



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

March 7, 2012

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New Report Identifies Connecticut's Most Dangerous Roads for Pedestrians

Advocacy group applauds Connecticut's progress in protecting pedestrians and bicyclists; calls on state to take further steps

Connecticut's most dangerous roads for pedestrians are the Boston Post Road (Route 1) and US-5, according to an analysis of new data by the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a policy watchdog organization.

Between 2008 and 2010, seven pedestrians were killed on Route 1 and four pedestrians were killed on US-5. The pedestrian deaths on these roads were clustered in Westport and East Hartford. Three pedestrians were killed along Route 1 in Westport, and three pedestrians were killed on US-5 in East Hartford.

Both Route 1 and US-5 are arterial roads – roads that traditionally are designed to move vehicles with little or no concern for pedestrians and bicyclists. Arterial roads have at least two lanes in each direction and can accommodate travel speeds of 40 mph or more. Arterials often lack pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks or well-defined crosswalks.

“Given these characteristics, it's no wonder that these kinds of roads are continually the most deadly for pedestrians in Connecticut, New Jersey and downstate New York,” said Renata Silberblatt, staff analyst with the Campaign.

121 pedestrians were killed statewide in the three years from 2008 through 2010. While fatalities decreased from 47 in 2008 to 26 in 2009, pedestrian fatalities increased in 2010. 48 pedestrians were killed in 2010.

Connecticut's pedestrian fatalities were concentrated in New Haven County (38 fatalities from 2008-2010), Hartford County (34 fatalities), and Fairfield County (22 fatalities).

By calling attention to these fatalities and providing a spatial analysis that clearly shows where these fatalities occurred, Tri-State hopes that the new analysis will help state transportation officials and local groups pinpoint specific areas where pedestrian safety improvements are particularly needed.

“We must learn from these tragedies and use information about them to make Connecticut’s streets safer,” said Ryan Lynch, policy director for the Campaign.

Connecticut already has a number of policies that are geared towards making the streets safer for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers alike. In 2009, the state passed a Complete Streets law and Bridgeport enacted a Complete Streets policy in 2011. In 2011, ConnDOT also made progress on three corridor studies that include significant bicycle and pedestrian elements. These studies examine Route 7, Route 1 and Route 10.

Both the state legislature and ConnDOT can take steps to ensure that the state’s roads are safer for Connecticut pedestrians and bicyclists. The Campaign called on the state’s legislature to pass Vulnerable User legislation (RB 111) which would enhance penalties for careless drivers who injure or kill pedestrians, bicyclists, emergency personnel, and others. The Campaign also called on Connecticut elected officials to pass automatic enforcement measures such as red light cameras.

"We see a clear connection between policies and legislation such as the Vulnerable User bill, that encourage safe, liveable, walkable communities and the need to grow sustainably," said Connecticut League of Conservation Voters Transportation Program Director, Kirsten Griebel.

In addition, the report recommends that ConnDOT implement and track the progress of its Complete Streets policy and strengthen its new bike and pedestrian policies. The agency can also further protect the state’s pedestrians by creating Safe Routes to Transit and Safe Routes for Seniors programs, and by targeting funding to high-risk areas and municipalities pursuing more walkable and bikeable communities.

“According to *Bicycling and Walking in the U.S.: 2012 Benchmarking Report* recently released by the Alliance for Biking & Walking, although 3.2% of work trips in Connecticut are by bicycle or foot, bicyclists and pedestrians account for 14.3% of traffic fatalities in the state. It’s imperative that we correct this inequity now,” said MaryEllen Thibodeau, president of Bike Walk Connecticut.

The Campaign used recently-released data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) to determine which routes had the highest number of pedestrian fatalities over the three-year period from 2008 to 2010. The analysis excludes Interstates and other roads where pedestrians are prohibited. Data was not available for pedestrian injuries, many of which occur in urban areas like New Haven.

A statewide Connecticut fact sheet and an interactive Google Map showing the most dangerous routes for walking are also available. The map shows the locations of each pedestrian fatality, with descriptive details for each victim killed.

The full report, as well as the state fact sheet and Google Map can be found at www.tstc.org/reports/danger12/.

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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.