

**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

**Chairperson: Linda Stewart-Byrd, MDOT
Vice Chairperson: Christopher Hamilton, Arlington County
Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos (202) 962-3313**

Item #1 Introductions

The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves and to sign the attendance sheet

Chair, Linda Stewart-Byrd called the meeting to order by introducing herself and asking the rest of the attendees to do so (*See attached attendance sheet*).

Item #2 Minutes of January 16, 2007

Approval was sought for the January 16, 2007 Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting minutes.

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the January 16th meeting as written.

Item #3 FY 2006 GRH Survey Report

Mr. Douglas Franklin discussed substantive changes made to the FY 2006 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey Report. The Subcommittee was asked to endorse the report for release.

Douglas Franklin commented that most of the changes made were editorial in nature. One notable change occurred on page 8 where a legend was created to make the bar graph more legible.

There were no comments made to the final draft FY 2006 Guaranteed Ride Home Survey Report. There was a motion and a second to approve the report. Mr. Franklin thanked the Subcommittee for their input and comments to the report.

Item #4 FY 2008 Draft Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP)

Mr. Nicholas Ramfos discussed substantive changes to the draft FY 2008 CCWP. The Subcommittee was asked to endorse the document.

Nicholas Ramfos commented that the version of the CCWP that was in the agenda packet was the final draft. Substantive changes from state funding agencies included renaming of the jurisdictional program: Telework to Maryland and Virginia Telework Program. COG/TPB staff elaborated on cost estimates for the Operations Center and in particular the costs for the development of the Regional TDM Software System. Guaranteed Ride Home costs were separated into two projects: General Operations and Maintenance and Process Trip Requests and Provide Trips; Marketing was separated into three project areas: TDM Marketing and Advertising, Bike To Work Day, and Employer Recognition Awards. Monitoring and Evaluation costs were broken out for contractor costs and specific schedules were shown for TERM Data Collection and Analysis as well as Program Monitoring and Tracking activities. Additional

clarification language was added on page 30 to the description of the Live Near Your Work (LNYW) project section under the Employer Outreach program. Mr. Ramfos explained that a total of \$15,000 was to be used through the TDM Marketing Contract for items such as local direct mailers, updating of regional LNYW marketing materials and \$80,000 was available in pass-thru grants to local jurisdictions for introductory briefing sessions.

Mr. Ramfos also stated that the introductory language in the Employer Outreach program was strengthened to illustrate the role local jurisdictions have in the program. Due to lack of consensus among the state funding agencies, the GRH Loyalty & Incentives project was removed from the FY 2008 CCWP. Mr. Ramfos commented on the reduction of GRH registrants and re-registrants over the past few fiscal years and attributed the decline to streamlined marketing activities and a massive clean-up of the GRH database. He stated that focused GRH marketing would be resurrected along with merchant supplied discount cards which Commuter Connections had used in the past to reward re-registrants to the program.

Additionally, Mr. Ramfos commented that COG/TPB staff would be seeking ways in which to improve survey response rates for the Employer Customer Satisfaction survey and he also announced that the Telecommuting Advantage Group (TAG) had been awarded the on-call assistance contract under the Telework program.

There was a motion and a second to approve the Final FY 2008 Commuter Connections Work Program.

Mr. Ramfos stated that the document would be presented for final approval at the TPB meeting tomorrow.

Item #5 TDM Evaluation Project Update

Mr. Nicholas Ramfos and Daivamani Sivasailam discussed the changes in the Commuter Connections TERM's. Ms. Lori Diggins discussed changes to the TERM's Framework Document.

Nicholas Ramfos and Daivamani Sivasailam discussed the changes in the TERM participation rates for the FY 2006-2008 evaluation cycle. The Integrated Rideshare TERM was change to show the Kiosk portion of the program, while the software portion was shifted to the Commuter Operations Center.

There was a motion and a second to approve the revised Commuter Connections TERM goals and participation rates.

Nicholas Ramfos distributed and discussed the Commuter Connections TDM Evaluation Project schedule.

Lori Diggins with LDA Consulting reviewed substantive changes to the draft TDM Evaluation Framework Methodology Document. She stated that this was updated for the fourth time for the project. There has been a reduction of TERM's six to five: Telework, Guaranteed Ride Home, Employer Outreach, Mass Marketing, and InfoExpress Kiosks. The program goals have been updated from 2002 and emission reduction goals will also be added to measure of Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 benefits.

Next, Ms. Diggins discussed the State of the Commute survey and briefed the Subcommittee on small changes in the prompts of the survey that had been added. Questions regarding online ridematching and incentive programs were added as well as specific questions regarding specific jurisdictional TDM program services. A Live Near Your Work question was added to the survey. Telework assistance, InfoExpress Kiosks, and Mass Marketing questions were added as well. Ms. Diggins also explained that a new survey format utilizing the internet has been included as part of the GRH Applicant survey.

Mr. Ramfos stated that the Committee can provide edits and comments regarding the draft TDM Framework Methodology document by April 6th. The draft document would be posted to the Extranet for review. The Subcommittee would be asked approve the document at its May 15th meeting.

Item #6 Congestion Management Process

The New Rule issued by the United States Department of Transportation was discussed in its relation to Statewide Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning.

Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning, discussed the evolution of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) in the National Capital region. First, he discussed TDM in relation to air quality standards as spelled out by the region's Air Quality Committee and secondly in relation to congestion management as prescribed in the Federal Register (pp. 7274 – 7275) § 450.320 – Congestion management process in transportation management areas and § 450.322.

Mr. Kirby commented that during the 1980's the region expanded its ridematching network to a regional program, forming Commuter Connections. During the mid 1990's, an increased focus on air quality and mobile emissions occurred which resulted in the genesis of the TERMS initiative in order to comply with increasingly tough standards of vehicle emissions. Newer automotive technology was rolled out that assisted with compliance of regional emissions goals. Retiring vehicle fleets and the rollout of new fleets, utilizing smarter, Ozone friendly technologies have also contributed to meeting those goals.

With regards to congestion management, Mr. Kirby cited language found in the February 14, 2007 publication of the Federal Register on the Final Rule for Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning. He also reiterated TDM's importance in helping to achieve the ever increasing standards of mobile emissions in regard to air quality given the new 8-hour standard. The following excerpts were cited directly by Mr. Kirby as requirements to the metropolitan transportation plan, whether highway or transit related. In our TMA, which is also a nonattainment area, we are not allowed to add highway capacity unless demand management has been first consulted and all other processes of demand management have been exhausted.

§450.320 Congestion management process in transportation management areas

[a] The transportation planning process in a TMA shall address congestion management through a process that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of a multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities

eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 through the use of travel demand management and operational management strategies.

[b] The development of a congestion management process should result in multimodal system performance measures and strategies that can be reflected in the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP. The level of system performance deemed acceptable by State and local transportation officials may vary by type of transportation facility , geographic location (metropolitan area or subarea) and/or time of day...

[c] The congestion management process shall be developed, established, and implemented as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process that includes coordination with transportation system management and operations activities. The congestion management process shall include:

(1) Methods to monitor and evaluate the process of the multimodal transportation system, identify the causes of recurring and non-recurring congestion, identify and evaluate alternative strategies, provide information supporting the implementation of actions and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented actions.

[d] In a TMA designated as a nonattainment area for ozone and carbon monoxide pursuant to the Clean Air Act, Federal funds may not be programmed for any project the will result in a significant increase in the carrying capacity of SOV's, unless the project is addressed through a congestion management process meeting the requirements of this section.

§ 450.322 Development and content of the metropolitan transportation plan

[f] The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum include:

(1) The projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the transportation plan;
(2) Existing and proposed transportation facilities (including major roadways, transit, multimodal and intermodal facilities, pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, and intermodal connectors) that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions over the period of the transportation plan.

Mr. Kirby stated that COG/TPB staff would be working on a regional CMP and would keep the Subcommittee briefed on the progress. He also stated the importance of the data collection activities and evaluation results of the Commuter Connections in relation to the CMP.

Item #7 Commuter Connections Stakeholder Research

Ms. Peggy Hetherington from Parsons Brinkerhoff Transit & Rail Systems presented preliminary results of a qualitative research study conducted with Commuter Connections Stakeholders.

Mr. Ramfos introduced Ms. Hetherington, a subcontractor with PB, on the regional TDM marketing project, and reported that the purpose of the stakeholder research project was to gain input from network members on local marketing activities and ideas on how to improve regional TDM marketing efforts.

Peggy Hetherington gave a brief, overall impression of her study of the Commuter Connections stakeholders as part of the regional TDM marketing project. She commented on the overall diversity of the area and the depth of knowledge and the level of professionalism among the Commuter Connections network members. She also commented on the overall satisfaction of network members, upcoming marketing opportunities, technology expansion, private sector outreach, and regionalized service opportunities. She stated that some of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned that an increase in cooperation and coordination in the region on TDM is important. She also stated that she was working on a summary of the findings that would be completed during the current fiscal year and shared with the group.

Item #8 Strategic Planning Plan

The Subcommittee continued discussion on the "Parking Lot Issues" associated with the final version of the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan.

Linda Stewart-Byrd asked that due to a lack of time, Subcommittee member submit requests for items to be covered at the May 15th meeting to Nicholas Ramfos.

Item #9 Bike To Work Day Event Update

Mr. Douglas Franklin briefed the Subcommittee on the Bike To Work Day Event.

Douglas Franklin stated that Bike To Work Day was scheduled for Friday, May 18, 2007. He also commented on the broad range of participants from expert to novice bicyclists. A free lunch will be provided to the organization that has the most participants. Four new pit stops have been added in: Crystal City, Tyson's Corner and Springfield in Virginia and Hyattsville in Maryland bringing the total to 25. The ridership goal is 6,600 for this year's event. Mr. Franklin also distributed posters and rack cards and mentioned the ads which were to appear on 6 circulator buses. He also stated that Mayor Adrian Fenty has agreed to be part of the Bike To Work Day ceremonies.

Item #10 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, May 15, 2007.