

Commuter Choice Maryland

2023 Annual Report



1. Introduction & Guiding Strategy

Commuter Choice Maryland is a free transportation demand management (TDM) program operated by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). The program offers incentives, resources, and free support to commuters and employers statewide to help ease traffic congestion and associated environmental and financial concerns by reducing drive-alone trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This annual report shares updates on activities undertaken in 2023.

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.

Commuter Choice Maryland Mission

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 complimentary statewide employer TDM services that support non-drive alone commuting options, teleworking, and flexible work schedules by employers across Maryland.

- **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.

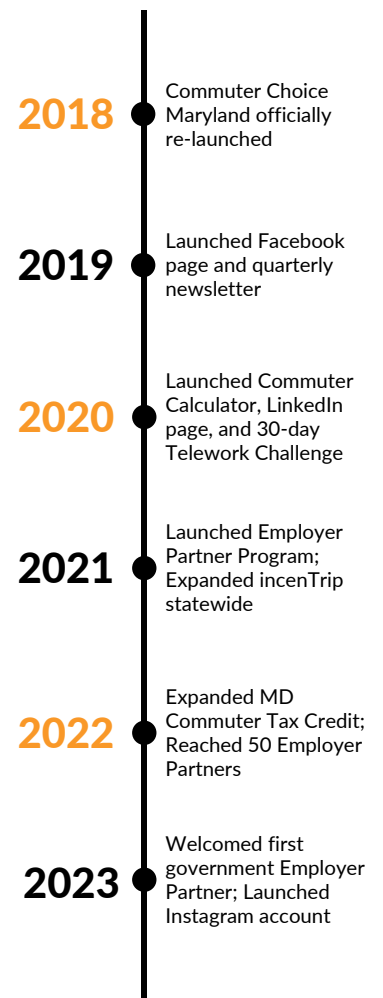
Goal 3. Increase ridesharing support, services, and use statewide.

- **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.

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.

Commuter Choice Maryland timeline



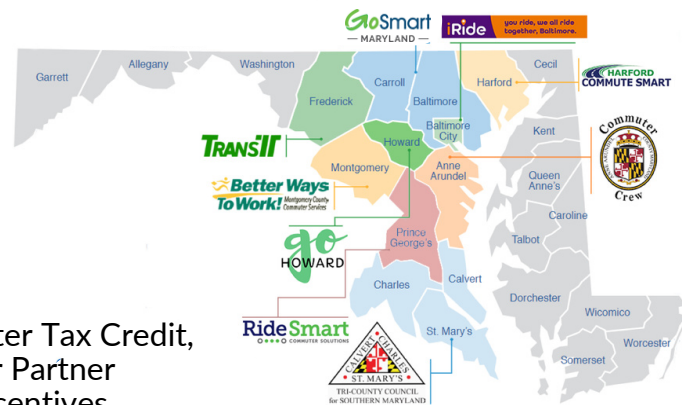
2. Progress & Updates

Coordination with Transportation Demand Management Specialists Supports Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4

Twelve local government agencies receive Ridesharing/Commuter Assistance grants from the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). These programs are led by dedicated TDM Specialists that complement Commuter Choice Maryland's efforts to meet its goals and objectives while supporting their own employer and public community members in understanding and using commuting options.

The TDM Specialists promote the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit, incenTrip, Guaranteed Ride Home, and the Employer Partner Program in addition to transportation options and incentives specific to their locations. The TDM Specialists, MTA, and Commuter Choice Maryland meet quarterly to share best practices.

Local Government TDM Programs:



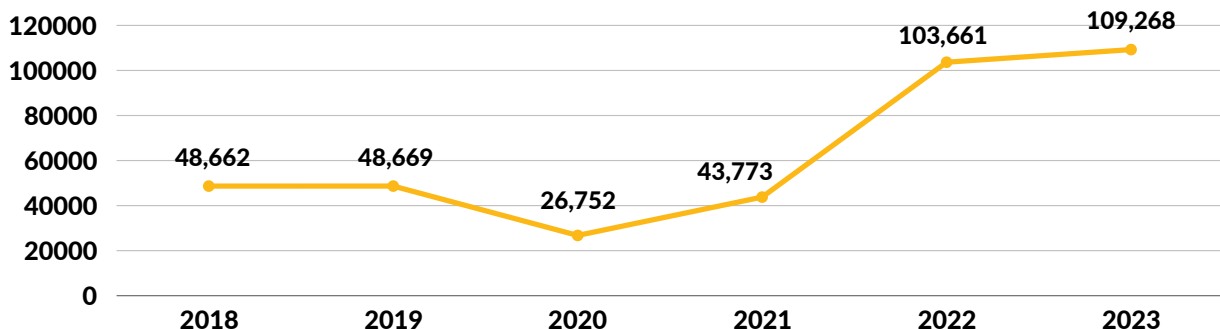
MDOT Commuter Choice Maryland Workgroup Supports Goals 1 and 4

MDOT created the Commuter Choice Maryland Workgroup to collaborate, engage, and support all the TDM projects that every modal administration is implementing or planning to implement. Most MDOT modal administrations are represented in the workgroup, which meets bi-monthly.

Commuter Choice Maryland Website Supports Goal 1

Commuter Choice Maryland maintains www.commuterchoicemaryland.com and affiliated webpages as a centralized resource of information for Maryland commuters and employers. Webpage visits continue to increase; there were 109,268 total webpage visits in 2023.

Annual Webpage Visits:



2. Progress & Updates (continued)

Engagement Events and Presentations

Supports Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4

Commuter Choice Maryland staff connected with over 3,300 commuters and businesses in-person and by supporting other departments and jurisdictions at 30 events in 2023, including Bike to Work Day, Car Free Day, fairs, meetings, events, and conferences across the state. Commuter Choice Maryland staff also supported four public open houses in Montgomery and Frederick counties to hear feedback about the American Legion Bridge/I-270 project. The team connected virtually to 375 community and business members by hosting two webinars and presenting at nine public meetings and three internal meetings. Local government TDM programs also received in-person and virtual support from Commuter Choice Maryland along with materials that promote incenTrip, the Employer Partner Program, and the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit.

As a special initiative, Commuter Choice Maryland collaborated with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) in the spring to support their Maryland Green Registry Challenge, a friendly competition between its business members that focuses on a different topic each year. Our team worked with the MDE Sustainability Programs Manager to develop the “Commuter Choice Challenge” criteria, promote the challenge, and co-host a webinar which increased awareness of both programs to Maryland Green Registry members and non-members.

Newsletters

Supports Goals 1, 2 and 3

Commuter Choice Maryland sent electronic newsletters to 6,000 businesses and commuters throughout Maryland to promote the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit, incenTrip, highlight Employer Partners, and share statewide events like Bike to Work Day. In 2023, five newsletters were sent; the open rates averaged 25.4% and ranged between 20.7% and 28.7%.

Newsletter	# Opens	Open Rate
Winter 2023	1,409	20.7%
Spring 2023	1,660	25.2%
Spring Events	1,682	25.7%
Summer 2023	1,808	28.7%
Fall 2023	1,611	26.9%



Event Highlights

- **Winter** – Harford County Small Business Fair, MACO Winter Conference
- **Spring** – Maryland Auto Show, Earth Day events, Bike to Work Day events
- **Summer** – MML and MACO Summer Conferences, Maryland State Fair
- **Fall** – Car Free Day, Bike Around Downtown Columbia, American Legion Bridge/I-270 Open Houses



2. Progress & Updates (continued)

Social Media

Supports Goals 1, 2, and 3

Social media has been an effective way for Commuter Choice Maryland to provide resources and tools for commuters and employers throughout Maryland, especially as engagement was more virtual than in-person during the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting posts and launching short ad campaigns has also been a cost-effective way to promote relevant content about commuting incentives and our free programs to commuters and employers.

Facebook

Commuter Choice Maryland launched a Facebook page in October 2019 and has gained 263 followers. The post with the highest reach promoted the July 2023 incenTrip webinar. Facebook content and engagement varied during the year but continues to grow over time in page likes and page reach.

Paid Social Media Ad Campaign Statistics

Results from two, month-long ad campaigns on Facebook and LinkedIn to promote the Commuter Tax Credit and Employer Partner Program.

	Impressions	Click-Through Rate
Feb 2023	65,151	0.76%
July 2023	94,398	0.57%

LinkedIn

The Commuter Choice Maryland LinkedIn page launched in winter 2018 to connect Maryland employers and business professionals with commuter program resources. Followers of the business page increased from 950 to 1,001 in 2023. There were 110,556 total post impressions; 13.3% organic and 86.7% sponsored. The average monthly total post engagement ranged between 1.8% and 6.6%; the highest organic engagement was 50% and the highest sponsored post engagement was 9.8%. The click-through rate (CTR) of posts ranged from 0%-27% with the highest CTR post promoting Bike to Work Week 2023.

Instagram

The Commuter Choice Instagram account launched in November 2023 to expand engagement approaches. Since its launch, the account gained 43 followers, reached 168 accounts (24 followers/144 non-followers), and had 70 profile visits and link clicks through organic content posting. The post with the highest reach and engagement was the introduction post. This platform will be leveraged for additional campaigns in 2024.



2. Progress & Updates (continued)

incentTrip

Supports Goals 1 and 4

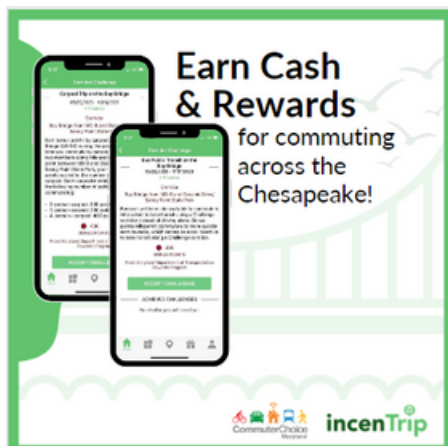
MDOT launched incentTrip statewide in November 2021, expanding access to this free, rewards-based tool beyond the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore regions. incentTrip is a free mobile application that helps Maryland commuters plan their trip and earn rewards when they take transit, carpool, vanpool, bike, or walk instead of driving alone during rush hour. incentTrip 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.

As of December 30, 2023, there were 292 new users in the statewide program who logged 2,613 trips in 2023. More than half (59%) of the trips logged have been walking or biking, with transit and multimodal trips making up 30% and 8.5% of trips logged, respectively. Commutes logged through incentTrip over the last year resulted in a reduction of over 1,500 hours of traffic congestion and over 4,800kg in emissions.

New incentTrip features launched in 2023 include:

- Corridor Challenges on I-95, I-695W, and Chesapeake Bay Bridge
- Multimodal trip planning feature enhancement
- Employer Rewards dashboard
- Capital Bikeshare membership rewards options

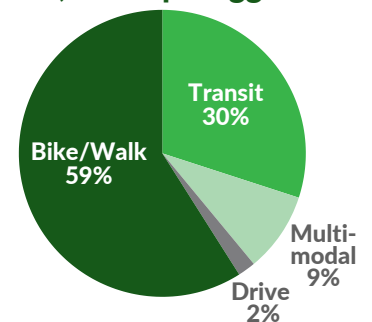
The app will be rebranded in 2024, and we look forward to expanding participation in the new features and continuing to build on the program's success!



incentTrip

**Nov 2021 - Dec 2023
Impacts:**

2,613 trips logged



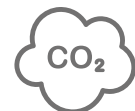
Participant Savings:



Reduced Congestion

1,514 \$55,731

Hours Saved



Reduced Emissions

4,883 \$193

Kilograms Saved



Reduced Fuel

695 \$2,276

Gallons Saved

2. Progress & Updates (continued)



Employer Partner Program Supports Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4

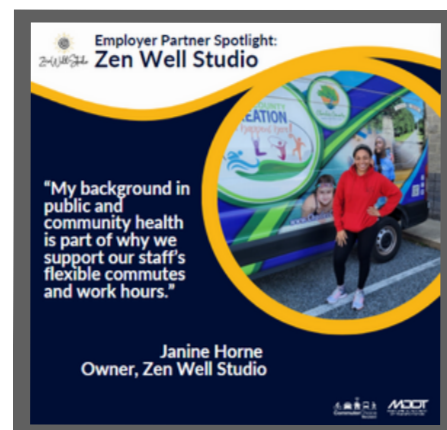
Commuter Choice Maryland launched the Employer Partner Program in 2021 to recognize Maryland employers and organizations for their leadership in offering transportation benefits to their employees which help reduce congestion, conserve energy, protect the environment, and improve the quality of life of all Marylanders. Options to become an Employer Partner include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conduct a commuter survey
- Distribute commute information to employees
- Provide ridematching assistance, preferential parking, or financial incentives for carpools and vanpools
- Implement flextime, staggered work schedule, or compressed work week
- Implement a telework program
- Install bike racks or lockers, showers, or offer financial incentives for active commuters
- Offer a Guaranteed Ride Home program
- Provide a transit benefit
- Offer Parking Cash Out
- Implement a parking fee
- Provide employee shuttles to transit stations

The Employer Partner Program also offers employers 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 Employer Partner Program had 40 partner organizations join or renew in 2023, including our first employer on the eastern shore and our first government agency Employer Partner!

A large effort was undertaken in 2023 to identify opportunities for MDOT and all state agencies to understand and improve awareness of commuting options and evaluate possibilities to expand commuter benefits. This will be a multi-year process, involving decision makers across state agencies; in the meantime, support will continue by providing commuting-related materials and increasing promotion of existing commuter benefits to employees at MDOT and all state agencies.



2. Progress & Updates (continued)

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, company sponsored Guaranteed Ride Home, carpooling, telework, bicycling, walking, scooters, and multimodal last-mile transportation. The number of employers claiming the tax credit declined sharply in 2021 but rebounded in 2022, most likely a reflection of COVID-related commuting pattern changes. It is expected that the number of businesses claiming the tax credit for 2023 will be similar or slightly increased compared to 2022. Transit continues to be the most frequently used benefit; however, telework, one of the expanded options in 2022, showed an increase in use. Businesses claiming the Commuter Tax Credit in 2023 represent a variety of industries and the majority are sized at under 100 employees.

Maryland Commuter Tax Credit Summary, 2017-2023.

Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
# Participating Employers	5	21	25	24	10	25	14
# Participating Employees	130	880	1,260	912	551	861	496
Transit	107	846	1,217	876	548	633	448
Vanpool	0	0	0	10	0	21	0
Carpool	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0
Cash in Lieu of Parking	23	34	43	26	3	162	12
Telework	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	25	36
Multimodal Last Mile	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0
Active Transportation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0
Company GRH	0	0	0	0	0	20	0

*Data current as of February 16, 2024. Tax credit applications are submitted year-round, and may be submitted up to three years after the subsidies were paid.

Commuter Tax Credit participation by industry and business size, 2023.

Industry	Business Size
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	1-4 Employees
Healthcare & Social Assistance	5-9 Employees
Other Services	10-19 Employees
Professional, Scientific &	20-49 Employees
Technical Services	50-99 Employees
	100-249 Employees
	250-499 Employees
	10,000+ Employees



3. What's Next?

Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and transportation-related emissions, and connecting more people to employment opportunities are priorities of the Moore-Miller Administration and MDOT. As post-COVID return-to-workplace strategies continue to evolve, Commuter Choice Maryland will continue to play a vital role in reducing congestion and improving the quality of life of all Marylanders.

Goals for 2024

Engagement

- Attend and/or support at least 25 events around the state.
- Support events in at least two counties that were not reached in 2023.
- Host or participate in at least four presentations (virtual or in-person, led by Commuter Choice Maryland or another entity).
- Aim for at least 300 new followers across social media platforms; test new strategies for market segmentation in digital content promotion.
- Update all Commuter Choice Maryland webpages and explore options to display content in a more dynamic way.
- Identify new opportunities to connect with other state agencies and departments to cross-promote commuter options and employer support.
- Increase internal engagement with MDOT modal offices to increase awareness and participation in commuting programs and events.
- Continue supporting the American Legion Bridge/I-270/I-495 TDM engagement efforts.

incentTrip

- Support and promote the new branding and re-launch of the app.
- Increase the number of app users in the statewide program to at least 500.
- Trial the app's use for at least one statewide promotion in 2024.

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 a total of 50 businesses to file 2024 tax credit applications.

Employer Partner Program

- Improve data tracking on employer outreach for Commuter Choice Maryland and all local jurisdictions by implementing a database already used by several counties in the state by the spring of 2024.
- In December 2022, the Maryland Climate Change Commission set a goal for Commuter Choice Maryland to increase Employer Partners from 50 to 500 by the end of FY 2024; this goal is very ambitious, and we aim to reach 200 Employer Partners by end of CY 2024.
- Collaborate with TDM specialists to increase the number of Partners in their jurisdictions.
- Encourage Employer Partners from new employment sectors, including 1-2 additional public sector members around the state.
- Update supporting materials including how-to reference guides and technical assistance documents.
- Support efforts to increase use of commute modes by MDOT employees and support internal efforts to help make MDOT and other state agencies leaders in providing and promoting commuting options and benefits.



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