

Policy Retrospect & Recommendations The Street Trust & Multnomah County REACH

Transportation Crash & Safety Report

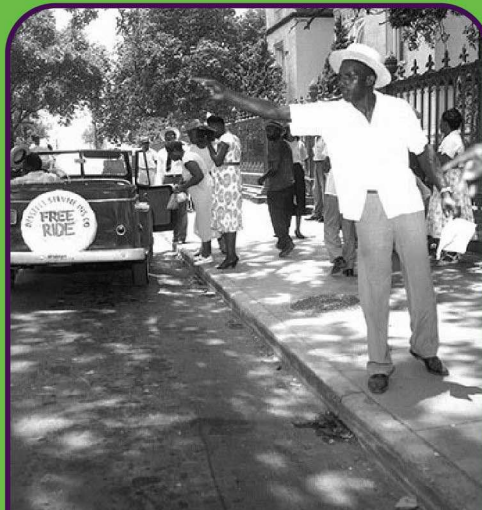
At the Intersection of Transportation and Health
SPRING 2026



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).¹ 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 ACHIEVE² 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.

Lead Author(s)

Burgin Utaski, The Street Trust (former)

Nsilo Berry, Multnomah County Health Department - Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Co-Author(s)

Sarah Iannarone, The Street Trust (former)

Abe Moland, Multnomah County Health Department - Healthy Homes and Community

Dan O'Neil, Geospatial Consulting

Sophie Smith, The Street Trust

Brendon Haggerty, Multnomah County Health Department - Healthy Homes and Community

Charlene McGee, Multnomah County Health Department - Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

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

² *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.

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.⁹³
- 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).⁹⁴
- 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.

⁹³ 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>

⁹⁴ Metro. 2022, November. 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Update. 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.⁹⁵
- 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.⁹⁶
- 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.⁹⁷

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.

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

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

⁹⁷ 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.⁹⁸
- 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)⁹⁹ for the entire state of Oregon.¹⁰⁰ 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**.

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

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

¹⁰⁰ 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

