



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 19, 2022
12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Chairperson: Kari Snyder, MDOT
Vice Chairperson: Judy Galen, Loudoun County
Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos 202/962-3313

Item #1 **Introductions**

The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves based on their jurisdictional location in order to be marked as present on the attendance sheet.

Item #2 **Minutes of May 17, 2022 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the May 17, 2022 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Kari Snyder, MDOT, requested a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

A motion was made by George Clark, TCCSMD, to approve the minutes, and seconded by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the May 17, 2022 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 **Vice Chair Nominating Committee**

Kari Snyder, MDOT, appointed the Nominating Committee that will select the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson.

Kari Snyder, MDOT, appointed the Nominating Committee that will select the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson. Ms. Snyder appointed herself, current Vice Chair, Judy Galen, Loudoun County, and Anna McLaughlin, DDOT representing Marina Budimir who was last year's Subcommittee Chair. Ms. Budimir was not in attendance and has moved on from DDOT and will not be able to serve in any committee roles. Ms. Snyder made a motion to approve the appointed Vice Chair Nominating Committee and the motion was seconded by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County. COG/TPB staff will convene the Nominating Committee in early August for further discussion.

Item #4 **FY2022 Car Free Day Event Draft Report**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented substantive changes to the draft FY2022 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented substantive changes to the draft FY2022 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee. The document was drafted for the March 2022 Car Free Day Steering Committee meeting with a comment period established. The report was previously presented to the Subcommittee in May; a comment period was subsequently established. There were no significant changes made to the report since the first draft report. George Clark, TCCSMD, made a motion to endorse the document and Kari Snyder, MDOT, seconded the motion. The document will be published to the Commuter Connections website and a follow-up message will be sent alerting the Subcommittee and Car Free Day Steering Committee.

Item #5 Clean Air Partners Update

Judy Galen, Loudoun County Commuter Services, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of Clean Air Partners activities.

Judy Galen, Loudoun County Commuter Services, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of Clean Air Partners activities. Clean Air Partners released a new strategic plan last month and a partner toolkit is available through Jen Desimone, COG/TPB staff. Clear Air Partners launched their summer campaign to educate residents on actions they can take to improve the region’s air and protect their health. The launch took place during Air Quality Awareness Week in early May. Summer campaign activities will continue during Ozone Action Month in August to heighten awareness during the hottest time of the summer. The Eco-Driving exhibit will be traveling to two high-foot-traffic locations: Westfield Wheaton Mall and Arundel Mills Mall. This exhibit includes a vehicle encased in a clear plastic bubble which occasionally exudes puffs of “smoke” vapor to deliver air quality messaging in a fun and memorable way. Clean Air Partners also plans to promote Car Free Day which will take place in September.

Item #6 2022 State of the Commute Survey

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights of the 2022 State of the Commute Survey.

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights of the 2022 State of the Commute Survey. The 2022 State of the Commute survey is the eighth triennial survey completed. 8,396 employed residents of the COG region were surveyed. An address-based sample of randomly selected postal addresses received survey invitation postcards via USPS with a link to the internet survey. Many of the questions within the survey were identical to past iterations of the survey for tracking purposes. Survey topics included current/past commute patterns, telework, commute satisfaction/ease, work/home location moves, access to transit/express lanes, awareness of Commuter Connections, etc. New questions included topics regarding commute/telework before pandemic, pandemic significance, and telework experience.

Preliminary survey results show that many aspects of commuting changed due to the pandemic, but some stayed consistent. Some changes included widespread telework, increased use of driving alone, declines in transit use, lower awareness of commute ads, etc. Three-quarters of workers had a change in their commute or work situation since before the pandemic. 60% of workers started or increased telework and 32% shifted to full-time telework. In 2022, telework accounted for 48% of weekly commute trips, drive alone accounted for 40%, and 12% of commute trips were made in alternative modes. Use of drive alone increased 14% for trips made to outside work locations since the prior survey (2019). Commuters who used alternative modes pre-pandemic switched modes more than drive alone commuters did. Many commuters shifted to telework and some to drive alone.

Ms. Diggins stated that transit lost mode share to driving alone among all sub-groups in 2022, even tradition transit populations which include core residents, core workers, young, non-white, and limited car access. 68% of commuters who stopped riding transit between 2019 and 2022 said the pandemic was a factor. Service availability was also a factor for some, because their home and work location had changed. In 2022, workers who commuted to outside work locations traveled an average of 16.9 miles, which is similar to 2019 at 17.2 miles. The average commute time dropped to 37 minutes for workers who commuted to outside work locations in 2022 from 43 minutes in 2019. The shift of many commute trips to telework could have resulted in faster trips for those who continued commuting. Shifts from transit, which have a long average travel time, to driving alone, which has a shorter travel time, could also have contributed to the drop. 76% of carpoolers were riding with family members in 2022, unlike in 2019 when household carpools were around 56%. The other major difference in carpool formation in 2022 was the drop in slug line/casual carpool from 20% in 2019 to 4% in 2022. Telework had a dramatic daily impact on commuting in 2022 with 44% of all workers teleworking on a typical workday. 66% of commuters teleworked occasionally in 2022. 95% of workers teleworked at least one day per week. In 2019, only 59% of workers teleworked one or more days per week.

Ms. Diggins explained that nearly one-third of non-teleworkers (9% of all workers) could do some work at a remote location and would be interested in teleworking. 86% of teleworkers agreed they were productive working from home. 80% were able to coordinate with co-workers and 66% said they were better able to concentrate on work. 92% of current teleworkers would like to telework at least one day per week in the future and 71% want to telework 3 or more days per week. 52% of 2022 respondents were satisfied with their commute which is about the same as in 2019 (50%). Bikers/walkers were most satisfied with their commute and Metrorail/bus riders were least satisfied. Commuters who carpooled/vanpooled or drove alone reported higher satisfaction in 2022 than in 2019. Transit riders were less satisfied in 2022. In 2022, 26% of commuters said their commute was more difficult than a year ago, but 24% said it was easier. 27% of respondents recalled hearing/seeing commute ads in the past year which is well below the 2019 rate of 45%. 34% of respondents who recalled ads took an action to try to change their commute. 40% of regional commuters knew of Commuter Connections and 5% of these commuters contacted the program or used its website in the past year; this was a drop from 11% in 2019. 56% of respondents said their employers offered commute services at the workplace. 43% of respondents said a transit/vanpool subsidy was the most widely available service in 2022. Drive alone was lower at worksites where parking was not free and commute services were offered. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, commented that stoppage of transit use during the pandemic likely had an effect on commuting difficulty compared to a year prior. Mr. Ramfos also commented that advertisement from Commuter Connections ceased during most of the pandemic which likely had an effect on commuters' knowledge of the program. Mr. Ramfos asked if questions regarding parking fees at the workplace were asked in the survey to gauge if changes were being made by employers. Ms. Diggins responded that 92% of those who now have free parking responded that parking was free at their workplace prior to the pandemic, 4% said it was not free, and 4% said they did not know. A comment period for this report will be open until August 12, 2022.

Item #7 2022 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Survey

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights from the 2022 GRH surveys for both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions.

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights from the 2022 GRH surveys for both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions. The survey methodology included an internet survey and a targeted telephone survey of registrants who were registered for either the Washington DC and Baltimore/St. Mary's regional GRH programs within the past three years. This survey was the 8th triennial survey for Washington DC and the 4th for Baltimore/St. Mary's. The survey for Washington DC had a sample size of 1,370 and Baltimore had 96. A combination of internet and telephone follow-ups were done for non-respondents. Both current and past registrants were eligible for the survey. Most registrants learned about GRH through word-of-mouth. 82% of registrants have participated in the GRH program for 3 or more years. More than half of past registrants cited a pandemic-related reason for why they did not re-register. In 2022, 32% of current participants said they were no longer registered while 28% of past registrants thought they were current. Six in ten current Washington registrants used an alternative mode as their primary mode and 35% primarily teleworked. 26% drove alone before they registered for GRH ("pre-GRH") and 4% drove alone while they were actively registered for the program ("during-GRH"). Primary telework for the during-GRH period is likely higher due to registrants reporting telework while still registered for the GRH program when the pandemic began. Average alternative mode use increased from 3.3 days per week pre-GRH to 3.7 days per week during-GRH. 23% of GRH registrants shifted from driving alone to alternative modes and 2% increased alternative mode use after joining.

Ms. Diggins continued with the Baltimore region survey results. Nearly all current Baltimore registrants used an alternative mode as their primary mode. 28% of past registrants also used alternative modes. Both drive alone and telework were common primary modes for past registrants. 40% drove alone before they were registered for GRH and 6% drove alone after registering for GRH. Carpool/Vanpool use increased from 14% to 30% and bus use rose from 25% to 38%. Average alternative mode use increased from 2.7 days per week pre-GRH to 4.3 days per week during-GRH. 34% of GRH registrants shifted from driving alone to alternative modes and 3% increased alternative mode use after joining. More than 8 in 10 respondents said GRH was important to their

decisions to start using alternative modes or maintain alternative mode use. 60% of respondents who started using alternative modes and 65% who increased alternative mode use were not likely or only somewhat likely to switch without GRH. 56% of GRH registrants received other Commuter Connections services; most common services being park and ride information, matchlists, transit information, carpool/vanpool information, and events information. 74% of all respondents said GRH was the only service or the most important service they received from Commuter Connections. 40% of GRH registrants took an eligible GRH trip. Carpoolers and vanpoolers were more likely to have used a GRH trip than were transit riders; registrants who commuted 20 or more miles were also more likely to have used a trip than were registrants with shorter commutes. 75% of GRH trips were taken to address an illness and 13% were for unscheduled overtime. Respondents waited on average of 19 minutes for the taxi to arrive. 97% of respondents who used a trip said they were satisfied. Nancy Huggins, MDOT, asked if the data regarding commuter knowledge of GRH through bus/train signage included park and ride lots. Ms. Diggins replied that if the park and ride lots are connected to transit use then the responses would have included that signage as well. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, commented that current GRH registrants are likely an accurate percentage due to registrants only being able to stay registered for one year. A comment period for this report will be open until August 17, 2022.

Item #8 2022 Car Free Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which will be held on September 22, 2022.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which will be held on September 22, 2022. Due to the pandemic, telework has been the primary commute mode for most commuters in the region for the last two years. As such, the Car Free Day promotion has included telework to still get people to pledge to go car-free or car-lite for the event. Last year, some commuters began venturing back into their offices which helped with the pledge numbers for the 2021 Car Free Day event. With high gas prices and lower COVID infection rates, there is hope that the number of pledges this year grows and many will participate in the event. The same materials are going to be used from the 2021 event with the exception of COVID messaging and masks on the poster. Hard copies of the flyers and posters will be available by the end of August. The 2022 event website is being updated at www.carfreemetrod.org. The proclamation will be signed virtually tomorrow at the TPB meeting by Pamela Sebesky, TPB Chair. Many jurisdictions are conducting proclamation signings of their own, which is encouraged.

Item #9 4th Quarter CCWP Budget Report

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2022 CCWP 4th Quarter preliminary Budget Report.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2022 CCWP 4th Quarter preliminary Budget Report. The Commuter Operations Center has expended about 73%, GRH 61%, Marketing 73%, Monitoring and Evaluation 69%, Employer Outreach 51%, and GRH Baltimore 72%. The total overall expenditure for the entire program was at 69%. A finalized version of the final budget report will be presented in September.

Item #10 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 20, 2022 at 12 noon.