



Melena View: Rerouting Maryland, One Call at a Time



“Be resilient, and persistent, and be really passionate about the program you’re marketing for.”

-Melena View

TDM Coordinator,
Commuter Choice
Maryland

FINDING HER WAY TO TDM

Melena View never set out to work in transportation. She studied environmental policy and planning at Virginia Tech, a major that blends land use, government policy, and psychology. A human geography course caught her attention early and led her to wonder: where do people choose to live, how do they get where they’re going, and why? Those questions pointed her toward transportation and Transportation Demand Management (TDM).

GETTING HER START

Melena’s path into TDM started with a family connection. A summer internship at Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning turned into a part-time role through her senior year, alongside land use projects like her capstone project. She came on as a transportation planner after graduation and, within two months, began working on a Best Workplace for Commuters project for OmniRide, her first hands-on TDM experience. She moved onto Commuter Choice Maryland soon after, and it became the project she looked forward to most.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Less than two years later, Melena works as a TDM Coordinator for Commuter Choice Maryland, splitting her time between engaging employers and commuters, creating marketing materials, and staffing community events. She focuses much of her effort on building relationships with employers located in Maryland counties that do not have a local rideshare coordinator.

What keeps Melena engaged is meeting people face to face and watching her work take effect in real time. Trying a new commute can be scary, but whether by bus, carpool, vanpool, active transportation, or microtransit, Melena enjoys helping people discover other ways to rethink their daily commute. Coordinating and staffing outreach events have become a favorite part of the job too, and she enjoys the behind-the-scenes planning almost as much as the outreach itself.

OVERCOMING THE LEARNING CURVE

Melena admits it didn’t come easily at first. Cold calling strangers and presenting to people who already think they have their commute figured out pushed her outside her comfort zone. She learned to sit with rejection without letting it discourage her, treating every “no” as a chance to refine her approach and hone her TDM skillset.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The payoff shows up in small moments, like hearing the excitement in someone’s voice when they realize they can register an existing carpool or start earning incentives through the Ride Together Rewards program. She finds satisfaction in helping each person find the commute that fits their lifestyle, whether that means managing cost or sharing a ride with a coworker. Employer partnerships create similar impact, like companies offering transit benefits. She also makes sure every MDOT employee knows about their free public transit benefit.

ADVICE FOR TDM PROFESSIONALS & MAGIC WAND MOMENT

Melena’s advice starts with the basics: know your program well enough to explain it clearly before selling it to anyone else. From there, dig into resources available nationally, from TDM learning series to policies like D.C.’s cash-out law. Just as important is getting comfortable putting yourself out there and accepting that you will hear “no.”

Asked if she had a magic wand, what she would change about people’s commutes, Melena wants solo drivers to stay more open-minded about trying something new. She knows the frustration firsthand: on her own drive to the MDOT office, traffic was bad enough to encourage her to start taking the train, and she hopes more commuters reach that same conclusion.



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!