

Regional TDM Marketing Group

October 4, 2005 Meeting

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

1. Introductions

2. Minutes of August 2, 2005 Meeting

The minutes were approved as written

3. New Chair Announcement

Victor Egu announced that due to the new fiscal year, a chair rotation will take place for the Regional TDM Marketing Group. Mr. Egu announced that Ann King from the Virginia Railway Express will be the new Chair and Donna Murray from WMATA will be the new Vice Chair. Ms. King presented Victor Egu with a plaque to recognize his service as the FY05 chair of the Regional TDM Marketing Group.

4. Telework Exchange

Martha McGrath from The Telework Exchange presented their online platform created to support telework initiatives across the Federal government. A recent study revealed that the Federal government workforce spends \$19 million commuting to and from work every business day. The Telework Exchange is the only interactive forum that provides a venue for Federal professionals to focus entirely on dialogue about telework. It provides the needed tools to validate and demonstrate the value of telework by providing the first framework to quantify Federal government and agency-by-agency progress against mandated telework requirements.

As a virtual community, the Telework Exchange utilizes their Web site www.teleworkexchange.com, as the primary venue for meeting organizational objectives. A recent campaign aimed to introduce the new Web site to Federal Teleworkers and encourage them to register. The group is organized and supported by a number of hi-tech companies who provide products and services to facilitate teleworking.

The Telework Exchange focuses on demonstrating the value of telework, promoting best practices, and measuring government agency progress with regard to Federal telework requirements.

Despite a potential \$5 million in funds that could be forfeited by Federal Agencies that don't comply with legislation enacted by Congressman Frank Wolf, adoption has been lack luster at the Federal level for many agencies. Ms. McGrath noted that although 50% of Federal workers could qualify for Telework, only about 12-15% actually practices it. She also pointed out that Telework is seen as a way to support the Continuity of Operations Plan.

Outreach efforts to help drive traffic to the Telework Exchange Web site relied heavily on grass roots support such as attending conferences to get the word out, distributing "The Teleworker" newsletter and handing out bumper stickers. As of October, approximately 3,000 Federal employees have registered to the Telework Exchange Web site. The mission is to increase that figure by ten fold by summer 2006.

5. Commuter Connections Marketing

Paula Johnson from NDW Communications discussed plans for Commuter Connections fall marketing. Unlike previous years, the FY06 marketing program will not be divided into separate budgets, rather one all encompassing budget will exist. The program will support Ridesharing, Guaranteed Ride Home, Telework, Transit and the role of the employer in encouraging and supporting change in commuting behavior.

The audience most likely to change their driving habits continues to be male and female SOV drivers who commute to work daily into and within the Metropolitan Washington area between the ages of 25 to 54. With survey data, direct mail test response information, and area-wide reports, it is evident that our target audience is computer savvy, fairly to well educated and commutes up to 40 miles into DC. Over 39% of the 6,700 respondents reported their annual household income is \$100,000 or greater.

Three important findings that surfaced from the 2004 State of the Commute data that will impact the NDW Communications/COG strategy are:

1. About one-third of likely alternative commuting prospects live near an HOV lane (and the audience in the outlying areas are more responsive to communications for alternative commuting)
2. The greatest reason cited for using alternative modes of transportation is to save time and/or money (32%)
3. The second most common reason cited (25%) for using alternative modes of transportation were related to making a move; either to a new home or new job.

The Commuter Connections program has clearly gained name recognition and awareness among a significant number of area commuters since its 1996 inception. Data indicates that commuters are likely to maintain or increase their use of alternative modes when they are participants in the GRH program. Key performance indicators i.e., enrollment into Guaranteed Ride Home, requests for rideshare applications, calls and web site visits seeking information or enrollment validate that there has been continually increasing participation in the programs.

In order to focus Commuter Connections resources, key strategies that will guide the FY 2006 program will include promotional efforts specifically geared to matching the audience profile of top Activity Centers and a focus on getting employers to offer benefits that will change employee commuting behavior.

Employer Communications

Qualitative research - Use the Employer Satisfaction study as a base for conducting one-on-one telephone interviews with employers to gain more in-depth understanding of issues and needs in order to most effectively prioritize and provide the content and support employers need.

Direct mail/E-mail communications - Direct mail and/or e-mail direct messages will be used to maintain on-going communications with employers to support representatives efforts.

Literature - Commuter Connections literature will be updated and will include a general services brochure, ridesharing brochure and GRH brochure.

Newsletter - The six-page *Commuter Connections* newsletter distributed to employers on a quarterly basis will contain a new sleeker and professional look and feel.

Employer Awards Program - This program recognizes the effective achievements of employers in the region.

Bike to Work Day - The event will be held on Friday of May 19, and supported by radio ads, and giveaways with the help of corporate sponsors.

Media Communication

General Commuter Connections communications need to continue to maintain name and brand awareness, especially to new residents of the Washington metropolitan area. Key message points need to focus on the time savings related to HOV usage and specific ridesharing options, as well as addressing commuters' frustration and Commuter Connections' ability to provide stress relief. Presented

in a clear, and straightforward manner, communications will include the various services provided and note that the services are free.

For the first half of the FY06 campaign, radio ads will spotlight specific messages that will provide individual focus on carpooling, GRH as well as a general mass marketing message. Furthermore, where appropriate, the mention of gas prices will be a recurring theme.

These radio spots will be coordinated and developed simultaneously with the others to ensure consistency in the message. Major Metropolitan Washington radio stations will be utilized as well as some outlying area radio to focus messages into targeted activity centers. Web advertising banners will be placed on radio web sites via value added opportunities.

Other media that can be focused with specific activity centers may include outdoor and print such as the *New Homes Guide* in the second half of FY06

Telework

Employers are still a primary source of conveying information to commuters on the benefits of teleworking. Commuter Connections efforts have helped to established Telework as an accepted commuting alternative which has been widely adopted. Telework will be supported via collateral, employer outreach and mentioned in radio ads for FY 2006. Training curriculum will be made available via the Commuter Connections web site along with Employer case studies on successful programs.

6. DC Circulator

Naa Koshie Mills from DC Surface Transit presented the launch of the new downtown DC Circulator bus. The new system is currently serving 4,000 riders per day and links popular business and tourist destinations in Washington. It features an easy hop-on, hop-off service that quickly moves workers, residents and tourists to places around the central core of Washington. The unique aspect of the 29 fleet system is its multiple doors and low floors, designed to allow large numbers of passengers to enter and exit with ease. Fares can be paid with cash, SmarTrip cards, passes, Metro transfers, or tickets purchased at sidewalk fare machines.

The Circulator's have a distinctive red and silver appearance and big windows to make for buses that are hard to miss. The Circulator operates every day (except Christmas) from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, about every 10 minutes. The cost is \$1 per ride or \$3 all day (3-day, weekly, monthly and annual passes are also available). There are several ways to pay including flashing a SmarTrip card,

exact cash and by purchasing tickets at fare meters located on sidewalks at select Circulator stops. One route links Union Station with Georgetown via K Street, and another provides a path between the Convention Center and the SW Waterfront via the Mall and 7th and 9th Streets.

The DC Circulator is the product of a unique public/private partnership. It is owned by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), managed by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and operated by First Transit, a private sector transit operator. Marketing is overseen by DC Surface Transit Inc.

7. 2005 TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan

Douglas Franklin distributed the first draft of the 2005 edition of the Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan. This annual guide serves as a resource for TDM products, research, and marketing activities conducted within the Washington metropolitan region. It outlines the strategies used to develop and implement ongoing campaigns in order to increase overall awareness of TDM products and services and adoption of alternative transportation modes. This is a collaborative report with contributions from transit agencies and Transportation Management Associations, as well as local Governments, state and Federal agencies. Edits will be accepted through October 31, 2005 and a final report will be released at the December 6th Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting.

8. Calendar of Events / Marketing Round Table

This is an opportunity to go around the room and have meeting participants share recent advertising, marketing collateral and information, and to discuss news or upcoming events happening within their organizations.

Victor Egu from Prince George's County reviewed rideshare activities conducted during the last quarter including Rideshare day at NASA in Greenbelt on Oct 17th and Nov 3rd at the Prince George's Community College.

Althea Evans from PRTC announced that they won an APTA award for a system brochure / map recently developed. She also noted that Sheila Larson has retired from the transit agency.

Leann Landry from WMATA stated that Metro also won awards for off-peak advertising, for rollout of SmarTrip on buses and for their new web site design.

9. Other Business / Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Marketing Group members were asked to provide any suggestions for topics at the next Regional TDM Marketing meeting to be held on Tuesday December 6, 2005 meeting. No suggestions were offered at this time.