



Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

Road safety for all citizens is an important goal at the Georgia Department of Transportation. The Department employs numerous programs to advance safety for all modes of transportation. Last year, fatalities in motor vehicle crashes rose just slightly, while those involving pedestrians and bicyclist experienced a larger increase over the previous year. The Department is not satisfied with those results and will continue to strengthen and promote programs and strategies to combat the number of fatalities on Georgia's roadways.

The GA DOT coordinates with federal, regional, county, and local government agencies to ensure the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians are addressed through system wide planning efforts. GA DOT and its partners across the state are proactive in efforts to improve safety along the roadways. We study locations most used by bicyclists and pedestrians to document and review safety concerns, and evaluate locations of pedestrian or bicycle crashes. Organizations working with pedestrians and bicyclists are routinely engaged, and often present information to the State Transportation Board (STB).

The Department also is partnering with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and the University of Georgia's College of Public Health Transportation and Safety Evaluation Group to develop a complete pedestrian crash study to provide vital data on incidents. This data may assist GA DOT and our many partners throughout the state to identify potential safety enhancements in key locations.

Additionally, the Department is updating the current Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan to incorporate new policies and best practices from around the country. The plan will also analyze crash locations for pedestrians and bicyclists and evaluate countermeasures intended to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety where needed.

The Department's Traffic Operations office is in the coordination phase of developing a Road Safety Audit (RSA) team. An RSA team is an independent multidisciplinary unit charged with qualitatively estimating and reporting on potential road safety issues and identifying opportunities for improvements in safety for all road users. GA DOT anticipates integrating RSAs into the project development process for new roads and intersections, and also encourages RSAs on existing roads and intersections. Recent test audits on several roadways were completed in the City of Atlanta and DeKalb County.

The STB recently adopted the *Complete Streets Program*, which requires the consideration of bicycle and pedestrian facility accommodations, as a design policy of the Department. The concept of Complete Streets emphasizes safety, mobility, and accessibility for all modes of travel, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists. All locations for future GA DOT projects are subject to this policy and must be incorporated in regional, local, state, or county planning as well.

These are just a few of the mechanisms the Department is utilizing in the ongoing efforts to advance citizen safety on the thousands of miles of roads across Georgia. Working to reduce fatalities on the state's roads is and will continue to be a central goal of the GA DOT.

By Meg Pirkle, Director Permits and Operations