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METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Rising Pedestrian Fatalities Trigger *Street Smart* Campaign

Local Leaders and Law Enforcement Boost Pedestrian Safety Across the Region

Fairfax County, VA – With pedestrian fatalities on the rise in recent years, leaders from the District, Maryland and Virginia unveiled the *Street Smart* pedestrian safety campaign. Kicking off the effort on the busy Route 7 corridor in Fairfax County, the regionwide effort combines stepped up law enforcement targeted to areas with high numbers of pedestrian-related incidents and resonant public awareness efforts to promote safer behavior behind the wheel and at the curb.

With 87 deaths, pedestrian fatalities reached a 10-year high in 2006 (the latest year for which complete data is available), according to a new study by Inoval Regional Trauma Center. Partial data for 2007 indicates that last year also saw higher-than-average pedestrian deaths. The Inova report shows an average of 82 pedestrians die and 2,061 are injured every year, according to data collected from 1994 to 2006. Put more simply, an average of one pedestrian is killed every 4.4 days and nearly six pedestrians are injured every day.

“If you are a driver, you need to drive like your life depends on it. If you are a pedestrian, you need to cross like your life depends on it,” said Gerald Connolly, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. “Virtually every pedestrian death and injury can be prevented if both sides of the crash equation – drivers and pedestrians – do a better job of looking out for each other. That’s what *Street Smart* is all about.”

Owing to their near-complete vulnerability when struck by vehicles, pedestrians account for fully one-quarter of individuals killed on the roads in the Washington region. In the District of Columbia, where the concentration of walkers, bikers and drivers is the highest in the region, fully half of highway deaths are pedestrians.

Galvanized by heightened concern about pedestrian safety, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments will host a Pedestrian Safety Workshop at the National Press Club in downtown Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, April 29. The goal of this workshop is to gather policy makers and working professionals from around the region to address the causes of pedestrian deaths and injuries, and come to collaborative solutions.

Cutting-edge technology also is being employed to boost pedestrian safety. Demonstrated at the kickoff, a new pedestrian-smart technology is being adopted by the District of Columbia that detects human

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movement, verbally instructs pedestrians (in English and Spanish) to activate a crossing signal and then tells pedestrians when it is safe to cross. High-intensity flashing lights let drivers know pedestrians are crossing. The device will be installed at locations where a high number of pedestrian incidents occur.

Across the region, police departments will be conducting waves of increased pedestrian safety enforcement this spring, including Fairfax County police officers stepping up enforcement along Route 7, Route 1 and other corridors that experience a high incidence of pedestrian crashes.

“We not only will be cracking down on people not following the laws that protect our pedestrians, but also educating drivers and pedestrians on how they can help make our streets safer for everyone,” said Metropolitan Police Chief Cathy Lanier.

Sponsored by the MWCOCG and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the *Street Smart* public awareness and enforcement campaign is aimed at reducing the number of pedestrian injuries and deaths in the Washington metropolitan area. The campaign uses internet and creative radio advertising in English and Spanish to reach drivers, while targeting pedestrians through outdoor and transit advertising with advertisements on bus shelters and bus sides. In addition, law enforcement and local, county and state agencies will be distributing handouts and tip cards to further spread awareness and educate drivers and pedestrians.

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About Street Smart

Street Smart is a public awareness campaign launched in October 2002 in order to change driver and pedestrian behavior in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. For more information about *Street Smart*, please visit <http://streetsmart.mwcoq.org> or <http://www.mwcoq.org/transportation/streetsmart>.

About the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

The TPB is the regional transportation planning organization for the Washington region. It includes local governments, state transportation agencies, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and members of the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies