



## Washington, DC

### New Capital for Walking and Bicycling



## 2010 Campaign Case Statement

June 30, 2008

## **Transportation System Needs**

### ***Need for transportation alternatives***

Washington, DC leads the nation in providing transportation options to residents, workers, and visitors. Between walking, bicycling, transit, driving, carpooling or even joining a slug-line, there are a multitude of options for getting from Point A to Point B.

Despite the wealth of available modes, a number of concerns continue to limit the feasibility of some of these choices. Concerns frequently cited as barriers to more frequent trips on foot or by bicycle include unsafe street crossings, heavy traffic, high-speed traffic, poor motorist behavior, and inadequate space for walking and bicycling.

Heavy levels of traffic congestion prove that Washington, DC is ripe for “alternative” modes. In 2007, the Washington DC region earned a dubious distinction when it tied with two other regions for the second worst traffic congestion in the United States. According to the Texas Transportation Institute’s *2007 Annual Urban Mobility Report*, the region’s residents spend an average of 60 hours per year stuck in traffic. This congestion is costly. It is estimated that in 2005 delays in the Washington area resulted in a waste of nearly 91 million gallons of fuel and cost each rush hour traveler \$1,094.

Increased investment in transportation infrastructure will help address DC’s congestion problem. The District’s high-density development patterns and mixed land uses create ample opportunities for increasing walking and bicycling trips while making new roads expensive and difficult to build. In many locations throughout the city, providing new facilities for walking, bicycling, and transit are the most cost effective and feasible ways to increase the overall capacity of the transportation system.

### ***Opportunities to strengthen other modes, especially transit, with better bicycle and pedestrian connections***

DC is home to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) which operates one of the country’s best subway and bus systems. A few other bus services, including the downtown Circulator and the Georgetown Metro Connection provide more transportation opportunities in DC. Two commuter rail lines supplement the system with service to DC from Maryland (MARC) and Virginia (VRE). Outside of DC, a number of local jurisdictions run bus systems such as DASH in Alexandria, VA ART in Arlington County, VA and Ride On in Montgomery County, MD. Despite the comprehensive nature of these transit systems, there are still addresses within DC that can be difficult to access without an automobile. For example, at a recent public meeting, residents complained that missing sidewalks forced them to walk in the street in order to reach the Metro. Improved bicycle and pedestrian connections in DC will increase the number of transit trips and reduce the number of trips by single occupant vehicles.

## ***Mobility needs of those who cannot or choose not to drive***

Many people in Washington, DC rely on alternative modes of travel. Because of age or other circumstances, many of the District's residents—children, students, persons with disabilities, low-income households and older residents—do not have access to an automobile. Others choose to live without an automobile. According to the 2000 Census, 37% of DC households do not own an automobile. Walking and bicycling provide affordable, often low hassle transportation options for residents who cannot or choose not to drive.

Percent of households that do not own an auto:  
DC: 37%  
USA: 10%

## **Active Transportation Track Record and Assets**

### ***Recent accomplishments***

It is not surprising that Washington, DC, a city where 37% of households do not own an automobile, has the second highest mode share for commuting trips completed by both walking and transit<sup>1</sup> among major US cities. Only New York City has a higher transit mode share, and only Baltimore, Maryland has a higher mode share for walking trips. For commuting trips by DC residents, 33% are made by transit, 1% by bicycle, and 12% by walking (which is twice the national average).

The relatively large mode shares for walking, bicycling, and transit demonstrate the success achieved so far by DC's bicycle, pedestrian, trails, and safe routes to school programs. These programs actively work to increase non-motorized mode shares and reduce traffic congestion. Below are some recent accomplishments for DC's active transportation programs:

#### ***Bicycle Program***

In 2005, the District adopted its first Bicycle Master Plan in nearly 30 years and has been busy making improvements for the past seven years. The bicycle program has added over 30 miles of bicycle lanes and 800 bicycle parking racks. In July of this year, Washington, DC will become the first city in the nation to launch SmartBike, a bike sharing program modeled on successful programs in Paris and Barcelona. In 2009, the bicycle program will complete the construction of the Union Station Bike Station, the first facility of its kind on the east coast, providing enclosed bicycle parking, rentals, and repair in a stunning new building.



The District of Columbia has funded transit improvements such as the installation of bike racks on the front of every city bus,

<sup>1</sup> US Census Data, 2000 Mode Split for Major Cities

helping to make our city's transit system, one of the most bicycle and pedestrian friendly in the country.



### *Pedestrian Program*

On the pedestrian front, DDOT just released a new Master Plan, establishing and reinforcing pedestrian-friendly policies for the District and targeting high-crash and high-demand corridors for improvements. DC already has installed more countdown pedestrian signals than any other city in the world, and recently installed the city's first rapid flash beacons. In addition, the District's land use planning strongly supports pedestrian and transit friendly development.

### *Trails Program*

Currently, DC has a 50-mile network of trails and greenways. Just last year DDOT constructed \$10 million worth of new and improved trails. Both the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the Anacostia River Trail will connect underserved areas of the city and link to the region's 300 mile trail network.

### *Safe Routes to School Program*

Last year DDOT hired a full time Safe Routes to School coordinator. The DC Safe Routes to School program provides new sidewalks, traffic enforcement, and bike/pedestrian education to students. The program also provides comprehensive "Five-E" programs at schools throughout the city.



### **Awards and recognition**

Washington, DC has all the essential components of a walkable, bikeable city and has made significant strides in increasing bicycling and walking facilities and rates in the last few years. Washington, DC has been consistently ranked at or near the top of lists of great walking cities. A few recent examples include achieving the top position in the Brookings Institution's rankings of best walking cities in 2007, and receiving the 5<sup>th</sup> position in the American Podiatric Medical Association's 2008 ranking. The District of Columbia was recently named "Most Improved City" for bicycling by *Bicycling Magazine* and has held Bronze Medal status as a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists since 2003. The District's Transportation Director, Mayor, and City Council have committed to a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly city, providing a level of political support never seen before on the issue.

### **Data collection**

Data show that DC's investments in active transportation have resulted in increased bicycling and walking and improved safety. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the percentage of DC residents who bike to

work has increased 70 percent in the past 6 years. During the same time period, police-reported crash data indicates that there has been a 16% reduction in the number of bicycle crashes despite the dramatic increase in bicycle commuting.

Data on pedestrian activity and crashes shows more room for improvement. According to the American Community Survey, there has been a 17% increase in the numbers of DC residents who walk to work between 2001 and 2006. In the same timeframe, there has been a 7% increase in the number of police-reported crashes that involve pedestrians.

### ***Existing bicycle and pedestrian master plans***

DC has built a solid foundation for bicycling and walking. The DC Pedestrian Master Plan was recently drafted, and the DC Bicycle Master Plan was adopted in 2005. These plans provide the framework for infrastructure planning and improvements as well as programming for safety education, encouragement, and training. Both plans include goals for improving the safety and mode share for walkers and bicyclists. The plans, which are actively being implemented, include best practices for furthering active transportation. More details about the plans will be provided later in this document.

### ***Project readiness and planning and implementing capabilities***

The District Department of Transportation is committed and ready to improve facilities for active transportation. Washington, DC made a commitment to strategic planning and implementation as an active transportation community in 2001 when it hired staff to focus on bicycle and pedestrian issues at the District Department of Transportation. Since 2001, the number of staff dedicated to bicycling and walking has increased from zero to five, plus a full time staff person to promote alternative modes. The District of Columbia Council followed this move with the creation of a Bicycle Advisory Council charged with informing the Mayor about bicycle issues and advocating for bicycle-friendly initiatives in the city. Currently, these two entities work together with the five full-time bicycle and pedestrian staff members at the Department of Transportation. All of these parties are ready and awaiting further opportunities to create new policies and implement intelligent bicycle and pedestrian strategies to make active transportation safer and easier throughout the city

### ***Opportunities for new trails***

While DDOT has been busy designing and building new trails, there are a few more in the planning phase that would benefit from the active transportation grant. In addition to the Met Branch and Anacostia trails, we have a network of proposed trails in the southern tip of the District that will provide access to metro stations, Maryland trails and the Wilson Bridge, the only bike/ped facility along the beltway. There is also an unfunded plan to connect all the Civil War forts in the District,



known as the Fort Circle Trail that will connect every Ward in the City. Once these planned trails are completed, the District will have an unparalleled network. Every resident will live within a mile of a trail.

## **Active Transportation Plan**

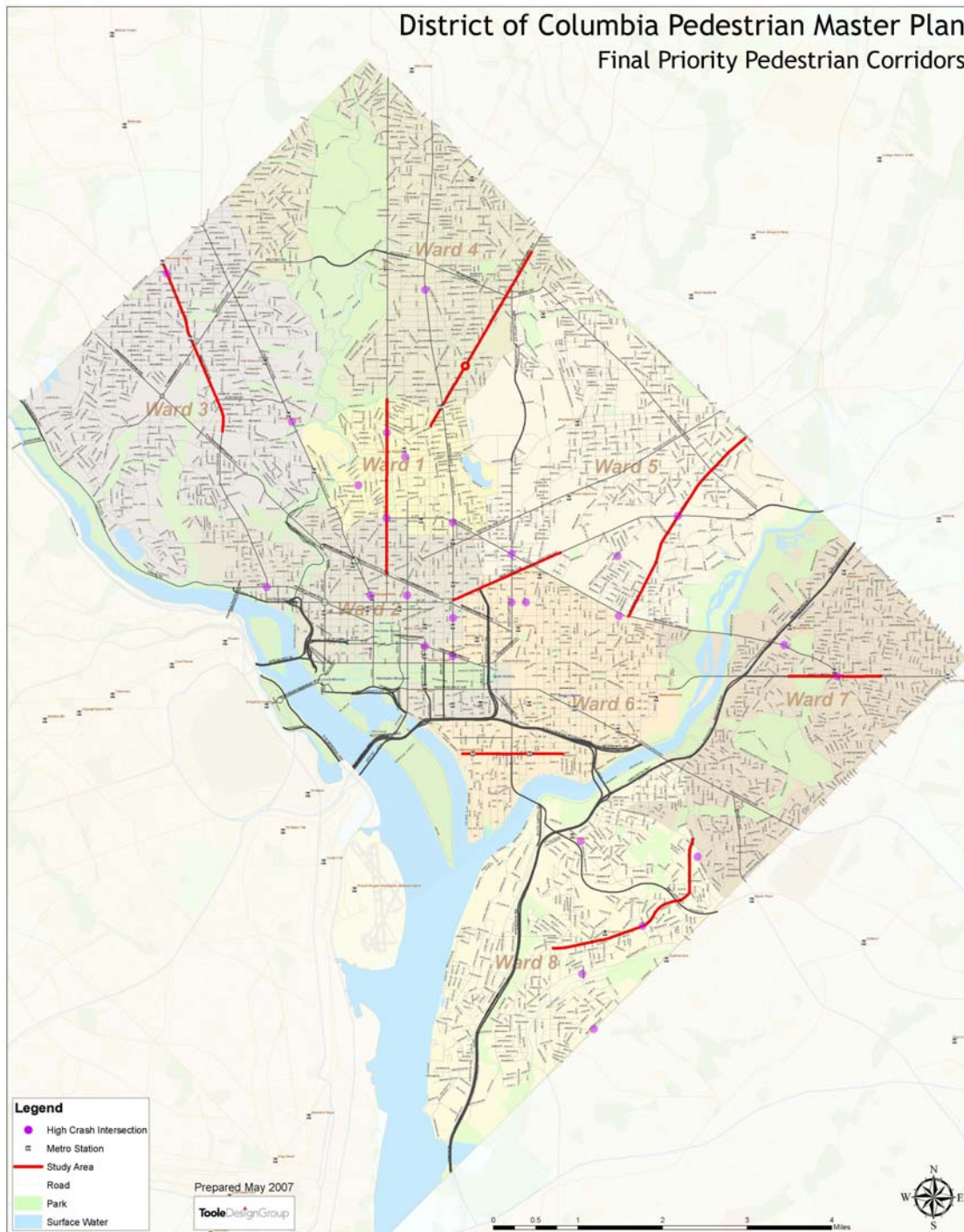
### ***Plans to develop active transportation systems and programs***

As indicated previously, DC has adopted and is busy implementing Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans that include extensive recommendations for new active transportation facilities and programs. Some highlights of the two plans are listed below.

Key recommendations from the Bicycle Master Plan include the following:

- Improve and expand the bike route system and provide functional and distinctive signs for the system.
- Provide bicycle facilities on roadways.
- Complete ongoing trail development and improvement projects.
- Improve bridge access for bicyclists.
- Provide bicycle parking in public space.
- Encourage bicycle parking in private space.
- Update District of Columbia laws, regulations, and policy documents to address bicycle accommodation.
- Provide training to District staff.
- Review District of Columbia projects to ensure they provide bicycle accommodation.
- Educate motorists about safe operating behavior around bicyclists.
- Educate bicyclists about safe bicycling.
- Enforce traffic laws related to bicycling.
- Establish a Youth Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Program.
- Distribute the District of Columbia Bicycle Map to a wide audience.

## District of Columbia Pedestrian Master Plan Final Priority Pedestrian Corridors



Key recommendations from the Pedestrian Master Plan include the following:

- The Pedestrian Plan is designed to make the District of Columbia safer and more walkable by improving sidewalks, roadway crossings and the quality of the pedestrian environment, and by ensuring that District policies and procedures support walking. Implement improvements to the high priority corridors in each ward.
- Provide sidewalks on both sides of all streets in the District.
- Improve pedestrian access and safety at controlled crossings and intersections.
- Improve pedestrian access and safety at uncontrolled crossings and intersections.
- Improve pedestrian access and safety at bus stops while maximizing transit efficiency.

- Ensure that every street in the District meets the needs of pedestrians of all abilities.
- Establish education, enforcement and encouragement programs that support pedestrian travel:
- Increase penalties for motorists for infractions that impact pedestrian safety
- Expand the District’s Photo Radar Speeding Reduction Program
- Expand Pedestrian Safety Campaign Efforts

***Potential to create interconnected active transportation systems***

The District of Columbia Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans aim to create interconnected active transportation systems. Systems of local trails, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and improved intersections are all planned to function as a network, providing active transportation access throughout the entire city. Not only are the various proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities planned to connect to each other, but they also connect to the facilities in neighboring jurisdictions.

***Revenue streams that could match or further leverage federal funds***

Unlike other states, DDOT already spends a large portion of it’s CMAQ money on bicycle and pedestrian projects. We expect this trend to continue even if we receive the active living funds. The City Council recently passed a new “Pedestrian and Bike Safety Fund.” In addition to existing revenue streams, this fund will direct 1.5 million local dollars annually for pedestrian and bicycle improvements throughout the District.

**Plan Benefits**

***Transportation benefits***

In the past 6 years, DC’s bicycle mode share has grown by 70% and in the past 5 years the pedestrian mode share has grown by 17%. During the same timeframe, the DC Pedestrian and Bicycle Program spent an average of three million dollars per year. With fifty million dollars dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle facilities over a period of five years, it is estimated that bicycle mode share will grow close to 200% and pedestrian mode share will grow by about 50%. Even with only twenty-five million dollars over the same time period, it is estimated that bicycle mode share will double and pedestrian mode share will grow by 25%. There is no question that increased funding for pedestrian and bicycle transportation will result in an increase in people that choose to travel by foot and by bicycle. This increased funding will additional benefits as will be described below.

***Public health benefits***

Like much of the United States, waistlines in the District of Columbia are expanding. According to a 2004 report by the Trust for America’s Health, Washington DC has the 15<sup>th</sup> highest level of adult obesity in the nation, and the 7<sup>th</sup> highest overweight levels for high school students. There are many benefits to having an active lifestyle. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Regular physical activity may help

reduce [the] risk for many diseases including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, colon and breast cancers, and osteoporosis. It also helps to control weight; contributes to healthy bones, muscles, and joints; and reduces falls among older adults.” Bicycle and pedestrian facilities benefit health by providing opportunities for community members to integrate physical activity into daily life.

### ***Environmental benefits***

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has classified Washington, DC as a severe non-attainment area for ground level ozone. In May 2007, the American Lung Association gave the DC area a grade of "F" for air quality, calling the city and its suburbs among the most polluted in the country. During 2007, the DC area experienced nine Code Orange and two Code Red days when pollution levels rose above federally acceptable levels and presented dangers to public health. In just the first 15 days of June 2008, the region experienced 5 Code Orange days and one Code Red day. The culprits behind these unhealthy concentrations of ozone are smog, soot and other particulate pollution, much of it the result of automobile exhaust.

District Mayor Adrian Fenty has signed on to the US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and committed that the District will meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in Washington, DC. Increased investments in active transportation will be key steps toward meeting ground level ozone and in reversing the trend of climate change.

### ***Economic development benefits***

Improved conditions for walking and bicycling will benefit economic development in the District of Columbia. Past investments in walking and bicycling facilities have served as a catalyst for the revitalization of DC neighborhoods. Pedestrian streetscape projects like Barracks Row on Capitol Hill have resulted in new and improved retail space and more walking and bicycling for basic neighborhood needs. DC’s many revitalized neighborhoods, have experienced healthy growth in property values, even amid nationwide concerns about the burst of the “housing bubble.”



### ***Community benefits***

The ease and attractiveness of walking and bicycling are important factors in creating a livable community. Active modes of transportations create opportunities for social interaction and increased knowledge of the community.

### ***Potential to further emergency preparedness***

Washington DC places a high emphasis on emergency preparedness. Given that Washington DC's roadways are clogged during a typical weekday rush hour and that 37% of DC households do not own a car, it is imperative that emergency evacuation plans include consideration of non-motorized means. DC already includes walking and bicycling routes in its evacuation materials.

### ***Potential to serve as a model for other communities***

As the nation's capital, DC is uniquely situated to serve as a model for other communities. Washington, DC is the center of the United States' government and decision makers from all fifty states live and work in the area. Senators, Representatives, and even the President of the United States will witness any local investments in active transportation and may look here for ideas to bring back to their communities or government policies.



### ***Other synergies***

Bicyclists and pedestrians in DC benefit from easy access to some of the oldest, most heavily used, and widest variety of National Park Service trails anywhere. Trails such as the C&O Canal National Historical Park towpath, the Rock Creek Park Trail, and the Anacostia Trail offer visitors and residents unparalleled access to National Park lands.

## **Contextual Factors Encouraging Success**

DC's mild winters provide an environment in which active transportation is possible throughout the year. DC's geography also encourages active transportation. The fall line between the piedmont and coastal plain regions of the United States falls within the District. As a result, DC contains geography representative of both regions. The piedmont is characterized by low, rolling hills and the coastal plains region is characterized by flatlands. This geography provides opportunities for a mixture of flat and easy walks and bike rides as well as more challenging hill climbs.

The high-density land use development pattern in the District can support higher levels of bicycle and pedestrian transportation. According to the US Census Bureau's 2006 estimate, approximately 581,530 residents live on only 61 square miles of land in the District. This averages about 9,500 people per square mile.

In addition to high population density, local zoning regulations support and encourage mixed use development patterns. The District is also known as a leader in transit oriented

development. These features of DC’s built environment encourage active modes of transportation.

### ***Existing bicycle or pedestrian culture***

The District has long had a thriving bicycle culture, with an active racing community, a bike courier association, and numerous clubs. In the past several years, the District’s bicycle and pedestrian culture has begun to enter the mainstream. In the last four years membership in the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, a local bicycle advocacy organization has doubled; the organization currently boasts 15,000 members and supporters. The number of walking and bicycling events each year is also growing. Local walking and bicycling events are also attracting increasing numbers of participants, for example Bike to Work Day, International Walk to School Day, BikeDC (a mass ride of five to ten thousand cyclists), and Walkingtown DC (50 guided walking tours occurring over a weekend).

## **Support for Plan**

### ***Political support (e.g., resolutions, elected officials, agencies)***

The District of Columbia is fortunate to have a government that is supportive of bicycle and pedestrian needs. The District’s mayor is an active triathlete and is personally invested in nonmotorized transportation. The city council are also supportive, the council recently passed a new “Pedestrian and Bike Safety Fund” which will direct an additional \$1.5 million local dollars annually for pedestrian and bicycle improvements throughout the District. Local agencies are also working toward improving opportunities for active transportation. The Department of Transportation has been working to adopt a Complete Streets policy, the Office of Planning considers the needs of pedestrians and bicycles in their plans and studies, and the Metropolitan Police Department officers routinely conduct their patrols on bicycle.



### ***Community support (e.g., public, companies)***

Public support for active transportation has never been higher. With high gasoline prices and growing concern about global warming and other environmental problems, the public is actively looking for alternatives to driving. Public outreach conducted as part of the bicycle and pedestrian plans show high levels of support for investment in walking and bicycling infrastructure. For example, during the Bicycle Master Plan process, 59% of the 258 respondents to an informal survey identified that building bikeways is the most effective way to encourage bicycling in the District.

The District Business Community also supports active transportation. The District Department of Transportation is currently working with more than 200 companies with more than 100 employees to encourage the employees to commute using alternative modes of transportation. DC is also home to a number of Business Improvement Districts which regularly work with city government to improve conditions for walking and bicycling.

The District of Columbia is fortunate to have support from a diversity of local partners. The DC Active Transportation Team includes the membership from the following organizations:

- District Department of Transportation
- DC Office of Planning
- DC Council
- Washington Area Bicyclist Association
- U.S. National Park Service
- Coalition for Smarter Growth
- DC Business Improvement Districts
- Destination DC
- Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- League of American Bicyclists
- Rails to Trails Conservancy
- National Complete Streets Coalition

## Active Transportation 2010 Project Table

<b>Facilities</b>		
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Without 2010 funding (by 2015)</b>	<b>With 2010 Funding (by 2015)</b>
Upgrade and extend existing trails	Complete: Metropolitan Branch Trail Anacostia Trail.  Upgrade: Rock Creek Trail	Develop: South Capitol Street Trail Ft. Circle Trail system Anacostia Rail Trail Anacostia River-Arboretum Bridge
Increase bicycle lanes throughout the city	50 miles	100 miles
Signed bicycle routes	150 miles	150 miles, plus full size, weatherproof “you are here” maps at 50 locations throughout the city
Bicycle parking	100 racks per year	200 racks per year, plus showers for workplaces
Bicycle Station	Complete Union Station Bikestation	Develop a second bicycle station
Build cycle tracks or separated bike routes along major commuter corridors	4 miles, plus bike detection at road and trail intersections	20 miles, including Nebraska Avenue, 16 <sup>th</sup> Street, Maine Avenue, and Irving Street
Retrofit traffic signals to include bicycle heads and phasing	5 intersections	50 intersections
Expand Bikeshare program	100 racks with 1,000 bikes in all wards of the District, including covered parking for Smartbike and non-shared bikes	1,000 racks with 10,000 bikes in all wards of the District, including covered parking for Smartbike and non-shared bikes  Bikes would be further customized to include locks and additional racks would be included
Install pedestrian-hybrid signals at uncontrolled pedestrian crossings	5 signals	50 signals
Install Rapid Flash Beacons at uncontrolled pedestrian crossings	20 Rapid Flash Beacons	100 Rapid Flash Beacons
Traffic calming improvements for cyclists and pedestrians	50 intersections, including curb extensions and refuge islands	500 intersections, including curb extensions and refuge islands

Sidewalk program improvements	1 mile per year	5 miles per year
Accessible pedestrian signals	1/year	10/year
<b>Capacity Building</b>		
Provide adequate staff to support bicycling and walking	5 bicycle and pedestrian FTEs: - manager - bike coordinator - ped coordinator - trail coordinator - safe routes to school coordinator	7 additional FTEs: - bike/ped promotion coordinator - bike/ped site plan review coord - 5 bicycle ambassadors
Provide training to District staff and consultants	One annual 2-day training for 50 staff and consultants on bicycle and pedestrian planning and design	Two annual 2-day trainings for 100 staff and consultants on bicycle and pedestrian planning and design  Travel and training funding for engineers to attend out-of-town trainings, certifications, and conferences
<b>Data Collection and Assessments</b>		
Collect additional and more useful and applicable data on bicycle use and facilities	One annual bicycle count at 30 locations	Two annual bicycle counts at 30 locations  Two annual pedestrian counts at 30 locations  Annual scientific telephone poll about pedestrian and bicycle transportation with sample size of 1,000  Annual field interviews with 500 bicyclists and pedestrians  Rate neighborhoods/wards in terms of capacity to support cycling – topography, distance to amenities, etc
Improve bicycle crash reporting procedures	Use police reports and hospital data to gather bike/ped data	Develop on-line reporting system for bicycle and pedestrians

<b>Education Campaigns</b>		
Enhance youth bicycle and pedestrian programming	Provide ped/bike training to 2,000 students in 8 schools/year	Provide bike/ped training to 8,000 students in 32 schools/year Subsidize bikes and equipment for low-income children  Support the Chain Reaction youth program, teaching young people how to repair and rehab bicycles
Improved driver education	Limited materials on bike/ped issues as related to vehicular traffic and drivers	Develop specific handbook and testing materials for DMV, as well as train instructors on bike/ped issues
<b>Enforcement</b>		
Improve enforcement of traffic laws related to bicycling and walking	Conduct 2 two-week ped/bike/car enforcement waves per year	Hire 20 additional DDOT Traffic Control Officers to conduct bike/ped oriented traffic enforcement  Ticket and tow vehicles in bike lanes and crosswalks  Develop required "Share the Road" and pedestrian safety program for offenders  Possibly add a dedicated police officer for bike theft and pedestrian enforcement
<b>Marketing and Promotion</b>		
Education campaign for motorists and cyclists about safe operating behavior around bicyclists and safe cycling	Continue \$100,000 per year contribution to regional Street Smart program	Contribute \$200,000 to Street Smart campaign  Supplement regional effort with local efforts, including television promotion  Include bus and taxi drivers  Utilize ad similar to the United Kingdom's (featuring the basketball players passing the ball) about paying attention for cyclists  Focus on existing rules such as driver behavior in bike lanes and distance from cyclists

<p>Conduct advertising campaign to encourage cycling and walking</p>	<p>Continue to participate in bike to work day</p>	<p>Initiate a well-funded campaign aimed at both bicycling and walking that discusses safety, health, and encouragement</p> <p>Create perks and incentives for new commuters through a “commuter challenge,” similar to Portland, Oregon’s</p> <p>Work with BIDs and large employers (hospitals, universities) to help promote and support bike commuting</p>
<p>Individual marketing of cycling transportation opportunities</p>	<p>Target 2 employers per year for individualized marketing</p>	<p>Target 10 employers and 2 DC neighborhoods per year for individualized marketing</p>
<p>Employer perks for bicycle commuters and walkers</p>	<p>Provide bicycle racks to employers upon request</p>	<p>Proactively seek out all non-compliant off-street parking, make DC Government a model employer by providing payroll deduction to assist workers to buy bikes and offering other incentives for commuting via bicycle and walking</p> <p>Encourage businesses to offer similar incentives</p> <p>Tax incentives for employers who develop bicycle commuter programs, including showers</p>
<p>Expand rides and events in DC</p>	<p>Participate in and assist with Bike DC and Bike to Work day</p>	<p>Additional funding for existing events, including outreach, better facilities and accommodations (ex: better stage setup and more microphones for Bike to Work Day)</p> <p>Establish local bicycle tours of various DC neighborhoods</p> <p>Support bicycle races in DC. BAC and DDOT can work with Hub Racing, Cyclelife, and Arlington Sports to promote races within city limits. Opportunity for cycling promotion and business partnership, including a downtown crit as offered in other cities</p>