



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 18, 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.

Item #2 **Minutes of March 16, 2021 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the March 16, 2021 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Marina Budimir, DDOT, requested a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

A motion was made by Holly Morello, PRTC, and seconded by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the March 16, 2021 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 **FY2021 Placement Rate Survey Draft Report**

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY2021 Commuter Connections Placement Rate Survey final draft report.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY2021 Commuter Connections Placement Rate Survey final draft report. The report was updated due to small typographical errors throughout the document. Language was also added to describe how the incentive applicants who were a part of this survey will be analyzed as part of the overall TDM Analysis report due to be completed in FY2023. The results from this survey will be used as part of the evaluation methodology for the TDM Analysis project once the three-year data collection period has been completed. Once the report has been endorsed, it will be published to the Commuter Connections website and will be available for hard copy distribution by request. George Clark, TCCSMD, made a motion to endorse which was seconded by Holly Morello, PRTC.

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

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

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 Commuter Connections Retention Rate Survey Draft Report. The survey objective is to define alternative mode retention amongst commuters. The survey included a random sample of 1,321 commuters who last participated in GRH or received other Commuter Connections services between July 2012 and June 2018. A retained commuter is one who changed to a new alternative mode after receiving Commuter Connections services and continued using the new mode. Two tests were conducted to determine whether a commuter had been retained or not. The three time periods used for analysis were current/recent travel, before receiving services (GRH/non-GRH service), and during

service (if current travel was drive alone). The pandemic disrupted commute patterns, so modes used at the time of the survey were not expected to reflect recent travel or likely future commutes. The 2021 survey asked about three recent commute travel cases such as current travel (at the time of the survey in November 2020), pre-pandemic travel (February 2020), and likely travel when pandemic is over. These three time periods were used to define the most likely “ongoing” commute for comparison with travel before receiving Commuter Connections services. In February 2021, telework accounted for 80% of weekly commute trips while 8% were non-telework alternative modes. Pre-pandemic, non-telework alternative modes of travel represented 47% of weekly trips.

Ms. Diggins explained that the likely future alternative mode use will be similar to pre-pandemic modes used by commuters. The pre-pandemic mode is a reasonable “ongoing” base for retention analysis. More respondents were likely to drive alone one or more days per week after the pandemic, but nearly all respondents who used alternative modes pre-pandemic were likely to return to those modes. 92% of respondents who biked/walked said they would likely return to that mode post-pandemic, 89% would return to transit, and 79% said they would return to carpool/vanpool. 67% of respondents received GRH services and possibly other non-GRH services and 33% received only non-GRH services. Ongoing alternative mode use was higher among respondents who participated in GRH than among non-GRH only users. The weekly share of trips by telework was about the same across the three groups. Ongoing alternative mode use was similar for last activity dates of 2017-2018 and 2015-2016. Alternative mode use was only slightly lower for the 2012-2014 group when telework is included as an alternative mode. GRH respondents had a greater alternative mode drop from pre-service to February 2020 than non-GRH respondents, but they started at a higher level of use. Telework use grew about the same for both groups.

Ms. Diggins continued stating the retention rates for GRH users (47%) and non-GRH only users (45%) were nearly the same. 59% of those who drove alone prior to using a Commuter Connections service changed to an alternative mode of travel after receiving service in February 2020. Adjustments need to be made to ensure retention rates calculated from survey data do not overestimate the actual rates. These adjustments include updating the base of past users to exclude those no longer commuting in the DC region and creating a composite rate that assumes lower continued alternative mode use among non-surveyed commuters. Nicole Huntington, NIH, asked if GRH users left transit because of transit issues as most GRH users at NIH used vanpool services pre-pandemic and will likely use transit post-pandemic. Ms. Diggins replied that yes, the question was asked and most responded with reasons such as change in job location, residence, or vanpool/transit schedules. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, asked how the retention rate from this survey differs from the one conducted in 2016. Ms. Diggins responded that the retention rate in the most recent survey is higher than the rate produced in the 2016 survey, likely due to telework becoming a more frequently used alternative mode throughout the years.

The draft report will be posted to SharePoint and the comment period will be open until June 10th. Mackenzie Love, NVTA, asked if transit is broken down in the report to describe which modes of transit respondents will use post-pandemic. Ms. Diggins replied that no it was not broken down due to the fact that many commuters use multiple modes of transit concurrently. Comments and edits on the draft report should be submitted to docomments@mwco.org.

Item #5 Car Free Day Event Draft Report

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented the draft FY2021 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented the draft FY2021 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee. The report has been reviewed by the Car Free Day Steering Committee; the report was presented at the March and May Steering Committee meetings. The Car Free Day 2020 proclamation signing took place at the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) meeting at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments on July 22, 2020. Kelly Russell, TPB Chairman at the time, signed the proclamation to recognize September 22, 2020 as Car Free Day in the Washington, DC region. All registrants received a \$30

Nift Gift card to use with local participating businesses in the Washington, DC area and a free LOVE Burger from Leon restaurants. Images developed for Car Free Day 2020 were relevant to traveling during the coronavirus pandemic and working remotely. The messaging reminded participants to use safe and healthy practices while traveling, such as wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands. The total Car Free Day paid media budget for the 2020 event was \$44,937 and included traditional and internet radio (Spotify), video (YouTube), a sponsored blog article (Popville.com), online banner ads (El Tiempo Latino), social media (Facebook), and text messaging. A partnership was continued with the local chapter of the American Heart Association and amplified the message about healthier travel methods such as bicycling and walking. The Capital Area Car Free College Campus Challenge was created as a friendly competition to generate awareness of and participation in Car Free Day on college campuses throughout the region. The college with the greatest number of pledges (Georgetown) received access to a radio interview, plus Commuter Connections branded face coverings and hand sanitizer. Transit signage was placed on Arlington ART Buses, Fairfax County Connector, Metrobus, Montgomery County Ride On, and Prince George's County The Bus. The total number of Car Free Day pledges for the 2020 event was 3,834. The breakdown was as follows: Telework 3,074 (37.4%), Walk/Run 2,521 (30.6%), Bicycle/Scooter 1,627 (19.8%), Bus 337 (4.1%), Train 331 (4.0%), and Carpool/Vanpool 270 (3.3%). Participants performed the following activities on Car Free Day: Working 3,323 (53.6%), Recreation/Exercise 1,230 (19.8%), Shopping/Errands 916 (14.8%), Taking Classes 306 (4.9%), Dining Out/Entertainment 277 (4.5%). The report will be posted to SharePoint with an open comment period until June 18th. Comments and edits should be submitted to docomments@mwkog.org. The final draft of this report will be presented to the Subcommittee on July 20th for endorsement.

Item #6 Clean Air Partners Update

Marina Budimir, DDOT, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities.

Marina Budimir, DDOT staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities. Air Quality Awareness Week took place on May 3rd through May 7th. Each day during the week featured a different theme with associated social media challenges. Daily themes included plants/trees, health, the air quality index, and others. Clean Air Partners engaged reporters and meteorologists to share activities and tips. Organic and paid social media promoted posts through Clean Air Partners Facebook and Twitter pages. Clean Air Partners contracted with DC and Baltimore area digital influencers to promote messaging and tips during Air Quality Awareness Week. Upcoming activities include Ozone Action Month in August and Car Free Day in September. The 13th annual poster contest was held for students in grades 4 through 8 residing in the Baltimore-Washington region with winners from Severna Park Middle School in Anne Arundel County and Middletown Middle School in Frederick County.

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 event. In 2019, there was a total of 119 pit stops. This year will have 95 total pit stops. T-shirts, BTWD guides, and regional bike maps have all been picked up by the pit stop managers. George Clark, TCCSMD, commented that the format used to pick up t-shirts was very efficient and should be continued in years to come. The proclamation signing for the event took place last month with TPB chair, Charles Allen's, electronic signature. 7,800 people have registered so far. Large posters, rack-cards, and Hispanic versions of the smaller flyers are items being used to promote the event. Internet and traditional radio stations, such as Spotify, El Zol, Pandora, and WTOP, are also promoting the event. Videos promoting the event can be found on YouTube and WTOP.com. After the event, a regional raffle of three bicycles will take place. Pit stops managers will provide information and photos from event day to be included in the formal event report.

Item #8 Federal Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) Transportation Management Program (TMP) Handbook

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on the production of an updated Federal ETC TMP Handbook for the National Capital Region.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on the production of an updated Federal ETC TMP Handbook for the National Capital Region. The update kicked off in May 2020 with the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPD) and the GSA. The handbook was last updated in 2014 and published in 2015. The goal of the update was to align the handbook with the new NCPD Transportation Elements and Addendum which was approved in July 2020. The handbook is a source that Federal ETCs can refer to when updating or creating a TMP for their federal worksite or installation. The update includes recent implementation examples on federal worksites such as the Homeland Security expansion at the St. Elizabeth's campus. Success stories will help others developing TMPs to have guidance through administering the TMP implementation processes from those who have accomplished TMPs before. The handbook is also going through a reorganization process as well to help add value. Appendices have been added to give more detailed information for TMP development. In July of 2020, NCPD issued a new requirement to enhance federal TMPs with expectations to meet updated parking ratios. The local jurisdiction appendix addresses policies and zoning requirements that could affect jurisdictions within the Subcommittee. Any suggestions as to what should be included in the appendix can be shared with Commuter Connections. The handbook should be available within the next few months on the Federal ETC website.

Item #9 2021 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, 2021.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which will be held on September 22, 2021. The creative materials will be available by mid-July. Commuting levels should be higher this year with many returning to work in September. Children returning to school and comfort with transit use and ridesharing will be main factors in Car Free Day participation percentages. Sponsorship also depends on how much of the economy has opened up later this summer. The proclamation will be signed in July at the TPB meeting. The next Car Free Day Steering Day Committee meeting will be held on July 14th and then in September shortly before the event.

Item #10 FY 2021 3rd Quarter CCWP Progress and Budget Reports

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 3rd quarter progress report and Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 3rd Quarter Budget Report.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 3rd quarter progress report. The Commuter Operations Center finalized the FY22 CCWP and received TPB approval in March. Work commenced on the ATCMTD grants which were approved in November 2020 which will expand the incenTrip program to the DMV megaregion. The Federal ETC Advisory work group was convened to discuss and handbook updates. The WMATA Platform Shutdown Work Group was also reconvened. An employer deduplication effort was completed to try to prevent duplicate applicants within the TDM system. A work spec was developed for a flexible vanpool concept based on stakeholder feedback. A draft mock-up for the TDM system's redesigned public facing homepage was completed. With the help of UMD, the development and testing of the new version of incenTrip was accomplished. 13,715 commuters were served in Ridematching throughout the quarter. A total of 53 applicants were registered and 523 commuters were re-registered. 1,982 commuters are currently registered in the GRH database and 33 trips were provided throughout the quarter. The Regional Recovery Campaign should start this summer and the Regional Bike Map was finalized and distributed. The Bike to Work Day marketing campaign was kicked off in late March. The Employer Recognition Awards Selection meeting was held in April. 38 payment requests were submitted through incenTrip in the

quarter. Finalization of the Placement Rate study and Retention Rate study was accomplished. 199 registered users in the GRH Baltimore program with 2 trips provided throughout the quarter.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 3rd Quarter Budget Report. The Commuter Operations Center and Monitoring and Evaluation are in good shape. The GRH and Marketing expenditures will be underrun due to the pandemic. Employer Outreach and GRH Baltimore will likely be underrun as well. Overall expenditures are at 34% which is less than the usual 90% in past years. Next fiscal year is anticipated to be more consistent with average annual expenditures.

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.

There was no discussion on this item.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 12 noon.