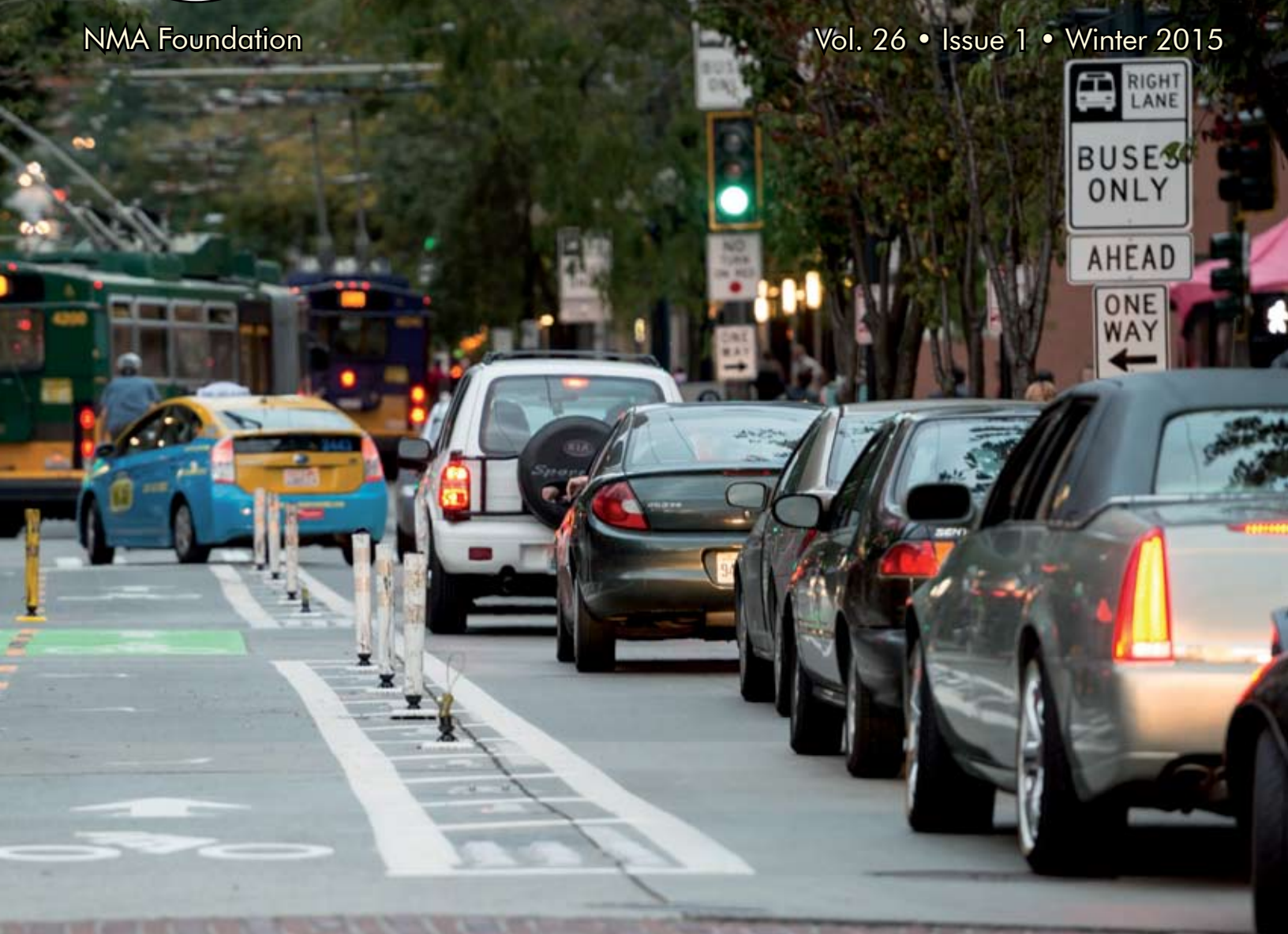




Driving Freedom

NMA Foundation

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Just How Smart is Smart Growth?

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NMA Foundation
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Driving Freedoms

Vol. 26 Issue 1

Face-to-Face Time.....	1
Sentinel Award Winner.....	2
NMA Washington Report	3
Six Tenets of Motorist Advocacy.....	3
Safety Mandates Hinder Visibility.....	4
Just How Smart is Smart Growth?	6
The Hazards of Driving While Diabetic	9
Members Write	10
News From Around The Country	11
SCCs & Activists List	13

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor.....John Bowman
Staff Writer



The NMA Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to finding innovative ways to improve and protect the interests of North American motorists.

Renew your NMA membership now to avoid any lapse.

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FACE-TO-FACE TIME

BY GARY BILLER, PRESIDENT, NMA

The NMA will be hitting the road in 2015. There is a dual purpose to our mission of actively seeking speaking engagements before liberty-advocating groups around the country: 1) attract new members among people who share concerns about eroding constitutional rights, and 2) use those opportunities to organize regional meetings with current members. The NMA can only grow if we create new lasting bonds and strengthen existing ones.

We have plenty of red-meat issues to share. The working title of our presentation, “Drivers: Second-Class, Double-Taxed Citizens (And it’s our own fault!)” sums up the premise.

The motoring public, long given in to apathy, has to be jolted back to reality. We will talk about increasingly invasive surveillance, the collection of billions of dollars of road-user fees while the highway infrastructure crumbles, and the growing disregard for drivers’ constitutional rights.

When looking for a quote to emphasize the destructive nature of apathy, I came across this one: “To sin by silence, when they should protest, makes cowards out of men.” That was written by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, an American author and poet born a few years before the Civil War. (Her most famous lines, contained in the poem, Solitude: “Laugh, and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone.”)

After I chose that quote as a call-to-action, I discovered that Ms. Wilcox was born and raised just

outside Janesville, Wisconsin, only about 25 miles from where I live. More recently, Janesville has been home to two politicians who have spent time on the national stage, one Democrat and one Republican.

Neither former U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold nor current U.S. Rep. (and former vice presidential candidate) Paul Ryan have ever been bashful about expressing their views on behalf of the public. The Wilcox gene appears to have been successfully passed down through several Janesville generations.

Prominently displayed near the top of the NMA home page at www.motorists.org are six tenets that describe our advocacy on behalf of motorists. During our presentations to the liberty groups, we will reveal the unspoken meaning behind each of those principles. (For a sneak peek, check out the sidebar on Page 3.)

A Mid-Atlantic tea party group recently contacted us about speaking at one of its upcoming monthly meetings, a gathering of about 150 people. Our goal for 2015 is to schedule several of these presentations before groups of 25 people or more in regions where there also are concentrations of current members.

Drop us a line if you know of a group (or better, a contact within that group) in your area that you think would be receptive to hearing the NMA message. If a successful connection is made, we may well be seeing you at a members’ meeting soon. 🍵

Steve Carrellas, New Jersey Advocate, Receives NMA Sentinel Award

Editor's Note: The NMA developed the Sentinel Award to recognize those who work diligently on behalf of the motoring public, often at personal risk and sacrifice. The award is signified by a framed certificate and NMA polo shirt to the recipient, and a press release issued to media outlets across his/her state of residence. Nominations for the Sentinel Award can be submitted to the NMA for consideration.

It is said that New Jersey has the densest system of highways in the country. Through the years, it can also be argued that many of the Garden State's transportation policies have been almost as dense. That is why it is fortuitous the current NMA Sentinel Award recipient, Steve Carrellas, has steadfastly maintained his role as the leading voice for New Jersey motorists since the mid-1980s. His volunteer roles as State Chapter Coordinator and New Jersey Director of Government and Public Affairs on behalf of the National Motorists Association have been an enabling factor in the important reforms he has helped usher in.

The long list of state issues that Steve has influenced through the years speaks to his dedication to motorists' causes and confirms his selection as Sentinel Award winner:

- ▶ Increasing New Jersey's speed limit from 55 to 65 mph.
- ▶ Eliminating HOV (high-occupancy vehicle) lanes on Interstates 80 and 287.
- ▶ Banning the use of photo radar (automated speed cameras).
- ▶ Monitoring and publicizing, with other NMA personnel, the flaws of the New Jersey



red-light camera pilot program which led to the shutdown of the five-year project.

- ▶ Keeping laser speed measuring devices off the streets for several years until they could be demonstrated to be accurate and reliable.
- ▶ Limiting the negative impact to motorists of enhanced vehicle inspection and maintenance programs ushered in with the Clean Air Act by being actively involved in the legislative and regulatory battles that ensued.
- ▶ Lobbying extensively for auto insurance reform, addressing issues such as ratings systems, underwriting criteria, mandatory insurance, drivers' license penalty point systems, and surcharges.
- ▶ Opposing unreasonable toll hike and congestion pricing proposals on New Jersey's three long-established toll roads.
- ▶ Protecting motorist privacy by stopping enabling legislation for electronic toll collection until the law prevented those toll records from being used for any

other purpose, including use of the data to detect speeding.

- ▶ Working closely with authorities to fix technical, administrative, and financial areas of New Jersey's E-Z Pass system to build a future plan for barrierless electronic toll collection at highway speeds.
- ▶ Providing significant input to the major reform in the early 2000s of the traditional services provided by the state Department of Motor Vehicles, so much so that the reforms resulted in the creation of a revised and more effective state entity now known as the Motor Vehicles Commission.
- ▶ Working with the New Jersey ACLU to prevent the state's driver's license requirements from complying with the more onerous, invasive aspects of the federal Real ID program.
- ▶ Keeping the mandated use of ignition interlock devices at bay for many years and when laws permitting the devices in DWI penalty cases were eventually passed, helping win concessions for first-time offenders.

Steve is a registered professional engineer in the State of New Jersey with Master of Engineering and Bachelor of Science degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He has used his more than 35 years of professional experience in systems engineering, vehicular technology, quality management and management consulting to continue his mission representing the best interests of New Jersey motorists, an effort more than worthy of the National Motorists Association's Sentinel Award. 🏆



NMA WASHINGTON REPORT

BY ROBERT TALLEY, NMA LOBBYIST

Several issues relevant to NMA members will be under consideration at the start of the 114th Congress. Notably, the discussions of highway funding and photo enforcement are likely to be continued into 2015. Congress will have 145 days to pass legislation to establish policy priorities and funding for surface transportation. In the real world, this may seem like plenty of time, but Congress seems reluctant to function these days and if it cannot complete a bill in that time it wouldn't be the first time.

Photo enforcement is expected to be a contentious issue. In 2014, the House passed an amendment to ban the collection of license plate data through photo enforcement for the year 2015 as part of a House appropriations bill—a funding law for the department of transportation. This provision would effectively kill federal funding for photo enforcement, preventing of storage of individual identifying information. Although the House passed the provision, the Senate did not act on it, and the final funding law did not contain the House restrictions.

At the end of 2014, Texas Rep. Steve Stockman upped the ante against photo

enforcement by introducing a bill that would require each state to certify that red-light cameras and speed cameras are not in use on any road receiving federal funding, whether at the state or municipal level. States allowing camera use would lose ten percent of their federal highway funding. According to reports, this would be a significant disincentive to photo enforcement. While Stockman is retiring, it is reasonable to expect that his ideas will be picked up and pushed in 2015. The gas tax, currently 18.4 cents per gallon, has been the traditional source of funding for the Highway Trust Fund, which pays for federal highway funding. This fund is set to run out of money in May 2015. The gas tax only brings in approximately \$34 billion per year, however, and current transportation funding is closer to \$50 billion a year. Once again, legislators are debating how to address this.

Increasing the gas tax and indexing it for inflation is a highly contentious issue but has supporters. Oregon Rep. Earl Blumenauer and Wisconsin Rep. Tom Petri introduced legislation at the end of 2014 to increase the gas tax by fifteen cents over three years and tie it to infla-

tion. Major newspapers are starting to get engaged. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today* have all run editorials calling for an increase in the gas tax. Additionally, some states are getting ahead of the federal government to shore up their own funding mechanisms. Recently New Hampshire and Maryland raised fuel taxes, and Indiana indexed its gas tax to inflation.

For Republicans who have recently acquired a majority in the Senate, thus cementing legislative control of Congress, the gas tax is highly problematic. While there is recognition of the problem, increasing taxes is not considered a politically appropriate action, and alternatives are under consideration. One would be to implement a user fee or vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) fee to replace the gas tax. One staunchly conservative Republican legislator recently told me “the tin hat crowd” will just have to get over it.

This funding dilemma is longstanding and the solutions are not politically easy, suggesting that if legislators can find a way to duck the issue in 2015, they probably will. 🚗

The NMA's Six Tenets of Motorist Advocacy ... And What They Really Mean

- 1. Traffic laws fairly written and reasonably enforced.** Translation: Drop the command- and-control tactics and treat motorists as responsible adults. Engineering, Education, and only then Enforcement.
- 2. Full due process rights for motorists, in the courts, on the streets, and in their vehicles.** Translation: Follow the Constitution. It isn't just a piece of paper, and drivers aren't second-class citizens.
- 3. Traffic penalties based on sensible standards that differentiate between responsible behavior and demonstrated unsafe behavior.** Translation: Stop assigning guilt by suspicion. Constitutional republics aren't police states.
- 4. Reasonable highway user fees for maintaining/improving highway infrastructure, not for wasteful overhead or unrelated pet projects.** Translation: Having road users pay for upkeep and expansion is fair. Charging them twice—as taxpayers and as drivers—for non-highway projects is not.
- 5. Traffic safety based on sound engineering solutions, not by arbitrary measures such as speed traps or red-light cameras.** Translation: “Revenue collection” corrupts rather than enhances safety.
- 6. Driver Education emphasizing early advanced driving-skill development, both on-road and in controlled learning environments.** Translation: There is no substitute for quality experience behind the wheel for novice drivers.

Safety Mandates Compromise Vehicle Visibility/Comfort

North Carolina Member K.C. Green, P.E., describes his frustrating quest for a new vehicle

Instead of reconstructing roads to create a better environment for accident avoidance, we're forcing automakers—via NHTSA mandates and the urging of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety—to incorporate expensive safety features into cars. Most of these features are not for accident avoidance, which is better accomplished through highway design, but for occupant protection.

All well and good, but three of these features—high window sills, thick roof pillars and oversized/rear seat headrests—actually promote crashes by reducing driver visibility. Certainly, if you avoid the crash in the first place, you don't have to worry about protecting the occupant, right? Well, how can you avoid the accident if you can't see out your window?

Maybe it's a guy thing (or maybe it's just me), but I've always rested my left elbow on the window sill when I drive. This element of comfort seems to be lost on automakers these days, thanks in part to the IIHS, NHTSA and other so-called safety organizations.

At least that's the indication I get from the makers of Cadillac, Chevrolet, Buick, Honda, Mitsubishi, Jaguar, Nissan, Subaru, Audi, Kia, Hyundai, Infiniti, Mazda, Dodge and Chrysler. With other automakers, it wasn't a lot better, but there were select models that somewhat managed to placate me.

In driver's ed class we're taught to keep our hands at 10:00 and 2:00, but that's not realistic. There are two issues at hand: high sills and narrow sills. All sills are higher than they used to be, and most sills are narrow. (Take a look at the comparison photos below to see what I'm talking about.) I blame high sills on NHTSA and narrow sills on clueless vehicle designers. You can raise the seat some to mitigate a high sill, but you can't widen a narrow sill.

Since September 2012, NHTSA has called on all automakers to provide a certain standard of side impact protection in all vehicles. This mandate translated into the inclusion of side air bags and extra structural members, thereby raising the sill height.

I recently bought a new 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee. I wanted to buy a sedan, but the Grand Cherokee scored highest on all the features that were important to me.

The Grand Cherokee has good left (and right) elbow support and pretty good visibility as well as other favorable features. It also had a decent "Road Test" report by *Consumer Reports*, although its dubious reliability rating prompted me to purchase an extended service contract.

My previous vehicle was a 1995 Buick Regal with 192,000 miles on it. I am the original owner and I decided that instead of trying to trade it in (which surely would've amused my salesman)

or sell it, I'd simply store it as household property without a license plate. The Regal is a great car, and I meticulously maintained it over the years, but various non-mechanical components are worn out or broken, and you can't easily get replacement parts, so it was time to upgrade. Plus, the Grand Cherokee has some neat bells and whistles.

Maybe I'll restore the Regal someday, or maybe I'll just donate it to a worthy cause. Regardless, its window sill was excellent, and not one of the 95 (yes, 95) new vehicles I looked at was as comfortable in that regard.

Toward the end of summer I began my car-shopping quest in earnest, focusing my search on midsize cars and SUVs. I knew going in that high/narrow sills would be a major annoyance, so I designated sill dimensions as the only consideration (much to the bewilderment of salesmen) during my initial showroom visits. If any vehicle replicated the comfort of my Regal I would've moved on to assess other features of that vehicle. But none did, so I noted the ones that came close and vowed to return for a second visit to check out visibility and a myriad of other features.

The sill assessment quickly eliminated 70 vehicles, including all vehicles from the brands I previously listed. It was never my intention to look at 95 vehicles or even 25. I simply kept looking until I exhausted every brand out there under \$55,000. (And even a gratuitous test of a \$105,000 Porsche Cayenne was uncomfortable.)

Besides the Grand Cherokee, other high-scoring vehicles, for window sill comfort, included the Ford Flex, BMW X5, Toyota FJ Cruiser and Land Rover LR2—all SUVs. The Volvo S80 was the highest scoring sedan—just a



Interior window sill height and width comparison. Top: 1995 Buick Regal. Bottom: 2012 Toyota Camry.

(Continued top of next page)

notch less comfortable than the aforementioned SUVs. Unfortunately, the S80 fell short in other aspects.

Realizing that most of the time I don't have backseat passengers, I tested visibility with and without the rear headrests. So I actually removed the rear headrests (much to the amusement of the salesman) to see how much better it would be. It clearly improved in all vehicles.

Every vehicle's side-rear or rear windows were at least partially blocked by part of the rear headrest. In some cases the blockage was dramatic (e.g. the Ford Explorer). In others, not so much (e.g. Range Rover Evoque). Some vehicles, such as the Grand Cherokee and Volvo S80, have fold-down rear headrests. That's a convenient feature, negating the need to store them. The best visibility with rear headrests removed was the Mercedes Benz C250. It was excellent, rivaling my Regal, but as of the 2015 model year, it's been discontinued.

My Regal doesn't have rear headrests, but it has never been a detriment. (Again, take a look at the comparison photos on this page.) After 19 years and 192,000 miles I never got rear-ended and the open view I enjoyed helped me avoid dangerous lane changes.

Now that I've had the Jeep for awhile, I'll share a few observations. With the Regal, I always felt confident about my surroundings when backing up or driving in traffic. With the Grand Cherokee my confidence is diminished. Don't blame the Jeep. ALL new vehicles have less visibility. You don't have a choice these days, unless you buy a convertible. Recent safety mandates and design trends have made driving a truly claustrophobic experience.

They say ignorance is bliss, well so is your enlarged blind spot. . . er, rather, dependent on BLIS. BLIS is the acronym for Blind Spot Information System, a system designed to warn you if an object is within a certain range next to you or off to the side behind you. It is not a camera.



Visibility comparison. Top: 1995 Buick Regal. Bottom: 2012 Toyota Camry.

BLIS is coming to a vehicle near you, if you don't already have it. It's not required now but probably will be someday. It's standard on some vehicles and not available on others. Some include it as an option, often as part of an expensive option package (like that required for my Jeep). Backup cameras are already in vogue, and surround-view cameras are up-and-coming.

I don't like the idea of depending on BLIS or surround-view cameras to guide me. (I'm actually OK with a backup camera, which would have been useful even with my Regal.) Mirrors and direct-sight have served me well over the years, and BLIS has no way of displaying an accurate position of nearby vehicles.

In conclusion, NHTSA's mandates have essentially robbed Peter to pay Paul. Sure, it seems important to have extra protection in case you get T-boned or rollover, but how much protection do you really need, and how likely is it that you are going to need it? Compare that to the current perennially compromised field-of-vision you'll suffer in almost every driving situation. Isn't

crash avoidance the ultimate goal?

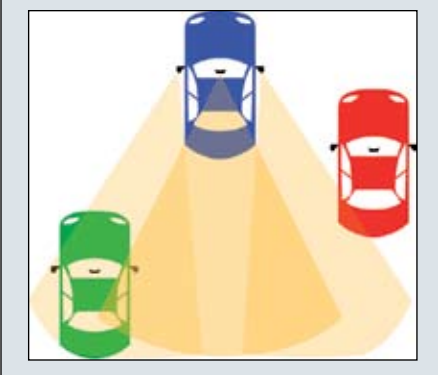
If you think NHTSA's gone too far by sacrificing comfort and visibility for the improbability you will ever need these recent "safety" enhancements, tell them at <https://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/ivoq/>. You can also call (888) 327-4236.

It's time to take the onus off behavioral and vehicular solutions to accomplish highway safety. Let's fix the roads first, then see how many cameras, beams, air bags, high sills, thick pillars and giant headrests we need. 🚗

Speaking of blind spots

Most people adjust side view mirrors so they can see the side of their car on the inside edge of the mirror. This limits visibility by creating "tunnel vision" to the rear. Set this way, your side view mirrors overlap much of what your rearview mirror sees and creates blind spots. The solution is to adjust the side view mirrors just beyond the point where you can see the side of the car on the inside edge of the mirror. This almost completely solves the blind spot problem. Here's how to do it:

For the driver side mirror, roll up the window and press your head against the glass. Adjust the mirror so that you can just barely see the edge of the car. For the passenger side mirror, place your head in the center of the car (directly behind the inside mirror mount) and adjust the outside mirror so that you can just barely see the edge of the car. See below.



Just How Smart is Smart Growth?

A member shares his first-hand experience with the consequences of urban tinkering

In a recent e-newsletter, reprinted on Page 7, we discussed issues related to Smart Growth as presented at a California forum for academics and environmentalists. In response, we received the following letter from a California member who provides us with a street-level perspective of how Smart Growth has been implemented in Long Beach, near Los Angeles.

We've all heard the term "Smart Growth" thrown around time and time again, but what does it really mean to the average motorist? Smart Growth supporters like The American Planning Association (APA) describe it as "development of mixed use, mixed income livable communities where people choose to live, work, and play because they are attractive and economical options rather than forced decisions." In its two-paragraph summary of Smart Growth principles, the APA mentions choice in some form seven times. So far, so good.

Smart Growth advocates stress the need to provide people with many transportation options—what the APA calls a "balanced, multi-modal transportation network." While these schemes pay lip service to the needs of motorists, the true emphasis is on remaking the urban landscape to promote the use of transit and non-motorized transportation like biking and walking.

Such alterations include narrowing travel lanes, adding bike lanes, traffic circles, curb extensions, median islands and more. One roadway modification, known as a road diet, has become increasingly in vogue. Under a typical road diet, a four-lane road, two lanes in each direction, is slimmed down to only one lane in each direction with a middle turn lane. The remaining lanes are dedicated to bicycles or parking. In the member letter that follows, you'll note how planners in Long Beach implemented a variation of a road diet on the two main thoroughfares through the city, which resulted in increased congestion and travel times for drivers. Surely these consequences were unintended, or were they?

Smart Growth supporters claim their transportation fixes will lead to more livable communities by creating safer, more efficient roads for all users. But in reality, such measures may instill cyclists and pedestrians with a false sense of security, leading to more conflicts and accidents, not fewer. And what about the impact of increased traffic congestion: greater fuel use, more emissions/pollution, wasted productivity, more road rage incidents? They don't seem to



care about those. In fact, increased traffic congestion presents an opportunity to implement another driver-unfriendly policy: congestion pricing.

Congestion pricing schemes charge motorists variable fees for driving in certain areas at certain times or on certain days of the week. It's made possible through the same tracking technology used to implement vehicle-miles-traveled taxes, and indeed, the two go hand-in-hand. The cumulative effect is to make driving so difficult or so expensive that many people simply give up. So much for choice.

A California NMA member writes:

So-called Smart Growth has already become a reality in my former home, Long Beach, California. For the first six or seven years I lived there, traffic flow through the city was amazing. With freeway access at the east and west ends of the city, and the development oriented along the east-west shoreline, the city had set up alternating one-way streets through downtown. You could get off the freeway even during commute hours and, if you happened to land on the right timing, never have to stop, riding the wave of timed lights all the way across downtown.

If you hit a red light, it would be the first one, but you would then ride that same wave all the way through. You would see the beauty of lights turning green ahead of you, progressing not at the speed limit, but at the higher, yet still cautious and prudent speed that most people actually wanted to drive. It was wondrously efficient, both in time and also fuel- and emissions-minimizing vehicle operation. It turned out that this operation

(Continued on Page 8)

NMA E-Newsletter #301: Caution! This is a Completely Hypothetical Exercise that could become Reality.

The California Environmental Protection Agency's Air Resources Board (ARB) recently put on a presentation titled "The Science behind Sustainable Communities Strategies." The stated goal was to provide "an objective review of the empirical evidence on how effective various transportation and land use strategies are at reducing vehicle miles traveled (and thus greenhouse gas emissions)." A representative from one of the NMA's allied organizations in California, Robin Cole with the Association of California Car Clubs, attended and provides us with a first-hand account below.

Robin's comments remind us of how hostile urban planners are toward automobiles as they spread their vision of densely populated urban areas where cars are seen as a threat. Robin notes that the presenter, Dr. Susan Handy with the University of California—Davis, relied mostly on assumptions, not facts, to support her claims. This approach reminds us of the rationale for mandating the 55 mph National Maximum Speed Limit (NMSL) during the Arab Oil Embargo. The government claimed that lowering highway speed limits would reduce fuel consumption by more than two percent. In reality, the reduction was less than half a percent, yet it took more than 20 years to fully repeal the onerous NMSL.

California recently implemented a "pilot" program for a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) tax through the enactment of Senate Bill 1077. By limiting where and when people can drive, such schemes will prove

critical to the long-term success of sustainable community initiatives. We cannot remain passive as planners and bureaucrats seek to reduce the transportation choices available to citizens; we'll reach a point where the momentum to do so will be hard to overcome. Here is Robin's account:

First, I would point out that although the California EPA /ARB building is beautiful, it is not energy efficient or economical. Apparently, California's environmental officials do not practice what they preach.

Most of the presentation attendees were master's or higher degree students in city planning. This means they were soaking this up. The presenter was Dr. Susan Handy with the University of California—Davis and the National Center for Sustainable Transportation. The purpose, she stated, was to reduce vehicle use and emissions.

Most of the results she cited dealt with reducing vehicle miles traveled and getting people to walk more, and use only bicycles and public transit. She explained her research was done by reading other people's papers and that there isn't a lot of research out there. Regarding capacity reduction, there is a lot to study in California but most of the information came from Europe. She had no data from the Oregon VMT tax pilot project. Yet, that program was used to push for passage of SB 1077. She could not say what geographic area, region or even what size of an area she used to come up with her "statistics."

She did not include socio-economic information in the study either. Yet the seminar was called

"The Science behind Sustainable Community Strategies." The "Regional Travel Demand Forecasting Module" was based on assumptions, per Dr. Handy. Several pages had charts of "empirical data" but underneath was the following statement: Caution! This is a completely hypothetical exercise.

The bottom-line goal of all of this is to get people out of their vehicles by making it more expensive to drive (gas, parking, tolls, etc.) and by getting people to live near where they work, play, shop, etc.

The scary part is that while you're listening to the presentation, at first it sounds attractive. Things would be convenient and cost less. I guess they did not do much research on the communities they are describing. I guess I was the only one in the room who remembered from history classes those towns which existed in the 1920s, where the steel mill or the mining company owned the town. Everyone worked at the same place, walked to work, had the company grocery and other stores, company medical providers and hospital or clinics. Anything a person earned went back to the company. So does a sustainable community mean being a "company man or woman?" Are these planners proposing socialized communities under the guise of air quality?

And like SMOG the figures are all made up and created without science. There are no actual figures based on anything actually measured or measurable.

This should scare everyone.

(Continued from Page 6)

depended on having three one-way lanes on each street.

Then the hippies and totalitarians got together “for the good of mankind.” They reduced the two streets configured this way, which connected the prime business areas with the freeway, to two lanes each, to make room for a dedicated bike lane separated from the car lanes by a wide empty space. This eliminated the ability of the roadway to accommodate any sort of obstruction. Somebody has to slow or stop to make a turn? Commercial vehicle unloading inventory in front of a store?

Now there is only one lane. When drivers had three lanes to work with, having to compress down to two was easy and hardly slowed traffic. With only two lanes to start with, compressing down to just one lane was a significant obstruction, and almost everybody “lost the wave” of timed lights. It became rare to get across downtown without having to sit, burning fuel and generating emissions, not to mention wasting time, at two or three lights.

Was this necessary? No! In addition to being an ardent motorist, I am a cyclist. One of the things I enjoyed about living in a densely-organized city was that I could walk or ride a bike to run errands, go to the grocery store, etc. I am a strong, experienced and confident rider, so it was not a problem to mix with traffic. I recognize this makes me unusual. But in Long Beach, if you didn’t want to share the road with cars that were close and fast, you had other options. In between the main roads, there were smaller, less-traveled, two-way streets that were generally only used by cars to access businesses and residences on those streets. Cars on these streets were infrequent and slow. So simply by using a different route when on a bicycle, one could ride comfortably away from fast-moving cars and get to the same places with no problem.

Did the bike lanes enhance overall safety for cars and bicyclists? It did not feel that way to me. The bike lanes were set up on the left side of the roadway, the opposite of every properly trained cyclist’s instinct to ride on the right. This had the potential to create situations in which a stopped car waiting to make a left turn suddenly pulls in front of a cyclist approaching from behind, or else just takes one out from behind without slowing because the driver doesn’t expect that type of road user to be in that space traveling at that speed.

To prevent this, the city built offset left-turn lanes, where at each block, a vehicle lane crosses over the



The mean streets of Long Beach.

bicycle lane so that a car is already to the left of the bike lane when making a left turn. Unfortunately, this still led to vehicle/bicycle conflicts, creating significant personal risk for cyclists and liability for motorists. If cyclists had simply exercised their right to use the normal traffic lanes, many of these encounters could have been avoided.

Did the bike lanes ever lead to an increase in bicycle commuting to downtown offices or businesses? Not that I ever noticed. I was still one of just a handful out there on my bike going to the grocery store, coffee shop, or doing other shopping. It turns out that you live where you want to or can afford to live, and you work wherever you can find the best job for you. If that means you roll “from Long Beach to Compton” every day, you’re actually lucky—it’s not a bad commute at all. If you work in an office downtown, you probably need to wear nice clothes (maybe skirts for women), nice shoes and have well-coiffed hair when you get there. Helmet hair, shoes that are safe and effective for riding, possible grease on your pant leg, and arriving sweaty are not options.

On a similar point, there were commuter trains available. I could walk about six blocks from my apartment to catch one, and it was probably about a mile from my office to the train station at the other end. I looked into it but didn’t get past the schedule. Not counting the walk time, just station to station, it took more than three times as long as driving.

I could go on about how redevelopment of the downtown area systematically destroyed much of the architectural and cultural character that attracted most Long Beach residents to the town in the first place, but that’s kind of off-topic for NMA. Suffice it to say, it has for the most part been a very expensive and irreversible failure: People chose to live in Long Beach and loved the place specifically because it was not what the city managers are trying to turn it into. 🏠

Driving While Diabetic: A Growing Hazard for Many Motorists

Editor's Note: When diabetics unexpectedly go into insulin shock, their symptoms (slurred speech, dizziness, disorientation) can mimic those of being under the influence. More than 29 million people in the United States have diabetes, and that number is only increasing. As a result, incidents of police mistaking diabetic shock for DUI appear to be rising, sometimes with dire consequences.

A Google search will quickly reveal many shocking accounts of innocent motorists who have had the misfortune of being pulled over for driving while diabetic. This is exactly what happened to a NMA member in Virginia. If you have diabetes, the American Diabetes Association provides information on how to minimize the risks of driving. Learn more at www.diabetes.org. Below is our member's story.

I was driving home from an evening meeting and suddenly passed out! I was going into insulin shock. I hit a vehicle stopped on the street and rolled past it for about one hundred feet where I was stopped by a police officer who had witnessed the accident.

The officer yanked open my door and pulled me out shaking me and screaming about my being drunk, which confused me even further since I don't drink. I wear a medical warning bracelet and also have a wallet card explaining my diabetes. The officer ignored both, and instead of calling the rescue squad he put me through alcohol testing. He even sent for a second breath tester because he thought the first was broken.

The officer continued to ignore



my pleas for help. He locked me in the back of his cruiser and went away. I was in a bad spot. If my condition worsened, I could go totally unconscious until all my bodily functions ceased and I would die.

The officer returned after an hour and said he was taking me to the emergency room. I breathed a sigh of relief thinking he finally understood my problem until he said he was taking me in for drug testing. As soon as I got to the hospital I asked the nurse to check my blood glucose, which she refused until I demanded she do so. My reading came back very low, and she immediately called the duty doctor and brought me orange juice and cookies which helped me to recover in a few minutes. The doctor also put me on a heart monitor.

The police officer wanted to take me to jail, but the doctor wouldn't release me. The officer wrote up an arrest warrant and told me to appear at the police station after I was released. He charged me with felony hit-and-run and being a drug dealer who overdosed on drugs. I turned myself in expecting the

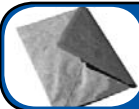
charges to be dropped. Instead, I was booked and had to post bail and was forbidden to travel until after my court appearance.

If convicted I could possibly spend time in prison. I hired an attorney and also contacted the American Diabetes Association (ADA) for advice. The ADA never responded. I contacted my doctor and some others who could assist me in court. I received copies of my blood tests for drugs and my diabetes and went to court.

Despite all the evidence I was startled at the position of the court. It took three hours to convince the judge of my innocence. He finally released me and the ordeal was over mostly. I then filed a complaint against the officer for ignoring my needs and for filing an obvious wrong charge. It was ignored. Next I hired another lawyer to file a removal of all record of this incident.

I also contacted another attorney to see about suing the officer or the city. He said I couldn't sue the city because there was some law against doing so. I was going to sue the officer but before I could he got himself in trouble. He had cited a young woman but then offered to tear up the ticket in exchange for sexual favors. She promptly contacted the mayor and voiced a complaint. The officer was ultimately dismissed from the police force.

The bottom line is that with the growing number of people with diabetes, police around the country will need better training to recognize the symptoms of diabetic shock and to respond appropriately. Many lives depend on it. 🚗



MEMBERS WRITE

The views expressed below do not necessarily represent those of the NMA. Letters are welcomed and should not exceed 300 words. They may be edited for length or clarity. Full-length articles will also be considered and should not exceed 600 words. Send to nma@motorists.org or mail to NMA, 402 W 2nd St., Waunakee, WI 53597

Back in the seventies, the U.S. president paid a visit to the Twin Cities, where I live. I didn't pay much attention until I was driving home one day. I was on a bridge over Highway 280 when I saw a sedan speed by along with a couple of motorcycles. I decided to follow along to see what all the commotion was about. A motorcycle cop at the bottom of the entrance ramp saw me coming. He pointed down at the pavement and then took off. What was he motioning for? I slowed down and then came several limousines—six in all. And then I realized what all the commotion was about: it was the president's motorcade.

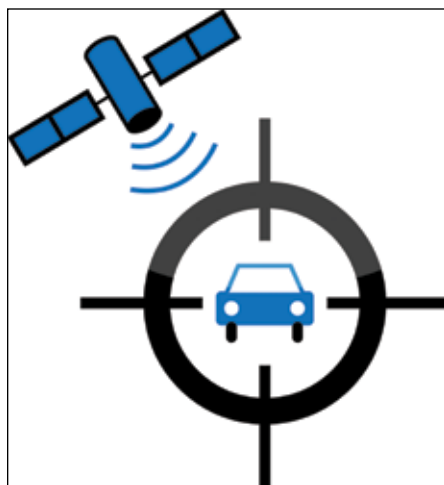
I noted that those limos were driving much faster than the federally mandated 55 mph. This ticked me off since I had written my congressmen against it and had received nothing back but lip service and patronizing form letters, the gist of which was "we the people should understand that it was important to drive 55 and help this endeavor." I floored my Opel Manta Rallye—a car with a sporting nature and reasonably fast—and took off after them.

I caught up to them on a sweeping turn but then figured I should back off. Don't want to go looking for trouble. The road straightened and I checked my speedo twice. We were doing a bona fide 85 mph. I'll bet all those cats in the party were wearing their seatbelts too. Sure they were. We should believe in the 55, but did they? Of course not.

I had satisfied myself and proved something about the nature of politi-

cians and hypocrites. Thinking back on it, they were probably knocking down a good 10-12 miles per gallon, too.

*Daniel T. Gatten
Saint Paul, MN*



With the advent of highly technological wireless communications capabilities in motor vehicles one can't help but wonder about the possibility of computer hacking. If hackers can invade the databases of major merchandisers from half a world away, couldn't they cripple the transportation system by maliciously scrambling vehicle-to-vehicle communications on a widespread scale? Could a hacker shut down fire trucks and emergency responders at will? Could there be a "turn off" option if the driver senses a malfunction? With wireless communications could there be the ability for a government entity of shut down a motorist's vehicle at will?

Any system, regardless of supposed safety benefits, should not be beyond

the control of the motorist himself.

To surrender control of the vehicle to another entity, manual or computer controlled, is to surrender one's personal freedom.

What's the next step, getting prior electronic authorization before taking the vehicle out of the barn and onto the highway? Surrendering one aspect of motor vehicle control "in the name of safety" can open the slippery slope to an avalanche of unwanted and unanticipated controls.

A New York Member

I absolutely hate computer-controlled cars. Our 2005 Town and Country has intermittent glitches that cause the headlights to turn off (and usually) back on for no apparent reason. Flicking the headlight switch does not appear to have any effect. And then there is the gremlin that switches the turn signal to the opposite direction you have selected after a few blinks. Yes, the blinker switches from left to right, or visa/versa, on its own. Potentially dangerous, in the right situation. So why the hell do the headlights and turn signals have to be computer controlled? And now they have "fly-by-wire" throttle positioners and soon there will be "steer-by-wire" and "brake-by-wire"? No thanks.

I am an electronic engineer, and I am not willing to give up my safety and the safety of my family to a device that can suffer the dreaded "blue screen of death." I have already had bad experiences with the other junk they have added on such as air bags and anti-lock brakes. If I had my way, I would only buy 1960s vintage vehicles. Back when cars were cars, not rolling computers waiting for a good EMP to cause an accident.

*Jon Strom
Ames, IA*





DRIVING NEWS

This information is current at time of printing. Get daily driving news updates from across the country through the “NMA Driving News” area of our website. For even more in-depth coverage of motorists’ issues from some of the country’s leading commentators, visit the NMA Blog at blog.motorists.org.

National

A new device similar to a radar gun can reportedly detect when vehicle occupants are sending and receiving texts. The “gun,” developed by Commsonics, distinguishes the unique signal used for texting from other background signals. Presumably, it could be combined with a traditional radar gun to hit motorists twice. No word on how the device will distinguish who was actually doing the texting—passenger or driver?

Arizona

The Tucson Police Officers Association called for the department to eliminate the ticket quota for patrol officers. Tucson Police Department patrol officers are expected to make at least one “traffic contact” a day on average that results in a citation or a warning, according to Chief Roberto Villaseñor. The purpose of the requirement was to encourage proactive traffic enforcement, the police chief said. Traffic contacts deter “bad driving habits,” and Villaseñor said it required his officers to do their jobs, which is ensuring “the smooth flow of traffic.”

British Columbia

A Canadian veteran was shocked when a Victoria police officer wrote her a traffic citation while she was taking part in a funeral procession for a fellow soldier on Remembrance Day, which coincides with Veterans

Day in the U.S. and is the day Canadians set aside to honor those who served in the armed forces. Debbi Ferguson was pulled over that day by a Victoria police officer and written a \$230 ticket for having an obscured license plate. At the time, Ferguson was using her car to escort the body of Pvt. Steve Allen from a nearby airport to a funeral home.

California

In a surprisingly under-the-radar development, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law a program that will set up the infrastructure to charge California motorists by the mile. Officially titled “Vehicles: road usage charge pilot program,” Senate Bill 1077 will create a task force to address all the aspects of a “charge-drivers-by-the-mile” program in the state, which would purportedly replace the gasoline tax.

Florida

The Jacksonville City Council considered an ordinance to allow people who live along local roads to decide if they want their street’s speed limit lowered from 30, to 25, or even 20 mph. Councilwoman Lori Boyer proposed the ordinance after getting complaints about speeding in her district in the San Marco area. The city highway engineer would have to deem the speed change reasonable and at least 75 percent of property owners on each road in question would

have to sign a petition agreeing to lower the speed limit.

A Florida woman filed suit against Avis Budget Rental Car Group for charging drivers for traffic tickets incurred while renting Avis vehicles without providing the renters the opportunity to contest the fines. Avis and ATS Processing Services pay alleged toll violations, speeding tickets and other traffic infractions incurred by renters, often prior to providing them with notice of the alleged fine, and then charge renters an administrative fee for processing the violations, according to a recently filed complaint.

A court ruling that found a South Florida city’s red-light camera tickets to be illegal has other cities and counties across the state trying to figure out whether the citations they’ve issued are valid. The 4th District Court of Appeals ruled that the city of Hollywood improperly delegated its enforcement authority by having a private company, American Traffic Solutions, issue tickets on the city’s behalf.

Illinois

Martin O’Malley, a key player in Chicago’s red-light camera bribery scandal involving Redflex, pleaded guilty to funneling cash and perks to city official John Bills. Bills is accused of helping rig the camera contract for Redflex in return for kickbacks. Former Redflex CEO Karen Finley has also been charged in the case.

Despite a pledge his motorcade drivers would slow down and obey the law last spring, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s motorcade racked

(Continued on Page 12)

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up another eight red-light or speed camera violations, according to ABC 7 News. ABC 7 had previously reported the Mayor's two vehicle motorcade had been ticketed nearly two dozen times for speed camera, red-light camera and parking tickets.

Maryland

The Howard County Police Department rolled out a new enforcement program that relies on data from previous traffic incidents to dictate the deployment of officers. A working group identified trends in county traffic data, which allowed them to plot particular times and places where a high-volume of incidents—including collisions, DUI offenses, speeding and aggressive driving—occur. The department will deploy patrols in the problem areas identified by the working group.

Michigan

With permission from a local road agency, researchers in Michigan hacked into nearly 100 wirelessly networked traffic lights, highlighting security issues that they say are likely to pervade networked traffic infrastructure around the country. More than 40 states currently use such systems to keep traffic flowing as efficiently as possible, helping to reduce emissions and delays. The team found three major weaknesses in the traffic light system: unencrypted wireless connections, the use of default usernames and passwords that could be found online, and a debugging port that is easy to attack.

New York

The Albany City Council voted 11-4 to bring red-light cameras to the city at 20 intersections. Some council members stated they felt the vote was

forced and that the city pressured them to pass the ordinance to fill a budget deficit. One council member even said he felt the vote was blackmail. The 2015 budget calls for \$2 million in revenue solely from red light cameras. Those opposed asked for more time to consider, but ultimately, the council decided to vote.

New Jersey

After five years, New Jersey's controversial red-light camera pilot program came to an end when state lawmakers chose not to take up legislation required to continue the program. The program generated controversy from the start, and outspoken critics such as Monmouth Assemblyman and NMA ally Declan O'Scanlon were quick to point out that the cameras were more about generating revenue for cash-strapped municipalities than improving public safety. In 2012, the NMA worked with O'Scanlon to document irregularities in the certifications of a number of cameras, which further eroded public trust in the system.

North Carolina

Asheville District Attorney Ron Moore dismissed about 230 speeding tickets city police had written based reading from radar guns with out-of-date certifications. City police completed a review of 4,500 tickets and found about 2,000 had been issued based on speed measuring devices, such as radar guns. Of that amount, 336 came from devices with lapsed certifications.

Ohio

A federal judge in Rhode Island ruled that cash-strapped East Cleveland must pay at least \$638,000 after defaulting on a years-old bill owed to an insolvent traffic camera company that was based in

Providence, Rhode Island. The total could reach \$1 million if an attorney for the receiver overseeing the insolvency seeks interest and attorney fees.

Pennsylvania

The jury in the federal trial of six Philadelphia Traffic Court judges delivered a verdict of not guilty for some of the co-defendants but convicted four others of perjury. The federal trial involved what prosecutors called a pervasive system of ticket fixing which benefited the politically connected. The trial lasted for two months during which a host of witnesses described the inner workings of the Philadelphia Traffic Court.

Texas

Some 6,150 speeding-ticket recipients are getting their cases dismissed because they may have been victims of police misconduct. Four Houston officers were found to have falsely reported each other as witnesses on tickets they wrote, investigators say. In some cases, one officer allegedly reported another as a witness—when the second cop was elsewhere writing up a ticket of his own. The officers reportedly cooked up the scheme to increase their overtime pay for testifying in court about the alleged incidents.

Washington, D.C.

Critics called for D.C. to refund several years' worth of red-light and speeding tickets issued by a camera that was actually located in Maryland. News reports showed that the camera near the intersection of East Capitol Street SE and Southern Avenue NE was located about 40 feet over the line into Maryland.

After the error was brought to light, D.C. took the camera down and put a temporary speed camera inside the D.C. line. 🚗