

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Office of the Inspector General

Inspector General



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONCERNING AN INVESTIGATION INTO MISCONDUCT VIOLATIONS BY EMPLOYEES OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

2011-0571 (S)

INVESTIGATIVE SYNOPSIS

The District of Columbia Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has completed an investigation, which revealed that a District of Columbia Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) employee improperly used a Maryland (MD) disability placard to obtain free parking in the vicinity of his District of Columbia work place.

The investigation also determined that another OCFO employee (OCFO employee #2), improperly allowed the OCFO employee to utilize her MD disability placard and, in return, used the OCFO employee's government-issued SmarTrip fare card, which includes a \$25 monthly designated subsidy.

During the investigation, OIG investigators conducted surveillances of the OCFO employee's vehicles,¹ and reviewed records obtained from the D.C. Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) regarding D.C. registrations assigned to the OCFO employee's vehicles and from the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) regarding the MD disability placard. In addition, investigators reviewed records obtained from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) regarding SmarTrip card usage reports,² OIG investigators also interviewed the OCFO employee and OCFO employee #2.

The investigation revealed that the MVA issued the MD disability placard to OCFO employee #2,³ a work associate of the OCFO employee. Between August 17 and November 16, 2011, OIG investigators conducted nine surveillances during which the OCFO employee's vehicles⁴ were observed parked in the vicinity of 1101 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C., at metered parking spaces, with the MD disability placard hanging from the rearview mirror. On four of those occasions, investigators observed the OCFO employee

¹ The OCFO employee owned two vehicles, which bore designated D.C. registration tags.

² Although records indicated that the OCFO employee had been issued four SmarTrip cards, WMATA maintained that usage report records were only available for two of the four cards.

³ OCFO employee #2 resides in Silver Spring, MD.

⁴ The surveillances were conducted on August 17, 2011, August 25, 2011, and November 16, 2011, for one D.C. registration tag; and August 31, 2011, September 6, 2011, September 14, 2011, September 15, 2011, October 5, 2011, and November 2, 2011, for the other D.C. registration tag.

exiting the vehicle alone. On each of the nine occasions, investigators observed both the parking meter and the dashboard of the OCFO employee's vehicle and saw that the OCFO employee had made no payment for use of the metered parking space.

In his OIG interview on January 19, 2012, the OCFO employee admitted that he used OCFO employee #2's MD disability placard to obtain free parking. The OCFO employee stated that he has two vehicles registered in D.C. and switches the disability placard between the vehicles. The OCFO employee told investigators that over the years, he has received numerous parking violation tickets, which were costing him a lot of money in fines. The OCFO employee stated that he received the disability placard from OCFO employee #2 several months ago and in return he provided her with his SmarTrip fare card,⁵ which OCFO employee #2 used to commute to and from work on occasion. The OCFO employee acknowledged that his use of the disability placard was improper.

In her OIG interview on February 9, 2012, OCFO employee #2 admitted that she loaned the OCFO employee her disability placard because she did not see anything wrong with it; however, after thinking about it, she determined that it was wrong. OCFO employee #2 also admitted that in return for the use of her disability placard, she used the OCFO employee's government-issued SmarTrip fare card a couple of times to commute to and from work.⁶

OIG investigators reviewed SmarTrip data usage records, which revealed that the OCFO employee's SmarTrip card was used on occasions between the Silver Spring Metro Station and the Waterfront SW Metro Station.⁷

CONCLUSIONS

The OIG investigation revealed that the OCFO employee improperly obtained free parking using a MD disability placard issued to a co-worker on at least nine occasions between August 2011 and November 2011. The OCFO employee admitted to regular misuse of the disability placard in the vicinity of his workplace. Finally, the OCFO employee admitted that he provided OCFO employee #2 his subsidized SmarTrip fare card to facilitate her work commute in return for his use of her MD disability parking placard.

⁵ According to DCRA records, the OCFO employee signed a SmartBenefits Application and Change Form on November 19, 2009, wherein he elected to have the \$25 monthly subsidy contributed to his SmarTrip Card, and agreed to use the benefit for the stated/intended purpose – i.e., to commute to and from his place of employment. The OCFO employee has been issued four SmarTrip Cards.

⁶ The OIG confirmed with an official from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 2776 that the SmartBenefits program subsidy is funded by District government.

⁷ For example, a review of WMATA usage records for SmarTrip Card 019510889 indicated that on August 10, 2011, the morning commute began on a MCDOT Ride On bus at a Silver Spring bus stop at 5:26 AM. At 5:36 AM, entry to the WMATA Silver Spring rail station occurred, and this commute ended with an exit at the WMATA Waterfront rail station at 6:08 AM. The evening commute began at the WMATA Waterfront rail station at 6:36 PM, with an exit at the WMATA Silver Spring rail station at 7:13 PM. This commute ended on a MCDOT Ride On bus at a Silver Spring bus stop at 7:26 PM.

On August 11, 2011, SmarTrip Card 019510889 usage records indicated a commute that began on a MCDOT Ride On bus at a Silver Spring bus stop at 5:26 AM. At 5:36 AM, entry to the WMATA Silver Spring rail station occurred, and this commute ended with an exit at the WMATA Waterfront rail station at 6:15 AM. The evening commute began at the WMATA Waterfront rail station at 4:33 PM, with an exit at the WMATA Silver Spring rail station at 5:07 PM. This commute ended on a MCDOT Ride On bus at the Nicholson (MD) bus stop at 5:33 PM.

Accordingly, this investigation has **SUBSTANTIATED** that the OCFO employee violated DPM § 1803.1 (a)(6) (Affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of government).

In addition, the OIG investigation revealed that OCFO employee #2 improperly provided her MD disability placard to the OCFO employee, her co-worker, and that she used the OCFO employee's government-issued SmarTrip fare card, which includes a \$25 monthly designated subsidy to facilitate her work commute on a couple of occasions.

Accordingly, this investigation has **SUBSTANTIATED** that OCFO employee #2 violated DPM § 1803.1 (a)(6) (Affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of government).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this investigation, the OIG recommends that OCFO:

- Address the OCFO employee's conduct with appropriate administrative action;
- Address OCFO employee #2's conduct with appropriate administrative action; and
- Ensure that all OCFO employees are trained appropriately regarding the District's standards of conduct.

May 21, 2013