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New Report Identifies New Jersey's Most Dangerous Roads for Pedestrians

Group urges funding for pedestrian infrastructure programs and county passage of Complete Streets policies

For four years in a row, New Jersey's most dangerous road for pedestrians is Route 130 (Burlington Pike) in Burlington County, according to an annual analysis by Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a policy watchdog organization.

Between 2008 and 2010, 10 pedestrians were killed on that route, with the majority of the fatalities occurring between Burlington Township and Delran.

Other New Jersey routes topping the list were Route 1&9 in Union County, and US-1 in Middlesex County.

"All three of these roads are arterials—roads designed to move vehicles with little regard for the safety of pedestrians or bicyclists who also use them," said Janna Chernetz, New Jersey advocate for the Campaign. "This type of planning has fatal consequences."

In the three years between 2008 and 2010, 435 pedestrians were killed on New Jersey's roadways. While the number of pedestrian deaths decreased in 2010 from 158 fatalities to 139, recently-released 2011 data from the New Jersey Department of Transportation show a slight increase in pedestrian fatalities, suggesting that New Jersey's roadways are far from safe for pedestrians.

"New Jersey has been taking steps to improve pedestrian safety, but these deaths are a reminder that more can and should be done," said Matthew Norris, South Jersey advocate for the Campaign.

The analysis found that the state's most dangerous roads for walking over the three-year period were:

Rank (in NJ)	Roadway	Pedestrian Fatalities (2008-2010)
1	US-130 (Burlington Pike), Burlington County	10
2	Route 1&9, Union County	9
3	US-1, Middlesex County	7
4	Route 35, Middlesex County	6
4	Route 28 (North Ave, Front St, Westfield Ave), Union County	6
4	US-46, Morris County	6
4	US-322/40 (Black Horse Pike, Albany Ave), Atlantic County	6
8	US-9, Monmouth County	5
8	Route 36, Monmouth County	5
8	White Horse Pike (US-30), Camden County	5
8	Route 22, Somerset County	5
8	Route 9, Ocean County	5

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign applauded efforts that are already underway to improve safety on the state's roadways. In 2009, the New Jersey Department of Transportation adopted an internal Complete Streets policy requiring that transportation planners and engineers consider all potential users of a roadway, including pedestrians and bicyclists, in the design of a new or significantly retrofitted road. The New Jersey Department of Transportation is currently creating a complete streets curriculum that will be presented around the state. In addition, the state created a five-year Pedestrian Safety Initiative, a multi-agency program that uses enforcement, engineering and education approaches to address pedestrian safety.

"NJ DOT's progressive complete streets policy is a good first step to reverse the damage done by earlier highway engineering practices but we don't have to wait for major road projects to see improvements. For example a handful of new development projects along US 130 in Burlington County are being completed without sidewalks - missed opportunities that would cost the taxpayers nothing," said John Boyle, research director at The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia.

The Campaign hopes that this analysis will encourage New Jersey to renew its commitment to pedestrian safety. The Campaign encourages the Christie administration to continue the Pedestrian Safety Initiative and adequately fund pedestrian and bike infrastructure programs including Safe Routes to Schools and Safe Streets to Transit in the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Capital Program. The Campaign also hopes that the state will consider a vulnerable users bill which would add protections for pedestrians and bicyclists injured by vehicles. Lastly, the report recommends that the administration and the New Jersey Department of Transportation will further their

commitments to pedestrian safety by giving preference to municipalities that have adopted Complete Streets policies when awarding grants.

Because many of the most dangerous roads have municipal or county jurisdictions, counties and municipalities across New Jersey can also make their streets safer by passing Complete Streets policies. In Essex County, Broad Street is municipal jurisdiction. Hudson County's Avenue C is municipal jurisdiction, and Route 501 is county jurisdiction. Parts of Union County's Route 28 are municipal jurisdiction and parts are New Jersey Department of Transportation's jurisdiction. Ocean County's Route 549 is county jurisdiction, as is Passaic County's Route 504.

"If Complete Streets is really going to make an impact in New Jersey, all municipalities and counties need to pass Complete Streets policies. It is only through this collaboration of local and state government that the safety of all who use New Jersey's roads can be assured," Chernetz said.

"Last year, an AARP survey found that 94 percent of New Jersey residents age fifty and older said it was important for them to be able to live independently in their homes and communities for as long as possible. And because so many New Jerseyans hang up their car keys for good as they get older, safe and accessible sidewalks and streets are vitally important - whether they are going to the doctor or grocery store, or visiting family and friends," said Dave Mollen, AARP New Jersey State President.

"All citizens, no matter their age and including those with disabilities, are pedestrians whether for short or long distances. We all need to know that when we use the sidewalks and cross streets, our safety has been paramount in the planning and design and not just to move motorists faster to their destinations," said Karen Jenkins, chair of the board of directors of the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition.

The Campaign's analysis was based on recently-released data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). The analysis excludes Interstates and other roads where pedestrians are prohibited. Federal data was not available for pedestrian injuries, many of which occur in urban areas like Newark, Trenton, and Camden.

County fact sheets showing the most dangerous routes for walking are also available. The fact sheets also include an interactive Google Map showing the locations of each pedestrian fatality, with descriptive details for each victim killed on the county's most dangerous route or routes.

The full report, as well as county fact sheets and Google Maps can be found at www.tstc.org/reports/danger12/.

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The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey.