


OLDER PEDESTRIANS AT RISK


A TEN-YEAR SURVEY AND A LOOK AHEAD


The population of older adults is growing in the U.S. and in the tri-state region.


According to AARP, "one in three Americans is now 50 or older – by 2030, one out of every five people in the U.S. will be 65-plus".¹ Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC) examined ten years of pedestrian fatality data focusing on older pedestrians. TSTC found that older pedestrians are at disproportionate risk of being killed in a collision with a car than younger pedestrians.


KEY FINDINGS

 In the ten years from 2003 through 2012, 4,237 pedestrians were killed in Connecticut, New Jersey and Downstate New York. Of these, **1,492 pedestrians were aged 60 years and older.**

 Walking in the tri-state region is more dangerous for older pedestrians than walking in the rest of the country: **the pedestrian fatality rate for people 60 and older living in Connecticut, New Jersey and downstate New York is 54.5 percent higher than for the rest of the country.**

 The population of older adults is increasing across the region and nationally.

 Older tri-state pedestrians are over-represented in the region's pedestrian fatalities: **tri-state pedestrians aged 60 and older comprised 35 percent of the region's pedestrian fatalities, but only 18 percent of its population.**

 The region's **older pedestrian average fatality rate was more than 2.5 times** that of pedestrians under 60 years old, and **pedestrians 75 years and older had an average fatality rate 3.4 times** that of pedestrians under 60.


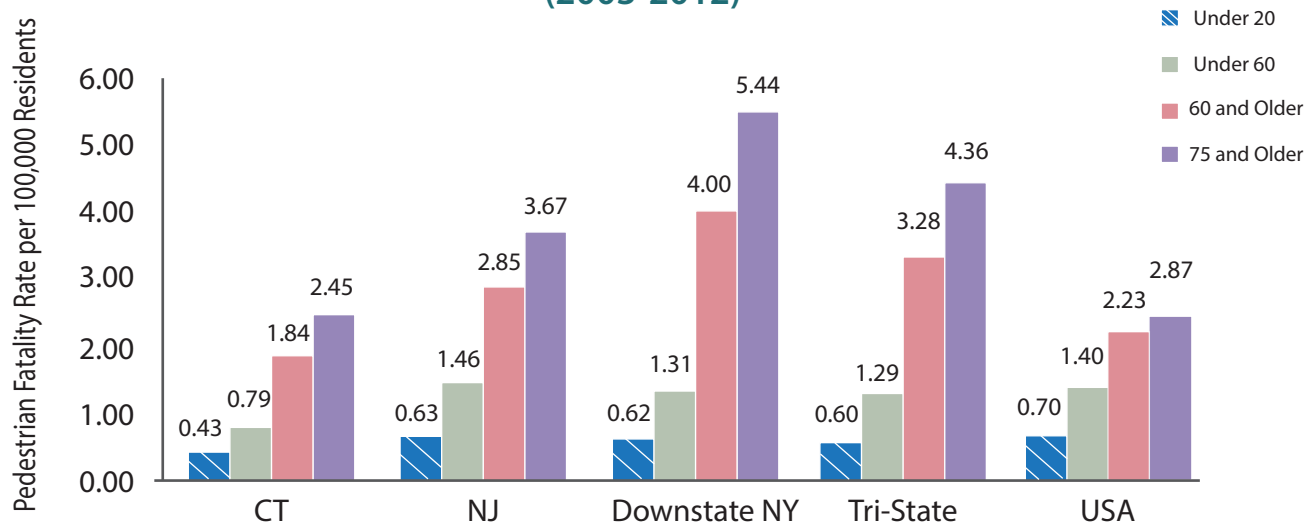
 Simple roadway improvements can make streets safer for pedestrians of all ages and abilities as well as bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.

Figure 1. Tri-State Average Pedestrian Fatality Rate by Age Group (2003-2012)



Source: TSTC analysis of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System Encyclopedia, 2003-2012, U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates and 2010 Census. U.S. fatality rates include tri-state region.

1. "Livable Communities Facts and Figures." AARP Livable Communities. April 2014. <<http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/livable-communities-facts-and-figures.html>>.

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



For more information, contact Veronica Vanterpool at 212-268-7474 or vvanterpool@tstc.org

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

WHY ARE OLDER PEDESTRIANS MORE AT RISK?


TSTC's analysis clearly shows that across the tri-state and in the U.S., pedestrians 60 and older are at higher risk of dying from a car collision than their younger neighbors.

Why is this? A larger proportion of older adults may choose not to drive or may be unable to drive than younger adults, leaving a great number of older adults reliant on walking and taking transit. Also, as AARP explains, "With advanced age, bone density declines, making serious injury or death more likely if one is hit by a car.[. . .] Falls among people 65 and older are an equally significant public health concern and cost more than \$19 billion annually in total direct medical costs. Inadequate sidewalk maintenance increases older adults' risk."²

Simple roadway improvements, such as clearly marked crosswalks, longer crossing signals and wider pedestrian islands can help older pedestrians cross the street. Well-maintained sidewalks also help older adults get around safely without a vehicle.

TRENDS

A clear trend over these ten years is that the population of those aged 60 and older is growing (figure 2). Moreover, recent research from AARP reveals:

 Connecticut has one of the highest concentrations of Baby Boomers in the nation – **almost 34 percent of the state's adult population is a Baby Boomer.**


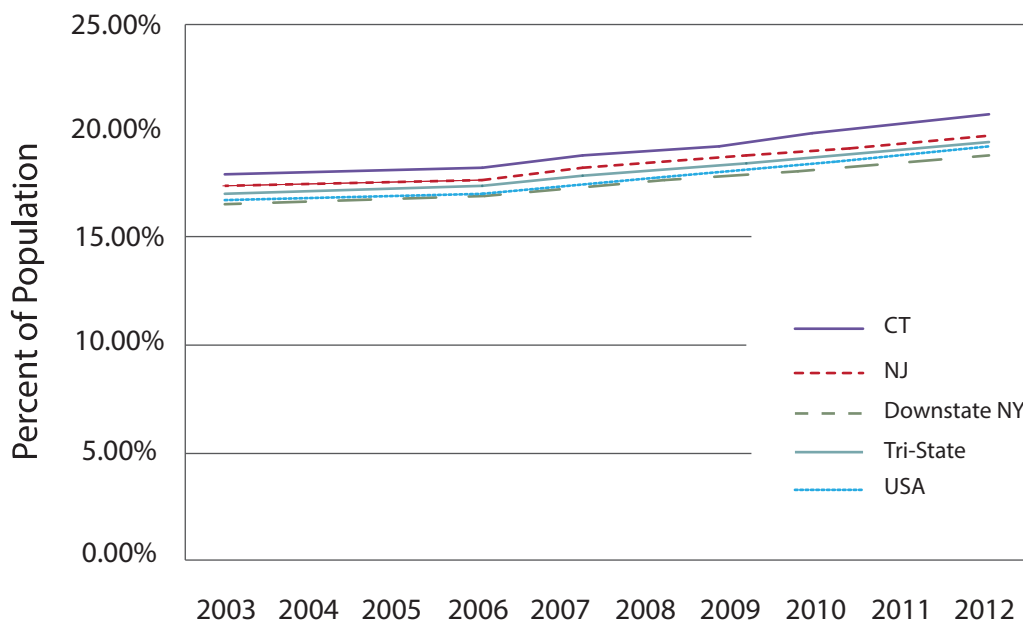
 New York and New Jersey have two of the highest percentages of Baby Boomers without a vehicle: **nearly 20 percent of New York boomers and nearly 7 percent of Baby Boomers in New Jersey are without a vehicle.**³ Being without a vehicle may mean that these older adults are walking and taking transit more often.

Figure 2. Tri-State Older (60+) Population Growth by Year 2003-2012



Source: TSTC analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates and 2010 Census.

With the population of older adults growing now and in the coming years, it is imperative for cities, towns and counties across the tri-state region to plan for the needs of older pedestrians. Our region has already taken significant steps, but what we need now is a more targeted approach to infrastructure changes, policy commitments and funding. While this analysis is focused on seniors, the recommendations outlined in this report will make the tri-state region safer for people of all ages and abilities.

2. Lynott, Jana. "Road Safety for Every Age". AARP Blog. May 8, 2013. <<http://blog.aarp.org/2013/05/08/olderadults-pedestrian-fatalities-age-friendly-transportation/>>.
3. "The Boomer Nation: A State-By-State Snapshot." AARP. April 30, 2014. <[http://www.aarp.org/politics-society/history/info-2014/map-where-boomers-live.html#/>](http://www.aarp.org/politics-society/history/info-2014/map-where-boomers-live.html#/).

AN EXAMINATION OF A DANGEROUS ROAD

Sunrise Highway is a 71-mile, multi-lane road running through Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island. The roadway is bordered by numerous stores and offices, as well as LIRR stations, schools and community centers. Yet, in many areas, Sunrise Highway lacks basic infrastructure – such as sidewalks, protected pedestrian islands and clearly marked crosswalks – that would make walking and biking along it safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities. The roadway consistently ranks high on TSTC's Annual Most Dangerous Roads for Walking report; in the three years from 2010-2012, 17 pedestrians were killed on Sunrise Highway.

In June 2014, TSTC, AARP New York, the Walkable & Livable Communities Institute (WALC) and Vision Long Island led a Sunrise Highway walking tour in three Nassau County municipalities, Valley Stream, Baldwin and Freeport. The communities were chosen because they are engaging in downtown revitalization projects and all three have called for pedestrian safety improvements to Sunrise Highway.

WALC's Dan Burden will issue formal, written recommendations later this year. Moving forward, NYSDOT should work with local community and civic associations at the onset of plans to implement changes that reflect the communities' vision for safer streets.

RECOMMENDATIONS






Region-wide

Communities across the tri-state region are making it easier and safer for older adults to walk. However, more can and should be done. In addition to the specific recommendations listed below, existing road infrastructure must be modified with an eye towards older populations. Infrastructure fixes, like shortening crossing distances, reducing distances between crosswalks and intersections, making pedestrian signals longer, and making pedestrian islands larger, can be implemented at relatively low cost. These improvements are key to keeping older pedestrians safe – as well as pedestrians of all ages and abilities.









In addition, all three state departments of transportation should adopt the National Association of City Transportation Officials' (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guidelines. The guidelines provide technical standards that departments of transportation can use to create streets that safely accommodate all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders. The Federal Highway Administration and thirty-seven cities, including New York City, and six states have adopted NACTO standards.

Lastly, communities across the states should pursue transit-oriented development (TOD), which ensures that housing, shops and offices are in proximity to existing bus and rail stations.


Downstate New York

-  NYSDOT should expand the statewide SafeSeniors Program, modeled on the successful pilot program on Long Island and create a Safe Routes to Transit Program that implements pedestrian safety improvements in areas near transit stops.
-  The state legislature should grant communities across the state the authority to lower their statutory speed limit to 25 miles per hour in residential and business districts, an authority recently granted to New York City.
-  NYSDOT's upcoming five-year capital plan should set a goal of investing five percent of the total transportation dollars on infrastructure that makes it safer for those who bike and walk.
-  NYSDOT should develop and implement performance measures to better track the funds going towards bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and to track its progress in implementing the state's 2012 complete streets law.
-  Counties outside of New York City should adopt a Vision Zero policy similar to New York City's aimed at eliminating traffic fatalities and making streets safer for all users.

New Jersey

-  New Jersey should prioritize bicycle and pedestrian improvements in areas with high concentrations of older residents and along roads with high concentrations of pedestrian fatalities.
-  New Jersey and the state's metropolitan planning organizations should allocate funding to regional trails such as The Circuit in Southern New Jersey so that these trails can serve as key transportation and recreation corridors. Pedestrian and bicyclist improvements must be prioritized on roads that provide access to these trails to create safe connectivity to the trails and surrounding roads and communities.
-  NJDOT should continue to incentivize municipal and county-level adoption of complete streets policies that require the design of all roads to accommodate the needs of all users, including older pedestrians.
-  Municipalities and counties that have passed complete streets policies should create implementation plans.
-  When applying to NJDOT for local aid or transit village funding, complete streets projects should be given funding priority.
-  Road resurfacing projects should consider including complete streets elements, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, consistent with NJDOT's complete streets policy.
-  The state legislature should pass a vulnerable users bill that would stiffen penalties for drivers who kill or injure pedestrians, bicyclists, highway workers, or other non-motorists using the roadway. The state should also pass a safe passing bill that clearly indicates how motorists should act when passing a vulnerable user on the roadway.
-  The state should increase funding to match application demand for the Safe Streets to Transit program and Transit Village program.

Connecticut

-  ConnDOT should create and fund Safe Routes for Seniors and Safe Routes to Transit programs that implement pedestrian safety improvements in areas with high concentrations of seniors and are near transit stops.
-  ConnDOT should redesign Connecticut's Highway Design Manual, the state's standard road design reference book, to address the goals and policies of the state's complete streets law.
-  Municipalities should work to enact complete streets ordinances that require all transportation projects to consider the needs of pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

APPENDIX: STATE AND REGION-WIDE CHARTS

REGION-WIDE

Rank	County	Older (60+ years) Pedestrian Fatalities, 2003-2012	Avg. Older Pedestrian Fatality Rate per 100,000*(2003-2012)	Avg. Younger (under 60 years) Pedestrian Fatality Rate per 100,000* (2003-2012)
1	Manhattan, NY	155	5.46	1.49
2	Nassau County, NY	142	5.17	1.49
3	Brooklyn, NY	202	4.94	1.23
4	Atlantic County, NJ	24	4.58	3.26
5	The Bronx, NY	79	3.94	1.16
6	Passaic County, NJ	32	3.89	1.44
7	Mercer County, NJ	24	3.85	1.33
8	Hudson County, NJ	35	3.83	1.19
9	Queens, NY	152	3.75	1.11
10	Essex County, NJ	47	3.72	2.01
11	Staten Island, NY	29	3.57	1.18
12	Union County, NJ	32	3.47	1.95
13	Putnam County, NY	6	3.46	1.33
14	Middlesex County, NJ	44	3.32	1.54
15	Bergen County, NJ	58	3.18	1.02
16	Camden County, NJ	28	3.11	1.60
17	Suffolk County, NY	81	2.99	2.23
18	Ocean County, NJ	38	2.47	1.55
19	Gloucester County, NJ	12	2.44	1.10
20	New London County, CT	12	2.39	1.10
21	Rockland County, NY	13	2.38	1.14
22	Cumberland County, NJ	6	2.24	1.80
22	Monmouth County, NJ	26	2.24	1.29
24	Litchfield County, CT	9	2.22	0.13
25	Orange County, NY	12	2.21	1.10
26	Tolland County, CT	5	2.00	0.80
27	Westchester County, NY	36	1.98	0.68
28	Fairfield County, CT	31	1.91	0.60
29	New Haven County, CT	30	1.85	0.99
30	Dutchess County, NY	9	1.77	0.54
31	Hartford County, CT	30	1.74	0.89
32	Burlington County, NJ	14	1.69	1.68
33	Salem County, NJ	2	1.61	1.72
34	Morris County, NJ	13	1.49	0.96
35	Cape May County, NJ	4	1.44	1.98
36	Windham County, CT	3	1.44	0.63
37	Somerset County, NJ	7	1.28	0.94
38	Hunterdon County, NJ	3	1.27	1.03
39	Warren County, NJ	2	1.02	0.90
40	Middlesex County, NJ	3	0.85	0.70
41	Sussex County, NJ	2	0.76	0.25

DOWNSTATE NEW YORK

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9	Rockland County, NY	13	2.38	1.14
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NEW JERSEY

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CONNECTICUT

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6	Hartford County, CT	30	1.74	0.89
7	Windham County, CT	3	1.44	0.63
8	Middlesex County, CT	3	0.85	0.70

* Fatality rates are calculated according to the population of relevant age group (i.e., population aged 60 years and older; population under 60 years).