Herndon Police Department
Local Issue

Problem Identification

The Herndon Police Department identified several local traffic safety issues that contribute to crashes. Distracted driving behaviors as well as pedestrians and bicyclists crossing roadways present notable safety concerns for the Town of Herndon. Distracted driving is largely due to cell phones and other activities that divert the driver's attention and are a growing concern everywhere. Pedestrians and bicyclists alike are a common sight in the town given the popular biking trail that runs through its center. We recognized that these issues particularly contribute to traffic safety and proper enforcement and education must remain a priority in order to make a positive impact on the behavior of drivers and decisions of bicyclists and pedestrians.

Distracted driving and violations of "Fail to yield right of way" were among the department's top contributing factors in crashes. "Failure to yield the right of way" and "failure to maintain proper control" were charged in 201 accidents out of a total of 706, which equates to 29% of total accidents in 2015. The reasons for distracted driving are growing but typically involve GPS and cellular devices, but ultimately inattention to the roadway is a prime contributor to accidents.

Pedestrian and bicycle crashes are of concern as they relate to overall accidents within the Town. There were 17 crashes involving a pedestrian and 14 crashes involving a bicyclist in 2015; this is up from 8 pedestrian and 13 bicycle related accidents in 2014. A small section of the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail crosses straight through downtown Herndon at several intersections for approximately two miles. The trail is heavily travelled by pedestrians and bicyclists and its crossing points at major roadways in Town are challenging in terms of pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Crash data and traffic enforcement activities were evaluated during the year to assist with planning for addressing distracted driving violation and improving pedestrian and bicycle safety. Temporal factors, including accident and violation data by location, time-of-day, day-of-week, and month-of-year were compiled to assist with planning and enforcement strategy.

Policies – See Policy Attachment

Planning

The 2014 Traffic Analysis included a review of crash data and traffic enforcement activities for 2014. Based on this information goals were established for 2015 to address traffic concerns, enforce violations, and facilitate pedestrian and bicycle safety. **These goals assisted us in preparing an operational plan to conduct selective enforcement to increase enforcement, decrease crashes, foster education on distracted driving, and promote pedestrian and bicycle safety.**

These strategies coincide with Virginia's Strategic Traffic Plan with regard to intersection emphasis, since many of the distracted driving, pedestrian and bicycle crashes occur at intersections. The Department's

strategy to do its part to reduce the frequency and severity of crashes at intersections, improve user awareness and compliance with intersection and interchange traffic control devices, educate roadway users, and develop an effective response program to improve traffic operation is supported by Virginia's Traffic Plan.

Our annual Traffic Analysis indicated that most crashes, to include distracted driving and pedestrian and bicycle crashes, occur during lunch and evening rush hours in contrast to alcohol/drug related crashes which are prevalent on weekends between 5pm to 4am. The temporal factors identified in the analysis enabled proper planning to focus on distracted driver and pedestrian and bicycle safety campaigns to improve safety and awareness of pedestrian and bicycle laws. The department's objective was to have an impact on reducing the number of crashes as well as injuries associated with distracted driving and pedestrian and bicycle violations, and plan more directed and concentrated enforcement during peak hours of crash activity.

A selective enforcement guide was distributed monthly to target enforcement efforts for specific violations according to locations, days and timeframes. Selective traffic enforcement forms were completed for each assignment on a daily basis and submitted to the Traffic Section supervisor for compilation. These planned activities augmented the routine patrols selected for targeted enforcement. The plan was monitored by our continued analysis of crash and enforcement data and statistics from our education programs that coincide with national initiatives.

The Herndon Police Department also created traffic safety strategies in conjunction with selective traffic enforcement efforts with the Town's Traffic Engineering and Improvement Committee (TEIC). The TEIC is a partnership of traffic engineers, public works staff and police personnel formed to address citizen complaints, road engineering deficiencies, and other traffic safety issues. The primary focus of traffic concerns between the TEIC partnership and the police department is to improve the free flow and safe passage of traffic within the Town. These meetings consistently address complaints and issues related to pedestrian and bicycle safety as these activities are welcomed.

Participation in national distracted driving and pedestrian and bicycle awareness campaigns facilitated an educational focus for community members and provided an opportunity for officers to reinforce safety. A direct effort by the department to meet with local civic groups and community members to discuss the dangers of distracted driving and pedestrian and bicycle awareness was well received by the community.

Training

TRAINING ATTENDED BY MEMBERS OF THE HERNDON POLICE DEPARTMENT IN 2014

Type of Training	Activity	Participants
Distracted Driving (including texting while driving)	Training	55 Officers
Pedestrian and Bicycle Laws (including failing to yield)	Training	55 Officers
Motor Carrier Safety	Refresher Training	2 Officers
Police Motorcycle Operations	Refresher Training	6 Officers

PRIOR TRAINING USED BY MEMBERS OF THE HERNDON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Training is an important part of the department's ongoing mission to promote and encourage safety on the roadways. Maintaining specialized certifications in crash investigations, utilizing speed detection devices, and other related training keeps the department prepared and proactive. The following table shows the current certifications utilized by department personnel throughout the year in its enforcement efforts.

Current Certifications Utilized	Participants
Motor Carrier Safety	2 Officers
Motorcycle Operations	6 Officers
Advanced Crash Investigations, Level 1	12 Officers
Advanced Crash Investigations, Level 2	6 Officers
Advanced Crash Investigations, Level 3	5 Officers
Advanced Motorcycle Crash Investigations	4 Officers
Drug Recognition Experts	4 Officers

Every member of the department attends academy level in-service training, roll call training, and departmental mandatory training. Roll call training is utilized to provide specific information on special enforcement initiatives such as distracted driving and pedestrian and bicycle safety awareness. Additional training is provided on new traffic laws or other specific enforcement information. Every officer with traffic safety enforcement duties received this training. Additionally, during 2014, members of the department received specializied training in motor carrier safety and crash investigation and reconstruction.

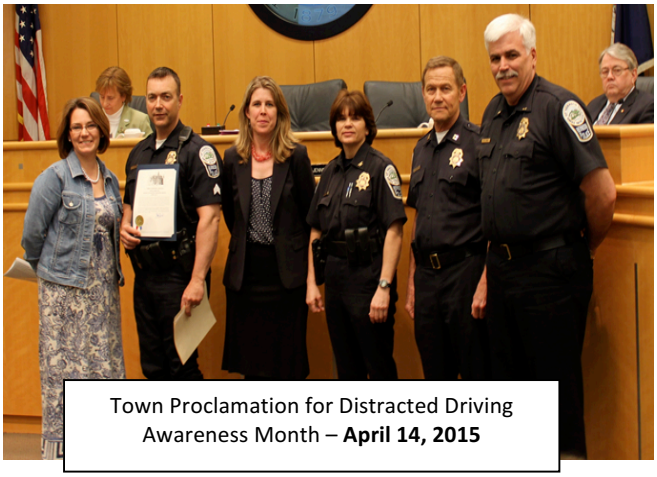
Several officers of the department have attended numerous academy level classes in traffic safety. These classes included motor carrier safety, traffic grant writing seminars, the law enforcement challenge preparation seminar, and police motorcycle operations to augment traffic enforcement efforts. The department places a top priority on training and continues to keep traffic safety a primary focus of its training program.

In 2015, members of the Traffic Section continued to use training they received from the Department of Motor Vehicles - Virginia Highway Safety Office. The various courses on Crash Investigation and Reconstruction along with annual in-service training on Motor Carrier Safety helped officers investigate causes of crashes and conduct motor carrier safety inspections.

Five officers attended various in-house training courses throughout the year in mapping intersections as part of the Crash Reconstruction Team. One member of the department attended the Law Enforcement Challenge Preparation Class and two attended the DMV Grant Seminar. The information gained in the Law Enforcement Challenge Preparation Class was valuable and resulted in a first place award for our category in 2015. The DMV grant writing seminar provided us with lucrative information that helped us earn $43,400 in DMV traffic safety grants. This funding has allowed the Herndon Police Department to increase enforcement efforts, purchase equipment, and provide training for officers.

Public Information and Education

The Town of Herndon Town Council is consistently very supportive of the efforts of the police department. In 2015, the Herndon Town Council passed Council Proclamations to include Official Recognition of Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April 2015 and Virginia Bicyclist and Pedestrian Awareness month in September of 2015. These meetings and presentations are broadcast on our local Herndon Community Television.



Town Proclamation for Distracted Driving Awareness Month – **April 14, 2015**

Town Proclamation for Pedestrian and Bicycle Awareness Month – **September 08, 2015**

Traffic Engineering

Significant contributions to traffic safety are fostered through the department's active participation in the Town of Herndon's Traffic Engineering and Improvement Committee (TEIC). This committee is comprised of traffic engineers and Public Works staff, along officers from with the Herndon Police Traffic Section. The committee meets bi-monthly to address citizen complaints, issues pertaining to potential or actual roadway engineering deficiencies, as well as future engineering, pedestrian safety, and congestion concerns. The police department plays a major role in the activities of this innovative committee. Citizen complaints contribute greatly to the safety improvement planning and implementation involved in the committee.

The TEIC committee was instrumental in traffic and safety improvements made in the Town of Herndon in 2015. Traffic safety issues came to the attention of TEIC and the members explored solutions prior to implementation and were evaluated for their impact. The committee sought *best practices* resolutions for traffic improvements to include adding signage, adding traffic signals, changing lane markings, or redesigning intersections. The ongoing study to address roadway safety along with pedestrian and bicycle safety is imperative to reducing associated crashes.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) was formed with the mission of promoting safe walking and bicycling as viable means of transportation and physical activity, and providing advice to the appropriate bodies (Town Council, Planning Commission and/or the Town's Transportation Engineering Committee – TEIC) on matters related to bicycle and pedestrian issues. Some of the purposes of PBAC involved safety programs for walking and bicycling, reviewing pedestrian and bicycle issues to include matters affecting pedestrian and bicycle transportation, and studying changes on applicable regulations, laws and best practices concerning pedestrian and bicycle issues.

The PBAC was instrumental in organizing a Herndon pit stop for "Bike to Work Day" on May 6, 2015. Herndon Officers were at the pit stop handing out brochures, pamphlets, and flyers on safety information to bicyclists. PBAC also spearheaded bike valet parking at the annual Herndon Festival where bike riders could store their bikes while enjoying the weekend festival event in May of 2015.

Special Programs & Community Policing

In 2015, the Department held a Youth Police Academy. The Youth Academy provided an educational platform to inform the students about a variety of traffic safety issues to include speed enforcement, DUI detection, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and distracted driving. Distracted driving was an important topic for students as they learned the danger of texting and driving. Graduates of these academies relate their experiences to the community and convey important information by emphasizing traffic safety. Members of the Traffic Section and the Crime Prevention Officer of the Herndon Police Department spoke to community and civic groups about traffic safety. Topics covered included bike safety, pedestrian safety, wearing a helmet and speed awareness. These presentations have been warmly received and the officers have been invited back several times. Flyers, brochures, and pamphlets with information on traffic safety are always available through kiosks at the Neighborhood Resource Center, the Community Center, the Herndon Branch of the Public Library, and the Herndon Police Department.

Youth Police Academy
November 6th 2015

Enforcement Activity

The department participated in distracted driving and pedestrian and bicycle safety awareness campaigns to discourage associated crashes and injuries. Selective enforcement was conducted with regard to these issues throughout the year. Altogether, the combination of these enforcement efforts resulted in:

- 504 total summonses for Failure to Pay Full-time and Attention
- 63 summonses for Reckless Driving
- 74 summonses for Failure to maintain proper control
- 38 summonses for Failure to yield right of way
- 719 summonses issued at Selective Traffic Locations
- 1,339 summonses for Speeding Violations

These summonses were written through Patrol and special enforcement details (at selective enforcement locations). These enforcement details were very specific in time and location based on crash data which were emphasized during midday and evening rush hours. Officers were very diligent in targeting the behaviors that led to crashes during these enforcement details. It is important to note that Virginia's texting law is difficult to enforce without an admission so only a few summonses were written last year for that violation. Officers were directed to enforce the driving behavior associated with the phone use or distraction. These included improper/erratic lane change, stopping on a highway, failing to maintain proper control and failing to pay full-time and attention.

The enforcement details were very successful in alerting potential drivers that the police department was proactively targeting dangerous driving behaviors to include distracted and inattentive drivers. While overall crashes were about the same from 2014 (685) to 2015 (706) these details undoubtedly prevented crashes. This is also evident in our total number of summonses issued for 2015.

Outcomes

The Herndon Police Department has made a concerted effort to combat distracted driving by conducting targeted enforcement to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety awareness and reduce crashes associated with these issues. Routine enforcement, targeted and selective enforcement, participation in national prevention programs, and enhanced enforcement in conjunction with high traffic times were conducted throughout the year. **In 2015, there were 17 crashes involving a pedestrian compared to 8 in 2014. The number of crashes where a bicycle was involved increased from 13 in 2014 to 14 in 2015. Crashes with injuries increased from 36 in 2014 to 70 in 2015. In 2014 five of these accidents were located at Crestview Drive where it intersects with the bike trail. This problem intersection was brought to the attention of the Traffic Engineering Improvement Committee. In 2015 one accident occurred at this location due to the safety improvements completed that included new road construction and signage.**

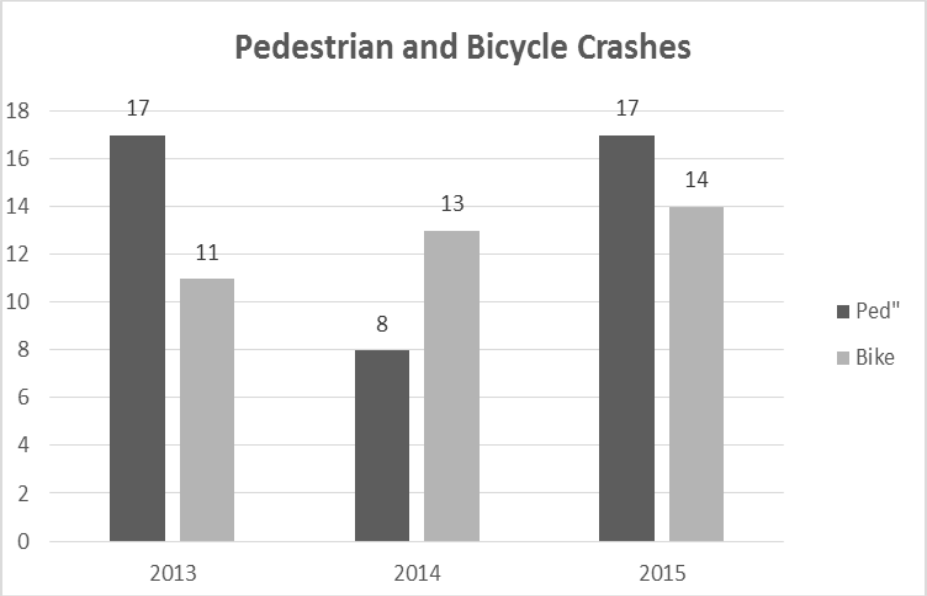
Significant contributions to traffic safety were fostered through the Department's active participation in the Town of Herndon's Traffic Engineering and Improvement Committee (TEIC). **In 2015, the TEIC**

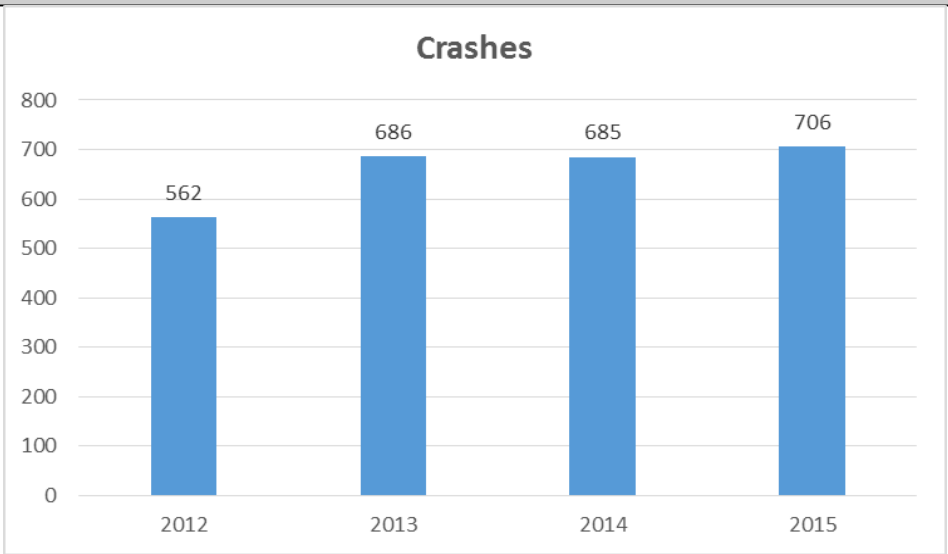
committee studied and addressed numerous crash related issues. These issues included nine speed studies, intersection redesigns, aggressive driving complaints, and roadway/signage recommendations.

Selective enforcement activity was conducted on a monthly basis to target specific traffic safety concerns, to include pedestrian and bicycle crossings and high crash locations. Through crash data, citizen complaints, officer knowledge and experience, and temporal factors such as location, time-of-day, day-of-week, and month-of-year when crashes and other violations were most prevalent, target locations and times were designated for proactive enforcement. Through selective enforcement the department accurately identifies contributing factors to better focus enforcement efforts, effectively monitor efforts, and redirect resources as appropriate.

Providing training to citizens on the dangers of distracted driving and pedestrian and bicycle awareness continues to be an important strategy toward reducing crashes. Throughout the year, members of the department spoke to community and civic groups about traffic safety, distracted driving, aggressive driving, pedestrian and bicycle awareness, and other violations. Flyers, brochures, and pamphlets with information on traffic safety are always available through kiosks at the Neighborhood Resource Center, the Herndon Community Center, the Herndon Public Library, and the Herndon Police Department.

The Herndon Police Department will continue to conduct routine, selective, and specialized campaigns to target and enforce distracted driving and pedestrian and bicycle safety awareness in 2016. However, the 2015 results remind us that more effort must be placed on reducing accidents related to distracted driving, and accidents associated with pedestrians and bicycles.





Law Enforcement Challenge Award

At the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police Conference on September 01, 2015, the Herndon Police Department received the first place award in the 2014 Law Enforcement Challenge for Municipal Police Departments with 55-75 members.

Law Enforcement Challenge Award
September 01, 2015