National Perspective on Vulnerable Road User Safety

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What is a vulnerable road user?

Who is a vulnerable road user?
More than 370,000 people died in transportation incidents over the last decade (2011-2020) in the United States. More than 350,000 of them died on our roads.

Source: National Roadway Safety Strategy, USDOT 2022
42,915

Source: NHTSA’s 2021 annual traffic crash data
Fatalities among all users have been increasing. Fatalities among pedestrians and bicyclists have been increasing even faster.

- 32,999 Total Fatalities
- 4,302 Pedestrian Fatalities
- 619 Bicyclist Fatalities
- 891 Bicyclist Fatalities
- 6,236 Pedestrian Fatalities

Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System
• Total projected **pedestrian** fatalities increased by **13 percent** from 2020 to 2021.
• Total projected **pedalcyclist** fatalities increased by **5 percent** from 2020 to 2021.

Source: Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities And Fatality Rate by Sub-Categories in 2021
“The term vulnerable road user (VRU) is used mainly to describe those unprotected by an outside shield, as they sustain a greater risk of injury in any collision with a vehicle and are therefore highly in need of protection against such collisions.”

Source: National Safety Council Position/Policy Statement – Vulnerable Road Users, 2018
People of color, particularly Native and Black Americans, are more likely to die while walking than any other race or ethnic group.

Pedestrian deaths per 100,000 by race & ethnicity (2016-2020)

- Asian/Pacific-Islander: 1.2
- White, Non-Hispanic: 1.5
- Hispanic/Latinx: 1.8
- Black or African American: 3.0
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 4.8

People walking in lower-income areas are killed at far higher rates.

Pedestrian fatalities per 100k people by census tract income

- $2.5-$43.0k: 3.3
- $43.0k-$55.7k: 2.3
- $55.7k-$70.3k: 1.8
- $70.3k-$93.1k: 1.5
- $93.1k-$250k: 1.0

All population: 1.9

Source: Dangerous by Design 2022
Fatalities impact communities differently...

Roadway Fatalities per 100,000 Population by Race (2018)

Fatalities Among Pedestrians

Pedestrian Fatalities per 100,000 Population by Race, 2018

Fatalities Among Bicyclists

Bicyclist Fatalities per 100,000 Population by Race, 2018

Source: National Roadway Safety Strategy, USDOT 2022
The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity”.

The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Source: Executive Order 13985
1 National Roadway Safety Strategy

2 USDOT Equity Action Plan

3 Pedestrian Safety Action Plan

The Equity Action Plan will *lay the foundation* for institutionalizing equity in all of USDOT's programs and policies.

USDOT ACTIONS TO PREVENT HARMFUL CRASHES INVOLVING PEDESTRIANS
Safe System Approach

BIL Funding Opportunities

- Reconnecting Communities Grant
- Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants
- Congestion Relief Program

Federal Highway Administration resources

transportation.gov/NRSS/SafeSystem

safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/
BE AWARE, it’s ME out there
Thank you!

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