



ASAKURA
ROBINSON

INVISIBLE ISSUES IN PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

TEXAS PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM

AUGUST 6, 2020

AGENDA

Introductions

Racial Disparities

Street Harassment

Discussion



MEGHAN
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PLANNING | URBAN DESIGN | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



WHAT IS STREET HARASSMENT?

“STREET HARASSMENT” DESCRIBES UNWANTED INTERACTIONS IN PUBLIC SPACES BETWEEN STRANGERS THAT ARE MOTIVATED BY A PERSON’S ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR GENDER EXPRESSION AND MAKE THE HARASSEE FEEL ANNOYED, ANGRY, HUMILIATED, OR SCARED. EVEN THOUGH “STREET” IS IN THE TERM, STREET HARASSMENT ALSO TAKES PLACE IN STORES AND RESTAURANTS, ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, IN PARKS AND ATHLETIC FIELDS, AND AT BEACHES.

1

Street harassment is very common, and effects our most vulnerable community members.

50%

of women and men
experience street
harassment before age 17

65%

of women have experienced
street harassment

86%

of them more than once

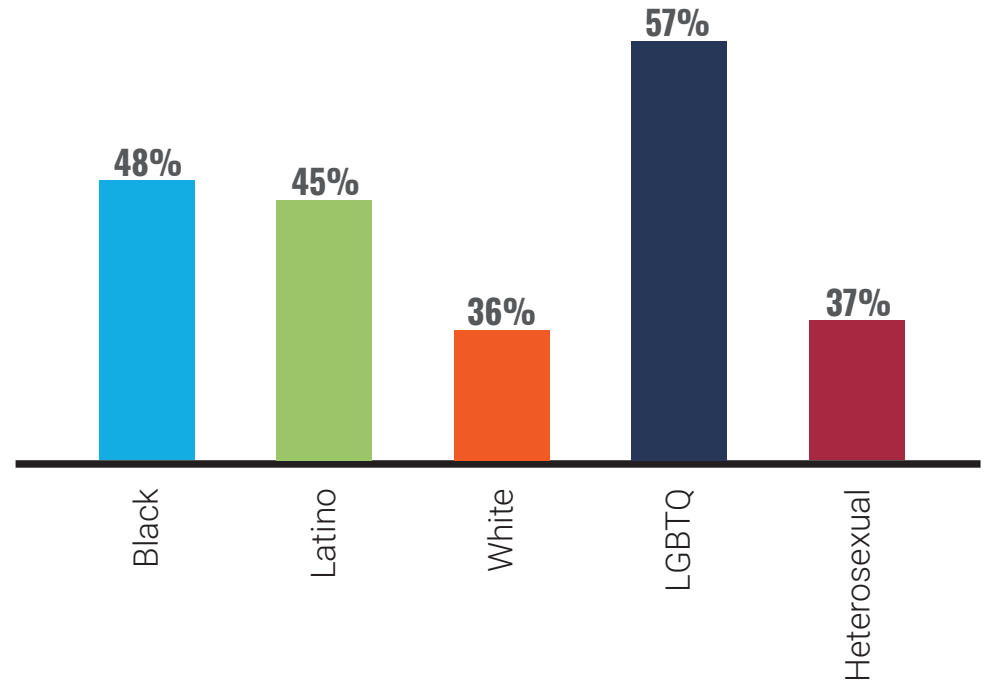
57%

of these women experienced
verbal harassment

41%

of these women experienced phys-
ically aggressive harassment

Percent of Respondents Who Have Experienced
Verbal Harassment in Public Spaces



Source: *Unsafe and Harassed in Public Spaces; A National Street Harassment Report*



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2

Victims change the way they use the public realm in response to harassment.

70%
of harassers of women
are a male acting alone

Most victims change their behavior in public space as a result of harassment. These changes include:

47% of women constantly assess their surroundings after being victimized

32% of men constantly assess their surroundings after being victimized

31% of these women go places in a group after being victimized

4% of all victims have moved or quit their job after being victimized

Source: Unsafe and Harassed in Public Spaces; A National Street Harassment Report



3

Solutions are complex, and vary.

Strategies range from criminalization and increased surveillance to tactical approaches, education, and public awareness. Examples include:

France imposed on-the-spot fines on harassers

Mexico City provided whistles to subway riders

Washington, DC passed the Street Harassment Prevention Act (2018), focusing on prevention through education

University of New Hampshire initiated an educational campaign promoting bystander intervention and reporting



Sources:

Unsafe and Harassed in Public Spaces; A National Street Harassment Report

How to Fight Street Harassment Effectively (Now This)

Mexico City's Plan To Fight Sexual Assault: Whistles On The Subway (NPR)

DC passes historic law to combat street harassment (Women's Media Center)

Wildcats STOP Street Harassment (University of New Hampshire)

Emilie Twilling (UTSOA)



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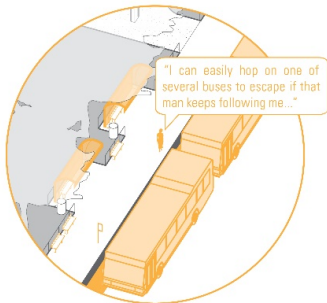
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Solutions are complex, and vary.

SUPPORTIVE

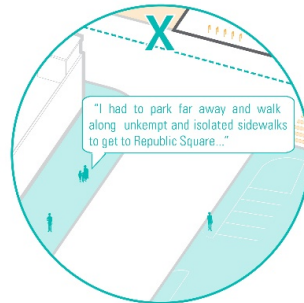


A) B-cycle provides an alternative option when traveling to and from Republic Square. This reassures women they will not get stranded on site with no means of escape.

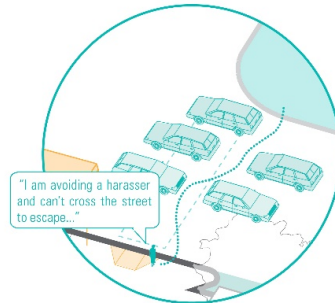


B) The CAP Metro bus station located on site offers numerous route options. This allows women to come and go with ease.

UNSUPPORTIVE

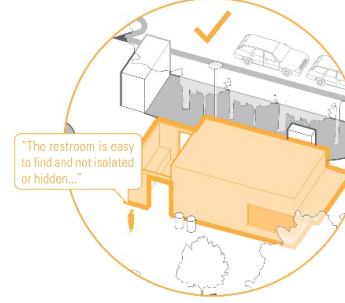


C) All adjacent parking is reserved for Federal Courthouse employees or expensive (\$10/hr). This forces women to park far away from the site in potentially threatening areas.

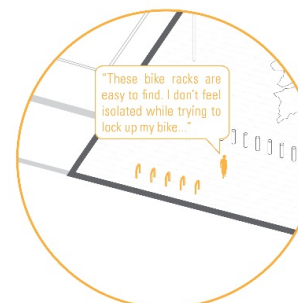


D) 5th street is busy and difficult to cross. There is no crosswalk or pedestrian signal. If a woman needs to escape, she must either wait or dodge traffic.

SUPPORTIVE

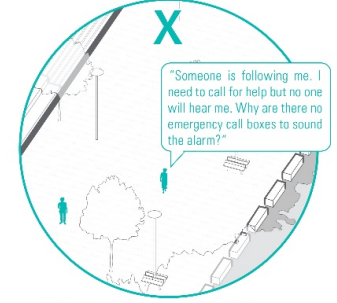


A) Republic Square provides secure restroom facilities. They are located on the edge (near the street), rather than being hidden or tucked away.

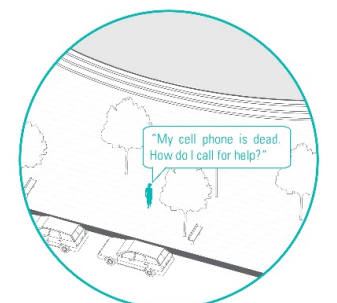


B) The bike racks are easy to find and not tucked away or hidden. A woman should not have to jeopardize her own security to access site amenities

UNSUPPORTIVE



C) There are no emergency call boxes on site, even in areas that are isolated with minimal visibility. A woman could call for help and not be heard.



D) There are no device charging stations on site. It is extremely unsettling to get stranded with no cell phone.

WHAT DOES SAFETY MEAN IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES?

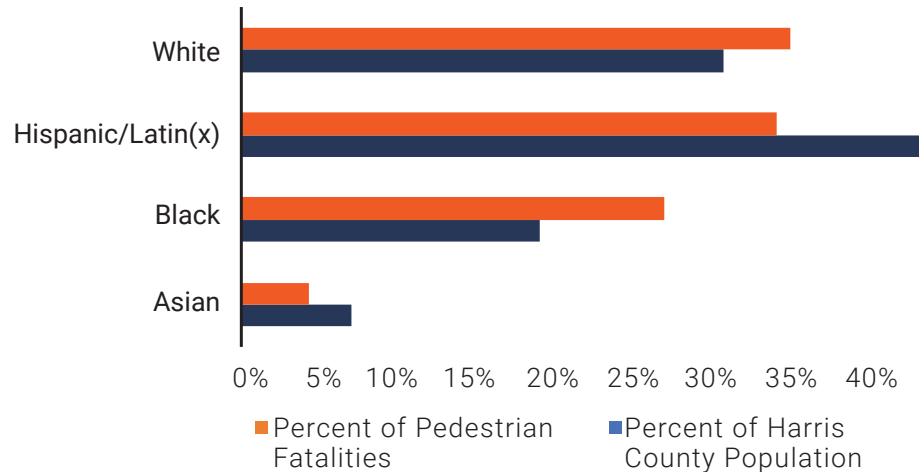
PEDESTRIAN SAFETY MUST NOT HAVE A SINGULAR DEFINITION. IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL PEDESTRIANS, IT MUST EVOLVE BASED ON LIVED EXPERIENCES AND THE NEEDS OF ALL MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY. THIS MEANS THAT WE MUST UNPACK WHERE THE PERCEPTION OF ONE'S SAFETY CONFLICTS WITH OR SUPERSEDES THE NEEDS OF OTHERS. OUR WORK IN CREATING SAFE STREETS NEEDS TO TAKE A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT HOW THE LAYERS OF OUR IDENTITIES ADD TO OR DETRACT FROM OUR SAFETY AS PEDESTRIANS.

5

Pedestrian safety is not universal.

IN THE 2017 STUDY, EXAMINING RACIAL BIAS AS A POTENTIAL FACTOR IN PEDESTRIAN CRASHES, RESEARCHERS FOUND, “SIGNIFICANTLY MORE MOTORISTS DROVE THROUGH THE CROSSWALK WHILE THE BLACK PEDESTRIAN WAS ALREADY IN THE ROAD COMPARED TO THE WHITE PEDESTRIAN — A 7:1 RATIO.” (COUGHENOUR ET AL)

Minority Pedestrians are Killed in Traffic Accidents in Harris County at Disproportionate Rates to Their Population Sizes, 2015 - 2020



Source: 2015 - 2020 TEXAS Crash Records Information System, 2018 American Community Survey

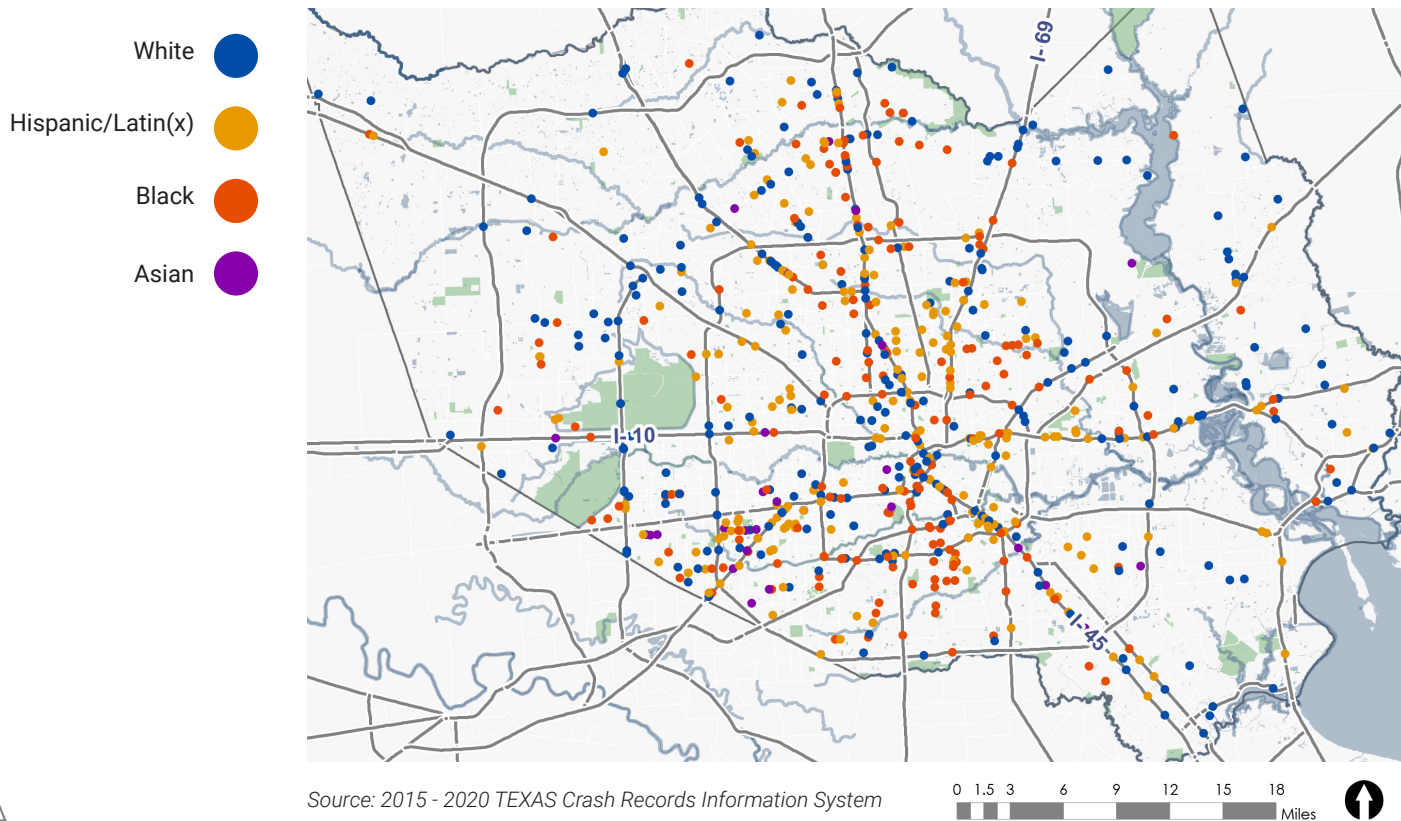
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Who has access to safe streets and sidewalks?

“YOU LOOK AT OAKLAND’S REDLINING MAP... AND YOU LOOK AT WHERE POVERTY IS CONCENTRATED, WHERE HIGH ASTHMA RATES ARE CONCENTRATED, WHERE WE HAVE PEOPLE HIT BY CARS, WHERE WE HAVE TRAFFIC COLLISIONS...THEY ARE ALL THE SAME PLACES.”

-RYAN RUSSO, DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION IN OAKLAND

The Geographic Spread of Pedestrian Fatalities in Harris County is Most Concentrated in Lower Income Communities of Color



7

Design solutions created in a vacuum fail the most vulnerable members of our society.

“IT WOULD BE VERY EASY FOR US TO JUST SAY, ‘WE DID A SURVEY AND 75 PERCENT OF OAKLANDERS SAY THEY SUPPORT SLOW STREETS [BUT] WHEN YOU SEE THE FACT THAT IT’S DISPROPORTIONATELY FOLKS WHO ARE HIGHER-INCOME WHO REALLY ENJOY IT, AND PEOPLE WHO ARE WHITE WHO ARE SAYING THAT, THAT’S A VERY IMPORTANT THING FOR GOVERNMENT TO BE LISTENING TO.”

-RYAN RUSSO, DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION IN OAKLAND



Jeff Chiu, Associated Press



Amr Alfiky, The New York Times



Nick Swartswell





Walking while Black.

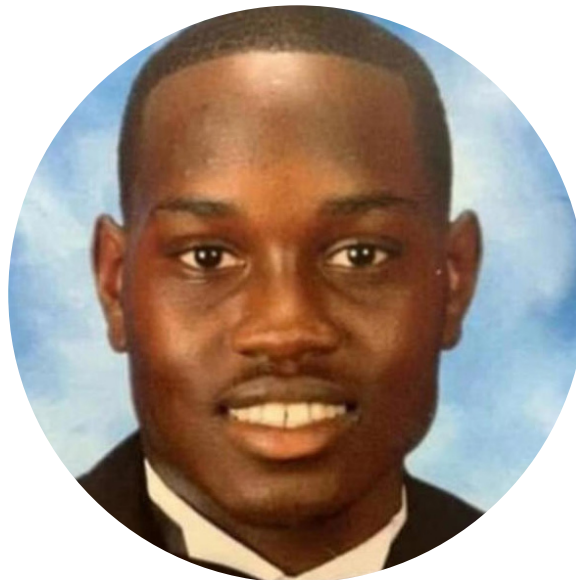
“IF YOU WANT TO BAN CARS, START BY BANNING RACISM.”

- DESTINY THOMAS, TRANSPORTATION PLANNER



TRAYVON MARTIN

FEBRUARY 5, 1995 -
FEBRUARY 26, 2012



AHMAUD ARBERY

MAY 8, 1995 -
FEBRUARY 23, 2020



DISCUSSION

WHAT ELEMENTS OF THIS INFORMATION WERE
SURPRISING TO YOU?

WHAT ELEMENTS HAVE YOU PERSONALLY
EXPERIENCED?

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN RELATIONSHIP'S WITH
PUBLIC SPACE CHANGE IN LIGHT OF COVID?

WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU
SEE TO BRING THESE PERSPECTIVES INTO YOUR
WORK?



THANK YOU!



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