

## Regional Travel Options:

Metro's Regional Travel Options (RTO) program supports Metro's mission of making a great place by increasing the awareness of non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel options such as biking, walking, taking transit, and ridesharing, and telecommuting/compressed work weeks. To accomplish this, the RTO program provides strategic investments that contribute to economic, environmental, and socio-economic health and prosperity for the region.

## Regional Travel Options Grants

For more information visit:

[www.oregonmetro.gov/traveloptions](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/traveloptions)



Metro, the regional government, crosses city limits and county lines to build a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Representing a diverse population of 1.5 million people in 25 cities and three counties, Metro's directly elected council gives voters a voice in decisions about how the region grows and communities prosper.

## Description

Individualized marketing (IM) projects identify people within a specific geographic area who want to change the way they travel. The projects use personalized contact to motivate people to use travel options more frequently. The marketing component provides customized information, training and events to encourage residents to bike, walk, carpool and take transit for some of their trips. Projects are measured by before and after surveys to determine reductions in single-occupant vehicle use and increases in trips using sustainable travel options.

## Purpose/Outcomes

To encourage and motivate residents to replace drive-alone car trips with sustainable travel options such as bike, walk, transit and carpool. Common outcomes include:

- Reduce drive alone trips and vehicle miles driven by area residents; increase trips made by bicycling, walking on transit, or by carpool
- Increase awareness of sustainable travel modes and promote healthy, active transportation choices
- Create opportunities for area residents and employees to walk, bike, carpool and take transit
- Use incentives to support local businesses and area economic development and livability
- Reach all residents at least five times with transportation options messages
- Focus on interested residents in the target area, contacting the at least ten times with transportation options' messages
- Increase awareness of the "Drive Less. Save More." Marketing campaign
- Portland IM projects typically yield a six to nine percent relative reduction of drive-alone trips; whereas suburban IM projects generally show a two to four percent reduction in SOV trips

## Marketing Campaign

Individualized marketing identifies a set of households that are interested in learning more about transportation options and supports travel behavior change with customized information and programs. Interested households receive an order form of localized transportation options information (mailed and available online), such as bus schedules or cycling maps; and, program offerings, such as bike commuting clinics or walking events. Those who are not interested are not contacted again.

Projects may also be designed to reach targeted audiences, such as senior citizens or new residents within a city. These projects also identify and work with only the subset of the audience that is interested in learning more about travel options.

## Measurement

- Survey distribution (gross and net), response rates, levels of significance and panel results.
- Relative and absolute mode share changes for car-driver, bike, walk, transit, and carpool trips.
- Vehicle miles reduced, pollution reductions and energy savings stemming from reduced auto trips will be based on current Metro RTO averages and factors.
- Qualitative measurements - awareness of campaign, intent to change behavior and anecdotal evidence of a successful project (quotes)
- Number of households contacted through marketing campaign and number of materials distributed.
- Number of events held (timeline) and estimated number of participants at each event.
- Supplemental data on transit ridership, traffic counts, or other available, secondary sources.

## Examples/Best Practices include

- Socialdata Interstate TravelSmart project (2004)<sup>1</sup>
- City of Portland SmartTrips projects (2005-2011)<sup>2</sup>
- Discover Wilsonville IM project (2011-12)<sup>3</sup>

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1. Access project information at: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/142341>

2. Access project information at: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/56703>.

3. Access project information at: <http://discoverwilsonville.com/>.

## Surveys

The key component of the surveys is a trip diary that will establish a baseline for mode choice and trip purpose. Two surveys are conducted, one before and one after the marketing and outreach. Before and after surveys will be the primary data source to measure program results. Establishing a control group is strongly advised to ensure results are from the IM project alone and not external influences such as weather, transportation system improvements or other marketing efforts.

Trip diary data is typically collected by a random sample telephone or mail survey. A panel design is recommended, with at least 40% of residents participating in the before survey, marketing campaign and after survey. Supplemental web surveys may also be used to gather data regarding awareness of the program and intent to change travel behavior. In addition, the surveys will provide demographic information including age, sex, education, number of vehicles, children, and bicycles in the household (additional demographics may be needed for target audience projects such as race/ethnicity, income, home ownership or others).

The after survey will be conducted approximately one year following the before survey. The after survey is nearly identical to the before version. Its purpose is to measure the effectiveness of the individualized marketing with respect to reducing drive-alone trips and increasing the mode share for bicycles, walking, carpool and transit among the households in the target population. Using automobile trip reductions, vehicle miles reduced should be calculated and included in the analysis. Metro recommends contracting with a professional research firm to assist with the survey, marketing campaign, and analysis.

## Grant Qualifications

- **Does the proposed investment contribute to increasing use of non-SOV modes?**  
This is established through a project proposal that provides a logical explanation demonstrating how the funded efforts will contribute to the increased use of non-SOV modes, identifying specific performance targets for each investment.
- **Does the applicant demonstrate interest and willingness?**  
Have strategic partners been identified and indicated their commitment to the project? This is established through a project proposal that identifies the specific opportunity or problem to which the applicant is responding.
- **Does the applicant have local financial support?**  
Minimum match requirements are used as base-level eligibility criteria. The minimum level is set at CMAQ thresholds, the federal source for RTO grants. Higher local match levels are needed when proposing higher-risk efforts and are rewarded through extra points in the scoring process.
- **Does the applicant have the capacity to implement?**  
This is determined based on the applicant's demonstration of a viable long-term business model and funding commitments.



### RTO Grant Timeline:

- Dec. 20, 2012 – Application packets available
- Jan. 9, 2013 – RTO Workshop
- Feb/Mar – Grant applications due
- Mar/Apr – Grant awards announced
- April to June – Grant agreements negotiated/signed
- July 1, 2013 – RTO Grant projects begin
- June 30, 2015 – RTO Grant projects completed