

# 2011-2013 Annual Crash Report

Valdosta-Lowndes County  
Metropolitan Planning Organization

July 2014



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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.

While previous VLMPO Annual Vehicle Crash Reports have included data from the previous three years, this year's report includes data from three years, 2011-2013.

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 2035 Transportation Plan, the forthcoming 2040 Transportation 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.

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 Services<sup>1</sup>, -- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Nebraska Highway Safety Plan Critical Strategies, Nebraska Department of Roads

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

Annually the Georgia Governor’s Office of Highway Safety adopts statewide goals to reduce fatal crashes throughout the state.<sup>2</sup> This local crash analysis is guided by these goals, and seek 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 State Highway Safety Plan 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 Portal and through raw crash data provided by GDOT, and may be slightly inconsistent with previous year’s data.

Terms Used in This Report	
PDO	Property Damage Only
Injury Crash	Crash that had injuries, not total number of injured
Fatal Crash	Crash that had at least one fatality, not total number of fatalities
CST	Construction

<sup>2</sup> Note: The 2013 and 2014 Georgia Governor’s Office of Highway Safety State Highway Safety Plan is currently being developed as a combined document

to address the new requirements of the MAP-21 legislation.

1. To maintain the steady decrease of traffic fatalities below the 2009 calendar year of 1,284 fatalities by December 31, 2012 to 1,122 fatalities

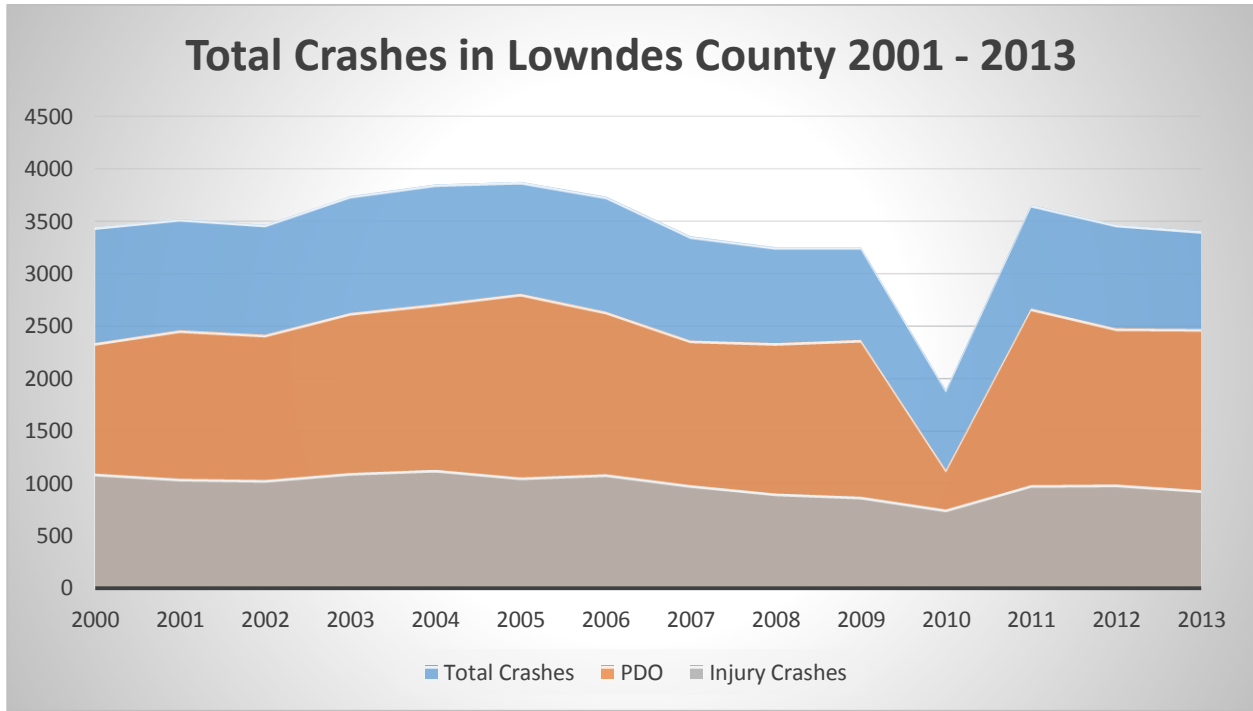


Figure 1 Crashes in Lowndes County have slightly increased since 2009, (note the change in data source in 2010). Overall crashes in Lowndes County are down from where they were a decade ago, as are fatal crashes.

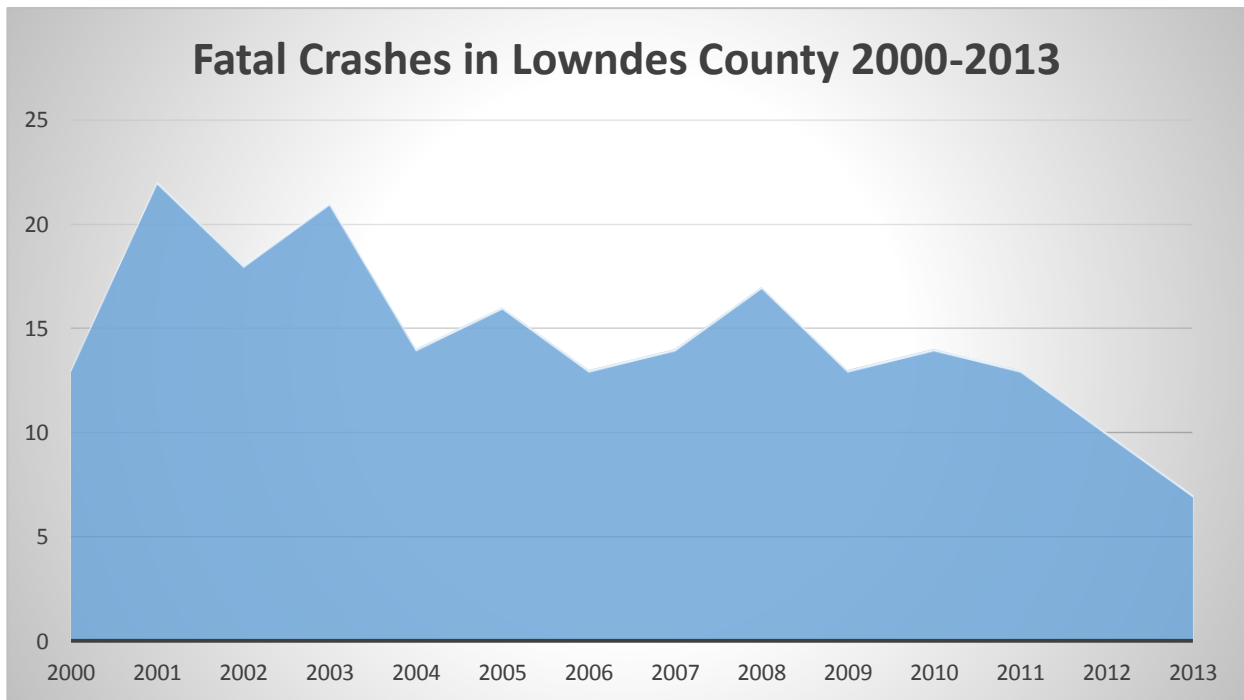


Figure 2 Fatal Crashes in Lowndes County have decreased since 2010 and longer.

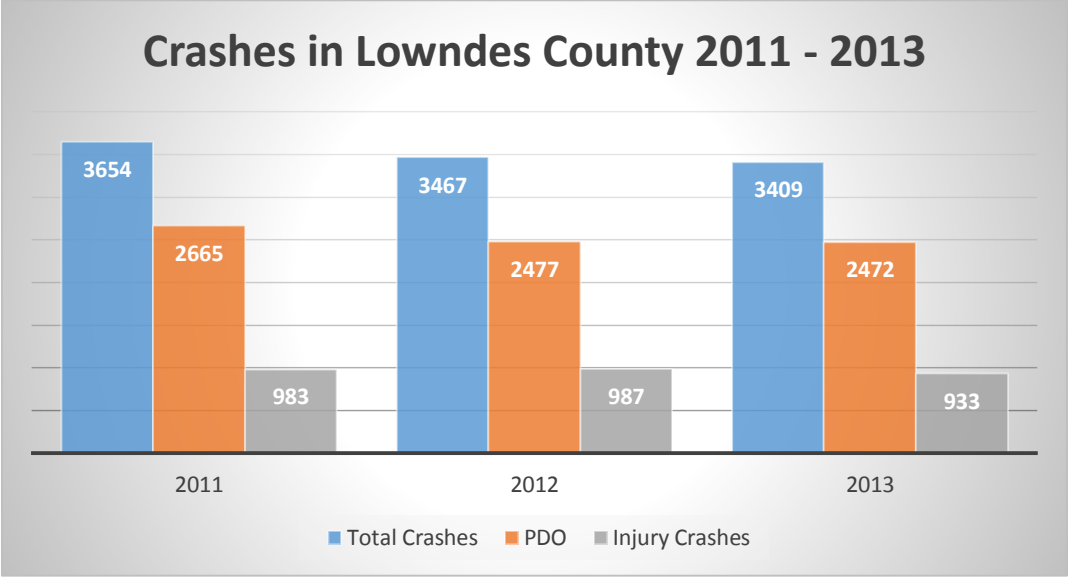


Figure 3 Crashes in Lowndes County have been on slight decrease since 2011.

- 2. To maintain the steady decrease of serious traffic injuries below the 2009 calendar base year of 109,685 to 105,326 by December 31, 2012

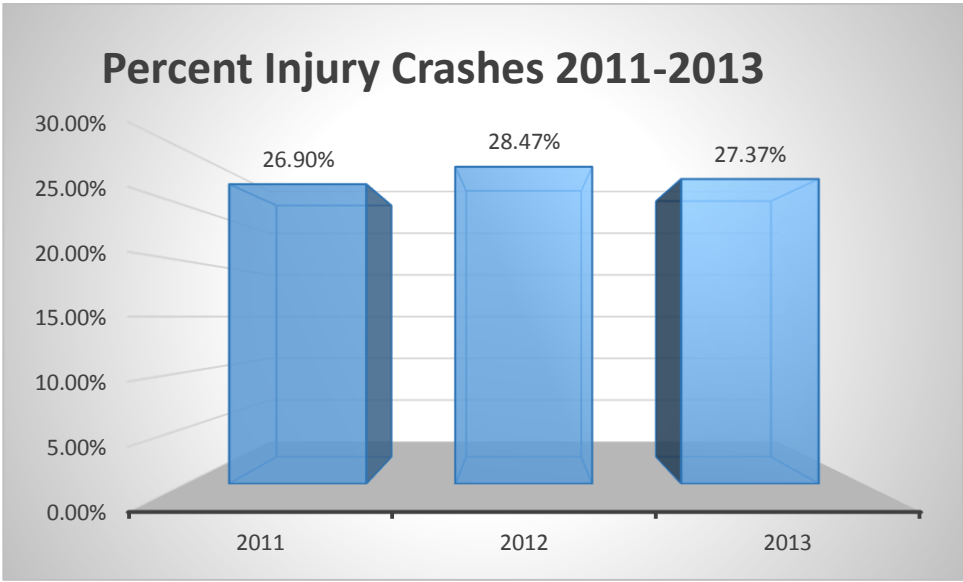
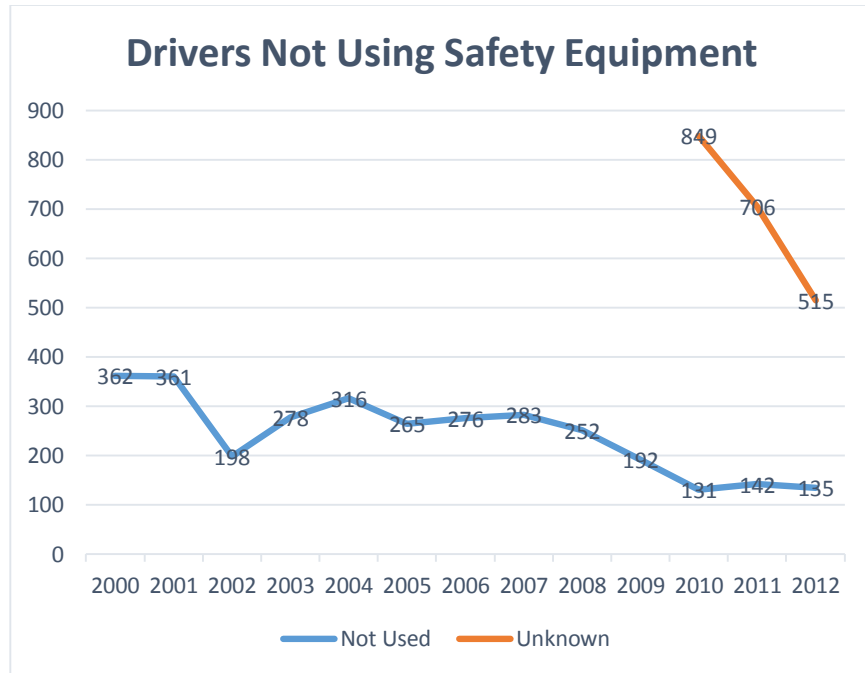


Figure 4 Crashes with injuries have been on the increase in Lowndes County since 2011.

**3. To decrease overall fatality rates in rural and urban areas**

As can be seen by Figure 2 earlier, the fatal crashes in Lowndes County and Valdosta are on a general downward trend. 61% of the crashes in Lowndes County during the three-year study period occurred within the city limits of Valdosta. This is not surprising that Valdosta has more crashes than more rural areas of Lowndes County due to the city being a regional economic hub and large population and jobs center.

**4. To decrease unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities in all seating positions by ten-percent (10%) from the 2009 calendar base year of 454 to 410 by December 31, 2012**



*Figure 5 Safety Equipment use has dramatically increased over the last decade. Even the number of times when it is unknown that safety equipment was being used shows that law enforcement is doing a better job of determining safety equipment use after crashes. (Note that raw data for use of safety equipment for the year 2013 was not available at the time of publication of this annual report. Therefore, previous year figures were utilized.)*

5. To decrease alcohol impaired driving fatalities by ten-percent (10%) from the 2009 base year of 331 to 299 by December 31, 2012

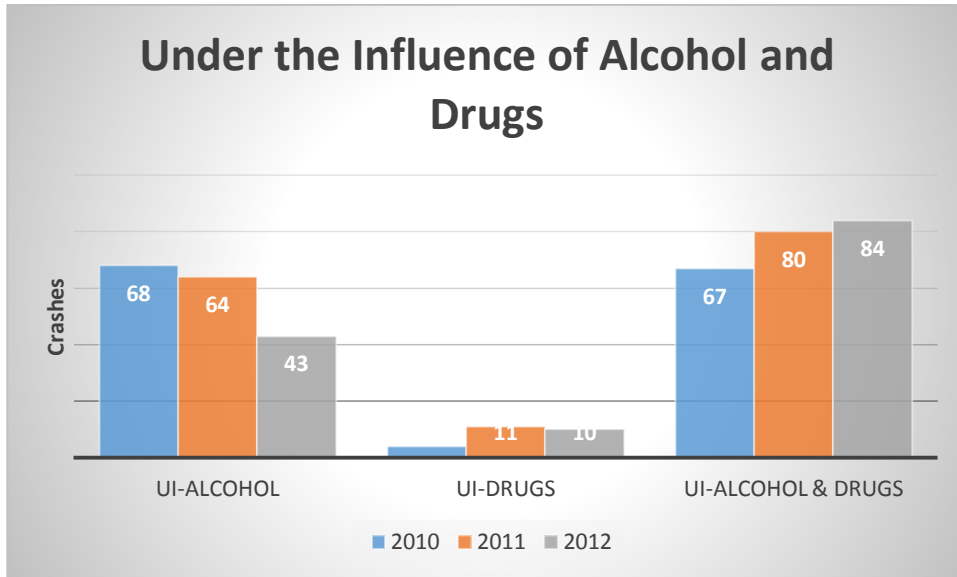


Figure 6 In the past three years, crashes with an alcohol impaired driver have decreased by nearly 37%, well above the state goal of 10%. The number of drivers under the influence of drugs seems to have risen, this could be both prescription and illicit drugs. (Note that raw data for driving under the influence as a cause of crashes for the year 2013 was not available at the time of publication of this annual report. Therefore, previous year figures were utilized.)

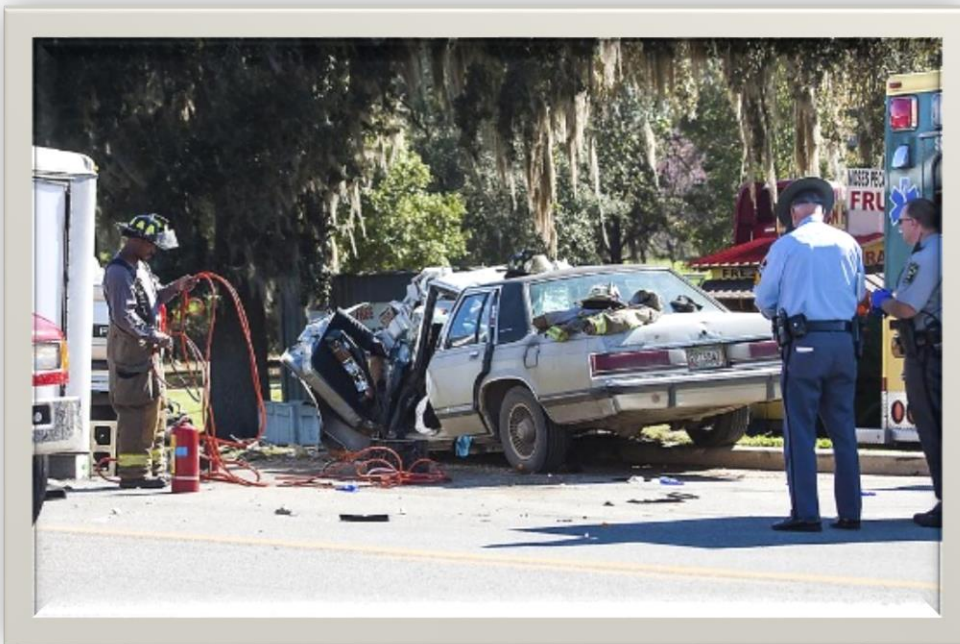
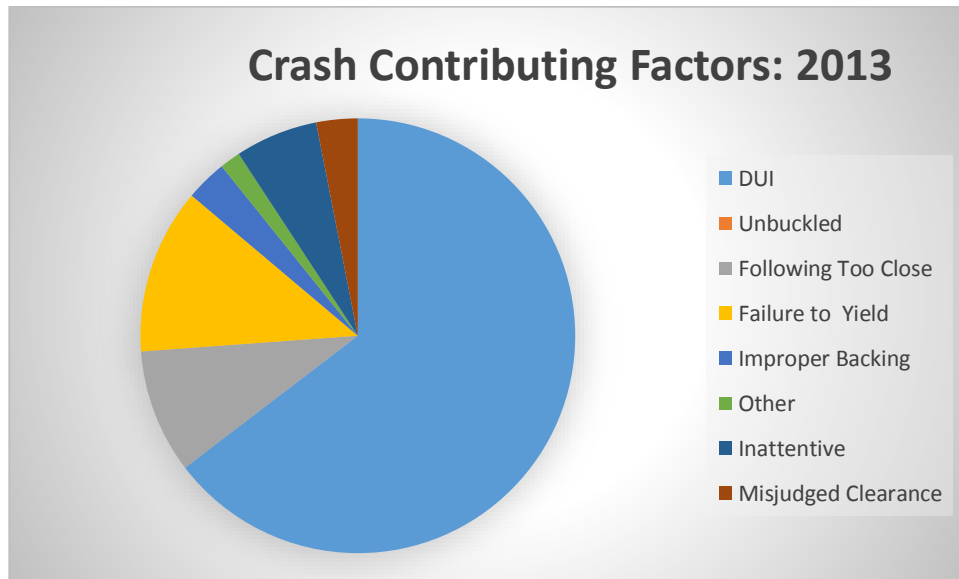


Photo: Valdosta Daily Times.



**6. To maintain the steady decrease of speeding related fatalities below the 2009 calendar base year of 238 by December 31, 2012**

Using the raw GDOT crash data, there were only 116 crashes where excessive speed was a factor, which is just more than 1% of all crashes in the county in the previous four-year study period. The chart below shows the other contributing factors to crashes over the previous four year period in Lowndes County and Valdosta. (Note that raw data for speeding as a cause of crashes for the year 2013 was not available at the time of publication of this annual report. Therefore, the 1% figure referenced above is from the previous year's report.)



*Figure 7 Factors Contributing to Crashes in Lowndes County.*

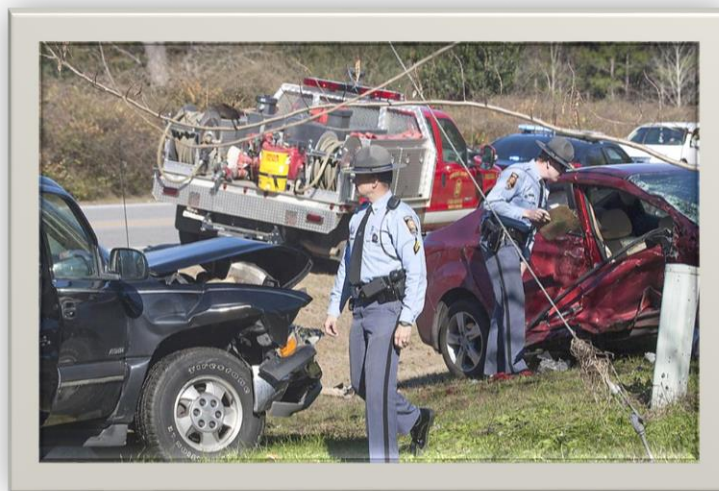


Photo: Valdosta Daily Times.

**7. To decrease motorcyclist fatalities from the 2009 calendar base year of 140 to 126 by December 31, 2012**

Passenger vehicle crashes have decreased from just under 40% of all crashes in 2011, to just over 20% in 2013. Pickup trucks and Utility Passenger Vehicles have seen similar decreases over the study period, while the number of unspecified vehicle type crashes has increased dramatically (5% to 34% over the three year period).

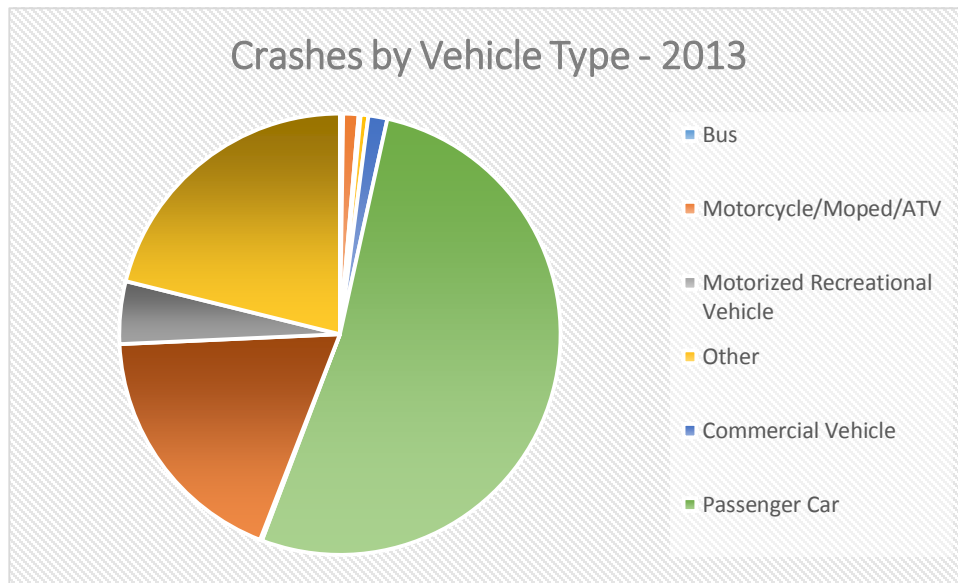


Figure 8 All types of Vehicles in Crashes.

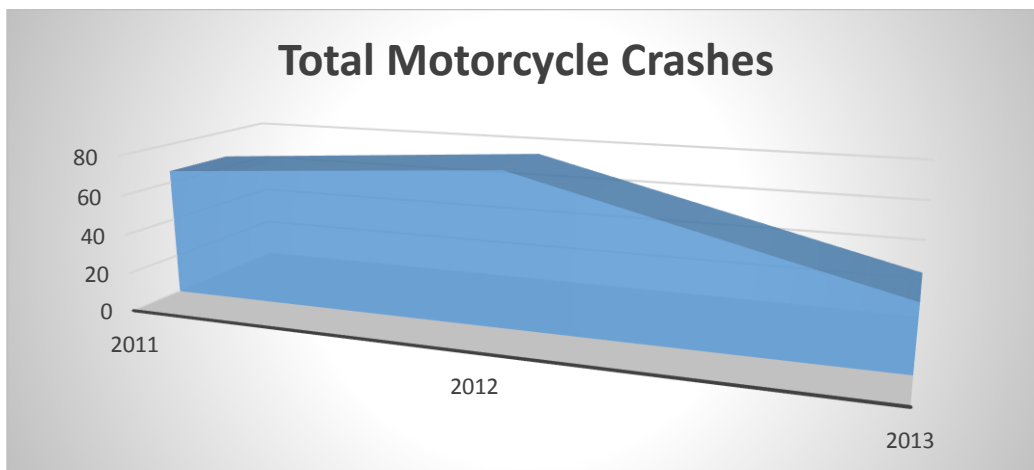


Figure 9 Motorcycle crashes between 2011 and 2013.

There were 177 crashes involving a motorcycle in the three-year study period. Over the past three years the number of motorcycle crashes in Lowndes County has decreased from 66 in 2011 to 33 in 2013.

**8. To decrease un-helmeted motorcyclist fatalities from the 2009 calendar base year of 11 to 10 by December 31, 2012**

Of all the crashes involving a motorcycle, only 35 riders were wearing a helmet when the crash occurred, while there have not been significant fatalities from motorcycle crashes, major safety concerns about cyclists wearing helmets need to be addressed in Lowndes County and Valdosta. (Note that raw data for motorcycle fatality crashes for the year 2013 was not available at the time of publication of this annual report. Therefore, previous year figures were utilized.)

**9. To decrease drivers age 20 years or younger involved in fatal crashes from the 2009 calendar base year of 148 to 134 by December 31, 2012**

The 2012 Crash Report produced by VLMPO it was identified that there were an average of 8.6 fatal crashes per year involving drivers between the ages 16-19. Since 2011, there have been a total of two fatal crashes involving teenagers.

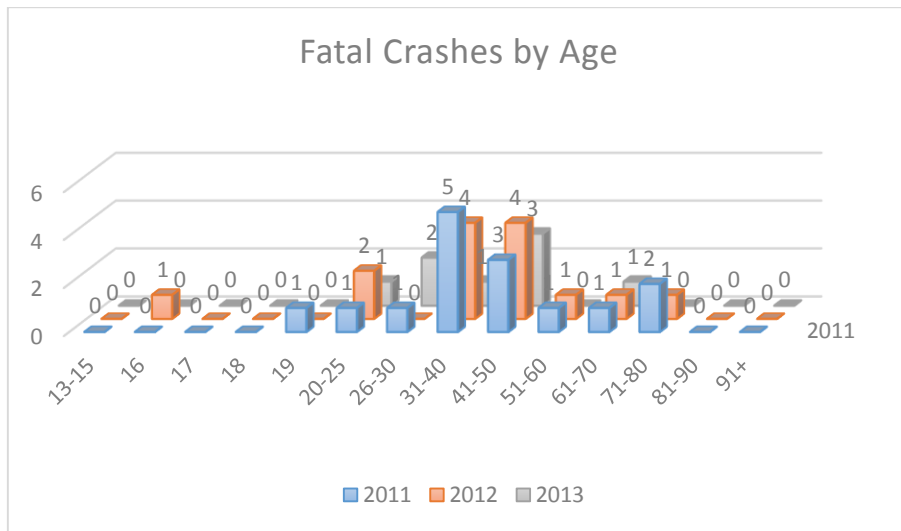


Figure 10 Fatal Crashes by Age shows that in Lowndes County there are more crashes in the 31-50 age groups than in most others. Crashes are not just caused by one age group, but are spread out across all age groups.

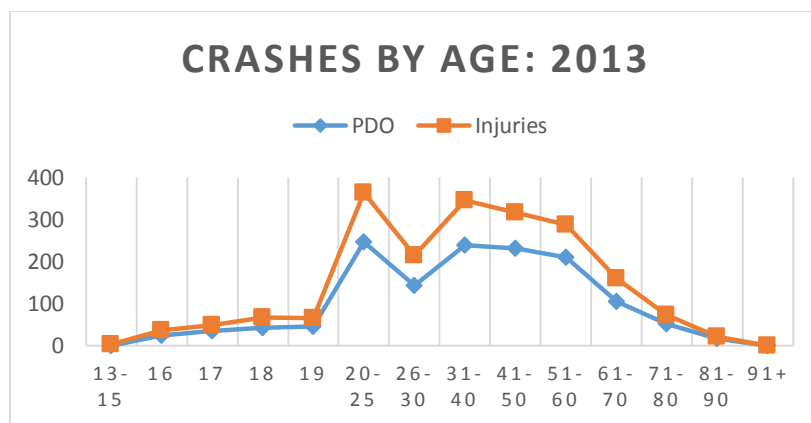
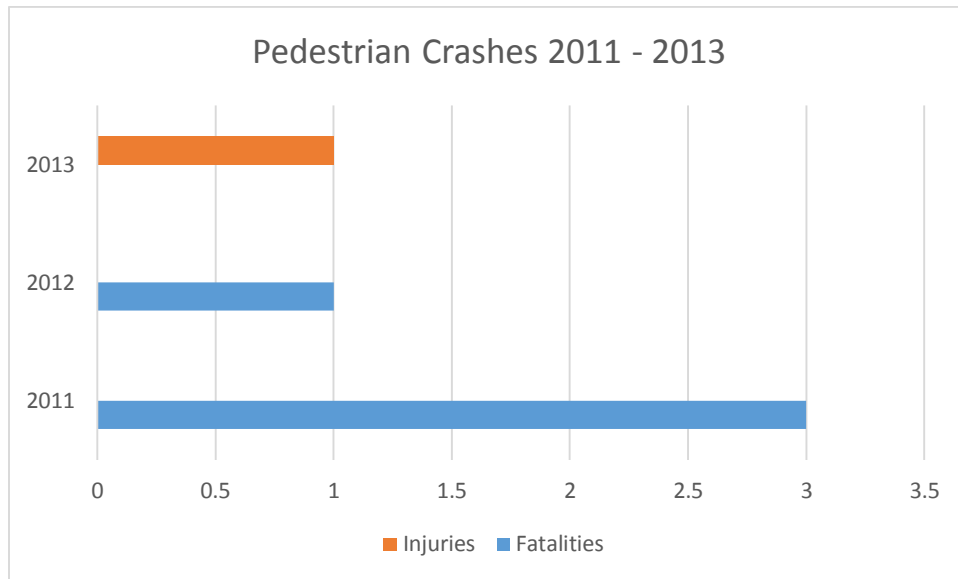


Figure 11 Crashes by Age

**10. To reduce pedestrian fatalities from the 2009 calendar year of 150 to 141 by December 31, 2012**



*Figure 12 In the past three years there have been four pedestrian fatalities in Lowndes County, in a total of five crashes.*

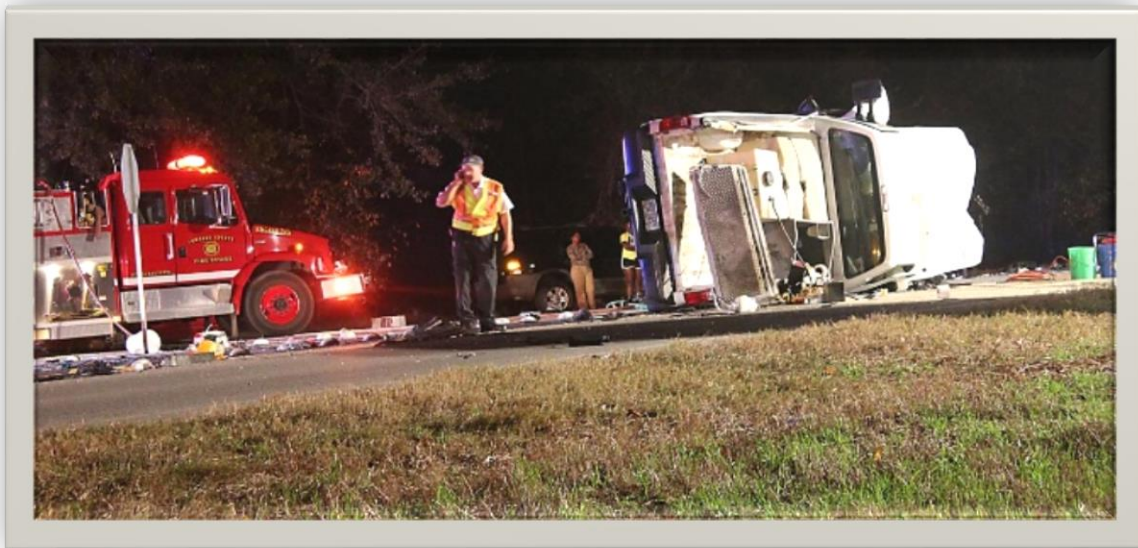


Photo: Valdosta Daily Times

## 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 four year study period were identified.

Only crashes at intersections 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.

Also included is a table containing planned future improvements to the Top 20 crash locations that may reduce crashes in the future.

(Note: Raw data for crash locations for the year 2013 was not available at the time of publication of this annual report. Therefore, previous year figures were utilized in the chart below.)



Photo: Valdosta Daily Times.



Photo: Valdosta Daily Times.

Top 20 Locations in Valdosta 2010-2012				
Rank	Last Year <sup>3</sup>	Location	# of Crashes	Improvements Planned
1	3	St. Augustine Road & Norman Drive	105	Intersection Improvement
2	12	Ashley Street & Northside Drive	64	
3		Baytree Road & Melody Lane	60	
4	20	Jerry Jones Drive & Country Club Drive	51	Added Travel Lanes
5		Hill Avenue & Oak Street	50	
6	8	Bemiss Road & Northside Drive	48	
7	6	Inner Perimeter Road & Oak Street	44	Added Travel Lanes
8	18	Baytree Road & Gornito Road	42	
9	15	Hill Avenue & Norman Drive	38	
10	19	Oak Street Extension & Murray Road	36	Added Travel Lanes
11	20	Oak Street & Northside Drive	35	
12	5	St. Augustine Road & Gornito Road	33	
13		Forrest Street & Park Avenue	32	Added Travel Lanes
14	6	Hill Avenue & St Augustine Road	31	Intersection Improvement
15		Baytree Road & S Sherwood Drive	30	
16	10	Jerry Jones Drive & Gornito Road	27	Added Travel Lanes
17		Hill/Central Avenues & Forrest Street	24	
17		Millpond Road & Country Club Drive	24	
19		St Augustine Road & Lankford Drive	23	New Road CST
20		Gordon Street & Baytree Road	20	
20		Ashley Street & Rosedale Place	20	
Top 20 Locations in Lowndes County 2010-2012 <sup>4</sup>				
Rank	Last Year <sup>5</sup>	Location	# of Crashes	Improvements Planned
1		Oak Street Extension & Lake Laurie Drive	9	Added Travel Lanes
2		Shiloh Road and I-75 Off Ramp	6	Interchange Improvement
3		North Valdosta Road & Coleman Road	5	
3		Madison Highway & I-75 Off Ramp	5	Interchange Improvement
3		Howell Road & Clay Road	5	
6		US 84 & James Road	4	
6	5	Lakes Boulevard & Mill Store Road	4	
6		Oak Street Extension & Oak Drive	4	Added Travel Lanes
6		North Valdosta Road & Val Del Road	4	Intersection Improvement
6		Lake Park Bellville Road & I-75 Off Ramp	4	
6		Shiloh Drive & Amber Drive	4	
6		North Valdosta Road & I-75 Off Ramp	4	Interchange Improvement
13	2	Loch Laurel Road & Clyattville Lake Park Road	3	
13		Lakes Boulevard & Francis Lake Drive	3	
13		Oak Street Extension & Bemiss Road	3	Added Travel Lanes
13		Knights Academy Road & Forrest Street Extension	3	
13		Bemiss Road & Pine Grove Road	3	
13		Shiloh Road & Val Tech Road	3	
13		Madison Highway & Root Circle	3	
13		Gordon Street & Poplar Street	3	
13		US Hwy 84 E & GA Hwy 135	3	

(Note: Raw data for Crash Locations for the year 2013 was not available at the time of publication of this annual report. Therefore, previous year figures were utilized.)

<sup>3</sup> A different data source is used this year from 2007-2009 Crash Report

<sup>4</sup> Lowndes County locations are those outside of the incorporated area of Valdosta, may include locations in Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton or Dasher.

<sup>5</sup> A different data source is used this year from 2007-2009 Crash Report

## 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 has been 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.

In April 2014 a Road Safety Audit was conducted along Patterson Street adjacent to the Valdosta State University. Local government and MPO staff participated in the audit, and will utilize the lessons learned to improve this report and the safety of the travelling public.

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 the population of Lowndes County can be better educated to not drink and drive, to not follow too closely and to be safer drivers in general.

## Other Charts and Data

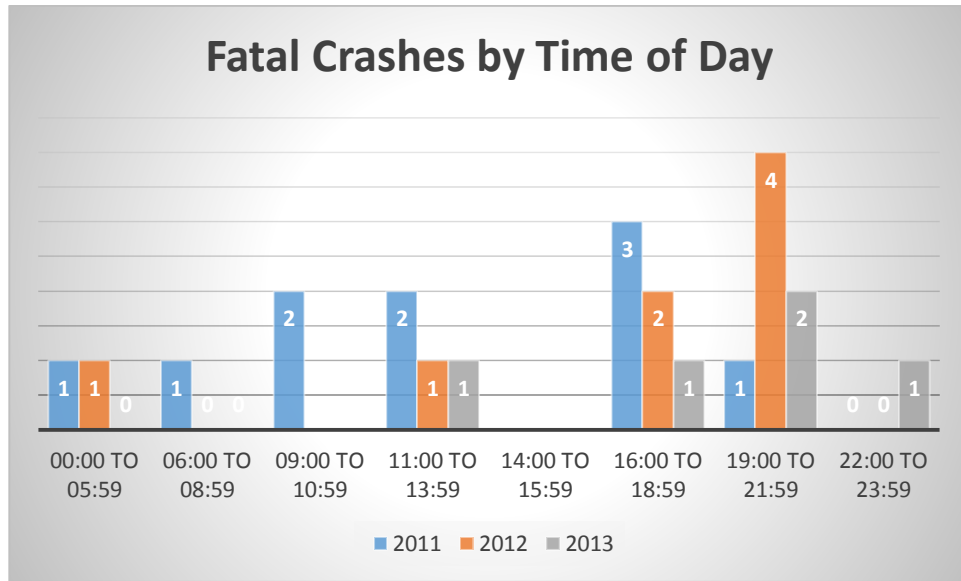


Figure 13 Fatal Crashes tend to occur more between 4 pm and 10 pm.

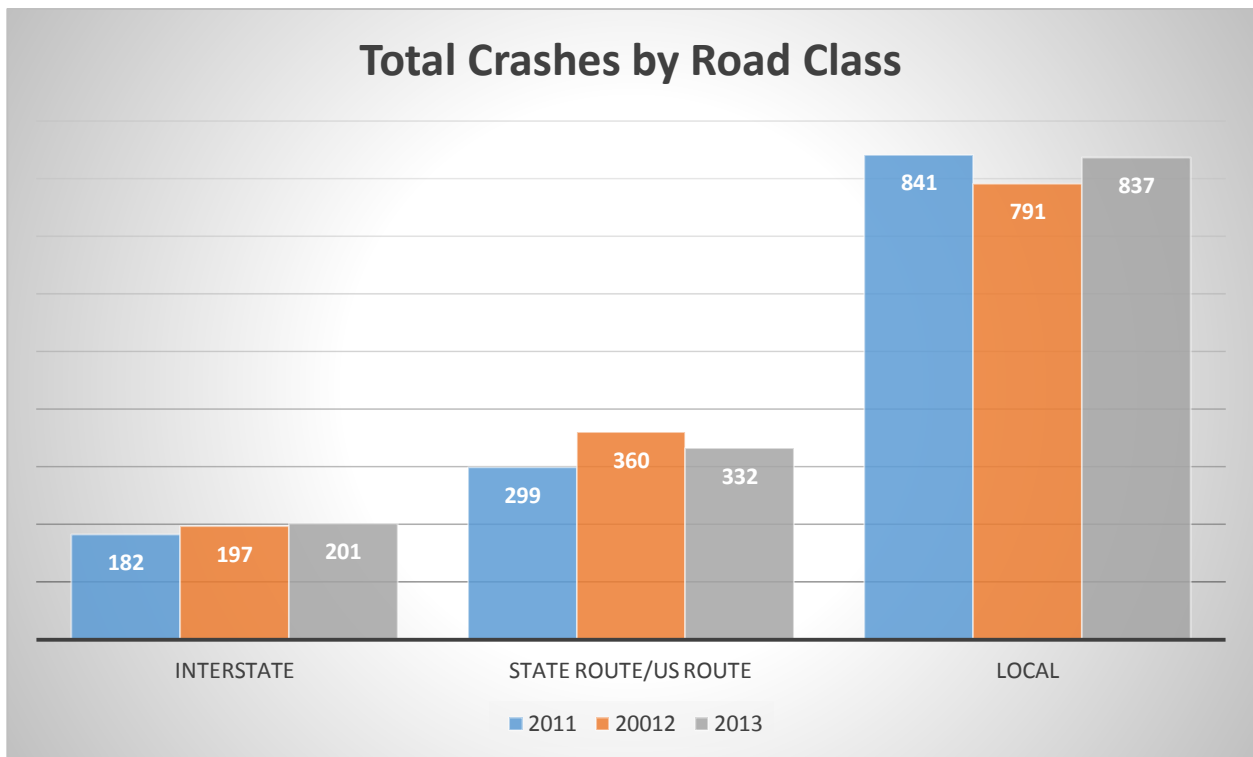


Figure 14 More crashes occur on local roads than on interstates and state highways.



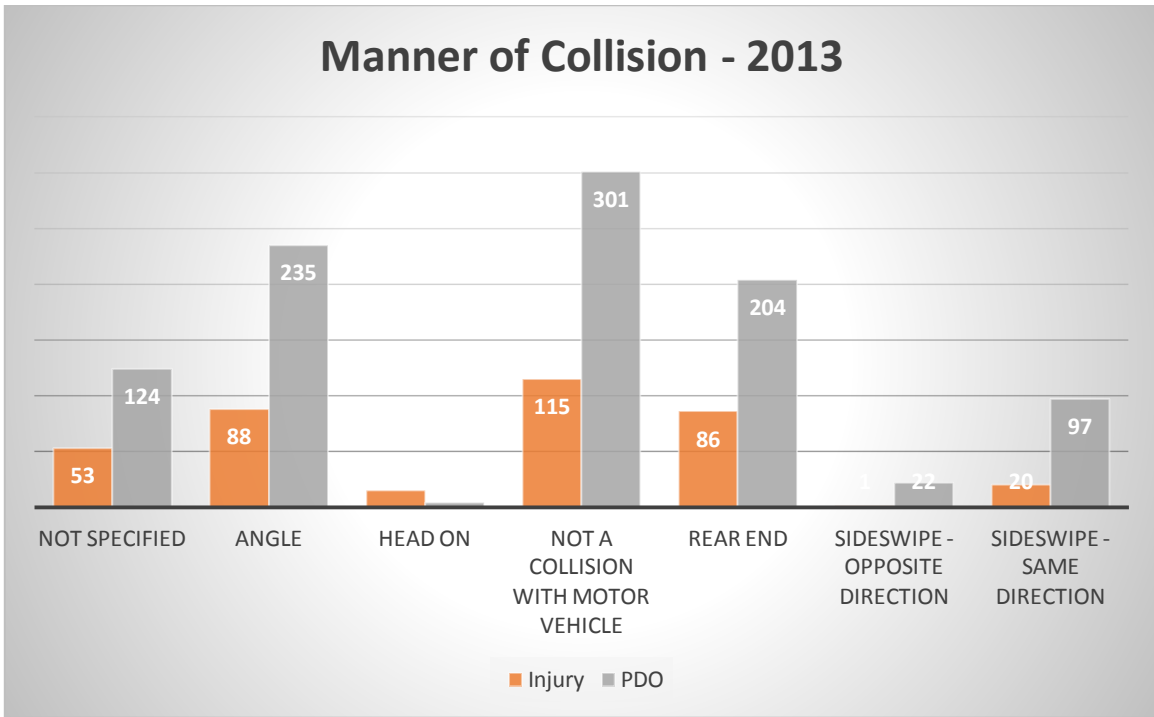


Figure 15 2013 Manner of Collision

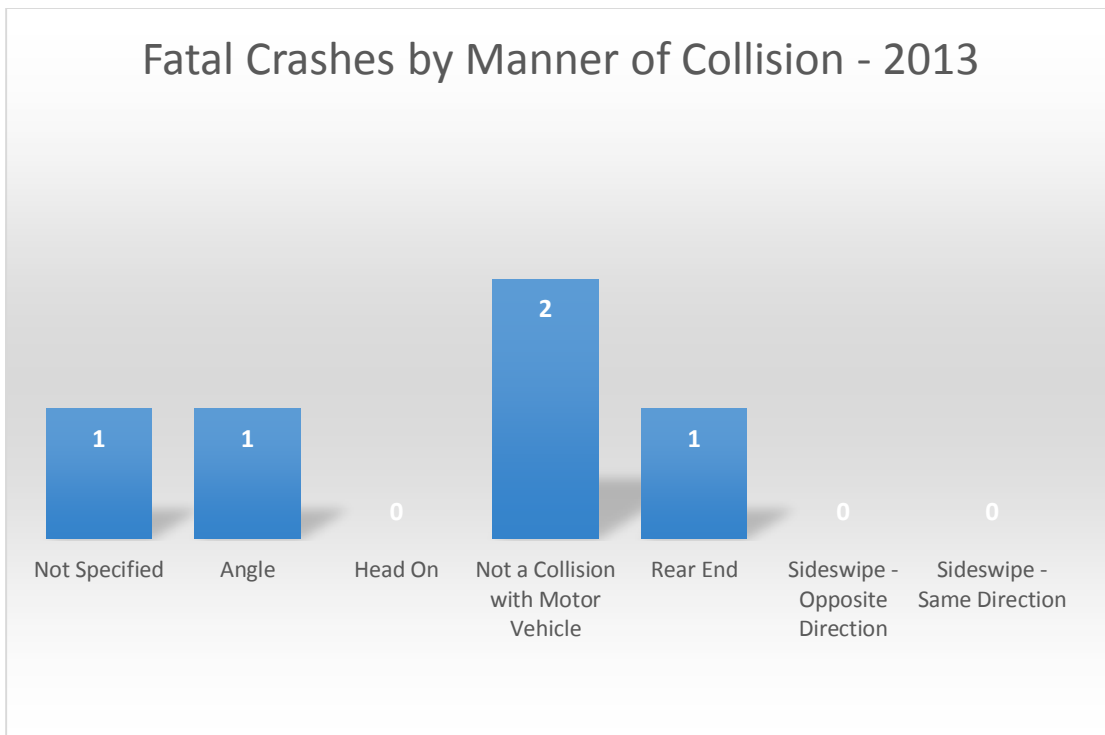


Figure 16 2013 Fatal Crashes by Manner of Collision