

**Commuter Connections Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, September 17, 2013**

**Chairperson: Sandra Brecher, Montgomery County**

**Vice Chairperson: Holly Morello, PRTC**

**Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos (202) 962-3313**

**Item #1 Introductions**

*The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves and to sign the attendance sheet*

Sandra Brecher called the meeting to order by introducing herself and asking the rest of the attendees to do so.

**Item #2 Minutes of July 16, 2013**

*Approval was sought for the July 16, 2013 Commuter Connections Meeting Minutes.*

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

**Item #3 Announcement of New Vice Chair**

*Sandra Brecher, Montgomery County announced the Vice Chair Nominating Committee's recommendation.*

Ms. Brecher stated that the Vice Chair Nominating Committee met by conference call on August 13<sup>th</sup> to determine a nominee for the Subcommittee's new Vice Chair. Lorraine Taylor, Holly Morello and herself consisted of the nominating committee. Ms. Brecher announced that the new Vice Chair nominee being recommended was Anna McLaughlin with the District Department of Transportation. Ms. Brecher asked for a motion to approve the nomination. There was a motion and a second and the Subcommittee unanimously approved Ms. McLaughlin as the Subcommittee's new Vice Chair. Ms. Brecher also stated that Ms. McLaughlin would be representing Commuter Connections on the Board of Director's for Clean Air Partners.

**Item #4 Change of Chairs**

Next, Holly Morello presented a plaque with a certificate of appreciation to Ms. Brecher for her service as the Commuter Connections Subcommittee Chair and thanked her for her work on chairing the Subcommittee as well as stepping in for Sam Oji after he moved on to another position. Ms. Morello then began the meeting as the new Chair for the Subcommittee.

**Item #5      2013 State of the Commute Survey**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the substantive changes made to the 2013 draft State of the Commute Technical Report*

Mr. Ramfos briefed the Subcommittee on the substantive changes made to the draft 2013 State of the Commute Technical Report. The draft report was presented to the Subcommittee during the July 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and a comment period of August 23<sup>rd</sup> was set. Ms. Ramfos explained that the major changes to the report included aligning charts and graph percentages with the narrative as well as ensuring that summary information matched up with what was in the main report. Additionally, staff and the consultant were reviewing the possibilities of how to show the data collected for the main highways and arterials that commuters are using during their commute.

Mr. Ramfos asked that a new review and comment period of October 7<sup>th</sup> be set for additional comments and edits to be submitted to COG/TPB staff on the draft Technical Report. The report will be posted on the Commuter Connections SharePoint site and comments will be accepted through 5 p.m. on October 7<sup>th</sup> through the [doccomments@mwkog.org](mailto:doccomments@mwkog.org) email box.

**Item #6      2013 GRH Applicant Surveys**

*Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on both the Baltimore and Washington GRH Applicant Survey draft reports.*

Ms. Diggins stated that the draft Washington DC and Baltimore region GRH reports were completed in July but results were not presented at the Subcommittee meeting due to time constraints. Ms. Diggins had a PowerPoint presentation on the results from both of the survey's and stated that since the survey for the Washington DC region was the fifth in a series and has a richness of data many of the slides in the presentation have the Washington DC results shown with the comparable results from the 1<sup>st</sup> year survey in the Baltimore region in sidebar columns. Since the survey questionnaire was nearly identical for both surveys, this was done to show comparable results from both regions and is not intended to diminish the results from the Baltimore region.

First, Ms. Diggins covered the survey methodology for both of the regional GRH surveys. The Washington region had 2,374 respondents and the Baltimore region which included St. Mary's County in Sothern Maryland had 543 respondents. There was a combination of both telephone and internet surveys. Data collected included travel for respondents prior to signing up for GRH, during the use of GRH, the influence the program had on travel choices, the use and satisfaction of the program, as well as the use of other Commuter Connections services.

Nest, Ms. Diggins covered demographics and registration information for both programs. In the Washington region, 60% of the registrants live in Virginia and 61% work in the District of Columbia. This has been consistent since 2001. For the Baltimore region, 72% of the respondents live in Maryland and 100% work in Maryland. In the DC region, respondents have very long commutes compared to all regional commuters. Ms. Diggins reported that the average one-way distance for GRH participants is 35.4 miles, compared to 16 miles for all regional commuters. About 60% of GRH participants travel 30 or more miles. In the Baltimore region, the average commute distance is 29.9 miles. In the DC region, most of the respondents correctly

identified the current GRH registration status; however, 50% of past registrants incorrectly thought they were still actively registered for the program. In Baltimore, the results were very similar with 48% of past registrants thinking they were still currently registered. About 60% of DC GRH participants registered before 2010 and 40% registered before 2008. In Baltimore, there were 12% that registered before 2010 and 64% that registered before 2012. DC respondents gave both personal and program reasons for not re-registering to the program. For instance, 18% changed jobs and 23% didn't know their registration had expired.

Next, Ms. Diggins covered GRH advertising recall and impact results. Word of mouth is the most popular way that most GRH program participants in both the DC (35%) and Baltimore (27%) regions learn about the program. Drive alone commuters and carpoolers noted that radio was also a popular way to hear about the program for DC participants. A large percentage of both DC (58%) and Baltimore (46%) heard or saw GRH advertisements. Ms. Diggins also stated that 33% of DC registrants were influenced by GRH advertisements to register to the program and in Baltimore 24% stated the same influence.

Ms. Diggins then covered GRH commute patterns and changes. There were three main questions asked of survey respondents: 1.) Did GRH encourage shifts from SOV to alternative modes?; 2.) Did GRH encourage more frequent use of alternative modes? And 3.) Did GRH extend the duration of alternative mode use? Additionally, respondents were asked how important GRH was relative to other factors in influencing mode shifts.

In the Washington DC region, bus and commuter rail account for a larger share of program use vs. the 2010 and 2007 survey. 99% of current DC region registrants use an alternative mode as their primary mode and 69% of past registrants are still using alternative modes. The share of past registrants who continued using alternative modes (69%) is essentially the same as in 2010 (68%). 24% of DC GRH registrants starting using alternative modes and 3% increased their use of alternative modes after joining the program. Ms. Diggins also reported that 24% of DC program registrants drove alone prior to joining the GRH program and 3% drove alone during the use of the program. Additionally, mode shares increased for participants using the program compared to mode use prior to their use of GRH. The average alternative mode days also increased from 3.4 days per week to 4.4 days and this was primarily due to shifts from Drive Alone to alternative modes rather than from shifts among current alternative mode users.

In the Baltimore region, 99% of the registrants use an alternative mode as their primary mode and 59% of past registrants still use an alternative mode. In 2013, 29% of Baltimore GRH registrants started using alternative modes and 3% increased the use of alternative modes after joining the GRH program. Ms. Diggins reported that 34% of Baltimore program registrants drove alone prior to joining the GRH program and 5% drove alone during program use. Additionally, the mode share for most of the alternative modes increased for participants using the program compared to mode use prior to GRH program registration. Average alternative mode use in the Baltimore region increased from 3.1 days per week to 4.4 days per week. The increase was primarily due to shifts from a Drive Alone mode than from the use of alternative modes.

Next, Ms. Diggins covered results from motivations for change. About 8 in 10 DC program respondents said GRH was somewhat or very important to decisions to start using an alternative mode and similar results were noted for decisions to increase or continue using an existing alternative mode. In Baltimore, 84% of respondents said GRH was somewhat or very important to starting an alternative mode and 47% said GRH was important enough to increase the use of

alternative modes, while 66% said it was important enough to help them decide to maintain the use of an existing alternative mode. About half of the DC respondents who started or increased an alternative mode said they were not likely or only somewhat likely to have switched their mode without the GRH program. The results were very similar for the Baltimore region for both those that started to use an alternative mode because of GRH, or increasing their use of an alternative mode.

Nearly half of the DC GRH survey respondents received other services from Commuter Connections including matchlists and transit information. In the Baltimore region, 65% of the survey respondents received only GRH information. About 16% received transit information and 9% received a matchlist.

In both regions, about half of the respondents who made a change cited other factors that influenced their decisions including saving money (28% and ease of the commute and convenience (23%). In the DC region, about 30% of the respondents used a GRH trip while 10% of the respondents in the Baltimore region did so.

Mr Ramfos stated that a comment period of October 7<sup>th</sup> would be set for both reports and that the draft documents would be posted to the Commuter Connections SharePoint site. Comments and/or edits should be submitted at [docomments@mwkog.org](mailto:docomments@mwkog.org) no later than 5 p.m. on Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Item #7 RideScout Presentation**

*Joseph Kopser, RideScout, briefed the Subcommittee on the RideScout Program and its debut in the DC market.*

Joseph Kopser gave an overview of the RideScout mobile application which provides real-time dynamic information and connections to public, private and social transportation options. Mr. Kopser explained that the program strives to replicate the reliability and flexibility of car ownership by using alternative forms of transportation. Mr. Kopser explained the service would include car sharing services, Capital Bikeshare, taxi cab companies, as well as public transportation options. Mr. Kopser emphasized that RideScout is different in the sense that the program will be providing information on public, private and social transportation solutions inside one mobile app. The service is free to users and the aim is to integrate new emerging services, sustainable options and existing modes of transportation. The program will connect users directly to a ride or to a website and present all transportation options by cost or arrival time to meet an individual's circumstances and preferences. Mr. Kopser stated that RideScout is looking to complement existing efforts in order to change travel behavior and that the firm is committed to sharing data and is open to input on analytics and functionality. The premise is to move commuters into and out of the city on public transportation and ridesharing and then move them around the city in existing alternative modes of transportation.

Keith Bounds asked how the firm is making their money and what charges would the public sector have to pay in order to be part of RideScout? Mr. Kopser responded that the private sector firms such as car sharing firms and taxi cab companies would be paying a fee to be part of the system. There would be no charges to public sector entities that wanted to be part of the program. The Subcommittee then discussed several issues regarding safety and security as well

as liability concerns. Concerns were also raised about Title VI compliance and environmental justice issues.

Mr. Ramfos stated that a working group would be formed to review many of these issues and how Commuter Connections can work on promoting RideScout as a complimentary service well as other mobile ridesharing applications that are new to the region. A solicitation for volunteers would be sent in the Subcommittee follow-up message.

**Item #8 Car Free Days Event Update**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the results for the recently held Car Free Days event.*

Car Free Days are being held from Friday, September 20th - Sunday, September 22nd. The objectives are to raise awareness of transportation alternatives and get area residents to pledge to try non-SOV methods of travel, whether car free or car-lite, for one or more days during the three day event.

The Car Free Day 2013 proclamation signing occurred on July 17, 2013 at the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) meeting. An enlarged proclamation was signed by Scott York, TPB Chair and Loudoun County Board of Supervisors.

The grand prize donated to the regional Car Free Day event was an Apple iPad, courtesy of Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland and the Maryland Transit Administration. Ridescout is also providing generous prize packages. All prizes by sponsors are listed on the web site. Key promotions for Car Free Day include: pizza and beverage, courtesy Flippin' Pizza; free bicycle rentals, courtesy Bike and Roll; and free bus trips, courtesy Frederick County TransIT.

A 60 second radio commercial was played for the Committee which started airing several weeks ago and will continue up to the event. The radio spot aired on WTOP, DC101, and BIG-FM. The Clear Channel radio stations also ran banner ad "take-overs" on their web site's home pages.

Ad space was donated for Car Free Day and is appearing on Fairfax Connector, Montgomery County Ride On, Metrobuses, and Arlington Transit. A donated internet banner ad is also rotating throughout the WMATA website.

A press release was sent out today to announce that Clean Air Partners will be conducting a live Twitter chat party tomorrow about Car Free Day. Text messages have been sent out to those who opted in, to prompt them to encourage friends to pledge. Email blasts were sent out to past participants, employers and universities. And mailings were sent to employers and military bases. Social media accounts were updated to reflect graphics from the 2013 poster. Facebook postings and tweets were placed on a regular basis to keep the Car Free Day event relevant and to garner more friends and followers. A total of 3,594 people like the Car Free Day Facebook page, up 15.5 percent since last year's event; and the number of people following Car Free Day on Twitter increased to 415, up by 28 percent.

**Item #9      FY 2015 Work Program Development**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the development of the FY 2015 Commuter Connections Work Program*

Mr. Ramfos discussed the proposed activities for the FY 2015 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP). He stated that the majority of the program elements and associated projects are unchanged; however there would be new project deliverables for the TERM Data Collection and Analysis project under the Monitoring and Evaluation program element. Mr. Ramfos stated that the 2013 State of the Commute general public report would be printed and distributed and the FY 2015 Applicant Placement Rate Study would also be completed. Mr. Ramfos then distributed and discussed the timeline and schedule for the production of the FY 2015 CCWP.

**Item #10      Commuter Connections Strategic Plan**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan*

Mr. Ramfos stated that the latest version (2012 – 2013) of the adopted Commuter Connections Strategic Plan should be reviewed by all network members. A formal comment period will be set for October 15<sup>th</sup> and an updated plan would be presented at the November Subcommittee meeting. He also stated that the document distributed today is a short version of the plan and that a more formal document is also available on line under the Publications section of the Commuter Connections web site.

**Item #11      4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Budget Report, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter CCWP Progress Report, and FY 2013 CCWP Annual Progress Report**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/DTP staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Budget Report, Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports.*

Mr. Ramfos discussed the FY 2013, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter budget report and stated that it was the final version of the report and that approximately 90% of the budget for the FY 2013 CCWP had been expended. He stated that the CCWP has to come in under budget because there are no carryover funds available each fiscal year. Mr. Ramfos also discussed the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter FY 2013 CCWP Progress Report. He stated that the narratives and data collection sections directly relate to the work accomplished between April and June 2013. Additionally, there is an FY 2013 Annual Progress Report that has also been produced that captures all of the program and project deliverables and data collection results for the entire fiscal year. Mr. Ramos asked if there were any questions or comments.

**Item #11      Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting**

Subcommittee members are encouraged to contact Nicholas Ramfos with any particular agenda items they may be interested in seeing on the next agenda.

**The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, November 19, 2013 at 12 noon.**