

Regional TDM Marketing Meeting

Minutes - December 2, 2003

1. Introductions – See Sign-in sheet
2. Minutes of the October 7, 2003 meeting

Approved with the following change:

Section 10 - Other Marketing Information, the number of respondents to the survey should be 67,000 not 6,700.

3. Regional SmartTrip Customer Service Center

Dick Siskind of WMATA discussed the progress of the Regional SmartTrip Customer Service Center (RCSC). He reported that all jurisdictions in the region would be switching to SmartTrip in the 2004-2005 fiscal year. WMATA is currently testing the SmartTrip boxes in the Arlington Fairfax area, testing about 85 buses. The next step is to convert 100 more buses in the DC and Montgomery County areas. The RCSC will manage the information that flows through this system and act as a clearinghouse for all transactions. Contractors ERG and Northrop Grumman will operate the service center.

Mr. Siskind stated that getting the RCSC operational would require great coordination and effort. Much of the software to run the system needs to be developed from scratch. They are looking to have a point of sale network where one can increase the value of a card, or set up an account and auto-load a value. The network will begin testing in June, with the service center to begin testing in late 2004. Mr. Siskind stated that WMATA has been holding monthly meetings, with all representative groups involved with the project. The MTA managed to get 100 buses refitted with the SmartTrip boxes over one weekend, so getting the boxes installed has gone smoothly. However, there will have to be a public awareness campaign, explaining that there is a mixed fleet, and to have coin change available. After the rollout of SmartTrip onto all buses, coins will continue to be accepted system wide.

Dottie Cousineau asked if real time or daily reports on ridership would be available, and Mr. Siskind replied that the data reports would most likely be available on a daily basis. In response to a question regarding WMATA's decision to no longer accept pennies, Mr. Siskind explained that there was no major backlash, noting that multilingual stickers placed onto fare boxes helped. There was however a few isolated instances with people still using pennies. Another question posed to Mr. Siskind asked if the pennies caused disruption and fouled up the machines, to which Mr. Siskind replied that the new machines simply returned them.

4. Arlington County Developer Outreach

Howard Jennings gave a presentation on integrating TDM into Arlington County development. He stated that the key to the issue was a site planning process and to stay involved. He pointed out that in the 1960's, Arlington County was a stagnant jurisdiction in terms of growth. To turn the tide, the county banked on the Metrorail line and centered development around the stations, creating urban villages. This led to 60% of the value of the county being clustered on 7% of the land. This action has had tremendous impact, as Arlington is considered one of the hottest real estate markets in the region. The planning was determined to be successful and proved that it is paramount to get TDM involved as early as possible with the developer community.

Arlington works with each building on an individual basis to seek out a transportation coordinator to communicate alternative transportation issues as well as coordinate parking management. A county ordinance requires developers to cooperate by submitting plans pertaining to tenant ridesharing concerns and can hold the developers accountable through fines should minimum standards be ignored. Mr. Jennings said that one important area to stress is the business benefits of these policies. This is not something that is being done *to* businesses, rather its something being done *for* them.

Franklin Bell asked who the TDM contacts would coordinate with at the County. It was stated that they would work with the site planners. Mr. Bell asked where the permits in the process would be attained. Mr. Jennings stated they were attained during the zoning process. Mr. Bell asked who would issue fines if a building was found to be in violation. Mr. Jennings said they hadn't faced this issue yet, but it needs to be worked out. Dottie Cousineau asked if the sites were given a menu of options to choose from. Mr. Jennings said that the sites are given lists of standard options, but the key is to be flexible. Additional solutions may be suggested if there are variations or traffic impacts in the area. The specifics are left up to the negotiator, the prime negotiator being Jim Henry, who has done a good job in getting businesses to select solutions. Ms. Cousineau asked why they wait three years after the building is constructed before evaluating the measures taken. Mr. Jennings stated that it often takes time to reach full occupancy.

It was asked when the concept of linking Metrorail stations and development came together. Mr. Jennings said it was conceived when the layout for the Metro stations was mapped out and since then, the program has evolved. Dick Siskind asked if a good example of this program was Carlyle Towers, to which Mr. Jennings replied yes. Jane Taylor asked how the residential program worked. Mr. Jennings said it relied on a contact person to distribute information and offer promotions. Christina Gordon noted the residential program is still under development. Charlene Robey posed a question about how to attain appropriate development in the Dulles Corridor. Mrs. Cousineau stated that Tyson's Corner is getting rezoned, and they are working with the development board. She said it was difficult, because the board is very pro-development. Ms. Robey asked who passes the decisions, and Ms. Cousineau stated it was the board. Ms. Cousineau said that using site analysis is one way to help deal with this issue, while creating tax districts is another. A major question of many potential employees is how close any business is to the Metro.

5. Wilson Bridge Project

John Undeland stated the main purpose of the program is to manage the traffic congestion problem on and around the bridge construction and that it is designed to keep traffic moving. Although the bridge construction has been underway for three years now, the project is entering into the phase where construction will impede traffic flow. Because the current bridge will not be taken out of service until after the new bridge is finished, the majority of impact is related to the phase we are entering involving construction of the interchanges. Mr. Undeland stated that upon completion there will be twin bridges, with six lanes on each. The first bridge will be completed in 2006, the second in 2008, with the interchanges being completed in 2011.

The Bridge Bucks program was linked with TDM efforts in the region to help control congestion. There are eight years of construction left on the schedule, and this project is looking to make the commute process as simple as possible for area residents during that time frame. The program is a one-year pilot, in which \$50 dollars of any type of transportation fare media is given to qualifying commuters traveling through the bridge corridor, either north- south across the Beltway or east-west across the bridge. Commuters can use the subsidy to commute by bus, rail or vanpool and Bridge Bucks can also be applied to a SmarTrip card. If commuters qualify, they will be contacted and guided through the options by a representative.

The advertising for this campaign will target drive time and appear on morning news radio and some newspapers within the corridor. There are three English radio spots and one Hispanic spot. A website is also being launched to provide more detailed information on the various commuter transportation alternatives.

Mr. Bell asked if the interchanges would be built simultaneously in both Maryland and Virginia. Mr. Undeland said yes, and noted that work on the Route 1 interchange had already started, but they anticipate larger impact when work on Interchange 95 begins. Ms. Cousineau asked if Telegraph Road would be affected, to which Mr. Undeland replied that it is indeed part of the project. There is \$2.5 billion dollars allocated for the project, including Telegraph Road and the bulk of Route 1. It was asked why the benefits for the Bridge Bucks program were capped at 1,000 commuters. Mr. Undeland said it was because there were limited funds.

6. Commuter Connections Telework and GRH Marketing Update

Douglas Franklin stated that approximately 450,000 GRH postcards had been sent out in late November 2003. The direct mail campaign employed the use of a PRIZM cluster system, which enabled Commuter Connections to target residents possessing a higher propensity to use alternative transportation and GRH services. The PRIZM system analyzed the Commuter Connections GRH database to create a profile of the typical alternative mode user

and GRH customer. Residents throughout the metropolitan region who matched the defined traits and characteristics of the target clusters were identified and sent a postcard mailer. Two postcards were used, one focusing on how GRH helps parents get to their sick children, while the other featured the headline “We do everything for commuters but tuck you in”. Charlene Robey asked about the strategy of using two postcards to which Mr. Franklin replied, it was a way to provide better targeting by issuing a family message to those households with the presence of children. Dottie Cousineau asked if there was any correlation in the mail out list with auto ownership. Mr. Franklin stated not on this particular mailing but data of that type is available at a higher cost, noting the more layers of demographics applied the more expensive the cost for the mailing. Mr. Bell asked how the clusters were developed. Mr. Franklin noted that Claritas has classified each neighborhood in the U.S. into one of 65 pre-defined cluster groups, based on socio-economic characteristics and demographics, which is essentially what is termed geo-demographics. The PRIZM system determined target clusters based on indexing which compares the percentage within each cluster group against the U.S. average for the cluster group. Clusters are designated as good target when the index reaches 110 or above, as the higher the number the stronger the propensity. Mr. Franklin then played the Telework Center radio commercial and stated that the spot would be tweaked in 2004 to add mention of the 60-day free trial period.

7. Integrated Rideshare TERM Update

Sheila Lewin of Pathways Strategic Communications discussed the two new kiosks installed in Manassas and Dulles Town Center. She stated that Commuter Connections is in the process of conducting kick-off promotions for these new kiosks. The awareness campaign will include print ads in local community newspapers, postcard mailers in both English and Spanish; mall posters and food-court table tents, napkins, cups; presence of a kiosk ambassador; distribution of giveaway items and slides on movie theater Lobby Entertainment systems. Ms. Cousineau suggested advertising on food court tray liners.

8. High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Study

John Martin discussed how previous studies of the area only provided a snapshot of HOV lanes in Northern Virginia and that a more comprehensive survey was needed to better understand how HOV lanes are used as well as commuter’s attitudes and perceptions about them. This info is helpful in that it provides insight about the level of support for HOV lanes by the general public and that it can also be beneficial for future rideshare marketing. The survey found that 25% of SOVers want to join a car or vanpool, with 8% being very interested. Greater insight is needed to bring that 8% into trialing the concept.

The survey conducted was a 25-minute telephone interview focused on the Dulles toll road, I-95, I-395, and I-66. It targeted people who were on these roads for long distances, 30 minutes on I-95 or 395, and 20 minutes on I-66 or the Dulles toll road. The survey focused on people age 18 to 65 who commuted three days a week during the morning rush hour. The survey netted 1,800 commuters. Demographics did not differentiate the beliefs of the groups, so

more casual models were needed. It turned out employment status was the biggest correlation, along with employer support.

The survey revealed a great deal of pro-HOV opinions, which is in contrast to opinions felt about HOV lanes when they were first introduced to the region. Charlene Robey stated it would be interesting to know what effect HOT lanes will have on ridesharing and HOV. Mr. Bell stated it was his understanding that HOT Lanes would be in addition to existing HOV lanes. Ms. Robey agreed but noted that it didn't seem to be getting across to people that HOV lanes would not be converted to HOT lanes, but rather HOT lanes are in addition to existing HOV lanes.

Mr. Martin discussed how half the people surveyed believed that HOV lanes were not enforced enough. It was important to find where this perception was coming from. Ms. Robey said there would be more enforcement money coming. There is question about what the fines are for HOV violation. Mr. Martin pointed out that a third of respondents surveyed didn't know the penalties for being caught. Ms. Robey noted, right now, it's at the whim of the judges, though there is a push to assign points for violations. John Martin discussed the issue of photo enforcement. Ms. Robey said this is a very delicate issue, and the General Assembly won't discuss it, but overall there is support for greater enforcement.

The survey indicated that 98% of SOV drivers are aware of HOV lanes and 75% know the hours of operation of those lanes. The findings revealed that 38% of commuters do not rideshare due to the fact that they "don't know anyone going my way". This of course is a primary service provided by Commuter Connections, free of charge to the general public through the Ridematch system. He also noted that 68% of HOV riders know of a convenient park and ride lot, compared to 52% of SOV users. The top reasons for using HOV lanes were saving time and avoiding congestion.

It was asked if there was a way to distinguish surveys between HOV 2 and HOV 3 users, and it was stated that it could be determined by running a cross tabulation of the results. Nicholas Ramfos asked if VDRPT was sharing this data with VDOT to which Ms. Robey replied yes. Mr. Ramfos suggested that it would also be a good idea to present this data to the TPB to get any feedback.

9. Other Business - None