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For too long, reparations have been considered taboo in mainstream America. Yet, in 2020 we saw COVID's devastating and racially disparate impact, we fought sweeping efforts to suppress and weaken the Black vote, and heard the millions of people who took to the streets in response to police violence against Black people nationwide to demand a more racially just tomorrow.

Intentional public policies have systemically destroyed families for generations and prevented entire communities from prospering—and those policies have been validated and perpetuated through our laws for the entirety of our national history. One often overlooked area is transportation infrastructure and policy. Our transportation infrastructure and policies have always been a driver of racial inequality and helped make many Black communities inhospitable for health, success, and economic opportunity. The nation's transportation infrastructure was built at the expense of Black communities and – from highways, to roads, bridges, sidewalks, and public transit – have been planned, developed, and sustained to contribute to the underdevelopment of Black communities. For decades, using public transportation was a daily reminder of the legal and social inferiority of Black people, particularly in the South. Black people were relegated to the back of the bus and required to give up their seats to white people on demand. In train stations, Black people were forced to wait in separate waiting areas, with separate bathrooms and drinking fountains. Today, transportation policy and infrastructure remains a daily reminder of how Black people have been, and continue to be, sacrificed to feed America's growth and expansion.

The renewed momentum in the century-long fight for reparations offers America the opportunity to grapple with how to address the full legacy of slavery, including the government-sponsored efforts that drove Black people from their homes, the theft of Black peoples' land, wealth, and community, and the isolation and destruction of Black communities.