

# METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



## COMMUTER OPERATIONS CENTER SUBCOMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

First Floor, Training Center

Chairperson: Shauna Brown, City of Alexandria

Vice Chairperson: Nicole Huntington, National Institutes of Health

COG Staff Contact: Christopher Arabia, (202) 962-3385

Items addressed and issues discussed were as follows:

**1. Introductions** (see attached attendance sheet).

**2. Minutes of the May 18, 2004 Meeting**

The minutes of the May 18, 2004 meeting were approved as written.

**3. Change of Chairperson and Selection of New Vice Chairperson**

Mr. Arabia stated that Shauna Brown has resigned as Rideshare Coordinator with the City of Alexandria. Mr. Arabia stated that a plaque of recognition, signed by the TPB Technical Committee Chairman will be sent to Ms. Brown for her work as Chairperson. Ms. Huntington will be the new Chairperson, however, she was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Arabia asked the subcommittee members to select a new Vice Chairperson. Mr. Arabia stated that the last two Vice Chairpersons represented the Federal sector and Virginia, therefore, it is a Maryland member's turn to occupy the position. Mr. Arabia stated that he spoke with Ms. Darlene Nader from the North Bethesda Transportation Center regarding her interest in the Vice Chairperson position, and asked the subcommittee for other nominations. Ms. Nader was unable to attend the meeting due to a family emergency. There were no other nominations for the Vice Chairperson position. Ms. Nader became the new Vice Chairperson.

**4. Upcoming/ Recent Fairs and Promotions**

Ms. Johnson stated that COG staff participated in the District of Columbia's Circuit Court transit fair in August. Future events for promotion include, the World Bank on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, USDA Work/Life Information fair in Washington, DC on October 18<sup>th</sup>,

NIH transportation fair October 20<sup>th</sup>, and Carr America transit fair in Alexandria, on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Robertson stated that Baltimore City staff will participate in a promotion to increase additional parking spaces at the Jones Falls Expressway. A date has not been set for the event.

Mr. Freeman stated that NIH staff will host a transit fair on October 20<sup>th</sup> and invited other Subcommittee members to attend.

Ms. Hefner stated that Fairfax County staff will participate in the promotion of the new Richmond Highway Express bus service and the expansion of bus service in the south county Route 1 corridor.

Ms. Norris stated that TransIT staff will participate in the following transit events, Chamber Bus Expo on September 28<sup>th</sup>, "In the Streets" on October 4<sup>th</sup>, Community in Motion on October 7<sup>th</sup>, NIH transit fair on October 20<sup>th</sup> and Fall Feast on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Ms. Briscoe stated that Tri-County staff participated in the Trans Walk Around event on August 21<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Sivels stated that Prince George's County staff participated in the Prince George's County fair on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>. Staff will also participate in promotional events for paratransit services at two senior assistant living facilities in October.

Mr. Smith stated that Harford County staff participated in the Annual Farm Fair event in August and Bike for Breast Cancer on August 25<sup>th</sup>. Harford County staff also participated in the following transit promotion events; The Gap Job Fair on September 29<sup>th</sup>, the Heat Center on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, Transportation Association Management on September 28<sup>th</sup>, Darlington Apple Festival on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and Fall Festival on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Sightler stated that Howard County staff participated in the Howard County fair in August. Staff will also participate in the 50 Plus Expo on October 15<sup>th</sup> and a health fair at the Howard County General Hospital. The date is pending for the health fair event.

Ms. McCall stated that ARTMA relocated its offices in July. The new address is updated on their Web site. ARTMA held their annual membership meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup>. ARTMA staff will also participate in the Anne Arundel County fair later in the month.

Ms. Affinito stated that Loudoun County staff will participate in a transit promotion event at the Dulles Town Center on October 16<sup>th</sup> and Community in Motion on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Hill stated that BTS staff will participate in the Taste of Bethesda on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## 5. Commuter Connections Ridematching Web Migration Project Update

Mr. Balsamo briefed the subcommittee on the Commuter Connections Web Migration Project. With the consulting help of COG's IT contractor, New World Apps, Inc., the major portion of gathering business and operational requirements for the Migration Project has been completed. These requirements have been compiled into a Requirements Specification Document. This document outlines the goals of the Migration Project and the requirements for the new web-based CCRS\GRH software. Mr. Balsamo outlined the major sections of the document, which are as follows.

- Current System Descriptions
- Primary Objective
- Project Goals
- Stakeholders
- User Classes
- New System Requirements
- Platform Level Application with underlying Services
- CCRS Service
- GRH Service

COG is working with the contractor to estimate the next phase of the project. The next phase will combine the efforts of internal COG staff and external staff. The next phase will include the following:

- Software Design Document
- UI Prototype and UI Style Guide
- Database Design and Implementation (GIS and business app)

Mr. Arabia requested input from the users of the current ridematching software, local program managers and program funders. He asked that everyone let him know what features they would like to keep, improve, remove, or add. Mr. Arabia stated that the purpose of the project is to create a Web-based ridematching/GRH system, so that there would not be any software on the users computer, and COG could expand and add features to the system in the future. Therefore, the main objective is to create a system with at least the same ridematching functionality as the current system, with some improvements. Several attendees had suggestions and comments (see below), and Mr. Arabia told the subcommittee to e-mail, fax or send letters regarding improvements, functions, and changes, etc. that they would like to see in the new system, to him.

Mr. Hall requested the new system be able to mark user records for sending letters in groups and for follow-up. Ms. Bunton also requested this feature.

Mr. Hall requested that the building codes be kept in the new system.

Ms. Bunton requested that the new system have drop down menus for landmarks.

Mr. Smith asked that the street and landmark information be updated for Harford County and surrounding areas in Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Ms. Bunton stated that she likes the current corridor matching feature and would like to keep that. Mr. Hall also said he would like corridor matching.

Mr. Hall asked about the possibility of adding a map feature that the commuter would be able to use to view the origin and destination locations and transit options.

Ms. Affinito requested that the new system include the ability to match on additional alternative origins and destinations.

Ms. Affinito also wanted the ability to view statistical data information and reports.

## **6. Client Site Status**

Mr. Arabia distributed the Client Site Status report showing issues and activities. Attendees were encouraged to bring up any of their concerns and issues.

Ms. McCall said she would like assistance to set up automatic upload and download tasks on her computer.

Mr. Arabia stated that Baltimore City is using the old version of the FTP files and will assist with the process of downloading the latest version of FTP files.

Ms. Bunton said that matchletters generated on her computer, are not showing an ID number.

Mr. Sightler requested another CD with the CCRS software to load onto the computer that will be used for ridematching.

Mr. Arabia asked Ms. Adams if she would like the latest FTP files installed on her rideshare computer, so she would not have to use a dial-up modem. Ms. Adams stated that she has not decided if she wants to use FTP. Ms. Adams will contact COG regarding her decision.

Mr. Arabia stated that he will make a sight visit to Prince George's County to install the CCRS software including the latest FTP files on another rideshare computer.

Mr. Steigerwald said that PRTC will inform COG about the status of their second rideshare computer since there will not be a PRTC staff person to operate it. Mr. Steigerwald stated that some commuters are matched with destinations that are outside of the commuter's range. Mr. Steigerwald said he noticed a few GRH applicants that he entered into the CCRS database were not in the database the next day. Mr. Arabia stated that he will follow up to get details of when this occurs so that COG can fix the problem.

Ms. Briscoe requested that the automatic up and download function be added to her computer. Mr Arabia stated that he will call Ms. Briscoe to talk her through the set up of the automatic schedule for the upload and download.

## **7. Review of Monthly Performance Data**

Mr. Arabia distributed copies of the July Monthly Progress Report for the Commuter Operations Center and the July 2004 Commuter Operations Center Performance Data. Mr. Arabia stated that per this subcommittee's request, he now posts both of these reports on the Commuter Connections Website. The reports for FY04 have been kept on the Web site and the FY05 reports are being added each month when the reports are completed. Mr. Arabia said that these reports are not visible to anyone going to the Web site, so subcommittee members should use the URL link that is provided in the e-mail notification sent out when a report has been posted.

Mr. Arabia mentioned that in response to requests by members of the subcommittee, a new table (Table 2B) has been added to the Commuter Operations Center Performance Data that shows the number of applications received through the Commuter Connections Web site, sorted by home jurisdiction.

The subcommittee reviewed Table 2A, which shows new applications, re-applications and follow up applications entered by each member. The data is based on App Code. Mr. Arabia stated that only some of the members submit this data to COG on a monthly basis. COG uses an internal report to complete the table data for the members that do not self-report this data. Mr. Arabia asked the subcommittee if they would like COG to use their internal report for all members listed in Table 2A. If so, the members would not have to submit this data. After further discussion, it was agreed that current reporting practices would continue and COG would provide a two month comparison of data to see if there is much difference between what some of the members report and COG's internal report. Mr. Arabia said that there may be some differences due to the timing of members' uploads, but COG's internal report captures data directly from the database, so it should be an actual account of application activity.

## **8. Including Park-and-Ride Map with Matchletters**

Mr. Arabia asked the subcommittee members who have their matchletters sent by COG, if they would like to include a Park-and-Ride map with the matchletters that are mailed. Mr. Arabia stated that mailing the letters with the Park-and-Ride map will cost an additional twenty-three cents, for a total of sixty cents. COG currently includes the Park-and-Ride map with matchletters for Fairfax County. This is a long standing agreement between COG and Fairfax County. Ms. Hefner said she would get back to Mr. Arabia to confirm the continuation of this agreement. The subcommittee elected to not include the Park-and-Ride map with the matchletters.

**9. Other Business/Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

Mr. Arabia reminded subcommittee members of the new meeting schedule and encouraged members to come up with agenda topics for future meetings.

**The next meeting of the Commuter Operations Center Subcommittee is scheduled for Tuesday, December 14, 2004 at 10 a.m.**

# COMMUTER CONNECTIONS

A SMARTER WAY TO WORK

## COMMUTER OPERATIONS CENTER SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Please place a ✓ beside your name, or add it using the space provided on the next to the last page.

Please cross out your e-mail if you DO NOT wish to receive information electronically.

\* Chair – Nicole Huntington

\*\* Vice Chair – Darlene Nader

\*\*\* COG Staff Contact

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