



**REGIONAL TDM MARKETING GROUP  
MEETING NOTES  
December 17, 2013**

**1. Introductions**

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

**2. Minutes of Meeting**

Notes from the September 17, 2013 meeting were approved as written.

**3. FY14 Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP)**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, distributed and reviewed the FY14 Washington Metropolitan Region TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan Final Draft Report. The document outlines a strategy for Commuter Connections to increase awareness of drive alone alternatives; serves as a resource for current TDM products & services available in the region; and provides a snapshot of current and planned marketing activity occurring within the region for Commuter Connections and its various network members. It also contains summaries of TDM research from the last five years. The report was endorsed by the Committee for final release and will be posted to the Commuter Connections web site for distribution to network members and the public.

**4. Commuter Connections FY14 Marketing Activity**

Dan O'Donnell from Odonnell Company discussed recent FY14 marketing activity and presented a preview of the upcoming spring campaign. The Draft FY 2014 1<sup>st</sup> Half Marketing Campaign Summary report was also distributed. In September, over 4,000 took the pledge to go Car Free or Car-Lite, about a third from each State. The top three jurisdictions were the District of Columbia, Montgomery County and Fairfax County. The breakdown by mode for all participants was transit 45%, walking 23%, bicycling 18%, carpool/vanpool 7%, telework 4%, and other 2%. Half of the participants were already using transportation alternatives, and the other half made up of the SOV group reduced their driving by 64,488 miles.

The fall media buy launched at the beginning October and ran through the end of the quarter using ads developed in the previous fiscal year. In addition to radio for both GRH and Rideshare, TV spots ran for Rideshare. Mobile friendly ads were also placed through Pandora, and pre-roll video and companion banner ads were placed through YuMe.

In October, a half page advertisement published within a military newspaper's relocation guide that was distributed at bases throughout the region. The fall 2013 newsletter and Federal ETC Insert was produced and distributed to the ACT! employer database and TDM stakeholders.

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Full page ads were placed in the Virginia MegaProjects 2014 calendar planners produced by VDOT. Placement included the inside front cover and two other interior pages. Commuter Connections also provided a portion of its value added radio spots and online banner ads to VDOT during the fall campaign to promote the use of GRH to I-95 commuters.

Creative concepts for the new spring campaign were developed and feedback was solicited from the marketing workgroup members. The workgroup made selections out of a series of creative visuals and draft radio scripts for both GRH and Rideshare for the new FY14 regional marketing campaign to launch in February 2014. Winning executions were GRH - "Icing on the cake/Cherry on top" and Rideshare ads featured statistics of Commuter Connections members with regard to saving money and vehicle miles traveled. Previews of the workgroup selections were shown to the Committee.

A direct mail piece incorporating the new creative was delivered to 500,000 households within the metropolitan Washington region in late December. The mailers promoted Ridematching and GRH and incorporated the new FY14 creative concepts selected by the workgroup. Recipients were households within the MWCOG footprint, ages 25-64 with annual incomes above \$75,000. Mailers include a postage paid reply mechanism containing a Ridematching and GRH application form.

#### **5. Montgomery County Walk & Ride Challenge**

Kristen Blackmon of Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) presented the 2013 Montgomery County Walk & Ride Challenge, where teams of employees working in the County tracked their steps using pedometers during a three week period in September. The goals of the Walk & Ride challenge were to provide a fun event that helps Montgomery County employees learn how easy it is to get around on foot or by the use of transit rather than driving; to promote businesses supporting traffic mitigation while developing relationships between TMD staff and employers and employees; and encourage team building among coworkers.

Those who walked at least 50,000 steps per week were entered into a drawing for an Amazon Kindle. Those who walked at least 25,000 steps per week were entered into weekly drawings. Each member of the team with highest average steps won a \$125 gift card, runner up team members each won a \$75 gift card, and third place team members won a \$50 card.

In its first year in 2007, the Walk & Ride Challenge registered 100 participants. Each year the event has expanded to include more Montgomery County TMD's, and in 2013 participation has reached over 1,000 employees. The theme for 2013 was 'put a little step in your commute' and an improved event website helped bolster that message. After signing up for the Challenge, each participant received a packet containing a t-shirt, pedometer, and useful information. .

The Walk & Ride Challenge was promoted through various methods included new logo, flyer, letters, emails, newsletters, street banner, web site, and targeted phone calls to employer contacts. Fun contests and promotions offered further opportunities to win prizes. The contests included a website scavenger hunt and photo contests where participants took pictures of non-SOV commutes,

including separate prizes for pictures on the Bethesda Circulator. All photos were posted on Facebook.

A brief post event survey was distributed via email to all participants. To encourage a higher rate of return, respondents were placed into a random drawing for gift cards to local businesses. A majority of survey respondents indicated they saw health benefits over the course of the program, and have changed their commuting habits as a result. Responses measure success at motivating participants to use alternative commute modes and help to determine changes for next year's Walk and Ride Challenge.

**6. FY13 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff reported preliminary findings from the FY13 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey. Of the 2,521 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2013, 549 or nearly 22 percent of surveys were completed. The vast majority, 91% of the survey respondents were pleased with the overall GRH service. Written responses were entered on more than two-thirds (71%) of the returned surveys, the overwhelming majority of which (81%) contained compliments. Compliments outweighed criticism 5 to 1. For every category, good or above ratings were given by 88% or more of the respondents. Average response wait was 16 minutes and 91% waited 30 minutes or less. The formal report will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee next month and a comment period will be established.

**7. 95 Express Lanes**

Michelle Holland from VDOT Megaprojects provided an update on outreach for Virginia's 495 and 95 Express Lanes. The 495 Express Lanes began construction in July 2008 and opened in November 2012, adding 50% capacity to manage Beltway congestion. The project connected four major commuter routes to create a seamless HOV and transit network, and provided three new access points to major retail and employment centers. Outreach entailed 900 community meetings, 215 bulletins reaching 70,000 weekly, 265 traffic alerts/news releases, and 300,000 emails providing project benefits and updates. A September 2013 survey showed that 59% of Beltway drivers see the benefit of the Express Lanes, and 8 in 10 customers say they plan to use the Express Lanes again and were satisfied with their Express Lanes experience. The top reasons travelers had used the Express Lanes include the need to reach a destination on time, congestion on the regular Beltway lanes, a more reliable trip, and a less stressful trip.

95 Express Lanes will offer free access for HOV-3+ and transit using reversible lanes for the majority of the 29-mile project. The dynamic system with variable tolls is on-track to be completed in late 2014. Carpools and vanpools will need the switchable EZPass Flex, available through Virginia and Maryland's EZPass offices, retail locations in Northern Virginia and online.

The marketing campaign launched in September 2013 included six weeks of online banner ads for GetAroundVa.com, a GetAroundVA Google Adwords campaign, Fredericksburg radio for two weeks, 2014 Transit/TDM Planners, and a commuter options brochure.

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

Due to time constraints, this agenda item did not occur.

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

The next FY14 Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting date is Tuesday, June 17, 2014 from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the COG Board Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.