



**Regional transportation safety strategy**

# 2-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

June 2021



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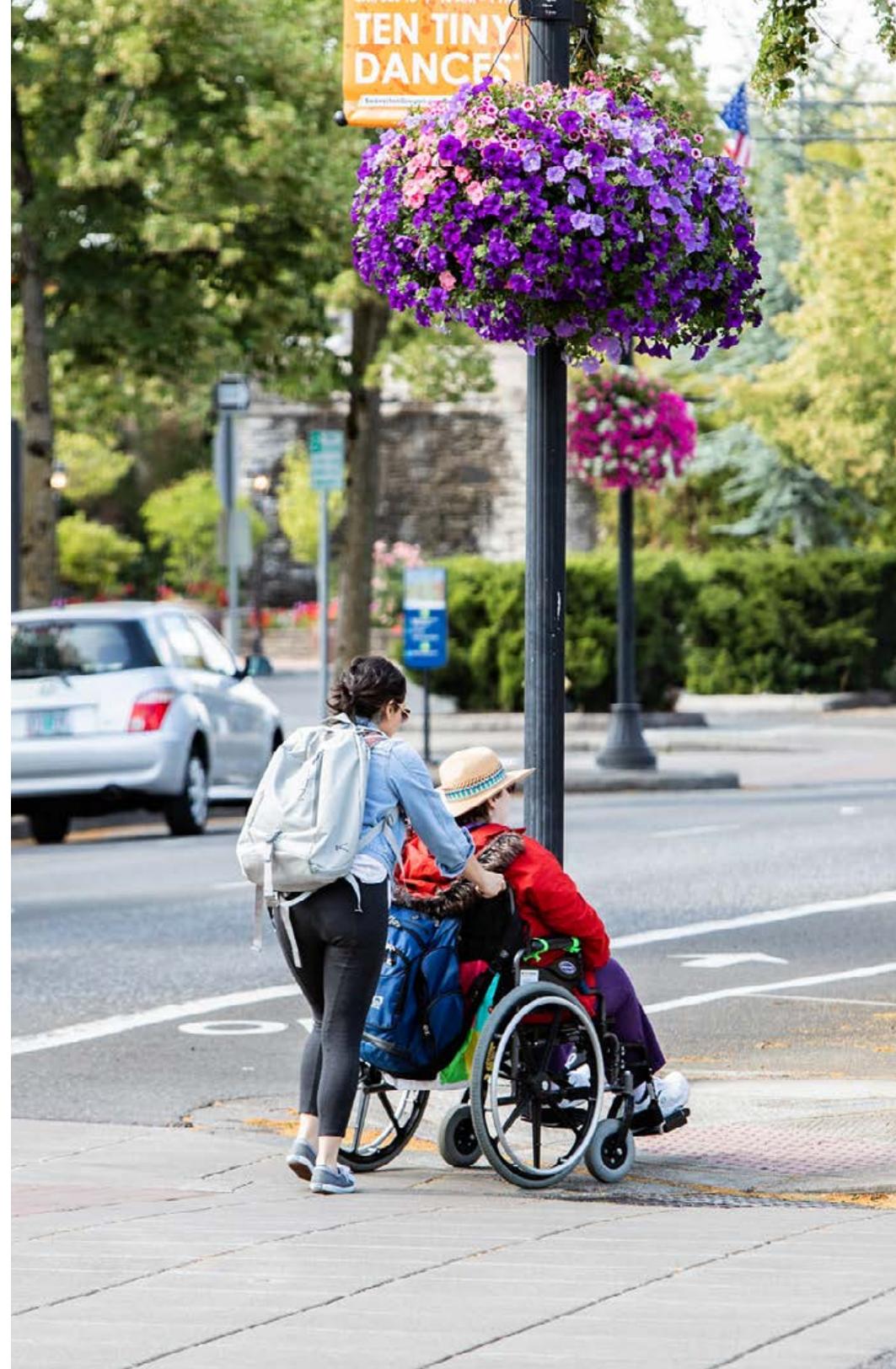
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The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) is a 17-member committee that provides a forum for elected officials and representatives of agencies involved in transportation to evaluate transportation needs in the region and to make recommendations to the Metro Council.

The established decision-making process strives for a well-balanced regional transportation system and involves local elected officials directly in decisions that help the Metro Council develop regional transportation policies, including allocating transportation funds. JPACT serves as the MPO board for the region in a unique partnership that requires joint action with the Metro Council on all MPO decisions.





*“The design choices we make about how fast cars move, whether there are bike lanes & sidewalks sharing the space with travel lanes — all of this is an example of what it means to have a truly forward-looking approach on infrastructure.”*

*- Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Transportation Secretary, March 18, 2021*

# VISION ZERO BY 2035.

# ONE DEATH IS TOO MANY.



## IN 2018 WE COMMITTED TO ZERO DEATHS AND LIFE-CHANGING INJURIES ON OUR ROADWAYS.

Regional partners came together and developed a strategic action plan to make our roadways safer for everyone. The strategy was recommended for adoption by the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and adopted by the Metro Council as part of the Regional Transportation Plan at the end of 2018.

This 2-year report provides a snapshot of progress that we have made since 2018 to implement the strategic actions adopted in the [Regional Transportation Safety Strategy](#).

## WE ARE NOT ON TRACK TO VISION ZERO.



Since the regional safety strategy was adopted at the end of 2018, at least 319 people have been killed in traffic crashes in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties. Thousands more are living with physical and emotional trauma from being in a crash.<sup>1</sup>

On average, there are over 23,000 crashes a year in our region that result in injury – over 60 crashes a day. Every three days someone is killed in a traffic crash. Every day someone experiences a life changing injury. Every one of us is impacted by traffic violence. **The lives lost since the safety strategy was adopted have cost our region over \$2 billion.**

**Our safety goals represent real people.** When we set a goal of an 11 percent reduction in traffic deaths and life changing injuries from 2015 to 2019, it is a goal to see 58 fewer people killed or seriously injured in a traffic crash in 2019. Instead, in 2019, traffic deaths increased 34 percent, and serious injuries increased 17 percent.<sup>i</sup>

We are moving in the wrong direction and are not on track to for zero deaths and serious injuries by 2035. Especially concerning is that **38 percent of people killed in traffic crashes in 2019 were walking.** **Pedestrian deaths have been on the rise for several years.**<sup>ii</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Due to the time-lag in crash data availability, only preliminary fatality numbers are available for 2020. Preliminary serious crash data for 2019 was available in early 2021.

*Every  
three days  
someone is  
killed in a  
traffic crash  
in our region.*

*Every day  
someone  
is seriously  
injured.*



## NOT EVERYONE IS EQUALLY SAFE ON OUR ROADWAYS.

### Systemic racism creates inequities in transportation safety and enforcement.

We know that Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and other people of color are more likely to be killed in a traffic crash. These community members are also less safe from harassment and other types of violence on our roadways. More data and analyses is needed to fully understand disproportionate impact in all three counties and the region.



In Multnomah County, Black people are twice as likely to die in a traffic crash.<sup>iv</sup>



of pedestrian deaths occurs in the communities in our region where **more people of color, people with lower incomes and people with limited English proficiency** live.<sup>vi</sup>

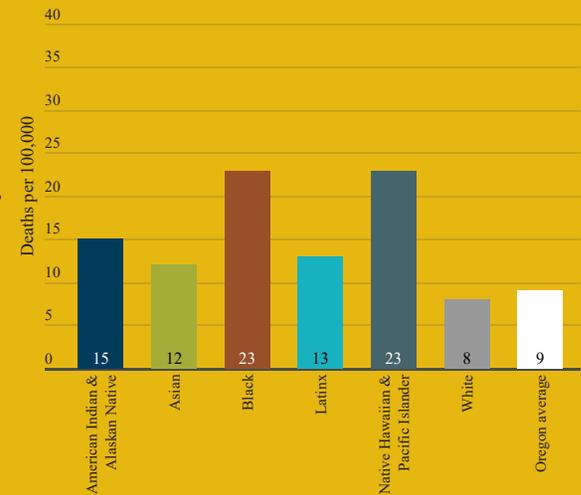


Nationally, **Black people are 80 percent more likely** to be killed by drivers while walking than White, non-Hispanic pedestrians.<sup>v</sup>

Black people are the most common targets of racial bias crimes in Portland, 60 percent of which take place in public spaces. Black pedestrians are stopped by police at higher rates than other races. Drivers are less likely to yield to Black people crossing at a crosswalk.<sup>vii</sup>

### Fatal pedestrian injury rates by race, Oregon (2014-2018)

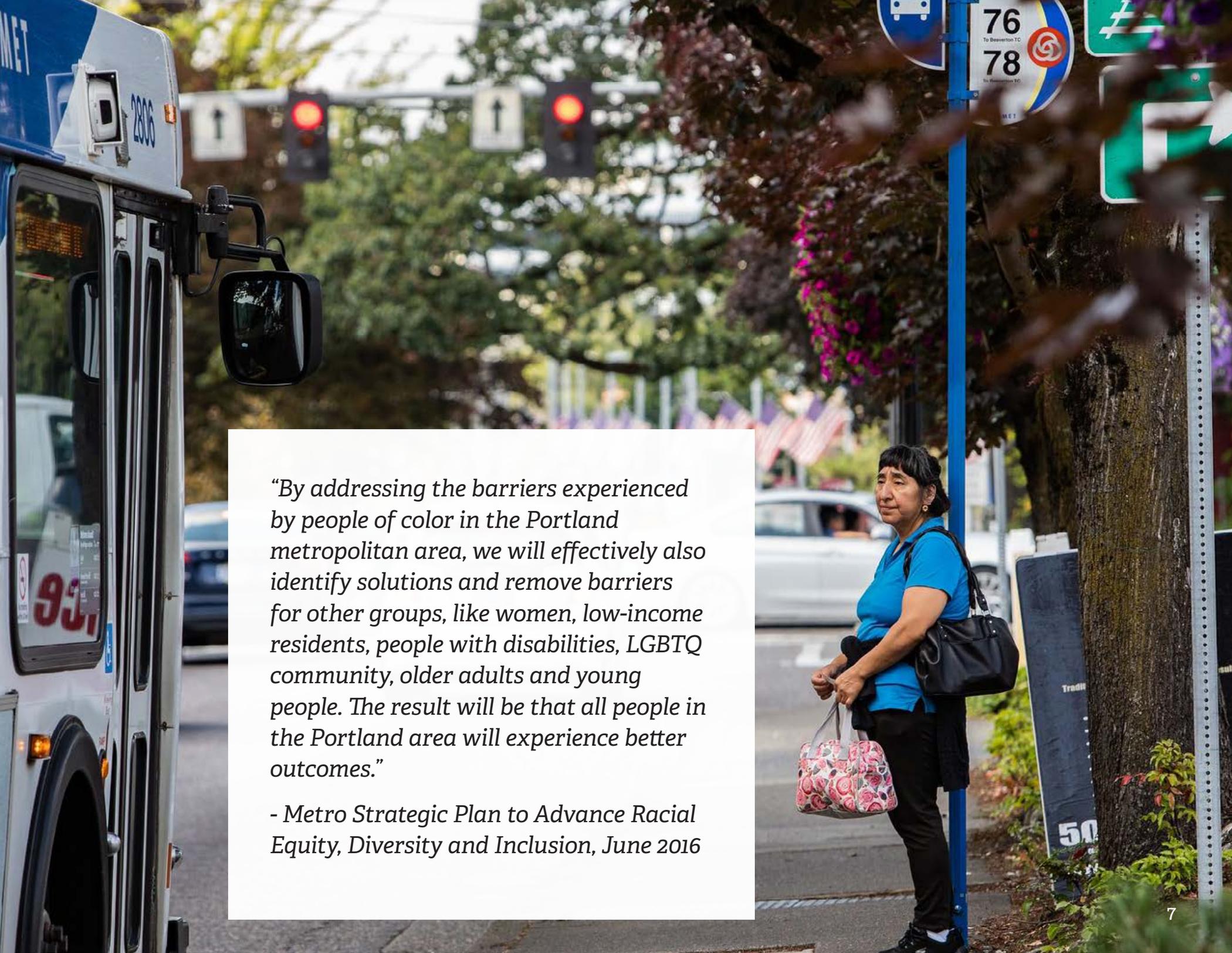
In Oregon, Black people experience the greatest disparity in pedestrian deaths, followed by Indigenous, Latinx and Asian people who also have a higher rate of pedestrian injury than the state average.



Source: ODOT, Pedestrian Injury and Social Equity in Oregon, 2021.<sup>iii</sup>

In 2020, Black people accounted for **18.5% of traffic deaths in Portland.**

That's **three times higher** than residents' share of Portland's population.<sup>viii</sup>



*“By addressing the barriers experienced by people of color in the Portland metropolitan area, we will effectively also identify solutions and remove barriers for other groups, like women, low-income residents, people with disabilities, LGBTQ community, older adults and young people. The result will be that all people in the Portland area will experience better outcomes.”*

*- Metro Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, June 2016*

# WE HAVE MADE PROGRESS, BUT WE NEED TO DO MORE.

This progress report provides a high-level summary of actions taken by **state, regional, local and community partners** in 2019 and 2020 to advance the strategic actions in the [Regional Transportation Safety Strategy](#). In some areas we have made progress. However, the rising number of traffic deaths and serious injuries each year should make us pause and **consider how regional partners can prioritize safety even more**. For an expanded list of actions and more information on how progress was assessed refer to the Appendix at [oregonmetro.gov/regional-transportation-safety-plan](http://oregonmetro.gov/regional-transportation-safety-plan)

2-YEAR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT			
Strategy	Status	What regional partners have done since 2018	What regional partners could do in the next two years
<b>1. Protect vulnerable users and reduce disparities</b>		Filled nearly 100 miles of combined sidewalk, trail and bikeway gaps and prioritized safety in funding decisions.  Expanded understanding of the disproportionate impact of crashes on Black people and people walking.	Prioritize equity and pedestrian safety in project funding and roadway design.  Prioritize community-led safety investments in communities of color and lower income communities.
<b>2. Design roadways for safety</b>		Developed new state, regional and local street design standards.  Identified safety needs and opportunities on many high injury corridors.	Prioritize making our top-10 most dangerous and high-risk urban arterials safe for pedestrians.
<b>3. Reduce speeds and speeding</b>		Modernized statewide speed setting methodologies.  Lowered speed limits on local roadways in Portland.  Installed more fixed speed cameras in more communities.	Continue to lower posted speeds. Legalize fixed-speed cameras for use in all jurisdictions and on all roadways.  Design current projects to manage speeds for safety.
<b>4. Address aggressive and distracted driving</b>		Implemented one of the strictest distracted driving laws in the U.S.  Began reporting through the Statistical Transparency of Policing (STOP) Program.	Coordinate regional support of vehicle technology-based solutions.  Continue to implement recommendations in Oregon's distracted driving report.
<b>5. Address impaired driving</b>		Maintained status quo as impairment has increased and resources have not kept pace.	Coordinate to accelerate the incorporation of Alcohol Detection Systems into vehicles at the state and federal level.  Coordinate to lower legal blood alcohol content levels.
<b>6. Engagement and coordination</b>		Developed regional Safe Routes to School campaign.  Ongoing coordination and policy making at state, regional and local levels.	Integrate the safe system approach into everything we do.  Coalesce leadership around Vision Zero.  Engage the public to demand safer streets and increase regional collaboration.

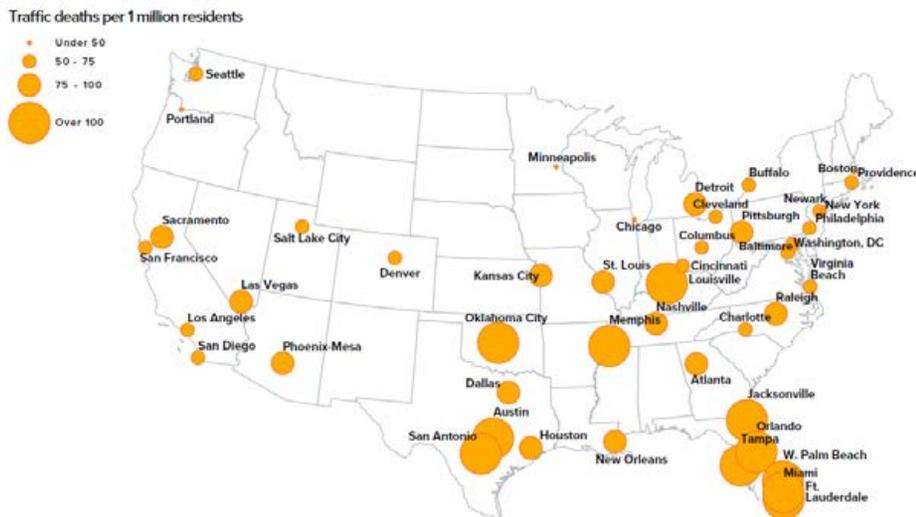
## A BETTER STATUS QUO.

We've never been content with the status quo. Unfortunately, traffic violence has become our status quo. Some might think that Vision Zero is unachievable – but we know better. We know safe streets for all, all of the time, can be our status quo. And experts agree. Doing more of what is working and taking the safe system approach have been proven to work.

Doubling down on what works through proven, evidence-based strategies, advancing life-saving technology in vehicles and infrastructure, and prioritizing safety by adopting a safe system approach and creating a positive safety culture, have been proven to work.

## DO MORE OF WHAT IS WORKING.

Our region has one of the lowest fatality rates in the country. What's working? Our commitment to compact urban growth. More trips made by walking, bicycling, scooting, bus and MAX. Fewer and shorter trips made by driving.



### Traffic deaths by urban region, 2011–2015

U.S. urban regions (MPOs) with populations greater than 1 million  
Source: 2018 Metro State of Safety Report

## PRIORITIZE SAFETY OVER SPEED.

Adding [the safe system approach](#) to what is already working in our region can get us to zero. **Safety for all road users must be set as the foremost goal, and all decisions must be made based on how well they advance work toward zero deaths.**<sup>ix</sup>



A **safe system approach** recognizes that although human error is inevitable, fatalities and life-changing injuries are preventable through street design and management choices. Successful safety programs systematically change the way streets operate to keep users safe, even when individuals make mistakes.

**Safe speeds.** Speed management strategies and technologies are estimated to save 4,000 lives each year nationally.<sup>x</sup>

**Safe vehicles.** Incorporating Advanced Driver Assistance Systems, technologies which exist today, into all vehicles, is estimated to save up to 10,000 lives a year nationally.<sup>xi</sup>

**Safe road users.** Incorporating Alcohol Detection Systems, technologies which exist today, into all vehicles, is estimated to save up to 9,000 lives a year nationally.<sup>xii</sup>

**Safe roads.** Roadway design improvements that are safety-outcomes based, such as roundabouts, sidewalks and medians, are estimated to save 3,000 lives a year nationally.<sup>xiii</sup>

**Safe EMS.** Improved emergency response to crashes is estimated to save 2,500 lives a year nationally.<sup>xiv</sup>

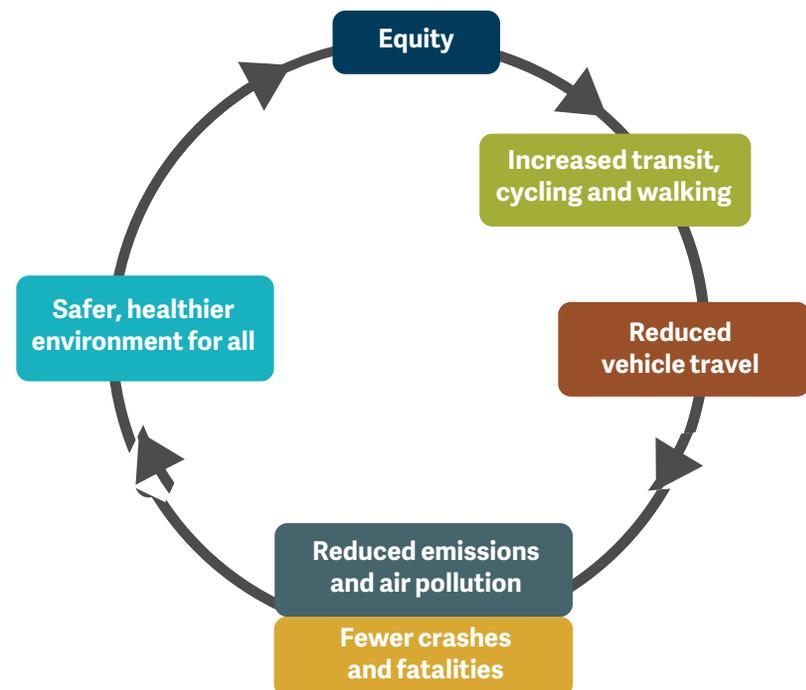
**Safe system for all.** Shifting to more transit, walking, and bicycling trips is estimated to save 3,000 lives a year nationally.<sup>xv</sup>

## INVESTING IN A SAFE SYSTEM IS AN INVESTMENT IN EQUITY, CLIMATE, ACCESS AND MOBILITY.

While more walking, bicycling and transit brings many benefits to our communities, we cannot expect Black, Indigenous or any person of color to choose **more vulnerable forms of transportation** (when they have the choice), without addressing structural racism and **arrested mobility** (a term coined by Charles Brown that asserts that legal and illegal authorities deny Black people the inalienable right to move or to simply exist in public spaces). Arrested mobility contributes to adverse social, political, economic, and health outcomes that are widespread, intergenerational and preventable.

We must prioritize racial and economic justice to achieve a safe transportation system with zero deaths and life changing injuries, where Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and other people of color are safe and feel safe while traveling in our region.

When people are safe and feel safe while riding the bus, walking down the street and riding a bicycle, these options will be accessible to more people. Availability of travel options helps ease congestion and reduces the need to travel by motor vehicle, leading to cleaner air, fewer traffic fatalities and a safer and healthier environment for everyone.



2018 Regional Transportation Plan

### Regional Transportation Safety Strategy

*A strategy to achieve Vision Zero in the greater Portland region*

December 6, 2018

[oregonmetro.gov/safety](http://oregonmetro.gov/safety)

The Regional Transportation Safety Strategy works in concert with other adopted strategies to achieve an equitable, safe, resilient and reliable transportation system. Find the Regional Transportation Safety Strategy on [Metro's Transportation Safety webpage](#)

## LOOKING AHEAD.

In the next two years we can drastically advance safety and reverse the upward trend of serious traffic crashes. We can take steps to save lives.

**We can** elevate the experiences and safety of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and other people of color in our processes and decisions.

**We can** prioritize near-term funding for safety projects, programs, and operations on the most dangerous arterial roadways and for the most vulnerable users.

**We can** amplify the safe-system approach in all decisions, focusing on safe speeds, safe streets, safe people, and safe vehicles. We can work together in coordination, proactively creating a safer system to prevent serious crashes from occurring.

*“While it will take a generation, the success of other countries and some U.S. cities demonstrates that a combination of approaches makes this an achievable goal.” Rand Corporation, Road to Zero report, 2018.*



This person uses their bicycle to get to and from their job in and around Forest Grove. We can make our most dangerous roadways, like the Tualatin Valley Highway, safe for everyone. The Oregon Department of Transportation, the City of Forest Grove and other partners are currently re-designing this stretch of highway to include safety features such as medians, enhanced pedestrian crossings, sidewalks and protected bicycle lanes.

## ENDNOTES

- i 2019 Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injuries Annual Performance Report, Metro, 2021. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2021/03/04/Metro-safety-annual-performance-report-2015-2019.pdf>
- ii 2019 Safety Fact Sheet, Metro, 2021. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2021/03/04/Metro-2019-safety-fact-sheet-20210225.pdf>
- iii Pedestrian Injury and Social Equity in Oregon, Analysis of Pedestrian Injury, Built Environment, Travel Activity, and Social Equity, Oregon Department of Transportation Research Section, January 19, 2021. [https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Safety/Documents/Pedestrian\\_Safety\\_and\\_Social\\_Equity.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Safety/Documents/Pedestrian_Safety_and_Social_Equity.pdf)
- iv Multnomah County REACH Transportation Crash and Safety Report: At the Intersection of Transportation Health, Race and Justice, 2021. <https://multco.us/file/95327/download>
- v Dangerous by Design 2021, Smart Growth America. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>
- vi 2019 Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injuries Annual Performance Report, Metro, 2021. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2021/03/04/Metro-safety-annual-performance-report-2015-2019.pdf>
- vii Multnomah County REACH Transportation Crash and Safety Report: At the Intersection of Transportation Health, Race and Justice, 2021. <https://multco.us/file/95327/download>
- viii Saving Lives with Safe Streets, Vision Zero Traffic Crash Report 2020, Portland. <https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2021/2020-vision-zero-traffic-crash-report.pdf>
- ix Zero Traffic Deaths: A Roadmap to Get There, released on March 31, 2021. [https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b30d2c5754a3474bbecf7d46b6586469?utm\\_source=sfmc&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=GOV%20540758&utm\\_content=](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b30d2c5754a3474bbecf7d46b6586469?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=GOV%20540758&utm_content=)
- x City Limits: Setting Safe Speed Limits on Urban Streets, NACTO, 2020: <https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-need/speed-kills/>
- xi The Road to Zero: A Vision for Achieving Zero Roadway Deaths by 2050, RAND Corporation, 2018. <https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/485bod61-e657-44e7-84f2-1a4206a7ea33/rtz-report.pdf.aspx>
- xii Farmer, Charles M. "Potential lives saved by in-vehicle alcohol detection systems," Traffic Injury Prevention, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and Highway Loss Data Institute, January 2021. <https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/alcohol-detection-systems-could-prevent-more-than-a-fourth-of-u-s-road-fatalities>
- xiii Safety Benefits of Highway Infrastructure Investments, AAA, May 2017. <https://aaafoundation.org/safety-benefits-of-highway-infrastructure-investments/>
- xiv The Road to Zero: A Vision for Achieving Zero Roadway Deaths by 2050, RAND Corporation, 2018. <https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/485bod61-e657-44e7-84f2-1a4206a7ea33/rtz-report.pdf.aspx>
- xv Public Transit is Key Strategy in Advancing Vision Zero, Eliminating Deaths, American Public Transportation Association (APTA), August 2018. <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Resources/resources/hottopics/Documents/APTA%20VZN%20Transit%20Safety%20Brief%208.2018.pdf>

If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the convention center, put out your trash or drive your car – we’ve already crossed paths.

**So, hello. We’re Metro – nice to meet you.**

In a metropolitan area as big as Portland, we can do a lot of things better together. Join us to help the region prepare for a happy, healthy future.

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June 3, 2021

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