



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS RIDEMATCHING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017
10:00 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
COG Board Room

Chairperson: Holly Morello, PRTC
Vice Chairperson: Alan Doran, Harford Commute Smart

COG Staff Contact: Stephen Finafrock, 202/962-3385 or sfinafrock@mwcog.org

1. Introductions

The meeting was brought to order by Chairperson Holly Morello of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC). Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and sign the attendance sheet.

2. Minutes of the December 20, 2016 Meeting

Approval was sought for the December 20, 2016 Ridematching Committee Meeting. An initial motion to approve was made by Mark Sofman of Montgomery County and a second made by George Clark of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSM). The minutes were approved as written.

3. Upcoming Fairs and Promotions

Anne Arundel County

- Fort Meade Earth Day
- Arundel Mills Presentation
- Bike to Work Day
- Radio Ads
- Movie Theater Advertisements
- Local Newsletters Advertisements
- Television Advertisements
- Currently planning for geofencing ads, additional radio ads and a gas station campaign

Baltimore City Department of Transportation

- State of Downtown Breakfast
- Earth Day Fair at the Social Security Building
- Downtown 101
- Bike to Work Day

Harford County

- Hutchins Park, Havre de Grace-Bike to Work Day
- Harford County Administration Building, Bike to Work Day

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD, 777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.E., SUITE 300, WASHINGTON, DC 20002-4239

THE COMMUTER INFORMATION SOURCE FOR MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WWW.COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG

1-800-745-RIDE

Transit Services of Frederick County

- Radio Advertisements
- Online advertisements with Frederick News Post
- Gas pump topper ads
- Print advertisements with local magazines
- Earth Day with Transit
- Brunswick Safety Day
- FCC Youth Transition Fair
- Thermo Fisher Scientific Earth Day
- Frederick City Benefit and Open Enrollment Fair
- MARC/MTA Commuter Bus Appreciation Day
- Bike to Work Day with Preparty on May 12th

Loudoun County Commuter Services

- Leesburg Flower Show
- Farmers Markets in Loudoun
- Earth Day Tree Giveaway

PRTC

- Navy Yard
- GMU Health Wellness Fair
- Freddie Mac Earth Day Event
- Lockheed Martin Earth Day Event
- Pentagon Commuter Fair

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG)

- Event at the Washington Navy Yard
- USGS Earth Day Event
- Department of Commerce Event
- USPTO Green Fair
- DHHS Earth Day Event (Rockville)
- DHHS Earth Day Event (D.C.)
- FDA Earth Day Event
- Transportation Fair at the Pentagon
- Bike to Work Day
- Transportation Fair at the Department of the Interior

North Bethesda Transportation Center (NBTC)

- ARC
- Transwestern
- FDA Earth Day Event
- Kaiser
- HHS Earth Day Event
- JBG Earth Day Event
- 6010 Executive Blvd (lobby event)
- USP Health Benefits Fair
- James Davis Health Fair
- Progressions Salon
- Target Huddle Meeting

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

- Event at the Washington Navy Yard
- Bike to Work Day Promotions
- ACT Public Policy Summit
- Pentagon Commuter Fair

- Bike to Work Day
- Calvert County Green Expo
- St. Mary's County Business Expo

4. TDM System Update

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, began his presentation by accessing the test server for the TDM System. The test version is linked to the production server, which means that the data displayed currently reflects what is live. COG/TPB Staff use the test version to replicate and fix software errors throughout the TDM system.

Mr. Finafrock then addressed the reported "Too Many Redirects" error experienced when an admin attempts to create an account with an existing email address. This issue has been fixed and the TDM system now displays the correct error message. COG/TPB Staff is looking into the possibility for the TDM system to provide the current user's profile when attempting to enter an existing email address within the system. In addition, the "one-click" Ride matching functionality is now active for the jurisdictions of Delaware and Charlottesville.

Mr. Finafrock then showcased all the special events that have been loaded into the TDM System by COG/TPB staff. This includes all major sporting events for the region and signature events for the National Cherry Blossom Festival. Fatemeh Allahdoust, Virginia Department of Transportation, asked Mr. Finafrock to elaborate on the ridematching process for special events. Mr. Finafrock then selected the Orioles Vs. Yankees game, added it to his commuter profile and ran a matchlist for the event. Mr. Finafrock then noted that for other commuters to appear on this matchlist, they must have also added the event to their commuter profile.

Mr. Finafrock then encouraged all in attendance to add any special events going on in their jurisdiction, and he recommended talking about this functionality during the coming marketing events.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB Staff, informed those in attendance that Howard County has received a grant from the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to develop a real-time ridematching mobile application. The grant received is in the amount of \$197,000. Commuter Connections has already developed a real-time ridematching application, called CarpoolNow, which had a soft launch back in September 2016. COG was approached by Howard County regarding the use of the MTA grant for marketing the existing application. This work will begin in FY2018 and can come in the form of both advertisements and driver/rider incentives. Member jurisdictions were encouraged to offer any marketing ideas they may have.

5. Mobile Applications Update

Mr. Finafrock explained the need for an update to the Commuter Connections mobile application. The goal is to bring this app into accordance with modern design standards, expand the functionality of the app, enable GPS suggested park and ride lots and incorporate "family branding" for the Commuter Connections and CarpoolNow apps.

An iPad was passed around for attendees to test use the newest version of the Commuter Connections app during Mr. Finafrock's presentation.

Ms. Allahdoust noted that not all the park and ride lots were appearing when running a matchlist using the iPad. Mr. Finafrock then clarified that only the park and ride lots within the specified search radius will appear.

Mr. Finafrock continued his presentation by showing the various imagery that is cycled through when viewing the login screen. Images include iconic architecture for D.C., Maryland and Virginia.

Mr. Finafrock then continued to demonstrate the navigation of the app. Once the user has logged into their existing account, or created a new one, they may find a ridematch, a park and ride lot, or access their commute log. Users may view their match results via a map view or a list view. This applies for park and ride lots as well. Users can see the ridematch results, and the choices on the list view for contacting people who are registered. Information is now in pop-up mode. Since 2008, Commuter Connections has required that commuters enter at least one piece of information; either a telephone or e-mail address.

Ms. Allahdoust asked if it is possible to add a live space-availability option for park and ride lots within the mobile app. Mr. Finafrock noted that if Commuter Connections had access to a live data stream, it would be possible to add this feature without having to overhaul the app. Mr. Finafrock then noted that we need to be very selective when adding features, because it will eventually slow the app down and lead to an unpleasant experience for users. The application will be expanded in the future to include more functions such as a Trip planner, which was asked about by Mr. Clark.

Users will now have access to their general and/or incentive commute logs. This will add a level of convenience to commuters who are registered for/in 'Pool Rewards, and they will need to log their trips into the TDM system.

Mr. Ramfos reiterated that adding additional functionality will slow down the app for users. Ms. Allahdoust suggested adding a link to Virginia 511. Mr. Ramfos stated that there is also an awareness of the valuable information commuters can obtain through the Commuter Connections web site about Park & Ride lots, and the importance of this being included in the new app. COG/TPB staff provides updates of Park and Ride lot information regularly.

Users can expect this update to be pushed out to the Apple Appstore, Google Play and BlackBerry World within the next two weeks.

6. Client Site Status | Roundtable

Darlene Nader, NBTC, requested that the bi-weekly reports be sent in a format compatible with Microsoft Excel. Mr. Ramfos noted that this would create possible issues. Mr. Ramfos also stated that individuals enrolled in the program trust us with their personal information and we cannot offer anything that could put their personal information at risk. It is suggested that these reports are deleted or shredded upon completion. In addition, members of the jurisdictions can always have the choice to call the support group line for special data requests.

Mr. Finafrock also mentioned that COG/TPB staff is working on adding a new function to the TDM System. Users may soon be able to request a Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) trip using the TDM interface. Upon logging into their account, a user would click the "Guaranteed Ride Home" module to find a button to request a ride, where they will be contacted to continue to make the arrangements. Live chat to extend communications with commuters is another improvement being considered for the near future.

Elizabeth Denton, Arlington Transportation Partners, asked if the Commuter Connections mobile app will be able to handle GRH trip requests. Mr. Finafrock reiterated that the more we add to the app, the slower it will get and there are no plans to add this feature now.

George Clark, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, inquired about Uber as an option for providing trips to commuters in Southern Maryland. Travis Johnson, COG/TPB staff, explained that Uber and Lyft are not ready to serve commuters in that area. He added that including Southern Maryland is not a viable solution at this point. Nonetheless, Steve Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, noted that Enterprise already covers this area and if needed Diamond Transportation is available to cover any trips for those that are disabled.

Finally, Fatemeh Allahdoust, Virginia Department of Transportation, asked about the possibility of linking CarpoolNow with the updated mobile app. Steve Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, added that for now it is only possible to connect both platforms through the desktop version.

7. January 2017 TDM Resource Directory

Steven Osborn, COG/TPB Staff, gave an update to those in attendance regarding the status of the January 2017 TDM Resource Directory. The Resource Directory has been completed and distributed. Mr. Osborn urged those in attendance to send any updates as they become available. Members do not have to wait for the update solicitation.

Mr. Johnston reminded Committee members to review the professional or transit-related updates included in the Directory.

Mr. Osborn reminded those in attendance that another outreach effort will be made closer to June for the July 2017 edition.

8. Quarterly Progress Report

Mr. Finafrock, reviewed the FY2017 CCWP 3rd Quarter Progress Report and encouraged Committee members to review portions that are relevant to their program. Minor mistakes can be made when a formula is changed altering the numbers on the tables.

Sharon Affinito, Loudoun County Commuter Services, noted that application numbers were down this quarter compared to the last report produced. Mr. Johnston attributed this decline to the recent surge in applications last quarter due to Metro's SafeTrack initiative and noted that program applications have seen an overall increase.

Ms. Affinito followed up by asking about the call logs sent to COG/TPB Staff. Mr. Finafrock clarifies that these logs are published as part of the Annual Report and can also be used as an effective marketing tool. Mr. Johnston, COG/TPB staff remarked that sometimes for state funding purposes (Maryland, for example) the data is required.

Darlene Nader, NBTC, mentioned that COG/TPB Staff should consider drafting a new version of Table 6 in the quarterly report. Travis Johnston, COG/TPB staff, mentioned that a draft can be made and presented at the June 20th Committee meeting, so it can be implemented by the next fiscal year.

9. Updated Bi-Weekly and Monthly Reports

Mr. Finafrock introduced a new COG/TPB staff member, Jetaune Slaughter. Mrs. Slaughter will be preparing and emailing these reports to jurisdiction members. Members are reminded to inform COG/TPB Staff of any staff or address changes.

The various reports jurisdiction members will receive are the monthly call list, the biweekly New Applicant report, the End User report, and The Suspicious Appcodes report.

Jurisdiction members are reminded to work through these reports and contact COG/TPB Staff at commutersupport@mwkog.org with any questions or concerns.

10. Other Business | Upcoming Agenda Items

No discussion was had regarding this agenda item.

The Next meeting of the Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee will be held on June 20, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

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