



Regional TDM Marketing Group

Meeting Notes Tuesday, September 16, 2008

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

COG Board Room - 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

1. Introductions

2. Minutes of June 17, 2008 Meeting

The minutes were approved as written

3. Change of Chairpersons

Glenn Hiner of Fairfax County was installed as the FY09 Regional TDM Marketing Group Chair. Dotty Dalphon was presented with a plaque for her service as the FY08 Chair.

4. Arlington County Bike Sharing

Paul DeMaio, Bicycle Promotions Manager from Arlington County discussed the County's upcoming "Nextbike" bike-sharing program. Arlington will be purchasing 100 bicycles to be available within the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor at 40 stations located at car-share poles and bike circle racks in the Spring of 2009. Expansion plans include an increase to 200 bicycles in year two with service added along the Rt. 1 corridor, and an increase to 400 bicycles in year three with County-wide expansion.

A contractor will be selected and will operate and maintain the service. Helmets will not be provided but encouraged. Program liability will rest on the named contractor and Arlington will require them to have insurance for the program. The county will market the program and collect usage fees and ad revenues from businesses who advertise on the bicycles.

The County is not planning on charging an annual membership fee, only a cost to use the bicycles based on length of hourly time. Customers will provide a credit card upon registration and must be at least 18 years of age. Customers not returning their rented bike will be charged a bike replacement fee of about \$400. Theft may be an issue and therefore Arlington has factored a 7% theft ratio into their budget.

The county received a start-up grant of \$209,000 from the Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation. The Nextbike service will cost \$175,000 in year one for capital, operations, and maintenance. Ongoing funding will come from user fees, advertising revenues, and other sources to be determined.

5. HOT Lanes Campaign

Steve Titunik from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Jim Wright from Pulsar advertising provided background on the Virginia High Occupancy Toll lanes (HOT lanes) and 511 service. Radio spots were played for both campaigns and collateral was handed out. VDOT is starting a five year I-495 construction project to add HOT lanes which will add more lanes and bring more transportation choices to the Capital Beltway. When complete the Beltway will offer seamless HOV lane connections with I-95 and I-66 for the first time through 14 miles of HOT lanes stretching from the Springfield interchange to Old Dominion drive. Buses, vanpools and carpools with three or more people will travel at no cost while SOV motorists who use the HOT lanes will pay a variable toll. HOT lanes will also create opportunities to add bus service on the Beltway. As concrete barriers go up, the ads are encouraging commuters to telework, rideshare and use transit. The web site for the HOT lanes project is at www.VirginiaHOTlanes.com.

Virginia's free traffic traveler info service, 511 allows travelers to anticipate traffic through the web site www.511virginia.org. The web site displays live feeds from traffic cameras and information on construction projects and traffic incidents. Commuters and other travelers can set up their own "control room" with tools to help determine the best routes to take throughout Virginia to avoid these disruptions. The features available allow travelers to take control of their commutes through customizable traffic cam displays, by phone (dialing 511), text messages and email alerts. To date over 2,000 individuals have set up a control room.

6. BTS Mobile Billboard Campaign

Danielle Milo from Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) presented the BriteMoves Mobile Billboard campaign. BriteMoves takes the messages directly to commuters via a traveling billboard system. The billboards provide a scrolling system with advertising rotating and appearing on both sides and the rear of the vehicle. The unique moving billboards aim is to create intrigue and curiosity in order to enhance the message and retention. According to BriteMoves, the vehicles reach up to 1,500,000 viewers 18+ per month, with 97% seven day retention. The route purchased by BTS travels on local commuter routes along and around Rt. 355, from Gaithersburg to Bethesda. Core operating hours are concentrated in peak morning and afternoon rush hours and during lunchtime. The billboards are well lit for evening hours. GPS enable clients to monitor vehicle location in real time.

7. Commuter Connections FY09 Marketing Activity

Dan O'Donnell from Odonnell Company presented recent FY09 marketing activities including the September 2, 2008 COG Press event and the Car Free Day event on September 22, 2008. Mr. O'Donnell also discussed the FY09 fall media plan which utilized existing Commuter Connections creative and he also presented conceptual approaches for the spring 2009 marketing campaign. The marketing workgroup will be providing feedback for the spring campaign.

The September 2 press event was held at COG to officially launch the new regional ridematching software, announce CarFree Day and the newly released State of the Commute Report. The

highest ranking Transportation Planning Board members from each state were on hand as speakers which included Charles A. Jenkins, Frederick County Commissioner; David Snyder, Falls Church Council Member; and Phil Mendelson DC Council Member. Lon Anderson, AAA Mid-Atlantic Director of Public Affairs also spoke. After the remarks a demo of the new ridematching software took place. Several news outlets attended the press event and just about every major media picked up the press release.

On September 22, as part of a worldwide celebration of car-free alternatives, approximately 5,500 Washington region residents joined others throughout the world in celebrating independence from gasoline and solo driving for international "CarFree Day". The event asked people to pledge to leave their cars at home and instead ride a train, bus, bicycle, subway, walk, telework or go "car-lite" and carpool. Marketing materials developed by Commuter Connections to promote CarFree Day included a logo, poster and radio spot. The theme selected was "Uncar for a Day" with a car-lite caveat. The radio spot was aired on four area stations over four week period leading up to September 22nd. Commuter Connections also ordered 2,500 buttons and made them available to Steering Committee members to help promote the event. Other marketing included donated ad space on Metro and Montgomery County Ride On buses as well as Montgomery County bus shelters. Poster art was resized for all transit signage to provide visual consistency with the larger campaign. The pledge form offered an opt-in field for cell phone numbers. Commuter Connections sent text email reminders which read "Thanks for pledging to go CarFree on September 22. Get a friend to pledge at <http://www.carfreemetrodc.com>".

The FY09 marketing schedule presented at the meeting was as follows.

- July 2008 - Analyze research and results from recent campaigns
- July 2008 - Develop marketing brief for Marketing Committee review
- Aug, Oct-Nov 2008 - Fall Campaign (FY08 creative)
- Sept 2008 – Press Event/Car Free Day events
- Sept 2008 - Develop conceptual approaches based on final marketing brief for Marketing Committee review
- Oct 2008 - Select conceptual approach based on Marketing Committee feedback
- Nov-Dec 2008 - Develop Spring 2009 creative
- Mar-June 2009 - Spring Campaign Rollout

The FY09 final Marketing Communications Brief document was distributed at the meeting. The final FY08 2nd Half Marketing Campaign summary report was also distributed. This report provided detail on all Commuter Connections marketing activity from January through June 2008.

8. FY09 Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP)

Staff distributed the FY09 Regional TDM Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP) Draft report. This report was originally discussed at the June Regional TDM Marketing Group meeting and the draft report issued in September was inclusive of initial edits received during the first round of changes. A comment period until October 28 was established for all final edits, after which the final report will be distributed at the December meeting.

9. Calendar of Events / Marketing Round Table

Meeting participants shared recent advertising/marketing collateral and discussed news and upcoming events happening within their organizations, including:

- Mark Sofman noted that Montgomery County Commuter Services has moved to their new facility and that *TRIPs* is the name of the new commuter store.
- Bobbi Greenberg noted the upcoming Clarendon WalkAbout and Confident City Cycling Class both planned to coincide with CarFree Day on September 22, 2008.
- Dotty Dalphon spoke about Frederick TransIT's Summer Freedom Pass, a program available to teens which provided unlimited rides during the summer for \$5.
- Althea Evans noted that PRTC's web site will be adding a Trip Planner by October 2008 and that a public hearing will occur regarding raising fares to make up a \$1.4 million shortfall. Commuter buses would experience an 18% fare increase.

10. Other Business/Suggested Agenda for next meeting

No other business was discussed.