

MEETING NOTES

CAR FREE DAY 2021 EVENT STEERING COMMITTEE

March 10, 2021

1. Introductions

Committee members, guests, and other attendees introduced themselves by name and affiliation.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the September 9, 2020 meeting were approved as written.

3. Car Free Day 2020 Draft Event Report

A comprehensive draft report was distributed which highlighted the various marketing and promotional aspects of the 2020 Car Free Day event. In 2020, the event faced challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and focus was shifted to place more emphasis on bicycling, scootering, walking, teleworking, and on employer based ridematching. In 2020, the number of Car Free Day pledges for transit and ridesharing compared to the previous year were down significantly, while teleworking increased dramatically, and for the first time ever, received the greatest number of pledges than any other category. During a typical year, teleworking has the least number of pledges. Biking and walking remained impactful this year, in part because nearly a third who took the Car Free Day pledge biked or walked for recreation or exercise.

The Car Free Day 2020 proclamation signing took place at the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) meeting at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments on July 22, 2020. Kelly Russell, City of Frederick President Pro Tem Board of Aldermen, and TPB Chairman signed the proclamation to recognize September 22, 2020 as Car Free Day in the Washington, DC region. Some jurisdictions also approved local Car Free Day proclamations of their own.

Images developed for Car Free Day 2020 were relevant to traveling during the coronavirus pandemic and working remotely. Messaging reminded participants to use safe and healthy practices while traveling, such as wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands. The poster was available in PDF format at www.carfreemetrodc.org and via an HTML email sent to 54,000 employers, stakeholders, and past year's participants of Car Free Day and Bike to Work Day events. The total Car Free Day paid media budget for the 2020 event was \$44,937 and included traditional and internet radio (Spotify), video (YouTube), a sponsored blog article (Popville.com), online banner ads (El Tiempo Latino), social media (Facebook), and text messaging. Radio encompassed 72 percent of the budget and aired on three Washington, DC area radio stations: WPGC (95.5), WHUR (96.3), and WTOP (103.5). Complimentary ad space was donated by transit partners from throughout the region. Signage was placed on Arlington ART Buses, Fairfax County Connector, Metrobus, Montgomery County Ride On, and Prince George's County The Bus.

Partnership was continued with the local chapter of the American Heart Association and amplified the message about healthier travel methods such as bicycling and walking. Transit

also boosts bicycling and walking activity, due to first mile/last mile needs. The Capital Area Car Free College Campus Challenge was created as a friendly competition to generate awareness of and participation in Car Free Day on college campuses throughout the region. The college with the greatest number of pledges (Georgetown) received access to a radio interview, plus Commuter Connections branded face coverings and hand sanitizer.

Commuter Connections' network members hosted numerous promotions to celebrate Car Free Day. Prince William County and the City of Manassas created Car Free Day "BINGO" and awarded prizes. Montgomery County Commuter Services staff were at a number of transit centers and Metrorail stations on September 22, 2020 with free hand sanitizer, face coverings, and a chance to win other prizes. Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland was at the La Plata Farmers Market on September 19, 2020 with free giveaways. Clean Air partners participated in Commuter Connections Car Free Day with a targeted social media promotion on Twitter and Facebook. All who took the Car Free Day 2020 pledge were entered into a raffle for a chance to win sponsor donated raffle prizes. All received a \$30 Nift Gift card to use with local participating businesses in the Washington, DC area and a free LOVE Burger from Leon restaurants.

The total number of Car Free Day pledges for the 2020 event was 3,834. While this was a decrease from the previous year, pledges were still greater in 2020 than in 2015 and 2018. With 916 of the total pledges, the District of Columbia was the number one jurisdiction in 2020, followed by Fairfax County at 676, and Montgomery County at 667. Participants were asked to select the mode(s) they pledged for Car Free Day 2020. The breakdown was as follows: Telework 3,074 (37.4%), Walk/Run 2,521 (30.6%), Bicycle/Scooter 1,627 (19.8%), Bus 337 (4.1%), Train 331 (4.0%), and Carpool/Vanpool 270 (3.3%). Note, participants could select more than one travel mode. Those who self-identified as typical drive alone travelers represented 959 (25%) of participants, and the group who are regularly car free made up 2,875 (75%). At 1,752 (46%), Virginia held the greatest number of Car Free Day pledges by state, followed by Maryland with 1,099 (29%), and the District of Columbia with 916 (24%). Other states combined received 67 pledges (1%). Participants performed the following activities on Car Free Day: Working 3,323 (53.6%), Recreation/Exercise 1,230 (19.8%), Shopping/Errands 916 (14.8%), Taking Classes 306 (4.9%), Dining Out/Entertainment 277 (4.5%), and None of the Above 145 (2.3%). Work locations on Car Free Day were from Home 3,011 (78.5%), Commuted to Standard Workplace Location 562 (14.7%), Other Location/Not Working that Day 198 (5.2%), and Co-working/Telework Center/Shared Workspace 63 (1.6%).

The 2020 Car Free Day event report was posted to SharePoint and the Steering Committee was asked to submit edits to the document by April 7, 2021. The draft document will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee on May 18th and a comment period will be established.

4. Car Free Day 2021 Date

Car Free Day is traditionally held on September 22nd. September 22, 2021 falls on a Wednesday and the goal for 2021 was set at 5,000 pledges by the state funding agencies.

5. Marketing Materials

After using the 'Drop it for a Day'-theme for three years in a row, in 2020 the event website and poster took on a whole new look and feel. To what extent the Car Free Day 2021 images and phraseology will still require emphasis toward traveling during a pandemic and working remotely is too early to tell.

6. Sponsors

The Committee is in search of sponsors to donate prizes for the regional raffle.

7. Other Business

The next Car Free Day Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5, 2021 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request, including alternative formats of meeting materials. Visit www.mwcog.org/accommodations or call (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD).