

North Carolina Driver and Traffic
Safety Education Association
Address

Dear Officers of the NCDTSEA Executive Board:

The Town of Chapel Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board supports the North Carolina Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (NCDTSEA) and the purposes of the organization to promote and advance all phases of safety education within the state of North Carolina. The Chapel Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board would like the NCDTSEA to amplify its efforts on educating bicycle and pedestrian safety in the driver education program curriculum.

As NCDTSEA may already be aware, statistics from the National Highway Traffic Association (NHTA) indicate that on average a pedestrian is injured in a traffic accident every eight minutes and is killed in a traffic accident roughly every two hours in the United States. Bicyclists do not fare much better. According to the 2002 NHTA study a bicyclist is fatally injured every six hours. The North Carolina Department of Transportation released statistics showing that on average about 900 motorist-bicycle accidents and 2400 motorist-pedestrian accidents occurred each year between 2001 and 2006 in North Carolina.

In October 2004, the Town of Chapel Hill adopted its Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan. The Action Plan is a long-range plan which identifies proposed new and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities for the Town. The Chapel Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board believes the Action Plan serves as a means of addressing and improving physical conditions, however, installing bicycle and pedestrian facilities only address part of the safety issue. Motorists should also be adept and knowledgeable of current laws and rights of cyclists and pedestrians.

The work of the NCDTSEA and other organizations such as the Division of Motor Vehicles and state Departments of Transportation (with distributing materials on bicycle and pedestrian safety) has been effective. Since 1975, long term data shows a declining trend in pedestrian/motor vehicle collisions. There are, however, several issues that the Chapel Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board would like to be emphasized and more thoroughly intergraded into the driver education curriculum:

- Motorists Passing Bicyclists
- Motorists and Pedestrian Street Crossings/Crosswalks
- Motorists Interaction with Bicycle Lanes/Share the Road/Road Pavement Markings (i.e. "Sharrows")

- Bicycle/Pedestrian/Automobile Points of Conflict (Intersections, Left and Right Turns, “Right on Red”)
- Concept that Bicycles are Vehicles

In addition to emphasizing the topics listed here, other strategies could include increasing the proportion of questions related to bicycle and pedestrian safety on driver education exams and reorganizing driver education printed materials so that bicycle and pedestrian safety information is prominently located.

By continuing to focus on these problem areas for bicyclists and pedestrians, motorists will increase their awareness and minimize the number of accidents. The Chapel Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board would like to thank you for your time and on-going attention to bicycle and pedestrian issues in the North Carolina driver education curriculum.

Sincerely,

Cc:
Chapel Hill Town Advisory Boards
Jordan Driving School
North Carolina Active Transportation Alliance
North Carolina Department of Transportation, Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety
Orange County Board of Commissioners
Town of Carrboro Board of Aldermen