



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, July 18, 2023
12 noon – 2:00 p.m.**

**Chairperson: Judy Galen, Loudoun County
Vice Chairperson: Janiece Timmons, WMATA
Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos 202/962-3313**

Item #1 Introductions

The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves based on their jurisdictional location in order to be marked as present on the attendance sheet.

Item #2 Minutes of May 16, 2023 Meeting

Approval was sought for the May 16, 2023 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Judy Galen, Loudoun County, requested a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting. George Clark, TCCSMD, made a motion to approve the minutes; Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, seconded the motion. The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the May 16, 2023 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 Vice Chair Nominating Committee

Approval was sought for establishment of the Nominating Committee.

Judy Galen, Loudoun County, briefed the Subcommittee on the process for selecting a new Subcommittee Vice Chairperson. Ms. Galen appointed herself, current Vice Chair, Janiece Timmons, WMATA, and Kari Snyder, MDOT, who was last year's Subcommittee Chair. Ms. Galen motioned to approve establishment and sought approval of the formation of the Nominating Committee. Holly Morello, Prince William County moved to approve the appointments and Mark Sofman, Montgomery County seconded the motion. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB Staff, thereafter briefed the Subcommittee on next steps which would include holding a conference call with the Nominating Committee in early to mid-August to discuss potential nominees. Mr. Ramfos also stated that the new Vice Chair would also be the Commuter Connections Clean Air Partners Board representative.

Item #4 FY 2023 Car Free Day Event Draft Report

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented the draft FY2023 Car Free Day Event report to the Subcommittee. The document was presented to the Car Free Day Steering Committee on March 8, 2023, and a comment period was established through April 14th. The draft report was subsequently presented to the Car Free Day Steering Committee on May 10th. The draft report was also presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee on May 17th and a comment period was established through June 15th. The Subcommittee was asked to endorse the report for release.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented the FY2023 Car Free Day Event Draft Report to the Subcommittee for endorsement for release. Mr. Franklin did not have substantive changes to make to the report which included all applicable comments from the previous Subcommittee meeting. Holly Morello, Prince William County, motioned to endorse the draft Car Free Day Event Report for release; George Clark, TCCSMD seconded the motion. The motion was approved, and the report was endorsed for release. The report will be published and posted to the Commuter Connections publications page over the course of the next few weeks.

Item #5 **FY 2021 – FY2023 Draft TDM Analysis Report**

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, presented the draft FY2021-FY2023 draft TDM Report to the Subcommittee. A comment period was established.

Lori Diggins, LDA Consulting, briefed the Subcommittee on the draft highlights of the FY2021-FY2023 TDM Analysis Report. Commuter Connections' comprehensive triennial evaluation during this period focused on the specific TDM elements of Telework, Guaranteed Ride Home, Employer Outreach, Mass Marketing and Commuter Operations, and Integrated Rideshare Software Upgrades. The FY2021-FY2023 analysis methodology focused on estimating the impacts of each program element, making any corrections to overlaps between elements, estimating cost savings for societal benefits and compiling all impacts during this period into a digestible impact report. Ms. Diggins explained the process of collecting the data for the report and how it is analyzed. A continuum of performance measurement is used to make commuters aware of different transportation modes as well as the different programs. The more awareness commuters have the more possibility their attitudes and willingness to try transportation alternatives would change. The continuum measurement also helps to evaluate commuters' participation and satisfaction with Commuter Connections services and measures the influences that impact behavioral change. An impact calculation approach that uses a series of "multiplier" factors that are applied to the user population is used for each TDM Program Element derived from surveys.

FY2021-FY2023 impacts fell short for vehicle trips, ranking 16% below the goal for this reporting period. VMT was 18% below the goal. The analysis proved that the coronavirus was a significant factor in reduced participation in most programs and led to shortfalls connected to commuter disruption. Emission shortfalls were due in part to the emission factors in 2023.

TDM programs are likely to offer societal benefits. The 2023 TDM Analysis Report estimated regional cost savings for many societal benefits to include the following: air pollution/emissions reduction, global climate change mitigation, congestion reduction, fuel consumption reduction, improved health/safety, specifically avoidance of car crashes and reduction of noise pollution. In a nutshell the report predicts and estimates a \$536,800 per day savings projection inclusive of all the societal benefits.

Regional Telework was higher in 2023 than in 2020 but the report only accounted telework related to COG/Commuter Connections actions. 6.3% of Maryland Commuters cited Commuter Connections/COG as a Telework information source for direct assistance. Assistance to Maryland Employers increased by 2.4% in commuting at telecommuting sites. Maryland Commuter Connections/COG influenced telework eliminated daily vehicle trips and reduced VMT. Telework exploded in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic and usage nearly doubled.

Ms. Diggins briefed the Subcommittee on Guaranteed Ride Home highlights during this period. There was a dramatic dropped in GRH registrants between 2020 until December 2022. There were only 2,905 GRH registrants in 2022 and in 2020 there was 12,155 registrants. 13,966 past registrants were added to the analysis for retention credit. FY2021-FY2023 yielded 42% more registrants for new alternative modes, 15% of the retained group continued to use new alternative modes. There we also some alternative modes that shifted from others. GRH did not meet goals during this period and the 2022 GRH Survey revealed that 41% of past participants did not renew due to telework. Mass marketing took a few shortfalls, Commuter Connections paused much of the GRH ads in 2020/2021, 26% of new GRH applicants however were influenced by ads to apply for the program and 6% of GRH impact was assigned to the Mass Marketing program element. Pre-FY2021 retained placements were roughly 42% of trips/VMT reduced.

During the reporting period Ms. Diggins discussed the Employer Outreach impact components: overall program, new/expanded programs and bike services. These components were calculated for employers that continued employer outreach for June 2020 and employers with new/expanded programs. 10% of impacts were attributed to employer outreach and the other 90% was attributed to the pandemic. Overall, the impacts

for each of the components decreased in 2023 versus 2020. Ms. Diggins provided the Subcommittee with a visual breakdown of the jurisdictional impact calculations which included total employers, employees and new/expanded programs. Overall, the participation goal for employer outreach was met during the reporting period.

Mass Marketing during this period focused on six components: direct influence, referred influence, 'Pool Rewards, incenTrip Mobile Application, Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day. 15% of commuters shifted to an alternative mode after hearing or seeing ads, and 50% who shifted said they were influenced to make a change because of the ads. Mass Marketing generated 2% new rideshare applicants and 6% of GRH applicants. incenTrip during this period had 3,587 active registrants, 81% of commuters used the application for their commutes and 60% opted to choose an alternative mode. The goals for Mass Marketing were missed. 'Pool Rewards results for this period are to be determined. Ms. Diggins explained the survey results from Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day for the reporting period.

The Commuter Operations Center provided direct assistance to 53,303 teleworkers, during July 2020-December 2022, 42,592 commuters were assisted. 43% were new/reapplying applicants, 57% were follow-ups and 56% of participants were placed in alternative modes. During the reporting period, goals were not met due to the pandemic.

The TDM Analysis observations concluded that the four program elements fell 13% with vehicle trip reduction and 9% with VMT reduction. The pandemic and telework affected overall participation expectations. Telework was higher during this analysis period. Ms. Diggins explained that the reporting period encompassed only 30 months of the 36-month evaluation period and the final impacts are anticipated to be higher.

Ms. Diggins concluded the presentation with taking any applicable questions from the Subcommittee members.

A comment period of August 15, 2023 was established.

Item #6 Clean Air Partners Update

Judy Galen, Loudoun County Commuter Services, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of Clean Air Partners activities.

Judy Galen, Loudoun County Commuter Services, briefed the Subcommittee on Clean Air Partners activities. She reiterated the primary objectives for the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. A survey was conducted in 2021, and as a result of that survey Clean Air Partners was able get a better point of reference to identifying the areas that posed the greatest opportunity for making significant change and positively impacting air quality. This data was captured in a chart and displayed to the Subcommittee. Eco-driving and lawn care activities are the most lucrative in terms of what people are willing to do and/or have done, which is the reasoning behind Clean Air Partners focusing a large amount of time and attention to these areas.

Ms. Galen gave the Subcommittee a recap on what happened this past spring and leading into the summer campaign. Ms. Galen pointed out that special attention be given to Ozone Action Month in August specifically because Commuter Connections network members have an opportunity to bring some attention to individual programs and this very important cause.

In April, Clean Air Partners launched Air Quality Awareness Week with a backyard bubble event. Pictures from the event were furnished to the Subcommittee during the briefing. During Air Quality Awareness Week lawn care and other outdoor activities were showcased. Individuals could enter contests and win random giveaways. There were opportunities to receive eco-friendly/electric equipment which included mowers, trimmers, and propane gas grills.

Ms. Galen highlighted the digital partner toolkits which are distributed monthly. Jurisdictions not already receiving these toolkits were encouraged to contact Jen Desimone with COG/TPB staff to be added to the distribution list.

Ms. Galen also shared information on what is expected in the month of August, which is Ozone Action Month, including the return of the car bubble, some media outreach, and pop-up events. The Subcommittee was informed of upcoming event dates throughout the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. A special thank you to Southern Maryland, George Clark and TCCSMD stakeholders was given for Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative's (SMECO) sponsorship.

Promotion included signage as well as media outreach. Clean Air Partners uses digital ambassadors and some of those ambassadors were using their own Instagram sites to provide giveaways and engagement with followers about the campaign.

Clean Air Partners wants to raise awareness and let people know how to take small actions when air quality is typically at its worst. Clean Air Partners is educating people on what can be done in terms of driving, including recommending the use of carpools and vanpools and directing people toward transit. When possible, Clean Air Partners is also coordinating with meteorologists to make sure that any Code Red or Code Orange days can be amplified so the information gets out to people about activity on poor air quality days. The plan is to have some in-person events as well, including opportunities for sponsorship from local jurisdictions.

Item #7 2023 Car Free Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB Staff briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which will be held September 22, 2023.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB Staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the number of pledges which increased by 35% from last year. The current goal for pledges in 2023 is 5,000.

Currently, poster updates are being made, and by the end of July a electronic PDF version of the flyer will be available on the Commuter Connections website. The Subcommittee was advised to provide poster requests via email. A paid media plan campaign has started and includes The College Campus Challenge. The website launch will be August 1st. Mr. Franklin briefed the Subcommittee on the status of renewed and new event sponsorships.

On July 19, 2023, the TPB Chair is due to sign the regional event proclamation, and Mr. Franklin encouraged all jurisdictions to create and adopt their own proclamations.

Item #8 Enhanced Mobility Solicitation

Mohammad Khan, COG/TPB Staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the federal section 5310 Enhanced Mobility grants solicitation process, which begins with pre-application conferences in August and the solicitation period in September.

Mohammad Khan, COG/TPB Staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the purpose of the Enhanced Mobility Program and the goal to fill the gaps in transportation for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Mr. Khan explained that beginning on August 1, 2023, the TPB will begin soliciting applications for Enhanced Mobility grant funding. The approximate funding amount for this solicitation period is \$10.8 million. The deadline for this solicitation period is September 30, 2023, at 3:00 PM. Mr. Khan touched on eligibility requirements informing the Subcommittee on who can apply, including, non-profit agencies, private providers, transit agencies and local governments, and what types of projects are eligible for funding (capital and operating) grants that improve transportation for people with disabilities and older adults.

Pre-Application conferences will be held in all three jurisdictions, District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. Upcoming solicitation details were provided to the Subcommittee. The schedule and other additional information can be found on COG's website at mwcog.org/enhancedmobility. The selection process is to conclude with TPB action to approve projects by December 2023.

Item #9 **4th Quarter CCWP Budget Report**

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY2023 CCWP preliminary 4th Quarter Budget Report.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2023 CCWP 4th Quarter preliminary Budget Report highlights. The final budget summary will be generated in September. This report accounts for about 70% of funds expended, but due to unaccounted invoices Mr. Ramfos expects the percentage of expended funds to increase.

Item #10 **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.

There were no topics discussed for this item.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 12 noon.