

**MISSION STATEMENT**

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



# COMMUTER CHOICE MARYLAND

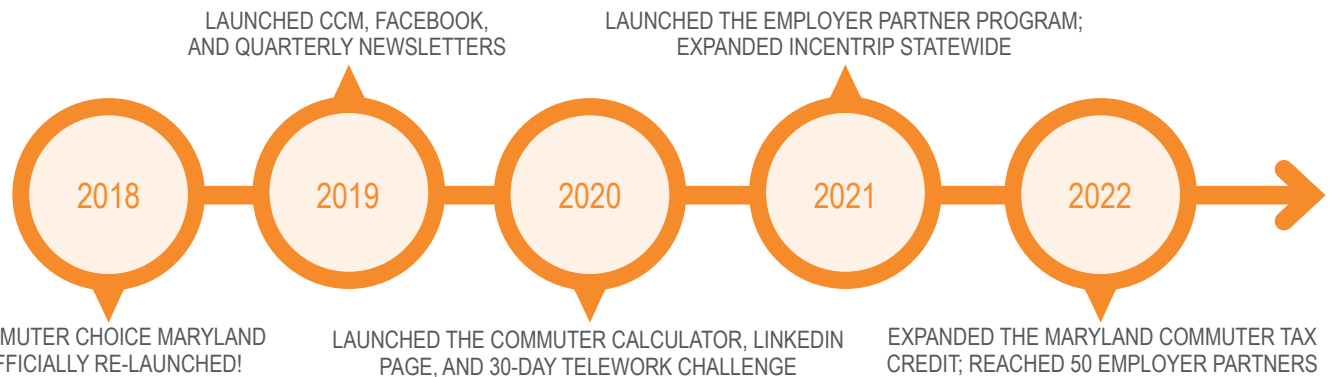
# Annual Report

*Helping Maryland's employers and commuters*



# INTRODUCTION AND COMMUTER CHOICE MARYLAND GUIDING STRATEGY

Commuter Choice Maryland continues to provide commuters and employers with the resources and information needed to help them find commute options that meet their needs. The program supports the Maryland Department of Transportation’s mission, goals and objectives (**Table 1**). This summary report will share progress made in 2022. **Figure 1** highlights recent Commuter Choice Maryland achievements.



**Figure 1:** Timeline of Commuter Choice Maryland Achievements 2018-2022

**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

### Goals

- Goal 1** Make transportation choices easy to understand and access.
- Goal 2** Enhance the awareness, availability, and use of complimentary statewide employer TDM services that support non-drive alone commuting options, teleworking, and flexible work schedules by employers across Maryland at the places Marylanders work.
- Goal 3** Increase ridesharing support, services, and use statewide.
- Goal 4** Maximize the reach and effectiveness of TDM services through collaboration and innovation.

### Objectives

- 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.
- Objective 2.1** Create a branded statewide employer services program.
- Objective 2.2** Build capacity to conduct outreach to businesses and deliver a statewide employer service program.
- Objective 2.3** Ensure MDOT funded TDM Specialists are trained, have materials, and support needed to execute statewide employer services.
- Objective 3.1** Partner with local jurisdictions to support ridesharing infrastructure.
- Objective 3.2** Expand the use and availability of existing ridesharing and Guaranteed Ride Home solutions to underserved areas.
- 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

## Commuter Choice Maryland Website

### Supports Goal 1

It has been a priority for the Commuter Choice Maryland Program to maintain the website (commuterchoicemaryland.com) as a centralized resource of transportation information in Maryland for commuters and businesses. There were 103,661 total website visits in 2022, a significant increase over previous years (Figure 2).

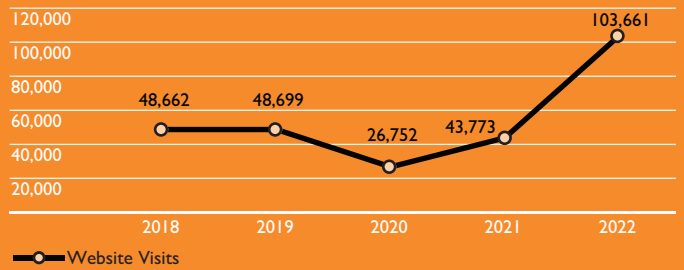


Figure 2: Commuter Choice Website Visits 2018-2022

## Events and Outreach Opportunities

### Supports Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4

Commuter Choice Maryland staff connected with over 3,000 commuters and businesses in-person and through supporting other departments and jurisdictions at 15 events in 2022, including Bike to Work Day, the Maryland State Fair, and various Maryland Highway Safety Office events across the state (Figure 3). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, outreach shifted largely to virtual platforms, but in-person opportunities have started to increase, a trend that is expected to continue.

Commuter Choice Maryland also supports outreach conducted by county and municipal Rideshare Coordinators by providing materials that promote the incenTrip mobile application, the Employer Partner Program, and the recently expanded Maryland Commuter Tax Credit.

#### SPRING

- Maryland Ports Federal Industry Trade Day
- Bike to Work Day Pit Stop Support in Columbia, Baltimore, and Towson
- Maryland Highway Safety Office Events

#### SUMMER

- Maryland State Fair
- Prince George's County Events
- Car Free Day Events
- Maryland Highway Safety Office Events

#### FALL/WINTER

- Bike Around Downtown Columbia Block Party
- Meet the Primes
- Maryland Kidney Foundation Walk
- MPCA's 39th Annual Conference
- Governor's Grant Office 2022 Annual Conference
- Minority Business Outreach Fair



Figure 3: Summary of 2022 Commuter Choice Maryland Outreach Events

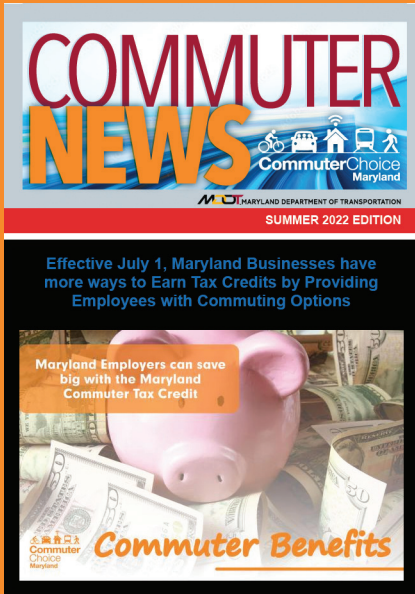


Table 2: 2022 Commuter Choice Maryland Newsletter Statistics

Edition	Number of Opens	Open Rate
Winter 2022	1,325	18.5%
Spring 2022	1,340	18.9%
Summer 2022	1,401	20%
Fall 2022	1,737	25.5%

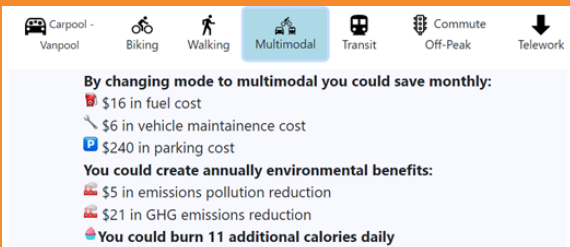


Figure 4: Example Commuter Calculator Output

## Quarterly Newsletters

### Supports Goals 1 and 2

The Commuter Choice Maryland newsletter was launched in Fall 2019. Thirteen newsletters have been published to date, which provide Commuter Choice Maryland information to over 6,000 businesses and commuters throughout Maryland. The newsletter unique opens were between 1,300-1,700 and the open rates ranged 18.5%-25.5% (**Table 2**).

Newsletter highlights included incenTrip, Maryland Commuter Tax Credit expansion, quarterly webinars, Employer Partner spotlights, Rideshare Coordinator/Transportation Demand Management Specialist and transportation program spotlights, and cross-promotion of other MDOT initiatives including Walktober, MDOT Maryland Transit Administration plans, and the Maryland Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Plan, along with events and safety tips and links.

## Commuter Calculator

### Supports Goals 1 and 4

Commuter Choice Maryland worked with the University of Maryland – Maryland Transportation Institute to develop a Commuter Calculator 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 (**Figure 4**). Data collection for the commuter calculator started in July 2020.

The following statistics were recorded for queries made between January and November 2022:

- There were 61 total queries
- The most popular vehicle type cited in calculator queries was “car” (85%)
- The average age of personally owned vehicles was 6.14 years; the range was 5-19 years
- The most popular vehicle fuel type cited in calculator queries was “gasoline” (95%)
- The top three commute options selected were: “Carpool/Vanpool” and “Telework,” (100%) “Multimodal,” (97%) and “Commute Off Peak” (95%)



## Commuter Choice Maryland Social Media

### Supports Goals 1, 2, and 3

#### Facebook

Commuter Choice Maryland launched a Facebook page in October 2019 and has increased steadily to 225 followers. Facebook has been an effective way to provide resources, tips, and tools for commuters throughout Maryland, especially when Commuter Choice pivoted from in-person to virtual outreach during the pandemic.

Facebook posts are scheduled daily and one post per week on average is promoted, which is a low-cost way to increase exposure to the Commuter Choice program. The “organic” and “sponsored” content that generated the greatest reach was a post that promoted the October 2022 Spotlight Webinar (Figure 6). Facebook content and engagement varied during the year but continues to grow over time in page likes (Figure 6) and page reach (Figure 7).

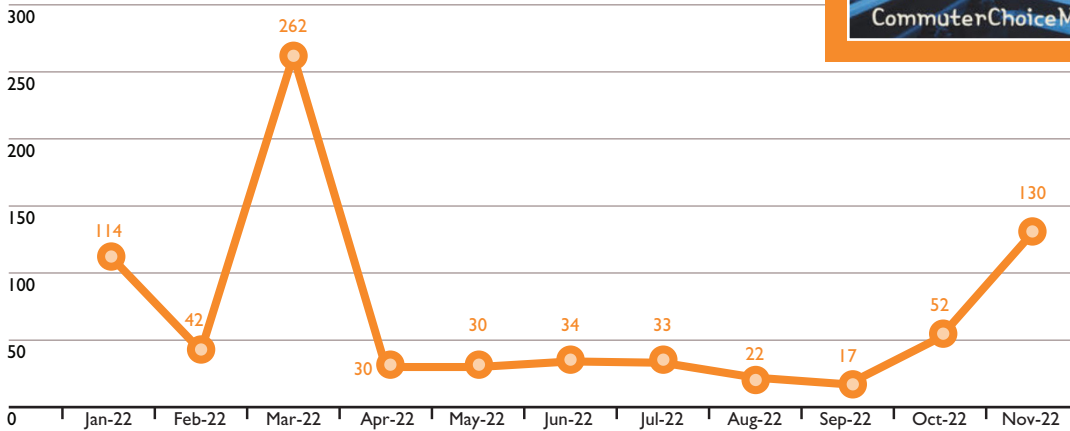


Figure 6: Total Facebook Page Likes by Month

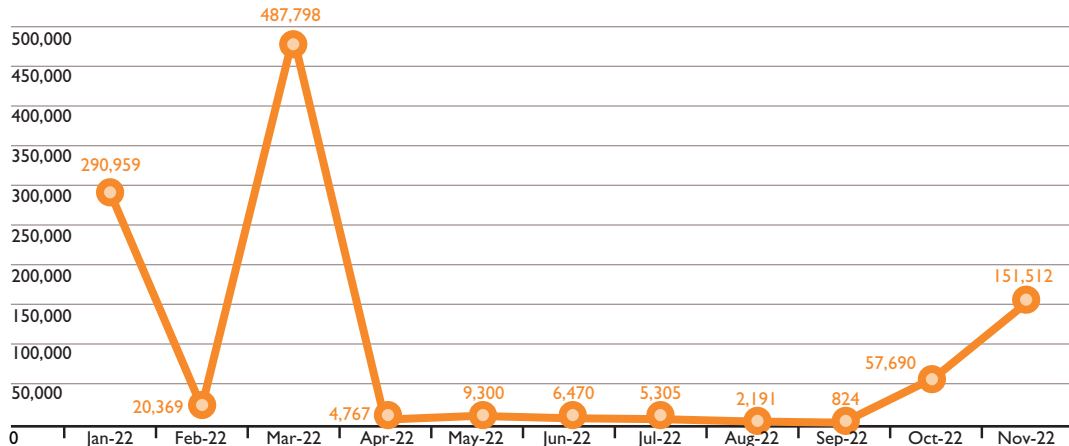


Figure 7: Total Facebook Page Reach by Month



Figure 5: Facebook Post with the Greatest Reach





Table 3: Top LinkedIn Followers by Job Type

Job Type	Followers
Human Resources	246
Business Development	136
Operations	75

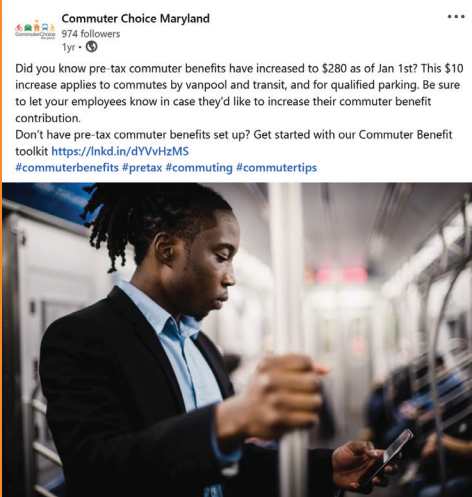


Figure 10: LinkedIn “organic” (top) and “sponsored” (bottom) Posts with the most Impressions

LinkedIn

Commuter Choice Maryland launched a LinkedIn page in Winter 2018 to connect Maryland employers and business professionals with commute program resources. The number of followers increased from 3,478 to 3,828 in the past year (2,878 original page and 950 new business page; this is likely a combination of unique new followers and duplicate followers of the original page and new business page). Followers represent a variety of industries and job types (Table 3). There were 31,939 total impressions of posts in the reporting period with sponsored content receiving more total impressions than organic posts (Figure 8). The engagement rate of posts was as high as 75% and average monthly engagement ranged between 2% and 5.5% (Figure 9).

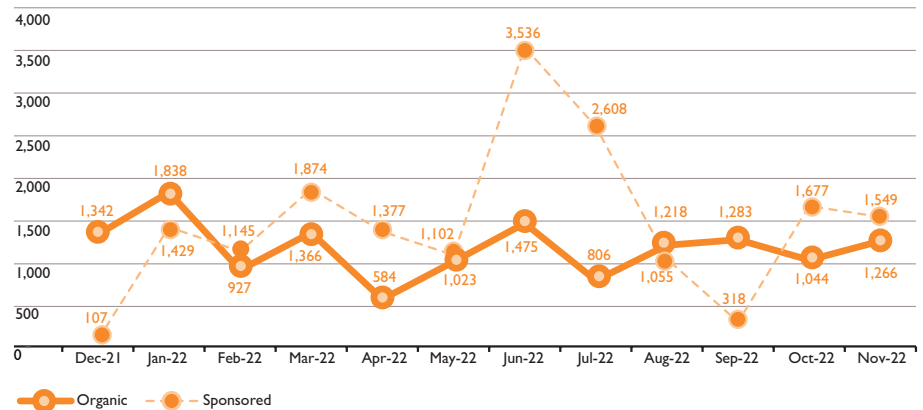


Figure 8: Total LinkedIn Impressions by Month

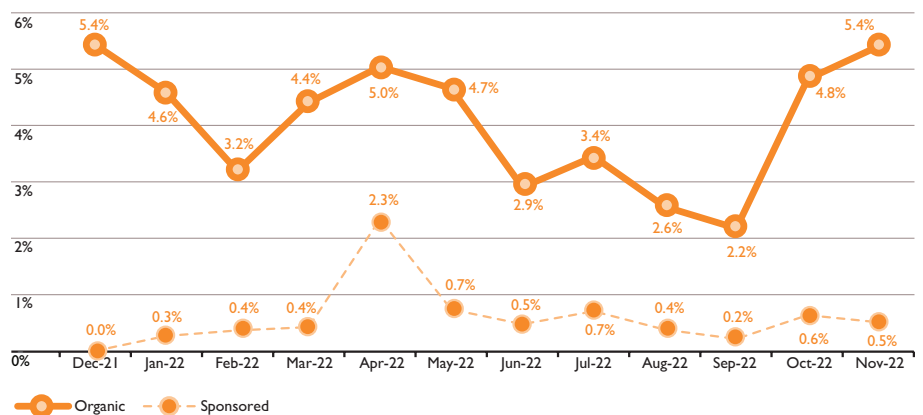


Figure 9: Average LinkedIn Engagement Rate by Month

One post is boosted weekly as a low-cost approach to gain exposure. The “organic” and “sponsored” posts with the most impressions promoted the Employer Partner Program, and the 2022 Federal Commuter Fringe Benefits increase, respectively (Figure 10).



## Quarterly Webinars

### Supports Goal 2

Commuter Choice Maryland hosts webinars for the business community to promote best practices and provide information and tools to implement commuter benefits. In 2022, Commuter Choice Maryland hosted four webinars (Table 4). Each webinar was shared in the quarterly newsletter and on social media, sent to the email list of 6,000+ business contacts, and shared with partners to distribute to their networks. Webinars typically are scheduled for 30 minutes during lunch times and have had up to 85 registrants, depending on the topic.

Table 4: 2022 Webinar Results

Date & Topic	Number of Registrants	YouTube Views
<b>May 25:</b> Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Plan	85	37
<b>August 31:</b> Return to Onsite Work Trends	35	27
<b>October 26:</b> Behavior Change Perspectives on New Commutes	31	15
<b>December 14:</b> Telework Business Assistance Grant and Tax Credit	38	37

## Employer Partner Program

### Supports Goals 2 and 4

Commuter Choice Maryland launched the Employer Partner Program in 2020 to recognize Maryland employers and organizations for their leadership in offering transportation benefits and creative program incentives to their employees. These leadership efforts help reduce congestion, conserve energy, protect the environment and improve the quality of life of all Marylanders. Employers may support their commuters in a variety of ways to become an Employer Partner:

- Conduct a Commuter Survey
- Distribute commute information to employees
- Provide ride matching assistance
- Provide preferential parking for carpools and vanpools; offers financial incentives
- Implement flextime, staggered work schedule, or compressed work week
- Implement a telework program
- Install bicycle racks or lockers, showers, or offer financial incentives for active commuters
- Offer a Guaranteed Ride Home program
- Offer a transit benefit
- Offer Parking Cash Out (if employer pays for employee parking)
- Implement a parking fee
- Provide employee shuttle service to transit stations





The Employer Partner Program also provides employers the opportunity to receive customized support from Commuter Choice Maryland and/or local Transportation Demand Management specialists to help expand their commuter benefits program and measure the impact of their efforts. The employers shown in **Figure 11** have met the qualifications to become an Employer Partner through their filing of the Commuter Tax Credit or otherwise using commuter benefits to make a difference in their workplaces and communities.

In 2022, the Employer Partner Program reached 50 partner organizations and has a goal to increase participation to 500. A strategy to grow the program statewide is underway!



Figure 11: Example Companies that Participate in the Employer Partner Program







## Maryland Commuter Tax Credit

### Supports Goals 2, 3, and 4

Maryland employers may claim a tax credit of 50% of eligible costs, up to \$100 per employee per month, by providing commuter benefits for transit, vanpools, cash-in-lieu of parking, and company sponsored Guaranteed Ride Home for their employees. In January 2022, MDOT proposed legislation to expand the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit to include employer-supported carpooling, telework, bicycling, walking, scooters, and multimodal last-mile transportation. The legislation received widespread support, passed, and took effect July 1, 2022. The number of employers claiming the Tax Credit declined in 2021, most likely in response to COVID-related commuting pattern changes. The number of businesses claiming the tax credit to date for 2022 has remained level but is expected to increase as more businesses prepare their 2022 taxes later in 2023. Like previous years, transit was the most frequently provided benefit, but the newly added telework option was also reflected in tax credit claims (**Table 5**). Businesses claiming the Commuter Tax Credit in 2022 represent a variety of industries (**Table 6**) and the majority are sized at under 100 employees (**Table 7**).

**Table 5: Maryland Commuter Tax Credit Summary, 2017-2022**

Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*
# Participating employers	5	21	25	24	10	10
# Participating employees	130	880	1,260	912	551	343
Transit	107	846	1,217	876	548	317
Vanpool	0	0	0	10	0	5
Carpool	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
Cash in Lieu of Parking	23	34	43	26	3	1
Telework	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20
Multimodal Last Mile	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
Active Transportation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
Company Guaranteed Ride Home	0	0	0	0	0	0

\*As of 1/4/2023

**Table 6: Commuter Tax Credit participation by industry type, 2022**

Industry	Count
Cable TV Network and Programming	1
Construction	1
Educational Services; Other Services	1
Film and Video Production	1
Finance & Insurance	1
Health Care & Social Assistance	1
Manufacturing	1
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	3

**Table 7: Commuter Tax Credit participation by industry size, 2022**

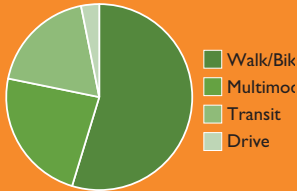
Business Size	Count
5-9 employees	2
10-19 employees	1
20-49 employees	2
50-99 employees	2
100-249 employees	1
500-999 employees	1
1,000-10,000 employees	1



# incenTrip



incenTrip Trips  
November 2021–November 2022



**Congestion Reduction**

Saved 524 hours  
Saved \$13,286

**Emission Reduction**

Saved 1,752 kg  
Saved \$69

Figure 12: Commute Trips Logged Through the incenTrip Maryland Program and Environmental Impacts

## incenTrip Mobile Application

### Supports Goals 1 and 4

The Maryland Department of Transportation launched incenTrip in November 2021, expanding access to this free rewards-based tool beyond the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore regions to commuters statewide. incenTrip is a free mobile application aimed at helping Maryland commuters save time and money while earning rewards when they take transit, rideshare, bike, or walk instead of driving alone during the rush hour commute. incenTrip helps commuters understand options for their trip and awards points for commute trips logged which may be redeemed for cash and other rewards. incenTrip was developed through a partnership between MDOT, The Maryland Transportation Institute at the University of Maryland and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Commuter Connections program.

Since launching incenTrip statewide in 2021, there have been 177 new users who logged 2,193 trips. More than half of the trips logged have been walking or biking, with transit and multimodal trips making up 23% and 19% of trips logged, respectively. Commutes logged through incenTrip have also contributed to a reduction of over 500 hours of congestion and over 1,700kg in emissions (Figure 12).

## MDOT Commuter Choice Maryland Workgroup

### Supports Goals 1 and 4

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. Most MDOT TBUs are represented in the workgroup, which meets bi-monthly.

## Coordination with Transportation Demand Management Specialists

### Supports Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4

Twelve jurisdictions representing nine commuter programs in Maryland receive a Ridesharing/Commuter Assistance grant from MDOT-MTA (Figure 13). These jurisdictions have dedicated Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Specialists that complement Commuter Choice Maryland's efforts to meet its goals and objectives while supporting their employer and public community members in understanding and using commuting options. The TDM Specialists promote the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit, incenTrip, and Employer Partner Program in addition to transportation options and incentives specific to their locations. The TDM Specialists, MDOT-MTA, and Commuter Choice Maryland meet quarterly to share best practices.

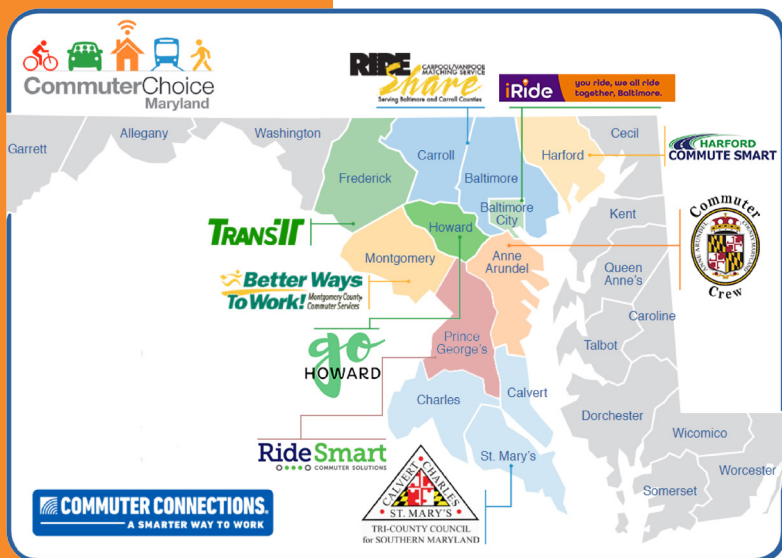


Figure 13: MDOT-MTA Rideshare Jurisdictions



## 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, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Maryland dropped dramatically in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; traffic and congestion have started to rebound as more employees return to the worksite, although roadway travel times remain about 5% less than pre-pandemic travel times. Telework increased drastically in 2020 and is expected to remain a significant mode choice for many employers on a full-time and part-time/hybrid basis, and participation in transit use, carpooling, and vanpooling have begun to rebound. Commuter Choice Maryland will continue to play a vital role with congestion reduction and improving the quality of life of all Marylanders.

## COMMUTER CHOICE MARYLAND GOALS FOR 2023

### Outreach and Communication

- Attend and/or support at least ten events around the state
- Host a minimum of four webinars
- Aim for at least 200 new followers across social media platforms; test new strategies for market segmentation in digital content promotion
- Explore options to display newsletter stories and dynamic news on the Commuter Choice webpage to increase engagement with e-newsletter and website content
- Update Commuter Choice toolkits and refresh the program branding
- Identify new opportunities to connect with other state agencies and departments to cross-promote commuter options and employer support

### incenTrip

- Promote the incenTrip app statewide and its expansion to include new features and rewards
- Increase the number of incenTrip users in the statewide program to at least 300

### Maryland Commuter Tax Credit

- Continue promoting the expanded Maryland Commuter Tax Credit and explore new ways to engage with the employer community to encourage applications
- Create more instructional content to explain the tax credit application process
- Aim for 20 new businesses to participate in 2023

### Employer Partner Program

- Work towards the Maryland Climate Change Commission's goal to increase Employer Partner Program to 500 by the end of FY 2024; aim to reach 200 by end of FY 2023
- Collaborate with TDM specialists to increase the number of Partners in their jurisdictions
- Encourage Partners from new employment sectors, including public sectors around the state



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