

Most Dangerous Roads for Walking

And How States Can Make them Safer



Tri-State Transportation Campaign
March 2012

Introduction

From 2008 to 2010, 1,267 pedestrians were killed by vehicles in the downstate New York, New Jersey and Connecticut region.

Key Findings

- More than 1,200 pedestrians have been killed in collisions with cars in our region between 2008 and 2010.
- Based on pedestrian fatalities, the most dangerous roads for walking in the entire region are SR-24 (Hempstead Turnpike) in Nassau County, Upper Broadway in Manhattan, SR-27 (Sunrise Highway) in Suffolk County, US-130 (Burlington Pike) in Burlington County, and U.S.-1&9 in Union County.
- Almost 60 percent of pedestrian deaths in our region occur on multi-lane thoroughfares known as arterials.
- Pedestrian fatalities decreased in 2010 in New York and New Jersey, but increased in Connecticut.
- Nassau County's SR-24 (Hempstead Turnpike) is the most dangerous road for pedestrians for the fourth year in a row.
- Roads that have fallen in ranking since the Campaign's initial 2008 report include Manhattan's 3rd Ave and Staten Island's Hylan Blvd.
- Pedestrian safety projects offer inexpensive ways to reduce pedestrian deaths and injuries.

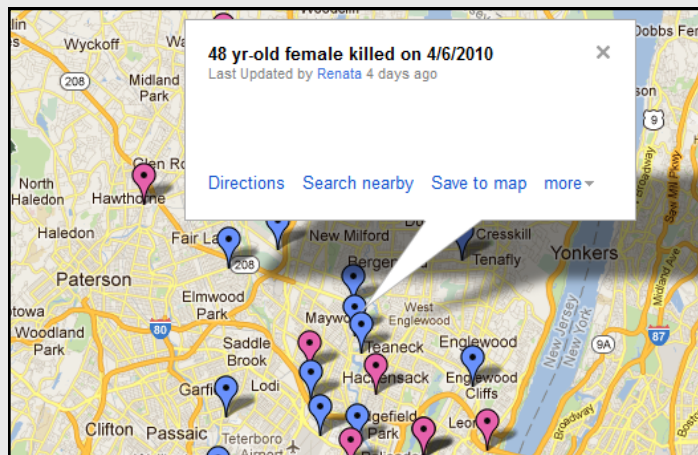
This report, *Most Dangerous Roads for Walking*, uses three years of federal data to pinpoint the exact location of each pedestrian death in downstate New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Using available latitude and longitude data, TSTC has mapped each of these fatalities through interactive Google Maps.

The report also analyses the available crash information to determine if pedestrian fatalities are more likely to occur on certain types of roadways. Almost 60 percent of regional pedestrian fatalities occurred on arterial roadways— wide, high-speed roads designed to move as many cars as fast as possible, with little if any

County/Borough/State Fact Sheets

The Campaign has produced county fact sheets (and a statewide sheet for Connecticut) identifying the most dangerous roads in the region. Each fatality is mapped through Google Maps, and includes the date of the crash, crash location, and the available demographic data for the victim. Through these Google Maps, users can zoom in on the exact crash location and view photos of the street location.

www.tstc.org/reports/danger12/

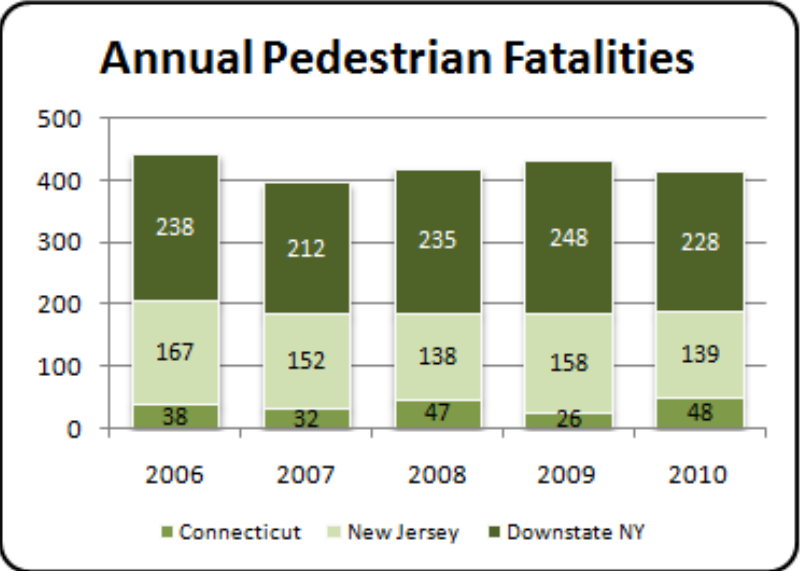


consideration for pedestrians. In fact, many of the region’s most dangerous roads for pedestrians — including parts of SR-24 (Hempstead Turnpike) in Nassau County, SR-27 (Sunrise Highway) in Suffolk County, US-130 (Burlington Pike) in Burlington County, and U.S.-1&9 in Union County — are arterial roads.

In 2010, pedestrian fatalities decreased in New York and New Jersey, but increased in Connecticut. Two other worrisome trends emerged in 2010 and in recently-released 2011 data from New Jersey. In 2010, national motor vehicle fatalities lessened, but pedestrian fatalities and injuries associated with these crashes increased. And, recently-

available data from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) show a slight increase in 2011 in the state’s pedestrian fatalities. As the economy picks up and people begin to drive more, it is important to ensure that the tri-state region’s roads are designed and repaired with pedestrian safety in mind.

Policymakers in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut have already taken some steps to make streets safer for all users. One example of progress is the adoption of Complete Streets policies that require roads



Source: TSTC Analysis of NHTSA’s FARS database, 2006-2010.

Region-wide Recommendations

Detailed recommendations specific to New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut are listed at the end of this report. But several recommendations apply to all three states:

- Make pedestrian safety a policy and investment priority;
- Protect the most vulnerable pedestrians through increased investment on Safe Routes to School, Safe Routes to Transit and Safe Routes for Seniors programs;
- Track and monitor complete streets policies to ensure that new or retrofitted roads safely accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists of all ages and abilities; and,
- Preserve and expand federal programs that provide significant funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

be designed for all users. In October 2011, New York enacted a state-wide Complete Streets law. Connecticut’s nationally recognized state-wide Complete Streets law was enacted in July 2009, and NJDOT adopted a Complete Streets policy in December 2009. Including upstate New York communities, over 40 municipalities and 5 counties in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut have adopted Complete Streets policies. Still, much more needs to be done to keep pedestrians safe on the tri-state region’s roads as the region moves from policy to implementation.

The Region’s Most Dangerous Roads for Walking

For the fourth year in a row, the region’s most dangerous road for pedestrians is Nassau County’s SR-24 (Hempstead Turnpike/Conklin Street). Broadway in Manhattan, SR-27 (Sunrise Highway) in Suffolk and US-130 (Burlington Pike) in Burlington County also topped the list.

Importantly, this simple ranking is based only on the number of fatalities along a stretch of roadway within each county or borough and does not factor in the length of each road or look at pedestrian injuries.

With the exception of the routes in Manhattan, many of these roadways

Table 1. Most Dangerous Roads for Walking (CT, NJ, downstate NY)

Rank	Change in Ranking (Prior Year's Rank)	Road	County	2008	2009	2010	Total
1	-	SR-24 (Hempstead Tpke/Conklin St)	Nassau, NY	4	6	5	15
2	-	Broadway	Manhattan, NY	3	6	4	13
3	↑ (4)	SR-27 (Sunrise Hwy)	Suffolk, NY	2	3	5	10
3	-	US-130 (Burlington Pike)	Burlington, NJ	3	3	4	10
5	↑ (8)	US-1&9	Union, NJ	4	3	2	9
6	↑ (8)	Broadway	Bronx, NY	3	3	1	7
6	↑ (8)	Kings Hwy	Brooklyn, NY	4	2	1	7
6	↑ (8)	SR-27 (Sunrise Hwy)	Nassau, NY	0	4	3	7
6	↓ (5)	Henry Hudson Pkwy/West St	Manhattan, NY	3	3	1	7
6	↑ (8)	SR-25 (Middle Country Rd)	Suffolk, NY	4	2	1	7
6	↓ (5)	Atlantic Ave	Brooklyn, NY	5	1	1	7
6	new	SR-110 (New York Ave)	Suffolk, NY	3	1	3	7
6	↑ (8)	US-1	Middlesex, NJ	1	3	3	7

typify the high-speed arterial found to be the most dangerous type of road for pedestrians (see next section). And even in Manhattan, the most dangerous routes are multiple lanes across and busy with speeding traffic.

Table 1 ranks all roads in the region with 5 or more pedestrian fatalities during the period 2008 through 2010.

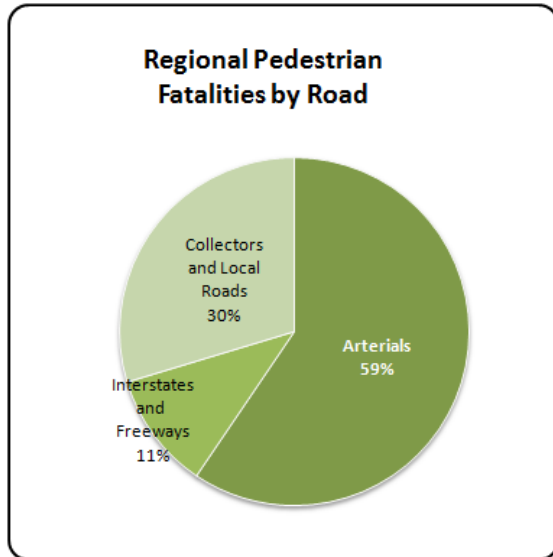
Table 1. Most Dangerous Roads for Walking (CT, NJ, downstate NY) Cont'd

	Change in Ranking/ (Prior Year's Rank)	Road	County	2008	2009	2010	Total
14	new	Jamaica Ave	Queens, NY	1	3	2	6
14	↓ (8)	Grand Concourse	Bronx, NY	3	2	1	6
14	New	Brighton Beach Ave	Brooklyn, NY	2	0	4	6
14	↑ (19)	Amsterdam Ave	Manhattan, NY	1	3	2	6
14	new	Union Tpke	Queens, NY	3	1	2	6
14	↓ (8)	Ocean Pkwy	Brooklyn, NY	2	2	2	6
14	new	Queens Blvd	Queens, NY	2	2	2	6
14	new	Wicks Rd (5th Ave/CR-13)	Suffolk, NY	1	2	3	6
14	↑ (19)	Route 35	Middlesex, NJ	1	4	1	6
14	↑ (19)	Route 28 (North Ave/Front St/Westfield Ave)	Union, NJ	4	2		6
14	new	US-46	Morris, NJ	1	2	3	6
14	↓ (8)	US-322/40 (Black Horse Pike, Albany Ave)	Atlantic, NJ	0	4	2	6
26	↓ (5)	7th Ave	Manhattan, NY	2	2	1	5
26	↓ (8)	Bowery	Manhattan, NY	3	2		5
26	new	E Gunhill Rd	Bronx, NY	0	1	4	5
26	↓(19)	Merrick Rd	Nassau, NY	2	2	1	5
26	↓ (19)	3rd Ave	Manhattan, NY	3	0	2	5
26	↑ (31)	US-9	Ocean, NY	1	3	1	5
26	↑ (31)	US-9	Monmouth, NJ	1	3	1	5
26	new	Route 36	Monmouth, NJ	2	1	2	5
26	↓ (19)	US-30 (White Horse Pike)	Camden, NJ	2	1	2	5
26	new	Route 22	Somerset, NJ	2	0	3	5

Deadly Road Designs

TSTC's analysis of pedestrian fatalities in downstate New York, New Jersey and Connecticut finds that arterials roads are the most dangerous

types of roads in the region for pedestrians. With at least two lanes in each direction, accommodating vehicle speeds of 40 mph or more, and often lacking pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, crossing signals, well-defined crosswalks or medians designed to protect pedestrians from fast-moving traffic, it is not hard to see how these kinds of roads are dangerous for pedestrians.



Source: TSTC Analysis of NHTSA's FARS database, 2008-2010.

In the tri-state region, almost 60 percent of the 1,267 pedestrian fatalities for which road type was recorded occurred on arterials. (The road type for 3 fatalities was not recorded.) Yet arterials only make up 15.3 percent of roads in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. 30 percent of pedestrian fatalities occurred on local roads, and the remaining 11 percent occurred on Interstates and freeways. (Pedestrians killed on limited access roads

Smithtown, New York's Route 25/25A: More Work Needed for a Dangerous Arterial

Between 2008 and 2010, 3 pedestrians were killed along Route 25/25A in Suffolk County's Smithtown and numerous pedestrians have been injured on this road. New York State DOT (NYSDOT) has taken some initiatives to make the road safer, including designating downtown Smithtown as a pilot area for its SafeSeniors pedestrian safety program. In 2011, the agency installed a safety fence to prevent mid-block crossing and added additional signage. More changes began in February 2012, when NYSDOT began work to reduce two lanes to one, and will use striping to change a lane into a median and turn lane. These are welcome improvements, but there is wide support for more work to be done on this road. Both Smithtown and Suffolk County elected officials have called for raised medians which would make the road safer for all users.



Image of SR 25/25A in Smithtown, NY.
Image from Google Street View.

are typically motorists looking for help with a stranded vehicle.)

These region-wide trends are consistent with the findings of New York City's Department of Transportation. The agency's 2010 *New York City Pedestrian Safety Study and Action Plan* found about 60 percent of pedestrian fatalities occur on New York City's arterial streets, though these streets make up 15 percent of the road network.

The good news is that arterials — and other poorly designed streets — can be re-engineered for pedestrian safety. Relatively low-cost pedestrian improvements such as sidewalks, crossing signals, curb cuts, raised cross-walks, and protective medians can be added. Redesigning roadways with all users in mind will allow pedestrians to safely access the shops, offices and stores which line many arterial roads.

“Faces” of the Region’s Most Dangerous Roads

The Campaign has consistently found arterial roads to be the tri-state’s most deadly road designs for pedestrians. These kinds of roads exist in urban, suburban and rural environments. Below are pictures of the region’s top 3 most deadly roads. These images were taken at or near where a pedestrian was killed. All images from Google Street View.



SR-24, Hempstead County, NY:
15 pedestrian deaths



Broadway, Manhattan, NY:
13 pedestrian deaths



SR-27, Suffolk County, NY:
10 pedestrian deaths



US-130, Burlington County, NJ:
10 pedestrian deaths



Image of a redesigned street,
Pottstown, PA.
Image from the National Complete Streets Coalition.

Examples of Recent Steps toward Pedestrian Safety, 2010-2012

New York

- Statewide Complete Streets law enacted;
- Over 2,100 pedestrian countdown signals installed throughout New York City in 2011;
- 20 mph “slow zone” established in the Bronx;
- Short-term and long-term pedestrian safety improvements will be made on the Hempstead Turnpike.

New Jersey

- 5,000 linear feet of sidewalks added on Black Horse Pike and on Route 9 in Atlantic County;
- Complete Streets curriculum created by NJDOT and will be presented around the state;
- Over 21 New Jersey municipalities adopted Complete Streets policies.

Connecticut

- Transit oriented development grants issued and awarded. Many awardees’ projects included pedestrian and bicycle connections to planned bus and rail stations, strengthening walkability in these communities;
- Three corridor studies (Route 7, Route 1 and Route 10) that include bicycle and pedestrian improvements are underway;
- Bridgeport enacted a Complete Streets policy in 2011;
- Improvements made on Route 34 in New Haven.

Examples of Recent Steps Back from Pedestrian Safety, 2010-2012

New York

- NYSDOT reduced funding for its Local Safe Streets and Traffic Calming program;
- Lack of enforcement of traffic safety laws by the New York City Police Department.

New Jersey

- NJDOT cut funding for its Safe Streets to Transit program in half, reduced Local Aid funding and cut its Transit Village program. These programs promote pedestrian infrastructure;
- The Safe Passages Task Force that was charged with undertaking statewide safety initiatives has not met since April 2010.

Connecticut

- Failure to pass a vulnerable users bill for 2 years in a row;
- Lack of response to community demand for safety improvements along Whalley Avenue in New Haven.

Federal Transportation Legislation's Impact on Pedestrian Safety

Proposed federal transportation legislation could mean major changes for federal pedestrian and bike safety programs -- and not necessarily for the better.

In the House of Representatives, legislative leaders have proposed a bill (HR7, the "American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act") which would completely eliminate the Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to Schools programs, the main dedicated federal programs for pedestrian and bicycle safety projects. Because of this and other controversial provisions, House leaders admitted in February that they did not have the votes to pass HR7, and promised to revamp it. Any revamp should include a restoration of these programs, which represent less than 2% of federal transportation spending.

The Senate's transportation bill (S.1813, also known as "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" or MAP-21), guarantees that local municipalities will have access to these programs, though it does reduce their funding levels. It also includes a "safe streets" provision which directs USDOT to create standards for the safe accommodation of all road users. This provision is waived in states which already have complete streets laws or policies (such as New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut).

Conclusions and Recommendations

From 2008 to 2010, 1,267 pedestrians were killed on the roads in down-state New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Almost 60 percent of these deaths occurred on arterial roads, making this type of road the most deadly for pedestrians in the region. Fortunately, municipal and state governments across New York, New Jersey and Connecticut are increasingly recognizing the perils of conventional road designs. In each state, state and local governments have been taking steps to fix unsafe roads, improving the streets for all, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists alike.

More can, and should, be done to promote pedestrian safety. All three states need to prioritize pedestrian safety in their transportation policies, plans, and spending. Pedestrian safety improvements offer benefits to the region far beyond their stated purpose. These projects are much less expensive than traditional road projects, yet contribute much-needed construction jobs. These projects can also have lasting positive economic impacts even after construction is complete. For example, the Alliance for Biking and Walking's *2012 Benchmarking Report* notes that

these improvements can attract tourists and increase property values. In addition, increasing pedestrian infrastructure may encourage people to walk and exercise more, helping tri-state residents lead healthier lives.

Below are specific recommendations the states can adopt to lower these tragic and preventable deaths.

New Jersey—

- Renew the Pedestrian Safety Initiative and adequately fund in NJDOT's Capital Plan pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure programs including Safe Routes to Schools and Safe Streets to Transit programs.
- Target grants to municipalities that have adopted Complete Streets policies.
- Publish online annual or bi-annual reports detailing progress in adhering to NJDOT's Complete Streets policy.
- Counties and municipalities should continue to pass Complete Streets policies in order to address roads not in NJDOT's jurisdiction.
- Consider a statewide vulnerable users bill.

New York—

- NYSDOT must adequately fund safety programs including Long Is-

Safer Streets in NYC – Better for Pedestrians, Better for Drivers

NYCDOT's 2010 Sustainable Streets Index (SSI), released in May 2011, shows positive results for many of the agency's 11 major projects. One of these projects, located in Queens, where the Pulaski Bridge and Jackson Avenue connect, has been especially successful. The agency's goals for the project included increasing pedestrian safety and connectivity (the area has a bus stop as well as a subway stop and new residential buildings), reducing traffic congestion getting on and off the bridge, and enhancing the streetscape.



NYCDOT added landscaped pedestrian islands, signal-protected crosswalks and reconfigured intersections. The pedestrian and bicyclist safety goals were met: the SSI notes that there were no pedestrian or bicyclist injuries in the 17 months after the agency made improvements, compared to 18 pedestrian and bicyclist injuries in the 10 years prior. The redesign has benefitted vehicles too. Vehicle delays were reduced up to 70% in the area.

Image from NYCDOT, 2010 Sustainable Streets Index

land's Local Safe Streets and Traffic Calming program and ensure funds are utilized to improve locations with high numbers of pedestrian or cyclist injuries or fatalities.

- Implement and track the progress of New York State's recently implemented Complete Streets legislation.
- Listen to communities' desires regarding safer roadway design, especially on Long Island.
- Pass automatic enforcement measures that help ensure vehicles follow traffic laws. These include speed cameras (New York State, A.7737) and red light cameras (Nassau County, S.2580/A.4763, Suffolk County, S. 41971/A. 6751, and New York City, S.4496).

Connecticut —

- Pass vulnerable users legislation (RB 111) that enhances penalties for careless drivers who injure or kill walkers, bikers, emergency personnel, and others.
- Pass automatic enforcement measures that help ensure vehicles follow traffic laws. Such legislation includes a statewide red light cameras bill.
- Implement and track, with an online website, the progress of Connecticut's statewide Complete Streets policy.
- Create and fund state Safe Routes to Transit and Safe Routes for Seniors programs.
- Target funding to high risk areas and municipalities pursuing more walkable and bikeable communities.

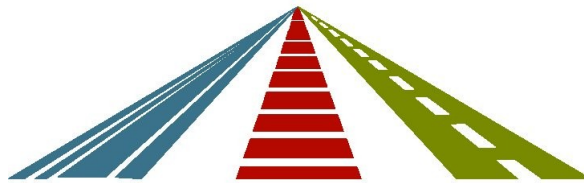


Crosswalk conditions in Little Falls before and after improvements. Images TSTC.

Progress Made in Little Falls, New Jersey

In 2008, with support from an anonymous donor and from the Community Foundation of New Jersey, TSTC organized a walking tour to address safety hazards to pedestrians and cyclists in downtown Little Falls, New Jersey. TSTC also issued a report to local leaders that offered recommendations such as increasing crosswalk visibility, ensuring sidewalk continuity and integrity, implementing traffic calming measures, and making access to transit easier for pedestrians. Downtown Little Falls hosts a train station and a number of bus lines. Thanks to the continued generosity of an anonymous donor, in 2011, Little Falls implemented safety improvements at two intersections. The municipality has added high-visibility crosswalks to the intersections of Main Street and Pater-son Avenue, and Main Street and Stevens Avenue, consistent with the recommendations of the TSTC report.

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



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