

Candidate 11 and 12: Iwona Sulkowska, Piotr Paleczny

Project of traffic safety improvement in Nowa Wies, Cracow, Poland

We are students of the Civil Engineering Faculty, Krakow University of Technology – specialty Roads, Streets and Motorways (5 year MSc course). The first four years of study gave us a full-scale knowledge in design and construction of various roads, as well as good knowledge in the area of traffic engineering including some lectures in the area of road safety. We have also received good knowledge in the area of environmental impacts of roads and traffic and protection of the environment.

In June 2007 we attended the lecture given by the Director of the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), which gave us excellent introduction to other, new for us problems of traffic safety in three chosen European countries (Poland, Italy, Spain). It was an interesting supplement of our knowledge.

Poland is among countries with high number of accidents and killed as well as high road accidents rates, despite of the fact that many efforts have been recently undertaken in order to improve traffic safety in our country. We were motivated by this fact to take part in the competition in domain of traffic safety for students from countries listed above and to take part in special camp and workshop organized by the ETSC in Brussels. The aim of that competition is to choose high risk location known to the participants and convince the road administration as well as local authorities to implement suggested changes in the chosen site.

We have chosen a straight section of an inter-regional road, which runs through community Nowa Wies with small houses surrounding linearly the considered road. Piotr lives in an adjacent town Oswiecim (20 km) and he often passes through the site. He has noticed a few dangerous situations in the considered area. Therefore we have come to the conclusion that improvement of road safety could meet expectations of local inhabitants.

Road safety problem in Nowa Wies.

The main problem on road section through Nowa Wies is pedestrian safety – particularly on section located near a local market, the parish church and the bus stop, i.e. a concentration of risk factors. There is relatively intensive pedestrian traffic across the road without any special protection and without signed and marked pedestrian crossing. It is also the center of the large village community, where a few other pedestrian traffic destinations are located. The nearest pedestrian crossing is located in the distance of 90 metres. Despite of pedestrian movement on both sides of the road only on one side the walkway was built, whereas on the other side pedestrians use a narrow ground shoulder. Pedestrians crossing the carriageway are not protected by a refuge island and by lighting and therefore there are several drivers moving with speed higher than a speed limit of 50 km/h, because of the long straight section. Pedestrians with children among them also violate traffic rules – they cross road in various not signed places.

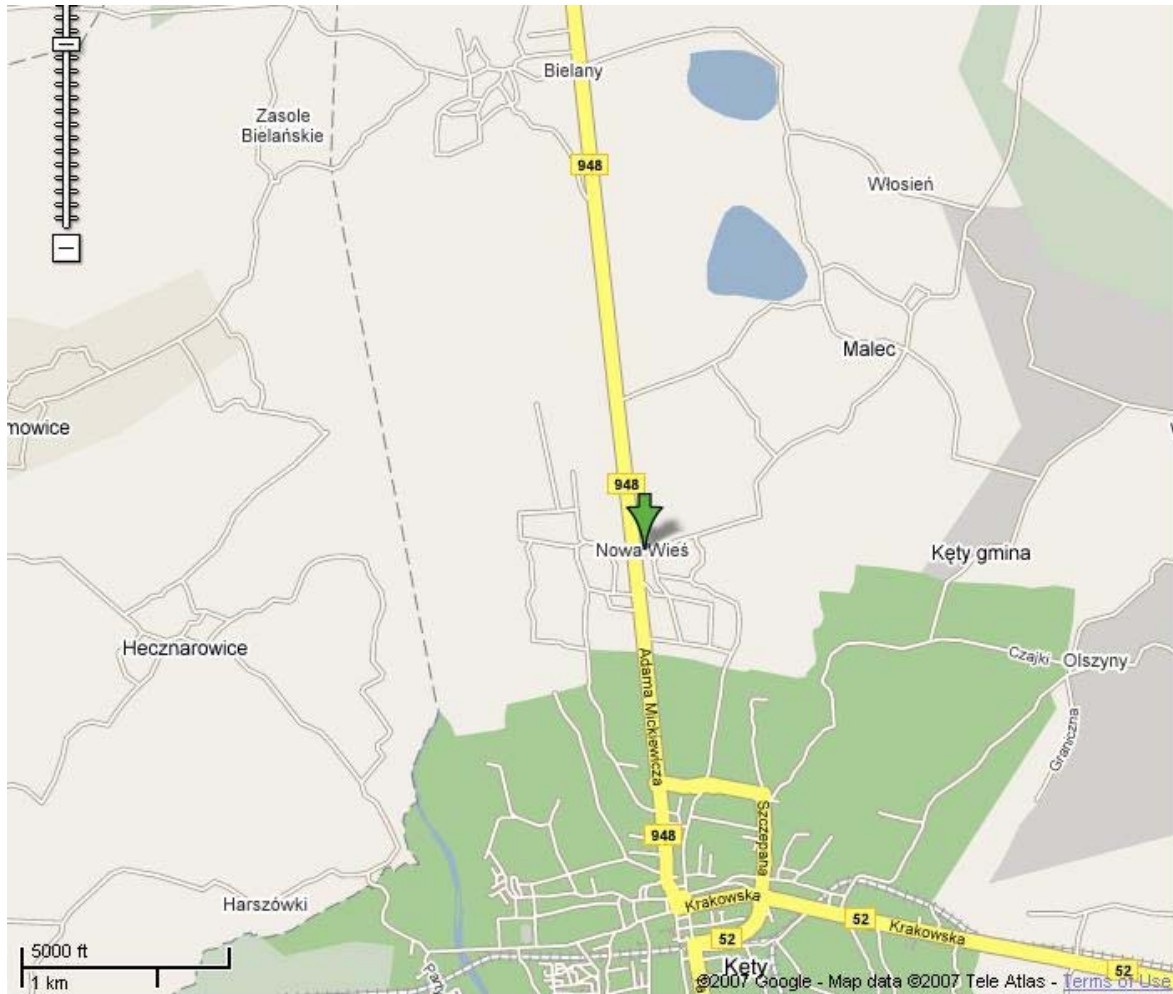


This road is the main connection between city Oswiecim (Auschwitz) to Kety, and then to the main city in this region - Bielsko-Biala. The other issue here is that the road has no curves and runs in a straight-line meaning that drivers often break the speed limit of this built-up area.

Below we can see the road statistics from this area. Even if the accidents and collisions statistics do not show large amount of accidents there exists problem and solution needs to be found. This straight inter-regional road in Nowa Wies is especially danger for pedestrians – citizens of this town.

accidents				
	left/right-rear		hitting pedestrian	
	injured	killed	injured	killed
2004	5	0	2	0
2005	2	2	1	0
(1/2) 2006	0	1	1	0
total:	7	3	4	0

collisions reported to the police							
	left/right rear	head-on rear	rear-end	hitting an object	hitting pedestrian	other collision	total in year
2004	4	1	3	1	0	2	11
2005	5	1	8	0	1	1	16
(1/2) 2006	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
total:	9	2	12	1	1	5	



New Design Proposal

We worked out our plan during camp in Brussels organized by ETSC. With other students from Poland, Italy and Spain we have learnt several new ideas and concepts useful not only on design, but also how to prepare a strategy of action for convincing the decision makers, i.e. road administration and local authorities. We returned to Poland rich in new experiences and ready to act.

We have decided to propose installation of a new pedestrian crossing close to the market and the church. It would be pedestrian crossing with the refuge island, what would make this place visible better and safer. It will allow to cross road in two stages. We also suggest a new parking in front of the market with one entry from the inter-regional road – it would decrease number of collisions among drivers parking there.

Our strategy plan

Another aim of the authors was to convince the decision makers that new design can really improve road safety. The authors decided to make a questionnaire survey in order to study opinions of Nowa Wieś inhabitants about their safety on the road when walking or driving. The authors also decided to make a project and a leaflet showing road safety problems, explaining the need for changes and basic assumptions for the design and its advantages.

We began our work with graphic and visual development. We prepared a location plan, which showed our suggestions. We also made a photo montage of pedestrians crossing with the help of a refuge island. This shows how it would look when implemented. We were in Nowa Wieś and we made a survey among inhabitants. Most of them claimed that this site is dangerous and there is a necessity for decisive actions to improve this situation.

There were also opinions that a push-button pedestrian crossing should be installed. Talking with inhabitants convinced us that this place is dangerous and we made the decision to deal with this site. We talked also with local authorities and we can claim that we also have full support from them. We then showed a presentation to the Administration of Inter-regional Roads in Cracow.

Meeting with the Administration of inter-regional roads in Krakow

On the 21st of January 2008 we were on the meeting in the house of Administration of inter-regional roads in Kraków (ZDW), where we presented our work. The official note from this meeting was sent by Mr Tomasz Pabis – manager of Faculty of Traffic Engineering in ZDW.

We now hope that they will make the decision to accept what we have proposed.