



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 17, 2022  
12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Chairperson: Kari Snyder, MDOT  
Vice Chairperson: Judy Galen, Loudoun County  
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 March 15, 2022 Meeting**

*Approval was sought for the March 15, 2022 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, requested a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting. (Kari Snyder, MDOT, and Judy Galen, Loudoun County, were unable to attend the meeting.)

A motion was made by George Clark, TCCSMD, to approve the minutes, and seconded by Joe Stainsby, OmniRide.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the March 15, 2022 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

**Item #3**      **FY2022 Car Free Day Event Draft Report**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, presented the draft FY2022 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, presented substantive the draft FY2022 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee on Douglas Franklin's behalf due to technical issues. The report was presented to the Car Free Day Steering Committee on March 9<sup>th</sup> with an April 15<sup>th</sup> comment period established. The report was updated and presented to the Steering Committee again last week. The report includes the event proclamation, names of all sponsors, and creative materials to promote the event. The event's website, social media sites, and earned media as a result of the event are also included in the report. The College Campus Challenge and Clean Air Partners promotion can be found in the report, as well as various jurisdictional activities during the event; pledge data and emission impacts can also be found. The report will be posted to SharePoint with a comment period open until Friday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. The report will be presented for final review and endorsement for release in July.

**Item #4**      **Clean Air Partners Update**

*Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of Clean Air Partners activities.*

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of Clean Air Partners activities in Judy Galen's absence. Clean Air Partners is a public/private partnership focused on educating people in the Baltimore and Washington, DC region about the risks of poor air quality. Judy Galen, Loudoun County, sits on the board for the Clean Air Partners this year. Everyone was encouraged to reach out to Jen Desimone, COG/TPB staff, to receive a toolkit to help promote Clear Air Partners initiatives. Clean Air Partners launched their summer campaign during Air Quality Awareness Week which occurred May 2<sup>nd</sup> through May 6<sup>th</sup>. Each day

of the week featured a different theme with associated social media challenges. Daily themes included Plants and Trees, Air Quality and Health, Sensors and the Air Around Us, etc. Reporters and meteorologists were engaged to share Clean Air Partners activities and tips. Social media posts made by VDOT and Montgomery County were shown as examples of organic social media posts. Upcoming campaign activities include Ozone Action Month in August with car bubble emissions demos and pop-up events, as well as Car Free Day which takes place in September. The annual Student Poster Contest was also held for students in grades 4 through 8 residing in the Baltimore-Washington region.

**Item #5 Metro Yellow Line Tunnel/Bridge and Potomac Yard Project Update**

*Greg Potts, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on the upcoming Yellow Line Tunnel/ Bridge and Potomac Yard projects.*

Greg Potts, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on the upcoming Yellow Line Tunnel/Bridge and Potomac Yard projects. The Potomac Yard Metro Station is set to be connected to the existing Metrorail system in early Fall 2022 (September 10 – October 22). The total duration of this phase of the project is 6 weeks during which a complete shutdown of all stations south of the National Airport station will commence.

There is a substantial amount of work to be done to rehabilitate the Yellow Line tunnel and bridge. The scope of work includes repair of steel lined sections to extend effective life a minimum of 50 years, bridge bearing and expansion joint replacement, and dry standpipe replacement. The construction duration will contain an 8-month continuous shutdown of Yellow Line between Pentagon and L'Enfant Plaza stations beginning on September 10, 2022. The stations will remain open during construction. During the station shutdowns, all trains will operate via the Blue Line. Two Blue Line services will operate from the National Airport to Largo and New Carrollton station in Maryland. If the 7000-series trains remain out of service, trains will operate less frequently. After the Potomac Yard projects ends in October, Yellow Line service will still be shut down, but Blue Line service will be available in stations south of the National Airport station. Replacement shuttles will be free for customers affected by the shutdown during the Potomac Yard cutover. Regional help is needed with the mitigation plan to help transport commuters during these shutdowns.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, mentioned the WMATA Platform Improvement Work Group will be meeting at the end of the month to wrap-up discussions on the Orange Line closures between Minnesota Ave. and New Carrollton. However, the group will not be reconvened to discuss items related to the Yellow Line closures as WMATA's is leading a regional PIO stakeholder group to address mitigation strategies for the project.

**Item #6 2022 Bike to Work Day Event**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY2022 Bike to Work Day event to be held on Friday, May 20, 2022.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY2022 Bike to Work Day event to be held on Friday, May 20, 2022. As of yesterday morning, about 10,000 people had registered for the Bike to Work Day event. There will be 96 pit stops across the region this year. The t-shirts are currently being sorted and will be picked up by pit stop managers tomorrow. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked if the number of t-shirts delivered is determined by the number of registrants. Mr. Franklin responded that that the number of t-shirts ordered is determined long prior to the registration period through an estimate calculated from the prior event year's registration numbers. Mr. Franklin cautioned there may be a slight shortage of t-shirts at select pit stops due to the delayed delivery of t-shirts coupled with an unexpected shortage. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition bike maps and updated bike guides will be available at the pit stops. The COG Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee contributed to the updating of both documents. The Bike to Work Day proclamation was signed at the TPB meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup> by TPB chair, Pamela Sebesky. Social media images were emailed to Steering Committee members for promotion of the event. All pit stop managers were given flyers, rack cards, posters, and banners. Paid promotion for the event also includes local/internet radio ads, social media promotion/influencers, and sponsored articles. After the event, the employer with the most bicyclists registered will receive a luncheon by the end of June. Photos of the event are encouraged to include in the Bike

to Work Day Event Report. The next Bike to Work Day Steering Committee meeting will be held on September 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss the 2023 event.

**Item #7            Regional TDM Evaluation Project Update**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on the status of the Regional TDM Evaluation project.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, updated The Subcommittee on the status of the Regional TDM Evaluation project. The data collection activities for FY2022 have been completed including the State of the Commute survey as well as the two Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Survey reports for the Washington, DC region and the Baltimore region. LDA Consulting is working on reviewing and gathering the data into draft reports to be presented to the Subcommittee in July. The reports will be open for comment and any changes or updates will be presented in September.

**Item #8            2022 Car Free Day Event**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which will be held on September 22, 2022.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which will be held on September 22, 2022. This year the event will take place on Thursday. The pledge form, posters, and other promotional items will be presented at the Car Free Day Steering Committee meeting in July. The event website will be open for pledges by early August. The Subcommittee was asked to provide potential leads on sponsorship for the event. The proclamation for the event will either be signed at the TPB meeting in July or September. George Clark, TCCSMD, confirmed contribution of sponsorship and Samsung device for raffle. Wendy Duran, ATP, asked for sponsorship packet to send to those interested in sponsoring event. Mr. Franklin responded that one will be sent to her.

**Item #9            Roundtable Discussion on Recent Gasoline Prices and their Impact on Commuter and Transit Services**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, moderated a roundtable discussion with Subcommittee members on how the recent spike in gasoline prices have affected commuter and transit service programs across the region.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, moderated a roundtable discussion with Subcommittee members on how the recent spike in gasoline prices have affected commuter and transit service programs across the region. There has been a rise in those interested in Commuter Connections programs. This could be due to many returning to the office, but also could be due to how high the gas prices are currently. The upcoming Commuter Connections newsletter will highlight the rise in gas prices and how employers can reach out to commuter programs to find ways to promote alternative modes.

George Clark, TCCSMD, mentioned seeing an uptick in commuter bus ridership in the last 30 days and some have said that they are choosing to ride the buses due to the increase in gas prices. Mr. Clark also said that vanpools are also currently being used more and that three more vanpools are approved for next fiscal year.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, said that traffic has increased on I-66 and that commuter ridership has also increased in Prince William County. Vanpooling usage is picking up as well.

**Item #10          FY2022 3rd Quarter CCWP Progress and Budget Reports**

*Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2022 CCWP 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter progress report and Nicholas Ramfos briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2022 CCWP 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter budget report.*

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2022 CCWP 3rd Quarter progress report. The Subcommittee endorsed the FY2023 CCWP in January and it was subsequently endorsed by the TPB in March. Work has progressed on the ATCMTD incenTrip grant with new incentives introduced into the application. As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, COG and its members served 12,984 commuters registered in ridematching which is a slight decrease from the previous quarter. A new testing portion of the vanpool module was launched within the TDM System, which includes the backend for the flexible vanpool improvements. An update to the “Welcome to Commuter Connections” email message sent to new applicants upon registration was finalized and deployed. The process was started for production of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the Regional Bike Map which will be distributed at the pit stops during Bike to Work Day. It will also be available on the “Order Brochures” page on the Commuter Connections website.

Mr. Sheehan stated that the updated GRH Participation Guidelines were enacted following endorsement from the Subcommittee in January. 130 new applicants were registered in the GRH program and 333 commuters were re-registered. A total of 1,748 commuters were registered in the GRH database by the end of the quarter signifying the first quarter-to-quarter increase seen in the program since the beginning of the pandemic. 54 GRH trips were provided throughout the quarter.

Phase 2 of the Look Again campaign rolled out on YouTube, LinkedIn, and TikTok. The campaign also included a series of Commute with Confidence Live Discussion videos which interviewed guests to share their current commuting experiences. Guests included the TPB chair, Pamela Sebesky, Commuter Connections Subcommittee chair, Kari Snyder, as well as Commuter Connections registered commuters. The Winter 2022 newsletter was published and distributed with the lead story on commuter benefit increases for 2022. Vendors were secured, promotional items were prepared, and an earned media plan was created for the Bike to Work Day 2022 event. Nominations were received and evaluated by the 2022 selection committee on March 29<sup>th</sup> for the Employer Recognition Awards. The National Press Club was secured as the venue for the event and a giveaway item was selected. A total of five vanpools were operating at the end of the quarter in the ‘Pool Rewards program. One new carpool was approved which is the first since the pandemic. The Flextime Rewards program will possibly be migrating to the incenTrip app as a part of the ATCMTD project. 3,129 users were registered for incenTrip as of March 31<sup>st</sup>. A total of 60 incentive requests were submitted and approved.

Mr. Sheehan continued with the regional TDM data collections and analysis. The TDM Evaluation Framework and Methodology for FY2021-2023 was finalized and endorsed for release by the Subcommittee in March. The 2022 State of the Commute survey occurred throughout the quarter with nearly 8,400 responses received. The FY2022 GRH Applicant Survey questionnaire was finalized and programmed into the TDM System. The FY2022 First Half Regional TDM Marketing Campaign Summary report was finalized and work began on the Second Half report. A first draft of the Car Free Day 2021 event report was presented and posted to SharePoint for comment. Upgrades were discussed for the ACT! Database and the decision was made to add new features to current database. An employer outreach sales training titled “Return to Work – A Panel of Transportation Experts” was held on March 30<sup>th</sup> which was the first in-person session since the pandemic began. For GRH Baltimore, a total of 89 registrants were recorded by the end of the quarter with 16 new applicants and 53 re-registrants. 5 trips were given throughout the quarter.

Nicholas Ramfos briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2022 CCWP 3rd Quarter budget report. The Commuter Operations Center has expended about 60%, GRH 46%, Marketing 49%, Monitoring and Evaluation 49%, Employer Outreach 37%, and GRH Baltimore 38%. The total overall expenditure for the entire program was at 48% as of March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**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.*

**The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 12 noon.**