

Students seek to improve safety for houseless pedestrians in Portland

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In 2022, a Portland State University Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) team made headlines with their strategies to improve safety for houseless pedestrians. Cities across the U.S. are facing

alarming increases in traffic fatalities, especially among the number of pedestrians who are struck and killed by drivers. In 2021, 70 percent of all pedestrian fatalities in Portland were of people experiencing homelessness. The MURP team Street Perspective, made up of Peter Domine, Nick Meusch, Asif Haque, Angie Martínez, Sean Doyle, and Meisha Whyte, investigated how to reduce the risk of being hit and killed specifically for unhoused people.

As the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) is updating the city's Vision Zero Plan, the team provided PBOT with recommendations to reduce the risk of pedestrian fatalities among the city's vulnerable homeless communities.

"A disproportionate number of unhoused pedestrians are being killed in [car crashes](#) across America—and protecting this uniquely vulnerable group will require a set of strategies that both include and exceed even the conventional street safety playbook... To understand how Portland could do a better job of protecting homeless people from traffic violence—and perhaps chart a model for analysis other communities could follow—the Portland State researchers conducted dozens of interviews, in addition to performing spatial analysis on fatal crash sites that sat within 250 feet of both 1) a reported campsite for unhoused people, and 2) a segment of the city's High Crash Network, where most of Portland's vehicle collisions occur," Kea Wilson of *Streetsblog U.S.* wrote about the team's work.

BikePortland covered the project as well, focusing on Portland and the city's history of approaches to dealing with homeless individuals and communities. Journalist Taylor Griggs described the team's strategies to reduce crashes near homeless camps as "promising."

More information: Read the report: [Safety Interventions for Homeless Pedestrians](#) (2022).

Watch the [recorded presentation](#)

Provided by Portland State University

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