



Greater Washington Regional Platform Fall 2012

About the Regional Network and Our Goals

Formed in 2010, the Greater Washington, DC Safe Routes to School Regional Network is a project of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and is funded with generous support from Kaiser Permanente. The goal of the Greater Washington, DC Network is to build partnerships and leverage resources in the region to improve policies as well as the built environment to support and encourage physical activity through walking and bicycling to school and in daily life. The National Partnership and its local partners work to support policy changes that transform the way communities do business and encourage policymakers to consider all modes of travel when making transportation decisions. The Greater Washington, DC Network also works at the local level to provide technical assistance to Kaiser Permanente's Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) zones in the region.

State of Active Transportation in the Greater Washington Region

The Greater Washington, DC Network works within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), a nonprofit responsible for solving shared problems across the region. COG staff supports the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB). The TPB is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Greater Washington, DC, region. The TPB promotes a collective approach to transportation development across the region and ensures the region conforms to federal transportation funding guidelines.

Communities that are members of COG and therefore part of the Greater Washington, DC network include the District of Columbia; the Maryland communities of Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George's and Charles counties as well as the cities of Bowie, College Park, Frederick, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Rockville and Takoma Park; and the Virginia communities of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties as well as the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

The Greater Washington, DC Area Network and the TPB have several common goals and efforts. The TPB recently adopted a Complete Streets policy and encourages its 22 member jurisdictions to adopt their own policies. The policy also requires the tracking of pedestrian and bicycle projects. This is a significant and important step toward a multi-modal region, and the Greater Washington, DC Network is ready to help communities adopt and implement their own Complete Streets policies.

The TPB endorsed COG's Region Forward plan as the vision for a more accessible, sustainable, prosperous and livable National Capital Region. Specific Region Forward targets that support the goals of the Greater Washington, DC network include increasing the construction rate of bicycle and pedestrian facilities; increasing walking, biking and transit trips; prioritizing all modes of transportation; and reducing pedestrian and bicycle fatalities across the region.

Take Action for Safe and Healthy Communities

Increasing physical activity through safe walking and bicycling trips not only benefits people's health, it also reduces congestion. But not all people have a transportation mode choice. Lower-income communities are more likely to

rely on walking, bicycling and public transit, and residents often face a higher risk of traffic-related injuries. Additionally, lower-income communities and communities of color have higher rates of obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases. Communities can take action to address all of these issues by adopting smart policies and building sustainable Safe Routes to School programs. The Greater Washington, DC Network specifically works to:

- **Create demand for walking and bicycling.**
 - Participate in committees and work groups addressing Safe Routes to School and pedestrian and bicycle issues.
 - Participate in the regional transportation planning process.

- **Leverage additional resources and policy changes to support walking and bicycling.**
 - Work with agencies at the local and regional levels to adopt policies that:
 - allow kids to safely walk and bicycle to school;
 - support walking and bicycling, such as the recently adopted TPB Complete Streets policy and street-scale improvements;
 - consider pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users in development and planning;
 - commit to increasing funding and projects for bicycling and walking around schools and throughout the community;
 - prioritize walking and bicycling infrastructure for populations most dependent on walking, bicycling and transit;
 - standardize the collection of multi-modal data for adults and children; and
 - locate, design and renovate schools with a focus on children walking and bicycling.

- **Increase physical activity opportunities for children, families and communities.**
 - Create Safe Routes to School programs that:
 - utilize Safe Routes to School funds;
 - ensure sustainability; and
 - keep kids safe through pedestrian and bicycling education and improvements in infrastructure.
 - Educate the region's residents and policymakers by developing best practice papers, case studies and fact sheets on safe walking and bicycling.
 - Assist schools in finding Safe Routes to School information.
 - Provide testimony and education on decisions affecting Safe Routes to School, walking and bicycling.
 - Provide technical assistance to Greater Washington, DC, Kaiser Permanente HEAL communities, including the Prince George's County Port Towns Community HEALTH Partnership.

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