Car Free Day 2015 Washington DC Metropolitan Region Event Recap



Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Commuter Connections Program

March 9, 2016 Draft Report

Car Free Day

Car Free Day is internationally celebrated as a day for people to leave their cars at home, and get around by train, bus, bicycle, subway, or walking. In the Washington DC region, people can also go "car lite" by carpooling or vanpooling.

The Metropolitan Washington region began celebrating Car Free Day in 2008.

Three main objectives are to:

- 1. Use Car Free Day as an opportunity to promote alternative modes of both commute and non-commute transportation.
- 2. Encourage commuters and the general public to take the pledge to use car free or car-lite travel.
- 3. Measure and report impacts.



Proclamation Signing

The Car Free Day 2015 proclamation signing took place on July 15, 2015 at the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) meeting at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.



Pictured L to R are Nicholas Ramfos, Commuter Connections Director, Transportation
Operations Programs, and Phil Mendelson, TPB Chair, and District of Columbia Councilmember.



Proclamation

WHEREAS, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Washington Region; and

WHEREAS, the TPB through its Commuter Connections program promotes and organizes the annual Car Free Day event along with its network members throughout the Washington area; and

WHEREAS, Car Free Day invites Washington region citizens to telework and try alternative forms of transportation such as transit, bicycling and walking, and "car lite" methods such as carpools and vanpools; and

WHEREAS, Car Free Day benefits the National Capital Region through improved air quality, reduced traffic congestion and parking demands, and energy conservation; and

WHEREAS, Car Free Day corresponds with international mobility week, occurring September 16-22, celebrating sustainable mobility.

NOW, therefore, be it resolved that the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board:

Proclaims September 22, 2015 as Car Free Day throughout the Washington Metropolitan Region; and

Encourages citizens to pledge to be Car Free or Car-lite by visiting www.carfreemetrodc.org; and

Asks TPB Member jurisdictions to adopt similar proclamations in support of Car Free Day.

Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Some jurisdictions also made their own Car Free Day proclamations.



Media Objectives

The marketing campaign raised public awareness of Car Free Day and challenged drivers to leave their cars home for the day and go car free, reduce the distance of trips taken, or go car-lite by Ridesharing.

The marketing campaign consisted of a web site, radio, text messaging, posters, transit signage, email blasts, online banner ads, social media, stickers and earned media. The efforts brought attention to Car Free Day and encouraged the public to take the pledge.

Radio

Draft radio scripts were developed and presented to the Steering Committee and revised, based on feedback. Voiceover talent was selected for the radio ad and a :30 second radio commercial was produced. The spot aired for several weeks leading up to the event on the following stations:

WIHT (99.5 Top 40)
WBIG (100.3 Oldies/Classic Hits)
WASH (97.1 WASH-FM/Adult Contemporary)
WTOP (103.5 News)

Car Free Day Radio Script 'Join the Team that Fits'

Male game show type announcer voice:

Ready to take the Car Free Day team pledge?

Sound Effects: (a group of happy people yaying & whoo hooing)

It's easy. Just go to carfreemetrodc.org and take the free pledge! Then join the team that fits your mobility best! Choose from Team Bus, Team Rail, Team Bike, Team Walk, Team Pool and Team Telework!

Female:

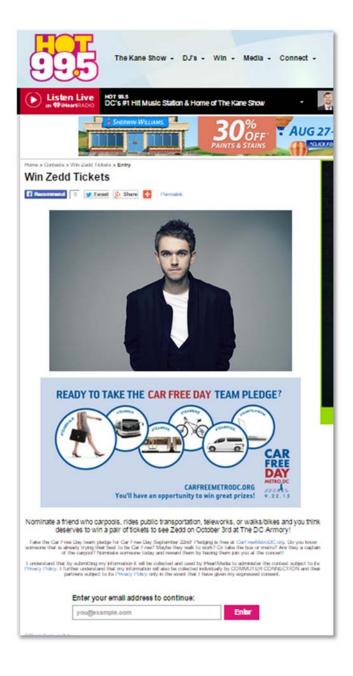
Count me in for doing my part to reduce traffic and making the world a little greener!

Male:

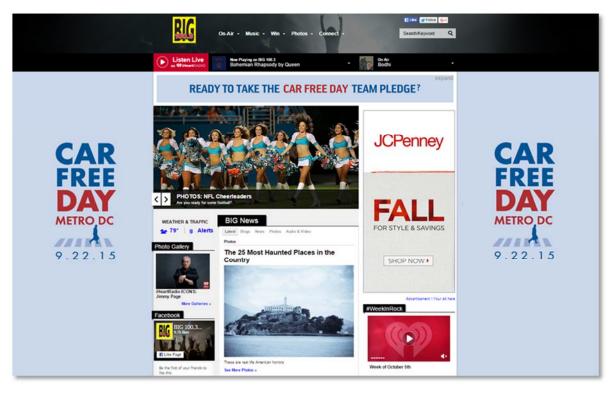
Car Free Day - Tuesday, September 22. Visit carfreemetrodc.org. You may even win a prize! Sponsored by Commuter Connections.

Value add

As part of the media buy negotiations, the radio stations provided complimentary web banners, home page takeovers, and background ads, mobile app banner ads, and :05 to :15 second sponsorship announcements.







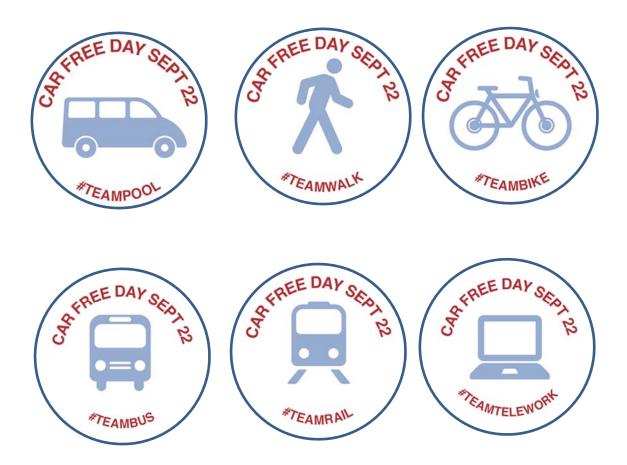
Poster

An all new Car Free Day poster was created, printed and delivered to network members. The poster took a team approach with the message "Join a team that fits your mobility best". The call to action directed people to carfreemetrodc.org to take the team pledge and for additional information on event activities. It also encouraged them to 'get social' through the use of team-mode hashtags. Posters were mailed to employers and distributed to jurisdictional partners, for further distribution within the region.



Stickers

New in 2015 were Car Free Day stickers used to promote the event in the region. Participants were asked to proudly wear the Car Free Day sticker to indicate they pledged to go car free or car-lite.



Email Blast

An email blast was sent to employers and those who took the Car Free Day pledge over the past three years. Numerous network members also sent e-mail blasts and e-newsletters of their own.

From: Commuter Connections <ridematching@mwcog.org>

Sent Tuesday, September 15, 2015 4:35 PM

To: Douglas E. Franklin

Subject Car Free Day Sept 22 – Take the Free Pledge



Commuter Connections is a program of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, www.mw.cog.org. Commuter Connections promotes bicycling to work, ridesharing and other alternatives to drive alone commuting, and has been providing trusted ridematching services for carpools and vanpools since 1974, and offers the free

Text Messaging

Opt-in text messaging was used to encourage those who participated in previous year's to pledge and to share the message with others.



Transit Signage

Bus signage was secured for Car Free Day from several jurisdictions; artwork was created reflecting the poster graphics and then printed, shipped, and installed at the various transit properties. Signage appeared on Montgomery County Ride On, Metrobus, Arlington Transit, and on Prince George's bus shelters. A complimentary internet banner ad was also created for placement onto the Metro website.







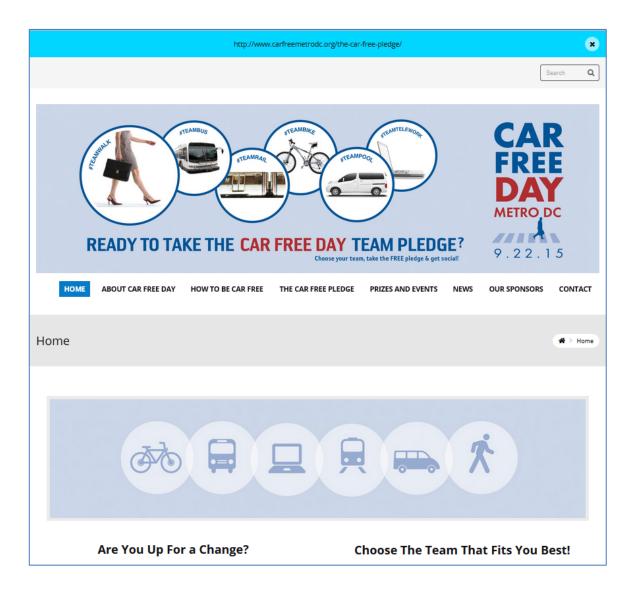


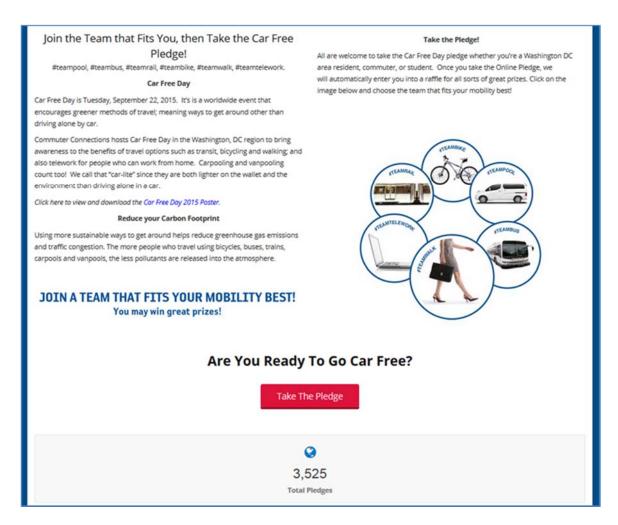




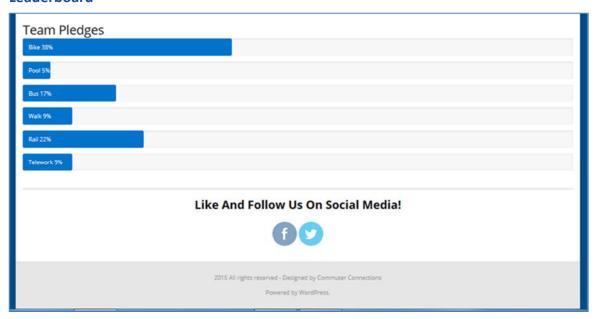
Website

An all new responsive website was created for Car Free Day 2015, launched in mid-August. The WordPress website contained enhanced functionality including a real time leaderboard displaying pledges by team. The Car Free Day website was visited 21,458 times with 15,751 of those visitors being unique. The total number of pages viewed were 39,499, the average number of pages viewed per session were 1.84, and the per session average duration of time spent on the CFD web site was 1 min and 41 seconds.



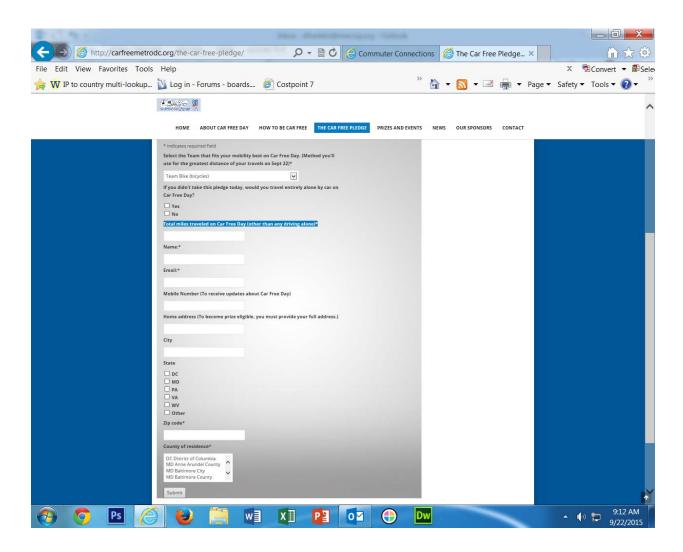


Leaderboard



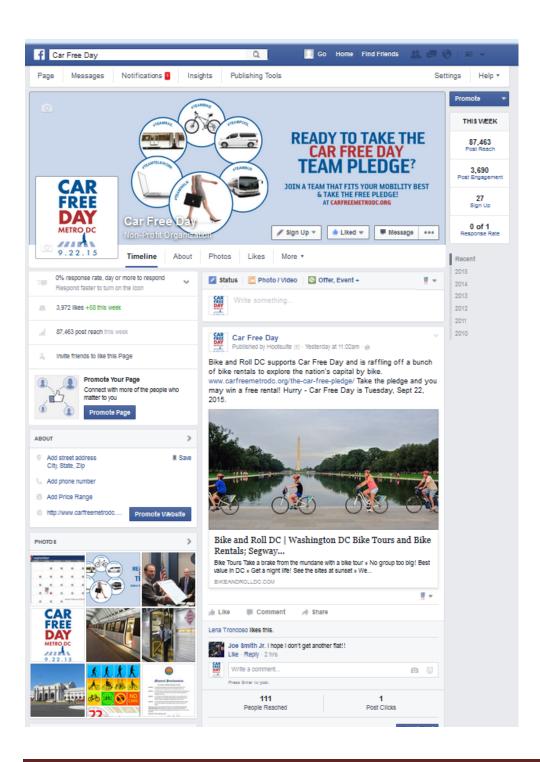
Pledge Form

On the pledge form, in order to track whether one was going car free or car lite on Sept 22, visitors were asked to select the team that fits their mobility best on Car Free Day. Team choices were #TEAMBUS, #TEAMRAIL, #TEAMPOOL, #TEAMBIKE, #TEAMWALK, and #TEAMTELEWORK.



Social Media

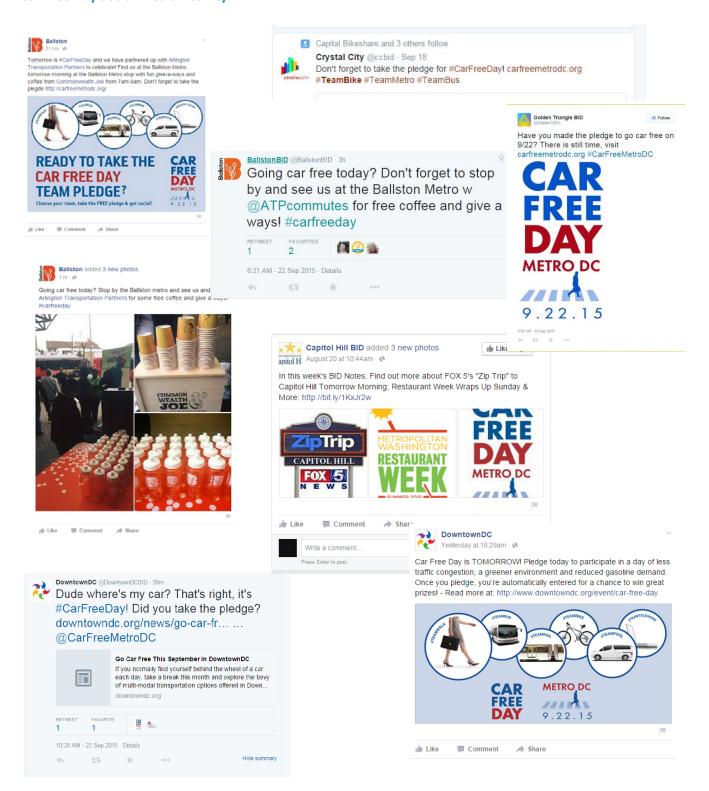
A Car Free Day Facebook page was used to keep friends of the event up to date on activities prior to and following the event. Car Free Day added over 100 Likes in 2015, for a total of nearly 4,000.



Twitter was used to promote Car Free Day activities and sponsors, and to engage with the public. Car Free Day increased its followers by 125 on Twitter, for a total of 600. The following hashtags were created for the various teams for use on Twitter: #TEAMBUS, #TEAMRAIL, #TEAMPOOL, #TEAMBIKE, #TEAMWALK, and #TEAMTELEWORK.



Car Free Day Social Media Activity











City of Frederick @FredCityGovt · Aug 25



ı Like Page

AASHTO and 1 other follow
MD TRIP @MD_TRIP · Aug 31

10:35 AM - 31 Aug 2015 - Details

For those on #TeamWalk, how will you safely participate in @CarFreeMetroDC

#CarFreeDay if your sidewalks are a mess? wapo.st/1Evwlkl

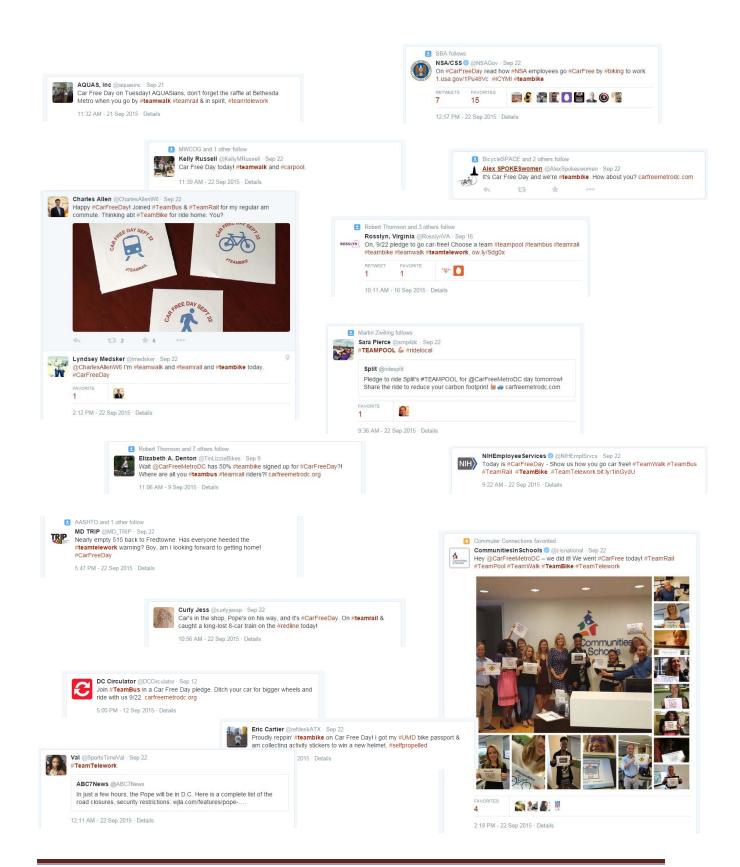


Department of Energy & Environment

4 hrs · 🚱

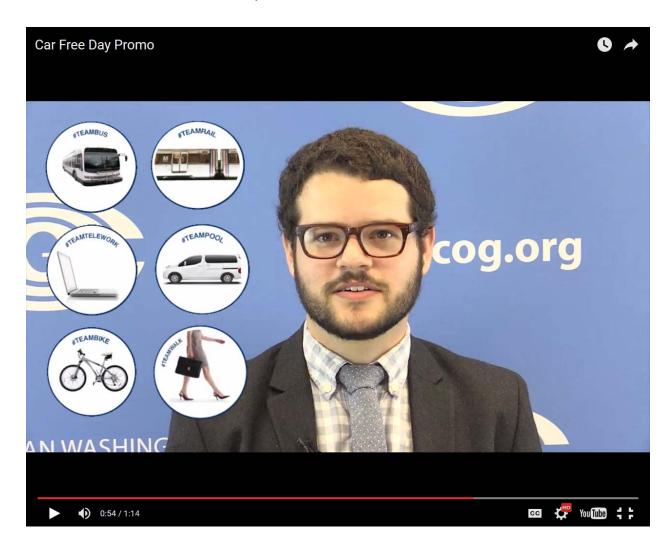
Did you know that leaving your car at home just two days a week will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 1,600 pounds per year? A small change, but a big difference. What alternative transportation methods work for you? #CarFreeMetroDC

(3 Likes



YouTube

The Council of Governments produced a Car Free Day promotional video with Steering Committee Chair, Jonathan Bollhoefer. The video was placed on You Tube and on the event web site, under 'About Car Free Day'.



Clean Air Partners produced a promotional video to provide a fun visual about the various types of green-minded car free travel. The video was placed on the event web site, under 'How to be Car Free'.



Jurisdiction Activities

Commuter Connections' network members hosted numerous to promote and celebrate Car Free Day.



The City of Alexandria's Local Motion program awarded free T-shirts on Car Free Day to the first 100 people who live and/or work in Alexandria who took the pledge.





In Arlington free coffee, snacks, and giveaways were provided in Ballston, Crystal City and Rosslyn by the respective Business Improvement Districts for those who took the Car Free Day pledge. The Ballston and Rosslyn events occurred at Metro stations, and the Crystal City event took place at the Crystal City Water Park.





On Car Free Day Fairfax County Department of Transportation held a Transportation Expo at the Fairfax County Government Center. In attendance were Fairfax Connector, Metro, VRE and other related vendors.









TransIT Services of Frederick County made it easy to give transit a try on Car Free Day by providing free rides on Connector and shuttle buses throughout the entire day.





Loudoun County Commuter Services offered a chance to those who live and/or work in Loudoun County who took the Car Free Day pledge to become eligible for a raffle to win one of two \$75 VISA gift cards.



Montgomery County Commuter Services celebrated Car Free Day at Metro stations in Bethesda, Friendship Heights, Shady Grove, Silver Spring and Twinbrook. Plus, the Germantown Transit Center, and select Ride On bus stops.



Friday Night Farmers Market - Friday, September 18, 2015 – Tri County Council for Southern Maryland was at the North Beach Board Walk promoting Car Free Day at the Town of North Beach's Farmers Market.





The University of Maryland held their Terp Transportation Fair on Car Free Day. Commuter Connections and other vendors were on hand.





Prizes and Sponsors

Donated prizes were offered as incentives to people pledging to go car free or car-lite. Local businesses and organizations that donating goods or services gained exposure, and were associated with a cause that contributed to the betterment of the region's traffic congestion and air quality. Sponsors included:































Raffle Prize Donations

- Kindle, courtesy Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
- SmarTrip card with \$25 in fare, courtesy Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
- Commuter train round-trip passes up to \$23, courtesy Virginia Railway Express
- Capital Bikeshare annual memberships \$85, courtesy goDCgo
- Pizza restaurant gift cards \$25, courtesy Mellow Mushroom of Adams Morgan and Herndon
- Snack-filled gift bag, courtesy KIND Healthy Snacks
- Bike shop gift certificate \$250, courtesy BicycleSPACE
- Six Flags America pair of tickets \$124, courtesy Six Flags America
- Organic food restaurant gift card \$50, courtesy sweetgreen
- Bike rentals \$40, courtesy Bike and Roll DC





Janet, Grand Prize winner.

THIS IS YOUR TICKET



Six Flags America

Complimentary Ticket

2015 Six Flags America One-day Admission, Valid 04/02/2015 - 11/01/2015

TICKET # 1499150881259808 REQUEST # 691963 CONFIRMATION # CT-ZDC9ENQ2G Valid From 04/02/2015 To 11/01/2015









Sponsor Social Media Activity

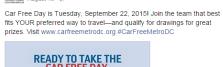






Bike and Roll DC

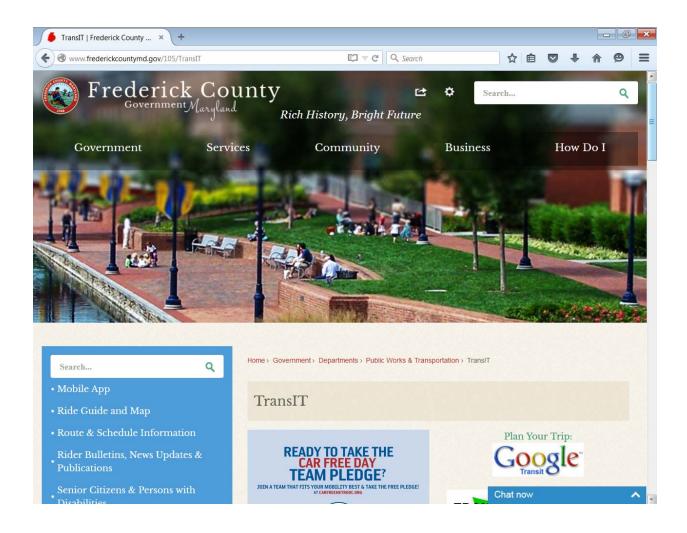


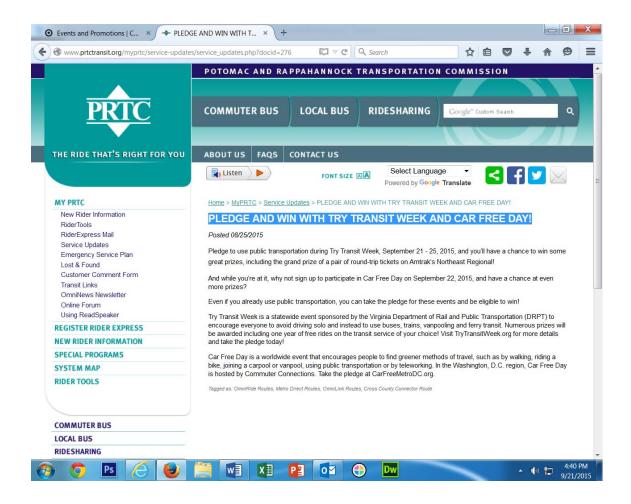




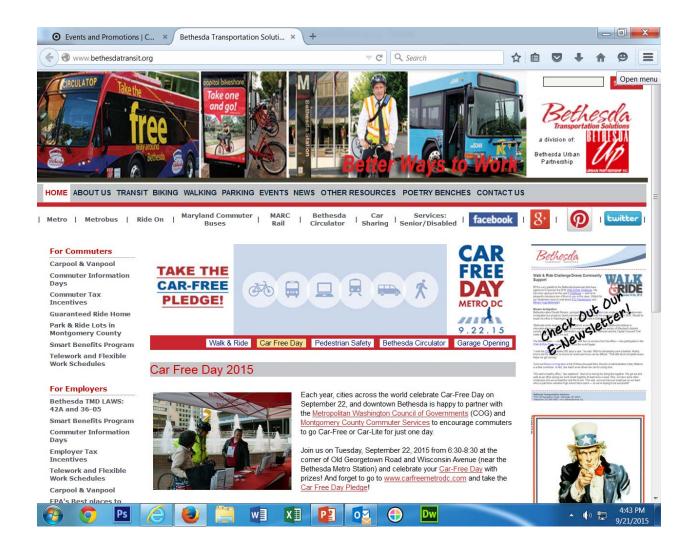


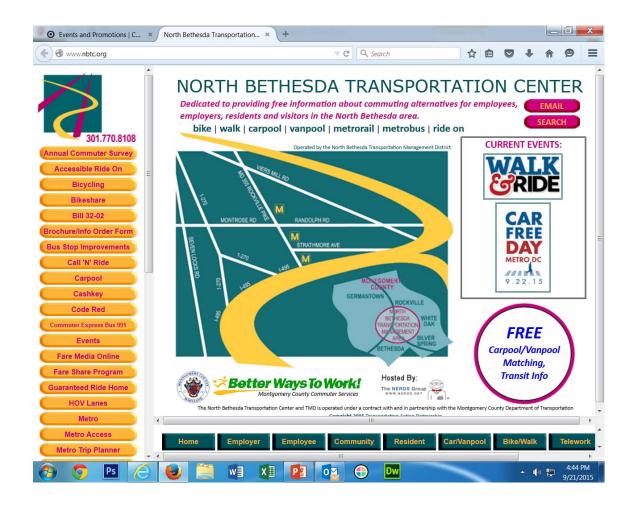
Commuter Connections Network Members and Affiliate Outreach

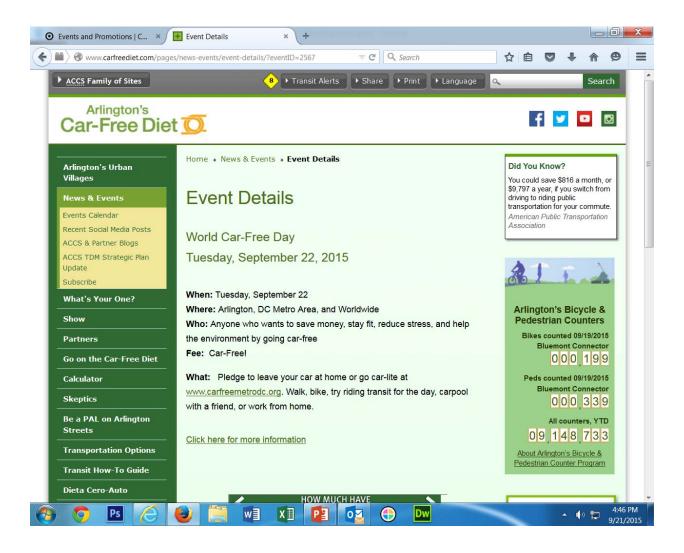


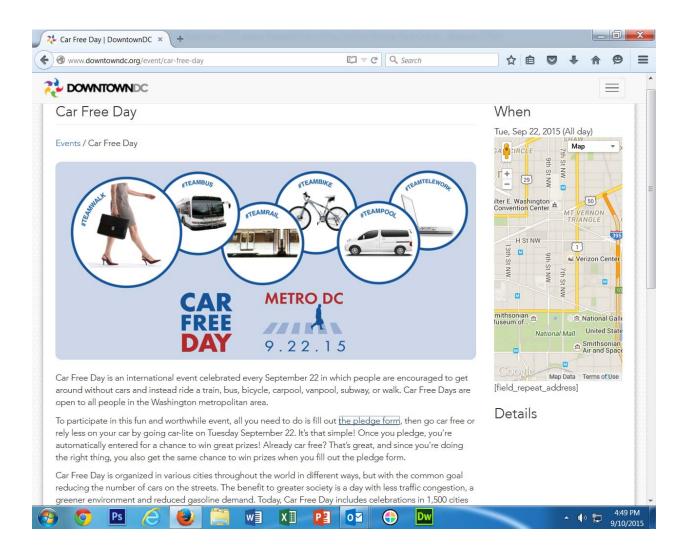




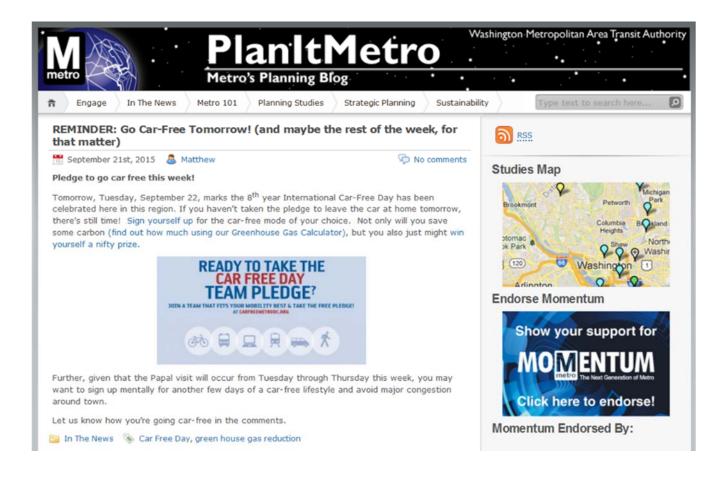














Capital Area Car Free College Campus Challenge

The Capital Area Car Free College Campus Challenge was created as a friendly competition to generate a buzz about Car Free Day on college campuses throughout the region. Eight universities encouraged their students, faculty and administration to take the Car Free pledge. The total number of pledges with .edu email addresses was 595, a 149% increase over last year. Below are the totals by institution.

Georgetown University	512
University of Maryland	22
George Mason University	43
George Washington University	11
American University	4
Northern Virginia Community College	3
University of D.C.	0
Howard University	0

















College Social Media Activity



Earned Media

A strategic calendar of media releases was designed to build momentum, beginning with a calendar listing one month ahead and continuing with several press releases, each focused on a different benefit of participation, and highlights of new features for the 2015 event. The team pitched the following press releases to newspapers, magazines, radio and televisions stations, and social media:

- Prizes, Promotions, and a Papal Visit—Great Reasons to Take the Pledge to Go Car Free on September 22 9-16-15
- Pledge for Car Free Day and Choose Your Team! MWCOG Press Release 8-13-15





CONTACT:

Allie Zamow: (914) 821-5100; azamow@asc-pr.com Steve Kania: (202) 962-3249; skania@mwcog.org

Sent: September 16, 2015

Prizes, Promotions, and a Papal Visit—Great Reasons to Take the Pledge to Go Car Free on September 22

Regional Businesses, Transit Agencies Support Annual Car Free Day Event

Washington, D.C. — Regional businesses are partnering with Commuter Connections to demonstrate their support for area residents and commuters who are pledging to celebrate Car Free Day on Tuesday, September 22, by providing great prizes. And this year, the Papal visit adds another great reason to participate. Pope Francis' arrival in the District of Columbia will entail street closures and traffic delays. Leaving your car at home, teleworking, or opting for another way to travel such as bicycling, walking, transit, or ridesharing will help to reduce the impact.

All residents in the region, including those who already use alternative modes of transportation, are encouraged to take the pledge at www.carfreemetrodc.org, and help reduce traffic on September 22 and during the entire week. The busy week in D.C. includes a three game Battle of the Beltways night series at Nationals Park between the Washington Nationals and Baltimore Orioles, starting Monday September 21. In addition, award winning artist Ed Sheeran will be performing at the Verizon Center on September 22 and 23.

Car Free Day is an annual worldwide event that encourages green travel options and environmental awareness, and the benefits of alternatives to drive-alone transportation. Taking the pledge to go car free offers a chance to win great prizes donated by our regional sponsors, whether you pledge as #teambike, #teamwalk, #teamrail, #teambus, #teampool or #teamtelework.

"We encourage everyone to take the Car Free Day pledge and enjoy the promotions and events to celebrate the region's green transportation options," said Nicholas Ramfos,

The Washington Post

Q: Car-free day

y A

My employer is pushing Tuesday as a car-free day and encouraging people to ride Metro. At first, I thought is was a joke. The pope is in town, there is a baseball game and a concert. That alone would make me wary of taking the train. But to add to it, Metro is constantly single-tracking, checking tunnels for smoke and dealing with police or fire activity at stations. Can you make a good case for me to leave my automobile at home Tuesday and take Metro. I cannot think of a single reason, including cost. By the time I pay for parking at a Metro garage and put money on my Metro card, I am over my transportation budget for the day.

A: Robert Thomson

Good for your employer, and I hope many people are aware of this annual event. See more about Car Free Day here.

Sponsors encourage commuters to leave their cars at home and travel by train, bus, carpool, vanpool, bike, on foot -- or telecommute.

Metrorail has plenty of problems, and I'm not into transportation ideology, so if Metrorail doesn't work for you, don't take it.

For me, Metrorail almost always works, because it means I don't have to

Performance Results

A total of 3,442 people took the pledge to go Car Free or Car-Lite on September 22, 2015. The breakdown by mode is as follows: Team Bike 35%, Team Rail 22%, Team Bus 17%, Team Walk 13%, Team Telework 8%, and Team Pool 5%. Each state generated at least 1,000 pledges and at least 30% of the total. Virginia residents generated 36 percent of the pledges, District 32 percent, Maryland 31 percent, and other 1 percent. The top three jurisdictions were the District of Columbia 32 percent, Montgomery County 21 percent, and Fairfax County 12 percent.

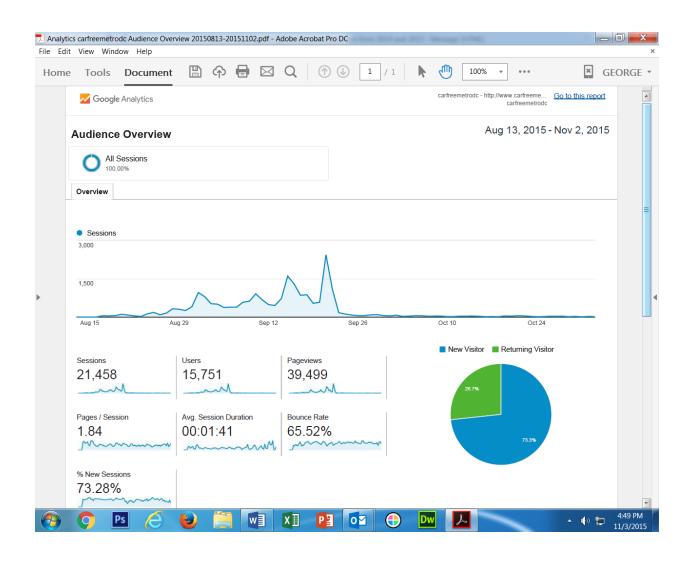
In order to separate those already in alternative modes from SOV travelers, the question was asked "If you didn't take this pledge, would you travel entirely alone by car on Car Free Day?" Those who pledged were asked to estimate the total miles they will travel on Car Free Day, other than any distance they may drive alone, such as to the park and ride lot. The total mileage saved on Car Free Day was 61,730 miles. Those identified as the SOV group consisted of 29%, 17,596 of the vehicle miles reduced. Total trip reduction on CFD by the SOV group is unknown, it is at least however 876 trips reduced, and possible double that given the high likelihood they made round trips.

COG/TBP staff provided Car Free Day emissions impacts, in tons. NOx or nitrogen oxides are the chemical in automotive exhaust; VOC or volatile organic compounds are ground-water contaminants; GHG or greenhouse gasses are released into the atmosphere and absorb and emit radiation; and Particulate Matter are microscopic matter suspended in the earth's atmosphere.

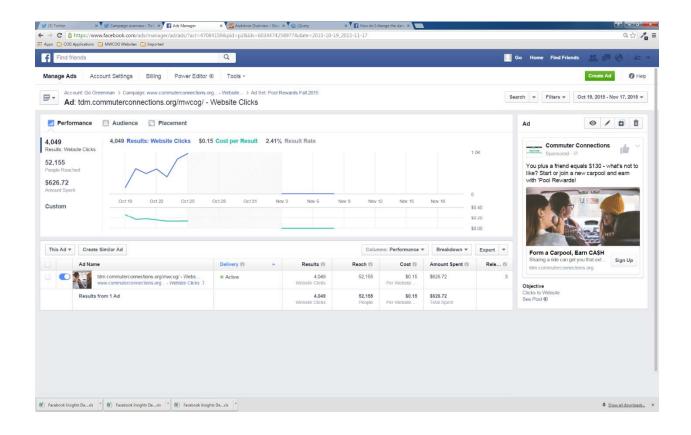
Jurisdiction (Sorted by # Pledges)	# Pledges	% Pledges
DC District of Columbia	1,093	31.8%
MD Montgomery County	719	20.9%
VA Fairfax County	405	11.8%
VA Arlington County	321	9.3%
VA Alexandria City	165	4.8%
VA Prince William County	165	4.8%
MD Prince George's County	147	4.3%
VA Loudoun County	121	3.5%
MD Frederick County	48	1.4%
MD Howard County	33	1.0%

Transportation Mode	# Pledges	% Pledges		
Team Bike (bicycles)	1,208	35%		
Team Rail (Metrorail, MARC, VRE)	742	22%		
Team Bus (Metrobus, local bus systems, and commuter buses)	579	17%		
Team Walk	457	13%		
Team Telework	288	8%		
Team Pool (carpools and vanpools)	168	5%		
	3,442	100%		
Usual Travel Status	# of Pledges	% of Pledges	Miles Saved on CFD	% of Miles
Alt modes	2,378	69%	40,723	66%
SOV	876	25%	17,596	29%
No response given	188	5%	3,411	6%
	3,442	100%	61,730	100%
State	# Pledges	% Pledges		
Virginia	1,235	35.9%		
District	1,093	31.8%		
Maryland	1,055	30.7%		
Other	44	1.3%		
West Virginia	15	0.4%		
	3,442	100%		
Emissions Reductions	NOX	voc	GHG	PM2.5
(in short tons/day)	0.032	0.025	28.98	0.00116

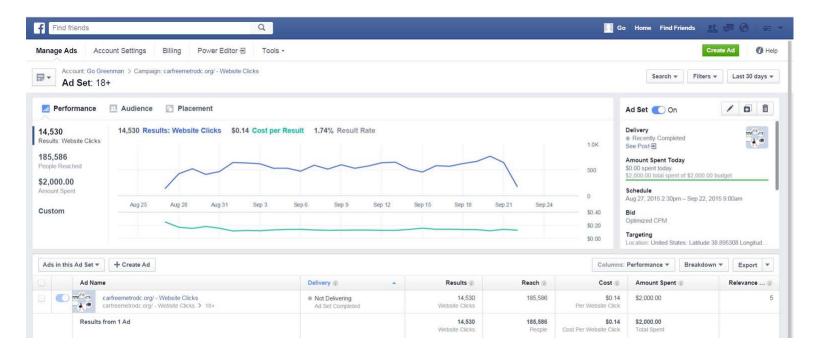
Car Free Day Website Traffic



Facebook Ad



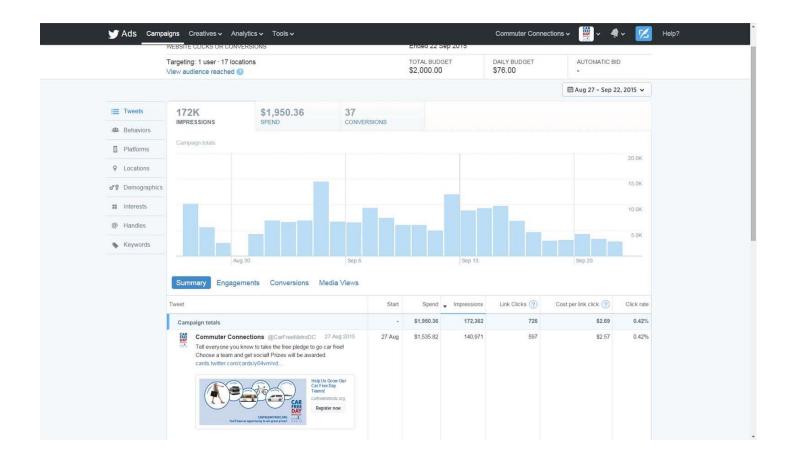
Car Free Day Facebook Analytics



Car Free Day Twitter Analytics

Appendix of Media Placements

The publicity team secured interviews and encouraged media outlets to place Car Free Day news stories. A total of 41 known placements appeared in newspapers, radio, television, newsletters and blogs, including the Washington Post, WTOP, WMAL and WUSA9.



CFD 2015 Print & Online Coverage - 28		
Date	Outlet	Topic linked to URL
7/26/2015	WTOP	Car-free day coming Sept. 23
8/17/2015	Frederick News Post	On the Move: Car Maintenance 101
0/25/2045	The Difference	PARK(ING) DAY PERMIT APPLICATIONS NOW BEING
8/25/2015	The Hill is Home	ACCEPTED
8/25/2015	The Wash Cycle	Going car free: it isn't just for New Yorkers
9/1/2015	Capital Bikeshare	Go #teambike for Car Free Day
9/1/2015	VRE Ride Magazine	PARTICIPATE IN TRY TRANSIT WEEK AND CAR FREE DAY
9/1/2015	The Washington Post - Dr. Gridlock	<u>Live Chat</u>
9/8/2015	Downtown DC BID	Go Car Free This September in DowntownDC
9/8/2015	Montgomery County Maryland	Join MCDOT and participate in Car Free Day on September 22
9/11/2015	Prince William Chamber of	Try Transit Week and Car Free Day Encourage Driving
	Commerce	Alternatives
9/13/2015	Groundswell	HOW CAN WE MAKE THE CAR-FREE MOVEMENT MORE
9/13/2013	Groundswell	INCLUSIVE?
9/13/2015	Rebuilding Place in the Urban Space	Metro DC Car Free Day, September 22nd
9/13/2015	The Washington Post - Local	Prince William County news in brief
9/15/2015	ATP Blog	Car Free Day is in One Week
9/16/2015	Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland	Pledge for Car Free Day and Choose Your Team!
9/17/2015	Maid to Clean	Car Free Day! September 22, 2016
9/17/2015	Market Watch	Walker & Dunlop Recognized as the 5th Healthiest
9/17/2013	ivial ket watch	Employer in DC Region
9/18/2015	AAA Mid-Atlantic	There is No Battle of the Sexes on Car Free Day, Yet With
3/18/2013	AAA WIIG-Adandic	the Papal Visit it is Wise to Take the Pledge
9/18/2015	Alexandria News	Take Car Free Day Pledge On September 22
9/21/2015	Frederick News Post	On the Move: Car-free day urges drivers to take a hike
9/21/2015	Greater Greater Washington	Events roundup: Go car free
9/21/2015	Just DC News	EVENTS ROUNDUP: GO CAR FREE
9/21/2015	PlanIt Metro	REMINDER: Go Car-Free Tomorrow! (and maybe the rest
3/21/2013	Fiailit WetiO	of the week, for that matter)
9/21/2015	Red Brick Town	Go Car Free in Alexandria, Virginia on World Car Free Day!
9/22/2015	ATP Blog	Today is Car Free Day
9/22/2015	The Tysons Corner	<u>Car Free Day in Tysons</u>

9/26/2015	The Washington Post - Transportation	Repeat the easy travel seen during the pope's visit? It would take a miracle.
10/6/15	The Hoya	GU Wins Car Free Challenge

CFD 2015 Radio Coverage - 2		
Date	Outlet	Topic linked to URL
9/17/2015	WMAL	Car Free Day Interview with Nick Ramfos WMAL (1)_9.17.17 .wav WMAL (2)_9.17.17 .wav
9/21/2015	WPFW	Car Free Day Interview with Nick Ramfos

CFD 2015 Newsletters & Calendars - 10		
Date	Outlet	Topic linked to URL
8/20/2015	Adams Morgan BID Partnership	Car Free Day - September 22
9/11/2015	Adams Morgan BID Partnership	Car Free Day - September 23
9/21/2015	The Magnet - Ballston BID	Where Minds Meet
8/19/2015 Capitol Hill BID Notes	Carital Hill DID Notes	Call for Businesses to Support Car Free Day on
	Capitol fill Bib Notes	<u>September 22, 2015</u>
9/10/2015	Downtown DC Update	Go Car Free This September in DowntownDC
8/25/2015	goDCgo Employer News	Ditch the Keys and Go Car-Free Next Month
September	Bethesda Magazine	Car Free Day 2015
September	InsideNOVA	Car Free Day 2015
September	Bike Arlington	World Car Free Day
September	Washingtonian	Car Free Day 2015

CFD 2015 Television Coverage - 1		
ate	Outlet	Topic linked to URL
9/17/2015	WUSA 9	Car Free Day Interview with Nick Ramfos