



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.

Briefing Note from Metrolinx Smart Commute

Smart Commute Bike to Work Day 2012

Smart Commute is a workplace-based transportation demand management program of Metrolinx and the municipalities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area. It comprises 11 independent, local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) whose funding is derived from various sources. The funding contribution from Metrolinx ranges from 40% to 50% of each TMA's total budget, and this helps to leverage funding from municipalities, fees from employers, sponsorships and grants. The relationship between Metrolinx and each TMAs is governed by a funding agreement. To date, more than 219 employers with 561,600 employees have signed on to the Smart Commute program.

History

Metrolinx and the TMAs have worked together to facilitate and promote Bike to Work Day events to the Smart Commute network of employers since 2008. For the last three years, Metrolinx has 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 build a critical mass that spans the region. In 2012, the goal is to remain aligned and increase the number of local events and the number of participants at these events. Local events include group commutes, bicycle breakfasts, workplace seminars and incentives such as commemorative t-shirts, bike repair kits, ankle bands, etc. In previous years, events have been held in Brampton, Burlington, Hamilton, Mississauga, Markham, Newmarket, Oakville, Oshawa, Pickering, Richmond Hill, Toronto, Vaughan and Whitby.

The success of these events has helped build momentum over the years. In 2008, more than 2,500 commuters participated in Bike to Work Day events across the region and the numbers have increased steadily each year. In 2012, we expect to attract close to 4,000 participants. The marketing and promotions efforts of the TMAs reach significantly higher numbers of GTHA residents.

Leveraged benefits

Metrolinx plays a key role in coordinating Bike to Work Day. The table below juxtaposes Metrolinx's investment with that of the TMAs' (estimate for 2012).

	Metrolinx	TMAs
Financial investment (including staff time)	Non-Responsive Information	
Paid media buys	\$18,000 (see below)	\$3,500 (3 placements)
Earned media	2 placements	25 placements
Sponsors	Non-Responsive Information	
Social media followers (Twitter, Facebook, Google+, etc)	800	5400
Local events	0	37
Other investment	Non-Responsive Information	

Marketing and Promotion

As an event that seeks to elicit behaviour change, marketing, promotions and incentives are critical to its success. The Metrolinx marketing and promotions plan for Bike to Work Day is built around five strategies:

1. Paid media

Advertising will be booked as follows:

- Print Advertisements – Community newspapers: 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
- Online Advertisement: 1 week banner ad on TheWeatherNetwork.ca, geo-targeted to GTHA

2. Earned/In-kind media

Significant efforts are made to secure earned and in-kind media coverage in the lead-up to and following the event.

- 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
- Media Advisory - Interview Opportunity with Metrolinx CEO Bruce McCuaig on May 28 at Clarkson GO Station (event-day morning) as cyclists arrive and receive t-shirts
- TMAs - To support release and advisory distribution, TMAs may pitch story to local media
- In-kind advertising (no cost): Metro, 24 Hours, and T.O. Night.
- Cross promotion with GO Transit customers (messaging on electronic PINS boards, On the GO e-mail subscribers, posters mounted in GO stations
- MTO Highway boards messaging

3. Visibility/event profile

Visibility and event profile are built through:

- The distribution of 8,000 posters and 2,000 postcards across the region

- The purchase and distribution of 2,500 branded Bike to Work Day t-shirts. These t-shirts create an immediate visual impact at local events. Metrolinx and Smart Commute brands are further enhanced over the course of the year as the shirts are worn throughout the year. Centralized purchasing by Metrolinx provides an economy of scale that would not be possible if each local initiative purchased these items individually. It also ensures consistent branding and messaging throughout the GTHA.
- Social media – Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn

4. A pledge

A key element of our promotions will center on encouraging people to pledge to bike to work (or to tell a friend about it or assist a new cyclist). The online pledge form will also capture data on the entrant's usual commute mode and how they learned about the event.

5. Prizes/sponsorships

Prizes for the 2012 event are being sponsored by:

- VIA Rail (a VIA Rail trip for two to Quebec City)
- Welcome Cyclists (a weekend getaway for two people to St. Catharines).

We are also seeking other sponsors to reduce the cost of the t-shirts. However, securing sponsors in such a challenging approvals environment is difficult and a potential risk to Metrolinx's reputation.

Non-Responsive Information

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

Audiences		Significance	Strategy/Objectives	Tactics		Key messages	Supporting materials		Timeline
				Tool	Responsible		Tool	Responsible	
Political officials	Mayors	B2WD creates opportunity for community engagement - for political and community stakeholders to connect with constituents, and for SC to increase awareness about alternative forms for transit	They can repeat our messaging in their own newsletters, websites, and possibly attend/participate on B2WD, etc.	TMA Outreach Events	Smart Commute TMAs	• May 28 is Bike to Work Day • Smart Commute will host events in your region in help mark Bike to Work Day. • Smartcommute.ca is the online source for information about commuting by bicycle in the GTHA.		SC TMAs	Ongoing
	City Councillors								
	MPPs		Their support could manifest into local promotional activities.						
	Regional governance								
Community stakeholders	Local organizations, businesses, transit partners, etc.								
Smart Commute Members (Employers & Employees)	All	Workplaces are key target for Smart Commute TMAs. Important to celebrate their participation and successes, while also encouraging	To increase the number of participants at TMA events around the GTHA by promoting cycling as a viable choice for commuters.	Participant T-shirts	Smart Commute TMAs	• Smartcommute.ca is the online source for information about commuting by bicycle in the GTHA. • Visit BikeToWorkDay.ca and take the Bike to Work Day Pledge!			28-May
				Bike Repair Kits					7-28 May
				Smart Commute website, "Bike to Work Day Pledge"	Smart Commute	"May 28 is BIKE TO WORK DAY. Consider alternative forms of transit. Take the Bike to Work Day Pledge"			30 Apr - 1 Jun
GO customers	All	Captive audience already engaged in sustainable commuting. Opportunity to encourage cycling to GO stations could relieve some parking availability pressures, while also raising the profile of Smart Commute.	To the raise the profile of the Smart Commute brand as a Metrolinx program encouraging multi-modal forms of transportation in the region.	PINS electronic message boards at Union Station	Karen/Savio/Brendon, Customer Communications	• May 28 is Bike to Work Day • Cycling can be a fast and effective way to get to work. • Visit BikeToWorkDay.ca and take the Bike to Work Day Pledge!			20 May - 28 May
				On the GO email					
				SMS messages					
				GO website	Erin Whitton/Caroline Busbridge, Strat Comm			7-May	
General Public (Potential Cyclist Commuters)	All	Bike to Work Day materials and communications will be targeted to those who currently do not bike to work, and may not think of cycling as a viable mode of commuting. We will leverage the "I Bike" message 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.	To increase the number of participants at TMA events around the GTHA by promoting cycling as a viable choice for commuters.	MTO Hwy Boards	MTO	"May 28 is BIKE TO WORK DAY. Consider alternative forms of transit. Take the Bike to Work Day Pledge"			17 May - 28 May
				Smart Commute website, "Bike to Work Day Pledge"	Smart Commute	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.			30 Apr - 1 Jun
				Facebook	Transit reporters	"Share your Bike to Work Day experiences and photos on Flickr, Facebook and Twitter! #biketoworkday"			28-May
				Twitter					
				Advertising	Virve Aljas , Marketing	iBike and so can you!			21 May - 26 May
Metrolinx & GO staff	Frontline	Staff are MX's greatest ambassadors in promoting GO initiatives and answering questions.	Inform GO frontline staff in advance of any external communications to ensure they are equipped to answer questions in an informed and helpful manner	Department-specific notices	Respective department	TBC	Job aid	Jason Allen, Customer Care	17-May
	All		Forwarding news releases to all staff ensures they are aware of the public efforts/initiatives, and encourages them to participate in B2WD	Employee Communications email	Erin Whitton, Strat Comm	• May 28 is Bike to Work Day • Cycling can be a fast and effective way to get to work. • Visit BikeToWorkDay.ca and take the Bike to Work Day Pledge!			27-May

*dates are subject to change

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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**dates are subject to change*