

**ITEM #3A**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Commuter Connections Subcommittee Members  
**FROM:** Nicholas Ramfos, Director, Commuter Connections  
**SUBJECT:** Responses to Comments on the Draft FY 20112 CCWP  
**DATE:** January 18, 2011

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The draft FY 2012 Commuter Connections Work Program was presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee on November 16, 2010. A comment period was established through Friday, December 3, 2010 and to the State TDM Work Group on December 14, 2010. A comment period was established through Friday, December 24, 2010.

Below are comments received from Subcommittee members and State TDM Work Group members with corresponding responses:

**Comment:**

1. Include 'Fiscal Year 2012' on the cover of all Drafts and the Final of the Work Program.

**Response:**

*This has been included.*

**Comment:**

2. On page 29, second paragraph - reference to BW Parkway should be MD 295.

**Response:**

*This has been corrected.*

**Comment:**

3. My concerns are in the marketing category - particularly the lines that say Advertising/marketing consultant work for Bike to work day (\$60K), Employer Awards (\$60K) and Carfreeday (\$25K and another \$19K for postage).

I am not that familiar with consultant fees, but they seem really high for what I have seen them create in the past, especially when we are talking one day events.

Can we get a breakdown of the type of work that is planned for each of these events by the consultant.

**Response:**

*The consultant fees for the three projects: Bike to Work Day, Employer Recognition Awards, and Car Free Day include much more than just a one day event. The one day event includes publicity prior and after the event (to increase public awareness, to obtain registrations, attendance, etc). Additional language on the products and services has been added to the "Products" and "Services" section under each project area to fully breakdown the work as requested. The additions are as follows:*

*Bike to Work Day:*

*Under "Products" section on Page 26, the following information was added to the "Creative Materials" bullet point: Creative materials for Bike To Work Day event which may include, but is not limited to logo update, poster, take-away brochure, transit signage, t-shirts, custom banners for each pit stop, radio ad, writing copy for live radio reads, print ad, internet ads, HTML e-mail blasts, and public service announcements. (COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

*Under Placement of Advertisements in the "Services" section on page 26 the following sentence was added: Activities include negotiation of value-added media.*

*The following bullet point was added under the "Services" section on Page 26: Media outreach and coordination of interviews. (COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

*Employer Recognition Awards:*

*Under the "Products" section on page 28, the following bullet point was added: Awards invitations (COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

*Car Free Day:*

*Under "Products" Section on Page 31, the following information was added to the "Marketing Collateral bullet point : Marketing collateral which can include, but is not limited to development and printing of posters, transit signage, bus shelter signage and other related advertising collateral that will need to be printed. (COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Under the “Products section on page 31, the following bullet points were added: *Development and production of radio ad, internet ads, and text messages, and HTML e-mail blasts. (COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).* Update of Web site and social media. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

**Comment:**

4. Due to the seemingly low number of participants in the Pool Rewards Program, we would like to suggest that the program application process may be too restrictive and not clearly enough understood by the public and that we re-examine how the program is currently being applied. This may be best accomplished through open and full discussion of program goals and evaluation in the appropriate committees/subcommittees. We also feel it would be beneficial to re-evaluate the registration process and examine those individuals that were denied access, as this information could provide insight as to how to better structure the program to allow for more participants.

The program costs seem out of line with the impact and that these funds might be used more effectively. Incentive programs have proven effective elsewhere and it seems logical that it could work here, but continually re-inventing the program in the attempt to make it work well enough seems wasteful. We suggest that not only is evaluation open to full discussion, but that the discussion include establishing goals for the continuation of this program so that it does not become an eternally assumed part of the work program. This could potentially free up funds for new initiatives that might have a greater impact without requiring additional funding from the sponsoring agencies.

**Response:**

*While it is true that the original ‘Pool Rewards demonstration project garnered less participants that was expected, there were a number of factors that lent themselves to the low registration rate including initial corridor limitation and a lack of a full 12 month schedule once the corridor limitations were lifted.*

*The ‘Pool Rewards demonstration project kicked off in October 2009 and there were only three corridors where participants could register: : 1) The I-495 corridor from Bethesda to Tyson’s Corner, 2) the I-495 corridor from MD-295 (BW Parkway) to I-270; and 3) I-395 from Washington DC into Northern Virginia. There were about a dozen active participants and*

*the program was then opened up to all corridors. When the corridor restrictions were lifted in March 2010, 185 new participants joined the program. These participants had 90 days to complete the program mainly because of the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2010. There were about 100 participants that completed the program. A much lower number than the 740 that the demonstration project could accommodate. However, the participants completing the program allowed for an initial and follow-up survey that showed very positive results. For the initial survey conducted in June 2010, 98% of the respondents stated that they planned to continue carpooling after the demonstration project ended. A follow-up survey conducted in October 2010 revealed that 93% of the participants had continued carpooling.*

*Based on the feedback from the original survey, the following software changes were made prior to the re-launch of the program in October 2011:*

- 1. The “trips logged” calendar was changed to display a confirmation on the days that have already been logged. The participating commuter will now see an indication that a trip was logged.*
- 2. The commute mode drop down list now includes Holiday, Sick Day, Vacation days/*
- 3. The number of days allotted to log trips from went from 5 to 8.*

*Additionally, Program requirement language was updated and changed to clarify the Rules of Eligibility and Participation Guidelines. For the FY 2012 CCWP there is \$130,000 available for the cash incentive which translates to approximately 1,000 carpool participants given the full \$130 pay out for each. Current impacts of the program are projected based on the initial demonstration project results and include the following daily impacts:*

*79 VT  
2,177 VMT  
0.00098 tons of NOx  
0.00053 tons of VOC*

*The current goal is to register at least 1,000 carpool participants during a full calendar year in the program and to then calculate the impacts based*

on follow-up survey results. Changes or cancellation of the program could be made at that time.

**Comment:**

5. Under the Funding section on Page 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence, *“The Maryland Transit Administration and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation provide direct funding to their local jurisdictions for transportation demand management activities that both support and are supported by the regional Commuter Connections network program.”* Changes to this sentence made to strengthen the bond between the local jurisdictions and the regional network. Support is not one way it goes both ways.

**Response:**

The intent of this sentence is to show that there are other TDM initiatives at the local jurisdiction level that are not part of the CCWP and are funded by other agencies such as MTA and VDRPT. While it is true that the support for programs goes both ways, there are several local TDM support programs that may be funded by the state that receive little or no support by the regional TDM program. Additionally, there are state-funded initiatives in the regional CCWP that are not supported by all jurisdictions.

**Comment:**

6. Under the funding Section on page 2, 4<sup>th</sup> sentence: *“The costs of the jurisdictional activities are allocated directly to the jurisdiction or jurisdictions that choose to conduct them.”*

In this sentence I think “jurisdiction” is not the local jurisdiction, but the state. This is confusing coming after the sentence about local jurisdictions. It makes it seem like this sentence is about MTA and DRPT. Consider deleting this sentence. We wouldn’t lose anything by deleting it.

**Response:**

This is correct. Jurisdictional in this case does mean the state funding agencies. In this instance the reference is between regional activities and “jurisdictional” program activities as shown in the table on Page 2.

**Comment:**

7. Under the funding Section on page 2, 4<sup>th</sup> sentence: *“This ensures that the regional activities upon which ~~all other activities depend~~ will be conducted regionally, and that the costs are allocated to the participating jurisdictions funding agencies according to the agreed upon funding formula.”*

Much of what the local jurisdictions do is not dependant upon regional activities. Again, regional and local activities support each other. I think we mean funding agencies because the jurisdictions are not part of the funding formula.

**Response:**

Jurisdictional in this case does mean the state funding agencies and is pertinent to the chart shown on Page Two. As was stated in the response to Comment #6, there are regionally conducted activities which local and other regional activities depend on. An example would be that the regional Guaranteed Ride Home program provides Commuter Connections Network members with an incentive to increase the use of alternative modes. In turn, the Guaranteed Ride Home program is being promoted through the Mass Marketing TERM and its data relies on the Commuter Operations Center TDM software system. Therefore, the language “upon which all other activities depend” addresses both local activities as well as regional activities.

In terms of the changes to the latter half of the sentence, these have been made and are reflected in the January 18<sup>th</sup> document.

**Comment:**

8. Page 2, under the “Funding” section, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, delete the first two sentences. It has been 6 years. We don’t need to mention this anymore. The second sentence becomes irrelevant when you remove the first sentence.

The last sentence needs to have the funding formula inserted. It makes sense that if you are going to mention (and we should) that there is a funding formula, we should show it. We have nothing to hide.

**Response:**

COG/TPB staff recommends maintaining the language to illustrate changes to the document and program over time. Agreed, it has been six years, however the change to the CCWP at that point in time was dramatic and the documentation needs to be there as a placeholder due to the changes in how the TPB adopted TERMS are being shown in the current CCWP.

The funding formula is a state population based formula and the reason the funding percentages are not shown is to avoid confusion given that not all program elements in the CCWP are equally supported or funded by the state funding agencies.

**Comment:**

9. On Page 4, under “Key elements and Highlights” – *“Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) will provide users of ~~alternative mode~~ high occupancy and green OR carpools, vanpools, transit and bicycle commute modes up to four free rides home per year in a taxi or rental car in the event of an unexpected personal or family emergency or unscheduled overtime.”* It may be time to stop calling these commute modes “alternative”.

Under the marketing section, can't recall any recent regional marketing of telework and this Work Program doesn't call for it, so let's remove this since it won't really be promoted regionally. Can't recall any regional promotion of walking.

Under the Monitoring and Evaluation Section - , *“the Telework program was streamlined due to increased participation by the private sector.”* What does this mean? Don't understand what “streamline” means. Virginia is using the evaluation results to continue a telework program.

Under the Employer Outreach section – The sentence that reads: *“Maryland jurisdictions will provide resources to employers on the benefits of teleworking and assist them in starting or expanding telework programs.”* Virginia jurisdictions promote telework, too.

**Response:**

Admittedly, the word “alternative” may not be the best word to use to describe other forms of driving to and from work in a single occupant vehicle; however it's much shorter than listing all of the various modes.

The word “green” may not be the best description either given that some modes may be “greener” than others and could lead to “green washing.” The fact is that driving alone in the car is still king in terms of getting to and from work, so anything other than this would be an “alternative.”

For the marketing section and the comment on removing telework, Commuter Connections does promote telework. For instance, last year during the snow blizzards, Commuter Connections issued a series of public service announcements asking commuters to telework. Telework is also promoted as part of special events such as Car Free day and there is also a Commuter Connections FaceBook page devoted to Telework. With regards to the promotion of walking, the same holds true in the event of a COOP situation or special events such as Car Free Day, Commuter Connections will include walking as a mode. Of course, this needs to be placed in context and will depend on walk-mode accessibility and infrastructure available at both the origin and destination.

Regarding the comment under the “Monitoring and Evaluation” section on telework, the regional Telework TERM was streamlined given that Telework outreach efforts on the regional level have been dramatically curtailed since FY 2007 and the fact that most, if not all, major employers in the region have some type of informal or formal telework program and that the transportation and emission goals set forth for the region for telework have been exceeded. 25% of the current workforce telework’s at least 1.3 days a week. Much of this information has been gleaned through the Employer Telework surveys and the State of the Commute. DC elected to not fund regional telework efforts; however, telework is addressed through its Employer Outreach efforts; Virginia elected to use the regional telework funds to augment its Telework!VA program through VDRPT; and Maryland continues to fund a telework initiative in the CCWP. However, the Maryland portion will be integrated into the Employer Outreach TERM in FY 2012. In the meantime, the private sector, (i.e. Telework Exchange) has dramatically stepped up its efforts to promote telework in the marketplace. This all means that there are less efforts on a regional scale and more customized efforts.

Finally, regarding the comment on telework under the Employer Outreach section: Yes, Virginia does provide resources to employers for Telework, however, not through the CCWP. Additional language regarding funding for Telework!VA to support Employer Outreach efforts was added to the Employer Outreach summary section on Page 37 of the draft FY 2012 CCWP.



**Comment:**

10. Table 2 – Footnote - Break this up and have separate statements for Virginia and the District. Below is my recommendation for revised text. Also, I don't think we need to mention VDOT's use of the \$22,000 in administrative functions if the \$22K is being provided to the local jurisdictions.

\* Virginia will provide \$XXX,XXX directly to jurisdictions in Northern Virginia to implement the Employer Outreach TERM.

\*\* The District of Columbia will hire a contractor to implement the Employer Outreach TERM.

**Response:**

The language on the footnote of Table 2 has been changed to accommodate this request.

**Comment:**

11. Page 37, under Employer Outreach introductory section *“Additionally, the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Transportation administers funds pass-thru dollars directly to the local jurisdictions in Northern Virginia to implement the Employer Outreach TERM...”*

These funds are no longer “pass-thru” because they are provided directly to the jurisdictions and do not “pass-thru” another agency.

**Response:**

These changes have been made.