



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 19, 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. Anna McLaughlin, DDOT, led the meeting as Chairperson due to the absence of Marina Budimir.

Item #2 **Minutes of November 17, 2020 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the November 17, 2020 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

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

A motion was made by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, and seconded by George Clark, TCCSMD.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the November 17, 2020 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 **FY2022 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) and 2020 – 2021 Strategic Plan**

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY 2022 CCWP and the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY2022 CCWP and the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan. The FY2022 CCWP draft document was presented in the previous meeting in November and was released for comment through December 4th. All comments have now been incorporated. The document was presented to state funding agencies last week and was approved. The daily impact figures for both transportation and emissions were updated with data from the FY2018 – FY2020 TDM Analysis report. Overhead rates have changed for COG per an Indirect Cost Rate Proposal submitted for review to the FTA, COG's cognizant agency. The overall budget has not changed for the Commuter Connections program; however, small amounts of dollars were shifted to account for overhead rate changes based on the submitted proposal. The 2020-2021 Commuter Connections Strategic Plan document included some minor text changes as well as the fiscal year update. A motion to endorse for both documents was made by George Clark, TCCSMD, and seconded by Nancy Huggins, MTA; the Subcommittee unanimously elected to endorse the documents. The CCWP document will be presented at the TPB Tech Committee meeting as well as the TPB meeting in February and will be released for comment. Final approvals from the TPB and TPB Tech Committee will take place in March.

Item #4 **FY2021 Placement Rate Survey Highlights**

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the highlights of the Commuter Connections Placement Rate Survey recently conducted.

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the highlights of the Commuter Connections Placement Rate Survey recently conducted. The triennial survey was conducted in November and December 2020. There were far less participants than in previous years due to the coronavirus pandemic. 282 commuters reported receiving Commuter Connections services during July-September 2020 and 145 commuters participated in a Commuter Connections incentive programs. The survey collected data for TDM evaluation and to identify possible program improvements. New questions were added to examine telework changes related to the pandemic as well as the likelihood to return to worksites post pandemic. New questions were also added regarding the use of CarpoolNow, incenTrip, and Flextime Rewards. Two-thirds of respondents were teleworking full-time at the time of the survey. Prior to the start of the pandemic, only 2% teleworked full-time. More than half of respondents expect to continue some telework post pandemic, 7% expect to telework full-time, and 50% expect to split their time between home and their main worksite. Telework days accounted for 76% of weekly commute trips. Among respondents who still traveled to a worksite, use of carpool/vanpool was about the same in 2020 as in 2017. Transit use fell and driving alone grew substantially.

Ms. Diggins explained that other travel characteristics in 2020 were generally similar to past years' results such as travel distance, travel time and carpool/vanpool occupancy. Six out of ten respondents made a commute change after receiving Commuter Connections services; most changed to telework. Fewer respondents made transit and carpool changes in 2020 than in 2017, and more shifted to telework. Transit and carpool changes decreased while telework changes increased. Four out of ten respondents made a change to a mode they still used, but some used the new mode only "occasionally". The coronavirus pandemic was the overwhelming reason for making a change. Even with the pandemic, economic reasons continued to be motivations to make commute mode changes. In 2020, respondents heard about Commuter Connections primarily from referrals and employers. GRH was the most requested service in 2020. 65% of matchlist recipients tried to contact an individual(s) listed on their matchlist and 43% reached an interested person. 35% of respondents who received transit information contacted a transit agency and used the information to use transit, similar to number of respondents in 2017 (40%) and 2014 (41%). 61% of applicants who received Park & Ride information used the information. 91% who received GRH information used it. The formal report will be presented to the Subcommittee in March and Ms. Diggins will share any data that had not yet been collected during the March meeting as well.

Item #5 FY 2020 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Customer Satisfaction Surveys for the Washington DC and Baltimore/St. Mary's County Regions

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 GRH Customer Satisfaction survey results for both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 GRH Customer Satisfaction survey results for both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions. GRH has been offered in the Washington DC region since 1997. The survey has eight questions and is offered online as well as through the mail. 1,707 surveys were distributed in 2020 and 165 responses were recorded, which is a survey response rate 10%. These amounts are lower than in previous years due to the pandemic. 91% of respondents said that the GRH trip reservations staff was excellent, 7% said good, and 2% said poor. 80% of respondents said that the GRH transportation service was excellent, 15% said good, 3% said fair, and 2% said poor. The overall rating for GRH service was 80% excellent, 11% good, and 3% fair. 42% used the GRH service for personal illness, 26% other emergency, 21% for sick child, and 11% for unscheduled overtime. 70% provided written feedback and the majority of the comments were compliments. There were 11 complaints mainly regarding issues with the drivers. The formal draft report will be posted for comments through February 19th. The report will be presented to the Subcommittee for endorsement in March and will be published on the Commuter Connections website following the endorsement.

Mr. Franklin continued with presenting results from the FY2020 Baltimore region GRH Customer Satisfaction survey. 68 surveys were distributed in 2020 and 7 responses were recorded, which is a survey response rate

10%. These amounts are lower than in previous years due to the pandemic. 100% of respondents said that the GRH trip reservations staff was excellent. 86% of respondents said that the GRH transportation service was excellent and 14% said good. The overall rating for GRH service was 100% excellent. 43% used the GRH service for personal illness, 14% other emergency, 14% for a sick child, and 29% for unscheduled overtime. 100% provided written feedback there were zero complaints. The formal draft report will be posted for comments through February 19th. The report will be presented to the Subcommittee for endorsement in March and will be published on the Commuter Connections website following the endorsement.

Item #6 Metro Platform Work for 2021 Briefing

Greg Potts and Nick Perfili, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on Metro's upcoming platform project work.

Greg Potts and Nick Perfili, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on Metro's upcoming platform project work. Concrete platforms have been exposed to weather and de-icing agents for decades. Platforms built 35-40 years ago and are now deteriorating. 50% of overall project has been completed. 11 stations have been completed and there are nine left with one being in Virginia and eight in Maryland. Improved lighting, upgraded platform shelters, slip-resistant tile, and new passenger information displays (PIDS) are examples of what each platform will be receiving through the project. The Addison Road and Arlington Cemetery Metro stations will be closed from February 13th through May 23rd. Greenbelt, College Park, Prince George's Plaza, and West Hyattsville stations will be closed from May 29th through September 6th. The blue line will be temporarily suspended during the Spring 2021 platform project work. Multiple transfer options are available for transit users during this time. Free shuttle service is available as well and the shuttles operate all hours that the rail system is open. Prior to, during, and after the station closures, customers will experience pedestrian detours, parking closures, and weekend shutdowns while crews stage equipment and materials. Addison Road will be free for the duration of the station closures and regular fares will be charged at all other stations. The last three of the platforms to be serviced within the project will take place in Summer 2022. All platform project information can be found on wmata.com/platforms.

Item #7 FY2021 Regional TDM Evaluation Project Update

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on Regional TDM Evaluation data collection efforts for FY2021.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on Regional TDM Evaluation data collection efforts for FY2021. As was mentioned earlier in the agenda, a draft report for the Placement Rate survey will be presented in March, and a comment period will be established, and the report will be finalized in May. The final survey for the year is the Retention Rate survey which evaluates past account holders' travel patterns. Final touches are being made to the on-line survey questionnaire and calls to respondents will begin by the end of this month. The on-line survey will start being distributed in February through early March and results will be included in FY2021 - FY2023 TDM Analysis Report. The Retention Rate survey is conducted every five years. Highlights from the survey results will be presented in March and a draft report will be presented in May and released for comments. The final report will be presented to the Subcommittee in July for final review and endorsement.

Item #8 Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment (ATCMTD) Program Grant Update

Daniel Sheehan, COG/DTP staff, briefed the Subcommittee on activities associated with the COG ATCMTD grant to expand the incenTrip program.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/DTP staff, briefed the Subcommittee on activities associated with the COG ATCMTD grant to expand the incenTrip program. Over the past few months, Commuter Connections has been working

with the University of Maryland, the primary subcontractors for the project, to launch the project, which commenced in mid-November. A project management plan was drafted and submitted to the FHWA in mid-January for feedback. The plan serves as the roadmap for the project including the scope, milestones, budget, etc. IncentTrip will be expanding from the Washington DC region to the entire state of Maryland first, then to the Richmond region in Virginia for “super-commuters” commuter to the Washington, DC non-attainment region, The application should be usable to the entire megaregion by the end of 2021. Incentive fulfillment is a task that is currently being worked on. The task includes possibly partnering with local businesses and retailers in the area to add to the incentive options as well as investigating digital options for disbursing cash payment incentives.

Item #9 2nd Quarter CCWP FY2021 Budget Report

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 2nd Quarter Budget Report

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 2nd Quarter Budget Report. Many programs are not being fully used due to the pandemic. Commuter Operations is operating at 40%, GRH 28%, Marketing 15%, Monitoring and Evaluation 34%, Employer Outreach 14%, and GRH Baltimore 22%. Overall expenditures are operating at 21% for the fiscal year through the second quarter.

Item #10 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, March 16, 2021 at 12 noon.