

# Commuter Choice Maryland

## PROGRESS REPORT

2018-2020



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# 1

## Planning for the Commuter Choice Maryland Update

When MDOT embarked on the journey to update the Commuter Choice Maryland program, the first step was to assess opportunities for enhancing its suite of existing Transportation Demand Management programs, policies, and incentives. In the Summer of 2017, MDOT contracted with ICF and Sharp & Company to conduct a mix of methods to develop this assessment and provide recommendations for further advancing TDM efforts in Maryland. The mixed method approach included:

- Comprehensive inventory of TDM programs, policies, and legislation, as well as existing transportation options to gain, and ultimately convey, a better understanding of the TDM options available to commuters.
- Survey of commuters throughout Maryland to identify knowledge and use of TDM strategies and existing barriers to non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel in both urban and rural areas.
- In-depth interviews with businesses/employers throughout Maryland to identify knowledge and use of TDM strategies, as well as existing commuting challenges that may affect employee populations and identify barriers to implementing worksite transportation programs for their employees.
- A review of select state, regional, and local TDM programs to learn how other agencies have addressed various challenges in their implementation and outreach on TDM strategies, programs and policies.

In the Spring of 2018, a half-day Strategic Direction Workshop was held and administered by the Maryland Department of Transportation with facilitation assistance from Foursquare ITP and PRR. The purpose of the workshop was to receive input from stakeholders throughout Maryland on a draft strategic direction, including feedback on the draft vision, goals, objectives, and strategies. Workshop participants were also asked to provide input on opportunities and challenges that exist for TDM in Maryland. Invitations to attend the workshop were sent to over 100 individuals representing the following organizations:

- MDOT Transportation Business Units: MDOT TSO, MDOT SHA, and MDOT MTA
- All Maryland Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- Local economic development offices for 25 Maryland counties
- Twenty-six representatives of Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) from across the state
- Representatives from all Maryland counties:
  - Ten county-level rideshare coordinators (Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas)
  - Twelve representatives from rural counties
- Representatives from ten additional public and public-private organizations (e.g., Transportation Management Associations, Fort Meade, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority)

A total of 39 people attended the Strategic Direction Workshop. Participant feedback led to the development of the final vision, and a set of goals, and objectives associated with the vision and MDOT mission (see **Table 1**).

*Table 1: Commuter Choice Maryland Strategic Direction*

**Vision**

Commuter Choice Maryland Increases the Use of Public Transportation, Ridesharing, Walking, Biking, Teleworking, and Alternative Work Schedules, to Enhance the Quality of Life of Marylanders.

**Maryland Department of Transportation Mission**



**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Maryland Department of Transportation is a customer-driven leader that delivers safe, sustainable, intelligent, and exceptional transportation solutions in order to connect our customers to life's opportunities.

**Goals**

**Objectives**

Goal 1 Make Transportation choices easy to understand and access.

Objective 1.1 Ensure that local and regional public transportation information is accessible to all.

Objective 1.2 Increase knowledge and comfort with the use of all transportation options, telework, and alternative work schedules.

Goal 2 Enhance the awareness, availability, and use of complementary statewide employer TDM services that support non-SOV drive alone commuting options, teleworking, and flexible work schedules by employers across Maryland at the places Marylanders work.

Objective 2.1 Create a branded state-wide employer services program.

Objective 2.2 Build capacity to conduct outreach to businesses and deliver a state-wide employer service program.

Objective 2.3 Ensure MDOT funded TDM Specialists are trained, have materials, and support needed to execute state-wide employer services.

Goal 3 Increase statewide ridesharing support, and services, and use statewide.

Objective 3.1 Partner with local jurisdictions to support ride sharing infrastructure.

Objective 3.2 Expand the use and availability of existing ridesharing and guaranteed ride home solution to underserved areas.

Goal 4 Maximize the reach and effectiveness of TDM services through collaboration and innovation.

Objective 4.1 Foster strong working partnerships with public and private stakeholders.

Objective 4.2 Leverage emerging and existing technology tools and services providers to expand the effectiveness of TDM services.

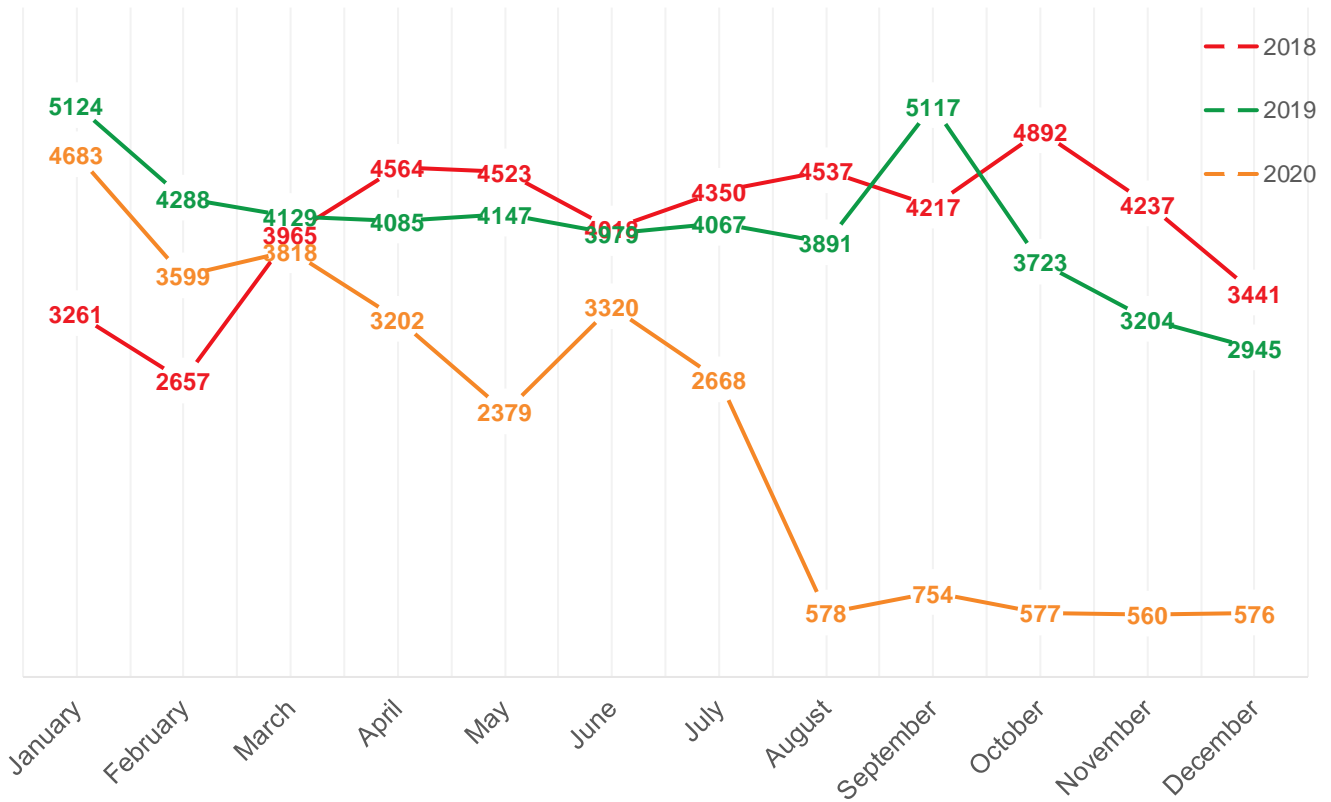
# 2

## Commuter Choice Maryland Implementation Progress Update 2018-2020

### Commuter Choice Maryland Website

In support of Goal 1 to make transportation choices easy to understand and access, it has been a priority for the Commuter Choice Maryland Program to update the website to serve as a centralized resource of transportation information in Maryland for commuters and businesses. From 2018 to 2019, there was a 0.08% increase in website visits (see Figure 1). From January through December 2020, there were 26,714 website visits.

Figure 1: Commuter Choice Maryland Website Visits by Month



## Events and Outreach Opportunities

In support of **Goal 2 to enhance the awareness, and use of complementary statewide employer TDM services that support non-SOV drive alone commuting options**, Commuter Choice Maryland staff have reached out to commuters and businesses at various events, such as Earth Day, Bike to Work Day, Artscape, Maryland State Fair, Car Free Day, Get on Board pop up events, Maryland Association of Counties Summer Conference, Women’s Traffic and Transportation Club, Baltimore Job Fair, the Baltimore Auto Show, Maryland Walk Day, various Maryland County DOT hosted events, MPO Roundtable meetings, Maryland Mitigation Workgroup meetings, Aberdeen Proving Ground working group meeting, and a variety of small and minority business events. From 2018 to 2019 there was a 77.23% increase in the total number of people engaged at various events and outreach opportunities (see **Table 2**). There was a significant drop in the number of events and people engaged in events for 2020 due to the pandemic; however, during this time outreach shifted to social media efforts and will be detailed in subsequent sections.

Figure 2: MDOT Commuter Choice Staff at an Outreach Event



Table 2: Outreach Events

Year	Total # People Engaged	Total # Events
2018	7,554	7
2019	13,388	38
2020	672	9

## Quarterly Newsletters

Commuter Choice Maryland newsletters was first launched in the Fall of 2019 and has administered a total of five newsletters, which continue to provide Commuter Choice Maryland information to over 8,700+ businesses and commuters throughout the State of Maryland. A sample of click and open rates can be seen in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Newsletter Metrics

Newsletter Edition	Total # Opened	Open Rate
Summer 2020	1,400	16%

The Commuter Choice Maryland newsletter also supports **Goal 1 to make transportation choices easy to understand and access and Goal 2 for enhanced awareness, availability, and use of TDM services to support non-SOV travel across Maryland**. Newsletters topics have included Maryland Commuter Tax Credit, Maryland One Stop Portal, Guaranteed Ride Home, Charm Pass & Smart Benefits, quarterly webinars, the Commuter Calculator, social media, rideshare coordinator spotlights, business spotlights, tools and resources, and events.

## Commuter Calculator

Commuter Choice Maryland worked with the University of Maryland – Maryland Transportation Institute to develop a Commuter Calculator. The purpose of the Commuter Calculator is to encourage commuters who are thinking about an alternative commute to driving alone with estimations on fuel cost savings, vehicle maintenance cost savings, parking cost savings, emissions pollution reduction, and Green House Gases (GHG) emissions reduction by changing to either carpool/vanpool, biking, walking, multimodal, transit, commuting off peak, and telework. Data collection for the commuter calculator started in July 2020. Here is a summary of the query results received to date:

- The most popular vehicle type was “car”
- The most popular vehicle age was between “4 to 6 years”
- The most popular vehicle fuel was “gasoline”
- The top recommended alternative commute mode: (Most popular mode) Carpool/Vanpool & Telework” (second popular mode) “Multimodal”, and (Third popular modes) “Transit & Commute Off Peak”

Figure 3: MDOT Commuter Calculator

**Address** 📍

Note: You may add exact address, nearby intersection, landmark or zip code.

Home

Work

**Preferred Departure Time** 🕒

Home To Work

8 : 00

Work To Home

17 : 00

**Number of Days You Commute to Work Location Every Week** 📅

5

**Vehicle Information** 🚗

Vehicle Type

Car

Vehicle Age

5

Vehicle Fuel

gasoline

**Submit**







Figure 5: Total Engaged Users by Month

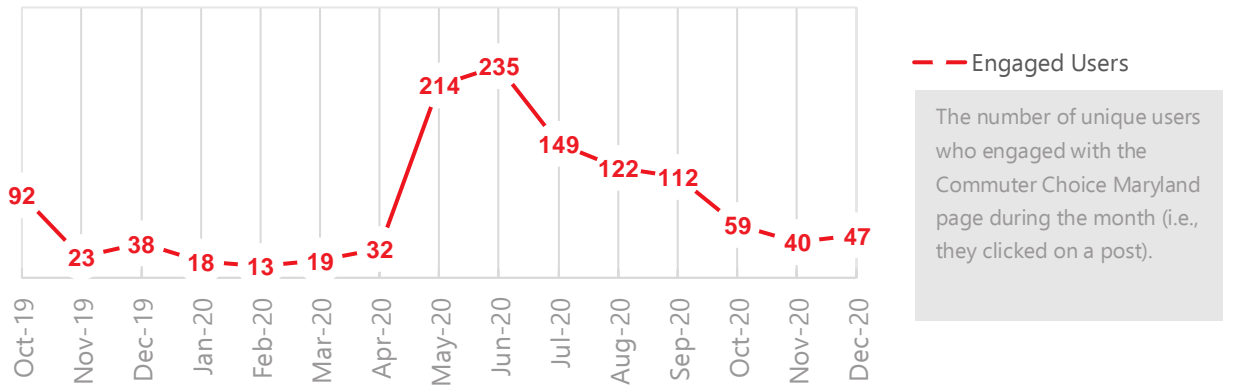


Figure 6: Total Reach by Month

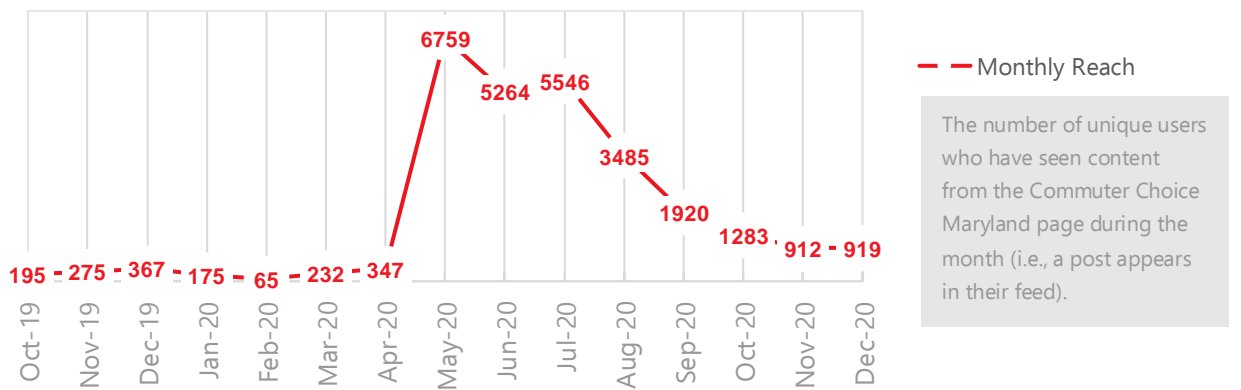
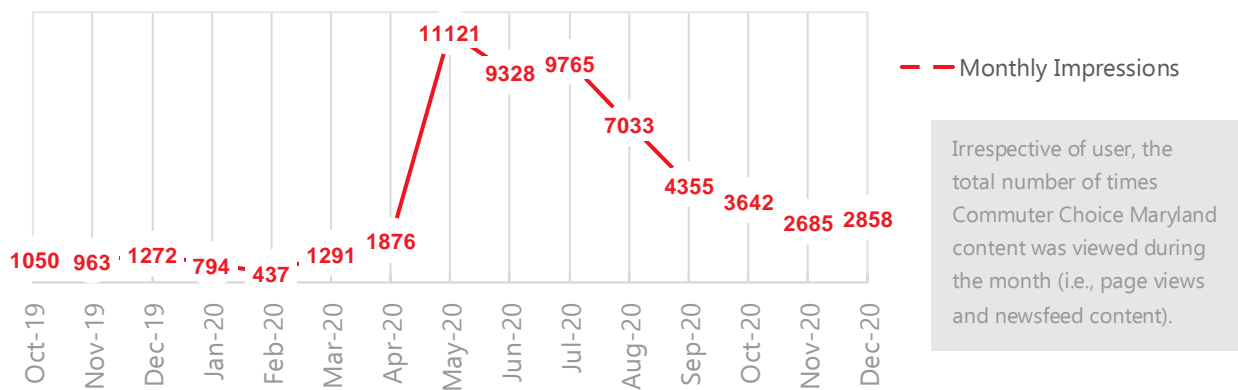


Figure 7: Viral Reach of Page Posts by Month





Business Outreach

**LinkedIn**

The Commuter Choice Maryland LinkedIn page was officially launched in the Winter of 2018 with the intention to connect Maryland businesses with program offerings, resources, and inspiration. Trough December 2020, Commuter Choice Maryland had approximately 2,700 followers and our new LinkedIn business page launched in August 2020 currently has 367. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Commuter Choice Maryland launched a 30 Day Telework Challenge campaign, as well as promoted the Commuter Choice Maryland newsletter, safe biking tips, additional telework tips, Commuter Choice Maryland biking webinars, and virtual bike month with paid LinkedIn campaigns. The campaign lasted from May 26, 2020 through July 8, 2020 and was the first time Commuter Choice Maryland invested funds towards businesses outreach, which was a success! With our various outreach efforts, we have reached many organizations throughout Maryland in different industries (see Table 4 though Table 7). The “Impressions” from LinkedIn are defined as the number of times the post was shown to LinkedIn members.



Table 4: Outreach Metrics by Employer

Company	Impressions from Unpaid Outreach	Impressions from Paid Outreach Campaign 5.26.20 to 12.31.2020	Total Impressions 11.5.2018 to 12.31.20
University of Maryland	576	5111	5687
The Johns Hopkins University	359	2788	3147
Marriott International	141	2025	2166
The National Institutes of Health	169	1733	1902
University of Maryland Baltimore County	160	1512	1672
Aerotek	171	1168	1339
FDA	136	1350	1486
T. Rowe Price	117	1185	1302
AstraZeneca	110	1038	1148
Booz Allen Hamilton	83	970	1053
Under Armour	103	1297	1400
Tech USA	99	522	621
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public	99	851	950
The Johns Hopkins University School of	10	797	807
United States Department of Defense	68	425	493
University of Maryland - Robert H. Smith	57	878	935
Northrop Grumman	42	694	736
National Cancer Institute (NCI)	34	417	451
Baltimore Business Journal Leadership Trust	11	414	425
64 Robots	19	405	424
IBM	24	642	666
Towson University	45	709	754
Leidos	52	345	397
The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics	62	649	711
Deloitte	46	642	688
US Army	N/A	324	324
Oracle	N/A	319	319
TEK Systems	N/A	422	422
Robert Half	N/A	289	289
Carefirst BlueCross BlueShield	N/A	262	262
Tenable	N/A	251	251
Amazon Web Service (AWS)	N/A	246	246
Johns Hopkins Medicine	N/A	237	237

Table 5: Outreach Metrics by Industry

Industry	Impressions from Unpaid Outreach	Impressions from Paid Outreach Campaign 5.26.20 to 12.31.2020	Total Impressions 11.5.2018 to 12.31.20
Information Technology and Services	3,188	38858	42046
Higher Education	2,863	29809	32672
Staffing and Recruiting	2,121	19951	22072
Computer Software	1,767	20409	22176
Financial Services	1,676	18709	20385
Management Consulting	1,513	14844	16357
Marketing and Advertising	1,199	13793	14992
Research	1,083	11904	12987
Hospital & Health Care	1,203	11844	13047
Nonprofit Organization Management	945	9981	10926
Government Administration	889	9665	10554
Computer & Network Security	803	8354	9157
Internet	699	7523	8222
Real Estate	694	7904	8598
Defense & Space	669	7511	8180
Education Management	708	6848	7556
Accounting	530	7003	7533
Biotechnology	584	6429	7013
Construction	610	6694	7304
Insurance	698	6279	6977
Professional Training & Coaching	576	5584	6160
Human Resources	527	5510	6037
Hospitality	433	5632	6065
Telecommunications	430	5185	5615
Health, Wellness and Fitness	3,101	2385	5486
Pharmaceuticals	N/A	2695	2695

Table 6: Outreach Metrics by Company Size

Company Size	Impressions from Unpaid Outreach	Impressions from Paid Outreach Campaign 5.26.20 to 12.31.2020	Total Impressions 11.5.2018 to 12.31.20
10001+ employees	6,230	66329	72559
11-50 employees	4,816	52392	57208
51-200 employees	4,447	48660	53107
1001-5000 employees	3,949	44750	48699
2-10 employees	3,836	40847	44683
201-500 employees	2,714	29223	31937
5001-10000 employees	1,865	20062	21927
501-1000 employees	1,836	19631	21467
1 employee	733	7547	8280

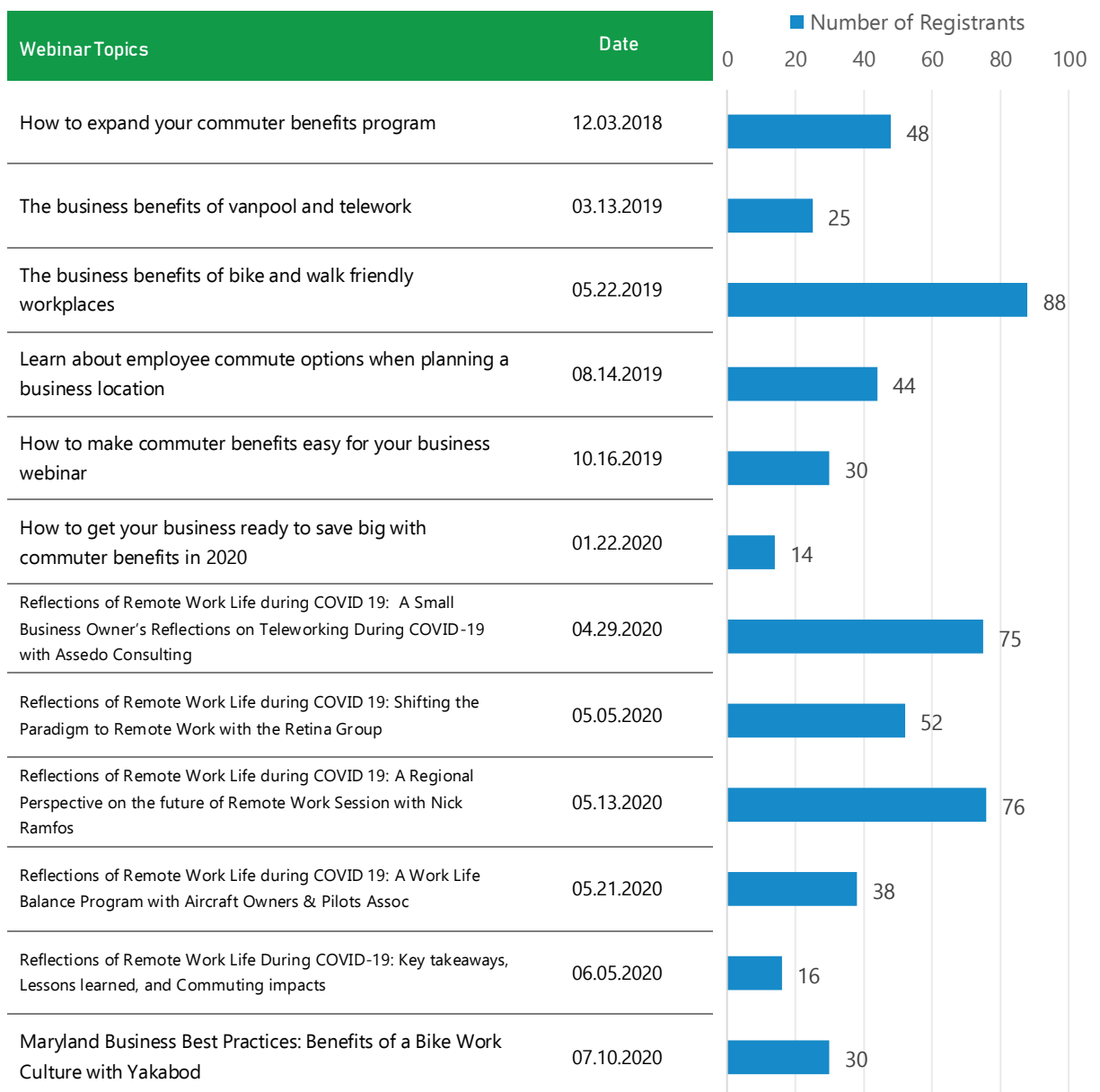
Table 7: Outreach Metrics by County

County	Impressions from Unpaid Outreach	Impressions from Paid Outreach Campaign 5.26.20 to 12.31.20	Total Impressions 11.5.2018 to 12.31.20
Montgomery County	11,725	69,158	129450
Baltimore City County	5,433	30,967	59751
Prince George's County	4,168	26,583	47898
Baltimore County	3,844	22,193	42033
Anne Arundel County	2,578	15,596	30695
Howard County	2,689	15,195	29667
Frederick County	1,368	6,891	13717
Harford County	831	4,486	9094
Carroll County	474	2,432	5027
Charles County	290	1,685	3134
Washington County	227	1,323	2642
St. Mary's County	182	1,210	2405
Calvert County	226	1,165	2124
Wicomico County	168	1,003	1904
Cecil County	149	945	1797
Queen Anne's County	95	599	1195
Talbot County	106	513	1061
Worcester County	99	467	1006
Allegany County	59	312	371
Kent County	54	379	433
Caroline County	40	311	351

## Webinars

In support of Goal 2 to enhance the awareness, availability and use of complementary statewide employer TDM services that support non-SOV travel by employers across Maryland, Commuter Choice Maryland administered quarterly business webinars. From December 2018 through July 2020, there were a total of twelve webinars administered, which covered various topics that provided businesses with tools, inspiration, and best practices for transportation commuter benefits. Every planned webinar was shared in our quarterly newsletter, sent to our email list of 8,700+ business contacts, shared with partners to distribute to their networks, and shared on social media platforms (Facebook & LinkedIn). We had up to 88 Webinar participant registration depending on the topic (See **Table 8**).

Table 8: Webinars Registrants by Month



## Maryland Business Spotlight

Commuter Choice Maryland highlights businesses for best practices to provide inspiration to other Maryland organizations to start offering some of these benefits to their employees. Businesses and organizations who have read our spotlights and listened to our webinars have shared that they have been useful in helping them plan and implement various commuter benefits. It has also been useful to hear from a variety of businesses and organizations of different sizes and from different industries because it provides insight that there is a possible solutions and endless benefits for a variety of situations (see **Table 7**).

The business spotlights also supports **Goal 2 to enhance the awareness of TDM services by employers across Maryland**. Businesses have shared their best practices with vanpools, transit, telework, biking, smart commute programs, work life balance programs, carpools, transportation fringe benefits, parking cash out, ride-matching app.

### Partners and Success Stories

Commuter Maryland works with Maryland employers to implement and promote commuter benefits programs. These employers play an important role in advancing transportation options that reduce congestions, conserve energy, protect the environment, and facilitate economic opportunity across the state.

The employers cited below have used commuter benefits to make a difference in their workplaces and communities.

#### Businesses/Organizations

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Associations

Assedo Consulting

John's Hopkins Applied Physics Lab

Live! Casino and Hotel

Morgan State University

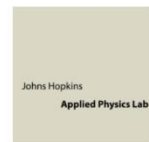
SMECO

The Retina Group

The University of Maryland

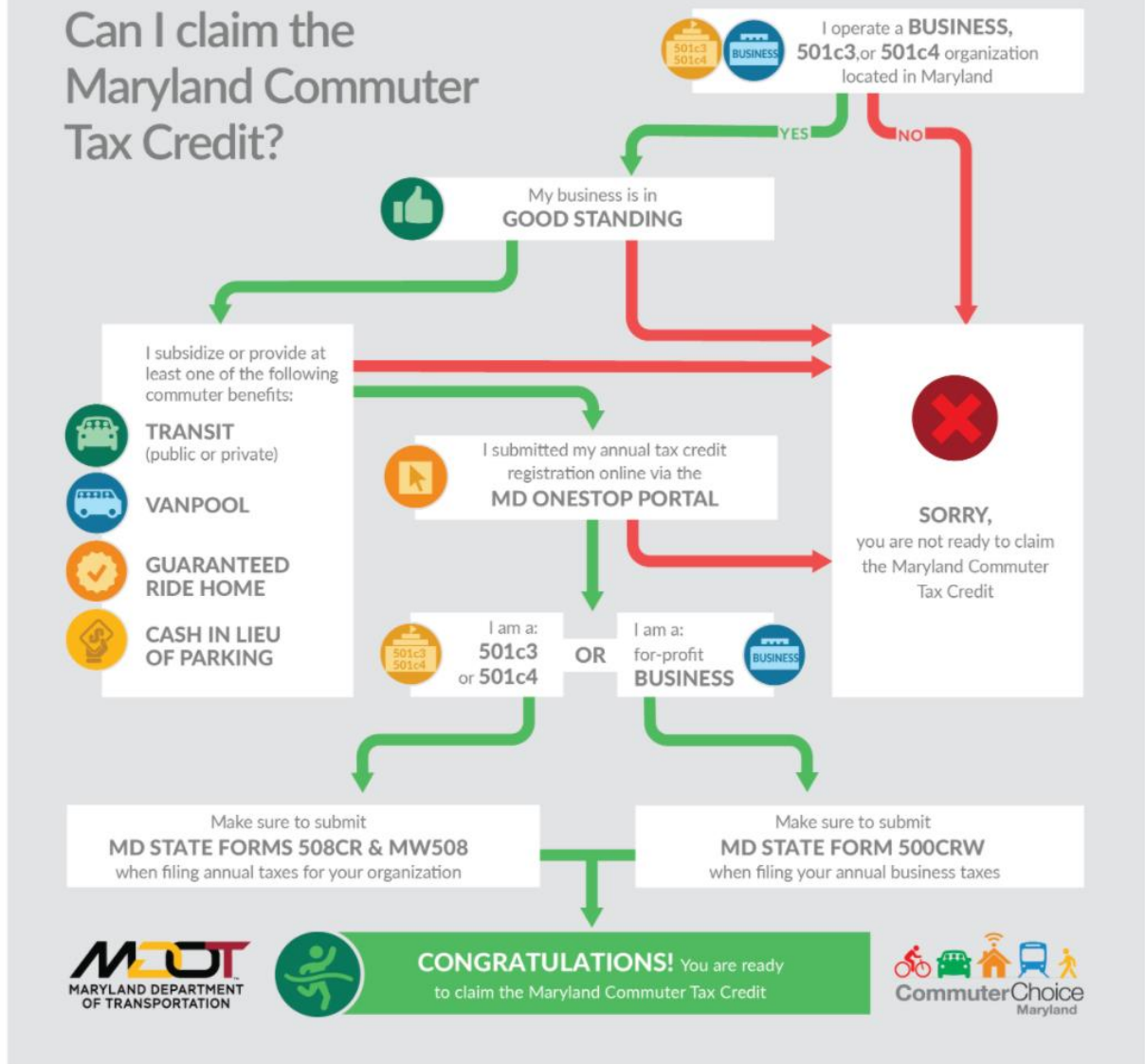
Tradepoint Atlantic

Yakabod





# Can I claim the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit?



## Business Outreach

### Maryland Commuter Tax Credit

Maryland employers may claim a tax credit of up to \$100 per employee per month or 50% of eligible costs of providing commuter benefits for eligible expenses such as vanpools, cash-in-lieu of parking, and company sponsored Guaranteed Ride Home for their employees.

There was a **240% increase in employer participation** from 2017 (5) to 2019 (16), with a significant increase in the number of employee participation from 2017 (130) to 2019 (1,260) (see **Table 9**). Organizations from various industries and sizes also participate in this tax credit (see **Table 10** and **Table 11**). Transit and cash-in-lieu of parking were the most utilized options for the MD Commuter Tax Credit.

Table 9: Maryland Commuter Tax Credit

Measure	2017	2018	2019
# participating employers	5	21	16
# participating employees	130	880	1,260
Transit	107	846	1,217
Cash in Lieu of Parking	23	34	43
Vanpool	0	0	0
Company Guaranteed Ride Home	0	0	0

Table 10: Maryland Commuter Tax Credit in use by Industry Type

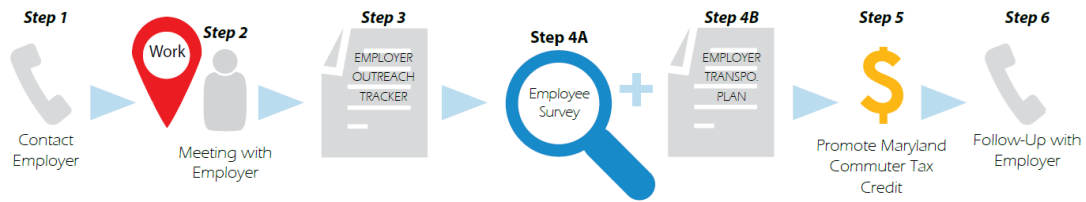
Industry
Management Consulting
Assisted Living
Health Care & Social Assistance
Administrative & Support
Waste Management & Remediation Services
Finance & Insurance
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
Accommodation & Food Services
Finance & Insurance

Table 11: Maryland Commuter Tax Credit in use by Employer Size

Business Size
5-9 employees
10-19 employees
20-49 employees
50-99 employees
250-499 employees
500-999 employees
1,000-10,000 employees

## Ride Share Coordinator Assistance

Training , Tools, and Technical Support of State-Wide Employer Services



Commuter Choice Maryland developed a process and tool to support the **MDOT MTA Rideshare Assistance Grant's new requirement** to provide state-wide employer assistance for the Baltimore region. The development of the Employer Assistance Tool, Process, Employer Survey, and Transportation Recommendations Report Template also supports one of Commuter Choice Maryland's goals to enhance awareness, availability, and use of complementary statewide employer TDM services. Before the tool was created there were no centralized location for the partners in the Baltimore Region to input the data collected and a process for easily reporting out progress digitally. We have also conducted multiple training session to help the grantees ease into the new process and get comfortable with the new tool.

## MDOT Commuter Choice Maryland Workgroup

The Maryland Department of Transportation created the Commuter Choice Maryland Workgroup to collaborate, engage, and support all the Transportation Demand Management projects that every business unit is implementing or planning to implement. Just about every MDOT TBU is represented in the workgroup and the group meets bi-monthly.

## What's Next for Commuter Choice Maryland?

By 2045, Maryland's population is expected to reach nearly seven million- an increase of over 15%. While this population increase is expected to create additional demand for the State's transportation systems, VMT in Maryland dropped dramatically in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of August 2020, VMT is expected to drop roughly 17% this year compared to 2019, with an estimated 50.0 billion VMT statewide. While MDOT anticipates that VMT will rebound back to 2019 levels in the next five years, there remains great uncertainty surrounding the exact timeline and speed of the recovery. Commuter Choice Maryland will continue to play a vital role in ensuring that tools and resources are available to commuters and businesses to help with the continued reduction of congestion and improve the quality of life of all Marylanders.

