

SAFETY BENEFITS OF WALKING

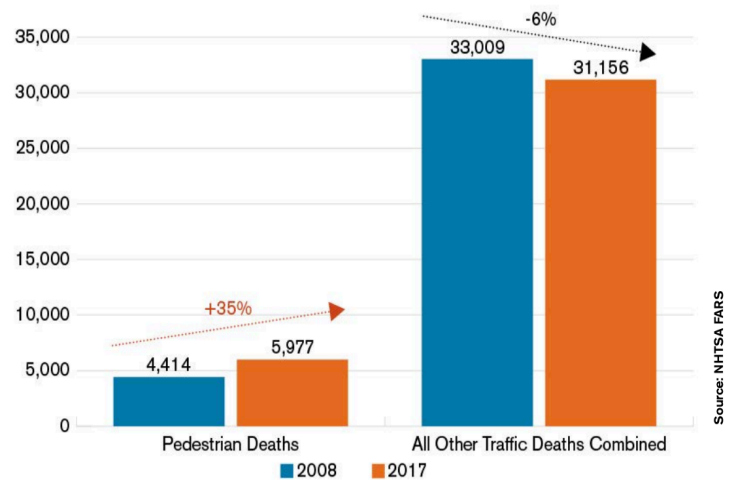
“Walkable communities support individual health and wellness, economic strength, and improved environmental conditions...we have our work cut out for us to convince decision-makers to make the changes necessary to address these alarming fatalities and help all communities realize the benefits of walking.”

-AMERICA WALKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KATE KRAFT

DANGERS TO PEDESTRIANS

- In 2018, there were 36,560 traffic fatalities in the United States, and pedestrian fatalities decreased from the year prior by 2.4%.¹
- 2018, however, was the deadliest for pedestrians and bikers, with 6,283 people killed while walking and 857 struck and killed while biking.²
- Speed matters: only 5% of pedestrians would die if struck by a vehicle traveling at 20 mph or less. At 30 mph, there’s a 40% chance of fatal injury if struck; at 40 mph, the chance of dying increases to 80%, and at 50 mph it reaches 100%.³
- Pedestrians are 1.5 times more likely than passenger vehicle occupants to be killed in a car crash on each trip.⁴
- From 2008 to 2017, the number of pedestrian fatalities has increased by 35%; on the other hand, the combined number of all other traffic deaths has decreased by 6%⁵
- People over 50, Black or African American people, Alaska Native or American Indian people, and those walking in communities with lower median household incomes are struck and killed at much higher rates.⁶

Numbers of U.S. Traffic Deaths in 2008 and 2017



Source: GHSA.org



WHAT WE ARE DOING TO HELP

America Walks [Safer System initiative](#): America Walks will use the 2018 Road to Zero grant to create and initiate context-sensitive safety treatments for midsize cities to reduce the growing number of pedestrian fatalities and injuries, through creating [complete streets](#) and supporting [Vision Zero Cities](#). America Walks' safer systems work with the 12 vulnerable communities facilitated:

- Cross-sector collaboration
- Inclusion of safe systems principles in planning frameworks
- Completed tailored pedestrian safety projects

TOP 5 SAFETY BENEFITS OF WALKING

1. Walking helps people get out of their cars: the risk of getting into a traffic crash increases with the average amount of travel each person spends in a car (per-person vehicle travel). Reducing that amount lowers the risk of traffic crashes for everyone.⁷

2. The more people that are walking or bicycling, the less likely drivers are to collide with them. Policies that increase the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists are effective in improving the safety of those on foot and bike.⁸

3. Investing in walking infrastructures could save money in the long run: developing Complete Streets often adds very little expense to transportation budgets. Long term, they can prevent expensive retrofitting of roads later on and also better the overall health of the community.⁹

VICTIM BLAMING

America walks is working to prevent the media from arguing “distracted walking” results in pedestrian fatalities. This argument prevents the real causes, such as poor street design, and improper speeds, from being known.

HELP SPEAK OUT [HERE](#)

4. Making roads safer for walkers helps make roads safer for everyone. Improving roadway environments like speed control and other related systems in favor of pedestrians helps to decrease the fatality of car crashes when they inevitably occur.¹⁰

5. Older adults, people of color, and low-income communities are most vulnerable to pedestrian fatalities. Prioritizing walking infrastructure projects that focus on these disproportionately affected groups is vital for overall

pedestrian safety. For example, local authorities can incentivize or award infrastructure projects in disadvantaged areas.¹¹

ABOUT AMERICA WALKS

America Walks, a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit organization, is leading the way in advancing safe, equitable, accessible, and enjoyable places to walk and move by giving people and communities the resources to effectively advocate for change. We provide a voice for walking and walkable communities with federal agencies, provide strategy support, training and technical assistance to statewide, regional, and local organizations, and serve as the convener of the national Every Body Walk! Collaborative.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/>

<https://www.nsc.org/>

<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/>

<http://www.hsrb.unc.edu/>

<https://www.nsc.org/road-safety/get-involved/road-to-zero>

<https://visionzeronetWORK.org/>

<https://www.ite.org/technical-resources/topics/complete-streets/>

https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/FINAL_Pedestrians19.pdf

WORK CITED

¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: *Traffic Safety Facts*, <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812826>

² Smart Growth America, *Dangerous By Design 2020*. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/app/uploads/2020/01/DbD-2020-Report.pdf>

³ U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Literature Review on Vehicle Travel Speeds and Pedestrian Injuries Among Selected Racial/Ethnic Groups. October 1999. <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/research/pub/hs809012.html>

⁴ Beck, LF; Delinger, AM; O'Meal, ME. Motor vehicle crash injury rates by mode of travel, United States: Using exposure-based methods to quantify differences. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 2017. 166, 212-218.

⁵ Governors Highway Safety Association: *Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State 2018 Preliminary Data*, https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/FINAL_Pedestrians19.pdf

⁶ Smart Growth America, *Dangerous By Design 2019*. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Jacobsen, P.L. Safety in numbers: more walkers and bicyclists, safer walking and bicycling. *Injury Prevention*. 2003. 9:205-209. <http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/9/3/205.full.pdf>

⁹ Smart Growth America: *Cost of Complete Streets*, <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/cost-of-complete-streets/>

¹⁰ Vision Zero Network: *What is Vision Zero?* <https://visionzeronetWORK.org/about/what-is-vision-zero/>

¹¹ Smart Growth America. "Take action" *Dangerous By Design 2019*. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>