



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Transit Bus Accident Study – Phase II
Yield to Bus Campaign - Stakeholder Meetings
District 3 -Chipley

Date: November 3, 2005

Time: 10:00 AM

Location:

Attendees: Alaxon Pitts, D3 Safety
Tommy Speights, D3 – Public Information
Donnie Duce, D3 – Planning Operations
Kathy Rudd, D3 – Public Transportation
Ray La Fontaine, FDOT, D3 – Planning Operations
Alphonso Menendez, TALTRAN
Mignon Allen, Dovetail Consulting
Amy Datz, FDOT CO PTO
Richard Diver, ECAT (via telephone)

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 introduced the background for the Yield to Bus public awareness campaign, including key research findings that demonstrated the primary causes of transit bus accidents. Ms. Datz explained that she was meeting with all FDOT district stakeholders to inform the districts of what safety, traffic operations, transit and/or public information initiatives we were developing. Ms. Datz indicated that her goal is to submit a concept paper to obtain grant funds for a statewide awareness campaign. The campaign will include methods to influence driver behavior and contribute to the reduction of rear end collision bus accidents.
2. Ms. Datz inquired from each transit agency the amount and use of bus bays. Members of the group responded that transit agencies tend to avoid bus bays, but confirmed that buses are experiencing rear ending accidents.
3. Ms. Datz continued the discussion by describing the methods of public awareness under consideration: TV, radio shows, tag renewal, ticket for moving violations, add module for 'Yield to Bus' at driving improvement school, LED panel on back of bus. Ms. Datz acknowledged that a any lighting change the back of a bus require approval by the National Traffic Safety Board, and adding new signage on roadway such as, "Buses Entering Traffic Ahead" or "Yield to Bus" upstream from a bus bay requires modification of MUTCD.
4. Richard Diver indicated that there may be some obstacles associated with the LED panel, given that the law only pertains to bus bays. If the indicator illuminated every time a bus turns, it would cause a legal problem.
5. Amy Datz confirmed that law only pertains to bus bays; however, she will be working towards changing the law to include yielding to all buses in the traffic stream. Ms. Datz explained that the nature of the project is long-term and progress to date reflects approximately three years into a six year project. Ms. Datz stated that early and ongoing consensus building is the foundation for success with a project such as this.
6. Mr. Diver indicated that talk radio works well in the district and should be considered for the awareness campaign. Ms. Datz agreed and stated that the peak hour drive time is good target time for the radio campaign.
7. Mr. Diver also encouraged public education with law enforcement organizations. Ms. Datz confirmed that target audience includes those agencies and organizations such as the Florida Highway Patrol Police Officers Association. Methods to involve these types of groups may include attendance at industry conferences or implementation of a crack down/enforcement model that would follow the awareness campaign effort. Kathy Rudd added that transit accidents are likely occurring due to lack of public education.

8. The group offered a number of other campaign ideas including meetings with the following stakeholder groups:
- CTSTs – Ms. Datz stated that the study team has already met with this group.
 - FDOT PIOs – attend the annual conference in July
 - FDOT Safety – attend annual conference in July
 - FTPA
 - Traffic Operations
 - Design Office
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Association
 - (State) National Safety Council- distributes information at annual conference in September. Orlando is district office for all of Florida, 1-800-237-0676, main number.
9. Amy Datz stated that a summary of this series of meetings with each district meeting will be posted on the PTO website and available for review and comment.
10. Amy Datz continued discussion regarding schedule, vision and goals of study. In a brainstorming format, Ms. Datz asked the group for ideas on how the success of the awareness program will be measured. For example, CUTR has launched a website where they are collecting crash data on transit. The question was asked of the group, “Is this an appropriate source of information and measure for success?”

Mr. Diver suggested that the study team gather data on reduction of accidents at bus pullouts.

Ms. Rudd inquired about the current state of bus transit accidents.

Mr. Diver explained that there are many issues to consider such as cost in labor and manpower to repair bus to get it back into operations; delays in traffic flow to clear bus from roadway; police officer time away from other law enforcement activities.

Alphonso Menendez indicated that TALTRAN has the capability to separate data by rear end accidents for bus operations.

Mr. Diver confirmed that ECAT has the data for both transit vehicle cost and cost estimates (from the police report) for automobile driver by accident. Mr. Diver agreed to send Ms. Datz the report/tracking sheet from the previous year.

11. Ms. Datz moved the discussion forward by asking the group their opinions on the potential benefits and impacts of a transit bus accident awareness campaign.
- Mr. Menendez suggested a reduction in traffic delays and congestion and more importantly an increase “On Time Performance” for bus operations. Mr. Menendez also shared that Ron Garrison, new director of TALTRAN, viewed improvement in customer service as very high on his list of priorities for the agency.

Ms. Rudd confirmed that all transit agencies within the State of Florida are required to prepare a Transit Development Plan (TDP). The TDP requires a customer survey. The survey provides baseline on the current level of customer satisfaction. Following the implementation of the awareness campaign, trends in the customer satisfaction level can be analyzed to determine if On Time Performance has improved.

12. Next, Ms. Datz requested the group review the specific list of public awareness techniques developed by the study team and requested feedback on the best or priority techniques:

Kathy Rudd

- #1 PSAs for TV, radio
- #2 Billboards
- #3 Branding – develop a catchy phrase like “Click it or Ticket”

Donnie Duce - reviewed techniques based on criteria of reaching the most people.

- #1 driver test/driving school
- #2 FDOT become more active partner in planning and design

Alphonso Menendez

- #1 Media Advisories
- #2 Radio PSA's - listening to the radio while driving is a common practice across all ages

Tommie Speights

- #1 Radio campaigns: typically develop “themes” for construction projects
- #2 Paid newspaper ads
- #3 Displays and brochures at churches, grocery stores, and kiosks at malls

Richard Diver

- #1 Wrapped Buses with “Yield to Bus” would circulate throughout coverage area (\$6, 000/bus) can wrap a portion of a bus.
- #2 June is safety month, see if safety council will assist in distribution of materials.

Alaxon Pitts

- #1 Driver Education
- #2 PSA's
- #3 Billboards (Make sure the core message is short, to the point, and attractive so drivers will easily understand)

Ray LaFontaine indicated that 402 grant pays for promotional items. Ms. Datz concluded the round table discussion of priority campaigns and mentioned that the study team will also consider a two year calendar or business cards with “Yield to Bus” logo and “Yield to Bus” informational scroll along bottom of cable access channel.

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