

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, JULY 12, 2023.....Following a pedestrian safety assessment that showed almost half of all Massachusetts pedestrian fatalities or serious injuries happened within 300 feet of a bus stop, the Department of Transportation is looking to use federal funds to make safety improvements at bus stops across the state.

Pedestrian fatalities, serious injuries and cyclist serious injuries trended up in Massachusetts between 2020 -- when there was a steep decline due to an absence of normal traffic volume -- to 2022, according to the [MassDOT Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment](#).

Crashes involving "vulnerable road users" (pedestrians, cyclists or others using the road not in a motor vehicle) have been on the rise all across the country.

Pedestrian fatalities reached a new high in Massachusetts in 2022, with 101 people dying in a crash-related incident, according to the assessment. Just over 300 pedestrians were seriously hurt in crashes. The record-high for pedestrians seriously injured in car crashes was in 2012, when 379 people were hurt.

Bicyclist fatalities were also high in 2022, but still lower than five recorded years since 2004, with 10 cyclists dying on the road in 2022, and 124 cyclists seriously injured.

Almost all pedestrian- and cyclist-involved crashes between 2016 and 2022 occurred in urban areas -- 96 percent for pedestrians and 98 percent for cyclists.

The assessment also showed a correlation between accidents and transit proximity: 41 percent of pedestrian-involved crashes and 34 percent of bicyclist crashes occurred within 300 feet of bus stops statewide.

This statistic is even higher in Boston-area communities, where 45 percent of bicyclist crashes and 50 percent of pedestrian accidents happened within 300 feet of an MBTA bus stop.

"Within the areas of bus stops, you were seeing considerable safety issues. There was bodily injury, accidents, car accidents," Tom Schiavone, deputy rail and transit administrator for MassDOT, said. "The whole goal of this project is to try to improve the safety around bus stops."

The department has identified funding available through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to target safety improvements at bus stops around the state. Through the law's funding mechanism, the federal government would put up 90 percent of the funds and the state would match 10 percent, Schiavone said.

Schiavone told the Regional Transit Authority Council on Wednesday that the department would be in touch to identify active bus stops that could benefit from safety upgrades.

State funding for the projects would come from the existing Highway Safety Improvement Program, said Hayes Morrison, MassDOT assistant secretary of policy and strategy.

"Think of it as a new pipeline of funding that is going directly to solving these known safety issues at these transit stops... New safety; no cost to you," Morrison said to the council of RTA directors. "We are really trying to come and help out with these issues."

A road safety bill Gov. Charlie Baker [signed at the end of his term](#) went into effect on April 1, aimed at protecting "vulnerable road users."

The law set a standard requirement that a driver leave at least four feet of distance when passing a vulnerable road user, and requires larger vehicles to be equipped with lateral protective devices, additional mirrors and backup cameras. It also requires officials to report information about crashes involving vulnerable road users and allows municipalities to petition to modify speed limits on state highways within their borders.

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