



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING

Chairperson: Marina Budimir, DDOT

Vice Chairperson: Kari Snyder, MDOT

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. Anna McLaughlin, DDOT, led the meeting as Chairperson due to the absence of Marina Budimir.

Item #2 **Minutes of January 19, 2021 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the January 19, 2021 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, and seconded by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the January 19, 2021 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 **FY 2020 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Customer Satisfaction Surveys for the Washington DC and Baltimore/St. Mary's County Regions**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY 2020 GRH Customer Satisfaction survey results for both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY 2020 GRH Customer Satisfaction survey results for both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions. Both reports were presented to the Subcommittee at the January 19th meeting along with PowerPoint presentations showcasing the highlights of each report. The documents were posted to SharePoint following the meeting with an open comment period through February 19th. There were only a few edits with regard to formatting and page numbering. For the Washington DC region, there were 1,707 surveys distributed in FY2020 with 165 survey responses received, which is about a 10% response rate. 97% of respondents were pleased with overall GRH service. 42% indicated that personal illness was the reason for using GRH service. The average wait time was 13 minutes and 96% of respondents waited 30 minutes or less for a GRH ride. For the Baltimore region, there were 68 surveys distributed in FY2020 with 7 survey responses received, which is about a 10% response rate. 100% of respondents were pleased with overall GRH service. 43% indicated that personal illness was the reason for using GRH service. The average wait time was 28 minutes and 86% of respondents waited 30 minutes or less for a GRH ride. George Clark, TCCSMD, made a motion to endorse both the FY2020 GRH Customer Satisfaction Survey reports for the Washington DC and Baltimore regions. Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, seconded the motion. The reports will be marked final and posted to the Publications page of the Commuter Connections website.

Item #4 **FY2021 Placement Rate Survey Draft Report**

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 Commuter Connections Placement Rate Survey Draft Report.

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 Commuter Connections Placement Rate Survey Draft Report. 282 commuters who received Commuter Connections services during July and September 2020 were surveyed, as well as 145 commuters who participated in a Commuter Connections incentive program such as incenTrip, Flextime Rewards, or CarpoolNow since each program's respective launch. The survey collects data for the regional TDM evaluation project and to identify possible program improvements. Questions were added to the survey to examine telework changes related to the coronavirus pandemic, the likelihood to return to worksites, and Commuter Connections services. After review of the demographics within the survey responses, incentive program applicants were more likely to live within the Washington, DC region and there was a higher rate of incentive applicants that were under the age of 35. 69% of recent applicants were employed with a federal agency while 33% of incentive applicants worked for private sectors. 74% of incentive respondents teleworked full-time at the time of the survey. Prior to the start of the pandemic, only 4% teleworked full-time. More than half of respondents expected to continue some telework after the pandemic ends. 9% expect to telework full-time and 50% expect to split their time between home and main worksite. Seven out of ten incentive applicants made a commute change after receiving services and most changed to telework (37.9%). 14.5% made a change to transit and 11% made a change to carpool or vanpool.

Ms. Diggins continued with the top sources of how respondents learned about Commuter Connections. 21% of incentive applicants learned of Commuter Connections through the internet and were less likely to learn about Commuter Connections from an employer or word of mouth, in contrast to recent applicants. GRH and incenTrip were the most used services. 54% of incentive applicants used incenTrip with 76% of those users logging trips on the bus or train. 58% of incenTrip users were frequent loggers who logged six or more trips per week. 50% of the 18 respondents registered to CarpoolNow said to have used the app 1 or more times while 22% said to have used the app 5 or more times. For Flextime Rewards, two respondents said that they received an alert and one respondent said that they had a delayed departure. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, mentioned that the incentive programs are fairly new and were not fully marketed due to the pandemic. In three years, the survey will be conducted again, and more data should be found at that time. The draft report will be posted to SharePoint with a comment period ending on April 6, 2021.

Item #5 **FY2021 Retention Rate Survey**

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, presented highlights from the data recently collected from the FY2021 Retention Rate Survey.

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, presented highlights from the data recently collected from the FY2021 Retention Rate Survey. A random sample of 1,321 commuters who last participated in GRH or received Commuter Connections services between July 2012 and June 2018 were surveyed. The survey was last conducted in 2016. The survey is used to collect data for FY 2021- FY 2023 TDM Analysis Report to estimate the percentage of past service users who made alternate mode shifts and maintained those modes. The analysis divided respondents into categories by program used and last activity dates. The three time periods used for analysis were current travel mode, travel mode before receiving services (GRH and non-GRH), and during service (if current travel mode is drive alone). The coronavirus pandemic disrupted commute patterns, so modes used at the time of the survey were not expected to reflect either the recent travel or likely future commutes. The 2021 survey asked about three recent commute travel cases which were current travel (in February 2021), pre-pandemic travel (February 2020), and likely travel when pandemic is over. 67% of respondents participated in the GRH program. 47% respondents received a transit schedule, route, and fare information. 28% received Park and Ride lot information. Respondents were evenly divided between GRH only, non-GRH only, and GRH/non-GRH. 25% of respondents said to be currently registered for GRH. 72% of respondents teleworked full-time at the time of the survey. Prior to the start of the pandemic, only 8% teleworked full-time.

81% of respondents said their commute in February 2021 was different than before the pandemic. 63% shifted to full-time telework while 18% were still traveling to an outside work location but used different modes than before. A higher share of respondents said they would drive alone one or more days per week after the pandemic, but likely to use alternate modes of travel similar to pre-pandemic. This data suggests that pre-pandemic mode use is reasonable to use for retention analysis. 25% of respondents who reduced transit use during the pandemic said they would resume transit use when the pandemic was over, even without transit service/safety changes. 65% mentioned changes would make them more likely to use transit at their previous level. Before the pandemic, alternate mode use was higher among past GRH users (52%) than non-GRH users (39%). Respondents who used only non-GRH services were more likely to drive alone at least some days a week after the pandemic than past GRH users, but they also reported planned use of alternate modes as well. The calculation of retention rates for each respondent will define the initial placement and retention. Adjustments will need to be made to ensure rates calculated from survey data don't overestimate the actual rates (i.e. inability to reach many past users or non-response among commuters with valid contact information). The adjustments will exclude past users who are no longer commuting in the DC region and create a composite rate that assumes lower continued alternate mode use among non-surveyed commuters.

Ms. Diggins stated that a draft report will be prepared for the May 18th Subcommittee meeting and any new highlights from the survey will be shared with the group.

Item #6 **ATCMTD Project Update**

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on recent and future activities related to the ATCMTD project.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on recent and future activities related to the ATCMTD project. Multiple tasks are currently being worked on regarding the incenTrip application. Expansion of incenTrip services throughout the National Capital Megaregion is one of the tasks. Currently, incenTrip is only available within the TPB non-attainment area and will be expanded into all of Maryland, central Virginia, and multiple counties in West Virginia, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. The incenTrip application's transportation network will also have to be expanded to accommodate these new areas with roadmaps and transit information in order to route users effectively. Project partners at UMD are working on compiling the tools and information for this expanded network with the help of COG. The expanded network within the incenTrip application should be available in November 2021. Also, by November 2021, the multimodal rewards and payment integration should be adapted to provide a variety of incentives within the incenTrip application. Transit credits, gift cards, or cash may be offered to help motivate users to use alternate modes of travel. Stakeholder feedback has helped establish which rewards methods to pursue. The first incentive expansion that is being worked on is digital payment via PayPal. A digital payment method would have a shorter turnaround time to issue payment to users and will lessen the amount of work being done by COG and TPB staff.

SmarTrip credits through WMATA is also an incentive option currently being discussed as well E-ZPass and CharmPass credits through MDOT. Local businesses will also be contacted to see if they would want to participate in the incentive program within incenTrip. An employer challenge module may also be implemented to try to encourage employer participation within the application by year two of the ATCMTD project. Halie Mitchell, VDOT, asked if the pilot employer challenge was to begin in Spring 2021. Mr. Sheehan replied yes, employers identified by goDCgo are currently being gathered to participate in the pilot challenge and the hope is that they can launch the program later this Spring.

Item #7 **2021 Bike to Work Day Event**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2021 regional Bike to Work Day event to be held on Friday, May 21st.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2021 regional Bike to Work Day event to be held on Friday, May 21st. This will be the 20th year of the Bike to Work Day. A new website was created for this event and registration has been open since March 1st. The website link is www.biketoworkmetrodc.org. The launch was officially announced through a press release and on social media. WABA has built and currently manages the registration page for the event's website while the rest is built and maintained by Commuter Connections. WABA is configuring a system to trigger weekly registration reports which will be emailed to pit stop managers to start by the end of this month. A COVID policy has been created for the event to ensure the safety of everyone involved. All registrants will be required to check a box before they can submit their registration saying that they have read and understood the policy. There will be staggered pit stop hours set in 30-minute intervals with a maximum of 30 registrants per interval. Each pit stop is allowed to choose their own hours of operation. The event will not promote lingering at the pit stops this year, instead bikers will stop to get their t-shirt/swag and then be encouraged to keep moving along. The promotion for this year's event is to get outdoors, exercise, and mental wellbeing.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, asked why "free refreshments and giveaways" is being promoted on the flyer if the COVID policy says there will be no food. Mr. Franklin responded that the poster is a draft and that the language will be removed. Ms. Allahdoust also asked about the number of registrants being 30 at each pit stop when Virginia is only allowed to have gatherings of 25 or less. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, replied saying that any pit stops that need to adjust their number of registrants need to let COG/TPB staff know immediately. Also, it has been discussed with WABA that registrants may not all show up at the same time and possibly not all 30 slots will be taken. Pit stops will have signs in place to let bikers know to keep moving. Hand sanitizer will be provided at each pit stops and wearing of masks will be enforced. There are 93 pit stops this year and all jurisdictions will be represented. 904 people have registered so far, and 16 sponsors have signed up to fund and/or participate in the event. Prince George's County Vision Zero is a first-time sponsor. Large posters, rack-cards, and Hispanic versions of the smaller flyers are items to be used to promote the event. A proclamation signing is scheduled to take place next month at the TPB meeting. Marina Budimir, DDOT, asked if there is a participation goal this year. Mr. Franklin responded that the goal from 2019, which was 18,000, is much higher than how many participants are expected due to the pandemic.

Item #8 Regional Bike Map

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on the production of a regional bicycling map.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on the production of a regional bicycling map. A draft copy of the bike map can be found on the Subcommittee meeting webpage. The bike routing module was launched in 2018 with 1,400 miles of trails and used data gathered from local jurisdictions. A Commuter Connections account is required to access the module. The module is a precursor to the draft paper Bike Map and utilizes the same data. The goal of the paper map is to display relevant bicycling infrastructure to cyclists throughout the TPB non-attainment area. The paper map serves cyclists by helping with route planning, to have an on-the-go resource, and direction to regional cycling routes. The key challenge is integrating bicycling data in disparate formats from various jurisdictions and translating into a cohesive network. The bike map will be two-sided. The first side will have the regional overview map and the second side will have local inset maps. The local inset maps will include the inner core (DC, Arlington, and Alexandria) with possible others such as Fairfax, Silver Spring, and Gaithersburg. Feedback was asked from the Subcommittee regarding additional routes, cycling resources, and any other items to be submitted by Tuesday, March 23rd. A print order will be placed in time for Bike to Work Day and future revisions/updates are expected. Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, asked if the bike map has been shared with the Bike/Ped Subcommittee. Mr. Sheehan responded that he will be sharing the map with the Bike/Ped Subcommittee for their input immediately following current meeting.

Item #9 FY 2022 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) and 2020 – 2021 Strategic Plan

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY2022 CCWP and Strategic Plan.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY2022 CCWP and Strategic Plan. The CCWP was presented to the TPB Tech Committee and the TPB in February with no comments received. The final version of the document will be presented to the TPB for their review and approval this month. The chair of the TPB is most interested in a recovery plan for the region with regard for commuter transportation. Commuter Connections has been working with state funding agencies as well as advertising agencies to derive a recovery campaign for when recovery efforts begin. The campaign will likely start with digital advertisement and social media blasts. The Strategic Plan has been reviewed and finalized by the state funding agencies. Once the CCWP has been finalized and approved by the TPB, both the CCWP and Strategic Plan will be released and posted to the Commuter Connections website.

Item #10 **FY 2021 2nd Quarter CCWP Progress Report**

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 2nd quarter progress report.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 2nd quarter progress report. 14,000 commuters were registered in the Ridematching program at the end of the quarter. Agreements on the ATCMTD grant project were fully executed with FHWA on November 13, 2020. The Federal ETC handbook continued its update process; a new version is expected within a couple of months. There were a number of technology updates to the TDM system. The new version of the incenTrip application was released in January following a substantial amount testing occurring throughout the 2nd quarter. A SchoolPool purge process was implemented to remove those no longer using the program prior to each new school year. 42 new applicants registered for the GRH program and 462 commuters re-registered. At the end of December, there were 2,882 total registrants in the GRH program with 38 trips provided throughout the quarter. Digital ads were developed in-house for the Commute with Confidence initiative. The FY2018-2020 TDM Analysis report was completed and endorsed by the Subcommittee in November. Also, the FY2021 Placement Rate Survey concluded data collection and work on the FY2021 Retention Rate Survey commenced. At the Employer Outreach Committee meeting in October, WMATA's new mobile payment options, Capital COVID Return to Work survey results, and Connected DMV flexible work plans were all presented. GRH Baltimore had a total of 149 registered users and provided 12 trips throughout the quarter. The FY2018-20 Baltimore GRH Program Impact Report was completed. Table 7 was added to the progress report to track SchoolPool applicants.

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

This was an opportunity for Commuter Connections Subcommittee members to bring up other business and to request agenda items for the next meeting.

Ken Joh, COG/TPB staff, shared the 2017-2018 Regional Travel Survey Sources. This is a travel survey that is conducted every 10 years. Regional Travel Survey documentation and tabulations have been developed by TPB staff. For those that would like to conduct their own analyses, public files are available and can be requested by visiting the webpage on the handout.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 12 noon.