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## **Burlington Metro Area Ranked Among Lowest in Nation for Preventable Pedestrian Deaths, Report Shows**

*Region is One of Only Twenty Metro Areas Nationwide  
with a “Pedestrian Danger Index” of Zero*

**BURLINGTON, VT** — The Burlington metro area is among the safest places in the nation for pedestrians. According to a report released today, Greater Burlington is the second-largest metro area in the nation with a Pedestrian Danger Index of zero. In addition, the report calculated Vermont’s statewide Pedestrian Danger Index at only 7.2, far below the national average of 52.1.

The report, *Dangerous by Design: Solving the Epidemic of Preventable Pedestrian Deaths (and Making Great Neighborhoods)*, ranks America’s major metropolitan areas and states according to a Pedestrian Danger Index that assesses how safe they are for walking. An update of the 2004 *Mean Streets* report, *Dangerous by Design* was released by Transportation for America ([www.T4America.org](http://www.T4America.org)) and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership.

The report authors note that most pedestrian deaths are preventable in that they occur on streets that are designed to encourage high-speed traffic and lack safe sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals and other protections. Fixing these problems simply requires investment and political will on the part of state departments of transportation and local communities, the report concludes.

“It’s not a surprise that greater Burlington scored so high for pedestrian safety,” said Chapin Spencer, executive director of Local Motion. “Communities throughout the region have made significant investments in sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian infrastructure over the last few decades.” In fact, pedestrian deaths have shown an overall downward trend for the last decade, thanks to infrastructure investments, traffic safety education and pedestrian-focused transportation policy.

Cities and towns across Chittenden County have worked particularly hard to improve pedestrian safety, Spencer noted. Some examples include:

- **Burlington:** Major investments in sidewalk upgrades and “countdown” pedestrian signals along with a focus on “complete streets”
- **South Burlington:** A network of walking paths, sidewalks, and crosswalks that connect neighborhoods with commercial areas
- **Winooski:** A full reconstruction of downtown streets, resulting in a comprehensive network of sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian amenities

- **County-wide:** More than \$1.5 million invested county-wide by the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization and VTrans in sidewalks
- **County-wide:** A diverse group of entities are working to expand the Safe Streets traffic safety pilot project across the county in 2010 ([www.SafeStreetsVT.org](http://www.SafeStreetsVT.org))

While walking conditions remain dangerous nationwide, many communities across the country are engaged in similar efforts to make their streets safe and welcoming for people on foot or bicycle, the report shows. These communities are beginning to reverse the dangerous legacy of 50 years of anti-pedestrian policies by retrofitting or building new roads as “complete streets” that are safer for walking and bicycling as well as for motorists.

“As Congress prepares to rewrite the nation’s transportation law, this report is yet another wake-up call showing why it is so urgent to update our policies and spending priorities,” said James Corless, director of Transportation for America.

Under the current federal transportation bill, less than 1.5 percent of available funds nationally are directed toward pedestrian safety, although pedestrians account for nearly 12 percent of all traffic deaths and 9 percent of total trips. Between 2007 and 2008, more than 700 children under the age of 15 were killed while walking.

“While Vermont is a leader in pedestrian safety, we still have a lot of work to do,” Spencer noted. “I talk to Vermonters every day who would like to walk more, but who don’t feel safe on streets that lack sidewalks and crosswalks or where the speed limit is too high.” We must continue to focus on pedestrian policies, funding and safety. Fortunately, there are many local and statewide partners ready to make this commitment.”

**National Partners:** Seven organizations served on the steering committee for this report, working closely with Transportation for America and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership. These organizations include the American Public Health Association, AARP, Smart Growth America, America Bikes, America Walks, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and the National Complete Streets Coalition. The full report is available online at [www.localmotion.org](http://www.localmotion.org).

**Local Partners:** Seven entities worked on the release in Vermont – AARP Vermont, Campus Area Transportation Management Association, Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, City of Burlington, City of South Burlington, City of Winooski, Local Motion and the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition.

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#### **ABOUT LOCAL MOTION**

Local Motion is a member-supported non-profit organization propelling a culture of active transportation and recreation in Northwest Vermont. [www.localmotion.org](http://www.localmotion.org)

#### **ABOUT TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA (T4AMERICA)**

Transportation for America is a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equal opportunity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century national transportation program. The coalition’s goal is to build a modernized infrastructure and healthy communities where people can live, work and play by aligning national, state and local transportation policies with an array of issues like economic opportunity, climate change, energy security, health, housing and community development. [www.t4america.org](http://www.t4america.org)