



PRESS RELEASE

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Report Identifies Connecticut's Most Dangerous Roads for Pedestrians

Advocacy group applauds state's recent efforts; calls for passage of safety legislation

A new report from Tri-State Transportation Campaign finds that 100 pedestrians were killed on roads in the three years from 2009 through 2011 in Connecticut. Connecticut's pedestrian fatalities were concentrated in New Haven County (26 fatalities from 2009-2011), Hartford County (25 fatalities) and Fairfield County (23 fatalities). This is a decrease from the Campaign's 2012 report which found that 121 pedestrians were killed on the state's roads from 2008 through 2010.

During this period, six pedestrians were killed on Route 1 (Boston Post Road), making the road the most dangerous for pedestrians in the state. After Route 1, Route 66 and US-44 each had three fatalities.

"Route 1 has been Connecticut's most deadly road for pedestrians since the Campaign's first *Most Dangerous Roads for Walking* report in 2008," said Steven Higashide, senior planner with the Campaign.

The analysis found that arterial roads – roads with two or more lanes in each direction that are designed to accommodate vehicle speeds of 40 mph or higher – are the most deadly for pedestrians, with almost 60 percent of pedestrian deaths in Connecticut, New Jersey and downstate New York occurring on this type of road.

"Arterials were traditionally designed to move vehicles from one destination to the next without regard for other road users like pedestrians and bicyclists. We continue to see that designing roads like this results in needless loss of life," said Renata Silberblatt, report author and staff analyst with the Campaign.

Pedestrian fatalities in all of Connecticut's counties were as follows:

County	Pedestrian Fatalities, 2009	Pedestrian Fatalities, 2010	Pedestrian Fatalities, 2011	Total Pedestrian Fatalities, 2009-2011
New Haven	7	13	6	26
Hartford	7	13	5	25
Fairfield	5	11	7	23
New London	3	5	1	9
Tolland	1	2	2	5
Litchfield	1	2	1	4
Middlesex	1	1	2	4
Windham	1	1	2	4
Statewide	26	48	26	100

The Campaign praised Connecticut’s progress toward becoming more pedestrian and bicycle friendly over the past year. Governor Dannel Malloy has encouraged transit oriented development (TOD) throughout the state and announced an inter-agency working group aimed at addressing TOD around new rail and bus rapid transit stations. The city of Bridgeport is developing a bike share system, one of the first in the tri-state region. And, in July 2012, the state announced its first road diet on a state roadway, planning to modify a section of Burnside Avenue/Route 44 in East Hartford to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

The Campaign called on Connecticut elected officials and heads of agencies to continue improving the state’s roadways and areas around them. The Campaign urged legislators to pass a vulnerable users bill, which would increase penalties for careless drivers who injure or kill pedestrians, cyclists, and other users of the road who are most at risk. In addition, the Campaign urged the Connecticut Department of Transportation to update the state’s Highway Design Manual, the state’s standard road design reference book, to address the goals and policies set forth in the state’s forward-thinking Complete Streets law.

“The Highway Design Manual gives guidance to engineers on how to design the state’s roadways, but it doesn’t even include designs for bike lanes or traffic calming,” said Higashide. “Updating the Manual to include information about creating streets for all users will help keep Connecticut residents safer, promote a cleaner environment and healthier economy.”

The Campaign also urged the state to create Safe Routes to Transit and Safe Routes for Seniors programs. These programs would identify transit stops and areas with high densities of senior citizens or senior amenities as priorities to enhance pedestrian safety. Examining pedestrian fatalities from 2008 through 2010, the Campaign found that among pedestrian fatalities in New Haven, Stamford, New Britain, Waterbury, and Meriden, almost 52 percent —51 out of 99— occurred within ¼ mile of a CTTransit bus stop.

“By focusing pedestrian improvements – such as sidewalks, crossing islands and visible crosswalks – in areas with transit riders and senior citizens, these two programs have the potential to save many lives,” said Higashide.

“It’s distressing to see New Haven at the top of the list for pedestrian deaths,” said State Representative Roland Lemar. “At both the State and local level, we need to commit resources to making our roads safer and ensure that all users are able to walk, bike or drive without fear for their lives. We must further commit to stronger enforcement of traffic laws that target careless, distracted or dangerous drivers. Enhanced distracted driving laws, red light cameras at dangerous intersections, laws protecting our vulnerable users, and the requirement that our roadways are designed smarter and accommodate all users – these are but a few of the urgent bills that I am supporting this year. We should never top this list again.”

“Implementing policies and investments that will make our streets safe and easy to navigate will encourage people to get out and walk; to school, to parks, to a bus stop or to a neighborhood shop. Pedestrian improvements, one of the easiest and least costly transportation investments, reap multiple benefits for public health, safety and the economy, while being the greenest travel option. It just makes sense to take steps to improve our streets,” said Kirsten Griebel, program director of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters.

“Improvements in Connecticut’s roadways are very important for seniors, but people of all ages benefit when communities have features like safer crosswalks and affordable and accessible transportation options. AARP is encouraged by improvements to date and hopeful that this report will highlight what policy makers can do to encourage pedestrian safety and livable communities across the state,” said Nora L. Duncan, state director for AARP Connecticut.

“This report makes clear that we’ve got to get back to basics and be much smarter about designing *people-focused* streets and roads. From active baby-boomers, to parents who want their kids to walk or bike to school, to students and young professionals who can’t afford or don’t want cars, more and more people want to be able to get around by foot or by bike. They shouldn’t have to take their lives in their hands in the process. Our policies for streets and roads need to encourage healthy, safe and environmentally-friendly ways of getting around, not discourage them,” said Kelly Kennedy, executive director of Bike Walk Connecticut.

The report uses the most up-to-date data available from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) to determine which routes within Connecticut had the highest number of pedestrian fatalities from 2009 to 2011. The analysis excludes Interstates and other roads where pedestrians are prohibited.

A statewide fact sheet showing the most dangerous routes for walking is also available and includes an interactive map showing the locations of each pedestrian fatality, with descriptive details for each victim killed.

The full report, as well as a state fact sheet and map can be found at
<http://tstc.org/reports/danger13/index.php>

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.