

Gorski Consulting Website

Archived News - 2015 - May

May 31, 2015

US Secretary of State Kerry Bicycle Accident – An Opportunity to Highlight Danger of Curb Impacts

The publicity surrounding the bicycle accident in which US Secretary of State John Kerry fractured his femur allows us to focus the public's attention on the danger of pedalled-vehicle contact of curbs in typical urban travel.



The law in Ontario requires that e-bikes must be equipped with pedals. However such pedals are too low and protrude outward in a way that contact with most urban curbs is a likely, yet unreported, fact.

In Ontario, the law stipulates that e-bikes must be equipped with pedals. However, such pedals are too low and protrude outward in such a way that contact with most urban curbs is likely. The additional problem is the lack of reporting of these incidents and thus the lack of concern and knowledge of the problem. When the pedal of an e-bike strikes such a curb, in a large percentage of such incidents, the rider is spilt onto the road or roadside near the curb or onto the roadside. In many such incidents there is no contact with another vehicle or pedestrian. This is a critical point because, when such an incident involves only the rider of the e-bike, it is very unlikely that the rider will report the incident to any official agency, even if injuries were sustained. Thus there is likely to be a high level of under-reporting of such incidents.

Such under-reporting is not unique but also occurs in other collision situations where a single vehicle is involved in a collision which is not reported. The common scenario is a driver who loses control of vehicle in a rural setting where, darkness, low traffic volume and other factors help to disguise the occurrence. The driver may call a friend or tow truck to deliver the vehicle to some location or, if the vehicle is drivable then it is simply driven away. Official police records and government agencies do not have notice of such events and therefore the seriousness of the incidents is not known.

Yet common sense should tell anyone that, when the pedal of an e-bike is positioned close to a curb in many scenarios of urban travel, contact to those curbs with under-reporting of the incidents is highly likely.

May 28, 2015

Impaired Driving Awareness Impaired by OPP's Impaired Understanding of Their Own Data



Driving while impaired by alcohol is not a small issue, but it must be discussed with accurate facts.

There can be general agreement that any focus on driving while impaired by alcohol must be a good thing. Yet CTV News and Huron County OPP do not appear to be helping to convince the public with the type of news story published on CTV News website of May 27, 2015 entitled “Huron County OPP worry as impaired driving charges jump 90%”.

Reading the headline one would initially believe there was some enormous societal change between 2014 and 2015, posing an immediate threat to the public. After all, a 90 percent increase in charges must mean that, as of January 2015, a vast number of young males decided to jump in their black, 4X4, pick-up trucks with loads of beer cases and

heavy liquor bouncing in the cargo boxes. However, we then read the fine print: 18 persons charged in 2014, 34 persons charged in 2015. Sixteen more charges. That is the basis for sending the public into a panic.

Never mind the issue of conducting a proper statistical study before alarming the public, the difference in charges could be that police were more active in capturing impaired drivers in 2015 than in 2014. Or so many other reasons. Many persons reading such propaganda are not directed to understand the importance of preventing impaired driving. Indeed, many persons reading the article come to the impression that police and news media cannot be trusted to properly inform them. This does not improve matters, it makes them worse.

At Gorski Consulting we believe that impaired driving is a complicated issue that is not just isolated to the roadway. Rather than becoming MADD about it we need to understand that it is related to other societal ills. Until we are prepared to take off the band-aid and take a close look at wound we will never prevent it from spreading, let alone find its cure.

May 27, 215

News Items From April 2015 And Older Moved To Archived News Page

We have moved all the news items from April 2015 and older to the Archived News page of this website. Please visit the Archived News page to see any older news items.

Motorcyclist Fatality on Perth Line 40, North-East of Stratford Ontario

A 16-year-old motorcyclist, Jeremy Wichenheiser, of Perth East Township, was killed in a collision at approximately 1100 hours this morning at the intersection of Perth Line 40 and Perth Line 110. Police indicate that the motorcyclist was travelling eastbound on Line 40 and that a 2011 GMC Pick-up truck was travelling southbound on Line 110. The GMC truck's travel was controlled by a stop sign.

There was evidence of impact damage to the GMC in the vicinity of the junction of the right front door and fender. Although this damage was significant it did not appear to be

unusually severe. The damage to the 2014 Honda R5A motorcycle was also significant at its front wheel and forks however this all did not appear to be severe.

Police were quoted as saying they were still trying to determine how the collision occurred.

In many of these instances the line of sight of the GMC driver who must pass through the main road is impeded by various vegetation. Stops at these low volume roads are often made in a “rolling” fashion because cross traffic is not common and is often unexpected.

It would be expected that police should be able to download event data from the GMC’s event data recorder (“Black Box”) and this should resolve much of the mystery regarding the driver’s actions. Unfortunately, news reporters are often not persistent enough to inquire from police what that data might contain, if only in a general fashion.

The presence, or lacking, of pre-impact skid marks on the part of the motorcycle might also help to clarify issues.

May 25, 2015

Re-Heating of Clarke Road Curve Safety Concerns

Gorski Consulting has maintained a continuous monitoring of the S-curve on Clarke Road just north of Fanshawe Park Road in north-east London, Ontario since the fall of 2009. The curve’s unusual geometry led us to believe that a larger concentration of loss-of-control events would occur there. However, with the mandating of electronic stability control on all new vehicles in Canada commencing in 2011 we observed a dramatic decrease in these loss-of-control events, particularly in 2014. However, our most recent visit to the site suggests that the safety concerns could be re-ignited due to a deterioration in the condition of the east road edge at the north portion of the curve.



View of the breaking away of the east edge of the pavement at the apex of the north curve on Clarke Road north of Fanshawe Park Road in London.

The extent of the breakage of the pavement edge would not appear to be significant when viewed in the above photo. However this deterioration has occurred precisely where the right side wheels of passing vehicles normally travel very close to that edge, as shown in the wider view below.



View, looking south, at the area of broken pavement with respect to the curve on Clarke Road.

Now, a larger number of northbound vehicles will have their right side tires travelling off the pavement edge and this could be an increased safety concern. This is not an empty statement. This morning, May 25, 2015 we observed evidence where two vehicles travelled off the east side of the curve and onto east roadside. In one instance we believe that a dump truck or a similarly large vehicle travelled off the road edge as shown in the photo below.



Evidence of deep gouging in the east roadside where a dump truck likely travelled off the road at the noted curve.

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In a second incident a Chrysler vehicle rolled over after travelling up the tall embankment, coming to rest on the east roadside, as evidenced in the photos below.



Evidence of a fresh concentration of broken glass from a vehicle that rolled over in the east roadside.



View, showing the relationship between the location of the broken glass and the north curve of Clarke Road.

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Considering the small number of incidents we have observed at this curve in the past year it is of concern that we should find evidence of two fresh incidents that likely occurred in the span of the last 24 to 48 hours. One might believe that this is just a coincidence however the presence of the road edge deterioration should be a concern and we will be monitoring how the City of London road maintenance personnel react to this new development.

May 20, 2015

Trial Begins of James Lugela in Fatal Rollover of Hwy 401 on July 20, 2013

It is reported that a trial has commenced as a result of charges laid against James Lugela, 26, who was the alleged driver of a Chevrolet Equinox that was involved in a rollover collision on Highway 401 on July 20, 2013. Gorski Consulting had attended the collision site on July 21, 2013 and reported on our findings in an article on our website ("Fatal Rollover on Eastbound Highway 401 East of Colonel Talbot Road, South-West Outskirts of London, Ontario", Posted July 21, 2013). Interestingly Mr. Lugela has decided to plead not guilty to a variety of charges including impaired driving causing death and refusing to provide a breath sample.

It appears much of the crown's evidence will be based on witnesses who will claim that Lugela was seen speeding, driving aggressively, following too close and passing. Evidence at the collision site suggested there had been a rear end impact with another vehicle yet nothing was mentioned in the official news agencies that such an event occurred.

Also, the physical evidence of yaw marks and roadside markings would indicate that the Equinox was travelling in the range of 90 km/h when it began to produce the initial yaw marks that we visible at time of our examination. Thus the physical evidence on the roadway will not be sufficient to support the allegations that the Equinox was speeding.

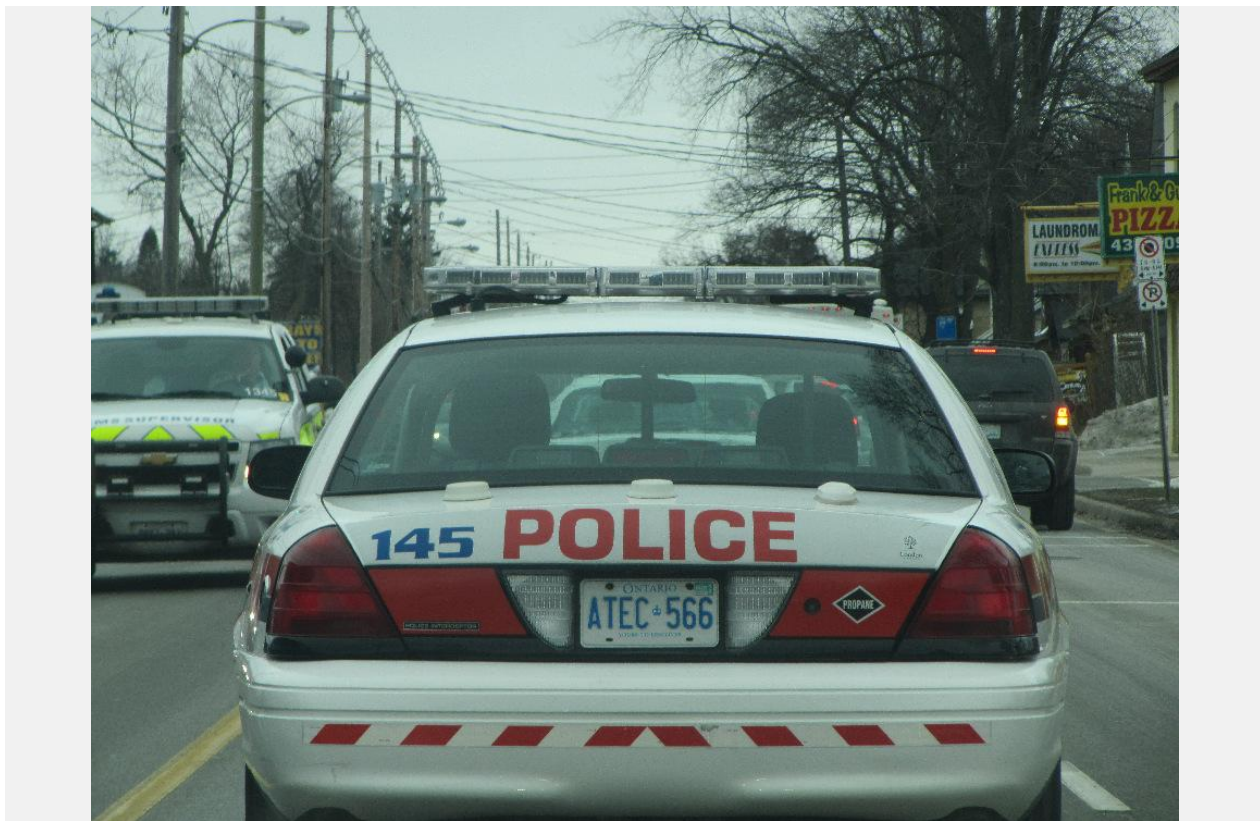
Police will likely have evidence from the vehicle's event data recorder ("Black Box") that may indicate the vehicle was speeding 5 to 7 seconds before the recorder was awakened. Perhaps this awakening might have occurred at the time of the possible rear-end impact. These possibilities will need to be revealed.

Furthermore, while the collision reportedly occurred near the interchange of Colonel Talbot Road, the facts indicate the collision was actually located about 5 kilometres east of that location, or just east of the Westminster Drive overpass.

So some facts are clearly confused or incorrect. It will be interesting to see what evidence is reported from the trial.

May 18, 2015

Yes To Police Body Cameras, But No If They Cost \$5,000.00 Each



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City of Toronto police are reportedly testing a new project for body worn video cameras on their officers. One hundred officers will be fitted with the units that will be “turned on” prior to interaction with the public. It remains to be seen how often the “turning on” will be accidentally “turned off”.

Meanwhile, the 100 cameras will reportedly cost \$500,000.00. While there is understandably a certain amount of administration of the project, it is not certain if the administration costs are included with the reported costs. Regardless, the cost appears to be out of line. High quality GoPro cameras capable of recording in 4K resolution should not be needed for the type of documentation that would be required. Yet such GoPro cameras should cost in the range of \$500.00 a piece, or far below the \$5,000.00 per unit for the police cameras. Lower cost cameras could easily function well for about \$200.00 per unit with perhaps an additional \$50.00 to \$100.00 for any long life batteries and storage.

Was GoPro asked to bid on this project? The bottom line is that the extreme costs should be explained.

May 8, 2015

Winter Road Maintenance – Ontario’s Auditor General’s Report Reveals Some of the Truth



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In April, 2015 a report from Ontario’s Auditor General became available entitled “Winter Road Maintenance”. The report was critical of the Ontario Liberal government entering into Performance-Based contracts with private contractors, resulting in worsening winter road maintenance conditions. While we applaud the content of the report we feel that additional facts needed our emphasis. Thus we have uploaded a new article to the Articles page of this website that reviews the Auditor’s report but also provides further commentary and opinion from our viewpoint.

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