

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



COMMUTER OPERATIONS CENTER SUBCOMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

12:00- 2:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

First Floor, Training Center

Chairperson: Shauna Brown, City of Alexandria

Vice-Chairperson: Nicole Huntington, National Institutes of Health

COG Staff Contact: Christopher Arabia, (202) 962-3385

Items addressed and issues discussed were as follows:

1. Introductions (see attached attendance sheet).

2. Minutes of the July 15, 2003 Meeting

The minutes of the July 15, 2003 meeting were approved as written.

3. Selection of Vice Chairperson/Change of Chairperson

Mr. Sightler was given a plaque for recognition of his accomplishments as the outgoing Chairperson. Ms. Brown will serve as Chairperson for the Subcommittee. Ms. Washington and Ms. Huntington were nominated for Vice Chairperson. Mr. Arabia stated that Ms. Washington was already the Vice Chairperson for another Commuter Connections committee. Ms. Huntington was selected to be the Vice Chairperson. Ms. Huntington and Mrs. Washington were not present for the meeting.

4. Update on CCRS System FTP Site and E-Communicator

Mr. Arabia explained and diagramed the FTP process. Mr. Arabia explained that the current process sends the upload from the client's computer to COG's ISP (Internet service provider) server. A computer at COG retrieves the data from the ISP server and finally sends the data to the CCRS server. Mr. Arabia stated that sometimes when the ISP has performed maintenance, the uploads and downloads are blocked. In addition, the data on the ISP server was not being backed up because the ISP would not allow it. Mr. Arabia explained that the new FTP process will send the upload from the client's computer directly to the new FTP server at COG, eliminating the ISP step all together. The data from the FTP server is then transferred to the CCRS server. The data on the FTP server will be backed up daily. The new process will allow COG staff to track the progress of the up and downloads and reduce the risk of data being lost.

COG staff is continuing to conduct site visits to update the CCRS software and set up clients for the FTP process, per the request of the client.

Mr. Balsamo briefed the Subcommittee on the status of updating the CCRS street centerline and transit data files. Mr. Balsamo stated that the transit data for all COG members has been updated. COG's GIS department has received the 2003 Virginia centerline files and is in the process of compiling the files. Once the files are received from the GIS department COG staff will update the files. In the interim, updates were made with the 2001 centerline files.

Ms. Affinito asked if the clients have the ability to change the AppCode after receiving the e-mail notification from COG. Mr. Arabia said that clients are able to change the App Codes.

Ms. Schwartz asked how will the client receive credit for an application received from a fair or promotion. Mr. Arabia said clients should notify COG when having promotions so that he can alert the other clients not to follow up with the new applicants from that company. Mr. Ramfos suggested that clients participating in a promotion or fair manually enter the application to avoid any confusion.

5. Upcoming Fairs and Promotions

Ms. Brown deferred this item until the end of the meeting to ensure there was adequate time for the discussion of membership fees.

Ms. Johnson stated that COG staff participated in the Potomac Yard Transit Fair in Alexandria, Virginia on September 9th. Ms. Johnson stated that the Transit Fair scheduled for September 24th at NIH has been cancelled until further notice. Ms. Johnson said COG staff will attend the Halloween themed, Transportation Management Program Fair held on October 31st near the King Street Metro in Alexandria, Virginia.

Ms. Affinito stated that Loudoun County staff will participate in the Commuters in Motion Day on October 16th to promote public transit. For additional information, clients were encouraged to visit the APTA web site.

Ms. Norris stated that TransIT staff will participate in the Commuters in Motion Day, on October 16th.

Mr. Hill said that Bethesda Transportation Solutions will participate in the Taste of Bethesda event held on October 4th.

Ms. Brown said Alexandria City staff participated in a community National Night Out event held on August 8th.

6. Membership Fee

Mr. Arabia distributed two documents, one showed the breakdown of annual services and associated costs provided to Commuter Connections members, and the other document showed the contributions jurisdictions made to COG. Mr. Ramfos explained that each COG member contribution is calculated according to the jurisdiction’s population. COG members pay a lower fee to be members of Commuter Connections than non-members of COG. Non-members pay a higher fee because they do not make monetary contributions to COG. The contribution made by COG members pay for overhead, administrative support and other COG organizational expenses that all Commuter Connections members benefit from. Mr. Ramfos explained that the current Commuter Connections fee structure has remained the same for more than ten years. In reviewing the current fee structure, COG discovered there is a shortage of funds needed for COG Commuter Connections services. Mr. Ramfos stated that the postage fees and telephone charges will be billed to members for FY04 and beyond.

7. Client Site Status

Mr. Arabia distributed the Client Site Status report showing issues and activities from 7/15/03 through 9/22/03.

	Status	Issues and Activity Since 7/15/03
Alexandria	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 7/31 to install all updates. City has ordered a new computer and will notify COG when new computer is set up with Internet connection. After which, COG will install CCRS software and set up FTP data transfer. On 8/19 there was a problem with a corrupt washcog.apr file. COG e-mailed a new file and the problem was solved.
ARTMA	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/14 to install all updates. Using FTP for Uploads and Downloads. Need to change FTP program files for new FTP site. New rideshare staff person as of 9/16 will need training. ARTMA staff has said (8/28) that they do not think the closest P&R lot and Metrorail station on some matchletters are correct. COG has asked for examples and is waiting for ARTMA to provide this info.
Baltimore City	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/13 to install CCRS software on new computer and return loaner computer. Provided training to new staff person on 8/13. Using FTP for Uploads and Downloads. Need to change FTP program files for new FTP site.
BMC	OK	Needs updated CCRS data and program files. Need to confirm if new installation on rideshare staff’s computer is needed. If so, then FTP will be set up.
Bethesda Transportation	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/11 to install all updates. Problems with auto Up/Downloads, but manuals are working.

Solutions		Changes to the auto times did not produce better results. May be a phone line problem.
Fairfax County	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/6 to install all updates.
Frederick County	OK	Need to reschedule site visit to install CCRS updates and FTP program for new FTP site. Has current TransIT bus data. Using FTP for Uploads and Downloads.
Harford County	Down COG is processing apps.	County staff informed COG on 9/14 that they have received their new computer. Waiting for County staff to set up new computer and set up Internet connections. Then COG will schedule a site visit to install CCRS software and set up FTP data transfer.
Howard County	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/15 to install all updates. On 8/20 there was a problem with the Upload and Download. Tech support from COG through the Help Line revealed that the upload and download files were not on the hard drive. The two files were e-mail to the County and County staff copied the files to the correct file folder then had successful Upload and Download.
LINK	OK	Need to schedule a site visit to install CCRS updates.
Loudoun County	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/1 to install all updates. Also set up FTP data transfer during site visit. Need to change FTP program files to send data to new FTP site.
Montgomery County	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 7/31 to install all updates. Using FTP for Uploads and Downloads. Reported missing some records due to an Upload not reaching the CCRS server. It appears that about once a week an Upload does not make it to the CCRS server. This may be because of problems with the links between COG's Internet service provider's server and COG's FTP computer and server. Therefore, during a site visit on 8/25 the Silver Spring and Countywide computers were set to only perform an auto Upload and no Downloads. This will prevent loss of data until the new FTP server can be fully tested. At that time all clients using FTP will be switched to the new FTP server. COG has programmed the server to create daily backups of all Uploads and keep a log of Uploads and Downloads for each client.
Montgomery County – Rockville	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 7/31 to install all updates. Using FTP for Uploads and Downloads. No problems have been reported.
Montgomery County – Silver Spring	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 7/31 to install all updates. Using FTP for Uploads and Downloads. After the County reported missing some records, COG made a site visit on 8/8 to check Upload/Download functions to track an Upload. They Upload worked and

		no data was lost, however, it appears that about once a week an Upload does not make it to the CCRS server. This may be because of problems with the links between COG's Internet service provider's server and COG's FTP computer and server. Therefore, during a site visit on 8/25 the Silver Spring and Countywide computers were set to only perform an auto Upload and no Downloads. The Upload on the Silver Spring computer is going to the FTP server for testing of the server. This will prevent loss of data until the new FTP server can be fully tested. At that time all clients using FTP will be switched to the new FTP server. COG has programmed the server to create daily backups of all Uploads and keep a log of Uploads and Downloads for each client. On 8/14 County staff reported the Batch Print function is not working. COG confirmed this problem and has added it to its long-term programming.
MTA	OK	COG is processing MTA applications. Need to set up a site visit to install updated CCRS files.
NIH	OK	Need to set up site visit to install updated CCRS files.
North Bethesda TMD/TAP	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/14 to install all updates. Also, cleaned up some space on their C drive which is nearly maxed out.
Northern Shenandoah Valley	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/21 to install all updates. Valley staff was able to get their modem working again on 8/18. The initial problem may have been a phone line problem.
Northern Neck PDC	OK	Need to provide updated CCRS files and FTP files to FTP to the new FTP server.
Pentagon/DOD	Down	Waiting for Pentagon staff to give COG the OK to install software and set up for FTP or modem. COG has not received a response to voice mail and e-mail requesting a status update.
Prince George's County	OK	Need to set up site visit to install updated CCRS files.
PRTC-1	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/6 to install all updates. Using FTP for Uploads and Downloads.
PRTC-2	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 8/6 to install all updates. Using FTP for Uploads and Downloads.
RADCO	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 7/22 to install all updates on new computer, modify local matchletter to print on new letterhead, set up FTP data transfer, and provided training to staff on how to manually Upload and Download. They do manual FTP transfers because they turn their computer off in the evening.
Rappahannock-	OK	Has all current CCRS data and program versions. Site visit on 7/29 to install

Rapidan PDC		all updates, set up Internet connection, modify local matchletter, and set up FTP data transfer.
Tri-County Council	OK	Need to schedule update of CCRS files.
US DOE	Down	DOE needs to get modem line or Internet connection. DOE office was remodeled and COG is waiting to set up a site visit when modem line is installed. Needs updated CCRS files. COG has not received a response to voice mail and e-mail requesting a status update.

8. Other Business/Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Mr. Arabia implored meeting attendees to come up with agenda topics. He explained that he only occasionally receives agenda topics from committee members. He further explained that the meeting should be about what the committee members want to discuss. The attendees did not suggest any agenda topics for the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Commuter Operations Center Subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 18, 2003 at 12:00 p.m.