



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 17, 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, Tri-County Council for 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 July 16, 2019 Meeting**

*Approval was sought for the July 16, 2019 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.*

Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, 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 Leigh Anderson, GW RideConnect.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the July 16, 2019 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

**Item #3**      **Announcement of New Vice Chair**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, announced the selection of the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, announced the selection of the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson. Mr. Ramfos stated that the Commuter Connections Vice Chair Nominating Committee, Janiece Timmons, Marcus Moore, and George Clark, met in August to discuss who the next Vice Chairperson should be and nominated Marina Budimir, DDOT, for the next Vice Chairperson of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee and she has agreed to serve in that role. Mr. Ramfos also mentioned that Ms. Budimir will represent Commuter Connections at the Clean Air Partners Board and will brief the Subcommittee as events take place.

**Item #4**      **Change of Chairs**

Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, assumed chairmanship from George Clark, TCCSMD, who was not able to attend today's Subcommittee meeting and presented a plaque in gratitude to Mr. Clark for his service as Chairperson from September 2018 to September 2019. The Subcommittee collectively thanked Mr. Clark for his contributions over the past year.

**Item #5**      **FY2019 Car Free Day Draft Report**

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

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes to the FY2019 Car Free Day Draft Report. The report was presented to the Subcommittee in May with a request for comments, however, the report was inadvertently not posted to SharePoint following the meeting. In July, the report was

presented again, comments were received and worked into the document. New items in the report include a Table of Contents, an abstract, and some edits to the cover page due to updated COG branding guidelines. Mr. Franklin asked for the final report to be endorsed by the Subcommittee. Kari Snyder, MDOT, made a motion to endorse the document and it was seconded by Traci McPhail, NBTMD. The document will be posted to the Publications section of the Commuter Connections website.

**Item #6**                    **2019 State of the Commute Survey Report**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the draft 2019 State of the Commute Survey Technical Report.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the draft 2019 State of the Commute Survey Technical Report. The report was presented to the Subcommittee in July and comments were received. On page “iii”, in the Executive Summary, information was added regarding personal vehicle access as it appears to be rising, particularly among young respondents. In previous reports, younger respondents have had less access to vehicles, but that seems to be shifting according to the 2019 survey. Vehicle access has gone up across all age groups, but there was a particularly substantial increase with the younger demographic. Mr. Ramfos also noted on page “vii”, information was added regarding ride-hailing usage versus transit where transit is available and where transit is not available. The data show that many would rather use transit when it is available to them, however, ride-hailing usage has increased among past transit users. About 59% of current ride-hailing users would have used transit if it were available to them. On page 11, the bike/scooter/walk percentages were separated to show that 1.5% of respondents chose to bike to work while 0.1% chose e-scooter commutes. All SOC data from 2004 was removed from the report due to how old it was along with the dramatic differences in commuting between then and now. Removal of the data also helps with comparing more recent data across reports.

Mr. Ramfos stated that language was added to show data by state for teleworking on page 47 of the report. On page 61, language was changed to clarify usage of HOV lanes by District of Columbia and Maryland residents versus usage of HOV lanes by Virginia residents. The majority of respondents who used HOV lanes were Virginia residents. On page 63, language was removed to exclude the I-66 Express Lanes outside of the Beltway that have not yet been built. In the paragraph below Figure 47, language was added to include the Inter-County Connector (ICC) as an Express Lanes facility used in Maryland. Mr. Ramfos said that page 64 had the most changes. Language was added to explain that almost 90% of respondents who used Express Lanes on the Capital Beltway and 70% who used Express Lanes on I-66 said they drove alone, which was the most common mode choice for Express Lane users. On page 70, a paragraph was added to explain reasons why answers may have varied from 2013-2019 by way of survey methods and respondents’ tendencies to be more truthful through internet surveys. Mr. Ramfos explained that the previous statement could also account for why there was a spike in “Don’t know” responses in Table 33 referring to Commuter Connection Program Referral Sources. Kari Snyder, MDOT, asked if respondents were asked to provide marital status or number of children. Mr. Ramfos responded that those demographics were not provided.

Fatemah Allahdoust, VDOT, asked if it were possible to condense the document even further to a one-sheet or two-pager. Mr. Ramfos replied that a handout with key takeaways has been created for the TPB meeting happening tomorrow and will be made available on the COG meeting page for the TPB once completed. A motion to endorse the document for release was made by Leigh Anderson, GW RideConnect, and the motion was seconded by Kari Snyder, MDOT. The next steps will be to prepare the general public report and pull-out sections for publishing.

**Item #7**                    **2019 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Survey**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the substantive changes made to the draft GRH Survey reports from both the Washington and Baltimore metropolitan regions.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, explained no major changes were made to the Washington and Baltimore GRH Surrey reports. Some minor changes were made to the text in order to match-up with the figures and charts throughout each of the reports. A motion was made to endorse the document for release by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, and the motion was seconded by Leigh Anderson, GW RideConnect.

Both reports will be finalized and published to the Commuter Connections Publications section on the web site. Subcommittee members will also be able to request a hard copy of either or both reports.

**Item #8                    2020 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Technical Report**

*Daivamani Sivasailam, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2020 CMP Technical Report.*

Daivamani Sivasailam, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2020 CMP Technical Report. The Congestion Management Process (CMP) is a requirement of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB). The Congestion Management Plan is an additional option that can be done upon request by the TPB. The long-range plan for the region, called Visualize 2045, has implemented the CMP components into the plan. The CMP technical report is completed every two years. The 2020 report is currently in development stages. The memo, to which Mr. Sivasailam referred, has the link to the full technical report in the footnotes. The report includes the state of congestion in the region and congestion management strategies. New Commuter Connections programs, such as incenTrip, were not included in previous reports and will need to be reviewed by Commuter Connections in the 2020 technical report.

Mr. Sivasailam asked for comments from the Subcommittee on section 3.2.2 in the memo which details all the local government agencies and organizations and their transportation demand management and traffic management activities. Comments were requested to be emailed to [docomments@mwkog.org](mailto:docomments@mwkog.org) by Friday, October 18, 2019 by close of business.

Mr. Sivasailam then explained that Section 3.3 in the CMP discusses the operation management strategies such as HOV, tolls, and traffic management. Section 4 shows several studies that the region undertakes. Section 5 details Visualize 2045. Section 6 concludes the report and summarizes the current conditions of the area. Fatemah Allahdoust, VDOT, asked that the importance of the Commuter Connections program be highlighted in the presentation given regarding the report. Mr. Sivasailam agreed to highlight Commuter Connections when presenting at the TPB Tech meeting. Mr. Ramfos asked that everyone look at their jurisdictional sections in the document and comment as necessary.

**Item #9                    FY2020 Regional TDM Evaluation Project Update**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on Regional TDM Evaluation data collection efforts for FY2020.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on Regional TDM Evaluation data collection efforts for FY2020. Mr. Ramfos directed the Subcommittee to Item #9 the agenda packet, where a timeline with many different data activities was shown. Task A on the timeline is to finalize and present the State of the Commute Survey. Tasks B & C are regarding the finalization and presentation of the GRH Washington and Baltimore reports. Both reports are to be finalized by the end of this year. A Vanpool Driver Survey will also be completed and a report will be issued this year as Task D. The last time this survey was conducted was in 2008. A new list of vanpool drivers will be comprised and the survey itself will be discussed at the TDM Evaluation meeting on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Ramfos pointed out that Enterprise, PRTC, and GW RideConnect are a few of the agencies that will need to be present at the meeting. Any agency that has an extensive vanpool program should be sure to be present. The survey will be strictly electronic this year and is scheduled to begin in early January and conclude in February.

Task E showcased the Bike to Work Day survey and the timeline for preparation and presentation of the survey. The survey will likely be conducted in early November, with the report being finalized and posted in May 2020.

Virtual pit stop participants will not be included the survey. Task F showcased the timeline for the Maryland Telework Data Collection and survey to be conducted early 2020 which will be discussed further at the October 15<sup>th</sup> TDM Evaluation Work Group meeting. This data surveys Maryland employers that have received telework assistance from Maryland Employer Outreach representatives in the last three years.

Mr. Ramfos continued with Task G regarding the Employer Outreach Database Analysis. COG will analyze and update the current list of employers, specifically levels 3 and 4, to ensure all jurisdictional information is accurate. If there is any missing information, then employers will not be counted in the database. There will be an ACT! training session on October 30, 2019 to address any data entry issues. In January, the database will be sent to LDA Consulting where it will be verified and validated with model runs to be conducted in March. The database needs to be inclusive of all jurisdictional information up to June 30, 2020. Marcus Moore, Fairfax County, added that after meeting with Mr. Ramfos and Mark Hersey from COG it was concluded that it would be better to provide estimates than no information at all regarding the database. Task H has the Car Free Day survey preparation and delivery outlined. This will be the first administration of the Car Free Day survey which will be conducted in November. The final item, Task I, outlines the Draft TDM Analysis Report which will be produced at the end of FY 2020. The analysis will be conducted on all Commuter Connections' TDM programs such as GRH, the Commuter Operations Center, Telework, Employer Outreach, etc. Highlights will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee in May with a draft report to be prepared in June. The report will be revised and finalized in FY 2021.

**Item #10 Car Free Day(s) 2019 Event**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day(s) event slated for September 21, 22, and 23 2019.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day(s) event slated for September 21, 22, and 23, 2019. The event already has nearly 4,000 pledges which is about a 40% increase over last year. The goal is still at 10,000 pledges. The objectives of Car Free Day are to promote awareness of alternative modes of transportation for both commute and non-commute travel. The results of the events, as well as the emissions impacts, will be reported in the Car Free Day report once the event is over. Mr. Franklin will report the results to the Subcommittee at the next meeting in November. 16,000 posters were sent to employers for promotion of Car Free Day and a PDF of the poster can be located on the Car Free Day website. The pledge form will be open through Monday. 2,700 text messages were sent to those who pledged advertising the event. In late August, an email blast was sent to 71,000 email addresses of those who pledged in previous years or who are a part of the Commuter Connections network. The event has attracted many sponsors as well as raffle gift incentives, such as SmarTrip cards, VRE tickets and Nift gifts, for those who take the Car Free Day pledge. Mr. Franklin showed the Subcommittee the Car Free Day Youtube video advertisement. Advertisements have been running on several radio stations, social media websites, and blogs. Frederick County bus services will be offering free rides during the Car Free Day event, and the City of Manassas will be sponsoring a community bike ride and a walking corridor during the event.

**Item #11 FY 2021 Work Program Development and Commuter Connections Strategic Plan**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the timeline of the development of the FY2021 Commuter Connections Work program (CCWP).*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the timeline of the development of the FY2021 Commuter Connections Work program (CCWP). The timeline shows in September 2019, Commuter Connections will verify their program elements, identify project components within each program element, and will review draft bullet points. In October, a draft work plan will be developed for the STDM Work Group review and a comment period will be established. The draft Work Program will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee for review and comment in November. In January 2020, final approval for release will be obtained from the Subcommittee and STDM Work Group. The draft Work program will be presented to the TPB Technical Committee and TPB and released for public comment in February. In May, Commuter

Connections will send funding commitment letters to funding agencies and identify any adjustments that need to be made to the TIP. Changes to the TIP will be implemented in June with full implementation of the Work Program happening in July. Mr. Ramfos presented Item 11A in the agenda packet which outlines the Commuter Connections proposed work activities for FY2021, including the Commuter Connections Operations Center, the Regional Guaranteed Ride Home Program, Marketing, Monitoring and Evaluation, Employer Outreach, and GRH Baltimore. Mr. Ramfos also presented item 11B, the Commuter Connections Strategic Plan, which will be posted for comment during the upcoming CCWP review cycle.

**Item #12      4th Quarter CCWP Budget Report FY2019 4th Quarter Progress Report and FY 2019 CCWP Annual Report**  
*Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 CCWP 4th Quarter final Budget Report and Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 Progress Report and CCWP Annual Report.*

Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2019 CCWP 4th Quarter final Budget Report. Regional GRH expenditures ran at 86%, Marketing was at 91%, Bike to Work Day ran at 100%, Employer Recognition was at 90%, Pool Rewards was at 93%, Vanpool Incentive was at 92%, CarpoolNow had 51% in expenditures, the VA Carpool Incentive was at 53%, Flextime Rewards was at 36% and GRH Baltimore had an 80% expenditure rate. The overall budget expenditures were at 89% for FY2019.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, addressed the FY 2019 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Progress Report for the Commuter Operations Center saying there were 17,820 commuters that were registered in Ridesharing. The Commuter Connections mobile app was downloaded 333 times, bringing it to almost 4,500 total downloads since the app was launched. CarpoolNow was downloaded 273 times, bringing it to 3,756 total downloads. A trip logging component was added to the Commuter Connections mobile app, which will help to promote the Flextime Rewards program in which commuters will receive an \$8 monetary incentive when completing logged trips (up to twice a day). The incenTrip app was launched on August 28<sup>th</sup>. The WMATA SafeTrack Work Group was reconvened as a WMATA Platform Shutdown Work Group to address TDM coordination due to the WMATA platform shutdown project being conducted this past summer. Mr. Sheehan said that Commuter Connections received 724 new GRH applications in the fourth quarter, and over 1,200 ridematching re-registrants. A contract was signed to partner with Uber for the GRH program in the fourth quarter as well, however, Uber did not start accepting GRH rides until July.

Traci McPhail, NBTMD, asked how it will be decided if a GRH rider received an Uber ride or a taxi. Mr. Sheehan responded that the dispatcher will decide which to send to the rider depending on response time and which is closest to the rider's location/destination. The goal is to decrease wait times in the Baltimore GRH service area as well.

In Marketing, the Spring 2019 Newsletter was issued with updates on the WMATA Platform Improvement Project as well as the Frederick Douglass bridge construction. An announcement was also made about full-size bicycles now being available on Metrorail. Announcements about the revamped Flextime rewards program as well as MTA's CharmPass were included as well. The Bike to Work Day event took place in May with 15 new local pitstops in which NIH won the Employer Challenge. The Employer Recognition Awards took place on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The Flextime Rewards campaign was also conducted during the fourth quarter. 2019 GRH surveys were programmed and distributed, as well as the conclusion of the Employer Outreach Customer Satisfaction survey. A sales training on "effectively presenting" was also administered on June 28<sup>th</sup> with the Employer Outreach program sales representatives.

Mr. Sheehan gave a brief overview of the annual report including highlighting of the regional bike map launch as well as the integration of Capital Bikeshare into the TDM system. Throughout the year, Commuter Connections processed about 27,000 rideshare applications and about 8,000 GRH applications. The Commuter Connections program reduced about 2,000 vehicle trips over the year. The program also launched a newer-vamped website and logo.

**Item #13      Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting**

*This was 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, November 19, 2019 at 12 noon.**