



Travel Reduction Program Regional Task Force (TRP RTF)

Minutes of May 18, 2009, Meeting

Committee Members Present

Karen Brink, Tucson Marriott University Park
Michele Joseph, alternate for Kate Riley, Sun Tran
Jennifer King, Tucson Electric Power
Denise Germany, Tucson Airport Authority
Ron Gonzales, Raytheon Missile Systems
Joe Portale, Pima Community College
Barbara Ricca, IBM

Audience

Curt Campbell, Arizona Sonora Desert Museum
Maxima Miller, Citi Financial
Jimmy Stout, U.S. Border Patrol
Tom Thivener, City of Tucson, DOT
Bonnie Williams, U.S. District Court

Jurisdiction Representatives

Karen Wilhelmsen, alternate for Beth Gorman,
Pima County DEQ
Yolanda Parker, City of Tucson

Staff

Rita Hildebrand
Gayle Johnson
Zonia Kelley
Johnnie Kelly
Ruth Reiman

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Rita Hildebrand at 10:05 a.m. and introductions were made.

2. Call to the Audience

No comments were provided.

3. TRP Status Update/Announcements

2008 Final Major Employer Summary Report – The report format has been used to track employers in the TRP and whether they met the requirements of the program year. For 2008, employers that submitted a 2007 TRP plan were required to submit a letter of commitment that they would continue their activities in 2008 and provide their TC contact information and number of employees. There was no survey in 2008. For 2008, there were 15 new sites and they were required to submit a baseline plan. Those plans were reviewed and approved by the Task Force. If a site had less than 100 employees and didn't want to stay in the program as a volunteer they could decline to do a TRP 2008 plan. The 2008 year ended with 291 sites.

The 2008 TRP plan data was minimal since only selective 2007 data could be carried forward to 2008. The average number of activities reported for all the sites were 19 implemented and 20 proposed.

New TRP sites for 2009 – 17 new sites have joined to-date for the 2009 TRP year. This brings the total to 308 sites, 205 employers and approximately 132, 673 employees. The new sites are: Child & Family Resources, Carondelet Health Network – Forbes, Villa Campana, Manor Care Health Services, J.C. Penney Santa Cruz, Red Lobster – Broadway, Claim Jumper – Broadway, Lovett & Touche Inc., Tucson Country Club, University Physicians- Campbell, Best Buy- Broadway, Gaslight Theatre, The Fountains at LaCholla, BE Aerospace, Tanque Verde School District and Anewco Products.

Business Development Activities

-Downtown Merchant Coupon Book - Rita Hildebrand gave the background on the promotion of the "Get Downtown Together and Win" coupon book to reward new registrants to the Rideshare database. Forty-one merchants participated with a special offer or discount and the values in the book totaled approximately \$1,700.00. A total of 850 books were distributed and resulted in 580 new registrants.

A survey was sent to the merchants asking: how many coupons were received, did they get new customers, their opinion on the overall promotion, what to improve and would they be willing to offer the same discount for another book.

A 24 percent response was received with general comments that it was a "win-win" for everyone, the restaurants did the best (the highest return was 38 coupons), it was a very professional coupon book and the merchants would do it again. Merchants that received none or 1 or 2 coupons weren't as enthusiastic about the promotion, but still saw it as good advertising.

A survey was sent to registrants who received a coupon book and there was an 18 percent response. Some of the results were: they got the message about the book

from employer, e-mails from Rideshare or a family/friend/coworker, the average usage was two coupons per person, 48 percent made a new purchase, 52 percent would visit again, 34 percent work downtown, mode use was 37 percent bus, 27 percent bike and 19 percent drive alone. Other comments were: the discounts weren't big enough, didn't like taking the whole book, they've shared coupons with family and overall it was a great idea.

-Vanpool Program – Ruth Reiman reported that the vans were going to be receiving the silver and blue decals starting June 1 and hopefully completed by June 30. Efforts will be made to not disrupt the vanpools by giving them a loaner van while their van is getting the new look of the other transit vehicles in the system.

-Prospecting – Staff has continued to research for new employers within geographical areas, using the Az Daily Star 200 list and a database, Directories USA.com targeting employers with 100 or more employees.

EXPO9 Overview –Sheila Storm, PAG Communications Director, reported that the alternative energy event was held March 6 and 7 at the TCC. Numerous sponsors assisted to host the event which had 100 vendors participate. Very good comments were received from all that participated. Great prizes had been donated from sponsors and the community to make the event even more appealing. National speakers and vehicles on display were very popular. PAG is looking to host another event in 2010 but may be scheduled later than that because of the economy. Attendance was approximately 2,700.

TRP TC Update Newsletter – March 2009 - A link was provided in the meeting packet to the March newsletter and printed copies were available in the lobby. The next newsletter will be sometime in June and staff is always looking for news items from the employers regarding activities and for testimonials from alternate mode users.

TRP RTF Announcements – none

4. Approval of Minutes of January 26, 2008.

Barbara Ricca moved to approve the minutes of January 26, 2008. Karen Brink seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

5. In-Kind Forms

The Task Force signed the Local Share Contribution Form for matching funds and attendance.

6. Clean Air Outreach – Ozone Status, staff report by Lee Comrie, PAG Air Quality Planning Manager. Lee Comrie explained that US EPA regulates various pollutants and the ozone standard had been strengthened in March, 2008 to protect public health. States had a year to identify which areas would be in or out of attainment for ozone standards based on data collected at monitoring sites. The Governor recommended areas outside of the tribal lands as being in attainment for ozone except for portions of Maricopa County and parts of Pinal County. US EPA in November of this year will notify the states and tribal communities of their changes or acceptance of the designations. In March 2010, final designations of boundaries will

be identified by US EPA and state plans will be submitted to them by 2013.

Major sources of ozone pollution are industrial emissions such as power plants and vehicle emissions. The impact on health associated with high ozone levels includes those with breathing difficulties including related conditions such as asthma. Pima County has been in compliance with the old standards but we are just barely meeting the new standard (of .075 ppm). The calculation for evaluating the standards is based on a three-year average of the fourth highest level at each air quality monitor. If the summer coming up is very hot, the region could be in violation of the standard for ozone. If non-attainment is determined, a plan will be submitted to US EPA identifying various enforceable measures that will be put in place in the region. PAG and member jurisdictions will be conducting a public education program "Live Breathe Clean Air" starting this summer. A letter was sent to the CEOs at the TRP employers requesting they increase emphasis on their rideshare activities to assist in the region's effort to control ozone. For additional information Lee can be contacted at aq@pagnet.org.

- 7. Sun Tran Update – Express service/Branding by Michele Joseph, Sun Tran Director of Marketing.** Michele Joseph presented an update on the four express routes. Route 104X, Marana Downtown Express, started in May 2007 and has a current ridership of 17.6 passengers per trip. Three express routes launched on Feb. 16, 2009 were: Route 110X, Rita Ranch-Downtown Express, starting at the Park & Ride lot on Rita Road west of Houghton and has a ridership of 8.3 passengers per trip with a reverse commute to the UA Tech Park and ridership of 5.8 passengers. Route 107X, Oro Valley-Downtown Express, starts at the Park & Ride Lots at Rancho Vistoso and Lambert at Riverfront Park, with a ridership of 10.5 passengers per trip. Route 203X, Oro Valley-Aero Park Express starts at the same Park and Ride lots and has a ridership of 9.7 passengers. The Sun Tran used a Web site survey available for riders to provide feedback on suggested times for the routes. Another survey will be made available for responses from riders regarding the routes for feedback on upcoming schedule changes which take effect in August. A regional transit branding look of blue and silver vinyl wraps or painting has begun for the Sun Tran buses, Sun Vans, Sun Shuttles and Sun Rideshare vans. Additionally, printed materials, pass products and the Web site will coordinate with the new look.

The regional system will provide an integrated customer service phone information, all service schedules in the ride guides and on the www.suntran.com Web site. Plans are also working toward a Regional Fare System Update system of smart card technology and seamless transfers between systems. Scheduled implementation is planned for 2010. Additional trips for existing express routes, frequencies and route extensions are all planned through RTA Improvement Plans for 2010 to 2012.

Mayor and Council review of fare increases will be addressed at a public meeting on June 2 at 5:30 pm. For more information, contact Michele Joseph at Michele.Joseph@tucsonaz.gov.

Clean Air Days, Bike Fest Report, Karen Wilhelmsen, Fugitive Dust Outreach Program Coordinator, PDEQ and Tom Thivener, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Manager, City of Tucson. Karen reported that there were 36 events for the month of April 1 – 30 and included 20 new events compared to last year. This year, 365 alternate mode users from 134 employers registered their commute on the Rideshare commute

calendar for participation in the prize drawings during the promotion. Almost 58,000 miles were reduced resulting in air pollution and green house emissions savings. Each registrant received a \$10 gift certificate from Bookmans. One new event was the Green Living Fair held at the Habitat Store on a rainy Saturday morning but was pretty successful. There was new participation from jurisdictions with hosting their events. The advertising budget was lower for this year's promotion and had an impact on attendance at the events. New sponsors and partners were involved in these events.

Tom Thivener covered the highlights of Bike Fest 2009, part of the Clean Air days, with emphasis on bike events throughout the community. There were 25 events during the month and the Bike 2 Work event expanded from one day to a full week. The workplace challenge changed this year to a commuter challenge to expand the reach for bicycling participation on an individual rather than employer basis. New events were: a movie at the Loft Theatre in partnership as a fund raiser for El Grupo, Tour de Campus with Tucson Police Dept. and Kiwanis for children 3 to 6 years old and held at the UofA mall, bike shops were involved in bicycle repairs, breakfasts and information were provided at popular bike commute routes identified from the PAG bicycle commuting survey. There was a lot of involvement from various businesses and sponsors from the community, contributions from jurisdictions and bicycling commuters. A question was asked about recognition for participants in these events or their employer. The tracking was new this year and updates to the commute calendar will improve tracking even more for next year.

9. RTA Update on new services, Park & Rides and Sun Shuttles by Jeremy Papuga, PAG Transit Planning and Operations Manager.

Jeremy presented an overview of the project implementation process under the RTA. The RTA Mobility Brochure was distributed and lists all the projects under the RTA 20-year plan. There are two types of projects in the RTA plan– one is program projects which include roadway and transit improvements. These projects are identified and taking place on schedule. The second type is categorical projects with amounts identified for environmental and safety elements of transportation. There are working groups associated with all of the categorical projects: Safety, Greenways, Bike/Ped, Wildlife and Transit Corridor Pull Outs. Each working group discusses the project needs, funding needs and how available funding can be used. Each group has a “call for projects.” Applications are then reviewed by the working group and each committee has a selection process to choose a vender. The working group is the first step in the process; their recommendations go through the TIP/TPC committees, PAG Management and then to the RTA board for review and recommendation.

Sun Shuttle services have brochures that identify the routes and times for the new shuttles that kicked off on May 4. As an introduction, the rides are free for the month of May to encourage ridership and get feedback on the routes for times and stops. The shuttles are set to make connections with regular Sun Tran services and after the free month of May, shuttle fares will match the regional transit system. Once the fare box system is in place, transfers will be free between the shuttles and Sun Tran services. There are two new Park & Ride lots for the shuttles, one at the Sahuarita Town Hall and one in Green Valley at the Esperanza Shopping Center. Jeremy Papuga reviewed the ridership on the new shuttle routes and the points of interest that were getting good ridership after just two weeks. Along the shuttle routes “flag stops” have been identified which are locations where the shuttle can be flagged down for a special pick up stop. All of the routes are coordinated with the ADA routes for accessibility. Route maps and times are available at www.pagnet.org. Additional new shuttle routes are scheduled for November. Currently fares are only cash

transactions but with the smart fare box system, passes will be available. Questions were asked about subsidies from the employers on the shuttle services and Jeremy will follow up and explore ways to accommodate a subsidy with the current collection system. The size of the largest shuttle is 30 feet in length, passenger load is between 14 and 22 passengers, but additional vehicle replacements will be coming in the near future. During the May introductory period, routes will be updated and changed as feedback is received and other routes are requested. Brochures are available for distribution at the employers.

Jim Stout, Sr. Agent for Community Relations for the US Border Patrol, commented to Jeremy that they would like to further discuss the Sahuarita and Green Valley shuttle route. That area is very active for the U.S. Border Patrol and additional safety discussions would be worthwhile. The U.S. Border Patrol staff itself has made contact with VPSI and is coordinating the possibility of a vanpool for employees. For more information, Jeremy may be contacted at jpapuga@pagnet.org.

10. Staff Overview and demonstration of online 2009 Activity Inventory Report –

Ruth Reiman, TDM Manager, reviewed the format and questions of the 2009 Activity Report replacing the TRP plan format that was previously used. An e-mail link will be sent to TRP employers on June 1 with a due date of June 30. The site data will be already filled in based on information TRP has on file. The questions were reviewed and examples of the type of data requested were covered. The form can be saved as a PDF file and printed. The inventory questions should be able to be completed within a very short time, if information is needed to be researched, the file can be saved and reopened. Comments are welcome as this is a first-time use for the form and hopefully can be continued for future years.

The Rideshare Web site has been updated with an online registration for Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH), the paper vouchers are going away and registration online will provide the registrant the ability to print their own voucher for the GRH. If someone does not have access to the Internet, staff will print and mail them a voucher. When the system is fully operational a message will be sent to the TCs to direct employees to register with the new system.

The program will still offer four rides and the system will track an employee's usage. The program is available for all alternate mode users, bus, carpool, vanpool, bike and walk. When the four rides are used up, no more rides will be offered until their anniversary date. Once a voucher is printed or reviewed, it is counted as one usage. The vouchers could be printed and saved for future use or accessed when the usage is required.

11. Staff report on Travel Reduction Ordinances (TROs)- draft replacement ordinance.

Ruth Reiman, TDM Manager, explained that the process for the revised/replacement TROs has been in draft form and sent to the environmental agencies for comment over the last six months. For 2009 there will be no changes. There is no survey and the activity inventory report is replacing the TRP plan format. The agencies have not agreed to the flexibility that was being proposed in the most recent draft of the TRO (March 13, 2009) posted on the Web site. Because the TROs are in the State Implementation Program, the agencies are requiring that the TROs continue to mandate a survey, a plan, some type of goals and to disseminate information to employees. The March draft is missing the survey and goals elements. A new draft is being developed with procedures that will not be cumbersome for the employers and

will be submitted to the agencies for approval. The July 1, 2009, date for implementation will not be met but hopefully by the start of the new year the process is expected to be completed.

In response to the question on the future of the TRP Regional Task Force, Ruth responded that the Task Force was not given as a required element of the Ordinance and as of now would not continue in the new year.

12. Roundtable of Company TDM Activities.

Coordinators attending the meeting were asked to give a brief update on activities in place at the work site or other developments related to their employer. Curt Campbell, Arizona – Sonora Desert Museum, commented that they are following the activities listed in their TRP plan. A problem has come up with the new IRS regulation of taxing any items of value that are given to employees as incentives to use alternate modes. During their busiest season, they give employees “George L. Bucks” as rewards for alternate mode usage. Under the new regulation these would also be taxable. The Museum also provides its own GRH program and it was suggested that the regional program could be used as an alternative.

Other Task Force members confirmed that the new regulation had just gone into effect and there was discussion as to what type of incentive wouldn't be taxable. Transit, vanpool subsidy and bicycler are not taxable.. Staff had not seen any discussion on the various list serves regarding the new regulation and would follow up on it. The program has been contemplating providing drawings for incentives that may be donated from employers. New registrants could be eligible for incentives or PAG can use the Commute Calendar as the tracking tool for alternate mode usage.

Bonnie Williams, US District Court, reported that they are still using the pretax option for monthly bus passes and will pursue a vanpool subsidy for potential vanpool use.

Maxima Miller, Citi, reported they had just held a “Green Fair,” Gayle Johnson came out and staffed an information table which generated 31 rideshare applications. To kick off their rideshare activities they are raffling off gift cards for new enrollees, and current registrants are asked to update their information and they can also be in the raffle. They have always taxed their incentives to employees and are working to get a vanpool incentive approved. Maxima is working with Jenny Sirnio at Sun Tran on how to promote more bus usage.

13. Future Agenda Items

Since there wouldn't be any routine TRP action items it's hoped that these meetings could be scheduled quarterly and continues to be of interest to members and non-members.

Next meeting date July 20, 2009, this meeting will most likely be canceled. Staff will notify members.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.