

“Parking Lot” Issues from the June 13, 2006 Commuter Connections Strategic Planning Meeting

The following issues were brought up and the group decided to table them for future discussions:

1. Explore outreach to increase numbers of new stakeholders/members as a way to increase funding
2. Include other transit options such as vanpool and carpool (under roles and responsibilities of local jurisdictions) **(Removed at the November 21, 2006 Subcommittee meeting because it is to be addressed by a newly updated MOU)**
3. Include planning activities as part of local and COG responsibilities **(Covered at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting)**
 - The Subcommittee expressed an interest in integrating TDM into other transportation and land-use planning activities.
4. Add fixing/resolving database problems as part of COG’s roles and responsibilities (section 4.5)
5. Reflect local roles more explicitly through roles and responsibilities sections **(Covered at the November 21st, 2006 Subcommittee meeting)**
 - Nicholas Ramfos stated that this issue would be addressed at the December 19, 2006 Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee Meeting. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between COG and the local jurisdictions will be updated to more clearly state those responsibilities. These responsibilities are also outlined in the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan under “Network Responsibilities.” This section may be found immediately following the Acceptable Performance Levels (APL’s).
6. Increase emphasis on Spanish language outreach and services **(Covered at the November 21st, 2006 Subcommittee meeting)**
 - Several outreach initiatives offered by Commuter Connections were discussed. The Spanish outreach services at COG including a Spanish version of the Commuter Connections website, specific direct mail pieces to the Spanish community, as well as a separate Spanish line with a live Spanish-speaking operator. Commuter Connections, in conjunction with the Access For All Committee (a TPB advisory committee) helped roll out a similar program for WMATA, which had been lacking the appropriate channels to communicate with Spanish-speaking people. Mr. Ramfos stated that despite several media campaigns and outreach efforts, usage the Spanish-speaking line is relatively low, but is expected to increase as the Spanish population in the area continues to grow.
7. Explore how to promote Commuter Connections network and yet retain individual jurisdictions’ identities **(Covered at the July 18, 2006 Subcommittee meeting, additional comments submitted at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting)**
 - Several options were presented as to how to retain individual local identities

while capitalizing on the Commuter Connections brand including: highway signage, a logo indicating membership, universal letterhead, and even identification on the phone. A possible redesign of the Commuter Connections web site could also shift a focus to a network-oriented look to Commuter Connections. The continued identification of the local jurisdictions is critical to receiving benefits of regional mass marketing events. The question of how to make the partnership more visible to the public was discussed. One possible solution to the problem would be a region-wide marketing effort aimed at the individual jurisdictions, allowing the public to realize the relationship between COG, Commuter Connections, the localities, and the states.

- **(January 16th, 2007)** The Subcommittee expressed a high level of interest regarding a uniform letterhead to be used by all members of Commuter Connections, emphasizing their membership in the network.
8. More coordination on regional/local outreach that is funded by Commuter Connections **(Covered at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting)**
 - The Subcommittee felt discussing the “Parking Lot Issues” was evidence of increased coordination among the jurisdictions.
 9. Provide local breakdowns of summary survey results **(Covered at the July 18, 2006 Subcommittee meeting)**
 - These results can be provided from the State of the Commute; however some of the results may not be available from other reports because they are not statistically significant. In 2004, these data were available, yet only Fairfax County sought the results of survey initially.
 10. Add to new initiatives: Improvements in systems across the board (Commuter Connections web-based ridesharing, reporting, etc.)
 11. Distinguish between objectives 8.1 and 8.2 (increase number of employers participating vs. increase the number of programs that they have)
 12. Clarify who has responsibility for setting jurisdiction goals
 13. Define performance goals in section 8 or re-word without specific numbers; if goals are kept, determine whether they are based on air quality, the TERMS, or some other measure
 14. Section 8.10: further discussion of barriers to cooperation between jurisdictions
 15. Where do we count participation in telework vs. employer outreach? How is credit allocated for each?
 16. Section 11: Consider TDM certification for network members, perhaps based on CUTR program **(Covered at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting)**

- The Subcommittee agreed that certification would aid in its goal to seek inclusion in the planning process as discussed in item #3.

Under Customer Service:

1. Send broadcast e-mails or queries in instances of system outages or other problems that affect most members
2. Suggestion for COG staff to make onsite visits to resolve computer problems that can be fixed over the telephone. If too expensive to provide, consider a fee schedule or make additional resources available.
3. COG can assist with data processing if needed (**Covered at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting**)
 - COG/TPB staff reported that Commuter Connections was addressing data processing needs.
4. COG staff need to be familiar with the geography and people in the local jurisdictions (**Covered at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting**)
 - COG/TPB staff reported that staff has addressed the need to increase knowledge and familiarity with local jurisdictions' geography

Under Managing Expectations:

1. Make sure transactions have a paper trail (**Covered at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting, covered through the set-up of "E-Support" from the Commuter Connections Operations Center as so acknowledged by the Chair, Commuter Connections Subcommittee**)
2. Have tracking or tickets in writing (**Covered at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting, covered through the set-up of "E-Support" from the Commuter Connections Operations Center as so acknowledged by the Chair, Commuter Connections Subcommittee**)
3. Expectations of responsiveness for resolving problems. System crash may mean as immediate site visit. Other technical problems should at least be acknowledged within one business day (**Covered at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting, covered through the set-up of "E-Support" from the Commuter Connections Operations Center as so acknowledged by the Chair, Commuter Connections Subcommittee**)
4. State-level intervention if issues for unresolved. (**Covered at the January 16th, 2007 Subcommittee meeting, addressed in the newly updated draft MOU so acknowledged by the Chair, Commuter Connections Subcommittee**)
5. COG to have IT contacts at the local level

Under Communications:

1. COG staff to attend state retreats
2. E-mail alerts to members
3. State updates on sub-committee meetings
4. Cancel meetings when appropriate