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1,345 Vehicle Collisions with Pedestrians and Bicyclists in Albany County

New York State Plans to Spend Fewer Dollars on Pedestrian and Bicycling Infrastructure in the Future; Advocates Call on the Governor to Allocate more Resources.

According to state data, there were [1,345 vehicle collisions with pedestrians or bicyclists in Albany County](#) over a four-year period from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2012. Using the New York State Department of Transportation's Accident Data Files, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit transportation policy watchdog organization, found that pedestrians were involved in 937 of these collisions and 408 involved bicyclists.¹ Twenty-three of these collisions were fatal (21 pedestrian collisions and 2 bicyclist collisions). The City of Albany had the highest number of collisions (852) and the Town of Colonie the second highest (203).

Despite these alarming statistics, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) will be spending less on infrastructure and amenities that make streets safer for these users of the road.

According to the Campaign's analysis of NYSDOT's "2013 Draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)," the blueprint for how NYSDOT will spend its transportation dollars, New York will be spending 40 percent less of its overall transportation dollars on projects like sidewalks, new crosswalks, bicycle lanes or pedestrian islands, measures that make it safer and more inviting for people to walk and bike.

New York plans to spend only 0.98% of its transportation dollars on pedestrian and bicycling projects from FFY 2014-2017, a reduction of more than \$100 million as compared to FFY 2011-2014.²

"New York State has the highest percentage of traffic fatalities for pedestrians and bicyclists in the nation: in 2012, 27% of all fatalities on New York's roads were pedestrians and bicyclists," said Veronica Vanterpool, executive director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. "New York should be topping the charts on investments to make its streets safe to walk and bike, not working to zero it out."

Many of these safety measures are low-cost, such as restriping vehicle lanes to accommodate bicycles or repainting crosswalks so they are more visible, so the reduction in funding amounts to significantly fewer projects that make roadways safer for all users of the road.

"These troubling findings are unfortunate and need to be addressed," said Beth Finkel, AARP New York State Director. "Spending around a penny on the dollar to address street safety should be unacceptable to all New Yorkers. New York needs safe streets for our children and older persons

alike, and Governor Cuomo needs to reverse this policy and invest more in safe passageways for pedestrians.”

In 2012, a Complete Streets bill was signed into law by Governor Cuomo sending a strong signal that streets should include safer road infrastructure for everyone that uses New York’s roads—including drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users of all ages and abilities. Yet, the paltry investment levels run counter to that message.

“Pass a Complete Streets Law and then spend fewer dollars on improving the safety of our roads? This is a bait and switch that shouldn’t be tolerated,” said Nadine Lemmon, Albany legislative advocate of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. “Governor Cuomo must dedicate a fair share of state transportation dollars to Complete Streets to help make our communities safer.”

“Earlier this year, Albany’s Common Council passed a Complete Streets ordinance to supplement the statewide commitment to designing safer streets for pedestrians and bicyclists,” said Leah Golby, Albany Common Council Member, 10th Ward. “It’s time for New York State to put its money where its mouth is and dedicate funds to support road infrastructure for the most vulnerable in New York’s communities.”

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.
tstc.org

1. Multi vehicle collisions involving pedestrians or bicyclists are not always recorded as collisions with pedestrians or bicyclists as it depends on the reporting officer’s interpretation of the crash event and the sequence of the crash event. This may result in an underreporting of vehicle collisions with pedestrians and bicyclists.

2. These numbers do not encompass the larger road and bridge projects that include some component of pedestrian and/or bicycling infrastructure. Unfortunately, NYSDOT does not separate out the costs of the various components on these larger projects, so it is impossible to tell how much is being spent on just pedestrian and bicycling improvements. That said, in the Draft STIP, NYSDOT is planning to spend over 60% less of its overall transportation dollars on road and bridge projects that include pedestrian/bicycling infrastructure, excluding 3 major bridge projects: the Tappan Zee, Kosciuszko, and Bayonne bridges.