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*One Region Moving Forward*

**News Release**  
For Immediate Release  
October 22, 2013

Contact: Jeff Salzgeber  
512.743.2659

## **Local Officials Urge Drivers, Pedestrians, and Cyclists To Look Out for Each Other** *Street Smart Campaign Aims to Reduce Injuries and Deaths During Dark Fall Months*

With Daylight Savings Time ending on November 3, school back in session, and Halloween around the corner, regional safety officials came together today to remind drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists to pay extra attention to one another on area roadways.

An hour less of daylight during evening commutes means reduced visibility, which typically leads to an increase in crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists during the darker autumn months. To reduce pedestrian and cyclist injuries and fatalities, the annual *Street Smart* public education campaign is encouraging area residents to be more alert. Last year, in November and December there were more than 400 crashes involving pedestrians in the Washington metro region.

Representatives from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, as well as state and local officials from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, gathered today at Upper Senate Park in Washington, DC to kick off the fall *Street Smart* campaign. Special guest Gwendolyn Ward shared the story of her 15-year-old daughter, Christina Morris-Ward, who was struck by a car and killed one year ago this month while crossing the street in Germantown on her way to school in the dark. Also attending was the Roaring Bengal Marching Band from James Hubert Blake High School in Montgomery County, which played a mournful dirge in recognition of the 72 pedestrians and cyclists killed in the region last year.

As the band played, a bell tolled in recognition of each pedestrian killed in 2012. With each ringing of the bell, a single band member ceased playing his or her instrument and left the instrument on the ground. The song ended with a lone trumpeter playing amid a sea of abandoned instruments.

“We all have to work together to improve safety in our region particularly now that it’s getting dark by the time many people are making their evening commutes,” said Chuck Bean, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. “Drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians need to follow traffic laws, be aware of their surroundings, and avoid distractions, such as cell phones.” Among other safety tips, the *Street Smart* campaign reminds drivers to be alert and yield to those on foot or on bicycles at intersections, and encourages pedestrians and cyclists to wear light colors or reflective clothing to be more visible.

Bean announced that law enforcement in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia will conduct increased enforcement October 28 through November 24, ticketing drivers, cyclists and pedestrians who violate traffic safety laws.

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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 twelfth 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 [BeStreetSmart.net](http://BeStreetSmart.net) and [twitter.com/COGStreetSmart](https://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.*

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**Street Smart Safety Tips**

(BeStreetSmart.net)

**If you're driving...**

- 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
- Slow down and obey the speed limit
- Avoid using your cell phone 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
- 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 lights
- 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

*Laws and regulations differ between jurisdictions. Visit [BeStreetSmart.net](http://BeStreetSmart.net) for information on specific trail guidelines and regulations.*