

VISION ZERO NOTEWORTHY PRACTICE — PARTNERSHIPS

Equity in Vision Zero — Oregon Metro

Focus Areas

Equity focus areas in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan region have a higher proportion of fatal and serious injury pedestrian and bicycle crashes compared to the region and include a majority of Regional High Injury Corridors:

67% of pedestrian fatalities and **72%** of serious injury pedestrian crashes occur in equity focus areas, **while only 56% of the population live in these areas.**

83% of bicycle fatalities and **69%** of serious injury bicycle crashes occur in equity focus areas.

56% of fatalities and **61%** of serious injury crashes occur in equity focus areas.

50% of high injury corridors (250 miles) are in areas with above average densities of people of color, **while only 41% of the population live in these areas.**

54% of high injury corridors (270 miles) are in areas with above average densities of people with low-income, **while only 43% of the population live in these areas.**

Background

Oregon Metro, more commonly known as Metro, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Portland, Oregon metropolitan region, focused on ways to address disparities and improve racial and social equity in the implementation of Vision Zero projects in the region. The agency's boundary encompasses Portland, Oregon and 23 other cities stretching from the Columbia River in the north to the bend of the Willamette River near Wilsonville, and from the foothills of the Coast Range near Forest Grove to the banks of the Sandy River in Troutdale.

First, Metro worked with cities, counties, community organizations, and other agencies to develop a definition of transportation equity.

“The removal of barriers to eliminate transportation-related disparities faced by and improve equitable outcomes for historically marginalized communities, especially communities of color.”

Metro also identified equity focus areas within the region to provide a framework for evaluating how transportation investments affect three demographic groups (which are not mutually exclusive): people of color, people with lower income, and people with limited English proficiency¹.

¹ 2018 Regional Transportation Plan, Appendix E: Transportation equity evaluation, and evaluation of equity, Environmental Justice and Title VI outcomes. December 6, 2018. Equity focus areas were identified using Census data. Census tracts with above-average concentration and double the density of people of color, people with limited English proficiency, and/or people with lower incomes were identified as equity focus areas.



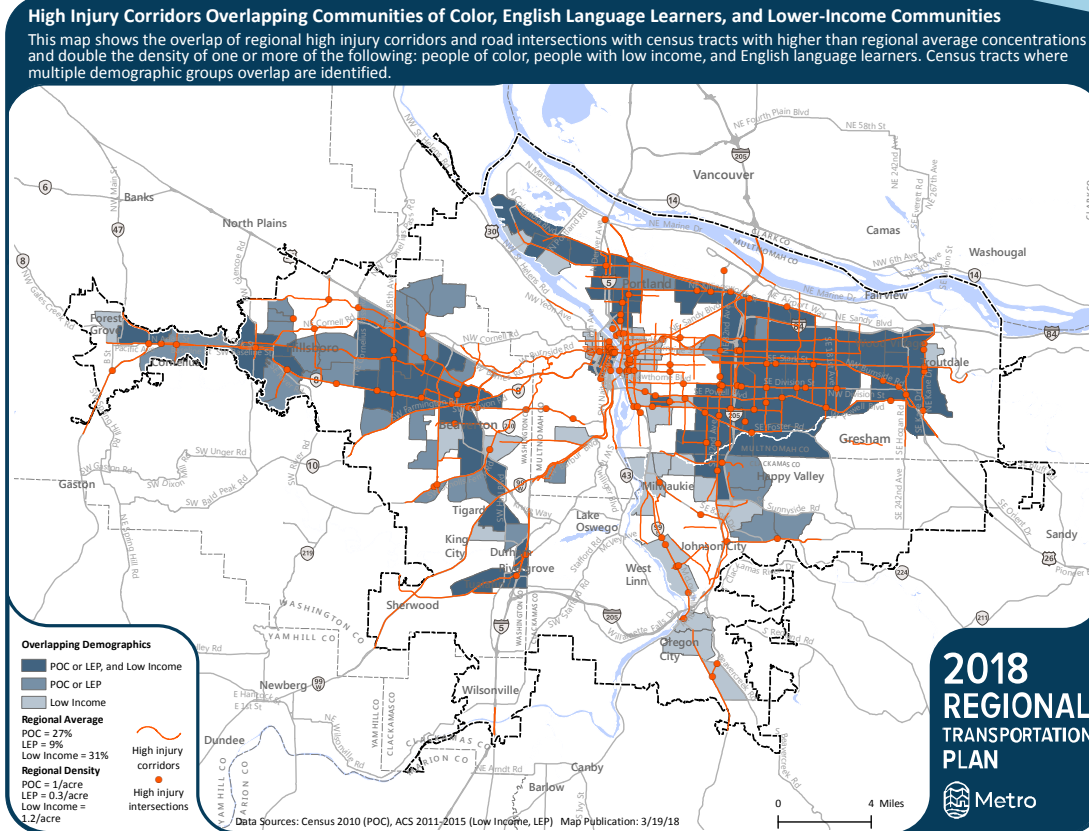


Figure 1. Graphic. Oregon Metro's Equity Focus Areas overlaid with Regional High Injury Corridors and Intersections.

POC: Persons of Color

LEP: Limited English Proficiency

Metro collected and analyzed crash data from 2011-2017 to identify trends in fatal and serious injury crashes and compare equity focus areas to regional averages. Additionally, Metro identified Regional High Injury Corridors and Intersections for the 6 percent of roadway miles in the region where 60 percent of fatal and serious crashes occur.² The data showed pedestrian fatalities are the most common type of fatal crash in the region, with a disproportionate percent of such crashes in equity focus areas.

² 2018 Regional Transportation Safety Strategy. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/regional-transportation-safety-plan>

The Oregon Public Health Authority identified the following statewide crash trends from 2008-2014:

- American Indians/Alaska Natives have the highest average rate of vehicle related deaths at 5.9 deaths per 100,000 population, which is 1.8 times the rate among Whites.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives and African Americans have the highest hospitalization for traffic related injuries at 52.2 and 46.2 admits per 100,000 population compared to 45.5 for Whites and 20.8 for Asian Pacific Islander.

Reducing disparities in equity focus areas is a priority when allocating funds and prioritizing safety projects in the region.

Performance Planning

Oregon Metro outlined distinct goals, objectives, policies, strategies and actions, and targets and performance measures in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan for transportation safety and equity. These policies help implement Metro's 2016 Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. While the policy areas of transportation safety and equity are distinct, they are linked through prioritizing safety investments in equity focus areas that show a disproportionate number of fatal and serious crashes when compared to the region.

Oregon Metro's Regional Transportation Safety and Equity Policy Framework includes:

- **Goals:** The region has a goal to eliminate deaths and serious injuries from traffic crashes and set five equity goals that address racial equity, community engagement, workforce diversity, safe communities, and resource allocation.
- **Objectives:** Transportation safety, particularly eliminating fatal and serious injury crashes for all modes of travel, is listed along with transportation security, preparedness, and resiliency as an objective. Objectives for equitable transportation include eliminating disparities and barriers for people of color and other historically marginalized communities.
- **Policies:** The region has nine regional transportation safety policies, including those that prioritize investment in high injury corridors and equity focus areas, to guide planning, project prioritization, investments, implementation, and seven equity policies to eliminate transportation-related disparities and barriers.
- **Strategies and Actions:** Oregon Metro, State DOT, cities, counties, and other partners target transportation safety through more than 50 actions across 6 strategies. These are included

in the Regional Transportation Safety Strategy. Transportation equity includes 30 actions across the 7 equity policies which are outlined in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan.³

- **Targets and Performance Measures:** The region has an overall safety goal of eliminating transportation related fatalities and serious injuries for all users of the region's transportation system by 2035, with a 16-percent reduction by 2020 (as compared to the 2015 five-year rolling average), and a 50-percent reduction by 2025. Oregon Metro plans to report on safety statistics for the identified equity focus areas to link safety with equity.

Project Prioritization:

Metro's safety and equity policy framework results in an increase in investments in safety projects and associated safety benefits in equity focus areas. For planning purposes the region identifies safety projects and safety benefit projects in the following manner:

- **Safety Project** – A targeted project that addresses an identified safety problem at a documented high injury or high-risk location.
- **Safety Benefit Project** – Project that increase safety for one or more roadway users but may not necessarily address an identified safety issue at an identified high injury or high-risk location.

³ 2018 Regional Transportation Plan, Chapter 3.
https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2019/04/09/2018-RTP-Ch3-Regional-System-Policies_0.pdf

Metro's 2018 Regional Transportation Plan brings a heightened awareness of how safety projects and safety benefit projects helped meet racial and social equity goals across the region. Metro's Transportation Equity Analysis for the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan measured planned investments in safety projects and safety benefit projects in equity focus areas compared to safety investments region-wide. The analysis found that 70 percent of safety projects and 72 percent of safety benefit projects were planned in equity focus areas. As the plan is implemented, Metro will measure the progress of safety investments by State, regional, and local partners in equity focus areas and the impact on fatalities and serious injuries in these areas. This will be reported in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan and in updates of the Regional Transportation Plan. Metro will develop an annual progress report documenting the progress made towards meeting the Federally required transportation safety targets and progress on actions by Metro and its partners. In conjunction with this annual report, the region will also report on similar statistics in the equity focus areas.

Funding

Metro's transportation planning funds cover safety planning, analysis, and monitoring. Safety projects are prioritized for Regional Flexible Funds (Federal transportation funds allocated at the regional level). In the most recent allocation of Regional Flexible Funds, Metro evaluated and scored cities' and counties' proposed projects based on how well they addressed the four policy priority areas of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan: safety, equity, climate and congestion. A project with a higher score is more likely to receive regional funding.

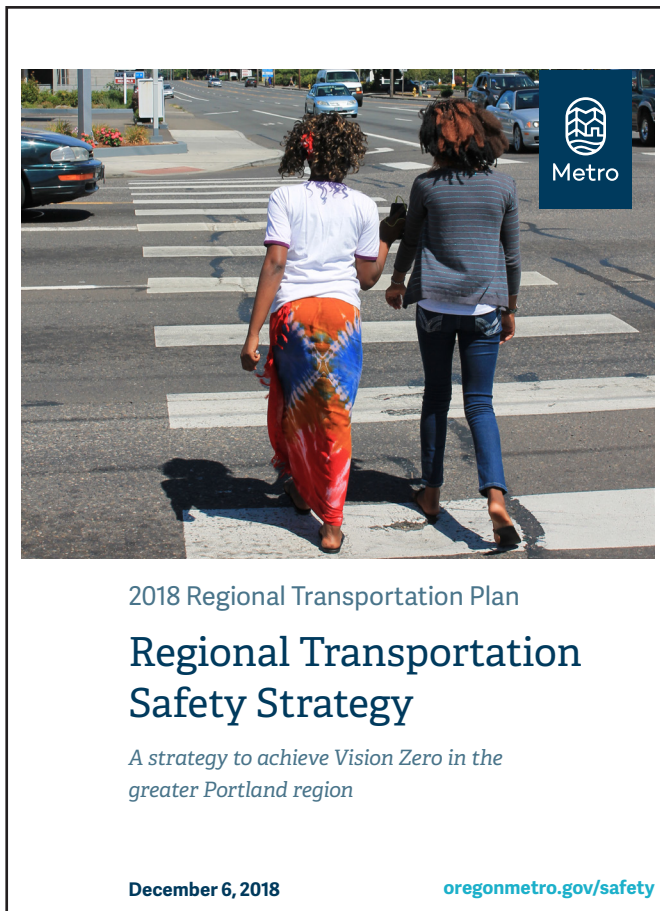


Figure 2. Graphic. Oregon Metro's Regional Transportation Safety Strategy.

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