

# COMMUTER CONNECTIONS OVERVIEW

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## 50 Years Helping The Region Get To Work

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# Introduction & Context

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# Program Background

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Mission: Encourage commuters in the National Capital Region to try and adopt the use of alternatives to the single-occupant automobile.

Structure: A network of nearly 30 transportation organizations - including COG, local governments, state DOTs (i.e., program funders), and federal agencies – working to achieve the mission.

Strategy: Transportation Demand Management (TDM) implementation through various programs and services.

- Consistent with Congestion Management Process (CMP) federal requirements and TPB's Visualize 2045 long-range transportation planning goals.

# Evolution and Growth

1974: The 1970s energy crisis spurs the creation of **Commuter Club**, a computerized carpool ride matching system developed at COG, in collaboration with GSA and the Greater Washington Board of Trade.

1987: Branding change to **Ride Finders** as local jurisdictions throughout the region gradually join the program.

1996: Re-brand to **Commuter Connections** as the program's scope broadens to include a variety of commuter resources complementing ridematching.

- Guaranteed Ride Home program
- Transit route and schedule information
- Telecommute/telework program assistance



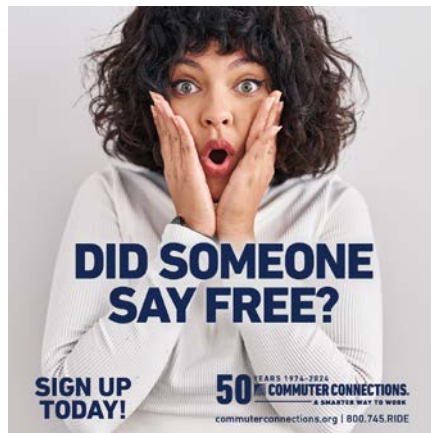
# Program Offerings

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# Core Commuter Programs



Free **ridematching** program uses proprietary software to pair individuals who have similar commutes for potential carpool and vanpool opportunities.



**Guaranteed Ride Home** program provides commuters who carpool, vanpool, take transit, bike, or walk to work with a free ride home in the event of an unexpected emergency, personal illness, or unscheduled overtime.

# Commuter Resources

**PARK & RIDE LOT MAP**  
Commuter Resource Guide

**Washington and Baltimore Metropolitan Regions**

- Park & Ride Locations
- Transit Services
- Bicycle Racks/Lockers
- Free vs. Paid Parking
- HOV/Express Lanes Access
- Highways/Major Roads

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments | VDOT | MDT  
D.C. Department of Transportation | Metro | VRE | MARC

**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS.**  
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK  
800.745.RIDE | commuterconnections.org

**BICYCLE ROUTE MAP**  
Washington, DC Region

**PLAN YOUR TRIP!**  
Sign up for our Bicycle Route Finder at [commuterconnections.org](http://commuterconnections.org)

**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS.**  
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK  
800.745.RIDE | commuterconnections.org

Employee Guide

**BICYCLING TO WORK**  
in the Washington Metropolitan Region

**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS.**  
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK  
[COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG](http://COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG)

### Calculate Your Cost of Commuting

Fill out this form to figure out your monthly commute cost!

(Press TAB to move to the next field and SHIFT-TAB to move back o

A. What is your daily round trip commute distance from home to work (in miles)?	<input type="text" value="10"/>
B. How many days per month do you normally work?	<input type="text" value="15"/>
C. Cost per mile of owning and operating a vehicle: *	<input type="text" value=".81"/>
D. How much do you pay for monthly parking and/or tolls?	<input type="text" value="150"/>
<i>Your estimated Monthly cost of commuting is</i>	<input type="text" value="\$271.50"/>
<i>Your estimated Yearly cost of commuting is</i>	<input type="text" value="\$3258.00"/>

# Regional Events Promoting Alternative Modes

**CAR  
FREE  
DAY**  
METRO DC



**Car Free Day** is a worldwide event that encourages greener methods of travel. Commuter Connections promotes the event regionally as a way for residents to try sustainable modes of transportation for a day, such as public transit, carpool, vanpool, telework, biking, or walking.



bike to work day

**Bike to Work Day** promotes bicycling to work as a healthy, fun, and cost-effective commute mode. Over 100 pit stops across 23 COG jurisdictions host 14,000+ riders.



# Regional Mass Marketing and Employer Outreach

Programs and events are promoted through a comprehensive mix of **regional marketing** channels to introduce the benefits and adoption of transportation alternatives.

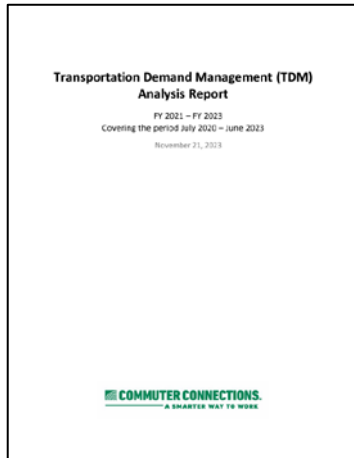
Through the **Employer Outreach** program, local TDM business experts work with employers to help establish commuter benefits and commute assistance programs at the workplace.



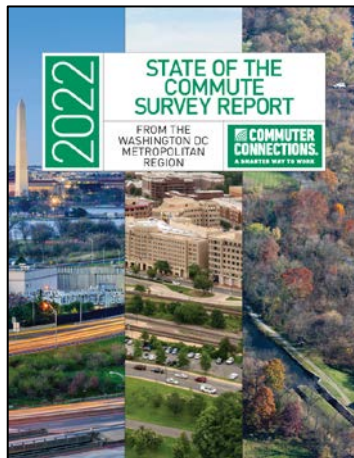
# Program Effectiveness

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# Monitoring and Evaluation



Feedback from program participants is gathered via surveys. Data is analyzed and published into reports such as the Regional TDM Analysis Report.



Insights on regional commute trends are gathered through the triennial State of the Commute survey.

# Daily Program Impacts and Effectiveness

Measure	Reductions
Vehicle Trips	119,500
Vehicle Miles of Travel	2,168,000
Nitrogen Oxides (NOx)	0.4 Tons
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	0.3 Tons

Measure	Cost
Cost per Vehicle Trip Reduced	\$0.19
Cost per Vehicle Mile of Travel Reduced	\$0.01
Cost per ton of NOx Reduced	\$49,000
Cost per ton of VOC Reduced	\$59,700

# Program Impacts: Daily Societal Benefit Cost Savings

Societal Benefit	Benefit Unit	Benefit Base Units	Cost per Unit of Benefit	Total Daily Cost Savings
Air pollution				
- NOx	Tons NOx removed	0.457 T	\$1,612	\$737
- VOC	Tons VOC removed	0.375 T	\$133	\$50
Greenhouse gases	Tons CO2 removed	836.0 T	\$36	\$30,096
Noise pollution	Total VMT reduced	2,168,829 VMT	\$0.0223	\$48,365
Congestion				
	Hours of delay reduced	2,883 hours	\$30.43	\$87,730
Excess fuel used	Gallons of fuel saved	93,484 gal	\$3.40	\$317,846
Health/safety	Crashes avoided/1 M VMT	2.193 crashes	\$15,952	\$34,983
All benefits				<b>\$519,807</b>

# Incentives and Recent Advancements

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# Incentive Programs



**Pool Rewards** offers cash incentives to form new carpools. Payment is awarded after successful 90-day trial period.



**Flextime Rewards** offers cash to commuters who avoid notorious bottleneck interchanges when traffic congestion exceeds normal levels.



**CarpoolNow** provides real-time ridematching services to commuters; carpool drivers are eligible to earn \$10 per trip.



**incentTrip** gamifies commutes by awarding points to commuters who plan sustainable trips in the app. Points may be redeemed for cash or transportation credits.

A maximum of **\$600** may be earned per year for all programs.

# Post-Pandemic Adaptations

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Mass marketing outreach efforts adjusted to target **Equity Emphasis Areas** (EEAs) more intentionally.

- Essential workers without telework options are more likely to benefit from Commuter Connections programs and services.

**Flexible Vanpool** program established to attract commuters with hybrid schedules.

- Federal Enhancing Mobility Innovation (EMI) grant program awarded funding to improve the commuter experience and target implementation within EEAs.

Launched the **Employer-Based Ridematching** feature to reduce anxieties related to riding with unfamiliar persons.



# Celebrating 50 Years: Past, Present, and Future

50 years of helping the region get to work will be celebrated at an event planned for fall 2024. The event will:

- Highlight past accomplishments.
- Acknowledge exemplary employers who are implementing impactful commuter benefit programs.
- Launch CommuterCash.

**CommuterCash** is the result of a nearly \$6 million effort to expand and enhance incenTrip.

- \$3 million in federal funding received from the ATCMTD program.
- Similar functionality to incenTrip, with ownership transferred to COG.



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