BIPOC-LED SOLUTIONS FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

AGREEMENT NO 21-035

WRITTEN AND CREATED BY

WHOSE STREETS? OUR STREETS!

Contents of this Report

Context and Background

Everyone deserves freedom of mobility and safe access to public streets. But the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)'s own Vision Zero data on traffic fatalities confirms that Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) are disproportionately harmed by unsafe streets. Communities of color not only have the least access to safe, healthy, and affordable transportation, we are also punished disproportionately by an unjust system of traffic enforcement. Traffic enforcement, which represents nearly one-fifth of all public encounters with the Seattle Police Department, is used by police to threaten, harass, and murder Black people and other POC for simply existing in public spaces.

Transportation equity requires building community trust and relationships. Despite the disproportionately negative impacts on BIPOC lives, BIPOC voices have historically been left out of conversations about traffic safety and enforcement. Many BIPOC communities and BIPOC-led organizations experience betrayal or misplaced trust from public systems. BIPOC-led groups working within their own communities can and should share the burdens of responsibility, goals, decisions, and leadership and work toward common goals of safety and equity in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Safety should be defined by the people who feel most unsafe, not the people shielded from harm. Similarly, solutions for community safety should thus be defined by the people who feel most unsafe. We also know that street safety is more than safety from vehicles.

This report summarizes 2022 outreach and engagement conducted by Whose Streets? Our Streets! within BIPOC communities about what it means for people to feel safe while traveling in Seattle and what should change to increase that safety.

Our Work

Whose Streets? Our Streets! (WSOS) is an all-BIPOC program of Seattle Neighborhood Greenways. Our organizing group includes 14 Black, Indigenous, POC, and queer/Trans community members responsible for overall leadership. We maintain three standing committees focused on communications, outreach, and research, as well as project teams for individual events, listening sessions and special projects. Organizing workgroup members are leaders and members of groups serving Seattle and Puget Sound's BIPOC communities. We bring expertise in transportation planning, research, police accountability, anti-racism work, community health and development, environmental justice, culturally-specific social services, and more.

Whose Streets? Our Streets! centers BIPOC voices, experiences, and leadership in everything that we do. Internally, this means compensating workgroup members for our time, energy, and expertise with hourly stipends, as well as spending time on our own leadership development through peer-to-peer skill sharing, mentorship, and supporting each other. Externally, this means prioritizing BIPOC vendors and event spaces as well as spending time building long-term, trusting relationships with BIPOC community members and groups led by andserving BIPOC communities.

Summary of Outreach Conducted

We developed working relationships with groups and organizations led by and serving BIPOC communities, worked collaboratively to host community events to bring BIPOC community members together, and participated in public events that provide a platform to speak to and engage with Seattle's BIPOC community on a larger scale. Our outreach and engagement included:

1. Utilizing our already-established relationships with community leaders within the BIPOC community to have one-on-one conversations about community safety with: Eddie Rye Jr., Larry Gossett, Royal Ali-Barnes, Rev. Angela Ying, and Dr Rev. Robert Jeffery Sr.
2. Outreach to BIPOC-owned businesses in the Central District, including Communion Restaurant & Bar, Ezell's Famous Chicken, Flowers Just-4-U.
3. Outreach to community members at Black churches in the Central District.
4. Building relationships with and working in coalition with: MLK Coalition Committee, Solidarity Budget Coalition, King County Equity Now, Village of Hope, Rainier Beach Empowerment Coalition, Front and Centered, and Wa Na Wari.
5. Hosting community listening sessions in collaboration with: Black Prisoners' Caucus, CID Coalition, Eggrolls, Massage Parlor Outreach Program (MPOP), NAACP Youth Council (NYC), and SURGE Reproductive Justice.
6. Participating in public Black community events (tabling and talking to people) including: Honoring Our Black Wall Streets, Umoja Fest, Relatives of Old Timers Seattle (ROOTS) Family Celebration, Juneteenth Celebration, Malcolm X Day, Back On the Block, Garfield HS Centennial Celebration, and Black Prisoners Caucus BBQ.
7. Hosting community events including: Seattle's MLK Day Workshop: BIPOC and Transportation Equity, Summer of Solidarity, and Rainier Beach Public Safety Town Hall.

In total, we engaged 94 BIPOC in longer sit-down individual or small-group conversations. Throughout this outreach, we asked people to share their perceptions of and solutions for community safety. We also highlighted community priorities and topics of community concern. We then developed surveys to delve more deeply into those subjects: parking enforcement and police stops. These received 242 responses, 75% of which were from Black respondents and at least 89% of which were from BIPOC individuals.

Summary of What We Heard

Key Themes: Transportation Safety

1. BIPOC communities, and the Black community in particular, experience an overwhelming amount of fear and anxiety just existing out on the street and in public places, and getting from Point A to Point B. This anxiety is a major factor in just about every transportation decision made.

2. The primary concern participants shared is harassment and fear of harassment – by police especially, but also by other people in positions of power such as bus drivers or fare enforcement officers, and by other members of the public.

3. Some BIPOC view having a car as a way to protect themselves from the harassment, anxiety, and uncertainty they experience on the streets. In these circumstances, some people choose to drive to get places because it increases their sense of safety and ability to control their surroundings. However, having a car is often seen as unaffordable.

4. Transit service that is frequent and reliable is incredibly important to feeling safe, as well as bus stops that are clean, well-lit, and comfortable. **"[Safety means] getting on the train or bus when it is expected and feel[ing] safe while I wait."**

5. Basic transportation infrastructure and its maintenance is incredibly important to feeling safe, as well as feeling valued as a neighborhood and community. This includes slower traffic speeds, sidewalks, street crossings, speed bumps, lighting, bike lanes, and more.

6. When picturing community safety, participants visualized walkable communities with public spaces for people to exist without having to pay or worry about harassment. This includes comfortable public spaces, murals, artwork, and cultural components that create a sense of community belonging.

"I want safe communities where our kids can walk to school and elders can go out and walk."

Key Themes: Policing and Enforcement

7. Overwhelmingly, BIPOC communities, and Black people in particular, feel unsafe around the police. Survey respondents shared that police contacts made them feel nervous, scared, targeted, and powerless. A common theme was the perception of being stopped for

"driving while Black." **"Folks are scared of the police and are experiencing trauma every time we're pulled over. We're tired of being harassed."**

8. Because of distrust in police and other institutionalized systems for public safety, BIPOC rely heavily on community networks for personal safety. This makes displacement particularly destabilizing to a person's sense of personal safety and ability to keep themselves safe.

9. Although participants viewed automated camera enforcement as substantially better than being pulled over by the police, many people have significant surveillance concerns, as well as concerns about the cost of tickets and the ramifications of not being able to pay.

"Safety looks like communities being listened to about what real crime is happening in their community without people living on the outskirts of the community gaslighting the real situation. When police get to know that community and work to stop the criminals through relationships and conversations about what crime is happening. Trust needs to be built between community and police."

Key Themes: Community Safety

10. **"[Safety is] people having enough – [their] daily needs met, not struggling just to survive."** People feel safe when they have a roof over their heads, a stable job with a thriving wage, and access to healthcare and social services.

11. People feel safe when they know and feel connected to their neighbors, and experience a sense of community belonging that involves both support and accountability. Community networks formed on shared values, language, racial identity or shared experiences create a sense of community connectedness that feels safe. And conversely, being in spaces with mostly white people creates anxiety and BIPOC feel they have to be alert at all times.

12. Safety from the environment, including clean water and air, is also important, and access to trees, green spaces, and other forms of nature are important to health and welfare.

13. People feel safe when they have self-determination and control over their own life and well-being. This means having a voice and living in a society that has real community participation and real democracy. In a system where working people have power, not just wealthy people, and the community has power over the decisions that impact them, people feel safe.

See the Appendix for further details and findings.

Community Solutions and Recommendations

Key Recommendations: Policing and Enforcement
1. **Establish community patrols and response teams made up of trusted people from within the community who are not associated with the police.** These people would be eyes on the street and be trained to de-escalate situations, talk to people, and provide resources and support rather than escalating tensions or arresting people on-site.
2. Create community reporting methods and systems that don't involve the police.
3. Limit or eliminate entirely police interactions with the public in traffic enforcement.

"Our community is not interested in reactive [solutions]. We are interested in proactive [solutions]. We're interested in being able to demonstrate our respect for each other."

Key Recommendations: Community Safety
1. Provide affordable, quality housing in the places where people want to live. This includes more housing, seed money for social housing development, housing support, and homeless services, as well as anti-displacement programs and policies.
2. Create access to jobs with thriving wages, job training, and workforce development. This includes paying people within the community for the work they are already doing, and the expertise they offer.
3. Provide healthcare for all, free healthcare, long-term drug treatment centers, and compassionate care, rather than criminalization, for people experiencing poverty.
4. Invest in places for people to gather that are free and accessible, and reflective of community values, such as funding community centers, public spaces, and community programs.
5. Invest in healthy climate futures including the Green New Deal. This includes public green space, trees, and parks, but also community resilience against climate change, summer smoke seasons, and flooding.

Key Recommendations: Safety for Youth
1. Invest in public places, after-school care, and programs for youth that are run by people who live in and know the community. This would keep youth active and give them safe places to be after school and in the summer where they can exist and be kids without getting harassed by police or getting into trouble.
2. Remove police officers from schools.

Key Recommendations: Public Transit
1. Expand transit routes and transit service so that it is reliable and frequent. Run more late night transit service and 24/7 routes.
2. Provide free public transportation for all.

3. Build more and better bus stops with benches, rain shelters, and trash cans.
4. Install doors or gates at light rail stations to keep people from going on the tracks and being killed by trains.
5. Maintain cleanliness on transit and at transit stops, including addressing drug use on public transit.
6. Create a visible community security program with trusted community members trained to mediate and de-escalate on the buses and at transit hubs that act as transit security instead of police.

Key Recommendations: Basic Transportation Infrastructure
1. Build basic infrastructure for people walking and biking, including crosswalks, sidewalks, flashing beacons, lighting, bike lanes, and bike racks.
2. Improve systems for maintenance of infrastructure like sidewalks and potholes.
3. Slow traffic speeds, including adding speed bumps everywhere and redesigning thoroughfares.
4. Invest in making the streets nice in the South End, like they are in other, wealthier parts of the city.

"I live in an area where I hear gunshots frequently, but I still think the place to start is by investing in community – things like streetlights, trees, bike lanes, speed bumps. . . This should be considered basic infrastructure."

Our Reflections and Lessons Learned

What we learned through our outreach process:
- **Building our team took time and energy.** We also placed special importance on spending time and energy on our team as its own community – getting to know and trust each other, skill sharing, and mentoring each other in our organizing knowledge and skills.
- **Show up for each other and be consistent with the community.** BIPOC community members will trust you and come through for you, if you always follow through for them. This applies externally, within the community, and internally, for our own team.
- **Prioritize the voices of impacted community members.** It is very important to hear straight from community members that are impacted, and to prioritize access for those people. In collaborating with various community groups, we trusted them to know their community best and depended on their expertise and experience to make each event accessible and meaningful.
- **Step outside your comfort zone**. Take risks and trust the people around you.
- **Prioritizing community health meant we had to be flexible.** We shifted our engagement methods and safety considerations with changing public health realities over the course of the year. This delayed some of our expected timelines and altered some of our expected budgets. We had to be flexible with shifting comfort levels within our own team and the wider community.

Appendix

Additionally, WSOS hosted listening sessions with distinct populations that it is important to highlight separately from our other community responses:

In addition to listening sessions, we also conducted three community surveys on topics that arose as important in community conversations, in order to delve more deeply into these subjects of interest and concern.

A. Full Summary of Community Responses on Community Safety

Overview: This is a summary of conversations hosted at public events throughout the summer and fall of 2022, including the Summer of Solidarity Event with Healthy Through Heat and Smoke and the Solidarity Budget Coalition, Rainier Beach Public Safety Town Hall with the Solidarity Budget Coalition, Black Prisoners Caucus BBQ, Roots Family Celebration, and Garfield High School Centennial Celebration. All events centered the Black community in Seattle, and participants were 90% Black.

Methodology: Conversations began with either the prompt "What does community safety mean to you?" or "What does safety mean to you when you're thinking about transportation in Seattle?" Some respondents gave quick answers while stopping in at a table, and others sat down for longer individual or small-group conversations and listening sessions.

"Our community is not interested in reactive [solutions]. We are interested in proactive [solutions]. We're interested in being able to demonstrate our respect for each other."

When asked "What does safety mean to you when you're thinking about transportation in Seattle?" the most common response was overwhelmingly, **"Being able to walk down the street without fear or anxiety."** This was repeated over and over, in different ways and with different specifics. **BIPOC communities, and the Black community in particular, experience an overwhelming amount of fear and anxiety while on public streets, and this anxiety is a major factor in just about every transportation decision made.**

- "Safety to me is being able to move with ease, without anxiety, without having to have "the talk" with my three boys before we go out. Public safety means I don't have to be fearful of white people nor the police. Public safety is being free to have fun and thrive in Seattle."
- "Being able to go to my destination and to another if I choose to, then back home with no hassle."
- "[Safety means] that Black and brown youth and people will not be policed. That we can walk without worrying about being stopped or questioned."

The primary concern participants shared is harassment and fear of harassment – by police, by other people in positions of power such as bus drivers or fare enforcement officers, and by other members of the public. Participants recounted personal experiences with harassment and assault,

including verbal harassment, people throwing rocks at them and yelling because of their race, and having the police called on them because of minor, non-threatening mistakes.

- "My son inadvertently failed to pay his fare [on the light rail]. When he tried to explain, the enforcement person called the police and he was arrested. We don't need police involved."
- "Especially for young women of color, it's scary to walk down the street alone."

Some participants view having a car as a way to protect themselves from the harassment, anxiety, and uncertainty they experience on the streets. In these circumstances, some people choose to drive to get places because it increases their sense of safety and ability to control their surroundings. When discussing driving, primary concerns were cost, police stops, and parking.

Many recommendations for improving transportation safety centered on public transit. Safety means "Getting on the train or bus when it is expected and feel[ing] safe while I wait." Suggestions included:

- Expanded transit routes and transit service that is reliable and frequent. More late night service and 24/7 routes.
- Free public transportation for all
- More and better bus stops with benches, rain shelters, and trash cans
- Doors or gates at light rail stations to keep people from going on the tracks
- Cleanliness on transit and at transit stops, including getting rid of drug use on public transit
- Visible community security program with trusted community members trained to mediate and de-escalate on the buses and acting as transit security instead of police.

Participants also had many recommendations for basic transportation infrastructure – particularly for people walking and biking, including more speed bumps, flashing beacons on crosswalks, sidewalks, lighting, bike lanes, and bike racks. Participants called out speeding and recommended redesigning thoroughfares and speed bumps. Maintenance is also important – potholes filled in the streets and sidewalks fixed. Many participants also called for greater investment in streets in the South End.

- "I live in an area where I hear gunshots frequently, but I still think the place to start is by investing in community – things like streetlights, trees, bike lanes, speed bumps. . . This should be considered basic infrastructure."
- "I want safe communities where our kids can walk to school and elders can go out and walk."
- "We wait too long for the city to make these important changes."
- "Slower traffic makes me feel safer. I have risked my life trying to justify that for people. One of the things we know in our neighborhood is that bad traffic policy contributes to more fatalities than gunshots. When we really value the lives of our young people, [you] say "let's reduce the lanes, let's slow the traffic"."
- "[Safety is] people driving the speed limit and not playing games."

Going even further, when picturing community safety, participants spoke about walkable communities with public spaces for people to exist without having to pay or worry about harassment. Comfortable public spaces, murals, artwork, and cultural components create a sense of community belonging. Participants suggested paying people in the community to run programs that activate community spaces in their neighborhoods, run neighborhood cleanups, and provide resources and information to people. That creates an economy in the neighborhood, a sense of community identity, and supports individual households.

- "When young people activate space in their neighborhood where there previously were higher incidences that contributed to youth crime, incidences decrease by 40%."

Overwhelmingly, participants felt unsafe around the police, and fear of police interactions is a major transportation issue. Participants suggested increased accountability, limiting traffic stops for minor issues like expired tabs and other reforms, and many participants pushed for full abolition, citing the failing of the current system.

- "[Safety to me] means… being able to walk the streets of my neighborhood without fear of being stopped [by police] because I look "suspicious."
- "[We need to] change that punitive approach. . . We gotta think intergenerationally and long-term. We're conditioning youth to be in a hostile environment."
- "Trust needs to be built between community and police. Community policing takes work and building that trust takes work. Taking any man, criminal or not, to jail has not worked."
- "In Britain when [police get called and] there's a weapon, [the victims] don't get shot. We need to have police accountability – when they kill they need to be held accountable. Seattle has $11 million for police accountability, which is b***s*** because we don't have it. 22 other cities have community-based accountability systems."

Although participants viewed automated camera enforcement as substantially better than being pulled over by the police, many people have significant surveillance concerns, as well as concerns about the cost of tickets and the ramifications of not being able to pay..

- "We live in a surveillance state. There's cameras all around the city. Even live recordings—I live off of Rainier and Graham, and there's live video available online of where I live. This is related to militarism of the police."
- "[I feel safer when there are] stronger surveillance protection laws. I think a lot of the surveillance tools that city agencies acquire for transportation like license plate readers or CCTVs or… location tracking tools. These tools are acquired to help with traffic management but they become a tool for mass surveillance, and a tool that impacts our ability to protest, visit health clinics, practice religion. We've seen these tools abused again and again. In New York, license plate readers were used to surveil muslims. It's concerning when both government agencies and corporations have access to our data all the time."

When speaking about solutions for community safety, participants spoke over and over about various types of community response teams. In particular, participants called for community patrols and response teams made up of people from within the community who are not associated

with the police. These people would be eyes on the street and be trained to de-escalate situations, talk to people, and provide resources and support rather than escalating tensions or arresting people on-site. Participants also suggested community reporting methods and systems that don't involve the police.

Participants also spoke at length about community safety outside of transportation. The most prominent themes were:
1. Economic safety, including affordable housing, a stable job, and access to healthcare and social services.
2. Community networks, including knowing and feeling connected to neighbors, community gathering places, and community support, especially for youth.

Participants defined community safety as **"People having enough – [their] daily needs met, not struggling just to survive."** This means affordable, quality housing in the places where people want to live. This requires more housing, seed money for social housing development, housing support, and homeless services, as well as anti-displacement programs and policies. Participants also spoke about access to jobs with thriving wages, job training, and workforce development. Participants also spoke about paying people within the community for the work they are already doing, and the expertise they offer. Participants also called healthcare for all, free healthcare, long-term drug treatment centers, and compassionate care, rather than criminalization, for people experiencing poverty.
- "We need investment in housing – 90% of people [that are] homeless in New York are sheltered; 90% of homeless in Seattle are unsheltered. We need to have equity and fully fund community services."
- "Invest in community services like free programs to teach people skills and necessary education for the workforce and jobs."

Participants expressed reliance on a sense of community for feelings of safety. Community networks formed on shared values, racial identity or shared experiences create a sense of community connectedness that feels safe. And conversely, being in spaces with mostly white people creates anxiety and participants feeling like they have to be on alert.
- "Safety for me starts with knowing the people in my community. I know that my neighbors won't mess with me. Being able to share with folks on a deeper level creates a sense of safety."
- "[Community safety is] seeing people at peace and not being worried about police. Seeing people coming together and having fun."

Participants suggested investing in places for people to gather that are free and accessible, and reflective of community values, such as funding community centers, public spaces, and community programs. In particular, participants highlighted programs for youth that take care of kids and provide places where they can exist and be kids without getting harassed by police or getting into trouble. Participants recommended removing police officers from schools and funding

after-school programs run by people who live in and know the community that would keep youth active and give them a safe place to be after school and in the summer.

- "Our children are hopeless and have no hope for the future. We have to take care of our kids. Those who are in doubt and shame and without resources are those who make bad decisions for their survival. [Seattle Public Schools] is failing our kids. We're setting kids up for economic suicide."
- "[We're saying people have] been bad since they were kids, when really they've just been incarcerated since they were kids. . . We need someone to listen and get kids what they need."
- "We want [kids] to feel like whatever needs they have can be met if they bring it to our attention. We don't want them to feel voiceless or live in fear. They should feel like they can speak out and not be crushed."

Other more minor themes that arose were environmental safety and self-determination.

Participants supported investments in healthy climate futures including the Green New Deal. This includes public green space, trees, and parks, but also resilience against climate change, summer smoke seasons, and flooding.

- "We need radical investment into a Green New Deal expansion, with the smoke apocalypse we just experienced. We need significant investment in environmental policies and divestment from exploitative policies."

Participants shared that community safety is having self-determination and control over their own well-being. This means having a voice and living in a society that has real community participation and real democracy, and the ability to define community problems and solutions. In a system where working people have power, not just wealthy people, and the community has power over the decisions that impact them, people feel safe.

- **"Safety looks like communities being listened to about what real crime is happening in their community without people living on the outskirts of the community gaslighting the real situation. When police get to know that community and work to stop the criminals through relationships and conversations about what crime is happening. Trust needs to be built between community and police."**

B. Chinatown / International District
Community Listening Session Summary

WSOS hosted this listening session in Chinatown in collaboration with the CID Coalition, Massage Parlor Outreach Project (MPOP), and Eggrolls (ChuMinh Tofu Mutual Aid). Twenty-one Asian community members participated, including 6 massage parlor workers who were paid for their time and attendance. The event was a bilingual space with some of the introductions and instructions in English and some in Mandarin, with 4 live interpreters facilitating conversation (note that some quotes are from translators, not in the exact words of the participants).

A majority of participants lived or worked in the CID, with some who were regular participants in the community through family and friends, events, and patronizing businesses.

> **"For me, safety is to have a place to live and have food to eat, without those, that's really unsafe. Not just me, but for the whole community."**

When asked what they associate with a sense of safety, general themes included:
- Economic safety: A job with steady income, vibrant local commerce, "Aunties selling veggies on the corner"
- Community: Knowing your neighbors, people there to help when you need it
- Communal peace & harmony
- Safety from violence and harassment

When asked about transportation in particular, most of the conversation referenced walking and taking transit. Many participants felt their mobility is limited because of feeling unsafe, often due to fear of harassment, with participants avoiding traveling at night, or avoiding traveling alone.
- "Taking public transportation while alone I get harassed a lot. When I take the bus I always sit very close to the driver, so that if someone is bothering me at least the driver is there."
- "If I have someone accompanying me, I feel safe, with someone else with me. To prevent accidents or incidents, two people is always better than one."

Many participants shared stories of witnessing violence in the streets in their neighborhood, and expressed that the neighborhood felt less safe in the last couple of years, since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Several participants shared that they have or carry pepper spray with them.
- "About a week ago, on the road nearby next to Hau Hau Market, I saw a homeless person holding a knife about 2 feet long, but wasn't sure what to do. I wanted to stop it but felt very helpless, and didn't know who to tell."

- "The pandemic added to the sense of lack of safety. There was a sense of danger before but it was exacerbated by the pandemic."

Participants described racist incidents and harassment. They described bystanders not stepping up to help, and felt like they could not rely on people around them who were not part of their community to help them if they needed it.
- "The other people were all trying to get away and back up. There was a couple nearby who were just like, "Cool."
- "American people believe in the rule of the jungle."

Because of this, participants expressed often not knowing who to go to for help when incidents happen. This is exacerbated by language barriers, and often results in people relying heavily on community solutions, friends, and family where they can trust that there won't be a language or cultural barrier.
- "If you can't speak English, you don't know how to ask for help, and that's scary."
- "When I come into contact with people in trouble, the first people I think to contact are those with MPOP [Massage Parlor Outreach Project] . . . because you don't need to speak English with them. When you need to find someone to translate . . . it's too urgent and 911 only speaks English. But through this small group [MPOP] we can find help."
- "I'm not worried most of the time. I know I have friends here who I can call upon."

Participants agreed that both the unhoused population in the neighborhood and the police presence have increased dramatically in recent years, but there were mixed feelings about both of those things. Some felt endangered by unhoused people on the streets (because of drugs, mental instability, and violence), and others felt they were harmless or victimized.
- "I get scared when there's a big group of people around, sometimes they shout things at me."
- "Last year, the place across from ours was full of homeless people. There were a lot of fights, sometimes people with guns. Eventually, there was nothing we could do so they moved the bus stop down the street to make it safer. They dispersed gradually, but back then there were fights every day, people taking drugs, using needles and smoking in the parking lot, and gun violence. It was unsafe for them too, many of them were scared."

- "I don't think the homeless people are scary, what's wrong with them? Sometimes when they smoke marijuana I ask them to not influence the customers, but they are kind and nice. I don't feel threatened by them at all."
- "When we get into trouble most homeless people will help us."
- "It feels a lot safer for me having people out on the street [rather than the streets being empty]."

Similarly, some participants appreciated and felt safer because of the increased police presence while others felt more endangered or stressed. Some people shared that the police presence

wasn't having the desired effect, and many shared stories about police escalating situations, instead of making it better.

- "[My place of employment] was robbed before, and they hurt one of our employees. She had 7 stitches. [The police] came here pretty quick and helped us, [and] afterwards they were patrolling the street. . . We were grateful."
- "There was a family of 5 [across the street], and one of the people was shot. I saw the whole thing, and she was screaming, and it was really scary. I'm not scared of the homeless people; I'm scared of the guns – that someone will shoot me. Now there's police around, it feels safer."

- "I don't feel safer when there's police, because then everyone is tense and the situation is always worse. I don't like the idea of police arresting people and sending them to jail or prison, I think that's horrible."
- "Police harass unhoused people or mentally ill people, and it creates other, new issues."
- [Talking about violence or harassment from unhoused people] "Most of the time when you leave someone alone, everything is okay, but when police start harassing them, it escalates and I worry about their safety."
- "I volunteer serving food to people on Sundays, and often police will come and bully our guests, ask them questions and harass them. It doesn't make us feel safe at all."

Participants shared that people outside the CID have strong opinions about how dangerous the neighborhood is. Whether or not neighbors are feeling unsafe, the perception of danger in the CID, often spread through media, has decreased business, sometimes very dramatically. Due to this, many were feeling the stress of lower incomes.

- "Sometimes customers are scared of people on the street, but not us. Sometimes they look shaggy, but they don't hurt us or scare us."
- "Sometimes friends say the CID is not a safe place for you, but I've been here 12 years. I don't think it's unsafe"
- "For me, when there's more homeless people there are less customers. That's not good for me, and I have to pay rent, buy food. That makes me anxious. So I am afraid of customers feeling afraid. They hear on the news things about CID being unsafe, and they don't come. . . . I used to make $30,000. Now with more homeless people in the street, I make about $10,000. That's a big difference."
- "My car window got smashed, and when customers see that, they are scared for their cars and don't come. That influences the business."

Even people who valued and felt safer with police presence agreed that community alternatives to police were desirable.

- "Police aren't providing what we think is safety. I'm interested in . . . looking for alternatives to police that actually provide safety. Police are the easy answer and the only thing provided for us, and I don't think that's what we actually need."

Because they rely so heavily on community support for safety, participants also spoke at length about gentrification and displacement in the neighborhood.

- "I have all Chinese people living next to me, all from Canton (Guangdong) Province, so there has not been much change. New people haven't moved into the new building yet. I asked around and it's probably $2,000 per month. I can't afford that."
- "I live here in an old apartment complex, where the rent had previously only increased about 10%. After I came back to Seattle this May it became $900 and is still much cheaper compared to the new apartment next to me, which is $2,000 per month . . . it used to be $650."
- [Speaking about new high rises and apartment complexes] "I enjoy Chinatown as it is and don't want to see it change into something different than it currently is. . . I worry about people who have lived here for many years and how they will afford rent, especially when much of the [new] housing is not targeted towards them."
- "I hope that CID is still a good place for immigrants in five years instead of just a site for tourists and outsiders. I hope that Asian immigrants will continue living here happily, and that it will continue being affordable for low-income people. The food is good here. I hope it won't turn into a place for white people where it only has fancy looks without internal values."

When brainstorming solutions, participants suggested improvements to make the neighborhood feel like a place where people live. Notably, to remove the fences and boarding on the windows, invest in businesses, increase affordable housing for immigrants, and restore the neighborhood vibrancy that existed before 2020.

- "To solve the problems of safety and hygiene, take away the fences."

One big improvement for the community would be translation services for the 911 hotline, or another helpline that people can call. Participants described various scenarios of community-centered services, responders, and support.

- "If there was a service center around the corner people could seek help immediately, with someone who knows [the community]. We could have one community worker or volunteer be there all the time. When people have incidents to report, they could react immediately so they don't need to call the police."

Participants also spoke at length about community care teams. People with strong relationships within the community would respond to an incident differently than the police, and would help each other instead of escalating situations. One participant shared a description of a program in China with community patrollers, such as retired elders, who act as eyes on the street. People know that they are there to help, and it makes the space feel safer to have trusted people watching out. Many participants latched onto this idea, and how it would be beneficial in the CID.

- "The community workers are great. I would have community workers in charge of safety for the community, in charge of different incidents."
- "If we have other ways besides the police, that would be good."

C. Queer/Trans BIPOC Listening Session Summary

WSOS hosted this listening session in the Central District in collaboration with Surge Reproductive Justice. Twelve BIPOC individuals participated, including people with a variety of gender identities and sexualities.

Generally, participants feel very unsafe on public streets and in public spaces, and experience a lot of anxiety just getting from point A to point B.
- "When we walk out the door, there's just no guarantee that we're coming back home. There's so many dangers and obstacles that we all have to face daily."
- "So many little things we have to be wary of, we have to be cognizant of just getting around."
- "There's also a lot of anxiety. Are places well-lit? If someone were to start following me, who do I call? Because I'm not going to call the cops, so am I in a place where I have someone I could call or someplace I could go?"

When asked, "What do you associate with a sense of safety as a queer, trans, non-binary person of color?" participants associated a strong sense of safety with being around people who look like them, and feeling unsafe around people who don't look like them, both in terms of race and in terms of diversity in gender presentation.
- "Seeing folks who look like me, have similar identities as me makes me feel safe and at home."

Participants shared stories of harassment in public spaces and on public streets, and felt like they had to take care of the situation themselves, rather than being able to reach out for help.
- "Especially if you're a trans woman, your rates of being harassed or assaulted are so much higher than for cis women."
- "It's not safe to be walking around late at night as a trans person. It's a different kind of harassment than [for a] cis or heterosexual person. [Bystanders] will just stand back and spectate and not help you, just let it happen."
- "I take the train and bus a lot and I've dealt with a lot of harassment. I'll call my friend and she'll talk me through whatever's happening. I also carry pepper spray."

Participants also experienced harassment from public transit operators, transit fare enforcement, and police officers.

- "I was on the light rail and I didn't tap my orca card, and someone came on and was checking. I have an orca card that gets paid every month, but I was running late and just didn't tap it. . . [Then these] two white men are giving me a hard time [and not believing me]."
- "[I was getting on the bus] with my brother, [who is] under 18. They were asking to see his ID, but what teen has an ID? The bus driver was asking us all these questions. Like, Bro, just drive. Why are you asking us all of this?"
- "[When I was younger], there was a cop who took me to the floor and put his knee on my neck. He saw me as this Brown girl that was getting aggressive or in a fight. He didn't see me as a kid, as someone with humanity."

Not only did participants feel unable to reach out to others around them for help, but also didn't feel like police were an option for protection. Several people expressed that cops exist to protect white people, or even to protect white people *from* Black and brown people. This is exacerbated for those who don't look or dress in a gender-conforming way. People shared stories of responders (cops and medics) arriving at a scene, but not helping them.
- "[On my way here tonight], a cop was looking at me weird while I was standing on the street [waiting for the Uber]. If a white lady was standing there . . . she would've been seen as in need of protection, I was seen as something suspicious."
- "[Police] asked "What did you do?" like it was my fault. I'm like "I'm the victim here.""
- "I don't [call the police] at all. I can handle it myself. If someone hits my car, I call my brother, I wouldn't call the police."
- "They look at you like you're part of the problem, not like you're supposed to be protected."

Notable to this listening session was that participants came to the event from a wide geographic spread: North (Lynnwood, Shoreline), South (Tacoma, Tukwila, Renton, Skyway), and from Seattle. Participants saw housing as intertwined with transportation. Displacement breaks apart communities, makes transportation significantly more difficult, and makes people more reliant on driving to get around.
- "A lot of my friends have moved out to Black Diamond, Maple Valley, these places that are so far away, and then you can't get back to your community because it's so far."

When driving, participants experience fear and anxiety, and feel like they can't move freely or travel around their city or region. Limited or confusing parking also limits their ability to stay connected to their communities.
- "I skip events because I hate parking so much. If I park somewhere I'm not supposed to or forget to pay my $5 and I come out to a ticket I decide that I'm not going to come back here anymore."
- "A lot of my fear of driving and anxiety driving stems from my parents instilling fear in me. Like having the light on in the front seat – I got yelled at for that. But I get it, because any little thing the cops are going to pull you over and when you're undocumented that's the end."

When brainstorming solutions, participants immediately spoke about community response teams that are able to provide care and support to the people who are actually in need of care and support. People cited programs like the Rainier Beach Empowerment Coalition Corner Greeters and Community Passageways. These programs put people on the street corner that are there to be eyes on the street, talk to people, and de-escalate situations.

- "It would be great to have a community intervention team. Someone who's not armed and not the police, but a community group you can call for support when you're in a scary situation."
- "If there's someone calling in and saying "Hey, I'm feeling in danger, I need someone to walk with me." Then the role is to go to that person that's feeling unsafe and providing care and support, not going up to someone else and causing more harm."

An important aspect of these programs is community accountability, something that participants felt is missing from police structures.

- "[For SPD] there's no accountability. There's no saying "Hey, why did you beat up Jack's dad?" That community accountability is so important. We want people [responding to situations] to be helpful and have those community relationships. To have the authority to help and the relationships and accountability to be able to help."

Participants also called for better and more long-term resources and more services as a way to improve safety.

- "Love and support transforms communities. Restorative justice work and being there for people, providing for their basic needs, that's safety."
- "So many of the solutions are just little bandaids."

And specifically cited housing support as important to queer and trans communities because such a huge percentage of unhoused youth are queer and trans.

- "There's a lot of networks out there [for housing support] but I never get the support I need. . . I don't want to go to a shelter, you never know what will happen there. If I return home and my parents have thrown away my stuff, where am I gonna go? . . . But I got so many "No"s and there wasn't anyone able to help."

Additionally, participants cited anti-displacement work and neighborhood plans that support existing residents as important parts of major transportation improvement projects.

- "Wherever the light rail station goes, the neighborhood has changed. It used to be trailer parks, cheap housing. Now it's hotels, big buildings, these big office parks with white people working there."
- "They were talking in the community back then about how [the light rail coming] was supposed to be helpful and beneficial to the community because you'd be able to take the train. But . . . after the light rail went in, the property values started skyrocketing and a lot of people got pushed out because they couldn't afford their mortgages anymore."

Participants called for abolition of police and carceral systems, rather than small reforms or training programs.

- "Trainings don't always work, people will go to them and drag through it, there's no accountability."
- "They see us as this object, this problem. They don't see us for our humanity. How do we get them to think of us as people? That's work they have to do, I can't do that for them."

In terms of physical improvements, participants spoke about adding new and fixing up existing sidewalks, improving parks and open spaces, and increasing public transit service. Participants also recommended free transit or sliding scale payments, such as the system in Olympia, and ways to make the transit system as easy to use as possible, such as putting card scanners on trains, like on buses, instead of on the platforms.

When asked about visions for the future, one participant shared: **"I like to imagine us being comfortable. Not having to look over our shoulders every time we leave the house. It's depressing to have to have this conversation over and over: "Are we feeling safe or not? Are we getting paid or not?" I'd like to see that change happen."**

D. BIPOC Youth Listening Session Summary

WSOS hosted this listening session in the Central District in collaboration with NAACP Youth Council (NYC). 9 BIPOC young people participated.

> **"We shouldn't have this problem of not enough resources in the US, in the richest nation in the world. . . Policing is not the solution. We need housing, food, services."**

When asked what safety means to them, participants cited peace of mind, stability, and feeling comfortable in public spaces. In particular, participants highlighted fear of police presence and associated a sense of safety with not having to look over their shoulders and feel anxiety.
- "I just want to leave the house and come home in one piece."

Participants shared stories about harassment from the public, particularly for young people and women, as well as harassment from people in positions of authority, such as police officers, bus drivers, and fare enforcement officers.
- "Knowing you can wait safely at bus stops. . . Especially late at night . . . being approached and catcalled makes me feel unsafe. I'm just trying to get home. Too often I've been thinking about whether I have enough fare on me to take transit. Safety means knowing that I won't be turned away by a driver."
- "For me, ever since bus fares became free for youth, those bus drivers have been asking questions about whether I'm actually 18 or under. I was harassed by a driver who yelled at me when I entered via the back door, even though I don't have to pay. He said I had to exit the bus and enter via the front door, but when I exited he closed the door on me and acted like he wouldn't let me get back in at the front."

The bulk of the conversation focused on solutions for making us feel safer, which centered around transportation, social services, and programs.

For increasing safety in transportation, participants recommended improved basic street infrastructure, including more safe crossings with stop signs, speed bumps, bike racks, better wayfinding, and places for people to just hang out and be in public and on the street.
- "We notice when those amenities aren't there. Speed bumps. Bike racks. They're so useful and it becomes so impactful (in a bad way) when they're not there."
- "There are so many crossings [that are so unsafe], where there's even a ramp for people in wheelchairs, but no crosswalk or stop sign. Cars don't stop."

- "[We need] space for young folks to just be young folks. A lot of the conversation is trying to get people to stay away from a certain space. We should have more places that allow young people to just be joyful and act like fools together."

Participants also called for expanded transit networks for both buses and light rail, more frequency, and expanded service hours, as well as physical improvements such as more bus stops with better lighting and other amenities like rain shelters, benches, and trash cans. Participants also recommended installing help buttons or phones at bus stops, like those on UW campus, that would call a hotline or support team (separate from the police), similar to programs in Chicago (Guardian Angels) and Safe Passage.

- "I've been stuck in the U-District because the light rail station gates closed around 1 AM. I got stranded." "That happened to me too!"
- "Even just routes to the Seattle colleges and community colleges. It takes too many bus connections to get to them. From White Center, it takes so long to get to SeaTac. You have to go downtown first. I wish I could just take one bus and get to school in the U-District. This is especially bad at night. I don't like having to walk at night during connections."
- "Making the bus come faster. Usually I can just catch the bus. I know all the bus routes. But if I miss one, and the bus comes every 30 minutes, then I have to sit there for 25 minutes. And then the bus might be late. . . Every bus should be no less frequent than 15 minutes."

Discussion also focused on programs and policies that could improve. Notably, better and more reliable information about where transit is and when it's coming, ("OneBusAway is so inaccurate. I just want accurate bus times"). Additionally, being able to transfer between buses and light rail without an Orca card, and more seamlessly integrating all the different transit agencies together into one system that is easy to use, easy to navigate, and easy to compare various options. Participants also suggested better education for kids about transit and navigating their city, such as learning about public transportation in school. Participants also cited the Via program as being helpful, and recommended expansion to other neighborhoods.

- "King County Metro's website is so hard to use to check bus routes. It needs to be easier to see every route I can use to get from a certain place to other places."
- "We should be able to learn about public transportation in school. Right now you have to learn it outside of school, and maybe your mom doesn't ride the bus or doesn't know how to catch the bus."

When speaking about driving, participants described having a car as a way to protect themselves, as something that increases their sense of safety, but was often considered unaffordable. Conversation about driving focused primarily on parking enforcement, and participants recommended parking enforcement and other ticketing that is reflective of income and has automatic rules that are not open to interpretation or officer discretion. Additionally, the City should post clearer signage for parking rules, especially when there are multiple timeframes on a sign with different ranges and dates that might cause confusion or anxiety about whether a spot is legal or not.

- "Right now the problem is that fees are random and arbitrary, and not aligned with folks making the city's minimum wage."
- "People have to pay so much money for parking and tickets. So many workers that work in Seattle and live elsewhere, like Tukwila and Angle Lake, have to commute all the way to Seattle and then pay for parking. Gas is expensive too. There are situations where Black and brown people have been murdered over minor offenses like parking [illegally]."
- "Parking signs can be so convoluted and confusing. You have to understand the psychology of how people think about their surroundings."

When speaking about safety, participants also spoke at length about housing and displacement, as well as social services that support economic safety and community well-being. Participants feel like their cultural hubs are disappearing. To solve this problem, they suggest funding to support and preserve community hubs and businesses, such as grants to BIPOC businesses to help them renovate, uplifting and supporting businesses that are impacted economically during construction projects. Participants also commented on cars running into businesses in BIPOC neighborhoods.
- "Seattle is white now. People are pushed out to south King County. My friends lived in trailer parks that were sold and got hotels and parking lots built on them, all for white people."
- "Now that it's gentrified, it doesn't even look like a city and feel like a community. It just feels like a place."
- "Where is the art? Where is the culture? Where is the voice of the people? Even if our schools and other buildings get renovated it should look like our city, not a city that was overtaken."
- "In White Center, where three businesses burnt down recently due to arson, there are huge apartments being built in that space. It feels suspicious."

Participants spoke at length about social services, including recommendations for schools, after-school programs, and recommendations for wider community support.

For schools, participants called for accessible mental health services and school counselors, particularly counselors and support staff at school that share background, identity, and experiences with students ("It's hard to talk to someone who doesn't share your background. They need to be culturally competent.") as well as getting rid of police in schools ("Kids are entering the school-to-court-to-jail pipeline just for shoving classmates in a fight."). Participants recommended more after-school programs, sports, and other opportunities such as Teen Nights at community centers. These programs should be "safe, fun, reliable, and staffed by people who care about you, who are from the community." They need to be free or inexpensive, without gatekeeping, and be widespread across the region. These programs allow kids to pursue passions and keep students inside the school in the evenings.
- "I was working at a school as an after-school teacher. So many of the kids are Black and brown, but all the teachers and staff members and bosses are white. I was wearing a BLM

shirt, and got called out for promoting school shootings and saying that apparently "all lives don't matter."
- "Don't put a white person in charge of programs that are intended to support POC."
- "A lot of school adults that people connect with are athletic staff, security guards, urban league staff, not necessarily teachers, because they don't have the stigma of reporting to the school district the way teachers do. It makes them more accessible and welcoming for students who need someone to talk to. Just having a diverse range of people in the school building will mean that students are more likely to find someone they can connect with."

For the wider community, participants suggested:
- More community spaces and hubs that are publicly accessible and free to exist in, where people can come together, share information with each other, and support one another.
- Programs and support resources that are standard and accessible across the region and outside of City boundaries.
- Language and translation services and family and community liaisons who can help people who don't speak English to not feel scared to access services.
- More support that is accessible for undocumented people, international students, and others who don't have a social security number and therefore don't qualify for many existing programs, assistance, or scholarships. This includes free Orca cards for undocumented people, so they don't have to fear using public transit, access to health insurance and mental health treatment, EBT and other food support programs, and opportunities for scholarships ("As an international student, I can't get a discounted Orca card even though I'm paying tuition to my school.")
- Eliminating ID requirements for more services and programs entirely, or at a minimum, City agencies and nonprofits should figure out the minimal amount of information that they need to serve community and get the funding they need without being overly intrusive ("[A lot of services are] not reaching people who are not comfortable giving out that information, things like race or address. People who are worried for their safety.")

"People from their own community sharing information about services and programs. Just like with the Covid vaccine. It has to be specific. Hispanic folks are not a monolith. A Dominican person talking to a Mexican person may not work. It has to be culturally competent."

Lastly, participants called for more opportunities like this one to have their voices heard, to talk thoughtfully about issues and what they want for our city, and opportunities to weigh in on the things that will impact them, like hiring.
- "Kids have really good remarks and questions to ask older people. There should be student representatives [in hiring]. It'd make a big difference."

E. Parking Enforcement Survey Summary

Overview: This survey was conducted in-person in May, June, and August 2022 in the Central District, Seattle's historically Black neighborhood. Our goal was to assess BIPOC experiences with parking enforcement.

Methodology: WSOS members collected responses on four occasions while tabling at the intersection of 23rd and Union on a Sunday afternoon, at the Juneteenth celebration at Jimi Hendrix Park, at the "Honoring Our Black Wall Streets" event, and at the Garfield High School Centennial Celebration. Anonymous responses were welcomed. We received 63 written responses, which were transcribed for analysis. We also advertised an online version of the survey on our WSOS Instagram account, which had 7 respondents. All 70 responses are analyzed here. An initial read of open-ended questions (Q1b, Q2b, Q3b, and Q5) identified common themes, which are tabulated in the bar charts shown below. Quotes highlighted below were lightly edited for spelling and uniform capitalization and punctuation.

Demographics: 60% of survey respondents were Black, and at least 85% of all respondents were people of color. The majority (56%) of respondents reported that they or their family had been displaced from a neighborhood in Seattle (due to gentrification, high rents, or other reasons) to somewhere else where they have to rely more on driving to get around. Of those displaced, the largest number of respondents (32%) now live in cities in south King County.

Contents

Summary of findings

When asked if there was anything that makes it difficult, stressful, or unfair to get to the Central District or to get around Seattle in general:
- Many respondents cited difficulties involving parking, including parking restrictions (79%), missing or confusing signage (63%), and parking enforcement practices (56%).
- 61% of respondents cited construction.
- 44% of respondents cited a lack of convenient or reliable transit.
- 40% of respondents cited a lack of convenient or safe routes to bike.

79% of respondents reported noticing changes in parking or parking enforcement in the Central District or elsewhere in Seattle. Prominent themes included:
- Parking has become more challenging, particularly due to an increasing density of residents competing for limited parking, shorter time limits, less free parking, and changes to street infrastructure (e.g., new bike lanes) that have removed parking.
- Enforcement has increased, and some feel that it targets communities of color and low-income areas.
- New parking signage has often been confusing.

64% of respondents reported having felt targeted by unfair or aggressive parking enforcement in Seattle. Prominent themes included:
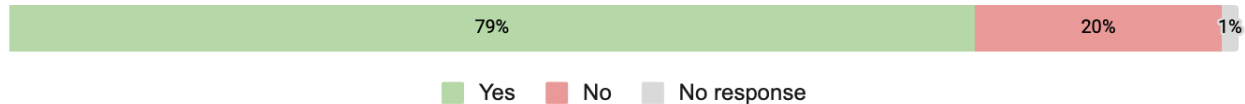- Enforcement feels aggressive because an officer ticketed opportunistically or soon after one parked, or behaved in a rude manner.
- An officer made a mistake or parking signage was unclear.
- Enforcement feels unfair because certain marginalized groups or communities are disproportionately targeted or affected by ticketing.
- Enforcement is perceived as aggressive because of the high volume of ticketing or officer presence in a certain area.

When asked what makes them feel welcome or like they belong in the Central District or in Seattle, respondents cited first and foremost Black community, businesses, events, culture, and art. They also mentioned being around respectful and friendly people, and having access to a safe and reliable transportation system.
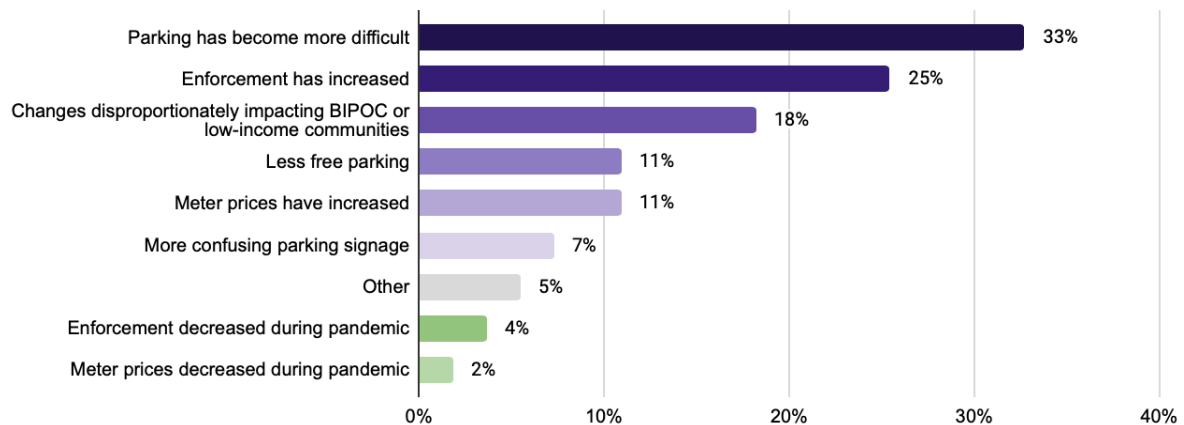
When asked what makes them feel unwelcome or like they don't belong in the Central District or in Seattle, respondents cited first and foremost rapid change, the high cost of living, gentrification, and displacement. They also mentioned being harassed or feeling watched, particularly by white people and the police, and barriers to using the transportation system.

Survey responses

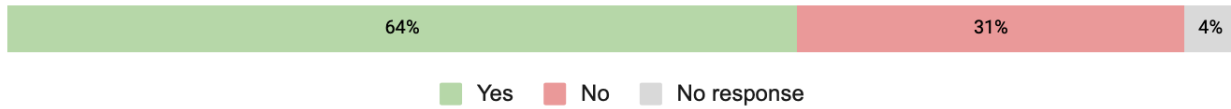## Q1a: Have you noticed any changes in parking or parking enforcement here or elsewhere in Seattle?

79%	20%	1%

Yes   No   No response

Q1b: If yes, what changes have you noticed?

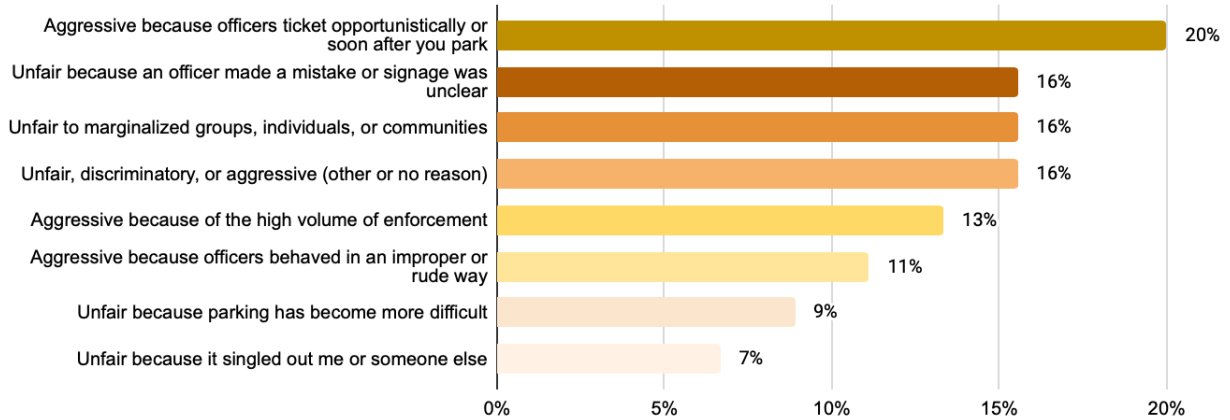| Category	Percentage
Parking has become more difficult	33%
Enforcement has increased	25%
Changes disproportionately impacting BIPOC or low-income communities	18%
Less free parking	11%
Meter prices have increased	11%
More confusing parking signage	7%
Other	5%
Enforcement decreased during pandemic	4%
Meter prices decreased during pandemic	2%

Notable quotes:

- *"Parking enforcement continually harasses BIPOC folks with tickets and threats and towing on 24th & Union where I live at Liberty Bank Building. … They don't do this in white neighborhoods. They continue to be unfair and inequitable toward people of color."*

- *"They tow cars daily, ticket multiple times a day. It feels like we are a target. The white people have parking under their buildings. The Black people have to park at banks and places where no parking is available."*

- *"I worked at Franklin HS and in the last 5 years, the parking became more limited around the school unless you could buy the special parking sticker, which was… an added expense if you commuted to work by car, which many of the staff did, because they could not afford to live in the city, and transit wasn't always the most efficient way of travel."*

- *"Less parking on the streets, bike lanes and additional bus lanes, more buildings but less parking."*

- *"Construction workers are taking our neighborhood parking."*

- *"Lots of new signage that has confusing language."*

- *"More parking is being changed to pay to park for only two hours. Parking signs are very confusing as well. Roads are also changing so parking spots are decreasing."*

- *"I stay in the South Park area, and every Wednesday of the 1st of the month, we have to move due to street cleaning. We as a community have nowhere to park from 9am-1pm and it's frustrating. Where do we park?"*

Q2a: Have you ever felt targeted by unfair or aggressive parking enforcement in Seattle?
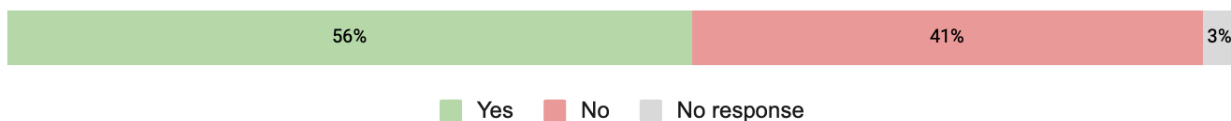
64%	31%	4%

Yes   No   No response

Q2b: If yes, what did that look like?

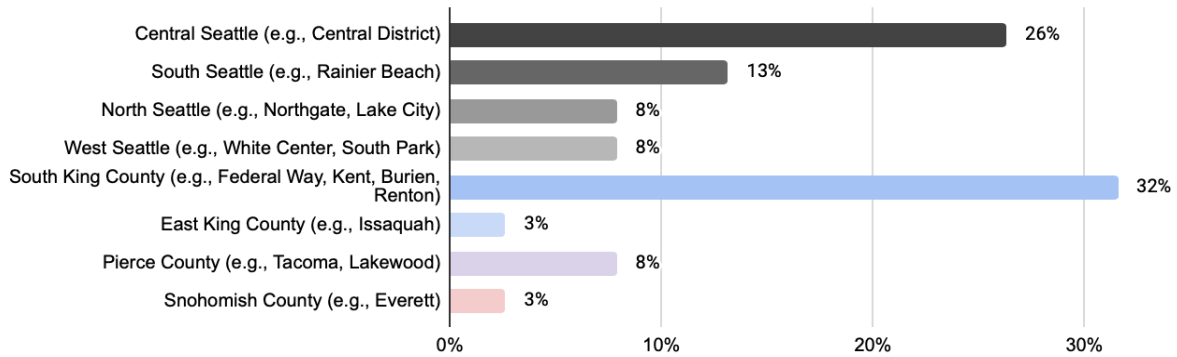| Category	Percentage
Aggressive because officers ticket opportunistically or soon after you park	20%
Unfair because an officer made a mistake or signage was unclear	16%
Unfair to marginalized groups, individuals, or communities	16%
Unfair, discriminatory, or aggressive (other or no reason)	16%
Aggressive because of the high volume of enforcement	13%
Aggressive because officers behaved in an improper or rude way	11%
Unfair because parking has become more difficult	9%
Unfair because it singled out me or someone else	7%

Notable quotes:

- *"Parents not speaking the language receiving parking tickets, then feeling as though us first-gen children must go with them to avoid tickets."*

- *"Fortunately I worked 3 blocks away from the municipal court and could easily appear before a magistrate. He saw my photographs and agreed to dismiss the tickets."*

- *"Lots of tickets. People losing cars because they can't afford to get [their] car out of the tow yard."*

- *"They don't care that your issues are severe. They just need to make their monthly quotas."*

- *"As an example: on Memorial Day (of all days) the Black Wall Street Festival event was targeted for parking enforcement."*

- *"Being followed. No notice of no parking areas."*

- *"Enforcement following me around the block talking crap."*

- *"Too many spots be taken and there's no room so now you have to drive farther."*
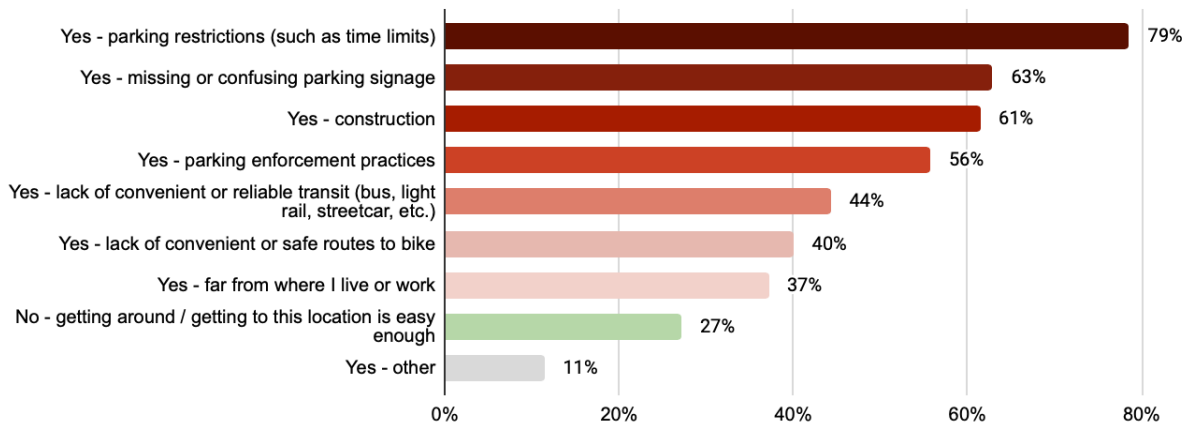
- *"Getting a ticket 5-10 minutes after parking."*

Q3a: Have you or your family been displaced from a neighborhood in Seattle (because of gentrification, high rents, high cost(s) of living, feeling unwelcome, or other reasons) to *somewhere else where you have to rely more on driving* to get around?
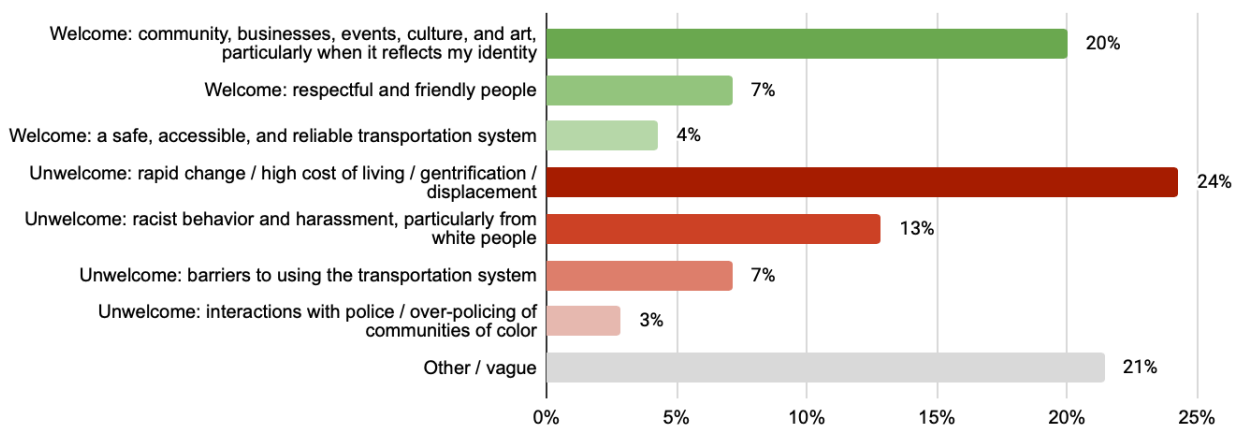
56%	41%	3%

Yes   No   No response

Q3b: If yes, what neighborhood or city do you currently live in? *(n = 38 locations mentioned)*

Location	Percentage
Central Seattle (e.g., Central District)	26%
South Seattle (e.g., Rainier Beach)	13%
North Seattle (e.g., Northgate, Lake City)	8%
West Seattle (e.g., White Center, South Park)	8%
South King County (e.g., Federal Way, Kent, Burien, Renton)	32%
East King County (e.g., Issaquah)	3%
Pierce County (e.g., Tacoma, Lakewood)	8%
Snohomish County (e.g., Everett)	3%

Q4: Is there anything that makes it difficult, stressful, or unfair to get to this location or to get around Seattle in general? *(Select all that apply.)*
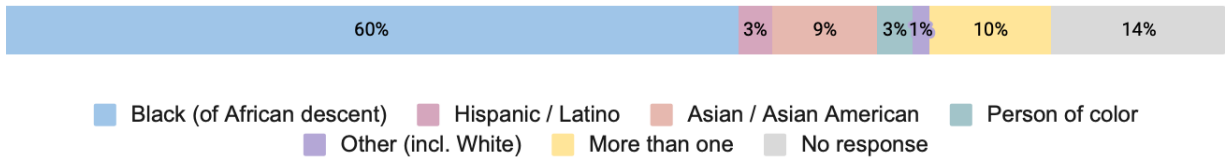
Response	Percentage
Yes - parking restrictions (such as time limits)	79%
Yes - missing or confusing parking signage	63%
Yes - construction	61%
Yes - parking enforcement practices	56%
Yes - lack of convenient or reliable transit (bus, light rail, streetcar, etc.)	44%
Yes - lack of convenient or safe routes to bike	40%
Yes - far from where I live or work	37%
No - getting around / getting to this location is easy enough	27%
Yes - other	11%

Q5: What makes you feel welcome or unwelcome here or elsewhere in Seattle, like you belong or don't belong?

Response	Percentage
Welcome: community, businesses, events, culture, and art, particularly when it reflects my identity	20%
Welcome: respectful and friendly people	7%
Welcome: a safe, accessible, and reliable transportation system	4%
Unwelcome: rapid change / high cost of living / gentrification / displacement	24%
Unwelcome: racist behavior and harassment, particularly from white people	13%
Unwelcome: barriers to using the transportation system	7%
Unwelcome: interactions with police / over-policing of communities of color	3%
Other / vague	21%

Notable quotes:

- *"The community makes me feel like I belong, specifically seeing many successful individuals that look like myself."*

- *"When the community is welcome and taken care of, when there are people that look like me (Black), art and murals celebrating my culture."*

- *"I feel welcome as a cyclist in Seattle because so much has been done to make it safer and easier to bike. However, I don't feel as welcome in some neighborhoods while biking or driving from seeing so many signs about being watched."*

- *"Accessible public transportation is also an important piece of feeling welcome."*

- *"Parking time limits... [make] me feel as though I can't enjoy my time there."*

- *"I was born and raised in the CD. My grandmother's home is still in the CD and it's difficult to visit due to the over-crowded streets, construction workers parking in every open space, and not enough disabled parking."*

- *"I just feel like I can't even afford to hang out in the area, let alone live in it. Affordable housing also feel inaccessible to me."*

- *"I do not feel welcome in Seattle due to the high cost of living, high parking fees (including zone parking), and a general sense that people of color only belong in certain parts of the city (unincorporated King County, Rainier Valley, Skyway, etc.)."*

- *"Getting pushed out of the neighborhood that I spent a lot of time in and grew up in."*

- *"White people make me feel unwelcome."*

Q6: What is your racial or ethnic identity? *(You may select more than one option.)*

60%	3%	9%	3%	1%	10%	14%

- Black (of African descent)
- Hispanic / Latino
- Asian / Asian American
- Person of color
- Other (incl. White)
- More than one
- No response

F. Police Stops Survey Summary

Overview: This survey was conducted in-person in August 2022 at Umoja Festival, a Black cultural event in the Central District of Seattle. Our goal was to assess BIPOC experiences with traffic stops and other forms of police contact.

Methodology: WSOS members collected responses while tabling at the event. Anonymous responses were welcomed. We received 86 written responses, which were transcribed for analysis. An initial read of open-ended questions (Q2a and Q2b) identified common themes, which are tabulated in the bar charts shown below. Quotes highlighted below were lightly edited for spelling and uniform capitalization and punctuation.

Demographics: 67% of survey respondents were Black, and at least 81% of all respondents were people of color. A wide range of ages were represented among respondents: 35% of respondents were between the ages of 16-34; 28% were between the ages of 35-54; and 28% were 55 or older. More women (50%) responded to the survey than men (40%).
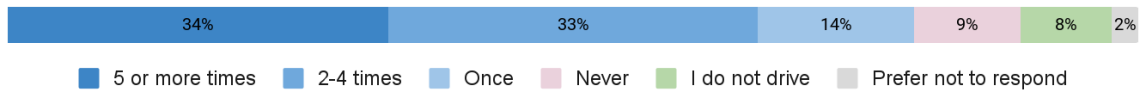
Contents

Summary of findings

How many times have you been stopped by a police officer while driving?

| 34% | 33% | 14% | 9% | 8% | 2% |

■ 5 or more times ■ 2-4 times ■ Once ■ Never ■ I do not drive ■ Prefer not to respond

Nearly all respondents reported having been stopped by police. Of those who drive, 90% reported having been pulled over while driving, including 38% who had been pulled over five or more times *(see above)*. While many respondents (48%) do not ride a bike, 38% of those who do bike reported having been stopped by police while biking. 35% of respondents reported being stopped while walking. Respondents' reported stops more frequently resulted in them receiving a ticket (56% of stops) than a warning alone (21% of stops).

49% of respondents who have been stopped by the police attributed a stop to unclear, weak, or nonexistent reasons and/or suspected racial profiling. A common theme was the perception of being stopped for "driving while Black." Other reasons for respondents' reported stops included speeding (31%), minor equipment-related violations (11%), and matching the description of a suspect or looking suspicious (6%).

Respondents shared that police stops made them feel nervous, scared, and uncomfortable (40% of responses); angry, harassed, and targeted (36%); and sad, powerless, and overwhelmed (22%). Some said that weakly-justified stops made them feel "like a criminal," and that interactions with the police made them "scared for their life" and "not sure how the police [would] respond to me." One said that whenever they have to engage with the police, their "heart drops to [their] stomach."

76% of respondents reported that they would not feel safe reaching for their license, vehicle registration, and insurance while a police officer is watching. Only 10% of respondents reported that they would feel safe doing so.
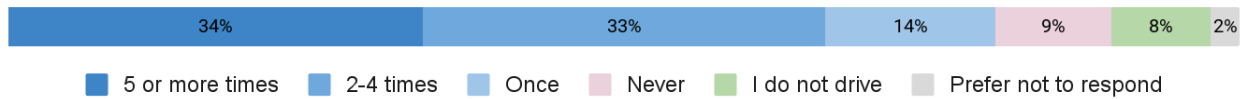
Do you think armed police officers should be removed from traffic enforcement?

| 78% | 9% | 6% | 7% |

■ Yes ■ No ■ Other ■ Prefer not to respond / No response
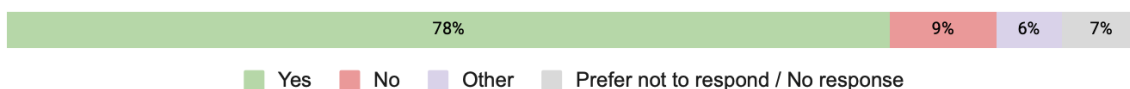
78% of respondents think that armed police officers should be removed from traffic enforcement *(see above)*. 9% of respondents disagree. In responses to a optional question soliciting additional thoughts, respondents shared that they "don't like how [the police] bother people in [their] community," that "routine traffic stops do not need armed police," and that "police are supposed to make us feel safe and protect us from real criminals."
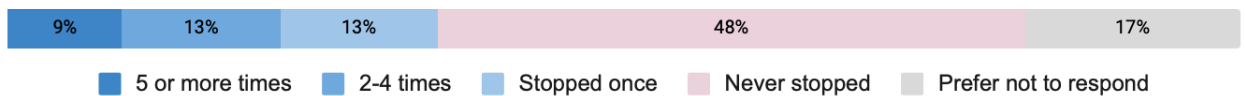
Survey responses

Q1a: How many times have you been stopped by a police officer while driving?

34%	33%	14%	9%	8%	2%

■ 5 or more times ■ 2-4 times ■ Once ■ Never ■ I do not drive ■ Prefer not to respond

Q1b: How many times have you been stopped by a police officer while biking?

1%	5%	8%	23%	48%	15%

■ 5 or more times ■ 2-4 times ■ Stopped once ■ Never ■ I do not ride a bike ■ Prefer not to respond

Q1c: How many times have you been stopped by a police officer while walking?

9%	13%	13%	48%	17%

■ 5 or more times ■ 2-4 times ■ Stopped once ■ Never stopped ■ Prefer not to respond

Q2: Please think about the time(s) that you were stopped by police. If you have never been stopped by police, you can skip these questions.

Q2a: Why were you stopped? (If you think the stop(s) were unfair or unjustified, let us know here.)
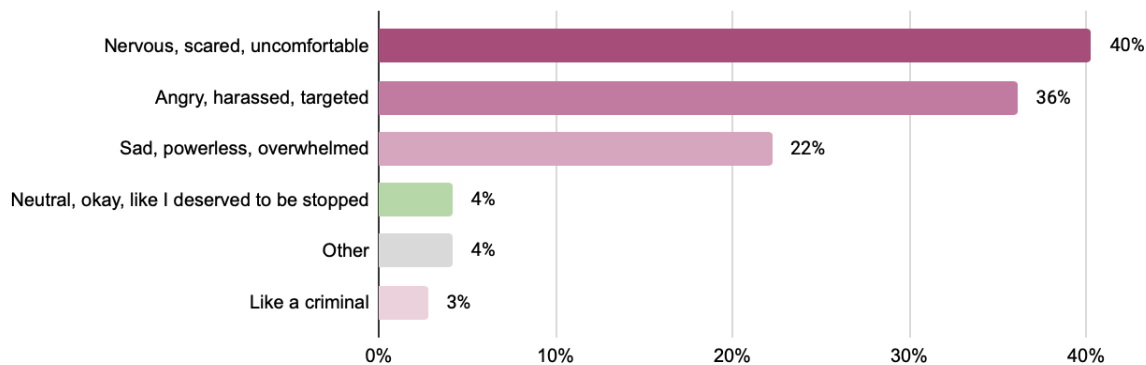

Reason	%
Unclear/weak/nonexistent reason and/or suspected racial profiling	49%
Speeding	31%
Other violation / vague response	29%
Minor violation (e.g., light out, expired tabs, seatbelt)	11%
Matched the description of a suspect or looked suspicious	6%
The officer knew me	3%
Jaywalking	3%
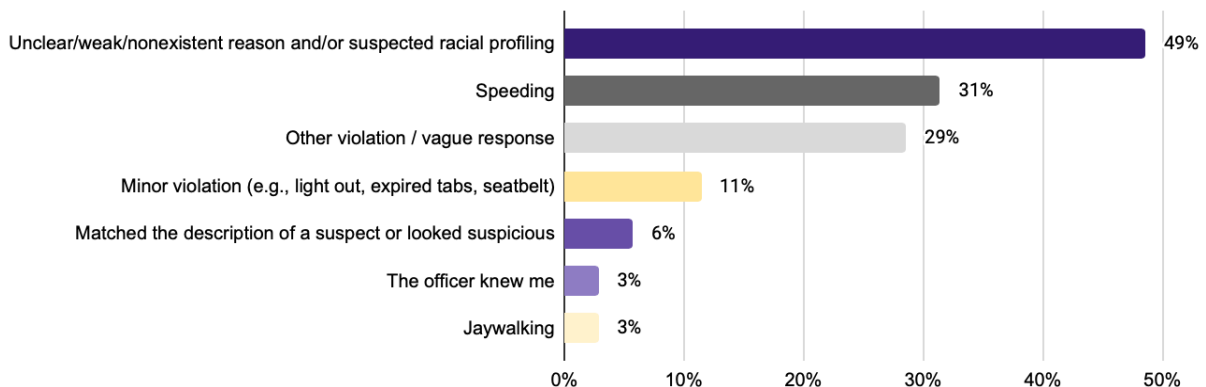
Notable quotes:

- *"Driving while being Black, driving late at night."*
- *"Driving while Black in the Eastside."*
- *"DWB (driving while Black)."*
- *"My cousin had loud Mexican music playing and [the officer] immediately stopped us, made us step out."*
- *"Driving a old school Cadi with a cap on."*

- *"I was stopped for not looking rich enough for what I was driving for the cops to leave me alone."*
- *"Unknown reasons – questioned by police whether my family was my own."*
- *"I was racially profiled and told I match the description of a rapist."*
- *"They said I looked suspicious."*
- *"Police officer wanted to ID me. The stop violated my rights. I was targeted."*
- *"The guy before me crossed and he was white, and they stopped me. Racially profiled."*
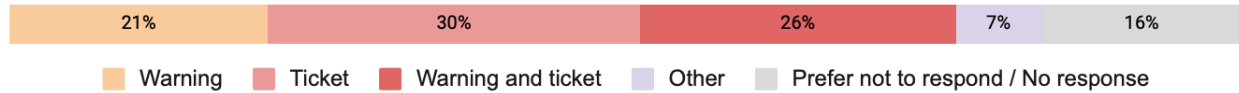- *"Speeding. Justified."*

Q2b: How did the stop(s) make you feel?

Response	Percentage
Nervous, scared, uncomfortable	40%
Angry, harassed, targeted	36%
Sad, powerless, overwhelmed	22%
Neutral, okay, like I deserved to be stopped	4%
Other	4%
Like a criminal	3%

Notable quotes:
- *"I am always nervous when I have to engage with the police. My heart drops to my stomach."*
- *"Unsettled. I wasn't sure what was next."*
- *"Nervous because both I and the passenger are Black."*
- *"Worried and not sure how the police will respond to me."*
- *"Scared for my life."*
- *"The cop seemed paranoid due to the window malfunctioning. Had to open the door to talk to the scared cop."*
- *"Like I was going to get beat up or going to jail."*
- *"Not good 'cause [the violation] happens all the time and people don't get pulled over."*
- *"Racially profiled."*
- *"Unfair, made no sense, unnecessary."*
- *"Scared, angry, upset, sad, isolated."*
- *"The police got the other guy's story and took it as facts and had absolutely no interest in hearing my side."*
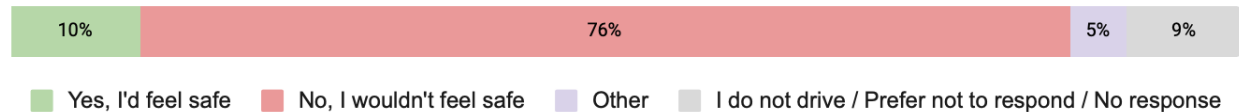
Q2c: Did the stop(s) end in a... *(You may select more than one option.)*

21%	30%	26%	7%	16%

☐ Warning ☐ Ticket ☐ Warning and ticket ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to respond / No response

Note: 13 respondents wrote in the "Other" section (7 of them in addition to selecting "Warning" and/or "Ticket"). "Other" responses included the following:

- *"Stepped out and checked the car for drugs"*
- *"Arrested" or "Jail" (4 respondents)*
- *"Insults by the cops"*

Q3: During a traffic stop, would you feel safe reaching for your license, vehicle registration, and insurance while a police officer is watching you?

10%	76%	5%	9%

☐ Yes, I'd feel safe ☐ No, I wouldn't feel safe ☐ Other ☐ I do not drive / Prefer not to respond / No response

Note: 7 respondents wrote in the "Other" section (3 of them in addition to selecting "Yes" or "No"). "Other" responses included the following:

- *"I would be nervous" / "Nervous always" (2 respondents)*
- *"Only after I stated 'OK let me find my info/document'"*
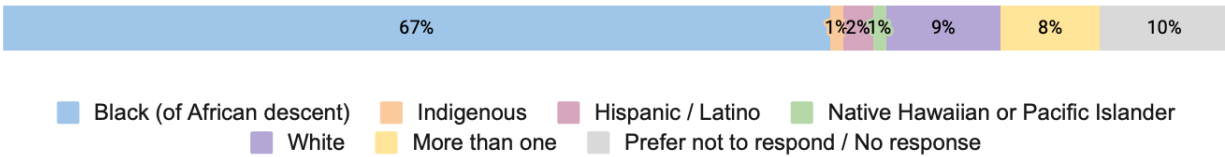- *"Sometimes"*

Q4: Do you think armed police officers should be removed from traffic enforcement?

78%	9%	6%	7%

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to respond / No response
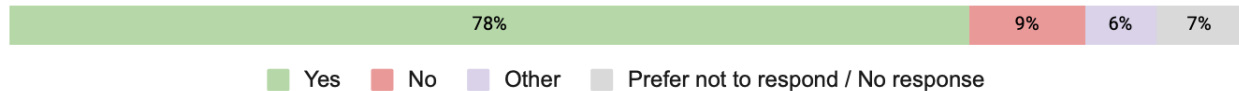
Note: 5 respondents wrote in the "Other" section (1 of them in addition to selecting "Yes"). "Other" responses included the following:

- *"I'm not sure" / "I don't know" (3 respondents)*
- *"Armed police serve a purpose but don't belong in traffic enforcement" (response summarized)*
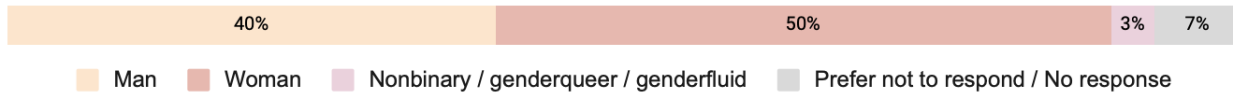- *"Proper training is needed to approach citizens with respect"*

Q5: What is your racial or ethnic identity? *(You may select more than one option.)*

| 67% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 9% | 8% | 10% |

Legend:
- Black (of African descent)
- Indigenous
- Hispanic / Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- More than one
- Prefer not to respond / No response

Q6: What is your age?

| 12% | 23% | 19% | 9% | 16% | 12% | 9% |

Legend:
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to respond

Q7: What is your gender identity?

| 40% | 50% | 3% | 7% |

Legend:
- Man
- Woman
- Nonbinary / genderqueer / genderfluid
- Prefer not to respond / No response

Q8 *(optional)*: Feel free to share any other thoughts about policing, safety, or other topics below.

Notable quotes:

- *"Police should be from the city they're policing…"*
- *"I was assaulted and sometimes the police use of force is extreme."*
- *"I ran a yellow light. Police threatened me, gripping his gun. Told me, 'You know what happened to [Amadou] Diallo?'"*
- *"It would be nice for [the police] to share pamphlets or flyers of events and resources to citizens they've pulled over."*
- *"Routine traffic stops do not need armed police. Also it feels like there are more cops in the South End."*
- *"I think that there are racist cops still everywhere, and until that is changed, no one is completely safe!"*
- *"Police are supposed to make us feel safe and protect us from real criminals."*
- *"I don't like how [the police] bother people in my community."*
- *"Less police will encourage more youth to be out having fun."*
- *"We need a new system."*

G. Community Safety Survey Summary

Overview: This short survey was conducted in-person in August and September 2022 at events centering the Black community in Seattle. Our goal was to assess BIPOC perspectives on community safety as it relates to transportation.

Methodology: WSOS members collected responses on three occasions while tabling at the Garfield High School Centennial Celebration, Black Prisoners Caucus BBQ, and Relatives of Old Timers Seattle (ROOTS) Family Celebration. Anonymous responses were welcomed. We received 86 written responses, which were transcribed for analysis. An initial read of the open-ended question (Q1) identified common themes, which are tabulated in the bar chart shown below. Quotes highlighted below were lightly edited for spelling and uniform capitalization and punctuation.
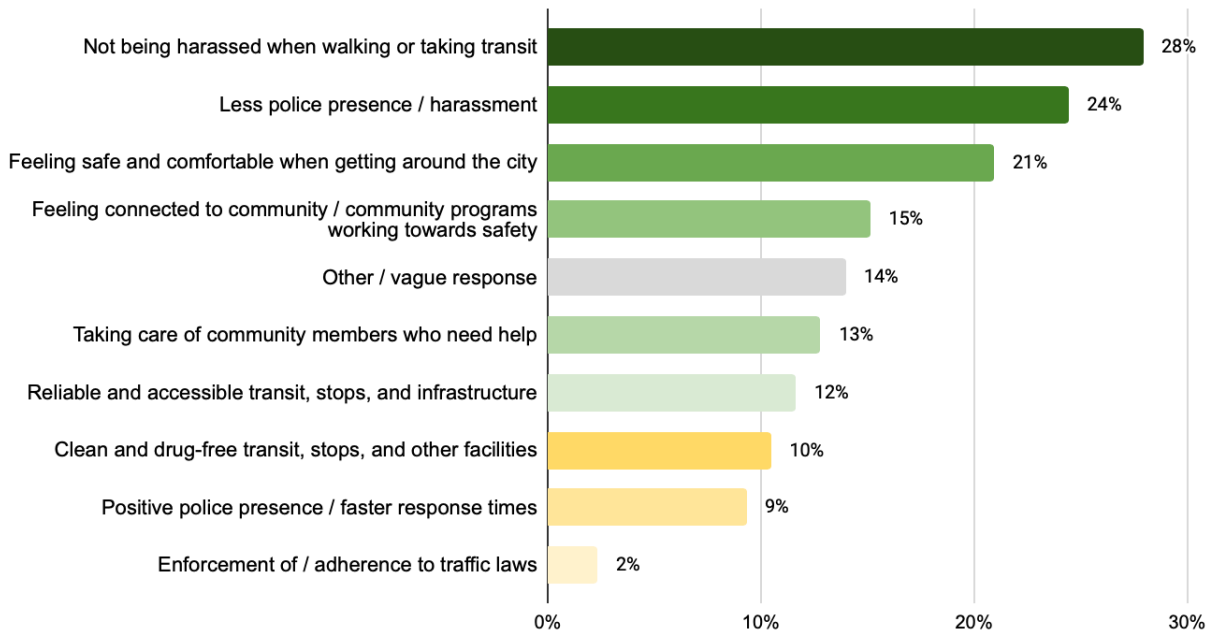
Demographics: 94% of survey respondents were Black. A wide range of ages were represented among respondents: 29% of respondents were under the age of 34; 33% were between the ages of 35-54; and 35% were 55 or older. An equal proportion of men and women (both 49%) responded to the survey.

Contents

Survey results

Q1: What does safety mean to you when you're thinking about transportation in Seattle?

Category	Percentage
Not being harassed when walking or taking transit	28%
Less police presence / harassment	24%
Feeling safe and comfortable when getting around the city	21%
Feeling connected to community / community programs working towards safety	15%
Other / vague response	14%
Taking care of community members who need help	13%
Reliable and accessible transit, stops, and infrastructure	12%
Clean and drug-free transit, stops, and other facilities	10%
Positive police presence / faster response times	9%
Enforcement of / adherence to traffic laws	2%

Summary

Respondents' top two priorities for safety when navigating Seattle's transportation system involved being safe from harassment. Different forms of harassment were cited: both from other members of the public and from people in positions of power such as bus drivers or fare enforcement officers (28% of responses), as well as often-racialized harassment from arbitrary, threatening, and unjust police contacts (24% of responses).

Respondents generally embraced reduced police presence (24% of responses), community-oriented solutions for safety (15% of responses), and efforts to care for unhoused community members and others in need of help (13% of responses) over calls for increased police presence (9% of responses).

The perception of safety and comfort while getting around Seattle was rated as a high priority (21% of responses), particularly the ability to get around without fear or anxiety. This relates closely to respondents' desire to get around Seattle without worrying about being harassed.

Having access to reliable transit and, in general, safe and equitable citywide transportation infrastructure was identified as a key contributor to community safety by 12% of respondents. Respondents (10%) also shared concerns about the cleanliness of transit facilities and drug use on transit.

Notable quotes, organized by theme

Not being harassed when walking or taking transit

- *"Safety in transportation in Seattle includes protections for young women of color who can be especially vulnerable when traveling alone."*
- *"When walking, nobody throwing rocks at me because of my race and yelling at me."*
- *"The bus drivers are sometimes mean, nasty, and have bad attitudes. I deserve respect. People are racist and they need help. I can't change my skin color."*
- *"Being able to ride public transportation without the threat of drug use or being attacked (I am a senior citizen)."*

Less police presence / harassment

- *"Police should not be pulling folks over for minor issues like expired tabs, etc. Folks are scared of the police and are experiencing trauma every time we're pulled over. We're tired of being harassed."*
- *"My son inadvertently failed to pay his fare. When he tried to explain, the 'enforcement person' called Renton police (this was on the light rail) and he was arrested. We don't need police involved."*
- *"Not being harassed or profiled. Not having to worry about my Blackness being criminalized in the eyes of people in positions of power."*
- *"Safety to me is being able to move with ease, without anxiety, without having to have 'the talk' with my three boys before we go out. Public safety means I don't have to be fearful of white people nor the police."*
- *"Safety means to me: being able to walk the streets of my neighborhood without fear of being stopped because I look 'suspicious.'"*
- *"I feel like any interaction with the police at this point is like a possible death sentence."*

Feeling safe and comfortable when getting around the city

- *"Getting to a destination safely without anxiety."*
- *"When you don't have to stress about what is going to happen or be paranoid."*
- *"What safety means to me as a person of color, is me not having to overthink my surroundings in Seattle when it comes to racism, discrimination, amongst other things."*

Feeling connected to community / community programs working towards safety

- *"Seeing more youth programs developed to keep youth active after school and in the summer."*
- *"Seeing people at peace... seeing people coming together and having fun."*
- *"Safety looks like a community that thrives and is supportive of each other."*

Taking care of community members who need help

- *"We need to address mental health services and help the homeless."*
- *"Free passes for people experiencing homelessness. Trained bus drivers to de-escalate situations."*
- *"Free transportation for all is a great step towards addressing poverty and homelessness."*

Reliable and accessible transit, stops, and infrastructure

- *"I feel it means getting on the train or bus when it is expected and feel safe while I wait."*
- *"Having transit be unobtrusive, like in other parts of the city – underground, and all accessible."*
- *"Safety means... a transportation system that equitably serves the most underserved communities as those are left out."*

- *"Safety in regards to transportation means fixing these streets. Potholes are dangerous for cars, buses, and bikes."*

Clean and drug-free transit, stops, and other facilities

- *"Clean, well-maintained seating…"*
- *"No crime at the bus stops, clean bus stops."*
- *"Let's rid the open drug use on public transportation first."*
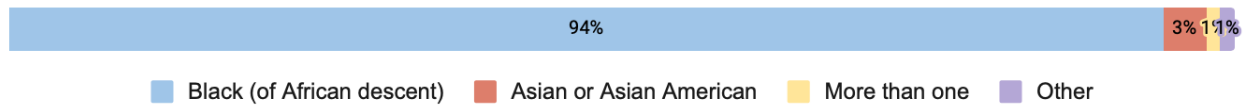- *"Rider safety means cleaning up the drug users, etc. on buses."*

Positive police presence / faster response times

- *"Community safety to me is men, walking the streets with firearms, protecting women and children 24/7, 365."*
- *"Not being attacked by random people. Police responding to my needs when time matters."*
- *"Safety looks like communities being listened to about what real crime is happening in their community without people living on the outskirts of the community gaslighting the real situation. When police get to know that community and work to stop the criminals through relationships and conversations about what crime is happening. Trust needs to be built between community and police."*
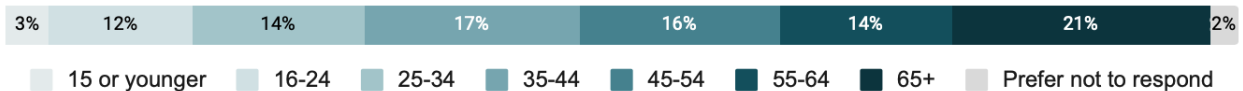
Enforcement of / adherence to traffic laws

- *"People driving the speed limit and not playing games."*
- *"Transportation in general has changed. Everyone has their own interpretation of safety, no one stops at stop signs anymore, it's a slow rolling stop."*
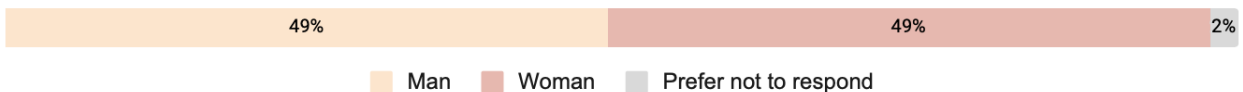
Q2: What is your racial or ethnic identity? *(You may select more than one option.)*

94%				3%	1%	1%

- Black (of African descent)
- Asian or Asian American
- More than one
- Other

Q3: What is your age?

3%	12%	14%	17%	16%	14%	21%	2%

- 15 or younger
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to respond

Q4: What is your gender identity?

49%	49%	2%

- Man
- Woman
- Prefer not to respond

H. Media Coverage

1. [Opinion: King County helmet law leads to biased enforcement, it should be repealed | South Seattle Emerald](#) (February 2022)
2. [Seattle bike helmet rule is dropped amid racial justice concerns | The New York Times](#) (February 2022)
3. [King County repeals mandatory bicycle helmet law | The Seattle Times](#) (February 2022)
4. [New NACTO Working Paper recommends reforming bicycle laws that punish Black and Latine/x bike riders without improving safety](#) (August 2022)
5. ["No one should feel like they're unsafe": Mobility justice photovoice as a youth advocacy tool for equitable community mobility | Family & Community Health](#) (August 2022)