

FY12 Performance Oversight Questions & Answers
Bicycle Advisory Council

- 1 **Please provide a list of the Council's current members. For each member, please provide the following:**

- The member's name
- The Ward, agency or organization the member represents
- Who appointed the member
- When the member's term expires
- Attendance record

Please see attachment.

- 2 **Please provide a list of the Council's meeting dates, times, and locations for FY 2012 and FY 2013 to date.**

The Council meets the first Wednesday of every odd numbered month at 6pm at 441 4th Street NW, Suite 1114.

- 3 **Did the Council receive funds in FY 2012? If so, please provide the following:**

- The amount of the funding
- The source of the funding
- A list of all expenditures
- A description of how these funds furthered the Council's mission

Because of the regulatory difficulties of dispersing the funds, the BAC voted to have DDOT use the funds to enhance the bicycle element of its long range multimodal transportation planning effort – MoveDC.

- 4 **Please describe the Council's activities in FY 2012.**

In addition to the accomplishments listed in response to Question 5 and the outreach described in response to Question 9, the BAC held six committee of the whole meetings and fourteen committee meetings, including bicycle study tours, in FY12. All meetings are open to the public.

5. **Please describe the Council's three biggest accomplishments in FY 2012.**

- 1) The BAC provided DDOT with detailed notes and feedback from 5 bicycle study tours in areas where cycling improvements are needed and/or where designs are either starting or in process. The areas include 1) the proposed M and now operational L Street NW bicycle lanes; 2) Rhode Island Avenue from Logan Circle NW to Eastern Ave. NE; 3) Ward 4 around both the new Wall-Mart location as

well as the Walter Reed facility and traversing Rock Creek Park; 4) the M/I Street SE/SW corridor from Water Street SW to 11th St SE. Providing DDOT with a cyclist's perspective on these facilities gives DDOT engineers guidance to make improvements that are helpful to cyclists and 5) Tenelytown/AU corridor via Nebraska Avenue, NW and New Mexico Avenue, NW including Ward Circle.

- 2) The BAC maximized implementation of the recommendations from the 2011 Office of Police Complaints report through a continuous and active dialogue with MPD on the issues of officer training regarding traffic law as applied to cyclists and equitable crash investigation procedures.
- 3) The BAC advised the DC Office of the Environment, Office of Planning and DDOT throughout the Sustainable DC initiative.

6. Please describe the state of bicycle safety in the District.

The District of Columbia experienced zero cyclist traffic fatalities in 2012, and the lowest overall number of traffic fatalities in decades. Although there were zero cyclist fatalities in calendar 2012, there has already been one cyclist fatality in 2013, and a crash in which the cyclist was critically wounded on February 25, 2013.

At last year's meeting of the Judiciary Committee, then-Councilmember Mendelsohn requested that both MPD and BAC develop ideas for benchmarks related to traffic safety in DC. Within the BAC and PAC we had discussions on this issue, and came to the conclusion that measures of traffic safety should be based on a combination of quantitative outcomes (e.g., reducing the number of fatalities and accidents) as well as increasing a feeling of safety among residents. We know of no data tracking the degree to which DC residents feel safe when they drive, bike, and walk in the District, making this question difficult to answer. However, we do know that the perception of danger is a barrier to people choosing to bicycle and there are increasing numbers of people choosing to bicycle in the District.

The District has made progress with regard to creating a safer bicycling infrastructure; however, there is still an education, safety and infrastructure gap. Both drivers and bicyclists need to be aware of each other while sharing the road. Bike lanes, sharrows, cycletracks and other design elements help but bicyclists and drivers need to be educated on how to interact with the infrastructure and with each other.

7. Please describe the Council's goals in FY 2013 and the plan/timeline for completion.

- 1) Facilities. Four bicycle study tours will be conducted. All four quadrants of the city will be included. Recommendations for improving conditions will be made to DDOT.

- 2) Planning. The BAC will form a Planning Committee to coordinate its participation in the Sustainable DC initiative and DDOT's multimodal planning effort, WeMoveDC.
- 3) Safety. Continued tracking of resolution of issues raised in the 2011 police complaints board report. Outreach to the DC Taxicab Commission and valet parking companies to institute bicycle awareness and safety training.

8. What challenges does the Council face?

- 1)The city has added some outstanding bicycle infrastructure in the past four years, but decades-long deficits remain: Maintenance of current bicycle facilities (repair, sweeping detritus, trimming overgrowing vegetation); Trail projects that never get finished or started (Met Branch, Anacostia Riverwalk, S. Capitol Street, Suitland Parkway); Missing connections between/among the various trail/bike lane/cycle track facilities throughout the city
- 2) The city needs to continue to move beyond the low hanging fruit to realize the goal of a bicycle friendly city. Probably most of easily installed bike lanes have been completed in the city and we're a long way from having a complete bicycle network. Hopefully, as part of the WeMoveDC multi-modal planning process, DDOT can become empowered to install lanes, reconfigure signal timing, and reallocate the public right of way in a way that strikes a new balance for walking, biking, transit and automobiles.
- 3)The BAC often learns of opportunities to comment on many transportation projects concurrently with public announcements. This sometimes prevents the BAC from having an opportunity to comment on smaller projects for which no public process is designated. This contrasts the ANC system, where for various issues applicants must specifically contact ANCs to discuss proposals, allowing substantive participation early in the process.
- 4)The BAC is challenged in its ability to make the public aware of its existence.
- 5)The BAC needs to work with the Committee on Environment, Transportation and Public Works to establish a tracking system for its recommendations to DDOT. This would provide accountability for realizing improvements needed in bicycling conditions in the city, which is ostensibly the purpose of the BAC.

9. How does the Council represent and solicit feedback from residents?

The DCBAC continues to reach out to District communities through attending local government or nonprofit meetings that involve bicycling. DCBAC members typically provide statements regarding a particular issue and are available to both ask and answer questions from the public. The DCBAC blog (<http://dcbac.blogspot.com/>) has

had 27,131 pageviews since its creating in early 2010. DCBAC members also receive emails from the public. In addition, the DCBAC is on twitter @DCBAC. We have approximately 550 followers. The blog and the twitter account allow District residents to learn more about DCBAC and bicycling as well as communicate their concerns.

From this feedback and the feedback from its meetings as described in response to Question 4, the BAC has learned that District bicyclists want to feel safe using District streets. While they seem to feel safer now than in the past, they are still concerned about being hit by vehicles who make U-turns or who turn without signaling. If bicyclists are struck, they concerned that they have few legal options if their injuries are serious or if they have lost the use of their bike.

As bicycle usage becomes more prevalent, adequate bike parking becomes more acute. While the District has create laws that require certain residential and commercial building to maintain parking for bicycles it is not enough, especially in commercial districts. The current practice regarding the installation of bicycle parking seems to be piecemeal. A more standardized policy is needed that looks at a particular area and determines how, where, and what type of bicycle parking is installed. The DC Department of General Services and the District Department of Transportation should work to create a comprehensive plan bike parking plan for the city.

10. Please provide a copy of all official correspondence sent by the Council in FY12 and FY13 to date.

Please see attachment.

11. The Council stated last year that one of its goals was to continue communicating with residents who live in areas that have little bicycle infrastructure. Has this communication continued, and if so, what has the Council learned?

The BAC's five bicycle study tours took place in areas of the city that lack bicycle infrastructure. Residents, including somelocal ANC commissioners, were able to provide their problems in getting around by bicycle in these areas. That feedback informed the BAC's reports to DDOT for improvement.

12. Have District agencies been attending Council meetings regularly?

Yes. Their attendance and participation in the meetings has been outstanding.

13. Does the Council have any suggestions for how to further develop the Capital Bikeshare program?

Comments received through its website and in its meetings, the BAC has learned that

residents are pleased about the expansion of Capital Bikeshare. They are eager to have it reach neighborhoods around the edges of the city. Comments have been made that the distribution of bikes in the stations in more distant locations is frequently unbalanced – all empty racks or all full. Concern has been expressed about the inability of residents that do not have access to bank or credit cards to participate in the program.

14. The Council has previously mentioned the need for greater enforcement of laws relating to bicyclists in the District. Has the Council seen any change in the frequency with which these laws are enforced? How can enforcement be further improved?

MPD has taken several laudable steps to improve traffic enforcement. First, over the past two years, traffic captains have been designated in every police district, ensuring a focus on traffic enforcement during on-duty time among officers under the direction of the traffic captains and allowing coordination of traffic enforcement throughout the city.

Second, MPD has recently collaborated with other agencies and non-profit organizations to increase the visibility of its outreach and education efforts. For example, MPD held a recent outreach event to combat illegal u-turns through the Pennsylvania Avenue cycletrack in collaboration with DCTC, DMV, and WABA. This type of collaborative event has potential to reach a wider audience and multiply the effectiveness of MPD enforcement and outreach. Third, and most importantly, MPD is actively working to expand its automated enforcement program, including new camera types addressing pedestrian crosswalk infringement and stop sign violations which will have important safety benefits for cyclists and pedestrians. Automated enforcement is the single most important traffic enforcement effort by MPD because one or two officers doing traffic enforcement can only make contact with a very small number of road users, whereas the number of unsafe traffic violations is still quite large. MPD should continue and enhance the traffic captain program, collaborative outreach efforts, and the automated enforcement program.

MPD's position has been that a dedicated traffic enforcement unit is unnecessary because it is the responsibility of all MPD officers to do traffic enforcement. In practice, however, road users can be observed committing traffic violations directly in front of an officer without being pulled over.

There are many practical difficulties to conducting traffic enforcement as a regular-time on-duty officer. An important one is the difficult task of prioritizing violations for enforcement. MPD should set priorities for officer traffic enforcement based on dangerous locations and violations that contribute to crashes most frequently as revealed through studies of bicycle crash information. By telling officers they have an equal responsibility to enforce all of the laws, as opposed to identifying a few

enforcement priorities, officers might end up not doing traffic enforcement at all, except in cases where they are participated in specific traffic enforcement special projects .

15. There are often conflicts between drivers and bicyclists with regard to sharing District roads and properly following safety regulations. What can be done to ensure that both bicyclists and drivers follow the rules of the road?

It is the responsibility of all road users to operate in a manner which is safe, courteous, and follows the law. However, many bicyclists and drivers cut corners from this ideal. We can pursue the goal of reducing conflicts through several avenues:

- 1) Increased traffic enforcement focused on the most dangerous violations. It is important that vigorous enforcement be focused on the most dangerous issues both to maintain public acceptance for these efforts and to use resources wisely.
- 2) Design of infrastructure which encourages safe and lawful behavior and minimizes inconvenience for all road users. For example, separated bike lanes reduce cyclist-driver conflicts because drivers do not feel slowed-down by cyclists, and cyclists can feel safe because they are passed by drivers at a safe distance. Appropriately timed lights can reduce the amount of running red lights and speeding to make yellow lights. The width and design of roads can be modified to encourage road users to "naturally" go safe speeds. Efficiently moving traffic (avoiding very long red lights and gridlock) reduces road user agitation generally. There are many other ways to modify infrastructure to improve safety and reduce conflicts.
- 3) Education efforts to instill the value of safe, courteous and lawful behavior among all road users through public campaigns and education, especially in schools.