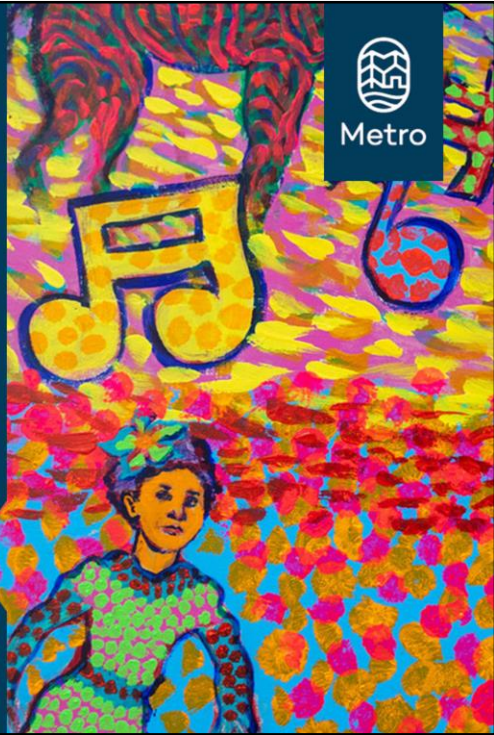


Advancing racial equity through transportation investments

Transportation
Funding Task Force
March 6, 2019



Metro



Overview

Purpose & vision

Racial equity –
what and why

Racial equity and
transportation

Our opportunity



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Land acknowledgment

- Northern Kalapuya
 - Tualatin
 - Atfalati
- Chinook
 - Clackamas
 - Multnomah
 - Cascades
 - Clowwewalla
- Northern Molalla

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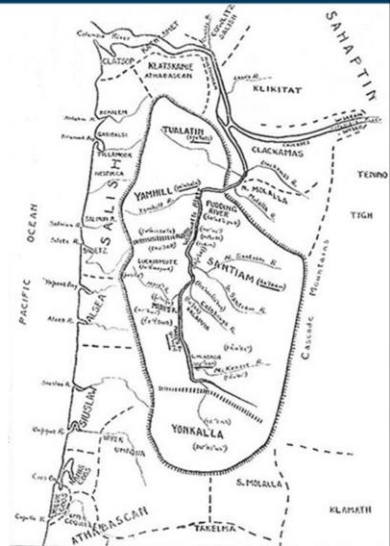


We honor this land, its original inhabitants and their families who continue to survive a history of genocide, assimilation and erasure. Multiple tribes and bands were part of what is now seen as the greater Portland region.

- Northern Kalapuya
 - Tualatin
 - Atfalati
- Chinook
 - Clackamas
 - Multnomah
 - Cascades
 - Clowwewalla
- Northern Molalla

Relations, trade and shared resources

- Cowlitz
- Klikitat
- Yakama
- Clatskanie



There was also a deep history of relations, trade and shared resources with neighboring peoples, such as the Cowlitz, Klickitat, Yakama and Clatskanie as well as other Chinookan bands up and down the Columbia.

Oregon: rooted in racism

- 1848 – Oregon Territory government makes it unlawful for Black people to live in the territory (40 day limit)
- 1850 – Donation Land Claim Act ahead of any attempt to have land ceded by Indigenous people



Blacks were explicitly excluded from the Oregon Territory. The original state constitution may have banned slavery, but also excluded nonwhites from living here.

(Before the Donation Land Claim Act there was at least some recognition of an "Indian right of occupancy," which meant a requirement to secure the land from Indigenous inhabitants – by purchase or conquest – ahead of settlement.)

White settlers soon demanded that the government do something about the Indigenous people living here, which led to wars and forced removal.

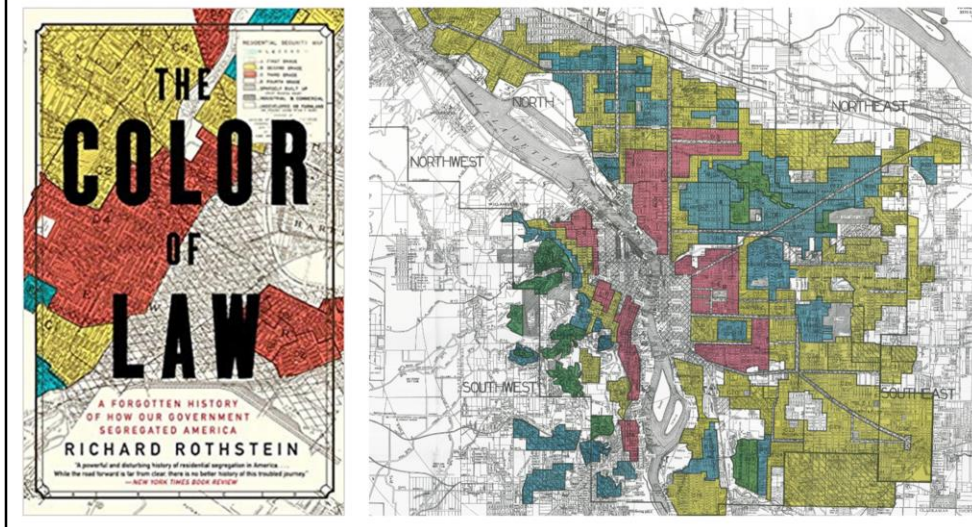
1862 – Oregon places an additional tax on African American, Chinese and Hawaiian people

1882 – Chinese Exclusion Act passed with support of the state's full congressional delegation

By the 1920s, Oregon had the nation's highest per capita membership in the Ku Klux Klan.

Until 1951, Oregon placed an additional surcharge on people of color for car insurance

Redlining



Through the 1940s, laws and government policies prevented people of color from buying or renting homes outside of designated neighborhoods

(while Japanese residents experienced forced relocation and incarceration in internment camps during World War II).

Through the 1960s and 70s – or later – real estate agents would discourage non-White clients from homes in White neighborhoods, and banks would often refuse loans for those properties when requested by a person of color.

Meanwhile, banks would declare investments in homes in African American neighborhoods or other communities of color too risky and refuse loans for those properties.

I'm telling this task for this because of how it relates to the transportation system and to point out that there were conscious policy decisions with the force of law that worked to create an inequitable system.

Transportation investments in African American neighborhoods



When Interstate 5 opened in the 1960s, the new freeway cut a swath through Portland's established African American neighborhoods, destroying at least 50 square blocks of homes and creating a barrier that still exists today.

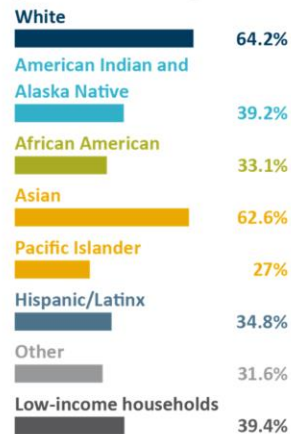
The history of major public investments create a sense that these are things done "*to us not for us*" in communities of color.

Racism does racism's job



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Homeownership rates in the greater Portland region



[This is a photo from the show Portlandia, where they asked why greater Portland has less racial diversity than other cities its size. (I don't think this is a real Tribune headline, but there are plenty of articles from other sources that make this same point.)]

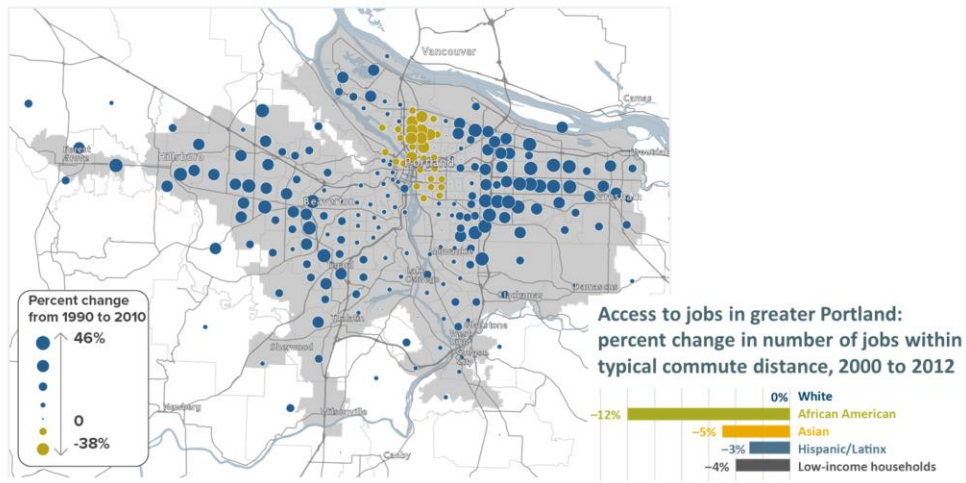
Homeownership is cited as a key tool in both personal and family wealth development and community stabilization.

Not only do people of color face issues of inequity in access to education and pay, the legacy of systemic racism in redlining and lending is reflected in current homeownership rates, which differ greatly by race.

- About 2/3 of White households own versus rent
- While that rate is about 1/3 – or even less – for Native American, African American, Pacific Islander and Latinx households

Displacement

Displacement and migration of communities of color, 1990-2010



As housing costs increase, families who own homes benefit from increased home value, while people who rent are forced to move farther from job centers and the community resources they rely on, increasing their daily travel cost and time.

Displacement is often seen simply as a consequence of a growing population and an improving economy.

Often unrecognized is a history that has concentrated communities of color into specific areas where they built strong community ties.

Since these individuals and communities continue to face systemic inequities that limit access to the benefits of an improving economy, they are often priced out of these same areas as others gain stronger purchasing power.

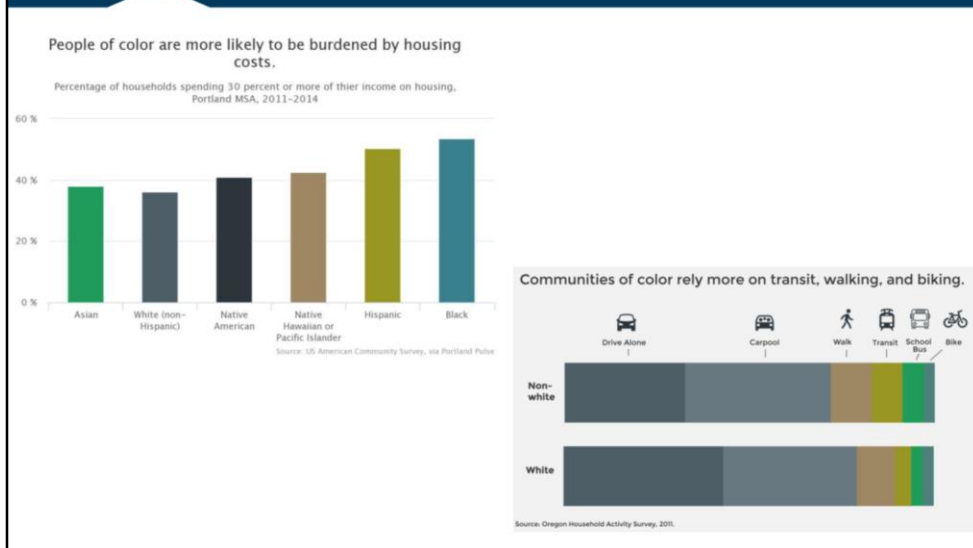
Note: Original source of commute distance graphic, Brookings Institution, did not provide information for Native Americans or Pacific Islanders.

Community impact



Not only does this displacement increase travel time and cost for individuals, it can create a cascading effect on the viability of community resources such as places of worship, community centers and culturally-focused businesses as members, users and customers lose convenient access.

Housing and transportation



People of color are more likely to be burdened by housing costs.

People of color are also more likely to rely on transit, walking and biking.

Today, communities of color continue to point to issues of racial bias and inequity in investigation and enforcement of traffic laws and transit fares.

Studies have also shown that drivers in the greater Portland region are significantly less likely to stop to allow an African American pedestrian to safely cross the street.

Additionally, people of color are more likely to be victims of traffic fatalities and severe injuries.

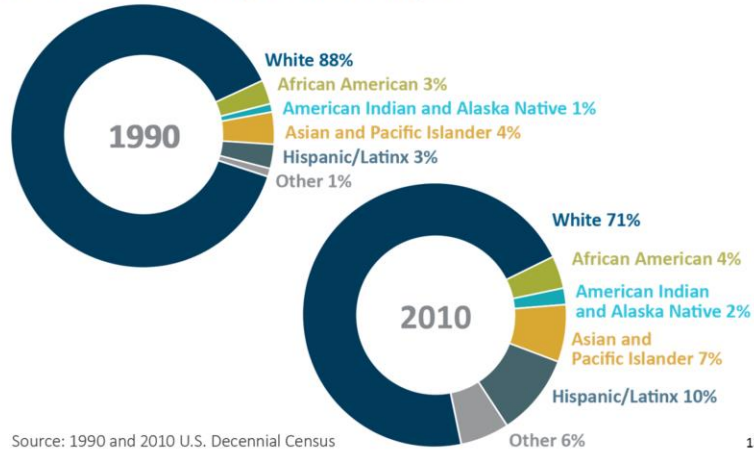
Transformation is happening.



- Greater Portland is changing – it is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Historically, decision-makers created racist laws and policies that continue to hurt and exclude people of color. As a result, communities of color don't have the same opportunities to be as healthy, wealthy or educated as their white neighbors.
- Improving access to these opportunities is central to greater Portland's future prosperity and Metro's mission, and it's something we all have the chance to be part of.
- As the region's demographics change, we need to plan for our future by addressing long-standing institutional barriers that inhibit success for everyone.

Diversity is growing...

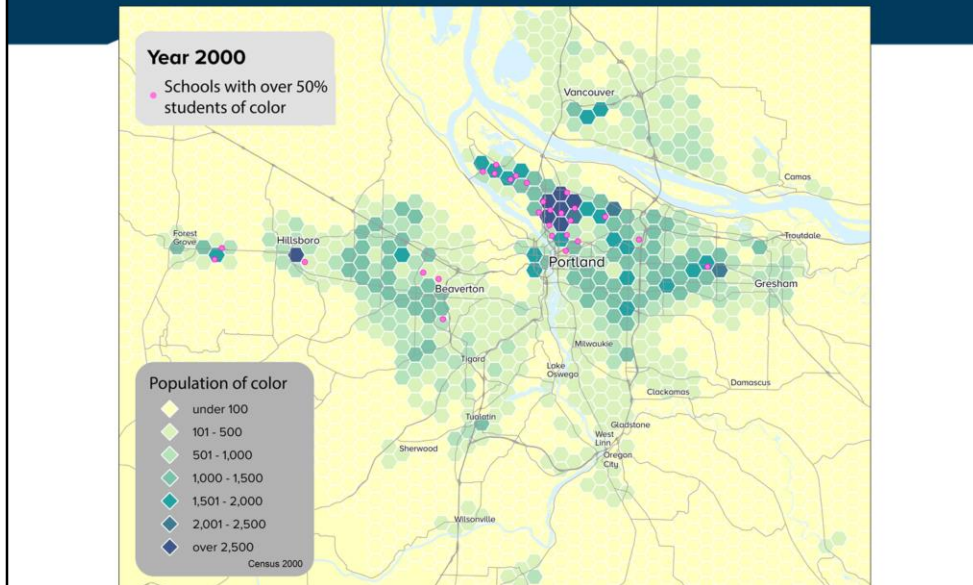
Race and ethnicity in the greater Portland region



Source: 1990 and 2010 U.S. Decennial Census

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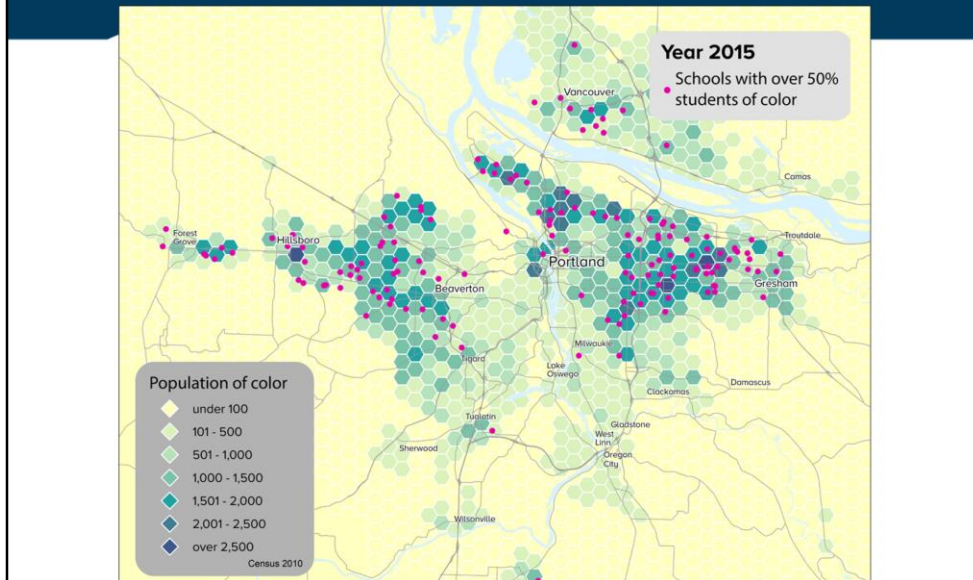
...in all communities...



Diversity is also spreading around the region. This shows both population for people of color overall and schools with over 50% non-white population.

In 2000, communities of color were largely concentrated in North/Northeast Portland, a legacy of redlining and displacement from other places. Most majority nonwhite schools were there as well.

...across greater Portland.



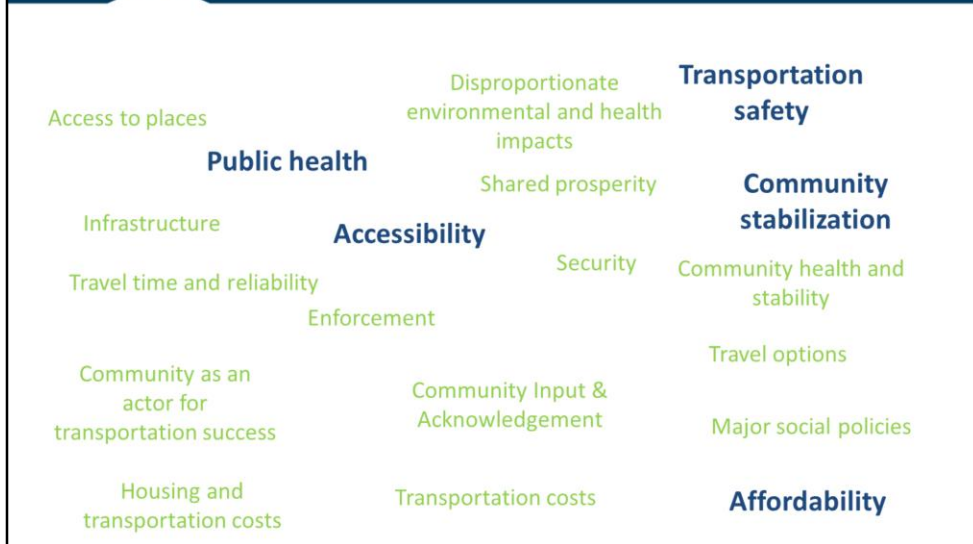
Ten years later, we're seeing majority non-white schools all over the region, especially in East Multnomah County, Washington County, and northern Clackamas County. This is partially because we are growing overall and attracting people from around the nation and world. It's also evidence of how displacement is changing communities.

This map obscures the fact that populations of color have grown everywhere in the region, *except* North/Northeast Portland. We know this is due to multiple causes, but displacement is real and it's affecting community cohesion and culture.

More than dots on a map. It has real impacts for how people live their lives – access to jobs, education, housing, places of worship, and also parks and nature.

By focusing our attention on improving racial equity, we are creating policies that serve communities across the region, and will only continue to do so as greater Portland becomes a more diverse place.

What have we heard

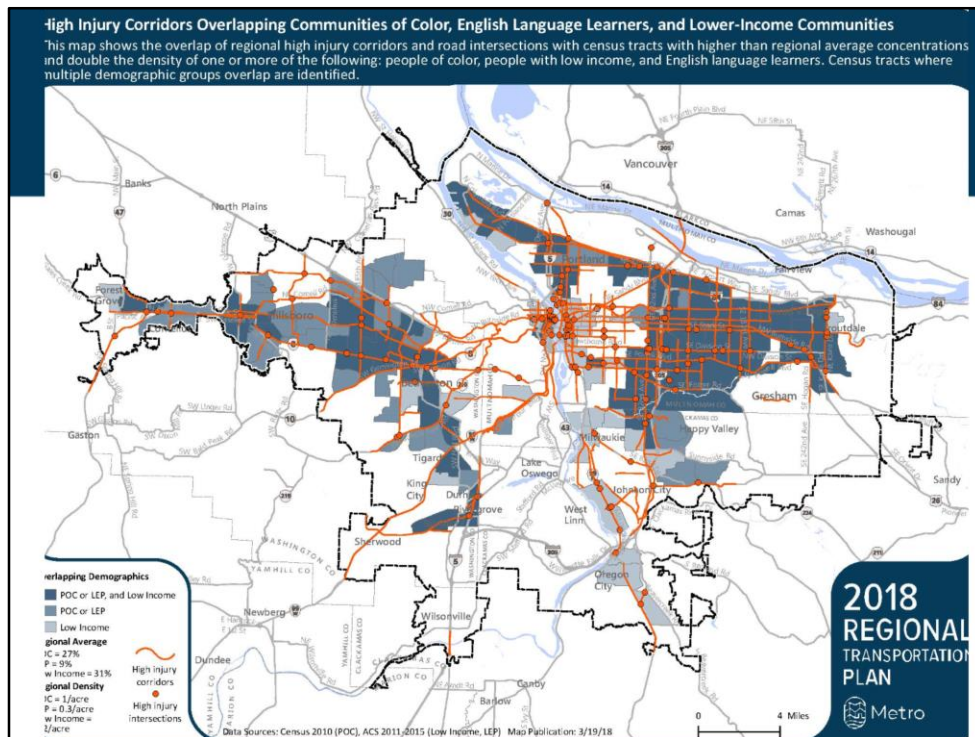


And, hopefully, government is changing. There have always been leaders in communities of color who have been active and resilient. As one community activist said at a Metro event last year, “Just because you’re just now listening to us doesn’t mean we haven’t been fighting and that we don’t know what our communities need.”

Engagement with communities of color have consistently expressed the transportation priorities of

- Public health (concerns about pollution, environmental protection)
- Accessibility (getting to where you want to go in the way you travel)
- Affordability
- Safety
- Community stabilization

There is consistently an overlay of the role that transit plays within these themes.



A clear opportunity came through the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan. Knowing that transportation safety was a key concern for communities of color, decision-makers looked at where high injury roadways and intersections (those that caused death or life changing injuries), and comparing them to where there are more people of color, English language learners and people with low income.

This led to a higher priority on safety projects in these areas and safety components within other transportation projects planned for these areas.

This is just one example of considering the impact of the current system as it relates to historically marginalized communities and making a choice to prioritize the impact on those communities.

Racial equity, broader impact

Acknowledging past and present systemic racism

Creating a strategy

A focus that advances opportunity for all

June 2016

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Racial equity and transportation

Impacts of
current system

Access
to decisions

Who benefits and
how

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So, how does this work for this task force, and how does the racial equity strategy apply to decision-making for transportation planning and funding?

I will pass on what Metro hears from community advocates over and over what staff and policymakers should be considering:

- Think about the impacts of the current system and what transportation means in terms of racial equity – connections to opportunities and opportunities to build wealth and improve health OR worse health outcomes, greater danger of death or serious injury, greater isolation and concentration of poverty and race. Pair this with impacts like displacement and it's clear that a transportation funding measure is inextricably linked with racial equity or inequity.
- Think about who has decided in the past, and who can decide going forward
- Think about how benefits are defined, who has benefited in the past, and who will benefit going forward