

2012-2016 Annual Crash Report

Valdosta-Lowndes County
Metropolitan Planning Organization

June 2017



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Introduction

Since 2007, the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO) has produced an annual Vehicle Crash Report examining infrastructure and behavioral safety concerns within the urban and rural portions of Lowndes County. The report is used to supplement the development of the VLMPO transportation plans and to identify transportation infrastructure projects to improve the safety of the travelling public. This year's VLMPO Annual Crash Report includes data from five years, 2012 – 2016.

This report will continue to be used to inform local public agencies of crash related data in the community, and to identify causes of crashes and possible safety improvements, law enforcement, or education improvements.

This report examines various characteristics of crash data to determine the increase or decrease in overall crashes, crash frequency, crash locations, contributing factors, etc. In the end, we will identify the twenty highest frequency crash locations in the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County.

This report will be used by the VLMPO and local jurisdictions to evaluate projects in the 2040 Transportation Vision Plan update and annual Transportation Improvement Program updates. It will help to identify future safety related infrastructure projects, and make data available to the MPO and local jurisdictions which will allow analysis of the most beneficial projects and actions based on past crashes at specific locations.

In addition, it will help the VLMPO establish safety performance measures that are now required by federal law under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The five safety

performance measures now mandated by federal law for MPOs to follow include number of fatalities, rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), number of serious injuries, rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT, and the number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries. MPOs must establish their targets for these safety performance measures by February 2018, and this document will provide a glimpse as to what these numbers could potentially be for the Valdosta urbanized area.

Local jurisdictions, agencies and other groups can also use this report to target education and enforcement efforts so as to help reduce crashes of all types on the roadways of Lowndes County.

The past Annual Crash Reports have identified particular geographic areas of concern, population groups and crash types that are prevalent in crashes in Lowndes County. This report continues to evaluate particular areas of concern, and works to find out why these crashes happen and what can be done to improve these areas.

This report is based on the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) Highway Safety Plan which outlines education and enforcement measures to reduce highway crashes on Georgia roads.

The GOHS Highway Safety Plan utilizes the "4-E" approach to reduce crashes in Georgia. Crash prevention and response is not the duty of just one agency; rather, many different agencies with different priorities and responsibilities. Each agency must respond accordingly to crash reduction efforts in their own areas of expertise. The 4 E's of Highway Safety -- Education, Engineering, Enforcement and

Emergency Medical Services¹, -- are where those many different responsible agencies come together to each do their own part in reducing crash frequency and severity.

Education includes working with young and old alike to educate drivers, pedestrians, bike riders, and passengers of the rules of the road and other important safety factors. Education includes: diversion programs for underage drinking; general public education campaigns; safety belt and child seat inspections; and expanded and improved driver training courses and materials.

Engineering includes working with local and state public works, and highway and transportation departments to improve the physical characteristic of the roadway and right-of-way. The Engineering 'E' focuses on improving the basic infrastructure of the intersections and roadway corridors.

Enforcement includes working with law enforcement agencies to educate drivers to prevent crashes, as well as efficient response and analysis of crash sites. The Enforcement E includes: employing checkpoints for DUI or seatbelt usage; enforcement of laws for underage and excessive drinking; targeted speed and intersection use enforcement; and proper data collection for future analysis.

Emergency Medical Services includes all first responders to crash sites and the medical treatment victims receive immediately after a crash. The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) E includes: efficient response by medical personal to crash site, rapid evacuation of victims to trauma centers, and education of the public on proper usage of safety restraints.

Each of the 4 E's is not mutually exclusive to the various agencies described above. For example

education is spread out between all of the different agency partners, like law enforcement agencies, highway departments, and EMS responders. Also, engineers may get ideas from suggestions from law enforcement agencies or schools about concerns with children walking to school. Each of the various agencies has their own role to play, as well as an interconnected role with other agencies to reduce crash frequency and severity on our roadways.

Highway Safety Plan Goals

Annually, the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety adopts statewide goals to reduce fatal crashes throughout the state. This local crash analysis is guided by these goals and seeks to show how our local communities are contributing to meeting these goals on a statewide basis. The crash information presented in this report will examine how our local communities are doing at reducing crashes.

On the following pages, the 2016 State Highway Safety Plan² goals are presented along with local crash analysis and statistics to show progress made locally towards achieving those goals.

Note: The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has changed the way in which it reports data to planning agencies, the data here was accessed through the Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System (GEARS) Portal and through raw crash data provided by GDOT, and may be slightly inconsistent with previous year's data. We are also not looking at crashes that occur on private property.

¹ Source: Nebraska Highway Safety Plan Critical Strategies, Nebraska Department of Roads

² Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety.
<https://www.gahighwaysafety.org/fullpanel/uploads/files/gohs-2016-hsp.pdf>

1. To decrease traffic fatalities 5.5% from 1,199 (2011-2013 average) to 1,133 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.

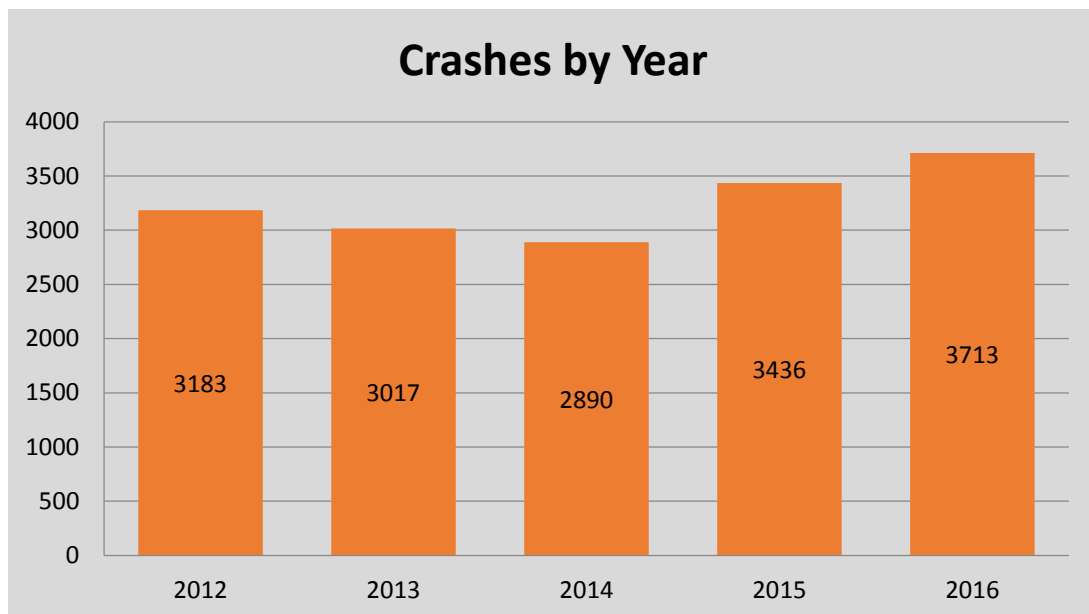


Figure 1: Between 2012 and 2016, Lowndes County experienced 16,239 crashes, and the annual totals decreased from 2012 to 2014 before two consecutive years of increases in 2015 and 2016.

Data Source: Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System (GEARS)

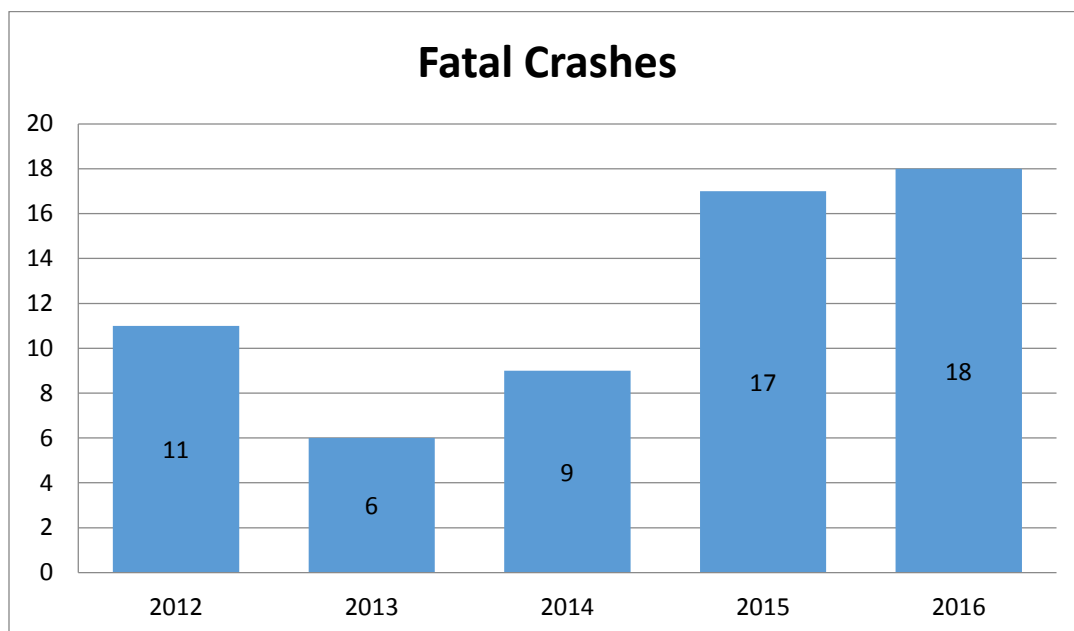


Figure 2: Overall, fatal crashes have increased in Lowndes County, especially from 2014 to 2015. Other goals from the State Highway Safety Plan investigate factors into these fatal crashes.

2. To decrease traffic injuries below the 2013 calendar base year average of 113,677 to 112,526 by 2016.

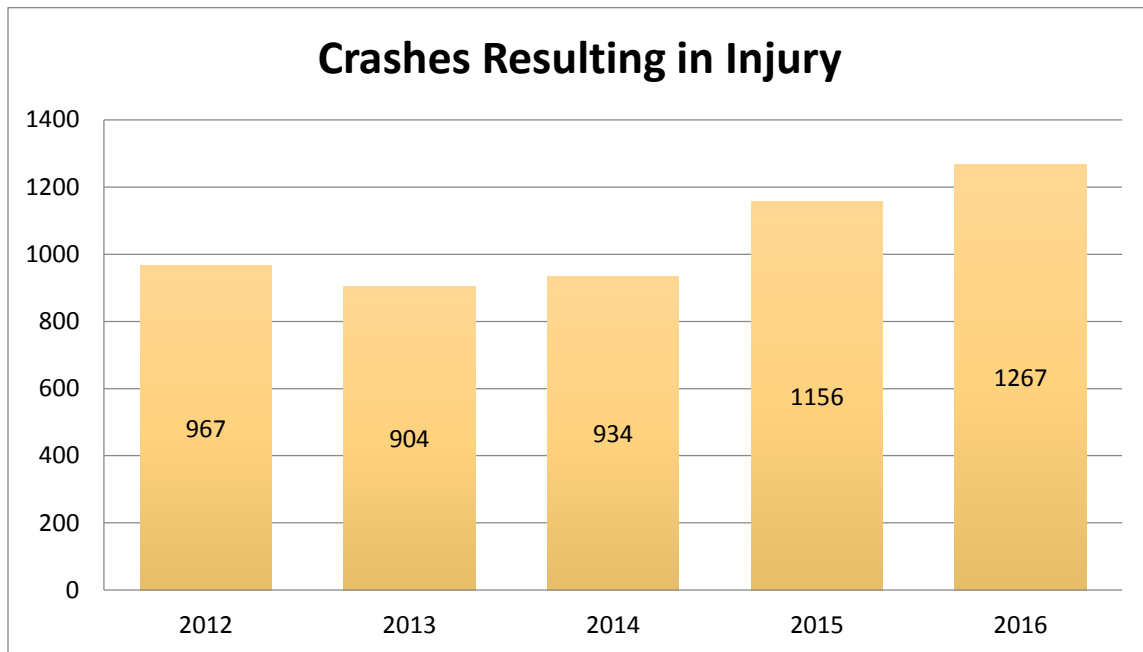


Figure 3: Lowndes County has experienced an increase in crashes resulting in injury.

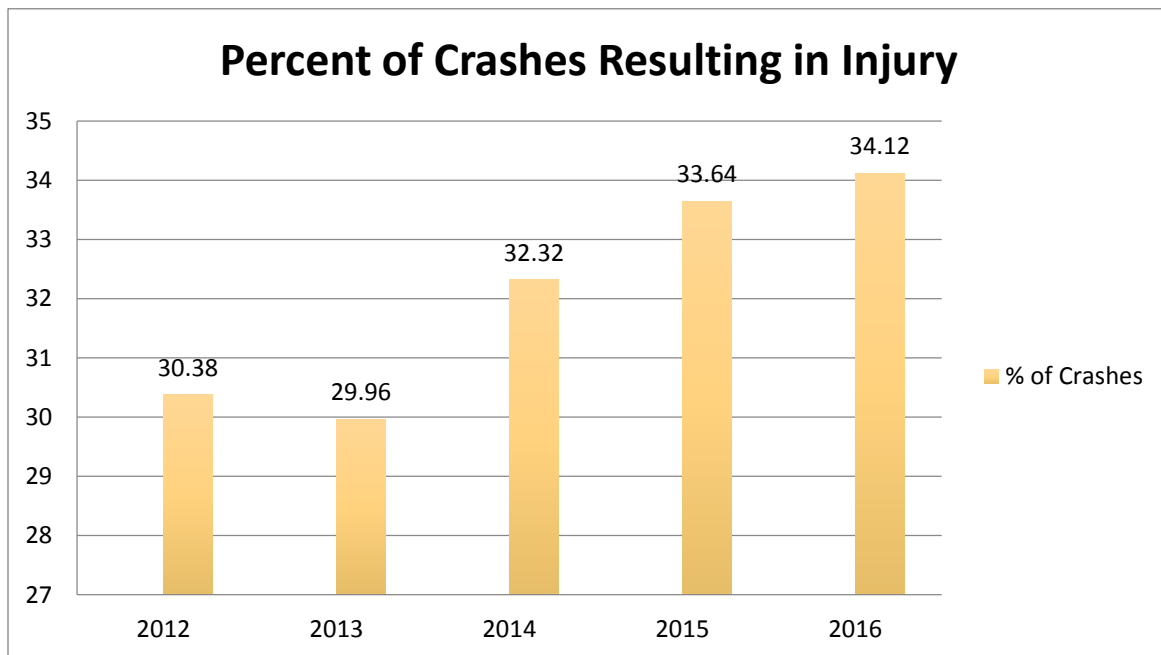


Figure 4: Lowndes County experienced a slight percent increase in the crashes that result in injury. After hovering around 30% in 2012 and 2013, the percentage of injury crashes went up to 34.12% in 2016.

3. To decrease fatalities per 100M VMT 6.3% from 1.11 (2011-2013 average) to 1.04 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.
 - a. To decrease rural fatalities per 100M VMT 5.7% from 1.86 (2011-2013 average) to 1.75 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.
 - b. To decrease urban fatalities per 100M VMT 7.6% from 0.79 (2011-2013 average) to 0.73 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.

	VMT (in millions)	Crashes		Serious Injuries		Fatalities	
		number	per 100M VMT	number	per 100M VMT	number	per 100M VMT
2012	361.10	3183	881.47	967	267.79	11	3.05
2013	367.46	3017	821.04	904	246.01	6	1.63
2014	388.03	2890	744.78	934	240.70	9	2.32
2015	407.47	3436	843.25	1156	283.70	17	4.17
2016*	420.94*	3713	882.08*	1267	300.99*	18	4.28*
2017*	440.94*	3903.44*	911.21*	1279.98*	303.29*	19.28098*	4.62*
5 year rolling average		3247.8	834.52	1045.6	267.84	12.2	3.09

Table 1: Crashes, Injuries, and Fatalities calculated at a rate of 100M vehicle miles traveled (VMT)

*2016 and 2017 numbers applied forecasted projections based on 2012-2015 VMT data from GDOT

4. To decrease unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities 7.2% from 389 (2011-2013 average) to 361 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.

29 out of 61 crashes resulting in fatalities in Lowndes County over the past 5 years did not record the use of safety equipment. Meanwhile, the overall percent of crashes in the past 5 years where safety equipment was recorded as used was approximately 78%. This percentage reflects null or unknown instances of the usage of safety equipment in a vehicle involved in a crash.

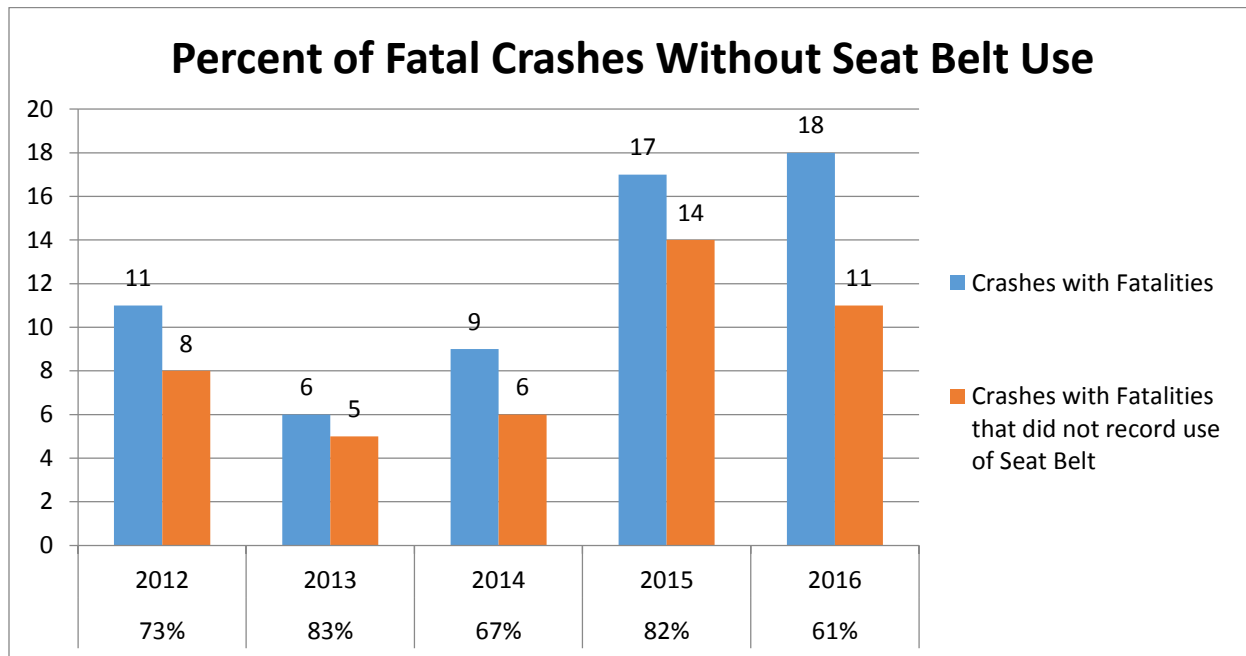


Figure 5: While there was an overall increase in the number of fatalities not involving seat belt use, there was a decrease between 2015 and 2016 from 82% to 61%.

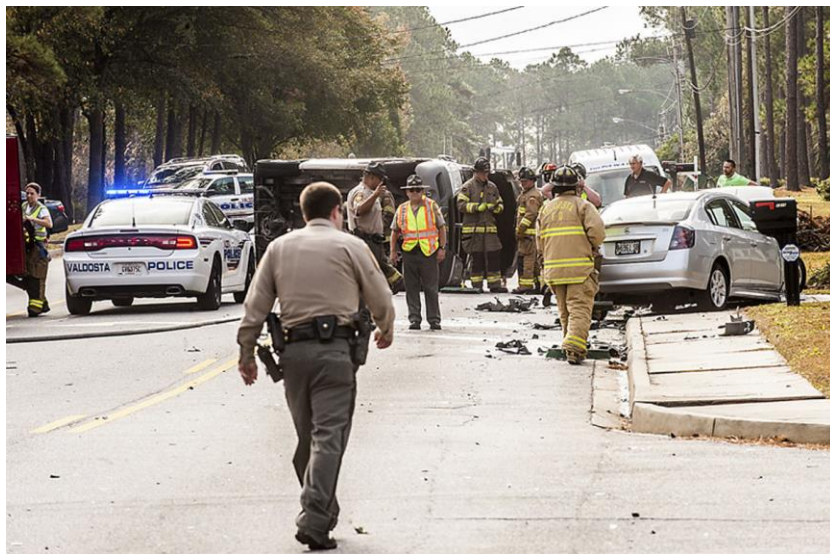


Photo: Valdosta Daily Times

5. To decrease alcohol impaired driving fatalities 2.5% from 288 (2011-2013 average) to 280 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.

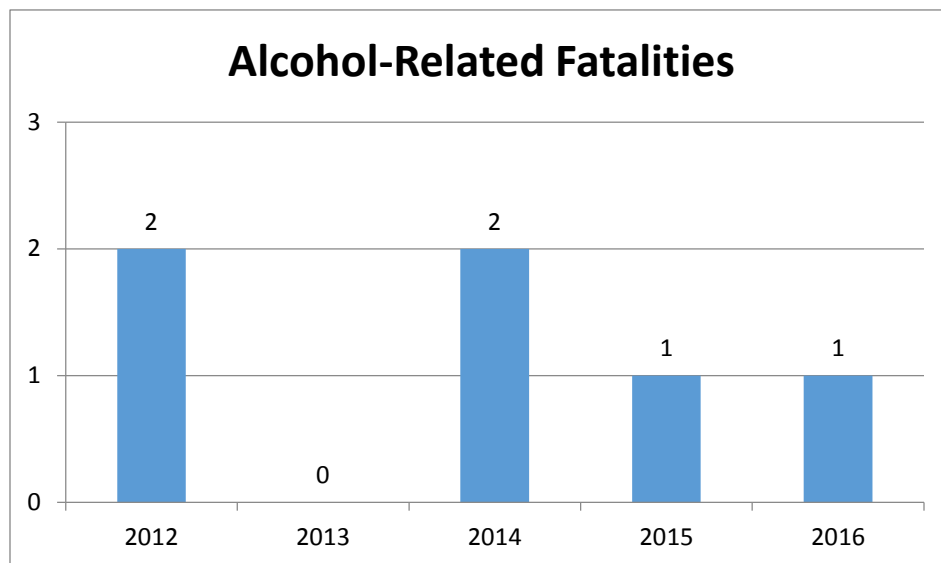


Figure 6: Alcohol fatalities have slightly decreased in Lowndes County between 2012 and 2016.

6. To decrease speeding-related fatalities 9.5% from 199 (2011-2013 average) to 182 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.

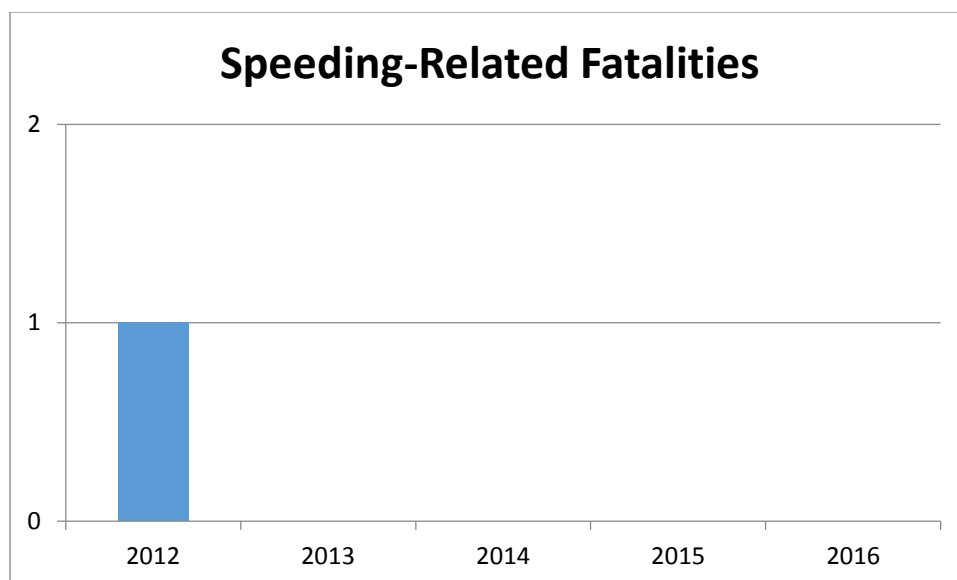


Figure 7: One traffic fatality in 2012 was directly attributed to speeding.

7. To decrease motorcyclist fatalities 1.8% from 133 (2011-2013 average) to 108 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.

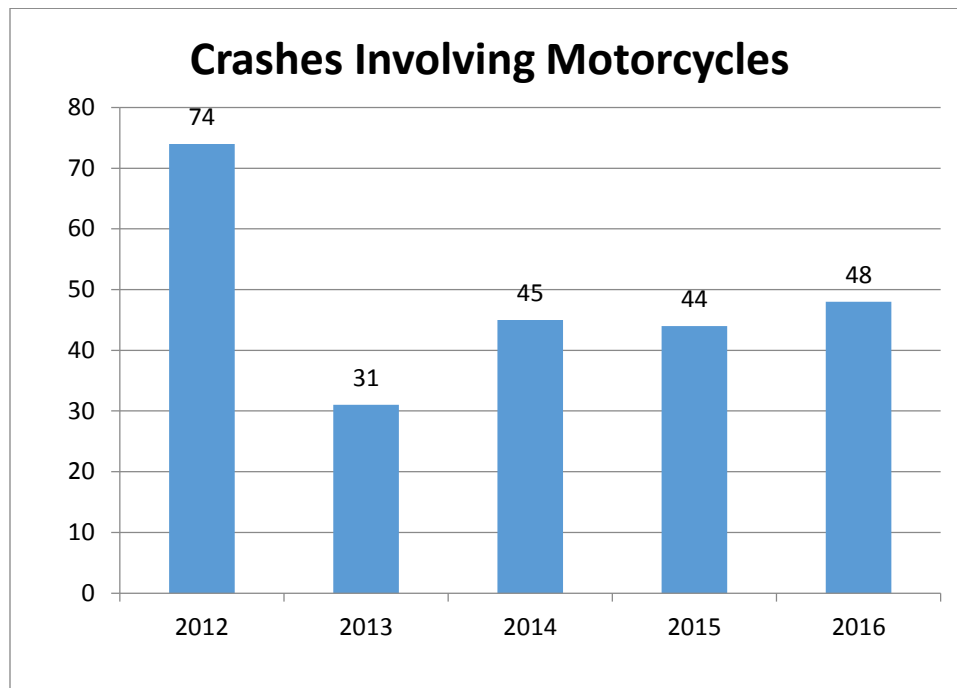


Figure 8: Lowndes County has seen an overall drop in motorcycle crashes in the past 5 years; however, there was a slight increase between 2015 and 2016.

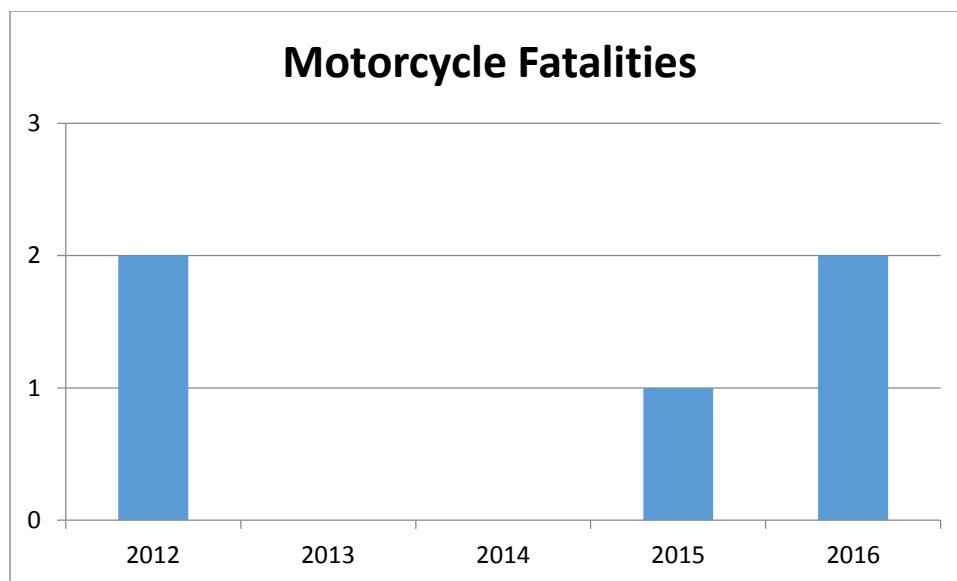


Figure 9: There was an increase in motorcycle fatalities between 2014 and 2016, but the average over the past 5 years is one per year.

8. To decrease un-helmeted motorcyclists fatalities from 9 (2011-2013 average) to 3 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.

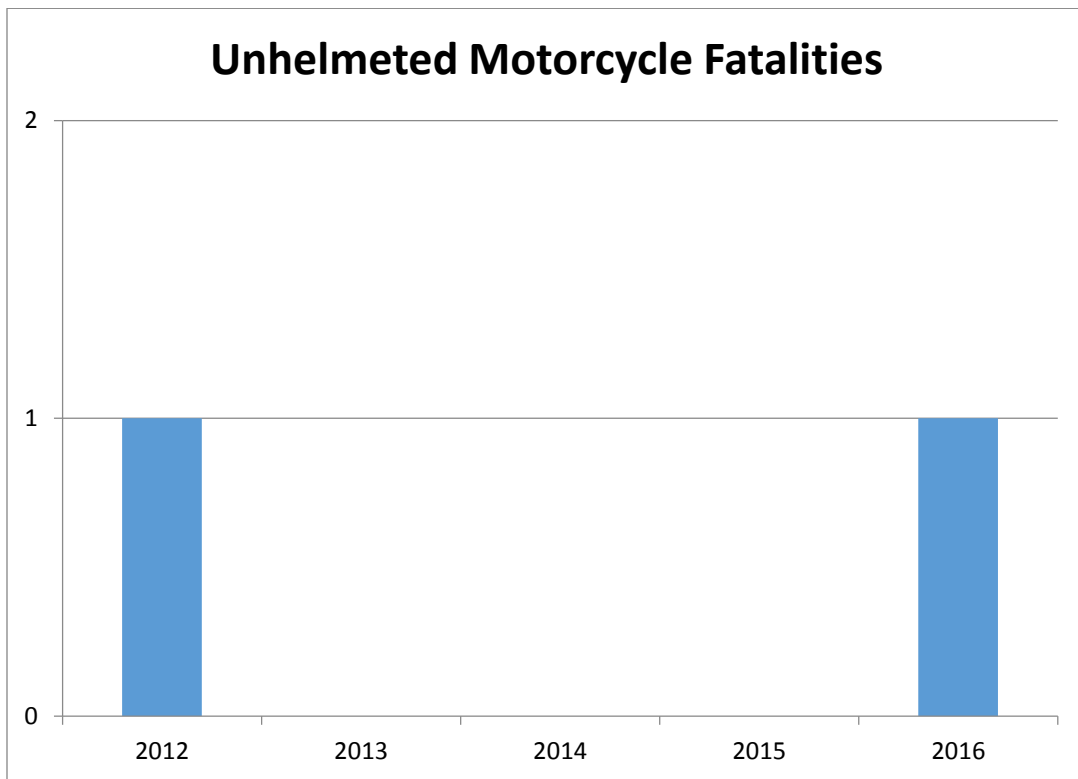


Figure 10: Unhelmeted motorcycle fatalities were infrequent over the past 5 years.

9. To decrease drivers age 20 or younger involved in fatal crashes 8.1% from 160 (2011-2013 average) to 147 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.

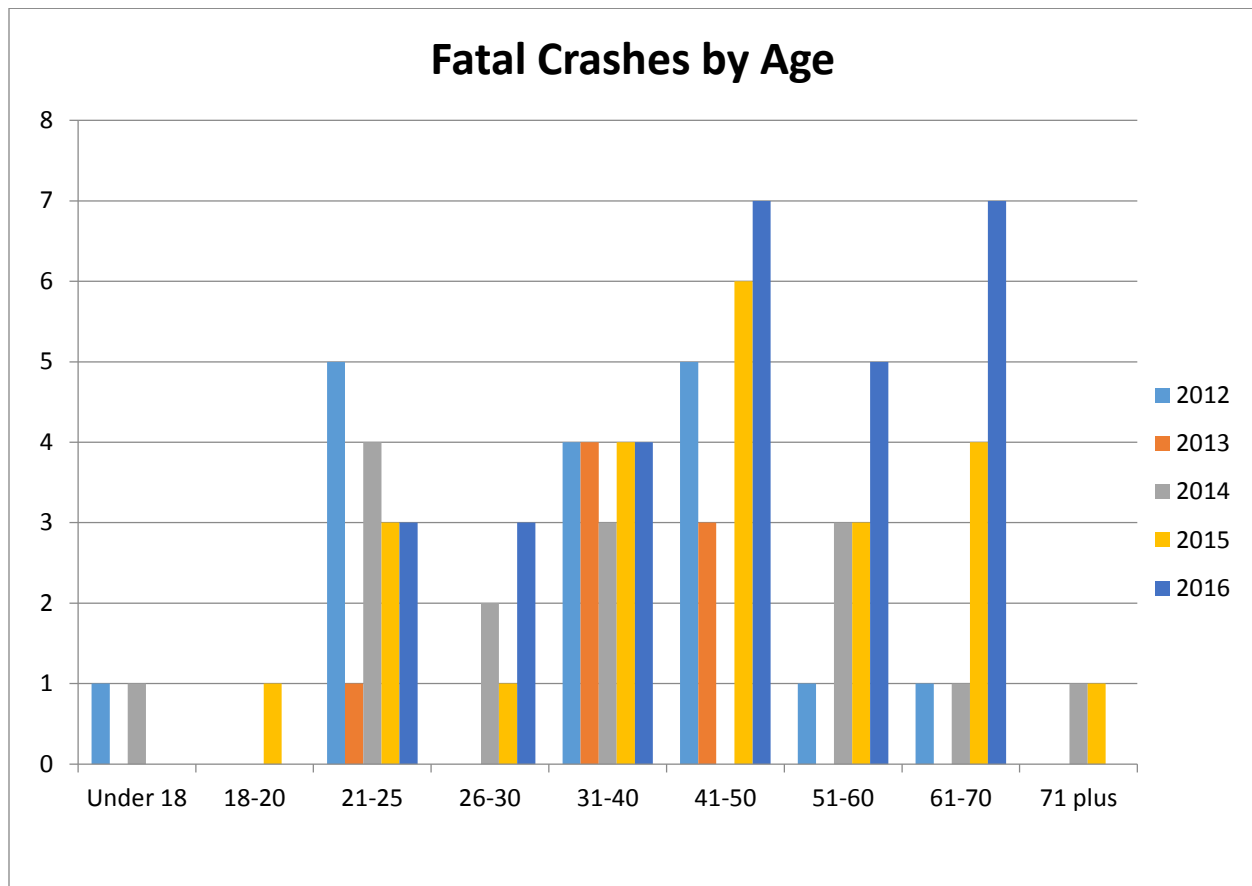


Figure 11: Fatal Crashes by Age shows that in Lowndes County, there are more crashes in the 41-50 age groups than in most others. Crashes are not just caused by one age group, but are spread out across all age groups. Over the past 5 years, there were 3 fatal crashes involving drivers aged 20 or younger.

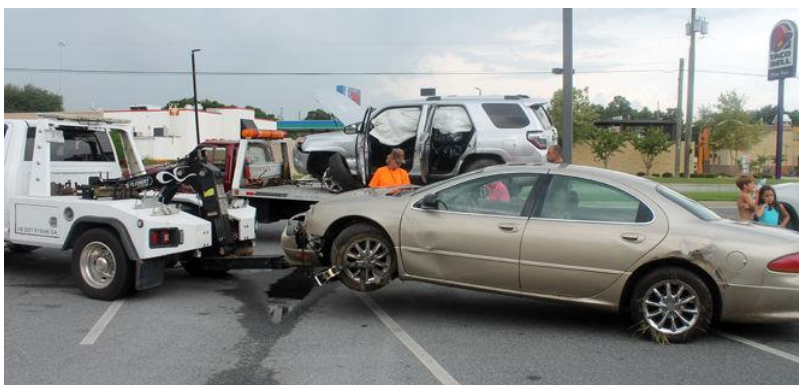


Photo: Valdosta Daily Times

10. To decrease the count of pedestrian fatalities from 176 in calendar year 2013 to 163 in calendar year 2016.

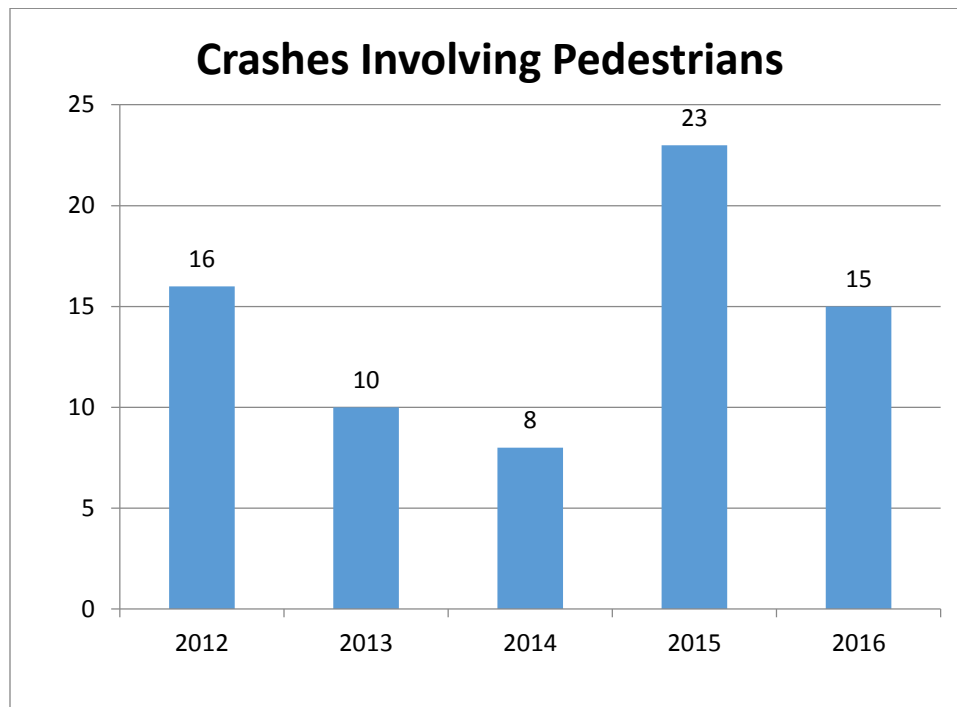


Figure 12: Lowndes County crashes involving pedestrians decreased from 2012 to 2014 and spiked in 2015, but declined in 2016.

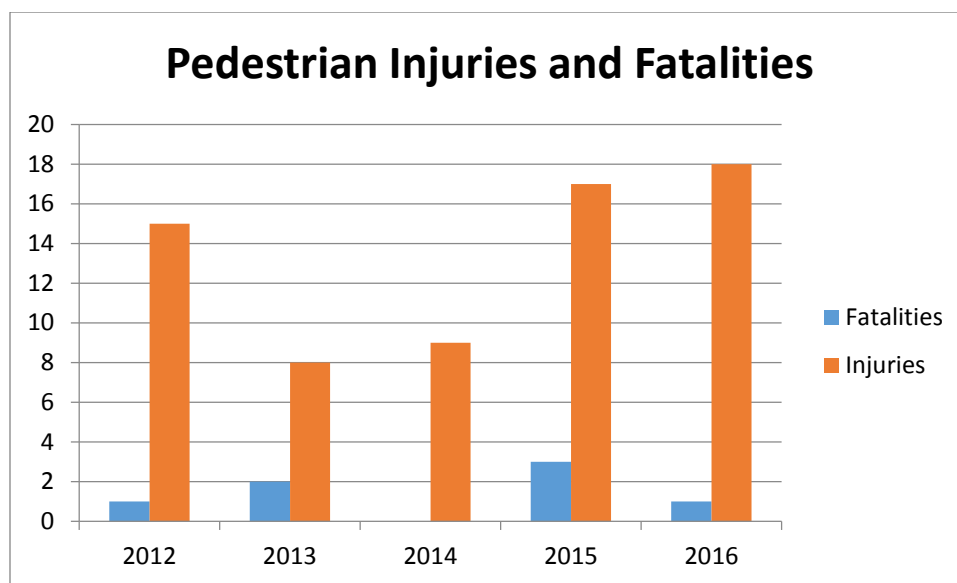


Figure 13: 2015 had the most pedestrian fatalities in Lowndes County in the past 5 years. The rolling averages over the past 5 years were 1.4 pedestrian fatalities and 13.4 pedestrian injuries.

11. To decrease bicyclist fatalities 12.5% from 15 (2011-2013 average) to 14 (2014-2016 average) in 2016.

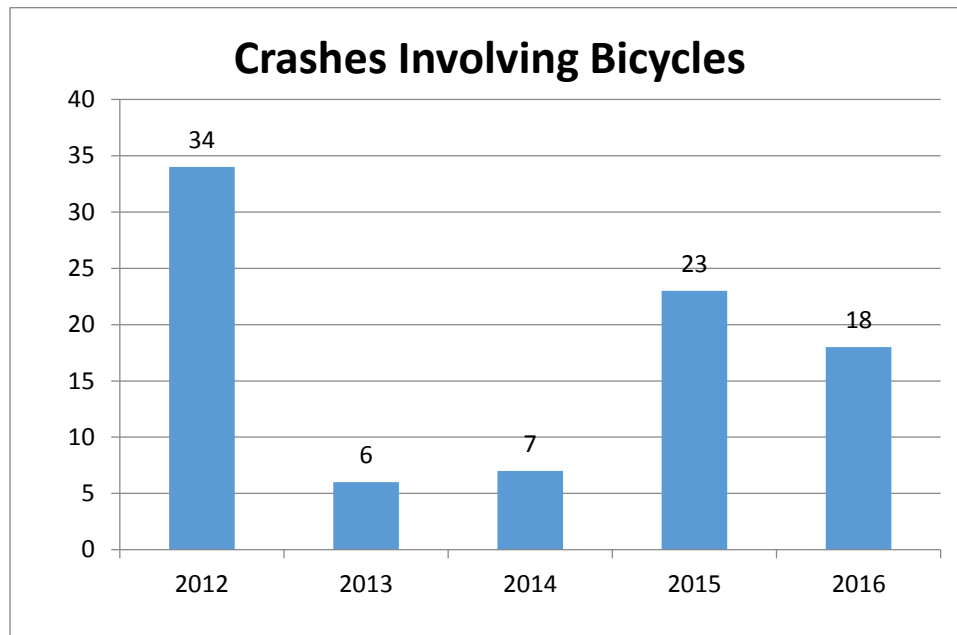


Figure 14: 2012 had the most bicycle fatalities in Lowndes County in the past 5 years.

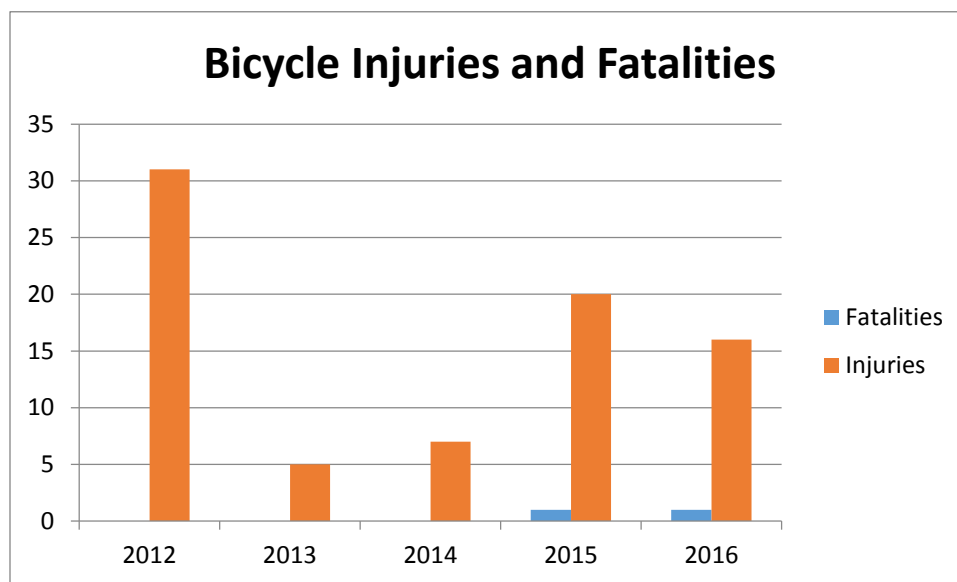


Figure 15: 2015 and 2016 had the most bicycle fatalities in Lowndes County in the past 5 years. The rolling 5 year averages were 0.4 bicycle fatalities and 15.8 bicycle injuries.

12. Increase statewide observed safety belt use of front seat outboard occupants in passenger vehicles from baseline 97.3 % in 2014 to 97.7% in 2016.

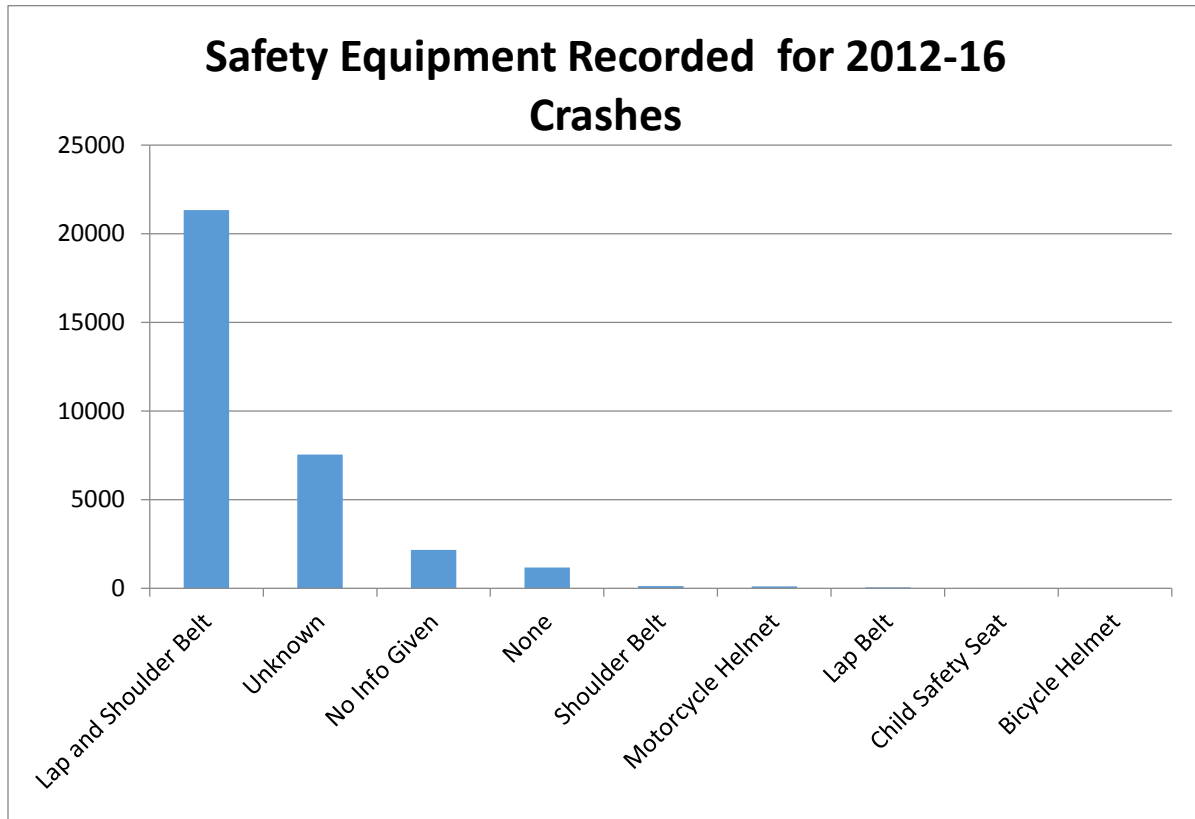


Figure 16: Of all crashes extracted from the GEARS database, approximately 78% of them noted that a seat belt or similar safety equipment was used. The most common type was lap and shoulder belt.

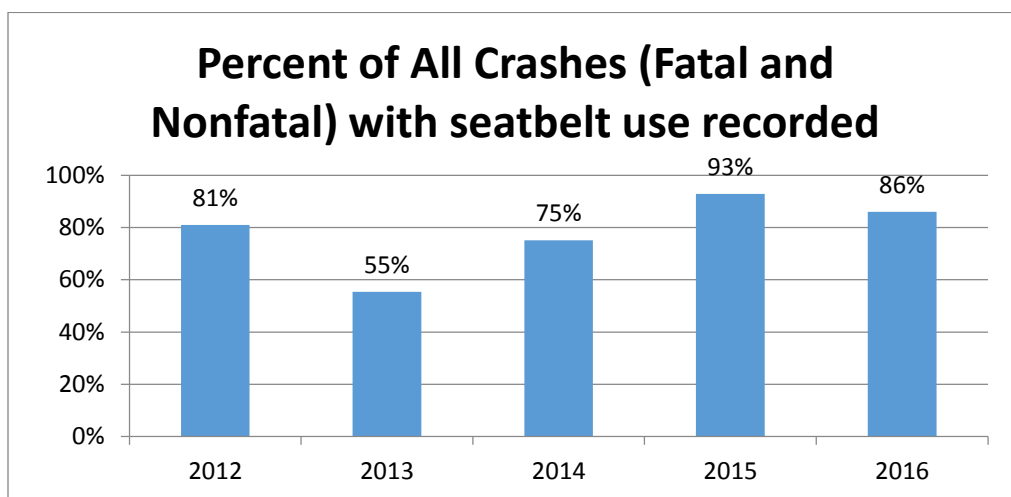


Figure 17: 2015 had the highest percentage of seat belt use among all 2012-16 Lowndes County crashes.

Other Charts and Data

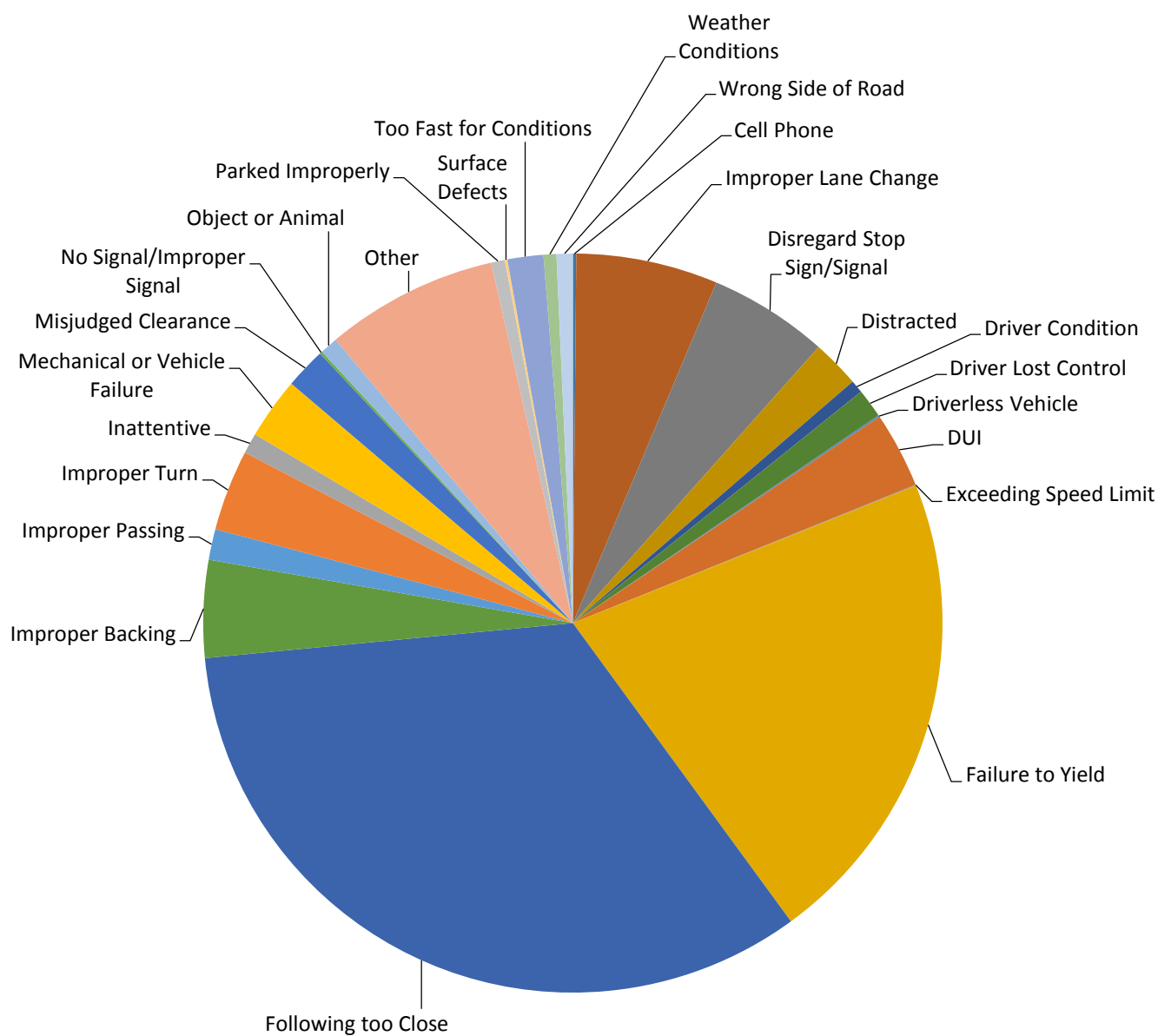


Figure 18: The most cited contributing factors to crashes in the 2016 calendar year were “following too close” and “failure to yield.”

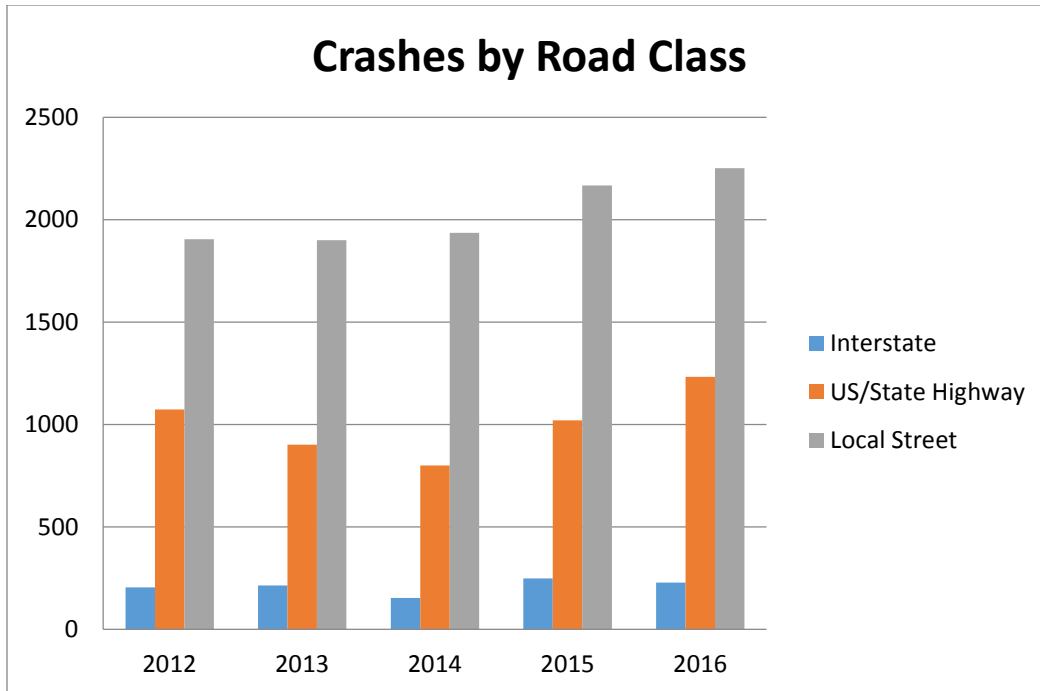


Figure 19: Crashes on local streets have increased the most between 2012 and 2016.

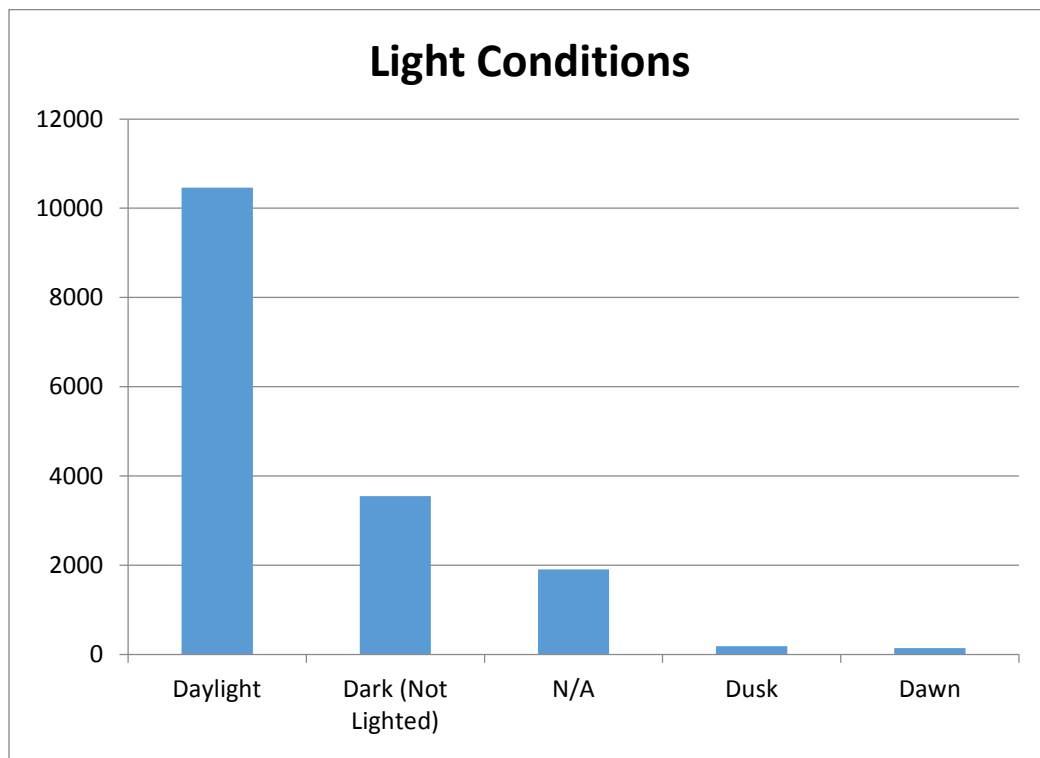


Figure 20: Most crashes from the past 5 years have occurred during daylight hours.

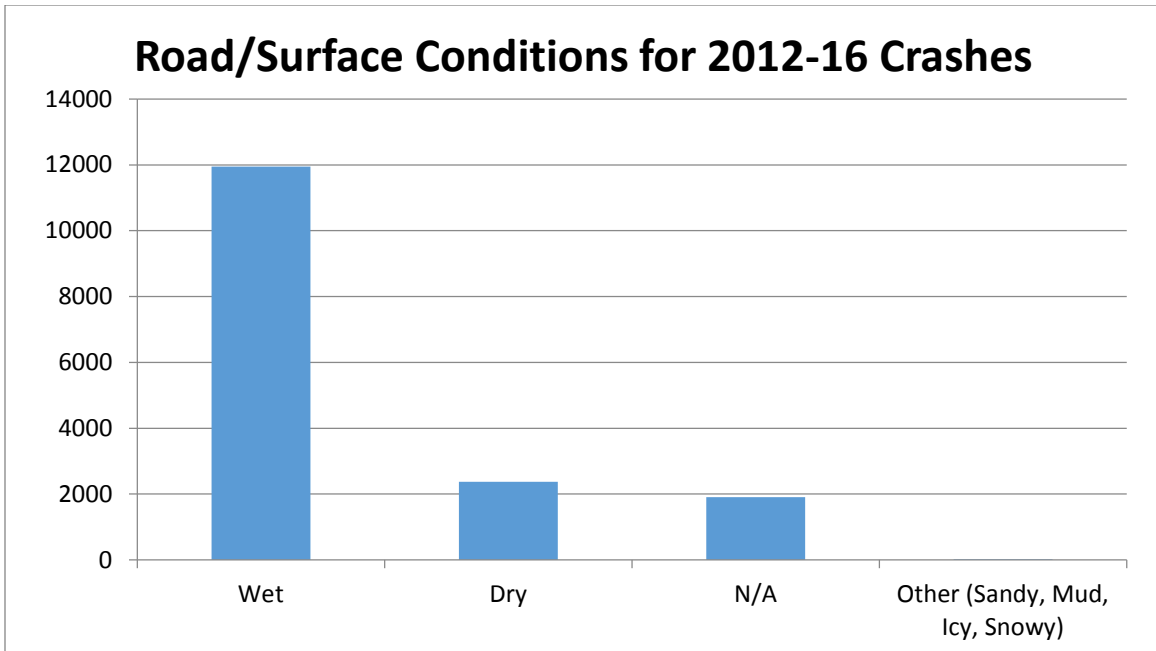


Figure 21: 2015 had the most pedestrian fatalities in Lowndes County in the past 5 years.

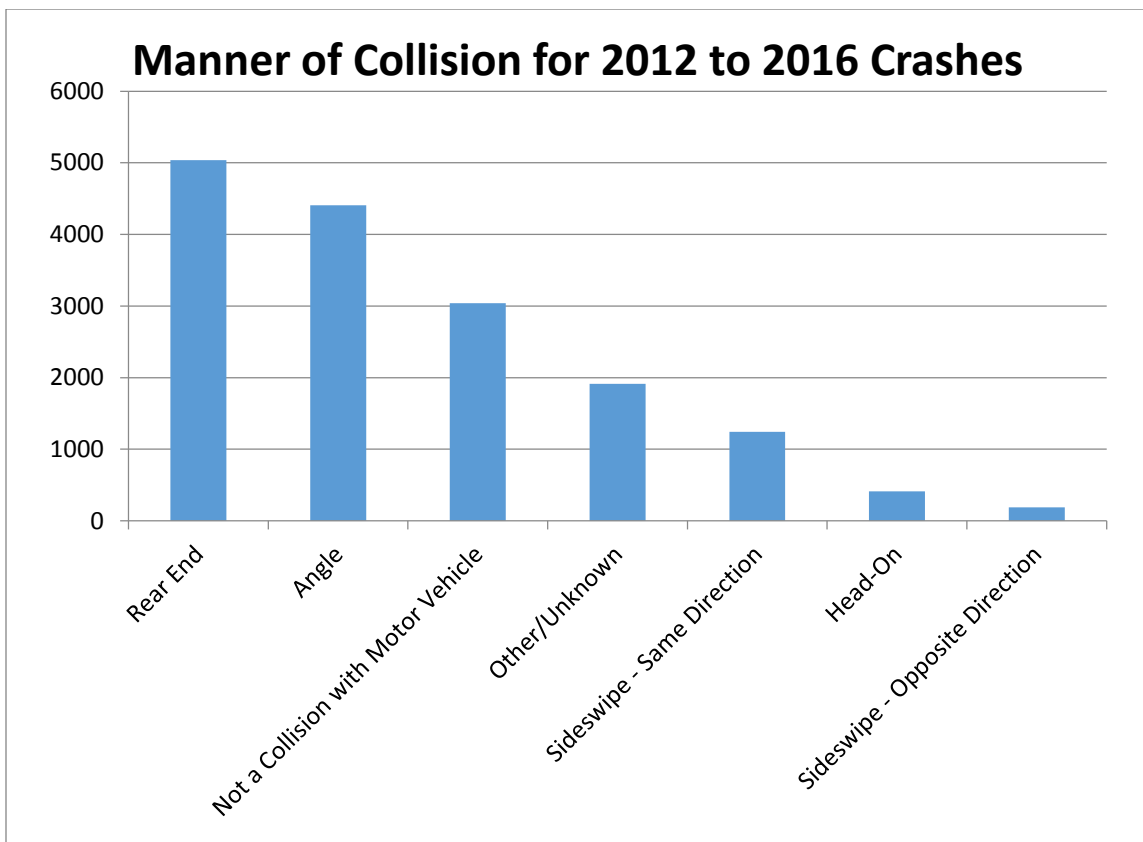


Figure 22: Rear-end collisions were frequent in Lowndes County between 2012 and 2016.

High Crash Locations

While the previous sections have primarily focused on fatal crashes, their impacts, causes and how they relate to the overall goals of the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety Strategic Highway Safety Plan, the following Section will look at the highest crash locations in the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County.

The Top 20 crash locations were determined through the raw crash data provided by GDOT. Using the crash data, the 20 locations with the most crashes during the five year study period were identified.

Only crashes at intersections or within 100 feet of an intersection were included in this listing; crashes at mid-block locations have not been included at this time.

The City of Valdosta produces an annual crash report examining trends in crashes throughout the City. The City's crash report and this report produced by the MPO are different in several ways. However, many of the Top 20 crash locations are the same. One of the biggest differences is that the City crash report includes data from two-vehicle crashes only. The MPO crash report includes all crashes at each location.

Figure 23 shows the location of crashes involving fatalities and serious injuries while Figures 24 and 25 show the locations of the top 20 crash locations in the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County, respectively.



Photo: Valdosta Daily Times.



Photo: Valdosta Daily Times.

*Fatal and Serious Injury
in Lowndes County, Georgia*

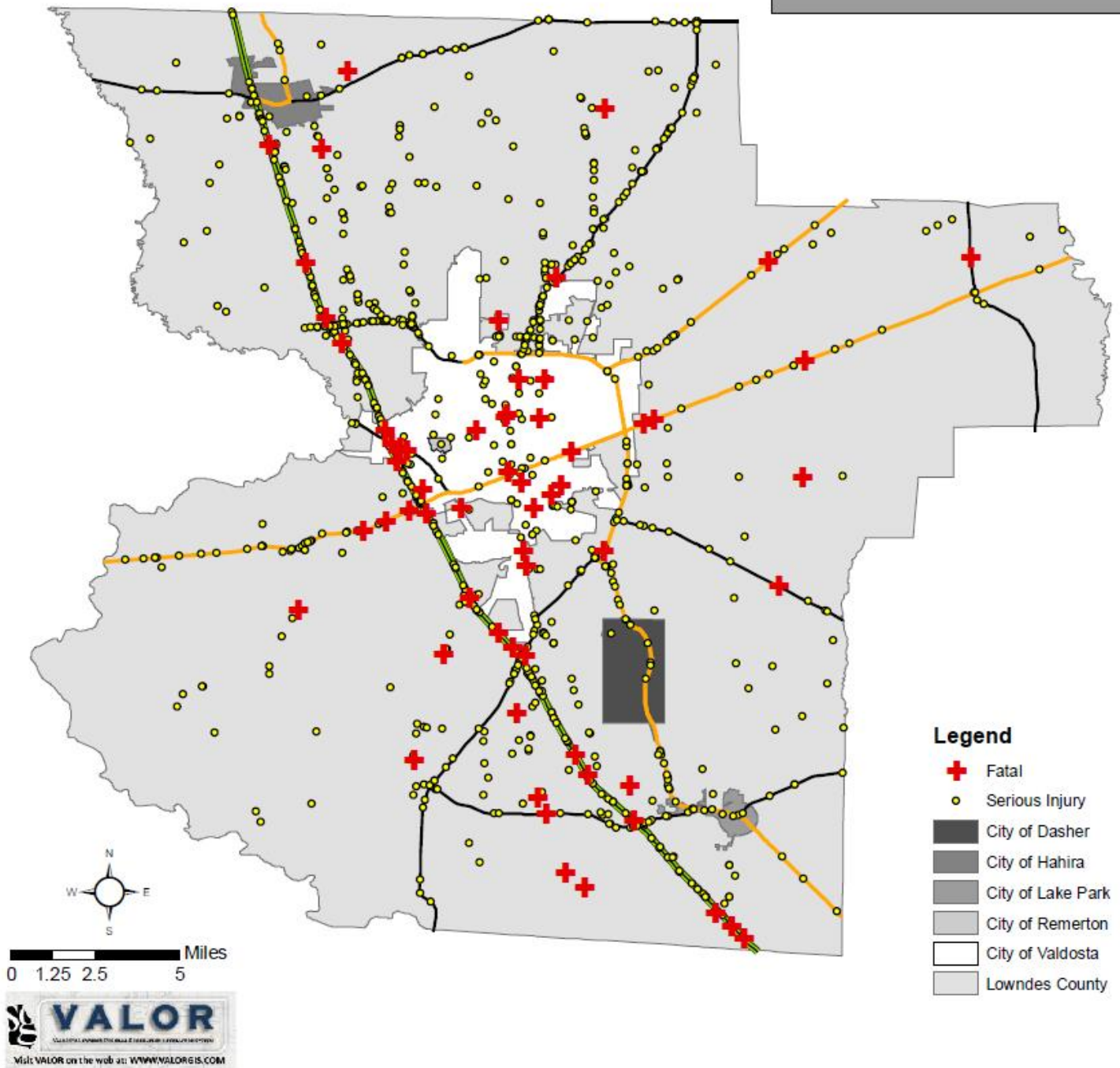


Figure 23: Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes in Lowndes County between 2012 and 2016.

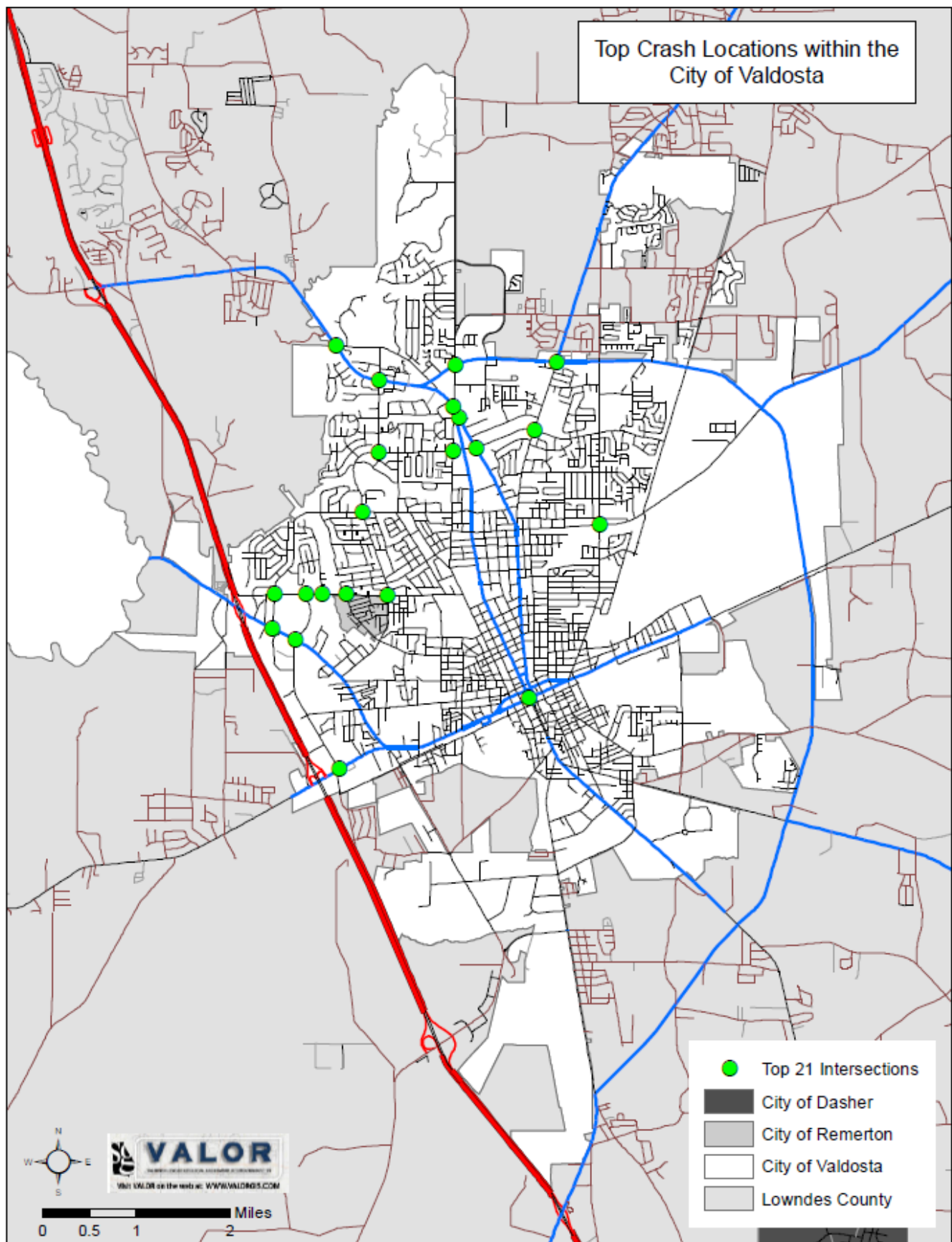


Figure 24: Top Crash Locations within the City of Valdosta.

Top 20 Locations in City of Valdosta 2012-2016			
Rank	Intersection	# of Crashes	Location
1	N ST AUGUSTINE RD @ NORMAN DR	143	Valdosta
2	GORNTD RD @ N ST AUGUSTINE RD	118	Valdosta
3	BAYTREE RD @ MELODY LN/JERRY JONES DR	116	Valdosta
4	N ASHLEY ST @ NORTHSIDE DR	112	Valdosta
T5	BEMISS RD @ INNER PERIMETER RD	107	Valdosta
T5	INNER PERIMETER RD @ N OAK ST EXT	107	Valdosta
7	BAYTREE RD @ GORNTD RD	103	Valdosta
8	BEMISS RD @ NORTHSIDE DR	94	Valdosta
9	COUNTRY CLUB DR @ N VALDOSTA RD	85	Valdosta
10	COUNTRY CLUB DR @ JERRY JONES DR/EAGER RD	82	Valdosta
11	N ASHLEY ST/N VALDOSTA RD @ N OAK ST EXT	81	Valdosta
12	NORMAN DR @ W HILL AVE	80	Valdosta
13	BAYTREE RD @ NORMAN DR	79	Valdosta
T14	BAYTREE RD @ S SHERWOOD DR	74	Valdosta
T14	GORNTD RD @ JERRY JONES DR	74	Valdosta
16	EAGER RD/W NORTHSIDE DR @ N OAK ST	66	Valdosta
T17	E / W HILL AVE @ N / S PATTERSON ST	56	Valdosta
T17	N ASHLEY ST @ SMITHBRIAR DR	56	Valdosta
19	COUNTRY CLUB RD @ N VALDOSTA RD	55	Valdosta
T20	BAYTREE RD @ W GORDON ST	54	Valdosta
T20	E PARK AVE @ N FORREST ST	54	Valdosta

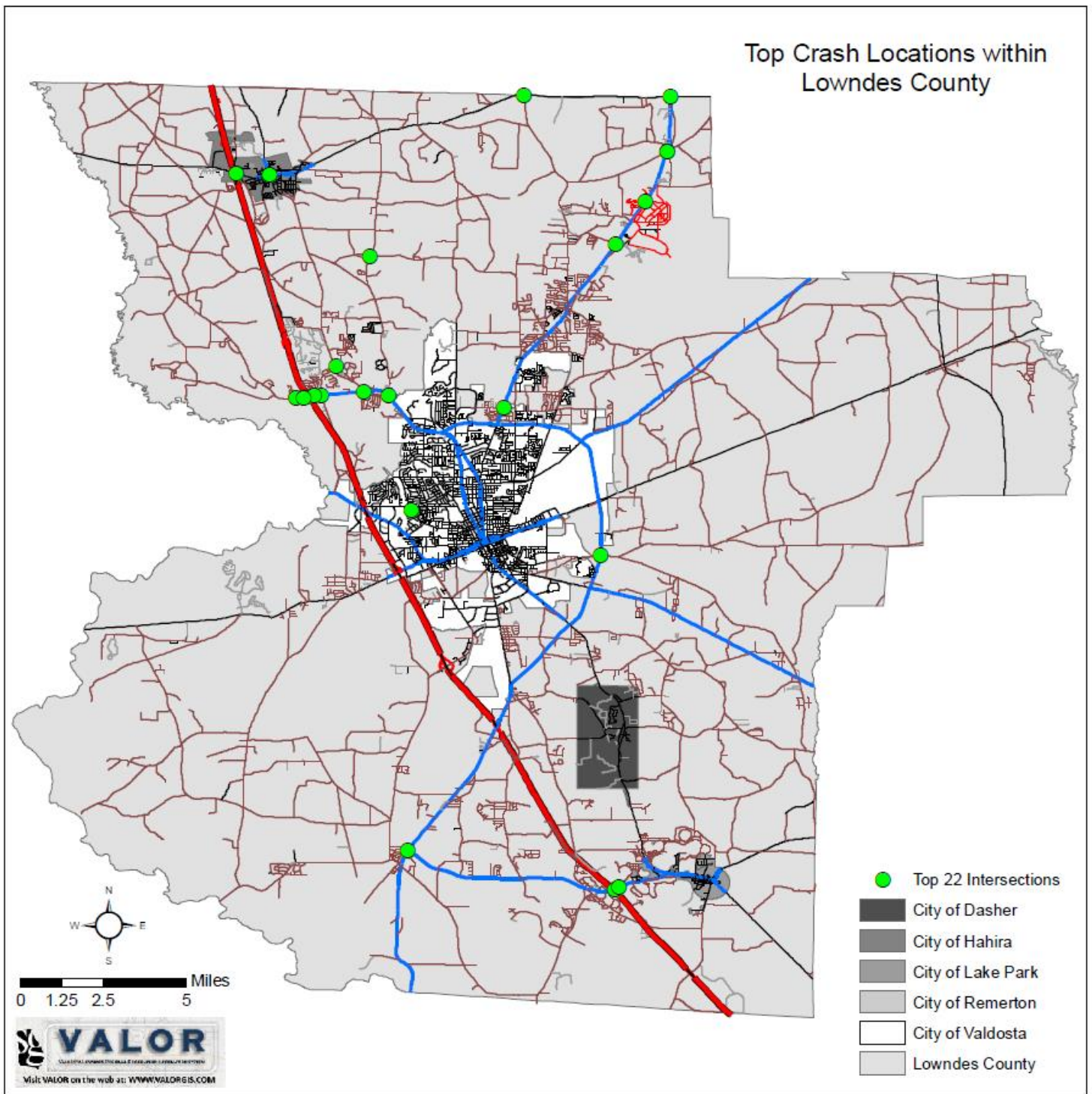


Figure 25: Top Crash Locations within Lowndes County

Top 20 Locations in Lowndes County 2012-2016			
Rank	Intersection	# of Crashes	Location
1	N OAK ST EXT @ BEMISS RD	44	County
2	VAL DEL RD @ N VALDOSTA RD	43	County
3	N VALDOSTA RD @ COLEMAN RD N	39	County
4	MILL STORE RD @ LAKES BLVD	36	County
T5	N VALDOSTA RD @ FLYTHE RD	30	County
T5	SHILOH RD @ I 75 OFF RAMP EXIT 22	30	County
7	OLD US 41 N @ FOXBOROUGH AVE	25	County
T8	GA HWY 122 E @ BEMISS RD	16	County
T8	VAL DEL RD @ BETHANY RD	16	County
T10	I 75 NB RAMP EXIT 29 @ GA 122	15	Hahira
T10	DAVIDSON RD @ BEMISS RD	15	County
T10	INNER PERIMETER RD @ HOWELL RD	15	County
T13	STEWART CIR @ OLD US 41	12	County
T13	N / S CHURCH ST @ E /W MAIN ST	12	Hahira
T13	CLYATTVILLE LAKE PARK RD @ MADISON HWY	12	County
T13	LAKES BLVD @ I 75 NB RAMP EXIT 5	12	County
T13	NEW BETHEL RD @ BEMISS RD	12	County
T13	GA HWY 122 E @ CAT CREEK RD	12	County
T13	PREWITTE ST @ BEMISS RD	12	County
T20	CEDAR LN @ BEMISS RD	11	County
T20	VAL TECH RD @ SHILOH RD	11	County
T20	W GORDON ST @ BAYTREE PL	11	Remerton

MPO Safety Performance Measures

In March 2016, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published regulations outlining performance safety measure targets in accordance with the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and MAP-21.³ This final rule went into effect in April 2016 and requires all state DOTs and MPOs to establish safety performance measure targets by August 2017 and February 2018, respectively. The performance safety measures are consistent with national highway planning goals aimed to reduce fatalities and injuries along the nation's highways and shall examine the following based on 5 year rolling averages:

Safety Performance Measures	Potential Targets for CY 2018 (5 year averages)
Number of fatalities	12.2 fatalities per year
Rate of fatalities per 100 Million VMT	3.09 fatalities per 100 Million VMT
Number of serious injuries	1045.6 serious injuries per year
Rate of serious injuries per 100 Million VMT	267.84 serious injuries per 100 Million VMT
Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries	1.8 non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries per year

The VLMPO can fulfill this new federal requirement either through programming projects that support the state of Georgia's safety performance measure targets, developing independent safety performance measure targets (these may potentially be the listed values in the above table), or a combination of these two options.

³<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/03/15/2016-05202/national-performance-management-measures-highway-safety-improvement-program>

Conclusions

This report is intended to provide information to local elected officials, law enforcement, local planners and engineers as well as the public about crashes in Lowndes County. This report was modeled after the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety Strategic Highway Safety Plan to address the same issues and points as that report.

This report is intended to be used by partner agencies and officials to better address the 4 E's of highway safety: education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency medical response. Agencies can use this report and the data contained herein to better address crash locations, driver behavior and crash response throughout the community.

This report will be shared with local elected officials, law enforcement officials, emergency response officials, local engineers and other groups to better inform the public about crashes in Lowndes County.

In the future, the locations identified as part of the Top 20 crash locations should be reviewed by local agencies through an analysis that addresses the primary manners of collision and contributing factors at these intersections. The use of Road Safety Audits (technical review of intersections and road segments to help identify possible crash mitigation techniques) should be championed by the MPO and local governments to encourage and improve the usefulness of this report and the data collected by the partner agencies.

Local agencies should be encouraged to use this report, as well as seeking out other data available from the MPO or other agencies to help do their part in reducing vehicle crashes in Lowndes County. This report identifies various ways in which Lowndes County citizens can be better educated to not drink and drive or follow too closely and to be safer drivers in general.