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**AS WEATHER WARMS, OFFICIALS CALL ON DRIVERS, PEDESTRIANS, AND
BICYCLISTS TO BE ALERT AND OBEY SAFETY LAWS**

Law Enforcement Out in Full Force This Spring to Ensure Safe and Alert Travel Behaviors

SILVER SPRING, MD – Spring is in full swing, and Washington-area residents are enjoying warmer weather, which means more people walking and biking. Transportation officials from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia gathered in Silver Spring, Maryland today to urge drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists to exercise caution, watch out for each other, and follow traffic safety laws.

The event marks the launch of the spring *Street Smart* public awareness and enforcement campaign. To drive home the call for safety, police departments throughout the D.C. area will support the campaign with increased enforcement of traffic laws that protect people walking and biking.

From April 11 to May 8, regional law enforcement will step up their efforts to identify and ticket drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists who break traffic safety laws. Violations such as failing to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, running red lights, or jaywalking can result in fines up to \$500. In addition, drivers may receive points on their driver record.

“We all have a responsibility to follow safety laws and look out for one another,” said Lt. David McBain of Montgomery County Police Department. “Whether you’re on foot, on a bicycle, or behind the wheel, you need to make an extra effort to be aware of those around you. And if safety isn’t enough to inspire extra caution, we are stepping up enforcement to make sure that message gets across.”

In 2015, 69 pedestrians and 6 bicyclists lost their lives in traffic crashes in the Washington area, accounting for 28.7 percent of the 261 traffic fatalities in the Washington region.

The *Street Smart* campaign kickoff took place at the Paul S. Sarbanes Silver Spring Transit Center, a multi-modal transit hub, serving pedestrians, bicyclists, bus riders, and train passengers. The Silver Spring Metrorail Station serves about 13,000 rail customers each weekday, and 24 bus routes serve the Transit Center, providing transportation service to more than 70,000 riders per day in Maryland and the District.

“Every one Metro rider is a pedestrian at some point in their journey,” said Robert Potts, Metro’s Assistant General Manager for Metrobus Services. “We work to keep customers safe during every part of their trip, and that includes their ways to and from our rail stations and bus stops.”

The *Street Smart* campaign offers safety tips for all travelers (see below). In an effort to prevent pedestrian and bicyclist deaths and injuries, the campaign partners media with enforcement to encourage all drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians to be alert, follow traffic safety laws, and stay safe.

To learn more about Street Smart, visit BeStreetSmart.net and follow us on twitter.com/COGStreetSmart.

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The Council of Governments is an independent, nonprofit association where area leaders address regional issues affecting the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia.

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 in the dark.
- 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 for information on specific trail guidelines and regulations.