

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



Commuter Connections Subcommittee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 15, 2005

Chairperson: Leann Landry, WMATA
Vice Chairperson: Linda Stewart - Byrd
Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos (202) 962-3313

Item #1 Introductions

Ms. Landry began the meeting by introducing herself and asking the rest of the attendees to do so. (*See attached attendance sheet*).

Item #2 Minutes of September 13, 2005

Approval was sought for the September 13th Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting minutes.

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the September 13th meeting as written.

Item #3 FY 2005 Employer Telework Seminars Draft Evaluation Report

The Subcommittee was briefed on the suggested changes made to the 2005 Employer Telework Workshops Draft Evaluation Report.

Ms. Campbell asked the group to endorse the final draft of the 2005 Employer Telework Workshop Draft Evaluation report which had been presented and discussed at the September 13th Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting. Ms. Campbell explained that the edits she had received from the group had been incorporated into the report. She asked the group if there were any additional modifications to the report.

There were no additional edits suggested and the Commuter Connections Subcommittee moved to endorse the 2005 Employer Telework Workshops Draft Evaluation Report for release.

Item #4 2004 Performance of Regional High – Occupancy Vehicle Facilities in the Washington Region

The Subcommittee was briefed on the 2004 Performance of Regional High – Occupancy Vehicle Facilities in the Washington Region

Andrew Burke and C. Patrick Zilliacus presented their report on 2004 Performance of Regional High – Occupancy Vehicle Facilities in the Washington Region. The HOV facilities monitored for the data in this report were: I – 395 and I – 95 (Shirley Highway), I – 66 (inside the Beltway), I – 66 (outside the beltway), I - 270 (and I – 270 Spur), Va. 267 (Dulles Toll Road), U.S. 50 (John Hanson Highway), U.S. 1 and Washington Street (arterial HOV in City of Alexandria), and the Wilson Bridge (future HOV crossing the Potomac River).

In order to present the clearest picture of the HOV usage, data collection was limited to three control days, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. These days were selected due to flex hours and teleworking benefits having the least impact. It was sighted that federal employees on four day work cycles tend to take Friday off, which would skew data. While both HOV and non-HOV lanes were monitored; only the peak flow lanes were monitored. The inbound lanes were monitored from 5 am till 10 am and the outbound lanes were monitored from 3 pm till 8 pm. The exception to the peak flow rule was U.S. Route 50, in which 2 way traffic was monitored due to 24 hour HOV restriction. Data collected included auto occupancy; person trips; vehicle trips and persons per lane per hour. In addition to automobile traffic, both buses and nearby transit was also monitored.

The findings of the report are as follows:

- HOV lanes carry more persons per lane per hour than adjacent non-HOV lanes (A.M. and non-HOV average vehicle occupancies for each facility – these do not include transit)
 - I-395 (HOV 2.5, non-HOV 1.1)
 - I-95 (HOV 2.6, non-HOV 1.1)
 - I-66 [inside beltway] (HOV 1.7)
 - I-66 [outside beltway] (HOV 2.0, non-HOV 1.1)
 - I-270 [at Md. 187] (HOV 1.9, non-HOV 1.1)
 - Va. 267 (HOV 1.8, non-HOV 1.1)
 - U.S. 50 [westbound side] (HOV 1.6, non-HOV 1.0)
- HOV lanes provide savings in travel time (from 37 minutes on Shirley Highway to 3 minutes on U.S. 50)
- Almost no savings in travel time on I-66 eastbound in the mornings (outside of the Beltway, concurrent-flow HOV lane)
- Hybrids appear to have some impact on HOV lane performance in Virginia

Questions and comments regarding the report:

- A member asked about the variability of counts such as these.
 - In order to try and limit the variability in this data collection, vehicle occupancy counts were limited to Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays and count data was utilized only against other data from that day.
- A member commented that the average vehicle occupancies reported were lower than the HOV requirement.
 - Many different variables may effect the counts such as:
 - Passengers (including children) in the vehicle may be out of sight, therefore not counted.
 - Hybrid vehicles such as Toyota Prius, Honda Insight, and Honda Civic Hybrid are entitled to use the HOV lanes with only one passenger (VA only).
 - Official use vehicles such as State Police, Safety Service Patrol (VA), and Chart (MD) are entitled to use of the lanes.
 - There some true violations as well.

The discussion continued on the difference in travel time savings when comparing HOV travel across the state lines of Maryland and Virginia. The primary reason sighted was a difference in the construction of the HOV lanes. The Shirley Highway HOV lanes are barrier separated while those along I - 66, I - 495, I – 270, and U.S. Route 50 are “concurrent – flow”. The concurrent – flow lanes tend to under perform the barrier separated lanes. The committee was reminded that the HOV lanes on I – 270 are unbalanced. The northbound (PM) lane runs several miles farther north to Clarksburg, while the its southbound (AM) counterpart does not begin until Gaithersburg. Furthermore, the committee was reminded that time savings data is collected from several runs, not just one.

One member of the subcommittee pointed out that these reports were especially useful in that they take into account transit rider ship in the HOV lanes also. Staff commented that the Metro Core Cordon Count will be conducted again in the spring of 2006. This survey will include all person trips, transit and highway, to the “downtown” areas of the District of Columbia and Arlington County, VA.

Item #5 FY 2005 Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey Draft Report and 1st Quarter Verification Statement

The Commuter Connections Subcommittee was presented with the FY 2005 Employer outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey Draft Report and the 1st Quarter Verification Statement.

Mr. Hersey presented the FY 2005 Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey Draft Report (Item 5a) and 1st Quarter Verification Statement (Item 5b rev.) He called for a comment period to be established until December 12th, upon when the comments are due for review for the FY 2005 Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey Draft Report.

Item #6 Commuter Connections 2002-2005 TERM Analysis Results and 2004 Bike To Work Day Survey Results

The Subcommittee was briefed on the results of the 2002-2005 TERM Analysis Report and the 2004 Bike to Work Day Survey Results by Lori Diggins of LDA Consulting.

Ms. Diggins of LDA Consulting gave a PowerPoint presentation which summarized the seven main ideas, goals, and achievements of the three year TERM analysis (July '02– June '05). This presentation represents a full data set of the full three year study. This study is meant to measure the effectiveness of the Commuter Operations Center (COC) and all of the Commuter Connections TERMS. It examines the number participants; the number of people placed in alternative modes; as well as reductions in vehicle trips (VT), vehicle miles of travel (VMT), and emissions as a result of the increased number of participants. The Commuter Connections TERMS evaluated include:

- Telework Resource Center
- Expanded Telework
- Integrated Rideshare
- Guaranteed Ride Home
- Employer Outreach
- Employer Outreach for Bicycling
- Mass Marketing

A summarization of each of the TERMS and their impacts follow.

- Expanded Telework TERM:
 - New TERM in 2002-2005 evaluation
 - Provided individual assistance to large employers and existing Telework (TW) programs
 - Purpose: Encouraged enhanced level of TW
 - Results:
 - 33 participating sites – 122,100 employees
 - 4% new TW = 4,900 TW
- Guaranteed Ride Home TERM
 - 27,252 commuters joined Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) from 7/02 – 6/05
 - 51% started using a new, alternate mode, but some alternate mode users shifted from one alternate mode to another
 - New users reduced 0.86 VT and 28 VMT daily
 - VMT results were discounted for GRH registrants who lived outside the metropolitan statistical area (MSA)
 - GRH results also discounted to share some credit with the Mass Marketing TERM
- Integrated Rideshare TERM
 - InfoExpress kiosks
 - 34,900 users obtained travel information from kiosks
 - 16.7% shifted to an alternate mode of transportation
 - Most shifts were to transit – 1.6 VTR factor

- Ridematch software upgrades
 - 35% COC applications recalled TR/PR info
 - 5.3% used information to change modes of transportation
 - Average daily reductions – 0.45 VT and 35 VMT
- Employer Outreach TERM
 - Sale Representatives:
 - 816 employers with level 3-4 programs
 - 217,900 employees
 - Average 20% VT reduction
 - Eliminate impact overlap with EO – Bike and TRC
 - Metrochek employers are not in the ACT! Database
 - 70 employers with 44,450 employees
 - All offered transit subsidy – 64% offered other strategies as well
 - Average 31% VT reduction
- Employer Outreach – Bicycling TERM
 - Worksite assistance
 - 85 employers offered bike services
 - 33,675 employees
 - 1% VT reduction (net of other EO impacts)
 - Bike to Work Day events
 - 1,150 new bike commuters after events
 - Average of 520 new daily bike trips
 - 213 daily VT reduced by new bicycling
- Mass Marketing TERM
 - Commuters directly influenced to make mode change (no other Commuter Connections contact)
 - 39% of commuters recalled commute messages
 - 0.4% tried an alternate mode after hearing the ad
 - 0.33% said the ad influenced their change = 7,800 commuters
 - Commuters influenced to contact Commuter Connections
 - RS/GRH requests increased when MM ads
 - MM ads accounted for 15% of new RS applications = 2,011 new alternate mode users
 - MM ads accounted for 8% of new GRH apps = 575 new alternate mode users

The collective TERMS met the VMT reduction goal by about 96,000. However it did not meet the NOx and VOC goals. Ms. Diggins cited incorrect trip conversion factors due to the increasing commute distance from when the TERM goals were originally adopted. Within the past three years, the COC assisted over 140,000 commuters.

60, 254 of them are from new or re-applications, while 83,072 were follow-ups.

Mr. Ramfos also commented that emission factors have changed. Due to the higher standards within the auto industry, the NOx and VOC reductions are not as noticeable.

Other findings include:

Impacts for All TERMS – 7/02 – 6/05

	GOAL	IMPACT	NET
Trips reduced	149, 325	128,973	(20,325)
VMT reduced	2,403,514	2,499,637	96,123
NOx	2.016 T	1.909 T	(0.107) T
VOC	1.106 T	0.937 T	(0.169) T

Mr. Ramfos called for the edits to the TERMS Draft Report to be submitted by December 16, 2005 and stated that the draft report would be presented to the TPB Technical Committee in January.

Mr. Ramfos also asked that any questions or edits regarding the 2004 Bike to Work Day Draft Survey Results be submitted by December 16, 2005.

Item #7 TDM Software Management System Update

The Subcommittee was briefed about the TDM Software Management Work Group which was held on October 28, 2005 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Mr. Ramfos reviewed the TDM Software Management System collaborative work group which took place at the Fairfax County Government Center's Pennino Building on October 28, 2005. Mr. Ramfos explained that the whiteboard comment session will be filtered into a specs document and then converted to a "Request for Proposals." The goal is to have the RFP completed within 30 days after securing funding from the appropriate agencies. The initial phase of the new software will focus on ride sharing and GRH integration. As a secondary step, Employer Outreach and InfoExpress Kiosks may be integrated; therefore it is important to find an open ended system which will allow for expansion.

Ms. Landry asked what time window was being considered. Mr. Ramfos responded that the speed with which we can act will depend on the speed to which consultants respond to the RFP. He emphasized as well the importance to explore all options and not rush, so as to make sure all factors are considered in order to achieve the optimum software.

Item #8 Expanded Telecommuting Project Draft Report

The Subcommittee was briefed on the Expanded Telecommuting Project Draft Report.

Ms. Campbell explained that the Expanded Telecommuting TERM Project Draft Report details the activities and outreach associated with the Expanded Telework TERM. She told the group that the project ran from July 2003 through June 2005 and that the program was initiated as a coordinated outreach program through the Commuter Connections Telework Resource Center.

Ms. Campbell said that at the program onset, COG identified 123 private and public sector employers with 1,000 or more employees in northern Virginia and Maryland that would be program targets. She said that federal organizations in the District of Columbia were also included in the project.

She stated that the primary incentive for organizational participation was no-cost training, specifically tailored to each employer.

Ms. Campbell concluded her overview of the Expanded Telecommuting TERM Project Draft Report by asking the Commuter Connections Subcommittee to review the report and forward any questions, concerns, or edits to her by November 29, 2005.

Item #9 GRH Participant Guideline Updates

This item was tabled until the next Subcommittee meeting due to a technical difficulty with the report. Mr. Ramfos will present this at the January Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #10 FY 2007 Work Program Development

The Subcommittee was briefed on the FY 2007 Work Program Development

Mr. Ramfos mentioned the strategic planning sessions, both past and forthcoming, and defined the purpose of the meetings. The suggestions made at these meetings are to be taken into account for the FY 2007 Work Plan. Valerie Pardo and Chris Arabia asked for an increase in attendance to the input sessions, emphasizing the importance of all members' participation in the meetings.

Item #11 2005 Bike To Work Day Event Draft Report

The Subcommittee was presented with the Draft Final Report of the 2005 Bike To Work Day Event Report. A call for final comments has been established for the December 2, 2005.

Mr. Hersey mentioned that this was the final draft report and the majority of the edits, aside from some formatting issues should be included. The report highlights the progress of the last year. Mr. Hersey also thanked those who were involved in the event. He asked that all questions, comments, and edits be submitted to him by December 2, 2005.

Item #12 Budget Report

Mr. Ramfos discussed the 1st Quarter Budget Report, explaining he used figures contained in the FY 2006 Commuter Connections Work Program; however there might be adjustments to Marketing and Employer Outreach. Marketing will face a \$ 214,000 reduction. While Virginia and DC have opted to not withdraw monies from the Marketing fund, their remaining \$115,000

will be spent in NOVA and DC only. VDOT has increased funding for Employer Outreach. The distribution will be negotiated with Mr. Ramfos and representatives of affected areas.

Item #13 Other Business/Set Agenda

Mr. Ramfos mentioned the current regional marketing campaign including Radio advertisement, direct mail, and a Total Traffic Network sponsorship. More information will be available at the December Regional TDM Marketing Group

The next regularly scheduled Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 17, 2006 at 12 noon.