



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 20, 2022
12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Chairperson: Kari Snyder, MDOT
Vice Chairperson: Judy Galen, Loudoun County
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 July 19, 2022 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the July 19, 2022 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 Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, to approve the minutes, and seconded by Holly Morello, OmniRide.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the July 19, 2022 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 **Announcement of New Vice Chair**

Kari Snyder, MDOT, announced the selection of the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson.

Kari Snyder, MDOT, announced the selection of the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson. The Vice Chair Selection Committee met in August and Janiece Timmons, WMATA, has agreed to be the next Vice Chairperson for the Subcommittee. Judy Galen will be serving as the Chair of the Subcommittee. A motion to approve the vice chair selection was made by Traci McPhail, North Bethesda, and the motion was seconded by Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect.

Item #4 **Change of Chairs**

Janiece Timmons, WMATA, assumed the position of vice chair and read the certificate language to outgoing Chairperson Kari Snyder, MDOT. Ms. Snyder was thanked by the Subcommittee for chairing over the last year and a plaque was mailed to her for her service. Judy Galen, Loudoun County, could not attend the meeting so Ms. Snyder resumed her position as Chair for the remainder of the meeting. Ms. Galen will also continue to be the board liaison for the Subcommittee on the Clear Air Partners Board since Ms. Timmons is already a Clean Air Partners board member for WMATA.

Item #5 **2022 State of the Commute Survey**

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, presented substantive changes to the draft 2022 State of the Commute Survey Technical Report to the Subcommittee.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, presented substantive changes to the draft 2022 State of the Commute Survey Technical Report to the Subcommittee. On page IV, in the top paragraph, a question was asked if teleworking responses were excluded for the survey question regarding whether commuting has become

easier or more difficult. The answer is that full-time teleworking responses were excluded due to the question wording in the questionnaire pertaining to those who traveled to an outside work location one or more days per week. The question did not ask what made commuting easier or more difficult. On page VIII, a comment recommended clarifying the language regarding the percentage of workers who telework and who would like to telework. The language has been clarified. On page 7, a question was asked how the results from the 2022 survey compare to the 2019 results for flexible work schedules. Language has been added to help compare current results to that of 2019. On page 26, a question was asked about transit use of those making under \$60,000 per year. There were no major differences between incomes for transit users and teleworking showed the vast difference in income as far as participants. On page 30, a footnote was added explaining that full-time teleworker responses were excluded from the questions regarding Commute Travel Time and Commute Distance as it was not relevant to their current situation. On page 53, "Move as Factor in Shortening Commute Distance or Time" was included in the 2019 report but excluded the option "Didn't Shorten Either Distance or Time". On page 70, language was added that relates to higher congestion, VMT, and air quality impacts. On page 77, language was added to express that "nearly half" of respondents agreed it was hard to unplug while teleworking. On page 125, one of the questions regarding primary commute mode by commute benefits asked could this be due to higher transit use in the Core. Language was added to clarify why more commute benefits are available to Core area workers. This draft report was presented to the TPB Technical Committee on September 9th and will be presented to the TPB tomorrow. There has been more media attention on the report results than ever before due to interest in commuting and how it's been affected by the pandemic.

Kari Snyder, MDOT, asked if there will be any further additions to the report. Mr. Ramfos replied that that this is the final draft with the exception of editing and graphics. A motion was made to endorse the document by Kari Snyder, MDOT, and was seconded by Holly Morello, OmniRide.

Item #6 2022 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Survey Reports

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, presented substantive changes to the draft 2022 GRH Survey Reports from both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions to the Subcommittee.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, presented substantive changes to the draft 2022 GRH Survey Reports from both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions to the Subcommittee. For the Washington DC report, on page IV, additional language was added to make it apparent that users maintained alternative mode use as well. On page 10, language was added to explain how users who started teleworking full-time perceived themselves as no longer registered for GRH and were treated in the survey interview as "past registrants." On page 15, language was added to the GRH Advertising section stating that Commuter Connections paused advertising during the pandemic. On page 18, there was a mix-up with the percentages on Table 9 that were corrected.

For the Baltimore report, on page I, some of the statistics under "Program Participation Findings" was made clear to be able to find in Table 2. On page II, language under "Telework at Time of Survey and Pre-pandemic" was cleaned up and wrong dates were removed. On page 9, language was added to explain how users who started teleworking full-time perceived themselves as no longer registered for GRH and were treated in the survey interview as "past registrants." On page 11, information under "Program Characteristics" was not showing in Table 5 so language was added for clarity. On page 31, language did not match Table 12 regarding "easier/faster process for approving ride requests;" the language was fixed. A motion was made to endorse the Washington DC report by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, and was seconded by Janiece Timmons, WMATA. A motion was made to endorse the Baltimore report by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, and was seconded by Kari Snyder, MDOT. The documents will be finalized and published to the Commuter Connections website with hard copies available upon request.

Item #7 Regional TDM Evaluation Project

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the data collection activities and schedule associated with the regional TDM Evaluation project for FY2023.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the data collection activities and schedule associated with the regional TDM Evaluation project for FY2023. For Task A, the final draft of the State of the Commute report was just presented to and endorsed for release by the Subcommittee. The release of the jurisdictional SOC data will begin in January 2023. Assistance with the preparation of the General Public Report will begin in June 2023 with the report becoming available in July. For Task B and C, the Washington and Baltimore GRH reports were just endorsed by Subcommittee in the current meeting and will be published. For Task C, a draft questionnaire has been prepared for the Bike to Work Day Survey with finalization to take place by the end of September. Some questions will likely be added regarding the pandemic. The survey will be implemented in November and highlights from the survey results will be presented in January. A survey report will be prepared and presented to the Subcommittee in March with the endorsement for release happening in May after the comment period closes. This survey will be comprised of participants who took part in Bike to Work Day 2022.

For Task E, Mr. Ramfos explained that telework data regarding telework assistance given by Maryland jurisdictions will be collected from employers in Maryland in early 2023. The data will be retrieved from the Act! Database. Task F is regarding the Employer Outreach Database Analysis from the ACT! CRM. Data exports from Act! will occur in January. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB Staff, noted a Commuter Connections newsletter was sent to employers logged in the database; there were over one thousand returns which shows that information in the system lacks integrity. All local jurisdictions need to go through and make sure contacts and other information are correct in the database. Model runs will be conducted in April and information gathered from January to June will be analyzed over the summer.

Mr. Ramfos stated that for Task G, the Car Free Day survey will run at the same time as the Bike to Work Day survey, however, a report is not produced for the Car Free Day survey. Task H involves the draft TDM Analysis report with data obtained through December and analysis of Mass Marketing and Telework occurring through the end of April. Analysis of Employer Outreach will occur in mid-May and preparation of the draft analysis report taking place in June. The first draft analysis report will be presented in July with the final version being presented in September. After a comment period, the report will need to be endorsed for release in November 2023.

Item #8 Clean Air Partners Update

Janiece Timmons, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of Clean Air Partners activities.

Janiece Timmons, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of Clean Air Partners activities. This past August was Ozone Action Month in which actions were taken to heighten awareness of air quality during the hottest time of the summer. Pop-up events were held at four farmer's markets throughout the Baltimore-Washington region, including Arlington, Uptown Market (DC), Towson, and Fells Point. The Eco-Driving Exhibit was installed at Westfield Wheaton Mall and Arundel Mills Mall. The exhibit displayed air quality messages and tips on how to reduce mobile-source emissions as well as a vehicle encased in a clear, plastic bubble, trivia questions, and a selfie wall. Clean Air Partners and Commuter Connections continued their on-going partnership to build engagement around Car Free Day and to promote the pledge through a social media campaign. Posts began the week of September 12th promoting the participation for Car Free Day and encouraging commuters to take the pledge. The campaign also includes working with 12 digital influencers with followings of 10,000-15,000 people on Instagram. The expected cumulative reach is between 50,000-100,000 people. Clean Air Partners and Washington Gas are partnering to bring the eco-driving exhibit to the Nationals Ballpark. The exhibit will be available to attendees during the September 27th game.

Item #9 2022 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, 2022.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which will be held on September 22, 2022. The event is focused on promoting awareness of all the alternative transportation modes available to commuters and non-commuters. Participants are encouraged to take the pledge to go car-free or car-lite for the day for the purpose of reducing emissions and traffic congestion. The official results of the pledge numbers will be presented at the Subcommittee meeting in November. Pledge numbers as they come in can be found on the Car Free Day homepage located at www.carfreemetrod.org. As of this morning, there were about 3,300 pledges and that already exceeds last year's final number which was under 3,000. Currently, most have pledged to bike or walk which is similar to past years with telework coming in as third most popular form of alternative travel.

Two promotional sponsors were added this year and four new raffle sponsors were added. Everyone who takes the pledge will receive an email with a promo code to get a \$30 Nift gift which will be valid through the end of October. Capital Bikeshare has offered a 24-hour pass for unlimited 45-minute rides on Car Free Day through October 22nd. Busboys and Poets is offering a free cup of coffee only valid on Car Free Day. Raffle prizes include coupons to various restaurants, a \$50 SmarTrip card, VRE transit passes, annual memberships, and specialty shop deals. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland donated a Samsung Galaxy tablet to be raffled.

Face coverings have been removed from marketing graphics and the website went live on August 1st. Two email blasts have been sent since the beginning of August. Flyers and posters have been sent to employers and can also be downloaded from the Car Free Day website. A three-week marketing campaign began in early September which will run through Car Free Day. The campaign will include multiple radio ads, promotional banners, a YouTube video, social media images, and social media influencer videos. A press release was sent out in early August with another one sent last week.

The proclamation was signed in July at the TPB meeting with a presentation given by Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff. The City of Rockville, Prince George's County, and Charles County are jurisdictions that have collected proclamations of their own which was encouraged. Montgomery County, Prince George's County and Prince William County will all be hosting Car Free Day events of their own as well.

Item #10 Congestion Management Technical Report

James Li, COG/TPB staff, gave an update on the recently published Congestion Management Process document which was accepted as final by the TPB Technical Committee in July.

James Li, COG/TPB staff, gave an update on the recently published Congestion Management Process (CMP) document which was accepted as final by the TPB Technical Committee in July. The 2022 CMP Technical Report has been released and can be found on the COG website. The Subcommittee was first briefed on the report in September 2021 and the comments received are reflected in the final version. Examples of TDM Strategies include the Commuter Connections program, promotion of local TDM, public transportation improvements, pedestrian and bicycle transportation enhancements, car sharing, and land use strategies. Table 3-1 provides information on ongoing TDM strategies and traffic management activities in the Washington DC region. Comments from the Subcommittee were received and are reflected in the final document. Key findings include congestion analysis, bottlenecks, TDM importance, walking/biking growth, real-time travel information, and pandemic impacts. Report recommendations include the continuation of the Commuter Connections program, continuation of the MATOC program, encouraging integration of operations and TDM components of congestion management, consideration of variable pricing, and encouragement of transit and non-auto travel modes.

Item #11 **FY2024 Work Program Development And Commuter Connections Strategic Plan**
Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the timeline development of the FY2024 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP).

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the timeline development of the FY2024 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP). The FY2024 CCWP timeline milestones include verifying program elements, identifying project components within each program element, and production of draft bullet points for review in September 2022. In October, a draft work plan will be developed for the STDM Work Group's review and comments. The program elements will be refined based on the feedback given. In November, the draft work program will be presented to the Subcommittee for review and comment as well. In January 2023, final approval will be obtained for release from the Subcommittee and STDM Work Group. The draft work program will be presented to the TPB Technical Committee and TPB for comment in February with final approvals being obtained from these groups in March. In May, funding commitment letters will be sent to funding agencies and any adjustments to the TIP will be identified. The TIP funding changes will be implemented in June if there are any, and funding commitment letters will be obtained as well.

Implementation of the final CCWP will begin in July 2023. There were not many changes made to the proposed work activities for the FY2024 CCWP with the exception of the addition of the Flexible Vanpool program being added to the CarpoolNow application and being partially funded by the Enhanced Mobility Innovative grant project. Also, the Flextime Incentive program is being integrated into the incenTrip application. The 2022 State of the Commute report will be printed and distributed to the general public, the FY2021-2023 TDM Program Element Analysis Report will be finalized and distributed, and the FY2024 Placement Rate Survey will be conducted with a report issued afterward. Lastly, the 2021-2022 Strategic Plan will be available for comment in November.

Item #12 **4th Quarter CCWP Budget Report FY2022, 4th Quarter Progress Report, and FY2022 CCWP Annual Report**
Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2022 CCWP 4th Quarterfinal Budget Report. Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on the FY2022 CCWP 4th Quarter Progress Report and the FY2022 CCWP Annual Progress Report.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2022 CCWP 4th Quarter final Budget Report. The Commuter Operations Center expended about 80%, GRH 63%, Marketing 77%, Monitoring and Evaluation 77%, Employer Outreach 78%, and GRH Baltimore 76%. The total overall expenditure for the entire program was at 75% for all of FY2022. The lower budget expenditures were due to the pandemic.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on the FY2022 CCWP 4th Quarter Progress Report. Operations highlights include work on the ATCMTD grant initiative with new incentives being introduced within the incenTrip application such as WMATA SmarTrip credits and Nift gifts. Flextime Rewards and travel alerts are being added to the application as well. A workflow was created for the E-ZPass incentive and an MOU was drafted. The WMATA Platform Shutdown Work Group was reconvened and meetings were coordinated on April 27th and May 25th. The programming of the GRH Applicant Survey was completed within the TDM System which produced the report endorsed earlier in the meeting. The programming of the Supplemental Vanpool Module was also completed which contains the Flexible Vanpool component. 13,361 commuters were served in Ridematching which is a slight increase from last quarter. The 2nd edition of the Regional Paper Bike Map was completed and released on Bike to Work Day 2022. A total of 213 new applicants were registered and 387 commuters were re-registered into the Guaranteed Ride Home program. The program now has about 1,846 commuters registered in the GRH database and 138 GRH trips were provided throughout the quarter. For Marketing, the implementation of the "Look Again" Regional TDM Recovery marketing campaign was continued. Advertising occurred on Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and radio in April. Two additional videos for the "Commute with Confidence" live discussions were produced which featured interviews with actual Commuter Connections commuters.

Mr. Sheehan continued with the Spring 2022 newsletter which was published and distributed. Two in-person events were attended which included the USPTO Virtual Green Fair in April and the Fort Belvoir Employee Transportation Fair in May. The Bike to Work Day 2022 event was held on Friday, May 20th. The Employer Recognition Awards event, hosted by Commuter Connections, took place on June 28th at the National Press Club. Two new vanpools joined the program throughout the quarter as part of the 'Pool Rewards program, for a total of eight vanpools operating by the end of the quarter. There was a spike in downloads for CarpoolNow bringing the total to 5,030 downloads during the quarter. 3,214 commuters are currently registered for incenTrip as of June 30th with 58 payment requests processed throughout the quarter. A marketing campaign for the application was developed and implemented in June. The campaign was targeted to MDOT users as well which included about 155 users registered and 2 payment requests received throughout the quarter. Under Monitoring and Evaluation, the 2022 State of the Commute report and the GRH Applicant surveys were conducted and the reports were endorsed earlier in the meeting. Under Employer Outreach, a new version of the ACT! Regional Employer Database was released in June (version 24 replaced version 19). A new purge process for the database was implemented which will now occur on an annual basis. For GRH Baltimore, a total of 106 registrants was recorded by the end of the quarter with 6 trips provided. Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, mentioned that she is sending her Table 6A report in every month and would like confirmation that they are being received as the data was not reflected in the tables.

Mr. Sheehan also briefed the group on the FY2022 CCWP Annual Progress Report. On page 5, Commuter Connections worked with GSA and NCPC to facilitate Federal ETC handbook updates and a Federal ETC response to the coronavirus pandemic. On page 7, 13,361 Ridematching commuters were being served by the end of the fiscal year which noted a decline of 336 participants throughout the year. On page 8, a TDM System cosmetic refresh was implemented in October 2021 and Quick Match was added as well. A new incentive payment module was added to the incenTrip application in November 2021. PayPal, gift cards, Nift gifts, and SmarTrip credits were added. On page 12, the 2nd edition of the Regional Paper Bike Map was completed and released on Bike to Work Day 2022. New guidelines were implemented this year for the Guaranteed Ride Home program which were endorsed by the Subcommittee in January 2022. There was an increase in the number of trips available for users per registration year (from 4 to 6) as well as the addition of Juneteenth as a program holiday. On page 14, the Look Again campaign started in late FY2021 and ran through the summer of FY2022 which promoted equity emphasis areas as well as encouraged commuters back into the office. Commute with Confidence live discussions were held by Nicholas Ramfos with Kari Snyder, MDOT, as well as Pamela Sebesky, TPB chair and Vice Mayor of the City of Manassas. On page 18, Bike to Work Day was held on May 20th with minimal pandemic guidelines. On page 25, the Employer Recognition awards were held on June 28th. On page 26, the fiscal year started with 2 vanpools and ended with 8 vanpools for 'Pool Rewards. On page 31, for the June 2022 CarpoolNow marketing campaign, two Park and Ride Lot promotional events were held, and three Instagram ads reached over 15,000 people. In-person sales trainings resumed for Employer Outreach and the ACT! Database was upgraded. For GRH Baltimore, 22 trips were provided throughout the fiscal year. Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect asked what happened between years 2005-2007 in Figure 35 as there was an obvious spike in registrants during those years. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, replied that GRH had its own marketing budget during those years so due to higher exposure, more people were aware of the program and decided to register for it. Funding agencies later requested the GRH marketing budget be combined with other marketing initiatives.

Item #13 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting

This is 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, November 15, 2022 at 12 noon.