

Regional TDM Marketing Meeting

Minutes – April 6, 2004

1. **Introductions** – See Sign-in sheet
2. **Minutes of the February 3, 2004 meeting**

Minutes were approved

3. **Bike to Work day**

Douglas Franklin discussed marketing plans for Bike To Work Day occurring on Friday May 7th. Bike to Work day brochures and posters are being distributed through Pit Stop managers, Federal ETC's through GSA, the Commuter Connections Employer database, WABA, and to area bike shops. Mr. Franklin outlined the layout of the brochure, and noted that there is a downloadable pdf format version available on the WABA's website. Mr. Franklin also discussed some of the incentives of registering for bike to work day, including a free t-shirt and a chance to win one of three high-end bikes.

Mr. Franklin also reviewed the Bike To Work Day posters. 40,000 8 ½ x 11's were made with the headline "Work Off Your Morning Donut", and several hundred oversized posters were printed. An second poster, more geared toward the bicycle enthusiasts was made for distribution to local bike shops, with the headline "Sometimes 2 Wheels Are Better Than 4". This poster was also sent in html format to last years participants. "I Biked To Work Today" stickers were also created. There will be a free lunch for the employer who has the most registrants and plaques for some of the smaller employers who generated the most riders. Refreshments and entertainment during the individual events at 19 regional pitstops will be secured by pit stop managers.

\$7,000 was spent on print advertisements, which would run in community newspapers and feature specific information regarding each area's pit stops. There will also be custom vinyl banners designed for each pit stop, to be hung at or near the pit stop location. On the radio, there were a total of 145 60-second spots airing on seven stations, at a cost of \$19,000. The spots mentioned the platinum level sponsors.

There was an announcement at last month's TPB meeting by chair Chris Zimmerman, declaring May 7th Bike To Work Day. Several PSA's also announced the event. A Media Advisory will be issued a week in advance of the event. Many local elected officials and dignitaries, such as District of Columbia Mayor Anthony Williams, Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan and chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Gerald Connolly will be on hand. There will also be various media pitches, to secure pre-event publicity and coverage for the event itself. A Press Release will be sent out on the day of the event through the COG Public Affairs office. The goal for this year is 4,000 riders.

4. Ozone Action Days

Joann Rohlfs introduced herself and noted the marketing for Ozone Action Days is still being worked out. There have been some changes to Ozone Action Days this year which may add more pollutants into the reporting. Also, there will be a change to an eight-hour standard to measure ground-level ozone and they will report particulate matter counts. She then introduced Jennifer Desimone, the COG coordinator for Ozone Action Days.

Ms. Desimone stated that the focus of this year's campaign would be radio spots in DC and Baltimore. They have raised \$80,000 dollars from sponsors so far, and they are working on scheduling the amount of spending they will target in each region. The Baltimore market will receive about half of what is targeted for the DC radio market. The ads will run on a two week on, one week off schedule. They will also be running theatre slides again. Promotional hand fans and sun hats will be distributed at events to raise awareness. There will be a kickoff at the Maryland Department of Environment on May 3rd, and a kickoff at COG on May 5th.

Nicholas Ramfos asked if there would be any change the previous ads for Ozone Action Days. Mrs. Desimone said they have some existing ads, but are planning to add more. Mr. Ramfos mentioned that Commuter Connections may be able to commit additional funds to the campaign to feature teleworking. It was asked if any transit posters would be printed and made available. Mrs. Desimone said there wouldn't be due to limited budget. It was suggested that a pdf file be created and distributed to transit agencies so they could make their own posters. Muriel Bowser asked if there would be any way to measure employer participation, to which Ms. Rohlfs replied that it would be available in a database.

5. Commuter Connections Media Impact Lead Analysis

Gail Cooperman, Director of Client Services for Dudnyk Advertising presented response to Commuter Connections marketing efforts from Sept '03 – Feb '04. She discussed the goals of the Commuter Connections Marketing Program, which were to convert SOV drivers into alternative commute modes through heightened awareness of Commuter Connections services, and enrollment in GRH and ridesharing programs. Ms. Cooperman recapped research conducted prior to the campaign launch, which indicated that the most compelling reason to take alternative transportation was to reduce frustration and stress associated with driving alone, while biggest obstacle was a fear of being stranded. Other beneficial reasons for switching to alternative modes, exalted in the ads included cost-savings, and reduction in travel time.

Ms. Cooperman discussed the layout of the campaign. It consisted of heavy media, mixing a variety of different mediums to achieve desired results. The response data demonstrated an increase in the number of collective inquiries from both the 800 number and website. There was also an increase in the number of GRH and ridesharing applicants from the previous campaign to the current campaign. Specifically, the results

have driven an increase in customer inquiries to the extent that web visits alone equal the combined phone and web response from a year ago. Additionally there have been more than 33% more applications to the Guaranteed Ride Home program and 54% more rideshare applicants. This clearly shows an increase in awareness of Commuter Connections and the services it provides.

6. FY04 – 2nd Half Commuter Connections Campaign Summary

COG staff distributed a draft report on Commuter Connections TDM marketing activity for the second half of FY04. This report provides a summary of the integrated advertising, direct marketing, media, public relations, and interactive campaign for Commuter Connections. The campaign also includes a component directed to the Hispanic community.

Sections of the report indicate media placement and marketing activity for the following areas:

- Guaranteed Ride Home
- Bike To Work Day
- Telework Workshops
- Telework Centers
- InfoExpress Kiosks
- Other TDM Marketing (such as sponsorship of minor league baseball)

7. FY 2003 GRH Customer Satisfaction Survey

Ryan Marshall discussed the results of the 2003 customer satisfaction survey. For continuity and comparison purposes, the survey design remained the same as last year. A total of 2,906 surveys were sent out, and 781 were returned, a return rate of approximately 27%. Responses to questions are below:

- Quality of the GRH Reservation Staff received 610 responses of “Excellent”, 129 “Goods”, 28 “Fairs”, and 13 “Poors”.
- Taxi or Rental Car Service received 542 responses of “Excellent”, 188 “Goods”, 30 “Fairs”, and 12 “Poors”.
- Response Time received 581 “Excellent” responses, 138 “Goods”, 32 “Fairs”, and 28 “Poors”.
- Overall Program received 613 “Excellents”, 129 “Goods”, 24 “Fairs”, and 11 “Poors”.

- Free response received 215 “Compliments”, 53 “Complaints”, 55 “Suggestions”, and 68 “Comments”.

Four themes were evident in the free response questions. First was increasing the number of trips available, however this would not be feasible. Second was finding the right taxi in the right place, which the GRH program already tries to facilitate to the best of its ability. Third was improving registration and re-registration, already improved in FY03, with more improvements in the works.

The other theme in this year’s free response was the quality of taxi cabs and drivers. This was the most common theme in the free response area. It broke down along two lines; First was improving driver knowledge of how the program worked. GRH staff is currently exploring the option of creating a pamphlet for distribution to cab drivers, via the cab companies, regarding the program and how it works. The second type of response had to do with the driver’s general attitude and knowledge of the area. This is hard to control due to the fact that Commuter Connections has no direct interaction with the cab drivers. A possibility would be a reminder to GRH customers of cab company policies, and reminding them to report any questionable or exemplary behavior on the part of their driver.

In conclusion, 94% of respondents were satisfied with the program. More than half of the free responses were compliments and there was a decrease in poor ratings from 2002. The program has shown improvement each year, and is in a refinement stage.

Muriel Bowser noted there is a taxi feedback phone line in Montgomery County, and invited COG staff to refer people to it if they had comments regarding their experiences in Montgomery County taxi cabs, both complaints and compliments.

8. America Walks Conference

Bill Smith was unable to attend the meeting. The conference will be held May 6th to May 8th.

9. Calendar of Events/Other

- Dick Siskind from WMATA updated everyone on the progress of installing SmarTrip on Metro busses. There was a delay due to some software and hardware issues. A decision on changing the busses over is to be made in the near future.
- Buddy Alves discussed MTA Transit Services for Orioles games and the Preakness and passed out new brochures for both.
- Leann Landry from WMATA announced that the new bus system maps were out. They also discussed the change over to a complete SmarTrip only payment for the parking lots. Mr. Ramfos asked how they would handle vacationers. Ms. Landry

said WMATA didn't know just yet, but did say they were going to make it possible to purchase SmarTrip cards in every station. Mr. Siskind said they are already selling cards at Metro Stations two nights week.

- Muriel Bowser from Montgomery County discussed the recent postcard campaign announcing their new "Better Ways to Work" website. To get more people to visit the web site, a free gift (mouse pad) was mentioned on the post card for those who filled out a brief online survey.
- Althea Evans of PRTC discussed her agencies recent unveiling of a children's educational program, designed to introduce kids to the bus. Using an oversized children's book, an oversized board game, and an actual bus driven to the school, they would teach children about bus service and bus safety. They hoped this program would also promote the bus to parents through their children. There would also be a tie in with the library reading program along with giveaway items.
- Kate Konrad of Arlington Transportation Partners announced their Zipcar and Flexcar car sharing kickoff. There are now 25 cars available in Arlington at Metro Stations and other convenient points. They also passed out their new "Solutions" spring newsletter.

10. Set Agenda

Dick Siskind asked for an agenda item on the SmarTrip fareboxes. There will also be an agenda item for the InfoExpress kiosk kickoff promotions for the Dulles and Manassas Malls.