

**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 15, 2018

12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

Third Floor, COG Board Room

Chairperson: Janiece Timmons, WMATA

Vice Chairperson: George Clark, Southern Maryland

Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos 202/962-3313

Item #1 Introductions

The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves and to sign the attendance sheet.

Item #2 Minutes of March 20, 2018 Meeting

Approval was sought for the March 20, 2018 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Janiece Timmons, WMATA requested a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

A motion was made by Kari Snyder, MDOT and her motion was seconded by Suzanna Parker, BTS.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the March 20, 2018 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 FY 2018 Placement Rate Survey

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the substantive changes to the draft FY2018 Placement Rate Survey Report. The draft report was presented to the Subcommittee on March 20th. An April 20th deadline for comments was established. The Subcommittee will be asked to endorse the final draft report.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff began by reminding the Subcommittee of the phases of draft document review; January 2018 and March 2018. He then began reviewing the substantive changes to the document including updated language related to the federal transit benefit, edits to text that did not match the charts related to rounding, bike and walk modes were excluded from Table 8 due to the sample size being too small to be statistically relevant, information was added about CarpoolNow, Appendix B was adjusted for 2017 data, and Table B12 was adjusted because numbers were transposed, Appendix C explanations were updated, emissions factors were updated. He then asked the Subcommittee if they had any questions or comments and reminded members of how the survey feeds into the regional TDM analysis.

The Subcommittee unanimously endorsed the report for release, including the changes discussed. The reports will be published and posted to the Commuter Connections website for downloading.

Item #4 Clean Air Partners Update

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, briefed the Subcommittee on recent and upcoming Clean Air Partners activities.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, reviewed three marketing campaigns currently in use by Clean Air Partners. To promote Air Quality Awareness week, April 30 – May 4, four air-quality themed graphics (good-green, yellow-moderate, orange-unhealthy for sensitive groups, red-unhealthy for all) were pushed out via the social media platforms Facebook and Twitter. Each message contained simple instructions on how individuals can help improve air quality, and encouraged downloading the Air Quality App.

Ms. Allahdoust then discussed the upcoming Clean Air Partners summer campaign that will be launched at a press event/awards recognition on Federal Hill in Baltimore, MD on June 21, 2018. The event will feature high level speakers and will recognize student winners of the poster contest and science fairs. The summer campaign will rely on grassroots style outreach, employing street teams to educate the public. Campaign materials will feature a “skywriting” concept with suggested behaviors and will be used on transit ads, social media, and online.

Ms. Allahdoust concluded her presentation by mentioning the student poster contest for grades 4-8. Grades were divided into two categories with first place, second place, and two honorable mentions from each.

Item #5 incenTrip Mobile App Launch

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the recent launch of the incenTrip mobile app and provided a live demonstration of the app for the Subcommittee

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, began by briefing the Subcommittee on the University of Maryland’s incenTrip mobile application launch open house for network members, held at COG on May 1, 2018 and thanked all Subcommittee members who could attend and lend their support. Mr. Finafrock gave a short overview of the events of the day.

Mr. Finafrock then provided additional background information such as the incorporation of suggestions and improvements made by the Ridematching Committee and COG/TPB staff. He then demonstrated the application, real-time for the Subcommittee. The opening of the live demonstration included instructions on how incenTrip users can use their Commuter Connections account to import their Commuter Connections username and password. His demonstration included differentiation between the primary application functions, “Plan a Trip” and “Go Now,” and the modes that are available in each function. He then demonstrated each mode within the functions and how points are awarded based on energy savings, which includes time to travel and fuel consumed. He also mentioned the “eco-driving” calculator included in the app to assist drivers in obtaining a more efficient trip. Mr. Finafrock further explained that prizes could be awarded to the users that earn the most energy savings, as an extension of existing incentive programs offered by Commuter Connections.

Mr. Finafrock then explained how the real-time travel data model used in incenTrip was also being used to power the Commuter Connections Flextime Rewards notifications and that the transit data used in incenTrip is optimized for “best trip” according to Google Transit. Because of this, some trips via transit may include routes typical users may not be familiar with. He then

explained that in CarpoolNow, which also includes transit options provided by Google Transit, prioritizes rail trips over other transit and is therefore likely to present a more familiar trip to the user.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, noted the app was developed with a grant from the Department of Energy (DOE) but serves the dual purpose of mitigating congestion. The DOE has expressed interest in continuing to enhance the app. If so, Commuter Connections may integrate into the app more intentionally in FY2020 after further testing in FY2019. Mr. Ramfos explained how Commuter Connections is striving to be relevant with Millennials and Generation Z, and the backend connection to incenTrip via the Commuter Connections database may be a means of doing so.

Subcommittee members asked how they could obtain the app. Mr. Finafrock stated that it was available for iOS and Android and that it was still in beta form. Anyone wishing to use the app can download it but will not be able to use it until they are presented with an email authorization code from UMD. Nicholas Ramfos asked Subcommittee members to download the app and to provide feedback to COG/TPB staff to improve the app.

Judy Galen, Loudoun County, suggested that inclusion of open vanpool seats would be a valuable addition to the app.

Item #6 2018 Bike to Work Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the Bike to Work Day event to be held on Friday, May 18th.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the upcoming Bike to Work Day event. Mr. Franklin stated that there have been multiple press releases issued related to the event and that there were currently 14,386 commuters registered with a goal of 20,000. He also mentioned several social media tools used to promote the event such as live streaming of the signing of the BTWD 2018 Proclamation and the addition of Snapchat filters for 2018.

Mr. Franklin also mentioned that pitstop managers were encouraged to record videos of their pitstop to be posted on the Bike to Work Day Facebook page. In addition to t-shirts, posters and rack-cards, during the month of May, a paid marketing campaign was active. This included deejay promotions and endorsements on multi-format, local radio stations. Mr. Franklin played three radio spots and two interviews conducted by Kristi King of WTOP with COG/TPB staff for the Subcommittee.

Mr. Franklin concluded that after the event, the top employer would be identified and awarded a lunch as well as several raffle prizes to be awarded to winners.

Item #7 Long Range Plan TDM Initiative

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, discussed the status of the work group examining the next steps with the Long-Range Plan Task Force TDM Initiative.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, stated the work group met on May 9th and included Nancy Huggins, MTA; Jim Larsen, Arlington County; Kelly Woodward, DATA; Thomas Hamed, City of Alexandria; Heidi Mitter, VDOT; Jim Bonjourno, WMATA; and Holly Morello, PRTC. Mr. Ramfos

stated the group was looking for local and regional ways to expand programs such as vanpool subsidy promotion and increasing transit access awareness.

Mr. Ramfos also stated the group also discussed parking pricing and the unlikelihood of suburban and ex-urban employers charging for parking, except in cases where employers have limited parking, in which case it may be possible. Parking cash-out at employer sites was also discussed. Mr. Ramfos stated the work group did not favor exploring raising parking rates at Metrorail stations.

The final item considered by the work group was growing telework. While Telework is popular at large employers, the work group felt that progress could be made with smaller employers that had not yet adopted a telework program. The work group has requested that each jurisdiction review practices occurring locally and submit those items for review by the work group. During the next meeting, the work group will explore details of the ideas with the goal of drafting recommendations for the Board to review.

Mr. Ramfos encouraged Subcommittee members who were interested in participating in the work group to participate in the next meeting on May 31, 2018.

Item #8 2018 Car Free Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2018 Car Free Day event.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2018 Car Free Day event. He stated the Steering Committee has begun meeting and encouraged others who wished to participate to attend the next meeting on July 11th at 10:00 am. To help plan the event. Mr. Franklin reiterated that Car Free Day is a chance to go car free or car light for commute and non-commute trips for the entire day.

11,200 people took the pledge to go car free or car light in 2017, an increase of 4,500 pledges from 2016. Mr. Franklin stated this was largely due to the sponsorship by Chipotle and their buy one, get one free burrito promotion.

Mr. Franklin stated the alternate mode breakdown was as follows: bike – 29%, rail – 22%, bus – 17%, walk – 16%, carpool/vanpool – 8%, and telework – 8%. This amounted to 191,428 miles saved. The registration for the event split evenly in thirds among the District, Maryland, and Virginia.

Car Free Day 2018 will be held on September 22, 2018 and additionally observed on September 21, 2018 (due to the weekend) to maximize exposure of the event. The event website is www.carefreemetrod.org and is currently seeking sponsors for this year's event.

Item #9 FY 2018 3rd Quarter CCWP Progress and Budget Reports

Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY2018 3rd Quarter CCWP Progress and Budget Reports.

Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, reviewed the FY 2018 3rd Quarter CCWP Progress Report and encouraged Subcommittee members to review the data associated with their respective jurisdictions. Ms. Brennan advised the Subcommittee that the Department of

Defense/Washington Headquarter Service (DOD/WHS) had joined Commuter Connections as a network member.

Ms. Brennan stated that as of March 31, 2018, 7,976 commuters were currently registered in the GRH database and that COG had signed a contract with SmartRide to provide GRH trips in Calvert, Charles, and St Mary's counties in Maryland. She mentioned that 128 surveys were conducted for GRH Baltimore with a response rate of 16%. 86% of respondents indicated they were pleased with the overall GRH service. As of March 31, 2018, 412 commuters were registered in the GRH Baltimore program. Additionally, Ms. Brennan mentioned all programs had seen an increase in activity over the same period in FY2017.

Ms. Brennan then reviewed the FY2018 3rd Quarter budget report and stated that the budgets were in line with program expectations to date.

Item #10 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting

This is an opportunity for Commuter Connections Subcommittee members to bring up other business and to request agenda items for the next meeting.

Carrie Snyder, MDOT, announced the [Commuter Choice Maryland](#) statewide TDM workshop happening Wednesday, May 30th, at 1:00 p.m. at MDOT headquarters. Ms. Snyder called for local perspectives to review draft strategic plan.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, announced the I-66 Transportation Management Strategies launched May 6th. The work elements for the effort can be reviewed at www.transform66.org. Ms. Allahdoust requested assistance for peer review, especially regarding the telework incentive program for employers.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, July 17, 2018 at 12 noon.