



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 29, 2010

Contact: Emily Howard/Stephanie Abraham
(202) 289-2001

Greater Awareness Vital as Biking and Walking Increase

WASHINGTON, D.C. – With statistics showing more and more area commuters biking to work or school, **Street Smart**, the regional pedestrian-cyclist safety campaign, kicked off with a call for greater awareness – by drivers, by cyclists and by pedestrians – to ensure safety. Local elected officials and law enforcement leaders from the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and suburban Maryland area gathered at the Metropolitan Police Department's Traffic Safety Enforcement Branch to emphasize the life-and-death importance of the campaign.

Across the Washington, D.C. region, pedestrians and bicyclists account for approximately one-quarter of all traffic fatalities.

“Many years of concerted effort to make our region more walkable and bikeable are paying off,” said Alexandria Mayor William Euille. “But as more and more residents travel by bike or foot, we all need to step up our awareness that walkers and cyclists are vulnerable.”

As a gauge of the increase in bicycle commuting, the District Department of Transportation is tracking the average number of bicycles at a peak travel hour in 19 locations citywide. From 2007 to 2010, the number bicycles at these locations increased by 80 percent.

Authorities are also urging pedestrians to take extra precaution this time of year, as the warmer weather and longer hours of daylight entice more outdoor activity.

In 2010, pedestrian and cyclist deaths increased nine percent across the National Capital Region from the previous year. A total of 83 area walkers and bikers lost their lives in traffic crashes, averaging one death every four days.

As part of the **Street Smart** campaign, law enforcement agencies from across the region are stepping up their emphasis of traffic safety laws. This increased focus on pedestrians and bicyclists will continue throughout the spring and summer months to ensure safety and awareness on the road remain priorities for all walkers, riders and drivers. Make no mistake, if you violate the law, you will be caught and you will be cited.

-more-



About Street Smart

Sponsored by the 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 ninth year. Aimed at reducing the number of pedestrian and cyclist injuries and deaths in the Washington metropolitan area, the campaign uses creative radio and television advertising in English and Spanish to reach drivers, pedestrians and cyclists, while targeting them 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. For more information about **Street Smart**, please visit www.bestreetsmart.net and twitter.com/COGStreetSmart.

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.

###