



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 16, 2019

12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

Third Floor, COG Board Room

Chairperson: George Clark, Southern Maryland

Vice Chairperson: Marcus Moore, Fairfax 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.*

**Item #2**      **Minutes of May 21, 2019 Meeting**

*Approval was sought for the May 21, 2019 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.*

George Clark, TCCSMD, requested a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

A motion was made by Susana Parker, BTS, and seconded by Nancy Huggins, MTA.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the May 21, 2019 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

**Item #3**      **Vice Chair Nominating Committee**

*George Clark, TCCSMD, appointed the Nominating Committee that will select and recommend the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson.*

George Clark, TCCSMD, appointed the Nominating Committee that will select and recommend the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson. Marcus Moore, the current Subcommittee Vice Chair, Janiece Timmons, the previous Subcommittee Chair, and George Clark, the current Subcommittee Chair were announced as the Commuter Connections Vice Chair Nominating Committee. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, stated that an approval needed to be made to accept three participants as the nominating committee. A motion was made by Susana Parker, BTS, and seconded by Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT. The Subcommittee approved the Commuter Connections Vice Chair Nominating Committee.

**Item #4**      **FY2019 Car Free Day Event Report**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes to the FY2019 draft Car Free Day event report.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes to the FY2019 draft Car Free Day event report. The previous draft of the FY2019 Car Free Day Event report was presented at the Subcommittee meeting on May 21. The report was to be posted to Sharepoint with a comment date ending on June 14, but the report was not uploaded in time. The report is now posted to Sharepoint and the comment period will be open until August 14. A follow-up email will also be sent to ensure everyone is clear on where to find the report and when the comment period ends. Endorsements will be asked for at the Subcommittee meeting in September.

**Item #5            Clean Air Partners Update**

*Marcus Moore, Fairfax County staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities.*

Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities. The summer campaign was launched on May 22 to help those in the area “breathe easier.” This year’s campaign sponsors were Commuter Connections, WGL and SMECO. The Clean Air Ambassador tour kicked off on April 28 at the Montgomery County Greenfest. Ambassadors engaged with the public and educated them on actions they can take to improve air quality. Residents won prizes such as transit passes, Jiffy Lube cards, etc. The Breathe Easy concert, featuring Jennifer Lopez, is happening tomorrow, Wednesday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at Capital One Arena for those who won tickets to the event. Clean Air Partners secured donated media from ART, CUE, WMATA, MTA, DDOT, PG County, Montgomery County, Frederick County, and MSS University Media. Ads will continue to run in July through September.

**Item #6            2019 State of the Commute Survey**

*Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights of the 2019 State of the Commute Survey.*

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights of the 2019 State of the Commute Survey. The State of Commute survey is done every three years, and this is the seventh time it has been administered in the Washington DC region. 8,246 employed residents were interviewed through the new address-based sample (ABS) method, which is substantially more entries than in previous years. The response rate was 2.7 percent. Data was also weighted to adjust sample size for race, ethnicity, and age. Ms. Diggins stated that there were many continued tracking questions, but also some new questions asked on the survey in 2019. For example, questions regarding bikeshare/scooters, express lanes, social networking/travel apps, and driverless cars were asked on this survey that were not asked in previous years.

Ms. Diggins explained that 58% of commuters’ weekly commute trips were made by driving alone or taxi/ride-hail, 24% made by transit and 10% eliminated by telework. Between 2004 and 2019, the drive alone percentage has fallen 13%, the transit percentage has risen by 7%, and the telework percentage has risen by 6%. One-third of commuters had HOV lanes available along their route while 18% had access to an Express Lane. There seemed to be some confusion within the data regarding what routes are defined as Express Lanes. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, said that the ICC has Express Lanes, but carpools, vanpools and transit do not have an HOV advantage and also have to pay the toll. 73% of Express Lane users typically drove alone, 26 % used carpool/vanpool, and 10% rode transit. The data regarding commute ease and commute satisfaction showed that 50% of the 2019 respondents were satisfied with their commute, which is lower than in recent years. The data also shows that there is a steady decline in commute satisfaction which also correlates with travel times increasing over the years. Commuters who travel short distances are more satisfied than those traveling long distances. Bikers and walkers were most satisfied, while ridesharers and those who drive alone were least satisfied. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, inquired whether teleworkers were asked about commute satisfaction. Ms. Diggins responded that teleworkers were not asked the questions regarding commute satisfaction due to their lack of commuting.

Telework has nearly tripled since 2004 and 35% of regional commuters teleworked at least occasionally in 2019. 771,000 non-teleworkers had job responsibilities that are telework-appropriate and would like to telework. Federal workers are represented in these samples and there has been a slight rise in telework for federal workers as well. 73% of non-teleworkers with telework-appropriate jobs worked at home all day at least one regular work day last year. Those who identify as teleworkers usually work from home at 1-2 days per week. 7% of teleworkers received telework information from Commuter Connections/COG which is slightly less than in 2016. Metrorail riders were notably more satisfied in 2019 than in 2016. Michael Weinberger, WMATA, stated that the reasons for higher satisfaction levels are likely due to the SafeTrack implementation in 2016 that led to the decline, as well as reporting transparency and track work being done currently. Ms. Diggins

stated that 85% of respondents had an account with at least one social networking application and had used at least one travel/trip information application. Heidi Mitter, VDOT, asked if the data regarding use of wayfinding/trip mapping applications was measured by year. Ms. Diggins explained that it was measured indefinitely and not by year.

Ms. Diggins also stated that 45% of respondents recalled hearing or seeing commute ads in the past year, which is lower than in 2016. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, added that these numbers are also a reflection of the change in marketing strategy as Commuter Connections likes to appeal to targeted demographics. Ms. Diggins agreed that Commuter Connections should appeal to those that are willing to change behavior rather than to mass audiences. 48% of regional commuters knew of Commuter Connections, also a drop from 2016, but awareness is high. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, referenced earlier comment and said that the marketing strategy applies to this drop as well. Ms. Diggins ended by stating that 9 of 11 local commute service programs increased awareness in 2019 and 60% of respondents said their employers offered commute services at their workplace. . Mr. Ramfos prompted Ms. Diggins to comment on the effects of ridehailing versus transit data. Ms. Diggins commented that about 40% of registrants would have used ridehailing if not for GRH and about 57% said they would have used transit.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, added that the report will be posted to Sharepoint and comments are due by August 20.

**Item #7                    2019 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Survey**

*Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights from the 2019 GRH surveys for both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions.*

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights from the 2019 GRH surveys for both the Washington, DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions. The 2019 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) triennial survey was the 7<sup>th</sup> conducted for the Washington, DC region and the 3<sup>rd</sup> for the Baltimore region. There were 2,066 respondents in the Washington region and 241 respondents in the Baltimore region. Ms. Diggins stated that slightly more than half of DC GRH registrants lived in Virginia and six out of ten worked in DC. Most current participants correctly identified their GRH registration status while 60% of past registrants through they were still registered. 58% of all participants saw or heard GRH ads and 31% were influenced to register by ads. 42% did not see or hear any GRH ads.

Ms. Diggins explained that nearly all current Washington registrants used an alternative mode as their primary mode of transportation. The same is true for nearly all current Baltimore registrants. 24% of Washington registrants shifted from driving alone to alternative modes after registering for GRH. 38% of Baltimore registrants shifted from driving alone to alternative modes after registering for GRH. About 8 in 10 respondents said GRH was important to their decisions to start using alternative modes of transportation. 50% of GRH registrants received other Commuter Connections services other than GRH. 37% of Washington registrants made trips using GRH and about 30% of Baltimore registrants made a trip. 71% of GRH trips were taken due to illness and 14% were due to unscheduled overtime.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, mentioned that both draft reports that are to be posted onto Sharepoint and that comments are due by August 15

**Item #8                    Metro Platform Shutdown Status**

*Michael Weinberger, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on preliminary results from the Metro shutdown associated with the platform repairs.*

Michael Weinberger, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on preliminary results from the Metro shutdown associated with the platform repairs. Mr. Weinberger began by reminding everyone to visit [www.wmata.com/platforms](http://www.wmata.com/platforms) in order to access alternative modes of travel during the platform shutdowns. The

front page of the website also provides updates regarding the platform shutdowns as well as a timeline for the shutdowns currently taking place and the ones to come. Non-slip tiles, canopies, and work on the platforms themselves are a few items that details are provided about in the blog posts on the website. All work is on schedule at this time. WMATA has about 140 partners that meet regularly to talk about the shutdown project as well as help with trip planning such as free express shuttle services and free parking. NVTC and Commuter Connections have been very helpful with supporting these efforts as well. The free shuttle services generally carry about 25,000 people during the week, 7-10,000 people on Saturdays, and close to 6,000 people on Sundays.

Mr. Weinberger continued by saying after providing free parking at some stations, it incentivized the use of the free shuttle service. Metrobus has added options for those affected by the shutdowns by adding more mid-day service and increased frequencies to busier lines. Heidi Mitter, VDOT, asked how ridership is doing compared to past years in lieu of the shutdowns. Mr. Weinberger responded saying overall, Virginia has only lost about 1% of ridership since the shutdowns have started compared to last summer. Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) is also being promoted through the shutdowns as an alternate mode of transit for emergencies. Marina Budimir, DDOT, asked will these alternate modes of transit as well as free parking be extended for the area while work continues after the summer is over. Mr. Weinberger responded by saying that an update will be given later in August regarding what will happen after September. There is still 8 weeks left to continue improving riders' experiences through customer feedback.

**Item #9            WAZE Carpool Briefing**

*Dani Simons, WAZE Carpool, briefed the Subcommittee on the WAZE Carpool mobile application and its debut in the region.*

Dani Simons, WAZE Carpool, briefed the Subcommittee on the WAZE Carpool mobile application and its debut in the region. Ms. Simons asked those to stand who have ever used Waze and Waze Carpool applications. This is the first Waze campaign to be ran locally in the Washington Metropolitan area. There are 120 million monthly active Waze users in 185 countries. Waze is a mobility platform that helps people move more freely in the communities where they live and work. Waze usually acquires about 60 million user reports per month. Waze's tools for cities include data sharing, carpooling, beacons to improve safety in non-GPS environments, and crisis notifications. Waze Carpool has easy onboarding, automatically matching drivers and riders, puts safety first, and gives the most efficient route using Waze technology. Rides can be scheduled ahead of time and more than one passenger can be picked up at a time with Waze Carpool.

Ms. Simons explained that there are no licensing fees for cities or employers and no service fee for riders. Waze has the ability to provide incentives to encourage trial and use until carpooling becomes more habitual. Riders are able to reimburse drivers up to .58 per mile as an incentive for drivers to participate in the carpool. Waze has implemented a cap of \$2 per trip to ensure the riders are not being charged excessively for long trips. An incentive program was used in the San Francisco Bay Area which promoted 5 free rides to Waze Carpoolers, among other special offers to encourage carpooling as a habit. The results were that carpooling increased by 56% in the Bay Area thanks to MTC promotions and strong policies that encourage carpooling. Waze Carpool helps to track TDM goals for those that need data to ensure promotions are being heard and funds are being well spent. Waze introduced Waze Carpool to the DC Metro area in April 2019. After the first 90 days of the marketing campaign, over 26,000 new carpoolers onboarded, over 90,000 ride requests were sent, and there was a 173% increase in carpool rides completed from Q1 to Q2. The top routes for carpooling were I-66 and the Dulles Toll Road. Nancy Huggins, MTA, asked for the age group being measured. Ms. Simons did not have data to display but answered that the likely age range was between early 20s to late 40s. Subcommittee members discussed the similarities between WAZE Carpool and the Commuter Connections program CarpoolNow. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, asked if only work trips were being recorded in Waze or were all trips recorded. Ms. Simons stated that the focus is on commuting at this time and the data reflects those that use the app are commuting to and from work. Drivers are capped at 2 trips per day. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, also asked for a match rate determining how many of the 90,000 ride requests were

matched to drivers. Ms. Simons said that she would get the match rate and let Mr. Ramfos know at a later date.

Ms. Simons stated that Waze Carpool is a peer-to-peer sharing application and not considered ridehailing. Riders do not have to pay to ride, but they may reimburse drivers should they choose a driver asking to be reimbursed. The areas that performed the best during the campaign were heavily used corridors with low slugging activity. Other areas showed high intent, but imbalanced rider to driver ratios. The WMATA platform reconstruction project led to a spike in ride requests shortly after it started. Waze is looking to partner with Commuter Connections if possible. George Clark, TCCSMD, told Ms. Simons that due to lack of time she may have to come back to be able to further explain Waze Carpool as it pertains to Commuter Connections.

**Item #10 Car Free Day(s) 2019 Event**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day(s) event slated for September 21, 22, and 23 2019.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day(s) event slated for September 21, 22, and 23 2019. The website is [www.carfreemetrodc.org](http://www.carfreemetrodc.org). The proclamation will be given by the TPB next week and the poster will be printed and distributed in August. All sponsors from last year are on board this year as well as a new sponsor, Nift (Neighborhood Gift). All those who pledge will received an email with a promo code to get a “nift”, which is an e-gift card to local vendors. Logo and posters are also on the website for print. Nancy Huggins, MTA, asked what the goal is this year. Mr. Franklin responded that the goal is the same as last year and years before, 10,000 pledges.

**Item #11 4th Quarter CCWP Budget Report**

*Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 CCWP 4th Quarter Preliminary Budget Report.*

Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 CCWP 4th Quarter Preliminary Budget Report. Ms. Brennan noted that Commuter Operations expended 77% of committed funds in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. GRH Washington is running at 86%, Marketing 78%, Employer Outreach 40%, and GRH Baltimore 70%. The overall preliminary budget expenditures are running at 74%. Final FY2019 Budget Report to be released in September.

**Item #12 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting**

*This is an opportunity for Commuter Connections Subcommittee members to bring up other business and to request agenda items for the next meeting.*

**The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 at 12 noon.**