



MEETING MINUTES

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS RIDEMATCHING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 17, 2008

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

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

COG Board Room, Third Floor

Chairperson: Kevin Thornton, Prince Georges County

Vice Chairperson: Diana Utz, GW RideConnect

COG Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos, 202/962-3313 or nramfos@mwkog.org

(Note: If you cannot attend this meeting, please call 202/962-3327.)

1. Introductions
2. Minutes of the March 18, 2007 Meeting

Minutes were approved.

3. Upcoming Fairs and Promotions

Stephen Finafrock from Commuter Connections discussed two events:

- June 10, Transportation Fair at GSA attended by Jonathan Rogers and Lewis Miller of COG, attendees were well-informed of Commuter Connections and its programs and made many mentions of Commuter Connections' radio ads. Event was well-attended.
- June 25, annual Employer Recognition Awards to be held at National Press Club.

Kevin Thornton discussed Prince George's County Live Near Your Work event held last month to give prospective homeowners incentives to buy homes near their workplace.

Darlene Nader from North Bethesda TMD discussed their "Super Fare Share" marketing campaign. She also detailed the following employer locations where they held events: ARC, USP, IBM, Transwestern, Manhattan Imported Cars, Balducci's, NIH/NIAID, JSSA, Tower Company, Elsevier, IQ Solutions, VOB, Rubino & McGeehin, Printing Images, Charles Products, Advanced Biosciences, Nabi, Coventry Health Care, Kaiser, Henry M. Jackson, Willis, Penan & Scott and Smislova & Kehnemui.

Glenn Hiner from Fairfax County discussed their major fairs and outreach efforts/products. Mr. Hiner also discussed upcoming BRAC fair on Friday, June 20 and Reston environmental event in coming weeks.

4. TDM Software Project Update

Patrick Holway from Base Technologies discussed updates to the TDM software and addressed issues raised by members since the previous committee meeting. Due to a number of inquiries on the matter, explained reason for "back" button being disabled. Due to data implications, browser back button will remain disabled; however, back button will be included within the application (if not cost-prohibitive).

Issue: Storing radius preference in system when performing ride-matching searches is not in current contract and is not a simple change; however, an estimate for such will be determined and presented to COG. Nearest transit stops should be included on ridematching letters by the end of the week.

Issue: Using a landmark as start/end point is important, especially in more rural areas. By the end of tomorrow, Base will have a table of landmarks to review for start/end points. Also, Base is in the process of making the match request screen more intuitive, which will be available by the end of week.

Issue: E-mail addresses are not displayed on match lists for ridematching committee members if "do not display e-mail address" option was chosen by commuter. Committee members can e-mail user their matchletter through the system, but the commuter's e-mail address will not be displayed.

Issue: Regarding errors related to changing employer addresses, the sequence numbers were malfunctioning. Base is aware of the problem known and is currently working on a correction. Base is also working with COG staff to resolve data migration issues. Base is aware of issues concerning an inability to geocode addresses and is manually working on a correction.

Issue: Based on models run by committee members, commuters who live and work very closely together are not matching to each other despite proximity. Base will investigate examples.

Issue: In the old system, for commuters that did not receive prospective matches, alternate starting points were displayed on match lists along with the corresponding matches. Is it possible to have multiple starting points used in new system? Base explained that due to instantaneous nature of new system, multiple starting points will need to be entered individually and two (or more) match letters will need to be sent out.

Nicholas Ramfos reminded all members that they need to be operating in the new system. Mr. Ramfos also explained that the target date for public roll-out of new system is end of July/beginning of August with a press conference to follow in September in combination with the announcement of CarFree Day (Sept. 22). Mr. Ramfos addressed concerns that some people in the database may be unaware they are in the database and may be caught off guard upon receiving information that they are in such database. These individuals can request to deactivate account and member jurisdictions will be notified of such people who request to have their account deactivated.

After a question was raised on the matter, Base discussed the process for handling transit information requests by commuters. Jurisdictions will continue to receive the commuters'

transit information requests through the new system as they have in the past when commuters checked such request on the paper applications.

5. GRH Software System Training

Mr. Finafrock briefed the committee on training of Diamond Transportation dispatchers for the new GRH management system. A training event was held on May 13 which was very successful. Transition to the new system has been relatively smooth. New GRH system is up and running and old system will remain live for a limited time. Diamond is now using new system exclusively.

6. Error Reporting Update

Mr. Finafrock passed out a spreadsheet which highlighted the errors/issues raised by committee members. Log-in bypass issue noted by Clinton Wade has been corrected, effectively making the site more secure. Ross Edgar and Mr. Finafrock explained that some disparities in log-in/log-out issues may simply be due to people using different web browsers, two of the most popular being Internet Explorer and Firefox.

Mr. Edgar and Mr. Finafrock discussed the issue of commuters with multiple accounts. In such a case, the preferred record to work with is the one that does not have a GRH number. Mr. Finafrock suggested that committee members e-mail Commuter Support account if assistance is needed in removing duplicates.

An issue was raised that report generation is still difficult. Mr. Finafrock said that he would assist committee members in with the technical aspects of running a report in the new system. Mr. Ramfos also noted that Commuter Connections will be holding another training session in the fall and encouraged members to submit any topics they would like to see covered at that event.

Mr. Finafrock explained that in the new system, unlike in the old system, employer information is now required. Base further explained that although beneficial, specific employer address is not necessary for generating matches; however, it is for GRH. Base also explained that blank fields for employer names should be discouraged. For commuters who are hesitant to give the name of their employer, a suggestion was made to use generic name such as "federal building" or the street address as the name. Mr. Finafrock also suggested that committee members avoid abbreviations as much as possible due to the variety of ways in which people abbreviate the same term.

7. Client Site Status/Roundtable

Due to the fact that a roundtable discussion took place by default during the previous item, Mr. Thornton suggested that the committee move on to agenda item 8.

8. Other Business/Upcoming Agenda Items

Meeting adjourned.

**The next Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee meeting will be held on
Tuesday, September 16, 2008 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**