



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

Third Floor, COG Board Room

Chairperson: Kendall Tiffany, Frederick County TransIT

Vice Chairperson: Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT

Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos 202/962-3313

Item #1 Introductions

The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves and to sign the attendance sheet

Fatemeh Allahdoust, Virginia Department of Transportation Northern Virginia District Office, called the meeting to order by introducing herself and asking the rest of the attendees to do so.

Item #2 Minutes March 16, 2016

Approval was sought for the January, 2016 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Approval of March 15, 2016 minutes was put forth on a motion by Heidi Mitter, Virginia Department of Transportation - NOVA and supported by Holly Morello, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, to approve the minutes of the meeting as written.

Item #3 TDM Software System Briefing

Travis Johnston, COG/TPB staff briefed the Subcommittee on recent and planned updates on the TDM software system.

Mr. Johnston began by discussing the history of the working group development and its input in the development of the most recently completed tasks. He continued to discuss the completed tasks including the GRH Applicant Survey for Washington and Baltimore which will have returning results in the near future.

He discussed updates to the look and feel of the TDM 4.0 site, the completion of the Facebook login icon on the Commuter Connections webpage and that Route-based Ridematching is to come soon with completion of a recently incorporated algorithm.

Additionally he noted that commute and general logging capacities have been updated, and that dynamic ride matching application called "CarPool Now" has been decided upon. Regarding the look and feel of the website more diversity was included in images in addition to 'gamification' style icons.

He then went into further detail about each category of these completed tasks including the enhancements to ease of access through the incorporation of the Facebook password linking to the Commuter Connections Website, the benefit of Route based Ridematching enhancements

including more accurate geographic mapping, upgrades to the commute log that eliminate commuter confusion and streamlines logging into one overall module including automatic logging by the system and different features like new drop down menus, with a focus on streamlining the logging process.

Mr. Johnston then began to discuss upcoming enhancements currently in development including, one-click Ridematching, a bike routing system overhaul, integrating GRH ride requests with TDM applications, a CMS Tool review regarding internal software utility and how content is displayed, the "CarpoolNow" Application and further collaboration with the Univ. of MD in the development of the iPRETii application.

Regarding the "CarpoolNow" dynamic ridesharing application, Mr. Johnston shared completed milestones including the establishment of the base application and the base rider functions in addition to upcoming milestones which include base driver functions, all rider functions and all driver functions.

Regarding the iPRETii application collaboration with the Univ. of MD, Mr. Johnston explained that a focus on a Flextime Incentive Program in coordination with the Commuter Connections application is under development however the incentive structure is yet to be determined.

Item #4 March 16th Metro Shutdown Briefing

Robert Griffiths, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the effects the March 16th metro shutdown had on modes of travel

Mr. Griffiths began by giving an overview of his presentation containing preliminary information on the impacts of the Metrorail shutdown including transit and auto ridership.

He displayed the expected impacts of no metro system, which would be the doubling of auto ridership, a 14% increase in carpooling and a 9% impact in auto ridership. He then displayed a graph of Metrobus ridership by bus planning sector which portrayed an overall 5% increase in Metrobus ridership with the greatest impact in DC, Metrobus routes with larger ridership increases, most significantly impacting the Wisconsin Ave and Pennsylvania Ave with 30%. Additionally, local operated transit system ridership's daily ridership decreased throughout the region due to interconnection with metro rail system.

Mr. Griffiths then displayed a graph showing DC Traffic Counts inbound to core area by hour which showed that vehicle traffic in a.m. peak period increase in early a.m. period and a decrease from 8am-10am, an overall 2% less than typical increase in mid-day traffic and an increase from 9pm – midnight indicating a Metrorail shutdown may affect evening workers in most significantly. Outbound travel from DC, in the p.m. peak period decreased compared to normal rates.

Regarding SmarTrip data from WMATA, on the day of the rail shutdown there were 14,000 new users, an increase in metro bus users, but overall decrease overall ridership.

Also, Ridesharing registrations, experienced a 400% increase for ridematching inquiries and a larger increase the subsequent day indicating many commuters looking for alternatives.

Finally Mr. Griffiths noted share a graph regarding Percent teleworking by primary commute mode commuter rail and metro rail riders have teleworking as option and noted that an important factor in overall response to the Metro rail shutdown was employees having the availability of teleworking and that if the rail system is closed down for extended period of time, alternatives will be a necessary component.

Mr. Ramfos then provided the subcommittee with handouts outlining the Metro SafeTrack work Plan. Including a memo regarding 6 committees at MWCOG that will be addressing the Safe Track issue including Commuter Connections.

Mr. Ramfos then discussed the desire to establish a Work Group for Commuter Connections between state funding agencies and most impacted jurisdiction, Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.

Mr. Ramfos stated that MWCOG committees are approaching the issues from both a transportation and emergency management focus for example, identifying current construction projects happening concurrently with line segment shut down, what impact will that have on traffic management, raising the question, what if an emergency without metro as an option?

Commuter Connections have identified immediate actions that can be taken firstly the utility of the Commuter Connections database comprised of 40,000 commuters to target with specific messages, also, the robust employer outreach database with over 12,000 employers to target, working with public information officers to ensure success of messaging regarding options and alternatives available through Commuter Connections will be available. He also noted that there will be "bus bridges" at shutdown locations provided by Metro, that bicycling will be promoted in addition to other creative ways to accommodate commuters.

Mr. Ramfos showed the committee the Commuter Connections webpage where there will be a link created to the SafeTrack plan on and asked if any local jurisdictions have local traffic management plans for public that they can be posted to the website as well, in addition to public service announcement, paid and social media messages.

Mr. Ramfos opened the floor for discussion and committee members shared conversation regarding the potential of a Commuter Connections SafeTrack Work Group, to be established.

Item #5 2016 Bike to Work Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2016 regional Bike to Work Day event.

Mr. Franklin shared the Bike To Work Day date of Friday May 20th and the anticipated whether for the event. He continued with the context and logistics of upcoming bike events that will be taking place the upcoming weekend sponsored by WMATA as part of their "Really Big Bike Weekend." Mr. Franklin also shared the Bike to Work Day T-shirt with the committee and noted that there were 14,000 registrants for the event which was 80% of last year's number with the anticipation of 1,000 more registrants depending on the weather. Email reminders have been sent out to previous year's participants

Mr. Franklin discussed the proclamation that took place the previous month at the NTPB Meeting, he shared the photo of the event and the individuals included in the picture including Timothy Lovain from the City of Alexandria, Greg Billing from WABA, Nicholas Ramfos of WMCOG, City of Rockville Mayor Virginia Newton, DC Council Member Alissa Silverman.

Mr. Franklin shared the greater focus of Bike To Work Day which was to enhance the inclusion of women and minorities being that the majority of participants identify as male and Caucasian, and that the committee has reached out to organizations relevant to these group and has included organization member of such nature in social media advertising.

Mr. Franklin also presented a Bike to Work Day Video clip and noted that additional clips are available on the Bike to Work Day Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/biketoworkdaymetrodc/> . Additionally, he shared a 60 second radio advertisement for the event, shared that there will be 21 Convoys during the event with a new map that includes pit stops overlapping the convoy routes. Finally, he noted that 3 dozen elected officials have endorsed Bike to Work Day this year.

Item #6 Clean Air Partners Update

Kendall Tiffany, Frederick County TransIT, briefed the Subcommittee on upcoming Clean Air Partners activities.

Mrs. Tiffany provided a brief review of updates regarding Clean Air Partners including Community and business outreach events, like participating the US Science and Engineering festival and multiple Earth Day Events.

Additionally, she mentioned the release of a new 'Employer Tool Kit' and she identified Jen Desimone/ MWCOG Staff as the point of contact for organizations that want to participate in outreach activities with Clean Air Partners.

Regarding marketing and public relations Mrs. Tiffany shared that Air Quality Awareness week was May 2nd-6 and that 3 mini events took place within the region to promote Air Quality Awareness and World Asthma Day which were sponsored by 'Breath DC' and the MD Dept. of the Environment in addition to a Youtube video campaign.

Regarding Curriculum and Outreach, the 18th annual Awards for Best Science Fairs took place the previous week at the Maryland Zoo and that award winners can be found on website Clean Air Partners' website: <http://www.mwcog.org/environment/air/partners/>

Item #7 2016 Car Free Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status on the status of the 2016 regional Car Free Day event.

Mr. Franklin shared information regarding the 2016 Car Free Day Event which will be held on Thursday, Sept. 22nd 2016. He noted that the Steering committee for this event has met twice this year, recognized the event's website, which is Carfreemetrodc.org in addition to Twitter and

Facebook pages. Additional marketing includes a poster and an upcoming radio spot in addition to a proclamation that will be made in July at the TPB meeting.

Mr. Franklin also mentioned that prize donations for the regional raffle are currently being accepted, that last year 3,400 people took the pledge to go car free or light, pledges were distributed evening among the tristate area totaling approximately 1000 pledges per state.

Regarding this year's event's theme focus remains on inclusiveness and team, with teams being organized by transportation mode including bike, rail, bus, pooling, walking.

Mr. Franklin concluded by extending an invitation to committee members for jurisdictions to join the Car Free Day Steering committee acknowledging that there have recently been new participants and that the next steering committee meeting will take place Wednesday, July 13th at 10:00am.

Item #8 Regional TDM Evaluation Project Update

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY 2016 data collection activities for the regional TDM Evaluation project.

Mr. Ramfos briefly shared with the committee that data collection for the State of the Commute Survey has been completed, that a final technical report will be completed by the end of June 2016, the GRH survey has been completed on-line in addition to phone calling for the DC market however phone calling will continue for the Baltimore region for the next two weeks because of the low response rates, which is anticipated to end by the end of May. He also mentioned that the Retention Rate Survey has been completed with its technical reported is anticipated being available at the end of the fiscal year.

Item #9 3rd Quarter CCWP Budget Report

Travis Johnston, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY 2016 CCWP 3rd Quarter Progress Report. Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff will address the 3rd quarter CCWP budget report.

Travis Johnston briefly addressed highlights from the 3rd quarter progress report including the fact there was a substantial 18% increase in the number of rideshare applicants during the quarter, potentially due to the March Metrorail shutdown. Additionally, Commuter Connections website views have increased by nearly 50% during the quarter. Both of which are considered healthy indicators of program growth. Due to time considerations, Mr. Johnston concluded his report.

Barbara Brennan then reviewed the 3rd quarter budget, which is running at 55%, at 80% in the Commuter Operations Area, the Regional GRH program is running at 52%, marketing 58%, Monitoring and evaluation at 52%, GRH Baltimore 42%. The Overall spending rate is anticipated to increase in the 4th quarter due to the finalization and payment of consultant currently pending consultant invoices.

Item #10 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Fatemeh Allahdoust, Virginia Department of Transportation Northern Virginia District Office shared information regarding VDOT public hearings scheduled for May 23rd, 24th and 25th as she drew the committee's attention to the VDOT website which contains specific information pertaining to ongoing projects in that particular region, she also provided a handout regarding the public hearings.

Subcommittee members are encouraged to contact Nicholas Ramfos with any particular agenda items they may be interested in seeing on the next agenda.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at 12 noon.