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SEPTEMBER 2026

CENTERING COMMUNITY POWER: LESSONS FROM BIKING WHILE BLACK

A POLICY REPORT



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was made possible thanks to years of trust building and a community of support and funders. Yolanda Davis-Overstreet and Sarah Reboloso McCullough began collaborating in 2017 with a shared commitment to mobility justice. Thank you to Adonia Lugo for bringing us into the same orbit and supporting us both in our work over the years. Our first collaboration, *Legacies of the Street: Seeking Transportation Justice*, juxtaposed the social history of racial flourishing and racism in the West Adams neighborhood alongside Davis-Overstreet's family history living in the community for three generations. This was funded by a Cal Humanities grant. Since then, we have stayed in relationship as we grew our respective projects.

When the UC Davis Environmental Policy and Management program offered the placement of an Environmental Justice Fellow, funded by the UC Davis Institute for the Environment, McCullough knew that this was an ideal opportunity to document the policy impacts of Davis-Overstreet's work on Biking While Black. The chosen EJ Fellow was Carlin Coleman, the lead author on this work and a graduate student in the Environmental Policy and Management program. Through a summer of working together, we produced this policy report. Thanks for the report design and layout goes to Eli Alston-Stepnitz, PhD and former FRI grad student.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Biking While Black's fiscal sponsor, Social Good Fund, for their continued encouragement, guidance, and steadfast support of our work and vision. Their partnership has helped sustain and strengthen this project through important years of growth, reflection, and community impact.

We also offer deep appreciation to project donors, Kautz Family Foundation and the Weiss Family Trust, whose belief in the importance of mobility justice, community storytelling, education, and collective well-being has helped make this work possible. Special thanks as well to our community engagement donation supporters, UC Davis Institute of the Environment, and Bicycle Transit Systems, for contributing resources, collaboration, and meaningful partnership opportunities.

Finally, we honor the many community-based organizations, advocates, educators, artists, researchers, volunteers, youth leaders, and allies who have walked, ridden, organized, documented, listened, and believed alongside us over the past five years. This work has always been rooted in collective effort, shared vision, and the power of community relationships. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to helping this project grow into a space of justice, joy, healing, storytelling, education, and movement for Black and BIPOC communities.



INTRODUCTION

The Biking While Black (BWB) movement began in September 2021 as a storytelling and advocacy project led by Yolanda Davis-Overstreet. Based on the belief that transportation justice is intertwined with civil rights, BWB centers the lived experiences of Black and BIPOC in mobility planning, policy, and culture. The project utilizes its films, podcasts, webinars, published material, and community engagement programs to amplify voices often absent or excluded in decision-making spaces. Simultaneously, BWB challenges systemic barriers that make cycling less safe for communities of color, including racialized policing, displacement, and historic disinvestment.

The *Biking While Black* films highlight the disproportionate criminalization, disenfranchisement, and displacement that are experienced by Black bicyclists, while the *Reimagine: Biking While Black* companion guide transforms those narratives into a framework that intertwines personal stories with both policy research and legislative insights. Following the *Reimagine* guide, the *Liberating Our Streets* curriculum puts the framework into action by training community members in mobility justice leadership. This includes undertaking walk audits, bike rides, and solution-building in high-risk neighborhoods. Through these efforts, BWB uses storytelling as both advocacy and a data source to transform lived experiences into policy change. Importantly, although the focus is on the experiences of bicyclists, these conversations also apply to other modes of active transportation, such as walking, e-biking, and scooters. The same systemic inequities shape safety and access across multiple modes.

This report blends research on bicycling, safety, and mobility justice with insights that arose from Biking While Black activities. Findings highlight how transportation work can be strengthened and made more equitable through storytelling and building community power. We identify common, dominant narratives in bicycling transportation and highlight counter-narratives that BWB and research propose. These counter-narratives re-shape how bicycling is experienced. They reflect current progress and persistent barriers and envision the future with strategies for deeper structural change.



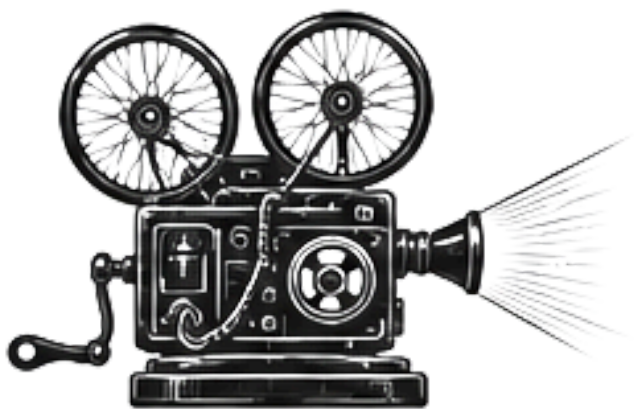
The report begins by describing Biking While Black and its accomplishments. The next section describes traditional bicycling narratives and the counter-narratives found in BWB. Concluding recommendations share how communities can create stronger advocacy for themselves, help policymakers better understand mobility injustice, and guide institutions on how to collaborate more effectively with communities to support equity-focused work.

BIKING WHILE BLACK ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since 2021, BWB has made measurable impacts in shifting narratives, building community power, and influencing policy in ways that center equity and lived experiences. The project has consistently advocated for the inclusion of racial equity and anti-criminalization in local and statewide transportation conversations. The Biking While Black films and advocacy have been part of larger mobility justice conversations in California and are a model for how to do transportation equity. Mobility justice seeks liberation of movement for all and is a grounding framework for this project. The term arose from work of The Untokening, a multiracial collective begun in 2016 and the work of mobilities scholars such as Mimi Sheller (citations). Transportation equity involves engaging and incorporating equity issues into transportation planning, policy, and research. While transportation equity hones in on systems of transport, mobility justice is a more expansive framework centered in histories of civil rights movements and strongly allied with racial justice.

BWB's films, podcasts, and public events have also played a critical role in narrative change, challenging the idea that infrastructure alone creates equity. BWB's first short film (2021), which was funded by a Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Go Human mini-grant, reached thousands of viewers and revealed how racial profiling and unsafe infrastructure shape the daily experience of Black bicyclists. The short film won "Best Bicycle Film," at the Better Cities Film Festival, and has been showcased in more than 50 communities.

In 2022, a 29-minute film, "Biking While Black: Continuing to Ride Through Decriminalization, Disenfranchisement, and Gentrification," followed and expanded on the original work by highlighting community-based solutions and the leadership of Black and BIPOC mobility advocates. By 2023, this advocacy





led to *Reimagine: Biking While Black*, a companion guide developed through community film screenings, neighborhood listening sessions, and a survey of BIPOC residents. The report combined personal narratives with legislative insights and policy data to create an advocacy framework grounded in justice and joy. It has been used to guide community advocacy and inform policymakers and institutions who seek to incorporate equity into mobility planning.

In parallel with the guide, BWB co-developed the *Liberating Our Streets* curriculum with Dr. Brooke Rios, the CEO of New LA Charter Schools, which centered on the Arlington Heights communities and surrounding areas. Leadership development, walk and bike audits, and advocacy training with grassroots experts were developed to create a model for safer and more equitable public spaces. Residents were able to present their walk and bike audit findings directly to city officials. Held at the Los Angeles City Council District 10 office, participants recommended realistic interventions, such as Metro Bike Share stations, improved pedestrian safety near schools, and traffic mitigation near a local factory (Biking While Black, 2023). Community engagement is a key component of BWB's advocacy approach and a central tenet of mobility justice. Initiatives like *Liberating Our Streets* are intentionally multi-generational, intending to identify urgent safety needs and develop concrete solutions. Not only do these neighborhoods now have stronger advocacy capacity, but they also have a model for how community-led processes can shape mobility justice work.

BWB's reach has been significant. Its films and campaigns have engaged more than 50,000 viewers nationally and internationally, sparking dialogue in community spaces, universities, and policy circles. These efforts have not only raised awareness of mobility justice but have also inspired local policymakers to introduce safety measures, providing a clear demonstration of how narrative change can turn into real, institutional impact. By utilizing storytelling as evidence and advocacy, BWB has successfully integrated lived experiences with research and policy analysis. The results are tools that resonate with both communities and policymakers.

“BWB’s films
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NARRATIVES VS. COUNTER-NARRATIVES

<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Counternarrative</i>
Infrastructure improves equity	Removing systemic barriers + infrastructure improves equity
Law enforcement creates safer streets	Law enforcement undermines safety and limits mobility.
Mobility = efficient movement of people and goods	Mobility = a civil right to move and live freely
Bike planning benefits all and is a net positive	Bike planning need stronger Black & BIPOC representation and more community dialogue to improve benefits

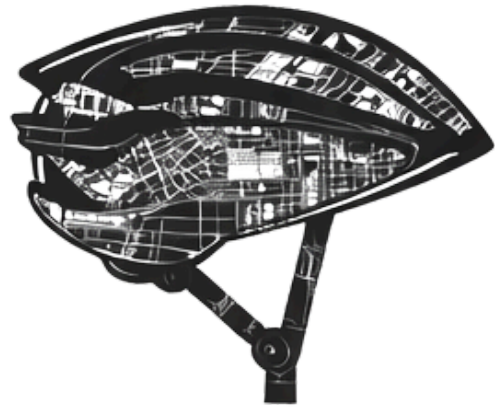
More Than Infrastructure

A dominant narrative in planning and advocacy is that expanding bike lanes and other cycling infrastructure automatically produces more equitable outcomes. This is because infrastructure is tangible, measurable, and politically attractive. Mileage counts, connectivity maps, and ribbon-cuttings signal investment in sustainability and safety. The *Liberating Our Streets* curriculum highlights that Los Angeles county has added more than 1,200 miles of bikeways over the last two decades, with a commitment to directing active transportation funding toward disadvantaged communities (Liberating Our Streets, 2024). Within this narrative, more lanes equal more access, especially for low-income residents who rely on biking as an affordable and sustainable mode of transportation.

However, evidence shows that infrastructure alone cannot deliver equity and can even reproduce or worsen disparities. A study conducted in Portland, a city that's often hailed as a cycling and sports capital with more than 350 miles of bikeways, found that women and people of color were significantly less likely to bike, citing safety concerns and cultural exclusion that infrastructure did not resolve (Lubitow et al., 2019). Vietinghoff (2021) reinforces this point, showing that even in cities celebrated for their cycling infrastructure, such as Grenoble, France, policy design and implementation have reinforced privilege and excluded marginalized riders.

These studies also highlight the less obvious aspects of exclusion. Soares and Glaser (2025) argue that cycling is often framed as belonging to a white, middle-class “creative class”. In this light, new bike lanes can become symbols of revitalization that invite gentrification and displacement, rather than genuine inclusion.

Osei and Aldred (2023) note a similar trend in the UK, where cycling policies focus on increasing mode share but fail to address safety concerns related to harassment and racialized policing, thereby leaving systemic inequities intact as infrastructure expands.



The lived experiences captured in *Biking While Black* illustrate how these structural issues play out in reality. Yolanda Davis-Overstreet recounts how her family’s tax dollars contributed to the introduction of sidewalks and bike lanes in wealthier Los Angeles neighborhoods, while her own community of West Adams remained disinvested (Voices in Justice Episode 3, 2025). Additionally, Damon Turner, founder of the Los Angeles Bicycle Academy, describes how youth in South LA continue to lack safe routes to school despite decades of infrastructure expansion across the city (Voices in Justice Episode 4, 2025). These stories reveal how infrastructure often bypasses the very neighborhoods and communities that are the most in need, while the communities that do receive investment continue to face over-policing, unsafe streets, and cultural erasure.

Considering both researched evidence and public reality, these findings demonstrate that equity cannot be measured solely by lane miles. While infrastructure is necessary, it is not a fully sufficient strategy when racialized policing, cultural exclusion, and uneven patterns of investment are taken into consideration. While an increase in bike lanes is a symbol of progress for some, it deepens marginalization for others. True equity in cycling requires pairing infrastructure with structural change that dismantles systemic barriers and centers the experiences of Black and BIPOC riders.

Traffic Enforcement and Public Safety

Many in transportation policy believe that enforcement is an essential tactic for creating safer streets. Built into frameworks like *Vision Zero*, this narrative assumes that if drivers, bicyclists, or pedestrians know there is the possibility of being stopped or ticketed, they will comply with traffic laws, ultimately reducing collisions and saving lives. In this framing, enforcement is positioned as a neutral tool for safety, and local agencies often adopt this perspective.

However, the counter-narrative reveals that enforcement not only fails to make streets safer for Black and BIPOC bicyclists but also actively produces harm. Mitchell and Ridgeway's (2018) study of over 10,000 bicycle stops in Tampa, Florida, found that 73% of stops involved Black bicyclists, despite Black residents making up only 26% of the city's population. The study also confirmed that these stops were ineffective in preventing crime or reducing crashes and showed no measurable connection between enforcement and safety outcomes. In a similar study, Barajas (2021) found that in Chicago, Black bicyclists were eight times more likely than white bicyclists to receive a citation, even though crash rates were lower in Black neighborhoods, highlighting how enforcement strategies translate into racial profiling rather than public safety. These patterns are confirmed by the 2025 RIPA Board Annual Report, which found that Black Californians were stopped 126.5% more frequently than would be expected given their population size. Latino residents were stopped 43.8% more frequently (RIPA Board, 2025). However, despite the higher stop and search rates, contraband was found less often on Black, Native American, and Latino residents when compared to White residents. Osei and Aldred (2023) expand this critique by showing that policies focused on enforcement often overlook other structural inequities, as well as normalize the criminalization of marginalized riders.

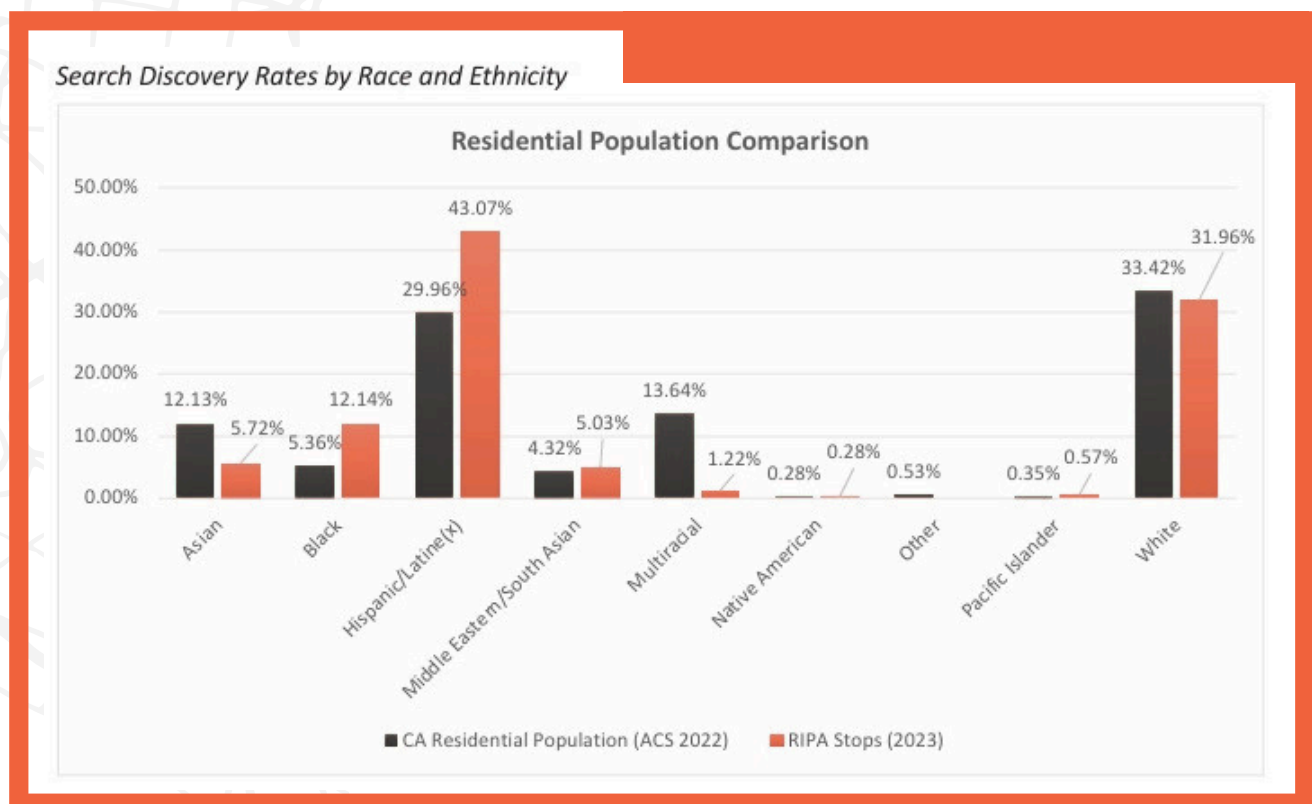


Figure 1. Search discovery rates by race and ethnicity, with Black residents being stopped 126.5 percent more than anticipated based on population size (RIPA, 2025).



Instead of addressing the root causes of these safety disparities, enforcement shifts the burden onto individuals through surveillance and punishment. This reflects the findings from *Liberating Our Streets*, where residents frequently identified police presence as a source of fear, not safety, particularly for Black and Latino youth. The lived experiences that were uplifted through the *Biking While Black* films corroborate these findings. Residents recount being stopped for minor issues like riding on the

sidewalk or for lacking a front light. These encounters can easily escalate into tickets, financial strain, and traumatic or fatal confrontations. These stories challenge the narrative that enforcement is neutral or beneficial, instead reframing the practice as one that undermines trust and limits mobility for the communities that need safe and accessible streets the most. These studies and community voices prove that enforcement does not often deliver the safety outcomes it promises and instead exacerbates racial disparities and criminalization.

Biking Mobility

In transportation planning, mobility is often described technically as the efficient movement of people and goods, reflecting the dominant framework of traffic engineering. With this perspective in mind, it's easy to see how cycling infrastructure and programs are justified. Their outcomes are measurable, with lowered vehicle miles traveled or reduced emissions signaling success. The language of efficiency frames biking as an activity that is only valuable for what it accomplishes in contributing to broader system goals, rather than what it means to the people who ride.

The counter-narrative promoted by BWB redefines mobility as a matter of civil rights, freedom, joy, and the ability to live fully. The *Biking While Black* film makes this shift explicit, highlighting how systemic policing, redlining, and racialized disinvestment have stifled Black communities' right to safe mobility. For BWB, biking is not only about travel, but also about reclaiming the right to exist and move freely without fear of violence or exclusion. The *Reimagine: Biking While Black* project expands on this by framing mobility justice as inseparable from racial justice. The act of riding a bike in Black and BIPOC communities is both an expression of freedom and an assertion of belonging in public spaces.

The BWB podcast series, *Voices in Justice*, episodes deepen this narrative through lived experiences. In Episode 1, host Talia Hamilton introduces traffic violence data showing that although Black residents comprise only 8% of Los Angeles' population, they account for nearly 17% of traffic collision victims. Guest Yannick Haynes describes how a hit-and-run while cycling left him with trauma and altered his relationship to biking. In Episode 2 of the podcast, community leaders discuss how joy and resilience are integral to mobility justice, reframing cycling as a space for cultural connection and intergenerational learning. Episode 3 documents the use of storytelling as a form of data, where community members narrate both the harm and the joy tied to their mobility experiences. By Episode 4, the series makes it clear that biking is about sustaining life itself and encompasses the freedom to move, heal, connect, and thrive, despite ongoing inequities in biking. Taking each podcast into account, these episodes argue that mobility should be considered not only as the simple movement of bodies through space, but also as the right to move safely, joyfully, and with dignity. For Black and BIPOC bicyclists, biking embodies resilience in the face of systemic barriers, becoming a tool for both survival and liberation.

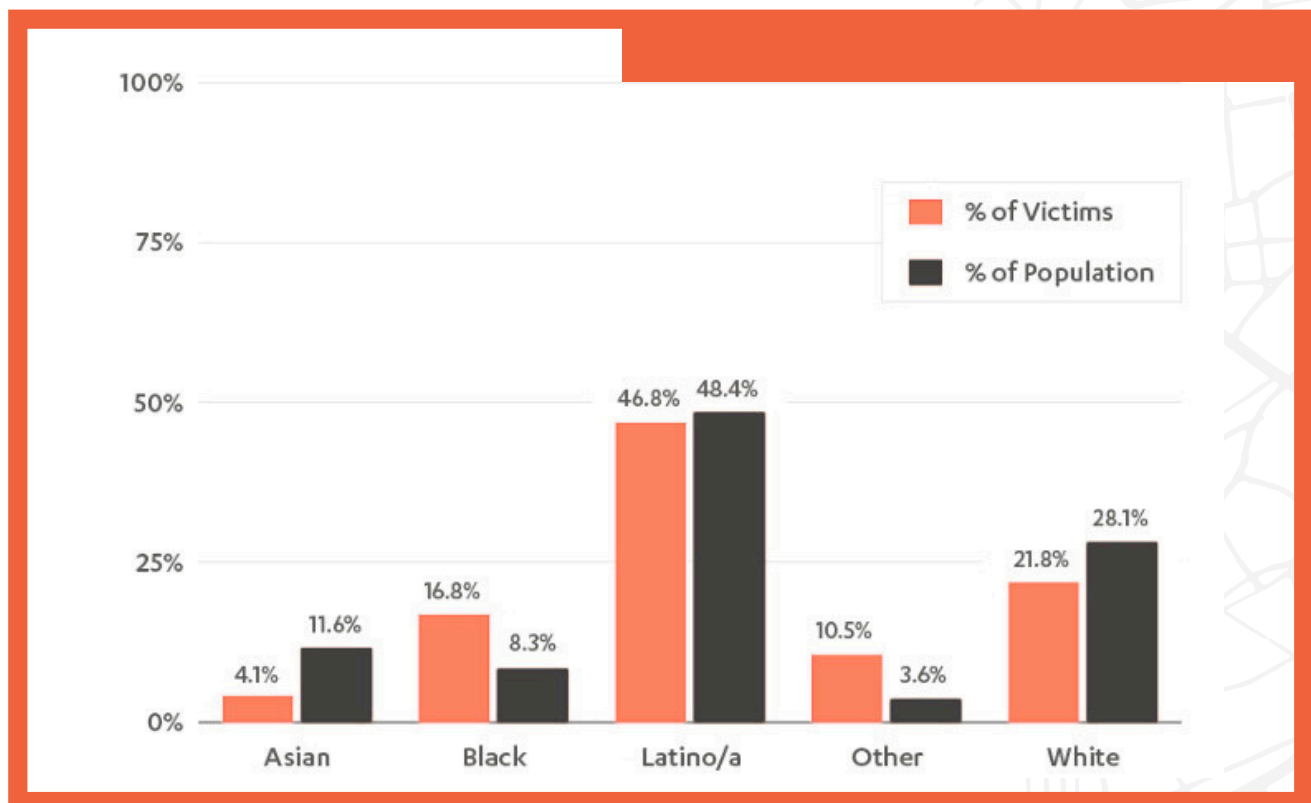


Figure 2. Traffic collisions by race compared to the percentage of the population in Los Angeles (Brozen & Butler, 2024)



Low Visibility in Planning

Mainstream planning and advocacy initiatives often promote the narrative that cycling investments and programs are universally beneficial to all. This narrative assumes that by adding bike lanes, launching bike-share programs, or running promotional campaigns, all riders will benefit equally from the improvements. For example, Bopp et al. (2022) found that many advocacy organizations employed a “one-size-fits-all” approach, focusing on large-scale metrics such as total ridership and crash

reduction, rather than examining the actual impact on different groups. This framing treats cycling as an inherently beneficial activity for everyone, overlooking how race and inequality influence experiences with mobility.

The counter-narrative, strongly supported by research and lived experience, demonstrates that Black and BIPOC bicyclists are routinely erased or marginalized within planning and visibility efforts. Lubitow et al. (2019) demonstrate that in Portland, women and people of color remain significantly underrepresented in cycling populations, partly due to advocacy and planning structures that center on the needs and perspectives of white, male, middle-class riders. Similarly, Barajas (2021) documents that in Chicago, Black bicyclists are far more likely to receive citations, while simultaneously having their transportation needs largely ignored when it comes to infrastructure decisions. Data from California suggest similar results, with the 2025 RIPA Board Report indicating that Black individuals accounted for 12.1% of all stops and were arrested at 17.3% of these stops, despite comprising only 5.4% of the population (RIPA Board, 2025). Braun et al. (2021) add that biking advocacy often excludes racialized riders by assuming bicyclists look a certain way based on dominant cultural influences of who belongs in cycling spaces. Hoffman and Lugo (2014) were among the first to identify this erasure and coined the term “bicycle justice” to argue that planners must consider equity, representation, and lived experience instead of only relying on technical fixes. These findings align with what *Reimagine: Biking While Black* reports, highlighting that Black and BIPOC riders are often invisible in planning conversations, even though they disproportionately face unsafe infrastructure, collisions, and over-policing while biking.

“Black and BIPOC bicyclists are routinely erased or marginalized within planning and visibility efforts.”

Additionally, community voices further reinforce this point. CalBike policy director Jared Sanchez describes how mainstream advocacy has historically centered on privileged riders, while grassroots Black and BIPOC communities have been sidelined in decision-making. These accounts dismantle the idea that all bicyclists benefit equally from planning decisions, instead showing that advocacy efforts reinforce existing disparities in the absence of intentional equity work. The erasure of Black and BIPOC bicyclists from data, policy, and representation undermines equity goals and perpetuates systemic barriers.

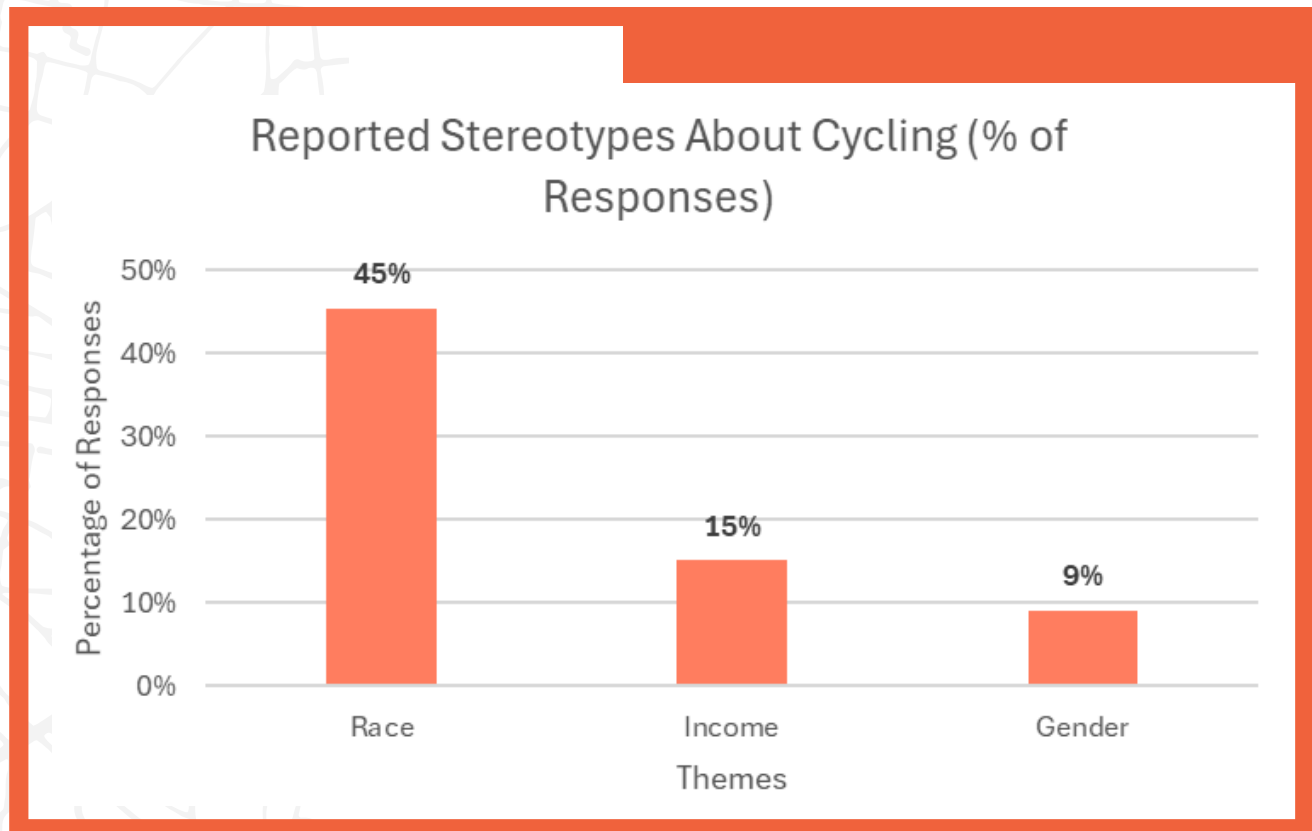


Figure 3. Percentage of responses identifying stereotypes about cycling by theme (Bopp, et al., 2022)

Biking Infrastructure

Urban planning often describes biking infrastructure as a tool for neighborhood revitalization, and new infrastructure is seen as an investment that sparks economic growth and attracts new residents. In this context, bike infrastructure is inherently viewed as a positive aspect. However, although seemingly beneficial on the surface, these projects can also be seen as symbols and drivers of displacement in Black and BIPOC communities. Barajas (2021) argues that bike lanes have been used as “racial projects,” signaling neighborhood change that benefits newcomers while neglecting the needs of long-standing residents. Braun et al. (2021) similarly document how



planning processes can reproduce racial exclusion, with bike investments accompanying waves of gentrification rather than responding to community-identified needs. The *Reimagine: Biking While Black* report found that residents in South Los Angeles were concerned that bike projects were introduced without genuine engagement, resulting in fears of rising housing costs and cultural displacement.

A central issue within biking infrastructure is the lack of meaningful outreach and education. Projects might be well-intentioned, but they often fall short of their intended goals because the continued education and dialogue that communities need are missing. However, these projects don't have to be this way. By gathering early and consistent input from communities, biking projects can be recognized as safe and equitable improvements for all. Without that intentional engagement, the relationship is lost, and projects become disconnected from the people they're meant to serve. In this way, the problem isn't the infrastructure itself, but the absence of inclusion within the decision-making process. More time, resources, and commitment to project completion are necessary, with trust between agencies and communities being built along the way. Only when education and ongoing community dialogue are embedded into planning can biking infrastructure evolve into a tool to further equity and belonging, as opposed to being a marker of exclusion.

These concerns align with broader studies on mobility justice, where infrastructure has become a marker for community "revitalization" that often excludes Black and BIPOC residents. The counter-narrative advanced by BWB and critical mobility justice studies reframes infrastructure as not only a technical or environmental intervention but as a justice issue. The question is not simply whether bike lanes are built, but who they are built for, who is displaced by them, and whose voices are included in defining the future of mobility in their communities.

“Infrastructure is not only a technical or environmental intervention; it’s a justice issue.

Next Steps/ Recommendations

Narratives and Cultural Frameworks

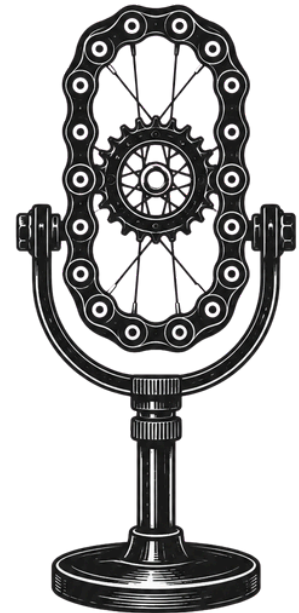
Adopting a narrative and cultural framework as a source of advocacy means recognizing that data alone is insufficient in capturing the true reality of mobility justice. Numbers and data, such as the frequency of bike crashes or police stops, cannot accurately convey the fear a rider might have of being stopped by police, or the joy of a group ride that feels like freedom. Stories fill the gaps that data misses. By showing human stakes of transportation planning and policy decisions, the inequities become impossible to ignore. This is the reason BWB has placed storytelling at the center of its

mission. The *Biking While Black* films bring to the forefront the ways Black riders experience safety and danger on the street. In contrast, the *Voices in Justice* podcast series brings lived experience directly into policy conversations. The *Reimagine: Biking While Black* report takes it a step further by connecting data and narrative experiences to illustrate that mobility is not only about moving through space, but also about belonging, healing, and power.

Including narrative and cultural sources builds power from within communities while also influencing institutions. When riders see their experience reflected in a film, podcast, or report, they know that their voices matter. Additionally, by sharing these experiences, policymakers must face the concrete realities that abstract planning terms can hide. Instead, they are forced to confront the real lives behind the numbers. This kind of cultural shift makes advocacy relatable in ways that technical approaches struggle to achieve. Adopting a more cultural and narrative framework grounds advocacy in humanity, rather than just metrics, and treats stories as a form of evidence to reveal the information that data fails to convey. Most importantly, by making room for lived experiences, spaces are created where communities can speak up for themselves and be believed, not just as participants, but also as leaders whose lived experiences set the terms of justice.

Community Power and Presence

In addition to storytelling, communities must also build their own power to make their presence undeniable. Historically, traditional advocacy has been limited to public hearings or technical reports, often leaving Black and BIPOC voices sidelined. Community power challenges this exclusion by making equity visible. BWB has shown that presence itself can be a form of advocacy. By hosting community rides, healing-centered gatherings, and intergenerational events, spaces are created where Black bicyclists are not only participants but leaders reclaiming the streets as a





reclaiming the streets as a place of belonging. Through power and presence, biking becomes transformed from a solitary act into a collective ritual where resilience and solidarity are fostered. The strength of these gatherings comes from their dual role in nurturing joy and healing in communities while simultaneously signaling to policymakers that Black and BIPOC bicyclists are visible and organized. By holding consistent events and gatherings, presence becomes a normal part of life rather than a temporary activity.

In Bogota, Colombia, the weekly Ciclovía program closes more than 70 miles of streets to cars and opens them up to walking, biking, and gathering. This event originated in the 1970s, but quickly evolved into a Sunday ritual that highlights everyday mobility (Guerrero Casas, 2024). Inspired by Ciclovía, many other cities periodically transform their roadways into community spaces. Similar to community rides, these projects show how visibility builds belonging and power (Campbell & Guerrero, 2018).

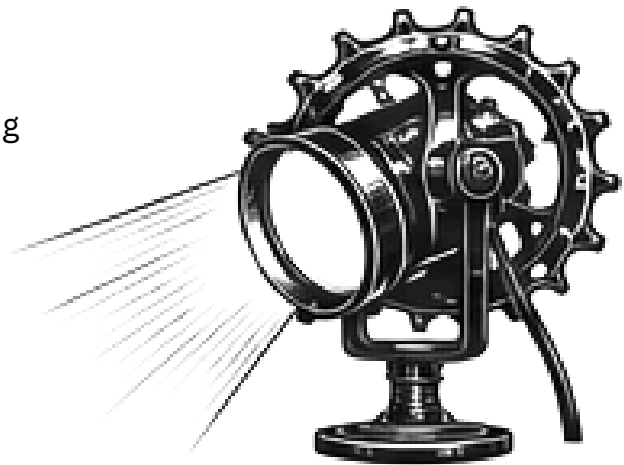
Unlike narrative frameworks, which translate lived experiences into stories for wider audiences, community power cultivates the conditions that enable communities to set the terms of their own visibility. Maintaining a consistent presence, whether through regular rides, wellness partnerships, or cultural gatherings, lays the groundwork for long-term cultural shifts. In this way, mobility justice becomes more than a policy goal by making it a lived reality in streets and neighborhoods. Adopting community power and presence means understanding that equity isn't simply achieved by inviting marginalized communities into existing decision-making spaces but also by centering their leadership and building advocacy that is felt on the ground.

Knowledge Translation and Accessibility

Knowledge translation and accessibility mean making information about mobility justice and transportation understandable, relatable, and useful for the very communities it affects. Oftentimes, planning and policy are communicated in highly technical language that alienates residents instead of empowering them. By reframing information so that it is not only available but also accessible, it can be presented in ways that connect to people's lived experiences and equip them to act.

“Equity is achieved by building advocacy that is felt on the ground.”

BWB has already started this work by creating platforms that turn policy issues into lived stories. The films and *Voices in Justice* podcast work well to transform abstract issues into human experiences that both policymakers and community members can understand. Social media also furthers this work, allowing BWB to turn complex findings and information into concise and shareable



content that can be circulated widely and quickly. This blending of formats shows that accessibility isn't only about simplifying, but also about ensuring that the information being communicated meets people where they are.

Expanding this framework looks like developing tools to bridge communities and institutions. Infographics, bilingual advocacy materials, and short videos that explain complex subjects can make policy issues more approachable for a wider audience, and social media can effectively complement these tools. Workshops and neighborhood conversations can then build on that exposure, helping residents connect their own experiences with broader policy debates. Knowledge translation and accessibility are about power. Once communities can better understand the challenges they face and how policies shape them, they are better equipped to hold institutions accountable. By committing to this framework, groups like BWB can ensure that mobility justice becomes a shared language, empowering communities to lead and demand the changes they need.

Institutional Alignment and Policy Reform

Lasting change and mobility justice require the realignment of institutions. This new alignment requires institutions to take responsibility for addressing inequities in their governance, enforcement, and planning. Oftentimes, transportation policy reflects outdated assumptions while simultaneously ignoring the lived realities of Black and BIPOC bicyclists, leaving communities to carry the weight of demanding equity. Governing institutions are the antagonists that continue to reproduce inequity. Institutional alignment requires policy reform to move beyond symbolic commitments and embed accountability into decision-making. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires transportation agencies to prevent discrimination in both policy and implementation (U.S. Department of Justice, 2025). Although Title VI mandates nondiscrimination in federally funded programs, document reviews have found that many agencies have historically delayed or failed to investigate complaints (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2023). BWB and similar groups can play a vital role in documenting harms, filing complaints, and pressing agencies to meet their civil rights obligations. Institutional realignment and resulting policy reform would shift



the burden of accountability from communities back on the institutions that shape mobility.

Clear models of institutional alignment are needed to demonstrate what it looks like in practice. One example is SCAG's Community Streets Mini-Grants program. This program is a part of

the Go Human campaign and is supported by the California Office of Traffic Safety. The mini-grants emphasize collaborative strategies and prioritize communities most affected by traffic safety. BWB was a recipient of this program, highlighting SCAG's commitment to addressing systemic racism and advancing equity through community-driven solutions (SCAG, 2021).

Another example is Measure Healthy Streets LA (HLA), which was passed by Los Angeles voters in 2024. The measure requires the city to include walking, biking, and transit improvements outlined in the Mobility Plan 2035 whenever a city street is repaved for at least an eighth of a mile. The measure also mandates the creation of a public data portal to track progress and provide residents with legal standing to hold the city accountable if improvements aren't delivered (Linton, 2024). Measure HLA is a clear example of how equity and infrastructure work together, and how institutional alignment can be structurally embedded in a city's policy.

Institutional alignment can also involve academic institutions. For example, the collaboration between UC Davis and BWB, which serves as the foundation for this report, demonstrates how academic institutions can use their resources to support community-led advocacy. In this partnership, the university provides the research capacity and institutional backing, while the community leaders determine the priorities and vision. Institutional alignment is strongest when providing funding, power, and visibility to community partners, while keeping leadership and priorities within the hands of the community. These models prove that institutions have the capability to embed collaboration into their structures and build a foundation for long-lasting, systemic change.

Sustainable Funding Pathways

Oftentimes, mobility justice efforts are supported by short-term grants or one-off pilot projects that create visibility but quickly fade

“Academic institutions can use their resources to support community-led advocacy.”

due to unsustainable funding. This cycle forces advocacy groups like BWB to continually chase funding and prove their worth, diverting energy and time that could be used to bolster programming, community building, and structural reform. Without stable financial support, equity becomes temporary instead of transformative.

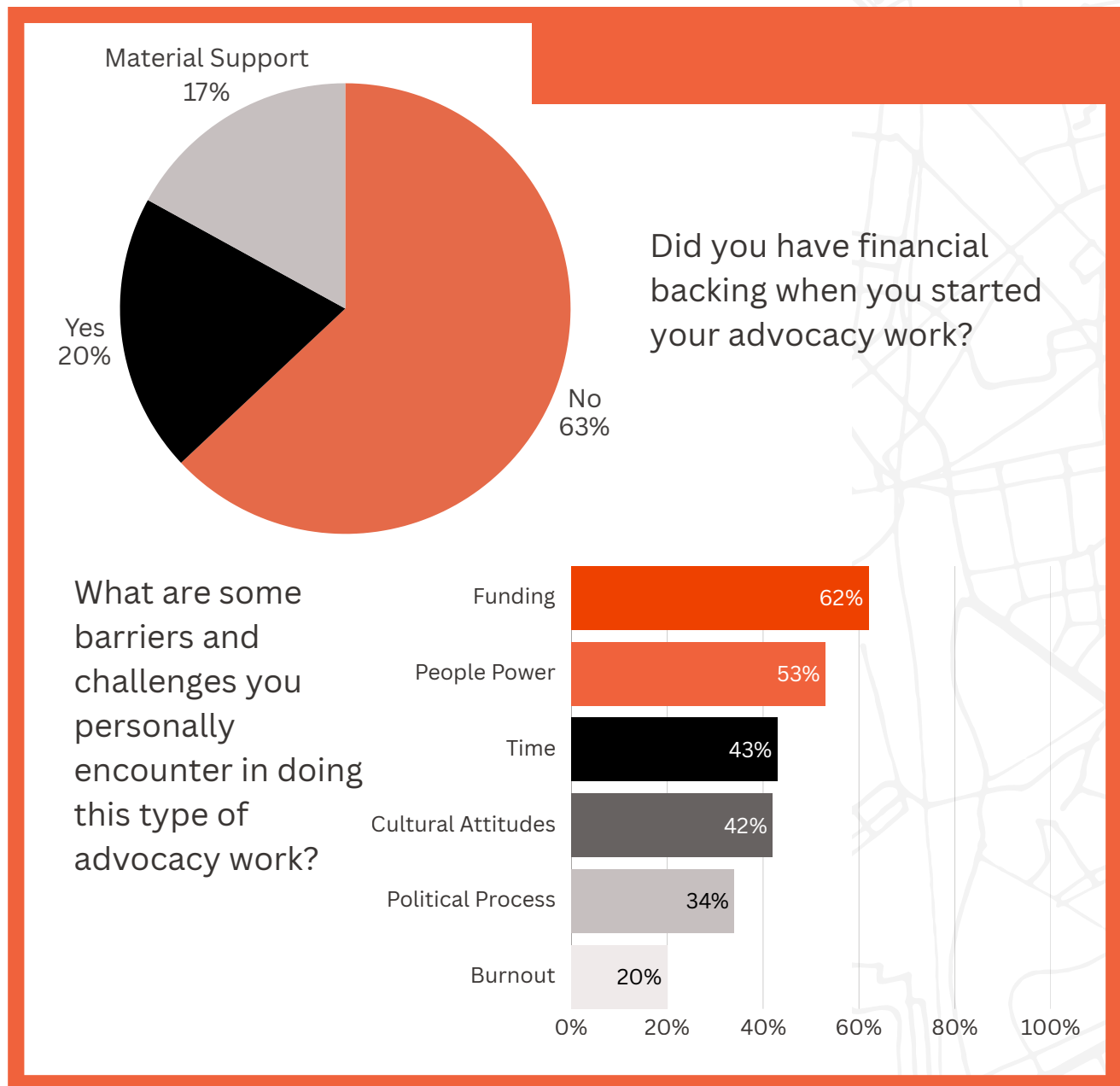
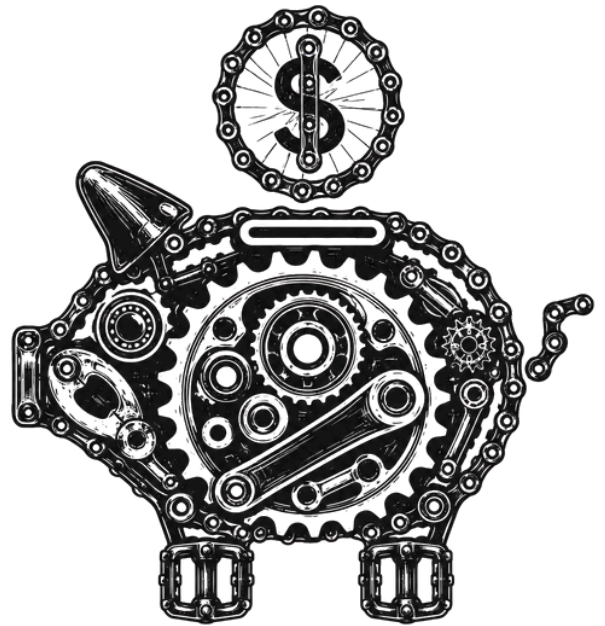


Figure 4. 62% of advocates cite funding as a barrier to advocacy work, and 63% stated they had no financial backing at the start of their advocacy work (Biking While Black, 2023).

BWB's history shows the impact even modest funding can have on an organization. In 2021, Davis-Overstreet received \$7,500 through the SCAG Go Human mini-grant program in order to produce the first nine-minute Biking While Black film. This film was launched on YouTube, shared through social media, and quickly amassed more than 25,000 viewers as a result. Building on this success, BWB secured another \$15,000 grant in 2022 and a \$30,000 grant in 2023. The incremental increases in funding allowed BWB to grow its platform and expand its community engagement. The importance of consistent funding is highlighted by the fact that SCAG's Go Human program has currently paused its mini-grants for restructuring in response to federal changes to funding. With this in mind, it's clear that grassroots groups are vulnerable to external cycles. This makes it essential that financing structures be reformed to align with the community's needs.

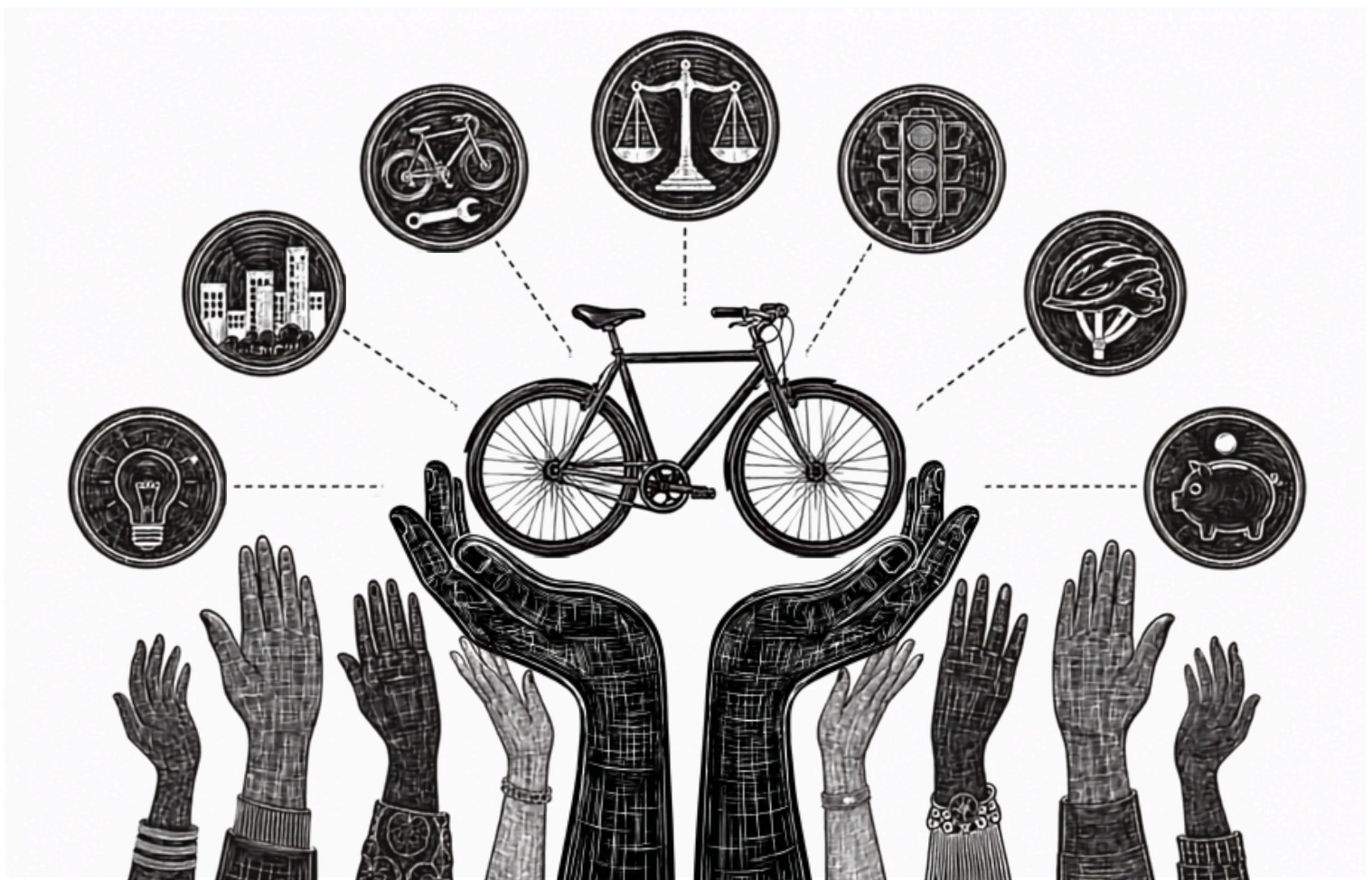


Another inspiring model of sustainable funding is the call for Los Angeles to adopt a Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP). A CIP is a five- to ten-year roadmap for how the city invests in its streets, sidewalks, and other public rights-of-way. Instead of relying on budgets that shift with political changes, a CIP identifies long-term needs and costs, and plans projects over time. This type of plan creates more transparency while giving communities a clear voice in shaping priorities. Because projects and funding would be planned in advance, CIPs prevent some of the inequities held by the current system. These examples show that it's possible to create transparent systems that result in long-term community leadership.

Regional agencies can build on sustainable funding pathways by embedding equity into their funding formulas and making community-driven initiatives a part of long-term transportation planning. Community organizations can strengthen resilience through cross-sector partnerships or by exploring grassroots fundraising initiatives. Sustainable funding pathways ensure that equity work isn't treated as temporary or symbolic but is recognized as an essential and ongoing infrastructure requirement for community wellbeing and mobility justice.

Closing

The work of BWB demonstrates that mobility justice is not only about transportation, but also about dignity, belonging, and power. By centering lived experiences and challenging dominant narratives, BWB has shown the ways in which storytelling can be a source for both data and advocacy while shaping policy and healing communities. These accomplishments highlight the possibility of shifting culture and institutions, while also revealing the structural inequities that remain deeply ingrained in our transportation systems. In the future, progress will depend on continuing to elevate counter-narratives, expand community power, translate knowledge into accessible forms, demand institutional accountability, and secure sustainable funding pathways. With these strategies in place, mobility justice can not only react to inequities but also be transformative in building new possibilities.



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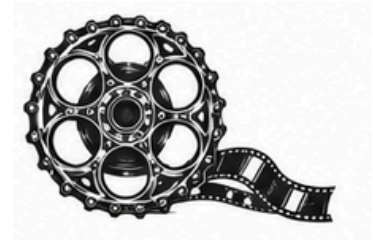
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Appendix

Biking While Black Screenings & Events



DATE	HOST / ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	EVENT TITLE	EVENT TYPE
1 June 2022	SCAG / Go Human	Southern California	Project Award	Grant / Project Development (short film)
18 Sept 2022	SCAG / Go Human	Stoneview Nature Center, Culver City, CA	Film Premiere	Screening + Community Discussion
30 Sept 2022	Roots in Motion	Los Angeles, CA	Community Screening	Screening + Discussion
15 Oct 2022	Re:Ciclos	Los Angeles, CA	Community Screening	Screening
22 Oct 2022	Ride On! Bike Co-op	Leimert Park, Los Angeles, CA	Community Ride and Screening	Community Ride + Screening + Discussion
23 Oct 2022	Better Cities Film Festival	Detroit, MI	Film Festival	Official Film Festival Selection
30 Nov 2022	Move Minneapolis Transportation Summit	Minneapolis, MN	Conference Presentation	Conference Presentation + Screening
30 Nov 2022	Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota / Move Minneapolis partners	Minneapolis, MN	Community Screening	Screening + Q&A + Community Gathering
4 Feb 2023	Zeitgeist Arts	Duluth, MN	Community Screening	Screening + Q&A + Educational Engagement
7 Feb 2023	UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies; UCLA Lewis Center; UCLA Planners of Color for Social Equity	Los Angeles, CA	University Screening	Screening + Q&A + Educational Engagement

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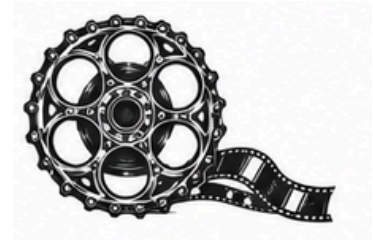
Biking While Black Screenings & Events



DATE	HOST / ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	EVENT TITLE	EVENT TYPE
19 Feb 2023	Pan African Film Festival	Los Angeles, CA	Film Festival	Screening + Q&A + Educational Engagement
23 Feb 2023	Otis College of Art and Design — Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	Los Angeles, CA	Campus Screening	Screening + Q&A + Educational Engagement
23 Feb 2023	Otis College of Art and Design	West Adams, Los Angeles, CA	Black History Bike Tour	Community Ride + Educational Engagement
17 Mar 2023	SPE Media Festival	Denver, CO	Film Festival	Official Film Festival Selection
27 Mar 2023	Black Film Festival	New Orleans, LA	Film Festival	Official Film Festival Selection
24 Apr 2023	Major Taylor Association and Worcester community partners The guide identifies multiple partners including: Major Taylor Association MassBike Worcester Earn-A-Bike Landry's Bicycles Worcester Caribbean American Carnival Association WalkBike Worcester Worcester NAACP YWCA of Central Massachusetts	Worcester, MA	Community Engagement Residency	Screening + Community Dialogue + Site Visits

Appendix (continued)

Biking While Black Screenings & Events



DATE	HOST / ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	EVENT TITLE	EVENT TYPE
28 Apr 2023	Seattle Black Film Festival	Seattle, WA	Film Festival	Official Film Festival Selection
21 May 2023	Filmed by Bike Film Festival	Virtual	Film Festival	Virtual Film Festival Selection
26 May 2023	Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition / NAACP Pasadena	Pasadena, CA	Community Screening	Screening + Q&A + Community Dialogue
1 June 2023	SCAG / Go Human	Los Angeles, CA	Community Hub Grant	Grant / Publication Development (Reimagine Guide)
3 June 2023	Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee	Los Angeles, CA	Government and Policy Screening	Screening + Policy Discussion
16 June 2023	West Adams Juneteenth Community Gathering & Screening	Los Angeles, CA	Juneteenth Screening	Screening + Community Discussion + Government Engagement
18 June 2023	CicLAvia — Juneteenth	Los Angeles, CA	Community Outreach	Tabling + Public Engagement & Education
5 Aug 2023	Indianapolis Black Documentary Film Festival	Indianapolis, IN	Film Festival	Official Film Festival Selection
20 Aug 2023	Black August Film Festival	Pasadena, CA	Film Festival	Official Film Festival Selection

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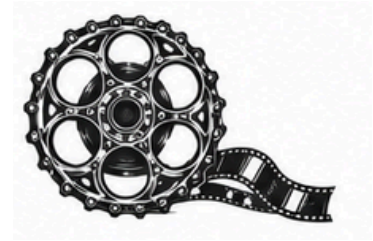
Biking While Black Screenings & Events



DATE	HOST / ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	EVENT TITLE	EVENT TYPE
1 Sept 2023	Biking While Black / SCAG Go Human	Los Angeles, CA / Public Release	Reimagine Guide Release	Publication Launch + Public Education
22 Sept 2023	Imagine This Women's Film Festival	Virtual	Film Festival	Virtual Film Festival Selection
24 Oct 2023	Diaspora Festival of Black and Independent Film	Chapel Hill, NC	Film Festival	Official Film Festival Selection
3 Dec 2023	South LA CicLAvia	Los Angeles, CA	Community Engagement	Tabling + Public Engagement & Education
20 Dec 2023	Bicycle Film Festival Worldwide	Virtual	Film Festival	Virtual Film Festival Selection
15 Jan 2024	39th Annual Kingdom Day Parade	Los Angeles, CA	Community Engagement	Public Event + Outreach
15 Feb 2024	WOMBI Bike Shop	Culver City, CA	Community Gathering	Community Conversation + Educational Engagement
17 Feb 2024	Worcester Public Library	Worcester, MA	Community Screening	Screening
23 Feb 2024	Black History Month event / Councilmember Carroll Fife	Oakland, CA	Community and Government Engagement	Screening + Community Dialogue
24 Feb 2024	New LA Schools Community Resource Fair	Los Angeles, CA	Community Outreach	Resource Fair + Tabling

Appendix (continued)

Biking While Black Screenings & Events



DATE	HOST / ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	EVENT TITLE	EVENT TYPE
19 Apr 2024	2024 California Bicycle Summit	San Diego, CA	Conference Presentation	Screening + Q&A + Educational Engagement
24 Apr 2024	Streets for All Transportation Panel	Los Angeles, CA	Policy Panel	Panel + Policy Engagement
2 May 2024	UC Davis; Sacramento Bike Club; Civic Thread	Sacramento, CA	University and Community Event	Screening + Educational Engagement + Community Dialogue
22 May 2024	SCAG Toolbox Tuesday	Virtual	Webinar	Virtual Presentation + Publication Discussion
22 May 2024	Black Girls Do Bike	Durham, NC / Virtual	Community Presentation	Virtual or Hybrid Educational Engagement
13 June 2024	Bike Culver City	Culver City, CA	Community Conversation	Community Engagement + Educational Discussion
23 June 2024	CicLAvia	Los Angeles, CA	Community Outreach	Tabling + Public Engagement + Education
24 June 2024	American Planning Association (APA) Los Angeles Section and the APA California Chapter	Loker Conference Center, California Science Center, Expo Park, Los Angeles	BIKING WHILE BLACK FILM (2022) Award of Excellence / Award of Merit in the Communications Initiative category	Awards Ceremony

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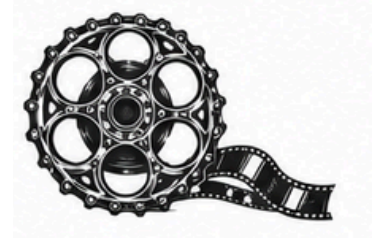
Biking While Black Screenings & Events



DATE	HOST / ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	EVENT TITLE	EVENT TYPE
17 Nov 2024	World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims	Los Angeles, CA	Community Memorial and Advocacy	Community Engagement + Traffic Safety Advocacy
18 Jan 2025	APA Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA	Community Screening / Q&A	Screening + Q&A + Educational Engagement
23 Feb 2025	CicLAvia	Los Angeles, CA	Community Outreach	Tabling + Public Engagement & Education
15 Mar 2025	A Place 4 Youth	Los Angeles, CA	Youth Engagement	Screening + Q&A + Educational Engagement
21 Mar 2025	LA County Supervisor Holly Mitchell's 2nd District Racial Justice Learning Exchange + Biking While Black Mobility Justice Walking Tour in West Adams	Los Angeles, CA	Mobility Justice Walking Infrastructure Education	Community Walk + Public Education & Screening
17 May 2025	LA Metro Rail-to-Rail Grand Opening	Los Angeles, CA	Community Activation	Community Engagement + Public Education
14 Aug 2025	ARDI Mobility Justice Series	Los Angeles County, CA	Mobility Justice Series	Screening + Panel + Community Listening
14 Sept 2025	CicLAvia	Los Angeles, CA	Community Outreach	Tabling + Public Engagement + Education

Appendix (continued)

Biking While Black Screenings & Events



DATE	HOST / ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	EVENT TITLE	EVENT TYPE
27 Sept 2025	Stoneview Nature Center	Culver City, CA	Community Screening	Screening + Community Discussion
30 Sept 2025	Boo-Boo Bandage Brigade	Los Angeles, CA	Community Outreach	Public Education + Community Engagement
22 Nov 2025	Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County	Los Angeles, CA	Community Museum Event	Screening + Q&A + Educational Engagement / Tabling
7 Jan 2026	Metro La Brea Bus Lane Prioritization Project	Virtual	Community Listening Session	Policy + Community Engagement
10 Jan 2026	Metro La Brea Bus Lane Prioritization Project	Los Angeles, CA	Community Listening Session	Policy + Community Engagement
29 Mar 2026	Pedal Movement	Long Beach, CA	Community Panel	Panel + Mobility Justice Discussion
4 Apr 2026	Spring Fest / Metro La Brea Bus Lane Prioritization Project	Los Angeles, CA	Community Outreach	Tabling + Public Education
17 June 2026	Marvin Braude Trail Ribbon Cutting	Los Angeles, CA	Community Celebration	Community Engagement + Infrastructure Advocacy
27 June 2026	Stoneview Nature Center	Culver City, CA	Environmental Film Event	Outreach + Tabling

Appendix (continued)

Biking While Black Screenings & Events



DATE	HOST / ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	EVENT TITLE	EVENT TYPE
Jun 28, 2026	CicLAvia — Leimert Park Meets Expo Park	Los Angeles, CA	Community Outreach	Tabling + Public Engagement + Education
24 Aug 2026	PolicyLink Summit	Washington, DC	National Conference	Conference / Professional Development + Field Research
29 Aug 2026	Biking While Black Field Research Residency	Washington, DC / Maryland	Field Research Residency	Field Research + Relationship Building + Documentation