



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, September 15, 2020  
12 noon – 2:00 p.m.**

**VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING**

**Chairperson: Marcus Moore, Fairfax County  
Vice Chairperson: Marina Budimir, DDOT  
Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos 202/962-3313**

**Item #1 Introductions**

*The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves based on their jurisdictional location in order to be marked as present on the attendance sheet.*

**Item #2 Minutes of July 21, 2020 Meeting**

*Approval was sought for the July 21, 2020 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 George Clark, TCCSMD, and seconded by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the July 21, 2020 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

**Item #3 Announcement of New Vice Chair**

*Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, Virginia, announced the selection of the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson. The Subcommittee was asked to approve the nomination.*

Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, Virginia, announced the selection of the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson based on a meeting held by the Commuter Connections Vice Chair Nominating Committee on August 24th. The nominee selected by the Nominating Committee for Vice Chair was Kari Snyder, MDOT. The Subcommittee was asked to approve the nomination. Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, motioned to approve the nomination. Judy Galen, Loudoun County, seconded the motion to approve the nomination. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, explained that the Vice Chair of the Subcommittee is also on the board for the Clean Air Partners initiative, and since Ms. Snyder is already a member of the Clean Air Partners board, Marina Budimir will be extending her membership as a board member for the next year.

**Item #4 Change of Chairs**

Marina Budimir, DDOT, who was not able to attend today's Subcommittee meeting, assumed chairmanship from Marcus Moore, Fairfax County. Kari Snyder, MDOT, presented a plaque in gratitude to Mr. Moore for his service as Chairperson from September 2019 to September 2020. The Subcommittee collectively thanked Mr. Moore for his contributions over the past year.

**Item #5 FY2018 – FY2020 Regional TDM Evaluation Analysis Draft Report**

*Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, reviewed the updates and analysis made to the draft Regional TDM Evaluation Analysis Report.*

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, reviewed the updates and analysis made to the draft FY2018 – FY2020 Regional TDM Evaluation Analysis Report. Ms. Diggins gave an overview of the objective of the evaluation and changes to the interim report. Changes to the report included revised results to add Commuter Connections activity (GRH, Employer Outreach, Mass Marketing, COC, software upgrades, etc.) during January-June 2020. Also, data was obtained from DRPT and updated survey results were provided from Telework!VA. Updated societal benefits cost savings calculations were also added to the report. Ms. Diggins continued with the overall TDM program impacts and goals that are reviewed and established by the Commuter Connections work program every three years. The VT (trips reduced) goal was missed by 5% and the Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) goal was essentially met. A shortfall in the emission goals was due to lower emission factors for 2020. The four TDM programs collectively met both the VT goal and the VMT goal. It was concluded that the coronavirus pandemic had a slight impact on achievement of goals for some program elements but was likely not a major factor; however, the next evaluation will likely show more of an impact from the pandemic.

Ms. Diggins continued with more TDM analysis observations, including how Maryland Telework, Telework!VA, and Mass Marketing either met or greatly exceeded their VT and VMT goals. GRH and the Commuter Operations Center both missed their VT and VMT goals, while Employer Outreach slightly missed its VT goal and met its VMT goal. Shortfalls in individual program elements were generally related to lower than expected participation and to reallocation of some credits to other program elements. Vehicle trips have dropped from 2017 to 2020, which could partially be due to the deletion of non-active employers and participants. TDM elements offer societal benefits such as congestion mitigation, climate change mitigation, and improved health/safety. The 2020 TDM analysis estimated regional cost savings for societal benefits; including air pollution/emissions reduction, reduction in fuel consumption, noise pollution reduction, as well as the benefits previously mentioned. Societal benefit cost savings are estimated to be \$702,011 per day. The hours of delay reduced for commuters is about 5,396 hours per day with around 150,540 gallons of fuel saved per day.

Ms. Diggins explained that Maryland Telework assistance impacts exceeded participation, vehicle trip, and VMT goals. Telework continues to grow in the region and Commuter Connections/COG continues to be a source of telework information. The impacts represent only the contribution of Commuter Connections to regional telework, which is about 5% of regional trips reduced. The impacts do not reflect increased telework during the pandemic. Telework!VA assistance impacts also exceeded participation, vehicle trip, and VMT goals. There were 15 active employers participating in the program during the evaluation period with an estimated 10,000 or more employees. About 19.1% of employees at Telework!VA sites started or increased telework during the evaluation period. GRH impacts were updated with January to June 2020 activity. GRH ads did have an impact with 31% of new GRH applicants saying they were influenced by ads to apply for the program. GRH fell short of participation, vehicle trips, and VMT goals. The declining trend in GRH participation is likely partly due to the pandemic but can also be related to lower regional awareness of the program.

Ms. Diggins stated that Employer Outreach impacts were calculated for employers that were maintained in database from July 2017 – June 2020. The analysis included employers with new/expanded programs. Employer records deleted prior to July 2017 were removed from the impact calculation. Employer Outreach met its VMT goal and slightly missed its participation and VT goals by 3%. 19% of total employers were either new or within expanded programs which accounted for 13% of its VMT impacts. Impacts do not reflect increased telework activity during the pandemic. Mass Marketing greatly exceeded goals for participation, VT, and VMT reduced. Mode shifts from Mass Marketing ads were two times the rate of 2017 and received a larger share of GRH than in 2017. The Commuter Operations Center has three components: Basic Services, Integrated Rideshare-Software Upgrades, and Non-Maryland Telework Assistance. 75,651 commuters were assisted by the COC between July 2017 and June 2020. The number of assisted commuters may have been higher without the effects of the pandemic. 43% of COC apps recalled receiving transit, Park & Ride, Telework, or bike information. 6.2% of non-MD teleworkers (about 34,000) regionwide cited Commuter Connections/COG as telework information source. The COC did not meet goals largely because the non-Maryland telework component was much lower than in 2017.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, mentioned that the comment period for the draft report will end on October 20, 2020. A follow-up message will be sent to the Subcommittee and the document will be posted onto Sharepoint for review and responses.

**Item #6**                    **2020 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Technical Report**  
*Andrew Meese, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2020 CMP Technical Report.*

Andrew Meese, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2020 CMP Technical Report. The Congestion Management Process (CMP) is a requirement in metropolitan transportation planning. The official CMP component is wholly integrated into the overall long-range transportation plan called Visualize 2045. The CMP Technical Report is a supporting document developed biennially since 2008. Commuter Connections' demand management programs are a centerpiece of the CMP and its compliance with federal regulations. All information in the report is pre-pandemic (through 2019). The TPB Technical Committee accepted the report as final at their July 10, 2020 meeting. Chapter 2 of the report discussed the state of congestion in the region as well as travel trends, congestion on highways and transit systems, a national comparison of the Washington Region's Congestion, and performance analysis of Visualize 2045. Chapter 3 reviewed consideration and implementation of demand management strategies as well as operational management and integrative/multi-modal strategies. Chapter 3 also documented the wide range of Commuter Connections programs including surveys, telework, employer outreach, incenTrip, CFD and BTWD.

Mr. Meese discussed key findings from the report including congestion and reliability analyses remaining similar to past reports. Travel demand management continues its importance while walking and bike utilization continue to grow. The Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) and real-time information availability also continue its importance as well. Recommendations from the report include continuity of the Commuter Connections program as well as MATOC, consideration of a congestion management plan, coordination of performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) and CMP, and encouraging integration of operations and travel demand components of congestion management. Other recommendations include pursuit of sufficient investment in the existing transportation system, encouraging congestion management for major construction projects, access to non-auto modes of travel, safe public engagement through mobile/social media, and Traffic Incident Management (TIM).

Mr. Meese continued with the peak period congestion and travel time index. Peak period congestion decreased between 2010 and 2012 but has moderately increased recently. Travel time index (TTI) decreased by 8.5% between 2010 and 2013 and increased by 3.9% between 2013 and 2019. Interstates remained the most congested highways followed by Transit-Significant roads. Peak period travel time reliability improved between 2010 and 2012, but more recently has decreased moderately. Planning time index (PTI) improved 10% between 2010 and 2012. The trend went down about 3% from 2014 to 2019. The most unreliable category is Interstates, followed by Transit-Significant roads. Mr. Meese displayed a chart from the report with the top 10 bottlenecks by probe data and annual average daily traffic (AADT) in 2019. He also displayed a chart with the national comparison of the Washington region's congestion where Washington, DC came in 3<sup>rd</sup> in Annual Hours of Delay per Auto Commuter in 2017, 5<sup>th</sup> in Average Hours Wasted in Traffic in 2019, and 7<sup>th</sup> in Extra Travel Time compared to Free Flow Conditions in 2019. Programs used for congestion management strategies include Commuter Connections, MATOC, the Silver Line, Metro, 495/95 Express Lanes, Bike to Work Day, and many others. Wendy Duren, Transpartners, asked if COG has utilized Waze in receiving auto-data for the report. Mr. Meese replied that they use Waze indirectly but not directly. The state DOTs use WAZE for incident reports and congestion due to construction zones and to acquire earlier warnings in order to alert the public.

**Item #7**                    **FY2021 Regional TDM Evaluation Project Update**  
*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on Regional TDM Evaluation*

*data collection efforts for FY2021.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on Regional TDM Evaluation data collection efforts for FY2021. The Regional TDM Analysis report will be finalized later this fiscal year. The Annual Placement Rate survey is typically conducted in November to include applicants who contacted Commuter Connections between July and September 2020. The numbers will be lower this year due to the pandemic which has caused a lack of commuters and transit ridership. The survey will be conducted and expanded to include questions regarding the effects of the pandemic. Questions regarding incentive programs, such as incenTrip, FlexTime Rewards, and CarpoolNow will be included as well. If the number of applicants is far below the number of survey respondents from previous years, which is around 700, then the survey could be moved to another quarter/fiscal year in order to acquire a greater number of surveyors. Another item to be conducted in the fall is the Baltimore GRH Analysis which is an impact analysis which will be similar to the Regional TDM Evaluation Analysis presented by Lori Diggins. The information from the Baltimore GRH Analysis will be shared with MTA and MDOT. The last item is the Retention Rate Survey which is conducted every five years to analyze whether users who no longer utilize Commuter Connections programs are continuing to use alternative modes of travel. The Retention Rate Survey is slated to be conducted early next year but could be moved due to the pandemic. There will be no TDM Evaluation Group meetings held this fall.

**Item #8                      Clean Air Partners Update**

*Jen Desimone, COG/DEP staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities.*

Jen Desimone, COG/DEP staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities. Ozone Action Week was launched virtually the first week of August since the summer months are when the region has the poorest air quality. Daily content and challenges were posted on social media. Posts focused on steps to take to reduce behaviors that contribute to the formation of ground level ozone. Activities were promoted with partners and included Digital Ambassadors, media relations, and meteorologist outreach. Digital Ambassadors, which are social media street teams, partnered with 11 local social media influencers to promote content through Instagram and Facebook. Clean Air Partners partnered with their sponsors in order to promote messaging on how to reduce ground-level ozone pollution. Clean Air Partners also will be joining Commuter Connections to promote Car Free Day. Promotional efforts will include social media posts on Twitter and Facebook beginning September 15<sup>th</sup> and will continue until the day of the event. Posts will encourage residents to pledge to go car free or car-lite and will include links to the CFD website. An email blast will be sent to 11,000 Clear Air Partners subscribers promoting the event. Fall/Winter Outreach include Energy Efficiency Day (October 7), Children's Health Day (October 8), a Home Heating Guide, and an Eco-driving holiday campaign (November 10-December 15).

**Item #9                      2020 Car Free Day Event**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which will be held on September 22, 2020.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which will be held on September 22, 2020. Major objectives are to promote general awareness to alternative travel modes for both commuting and non-commuting. The event website is [carfreemetrodc.org](http://carfreemetrodc.org) where residents can take the pledge to go car free on the day of the event, enter raffles to win prizes, and gain more knowledge about the event and the alternative travel modes that can be used. Results on the number of 2020 pledges and emission analysis from the event day will be reported to the Subcommittee at the next meeting in November. Marketing for the event began after Memorial Day in May with the CFD poster being the first item developed. Mr. Franklin presented the poster to the Subcommittee emphasizing the safe modes of travel displayed on the poster due to the pandemic. Telework, walking, biking and scooters were showcased on the posters as safe modes of car free travel. All icons besides the teleworking one also showed the importance of wearing a mask while

traveling. With the cancellation of Bike to Work Day earlier in the year, Commuter Connections encourages all who usually participated in BTWD to participate in CFD and take the pledge.

The leaderboard on the website shows that 2,750 pledges have been made so far. Mr. Franklin pointed out that telework is usually the least used mode in prior years, but due to the pandemic, it is the number one mode chosen for the event this year. The poster is available on the website for download and it was sent to 77,000 email addresses of those affiliated with the Commuter Connections program. A 30-second radio spot will be running on WHUR, WPGC and WTOP throughout the week of the event. Digital campaigns with visuals will be promoted by Spotify, YouTube, and Facebook. Text messages were also sent to those that gave permission in past years promoting the event. Various transit agencies have allowed ad space promoting CFD including WMATA, Arlington Transit, The Bus, Fairfax Connector, and Montgomery County RideOn. All those who pledge will get a \$30 Nift gift credit to use on local merchants. (The same \$30 Nift gift credit was provided last year as well.) A new sponsor is Leon, which is a healthy fast food restaurant, is offering a free vegan burger to all those who pledge. Pledges are also entered into a free raffle with the chance to win one of many prizes. A press release will be sent out this week and promotion on local college campuses is happening as well.

**Item #10**                    **FY 2022 Work Program Development and Commuter Connections Strategic Plan**  
*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the development timeline for the FY 2022 Commuter Connections Work program (CCWP).*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the development timeline for the FY 2022 Commuter Connections Work program (CCWP). Draft bullet points and identification of project components were shared with the Subcommittee. In October, a draft of the work plan document will be developed for review by the STDM Work Group. The draft will be updated based on STDM Work Group and presented to the Subcommittee for further review and a comment period will be established. Final approval and endorsement of the document by the Subcommittee will take place in January 2021. The draft Work Program will be presented to the TPB Technical Committee/TPB and will be released for public comment in February. Final approvals from the TPB will happen in March. In May, funding commitment letters will be sent to funding agencies as well as identification of any adjustments needed to the TIP. In June, implantation of TIP funding changes and the obtainment of funding commitment letters from the state funding agencies will take place. Finally, implementation of the finalized Work Program will begin in July.

Mr. Ramfos discussed changes to the proposed work activities for FY2022. The incenTrip program will be expanded from Baltimore to the Richmond area based on the recent ATCMTD grant received by COG. On page 2, language regarding coordination of software upgrades with the ATCMTD grant project was added to the document to reflect this. Also, language was added regarding coordination of a new pit stop manager orientation session for BTWD. Under Monitoring and Evaluation, language was added regarding updating the Evaluation Framework Methodology for data collection, completion of the 2022 State of the Commute Survey data collection, and the 2022 In-depth GRH Applicant Survey data collection. On page 13, in the GRH Baltimore project, a 2022 In-depth GRH Applicant Survey data collection item was also added. The Commuter Connections Strategic Plan is available under the Publications section of the Commuter Connections website for review and a comment period will be established in November.

**Item #11**                    **4th Quarter CCWP Budget Report FY2020, 4th Quarter Progress Report and FY 2020 CCWP Annual Report**  
*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 CCWP 4th Quarter final Budget Report. Dan Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on the FY 2020 CCWP 4th Quarter Progress Report and the FY2020 CCWP Annual Progress Report.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 CCWP 4th Quarter final budget report. Commuter Operations expended about 95% of funds for the fiscal year. GRH was at 79%, Marketing at

81%, Monitoring and Evaluation at 91%, Employer Outreach at 79%, and GRH Baltimore at 74%. Overall, the program has expended about 82% of funds which is much lower than the usual 90-100% of expenditures. The pandemic halted much of the program's activity during the final 3 months of the fiscal year.

Dan Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on the FY 2020 CCWP 4th Quarter Progress Report and the FY2020 CCWP Annual Progress Report. In the Commuter Operations Center, about 16,560 are registered in the system as of June 30th, which is a dip from prior quarters due to the pandemic. The chatbot was implemented in the 4th quarter onto the TDM website. The employer-based Ridematching feature was developed and implemented in the 4th quarter in response to the pandemic. A new version of the CarpoolNow app was launched which now includes carpool pick-up points. 44 new applicants were registered to the GRH program in the 4th quarter with 657 re-registering. As of June 30th, a total of 6,027 commuters were registered and 20 trips were provided throughout the quarter. Most marketing efforts were placed on hold in March 2020 with the exception of PSAs for the GRH program and the WMATA Platform Shutdowns. A Commuter Connections newsletter was published and distributed. A new paper version of the Park & Ride map was published; the last paper version being distributed in 2012. Bike to Work Day was cancelled. The 2020 Employer Recognition Awards was digitally broadcasted on June 23rd. Under Monitoring and Evaluation, the Telework Survey, Pool Rewards Survey, and Vanpool Drivers Survey were all administered. The Vanpool Drivers Survey report and Car Free Day Event 2019 report were finalized. In Employer Outreach, a virtual sales training session took place in June.

Mr. Sheehan explained that the FY2020 Annual Progress Report is available for review but did not highlight notable accomplishments due to lack of time. The final report can be found on the Subcommittee's meeting page for today's meeting.

**Item #12            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.*

There was no discussion on this item.

**The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 12 noon.**