



Regional TDM Marketing Group

Meeting Notes Tuesday December 18, 2007

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

COG Board Room - 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

1. Introductions

2. Minutes of September 18, 2007 Meeting

The minutes were approved as written.

3. FY08 Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan

Douglas Franklin presented the final draft of the FY08 Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan that was also posted as part of the meeting announcement. The first draft of the report was presented at the September 18, 2007 meeting and the deadline for edits was October 18, 2007. The report included input from 25 organizations and was approved, contingent on the removal of the word “pilot” from page 44 under the TeleworkVA! section.

4. Commuter Connections FY08 Marketing Activity

Dan O’Donnell from Bus Design presented a recap of Commuter Connections’ fall marketing campaign and activities planned for the spring of 2008. The final FY08 Marketing Communications Brief was distributed after an open comment period and a draft of the FY08 First Half Marketing Campaign Summary Report was issued.

Commuter Connection began its fall radio flight in October 2007 on WRQX, WJZW and WTOP. The spots repeated those produced in the spring of 2007. Several promotions took place with various radio stations in the fall and the highlights included the following:

- Sponsorship of Redskins Radio including a listener ticket/prize giveaway to the game against the Chicago Bears entitled “How do you Bear your Commute?”
- WRQX, Mix 107.3, listeners had the opportunity to register their carpool online. One carpool per week won a prize pack full of great gifts for the carpoolers and the car. The carpoolers were rewarded with items such as free coffee and pizza, while the car was rewarded with items such as an oil change and car wash.
- WJZW - Live traffic sponsorships were provided and COG staff participated in a taped interview for the community affairs program on December 11th.

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- WTGB - Listeners submitted stories about their existing carpool via the stations website. Winners were awarded prizes such as a car detailing, gas card and food for the carpool members.
- COG staff recorded Green Tips that aired on the station advising listeners on ways they can Go Green. Staff also interviewed with morning show personality Kelly Knight for their Sunday, November 18, 2007 public affairs program.

Thirty second TV spots appeared on the “Carpoolers” sitcom for six weeks beginning early October 2007. Commuter Connections found the opportunity to be a great way to bring the concept of ridesharing into the mainstream. ABC 7 television provided discounted airtime from \$6,500 to \$4,000 per spot. Local ABC owned radio stations, WRQX, WJLA co-promoted the new show and Commuter Connections. Commuter Connections placed a “Carpoolers” banner on its homepage to fulfill a reciprocal agreement with ABC which helped to enable the ad space discount. Additionally, WJZW recorded several promos with one of the main actors of the Carpoolers sitcom, Jerry O’Connell who plugged the show and Commuter Connections.

The internet portion of the campaign included rotating sizes of banner ads across the Red McCombs Media (RMM) network of websites geo-targeted to Washington, D.C. In addition to the RMM websites, the top 42 news, business, weather and local media sites were used. By the end of the campaign, the placement will provide over 8 million impressions in the Adults 25-54 market. In addition, Commuter Connections’ banner ads appeared on WTOP radio’s web site, on the traffic page.

Direct mail will be sent to 435,000 households in late December through mid January 2008. The mailers will be distributed within the COG footprint and to ages 35-54 with household income of \$50,000 and higher.

A preview of marketing activities planned for spring 2008 include radio advertising, bus shelters, internet advertising, gas pump toppers and coffee cup sleeves. Early ad concepts for the spring 2008 campaign were sent to the marketing workgroup for feedback in November 2007. In addition, the ads were tested with an online consumer group in the fall of 2007. Prior to production, a second round of ad concepts for radio and print ads will be sent to the marketing workgroup for feedback during the January – February time line.

During the Regional TDM Marketing meeting, Commuter Connections and its contractor, Bus Design addressed questions and comments previously raised by the workgroup, including those which felt more Commuter Connections marketing dollars should be allocated toward an environmental message. COG/TPB staff pointed out that according to recent data, those who have actually converted to SOV alternatives, did not consider environmental factors as a top tier influence during their decision making process. Time and money continue to be the most important factors. COG/TPB staff also pointed out that the marketing TERM impacts will measure the success of travel behavior changes and therefore it is important that messages be tailored to those most likely to make a mode shift change that will contribute to transportation and emission impacts. Commuter Connections is addressing the environmental benefit of alternative mode travel through other outreach methods, where the message is more resonant with the target audience. An example of where Commuter Connections is using an environmental appropriate

message is through a public affairs interview on a “green” radio station (94.7 The Globe) as well as sponsoring a “green tips” segments on this station. Another area where Commuter Connections gains traction with the environmental audience is through the annual Bike to Work Day event and through participation in Earth Day events.

5. Honest Tea/ Jamis Bicycles Promotion

Dale Crowell, Director of Public Relations for Honest Tea discussed the beverage company’s co-promotion with Jamis Bicycles. Based in Bethesda, Honest Tea extended an offer to Montgomery County employers to join them in supporting employee health and wellness. Jamis Bikes provided discounted bicycles to employers who distributed at least fifteen bikes to their employees. As part of the promotion, each employer received free cases of Honest Tea to share with their employees as well.

Honest Tea’s objective with the Jamis promotion was to leverage the bicycle company’s recognition to increase awareness of Honest Tea through business to business promotions with employers and to drive volume in grocery stores. The strategy was to target the top 20% of grocery accounts in their distributor’s territories by using special pricing and sales incentives. This enabled Honest Tea to gain high volume drops and end cap displays showing visuals of the product and Jamis bicycles.

In order to practice what they preach, as part of the employer promotion, Honest Tea gave each of their 45 employees a free Jamis Ranger bicycle to encourage biking to work. This, amongst other efforts, resulted in Seth Goldman’s receiving the 2007 Visionary Leadership Award from the Alliance for Workplace Excellence. As word got around regarding Honest Tea’s employee bike program, other companies such as Federal Realty decided to join in to buy Jamis bikes for their employees.

6. VPSI Contest

Rico Fleshman, Project Manager from VPSI discussed the vanpool company’s recent human interest story contest. The program was conceived as a customer appreciation and loyalty program as a part of VPSI’s 30th anniversary celebration. Vanpool coordinators were queried for success stories to be used as content for the Commuter Chronicle newsletter. The incentives to submit vanpool stories culminated in a prize drawing in October 2007, with a grand prize 60” plasma HDTV and runner-ups received digital picture frames. Several thousand contest submissions were received from all over the world including the Washington DC region. The winning story was selected randomly by VPSI’s President and was from a Camp Pendleton vanpooler in San Diego, who will use the TV to watch the San Diego Chargers’.

7. Ride Solutions YouTube Demo

Jeremy Holmes, Program Director of Ride Solutions discussed the use of YouTube as a marketing tool for TDM. This type of social networking instrument can turn a one time news piece into a permanent marketing tool. The site can be used as a showcase for footage from news coverage and current television campaigns, etc. Ride Solutions used YouTube as another distribution channel for their Clean Commute Day commercial and found great success. Mr. Holmes suggested that one can also begin

creating new video material; a regular video blog, or educational pieces about TDM programs. For example, such videos may profile vanpool operators, a series of tech-support vignettes for telework, or other TDM related topics. Also discussed were some of the other social networking sites for TDM organizations to consider, including Facebook and MySpace. Mr. Holmes added that more often videos found on these social networking properties tend to be edgier and entertaining, so he suggests having fun with it.

8. Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey

Douglas Franklin presented preliminary findings from the FY 2007 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Customer Satisfaction Survey. The results encompassed a survey of trip recipients during fiscal year 2007 (July 2006 through June 2007). The customer satisfaction survey for GRH was collected on an ongoing basis throughout the fiscal year. All commuters who obtained a free ride home through the program received a survey response card for each ride taken.

Of the 2,960 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2007, 827 completed surveys were received, a 28% response rate. The vast majority, 93% of the survey respondents were satisfied with the overall GRH service. Written responses were entered on a third of the returned survey cards. Compliments made up 70% of the written responses. Good or above ratings were given by 90% of the respondents for all categories. Average response wait time for the taxis was 17 minutes, with 88.5% waiting 30 minutes or less. TDM Marketing Group members were asked to review the document and provide any edits on the Extranet by February 29th.

9. Calendar of Events / Marketing Round Table

Meeting participants shared recent advertising/marketing collateral and discussed news and upcoming events happening within their organizations.

Of note, Buddy Alves of the Maryland Transit Administration shared recent collateral and bi-lingual pocket maps that were distributed to 600,000 doorstops in Baltimore.

Dotty Dalphon of Frederick TransIT and Donna Norfleet of the City of Alexandria offered free interior advertising space on their buses to promote the GRH program. Rico Fleshman of VPSI also offered to provide free space on van magnets.

10. Other Business / Set Agenda for next meeting

Staff handed out books commemorating COG's 50th anniversary entitled "A Half Century of Regional Partnership."