



## FY 2012 Final Marketing Communications Plan and Schedule

**Mission:** Commuter Connections is 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 occupant vehicles (SOV's).

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, Car Free Day, and the Employer Recognition Awards. The FY2012 marketing program will raise commuter awareness of commuting choices available in the Washington metropolitan region and support the Commuter Connections network in persuading commuters to choose, and continue to use, alternatives to driving alone to work.

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

- 2010 State of the Commute Survey
- 2010 Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program Survey Report
- 2010 Bike To Work Survey TERM Analysis Report
- FY 2009 Commuter Connections Applicant Database Annual Placement Survey Report
- 2008 Commuter Connections Transportation Emission Reduction (TERM) Analysis Report.
- Commuter Connections Stakeholder Attitudes and Opinions, April 2007.

Internal reports and surveys are the cornerstone for the FY2012 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 addition to comprehensive data provided by internal reports, the marketing team has considered 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 mass marketing campaign. This information is used to support the development of the media and/or messaging strategies.

With slow economic growth and restrained consumer spending, we anticipate the economy to continue to play a significant role in consumer decision making for the coming year. Strong, simple messages focusing on the cost savings of ridesharing tested well in market research conducted during the Fall of 2010. Based upon current economic outlook and last year's market research, the FY2012 campaign will continue to emphasize the economic benefits of Ridesharing.

The FY2012 Rideshare campaign will promote awareness of commute options and the benefits these options offer the SOV driver. The Guaranteed Ride Home message will focus on support, offering a safety net to address and remove any concerns about being stranded at work 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. The mission of these events is to encourage SOV drivers and commuters respectively, to try an alternative mode with the intention of altering SOV commute behavior to incorporate alternative modes as part of their drive or commute behavior.

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

- Increase awareness of the Guaranteed Ride Home program to SOV commuters, removing a major barrier to using transit, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling or walking to work. More focus will be on commuters in the outer ring where 9 out of 10 workers commute by driving alone. Both ridesharing and transit use provide the greatest potential to this audience.
- Position GRH as a safety net, available to commuters in case of unplanned overtime or unexpected personal or family emergency.
- Emphasize the cost savings benefits of ridesharing. Use simple, direct messages that money can be saved by sharing a ride.
- Building on the cost benefits of ridesharing, use 'Pool Rewards as an additional incentive to increase participation in ridesharing. This will be promoted on its own as well as in conjunction with general Rideshare component pieces.
- 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.
- Promote efforts to ease regional commuting issues through earned media placements through use of human interest stories of commuters using alternative commute modes and/or employers offering commuter benefits that have higher than expected engagement levels..

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 FY2012, **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 time consuming commutes.

**Print** creative is important to provide visual, repetitive communication and reinforcement of messages delivered through radio spots. FY2012's marketing strategy will include well placed visuals across the geographical region Outdoor print such as bus signage and shelters, , online animated banner ads and cable TV will be evaluated as visual elements for the campaign.

Paid text Internet advertising will be investigated to improve the placement of Commuter Connections in browser search engine results. In addition to traditional media, the marketing team will look to further expand the use of social media. Building upon Commuter Connections' existing pages on Facebook (Commuter Connections, Telework, Bike to Work Day, and Car Free Day) and accounts on Twitter (Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day), the marketing team will investigate additional strategies to increase engagement and integrate social media activities with other marketing approaches.

The marketing team will investigate options to provide smart phone users access to Commuter Connections and commute option information and benefits. Quick Response (QR) codes may be used on marketing creative to provide smart phone users with quick and immediate access to Commuter Connections information and registration or pledge pages.

Existing creative will be used for the fall campaign; results of the complete FY 2011 campaign will be studied and best practices will be carried forward for the FY 2012 campaign. The creative team will consider the results of the FY 2011 campaign along with area transportation trends and additional exploration to help identify the most effective messaging strategies for implementation for spring 2012.

The Marketing Communications Plan will effectively and efficiently reach its target markets based on a review and analysis of third party media data from Strata, Scarborough and Arbitron as monitored by a professional media buying firm. Reach and frequency of the target demographic will be calculated using a cost/value proposition for each media option.

## **Guaranteed Ride Home**

**Objective:** Increase the number of applicants in the GRH database by promoting GRH and eliminating a barrier to using transit, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling, and walking to work.

**Target market** (from 2010 Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program Survey Report):

- 35-54 years old (63%)
- Caucasian (68%) and African-American (20%)
- \$80,000+ annual household income (80%), \$120,000+ annual household income (50%)
- Commute of more than 30 miles / 45 minutes
- Live in Virginia (65%) or Maryland (32%), with a special emphasis on Prince William (17%) and Fairfax Counties (13%); work in D.C (63%) and Virginia (26%)

### **Tactics:**

- Focus will be on commuters in the outer ring including Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Loudoun, and Prince William counties.
- Radio advertising will focus on exurb radio stations serving the outer ring counties.
- Public relations/media communications to provide testimonials of GRH success stories and broaden awareness and registrations for the program.
- Evaluate web advertisement (banner ads), geared directly toward generating registrations.
- Evaluate print and/or transit signage to increase awareness.
- Update website images to integrate with the campaign.
- Direct Mail (Allocation equals 5% of Work Program budget).
- Investigate use of mobile media and “point of sale” placement to increase registrations. QR codes will be investigated as a way to engage with smart phone users to drive them directly to the Commuter Connections website and provide additional information.
- Because of the ability to directly target certain geographic areas, and due to the high percentage of SOV drivers in the outer ring, out-of-home including gas pump toppers may be investigated for possible use.

**GRH Media Allocation:** Approximately 32 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 Commuter Connections 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. Live traffic reads provide an ideal opportunity to make the association between traffic and solution and will be investigated for feasibility.
- A Spanish-speaking radio station will be included to reach out to the region's Hispanic population.
- To ensure top placement on search engine results, search engine ads will be investigated as a means to position Commuter Connections at the top of search result lists.
- TV will be considered as an opportunity to visually present the message that's conveyed in radio spots.
- Online banner ads may be used on selective websites to drive users to the Commuter Connections website to register.
- Out-of-home components that make a direct connection between commuting options and saving money will be considered. Possible options include gas pump toppers and ATM machine advertising.
- Public relations/media communications to provide testimonials of ridesharing success stories and broaden awareness and registrations
- Direct mail (Allocation equals 5% of Work Program budget)

**Rideshare Media Allocation:** Approximately 59 percent of media budget.

## **'Pool Rewards**

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

### **Target Market**

- Rideshare demographics

### **Tactics:**

- Media and public outreach to build awareness.
- To promote awareness, radio and online banner ads may be used.
- Rideshare campaign components will tie in 'Pool Rewards as an additional incentive.
- Value add from the mass marketing campaign may be used to expand the reach of the 'Pool Rewards.
- Craig's List, Commuter Connections bulletin board

**'Pool Rewards Media Allocation:** Approximately 2 percent of media budget.

## **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 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: Level 3&4 Employers in Commuter Connections Network area

### **Tactics:**

- Bike to Work Day (BTWD)
  - Sponsor BTWD, May 18, 2012.
  - Secure corporate and other sponsorships for BTWD.
  - Web site to be managed by COG/TPB staff and will move from [www.waba.org](http://www.waba.org) to a specific domain for the event itself.
  - Use radio advertising to increase awareness of BTWD.

- Provide additional marketing collateral and advertising including t-shirts, posters, rack cards, and possible pit stop banners, print ads and Circulator bus cards.
- Email blasts and mailings to employers.
- Email blasts to colleges and universities.
- Earned Media.
- Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook.
- Car Free Day (CFD)
  - Sponsor CFD, September 22, 2011
  - Secure corporate and other sponsorships for BTWD.
  - Use radio advertising to increase awareness of CFD and drive listeners to carfreemetrodc.com.
  - Provide marketing collateral such as posters.
  - Transit /outdoor signage (bus exterior and bus shelter ads).
  - Text messaging.
  - Email blasts and mailings to employers.
  - Email blasts to colleges and universities.
  - Engage Transportation Planning Board through Proclamation and encourage jurisdictional partners to do the same.
  - Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook.
- Employer Recognition Awards
  - Coordinate the Employer Recognition Awards ceremony, June 2012.
  - 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 in major publication highlighting local companies who voluntarily implement innovative employee commute and telework programs.

**Special Events Media Allocation:** Approximately 2.6 percent of media budget for BTWD, 4.2 percent of media budget for CFD, and less than 1 percent of media budget for Employer Recognition Awards event.

### **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
- Continuously update Federal ETC website information

**Employer Outreach Media Allocation:** 0 percent of media budget.

## FY 2012 Schedules

### FY 2012 Creative Development Schedule

Review research and results from recent campaigns	July 2011
Develop Marketing Communications Plan	Aug 2011
Feedback on Plan from Regional TDM Marketing Group ( <i>Extranet</i> )	Aug 2011
Present conceptual approaches to Regional TDM Marketing Grp	Sept 2011
Refine and develop approach based on Workgroup feedback	Oct 2011
Finalize creative	Nov 2011
Produce creative	Dec 2011
Distribute creative to media vendors	Jan 2012
Campaign launch	Feb 2012

### FY12 Marketing Campaign Schedule

Car Free Day	Aug – Sept 2011
Fall Campaign (repeat FY11 creative)	Oct – Dec 2011
'Pool Rewards	Oct – Dec 2011
Spring Campaign (new FY12 creative)	Feb – June 2012
Bike to Work Day	Apr – May 2012
Employer Recognition Awards	June 2012