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I have been taking public transit since I was 10 years old, in 5th grade. every day I would wait with my mom at the bus stop and she would see me off into the care of the bus driver, who always chatted with me and watched over me. one time a man started asking me questions and the driver told him to leave me alone and even told my mom about it the next day. he shaped my earliest experiences taking public transit.

when I got a little older a whole world was unlocked. friends' houses, music, parks, eventually work. I now use the bus to get everywhere. it gives me the freedom to get almost anywhere I need to. not that the system is perfect. often I find myself waiting for long periods in all types of weather, taking multiple transfers to get to locations that should be easy to get to, and sometimes I find myself completely without a bus route to where I want to go. and now that I'm no longer on the student bus pass, fares really add up. but still, I see so much potential and I have so many good experiences on public transit. i want more investment in maintenance, expanded routes, and reduced fares. I want my city to have a transit system to be proud of. freeways are not the answer. they cut right through the heart of my neighborhood and make it harder to get around, not easier.