



1950s

An expanding federal government and other factors led to booming job growth and housing for the region. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is formed by local cities and counties to coordinate on regional issues.

1970

Beginnings of environmental awareness, creation of Earth Day and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

1973

OPEC oil exports stoppage causes gas shortages and high prices at the pump.

HOV lanes open to carpools.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) consolidates four regional bus systems to form Metrobus.



1984

Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) begins operation.

1985

Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT), a national Transportation Demand Management (TDM) trade association, is founded.



1986

Commuter Club changes name to Ride Finders.

1997

Commuter Connections enters the internet age by launching the commuterconnections.org website.

Commuter Connections expands beyond carpool ridematching services to include regional assistance and information on transit, bicycling, and telework.

Commuter Connections begins offering Guaranteed Ride Home program, a safety net for commuters in case of unexpected illness, emergencies, and unscheduled overtime.

1998

IRS expands tax incentives to allow employees to purchase pre-tax transit and vanpool expenses.

Commuter Connections hosts first awards event to recognize employers in the region that offer outstanding commuter and telework benefits to employees.

2009

IRS brings transit/vanpool commuter benefits on parity with parking benefits.



2010

Commuter Connections tells commuters that it pays to rideshare with 'Pool Rewards.

Commuter Connections expands Guaranteed Ride Home to Baltimore region and St. Mary's County.

2012

Commuter Connections 'Pool Rewards expands to include monthly vanpool subsidy.

High Occupancy Toll lanes open along the Capital Beltway using dynamic congestion pricing.

2019

WMATA welcomes full-size bikes on Metrorail during peak periods.

Commuter Connections and the University of Maryland co-develop *incenTrip*, a multi-modal real-time trip planning app.



1950s / 1960s

1964

Completion of the Capital Beltway.

1965

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) established.

1966

TPB becomes associated with COG.

1969

COG and TPB help launch Capital Flyer Express bus service.

1970s



1974

COG and TPB forms Commuter Club, offering regional carpool ridematching services based on home and work locations.

1976

WMATA opens Metrorail system.

1977

Commuter Club emphasizes carpooling to Metrorail stations and Park & Ride Lots.

Commuter Club hosts vanpooling workshops for employers.

1980s / 1990s

1992

Virginia Railway Express (VRE) begins commuter rail operation.

1993

IRS provides tax incentives to employers to encourage use of transit and vanpools.

1994

Ride Finders begins employer outreach program.

1996

Ride Finders rebrands name to Commuter Connections.

1990s / 2000s



2001

Commuter Connections partners with Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) to organize first regional Bike to Work Day event.

Commuter Connections publishes first State of the Commute triennial survey.

2008

Commuter Connections brings Car Free Day to the region.

Bikesharing first introduced as SmartBike DC, the precursor to Capital Bikeshare, which launched two years later.

2000s / 2010s

2014

Commuter Connections launches mobile-friendly website and mobile apps.



2017

Commuter Connections introduces Flextime Rewards, providing cash rewards for delaying commutes along key bottlenecks.

Dockless bikesharing and e-scooters introduced.

2010s / 2020s

2020

Commuter Connections awarded an ATCMD federal grant to enhance *incenTrip* in partnership with the University of Maryland by improving the program's gamification elements and rewards system.

2024 & BEYOND

incenTrip relaunched as *CommuterCash* following completion of the ATCMD project.

Commuter Connections awarded federal grant to develop a flexible vanpooling program, *VanHopper*, to restore under-capacity vans due to post-pandemic hybrid commuting schedules.





We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of a program enacted by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at COG, known today as Commuter Connections. The initiative was created in 1974 in response to the OPEC oil embargo which caused gas shortages that paralyzed U.S. automotive transportation.

During the preceding decades, the Federal-Aid Highway Act and completion of the Capital Beltway paved the way to ubiquitous travel by automobile and commuting by way of single occupancy vehicle became a way of life. That all came to a halt during the gas shortages.

Leaders in the metropolitan Washington region responded to the crisis by supporting the formation of a regional carpool ridematching system, originally called Commuter Club, to facilitate moving more commuters in one vehicle by matching residents who live and work in the same areas.

Carpooling is now only one part of an overall concept known as Transportation Demand Management (TDM). Commuter Connections remains an innovative leader in this approach, which focuses on reducing travel demand on existing road and highway infrastructure by influencing alternative travel behaviors.

Congratulations to the TPB for a significant milestone reached by its Commuter Connections program and for its many accomplishments over the decades to help shape travel demand. Thank you to the state DOTs and agencies who fund these essential programs and to the COG jurisdictions who help support, facilitate, and collaborate with Commuter Connections as part of a unified regional system.

Looking forward, Commuter Connections will continue to work with area leaders to offer improvements and development of multimodal travel solutions. The resulting efforts will meet and exceed future demands on our roads, highways, and paths to ever-improve our environmental impacts and quality of life for the region.

Sincerely,

Christina Henderson
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Councilmember At-Large, District of Columbia

Commuter Connections

Founded in 1974, Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated through the TPB. The program offers free multimodal commuter services to residents and workers in the metropolitan Washington region and beyond, including ridematching, Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day regional events, employer outreach, Guaranteed Ride Home, and a host of other incentive programs. Commuter Connections is funded by the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Founded in 1965, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington, DC metropolitan region. Working with local, state, regional, and federal partners and leaders, the TPB coordinates future plans, provides data and analysis to decision makers, and coordinates regional programs to advance safety, land-use coordination, and more. The TPB is housed at and staffed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Founded in 1957, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders together to address major regional issues in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG's membership is comprised of 300 elected officials from local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress.

50 YEARS 1974-2024
COMMUTER CONNECTIONS

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF MOVING FORWARD



The Commuter Connections program is funded by DDOT, MDOT, and VDOT.

OCTOBER 2, 2024

Above photos: Commuter Connections Inaugural, GRH Postcard, State of the Commute Survey, Bike to Work Day.
Front cover photos: Metrorail Grand Opening*, Capital Flyer Express Bus, Carpooler with Bumper Stickers, Bus-Only HOV Lane.
*Credit: WMATA Photograph by Larry Levine