



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS RIDEMATCHING COMMITTEE  
MEETING NOTES**

**Tuesday, March 21, 2023**

**1. Introductions**

The meeting was brought to order by Lindsay Morris, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC). Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, asked attendees participating virtually to introduce themselves when their jurisdiction was announced and meeting attendees that were attending the meeting in-person introduced themselves afterwards.

**2. Minutes of the December 20, 2022 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the December 20, 2022, Ridematching Committee Meeting minutes. An initial motion to approve was made by George Clark, Tri County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSMD), and a second motion was made by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County Commuter Services. The minutes were approved as written. All were in favor.

**3. Upcoming Fairs and Promotions**

COG/TPB staff and clients provided information on recent and upcoming transportation fairs and promotions.

**Council of Governments**

COG/TPB staff will be participating at a USPTO hybrid event for Earth Day on April 19 and at Pentagon DOD on May 17.

**Montgomery County Commuter Services**

Preparation was underway for Bike to Work Day. A new pit stop in Wheaton has been added. A programming re-write for the Walk and Ride challenge program is underway.  
Virtual Commuter Information Days

**Tri County Council for Southern Maryland**

Commuter Fair in April  
Bike to Work Day in May  
Hosting a quarterly MTA/MDOT Rideshare Coordinator meeting at Tri County Council for Southern Maryland.

**Baltimore Metropolitan Council**

Bike to Work Day promotion with 8 active pit stops  
Published a Regional Park and Ride map  
Starting marketing campaigns for Spring and Summer

**Howard County**

Earth Day Events  
Green festival  
Bike to Work Day in May

**Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments**

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20002-4290  
[www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) 800-745-RIDE

**Arlington Transit Partners**

National Walking Day April 15<sup>th</sup>  
Seven active pit stops for the Bike to Work Day  
Commuter Fair at the Pentagon DOD on May 17

**Prince William County**

Nine pit stops available for Bike To Work Day  
Earth Day Event including Freddie Mac, USPTO, Chamber of Commerce.

**Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission**

Bike Month  
Madison Race collaboration  
Culpepper Festival in June

**Northern Shenandoah**

Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival

**Maryland Department of Transportation**

Earth Day Event  
Bike Month  
Maryland Auto Show at Baltimore Convention Center  
Promotion of the IncenTrip program.

**Loudoun County OTS**

Loudoun County Transit resumes full service following the End of the transit labor strike  
Loudoun County is hosting a community meeting to provide an update to the public on the proposed Restored transit service for Route 7 and Route 690 (Hillsboro Road)  
Bike to Work Day 2 active pit stops.

**FDA**

Virtual Earth Day  
Bike to Work Day preparation for White Oak pit stop

**4. Enhancing Mobility Innovations Grant Briefing**

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, presented a new Vanpool Microtransit pilot program which was recently awarded funding by the Federal Transit Administration through the Enhancing Mobility Innovations (EMI) grant program. One of the main focuses for the EMI program is the idea of “mobility for all.” Top that end, the Vanpool Microtransit pilot program expects to create software to increase vanpooling as a viable public transit mode for transportation disadvantaged populations. Mr. Sheehan began discussing the context of the grant that COG applied for and the goals of this program.

The project, which has a budget of \$312,500, will be implemented in conjunction with Commuter Connections’ existing software development team and marketing contractor; no new procurement would be involved in this new project. The project received letters of support from various groups including MDOT, GEICO, Commute with Enterprise, and TCCSMD. The Ridematching Committee is being identified as a guiding body to provide feedback. The duration of the project is intended to be 24+ months.

Mr. Sheehan continued his presentation explaining that the project is a development of an open-source Microtransit platform that aids in the creation and growth of flexible vanpooling. This idea differs from the traditional vanpooling model, which is often viewed as long-distance, inflexible, and offers minimal stops. The project is expected to be a continuation of the Flexible Vanpool model already in place but with more marketable and feasible elements for microtransit. Implementation will be focused on transit-scarce areas and COG's Equity Emphasis Areas. The program needs direct partnership with employers who may be interested in transporting employees to their work sites from areas with no public transportation available.

Mr. Sheehan continued sharing some of the project goals including the need to reduce costly single occupancy vehicle commute trips. He then explained the implementation strategy and timeline for this project. The official launch of the platform for use by employers, vanpool operators, and the general public is expected by early 2025.

Mr. Sheehan ended his presentation showing how an envisioned platform workflow would look like based on an employer or Commuter Connections search.

George Clark, TCCSMD, asked if this pilot program is going to be sent out to a consultant or will it be implemented "in house". Mr. Sheehan told him that the project will be done by Commuter Connections with the existing contractors who already work with Commuter Connections software development and marketing projects..

## **5. Mobile Application Update**

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Committee about the upcoming changes to the Commuter Connections Mobile App. The changes will be released in two phases; one cosmetic and the other functional. He reminded the attendees that, at this time, the Commuter Connections App is limited in what it can do. It only offers ridematching services. The Guaranteed Ride Home request service will be added to the new application. In addition to those features, biometric security, including fingerprint and facial recognition, will be incorporated.

Notification enhancements will include "push" and "toast" notifications. Push notifications will prompt end-users to open the app when a program is due for renewal or to remind commuters to log trips as an example. Also, a new customized menu will indicate how many Guaranteed Ride Home trips are left for a commuter, his/her points balance for IncenTrip, and the Park & Rides lots near them.

Mr. Finafrock ended his presentation introducing the new design for ridematching results, the map view, and its list. Commuters will be able to toggle through results so contact information will be seen. Telephone numbers and e-mails will be available via hyperlinks in the app. The new updates are expected to be delivered by the end of this fiscal year, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## **6. TDM System Purge Discussion**

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, began by reviewing an example of an electronic ridematching purge letter which was included as a meeting handout. Mr. Finafrock reiterated that everybody in the database receives the letter once a year following registration, and annually thereafter. The letter is sometimes customized at the request of Commuter Connections partners. The electronic version is provided to all commuters who have an e-mail on file, those who do not will receive a paper copy through the mail.

Mr. Finafrock explained that the purge process has been in place for many years, however, now may be a good time to consider modifications because new programs have been added like the incenTrip and other incentive programs. The idea is to add some language to the letter and possibly include a purge for incentive program enrollment along with the ridematching purge. The letter can be customized by local jurisdictions who opt to change the base letter.

George Clark TCCSMD, asked if this new proposed ridematching purge letter was going to be sent before the April purge process. Mr. Finafrock replied that the process is running as always, and no changes are expected until a future month.

Mr. Finafrock ended the discussion asking for feedback and ideas from the Committee about what should be included in a sample letter shown during the meeting. The current generic purge letter will be sent to attendees so they can submit ideas for any updated language that could be included in a new version of the holistic purge letter.

Nancy Huggins, MTA, asked if this purge process is only for the Ridematching Program. Mr. Finafrock responded that GRH participants also undergo the purge process if their accounts are not renewed.

## **7. TDM Resource Directory**

Jetaune Randall-Slaughter, COG/TPB staff, reported that the Resource Directory for January 2023 has been finalized. She thanked Stephen Finafrock and Dan Sheehan of COG/TPB staff for their contributions and all the Rideshare Coordinators who submitted their changes on time.

She encouraged all Rideshare Coordinators to start sending the updates for the new Resource Directory before July 2023.

## **8. Second Quarter Progress Report**

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, presented highlights to the Committee from the Commuter Connections Quarterly Progress Report. Mr. Finafrock noted that significant progress was made on the ATCMTD project, which integrated Flextime Rewards into the application and added Corridor Challenges as a new program; both enhancements were released to the public in December 2022.

At the end of December 2022, Commuter Connections and its members served 13,411 commuters registered in Ridematching. Also, Mr. Finafrock said that all the reports in the TDM should be working once database migration was completed.

He went on to review data about the Guaranteed Ride Home Program. As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, a total of 1,995 commuters were registered to the Program, which is an increase over the prior quarter. Commuter Connections continues to provide see growth in the number of GRH trips provided per quarter. Mr. Finafrock reminded everyone that the Guaranteed Ride Home Program now offers 6 trips a year.

Mr. Finafrock then summarized Table 1: Quarterly Activity and Impact Summary on page 18 of the report. Notably, there were 4,219 matchlists sent in this quarter alone.

George Clark, TCCSMD, asked if Table 6 data is included in the progress report. Mr. Finafrock said that Table 6 is reported as part of the Commuter Connections Annual Report.

## **9. Roundtable**

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, shared his experience commuting to work noticing significant traffic near the Pentagon area due to construction projects in the parking lot.

Marc Lewis, DOD, explained that there are two ongoing construction projects at the Pentagon. One is the repair of the tunnel underneath that goes to the Pentagon Transit Center, the other is the realignment of connector roads that will better intersect with the southeast. He estimated that these projects will last a year.

Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, shared that Joanne Roberson has left and is being replaced by a new staff member. Her name is Kerry McKenney.

Arlington Transportation Partners announced a formation of the first commuter vanpool connecting Arlington to the Loudoun County.

#### **10. Other Business/Upcoming Agenda Items**

George Clark, TCCSMD, suggested that Table 6 should be added on the next meeting agenda for further discussion.

**The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee will be held on June 20, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**