



**Metro**


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**DECEMBER 3, 2020**

**TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**THROUGH: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON**   
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**FROM: JIM DE LA LOZA**   
**CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: REGIONAL TDM PROGRAM UPDATE**

**ISSUE**

This is an update on the progress made towards creating and implementing a Regional TDM Program as outlined in Board Motion 36 and approved by the Board in October 2017. This report also discusses how COVID-19 pandemic impacted TDM and mobility behaviors.

**BACKGROUND**

In October 2017, the Board approved Motion 36, directing staff to explore and implement a markedly expanded role for Metro as a leader in Transportation Demand Management (TDM) in Los Angeles County by creating a Regional TDM Program and Toolkit. In March of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Stay at Home Order, restrictions required non-essential employees and students to telecommute, creating a “new normal” and disrupting employees’ usual commuting patterns. As the County slowly returns to a post-COVID-19, commute patterns are likely to continue to evolve. Many employers have already invested equipment, innovative solutions and infrastructure in telecommuting; and some employers are also considering reducing their office real estate and capacity and transitioning their employees to telecommuting permanently. Additionally, commuters may be less comfortable riding mass transit for at least several months after COVID-19 restrictions and prefer to drive alone to work. As a result, TDM in the region will have to shift to focus on perceived safety of commuter. Transit, carpool and vanpool options should all remain as TDM options during the pandemic and its recovery period. TDM can also do more to

encourage biking and walking commutes where possible. A new focus to help residents plan short personal trips will also be essential as more employees will work from home and be tempted to take short trips in their cars to run errands, go to appointments, etc. The target audience for our regional TDM efforts will expand from daily commute to any mobility needs. To meet the needs of the “new normal” Regional TDM is expanding to focus on post-COVID recovery commuting and other trips.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Goals and Progress**

#### *Create a TDM Toolkit Website*

A TDM toolkit website will include TDM Best Practices, resources, TDM ordinance guidelines, and information on implementing TDM policies such as telecommuting and parking cash out. There will also be a focus on how to commute safely on public transit, vanpools and carpools as employees transition back to the workplace post-COVID. Draft content has been prepared and is currently being edited. TDM Staff is working with Marketing to create the TDM Toolkit webpage. A draft version of the page is currently being reviewed. Website launch scheduled for the first half of 2021. Ideally, staff would like to launch the website and kickoff Regional TDM at the same time non-essential employees begin reporting back to their workplaces.

#### *Create a countywide branded campaign for Regional TDM*

TDM and Marketing Staff are currently developing a branded campaign that will use the “Go Metro” branding while allowing for each City to include its name in the branding (Example: Go Metro, Go Arcadia). Campaign launch anticipated on the first half of 2021.

#### *Community Based Ridematching Tool for Carpool and Vanpool*

TDM Staff is working with Trapeze/TripSpark, a Metro-authorized contractor for Regional Rideshare, to create a Community-Based Ridematching Tool. The tool will be branded for Regional TDM as part of the “Go Metro” branding and can be sub-branded for municipalities in Los Angeles county. The tool will allow cities to assist their residents in forming / joining carpools or vanpools for their home to work commutes, as well as from home to transit hubs where they can continue their trip via public transit. Transit and bike partner information will be available as well. Ridematching tool launch is scheduled for the second half of 2021. Until the Community-based Ridematching Tool is up and running, Regional TDM will promote Metro’s Regional Rideshare Matching database to promote vanpool and carpool mobility options during COVID recovery.

During COVID recovery, commuters may be hesitant to take public transit. Carpool and vanpool options can be promoted through Regional TDM. Commuters have more control over vanpool and carpool protocols. For example, a vanpool can agree to get COVID tested, wear masks in the van and agree on sanitation methods for the interior of the van. The control over the commuting environment that vanpools and carpools offer can provide a level of comfort and security to commuters who would otherwise choose to drive in their own vehicles to attain their personal health and safety.

### *TDM Workshops for Local Jurisdictions*

Metro will host quarterly TDM workshops. City surveys indicate a strong interest in workshops on the following topics: telecommuting, parking cash out, compressed work week schedules, networking with counterparts in neighboring community based social marketing. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the first Regional TDM Workshop will be virtual. Metro staff collaborated with New Urban Mobility Organization (NUMO) to create an inter-active virtual workshop on telecommuting scheduled for January 2021. Workshops on future topics will be held virtually while the County is under COVID-19 restrictions.

### *TDM Mini Grant Program*

The Mini Grant Program will annually provide 10 grants at \$10,000 each available to cities, community based organizations or Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to use for commuter behavior change programs. Stakeholder feedback has been solicited. Mini grant program is anticipated to launch in FY2022

### *Develop a TMA Network*

The TMA Network launched in 2018 and Metro staff leads TMA Network meetings every other month.

### *Quarterly TDM Newsletter for all jurisdictions in the County.*

The first issue of the quarterly newsletter was emailed to all cities in the county in July 2020. The second issue will go out the end of November 2020.

### *Countywide Commuter Tax Benefit Ordinance*

During COVID-19, many small businesses have been struggling to survive and the environment is not conducive to imposing a new requirement. In addition, many employees are not commuting to work right now and therefore would not

be able to take advantage of the pre-tax benefit for commute costs. Finally, depending on the outcome of the Fareless. System Initiative, there may not be a commuter cost for transit in Los Angeles County. For these reasons staff are focusing on educating small businesses about all of the commuting options available to them, including the ability to set aside pre-tax dollars to pay for the cost of transit and vanpool.

### *Expanding U Pass and E Pass*

Annual expansion goal is to increase student participation by 10% per year and employee participation by 20% per year. Due to school closures and distance learning, participation in the U-Pass program has declined. Participation in the E-Pass program has actually increased as a result of the pandemic because the E-Pass allows employers to provide passes to their employees and only pay for what they use. This factor has become increasingly important with fluctuating return-to-work schedules and more frequent telecommuting. the E-Pass Program was in a pilot phase through June 2020, and received approval by the Metro Board to continue as a permanent program effective July 2020. There are currently 15 businesses enrolled in the program with additional employers in the queue to join.

### *Travel Rewards Research Pilot*

Metro is partnering with Duke University for Advanced Hindsight, Harvard Business School and private sector technology and mobility partners to identify and test the most effective incentives to persuade travelers in Los Angeles County to stop driving alone and choose transit, walking, carpooling or biking instead. Metro received a \$700,000 FTA AIM grant to fund the research program. The project will focus on how people choose to travel and the best incentives and messaging to use to encourage an increase of the use of alternative commutes. The results of the pilot will be shared with local jurisdictions allowing them to learn from and consider adopting the lessons learned by Metro's pilot project. Metro is currently conducting outreach to identify partners to participate in the research pilot including large employers, hospitals, universities, housing developers and non-profits. The project will kick-off in Spring 2021.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will continue to work on all aspects of the TDM Toolkit, performing outreach and launching programs for Regional TDM in 2020-2021. Staff will report back on progress in six months.