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METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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***Street Smart* Campaign Shows Evidence of Boosting Pedestrian & Cyclist Safety**

WASHINGTON, DC – In a regional show of force, elected officials and law enforcement leaders from northern Virginia, suburban Maryland and the District of Columbia launched the 2009 *Street Smart* pedestrian safety campaign at the bustling intersection of 14th & U Streets, NW. New to the campaign this year is a heightened focus on cyclist safety, complementing the overall education and enforcement effort.

The *Street Smart* effort, in concert with other safety measures, is showing strong indications of making the region's streets safer. The District of Columbia, the region's most pedestrian/cycling-centric jurisdiction, experienced a 46 percent drop in pedestrian- and bicycle-related fatalities in 2008 from the prior year (2008: 14 pedestrians and one cyclist; 2007: 25 pedestrians and three cyclists). On average, pedestrians account for 30 percent of the District's traffic fatalities, according to the District Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Police Department.

"Proactive education of the public and active enforcement of safety laws is why we saw fatalities head in the right direction last year," commented Patrick Burke, assistant chief of the Metropolitan Police Department. "By getting more drivers, cyclists and pedestrians to literally look out for each other, we can turn last year's success in the District into a long-term, region-wide trend."

In conjunction with *Street Smart*, a wide range of jurisdiction-specific pedestrian safety innovations are being spearheaded to save lives and prevent injuries. Among the highlights:

- Montgomery County debuted "WalkSafe!," a free video educating non-native English speakers. Surveys of "English as a Second Language" students before and after watching the video showed 76 percent reported they now cross the street more carefully. The surveys also showed a 45 percent increase in students who say they always obey walk signals.
- The City of Alexandria installed an innovative traffic signal called the HAWK pedestrian beacon on a busy intersection (Van Dorn Street at Maris Avenue). Triggered by pedestrians waiting to cross, the system uses high-intensity flashing lights to alert motorists of their presence.
- Arlington County's "Lights for Bikes" effort distributed free bike lights on trails at the end of daylight savings time.
- The City of Rockville has installed pedestrian countdown signals at all signalized traffic intersections in the City.

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Sponsored by Metropolitan Washington Council Of Governments (COG) and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the *Street Smart* public awareness and enforcement campaign is in its seventh year. Aimed at reducing the number of pedestrian injuries and deaths in the Washington metropolitan area, the campaign uses creative radio advertising in English and Spanish to reach drivers, while targeting pedestrians through outdoor and transit advertising 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 that was 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.mwcog.org>.

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

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