

Knowing Your Streets

You can get informed, stay involved, and make a difference.



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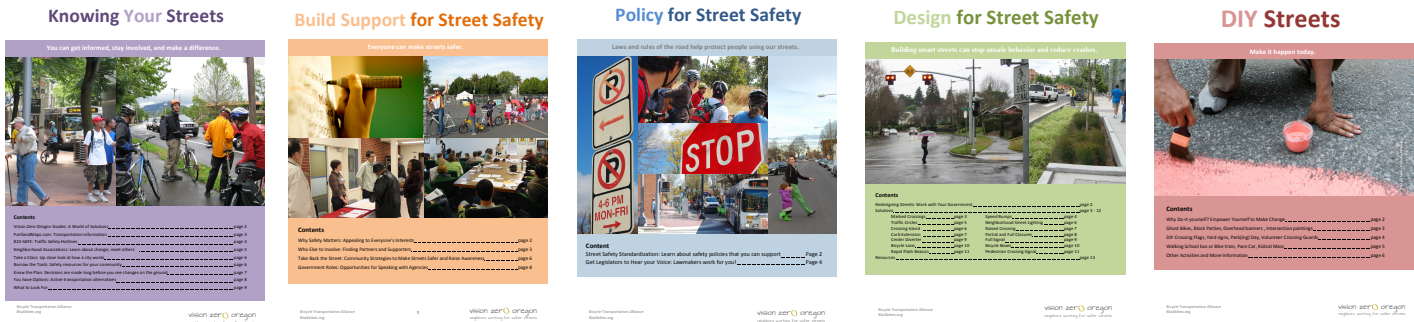
Vision Zero Oregon Guides

A World of Solutions

These guides are meant to give you the tools to understand your streets. You don't need to wait for the transportation department to do everything, you can help identify problems and solve these issues on your own. Read through each guide to discover tools, techniques, and knowledge that will help you create change.

Use these tools to turn your interest into activism.

Five guides lead you towards becoming a neighborhood street safety activist:



Knowing Your Streets

The tools, services, and contacts presented here are essential background for any activist's toolkit. Take advantage of these resources to prepare your case.

Building Support for Street Safety

For some solutions you can go it alone, but in many cases it helps to have partners to fight for your cause at the city and state level.

Policy for Street Safety

The rules that govern streets include the behavior of all pedestrians, bicyclists, and car drivers. Understand the problems and the future potential for policy changes, so that you can push for improvements.

Design for Street Safety

Not all streets are created equal. Learn about the building blocks that can be used to create a safe street.

DIY Street Safety

Take the solutions into you own hands with these suggestions.



PortlandMaps.com

Transportation Information

Not all traffic safety solutions are allowed on all city streets. Learning more about the streets in your neighborhood will help you understand why some streets are friendlier than others, why some have speed bumps, and why some allow for faster traffic. You can also locate information about speeding and other traffic problems to support your request for change.

In the Portland metro region, www.portlandmaps.com is a valuable source of information about your transportation system.

Detailed information includes:

- How fast cars are driving.
- How many cars are on the road.
- Percentage of heavy truck traffic.
- Transit lines and stop locations.
- What purpose your street serves.
- Emergency Response Routes (streets used by ambulances and fire trucks).

The transportation planning classifications (included in the Transportation System Plan, or TSP) identifies what roles your street plays in the transportation system. Particularly important are the classifications for “Emergency Response Routes” and “District Collectors.”

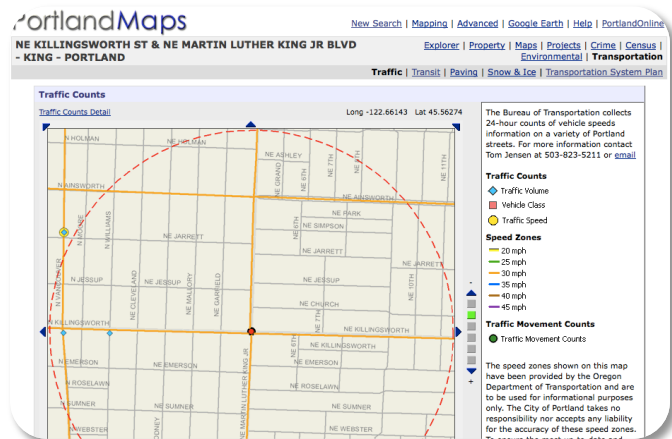
Emergency Response Routes do not allow “traffic slowing devices,” so speed bumps or traffic circles are not currently potential traffic-calming solutions on those streets.

The same applies to streets with a traffic classification of “District Collector,” “Major City Traffic Street” or “Regional Trafficway.” These are the busiest streets in a town. Such street classifications do not allow traffic slowing devices to be installed.

If you are not in Portland, your city’s website should offer similar information. Search for “Transportation System Plan.” The state of Oregon requires that each city develops or updates their TSP every 5 to 10 years.

Use portlandmaps.com today:

1. Visit www.portlandmaps.com in your internet browser.
2. Submit your home address or an intersection you want to learn more about.
3. Click on the ‘Transportation’ entry along the top, and then a more detailed topic in the row below to learn more.



Things to look out for:

In the Traffic section, look at the “**85th Percentile Speed**” and the percent traveling over “**10% above the speed limit.**” These measures show how fast most cars drive and how many cars are speeding.

In the Transportation System Plan page, look for **Local Access** and **Neighborhood Collector** streets. These can support the widest range of traffic calming solutions.

823-SAFE

Traffic Safety Hotline

Most cities offer a telephone hotline for making requests and reporting safety problems. In Portland this number is (503) 823-SAFE (7233).

Every city tries to identify safety concerns on their own, but they cannot be everywhere. They need you to act as the local expert by reporting issues when you see them.

Speeding, malfunctioning signals, and debris in the roadway are concerns that the city should be aware of, so that the problem can be solved.

After reporting your problem to a hotline, you should receive a return call from a Traffic Safety Specialist to discuss the next steps. Generally, your concern or complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate department for follow up and they will study ways to solve the problem. This can take up to three months, depending on how busy the city is.

Some problems cannot be solved quickly for budget or timing reasons, but small items that are a part of routine maintenance can be fixed faster.

The types of problems to report include:

- **Intersection Safety:** Pavement Markings / Signals / STOP Signs
- **Pedestrian Safety:** Crosswalks / Curb Ramps / Signals / Visibility / Enforcement
- **School Safety:** Safe Routes / School Drop-Off and Pick-Up Operations / Crosswalks / Bus Zone / Education
- **Speeding:** Enforcement / Speed Zones / Residential Speed Bump Purchase Projects
- **Visibility:** Lighting / Tree Pruning / Signage
- **Bicycle Safety:** Bike Lanes / Parking / Signals / Visibility
- **Parking:** Limited On-Street Parking / No Parking
- **Project Requests:** Sidewalks / Bike Lanes / Signals / Intersection Improvements

What You Can do *Today*:

1. Start out small, identify a traffic problem in your area (for example, worn crosswalk markings).
2. Speak with the specialist that returns your call. Make suggestions for improvements (see the other guides for ideas).
3. Hopefully, see your concern addressed and on the ground in the following weeks.

The city needs you to be the local expert, reporting problems they would not discover on their own.



Neighborhood Associations

Learn about changes, meet others

In Portland, every area of the city is a part of a neighborhood association. When city agencies are exploring problems, solutions, and projects in your neighborhood, they will go to the neighborhood association meeting to hear the opinion of the neighborhood. If you are not there, your voice may not be heard. Many other cities in Oregon have neighborhood associations or homeowners groups.

Neighborhood association board members are volunteers and residents themselves. They can help point you in the right direction for solving a particular neighborhood problem. If you want to be very active, you may be able to become a board member yourself.

Most neighborhood associations follow the meeting structure called *Roberts Rules*. This formal process of running a meeting can be cumbersome at first, but do not let it stop you from participating. Attend a meeting or two to get a feel for the process and understand how it works.

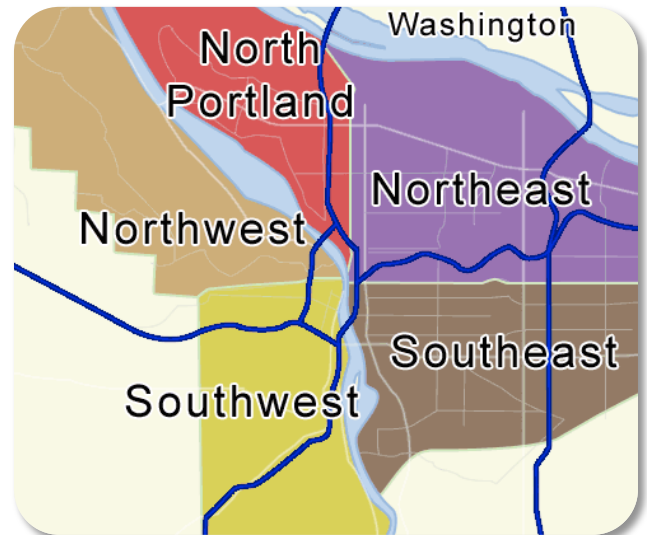
Neighborhood associations deal with a wide variety of topics and are generally a good way to stay on top of the latest news in your neighborhood.

Some topics they cover include:

- New land development proposals
- Planning project updates
- Discussion of neighborhood issues
- Neighborhood noise/nuisance complaints
- Organizing neighborhood fairs, events, and clean ups

What You Can do *Today*:

1. What neighborhood do you live in? Visit your city's website to find out.
2. Many neighborhood associations have a website and email mailing list. Join in on the discussions.
3. Attend the next meeting to introduce yourself and understand how the process works.



How to Take it Farther:

Safety projects are often difficult to do because of a lack of money. Neighborhood associations have access to neighborhood grant opportunities and may be a partial source of funds for a project.

Find partners to support your cause and apply for these opportunities as they come up.

Take a Class

Up-close look at how a city works

If you are really interested in how transportation decisions and processes are done in the City of Portland, you are in luck! In partnership with Portland State University, the city offers a class called *Traffic and Transportation*, through the school of Urban Studies and Planning. The class is focused on local traffic and transportation issues, and how to get things done in your neighborhood.

The class covers a wide range of topics and encourages students to explore solutions to issues in their own neighborhood.

There are other classes offered by different organizations, such as Mercy Corps, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

Borrow the Tools

Safety resources for your community

To support your efforts at learning more and increasing safety, the City of Portland offers a variety of services and tools for communities to take advantage of as a part of their *Community and School Traffic Safety Partnership*. This includes educational materials:

- Crosswalk brochures
- Educational videos
- Yard signs to borrow to get your message across
- Answers to frequently asked questions
- Speed recorder boards

If you want help in gathering support for your cause, the city can make presentations at your neighborhood association or other community group. Other cities may also have supplies and information for you to borrow.

Scholarships are available!

The class is offered every fall term, and a limited number of full cost scholarships are available. Look for application information on the Portland Bureau of Transportation's website beginning in October.

www.portlandonline.com/transportation



This sign is available for your special events!

www.portlandonline.com/transportation

click on "Getting Around" then on "*Community and School Traffic Safety Partnership*"

Know the Plan

Decisions are made long before you see changes on the ground

Big projects take a long time to plan, fund, design, and implement. So it is important to get involved at every step along the way. Here is a quick guide to the important transportation plans and processes you can participate in.

Transportation System Plan (TSP)

This is the big plan for all transportation investments that will be implemented in every city in Oregon over the next 20 years. It is a bit of a dry read, but it will give you a sense of what is in store for the future of your neighborhood. The City of Portland will be updating their TSP before the end of 2012. Most cities update their TSP every 5 to 10 years. If a project or solution is not listed in a TSP, it is less likely to get funding (although it is not impossible). Keep an eye out for opportunities to review and comment on the plan.

Modal Planning

Smaller more focused plans, such as the *Bicycle Plan for 2030*, and the *Freight Master Plan* identify specific improvements to enhance the network for their users. These plans are coordinated with the TSP, but the more focused planning process allows for a more detailed plan and chance to comment.

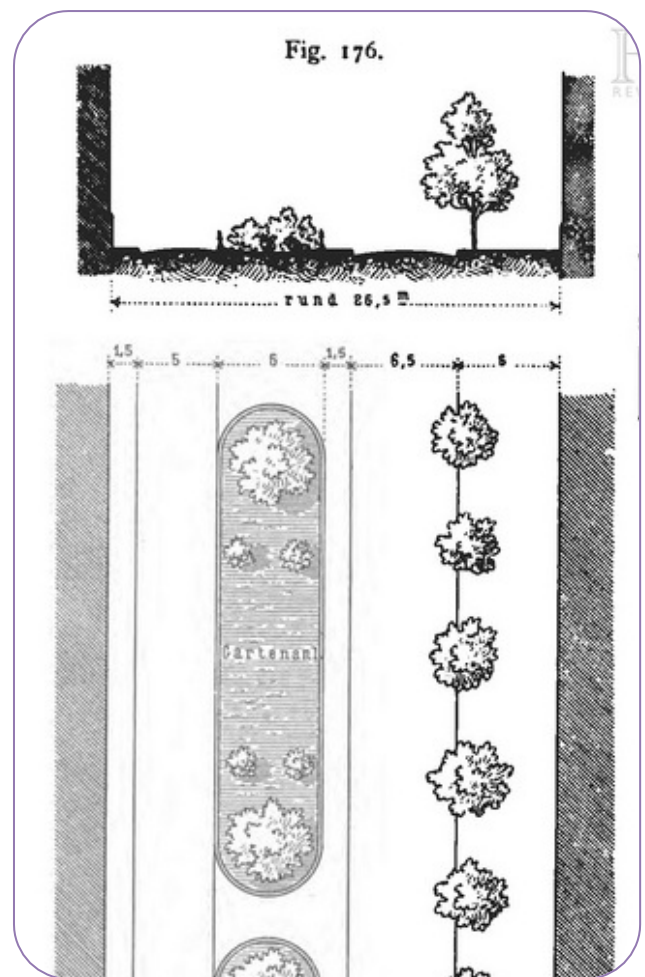
Individual neighborhoods or corridors also have plans that identify improvements on a smaller scale. Check with your city or neighborhood association to see if there is a plan developed for your neighborhood.

Project Planning & Development

The opportunity to participate in big plans comes around every few years, but projects are happening all of the time. Where the big plans identify a line on a map, the project development process studies the details and precise routes. This is where you can effect the most change as a resident. You have insider knowledge that the city does not, so get involved at each stage of the project development. It might seem like a long time before something is built, but if you do not speak up early in the planning process, it may be too late to get your solutions included.

Where do you fit into the plans?

- You know where the problems are. Tell your stories.
- Help evaluate solutions that would work best in your neighborhood.
- If you like the plan, advocate for it! Write letters and testify in support at city council.



What do you want your street to look like?

You have Options

Active transportation alternatives

Finding ways to get to work or school without having to drive is easier than ever. Online and cell phone tools make finding bike and bus routes a snap.

<http://maps.trimet.org>

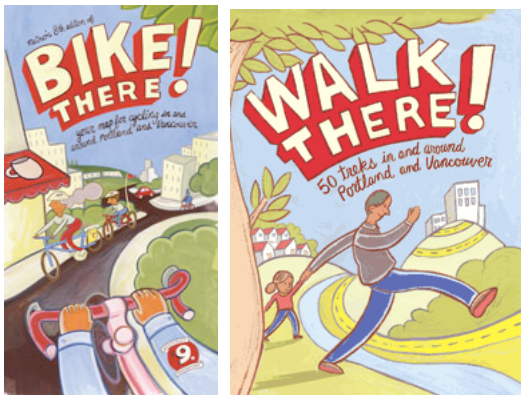
TriMet's online mapping tools let you plan your trips using their transit system. Input your origin and destination, departure or arrival time, and preferred walking distance and get the quickest way to your destination. In many cases traveling by transit takes more time than driving, but you do not need to worry about parking or traffic, and you can read along the way. Other transit providers offer similar trip planning websites.

<http://bicycle.org/>

This trip planning website provides suggested biking directions between locations. The routes are designed to be safe, comfortable, and direct.

<http://maps.google.com>

Get directions for driving, biking, walking, or taking transit!



If you prefer printed maps and routes, Metro offers these guides.

<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/walk>

<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/bike>

What You Can do *Today*:

1. Explore your options to commute to work by bus or bike by using a website listed to the left.
2. Pick a day with nice weather to try your new commute out, and give yourself plenty of time. Find a buddy that is comfortable biking or traveling by bus to show you the ropes.
3. Enjoy the chance to get exercise or read during our commute.

Your phone can tell you the way:

Smartphone users can use apps to plan carless trips anytime. Here are a couple of our favorites, search for them in your phone app store:

PDX Bus (iPhone only)

Portland Transit (Android and iPhone)

If you don't have a smartphone, you can get instructions by text message with a service called *Dadnab*. Text your trip to: (503) 406-8622

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What to Look For

It is easy to say a street is unsafe – but it is harder to understand what makes one street more dangerous than another. Often it is a combination of things, but keep an eye out for these issues in particular:

Easy Speeding Streets

Some streets seem like they were designed for drivers to travel fast. In some cases, such as freeways, that is exactly what is wanted. In most other cases, such as neighborhoods or main streets, this is unsafe and not desired. Streets that are wide and straight, and that seem to go on forever, are often the worst culprits. Design solutions that narrow the roadway, visually close the street, and offer slight obstacles (such as traffic circles or pedestrian islands - see the design guide for more information) can lead to healthier streets for everyone.



Incomplete Streets

If your street has no sidewalks, or limited crossing opportunities, it is likely to be dangerous for pedestrians. People will walk in even the harshest conditions, but it puts them in danger. Busy streets with narrow or missing bike lanes create a similar problem. Bicycling on the sidewalk is unsafe and mixing with motor vehicles at high speeds is unrealistic. There needs to be space set aside on high-traffic roads for bikes, pedestrians, and cars.



Unsafe Behavior

A person behaving in unsafe ways is a major problem on streets. Often, unwanted actions are a sign of a poorly designed street.

- Pedestrians crossing outside of a crosswalk indicate that there are not enough safe crossings provided (see picture to right).
- Bicyclists blocking car traffic indicate that there are not safe bike lanes available to use.
- Speeding cars are a response to what feels safe for drivers based on the design of wide, expansive streets.

