

Commuter Connections Subcommittee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 21, 2006

Chairperson: Linda Stewart-Byrd, MDOT

Vice Chairperson: Christopher Hamilton, Arlington County

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, 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 September 19th, 2006

Approval was sought for the September 19th Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting minutes.

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the September 19th meeting as written.

Item #3 One Big Planet Loyalty/Incentive Program

Mr. Christopher Norford of One Big Planet presented a loyalty/retention program to the Subcommittee, aimed at retaining Guaranteed Ride Home enrollment.

Mr. Christopher Norford presented a loyalty/retention program offered by his company aimed at strengthening relationships between organizations and their constituents' membership. The participating organizations share goals of membership retention, new membership enrollment and revenue generation. There are four aspects of branding for Commuter Connections from One Big Planet, should the Subcommittee decide to move forward on this item. Part one is comprised of a Membership Card, branded to the organization. Part two is a customized Website, branded with the Commuter Connections logo. Part three continues the customization of the program by allowing Commuter Connections to select what benefits are made available to its membership and part four is comprised of highly specialized Communications Center for Commuter Connections membership.

Within the One Big Planet promotion, two types of benefits exist. They are value benefits, where the organization pays for retention of membership and advantage benefits, which allows for revenue generation through a more specified membership. Network-wide, there are 60, 000 types of merchants in 12 different categories. Merchants can be identified by zip code.

The primary focus of this promotion is maintaining GRH enrollment while encouraging some new enrollment also. Applicants have fallen from 30,000 to 15,000 in a 12 month period because of a large data cleaning project conducted by COG/TPB Staff.

Concerns over cost were raised at the meeting. Mr. Ramfos and Mr. Norford explained that the first year of re-registration cost for participation in One Big Planet would be paid for by Commuter Connections. If the participant wish to continue after the first year, they would be responsible for the dues. Several concerns were also raised as to when Commuter Connections would be able to realize the benefits from participating in this program. Mr. Ramfos commented that full program realization would be measured in the second and third years of participation.

Item #4 FY 2006 Employer Outreach Customer 1st Quarter Verification Statement and draft Customer Satisfaction Survey

Mark Hersey presented the draft FY 2006 Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey survey results and report as well as the Customer 1st Quarter Verification Statement.

Mr. Hersey presented the FY 2006 Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey Draft Report and 1st Quarter Verification Statement. He called for a comment period to be established until December 20th, upon when the comments are due for review for the FY 2006 Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey Draft Report. All comments may be forwarded to Mr. Hersey.

The Subcommittee posed the question: "What has changed in this year's report over last year's report?" Mr. Hersey stated that this year 300 less surveys were sent out than last year. This equated in 54 fewer responses. The findings of the survey follow: Question 1 asked, "How long have you been involved with helping your company's employees with their daily commutes? Approximately 34 percent had been involved more than three years, while 17 percent had been for 2-3 years. This illustrates a large percentage of senior people engaged in the role of Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETC's). Question 2 asked, "Do you know someone or an organization that can assist you in developing and implementing a commuter transportation program?" 66 percent responded "Yes" to this question while 34 percent responded "No." This has been the typical response to this question in the past several years according to Mr. Hersey.

Questions 3 and 4 dealt with how often contact was made by representatives who could assist in implementing a commuter transportation program. Question 3 was related to phone contact. 88 participants reported being contacted by phone at least 1-2 times, 21 reported 3-5 times, 9 reported 6-10 times, 17 reported over 10 times. 31 said they had never been contacted and 25 said they were unsure. Question 4 was related to in-person contact. 49 participants reported being contacted at least 1-2 times, 12 reported 3-5 times, 7 reported 6-10 times, and 1 reported more than 10 times. 67 people said they had never been contacted and 56 said they were not sure.

Question 5 asked, "How responsive is your representative to your questions, requests for information and assistance? 28 percent of respondents said the representatives were very responsive, 17 percent were somewhat responsive, 3 percent were not responsive, and 52 percent had never asked.

Question 6 asked respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction with the following services provided by each representative: A.) Explanation of Commuter Connections and/or local ridesharing products; B.) Knowledge of local traffic mitigation/air quality programs; C.) Providing information on traffic congestion strategies; D.) Willingness to help; E.) Enthusiasm about

Commuter Connections or local ridesharing products, services, and programs; and F.) Overall quality of services provided by your Employer Services program. More than 40 percent of respondents reported they were "Very Satisfied" in four out of six topic areas. Employer satisfaction with the overall quality of employer services was measured at 48 percent indicating that they were "Very Satisfied." Question 7 asked, "How helpful are each of the following materials offered by Commuter Connections and/or your local ridesharing program?" 48 percent said the Informational brochures were "Very Helpful," 32 percent said the plotted carpool matching maps were "Very Helpful," 48 percent said posters were "Very Helpful," and 54 percent said the website was "Very Helpful."

Question 8 was divided into three parts. Question 8A asked, "During the past year did you participate in the Commuter Connections employee survey or another commuter survey?" 12 respondents replied "Yes," 44 replied "No," and 24 replied "Not Sure." Question 8B asked, "Did your representative give you a copy of the statistical summary of your Employee Commute Survey?" 45 respondents replied "Yes," 10 replied "No," and 5 replied "Not Sure." Question 8C asked, "Did your representative use your statistics to create an employee commute program or to ridesharing in general?" 17 respondents replied "Yes" to this question, 4 replied "No" and 11 replied "Not Sure."

Question 9 asked, "Would you be interested in attending any of the following free training programs or workshops?" The top three responses in order were: 67 respondents stated that they would be interested in attending Commuter Connections programs, 44 respondents said they would attend general ETC training, and 41 respondents said they would be interested in attending a workshop on incentives. Question 10 asked, "Overall, how effective has your representative been in helping you and your organization to develop and implement employee commuter programs?" 40 percent of respondents reported that their representatives had been "Very Effective," 37 percent reported "Somewhat Effective," 7 percent "Not Effective," and 16 percent had "No Opinion."

Item #5 GRH Participation Guidelines

Towanna Hinton discussed the current GRH Participation Guidelines and proposed changes.

Ms. Hinton stated that new language had been added to items 2 and 3. Item 2 reinforces the necessity of having a supervisor's name and phone number in order to verify unscheduled overtime. Also required are both a home and work phone number for participants in the program. A cell number may be substituted in place of a home number. Item 3 reinforces that that GRH credits are in no way transferable. Ms. Hinton asked that any proposed changes be posted to the Extranet by December 20, 2006. A question was raised about section 11 in regard to a trip cancellation counting against a commuter's GRH credits. Mr. Ramfos explained that if a commuter were to miss a GRH, Commuter Connections would still be charged a dismissal fee. If a commuter calls to cancel a requested trip, their GRH credits would not be affected, provided the trip is cancelled with the allotted window.

Item #6 Arlington County TDM Evaluation Project

Chair, Linda Stewart-Byrd tabled this Agenda item until the January 16, 2007 meeting.

Item #7 2006 Bike To Work Day Event Draft

Mark Hersey presented the draft 2006 Bike To Work Day event report.

Mr. Hersey asked that final comments on this report to be submitted to him by December 20, 2006. The document has already been approved by the Bike To Work Day Steering Committee.

Item #8 Strategic Planning Plan

Nicholas Ramfos discussed some of the outstanding "Parking Lot" issues from the Commuter Connections Strategic Planning Document.

Mr. Ramfos discussed item 5: Reflect local roles more explicitly through roles and responsibilities sections. He stated that this issue would be addressed at the December 19, 2006 Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee Meeting. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between COG and the local jurisdictions will be updated to more clearly state those responsibilities. These responsibilities are also outlined in the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan under "Network Responsibilities." This section may be found immediately following the Acceptable Performance Levels (APL's).

Mr. Ramfos also discussed item 6: Increase emphasis on Spanish Language outreach and services. He discussed the Spanish outreach services at COG including a Spanish version of the Commuter Connections website, specific direct mail pieces to the Spanish community, as well as a separate Spanish line with a live Spanish-speaking operator. Commuter Connections, in conjunction with the TPB's Access For All Committee helped roll out a similar program for WMATA, which had been lacking the appropriate channels to communicate with Spanish-speaking commuters. Mr. Ramfos stated that despite several media campaigns and outreach efforts, usage the Spanish-speaking line is relatively low, but may increase as the Spanish population in the area continues to grow.

Item #9 Budget Report

Nicholas Ramfos distributed the FY 2007 first quarter budget report.

Mr. Ramfos asked that any questions regarding this handout be forwarded to him.

Item #10 FY 2008 Work Program Development

Nicholas Ramfos distributed the timeline for the development of the FY 2008 Commuter Connections Work Program.

Mr. Ramfos stated that a draft FY 2008 Commuter Connections Work Program would be distributed at the January 16, 2007 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting

Item #11 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Chair, Linda Stewart-Byrd stated that the Arlington County TDM Evaluation Project would be on the Agenda for the January 16, 2007 Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, January 16, 2007.