



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, July 19, 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*

**Item #2 Minutes May 17, 2016**

*Approval was sought for the May 17, 2016 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.*

Approval of May 17, 2016 minutes was put forth on a motion by George Clark, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland and seconded by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, to approve the minutes of the meeting as written.

**Item #3 Vice Chair Nominating Committee**

*Kendall Tiffany appointed the Nominating Committee that will select the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson.*

Kendall Tiffany, current Commuter Connections Subcommittee Chairperson, of Frederick County TransIT began by introducing the members of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee Vice Chairperson Nominating Committee, which were current Subcommittee Vice Chairperson Fatemeh Allahdoust and former Chairperson from the DDOT Jim Sebastian, who will be coming together in the upcoming month to nominate a Vice Chairperson to begin the month of September 2016.

She then requested a motion for approval by the Subcommittee. A motion was made by Judy Galen, Loudoun County and seconded by George Clark, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. The Subcommittee voted unanimously to accept the motion for the Commuter Connections Vice Chair Nominating Committee.

**Item #4 Clean Air Partners Update**

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

Kendall Tiffany, Frederick County TransIT discussed the organization's focus on Community and Business partnerships through the Employer Toolkit. MWCOG staff member Jen Desimone was identified as the contact person for Employer Toolkits. She continued in discussing marketing and

public relations efforts by the organization including online and transit advertisements with the goal of raising awareness for Clean Air Partners, its mobile application within a partnership with the AOL campaign, which will go on until September.

Ms. Tiffany then began to discuss the "Breathe Easy" concert promotion campaign which will encourage metropolitan area residents to promote their clean-air deeds with the goal of winning concert tickets in addition to a paid media campaign to promote the event. She also discussed the Car Free Day campaign which is in collaboration with Commuter Connections and the Charm City Circulator, Clean Air Partners will run a co-branded campaign using the Car Free Day video produced by Clean Air Partners and advertising over a two-week digital and media campaign. She noted that Clean Air Partners continue to be active via social media outlets.

Finally, Ms. Tiffany discussed the organization's curriculum and outreach efforts including the summer education outreach program which involves educators visiting camps around the region and presenting the clean air activities curriculum.

**Item #5      2016 State of the Commute Survey**

*Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights of the 2016 State of the Commute Survey. A comment period was established for the draft Technical Report for Friday, Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016*

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, provided a PowerPoint presentation of highlighted results for the 2016 State of the Commute Survey within the Commuter Connections TERM Evaluation project. Ms. Diggins mentioned that her primary focus of this presentation will be mostly regarding the results from new questions that were included in the 2016 SOC survey. She noted that in addition to landline and cellular telephone outreach efforts for obtaining survey responses for the 2016 SOC survey, internet was also used as it was less expensive and potentially more helpful in gathering survey responses. The sample size was around 6,000, which was consistent with previous SOC survey sample sizes.

Ms. Diggins then began sharing the content of survey topics including travel patterns, telework and awareness, however with new questions added in the 2016 questionnaire including looking at extra time that people put into their commute for travel delay, episodic teleworking, quality-of-life ratings and the consideration of incentives to work outside peak commute hours.

Regarding commute patterns, Ms. Diggins noted that 61% of commuters drive alone weekly, 20% by transit and 10% of trips were eliminated by those using Compressed Work Schedules and telework. She noted that a trend has been identified in the reduction of driving alone percentages since 2004. Additionally, the use of telework has increased by 6% over the same period. There was a total average travel time of 39-minutes for a typical commute time and 17.3 miles to work. Regarding HOV lanes the findings note that three in 10 commuters said there was an HOV lane along their route to work and 15% said that they had access to an Express Lane. An additional finding regarding HOV and Express Lanes was that an average of 20 minutes was saved by commuters on their commutes and 48% of commuters said lane availability influenced their commute decisions. Regarding commute ease and satisfaction six in 10 commuters were satisfied with their commute, however satisfaction declined since 2013 especially among transit riders and one third of commuters who relocated either their residence or employment location said that commute factors were important in their decision-making.

Continuing with her presentation, Ms. Diggins noted that in the 2016 findings 21% of commuters reported a more difficult commute than a year ago. Additional findings include the fact that 58% of commuters were satisfied with their commute in 2016 which is actually lower than the findings for the year 2013 or 2010. Of these polled, bikers and walkers were the most satisfied and single occupancy commuters and those who rode trains were less satisfied. Regarding telework experience some key findings were that teleworking continued to climb, teleworking more than doubled since 2004 to 32% of workers and 58% of teleworkers telework at least one day per week and that one in 10 teleworkers received telework information from Commuter Connections.

As it relates to transportation satisfaction, key findings include that only 36% of regional commuters were satisfied with the regional transportation system in 2016 and that the satisfaction declined between 2013 and 2016. Transportation satisfaction declined notably for transit riders Between 2013 and 2016 from 58% to 38%. Additionally, nine in 10 alternative commute mode users cited personal benefits and societal benefits of using alternative modes. Regarding regional and local commute services, Ms. Diggins stated that some key findings included that 53% of respondents said that a commute information number or website was available, two in ten had use the number or website. Also six in 10 commuters knew of Commuter Connections and 7% of commuters had used Commuter Connections services and awareness of local commute services range from 9% to 51% of targeted commuters.

Regarding employer services key findings, 55% of commuters said their employers offered workplace commute services, which is a decline from 61% in 2010 particularly pertaining to transit and vanpool subsidies and also suggests that employers that cut benefits due to the recession more than likely had not restored them. Additionally, half of commuters who had access to employer services for their commute used at least one service and 59% used transit or vanpool subsidies while 30% used commute information.

Nicholas Ramfos stated that the draft 2016 State of the Commute Technical Report will be finalized this fall and comments should be submitted to the [doccments@mwkog.org](mailto:doccments@mwkog.org) email address no later than September 2, 2016 by close of business. A follow-up email to the group will be sent as a reminder to review the document and submit comments.

**Item #6      2016 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH)**

*Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights from the 2016 GRH survey for the Washington DC metropolitan region. A comment period was established for the draft report issued for Friday, Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016*

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, provided a PowerPoint presentation of highlights regarding the Commuter Connections 2016 Guaranteed Ride Home survey for the Washington DC region. She began by discussing the survey methodology, which was conducted using a combination of internet and telephone based outreach. She discussed demographics and registration and her findings which were that slightly more than half of Guaranteed Ride Home registrants lived in Virginia and two thirds worked in DC. Maryland's registration has increased since 2010 by 8% however Virginia's has declined by 10%. Also her findings note that Guaranteed Ride Home registrants had longer commutes compared to the average regional commuter which was an average of 35.9 miles in contrast to 17.3 miles averaged for all regional commuters. She also

noted that most current participants correctly identify their Guaranteed Ride Home status but 56% of past registrants thought that they were still registered. Of current registrants seven in 10 registered before 2013 while 52% registered before 2011, two thirds of registrants participated in the GRH program for three or more years and that reasons for not registering were essentially the same as in 2013.

Ms. Diggins then began to discuss Guaranteed Ride Home advertising recall and impact noting that word-of-mouth continued to be the way most registrants learned about the GRH program, that 58% of all participants heard or saw Guaranteed Ride Home advertisements, that three in 10 registrants heard Guaranteed Ride Home advertisements before they registered and these advertisements influenced them to register for the program.

Regarding Guaranteed Ride Home commute patterns and travel changes, Ms. Diggins noted that nearly all current registrants used an alternative mode as their primary mode, that bus and commuter rail accounted for a larger share of current registrants in 2016 versus 2010, that 24% of participants drove alone before Guaranteed Ride Home and that 3% drove alone during Guaranteed Ride Home registration and that mode shares for most alternative modes users increased. Also she noted that while participating in Guaranteed Ride Home, alternative mode use increased from 3.4 days to 4.2 days per week, that in 2016 23% of Guaranteed Ride Home registrants shifted from driving alone to alternative modes and 3% increased alternative mode use after joining the program. In addition, eight in 10 respondents said that Guaranteed Ride Home was important to their decisions to start a new alternative mode or continue an existing alternative mode and that half of respondents who started using alternative modes and half who increased alternative mode use were not likely and only somewhat likely to switch without Guaranteed Ride Home. Ms. Diggins also noted that 44% of Guaranteed Ride Home registrants received other Commuter Connections services most commonly ridematch lists, transit info and carpool and vanpool information. 36% of respondents also cited non-commute service factors that influenced their decision including saving money, convenience, time and helping to reduce traffic.

Regarding the use and satisfaction of the Guaranteed Ride Home program, three in 10 Guaranteed Ride Home registrants made a trip, and that 75% of Guaranteed Ride Home trips were taken to address an illness while 12% were for unscheduled overtime.

Mr. Ramfos stated that the draft 2016 GRH Survey for the Washington DC region report will be finalized this fall and comments should be submitted to the [doccments@mwcog.org](mailto:doccments@mwcog.org) email address no later than September 2, 2016 by close of business. A follow-up email to the group will be sent as a reminder to review the document and submit comments.

**Item #7      2016 Retention Rate Survey**

*Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the highlights of the 2016 Commuter Connections Retention Rate survey. A comment period on the draft Report was established with a deadline Friday, Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016.*

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, provided a PowerPoint presentation of highlights regarding the Commuter Connections 2016 Retention Rate Survey. Regarding the methodology, Ms. Diggins shared that the survey included 989 random sample commuters who participated in Guaranteed

Ride Home or received Commuter Connections services between 2008 and June 2014, that the survey analysis divided respondents into categories by program used and last activity date.

Regarding services received, Ms. Diggins noted that eight in 10 respondents participated in Guaranteed Ride Home, that four in 10 respondents received a carpool or vanpool service while one third received a transit or bike service and 4% got telework information. She also noted that Guaranteed Ride Home respondents were almost evenly divided between receiving Guaranteed Ride Home only and Non-Guaranteed Ride Home services, and 19% of all respondents only received a Non-Guaranteed Ride Home service. Guaranteed Ride Home and Non-Guaranteed Ride Home respondents received somewhat different Non-Guaranteed Ride Home services then did Non-Guaranteed Ride Home only respondents in that Non-Guaranteed Ride Home participants use ridematching services more frequently while GRH/Non-GRH respondents received more transit services from Commuter Connections.

Regarding current commute patterns respondents used non-telework alternative modes for 63% of commute trips at the time of the survey, and respondents used telework for 15% of weekly commute days. Current alternative mode share was higher for respondents with 2013 to 2014 last activity date, that carpool and vanpool use declined with increasing time since receiving service, but transit use was higher for respondents with earlier last activity years, and respondents who participated in GRH either alone or with other Commuter Connections services had higher non-telework alternative mode use at the time of the survey. Ms. Diggins also noted that current transit use was highest for GRH only participants and that carpool use was higher for respondents who had received a Non-GRH service.

Regarding previous commute and retention rates, Ms. Diggins noted that there was a decline in alternative mode use, which is primarily transit and a slight decline in carpooling, that GRH respondents had a greater drop in alternative mode use then pre-service mode to current mode then did respondents who received GRH, but telework use grew more for Respondents. 91% of Guaranteed Ride Home respondents who drove alone at the time of the survey used alternative modes while in GRH among non-GRH respondents, 48% used alternative modes after receiving Commuter Connections services.

Ms. Diggins then continued to define the retention rate and its calculation for uses in the survey results. A retained commuter is a commuter who changed to a new alternative mode to receive or after receiving Commuter Connections services and continued using the new alternative mode until the time of the survey. She noted that retention rates were not substantially different by last year of activity and that Guaranteed Ride Home users had higher retention rates than did non-Guaranteed Ride Home users. Retention rates calculated from the survey data likely overestimate the actual rates because of an inability to reach many past users and the level of nonresponses for commuters with valid contact information.

Ms. Diggins then discussed motivations for continued alternative mode use noting that commuters who shifted from alternative modes of driving alone did so primarily because they changed jobs or work hours or moved to a new home. She shared that commuters who continued using alternative modes primarily gave personal benefit reasons or because it was the obvious choice. 52% of commuters who were using alternative modes said that a Commuter Connections service influenced or assisted their continued use of alternative modes and that Guaranteed Ride Home and transit information were the most common influencers.

Mr. Ramfos stated that the draft 2016 Retention Rate Survey Report will be finalized this fall and comments should be submitted to the [documents@mwcog.org](mailto:documents@mwcog.org) email address no later than September 2, 2016 by close of business. A follow-up email to the group will be sent as a reminder to review the document and submit comments.

**Item #8            2016 Employer Recognition Awards Event**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2016 Employer Recognition Awards event held on June 27th.*

Mr. Franklin shared a presentation with the Subcommittee including photographs from the Employer Recognition Awards Ceremony identifying the setting and some of the participants, award presenters and award winners for the incentives, marketing and telework award categories in addition to the two employer services awards for sales team and organization achievement. Mr. Franklin also shared a video of highlights regarding the award winners, a copy of the event booklet, and the Wall Street Journal ad. He also thanked the selection committee for their help in the awards and the workgroup that helped work on the project.

**Item #9            SafeTrack Work Group Update**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff briefed The Subcommittee on the Commuter Connections SafeTrack Work Group activities.*

Nicholas Ramfos briefly discussed communications efforts including the establishment of the Commuter Connections SafeTrack workgroup that has been meeting on a regular basis. He noted that WMATA has been providing additional bus services for each of the surges. COG/TPB staff has been participating in WMATA's SafeTrack "pop-up events" throughout the region. In addition to press events and conferences. WMATA is using paid and social media as part of their public outreach efforts. Metro has a dedicated SafeTrack web page on their website and Subcommittee members are encouraged to visit that site. Commuter Connections has a web hub on its site and has also sent targeted email messages which total to about 60,000 to date to both employers and employees impacted by the SafeTrack project. Public Service Announcements and paid media on radio as well as an ad in the Washington Business Journal and social media have also been used as outreach tools through Commuter Connections. In terms of results, there were about 17,000, "click-throughs" on Facebook with a very high return rate of \$.11 per click and out of 50,000 web visits in June and about 16 ½% of those were for the SafeTrack page. A key indicator was that Rideshare applications were up 104% from the same time last year.

Mr. Ramfos presented the webpage which included different forms of advertising along with a copy of the Washington Business Journal advertisement and social media ads used.

In Fairfax County there has been specialized shuttle services to the Pentagon as well as a dedicated SafeTrack webpage and a significant degree of employer outreach efforts.

Arlington County has been promoting flex work and telework scheduling, street parking has been limited in and around Metro stations to accommodate more buses, mobility hubs have been created at transit stores in addition to a taxi sharing initiative as well as temporary bike corrals

being added as a part of Capitol BikeShare. Bike “trains” were also instituted along with website and social media outreach activities.

Mr. Ramfos reported that DDOT also has a SafeTrack page, extended parking restrictions, and rush hour has been extended a half an hour in the morning and evening time periods. There are extra Metro buses, extended DC circulator routes, and a promotion for Capital BikeShare for a \$2 fare for under 30 minutes. The DC streetcar has been free and employer outreach efforts have been made by goDCgo.

Prince George’s County also has a SafeTrack website and the county has been promoting flex work and telework programs. There has also been a free shuttle bus service provided.

The City of Alexandria has increased DASH bus routes, free shuttles between Braddock Road and the airport as well as Pentagon City. Some Metro bus routes were also doubled running every 15 minutes, new bike stations were installed in addition to the Capital BikeShare promotion. Bike “trains” were also promoted in conjunction with WABA. Mr. Ramfos then played a YouTube video developed by the City of Alexandria for SafeTrack.

Mr. Ramfos then noted that there is new information being released regarding the first three surges of SafeTrack. Regarding congestion, Surge One had the most significant congestion during the a.m. and p.m. peak periods. Generally, traffic did increase with some locations experiencing different levels of congestion than others. Traffic was typically 10 to 15% higher. Surge Two had less notable changes however there was a 7% increase in traffic congestion in the PM hours during this surge phase. Surge Three had the least traffic congestion with only between 3 to 5% increase in PM hours. Congestion was actually lower than for the same period a year ago. One of the most important things to consider right now is when Surge 9 occurs beginning on September 9th as school is back in session and many residents are back from their vacations. This surge period may be a true test of the impacts SafeTrack will have on congestion levels.

**Item #10 2016 Car Free Day Event**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2016 Car Free Day event slated for September 22<sup>nd</sup>.*

Mr. Franklin noted that the Car Free Day proclamation will be taking place the subsequent day on July 20 here at MWCOG during the TPB meeting. He also described the marketing for the event including this year’s poster design which is consistent with the theme from the previous year’s event. The message for the campaign is, “Change Things Up.”

Mr. Franklin explained that there will still be teams including team bike, team bus, team carpool, team rail, team telework and team walk. The hope is that people join the teams that meet their mobility needs. Mr. Franklin also noted that there is a radio advertisement placement that will air in the first couple of weeks in September. He mentioned that the Car Free Day Steering Committee discussed this information in their previous meeting which took place on July 13.

[CarfreeMetroDC.org](http://CarfreeMetroDC.org) is the website for the event and last year there were 15,000 unique visitors to the website and 21,000 visits and updates are currently being made on the website to reflect new graphics which were finalized at the Car Free Day Steering Committee meeting last week.

Sponsors are being secured and the hope is to have jurisdictions help recruit sponsors. Mr. Franklin mentioned that social media will be playing a more prominent role in this year's event in comparison to paid media. The twitter handle for the event is #carfreeday.

Finally, Mr. Franklin shared that he is still anticipating further developments regarding street closures and promoting an aspect of the event called 'open streets' which is a more positive spin on street closures that will help facilitate the utility of transportation alternatives on this day.

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

Mr. Ramfos drew the Subcommittee's attention to item number 11 in the agenda packet. He noted that it is a preliminary 4<sup>th</sup> quarter document and that a final document will be provided in September once all invoices from vendors are received and reflected in the final project financial management reports.

**Item #12 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting**

During this time Lorraine Taylor of WMATA shared the news that she will be retiring effective August 1 and thanked the Subcommittee members and also introduced a new team member Janiece Timmons. Ms. Taylor was applauded for her service by the Subcommittee and congratulated on her retirement.

**The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 12 noon.**