

# METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



## COMMUTER OPERATIONS CENTER SUBCOMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

First Floor, Training Center

Chairperson: Darlene Nader, North Bethesda

Vice Chairperson: Chris Kingery, Loudoun County

COG Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos, (202) 962-3313

Items addressed and issues discussed were as follows:

1. **Introductions** (see attached attendance sheet).
2. **Minutes of the March 14, 2006 Meeting**

The minutes of the March 14, 2006 meeting were approved as written.

3. **Up Coming Fairs and Promotions**

Mr. Stiegerwald stated that staff participated in a marketing campaign targeting an assisted living complex.

Ms. Dalphon stated that Frederick County staff will participate in the June 27<sup>th</sup> transit fair. Staff will also participate in events at Citicorp and Frederick Memorial Hospital.

Ms. Waters stated that Bethesda Transportation Solutions staff participated in the Bethesda in Motion, Taste of Bethesda, and Imagination Bethesda which focused on kid safety. BTS is also participating in an event with the Washington School of Photography.

Prince Georges County staff will participate in the monthly Expo held at the Sports and Learning Complex.

Mr. Hall stated that Montgomery County staff will participate in the Name that Kiosk event. Staff also participated in the Taste of Wheaton event, and will participate in the Annual County Fair in August.

Ms. McColl stated that ARTMA staff is currently targeting large community associations to promote ridesharing. The campaign “See You There” also promotes local transit options such as using the local commuter bus.

Mr. Sightler stated that Howard County staff participated in a Clean Car Clinic targeting local residents.

Ms. Hinton stated that COG staff participated in Transportation Fairs at GSA on April 19<sup>th</sup> and DOT on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Staff will also participate in Transit Fairs at the DCA, National Airport on June 21<sup>st</sup>, NIH on June 27<sup>th</sup> and the National Science Foundation on July 13<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Briscoe stated that TRI County Council of Southern Maryland staff participated in a Bike to Work Wellness event and is currently working on a summer school transportation project. Staff will participate and attend an Embassy Minority Transportation meeting in June.

Ms. Richards stated that Harford County staff participated in an Employee Fair at the Harford Community College Board of Education and McKormick Co. to promote ridesharing. Staff also participated in a Clean Car Clinic, targeting the Board of Education and Harford County Government employees. Harford County staff will participate in the annual County Farm Fair in July.

#### **4. Transit and Street Center Line Update**

Mr. Edgar provided an update on the status of transit and street center line files. Mr. Edgar distributed a color coded handout describing the counties whose data was received. Mr. Edgar explained that he is in the process of contacting counties for their data. Mr. Edgar stated that Baltimore County data must be purchased. TIGER line files will be used for Franklin, Adams and York counties in Pennsylvania and for other counties for which the data is unavailable. Mr. Edgar stated that COG is looking into obtaining data from a single source for more accurate Geo coding.

Mr. Arabia asked Mr. Edgar for a time line for completing the updates.

Mr. Edgar stated that initially the time line was for June 30<sup>th</sup>, however because of the complexity of the project, the date has been moved to July 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **5. Commuter Service Training**

Ms. Hinton briefed the Subcommittee on the upcoming customer service training and distributed a course description to the committee members. The course will be given by the National Seminars Group. The instructor will be Mr. Gregg Gregory. Ms. Hinton

stated that the training will be held in the COG board room on July 10<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Materials, such as work books and certificates will be distributed the day of the course. Subcommittee members who are interested in attending the training should respond to a group e-mail that will be sent to remind the members of the training. Ms. Hinton stated that the training can be customized and asked committee members to provide suggestions for topics they would want to include.

Mr. Arabia stated that he would like to see two items discussed:

1. How to avoid “he said, she said” issues.
2. How to give the customer what he/she can expect.

Ms. Hinton stated that staff has a scheduled conference call with the training organization and will mention all suggestions for additional training topics.

Ms. Nader asked if the training will be interactive.

Ms. Hinton stated she wasn't sure, however if the committee would like interactive training, it can be considered.

## **6. TDM Resource Directory Update**

Ms. Johnson stated that the regional TDM Resource Directory is in the process of being updated. Ms. Johnson stated that most clients were called to see if any changes were necessary for their jurisdiction. Ms. Johnson stated that a pdf version of the resource directory will be e-mailed to all client members. Hard copies of the directory will be made available to those who cannot receive the pdf version or are interested in receiving a hard copy.

Mr. Arabia asked if the information on the Commuter Connections web site will be updated.

Ms. Johnson stated that the information will be updated.

## **7. New Regional TDM Software System Update**

Mr. Ramfos discussed the status and next steps for the TDM Web-Based software system project. Mr. Ramfos explained that a request for proposals was issued on May 15<sup>th</sup>. A pre-bid meeting for vendors took place on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Ramfos stated that proposals from the vendors are due on June 26<sup>th</sup>. A meeting has been scheduled for July 7<sup>th</sup> with the selection committee to select the vendors. After vendors are selected, the selection committee will conduct interviews and narrow down the vendors to a select few. An additional meeting has been scheduled for July 28<sup>th</sup> for oral presentations by short-listed vendors and to select the vendor for the project. Mr. Ramfos stated that the Selection Committee would like to have a vendor for the project by July or August.

Ms. Nader encouraged Subcommittee members to continue to contact COG staff regarding changes or improvements needed for the software system.

Mr. Ramfos stated that future and more frequent meetings for the Subcommittee can be arranged to help keep committee members abreast of the current software system project.

## **8. Regional Marketing Update**

Mr. Franklin discussed the TDM marketing campaign for the January through July time period. Mr. Franklin explained that radio spots were aired in February and will continue through June 25<sup>th</sup>. Three radio spots were aired and rotated advertising both ridematching and the Guaranteed Ride Home program. Additionally, direct mailers were issued in February to various households over a 10 week span and focused on promoting ridesharing. The direct mailer was targeted based upon the use of PRIZM analysis of the Commuter Connections rideshare database. The mailer distribution identified and pinpointed target neighborhoods that are prone to having a higher propensity to carpool/vanpool based on lifestyle segments.

Mr. Franklin stated there are new Rideshare and GRH brochures that have been printed. An informational brochure was also developed and printed, and provides information on all services provided by Commuter Connections.

Mr. Franklin stated that Bike to Work Day was held on Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. Several sponsors participated in the event while ten sponsors gave cash donations. \$16,200 was raised as a result of this year's sponsors. These sponsors were listed on the Bike to Work Day poster. Participants who pre-registered and participated in the event received a free T-shirt. Registration for the event increased by 30%, from 4,844 in 2005 to 6,263. Radio spots promoted the event which aired during the weeks of May 1<sup>st</sup> and May 8<sup>th</sup>. In addition, Commuter Connections provided banner art for 13 of the 21 pit stops.

Mr. Franklin stated that the spring Commuter Connections newsletter was published and distributed. COG staff is currently working on the summer Commuter Connections Newsletter.

Mr. Franklin stated that the Employer Recognition Awards will be held on June 28<sup>th</sup> at the National Press Club.

## **9. Client Site Status/Roundtable**

Mr. Edgar stated that edits were made on some client matchletters. Mr. Edgar explained that changing the text of the matchletter is difficult and that clients should contact him if they would like to change something in the matchletter.

Mr. Edgar explained that he expects the electronic version of the purge letter should be completed by the end of the fiscal year. The paper versions of the purge letter have been

revised. Clients will be notified on which commuters received the electronic purge letter. Commuters whose e-mails are inoperative will be deleted and will receive the paper version of the purge letter.

Ms. Hinton stated that the Landmark book used for ridematching will be updated. Ms. Hinton asked the Subcommittee to e-mail any new landmarks for their particular area by July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ms. Hinton stated that the revisions for the Landmark book should be completed by August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Hinton distributed a handout explaining the new procedures for requesting technical assistance. Ms. Hinton stated that the goal is to resolve any issues within 1 business day. The new procedures require clients to contact COG staff regarding technical issues by calling the help line at 202-962-3333 or by sending an e-mail to [comutersupport@mwkog.org](mailto:comutersupport@mwkog.org). When clients call the help line, staff will be instructed to ask clients questions to better resolve technical issues, and if the agent is unable to assist the client, the client will be instructed to leave an e-mail on the [comutersupport](mailto:comutersupport@mwkog.org) e-mail. Clients will be notified by an acknowledgement of receipt. Clients will receive an e-mail notification when the problem is solved. All communications with clients will be documented. Ms. Hinton asked clients not to leave voicemails on staff's personal voice or e-mails.

#### **10. Other Business/Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

Mr. Hall suggested that Extranet features discussed in the previous TPB meeting be an agenda item for the next meeting.

**The next meeting of the Commuter Operations Center Subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 19, 2006.**