



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board Technical Committee
FROM: Nicholas Ramfos, TPB Operations Programs Director
SUBJECT: TPB's Transportation Demand Management Aspirational Initiative
DATE: March 27, 2020

The TPB's Adoption of Resolution R10-2019 on December 19, 2018 acted on recommended project, program and policy ideas that would implement TPB's Aspirational Initiatives identified in Visualize 2045. The resolution directed the TPB's Commuter Connections program staff to:

a. Examine ways in which its existing service applications and programs can be enhanced to integrate the gamification and rewards aspects

COG/TPB staff has worked with the University of Maryland on releasing the Commuter Connections Flextime incentive program in FY2019. The program provides an incentive to those electing to delay their trip during a.m. and p.m. peak hour commuting periods after receiving a notification of congestion along their work route. An \$8 cash incentive is provided (up to \$600 per calendar year) for commuters who track their delay through the Commuter Connections mobile app. Any commuter in the region can receive the congestion notification; however, those eligible to receive the incentive must travel along four identified bottlenecked corridors in the region. An algorithm was developed using a variety of verification techniques to confirm the legitimacy of a user's trip. This includes the use of location services to verify departure and arrival times, as well as verify the route the individual has traveled. This verification helps confirm participants traveling to their registered workplace. It also helps verify that the participant is truly flexing their time and delaying their trip. This enhancement has allowed for all commuters to be paid a modest incentive each time they elect to delay their trip. This new tracking feature was made available earlier this fiscal year.

COG/TPB staff has also worked with the University of Maryland on launching the incenTrip mobile application last August which is a new mobile application that gives commuters in the Washington metropolitan region the ability to avoid both day-to-day congestion and traffic jams caused by traffic accidents, work zones, special events and adverse weather conditions. App users also earn reward points while receiving recommendations on the best travel mode, departure time and/or route recommendations. The app allows users to earn reward points every time a trip is planned through incenTrip and users can take advantage of multimodal travel options, outsmart traffic jams, and invite their friends to join. With a single click, users will be able to exchange their points for an incentive. By supporting incenTrip and providing incentives to travelers, Commuter Connections can address congestion, reduce energy use, and emissions. The key innovation of incenTrip is the development of personalized and dynamic incentives that vary based on individual preferences and real-time traffic conditions, which significantly improves the cost-effectiveness of traveler incentives. incenTrip performance can be monitored daily via a customized dashboard. The goal of the incenTrip eco-system is to improve multimodal transportation system performance along congested corridors.

Results since the launch are as follows:

- 2,503 Commuter Connections accounts created through the app
- 1,320 requests for payment have been screened or are in-process of being screened
- 567 unique users have requested payment
- 718 requests for payment have been paid via check
- \$30,785 in incentive money paid since program launch

Adjustments have been made to the app this fiscal year based on user feedback along with the implementation of a point system for rewards.

COG/TPB staff is also working on improvements to the Commuter Connections CarpoolNow mobile app this fiscal year which allows for dynamic ridematching to occur. A driver cash incentive of \$10 per trip (up to \$600 per calendar year) is available to those picking up carpoolers on the way to and from work. Improvements to the app will include adding a layer on top of the current 300 plus park and ride locations which will identify high volume carpool pick up points across the region. High volume afternoon carpool pick-up points in both the District of Columbia and Arlington County will also be included in the new layer. Special attention will be focused on these pick-up points for drivers looking for passengers. This new feature will be used as part of the options offered to commuters during this summer's WMATA Platform Shutdown project.

b. Develop a process through which TPB member jurisdictions work collaboratively with WMATA to undertake a targeted outreach to employers to increase participation in WMATA's SmartBenefits program.

COG/TPB staff worked with WMATA and the local jurisdictions on the sharing of data from COG's Employer Outreach database in order to reach out to employers to either start or expand a SmartBenefits program. The goal is to collaborate on outreach activities for TDM initiatives at worksites and the inclusion of SmartBenefits. A three-month pilot program from January to March 2019 was completed and lessons learned were incorporated into a longer-term initiative that is now in full force this fiscal year. Results of the initiative will be examined as part of the Commuter Connections TDM Analysis Report due out later this year.

c. Develop policy templates for small and mid-size employers to adopt and implement FlexTime and Telework programs at their work places as a resource for Commuter Connections Employer Outreach program.

This work commenced earlier this fiscal year with the help of a Commuter Connections Telework Work Group through the exchange of information and discussion of possible ideas. The following telework items have been updated on the Commuter Connections website (www.commuterconnections.org) in both the "[Employer](#)" and "[Commuter](#)" sections: <http://www.commuterconnections.org/>

- Tips for teleworking "Do's and Don'ts" for both managers and employees
- Updated listing of coworking centers/shared workspaces/Telework Centers
- An updated and downloadable Telework Poster that employers may use
- Update of a self-help guide for employees seeking to telework or who are looking to become more productive while teleworking
- Update of a virtual tour and overview presentation of telework centers (e.g. Coworking Centers) that describes how these spaces operate

- Added sample program guidelines that can be used to construct a telework program at worksites
- Added a sample “teleworker agreement”
- Added FAQs regarding telework and FAQs regarding Alternative Work Schedules (AWS)
- Added sample program guidelines that can be used to develop an AWS policy at worksites
- Added a sample “program agreement” that can be used by employers for individuals who elect to work alternative schedules
- Added tips for compressed work week “Do’s and Don’ts” for both managers and employees.

The Telework and AWS resources are now available to download, review and share with employers through outreach activities by Commuter Connections Employer Services representatives. The timing of releasing this information has assisted employers dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic with regards to continuity of business operations.

Commuter Connections also began running a social media campaign on March 9th through early April to promote the updated telework resources. The ad is running on Facebook and LinkedIn.

When Employees Telework, it’s Mutually Beneficial.

Less time and money spent commuting results in better work/life balance, higher morale and productivity. As a guiding force on Telework, Commuter Connections provides free employer assistance to establish or expand telework programs based on your needs. commuterconnections.org 800 745-7433.

