



April 29, 2008

The workshop, sponsored by WMATA, COG, MDOT, VDOT, DDOT and AAA, was attended by approximately 200 individuals, including elected officials and pedestrian safety experts from a variety of fields: transportation, law enforcement, engineering, public education, transit, disability services, planning, health, engineering, schools, public affairs, insurance, military, business, community organizing, and media.

### **Defining the Problem**

- For many area residents, walking is an important transportation choice for carrying out daily activities like commuting to work, shopping, recreation, and school. The walkability of area communities is tied to the economic future of this region.
- Many pedestrian safety decisions are based on current facts, even if the facts are not particularly useful or are incomplete.
- Crosswalks don't mean very much to drivers and therefore have lost much of their meaning for pedestrians.
- The safe pedestrian route needs to be convenient or the convenient pedestrian route needs to be safe.
- Nearly every other developed industrial society has addressed the pedestrian safety issue successfully.
- Because governments have subsidized auto travel and parking to a greater extent than transit, cycling or walking, it is no surprise that people choose to drive.

### **State and Regional Policies and Philosophies**

- There is nothing more fundamental to transportation safety than pedestrian safety.
- Increasing the reach and duration of the Street Smart Campaign will help keep this message in the media and continue to boost awareness.
- Develop walkable communities for the future that reflect past successes. And if the region is going to keep a pedestrian and bike environment in shape, officials must focus on maintaining the system, including services reachable by walking.
- Work on the "3 Es", but also remember the "Big R:" Regionalism.
- Address the issue together through sustaining and expanding Street Smart, law enforcement, completing sidewalks, setting regional guidelines for bus stop locations, and addressing pedestrian signals, illegal parking, and accessibility.

### **Best Practices to Continue or Expand and New Solutions**

1. **Establish regional bus stop siting guidance** based on data about safe placement and need

2. **Develop land use review with transportation (especially pedestrian) in mind**, including accessible destinations, pedestrian friendly design scale; compact communities designed to encourage bicycling and walking for short trips by providing destinations close to home and work, and by providing sidewalks and a pleasant environment for walking and biking; identify dangerous intersections, public streetscape design near major new buildings; reverse angle parking instead of parallel; pedestrian lighting; creating new street connections; safe routes for students to walk or bike to school; traffic calming; accept more motor vehicle congestion/higher priority for pedestrian safety and access versus motor vehicle level of service include accessibility features.
3. **Improve crosswalk design**, including mark crosswalks better for visually impaired; align curb cuts with the crosswalks to avoid directing the visually impaired into the middle of the intersection; audible pedestrian signals; crosswalks warning lights; more pedestrian signals, shorten crossing distances.
4. **Collect adequate data**, including improved crash reporting information; better statistics on speed of vehicles involved in pedestrian crashes; identify specific problem locations; set performance measures for multimodal transportation measures; information about pedestrians by age, language spoken, and immigration; set crash reduction goals.
5. **Establish consistent laws across the region**, such as a commitment to 30 mph speed limit and parking restrictions. Enforce the laws with adequate resources of manpower, training, photo enforcement, dedicated traffic units and community policing.
6. **Improve education for drivers and pedestrians**. Focus media and public education, using aggressive targeted messages to children and seniors, language and cultural minorities, groups of different physical ability levels. Use a traffic hotline and signs “telling” drivers what to do. Messages should include high visibility clothing, Safe Routes to Schools, safety patrols, driver’s education, and “Smooth Operator.” Increasing the reach and duration of the Street Smart Campaign will help keep pedestrian safety in the media and continue to boost awareness.

## **Stakeholders**

It is important to include major stakeholder groups in planning and in the implementation, especially for education campaigns. These groups should include law enforcement, schools, PTA, principals, businesses, judiciary, persons with disabilities, churches, community groups, transit agencies, departments of transportation and public works, medical, families, and churches.

## **Recurring themes:**

- Improve data collection and use, including performance measures
- Expand “Street Smart”; start education early and provide it often
- Have consistent laws across the region
- Develop regional bus stop planning guidance