Report of the Bicycle Subcommittee to the Full Transportation and Parking Committee  
Date: March 15, 2011

Members: Len Schoppa (chair); Julia Monteith; George Cahen; Mark Stanis; Zhisong Wang; Alex Pawlowski; Angela Tabler; and Becca White (ex officio)

A tragic accident last spring was the impetus for the formation of this committee. Graduate student Matthew King was cycling back to the University on West Main after a shift at the Haven homeless shelter when he was struck by a City Public Works vehicle and killed. This accident raised concerns about the safety of the growing number of cyclists and scooter-riders that have taken up these modes in recent years, prompting the Transportation and Parking Committee to form this subcommittee to examine what the University might do to make sure that cyclists are as safe as possible. While addressing these safety issues, the committee was also asked to examine ways to make cycling more convenient and attractive and to suggest ways of addressing conflicts that arise between bicycles, scooters, and pedestrians in shared spaces on and near Grounds. The committee met five times over the course of the year, gathering for a final time on March 15 to finalize this report. Our recommendations can be grouped under three topics. Many of the issues of concern have also been addressed in the updated UVa Bicycle Plan, available at http://www.virginia.edu/architectoffice/pdf/Bicycle_Master_Plan.pdf

Safety Education

Currently, students have several opportunities to take bicycle safety courses, including a course being offered in April by Community Bikes in cooperation with UVA Parking and Transportation and the Office of the Architect. We believe that such offerings should be scheduled on a regular basis and advertised so that newly-arriving students, as well as students who are planning to start biking again in the spring, have a chance to learn the rules of the road and practice them under the guidance of a certified instructor.

We realize, however, that the proportion of students and other members of the University community who will take the time to sign up and show up for this type of class will be a small fraction of the number who need this type of education. So we propose to supplement these courses with an online module (similar to the ones used in human resources, where test-takers learn in the course of taking the "test") that we feel should be required of everyone who wants to register their bicycle (or scooter). Currently, the University Police administer the bicycle registration system, which is advertised primarily as a measure that will help registrants recover their bicycles, should they be stolen, but could also be useful for the educational process we recommend.
Angela Tabler, who administers this program for the University Police and was a member of our committee, has already incorporated a short bicycle-safety “test” into the online registration based on this suggested format. The test covers basic rules of the road (e.g. ride with the traffic, bicycles must stop at stop signs), and students have to answer these questions correctly before they can register. We suggest that she add a question to alert test-takers to the availability of safety courses like the one planned for April. Local League of American Bicyclists-Certified Instructor Mac Lafferty helped draw on existing materials to create this unit.

The committee discussed the option of making bicycle registration and the taking of this test mandatory, but decided this would not be beneficial at this time. Instead, we propose to create a set of incentives related to the use of bicycles as a mode of transportation: points on NuRide that registrants can use to purchase bicycle lights, locks, etc; credits that can be used in the occasional parker lots; zipcar credits (this benefit has already been approved); and "special access" to a future kiosk at a central bicycle parking area that will enable registrants to repair their bicycles (see below). Our proposal is aimed at using these benefits to incorporate newly-arrived cyclists into other programs that enable members of the UVA community to avoid relying on a single-occupancy vehicle for their commuting.

We recommend that the system for scooters and similar devices with motors above 49 cc (or equivalent) should be stricter. Those who want to park these vehicles should be required to register and take an online safety education module. Angela Tabler is already working to incorporate this unit into the online registration process. Registrants will receive a decal they can attach to their vehicle that will allow them to park in designated areas, once more of these areas are created. We propose the P&T should put up signs in these areas that warn non-registrants: "no parking without a decal." We might offer these registrants some lesser benefits similar to those described above. The main incentive would be the ability to park in designated areas for free. We would then start enforcing rules that would prevent these people from parking scooters outside of designated areas.

**Bicycle Parking and Bicycle Paths on Grounds**

The growing number of bicycles have started to strain University facilities for getting bicycles and pedestrians across grounds (many of these are shared) and for parking. Currently, many of the paths on grounds are officially off limits to bicycle riders, who are asked to walk their bicycles in order to avoid collisions with pedestrians. But few cyclists follow these rules, causing frequent near-miss incidents and some collisions. At the same time, the University’s bicycle parking facilities are currently limited bicycle racks, some of which fill to capacity at peak hours. Meanwhile, a growing number of scooters are parking next to bicycle racks or on sidewalks in ways that sometimes create obstructions. We expect more students and
University community members will make use of bicycles and scooters in coming years as gas prices rise and University “transportation demand management” policies draw them away from motor vehicles. When this happens, the conflicts summarized above will get worse. We propose that the University begin investing in bicycle and scooter parking facilities and that it addresses the need for expanded paths within impacted areas of Grounds to reduce the safety issues.

First, additional scooter parking locations need to be developed by building in the appropriate locations (such as the new one at Alderman Library) or by potentially converting some automobile parking spaces into spaces that will accommodate several scooters.

Second, the University should create bicycle corrals for parking in central locations, with kiosks offering basic services (air, repair). The first one of these corrals is scheduled to open in April near Clark Hall. Similar cluster parking areas could be developed so that solar panel-baring roofs would shelter the bicycles from rain. We feel such facilities would make sense, especially, for areas near the dorms where students do not have indoor parking for bicycles. Such facilities would not only accommodate a larger number of bicycles and address some of their needs, they would also create a central place where bicycles are better protected from a security point of view, and where bicyclers could meet and socialize.

Third, the University should create covered bicycle parking in or next to the main parking garages, with some bicycle lockers, to serve the commuters who drive and park and then use a bicycle to get across grounds. All of our garages have hashed off areas not usable for automobile parking that (if safe to do so) might be turned into indoor bicycle parking areas.

Fourth, the University should begin creating wider areas with path-markings directing pedestrians and bicyclists to separate lanes in the most congested corridors, such as Engineer’s Way connecting the parking lots near the Stadium with the Engineering district.

We propose that the University develop a plan to develop all of these facilities over time, although no funding source has been identified. Some of these might be built with the support of money from the Grounds Improvement Fund (GIF). We suggest that the Parking and Transportation Department make at least one of the above projects a priority in drawing up its GIF proposals in the next funding cycle. GIF funds have already been used to create the first scooter parking area near Alderman Library and the kiosk and corral near Clark Hall.

**Road Markings**

Most of the roads in the University area that are wide enough to accommodate them already have bicycle lanes marked on the street. Some streets that have significant bicycle traffic, however, are too narrow to accommodate separate lanes for bicycles. Other communities have
implemented “sharrows” (shown in the photo below) to make it clear to both cyclists and automobiles that these streets are to be shared. Cyclists are invited to ride in the traffic lane rather than trying to squeeze between automobile traffic and parked cars or the curb. Autos are asked to slow down to the speed of bicycles.

(from http://bike-pgh.org/campaigns/bicycle-advocacy/shared-lane-markings/)

Julia Monteith of the University Architect’s Office (and our committee) has been working with Rebecca White and both the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County to pilot this type of road markings in two areas: Alderman Road on Grounds and on Water Street in the Charlottesville downtown. The City has agreed to implement these pilot locations in 2011.

The committee applauds this initiative and recommends that the Office of the Architect and Parking and Transportation study the two areas (counts of bicycles before and after as well as observations of bicycle and automobile behavior) and mark more street segments in the area in this way if the pilot proves to be successful. Among the street segments we recommend for consideration in an expanded deployment of this system are Grady Avenue, West Main Street and Jefferson Park Avenue.