

## **Regional TDM Marketing Group**

### **June 6, 2006 Meeting Notes**

#### **Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments 10:00 a.m. – Meeting Room 3**

#### **1. Introductions**

#### **2. Minutes of April 4, 2006 Meeting**

The minutes were approved as written.

#### **3. Wilson Bridge Opening**

Michelle Holland from the Wilson Bridge project discussed the May 18, 2006 dedication ceremony commemorating the opening of the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The purpose of the ceremony was to bring together national, regional and community leaders to recognize completion of first of two new bridges, in advance of switching traffic to the new bridge. The Federal Highway Administration served as the primary host and a steering committee helped to organize and implement event logistics.

Ms. Holland explained that shuttles transported attendees from offsite parking located on both sides of the bridge. Dignitaries however, were able to park on the bridge itself. The U.S. Air Force band performed for an estimated crowd of 1,200 people. Mayor Anthony Williams, Governor Tim Kaine, Governor Robert Erlich and Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta took part in the ribbon cutting ceremony and enjoyed the first ride across the new bridge in President Woodrow Wilson's 1923 Rolls Royce. Another major highlight of the event included a flyover by the Navy's Blue Angels. Extensive security measures were coordinated between state and local law enforcement agencies as well as the US Coast Guard.

In a two-step process, all six lanes of bridge traffic will be transferred onto the new bridge this summer. The northbound shift will occur in mid-June and the southbound switch will take place in mid-July. Demolition of the old bridge will also occur this summer and the second bridge will open in 2008.

An extensive public outreach campaign has been warning would be travelers to expect serious backups and avoid the area, by deferring travel or using alternate routes. A \$400,000 paid media campaign comprising of three radio ads began airing over a nine week period, starting in May and running through June. Spots included a general awareness message, and separate ads specific to the two individual shifts. The radio ads aired primarily during drive-time radio in local markets as well as targeted

long-distance markets through satellite radio. The campaign also included alerts on Highway Advisory Radio and highway message signs along the I-95 corridor. The toll-free number (877-INFO WWB) offering directions and motorist assistance was staffed to handle the increased volume of calls during this time period. Travelers were also asked to visit [www.wilsonbridge.com](http://www.wilsonbridge.com).

Due to the fact that most of the heavier traffic-impacting work is completed, Ms. Holland informed the group that the “Bridge Bucks” program is in its final year. Peggy Schwartz commented that it would be interesting to track those who previously drove alone who switched to transit based on the construction project and the benefit of the Bridge Bucks program, to see what percentage continue to use transit after the program is phased out and construction work dwindles.

Ann King was curious to know whether royalties were paid to use the Mission Impossible theme in the Wilson Bridge radio spots.

#### **4. Clean Air Partners**

Jennifer Desimone of COG presented a recap of the 2005 Air Quality Ozone season and a preview of outreach events and marketing plans for 2006.

There were no Code Red days in Washington in 2005 and three in Baltimore. Code Orange days were 19 and 22 respectively. Ms. Desimone noted that this was the first time since Clean Air Partners was formed that there were no Code Red days in the Washington area. The main reasons attributed to the cleaner air include regional weather patterns, better controls on vehicles and industry, successful alternative commute programs and reduced transport.

For the 2006 marketing and outreach campaign, the emphasis shifted from a Code Red to a Code Orange focused program based on the EPA’s new standards for ground level ozone. EPA has set the 8-hour ozone standard to coincide with the Code Orange air quality index because research demonstrated that lower levels of ozone exposure over a longer period of time affect the health of sensitive groups. Sensitive groups are considered children, older adults, and those with heart or lung diseases. The campaign wishes to increase awareness and understanding of Code Orange alerts with the general public, Air Quality Action Days employer participants and meteorologists. To help promote the new emphasis on Code Orange, orange T-shirts were given to attendees at the Clean Air Partners Annual meeting which included the Clean Air Partners logo and the message - “Orange is the new Red”.

Clean Air Partners 2006 sponsor commitments totaled \$132,500. The major contributor was Mirant at \$50,000. Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties contributed as well as Commuter Connections, VDRPT and WMATA. Other sponsors included Constellation Energy, Lockheed Martin and Washington

Gas. The sponsorship dollars will go toward the 2006 marketing campaign which will include a media buy and the production of two new 60 second radio spots.

National Air Quality Awareness Week included a Clean Air Partners event on May 17, 2006 supported by EPA and NOAA. The event was held at Lady Bird Johnson National Park where elected officials and regional air quality and health experts demonstrated how individuals can protect their health on days when air quality is unhealthy. A stack of oranges collectively weighing 200+ lbs. were displayed to represent the significance of Code Orange and the pounds of pollution released by a single auto traveling from Washington D.C. to New York. As part of the activities, emission testing devices sampled electric lawn mowers and GM Hydrogen cell “clean cars”, against air pollution generated by conventional cars and mowers.

## **5. Commuter Connections Marketing**

Douglas Franklin of COG issued an updated draft of the Commuter Connections FY06 2nd Half Marketing Campaign summary. This document summarizes activity consisting of marketing, advertising and special events conducted by Commuter Connections within the Washington metropolitan area between January and June 2006. Activity consisted of radio, billboards, direct mail, quarterly newsletters and collateral development. Events mentioned in the report included that of Bike to Work Day, the Employer Recognition Awards ceremony and InfoExpress Kiosk promotions.

## **6. Pedestrian Safety Workshops**

Peggy Schwartz of Transportation Action Partnership presented information about pedestrian safety workshops held on May 2, 2006 in North Bethesda. The “Walkable Communities/Pedestrian Safety” workshops were sponsored by the State of Maryland and the National Center for Bicycling & Walking and included presentations on successful pedestrian design, safety, education, and enforcement. The workshops included a diverse group of attendees, each bringing a different perspective to the table. Participants brought together through the workshops ranged from employers, developers and school administrators within the community.

Each workshop encompassed a “walking audit” to help identify areas of pedestrian concern. The workshops and audits included involvement by participants in wheelchairs, which helped gain valuable perspective and understanding of even greater challenges faced by pedestrians with disabilities. The slogan for the workshops was “Creating a walkable North Bethesda community, two neighborhoods at a time!” Ms. Schwartz stated that the walking audits provided an eye opening experience and revealed impediments such as broken crosswalk buttons, trees blocking sidewalks, lack of ramps, damaged curbs etc.

A deliverable from the workshops included a report to suggest potential short and long-term solutions and improvements that would make both the Executive Boulevard area and the area around the Twinbrook Metro station more pedestrian friendly. The report was issued to community leaders to educate them about the findings discovered through the audit process, and to share feedback and recommended solutions spawned from the workshops. This was done in hopes that action can be taken to address the challenges which pedestrians face on a daily basis.

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

This was an opportunity for meeting participants to share recent advertising, marketing collateral and other information, and to discuss news or upcoming events happening within their organizations.

Leann Landry of WMATA stated that Metro is rolling out their *NextBus* system on the 90's line by the end of June. The system notifies waiting bus patrons about the estimated arrival time of the next three buses. Advertising to promote the *NextBus* system will be executed when 80% of Metro's 12,000 bus stops are installed with the equipment, which may take up to several months.

Ann King noted that VRE will operate on July 4<sup>th</sup> to transport passengers to and from D.C. for the fireworks and activities on the mall.

Rich Solli from MTA mentioned that the campaign to promote light rail is on hold at this time, due to problems with ticket issuing. Also the Route 40 bus line will be receiving the *NextBus* signs this summer.

## **8. Other Business / Set Agenda for Next Meeting**

Marketing Group members were asked to provide any suggestions for topics for the next Regional TDM Marketing meeting to be held on Tuesday September 19, 2006. No suggestions were offered at this time.