



COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH PLAN

Smart Commute's Bike to Work Day May 28, 2012

Situation

Bike to Work Day is an annual, one-day campaign to encourage commuters in the Greater Toronto & Hamilton Area (GTHA) to try riding a bike to work, and to show appreciation to those who already do. This year, Bike to Work Day will occur on Monday, May 28.

Since 2008, Metrolinx and Smart Commute's Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) across the GTHA have teamed up to facilitate and promote Bike to Work Day events to the Smart Commute network of employers. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, Metrolinx partnered with the City of Toronto to align Bike to Work Day with the Group Commute, a successful 20-year-old event held in downtown Toronto, to increase awareness and support for cycling as a reasonable option for commuters across the region. The partnership will continue for 2012.

In 2011, 3,150 people took part in Bike to Work Day events organized by Smart Commute across the region. The theme was "Come Ride with Me" and focused on encouraging people to find a riding buddy for the commute. There were 899 respondents to the Bike to Work Day Pledge, with 41% through referral from their workplace, and #biketoworkday was a top trending Toronto tweet throughout the day. The branded promotional items were very popular – 1,800 t-shirts and 485 bike repair kits were distributed. Activities were supported by a marketing and advertising campaign with paid media in eight community newspapers across the GTHA and advertisements in the Toronto Star. Five thousand postcards and 2,250 posters were produced and distributed to Smart Commute Employers by the TMA's.

Strategy

For 2012, Bike to Work Day materials and communications will target commuters who currently do not bike to work, and may not think of cycling as a viable mode of commuting. The "I Bike" message will be leveraged to communicate to audiences that "people like me bike, and so can I", even if it is just once a week, or for one segment of their journey.

Key Messages

- Cycling has many benefits as a form of active transportation: improves health, contributes to fitness, and reduces personal environmental impact, traffic congestion and commuting costs. And it is fun!
- Visit BikeToWorkDay.ca and take the Bike to Work Day Pledge! You will have a chance to win one of two great prizes: a trip to Quebec City courtesy of VIA Rail, or a weekend cycling getaway to St. Catharines courtesy of Welcome Cyclists.
- Share your Bike to Work Day experiences and photos on Flickr, Facebook and Twitter! #biketoworkday
- Smartcommute.ca is the online source for information about commuting by bicycle in the GTHA.

Audiences & stakeholders >> approach & tactics

Audience & Stakeholder chart attached

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Media relations strategy

The media strategy outreach is two-fold:

1. Share the benefits of cycling through personal stories to illustrate how everyone can make biking part of their commute. This will be supported by a news release distributed over CNW and follow-up media calls.
2. Create a media opportunity to communicate how Smart Commute is affecting encouraging more and more people to turn to active transportation in their daily commute – even if only for a segment of the trip. Invite media to Clarkson GO Station on the morning of May 28, as cyclists ride into the station to catch the train. Clarkson resident and Metrolinx CEO, Bruce McCuaig, will be available to speak with media about Smart Commute and the benefits of adding active transportation to the daily commuting routine.

Tactics:

Media activity/tactic	Date due	Responsible
News Release Focus on benefits of cycling – cost savings, stress reduction, fun – and share “I Bike” stories that illustrate how everyone can make biking part of their commute	May 28	Metrolinx Smart Commute & Strat. Comms.
Media Advisory re: Interview Opportunity • Interview opportunity with Metrolinx CEO Bruce McCuaig on May 28 at Clarkson GO Station • On event-day morning as cyclists arrive and receive ‘recognition’ t-shirts	May 25	Metrolinx Smart Commute & Strat. Comms.
To support release and advisory distribution, TMAs may pitch story to local media in their vicinities	May 26 - 28	Smart Commute TMAs

Marketing Plan

The marketing strategy is focused on building awareness in local communities where Smart Commute TMAs are located, and establishing clear linkages between Smart Commute and Metrolinx and the organizational commitment to encourage commuters to explore alternate forms of transportation.

All costs will be paid by Metrolinx Smart Commute.

Advertising (Total cost: \$18,232.80)

1. **Print advertisements – Community newspapers** (\$9,206.30) – May 21-26 (TBC, pending booking)
 - 1/8 page B&W + 1-colour ads (1 insertion each): Newmarket-Aurora Era-Banner, Hamilton Spectator, Oshawa/Whitby This Week, Mississauga News, Richmond Hill/Thornhill Liberal, Oakville Beaver, Brampton Guardian
2. **Online Advertisement** (\$9,026.50) — May 21 – 27 (TBC, pending final booking)
 - One-week banner ad on TheWeatherNetwork.ca, geo-targeted to GTHA

3. Contra Ad Space (No cost) — May 21 – 27 (TBC, pending final booking)

- Metro, 24 Hours, and T.O. Night. The ad design will be reconfigured pending final booking and confirmation on size specifications.

Non-Responsive Information

Evaluation

Quantitative and qualitative measures to determine whether communication objectives were achieved:

- increased number of Bike to Work Day pledges from 2011
- increased number of workplace events and event participants from 2011
- increase in visitor traffic to the website over 2011 levels
- increased use/mentions of the #biketoworkday on social media platforms
- Positive media coverage and impressions about Bike to Work Day, Smart Commute and bicycle commuting in the GTHA

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Approved by:

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**dates are subject to change*