



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, November 19, 2019  
12 noon – 2:00 p.m.  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.  
Third Floor, COG Board Room  
Chairperson: Marcus Moore, Fairfax County  
Vice Chairperson: Marina Budimir, DDOT  
Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos 202/962-3313**

**Item #1      Introductions and Retirement Announcement of Sharon Affinito**  
*The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves and to sign the attendance sheet. Sharon Affinito, Loudoun County, was recognized and thanked for her work with COG/TPB in anticipation of her retirement. A plaque and card were given to her and cake was shared with the Subcommittee.*

**Item #2      Minutes of September 17, 2019 Meeting**  
*Approval was sought for the September 17, 2019 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.*

Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, requested a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

A motion was made by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, and seconded by George Clark, TCCSMD.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the September 17, 2019 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

**Item #3      2019 Bike to Work Day Draft Event Report**  
*Mark Hersey, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2019 Bike to Work Day draft report.*

Mark Hersey, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2019 Bike to Work Day draft report. The comment period for this report opened November 19, 2019 and will close on December 20, 2019 by 12 noon. Page 9 of the report details each pit stop from Bike to Work Day in the region as well as the number of registrants per pit stop. Page 14 shows a graph displaying the number of pit stops and registrants by year. In May 2019, there were 115 pit stops and close to 18,000 registrants, which is 10 times the number of registrants from when the event started in May 2002. Mr. Hersey noted there was a total of \$50,000 in cash donated through monetary and in-kind sponsorships from a variety of organizations in the Washington Metropolitan region. The report includes highlights from each pit stop as well as an extensive list of employers who had at least 5 employees register for the event. Page 58 displays the print and online media coverage of the Bike to Work Day 2019 event. The remainder of the document includes images and highlights of the event as well as the proclamations for the event by Arlington, Charles and Fairfax counties. Mr. Hersey asked the Subcommittee to forward any suggested edits or changes to him so that he may work toward finalizing the document. Fatemah Allahdoust, VDOT, asked if pictures that she sent from the event would be included in the report. Mr. Hersey responded that they will be included in the final document.

**Item #4****Overview of Recent COG/TPB Dockless Shared Mobility Device Activities**

*Andrew Meese, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on dockless shared mobility devices, notably e-scooters and electric-assist bicycles.*

Andrew Meese, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on dockless shared mobility devices, notably e-scooters and electric-assist bicycles. Mr. Meese started by explaining the new terminology for shared mobility devices (SMDs) or micromobility. He also explained the distinction between “dockless” and “docked” SMDs. Capital Bikeshare stations are an example of docked SMDs, while e-scooters and e-bikes are known to be dockless. E-scooters have higher demand, generate more revenue, and are driving rapid growth in SMD trips. In DC, dockless vehicle monthly trips increased from 140,000 in May 2018 to 590,000 in May 2019. Nationally, 84 million trips on shared micromobility were documented in 2018. Mr. Meese emphasized how scooter share began in 2018 and has been an immediate success. Four local jurisdictions created pilot permit programs to measure the use of SMDs, with the earliest beginning in September 2017, and all four ending in December 2019. All four jurisdictions are extending their pilot permit programs. Baltimore City has also implemented programs measuring SMD use in their region.

Mr. Meese explained that MWCOG has been hosting Regional Dockless Workshops every six months in order to share information on evolving practices within the SMD programs. Representatives from DDOT, Arlington County, Montgomery County, and the City of Baltimore have attended these workshops. The first workshop was held on May 31, 2018 and the next workshop will be held on December 9, 2019. SMD use is growing rapidly and has led to a reduction in motorized trips, especially ride-hailing and personal motor vehicle use. The Access for All Committee (AFA) has voiced concerns about the impacts of SMDs have on persons with mobility and/or vision challenges. Careless parking of SMDs have caused tripping hazards and block wheelchair movements on sidewalks and ramps. The speed of SMD travel on sidewalks has also been a concern. The AFA chair has spoken on these issues and will speak again at the next workshop. Mr. Meese presented examples of US cities that have instituted parking policies for dockless vehicles in order to diminish concerns of pedestrians. Some cities are offering incentives to those who choose to park their SMD in a designated parking area. E-scooter injury rates are low with most injuries occurring during first use of the SMD. Injury rates are expected to decline as users become more experienced. Training for SMDs are mostly app-based with some agencies and operators sponsoring training events. Some ideas for regulation of SMDs are age restrictions, drivers license requirements, late night use restrictions, built-in speed governors, and geo-fencing.

Mr. Meese continued by presenting a chart showing SMD user demographic activity in Baltimore. A higher percentage of low-income and minority users prefer e-scooters versus bikesharing. More women and more users in business attire prefer e-scooters over bikesharing as well. Major age differences were discovered as those 55 and older tend not to use SMDs. Theft and vandalism, rising permit fees, and companies' profitability are long-term threats and issues that will continue to be monitored. Kelly Woodward, DATA, asked what next steps are after e-scooters. Mr. Meese said that mopeds have been becoming more popular. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked if there will be clarification given regarding the use of the term “micromobility” as it is being used in multiple ways in transportation circuits. Mr. Meese replied that he will take that message back to the workshops to discuss what can be done. Joseph Stainsby, Vanpool Alliance, asked if there will be movement towards universally “docked” SMDs since “dockless” SMDs are now asked to be parked in designated areas. Mr. Meese distinguished the difference between docked stations such as Capital Bikeshare and the design of dockless SMDs which do not require a docked station in order to be used. Marina Budimir, DDOT, commented on the success of Capital Bikeshare in the region as well as work being done to mitigate theft and misuse of SMDs. Fatemah Allahdoust, VDOT, asked if Fairfax County has adopted ordinance to bring e-scooters to the county, and she asked what the rules for where e-scooter riders are supposed to ride in the city. Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, said he would look into getting more information for her. Marina Budimir, DDOT, responded saying DC prohibits e-scooter riders from riding on sidewalks in Downtown DC, otherwise the decision of where to ride (sidewalk versus street) is at the rider's discretion. Ms. Budimir also pointed out that e-scooter rider signaling is an issue that DDOT is looking into.

**Item #5****Regional Travel Survey Briefing**

*Ken Joh, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2017-2018 Regional Travel Survey (RTS).*

Ken Joh, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2017-2018 Regional Travel Survey (RTS) focusing on alternative travel options that reduce the need for solo driving throughout the region. The regional travel survey (RTS) is a once a decade, comprehensive survey of all types of trips (both work and non-work). The RTS analyzes detailed household and individual trips to develop COG/TPB's regional travel demand forecasting model. The Commuter Connections State of the Commute survey (SOC) is a triennial survey focused on commute trips. The SOC analyzes commute patterns and attitudes toward alternative modes to evaluate and improve travel demand management (TDM) efforts. The first part of the RTS is a recruitment survey which asks for details about the household, members of the household, and vehicles owned by the household. The second part of the RTS consists of a trip diary in which each member of the household records trips taken on designated dates.

Mr. Joh showcased new alternative travel option questions included on the 2017-2018 RTS that have not been included in previous surveys. The new questions inquired how often a person uses alternative travel options in a typical week and focused on travel options that reduced SOV travel. The questions also sought to capture recent travel trends since the 2007-08 Household Travel Survey was administered. These questions were only asked of those who were 16 years of age or older. Results showed that more households in the core of the region have one vehicle than those in the inner and outer suburbs of the region. The opposite was reported when asked how many households own two or more vehicles: More households in the inner and outer suburbs owned two or more vehicles than households in the downtown core. The number of households owning two or more vehicles has slightly decreased since the 2007-08 RTS was administered, and the number of households owning one vehicle has slightly increased. Ride-hailing services in the region have become very popular with Uber and Lyft being the main Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) used. These services use smartphone apps to connect passengers with drivers of personal vehicles. Ride-hailing is most frequent in the inner core with Washington DC residents using ride-hailing as a mode of transportation at least once a week. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked where the data for the use of ride-hailing services in the region came from as it does not seem accurate for Charles County. Mr. Joh explained that the data came from the recruitment section of the RTS and includes multiple types of trips, not just commute trips, such as the SOC survey.

Mr. Joh continued onto the regional and local public transit portion of the survey. The region has multiple rail options as well as bus options for regional and local transit. Washington DC, Arlington County, and City of Alexandria residents were the top user of public transit; respondents reported using public transit at least once a week. Home delivery services on weekdays has become another option for those in the region to avoid SOV travel. Package deliveries, food deliveries, and home services such as landscaping are examples of these home delivery services. Other alternative travel options used to maximize use of the region's highway system include carpooling, vanpooling, HOV lanes and toll roads. Commuter Connections offers ridesharing programs to promote carpooling and vanpooling to and from work. Casual carpooling (slugging) allows drivers and non-paying passengers to use HOV lanes. Prince William county reported having the most residents who utilize car and vanpooling in the region at least once a week. The region's extensive network of HOV lanes help move more persons per lane than general purpose lanes in the AM and PM peak periods. Prince William County also led the region in HOV use for weekday peak period travel. HOT lanes (Express Lanes) and toll road pricing encourage efficient use of the region's limited highway capacity in peak periods. The RTS results showed that over half of drivers in the region use toll transponders with the highest amount of toll transponder use coming from those in the core and inner suburbs. Loudoun County reported the highest use of HOT lanes and toll roads for weekday travel at least once a week. Sharon Affinito, Loudoun County, asked if the toll transponder survey results included bus riders. Mr. Joh clarified that the results only included toll transponder use in private vehicles.

Mr. Joh concluded with the bicycle and bikeshare portion of the RTS. The region's bicycling network and infrastructure has grown significantly since 2005. 48% of the region's households have one or more adults

who have bicycles for their personal use. Capital Bikeshare launched in 2010 and has grown to serve five jurisdictions with 500 stations and over 4,300 bikes. Washington DC leads the region in weekday bicycle use; DC residents report cycling at least once a week on average. Marina Budimir, DDOT, asked what type of bicycle trips are being recorded as she believed the percentage (18%) of DC residents who bike at least once a week is rather high. Mr. Joh explained that the trips recorded are for weekly travel only and there will be more information to come once observed trip results are available in Spring 2020. Kelly Woodward, DATA, asked if there may be a reason why ridehailing is more popular in the core of the region. Mr. Joh answered that the availability of services and the use of ridehailing services with public transit may be the cause of popularity.

**Item #6 Car Free Days 2019 Event**

*Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the results from the Car Free Days event held on September 21, 22, and 23rd.*

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the results from the Car Free Day(s) event held on September 21, 22, and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Sheehan presented the Car Free Day pledge summary and emissions analysis document visually displayed the numeric findings from the event that occurred in September 2019. The event occurred over the course of a weekend for 3 days with Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> representing the internationally observed Car Free Day. The event had 4,756 pledges with the jurisdictions of DC, MD, and VA contributing somewhat equally to the event as well as some smaller contributions from WV, PA and DE. The pledge count in 2019 was significantly higher than the number of pledges in 2018, and closer to the peak year in 2017 where Chipotle coupons helped entice a large amount of pledges. This year “Nift” gifts were offered as incentive for pledging to the event. More residents of DC and VA chose to participate in the event by bike and rail than those in MD. An almost equal number of pledges in each jurisdiction decided to take the bus for the event, while VA led the region in telework and pool options. Mr. Sheehan continued with the total breakdown of pledges by transportation mode. Participants were able to choose more than one travel mode, so the totals are far higher than the total pledge count. About 22% of participants chose rail as a mode of car free travel, 21% chose to walk, bike or bus (respectively for each option), 9% chose to pool and 8% chose to telework. The pledge data also revealed that about half of those that pledged said that they are not normally car free. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked if some of the pledges may be commuter bus riders and may not have understood the question. Mr. Sheehan agreed that it could be a possibility. Most of the pledges claimed to go car free all three days of the event. The emissions savings from the 2019 Car Free Day event was an estimated 190,863 miles saved.

**Item #7 Regional TDM Evaluation Project Update**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on recent data collection activities associated with the regional TDM Evaluation project.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on recent data collection activities associated with the Regional TDM Evaluation project. The Car Free Day event survey is currently out in the field to assess what travel behavior was prior to Car Free Day and how the event impacted travel behavior going forward. The Car Free Day and Bike to Work Day event surveys should both close around the end of December. A questionnaire for the regional Vanpool Driver survey is currently being finalized and should be released in early January. Vanpool driver lists are being requested from vanpool providers to avoid duplications in the survey. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked how many vanpool drivers are not registered through Commuter Connections. Mr. Ramfos replied that many vanpool drivers are not registered due to many vanpools being privately owned and operated.

**Item #8 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program Participation Guidelines Changes**

*Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on recommended changes to the regional GRH program participation guidelines.*

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on recommended changes to the regional GRH program participation guidelines. Language has been added to the GRH participation guidelines allowing users

to submit their request online through their Commuter Connections on-line account. Once a trip is requested, a dispatcher will reach out to the user and set up or deny the trip. The term transportation network company (TNC) was also added to the guidelines regarding types of services used in order to set up GRH trips for users. Uber is the only TNC currently approved as a ride provider and may now be used by dispatchers for GRH trips depending on location, time, and type of emergency. Other TNCs may join as ride providers in the future. Mr. Finafrock requested all comments on the recommended changes to the GRH program participation guidelines be submitted by noon on December 20<sup>th</sup> to [docomments@mwkog.org](mailto:docomments@mwkog.org). Traci McPhail, NBTMD, inquired about users requesting GRH rides after 10:00pm since TNCs are technically available at all hours. Mr. Finafrock responded saying if they are requesting a ride through the GRH program, then they will have to submit their request before 10:00pm in order to get a response from a dispatcher.

**Item #9            FY2021 Work Program Development and Commuter Connections Strategic Plan**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft FY2021 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) and the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft FY2021 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) and the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan. Mr. Ramfos defined the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan as a network of public and private transportation organizations, including COG, state funding agencies, and local organizations, that work together to assist and encourage people in the Washington region to use alternatives to the single-occupant automobile. The benefits of Commuter Connections include helping to reduce and manage commuter congestion, tourist travel, and emissions. The program also supports local efforts to attract and retain employers. The program supplies workers with multiple commute options for an improved quality of life. The presentation included a map showcasing the areas of the region that the Commuter Connections program supports. The Washington DC Metro region ranked highly on the Census Bureau's MSA rankings for carpooling and transit use. Of 2,795,375 total workers in the area, 11.1% participate in carpooling and 13.9% participate in transit use.

Mr. Ramfos continued with the Commuter Connections daily program impacts which measured the reductions of vehicle trips, miles of travel, and environmental effects of the program. Commuter Connections constitutes the major demand management component of the region's congestion management process (CMP) which is federally required of the TPB. The CMP document has been presented to the Subcommittee and has been shaped by the Subcommittee through comments and suggestions. The Commuter Connections program is also a part of Visualize 2045 as well as other endorsed initiatives by the TPB. The program's daily societal benefit cost savings is approximately \$1,198,085 per day. The program's FY2021 budget is about \$200,000 more than the prior year totaling \$6,405,287. 32% of the overall budget includes staff and overhead costs, 50% includes private sector services, 9% include local jurisdiction pass-thru costs, and the last 9% include direct costs.

Notable work items for FY2021 include an investigation to determine streamlining opportunities of Commuter Connections mobile applications. Printing and distribution of the 2019 State of the Commute report will occur. The FY2021 placement and retention rate study surveys and reports are also scheduled to occur. The comment period for the CCWP and the Strategic Plan will end on December 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. Kelly Woodward, DATA, asked how the placement survey is administered. Mr. Ramfos explained that in November of next year, a survey will be provided to those who use the program and will ask how they use it. Results from previous survey showed that about 42% change their commuting habits due to the Commuter Connections program. The survey is administered by email and telephone with a goal of at least 700 responses.

**Item #10            1st Quarter CCWP FY2020 Budget and Progress Reports**

*Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 CCWP 1st Quarter Budget Report and Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on the FY2020 CCWP 1st Quarter Progress Report.*

Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 CCWP 1st Quarter Budget Report. Overall commuter operations for the first quarter ran at 17% and regional Guaranteed Ride Home ran at 15%. General marketing ran at 12% with the DC/MD Vanpool incentive at 7%, Flextime Rewards at 9%, and the incenTrip mobile app which ran at 8%. Over 100 checks were disbursed in the month of November to incenTrip app users. Monitoring and evaluation ran at 15% and Employer Outreach ran at 6%. Total expenditures ran at 12%.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on the FY2020 CCWP 1<sup>st</sup> quarter progress report. The Ridematching program served just about 18,000 commuters in the first quarter as of September 30, 2019. The incenTrip mobile app continued to increase gains and downloads (26%) after launching in the first quarter. The WMATA platform work group continued to meet and bolster TDM options prior to the end of the first round of platform shutdowns on Labor Day 2019. The FY2021 CCWP planning process was kicked off in the first quarter which was explained by Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, during the last agenda item. Mr. Sheehan continued with the regional Guaranteed Ride Home Program which registered about 620 new applicants as well as re-registered 1,170 existing commuters. For Marketing activities, the Summer 2019 newsletter was issued and featured recognition of the employer award winners from the 2019 Employer Awards Ceremony held in June. The debut of the incenTrip app in late August and Car Free Day in September were also featured. New pit stop guidelines have been established for Bike to Work Day pit stop managers. CarpoolNow had 170 downloads throughout the quarter.

Mr. Sheehan discussed several reports that were developed and finalized such as the 2019 State of the Commute Technical report, GRH Applicant Survey report, and the Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey report. An Employer Outreach sales trainings on Flexwork and Telework was held in September. Lastly, GRH Baltimore had a total of 345 registrants at the end of the first quarter and the program had provided 27 trips throughout the first quarter.

**Item #11      Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting**  
*This was an opportunity for Commuter Connections Subcommittee members to bring up other business and to request agenda items for the next meeting.*

**The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 12 noon.**