

REALTIME FILE

SFBIKE

Anti-Black Racism in Biking Community

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REALTIME FILE MAY NOT BE A TOTALLY VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

>> Meaghan Mitchell: We will be

starting in just a moment. All right.

Everyone's here. Good evening.

And welcome to Bike Lanes, Gentrification and Anti-Blackness brought to you by the San Francisco Bike Coalition.

I am Meaghan Mitchell and joining me is Audrey Harris. Tonight's conversation stems from a letter written to our membership from our executive director.

In this letter, Brian acknowledges that out of 10,000 members of this organization, 80% are white people.

That means white people have led everything from our leadership to our bicycle advocacy. As a result, we have failed to address and live up to this organization's mission of creating an organization fighting for safe, just, and livable streets.

To achieve that mission, we must talk about race and take action for racial justice.

It is no longer acceptable to operate under the flawed assumption that what is best for our membership is best for everyone.

>> Audrey Harris: The coalition at all levels of leadership have taken a step back to ask how we might become an antiracist organization.

It started with a strategic plan.

Most recently a decision was made to remove strategies that require police funding that goes to enforcement related to people on bikes.

This work, although just a start, is a critical step in putting a stop to unnecessary attacks on Black and brown communities.

In addition to internal conversations, this event serves as the start to having these conversations with the coalition's membership and the broader advocacy community for people on bikes.

In the spirit of late Congressman John Lewis, if you don't do everything you can to change things, then they will remain the same.

We only pass this way once.

You have to give it all you have.

Tonight, we are joined by a panel that embodies that spirit.

Meaghan and I are joined by the city's director of racial equity, Shakirah Simley, transportation engineer Ariel Ward, SFMTA transportation planner, Kenya Wheeler and strategic planner Brytanee Brown.

>> Meaghan Mitchell: This is being streamed live on Facebook.

Everyone in this event will receive a link to the recording later this week.

Immediately following the panel discussion there will be an opportunity to join a small

group discussion with other attendees.

There will not be an opportunity to ask questions during the webinar because we have received 400 questions in the event registration.

However, we encourage you to stay engaged as this will not be our only event focused on this topic.

We will be posting a typed transcript of the event on our website later this week, as well. At this time, we plan to pass it over to supervisor Shamann Walton.

Unfortunately, he wasn't able to join us but his office did send us remarks that I will read now.

Since day one in office, supervisor Walton has been working on equity and justice legislation with the goal of improving outcomes for Black people in San Francisco.

Some of our equity and justice work includes shutting down juvenile hall by 2021, the CAREN Act, reparations plan and advisory committee, sheriff's oversight going on the ballot this November, homicides and violent crimes plan, establishing a relief fund for COVID-19 and more.

Currently we have a pending legislation declaring anti-Black racism as a public health and human rights crisis.

In partnership with the human rights commission which creates a framework for San Francisco to actively address anti-Black racism and work within the office of equity, racial equity in all programs.

Anti-Black racism's hostility toward Black people and culture manifested through individual, internalized, interpersonal, systemic decisions, processes and outcomes.

Anti-Black racism is the explanation for help in equities and what creates disparities in the wealth gap, education, environment, economic opportunities, and housing that are all available for Black people.

Our work is not done.

It's just the beginning and we thank you all at the San Francisco bicycle coalition and many allies for supporting our equity and justice work.

>> Audrey Harris: Thank you, Meaghan.

At this time we would like the panel to introduce themselves starting with Shakirah, Ariel, Kenya and then Brytanee.

>> Shakirah Simley: Thank you so much, Meaghan, Audrey and thank you so much to the San Francisco bike coalition.

I am happy to be here and see all your shining faces.

Some serious Black excellence on this call.

My name is Shakirah Simley, I am the inaugural director for the office of racial equity for the county of San Francisco.

This office was legislated last July and signed into office by the mayor and sits under the San Francisco human rights commission led by Cheryl Evans Davis.

And our goal through the office of racial equity is to dismantle and address institutional systemic interracial racism within city government and outside of city government as well.

Six months into the role, I definitely have a full plate given the pandemics within pandemics that we are facing.

But I have long had an interest in planning and community and economic development.

From my experience as a justice advocate to executive director for nonprofits, and also just as a San Francisco citizen, I lived here for 13 years, originally from New York City.

I am excited to have a conversation that I feel like we have been needing to have within the bike community for a very long time.

And hopefully, I am hoping that this conversation spurs many other individual conversations, but also conversations that we need to be having within city government and within our planning processes.

So, that's quickly that's just me.

I'll pass it off to Ariel.

>> Ariel Ward: Thank you for that.

Super excited to be here with you all and see so many familiar faces.

My name is Ariel Ward, a transportation planner and engineer by day, all things creative by night.

I am a proud alumna of Howard University, driven by community, compassion and culture.

I have a background in community based transportation planning and engineering and seek to understand how planning can be used to further, how planning can be used to generate solutions in communities where it -- inequity and I recognize transportation as a critical pathway to connecting people to people, resources and opportunity, regardless of circumstances of their birth and background.

So I am currently at the San Francisco municipal transportation agency and, I have been there for almost four years.

And now --

>> Kenya Wheeler: Thanks, Ariel.

And my name is Kenya Wheeler and I am a principal transportation planner at the San Francisco municipal transportation agency. My work is focused on currently parking and curb management work so I am part of the team that oversees the citywide demand responsive pricing program and works on city wide parking policy.

Looking at the curb as our unit of measurement and analysis which is something that affects everyone, whether you are biking, driving, walking, taking transit.

And, I have come to this work actually more in my night work, outside of the agency, I have been a long-time transportation advocate and have worked quite a bit in the East Bay, native born and raised in Berkeley and lived in the Bay Area most of my life and I have been working on trying to make sure that our transportation systems are open for everyone, whether you have access to public transit, bike or car.

And especially for communities, bike communities that aren't us a at the table.

I would say I've probably been the only Black person at the table so it's been great to see all the other colleagues here on this panel that connection of planners engineers and advocates stepping into this work.

That's been a great thing to actually see that.

Hopefully you can help work to pass the baton on to the next cohort to do better things.

In Oakland, I have worked -- I was on the founding member of the Oakland bicyclist and pedestrian advisory commission and served as chair in 2019 where we adopted a, a groundbreaking bicycle master plan that Brytanee worked on, we will hear more about that on this call tonight and, yeah, really excited to have the opportunity to thank Meaghan and Audrey and the bike coalition board and staff for putting this together and looking forward to the conversation that we will be having.

and now I'll pass it on to Brytanee.

>> Brytanee Brown: Good evening, everybody.

I'm really happy to be here, see everybody's faces.

Brytanee Brown.

I currently am a strategic planner with the Thrivance group.

I also get to work alongside Ariel as we build up at the intersections, publication via medium where we highlight, you know, articles and stories for and by women of color.

Very similarly to Kenya's story, I grew up in the Bay Area, a proud South Berkeley resident or, grew up there, South Berkeley native.

I am an urban planner and I believe in the healing of racialized people through the planning process.

I say Black people over plans, people over planning.

And I really wanted to use the work that I've done in the planning field to build power and honor people's culture.

I want to see people -- I want to see people's -- their lived experiences reflected in our built environment and so that is absolutely how I plan.

It's very hard work.

It hasn't always gained -- I'm in good company today.

I am really happy to be here and, yeah.

I think the conversation will expand and open up more, but, I really just want to shout out the work that I get to do at Thrivance with a bunch of awesome women who have backgrounds in anthropology, cultural organizers, community organizers working on affordable housing.

And we call that, you know we call that planning work.

Just really excited to be here, happy to see that the SF bike coalition is wanting to engage in conversations that really censor Black people especially in the Bay Area.

Yeah, happy to see everybody and excited for this conversation.

>> Audrey Harris: Awesome.

Thank you.

So let's all get comfortable.

We are about to dive into our questions.

And this first question I think is kind of why we are all here and it may sound like a very lofty question and can go many directions that I hope you all can tap into. But Shakirah, I'm going to start off with you if you don't mind.

The question that we want to kind of discuss is -- how does anti-Blackness show up in our communities in the biking community at large?

How does it show up in planning around bike infrastructure and programming?

You all are planners and engineers and advocates in this work.

How does that show up?

>> Shakirah Simley: That's a great question.

I'm in fantastic company.

Please feel free to interrupt me, check me, well, actually all that.

So when we are thinking about bike infrastructure and transportation infrastructure, the question I always come back to is -- who are we building for?

Who gets to use this?

Who decided that this should be here?

And what kind of history is inherent in our streets, in our sidewalks, in our transit networks that may inhibit folks from being able to move and to move freely?

And I -- when we are thinking about this and coming from a city government perspective, I know we have a lot of work to do. Because oftentimes, we are not building for the folks whose lived experience should be paramount, for folks who might have been pushed out, for folks who, you know, where I am going to say, you know, cars may be their economic lifeline to get to where they need to go, for folks who don't have a bus stop within walking distance of their homes, for folks who have to travel over, you know, two or three miles just to go to the grocery store.

So these are some of the questions that underline this, but I always come to -- come back to who are we building for?

Who decided this needs to be here?

And what history kind of set the groundwork for this infrastructure?

What's woven into this, so we live in a racist society which means that in whatever we do from an interpersonal interactions, from our systems, we are always going to have racialized outcomes.

We cannot separate those things.

I think folks like to think that we can, but we cannot.

And for my perspective, the office of racial equity, is acknowledging that truth, acknowledging that history, prioritizing intersections and also rooting out anti-Blackness. Extremely important.

When we can acknowledge that grounding, we can move forward much and understanding that as well, we need to understand that we are talking about racism and anti-Blackness, we are thinking about interpersonal racism and also thinking about systemic racism.

And those things work together neatly and how that relates to transportation is a neat way of putting this is thinking about spatial awareness which I think is very racialized and also thinking about spatial segregation.

So on one hand, with spatial awareness where you have white folks who take up a lot of space, because you have never been made to feel small in a public setting.

Or had to move or not be able to, you know, go into certain businesses or go into certain neighborhoods or be even able to walk down a sidewalk freely.

When I think about my grandmothers and great grandmothers in the south and how they weren't able to move and how I am able to.

Because that sense of entitlement that happens in our bike lanes and sidewalks, that translates into a lack of spatial awareness that translates into anti-Blackness and people feeling they can move freely in their own neighborhoods and spaces.

That's directly correlated to spatial segregation.

There's a whole system of racism based off of red lining, exclusionary zoning, based off of transit planning that prioritized certain people's needs over others' maybe I was commuting from the suburbs coming into the city, so highways were built in low-income or Black and brown neighborhoods versus the transit needs of people who actually live there.

All of those things wrapped together to create that spatial segregation which is affirmed and perpetuated in our city infrastructure to this day.

So, when we are thinking about these things we have to hold both.

We have to tackle interpersonal racism as we are thinking about spatial awareness and who gets access to the sidewalk and who don't, and then we also think about racial segregation and undoing that racist history, because we live in a society that will always produce racialized outcomes.

That's the kind of grounding I want to provide for that.

But there are lots of different ways in which anti-Blackness shows up in cycling and bike-ling.

Bike-ling?

I'm tired.

It's Monday.

I want to ask other panels as well.

Thank you.

>> Ariel Ward: I agree especially on the interpersonal piece.

Anti-Blackness shows up in cycling, in the cycling community just as it shows up anywhere else and, as I was prepping for this panel, I came across a quote from Toni Cade Bambara that "revolution begins with the self, in the self."

And I think a lot of this work is internal work.

As a planner, I like to say I do heart work, because that's what it is to pursue just outcomes.

I think that what a lot of times we think of it, you know, systemic racism, we think at a very high level but it really begins on a very individual level and there's a need to kind of shift what's happening at the micro level to move what's happening at the macro level. So when you talked about that, it definitely made me think of that aspect of like needing to do this very in-depth personal work, but then how you have to also do that work in community.

That's the only way that it moves.

So I think it's really meaningful for us to be here today and start to be doing that work in community and the bicyclists should also be doing that work in community.

And I think of it as like -- you want say how do we increase bicycling in Black communities but then you see a Black woman with a bike that's nicer than yours, actually somebody just told me this story on Friday that they were at a Target and somebody saw them with a really nice bike and they were like -- did you steal that? Those are the ways in which anti-Blackness shows up in the bicycling community. So it's macro and micro and I think it's also paying attention to those, to those ways. Because even if you didn't approach that person, if you were even thinking about it, right, how did she get such a nice bike?

You are complicit in that anti-Blackness.

>> Meaghan Mitchell: Definitely.

That brings me to a question of how communities of color can support bicycling infrastructure.

Ariel, since you kind of segued into that, maybe you could tell us.

And it could be the wrong question, but would love to hear what you would have to say about that.

>> Ariel Ward: I'll be on this soapbox for a little bit but I don't want to take up too much space.

There are so many other great voices.

>> Meaghan Mitchell: There's time for all of us.

>> Ariel Ward: I think that's a wrong question.

I get that question a lot.

How do we get communities of color supporting bicycling?

I'm like you don't.

That's the wrong question.

I think it's a question that internally centers your own priorities, your own beliefs, your own values.

I think the real question is, how do we increase the mobility of Black communities, of communities of color?

And I think bicycling is a means to an end.

It's a part of expanding that mobility tool kit but it's not the end itself and so, I absolutely think that that's the wrong question, but I am going to let some other folks jump in on that and maybe I'll tag back in.

>> Meaghan Mitchell: Brytanee, I'd love to hear your perspective.

>> Brytanee Brown: Absolutely.

I think even the title of this -- even the title of this panel, right, like -- and what it invites like who is here currently and what are you hoping to glean from this conversation?

And, what -- and by getting this information, then what are you -- I think it's kind of a gender base.

Right?

Like -- bike lanes.

Gentrification.

Ok.

I want a bike lane but I don't want gentrification.

How do I come -- what does it look like for me to be in this space and like move my agenda forward?

So just even -- I know we are in this like really awesome space just the six of us right now, or eight of us, but I know there are other folks who are listening in and if you -- if you have ever approached a conversation just so that you could continue to promote bike lanes, I think that, that is absolutely not what we are trying to do.

Why we are talking about mobility.

I think one of the things that really struck me about planning and working in government were the modality-based plans.

I was so confused.

I was like -- so we have a bike plan, we have a pedestrian master plan, we are not talking about cars, we kind of have a parking plan, and it's not just one agency, but that's just kind of how -- that's just kind of how cities work.

And, but it was really concerning because I knew that if we just had -- if we were focusing on just one mode, it wasn't going to be serving communities and so, part of the work that I was doing when I was at the City of Oakland was to develop a mobility action plan which would prioritize and really push the city to look at -- to look at people and then look at their modes and what would it look like and I think it was important to have it be the mobility action plan rather than the community based transportation plan, because we are saying the marker for our success is not whether or not we will engage community, because even that can be inflated or flawed.

But that we are going to be looking at the mobility outcomes of these communities over the course of one to five to 10 years.

We have a long-range plan.

So I think even just how, if we are thinking about anti-Blackness and how we get approached and tapped for information, it's just project by project.

You know what I'm saying?

Folks are looking to pull one bike lane on four blocks but what about our entire community?

Five, six, seven square miles with incredibly dense transportation networks.

We have transit systems, streets, sidewalks, utilities, thinking about our communities wholly is, I think, the better approach.

And really lends itself to closing racial disparities as it relates to transportation and mobility.

So, you know, I just -- I get really amped up about the bike-lane conversation because I'm like that's not what -- we are actually trying to increase mobility outcomes.

Right?

And, it's not just going to happen with this one bike lane.

So having this conversation about all of the modes and what it looks like to increase our mobility.

So -- I'll open it up and I think Kenya might have something to say.

I saw him --

>> Kenya Wheeler: I did, Brytane.

What you are stating is really that crux of the -- there's the structural racism with our planning practice exists in and just in the institution of planning itself, you talked about the modality -- [muted] -- oop.

Can you hear me now?

All right.

I was going to say -- so I was saying that, the point you were making about modality is just -- is part of the structural blind spot, blindness within the field of planning.

We are so often focused on, as a practitioner, the particular mode that we are operating in and not looking at the wholistic link of how a system works together.

Like, we learn about systems and problems and we go into the practice, we are in these silos where we don't talk to each other.

Both in terms of modes, in terms of agency and institutions and communities -- [muted] -- of the key challenges that everyone in this work, whether you are a planner, whether you are a community member or activist or advocate, we have to work together to like break down those silos.

And I feel like in this moment of where we are actually recognizing Black Lives Matter, that's indicative of our society, recognizing that these foundational -- it's not something that we are going to accept, that we are going to be -- I hope as a nation I think we are seeing this now, folks are saying yeah, this is not acceptable and we need to move on.

I think with -- as that relates to in our work is -- not accepting this sort of status quo of

we have communication that speaks to people but doesn't really actually include their concern.

It doesn't really fund their concern.

We have gone through this cycle in my career where we, you know, went through this whole movement toward environmental justice, we had the executive order back in '96. We have now gone through and it's part and parcel of our federally funded plans, we have a state law that requires environmental justice integrated into journal plans, we are seeing that now happening with transportation plans.

But you do all these plans and I think as planning practitioners, we see this.

What happens once those plans are approved?

How are they actually being operationalized?

That's I think is the next endeavor that we all need to break into.

Making sure that there's money behind it.

One of the things that I know we saw in Oakland is when we went to community members and asked about bike lane, they were like bike lanes are great but I don't have a bike.

I want to have my kids ride but I don't have money for a bike.

Is there a program that you could set up so that kids can learn in the school, perhaps, if you know we don't have time because I work a couple jobs, I myself -- I actually learned how to ride from someone at a school because that was a way to actually help me with basically as I was, you know, in high school trying to find a way to connect with folks. It was a school staff member took me in and the weekend told me how to ride.

I hadn't ridden a bike in decades, didn't have a bike.

I was privileged that I was in a school district that allowed for that to happen.

It wasn't Berkeley.

And I know in Oakland, it's super under resourced.

There are programs now that are funded but only a fraction of schools that need that kind of assistance actually have the funding.

So bikes being provided in schools that are funded to cover.

That's not all of Oakland.

That's just one area of the country where -- so that's the type of scaling that I think needs to be done.

We have to look at not just what we do here in the city, in San Francisco, but also what are we doing as Aragon?

As a nation, to address as a region, as a nation, and the legislation O being authorized.

We are all in the midst of this pandemic, there are so many crisis like Shakirah was saying, would he have pandemics on pandemics.

But I think one thing I put to the panel and also to participants, what can you be advocating for now at that federal level that can actually create a systemic change to move the needle in the right direction?

So that's one thing I wanted to point out and I wanted to talk about the anti-Blackness piece.

I wanted to bring up something, I was doing a little research before this about, you know, my journey into cycling was a way to get myself a sense of like being able to have mobility and freedom that I didn't have a car when I was a kid.

And it was kind of, you know, Berkeley was pretty far from all that cool stuff in downtown or in Telegraph.

It was a way to get out and connect with friends and get out.

But the issue of like and Ariel made this, I think she posted it on Twitter, but it's an amazing quote that I thought that it's -- it just keeps reverberating in my mind.

That's, you know, the statement that Black mobility has always been a source of white anxiety.

And, you know, I was doing some research on Blackness and cycling and I came across

a name that many advocates have heard about before.

Major Marshall Walter Taylor.

If you don't know, he's a Black American, he was born 13 years after slavery ended.

He was I think really the First National level sports celebrity.

And he was a, as a kid, he actually worked at a bike store in Indianapolis because he was doing bike tricks.

Which actually is interesting, the story, this white family gave him a bike he was friends with, when they moved away.

He parlayed that into becoming one of the top athletes of his time in the late 1800s.

Early 1900s.

Every time he was racing, there were instances where white cyclists didn't want to ride with him which, you know, I mean it's almost kind of reminds you of what we are seeing now where sports athletes who are kneeling and protesting the treatment of Black bodies by our state, are like being shunned by some of their teammates.

When Major Taylor was racing, there were two incidents where he was actually attacked by other racers in the middle of the race.

Someone threw him off his bike.

You can try to shuck someone off like a leg in the spoke.

Throw 'em off.

And the second time it happened in Australia.

He actually was unconscious and the ruling was that the person who did this to him got like a year suspended sentence.

The tragedy that we are seeing now in the larger context of our society, we have seen that happening in cycling, that was a hundred years ago.

But it's like -- a hundred years later we are still seeing echoes of that in our society.

There's anti-Blackness and mobility is the thing we should all reflect on.

What are we doing in our policies to provide real equity for Black bodies and brown bodies.

I think one of the things I have always noticed is that what happens to Black folks and brown folks will eventually happen to the rest of society.

So if would he aren't taking care of the most vulnerable, we will all be paying the price down the road.

>> Meaghan Mitchell: Absolutely.

Thank you for that.

I am actually just curious now that we are in a situation in San Francisco where we are dealing with various micro mobility companies coming in, I know because I used to work at one of them.

What do you think would be good ways for these companies to engage with the Black community on an authentic level?

I want everybody to answer that one.

I'll start with you, Ariel.

>> Ariel Ward: Oh, ok.

And also, thanks for sharing that quote, Kenya.

That was by Dr. Alison Hobbs who studied the role of automobiles in Black communities, the societal and cultural roles.

And she was exploring the ways in which they put limitations on how Black people could travel through cars and so I would explore to be understanding how that could also be happening in the ways Black people can travel on bikes.

And I think that when you do get to the question of, you know, how do you increase mobility in Black communities and start to expand that tool kit to include micro mobility options, I think that it's experiential.

It starts by getting people out and having them experience it.

Just yesterday my friend was like I would love to bike around Oakland today.

Or one day.

And I was like oh, that can be today. Let's go.

And we biked along -- we biked around the lake twice.

Or I would make bets with friends if they lost a bet, next thing they are on the bike.

And they are like this is not so bad.

They texted me and said -- it has to be experiential.

It's our role to help people understand how cycling or micro mobility can fit into their daily lives and I talk about my experience with Bike Share.

When I first started using it I took it downhill to the grocery store.

I didn't want to walk.

Being lazy.

One day I missed the bus.

That bus wasn't coming for a cool 30 minutes.

So I said let me see what this bike share is like.

I hopped on a bike share and I beat the bus.

I could beat the bus?

I'm not taking the bus to work.

I started biking to work every day instead of the bus.

It was one of the highlights of the day.

It's getting communities out there.

There are people that -- I think there's a question of like how do we -- how do we engage authentically?

There are people who have been doing this work, there are people who know how to do this work.

So if you don't know, there are people out there who do and you should be hiring them.

You should be paying them.

You should be listening to them.

They maybe should have your job.

I don't know.

But, I am just saying like there's people out here who know how to do this work and yeah, there's plenty so -- that's my two cents.

>> Meaghan Mitchell: I'm like say it again! Say it again.

Shakirah?

>> Shakirah Simley: I would just add to that, it is experiential and it makes a difference when the person providing the experience looks like you.

So, I think there's comfort in trust with that, which is really important.

I have, you know, it has been really affirming and heartwarming to me to see how some of our young Black and brown youth are like using like scooters and bike shares to like go to parts of the city that maybe they have never been to before or get to where they need to go and just kind of be free like I just want Black kids to be free and just like be kids.

And we don't often allow them that space.

Literally.

And I was sharing with you all a moment when I was in like Chicago and seeing like how a lot of the kids like use the bikes there to just kind of like roll through downtown or like, you know, go by Millennium Park or be in spaces that are not meant for them, but they can get there and be there easily and cheaply and, because we don't have a lot of spaces for our young people to congregate together, to be free and not be monitored and policed.

As we all are in our communities.

So and then also from, you know, prior to this job I worked in city hall, as a legislative aide, and dealt with a lot of these, you know, some of these companies and I think definitely like not treating a city like your own blank canvas.

If you are going to be selling something, giving the neighbors a heads-up, when you are pulling permits, talking to folks, getting their buy-in, ask them where they want it.

You may in the know where the best place to put a bike share or maybe people don't want a bunch of scooters like right in front of their grandma's 88, like, ramp.

I think it's important to make sure that companies take a lot more social responsibility in connecting to community way before they are bringing those assets to the community and then definitely paying folks for their time and their insight just like you would any, you know, support Mackenzie or Bain whatever consultant from the east coast told you this was a good idea, there's a lot of Black and brown expertise that can do just the same.

So -- pay up.

I want to definitely co-sign that piece.

Thanks.

>> Meaghan Mitchell: Brytanee and Kenya?

>> Brytanee Brown: Yeah.

I would say everything, yes to what the panelists have said.

I also want to make sure that we hold government accountable.

I see -- I saw a lot of responsibility being shifted toward the mobility companies and at the same time, there are things that are absolutely things government should be requiring the companies to do and to see themselves as the oversight body and not as this like passive agency.

So, absolutely making sure that there are deployment stations distributed geographically throughout the city.

Being agnostic in their approach.

So what does it look like to have a website that allows all of the scooter micro mobility companies to be present and is sponsored by the City of whatever whatever.

But everybody knows like generally this is what a scooter is.

Generally this is what bike share is.

So you know, I tend to be having the agency government background and having a background working in a nonprofit that was responsible and in partnership with, for go bike in their expansion recently saw the gaps and transit should be free.

So, I think micro mobility should be free or, you know, deeply subsidized and we were able to make it deeply subsidized in the rollout and it had huge impacts on who was accessing it.

I think in the height of our bike share for all work that we were doing, I think 80 to 90% of all of our -- all the folks that we signed up, were Black folks making under \$25,000.

You know.

And so we were able to -- those are the kinds of outcomes that I think we should be thinking about and so it does take micro mobility and having them do that work, but also absolutely holding government accountable.

And then just to get back to the experiential piece, when I was working at the City of Oakland, we did community cleanups monthly and Ariel and Kenya would come through and we had one event where we partnered with -- to bring scooters out and obviously the youth, you have to be over the age of 18 to ride the scooter.

But they brought free socks, they brought sock, they brought helmets, so there were young people who could ride in the street with us so that adults were on and we worked with like the elders and they were able to kind of learn how to scoot and then you had the youth with their helmets on and I think about that story because that lane in and of itself served as a culture marker.

Shakirah earlier mentioned like spatial awareness and how -- and I would love for us to kind of talk about this as, even challenging this notion that like a bike lane equals safety.

And I just don't buy that at all.

It's white paint.

You know what I'm saying?

There are other things in the built environment that make me feel safe.

That is not white paint.

So just even the fact that we had young people gravitating toward us in the middle of the street, because the paint was orange and it was bright.

You know what I'm saying?

I feel safe when I hear music.

I'm walking down the street and I can hear, you know, loud music.

There are other things that are out there.

So even just challenging these notions of what it means to feel safe and what are we -- what are we pushing?

And who is it for?

Is it something that I have been thinking about, too.

I know this isn't about micro mobility -- but I thought the spatial mobility was something important.

>> Audrey Harris: That's a good point you bring up, Brytanee, spatial awareness and messaging and what does harmful messaging look like.

And our preconversation, we talked about messaging around banning cars, more bike lanes with white paint, and that coalition should be only focusing on biking and bike infrastructure.

I would love to hear from the panel on kind of through their work and experience how are these messages harmful?

We talked about government's role at the federal, state and local level.

How are these messages harmful to our communities, potentially?

>> Kenya Wheeler: Well, I can start off and then -- open it up.

You know, it's -- you know, there's a, as advocates for community based transportation, I think a lot of times the normative narrative is cars are bad and that, you know, we need to deprioritize them.

And in a lot of ways in terms of safety and outcomes, there's, you know, -- outcomes, there's a lot of truth to that.

But there's also reality that, for folks who are in -- if they are in a community where they don't have good transit access and I'm thinking like even parts of San Francisco, parts of the southeast where there's very limited connections between neighborhoods and downtown, like in the Bayview, parts of the valley, and where individuals are working not the kind of privileged jobs that we have as a public servant, you know, I have the privilege of working in an office and having a defined time when I can be in.

I'm working from home right now.

Many folks, they are having to go to work right now on, when they can get on a bus if it's not overcrowded or, they are driving.

So there's a reality that in a lot of Black communities like having a car is an access point for mobility.

It's also a point of status.

There was many, many, you know, years where if you didn't have resources you were taking transit.

It was almost like a rite of passage that if you received wealth, you know, a better job, you were able to buy a car and that was showing status.

There's a whole kind of like I hate to be -- it's like we don't talk about this, but it's so true that a car in a lot of ways can be a sense of status.

And, I think one of the challenges that a kind of privileged view of cycling had to take is that we have to recognize that that is the case.

That is a norm.

That we have to be cognizant of.

And to not totally dismiss.

Now there are lots of ways you can do that.

The question I think is what -- how do we reach people where they are at and if we are trying to, wanting to embrace like a, you know, greener lifestyle, what are cultural ways of doing that?

Like in Oakland, there's the bike team and they get a lot of accolades.

But really they started working with youth.

Not only is that like to me one of the best places to start because it's like you change the minds of kids you can change the minds of society.

And they have been able to, you know, create a whole culture around tricking out your bike, you know, showing the bike as a cool thing to do.

And so like how do we scale those kinds of organic community solutions to really start -- I think that's one approach.

But I think also like the point that Brytane made about, you know, paint is as a safety is, -- FTC coming up over and over again.

I remember some of you will remember, talking about victory cycling.

If you are a bike her, this is like older white folks talking about. This I remember reading about this.

You have to be out there in the middle of the street out there biking and showing the cars what you are going to do.

You are likely to get hit by a 3,000 pound SUV.

Even with a paint line, we know that drivers aren't going to obey that.

Protected bike facilities give you a modicum of safety, but you still have a K71 plastic barrier between you and a 45 mile an hour car, that driver slips over, you are done.

So, there's another thing which I think we, as cyclists, as advocates and planners have to look at is how do we actually reach people who are driving?

That's the folks we actually want to let them know that there are signs that say drive like your kid lives here.

Well I mean you see those in some communities but I've never seen a culturally significant one talking to Black folks like yeah, this is your kid, your homies are here.

So there are these again sort of good steps of like how we might reframe, but we have to do it in a way that's in people's context.

>> Shakirah Simley: I would say the situation is definitely nuanced and definitely worth having and it's not for white communities or advocates to walrus on behalf of like environmentalism and silencing people out as to why they are driving and, you know, from a government perspective, I have seen people use their cars because it's an economic lifeline.

Because they are super commuters so they can't bike to work because they increasingly are being pushed out in the neighborhoods where they grew up so they have to travel further to work.

So it's difficult for them to do that.

For folks who -- this is everybody who has families if you have kids or children or small kids you may not necessarily feel safe biking with your child.

So you may have to adapt to a car in order to do that.

For some folks, this is a different conversation, but their vehicle is their home.

A lot of people are -- population has gone up exponentially in California.

So people are using their car to get to work and also to keep a roof over their head as well.

And also, you know, we haven't solved for the fact that we are not building -- we aren't having, how do I say this -- we aren't, like if we are having these conversations it needs to be coupled with a thoughtful push on how we are going to involve neighborhoods that equity has been -- if we are going it talk about bike lanes it's yes and -- and I would say it's at the bottom of the priority list when it comes to better transit, safer transit, you know, streets are not filled with potholes, hour sidewalks aren't cracked like, right, our kids can safely, you know, walk to and from and not, you know, subject to accidents.

They actually have sidewalks.

I mean there are some different things that, if you ask folks why they are driving or, you know, what the impetus is behind this, think you will get a more nuanced answer in the Black community.

And yes, there is a class component to this for folks.

Which is important in part of our culture that is worth exploring and talking among ourselves.

But I think these are the considerations that I want to make sure that we are having around the greater transit equity when we are just talking about bike lanes and -- going to say the c-word -- cars.

Clutching your Pearls, I'm not here for it.

You haven't done the work.

And you haven't talked to people.

And you haven't and you are not connecting with the folks who may disagree with you.

Also just because I, you know, folks drive, they don't care about the environment.

That is some -- that false dichotomy, we need to dead that in the water.

Right?

When I think -- prime example.

When I think of folks in the Bayview southeast who may have to use their car to drive to work, they are A.G. environmental activists because they are fighting against the shipyards, fighting against the PG and E stations, they are the ones fighting against the sewer treatment plant facing their neighborhoods.

So you can't tell me that Black people don't care about the environment and environmental justice when they have laid the groundwork for some of our most powerful environmental justice moves and just because they aren't prioritizing bike lanes, can't like -- now I'm getting hyped up.

I'll put myself on mute.

Somebody else will need to jump in -- but we have to -- I'm going to call a spade a spade here and I think transparency and honesty here, we have to be super super real what are we actually saying?

And it is a racialized conversation.

It is.

And, we need to -- we need to move beyond that and we need some more cultural humility when it comes to this conversation.

And be able to step back.

Step back and have this more nuanced approach.

>> Ariel Ward: Cosign all of that.

Super heavy.

I think, Shakirah, you and Kenya were speaking to two really important things I think to this conversation.

You just listed off maybe like 10 things to consider.

You know, as we think about what bike infrastructure and cycling looks like in Black communities.

And what Kenya mentioned earlier and I think what you also mentioned in speaking of like just because it doesn't look like your way, just because it doesn't look like your experience, doesn't mean it's the right way.

Or it's the wrong way.

And I think sometimes when I hear the question of like how do we get more Black people on bikes, as if you know we aren't biking, sometimes I hear like, you know, how do I get Black communities to do this my way?

Or in a way that centers, you know, what I want.

And I hear how do I get this bike lane in a Black community so I can bike through it on the way to my white one?

And you know, in this work, I hear a lot that Black communities, whether it's a highway or a bike lane, they are tired of their communities being looked at as a thoroughfare.

So I think that the way that you start to engage it is to hold the tension is to, you know, decenter your priorities, is to, you know, consider a center another experience.

And then another thing that I wanted to also say, Kenya's point about starting with the youth, as well, I know this is a little bit outside of the car piece, but I think it's really important to -- when it comes to expanding mobility of Black communities starting with youth and exposing them to these different ways of traveling.

But that tension piece is so critical and then I think to bring you safety peace as well, that's something as a bike engineer doing work in Bayview hunter's point, in the western addition is something that the community has, the tension I have to hold because that's questions that they are asking me.

You know.

They are saying safety for who?

And I think one of the -- one of the experiences that really shifted my understanding of safety even though, you know, I navigate this experience as a Black woman, was the work that was doing -- that was been done, excuse me, in the Tenderloin around the Compton trans gender district and hearing Janelle -- I'm blanking on her last name -- one of the --

>> Shakirah Simley: Janetta Johnson?

Aria?

Oh, Janelle.

Yeah.

>> Ariel Ward: Speaking about what, like having these markers in public space meant. So, you know, having decorative crosswalks, having the light poles wrapped with the trans gender flag.

Like what that meant to them as Black trans women in that space.

And to me it just shifted my understanding of safety to a different level as an engineer to, you know, we look at once again as Brytanee said, the white paint.

But, you know, what does it mean when a Black trans woman is saying this is in a world that is, you know, can be inherently unsafe for Black trans women, when I see these elements of myself in public space, it feels safe for me to be here and it take up space and to feel like I belong here.

So I really wanted to also speak to that element.

And the incredible work that they are doing and, two, that element of redefining or understanding safety.

In this space.

>> Brytanee Brown: What can I say after all of that gloriousness?

This is amazing much one thing that I will uplift is this idea that like if we keep using bike lanes as the -- as our safety metric, that's the only data that we will be able to measure and, um, and so, I think you said this earlier, Kenya, like yeah, there are outcomes, there are safety related outcomes attached to, you know, you put a bike lane in and, it lessens or reduces collisions, but that's the only thing that we have really been promoting and uplifting.

And so that's, I think, if we want people to bike, we might be shifting -- we might stop talking about bike lanes and maybe traffic calming diverters.

I have seen bob outs.

Concrete bob outs work well.

I've seen traffic circles work really well in communities.

And we have to be willing to fund those things as well.

So I just want -- yeah, like getting very clear about what it is that we want.

Is it that we want people to bike or is it that we want people to have bike lanes?

And I think those are two -- they don't have to be -- they aren't one in the same.

And just being very clear about what our goals are.

And being committed to paying for those things, because I have seen it to where the only way our communities will get approached is if we do -- if we decide we will take on that infrastructure.

But there are other things that we need much Shakirah, you mentioned earlier the curb ramps, we need utility upgrades, all those things.

But is it like are we only going to get those things because we decide we will put this infrastructure that doesn't necessarily jive with our community?

Is that the only way we will get access to these resources and that's what kind of frustrates me.

So I would love for us to have that conversation of like if we want to be increasing mobility, what is the full range of options?

Can we be more imaginative and bold in our thinking of what are some new tools and who do we need to engage to make those tools actually become, you know, a thing and look like an infrastructure.

So --

>> Meaghan Mitchell: Thank you so much for that. We have reached our time.

We still have so many more questions.

We want to continue to stay engaged. Wonderful conversation.

I want to thank our panelists for taking time to chat with us tonight.

We really appreciate you all.

As we said, we have a long way to go.

But conversations like tonight's are where we start.

I also want to thank Supervisor Shamann Walton for his hard work not only in District 10 but city wide.

We are noted an organization without the membership.

To all the 10,000 plus ever you, we appreciate your dedication to the San Francisco bicycle coalition.

Last but definitely not least, our staff and board.

Thank you.

Now, join us for a virtual small group discussion.

We will be putting the link in the post-event in a small group discussion in the chat.

If you are watching this video live, we will be putting a link in the comments.

And if you are interested in joining us, click on that link and we will see you in a second.

Thank you guys once again.

It was wonderful.

Guys and gals.

Appreciate you.

And --

>> Thank you, everybody.

This was great.