



Pedestrian Forum



Safe Pedestrians and a Walkable America

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<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fourthlevel/pedforum.htm>

Each year pedestrian fatalities comprise about 11 percent of all traffic fatalities and there are approximately 4,600 pedestrian deaths. Another 70,000 pedestrians are injured in roadway crashes annually. Safety is important for all roadway users, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has established a goal of reducing pedestrian fatalities and injuries by 10 percent by the year 2008. Pedestrian safety improvements depend on an integrated approach that involves the 5 E's: Engineering, Enforcement, Encouragement, Education, and Evaluation. The *Pedestrian Forum* highlights recent pedestrian safety activities related to the 5 E's that will help reach FHWA's safety goals and save lives.

Efforts to Document Pedestrian and Bicyclist Exposure and Crash Rates

Those who are interested in promoting walking and bicycling as a safe and viable mode of transportation have always been interested in determining pedestrian and bike exposure rates for several reasons:

- To determine if people are walking/biking more or less each year.
- To determine whether pedestrian/bicycle facility projects are well utilized.
- To compare them (exposure rates) with the number of pedestrian and bike fatalities to get a true measure of fatality/injury/crash rates.

In general, the number of pedestrian fatalities have gone down each year (with the exception of a couple of years), while the number of bicyclists killed has remained about 800 per year. Practitioners do not know if the decline in pedestrian fatalities is a result of safer conditions for pedestrians or the fact that less and less people are walking. Those making similar comparisons with vehicles have always been able to rely on "vehicle miles traveled," which is information the states are required by law to collect. There is no incentive, however, to expend resources to determine pedestrian and bike exposure rates. Nevertheless, several efforts are currently underway to determine a measure.

National Household Travel Survey (NHTS)

FHWA has been conducting the NHTS every seven years or so since 1969. The NHTS, which is the nation's survey to quantify the travel behavior of the American public, is the nation's inventory of daily and long-distance travel. The survey has provided the nation with authoritative data on travel by all modes of transportation, for all travel purposes, and all travel distances. The next survey is scheduled to take place in 2008, although it is not currently fully funded by Congress.

As it stands, the NHTS has some limited questions on pedestrian and bicycle travel, but FHWA has been taking steps to improve the data collected by hosting "content" sessions and getting input from ped/bike practitioners and other interested parties. The first informal content session was held during the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, and several changes were suggested. Since there wasn't enough time to hear all suggestions, FHWA decided to follow up with two "web conferences" to get more input.

This first was held on June 21 (for bicyclist content), and the second (for pedestrian content) will be held on July 22 (time to be determined). If you would like more information on participating in the July session, contact Heather Contrino (heather.contrino@dot.gov) or Nancy McGuckin (nancy.mcguickin@dot.gov).

States and MPOs have the opportunity to purchase samples of the household travel survey being conducted in 2008. These additional samples, along with random national samples collected in your area, will be compiled into a cleaned geo-coded database for ready application

to local planning and forecasting. To join the Add-On program, visit the website for the NHTS is: <http://nhts.ornl.gov/>

Developing a Measure of Pedestrian Exposure to Risk

In the fall of 2006, with the cooperation of the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT), the DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), Metro (WMATA), and the U.S. Access Board, FHWA tested a potential candidate measure for pedestrian exposure to the risk of crashing with a motor vehicle. In its simplest form, this measure is a hundred million pedestrian feet (meters) of roadway traveled. For example, for a certain crosswalk at an intersection, the measure would consist of the number of pedestrians counted over a given time period (pedestrian volume) times the length of the crosswalk in feet. The candidate measure was tested for methodological feasibility in Washington, DC, in October and November of 2006. Washington, DC, was selected as the test site because it is a major metropolitan area, has a large number of pedestrians and tourists, and is located close to FHWA research facilities. These methodological tests were conducted at seven different types of pedestrian facilities in the city, and at different hours of the day and evening. The tests were coordinated with DDOT and with the U.S. Access Board. The results showed that it was feasible to collect data using the proposed measure. Eight-hour samples at the seven locations yielded a total of about 1.13 million pedestrian feet of roadway traveled. Studies are ongoing. For information, contact Ann Do at ann.do@dot.gov.

2007 Pedestrian Injury Risk Surveillance Workgroup Meeting

On June 5, 2007, the State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association (STIPDA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) hosted a one day meeting focusing on pedestrian injury risk surveillance. The meeting brought together a group of injury epidemiology and surveillance experts from the field together with other subject matter experts and national partners to explore issues, challenges and opportunities and develop “promising practices” in pedestrian injury risk surveillance for use at the state level. As a part of an ongoing process, NHTSA will take the “promising practices” identified by this group and will work towards validating and measuring them in

future activities. The findings of this meeting will be documented by STIPDA, and the information will be shared in a report in late 2007. For more information, contact Leah Preiss at Leah.Preiss@dot.gov.

National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project

This is a volunteer effort undertaken by the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ Pedestrian and Bicycle Council and Alta Planning + Design to get data on pedestrian and bicycle exposure rates. The Project’s three objectives are:

- Establish a national bicycle and pedestrian count and survey methodology, building on best practices from around the country.
- Establish a national database of bicycle and pedestrian count information generated by consistent methods and practices.
- Use the count information to begin analysis on the correlations between various factors and bicycle and pedestrian activity.

For more information and to download data collection forms, visit: www.altaplanning.com.

Coming Soon: Results of National Survey of Pedestrian and Bicyclist Attitudes and Behavior

NHTSA conducted this extensive phone survey (9,616 respondents, age 16 or older in the U.S.) to determine the scope and magnitude of bicycle and pedestrian behavior and attitudes. Topics addressed include: frequency of biking and walking, trip information, reasons for not walking/biking, perceptions of safety, safety practices, facilities availability, community design, safety of routes to school, and sociodemographics. For information contact Marv Levy at marvin.levy@dot.gov or Alan Block at alan.block@dot.gov. We will keep you posted when results are released to the public.

This *Pedestrian Forum* is available on the Web at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fourthlevel/pedforum.htm>

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