

WAY TO GO

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JANUARY 2020

COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION PROGRAM

DRAFT WHITE PAPER

V.4TMA.20

INTRODUCTION



The Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) White Paper was developed by Way to Go's Transportation Management Association (TMA) partners to educate regional decision-makers about the benefits of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs for the Denver region. Recent changes regarding air quality along with growing traffic congestion invite a discussion about how similar region's nationally have used CTR rules to engage large employers in promoting and supporting a suite of transportation options for their employees to consider when deciding how to commute to work. Over 60 states and regions have CTR rules including the States of Washington, Oregon and California, Maricopa and Pima County's in Arizona and numerous regions all around the nation.

CTR rules are a soft measure in that employers provide information and support for employees to know their commute options. It is neither a mandate to force employees out of their cars, nor a performance-based rule that penalizes employers should employees continue to drive alone.

CTR rules create a win-win-win scenario in that employees desire more travel choices and thus, it helps to recruit and retain employees; employers save on taxes when employees use pre-tax funds to purchase transit passes, vanpool rides or parking; employers can save on parking in that most businesses that have a TDM program have between 5 to 15 percent fewer drive alone commuters than their neighbors; and for the community, it means cleaner air, less congestion and healthier residents.

Way to Go's TMAs have researched CTR rules, spoken with CTR implementors in other communities and vetted the concept with select decision makers regionally to arrive at some ideas for how to successfully deliver a CTR program in the Denver Region. This White Paper defines the concepts, provides examples and offers some guidance from TMA experience on working with our region's employers.

THE PURPOSE



A **Commuter Trip Reduction** program could be designed to engage more employers throughout the Denver region in helping their employees consider a variety of commute options when traveling to and from work. Having more commute options for employees to choose from allows employees to make the best choices for themselves based on convenience, cost, comfort and in some cases, carbon footprint.

The Denver Region was recently downgraded to **Serious Nonattainment** by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, calling for additional actions to reduce air pollution in the region as part of compliance with the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. Regional stakeholders are currently exploring options to reduce vehicle emissions to address our air quality exceedances. CTR could be part of these reductions, not only helping clean the air, but also reducing traffic congestion and energy consumption.

Employers can implement a CTR plan using the FREE Way to Go services provided by the region's 8 Transportation Management Associations and Way to Go's regional staff. **Employers that offer these programs have a 5 to 15 percent lower drive alone rate than other nearby employers.**

THE CHALLENGE



Growth in traffic volumes and related air emissions have resulted in excessive traffic delays, vehicle idling and unclean air for which the existing voluntary trip reduction initiatives are insufficient. The Way to Go program is a voluntary trip reduction initiative that supports employers promoting and offering a mix of travel options to their employees.

Way to Go is effective when an employer recognizes the need for a Transportation Demand Management program for their employees. However, most employers do not participate despite the many benefits a TDM program can offer.

The Denver Region needs more employer engagement to slow the growth of traffic congestion and meet the goals of **Metro Vision**. As well as local plans such as **Denver's Mobility Action Plan**.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) created the Way to Go program and a network of Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to implement **Transportation Demand Management** services for employers who volunteer to implement a TDM plan.

Way to Go makes it easy for employers to help their employees with their commutes and offers seasonal campaigns to promote the use of transportation alternatives to driving alone.

Way to Go offers real-life solutions helping commuters save money, experience less stress, and save time, so that they can focus more on the things they enjoy.

Way to Go's TMA partners are working to educate decision makers about the benefits and desired approach for a Commute Trip Reduction program drawing largely from the successful **CTR program in the State of Washington.**

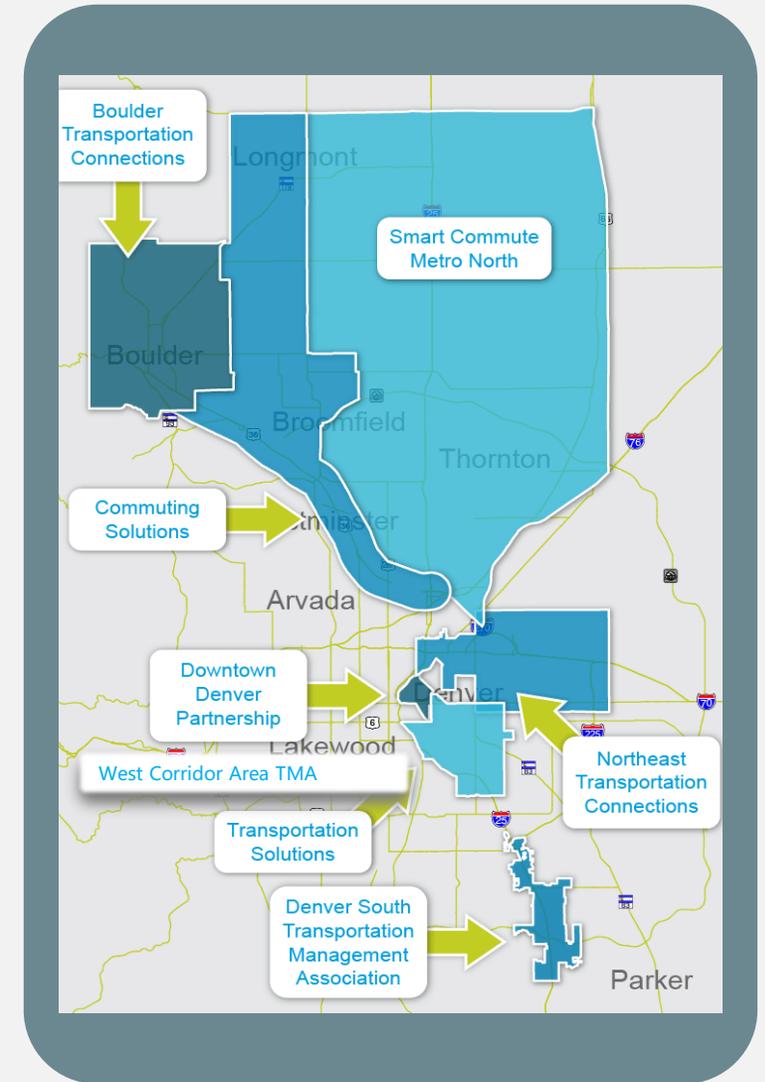
TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



TMA's are typically a public private partnership designed to work with employers, property owners and commuters in implementing TDM programs in a specific area.

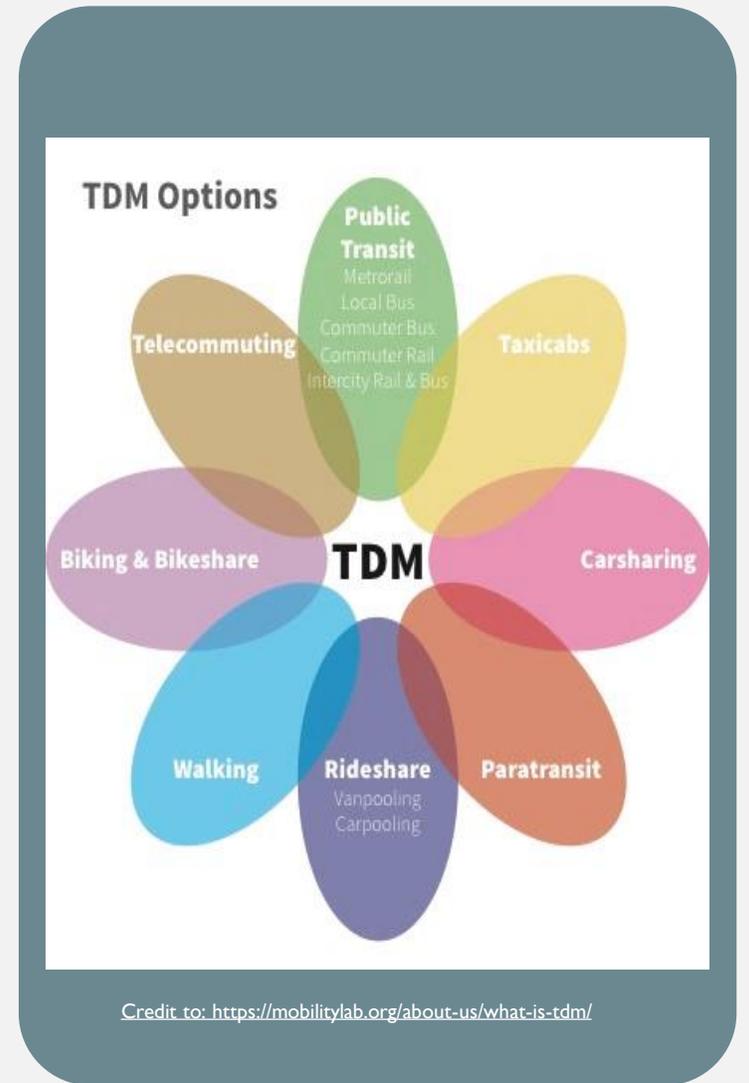
TMA's are non-profit entities that are eligible for federal funding to support TDM as part of the Way to Go partnership.

There are 8 TMA's within the Denver Region; adding most recently the West Corridor Area TMA, focused on Lakewood and adjacent communities west of downtown Denver to Golden.



TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transportation Demand Management is the flip side of infrastructure. It focuses on understanding how people make their transportation decisions and helping people use the infrastructure in place for transit, ridesharing, walking, biking and telework. It is cost-effective in guiding the design of our transportation and physical infrastructure so that alternatives to driving are naturally encouraged and our systems are better balanced.



FREE WAY TO GO SERVICES



TRANSIT

Way to Go can help employers figure out the best routes for their employees, suggest the best transit pass options for the company or individual employees and help promote transit use at employment sites.

VANPOOL

Employees who commute more than 15 miles to work can use vanpool, a low-cost program that provides vans, insurance and fuel for commuters to travel together to work. Participants don't have to work for the same company if their work locations are nearby. Way to Go can help employers get company vanpool programs off to a great start.

CARPOOL

Way to Go can assist employers in encouraging employees to carpool. Employees can use Way to Go's free and secure online ride-matching tool to set up a company carpool list or match employees with other commuters in the area.

WALK AND BIKE

Employers can give employees a wellness boost and improve morale by encouraging biking or walking to work. Way to Go can give employers tips and resources, like bike maps and route plans, to help support commuters in their organization who bike and walk to work.

ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

More companies allow employees to work remotely, flex their hours or compress their workweeks, resulting in reduced traffic and commute time, and improved work-life balance. Way to Go can work with employers to figure out the right work schedule options for employees and the organization.

GUARANTEED RIDE HOME

Employers can add Way to Go's low-cost Guaranteed Ride Home program for companies offering RTD EcoPass. Pass holders who use transit, walk, bike, carpool or vanpool can use the program, which gives them a free taxi ride home in case of an emergency or unexpected schedule change.

CTR EXAMPLES

In 1991 the Washington State Legislature passed the **Commute Trip Reduction** Law. This law engaged many local communities and employers in efforts to address traffic congestion, air pollution and fuel consumption.

Commute trip reduction laws target worksites with 100 or more full-time employees. Worksites develop and manage their own programs based on strategies identified as having the highest impact for their employees and more than 1,000 worksites and 550,000 commuters participate statewide.

Surveys conducted every other year are used to measure vehicle miles traveled and mode choice at each worksite.

In 2017-18, commuters at worksites that participated in commute trip reduction left about 34,500 cars at home every weekday; instead, they opted to commute by bus, vanpool, train, bicycle, foot or telework.

These alternative mode commute trips reduced almost 13 percent of daily vehicle miles traveled per employee.

This decrease in vehicle miles traveled means nearly 4 million fewer gallons of fuel used each year, saving commuters about \$25 million annually. Collectively, this is an annual reduction of 75,000 metric tons in greenhouse-gas emissions – equal to the amount of carbon sequestered annually by 88,269 acres of forest.



STATE OF WASHINGTON

These programs have a variety of names that are equivalent, including: TDM, CTR, Trip Reduction Program, Employer Trip Reduction Plan and others.

An Employee Trip Reduction Plan has specific requirements, including:

1. Survey of employees about how they commute.
2. Strategies to increase biking, walking, riding transit, and carpooling to reach employer’s target emissions reduction. Strategies include ongoing education, transit pass reimbursements, and telework policies.
3. Mandatory guaranteed ride home program, which provides employees who rideshare a ride home in the event of an emergency or unplanned overtime at no cost to the employee.
4. A “cash out program” for employers with 50 or more employees who subsidize employees’ parking. A cash-out program means employees can give up their parking space in return for cash equal to the cost of the space.

The emission reduction goal established for Santa Monica is 1.5 Average Vehicle Ridership (AVR).

Employers with a place of business in the City of Santa Monica that have more than 10 employees must comply with the Santa Monica **Transportation Demand Management Ordinance**.

Currently 60 percent of the City’s employers have met their goal, achieving an AVR Target of 1.5 or better for both the morning and afternoon peak hours. This is equivalent to reducing one out of three cars driven to a worksite in Santa Monica each day.



CITY OF SANTA MONICA

CALIFORNIA

Travel Reduction Program (TRP) Annual requirements include:

1. Assign a Transportation Coordinator.
2. Disseminate Sun Rideshare information to employees.
3. Submit an Employee Survey every year.
4. Submit an Activity Inventory Report (AIR) every year in May – the trip reduction plan.
5. Notify TRP staff of any changes at the worksite, such as downsizing or transportation coordinator changes.

Pima County and its municipal jurisdictions adopted travel reduction ordinances in 1988.

Participation in the **Travel Reduction Program (TRP)** is mandatory for employers that have 100 or more employees.

Employers with fewer than 100 employees can volunteer to participate in the program.

Total mileage saved by the TRP in 2018 was 54,820,272



PIMA COUNTY
ARIZONA

WAY TO GO TMA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

For additional information about other TDM ordinances see:

DRCOG's TDM Ordinances: Best Practices featuring 20 of the 65 ordinances nationally.

Available upon request.

In partnership with Way to Go, employers with 100 or more employees could be asked to:

Designate

1. Designate an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC).

Offer

2. Offer employees the Pre-Tax Commuter Benefit IRC 132(f).

Promote

3. Promote a suite of travel options that employees can choose from.

Conduct

4. Conduct an employee commute survey every two years. Way to Go provides surveying assistance free of charge.

Submit

5. Submit a TDM Plan to maintain or achieve the trip reduction goal within a 2-year period.

SUGGESTED CORE ELEMENTS FOR A DENVER REGIONAL CTR PROGRAM

1. DESIGNATE

Designate an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) to act as the primary contact for employees for transportation-related programs and services. It is a part-time role that often takes on average less than 2 hours per week. ETCs are also responsible for communicating important information about commute options and other information provided by Way to Go, TMAs, RTD and local jurisdictions.



2. OFFER

Employers can offer pre-tax commute benefits to employees. The IRS code allows employees to use up to an annual limit (\$270 in 2020) per month in pre-tax money to pay for their transit passes, vanpool fares or parking. Employers save by not having to pay payroll tax of 7.65% on pre-tax funds.

3. PROMOTE

Employers offer local transit schedules, bike maps and ride-matching information. Employers can consider participating in one or more of the region's seasonal campaigns such as Bike to Work and Go-Tober. Employers choose from a suite of options to promote commute choices.

4. CONDUCT

An employee commute survey can be conducted once every two years using the FREE Way to Go surveying services. It can be as simple for an employer as forwarding a survey link to employees and Way to Go does the rest. The survey provides a snapshot of employee commute behavior and helps employers tailor the type of incentives or subsidy they may desire to offer their employees.

5. SUBMIT

TDM Plans could be submitted using a simple to use online template.



TDM PLANS INCLUDE

Worksite analysis of the location of bus stops, bike lanes and other worksite amenities that help employees use a mix of transportation options

Mode share and mode share target

Description of TDM strategies and why they were chosen for their worksite

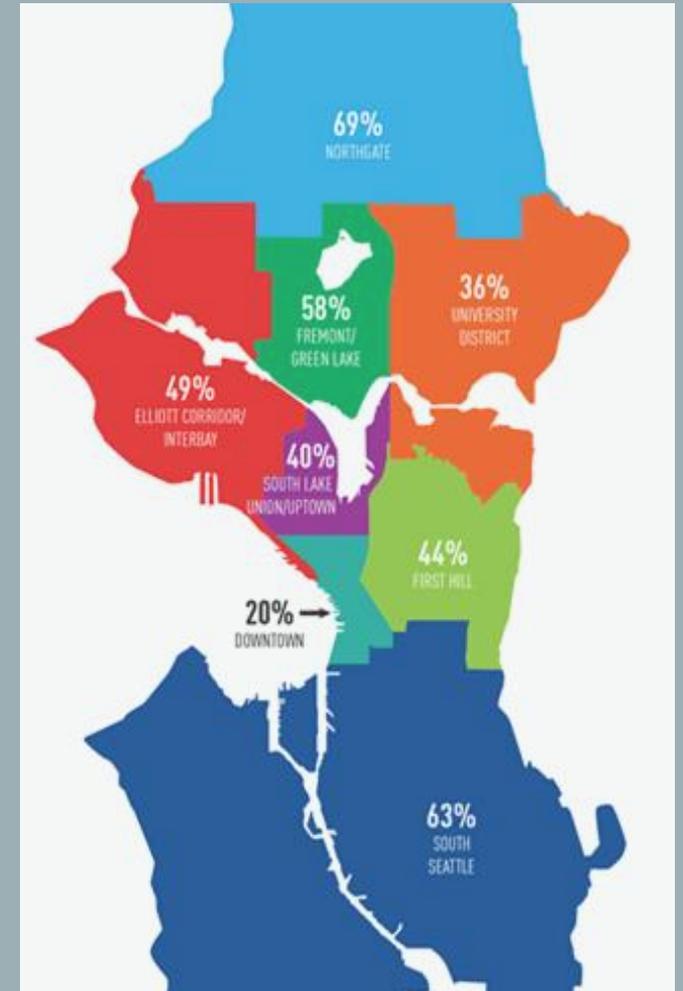
Commuter survey results

PROGRAM TARGETS

SOV RATE EXAMPLE

A method for defining program goals is using a single occupant vehicle (SOV) mode share rate or in other words, how many cars with only one employee occupant enters the worksite each day. Determining the goals by area includes a review of existing mode share along with availability of transit and support infrastructure (i.e., bike path) that create a mix of travel options.

In Seattle, a suburban area such as Northgate has a goal of 69 percent SOV whereas downtown with an array of travel options is set at 20 percent.



METRICS FOR SUCCESS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
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Environment

- Cleaner air!
- More people walking and biking to work

Equity and Health

- Reduced cost of housing and transportation
- Reliability for social justice population
- Better health

Economy

- Increased reliability for access to jobs
- Decreased parking demand
- Dollars returned to local economy instead of spending it on fuel and maintenance

Efficiency

- Mode split or increase in non-drive alone mode share
- Leverage infrastructure/capital investments
- Increased cost effectiveness of alternative travel investment through improved ridership