

**Bicycling, Walking and the Vision
of the Transportation Planning Board**

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board has long recognized the benefits of bicycling and walking in the region's multi-modal transportation system. The Transportation Planning Board's [*Transportation Vision for the 21st Century*](#), adopted in 1998, emphasizes bicycles and pedestrians in its goals, objectives and strategies. A key part of the *Vision* is a strong urban core and a



Figure 1: DC Bike Lane

set of regional activity centers, which will provide for mixed uses in a walkable environment and reduced reliance on the automobile. The *Vision* also calls for the implementation of a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. Recommendations in this plan will help realize the *Vision*.

*The Urban Core has
a Growing Network
of Bicycle Lanes*



*The Woodrow
Wilson Bridge
Trail opened in
2009*

Figure 2: Woodrow Wilson Bridge Trail

Region Forward 2050

The Council of Governments recently completed [*Region Forward*](#), a vision for the National Capital region in 2050. *Region Forward* builds on the TPB *Vision*, calling for more rapid implementation of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan, increased walking and bicycling, and reduced pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.

This plan incorporates the goals, targets, and indicators from *Region Forward* which relate to walking and bicycling, as well as some additional indicators which will help show how well those goals are being met.

Bicycling and Walking in the National Capital Region

The Washington region is nationally known for the quality, beauty, and extent of its bicycle paths. Its walkable core neighborhoods attract residents and visitors alike. The region has a strong foundation of walking and bicycling facilities to build upon.¹

Taken together, bicycling and walking are a significant and growing mode of transportation in the Washington region. According to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' 2008 Household Travel Survey walking and bicycling account for 9% of all trips in the Washington region, up from 8.3% in 1994.

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Recent years have seen progress for bicyclists and pedestrians. Several major new trails and bridges have opened, and most local governments have adopted bicycle, pedestrian, and/or trail plans. Most of the transit agencies in the region, have added bike racks to their buses. Bicycle or pedestrian coordinators and trail planners are now found at most levels of government. In accordance with federal guidance and new state policies, pedestrian and bicycle facilities are increasingly being provided as part of larger transportation projects. Employers are investing in bike facilities at work sites, and developers are including paths in new construction.² A pilot bike sharing program, [*Smartbike*](#), the first such program in the United States, has been implemented in the

¹ DC Bicycle Lane Photo: COG/TPB /Michael Farrell

² Woodrow Wilson Bridge Trail Photo: COG/TPB /Michael Farrell

District of Columbia, and a large-scale regional bike sharing program, *Capital Bikeshare*, is in the planning phases.

Bicycling and walking could reach a greater potential in the Washington region, however. Many trips currently taken by automobile could be taken by bicycle. The average work trip length for all modes in the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area is 16.2 miles.³ But 17% of commute trips are less than five miles, a distance most people can cover by bicycle.

Many people who live far from their jobs, but closer to transit or a carpool location could walk or bike to transit or the carpool instead of driving. The average trip distance to transit or carpool is only 3.1 miles.⁴ Only 15% of transit riders and carpoolers travel more than five miles to the transit or carpool location.⁵

The potential for shifting non-work trips to bicycling or walking is even greater than for work trips. The average non-work trip is a little more than five miles, and nearly 3/4 of all trips are non-work trips.⁶ The median auto driver trip in the Washington region, according to the 2008 COG Household Travel Survey, is four miles. The median trip for an auto passenger is only 2.8 miles. One fourth of all auto trips are less than 1½ miles in length. Destinations such as schools, shopping, and recreational facilities are often close enough to walk or bicycle. Bicycling and walking have considerable potential to displace automobile trips if suitable transportation, design, safety, parking, school siting, and land development policies are followed.

*The New York Avenue
Metro Station
Incorporates a Shared-
Use Path and Bicycle
Parking*



Figure 3: New York Avenue Metro Station and Metropolitan Branch Trail

³ National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, *2004 State of the Commute Survey Report*, November, 2004, p. 22.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 27.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 27.

⁶ National Capital Regional Transportation Planning Board, *1994COG/TPB Household Travel Survey: Summary of Major Findings*, January, 1998. Page 5.

Plan Development and Organization

This plan has been prepared by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington region. The TPB is made up of representatives of 20 local governments, the departments of transportation of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, the state legislatures, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Member jurisdictions are shown in Figure i-A on page i-4. The area of the TPB members plus Calvert County in Maryland and Stafford County in Virginia comprises the Washington, DC-MD-VA Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

This document presents the long-range Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Washington Region through the year 2035. The plan is a list of regional projects identified by the TPB member jurisdictions, accompanied by recommended best practices and a description of existing facilities and regional trends for bicycling and walking. This plan includes both funded and unfunded projects. It does not specify design guidelines, but refers instead to state and national guidelines for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

This update of the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the National Capital Region* seeks to reflect the goals, objectives and strategies of the 1998 *TPB Vision* and *Region Forward 2050* while building on information from previous bicycle plans. It includes performance measures that will show progress towards the *Vision* and *Region Forward* goals.

Pedestrian access and safety receives increased attention in this update, reflecting increased attention to pedestrian issues by the TPB member governments and agencies. . Pedestrian planning is most needed at the county, city and neighborhood level. There is, however, a role for regional pedestrian planning, especially in the area of educating the public.

**Figure i-A
TPB Planning Area, Washington DC-MD-VA Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)**

