Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's
CommuteInfo Program, the Brooke Hancock Jefferson
Metropolitan Planning Commission, Morgantown
Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization &
Ridesharing Partnerships

Presented at the
2013 WVDOT/MPO/FHWA
Transportation Planning
Conference

September 17, 2013



### **Presentation Overview**

### What is CommuteInfo?

- Commuting options
- Program services
- Commuting resources

### Collaborative Partnerships & Local Initiatives

- CommuteInfo
- CommuteInfo & the Brooke Hancock Jefferson Metropolitan
   Planning Commission
- Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization

## CommuteInfo Program

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission delivers the CommuteInfo program with the support, cooperation, and collaboration of many agencies and organizations in the region including transportation management associations, transit operators, employers, job training agencies, and non-profit service organizations.

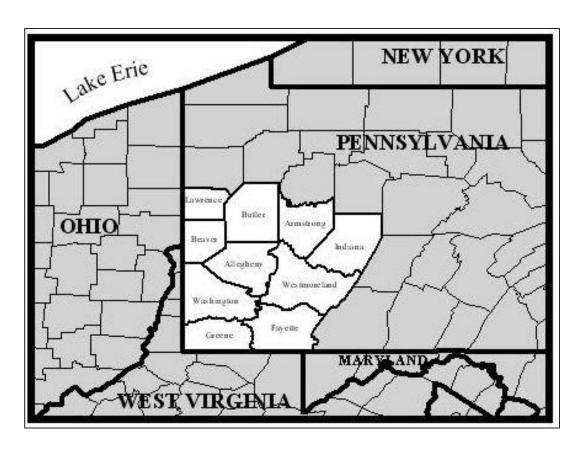
"I registered for the CommuteInfo program to try and save money on gas. My company does have carpooling information and connects people for car pooling, but there weren't any matches for me [at this time]. That's when I signed up on the commuteinfo.org website. Each day I travel approximately 25 miles from my home in Weirton to the Robinson area. This is 50 miles round trip and typically takes about 30-35 minutes one way. ... I would just want other commuters to know that it was very easy to sign up and use the commuteinfo.org website."

"Mary M." from Weirton, WV





### CommuteInfo Service Area



### **SPC Region**

- Total area (sq mi) **7,117.4**
- Number of Counties 10
- Total Population **2,574,959**
- Workers 16 years & older, at work, that worked in SPC region regardless of where they resided
   1,199,295

(source: 2010 Census)

# BHJ Commuters Travelling to SPC Region for Employment

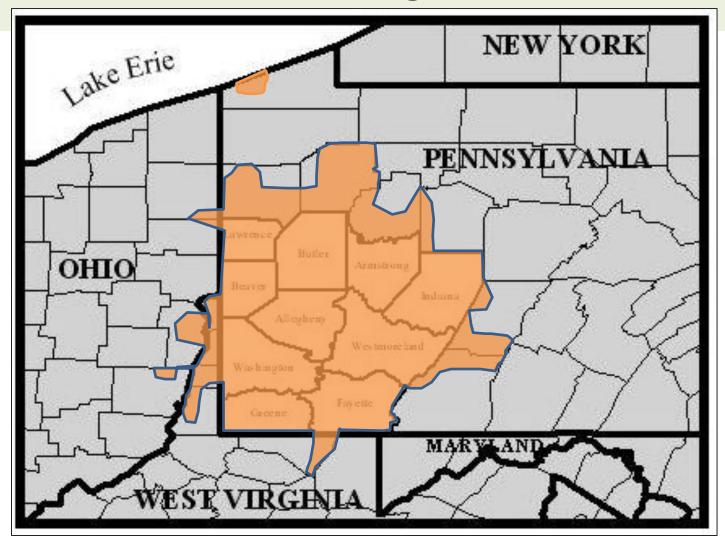
Jefferson Co.	1,465
Brooke Co.	1,282
Hancock Co.	2,298

(source: 2000 Census)





## **Commuting Shed**







## Regional Approach, Local Implementation









### Goal

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) operates the region's carpool and vanpool program under the name CommuteInfo. The goal is for commuters in the 10-county SPC region to choose ridesharing, instead of driving alone, at least twice a week.

- Transit
- Vanpools
- Carpools
- Biking
- Walking









### Regional Impact



- Over 700 commuters already ride to work daily in CommuteInfo's 59 registered vanpools and nearly 500 commuters ride to work daily in the 219 carpools registered with CommuteInfo.
- The region will have less traffic congestion and improved air quality if more commuters shared a ride to work.
- CommuteInfo vanpool and carpool participants saved just under \$1 million during 2012 in gas costs alone!





### Green, Green or *Green*?







### **Commuting Costs**

Home | Contact Us | E-News Sign Up | Search For Commuters For Employers Commuting Resources Commuting Options For Commuters: Commute Cost Calculator Driving alone to work costs me HOW much? A. How far, in miles, is your roundtrip to and from work 40 each day? CommuteInfo.org® B. How many days per month do you normally work? (21 days is average for 40/hour, non-compressed week) C. How many miles per gallon does your automobile 25 For Commuters: D. How much per gallon do you normally pay for 3.65 Commute Cost gasoline? Calculator E. What is your cost per mile for repairs, registration, .07 maintenance and taxes? \* **Benefits of Ridesharing** F. What is your cost per mile for financing, insurance and .52 depreciation? \* Top 10 Reasons to 100 G. How much do you pay for monthly parking? Rideshare \$718.24 Want to be a Millionaire? Your estimated Monthly cost of commuting is

Your estimated Yearly cost of commuting is

\$8618.88



Why is Ridesharing Important?



### **Commuting Options**



Not a one size fits all...
we are helping commuters
to make educated
choice(s),
to choose the option(s)
which works best for them

- Building Awareness
- Educating
- Promoting Choices







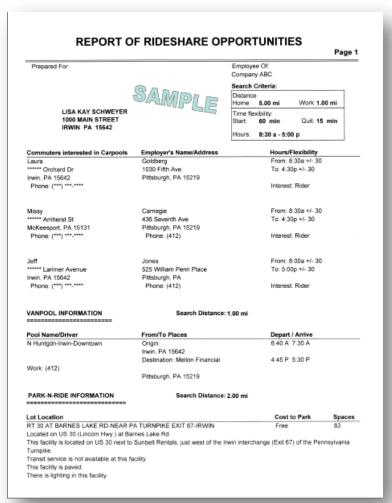








### **Commute Options Report**



- List of other commuters making the same trip
- Register for your report via internet or telephone:
  - CommuteInfo.org
  - **1-888-819-6110**
- No matches?
  - Add flexibility to increase rideshare partners.
  - You will also want check with:
    - Friends and family
    - Coworkers
    - Message board at work





### **Transit Information & Referral**



### Gretchen from Apollo/Leechburg's Story:

I figured this out a few weeks ago and it might help with some folks on the fence about alternatives to driving alone.....

#### Let's assume that:

- I am paying \$2.65 per gallon for gasoline; and
- I have a car that gets 18 mpg, hwy/city avg (which I do); and
- I am paying \$5 to park at a city lot; and
- I am commuting 80 miles round trip (which I do).

### It costs a commuter, like me.....

•	Gasoline per week	\$58.89
•	Parking per week	\$25.00
•	Maintenance	\$ 4.00
		\$87.89

The PAT bus would cost per wk \$15.00

Savings per week \$72.89 Savings per year \$3,644.50!

(That's a vacation to Disney, with airfare, for 5 people!)





## Vanpooling

As defined by the Federal Transit Administration, Vanpooling is:

"A transit mode comprised of vans, small buses and other vehicles operating as a ride sharing arrangement, providing transportation to a group of individuals traveling directly between their homes and a regular destination within the same geographical area. The vehicles shall have a minimum seating capacity of seven persons, including the driver."







## What is a Commuter Vanpool?

- A group of 7 to 15 people who commute together on a regular basis in a comfortable van
- Vanpools do not have a paid driver, and instead rely on volunteer drivers
- One person volunteers to be the coordinator of the vanpool, while others from the group volunteer to serve as drivers
- The participants share the cost the vanpool and determine their daily schedule and commute route







## CommuteInfo Vanpool Program Today



Today, **59** CommuteInfo vans are making an estimated total of **1,200** commuter trips throughout the region each work day.

CommuteInfo strives to make the vanpooling experience as seamless as possible for commuters and employers by providing packaged vanpooling services, including:

- Vanpool formation consulting and coordination
- Rider inquiry referrals
- Van leasing setup
- Insurance and maintenance
- Driver screening
- Emergency roadside assistance
- Emergency Ride Home service





## CommuteInfo Vanpool Listing

- Commuters can also check current seating availability by referring to CommuteInfo's online vanpool listing, available at CommuteInfo.org
- Available at:
   CommuteInfo.org
- Updated regularly
- Provides a detailed list of available seats on vanpools



Below you will find a list of all of the CommuteInfo vanpool groups. You can sort the list by clicking on the "title" of the columns you wish to sort by.

If you wish to join or be placed on the waiting list for one of these vanpool groups, register today or call us at 1-888-819-6110 and be sure to indicate the van number you are interested in joining.

\* Please note: The information listed on this chart is updated monthly, but changes sometimes occur more frequently. Call us at 1-888-819-6110 for the most up-to-date information.

Van Number	Starting Location (City)	Starting Location (State)	Starting Location (County)	Destination (City)	Arrival Time @ Destination	Departure Time From Destination	Number Of Open Seats
V104	Weirton	WV	BROOKE	Pittsburgh	740 A	510 P	4
V107	Greensburg	PA	WESTMORELAND	Pittsburgh	700 A	405 P	4
V109	Apollo	PA	WESTMORELAND	Pittsburgh	725 A	440 P	0
V114	Weirton	WV	HANCOCK	Pittsburgh	735 A	500 P	0
V115	Canonsburg	PA	WASHINGTON	Pittsburgh	740 A	500 P	1
V116	West Newton	PA	WESTMORELAND	Pittsburgh	715 A	500 P	1
V117	Greensburg	PA	WESTMORELAND	Pittsburgh	730 A	415 P	2
V119	Cranberry	PA	BUTLER	Pittsburgh	725 A	510 P	1







How to get started sharing rides and saving money



### What is a carpool?

MAP-21 Subtitle E—Miscellaneous
 SEC. 1501. REAL-TIME RIDESHARING.

Paragraph (3) of section 101(a) of title 23, United States Code (as redesignated by section 1103(a)(2)), is amended by striking "and designating existing facilities for use for preferential parking for carpools" and inserting "designating existing facilities for use for preferential parking for carpools, and real-time ridesharing projects, such as projects where drivers, using an electronic transfer of funds, recover costs directly associated with the trip provided through the use of location technology to quantify those direct costs, subject to the condition that the cost recovered does not exceed the cost of the trip provided".





## Fill up those empty seats, Carpool!

- 2 or more people
- Privately owned vehicle
- Ride with:
  - Friends
  - Family
  - Neighbors
  - Co-workers
- Set your own rules
  - Who drives and when
  - Costs
  - Seating, music, etc.







## Carpooling Benefits



### **Benefits**

- Lower cost of commuting by sharing costs
- Sometimes faster (e.g. HOV lanes)
- Reduced traffic and automobile emissions
- Flexible, great for shorter commutes
- May lower auto insurance premiums





## CommuteInfo Carpooling Services

- Help finding others interested in carpooling
- Public advertisement of your carpool, to fill empty seats
- Emergency Ride Home service
- Emergency road side assistance kit (one per registered group)
- Carpool driver safety training







# Why register my "Pool" with CommuteInfo?



### **Benefits**

- Riders qualify for Emergency Ride Home service
- Free road side assistance kit (one per carpool)
- Advertise your pool if you are looking for more riders
- Safety training
- ZipCar discount





## CommuteInfo Support for Pooler Groups: On-Going Customer Service

- Maintain rosters
- Register new riders
- Assistance filling empty seats
- Customized riders wanted signs
- Semi-annual newsletters tailored for "pool" participants
- Individual check-in meetings







### Emergency Ride Home Benefit



- Participants in registered CommuteInfo vanpools and carpools qualify
- Coverage extends to some eligible transit riders
- Reimbursement for rides purchased to get home in the event of:
  - an unexpected personal or family emergency
  - personal illness
  - unscheduled overtime
  - other eligible event
- Up to four rides per year, with a total cost of all reimbursements not to exceed \$100 per calendar year

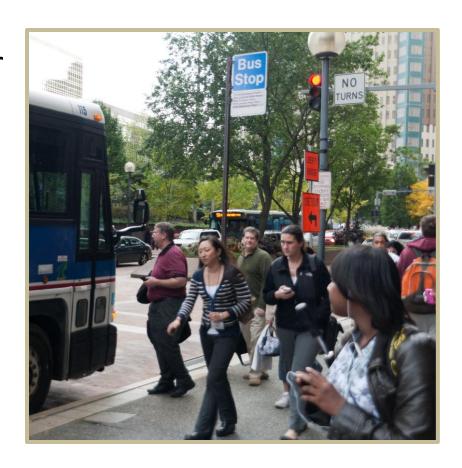




## Biking and Walking



- Option for some
- End of commute for everyone (walking)
- Promote healthier lifestyles







## Bikepool & Bike Commuting Support

- CommuteInfo provides matches
- Partnership with local developer to provide indoor & outdoor bike parking
- Partnerships to provide bike racks for bicycling commuters





Post-Gazette column praises bike share and advocates for continued investment in transportation alternatives.

About How It Works

City of Pittsburgh launching a CMAQ funded Bikeshare program pilot in 2014





## Park-n-Ride Facility Inventory

- Information regarding regional park-n-ride facilities is available at CommuteInfo.org
- Learn about
  - Locations
  - On site amenities
  - Transit availability
  - Facility owners
- Download fact sheets for each park-n-ride facility







## Park-n-Ride Facility Sample Fact Sheet



### NORTH FAYETTE TWP VFD-STEUBENVILLE PIKE-OAKDALE OAKDALE, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



### TRANSIT AVAILABILITY:

TRANSIT SERVICE PROVIDED BY:

PORT AUTHORITY OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

ROUTES TO DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH [UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED]:

29 - ROBINSON

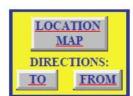
### LOCATION:

7678 STEUBENVILLE PIKE

NORTH FAYETTE TOWNSHIP

OAKDALE, PA 15071

APPROX. 12 MILES W OF DOWNTOWN PGH



#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

PARK-N-RIDE SPACES ARE AVAILABLE NEXT TO THE NORTH FAYETTE TWP VFD ON STEUBENVILLE PIKE WEST OF RT. 60 BETWEEN FARMCREST DR. & HAWTHORNE DR.

# OF SPACES: 120

OWNED BY: PRIVATE
PARKING FEE: NONE

### AMENITIES:

ON-SITE: PAVED STRIPED LIGHTING SHELTER(S)

HANDICAPPED SPACE(S)

TRASH CAN(S) BENCH(ES)



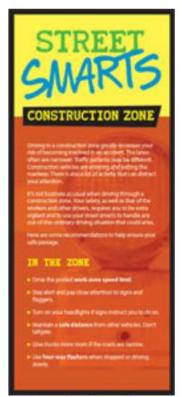


## Safety Tips











Driving

Biking

Walking

Construction Zone

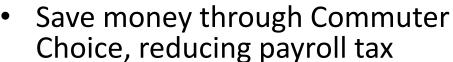
R.E.S.P.E.C.T.





## **Employer Benefits**





- Employees arrive on time
- Allow for customer & visitor parking





### Commuter Choice

### What are Commuter Choice Tax Incentives?

- Commuter Choice is a provision of the Internal Revenue Code [(26 USC 132(f))], allowing employers to offer their employees a tax free fringe benefit of up to \$245 per month if they ride transit or a vanpool to get to work
- The program is designed to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion, and conserve energy by encouraging employees to commute by means other than single occupancy motor vehicles
- Each employer can choose whether and how to offer the benefit to their employees
- Transit or vanpool passes or vouchers (up to \$245 per month)
- Bicycling expenses (up to \$30 per month)
- Qualified parking spaces in conjunction with transit use (up to \$245 per month)

# Why do employers choose to provide these benefits?

- Reduce traffic congestion, reduce need for parking
- Improve air quality, conserve energy
- Save money for employer & employee
- Low cost compared to other benefits
- Attract and retain qualified workforce





### **Program Evaluation**

- Annual Commuter Questionnaire
- Quarterly Existing Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Monthly New
   Registrant Customer
   Satisfaction Surveys

Annual PoolerDrop-In Events



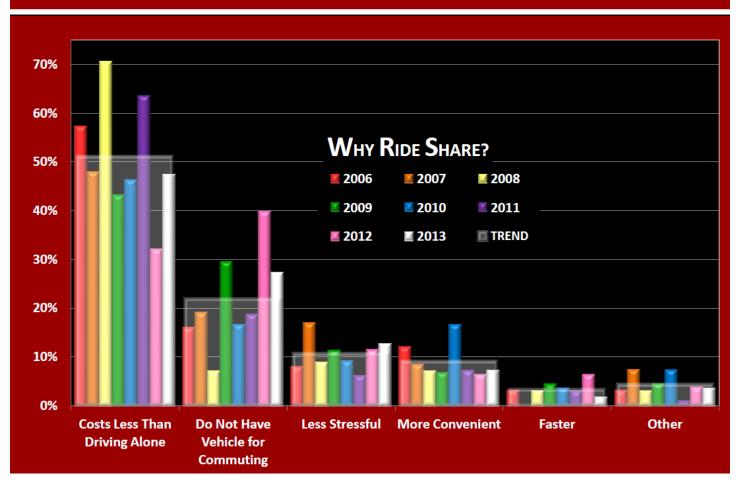




### **Annual Commuter Questionnaire**

### **WHY RIDE SHARE?**

If you ride share to work or school, which is the main reason for doing so?



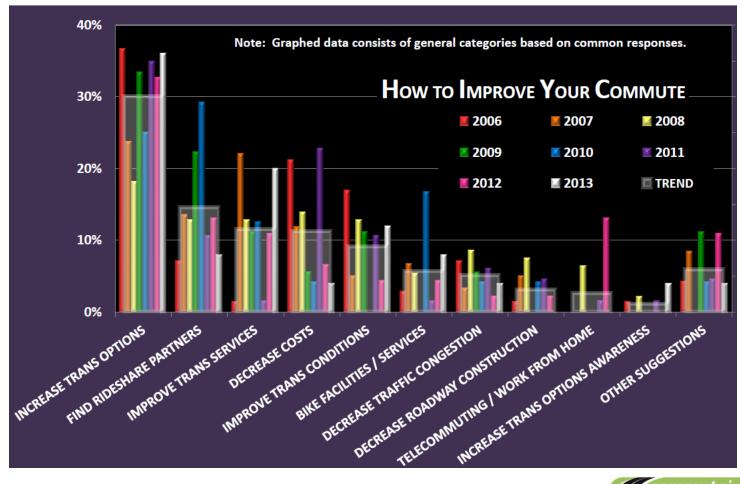




### **Annual Commuter Questionnaire**

### **HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUTE**

What would make your commute better, easier and / or safer?

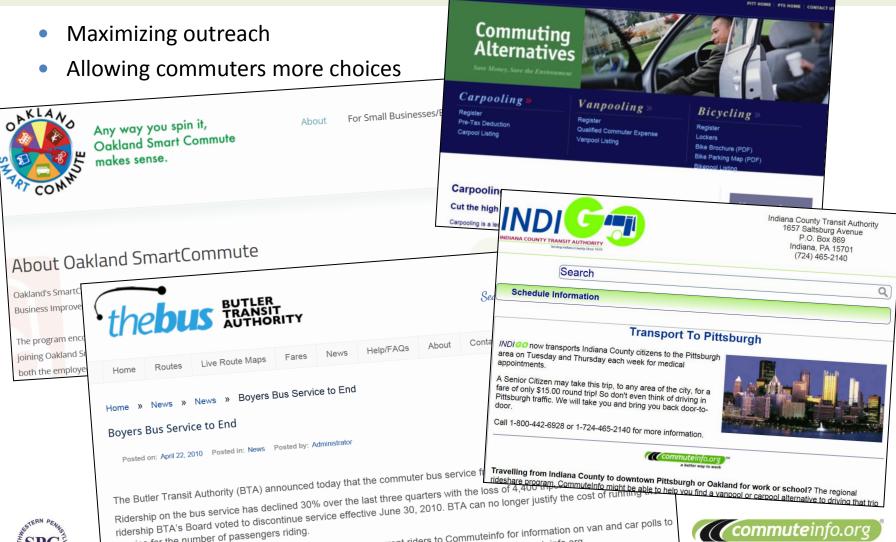






## Collaborative Partnerships

University of Pittsburgh





ridership BTA's Board voted to discontinue service effective Julie 33, 23 to service for the number of passengers riding.

BTA appreciates all the loyal riders and would like to refer current riders to Commuteinfo for information on van and car polls to the Boyers area. Commuteinfo can be reached at 1-888-819-6110 or on the web at www.commuteinfo.org.

a better way to work

1.888.819.6110

#### CommuteInfo & BHJ

#### A Partnership that Works

- Signed MOU in 2004
- Regular communication and coordination
- Participation in CommuteInfo Regional Partner, and BHJ RAMP meetings
- Example of how partnerships can eliminate duplication of services/costs:
  - \$ Toll-free phone number
  - \$ Website
  - \$ Highway signs
  - \$ Ridematching services
  - \$ Participant support/customer service
  - \$ Emergency ride home
  - \$ Vanpool services provider contract



Metropolitan Planning Commission

## BHJ's Outreach **Efforts**



Billboards



WTOV-9 Television Commercials



Froggy Radio Live Action Broadcasts

BROOKE=HANGOGK=JEFFERSON **Metropolitan Planning Commission** 

## BHJ's Outreach Efforts

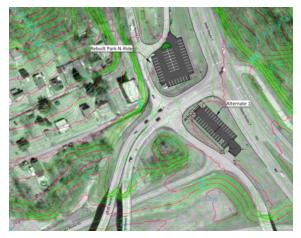


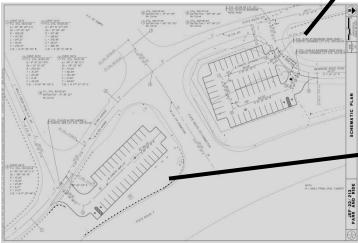


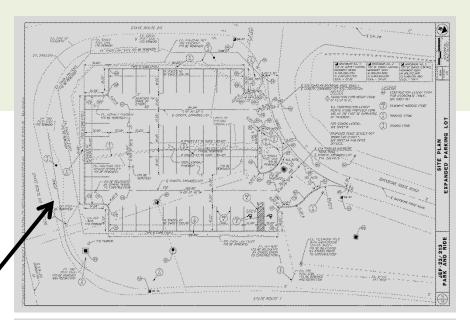
**BHJ Website & Newsletters** 

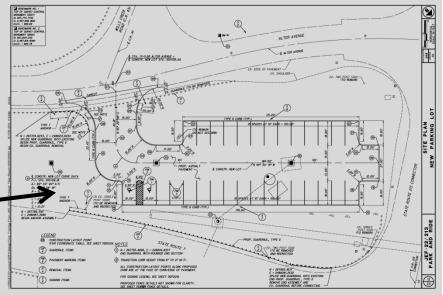
# CommuteInfo Jingle!

BROOKE-HANGOCK-JEFFERSON Metropolitan Planning Commission Park-n-Ride Facility at SR 7 & 213 Steubenville Jefferson County

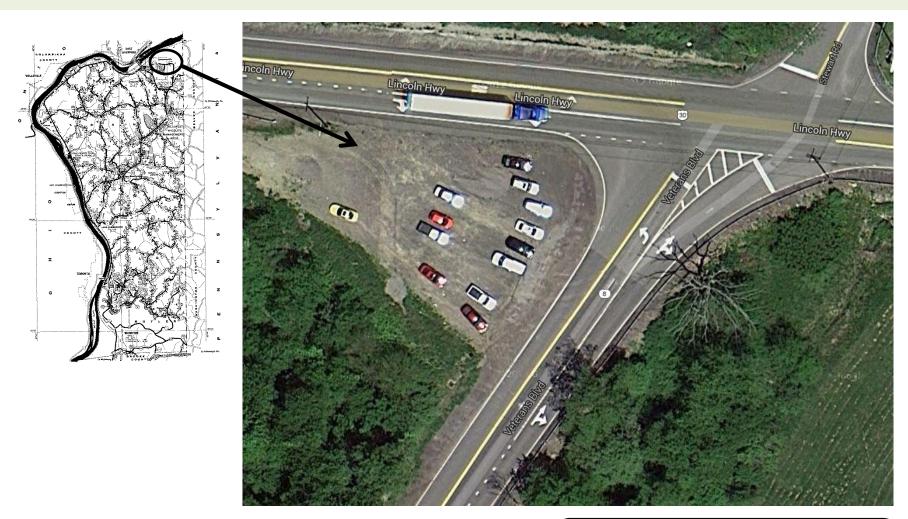






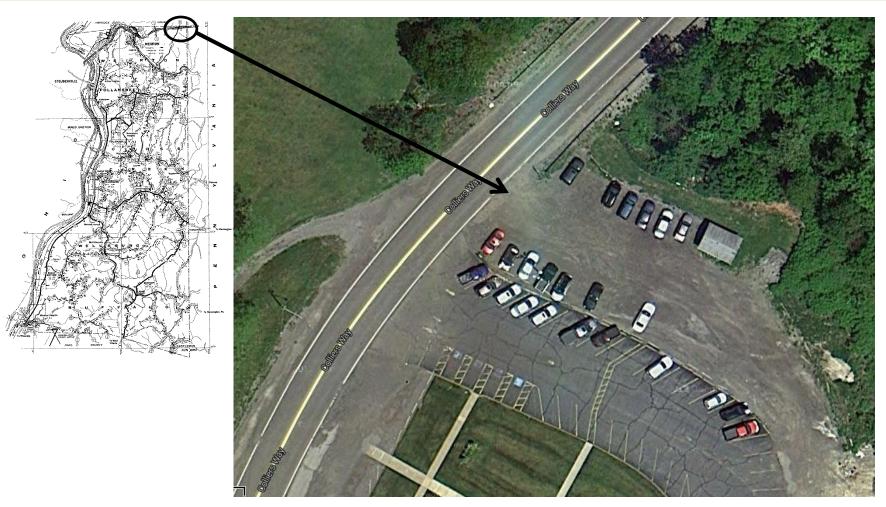


# Informal Park-n-Ride Lot at US-30 and SR-8 Chester, Hancock County



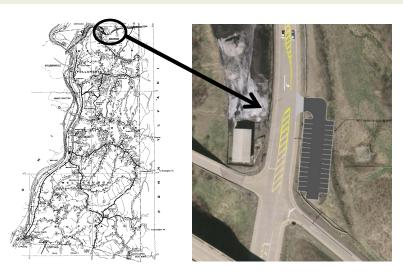
Metropolitan Planning Commission

# Informal Park-n-Ride Lot at US-22 and Colliers Way Weirton, Brooke County

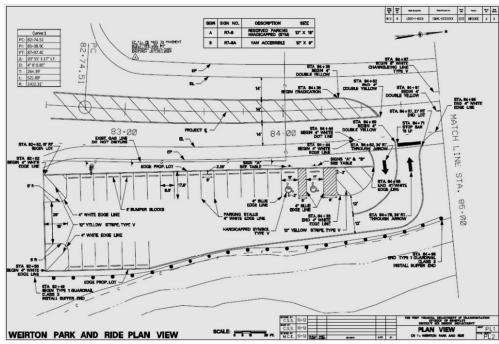


Metropolitan Planning Commission

# Park-N-Ride Lot at US-22 and Harmon Creek in Weirton, Brooke County







## Outcomes – BHJ Area Commuter Requests

#### Travelling to PA

#### for work from:

Ohio

Onio	
Austintown	1.37%
Belmont	1.37%
Bloomingdale	1.37%
Brookfield	1.37%
Gerard	1.37%
Hopeville	1.37%
Mingo Junction	12.33%
Niles	1.37%
Richmond	1.37%
St. Clairsville	1.37%
Steubenville	57.53%
Toronto	8.22%
Wintersville	9.59%

West Virginia	
Beech Bottom	1.02%
Chester	1.02%
Colliers	3.06%
Follansbee	7.14%
Morgantown	2.04%
New Cumberland	4.08%
Newell	1.02%
Weirton	72.45%
Wellsburg	4.08%
Wheeling	4.08%

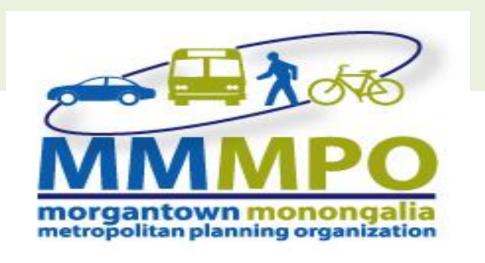
# Travelling from PA for work to:

Ohio	
Steubenville	50.00%
Wintersville	50.00%
West Virginia	
Bethany	5.00%
West Liberty	5.00%
Wheeling	90.00%
Bethany West Liberty	5.00%

#### Outcomes – BHJ Area Commuter Involvement

- 176 people registered with CommuteInfo
- 83 currently riding in a vanpool (part of 8 vanpool groups)
- 8 currently riding in a carpool (3 carpool groups)





# Transportation Demand Management in the Morgantown Area

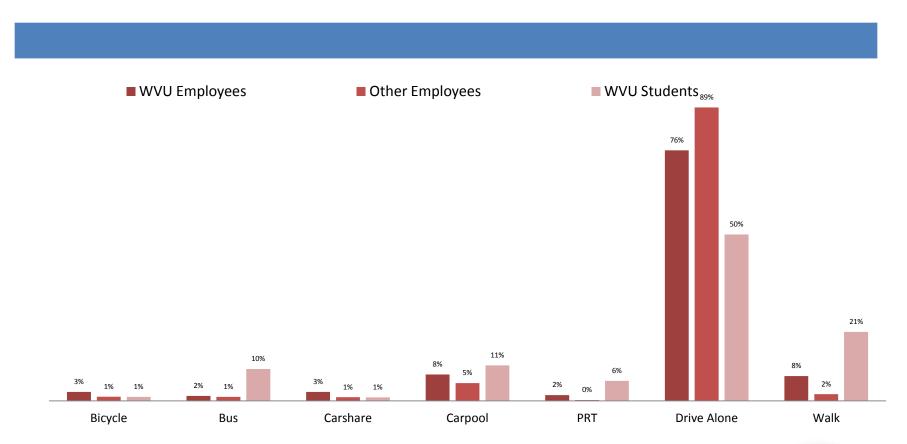
Bill Austin, AICP Executive Director



### History of TDM in the Morgantown Area

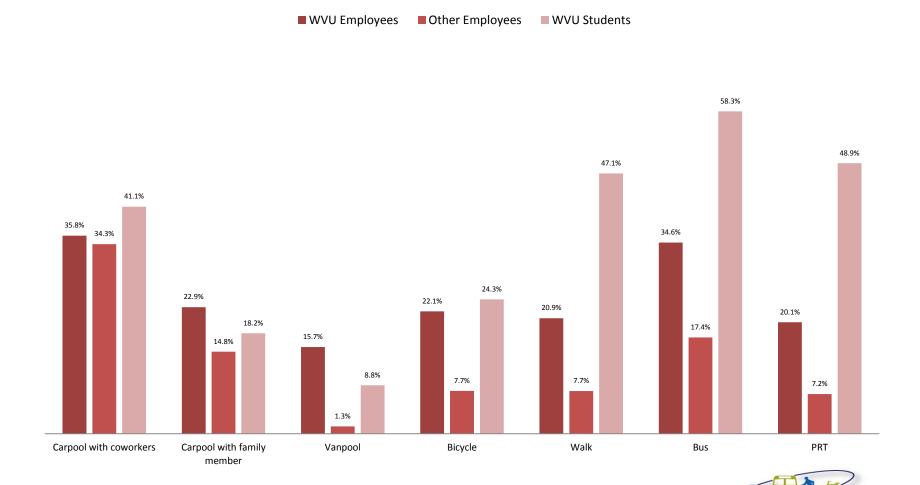
- 2005 Study to determine the feasibility of TDM in the Morgantown Area
  - Found that there was interest in TDM but that it was not feasible for implementation at that time.
- 2010 Significant increases in congestion indicated that TDM may be a viable strategy to address congestion in the area
  - Hired Parsons Brinckerhoff to Perform a TDM Study to determine the feasibility of TDM in the area.
  - Parsons Brinckerhoff conducted a survey of approximately 3,000 citizens
    - 82 percent of respondents agreed the transportation facilities needed improvement

## Results of Parsons Brinckerhoff Study Survey - Current Area Mode Split





# Parsons Brinckerhoff Survey Findings - Willingness to use Alternative Modes



## TDM Study Results (cont.)

- The Parsons Brinckerhoff Study identified the WV 705corridor as a high commute corridor
  - Between WVU, WVU Hospital, Mon General Hospital, Mylan Pharmaceuticals, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, and National Energy Technology Laboratory there are 10,000 commuters in the corridor
  - The PB Study recommended this corridor as a possible beginning point for a vanpool/carsharing program



#### MPO Efforts to Initiate TDM

- Due to the PB Study the MPO assigned personnel to work to implement a vanpool program.
- The MPO reached out the top levels of the major employers in the corridor for support. Most of the employers were supportive of the effort
- With this support the MPO applied for and received a grant of \$50,000 in CMAQ funding from WVDOH.



## MPO Efforts to Initiate TDM (cont.)

- The MPO convened a committee representing the major employers in the area to promote TDM.
- The MPO also reached out to VPSI (now vRide) for information on car pool and van pool formation. VPSI agreed to help form carpools when there was not enough demand to form a vanpool.
- The MPO's, VPSI and employers had several promotional events inviting employees to sign up for van pools
- Sixty employees signed up to participate in van pools, however no one was willing to take on the responsibility of driving the van.



#### MPO Efforts to Initiate TDM

- Several agencies dropped out of the effort.
  - Once the effort moved from those responsible for operating the employers facilities to HR employer interest dropped off substantially.
- Since that time the MPO lost the staff member responsible for working with TDM.
- The MPO is now working with Mountain Lines Mobility Coordinator to reinstitute the vanpool effort.
- Efforts to date have been promising with NETL showing revived interest in the program.



#### Learn more

Lisa Kay Schweyer Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's

> CommuteInfo Program 412-391-5590 CommuteInfo.org

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