

National online support for Canadian Commuter  
Challenge 2001  
Report on phase 1 and phase 2

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April 26, 2001

# 1 Executive Summary

This document is an interim report on the Online support for the Canadian Commuter Challenge 2001. It reports on phases one, two and three of the project. Some details of the early start of phase four are given.

## 2 Recap of Proposal

The key to a successful commuter challenge is in the ability to collect data. Over several years, volunteer contributions to Ottawa Commuter Challenge event run annually by Auto-Free Ottawa have resulted in a sophisted web based data collection system.

In its original form, it was targetted at one city only. Redesigns in 1999 and 2000 have resulted in the software being ready to support multiple cities on a single system, but this facility has never been tested.

The project was divided into five major phases:

Phase one setup a system capable of handling the anticipated load

Phase two transform all Ottawa-specific pieces into more generic templates that can be filled in easily during phase four

Phase three test system with a second city (Vancouver - BEST) enabled, and with multiple respondants picked from several cooperative audiences (e.g. Environment Canada, BC Ministry, BEST, etc. employees). Bring up national portal.

Phase four accept applications from Canadian communities wishing to use the system, and configure the appropriate templates for their use.

Phase five run the event.

This is a report on phases one, two and three.

### 3 Phase 1: system setup

This phased concerned itself with the contracting of and setup of the system that will be used for the event.

This was scheduled to be 90% complete by March 1, and 95% complete by April 1.

Actual dates are as follows:

The target system was made available to us after three weeks of delays by the subcontract on March 2. It was 90% configured by March 9, 2001.

The 95% mark was completed on schedule, by April 1, with web servers, database servers, domain name servers, and email servers setup and configured.

On April 24, the subcontracted informed us that they would like to change the IP address<sup>1</sup>. This would result in improved connectivity and performance to us.

The subcontractor provided us with adequate notice of the change and our choice of transition times. The transfer (which involved movement of a physical cable) was done at 10am on April 26. The new IP address is in use now, but it is believed that may still be one or two glitches with mapping of IP address to virtual web server — this may have resulted in the wrong web page appearing at the wrong URL during the period of April 26 through May 1. This is still under investigation.

We do not expect any additional changes to IP addresses, not would we be accept any changes from this subcontractor.

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<sup>1</sup>The IP address is the number, e.g. 12.109.179.203 which is used by the network to direct data. The domain name server is responsible for mapping a name, e.g. [www.commuterchallenge.net](http://www.commuterchallenge.net), to the appropriate number

## 4 Phase 2: create of per-city per-language templates

The AFO National Capital Region web site of 2000 was translated to templates.

This started on March 1, and proceeded until March 19, 2001, at which point a mock up of the Vancouver, Ottawa, Montreal and Nanaimo web sites were put online.

These were left online for one week for review. During that period very little feedback was received, nor was enough feedback *actively* sought.

A second review period was scheduled for March 28 through April 3rd, during which a mock challenge was also scheduled.

BEST promised feedback for April 3, 2001, but as of the time of this writing, little substantive feedback has been received. It is understood that a far more proactive method of getting feedback is necessary. The distance gets in the way too much in this context. Given more time, an in-person feedback session would have been scheduled.

Environment Canada personnel provided large amounts of feedback. A total of 24 problems were reported by April 9. Of these 16% have been fixed to date, the remaining (mostly minor wording problems) will be addressed by May 7. All of the functional issues with the data entry portions have been resolved.

A city captain's resource kit, including a template for a team captain's info kit was to be prepared. The first revision went online on March 26. Based upon feedback received, version 2 was put online on April 22.

## 5 Phase 3: Multicity test

A trial run of the multi-city software was done during the period March 28 through April 4. Feedback from this was used and incorporated during the month of April.

As part of this process, the web site <http://www.commuterchallenge.net> and <http://www.defitransport.net> was put online.

A report summarizing all remedial actions taken will be made available by May 7.

## 6 Phase 4: City sign up

Although not originally scheduled to start until May 1, due to pressure from city captains, city registrations started on actively on April 22 a week early.

This activity has taken multiple days away from acting on feedback. The feedback will now have to be applied to all sites. Fortunately, the templating system makes this relatively painless.

Phase 4 is currently ahead of schedule, and is likely to complete well before the scheduled May 15 date. There are currently 9 cities that are confirmed to be running challenges: Edmonton, Kelowna, Kitchener/Waterloo/Cambridge, London, Nanaimo, Ottawa, Prince George, Vancouver, and Winnipeg. The following cities have responded positively, but are not yet configured: Guelph, Kamloops, Nelson, Victoria, Whistler, and Regina.

Generic web sites that will permit individuals (only) to register will be created for: Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City, Halifax, Fredericton, St. Johns, Saint John, Moncton and Charlotte Town. This will occur on May 20, unless a city captain shows up.

## 7 Conclusion

The city captain interaction process has taken significant time away from final debugging of the web site.

This is a reflection of the fact that lead times for most posters, letters, is really April 1, not May 1. Future national software coordinators need to be ready to accept applications by March 15. This requires that contract issues be cleared up well before February 1.