



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING

Chairperson: Marcus Moore, Fairfax County

Vice Chairperson: Marina Budimir, DDOT

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 March 17, 2020 Meeting**

*Approval was sought for the March 17, 2020 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 George Clark, TCCSMD.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes of the March 17, 2020 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting.

**Item #3**      **FY2020 Regional Vanpool Driver Survey Report**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff reviewed the results from the FY2020 regional Vanpool Driver Survey Report.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, reviewed the results from the FY2020 regional Vanpool Driver Survey Report. Highlights from the survey were discussed in the last meeting in March. Mr. Ramfos explained that his current update will cover any open-ended questions that were not discussed previously because the report was not yet completed. Table 5, on page 14, shows over 75% of the vanpool drivers say that they leave home before 6:00am. Figure 9 shows total travel time and line-haul time as well. Table 6 shows passenger pickup and drop-off times. Figure 10 shows travel distance; almost 20% of drivers said total distance was 30 miles or less, 31% of drivers traveled 31-45 miles, and 29% traveled 46-60 miles. Table 7 shows primary routes traveled by vanpool drivers where I-95 was the most traveled route. Table 8 shows that sources of vanpool formation assistance were split between about half saying they did not receive assistance or did not know of assistance and those that did receive information from their employer or otherwise. Figure 12 shows 72% of riders receive the vanpool subsidy in 2020 as well as other support services, such as GRH (51%) and Vanpool Alliance (43%). Figure 15 shows the areas of concern in which the largest concern was finding new riders. The report will be posted to SharePoint for comments with the comment period ending on Thursday, June 18, 2020. The report will be finalized and presented to the Subcommittee in July for endorsement.

**Item #4**      **FY2020 Car Free Day Event Report**

*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented the draft FY2020 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, presented the draft FY2020 Car Free Day Event Report to the Subcommittee. The report was presented to the Car Free Day Steering Committee in March 2020 with a comment period ending in April. The draft report presented includes those comments. Car Free Day started in Europe in 2000 and began in Washington, DC in 2008. The program includes traveling car-lite as well as non-commute participation. The report measures travel methods, miles traveled, as well as event impacts. All registrants received a virtual Nift gift of \$30 towards neighborhood businesses. Mailings and email blasts with Car Free Day logos and flyers were sent to nearly 77,000 email addresses. Multiple social media sites, including Facebook and YouTube, and radio stations helped to promote the Car Free Day event. There were also bicycle raffles to help increase participation. Text messages promoting the event were also sent to those who chose to receive them. Transit signage on buses and bus stops were also used to promote the event. 117 commuters used the incenTrip app during Car Free Day. Raffle winners were shown on Facebook and Twitter. The American Lung Association and the American Heart Association partnered with Commuter Connections to support the Car Free Day initiative.

Mr. Franklin stated almost 300 pledges came from the top three universities in the region, Georgetown University, American University and the University of Maryland, through the Car Free Day Campus Challenge. Georgetown University won the challenge in 2019 and received a pizza party provided by Ledo Pizza. The City of Fairfax CUE buses offered free rides in the week leading up to the Car Free Day event. Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland promoted the event at the Waldorf Farmer's Market and provided giveaways. There were 4,756 pledges in total with 1,405 in DC, 1,481 in MD and 1,789 in VA. The majority of pledges participated in all three days of the event. The report will be posted to SharePoint for review with the comment period ending on Friday, June 19, 2020. The report will be finalized and presented to the Subcommittee in July for endorsement.

**Item #5            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. The Clean Air Partners Awareness Week took place in May and the results have not been distributed as of yet. The upcoming summer campaign, which runs from June to October focusing on marketing efforts to reduce emissions, has been changed to a virtual campaign due to the ongoing health crisis. Marketing materials will be available on the Clear Air Partners website. Outreach around "orange days" will continue alongside the promotion of Car Free Day in the fall, as well as other Commuter Connections outreach efforts. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked if it is true the air quality has improved up to 30% during the pandemic. Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, responded that no formal reports have been prepared to date on this topic; however, once the information is available it will be distributed.

**Item #6            Regional TDM Evaluation Project Update**

*Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on recent and upcoming Regional TDM Evaluation project activities.*

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, updated the Subcommittee on recent and upcoming Regional TDM Evaluation project activities. Currently, Commuter Connections is in the process of evaluating existing Employer Outreach data from the ACT! Regional Employer Database. There will be additional data forthcoming from January through June 2020, which will be submitted to LDA Consulting for review and analysis in July. The Pool Rewards survey will be issued in June to all Pool Rewards applicants dating back to 2017. The Employer Telework survey will be issued next week to employers in the ACT! Database as well as all of the federal telework and transportation coordinators. The survey will assess telework prior to the pandemic as well as during. A draft TDM Analysis report will be produced by the end of the fiscal year and will be presented to the Subcommittee in July. The final report will be available in September after analysis of the data from January to June has been included. George Clark, TCCSMD, asked if analysis was being done on the suspended vanpools

in the area. Mr. Ramfos responded saying that questions regarding vanpool suspension during the pandemic may be asked on the Placement Rate Survey which will be conducted in November.

**Item #7**            **2020 Bike to Work Day Event**  
*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the*  
*2020 regional Bike to Work Day event which was cancelled.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the 2020 regional Bike to Work Day event that was cancelled. In March, the region's officials placed social distancing guidelines on residents due to the coronavirus pandemic preventing the event from taking place. Conversations were had between Commuter Connections and event sponsors, and a survey was issued to Bike To Work Day committee members as well as pit stop managers, resulting in the event being cancelled. Some sponsors asked that the funds provided be allocated to next year's event while others asked that their funds be refunded. Bike to Work Day month is still in effect. The next Bike to Work Day meeting will be in September. Bike to Work Day 2021 will celebrate 20 years of the event.

**Item #8**            **2020 Car Free Day Event**  
*Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day(s) event*  
*slated for September 22, 2020.*

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the Car Free Day(s) event slated for September 22, 2020. Some jurisdictions are choosing to make up Bike to Work Day the week of Car Free Day. The "Drop it for a Day" theme is not expected to be used for this year's event. The theme for this year's event will be decided at the next Car Free Day Steering Committee meeting in July. The pandemic has prevented talks with sponsors, but once the region progresses further along in the re-opening process, sponsorships can be conversed upon and finalized. The Car Free Day proclamation will take place at the July TPB meeting. The next Car Free Day Steering Committee meeting will take place on July 8, 2020.

**Item #9**            **FY2020 3rd Quarter CCWP Progress and Budget Reports**  
*Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 CCWP 3rd quarter*  
*progress report and Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the*  
*FY2020 CCWP 3rd Quarter Budget Report.*

Daniel Sheehan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 CCWP 3rd Quarter Progress Report and Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY2020 CCWP 3rd Quarter Budget Report. The Commuter Operations Center served about 18,000 commuters by the end of March with the Ridematching system, which is about a 200-user increase from last quarter. The Commuter Connections mobile application accumulated a total of 5,536 lifetime downloads with about 300 downloads occurring during the quarter. The FY2021 Strategic Plan was endorsed by the TPB in March. Mr. Sheehan stated that there were 745 new GRH applications throughout the quarter with 689 approved. Also, just about 1,200 existing commuters re-registered for the program. As of March 31, 2020, there were 7,281 active GRH registrants with 518 trips provided throughout the quarter. Most marketing efforts were paused at the end of March due to the pandemic travel restrictions. The Bike to Work Day event was cancelled as well as many other campaigns. The 2020 Winter Newsletter was issued.

Mr. Sheehan explained that the Employer Awards Ceremony has been postponed. The Employer Awards Selection Committee meeting did take place and winners were chosen. A scaled down version of the event is in the works for the near future. The Car Free Day College Campus Challenge luncheon was held at Georgetown University as they won the challenge in 2019. The CarpoolNow application had around 150 downloads

throughout the quarter, which brings the amount of lifetime downloads to 4,200. There were 964 new Commuter Connections accounts created through the incenTrip mobile application and also 572 payment requests submitted. Employer Outreach has made efforts to supply employees as well as supervisors with tools and resources to help ease the transition of full-time telework as well as learn best practices for use of telework going forward. A sales training was facilitated on March 10, 2020. The GRH Washington and GRH Baltimore Customer Satisfaction reports were finalized and posted. GRH Baltimore provided about 20 trips throughout the quarter with 16 approved applications and 319 total registrants at the end of March 2020.

Mr. Ramfos continued with the FY2020 CCWP 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Budget Report. About 62% of Commuter Operations funds have been expended. 59% of funds have been expended for GRH with an underrun to be expected due to the coronavirus pandemic and underuse of the program. Marketing is at 62%, Monitoring and Evaluation at 53%, Employer Outreach at 45%, and GRH Baltimore at 52%. Overall, about 58% of funds have been expended for the program.

**Item #10      The Coronavirus Pandemic and TDM**

*This was a roundtable discussion on How the pandemic has affected the region's TDM activities and ideas on how commuter travel will be addressed as the region begins opening back up.*

Subcommittee members volunteered to be a part of the Commuter Connections Pandemic TDM Work Group to help manage the transportation initiatives forthcoming, as well as ongoing telework needs, as the region begins to lift its social distancing restraints.

**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, July 21, 2020 at 12 noon.**