



## FY 2011 Final Marketing Communications Plan and Schedule

**Mission:** Commuter Connections acts as a regional network providing commute services and information to area residents and employers in the Washington metropolitan region in order to reduce traffic congestion and emissions caused by single occupant vehicles (SOV's).

Marketing will provide frequent regional promotion of alternative commute options including; car/vanpooling, teleworking, bicycling, walking, and mass transit; support programs such as Guaranteed Ride Home, the Commuter Connections network ridematching services, and special events such as Bike to Work Day, Car Free Day, and the Employer Recognition Awards. The FY2011 marketing program will raise commuter awareness of commuting choices available in the Washington metropolitan region and support the Commuter Connections network in persuading commuters to choose, and continue to use, alternatives to driving alone to work.

**Marketing Input:** The background for this marketing brief was derived from the following sources:

- Transportation Emission Reduction Measure (TERM) Analysis Report FY2006-2008
- Fiscal Year 2009 Applicant Database Annual Placement Survey Report
- 2007 Bike to Work Survey TERM Analysis Report
- 2007 State of the Commute Survey;
- 2007 GRH Survey Report, and;
- Commuter Connections Stakeholder Attitudes and Opinions, April 2007.

Internal reports and surveys are the cornerstone for the FY2011 Marketing Brief. These reports provide quantitative and qualitative measurement of commute behavior by workers throughout the Washington metropolitan region and the results of this behavior on air quality and congestion. In particular, the FY2011 marketing campaign will be looking to bolster the results of the Mass Marketing and Guaranteed Ride Home programs as reported in the TERM Analysis Report.

In addition to comprehensive data provided by internal reports, the marketing team will also consider performance data from past campaigns as well as information gathered through industry reports, surveys, and trends and how it might be applied to the Commuter Connections mass marketing campaign. This information may be used to support the development of the media and/or messaging strategies. New additional customer research will be conducted during FY2011 using anonline methodology with the purpose of researching potential trends in commuting attitudes and opinions.

The FY2011 campaign will continue to promote awareness of commute options and the benefits these options offer the SOV driver. The Guaranteed Ride Home message will

continue to focus on peace of mind, addressing and removing any concerns about being stranded due to non-SOV commute options. In addition to paid and earned media, the regional effort will include special events including Car Free Day and Bike to Work Day. The mission of these events is to encourage SOV drivers and commuters respectively, to commit to trying an alternative mode with the intention of altering SOV commute behavior to incorporate alternative modes as part of their drive or commute behavior.

**Marketing Strategies:** The marketing strategy will be looking to achieve the following:

- Increase awareness of the Guaranteed Ride Home program to SOV commuters, removing a major barrier to using transit, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling or walking to work. Strategies and media will be investigated to enable enrollment with no, or minimal, additional effort required.
- Use the number of people who use alternatives to driving alone or telework to encourage others to follow suit. Social psychology experiments have shown people will conform to what others are doing. Commuters may be more likely to choose an alternative to driving alone if they know that many of their co-workers and fellow commuters already have. By reinforcing the idea that hundreds of thousands of commuters in the Washington DC region are already saving money on their commute, others may feel compelled to join the trend.
- Targeted marketing messages will be used to reflect jurisdictional commute options and norms for regional activity centers and clusters in the Washington DC region.
- Increase the number of participants in special events and promotions such as Car Free Day and Bike to Work Day based on set committee goals.
- Provide renewed focus and promotion of teleworking or coworking as an economically sound and environmentally friendly solution to traffic congestion.

Media buying strategies will be selected based on Scarborough Research reports for the specific target audiences for each program and event: Ridesharing, Guaranteed Ride Home, Employer Recognition Awards, Car Free Day, Bike to Work Day, 'Pool Rewards and any other program or event. These reports identify specific media that are best suited for each target audience. The report information is considered along with the cost of each media option and results from previous Commuter Connections campaigns.

For FY2011, **radio** is recommended as the anchor medium for the program, with its ability to reach a large portion of our target markets (90 percent) with significant frequency when they are engaged in their possibly stressful, frustrating, costly and time consuming commutes.

**Print** creative is important to provide visual, repetitive communication and reinforcement of messages delivered through radio spots. FY2011's marketing strategy will include well placed print across the geographical region. Outdoor print, online print, and cable TV will be evaluated as visual elements for the campaign.

**Internet advertising** is interactive and closer to one-to-one selling than any other form of media. Placement of banner ads on websites targeted to key counties, news, weather, television affiliates, and job sites may be used to reach commuters just a click away from Commuter Connections online ridematching service or to sign up for benefits such as Guaranteed Ride Home.

Options will be investigated to improve the placement of Commuter Connections in browser search results. Currently, googling “carpool Washington DC” returns Commuter Connections on the third page of search results. Other electronic carpool services such as gocarpool, erideshare, carpoolworld, and craigslist, are returned on the first page. (MWCOG’s address and phone number are returned as part of the local business information. This information does not identify Commuter Connections by name nor does it link to the website.)

In addition to traditional media, the marketing team will look to further expand the use of social media. Building upon Commuter Connections’ existing pages on Facebook (Commuter Connections, Telework, Bike to Work Day, and Car Free Day) and accounts on Twitter (Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day), the marketing team will investigate additional strategies to increase engagement and integrate social media activities with other marketing approaches. In addition, the marketing team will investigate options to provide smart phone users access to Commuter Connections and commute option information and benefits.

Existing creative will be used for the fall campaign; results of the complete 2010 campaign will be studied in August 2010 and best practices will be carried forward for the FY11 campaign. The creative team will consider the results of the FY10 campaign along with area transportation trends and additional exploration to help identify the most effective messaging strategies for implementation for spring 2011.

The Marketing Communications Plan will effectively and efficiently reach its target markets based on a review and analysis of third party media data from Strata, Scarborough and Arbitron as monitored by a professional media buying firm. Reach and frequency of the target demographic will be calculated using a cost/value proposition for each media option.

## **Guaranteed Ride Home**

**Objective:** Increase the number of applicants in the GRH database by promoting GRH and eliminating a barrier to using transit, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling, and walking to work.

**Target market** (from 2007 GRH Survey Report):

- 35-54 years old
- Caucasian (65%) and African-American (21%)
- \$60,000+ annual household income
- Commute of more than 30 miles / 45 minutes
- Live in Virginia (64%) or Maryland (34%), with a special emphasis on Prince William (20%) and Fairfax Counties (18%); work in D.C (60%) and Virginia (30%)

**Tactics:**

- Radio advertising to increase GRH awareness, applications
- Public relations/media communications to provide testimonials of GRH success stories and broaden awareness and registrations for the program
- Evaluate web advertisement (banner ads), geared directly toward generating registrations
- Evaluate print and/or transit signage to increase awareness
- Continuously update website information
- Direct Mail (Allocation equals 50% of Work Program budget)
- Investigate use of mobile media and “point of sale” placement to increase registrations
- A component (print, radio, or TV) will be used to reach out to the region’s Hispanic population.

**GRH Media Allocation:** Approximately 45 percent of media budget.

## **Rideshare**

**Objectives:** Maintain and increase awareness of shared ride modes, retain current ridership on these modes; gain new riders; gain new applicants to the regional database.

**Target market** (from FY 2009 Applicant Database Annual Placement Survey Report):

- 25-54 years old (82%), 35-54 years old (63%)
- Caucasian (64%) and African-American (20%)
- \$80,000+ annual household income (68%)
- Commute of more than 20 miles/30 minutes
- Live in Virginia (65%) or Maryland (33%); work in D.C. (49%) or Virginia (34%)
- Work for employers with 100+ employees (71%), work for employers with 1000 or more employees (41%)
- Work for federal agencies (50%) and private sector (31%)
- Professional (37%), Executive/managerial (30%), and administrative (16%)

### **Tactics:**

- Radio advertising to increase awareness of services, applications and conversions
- Public relations/media communications to provide testimonials of ridesharing success stories and broaden awareness and registrations
- Evaluate web advertisement (banner ads) for the ridesharing database, geared directly toward generating registrations
- Evaluate print and/or transit signage to reinforce the marketing message
- Continuously update website information
- Direct mail (Allocation equals 50% of Work Program budget)
- A component (print, radio, or TV) will be used to reach out to the region's Hispanic population.

**Rideshare Media Allocation:** Approximately 45 percent of media budget.

## **'Pool Rewards**

**Objectives:** Recruit and retain commuters in a carpool through cash or other incentives. This activity will be contingent upon continuation of the 'Pool Rewards program.

### **Target Market**

- Rideshare demographics

### **Tactics:**

- Media and public outreach to build awareness
- Direct mail to area residents
- Geo-targeted internet ads, social media
- Investigate additional region-specific marketing including billboards

**'Pool Rewards Media Allocation:** Approximately 2 percent of media budget.

## **Special Events**

**Objectives:** Use special events, such as Bike to Work Day, Car Free Day, and the Employer Recognition Awards event to highlight existing programs and encourage other employers and commuters to become involved, increase their ridership or enhance their on-site programs; increase commuter participation in Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day.

### **Target Market**

- Bike to Work Day (from WABA member statistics): Age 25-49, Male, Commute trip up to 30 miles, \$30,000+ household income
- Car Free Day: SOV-drivers
- Employer Recognition Awards: Employers in Commuter Connections Network area

### **Tactics:**

- Bike to Work Day (BTWD)
  - Sponsor BTWD, May 20, 2011 (tentative date)
  - Secure corporate and other sponsorships for BTWD
  - Use radio advertising to increase awareness of BTWD
  - Provide additional marketing collateral including t-shirts, posters, rack cards, and possible pit stop banners and Circulator bus cards
  - Earned Media
  - Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook
  - Coordination and support to WABA for BTWD web site
- Car Free Day (CFD)
  - Coordinate CFD, September 22, 2010
  - Use radio advertising to increase awareness of CFD and drive listeners to [carfreemetrodc.com](http://carfreemetrodc.com)
  - Provide marketing collateral such as posters
  - Transit /outdoor signage (bus exterior and bus shelter ads)
  - Text messaging
  - Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook
  - Support for Car Free Day web site
- Employer Recognition Awards
  - Coordinate the Employer Recognition Awards ceremony, June 2011
  - Provide marketing collateral in support of the application process; online application and email blast to potential nominees
  - Marketing collateral for the event including invitations, program brochure, and podium sign, and promotional giveaways.
  - Print advertisement highlighting local companies who voluntarily implement innovative employee commute and telework programs

**Special Events Media Allocation:** Approximately 2.7 percent of media budget for BTWD, 4.3 percent of media budget for CFD, and less than 1 percent of media budget for Employer Recognition Awards event.

## **Employer Outreach**

**Objectives:** Add new employer clients; expand participation and offerings in existing employer programs; recognize existing employer programs who have implemented successful programs; increase the number of employers offering the tax free commute benefit; increase use of SmarTrip offered through employer programs.

**Target Market** (from FY 2009 Applicant Database Annual Placement Survey Report):

- Employers with 250 or more employees (59%)
- Federal agencies (50%)
- Private sector employers (31%)

**Tactics:**

- Update web content as required and other social media applications for Telework such as Facebook
- Quarterly employer newsletter
- Quarterly Federal Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) newsletter insert
- Email marketing and mailings
- Continuously update Federal ETC website information

**Employer Outreach Media Allocation:** 0 percent of media budget.



## FY 2011 Schedules

### FY 2011 Creative Development Schedule

Review research and results from recent campaigns	June 2010
Develop Marketing Communications Plan	July 2010
Feedback on Plan from Regional TDM Marketing Group ( <i>Extranet</i> )	Aug 2010
Present conceptual approaches to Regional TDM Marketing Grp	Sept 2010
Refine and develop approach based on Workgroup feedback	Oct 2010
Finalize creative	Nov 2010
Produce creative	Dec 2010
Distribute creative to media vendors	Jan 2011
Campaign launch	Feb 2011

### FY11 Marketing Campaign Schedule

Car Free Day	Aug – Sept 2010
Fall Campaign (repeat FY10 creative)	Oct – Dec 2010
Spring Campaign (new FY11 creative)	Feb – June 2011
Bike to Work Day	Apr – May 2011
Employer Recognition Awards	June 2011