

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS HIGH TECH AD-HOC GROUP
MEETING NOTES
April 15, 2003

1. Introductions

See attached attendance sheet.

2. Fairfax County CriS System Update

Greg Scott with the Fairfax County briefed the group on the Community Resident Information System (CRiS) activities. He shared with the group that town of Vienna and the town of Herndon will be coming on board on the CriS kiosk system. New kiosks have been deployed at different county locations. A stand alone kiosk has been deployed in City of Fairfax. A new kiosk has been deployed at the Fairfax museum. The kiosk located at the museum does not have the phone activated features but does include touch screen capabilities. Another kiosk has been deployed at the Herrity building. All of the new kiosks have the Commuter Connections application.

Different area jurisdictions such as Alexandria and Arlington have shown interest in becoming partners with the Fairfax county kiosk system. He also shared with the group that the DMV project has been on hold due to budget constraints. The State of Virginia is still interesting in integrating a DMV application with the CriS system but funds have not been allocated to continue with the project.

The recent expansion in the CRiS system has resulted in total of 20 kiosks. Currently all kiosks have the card readers installed on them but are inactive. Customers can pay their taxes and tickets using the phone handset. In future the credit card readers will be activated and smart card technology will also be deployed.

3. Commuter Connections E-Communicator Project Update.

Owais Rafique gave an update on the E-Communicator project. He explained that E-Communicator was designed to integrate the GRH & CCRS databases. E-Communicator automates the process of ridesharing & GRH application processing. After an application is processed the system will generate an email message to Commuter Connections clients. The message will notify the respective jurisdiction about the new application and the information they have requested. The system will also send matchletters to the customers via email.

The new system includes a web interface that has been improved for better service. New features are added to make the system more user friendly. When a customer submits an application on the web, the application is then imported into a visual basic application. The visual basic application allows staff to review the application and make edits if necessary. It allows staff to email matchletters after the review process. The new application also has reporting features. Different reports can be created by changing

different parameters. The system also has an archive feature that can help in tracking follow ups. Currently the software is being modified to enhance geo-coding features. The system is also enhanced to accommodate text and html based E-mails. Next steps of this project are to include transit stops and park n ride lot information.

4. WMATA SmarTrip Customer Support Service Center Update

Craig Maxey with WMATA gave an update on the regional SmarTrip system. Mr. Maxey updated the group on the current status of the Regional SmarTrip System. The initial steps of the effort was the bus fare box project. The roll out process for this effort needs to be compatible with all of the regional transit systems. Regional agreements included a letter of intent from the participating agency. This phase of the project also included regional service center contracts, regional coordination and implementation service.

ISQT occurred between November 2002 - February 2003. 90 buses in Arlington County were tested with the new fare box system. 1.3 million bus trips occurred during the testing period. 7 percent of the total trips (97,000) involved use of SmarTrip cards to pay for the fare. 85 percent of the users found the new fare box easy to use. There were 12 complaints over the testing period. Adding value on the SmarTrip card on the bus was low (56 customers) added fare value of \$716 on the bus. Loading value on-board did not show significant delays to time issues during ISQT.

The new fare boxes did not accept pennies during the testing period. The non acceptance of pennies was not an issue with the customers. The non-acceptance of pennies also shows consistency across the Metro system.

There is also a proposal to allow for a negative balance on the SmarTrip card for buses similar to the rail system. This issue will require WMATA board concurrence. The regional integration effort included a capital funding agreement, operations letter of intent, and operations funding agreement. The final version of requirements stated above will be sent out shortly. Agreements remaining to be prepared include an agreement for the use of debit/credit capability and a SmarTrip license agreement; SmarTrip is copyrighted to WMATA.

Three contracts to be awarded include the Regional Customer Service Center (RCSC), a central data processing service, and computer hardware purchase. The central data processing service contract was awarded to Cubic Systems that also manufactures the SmarTrip hardware and software currently deployed onto the Metrorail system and also used in the ISQT. The computer hardware purchasing contract was awarded to IBM through GSA and this contract is awarded to support the central database.

There are 17 transit agencies providing over 500 million annual trips that are participating in the deployment of the new SmarTrip equipped fare boxes. Regional coordination is required in many areas including operative procedures, design, testing and installation of the equipment. Schedules for ten separate contracts, configuration of fare

tables, data for monthly financial reconciliation, and implementation are also part of the coordination effort. The implementation schedule is to complete this effort by 2005. Following is the sequence this regional effort is being coordinated:

- Award Contracts
- Bus fleet installation
- Customer Service Center and consolidated database design installation
- Montgomery County, Prince Georges County, Northern Virginia bus fare box and garage computer installation
- Autoload, transit benefits SmarTrip reformat, rail upgrade
- MTA bus fare box and computer installation
- Maryland lots bus and computer installation this includes locally operated transit services
- MTA rail fare collection system upgrade

(Mr. Maxey's presentation has been enclosed).

5. Cash Key Project Briefing

Peggy Schwartz of the NBTMD gave a briefing on the Cash Key program. Over 5,000 electronic meters in Montgomery county were equipped with Cash Key hardware. A customer can pay for parking in advance and load that value on a key. The key then can be used to pay for the parking. A key was chosen instead of a smart card to enhance ease of use and that can be carried with the vehicle key instead of a separate smart card. Security reasons were also factored in the selection process and keys are mainly more secure than the smart cards. There are 4 locations in the county where customers go to reload the value on the key. A \$15 deposit is needed for every key assigned. This amount is charged to the customer to cover the cost of equipment. Any amount up to \$65 can be loaded onto the key. When the key is installed into the meter it deducts the amount.

Ms. Schwartz told the group that 3 interfaces were designed to accommodate the system requirements, setup, configuration, and software requirements. Card software is also provided based upon the operations requirements. The three interfaces are as follows:

- Customer software along with a special cable for either meter cash or cards.
- A meter case interface for meter cards only.
- A Cash Key interface for the Cash Key.

The system was tested through various screens to enhance the value flow and security features. Ms Schwartz shared different screens of the interfaces with the group. She told the group that project management incurs about \$10,000 a month in sales for the Cash Keys. Marketing materials were introduced in 2000. The Cash Keys so far have been very durable, some complaints on the keys not working have been documented. In most cases it is the parking meter itself as they run on a 9 volt battery. Due to power loss the system can be out of service.

Q. Do you have to pay the deposit to get the key

A. Yes

Q. Any social issues at the \$15 deposit.

A. Some issues were raised, however a refund is given on the deposit.

(Ms. Schwartz's presentation is enclosed).

6. Set Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date was set for June 17th at 8:30 a.m.