



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS RIDEMATCHING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

**Tuesday, September 15, 2020
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Virtual Webex Meeting**

**Chairperson: Allison Kemp, Bethesda Transportation Solutions
Vice Chairperson: Hugh McGloin, DOD/WHS**

COG Staff Contact: Stephen Finafrock, 202/962-3385 or sfinafrock@mwcog.org

1. Introductions

The meeting was brought to order. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves when their jurisdiction was announced. The meeting took place virtually through Webex.

2. Minutes of the June 16th, 2020 meeting

Approval was sought for the June 16th, 2020 Ridematching Committee Meeting minutes. An initial motion to approve was made by George Clark of Tri County Council for Southern Maryland and a second motion to approve was made by Nancy Huggins of the Maryland Transit Administration. The minutes were approved as written. All were in favor.

3. Announcement of New Ridematching Committee Vice Chair and Change of Chairs

Stephen Finafrock announced that Hugh McGloin, Department of Defense/Washington Headquarters Services, would be the new Committee Chair. Andrew Dempster, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, was appointed as the new Committee Vice Chair. Mr. McGloin announced that Allison Kemp had received a certificate of appreciation acknowledging her outstanding quality of leadership and commitment to her role as Committee Chairperson over the last year.

4. Upcoming Fairs and Promotions

Several Jurisdictions reported events during the pandemic.

George Clark, Tri County Council for Southern Maryland, reported an event in Charles County regarding Car Free Day. Mr. Clark is also promoting "Commute with Confidence" in all three counties and online. Hugh McGloin, DOD/WHS, mentioned that the Pentagon is trying to look for virtual alternatives for an upcoming transportation fair.

Darlene Nader, North Bethesda TMD, participated in a virtual retail meeting with tenants at Westfield Montgomery Mall. They were joined by representatives at Montgomery County's RideOn buses from MCDOT, as well as a representative from Metro. The topics discussed were safety on transit during COVID-19 and forming carpools and vanpools going to the mall.

Before the group moved on to the next topic of the agenda, Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, reminded everyone that new regional Park and Ride paper maps are were recently reprinted and available upon request. The last regional Park and Ride lot map was printed in 2012 so there has been a significant update. Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, showed the

members of the committee the link to order printed versions through the Commuter Connections website:
<https://www.commuterconnections.org/order-brochures/>

5. SchoolPool Update

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, began his presentation by reminding attendees of the basics of SchoolPool. Mr. Finafrock compared SchoolPool to Commuter Connection's TDM ridematching software and highlighted some key differences. SchoolPool tries to help K-12 student's parents find carpool partners to and from school. Mr. Finafrock continued explaining the purge process implementation. The implementation of a purge process is a very important step to provide a clean database and more accurate information. The purge process will be put in place to remove older accounts from former students that are no longer enrolled in K-12 schools.

This process will occur annually, during summer months. Parents will be notified via e-mail so they can check their account and update their children's account (grade, teacher, school etc.). This will also include a round of notifications for parents. The first process notification took place in early June of this year. The second one was in August. The notification includes a short message thanking parents for their participation and reminding them to login and make the updates.

Mr. Finafrock then moved on to a slide showing how to edit a child for members not familiarized with the process. Mr. Finafrock noted the differences in success of the program between public and private schools because of the current challenging COVID-19 situation, citing the Dulles Area Transportation Association as an example of a robust SchoolPool program. Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, and Sarah McGowan, Dulles Area Transportation Association, have been working closely to improve the application and additional features such as matching algorithms and the idea of route matching in the near future. Mr. Finafrock ended his presentation asking for questions around the table. Hugh McGloin, DOD/WHS, acknowledged that it's a challenging time with schools, considering they are mostly operating virtually.

6. Adaptation to Business in the Era of COVID-19

This goal of this topic was to let the committee participants discuss how they have modified their standard procedures regarding transportation fairs in times of COVID-19.

Darlene Nader, North Bethesda TMD, had several CID virtual events. The biggest one was with all of the tenants at Westfield Montgomery Mall in Bethesda that went really well. They talked about forming carpools and vanpools going to the mall. Also, a representative from Metro and Montgomery County RideOn was there to inform the group about safety on transit during COVID-19. Mrs. Nader thinks this should be the approach for employer outreach until the end of this calendar year.

7. Quarterly & Annual Progress Report

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, started his review of the FY2020 Commuter Connections Fourth Quarter Report, directing those in attendance to page 19, Table 1, showing the activity and impact summary of the programs administered by Commuter Connections.

Beginning on page 20, the report is broken down by jurisdictions. He recommended that members of the group read and make sure the data is correctly reflected for their respective jurisdictions. Mr. Finafrock highlighted the technical assistance requests on page 52, which are logged when Committee members use the technical support telephone or e-mail for reporting any issues. Finally, on the last page, Mr. Finafrock, pointed out the employer outreach program information.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, shared some specific data which occurred throughout the quarter. Between the months of April and June, there were 701 GRH applications received. A total of 44 were registered as new applicants, and 657 commuters were re-registered. 20 GRH trips were provided in the Washington area, which was not a surprising number given the Coronavirus pandemic. No trips were provided for the Baltimore GRH program. Mr. Sheehan continued highlighting some technology updates. Commuter Connections launched a chatbot that is available on the TDM system for the public to utilize. Also, in response to the pandemic, an employer-based ridematching program was developed last quarter. The TDM system registration process was modified with the hopes of being more streamlined and easier to manage.

Nancy Huggins, MTA, inquired about whether Diamond Transportation is still dispatching Uber as a provider for the GRH Baltimore program. Mr. Sheehan confirmed Uber is still a provider for the GRH Baltimore program.

Darlene Nader, North Bethesda TMD, asked when the data for the progress report needs to be sent. Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB, replied that ideally the data would be turned in at the beginning of the month including the employer outreach data because it is part of this report. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, added that the ninth of the month would still be acceptable and preferred over the 15th for internal working purposes.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, mentioned that a meeting was held to highlight the importance of providing data on a regular basis for all the jurisdictions in Northern Virginia funded by VDOT.

George Clark, Tri County Council for Southern Maryland, reported an issue with the "submit" button when sending a report.

Mr. Finafrock began highlighting the FY2020 Commuter Connections Annual Progress Report and highlighted some relevant data about the programs administered by Commuter Connections. For instance, the average cost of a trip for GRH in the Washington area was \$79 with illness being the main reason to use the program followed by childcare conflict. Data relating to the GRH Baltimore program was summarized on page 32. The average cost for a trip in Baltimore was \$109.

Mr. Finafrock then moved on to emphasize the importance of Table 6A, where activity from the jurisdiction is reflected. Any call received through the agency, not COG, will be included in this Annual Report. He continued explaining how COG receives applicants and how program activities are tracked in the database. Mr. Finafrock showed a couple of pie charts indicating where GRH registrants live and work, in addition to registrants and modes of transportation in Figure 6. The amount of monthly website visits was highlighted at the end of the report.

Nancy Huggins, MTA, asked why BWI was still on Table 6B when they haven't participated in any ridesharing activities for a long time. Mr. Finafrock agreed and noted a correction would be made and the Annual Report would be re-posted to the mwcog.org meeting page. A notification will be sent to committee members once the updated report is posted.

Mrs. Huggins also wanted to recognize Mr. Clark and Kendall Tiffany, Frederick County Transit Services, for doing an outstanding job on the telework session for the Transportation Association of Maryland Conference, which started on the same day of the meeting.

Mrs. Allahdoust announced that VDOT is working with COG on a Park and Ride lot assessment study which will be completed by the middle of next year, around the summer of 2021. It will have better interactive online capability for all the Northern Virginia parking lots including all amenities and features.

8. Other Business | Upcoming Agenda Items

Nancy Huggins, MTA, suggested a refresher of the incenTrip program for the next Ridematching Committee meeting.

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, had an item related to a digital form to submit data, specifically the calls received information at client sites for the monthly report. This form could be consolidated with other types of forms Maryland jurisdictions use to report information to COG.

The Next meeting of the Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee will be held on December 15, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.