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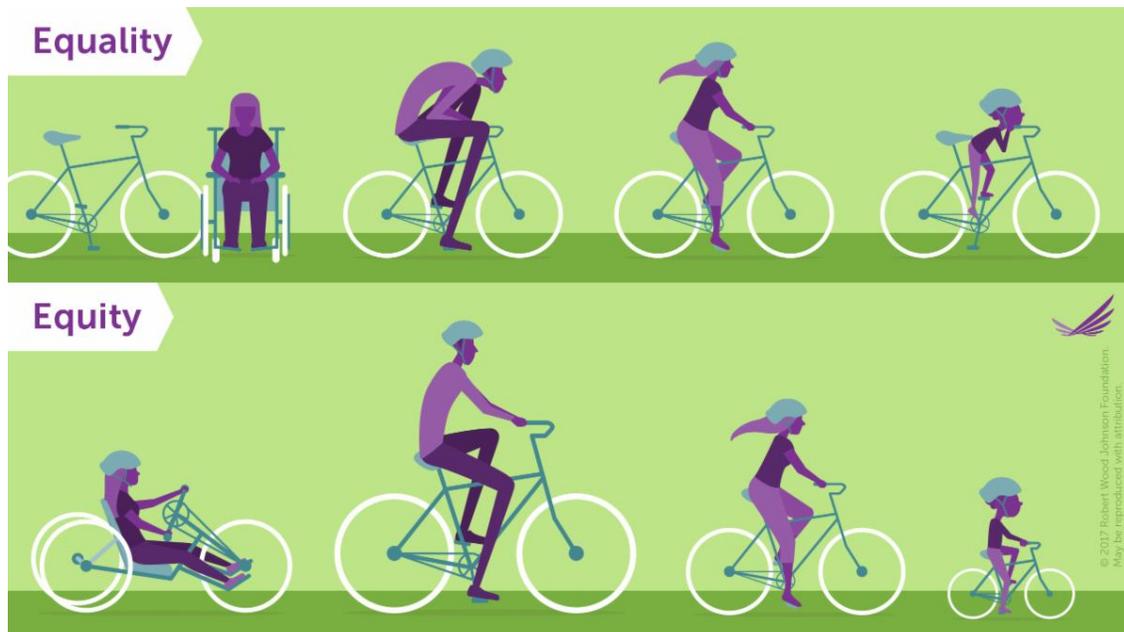


Issue 49

Advancing Transportation Equity

What is transportation equity? It's transportation that works for everyone. It's when residents have the mobility they need to participate fully in society. It also requires a proactive approach to investing in communities that have been underserved. Applying an equity approach to transportation means that we must acknowledge how the built environment and transportation systems have not served everyone equally.

Highway construction, federal transportation dollars, redlining, zoning, school districting and many other policy tools have historically disenfranchised certain communities, particularly low-income Black people, resulting in limited access to safe, comfortable, affordable and healthy transportation choices that other groups enjoy.



Transportation impacts people's daily routines and experiences. Whenever we

make planning, policy or design decisions, there is an obligation to advance equity.

Why Include Equity in Transportation Planning?

- **Transportation is a public good** – Everyone should have access to the benefits of a safe and connected transportation system.
- **Disparate access to mobility leads to social exclusion**– Disparate access means not everyone has the same ability to enjoy safe and connected travel, because the system is designed to favor some groups over others. This perpetuates inequities in access to food, healthcare, recreation, education, employment and other essential needs and opportunities.
- **It's required by law** – Environmental Justice Executive Order, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- **Achieving planning goals requires it**– Focusing resources on populations who have been traditionally underserved, and who face the greatest challenges is critical in order to make significant progress on safety and accessibility.

Active transportation projects specifically play a role in advancing equitable systems. For example, they:

- Provide affordable options
- Support improved health outcomes
- Increase accessibility to modal options
- Address safety disparities

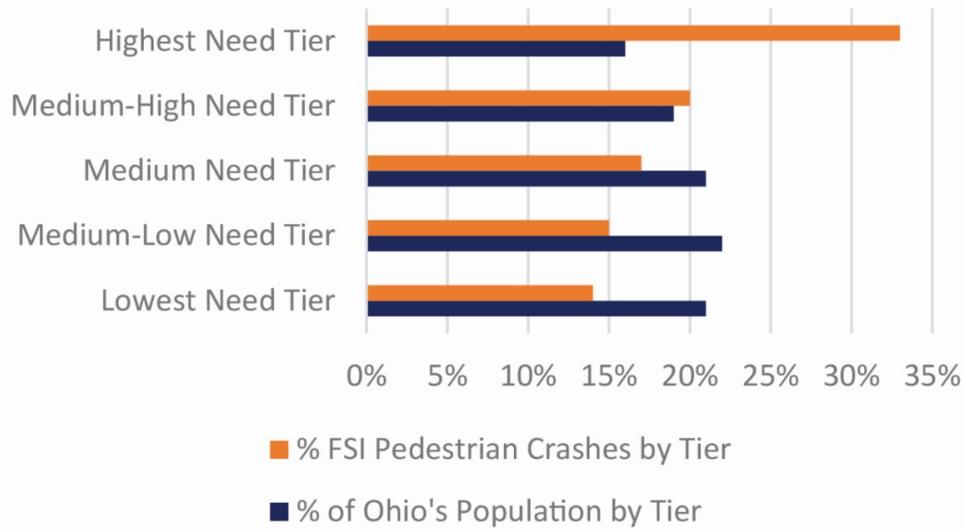
Data and Talking Points

Although progress has been made in recent years, inequities still exist today. Listening to the experiences of people who navigate such challenges every day will provide a deeper understanding of these disparities (see Resources).

It can also be helpful to identify where inequities are borne out in data and to use this data in understanding existing conditions, identifying projects and measuring performance. Here are some data points to know:

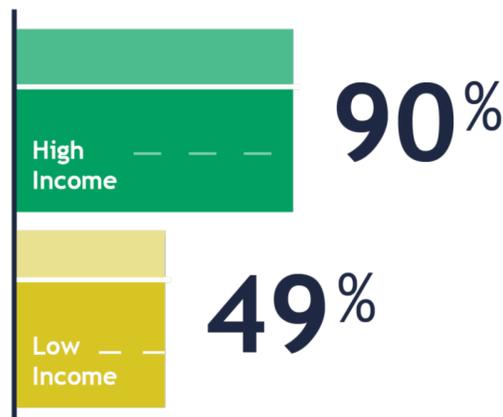
- **Traffic Safety Disparities** – Nationally, people of color and low-income people are more likely to be killed while walking and bicycling.
- In Ohio, [data indicates](#) that bicycle and pedestrian crashes disproportionately affect people of color – making up between 18-34% of all fatal pedestrian crashes since 2009 but only about 18% of Ohio's population.
- For pedestrians, this trend has occurred with greater frequency in recent years. The table below shows that 33% of all fatal and serious injury (FSI) pedestrian crashes and 28% of all FSI bicycle crashes from 2009-2018 occurred in a block group identified as the highest tier of need, where only 16% of Ohio's population lives.

FSI Pedestrian Crashes by Need Tier



- **Infrastructure Investment Disparities** – Low-income communities and communities of color generally have less access to high-quality pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

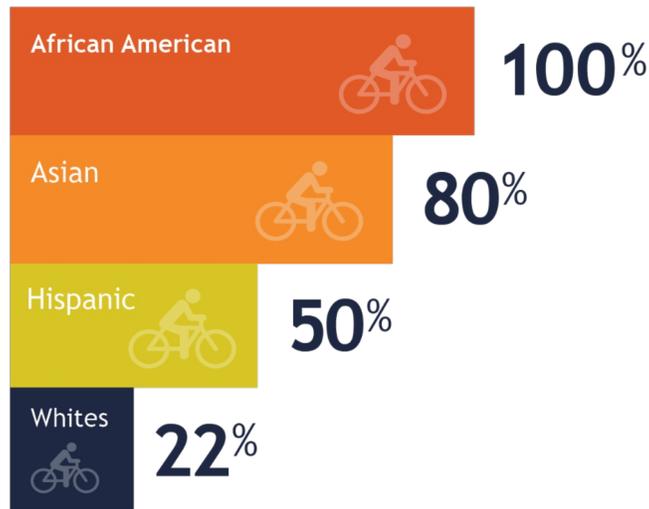
Communities with Sidewalks



Bridging the Gap, Income Disparities in Street Features that Encourage Walking, 2012

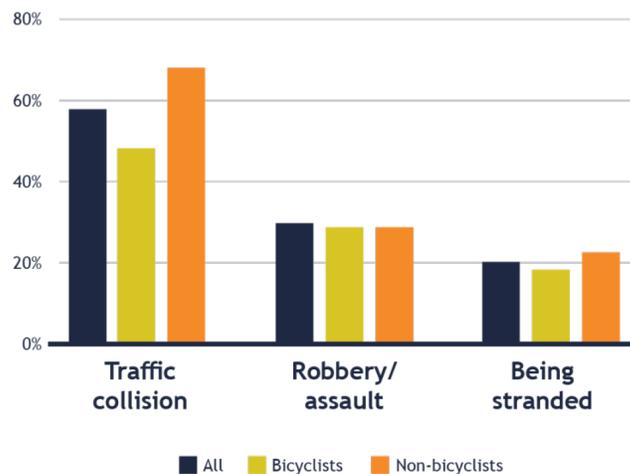
- **Ridership** – People of color are the fastest growing population of bicycle users nationwide. Low-income individuals are also bicycling more than higher earners.

Growth in the percent of all trips that are by bike (2001-2009)

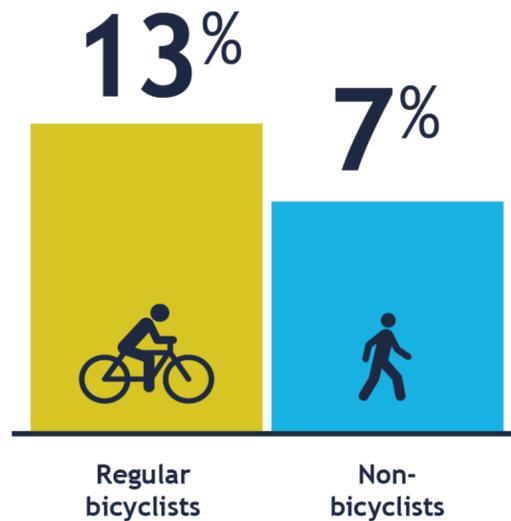


- **Traffic Violence** – Fear of traffic injuries and deaths, police violence and street harassment discourage active transportation in low-income and communities of color. In Ohio and across the country, traffic laws are disproportionately enforced against people of color, including people walking and bicycling, as shown in several *Ohio* and *national studies*.

Bicycling fears among surveyed Blacks and Latinos



Fear of being profiled by police while biking among surveyed Blacks and Latinos



Actions to Develop Equity

While active transportation can provide safer and healthier transportation choices for marginalized communities, it can also perpetuate transportation inequities if not planned and implemented with meaningful engagement.

So what actions can be integrated into practices and procedures to develop a more equitable transportation system? Here are a few actions to consider:

Community Engagement

- **Engage with the public on their terms.** Transportation professionals must work to hear and respond to the voices of people who have been excluded from transportation planning decisions. This means prioritizing public engagement with low-income communities, communities of color and other marginalized groups. When projects and plans reflect the needs of these groups, the transportation system serves everyone better.
- **Value the expertise of community-based organizations** and compensate them for their involvement in the planning process.
- **Partner with advocacy groups**, like LGBTQ, disability rights, racial justice and other organizations that recognize the overlapping types of oppression people face based on their race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and/ or ability.
- **Promote grassroots, community-led decision making.** Use culturally competent outreach strategies, clear communication and transparent decision making to encourage trust, collaboration and community empowerment.

Projects

- **Existing conditions analyses** can help understand a community's needs by gathering data on equity-related factors to analyze, such as how existing transportation systems serve, or fail to serve, marginalized groups. These factor could include: communities of color, low-income populations and concentrations of people with disabilities. Be sure that quantitative data is combined with qualitative data collected through outreach. Data should inform decisions, not be the decision.
- **Demand analyses** should include equity indicators, like educational attainment, limited English proficiency and motor vehicle access.
- **Performance metrics** should reflect equity goals; for example, by 2025 70% of communities of color will be within a quarter of a mile of active transportation facilities.
- **Project prioritization** should use equity factors (like the ones mentioned above) to help determine what projects to build, and where.
- **Be intentional about race in these analyses.** Distinct racial and ethnic populations have unique needs and perspectives. When there is enough data to do so, separate racial and ethnic groups.
- **Be mindful of the language you use.** For example, avoid using “minority.” This term centers everyone’s identity around whiteness. Instead, use terms like People of Color (POC); Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC); or racialized people/groups.
- **Avoid opaque terms**, like low-income neighborhoods, in favor of specific explanations, for example – Census tracts where more than 30% of households are below Area Median Income.
- **De-emphasize “best” practices** in favor of local expertise and peer information exchanges between similar communities. For example, an image of a cycle track from Bogotá may resonate more than an example from Copenhagen at a meeting with Latinx community members.
- **Include the lived experiences of marginalized communities** as essential data in assessing infrastructure and investment needs.

Resources

Ohio

- [Walk.Bike.Ohio District Equity Analyses](#) (ODOT)
- [Walk.Bike.Ohio Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Analyses](#)(ODOT)
- [TIMS Active Transportation Map Viewer](#)(ODOT)
- [Active Transportation Academy Health and Equity in Transportation training \(ODOT\)](#), available through an eLearning platform.
- [Health Equity and Mobility Justice FAQ Factsheet](#)(Ohio Department of Health)
- [The Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement](#)(The Ohio

Other

- [*Mobility Equity Framework*](#) (The Greenlining Institute)
- [*Principles of Mobility Justice*](#) (The Untokening)
- [*Equity Conversation Guide*](#) (Toole Design Group)
- [*Designing for All Ages & Abilities: Contextual Guidance for High-Comfort Bicycle Facilities*](#) (NACTO)
- [*Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design*](#) (World Bank Group)
- [*Planning While Black: A Powerful Call for Racial Equity*](#)(NACTO)
- [*Why We Must Talk About Race When We Talk About Bikes*](#)(Bicycling Magazine)
- [*Rewriting the Urban Planning Canon*](#) (American Planning Association)
- [*Dangerous By Design*](#) (Smart Growth America)

Equitable Engagement Spotlight: Yay Bikes!

Bicycle advocacy and education group Yay Bikes! led a series of Train the Trainer educational bike rides throughout the state, with a focus on racial and gender inclusion.

In each class, at least 25% of participants and 50% of instructors were required to be Black people. Gender parity required at least 50% of participants and instructors to be female. Yay Bikes! wrote these requirements into its scope of work, which held partner organizations accountable.

Creating racially-integrated workshops with gender parity led to important conversations among participants and instructors about how to design and lead bike rides in an inclusive and equitable way.

Participants and instructors were able to understand the very different experiences that people face while bicycling as a result of racism and sexism. All participants learned necessary skills to intentionally design routes and rides that are welcoming and safe.

This is a prime example of the deliberate approach that is needed to achieve inclusive engagement.



Announcements

- Walk.Bike.Ohio's *Existing Conditions Summary Report* is now available online! Check it out for a comprehensive look at the current state of active transportation in Ohio. In addition, if you weren't able to join a stakeholder meeting, catch up on up the draft recommendations by watching this *short video*.
- The *Active Transportation Academy's Health and Equity in Transportation training* (ODOT) is available online through an *eLearning platform*.
- Recordings from the Ohio Safety Project Process and Funding Course are available on *YouTube*.
- The National Center for Safe Routes to School and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center have shared new *planning considerations for walking and rolling to school this year*.
- Learn about *engaging people with disabilities in street planning and design* from Toole Design's new resource guide.

Questions? Feedback?

Drop us a line, bikeohio@dot.ohio.gov



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