



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, January 17, 2017

12 noon – 2:00 p.m.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street, N.E.

Third Floor, COG Board Room

Chairperson: Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT

Vice Chairperson: Janiece Timmons, WMATA

Staff Contact: Nicholas Ramfos 202/962-3313

Item #1 Introductions

The Subcommittee members were asked to introduce themselves and to sign the attendance sheet

Item #2 Minutes November 15, 2016

Approval was sought for the November 15, 2016 Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT, asked the Subcommittee members for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 15th Commuter Connections Subcommittee Meeting. A motion was made by George Clark, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, and seconded by Holly Morello, PRTC.

Item #3 2016 Bike to Work Day Draft Event Report

Mark Hersey, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the substantive changes made to the 2016 Bike to Work Day Draft Event Report. The Subcommittee was briefed on the report on November 15th and a comment was established for December 15th. The Subcommittee was asked to endorse the final draft report for release.

Mr. Hersey began by thanking those who shared edits in the last round of revisions to the report before it was finalized and then shared a few highlights from the report including the addition of information pertaining to the College Park Metro pit stops and information that was added regarding the outreach efforts that were conducted to women and minority groups found on pages 48 and 62. He also noted that he was able to correct numbers and pit stop info information such as on page 11 of the report where registration growth by year and number of pits stops was corrected. He shared that additional photos were added beginning on page 69 and drew the Subcommittee's attention to an infographic on page 74 which was a result of research performed by Washingtonian magazine displaying geographic location hourly bike Counts for Bike to Work Day 2016 and an overall event bike count compared to the 2015 event.

Mr. Hersey concluded that the next steps for the report was endorsement for it to be released to the public.

Ms. Allahdoust asked the question as to the women and minority outreach efforts and whether or not, any data that was produced reflected success or if there were any statistically significant outcomes regarding these demographics.

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, noted that data was collected for event evaluation and that there was not a significant increase in minority and women participation in the event. Mr. Hersey noted that this was the 1st year that there was a concerted effort in advertising and outreach towards these groups and anticipated greater momentum in generating interest amongst these demographics in future events.

Larry Filler, Arlington County, asked who gets the report once it is approved to which Mr. Ramfos noted that the report will be published on the Commuter Connections website publications page and the Commuter Connections Subcommittee and BTWD Steering Committee members will be notified once it has been posted.

Ms. Allahdoust requested a motion to endorse the document for release. A motion was made by Mr. Filler and seconded by Mr. Clark.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the 2016 Bike To Work Day Draft Event Report for release.

Item #4 FY 2018 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) and 2016 – 2017 Strategic Plan

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on substantive changes made to the FY 2018 draft CCWP and to the 2016 – 2017 Commuter Connections Strategic Plan. Both documents were presented to the Subcommittee on November 15th for review. A comment period of December 2nd was established. The Subcommittee was asked to endorse both documents for release.

Mr. Ramfos stated that both documents up for approval were put forth for comment by Subcommittee members and although no comments were received, changes were made to the draft FY2018 CCWP, for example on page 11 where there is an updated budget reflecting the Pool Rewards program marketing funds will also be used to expand the program as part of the upcoming Transform I-66 project. Also, Mr. Ramfos pointed out that on Pg. 12 in the Commuter Operations Center section the words “and Administrative Support” were added to a “Ridematching Coordination and Technical Assistance” project title based on a comment received from VDOT. This change was made to accurately reflect COG/TPB staff support of various Commuter Connections committee groups.

Regarding changes to the draft Strategic Plan document, Mr. Ramfos noted the changes on page 2 where Anne Arundel County will be replacing the BWI Partnership and the Annapolis Regional Transportation Management Association for Ridematching services in that region. Mr. Ramfos concluded in noting that a longer version of the Strategic Plan will be posted to the Commuter Connections website and Subcommittee members will be notified when the document is posted after final updating.

Ms. Allahdoust asked for motion to approve the FY 2018 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) and the 2016 – 2017 Strategic Plan for release. A motion was made by Kari Snyder, /MDOT and seconded by George Clark.

The Subcommittee unanimously voted to approve the FY 2018 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) and the 2016 – 2017 Strategic Plan for release.

Item #5 Commuter Connections and CarpoolNow Mobile App Updates

Stephen Finafrock, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on upcoming updates to the two mobile apps.

Mr. Finafrock began in noting that his presentation is a comparison of two mobile applications, the CarpoolNow (CPN) App, which was discussed at the December Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee meeting, and the Commuter Connections mobile application also known as (V2) which has been live for the past 2-3 years and has recently undergone re-design.

The goal of the presentation is to provide an update on the redevelopment of the V2 mobile app and the status of the CPN mobile app. He continued in sharing that (CPN) will provide real-time ridematching around the DC and Baltimore regions with the hope to expand ridematching to a younger demographic. (V2) will incorporate similar branding, and in expansion of Commuter Connections Ridematching (CCRM), V2 will also bring online mobile trip logging for Pool Rewards or other purposes. There is also the capacity to find park and ride lots from the user's location in real time.

Regarding look and feel for V2, the Login User Name and password fields were changed to maintain a focus on the background image of the Logon screen and that new accounts can be created from mobile app

Ms. Allahdoust asked the question as to whether or not on the 1st time a user accesses the (CPN) app are they prompted to sign in? To which Mr. Finafrock acknowledged that a login is required to establish a base profile, but this does not auto enroll the user into GRH, but login credentials will be the same if the user decides to create a GRH profile.

Next, Mr. Finafrock mentioned that the CCRM desktop version branding was maintained for the V2 with a goal of showing how there are other ways that Commuter Connections can fit into your life, like providing information for activities in the area and images of landmarks throughout the region. Regarding navigation, Commuter Connections Ridematching app V2 is based on V1 and the desktop version where the system relies on users providing location information such as home address, work address etc. Both mobile apps have options for list and map views of matches with icons that can be clicked to display where riders are located.

Mr. Filler asked for clarification on the purpose of needing to provide a supervisor's name to which Mr. Finafrock clarified that its purpose is for GRH program eligibility. The supervisor is contacted in the event of an unscheduled overtime GRH ride request.

Mr. Clark asked the question as to whether or not private businesses like Uber or Lyft could use the app to basically take over the markets. Mr. Finafrock clarified that because (CPN) is intended to be free of charge for users, the awareness of a fee for travel upon user to user interaction

would prevent misuse. Uber and Lyft driver's will not be able to use the app to charge for rides given.

Mr. Finafrock noted that an additionally shared function of the two apps is that users can point and click to a location. Regarding app differences, he also noted that the offering to drive is a (CPN) only function and shows where commuters are located or lists names that can be clicked to show rider destination and options on to how to reach them. Also, mobile trip logging is a difference that is part of CCRM V2 app and not in (CPN) which is a new feature only for desktop now, but will be available via the app. Regarding downloading statistics, Mr. Finafrock noted that there have been 900 downloads for (CPN) over different platforms. He then opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Filler asked if there has been any reporting to quantify how many people have actually used the application, and that analytics should be available to provide this sort of information.

Mr. Finafrock explained that the program is currently looking at how the statistics collected can be analyzed and is in the process determining what specific information should be acquired for example, there is a current goal to gather how many original downloaders of the app have deleted it. Google analytics is running and data collected is being investigated currently but there is no current way to be sure as to how many rides have actually been completed.

Marina Budimir, DDOT, asked what is the marketing plan for the application to which Mr. Ramfos noted that value-add marketing is currently underway through the current regional TDM Marketing campaign, but is not heavy duty and that the program is also relying on Subcommittee members to promote the app in their respective jurisdictions. Promotional outreach through sports teams like the Nationals has taken place, and staff is working with VDOT to capitalize on the upcoming HOV 2 to 3 conversion on I-66 to encourage more carpooling. The current plan has no marketing dollars allocated from the current budget to explicitly promote the CarPoolNow mobile app and the program is working through current channels to acquire the critical mass needed for both apps to work best.

Ms. Allahdoust noted that VDOT has revamped the 511 mobile app and the CPN app will be marketed through that medium in the future, but that it would be good to follow up in the future on Larry Filler's question whether successful completion of trips has occurred, and that perhaps testimonies can be used as a marketing tool in the future.

Item #6 2016 Bike to Work Day TERM Analysis Survey

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff briefed the Subcommittee on the highlights from the 2016 Bike to Work Day survey.

Mr. Ramfos began by introducing the survey which is conducted in 3 year cycles with the goal of collecting data on participants and to capture transportation and emission impacts which are included in the analysis of the Mass Marketing TERM. He noted that his presentation is of preliminary highlights from the survey and that a formal report will be presented to the Subcommittee in March. He noted that the survey took place beginning in November 2016 and 17,000 invitations were sent to participants of the 2016 Bike to Work Day event. There was a 21% response rate which is unusually high for a survey and speaks to the event participants' enthusiasm.

The survey aims to collect data regarding new and increased bike commuting, what commuting was before Bike to Work Day, what is was in the Summer after Bike to Work Day and the Fall after the event. The survey also is used to estimate Vehicle Miles of Travel and Vehicle Trip reductions. New satisfaction questions were included per the request of WABA. Regarding demographics, participants were overwhelming identified as white and were predominately male, which has not changed much since 2001. Half of the participants identified as over 45 years old, half work for large employers with over 250 employees and over half reported incomes of over \$120,000 annually.

Regarding information from the event, 20% were first time participants, over $\frac{3}{4}$ had participated in earlier Bike to Work Day events. Respondents were also asked how they heard about the 2016 Event and about 34% learned of the event through the internet, 20% learned of the event via word of mouth. There was also growth in social media and past participants grew slightly as information sources. For social media the higher percentage of respondents were under the age of 35 and the same follows regarding word of mouth. The majority of those who were over 35 years old heard of the event through WABA and having been past participants.

Mr. Ramfos continued in sharing a series of questions from the event survey and their response rates including a new question provide by WABA which was, "what was your favorite part of 2016 BTWD event experience?" to which 29% mentioned that they enjoyed sharing the ride with other bicyclists and about 16% shared that it was having more bicyclists on the road. Participants also mentioned that they enjoyed receiving the gifts and prizes for participating. Participants were also asked if they were likely to participate in another BTWD event to which 95% said very likely and 5% said somewhat likely in addition to a high percentage of respondents who shared that they were very likely and somewhat likely to recommend the event to others.

Regarding travel patters before and after BTWD, 86% biked at least 1 day/month before their first BTWD of which 62% self-identified as frequent riders. About 24% shared that they bike less than one day per week and about 14% never rode at all before BTWD. After BTWD, 8% of respondents shared that they started biking to work, 20% shared that they increased bicycling frequency, about six in ten respondents shared that they rode before and didn't change riding frequency after BTWD, while 7% decreased biking frequency and 6% had no change before or after the event. From this data, new riders and increased bike use appears to have increased by about 30%

Regarding the summer directly following BTWD over 90% of respondents biked to work at least one day a month which shows a growth from 86% before to over 91%. Frequent riders rose by 10% to 72%. Bike frequency rose 0.3%. Respondents who biked before the event rode an average 2.6 days and those who bike during the summer rode 2.9 days. Bike use rose the most in the frequent rider categories.

Regarding the Fall after BTWD, riding declined where 87% rode occasionally and 64% rode one or more days per week. Respondents were asked why they do not ride a bike to work more often now and primary variables were cold weather, traveling distance, safety concerns, showering issues, and the need for to use their car for work. On the days that respondents didn't bike to work, 40% drove alone which was equal to those who took transit. Also 21% used Capital BikeShare to commute to and from work during the past year. When asked how many miles respondents traveled to and from work, the average was 8.6 miles one-way. 34% lived about 4

miles from work, and about ¾ lived within ten miles. Only 12% lived more than 15 miles from work. The average regional commute distance is about 17 miles, but for BTWD participants it's about 4 miles.

Participants were also asked about employer bicycle program offerings and over 80% shared that their employer had some type of bike commuting assistance like racks, showers and lockers. Regarding how many times individuals rode their bike other than going to and from work, 8 out of 10 rode for non-commute reasons in a month of which 1/3 were frequent riders and ½ rode 1-5 days per week. 20% didn't ride at all. Regarding whether or not respondents rode their bike for non-commute trips after BTWD more often, 20% increased in this category since their 1st BTWD event, 5% rode less often and ¾ made no change at all. The data shows that BTWD may have spurred more non-commute bike trips.

Mr. Ramfos then clarified questions from Subcommittee members. Subcommittee members then engaged in a discussion regarding whether another BTWD event during the course of a year would be beneficial, to which Car Free Day entered the discussion and was agreed upon as the best event to focus attention on and to support the Car Free Day Steering Committee goals by attending future meetings and engaging to make it a greater regional event.

Item #7 Update on COG's Multi-Sector Working Group (MSWG) Activities

Davaimani Sivasailam, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on COG's MSWG Green House Gas emissions reduction strategies.

Mr. Sivasailam began his presentation drawing the Subcommittee's attention to the handouts for the agenda item which were recommended by the multi-sector working group and the recommended consensus greenhouse gas reductions strategies for endorsement by the COG Board of Directors.

Mr. Sivasailam continued by providing a brief background on the Multi-Sector Working Group policy team and the history of the enclosed recommendations. He noted that the goal of the task force was to generate greenhouse gas reduction strategies for voluntary implementation. After extensive surveying of local leadership from different sectors, the Task Force was then charged with evaluating if current strategies are consistent with the policies of local governments, and if implementation levels are reasonable for an agency to consider. Actions that can be taken to implement strategies and to identify any issues in implementation were also evaluated. A list of recommendations was developed and grouped into three categories. These categories include whether or not strategies can be implemented region-wide, at the jurisdictional level and if they can be locally supported. Strategies were also categorized by sector, those being energy-related and built environment, (the humanitarian-made space in which people live, work, and recreate on a day-to-day basis) land use and transportation.

Mr. Sivasailam continued in noting that the COG Board adopted the recommendations officially and will be forwarding them to different policy boards in the region while trying to encourage local governments to try to implement as many of the strategies as possible with the technical support of MWCOG staff.

The next phase for the project will be periodic reviews and evaluation of benefits, primarily in the area of greenhouse gas reductions. He concluded in noting that an area of the strategies that

may be of particular interest to the Subcommittee is the jurisdictional goal of encouraging cash subsidies for public and private sector commuters using alternative modes of travel.

He then opened the floor for a few brief questions and points of clarification.

Item #8 FY 2016 Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Customer Satisfaction Draft Survey Results

Douglas Franklin, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the FY 2016 GRH Customer Satisfaction survey results for both the Washington DC and Baltimore metropolitan regions. A comment period for the draft reports was established for February 24th

Mr. Franklin began his presentation by drawing the Subcommittee's attention to the materials associated with the agenda item; two formal reports and two PowerPoint slideshows, noting that Commuter Connections has been offering the GRH program in the Washington region for 20 years, beginning in 1997. He discussed the methodology in terms of online and paper surveys sharing that 95 % of the 9,195 registered GRH customers received the survey online while cards were mailed to those who do not have email accounts.

Mr. Franklin noted that the surveys contain four questions which are to be rated in four categories ranging from poor to excellent in addition to asking the reason for taking the GRH trip, how long was the commuters wait time and space for open ended comments. He continued in noting that in FY 2016 2,258 GRH trips were taken and thus surveys given of which there were 361 respondents or a 16% response rate that has been consistent over recent years.

Regarding how commuters rated the service from GRH reservation staff 92% replied good or excellent, for the transportation service rating 90% replied good or excellent which was the same rating for response time, while the overall rating being 91% of replies of good or excellent.

Regarding the reason for trip 37% identified personal illness while overtime was least used reason at 12%. Mr. Franklin then shared statistics of a decade long comparison in the rating categories of reservation staff, transportation service, response time and overall service

Regarding customer feedback 77% of those who completed the survey for the Washington region provided written responses. Of those 61% were positive while 18% suggested areas in need of improvement. He then shared written response data by type, category, in addition to examples of compliments and complaints while concluding with a recap of highlights.

A few questions from Subcommittee members included a question regarding the follow up process for complaints to which Mr. Ramfos noted that complaints are escalated and providers are contacted regarding any issues. An additional question that was asked pertained to wait time and whether or not commuters waiting for 30 minutes was an appropriate amount of time for service to be provided to which Mr. Ramfos noted that 15-20 minutes is the contractually agreed upon time frame between the program and service providers, however several factors are included in timing, but beyond 30 minutes is considered not acceptable.

For the Baltimore region program, 117 surveys were distributed of which 17 were returned representing a 14.5 % response rate. For transportation service 81% gave a good to excellent

rating however 50% gave the same rating regarding response time with an average wait time calculated to be 35.5 minutes, 81% waited 30 minutes or less.

Regarding reasons for trips taken, personal illness was the most common at 39%. With the other categories there was more of a balance for than the Washington region. 11 out of the 17 respondents provided written responses, 6 were positive while 2 were negative. Mr. Franklin concluded with a recap of the highlights from the Baltimore region and opened the floor for questions.

A conversation began, prompted by the Subcommittee regarding how to address complaints regarding wait times, to which Mr. Ramfos shared that distance from taxi dispatch centers to several areas in the Baltimore region including a military base where drivers have to be screened, is adding to the wait times. He continued in explaining that program leadership have engaged other private providers like Uber and Lyft to address areas where provider service is not prominent, but were not successful in establishing a service agreement.

Ms. Allahdoust reiterated the comment period for the two reports associated with the agenda item, being February 24th.

Item #9 SafeTrack Work Group Update

Nicholas Ramfos, COG/TPB staff briefed the Subcommittee on the Commuter Connections SafeTrack Work Group activities.

Mr. Ramfos began by drawing the Subcommittee's attention to the handout associated with the agenda item in packet, which was a press release from WMATA published on January 12th. He reminded the group that Surge 11 ended in December and at that time there were no plans for Surges 12 through the original 15. He shared that there will now be a 16th surge and that the dates for Surges 12 and 13 have been set. Surge 12 will take place between Feb. 11th - 28th affecting the Blue Line as a total shutdown of rail lines between Rosslyn and the Pentagon. Surge 13 will take place between March 4th and April 9th, affecting the Blue and Yellow Lines from Huntington to Vandorn Station and that the Surge will take place in three phases. The dates for Surges 14-16 have not been determined, but they will affect the Green Line in Prince George's County, followed by the Orange Line from Minnesota Ave to New Carrollton states, and finalizing with the Red Line in Montgomery County.

Mr. Ramfos concluded in noting that Mr. Larry Filler will be joining the upcoming Commuter Connections SafeTrack Work Group meeting on Jan. 25th to share details with the group, that Commuter Connections has and will continue to update Facebook and the program's website with up to date information on surge related material.

Janiece Timmons, WMATA, also shared that WMATA also has up to date details on SafeTrack on their website at WMATA.com. She also shared details regarding the upcoming presidential inauguration that will take place on Jan. 20th and plans that WMATA has in place for the events including being fully operation on that day. She offered Subcommittee members informational brochures and SmartCard promotional sleeves on the topic.

Item #10 2nd Quarter CCWP Budget Report

Barbara Brennan, COG/TPB staff, briefed the Subcommittee on the status of the FY 2017 2nd Quarter budget report.

Ms. Brennan began in sharing that the program is currently running at a 34% spending rate for second quarter which is to be expected, however the current figures are preliminary tabulations. Car Free Day event funds are 86% spent which is to be expected given the event concluded in the past fall. She also notified subcommittee members that totals on GRH figures for the Baltimore region have recently been split with MTA funding and that this is an additional change that has been made that is not reflected in the report ending December 31st. including why General Operating and Maintenance is shown at 96%.

She then opened the floor for questions.

Item #11 Other Business/Set Agenda for Next Meeting

With no other business Ms. Allahdoust requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Mark Sofman, Montgomery County and seconded by Kendall Tiffany, Frederick County TransIT. The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 at 12 noon.