

**2009 Car Free Day Steering Committee
Meeting Notes
Wednesday October 14, 2009**

1. Introductions

2. Approval of Minutes from September 9, 2009 Meeting

The minutes were approved as written.

3. Pledge Data

Participation in the Car Free day event grew significantly in 2009, increasing by 14%. The total number of pledges climbed from 5,471 pledges in 2008 to 6,211 pledges in 2009. Participants used a variety of travel modes to avoid driving alone. The majority, 54.4% traveled by train (Metrorail/commuter rail), 41.5% traveled by bus, 37.7% by bicycle and nearly 6% used a carpool or vanpool. In many cases more than one method of alternative transportation was taken, therefore totals exceed 100%. The Car Free Day event was responsible for taking nearly 2,200 SOV's off the road as more than a third, 37% of participants, stated they are not normally car free. The majority of those who pledged, 63% were already using car free alternatives.

4. Media Coverage

This year, Car Free Day was debated and discussed in the main stream news and in the blogs. Whether positive or negative, it struck chords. Overall, coverage for Car Free Day was very positive but in some cases it brought out the worst, as in this U.S. News and World Report article "Competitive Enterprise Institute Protests World Car-Free Day" citing that life without a car is un-American. Locally most of the coverage was upbeat with the exception of a luke-warm article in the Washington Post, "Car-Free Diet Hard to Swallow For Many" where the reporter took a pragmatic view of what a day would be like without the use of a car. That was balanced however by a feel good article also published in the Washington Post entitled "A Day Without the Detriments of Driving". A third article in the Washington Post titled "A Day for Rethinking Our Four-Wheeled Fixation" used a what-if scenario, which pondered what life would be like without cars by calculating the tons of CO2 and gallons of gasoline that would have been preserved. Television coverage was very good with both News Channel 8 and ABC News Channel 7 on the scene. Radio coverage was heard on 88.5 FM, WAMU where Commuter Connections Director Nicholas Ramfos was followed by a reporter during his commute from home to work. The Gazette covered the Montgomery County Car Free Day scene.

5. Regional Sponsors/Prizes

Several prizes were raffled off at the regional level. The District Department of Transportation donated an iPod for the prize drawing and the winner was announced on the Car Free Day Twitter site. Other prizes included five \$25 SmarTrip cards donated by WMATA, three Segway tours from Capital Segway, five pairs of major league baseball tickets from the Washington Nationals and 200 \$10 gift cards from Spokes Etc. bike shops.

6. Partner Events and Activities Roundtable

A PowerPoint slide show was given to highlight the various events and activities that occurred throughout the region. Photos included DDOT's downtown street closure on F Street near the Verizon Center, Montgomery County's presence at several Metrorail stations and Arlington County's car-free diet happy hour.

7. Other Business

Arlington's Car Free Day video placed on YouTube was shown at the meeting.