



Regional TDM Marketing Group

Meeting Notes Tuesday March 20, 2007

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

COG Board Room - 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

1. Introductions

2. Minutes of December 19, 2006 Meeting

The minutes were approved as written.

3. 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

- Prince Georges County will host a Live Near Your Work workshop in May.
- Montgomery County is sending an email through Angel Vision which will run an animated presentation of the Fare Share and Super Fare Share programs.
- MTA provided copies of the 2007 Preakness Transit Service brochure and the MTA 2006 Annual report.
- Alexandria Rideshare received recent coverage on WTOP for their Carshare Alexandria! event that was held March 8, 2007 at City Hall. Additionally, a live interview regarding this event was conducted with News Channel 8.

4. Commuter Connections Marketing Update

Dan O'Donnell from Bus Design presented FY 2007 Commuter Connections marketing activity. The integrated spring marketing campaign will consist of drive time radio as well as direct mail, exterior transit, bus shelters and online marketing. This year's campaign will use the theme "A Small Change Can Make A Big Difference In Your Commute". With one small action, a call to Commuter Connections, commuters can get the info they need to make a positive change which can make a big difference. Four radio spots were played for the marketing group, with themes on saving money, saving time, GRH and ridematching.

Mr. O'Donnell noted that web site visits to www.commuterconnections.com were up by 11.8% during the month of February when the campaign kicked off, compared to the same time the previous year. An offer was extended to Commuter Connections members to receive free PSA's

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from some of the radio stations that Commuter Connections is currently running advertisements with. Interested members should contact Douglas Franklin to make arrangements.

Other remaining initiatives for FY07 will include the Spring employer newsletter, as well as a redesign of the employer sales portfolio. Special events planned by Commuter Connections for FY07 will include Bike to Work Day and the tenth annual Employer Recognition Awards. Lastly the Commuter Connections web site will undergo a complete redesign.

5. Alexandria Marketing Study

Donna Norfleet from the City of Alexandria presented findings from a recently conducted residential marketing study and promotion. The study gathered data to measure awareness and usage of transportation options. During the data collection period, outbound calls were made to 4,800 city residents (about 3.5 of the total population), with a response rate of 13%. Results from the 33 question survey showed an 89% rate of awareness of DASH services. The number of respondents who rode DASH over the past month was 17% and the drive alone rate among respondents was 58%. DASH bus stops are within a 10-minute walk for 85% of respondents.

Phase two of the project was to conduct three marketing tests using various methodologies and incentives, outbound calling; direct mail; and an onsite promotion. The first was to offer two free-ride tickets to 500 residents who expressed interest in riding DASH but who had not ridden in the past three months. This promotion was enacted to encourage trial ridership or higher frequency usage by this audience. Approximately 50 people rode DASH as a result of the offer and said they would ride again.

The second marketing venture was to drive awareness of the transportation options and information available on the City's web site and to encourage the completion of an online survey. To generate web visitors, 5,000 postcards were mailed to residents, each offered a separate incentive to complete the online survey. Half of the postcards mentioned a \$5 Starbucks gift card for completing the survey, and the other 2,500 postcards were offered a chance to win a \$50 gift card to Best Buy. The Starbucks gift cards generated a 2.1% response rate, 53 total completed surveys, while the Best Buy offer generated a lesser response rate at 0.8% or 20 total completed surveys. This study revealed that even with a significantly smaller but guaranteed \$5 incentive, response was more than 2.5 times greater than simply a *chance* to win a \$50 prize.

The City of Alexandria held an onsite promotion targeting the Somali/Ethiopian community at a local Ethiopian restaurant/market. The grassroots efforts involved distribution of 78 pairs of free ride passes. A total of 40 free ride passes were utilized, a 25% conversion rate.

6. Virginia Railway Express Marketing

Virginia Railway Express Marketing Manager Ann King presented a six week ad campaign rolled out in the fall of 2006 to help recoup lost ridership, which was down by 12%. The 60-second spot aired on five radio stations (WTOP, WJFK, WMZQ, WFLS & WBQB) at a cost of \$165,900

and reached listeners near both the Fredericksburg and Manassas lines. Print ads appeared in the Washington Post, Manassas Journal Messenger, Quantico Sentry and the Free Lance-Star at a cost of \$35,400. Ms. King passed around copies of the various print ads and played the radio spot. Soon after the conclusion of the campaign, VRE ridership was back up to normal levels.

VRE :60 Radio Spot – “Onboard”:

What makes you happy in the morning? Cup a coffee? Sports Page? Little nap on the way to work? A few chapters in that book? Whatever it is, we bet it's just not happening if you're sitting in your car, stuck in traffic. We bet it's got nothing to do with traffic, or gasoline prices, parking lots and the stress of driving to and from work, day after day after day. And if that's what you're facing Monday through Friday, we suggest you jump aboard the VRE. Relax, read the paper, drink your coffee, ease your way into the day and stop wasting your time and temper in bottlenecks and back ups. Get out of that mess and get aboard the Virginia Railway Express. There's just no better way to commute in and out of the city along 66 and 95. The VRE. We'll get you to work and back home again without all the hassles and hang ups. For schedules and fares, visit vre.org. The VRE. Works for me.

7. Street Smart Campaign

Mike Farrell from COG informed the group that pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities accounted for 24% of the total traffic fatalities in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and northern Virginia from 1994-2005. As a result the Street Smart Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Campaign started in 2002 to encourage behavioral change through public education and awareness. The Street Smart initiative for 2007 geared toward motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists has a budget of \$430,000 and is taking place from March to April 2007. The program is coordinated by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), and is supported by federal funds made available through state governments, along with funding from various local governments at a .02 cents per capita rate, and a \$12,000 contribution from the Honda Motor Company.

To an area as congested as the greater Washington region, the challenge of pedestrian and bicyclist safety is of grave concern to the public, law enforcement, and transportation officials alike. The Street Smart campaign aims to use media outreach and stepped up law enforcement efforts to change motorist and pedestrian/bicyclist behavior, and reduce related deaths and injuries. This is communicated by increasing awareness of the consequences of pedestrian and bicycle crashes; recommending actions to reduce risks; and increasing awareness of law enforcement action against unsafe and illegal behavior. The month long wave of advertising themed “Flesh vs. Steel, It's no Contest” will appear on radio, transit, print and internet advertising. Additionally, a Safety Tips brochure was created for drivers pedestrians and bicyclists. Male motorists aged 18 to 34 are disproportionately involved in collisions of all types, including collisions with pedestrians and bicyclist. Radio allows for cost-effective targeting of this demographic through select stations catering to this particular audience. Pedestrians and bicyclists are more difficult to reach than motorists because they do not typically carry radios.

The number of law enforcement agencies participating in the program more than doubled during the 2007 campaign; fifteen law enforcement agencies distributed 50,000 hand-out “warnings” to violators. Materials were printed in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Amharic (Ethiopian) in recognition of the diversity of the region.

The Street Smart press briefing and kickoff was held at Thomas Circle in Washington D.C. on March 20, 2007 and was attended by D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty, Fairfax Supervisor Catherine Hudgins, D.C. Police Chief Cathy Lanier and Arlington Board Member Chris Zimmerman. News Channel 8 and Channel 4 both covered the event. For more information visit www.mwcog.org/streetsmart.

8. Other Business / Set Agenda for June 19, 2007 meeting

Douglas Franklin distributed a document that outlined the communication between COG and it’s committee members regarding the schedule of FY07 marketing activity, extranet postings, and workgroup formation.

Linda Steward Byrd inquired whether Commuter Connection could arrange to air some of the radio spots in the Baltimore market if funding was provided.

Marketing Group members were asked to provide any suggestions for topics for the next Regional TDM Marketing meeting to be held on June 19, 2007.