

## Analysis of Suggestions for Improvement as part of the FY 2010 County's Line of Business & Schools Program Review Processes Fall 2008

**Request By:** Public

**Suggestion:** Utilize zip cars for County employees to reduce or eliminate maintenance, gas, insurance, and the need for employees not at the Government Center to run there to pick up county cars. Instead an employee could pick the zip car up at a location near their house.

### **Response**

**Provided By:** Department of Vehicle Services

**Background:** Zip-Car is a membership based system that is offered as an alternative to car ownership. The general idea is to provide a car when it is not needed frequently. Each member is provided a Zip-Car card that allows them to access Zip-Car vehicles. The members go to a Web site, reserve the car for a specific period (# of hours), and then go to the location to pick up the car. The car must be returned to the same location.

The cost to rent the car varies; it starts at \$8.33 hour (and up depending on model), but does include the fuel and insurance. There is also a \$25 per person one time registration cost and a \$50 monthly minimum use commitment charge. If the car is not returned by the hour it is due back, there is an additional \$50 an hour charge. In 2006, Zip-Car had 340 cars in the Washington DC area and 18,000 card holders.

### **Recommendation:**

The Department of Vehicle Services met with representatives of Zip-Car in the fall of 2006 to determine if Zip-Car was a viable option for the County. The following information is based on the information from that meeting.

The Zip-Car vehicles are primarily located where there are heavy population densities, such as downtown Washington DC and at Metro sites where they will receive "heavy use." In general the Metro sites only have one or two vehicles. Furthermore, the Zip-Car representative said that their business model is targeted at an urban area and not at suburban or rural areas (such as Fairfax County) where potential users live and work at widely scattered locations.

When a County employee needed to use a Zip-Car, they would have to drive to the location, find a place to park, pay a parking fee, and then access the Zip-Car. They would use the Zip-Car for County business, return it to the same location, get into their personal car and return to work. It would be much easier to use their personal car and be reimbursed by the County.

Since Zip-Car pays the car insurance, they require that each driver's license be checked and therefore need a pre-approved list of all potential users. They indicated that the County could get a discount on the initial registration fee if the County assumed this responsibility. This could potentially be every person in the Government Center complex and many employees at other sites. This would require a huge amount of administrative oversight.

Also, since a Zip-Car card is needed to access the vehicles, the County would have to provide a card for every potential user or would assign a few cards to agencies which would require someone to control them. This would also require administrative support.

Based on the information above, the use of Zip-Cars is not recommended at this time.