



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

Third Floor, COG Board Room

Chairperson: George Clark, Southern Maryland

Vice Chairperson: Marcus Moore, Fairfax County

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 of January 15, 2019 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the January 15, 2019 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

George Clark, TCCSMD, 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 Nancy Huggins, MTA.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the January 15, 2019 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 **FY 2018 - FY 2020 Commuter Connections Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Evaluation Framework Revised Methodology Document**

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY2018 - FY2020 TDM Evaluation Framework Methodology Document.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY2018 – FY2020 TDM Evaluation Framework Methodology Document. Notable changes included the addition of goal numbers for the Telework!VA program and the addition of a survey to be administered after Car Free Day(s) concludes to monitor travel mode use. Mr. Ramfos also mentioned a few updates to outdated information in which the years were not correct for the data collection timeframe and the correction of typos. Heidi Mitter, VDOT, commented on the correct spelling and removal of the TWVA acronym for Telework!VA program.

Holly Morello, OmniRide, made a motion to release the report. Nancy Huggins, MTA, seconded the motion. The document was endorsed for public release. Mr. Ramfos stated that the report would be published to the Commuter Connections publications page and final hard copies would be made available to those requesting a copy.

Item #4 **FY 2018 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY2018 GRH Customer Satisfaction survey report results for both the Washington, DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2018 GRH Customer Satisfaction survey report results for both the Washington, DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions. Both of these reports were presented to the Subcommittee in January and were posted to Sharepoint. Any comments not worked into the

document were individually responded to. Notable changes to both reports include a new format for the Abstract page (inside front cover), additional language that includes the total number of GRH members, how many rides were taken, and additional details regarding the survey methodology. Mr. Franklin noted that the response rate listed on page 4 of the Washington DC report was corrected from 15% to 14%. On page 20 of the Baltimore report, in the Recap Summary, 73% (updated from 71%) of members waited 30 minutes or less for GRH.

The Subcommittee recommended several modifications to the reports prior to issuing their endorsement. The date on the title page needs to be updated to March 19th. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, questioned the number of “registered” members in the reports. George Clark, TCCSMD, agreed that the number of registered users was incorrect. Mr. Franklin agreed to review and update the number of registered members in the final version of the reports. Heidi Mitter, VDOT, recommended that a statistic on page 9 which shows 97% of survey respondents were pleased with the overall GRH service should be mentioned within the Executive Summary. Mr. Franklin noted that the satisfaction statistic is in the Recap Summary section of the report, but Subcommittee members agreed the statistic should also be included in the Executive Summary.

Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, made a motion to endorse the changes to documents for release and Holly Morello, OmniRide, seconded the motion. The documents were endorsed for release with the noted changes. The reports will be finalized and posted to the Commuter Connections publications page.

Item #5 WMATA Station Platform Work Summer 2019

Gregory Potts, WMATA staff, presented to the Subcommittee on WMATA and jurisdictional preparations to mitigate travel during the platform reconstruction project/summer shutdown that will take place on the southern end of the Yellow and Blue lines, from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

Gregory Potts, WMATA staff, along with his colleague Michael Weinberger, Foursquare ITP, informed the Subcommittee about WMATA and jurisdictional preparations to mitigate construction impacts during the platform reconstruction project/summer shutdown that will take place on the southern end of the Yellow and Blue lines, from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. Mr. Potts presented slides detailing the poor conditions of the oldest platforms in the Virginia area that need repair (Braddock Road, King Street, and Van Dorn stations). There are 45 outdoor station platforms that have deteriorated over time due to weather conditions and de-icing agents. Out of the 45, ten station platforms have already been rebuilt; 15 stations have platforms in good condition; and 20 stations have platforms requiring immediate attention for safety reasons. The first phase this summer is addressing the first 6 of those platforms; a larger plan is being devised to address the remainder of the 20. When platforms are shut down during repairs, it takes about 30 days for the repairs to be completed. Without a shutdown, it can take up to a year and a half to complete repairs. Contractors will have 24-hour access to work sites. Construction will be performed during the summer months because it is slower and less riders will be affected. During Summer 2019, there will be no blue and yellow line rail service south of National Airport from Saturday, May 25th to Monday, September 2nd. The anticipated construction schedule will include Braddock Rd., King St., Eisenhower Ave., Van Dorn St., Huntington, and Franconia-Springfield stations.

Mr. Weinberger stated that residual construction will continue past Labor Day at some stations. Station improvements may not be fully completed until December 2019 or beyond. Contract 1 begins during the Summer 2019. Contracts 2 and 3, which include rail stations in Virginia and Maryland, will be begin work in Summer 2020 and Summer 2021. Most repairs will be done solely to the station platforms. Metro announced work in May 2018 which gave a year of advance notice to all those who will be affected. Heidi Mitter, VDOT, asked if Silver Line trains will still be able to travel through Orange Line stations? Mr. Potts clarified that the trains will still be able to pass through stations that are shut down for repairs. Mr. Weinberger added that there are still meetings being held to finalize the operations plan; more details to follow after these meetings take place. The Subcommittee sought clarification on whether Arlington Cemetery station will remain open through Contract 1 and will National Airport be open in Contracts 2 and 3. National Airport is part of contract 3 but

should remain open throughout project. Mr. Potts inserted the disclaimer that the schedule of station closures has not been finalized.

Mr. Weinberger shared that there are plans to try out different route patterns in Fall 2019 and to practice these routes prior to the shutdowns taking place next summer. Regional network coordination has included conference calls and meetings with the Northern Virginia Stakeholder Group (led by Metro), the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), and more than 140 members of local/state/federal government, congressional offices, transit providers, police/emergency management, and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWA). The SafeTrack coordination effort is being used as a model for this project. Express shuttles will be available to customers while the stations are shut down. There will be specific shuttle and bus schedules for services to be utilized during the shutdowns. Local transit operators, such as Fairfax Connector, Alexandria DASH, and OmniRide, are considering service enhancements in order to assist customers during the shutdown as well. WMATA is also working with state and regional representatives on alternative travel options and demand management. Nancy Huggins, MTA, asked if commuters traveling from Springfield will be able to take a bus to the line and then pick up a shuttle? She also asked if Kiss & Ride lots will be turned into Park & Ride lots? Mr. Potts confirmed that these mitigation efforts are currently in the works. He also explained that Franconia-Springfield has a decent parking capacity where nothing needs to be changed. Huntington has limited parking that could create capacity issues, but the issues will hopefully be mitigated by enhanced line services. Parking garages are going to remain open. WMATA has not decided as of yet whether parking payments will be subsidized or reduced. Mr. Potts says that all discounts and incentives will be discussed with the board. Visit wmata.com/platforms for more information.

George Clark, TCCSMD, asked about WMATA's plans to maintain customers while shutdowns occur, as commuters may get used to different commutes. Mr. Potts explained that the board is developing ideas for incentives for those affected by the shutdowns. They are also working on a post-marketing campaign to launch after station repairs are completed. Mr. Weinberger further explains that data collected from this project will determine if other commutes are effective and can help to manage the roads around the stations better. Also, promoting carpooling/vanpooling will help reduce single occupancy vehicles on the road which leads to less congestion. The Subcommittee discussed reviving the TDM Coordination Group used during SafeTrack so stakeholders will have the ability to more easily coordinate communications. Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, commented that the less SOVs the better and asked for a redirect for the website as many are forgetting to add the "s" at the end of "platforms".

Item #6 **2017/2018 Regional Travel Survey Update**
Ken Joh, COG/TPB Staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the background, purpose, and importance for conducting a regional household travel survey to support regional travel demand modelling and travel trends analyses.

Ken Joh, COG/TPB Staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the background, purpose, and importance for conducting a regional household travel survey to support regional travel demand modelling and travel trends analyses. Since 2016, Dr. Joh has managed the planning and development of the household travel survey to the implementation of the survey. COG's milestone was reached with over a year of survey data collection and findings. Household travel surveys provide input for travel demand models used to forecast future travel patterns and vehicle emissions. Results from the travel survey are used by MPO member governments and agencies to inform transportation studies and support other planning activities. Dr. Joh explained that each participating household completed a travel diary that accounted for all trips made by household members in a given time period. COG/TPB have been conducting travel surveys every 10 years since 1968. The last survey was administered in 2007-08 covering 11,000 households. Methodologies have changed over time. The most recent survey covered 16,000 (exceeded goal of 15,000) households from October 2017 to December 2018.

Part 1 of the survey included a recruitment questionnaire (sociodemographic characteristics of household, travel/commute modes, etc.) and part 2 included a one-day travel diary. Dr. Joh expressed that it is challenging to get people to complete surveys. Invitations were sent to randomly selected households with a

participation incentive. The survey was web-based with a telephone option for those without access to the internet. The RTS covered: 22 major jurisdictions, 111 geographic strata (PUMAs/Activity Centers), and 11 TPB member jurisdictions (including Fauquier County). COG also coordinated with the Maryland Travel Survey for 3 jurisdictions (Anne Arundel, Howard, and Carroll Counties) to ensure minimal survey duplication or conflict. Arlington County purchased additional samples for analyzing their Activity Centers, so an add-on survey was conducted for them. Hispanic/Latino households were targeted specifically to ensure participation from this underrepresented group in the survey. Households in predominately Hispanic/Latino neighborhoods who did not initially respond to the survey were resent surveys in Spanish. Holly Morello, OmniRide, asked what PUMA is. Dr. Joh clarifies that PUMA means Public Use Microdata Area comprised of census tracts totaling about 100,000 households.

Dr. Joh says that they had to be very strategic when determining which questions to keep or drop from the previous survey (2007). New questions included: Peak period HOV use, HOT/Toll road use, Ride-hailing, Carshare/Bikeshare, Transit pass use, and Toll transponders use. Both the State of the Commute (SOC) and Regional Travel Survey (RTS) are random sample surveys with different purposes. The SOC survey focuses on commute trips/modes only. The RTS captures all trips (work/non-work). SOC survey happens every 3 years for a duration of about 3 months. About 23,011 recruited household completed Part 1 of RTS. There were 15,976 households who completed Part 2 of RTS, exceeding survey goal of 15,000. This resulted in 122,261 completed trips and 45,030 vehicles recorded in travel diary. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked to see St. Mary's County and Spotsylvania County in the chart. Nancy Huggins, MTA, asked if scooters were included in surveys. Dr. Joh responded saying that they wish they had had the foresight to include scooters but were not widely available when the survey instrument was developed, but there was an "other" option for those who did not have what was listed.

Heidi Mitter, VDOT, asked if COG produces documents with results from the survey and how periodic updates determined. Dr. Joh responds that yes; a report is forthcoming as the survey was recently completed. Once data processing is finished, they will use data to create/update model from it. The Subcommittee noted the response rate for the RTS was rather high; Dr. Joh mentioned offering an incentive helped with survey participation. A \$20 gift card was given to every household that completed the survey. Multiple reminders were sent out to participants and we were available to answer any questions or concerns they may have had. Nicole McCall, COG/TPB staff, mentioned that the organization name (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments) was excluded from mailing materials to relieve participants' concerns about governments collecting information from citizens. It is going to take several months to sort through data and produce reports. Heidi Mitter, VDOT, asked if the words "commuter" or "commute" were defined in the survey? Dr. Joh explained that all trips were to be recorded so trips were asked to be described. Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, asked what percentage of the budget included incentive gift cards and how were incentives distributed? Dr. Joh responded that over 50% of budget was used for gift card incentives. He further explained that households had the options of getting e-cards or physical gift cards, as well as declining an incentive altogether. A surprising number of households chose to donate incentive to the American Red Cross.

Item #7 TDM Evaluation Project Update

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the Regional TDM Evaluation project.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the Regional TDM Evaluation project. Mr. Ramfos began by noting the Framework Methodology document, which is the blueprint for how Commuter Connections conduct data collection and analysis, was endorsed for release under Agenda Item #3. The document will be published to the Commuter Connections website where it will be available to the public.

Data collection started in January for the 2019 State of the Commute survey with a goal to reach about 6,000 workers in the region. Over 7,000 workers have responded to the survey thus far. A higher percentage of workers have responded through the internet than in previous iterations of the survey. Phone responses to

survey requests are currently low; the original goal was to complete 500 phone surveys. Both postcard mailing waves have been completed. LDA Consulting and CIC Research are monitoring responses on a weekly basis. The postcards used included COG's name; there was no apparent negative impact. The postcard messaging was localized and centered around collecting data from the local community on transportation. The chance to win a \$250 Amazon gift card was another incentive to obtain responses. Internet surveys should be winding down this month (March) and phone surveys will conclude in April and then a data-rich, technical draft report would be available by June. The draft report will be presented to the Subcommittee in July.

Mr. Ramfos said that the Employer Customer Satisfaction survey is going a little slow. One issue is contact information not being up to date in the CRM system. The first wave of mailings were sent to organizations that did not have email addresses listed in the CRM. Phone surveys were also completed, however, many of the phone numbers in the CRM system were not accurate. The second wave of mailings were sent to everyone in the database to reach all organizational contacts in system. Mr. Ramfos stated that he was still not confident responses will match or exceed that of the last Employer Customer Satisfaction survey completed in 2014. A draft report is expected by the end of the fiscal year as well.

The last two surveys are the GRH Applicant Surveys; one for the Washington, DC region and the other for the Baltimore region. Response data is now being organized as well as testing of the actual survey itself. The surveys should be launched in two weeks; draft reports ready by June and presented in July. Holly Morello, OmniRide, asked if SOC results were still good even though there was only a chance to win a gift card versus Ken's survey where everyone received a gift card? Mr. Ramfos replied yes because the response rate was so much higher than in past surveys. Mr. Ramfos also explained how some thought the email verification message from CIC Research that they were to select to receive the gift card was spam and did not respond to it. Once Mr. Ramfos resent the message, more of the selected winners responded to receive their winning gift card.

Item #8 2019 Bike to Work Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2019 Bike to Work Day event to be held on May 17th.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2019 Bike to Work Day event to be held on May 17th. The Bike to Work Day Steering Committee set a goal of 19,000 bicyclists which is 10% above mark from last year. Registration is open as of last Wednesday. An announcement has been made on social media and as of Sunday, 1,100 have already registered. 2 pit stops (Reston and Frederick) already have over 100 registrants. WABA is handling the event registration while COG/TPB staff handles everything else. WABA is still in the process of building weekly reports for pit stop managers. Emails with registration data will be sent out to pit stop managers on Monday. The event received \$50,700 from 20 event sponsors. All were repeat sponsors from previous years except 2 new sponsors: Comstock and Springfield Plaza. Sponsor funds will be used to pay for t-shirts, banners, and bicycles (including an electric bicycle) for the regional raffle. 17 new pit stops were added this year for a total of 115 pit stops for 2019. Examples of flyers and banners (English/Spanish) are in Subcommittee's agenda packets. Actual event materials will be shipped out tomorrow. Employers around the region will receive event memos and flyers. The Proclamation signing by the TPB chairman will take place in COG boardroom on April 17th along with a photoshoot. Media plans are in development. Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, praised the O'Donnell Company for their work on the artwork on the event materials.

Item #9 FY 2020 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) and 2018-2019 Strategic Plan

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY2020 CCWP and Strategic Plan.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY2020 CCWP and Strategic Plan. The draft CCWP was endorsed by Subcommittee in January and then presented to the TPB Tech

committee and TPB in February. It was released for public comment and some revisions have been made. Notable revisions include: 1) Bike to Work Day section to include sponsorship funding and the three state funding agency contributions; 2) CFD post-survey was added to the TDM Evaluation section; 3) COG overhead rate calculations have changed which were made effective in February per a change in COG's indirect cost allocation plan. The CCWP is to be reviewed for approval tomorrow by TPB. The Strategic Plan was also endorsed by the Subcommittee in January. Once both documents are finalized, a message will be sent with link to the published documents. Hard copies of the FY2020 CCWP will be made available to those interested upon request.

Item #10 FY 2019 2nd Quarter CCWP Progress Report

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 CCWP 2nd quarter progress report.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 CCWP 2nd quarter progress report. Mr. Sheehan highlighted that the Operations Center served 18,336 commuters through the ridematching database in the 2nd quarter; there was a 153 user loss from last quarter, however, the number of users increased by over 1200 as of December 2017. There were about 300 downloads of the Commuter Connections mobile app (3,778 total) and there were about 200 downloads of the CarpoolNow app (3,284 total). The first iteration of the Bike Route Finder module accessed through the Commuter Connections TDM system which features over 1400 miles of trails was released to the Commuter Connections account holders and was mentioned in the Bike to Work Day press release. The Bicycle Route Finder module will continue to be enhanced.

Mr. Sheehan identified three Visualize 2045 aspirational elements related to TDM that were adopted by the TPB during the December 2018 meeting: 1) Technological enhancements shifting away from SOVs; 2) Collaborating with WMATA's SmartBenefits program; and 3) Developing policy templates for employers regarding flex-time and telework programs. Progress has already been made on most items, for example incenTrip incentives are being formulated and Commuter Connections recently granted WMATA access to the ACT! Regional Employer Outreach Database.

Mr. Sheehan also noted that the GRH program for the Washington, DC region has received 385 new applications, as well as 1,142 re-registrants for a total of 7,730 total registrants at the end of December. The GRH program provided 535 trips throughout the quarter. GRH Baltimore received 31 new applications. There were a total 381 registrants in the program at the end of December (100 more from September). The program provided 16 trips throughout quarter. iCabbi launched their platform to be able to track their cabs, which is useful for GRH customers.

The FY2019 Regional TDM Resource Guide Strategic Marketing Plan has been released. Also, staff and contractors conducted Fall Rideshare GRH Marketing Campaign throughout quarter. A work group was formed to create the concept for the Spring Umbrella campaign that is now running. Commuter Connections also issued a fall newsletter with case studies, transportation incentives and a call for nominations for the Employer Recognition Awards. Prep work for the 2019 Bike to Work Day (BTWD) event began and the 2018 BTWD report was finalized. Mr. Sheehan highlighted work being done by those who served on TDM Evaluation Work Group as their feedback was valuable for surveys and for the TDM Methodology Framework. The Employer Outreach committee helped with the collaboration with WMATA on ACT! database access.

Item #11 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.

Heidi Mitter, VDOT, mentioned that the GWRideConnect Facebook marketing campaign is very well liked and suggested a presentation at the next meeting. George Clark, TCCSMD, suggested putting this item on the agenda for the TDM Marketing Group.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 12 noon.