

**Commuter Connections Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, March 20, 2012

Chairperson: Lorraine Taylor, (WMATA) Washington D.C.

Vice Chairperson: Sam Oji, Montgomery County

Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos (202) 962-3313

Item #1 Introductions

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

Lorraine Taylor, called the meeting to order by introducing herself and asking the rest of the attendees to do so.

Item #2 January 17, 2012

Approval was sought for the January 17, 2012 Commuter Connections Meeting Minutes.

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the meeting as written.

Item #3 FY 2011 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the substantive changes made to the FY 11 GRH Report.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY 11 GRH Customer Satisfaction Survey Report. The FY 2011 Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey Report was originally presented to the Regional TDM Marketing Group in December and the Commuter Connections Subcommittee in January. An open comment period until February 14th was held. Of the 3,465 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2011, 667 or 19% surveys were completed. The vast majority (96%) of the survey respondents were pleased with the overall GRH service. Written responses were provided by more than two-thirds (69%) of the survey respondents, the majority of which (79%) were complimentary. Compliments outnumbered criticisms by 9 to 1. Good or above ratings were given by at least 94% of the respondents for each category. Average response wait was 13 minutes, and 94% waited 30 minutes or less. The Subcommittee endorsed the report for release.

Item #4 FY 2012 Placement Rate Study

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, presented the FY 2012 draft Placement Rate Study Report.

Ms. Diggins presented the results from the draft FY 2012 Placement Rate Study report. The triennial applicant survey was conducted beginning in November 2011 and concluded in December 2011. A random sample of 892 commuters who received services from Commuter

Connections during July through September 2011 were surveyed. The survey collects data for the Commuter Connections TERM evaluation and also helps identify possible program service improvements. There were 775 completed internet interviews (10% response) and 65 telephone completed interviews (31% response) and 52 completed the telephone follow up interviews (26% response) with a total of 892 interviews from 8,831 applicants resulting in a 10.1% response rate.

Ms. Diggins reported that more than half of the applicants surveyed had made a change in their commute travel since receiving assistance. 38% of respondents who made a change drove alone before making the change. The total continued and temporary change was 40.5% compared to 37.7% in 2008. Cost, time, and circumstances were the primary motivations for making these changes, but four in ten said a Commuter Connections service assisted or influenced their change. Sixty-four percent stated that economic factors were more important than other reasons or the main reason that they made a change. Word of mouth referrals remain the primary way that commuters learn about Commuter Connections. More respondents received transit information from Commuter Connections than ridematching information. This could have been due to the change in the transit benefit in 2010 and 2011. A large share of commuters who receive information from Commuter Connections followed-through and used the information. The use of GRH, Telework, and bicycling information for 2011 includes; 96% registered for the GRH program, 55% used information they received from Commuter Connections on Telework to talk further to their employer, 18% used the information they received to start/increase Telework, 16% started biking to work, 11% started to bike to work more often and 10% biked more for non-work trips. A comment period for the draft report was established for April 10th. The draft document will be posted to the SharePoint site for review and comment.

Item #5 Congestion Management Process

Erin Morrow, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Congestion Management Process Update.

Ms. Morrow briefed the Subcommittee on the CMP Update Memo included in the handouts. She informed the Subcommittee that work is underway to update the region's Congestion Management Process Technical Report for 2012. The memo requests that Subcommittee members or the most appropriate person at their agency/organization review the table of local TDM strategies from the 2010 report and contact Ms. Morrow with any changes and/or updates that should be made for the 2012 report update. Any comments from Subcommittee members are requested by March 30th. Ms. Morrow informed the Subcommittee that a version of the memo was distributed to both the MOITS Subcommittee as well as select members of the Regional Bus Subcommittee.

A question was asked about the deadline for updates/changes to the table. Ms. Morrow responded that any feedback is requested by March 31st, but if additional time is needed, to contact her and let her know to that comments will be forthcoming. A question was asked about whether all TDM programs from an agency had to be listed. Ms. Morrow responded by saying that the list in the report is intended to be representative of the TDM programs in the region. Comments and updates could be sent directly to Ms. Morrow or to docomments@mwkog.org by the 30th.

Item #6 VDRPT Super NoVa Study

Christopher Arabia VDRPT staff, briefed the Subcommittee on Virginia's Super Nova Study.

Mr. Arabia briefed the Subcommittee on the Super Nova Transit & TDM Vision Plan which VDRPT is undertaking. The idea of this study is to create a regional transit & TDM vision that identifies mobility and enhancements for the Super Nova Region. The study will review the choices of transportation for the entire region. Northern Virginia is the most congested region in Virginia and is affected by travel from two states (WV and MD) and the District of Columbia. Many people traveling into and through the region have commutes as long as 100 miles in each direction. The regional needs include: mobility, transportation choice, access to regional destinations, as well as contiguous transit services, transportation demand management, and land use/transportation planning coordination. The vision for Super NoVa Transit/TDM Plan will identify safe, strategic, and seamless mobility options for rail, transit, and TDM that will be guided by sustained and informed involvement respecting the diverse communities within the greater Northern Virginia region called Super NoVa. There have been some public participation meetings to date and more will follow.

Item #7 'Pool Rewards Update

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 'Pool Rewards Project.

Mr. Ramfos discussed the expansion of the 'Pool Rewards rideshare incentive program to include vanpools. Commuter Connections is moving forward with launching the vanpool component for the 'Pool Rewards incentive program. Two proposals from vanpool provider firms were received as part of COG/TPB's procurement process. These firms will be providing the vanpool service for the project. Vans that are participating in this project will need to originate in either DC, MD, WV, or PA and their destination can be anywhere in DC, MD or Northern VA. Mr. Ramfos stated that COG/TPB staff is currently working on the design and production of 'Pool Rewards marketing materials which will be available in early April. COG/TPB has also been officially certified by FTA for National Transit Database (NTD) reporting of the vanpool miles that will be part of the project. A soft launch of the project will occur over the next few weeks and then a more formal launch will occur in late May to early June.

Item #8 2012 Bike to Work Day Event

Douglas Franklin COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the Regional BTWD Event for May 18th.

Mr. Franklin briefed the Subcommittee about the Bike to Work Day event on Friday, May 18th. He stated that registration is currently open. Last year 11,000 event participants registered and the Bike to Work Day Steering Committee approved an increase to 12,500 registrants for 2012, which is a 13.5% increase. Commuter Connections held a successful sponsorship drive that began in October 2011. In addition to cash donations, there are in-kind raffle prizes, including five bicycles. Cash donations will pay for the event T-Shirts and vinyl banners will be purchased for 56 pit stops.

Mr. Franklin reported that the new web site was launched last week at www.biketoworkmetrodc.org; which is the major change for 2012. COG/TPB staff is now managing the event web site. Previous to this year, the BTWD web pages were within the WABA web site; this year the web site is a dedicated one with its own unique URL. The new web site will be handled similarly to the way the Car Free Day web site is managed. The web site masthead reflects this year's marketing materials so everything has the same "look and feel." Pit stops may also send logos of local sponsors to COG/TPB staff to allow posting them onto the corresponding pit stop pages.

A PDF of the Bike to Work Day poster can be found on the web site, in both English and Spanish. The hard copies are at the printer and will be delivered this week. Commuter Connections conducted a mailing to 6,000 employers in the Washington area on the event. The mailing included BTWD poster and a cover letter with tips on how to hold a Bike to Work Day event at the worksite. The radio ad will be recorded next week and air starting late April.

Item #9 Rising Gasoline Price Discussion

Nicholas Ramfos COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the recent statistics from Commuter Connections as they relate to higher gasoline prices.

Mr. Ramfos briefed the Subcommittee on the daily commuter transportation decisions in Washington metropolitan region are being influenced by the price of gasoline. Cog/TPB staff compared the gasoline prices from 2010 to 2011. In 2011, Commuter Connections experienced a 20 percent increase in the number of car and van-pool applications over those submitted in 2010. The average price of gasoline in 2011 was 27% higher than in 2010 and may be heading to even higher levels this year. The spike in the price of fuel prompts considerable interest in transportation alternatives. Commuter Connections can provide commuters with options that reduce the impact of high fuel prices and changing travel behavior for a commuter just one day per week can cut commuting costs by 20%.

Item #10 FY 2013 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) Development

Nicholas Ramfos COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY 2013 CCWP.

Mr. Ramfos informed the Subcommittee about the FY 2013 CCWP. He announced that he would be presenting the final draft to the Transportation Planning Board on March 21st for their approval. The document was presented to the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee and received great feedback.

Item #11 2nd Quarter CCWP Progress Report

Barbara Brennan COG/DTP staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2nd Quarter CCWP Progress Report.

A copy of the 2nd Quarter Commuter Connections Progress Report for FY12 was distributed to the Subcommittee. Ms. Brennan reviewed the quarterly report (October, 2011 – December, 2011) and went over the narrative and selected the charts from the report. She asked if there were any questions or comments.

Item #12 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Subcommittee members are encouraged to contact Nicholas Ramfos with any particular agenda items they may be interested in seeing on the next agenda.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, May 15, 2012 at 12 noon.