

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS RIDEMATCHING COMMITTEE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

1. INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was brought to order by Dan Sheehan, COG/TPB staff. First time attendees were asked to introduce themselves.

2. JUNE 18, 2024 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Approval was sought for the June 18th, 2024, Ridematching Committee Meeting minutes. An initial motion to approve was made by Christian Bacon, PGC DPWT, and a second motion was made by Jetaune Slaughter, COG/TPB staff. The minutes were approved as written. All were in favor.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 AGENDA

Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, Vice Chair of the Ridematching Committee, requested approval of the new format of discussion in the agenda. She explained that The Ridematching meeting discussion will be concentrating first on the items that have been presented in the previous meetings during the day that are specific to Ridematching. An initial motion to approve the new Meeting Agenda was made by Brandon Brown, Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation, and a seconded by Jetaune Slaughter, COG/TPB staff.

3. CHANGE OF CHAIRS

Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, replaced Maritza De La Vega as the new Chair of the Ridematching Committee. Ms. Anderson will be the Chair for the next year. George Clark, TCCSMD, was announced as the new Vice Chair for the next year.

4. OPEN DISCUSSION ON ITEMS PRESENTED AT THE SEPTEMBER 17TH COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Dan Sheehan, COG/TPB staff provided a recap of relevant items discussed at the previous meeting.

The first item is the CommuterCash program which will take the place of incenTrip (Commuter Connections' incentive program application developed in conjunction with the University of Maryland over the last several years). The formal announcement to the public will occur on October 2nd in tandem with our 50th Anniversary event. The full release of CommuterCash is expected to take place in December of this year. Mr. Sheehan encouraged all the ridematching coordinators to start thinking how they might incorporate any outreach efforts to get people registered in the new program.

Mr. Sheehan explained that the migration between the two systems will be automatic, therefore users don't need to worry about losing trips data or their points balance. To participate in CommuterCash users will need to already have an account with Commuter Connections.

Mr. Sheehan went on to discuss the launch of other elements of CommuterCash like the employer commuter challenges that will be taking place in February of next year. The 'Pool Rewards program will be incorporated into CommuterCash later in May or June of next year.

After the presentation, Mr. Sheehan asked if anybody had questions or thoughts about the transition, and how Commuter Connections could provide support at a local level with any materials or further guidance.

Brandon Brown, Prince George's County DPWT, asked if there was any marketing projected for the CommuterCash program. Mr. Sheehan explained that there is a budget for marketing once the program has officially been launched. The current plan will include social media, radio ads and other digital platforms with the purpose of targeting a lot of people coming into DC that use the app.

Mr. Sheehan noted that the CommuterCash program can only be used for commuter trips in regard to the points that can be redeemed.

Mr. Sheehan went on to discuss another item that was brought up for discussion in the Subcommittee meeting relevant to the Ridematching Committee. He reviewed the changes of the 'Pool Rewards program for the region. The Subcommittee is currently reviewing some updated language that Commuter Connections proposed, in regard to how people receive incentive payments, how they comply with the program requirements, and how to log trips in the system.

He went on to review the basics of the Pool Rewards and how commuters who carpool get paid once they have registered on the Commuter Connections platform and log their trips along with their partner. Currently 2 dollars a day, 1 dollar per trip. Commuter Connections is planning to raise that amount to \$2.50 per trip up to \$5 a day for a 90-day period to make it more lucrative and encourage more participation. Commuter Connections will expand the methods of payments including PayPal or other forms of digital payments, and it will increase the frequency of payments from just once at the end of 90 days to every month to further engage participants.

Hannah McMullin, City of Alexandria, asked if there was a difference in rewards for the person who is hosting the carpool and the passenger who is just riding alone. Mr. Sheehan said that there is no difference at this point. Both the driver and the riders receive the same amount, and the only requirement is the need to log their trip to receive the incentive reward.

Mr. Sheehan encouraged the Ridematching Committee to send any suggestions or ideas to improve the 'Pool Rewards program via e-mail. Suggestions may be included in the updated program guidelines. The new guidelines will be formalized and published in November after the Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting.

Mr. Sheehan ended his presentation by sharing some FY2024 program data tables. He began by mentioning the total amount of data provided between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024. 13,449 interactions were reported in this period. The Commuter Connections Ridematching Database for FY2024 already has around 12,750 active users registered.

Mr. Sheehan went on to discuss the Activity Summary broken down by jurisdictions. He then went on to cover calls received at client programs, a self-reported dataset, as well as applications received by the TDM system. Then he shared a few graphics of Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home Program which is experiencing some growth over the last few years. Total trips provided in FY2024 were around 600. He also talked about the increase in web traffic according to Google Analytics. FY2024 Monthly Web Visits reported a grand total of 138,832.

Kendall Tiffany, Loudoun County Commuter Services, asked a question regarding a Ridematching graph indicating higher numbers and a peak for November and May compared with other fiscal years. She also asked about how the data is compiled for the applications received.

Mr. Sheehan finished his presentation reminding everyone about the 50th Commuter Connections Anniversary celebration at the National Press Club. The event will honor the annual regional employer award recipients and will include the official announcement of the Commuter Cash program as well.

5. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

- PGC DPWT: Brandon Brown requested recommendations from other on how to bring TDM to the universities and college institutions in the County. He also requested advice from DOD on how to approach Andrews Air Force Base to promote TDM services.
- North Bethesda TMD: Traci McPhail shared a social media contest in the TDM week for the Association for Commuter Transportation.
- DoD/WHS: Alex Mitchell talked about their monthly table events to promote transportation initiatives like the Car Free Day, and the Guaranteed Ride Home Program.
- City of Alexandria: Hannah McMullin spoke about Car Free Day and a digital display campaign to promote the Guaranteed Ride Home Program. She also mentioned a report of 156 total ride matches for the past fiscal year.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Leigh Anderson, Chair, asked if any members of the Ridematching Committee would like to make a presentation about a new topic at a future meeting. There were no immediate volunteers.

7. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Traci McPhail, North Bethesda TDM, and seconded by Kendall Tiffany, Loudoun County Commuter Services.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee will be held on December 17, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.