

# Country Roads & City Streets

WV Transportation Technology Transfer Center

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College of Engineering & Mineral Resources

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## ELKINS HOST TO FIRST WALKABLE COMMUNITIES WORKSHOP

On Saturday morning April 21, Elkins hosted the first Walkable Communities Workshop held in West Virginia. Ed Griesel, a downtown merchant, deserves thanks for his efforts in putting together the initial workshop proposal and handling local publicity and arrangements. Twenty people attended the workshop, including Mayor Virgil Broughton, Councilman Van Broughton, Police Sgt. Jack Roy, City Clerk Phil Graziani, and Randolph County Chamber of Commerce Director Brenda Pritt. A health care professional and senior citizens were also in attendance.

After Councilman Broughton reviewed the local pedestrian situation, Ron Eck, Mike Blankenship, and Bill Wyant of the T<sup>2</sup>Center staff discussed pedestrian safety and the walkability problem. Sources of funding for pedestrian projects were iden-

tified. Through slides, they presented a vision of a walkable community. The participants then formed small groups to identify barriers to walkability in the Elkins area. These were prioritized and an action plan, to overcome the barriers, was developed. A pedestrian task force was formed. The task force has continued its work, initially focusing on making the downtown area more pedestrian friendly.

The Walkable Communities Workshops are four-hour sessions intended to identify problems that pedestrians face every day, to help communities mobilize the resources needed to be pedestrian-friendly, and to organize for success. Workshops are offered free of charge. Any West Virginia community is eligible for the workshop and is invited to apply. While there is no formal application, we do ask that the proposal show broad-based community involvement and support and include a statement of anticipated objectives.

*To learn more about hosting a Walkable Communities Workshop in your community, please see page nine of this edition.*



*Ron Eck presents the Walkable Communities Workshop to twenty Elkins residents.*



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### *Country Roads and City*

*Streets* is a quarterly

publication of the West

Virginia Transportation

Technology Transfer Center

(T<sup>2</sup> Center). The purpose

of this newsletter is to provide

information that

is beneficial to highway

construction and

maintenance personnel.

The material and opinions

contained in this newsletter

are those of the West

Virginia Transportation

Technology Transfer

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*Country Roads and City*

*Streets* is a combination of

original and borrowed

material. Every effort has

been made to ensure the

integrity and accuracy of

this material. However, the

WV T<sup>2</sup> Center does not

assume responsibility for

any incorrect material.

**By: Ron Eck**

**WV T<sup>2</sup> Center Director**

### **Walking in the U.S.**

A visit to almost any West Virginia community on a pleasant late afternoon or early evening will show that walking is clearly a popular activity, whether for recreation, exercise or simply for relaxation and enjoyment of the outdoors. However, the potential of walking as a mode of transportation is just beginning to be realized.

Results of the 1990 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey revealed that only one out of five trips involved travel to or from work, and less than 2 percent involved on-the-job travel. The largest portion of trips (42 percent) are family or personal business travel, which includes trips to the grocery store, to the doctor or dentist, or to transport a child to school. Social or recreational travel accounts for another 25 percent of trips. This category includes visits to friends or relatives, trips to a park or sporting event, and pleasure driving and vacation travel. Overall, 7.2 percent of all trips were by walking. The survey showed that walking was a frequent component of multi-modal trips, although these accounted for only 1 percent of all trips. About one-third of the walking trips were for social or recreational purposes. Family and personal business travel, along with school and church-related travel, were also significant contributors. Average length of a walking trip was 0.6 mile.

Madison, Wisconsin; Portland, Oregon; and Boulder, Colorado are all places that enjoy relatively high levels of walking for transportation as well as recreation and fitness. These cities and many others in Europe and Asia provide strong evidence that walking is more than just a good way to stay fit and enjoy the outdoors. It is a mode of transportation

that can reduce the need for automobile trips and play an important role in the overall transportation system.



### **Benefits of Walking**

Increased levels of walking would result in significant benefits in terms of health and physical fitness, the environment and transportation-related effects. Research has shown that even low to moderate levels of exercise, such as regular walking, can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke and other chronic diseases; help reduce health care costs, contribute to greater functional independence in later years of life, and improve quality of life at every stage. Replacing automobile trips with nonmotorized and nonpolluting walking trips can yield significant environmental benefits. According to a Minnesota study, public savings from reduced pollution, oil importation, and congestion costs alone have been estimated at between 5 and 22 cents for every automobile-mile displaced by bicycling or walking. Efforts to facilitate walking can also result in more general transportation benefits besides offering additional travel options for those who are unable to drive or who choose not to drive for all or some trips. For example, measures to reduce vehicle speeds, which can encourage greater pedestrian activity in residential or downtown shopping and business areas, also impact positively on motor vehicle safety. Greenways along waterways, railway lines or other public rights-of-way yield recreational, educational,

environmental, and aesthetic benefits in addition to providing corridors for walking.

### Basic Sidewalk Requirements

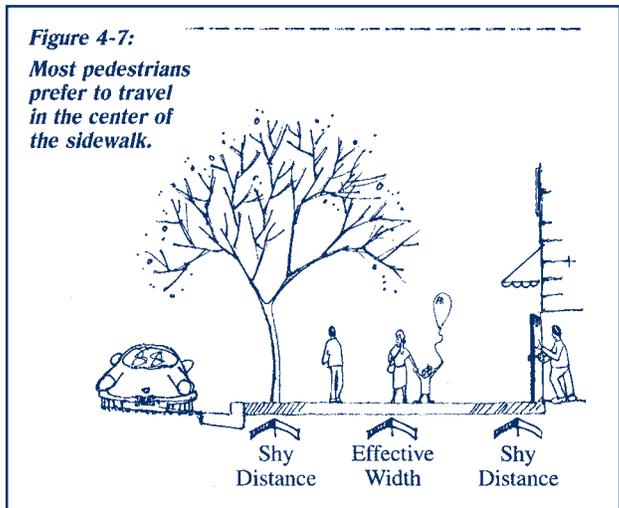
**Minimum Width:** Sidewalks require a minimum width of 5.0 feet if set back from the curb or 6.0 feet if at the curb face. Any width less than this does not meet the minimum requirements for people with disabilities. Walking is a social activity. For any two people to walk together, 5.0 feet of space is the bare minimum. In some areas, such as near schools, sporting complexes, some parks, and many shopping districts, the minimum width for a sidewalk is 8.0 feet.

**Border Areas and Buffers:** A border area should be provided along streets for the safety of motorists and pedestrians as well as for aesthetic reasons. The border area between the roadway and the right-of-way line should be wide enough to serve several purposes, including provision of a buffer space between pedestrians and vehicular traffic, sidewalk space, snow storage, and an area for maintainable aesthetic features such as grass and other landscaping.

**Placement of Street Furniture:** Pedestrians require a “shy” distance from fixed objects such as walls, fences, shrubs, buildings, parked cars and other features. The desired shy walking distance for a pedestrian is 2.0 feet. Allow for this shy distance in determining the functional width of a sidewalk.

**Grades:** If possible, grades should be kept to no more than 5 percent and, terrain permitting, no greater than 8 percent. When this is not possible, railings and other aids should be considered to help older adults.

**Stairs:** Since falls are common with poorly designed stairs, every effort should be made to create a slip-free, easily detected, well-constructed set of stairs. The following principles apply: Stairs require railings on at least one side; they need to extend 18 inches beyond the top and bottom stair. When an especially wide set of stairs is created, consider rails on both sides and one or two in the mid-stair area. Avoid open risers and use a uniform grade with a constant tread-to-rise along the stair-



way length. All steps need to be obvious. Stairs should be lit at night. A minimum stairway width is 42 inches to allow two people to pass. The forward slope should be 1 percent in order to drain water.

### Sidewalk Enhancements

The following elements are often found to be desirable to achieve robust commercial activity and to encourage added walking versus single-occupant motor vehicle trips. One or two very attractive features create a highly successful block and one or two highly offending or unsafe conditions will leave one side of a street nearly vacant.

**Trees:** The most charming streets are those with trees gracing both sides of a walkway. This canopy effect has a quality that brings pedestrians back again and again.

### CENTER STAFF & CONTACT INFORMATION

WV Transportation  
Technology Transfer Center  
West Virginia University  
PO Box 6103  
Rm. 651 and 653-B  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6103  
Phone: (304) 293-3031 x 2612  
Fax: (304) 293-7109  
[www.cemr.wvu.edu/~wwtt/](http://www.cemr.wvu.edu/~wwtt/)

### STAFF

#### Dr. Ronald Eck, P.E.

Director  
(304) 293-3031 x 2627  
[reck@wvu.edu](mailto:reck@wvu.edu)

#### Michael Blankenship, P.E.

Program Manager  
(304) 293-3031 x 2629  
[mblanken@wvu.edu](mailto:mblanken@wvu.edu)

#### Kim Carr

Public Relations Specialist  
(304) 293-3031 x 2612  
[kcarr@wvu.edu](mailto:kcarr@wvu.edu)

#### Andrew Morgan, E.I.

Technical Assistant  
(304) 293-3031 x 2662  
[amorga10@wvu.edu](mailto:amorga10@wvu.edu)

#### Sandy Wotring

Administrative Assistant  
(304) 293-3031 ext. 2630

#### Bill Wyant

Senior Volunteer  
[wwyant@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:wwyant@hsc.wvu.edu)

**Paver Stones:** Colorful brick, stone, and even tile ceramics are often used to define corners, to create a mood for a block or commercial district, or to help guide those with visual impairments. Set the bricks or pavers on a concrete pad for maximum life and stability.

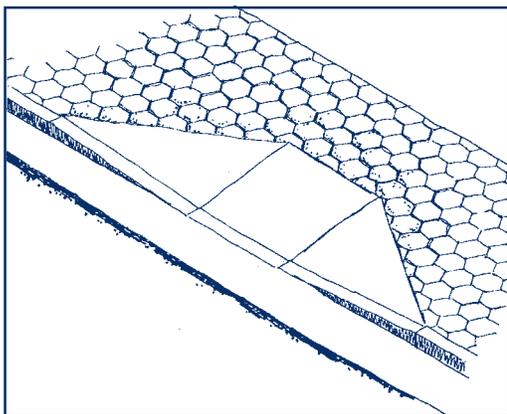
**Awnings:** Retail shops should be encouraged to provide protective awnings to create shade, protection from rain and snow, and to otherwise add color and attractiveness to the street.

**Alleys and Narrow Streets:** Alleys can be cleaned up and made attractive for walking. Properly lit and planned, they can be secure and inviting.

**Kiosks:** Small tourist centers, navigational kiosks, and attractive outlets for other information can be handled through small-scale or large-scale kiosks. Well-positioned interpretive kiosks, plaques and other instructional or historic place markers are essential to visitors. These areas can serve as safe places for people to meet and can generally help with navigation.

### Construction/Work Zones

As more and more construction/work zones appear, the need to protect pedestrians and provide a



*Colored stone sidewalks with concrete curb ramps have a detectable color change.*

safe travelway becomes more critical. Some considerations for pedestrians in work zones include:

- Separate pedestrians from conflicts with construction equipment.
- Separate pedestrians from conflicts with rerouted traffic.
- Provide a safe, convenient and accessible route that maintains the direction and character of the original route.
- Minimize the number of construction access points.
- Communicate construction activity and pedestrian impact through the local media and pedestrian interest groups.
- Avoid using delineating materials that are difficult to recognize by persons with impaired sight.



### Pedestrian Products from FHWA

***Pedestrian/Bicyclist Safety Resources Set (FHWA-SA-00-005)*** is a CD-ROM containing a library of information on how to improve pedestrian/bicyclist safety in communities across the nation. Included in the resource set is information on facility design, planning, guidelines, good practices and tools to aid in problem identification and countermeasure development. This CD-ROM contains about 15,000 pages of information classified by various categories (e.g., design, planning, outreach, tools, etc.) and is intended for safety practitioners and other advocates who want to create “walkable/bikeable” communities.

***Safer Journey - Interactive Pedestrian Safety Awareness CD-ROM (FHWA-SA-00-009)*** is an interactive CD that takes the user through various pedestrian scenarios encountered every day across America. It has been developed to improve the level

of pedestrian knowledge for all road users (including schools, driver education groups, enforcement, etc.) and safety practitioners. The CD-ROM activity areas include the Journey, the Quiz and a library of resources. During the “Journey” section, the user interacts with the software to determine the outcome of the scenario. A crash type-safety countermeasure matrix is included in the library section. This CD-ROM can also be included in state/local community pedestrian materials kits and/or used at seminars, conferences, etc. View the CD on-line at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fourthlevel/newprod.htm>

***Brochure “A Walkable Community” (FHWA-SA-00-010)*** is a snapshot on designing for a walkable community. Creating a walkable community is much more than just sidewalks; it is important to understand the needs and characteristics of the pedestrian and features that affect their travel. A crash type-safety countermeasure matrix is featured with related graphics. More detailed information on each of the 60+ countermeasures illustrated in this brochure can be found in the “Safer Journey” CD, library section. This brochure is intended for safety practitioners, advocates, and other special road users who want to create “walkable/bikeable” communities.

For more information on any of these FHWA products, visit the web site at [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/ped\\_bike.htm](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/ped_bike.htm)

These CDs are also available for loan from the T<sup>2</sup> lending library. (See page 10).

## Barriers to Walking

Sometimes, pedestrian facility improvements and expansions are not supported because use levels are low. Many reasons exist for low levels of pedestrian travel, including:

- poorly designed facilities, excessive access points
- failure to provide a continuous system of pedestrian facilities
- concerns for personal safety
- poor lighting
- lack of separated facilities
- failure to provide facilities to and from popular origins/destinations
- no protection from inclement weather
- lack of pedestrian amenities (e.g., benches)

## Common Pedestrian Characteristics

Different pedestrian age groups have different needs. Understanding the user helps in the design, maintenance and use of pedestrian facilities.

AGE	CHARACTERISTICS
0-4	Learning to walk, requiring constant supervision, developing peripheral vision and depth perception
5-12	Increasing independence but still requiring supervision, poor depth perception, susceptible to dart-outs and intersection dashes
13-18	Sense of invulnerability, intersection dashes
19-40	Active, fully aware of the environment
41-65	Slowing of reflexes
65+	Street crossing difficulty, poor vision, difficulty hearing, high fatality rate

## WWW.CHECK-IT-OUT

### WEB SITE RESOURCES

Accessible Sidewalks

[www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov)

National Bicycle and  
Pedestrian Clearinghouse

[www.bikefed.org](http://www.bikefed.org)

Transportation for Livable  
Communities Network

[www.tlcnetwork.org](http://www.tlcnetwork.org)

Pedestrian and Bicycle  
Information Center

[www.walkinginfo.org](http://www.walkinginfo.org)

Trails and Greenways  
Clearinghouse

[www.trailsandgreenways.org](http://www.trailsandgreenways.org)



## THE WALKABILITY CHALLENGE

Everyone benefits from walking. But walking needs to be safe and easy. Use this challenge to decide if your neighborhood is a friendly place to walk. If you find problems, there are ways you can make things better.

**Getting Started:** Pick a place to walk, like the route to school, a friend's house, or just somewhere fun to go. Print a copy of this checklist before you go, and as you walk, note the locations of things you would like to change. At the end of your walk, circle an overall rating for each question. Then add up the numbers to see how you rated your walk.

### RATING SCALE

1 = Awful	2 = Many Problems
3 = Some Problems	4 = Good
5 = Very Good	6 = Excellent

*This challenge was adapted from FHWA.*



**Did you have enough room to walk or maneuver safely?**      1      2      3      4      5      6

- Yes       Some Problems
- Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
- Sidewalks were broken or cracked
- Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, dumpsters, etc.
- No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
- Too much traffic
- Something else?
- Locations of problems \_\_\_\_\_

**Was it easy to cross streets?**      1      2      3      4      5      6

- Yes       Some Problems
- Road was too wide
- Traffic signals made us wait too long or didn't give us enough time to cross
- Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
- Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic
- Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair
- Something else?
- Locations of problems \_\_\_\_\_

**Did drivers behave well?**

1 2 3 4 5 6

\_\_ Yes

\_\_ Some Problems

\_\_ Backed out of driveways without looking

\_\_ Did not yield to people crossing street

\_\_ Turned into people crossing streets

\_\_ Drove too fast

\_\_ Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through red lights

\_\_ Something else?

Locations of problems \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers....

**Was it easy to follow safety rules?**

1 2 3 4 5 6

Could you and your child....

\_\_ Yes \_\_ No

Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?

\_\_ Yes \_\_ No

Stop and look left, right, and then left again before crossing streets?

\_\_ Yes \_\_ No

Walk on sidewalks, or shoulders (if no sidewalks), facing traffic?

\_\_ Yes \_\_ No

Cross with the light?

**Was your walk pleasant?**

1 2 3 4 5 6

\_\_ Yes

\_\_ Some unpleasant things:

\_\_ Needs more grass, flowers, or trees

\_\_ Scary dogs

\_\_ Suspicious activity

\_\_ Not well lit

\_\_ Dirty, lots of litter or trash

\_\_ Something else?

Locations of problems \_\_\_\_\_

**HOW DID YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD RATE?**

Your walkability challenge is

\_\_\_\_\_

26-30 Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking.

21-25 Celebrate a little. Your neighborhood is pretty good.

16-20 Okay, but it needs work.

11-15 It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.

5-10 Call out the National Guard before you walk. It's a disaster area.

## WV T<sup>2</sup> ADVISORY BOARD

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WVDOT  
Burlington, WV

**Kevin Burgess**  
FHWA  
Charleston, WV

**Michael DeMary**  
Public Works Director  
Fairmont, WV

**Bob Gordon**  
Region 9 Planning and  
Development Council  
Martinsburg, WV

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Public Works  
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WVDOT  
Charleston, WV

**Terry Hough**  
City Engineer &  
Public Works Director  
Morgantown, WV

**Jack Justice**  
FHWA  
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WVDOT  
Clarksburg, WV

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Association  
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Clarksburg, WV

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WV Governor's Highway  
Safety Program  
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## POINTS TO MAKE TO YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

1. Walking is an excellent indicator of the quality of life in a community.
2. A vital walkable downtown or neighborhood center with attractive places to walk and shop contributes to the local economy and attracts or keeps businesses in the community.
3. A walkable community is a place where people can get to know each other.
4. Children, senior citizens and people with disabilities can get around on their own.
5. As new housing developments are designed with walking in mind, as gaps in the sidewalk system are filled and as street crossings are made safer, more short car trips can be made on foot.
6. A shift to more walking reduces air pollution, traffic congestion and parking demands.

*The above points were taken from the Summer 2000 edition of The Arizona Milepost.*

## WALKABLE COMMUNITIES WORKSHOP INFORMATION

### WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE:

Many West Virginia communities need to address the concern of developing safe, walkable communities. The Walkable Communities Workshop has been designed with this objective in mind.

### ITEMS COVERED:

- Learn how to mobilize the resources necessary to make your community a safe place to walk.
- Discover the problems that pedestrians face every day.
- Join with others to develop a plan of action to make your community pedestrian-friendly.

### HOW ARE PARTICIPANTS CHOSEN?

Any community is eligible for this workshop and is invited to apply. While there is no formal application, we do ask you to submit a written statement showing broad-based community involvement, and a statement of your group's anticipated objectives.

A staff member from the Transportation Technology Transfer Center will then contact you to screen your application in further detail.

### WORKSHOP OPERATION DETAILS:

The workshop is provided by the WV Transportation Technology Transfer Center free of charge. The community is asked to provide a meeting room for the workshop and light refreshments for the break. Please contact the Center if your community is interested in learning more about this program.

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*It's hard to believe that it's that time again. It seems like only yesterday we were saying goodbye to our technical assistant, Ben Taggart, and welcoming Anthony to take his place. Today, we say farewell to Anthony as we welcome Andrew to our staff.*

*While we are indeed sad to see Anthony leave, we feel fortunate to have had him aboard for the past couple of years. Anthony made several contributions to the Center and helped us expand and improve our program and services. We are confident he will be an asset to his new company. Anthony, we wish you well in your new city and career. We'll miss you.*

*We are happy that Andrew Morgan has agreed to be the new technical assistant. Like our previous graduate assistants, Andrew will have a variety of roles, including providing field assistance, working with our lending libraries, assisting with the newsletter, and a slew of other special projects. Andrew, from the Center staff, Welcome Aboard.*

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**Anthony Ford**

Anthony joined the Center in August 1999 and has been with us for the past two years. He received his bachelor of science degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from WVU in 1999 and attained his master of science degree with a focus on transportation in 2001. While in graduate school, Anthony's thesis project focused on the development of a pavement management system for the WV Division of Highways. A variety of agencies have already expressed interest in obtaining and implementing the system, WV DPMS.

Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern, Inc. (HSMM), an engineering consulting firm in Roanoke, Virginia, hired Anthony as a Design Engineer in June 2001. HSMM is a progressive engineering firm with many exciting projects that should keep Anthony busy and out of trouble.

When asked about his experiences with the T<sup>2</sup> Center, Anthony replied, "My time with the WV T<sup>2</sup> Center has been well spent and has been beneficial to me on both a work-related and personal level. I have made some good contacts and more importantly, good friends while I was employed with the Center. The LTAP program is full of great people that have given me nothing but fond memories of my time here. I will definitely keep in touch with the Center staff and try to help them out as much as I can. I want to wish Andrew Morgan good luck with everything. I'm sure the LTAP family will welcome him with open arms just as they did for me."



**Andrew Morgan**

Andrew is originally from Vienna, WV, obtaining his diploma from Parkersburg High School in 1998. He graduated with his bachelors degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from WVU in May of 2001 and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Civil Engineering, specializing in transportation.

For the past two summers, Andrew has worked for the Division of Highways as a co-op in District 3. He spent time working as an inspector on a sewer project, inspecting construction of a temporary bridge, and working in the bridge design department.

Andrew has also been very involved within the Civil Engineering department at WVU. For over a year, he has been the teaching assistant for the surveying and computer-aided design courses. He also served as president of the student chapter of ASCE (American Society of Civil Engineers).

Andrew is looking forward to working with the T<sup>2</sup> Center and the LTAP community. He welcomes any questions you may have, and is willing to do as much as possible to assist the public. And, like Anthony, Andrew loves to golf, and welcomes any chance to be on the golf course.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

*Please add these events to your calendar!*

**The Eastern Winter Road Maintenance Symposium & Equipment Expo**

**Worcester, MA  
September 5-6, 2001**

*For more information, contact*

*Mr. Christopher Ahmadjian  
of the Baystate Roads Program*

*413-545-2604 or visit this web site:*

*<http://www.easternsnowexpo.org>*

**2001 Snow and Ice Control Workshop**

**Jackson's Mill, WV  
October 3, 2001**

**2001 WV Traffic Safety Conference**

**Charleston, WV  
October 23-24**

**Pre-Conference Workshops  
scheduled for  
October 22.**

**CD-ROM**

**Safer Journey: Interactive Pedestrian Safety Awareness**

Contains various activities to improve the level of pedestrian knowledge for all road users and safety practitioners.

**Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Resource Set**

Contains many good publications on pedestrian and bicycle issues: design criteria, evaluation, accident analysis, planning, etc.

**VIDEO**

**Along for the Ride: Safer Bicycling for Everyone**

How to be safer when bicycling. Areas discussed include: wearing of a helmet, rules of the road, and sharing the road.

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Synthesis of Safety Research Pedestrians**

Federal Highway Administration, 1991

**Improving Conditions for Bicycling and Walking**

Federal Highway Administration, 1998

**The National Bicycling and Walking Study**

Federal Highway Administration, 1994

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Research 2000 - Safety and Human Performance**

Transportation Research Board, 2000

**The Boone/Blowing Rock Alternative Transportation Project**

Sierra Club, 1995

**Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities**

AASHTO, 1999

*CDs, Videos and Publications are available from our lending library for a period of two weeks at no charge. To borrow material from our library, please contact Kim at 304-293-3031 x 2612 or E-mail [kcarr@wvu.edu](mailto:kcarr@wvu.edu).*

*Printed copies of our complete library directories are also available. If you would like to receive a copy of our latest directories, please let us know.*

## WE WANT TO KNOW

*We are always looking to improve our program to better serve your needs. The T<sup>2</sup> Center welcomes any ideas, comments, or suggestions you have regarding our program.*

*To provide the Center with feedback, or to make changes to your mailing address, please fill out the following form. Please fax your form to Kim at 304-293-7109, email to [kcarr@wvu.edu](mailto:kcarr@wvu.edu), or mail to WV T<sup>2</sup> Center, WVU, PO Box 6103, Morgantown, WV 26506-6103.*

1. Please send me more information on:
2. Please provide us with training workshop suggestions that would benefit you and your agency.
3. Please list topics for publications, videos, and/or cd-roms that you would like the Center to obtain for our lending libraries.
4. Please list any additional comments on how the T<sup>2</sup> Center could better serve you.
5. Please fill out the following to update your mailing information or to request information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The West Virginia T<sup>2</sup> Center is a part of the nationwide Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration. The Center also receives funding from the West Virginia Department of Transportation.

### **Mission:**

The mission of the West Virginia T<sup>2</sup> Center is to foster a safe and efficient transportation system. The T<sup>2</sup> Center's mandate is to improve the transportation system by improving the professional skills of those involved in highway design, construction and maintenance, and to act as a resource for them by keeping up-to-date training libraries and constantly seeking/developing new technologies.

### **Overall Goal:**

The Center's overall goal is to improve the transportation system by focusing on professional training, technical assistance, and information dissemination.

To achieve this goal, the WV T<sup>2</sup> Center does the following:

- Provides on-site training and demonstrations
- Publishes a quarterly newsletter
- Maintains a video and publications library
- Provides technical assistance via e-mail, telephone, fax, mail, or site visits

**IN BRIEF WITH RON ECK**



Health news reported in the media this year has not been very flattering for the Mountain State. West Virginia ranks number one in measures of sedentary life style and obesity. We rank near the top in heart disease, diabetes, and related conditions.

What does this have to do with transportation and public works? Studies suggest that by engaging in moderate-intensity activities such as walking, individuals could prevent and treat many chronic diseases and other physical, mental, and emotional health problems as well. As public works

professionals, we can do our share by designing, constructing and maintaining safe and accessible sidewalks, paths and trails for public use.

This issue is devoted to pedestrians and desirable characteristics of facilities to accommodate them. The Center conducted its first Walkable Communities Workshop in Elkins in April. Other communities are working on programs to upgrade their sidewalks and promote walking for fitness and as an alternate mode of transportation. What is your community doing to enhance its walkability?

West Virginia Transportation Technology Transfer Center  
West Virginia University  
College of Engineering and Mineral Resources  
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
PO Box 6103  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6103

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
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Permit No. 34

***Change Service Requested***

Please share this newsletter with others.

- Road Supervisors
- Council Members
- Public Works Dept.
- Road Crew
- Managers
- City Engineers
- Mayors
- Others

