

# **Commuter Connections**

## **FY 2010 Draft Marketing Communications Brief**

### **July 2009**

**Mission:** Commuter Connections acts as a regional network providing commute services and information to area residents and employers in the Washington metropolitan region in order to reduce traffic congestion and emissions caused by single occupancy vehicles (SOV).

Marketing will provide frequent regional promotion of alternative commute options including; car/vanpooling, teleworking, bicycling, walking, and mass transit; support programs such as Guaranteed Ride Home, the Commuter Connections network ridematching services, and special events such as Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day. The marketing program aims to raise awareness of alternate commute options, and support the Commuter Connections network in persuading commuters to switch to alternative commute modes from the use of single-occupant vehicles (SOV), and persuading commuters currently using alternative commute modes to continue to use those modes. A three month Carpool Incentive Demonstration project, Pool Rewards, will be promoted to commuters along three of the area's most congested corridors. The purpose of this project is to recruit and retain commuters into a carpool through cash incentives.

**Marketing Input:** The background for this marketing brief was derived from the following sources:

- Transportation Emission Reduction Measure (TERM) Analysis Report FY2006-2008
- Fiscal Year 2009 Applicant Database Annual Placement Survey Report
- 2007 Bike to Work Survey TERM Analysis Report
- 2007 State of the Commute Survey;
- 2007 GRH Survey Report, and;
- Commuter Connections Stakeholder Attitudes and Opinions, April 2007.

Internal reports and surveys are the cornerstone for the FY2010 marketing brief. These reports provide quantitative and qualitative measurement of commute behavior by workers throughout the Washington metropolitan region and the results of this behavior on air quality and congestion. In particular, the FY2010 marketing campaign will be looking to bolster the results of the Mass Marketing and Guaranteed Ride Home programs as reported in the TERM Analysis Report.

In addition to comprehensive data provided by internal reports, the marketing team will also consider performance data from past campaigns as well as information gathered through industry reports, surveys, and trends and how it might be applied to the Commuter Connections marketing campaign. This information may be used to support the development of the media and/or messaging strategies.

The FY2010 campaign will continue to promote awareness of commute options and the benefits these options offer the SOV driver. The Guaranteed Ride Home message will continue to focus on peace of mind, addressing and removing any concerns about being stranded due to non-SOV commute options.

In addition to paid and earned media, the regional effort will include special events including Car Free Day and Bike to Work Day and programs including Pool Rewards to directly incentivize SOV commuters into carpools, reinforce the marketing messages, and build loyalty with commuters who have converted modes.

**Marketing Strategies:** The marketing strategy will be looking to achieve the following:

- Increase awareness of the Guaranteed Ride Home program to commuters using alternative transportation at least twice a week. Strategies and media will be investigated to enable enrollment with no, or minimal, additional effort required. For example, all commuters selected for Pool Rewards should automatically be enrolled in GRH unless they “opt-out”.
- Directly influence changes in commuter behavior through hard hitting and well placed marketing/advertisements that increases the recall of the commute message. Promote ridematching registration on Commuter Connections website through marketing initiatives.
- Increase the number of participants in special events and promotions such as Car Free Day and Bike to Work Day based on set committee goals.
- Provide renewed focus and promotion of teleworking or coworking as an economically sound and environmentally friendly solution to traffic congestion.

Media buying strategies will be selected based on Scarborough Research reports for the specific target audiences for each program and event: Ridesharing, Guaranteed Ride Home, Employer Recognition Awards, Car Free Day, Bike to Work Day, Pool Rewards and any other program or event. These reports identify specific media that are best suited for each target audience. The report information is considered along with the cost of each media option and results from previous Commuter Connections campaigns.

For FY2010, **radio** is recommended as the anchor medium for the program, with its ability to reach a large portion of our target markets (90 percent) with significant frequency when they are engaged in their possibly stressful, frustrating, costly and timely commutes.

**Print** creative is important to provide visual, repetitive communication and reinforcement of messages delivered through radio spots. FY2010’s marketing strategy will include well placed print across the geographical region and may include bus shelters and transit signage.

**Internet advertising** is interactive and closer to one-to-one selling than any other form of media. Placement of banner ads on websites targeted to key counties, news, weather, television affiliates, and job sites may be used to reach commuters just a click away from Commuter Connections online ridematching service or to sign up for benefits such as Guaranteed Ride Home.

A balance of non-traditional media will be investigated for FY2010 may include **mobile media**, **out-of-home media**, and **social media**.

Existing creative will be used for the fall campaign; results of the complete 2009 campaign will be studied in August 2009 to help identify the most effective messaging strategies for implementation for spring 2010.

### **Guaranteed Ride Home**

**Objective:** Increase the number of applicants in the GRH database.

**Target market** (from 2007 GRH Survey Report):

- 35-54 years old
- Caucasian (65%) and African-American (21%)
- \$60,000+ annual household income

- Commute of more than 30 miles / 45 minutes
- Live in Virginia (64%) or Maryland (34%), with a special emphasis on Prince William (20%) and Fairfax Counties (18%); work in D.C (60%) and Virginia (30%)

**Tactics:**

- Radio advertising to increase GRH awareness, applications
- Public relations/media communications to provide testimonials of GRH success stories and broaden awareness and registrations for the program
- Web advertisement (banner ads), geared directly toward generating registrations
- Print and/or transit signage to increase awareness
- Continuously update website information
- Direct Mail
- Investigate use of mobile media and “point of sale” placement to increase registrations

**Media Allocation:** Approximately 44 percent of media budget.

**Rideshare**

**Objectives:** Maintain and increase awareness of shared ride modes, retain current ridership on these modes; gain new riders; gain new applicants to the regional database.

**Target market** (from FY 2009 Applicant Database Annual Placement Survey Report):

- 25-54 years old (82%), 35-54 years old (63%)
- Caucasian (64%) and African-American (20%)
- \$80,000+ annual household income (68%)
- Commute of more than 20 miles/30 minutes
- Live in Virginia (65%) or Maryland (33%); work in D.C. (49%) or Virginia (34%)
- Work for employers with 100+ employees (71%), work for employers with 1000 or more employees (41%)
- Work for federal agencies (50%) and private sector (31%)
- Professional (37%), Executive/managerial (30%), and administrative (16%)

**Tactics:**

- Radio advertising to increase awareness of services, applications and conversions
- Public relations/media communications to provide testimonials of ridesharing success stories and broaden awareness and registrations
- Web advertisement (banner ads) for the ridesharing database, geared directly toward generating registrations
- Print and/or transit signage to reinforce the marketing message
- Continuously update website information
- Direct mail
- Investigate promotional partnerships with event organizers to encourage event ridematching as a way to build awareness of the database and encourage trial use of carpooling
- Investigate stadium or venue advertising, programs, playbills, and tickets to promote special event ridematching

**Media Allocation:** Approximately 44 percent of media budget.

### **Carpool Incentive Demonstration Project (Pool Rewards)**

**Objectives:** Recruit and retain commuters in a carpool through cash or other incentives.

#### **Target Market**

- SOV-commuters along the I-495 corridor from Bethesda to Tyson's Corner, the I-495 corridor from I-295 (BW Parkway) to I-270, and I-395 from Washington DC into Northern Virginia

#### **Tactics:**

- Media and public outreach to build awareness
- Direct mail to area residents that may qualify
- Geo-targeted internet ads
- Investigate additional region-specific marketing including billboards

**Media Allocation:** Approximately 4 percent of media budget.

### **Employer Outreach**

**Objectives:** Add new employer clients; expand participation and offerings in existing employer programs; recognize existing employer programs who have implemented successful programs; increase the number of employers offering the tax free commute benefit; increase use of SmarTrip offered through employer programs.

**Target Market** (from FY 2009 Applicant Database Annual Placement Survey Report):

- Employers with 250 or more employees (59%)
- Federal agencies (50%)
- Private sector employers (31%)

#### **Tactics:**

- Update web content as required and other social media applications for Telework such as Facebook
- Quarterly employer newsletter
- Quarterly Federal Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) newsletter insert
- Email marketing and mailings
- Telework Case Study promotion through newsletter
- Marketing collateral to support Commuter Connections Network member Live Near Your Work (LNYW) events
- Continuously update Federal ETC website information
- Update regional Bicycling Guide

### **Special Events**

**Objectives:** Use special events, such as Bike to Work Day, Car Free Day, and the Employer Recognition Awards event to highlight existing programs and encourage other employers and commuters to become involved, increase their ridership or enhance their on-site programs; increase commuter participation in Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day.

#### **Target Market**

- Bike to Work Day - from Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) member statistics): Age 25-49, Male, Commute trip up to 30 miles, \$30,000+ household income
- Car Free Day: SOV-drivers
- Employer Recognition Awards: Employers in Commuter Connections Network area

**Tactics:**

- Bike to Work Day (BTWD)
  - Sponsor BTWD, May 21, 2010 (tentative date)
  - Secure corporate and other sponsorships for BTWD
  - Use radio advertising to increase awareness of BTWD
  - Provide additional marketing collateral including t-shirts, posters, rack cards, and possible pit stop banners and Circulator bus cards
  - Earned Media
  - Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook
  - Coordination and support to WABA for BTWD web site
- Car Free Day (CFD)
  - Coordinate CFD, September 22, 2009
  - Stage a Car Free Day event that amplifies the CFD 2009 publicity campaign with a news value component that highlights the importance of the observance and its relevance to D.C.-area commuters while sparking human interest
  - Use radio advertising to increase awareness of CFD and drive listeners to [carfreemetrodc.com](http://carfreemetrodc.com)
  - Provide marketing collateral such as posters
  - Transit /outdoor signage (bus exterior and bus shelter ads)
  - Text messaging
  - Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook
  - Coordination and support to DDOT for Car Free Day web site
- Employer Recognition Awards
  - Coordinate the Employer Recognition Awards ceremony, June 2010
  - Provide marketing collateral in support of the application process; online application and email blast to potential nominees
  - Marketing collateral for the event including invitations, program brochure, and podium sign, and promotional giveaways.
  - Print advertisement highlighting local companies who voluntarily implement innovative employee commute and telework programs

**Media Allocation:** Approximately 2.5 percent of media budget for BTWD, 6 percent of media budget for CFD, and less than 1 percent of media budget for Employer Recognition Awards event.