

Pedestrian Safety in the United States' Sunbelt: A Spatial and Qualitative Analysis

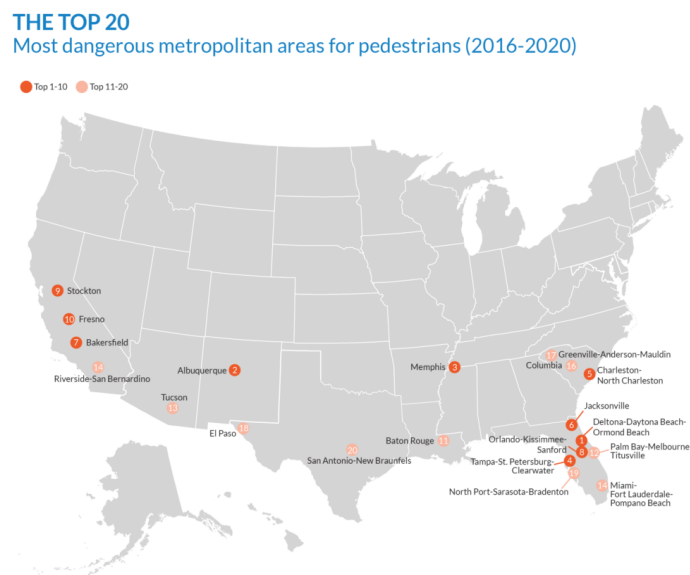
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The United States is currently experiencing the largest rise in pedestrian fatalities in recent history. Cities in the southern half of the country, the “Sunbelt”, make up a disproportionate amount of the most dangerous cities for pedestrians in the country. Though research has been thorough in the demographic and built environment characteristics that correlate with increased pedestrian risk, there is little research as to why this specific region of the country is largely unable to control this rise. Through spatial and statistical analysis of three Sunbelt cities and two non-Sunbelt cities, along with seven interviews conducted with municipal officials and pedestrian safety advocates, evidence is found that fatal crashes cluster in the Sunbelt in largely Black and Hispanic-dominant neighborhoods on the outskirts of cities, which explains much of the discrepancy between lower pedestrian fatality rates in other parts of the country. Additionally, Sunbelt cities are constricted by jurisdictional bureaucracy and dealing with the legacy of previous urban renewal projects in communities disproportionately affected by pedestrian fatalities, which is largely unique to the region.



Source: *Dangerous by Design* (Smart Growth America, 2022)