

A photograph of a snow-covered path, likely a pedestrian or bicycle trail, with trees and a fence on the left side. The path is covered in a thick layer of snow, and there are footprints visible. The trees are also covered in snow, and the sky is overcast.

BMTS Article Digest
February – March 2025

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed from the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page at <http://bmtsonline.com/about/committees>.

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See the **Two Rivers Greenway Pedestrian & Bicycle Monthly Counting Reports** at <http://bmtsonline.com/data/bikeped-counts>.



Waverly PD reveals cause for car vs. pedestrian crash in Waverly

By Sara Kinneary

Published: Jan. 15, 2025 at 11:35 AM EST | Updated: 50 minutes ago

WAVERLY, N.Y. (WBNG) -- The Waverly Police Department completed its investigation into a motor vehicle collision that left one hospitalized with serious injuries.

On Jan. 4, around 6 p.m., Waverly Police responded to the intersection of Chemung Street and Clark Street in Waverly, near the St James Catholic Church, for reports of a motor vehicle accident.

According to the department, upon investigation, it was found that an 82-year-old woman had failed to use a nearby crosswalk when she was struck by a moving vehicle.

Police reported that the driver, a 35-year-old woman, was not hurt during the incident and could not avoid the collision.

The 82-year-old woman was transported to a local hospital for medical treatment for reported serious injuries.

Waverly PD said Greater Valley EMS and the Waverly Barton FD assisted at the scene.

Pedestrian hit by vehicle in Ithaca



By [Sydney Lee](#)

Published: Feb. 15, 2025 at 3:26 PM EST

ITHACA, N.Y. (WBNG) -- Ithaca Police responded to the 500 block of Spencer Road for a motor vehicle accident involving a pedestrian on Feb. 15.

Officials said that the pedestrian was struck by a vehicle, which then fled the scene. The pedestrian was transported to a local trauma center and is currently in stable condition.

The case is still under investigation. The driver and the vehicle have not been located.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has information is asked to contact the Ithaca Police Department.

Police continue investigation into weekend hit-and-run

by **Matt Butler**

February 17, 2025

ITHACA, N.Y. — The Ithaca Police Department is still investigating a hit-and-run on a pedestrian that occurred early Saturday morning on Spencer Road in Ithaca.

Police initially announced Saturday that a hit-and-run took place around 12:30 a.m. that day, sending one person to Robert Packer Hospital, who was listed in stable condition.

Ithaca Police Chief Tom Kelly offered further details Monday, saying that the victim was being dropped off at his residence by another person when he was hit.

“As he walked behind the car and entered the roadway, he was struck by a passing vehicle,” Kelly said. “Witnesses stated the vehicle that struck [the victim] never slowed down and continued to accelerate north.”

The driver in the incident has not been identified. Kelly said the police are reviewing surveillance footage from the area to determine more information, but there is no description yet available for the driver or vehicle involved.





Plaza at Las Cruces, New Mexico. Source: Placemakers, LLC

[Health](#)

Health and planning for quality of life

In addition to heavy smoking and drinking, lack of social connections and physical activity are primary factors in dying sooner. The latter two deficits can be addressed by community planning focusing on quality of life and walkability.

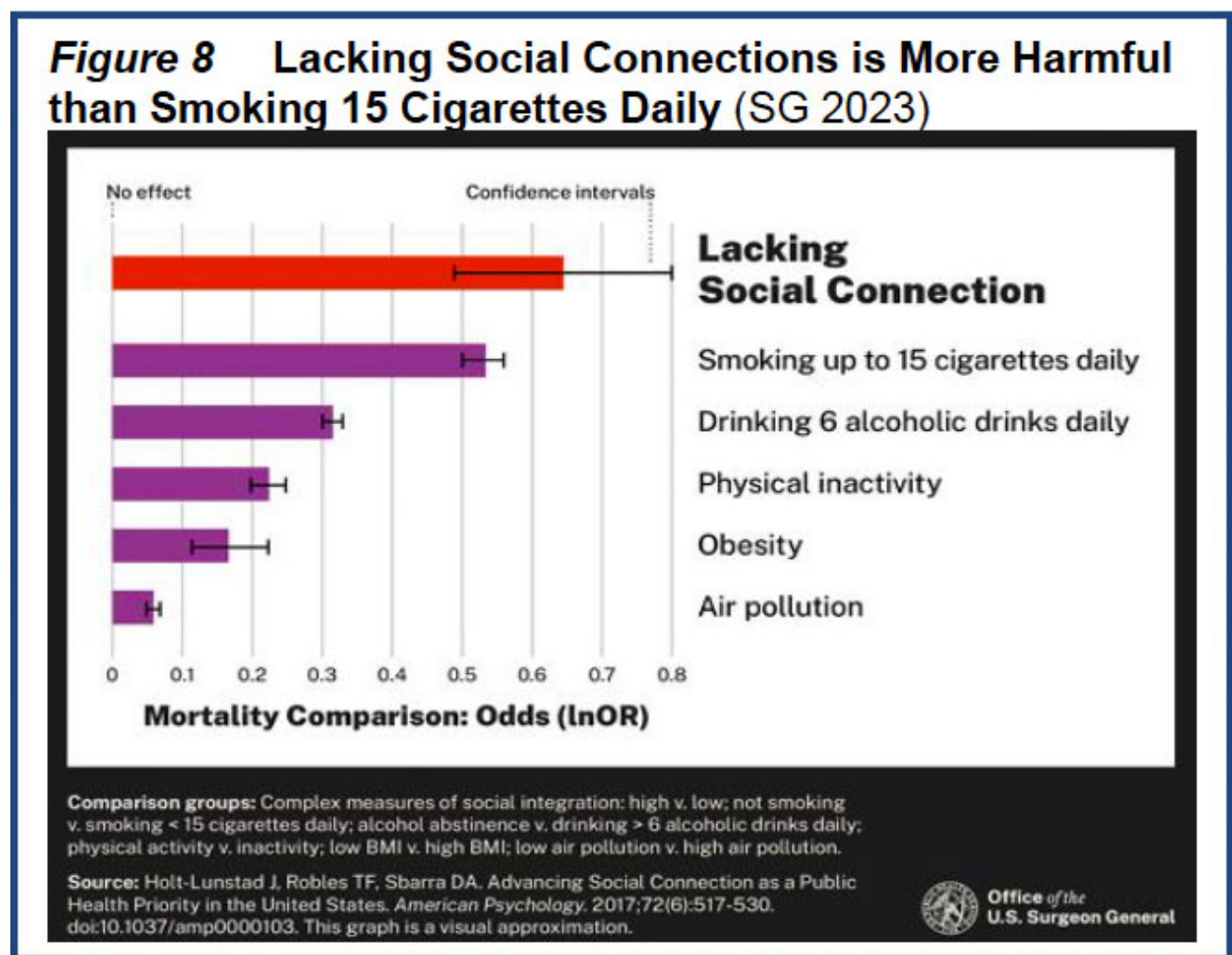
[ROBERT STEUTEVILLE](#) FEB. 14, 2025

“Quality of life” is an elusive concept that people want in their communities but is often undervalued by planners because it is difficult to measure. However, there are clear ways that planners can boost quality of life, adding years to people’s lives and improving happiness, argues Todd Litman of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, who recently issued a report, [Planning for Quality of Life: Considering Community Cohesion and Related Social Goals](#).

Quality of life is related to social factors like community cohesiveness, equity and affordability, fitness and health, personal security, and attractiveness of the public realm, Litman explains. Perhaps the most striking quality-of-life factor is cohesiveness, which Litman defines as “The quality of interactions among people in an area, and therefore the strength of connections among them, indicated by the portion of residents who know, trust, enjoy and spend time with their neighbors.”

A powerful planning argument for walkable communities can be made relative to cohesiveness, backed up by research. “Compared with car-dependent areas, people living in walkable areas are 24-47 percent more likely to have a strong sense of community,” according to one study, (Frank et al), among many. Walkable places increase social capital (Leyden, 2023) and result in far more friendly, unplanned encounters, contributing to mental health. If you walk to a destination, you are twice as likely to have a friendly encounter than if you drive, and 50 percent more likely than if you take transit, reports Litman.

Why does that matter? It turns out loneliness increases the odds of dying sooner to an astounding degree. Not only does lack of social connection carry a similar risk to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, but it is also twice as risky as consuming *six alcoholic beverages a day*, reported the Surgeon General. Furthermore, being lonely carries twice the risk of being physically inactive, which in itself is a substantial risk. Obesity is also a big risk, and that is also connected to physical activity and walkability—although other factors like diet have an impact.



Source: Litman, Planning for Quality of Life

While community planning cannot address smoking and drinking, walkable places have a salutary effect on both loneliness and physical activity. Walkability and park access are strongly associated with better outcomes in physical activity, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stress, and a sense of community (Frank et al., 2019). That is because physical activity rises, easily measured by the step

count on a cell phone, in a walkable place without people having to think about it. It is built into everyday life. While staying in an exceedingly walkable place—like downtown Savannah, Georgia, or Seaside, Florida—I've noticed that my step count invariably doubles or triples.

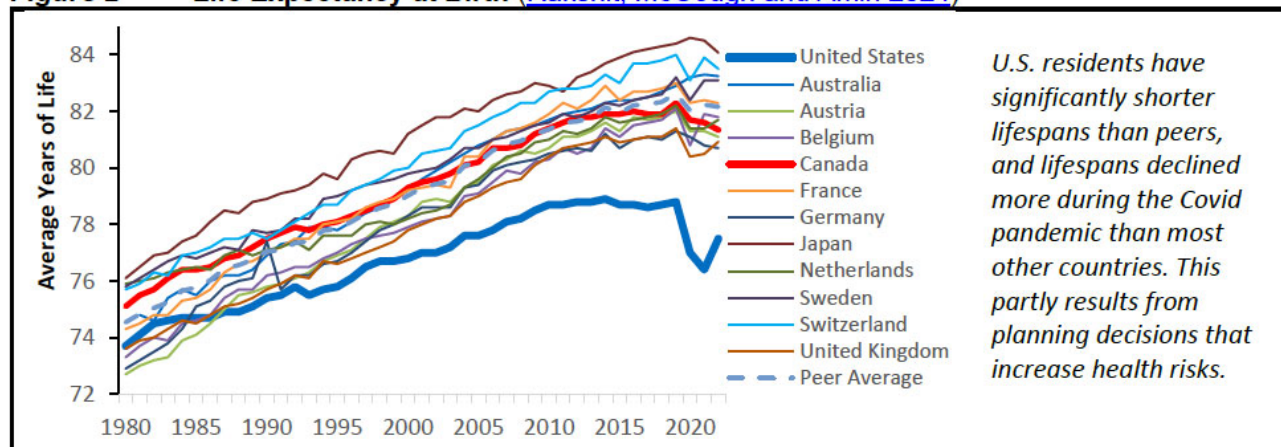
Other aspects of this report are important, especially affordability and equity, because walkable places can get expensive. While they remain in short supply, the National Association of Realtors reports that a solid majority (56 percent) of Americans prefer a small lot in a walkable place to a large lot in an automobile-dependent place. Litman explains that high real estate prices can be mitigated by reducing transportation costs in a mixed-use community, allowing for higher density and missing middle housing, and subsidizing affordable housing built in walkable neighborhoods.

Another factor is security and protection. Substantial crime damages quality of life to the degree that residents will move to a safer neighborhood. Research shows that crime rates tend to decline with passive surveillance provided by pedestrians, businesses, and homes with windows that face a street, called “eyes on the street,” Litman explains.

The final factor, public realm beauty, is the province of urban designers and architects, and can certainly be enhanced by good planning and landscape features.

Of all of the highly developed nations, the US has the lowest life expectancy by a substantial margin:

Figure 2 Life Expectancy at Birth ([Rakshit, McGough and Amin 2024](#))



Source: Litman, Planning for Quality of Life

The US also has the most suburban sprawl. According to Litman, sprawling communities tend to:

- Drive 30-70 percent more and use active modes (walking, cycling) 70-90 percent less.
- Have 20 percent to 80 percent higher traffic casualty rates.
- Be less physically active, have higher heart disease and diabetes rates, and die two to four years younger, all else equal.

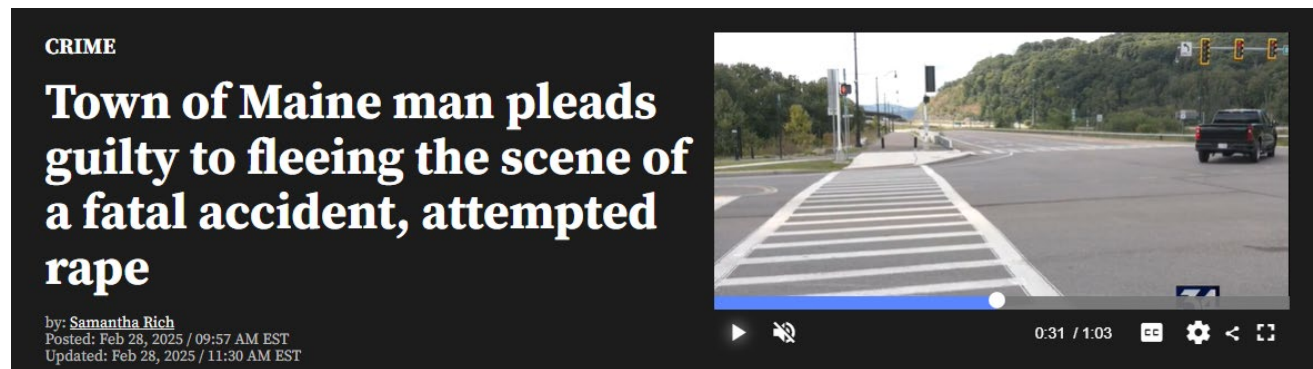
The problem is that we over-invest in the following:

- Higher speed modes and roadway expansions.
- Urban-fringe development.
- Parking subsidies and mandates.

We under-invest in the following:

- Slower but affordable, inclusive and safer modes of transportation.
- Compact and mixed community development.
- Public realm improvements.

Clearly, America has a big public health problem, and research powerfully connects that issue with how we plan and build communities—and the dominant mode of development since 1950, suburban sprawl. Compact, walkable communities play an important role in boosting the health and social connections of Americans. It is high time that we started taking quality of life more seriously in planning.



BINGHAMTON, N.Y. (WIVT/WBGH) – A Town of Maine man was convicted in Broome County Court on Wednesday of fleeing the scene after killing a man as well as attempting to have sex with a minor.

District Attorney Paul Battisti announced on Friday that 21-year-old Christian Rogler pleaded guilty to Leaving the Scene of a Fatal Accident and Attempted Rape in the First Degree. Rogler’s guilty plea stems from two separate incidents.

In September 2024, in the Town of Dickinson, Rodler struck and killed Jamel Smalls of Binghamton. He fled the scene of the crash and was later located and arrested at his residence in the Town of Maine. For this crime, he will be sentenced to 2 and 1/3 to 7 years in New York State Prison, which is the maximum sentence allowable under the law.

Additionally, in late 2021, Rogler attempted to sexually assault an underage person in the Village of Johnson City. As part of his plea, he will receive 3 and ½ years in New York State Prison, followed by 10 years of post-release supervision. Rogler is also required to register as a sex offender. A final no-contact order of protection will be issued for the victim.

“The victims and their families have endured unimaginable pain and loss as a result of Rogler’s reckless and predatory behavior. His actions, fleeing the scene of a fatal accident and committing a heinous, deplorable act against an innocent victim, are nothing short of appalling. While no sentence can undo the harm caused, we hope today’s plea brings some sense of justice and closure to those affected. We remain committed to holding individuals like Rogler fully accountable for their actions and ensuring they face the consequences of their crimes,” said Battisti.

Sentencing is scheduled for May 28. Both sentences will run concurrently.

A family member of Smalls reached out to News 34, commenting on the sentencing. They stated the plea agreement is unacceptable and said their family will not stand for it as they seek justice for Smalls's murder.



Heavily damaged sidewalks line a roadway in Denver's Little Saigon business district in 2024. A new sidewalk fee for all property owners is set to reform the city's *Photographer: Hyoung Chang/Denver Post*

[CityLab](#) / Perspective

Who Should Pay to Fix the Sidewalk?

Denver has made sidewalk upkeep a public responsibility, becoming the largest US municipality to fund and maintain this critical but unsung pedestrian infrastructure.

By [David Zipper](#)

February 20, 2025 at 11:01 AM EST

Denver's Colorado Boulevard is a major artery and an important transit corridor; local leaders are [considering](#) expanding bus service by adding a Bus Rapid Transit line along its length. But

getting to or from a stop often requires trudging along unpaved paths that run between patches of crumbling concrete and then [standing in the dirt](#) waiting for the next bus.

The reason: Like a lot of US cities, Denver has a dearth of decent sidewalks. According to an [analysis last year](#), the city is missing 300 miles of pedestrian pathways; of the 2,300 miles that do exist, around 30% are too narrow and an unknown proportion are in disrepair, making them treacherous to negotiate.

Sidewalks are the unsung but essential infrastructure of millions of mundane daily journeys. But they tend to be chronically neglected — especially in neighborhoods whose residents rely on them most.

Denver is seeking to change that. Last month, the Mile High City began to fully fund and maintain its entire sidewalk network, taking over from private citizens. Most property owners [will pay a \\$150 fee for sidewalks per year](#); a small minority with more than 230 linear square feet facing the street will pay \$3.50 per additional square foot. The goal is to build and improve more than 1,000 miles of pavement within a decade. “It’s the largest city in the country that’s made this move,” said Michael Pollack, a professor at Cardozo School of Law in New York City who is writing a book about sidewalks. “It’s a really important step — one that I’d like to see more municipalities adopt.”



A Denver family negotiates a gap between sections of sidewalk in 2016.

Photographer: Aaron Ontiveroz/Denver Post via Getty Images

Although sidewalks grab few headlines, a bevy of studies show their importance to urban mobility. [One analysis](#) of 11 countries concluded that abundant sidewalks increase physical activity and improve residents’ public health. A [2009 study](#) of Boston found that sidewalk quality heavily influences the route that people take to their workplace after exiting transit. A [paper](#) last year

showed how pedestrian infrastructure affects Orlando residents' willingness to walk to nearby grocery stores.

Sidewalks save lives, too: A [2022 study](#) found that “the absence of sidewalk is one of the main factors” determining pedestrian crashes on a road segment.

To pay for upgrades, US municipal governments can occasionally tap federal programs like [Safe Routes to School](#), but funding and governance is largely up to them. Only a handful of cities, including Boston and Washington, DC, make pedestrian infrastructure a public responsibility. Most assign upkeep to adjacent property owners such as households and commercial real estate companies. According to a [recent study](#), 23 of the largest 30 US cities make property owners responsible for sidewalk construction and maintenance, even as public agencies themselves pave streets and highways.

“If you want to know what a city or state prioritizes, don't listen to their words, look at their budget,” said Mike McGinn, executive director of the advocacy group America Walks. “Sidewalks often are literally ‘not our job.’”

Pollack describes this as a cost-cutting maneuver — “one more thing that the city can essentially outsource to somebody else,” he said. But expecting property owners to build and keep up sidewalks invites a slew of costly problems. Since pedestrian infrastructure is seldom front of mind for most residents, a letter from the city demanding repairs can catch them unaware. “You don't know at what point you're going to get hit with a bill for potentially thousands of dollars,” said Pollack. “That can become an unmanageable surprise expense.” Those who fail to fix the adjacent sidewalk could have a lien placed on their property or face foreclosure.

Even in the best of circumstances, expecting residents to maintain sidewalks leads to suboptimal outcomes. Most repairs take place only after the pavement is in woeful condition, and variations among contractors undermine consistency.

Drawbacks are [particularly acute](#) in low-income neighborhoods with predominantly Black and Latino populations, which tend to have more vacant properties and budget-strained inhabitants, which leads to poor sidewalk networks. Since these neighborhoods also tend to have more residents who rely on bikes or transit to get around, shoddy sidewalks can widen inequities in road safety. (Black and Hispanic Americans are [disproportionately represented as victims](#) in pedestrian and cyclist crashes.)



Workers fix a sidewalk in the Baltimore's Canton neighborhood in 2020.
Photographer: Brendan Smialowski / AFP via Getty Images

In Denver, sidewalk policy has reflected American norms. “It has always been the responsibility of the adjacent private property owner to build the sidewalk and then to address any need for repairs — with not a lot of enforcement from the city,” said Jill Locantore, the head of the Denver Streets Partnership and a prominent local proponent for better pedestrian paths.

Most repairs were driven by complaints from residents. “Somebody had to call the city, basically narc on their neighbor,” Locantore told me. Officials were so overwhelmed by sidewalk complaints that [residents were limited to one annually](#). “You had to pick your most egregious sidewalk, and that was your one call for the year,” she said.

Poor or missing sidewalks hamper local walkability, Locantore added: “A lot of people don’t feel safe walking to close destinations in their neighborhood — whether it’s a park, the local elementary school, or coffee shop — because there’s no sidewalk at all.” And the ripple effects of bad sidewalks constrain Denverites’ regional mobility, too. In a 2015 study, several organizations [concluded](#) that a lack of safe pedestrian paths was the single greatest impediment to accessing local transit.



Where the sidewalk ends at the intersection of 48th and Gaylord in Denver. *Photographer: Aaron Ontiveroz/Denver Post via Getty Images*

But few city officials prioritized improving the city’s pedestrian network. A few years ago, Locantore said, transportation staff refused to accept her organization’s crowdsourced sidewalk survey because they feared liability for letting dangerous sidewalks languish. (Those concerns were partly assuaged by a [2022 Colorado Supreme Court decision](#), which found that the city of Boulder was not responsible for the injuries suffered by a woman who fell after tripping on a sidewalk deviation — a broken or misaligned segment of walkway — of 2 1/2 inches. The court concluded that Colorado’s sidewalks are in such terrible shape that a deviation of that size had not “exceeded the bounds of reason.”)

The Denver activists’ labors began to bear fruit in 2017, when city officials for the first time [allocated \\$4 million](#) to fill sidewalk gaps. It was a watershed moment, but the money was a relative drop in the bucket. The city estimated that working all the way through its sidewalk backlog would cost [billions of dollars](#). In 2020, the Denver Auditor issued a report slamming the city’s approach to pedestrian infrastructure, concluding that it creates “unequal access to safe and accessible sidewalks and places an undue and inequitable financial burden on some Denver residents.”

Locantore and her allies began to consider a drastic move: shifting responsibility for building and maintaining all sidewalks to the city directly, with funding raised through property fees. A few city councilmembers sounded intrigued, but the activists struggled to build momentum. “In January of 2022 we lost patience,” Locantore said. “My colleagues and I were sitting around and were like, ‘Damn it, let’s just do it ourselves.’”

And so they did, with a campaign dubbed [Denver Deserves Sidewalks](#).

The campaign's first step involved collecting the thousands of signatures required to get on the city ballot. That task proved to be less of a hurdle than expected. "People hate being approached by clipboards, but collecting signatures for this was one of the easiest things I ever did," said Locantore. "You would just go to a farmers market and ask people, 'Do you want better sidewalks?' And they'd be like, 'Yes, where do I sign?'"

Facing negligible opposition, the ordinance [passed](#) in November 2022 with 56% of the vote. Pollack, who has examined Denver's precinct-level returns, said that support was highest in Black and Latino areas where sidewalks are especially lacking. Opposition was concentrated in wealthier neighborhoods with minimal pedestrian infrastructure, where many residents were content with the status quo. "They wanted to preserve a kind of bucolic, sidewalk-free environment," Pollack said.

It took around two years to iron out operational issues, but in January, Denverites began receiving a bill for sidewalk maintenance that is lumped into their biannual stormwater fees. The \$150-and-up fee is projected to bring in \$40 million per year, which will finance around \$850 million in debt. To give a sense of scale, \$850 million is [roughly double](#) the annual budget of Denver's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.



An LA resident navigates a sidewalk in dire need of repair.
Photographer: Rick Loomis/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images

Locantore said she is excited to see her city assume responsibility for its sidewalks, but also apprehensive. "It's uncharted territory," she said. "The city has never taken on a project of this scale before, and they're taking over an entirely new class of assets that they've historically had nothing to do with."

McGinn of America Walks applauds Denver's ambition. "I can think of no better transportation investment in safety, health, pollution reduction, affordability and jobs than great sidewalks," he said. "Public benefits deserve public investment."

Pollack, who plans to feature Denver's sidewalk saga in his forthcoming book, believes that its new policy of direct city control is morally just because leaving property owners responsible is inequitable. "Neighborhood sidewalks will rise and fall with those residents' fortunes," he said. "That's particularly bad for low-income neighborhoods."

Pollack added that cities' sidewalk [liability under the Americans with Disabilities Act](#), which led Los Angeles to [settle a lawsuit for \\$1.4 billion in 2016](#), shouldn't affect their willingness to manage footpaths directly. "ADA imposes its responsibilities on municipalities, not individuals, he said. "Taking charge of sidewalks is not going to expand the vulnerability under the ADA that they already have."

According to the ordinance's [language](#), Denver must complete its sidewalk network within nine years (the city has warned it could take [three times as long](#)). That is a lofty goal, but even partial success could inspire other cities to follow its lead. Pollack said that he is aware of only a few small

towns, such as [Ithaca](#) and [Hudson, New York](#), that have transferred sidewalk maintenance responsibilities from property owners to the municipality.

But inadequate pedestrian infrastructure seems to be an urban problem across the US. In 2022, Austin [estimated](#) that the city needed to build an additional 810 miles of sidewalks. In Indianapolis, [almost 2,000 miles of roads lack them](#) and installation is projected to cost \$7.2 billion on top of \$92 million in repairs for sections in “poor” condition. In November, voters in Berkeley, California, approved a ballot measure that will generate [\\$250 million over 14 years](#) for street upgrades including sidewalk improvements.

There is another reason to keep a close eye on Denver’s sidewalk overhaul. Given the current political landscape, it appears unlikely that Congress or the US Department of Transportation will offer much of a tailwind to active transportation in the years ahead. [Project 2025](#), the conservative policy blueprint that the Trump administration has been closely following, argued that “local sidewalks” (along with bike lanes and hiking trails) should no longer be eligible for federal funding at all.

But in Denver, the feds have played no role in implementing the boldest sidewalk reform in recent American history. If this city can transform its pedestrian infrastructure all by itself, residents elsewhere might well ask why their leaders cannot do the same.

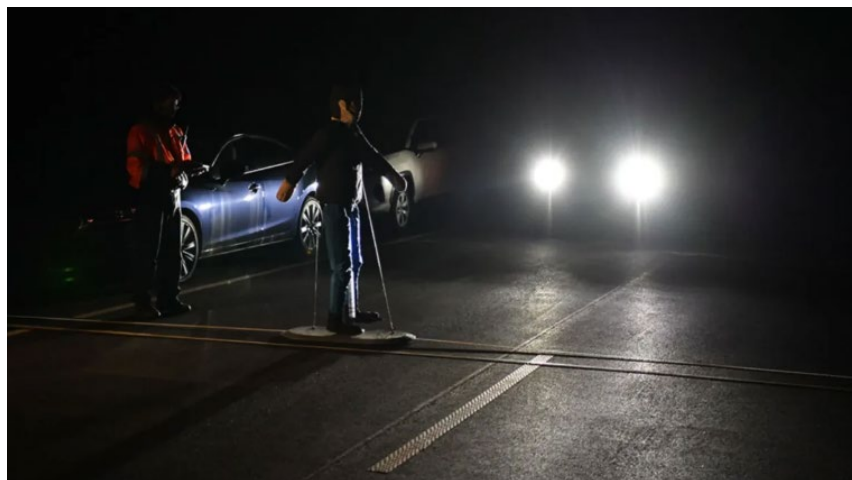


Reflective clothing may reduce the effectiveness of pedestrian detection technology: IIHS

The new study suggests automated braking systems may not see safety attire worn by pedestrians.

Published Jan. 27, 2025

By Kalena Thomhave



The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety is shown testing the effectiveness of automatic emergency braking systems at night. *Photo provided by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety*

High visibility clothing with reflective strips, which can help drivers see pedestrians at night, may also reduce the effectiveness of automated crash prevention systems,

according to an Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study.

The [IIHS study](#), published this month, examined how crash prevention systems in 2023 model year Honda CR-V, Mazda CX-5 and Subaru Forester vehicles fared when encountering different pedestrian clothing amid varied lighting conditions.

Each vehicle tested was equipped with automatic emergency braking, which in normal conditions reduced pedestrian crashes by 27% compared to vehicles without the technology, per IIHS research. However, researchers found reflective strips can hinder the performance of some vehicles' AEB systems.

"It's untenable that the clothes that pedestrians, cyclists and roadway workers wear to be safe may make them harder for crash avoidance technology to recognize," IIHS President David Harkey, said in a statement. "These results suggest that some automakers need to tweak their pedestrian automatic emergency braking systems."

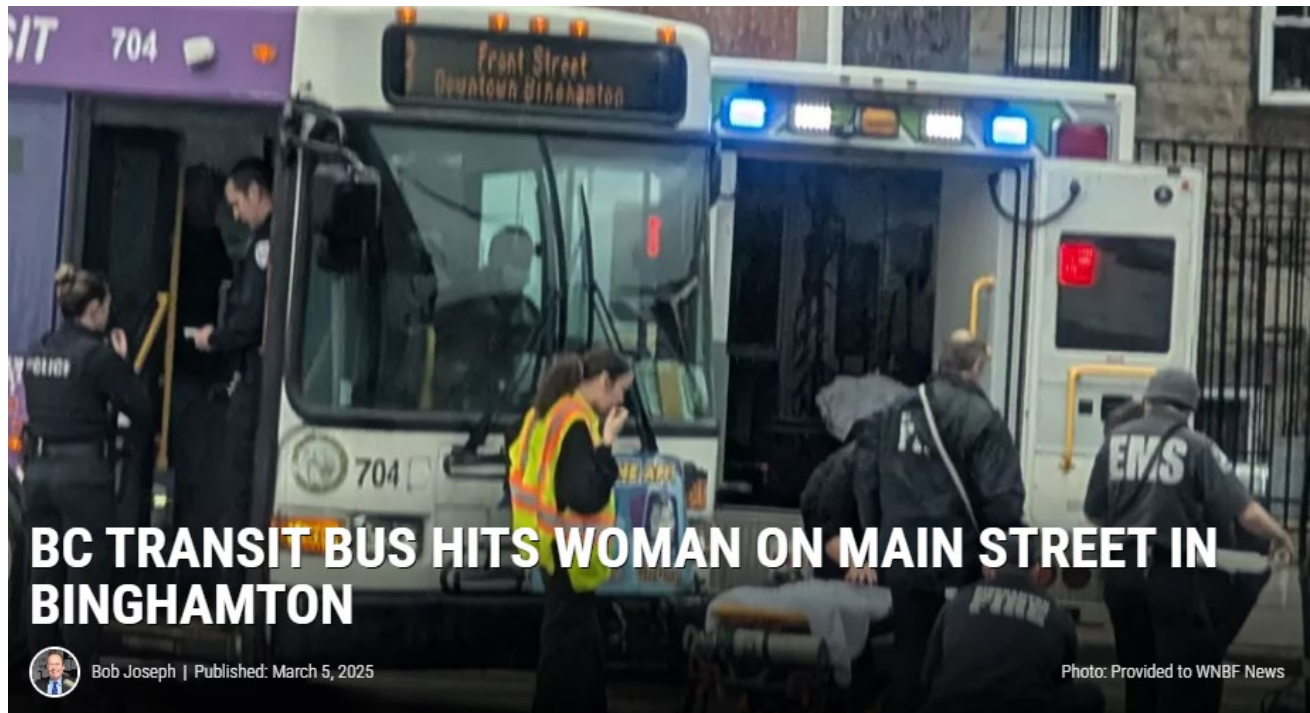
Researchers tested the AEB systems by dressing an adult-sized dummy four ways, including in black attire, a black outfit with reflective strips, a reflective jacket with black pants, and a white outfit. In the tests, the dummy was moved across a street within a crosswalk to mimic a pedestrian.

Each vehicle was tested at speeds of 25 miles per hour with no lighting in the crosswalk, then with 10 and 20 lux of lighting, which is the federally recommended amount of light for better pedestrian visibility, according to the [Federal Highway Administration's](#) Visibility Research Program.

The Mazda CX-5 and the Honda CR-V fared poorly in the tests, hitting the dummy 88% and 84% of the time, respectively, according to IIHS research. The CR-V did not slow when the dummy was wearing the reflective jacket, even with 20 lux of lighting in the crosswalk, the study found. While the CX-5 slowed less when faced with the reflective jacket than it did when the dummy was wearing all black. Both vehicle models did not slow at all when the dummy was wearing reflective strips.

Meanwhile, the Forester stopped and avoided a collision in nearly every single trial. However, it did not fully stop, but reduced speed by 82% when the dummy was wearing the reflective strips, the study found.

In contrast to human drivers, who are readily able to connect the movement of reflective strips to pedestrians, the reflective strips likely "confounded" the sensors of the tested cars, David Kidd, a senior research scientist at IIHS and co-author of the study, said in a statement.



BC TRANSIT BUS HITS WOMAN ON MAIN STREET IN BINGHAMTON



Bob Joseph | Published: March 5, 2025

Photo: Provided to WNBF News

A pedestrian sustained possible head and back injuries when she was struck by a bus at a busy downtown Binghamton intersection.

The incident occurred around 2:50 p.m. Wednesday at Main and Front streets.



A BC Transit bus stopped at Main and Front streets after a woman was struck by the turning vehicle on March 5, 2025. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

Police and witnesses said a BC Transit bus hit the woman as she was walking north across Main Street.

A video recording from a camera mounted at the intersection apparently showed the bus had the right-of-way at the time. But a witness told WNBF News she believed the woman who was in the crosswalk at

the time had the right-of-way.

The 74-year-old woman who was using a cane as she walked told bystanders she had recently had a hip replacement procedure.

Three passengers were on the bus at the time of the incident.

A Binghamton police car blocked Main Street after a pedestrian was hit by a bus on March 5, 2025. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

A section of Main Street were closed while medics tended to the injured woman and police interviewed witnesses, including those who were on the bus. The woman was taken by Superior ambulance to Wilson Medical Center in Johnson City. Her injuries were not believed to be serious.

BC Transit representatives responded to the scene of the incident.

