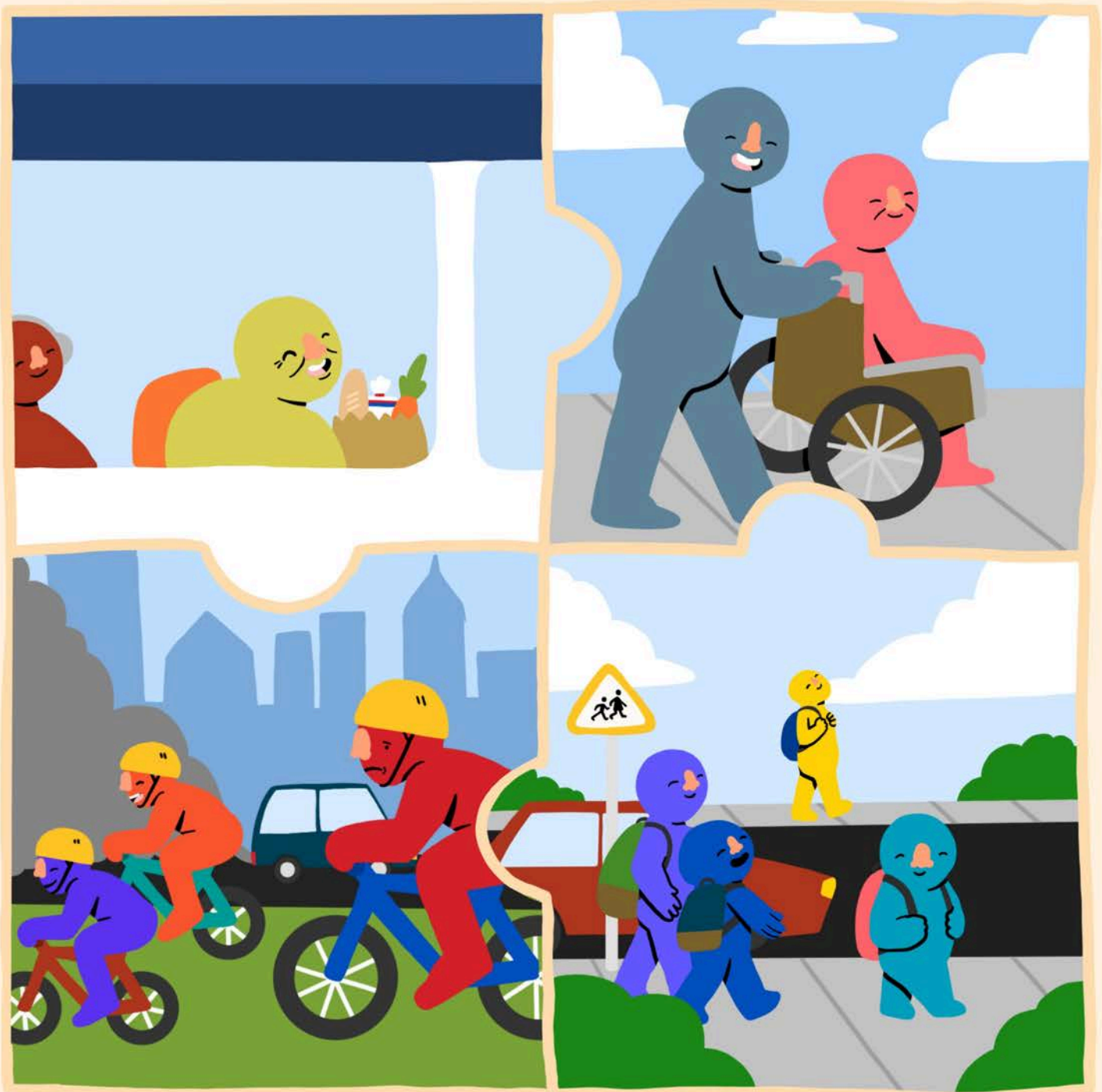


Funding the Future

An Illustrated Guide to Surface Transportation Reauthorization

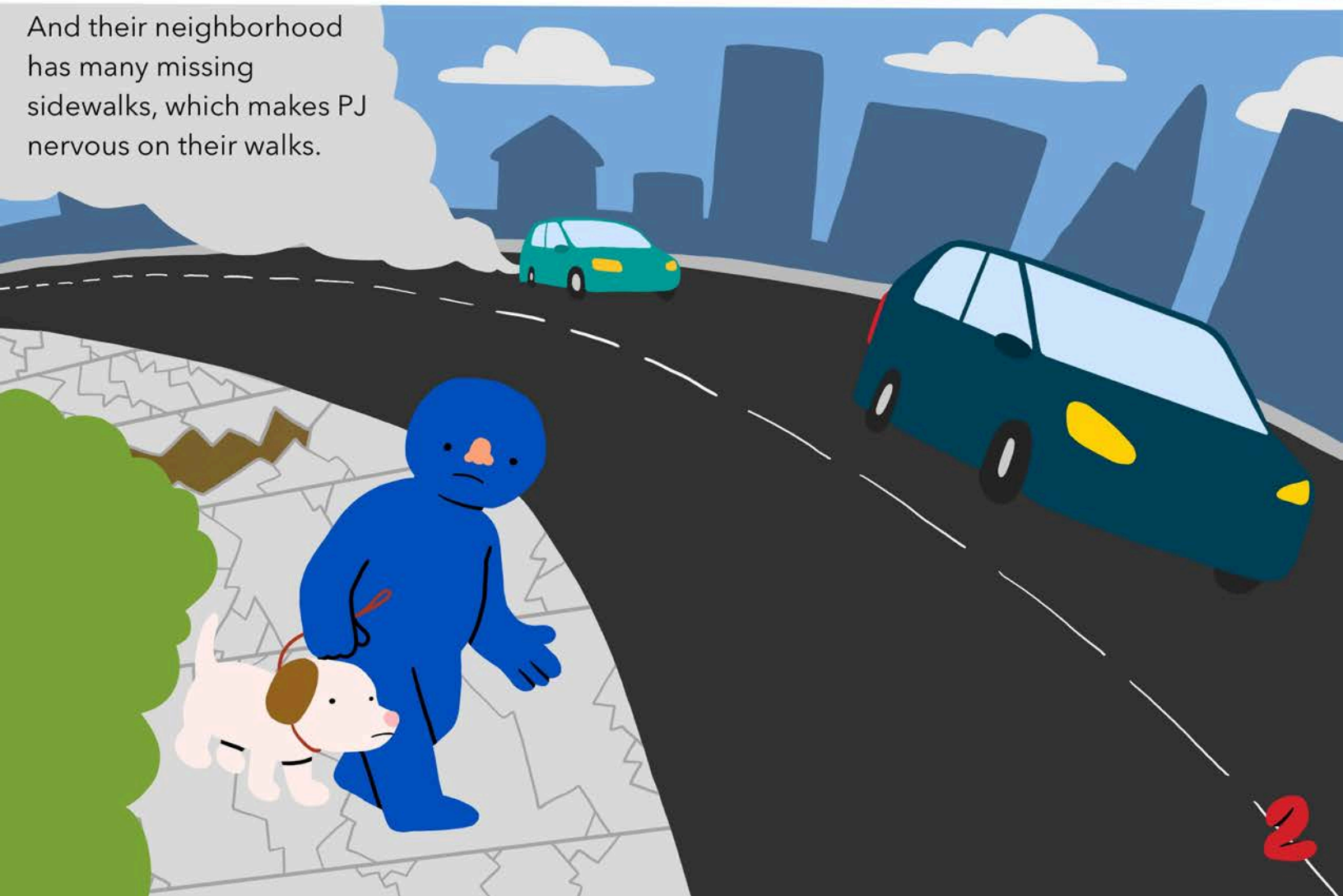




Malcom tries their best to live a full life with their dog PJ, from their work to connecting to loved ones... but it's been hard lately. They used to drive, but their car broke down and is in the shop.



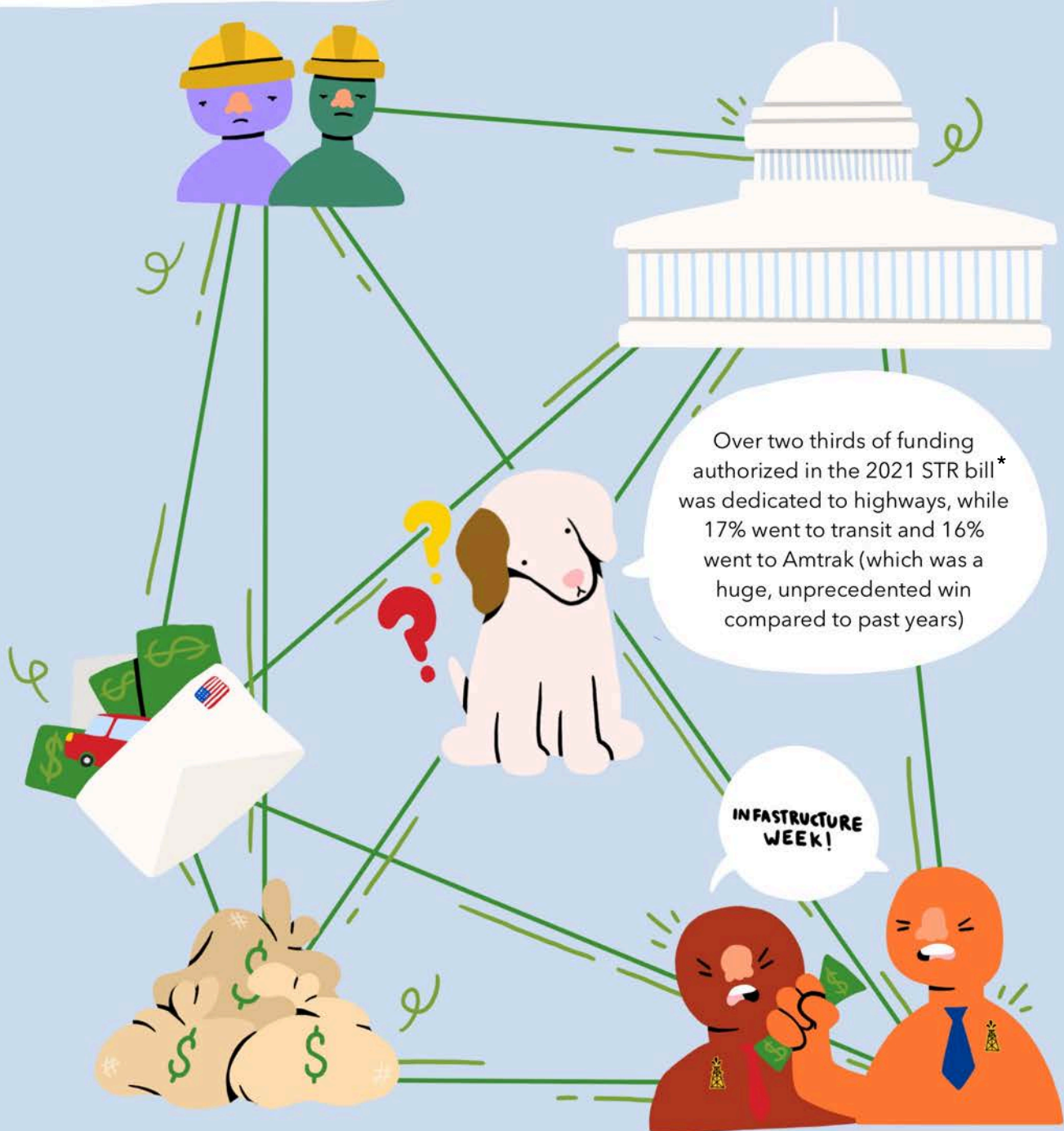
As for other options, they always seem to just miss the bus that comes every 30 minutes.



And their neighborhood has many missing sidewalks, which makes PJ nervous on their walks.

Why is transportation so tough in this country?

One big reason is where Congress invests our infrastructure dollars. The federal government spends hundreds of billions of dollars on transportation every year. But every five years or so, Congress must reauthorize this funding, making key policy adjustments while they're at it. Sometimes this reauthorization is combined with other policies as part of a bigger infrastructure bill.



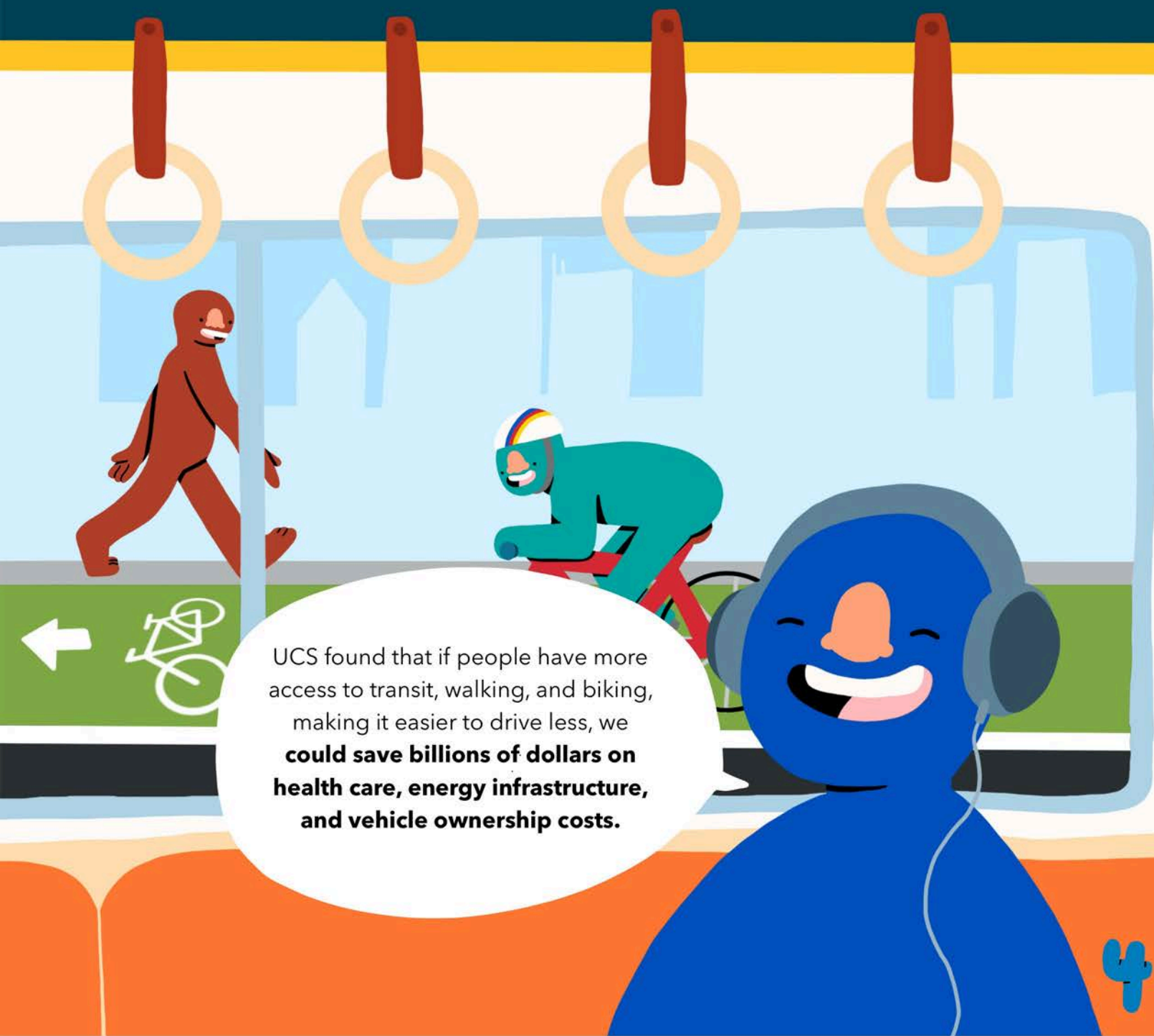
Reauthorization is the process for deciding how billions of dollars of federal funds are spent. This can be anything from public transit, bike lanes and rail; however, historically, the bulk of the funding has gone to roads and highways.

**We will be referring to Surface Transportation Reauthorization as STR or Reauthorization.*

The bulk of funding in STR bills has historically been dedicated to moving cars, not people. For decades, the automobile, oil, roadbuilding, and trucking industries have benefited from this lack of alternatives and have lobbied to maintain the status quo.

But imagine what it would be like if this situation were reversed.

What if Congress invested in transit accessibility, walkability, and safety with the same level of funding and attention that we currently allocate to roads and highways?



UCS found that if people have more access to transit, walking, and biking, making it easier to drive less, we **could save billions of dollars on health care, energy infrastructure, and vehicle ownership costs.**

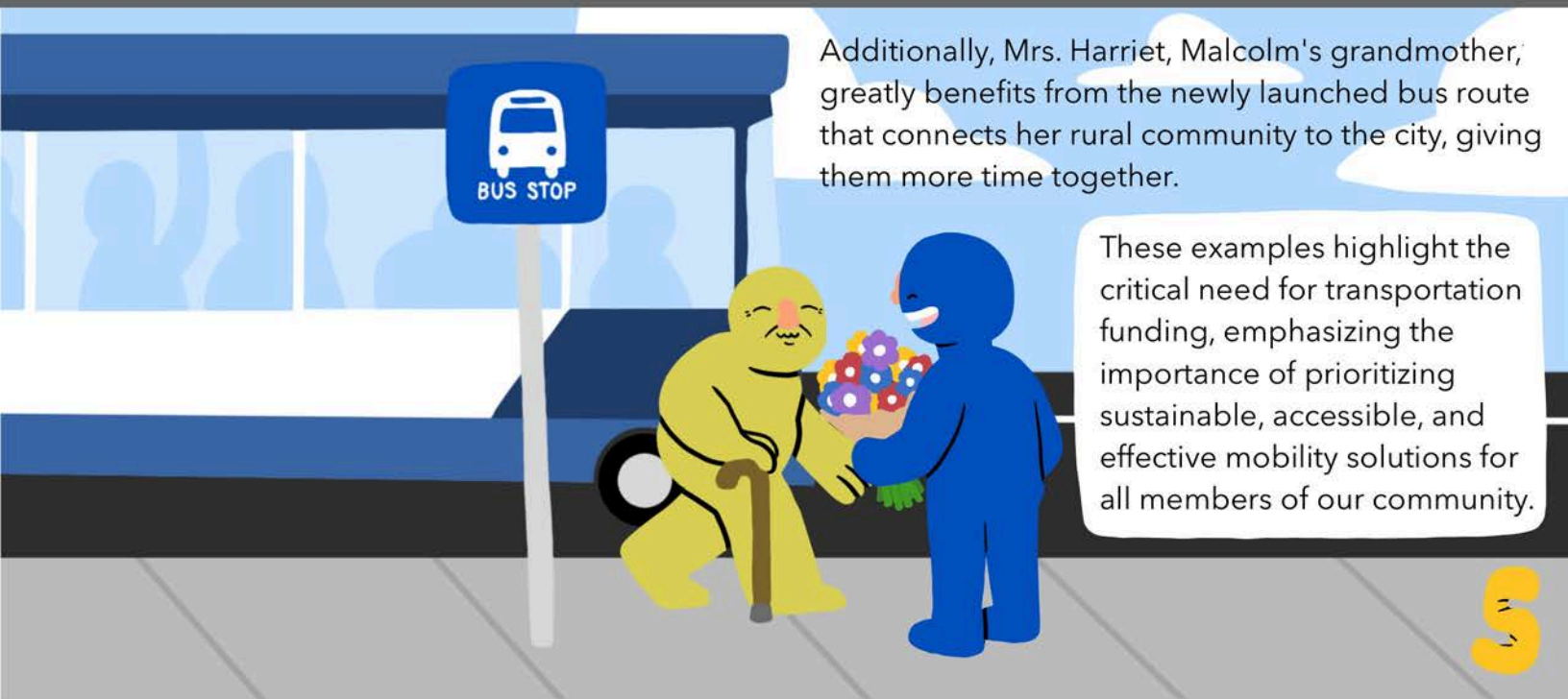
Connection plays a crucial role in building communities. When our elected leaders invest in people's freedom to move, everyone benefits.



The Ortega family is thrilled to come together around their new electric vehicle, with lots of charging locations thanks to the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. Their new vehicle has saved them money and allows them to easily drive the kids to various activities, from soccer practice to dance rehearsal.



Additionally, Mrs. Harriet, Malcolm's grandmother, greatly benefits from the newly launched bus route that connects her rural community to the city, giving them more time together.



These examples highlight the critical need for transportation funding, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing sustainable, accessible, and effective mobility solutions for all members of our community.

PLUG IN! MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



With all of these hearings, policy proposals, and negotiations between elected officials, where can I plug in? Where can I really make a difference?

The good news is that the possibilities are abundant! Reauthorization is an expansive process; therefore, there are plenty of opportunities to ensure that your voice is heard. What matters is creativity, consistency, and communication!

HOW YOUR VOICE INSPIRES CHANGE



Your legislators need to hear from you to prioritize transit funding, zero-emission vehicles, and highway maintenance over road building.

For instance, in the last reauthorization process, Rochester advocates wrote an op-ed to gain support from NY Senator Chuck Schumer for funding to reconnect communities divided by highways. Consider what your community needs: more frequent buses, safer sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and solutions for crossing highways, or reducing air pollution. It's essential to have a voice in the decision-making process that often feels inaccessible.

Transportation isn't just about roads; it's about connection, opportunity, and freedom.

This STR is a chance to fight for a future transportation system that centers people, health, and the environment

