

**REGIONAL TDM MARKETING GROUP  
MEETING NOTES**

**Tuesday March 16, 2010**

**1. Introductions**

**2. Minutes of December 15, 2009 Meeting**

The minutes were approved as written.

**3. Virginia Railways Express**

Ann King from Virginia Railways Express (VRE) provided an update on the commuter train service and its various marketing and communication outreach. With 18,000 daily passengers, ridership is at an all time high. Prior to last year, folding bicycles were the only type permitted on VRE trains. Newly purchased railcars with better capacity and configuration allow two regular full size bicycles on designated railcars. In addition, there are bike racks at every station. The new bicycle friendly policy is congruent with the need to reduce the number of single occupant drivers who pack the parking lots throughout the system. This year will also mark the first year when a Bike to Work Day “pit stop” will be located at a VRE station. The bike event will be held at the Burke station.

VRE has given their web site a face lift and has also redesigned collateral, all reflecting the same look and feel. Ms. King handed out new rider guides. The conductors and engineers were previously managed by Amtrak and are now under the management of a French-Canadian firm. New uniforms will be issued to the conductors. VRE has introduced express train service to reduce the commute time of passengers who travel from far distances. Interaction with customers is a crucial component of the rail line’s customer service. Twelve thousand passengers have signed up for “TrainTalk” online newsletter. The number of customers responding to VRE’s most recent survey reached 1,500. VRE has added Facebook and Twitter as another avenue to keep riders informed. During the winter snow storms, the social networking sites were used as a tool to communicate to passengers about the disruption in VRE service and related closures.

**4. Commuter Connections FY10 Marketing Activity**

Dan O’Donnell from Odonnell Company provided an overview of the Commuter Connections Spring TDM marketing campaign. The final FY10 1<sup>st</sup> Half TDM Marketing Campaign Summary Report and a draft of the FY10 2nd Half TDM Marketing Campaign Summary Report were distributed.

A press release was sent out on March 11, 2010 to announce the expansion of the ‘Pool Rewards program throughout the entire Washington region. Media coverage included WTOP, The Washington Post, Washington Examiner, NBC Washington and MSNBC. Language for the ‘Pool

Rewards web page was modified to reflect program expansion to a region wide level. Modifications were made to the post card originally created at program launch to communicate new changes. A portion of the value-added opportunities from the spring radio campaign were used to promote the 'Pool Rewards expansion. A promotion called "Double Fill" will take place in March with 94.7Fresh FM. The Fresh street team will be on site at several high traffic gas stations within the region during the morning rush hour. The team will distribute the modified 'Pool Rewards post cards to gas station patrons. As part of the promotion, gift certificates for a free pizza, courtesy of Papa John's will also be given to all who fill up. Other support for the 'Pool Rewards program included ads that ran on Yahoo through the end of February and Rideshare Direct mailers sent in February supporting 'Pool Rewards through the incorporation of a brief message about the limited-time incentive program.

New radio spots were produced to promote GRH and Rideshare, two ads for each. Rideshare radio spots started the week of February 22nd while GRH radio spots started the week of March 8th. A total of four weeks of radio will air during the first quarter of 2010. During that time Rideshare and GRH spots will not overlap during given weeks. Stations included in the campaign are WASH (Soft Rock 97.1FM), WLZL (El Zol, 99.1FM), WTOP (News/Talk 103.5FM), WBIG (100.3 FM), WPGC (95.5 FM), WIAD (94.7 Fresh FM), WRQX (Mix 107.3FM) and Metro Networks. Copy was developed for live traffic reads for Metro Networks sponsorship and radio stations developed and implemented value-added opportunities. Mr. Odonnell played audio of each of the four newly developed radio spots.

The top reason why the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) service is used is due to sick children. To reach that target audience, backpack flyers promoting the GRH program will be sent to elementary schools in Montgomery and Fairfax counties for distribution to 150,000 students in April. In February, the message was also sent home electronically through the school systems' email List Servs. To promote the GRH program to parents of elementary school age children, Parenting and Disney websites were added to the internet outreach element of the overall campaign.

McDonald's and Grubhub coupons were sent to GRH re-registrants as part of the GRH Rewards program starting in January. A press release was sent in February 2010 to announce the Rewards program. Media coverage included the Washington Examiner and Frederick NewsPost. PRTC and Frederick TransIT sent notices to their commuters about the program via email.

Donations from Commuter Connection network members provided free transit space on the following transit properties: Frederick Transit bus exteriors, PRTC Commuter bus exteriors, MTA-MARC interior rail cards, Montgomery County Ride On bus exteriors and shelters.

A corporate sponsorship drive continued through the end of January for Bike to Work Day (BTWD). All sponsors will be included on the event collateral and the registration web site. Flyers will be mailed to employers throughout the region. As part of the Mid-Atlantic Sports Network's sponsorship, a 30-second PSA will be produced to air on Washington Nationals programming. The BTWD flyers and rack cards were finalized and will be distributed in March. The event T-Shirt design was finalized for production and the DC Circulator Bus interior cards are to be installed by April 1. 8 x 4' vinyl event banners have been customized and printed for each pit stop. A new 60 second radio spot will be produced for the 2010 BTWD event. The radio spot will mention Gold level sponsors and will air for three weeks during the last week of April through mid-May. The ad

will be heard on ESPN, DC101 and Hot 99.5. The ESPN buy will include an on-air endorsement by radio personality Andy Pollen, a regular bicycle commuter.

## **5. Golden Triangle BID**

David Suls from the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District (BID) discussed the BID's 2010 bike rack contest. The purpose of the contest was to attract designs that would combine the artistic with the practical in the form of creative bicycle parking for D.C.'s Golden Triangle. The design selected by the BID will be awarded \$1,500 plus a complimentary stay for two at the Hay-Adams hotel. The winning design will be fabricated into one or more racks and installed within the Golden Triangle neighborhood. The BID ran a similar contest in 2009 and a bike rack that spelled out "bike here" in metal piping was the winner out of 65 entries. The BID solicited participation for the 2010 contest via List Servs, blogs, newsletters and Craigslist, and has more than 300 regular bike racks throughout its service area. The contest provided media exposure for the BID when the contest was put into motion, when the winner was announced and when the rack was later installed. Businesses in the Golden Triangle interested in having a bike rack installed can submit a request to the BID. If approved, the BID will absorb all related costs. Mr. Suls passed out an item of literature which included bicycle safety and etiquette tips along with a map of bike rack locations within the BID.

## **6. Street Smart Campaign**

Mike Farrell from COG presented the spring 2010 Street Smart campaign. Street Smart first started in 2002 to encourage behavioral change in drivers, pedestrians and cyclists through public education and awareness. It also informs its target audience about stepped up law enforcement regarding important safety laws that when adhered to can save lives. Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and northern Virginia account for at least a fifth of total traffic fatalities. Last year law enforcement issued 50,000 citations and warnings to motorists, pedestrians and cyclists during the campaign. A similar show of strength is anticipated this year.

The budget for FY10 is \$658,000 and is paid for by the Council of Governments jurisdictions, with matching funds from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The campaign appears twice each year for a one month period, in the spring and fall. The FY10 campaign will include the use of cable television for the first time. In addition to cable, ads will appear on radio, transit signage and the internet. A safety tips card was created for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists, along with Spanish versions as Hispanics are a significant segment of pedestrians that are injured or killed. The new campaign's message is packed with shock value as the television spot was very graphic in its depiction of a pedestrian being struck by a motorist, an approach far more aggressive than the previous year's campaign. An earned media component will add further exposure for the campaign with a press event scheduled for March 23. During the press event there will be a pedestrian crash test dummy demonstration at various speeds to measure force of impact at various speeds. Videos of the demo will be posted to the StreetSmart web site.

**7. Calendar of Events/Marketing Round Table**

Meeting participants shared recent advertising/marketing collateral and discussed news and upcoming events happening within their organizations, highlights included:

Live Near Your Work functions will be held in Frederick, Montgomery and Prince William Counties this spring.

Arlington Transportation Partners will be handling the Employer Outreach contract for the District Department of Transportation under the goDCgo brand.

MDOT will be hosting a telework seminar through the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

**8. Other Business/Suggested Agenda items for next meeting**

Next FY10 Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting date: Tuesday, June 15, 2010, noon – 2:00 p.m.