



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, July 21, 2020**

**12 noon – 2:00 p.m.**

**VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING**

**Chairperson: Marcus Moore, Fairfax County**

**Vice Chairperson: Marina Budimir, DDOT**

**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 19, 2020 Meeting**

*Approval was sought for the May 19, 2020 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.*

Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, 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 May 19, 2020 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

**Item #3      Vice Chair Nominating Committee**

*Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, appointed the Nominating Committee that will select and recommend the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson.*

Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, appointed the Nominating Committee that will select and recommend the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson. The Nominating Committee will include Marcus Moore, George Clark, and Nicholas Ramfos. Marina Budimir will be going on maternity in August and will not return until early 2021. Anna McLaughlin, DDOT, has agreed to be a part of the Committee in Marina's place. Mr. Moore asked for motions to approve the members of the nominating committee. A motion to approve the Committee was made by Holly Morello, OmniRide, and seconded by Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, will alert the Nominating Committee on meeting times and updates.

**Item #4      FY2020 Regional Vanpool Driver Survey Report**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff reviewed any substantive changes made to the draft FY2020 regional Vanpool Driver Survey Report.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, reviewed the substantive changes made to the draft FY2020 Regional Vanpool Driver Survey Report. The report was presented to the Subcommittee for comments in May. No changes were made to the report beyond updated text. Some organizations and program names were updated to reflect their correct names. The report is now ready to be endorsed for release by the Subcommittee. Once approved, the final report will be published on the Commuter Connections website and hard copies will be sent to those who request one. A motion to endorse the report was made by Kari Snyder, MDOT, and seconded by Judy Galen, Loudoun County.

**Item #5****FY2020 Car Free Day Event Report**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, reviewed any substantive changes made to the draft FY2020 Car Free Day Event Report.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, reviewed any substantive changes made to the draft FY2020 Car Free Day Event Report. The draft report was presented to the Subcommittee at the previous meeting in May and was uploaded to SharePoint. The comment period was open until June 19<sup>th</sup>. Some minor edits were made as well as a few new visuals. Mr. Franklin explained that a photo of the Montgomery County Car Free Day “Thank You Van” was added which was used to greet commuters at popular transit stops. An article about Car Free Day from The Frederick News Post was also added to the report. Kelly Woodward, DATA, moved to endorse the report for release and George Clark, TCCSMD seconded the motion. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, mentioned that Commuter Connections will not be producing hard copies of the report and it will be published on the Commuter Connections Publications webpage in a couple of weeks and made available to those interested in downloading it.

**Item #6****Metro Platform Shutdown Status**

*Greg Potts, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on preliminary results from the Metro shutdown associated with the platform repairs.*

Greg Potts, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on preliminary results from the Metro shutdown associated with the platform repairs. There are 20 outdoor platforms that need repairs and six station platforms were repaired in summer 2019. Those stations were all south of Reagan National Airport. Regional coordination efforts included organizations such as WMATA, DRPT, VRE, George Mason University, MWCOG, as well as many others in the northern Virginia region. Commuter Connections and NVTC (Northern Virginia Transportation Commission) helped to coordinate monthly calls to ensure TDM involvement with the project; these efforts continued as the summer 2020 platform improvement work began. Effective Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, all stations west of Ballston-MU on the Orange and Silver lines were closed. Alternative travel options include free shuttle services. Mr. Potts stated that many stations were reopened due to the pandemic and in turn started offering free shuttle services from those stations as well. Low-ridership has been documented since the pandemic began including about 3,000 weekday trips on the Orange and Silver lines, and about 1,000 trips on weekends. On June 24<sup>th</sup>, it was announced that the Silver line will be restored on August 16<sup>th</sup>. WMATA also announced that the West Falls Church station on the Orange line will re-open to customers on August 16<sup>th</sup>. The remaining Orange line stations are expected to re-open around Labor Day. Work will begin on the National Airport Station platform on August 8<sup>th</sup> and last through Christmas 2020 with no significant impact to weekday service.

Mr. Potts continued with pictures of the construction progress on four of the stations’ platforms (Dunn Loring, East Falls Church, West Falls Church, and Vienna). There were concerns regarding whether the pandemic would impact the construction process due to social distancing and supply chain demand, however, it seems the process is going well, and the project does not seem to be delayed by the effects of the pandemic. The website for all updates regarding the project is [www.wmata.com/platforms](http://www.wmata.com/platforms). Marc Bowman, WMATA, shared information regarding communications that will be on the website as well as other social media campaigns to help commuters understand next phases and updates on the project. A virtual event is being planned for when most of the stations are reopened around Labor Day that can showcase the new platforms. Mr. Potts concluded saying that after August 16<sup>th</sup>, when the Silver line rail is reinstated, the free shuttle service will cease to run. There will be a new Orange line shuttle service and maps will be available on the website to clarify the new shuttle routes. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, asked if WMATA could share plans for the project’s continuance in 2021. Mr. Potts stated that Arlington Cemetery station platform work will be done in Spring 2021 with hopes to be completed by Memorial Day. Mr. Bowman explained that Summer 2021 will include platform work on the Maryland stations north of Fort Totten up to Greenbelt. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, work will be performed on West Hyattsville, PG Plaza, College Park, and Greenbelt. These stations will be closed during this time. Addison Road station will also be closed and worked on in Spring 2021.

**Item #7**            **Clean Air Partners Update**

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

Marina Budimir, DDOT staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities. Ozone Action Week will be taking place in the first week of August, which usually is the hottest week of the summer. Steps and behavioral changes will be shared as to how individuals can help reduce ground ozone emissions. Clean Air Partners will team up with Commuter Connections for Car Free Day in September. Energy Efficiency Day will also be taking place in October with the actual date to be announced in the near future.

**Item #8**            **FY2020 Regional Employer Telework Survey**

*Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the results from the recently administered Employer Telework Survey.*

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the results from the recently administered Employer Telework Survey. The survey is conducted every three years, however, this year it was changed due to telework being more prominent during the coronavirus pandemic. 180 employers were interviewed from the ACT! Database or the federal ETC/TW coordinator database. The internet survey was sent through email and postal mail invitations and collected data on employer size, location, type, change in worksite operation, telework counts now and pre-pandemic, telework assistance received, etc. The diverse sample included majority Maryland and Virginia worksites with employer types being 49% private, 33% not-for-profit, 13% federal, and 5% state/local government. Industries included government, medical, trade association, education, real/estate property management, and a few others. There was an even representation of small, medium, and large organization sizes that participated in the survey. Ms. Diggins explained how 96% of worksites had shut down or reduced on-site operation either completely (81%) or partially (15%) since the pandemic began. In June, at the time of the survey, 95% of sites with reduced operation were still closed or had limited on-site operation. 97% of worksites had at least some telework since the pandemic began and 55% of those worksites had all of their employees teleworking full-time. During the pandemic, the average share of employees who teleworked grew from 36% to 82%. 76% of worksites had at least some telework happening pre-pandemic. 14% of worksites developed a formal telework program/policy due to the pandemic, 61% already had a formal program in place, and 25% still do not have a telework program in place. Most of the worksites who had a telework policy prior to the pandemic made changes to expand telework eligibility.

Ms. Diggins pointed out that more than half of the worksites anticipate the continuance of teleworking at a higher rate than the pre-pandemic level. Seven in ten worksites will consider implementing work hours or commute strategies after the restrictions are lifted to reduce future virus outbreaks. These strategies include flexible/staggered work hours, compressed work schedules, employee shuttles, and expanded telework. Employers have also considered implementing other virus-prevention strategies at their worksites such as social distancing strategies, mask requirements, hand sanitizer stations, more telework/virtual meetings, temperature checks, etc. 50% of employers noted significant telework issues with child and dependent care being the most prevalent. Employee isolation, spouse/partner conflict, disconnection from management, and access to equipment were also considered significant telework issues. 80% of employers said managers have reported benefits of managing remotely. Nearly three in ten organizations said managers noted greater worker productivity and increased communication with workers. 92% of employers said employees reported benefits of working from home. The greatest employee benefits were not commuting, comfortable work environment, and personal cost savings. Ms. Diggins closed by saying that there are more elements of the survey to come once she has had time to dissect more of the survey regarding industry and size comparisons. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked if the number of employees per organization was per location or included multiple locations. Ms. Diggins answered that multiple locations within the Washington Metro region could have been included under one organization. Kari Snyder, MDOT, asked if Commuter Connections will be issuing a press release or newsletter with the information from this presentation regarding telework. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, said that due to the interest in this issue, LDA Consulting will be issuing a document to be used for press releases

and newsletters in the near future. The follow-up briefing report will be sent to the Subcommittee members but will not be formally published.

**Item #9**                    **FY2018 – FY2020 Regional TDM Evaluation Analysis Report**

*Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the preliminary results from the draft FY 2018 – FY2020 Regional TDM Evaluation Analysis Report.*

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the preliminary results from the draft FY2018 – FY2020 Regional TDM Evaluation Analysis Report. This analysis is performed triennially to estimate the effectiveness of four Commuter Connections TDM program elements: Telework Assistance (MD/VA), Guaranteed Ride Home, Employer Outreach, and Mass Marketing. This report also documents results from the Commuter Operations Center. The impact calculation approach uses a series of multiplier factors applied to user population. The calculation multiplies placement rate, the “vehicle trip reduction” factor, travel distance, and emission factors. The analysis includes a comparison of collective goals against collective impacts, including the Commuter Operations Center from July 2017 to December 2019. Impacts fell short of goal for vehicle trips by -7% and VMT by -3%. The shortfall in emission goals are due to reduced emission factors for 2020 and shift to the MOVES emission model since the goals were assigned. Ms. Diggins explained that the TDM analysis primarily reports TDM performance against regional air quality conformity goals. TDM is also likely to offer societal benefits such as congestion mitigation, climate change mitigation and improved health and safety. The 2020 TDM analysis also estimated regional cost savings for selected societal benefits including air pollution/emissions reduction, global climate change mitigation, reduction in fuel consumption, etc. The societal benefits cost savings equaled about \$680,000 per day.

Ms. Diggins showcased how the analysis measured telework assistance by extracting teleworker responses from the State of the Commute survey and dissected their demographics. 8.8% of MD telecommuters cited Commuter Connections as a telework information source. Commuter Connections influenced telework eliminated about 13,647 daily vehicle trips and 308,250 VMT. For Virginia, data was taken from the Telework! VA survey. 19.1% of employees at Telework! VA sites started or increased telework after given assistance. The daily impact equaled about 657 vehicle trips and 12,000 VMT reduced. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB, pointed out that Commuter Connection did not have all the data from the Telework! VA survey and that the figures could increase. Telework continues to grow in the region and Commuter Connections continues to be a source of information for telecommuters. The Guaranteed Ride Home program element of the analysis included 12,155 registrants as of December 2019 with 6,640 being new registrants from FY2018-20. 46% of FY2018-20 registrants started an alternate travel mode. 12% of Pre-FY2018 registrants were continuing to use a new alternative travel mode since they began the program. The GRH program did not meet goals due to declining participation which is likely related to lower regional GRH awareness.

Ms. Diggins continued with the impact of Employer Outreach on TDM analysis. Three impact components include the overall program, new/expanded programs, and bike services. The impacts are calculated from employers maintained in Employer Outreach from June 2017 and employers with new/expanded programs since June 2017. The impact included around 1,887 employers with 278 being new/expanded employers, Employers deleted since June 2017 were removed from the impact calculation. 597 employers offered bike services to 346,107 employees at bike worksites. Bike riding contributed to a 0.1% vehicle trip reduction. Bike trips averaged about 4.2 miles one way. The Employer Outreach impact met the VMT goal and fell slightly short of participation and vehicle trip goals. The impact also did not meet emission goals. Ms. Diggins explained the Mass Marketing components which were direct influence, referred influence, ‘Pool Rewards carpool incentive, Bike to Work Day, and Car Free Day. In direct influence. 14% of commuters recalled seeing a Commuter Connections commute message versus 21% in 2017. 11.5% of these commuters shifted to an alternative travel mode after seeing an ad versus 3.3% in 2017. In referred influence, 12.3% began using rideshare and 15% began using GRH . Bike to Work Day included 51,238 total riders in events over the past three years. 87% biked to work prior to Bike to Work Day, 7.4% were new riders in summer/fall, and 19.3% increased bike riding in summer/fall. Car Free Day included 18,731 total pledges in events over the past three years. 11% used a new alternative travel mode for a work trip on Car Free Day and 11% of participants increased alternative

travel mode use after Car Free Day. The daily impacts were 1,007 vehicle trips and 15,000 VMT reduced. Mass Marketing greatly exceeded goals for placements, trips, and VMT reduced. Mr. Ramfos stated again that more data will be added to the report and the full updated draft report will be presented to the Subcommittee in September and a comment period will be established.

**Item #10            2020 Car Free Day Event**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event slated for September 22, 2020.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event slated for September 22, 2020. The event provides an opportunity to promote alternative travel options for both work and non-work-related travel. Individuals will go online to take the free pledge to leave their car at home for a day and use alternative travel options. The pledge numbers will be counted, and the emissions impacts will be calculated once the event is over. Marketing outreach efforts to employers, colleges/universities, and the public will be taking place over the next month. The proclamation for the event will be presented and signed by TPB chair, Kelly Russell, during the TPB meeting taking place tomorrow with a presentation by Nicholas Ramfos. The “Drop it for a Day” theme will be replaced and is currently under development. The poster/flyer will be distributed virtually by the end of next week. The website, [carfreemetrodc.org](http://carfreemetrodc.org), and the pledge form will be open officially on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, with more of an emphasis on teleworkers. Bicycles are currently hard to find for purchase due to pandemic. Sponsors include Capital Bikeshare, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, WMATA, WABA, Nando’s Peri-Peri, VRE, and others. Everyone who takes the pledge will receive a Nift gift promotion. Transit signage will be able to be seen on Fairfax Connector, MetroBus, Montgomery County RideOn, as well as other transit organizations who opted to participate.

**Item #11            4th Quarter CCWP Budget Report**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 CCWP 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter preliminary Budget Report.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 CCWP 4<sup>th</sup> quarter preliminary budget report. Due to the pandemic, there will be a larger than usual underrun due to many marketing initiatives being put on hold and the GRH program not being utilized to fullest extent. Nicholas Ramfos said that he will come back in September with the final report which will have additional final expenditures for FY2020.

**Item #12            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.*

**The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 12 noon.**