



For immediate release – March 4, 2015

Contact

Nadine Lemmon, (917) 767-7698
New York & Federal Policy Coordinator

Veronica Vanterpool, (917) 957-9748
Executive Director

Report Identifies New York’s Most Dangerous Roads for Walking

Though focus on safety increases, so do fatalities; better design and infrastructure needed

A [new analysis](#) from Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit policy watchdog organization, finds that in the three years from 2011 to 2013, 732 pedestrians were killed on roads in the 12 downstate New York counties. Overall, 1,266 pedestrians were killed in the tri-state region during the time period, an increase of 30 fatalities (1,236) over last year’s analysis.

Using the most recently available federal data, the analysis finds that Suffolk County’s Route 25 (Jericho Turnpike) is not only the most dangerous road for pedestrians in downstate New York, but in the tri-state region. Twenty pedestrian fatalities occurred on this Suffolk County arterial road, with almost half of these fatalities occurring within the 11.5-mile stretch from Centereach to Ridge.

Jericho Turnpike now holds the unfortunate title as the region’s most dangerous road two years in a row.

In April 2014, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) began the upgrade of deteriorated sidewalks and filled in gaps in the sidewalk infrastructure along four miles of Route 25A/Main Street in downtown Riverhead. Improved lighting, new benches and bike racks were also completed improvements. The four-mile area of concentration did include the site of one pedestrian fatality in 2012, which was noted in last year’s analysis.

“We are glad NYSDOT is concentrating safety infrastructure and amenities for pedestrians in this stretch of Suffolk’s notoriously deadly corridor. Sidewalks are prerequisites for safe mobility in communities and the additional amenities such as benches and bike racks encourage people to get around without a car. But given that pedestrian fatalities have increased in Suffolk over last year’s analysis, more concentrated safety projects are needed throughout the county,” says Veronica Vanterpool, the Campaign’s executive director.

In June 2014, a \$3.2 million federal grant from Highway Safety Improvement Program funds was awarded for operational and pedestrian safety improvements on one of the region’s most dangerous roads, Route 110, in the Village of Amityville and the towns of Babylon and Huntington in Suffolk County. While these are encouraging investments, the need is so much greater than the investments made to date.

“This report serves as another exclamation point reminding Long Island public officials that our roadways continue to be dangerous for pedestrians,” said Eric Alexander, director of Vision Long Island. “The recommendations contained herein will serve to reverse what has become a descending spiral of poor safety measures in the design of our regions streets. Vision Long Island and other organizations will be asking our public officials to address these findings at our third annual Complete Streets Summit on Friday, April 10,” he added.

Progress is being made. In June 2014, Suffolk County legislators approved \$250,000 in annual dedicated funding (beginning in 2016) for implementing the county’s Complete Streets policy, a model that should be followed by other municipalities throughout the state.

Nassau County’s Route 24 (Hempstead Turnpike), with eleven deaths, is the second most dangerous road for pedestrians in downstate New York. With ten deaths apiece, Grand Concourse in the Bronx and Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn tie for third.

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 downstate New York, 45 percent of pedestrian deaths occur on roads classified as arterials,” Ryan Hall, staff analyst for the Campaign pointed out.

“We commend the Tri-State Transportation Campaign for identifying the need for improvements on our arterial streets, which are the site of most fatal crashes, even though they only make up a small percentage of our road network,” said Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives. “There is demand from communities across the five boroughs to make multi-lane speedways like Atlantic Avenue, the Grand Concourse and Queens Boulevard less lethal and more livable. We urge the City to commit to redesigning these hazardous corridors with improvements including pedestrian refuge islands, dedicated bus lanes and protected bus lanes.”

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

Rank (in downstate NY)	Change in Ranking (Prior Year's Rank in downstate NY)	Jurisdiction	Roadway	Total Pedestrian Fatalities, 2011-2013
1	↔ (1)	Suffolk County	Route 25 (Middle Country Road, Jericho Turnpike, East Main Street, Main Road)	20
2	↔ (2)	Nassau County	Route 24 (Hempstead Turnpike, Fulton Avenue, Conklin Street)	11

3	↑ (8)	Bronx	Grand Concourse	10
3	↑ (6)	Brooklyn	Flatbush Avenue	10
4	↑ (5)	Nassau County	Merrick Road	9
4	↔ (4)	Queens	Woodhaven Boulevard	9
4	↓ (3)	Suffolk County	Route 110 (New York Avenue, Broadhollow Road, Broadway)	9
5	↑ (7)	Queens	Queens Boulevard	8
5	↔ (5)	Suffolk County	Route 27A (Merrick Road, Montauk Highway, CR-85, CR-80, Main Street)	8
6	↑ (8)	Brooklyn	Eastern Parkway	7
6	↓ (3)	Nassau County	Route 27 (Sunrise Highway)	7
6	↔ (6)	Manhattan	First Avenue	7
6	↑ (8)	Queens	Rockaway Boulevard	7
7	↑ (8)	Bronx	White Plains Road	6
7	↓ (3)	Manhattan	Broadway	6
7	↑ (8)	Queens	Jamaica Avenue	6
7	↔ (7)	Queens	Northern Boulevard	6
7	↑ (8)	Suffolk County	Route 25A (East Main Street, Fort Salonga Road),	6
8	↔ (8)	Brooklyn	Atlantic Avenue	5
8	New	Brooklyn	Broadway	5
8	↓ (5)	Manhattan	Second Avenue	5
8	↑ (9)	Manhattan	Third Avenue	5
8	↓ (6)	Manhattan	Seventh Avenue (Adam Clayton Powell Jr Boulevard)	5
8	↑ (9)	Manhattan	Ninth Avenue (Columbus Avenue)	5
8	↔ (8)	Queens	Hillside Avenue	5
8	↓ (3)	Suffolk County	Route 27 (Sunrise Highway, Montauk Point State Highway, CR-39)	5

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

New York City’s Vision Zero program has made great strides at reducing pedestrian deaths. Over the past year, the City has lowered its municipal speed limit, installed pedestrian safety cameras in targeted locations and passed legislation penalizing drivers who fail to yield the right of way to pedestrians. The NYC Department of Transportation recently unveiled borough specific Vision Zero Pedestrian Safety Action Plans developed with input from numerous community workshops. Each plan prioritizes intersections and corridors for priority safety improvements.

“Vision Zero should be a goal for the entire state of New York given that New York State has the highest fatality rate in the nation for pedestrians and bicyclists at 29 percent,” said Nadine Lemmon, the New York and Federal Policy Coordinator for the Campaign. “While NYS released nearly \$143 million in federal funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects throughout the state, the state itself has not yet established a dedicated fund for these projects in the state budget.”

“Walking is a critical part of living a healthy, active lifestyle, but not all communities are safely walkable. This report is a useful tool for advocates interested in improving the health and safety of their communities by improving conditions for pedestrians,” says Monica Chierici, Project Director, Division of Health Policy, New York Academy of Medicine.

"Pedestrians over 60 are more than twice as likely to be victims than younger New Yorkers. As people age—and decide whether to remain in their communities and continue contributing socially and economically—they want to feel safe walking in their neighborhoods," said Beth Finkel, State Director of AARP for New York State. "AARP surveyed New York voters 50 and older last year and found two thirds identified cars not yielding to pedestrians as a problem, while 62 percent said sidewalks are too narrow, poorly lit, in need of repair or nonexistent. Nearly half said traffic lights are timed too fast for safe pedestrian crossing. We urge our leaders to follow through with full implementation of the Complete Streets Law the state enacted in 2012 and to prioritize safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in all road design and projects."

The Campaign urges New York's elected officials and agency leaders to:

- Establish \$20 million in dedicated funding for pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure—annually, and on top of what is already being spent in the state budget or in New York State Department of Transportation's Capital Program
- Increase New York City's contribution to transforming arterial roadways and fully implementing Vision Zero in the NYC Budget and capital plan.
- Create a Long Island Safe Routes to Transit program that would target areas around transit stations for pedestrian safety improvements
- Amend NYSDOT's "Preservation First" policy to include new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and pass legislation that would amend the State's Complete Streets law to include maintenance and repair projects
- Grant local leaders home rule power to lower the speed limits on roads
- Adopt a Complete Streets policy for the metropolitan planning region of New York City, Long Island and the Hudson Valley
- Standardize the reporting of fatalities resulting from traffic crashes across municipal, state and federal agencies

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 routes for walking are available at the Campaign's website and include interactive maps showing the locations of each pedestrian fatality with descriptive details for each victim. State legislative boundaries and New York City Council districts are also outlined. **A summary of the analysis, as well as state and county fact sheets and maps can be found at tstc.org.**

###

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.