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METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
COMMUTER CONNECTIONS RIDEMATCHING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
First Floor, Room One

Chairperson: Chris Kingery, Loudoun County
Vice Chairperson: Kevin Thornton, Prince Georges County
COG Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos, (202) 962-3313

Items addressed and issues discussed were as follows:

1.   Introductions (see attached attendance sheet).

2.   Minutes of the December 19, 2007 Meeting

The minutes of the December 19, 2007 meeting were approved as written.

3.   Upcoming Fairs and Promotions

Ms. Nader, North Bethesda Transportation staff will be participating in a Bike to Work event on May 18, 2007. There will be a Walk and Ride event on June 4, 2007.

Mr. Doane, Hartford County Transportation staff announced they have hired a new rideshare coordinator.

Ms. Norfleet, Alexandria Transportation staff reported having a Flexcar and Zipcar event that will be televised by local news stations.

Ms. Bunton, Baltimore Metropolitan Council staff announced they will be hosting a Bike to Work campaign.

Mr. Steigerwald, Prince William County will participate in an Employer Services event. The event is will take place on March 24, 2007 at George Mason University. The OmniRide bus will make the second change in schedules by April 2, 2007.

Ms. McColl, ARTMA staff is starting a new campaign to promote rideshare.

Mr. Luther, BWI Business Partnership announced they will be giving away bags at the MARC Station as part of the campaign to promote ridesharing.

Mr. Hiner, Fairfax County is looking to incorporate the SmarTrip Card as a new way to pay for commuting. Fairfax County has an upcoming in June 2007.

4.   New Regional TDM Software System Update

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD, 777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.E., SUITE 300, WASHINGTON, DC 20002-4239

THE COMMUTER INFORMATION SOURCE FOR MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WWW.COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG   1-800-745-RIDE

Mr. Ramfos and Base Technologies representatives presented and discussed the status of the TDM Web-Based Software System Project.

Base Technologies presented the initial registration and the process for entering a new commuter. Based on feedback received the user will be able to share his or her contact information, including the way in which they prefer to be contacted (i.e. phone, e-mail, home address). Duplicate records can be checked against the User ID, Email, and/or telephone numbers. A user recovery function will be available and will send an email to recover a lost/forgotten password.

Employer locations such as the Department of Justice (DOJ) can be searched against commuter entry as DOJ only. A standard popup window will let the user know there is a problem. The "Request a Match Feature." was also presented.   Routing will be used as opposed to radius to calculate distances from one location to the next and for matching. More flexibility has been added in the arrival and departures times feature.

A unique feature for users who choose not to give out their contact information has also been added to the system. The new TDM Software System will contact the commuter for each individual using a function similar to EBay.

Base Technologies is currently in the process of creating a Report Module for all local programs reporting needs. Jurisdictions can also customize a look for their county.

Mr. Ramfos stated that there were bus, train, and transit data to integrate into the software. Some of this process will take place in Phase Two of the TDM Software Development.

Mr. Ramfos is also seeking volunteers for the RFP for Phase Two of the TDM Software System project.

Mr. Edgar mentioned that user controls would be placed as close to the information as possible in order to incorporate more controls later on. He also discussed the importance of focusing on the basic needs of the commuter rather than the specifics and details. We don't want to commuter to feel overwhelmed with finding a ridematch. The project team is keeping simplicity in mind for the commuter.

Ms. McColl (ARTMA) pointed out that showing alternatives for commuting using public transportation would be a valuable tool.

Mr. Ramfos stated that employer outreach information would be integrated from the ACT! Database during Phase Two of the project. Mr. Ramfos is also seeking a center to hold a collaborative session for the Committee in order to review the Administrative pages. He also stated that input on the current pages can be posted on the extranet and should be done by April 16th. This would be the last round of comments/edits for the general public pages and further enhancements, if applicable, would be made the following fiscal year.

Base Technologies representatives discussed the GRH Ride Request Process included in the new system. After requesting a ride online the commuter is given a call from the GRH Dispatcher for the arrangement of the GRH Trip. Users are asked to provide the trip reason in order to determine the eligibility of the commuter to obtain a GRH Trip.

Base Technologies is completing the overall look and feel of the new TDM Software System. The primary focus is on the system functionality. Phase I is projected to go live on June 29, 2007 and in the interim the project team would be testing the system and fixing any bugs.

The deadline for comments on the General Pages of TDM Software System is April 16, 2007. These comments should be posted to the Commuter Connections Extranet.

5.   Transit and Street Center Line Updates

Mr. Edgar stated that all programs should have received a copy of the disk with the updated points of interest.

Clients are encouraged to call the Commuter Connections Help Line to solve problems with the installation. It is recommended to install it only on one computer. Questions can be emailed to Mr. Edgar through the operations center. Be sure to include "Geocode" in the subject line so it may be forwarded to the correct person.

6.   Electronic Applications Update

Mr. Ramfos stated that issues associated with forwarding applications as to make sure everyone is receiving emails for new commuters.

7.   FTP Status Report

Mr. Edgar discussed steps to secure the FTP. Mr. Edgar mentioned that there had been an attack on the system by an unknown user. Security and safety enhancements have been made by staff. He explained why staff was asking for users IP address and reported that the commuter's personal information is encrypted for security reasons.

8.   Commuter Connections Marketing Campaign

Mr. Franklin mentioned a number of promotional avenues Commuter Connections was using in its current regional TDM marketing campaign including; bus signature, billboards, and radio. This year's slogan is "A Small Change Can Make a Big Difference." The radio promotion started in February 2007 and will run through June 2007. Mr. Franklin also discussed emergency car kit give-a ways that would be used for radio contests and call-ins for carpoolers and vanpoolers. Over 42 top radio stations are part of the campaign along with web banners. The Commuter Connections web pages are also being re-designed and will be completed at the end of June.

Mr. Franklin also stated that Bike to Work Day Registration is now open for the May 18, 2007 event. Sponsors will be raffling off a bike at the event. There will be T-shirts and beverages for the participants

9.   Client Site Status/ Roundtable

Mr. Ramfos mention 800 records were pulled having expirations dates of more than one year. Some records had expiration dates for 2010, so a memo with a list of commuter from each local jurisdiction was sent out to clear up this issue with the database.

10.   Other Business/Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Mr. Ramfos encouraged committee members to request and send agenda items for the upcoming meeting.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee will be held on Tuesday, September 19, 2007 at 2 p.m.