

SUBTEXT

ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2022

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ISSUE 1

In November 2020 the writer Anne Helen Peterson spoke with sociologist Jessica Calarco about her recent research on mothers grappling with parenting, partners, anxiety, work, and feelings of failure during the pandemic. When Peterson notes that the issues and problems Calarco describes in her research aren't new or unique to the pandemic, only amplified by it, Calarco responded:

“Other countries have social safety nets. The U.S. has women.”

This quote speaks to the ways that women, whether they are caregivers or not, have operated in the US. Peterson further describes this includes “unpaid service work in institutions and at home. [Women are] the ones who run the bake sales so the school can have an art teacher or enough books to go around. They're the ones who run church outreach programs to attract new families and serve community members in need. They're the ones who check in on sick coworkers, remember birthdays, and help their colleagues feel like part of a team. Women do all of that unpaid service for the institutions in their lives, and then they go home and do even more”.

This caretaking and unpaid service work is assigned both consciously and subconsciously, and requires

bearing a disproportionate burden of emotional labor, especially for Black and brown women and those with other underrepresented identities. For example, as the transportation field reckons with its role perpetuating systemic racism and sexism, the responsibility for determining and operationalizing solutions often falls to Black and brown women taking on roles around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. During the pandemic this kind of labor grew and was compounded by the need to continue to perform at work, worrying about being a productive employee and the risk of being judged (at best) or penalized (at worst) when it becomes too much.

Transportation struggles in the same way that other fields do—women are underrepresented at the executive level and in other senior leadership positions. For those who are in positions of leadership, success comes with the additional burden being the other, the only in the room. This often means assimilating to what society has deemed “professional” and internalizing historical definitions of what one needs to do and be to achieve that success.

These ingrained narratives are not only difficult to combat, but also difficult to change alone, particularly for women whose experiences are often overlooked.

And so, as we reviewed submissions for this project, the theme of “subtext” emerged. Subtext refers to hidden meanings or understanding gleaned from reading between the lines. When we examine the roles

that women play in this field we recognize the multiple identities they hold and contexts they must operate in—being the caregiver, the educator, the nurturer in multiple senses. We recognize that the hidden meaning behind women’s contributions to the field is that it is what keeps us moving forward, and advancing change. We hope this first issue helps to make some of that subtext explicit and the invisible visible.

VALUE US
VALUE US
VALUE US
VALUE US
VALUE US

KIMBERLY 'MING' HUA FORD

I dedicate this piece to the people that helped me with the transition into the government space.

To those that attempted to understand my perspective, and saw it as a value opposed to a threat.

To those that relate to what follows:

What is the value of BIWOC
in the workplace?

BLACK INDIGENOUS AND ADDITIONAL WOMEN OF COLOR

Who tread the lines of being marginalized

And the ability to be seen?

Who sit at the table but isn't called on when her
hand is raised?

Or when she does speak, she speaks a language
of community resilience,

centering voices that have been deemed less
than valuable, or hard to reach.

Who in their experiences go home to those hard
to reach voices,

black and brown skin tones,

She kisses them softly to sleep,

Only praying that her co-workers will someday seek
to understand,

the truth of these experiences,

and with a lens of love.

What is the value of BIWOC
in the workplace?

BLACK INDIGENOUS AND ADDITIONAL WOMEN OF COLOR

In institutions that have created laws of racial
segregation,

Upheld them until the oppression was pushed against,

And the door to opportunity was forced open by
prayer and sometimes outrage.

And for an Asian and Latina women like me,

That must water down my heritage because it's too
complicated to understand,

Smiling at the water cooler as the island of her people
is being ravished by Hurricane Maria,

Whose death toll mirrors the apathetic response to
black and brown communities being disproportionately
affected by COVID19,

that walks lines of being too passionate about our
right to live,

and being a traitor for working in the systems that
“don't give a damn about us.”

So what is the value of BIWOC
in the workplace?

BLACK INDIGENOUS AND ADDITIONAL WOMEN OF COLOR

That must break their heart open,

In hopes that it is received by one true ally,

So the workspace is safe for future women of color's
mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing.

Who break open but are told we shouldn't sacrifice,

But feel it's the only way for true change.

That build bridges even if it's my back that is walked on.

What is the value of BIWOC
in the workplace?

BLACK

Carrying weights I have not bared

Having built a resilience that was not by choice but
by survival

INDIGENOUS

To this very day face erasure as treaties signed into law
are broken

Yet fight for traditions that were always meant to heal

AND ADDITIONAL WOMEN OF COLOR

Who navigate between color lines of black and white

Are let into the doors of many black and indigenous
communities in hopes

That we can unite in the trial for justice.

As we all battle comparison of proximity to whiteness.

So what is our value? What is it?

Or is it for *me* to try to make *you* understand??

TWO SIDES
OF THE
SAME TOKEN
TWO SIDES
OF THE
SAME TOKEN
TWO SIDES
OF THE
SAME TOKEN
TWO SIDES
OF THE

KIM LUCAS

Equity is THE focus of many government and transportation conferences, panels, programs, and hiring. Are we moving beyond talking about it to living it? Do we know how? With this renewed focus on repairing the wrongs done to people of color, especially Black Americans, by our government — I question how my identity as a mixed-race woman of Black descent has impacted my career path.

My concept of identity continues to evolve. My perception of my own is fluid, and different from how I am perceived by others. Where I live, where I work, what family gathering I am attending, all influence how I am perceived, and ultimately how I feel.

Do you have control of your identity? Have you noticed times where it felt different?

What IS identity? Is it the collection of inalienable traits that make you you? Are there inalienable traits? What do you see when you see me? What do you see when you see you?

THE BEGINNING

My first W2 job was as a Student Bus Driver at The University of Virginia.

Charlottesville, Virginia was one of the most racially diverse places I had ever lived.

Charlottesville is not known for its diversity.



Picture of a University Transit Service bus.
Credit: Peter Ohlms

BUS STOP AND SHELTER PROGRAM MANAGER

(First Transit) Arlington County Virginia



I simultaneously applied for an executive assistant position. I only got called back for one.

This was my first "real" job, and one I was qualified for because of my experience in transit operations. This was the first, and last time, that I have ever been interviewed by more black panelists than white. I realize now how lucky I was to have supervisors of color who I was able to look up to.

Picture of Kim surveying a bus stop with a colleague.
Photo from personal collection

**MASTER OF CITY PLANNING, UC BERKELEY;
MULTIPLE PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIPS**

I went to grad school because I wanted to learn more about the career path I had started down, and because I wanted to try living somewhere new.

I learned a lot.

While an intern for a local bicycle advocacy group, I was asked to model for the promotional materials.

The other intern asked why she wasn't. She was told that it was "obvious."

To me, it wasn't. Not then.



East Bay Bicycle Coalition promotional pamphlet.
Credit: Tim Wagner



Picture of the Capital Bikeshare management team including local municipal staff, local operational staff, and executive management from our operator. Credit: DDOT

**CAPITAL BIKESHARE PROGRAM
MANAGER, DISTRICT DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION**

Until 2015, Washington, D.C. was a majority Black city. The District's Department of Transportation is still the most racially diverse place I have ever worked. Even so, there are parts of the department and of the transportation industry that were not representative of the communities served.

I stood out as a candidate because of my experience.

And for other reasons?

**2018 GWENDOLYN CAFRITZ
FOUNDATION INDIVIDUAL
AWARD RECIPIENT**

In 2018 I was the first woman, and first individual of Black descent, in DDOT's history to receive a Cafritz Foundation Individual Award. I was nominated for a group project to improve Capital Bikeshare asset management, and other programmatic successes.

I was tickled and also intrigued when I learned after the fact that I had been made a literal poster child. Again!



Picture of an advertisement for the Cafritz Foundation Award featuring Kim and City, Foundation, and George Washington University leadership. Credit: Ted VanHouten

**2019 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CITY TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS
LEADERSHIP FELLOW**

There are organizations in our industry that are striving to change how Leadership looks.

Programs like the National Association of City Transportation Officials' Leadership Fellowship, and Transit Center's Women Changing Transportation, are not only offering an opportunity for professionals in our field to strengthen their leadership skills, but they're making the conscious choice to ensure that the participants in their programs are more representative of the communities served and bridging the gap in representative leadership.



Picture of the second cohort of the Leadership NACTO Fellowship program. Credit: NACTO



Every single day I reflect on the work I am doing and how my existence as a mixed-race woman of Black descent is influencing it. In this moment where there is heightened attention at repairing the damages done to communities of color by government entities, my role and the impact of my personal experiences remain unclear.

Especially in my work that is centered around increasing access to safe biking options, more than once I've been told that "black people don't ride bikes." I am forced to reconcile this perspective with the truth that my Dad, a man born at Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, D.C., and attended segregated schools his entire childhood, taught me how to ride a bike. What do I do with this cognitive dissonance? And how do I use it to change hearts and minds for better mobility options for all communities.



Despite nearly 20 years of professional transportation experience, a graduate degree, professional certifications, and a prestigious award- there are moments in my work life when I am called to reflect on myself and my experiences.

Being the literal poster child can feed into the insecurities that we all face, and can lead to other people thinking that I may only be chosen for my external identities and not my capacities.

I'm truly grateful for the opportunities that I've had, the people who made those opportunities happen, and am hopeful for what is yet to come. I hope that I can pay it forward- the question is how.

REFLECTIONS ON THE TRANSIT FIELD

FROM WOMEN ACROSS OUR FIELD

WHAT IS A REFLECTION ON WOMEN'S ROLE
IN THE TRANSIT FIELD YOU'D HOPE TO
SHARE WITH OTHER WOMEN AT VARIOUS
STAGES OF THEIR CAREERS?

MY FRIEND
MY FRIEND
MY FRIEND
MY FRIEND
MY FRIEND
MY FRIEND

**MONICA G.
TIBBITS-NUTT**

DOROTHY MAE RICHARDSON
5/3/1922-4/28/1991

Dorothy Mae was a woman of color whose work and life focused on protecting her neighborhood on the North Side of Pittsburgh. During the 1960s, she created a model of community investment meant to combat the detrimental impacts of redlining and so-called urban renewal. She fought for the right of residents to be able to live in adequately maintained dwellings, arguing that the blight of the slums was due to landlord neglect and not a reflection on the residents themselves.

In her work, Richardson made connections between housing, transportation, and economic development, noting that white communities received unequal investments in their housing and transportation infrastructure. Even as the transit options increased in Pittsburgh, those options rarely served to connect communities of color to the broader region—instead, those communities were repeatedly dissected and isolated by both highway and rail expansion projects.

Throughout her work, Richardson shows a deep understanding not just of policy issues, but of the impact that policies and prejudice have on the lived experiences of the individual tenants for whom she fought.

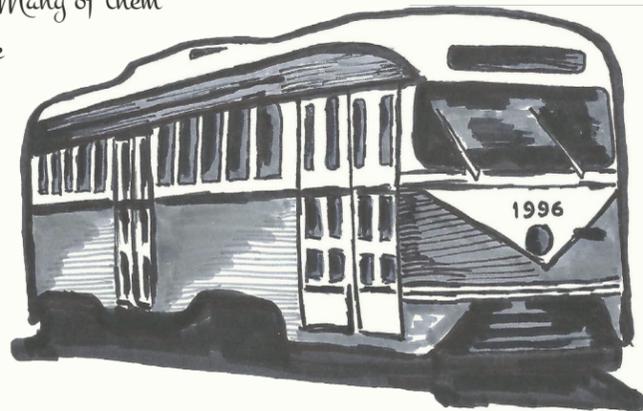
OCTAVIA HILL
12/3/1838-8/13/1912

A white Englishwoman, Octavia Hill spent her life attempting to genuinely improve the living conditions of the British poor and working class. At a time when such an approach was quite unusual, Hill focused on concretely addressing both substandard living conditions and available infrastructure. She recognized the extent to which residents of the ‘slums’ were cut off from employment and educational opportunities, and were living in (literally) the waste of new transportation innovations to which they had no access. In addition to working to improve tenants’ physical spaces, she was also working with the individual residents to connect them with essential services and to fight for better access to the transportation services that might take them to those services. In doing so, Hill improved innumerable lives among a population oppressed by bureaucratic decision making.

My Friend.

Transportation and it's availability or lack there of continue to plague the slums and any effort for those neighborhoods to rise up above the poverty and prejudice that they experience. Housing and transportation are linked and so is the continued barring of access for those in low income communities. We are plagued by transportation costs and unequal access to that transportation. Our community wasn't always like this. Our neighborhoods were more integrated. They were well kept and were valued and invested in. Then the city wanted change, wanted a new vision, wanted a modern place for its residents. This led to the suggestion of clearing out the Lower Hill. Over 8,000 families were removed. People were forced from their neighborhoods and their homes so the city could have a new civic arena. Where did those families go, what happened to their neighbors? They were displaced to neighborhoods that reflected their race. All of the white families left. Many of them

to the suburbs where investments were made to improve these new neighborhoods. For the communities of color, they were left with neighborhoods that were forgotten and neglected. Those



with a choice left, those of us who chose to stay were faced with renewed segregation that in no way reflected the places we grew up. This exodus, this abandonment, created the segregation we are fighting to this day. Our transportation costs are higher, we have unreliable transit options, and the new highway system to better connect white suburbs to jobs and education runs right through our neighborhoods. Through not to. That traffic flow operates in one direction and white suburbanites made sure that transit would not allow that one way trip to bring the "others" back to their communities. We have been walled in. While the world moves around us, we are stuck. Stuck in the physical embodiment of segregation. As more and more of the way we move caters to these suburbs, gone are the bus routes taking our kids to better schools. Gone are the buses connecting my neighbors to jobs. Instead of more transit, we get highways. We get cars many can't afford traveling to places we aren't allowed. Transportation investment and disinvestment are our Jim Crow. Policies and practices meant to increase segregation not encourage integration. All I can do is continue to work for my neighbors and for my neighborhood. Our group will continue to fight. Continue to push with the hope of a future better world. A better world for our communities. A world connected to all of the opportunities and experiences that every human should be afforded. That world is what we fight for. That world is what we dream for our people.

Dorothy

My Friend,

We are being displaced. As London pushes into the modern age, they build roads and rails to address the issues of constipated roadways. These new paths run through the slums and the shantytowns throughout the city. It isn't just the roads or the rails that divide, it is the infrastructure to accommodate these new railways. They need land to run their trains and they need places to house and maintain their growing fleets. The easiest and most cost effective way to do this is clear out the slums to make room for better transport options for the middle and upper class citizens. They use these transportation improvements as a reason to remove neighborhoods and cut them off from the modern comforts that these adverts enable. These great inventions and drivers of increased prosperity come at the cost of the slums and the shanties. It comes at the cost of tens of thousands of men, women, and children. Tenants who have been evicted because their rights are not as important as the needs of a modern growing city. Now what was once an unintended effect of railway needs has become an exceptional tool to use to rid the city of undesirable neighborhoods. Slum clearance has become more and more prevalent in the push towards modernization and increased prosperity. They clear these properties not only to benefit wealthier residents, but to erase slum dwellers. The slum dwellers are left with nowhere to go and nowhere to belong.



They can neither afford the rents of safer dwellings and will have forever been blocked from the neighborhoods built on top of their tenements. All we can do is work. Build upon previously dilapidated properties to give tenants a safe, clean place to live. Instead of destroying these properties and building anew, we work to fix them. We work to manage them. We train the tenants how to care for these homes. To care for themselves. All we have is each other and the hope of a better world. One in which we all have the opportunity to create a better life. The opportunity to want more and have a sliver of hope in attaining it. This is the world we all deserve.

Octavia Hill

My Friend,

How do I make people understand that my neighborhood is worth saving? When they look at our neighborhoods, all they see are slums. They don't see all of the people who deserve a safe and clean place to live. When leaders and decision makers see the slums, they blame those of us who live here. Every bad thing is thrown on us, and it isn't fair. They don't blame the landlords. They don't see that they are taking advantage of poverty and prejudice. The slum dwellers aren't just poor; they're black. You cannot imagine the hatred they face because of their skin color. This racism makes our neighborhoods not just ignored like those you worked with, but targeted because they see us as undeserving of better neighborhoods. They see us as lesser. They will not help us, so we must help ourselves. We both know that change has to come from the residents. I held a block party last week to help teach younger residents how to clean. I want them to understand



that after you scrape grime and grease off baseboards and haul rubbish away, you begin to have a place you can be proud of. I realized that we need to teach residents how to maintain their properties. So many of these residents don't know any better because no one has

taken the time to teach them. Despite all of this, we can't get officials to take our problems seriously. I need them to force the landlords to make needed repairs. These landlords are exploiting the outside views of our neighborhoods to continue to do nothing. It must sound very similar to the fight you had in saving your neighborhood. Maybe we can't force the landlords; perhaps we need to manage the properties as you have done. Instead of working with slumlords, build and maintain properties where tenants are seen as human. I know that you worked with a benefactor to fund your properties, but we do not have that option. We are beginning to focus on obtaining loans for tenants to buy homes. Now we need to find partners willing to lend. I am meeting with some banks to see if they might consider loaning money to the residents. I know that many of them think that the residents are too high risk and that they won't pay back their loans. We need to show them that they can and will make those payments. You've shown that working class people can and will pay for these properly maintained homes. We need a chance to prove it can work here as well.

Dorothy

My Friend,

The burden of the problems before you has been heavy, and the constant need of the job has required so much of you and your time. Shedding light on a forgotten group of people is difficult if you do not recognize that the conditions of these properties is a set of not only physical conditions but more importantly of human conditions. Our members of Parliament focus their efforts on planning and building what the ideal property could be. It is a much easier task than what is before us. The harder work is understanding what tenants face now and what needs to be done to improve their lives. I have tried to find housing for the slum dwellers but none exist. The only solution was to become the landlord myself. We have spent much time removing the vermin, cleaning filthy walls, and clearing all plumbing issues. As we repair these buildings, it is important to repair the tenants themselves. It is important for tenants to take responsibility for their circumstances and

their homes. The tenants must be diligent in their rent payment. We do not tolerate arrears and through this we have been able to return on the investment made by our benefactor. This continued return while modest has enabled us to attract new backers



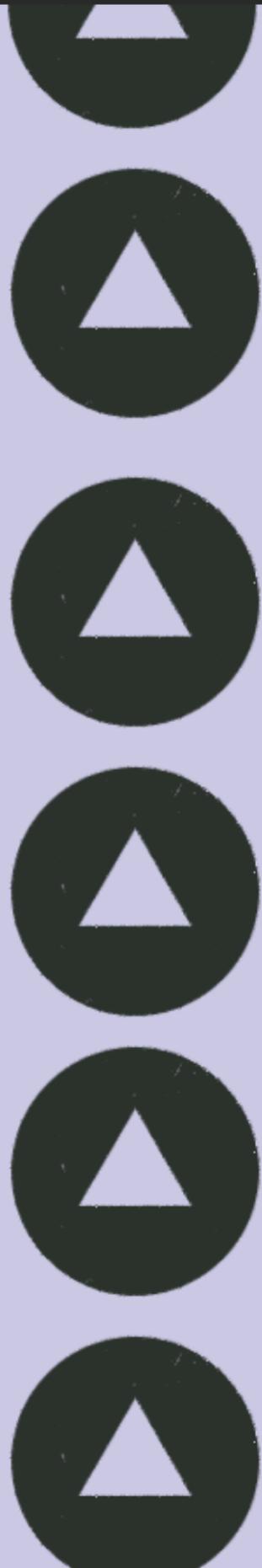
and obtain additional properties. This is not the design of the existing poor relief system that the Poor Law Boards have employed, but a recognition that every individual has a contribution to make to the common life and is immeasurably poorer if they are not enabled to make it and that therefore the only cure for the ills of society lies in the conversion and education of the individual. The tenants need training, access, and opportunities to improve their lives. Every new

innovation of this modern age makes the lot of the slum dwellers more bleak. These unskilled laborers do not have the luxury of model industrial dwellings that the artisan class enjoy. Without this type of housing, tenants have few options for employment. Without transport they must find employment in or around the properties. The advent of the single horse-drawn omnibus did much to provide those in the middle class suburbs access to the city and all of the jobs located there. This service was built for the middle and upper classes and the slums are where they dumped the dung of the horses that pull these new buses. This forgotten population not only suffered from every possible disadvantage, but are blocked out of this new and modern way of moving through the city. My greatest fear is that at best this new bus service will continue to divide the slums and the tenants from the rest of decent society and at worst further displace those with no where else to go.

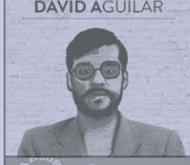
Octavia Hill

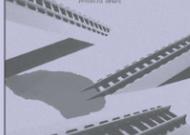
TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT

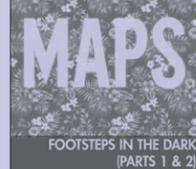
PLAYLIST BUS, BIKE, TRAIL
CAR & MOVEMENT

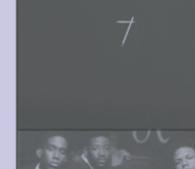


MARYANN
AGUIRRE

	LO-FI EN LA MICRO	Palmasur	Lo-Fi en la Micro	2:33	PLAY >
	NIGHTRIDER	Tom Misch, Yusef Dayes, Freddie Gibbs	What Kinda Music	5:00	PLAY >
	BUS RIDE	KAYTRANDA, Karriem Riggins, River Tiber	99.9%	2:13	PLAY >
	ZOOM ZOOM	Polo & Pan	Caravelle	3:29	PLAY >
	BUS STOP	The Hollies	20 Golden Greats	2:54	PLAY >
	DOUBLE DUTCH BUS	Frankie Smith	Double Dutch Bus	5:20	PLAY >
	CUMBIA DE LA BICI	El David Aguilar	El David Aguilar	5:20	PLAY >
	BICICLETA	Marcos Valle	Bicicleta/Beta Menina	3:49	PLAY >
	BIKING (SOLO)	Frank Ocean	Biking (Solo)	3:32	PLAY >

	BICYCLE RACE	Queen	Jazz	3:00	PLAY >
	BIKES	Rubblebucket	Rubblebucket	4:37	PLAY >
	MY MY METROCARD	Le Tigre	Le Tigre	2:54	PLAY >
	LAST TRAIN TO LONDON	Electric Light Orchestra	Discovery	4:30	PLAY >
	THE METRO	Berlin	Pleasure Victim	4:11	PLAY >
	TICKET TO RIDE	The Beatles	1	3:10	PLAY >
	SUBWAY	Yeah Yeah Yeahs	Mosquito	5:16	PLAY >
	EL METRO	Café Tacvba	Re	3:46	PLAY >
	TREN AL SUR	Los Prisioneros	Coleccion Suprema	5:38	PLAY >

	QUICK DRIVE	Niko B	Quick Drive	3:02	PLAY >
	LOW RIDER	War	Why Can't We Be Friends?	3:10	PLAY >
	WHITE FERRARI	Frank Ocean	Blonde	4:08	PLAY >
	3 HOUR DRIVE (FEAT. SAMPHA)	Alicia Keys, Sampha	ALICIA	4:01	PLAY >
	BEHIND THE WHEEL	Depeche Mode	Music for the Masses	5:19	PLAY >
	BLINDING LIGHTS	The Weekend	After Hours	3:20	PLAY >
	MAPS	Maroon 5	V	3:09	PLAY >
	FOOTSTEPS IN THE DARK	The Isley Brothers	Go for Your Guns	5:06	PLAY >
	WALKING ON A DREAM	Empire of the Sun	Walking On A Dream	3:18	PLAY >

	PUMPED UP KICKS	Foster the People	Torches	3:59	PLAY >
	RUNNIN'	The Pharcyde	Waxing Off	4:55	PLAY >
	KICK, PUSH	Lupe Fiasco	Lupe Fiasco's Food & Liquor	4:14	PLAY >
	SKATE	Bruno Mars, Anderson .Paak, Silk Sonic	Sonic	3:23	PLAY >
	JUMP	Kris Kross	Totally Crossed Out	3:15	PLAY >
	SLIDE (FEAT. FRANK OCEAN & MIGOS)	Calvin Harris, Frank Ocean, Migos, Funk Wav	Funk Wav Bounces	3:50	PLAY >
	KEEP MOVING	Jungle	Keep Moving	4:00	PLAY >
	TIP TOE	SAULT	7	3:09	PLAY >
	END OF THE ROAD	Boyz II Men	Cooleyhigh-harmony	3:09	PLAY >

CONTRIBUTORS

KIMBERLY FORD

Kimberly ‘Ming’ Hua Ford enters the world of equity, diversity, and inclusion work with the lens of a previous super mom (single mom), 1st generation college student, 1st and 2nd generation citizen, Chinese and Puerto Rican mixed cis gender woman. She has over 13 years of experience implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives. She holds a B.A. in Ethnic Studies which impacted her ability to understand cultural bias, discrimination, and systemic oppression with an intersectional lens.

Kimberly left her job as the Transit Equity Specialist after 4 years at the Regional Transportation District (RTD) to pursue a career in equitable community engagement and wellness services for Black, Indigenous, and Additional Women of Color via sistercirclewellness.com.

Prior to RTD she worked with numerous nonprofit agencies committed to social justice organizing strategies to advance equity. She graduated from the Real Estate Diversity Initiative (REDI) in 2019 and shortly after became a REDI program administrator with a focus on advancing equitable practices in real estate development.

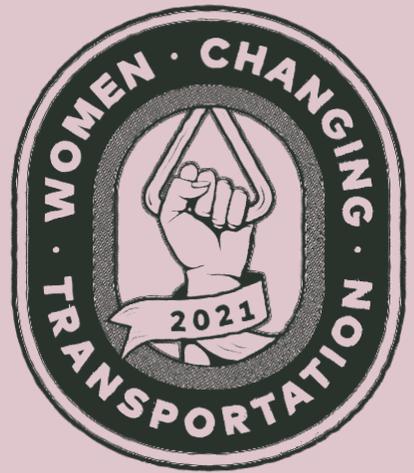
In her words “In order to learn how to improve systems that have historically underserved communities, we must dissect and dissolve practices that do not work equitably and evolve systems into something that truly work for all of us.”

KIMBERLY LUCAS

Kim Lucas is the Acting Director for the City of Pittsburgh’s Department of Mobility & Infrastructure, leading the Planning, Policy, and Permitting Bureau. Prior to this role, Kim was the Sustainable Transportation Branch Manager with the District Department of Transportation, Planning & Sustainability Division, in Washington, D.C. where she led a team responsible for overseeing the planning and implementation of the shared micro-mobility; freight & urban delivery; and transportation demand management programs.

Kim has over 15 years of professional transportation experience, beginning with her stint as a student bus driver at the University of Virginia, and has worked in the cornerstones of transportation planning: the public and private sectors, advocacy, and research.

**JOIN THE
MOVEMENT,
SHARE
WIDELY
AND OFTEN**



**JOIN THE
MOVEMENT**