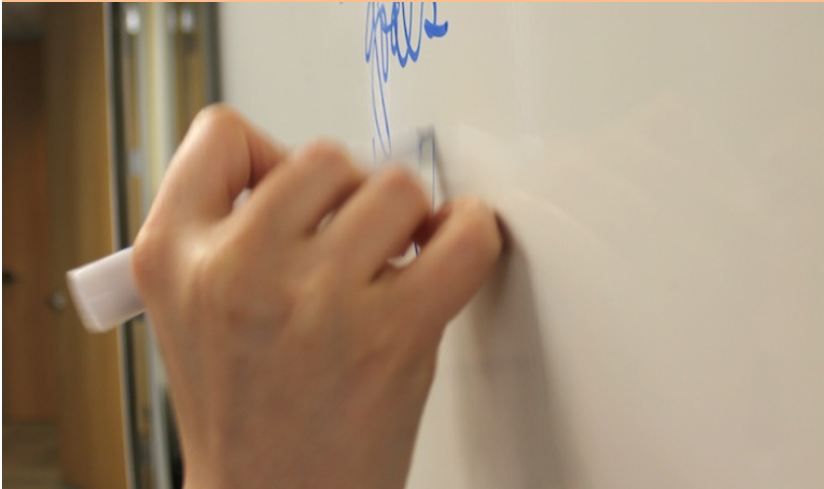


Build Support for Street Safety

Everyone can make streets safer.



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Why Safety Matters

Safe streets are the backbone of a pleasant neighborhood and a strong community. Improving street safety seems like an easy cause, but concerns over speed, parking access, and cost can get in the way. Here are a few ways to articulate why safe streets with space for cars, bikes, and pedestrians matter for everyone:

Protects Children

While streets are important for transportation, they are also a part of a neighborhood where kids walk, cross and play. No child should be at risk of injury while walking to school, visiting friends, or just running around being a kid.



Provides Equal Access

Nearly 40% of people in Oregon do not use a car for various reasons. Providing ways for them to get around is simply a good idea. Healthy streets allow everyone to get to their destinations, by providing sidewalks, curb ramps for wheelchairs, and easy access to transit.

Supports Business

People driving on fast roads don't have time to see shops, restaurants, and other services. It's much easier to stop in at businesses on slower streets or when walking and bicycling.

Appealing to Everyone's Interests

Reduces Crime and Keeps "Eyes on the Street"

A safe street encourages people to use it during all hours of the day. This reduces the attractiveness of streets to criminals and promotes "community policing" by getting more people outside and putting more "eyes on the street."

Makes Active Transportation More Enjoyable and Effective

Relying less on cars to get around makes traveling healthier, more sustainable, and more affordable. Safer streets make it easier to walk, bicycle, and take transit to work, school, shops, entertainment, and anywhere else you want to go.

Reduces Environmental Impacts

Traveling by foot, bike, or bus goes a long way to reducing the impacts of climate change. Active transportation reduces greenhouse gas emissions and helps to lessen the impact of stormwater runoff. Many traffic calming designs, such as bulbouts, can also include stormwater management features.

Reclaims the Street for Everyone

In most cities, streets occupy up to 40% of public land. Instead of handing over that much valuable space to dangerous traffic, streets can be places to walk, socialize, and enjoy your community.

Encourages Mixed Residential, Commercial, and Recreational Opportunities

Streets can be more than part of the journey; they can be a major, attractive destination. Main streets where you can live, work, and play provide resources for people of all ages and abilities. Healthy streets let you spend less time getting places and more time enjoying what is nearby.

Who Else to Involve

Finding Partners and Supporters

Everyone is affected by street safety and an amazing range of people and organizations may be interested in taking action on their own or supporting your efforts to make streets safer. Start by asking them about their interests in street safety. If they want to help out, you can begin exploring what skills, relationships, and influence they can add.

In addition to the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA), you may find support from these organizations and people in your neighborhood:

Neighbors

The people living next to you use the same streets and may have noticed safety concerns as well. Take a moment to mention a concern you have, tell them about steps you have already taken to fix it, and ask if they have any other street safety concerns. Find ways to work on these concerns together.



It is important to get neighbors talking to one another



Businesses thrive on streets where people can easily and safely walk, bicycle, drive, and take transit

Find partners today:

1. **Simply ask your neighbors and own family about street safety concerns.**
2. **Identify some of the major threats in your area** and see if others, like business owners, event-goers, and people at schools have had the same or similar problems.
3. **See what skills and resources** these people and groups can contribute to the effort.
4. **Don't forget about Facebook, Twitter, and other social media;** nearly every organization out there has a digital presence and it's easier than ever to get in contact.
5. **Contact the BTA to get ideas:**
gerik@bta4bikes.org , or (503) 226-0676

Schools

Student safety is always a big concern. Get administrators, students, and PTA boards involved. Universities can often provide a range of technical support and are full of students eager to make cities safer places. Try talking to university programs for urban planning, engineering, public health, community development, and architecture.

Religious Institutions

Places of worship are often community-oriented and interested in the wellbeing of their members and the surrounding neighborhood. Congregations can be great places to find engaged and motivated partners. They have community ties and a strong voice to spread a message to many people.

Local Businesses

Shopkeepers understand that it is good for business if people can easily and safely get to their stores and restaurants. Many more people will see businesses and be able to stop if streets are slow moving and active pedestrian places.

Fraternal Orders and Unions

These groups have well-organized members who are often willing to work for equity and public rights issues. Many labor unions also have skills in advocacy and speaking with politicians.

Neighborhood Associations

This is one of the best ways to raise awareness of safety threats and find people interested in supporting your improvements. If you live in Portland, a neighborhood association should represent you. Through frequent meetings and events, neighborhood associations provide a forum for people to meet, express ideas, and begin collaborative action. They are also great places to learn about upcoming plans and programs taking place where you live. Some neighborhood groups also offer training and resources for public advocates. In Portland you can contact the Office of Neighborhood Involvement for more information. Visit www.portlandonline.com/oni



Neighborhood Associations are great forums to raise interest for working together towards street safety

Environmental/Equity Groups

Safe streets can reduce environmental impacts and make non-automobile travel possible and enjoyable. Check out the range of work being done by many groups including:

- Sierra Club
- Audubon Society
- 1000 Friends of Oregon
- Ecotrust
- Forest Park Conservancy
- Urban League of Portland

Do people argue against street safety?

Street safety has very broad appeal but some people may have valid concerns with some of the ways it is pursued. Traffic calming devices may be seen as slowing down cars, while certain laws and regulations may seem harsh or targeted only to cars. It is also important to understand the concerns of emergency service providers (fire trucks and police), freight haulers who need to move big trucks, and people driving cars, who have a right to use the road in a safe manner.

Thinking about “positions” and “interests” as a better way to understand where everyone is coming from. Their position may be that speed bumps are hazardous and inconvenient. It can be hard to convince them otherwise. Instead, try to find their interests, which may be ensuring efficient travel speeds and being able to easily get where they want to go. Chances are you can work together to reach a person’s interests through creative thinking and a bit of give-and-take.



Curb extensions and bioswales work together towards safe crossings and stormwater management on SW 4th Avenue in Portland

Law Enforcement

It's the job of police officers to make sure that streets are used safely. Talk to an officer on the street or in a precinct office and ask them to spread word of your concerns to the right people. They may share your concerns. Check out the Portland Police Bureau Traffic Division for more.

Social Services

Many people rely on social services for employment, food, health, and education support. Sometimes these people are the most dependent on walking, bicycling, and transit. Service organizations such as Boys and Girls Club, Red Cross, Goodwill, health clinics, employment divisions, and others have established community ties and are interested in promoting social welfare and equity.

Walking/Bicycling Clubs

These groups get together all over the city and likely have a host of concerns about safety that they may want to work towards. (See page 6 for more information on forming your own walking or bicycling club).

Community Groups

These groups often form around a shared interest in the wellbeing of neighborhoods. Some groups, such as Active Right of Way (AROW) in Portland, deal directly with street safety. Other groups may have a

Organizations You Should Know

- Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA)
- Willamette Pedestrian Coalition
- Community Cycling Center (CCC)
- Organizing People – Activating Leaders (OPAL) Environmental Justice
- Active Right-Of-Way (AROW)
- Urban League of Oregon
- Active Right of Way (AROW)

“It's important to reach out to the non-transportation people too.”

Laura Koch at Community Cycling Center notes,

“That's where the new and valuable connections will be made.”

different focus, but could still be interested in making streets safer.

Medical and Health Services

Hospitals, clinics, and public health groups have a major stake in promoting street safety. Medics would prefer that people avoid a crash, rather than have to treat an injury. At Legacy Emanuel Hospital in Portland, the Trauma Nurses Talk Tough encourages people to reduce safety risks on a daily basis.



The Boys and Girls Club in NE Portland hosts activities for kids and teens to promote awareness on the busy streets nearby.

Take Back the Street

Community Strategies to Make Streets Safer and Raise Awareness

Streets should be usable by everyone, no matter how you travel. Here are some great ways to make the street a lively public space for your community. You may even get to know your neighbors better along the way.

Block Party

Cities often allow residents to temporarily close residential streets for parties and other community events. The steps for a single person or organization to arrange street closures are usually straightforward and city governments have the information available on how to request a closure. Neighborhood associations can be a great resource for learning how to organize such an event and spreading the word among fellow residents and businesses.

- Determine when and where you want the closure and party. Weekends and holidays are better than during the workweek. Low-traffic residential streets are usually favored over busy roads.
- File a closure permit request with the appropriate city office with the help of your neighborhood association or on your own. These requests often require that all residents of the street sign a consent form. There may be a fee for processing.
- Streets can also be closed for events through an un-permitted process driven by neighbors, but there are benefits to closing your street through the city process, such as inviting a police car or fire truck for kids to explore.



Walking, Bicycling, and Education Groups

- Bicycle Transportation Alliance, 503-226-0676
- Columbia River Volkssport Club, www.crvwalking.org
- Community Cycling Center, 503-288-8864
- Mazamas, www.mazamas.org
- Northwest Trails Alliance, www.nw-trails.org
- Portland By Cycle Classes, 503-823-7083
- Portland By Cycle Guided Bike Rides, 503-823-7699
- Portland Velo, www.portlandvelo.net
- Rose City Roamers, 503-285-2915
- SW Trails Group, www.swtrails.org
- Trails Club of Oregon, www.trailsclub.org

Soup Night/Potluck

Neighborhood parties do not have to close down streets or obtain permits. They can be as simple as organizing a potluck in someone's home or at a park. Neighbors can also choose one home to prepare a couple of soups in bulk and invite the neighborhood over for a casual get together. Neighborhood associations may help coordinate soup night schedules and might contribute towards providing community bowls, pots, and other necessary kitchen items.

Walking Groups

The simple act of walking around is a great way to get to know your community, but it is often taken for granted. People are out walking dogs, tending to gardens, washing cars, or playing with their children. Take a stroll and say hello to the people you pass. This simple action makes streets safer since you will come to know the people using the streets and will watch out for your neighbors (and their kids and dogs).

You can also organize walking groups for more regular opportunities to get to know neighbors. A group of morning dog walkers, neighborhood watch patrols, or fitness walkers can become a regular and comforting site for people in the area.

Many options exist for getting people together to explore their neighborhood.

- Neighborhood-area organizations that already exist may be a great venue to attract members to your effort.
- Organizing a walk around a destination (be it walking children to school, going grocery shopping, or stopping for coffee) can help attract more people and give the group a sense of purpose.
- Gyms, fitness equipment stores, medical offices, and commercial districts may form walking groups to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Meetup.org is a nationwide social networking site that brings together millions of people for activities and events, including walking groups. There are over 70 walking groups listed in Portland alone.

Take Action Today:

- Web search “street closure permit” to learn about closures for block parties
- Find existing walking groups or create your own and see if anyone involved is interested in street traffic safety
- Explore *Safe Routes To School* program to learn about walking and bicycling trains for kids

Bicycle and Walking Trains

Helping children get to school by bicycling or walking is a great way to make the daily school commute easier and to get to know your neighbors. You can arrange a train (that picks up students and parents along the route to school) yourself or explore options of getting an official City of *Safe Routes To School* program set up at your elementary or middle school.

Intersection Repair (*Portland City Repair*)

This is one community organization tool that helps neighborhoods decorate streets and intersections. It can help calm traffic, beautify the area, and introduce you to your neighbors. There are many existing “repaired” intersections in Portland, mainly in Southeast.



A City Repair painted intersection in SE Portland near Belmont

Government Roles

Opportunities for Speaking with Agencies

Nearly all street designs, operations, and enforcement improvements that will make streets safer will require action by government and public agencies. City councils, mayors, county administrations, regional governments, state authorities, and federal agencies are all involved and may have access to funds to pay for the improvements. Get involved in your government agency planning efforts.

Public Events and Meetings

- Transportation projects are always going on somewhere. The agencies involved frequently hold open houses and meetings for the public to attend and provide input on projects big and small. Web search “Bureau of Transportation” to find a calendar of public events.
- Regular government budget meetings also allow public comment. This is your chance to attend, write letters, and raise support for safety project funding.

Transportation Planning Processes

The Transportation System Plan (TSP) is updated regularly for each city in Oregon, as required by state law. During the update process, petition your representatives and agencies to include more multimodal-friendly projects that keep safety in the forefront. Changing system-wide plans and policies will have a much larger effect than just lobbying for one local improvement.



What do Governments do for Safety?

City, county, regional, and state government spend roughly \$600 to \$700 million on transportation in the Portland area every year; even more throughout the state of Oregon. The money goes towards street construction and maintenance, improving safety and access, as well as regulation and enforcement.

State of Oregon

- Sets most street laws and speed limits while overseeing the building and repair of state highways
- Distributes federal money to specific projects and corridors
- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) manages the state’s Oregon Transportation Plan, which guides long-range transportation planning
- The State coordinates the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which distributes money to many projects around the state

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

- Integrates transportation and land use planning through the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
- Metro, the Portland regional government provides community and best-practice resources, such as *Creating Livable Streets: Street Design Guidelines for 2040* (Metro only)

City Transportation Department/Public Works

- The Portland Bureau of Transportation maintains \$8.1 billion worth of transportation infrastructure and is largely responsible for most streets
- Develops the Transportation System Plan (TSP), which catalogs specific goals and near-term projects
- Manages design standards and regulates enforcement policies
- Works with neighborhood offices to communicate with members of the public

Transit Providers

- The Portland-area transit agency provides nearly 300,000 trips a day, many of which involve walking or bicycling at either end (TriMet)
- Works to improve access to transit stops and build lively station areas
- Provides many opportunities to get involved in station-area planning



Safe neighborhood streets can be used by everyone for many purposes, including basketball

Feedback and Citizen Input

The City of Portland has set up several hotlines (503-823-SAFE and safe@portlandoregon.gov) for traffic safety and street maintenance issues. If you have a specific concern, calling one of these numbers can be a great way to begin the process of seeking improvements. Be patient because these things take time, but the City needs your input on what and where the problems are and how to begin fixing them.

If you don't live in Portland, call the main phone number for your city's government and ask who to speak with. Learn more on page 4 of the *Knowing your Streets!* guide.

Funding Opportunities

- In Oregon Cities, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is in charge of regional transportation and land use. This money can be used for a broad range of projects, including walking, bicycling, and transit, that are not as readily supported by more traditional federal funding.
- In Portland, Metro Regional Travel Option (RTO) grants are one of the few funding sources available to citizen organizations as they pursue projects that support multimodal options.

Making the Case for Safety

Understand the Problem

- Learn how streets work and where there are problems (see *Knowing Your Streets* Guide for details).
- Figure out who needs to be involved. Then invite them to get involved.

Find Partners

- Understand who will be affected by the problem and think of ways to make street safety interesting to them
- Focus on their interests and “what’s in it for them”
- Get involved with block parties, walking groups, and other ways to meet people, build awareness and find support

Communicate

- Understand the problem and be prepared to suggest solutions to the people you talk to (see *Policy for Street Safety*, *DIY Streets*, and *Design for Street Safety* Guides for more information).
- Attend public meetings and neighborhood associations to talk about the problems
- Be persistent and patient! Even small projects require planning and funding.

- Get involved during the budget process to ask for additional funds to be set aside for road safety.
- The Portland Development Commission (PDC) may be able to help with improvements in business districts.

“How is the new what.”

- Sam Adams, Mayor, City of Portland

(Knowing how to get it done is as important as knowing what to do.)