Gorski Consulting Website

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February 18, 2017

The Lessons of Princess Diana Fatal Collision Could Have Been Learned Before Toronto Crash

There were opportunities available to learn from Princess Diana's tragic collision. There are opportunities that continue every day but are not taken.

Every tragic collision is an opportunity to learn and to correct problems that could prevent the next tragic collision. Unfortunately this learning does not occur often enough.

August 1997 seems like such a historic and distant date when the Mercedes in which Princess Diana was a passenger collided with an unprotected pillar of a Paris tunnel. At the time the news media focused the public's attention on the hype that the Princess was

assassinated, that the news photographers were to blame and that the driver was alcohol impaired. Some of these stories may have been newsworthy but they also distracted the public from other important issues.

One important issue was that the fatalities in the Princess Diana Mercedes would likely never have occurred if the pillars of the tunnel had been protected with a simple barrier. Without that protection the front end of the Meercedes was able to penetrate the gap between the pillars allowing a massive impact with an immovable pillar. This understanding is not rocket science though essentially nothing was said in the news media and the public has failed to learn from that opportunity.

But “Princess Diana” collisions keep recurring. There was an opportunity to call similar collisions by that name so as to expose the problem and create opportunities for improvement and correction. However we keep running full speed into the same brick wall as we would expect any homo sapiens species to do, seemingly because we are too intelligent to be told otherwise.

Immovable pillars, immovable trees, immovable buildings, anything that cannot be moved when impacted by a vehicle is a very big problem if actions are not taken to prevent a direct, high-speed impact. As occupants, when we are inside a vehicle that is in direct impact with such an object, we must come to an extremely quick stop. While engineers do everything they can to create a vehicle that absorbs energy and manages the deceleration in a controlled manner there is a limit to what can be achieved by the vehicle alone. The opposite side of the “Impact Book-End” is the object that is struck and we have opportunities to make that more forgiving by placing some form of barrier that will either lengthen the time/distance of deceleration or deflect the vehicle so that it does not come into direct contact with the immovable object. Again, this is not rocket science. This understanding has been well known since the early concepts of the modern highway system. When we are aware of this then it is not difficult to drive along any major roadway to consider whether such protections do not exist.

As an example, it was reported that sometime “overnight”, presumably this morning, February 18, 2017, a pick-up truck collided with one of those immovable pillars at an underpass of Kipling Avenue near New Toronto Street in Toronto, Ontario. Two persons are presently reported to be clinging to their lives. A photograph presented in a news

article of the CP24 News in Toronto was authored by John Hanley although it does not appear that Mr. Hanley is affiliated with the news organization.

Photo taken by John Hanley showing the pick-up truck that collided with the underpass pillar on Kipling Avenue in Toronto.

Again, it is not helpful that numerous persons are standing in the way of the damaged vehicle however this is sufficient for us to know that the vehicle was involved in a massive narrow impact of the left front end. When the impact is to an unprotected immovable object and the vehicle loses most of its pre-impact speed from that impact then this is always a “massive” impact: an adjective that could be used by many news persons to inform the public of something potentially deadly. Yet this Princess Diana Collision could have been a simple, minor incident had there been a proper barrier in

front of the immovable object. Having examined the site on Google Maps it is clear that the underpass has been present at this location for decades. Much like the Princess Diana tunnel it contained a downgrade on approach to the tunnel. The site also contained four lanes of traffic similar to the Princess Diana site. Persons travelling this route had two decades to understand that what happened to Princess Diana in Paris could also happen at this similar site. Undoubtably there are similar sites throughout Toronto or Ontario or elsewhere.

The public needs to be aware of these sites. Some of us intelligent homo sapiens people need to divert our attention from building the next rocket to Mars and bring about this simple awareness that we need to learn from our past mistakes. That is just as much a heroic and noble deed to our fellow creatures.

February 16, 2017

Supreme Court of Canada Ruling Not Revolutionary – Municipalities Must Monitor and Document Events or Situations That Could be Dangerous

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that the Municipality of Bruce County was entirely to blame for an accident in August of 2008 that left mountain-biker Stephen Campbell a quadriplegic.

In response, Pat Vanini, executive director of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario was quoted as saying “It may be that municipal governments just don’t do these kinds of activities – they totally withdraw from them”.

Gorski Consulting finds this reaction misguided. As assessors of municipal actions surrounding tragic accidents that have resulted in severe injury and death we fail to sympathize with Mr. Vanini’s comments when he fails to recognize the basic issue why municipalities are often found liable when such a tragedy strikes. Above all, the number one issue is one of monitoring and documentation. What the Supreme Court of Canada noted was that the Municipality of Bruce County failed to monitor the occurrence of accidents and failed to document them. In our experience, as we have attempted to examine the records of a municipalities’ actions surrounding serious incidents, there is

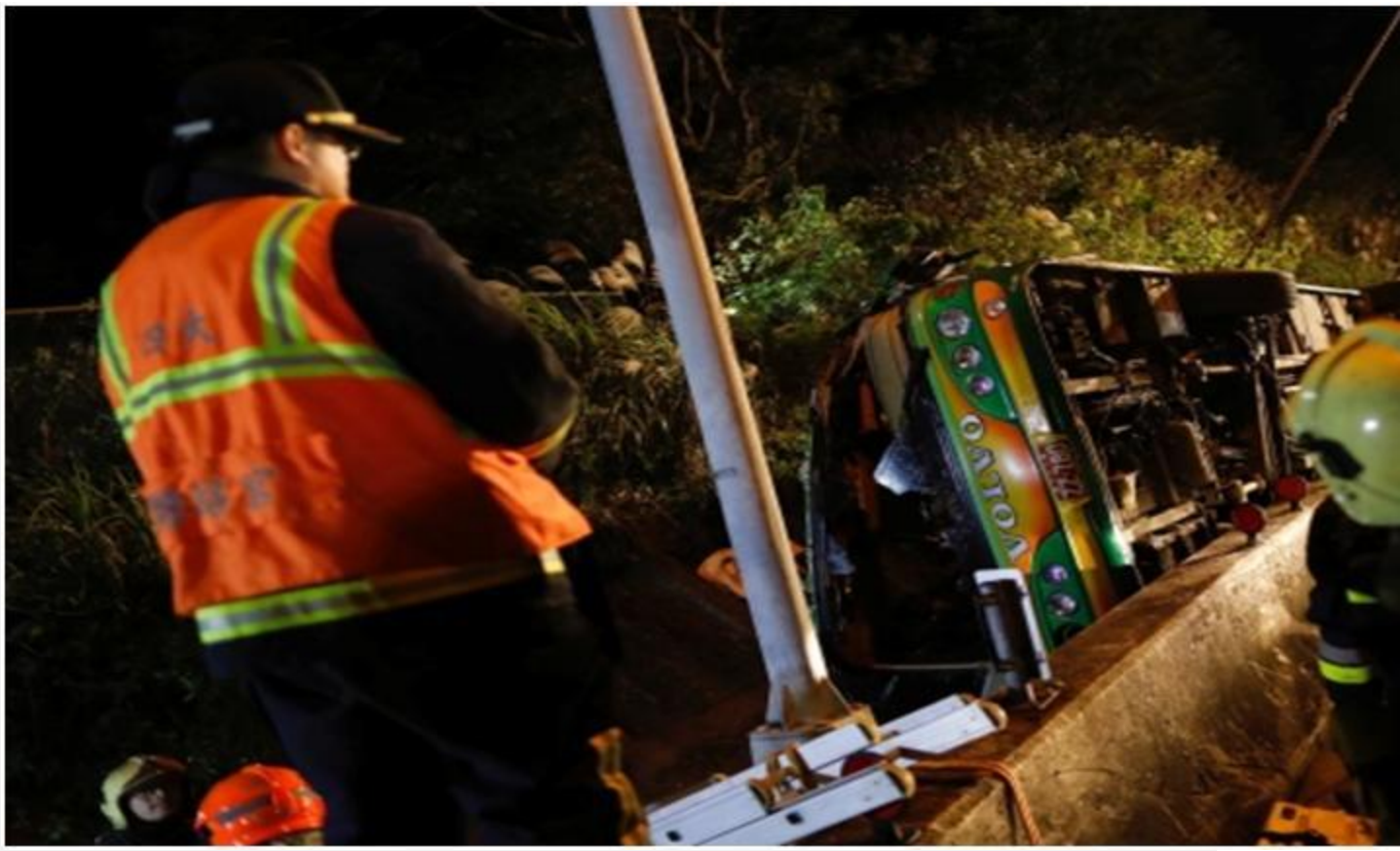
this recurring theme that proper documentation was not available and that proper monitoring of safety issues was not conducted.

Unlike Mr. Vanini's claim it is not that municipalities need to withdraw from all events that could prove them liable. There is a mindset amongst many in the municipal environment that it is better to hide everything and document nothing so that plaintiff lawyers have nothing to grab a hold of. That is a choice, but in our opinion, it is a foolhardy choice.

While we do not hold a globally good opinion of all judges in the field we also believe that a reasonable judge will take into consideration properly documented actions of a municipality demonstrating that they have studied certain risky events, situations, locations or infrastructure. As experts who at times are asked to prepare reports on such issues we take large note of situations where a municipality has demonstrated that it has made an effort to document a potentially dangerous situation and that they were making efforts to correct it. To us that carries great weight. However when we see evidence that suggests a municipality's records are minimal or non-existent that also influences our opinion on the reasonableness of the municipality's actions. Those members of staff and risk assessement managers who advise that such a limited documentation is the way to prevent or minimize law suits are the problem, not the claim that judges are being unfair.

February 13, 2017

Taipai 32 Fatalities in Bus Rollover – Why Does it Continue to be a Revelation That the Laws of Physics Do Not Honor International Borders



A “New Jersey” type of barrier is visible at the scene where a bus rolled over and killed 32 persons. Why do we not understand that a barrier like this often causes a rollover of a large vehicle?

It was only March 22, 2016 when Gorski Consulting posted a news item entitled “Multiple-Fatal Highway Transit Bus Collisions – The Facts No One Wants To Know”. This was in response to a bus rollover in Spain that killed 13 students. The opening words in that news item stated the following:

“It remains a puzzling fact of human nature how little questioning is done when multiple fatalities occur during inter-city transit bus rollovers. It is as if bus rollover are deemed to be unavoidable and fatal injuries during a rollover are an obvious, inevitable consequence.”

In addition, Gorski Consulting also uploaded an article to the Articles page of the Gorski Consulting website with the same title as that news item.

Unfortunately we understood that these words would just be a lost postscript to deaf ears and that, inevitably another multi-fatal bus rollover was just around the next corner. Now the next corner has arrived…

Reports indicate that another bus rollover occurred in Taipai, Taiwan today, February 13th, resulting in 32 deaths. As is often the case, very scant information is provided from the accident site and rarely in anything shown of relevance to why the collision occurred. Often the primary suspect is some kind of low barrier designed for redirection or containment of smaller vehicles while causing disastrous rollovers of larger vehicles. But photographs accompanying news reports always show the final rest positions of the buses, rarely the barriers.

As in so many of these previous incidents there will be several days of funerals and condolences expressed to the families and then forward we go…onto the next potential disaster. And when the next multiple fatality incident occurs the same thing happens: funerals, condolences, funerals, condolences…

There was a single photograph attached with the news of the latest bus rollover in Taipai and that has been shown at the beginning of this news item. It shows the bus rolled over onto its roof. But it also shows a small portion of concrete "New Jersey" type barrier. Since we have not been the first responders at the site and we only have this single photograph with which to evaluate what occurred many would say "you simply don't know, how can you make judgments over something for which you have very little information?"

We respond: Why is there so little information that persons who have some knowledge about these issues cannot make informed comments? Why are there only two or three photographs shown and none of these are relevant to why the incident occurred? Why are there no photographs of relevance so that an independent agency can comment knowledgeably about the incident? While we do not know the precise details of this incident we are also not so naïve as to accept that this lack of information is the acceptable norm. It is not the first time that an inter-city bus has rolled over a low barrier resulting in multiple fatalities, but the public is unable to connect the dots because these incidents are sufficiently spaced out in time and they occur in many countries.

The primary issue is that it is vastly expensive, given present technology, to change the highways of the world to protect occupants of large vehicles when those vehicles enter into a loss-of-control and exit the pavement of a roadway. Various barriers have been erected to protect the occupants of smaller vehicles but if you happen to be the driver or occupant of a large and tall truck or bus your vehicle is highly likely to be tripped by that low barrier rather than being re-directed. The additional problem is that most cabs of large trucks an the occupant compartments of large buses are incredibly weak in comparison to the total mass of the vehicle. While stiffness is not always good, the prevention of structural intrusion in vehicles that contain a large volume of space means that there could be space for survival that is not being taken advantage of.

The best we can make of this situation is there are a great many persons in the highway infrastructure environment who would wish to keep this issue as quiet as possible as they believe that no reasonably economical solution can be found. And so the slaughter of innocent occupants of large buses continues.

When a bus crash occurs in Taipai it seems reasonable to ignore it. After all, it is far away on the other side of the planet. The crash in Spain last year was also nowhere near North America. And there was a bus rollover in Japan on January 15, 2015 resulting in multiple fatalities. Only about 3 weeks ago a bus crashed into a “barrier” near Verona, Italy, resulting in a fire and killing 16 occupants. Closer to home it was just a year ago, on February 8, 2016, that there was a bus rollover on I-95 near Madison, Connecticut where 30 of the 55 passengers were injured.

Though these collisions seem far away we fail to recognize the single common component: The laws of physics do not honor international borders. What we see in Japan or Spain or Italy will also visit us soon because the roadway environment is similar. Buses with high centres of gravity will roll over low barriers as easily in North America as they will anywhere else. Why is it that we do not heed the warnings that these catastrophes provide? Failing to discuss these problems is no better than the ostrich who digs his head in the sand. Our problem will not go away if we refuse to discuss it. However, a wide open discussion has the potential of bringing forth a problem to our mutual conscious that is often solved through many minds thinking about it. Why would we refuse that opportunity?

Were “Life-Threatening Injuries” Due To Drowning? An Important Fact Not Publicly Disclosed

What really happened at the site of this construction site on Highway 401 where a vehicle struck a concrete wall and rolled into a deep pool of water?

A single vehicle collision occurred yesterday evening, February 12th, 2017 whereby a westbound vehicle travelled off the pavement of Highway 401 just east of Veterans Memorial Parkway, just east of London, Ontario. The local CTV News station first reported the story at 0503 hours of February 13th indicating that a Toyota “rolled off the highway” and “ended up in a culvert on its roof”. The London Free Press then posted a story at 0919 hours of February 13th indicating that a car “left the road and rolled onto its roof in the ditch”. While both of these reports are half true they are also half false because they failed to mention critical factors about the incident that the public ought to be made aware of.

Yes, the vehicle hit a culvert but it was a culvert in a construction zone where work was still not completed. The incomplete construction exposed a concrete wall of the culvert to traffic that was tall enough that the striking vehicle came to a dead stop at the impact of the wall. Also, upon striking the concrete wall, the vehicle then **rolled onto its roof**

in a deep pool of water. While the public may not appreciate the details of these facts they are significant. A high speed expressway such as Highway 401 normally contains an abundance of roadside protection at construction zones and the public needs to know that this collision would likely have been prevented if a temporary roadside barrier had been installed near the “culvert” until the hazard of the wall was mitigated.

View of the tire marks of the out-of-control vehicle as it slid down the steep embankment collided with the concrete wall of a culvert.

Additionally, the possibility that the young female driver may have “life-threatening injuries” related to drowning must have been discussed publicly as this factor is commonly kept away from public discussion. A collision such as this might have been prevented if the public was made more aware of previous incidents of drowning and alarms bells were sounded to increase vigilance over such incidents. Future such collisions might also be prevented if this present tragedy is brought to the public’s attention and similar alarm bells are rung.

View of the deep water surrounding the incomplete construction of the culvert. The striking vehicle reportedly came to rest upside down in the water.

Gorski Consulting has been continually vocal about these threats to public safety and will do so in the future, however the Gorski Consulting website is only a small voice in the otherwise loud chatter of large news-gathering organizations. As news rooms become depleted of journalists and their budgets shrink news cannot be gathered in the traditional, independent manner that it was and important facts are not relayed to the public. This is another alarm bell that Gorski Consulting keeps ringing.

February 3, 2017

How Many Incidents Do Not Become Reported in Official Police Collision Data? – Part 4

Physical evidence of collisions and loss-of-control events documented by Gorski Consulting on Clarke Road continues to be compared to the data released by the London City Police.

Gorski Consulting has uploaded the latest article from a review of police-reported collision data on Clarke Road in London, Ontario. Problems persist as the police data does not contain specific information as to where the collisions occurred within the 1300 metre length of Clarke Road where the data has been provided. This has resulted in preliminary estimates that between 32 and 52% of collisions that actually occur are not reported in the police data. This estimate does not take into account the additional loss-of-control events documented by Gorski Consulting that likely did not result in collisions. Gorski Consulting will be continuing its analysis of the data from the years 2015 and 2016 and articles will be posted with the latest running estimate. Please visit the Articles page to review this latest data.

Gorski Consulting

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