



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 16, 2017

12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

Third Floor, COG Board Room

Chairperson: Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT

Vice Chairperson: Janiece Timmons, WMATA

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 21, 2017 Meeting

Approval was sought for the March 21, 2017 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

A motion was sought by Subcommittee Chair Fatemeh Allahdoust to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

A motion was made by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County and seconded by Kelly Woodward, DATA.

The Subcommittee unanimously approved the previous meeting's minutes.

Item #3 2016 Bike to Work Day TERM Analysis Draft Report

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the substantive changes made to the draft 2016 Bike to Work Day TERM Analysis Report. Highlights from the draft report were presented to the Bike to Work Day Steering Committee on March 8, 2017 and to the Subcommittee on January 17th. The draft report was presented to the Subcommittee on March 21st with a comment period of April 14th. The Subcommittee was asked to endorse the final draft report for release.

Nicholas Ramfos began by reminding Subcommittee members that results from the 2016 Bike to Work Day TERM Analysis Draft Report were presented in January and March where an April 14th comment period was established. Comments were received and edits were made to the draft report. Mr. Ramfos then reviewed the substantive edits including in the introduction section where the survey methodology was clarified with language added regarding the original mailing where there were 17,045 emails delivered with 265 that were undeliverable which factored into the percent completed response rate. In Section 2 of the draft report, information was added that came out of a question asked during a presentation given to the TPB Technical Committee regarding Bike to Work Day. The question asked about whether there were home and work zip

codes for Bike to Work Day participants. Mr. Ramfos stated that the information is collected but has never been included in the report in the past so it was added to show top home and work zip codes. There was also a separate section added to compare numbers based on efforts to increase outreach to female and minority populations. Sex, race, and ethnicity comparison language was added from the 2013 survey.

Mr. Ramfos stated there were minor grammatical changes made to clarify language in the narrative as it related to figures and tables. For example, in one section below figure 11 regarding new and increased biking during the summer after Bike to Work Day, language was added about the 6% that didn't bike to work and still did not bike to work after the event so that it would correlate better with Figure 11.

He concluded in noting that this report including some of its results will be used as part of the Mass Marketing TERM analysis and requested that the document be endorsed for the release.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT requested a motion from the Subcommittee to endorse the 2016 Bike to Work Day TERM Analysis Report for release to which Kari Snyder, DOT made the motion which was seconded by Tracy McPhail, N. Bethesda TMD.

The Subcommittee voted unanimously to endorse the 2016 Bike to Work Day TERM Analysis Draft Report.

Mr. Ramfos followed up in noting that the document will be posted to the publications page of the commuterconnections.org website and that Subcommittee members would be notified once the report was available for downloading and review.

Item #4 Commuter Connections Flextime Incentive

Steven Osborn, COG/TPB staff, presented the preliminary findings from a Flextime Incentive White Paper. A comment period was established for June 15th.

Steven Osborn began by providing an introductory summary of the core concepts of the incentive program to be presented. He noted that this financial incentive program for commuters in the Washington metro area will encourage the use of their available flexible work schedule to avoid congestion along corridors during a major incident occurring during the peak period. Also, this program will reward commuters and reinforce the importance of mitigating traffic during the peak period.

Mr. Osborn then began an overview of the main contents of the draft white paper. This includes a literature review consisting of 3 scholarly works and data from the Commuter Connections 2016 SOC survey. Mr. Osborn then explained that additional relevant literature may be reviewed if discovered. The literary review will be followed by an explanation of the "corridors of interest," levels of service along selected corridors, and program implementation. This review was performed to learn and understand best practices, financial implications and positive impacts of flextime on corridors and commuters.

The first publication reviewed is titled "Rewarding for Avoiding the Peak Period: A Synthesis of Three Studies in the Netherlands." Mr. Osborn then explained the author's key findings from the

first experiment including that 35% of the participants were willing to flex their time given a relatively modest reward.

The second study presented took place on the Netherlands' Hollandse Bridge and had a clear goal in mind: avoidance of a significant increased level of congestion during a year-long construction project. Mr. Osborn then presented the author's key findings from the second experiment that the largest change made was attributed to commuters using flextime. Commuters flexing their time made up a total of 2.6% of the total traffic flow.

The third study presented took place on Netherlands' Moerdijk Bridge and had a similar goal in mind: to avoid a significant increase in traffic congestion due to roadwork. Mr. Osborn then presented the author's key findings from the third experiment that the total number of bridge passengers decreased by about 920 vehicles per evening peak, or, 4.6% of the total traffic flow along the bridge.

Mr. Osborn then began to review the second publication included in the draft white paper's literature review. This publication also studied the use of incentives to increase the willingness of commuters to travel outside of the peak period. This program occurred at Stanford University. Stanford first designed and implemented their incentive program, called CAPRI (Congestion and Parking Relief Incentives), in 2012. A total of 3,082 individuals registered to participate in the program. The study lasted for approximately two and a half years. Mr. Osborn then explained the enrollment and reward structure, followed by the summary of the main findings. Compared to the general Stanford population, CAPRI participants were 21.2% less likely to commute during the morning peak hours of 8-9 a.m., and 13.1% less likely to commute during the evening peak hours of 5-6 p.m.

Mr. Osborn then briefed the Subcommittee on the third piece of literature reviewed. It is titled "Behavioral Economics and Psychology of Incentives." The main finding was that incentives can be structured with less money and fewer options for optimal results. Mr. Osborn then reviewed findings from the Commuter Connections 2016 State of the Commute survey. Key findings included that 50% of commuters use flextime they have available, 13% have flextime available but do not use it, and 37% do not have flextime available. He then presented the flexibility of working commuters by jurisdiction.

Mr. Osborn then highlighted a specific question asked in the State of the Commute Survey, "If you could receive \$3 per day for each day that you arrive at work before 7:00 am or at 10:00 am or later, how likely would you be to make this change in your work schedule?" Likelihood of work jurisdictions to use their flextime when commuting workers are offered a small reward results for each jurisdiction were then reviewed.

Mr. Osborn then discussed the corridors of interest selected for a potential flextime pilot program to be implemented. Criteria for selecting corridors were based on State of the Commute Report data and the top-10 traffic bottlenecks in the region which are published as part of COG/TPB's 2016 "Congestion Management Process Technical Report." Mr. Osborn then explained how the top-10 traffic bottleneck rankings are determined.

Four of the region's top-10 bottlenecked segments have been recommended for a Flextime Incentive pilot program:

- I-270 spur down past the American Legion Bridge – Inner Loop

- Along the Beltway between I-95 and MD-193 – Outer Loop
- I-66 EB at VA 267
- D.C. 295 SB at Benning Rd.

Mr. Osborn then followed the recommended corridor selection by describing the levels of service on each of the corridors that have been examined. He showed slides consisting of images extracted from COG/TPB's "Traffic Quality on the Metropolitan Washington Area Freeway Systems" report published in 2014. It was determined that these segments typically suffer from high traffic densities that impede daily normal traffic flow.

Mr. Osborn stated that the selected corridors of interest are not the only possible ones in which to implement a flextime incentive program and that the corridors selected were purposely chosen if a pilot program is initially launched.

Mr. Osborn then outlined some of the concerns regarding verifying the authenticity of a commuter's flexible schedule. Strategies can include mobile location services and self-reporting. In lieu of self-verification, supervisor verification may be required. There will be measures in place to prevent participants from circumventing program rules. Mr. Osborn concluded by recommending that the pilot program be implemented and that if successful it could be expanded to other corridors and permanently implemented. Underrun funds from the FY2017 CCWP could be used to launch the pilot program as part of the FY2018 CCWP.

Mark Sofman, Montgomery County asked what Stanford gained from their financial investment of \$211,000? Mr. Osborn noted that the investment helped reduce congestion in their area.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT asked whether the Stanford pilot led to support from government agencies to continue the program. Mr. Osborn noted that the project ended after a 2-year life span.

Mr. Sofman asked if this were to be implemented in the DC Region will this yield significant enough data that it would affect the TERM analysis? Nicholas Ramfos, COG TPB staff replied that it would produce measurable data that would support transportation impacts from the TERM.

Ms. Allahdoust asked if the Stanford project made a dent in overall congestion. Mr. Osborn stated that it had a long-lasting effect where it was determined that a significant percent of participating commuters were likely to change their commuting behavior.

Mr. Sofman asked what would be measured, how would it be measured, will it be detectable and will there be a return on the investment? Mr. Osborn replied that the number of participants in the program, when they began and ended their commute and how long it took participants to arrive at their respective employment locations would be measured.

Mr. Ramfos noted that the program is designed to be more of a congestion management than an air quality aid, although there could also be air quality benefits. For example, less congestion means fewer idling cars and less emissions. He noted that the bigger benefit is diverting peak period traffic. He shared that there may be a segment of the population that a flextime incentive would appeal to and that the purpose of the pilot is to gauge the effectiveness of such a program and that it could lead to changes in commuting behavior.

Ms. Allahdoust reference the Stanford project which contained nearly 3,000 registrants and based on her math came at a cost of nearly \$70 per person and asked if this cost would make a dent in congestion. Mr. Ramfos replied noting the visit to the region by the Pope and that a vast number of commuters either diverted their commute or did not commute at all which made it easier for those who were commuting to get to work on that day. If commuters travel later, it will allow for a faster travel rate than typical. Flextime is a TDM measure and that it can appeal to a wide audience.

Finally, Ms. Allahdoust asked if the 44% demographic who have Flextime available but do not use it will be the target audience for the pilot. Mr. Osborn replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Osborn stated that a comment period of June 15th would be established for the report. All comments should be forward to docomments@mwkog.org by 5 p.m. on the 15th.

Item #5 2017 Bike to Work Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2017 Bike to Work Day event to be held on Friday, May 19th.

Mr. Franklin began by sharing that the event will be held the upcoming Friday and the weather report appeared favorable for the event, however during the afternoon there may be scattered thunderstorms, but hopefully this will not discourage evening participation. He then displayed the event T-shirt.

14,800 participants had registered online for the event with an overall goal of 18,600 being a 6% increase from the previous year's participation level. At the time of his report registration levels were at 80% of the goal.

Mr. Franklin continued in sharing a photo of the Bike to Work Day Proclamation which included TPB Chair Bridget Newton, Nick Ramfos/MWCOG TPB Staff, Kelly Russel Alderman from the City of Frederick and Michele Cleveland from WABA noting in addition that this year was the first time that Commuter Connections provided a live stream of the proclamation signing on Facebook.

He also shared that like last year, outreach efforts are being more significantly focused on women and racial minority groups noting that from the 2016 participation survey 36% of participants were female and that only 10% identified as a member of a minority population. Based on this, there has been outreach to diverse community groups to spread the word about registering for the event.

Mr. Franklin continued in sharing that there are currently 22 Convoys that will be active on the day of the event all of which are listed on the event website. Additional marketing activity includes Bike to Work Day banners throughout the region, a press release listing elected officials and other dignitaries in attendance, and boosted posts and paid media on Facebook and Twitter. Also, for the first time Snapchat will be used as part of social media outreach. 10 'geofilters' will be available at the time of the event from the top ten pit stop in the region with 500 or more registrants.

After Bike to Work Day raffle prizes including bicycles and \$2,000 worth of California Tortilla Gift Cards will be distributed. The Employer Challenge luncheon for top employers in the region; those having had the most employees participate in the event will also take place.

Mr. Franklin then played the 60 second radio ad which began running May 1st and will be on a series of radio stations. He noted that there was an emphasis placed on the community support aspect of the event based on data derived from BTWD 2016 survey where participants were asked what they enjoyed most. Results included the overall spirit of the event, comradery and community support. He then displayed a banner example and shared a visual example of the snapchat filter. Finally, Mr. Franklin noted that the Bike to Work Day Steering Committee will return in 4 months to beginning planning for the 2018 event.

Item #6 Clean Air Partners Update

Janiece Timmons, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on upcoming Clean Air Partners Activities.

Janiece Timmons, WMATA began by drawing the Subcommittees' attention to the printed materials provided associated with the item including the group's activity report where she began to highlight specific activities including that Clean Air Partners is undergoing community and business outreach participating in local events such as the B' More healthy expo which garnered over 20,000 attendees, in addition to the Montgomery County Green Fest which hosted over 800 attendees and noted that Clean Air Partners will also be represented during Bike to Work Day 2017.

Regarding marketing and public relations Ms. Timmons noted that they recently held Air Quality Awareness week which took place from May 1st – 5th which also included World Asthma Day. There was social media outreach on Facebook and Twitter for these events including 4 air quality ads regarding air quality codes which were mainly focused on actions to be taken within the different air quality categories including conserving energy, taking public transit and lessening carbon footprints. She shared that a primary goal of the campaign was to get people to download the air quality mobile application in order to stay informed about air quality in the region.

Regarding curriculum and outreach Ms. Timmons shared that Clean Air Partners in partnership with schools throughout the region recently awarded 18 special awards for the best science fair projects in the region in the category of air quality and climate change. Winners will be recognized at an annual anniversary event. Additionally, there was the 9th annual poster contest where winners will be highlighted at the event as well.

Clean Air Partners will be celebrating their 20th anniversary at Pepco Edison Place gallery. They will be using the event to highlight and celebrate organizations and students who have demonstrated exemplary efforts towards improving the quality of air in the region. Finally, she shared that Clean Air Partners recently announced their four new 2017 board members.

Item #7 2017 Car Free Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2017 regional Car Free Day event.

Mr. Franklin began by stating that Car Free Day will be held on Sept. 22nd 2017 and that the website address for the event is carfreemetrodc.org. He described Car Free Day as an international event and that here in Washington DC participants are encouraged to use transportation alternatives to the single occupant vehicle including Carpools/van pools. For the event, residents are encouraged to visit the website and take the pledge to go car-free or car-lite. Emission impacts can be calculated from the pledges. He noted that a long-standing objective of Car Free Day is to host "Open Streets" events and the group is still working on accomplishing this goal.

Mr. Franklin added that the main marketing materials will include social media, radio, the event poster and the website. He recalled that last year there was event growth which he attributed to a strong social media presence. He shared that there were 4,500 pledges taken last year which was a 30% increase over the previous year and that each state in the metro region generated 1,300 pledges or more.

In 2016 the number 1 method of transportation on that day was bike at 26%, followed by rail at 23%, bus at 18%, walk at 14% and telework and pooling tied at 8%.

He mentioned that if Subcommittee members were not already part of the Car Free Day Steering Committee he encouraged participation and noted that the next meeting will be held on July 12th at 10am and that the Steering Committee chair is Tracy McPhail of North Bethesda.

He noted that at the previous meeting there were guest presenters including Open Streets DC which is a local citizens' initiative and Toole Design company who presented a similar concept that can be considered as a modified open streets event where vehicular traffic coexists with the open streets. He noted that most open streets events throughout the country occur during the weekend which may be more accommodating to local government leaders. He agreed that the nation's capital faces unique challenges from a security standpoint but there remains strong interest in the event as it becomes more popular and that the bigger the initiative grows the more recognized it will become and thus perhaps there will be more support from public leadership in supporting the event.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, shared that in Virginia the "Try Transit Week" will be taking place concurrently with Car Free Day and that given that the events are taking place simultaneously that it is great to have mutual synergy in collaboration, marketing and support.

Item #8 FY2017 Regional TDM Evaluation Project Update

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed The Subcommittee on the status of data collection activities related to the regional TDM Evaluation project.

Mr. Ramfos began by describing the structure of the 2015 – 2017 TERM analysis report which is a compilation of all Commuter Connections TERM data collected over the past 3 fiscal years including the earlier discussed 2016 Bike to Work Day TERM Survey data report. There will be a draft of the report presented at the July Subcommittee meeting and will encompass all the

TERMs including the Operations Center, the Guaranteed Ride Home program, Employer Outreach, Telework and Mass Marketing TERMs with preliminary transportation and emissions impacts. The draft report will only contain data through December of 2016 and the remaining data between January and June of this year will be collected and analyzed after June 30th. An updated report would then be presented to the Subcommittee in September. Both draft reports will be provided a comment period with the goal of a final report that would be presented to the Subcommittee in November for an endorsement for release.

Mr. Ramfos explained that COG/TPB staff will be collecting data on 'Pool Rewards participants through a survey that will be distributed next month. Also, the telework survey for employers in MD has been completed, however there will be no report published regarding this data but results will be incorporated along with survey data from VA's Telework! VA program.

Additional data collection activities include the State of the Commute survey. A public report is currently being produced through a design firm and a technical editor has been hired to review the current draft. "Pull out" sections, which are smaller subsets of data and information from the report provide an 'at a glance' view of attitudes towards transportation or telework for example will also be produced. The 2016 SOC general public report and pull-out sections will be available sometime over the summer.

Mr. Ramfos concluded in noting that the current data collection period is winding down and a new three-year data collection period will begin on July 1st. He then extended an invitation to Subcommittee members to consider participating in the TDM Evaluation Group if not already members as the group will be meeting in the fall to review activities associated with the next data collection cycle.

Item #9 3rd Quarter CCWP Progress Report

Travis Johnston, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY2017 3rd Quarter Progress Report. Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, addressed the 3rd Quarter CCWP Budget report.

Mr. Johnston began by highlighting a few portions of the report. Specifically, on page 2 where there is a summary of SafeTrack efforts and the different messaging that has been sent out on the subject. Also, on pages 3 and 4 where enhancements to the TDM system and both mobile apps are discussed including significant improvements that have been made. Mr. Johnston shared that Bike to Work Day and the Employer Recognition awards are upcoming events which are also summarized. The TERM analysis activities are outlined on page 10. He concluded in drawing the Subcommittees' attention to Table 1 on page 15 where it is illustrated that Rideshare applications are slightly down, but there was a slight increase in Guaranteed Ride Home program applications for the quarter. Finally, he pointed out where individual jurisdiction's data sets can be found. He then opened the floor for questions.

Ms. Brennan shared that the spending rate for the 3rd quarter budget for the Commuter Connections Program was running at 58% which is slightly under the 3rd qtr. amount however during the last quarter there is a general expectation for an influx in remaining consultant invoices and other activities that will wind down the fiscal year. She continued in sharing that Commuter Operations is running at 67%, Guaranteed Ride Home at 52%, marketing at 62%,

Monitoring and Evaluation at 66%, Employer Outreach at 40% and Guaranteed Ride Home Baltimore is at 48%. She then opened the floor for questions.

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.

During this portion of the meeting Janiece Timmons/Wmata noted that Metro's procurement office will be holding a "Back to Business" fair on June 20th at the Washington DC Convention Center. She shared 4 x 9 cards for Subcommittee members to distribute and share with their respective jurisdictions. She also shared patriotic themed sunglasses with group members in recognition the July 4th holiday.

Fatemeh Allahdoust/VDOT reminded Subcommittee members of upcoming events and committee meetings and also reminded group members about the comment period of June 15th for the Flextime Incentive White Paper.

The meeting was subsequently adjourned.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, July 18, 2017 at 12 noon.