



From Marketing to Movement: Lillian Bunton's 25+ Years in TDM



"[Commuter benefits programs] make a difference in people's worlds, and that's enough."

-Lillian Bunton
Transportation Demand Management Coordinator,
Baltimore Metropolitan Council/GoSmartMD

An Unexpected Path to Transportation

Lillian Bunton did not set out to become a TDM coordinator. Her background was in publications, sales, and marketing, and when the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) posted a marketing job over 25 years ago, she applied, was hired, and her TDM career began. Today, she manages GoSmartMD, BMC's TDM program.

That foundation still drives how she approaches outreach today. "My program is rooted in marketing," Lillian says. Rather than leading with the full complexity of commuter benefits, she leads with the one thing that gets people listening: "Hey, did you know if you didn't drive alone, you can get home for free in a cab?" Once she grabs their attention, she introduces the broader menu of services.

Serving Two Very Different Counties

As TDM Coordinator for Baltimore and Carroll Counties at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, Lillian tailors her approach to the two distinct audiences. Baltimore County ranks as the second largest job center in the state, so she focuses heavily on employer outreach. Carroll County is nearly 60% rural and functions largely as a bedroom community, so she takes her message directly to people, tabling at events and festivals.

She also meets people where they are: social media. "It's almost as effective for 10% of the price," she says, "which is amazing because everything else costs more." Her marketing instincts keep the message simple and the budget-friendly.

Building Bike to Work Day from the Ground Up

One of Lillian's proudest achievements started with roughly 10 cyclists and a clipboard. In the late 1990s, a small group of enthusiastic riders wanted to celebrate International Bike to Work Day, and Lillian helped coordinate a small gathering near Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Nearly 30 years later, the event draws around 2,000 participants annually.

When the pandemic forced her to reconsider what the event could look like, Lillian transformed the event into Bike to Work Week and partnered with bike shops across both counties to create neighborhood pickup locations that had never existed before, bringing in rural and more distant riders who had always been left out. Next year marks the program's 30th anniversary, and Lillian is actively looking for new locations and sponsors.

The Work That Sticks

Lillian measures success in small moments. For example, a maintenance worker once recruited his friends to the IncenTrip (now Commuter Cash) program because he earns \$30 a week doing what he already does. Another woman once told Lillian she was so relieved to learn about a vanpool near her office that she bent over to catch her breath. "It makes a difference in their world," Lillian says. "That's enough."



If your organization offers and promotes commuter benefits or would like free assistance to start or expand your program, contact Commuter Choice or join the Employer Partner program online at: www.mdot.maryland.gov/employerpartner/