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Durham Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission Releases Pedestrian Crash Map

*One Pedestrian Crash Every Three Days in Durham; Highway Safety Research Center
Receives Multi-Year Grant to Improve Education and Enforcement Efforts*

DURHAM, N.C. – Citizens interested in knowing where the most pedestrian crashes have occurred in the last five years in Durham County can now log on to a new, interactive map.

The Durham Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) has added a pedestrian crash map to its Web site, which identifies all reported pedestrian crashes in Durham County from 2004 to 2008. The map is now available at http://www.bikewalkdurham.org/BPAC_maps.html and also identifies the frequency and severity of each pedestrian crash location.

According to North Carolina Department of Transportation data, the average number of pedestrian crashes in Durham County has increased from 96 per year between the years of 1997 to 2002 to 120 per year between the years of 2003 to 2007. This is equal to approximately one pedestrian crash every three days. In Durham County, 59 percent of pedestrians involved in crashes from 1997 to 2007 were African-American, even though African-Americans make up less than 40 percent of the population in Durham County according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

According to Erik Landfried of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, the new crash map – and the data it easily displays – illustrates the continued need for improved education, enforcement and engineering treatments in Durham. “Pedestrians and bicyclists are the lifeblood of a healthy community and a safe and robust pedestrian and bicycle system would give Durham a tremendous advantage in the region,” said Landfried. “Our Commission plans to work with City staff to reprioritize some of the projects in the Pedestrian Plan by placing more emphasis on recent crash data and the proximity of these crashes to schools and parks. We

are also requesting that the Durham City Council and the Durham County Board of Commissioners identify funding opportunities and remove any planning or construction bottlenecks that may delay priority projects.”

Recent analysis of crash data by the Highway Safety Research Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill revealed that Durham County has the highest number of crashes per capita involving child pedestrians of the 10 largest counties in North Carolina over the period of 1997 to 2007. The Highway Safety Research Center has received a multi-year grant to improve pedestrian safety in Durham, particularly focusing on education and enforcement efforts for both pedestrians and motor vehicle drivers. BPAC will work closely with the Highway Safety Research Center to support their efforts.

In addition to the new pedestrian crash map, the BPAC has also added maps to its Web site so that citizens can easily review the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans adopted in 2006 and monitor the construction progress of high-priority projects. Durham’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans call for the planned, prioritized expansion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Durham, including bike lanes, sidewalks, and improved pedestrian crossings.

In addition to focusing on improving pedestrian safety and access, BPAC continues to advocate for additional bicycle facilities. Dan Clever of BPAC estimates that Durham can restripe existing roadways to complete a comprehensive 40-mile bicycle network for about \$1.5 million. “By working with the Durham Open Space & Trails Commission, the bicycle network — including the hugely successful American Tobacco Trail — will be connected to many area parks, schools, offices, and tourist destinations,” Clever said.

For more information about the new pedestrian crash map or the BPAC, contact Dale McKeel, Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator with the City’s Department of Transportation and staff support to the BPAC, at (919) 560-4366, ext. 36421 or via e-mail at dale.mckeel@durhamnc.gov.

About the Durham Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC)

The Durham Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) is a citizens group whose purpose is to advise the Durham City Council and the Durham County Board of Commissioners on bicycle and pedestrian issues. The commission consists of 15 members, with six members appointed by the Durham City Council and 6 members appointed by the Durham County Board

of Commissioners. The remaining three seats are liaison members to other commissions, which are the Durham Open Space & Trails Commission, the Durham Planning Commission, and the Recreation Advisory Commission. For more information, visit www.bikewalkdurham.org.

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