



## Commuter Connections Subcommittee

### MEETING MINUTES

*Tuesday , July 18, 2006*

**Chairperson: Leann Landry, WMATA**

**Vice Chairperson: Linda Stewart - Byrd**

**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, Leann Landry 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 May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

*Approval was sought for the May 16<sup>th</sup> Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting minutes.*

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting as written.

**Item #3      Vice Chair Nominating Committee Draft Survey Report**

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

The Commuter Connections Subcommittee Nominating Committee was formed. This committee is comprised of the current year Chair, the current year Vice- Chair, and the previous year's Chair. The incoming Vice-Chair will be selected from Virginia by Leann Landry, Linda Stewart-Byrd, and Sharon Affinito. The Subcommittee approved the Nominating Committee appointments.

**Item #4      Clean Air Partners Update**

*The Subcommittee was briefed on the recent activities of the Clean Air Partners including Air Quality Action Days by Harriet West, Executive Director, Clean Air Partners.*

Harriet West, the Executive Director for Clean Air Partners, briefed the Subcommittee on current activities. She reported that during 2005, there were 3 "Code Red Days" in Baltimore, while Washington, DC saw no "Code Red Days." This was the first time in the 10 year history of Clean Air Partners that Washington, DC saw no "Code Red Days." The lack of "Code Red Days" for the DC Metro area can be attributed to regional weather patterns, better controls on vehicles and industry, successful alternative commuter programs, and reduced transport.

Although no “Code Red Days” were reported for 2005, a change in EPA Standards for ground level ozone went into effect in the same year. New focus will be given to current “Code Orange Days” and the campaign “Orange is the New Red”. The primary reason for the shift is to heighten awareness and understanding of “Code Orange Days” by the public, Air Quality Action Days (AQAD) employer participants, and meteorologists.

Clean Air Partners has been reorganizing their focus to be directly aimed at “Code Red” and “Code Orange Days”, rather than AQAD’s in general. Actions during “Code Orange Days” include: notifying the public and employees, locking out refueling of non-emergency vehicles, and curtailing mowing and vehicle movement. A “Code Red Day” adds: a ban on painting, curtailing vehicle movement, and a display of flags.

A current marketing campaign is underway, utilizing 8 radio stations in the Washington, DC and Baltimore markets at a cost of \$98,000. The components of this campaign will include paid spots, PSA, promotional announcements, and special events. Some of the station-hosted events include electric lawn mower giveaways and after-dark fuel promotions at various local gas stations.

**Item #5            TDM Evaluation Project Updates**

*Nicholas Ramfos briefed the Subcommittee on the triennial Evaluation Schedule for the 2006-2008 time period.*

Mr. Ramfos briefed the Subcommittee on the Commuter Connections TERM evaluation Schedule that was in the agenda packet. The current schedule and measures have been reviewed by the state funding agencies. The TDM Evaluation Group will be meeting several times over the coming year in order to continue to update the evaluation framework document.

Some data collection activities have been streamlined as a result of findings and the need for the data collected for the final TERM Analysis Report. The Metrochek/SmartBenefits survey conducted for the Employer Outreach TERM through WMATA will not be conducted in the new schedule. Data collection for the Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Survey will continue in order to augment evaluation of the GRH TERM. The Placement Rate Study will be conducted during one fiscal year during the three year cycle.

Mr. Ramfos also explained that the TDM Evaluation Framework Methodology is set for completion by the end of the calendar year and any interested parties who are interested in joining the group should contact him directly. This group is especially important because it sets the methodology and calculations for the TERMS that will serve as the benchmark for the evaluation of the Commuter Connections program TERMS.

**Item #6            Draft Fourth Quarter Budget Report**

*Nicholas Ramfos distributed and discussed the draft 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Budget Report.*

Mr. Ramfos distributed and reviewed the current draft 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Budget Report which was as of June 28, 2006.

He did explain that the expenditures shown are low due to outstanding marketing invoices and local jurisdiction invoices for Employer Outreach. An under-run is expected for FY 2006 due to lower overhead costs at COG.

**Item #7      Employer Outreach Update**

*The Subcommittee was briefed by Mark Hersey on recent Employer Outreach Activities, including distribution of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter draft verification report, and information on new program goals.*

Mr. Hersey distributed and discussed the draft 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Employer Outreach regional conformity verification statement and the revised goals for the Commuter Connections TERMS along with new goals for the Employer Outreach TERM.

Mr. Hersey explained that some information on the new Employer Outreach goals handout was incorrect. In regard to Frederick County, the New Employer Goal at 15% should be (4), not (0). In regard to the Tri-County, the New Employer Goal at 15% should be (1), not (0). Also, the footnote pertaining to Frederick County should read, "Frederick County has NOT attained the original goal, therefore a change was not made."

Mr. Hersey stated that Prince William County Employer Outreach representatives discussed an individualized marketing project conducted with a local university and a nursing home at the previous Employer Outreach Committee meeting. He also announced that Montgomery County won an award for having the most Employer site surveys completed during the last fiscal year.

**Item #8      Strategic Planning Plan**

*The Subcommittee was briefed on several issues regarding the Strategic Plan including "Parking Lot" issues from the June 13<sup>th</sup> session by Gus Robey and Nicholas Ramfos.*

Mr. Ramfos distributed several documents regarding this item number. They included: the draft Commuter Connections Strategic Plan, the FY 2007 Commuter Connections Work Program Tasks and Deliverables, "Parking Lot" Issues from the Commuter Connections Strategic Planning Meeting, and the Commuter Connections Operations Center Technical Support Policy.

Christopher Arabia addressed the Subcommittee on changes to the Strategic Plan. Comments regarding roles and responsibilities have been incorporated into the document. Some terms of measurement had been reduced or abandoned. Specifically, this new document spells out who is responsible for certain tasks through program objectives, operating objectives, and network responsibilities.

Mr. Ramfos reviewed the purpose of the FY 2007 Commuter Connections Work Program Tasks and Deliverables. This document is meant to serve as a brief overview of the entire program and will allow members to quickly find their assigned tasks. The Commuter Connections Technical

Support Policy has been put in place in order to improve response time for client member issues as well as providing the correct channels of communication and aiding in Commuter Connections follow-up with reported issues.

Mr. Ramfos and Charlene Robey discussed an expansive list of items that have been labeled as “Parking Lot” issues resulting from the June 13<sup>th</sup> Strategic Planning Session held at COG. This list of items will continue to be reviewed at upcoming Commuter Connections Subcommittee meetings until the list has been fully addressed. Initially, four “Parking Lot” issues were chosen by Subcommittee member for discussion today. They included:

1. Explore how to promote Commuter Connections network and yet retain individual jurisdictions’ identities.
2. Provide local breakdowns of summary survey results.
3. Reflect local roles more explicitly through roles and responsibilities section.
4. Increase emphasis on Spanish language outreach and services.

The topics appear below in order of discussion:

***1. Explore how to promote Commuter Connections network and yet retain individual jurisdictional identities.***

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 website 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.

***2. Provide Local Breakdowns of summary survey results.***

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.

Due to a lack of time, the Subcommittee was only able to discuss the first two items selected. Items 3 & 4 will be tabled until the next Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting.

**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. The Live Near Where You Work group will be holding a web-based meeting within the next few weeks. The Employer Sales Portfolio Work Group will begin meeting after the new marketing contractor is selected. Proposals for the marketing contractor are expected to be distributed within the next two weeks. The GRH Incentive Work Group will be holding a web-based meeting within the next few weeks. Lastly, the Employer Survey Work Group has held two meetings and distributed the survey at the last meeting. Currently, we are awaiting feedback on the survey from Employer Outreach Committee members.

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

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

**The next regularly scheduled Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 19, 2006 at 12 noon.**