

One Region Moving Forward

News Release

For Immediate Release
April 9, 2013

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New Campaign Warns Motorists, Pedestrians and Bicyclists to Exercise Caution *Dramatic Ads Offer Safety Tips, Promote Increased Traffic Safety Vigilance*

Like millions of others in the area, most days Stephen Grasty walks several blocks a day—to work, to a Metro stop, to a friend’s house. Though he has had his share of close calls, he has never been hit by a car and he would like to keep in that way. Stephen’s face—symbolically blemished by a tire tread—will soon be appearing in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government’s new public awareness safety campaign urging drivers pedestrians and bicyclists to look out for each other.

The *Street Smart* campaign offers safety tips to prevent pedestrian and bicyclist deaths and injuries in the DC metro area. The campaign gets underway next week in the wake of recent pedestrian crashes that left a 71-year-old woman dead in the 1100 block of Florida Avenue and at least 13 other pedestrians killed in crashes in the Washington metropolitan region in 2013 to date.

“Most people do not stop to think how vulnerable pedestrians are on our streets and sidewalks,” said Mayor Vincent Gray. “But the reality is that we must protect pedestrians from cars and other vehicles, because when they collide with a pedestrian, the pedestrian never wins.”

The “tired faces” visuals call attention to the dangers confronting pedestrians and bicyclists with the larger-than-life faces of area residents on ads on buses and in transit shelters in the District, Virginia and Maryland. State and local officials want drivers to actively watch out for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially when turning. They also are reminding bicyclists to ride with traffic and stop at red lights and urging pedestrians to use crosswalks and wait for the walk signal before crossing the street.

In 2012, preliminary data indicates there were 3,033 crashes in the DC metropolitan region involving pedestrians and bicyclists, which resulted in 70 fatalities. These deaths accounted for 26.5 percent of all traffic fatalities in the Washington region.

During the *Street Smart* campaign, which runs through May 13, law enforcement officers in Maryland, the District of Columbia and northern Virginia will be watching for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists who violate traffic safety laws. Drivers and cyclists who fail to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, as well as pedestrians who jaywalk, can face fines that range from \$40 to \$500. Drivers also are subject to getting points on their driver records.

Information on the new campaign and the *Street Smart* public education program may be found at www.beststreetsmart.net.

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About the Street Smart Campaign & the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

Sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the Street Smart public awareness and enforcement campaign is in its eleventh year. Its goal is to reduce pedestrian and cyclist injuries and deaths in the Washington metropolitan area. For more information about Street Smart, please visit www.beststreetsmart.net and twitter.com/COGStreetSmart. 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.

Street Smart Safety Tips

(BeStreetSmart.net)

If you're driving...

- Slow down and obey the speed limit
- Look twice for people in crosswalks and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists
- Be careful when passing stopped vehicles
- Yield to pedestrians and cyclists at intersections when you're turning
- Allow three feet when passing bicyclists
- Look for cyclists and cars before you open your door
- Avoid using your cell phone and never text while driving

If you're walking...

- Cross the street at the corner and use marked crosswalks when they're available
- Wait for the "Walk" signal to cross the street
- Watch for turning vehicles. Before crossing look left, right, and left again
- Be seen! If you're walking after dark or in bad weather, make it easier for drivers to see you by wearing light clothing or something reflective
- Don't text while you're crossing the street
- If you're on an off-street trail, obey all posted signage and approach intersections with caution

If you're biking...

- Obey all traffic signs and traffic signals
- Ride in the direction of traffic, at least a car door width away from parked cars
- Use hand signals so drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians know what you're going to do
- Always wear a helmet
- Use lights if you're riding at times of darkness
- If you're on an off-street trail, obey all posted signage and approach intersections with caution
- Slow down and watch for pedestrians on sidewalks, trails and in crosswalks

Laws and regulations differ between jurisdictions. Visit www.BeStreetSmart.net for information on specific trail guidelines and regulations.