



Pictured Above: DTCP's BikeAround Downtown event in 2022. Photo taken by Stephen Curry.



## GEARING UP FOR CHANGE WITH DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA PARTNERSHIP

Need inspiration to get your neighborhood or organization on the move? Look no further than Downtown Columbia Partnership (DTCP). This non-profit works to ensure that Columbia residents and workers have more choices to get around than driving a car alone, while helping Columbia, Maryland's downtown area reach its full potential.

### A DOWNTOWN ON THE MOVE

As DTCP's Executive Director, Phillip Dodge has been working with residents, workers and businesses to transform a suburban business district into a lively urban center. The goal is to find the perfect balance for people looking to get to and around the downtown area. Being proactive about congestion means, as Phillip puts it, "building the habits and infrastructure now so that [we] don't have congestion problems when the city is fully built out."

A frequent bike commuter himself, Phillip strongly believes that the ideal downtown is one where people do not have to drive. Columbia residents and workers are encouraged to walk, use bikes, carpool or use other sustainable transportation modes in a way that supports local businesses and improves the local quality of life.

### EVEN A PARTNERSHIP NEEDS A PARTNER

"I'm most proud of our continuous collaboration with the county," Phillip says. Working closely with Howard County's Office of Transportation, especially its TDM program [Go Howard](#), has led to several successful initiatives. These came in light of the restrictions COVID-19 placed on the usual methods of community engagement. Outdoor events, such as BikeAround Downtown and culinary walking tours, were created for the public to experience traveling around downtown Columbia on foot and by bike. DTCP is now focused on employer and employee engagement, creating Commuter Incentive Happy Hour events as opportunities for local employees to learn about their non-SOV commute options and the transportation resources available from local and regional entities. Another growing initiative saw DTCP partner with Howard County's local bike advocacy group to launch [Bike HoCo Trip Rewards](#), a rewards program where people can take advantage of discounts at participating local businesses if they don the program's sticker on their bike helmet.

Howard County organizations curious about creative benefits that could help their employees get to work in a more financially and environmentally sustainable way can try partnering with Go Howard. Organizations anywhere in the state of Maryland can always reach out to their [local commute program coordinator](#) or to the team at [MDOT Commuter Choice Maryland](#) for free support.

### IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

Phillip's advice? "Don't be afraid to try something new because if you don't try, you can't succeed." Organizations cannot be afraid of failing. Phillip's willingness to try out new ideas has led to DTCP receiving awards for BikeAround Downtown and a culinary walking tour. Additionally, his numerous collaborative projects have led to some significant commuting-related behavior change among Columbia's residents and workers. Phillip notes that the implementation of these programs will not take as much energy or money as you think they might. Try something new out! You never know what may happen.

Catch Phillip, DTCP, and other local residents and workers at these upcoming events in downtown Columbia:

- Spring Culinary Walking Tour – April 28, 2024 – 3:00 to 6:00 pm
- BikeAround Downtown – May 4 and 5, 2024
- Bike to Work Week – May 13 to 17, 2024 and Bike to Work Day – May 17, 2024

"Don't be afraid of trying something new because if you don't try, you can't succeed."

-Phillip Dodge

Executive Director, DTCP

