

Nonprofit report highlights traffic safety crisis in Georgia

Story by Abby Kousouris | July 4, 2024



ATLANTA, Ga. (Atlanta News First) - A new [report](#) from transportation research nonprofit TRIP highlights a trend in traffic fatalities.

[More than 1,600 Georgians](#) lose their lives on the road each year. This includes drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The number of traffic deaths has grown over the last decade.

“While it is good news that the number of traffic fatalities is trending downward in recent years, the sharp increase in traffic fatalities over the past decade must be addressed,” said TRIP Executive Director

Dave Kearby.

“Making a commitment to eliminating fatal and serious injuries on the nation’s roadways will require robust investment and coordinated activities by transportation and safety-related agencies in providing the needed layers of protection for the nation’s motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists, including safe road users, safe roads, safe vehicles, safe speeds, and high-quality post-crash care,” he said.

Bicyclist Dave Matthews had a brush with death while riding his bike 13 years ago.

In his spare time, he makes ghost bikes to act as a memorial for fallen bicyclists.

“I’ve seen people devastated for life. I made it my mission to step up and stand up for people who don’t have a voice,” said Matthews.

The report shows the number of bicyclists killed across the country has increased by 29%.

Traffic fatalities in Georgia have increased 39% since 2013, with a dip during the pandemic.

The study reports the economic impact on the state is huge. Based on the the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s measurement, the study found the cost from medical care to property damage and more adds up to nearly a \$100 billion loss. That’s more than the state’s entire budget.

Matthews said the impact on families can be immeasurable.

“It could be you when somebody is going to leave home and never come back and to think that’s a possibility in our society with all of the technology we have is disturbing,” said Matthews.

Insurance companies trying to combat these losses are trying out new technology to ensure people won’t use the phone in their cars.

Tom Smith, economist at Emory University estimates the investment could save thousands of lives and billions of dollars.

“People would think that’s an overreach, but it’s not really an overreach if it’s your kids killed in a car crash,” said Smith.