

ITEM #3

MEMORANDUM

TO: TDM Evaluation Group Members
FROM: Nicholas Ramfos, Director
Alternative Commute Programs
SUBJECT: Responses to Comments on the Draft Employer Outreach
Customer Satisfaction Survey
DATE: January 27, 2009

Survey Methodology Summary

1. **COMMENT:** In view of low response rates in the past, the survey should be designed in a fashion to maximize the likelihood of obtaining responses. According to the presentation to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee on November 18, a total of 846 employers have been verified as providing some level of employee commute benefits. Since this database has been carefully reviewed and confirmed over the past several months, accurate contact information should exist for these firms. Nevertheless, the following clarifications to the survey methodology are recommended:

- Prior to sending initial contact communications, coordinate with each local jurisdiction to ensure that the list of firms in that jurisdiction and contact information is accurate and complete. This will serve as a check against incomplete information (e.g. missing e-mail addresses) or inconsistent (e.g. different contact points, etc.).
- Ensure that the recipient of both the e-mail and the postal letter is the proper individual within the firm to respond to the survey. This can be done by requesting the recipient to forward the survey within the firm, if necessary, and requesting an acknowledgement of receipt.

RESPONSE: The response rates received on the previous Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction surveys were in the acceptable range given the survey methodology used at the time which was to mail out the survey to employers in the regional Employer Outreach ACT! database with an option for either a mail-back or fax-back response. A nominal gift was offered to those who responded (usually a Commuter Connection giveaway item already on hand).

In regards the accuracy of the contact information for employers, COG/TBP staff must rely on the local jurisdiction staff to update contact information. For the survey, COG/TPB staff will use the current list of employers in the ACT database for each of the jurisdictions. This list includes approximately 1,400

employers. During the TERM analysis, Commuter Connections' contractor attempted to contact about 400 of these employers that were listed as "new" or "expanded" programs, to confirm their program status. The contractor reached about 200 of the employers and updated contact information that had changed for these employers. But a large majority of employers in the database were not contacted, because the database did not indicate any changes in their programs or because they were Level 1 or 2 and so were not included in the TERM calculation. Contact information could be out-of-date for some of these employers.

During the survey process, the COG/TPB contractor for this project will do its best to ensure that the correct individual at the company is asked to complete the survey; however, there may be instances where the correct individual may not be identified (i.e. a recent departure, unwillingness of recipient to forward the survey within the firm). Local jurisdiction sales representatives will be notified on the date range of when the survey will be conducted along with the list of employers that will be contacted during the January 27th Employer Outreach Committee meeting. Employer Outreach representatives will be encouraged to review the database and update any information that they know to be inaccurate prior to that time.

Definitions (applies to several questions)

2. **COMMENT:** The term "worksites" is used in several questions. This raises several questions that the survey should clarify:
- How is the "worksites" itself defined: single building vs. campus settings with multiple buildings vs. multiple sites, not co-located? Does the firm's commuter coordinator represent the activities at all sites? If not, should additional surveys be completed by other people who may be responsible for other sites?
 - Do all worksites conduct the same activities (Q-2) and provide the same services (Q-5)?
 - For multiple sites or multiple buildings at a campus site, how should "number of employees at the worksite" (Q-3) be counted?

RESPONSE: Each contact is responsible for the site listed in the ACT! database based upon the contact inputs from the local Employer Outreach sales representative(s). In some cases, a contact might be responsible for multiple sites in the metropolitan region, in other cases each site could have a unique contact, depending on how the company is structured and how commuter transportation programs are assigned to those responsible for site program implementation and/or monitoring.

To address the comments noted, the following changes were made in the survey questionnaire:

- Revised Q2 to ask about work conducted “by your organization”
- Added questions Q2a and Q2b to determine incidence of unique worksite vs multiple worksites.

3. **COMMENT:** The phrase “or a representative of a locally-based ridesharing program, representing the Commuter Connections Network” should be added to all questions that refer to “Commuter Connections representative.”

RESPONSE: See revisions on the questionnaire – We have added language as necessary to clarify that the “representative” could be a local representative from a member organization of the Commuter Connections network. This change is being suggested mainly because not all Employer Outreach representatives are with a locally-based ridesharing program (i.e. some are with TMA’s and others are with consultant organizations).

Introduction

4. **COMMENT:** The offer of a free gift in exchange for completing the survey may be counterproductive and should be reassessed. The offer of a “free gift” is often associated with the mass marketing of items of unknown or questionable value. The survey is presumably being administered to professional staff members who already have a business relationship with Commuter Connections or a ridesharing agency. As such, completing the survey should appeal to their responsibility to their organization and to improving the lifestyle of their fellow employees by improving their commute. If it is deemed absolutely necessary to provide a gift, the gift should be something with more than trivial value and it should be identified.

RESPONSE: While it would be good to identify specific gifts that will be provided, Commuter Connections does not have budget to buy items for this purpose. In past years, gifts have been given in the 5 to 10 dollar range that have been leftover items from the annual Employer Recognition awards program, such as the small journals made of out recycled paper and Commuter Connections umbrellas. Because we are not sure how many of each gift we will have and which will be sent to a specific respondent, we prefer not to be specific about the gift.

Survey Questions - General

5. **COMMENT:** The survey provides opportunities for the respondent to indicate that they “don’t know” the answers to many questions. These opportunities should be limited to the maximum extent possible, if not completely eliminated. The provision of “Don’t Know” as legitimate answers to these

questions will simply discourage respondents from obtaining answers to those questions that they may not know automatically. Moreover, it is difficult to understand how respondents would not know:

- The type of organization they work for (Q-1)
- The length of time that they have individually been involved with commuter information (Q-6a)
- The number of times in the past year they have communicated with their Commuter Connections representative (Q-9)
- The degree of satisfaction with the frequency of contact (Q-10)
- The preferred form of communication (Q-11)
- Their overall level of satisfaction with Commuter Connections (Q-13)
- The likelihood of referral of Commuter Connections to other employers (Q-17)

RESPONSE: “Don’t know/refused” is a common pre-coded category for telephone surveys and will be a valid response for the survey because questions will not be mandatory. For surveys that are completed on the paper form, a missed question will be treated as a DK/refusal. However, “Don’t know” will be deleted as a formal response category for some questions. See the questionnaire revisions for these changes.

Question 5:

6. **COMMENT:** The columns representing the possible responses to this question do not completely capture the range of possible answers, and thus could be misconstrued. For example, “Don’t Know” could mean that the respondent is not aware of the service, or it could mean that the respondent does not know if the company would consider offering the service. This confusion might be clarified by inserting a prior question, asking whether the respondent is aware of a service. Such an additional question would also be useful in gauging the degree of familiarity of the respondent employee coordinators with the variety of potential commuting benefits available.

RESPONSE: Yes, it is possible a “Don’t know” response could be either of the two cases noted. A change was made to clarify that this response is for services that are not available and the respondent does not know if the organization would consider offering it.

7. **COMMENT:** There are 14 items listed under “Services or Benefits,” most of which represent conscious, pro-active services that employers may offer employees. However, Free Parking is also listed as one “benefit.” This benefit is widely available throughout the non-core parts of the region and is often thought to be the single greatest disincentive for using alternative modes. Including Free Parking in a list of 14 other benefits may not sufficiently emphasize it to respondents, who may even overlook it in

completing this question. Therefore the availability of Free Parking should be extracted from the list in Question 5, and asked as a separate question.

RESPONSE: Free Parking is not considered a commuter benefit incentive in the transportation demand management discipline when calculating transportation and emission impacts, however, the business community and the general public deem free parking as a commuter benefit, therefore, COG/TPB staff is recommending keeping the Free Parking “benefit” in the list of benefits in Q. 5. This is mainly to verify whether employers (both in the core and non-core) offer free parking to employees as a benefit. This information also helps in gathering data that may be used as part of future “sales pitches” to employers who are looking for ways to potentially reduce worksite costs.

8. **COMMENT:** It is not clear how the various services listed in Question 5 will be rotated for persons who receive hard copies of the survey to return via mail. (This is perhaps another reason to extract the Free Parking question noted above.)

RESPONSE: Several versions of the questionnaire will be printed and respondents will be mailed one of the versions.. Responses can easily be rotated for respondents who complete the survey on-line or by telephone.

9. **COMMENT:** The survey should stress that the column entitled “Not Available, Would Consider Offering” does not constitute a commitment to offer the service, but rather indicates that the respondent is not aware of any absolute prohibitions within the company to offer the service.

RESPONSE: COG/TPB staff do not feel it is necessary to make this change. The survey is anonymous and employers that respond to the survey should have no reason to feel that they are committing to any future action. However, to soften this response, we have changed the response to “might consider offering” the service.

Question 15:

10. **COMMENT:** This question should be expanded to gauge the degree of familiarity of the respondents with each individual Commuter Connection / local TDM assistance program identified in the CC Work Program, and the level of satisfaction with each program. The following Commuter Connections programs / services should be added: (all are identified in Commuter Connections Work Program)

- General Ridematching and Technical Assistance
- Transportation Information Services

- Guaranteed Ride Home
- General TDM Marketing and Advertising
- Bicycle Information
- Bike to Work Day
- Employer Recognition Awards Program
- Car-Free Day
- Live Near Your Work Program
- Air Quality Action Day Information
- Federal ETC Website
- Federal ETC Newsletter

RESPONSE: The purpose of the Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction survey is to gauge the satisfaction of the program services being provided directly to employers versus those services being offered to the employers' respective employees through the day to day general operations of the regional and local Commuter Connections program services.

- General Ridematching and Technical Assistance – This service is offered by COG/TPB staff to Commuter Connections network members and is not part of the Employer Outreach TERM; therefore it will not be added to Q. 15
- Transportation Information Services – This service is conducted by COG/TPB staff for the general public and is not part of the Employer Outreach TERM; therefore it will not be added to Q. 15.
- Guaranteed Ride Home – COG/TPB staff offers this service to the general public. However, it is a service the Employer Outreach staff can make an employer aware of and encourage them to disseminate the information to employees. This falls under the “Information Brochures” category in Q. 15 and can be called out along with other informational brochures (i.e. bicycling and telecommuting, etc).
- General TDM Marketing and Advertising – This program is designed as part of the Mass Marketing TERM and is geared towards the general public and is not part of the Employer Outreach TERM.
- Bicycle Information - This should be changed to Bicycle Information Sessions and will be added to Q. 15 under the “Workshops or Seminars” category.
- Bike to Work Day – This will be added to Q. 15 under a new “Special Events” category.

- Employer Recognition Awards Program – This will be added to Q. 15 under a new “Special Events” category.
- Car-Free Day – This will be added to Q. 15 under a new “Special Events” category.
- Live Near Your Work Program – This will be added to Q. 15 under “Workshops or Seminars” category.
- Air Quality Action Day Information – This will be added to Q. 15 under the “Information Brochures” category.
- Federal ETC Website – Federal employers are generally not part of the Employer Outreach TERM mainly because they are in the “baseline” (pre-1999). In some rare incidences, Federal Employers may have added programs and have had contact with either COG/TPB staff and/or a local Employer Outreach representative. However, this is a nominal amount of federal employer sites.
- Federal ETC Newsletter - Federal employers are generally not part of the Employer Outreach TERM mainly because they are in the “baseline” (pre-1999). In some rare incidences, Federal Employers may have added programs and have had contact with either COG/TPB staff and/or a local Employer Outreach representative. However, this is a nominal amount of federal employer sites.

11. **COMMENT:** A follow-up question should be asked to determine possible reasons why employers are particularly (a) satisfied, or (b) unsatisfied with assistance they or their colleagues receive from each of these programs.

RESPONSE: This question will be added.

12. **COMMENT: Question 18:** This question should be expanded to add the following programs or activities:

- Live Near Your Work Program
- Air Quality Action Day Information

RESPONSE: These programs will be added to Q. 18.