

Grants to Be Issued to Persuade Persons to Live Close to Transit

District of Columbia Program Would Aid D.C. Traffic Congestion Reduction Efforts

The District of Columbia Office of Planning (OP) has released a Request for Applications (RFA) for up to \$200,000 in matching homeownership grants, to be administered by qualified D.C. employers with the aim of persuading people working in the District to live in the District near their workplace and/or public transit.

With D.C. gas prices at about \$4.00 per gallon, this incentive could induce workers to move nearer to their place of employment and/or public transit, thereby reducing the money and time they spend commuting. For the District, the program would contribute to the city's efforts to revitalize its neighborhoods while reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

In partnership with the selected D.C. employers, the Live Near Your Work (LNYW) pilot program will provide grants for down-payment and closing-cost assistance to individual employees. OP will match employer contributions (up to \$6,000 per participating employee) to attract and retain D.C. residents, with the primary purpose of encouraging employees to live close to their place of employment and/or transit.

Specifically the District will provide matching grants between \$3,000 and \$6,000 to employees of the selected employers who purchase a home closer to their place of employment than where they were previously living. The District will match:

- \$3,000 per employee for homes purchased in the District of Columbia that are within ½ mile of a Metro station

or within ¼ mile of a high-quality bus corridor. High-quality bus corridors were identified based on total ridership,

frequency of service, frequency of stops, and number of bus routes.

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Progress in Powering Traffic Signals with Wind and Solar Energy

University of Nebraska Pilot Aims to Reduce Energy Use, Costs

Energy and transportation experts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are about to begin the second stage of a pilot project to develop a wind and solar hybrid power system that generates, stores and distributes electricity to power traffic and street lights. The project is funded by a \$999,000 U.S. Department of Transportation grant.

The goal is to create "energy-plus" roadways that produce more electricity

than they consume. The transportation industry has experimented with solar power for roadway infrastructure, but combining it with wind power is almost unheard of, says Jerry Hudgins, the UNL electrical engineer who leads the three-year project. A hybrid system could provide a clean, continuous source of power that reduces energy consumption

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Wind generator and control system at 84th St. and Nebraska Highway 2 in Lincoln, NE. (Photo: Courtesy of Univ. of Nebraska, Electrical Engineering Dept.)

San Francisco Launches Real-Time Parking Availability for SFpark

Information Available Via Website and iPhone App

San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee joined the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) on April 21 to announce the launch of real-time parking data for SFpark. This federally funded pilot project run by the SFMTA uses smart parking management technologies and pricing policies to make it easier and faster to find parking in San Francisco.

“Cities around the world are combating parking and traffic congestion problems,” said Mayor Lee. “With SFpark, San Francisco is the first city in the world to pursue a comprehensive parking-based approach to congestion management and greenhouse gas emission reduction that will also support local merchants and keep San Francisco moving.”

Asked about the public reaction to this initiative, SFMTA spokesman Jay Primus told UTM that the public response thus far – to the availability of real-time parking information and longer parking times at meters – has been very positive. Demand price changes in garages are only just beginning to be implemented so it is too soon to gauge any response.

The SFpark project is composed of three components: sensors to record park-

ing availability, a data feed to distribute information about parking availability and new meters to make it easier to pay.

SFpark real-time parking availability and pricing information is available via a website (<http://SFpark.org>), the SFpark app for the iPhone and an open data stream for outside app developers. The SFMTA has conducted outreach with the app developer community to help ensure broad awareness of this new data feed and has created a section of the SFpark.org website to make it easy for developers to access and understand this data stream. These tools will help people decide where and when to drive, directing them to blocks and garages with open parking spaces.

Better management of parking will reduce congestion on San Francisco’s streets and result in cleaner air, improved safety and faster transit times. The SFpark pilot began in the summer of 2010 and will run until summer 2012. Eighty percent of the pilot’s funding is provided by a \$19.8 million grant from U.S. Department of Transportation’s Urban Partnership Program, with the remaining 20 percent coming from the SFMTA.

“This innovative project will reduce cir-

cling and double-parking, help make Muni faster and more reliable, reduce congestion, and create safer streets for everyone,” said SFMTA Executive Director/CEO Nathaniel P. Ford Sr. “The parking information on the app, the website, and the real-time information signs will allow SFpark to also make it easier to park and drive in San Francisco.”

The SFpark website provides customers the ability to see parking availability and cost before heading out the door. The mapping tool on the home page shows location, high, low or medium availability and rate information for SFpark garages and on-street parking spaces. The SFpark iPhone app uses the same data feed to provide a mobile option. By providing a real-time data feed to the public, application developers and companies, such as Google, and in-vehicle navigation systems can also distribute this data to drivers.

Later this year, the real-time parking data will also be made available via the region’s 511 system, and the SFMTA will

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*New coin and card multi-space meters are part of the SFpark project.
(Photo: Courtesy of SFMTA)*

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