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## Elderly Renton woman hit by bike rider on Cedar River Trail identified

By [DEAN RADFORD](#)  
Renton Reporter Editor

Apr 21 2010, 6:55 PM · **UPDATED**

An 83-year-old Renton woman out for a walk on the Cedar River Trail late Sunday afternoon died Monday morning of head injuries she suffered when hit by a bike rider, according to the Renton Police Department.

Velda K. Mapelli's death was ruled an accident by the King County Medical Examiner's Office.

She suffered fractures of her skull, clavicle, ribs and pelvis, according to the medical examiner, and had blunt force trauma to her head and torso.

Mapelli was taken to Harborview Medical Center in critical condition, where she was in the intensive-care unit. Her family reported to Renton Police that she died at about 11:30 a.m. Monday.

She was walking east on the popular trail along the Cedar River about a quarter-mile from Interstate 405 at about 4:50 p.m. when she was hit by a bike rider and fell to the ground. The accident happened near the Cedar River Dog Park.

The bike rider, a 57-year-old man, also fell to the ground and suffered minor injuries. He was treated at the scene by medic units. A second bike rider wasn't injured.

According to police, as the bicycles began to pass her on the left, Mapelli stepped in front of them and was struck.

The police department's Traffic Division is continuing its investigation, including

talking to witnesses.

"This is very, very sad," said Renton Police Commander Paul Cline.

Cline said it's not known how fast the two bike riders were traveling. The speed limit for bike riders on the trail is 15 mph. They are required to yield to walkers and pass on the left, according to the etiquette rules posted on a kiosk near the trail's entrance.

"We don't know if the rules of the trail were violated," Cline said. If someone was reckless, then charges are possible, he said.

He can't remember any deaths on the trail as a result of a pedestrian-bike collision.

Brad and Davina Jaggard of Renton, out walking Monday afternoon on the trail, were shocked to hear of the accident. They used to live in Seattle.

"I am always aware of my surroundings," Davina said, including the wooded areas that line the trail.

Renton Police will send a patrol car or bike patrol to the trail if it receives a report of a rules violation. But response can be difficult because the trail is inaccessible in certain areas, he said.

Officers on bikes will patrol the trail during the summer. Some surveillance is done to ensure transients aren't causing a problem on the trail.

"For the most part people who use the trail seem to be pretty well-behaved," Cline said.



The speed limit for bike riders on the Cedar River Trail is 15 mph, according to rules posted on the trail. Riders must yield to pedestrians and pass on the left.

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**twRNtriathlete** 5 days ago

This is why saying "On your left" as you are approaching the person in front of you. By the way, the person in front, I believe, ALWAYS has the right-of-way. This could also just be an unfortunate event where the riders could have said "On your left" and because of her age, perhaps she was hard of hearing and didn't hear them.

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**greeneeyes** 4 days ago [in reply to twRNtriathlete](#)

2 people liked this.

You're an as\$. How you could even begin to make this statement is unreal. What is wrong with your attitude? Bicycle riders are the worst thing on the road. They do not follow the rules of the road. They feel it's okay to ride on the sidewalk to avoid traffic, and then cut back into traffic at will. I'm sick of seeing all the old men and their spandex too. Grow up. There are so many, many bike trails (they are called roads) why the need to travel where there are so many people, young and old, walking? SHAME SHAME SHAME on you and yours. Awful you could even suggest such a thing - I've NEVER seen bicyclist following any rules of the road. We need police now to charge bike riders with traffic tickets? I say take all the bikes OFF people trails and get on the road and then follow those rule.

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**MV\_Guy** 1 day ago [in reply to greeneeyes](#)

I can think of a lot worse on the road than Bicyclists, and many cars dart in and out of traffic too. That trail is not for any one group i.e.. walkers, bikers or roller bladers. It is for everyone. This is an accident, not a malicious attack on someone. The statement that she might not have heard was speculation and could have merit. I would try less hard at passing judgment, and more toward better understanding.

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**southlakewa** 4 days ago

That segment of the trail is used by a lot of pedestrians, old and young, and bicyclists should always use extreme caution when navigating around them. While we don't know the full story here (it could have been an unavoidable accident, not attributable to speed or lack of verbal warning) I will say this: speeding and obnoxious bicyclists on the Cedar River Trail are a real problem. In my opinion, cyclists should be going no faster than 10 MPH on this segment of the trail, and the police need to enforce those speeds.

Ultimately, it would be nice to see a bike-only path built from the trail head to the railroad bridge, as I think that would eliminate much of the bike-pedestrian conflicts. I suggest the bicyclists start lobbying and fundraising now, as the dog park people did.

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**Coulonwalker** 4 days ago

1 person liked this.

I wasn't there, so I can't speak to this incident, however, I've been very nearly run over several times by speeding bike riders in Coulon Park who ring their bike bell about the time they're even with my elbow and who continually ignore the dismount signs. I guess I'm not terribly surprised that a fatal accident has occurred. For every courteous bike rider, I seem to encounter at least one self-centered menace with an arrogant "I own the trail" attitude. My condolences to the lady's family.

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**Cheryl Beatteay Lecog** 4 days ago

1 person liked this.

This is very sad....

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**NWCreolelady** 1 day ago

1 person liked this.

Greeneyes, there are bicyclists such as you describe and they are a pain but we can't stereotype this group. I walk the Interurban Trail regularly and most of the cyclists do say "on your left" prior to passing you - so twRNriathlete, thank you for trying educate other cyclists. Cyclists must speak loudly and clearly and be ready to slow down for goodness sakes as you pass walkers.....just the same way you do (or should) driving in parking lots. There are times when cyclists may announce they're passing a little too late and it's startling as they speed past and you're doing the two step to get out of the way. I've been caught off guard and had to think twice about if they are passing on my left or my right when I first started walking the trail. We need more signs at trailheads about etiquette. Another idea would be to mark the trails with one side for all those speedy wheels (bikes, skates, etc.) and one for walkers. I actually prefer those bicyclists who have bells to ring, but again please use caution and don't wait until your on someone's tail. I feel that the walker should have the right away, which I think is what twRNriathlete was saying about the person in front. Deepest sympathy for the family of this woman.

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**daneowner1** 1 day ago

1 person liked this.

Velda was not only a friend, but a wonderful neighbor. I am grateful to have known her and will miss her deeply. She had a smile that would light up anyone's day and did so every day we spoke or I waved as she went walking by.

"On your left is not enough if you are going too fast and cannot make an adjustment when passing a walker/runner, etc. I have a Great Dane, one you cannot miss and have almost been clipped by a bicyclist. There is no reason that this should have happened. It is time the inconsiderate riders pay for their negligence. It is so sad this happened; I have had bicyclist come up beside me and say on your left and I too stepped to my left. How fast were they going that they could not avoid her. Velda, I will miss you deeply, my thoughts and prayers to all your family and friends. Good-Bye Velda; Love, your neighbor

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**rentonrain** 1 day ago

1 person liked this.

Actually I'm not sure that saying "on your left" is really helpful. I think many pedestrians find it startling. And while everyone knows the concept of right and left, when you have to think about it in a hurry and only have seconds to react, your thought process can actually slow down and it can become confused, and you may find a walker stepping into the bicycle's path.

This may be a good time to rethink what distances should be kept and what signaling used when approaching pedestrians.

From an article I read in another periodical today, the victim though 83 was in very good athletic condition. But one must account for a variety of ages, conditions, and hearing abilities.

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**PNWLocalNews** 5 days ago

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