



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Transit Bus Accident Study – Phase II
Yield to Bus Campaign - Stakeholder Meetings
District 6

Date: December 6, 2005
Time: 2:00 pm
Location: 1000 N.W. 111 Avenue
Miami, FL 33172

Attendees:

Amy Datz	FDOT- Public Transportation Office
Mignon Allen	Dovetail Consulting
L. Carl Filer, Jr.	FDOT - Public Transit Manager
Maribel Lena	FDOT - Public Information Officer
Theo Buford	FDOT - Safety

Annotated Agenda:

- Overview
 - The “Yield to Bus” campaign stems from the FDOT analysis of transit route accidents on the state and Federal highway system.
 - The current focus of this campaign is the development of several safety related strategies and improvements.
- Public Awareness Strategy
 - The objective of this campaign is to inform motorists of the Florida law that requires drivers to yield to buses entering the travel lane from a bus bay.
 - This project will involve the use of multiple communication channels: Radio, television, billboards and other signage; driver education courses, license and tag renewals; driver license test and driving improvement school
- Target Audience
 - The primary audience for this campaign is the general public driving in Florida.
 - The reason for our meeting with the districts is to identify persons and organizations willing to be champions for safety and the support awareness/communications campaign.
- Our Goal
 - The goal of this project is develop, seek funding for, and implement an awareness campaign plan that will influence driver behavior and lead to increased bus transit safety.
- Main Tasks
 - Our primary task is to gather input and support from the Offices of Public Transit, Safety, Traffic Operations and Public Information, along with the local transit agencies.
 - We will then develop public awareness action plan/concept paper to apply for funding that will lead to programs that will enhance bus safety.
 - The concept paper will be submitted to the FDOT Safety Office for a funding grant application to implement the awareness campaign.
- Schedule

- Oct 2005 - Nov 2005 Gather stakeholder input and ideas
- Feb 2006 Complete public awareness action plan
- May 2006 Grant award notification
- October 2006 Funding allocation and program initiation

Meeting Summary:

1. Amy Datz began the session by explaining the history of the study. Ms. Datz explained that initially she thought that transit bus accidents may be occurring due to a road design flaw, but instead found the root cause was a behavioral flaw on the part of automobile drivers. As a result of her findings, Ms. Datz initiated the "Yield to Bus" public information campaign.
2. Ms. Datz drew a diagram of a near side bus stop in an exclusive right turn lane, described a typically rear end transit bus accident and asked the group if this type of accident occurred in Miami. Carl Filer responded that 95% of bus stops are far side bus stops.
3. Ms. Datz continued by reviewing the key tasks and target audience. Ms. Datz mentioned that the Transportation Commission is concerned that Florida has the highest rate of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities and this program supports making positive changes in that area of safety across the modes.
4. Ms. Datz explained that study team has been meeting with all districts and key stakeholders including PIO (public information officers), Safety, Public Transportation Office, Traffic Operations and transit agencies. Ms. Datz stated that the synopsis of all meetings will be posted on the transit website to encourage an open process. She also mentioned that the concepts paper (to apply for grant funds) must be submitted in February 2006. Ms. Datz informed the group that the grant recipients will be announced in May 2006. For the Yield to Bus Campaign, Ms. Datz is considering a request of approximately \$500,000. The grant would fund a softer campaign in year 1 and TV commercials in year 2.
5. Carl Filer, Theo Buford, and, Maribel Lena responded that the cost is prohibitive to do TV commercials, but suggested
 - Community access channel,
 - Scrolls on bottom of screen, and
 - Radio advertisements.
6. Ms. Datz continued by explaining that she would like to brand the campaign with a slogan such as "Click it or Ticket".
7. Next, Ms. Datz distributed an information sheet on the electronic yield light specification. Mr. Filer explained that Miami-Dade transit buses currently have a yellow sticker, which reads: "Yield to the Bus." Mr. Filer recommended the study team contact Alberto Parjus from Miami-Dade Transit, Department of Operations, for further information and discussion.

Amy Datz mentioned the TCRP Report, "Yield to Bus," where a successful campaign involved an operator waving to driver to say thank you after the automobile yielded. Ms. Datz inquired if

Miami-Dade has experienced a reduction in accidents since the implementation of the sticker on back of bus.

12. Amy Datz asked the group to review the proposed awareness techniques listed on fact sheet and identify the techniques of greatest priority. The group identified the following priorities:
- Informational Kit
 - Press Release
 - Brochures
 - Give Aways
 - PSA

All members of the discussion group confirmed that the list was comprehensive and included many good ideas.

13. Mignon Allen asked if there were any reservations, pitfalls concerns, or thoughts on anything discussed so far. Mr. Buford responded that Florida is not a state run transit system; therefore, the study team must work closely with transit agencies to implement a successful campaign -- that is key.

Ms. Allen mentioned that another district recommended that awareness programs only be developed for state routes and asked if this group agreed. Members of the group generally agreed that there is no need to differentiate between roadways – if the study team can accomplish ‘Yield to Bus’ on one roadway, they should move forward to accomplish this on all roadways.

14. Mr. Buford recommended that the study team coordinate with the county government regarding the uniform logo/device on buses. Mr. Buford would like a standard established that would be consistently recognized throughout the state, but also make allowances for individual County designs for logo.

15. The public information officer stated that three (3) dominant languages are used for all public meetings in Miami:
- English
 - Spanish
 - Creole

16. Ms. Allen reviewed the key research questions to be answered by the study:
1. What is public awareness?
 2. What will successful campaign achieve?
 3. Who is the target audience?
 4. What does FDOT want them to know?
 5. What are the appropriate techniques?

Mr. Filer responded that the target audience is law enforcement and recommended two strategies to engage them in the process:

1. Target new officers during Police Academy training and seasoned officers during refresher training to raise awareness of law.

2. Establish a Yield to Bus week or month with a large media campaign to raise awareness. Follow the campaign, with a law enforcement push and ticket writing during this week or month.
17. Ms. Allen asked if the District had any major successful campaigns as a model or other recommendations. Responses included:
- Click it or Ticket.
 - Large press conference with speakers (including law enforcement representatives)
 - Targeting student government association colleges/universities
 - Motor Carrier Compliance partnering with FDOT
18. Ms. Allen asked if there will there be resistance toward change from transit agencies and what is the culture? Members of the group did not foresee a major problem, but have not discussed this specific project with transit agencies and encouraged the study team to do so.

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC INFORMATION & AWARENESS TECHNIQUES

The following is a list of techniques under consideration for the Yield to Bus Campaign:

- Information Kits (distributed at driver education courses, license and tag renewals; driver license test and driving improvement school)
- Advertisements (30 and 60 second)
- Informational Videos
- Video library/clippings of bus transit safety television news coverage
- Press releases
- Media Advisories
- Newspaper articles
- Press conferences
- Newsletters
- Reports
- Brochures
- Posters
- Audiovisual presentations
- Websites
- Special Events
- Displays and exhibits with pockets for informational materials placed in public gathering places (grocery stores, banks, churches, shops)
- Public Service Announcements (radio and television)
- Billboards
- Speakers Bureau/Public speaking engagements
- Citizen Advisory Group
- Programs at Schools for Parents
- Theme/Logo/Brand Identity for Campaign
- Community Walk (i.e. "Walk for Safety")
- Buttons, magnets, other promotional items
- Contests
- Public workshops/meetings/open houses