



FACT SHEET

Overview of Pedestrian Safety in Central Florida

On May 30, Smart Growth America released its 2024 Dangerous by Design report, ranking the nation's most dangerous metro areas for pedestrians. While Florida – and the MetroPlan Orlando planning region in particular – have always been featured prominently in these reports, our tools and focus are different today than they were when the last report was published, in 2019.

WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR CENTRAL FLORIDA SINCE 2019?

- The MetroPlan Orlando Board officially launched **Vision Zero Central Florida**, in late 2023. This regionwide push to end traffic deaths and serious injuries from all types of crashes was made possible by a \$3.79 million federal grant.
- This year, the region and local governments identified **High Injury Networks** where a disproportionate number of crashes result in death or serious injury. While Vision Zero deals with crashes of all types, scores that determine High Injury Networks give extra weight to vulnerable users like pedestrians, who are not shielded by a vehicle.
- This fall, the **Vision Zero Action Plans** will move toward approval at all levels, and implementation can begin. The region is already gearing up for the next round of federal grant applications.
- The **Florida Dept. of Transportation** (FDOT) launched a parallel initiative called **Target Zero** that focuses on behavioral changes and works hand-in-hand with Vision Zero.
- **FDOT District 5** has established its own **Safety Office** and developed its first **Safety Strategic Plan**. Since state roads are involved in 60% of the regional High Injury Network, it is important to have this FDOT support in finding solutions.

WHAT CONTEXT CAN OUR WORK ADD FOR PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN CENTRAL FLORIDA?

- Pedestrian crashes overall have **declined** by 11% on a per capita basis during the past decade in our three counties, while population increased nearly 20%.
- **Severity** of pedestrian crashes has increased, with fatalities per capita **going up** by 27%.
- **Daytime fatalities dropped** by 23% per capita, while **nighttime fatalities increased** 37%.
- **Pedestrian-caused crashes declined** by 20% per capita, while **motorist-caused crashes increased** by 2%.
- **Vehicle size** is an important factor in escalating the impact speed and injury severity of pedestrian crashes. Heavier vehicles with taller front ends hit harder and strike more vulnerable spots on a pedestrian's body.
- As is the case across the nation, vehicles in Central Florida have increased in height and weight over the past couple of decades. For example, nationwide sales of crossover utility vehicles, which have taller front ends and weigh more than sedans, have **nearly doubled since 2012**.

- On our regional High Injury Network, the average posted speed is 43 mph; average operating speed is 53 mph. That **extra 10 mph adds about 75 feet of stopping distance**, which results in a much higher impact speed when a vehicle hits a pedestrian. **Reducing motorist operating speeds** is the most important change we can make to reduce pedestrian fatalities.
- When the **factors of vehicle size, speed, and darkness combine**, we see a significant increase in the severity of pedestrian crashes. Likewise, confronting them in combination can make a significant safety difference.

WHAT DOES THE 2024 DANGEROUS BY DESIGN REPORT SAY?

- **RANKING** – After years at or near the top of the list, **the Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford area is ranked at #18**, based on pedestrian fatalities from 2018-2022. The report didn't reflect any improvement in pedestrian deaths for Central Florida since the last report. (It should be noted that figures used by Smart Growth America include portions of **Lake County**, so they differ somewhat from totals specific to our three-county region.)
- **FLORIDA** – The state dominates on the most-dangerous list with 8 of the top 20 spots. All major metros in Florida rank higher than ours (**Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach (#5); Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater (#8); Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville (#11); Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach (#14); Jacksonville (#15); Cape Coral-Fort Myers (#16); North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton (#17)**).
- **MOST DANGEROUS** – The **Memphis** metro, which includes parts of Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas, occupies the 2024 **#1 spot** on the most-dangerous list.
- **OVERALL** – Pedestrian safety trends are worsening across the country, particularly in the Southeast. More than 7,500 pedestrians died as a result of crashes in 2022; deaths in the 101 largest U.S. metros increased by 26%.

ABOUT METROPLAN ORLANDO'S WORK

MetroPlan Orlando leads transportation planning efforts in Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. The organization coordinates closely with elected officials, industry experts and the community to shape a future system that offers travel options and allows people to travel safely. As the metropolitan planning organization for Central Florida, it sets priorities and determines how federal and state transportation dollars are spent in the region. MetroPlan Orlando is coordinating the Vision Zero Central Florida initiative, which includes a regional approach to traffic safety, as well as individual efforts in partnership with local governments. For more information, visit MetroPlanOrlando.gov

To learn more about Vision Zero Central Florida, visit VisionZeroCFL.gov

To read the Smart Growth America report, visit SmartGrowthAmerica.org/dangerous-by-design

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