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## **METRO D.C.'S BIKE TO WORK DAY EXPANDS ITS REACH**

*Organizers Look to Diversify Annual Commuter Event*

Washington, D.C. – Bike to Work Day 2016 organizers, Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), have partnered with area organizations to increase participation in the annual event by women and minorities, two groups that have been previously underrepresented. The 2016 event, held on Friday, May 20 in metropolitan Washington, will draw residents from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia in support of cycling as a healthy commuting option that saves money, reduces traffic congestion, and improves air quality.

“I think diversity is important in everything we do,” said Kelly Russell, City of Frederick Alderman and member of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board. “When you put people on a bicycle it’s almost like a common language. You can teach anyone to ride a bike if they’re willing, and you can do activities together on a bicycle that bring people closer together. It’s just a really good way to build community.”

Alderman Russell, District of Columbia Council’s Elissa Silverman, and Fairfax County’s Cathy Hudgins talk cycling in these videos: <http://bit.ly/1UMNzFe>

The most recent voluntary participant survey, conducted in 2013 by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), revealed a gender participation gap and an opportunity to increase the event’s diversity. 34 percent of Bike to Work Day participants are women, 4 percent are African American or Asian, and just 3 percent are Hispanic. To increase overall participation this year, organizers have engaged local organizations and community leaders, distributing toolkits to help build awareness and involvement.

“We always look for new ways to grow and develop the region’s bicycling community and expand Bike to Work Day participation,” said Nicholas Ramfos, Director of Commuter Connections. “That’s why this year we are connecting with and encouraging local organizations, including Gearin’ Up Bicycles and the Washington, DC Women’s Business Center to promote the event to their members and supporters.”

This year’s event will boast 83 pit stops across the region, welcoming bicyclists with refreshments, entertainment, and the chance to win great prizes, while supplies last. Registrants

will be entered into a bicycle raffle and the first 15,000 who register and participate will receive a free event t-shirt.

New and experienced riders can learn about the free event and register online at [www.biketoworkmetrodc.org](http://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org). Follow Commuter Connections on Twitter at [@BikeToWorkDay](https://twitter.com/BikeToWorkDay) and use #BTWD2016.

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*[Commuter Connections](#) is a program of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, [www.mwcog.org](http://www.mwcog.org). Commuter Connections promotes bicycling to work, ridesharing and other alternatives to drive alone commuting, and provides ridematching for carpools and vanpools, and offers the free Guaranteed Ride Home program. Commuter Connections, [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) is funded by the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and U.S. Departments of Transportation.*

*The [Washington Area Bicyclist Association](#) creates a healthy, more livable region by promoting bicycling for fun, fitness, and affordable transportation; advocating for better bicycling conditions and transportation choices for a healthier environment, and educating children, adults, and motorists about safe bicycling.*