![Commuter Connections - A Smarter Way to Work]

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS
RIDEMATCHING COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, June 18, 2019
10:00 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
COG Board Room

Chairperson: Thomas Hamed, City of Alexandria
Vice Chairperson: Allison Kemp, Bethesda Transportation Solutions

COG Staff Contact: Stephen Finafrock, 202/962-3385 or sfinafrock@mwcog.org

1. Introductions

The meeting was brought to order by Chairperson Thomas Hamed of the City of Alexandria. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and sign the attendance sheet.

2. Minutes of the March 19th, 2019 meeting

Approval was sought for the March 19th, 2019 Ridematching Committee Meeting minutes. An initial motion to approve was made by Leigh Anderson of GWRide Connect and a second motion to approve was made by George Clark of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. The minutes were approved as written. All were in favor. However, it was discovered that the meeting minutes were the incorrect version and a corrected version of the previous meeting minutes was distributed for approval. A motion to approve was made by Thomas Hamed of the City of Alexandria and a second motion was made by Holly Morello of PRTC.

3. Upcoming Fairs and Promotions

Ann Arundel County Office of Transportation

- Bike to Work Day
- Get on Board Transit Appreciation Day
- Public Meetings – AAC Transit Changes
- Drug Education Awareness Festival
- Baysox Fanfest – Networking/Outreach
- Synergy Networking Event

Arlington Transportation Partners

- Four New School Opening in Arlington this Year
- Tenant Appreciation Event in June
- Arlington County Fair Tabling Event in August

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD, 777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.E., SUITE 300, WASHINGTON, DC 20002-4239

THE COMMUTER INFORMATION SOURCE FOR MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WWW.COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG   1-800-745-RIDE

- Teach New-Hire Orientation in August
- Our Shared Street in August
- AAMVA Wellness Fair in September
- Disaster Relief Trails in September

Baltimore City DOT

- Block Parties in Baltimore City
- AAScape
- AFRAM
- Maryland State Fair

Bethesda Transportation Solutions

- AOTA - CID
- Global Generali Assistance – CID
- 7250 Woodmont Ave. Ice Cream Social – CID
- 4800 Hampden Ln. Ice Cream Social – CID
- Electric scooter demonstrations for those who attend CIDs

City of Alexandria

- Landmark Mall Commuter Fair
- Park(ing) Day upcoming in September

North Bethesda Transportation

- Meeting with Digital Management Inc.
- Town Hall Meeting at Total Wine with Enterprise
- Benefits Fair at USPS
- Montgomery County Commuter Store/CID at Marriott
- Health Expo at James G. Davis Construction
- Ice Cream Social at Democracy Center-Rock Spring Park
- Summer Kick Off at JBG – 5635 Fisher's Lane
- Summer Tenant Social at Pike & Rose

PRTC

- Quantico Welcome Aboard Brief
- Stratford University New Student Orientation
- Pentagon Commuter Fair
- GMU Health and Wellness Fair
- Carlyle Group Transportation Fair
- Department of Commerce Commuter Fair
- Lockheed Martin Earth Day Fair
- Earth Day Fair at PWC County Complex Building
- Freddie Mac Earth Day Event
- GMU Bike to Mason Day
- Pentagon Commuter Fair
- National Science Foundation Commuter Fair
- VDOT Commuter Fair
- OmniRide and GMU Transportation Forum
- Mark Center Commuter Fair
- DHHQ Commuter Fair

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

- Carlyle Group Transportation Fair
- JBG Smith Earth Day Fair
- USPTO Green Fair
- USGS Earth Day Fair
- FDA Earth Day Expo
- Transportation Fair – 5600 Fisher's Lane
- Pentagon Transportation Fair
- VDOT Commuter Fair
- Fisher's Lane Take a Hike Day
- National Capital BBQ Battle (CarpoolNow Promotion)
- Mark Center Transportation Event

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

- MD Safety Summit
- Southern MD. Business Expo.
- Bike to Work Day
- Radio Show
- Mark Center

4. TDM System Update

Dan Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, began his presentation with a brief overview of his presentation, which would include updates since the March meeting, review of all FY19 TDM System enhancements and plans for FY2020.

Mr. Sheehan continued his presentation with a display of the new verified trip logging function through the Commuter Connections mobile application. Images on this slide included the main menu where a user would begin their trip, a message confirming a trip has been verified and a screenshot of a tracked trip.

Mr. Sheehan continued to present another enhancement to the TDM System, a refresh of the special events module. This update includes a matchletter and UI that is more consistent with the Commuter Connections ridesharing database look and feel. Mr. Sheehan urged those in attendance to test the module and upload any special events going on in their jurisdiction.

The next enhancement presented was the implementation of duplicate employer prevention. This feature will automatically suggest locations as a user or administrator types. Suggested addresses are bound to a geofenced area.

Mr. Sheehan then mentioned that COG/TPB staff had updated cobranded matchletters to include any new or updated logos. Matchletter logos will continue to be updated as needed. Any jurisdiction in need of an updated matchletter can contact Commuter Connections to coordinate the update. Mr. Sheehan also mentioned that Commuter Connections is working on updating partner agency emails. This will make it easier for users to contact their local agencies for assistance. This feature is still being tested by COG staff.

George Clark, TCCSM, mentioned that he has new park and ride lot data to report. Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, suggests sending it to the commuter support inbox at commutersupport@mwcog.org.

Mr. Sheehan then moved on to discuss the year in review, beginning with the integrated Capital Bikeshare locations into the ridematching results map. Locations and maximum bikes available are shown at certain zoom levels and when clicking on a bikeshare icon. COG/TPB staff has also completed a marketing enhancement: registration source tracking. This feature allows COG staff to track the source of a user's registration and determine which sources of advertising are the most successful.

Mr. Sheehan also demonstrated the implementation of the address standardization function for a user's home and work address. This feature will automatically populate suggested addresses based on a geofenced area as the user types. This will allow users to pick from a list of suggestions and hopefully mitigate duplicate employers as well.

The next topic discussed by Mr. Sheehan was the coming enhancement to the TDM system for FY2020. Commuter Connections will be working on a "GIS Depot" which will make Commuter Connections more self sufficient and less dependent on Google. This would replace Google with ESRI ArcGIS for internal program geocodes, routing and map queries. This also allows COG/TPB staff to fine tune its GIS data and gives commuters an alternative if Google decides to change its fee structure. Also planned is the Ridematching batch geocoding for the TDM system. This will ensure that geocoding data is changed in one central location and any changes made will permeate throughout the software. This will also act as a safety net to ensure that commuters have proper geocodes. Lastly, route-matching algorithms will be enhanced to consider and use alternate origins and destinations.

Mr. Sheehan then discussed the FY2020 plans for the incenTrip mobile application. COG staff have convened a working group comprised of volunteer Commuter Connections network members. COG/TPB staff and the work group met on a weekly basis to agree on an adjustment to the point structure and discuss new enhancements, possible rewards and the fulfilment of those rewards. The University of Maryland has been receptive to these suggestions and are working on implementing them. COG staff and the University of Maryland are also working on integrating Commuter Connections to the app to better align it with the Commuter Connections work program.

George Clark, TCCSM, asked if Commuter Connections could urge commuters to pick a program by adding a popup asking, "do you wish to exit?" Commuter Connections might be able to implement something of this nature within the upcoming fiscal year.

Thomas Hamed, City of Alexandria, asked for clarification on geocoding. COG staff clarified that COG is currently already paying for ArcGIS data on a third-party server.

Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, asked if there is a cost saving by moving from Google to ArcGIS. Mr. Sheehan confirmed that COG is already paying for street data through NAVTEQ.

5. Flextime Rewards Update

Steven Osborn, COG/TPB staff, presented updates to the committee on the Flextime Rewards program. Mr. Osborn began his presentation by highlighting a change in the incentive structure, which went into effect May 2019. Participants will now receive $8.00 per qualified trip. Rewards are still not to exceed $600 per person throughout the year. A qualified trip is any flexed trip logged through the Commuter Connections mobile application after receiving an email alert to do so. Mr. Osborn then noted that the participation guidelines on the Commuter Connections website have been changed to reflect the new incentive structure.

Mr. Osborn then highlighted the participation workflow for the program. Mr. Osborn described the signup process for commuters by displaying a screenshot of the Flextime registration page. This includes all the necessary information Commuter Connections needs, such as identifying the corridor they travel on, supervisor information, actual departure times, flexibility and which days of the week they commute.

Mr. Osborn then showed an example of an email a user would receive to flex their trip and explained the app's algorithm. Data from the University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Transportation Technology (CATT) lab and their Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS) is used to monitor traffic levels and create a predictive travel model. This model will alert commuters registered within the program of higher-than-average traffic volumes and suggest alternate departure times.

Mr. Osborn then showed screenshots of how to log a trip using the Commuter Connections mobile app. Users must login and select the "Log Verified Trip" option to begin. The app will automatically determine the stopping point based on proximity to the destination. Mr. Osborn continued to explain how payment for each individual is administered. COG staff can run a report and gather the users starting point longitude and latitude, destination longitude and latitude, commuter ID number, departure suggestion, actual departure, corridor name and a link to the route the user took. The report also includes trip length, time and speed. The report is checked monthly, but COG/TPB staff is in the process of developing a report that can be run as needed.

A change to the admin module was then presented. Mr. Osborn began by showing a screenshot on how to access a user's Flextime Rewards account. Then he mentioned that certain information can no longer be changed through the Flextime Rewards admin module. Work schedule flexibility and contact information will only be changed through the commuter admin module. This makes sure that this information is only being edited in one place and should prevent confusion.

Mr. Osborn continued to present marketing initiatives for the program. At the time of this presentation, Facebook ads that began on May 29th had reached 9,000 people. Banner ads will be running on WTOP's website. Flextime postcards have been sent to 540 employers in the region. Targeted emails have also been sent to employers that are known to have flexible schedules.

Lastly, Mr. Osborn presented download stats for the CarpoolNow and Commuter Connections mobile applications. Stats as of June 17th are:

CarpoolNow:
- iOS: 2,626
- Android: 1,102

Commuter Connections:
- iOS: 2,924
- Android: 1,533

6. TDM System Best Practices

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB, presented updates to the committee on completed enhancements to the TDM System. He began by mentioning that COG is considering making this topic a standing agenda item and thanked Darlene Nader and Leigh Anderson for their past presentations on the subject.

Mr. Finafrock then presented an overview slide where he outlined the points to be discussed during the presentation. He then began speaking about match profiles and variables. The variable screen sets the radii for matches.

George Clark, TCCSM, suggested that Commuter Connections add a pop-up message to urge users to add a destination in their profile. Mr. Finafrock continued with the variable screen displaying where administrators and users can adjust their work schedule flexibility. Mr. Finafrock mentioned that flexibility is one of the most important factors in generating additional results.

Mr. Finafrock then reviewed route-based ridematching and explained its importance, preventing matching across natural barriers and honoring "over-the-road" mileage instead of "as the bird flies." The route-based option will match users with other users as long as their routes share at least 30% in common. This will give users alternative matches if they need them.

Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, mentioned that she used the route-based method to match users near Park 'N Ride lots and that she believes it has been a positive enhancement to the TDM.

Mr. Finafrock then discussed appcode assignments and George Clark, TCCSM, mentioned that a list of appcodes could be useful for the group.

Lastly, Mr. Finafrock reviewed the list of public email addresses for Commuter Connections and their intended uses:
- commutersupport@mwcog.org – Technical support for ridematching coordinators
- commuterconnections@mwcog.org – Meeting announcements and committee information
- docomments@mwcog.org – Feedback on meeting documents
- ridematching@mwcog.org – TDM System outgoing email and public-facing email box for Commuter Connections

7. July 2019 TDM Resource Directory

Steven Osborn, COG/TPB staff, mentioned that COG has begun collecting data for the July edition of the TDM Resource Directory with the help of the Commuter Connections intern, Joshua Holmes. Mr. Osborn mentioned that those in attendance should report changes to park and ride lot data and transit information.

8. Client Site Status | Round Table

Ron Crites, Prince Georges County DPWT, announced that 200 electrical charging stations are being installed and the DPWT has suggested 140 locations.

Taylor Corydon, Arlington Transportation Partners, mentioned that they are working on getting docking stations for scooters in Arlington.

9. Quarterly Progress Report

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, mentioned that there is a new Ttable 6a and urges those in attendance to clear the pending queue, so the quarterly and annual report numbers are accurate.

10. Other Business | Upcoming Agenda Items

Nicholas Ramfos reminded those in attendance that Car Free Day is coming up and urges those in attendance to get involved.

The Next meeting of the Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee will be held on September 17, 2019 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.