



2011-2012 Annual Report

District 5 Regional Commuter Assistance Program

A Program of the Florida Department of Transportation

About reThink

reThink is your #1 resource on commuter options in Central Florida. A service of the Florida Department of Transportation, the program has four essential goals: decreasing traffic congestion, improving air quality, conserving natural resources, and saving people money. To achieve these goals, reThink promotes various transportation options, such as sharing the ride, riding transit, biking and walking, and telecommuting, to employers and commuters throughout District 5.

During Fiscal Year (FY) 11-12, the reThink program was administered by a four-person consultant team based at the FDOT Orlando Urban Office. The program operates with its own business plan and goals, with oversight by FDOT Project Managers Diane Poitras and Karen Adamson and TranSystems Project Manager Andy Nicol. The team provides commuter assistance to all nine counties in District Five, including Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties.

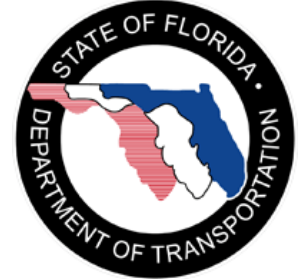
Program History

Launched in July 2010, FY 11-12 marked the second full year of program operations. The addition of an Outreach Specialist increased the level of activities during this second year. The four-person staff was able to conduct 332 meetings and events in FY 11-12, an increase from the first year's 272 meetings and events.

Outreach efforts benefited from the relationships and partnerships established during the first year of the program. The Outreach Specialists routinely received referrals from Year One Employer Partners and brand awareness among area stakeholders was high.

Notable accomplishments during Year Two include the following:

- Receiving MetroPlan Orlando and the Central Florida Clean Air Team's Clean Air Award (Orange, Osceola, and Seminole County)
- Partnership with the City of Deltona and Bruce Strumpf, Inc. to designate a Shared-Use Park & Ride lot at Deltona Plaza (Volusia County)
- Partnership with the City of Mascotte to designate a Shared-Use Park & Ride Lot at the City's Civic Center (Lake County)
- Opening a new Park & Ride Lot in Minneola, in cooperation with the City of Minneola and the Lake-Sumter MPO (Lake County)
- Partnership with the City of Ocala, the Ocala/Marion County TPO, SunTran, Marion County, and the Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the area's first "reThink Your Commute" day with a focus on transit (Marion County)



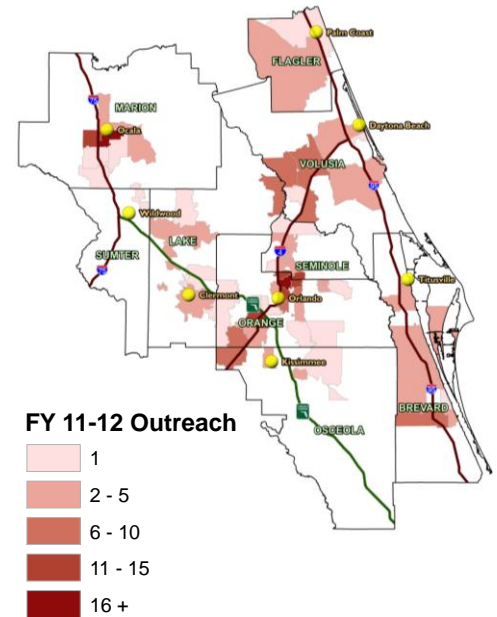
Outreach

The reThink outreach team promotes transportation options by assisting employers in the creation and implementation of Commuter Benefit programs at individual worksites. In FY 11-12, the reThink outreach team met with 77 new employers to introduce the program and discuss the available transportation options. Including employers that participated in the first year of the program, reThink assisted **95 employers and organizations** in the promotion and utilization of transportation options. Some notable partners include the following:

-  Kennedy Space Center
-  Orlando Health
-  Volusia County Government
-  City of Deltona

When working with an employer or organization, the reThink team aims to provide services that best fit the needs of that group. From Lunch & Learn programs to Transit Trainings, it is these type of activities that keep the reThink team busy year-round. In fact, the team facilitated **87 ridematching drives, 40 Lunch & Learns, nine Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) trainings, and three Transit Trainings.**

While outreach efforts were focused on the “underserved” areas of District 5 in the first year, FY 11-12 brought more activity in the urban core. The map to the right provides an overview of the location of **332 outreach activities** (organized by zip code) during Year Two. The top three locations of outreach during FY 11-12 were Orange County (152), Marion County (57), and Brevard County (35).

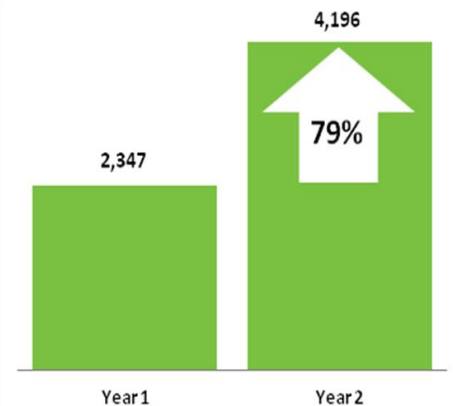


Ridematching

The most essential element of the program is reThink’s ability to match people with similar origins, destinations, and work schedules so that a carpool/vanpool can be formed. This is done through Ez-Ride, ridematching software offered through Florida State University. The matching software is available online at reThinkYourCommute.com, enabling commuters to set up their own profile and find matches at their convenience. One-on-one assistance is available through the 1-866-610-RIDE (7433) Call Center, as well as at worksite and community events with reThink Outreach staff.

During the first year of the program, 2,347 individuals registered with reThink. In Year Two, that number **increased to 4,196 (a 79% increase).**

In response to commuter needs, several enhancements were made to Ez-Ride, which include the addition of a “bike buddy” matching option, the ability to adjust search radii, and the option to view bus options through Google Transit. Additional enhancements to Ez-Ride are in development, including a trip planner and adding SunRail stations to the online map feature.

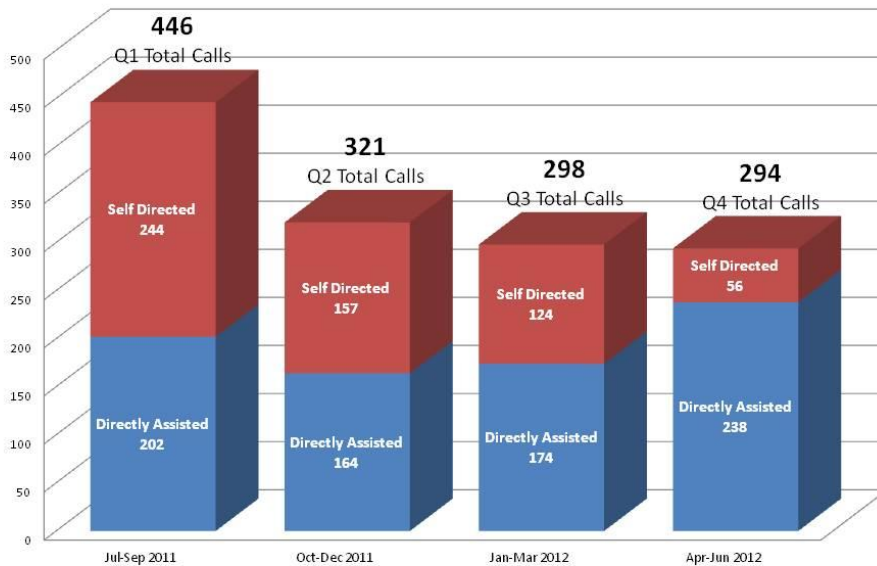


1-866-610-RIDE Call Center

Commuters can speak directly to the reThink team and receive personalized assistance through the 1-866-610-RIDE Call Center. The system also allows commuters to self-transfer to any of the six public transit providers in District 5.

1-866-610-RIDE (7433) Call Center

Total Calls - FY 11-12



In FY 11-12, we **received 1,359 calls, 15% more than the previous year**. The number one reason for commuters to call in was for information regarding transit routes and schedules (54%); second was to register to find a carpool/vanpool match (14%).

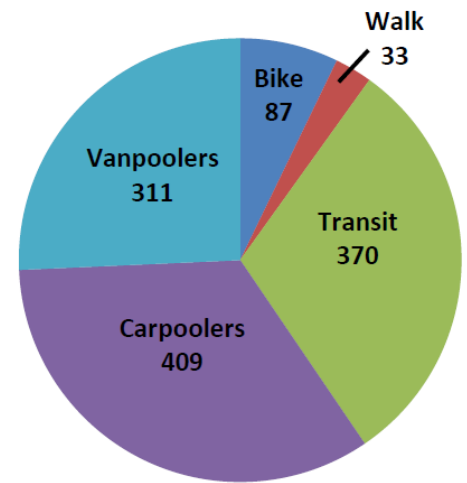
In April 2012, a bilingual Program Coordinator was added to the team to better assist our Spanish-speaking commuters. At the end of FY 11-12, an option was added to allow commuters to connect with the SunRail City Center to learn more about the upcoming commuter rail project.

Emergency Ride Home (ERH) Program

reThink continues to administer the Emergency Ride Home (ERH) program as a way to alleviate the concern of not having a vehicle during the day.

This program is a back-up plan for commuters that use an alternative mode to get to work at least two (2) times a week. If a specific qualifying event occurs and the commuter does not have their own vehicle to get home, the program will reimburse the cost of a taxi cab, rental car, or mileage up to four (4) times a year and up to \$150 per occurrence.

To date, **1,210 commuters have enrolled in the ERH program – an 81% increase** over the first year’s 667 registered commuters. The program received 15 requests for reimbursements, making the cost for this incentive program during FY 11-12 less than \$700.



ERH Registration by Mode

Marketing

Website

The program website, reThinkYourCommute.com, provides a common portal for commuters and employers across District 5 to find information on transportation options and the available programs and services.

In the second year of the program, the website received **10,010 visits** (81% were unique visitors), which is in line with the first year’s 10,114 visits. The most popular pages of the website were the ridematching service, the Park & Ride lot maps, and the Emergency Ride Home (ERH) program page. Clean Air Month in May saw the most traffic, bringing 1,229 visits, of which 78% were unique visitors.



A concentrated effort was made during Year Two to reach out to stakeholders across District 5, requesting links be added to their websites to lead commuters to the program website. The result of this effort is that our top referral sources are these same stakeholders; LYNX continually tops the list of referral sources (590 referrals), along with the City of Clermont (369 referrals).

Media Coverage

The program received media coverage thanks to the addition of Park & Ride lots in Minneola, Mascotte, and Deltona. Articles were featured in The Orlando Sentinel, The Daily Commercial, The New Groveland Graphic, and The Daytona Beach News-Journal.

Vehicle Advertising

Advertising agreements were maintained in Brevard, Flagler, and Volusia County. The vehicle advertising in these three counties featured reThink messaging on transit vehicle tails and windows. Interior bus cards were also featured on LYNX buses, inviting bus commuters to register for the Emergency Ride Home (ERH) program. In addition to these paid placements, Marion County



and Sumter County allowed reThink logo decals to be added to transit vehicles to increase brand awareness in their service areas.

Outdoor Advertising

Thanks to FDOT owning a road sign in Minneola, reThink posted a large road sign to promote the Park & Ride program in Lake County.



Print Advertising

Advertisements promoting the new Econlockhatchee Park & Ride lot were placed in the East Orlando Sun. A small ad was placed in the Orlando Business Journal's April "Celebrating Sustainability" issue as well.

Direct Mail

In January 2012, a mailer was sent to all commuters registered with reThink. The mailer focused on the money individuals could save by reThinking their commute and asked commuters to make sure the program had their most up-to-date information on file (e.g. work schedule and contact information).



Thanks to the City of Minneola, reThink messaging was featured on monthly utility bills in Minneola in the second half of the year. Letters were also sent to residents in the Audubon Park Garden District, which is served by LYNX Link 13 and 313. The mailer included information on transportation options and invited area commuters to reThink the way they get to work.

Radio Advertising

In cooperation with MetroPlan Orlando, radio spots were placed on three radio stations at the end of May. The spots celebrated reThink receiving the Clean Air Award and included a call to action to contact reThink for more information. In addition, MetroPlan Orlando staff and the reThink Program Manager were featured guests on a radio show on SUNNY 105.9.



As part of Ocala's First reThink Your Commute Day, the Program Manager was interviewed on WOCA 96.7FM and 1370AM and a free Public Service Announcement was created thanks to WITG 104.7.

reThink's Public Service Announcement (PSA) was also routinely played on WPRK 91.5.

Email Marketing

A monthly e-newsletter is sent to reThink commuters and supporters; the e-newsletter highlights transportation issues and projects throughout District 5.

Special Events

A series of special events were organized during FY 11-12. These special events were great opportunities to connect with stakeholders and commuters alike.

- Ribbon Cutting: FDOT Orlando Urban Office Bike Rack Installation - November 18, 2011
- Ribbon Cutting: Park & Ride Lot in City of Minneola - January 19, 2012



- Ribbon Cutting: Shared-Use Park & Ride Lot at Mascotte Civic Center - February 28, 2012
- Ribbon Cutting: Shared-Use Park & Ride Lot at Deltona Plaza - March 1, 2012
- City of Orlando's Bike to Work Day - May 25, 2012
- Ocala's First reThink Your Commute Day - July 11, 2012 (planning took place during FY 11-12)

Speaking Opportunities

The reThink team was a featured presenter for the Surfcoast Chapter of the Florida Planning & Zoning Association training on June 15, 2012.



Looking at the Numbers

Since the launch of the program two years ago, District 5 commuters that have registered their alternative commute with reThink have made a big impact.

- 21.9 million fewer vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- 1 million gallons of gas saved
- 20 million pounds of carbon dioxide averted from the atmosphere
- reThinkers saved more than \$12.7 million dollars in commuting costs



Looking Ahead

As Year Three begins, the reThink team is also hard at work encouraging additional mode shift by improving the programs and services offered. Some of the initiatives that will be developed in FY 12-13 include the following:

- ✓ Connectivity - Regional coordination to help commuters with the "last mile" between SunRail stations and their worksite
- ✓ Coordination with SunRail - Working with the SunRail team on cross-promotions and efficient use of marketing resources
- ✓ Employer Partner Levels and Best Workplaces for Commuters (BWC) – Partners will now be rated based on the depth of their Commuter Benefits. The team will also promote the national BWC recognition program as an additional incentive for employer involvement.
- ✓ Coordination with Vanpool Providers - The reThink team will work more closely with the transit agency vanpool programs, looking for opportunities to increase and retain vanpool ridership
- ✓ Partnerships - More concentration will be placed on getting the most out of our partnerships with the area's transportation providers and stakeholders



For more information or to get involved, please contact us!

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**Special Thanks to Our
Transportation Partners!**

