

VOICE SITES

GREECE

1. National Road Patras-Pyrgos

Introduction:

The local community requested a safe pedestrian passage across the national road Patras-Pyrgos at the 58.9 km, in the Lechaina area. The road cross section consists of one lane per direction with a paved shoulder. As usual on Greek country roads, there is no physical separation (i.e. barrier) between the two directions, which is the reason for numerous traffic accidents at Greek rural roads. In 1996-2000 the total number of accidents at this stretch was 5, with 9 injuries (of which one pedestrian) and 3 fatalities. Therefore the community requested either an underground or an overbridge pass across the national road.

Risk factors analysis:

For the specific spot the possible impacts of accident occurrence were defined as follows:

- Absence of physical separation between the two directions
- Pedestrian crossing outside marked crosswalks
- Running over red traffic lights

Follow-up action:

The Ministry of Public Works, as the body responsible for the maintenance and operations of the specific road section, decided to construct a steel bridge over the road to ensure a safe pedestrian passage. The bridge was put in operations in 2000.



Later development of safety situation:

The data shows, however, that in the subsequent period of 2001-2003 there were 6 more traffic accidents which led to 12 injuries and 4 fatalities, of which two were pedestrian fatalities. Therefore, despite the partial improvement in infrastructure, the pedestrian safety record actually worsened at this high-risk spot.



Conclusions:

The reasons for the actual deterioration of safety situation at this high-risk site after infrastructure improvements have been made are as follows:

- Lack of the overpass attractiveness due to its user-unfriendly design and amenities (too many high steps to climb for pedestrians)
- Absence of physical separation between the two traffic flows
- Traffic offenses by pedestrians, including crossing the road on red traffic lights; lack of public awareness in respect to road safety issues; absence of police enforcement
- Reduced visibility, especially at night

Therefore it is evident that partial infrastructure improvements may not be an effective solution. They should also be accompanied by other measures (notably information campaigns and police enforcement).

2. Rural road section along the coast "Athens-Sounio"

Introduction:

In 1992-1996, 227 accidents with casualties were recorded at the rural road section along the coast "Athens-Sounio", resulting in 24 fatalities and 40 serious injuries. Based on accident data recorded by the Police, as well as traffic and accident data for different sections of the examined road network, the high risk spots within this network were detected.

The high risk spot selected to be thoroughly examined and treated was between 29-30 and 30-31 kilometers of the road network. This is an area with several night clubs which, especially during summer time, attracts a large number of people from the greater Athens area.

Risk factors analysis:

The following possible causes for the increased number of accidents were defined:

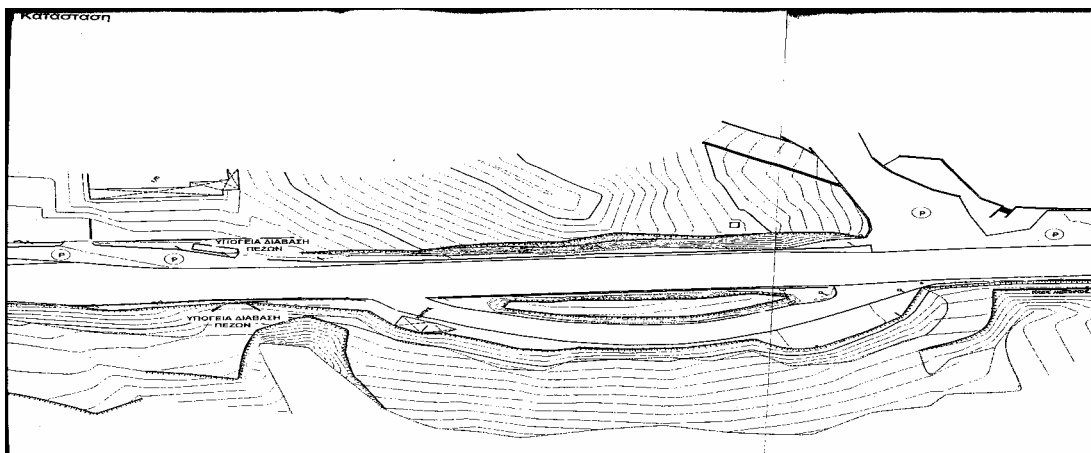
- Road side parking

- Left turns and U-turns that take place during entering/exiting from the night clubs and their parking areas
- Pedestrian crossing outside marked crosswalks, or the underpass
- Reduced visibility, especially at night

Follow-up action:

After examining the existing situation and the possible solutions, the following interventions finally took place in 2000:

- Traffic lights were put in place
- Left turns and U-turns are only allowed through a deviation
- A median at both sides of the road was built
- Street lights were installed



Conclusions:

As the result, the number of accidents at the road "Athens-Sounio" and in particular on the stretches between 29-30 and 30-31 km have slightly decreased. The number of accidents went down to 218 and the number of seriously injured was 47. However, the number of fatalities went up to 28. This proves the point that infrastructure improvements, to be effective, should be accompanied with stricter police enforcement and information campaigns leading to changes in road users' behaviour.