

**MEETING NOTES  
REGIONAL TDM MARKETING GROUP  
Tuesday December 20, 2011**

**1. Introductions**

**2. Minutes of September 20, 2011 Meeting**

Meeting notes were approved as written.

**3. FY12 Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP)**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, distributed the FY12 Washington Metropolitan Region TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan Final Draft Report. The document outlines a strategy for Commuter Connections to increase awareness of drive alone alternatives; serves as a resource for current TDM products & services available in the region; and provides a snapshot of current and planned marketing activity occurring within the region for Commuter Connections and its various partners. It also contains summaries of TDM research from the last several years. The report was endorsed by the Committee for final release and it will be posted to the Commuter Connections web site.

**4. Walk and Ride Challenge**

Kristen Blackmon of Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) presented their recent Walk & Ride Challenge where teams of Montgomery County employees used pedometers to track their steps during a three week period in October 2011. Teams competed to see who could log the most steps. Those who walked at least 50,000 steps per week were entered into a drawing for an iPod nano. Those who walked at least 25,000 steps per week were entered into a weekly drawing for a \$25 gift card to a local business. The team and individual with the highest average steps won \$100 Visa gift card and a \$50 SmarTrip card.

The goals of the Walk & Ride challenge were to provide a fun event that promotes walking and the use of transit; help Bethesda-based employees learn how easy it is to get in and around downtown areas on foot or by the use of transit instead of driving; encourage team building among co-workers; and to promote Bethesda businesses while developing relationships between TMD office and employers and employees. In its first year, the Challenge was restricted to Super Fare Share companies, and registered just under 100 participants. In 2008, BTS opened the competition to all Bethesda-based employees and saw a surge in participation, with a total of 400 registered participants. In 2009 and 2010, BTS teamed up with North Bethesda, and the two jurisdictions had a combined participation of close to 550 registered. In 2011, the Silver Spring and Friendship Heights TMDs were added, and total participation rose to 650.

Post event surveys were distributed via email to all participants. To encourage a higher response rate, survey participants were placed into a random drawing for \$25 gift cards to local businesses. The vast majority of respondents indicated they had heard of the Challenge through their Transit Benefits Coordinators. Another significant source was other co-workers within their company. When asked how they would rate their overall experience in the Challenge, 69% rated the experience as Excellent/Very Good and 64% of respondents indicated they would definitely or somewhat likely participate again the following year. The website was rated easy to use by 81% of respondents. A majority of survey respondents indicated they saw health benefits over the course of the program and have changed their commuting habits as a result. The winning team was from the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). Over 100 employees attended from ASHP who enjoyed lunch from Naked Pizza. Gift bags with gift cards were given to the winning team members.

The TMD's marketed the Walk & Ride Challenge through various methods including flyers, emails, letters and phone calls to targeted employer contacts; newsletters, banners, and web site content; and promoted the Challenge at Community groups, such as the Advisory Committees, and Citizens Advisory Boards.

## **5. Commuter Connections FY12 Marketing Activity**

Dan O'Donnell, from the Odonnell Company presented FY12 fall marketing activity and a preview of the FY12 spring campaign. The FY12 1st Half Marketing Campaign Summary Final Draft report was distributed to provide further details regarding the media buy and each of the various components of the Commuter Connections marketing campaign which occurred between July 2011 and December 2011. The fall FY12 marketing campaign was kicked off in October 2011. The campaign included TV and radio for GRH, and radio and a Google Ad Words campaign for Rideshare. The radio used spots produced in FY11, and both Rideshare and GRH radio included a Hispanic station, WILC Romantica. The TV ad ran on Fox morning news and in the evenings on Comcast Cable on over a dozen popular channels.

A Google Ad ran during the fall campaign from October-December. The Commuter Connections ad was a paid text listing that was available to those in the Washington D.C. region who searched Google using a number of rideshare related keywords. The top five keywords by click through were commuter, vanpool, carpool, traffic and rideshare. When users searched for one of the designated keywords on Google, the Commuter Connections ad was positioned at the top of the results before any of the free results appear. By the end of the three month campaign, the listing is projected to produce nearly 3,000 click-thrus to the Commuter Connections web site.

In October, a half page advertisement published within a military newspaper's relocation guide that was distributed at bases throughout the region. The fall 2011 newsletter and Federal ETC Insert was produced and distributed to the ACT! employer database and TDM stakeholders. The cover story was on the 'Pool Rewards employer contest winner.

Feedback was collected from the marketing workgroup on GRH and Rideshare creative concepts and draft radio scripts for the FY12 regional marketing campaign. Winning executions were GRH - "Why would you take chances and risk it?" and Rideshare - "Easier ways to save your money." Previews of the workgroup selections were shown to the Committee. The radio production will occur

in January for the FY12 second half regional TDM marketing ad campaign, to be kicked off in February 2012.

A direct mail campaign piece will be sent in December, 2011 to 500,000 households within the Washington region to promote Ridematching and the GRH program. The direct mailer will be sent to residents within the COG footprint who reflect Commuter Connections' target demographic (ages 25-54 with household incomes of \$75k and above). The targeted residents live within Washington region zip codes identified through the PRIZM system, based on a previous analysis conducted in 2006. For other zip codes, the households to receive a Commuter Connections mailer include residents matching the target demographics with at least 35 combined active GRH and Ridematching accounts. A list of zip codes where the mailer was sent was distributed at the meeting and posted to the Commuter Connections SharePoint system.

An Earned Media plan was developed for FY12. COG/TPB bi-lingual staff took part in an interview with the Hispanic station, WILC - Romantica on November 16th. WMAL sponsored a contest that partnered Commuter Connections with Dr. Tom Roselle from the Roselle Center for Healing. The contest promoted reducing stress by ridesharing, encouraged listeners to sign up for 'Pool Rewards. Dr. Roselle promoted the contest with a promotional message to use 'Pool Rewards to discover stress free commuting. Four participants were awarded with stress relieving gift packs (valued at \$400 each) from the Roselle Center.

Commuter Connections was promoted by WBQB (B101.5) in mid-November. The promotion reached out to 64,000 people in a direct mail campaign and the contest was also heavily promoted on-air. Commuter Connections featured in a half-page ad in their newsletter.

Flippin' Pizza held a Veteran's Day promotion sponsored in part by Commuter Connections. In addition Flippin' Pizza and Madam Tussaud's coupons were replenished as both companies renewed their GRH Rewards sponsorship.

GRH and Rideshare artwork containing images from the new FY12 campaign were developed into posters to appear within the parking garages at Tysons Corner Center. This complimentary ad space was provided to Commuter Connections.

Nearly 12,000 people in the metropolitan Washington region pledged to "Uncar for a Day" or go Car-Lite on Car Free Day, September 22, making it the most successful year of the DC region's celebration of alternatives to solo-driving. The response was a 70% increase over pledges from the previous year. The Commuter Connections publicity team secured interviews, placed news stories and drove media to unprecedented coverage of the event. As a result of these efforts, media coverage increased by 20% and resulted in 102 media placements.

## **6. Tri-County Marketing**

George Clark from the Tri-County County for Southern Maryland discussed recent marketing activities for Southern Maryland. A video clip was viewed of Mr. Clark from his appearance on a local cable TV interview where he espoused regarding both the Ridematching and Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) programs. Photos of GRH signage provided by Commuter Connections and displayed

at Park & Ride Lots in Calvert and Charles Counties were shown. In addition, Tri-County augmented the Rideshare and GRH TV ads with the Tri-County logo superimposed at the end and ran it on local cable. Tri-County also produced a TV spot specifically addressing the price of gas.

#### **7. FY11 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, reported preliminary findings from the FY11 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey. Of the 3,465 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2011, 667 or 19% surveys were completed. The vast majority, 96% of the survey respondents were pleased with the overall GRH service. Written responses were entered on more than two-thirds (69%) of the returned surveys, the majority of which (79%) contained compliments. Compliments outweighed criticism 9 to 1. Good or above ratings were given by at least 94% of the respondents for each category. Average response wait was 13 minutes and 94% waited 30 minutes or less. The formal report will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee next month and a comment period will be established.

#### **8. SmartBenefits Outreach**

Antoinette Rucker from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority provided an update on outreach for SmartBenefits/SmartTrip. Flyers, emails, web content and seminars were used to get the word out. In January, Metro's SmartBenefits program will begin to follow new IRS requirements to separate parking and transit benefits in order to restrict commingled use. SmartTrip cards will deduct fare or parking fees when tapped to a Metrorail faregate, bus farebox or Metro parking target. Employers will determine what happens to any unused benefits, which are either credited back to the employer's account or rolled over to the employee's accounts for future use. Also beginning in January, transit funds no longer will be transferrable from one purse to another. Transit benefits will not pay for parking and parking benefits will not pay for transit. The personal stored value purse allows additional amounts to cover either transit or parking. Transit and parking payments will be deducted from the transit and parking benefits purses first. When those funds are exhausted, payments will be deducted from the personal stored value purse.

#### **9. Calendar of Events/Marketing Round Table**

Due to time constraints this item was postponed until the next meeting.

#### **10. Other Business/Suggested Agenda items for next meeting**

The next FY12 Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 20, 2012 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.