

**REGIONAL TDM MARKETING GROUP  
MEETING NOTES**

**Tuesday December 15, 2009  
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**1. Introductions**

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

The minutes were approved as written

**3. FY10 Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP)**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, distributed the FY10 Washington Metropolitan Region TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan Final Draft Report. The document serves as a resource for current TDM products & services available in the Washington Baltimore area and provides a snapshot of current and planned marketing activity occurring within the region for Commuter Connections and its various partners; particularly within the defined regional activity centers. It also contains summaries of recent TDM research from the last several years. Lastly it outlines a strategy for Commuter Connections mission to increase awareness of drive alone alternatives. A comment period was established after the initial draft report was presented at the September 15, 2009 meeting and the report is inclusive of edits received. The report was also posted to the Commuter Connections web site, as part of today's meeting announcement. The report was approved by the Committee for final release.

**4. OmniRide Tysons Express.**

Althea Evans from Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission discussed the new OmniRide Tysons Express bus from Woodbridge, Virginia, to Tysons Corner. Tysons Express is funded by Virginia Megaprojects, a partnership between Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and the Virginia Department of Transportation. The new express bus was designed to help mitigate congestion in Northern Virginia. The Wi-Fi-equipped buses equipped with motor coach seating depart from the Woodbridge VRE Station on weekday mornings, stopping at the I-95/Route 123 Commuter Lot with return trips running late afternoon into evening. Through mid-May the express bus fare is half-price off regular OmniRide rates, making the introductory fare only \$3.00 each way, if using cash, or only \$2.40 with a SmarTrip® card one-way. The goal is to reach 35 passengers per vehicle. To kick off the express bus there was a meet and greet with coffee and pastries. Goody bags were given out with Omniride earbuds, Tysons T-Shirt and coupons to the mall. PRTC will be conducting a mailing to solicit Home Owners Associations to publish articles about the new express bus in their newsletters. A direct mail campaign will be sent out at a later date. Traffic tags, online banner ads and social media will round out the marketing outreach. There is another Tysons Express bus planned for the fall of 2010 from Loudoun County.

## **5. Tysons Connector Lunchtime Shuttle**

Glenn Hiner from Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) discussed the new Tysons Connector free lunchtime shuttle, operated by Fairfax Connector. Funding is being provided by the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority's Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project. During lunch, employees, residents or shoppers in the area can head off in search of their favorite lunch specials via the free shuttle. This lunchtime shuttle serves two mid day routes every 10 minutes between 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. each weekday with buses connecting Tysons Corner Center, Tysons Galleria and major employers located nearby. A kick off was celebrated in Tysons on November 23 as 10,000 hand-delivered flyers and rack cards were distributed. Press coverage included NBC 4 and the Washington Post. The 26 passenger shuttle buses will be rolling out a new look with special branded wrapped buses starting in January 2010. Ongoing outreach is being conducted by FCDOT, Dulles Rail and the Employer Solutions Team (Mega Projects).

## **6. Commuter Connections FY10 Marketing Activity**

Dan O'Donnell, Odonnell Company, presented FY10 fall marketing activity and a preview of the FY10 spring campaign. The Final Draft FY10 1st Half Marketing Campaign Summary report was distributed to provide detail regarding the media buy and each of the various components of the Commuter Connections marketing campaign occurring between July 2009 through December 2009.

Since the Car Free Day event was held just after the last September 15, 2009 Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting, the presentation reported on the results and exposure of the September 22 event. Media coverage of Car Free Day was outstanding. Some of the major outlets included were ABC 7News, News Channel 8, Washington Post, Washington Business Journal, Washington Examiner, and WAMU. Total pledges for Car Free Day increased by 14% from 2008 to 6,211.

The fall umbrella campaign began in October and radio was used as the anchor medium with a broad mix of eight Washington area radio stations. Radio ads produced for the Guaranteed Ride Home and Ridematching campaigns in spring 2009 were recycled for the fall campaign. Radio spots for the two programs have been evenly rotated through the end of December.

Internet activity to [commuterconnections.org](http://commuterconnections.org) increased dramatically in October 2009 by 36% over last October and November 2009 increased even more, 77% since the same time last year. Phone call data indicated a spike in calls made when the fall campaign kicked off in October, the highest since the beginning of the FY10 fiscal year.

Run of site web banner and run of network popunder ads continued during the fall campaign on major news and weather stations as well as Monster.com and a host of other targeted sites through the iii-Interactive network.

Value-added promotions provided additional exposure for Commuter Connections and focused on the Rideshare Tuesday promotion. Almost \$100,000 in additional air time, sponsorships and radio station web site presence was made available.

'Pool Rewards kicked off in late October and include direct mail post cards, and internet banners. The incentive program targeted commuters who currently drive alone to work through one of three specific corridors in the Washington region - I-495 from Bethesda to Tyson's Corner; I-495 from Baltimore-Washington Parkway to I-270; and I-395 from D.C. to Northern Virginia. The pilot program aims to encourage current drive alone commuters to try carpooling for a 90-day trial period. In exchange for logging weekly carpool information online and completing surveys about the experience, participants may earn up to \$130 in cash for starting or joining a new carpool. Other marketing for the 'Pool Rewards program included email marketing and online banner ads. The communications outreach for 'Pool Rewards netted exposure on ABC-7News, WTOP, WAMU, NPR, WUSA 9, Washington Post, Washington Business Journal, Washington Examiner and WAMU.

Mr. O'Donnell presented conceptual approaches for the FY10 spring marketing campaign. The Rideshare theme will be "Shortcut to Savings" and key messaging strategies will emphasize the economic gain with a strong money messaging, "ridesharing is found money". The GRH theme will be "coverage" with a key messaging strategy focusing on GRH as being "free insurance for commuters".

The 2010 Employer Recognition Awards nomination forms were developed and mailed out in the beginning of December. The mailer brochure was sent to level 3 and 4 employers and included a nomination form.

The Bike to Work Day sponsorship drive started in October 2009 for the May 2010 event. The drive will continue until January 2010. A new logo was also developed for the Bike to Work Day event.

GRH Rewards is a way to reward commuters for renewing their Guaranteed Ride Home membership. Commuters who continue with their free GRH service will receive a renewal membership notice and enjoy coupons from our corporate sponsors, good for free and discounted products and services. McDonald's has been secured for 2010 and other GRH Rewards sponsors are currently in negotiation.

The FY10 marketing timeline was reviewed as follows:

Research and results from previous campaigns	June 2009
Developed FY 2010 Marketing Brief	July 2009
Collected feedback from Marketing Committee on Marketing Brief (via extranet)	Aug 2009
Presented conceptual approaches to Reg TDM Mktg Group Committee	Sept 2009
Presented visual concepts and scripts to Marketing Workgroup for feedback	Sept 2009
Refined and developed approach based on Workgroup feedback	Oct-Nov 2009
Finalized and produced creative	Nov-Dec 2009
Distribute creative to media vendors	Jan 2010

#### **7. FY09 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, reported preliminary findings from the FY09 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey. A total of 3,101 surveys were distributed with a 27% survey completion rate. Good or above ratings were given by at least 92% of respondents for each category and all categories either maintained excellence or improved slightly. Written responses were entered on more than two-thirds, 69% of the returned surveys, the overwhelming majority of which, 82% were compliments. The question regarding overall GRH service received a 96% satisfaction rating by survey respondents. The average response wait was 15 minutes with 93% waiting 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. Tysons Corner Mall Signage System**

JD Schneeberger from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), presented the newly installed transportation monitors at Tysons Corner Center. The purpose of the project was to provide real-time, multi-modal, Tysons Corner specific traveler information to patrons throughout the mall. Five strategically placed monitors provide shoppers with the traveler information, transit/TDM options, Megaproject news and upcoming construction activities. Animated flash ads by Commuter Connections featuring the Guaranteed Ride Home program and ridesharing as well as ads by Telework VA! Ads rotate between information segments. The system also has information about the new OmniRide service to Tysons Corner and the free lunchtime Connector. Partners on the project include the VDOT, Virginia Megaprojects (I-495 HOT Lanes & Dulles Rail Project), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

#### **9. Walk & Ride Challenge**

Danielle Milo of Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) presented their recent Walk & Ride Challenge where teams of Bethesda-based employees used pedometers to track their steps over a three-week period in September 2009. Teams competed to see who could log the most steps. The cost to participate was \$60 per team, with the maximum number of team members at five. Most teams, 89% were sponsored by their employers. Those who walked at least 50,000 steps per week were entered into a weekly drawing for a brand new iPod nano. Smaller prizes were given out for the 25,000 step threshold. Based on how easy it is to get in and around downtown Bethesda on foot or by using transit instead of driving, the goal was to help Bethesda employees learn exactly that and provide a fun event which would also encourage team building among co-workers. In its first year, the Challenge was restricted to Super Fare Share companies, and registered just under 100 participants. In 2008, BTS opened up the competition to all Bethesda-based employees and saw a surge in participation, with a total of 400 registered participants. In 2009, BTS

teamed up with North Bethesda, and the two jurisdictions had a combined participation of 548 registered made up of 113 teams from 41 companies. The results were announced at the Taste of Bethesda. Post event surveys were distributed via email to all participants. To encourage a higher response rate, a prize drawing was given for tickets to the Taste of Bethesda. In 2009 the response rate dropped from 35% to 13%. The vast majority of respondents indicated they had heard of the Challenge through their Transit Benefits Coordinators, indicating an effective marketing strategy on the part of BTS staff. Another significant source was other co-workers within their company. The vast majority of each year's respondents, 89% indicated they would definitely or somewhat likely participate again the following year. A majority of survey respondents indicated they saw health benefits over the course of the program, have changed their commuting habits as a result.

#### **10. 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:

Montgomery County Commuter Services is preparing pre-tax transit benefit booklets.

North Bethesda is working on developing a "green" brochure and the Bike to Work Day pit stop will move to the White Flint mall.

Maryland Department of Transportation will be working with the Telework Center in Howard County.

Frederick County TransIT will host a "Kids Ride Free" holiday promotion on buses.

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation will be using more paid media to promote vanpool benefits and the TeleworkVA! program to employers.

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

The next Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting date will be Tuesday, March 16, 2010 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.