

**Planning and Social Media:
A Case Study of Transit Stigma and Twitter**

Date: Wednesday, February 4th, 2015

Location: USC Verna & Peter Dauterive Hall (VPD), Room 112

Time: Noon to 1:30 pm

RSVP to Janet Kleinman at janetkle@usc.edu



Lisa Schweitzer is Associate Professor at the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy. She specializes in urban studies, and, in particular, analyses of social justice, environment and transport. Her work has appeared in multiple popular and scholarly outlets, and her research has been funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Health. She maintains a blog about sustainable urbanism at www.lisaschweitzer.com.

Abstract: How media portray public transit services can affect the way voters and stakeholders think about future transit investments. An examination of social media content, specifically Twitter feeds, about public transit finds that they reflect more negative sentiments about public transit than do the comments about most other public services, and include more negative material about transit patrons. However, transit agencies may be able to influence the tone of those comments through the way they engage with social media. Transit agencies that respond directly to questions, concerns, and comments of other social media users, as opposed to merely “blasting” announcements, have more positive statements about all aspects of services, independent of actual service quality. The interaction does not have to be customer oriented. Agencies using Twitter to chat with users about their experiences or new service also have statistically significantly more positive sentiments expressed about them on social media.