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Report Identifies New Jersey’s Most Dangerous Roads for Walking

Fatalities decrease slightly but transportation funding crisis threatens further progress

A [new analysis](#) from Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit policy watchdog organization, finds that in the three years from 2011 to 2013, 435 pedestrians were killed on roads in New Jersey. This reflects a small decrease from the Campaign’s previous analysis, which found that 442 pedestrians were killed on New Jersey roads from 2010 through 2012.

Using most recently available federal data, the analysis finds that, for the fifth year in a row, Burlington County’s US-130 is once again the most dangerous road for pedestrians in the state. Nine pedestrians were killed on US-130 in Burlington County, with seven of these deaths occurring within the approximately 7.5 miles stretching from Cinnaminson to Willingboro.

Over the past few years, State agency leaders and elected officials have taken actions to make US-130 less deadly for pedestrians, including increased enforcement of motor vehicle violations through the Operation 130 Safe Passage program. In late 2014, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission also began a study to develop recommendations for improving pedestrian and bicycle safety along the highway at the request of the Burlington County Freeholders and 12 local municipalities.

“What Route 130 needs is continuous sidewalks, median islands and crosswalks,” said Matthew Norris, the Campaign’s South Jersey Coordinator. “Given the lack of this infrastructure, it is no surprise that Route 130 continues to top the list.”

Camden County’s US-30 (White Horse Pike) and Middlesex County’s US-9 tied for second most deadly road for pedestrians in New Jersey with eight deaths each. US-30 continued its deadly streak in Atlantic County as well, where it tied with Route 36 in Monmouth County with six deaths each.

The Campaign found that arterial roadways—multi-lane roads that often have speed limits of 40 mph or more and with little pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure—are the region’s most deadly for pedestrians.

“While about 15 percent of the total lane miles in the three states are classified as arterials, over 50 percent of pedestrian fatalities occurred on this type of road. In New Jersey alone, almost 70 percent of pedestrian deaths occur on roads classified as arterials,” Ryan Hall, staff analyst for the Campaign pointed out.

The analysis found that the New Jersey roads with five or more pedestrian fatalities over the three-year period were:

Rank (in NJ)	Change in Ranking (Prior Year's Rank in NJ)	Jurisdiction	Roadway	Total Pedestrian Fatalities, 2011-2013
1	↔ (1)	Burlington County	US-130 (Burlington Pike)	9
2	↔ (2)	Camden County	US-30 (White Horse Pike, Admiral Wilson Blvd)	8
3	↑ (4)	Middlesex County	US-9	8
4	↔ (4)	Atlantic County	US-30 (White Horse Pike, Absecon Blvd)	6
4	↑ (5)	Monmouth County	Route 36	6
5	↓ (4)	Atlantic County	US-322/40 (Blackhorse Pike, Albany Ave)	5
5	↔ (5)	Cumberland County	Route 47	5
5	↔ (5)	Essex County	Route 21 (McCarter Hwy)	5
5	↓ (3)	Middlesex County	US-1	5
5	New	Ocean County	Route 37	5

State and local government agencies collect and use data in a variety of ways over differing time periods to record pedestrian fatalities. New Jersey would benefit from a central database that includes federal, state, local, and police enforcement data on all traffic crashes.

“New Jersey was identified as a Pedestrian Focus state by the federal government, an unfortunate label. In addition to infrastructure improvements, New Jersey must enact legislation to protect its most vulnerable road users,” said Janna Chernetz, Senior NJ Policy Analyst for the Campaign. “A safe passing bill, which would require motorists to give room when passing a pedestrian, cyclist or other road user, has passed in the NJ Assembly but is currently being held up in the Senate Transportation Committee. New Jersey is losing valuable protections and educational tools by putting off the enactment of much needed legislation.”

Unfortunately, the insolvency of the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) beginning July 1, 2015 poses a threat to improving pedestrian safety in the state. Without new revenue to replenish the TTF, counties and municipalities that rely on state aid and grants funded through the TTF are less likely to advance Complete Streets projects.

Complete Streets projects are proven to enhance safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists while also delivering economic benefits to municipalities where these investments are made. In 2012, South Park Street in Montclair was transformed from a 72-foot wide arterial street with angled parking to a pedestrian hub with wide sidewalks, a center median and curb extensions, and is credited with the revitalization of its downtown.

The Campaign urges New Jersey’s elected officials and agency leaders to:

- Identify new, long-term, sustainable revenue sources, such as an increase in the state's gas tax, to replenish the state's bankrupt Transportation Trust Fund
- Pass Safe Passing and Vulnerable User legislation to enhance safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, construction workers and law enforcement users
- Double the state's investment in programs that fund pedestrian improvements such as the NJ Transit Village Program (\$1m to \$2m) and Safe Streets to Transit (\$1m to \$2m)
- Ensure that state/local roads being rebuilt with Sandy recovery funds adhere to the NJDOT's Complete Streets policy
- Dedicate federal transportation funds, through NJDOT and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, to build and connect regional trails, such as the Circuit in southern New Jersey and roads that provide access to such trails
- Institutionalize NJDOT's successful Complete Streets trainings and workshops for local municipalities
- Standardize the reporting of fatalities resulting from traffic crashes across municipal, state and federal agencies

"Despite the state being designated a Pedestrian Focus State by the FHWA, New Jersey continues to experience much higher than average pedestrian road fatalities. While the national average is 12-14 percent annually, NJ's percentage is 24 percent," says Cyndi Steiner, Executive Director of the New Jersey Bike Walk Coalition. "We call upon the NJDOT, counties and municipalities to recognize the serious issue of pedestrian safety and make it a priority, from leadership down to administrative and technical levels. Engineering needs to prioritize safety over speed. With additional federal funds under the Highway Safety Improvement Program being awarded to the state, there are resources available to implement safe crosswalks, sidewalks, curb extensions and bumpouts, pedestrian signaling and other infrastructure to make the roads safer. Pedestrian safety should be everyone's priority."

"It's clear that there is more work to be done to make our roads safe," said Cathleen Lewis, Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations for AAA New Jersey. "This list highlights the dangers on our roadways and can help focus education, enforcement and engineering efforts to make our roadways safe. Both motorists and pedestrians need to be aware of their surroundings and remain distraction free while in the roadway."

"New Jersey pedestrians are dying at a rate of one every 20 hours, and more than one-third of them are older adults. Government leaders at all levels simply must move more aggressively to fully implement protective measures, including Complete Streets policies and investment in safer transportation projects," said AARP New Jersey State Director James Dieterle.

"Thanks in part to previous Most Dangerous Roads reports, local officials have taken action to step up traffic enforcement on Route 130. However enforcement alone cannot solve the chronic problem of bicycle and pedestrian safety. Physical changes to the road including contiguous sidewalks, modern walk signals, highly visible crosswalks and pedestrian refuge medians are necessary to accommodate our most vulnerable road users including children, the elderly and persons with disabilities," said John Boyle, Research Director for the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia.

The analysis relies upon the most recent data available from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) to determine which routes within each county had the highest number of pedestrian fatalities from 2011 to 2013. The analysis excludes

interstates and other roads where pedestrians are prohibited and omits those fatalities that occurred on portions of roads where pedestrians are not allowed.

County fact sheets showing the most dangerous roads for walking are available at the Campaign's website and include an interactive map showing the locations of each pedestrian fatality, with descriptive details for each victim. State legislative boundaries are also outlined. **A summary of the analysis, as well as state and county fact sheets and maps can be found at tstc.org.**

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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.