Introducing… CommuteInfo
A program of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
a better way to work
Welcome

Introductions

- Lisa Kay Schweyer, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission’s CommuteInfo Program

Today’s Speakers

- Eric Laughlin, Highmark
- Christine Bell, Airport Corridor Transportation Association
What is CommuteInfo?

CommuteInfo is a program of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, dedicated to increasing the number of commuters in Southwestern Pennsylvania sharing a ride at least twice a week to work or school.

- Transit
- Vanpools
- Carpools
- Biking
- Walking
Today’s session will be recorded and later posted on the CommuteInfo website for future reference.

During the session, the chat feature will be closed. At the end of the presentation, the recording will end and a question and answer session will begin, at which time the chat feature will be reopened.

If you have any questions before we get started, please submit them now using the chat feature.

Please note that depending on your connection, the slides may move slowly. We will try and adjust our speaking to accommodate for any delay.
CommutInfo Webinar
Employer Efforts

Christine Bell
April 23, 2009
Transportation Management Associations

- Nonprofit organizations organized to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality
- Organized in the 1970s to help US companies and their workers respond to gasoline shortages
- First Pennsylvania TMAs incorporated in the early 1990s
- There are 9 TMAs in Pennsylvania and more than 200 across the country
Western Pennsylvania’s Transportation Management Associations

- Airport Corridor Transportation Association (ACTA)
  Serving Airport Corridor Businesses and Municipalities

- Oakland Transportation Management Association (OTMA)
  Serving Oakland Universities, Businesses and Residents

- Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership’s Transportation Management Association (PDP TMA)
  Serving Downtown Pittsburgh Businesses and Building Owners
ACTA’s mission is to optimize the use of the transportation system in the airport corridor by employing demand management strategies to broaden the spectrum of commuter travel options.
Airport Corridor Transportation Association
Some Facts About ACTA

- We’re a membership-based charitable organization

- Our members, who pay yearly dues, are private businesses and public sector entities with an interest in the airport corridor

- Our primary funding comes from state and federal transportation dollars through SPC

- Our service area is the airport corridor (western portal of the Ft. Pitt Tunnel through Beaver County along the Parkway West).
ACTA’s Relationship with Local Businesses

- ACTA is a membership-based organization.

- Our members pay dues to belong to ACTA (typically, $2 per employee per year).

- We work with businesses to get them more involved in transportation planning and decision making.

- We work with businesses to help current and new employees with their daily commute.
How Does ACTA Work with Businesses?

1. Transportation Planning Studies
2. Extend PennDOT’s Reach
3. Safety Awareness
4. Last Mile Shuttle Service to Connect Workers to Jobs
5. Help Workers with Commuting Alternatives
6. Assist Employers with Transportation Needs
7. Encourage Walking as an Alternate Mode and to Improve Health
1. Transportation Planning Studies
   A. Commuting in the Corridor

Over the past 5 years, ACTA has based programming decisions on a number of planning studies.

- Compare the employer and employee data on existing jobs and work hours with the data on current bus riders and bus routes to develop a snapshot of how people are currently commuting to jobs and what gaps exist in the current transportation system.

- Create a model for getting people to work in a job-rich suburban area with limited fixed route bus service.

- Suggest how to fill the gaps in the transportation system in the most cost-efficient way.

- Suggest technologies that might help in coordinating the transfer from mainline service to shuttles.
1. Transportation Planning Studies

A. Commuting in the Corridor

- A summary of the this study was sent to all businesses in the airport corridor.

- Commuting in the Corridor, was published in January, 2008.

- On January 31, 2008 ACTA held a public event to release the study. Presenters included:
  - Toby Fauver, PennDOT
  - Pete Behrman, PAAC
  - Mary Jo Morandini, BCTA
1. Transportation Planning Studies
   B. Intermodal Connectivity Study

- 4 Townships
- 19 Commercial Areas
- 236 Retail Stores
- 70 Restaurants
- 1 Mall-7M Visitors/Yr.
- 11 Hotels
- 12 Office Buildings
- 1 Office Park (RIDC)
- 4 Gasoline Stations
- 1 Cinema-12 Screens
- Undeveloped Parcels
Facilitate a community planning process to develop a plan that will improve mobility, foster intermodal connectivity, and create a sense of place in a congested suburban retail hub that serves as the area’s downtown.
1. Transportation Planning Studies

B. Intermodal Connectivity Study

Mobility Study Publications
1. Transportation Planning Studies

B. Intermodal Connectivity Study

- Since completing the study in March, 2008 ACTA has been working on implementation strategies
- Preliminary Approval of Funding for Retiming of Four Traffic Signals in the Study Area
- Application for Smart Transportation Funding from PennDOT to Implement Key Study Recommendations
- Commitment from IKEA to Front Funding for Improvements
1. Transportation Planning Studies

C. Safety & Security at Suburban Bus Stops

- Developing Prototype Designs for Suburban Bus Stops
- Designing Model Zoning Ordinance Language for Bus Stops and Shelters
- Emphasis on Creating Pedestrian Walkways & Other Amenities
- Inventory of 38 Bus Stops Completed
- Surveyed Bus & Shuttle Riders
- Looking at ADA Improvements
Hub Station at Robinson Town Centre

IKEA Area Aerial View
IKEA Area Existing Bus Stops
Hub Station Pedestrian Improvements
Hub Station Plan
Hub Station Section
2. Extend PennDOT’s Reach

- Organize public meetings on major construction projects.
- Facilitate information-sharing sessions to coordinate construction projects and public impacts of detours.
2. Extend PennDOT’s Reach

ACTA’s e-mailed Traffic Alert Bulletins reach 165,000 airport corridor workers and residents each week. To get on the list: amy.mathieson@alleghenycounty.us.
2. Extend PennDOT’s Reach
Informing Motorists

- Another Joint Project of the 3 TMAs
- Helping Commuters Make Better, More Informed Travel Choices
- 7,000 Brochures Sent
- 24-Hour Information Hotline
3. Safety Awareness

- With PennDOT, installed pedestrian interval signals at 10 key intersections in Oakland.
- Conducted bike inspections, taught bicycle safety and provided new bike helmets for 1,000 children.
- FedEx Ground was a hosted a safety event for children of their employees. ACTA provided the bike helmets and safety information.
4. Last Mile Shuttle Service

ACTA’s Penn Center West shuttle service takes workers from the work site to the West Busway weekday evenings when Port Authority service is no longer available.
ACTA’s On-Demand Shuttle Service takes workers from the 28X bus stop at IKEA to jobs within 1.5 miles of the bus stop.
4. Last Mile Shuttle Service
Serving Late-Night Work Shifts

On December 1, 2008 ACTA Started Operating a Shuttle to Serve Late Night Retail and Restaurant Workers
5. Help Workers with Commuting Alternatives
Transportation 101

- Purpose is to Train the Trainer
- Four-Hour Classroom Instruction
- One Hour Training on the Bus
- Started in Beaver County
- Now Provides Training in Beaver & Allegheny Counties
- Requests from Catholic Charities, Allegheny County Department of Human Services and others.
5. Help Workers with Commuting Alternatives
Transportation 101: Students Learned

- An overview of shared ride options in the region
- Transportation options available to their clients
- How to determine if a client lives near a bus route
- How to help plan a trip using bus schedules
- The cost of a bus ride and how to pay
- Who to contact for additional questions
6. Assist Employers with Transportation Needs

This is a Project of the 3 Pittsburgh TMAs
7. Encourage Walking as a Transportation Alternative

- Another Joint Project of the 3 Pittsburgh TMAs
- 1,000+ Participants to Date
- 86,264,788 Steps Taken
- Over 43,000 Miles Walked
- Grand Prize Winner Walked 2,125,866 Steps in 8 Weeks
- Sponsors: Armstrong Telephone, IKEA, Allegheny Medical, University of Pittsburgh, The Mall at Robinson & IKEA
- Winter Walk Challenge: New Year’s Day – Groundhog Day
ACTA was recognized as an outstanding nonprofit organization in the Pittsburgh region for its management excellence as a consumer centered organization that “…values constituent input which is an essential component of assuring that an agency’s programs are matched with the needs of its clients.”
Commuter Solutions
Highmark’s current commuter programs have a foundation built by employee programs and business needs.

Recent events
• 2007 Restructuring of Port Authority routes
• 2008 Port Authority Contract Concerns
2007 Restructuring of Port Authority routes

- Highmark conducted an employee survey to identify the:
  - potential impacts of changing bus routes.
  - number of employees who rely on public transportation
  - Employees’ commuting options and preferences
2007 Survey results indicated:

- 22% of employees engage in some type of carpooling
- 38% of employees utilize work from home options
- 65% of employees use public transportation to commute to work
The possibility of a work stoppage resulted in Highmark considering enhancements to commuter and work from home options.
2008 Port Authority contract negotiations

• A cross-functional team was assembled
  – Employee Relations
  – Facilities
  – Compensation
  – Payroll
  – Corporate Safety and Security
  – Internal Communications
Cross-Functional Team Results

- Added 30 bike racks
- Published 8 intranet articles to employees highlighting healthy and eco-friendly commuter options
- Developed an automated internal ridesharing data base
Internal Ridesharing Database

• Creative use of PeopleSoft Employee Self-Service application

• Developed intranet page on the Employee Relations website

• 578 employees are currently registered on the database
Alternative Work Arrangements

• Telecommuting (fulltime work from home)
• Flexible start times
• Compressed workweek options (i.e. 4-10 hour days, 9:1, or other combinations)
• Occasional work from home
Commuter Benefits

• Commuter Benefits Program
  – Provides tax savings for enrolled employees who pay for:
    • Public transportation
    • Vanpool
    • Parking

• CommuteInfo.org
  – Highmark encourages all rideshare and transit users to enroll with CommuteInfo.org
Questions
Questions, Comments

Upcoming Webinars:

- June 25 – Bike Commuting
- August 27 – University Focus
- October 22 – Pre-Holiday Transportation Planning

http://www.commuteinfo.org/comm_webinar.shtml
Contact Information

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