

# The Street Trust & Multnomah County REACH Transportation Crash & Safety Report

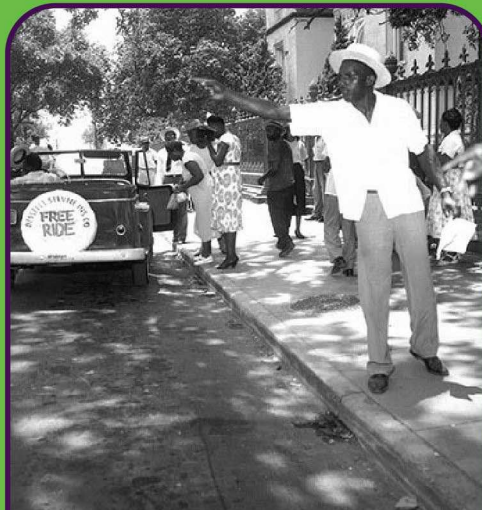
At the Intersection of Transportation and Health  
SPRING 2026



RACIAL & ETHNIC APPROACHES  
TO COMMUNITY HEALTH



**Elizabeth Jennings Graham** (1827 - 1901) was a Black teacher and activist that fought for transportation equity.



1953 Baton Rouge Bus Boycott led by **Reverend T.J. Jemison**.



**Rosa Parks** walks with NAACP Montgomery Chapter President Ed Nixon on Dec 5th, 1955 before the start of the 381-day Montgomery Bus Boycott.

# 2026 REACH Transportation and Crash Safety Report Draft

## Acknowledgment

This report was written in continuation of the 2021 publication *Multnomah County Transportation Crash and Safety Report: At the Intersection of Transportation, Health, Race and Justice* (TSR).<sup>1</sup> The original report drew from the work of partners such as the Coalition of Communities of Color and the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT). This updated report aims to build on the previous publication with updated context, literature, and data from the past four years.

While this report focuses on the transportation-related health inequities facing Black, African American, Immigrant, and Refugee communities in Multnomah County, especially in North and East Portland, it is not a reflection of community deficits. These communities hold deep strengths, lived wisdom, and resilience. The disparities documented here would be even more severe without those strengths. Groups such as the ACHIEVE<sup>2</sup> Coalition help ground the report in relevancy and feasibility and words can't begin to reflect how vital they are to the work REACH does.

The data in this report reflect real lives: families, neighbors, and community members whose health and safety are shaped by systems and structures that too often fail them. The findings are difficult, and they may evoke discomfort or even grief. We ask that you sit with that discomfort and use it as motivation to pursue meaningful change. Allow the information in this report to be a call to action.

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<sup>1</sup> Haggerty, B., Hamberg, A., McGee, C., & Campbell, A. (2021). *Multnomah County REACH Transportation Crash and Safety Report*. <https://multco.us/info/traffic-safety-report>

<sup>2</sup> *Action Communities for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change* Coalition is a group of multisectoral partners who have a collective vision of ending health inequities in chronic diseases for African-Americans and African immigrants/refugees in Multnomah County.

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Relevant Literature

## Executive Summary

Public health and transportation is an intersection that interacts with all of us in the built environment. In Multnomah County the third leading cause of mortality (after Cancer and Heart disease) is *unintentional injury*<sup>3</sup>. From 2015 to 2023 we have seen a 25% increase in car crash deaths, and a 59% increase in pedestrian deaths. In the *Traffic Crash Deaths in Multnomah County (2023)* public health data report, Multnomah County Health Department reported that in 2020-2021 traffic (related) crashes was the leading cause of death from unintentional injury for those aged 5 - 24.<sup>4</sup> For ages 25 - 84, it was the second leading cause of death from unintentional injury. The *Racial Ethnic Approaches to Community Health* team (REACH) works with local organizations, other government programs and agencies, businesses and community members to prevent chronic disease and improve the collective health of Black and African communities (including immigrants and refugees) of Multnomah County. The REACH focus tracts<sup>5</sup> are home to an alarming number of high injury corridors across the county (77% as of 2021).<sup>6</sup> These high injury corridors exist through a high concentration of Black residential communities, making this a severe equity concern for all residents and agencies alike.

Since 2021, Multnomah County has seen noticeable improvements in transit infrastructure, as well as organizational planning. Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) recently released their 2025 Deadly Crash Report, where 2025 reported 39 traffic deaths in the Portland Boundary. Almost 75% of the deadly crashes in 2025 occurred on the high crash network, and disparities are still shown to exist between people of color (particularly Black and Latine persons).<sup>7</sup> Major reductions in traffic deaths in places like East Portland

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<sup>3</sup> Unintentional Injury - Refers to fatal and nonfatal injuries not deliberately inflicted, including any such injury described as an "accident," regardless of whether inflicted by oneself or by another person (CDC).

<sup>4</sup> Traffic Crash Deaths in Multnomah County, 2020-2021, (August, 2023). [https://multco.us/file/new\\_report%3A\\_traffic\\_crash\\_deaths\\_in\\_multnomah\\_county%3A\\_taking\\_a\\_safe\\_system\\_approach\\_to\\_address\\_traffic-related\\_fatality\\_trends\\_%26\\_contributing\\_factors/download](https://multco.us/file/new_report%3A_traffic_crash_deaths_in_multnomah_county%3A_taking_a_safe_system_approach_to_address_traffic-related_fatality_trends_%26_contributing_factors/download)

<sup>5</sup> REACH focus tract is defined as a boundary with poverty rates at or greater than 20% within Multnomah County

<sup>6</sup> Multnomah County REACH Transportation Crash and Safety Report. 2021. [https://multco.us/file/reach\\_traffic\\_safety\\_report/download](https://multco.us/file/reach_traffic_safety_report/download)

should be applauded, and continued efforts need to be sustained in order to erase racial disparities with the goal of Vision Zero in both our minds and hearts. Metro's 2025 *Annual Safe Streets Plan* also denotes county decreases (14%) in traffic deaths from 2023 to 2024. Similarly, people of color (Black, American Indian, and Latine) are disproportionately represented in the traffic death data.<sup>8</sup>

Examining the reason for the disproportionate impacts can be attributed to the intentional deployment of exclusion laws in Oregon's history that institutionalized redlining, zoning restrictions, and transformative infrastructure development. For example, Black communities in North and North East Portland were radically changed once I-5 was constructed. Between fractured communities, and housing demolitions residents in North and North East Portland began transitioning more East.<sup>9</sup> Despite the historical disinvestment in communities of low-wealth and color, agencies and advocates are committing to addressing the racist history head-on. The [Albina Vision Trust](#), a community non-profit, "...created to buy back land, rebuild community, and reroot Black legacies and Black futures in the heart of Portland's central city;" is partnering with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) during the I-5 Rose Quarter Project. These partnerships help to ensure that further infrastructure transformation happens in the best interest of those most impacted. Smaller examples of authentic community collaboration include PBOT's partnership with the Division Midway Alliance & Coalition of Communities of Color where these organizations created the Beyond Traffic Safety Toolkit. The toolkit focuses on community experiences while providing actionable opportunities for both government and community based organizations to engage in making public spaces safer. These intentional authentic collaborations pave the way for transformative change, and Multnomah County is beginning to see the fruits of these authentic partnerships.

This REACH Traffic Safety Report (TSR) also builds upon the foundational six dimensions framework from the 2021 REACH TSR:

- Fatal Traffic Crash Injuries
- Non-Fatal Traffic Crash Injuries
- Biased Policing & Traffic Law Enforcement
- Violent Crime
- Bias Crime & Incidents (*previously Harassment*)
- Biased Behavior amongst Road User

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<sup>7</sup> Portland Bureau of Transportation. (2026, March). *Portland 2025 Deadly Traffic Crash Report Summary*. City of Portland.

<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/vision-zero/documents/portland-2025-deadly-traffic-crash-report/download>

<sup>8</sup> Metro. (2025, December). Annual Safe Streets Update. p.3. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2026-04/2025-safe-streets-update.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Hughes, J., Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. (2019). *Historical Context of Racist Planning: A History of How Planning Segregated Portland*. City of Portland, p. 13. <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/adap/history-racist-planning-portland>

The Table below briefly describes key findings from the aforementioned six dimensions. *Minus signs (-) indicate areas that need improvement, and plus signs (+) indicate areas of success.*

Six Transportation Dimensions	Key Findings
<p><i>Fatal Traffic Crash Injuries</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Between 2020 and 2024, 47 Black persons died in transport-related crashes, an increase compared to 2013–2017.</li> <li>- From 2020 - 2024 Black persons continued to experience the highest rate of traffic crash deaths in Multnomah County.</li> <li>- Black persons experience a higher rate of years of potential life lost before age 75 compared to other races and ethnicities in Multnomah County.</li> <li>- Despite a wide variety in annual transport-related fatalities for Black persons over the past five years (2 in 2022, 17 in 2023), the 5-year rolling average reached a peak in 2024.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Non-Fatal Traffic Crash Injuries</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black residents in Multnomah County are disproportionately represented among emergency room and urgent care visits for traffic and pedestrian-related injury.</li> <li>- Black residents make up almost 20% of traffic-related injury visits, while only accounting for 8% of the County population.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Biased Policing &amp; Traffic Law Enforcement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (Perceived) Black drivers in Portland are more likely to be stopped by non-traffic personnel for a non moving violation when compared to (perceived) White Drivers.</li> <li>+ (Consent) Search rates from 2020 to 2024 decreased across all (perceived) racial groups due to the incorporation of a 2019 Oregon Supreme Court Ruling, and improved police officer training.</li> <li>+ Most traffic stops that occurred in Gresham ended with a warning.</li> <li>+ Automatic Traffic Enforcement in the 8 fixed speed locations in Portland saw a 43% decrease in traffic crashes from 2019-2022.</li> </ul>

Six Transportation Dimensions	Key Findings
<i>Violent Crime</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black persons in Multnomah County have experienced a greater violent crime victimization rate.</li> <li>- Road rage incidents involving a firearm have been increasing nationally since 2015.</li> <li>- Currently, there aren't any specific road rage laws in Oregon, which makes classifying road rage elusive.</li> </ul>
<i>Bias Crimes &amp; Incidents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anti-Black or African American Bias Crimes and Incidents in Portland public spaces have been increasing.</li> <li>- County-wide reporting is needed to understand Bias Crimes past the Portland boundary.</li> </ul>
<i>Biased Behavior amongst Road Users</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ PBOT has responded to the bias behavior among road users by investing the strategies and policies geared toward community engagement, and infrastructure changes</li> </ul>

Despite the areas in need of continued improvement, policy recommendations outlined in the first REACH Traffic Safety Report have shown the widespread commitment from governmental agencies, and community based organizations. Please note, for a more detailed description of the policy recommendations and the *recommendations in action*, please read the full policy section starting on page 36.

*Minus signs (-) indicate areas that need improvement, and plus signs (+) indicate areas of success.*

(2021) Policy Recommendation	Recommendation in Action (2021 - 2025)	Recommendation Response Update
<i>Demand transportation decision making bodies to establish a policy and practice of authentic engagement with communities of color.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ The Oregon Department of Transportation is managing the I-5 Rose Quarter project, and implemented the Historic Albina Advisory Board (HAAB) in 2021 to elevate voices in the Black Community to ensure that project outcomes reflect community interest and values.</li> <li>+ <a href="#">HB 2985</a>, passed in 2021, requires that ODOT diversify its advisory committees to reflect Oregon's racial, ethnic, and ability population composition.</li> </ul>	This recommendation should <b>continue</b> to be implemented.

(2021) Policy Recommendation	Recommendation in Action (2021 - 2025)	Recommendation Response Update
<p><i>Demand transportation decision making bodies to establish a policy and practice of authentic engagement with communities of color.</i></p>	<p>+ In April 2024, PBOT's Vision Zero Program partnered with the Division Midway Alliance (DMA), and the Coalition of Communities of Color developed a toolkit titled, Beyond Traffic Safety: Building community belonging and safety in public spaces.</p>	<p>This recommendation should <b>continue</b> to be implemented.</p>
<p><i>Transportation agencies should adopt a policy of establishing measurable equity goals and engaging in routine evaluation to assess progress.</i></p>	<p>+ Metro, at the end of 2022, released their 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Update. The update, similar to PBOT's equity direction, reiterated the focus of prioritizing transportation investments, and eliminating transportation related disparities for historically marginalized communities. The report highlights that the active transportation network is generally "more complete" in equity focused areas (when compared to non-equity focused areas).</p> <p>+ In April 2024, Division Midway Alliance, Coalition Communities of Color and PBOT Vision Zero partnered to launch the Beyond Traffic Safety Toolkit. This toolkit identified 14 ways government agencies and community based organizations could increase community safety and belonging along Portland streets and public spaces.</p>	<p>This recommendation should <b>continue</b> to be implemented.</p>
<p><i>Transportation agencies should invest in scientifically supported infrastructure changes such as traffic calming, speed control, and mode separation to reduce injuries.</i></p>	<p>+ PBOT was awarded a \$20 million grant by the Department of Transportation to make safety improvements along 122nd avenue. 122nd is one of the most dangerous corridors in Portland, in addition to hosting a racially diverse community. City Council accepted the grant agreement on May 29th, 2024 and several investments have been funded with others proposed.</p>	<p>This recommendation should <b>continue</b> to be implemented.</p>

(2021) Policy Recommendation	Recommendation in Action (2021 - 2025)	Recommendation Response Update
<p><i>Transportation agencies should invest in scientifically supported infrastructure changes such as traffic calming, speed control, and mode separation to reduce injuries.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ The Urban East Multnomah County Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP), adopted on Jan 15th, 2025, identifies key safety challenges and proposes actionable strategies with the goal of eliminating traffic related injuries and deaths by 2035.</li> </ul>	<p>This recommendation should <b>continue</b> to be implemented.</p>
<p><i>TriMet should continue to prioritize service improvements in neighborhoods with a high proportion of Black residents. Transportation agencies should make investments that enhance feelings of safety and belonging.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ In TriMet's 2023 regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plan update there is a prioritization framework that includes an equity lens screening. This allows TOD to potentially elevate more disadvantaged neighborhoods, and sites in need of development or if the development will work to reduce inequalities the community experiences.</li> <li>+ Through 2024 TriMet has improved lighting at 60% of their MAX platforms, while more than 80% of the MAX platforms have seen camera improvements. In October 2021 TriMet improved MAX Blue, Green and Red lines in the Lloyd District related to track improvements. In 2025, the NE 82nd Ave MAX station saw improvements and upgrades pertaining to rebuilt stairways, a refurbished shelter, and better sight lines (and a guardrail) for improved safety.</li> <li>- In July 2025 TriMet announced a \$300 million dollar gap. This budget gap is the result of rising operation costs, and decreased revenue.</li> </ul>	<p>This recommendation should <b>continue</b> to be implemented if future funding can be secured. Also, monitoring of any cuts in low-income communities, and communities of color; especially communities that have high Black resident populations across Multnomah County should be captured.</p>
<p><i>Transportation and public health agencies should collaborate to undertake transportation messaging campaigns that center the Black experience, along with safety, equity and justice.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ In 2023, REACH's increased capacity led to participation in the East Multnomah County Transportation Committee (EMCTC-TAC) technical advisory subcommittee.</li> <li>+ (2024) Multnomah County Health Department, specifically its public health division, supported the WA state Department of Health, Clark County Public Health, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and the Oregon Health Authority in the creation of the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Health Analysis.</li> </ul>	<p>This recommendation should <b>continue</b> to be implemented.</p>

(2021) Policy Recommendation	Recommendation in Action (2021 - 2025)	Recommendation Response Update
<p><i>Transportation and public health agencies should collaborate to undertake transportation messaging campaigns that center the Black experience, along with safety, equity and justice.</i></p>	<p>+ (2025) The REACH team joined the technical subgroup for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) in the Northeast Sandy Boulevard Investment Strategy project.</p>	<p>This recommendation should <b>continue</b> to be implemented.</p>

This report updates and expands the 2021 Multnomah County REACH Transportation Crash and Safety Report. It uses new data, recent research, and deeper community context to examine transportation safety across six dimensions: fatal crashes, non-fatal injuries, biased policing & traffic law enforcement, violent crime, bias crimes, and biased behavior among road users. A seventh dimension has been added that seeks to account for the historical and contemporary experiences of racism that shape mobility for Black and African communities.

Several indicators show progress. The fatal crash disparity between Black and White residents narrowed from 2013 to 2022, and overall racial equity has become more central to transportation policy discussions. Portland saw the people killed in crashes begin to track down since its 2023 high number. 2025's 39 traffic fatalities even show a further decrease from 2024's 58 number. Portland Police *Search Rates* involving (perceived) Black/African Americans drivers also saw an 83% decrease from 2020 to 2024. Additionally, Automated Traffic Enforcement has shown early success in reducing traffic crashes along Portland's High Crash Network.

***Progress should not equal complacency: Introducing the 7th dimension to traffic Safety***

Black residents remain overrepresented nearly threefold in emergency and urgent care visits for traffic injuries. Disparities in non-moving traffic violations, violent crime victimization, and exposure to *Bias Crime & Incidents*. These patterns reflect long-standing structural inequities. Historically Black neighborhoods were shaped by exclusion laws, redlining, urban renewal, freeway construction, and displacement. Today, many Black Multnomah County residents live in areas with fewer sidewalks, lower intersection density, higher traffic volumes, and slower emergency response times. The compounding effects of racism in policing, public transportation, and public space further limit freedom of movement and contribute to poor health outcomes. This report centers these realities by naming transportation safety as both a mobility issue and a racial justice issue. However, "centering" will not be enough, the work needs a paradigm shift to include a 7th dimension. This 7th dimension, one of assets, will demand that when we speak about marginalized communities in Multnomah County, we leverage these assets as an opportunity to support communities in health promotion, policy reformation, funding support, and social cohesion. Protecting assets, the 7th dimension, will work in tandem with how the other 6 dimensions of traffic safety are utilized. The difference being that instead of working to "reduce inequities" prioritized in the first 6 dimensions, the 7th dimension will shift areas of focus to community and cultural assets and the importance of protecting them.



## ***Transportation systems contributed to the inequities described in this report. They can also be part of the solution.***

### **How We Got Here**

#### **United States**

Major events since the last REACH report five years ago have transformed national and local conversations about public health safety, transportation, and racial justice. In 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement inspired widespread acknowledgement of systemic racism. Countless organizations have since invested time and resources in attempts to center racial equity in their work.<sup>10</sup> In the field of transportation, many agencies and groups have committed to expanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives.<sup>11</sup> For example, in 2022 the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) published an Equity Action Plan. In this plan, USDOT committed to expanding transportation access, particularly for “underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged communities.”<sup>12</sup>

During the same period, the COVID-19 pandemic had profound effects on public health in the United States. This is particularly true for the country’s Black and African American communities, who suffered disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infection.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, COVID-19 is not the only instance of disproportionate health outcomes. Racist housing policies, air pollution, and respiratory illnesses are all burdening factors across Black, Latine/x, Indigenous, and refugee communities.<sup>14</sup>

Rokotovao et al. capture this sentiment in their 2024 publication, “Addressing anti-Black racism within public health in North America,” stating:

*In particular, the onslaught of anti-Black police violence publicized in 2020 — including the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, D’Andre Campbell, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, and Breonna Taylor — has catapulted widespread acknowledgment of the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for justice for marginalized lives. Combined with the finding that systemic anti-Black racism (ABR) translates into detrimental health outcomes for Black communities, including disproportionate higher rates of COVID-19 infection, there has been growing awareness across sectors that systemic racism and intersectional violence rooted in classism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism, and more, create and sustain Black health disparities.<sup>15</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> Hernandez, T.K. (2023). Can CRT Save DEI? Workplace Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in the Shadow of Anti-Affirmative Action. *UCLA Law Review*, 71(2), p. 4. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4666156>

<sup>11</sup> McCullough, S. R., & Erasmus, C. S. (2024). Performative versus Authentic Equity Work: An Assessment of Current Practices in Transportation Planning. *Transportation Research Record*, 2678(5), pp. 884-903. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03611981231193409>

<sup>12</sup> United States Department of Transportation. (2022). *Equity Action Plan*, p. 2. <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/66378>

<sup>13</sup> Tai, D. B. G., Sia, I. G., Doubeni, C. A., & Wieland, M. L. (2022). Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 on Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups in the United States: a 2021 Update. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 9(6), pp. 2334–2339. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-021-01170-w>

<sup>14</sup> Ma, K., Thomas, D. N., Heer, N. H., Wyatt Mitchell, I., Karner, A., Levine, K., & Shuster, J. (2022). *Racial Equity, Black America, and Public Transportation, Volume 1: A Review of Economic, Health, and Social Impacts*. The National Academies Press: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26710>

In addition to the negative health consequences and anti-Black racism seen throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also useful to note the subsequent change in mobility patterns during the shelter-in-place period and beyond. In March 2020, in the days following the World Health Organization's declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic, the percentage of people staying at home rose from 20% to 35%.<sup>16</sup> In the following months, reports show that increased social distancing policies resulted in an additional 25% decrease in mobility.<sup>17</sup>

Studies reveal that, nationally, communities with more essential workers and vulnerable populations (including African American, Hispanic, Female, and people over 45 years old) had higher rates of transit use during the pandemic compared to other communities. For example, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics records show that African American populations have a lower percentage of individuals in management or other roles with opportunities for remote work.<sup>18</sup> This supports the hypothesis that transit options remained in demand for people working in primarily physical occupations. A study by Sy et al. highlights the key idea that “socially disadvantaged” people, like essential workers, often lack the privilege to engage in social distancing, putting them at increased risk for COVID-19 infection — a phenomenon the researchers call “social distancing inequity.”<sup>19</sup>

Despite the great need for affordable public transportation options during the pandemic, especially for Black and African American populations, many policy and funding mechanisms did not align with this need. Across the U.S., many agencies responded to reduced traffic and transit ridership by cutting public transit service. Many noted the disproportionate impact this had on Black people, who represented about 40% of transit's peak pandemic ridership.<sup>20</sup> As a result of these service cuts, transit users had to face longer wait times, longer trips, and crowded facilities, all of which had consequential and disproportionate health impacts on Black communities. This reflects a broader pattern of systemic neglect and a lack of consideration for how the built environment affects different communities, specifically the essential workforce. The pandemic merely exposed these pre-existing weaknesses in the system.

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<sup>15</sup> Rakotovoao, L., Simeoni, M., Bennett-Abuyash, C., Walji, T., & Abdi, S. (2024). Addressing anti-Black racism within public health in North America: a scoping review. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 23(1), p. 2. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-024-02124-4>

<sup>16</sup> Lee, M., Zhao, J., Sun, Q., Pan, Y., Zhou, W., Xiong, C., & Zhang, L. (2020). Human mobility trends during the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. *PLoS One*, 15(11), e0241468-, p. 5. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0241468>

<sup>17</sup> Wellenius, G. A., Vispute, S., Espinosa, V., Fabrikant, A., Tsai, T. C., Hennessy, J., Dai, A., Williams, B., Gadepalli, K., Boulanger, A., Pearce, A., Kamath, C., Schlosberg, A., Bendebury, C., Mandayam, C., Stanton, C., Bavadekar, S., Pluntke, C., Desfontaines, D., ... Gabrilovich, E. (2021). Impacts of social distancing policies on mobility and COVID-19 case growth in the US. *Nature Communications*, 12(1), 3118–7, p. 5. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-23404-5>

<sup>18</sup> Liu, L., Miller, H. J., & Scheff, J. (2020). The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on public transit demand in the United States. *PLoS One*, 15(11), e0242476-, pp. 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0242476>

<sup>19</sup> Sy, K. T. L., Martinez, M. E., Rader, B., & White, L. F. (2021). Socioeconomic Disparities in Subway Use and COVID-19 Outcomes in New York City. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 190(7), pp. 1234–1242. <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwaa277>

<sup>20</sup> Ma, K., Thomas, D. N., Heer, N. H., Wyatt Mitchell, I., Karner, A., Levine, K., & Shuster, J. (2022). *Racial Equity, Black America, and Public Transportation, Volume 1: A Review of Economic, Health, and Social Impacts*. The National Academies Press: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26710>

## Multnomah County:2021-2025

Multnomah County is not exempt from the nationwide impacts mentioned above. Since 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement, COVID-19 pandemic, extreme heat and wildfires, and an increase in DUII (Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants) rates are all significant determinants in public health changes.

In 2020, Portland drew global attention for its prolonged, high-profile Black Lives Matter protests. These events raised public health concerns due to local and federal law enforcement's repeated use of chemical irritants, dangerous force, and harmful crowd control tactics against protesters.<sup>21</sup> In response to ongoing racial injustices, in 2021 the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners declared racism to be a public health crisis.<sup>22</sup> Their declaration identified transportation as one of several systems contributing to racial health disparities.<sup>23 24</sup>

As was the case nationally, the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted communities of color in the Portland area, specifically Black and African American (B/AA) people, American Indian or Alaska Native people, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander people.<sup>25</sup> The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) reported that in 2020-2021, COVID-19 caused the B/AA population to lose years of potential life at more than twice the rate of White people in Oregon.<sup>26</sup> Fortunately, OHA finds that official rates have lowered in recent years (2022-2023), with Black and White populations experiencing fairly equal rates. The pandemic also had profound impacts on community mobility in Multnomah County. TriMet ridership dropped by about two-thirds in only a few weeks during March 2020.<sup>27</sup> In turn, TriMet cut bus service hours by 20% by the following month.<sup>28</sup> While there have not been any specific studies about the impact TriMet service changes have had on the B/AA population in Multnomah County, it is evident many people were still reliant on the remaining service. A correspondent from Street Roots notes that in the spring and summer of 2020, thousands of Portlanders continued riding Line 72,<sup>29</sup> which TriMet notes as serving "culturally diverse and historically disenfranchised" areas.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Heisler, M., Hampton, K., & McKay, D. (2020). Dangerous use of crowd-control weapons against medics and protesters in Portland, OR. *The Lancet (British Edition)*, 396(10259), e59-e60. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)32080-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32080-8)

<sup>22</sup> Multnomah County Communications Office. (2021). *Multnomah County declares racism a public health crisis*. <https://multco.us/news/multnomah-county-declares-racism-public-health-crisis>

<sup>23</sup> Hull Caballero, M., & Caldwell, R. (2022). *Lessons Learned: City's response to protests exposed vulnerabilities in Portland's police accountability system*. City of Portland, Portland City Auditor.

<https://www.portland.gov/ipr/news/2022/4/12/lessons-learned-citys-response-protests-exposed-vulnerabilities-portlands-police>

<sup>24</sup> Torgrimson-Ojerio, B. N., Mularski, K. S., Peyton, M. R., Keast, E. M., Hassan, A., & Ivlev, I. (2021). Health issues and healthcare utilization among adults who reported exposure to tear gas during 2020 Portland (OR) protests: a cross-sectional survey. *BMC Public Health*, 21(1), pp. 803–803. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10859-w>

<sup>25</sup> Oregon Health Authority. (2021). *COVID-19 2021 Report: Oregon's Annual Summary*, p. 6.

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/covid19/Documents/DataReports/2021-Annual-Data-Report.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Oregon Health Authority. *Final Death Data: Leading causes of mortality (2017-2023)*. Oregon Death Data.

<https://oregon.gov/oha/PH/BirthDeathCertificates/VitalStatistics/death/Pages/index.aspx>

<sup>27</sup> Sabatier, J. (2021, May 17). TriMet expects a slow return to pre-pandemic ridership. *Oregon Public Broadcasting*.

<https://opb.org/article/2021/05/11/trimet-expects-a-slow-return-to-pre-pandemic-ridership/>

<sup>28</sup> Tigard Chamber of Commerce. (2020, March 30). *TriMet to adjust schedules, preserve safety and service, as community responds to COVID-19*.

<https://tigardchamber.org/trimet-to-adjust-schedules-preserve-safety-and-service-as-community-responds-to-covid-19/>

<sup>29</sup> Miller, H. L. (2020, September 9). Portland's busiest bus line: What it looks like during a pandemic. *Street Roots*.

<https://streetroots.org/news/2020/09/09/busiest-bus-line-portland-what-it-looks-during-pandemic>

<sup>30</sup> York, T. (2024, December 20). TriMet's 82nd Avenue Transit Project fueled by \$55.5 million grant from Portland Clean Energy Fund. *TriMet News*.

<https://news.trimet.org/2024/12/trimets-82nd-avenue-transit-project-fueled-by-55-5-million-grant-from-portland-clean-energy-fund/>

In 2021 the Pacific Northwest experienced an extreme weather event known as the *Pacific Northwest Heat Dome of 2021*. Neighborhoods with little tree coverage, lots of paved surfaces, and close proximity to highways can get distinctly hotter than other parts of the city.<sup>31</sup> This phenomenon is known as the urban heat island effect. A 2023 Multnomah County Health Department report found that wealthier and Whiter neighborhoods (Northwest Heights, Forest Park, Hillsdale, Sellwood-Moreland, Eastmoreland, Reed, Buckman, Kerns, Laurelhurst, Gresham Butte) had up to 11% more tree canopy coverage than neighborhoods (Montavilla, Hazelwood, Wilkes East, North Gresham, North Central, Wood Village, Fairview, Troutdale) with the highest proportion of BIPOC residents.<sup>32</sup> Lack of tree coverage is just one of a series of environmental factors that has resulted in BIPOC residents experiencing a higher likelihood of the urban heat island effect than White residents in the Portland area.<sup>33</sup> Exposure to extreme heat can worsen existing health conditions, like asthma, heart disease, and diabetes.<sup>34</sup>

Along with extreme heat, studying wildfire and poor air quality in Multnomah County is useful in highlighting climate events that disproportionately impact vulnerable communities. In the past several years, notably 2020, Multnomah County has experienced high levels of air pollution due to nearby wildfires.<sup>35</sup> Exposure to damaging air pollution in conjunction with the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in compounding public health issues.<sup>36</sup> Figure 01 below illustrates that the highest BIPOC residential population (93%) lives within a single kilometer of air toxic source facilities.<sup>37</sup> In Oregon and Washington State, vulnerability to the negative effects of wildfires is higher in areas with Black and Native American populations.<sup>38</sup> The effects of urban heat islands and poor air quality highlight the overlapping natures of the built environment and public health.

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<sup>31</sup> CAPA Strategies. (2023). *Heat Watch Portland Metro Region*.

[https://osf.io/m8b3w?view\\_only=cafa95f8fc9d4dd0bf84ed5cad8cd664](https://osf.io/m8b3w?view_only=cafa95f8fc9d4dd0bf84ed5cad8cd664)

<sup>32</sup> Multnomah County Health Department Environmental Health Services Division. (2023, July). *2023 Environmental Justice Snapshot Report*, pp. 5-6. <https://multco.us/news/multnomah-county-releases-environmental-justice-snapshot-report>

<sup>33</sup> Voelkel, J., Hellman, D., Sakuma, R., & Shandas, V. (2018). Assessing Vulnerability to Urban Heat: A Study of Disproportionate Heat Exposure and Access to Refuge by Socio-Demographic Status in Portland, Oregon. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(4). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15040640>

<sup>34</sup> Keith, L., & Meerow, S. (2022, April 6). Planning for Urban Heat Resilience. *Planning Advisory Service Report*, (600), pp. 9-17. <https://planning.org/publications/report/925695/>

<sup>35</sup> Green, A. (2020, September 12). Portland's air quality was the worst of major cities in the world Friday, due to Oregon and Washington wildfires. *Oregonian/OregonLive*.

<https://oregonlive.com/news/2020/09/portland-now-has-the-worst-air-quality-in-the-world-due-to-oregon-and-washington-wildfires.html>

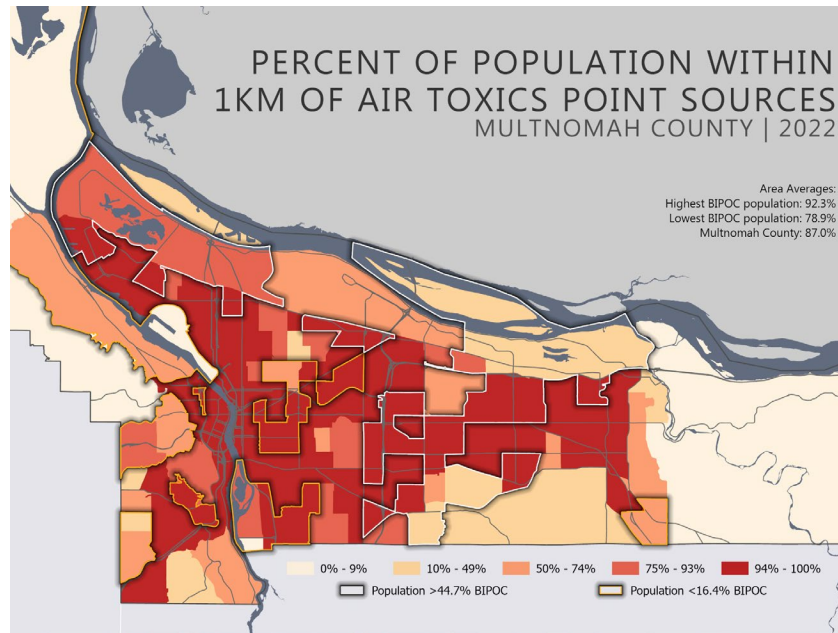
<sup>36</sup> Peñalosa, M. (2020, September 14). 'It's A Bit Surreal': Oregon's Air Quality Suffers As Fires Complicate COVID-19 Fight. *NPR*. <https://npr.org/2020/09/14/912701172/its-a-bit-surreal-oregon-fights-smoke-from-record-wildfires-during-a-pandemic>

<sup>37</sup> MCHD Environmental Health Services Division. 2023 Environmental Justice Snapshot.

[https://multco.us/file/2023\\_environmental\\_justice\\_snapshot\\_report/download](https://multco.us/file/2023_environmental_justice_snapshot_report/download)

<sup>38</sup> Davies, I. P., Haugo, R. D., Robertson, J. C., & Levin, P. S. (2018). The unequal vulnerability of communities of color to wildfire. *PloS One*, 13(11), e0205825–e0205825. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0205825>

Figure 01 - Due to the built environment, BIPOC residential communities in Multnomah County are at a greater risk of exposure to air toxins.



Bringing together local data on COVID-19, mobility patterns, and climate-related events highlights the multiple public health and safety challenges faced by Black and African American communities in Multnomah County, including limited access to reliable transportation, increased exposure to environmental hazards, heightened risk of policing and surveillance during travel, and disruptions to essential services like employment, healthcare, and education. These daily stressors shape how people move through the world and provide essential context for understanding the deeper, overlapping impacts of transportation inequity

### From Data to Context: What Recent Reports Reveal About Safety, Equity, and Mobility

Building on the findings of the 2021 REACH Traffic Safety Report, this section explores recent research and reports from across the region that deepen our understanding of how transportation systems continue to shape racial health outcomes. Drawing from government, agency, and community-led sources, it highlights the evolving landscape of transportation equity in Multnomah County. In 2023, a Multnomah County report “Public Health Data Report: Traffic Crash Deaths in Multnomah County,” found increased traffic-related fatalities between 2020 and 2021. It showed pedestrian deaths also increased, and a disproportionate number of those pedestrians were Black, Indigenous, and people of color, low-income people, or people experiencing homelessness.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, other factors such as intoxication remain elusive in drawing definitive conclusions about the presence of substances and their connection to impairment. Alcohol is the only substance where decedents can show detectable qualities of impairment.<sup>40</sup> More critically, the 2023 report only had *victim* intoxication levels, not other parties involved in crashes. Therefore, it is unknown if substance intoxication of additional parties in pedestrian-car events played a role in these crashes.

<sup>39</sup> Multnomah County Health Department. (2023). Public Health Data Report: Traffic Crash Deaths in Multnomah County 2020 - 2021. p. 2. <https://multco.us/news/traffic-deaths-reach-record-highs-multnomah-county-turns-public-health-lens-preventable-deaths>

Aside from the percentage of traffic deaths involving intoxicants, it is evident that alcohol-impaired driving fatalities in Oregon have consistently risen (i.e. from 144 in 2019 to 215 in 2021).<sup>41</sup> Reducing impaired driving and Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants (DUIIs) has become a key concern for Oregon leaders, resulting in the formation of the Governor's Advisory Committee on DUII.<sup>42</sup> A forthcoming analysis (2025) funded by a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) planning grant from Metro and the U.S. Department of Transportation in support of the Urban East Multnomah County Transportation Safety Action Plan update (2025), finds that crashes involving alcohol or drugs are four times more likely to result in death or serious injury compared to other crashes, with pedestrians accounting for half of the fatalities. These crashes occur most often between 7 pm and midnight and are heavily concentrated along Burnside Road, NE 181st Avenue, and SE Stark Street.<sup>43</sup>

## Advancing Vision Zero - The Safe Systems Approach

The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) first adopted its "Vision Zero" plan in 2016, the goal of which is to "eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on Portland streets."<sup>44</sup> Vision Zero recognizes a need for collaboration between transportation and public health agencies, noting *prevention of risk* as central to mitigating adverse health outcomes. Through its Vision Zero initiative, PBOT has identified the city's 30 most dangerous streets and intersections. Despite only being 8% of the city's streets, these locations accounted for 67% of traffic deaths from 2020 to 2024.<sup>45</sup>

According to PBOT's 2023 *Deadly Traffic Crash Report*, 2023 had the city's highest rate of traffic fatalities in three decades. Of 69 traffic crash victims, Black individuals made up 16% of people killed, despite only being 5.6% of Portland's population.<sup>46</sup> In 2024, 58 people were killed in traffic crashes.<sup>47</sup> Of the 58 individuals killed in 2024, Black individuals made up 11% of people killed (despite only being 5.6% of Portland's population). Continuing, PBOT's recently released 2025 *Deadly Crash Report* named the 39 people killed in traffic crashes in Portland. East Portland specifically saw a 56% decrease in traffic deaths, 18% greater than the city-wide 38%. Blackpersons made up 13% of the Portland traffic deaths in 2025 (despite being only 5.6% of Portland's Population).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Multnomah County Health Department. (2023). *Public Health Data Report: Traffic Crash Deaths in Multnomah County 2020 - 2021*

[https://multco.us/file/new\\_report%3A\\_traffic\\_crash\\_deaths\\_in\\_multnomah\\_county%3A\\_taking\\_a\\_safe\\_system\\_approach\\_to\\_address\\_traffic-related\\_fatality\\_trends\\_%26\\_contributing\\_factors/download](https://multco.us/file/new_report%3A_traffic_crash_deaths_in_multnomah_county%3A_taking_a_safe_system_approach_to_address_traffic-related_fatality_trends_%26_contributing_factors/download)

<sup>41</sup> State of Oregon. (2023, April). *Impaired Driving Program Assessment*. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, p. 6.

<https://digitalcollections.library.oregon.gov/nodes/view/214752>

<sup>42</sup> Oregon Department of Transportation. *Governor's Advisory Committee on DUII*.

<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/safety/pages/gac-duii.aspx>

<sup>43</sup> East Multnomah County. (2025). *Transportation Safety Action Plan*, p 15

[https://multco.us/file/east\\_multnomah\\_county\\_transportation\\_safety\\_action\\_plan/download](https://multco.us/file/east_multnomah_county_transportation_safety_action_plan/download)

<sup>44</sup> City of Portland. *About Vision Zero*. <https://www.portland.gov/transportation/vision-zero/about-vision-zero>

<sup>45</sup> City of Portland. *High Crash Network streets and intersections*.

<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/vision-zero/high-crash-network-streets-and-intersections>

<sup>46</sup> Portland Bureau of Transportation. (2024, February). *Portland 2023 Deadly Traffic Crash Report*. City of Portland. p. 6.

<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/vision-zero/documents/portland-2023-deadly-traffic-crash-report/download>

<sup>47</sup> Portland Bureau of Transportation. (2025, March). *Portland 2024 Deadly Traffic Crash Report*. City of Portland. p. 1.

<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/vision-zero/documents/portland-2024-deadly-traffic-crash-report/download>

<sup>48</sup> Portland Bureau of Transportation. (2026, March). *Portland 2025 Deadly Traffic Crash Report*. City of Portland. p. 10.

<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/vision-zero/documents/portland-2025-deadly-traffic-crash-report/download>

This decrease is consistent with what Greater Portland also saw in terms of traffic deaths. Metro reported in their 2025 *Annual Safe Streets Plan* that Multnomah County saw a 14% decrease in traffic deaths (from 2023 to 2024). Unfortunately, when analyzed across the Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties (from 2019-2023) Black, American Indian, and Latine persons are disproportionately represented in traffic deaths (per 100,000).<sup>49</sup> Despite the prevalence in the disproportionality of traffic deaths amongst people of color, transportation agencies have remained steadfast in their commitment to address the inequities.

PBOT's 2023 Vision Zero Action Plan Progress Report, reported moderate progress in its previously outlined goals.<sup>50</sup> Some of these goals included setting safe speed limits, redesigning dangerous streets (to encourage safe speeds), improving street lighting (on wide streets in high-equity areas), maximizing signal operations, and advancing safety and a sense of belonging for culturally specific communities, among many others. PBOT's Vision Zero Action Plan Update 2023-25 reaffirmed the city's commitment to eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries while acknowledging that stark inequalities persist: Black and Indigenous community members continue dying in traffic crashes at about twice the rate of their proportion of the population.<sup>51</sup>

Portland's Vision Zero Action Plan Update 2023-25 and the updated PedPDX report highlight the same urgent concern: traffic violence continues to disproportionately impact Black and Indigenous Portlanders. The PedPDX update, which covers data from 2019 to 2022, builds on earlier findings, including insights from the 2018 "Walking While Black" focus group. It reinforces the call for targeted safety improvements along [High Crash Network](#)<sup>52</sup> streets, where these disparities are most severe. Together, these reports emphasize the need for equity-focused action to make the city's streets safer for all.<sup>53</sup> This is where the Safe Systems Approach (SSA) has been integral in the examination of system based interventions to address traffic deaths and serious injuries. The SSA strategy shifts the focus from individual behavior to systemic design and policy interventions. SSA works to mitigate inherent risks in transportation systems, structured around building multiple layers of protection to first prevent crashes, and then minimize harm when they do occur. This approach is valuable because it centers system design around human vulnerability and error. By recognizing that people will make mistakes and that they are physically at risk in traffic, taking a human-centered approach may be more effective than vehicle-based safety approaches.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Metro. (2025, December). Annual Safe Streets Update. p.3. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2026-04/2025-safe-streets-update.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Portland Bureau of Transportation. (2024). *Annual Vision Zero Action Plan Progress Report*. City of Portland.

<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/vision-zero/annual-vision-zero-action-plan-progress-report>

<sup>51</sup> Portland Bureau of Transportation. (2023, November). *Portland Vision Zero Action Plan Update 2023-25*. City of Portland.

<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/vision-zero/documents/vision-zero-action-plan-update-2023-25/download>

<sup>52</sup> High Crash Network - The 30 streets and intersections with the most serious crashes—make up 8% of Portland streets but accounted for an average of 67% of traffic deaths from 2020 to 2024.

<sup>53</sup> Portland Bureau of Transportation. (2023). *PedPDX: Portland's Citywide Pedestrian Plan | 3 Year Status Report 2019-2022*. City of Portland, p. 47. <https://www.portland.gov/transportation/planning/documents/pedpdx-3-year-status-report/download>

<sup>54</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation. *What Is a Safe System Approach?* <https://www.transportation.gov/safe-system-approach>

Metro's 2025 Annual Safe Street for All Report frames the SSA across the Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties. Metro highlights that the elevation of SSA has stoked various Transportation Safety Action Plans (TSAPs) in the tri-county region. For example, Washington, Clackamas, and East Multnomah Counties have Vision Zero as the goal for their jurisdictions. Cities across the tri-county region are also dedicated to a zero goal as well. This holistic commitment and subsequent TSAPs are providing the pathway to zero that is needed across the tri-counties. Another important perspective when discussing the Safe System Approach is to understand that there are proven interventions that can reduce traffic deaths to zero. Metro outlines 8 proven SSA strategies that agencies, legislators, advocates, and communities should be implementing in order to work towards a zero traffic death reality:

1. Major Safety Projects
2. Reduce Vehicle Speeds
3. Modal Shift & Reduce Vehicles Miles Traveled
4. Low-Cost Systemic Projects
5. Vehicle Technology & Smaller Vehicles
6. Emergency Response
7. Community Resources & Education
8. Automated & High-Visibility Enforcement

Multnomah County is seeing these strategies implemented across the jurisdiction. For example, since 2021 PBOT has reduced speed limits across more than 100 miles worth of Portland Streets (Reduce Vehicles Speeds).<sup>56</sup> This is significant because speeding has been a top contributing factor in deadly crashes since 2017. Another example of SSA in action is the investment in system wide changes on the High Crash Network. 2025 saw the completion of 7 different High Crash Network construction projects. Since 2017, PBOT and partnering transportation agencies have invested close to 200 million dollars in safety projects along the High Crash Network (Major Safety Projects). While the Safe System Approach provides a valuable framework for safer transportation system design, it can only be successfully implemented by confronting the inequities that shape who is most at risk on our roads. Advancing traffic safety must go beyond infrastructure and enforcement to grapple with the long-standing impacts of racism embedded in land use, housing, and transportation policy.

### **Advancing Traffic Safety in the Context of Racism**

From Oregon's Black exclusion laws of the 1800s to 20th-century redlining, zoning restrictions, and unfair lending practices, Black and African American residents were systematically confined to certain neighborhoods. This included the neighborhoods of Albina, Kenton, Arbor Lodge, Piedmont, Humboldt, Overlook, Boise, Eliot, Woodlawn, Concordia, Sabin, Irvington, and Vernon.<sup>57</sup> Many of these same neighborhoods were later targeted for urban renewal, freeway construction, and upzoning that displaced residents and fractured communities. In the Lower Albina area specifically, the city introduced two significant developments that radically changed

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<sup>55</sup> Metro. (2025, December). Annual Safe Streets Update. p.3. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2026-04/2025-safe-streets-update.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> PBOT. (2026). Portland's Vision Zero Dashboard.

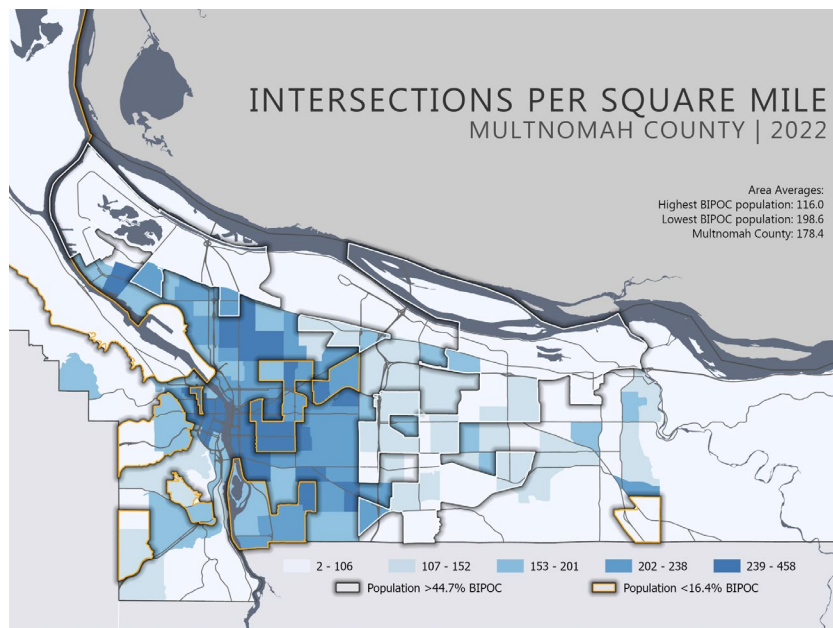
[https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/portland.bureau.of.transportation/viz/VisionZeroDashboard\\_16179023789280/VisionZeroDashboard](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/portland.bureau.of.transportation/viz/VisionZeroDashboard_16179023789280/VisionZeroDashboard)

<sup>57</sup> Hughes, J., Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. (2019). *Historical Context of Racist Planning: A History of How Planning Segregated Portland*. City of Portland, p. 13. <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/adap/history-racist-planning-portland>

the landscape. First, in 1956, was the building of I-5 through the neighborhood. I-5, cut right through Lower Albina/Eliot and required the demolition of hundreds of housing units. This displaced population moved north, starting the trend of transitioning Lower Albina into a commercial zone. Another key development was the construction of the Memorial Coliseum (now Veterans Memorial Coliseum) by the City of Portland in 1960. These patterns, documented in *Historical Context of Racist Planning: A History of How Planning Segregated Portland* and *The African American Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*, have left lasting structural inequities that shape access to safety, mobility, and opportunity.<sup>58</sup>

Today, many Black Multnomah County residents live farther from the city center in areas with substandard infrastructure, limited access to reliable transit, and higher exposure to unsafe streets. These neighborhoods often lack basic safety features like sidewalks, lighting, and crosswalks, infrastructure that promotes healthy, active lifestyles, improves public safety, and enhances economic value. A 2023 Multnomah County study identified the density of intersections, noting that increased intersection density corresponds with walkability. The study identified that tracts with the highest population of BIPOC residents experience significantly lower intersection density.<sup>59</sup>

Figure 02. The majority of BIPOC residents in Multnomah County live in areas that are less walkable.



<sup>58</sup>Hughes, J., Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. (2019). *Historical Context of Racist Planning: A History of How Planning Segregated Portland*. City of Portland, p. 13. <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/adap/history-racist-planning-portland>

<sup>59</sup>Multnomah County Health Department Environmental Health Services Division. (2023, July). *2023 Environmental Justice Snapshot Report*, pp. 8-10. <https://multco.us/news/multnomah-county-releases-environmental-justice-snapshot-report>

The legacy of exclusion and ongoing displacement are not only unjust, but are also costly to public health and community safety. This report begins with the recognition that the transportation system has contributed to these harms and must now be part of the solution.



**Please be advised, the following section describe horrific crimes. If you'd prefer to skip this section, please skip until you see this box again.**



Racism and White supremacy have shaped how Black communities experience public space and mobility in Multnomah County, far beyond traffic safety concerns. High-profile hate crimes, including the 1988 murder of Mulugeta Seraw, the 2016 murder of Larnell Bruce Jr., and the 2017 MAX train attack, show how public travel and the presence in public spaces can be dangerous for Black residents simply because of their existence.

Mulugeta Seraw was an Ethiopian immigrant and transportation worker (he drove an airport bus) who was killed in 1988 by neo-Nazi skinheads from the White Aryan Resistance while he and his friends were looking for parking space near their apartment at SE 31st and Pine Street in Portland.<sup>60</sup>

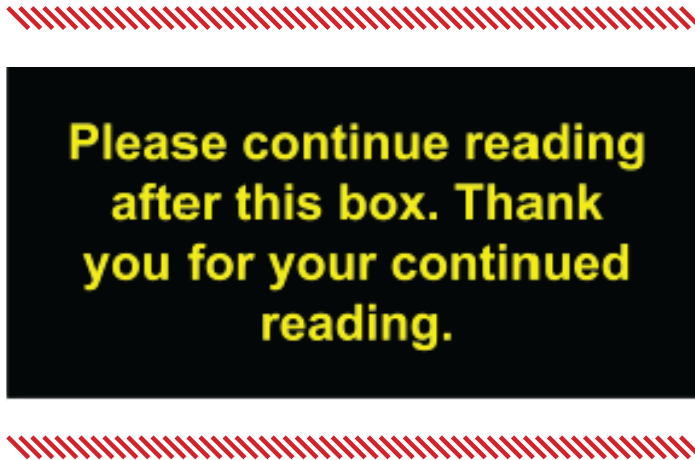
Larnell Bruce, Jr., another young Black man, was killed by a White supremacist gang member. Following a scuffle in the parking lot of a Gresham convenience store in 2016, the gang member got into his car, hit the accelerator, and drove into Mr. Bruce, fatally wounding him.<sup>61</sup> In 2017, a hate crime on a TriMet MAX light rail train near Hollywood Transit Center resulted in the murder of two people and left one person seriously injured. The altercation had begun earlier, when the White male assailant spewed anti-Muslim comments and death threats toward two young Black women on the train. Walia Mohamed, a rider on the train who was 17 at the time of the attack, testified during the trial that witnessing the stabbings left her terrified. “It was just aggressive... hurtful things. I never experienced it, so, me being Muslim — we are hated. I could lose my life,” she said. When asked about her hijab, which she was wearing during the attack, Mohamed shared that she stopped wearing it just weeks later.<sup>62</sup> Her testimony underscores the everyday risks BIPOC people face simply for existing in public space — being Black on the street or in a parking lot or Muslim on a train can become a matter of life or death.

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<sup>60</sup> *Willamette Week* Staff. (2018). Racist Skinheads Beat Mulugeta Seraw to Death on a Portland Street. Thirty Years Later, the Crime Still Echoes. *Willamette Week*. [www.wweek.com/news/2018/10/31/racist-skinheads-beat-mulugeta-seraw-to-death-on-a-portland-street-thirty-years-later-the-crime-still-echoes/](http://www.wweek.com/news/2018/10/31/racist-skinheads-beat-mulugeta-seraw-to-death-on-a-portland-street-thirty-years-later-the-crime-still-echoes/)

<sup>61</sup> Azhar, M. (2019). A Black And White Killing: The Case That Shook America. *BBC*. [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3k1NBSJclPP7vCrTg2qzIDM/mobeen-azhar-on-why-the-murder-of-larnell-bruce-is-part-of-a-brader-story-about-race-in-america-today](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3k1NBSJclPP7vCrTg2qzIDM/mobeen-azhar-on-why-the-murder-of-larnell-bruce-is-part-of-a-brader-story-about-race-in-america-today)

<sup>62</sup> Riski, T., Soleil, C. (2022). Here's How the Teenagers Targeted by Jeremy Christian Described the Encounter. *Willamette Week*. [www.wweek.com/news/courts/2020/02/04/heres-how-the-teenagers-targeted-by-jeremy-christian-described-the-encounter/](http://www.wweek.com/news/courts/2020/02/04/heres-how-the-teenagers-targeted-by-jeremy-christian-described-the-encounter/)



Acts of racial violence experienced by people moving through public space in the course of their daily lives create lasting trauma and influence how people of color choose to travel. Even if the precise impacts on travel behavior have not been adequately researched or quantified, individual accounts of lived experiences suggest that they have lasting effects. These incidents highlight the trauma and stress communities of color experience when they travel to and from everyday destinations.

A 2022 publication, “Racial Equity, Black America, and Public Transportation: A Review of Economic, Health, and Social Impacts,” notes the inequitable health impacts of environmental racism on Black people. Health disparities already prevalent in predominantly Black neighborhoods were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic “as public health experts found predisposition to infection was directly linked with the impacts of environmental racism.”<sup>63</sup> Also mentioned is the effect COVID-19 had on public transportation use and access. In some cases, governments and planners responded to a decrease in ridership by cutting or reducing transportation funding. Black commuters, who made up 40% of transit riders, consequently saw longer waits and travel times.<sup>64</sup>

Over-policing on public transportation is yet another way in which Black people are disproportionately impacted in their day-to-day transportation and safety needs, a concept explored below in the analysis of TriMet’s Safety Response Team. When concerns about community safety on transit arise, decision makers often opt for increased police presence, in turn perpetuating a disproportionate focus on policing and surveilling Black people riding public transit.

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<sup>63</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2022. Racial Equity, Black America, and Public Transportation, Volume 1: A Review of Economic, Health, and Social Impacts. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26710>.

<sup>64</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2022. Racial Equity, Black America, and Public Transportation, Volume 1: A Review of Economic, Health, and Social Impacts. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26710>.

## A Shifting Policy Landscape

In Minneapolis, two years after George Floyd was murdered, the city-adopted 2022 Transportation Action Plan signaled a public policy shift toward deeper commitment to racial justice.<sup>65</sup> Minneapolis leaders centered equity in the work and sought to address racial disparities through the act of transportation planning. The plan's Racial Equity Framework (REF) guides the planning, design, and construction of transportation projects, and helps grow anti-racist culture within the bureaucracy. It emphasizes reversing negative trends caused by racial injustice and ensuring that race no longer determines opportunities for residents. This shift is happening not only in Minneapolis but across a growing number of communities working to confront the legacy of exclusion in their transportation systems. The following best practices highlight how cities, agencies, and coalitions are reimagining mobility as a tool for racial equity, public health, and community resilience.

At the federal level, Irene Marion's accomplishments as USDOT Director of the Departmental Office of Civil Rights under President Biden were remarkable. Marion's administration oversaw development of the Justice40 Initiative (2021) which directed 40% of the overall benefits from federal investments in climate and clean energy to disadvantaged communities, including transportation projects.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, the "Reconnecting Communities" pilot was developed under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (IIJA/BIL). IIJA/BIL focused on advancing community-centered transportation projects (like rapid bus lines and pedestrian walkways) in effort to restore connectivity and economic vitality for the benefit of low-capacity communities.<sup>67</sup> Since 2019, communities across the United States saw economic commitment at the intersections of public health, racial justice, and transportation equity. For example, the Albina Vision Trust (AVT) is working with ODOT on a massive \$400+ million Rose Quarter project.<sup>68</sup> AVT is creating urban development strategies that center restorative development for Portland's Black community and reconnect the physical fabric of the Lower Albina neighborhood\* (In 2025 67.5 million dollars was already allocated. This is a great thing happening in Portland, but good things are happening around the U.S:

- [Destination Crenshaw, Los Angeles](#) – \$100 million project integrating public art, community green spaces, and infrastructure (transportation and broadband) improvements along the K-Line light rail
- [Far South Side Transit Expansion, Chicago](#) – \$1.9 billion project to extend rail to isolated, predominantly Black communities, enhancing access to employment and services while addressing decades of inequitable access
- [Racial Equity Toolkit \(RET\) for Transportation, Seattle](#) – Implemented via their recent transportation levy, the RET provides a strategic framework to guide the development and assessment of transportation policies, programs, and initiatives with a focus on promoting racial equity

**\*Rose Quarter Project Funding Update\*** - [KATU](#) reported from Mayor Keith Wilson in 2025 that President Donald Trump issued a 450 million dollar funding rescission via the federal *Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program*. More recently, the Rose Quarter Project joined an exclusive *AMERICAFWD* cohort of projects across the United States. *AMERICAFWD*'s accelerator lab is designed to assist larger scale projects in their movement from funding to completion. Tangible goals include:

- The articulation of clear, competitive path for Oregon 2027 Legislative Session (and other federal funding opportunities)
- Receive support evaluating long-term funding and financing options

Additional Information can be found at the Rose Quarter Project landing [page](#)

<sup>65</sup> City of Minneapolis. (2022). *Transportation Action Plan*. <https://go.minneapolismn.gov/>

<sup>66</sup> The White House. (2022). *Justice40 Initiative*. <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>

<sup>67</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation. (2022). *Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program*.

<https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting>

<sup>68</sup> City of Portland. (2024). *Resolution 37669*. <https://www.portland.gov/council/documents/resolution/adopted/37669>



## **Analysis: The Six Dimensions of Transportation Safety**

The historical and current context outlined above underscores how systemic racism continues to shape transportation safety and public health outcomes for Black, African American, and African Immigrant and Refugee communities in Multnomah County. To better understand the ways these inequities show up in everyday travel, this report examines six interconnected dimensions of transportation safety: Fatal Traffic Crash Injuries, Non-fatal Traffic Crash Injuries, Biased Policing & Traffic Enforcement, Violent Crime, Biased Crimes, Biased Behavior among Road Users. Each dimension offers a lens into how risk, harm, and injustice are distributed across our streets and public spaces. Concluding this report is the addition of a seventh dimension, one that highlights the historical and contemporary experiences of African American and African Immigrant/Refugee populations.

### **Fatal Traffic Crash Injuries**

#### **Key Finding(s):**

- **Between 2020 and 2024, 47 Black persons died in transport-related crashes, an increase compared to 2013–2017.**
- **From 2020 - 2024 Black persons continued to experience the highest rate of traffic crash deaths in Multnomah County.**
- **Black persons experience a higher rate of years of potential life lost before age 75 compared to other races and ethnicities in Multnomah County.**
- **Despite a wide variety in annual transport-related fatalities for Black persons over the past five years (2 in 2022, 17 in 2023), the 5-year rolling average reached a peak in 2024.**

### **Background**

Table 01 below details the counts and rates of death per 100,000 residents from all transport-related deaths in Multnomah County between 2013-2017 and 2020-2024. The overall rate increased between the two time periods from 7.9 deaths per 100,000 residents to 10.4. Of the demographic groups listed, most experienced an increase in the rate of traffic deaths, with the exception of Asian persons.

There were 47 Black residents that died due to a transport-related cause. An increase compared to the 2013-2017 time period (38 deaths). There was statistically no change in the traffic crash death rate for Black persons between time periods. Black persons continue to have the highest death rate among demographic groups in the County. Although the comparative disparity between other groups has decreased, it is due to increases in death rates for those referent groups, and does not demonstrate progress on outcomes.

Table 01. Black persons in Multnomah County continue to have the highest rate of traffic crash deaths (age-adjusted rate per 100,000 population) - Oregon Public Health Assessment Tool (OPHAT)

Race/Ethnicity	2013-2017			2020-2024		
	Rate	(95% CI)	Count	Rate	(95% CI)	Count
<b>Total</b>	7.9	(7.0-8.8)	323	10.4	(9.4-11.4)	443
American Indian/Alaska Native alone or in combination	9.1	(4.6-16.3)	11	12.5	(7.3-20.0)	17
Asian alone or in combination	5.8	(3.5-9.0)	20	5.2	(3.2-8.0)	21
<b>Black alone or in combination</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>(9.7-19.2)</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>(10.1-18.5)</b>	<b>47</b>
Pacific Islander alone or in combination	<i>unreliable</i>		2	<i>unreliable</i>		6
White alone or in combination	7.4	(6.5-8.3)	254	9.8	(8.7-10.8)	346

### Years of Potential Life Lost Counts and Rates

Table 02 below summarizes the counts and rates of years of potential life lost before the age of 75 (YPLL) due to all transport-related deaths in Multnomah County. Comparing the 2013-2017 period to 2020-2024, the YPLL due to all transport-related deaths increased by 43% in the County overall, or 4,337 years.

Black persons in Multnomah County saw a significant increase in the rate of YPLL from 2013-2017 to 2020-2024, jumping from 504.1 years to 597.9. This is an 18% increase between periods. While this is a smaller percent increase than the County overall, the YPLL rate for Black persons is now significantly higher than all other demographic groups represented.

Table 02. Black persons in Multnomah County are experiencing the greatest rate of Years of potential life lost before age 75 from traffic crash injuries (age-adjusted rates per 100,000 population) - Oregon Public Health Assessment Tool (OPHAT)

Race/Ethnicity	2013-2017			2020-2024		
	Rate	(95% CI)	Count	Rate	(95% CI)	Count
<b>Total</b>	265.0	(259.8-270.2)	9,955	377.7	(371.5-383.9)	14,292
American Indian/Alaska Native alone or in combination	557.1	(503.2-611.0)	410	487.0	(448.2-525.7)	607
Asian alone or in combination	147.8	(134.9-160.7)	502	154.8	(142.6-166.9)	623
<b>Black alone or in combination</b>	<b>504.1</b>	<b>(476.9-531.4)</b>	<b>1,316</b>	<b>597.9</b>	<b>(570.9-625.0)</b>	<b>1,883</b>
Pacific Islander alone or in combination	263.3	(214.0-320.6)	99	462.4	(401.3-523.4)	220
White alone or in combination	245.1	(239.1-250.9)	6,782	344.0	(337.5-350.5)	10,748
Hispanic	252.2	(237.4-267.1)	1,111	446.8	(428.9-464.7)	2,384

## Transport-Related Fatality Counts

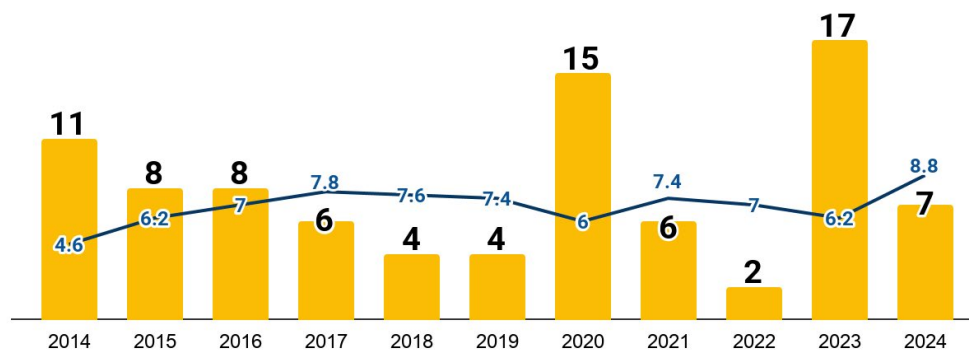
Figure 03 below details annual transport-related fatalities for the Black population of Multnomah County from 2014 to 2024. In recent years, deaths have fluctuated, reaching double digits in 2020 (15 deaths) and peaking in 2023 (17 deaths). Notably, there were only 2 deaths in 2022, the lowest since 2008, which makes the 8.5x increase in 2023 particularly striking. The 5-year rolling average of annual transport-related deaths for Black residents peaked in 2024 with 8.8 deaths.

Figure 03. The rolling five year average for transport-related fatalities in Multnomah County has reached its highest count in 2024.

### Annual Transport-Related Fatalities for Black Population

Multnomah County, 2014-2024, OPHAT

■ Count — Rolling 5-year Average



## Non-Fatal Traffic Crash Injuries

### Key Finding(s):

- Black residents in Multnomah County are disproportionately represented among emergency room and urgent care visits for traffic and pedestrian-related injury.
- Black residents make up almost 20% of traffic-related injury visits, while only accounting for 8% of the County population.

## Background

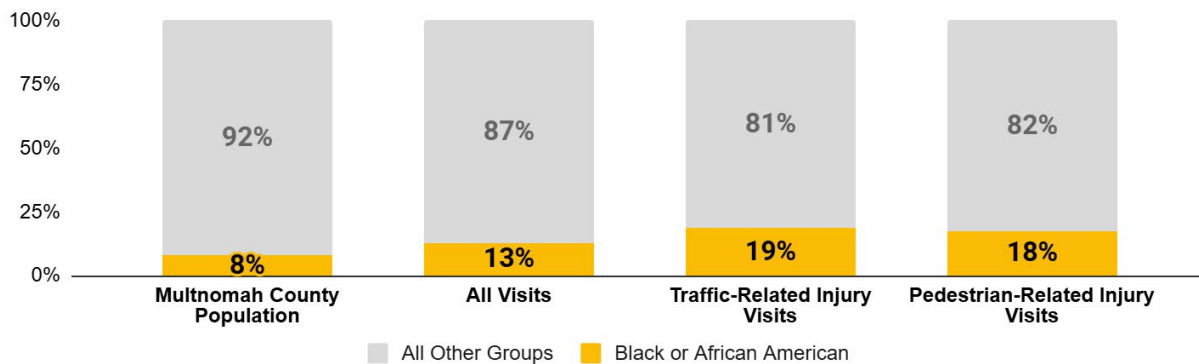
The primary data source for tracking non-fatal injuries comes from emergency department and urgent care visits, collected through a statewide system called Oregon ESSENCE (the Oregon Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics).

Figure 04 illustrates the percentage of traffic-related injury (TRI) visits and pedestrian-related injury (PRI) visits for Black persons. Between 2018 and 2024, Black residents continued to be over-represented among patients visiting emergency departments and urgent care centers for TRIs and PRIs. While Black residents accounted for 8% of Multnomah County's population, they accounted for 19% of TRI visits, and 18% of PRI visits.<sup>69</sup>

*Figure 04. Black residents comprise 8% of the population in Multnomah County but are over-represented in Patient Visits (emergency & urgent care) between 2018 - 2025.*

### Black or African American Patient Visits as Percent of Total by Visit Type

Multnomah County, ESSENCE 2018-2024, ACS 5-Year Estimate 2018-2025



## Biased Policing & Traffic Law Enforcement

### Key Finding(s):

- **(Perceived) Black drivers in Portland are more likely to be stopped by non-traffic personnel for a non moving violation when compared to (perceived) White Drivers.**
- + **(Consent) Search rates from 2020 to 2024 decreased across all (perceived) racial groups due to the incorporation of a 2019 Oregon Supreme Court Ruling, and improved police officer training.**
- + **Most traffic stops that occurred in Gresham ended with a warning.**
- + **Automatic Traffic Enforcement in the 8 fixed speed locations in Portland saw a 43% decrease in traffic crashes from 2019-2022.**

<sup>69</sup> ACS - American Community Survey in its 5 year estimate (2018-2025) identified *Black alone and in combination* in Multnomah County to be 8%. Race category for calculating percentage of patient visits in Figure 4 is Black alone/in combination.

## Background

Racial disparities in traffic stops are associated with the racial attitudes and demographics of a given population.<sup>70</sup> In an analysis of 100 million traffic stops in the U.S. (2011-17), Black drivers were about 20% more likely to be pulled over by police as compared to White drivers.<sup>71</sup> A 2022 study found that U.S. counties with higher proportions of White residents had larger racial disparities in traffic stops conducted there.<sup>72</sup> One study, using United States data from 2015-2016, found that police-related deaths happened most frequently:

- In neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income residents and people of color.
- For non-Hispanic Black individuals. It additionally showed disparities with predominantly White neighborhoods, highlighting the significance of neighborhood segregation in understanding and addressing police violence.
- It is also worth noting that the race of persons involved in police interactions are perceived by the officers involved. The race of the individual is not the result of self-identification when interacting with the police.

## Portland Police Bureau (PPB) Stops Data

In Multnomah County, Portland Police Bureau's (PPB) Strategic Division releases an annual *Stops Data Collection Report*. The most recent report, *Stop Data Collection 2024* (released in June 2025) reported a 41% increase in driver stops from 2023.<sup>73</sup> PPB also reports that the vast majority (98%) of drivers stopped included traffic violations (speeding primarily). In the 2023 Stop Data collection report, PPB identified that drivers *perceived* to be Black “were significantly more likely to be stopped for a non-moving violation by non-traffic personnel...”<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, in the 2024 *Stop Data Collection* report, the traffic division continued to report that (perceived) Black drivers were more likely to be stopped for non-moving violations<sup>75</sup> than (perceived) White drivers.<sup>76</sup> Another key finding that was revealed in the Portland Police Bureau's 2024 *Stops Data Collection Report* is related to *Search Rates*.<sup>77</sup> *Search Rates*, which PPB acknowledges, can lead to the perception of biased policing if high-discretion searches on people of color are overused without returning contraband.<sup>78</sup> *Search Rates* in 2024 for (perceived) Black/African Americans (as well as other race and ethnicities) declined sharply after the passing of a 2019 supreme court ruling, [Oregon V. Arreola-Botello](#). The *Search Rates* for (perceived) Black/African Americans in 2020 was 5.3%, then in 2024 dropped to 0.9%. This is an 83% decrease in search rates just among (perceived) Black/African Americans in Portland.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Stelter, M., Essien, I., Sander, C., & Degner, J. (2022). Racial Bias in Police Traffic Stops: White Residents' County-Level Prejudice and Stereotypes Are Related to Disproportionate Stopping of Black Drivers. *Psychological Science*, 33(4), pp. 483–496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976211051272>

<sup>71</sup> Pierson, E., Simoiu, C., Overgoor, J., Corbett-Davies, S., Jenson, D., Shoemaker, A., Ramachandran, V., Barghouty, P., Phillips, C., Shroff, R., & Goel, S. (2020). A large-scale analysis of racial disparities in police stops across the United States. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 4(7), pp. 736–745. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0858-1>

<sup>72</sup> Ekstrom, P. D., Le Forestier, J. M., & Lai, C. K. (2022). Racial Demographics Explain the Link Between Racial Disparities in Traffic Stops and County-Level Racial Attitudes. *Psychological Science*, 33(4), pp. 497–509. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976211053573>

<sup>73</sup> Portland Police Bureau Strategic Services Division. (2025, June 25). *Stops Data Collection 2024 Annual Report*. <https://www.portland.gov/police/open-data/documents/2024-stops-data-collection-report/download>

<sup>74</sup> Portland Police Bureau Strategic Services Division. (2024, June 20). *Stops Data Collection 2023 Annual Report*. <https://portland.gov/police/open-data/documents/2023-stops-data-collection-report/download>

<sup>75</sup> Non-moving violation - All traffic-related violations that can occur regardless if the vehicle was being operated or not. The most common offenses in this group are related to the improper display of license plates, expired license plates, and improper equipment (such as headlights or turn signals).

<sup>76</sup> Portland Police Bureau Strategic Services Division. (2025, June 25). *Stops Data Collection 2024 Annual Report*. <https://www.portland.gov/police/open-data/documents/2024-stops-data-collection-report/download>

<sup>77</sup> Search Rates -Police can exercise their discretion in one of two ways during a search—low discretion or high discretion search. In low discretion searches, policy or training dictates the likelihood of a search occurring. For example, if police stop an individual and take custody of them to administer a breathalyzer test, policy would require that the subject be searched for weapons prior to being transported. In high discretion searches, such as consent searches, police officers exercise more judgment in their decision to search.

<sup>78</sup> Portland Police Bureau Strategic Services Division. (2025, June 25). *Stops Data Collection 2024 Annual Report*. <https://www.portland.gov/police/open-data/documents/2024-stops-data-collection-report/download>

<sup>79</sup> Portland Police Bureau Strategic Services Division. (2025, June 25). *Stops Data Collection 2024 Annual Report*. <https://www.portland.gov/police/open-data/documents/2024-stops-data-collection-report/download>

## Gresham Police Stop Data

Gresham Police Department provided traffic citation data from June 2018 to March 2025, reporting a total of 29,876 stops. Of these stops, the majority ended with a warning (58%). Of all the stops that occurred in Gresham, (perceived) Black people were represented at approximately 14.5% of the stops. Most ended with a warning (~65%) with the second largest result being a citation (32%).

## Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE)

To reduce biased policing, some scholars and advocates argue in favor of automatic traffic enforcement (ATE) tools.<sup>80</sup> Because ATE may effectively mitigate racial profiling and bias, they provide an opportunity for traffic enforcement that protects communities of color from reckless drivers while mitigating biased policing interactions. Consequently, the harms of racial bias in policing may be reduced, potentially reducing the instances of racial profiling and biased use of lethal force in traffic stops, and the “funneling [of] overpoliced and marginalized communities into the criminal-justice system.”<sup>81</sup> Not only do automated traffic enforcement tools have the potential to reduce injury-causing crashes in Multnomah County, but they may also help reduce the health and safety ramifications caused by violent policing.

In PBOT’s 2023-2024 legislative report on the *Outcome Evaluation on the Fixed Photo Radar System for the City of Portland*; PBOT reported that it saw a 43% decrease in total crashes from the 8 fixed speed location cameras during 2019 - 2022.<sup>82</sup> Unfortunately, there was a 9% increase in fatal and serious injury crashes during the same time period. PBOT references the COVID-19 pandemic, via the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), as the possible reason for the increase both locally and nationally in crash injury severity.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ralph, K., Barajas, J. M., Johnson-Rodriguez, A., Delbosc, A., & Muir, C. (2022). Can a racial justice frame help overcome opposition to automated traffic enforcement? *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 14, 100594-. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2022.100594>

<sup>81</sup> Woods, J. B. (2021, June 30). Traffic without the police. *Stanford Law Review*, 73(6), pp. 1471–1549. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3702680>

<sup>82</sup> [https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen\\_engagement/Reports/PhotoradarSystem\\_Portland%20023-24.pdf](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Reports/PhotoradarSystem_Portland%20023-24.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2021, October). Continuation of Research on Traffic Safety During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency: January – June 2021. U.S. Department of Transportation. [https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2021-10/Traffic-Safety-During-COVID-19\\_Jan-June2021-102621-v3-tag.pdf](https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2021-10/Traffic-Safety-During-COVID-19_Jan-June2021-102621-v3-tag.pdf)

The other 7 cameras were installed in 2024, and PBOT has not captured enough data to report on the outcomes of the fixed cameras. However, preliminary reporting from 2022 to 2025 has depicted substantial decreases in traffic deaths across all modes of transportation.<sup>84</sup> Lastly, it must not be lost that during the implementation of these fixed speed cameras, there was also a reduction in the speed limits where these fixed cameras speeds were posted.<sup>85</sup> From January 2021 to July 2025, 77% of speeding violations that were issued were to vehicles registered outside of the Portland Metro Area. 13% of speeding violations were issued to vehicles registered in Multnomah County, while the final 10% were issued to vehicles in the Portland metro area excluding Multnomah County (\*data courtesy of the PBOT Vision Zero team).

**\*Please Note\*** - PBOT's Automatic Traffic Enforcement system is almost always used to enforce speeding and red-light violations. In the very rare case that a police detective requests access to footage, it is only in assisting a felony investigation (i.e human trafficking or hit and run cases). Furthermore, blanket searches for vehicles don't occur, if there isn't an associated active case number. Portland does not voluntarily share footage with the federal government; and never uses the camera footage to prosecute or pursue cases related to immigration status.

## **Violent Crime**

### **Key Finding(s):**

- **Black persons in Multnomah County have experienced a greater violent crime victimization rate.**
- **Road rage incidents involving a firearm have been increasing nationally since 2015.**
- **Currently, there aren't any specific road rage laws in Oregon, which makes classifying road rage elusive.**

## **Background**

Both real and perceived threats from violent crime, including hate crimes, play a significant role in shaping travel decisions. Beyond the quantitative data presented below, individual incidents can have a disproportionate impact on how safe people feel while in transit each day. The Law Enforcement Agency Reported Crime Analysis Tool (LEARCAT) is a valuable resource for analyzing crime data reported by law enforcement agencies to the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Detailed incident and victimization data from LEARCAT 2016-2023 shows crime patterns across various demographics. In Multnomah County, this dataset is instrumental in highlighting the disproportionate impact of violent crime on Black and African American communities.

By calculating victimization rates per 100,000 individuals, LEARCAT reveals that Black residents experience significantly higher rates of violent crime victimization compared to White populations and other communities of color, as illustrated in Figure 05 (below). This disparity underscores systemic issues contributing to racial inequities in public safety. It emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to protect and support Black and African American populations in the county.

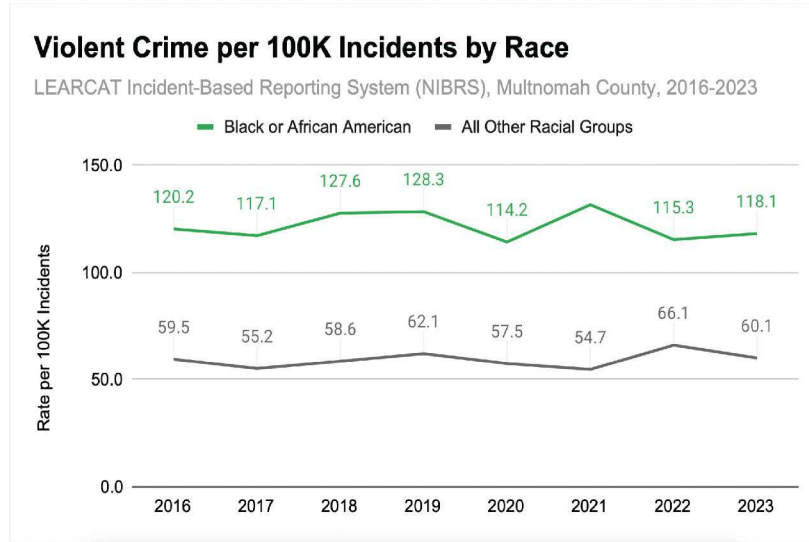
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<sup>84</sup> PBOT. (2026, February). Portland's Vision Zero Dashboard

[https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/portland.bureau.of.transportation/viz/VisionZeroDashboard\\_16179023789280/VisionZeroDashboard](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/portland.bureau.of.transportation/viz/VisionZeroDashboard_16179023789280/VisionZeroDashboard)

<sup>85</sup> [https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen\\_engagement/Reports/PhotoradarSystem\\_Portland%20023-24.pdf](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Reports/PhotoradarSystem_Portland%20023-24.pdf)

Figure 05. Black and African American persons in Multnomah County experienced higher rates of violent crime victimization, from 2016 to 2023.



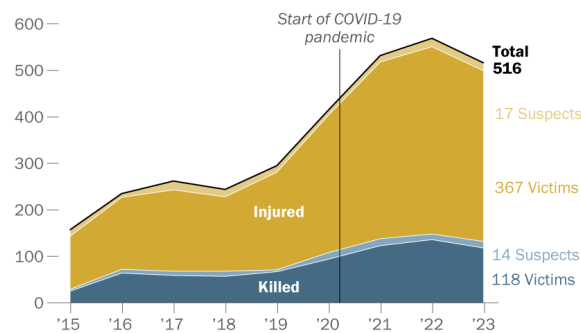
## Road Rage

Road Rage, as defined by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, is the “intentional assault by a driver or passenger with a motor vehicle or a weapon that occurs on the roadway or is precipitated by an incident on the roadway.” According to the Pew Research Center (in figure 06 below) US road rage incidents involving a firearm have steadily increased. From 2015 to 2023 the US has seen over 500 road rage incidents that specifically involve a firearm. In these incidents, nearly all of the time (~94%) a victim is either shot or killed. More specifically, victims of firearm-related road rage incidents are shot close to 76% and are killed just over 24% of the time.

Figure 06. U.S Road Rage incidents involving a firearm have been increasing since 2015.

### U.S. road rage incidents involving firearms are more common, deadlier since the COVID-19 pandemic

Number of suspects and victims shot and \_\_\_\_ with a gun in U.S. road rage incidents



Note: The Gun Violence Archive only tracks road rage incidents that involve firearms. Source: Gun Violence Archive.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

\*Information presented [here](#) comes from the Gun Violence Archive via the PEW research center

It's critical to note that this national trend isn't necessarily reflective of a more local, state, or even regional trend related to road rage incidents with a firearm. [The Gun Violence Archive](#) reported (via their American Gun Violence tracker) that Portland and Gresham had 14 road rage incidents where either a victim or suspect were identified and involved a firearm. Of these 14 firearm based road rage incidents there were 10 victims total, and 8 were injured. Furthermore, of the 14 road rage incidents, 10 suspects were identified and arrested. The remaining 4 cases did not (or have yet to) identify a suspect in the particular road rage case.

Classifying road rage remains an elusive legal consequence in Oregon and across the country. Currently, there aren't any specific road rage laws that specifically call out road rage as a crime in Oregon. The notable proxies include:

- *Menacing* - ORS 163.190<sup>86</sup>
- *Recklessly endangering another person* - ORS 163.195<sup>87</sup>
- *Careless driving* - ORS 811.135<sup>88</sup>
- *Reckless driving* - ORS 811.140<sup>89</sup>

States like Utah have a clearer definition in their legal code when it comes to road rage:

*If the trier of fact finds that an actor was an operator or passenger of a vehicle and the actor committed an offense in response to an incident that occurred or escalated upon a roadway and with the intent to endanger or intimidate an individual in another vehicle.*  
(Utah Code 76-3-203.17)

Having clear state and local codes pertaining to road rage will also help with accurately accounting for road rage across the state, and consequently across Multnomah County. Right now, there isn't a clear data source specifically counting solely road rage; another barrier may also include underreporting of road rage incidents. These data gaps need to be addressed in order to adequately explore the extent to which road rage is prevalent across Multnomah County.

## **Bias Crimes & Incidents**

### **Key Finding(s):**

- **Anti-Black or African American Bias Crimes and Incidents in Portland public spaces have been increasing.**
- **County-wide reporting is needed to understand Bias Crimes past the Portland boundary.**

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<sup>86</sup> A person commits the crime of menacing if by word or conduct the person intentionally attempts to place another person in fear of imminent serious physical injury.

<sup>87</sup> A person commits the crime of recklessly endangering another person if the person recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury to another person.

<sup>88</sup> A person commits the offense of careless driving if the person drives any vehicle upon a highway or other premises described in this section in a manner that endangers or would be likely to endanger any person or property.

<sup>89</sup> Recklessly drives a vehicle upon a highway or premises open to the public in a manner that endangers the safety of persons or property; Operates a vehicle on a highway or premises open to the public and, in the presence of two or more persons assembled for the purpose of spectating the conduct, intentionally:

## Background

In addition to PPB Bias Crime data, the first TSR included data from a hate crime tracking platform called ReportHatePDX. This platform, created by Portland United Against Hate, showed that the majority of reported hate crimes in Portland during a 2018 pilot period were perpetrated against Latine and Black and African American individuals. Unfortunately, the ReportHatePDX database is no longer operational, meaning that updated data from this resource is unavailable for this update. Consequently, for this dimension of traffic safety instead of Harassment, Biased Crime in the “public space” will be the dimension for this report.

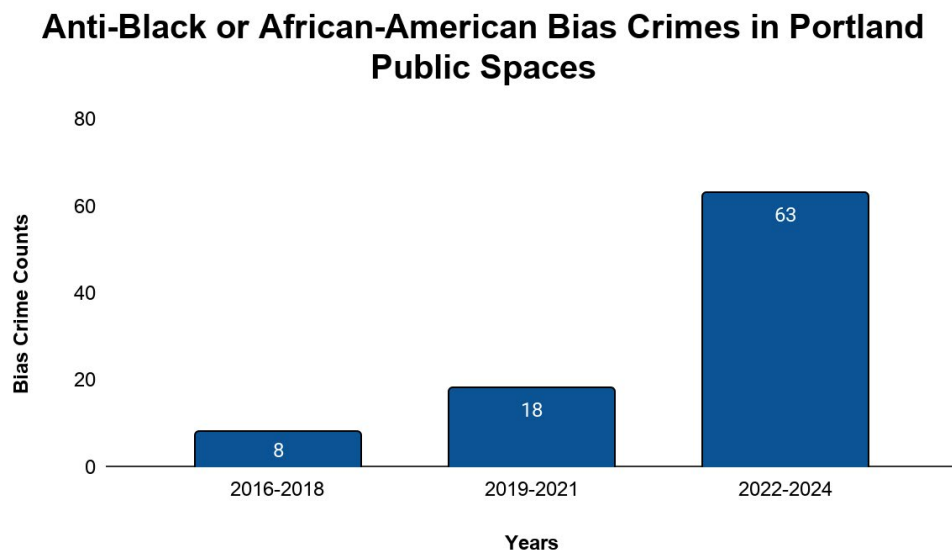
## Portland Police Bureau Reported Crime Statistics

Portland Police Bureau (PPB) Reported Crime Statistics are summarized in a public online dashboard. As noted in the methods section, this dashboard provides an overview of biased crimes by quarters from 2016-2024. Figure 07 details a total of 89 bias crimes where the victim identified as Black (or African-American). The bias type that was identified in these cases was *anti-Black or African-American*. Across this 9 year span, anti-Black bias crimes occurred on an average just under 10 bias crimes per year. It was also found that the suspects identified in these anti-Black Bias crimes were most often (approximately 70%) White males. Lastly, *Public Spaces*, as defined by the PPB, captures the following settings:

- *Air/Bus/Train Terminal* - Airports, bus, boat, ferry, or train stations and terminals
- *Parking/Drop Lot/Garage* - Areas primarily used for parking motorized vehicles and/or trailers; usually, but not always, commercial in nature
- *Street/Highway/Road/Alley/Sidewalk* - Open public ways for the passage of vehicles, people, and animals.

More information on how PPB categorizes locations can be found [here](#).

Figure 07 - Anti-Black or African-American Bias Crimes in Portland Public Spaces has been increasing since 2016.



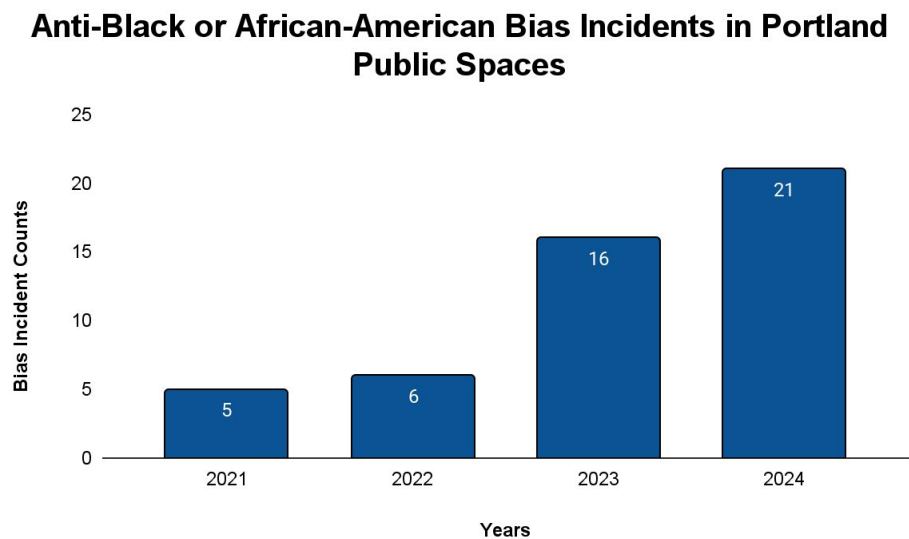
\*This data comes from the open source Reported Bias Crimes [dashboard](#) via the Portland Police Bureau

Figure 08 below, similar to Figure 07, denotes Bias Incidents instead of Bias Crimes. Bias incidents as defined by the OR Department of Justice is:

*Any hostile expression that may be motivated by another person’s actual or perceived protected class, meaning their race, color, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The act does not need to be a federal, state, tribal, or local crime.<sup>90</sup>*

*Bias Incidents* are not crimes, but can still contribute to an unsafe, and unsettling environment. *Bias Incidents* have only been captured since the enactment of [SB 577](#) in 2020. The first complete data set of *Bias Incidents* came in 2021, with slight increases occurring from 2021 to 2024. It must be noted that because *Bias Incidents* began their recording in 2020 (quarter two specifically), this doesn’t mean that *Bias Incidents* were not occurring prior to their official capture. In fact, the previous REACH Traffic Safety report brought forth qualitative data where Black persons described their experience in the built environment beyond the infrastructure concerns. Like *Bias Crimes*, *Bias Incidents* also reveal that White males as the majority perpetrators identified in Anti-Black *Bias Incidents* in Portland Public Spaces. Lastly, there are also limitations with defining a person’s race (suspect or victim). There are times where a person’s race is perceived or self identified, and it’s not immediately clear across all cases.

*Figure 08 - Anti-Black or African-American Bias Incidents in Portland Public Spaces has been increasing since 2021.*



\*This data comes from the open source Reported Bias Incident [dashboard](#) via the Portland Police Bureau.

<sup>90</sup> OR Department of Justice. 2026. What's the Difference between a Hate or Bias Crime and a Bias Incident? <https://www.doj.state.or.us/oregon-department-of-justice/civil-rights/bias-and-hate/whats-the-difference-between-a-hate-or-bias-crime-and-a-bias-incident/>

## Biased Behavior Among Road Users

### Key Finding(s):

- **An update to the Racial Bias in Drivers study is needed to determine if there has been a shift in driver attitudes towards pedestrians in the Portland Area.**
- + **PBOT has responded to the bias behavior among road users by investing the strategies and policies geared toward community engagement, and infrastructure changes.**

### Background

In 2017 the National Institute for Transportation and Communities published a final report on the by Kimberley Kahn titled *Racial Bias in Drivers' Yielding Behavior at Crosswalks: Understanding the Effects*. Here, Khan examined how the social identity of pedestrians impacted the driver behavior at crosswalks (marked and unmarked). The study found that Black pedestrians were waiting at marked crosswalks, drivers were found to stop more likely after the stop bar when compared to their White counterparts.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, when it came to the first car stopping at marked crosswalks, Black males were the least likely group to have the first car stop at a marked crosswalk.<sup>92</sup> It should be noted that this research was conducted several years ago, and an update in the research is needed.

This section, in the previous REACH traffic safety report, also included PBOT's 2018 Walking While Black focus group report. The report highlighted qualitative data from Black participants that elevated the need for improved infrastructure, PBOT communications, and elimination of microaggressions. PBOT has responded with outlining policy and investment strategies focused on reducing racial inequities in the built environment. These include:

- Ensure that PedPDX investments and strategies address the infrastructure concerns raised by Black Portlanders
- Strengthen community partnerships + leadership development opportunities for Black Portlanders
- Further research focused on understanding the Black experience in Portland
- Collaborate with City and regional partners to address hate and racially-motivated behavior as a transportation issue
- Develop tools that evaluate and address community impacts, promote community benefits and mitigate unintended outcomes

\*Details on these strategies can be found at

<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/planning/documents/appendix-d-walking-while-black-focus-group-report/download>

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<sup>91</sup> Kahn, Kimberly, Jean McMahon, Tara Goddard and Arlie Adkins. 2017. *Racial Bias in Drivers' Yielding Behavior at Crosswalks: Understanding the Effect*. NITC-RR-869. Portland, OR: Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC).

<sup>92</sup> Kahn, Kimberly, Jean McMahon, Tara Goddard and Arlie Adkins. 2017. *Racial Bias in Drivers' Yielding Behavior at Crosswalks: Understanding the Effect*. NITC-RR-869. Portland, OR: Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC).

## Discussion

Transportation and public health are deeply connected in Multnomah County. Unintentional injury is the third leading cause of death, and traffic crashes remain one of the most preventable forms of harm. This report updates and expands the 2021 Multnomah County REACH *Transportation Crash and Safety Report*.

It uses new data, recent research, and deeper community context to examine transportation safety across six dimensions: fatal crashes, non-fatal injuries, biased policing & traffic law enforcement, violent crime, bias crimes, and biased behavior among road users. The addition of the seventh dimension perspective seeks to account for the historical and contemporary experiences of racism that shape mobility for Black and African communities.

Several indicators show progress. The fatal crash disparity between Black and White residents narrowed from 2013 to 2022, and overall racial equity has become more central to transportation policy discussions. Portland saw the people killed in crashes begin to trend down since its 2023 high number. 2025's 39 traffic fatalities show a further decrease from 2024's 58 number.

### ***Progress should not equal complacency.***

Black residents remain overrepresented nearly threefold in emergency and urgent care visits for traffic injuries. Disparities in non-moving traffic violations, bias crime victimization, and exposure to violent crime. These patterns reflect long-standing structural inequities. Historically Black neighborhoods were shaped by exclusion laws, redlining, urban renewal, freeway construction, and displacement. Today many Black Multnomah County residents live in areas with fewer sidewalks, lower intersection density, higher traffic volumes, and slower emergency response times. The compounding effects of racism in policing, public transportation, and public space further limit freedom of movement and contribute to poor health outcomes. This report centers these realities by naming transportation safety as both a mobility issue and a racial justice issue.

The findings highlight urgent opportunities for systems-level actions. A Safe Systems Approach can reduce harm at a population level by focusing on safer street design, lower vehicle speeds, and investment in infrastructure that supports walking, biking, and transit. Data-informed strategies can reduce biased enforcement while still improving safety outcomes. Partnerships between transportation agencies, public health, and community-based organizations are essential for implementing solutions that reflect lived experience and community priorities. The past 5 years have dedicated investments to the crash network. Automated traffic enforcement, such as speed cameras. With speed cameras placed at various locations in Portland's high crash network, coupled with speed limit policy reduction; policy, system, and environmental changes is the pathway to continued decreases. Transportation agencies have made it clear that they see the disparities in the data, and the feedback presented from the community. The focus on equity has to remain at the forefront investment decisions, and infrastructure choices in order for the inequities to evaporate. Sustained funding also has to be a priority if policymakers, advocates, health & transportation agencies, as well as communities want to continue to see decreases in traffic deaths.

The data makes clear that targeted investment, stronger cross-agency coordination, and an explicit commitment to racial equity are necessary to prevent future harm and improve health and mobility for Black, African American, and African Immigrant and Refugee communities in Multnomah County. The recommendations below highlight the opportunities REACH and the Street Trust believe transformative change can occur.

The recommendations in the next section are meant to evaluate previous examples by showing what high-level progress has been made since the release of the 2021 REACH report, and if the recommendations should continue.

***Transportation systems contributed to the inequities described in this report.  
They can also be part of the solution.***



## Policy Retrospect & Recommendation Response

In the 2021 REACH Transportation Crash & Safety Report (TSR) there was a recommendation that would

### 1. **Demand transportation decision making bodies to establish a policy and practice of authentic engagement with communities of color.**

#### *Recommendation in Action (2021 - 2025)*

- The Oregon Department of Transportation is managing the I-5 Rose Quarter project, and implemented the [Historic Albina Advisory Board](#) (HAAB) in 2021 to elevate voices in the Black Community to ensure that project outcomes reflect community interest and values; and that historic Albina directly benefits from the investments of this project. The HAAB is able to provide direct communication to both City of Portland Leadership, and ODOT project leadership in way that facilitates restorative justice principles, community input & transparent decision-making, mobility focus, and climate action & improved public health.
- [HB 2985](#), passed in 2021, requires that ODOT diversify its advisory committees to reflect Oregon’s racial, ethnic, and ability population composition. Specifically, there is a commitment to the promotion of economic opportunity for Oregonians through transportation investments, including working with businesses owned by Black, Indigenous, People of Color, women, and others who have experienced historical and contemporary marginalization.
- In April 2024, PBOT’s Vision Zero Program partnered with the Division Midway Alliance (DMA), and the Coalition of Communities of Color developed a toolkit titled, [Beyond Traffic Safety: Building community belonging and safety in public spaces](#). This toolkit maps out how the project conducted its authentic community engagement, and recommendations that can be implemented into communities impacted by built environment violence.

#### *Response to 2021-2025 recommendation updates*

This recommendation should **continue** to be implemented by transportation decision making bodies. With transportation investments (or disinvestments) happening all around the county, having voices from communities of color is critical to understanding the depth that these decisions have on communities. Additionally, communities of color, when authentically engaged, provide a level of accountability which is vital to transparency, and integrity in not only the community where work is being performed, but also within agencies.

### 2. **Transportation agencies should adopt a policy of establishing measurable equity goals and engaging in routine evaluation to assess progress.**

#### *Recommendation in Action (2021 - 2025)*

- PBOT Equity Matrix was developed in 2017, and remains an integral tool in how PBOT determines priority areas for investment. This equity-centered approach has resulted in structural improvements such as new street lighting on the high crash network.<sup>93</sup>
- Metro, at the end of 2022, released their 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Update. The update, similar to PBOT’s equity direction, reiterated the focus of prioritizing transportation investments, and eliminating transportation related disparities for historically marginalized communities. The report highlights that the active transportation network is generally “more complete” in *equity focused areas* (when compared to non-equity focused areas).<sup>94</sup>
- In April 2024, Division Midway Alliance, Coalition Communities of Color and PBOT Vision Zero partnered to launch the Beyond Traffic Safety Toolkit. This toolkit identified 14 ways government agencies and community based organizations could increase community safety and belonging along Portland streets and public spaces.

<sup>93</sup> City of Portland. 2026. Annual Vision Zero Action Plan Progress Report <https://www.portland.gov/transportation/vision-zero/annual-vision-zero-action-plan-progress-report>

<sup>94</sup> Metro. 2022, November. 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Update. [https://multco.us/file/resource:\\_metro\\_rtp\\_fact\\_sheet\\_-\\_equity/download](https://multco.us/file/resource:_metro_rtp_fact_sheet_-_equity/download)

## *Response to 2021-2025 recommendation updates*

Many agencies have committed to centering equity in their work, and erasing the differences that are seen when investigating crashes. Regular reporting on the status of these equity focused areas, similar to what Metro did for their Regional Transportation Plan update. Additionally, partnering with equity focused CBOs like Division Midway Alliance, and Coalition of Communities of Color is a great example of how transportation agencies and CBOs can elevate pragmatic community-centered solutions. Measurable equity goals should continue to be at the forefront of routine evaluation in order to properly hold agencies accountable for the continued work that needs to be done, and to celebrate the work that has been completed. This recommendation should **continue**.

### ***3. Transportation agencies should invest in scientifically supported infrastructure changes such as traffic calming, speed control, and mode separation to reduce injuries.***

#### *Recommendation in Action (2021 - 2025)*

- PBOT was awarded a \$20 million grant by the Department of Transportation to make safety improvements along 122nd avenue. 122nd is one of the most dangerous corridors in Portland, in addition to hosting a racially diverse community. City Council accepted the grant agreement on May 29th, 2024 and several investments have been funded with others proposed. Investments include adding protected bike lanes (mode separation), improved (and new) pedestrian crossings (traffic calming), adding speed reader boards (speed control). These along with several other investments is what's needed in order to tackle dangerous corridors in the high crash network.
- The Urban East Multnomah County Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP), adopted on Jan 15th, 2026, identifies key safety challenges and proposes actionable strategies with the goal of eliminating traffic related injuries and deaths by 2035. The TSAP is incredibly valuable because it highlights the needs in East County and provides a roadmap for investing in scientifically supported infrastructure. The TSAP specifically calls out the need for speed management, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, intersection safety, and access & connectivity. In action, Gresham developed a new safer 2025 crossing for the Wy'East Way multi-use path. The new crossing provides pedestrians and bicyclists with a safe pathway around Division and Main Avenue intersections.
- Gresham's 2035 Transportation System Plan (TSP) (adopted in 2026) is a blueprint document that includes goals related to: healthy & active transportation options, safe & efficient transportation system, a well-connected-multi-modal system, economic development, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions & increased environmental stewardship. The draft TSP outlines the need for both capital improvement plans (street corridors, intersection projects) as well as non-capital improvements (planning, programs, technology solutions). Both improvement options have scientifically supported options that, if funded and implemented, will be critical to achieving that vision zero goal by 2035.

## *Response to 2021-2025 recommendation updates*

Transportation agencies across the county have shown investments in scientifically proven infrastructure solutions. The examples above aren't indicative of all the work the different agencies in Multnomah County have committed to doing. With uncertainty around longer term funding, previously allocated funds must be responsibly utilized in order to address the County's most dangerous corridors. The recommendation should **continue**.

### ***4. TriMet should continue to prioritize service improvements in neighborhoods with a high proportion of Black residents. Transportation agencies should make investments that enhance feelings of safety and belonging.***

### *Recommendation in Action (2021 - 2025)*

- TriMet's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) supports the creation of compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around high-quality transportation systems to facilitate shorter trips, better lifestyles, and a more efficient use of city resources. In TriMet's 2023 regional TOD plan update there is a prioritization framework that includes an equity lens screening. This allows TOD to potentially elevate more disadvantaged neighborhoods, and sites in need of development or if the development will work to reduce inequalities the community experiences.<sup>95</sup>
- Through 2024 TriMet has improved lighting at 60% of their MAX platforms, while more than 80% of the MAX platforms have seen camera improvements. In October 2021 TriMet improved MAX Blue, Green and Red lines in the Lloyd District related to track improvements. In 2025, the NE 82nd Ave MAX station saw improvements and upgrades pertaining to rebuilt stairways, a refurbished shelter, and better sight lines (and a guardrail) for improved safety.<sup>96</sup>
- In July 2025 TriMet announced a \$300 million dollar gap. This budget gap is the result of rising operation costs, and decreased revenue. Trimet has reduced spending by \$150 million dollars, mostly through staff reduction, and the pausing of bus service expansion. Additional cuts will be experienced starting March 1st, 2026 in order to continue in closing the budget gap. TriMet held several open houses and a survey where they engaged with more than 8,000 people on understanding how the impact will impact their lives.<sup>97</sup>

### *Response to 2021-2025 recommendation updates*

Trimet has been involved in investment practices that are improving the sense of safety and community. With safety, security, and lighting improvements at various MAX stations such as NE 82nd shows that TriMet has listened to concerns from the community, particularly the Black community of Multnomah County. However, with the weight of the \$300 million dollar stagnating progress, it's unclear how these reductions will impact Black persons in Multnomah County. Of course transit reduction isn't the reality anyone wants to see. The reality of the reduction reaffirms the need to address transportation funding, and the mechanisms that hinder adequate systemic pathways. The 2021 recommendation should **continue** with the added lens of tracking any cuts in low-income communities, and communities of color; especially communities that have high Black resident populations across Multnomah County.

### **5. Transportation and public health agencies should collaborate to undertake transportation messaging campaigns that center the Black experience, along with safety, equity and justice.**

#### *Recommendation in Action (2021 - 2025)*

- REACH and the Healthy Homes Community (HHC) Team of Multnomah County Health Department have been participating in several transportation committee workgroups. In 2023, REACH's increased capacity led to participation in the East Multnomah County Transportation Committee (EMCTC-TAC) technical advisory subcommittee. Representation on EMCTC-TAC is important because it brings a public health lens to the transportation work occurring in Multnomah County, while elevating the marginalized voice of Black persons in East County. The REACH team worked with EMCTC during the development of the East Multnomah County Transportation Safety Action Plan to bring feedback from the ACHIEVE coalition. The HHC team in 2024 through 2025 worked closely with the City of Portland & Gresham on their respective Transportation System Plans (TSPs) and provided feedback that serves to increase safety, equity and justice.

<sup>95</sup> TriMet.2023.Transit Oriented Development Regional Plan Spring 2023. <https://trimet.org/tod/pdf/tod-regional-plan.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> Trimet.Making Transit Better:Max Improvements.<https://trimet.org/bettertransit/max.htm>

<sup>97</sup> TriMet. Why Cuts, and Why Now? <https://trimet.org/servicecuts/index.htm#whycuts>

- Multnomah County Health Department, specifically its public health division, supported the WA state Department of Health, Clark County Public Health, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and the Oregon Health Authority in the creation of the *Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Health Analysis*. The health analysis was released in November, 2024 and covers topics related to: Air Quality, Noise, Transportation, Climate Change, Water Quality, and Social Determinants of Health. This report elevates Black, as well as several other BIPOC identified groups, as an equity priority community. This acknowledgment is crucial because centers Black and other historically excluded voices in the framing for why the recommendations in the health analysis are important.<sup>98</sup>
- The REACH team joined the technical subgroup for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) in the Northeast Sandy Boulevard Investment Strategy project. The project report was released in August 2025 and details the many month process of the work ODOT and partners did along NE Sandy Blvd. Where this corridor is located, close to 50% of the population identifies as a person of color. Specifically, Black persons make up roughly 12% of the persons who identify as a person of color in this area. From 2019 to 2023, NE Sandy Blvd has seen 425 crashes and has nine locations (along the corridor) that rank in the top 15% of ODOT's Priority System Index System (SPIS)<sup>99</sup> for the entire state of Oregon.<sup>100</sup> The investment strategy highlights the need for enhanced crossings, Filling gaps in the sidewalk network, better lighting, improved transit access, and better active transportation connections. These concerns came from community feedback, technical advisory subgroups, and advocates with interest in making NE Sandy Blvd safer. REACH will continue to monitor the investment timeline, and will partner with ODOT in order to support communication efforts culturally specific for Black persons in Multnomah County.

### *Response to 2021-2025 recommendation updates*

Transportation agencies have been, and continue to provide seats at the table for public health agencies and teams. Work needs to continue to include public health agencies throughout transportation projects and messaging processes. Culturally specific messaging, in different languages, locations, and direct marketing will help transportation agencies expand who they are talking to, and the importance of garnering robust feedback. Public health agencies have to continue incorporating and open lanes for historically marginalized voices. Whether that's promoting open-houses and surveys to participating in community workgroups or oversight committees. There is a demand for the Black voice to be included in the transportation, and this demand needs to be taken seriously and authentically by transportation and public health agencies alike. The recommendation should **continue**.

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<sup>98</sup> WA DOH. November 2024. Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Health Analysis. <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/334-565.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> Safety Priority Index System (SPIS) - developed by ODOT alerts transportation officials to public roadway segments exhibiting unusually high occurrences of crashes.

<sup>100</sup> ODOT. August 2025. Northeast Sandy Blvd Investment Strategy. [https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Projects/Project%20Documents/US30IS\\_U.S.%2030%20Sandy%20Blvd%20Investment%20Strategy\\_FINAL\\_Sept.%202025.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Projects/Project%20Documents/US30IS_U.S.%2030%20Sandy%20Blvd%20Investment%20Strategy_FINAL_Sept.%202025.pdf)



## Conclusion: The 7th Dimension

The REACH Traffic Safety Report 2.0 builds upon the work published in its 2021 iteration. Analyzing the six dimensions of traffic safety, while emphasizing the historical inequities that have cornered African American and African Immigrant/Refugee communities in Multnomah County. Emphasizing on the historical, and addressing the current inequities that African-American, and African Immigrant/Refugees have faced benefits all of Multnomah County. A safer well-funded transportation network means all people can utilize the system. The six dimensions of traffic safety will continue to be critical to the mission of REACH, and will serve as valuable pillars of information not just for this report, but future iterations. However, it is important to recognize that Multnomah County, and any communities historically marginalized, are also highlighted for the joy and respite they have provided. This conclusion will serve not as a definitive marker upon the information provided above. Rather, as a foundational marker to explore how these communities build, construct, and invest in their peace.

This will be called the 7th dimension. A dimension that will highlight the historical, and contemporary experiences of African American and African Immigrant/Refugee populations. This 7th dimension, one of assets, will demand that when we speak about marginalized communities in Multnomah County, we leverage these assets as an opportunity to support communities in health promotion, policy reformation, funding support, and social cohesion. The 7th dimension will work in tandem with how the other 6 dimensions of traffic safety are utilized. The difference being that instead of working to “reduce inequities” observed in the 6 dimensions, the mindset of the 7th dimension will be to “protect assets.”

Looking to the future, The Street Trust and REACH will identify audit sites based on the East Multnomah County Traffic Safety Plan performed by Multnomah County Transportation division via Alta Planning + Design consultancy group. These audits will be multimodal in nature and will be designed to highlight the assets in a community (as well as opportunities for improvement). Furthermore, REACH, The Street Trust, and community partners will circulate the findings and intensify engagement. Opportunities for circulation include the monthly ACHIEVE (Action Communities for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change) coalition meetings, community events like Reclaiming Black Joy and the People’s Farmers Market hosted by Play Grow Learn, East Multnomah County Transportation Committee (EMCTC), and several community events. By elevating and maintaining the dialogue connected to the REACH Traffic Safety Report, this work will continue to empower community and government partner agencies towards a safer built environment for all.



## **APPENDIX: Research Methods**

This section contains an overview of the methods used for the six safety outcome dimensions. Data was accumulated from a variety of sources, including:

- Multnomah County Health Department (MCHD)
- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
- METRO
- TRIMET
- City of Portland (COP) & Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)
- City of Gresham
- State of Oregon
- FBI Database(s)
- Academic Literature
- Other publicly available data sources

### **Methods for Fatal Injury**

#### **Oregon Health Authority: Oregon Public Health Assessment Tool (OPHAT)**

Data for fatal injury includes counts, rates, and years of potential life lost per 100,000 residents. Mortality rates are presented in two non-overlapping five-year periods to evaluate change over time (2013-2017 and 2020-2024). Using five-year periods, this tool smooths year-to-year variation in death rates from traffic crashes, and the larger count increases the reliability of rates when cross-tabulating. Rates are age-adjusted because we expect race groups to have different age distributions, and traffic deaths are age-related. Young people are more likely to be in a crash and older people are more likely to die from injuries. Demographics were categorized into “single race alone or in combination with other race(s).” This option helps reflect diverse identities and provides more accurate data to understand disparities. Rates for Hispanic ethnicity are calculated separately.

All death data is summarized from Oregon Death Certificates made accessible through the Oregon Public Health Assessment Tool (OPHAT) compiled by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Public Health Division. In accordance with guidance from OPHAT, non-overlapping 95% confidence intervals are interpreted as significant. OPHAT guidance requires rates based on five or fewer events to be suppressed. Traffic deaths are identified by injury intent and mechanism selecting the following categories of unintentional injury: All injury > All transport.

## Methods for Non-Fatal Injury

### Oregon Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics (ESSENCE)

The primary data set for non-fatal injury reporting are emergency department and urgent care visits available in a statewide syndromic surveillance system known as the Oregon Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics (Oregon ESSENCE). Using ESSENCE, staff identified emergency department and urgent care clinic visits related to traffic-related injuries (TRI) for all modes, as well as specifically pedestrian-related injuries (PRI). The queries focus on the chief complaint and discharge diagnosis fields.

Visit counts were cross-tabulated with the 'race' field. Race categories are defined by the ESSENCE system and health care providers enter values into the race field. Providers often enter more than one race into the 'race' field. These visits were categorized as "Two or more races." Race is not consistently reported. Between 2018-2024, race was missing or unknown for 8% of all visits, 10% of all traffic-related injury visits, and 11% of pedestrian-related injury visits. Rates presented are calculated per 100,000 residents using American Community Survey ([ACS](#)) five-year estimates.

ESSENCE data includes only the subset of people injured in crashes who seek care at an emergency department or urgent care clinic. For example, someone who sustains a TRI, but chooses to not seek care due to financial limitations, is not included in this data. This data also does not include fatal TRI that are never seen in emergency departments. ESSENCE data are visit-specific, not patient specific, so multiple visits from the same person for the same injuries would be counted multiple times. The data do not include any categorization of injury severity such as serious, critical, incapacitating, etc. that are commonly included in law enforcement reports. This characteristic limits comparability to other sources of crash injury data. The data does not include standard collection of crash location, type, or other crash-specific context. Subgroup counts fewer than five are aggregated into larger groups.

## Methods for Biased Policing

### Portland Police Bureau Stops Data

PPB has been collecting data on traffic and pedestrian stops since 2001, following recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel on Racial Profiling. Officers record details such as their perception of the individual's race, gender, and age, the reason for the stop, whether a search was conducted, the type and outcome of any search, and the overall result of the stop. In 2011, the PPB launched an electronic data collection system to enhance accuracy and efficiency. Following the passage of Oregon House Bill 2355 in 2017, which mandated standardized data collection practices, the PPB updated its system in 2018 to comply with state requirements. This updated system integrates with the Bureau's computer-aided dispatch and electronic citation systems, ensuring comprehensive and accountable data collection. In the use of this data set, it is important to mention the potential for inaccuracy in police reports. Further, accurate police reporting is dependent on the ethical behavior of the police officer.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Güss, C. D., Tuason, M. T., & Devine, A. (2020). Problems With Police Reports as Data Sources: A Researchers' Perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 582428. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.582428>

## **Gresham Police Department (GPD)**

The Gresham Police Department provided traffic citation csv data from June 2018 to March 2025.

### **Automatic Traffic Enforcement (ATE)**

This section includes data from the City of Portland's use of speed cameras to improve traffic safety. Per City of Portland's Vision Zero webpage:

*“Oregon state law allows cities to use speed and intersection safety cameras to improve traffic safety. To achieve Portland's Vision Zero goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries on our streets, we're installing speed and intersection safety cameras at and along the highest crash streets and intersections. Portland's High Crash Network represents just 8% of Portland's streets but accounted for 67% of deadly crashes from 2020 to 2024.*

*Portland's cameras are concentrated on the High Crash Network. These cameras will play a critical part to help enforce safe driving behaviors along with infrastructure and education.”*

Photo Enforcement reports can be found at the bottom of this [webpage](#). State law requires each Oregon jurisdiction operating a photo radar program to report to the legislature each biennium. Portland submits separate reports for its speed safety cameras (Fixed Speed) and the intersection camera and mobile van cameras (Photo Radar and Red Light Running (2023-24)).

## **Methods for Violent Crime**

### **Violent Crime**

The analysis in this report relies on data from the Law Enforcement Agency Reported Crime Analysis Tool (LEARCAT) to examine the impact of violent crime on Black and African American populations in Multnomah County. LEARCAT provides incident and victimization data reported to the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) from 2016 to 2023, allowing for detailed demographic analysis. Crime rates are calculated per 100,000 individuals using U.S. Census Bureau population estimates, ensuring a standardized comparison across racial groups. This dataset enables an assessment of disparities in victimization rates, offering critical insights into the disproportionate impact of violent crime on Black residents. While police-reported data may contain inherent biases and limitations, LEARCAT remains a vital tool for understanding racial disparities in public safety.

### **Road Rage**

*Road Rage* data was captured using research done in combination between the [Pew Research Center](#), and [Gun Violence Archive](#). The *Road Rage* incidents referred in the report were only recorded if a firearm was present in the altercation. Furthermore, the research presented speaks to a larger national trend that is not indicative of more regional Multnomah County *Road Rage* incidents involving a firearm. The Gun Violence Archive's open database provided information pertaining to Road Rage incidents involving a firearm in Portland & Gresham. However, more research is needed to fully understand *Road Rage* in scenarios where both a firearm is and isn't present in altercations around Multnomah County.

## Methods for Bias Crimes & Incidents

### Portland Police Bureau: Reported Bias Crime & Bias Incidents Statistics

The data consists of both Bias Crimes and Bias Incidents, as collected by the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) and reported to the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). A Bias Crime is determined when an investigation confirms that an offender's actions were motivated, in part or in whole, by bias. These cases meet both Oregon Senate Bill 577 and FBI criteria for bias crimes.

A Bias Incident is tracked when an event has a bias-related nexus but does not meet the threshold for a criminal offense. These were not tracked until Q2 2020, following the enactment of SB 577.

Data is categorized by location type, rather than strict geographic coordinates. Location categories include:

- Business
- Place of Worship
- Public Space
- Residence

The Public Space category is used as a proxy for transportation-related environments, including streets, sidewalks, intersections, transit stops, and other shared public areas where pedestrian and traffic interactions occur. Since the report focuses on traffic and pedestrian safety for the Black population in Multnomah County, this category is the most relevant to capture potential bias-related safety concerns in transportation settings. Public Space captures the following areas:

- Air/Bus/Train Terminal
- Parking/Drop Lot/Garage
- Street/Highway/Road/Alley/Sidewalk

Data is updated quarterly following a review by the Bias Crime Detail detective. Notable limitations include

- Incidents without a police report are not investigated, meaning motivation and details cannot always be determined.
- Hate speech alone is not classified as a bias crime unless accompanied by criminal actions.
- Demographics (race, gender, and age) are available for victims and, when possible, offenders. If an offender is unidentified, demographic details may be incomplete or listed as "unknown."

A public [dashboard](#) can be accessed for further analysis. Per the Portland Police Bureau:

*"The Reported Bias Crime Statistics dashboard is an interactive data visualization of incidents reported to the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) which meet the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) guidelines for bias motivation. All cases flagged for potential bias motivation are reviewed by a PPB detective specifically assigned to investigate bias crimes."*

## Methods for Biased Behavior Among Road Users

### Relevant Literature

Kahn, Kimberly, Jean McMahon, Tara Goddard and Arlie Adkins. 2017. Racial Bias in Drivers' Yielding Behavior at Crosswalks: Understanding the Effect. NITC-RR-869. Portland, OR: Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC).

#### Abstract

*This project explores social identity factors (race and gender) that influence drivers' behavior in interactions with pedestrians at crosswalks. One dangerous potential point of conflict for pedestrians within the transportation system is interactions with drivers at crosswalks (NHTSA, 2009). In 2010, there was one crash-related pedestrian death every two hours and an injury every eight minutes, and racial minorities are disproportionately represented in these pedestrian fatalities (CDC, 2013). In light of this disparity, this project examines whether racial discrimination occurs at crosswalks, which may lead to disparate crossing experiences and disproportionate safety outcomes. Racial minorities experience racial discrimination across various domains in society. Consistent with this societal pattern, it is hypothesized that drivers will exhibit racial bias when making decisions about whether or not to stop for pedestrians waiting to cross the street at a crosswalk, which may reflect conscious or nonconscious biases.*

### Relevant Literature

Goddard, Tara, Kimberly Kahn and Arlie Adkins. 2015. "Racial Bias in Driver Yielding Behavior at Crosswalks." [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/psy\\_fac/14/](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/psy_fac/14/)

#### Abstract

*Psychological and social identity-related factors have been shown to influence drivers' behaviors toward pedestrians, but no previous studies have examined the potential for drivers' racial bias to impact yielding behavior with pedestrians. If drivers' yielding behavior results in differential behavior toward Black and White pedestrians, this may lead to disparate pedestrian crossing experiences based on race and potentially contribute to disproportionate safety outcomes for minorities. We tested the hypothesis that drivers' yielding behavior is influenced by pedestrians' race in a controlled field experiment at an unsignalized midblock marked crosswalk in downtown Portland, Oregon.*

### Relevant Literature

["Walking While Black" Focus Group 2018 Report](#)

#### Abstract

*In 2017 the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) launched a community-informed process to update PedPDX, Portland's Citywide Pedestrian Plan. PedPDX will prioritize sidewalk and crossing improvements and other investments to make walking safer and more comfortable across the city. A key element of the early PedPDX public involvement strategy included a survey asking Portlanders to tell PBOT their priorities for making Portland a more walkable city. The PedPDX survey distribution and engagement strategies focused on online survey, language-based engagement, public events and youth engagement activities.*

