

Regional TDM Marketing Group

December 6, 2005 Meeting

**Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
10:00 a.m. – Meeting Room 3**

1. Introductions

2. Minutes of October 4, 2005 Meeting

The minutes were approved as written.

3. 2005 TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan

Douglas Franklin distributed the final 2005 edition of the Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan for approval. This annual guide serves as a resource for TDM products, research, and marketing activities conducted within the Washington metropolitan region. It outlines the strategies used to develop and implement ongoing campaigns in order to increase overall awareness of TDM products and services and adoption of alternative transportation modes. This is a collaborative report with contributions from transit agencies and Transportation Management Associations, as well as local Governments, state and Federal agencies. The report was approved by the marketing group.

4. Maryland Transit Administration

Rich Solli from MTA provided an overview of The Greater Baltimore Bus Initiative that began on October 23, 2005. The initiative is the biggest set of improvements in the history of the Baltimore area bus system and its theme is “Your new ride, our new Attitude.”

An integrated marketing campaign was launched to communicate the positive changes surrounding the new and improved system. 60-second English and Spanish spots introduced the roll out of over 200 new state-of-the-art low floor buses, as well as changes to twenty routes. The route changes simplified or improved frequency of service and connections to other bus routes and rail service.

Other radio spots focused on common courtesy and respect among passengers. “Respect the ride” messages included the suggestion to younger bus patrons to give seats to seniors, keep the noise to a minimum and do not deface seats with graffiti. Other ads involved safety and were narrated by MTA Administrator Lisa Dickerson. The safety message was geared toward school age kids, as Baltimore City kids ride MTA buses to school. Messages included - never run for the bus; stay seated until the bus comes to a complete stop; look out for cars, do not jump or hang on exterior of buses.

Other elements of The Greater Baltimore Bus Initiative included clear door hanger bags with a “Your bus stop may be moving” flyer, a Pocket Size System Map and a postage paid Time table request card. A full size system map was also developed which included all the new route changes.

5. Commuter Connections Marketing

Donna Maguire from NDW Communications discussed fall marketing activities for Commuter Connections and a preview of second half fiscal year plans.

The FY06 plan calls for continued high reach & frequency through mainstream and 60-second spot market radio. Total radio media spending for FY06 for the first half of the fiscal year was \$159,267. This encompassed a five week flight which aired from mid October until the week of Thanksgiving.

50% of the spots were aired during am drive, 40% pm drive and 10% during off peak hours. Three new spots were developed for FY06; ridematching services- “Men, women and sharing” (50% Rotation); overall alternative mode spot “Super Commuter” (25% Rotation); and a GRH ad “Satisfaction Guaranteed” (25% Rotation). In order to target the active listener concerned about traffic congestion, the fall flight also included sponsorship of the traffic report on all Clear Channel stations. These 15 second sponsorships aired at a cost of \$25,500.

The FY06 campaign will place emphasis on the Commuter Connections ridematching service. Ms. Maguire noted that changing behavior to ridesharing presents a larger challenge than registering for Guaranteed Ride Home programs for commuters already in alternative modes. The overall ridematch message aims to increase awareness that finding a potential rideshare partner is “free, quick and easy through Commuter Connections” and that “it just takes two to benefit from carpooling/vanpooling” (in terms of the cost savings). The campaign will however continue to support ridesharing via the assurance of GRH.

Other highlights from the first half of the fiscal year included a free web banner on TrafficLand.com which generated 500,000 impressions; the creation of collateral for the 2006 Employer Recognition Awards nomination materials and the quarterly newsletter.

Ms. Maguire provided a preview of the second half of the fiscal year centered around the direct marketing campaign. The mailing will be targeted based upon the use of a PRIZM analysis of the Commuter Connections rideshare database. The mailer distribution will identify and pinpoint target neighborhoods that have a high propensity to carpool/vanpool. The message to most households will emphasize the cost savings aspect of ridesharing, exploiting the recent high gas prices. Maryland households within close proximity of HOV lanes will receive a mailer which also incorporates an HOV message.

Other aspects of the FY06 campaign will include an employer component which will include qualitative research with level 2-3 employers. This research aims to gain insight about challenges employers face and how they feel Commuter Connections may become a greater resource. New brochures for GRH, Ridematching and overall Commuter Connections services are under development and will be made available in the first quarter of 2006. The new brochures will take on a sleek look and feel and will incorporate photography. Finally, other considerations for the second half of the fiscal year includes the possibility of billboards to coincide with the rideshare campaign.

A draft Marketing Campaign Summary report was issued for the First Half of FY06.

6. Fairfax Connector Celebration

This item was postponed until the February marketing meeting.

7. Commuter Store Re-opening

Jay Freschi Project Manager for the Arlington County Commuter Stores gave a presentation about the recent grand re-opening of the Rosslyn location. Commuter Stores provide personal customer service, transforming fare sales to a consultative approach in a convenient retail environment to those who live or work in Arlington. Large customer counter space allows staff members to work with customers without being stuck behind the desk.

The first store opened in Ballston in 1989 and more locations were added in Crystal City and Rosslyn in the early 90's. The stores have become a prototype model whose concept has been replicated around the region and country. The stores provide a one-stop shop for every kind of transportation information. Combined the stores generate 200,000 annual customers and \$6 million in annual sales.

The Rosslyn store opened in 1994 and had no major cosmetic changes during the first 10+ years until it was remodeled in July of 2005. During the ten-week construction phase the existing store remained open to minimize customer impact. The old retail space was retained and converted into a new distribution center for the County which nearly tripled the previous storage square footage. The new expanded storage allows management to keep more inventory on hand for popular schedules and maps.

The Rosslyn Commuter Store contains a new interactive map display which allows customers to electronically view various commuting maps. This technology replaced seven old paper maps and added ten additional maps in one easy to use 42" display. Other hi-tech features of the store include electronic Bus departure and arrival information; silent "infomercials" to promote other TDM projects; real-time weather and traffic information and breaking news stories.

Two user stations allow customers to plan trips, register SmarTrip cards and join Car/Vanpools. The store has also contracted with a "Hot-Spot" provider to allow wireless laptop users to gain internet access at no charge while visiting the store.

8. Calendar of Events / Marketing Round Table

This was an opportunity to go around the room and have meeting participants share recent advertising, marketing collateral and information, and to discuss news or upcoming events happening within their organizations.

9. Other Business / Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Marketing Group members were asked to provide any suggestions for topics for the next Regional TDM Marketing meeting to be held on Tuesday February 7, 2006. No suggestions were offered at this time.