

## **Regional TDM Marketing Meeting**

**Minutes – June 1, 2004**

### **1. Introductions**

See Sign in Sheet.

### **2. Minutes of the April 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

The minutes were approved.

### **3. Montgomery County Ride-On**

Beverley LeMasters provided an update on Montgomery County's Ride-On marketing efforts and the County Council's recent decision to allow advertising on the buses. She also discussed the recent agreement with Clear Channel Communications to upgrade the older bus shelters with assistance from corporate partners. The corporate partner would receive advertising space on the bus shelters for sharing in the cost of upgrading the shelters. Also reviewed was the rollout of Compressed Natural Gas buses, the new Clarksburg service and other enhanced services and expanded schedules to existing routes.

### **4. Commuter Connections Marketing Update**

Douglas Franklin discussed the recent opening of two InfoExpress Kiosks, located in the Dulles Town Center and Manassas Mall. A promotional campaign to drive awareness and trial of the new kiosks included a direct mail campaign to households within ten mile radius of each mall, ads in local papers, seat drops in local busses, 15-second theatre slides, and table tents at the Dulles Town Center. An ambassador was present at the kiosk openings to assist patrons with the new InfoExpress kiosks. Those who tried the kiosks were given a "goodie bag" of transit schedules and small giveaway items, donated by Commuter Connections and the transit agencies. Those who registered for a Guaranteed Ride Home or Ridematch were given a Commuter Connections lunch cooler and entered into a drawing for a \$100.00 mall gift certificate.

Mr. Franklin then outlined the upcoming Commuter Connections minor league baseball game promotion with the Potomac Cannons in Woodbridge, VA. The game is scheduled for Saturday June 6<sup>th</sup> with fireworks afterward. Commuter Connections will throw out the first pitch and have a marketing booth set up, where they will give out Commuter Connections stadium seat cushions to fans that fill out a GRH or Ridematch application. Mr. Franklin also discussed a similar sponsorship that took place in May with the Frederick Keys.

Gail Cooperman from Dudnyk Advertising provided background on the upcoming 2004 GRH Direct Mail marketing campaign. She noted that the objective is to get smart about our target by identifying our best customer prospects, locating the areas where they live, and reaching them cost-effectively.

To identify our best prospects, we examined our existing customer database and created a profile using the PRIZM system designed by Claritas. Then based on similar geodemographic traits, we targeted specific neighborhoods. These customers presumably have a higher propensity to use the GRH service.

Other factors to pinpoint optimum target areas for the direct mail boundaries included the Regional Activity Centers defined by COG, zip codes with a high concentration of SOVs, and HOV corridors.

The PRIZM analysis of the GRH database indicated that the ideal GRH commuters are classified into the following categories: predominately affluent; upper middle and middle-income towns; second city neighborhoods; and are suburban families and couples. Eighteen of PRIZM's sixty-two clusters are represented. Ms. Cooperman presented a color coded map of the high index target areas, which used the "red is hot, blue is not" visual.

The fall 2003 mailer was a relatively simple campaign in contrast to the upcoming mailout which will test a new marketing strategy. The previous mailer sent to approximately 450K households, consisted of two postcards, one a general catch-all featuring the message "*We do everything for commuters but tuck you in, Guaranteed Ride Home*", and the second targeted households with children featuring the message "*We'll make sure you get home when you need to be, Guaranteed Ride Home*". The second was designed to address the concerns many parents feel when using alternative mode of commuting. The response vehicles for recipients were the Commuter Connections 800 number or the website. The mailing which dropped late November and received first week in December created a tremendous increase in total inquiries, 9,191 in 12/03 vs. 7,041 in 12/02 and GRH applications of 1,011 in '03 vs. 487 in '02.

The new 2004 GRH direct mail campaign will continue the previous two creative executions and will introduce a third creative element representing an HOV component. In addition, a third response vehicle will be added to the 2004 direct mailer in the form of a self-addressed postage paid piece, with a built-in GRH application form. The three creative approaches (general audience, families with children and HOV) will be randomly distributed to households near HOV lanes. Residents not near HOV lanes will receive one of two creative approaches (general audience piece or families with children). Furthermore, households will randomly receive either a postcard or application. Tracking will take place in the form of unique phone extensions and web addresses for each of the separate direct mail variations. Ms. Cooperman provided a handout indicating quantity breaks inclusive of the mailout distribution plan.

## **5. WMATA SmarTrip Operations**

Dick Siskind discussed the status of the SmarTrip changeover on Metro Buses. On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, installation of SmarTrip on the Metrobus fleet began. As of the meeting, 532 buses were equipped with SmarTrip fare boxes, approximately one third of the fleet. The following weekend, 199 busses are to be outfitted with the new fare boxes. The web site will carry information regarding when certain routes would be rolling out the new system. The goal is to have the entire bus fleet equipped with the new fare boxes by mid August. In 2004, MTA will be equipped with the fare boxes, while all others should convert by 2005. There were

several questions about the upcoming late June changeover of metro parking lots to SmarTrip only, such as how tourists and non-frequent riders will obtain cards. Mr. Siskind mentioned that low-tech vending units would be installed to disburse the cards. For \$10.00, a card would be issued with \$5.00 of fare value. He also stated that to encourage more widespread adoption of the SmarTrip cards, WMATA considered giving the cards away and to require customers to only pay the fare upload amount. However the card technology is too expensive to give away and at this time, WMATA is charging a \$5.00 fee to obtain the computer chip embedded reusable media.

## **6. Ozone Action Days**

Jen Desimone discussed changes to the Ozone Action Days campaign. She stated that the campaign would now be called Air Quality Action Days, due to the fact that it would no longer target just ozone. She also outlined the marketing for the upcoming period and handed out a media schedule for radio spots airing in the Washington and Baltimore markets. They will be using a two week on, one week off rotation of the spots. Several commercials have been updated from last year, with a new spot focused on a telework theme, based on an additional subsidy from Commuter Connections. Ms. Desimone also distributed an Air Quality Action Days brochure, indicating the new code purple level, the causes of ground-level ozone, health risks and what action can be taken to reduce ozone levels.

## **7. WMATA Marketing**

Leann Landry presented WMATA's recent "Off-Peak" marketing efforts. Since all rail and many bus lines are at capacity during peak work rush hours. The new off-peak ad campaign's objective is to increase ridership on Metrobus / Metrorail during weekends and for discretionary trips during the week at non-peak and after hours.

The strategy was to emphasize that Metro is about enabling customers to get to the important moments in their lives. Ms. Landry noted that to accomplish this they wanted to visually display the spirit of the "Metro Opens Doors" tagline. The ads depict off-peak locations such as restaurants, superimposed with Metro seats into the scene.

Paid Advertising started in March and will run through June. In-system ads started in May and will run through July. March results from the campaign showed a year-over-year increase in off-peak weekday ridership by 12%, and weekend figures grew by 5.7%. April saw a weekday off-peak growth of 4.2% and weekend ridership grew by 25.74% (this however includes the Women's March for Life).

Ms. Landry provided an overview of the SmarTrip Parking advertising which had the mission of informing Metro riders that after June 28th, they must use a SmarTrip card to exit Metro parking lots. The strategy to accomplish this is to supplement sandwich board messages with ongoing "call-to-action" advertising. Over an eight week flight, ads are being placed in the Washington Post Express on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with an Insert on Thursday.

For the small percentage of riders that fall into the tourist segment, businesses in certain highly targeted industries including hotels, event organizers, conventions etc. were communicated to via email regarding the SmarTrip card parking requirement. The size of

the blast email was approximately 4,000 contacts. The emails provided a series of three messages, which communicated the cashless parking change in the body of the email, but also entice them to go to website to order a SmarTrip Card. Click Thru rates for the campaign for the first two emails were 6% and 5% respectfully with the last email to be sent in the first week of June.

Ms. Landry also discussed the “30s are going your Way” bus promotion to increase “off-peak” ridership on this bus route. The route selected is ideal because it serves off-peak venues, has good peak period ridership, has off-peak capacity, and has frequent off-peak service. The promotion took place in conjunction with the Sierra Club of Washington, DC and brought in community area venues to participate in discount promotions. For example, Georgetown Park Mall provided discounts at numerous merchants for the entire month of April. Borders Books of Georgetown gave free coffee and book discounts, WASH-FM did an on-air dinner-and-a-movie giveaway promoting the 30s lines, where area restaurants gave certificates in exchange for radio mentions. In April 2004, growth in ridership over March 2004 was 9%. This is compared to a 1% decline in ridership over the same period the previous year.

Ms. Landry revealed the recently refreshed look and feel for Metro, using more contemporary colors while keeping the traditional Metro identity.

## **8. Marketing Reports**

Douglas Franklin distributed an updated draft of the FY04 2<sup>nd</sup>-Half Commuter Connections Marketing Campaign Summary. The report summarizes Commuter Connections marketing activity, media schedules and costs from the time period, January through June 2004. Mr. Franklin also discussed the upcoming 2004 TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP) schedule. This manual serves as a collective marketing resource for TDM products, research, and marketing activities that have been conducted in the Washington metropolitan region by the area transit agencies. An email will be sent out by Ryan Marshall with specific pages of the manual that are relevant to each document contributor. You will be asked to update and make any corrections reflective to current service offerings, marketing budgets and plans for the upcoming year. A draft of the SMP will be issued at the August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, and a final release is due to be issued in October 2004.

## **9. Calendar of Events**

Time did not permit for this agenda item.

## **10. Set Agenda for August 2004 Meeting**

No suggestions were offered.