

Regional TDM Marketing Meeting

Meeting Notes- December 7, 2004

1. Introductions

See sign-in sheet for attendance.

2. Minutes of the October 5th Meeting

The minutes were approved as written.

3. Commuter Connections FY05 Marketing Campaign

Gail Cooperman from NDW communications provided an update on Commuter Connections marketing activities for the first half of FY05 and provided a preview for upcoming advertising plans for the balance of the fiscal year.

Radio was selected as the primary communication vehicle for the FY05 campaign, since it is the most efficient way to target SOV commuters, specifically during “drive times.” In addition to several newly produced 60-second spots that support this communications strategy, 15-second sponsorships ran on Total Traffic Network as a test during the fall of 2004. Total Traffic Network manages traffic reports on eight Clear Channel-owned stations.

To reach the Hispanic market, 60-second spots aired on local Hispanic radio stations. In addition, an on-air interview was negotiated with Mega FM. Commuter Connections also created a Spanish Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) brochure/application to be used as handouts at Hispanic events, and to fulfill requests for GRH information by Hispanic commuters.

Internet banner display advertising and a continuous maintenance of key word search tactics reinforced the Commuter Connections message to our internet savvy audience. The internet campaign for both Mass Marketing and GRH netted 1,814,355 impressions and 1,348 click thru’s during the first half of FY05, through November.

Telework Center print advertising targeted to employees was placed in three consecutive Tuesday issues of the weekday tabloid Express Newspaper, published by the Washington Post. This was followed by a GRH December direct mail drop to over 450,000 households within neighborhoods identified through the PRIZM cluster analysis used in FY04. The GRH database analysis helped determine potential commuters most likely to adopt alternative commuting options. For the December 2004 mailout, an updated version of the mailing list was purchased to better ensure accurate delivery.

Ms. Cooperman displayed graphs indicating that the combined inquiries (web visits to www.commuterconnections.com and calls to 800-745-RIDE) decreased 22% compared to the previous year (July- November), while the number of Guaranteed Ride Home applications increased by 35%, from 3,239 to 4,374 and the number of Rideshare applicants increased by 59%, from 3,802 to 6,035.

These results indicate that the quality of prospects has increased during the recent promotion period. This is validated by the improved conversion rate from inquiry to participant, which increased from 5.9% in 2003 to 10.3% in 2004 for GRH applications, and from 7% in 2003 to 14% in 2004 for Rideshare applicants.

A draft report summarizing the campaign for the first half of FY05 was distributed at the meeting. Ms. Cooperman concluded her presentation with a brief preview of marketing activity planned for the second half of FY05. This will include more radio for both GRH and Mass Marketing, online advertising, direct mail, bus back transit posters, New Homes Guide, Telework Center Wall Street Journal ad, Telework Workshop radio advertising and Hispanic event marketing.

4. Clean Air Bicycle Event

Rolando Andrew, CEO of the American Lung Association (ALA) for the District of Columbia, discussed the Clean Air Bicycle Tour. Mr. Andrew explained that the ALA issues an annual State of the Air report that ranks different regions throughout the country for air quality. For the past couple of years, the Washington area has received the equivalent of an 'F' in air quality. The ALA received a small grant from the Department of Transportation to promote alternative modes of transportation for air quality purposes. This year the ALA is working toward reintroducing previous campaigns to make people aware of the damage they are doing to the air quality by driving alone to work.

ALA's upcoming "Clean Air DC Ride" event is scheduled to occur on June 18, 2005 with a target of 1,000 riders and an estimated fund raising goal of \$200,000. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association will be an official partner of the Clean Air DC Ride, by helping to recruit participants and by managing the logistical aspects of the ride. The ALA plans to call citizens to action for the bicycling event with a full-page ad in the *Washington Post* weekend section and plans to further promote the Clean Air DC Ride by having a representative at each Bike to Work Day pitstop. The ALA plans to use the proceeds from this event to help fund programs such as Clean Air initiatives, programs for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and research efforts.

5. Expanded Telework Initiative Marketing

Danette Campbell demonstrated the Telework CD-ROM which was produced to encourage employers in the region to contact Commuter Connections about

starting or expanding telework programs. Direct mail pieces using the theme “Harness the Power of Telework” were sent out to a total of 580 employers within the region. Each was packaged with a CD that featured a professional slide show of photos and graphics, with a voice-over explaining the benefits of telework and the free services of the Commuter Connections Telework Resource Center. The mailer was followed up by telephone calls and resulted in 58 scheduled appointments with individual employers for FY05.

Rich Solli, from the Maryland Transit Administration asked about the perceived differences between the terms telecommuting and teleworking. While there is no set standard used within the industry, Nicholas Ramfos stated that a general rule of thumb is that telecommuting can be defined as working from home in lieu of driving to the office, while teleworking may be construed as any form of work outside of the office. Gail Cooperman added that although it is a matter of semantics, the term “telework” may help underscore and emphasis that *work* is being done and feels it may have a more positive affect on employers who are skeptical about the productivity of teleworkers.

6. GRH Customer Satisfaction Survey

Christopher Arabia and Erin Bijas, presented the preliminary results of the FY04 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Customer Satisfaction Survey. This survey is designed to gauge how the GRH program is viewed by users of the program. Each month, survey cards are sent out to all customers who have utilized the service within the previous month. Ms. Bijas distributed a draft of the survey, which indicated an overall customer satisfaction rating of 96%. This outstanding mark is a clear indication that the GRH program is very popular with Washington area commuters, as well as being a well run program. Customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and appreciative, but some GRH customers also offer suggestions for improvements. In general, most suggestions are either cost prohibitive or not within direct control of Commuter Connections. Nonetheless, steps are being taken to continuously improve and refine the program. Evidence of this perpetual improvement is reflective in the steady increase of the customer satisfaction rating since the program’s inception. The group will be asked to endorse the report at the February meeting. Comments and edits should be sent to Mr. Arabia at carabia@mwkog.org.

7. Calendar of Events / Other Marketing Information

At this time, all meeting attendees were provided with an opportunity to briefly share new marketing materials / information and to discuss recent or upcoming events happening within their organizations.

Ann King from Virginia Railway Express (VRE) informed the marketing group of VRE’s “Santa Train” that is held every year during the holiday season. During this time, VRE asks riders to donate to the “Toys for Tots” program, or give a

cash donation. Ms. King explained that this marketing effort has been very successful in the past, as a generous amount of toys are accumulated through the event each year for needy children.

Other upcoming VRE events include the building of a railroad bridge that will be parallel to the Quantico Bridge at a cost of \$26 million. It will take 2-3 years to complete and will allow trains to run in both directions without interruption. Finally, in an effort to make riders feel safer, VRE will be having bomb-sniffing dogs on board their trains once a week.

Linda Provost from Montgomery County Commuter Services, stated that Montgomery County is planning a Transit Award ceremony for employers in May 2005. They are also holding a promotional event called "Give and Go" that will take place on Ride-On buses. Patrons will be asked to contribute a canned good for local shelters. In return, Ride-On will provide the "giver" with a "go" (a free ride for their donation).

Rich Solli announced that MTA has a new acting Administrator, Lisa L. Dickerson. Mr. Solli also announced that the south end of the Light Rail - Double Track Project is complete and service has been re-opened to the Cromwell Station, Glen Burnie and BWI Light Rail stops. This will make service along the line more reliable. The North End will close effective Monday January 3rd for similar renovations from North Ave. to Hunt Valley. Lastly, MTA has introduced its new fare boxes on 150 buses in the Eastern district. Paper fare cards will be replaced by magnetic cards called "Go Passes". In the future, MTA will be moving to SmarTrip.

Vanessa Vega, from the City of Alexandria, announced that a transit fair will be held on January 26, 2005 at the new USPTO building.

Robin Briscoe, with the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, announced the jurisdiction's bi-monthly council meeting which will be taking place on December 15th. Attendees will include elected officials, state delegates and legislatures from Southern Maryland. At the meeting, the annual Commuter Toy Campaign and Wrap Party will be re-publicized. The campaign collects toys for needy families from area bus and vanpool commuters. The Wrap Party will feature a live radio broadcast from a local tri-county area station. Also during the week, radio spots will air for the Commuter Choice initiative and area Rideshare Program. In addition, Tri-County Council will be distributing an upcoming newsletter to over 3,700 bus and vanpool commuters.

Douglas Franklin announced the upcoming Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards ceremony that is taking place at the National Press Club on June 29, 2005. Mr. Franklin distributed application brochures and asked the assistance of meeting attendees to nominate or encourage employers within their respective jurisdictions to apply. The application deadline is February 4, 2005.

**REGIONAL TDM MARKETING GROUP
MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET
December 7, 2004**

(Please put a **T** beside your name, or add it using the space provided on the last page.)

(Please cross out your e-mail if you DO NOT wish to receive information electronically.)

* Chair

** Vice Chair

*** COG Staff Contact

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	Matt Benka	Virginia Railway Epress	703-684-1001
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T	Jen Desimone	COG	202-962-3360

Victor Egu of Prince George's County distributed Transit Guide pamphlets that provide comprehensive information on public transportation within various sections of Prince George's County. The guides include a detailed map indicating "The Bus" and Metrobus stops, as well as Metrorail stations. Other information includes bus arrival frequency, commuter parking and a brief explanation of the Guaranteed Ride Home program.

8. Other Business / Set Agenda for February 1, 2005 meeting

Rich Solli requested to be added to the agenda for the February 1 meeting to discuss the MTA Commuter Choice radio campaign.