



MEMORANDUM

Date: January 2, 2018

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C.H. Huckelberry", is written over the typed name and title.

Re: **Tucson Named the 2nd Most Dangerous City for Bicyclists**

This subject was headlined in a recent *Arizona Daily Star* article from a financial planning website, 24/7 Wall St. I asked our staff to examine the data to determine if Tucson/Pima County deserves the title given by the financial planning website.

Staff's response is attached and indicates any study that would reach such a conclusion, based on the data and information available, is severely flawed and of little use.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: Farhad Moghimi, Executive Director, Pima Association of Governments

DATE: December 19, 2017

TO: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

FROM: Andy Dinauer, P.E.
Matt Zoll, A.I.C.P.

SUBJECT: Tucson: 2nd Most Dangerous City for Bicyclists

We are in receipt of your memorandum dated 12/14/17 regarding Tucson being listed by the 24/7 Wall Street website as the “2nd Most Dangerous City for Bicyclists.” We have reviewed the report and have the following observations about their methodology and conclusions:

- 1) One year of data cited in the review (2015) can represent a randomly high fluctuation in crash frequency, especially for very low frequency events (such as fatal bicycle crashes). A longer average will help address this issue, but good data about how bicycle usage has changed over those years might be important too in order to draw a more accurate and meaningful conclusion.
- 2) The exposure metric (“per one million people”) is inappropriate. Because Tucson is a relatively bike-friendly city, it likely has a significantly higher share of the population (resident and visiting) that bike, compared to other cities that did not appear as high on the list. This is as misleading as saying Tucson is the safest city to go skiing in because of our record-low number of skiing related deaths “per one-million people.”
- 3) Bicyclists in the Tucson region can cycle year-round, versus in many cities the majority of cyclists may only be able to cycle about 6 months of the year due to winter conditions. This of course leads to higher year-round ridership, miles traveled, and corresponding risk.
- 4) The study also mentions bicycle commute data per the Census and compares it with other cities that may have a similar bicycle commute percentage to Tucson but fewer fatalities. However, commute trips account for only about 20 to 22 percent of all trips. As a cycle-tourism destination and retirement community, it’s likely that 85 to 90 percent of all bike trips in Tucson are non-commute. Therefore, using the Census for comparison is problematic when the Tucson region may be unique compared to most other cities due to our high non-commute percentage of bicycle trips.

In conclusion, the study is flawed and is not consistent with what would be required in terms of method of analysis in order to draw the stated conclusions. For instance, it does not give any consideration to what percentage of the population cycles beyond the Census commuter data or the percentage of overall travel (trips or miles traveled) via cycling. A comparably sized jurisdiction, with few cyclists, that ride infrequently and are only able to ride for 6 months out of the year cannot defensibly be compared to a similar-sized jurisdiction with a significantly higher percent of cyclists that ride much more frequently and are able to ride for a full 12 months out of the year.



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 14, 2017

To: Andy Dinauer, Division Manager
Regional Flood Control District

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Matthew J. Zoll, Program Manager
Department of Transportation

Re: ***Arizona Daily Star Article – Study: Tucson the 2nd most dangerous city for bicyclists***

Enclosed is a brief article that appeared in the *Arizona Daily Star*, indicating Tucson is the second most dangerous city for bicycles.

Please research how they came to this conclusion. I appreciate your review and comment on the article.

CHH/mp

Attachment

http://tucson.com/news/local/study-tucson-the-nd-most-dangerous-city-for-bicyclists/article_ec661b58-e010-11e7-98b2-3b51bf01a76b.html

Study: Tucson the 2nd most dangerous city for bicyclists

Arizona Daily Star Dec 13, 2017 Updated 1 min ago

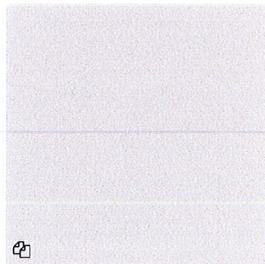


Tucson police personnel bring up the rear as a young cyclist crosses the finish line prior to the finish of the 106-milers during the 35th El Tour de Tucson bicycle race on Nov. 18, 2017.

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Ron Medvescek / Arizona Daily Star

MORE INFORMATION



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Tucson prides itself on being a bicycle-friendly town, but one website's study says that our town is actually quite the opposite.

According to financial planning website 24/7 Wall Street, Tucson ranks number two on the list of most dangerous cities for bicyclists.

"Despite the nation's relatively poor bike system, the number of Americans riding bikes is on the rise, and the vast majority of large cities are remarkably safe for cyclists," the article says, adding that since 2000, the number of people commuting by bike increased by 60 percent.

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To identify the most dangerous cities for bikes, 24/7 Wall St. reviewed crash data from 2015 to identify the number of bicyclists and riders of other pedal-driven vehicles who died in traffic crashes.

Based on the 2015 data, Tucson did not fare well, according to 24/7 Wall St.

With a population of 531,641 in 2015, four bicyclists were killed in Tucson traffic crashes, which equals a bicyclist fatality rate of 7.5 per one million people, the website says.

That landed Tucson at the top of the dangerous city list, second only to Albuquerque.

Phoenix didn't fare very well either, coming in at the 4th most dangerous city for bicyclists.

Check out the full study here.

Caitlin Schmidt

Public safety reporter covering police, fire, courts, and sports-related legal issues.