



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 21, 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 March 19, 2019 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the March 19, 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 Kari Snyder, MDOT.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the March 19, 2019 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 **FY2019 Car Free Day Event Report**

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 draft Car Free Day event report.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 draft Car Free Day event report. The draft document was presented to the Car Free Day Steering Committee on March 13th and a comment period was established. The draft report was presented again to the Car Free Day Steering Committee for a final review on May 8th. The proclamation for Car Free Day from July 2018 can be found on pages 4-5. Mr. Franklin noted that there is hope for additional Car Free Day proclamations to be added to future reports. A total of 16,500 posters were printed, 5,500 of which were mailed to employers throughout the region. In addition, an email blast was sent to 45,000 email addresses comprised of those who took the Car Free Day pledge over the previous three years, Commuter Connections opt-in accounts, committee members, employers, and Federal Telework Coordinators. Each participant who pledged to go car free or car-lite was entered into a raffle for a chance to win sponsor-donated prizes. Prizes ranged from Capital Bikeshare annual memberships and \$25 SmarTrip cards to a Samsung Galaxy tablet. Sponsors included WMATA, Capital Bikeshare, goDCgo, District Taco, Giant Food, and many others. District Taco offered the incentive of \$3 off next order for those who pledged to be car free.

Mr. Franklin stated that radio, blogs, posters, social media as well many other media methods were used to bring attention the Car Free Day event. The total promotion cost to MWCOG for the event was around \$45,000. Complimentary transit signage was donated by Arlington Interior bus cards, Fairfax County Connector bus tails, Prince George's County bus shelters, as well as Montgomery County and Metrobus. Outreach was conducted that included targeted press releases to raise awareness of the health benefits of going car free. Commuter Connections partnered with the American Lung Association and the American Heart Association to support the Car Free Day initiative of improving the region's air quality and health. The Capital Area Car Free College

Campus Challenge in which universities competed to see which university could generate the most awareness throughout the region through getting others to pledge. A total of 2,770 people took the Car Free Day pledge in 2018. The breakdown of modes traveled on Car Free Day were: Bike (27%), Rail (26%), Bus (21%), Walk (10%), Telework (8%), and Carpool (8%). The previous year's travel mode usage fell in the same order from largest to smallest. Compared to 2017, rail and bus both increased by 4%, walk/run mode share decreased by 6%, and bike decreased by 2%. The event report will be posted to Sharepoint and the comment period will open until June 14, 2019. The final draft report and comments received will be presented to the Subcommittee in July for endorsement, and afterward will be posted to the website.

Item #4 Car Free Day(s) 2019 Event

Matthew Zych, WMATA staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day(s) event slated for September 21, 22, and 23 2019.

Matthew Zych, WMATA staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day(s) event slated for September 21, 22, and 23 2019. Mr. Zych presented pictures of congested areas as well as examples of what other traffic regions, such as London and New York City, are doing to help congestion in their areas. Car Free Day is one way the National Capital region can promote less traffic congestion and limiting single-occupancy vehicles (SOV) and zero-occupancy vehicles (ZOV).

Mr. Zych explained that more education and events like Car Free Day are what will help the region reduce traffic congestion. Car Free Day includes car-free and car-lite participation to promote alternative modes of transportation. The event will be on a Saturday, Sunday, and Monday this year, which means only one day will be a regular commute day (Monday). All are encouraged to participate in car-free and car-lite options throughout the weekend. The theme is *Drop it for a Day!* Email blasts, traditional media, and social media were used for employer outreach and marketing efforts. Corporate support, donations and incentives are helpful in generating pledges. The Farmer's Market and other partnerships will be actively involved on event day. Heidi Mitter, VDOT, asked if Chipotle will be a sponsor this year and advised that sponsors be figured out by July meeting. Discounts on food or Metrobus/rail could also be effective.

Item #5 incenTrip Mobile Application Update

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on the incenTrip mobile app along with recommendations from the incenTrip Work Group on a point accumulation and payment structure that will be incorporated into the operational logistics of introducing and implementing the app in the region.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on the incenTrip mobile app along with recommendations from the incenTrip Work Group on a point accumulation and payment structure that will be incorporated into the operational logistics of introducing and implementing the app in the region. The incenTrip app is currently being piloted by Commuter Connections account holders.

When the app launches to the public, incentives will be issued to those who log their trips through a point accumulation system. Commuters who are eco-conscious in their driving, rideshare (e.g. carpool or vanpool), take transit, bike, or walk to work can accumulate points during their home and work commutes. Actual incentives, the reward structure, and incentive fulfillment have yet to be determined. A work group has been created to recommend a path forward regarding incenTrip elements.

Mr. Sheehan stated that use of the incenTrip app will hopefully promote better ways to commute in the DC/Baltimore regions. The memo details recommendations on how the app can be tailored to Commuter Connections program needs. The app is set to release summer 2019. The first recommendation discussed was to prioritize modal shift to SOV-alternatives during peak commute hours. Mr. Sheehan expressed wanting to find the best times for participants to earn points. The second recommendation was to allocate points in a manner that is mode-agnostic and does not favor long-distance commutes. The third recommendation was to develop a tiered points model that adapts to users' behavior over time. The plan is to have points start to

diminish as alternative behavior becomes more regular. Heidi Mitter, VDOT, asked if the app rewards non-SOV trips per week and Mr. Sheehan responded that she was correct. SOV trips can earn points for safe and eco-friendly driving. George Clark, TCCSMD, inquired about the point system and how the points will be paid out. Mr. Sheehan responded that the goal is to pay out less than \$500 per year per person.

The fourth recommendation was to create various levels of monetary rewards that appropriately correspond with point redemption totals. Points will be exchanged for monetary rewards. Checks will be issued and will be the only option to receive the monetary incentive as of the summer 2019 release. Other forms of incentives may be explored in 2020. The fifth recommendation was to maintain the “badge” level gamification element, but structure in a manner that offers a greater challenge as behavior changes. This will give users the option to be recognized as they achieve new levels of eco-friendly commuting. There is also the possibility of the ability to share these achievements on social media. Other recommendations and details on the application can be found in the memorandum.

Gladys Hurwitz, MDOT, questioned if the application will be promoted like as part of other events such as Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day. Mr. Sheehan answered that eventually the app could be promoted as part of special events. Matthew Zych, WMATA staff, asked if one can still earn points if driving outside of peak hours. Nancy Huggins, MDOT, stated that as long as the start time is during peak hours, points can still be earned. Mr. Ramfos added that there are about 500 users currently testing the app and the launch ceremony should occur some time in the first quarter of the next fiscal year.

Item #6 Clean Air Partners Update

Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities.

Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities. Clear Air Partners works to educate the public on air quality awareness and ways to help reduce pollution. They have enhanced their social media strategy to ensure they are posting to industry best practices. Mr. Moore noted that the summer campaign is kicking off tomorrow. The summer campaign will have a highly visible press conference/awards recognition event at The Wharf in DC on May 22nd. Clean Air Partners will also sponsor its 5th Breathe Easy Concert promotion to encourage residents to tell what they do to improve air quality for a chance to win tickets to see Jennifer Lopez in concert on July 17th. The summer campaign is made possible through donations from Commuter Connections and Washington Gas. The 11th annual student poster contest was held for students grades 4 through 8 residing in the Baltimore-Washington region. Most of the student winners were from Montgomery County. Campaign materials and ads will be used on transit ads, social media, and online.

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 that data collection has finished for the fiscal year. About 8,200 respondents completed the State of the Commute survey which was significantly more than expected. The draft technical report will be ready for the Subcommittee to view in July and a comment period will be established.

For the Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey, raw data was collected, and a draft report will be available to the Employer Outreach Committee in July. There were not as many responses as there were 5 years ago. The Guaranteed Ride Home survey for the Washington DC region has been completed. The GRH survey for the Baltimore region will be closing Wednesday of this week. Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, inquired if cell phones were called for the State of the Commute survey or were landlines used. Mr. Ramfos

responded that both landline and cell phone numbers were used but the phone component for completed surveys was minimal and most responses came from internet survey completions.

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 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. Mr. Franklin announced that, to date, registrations for this year's event appear to have increased by 4% from 2018. Heidi Mitter, VDOT, asked if the final number consisted of pledges or participants. Mr. Franklin responded that the number included those who registered for the event. The weather was much better than last year when it rained during the event. 2,300 registered the day before or the day of the event which boosted the final figure considerably. This year's event set a record with the second most registrations ever. Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, asked which year was number one. Mr. Franklin responded that 2017 marked the largest number of registrants in the event's history with approximately 18,000 registered that year. More registrants may be included from the Monday after the event (5/20/19) as registration closes at the end of that day. Jessica Charles-Allen, AACOT, asked if there were a high number of registrants toward the end, were there enough t-shirts? Mr. Franklin responded if there were some left then yes. The proclamation was held in the COG board room and was live streamed. The media campaign consisted of posters, rack cards, social media postings, radio ads, etc. Mr. Franklin showed the Subcommittee two videos: 1) Fox 5 at the Fairfax pit stop and 2) NBC 4 at the Tysons pit stop.

The trends of the registration data will be given in the event report. Raffles are still to come which will include 3 bikes and gift cards from Giant Food; some raffles took place at the pit stops on the day of the event. BTWD 2020 will be discussed in September at the next Steering Committee meeting. Sharon Affinito, Loudoun County, inquired if there was a way to get a full headcount of all participants, including walk-ups. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, responded that there will never be an absolutely accurate number of participants, but a more accurate number will be forthcoming as part of the event report.

Item #9 CarpoolNow and Flextime Rewards Mobile Apps Update

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the CarpoolNow and Flextime Rewards mobile apps and outreach activities.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the CarpoolNow mobile app and Flextime Rewards program and outreach activities. The Flextime Rewards program offers an \$8 incentive to commuters who log their trips using the new Verified Commute Log feature in the Commuter Connections app. Those who are registered and commute in an eligible corridor and receive a notification email from the TDM System and successfully log a verified flex trip will be rewarded. Mr. Sheehan demonstrated how to use Flextime through the Commuter Connections app. The app rewards users with \$8 per flex trip, not to exceed \$600 per year. Mr. Sheehan stated that CarpoolNow is being promoted as an alternative commute option during the WMATA station shutdowns for platform repair work to be performed. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, added that Commuter Connections has partnered with a radio station for the DC BBQ Battle in June which will help to promote CarpoolNow at the event. Rack cards and social media posts have also been a part of the media campaign for the app. George Clark, TCCSMD, would like to use the "Give Rides, Get Cash" ad online. Mr. Ramfos expressed that everyone needs to help promote the application. Anyone who is interested in receiving the visuals for advertisement purposes should contact Douglas Franklin.

Item #10 FY 2019 3rd Quarter CCWP Progress and Budget Reports

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 CCWP 3rd quarter progress report and Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 CCWP 3rd Quarter Budget Report.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 CCWP 3rd quarter progress report. Mr. Sheehan highlighted that the Operations Center served 17,715 commuters through the ridematching database in the 3rd quarter; this is relatively consistent for the same time period in 2018. There were 333 downloads of the Commuter Connections mobile app (4,111 total) and there were just under 200 downloads of the CarpoolNow app (3,477 total). TDM System upgrades included the addition of Capital Bikeshare stations to the system and a new Google “auto-complete” feature which suggests geocoded address when users register their accounts. Work continued on creating the Verified Commute Log feature. The January 2019 edition of the Commuter Connections TDM Resource Directory was published.

Mr. Sheehan also noted that the GRH program for the Washington, DC region has received 723 new applications, as well as 1,513 re-registrants. A total of 7,632 individuals were registered for GRH at the end of March. The GRH program provided 573 trips throughout the quarter. GRH Baltimore received 23 new applications. There were a total 381 registrants in the program at the end of March. The program provided 26 trips throughout quarter.

The Winter 2019 newsletter was published with stories featuring CarpoolNow, the increase in the federal transit benefit from \$260 to \$265, Bike to Work Day (including a highlight of the new Commuter Connections Bike Router), and the Haymarket to Arlington bus route. Commuter Connections launched the winter “Why Rideshare? Why Not?” rideshare marketing campaign and the “Don’t Freak Out” GRH marketing campaign. Advertising consisted of a variety of mediums, including press releases, radio ads, social and digital ads, transit signage, etc. Staff finalized plans for Bike to Work Day 2019. Nominations for the Employer Recognition Awards (ERA) were open through February; the Awards Selection Committee was convened to select winners. The ERA Ceremony is scheduled at the National Press Club on Friday, June 21, 2019.

The regional TDM Evaluation project is in full swing. The FY2018 – FY2020 TDM Program Elements Revised Evaluation Framework was published in March and is accessible from the Commute Connections website. The State of the Commute survey was launched. The 2019 Employer Outreach Satisfaction Survey was finalized and sent to contacts within the ACT! Regional Employer Database. The 2019 GRH Surveys underwent programming and testing and are expected to be released to respondents in April. The Bike to Work Day 2018 Event Report, FY2019 First Half Regional TDM Marketing Campaign Summary, and FY2017 GRH Customer Satisfaction Survey reports were released.

Local TDM sales reps and WMATA began collaborating in the regional ACT! Employer Outreach Database. This collaboration is a direct result of the Visualize 2045 Long-Range Plan Aspirational Goals identified and endorsed by TPB in late 2018. Staff also made substation progress on completing the FY2019 Employer Case Studies and facilitated a sales training on “Having Employers Buy-in to TDM.”

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.

Lorraine Taylor, MDOT, briefed the Subcommittee on using SmartBenefits on MDOT MTA CharmPass mobile ticketing app. Ms. Taylor mentioned that the information shared can also be found in the COG newsletter. CharmPass is the official MDOT MTA mobile ticketing app that can be purchased on a smartphone. Services for the app include BaltimoreLink Local Services, Light RailLink, MARC commuter rail, and MTA commuter bus. Once purchased, tickets can then be stored on the commuter’s smartphone for immediate use. There are multiple options within the services provided to fit the needs of most commuters, from one-day passes to monthly passes. There are also reduced fares for eligible seniors and persons with disabilities. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked if 10-day passes are available. Ms. Taylor responded that only 1-day, 7-day and 31-day passes are now available. SmartBenefits can now be added to the CharmPass app. Instructions included assigning SmartBenefits to MDOT MTA mobile app, deleting the current ticket provider, and making a payment. SmartBenefits has to be added on the first day of the month when using for the first time. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, questioned how the app is being marketed. Ms. Taylor responded that marketing is being done

through employer outreach activities. Benefits from using the CharmPass app include the ability to have tickets easily accessible on smartphone, no paper tickets, 24/7 convenience, split payments, and flexibility.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, July 16, 2019 at 12 noon.