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## **REPORT DOCUMENTS PREVENTABLE PEDESTRIAN DEATHS, RANKS MOST DANGEROUS METRO AREAS**

*Older adults, children most threatened by streets built for speed, not safety*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – More than 47,000 people were killed while walking in the U.S. between 2003 and 2012, at a rate that has been rising in the last few years. The majority of those deaths likely could have been prevented with safer street design, according to a new report released today by the [National Complete Streets Coalition](#), a program of Smart Growth America.

[Dangerous by Design 2014](#) also ranks America's major metropolitan areas according to a Pedestrian Danger Index that assesses how safe pedestrians are while walking. The four most dangerous – Orlando, Tampa, Jacksonville, and Miami – are all in Florida. The others in the top 10 most dangerous list are: Memphis, Phoenix, Houston, Birmingham (new to this year's top 10), Atlanta, and Charlotte.

"We are allowing an epidemic of pedestrian fatalities, brought on by streets designed for speed and not safety, to take nearly 5,000 lives a year; a number that increased six percent between 2011 and 2012," said Roger Millar, Director of the National Complete Streets Coalition. "Not only is that number simply too high, but these deaths are easily prevented through policy, design, and practice. State and local transportation leaders need to prioritize the implementation of Complete Streets policies that keep everyone safe."

The report presents data on pedestrian fatalities and injuries in every U.S. metro area, as well as state by [state assessments](#) and an online, [interactive map](#) showing the locations where pedestrian fatalities have occurred.

More than 676,000 **pedestrians were injured** over the decade, equivalent to a pedestrian being struck by a car or truck every eight minutes. That rate increases significantly for more vulnerable populations such as older adults, children and people of color. While just 12.6 percent of the total population, those over the age of 65 years old account for **nearly 21 percent** of pedestrian fatalities nationwide.

"Older persons account for one in every five pedestrian fatalities and have the greatest fatality rate of any population group," said AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeaMond. "America's state, federal and community leaders should focus on making our streets safer – which will benefit everyone, including the growing number of older Americans."

Children 15 years and younger represent a significantly at-risk population, and fatal pedestrian injury remains a leading cause of death. Between 2003 and 2010 (the most recent year for which data is available about children), 4,394 children were killed while walking.

Among people of color, blacks and African Americans suffer a pedestrian fatality 60 percent higher than non-Hispanic whites, and Hispanics of any race have a rate nearly 43 percent higher.

The majority of pedestrian deaths occur on roadways that encourage speeding, and speeding is a factor in nearly one-third of all traffic fatalities. The report finds that these deaths can be prevented through changes to the design of our streets: providing sidewalks, installing high-visibility crosswalks and refuge islands, and calming traffic speeds.

This has proved true for roads such as NE 125<sup>th</sup> St. in Seattle, WA. In 2011, the city added a marked crosswalk, reduced the number of travel lanes, and installed bike lanes, along with other measures, to provide for the safety of pedestrians in a high-crash corridor where 87 percent of drivers were speeding. The modifications have reduced the rate of collisions by 10 percent and speeding by 11 percent and led to more people walking and biking along the roadway.

“More and more Americans are choosing communities that are walkable and accessible for pedestrians, children and older Americans, but that shouldn’t be a luxury,” said Nancy Somerville, Executive Vice President & CEO of American Society of Landscape Architects. “Simple and affordable additions or retrofits to traffic signals, pedestrian islands and sidewalks can make a huge difference in safety and protection.”

The National Complete Streets Coalition recommends states take action to improve safety for pedestrians in communities nationwide:

- Increase the available funding and maximize the use of existing federal programs for walking and bicycling projects.
- Adopt a Complete Streets policy and comprehensive implementation plan.
- Emphasize walking and bicycling in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).
- Reform measures of congestion, such as level of service, to account for the needs of all travelers.
- Update design policies and standards.
- Standardize and gather more comprehensive data on pedestrian crashes.
- Give local cities and towns more control over their own speed limits.
- Encourage collaboration across transportation, public health, and law enforcement agencies.

[Read the complete report here.](#)

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### ***About The National Complete Streets Coalition***

The National Complete Streets Coalition, a program of Smart Growth America, seeks to fundamentally transform the look, feel and function of the roads and streets in our community, by changing the way most roads are planned, designed and constructed. Complete Streets policies direct transportation planners and engineers to consistently design with all users in mind.

***About Smart Growth America***

Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring better development to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring more homes are built near public transportation or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods.

***About AARP***

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org); AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).

***About the American Society of Landscape Architects***

Founded in 1899, ASLA is the national professional association for landscape architects, representing more than 15,000 members in 49 professional chapters and 72 student chapters. Members of the Society use "ASLA" after their names to denote membership and their commitment to the highest ethical standards of the profession. Landscape architects lead the stewardship, planning, and design of our built and natural environments; the Society's mission is to advance landscape architecture through advocacy, communication, education, and fellowship.