

CAR FREE DAY STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Steering Committee members, guests, and other attendees introduced themselves by name and affiliation.

2. MEETING MINUTES

The September 13, 2023 meeting minutes were approved as written.

3. CAR FREE DAY 2023 DRAFT EVENT REPORT

A comprehensive draft report was distributed that highlights activities surrounding Car Free Day 2023 and the event's pledge results. A regional marketing campaign promoted the Car Free Day event held on Friday, September 22, 2023, which helped to yield 5,105 pledges, a 26 percent increase over the previous year.

The Car Free Day 2023 proclamation signing took place at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) meeting on July 19, 2023. During the meeting, Charles County Commissioner President, Reuben Collins, and TPB Chair, signed the enlarged prop and officially proclaimed September 22, 2023 as Car Free Day in the Washington, DC region. Many jurisdictions also approved local Car Free Day proclamations of their own, including Charles County and the City of Manassas.

All who took the Car Free Day pledge were entered into a free raffle for a chance to win prizes donated by sponsors. In addition, all who took the Car Free Day pledge received a \$30 Nift Gift promocode, a 24-hour Capital Bikeshare pass, and 50% off orders at All About Burger.

The Car Free Day paid media budget for the 2023 event was \$45,000 and consisted of radio, text messages, social media, and digital banner ads. Other efforts to promote Car Free Day included flyers and earned media.

The Capital Area Car Free College Campus Challenge was created as a friendly competition to generate awareness of and participation in Car Free Day on college campuses throughout the region. The college with the greatest number of pledges, the University of Maryland, received a luncheon to commemorate the occasion.

Commuter Connections network members hosted numerous promotions to celebrate Car Free Day. As part of its sponsorship, during Ozone Action Month in August, Clean Air Partners integrated Commuter Connections and Car Free Day messaging at various events to build awareness about the fall event. One of its interactive promotions included an on-site Trivia game, with Car Free Day questions.

Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request, including alternative formats of meeting materials.
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METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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A thorough analysis and reporting was provided of the Car Free Day 2023 pledge data. With 2,186 (43%), Virginia had the greatest number of pledges in 2023, followed by Maryland at 1,705 (33%), and the District of Columbia at 1,130 (22%). Other states received 84 pledges (2%) of the total.

All COG jurisdictions participated in support of Car Free Day 2023 and generated pledges. The District of Columbia was the number one jurisdiction with 1,130 (22 %) of the total pledges, followed by Arlington County 1,006 (20%), and Montgomery County 993 (19%). Pledges in triple-digits were also generated in the following jurisdictions order: Fairfax County, Prince George's County, Loudoun County, City of Alexandria, and Prince William County.

Participants were asked to select the travel mode(s) they would use on Car Free Day 2023, with the average number of modes per person at 2.2. The breakdown was as follows: Walk/Run 3,064 (60%), Telework 2,590 (51%), Bicycle/Scooter 2,039 (40%), Train 1,764 (35%), Bus 1,241 (24%), and Carpool/Vanpool 650 (13%).

Those who took the pledge in 2023 were engaged in the following activities on Car Free Day: Working 4,176 (82%), Recreation/Exercise 2,227 (44%), Shopping/Errands 1,507 (30%), Dining Out/Entertainment 1,489 (29%), Taking Classes 354 (7%), Chauffeuring Kids 465 (9%) and Other 239 (5%).

The following were work locations on Car Free Day 2023: Worked From Home 2,433 (46%), Commuted to Standard Workplace 1,868 (35%), Not Working/Other 835 (16%), Co-working/Shared Workspace/Telework Center 157 (3%).

The 2023 Car Free Day Event Draft Report was placed into an open comment period through June 18th. The same draft document will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee on May 21st with the same comment period.

4. 2024 EVENT DATE

The Car Free Day event, traditionally held on September 22nd, falls on a Sunday in 2024. In light of this, the Steering Committee decided to celebrate the event on Monday, September 23rd.

5. MARKETING MATERIALS

COG/TPB staff discussed the options of developing a new creative direction for the 2024 Car Free Day campaign or modifying the previous event's marketing materials. The Steering Committee chose the latter. Other than updating the logo/dates on the event flyer, the most notable change for the 2024 Car Free Day imagery will be the inclusion of a transit rider within a wheelchair.

6. SPONSOR DRIVE

The Steering Committee is in search of sponsors to donate prizes for the Car Free Day 2024 regional raffle in exchange for logo exposure on the website, and mention on social media and press release.

7. OTHER BUSINESS/SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next Car Free Day meeting was announced as occurring on Wednesday, July 10, 2024 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM.