



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS RIDEMATCHING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, March 19, 2019
10:00 p.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
COG Board Room

Chairperson: Thomas Hamed, City of Alexandria
Vice Chairperson: Allison Kemp, Bethesda Transportation Solutions

COG Staff Contact: Stephen Finafrock, 202/962-3385 or sfinafrock@mwcog.org

1. Introductions

The meeting was brought to order by Chairperson Thomas Hamed of the City of Alexandria. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and sign the attendance sheet.

2. Minutes of the December 18th, 2018 meeting

Approval was sought for the December 18th, 2018 Ridematching Committee Meeting minutes. An initial motion to approve the minutes was made by Darlene Nader, North Bethesda Transportation Center and seconded by George Clark of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. The minutes were approved by the Committee as written.

3. Upcoming Fairs and Promotions

Anne Arundel County Office of Transportation

- Future workforce event March 12th
- Bay Sox Night Out outreach event
- MD Job Fair outreach event April 17th

Bethesda Transportation Solutions

- Landow Building Spring E-Cycling Event April 4th
- Earth Week-CID at JBG and Brookfield Properties in April

City of Alexandria

- Pentagon Ridematching Fair March 3rd
- Carlyle Commuter Fair April 10th
- Earth Day March 27th
- Bike to Work Day May 17th

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD, 777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.E., SUITE 300, WASHINGTON, DC 20002-4239

THE COMMUTER INFORMATION SOURCE FOR MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WWW.COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG

1-800-745-RIDE

Frederick County Transit Services

- Recently updated and revamped route brochures
- Transit Driver Appreciation Day March 18th
- Brunswick Safety Day April 7th
- Health Fair at Homewood Senior Living April 12th
- Free Rides on Connectors and Shuttles for Earth Day April 22nd
- AstraZeneca Earth Day Event April 23th
- City of Frederick Health and Wellness Fair April 25th
- ThermoFisher Scientific Earth Day Event April 26th
- Hood College Benefits Fair April 30th
- Hood Green Neighborhood Festival May 4th
- USP Benefits Fair May 9th
- BTWD Events May 17th

Montgomery County Commuter Services

- BTWD planning
- Public meetings to announce expansive of pilot program for E-Scooters and E-Bikes into more areas of the County.
- Green Fest, April 28th at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton
- Early April benefits fairs/CID's at Walter Reed (NMMC) and Uniforms Services University of Health Sciences (USUHS)

North Bethesda Transportation

- CID at Henry Jackson Foundation Headquarters March 6th
- United States Pharmacopeia March 11th
- Charles Products March 21st
- Relocation CID with NIH at Executive Blvd for employees moving to Rock Spring Park April 10th
- Earth Day at Total Wine April 16th
- Earth Day at 11300 Rockville Pike lobby area April 24th
- Earth Day at 6110 Executive Blvd lobby area April 25th
- Earth Day at HHS April 30th
- CID at JBS International May 2nd
- Large health benefits fair at USP May 7th
- BWD at Pike Rose May 17th

PRTC

- TDM Program Presentation at PW County Chamber of Commerce in Feb
- Chamber of Commerce Business Awards. Award nominee and event sponsor in March
- Coast Guard Transit Fair in March
- TDM Program Presentation to Commercial and Industrial Land Exchange in March
- Quantico Welcome Aboard Brief in March
- Stratford University New Student Orientation in March
- Pentagon Rideshare Event in March
- Carlyle Group Transit Fair & Vanpool Forum for vanpool owner operators at OminiRide Transit Center in April
- Earth Day Event at Lockheed Martin in April
- Earth Day Event at Prince William County Government complex in April
- Earth Day Event at Freddie Mac in April
- Bike to Mason Day PTO Transit Fair in April
- Bike to Work Day Awareness – Bike Exchange at Manassas Farmers Market in April

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

- Transportation Fair at Saint Elizabeth headquarters for the Coast Guard March 7th
- Transportation Fair at Pentagon March 21st

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

- Southern Maryland Legislative Reception in Annapolis during February
- Town of La Plata Green Day March-April
- MTA Rideshare Quarterly Meeting in April
- USPTO Commuter Fair/Green Fair in April
- MD MVA Safety Office Summit in April
- St Mary's Business Expo in May
- Calvert/SM Federal Employees Expo in May

4. TDM System Update

Steven Osborn, COG/TPB staff, began his presentation discussing Verified Trip Logging, the new-and-improved feature of the Flextime Rewards Program. After opting in to the Flextime Rewards program, commuters will receive email messages originating from Commuter Connections notifying them of significant traffic delays on their commute corridors. From there, the commuter may qualify to receive the flextime incentive if their trip is along one of four identified high-traffic corridors and if they choose to log a verified flextime trip. Commuters will use the Commuter Connections app to confirm that they are going to start a flextime trip prior to the start of the trip. The trip will be saved automatically when the participant reaches his/her destination. Trip data will be saved and can be reviewed upon request to compare the trip taken to the user's profile work hours and the route they would normally take to and from work. This feature is still in production, but it has been successfully tested.

An administration module for the Flextime Rewards Program is in development. Administrators may use the module to search for and select an existing commuter account. Administrators will have access to a registered account holder's Flextime Rewards information. This includes corridor used, standard departure times, flexibility, work days, contact information and supervisor's information. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, stated adding that this feature will provide a more accurate representation for users to qualify for program incentives.

Mr. Osborn continued showing another improvement built on the TDM System: Capital Bikeshare Integration. Commuters looking for a rideshare match result can now have access to locations of Bikeshare stations. By clicking on the yellow icon, commuters will have the address and the maximum available bikes for that location.

Gladys Hurwitz, MDOT, asked about the possibility of integrating scooters as well. Mr. Ramfos pointed out that it would be feasible to create a link to those providers in the future.

Mr. Osborn moved on to the next two topic updates: Registration Source Tracking and Address Standardization. The former gives the administrators a tool to better understand the ad source of new applicants. In the new display, administrators can look to see if accounts were created either through Commuter Connections Mobile app, CarpoolNow or a marketing campaign such as for GRH along with the date. The latter incorporates a more accurate address standardization. A commuter or administrator can choose from a list of standardized options that are generated as they begin typing the address. This is a very useful tool for larger employers that have many different types of customized addresses without following a format of standardization.

The presentation finished with the review of the last download stats for CarpoolNow and Commuter Connections as of March 18th, 2019.

5. TDM System & Follow-up Best Practices

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, updated the Committee about tools and reports within the TDM System that help administrators facilitate a better customer experience for users. Before Mr. Finafrock began his presentation, he invited Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, to speak about the importance of Data Integrity within the TDM System. He reported an

alarming case from December 2018 where an individual generated hundreds of ridematching results and followed-up with the registrants independently of Commuter Connections. The individual then detailed his matching success rate in a report, which claimed to administer superior follow-up methods than what is currently being offered by Commuter Connections database administrators and submitted the report to public funders with a request to fund his follow-up activities independently of Commuter Connections.

Mr. Ramfos explained that the case was reviewed by COG's legal department and subsequently resulted in a strengthening of the Commuter Connections TDM System terms of use and privacy policy. Mr. Ramfos also requested members of the Committee to be on the alert for suspicious activity as Commuter Connections data is very valuable and there is a growing interest in our data for new companies in our industry. Mr. Ramfos concluded his remarks with a reminder about the importance of keeping a healthy database, which can improve the user experience for individuals seeking ridematching services. Following-up with Commuter Connections ridematching registrants is a critical part of keeping a healthy database. If Commuter Connections network members fail to perform this task adequately, other parties may step in and begin to perform follow-up and ridematching activities.

Mr. Finafrock then continued with his presentation demonstrating the TDM System tools. He reminded members of the Committee that some registrants do not select a program at registration because they are only interested in getting transit information or they are commuters who are only interested in bicycling. For commuters looking for transit information for buses or regional trains there is a report generated by the system every two weeks that is shared with transit providers.

In addition, he encouraged members of the Committee to use the notes section in the TDM System more often to increase the productivity in quarterly progress reports. He went on to talk about the *Ridematch* profile page. On this page, there is an opportunity for coordinators to add addresses or landmarks or to extend the radius search so commuters who haven't been successful in finding other partners for carpools or vanpools may increase their chances.

Mr. Finafrock briefly mentioned the most used reports for the jurisdictions: The Suspicious Code Report, The End User Report, and the Purge Report. These reports are now digitized and easily accessible. The End User Report compiles every active account in each jurisdiction in a given month. The Purge Report represents the records whose accounts have expired. Jurisdictions should mark records as inactive in cases where there is no response after a follow up.

The session ended with two case studies of best practices in following-up with commuters by North Bethesda Transportation (NBTD) and GWRideConnect. In the first study, Darlene Nader, NBTD, explained her method. She sends a first e-mail contact with an incentive (a gift card), and an attached document including a checklist. Then in a second follow up e-mail she advises that the account will be deleted if the commuter does not respond to the inquiry. Ms. Nader typically will wait for 30 days to make a phone call as a last resource to contact the commuter before deleting their record. She reported a 30% response success rate using this system. The gift cards are mailed out at the beginning of the month.

Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, explained her approach with commuters. First, there are three methods available to make an initial contact with GWRideConnect:

1. Commuters who sign up through the Commuter Connections Site
2. Applications received through the GWRideConnect website
3. Or calling directly at 540-373-7665

Following the initial contact commuters receive a welcome packet that contains information tailored to their commute. This includes a list of any vanpools, formal carpools, buses going to their general commuting area, etc.

Then, there is a follow-up between two to three weeks after the initial contact asking if the commuter has found a ride or asking about their previous mode of transportation and if the information obtained was correct.

Finally, to maintain the database, check-in e-mails are sent to commuters twice a year asking if they need further assistance or if there have been any changes to their information or situation. Ms. Anderson reported that using this practice has increased the response rate to about 33%.

6. January 2019 TDM Resources Directory

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, reminded the Committee that the TDM Resources Directory has been finalized and is now available in PDF format. Hard copies are also available upon request. He emphasized the importance of confirming responses requesting updated information before publishing the document. The TDM Resources Directory is updated every six months. Holly Morello, OmniRide, reported a change in the bike information section in her jurisdiction.

7. Client Site Status/Roundtable

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, suggested the idea of keeping TDM System & follow up best practices on the next agenda.

Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect, shared that their web site has been refreshed.

8. Quarterly Progress Report

The FY19 first quarter progress report was presented by Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff. He reminded those in attendance that any use related to applicants and services provided is reflected in the tables. Mr. Finafrock reminded members of the Committee to let him know of any discrepancies they observed in the progress report.

9. Other Business/Upcoming Agenda Items

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, announced that the fairs and promotions that COG/TPB staff have been invited to or are aware of have been added to the Committee's SharePoint calendar.

Dan Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, had an announcement related to the incenTrip program. IncenTrip is expected to go "live" later this summer and commuters will then be able to start earning points for incentives. Anyone interested in participating in a work group for the points should contact Mr. Sheehan. Holly Morello (OmniRide), Darlene Nader (NBTMD), Thomas Hamed (City of Alexandria), Heidi Mitter (VDOT), Gladys Hurwitz (MDOT), and Leigh Anderson (GWRideConnect), expressed their willingness to volunteer their feedback.

A motion to adjourn was initiated by Thomas Hamed and was supported first by Leigh Anderson and seconded by Holly Morello.

The Next meeting of the Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee will be held on June 18, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.