

**Commuter Connections Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

**Chairperson: Linda Stewart-Byrd, MDOT
Vice Chairperson: Christopher Hamilton, Arlington 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

Chair, Linda Stewart-Byrd called the meeting to order by introducing herself and asking the rest of the attendees to do so (*See attached attendance sheet*).

Item #2 Minutes of May 15, 2007

Approval was sought for the May 15, 2007 Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting minutes.

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the May 15th meeting as written.

Item #3 Vice-Chair Nominating Committee

Ms. Linda Stewart-Byrd appointed a Vice-Chair Nominating Committee for Subcommittee approval.

Ms. Linda Stewart-Byrd appointed a Vice-Chair Nominating Committee. She stated that the Vice-Chair Nominating Committee would meet to select a new Subcommittee Vice-Chair during a conference call during the week following this meeting. The Subcommittee approved the following representatives for the Vice-Chair Nominating Committee: Lorraine Taylor representing the District of Columbia, Linda Stewart-Byrd representing Maryland, and Christopher Hamilton representing Virginia.

Item #4 Clean Air Partners Update

Mr. Jennifer Desimone, COG/EP Staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the recent Clean Air Partners activities, including its 10 year anniversary.

Ms. Desimone briefed the Subcommittee on the upcoming and recent events in celebration of Clean Air Partners' 10-year anniversary, including the development of a new brand for Clean Air Partners. The new brand was incorporated into a redesigned logo, web site, and print materials. Clean Air Partners' media campaign consisted of radio and transit advertisements. Radio spots ran for 5 weeks during June and July in the Washington and Baltimore markets, resulting in approximately 30 million impressions. Added value radio promotions included a free gas give-away and a contest to promote teleworking. Transit ads were displayed in 17 Metro stations and 24 Frederick County buses from June through August. Clean Air Partners messaging was also printed on the back of Metro fare cards and distributed in July and August.

Item #5 TDM Evaluation Project Update Monitoring Program Status Report

Ms. Lori Diggins and COG/TPB staff updated the Subcommittee on recent findings from the 2007 GRH Applicant Survey Report. preliminary results from the 2007 State of the Commute Report, and data collection activities for FY 2008.

Ms. Diggins reported that the total respondents for the 2007 State of the Commute (SOC) survey were 6600 randomly selected workers; 600 from each jurisdiction which is weighted to the population of workers. She illustrated that drive alone or SOV had dropped slightly from 2004 and the use of all alternative transportation modes has increased slightly. The most frequently cited reasons for respondents not continuing to use alternative transportation modes included: inconvenient, job change and temporary circumstances.

Ms. Diggins also reported that telework has grown substantially since 2004. 18.7% of regional commuters in the National Capital Region teleworked at least one day per week compared to 12.8% in 2004.

When asked about transit opportunities within their home jurisdictions, respondents living in the core of the region (Alexandria, Arlington and DC) reported that 95% of transit services were available. This number decreases the further out one moves from the city core. The middle ring (one county out) reported 87% and the outer ring jurisdictions (beyond one county) reported 64% availability.

Ms. Diggins reported that the perception of commute ease has increased from 2004 to 2007. When asked about relocating, 20% of respondents considered their commute when relocating. 28% considered their commute as a highly important factor when considering where to live/work. Overall awareness of information (Commuter Connections and Membership) declined, down from 66% in 2004 to 55% in 2007. Primary contact for GRH, Rideshare, Carpool and Vanpool organizations within the local jurisdictions has also declined. Awareness of local offices ranged from 11% to 49% with PRTC having the most notoriety.

Next, Ms. Diggins briefed the Subcommittee on the 2007 Guaranteed Ride Home applicant survey. First she gave an overview of the survey and explained that it was the third triennial survey with the other two surveys being conducted in 2001 and 2004. There were 1,000 applicants surveyed and the purpose of the survey is to evaluate the effectiveness of the GRH TERM.

Ms. Diggins then covered results from the demographics and registration status. She also stated that 45% of the respondents were registered to the program for more than 2 years. Next, she covered reasons for not re-registering. 17% of the respondents did not re-register because they never used the program. 34% of respondents heard about the GRH program through "Word of Mouth" and 16% heard it from the radio. Ms. Diggins stated that 38% of GRH registrants were influenced by advertising to join the program. General overall awareness of GRH program has declined to 26%, down from 56% and of those respondents 5% participated in GRH in the past two years. On a positive note, 37% of respondents were aware that Commuter Connections was the sponsor of the Guaranteed Ride Home program. She also stated that the length of time for respondents using alternative modes was 87 months compared to 80 months regionally. Next, Ms. Diggins briefed the group on how important GRH was relative to other factors in influencing mode shifts. She reported that 37% of respondents received other benefits that

influenced their decision more than GRH. More important benefits included discount transit passes.

Lastly, Ms. Diggins briefly covered the TDM data collection activities that were slated for implementation during FY 2008.

Item #6 WMATA Update on SmarTrip Card

Ms. Lorraine Taylor of WMATA updated the Subcommittee on the progress of installing SmarTrip on buses and commuter rail.

Ms. Taylor briefed the Subcommittee on the state of SmarTrip implementation through the region on commuter rail and bus services such as DASH, MARC, VRE and the Fairfax Connector. The Baltimore MTA has also completed installation of the new fare boxes but has not implemented them as of yet. The ultimate goal is a regional look and feel throughout the National Capitol Region while providing seamless transportation to the consumer. The rollout for MARC, VRE and Regional Commuter Buses is expected in late 2008.

Additionally, she distributed several handouts. A tri-fold "All About Smartrip" contains a Smartrip application and payment information as well as helpful tips to guide those who are new to Smartrip as to its usage. The second item was a post-card designed to be mailed to employers reminding them of the upcoming requirement that 60% of all transit benefits must be distributed through SmartBenefits, shifting from the Metrochek beginning in January. The third handout listed all regional transit agencies and programs that are set to begin partnership with Smartrip and their anticipated enrollment date.

Item #7 2007 Employer Recognition Awards

Mr. Douglas Franklin discussed the recent 2007 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards, held in June at the National Press Club.

Mr. Franklin discussed the 10th Anniversary of the Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards held on June 26th at the National Press Club and emceed by the new Director of the District Department of Transportation, Emeka Moneme. Awards were presented by Jim Dinegar of the Greater Washington Board of Trade, Mark Wright of ACT, Margaret Walls of Resources for the Future and Catherine Hudgins, Supervisor from Fairfax County, Virginia.

Mr. Franklin stated that the winners were given a glass trophy and photographs taken for inclusion in the Commuter Connections Newsletter. Award winners were also recognized in the Wall Street Journal.

Ms. Judy Galen, Mr. Mark Sofman and Ms. Anna McLaughlin served on the Awards Committee Workgroup and were thanked for their input on the awards materials and the collateral design as well as the give away item this year which was a blue and white umbrella with the Commuter Connections logo. Next year Ms. Lorraine Taylor, Mr. Chris Arabia and Ms. Robin Briscoe have volunteered their time to server on the work group.

Mr. Franklin finished up by playing the 10th Anniversary montage for the Subcommittee and offered and leftover program booklets for anyone who wished to have one.

Item #8 4th Quarter Budget Report

Mr. Nicholas Ramfos briefed the Subcommittee on the 4th Quarter Budget Report

Mr. Ramfos distributed the 4th Quarter Budget Report and asked that all questions be directed to him through email because of time constraints.

Item #9 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, September 18, 2007.