

## Commuter Connections Subcommittee

### MEETING MINUTES

*Tuesday, September 19, 2006*

**Chairperson: Leann Landry, WMATA**  
**Vice Chairperson: Linda Stewart-Byrd, MDOT**  
**Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos (202) 962-3313**

**Item #1**      **Introductions**

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

Vice 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 July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

*Approval was sought for the July 18<sup>th</sup> Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting minutes.*

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting as written.

**Item #3**      **Announcement of New Vice Chair**

*The Nominating Committee selection for the incoming Vice-Chair was announced.*

Nicholas Ramfos reported that the Commuter Connections Subcommittee's Vice Chair Nominating Committee met in August by conference call and nominated Christopher Hamilton with Arlington County as the next Vice Chair. The nomination was approved by the Commuter Connections Subcommittee.

**Item #4**      **Change of Chairperson**

*The outgoing chair of Commuter Connections was recognized by the incoming chair.*

Linda Stewart – Byrd, incoming chair recognized Leann Landry, outgoing chair and read the plaque to be presented to her for service to COG and Commuter Connections.

**Item #5      “Hov”er Project Presentation**

*The Subcommittee was briefed by Paul Minett on the HOVER system developed by Trip Convergence Ltd, of Auckland, New Zealand.*

Paul Minett of Trip Convergence Ltd of Auckland, New Zealand briefed the Subcommittee on a pilot program known as the “Hover” system. This system is a hybrid version of carpooling and what is commonly referred to as “slugging,” known as facilitated carpooling. The goal of the “Hover” system is to entice those who are not currently participating in traditional carpooling to join in. The primary difference between “Hover” and traditional carpooling is the “value proposition”—what tangible gain one might experience from carpooling. In the “Hover” system, members are awarded credits for driving and members pay with credits for riding, all through an electronic system which operates with ID tags and sensors, similar to “EZ Pass.” When a large number of credits have been amassed by members, they are redeemable for cash.

In order to establish membership in the “Hover” system, two complete reference checks must be performed. After membership is secured, participating members converge on a so-called “Hoverpark” (a place where “Hover” members meet and park their cars according to destination.) Those members wishing to ride simply meet up with the first outbound vehicle headed to their destination. Carpools are formed on a first – come, first – serve basis.

In the evening, riders would be picked up by the same drivers which took them in the morning and then continue to a “Hoverport,” in order to get back in the system. In this common area, riders can match up with drivers headed back to the “Hoverpark” of their origin. Finally, a “Guaranteed Ride Home” program is in place in order to prevent any riders from being stranded.

The primary hurdles of getting this program off the ground would be land acquisition for the “Hoverpark” and the “Hoverport” as well as the hardware and software implementation. Trip Convergence is offering incentives for early adopters as well as decreased insurance premiums for members because of their reduced vehicle usage. Members expressed concern over the lack of technological development of this system as well as the lack of a working prototype.

**Item #6      “POCKETS” Workplace Distributed Workforce Alternative Presentation**

*The Subcommittee was briefed by Michael Shear, President and CEO of POKETS Distributed WorkPlace Alternative, Inc. on the development of advanced telecommunications approaches to support transportation, land use and emergency preparedness objectives.*

Michael Shear, President of and CEO of Pockets Distributed Workforce Alternative presented “Developing Advanced Telecommunications Approaches in support of Transportation Land Use and Emergency Preparedness,” his hybrid model, which combines strategic use of real estate coupled with information technologies whose positioning can benefit the largest portion of any workforce. Transportation and Mobility, Telecommunication and Connectivity, and Land use and Proximity are all various access methods of workers to their work environment.

Many challenges have been presented to telework, including: isolation/envy factors, inability to assess progress by management, typically offered on a part-time basis, and trustworthiness of employees in the charge of company property such as laptops, etc. By creating satellite offices for workers, managers are able to monitor employees as often as desired and without the risk of property loss.

Three pilot locations are currently being planned in North Central Texas and have drawn the support of the North Texas Clean Air Coalition, North Texas Commission, Dallas and Fort Worth Chambers, State Energy Conservation Office, Verizon Communications, and the Dallas EPA. The current pilot program in North Texas is proposed to be a joint venture with planning group members from North Central businesses, organizations, and individuals. These representatives will be responsible for applying for federal grants as well as completing feasibility reviews. Finally, the same group of planners will be charged with selecting the first tenants as well planning the migration to the new center as well as working through any Human Resource logistics which might need to be worked through.

The Subcommittee raised concerns over whether this was a true trip reduction. Mr. Shear also acknowledged that not all work behaviors transcend the home office and that this might be one possible alternative to that issue. Over zealous telework goals were also addressed by the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee voiced some concerns that this ideal might help to influence another round of goals from the federal government which employers might not be willing to subscribe to.

**Item #7 Strategic Planning Plan**

*The Subcommittee tabled this Agenda item until the next meeting due to lack of time.*

**Item # 8 Budget Report and Annual Report**

*The Subcommittee was briefed Nicholas Ramfos on the FY 2006 Annual Progress Report and the final quarter budget report.*

Mr. Ramfos distributed briefed the Subcommittee on the FY 2006 Annual Progress Report. He asked that any questions or comments on the report from the Subcommittee be directed to him. Mr. Ramfos also distributed and discussed the FY 2006 final quarter budget report. He stated that Commuter Connections has expended approximately 80% of its funding for FY 2006.

**Item #9 Work Group Updates**

*Nicholas Ramfos discussed the status of the Live Near Where You Work, Sales Portfolio, GRH Incentive/Rewards, and Survey Work Groups.*

Mr. Ramfos reviewed the status of the new Work Groups formed for new projects associated with the FY 2007 Commuter Connections Work Program. He discussed The Live Near Where You Work "Webinar" on September 7<sup>th</sup> where the group discussed pre-existing Live Near Where You Work programs. An additional meeting is scheduled to occur on September 27<sup>th</sup> where the various work-force housing programs which are already in place in the local jurisdictions will be discussed. Program materials will be prepared for inclusion as sales tools for the Employer Outreach sales representatives. The Subcommittee raised the question of how would this differ from the remote telework centers. Mr. Ramfos clarified that this work group would be examining the ability of employees to relocate their residence closer to their actual work site, not to be confused with "proximate commuting." The Live Near Your Work addresses the land use/public transportation issue through public education to the business community of existing work force housing incentive programs.

The Employer Sales Portfolio Work Group will begin redesigning the portfolio as soon as the new marketing contractor is on board.

The GRH Incentive Work Group had a meeting in August to discuss a loyalty and incentives program for participants. Eligibility would be managed through a provider such as One Big Planet. Upon re-registration, a commuter would receive one year free and thereafter be responsible for their membership.

The Employer Survey Work Group has met twice and has assembled a draft survey which will be presented at the October Employer Outreach Committee meeting. The current survey is in the process of being graphically re-designed, for those jurisdictions that are in need of the printed version.

**Item#10 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting**

*The Subcommittee will continue to work on the Strategic Plan "Parking Lot" Issues as well as continuing to receive updates from Mr. Ramfos on the status of the new Work Groups.*

The Subcommittee mentioned that we should add the recent Employer Outreach direct mail out results. The Subcommittee also requested that that more meetings be web-based, in the "Webinar" format. The Subcommittee was informed that the larger meetings were harder to hold in the web-based format because the more participants we add to the meetings, the quality of the phone call and the internet presentations will be degraded. However, Mr. Ramfos did offer to discuss the suggestions with the IT department and seek there advice on the suggestion.

**The next regularly scheduled Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 21, 2006 at 12 noon.**