



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING

Chairperson: Marina Budimir, DDOT

Vice Chairperson: Kari Snyder, MDOT

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 July 20, 2021 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the July 20, 2021 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Kari Snyder, MDOT, 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 Janeice Timmons, WMATA.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the July 20, 2021 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. The Vice Chair Nomination Committee met on August 9th and selected Judy Galen, Loudoun County, as new Vice Chair of the Subcommittee. Ms. Galen accepted the nomination pending approval of the Subcommittee. A motion to approve the nomination was made by Holly Morello, PRTC, and seconded by Wendy Duren, ATP.

Item #4 **Change of Chairs**

Kari Snyder, MDOT, read the certificate that was laid in a plaque and mailed to outgoing Chair Marina Budimir, DDOT. Gratitude was expressed to Ms. Budimir for her service as Chair for term, and Ms. Snyder began her term as Chair thereafter.

Item #5 **Clean Air Partners Update**

Marina Budimir, DDOT, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities.

Marina Budimir was not in attendance for the meeting and Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, offered to brief the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities. August was Ozone Action Month with digital ambassadors partnering with 11 local social media influencers to promote content through Instagram and Facebook. Clean Air Partners joined Commuter Connections to promote Car Free Day with promotional efforts including social media posts on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook from September 13th through September 21st. Posts will include links to carfreemetrodc.org to encourage residents to pledge and use #CarFreeDay2021 and #CarFreeMetroDC. During this holiday season, Clear Air Partners will have an exhibit to demonstrate how residents can reduce their emissions. The exhibit will feature a vehicle in a clear, plastic bubble. The challenge is composed of questions on driving behaviors and their impact on emissions and air

quality. When a player chooses an incorrect answer, a puff of “smoke” vapor, representing vehicle emissions, shoots from the tailpipe into the bubble, and the game provides the player with information about air pollution linked to their answer. Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, added that the locations for the exhibits have not been decided as of yet, but will likely be in local shopping malls in DC, VA, and Baltimore, MD. Ms. Allahdoust also mentioned that the Clean Air Partners Board will have updates regarding future operations of the program by early 2022.

Item #6 Regional TDM Evaluation Project

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the data collection activities and schedule associated with the regional TDM Evaluation project for FY2022.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the data collection activities and the schedule associated with the regional TDM Evaluation project for FY2022. There will be updates to the Framework Methodology document which is essentially the blueprint of how data is collected and analyzed for all of the Commuter Connections TDM program elements. TDM Evaluation Work Group meetings will begin in October, with two more following in November and December. In these meetings, the group will review the TDM Program Element Evaluation Framework, the 2022 State of the Commute report, and the GRH surveys for the Washington, DC and Baltimore regions. A draft of the TDM Evaluation Framework document should be available for review by the end of the 2021 calendar year. The draft document will then be presented to the Subcommittee in January 2022, and the final document to be endorsed for release by March 2022. The GRH survey questionnaire will be reviewed this fall and will go into testing early next year. This survey will be administered in the spring with the draft report being produced by the end of the fiscal year. The draft report will be released for comment next summer and revisions will be implemented in fall of 2022. The final report should be released by next November. The State of the Commute survey questionnaire will be presented for review next month, and the final draft should be ready by the end of 2021. Post cards will be sent to households starting in December with interviews beginning in January. The State of the Commute technical draft report will be presented for review and comment at the end of the fiscal year. The final draft report will be presented in September for final revisions, and the final report to be endorsed in November 2022.

Item #7 2021 Car Free Day Event

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which is slated for September 22, 2021.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day event which is slated for September 22, 2021. The event is held to promote awareness of modes of travel other than driving alone. Carpooling and vanpooling are considered “Car-Lite” modes of travel. Currently, the number of Car Free Day pledges is 2,864. The final number of pledges will be revealed in the Subcommittee meeting in November. The number of pledges so far is lower than last year’s number (3,800) and higher than the number of pledges in 2018 (2,770). Last year, telework was the most used mode due to the height of the pandemic. This year, 60% of pledges indicated that they would be teleworking and 60% indicated that they would be walking. Those who took the pledge were allowed to choose more than one mode of travel for the day. 44% of pledges said that they would use a bike or scooter. Train and bus came in each around 20% of pledges and 10% pledged to carpool or vanpool. The poster emphasizes transit and ridesharing to try to reintroduce shared modes of travel. Radio ads were released in early September promoting the event as well as a YouTube video, email blasts, website ads, and text messages. Fairfax County Connector and Montgomery County Ride On buses will have ads on their buses promoting the event. Each mode of travel has a separate image to post on social media as well as a smaller version the event poster including multiple modes. New sponsors include Caboose Tavern and Brewery and Georgetown Running Company. Everyone who takes the pledge will get a \$30 Nift gift card. The college campus challenge is underway. Toolkits were sent to the colleges and sponsors. The press release was sent out late last week. Giveaways and raffle prizes will be given to selected pledgers before and on Car Free Day. Prince George’s County will be hosting events throughout the county in support of Car Free Day. Prince William County and Tri-County Council will be promoting the event at their local farmer’s markets. Holly Morello, PRTC, gave a presentation on Car Free Day at the September 10th TPB Technical meeting and

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, will be presenting to the TPB tomorrow where Charles Allen, TPB Chair and DC Councilmember, will sign the regional Car Free Day proclamation.

Item #8 2022 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Technical Report

Andrew Meese and James Li, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2022 CMP Technical Report.

Andrew Meese and James Li, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the 2022 CMP Technical Report. The TPB is required to prepare a Congestion Management Process (CMP). The CMP is integrated in the TPB's Long Range Transportation Plan, the current version of which is called Visualize 2045. The report explains how plans are selected to be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The report is produced every two years and is currently in the information gathering process. CMP strategies include operations management strategies such as incident management and traffic engineering, demand management strategies such as Commuter Connections programs, and integrated operations. Chapter 3 of the CMP Technical Report documents the breadth of Commuter Connections programs with sections on surveys/evaluation, telework, employer outreach, ridesharing, incenTrip/rewards programs and events such as Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day. Commuter Connections' monitoring and evaluation is particularly important and helpful for complying with CMP regulations. Within the current draft CMP, Table 3-1 "Ongoing State Local Jurisdictional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies" is a multipage table providing detailed information on ongoing, jurisdiction-specific demand management strategies in the Washington region. Mr. Meese requested the Subcommittee review this table and provide edits and input. The deadline for edits is November 19, 2021. James Li, COG/TPB staff, added that he and Mr. Meese are available for questions regarding Table 3-1 edits. A follow-up message TO THE Subcommittee will be sent as a reminder to review and update the TDM jurisdictional programs.

Item #9 FY 2023 Work Program Development and Commuter Connections Strategic Plan

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the timeline development of the FY 2023 Commuter Connections Work program (CCWP).

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the timeline development of the FY 2023 Commuter Connections Work program (CCWP). In September 2021, Commuter Connections began verifying program elements, identifying project components within each program element, and produced draft bullet points for review which were presented to the state funding agencies. In October, the development of a work plan document for the STDM Work Group to review will begin and a comment period will be established. The program elements will be refined based on feedback. In November, the draft Work Program will be presented to the Subcommittee for review and comment. In January 2022, final approval for release of the Work Program will be obtained through the Subcommittee and STDM Work Group. The draft document will be presented to the TPB Technical Committee and TPB in February for comment with final approvals taking place from these groups in March. In May, funding commitment letters will be sent to the funding agencies and adjustments that will need to be made to the TIP will be identified. The commitment letters sent should be obtained by Commuter Connections in June with implementation of the Work Program beginning in July 2022. Most proposed work activities will remain the same with the exception of the ATCMTD grant project which will continue into 2022. The MDOT incenTrip Mobile Application was added to the work activities. Under Monitoring and Evaluation, the Regional TDM Data Collection and Analysis project includes the following new activities: finalization of the 2022 GRH Applicant Survey Report; conducting the Employer Outreach database analysis, conducting an employer Telework survey for Maryland employers, a Bike to Work Day event survey; finalization of 2022 State of the Commute Technical Report and the production of a general public 2022 State of the Commute report; preparation of draft 2023 TDM Analysis Report; and responding to general data requests. The companion document to the Work Program is the Strategic Plan which will include some minor edits before being issued for comment along with the draft Work Program in November. Judy Galen, Loudoun County, asked if there will be any impacts from the pandemic to the FY2023 Work Program. Mr. Ramfos responded that traffic levels are reaching pre-pandemic levels, therefore it will be important that projects in the FY2023 Work Program be structured to be implemented as programmed to address any added congestion levels.

Item #10 **4th Quarter CCWP Budget Report FY2021, 4th Quarter Progress Report, and FY 2021 CCWP Annual Report**

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 4th Quarter final Budget Report. Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on the FY 2021 CCWP 4th Quarter Progress Report and the FY2021 CCWP Annual Progress Report.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 4th Quarter final Budget Report. The Operations Center came in at 90%, GRH at 58%, Marketing at 42%, Monitoring/Evaluation at 78%, Employer Outreach at 82%, and GRH Baltimore at 45%. The overall expenditure was at 57%. The lack of spending was due to the pandemic. He explained that budget underrun funds are sent back to the state funding agencies.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the group on the FY 2021 CCWP 4th Quarter Progress Report and the FY2021 CCWP Annual Progress Report. Work has continued with the ATCMTD project including expansion of the incenTrip app throughout the DMV megaregion. PayPal was added as a source of payment to pay users in the beta version of the application. The updated Federal ETC handbook is ready to be published. The WMATA Platform Shutdown TDM Work Group was reconvened and met in April and May. Commuter location data was cleaned in the TDM system and helped improve TDM system functionality. In total, at the end of the quarter, 13,697 commuters were served with Ridematching. The GRH program had 59 applicants, 252 re-registered commuters, and a total of 1,659 commuters registered in the GRH database by the end of the quarter. 43 GRH trips were provided. In Marketing, the TDM Recovery campaign kicked off in June and the regional Bike map was distributed. The Bike to Work Day event was held in May and the Employer Recognition Awards were held in June. Approximately 2,913 users were active in the incenTrip program at the end of the quarter with a total of 43 payment requests submitted throughout the quarter. Work continued on the FY2021 Placement Rate Survey and the FY2021 Retention Rate Survey. The FY2021 First Half Regional TDM Marketing Campaign Summary final document was published. An Employer Outreach Sales Training was held in June called "Unleash the Power of Storytelling" led by Rob Biesenbach. GRH Baltimore provided 4 trips throughout the quarter.

Mr. Sheehan continued with highlights from the FY2021 CCWP Annual Progress Report. The report was updated to follow format of other TPB documents. The report includes highlights from each quarterly report of the last fiscal year. The ATCMTD grant project was kicked off in fall 2020 and continued through the fiscal year. Multiple updates were made to the TDM System as well as to the incenTrip application. The Flexible Vanpool effort also began. The Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day events were held. The Employer Recognition Awards ceremony kicked off in-person events which had been stalled within the last year due to the pandemic. The FY2021 Retention Rate Survey and Placement Rate Survey were both completed. Commuter Connections' Employer Outreach program aided the Greater Washington Partnership's efforts to procure responses to the popular Return to Work survey. Commuter Connections had a total of 7,235 new and re-applicants for Ridesharing at the end of the fiscal year.

Item #11 **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 16, 2021 at 12 noon.