Predictable is Preventable: Tracking Near-Miss Incidents

Abstract
Police officers can be important sources of information regarding identification of challenging pedestrian crossings like pedestrian near-miss incidents.

Background
The shortcomings of using crash data to evaluate pedestrian safety
Crash data alone may not be sufficient to present an accurate map of hazardous pedestrian crossings. Crash data are subject to variability. Furthermore, pedestrian crashes are relatively rare events, and do not capture the everyday challenges pedestrians face at road crossings. Data on near-miss occurrences can reflect challenges for pedestrians and used to predict the potential for crashes. Local, regional, and state agencies may use these data to help prevent future crashes.

Surveysing traffic safety officers to evaluate pedestrian safety
Traffic safety officers understand their communities and street safety conditions. They can provide valuable insight into the pedestrian experience at intersections they monitor.

Methodology
Police officers who are involved in traffic safety duties for their department completed the survey.

The survey was conducted during November and December of 2015. VTC sent the survey to the NJ Police Traffic Officers Association, crossing guard trainers, and the NJ State Association of Chiefs of Police. The survey effort received 176 valid responses.

Nearly 30% of respondents reported that they did not have school crossings that were challenging for pedestrians in their municipalities. A total of 186 challenging locations were identified.

County | Number of Challenging Intersections
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Bergen | 29
Monmouth | 21
Camden | 19
Burlington | 18
Essex | 17
Union | 16
Ocean | 13
Mercer | 9
Middlesex | 9
Morris | 9
Atlantic | 7
Passaic | 7
Hudson | 4
Suffolk | 3
Cumberland | 2
Gloucester | 2
Hunterdon | 1
Somerset | 1
Total | 186

Data can expose everyday challenges for pedestrians and used to predict potential crashes.

Key Findings
Road Jurisdiction
Almost 50% of the crossings identified as most challenging were located on county roads. Coordination between municipalities and counties to address road safety is difficult.

Contributing Conditions
The most common identified factors contributing to pedestrian challenges were traffic volume, turning vehicles, and traffic speed. Transit stops and driveways posed more of a problem in urban environments.

Key Information Sources
Police identified pedestrian near misses as significantly more common than pedestrian crashes at crossings identified as challenging.

What makes this intersection challenging for pedestrians?

For More Information
NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center
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