

## Commute Trip Reduction Alternate Plan Final Report

The CTR Board created this opportunity to test the feasibility of new and locally determined approaches for accomplishing the mission of the CTR program. This final report gathers information about the experience and results of your alternate plan. The board is interested in what worked and what didn't, and what was learned. This report and your final presentation will provide the board with valuable information to learn and consider how the state program can evolve to enhance its effectiveness and/or efficiency.

### Jurisdiction: City of Tukwila

#### Alternate Plan Concept

1. Given the ideas, strategies, data-collection methods or administrative changes you tested, what went well? Why?

The strategy of the Pilot Project was to address all trips, focusing on Tukwila's two core centers (the MIC and the GTEC), with continued programming for CTR-affected employers. Overall, we believe this was a good strategy for Tukwila. The Tukwila GTEC was an unfunded plan and this approach allowed the city to provide extra services to all employers and residents by leveraging resources such as CMAQ and Regional Mobility Grant outreach activities and in-kind assistance by city staff.

In 2013, two interns provided outreach assistance in the field while building on previous Rideshareonline grant work. The city was awarded two CMAQ grants in mid-2015 assuring that the GTEC/centers concept will continue at least through 2018, as we are able to provide intensive customized outreach services with expanded staff capacity. Material from the GTEC and CTR Plans are being used to develop a TDM Plan for the city that will be a supportive document for the CTR Plan and Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, as identified in the administrative work plan. The TDM Plan will provide context for the history of the program and serve as a framework for future programming. It is intended to be a living document with an emphasis on allowing flexibility to embrace new developments in the field.

The city chose to maintain its traditional CTR program while also implementing a more comprehensive "all trips" approach to TDM. The city also chose to work with five partnering South King County cities to prepare and submit the updated CTR plan in 2015 as required by that cycle. While our Pilot was not as dramatically different from the usual program as other pilots, the opportunity to identify additional areas for outreach while we build for the future was helpful. Performance measurement methods did not differ from previous cycles and was based on the affected CTR survey data, supplemented with RideshareOnline (RSO) data. While we are still building momentum for TDM work in Tukwila it is clear that recognition of TDM and CTR elements is now more mainstream in our jurisdiction.

2. What challenges were there? How did you address these challenges?

Challenges were similar to those faced with the traditional approach. Frequent turnover of ETCs and a lack of responsiveness by employers unless there is an urgent need such as parking and other economic factors makes it challenging to provide consistent and meaningful incentives to employees. Additionally, it has been difficult to gather information and facilitate meaningful communication regarding trip reduction efforts with certain employers due to changes in transparency for employer CTR processes.

Another challenge has been developing the TDM Plan without many regional or national examples from similarly sized jurisdictions. Fortunately, we have had some support from partnering agencies; Kate Johnston of the City of Bellevue has graciously provided feedback throughout the development of the

plan based on her experience writing the Bellevue TDM Plan and Alex Krieg of PSRC has agreed to review the plan before we take it to the Tukwila Transportation Committee for their approval this spring.

A challenge moving forward will be to develop new programs and campaigns that incentivize behavior while conforming to more stringent limits on the types of rewards we may provide, which have recently been clarified by the state. We believe that in-person and customized outreach can help to make up some of the difference in this area, however this approach requires additional staff capacity, which may not be possible for smaller jurisdictions such as Tukwila without the acquisition of additional funding sources.

3. Did your plan evolve over time? How did you decide to make changes? What effect did the changes have?

The plan has evolved since inception. In the first phase, 2013, we initiated our outreach with RSO to all employers with a focus on the two centers. Our funding was sparse and leveraging of staff resources and supplies was crucial. Following receipt of the CMAQ grants, opportunities to expand began to develop, such as expanding customized outreach to historically underserved populations through a subcontract with Hopelink. Of note, the foundation for this program was set with consensus by committee, council, and department. The CMAQ grants are allowing us to follow through with the city's vision for our urban and manufacturing industrial centers.

4. Under what circumstances do you think the method you employed would be most successful?

As mentioned above, we believe that dedicated outreach staff are crucial to making a meaningful impact on trip behavior in Tukwila. Seeing as we lack some of the most compelling external forces (e.g. parking fees or limited parking availability) that drive people to voluntarily change their transportation behavior, we must develop sophisticated campaigns that give people information and motivation to change their behavior.

In addition, expanding the focus to "all trips" can make it more difficult to efficiently reach residents or those who spend time in Tukwila as there is not a centralized means of contacting these individuals. Adequate funding to employ outreach staff is therefore critical to the continuation of comprehensive TDM programming in Tukwila.

## Goals, Targets, and Measurement

5. What was your alternate plan's performance for drive alone rate (DAR) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reductions? How does this compare to the performance from your 2011-2012 traditional CTR plan?

The performance targets for the Pilot Program were to meet the State DAR and VMT goals. The DAR target in 2013-2015 was to reduce up to 10% drive-alone trips from baseline rates (2007/2008). This was modified in 2015 with the development of a new joint South King County partner jurisdiction target of achieving a 27% NDAT rate by 2019. The current VMT target is 13.9 and the current Greenhouse Gas Emissions target is 27.50 daily pounds per employee.

Attainment figures for 2013/2014 were:

- NDAT: 20.6%
- VMT: 17.1
- GHG daily emissions per employee: 33.54 lbs.

Attainment figures for 2015/2016 were:

- NDAT: 19.8%
- VMT: 17.7
- GHG daily emissions per employee: 32.73 lbs.

Performance in 2011/2012 biennium prior to the start of the Pilot Program was closer to the targets for all three measures than it was in 2013/2014 and 2015/2016. We believe that economic pressures related to the great recession and extreme changes in gas prices have influenced travel behavior in the region over the past decade. For example, economic recovery coupled with low gas prices in 2015 may have increased the likelihood of an individual choosing to drive a personal vehicle rather than taking an alternate mode of transportation.

6. Did you meet your alternate plan's DAR, VMT or other goals/targets?

Although the Pilot Program did not achieve the desired targets, we believe that the Pilot Program combined with other TDM programs has likely contributed to maintaining a relatively consistent rate for all three measures. Without TDM programming in Tukwila, VMT and NDAT may have otherwise increased/decreased more substantially over the past several years in response to population and economic factors that were brought about by economic recovery following the great recession.

7. What data did you collect?

a. How did you collect that data?

i. Were there issues or opportunities that arose from this collection methodology? If so, what were they?

b. What were some of the factors that influenced your selection of this method?

We collected data from RideshareOnline.com and from the traditional CTR employer surveys. We did have an issue with obtaining past RideshareOnline data to compare participation. When we recently tried to access data from before and through the length of the pilot program we were not able to access data from before Jan 2014 due to a two-year RSO data retention policy.

These methods of methodology were selected because they did not require additional staff time or additional resources to conduct, as staff capacity was limited at the time the program was developed. Alternative modes of measurement (e.g. direct measurement of behavior) are not readily available or proven in the field.

8. Do you have any qualitative performance information to report? If so, please provide it.

We have received a lot of qualitative feedback regarding the need and desire for improved transit provision. Common requests include the need for lighting and weather protection improvements at bus shelters and the desire for more frequent service along some routes. We plan to work with regional transit providers to address these needs in the future. City council and staff are involved in the King County Regional Transit Committee and caucus.

## Administration

9. Was there a noticeable difference in administration time and effort? Can you talk about the administrative differences?

Yes, the staff capacity necessary to expand outreach efforts to "all trips" in a meaningful way while simultaneously developing a TDM Plan for the city was significantly greater than that required to conduct the normal CTR program. Our team has expanded to include 1.5 outreach staff, who focus solely on

making connections in the community to improve the frequency and scope of TDM programming. There are also administrative implications to managing a larger team—we have a lot of good work going on that requires oversight!

10. How did the implementation costs compare to your traditional CTR plan? Please address both monetary and staff time costs.

Implementation from 2013-2015 cycle was limited to the basic CTR Plan funds coupled with in-kind services from the city, including intern assistance, materials, printing, marketing materials, and more. The GTEC Expansion grant allowed us to implement our unfunded GTEC while working with other sources to provide outreach to all employers and employees in Tukwila's Urban Center, MIC, and throughout the city. This work required a significantly larger budget, with approximately \$210,000 in expenditures in 2016 (combining all four revenue funds including CTR allocation), as compared to the annual state CTR allocation of approximately \$40,000.

11. How did your employers, employees and decision-makers react to the different plan?

It was a seamless transition. Most employers did not notice the difference. Their employees took advantage of incentives and many asked for assistance in planning their commute or by providing comments on transit service. Those comments helped inform the Tukwila Transit Plan update as well as the work staff did with the Regional Transit Committee and other planning processes.

### **Programmatic Learning**

12. Please compare and contrast the pros and cons of this plan with those of your traditional CTR plan.

This plan allowed us to create a more flexible approach depending on site analysis and other factors. We were able to work with smaller employers and create a more open equitable outreach program to get information to our commuters, residents, business owners, and employers. Metro provided funds (from their Urban Access grant) to build a city specific transportation web site for example. Cons were that it was a more ambitious program but was allocated the same amount of funds, so it was difficult to fully implement until we were awarded additional funding.

13. Knowing what you do now, what would you keep, change or add to your plan? Why? This could be the program's design, strategies, goals or data-collection method.

We are fortunate to have CMAQ funding to ensure our program will continue to be implemented through 2018. The foundation for a robust program is in place due to the original concept that was developed for the Pilot Program.

14. Have the results or the experience of your alternate plan generated any new TDM ideas? If so, please provide them.

We have rebranded our CTR program to TDM and plan to use that umbrella for our local programs and projects. Staff is developing a Tukwila TDM Plan as a part of the Pilot Program that will provide a comprehensive overview of the history of the program in the city, along with guidance for future TDM programs.

15. Did the greater flexibility provided by the board's pilot program open doors for your program? Did you have enough guidance and support from the board and state program to aid in the development and implementation of your alternate plan? Please share your thoughts with us.

This is the key point of our Pilot Program. Our city staff and council supported our efforts with moving toward a TDM concept. The ability to shift the focus to all trips allowed us to engage with partners such as small employers who are interested in voluntary CTR programs. We appreciate the opportunity to work with enthusiastic sites, which allows us to explore innovative approaches to trip reduction!

16. What kinds of changes to state program rules would better support your program's success?

If the state was able to act as a resource for bulk purchases (e.g. bike racks, ORCA cards, etc.) and provide customizable marketing materials the individual agencies enacting the programs would require less monetary and staff support while overall program costs may be used more efficiently (e.g. to hire dedicated outreach staff). We support a corridors-based approach and believe the program would benefit from consolidating efforts in this way.

Standardized methods of performance measurement (as feasible) may help jurisdictions provide more meaningful quantitative information to the state. State assistance to conduct more frequent assessments of performance measures (e.g. annual review of RSO data) and provision of a template for conducting calculations/assessments of the data would be helpful to improve the responsiveness of programs and promote a more data-driven approach.

Regular training for implementers and state-led regional ETC trainings would help support our work and ensure that all parties involved have the necessary information.

Ensure the RideshareOnline ride matching database is maintained up to date and improve visibility of apps (Trip Logger, Ride Matcher) so the public can take advantage of a more convenient way to log trips.

Provide adequate funding for implementers to hire outreach staff and/or allow agencies to sub-contract with local organizations and non-profits (e.g. Hopelink contract through CMAQ funding has greatly extended the scope of our outreach).

17. Is there anything else you want to share about this experiment and experience?

We appreciate the opportunity to try a modified approach to trip reduction and believe that our program sets a good example of flexibility for other small cities.