



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

## Senator Sean Ryan, Assemblymember Jon Rivera Urge Action For Safer Streets

SEAN M. RYAN August 29, 2024

| ISSUE: TRAFFIC SAFETY, COMPLETE STREETS, NYS SENATOR SEAN RYAN, NYS SENATE DISTRICT 61



Traffic Fatalities Are Increasing at an Alarming Rate in Western New York and Statewide

Legislation Introduced to Prioritize 'Complete Streets' Designs Proven to Make Roads Safer for Everyone

**BUFFALO** – Today, August 29, 2024, New York State Senator Sean Ryan and Assemblymember Jon Rivera joined advocates from GObike to call for changes to New York

State law that would make travel safer for all road users.

According to a report released in June by Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, New York has seen a steady increase in motor vehicle fatalities in each of the last three years on record. That trend culminated in 1,175 fatalities in 2022 – the highest number of traffic deaths the state has seen since 2013.

Additional historical data collected by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and [compiled by GObike](#) indicates that the number of car crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists in Western New York has [increased in each of the last three years](#). The number of crashes involving a pedestrian or cyclist has risen from 676 incidents in 2020 to 879 in 2023 – a 30% increase. The increase in pedestrian and cyclist fatalities has been even sharper, rising 200% from 14 in 2020 to 42 in 2023.

A piece of legislation sponsored by Senator Ryan and Assemblymember Rivera is aimed at making New York's streets safer for all users and reversing this alarming trend. Their bill ([S.9718/A.1280A](#)) would ensure "Complete Streets" design principles are used in more transportation projects across New York.

A Complete Street is a roadway planned and designed to consider the safe, convenient access and mobility of all roadway users of all ages and abilities – on foot, on bikes, in wheelchairs, and in cars. Complete Streets roadway design features include sidewalks, lane striping, bicycle lanes, paved shoulders suitable for use by bicyclists, signage, crosswalks, pedestrian control signals, bus bulb-outs, curb cuts, raised crosswalks, ramps and traffic calming

measures. Established in 2011, New York's [Complete Streets](#) policy was created to ensure that state, county, and local agencies consider the convenience and mobility of all types of road users when developing transportation projects.

However, current law only requires certain types of projects to incorporate Complete Streets principles. It specifically excludes projects classified as resurfacing, maintenance, and pavement recycling, which occur far more frequently than the projects covered by the current law. This omission dramatically decreases the number of projects in which complete streets design features are used. The bill introduced by Senator Ryan and Assemblymember Rivera would expand the state's Complete Streets policy to include all of these types of projects.

Senator Ryan has also introduced another bill ([S.100A](#)) that would expand the Complete Streets policy's impact. Currently, only transportation projects undertaken by NYSDOT or projects that receive *both* federal and state funding are required to use Complete Streets principles. This legislation would expand the policy to include all transportation projects that receive *either* federal or state funding.

**Senator Sean Ryan** said, "Crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists have been on the rise and we have seen the tragic results on the news in Western New York too many times to count. Many of those tragedies have been the result of distracted driving and a lack of appropriate safety infrastructure. It's clear that we need to be more proactive in addressing this problem. There are many things we can do to try to influence driver behavior, but just being more thoughtful about our roadway infrastructure is one of the most effective interventions we can make. Many of New York's roadways have already benefited from utilizing the Complete Streets model to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and

drivers. However, we still have work to do to ensure our entire transportation network is as safe as possible for everyone using it.”

**Assemblymember Jon D. Rivera** said, “Far too often, we witness the tragic consequences of dangerous intersections and poorly designed roadways. Lives are lost, families shattered, and communities scarred by preventable accidents. Here in Western New York crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists have increased every year for the last three years. We must do better for our children and our families. The Complete Streets legislation I’m sponsoring alongside Senator Ryan is a step toward ensuring that our streets prioritize safety above all else.”

**Justin Booth, Executive Director of GObike and Member of the New York State Safe Streets**

**Coalition, said,** “There is no price you can put on saving lives, but you can measure the cost of leaving our roads in their current dangerous condition. The [Erie County Department of Health measured the fallout of all the crashes that occurred in 2014](#). At that time, the average cost of hospitalizations and emergency department visits per crash was \$46,978. In today’s dollars, that’s \$62,020 per crash in medical costs alone, let alone the cost of follow-up care, damage to cars and bikes, property, and lost wages. In Erie County from 2018 - 2023, there were 34,600 crashes resulting in injury or death, for an average of 5,717 per year. By the County’s calculations, the costs of these hospitalizations and emergency department visits cost us \$354,568,340 each year. In comparison to what all these crashes on our dangerous roads cost our community, we can absolutely afford to make these investments in improving safety through infrastructure improvements. When streets are safer for people to walk, bike, or use wheelchairs, they’re safer for drivers, too.”

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2023-S100A

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- Introduced
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Requires the consideration of complete street design for certain transportation projects which receive federal or state funding

December 28, 2022

In Senate Committee [Transportation](#)

Sponsored by [Sean M. Ryan](#)

Do you support this bill?

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