



Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

**FY21 Second Half
Marketing Campaign Summary
First Draft Report**

**Commuter Connections
Regional TDM Marketing Group**

March 16, 2021



FY21 Second Half Marketing Campaign Summary
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Executive Summary

Overview

This document summarizes Commuter Connections' FY21 second half marketing activity occurring between January and June 2021. Although the normally robust regional TDM Mass Marketing initiative remained on pause, Commuter Connections continued to provide assistance to essential workers and plan for upcoming events such as Bike to Work Day and the Employer Recognition Awards.

During the second half of FY21, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the region. After a year of working from home for non-essential employees, the in-progress vaccination rollout brings the potential for full recovery within the near future.

Bike to Work Day

Bike to Work Day 2021 marks the popular bicycling event's 20th anniversary. Commuter Connections concluded its annual sponsorship drive at the end of January 2021 and launched registration for the May 21, 2021 event, in early March 2021. The media buy for the Bike to Work Day 2021 marketing campaign is \$64,000.

Employer Recognition Awards

The 2021 Employer Recognition Awards program recognizes employers who initiate outstanding worksite commute benefits and/or telework programs to assist employees. The nomination period concluded at the end of January, the Selection Committee will take place in late March, and winners will be honored in June. The media buy for the Bike to Work Employer Recognition Awards print ad is \$7,500.

Mass Marketing Campaign

Due to the coronavirus pandemic the FY21 second half traditional mass marketing media campaign which would have normally begun in February 2021, did not take place. A regional recovery campaign however is under development which will be poised to provide reassurance to help transition commuters back to using non-SOV methods of travel to the workplace in a safe and healthy manner.

CarpoolNow

The 'Pool Rewards campaign remains on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Flextime Rewards

The Flextime Rewards campaign remains on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic.

incentrip

The incentrip campaign remains on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic.

'Pool Rewards

The 'Pool Rewards campaign remains on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Introduction

Results about respondents' attitudes, behaviors, and commute patterns from the following surveys helped to shape marketing efforts.

- 2020 Commuter Connections TDM Analysis Report (FY18–FY20)
- 2019 Commuter Connections State of the Commute Survey Report
- 2019 Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Survey Report for the Washington, DC Region
- 2019 Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Survey Report for the Baltimore Region
- 2019 Commuter Connections Bike to Work Survey Analysis Report
- FY 2018 Commuter Connections Applicant Database Annual Placement Survey Report

The second half of FY21 includes the following activities:

- Employer Recognition Awards 2021
- Bike to Work Day 2021
- Newsletters (Winter and Spring 2021)
- Regional TDM Marketing Group meetings (March and June 2021)
- Regional Recovery Campaign development

About Commuter Connections

Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated through the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Commuter Connections offers free commuter services to workers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Major services include ridematching for carpools and vanpools, and administration of the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program in the Washington, DC and Baltimore regions. Other key elements include a host of incentives programs and special events. Through its Employer Outreach Representatives, Commuter Connections also assists employers with establishing and enhancing commuter programs for their employees, including telework.

Organizations represented in the Commuter Connections Regional TDM Marketing Group include:

- Arlington County Commuter Services
- Bethesda Transportation Solutions
- City of Alexandria GO Alex
- City of Fairfax
- District Department of Transportation
- Dulles Area Transportation Association
- Enterprise Rideshare
- Fairfax Connector
- Fairfax County Commuter Services
- GW Ride Connect
- LINK
- Loudoun County Commuter Services
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Maryland State Highway Administration
- Maryland Transit Administration
- Montgomery County Commuter Services
- Montgomery County Ride On
- National Institutes of Health
- North Bethesda Transportation Center
- Northern Neck Rideshare/PDC
- Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
- OmniRide (PRTC)
- Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation
- Rappahannock Area Development Commission
- Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
- TransIT Services of Frederick County
- Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
- Tysons Partnership Transportation Council
- U.S. General Services Administration
- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Railway Express
- Washington Area Bicyclist Association
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Brand Character

Commuter Connections delivers a brand promise as the preeminent and trusted regional network of transportation organizations in the Washington, DC region, providing free commuting services and solutions for more than forty years. Through Commuter Connections' online Ridematching system, commuters registering for the service are given direct access to others who are looking to carpool and vanpool, along with access to commute routes and other alternative mode options such as transit, bicycling, and teleworking. Sharing a ride to work positively affects air quality and mobility for the region.



Bike to Work Day

Commuter Connections concluded its annual sponsorship drive on January 29, 2021 for the May 21, 2021 Bike to Work Day 20th anniversary event. A total of \$46,564 was raised, representing both new sponsors and sponsors carried over from the cancelled May 2020 event. Registration for Bike to Work Day 2021 was launched in early March 2021. The 2021 poster is a modified version of the 2020 poster.

BIKE TO WORK DAY 2021

Friday, May 21
FREE EVENT - REGISTER AT BikeToWorkMetroDC.org

Pre-Register by May 14 for **FREE T-SHIRT*** & **BIKE RAFFLE**
Free refreshments & giveaways while supplies last.

20th Anniversary

Still working from home? No problem! Bike to your local "pit stop" for your free T-shirt and back home again.

SPONSORS: COMMUTER CONNECTIONS, WABA, ICF, GO Alex, URBANSTEMS, BICYCLE SPACE, Bike Arlington, Marriott INTERNATIONAL, VERRA, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS (AASHTO), AMERICAN COLLEGE of CARDIOLOGY, FAIR LAKES, Giant, RYDMAC PREMIER, VISIONZERO, goDCgo, MDT, VDOT.

Register free at BIKETOWORKMETRODC.ORG
800.745.7433
#BTWD2021

Visit biketoworkmetrodc.org for pit stop locations and times.
*T-Shirts available at pit stops to first 15,000 registrants.
More than 90 pit stops in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia!
Staggered hours and a strict COVID policy will be in place.

Bike to Work Day is funded by DDOT, MDT, VDOT, and USDOT.

bike to work day 2021



Employer Recognition Awards

The Employer Recognition Awards program recognizes employers who initiate outstanding worksite commute benefits and/or telework programs to assist their employees. The 2021 awards nomination period ended January 29, 2021, and the Selection Committee will meet on March 19, 2021. Winners will be honored on June 29, 2021 at the 24th annual awards ceremony.



Regional Recovery Campaign

Commuter Connections is embarking on the development of messaging and a marketing campaign to help bring back commuters to transit (especially buses) and vanpools and carpools (with coworkers, neighbors and household members).

The regional recovery campaign will be poised to help restore non-SOV commute levels so that traffic congestion does not surpass pre-pandemic levels. Additionally, the campaign aims to provide reassurance to help transition commuters back to using non-SOV methods of travel to the workplace in a safe and healthy manner. The readied campaign will be released when the timing is appropriate to do so.

Newsletters

The winter 2021 edition of the Commuter Connections newsletter was produced during the second half of FY21. The six page 4-color newsletter is produced and distributed quarterly to employers and stakeholders. It is also available in .pdf format on the Commuter Connections website.

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS. | A SMARTER WAY TO WORK

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The Commuter Information Source for Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia



TRANSIT INNOVATIONS IN THE REGION

While 2020 was a year most said good riddance to, transit agencies can reflect back on several diamonds in the rough. Last fall brought state-of-the-art and groundbreaking bus innovations to the Washington, DC metropolitan region to help get your employees to and from work.

The appeal of developing bus solutions to relieve the region's congested roadways are many; beyond environmental gains, topping the reasons are lower costs and quicker deployment to get bus systems up and running.

Flash is a new bus rapid transit (BRT) network which serves the East side of Montgomery County, traveling along Colesville Road/Columbia Pike (US 29) and Lockwood Drive, between the downtown Silver Spring Transit Center, Four Corners, White Oak, Fairland, and Burtonsville.

Unique station designs come with weather protection, pre-payment stations, and real-time transit information. The new articulated (bendy) style 80 passenger buses are extra-long and spacious. Buses are equipped with features such as free Wi-Fi and USB charging ports.

Flash buses are the first within the region where bicycles can be taken onboard, unlike conventional buses which have bike racks mounted to the front. Wheelchairs and strollers are also welcome to roll on board.

"The October launch of Flash significantly improved transportation options for Montgomery County residents. We've been encouraged by the community's enthusiastic reception and the growing ridership on our new service. Our success on US 29 informs and inspires our ongoing work to implement our countywide bus rapid transit plan," said Chris Conklin, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

Flash is not the first BRT in the region, but it is the first in Maryland. Metroway was introduced in 2014 as part of the Metrobus system and has gained wide popularity for speedily transporting riders along Route 1 between

Arlington and Alexandria from Pentagon City to the Braddock Road Metrorail station, via Potomac Yard.

The Flash system has bus-only shoulders in the northern part of the US 29 corridor, north of its Tech Rd. Station, allowing the buses to travel at more predictable rates of speed, making them more reliable, especially during rush hours. In addition, Flash buses use transit signal priority to extend green lights and shorten red lights to advance through some 15 intersections more efficiently.

With several features similar to Metrorail's efficiency, BRT platforms are essentially level with bus entryways to make boarding and deboarding faster. Additionally, all doors open when the bus arrives, allowing riders to enter or exit from any of the three doors instead of waiting in line for just one.

Flash's Blue route operates weekdays only during rush hours, (5:30 to 8:00 am) and (3:30 to 7:00 pm), and travels between the Silver Spring Transit Center and Burtonsville. Buses arrive at least every 15 minutes, and where Blue and Orange routes overlap, service is every 7 to 8 minutes.

Flash's Orange route operates seven days a week, all day (5:30 am to 11:55 pm) and travels between the Silver Spring Transit Center and Briggs Chaney. Buses arrive at least every 15 minutes, and on weekdays where Orange and Blue routes overlap, every 7 to 8 minutes during rush hours.



Photo courtesy of Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

Continued on page 2

Federal ETC Updates Newsletter

The winter 2021 edition of the Commuter Connections Federal ETC Updates newsletter was produced during the second half of FY21. The two-page black & white newsletter is produced and distributed quarterly to Federal Employee Transportation Coordinators via GSA. It is also available in .pdf format on the www.federaletc.org website.

WINTER 2021

FEDERAL ETC UPDATES

NAVSEA – THE FORCE BEHIND THE FLEET



Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) known as *“The Force Behind the Fleet”* designs, builds, delivers, and maintains the United States Navy’s ships and submarines and their combat systems. NAVSEA is the largest of the Navy’s five system commands and with a fiscal year budget of more than \$40 billion, NAVSEA accounts for about one quarter of the Navy’s entire budget.

The origin of NAVSEA dates back to the late 18th century when piracy against American merchant trading vessels became problematic along the Barbary Coast of Northern Africa. After the Revolutionary War, ships from the newly independent American colonies were no longer under the protection of the British Empire. This enabled the Barbary States to overtake unprotected American ships at will and without repercussion.

Lacking a proper navy, the fledgling American government could do little to prevent such seizures and in 1793, matters got worse when eleven American merchant ships were captured and held for ransom. As part of the Naval Act of 1794, passed by the 3rd U.S. Congress and signed into law by President George Washington, Commodore John Barry was charged to oversee the construction of a 44-gun frigate. It was the beginning of what is now NAVSEA.

Fast forward to modern day warfare, and the Navy’s mission to protect U.S. interests here and abroad has not changed; although the size, scope, and weaponry has. Today, with a global workforce of more than 82,000 civilian and military personnel, NAVSEA’s challenges are much like any large

government agency, which includes the concerns of getting its employees to and from work cost-effectively and efficiently.

In December 2020, NAVSEA held a virtual commuter event for the approximately 5,000 Washington Navy Yard headquarters personnel with the anticipated return of normal-level commuting options, in a post-pandemic environment. Online attendees learned about the latest developments from representatives of Commuter Connections, OmniRide, Transform 66, and Vanpool Alliance.

For example, half-price fares are available on OmniRide I-66 bus routes from Gainesville.

In Virginia, riders in new vanpools of 5 or more riders pay only \$150 per month for the first 12 months. Plus, mobile apps and incentives programs (CarpoolNow, incenTrip, and Pool Rewards) from Commuter Connections pay cash rewards to commuters for using greener ways to commute.


The commuter subject experts from these various organizations presented on a multitude of topics such as: Upcoming Improvements on I-66, Local and Regional Commuter Assistance Programs, Commuter Resources Available Online and on Mobile Devices, and Financial Incentives for New and Existing Vanpools & Carpools. Afterward, the format of the event consisted of a panel discussion and allowed for the guest panel to field questions from NAVSEA personnel.

For more information, visit www.navsea.navy.mil.

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NEWSLETTER |


The Commuter Information Source for DC, MD, VA



Transit Innovations in the Region

While 2020 was a year most said good riddance to, transit agencies can reflect on several state-of-the-art and groundbreaking bus innovations brought to the region.

More News



Spring/Summer 2021 Metro Platform Reconstruction

Metro will temporarily close six stations in 2021 to reconstruct deteriorating outdoor platforms. Stations include Arlington Cemetery and Addison Road this spring, and four Green Line stations this summer.

Bike to Work Day Set for May 21, 2021

Those still working from home in May can bike to a nearby pit stop for exercise and a free T-shirt. COVID rules and staggered hours have been established by organizers for the benefit of maintaining public health safety.

New Policies for Electric Scooters/E-Bikes in DC

Safety improvements are coming later this year for electric scooter and e-bike use in the District. New regulations for "Shared Fleet Devices" include a public complaint hotline, locking device requirements, and limitations on speed.

On-Demand PGC Link Service

A new demonstration project was launched in Prince George's County serving the greater Fort Washington area. The app-based service provides curb to curb on-demand transportation.

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Appendix A

Performance Measures

Web Visits

Month	FY 2020 Web Visits	FY 2021 Web Visits	+/-	+/- %
January	11,699	3,410	(8,289)	-70.9%
February	10,320	4,710	(5,610)	-54.4%
March				
April				
May				
June				
	22,019	8,120	(13,899)	-63.1%

Phone Calls

Month	FY 2020 Phone Calls	FY 2021 Phone Calls	+/-	+/- %
January	1,197	144	(1,053)	-88.0%
February	853	159	(694)	-81.4%
March				
April				
May				
June				
	2,050	303	(1,747)	-85.2%