



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 20, 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 May 18, 2021 Meeting**

Approval was sought for the May 18, 2021 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Marina Budimir, DDOT, requested a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

A motion was made by George Clark, TCCSMD, and seconded by Traci McPhail, North Bethesda.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the May 18, 2021 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

Item #3 **Vice Chair Nominating Committee**

Marina Budimir, DDOT, appointed the Nominating Committee that will select the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson.

Marina Budimir, DDOT, appointed the Nominating Committee that will select the next Subcommittee Vice Chairperson. The Nominating Committee appointed will include Marina Budimir, DDOT, Kari Snyder, MDOT, and Marcus Moore, Fairfax County. The motion to appoint the Nominating Committee was approved by Holly Morello, PRTC, and seconded by George Clark, TCCSMD.

Item #4 **FY2021 Retention Rate Survey Draft Report**

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, reviewed substantive changes made to the draft FY2021 Commuter Connections Retention Rate Survey Draft Report.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, reviewed substantive changes made to the draft FY2021 Commuter Connections Retention Rate Survey Draft Report. Highlights for the report were presented to the Subcommittee in March and the draft report was presented in May. A comment period was open through June 10, 2021. Minor changes were made regarding typographical and numerical errors as well as a clarification on an overlap of respondent selection in 2014. A motion to endorse the document for release was made by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County, and seconded by Holly Morello, PRTC. Following endorsement, the report will be published with hard copies issued by request.

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

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, reviewed any substantive changes made to the draft FY2021 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee.

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, reviewed any substantive changes made to the draft FY2021 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee. The initial draft version of report was presented in May with no changes

made through the comment period. A motion to endorse the final draft report for release was made by Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, and seconded by Holly Morello, PRTC. The report will be posted to the Commuter Connections website with an email informing Subcommittee of document release.

Item #6 495 NEXT Project Briefing
Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, postponed briefing the Subcommittee on the 495 NEXT project.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, postponed briefing the Subcommittee on the 495 NEXT project until a future Commuter Connections Subcommittee meeting. She also gave a brief overview of the project that includes a 2.5-mile extension of the 495 Express Lanes north from the current terminus near the 1-495 and Dulles Access Road interchange and to the vicinity of American Legion Bridge. Two new Express Lanes will run in each direction to address reducing congestion, providing additional travel choices to motorists and improvement of the travel reliability. It is expected that a TDM component will be part of the TMP for the project. Ms. Allahdoust stated that once additional information becomes available there will be a full-scale briefing to the group on the project specifics.

Item #7 Metro Platform Improvement Project Update
Charlie Scott, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on preliminary results from this summer's Metro Platform Improvement Project.

Charlie Scott, WMATA, briefed the Subcommittee on preliminary results from this summer's Metro Platform Improvement Project. The purpose of the project is to address platform aging and deterioration and to improve the overall safety and accessibility for riders. Customer experience improvements include improved lighting, upgraded platform shelters, slip-resistant tile, new Passenger Information Displays (PIDs) and clearer speakers for important announcements. This summer, green and yellow lines have been shut down at Greenbelt, College Park (UMD), Prince George's Plaza, and West Hyattsville since May 29th and are scheduled to reopen on September 6th. Free shuttle buses will be available for riders during the shutdown with limited-stop service. Alternative travel options will include both The Bus and Metrobus services. Images of construction currently taking place at the stations were shown. Information regarding project overview, service impacts, alternative travel options, shuttle maps/schedules, and other project updates can be found at www.wmata.com/platforms. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, asked if there were any changes in ridership since the project began this summer. Mr. Scott replied that West Hyattsville and Prince George's Plaza is serving about 80% of the pre-shutdown ridership with shuttle service. College Park is serving about 50% due to UMD either being in session or out of session. Greenbelt is serving about 2/3 of pre-shutdown ridership with shuttle service. In 2022, the Prince George's County orange line (3 stations in Maryland and 2 stations in the District) will be shut down for platform improvement.

Item #8 Clean Air Partners Update
Marina Budimir, DDOT staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities.

Marina Budimir, DDOT staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the latest Clean Air Partners activities. In May, Air Quality Awareness Week took place with activities including Digital Ambassadors, which were social media influencers promoting content through Instagram and Facebook. August will be Ozone Action Month with a purpose to heighten awareness during the hottest time of the summer. The digital campaign will focus on taking concrete steps to reduce behaviors that contribute to the formation of ground level ozone. Activities will be promoted through Digital Ambassadors. Car Free Day 2021 will take place in September partnering with Commuter Connections to promote less pollution through less cars on the road. Clean Air Partners will promote Car Free Day through Digital Ambassadors as well as posting on their social media pages and email blasts. Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, added that Clean Air Partners will also be promoting an event that will showcase how car exhaust works to educate the public in September.

Item #9 Federal Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) Transportation Management Program

(TMP) Handbook

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on the production of an updated Federal ETC TMP Handbook for the National Capital Region.

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on the production of an updated Federal ETC TMP Handbook for the National Capital Region. An updated version of the handbook was shared virtually. The handbook had not been updated since January 2015. The recent update conducted in tandem with NCPD who released a new Transportation Element and Addendum policy document in July 2020. The handbook will help federal ETCs develop or improve TMPs at their worksites. Parking ratios for the historic core areas in the region can be found in the Transportation Element document along with guidelines to ensure spacing for employees as well as other staff and vendors. The handbook outlines the process for preparing TMPs to help facilitate these guidelines. Callouts to TMPs that are already in existence that can be referenced for best practices can also be found in the handbook in Section 3, which is the implementation guide. Appendix A explains Transportation Demand Management Strategies with three umbrella categories including carpooling, vanpooling, and GRH which the ETC is encouraged to partner with Commuter Connections to implement. Appendix B explains the Local Jurisdiction Requirements. Appendix C is a toolkit for information gathering. Appendix D includes a Transportation Management Plan Checklist. Appendix E explains Relevant Federal Policies and Guidelines. Appendix F lists Federal TMP Examples. The handbook should be finalized for distribution sometime this summer, possibly in August. Marina Budimir, DDOT, asked if COG will send a notice when the handbook is finalized and published. Mr. Sheehan responded that the handbook will be posted on the Federal ETC website.

Item #10 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 emphasis for this year's event will be to get the public back to using transit again. The poster from last year will be modified to include transit and ridesharing, which was respectively downplayed last year due to the height of the pandemic. Posters will be printed this year along with email blasts and social media posts. The website is carfreemetrodc.org which will be launched alongside the pledge form on August 2nd. Jurisdictions still need to communicate marketing activities and promotions to take place at their locations by mid-August. Sponsors on the website have been secured for 2021 and more will be added once secured. Sponsors for the prize raffles include Giant Food, Metro, VRE, WABA, Nando's Peri-Peri, and more. All who take the Car Free Day pledge will receive a \$30 Nift gift promo code which can be used toward local neighborhood businesses. Transit signage has been confirmed with Fairfax Connector, Metrobus, Arlington County buses, and Montgomery County RideOn. The proclamation has been shared and will be signed at the TPB meeting in September.

Item #11 4th Quarter CCWP Budget Report

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, will brief the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 4th Quarter preliminary Budget Report.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2021 CCWP 4th Quarter preliminary Budget Report. Due to the pandemic, the amount of funds expended are much lower than previous years. Commuter Operations is at 81%, GRH at 57%, Marketing at 38%, Monitoring and Evaluation at 77%, Employer Outreach at 47%, and GRH Baltimore at 44%. Overall expenditures for the fiscal year are at 49%.

Item #12 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.

Judy Galen, Loudoun County, showcased article published by Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, describing his experience returning to transit. Mr. Ramfos gave a short description of his story and article while encouraging everyone to get back to using transit as we all return to the office.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 12 noon.