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*One Region Moving Forward*

## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **Officials Urge Motorists, Pedestrians, and Bicyclists to Stay Aware, Stay Safe**

*“Street Smart” Campaign Promotes Traffic Safety and Caution*

**COLLEGE PARK, MD** – Spring is here, and Washington-area residents are ready for outdoor activities. Transportation officials from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia want to make sure that as drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists take to the streets, they also take care and watch out for each other. To encourage safety, officials gathered today in College Park, Maryland to launch the spring *Street Smart* public awareness and enforcement campaign.

“This winter’s brutal weather forced residents to spend most of their time inside, and now that it’s warming up, more people will be out walking and biking,” said Rushern L. Baker III, County Executive, Prince George’s County, Maryland. “With more of us back out on the roads, now is the time to make an extra effort to be aware of one another. We’ll be stepping up enforcement throughout the region to make sure everyone gets that message.”

As part of the campaign, which runs from March 23 to April 19, regional law enforcement will be on the lookout for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists who break traffic safety laws. Violators on foot, bicycle, and behind the wheel will be ticketed and face fines up to \$500, and drivers may also get points on their driver record.

*Street Smart* officials launched the spring initiative at College Park City Hall. Several pedestrian fatalities in College Park last year led officials to reduce the speed limit for MD Route 1 from 30 mph to 25 mph and to add improvements such as median fencing and signals to help pedestrians safely cross the roadway. Officials shared the message of awareness and accountability at today’s gathering.

“We all have a responsibility to pay attention and follow traffic laws to make sure everyone travels safely,” said John Saunders, Director of Highway Safety, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. “It takes only a moment of distraction or impatience for the unthinkable to happen.” In 2014, 75 pedestrians and bicyclists lost their lives in traffic crashes in the Washington area.

*Street Smart* is an annual public awareness campaign in the Washington, D.C., suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia area that aims to prevent pedestrian and bicyclist deaths and injuries. The campaign offers safety tips for all travelers (see below) and pairs media with enforcement to encourage all drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians to be alert and follow traffic safety laws when they’re en route throughout the region.

Find information on the *Street Smart* public education program at [BeStreetSmart.net](http://BeStreetSmart.net).

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***About the Street Smart Campaign and 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 thirteenth year. Its goal is to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and deaths in the Washington metropolitan area. For more information about Street Smart, please visit [www.beststreetsmart.net](http://www.beststreetsmart.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.*

## ***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 bicyclists when you're turning at intersections.
- Allow three feet when passing bicyclists.
- Look for bicyclists 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 before crossing 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-colored clothing or something reflective.
- Don't text while you're crossing the street.
- If you're on an off-street trail, obey all posted signs 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, bicyclists, and pedestrians know what you're going to do.
- Always wear a helmet.
- Use lights if you're riding in the dark.
- If you're on an off-street trail, obey all posted signs and approach intersections with caution.
- Slow down and watch for pedestrians on sidewalks, trails, and in crosswalks.

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