

## Purpose

The purpose of the Cooper Jones Active Transportation Safety Council (CJATSC) Study Team is to review and discuss observations made from detailed case materials of fatal crashes involving cyclists, walkers, rollers, and people using other forms of active transportation to identify modifiable risks and protective factors that if present or absent could prevent future fatalities.

Review and discussion of case materials are organized around modifiable risk factors within the [Safe System Approach](#). Within each Safe System Element, modifiable risk and protective factors are identified across the [Spectrum of Prevention](#) framework.

**The observations reported by the Fatality Case Review Study Team are not the official recommendations of the CJATSC or the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.** The Study Team submits a summary of their observations to the CJATSC for consideration when developing actionable recommendations. The official recommendations of the CJATSC are published in their Annual Report and are found at <https://wtsc.wa.gov/programs-priorities/active-transportation-safety-council/>.

## Scope of Review

Meeting Date:	Monday, February 26, 2024
Case Selection Topic for Review:	Pedestrian Fatalities Involving Young Drivers Aged 16-20
Case Selection Criteria:	<p>Pedestrian fatalities that occurred in 2022 involving young drivers ages 16-20. In 2022, there were seven pedestrian fatalities involving a young driver aged 16-20; all seven cases were selected for review.</p> <p>These cases <i>involve</i> a young driver, which does not indicate that the young driver was the causing or striking vehicle driver.</p>

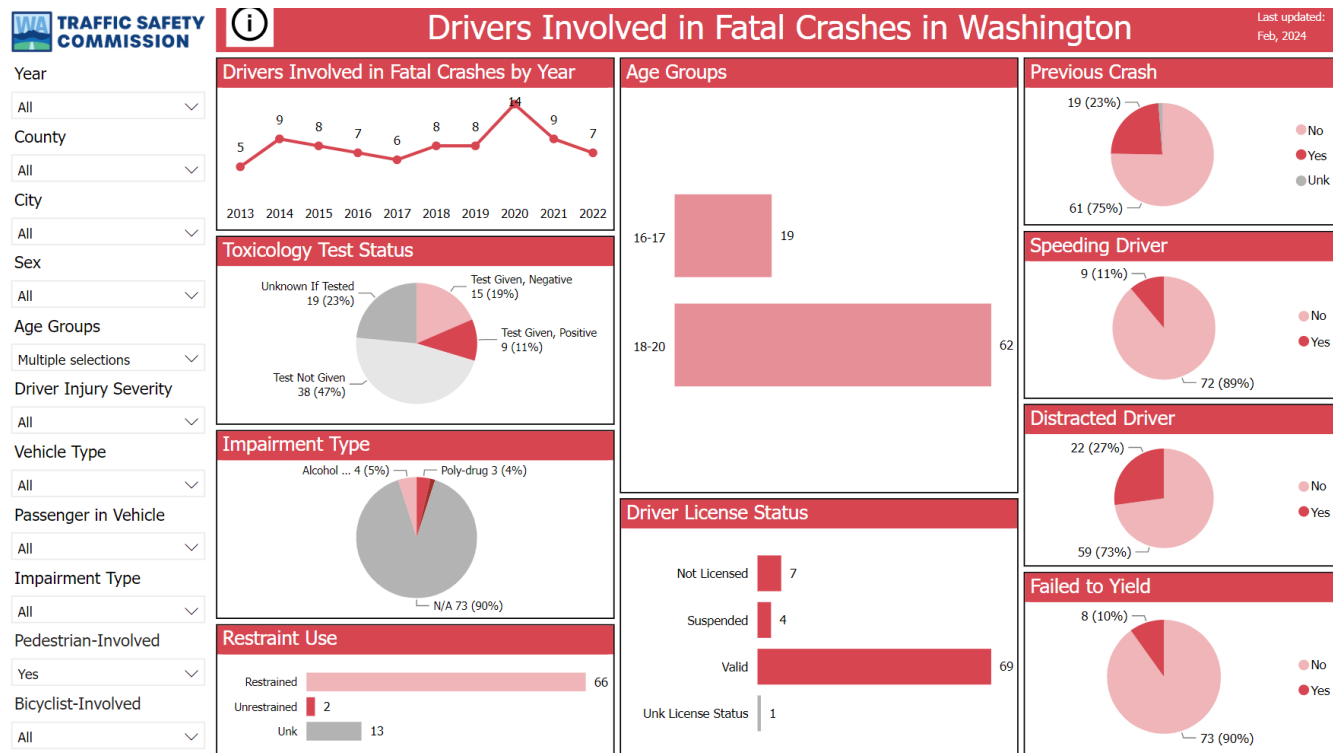
Summary of cases under review:

- Five cases involved only a young driver and the fatal pedestrian.
- One case involved a young driver with a passenger and the fatal pedestrian.
- One case involved three drivers, one being a young driver who was NOT the striking driver.

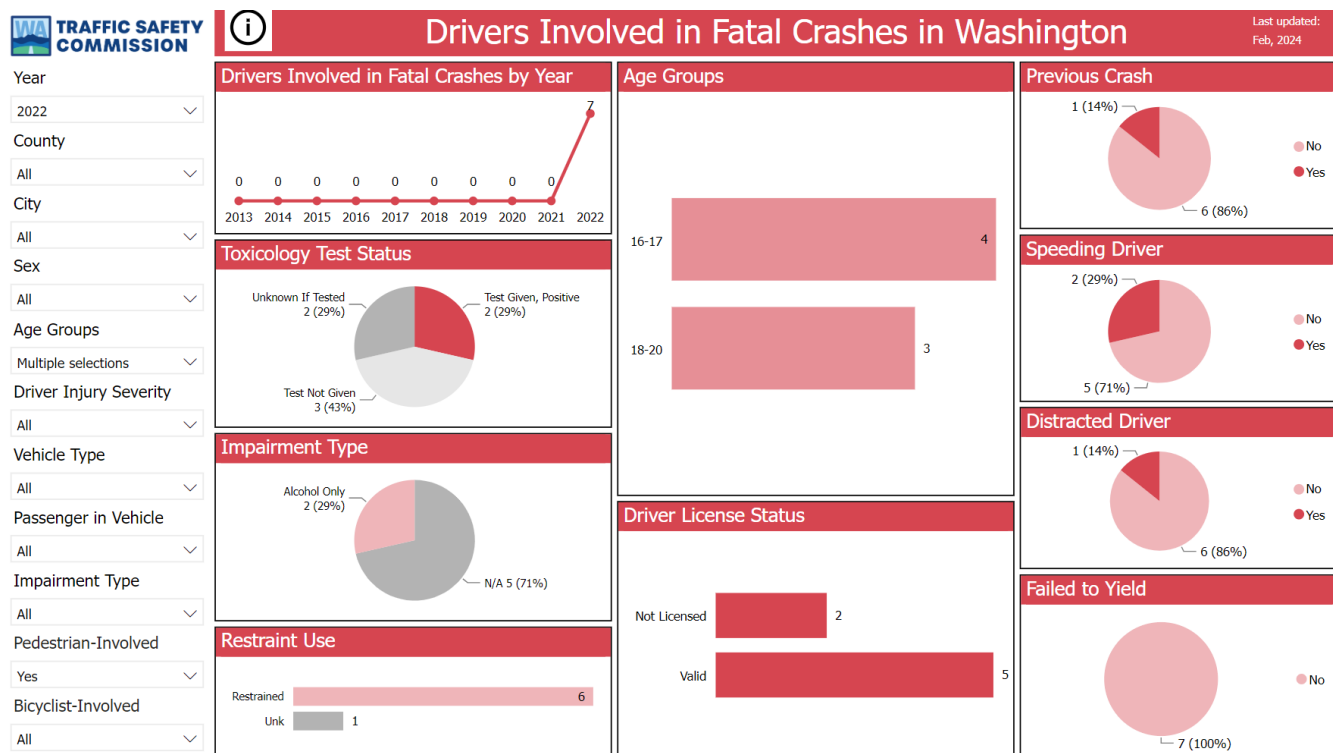
## Data Source

Data regarding the seven pedestrian fatalities under review was extracted from the following WTSC data dashboard <https://wtsc.wa.gov/dashboards/drivers-involved-in-fatal-crashes/>.

### Young drivers aged 16-20 involved in pedestrian fatalities between 2013-2022



### Young drivers aged 16-20 involved in pedestrian fatalities in 2022



## Observations

The observations and considerations presented in this report are based on discussions of the factors involved in the individual cases selected for this review.

### Safe Road Users

1. In multiple cases reviewed, young drivers involved in crashes immediately contacted their guardians for advice. This demonstrated the importance of family connections, and the influence family has on young drivers. Consider this when developing outreach and education campaigns targeting young drivers.
2. Newer vehicles have larger and more interactive in-dash systems and screens, which may cause distracted driving. Consider the following:
  - a. Research drivers' education and tests to verify what is included about interacting with newer dashboard technology and distracted driving.
  - b. Require all drivers to take continuing education or retest periods to ensure people are educated about new technologies and potential distractions.
3. Safety risks increase with late night driving. Young drivers with intermediate licenses are restricted from driving between 1-5 a.m.
  - a. Consider changing the restriction to start at 10 p.m., which is best practice, while still allowing exceptions for work.
    - i. [SB 5583](#) will modify nighttime driving restrictions for intermediate license holders to allow holders to operate a motor vehicle between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. if accompanied by a licensed driver at least 25 years old, or for school, religious, or employment activities for the holder of their immediate family member.
4. People licensed after the age of 18 may not have taken a drivers' education course. However, studies show completing drivers education course reduces risk.
  - a. Consider supporting policies that expand education requirements.
    - i. [SB 5583](#) will expand education requirements for people between the ages of 18-24. The target implementation date is July 1, 2026.
5. Young drivers may not have confidence about the actions required after being involved in a serious crash. It was confirmed that post-crash responsibilities are included in the DOL drivers guide. Consider researching if there are questions related to this topic on the drivers' exam and adding them if they are not.
6. People dropped off from rideshares mid-block may choose to cross the street there versus at a crosswalk which may increase risk to safety. Consider conducting outreach to rideshare companies and the public about safe drop-off practices.

7. Drivers are diverse and include people from a variety of countries and cultures. Including cultures where laws are not enforced on a regular basis, or laws are viewed as suggestions versus strict requirements. Consider developing campaigns in other languages to increase awareness and understanding of safety culture, the importance of following laws, and how laws are enforced.
8. The study team continues to observe that mental health and substance abuse impacts safety on roadways. Consider the following:
  - a. Supporting policies that provide mental health and substance abuse services.
  - b. Partnering with substance abuse providers and promoting active transportation safety best practices.
9. Drivers may choose to drive regardless of whether they are able to comply with license restrictions due to a need to get to work/run essential errands. Consider the following:
  - a. Enforcement of minor infractions, such as not wearing corrective lenses, can deter repeated offences or offending in the first place. Consider conducting outreach to law enforcement on this topic.
  - b. Support policies that increase access to public transportation, so people do not feel like that have no other option than to drive for essential errands.
  - c. Educate people about the importance of adhering to their license restrictions/requirements.
10. People may not intuitively understand the difference in how drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, etc. move about on roadways and adjacent infrastructure. Additionally, crosswalks may provide pedestrians with a false sense of security.
  - a. Consider developing education for people to understand how each (drivers, peds, cyclists, etc.) moves about on roadways and how to practice situational awareness regardless of who has the right-of-way.
  - b. Drivers' education courses should include education about ALL transportation modes to change perceptions to support a more shared-use model rather than driver-centric.
11. Multiple cases involved a young driver not slowing or stopping when cars in adjacent lanes had stopped for a crossing pedestrian. This included situations in which the pedestrian did and did not have the right-of-way. Consider outreach and education to young drivers encouraging them look for other slowing vehicles and to proceed with caution when this is observed.

## **Safe Vehicles**

1. Young drivers may choose to drive at excessive and unsafe speeds due to lack of experience and knowledge of risk. Consider requiring intelligent speed assistance on vehicles for drivers with intermediate licenses.

## Safe Speeds

1. Roads that are long straight-aways with no stop signs or traffic signals allow drivers to gain and maintain speed. This is especially dangerous in mixed-use, residential, and densely populated areas with high pedestrian activity. Roundabouts are an option to slow traffic, however there are roads too narrow for roundabouts. Consider the following:
  - a. Support and advocate for the installation of stop signs and signals at reoccurring intervals in these types of locations.
  - b. Install speed feedback signs.
  - c. Expand local municipalities' use of speed cameras.
    - i. [HB 2384](#)

## Safe Roads

1. The study team continues to observe fatalities occurring when a pedestrian and vehicle are given the right to proceed through an intersection at the same time. Consider policies that totally separate pedestrians and vehicles at intersections, such as not allowing vehicles to turn right on red and not allowing pedestrians to cross while vehicles make left turns.
2. Streets designed with tall trees and foliage canopies included near sidewalks and roadway edges may block street lighting and increase risk to safety for vulnerable road users.
3. The study team continues to observe outdated roadway design that is not appropriate for highly populated and residential areas. These types of roads may also be stroads<sup>1</sup> which WSDOT identified as having high pedestrian injury/death rates. Another example is multi-lane roads with bus stops and active transportation users but no crosswalks. Consider the following:
  - a. Support funding to install roundabouts when possible, increasing stop signs/signals, and installing speed feedback signs on these roads to reduce speeding.
  - b. Support policies that prioritize stroads for active transportation user improvements.
  - c. Support lowering speed and adding more crosswalks/flashing crossing signage in areas where active transportation users have increased.

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<sup>1</sup> A "stroad" is term that may be used to define a road (often an arterial road) that becomes a street over time. A road connects two points and run miles, has higher speed limits, and more traffic. A street is a road with buildings on both sides, usually has more businesses and active transportation users. Stroads happen over time, as populations increase, businesses and residential buildings are added around the road, and it becomes a street. This may result in road design that has not caught up with change and usage and therefore creates an increased safety risk for active transportation users.

### **Post-Crash Care**

1. Modern tools and technology have improved over the last two decades. These improvements help law enforcement with crash investigations and fatal reconstruction reports, which ensures more accurate reporting of crash factors. Consider supporting funding for technology and training needed for law enforcement to conduct thorough investigations.

### **FCR Improvement**

1. The materials provided for fatal case reviews are often missing adjudication information. The study team would like to know when a case results in vehicular homicide, negligent driving, etc.
2. The study team would like to know the details of previous crashes of drivers involved in crashes under review to see any multi-crash involved patterns.

### **Summary of Considerations**

The Fatal Case Review Study Team is referring the following actions to the CJATSC for discussion by all members and consideration for further research, applicability, and evidence base to develop Study Teams, white papers, policy, and recommendations of the CJATSC to prevent death and serious injury among active transportation users.

- Invite a WSDOT speaker to discuss stroads – how they are identified and then prioritized for ATU improvements.
- Research planning and permitting requirements for constructing high-occupancy residential areas such as apartments, townhomes, and large single-family housing developments.
  - What are the regulations for developers to address and/or improve ATU safety?
  - Research how to discourage or ban development land use waivers when ATU safety-related are present.
    - Make the process more accountable, such as crash history precludes waivers.
    - Look into how traffic studies are used in this process – is it only traffic volume that predicts use and waivers or does the process also require measurement of ATU activity.
    - Require measurement of all forms of transportation use in studies for new builds.