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## **On National Walking Day, Analysis Identifies New York’s Most Dangerous Roads for Pedestrians**

*Fatalities decrease, but better funding for safe walking infrastructure still needed*

Today, on National Walking Day, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit policy watchdog organization, releases [a new analysis](#) underlining the need for better funding and infrastructure that makes it safe to walk throughout our communities. The report finds that in the three years from 2012 to 2014, 782 pedestrians were killed on roads in the 12 downstate New York counties. This reflects a 6.8-percent increase from the Campaign’s previous analysis, which found that 732 pedestrians were killed on downstate New York roads from 2011 through 2013.

The *Most Dangerous Roads for Walking* analysis uses federal traffic fatality data to identify the most deadly roads for pedestrians in the Connecticut, New Jersey and downstate New York region. This year’s analysis also identifies the most deadly roads in the four largest upstate NY counties, as well.

Tri-State’s latest report marks the third analysis in a row that Route 25 has been ranked the most deadly road for pedestrians in downstate New York and in the entire tri-state region. Including data from the roadway throughout Nassau, Queens and Suffolk Counties, 24 pedestrians were killed on this road.

The analysis finds that Route 25 in Suffolk County (Jericho Turnpike) and Nassau County’s Route 24 (Hempstead Turnpike) both saw 12 deaths between 2012 and 2014, the most deaths on a single road in an individual county.

The Campaign found that arterial roadways—multi-lane roads that often have speed limits of 40 mph or more with little pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure—are the region’s most deadly for pedestrians. Long Island is home to the top four most deadly roads throughout the entire tri-state region, all of which are arterial roadways.

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) previously redesigned a six-mile stretch of Route 25 in Nassau County, adding turning lanes and improving sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, and repaired deteriorating sidewalks along four miles of Route 25A/Main Street in downtown Riverhead.

“We are glad NYSDOT is concentrating safety infrastructure and amenities for pedestrians in this stretch of the region’s notoriously deadly corridor. Sidewalks and pedestrian medians are indeed prerequisites for safe mobility, but it’s time to consider reducing speed limits and adding curb extensions to calm speeding on these arterials,” said **Veronica Vanterpool, Tri-State Transportation Campaign Executive Director**. “The drop in pedestrian fatalities in Suffolk is a good sign, but more concentrated safety projects are needed throughout the county.”

“Another sad day to reflect on the loss of life on Long Island’s deadly roadways,” said **Eric Alexander, Director of Vision Long Island**. “It is long past time for folks who design our roads to look at common sense safety measures including traffic calming and complete streets treatments that will reduce the number of fatalities in heavily trafficked pedestrian and bike areas.”

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 and the state. New York State is fast approaching the five-year anniversary of its complete streets law. Yet in that time, zero state dollars have been dedicated to supporting complete streets projects.

Advocacy from more than 60 statewide organizations and 42 NYS Assembly members during 2016-2017 state budget negotiations resulted in an appropriation of \$20 million per year in the Assembly’s budget proposal. Unfortunately, the appropriation was not included in the Senate proposal and ultimately not part of the final budget. NYSDOT, however, received an additional \$1 billion for its Capital Program in the final state budget. With this increase, NYSDOT, which owns many of the roads on the Most Deadly Roads list, should spend an additional \$20 million each year over the next five years (total of \$100 million over the life of the Department’s next capital program) to reduce pedestrian fatalities on these roadways.

“Simply put, New York State is not doing enough to turn these fatality numbers around. An historic budget was just passed, one that makes record investments in transportation, and not one penny of our state tax dollars was dedicated to pedestrian infrastructure. We can, and should do better,” said **Nadine Lemmon, Director of New York and Federal Policy for Tri-State Transportation Campaign**.

In New York City, Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn and Queens Boulevard each had 11 pedestrian fatalities. For the second analysis in a row, Grand Concourse in the Bronx ranked third in New York City with 10 deaths during the three-year period.

“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,” said **Ryan Hall, Tri-State Transportation Campaign Staff Analyst**.

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

Rank (in downstate NY)	Change in Ranking (Prior Year's Rank in downstate NY)	Jurisdiction	Roadway	Total Pedestrian Fatalities, 2012-2014
1	↔ (1)	Suffolk County	Jericho Turnpike, Middle County Rd, East Main Street, Main Road (SR-25)	12
1	↑ (2)	Nassau County	Hempstead Turnpike, Fulton Ave (SR-24)	12
2	↑ (3)	Brooklyn	Flatbush Ave	11
2	↑ (5)	Queens	Queens Blvd, Hillside Ave (SR-25)	11
3	↔ (3)	The Bronx	Grand Concourse	10
4	↑ (7)	Queens	Northern Blvd (SR-25A)	8
4	↑ (6)	Queens	Rockaway Blvd	8
4	↑ (7)	Suffolk County	Main St, N Country Rd, Sound Ave (SR-25A)	8
4	↔ (4)	Suffolk County	Broadway, New York Ave, Walt Whitman Rd (SR-110)	8
4	↑ (8)	Suffolk County	Sunrise Highway, Montauk Highway, Southampton Bypass (SR-27)	8
5	↑ (8)	Brooklyn	Atlantic Ave	7
5	↑ (6)	Nassau County	Sunrise Highway (SR-27)	7
5	↑ (8)	Manhattan	Third Ave	7
5	↑ (7)	Manhattan	Broadway	7
5	↑ (7)	Queens	Jamaica Ave	7
6	↔ (6)	Brooklyn	Eastern Parkway	6
6	↓ (4)	Nassau County	Merrick Rd	6
6	New	Manhattan	Amsterdam Ave (Tenth Ave)	6
6	New	Queens	Roosevelt Ave	6
7	New	The Bronx	Bruckner Blvd	5
7	New	Brooklyn	Rockaway Parkway	5
7	New	Monroe County	Monroe Ave (SR-31)	5
7	↓ (6)	Manhattan	First Ave	5
7	↑ (8)	Manhattan	Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd (Seventh Ave)	5
7	↓ (5)	Suffolk County	Montauk Highway (CR-80)	5
7	↓ (4)	Queens	Woodhaven Blvd	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.

Concerted efforts in New York City have been successful in reducing pedestrian deaths. While nine New York City roadways top the list of the top 15 most dangerous roads, five of them have seen a decrease in fatalities from 2013-2014, with the greatest reductions on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx and Jamaica Avenue in Queens. With the implementation of Vision Zero in 2014, measures such as the reduction in NYC's speed limit to 25 mph, the installation of speed cameras and the Right-of-Way legislation appear to be already protecting lives and reducing preventable deaths. 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. With the exception of Manhattan's Amsterdam Avenue, all

of this year's Most Dangerous Roads within New York City have been previously identified as priority corridors or intersections.

"Parks & Trails New York applauds this report for raising awareness for this important safety issue," said **Executive Director Robin Dropkin**. "New York State's roads are the nation's most dangerous roads for walkers and bicyclists, representing almost a third of road fatalities. While we have made significant progress in recent years promoting the idea of complete streets and improving safety for these vulnerable users, this report demonstrates why New York State should deliver on the promise to provide New Yorkers with a greener, healthier and more equitable transportation system and provide significantly more funding to help build sidewalks, bike lanes and multi-use trails."

"New Yorkers 65 and older are more than three times likelier to be victims of pedestrian fatalities than younger New Yorkers," said **Beth Finkel, State Director for AARP in New York**. "Once again Tri-State's report shows we still have traffic safety issues in our state. AARP believes one way to address these pedestrian safety issues is to make our communities more livable by investing in complete streets, which takes into account all users of the roads, not just motor vehicles. In an AARP-commissioned 2014 [survey](#), large numbers of New York Voters age 50 and over cited traffic safety-related issues as problems in their communities. We must stop these trends."

"City streets have become the lifeline of urban living. As public spaces for daily activities, their safety is essential for the health and survival of all city dwellers – motorists, cyclists and pedestrians alike," said **Dr. Angel Mendoza, Director of the Center for Health Policy and Programs at The New York Academy of Medicine**.

"We have made the environment hostile to pedestrians. We can make streets safer by slowing down cars, marking crosswalks and extending signal times and making sure we have well developed and maintained sidewalk systems. Streets are not just for cars, but should be shared safely by all forms of transportation, including active transport like walking and biking," said **Katherine Kraft, National Coalition Director at America Walks**.

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

- Develop complete streets plan with NYSDOT for roads ranked in the top five *Most Dangerous Roads for Walking* for three or more consecutive analyses
- Dedicate at least 2 percent of the \$1 billion increase in NYSDOT Capital Program (a minimum of \$100 million) to pedestrian and bicycling projects over the next five years
- Call for NYSDOT to release a progress report of complete street projects implemented since passage of the Complete Streets Law of 2011
- Grant local leaders the power to lower speed limits
- Allow municipalities to use their own adopted design guides in lieu of, or in addition to, AASHTO
- Improve evaluations of system performance for pedestrian and bicycling facilities
- Call for New York City to contribute at least \$250 million annually to fix its most dangerous streets and corridors

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 streets within each county had the highest number of pedestrian fatalities from 2012 to 2014. 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. **A summary of the analysis, as well as state and county fact sheets and maps can be found at [tstc.org](http://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 network in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey.*