



South Jersey
Transportation
Planning Organization

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NOTE: Award presentation photo to follow by 4 p.m.

**SOUTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION HONORED FOR
CUMBERLAND COUNTY PLAN TO PROTECT PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS**
*2023 National Roadway Safety Awards recognize innovations to protect travelers
as pandemic spike in U.S. road fatalities continues largely unabated*

WASHINGTON, DC – The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) was honored today with a 2023 National Roadway Safety Award for developing a plan to prioritize making roads and intersections safer for cyclists and pedestrians in rural Cumberland County.

The [Cumberland County Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan](#), finalized in 2022, helped local officials secure federal funding to design and implement safety improvements in six busy corridors. The roads are in the cities of Bridgeton, Millville and Vineland, where about 77 percent of county residents live.

The \$400,000 cost of developing the plan yielded \$32 million worth of federally funded projects. The corridors were selected based on public input and their history of bicycle and pedestrian crashes.

The largest project, funded with a \$20 million federal grant, will reduce the number of vehicular lanes and add new traffic signals and pavement to a 2.3-mile section of Chestnut Avenue in Vineland. Other corridors planned for pedestrian and bicycle improvements are: 3rd Street/Wheaton Avenue in Millville, High Street in Millville, East Avenue in Vineland, Irving Avenue in Bridgeton, and Atlantic Street, also in Bridgeton.

Projects will include more visible crosswalks, shorter intersection crossings, and narrowed roads to slow down traffic. Between 2012 and 2016, 536 crashes involving cyclists and pedestrians accounted for 2.9 percent of all collisions in Cumberland County. However, they resulted in 21.6 percent of all fatal and serious injury crashes countywide, according to SJTPO.

“We just hadn’t had traction in addressing bike and pedestrian projects,” said Alan Huff, SJTPO’s program manager for safety initiatives and public outreach. “We wanted to really focus on them.”

Before the plan, such proposals often languished because they tend to be complex and difficult to carry out in densely populated areas with older infrastructure and heavy traffic, Huff said.

SJTPO coordinates planning for Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties.

The 10 National Roadway Safety Award winners and two honorable mentions are using proactive, data-driven, collaborative and cost-effective approaches to better protect pedestrians, cyclists and motorists across the country. Much of their work began amid a nationwide spike in vehicular crashes during the pandemic, when U.S. [roadway fatalities rose 7.3 percent in 2020 and a further 10.1 percent in 2021 before holding steady at a high level in 2022 \(-0.3 percent\)](#).

Early estimates for the first half of 2023 show crash fatalities declined slightly but [remain at levels not seen since the mid-2000s](#). Between January and June, fatalities nationwide declined by an estimated 3.3 percent, compared with the first six months of 2022, according to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA).

First-half 2023 fatalities in New Jersey fell further: An estimated 277 people died on New Jersey roads, down 14.9 percent from the same time frame last year, according to [NHTSA's preliminary data](#).

The continued high fatality numbers demonstrate the value of safety innovations like the Cumberland County Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and the 11 other projects from across the nation.

The National Roadway Safety Awards, presented biannually since 1999, are sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and the nonprofit Roadway Safety Foundation. Projects were evaluated on safety effectiveness, innovation and efficient use of resources.

“The problem-solving creativity and dedication shown by the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization will save countless lives -- using a data driven approach and practices that are proven to reduce crashes,” said Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt. “It demonstrates a strong commitment to moving South Jersey toward zero deaths and serious injuries on the state’s roadways, and we are proud to applaud their efforts.”

“The stubbornly elevated fatality numbers underscore the urgent need for innovations like the National Roadway Safety Award honorees’ projects,” said Roadway Safety Foundation Executive Director Bruce Hamilton. “With several initiatives already showing major reductions in fatalities, injuries and crashes, today’s honorees are shining a bright light on the path to safer travel.”

Other honorees are:

- **North Carolina:** NCDOT for reducing severe crashes at rural intersections by adding more all-way stops
- **Illinois:** Illinois Tollway for creating an app that shows livestream video of serious crashes to speed up incident response
- **Florida:** FDOT for demonstrating how skid-resistant pavement can shorten stopping distances at high-speed intersections
- **Louisiana:** Acadiana Planning Commission for reducing severe crashes at rural “T” intersections using larger signs and rumble strips to alert distracted drivers
- **Texas:** TxDOT for reducing pedestrian fatalities on an Austin highway, particularly among people experiencing homelessness
- **Delaware:** DeIDOT for reducing fatal and serious injury crashes by converting more intersections to all-way stops

- **New Jersey/New York:** The Port Authority of NY & NJ for reducing crashes by using timely data analysis to proactively identify and address safety problems
- **Minnesota:** MnDOT for its widespread use of “J-turn” intersections on high-speed divided highways to reduce the severity of crashes
- **California:** Caltrans for implementing pedestrian protections, signs to prevent wrong-way driving and other cost-effective safety measures more quickly
- **Virginia:** VDOT (Honorable Mention) for funding lower-cost safety projects in a more systemic way aimed at preventing traffic fatalities and serious injuries
- **Nevada:** NDOT (Honorable Mention) for its first comprehensive plan to reduce speeding, a leading cause of fatal and severe crashes

Winners were selected by an expert panel of judges:

- Lori Diaz, The American Traffic Safety Services Foundation
- Jennifer Hall, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- Adam Kirk, Kentucky Transportation Center
- Stephen Read, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Brian Roberts, Transportation Research Board
- Terecia Wilson, Clemson University

For complete details on each of the winners and for more information on the national awards program, visit: www.roadwaysafety.org/awards

The Roadway Safety Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable and educational organization. Our mission is to reduce the frequency and severity of motor vehicle crashes, injuries and fatalities by improving roadway systems and their environment.