



Redefining Safety

Policing and enforcement in transportation

The Problem

Over-policing and racism in transportation mean that Black and Brown people are not safe in our transportation systems and public right-of-way.

“The Jane Jacobian idea of ‘eyes on the street’ very easily becomes “eyes on the Black people” — which is why some African Americans disengage from public spaces like parks altogether. These peaceful green spaces just as easily induce anxiety and trauma for Black and Brown people, especially when they know the cops can be unleashed at any moment.”- Brentin Mock, [CityLab](#)

Black and Indigenous people suffer disproportionate police violence. Black, American Indian, and Alaska Native community members are significantly more likely than white people to be killed by police. Latino men are also more likely to be killed by police than are White men. For young men of color, [police use of force is among the leading causes of death](#).

Policing in transportation leads to injury and death for Black and Brown community members. Traffic stops are by far the most common interaction that people have with law enforcement. Policing in transportation provides opportunities for discriminatory targeting of civilians. Across all modes, locally and across the nation, jaywalking, failure to show proof of payment, broken tail lights, and other minor traffic infractions have provided “justification” for police involvement that ended in civilian death. Said Joquin, Sandra Bland, Dijon Kizzee, Byron Lee Williams, Samuel DuBose, Oscar Perez-Giron, and many more, were all killed after being stopped for “routine” transportation enforcement. Even when a racially profiled traffic stop doesn’t result in violence, these stops create fear, humiliation, distrust and PTSD among those stopped.

Black and Brown folks disproportionately receive transportation related tickets.

- **Walking:** In 2016, [28%](#) of jaywalking citations in Seattle were written to Black people, who represent just about 7% of the city’s population.
- **Riding:** While 9% of people who ride Sound Transit light rail and trains are Black, [22%](#) of riders caught up in the fare-enforcement system over the last four years were Black.
- **Driving:** Black, Latino, Native American and Pacific Islander drivers in Washington were searched at a rate up to [5x higher](#) than white motorists. Black and Latinx drivers were issued 2.6 and 1.7x more traffic infractions per capita than White drivers, respectively.

People of color are charged with more punitive fines, fees, and other consequences at a higher rate, causing lasting economic harm and mobility impacts for individuals and their households. If you fail to resolve a traffic ticket in Court, you may receive a late fee, lose your right to a hearing, your ticket may be sent to collections, your vehicle may be impounded, and your license may be suspended. Driving with a suspended license is a crime. Compared to 0.4% of White men, about [2.3%](#) of all Black men face a license suspension charge after a traffic infraction fine. Attending court to address a fine puts undocumented community members at risk of deportation.

Transportation enforcement is expensive and punitive fines aren’t working. Sound Transit spends about \$1.4 million a year on fare enforcement and does not get the money from fines, which are instead handled by the court. In recent years, the majority of tickets went unpaid and were [sent to collections](#).



Principles

To us mobility justice means the end of health, safety, environmental, economic, and social inequities for transportation workers and users of all races and abilities, using all modes.

Redefine safety beyond injury and death from traffic collisions to include the right of Black and Brown bodies to be free from harassment and police violence.

Acknowledge and repair harm. We must acknowledge the history of racist policing in transportation, white supremacy in urban planning and our organization, and disparities in investment of safe communities. We must develop policies and programs that elevate and validate BIPOC voices from these communities to end dangerous and harmful practices.

Center racial justice. Solutions must center the needs of BIPOC communities through racial equity analysis and community-led decision making.

Transparency. Require detailed reporting of data related to transportation policing and enforcement disaggregated by race and gender.



What we've done

Fare enforcement at King County Metro. Brought resolutions out of courts; divorced policing from fare-related infractions; developed income-based fines & incentive-based resolutions.

Block the Box. Piloting automated enforcement technology to keep bus lanes clear and crosswalks safe while avoiding discriminatory enforcement and police interactions.

Low-income toll study. Won state legislative study to research income-based tolling programs.

Free and affordable transit fares. Pushed for ORCA LIFT ferries study & helped pass subsidized ORCA LIFT program.

State Fare Enforcement laws. Supporting legislation that would update the state law to allow regional transit authorities to create fare enforcement programs that do not rely on court systems.

What's next? Moving towards true safety.

We support Black-led organizations calling for decriminalization of our cities. Within our scope of transportation we aim to move forward policies at the federal, state, regional, and local levels that:

- **Reject policing** by decriminalizing behaviors that encourage healthy and sustainable modes, and **redirect police budgets into upstream solutions and direct community benefit.**
- **Prioritize incentives, education, engineering, and access** over enforcement, including connected and well-designed networks for healthy transportation options, free or affordable transportation access, and more.
- In the interim, **replace armed officers with civilian officials or automated enforcement.** Automated enforcement should not be seen as a solution to community safety and should be rigorously evaluated for equitable geographic distribution, reinvestment of revenue, removal of officers from case review, strong privacy considerations & alternative resolutions as described in this document. Wherever possible, infrastructure improvements or real time awareness mechanisms should be used instead.
- **Remove courts.** Parking, traffic, fare, and other transportation citations should be dealt with administratively rather than in courts.
- **Alternative resolutions.** Users should be offered opportunities to correct matters before penalties are issued. Penalties should be progressive; scaled by income or non-financial. Fine revenues should be reoriented back into community solutions.
- **Create accountability & use inclusive processes** in program design through authentic engagement, data transparency, and agency accountability. TCC will speak on behalf of racial justice, but not on behalf of BIPOC communities. Policies that include programming and implementation should be reoriented back to community for design.



What's next? Policy ideas.

Support easy, safe and affordable access

- More funding for safer crosswalks & connected networks of sidewalks and bike lanes
- Get funding for income-based fare programs
- Reinvest fee revenue into BIPOC communities
- Move toward fare ambassadors and free & affordable fares

Decriminalize sustainable modes

- Remove outdated pedestrian, biking and micromobility laws that criminalize sustainable modes
- Support efforts to decriminalize jaywalking, micromobility use, and helmet laws
- Ensure new mobility workers do not get policed doing their job (redistributing scooters on private property, TNC drivers charging their electric vehicles)

Reduce punitive enforcement

- Remove enforcement from courts, especially for nonviolent issues
- Support alternative resolutions (e.g. incentives and non-financial options)
- End [debt-based driver's license suspension](#) practices
- Pursue progressive resolutions (e.g. income based fines, incentives, vouchers)
- Fix state laws preventing more equitable transit fare enforcement
- Understand impacts of non-enforcement fines, such as toll fines
- Pilot program on alternative resolutions
- Create non-punitive mask requirements; offer masks in public spaces

Reduce police in enforcement

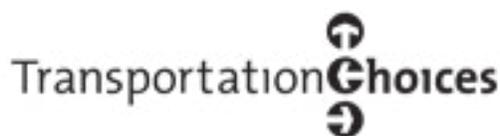
- Redirect funds that support highway and non-motorized safety programs away from policing into non-policing interventions
- Update pdate federal, state, and local recommendations to de-emphasize enforcement for safety plans
- Redirect funding in safety grants away from law enforcement officers
- Pursue automated enforcement equity and privacy study
- Remove requirement for sworn police officers review of automated enforcement photos
- Divorce police from fare enforcement
- Remove police from fare evasion incidents
- Remove police interactions from routine traffic stops and parking enforcement

Community engagement

- Develop Transportation Equity Advisory groups
- Pay community members for their expertise on community safety solutions
- Policies that include programming and implementation should be reoriented back to community for design

Data and transparency

- Improve traffic stop data disaggregation and transparency
- Engage in State Patrol study on disproportionate traffic stops
- Work to ensure privacy in enforcement data, especially sharing between law enforcement offices
- Use crash data collected from automated enforcement to identify and inform infrastructure improvements to reduce reliance on enforcement at that location



Mission: Transportation Choices Coalition is working to bring Washingtonians more and better transportation choices — real opportunities to take a bus, catch a train, ride a bike, or walk.

What we do

Coalition organizing and advocacy | Policy research | Community engagement | Communications and education