

2008-2009 (June 2008-July 2009)
getDowntown Program Accomplishments

1. Contacts with Businesses/Employers

- a. Continue to interface with downtown business managers to provide information and resources to them and their employees related to commuting information. Provided information to downtown business managers related to the Commuter Challenge and to the new Nightride Shuttle.
- b. Gave commuting presentations to employees at 10 different downtown organizations (Google, DTE Energy, JJR, Hobbs and Black, Ann Arbor YMCA, Ann Arbor Architects Collaborative, Zingerman's Delicatessen, Menlo Innovations, JSTOR, City of Ann Arbor) in September 2008-May 2009. Also provided information on the Commuter Challenge to businesses outside of downtown including the VA Hospital and Thomson Reuters.
- c. Continued our "Commute Chat Program," which invites employers to network and learn more about different commuting options in the downtown. Commute Chat was held 3 times this past year with 5-15 employers at each event. Commute Chat covered topics such as the environmental benefits of sustainable commuting and the Commuter Challenge.
- d. Conducted a getDowntown Evaluation in 2009 with questions for employers about their commuting needs and what they are currently doing related to sustainable transportation. The getDowntown Evaluation had been conducted in 2000, 2001, and 2005. This is the first time employers had been asked for their feedback on this evaluation.
- e. Provided information and met individuals with business managers regarding the downtown Zipcars.
- f. Continue to provide a monthly email newsletter to all go!pass contacts (around 400). Created a Commuter Connection print newsletter with commuting information for Spring/Summer and mailed it out to major downtown employers to give to their employees. This print newsletter will also be created for the Fall/Winter.
- g. Provided information to employers via email regarding AATA service changes, new commuting services from the AATA, downtown Zipcars and other commuting issues.
- h. Frequently attended Main Street Area Association meetings and Chamber Events to connect with downtown employers.

2. Contacts with Employees

- a. Send a monthly email newsletter to go!pass contacts and other interested individuals. This newsletter is then forwarded to employees of downtown businesses.
- b. Created a "Commuting Options for Downtown Employees" brochure and separate Park and Ride Lot information sheet as a way to communicate information on commuting options to downtown employees.
- c. Created a print newsletter for Spring/Summer (another will be created for the fall) containing information relevant to downtown employees. These newsletters were provided to major employers and also distributed to coffee shops, the library and other locations downtown.
- d. Presented information on Commuting Options to downtown employees at 10 different downtown organizations (see above).

3. Increased Awareness of the getDowntown Program

- a. The getDowntown Blog continues to be successful way to provide commuting information to downtown employers and employees as well as to the larger community. 2008 (Jan-Dec) saw a total of 13,196 hits to the blog, averaging about 1,000 per month.
- b. The getDowntown website continues to be updated on a regular basis and also provides a wealth of information to downtown employers, employees, and the larger community. From June 1, 2008-June 1, 2009 there were 35,160 visits to the getDowntown Website, average between 800 a month during slow times to 12,000 a month during the Commuter Challenge.
- c. Received media coverage during the first day of the Commuter Challenge 2009 in the Ann Arbor News. Also had a video with Concentrate about the Commuter Challenge. Received media coverage on Ann Arbor Radio related to the Commuter Challenge. On Bike to Work Day (May 15) received coverage on WEMU. Received media coverage regarding Zipcars on Concentrate.
- d. getDowntown has significant media relationships with the Ann Arbor News, the Ann Arbor Chronicle, AnnArbor.Com, Concentrate, the Ann Arbor Business Review, and WEMU.
- e. getDowntown has a Twitter account which allows blog posts to go on Twitter. As of June 29, 2009 the getDowntown Twitter Feed has 200 followers.

- f. getDowntown has a group on Facebook and recently created a Fan Page. There are currently about 100 members of the Facebook group and 20 Facebook Fans.

4. New Programs

a. 2009 getDowntown Evaluation

- i. Successfully completed an evaluation of the getDowntown Program, which includes information on the Commuting Habits of downtown employees and feedback from downtown employers. This information can be benchmarked with past evaluations (conducted in 2000, 2001, 2005) to help assess the getDowntown Program and how it may (or may not) be influencing downtown commuting behavior.

b. Zipcars

- i. Successfully launched the downtown Zipcar program in March 2009 by bringing 4 Zipcars to downtown Ann Arbor.
- ii. The downtown Zipcar Program has already shown signs of success with a healthy utilization rate and a strong marketing plan for the summer months. Target utilization for Zipcars is 40% and right now the downtown Zipcars are averaging about 35% utilization with more members joining the program every month.

5. Continuing Programs

a. Bike Lockers and Bike Parking

- i. Continued to market and rent bike lockers to downtown employees.
- ii. With the help of the Ann Arbor DDA Added 40 new Art Hoops to replace old bike hoops in downtown Ann Arbor.

b. Green Commute 2009 (June)

- i. Organized a Green Commute section of Green Fair to showcase different Green Commute options to the public. Exhibitors in the Green Commute Section included the City of Ann Arbor, MichiVan, the AATA, and many more.

c. Marketing of AATA services to downtown employees

- i. Worked with the AATA to provide information to downtown employees on the new Nightride Shuttle Service and the A2 Chelsea Express Service. Have already begun working with the AATA to market the new Commuter Express Service from Canton to Ann Arbor.

d. Commuter Challenge

- i. This year's Commuter Challenge saw the best participation level ever with 1,806 participants from 139 organizations and more downtown Organizations participating than ever before.
- ii. In an evaluation survey, 53% of downtown respondents (compared to 50% of all respondents) said the Commuter Challenge changed their commuting behavior.
- iii. In an evaluation survey, 20% of downtown respondents had rarely or never used sustainable transportation before the Commuter Challenge.
- iv. Continue to cultivate a partnership with the UM around the Commuter Challenge. This year, the UM donated in-kind gifts as well as money towards printing to help with the Challenge. The UM continues to be interested in stepping up their commitment to the Commuter Challenge.
- v. Continue to receive success stories from Commuter Challenge participants who say the Challenge significantly impacted their commuting behavior and as a result of last year's Challenge they are continuing to use sustainable transportation.
- vi. Have received stories from individuals this year who say the 2009 Commuter Challenge positively impacted their commuting behavior.
- vii. The Commuter Challenge received a lot of positive press including a story in the Ann Arbor News and a video on Concentrate.

e. go!Pass Program

- i. Interest in the go!pass program continues to increase. As of June 2009 466 organizations and 5,954 downtown employees participate in the program. This is an increase from the last several years. getDowntown often gets a call from a new business about go!passes as soon as they locate downtown.
- ii. 62 businesses purchased go!passes for the first time during this fiscal year (as of July 2009).
- iii. Ridership of people with a go!pass increased by 20% in 2007-2008 as compared to 2006-2007.
- iv. Expanded use of go!pass in July 2009 to allow individuals to get a 50% discount on the new AATA Commuter Bus Services to Chelsea and Canton with their bus pass. This happened as a result of a request to the DDA and the DDA funding that request.
- v. The numbers of discounts for the go!pass continues to increase.

- f. **Lead by Example with the City of Ann Arbor**
 - i. Have almost completed a year-long contract with the City of Ann Arbor to create a Customized Commuting Program for their employees. Accomplishments include conducting a survey of downtown employees to assess commuting needs, conducting focus groups of City employees, recruiting Commuting Ambassadors, conducting several commuting events at the City of Ann Arbor, installing a Commuting Information Station and providing information and resources to City employees on their commuting needs.
 - ii. As a result of the Lead by Example program, the City of Ann Arbor had record participation in the Commuter Challenge this year and many employees report an increased knowledge of commuting options and services.
- g. **AATA Nightride Shuttle and Evening Employee information**
 - i. Successfully completed an analysis of the commuting habits of downtown Ann Arbor Employees, worked with the AATA to pilot an evening employee service and provided a comprehensive report to the DDA and AATA documenting the pilot service and future recommendations for evening employees.
- h. **Cultivating partnerships with affiliated organizations**
 - i. Continue to foster relationships with the AATA, City of Ann Arbor, Chamber of Commerce, UM, Washtenaw Area Transportation Study and Washtenaw Biking and Walking Organization to further the mission of the getDowntown Program.