

Real-Time Transit Information Reaps Rewards

GRAHAM CAYWOOD AND SHANA JOHNSON

TransitScreen, a transportation software and digital sign company, received top honors in the Six-Minute Pitch Transportation Start-Up Challenge at the TRB 93rd Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., in January. TransitScreen, which specializes in real-time transit information displays, produces a live display of all transportation options at a specific location—bus, train, bikeshare, rideshare, and carshare.

TransitScreen technology was developed through a fellowship program with Mobility Lab in Arlington County, Virginia, a public research and development organization focused on advancing the practice of transportation demand management.

In the Six-Minute Pitch, four young transportation entrepreneurs propose a new transportation technology product or service—in six minutes or less—to a panel of industry entrepreneurs and investors. Presenters are judged on the commercial feasibility of their proposal and how their product or service brings transportation research into practice and meets critical transportation challenges.

Sponsored by the TRB Young Members Council, the competition was organized by 2013 winners Susan Paulus, Lakeside Engineers, and Robert Rodden, American Concrete Pavement Association. A panel of judges—Gabe Klein, Urban Land Institute;

Caywood is Communications Director and cofounder of TransitScreen, Dallas–Fort Worth, Texas. Johnson is Senior Transportation Planner, Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning, Inc., Rockville, Maryland, and served as moderator of the Six-Minute Pitch.



A TransitScreen display for K and 15th Streets in Washington, D.C., includes information on bikeshare availability as well as approaching buses and Metro trains.

Sean O’Sullivan, Carma; and Rodden—provided immediate feedback on the market potential and business model of each proposal, as well as the incorporation of innovative technologies or techniques.

“TransitScreen is an outgrowth of the collaborative consumption economy. The world is changing,” noted Klein, former transportation commissioner for the City of Chicago and former director of the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, in a radio interview with the Washington, D.C., National Public Radio affiliate.¹ He added that TransitScreen would be useful outside Metro stations, which typically lack electronic data about nearby modes, as well as inside stations, so that travelers exiting a train can review their modal connections.

In April, TransitScreen launched SmartWalk, a digital display of real-time transit information to be projected on sidewalks or walls that incorporates traditional signs and information about local landmarks, directions, distances, and opening and closing times.²

¹ http://wamu.org/news/14/04/21/taking_transit_information_off_mobile_devices_and_onto_public_displays.

² <http://www.fastcodesign.com/3028960/slicker-city/smartwalk-turns-any-public-surface-into-a-subway-tracker>.



PROMOTING SAFETY— Charlie Williams II, Center for Offshore Safety, discusses safety culture at the first meeting of the Committee on Offshore Oil and Gas Industry Safety Culture Framing Study. The committee gathered April 29–30 at the National Academies’ Keck Center in Washington, D.C., to identify the essential characteristics of a strong safety culture; industry barriers to achieving this culture and ways to overcome the barriers; and effective measurement and assessment strategies. The study, a project of TRB and the National Research Council’s Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, is expected to be completed in late 2015.