



## REGIONAL TDM MARKETING GROUP

### MEETING NOTES

December 19, 2023

#### 1. Introductions

Committee members, guests, and other attendees introduced themselves by name and affiliation.

#### 2. Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the September 19, 2023 Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting were approved as written.

#### 3. FY24 Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP)

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, reviewed the FY 2024 Washington Metropolitan Region TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP) final draft report. The initial FY24 SMP draft document was presented at the September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and an open comment period was held through October 31<sup>st</sup>. The SMP serves as a resource for TDM products and services available in the region; features key activity centers; provides a snapshot of planned marketing activity by Commuter Connections and its various network members; and contains summaries of TDM research conducted over the past five years. The SMP also includes a profile of the region's population and job growth, its impact on mobility, and how transportation planning and TDM play a vital role as part of the Congestion Management Process. Key sections of the document were reviewed and the FY24 SMP was endorsed by the Regional TDM Marketing Group for final release and will be posted to the Commuter Connections website.

#### 4. Commuter Connections FY24 Marketing Activity

Dan O'Donnell and Mark Wirth, Odonnell Company, presented regional TDM marketing activity of Commuter Connections for the first half of FY24. A regional marketing campaign ran in fall 2023 to promote the Rideshare and GRH programs. The FY24 First Half Marketing Campaign Summary Draft report was distributed, which covers the time period from July to December 2023. The final version of the report will be issued at the March 2024 meeting.

The FY24 fall media buy for Rideshare was \$360,000 with a theme of "Better Together." The campaign consisted of traditional English and Spanish radio, mobile billboards, gas pump toppers, convenience store signage, digital banner ads, YouTube, and social media. The FY24 fall media buy for Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) was \$240,000 and used a similarly designed creative with a simple "Free Ride Guaranteed!" message. The GRH campaign consisted of traditional English and Spanish radio, mobile billboards, gas pump toppers, convenience store signage, digital banner ads, YouTube, and social media. The GRH Baltimore portion of the FY24 fall campaign was \$25,000 and consisted of traditional English radio.

The fall 'Pool Rewards regional media buy was \$20,000 and promoted the standard \$130 payout to carpoolers, and \$200 monthly subsidy to vanpools with a message of "Share the Ride, Make a Buck". The media mix included broadcast radio, digital banner ads, social media, and a sponsored native article. The campaign also promoted a bonus 'Pool Rewards offer of \$100, on top of the usual \$130, when traveling

through the 495NEXT corridor. This portion of the campaign was part of value-added media provided by WTOP for VDOT's I-495 Express Lanes Northern Extension project. The FY24 fall media buy for CarpoolNow was \$15,000 and promoted the real-time app for carpools and vanpools, and its \$10 per trip driver incentive. The campaign consisted of radio and social media, and a sponsorship of iHeart Radio's Jingle Ball at Capital One Area.

A marketing campaign promoted the Car Free Day event held on September 22, 2023. Pledges topped 5,100, a 26 percent increase above the 2022 event. The Bike to Work Day sponsor drive began in October 2023 and will remain open through January 31, 2024. To kick off the Employer Recognition Awards call for nominations, a nomination brochure and form with the "The Stars Among Us" theme were developed and mailed to employers in early December 2023. The awards nomination period will also remain open through January 31, 2024.

A commuter survey was conducted during the fall to develop a new brand name for the incenTrip app; CommuterCash emerging as the new name. As part of a Commuter Connections website refresh, new templates were developed ahead of a launch during the second half of FY24. Lastly, new creative concepts were designed for the spring 2024 GRH and Rideshare umbrella campaigns.

#### **5. Prince William County Marketing**

Ivanna Baez, OmniRide, presented marketing activity for Prince William County. OmniRide experienced several challenges by way of a bus operator a work stoppage and bus driver shortage, which temporarily impacted reliability of the bus service. In 2021, OmniRide celebrated its 35th anniversary, rolled out new buses for its commuter bus service, and opened its OmniRide western bus maintenance and storage facility. In 2022, free Sunday service was debuted along certain routes, and was promoted with bus wraps. Also in 2022, OmniRide Connect MicroTransit was debuted, as well as an Express Route connecting Manassas with the Dulles Corridor. The Express Route was promoted using print and social media. A "Senior Summit" was held in 2023 with print, Comcast TV, and WTOP Sponsored Facebook used to promote the event. The summit was open to seniors, their families, and caregivers. Also in 2023, Saturday bus service and mobility services begin in the Manassas area and was promoted in print and social media. Additionally, a commuter bus ribbon cutting, and a "Transit and Treats" Halloween bus event took place in 2023.

#### **6. FY23 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented results from the FY23 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Customer Satisfaction Survey for the Washington region. Of the 564 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2023, 61 (11%) surveys were completed, and the vast majority (95%) of respondents were pleased with the overall GRH service. At 33 percent, personal illness was the most reported reason for using the service. Written responses were provided by 64 percent of respondents and the majority contained compliments vs. criticism, more than a 4 to 1 margin. For each program category, good or excellent ratings were given by 87 percent or more of respondents. The average response wait time was 20 minutes and 90 percent waited 30 minutes or less.

#### **7. Marketing Round Table/Calendar of Events**

Meeting participants discussed marketing related news, plans, and upcoming events within their organizations.

Antoinette Rucker, Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority, stated that Metro eliminated its \$2 SmarTrip card fee for seniors 65+ and announced the launch of 24/7 late night service on fourteen bus routes in DC. This is an effort to help companies in the hospitality and other industries who have employees working beyond when bus service has been previously provided. This action may spur interest in SmartBenefits by such employers.

Kerry McKenney, GWRideConnect, mentioned that it has been helping OmniRide with outreach for the southern Prince William County Express Route. Recent events included the fall festival, Fredericksburg Christmas Tree lighting, and the Pentagon transportation fair. Student carpooling was promoted for Germanna Community College's Welcome Day. GWRideConnect is running a social media campaign called "Vanuary" with a native article on the Stafford County website. A 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo was developed for 2024, and a new marketing campaign will be launched called "Revolutionize your Commute!", featuring George Washington.

George Clark, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, shared advice not to run a Don't Drink and Drive ad for the holidays at same time as promoting the Guaranteed Ride Home program, to avoid getting calls from inebriated people who think GRH provides late night free rides. A social media campaign is promoting Maryland Commuter Choice, GRH, and Rideshare programs. Lastly, Tri-County will be at an Annapolis event with a booth in the Southern MD delegation section.

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

The next Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2024, from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm.