

**REGIONAL TDM MARKETING GROUP  
Meeting Notes March 17, 2009**

**1. Introductions**

**2. Minutes of December 16, 2008 Meeting**

The minutes were approved as written

**3. District Bicycle Transit Center**

Jim Sebastian from the District Department of Transportation shared plans for the new Bicycle Station in D.C. The location of the bike station will be adjacent to the Metrorail entrance along First St. and Massachusetts Ave., across from the Postal Museum. The location will enable commuters coming into/from Union Station to utilize the bike station to extend non-auto trips. Mr. Sebastian's presentation included a look at bike stations in other countries such as Japan and Amsterdam and several within U.S. cities such as Seattle and Chicago. The bike station design in the District will pit a new modern glass and steel structure against the background of Union Station's turn of the century neo-classical architecture. This approach will be similar to the appearance of the Louvre in Paris amidst a setting of centuries old buildings. The bike station will accommodate parking for 150 bicycles for a daily fee of \$1, with 25 more free outdoor racks. The facility will provide bicycle repair, rental and accessory sales. Revenue is expected to offset staffing requirements. A portion of the station's bike parking will be reserved for members who pay an annual or monthly fee. While the station will have set hours of business for daily paying customers, members will have 24/7 card access. For space efficiency, bicycle parking will be stacked in double high rows, with easy-to-lower angular bike rack ramps to allow loading and securing onto the top level row. The bike station is anticipating a summer 2009 opening.

**4. Commuter Connections FY09 Marketing Activity**

Dan O'Donnell from Odonnell Company provided a preview of the Commuter Connections spring marketing campaign. The final FY09 1st Half Marketing Campaign Summary Report was distributed and a first draft of the FY09 2<sup>nd</sup> Half Marketing Campaign Summary Report was distributed. Activities presented at the meeting include the following:

The spring umbrella campaign was launched in late February. The ridematching radio ads asked commuters to "Try a Different Way to Get to Work" with Commuter Connections for a "fresh approach to saving money, time and the environment". The bright colored print ads were developed in stark contrast to the economic gloominess many may be feeling and offer positive energy about a lifestyle change. The sense of fun and lightness were utilized by the use of a pogo stick and unicycle to grab the listeners' attention before delivering Commuter Connections' main message.

During the 2nd half of the year campaign, radio was used as the anchor medium for the campaign with a broad mix of radio stations including targeting Spanish-speaking commuters

with spots running on WLZL, El Zol. In total, the eight Washington based stations and four exurban stations were used during the campaign.

Four new radio spots were written and produced to deliver the messages of the Guaranteed Ride Home and Ridematching campaigns. The radio campaign rotated alternating weeks between Rideshare and Guaranteed Ride Home spots. The Marketing Workgroup provided feedback on the new radio scripts produced for the spring 2009 campaign. Mr. Odonnell played the audio of the radio spots.

Internet advertising during the spring campaign includes rotating sizes of banner ads served to specified websites and geo-targeted to IP addresses in the Washington DC region. Historically, weather sites have been among the top performers for all Commuter Connection campaigns. Popunder ads, those ads presented in a window left behind when closing the browser, have also delivered top performance in FY09. Besides previously successful web sites, the campaign included a major job web site, Monster.com as data from the 2007 State of the Commute Survey showed a correlation between changing job or work hours and switching to alternative transportation. A social networking site, Facebook has also been added into the mix.

COG/TPB staff worked with Commuter Connections network members to secure donations of ad space on bus interiors/exterior, shelters, vanpools magnets and interior rail cards.

- Alexandria LocalMotion DASH bus interiors
- Arlington Transit ART bus interiors
- Frederick County Transit bus exteriors
- Loudoun County park & ride displays and Virginia Regional Transit bus exteriors
- MTA MARC Train interior rail cards
- Montgomery County Ride On bus shelters & bus exteriors
- VPSI van magnets

A direct mail campaign was mailed to households with persons age 35-54 with annual income levels above \$50,000. A tear off card was included so the recipient can easily apply for either ridematching and/or the GRH program, or request additional information. 450K mailed in January.

The Commuter Connections winter 2009 Newsletter and Federal ETC insert was distributed in February and placed online. Development began on the Spring 2009 Newsletter and Federal ETC insert.

COG/TPB staff continued to monitor and maintain the Commuter Connections web site including an added flash file tied to the spring marketing campaign.

Three different styles of coffee cup sleeves were created for the spring campaign and are being distributed over a 4 month time period to coffee cafes located in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington DC. A total of 525K, customized 4-color 'ad sleeves' were distributed.

- For the spring campaign, all radio stations were asked to promote the benefits of Commuter Connections' new online ridematching system. The radio stations responded

with a mixture of promotional ideas. In addition, bonus radio spots and live reads are included on many of the value add promotions. Most stations also plan to promote Commuter Connections on their station websites.

The value add promotions provided as part of the spring campaign included:

- WASH, WBIG, and WMZQ will continue to run the Rideshare Tuesday promotion.
- WRQX (Mix 107) will sponsor a contest in April for a Metro SmarTrip Card valued at \$107. Entrants will be asked to provide details on how they plan to utilize it.
- WAFY will sponsor a contest in June with a bicycle as the prize. Entrants will be asked to provide commuting ideas or how to save on commuting costs.
- Commuter Connections will take part in interviews with Guy Lambert for WPGC's Public Affairs Show and on WLZL's "Tu Familia Zol" program.
- WFLS will provide Commuter Connections information in an e-blast to their database of 16,000 station club members.

Collateral was developed for Bike to Work Day to include rack cards and posters. Adults 25-49, slightly skewed toward men, with a household income above \$30,000 were targeted through radio advertising at a cost of \$24,000. Signage appeared on Downtown Circulator buses. T-shirts are being created for bicyclists who register and participate. Banners will be created for each pit stop. A sponsorship drive resulted in 35 sponsors and generated contributions to offset some of the marketing costs. The younger target audience will be targeted through social networking sites, Facebook and Twitter.

## 5. Prince George's Bus Shelters

Chris Napolitano from Joint Venture Marketing on behalf of Prince George's County discussed the recent RideSmart Commuter Solutions campaign which featured ads in local magazines, bus shelters and in-bus posters. In addition, the campaign was supported by a quarterly newsletter to employers in the county and staff attendance at employer work sites and benefit fairs.

The campaign was devised to reach commuters using and seeking alternative commutes to know about the variety and number of programs and resources available. Poster Copy – "Getting across town can sometimes be a nightmare. That's why you should call Ride Smart Solutions. We provide a range of transportation solutions for everyday heroes like you. From van pools to buses and every service in between, we'll make sure nothing stops you."

The phone number used in the ads was 800 745-RIDE and online inquiries were referred to [www.RideSmartSolutions.com](http://www.RideSmartSolutions.com). The web site saw a 35% increase in web activity in September and October when the campaign was introduced and 20% above average numbers when shelters were moved to new neighborhoods in January and February.

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

Meeting participants shared recent advertising/marketing collateral and discussed news and upcoming events happening within their organizations, highlights included:

Loudoun County– Earth Day event seedling giveaway  
Montgomery County – Go Green America event at Fairgrounds  
Prince George’s County – Greenbelt Community Map  
Bethesda – Bicycle brochure and Walk n’ Ride campaign

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

The next Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 16, 2009 from 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm, COG Board Room – 3rd floor.