

MEETING NOTES
CAR FREE DAY STEERING COMMITTEE
2022 EVENT
May 11, 2022

1. Introductions

Committee members, guests, and other attendees introduced themselves by name and affiliation.

2. Meeting Minutes Approval

The minutes from the March 9, 2022 meeting were approved as written.

3. Car Free Day 2021 Draft Report Update

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented an updated version of the 2021 Car Free Day event report, initially presented at the Steering Committee's March 9, 2022 meeting. The updated version contained minor edits and improvements collected during the open comment period, held through April 15, 2022. The refreshed report will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee at its May 17, 2022 meeting, and a comment period will be established. Final endorsement to approve the 2021 Car Free Day event report will be sought at the July 19, 2022 Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting.

4. Marketing Materials

The Steering Committee plans to remove all references (copy and visuals) related to the COVID-19 pandemic from the 2022 Car Free Day event marketing materials. The Car Free Day Steering Committee will need to provide any final feedback at its July 13, 2022 meeting.

5. Prize Sponsors

The Steering Committee is in search of sponsors to donate in-kind prizes for the regional Car Free Day 2022 raffle. Each person who takes the Car Free Day pledge and provides a valid address from the Washington, DC region is eligible. Sponsors from 2021 will be asked to renew participation in this year's Car Free Day raffle. Additionally, other potential sponsors will be contacted. George Clark, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, is donating a tablet for the 2022 event. Marina Budimir, District Department of Transportation (DDOT), noted at the March 9, 2022 Steering Committee meeting that it is considering a possible Capital Bikeshare promotion for all who take the Car Free Day pledge. Possible sponsors for Car Free Day 2022 include Vegetable and Butcher (V+B), a ready to enjoy meal delivery company, and Southblock, a brick and mortar coffee/juice bar.

6. Online Pledge Form Discussion

The 2021 Car Free Day online pledge form was reviewed by the Steering Committee. Some members expressed concern with the length of the form and inquired as to the possibility of consolidation or elimination of some of the questions. Steering Committee Members are welcome to submit specific written suggestions to COG/TPB staff, with the caveat that certain questions on the pledge form are integral to the data collection process for measurement and reporting of transportation and emissions impacts.

7. DC Open Streets Presentation

Andra Roventa, DDOT Transportation Planner, presented about the District's Open Streets events. The events help to inspire people to think differently about their city streets by encouraging physical activity through recreational opportunities, education, and by building the local community and surrounding neighborhoods.

The Open Streets events are part of Mayor Bowser's Vision Zero initiative and via road closures, prioritize people over cars so they may freely enjoy public space, apart from vehicular traffic. The events also include pop-up art installations to temporarily enhance public space during the event. Another key element of the Open Streets concept is to involve local businesses as part of the fabric within the community. Local merchants within the physical boundaries of the street closure event provide day-only specials and activities.

Open Streets events were held in 2019 and 2021 when three miles of Georgia Avenue reigned car-free, between Missouri Rd NW and Barry PI NW. Attendees were asked to travel to the event by foot, bike, scooter, or by taking public transit. In attention to showcasing multi-modal transportation options for travel and recreation, Open Streets events promote activities for various ages and abilities, such as double-dutch jump roping, yoga, dance, and aerobics. Attendance is free and no registration is required.

Approximately 20,000 attended the Georgia Avenue Open Streets event on October 2, 2021 to enjoy food, fitness, and fun. The majority of survey respondents (70%) discovered businesses on the Georgia Avenue corridor (up from 56% in 2019); 72% of attendees had a more positive opinion of the corridor; 70% of attendees spent 1-3 hours with 48% participating in activities.

Planning an Open Streets event involved inter-agency coordination within the District of Columbia government and working with local partners such as Business Improvement Districts and community organizations. DDOT has found that it could take 3 – 6 months to plan an Open Streets event, depending on the typical traffic volume of a street that may be closed to vehicles. Volunteers are also needed to make the Open Streets DC events successful and were incentivized through a one-year membership to Capital Bikeshare, a T-shirt, SWAG, and a post-event gathering. Upcoming Open Streets DC spring events will be held on May 21, 2022 along Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, SE, and on June 4, 2022 along 7th Street NW.

COG/TPB staff encouraged meeting attendees to advocate for an Open Streets Event during Car Free Day 2022 within their respective jurisdictions.

8. Jurisdiction Roundtable

Committee members provided updates on jurisdictional plans for Car Free Day 2022.

9. Other Business

The next Car Free Day Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 13, 2022 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am.

Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request, including alternative formats of meeting materials. Visit www.mwcog.org/accommodations or call (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD).