

**Regional TDM Marketing Group  
Meeting Notes  
Tuesday June 15, 2010**

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Minutes of March 16, 2010 Meeting**

The minutes were approved as written.

- 3. Beltway HOT Lanes Groundbreaking**

Michelle Holland from TransUrban discussed the recent 14-mile Beltway HOT Lanes project, which is the largest current highway improvement project in the United States. A driver's awareness campaign called "Orange Cones. No Phones" targeted the 210,000 individuals who drive on the Capital Beltway each day. According to a recent survey conducted by Transurban-Fluor and AAA Mid-Atlantic, 56 percent of Beltway drivers use their cell phones to make calls or read/write text messages while driving. The campaign aimed to change behavior during construction as distractions such as cell phone/text usage within an active work zone leaves no room for driver error. Another aspect of the outreach campaign included working with AAA and the school system about texting safety.

Other communication vehicles to keep drivers informed are the two web sites, each with unique offers. VAmegaprojects.com is the umbrella site which provides information on lane closures, travel advisories, how to sign up for email alerts, and links to various projects. Virginiahotlanes.com provides specific information on High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane project details and benefits, construction timeline information, sign-ups for progress updates and a look ahead at future work.

The HOT Lane project is a \$2 billion public-private partnership to create fourteen miles of variable toll lanes, two in each direction. Sensors placed every one-third mile will monitor traffic levels and keep the lanes free-flowing by continuously adjusting toll prices based on real-time traffic volumes. A network of information signs will post toll rates to inform drivers. Monitors will identify vehicle entry and exit points, and total trip distance. The HOT Lanes will be friendly to alternative transportation methods as there will be no charge for transit users and vehicles with three or more occupants, plus every crossing will contain pedestrian and bicycle access. The new HOT Lanes project will connect four major commuter routes to create a seamless HOV and transit network with three new access points to major retail and employment centers, including Tysons Corner and Merrifield. The Virginia HOT Lanes are projected to open in late 2012.

4. **Commuter Connections FY10 Marketing Activity**

Dan O'Donnell from Odonnell Company provided an overview of the Commuter Connections FY10 marketing campaign and discussed the timeline for the FY11 campaign. A second draft of the FY10 2<sup>nd</sup> Half Marketing Campaign Summary Report was distributed.

For Bike to Work Day, ESPN radio personality Andy Polin endorsed the event through a live read spot. As an added-value, DC101 and HOT 99.5 ran a bicycle giveaway contest. The earned media plan produced a record number of media placements for Bike to Work Day. Print ads were created and placed in the City Paper and the Washington Examiner. Ads mirrored the event poster and both publications provided value-added online banners ads. Bike to Work Day was held on May 21st at 35 simultaneous locations throughout the entire Washington metropolitan region. A record setting 9,200 bicyclists registered, a 17 percent increase over 2009. T-Shirts were sent to sponsors as a thank you for supporting the event. The Bike to Work Day Employer Challenge luncheon will be held on June 29 at Booz Hamilton and will be covered in the summer newsletter.

For the upcoming Employer Recognition Awards event, Maglites were ordered as giveaways. A commemorative program booklet was developed to provide background on the winners. Podium signage was created with the same look and feel of the program booklet. A print ad was developed to appear in the Wall Street Journal on June 25, 2010 to recognize employer recipients of the awards.

For the mass marketing campaign, the Commuter Connections television commercial aired on Mid-Atlantic Sports Network (MASN) during the first 30 games of the 2010 Nationals baseball season. A live two minute pre-game interview with Commuter Connections director Nicholas Ramfos staff was held in April on the NatsXtra pre-game show. The Commuter Connections logo appeared on screen during Nats Xtra and Batting Practice Shows together with a live announcer noting our sponsorship.

Commuter Connections advertising appeared on network member buses and trains for GRH and/or rideshare. The free ad space was donated by PRTC/Omniride, Frederick TransIT, Montgomery County Ride On and MTA/MARC.

For the internet advertising component of the campaign, web banners were geo-targeted by IP address and placed on Monster.com, Accuweather, Washington Times, and iii-interactive.com run of network. In FY10, short videos were added to banners to make them more engaging. Internet banner ads were also placed onto the Parenting and Disney websites to promote the GRH program to parents of elementary school age children.

Radio spots aired through June on Washington area stations, plus spots were translated into Spanish for airing on El Zol and COG/TPB staff took part in

an interview at El Zol. Traffic update sponsorships were placed through Metro Networks and heard on to two dozen stations throughout the Washington metropolitan region. In addition to paid media placements, the spring campaign delivered value add radio and online promotions in the form of additional air time, sponsorships, and web banners. Metro Networks delivered additional traffic sponsorships at no cost. MIX 107.3, ran a carpool contest the week of April 12 and provided promotional announcements. As part of the internet media buy, over 300,000 bonus web banner impressions were delivered.

A “backpack flyer” email blast promoting the GRH program was sent to Fairfax and Montgomery County Elementary School Lists. This was a follow up to a hard copy mailing of flyers to the schools.

A direct mail campaign is being prepared for late June. Two unique mailers were created, each with images that provided emphasis on either rideshare or GRH. Each of the mailer versions also cross promoted both services. Mailers will be sent to 500,000 households in the Washington metropolitan region.

Commuter Connections sponsored a baseball game with the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. Sponsorship included a two-sided insert in the Gameday magazine. Stadium announcements were made through the public address system, the Commuter Connections logo appeared on the electronic display and it also played our television commercial.

A timeline to rollout the FY2011 marketing campaign was reviewed:

June 2010	Analyze research and results from recent campaigns
July 2010	Develop Marketing Plan, post to Extranet for feedback
Aug 2010	Collect feedback from Regional TDM Marketing Group via Extranet
Sept 2010	Present conceptual approaches to Regional TDM Marketing Group
Oct 2010	Develop approach with meeting feedback
Nov-Dec 2010	Develop creative with feedback from Marketing Workgroup

Odonnell reported a 61 percent increase in web visits to the Commuter Connections web site from January to May in 2010, compared to the same period in 2009. Phone calls averaged 1,460 per month in January and February 2010, and spiked to over 2,000 in March when the campaign was in full swing. Applications were up by 13 percent for rideshare and 8 percent for GRH for the first two months of 2010 compared to the same period in 2009.

## **5. FY11 Marketing Workgroup Call for Volunteers**

Staff called for one member from each state to volunteer to serve as part of the FY11 Commuter Connections Marketing Workgroup. Workgroup members will review and comment on creative concepts developed for the Commuter

Connections FY11 spring campaign. Other creative will also be reviewed by the workgroup as it becomes available throughout the fiscal year.

**6. VPSI Photo Contest**

Rico Fleshman from VPSI presented results of its first ever “Photos from the Road iPad Giveaway Contest. VPSI van coordinators and customers were asked to submit photos taken aboard their vanpool (while not driving) from their daily commute. The contest was open from April 29th to May 26, 2010. VPSI announced the contest on their blog, facebook and twitter pages. A total of 400 entries were received and a panel of VPSI judges narrowed them down to fifteen finalists. One grand prize winner was selected by the panel to receive a 16GB Apple iPad and fourteen first prize winners were given \$25 Best Buy gift cards.

**7. FY11 Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan**

Douglas Franklin discussed procedures for the upcoming FY11 SMP report. The SMP is an annual guide that serves as a resource for planned marketing strategy and activities conducted within the Washington metropolitan region by Commuter Connections and its network members. It also provides profiles of TDM products, and summarizes TDM research conducted within the region. Commuter Connections network members are asked to contribute by updating sections of the report pertaining to their organizations. Last year’s report is posted on the Commuter Connections web site under the publications page. An email will be sent in July asking for initial edits by mid August. A draft of the report will be issued at the September 21, 2010 marketing meeting and the final report will be distributed at the December 21, 2010 meeting for adoption and release.

**8. Calendar of Events/Marketing Round Table**

Meeting participants shared recent advertising/marketing collateral and related news and events within their organizations. Highlights are as follows:

Keith Bounds from MDOT announced that the Guaranteed Ride Home program was being extended to the Baltimore region in October 2010.

Holly Morello from Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission shared information about Omnilink’s Teen Summer Pass program.

Glen Hiner announced that plans were on target to bring an express bus from Loudoun to Tysons.

**9. Other Business/Suggested Agenda items for next meeting**

Next Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting: Tuesday, September 21, 2010, 10 a.m. – Noon