

Stakeholder Survey Summary

Regional Transportation Demand
Management (TDM) Strategic
Action Plan

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Southwestern Pennsylvania
Commission

Submitted by:
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I. Introduction

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) administered a regional transportation demand management (TDM) survey to stakeholders. The purpose of the survey was to collect stakeholders' perspectives on TDM within local jurisdictions and across the SPC region. The survey will help to achieve a better understanding of existing transportation conditions and initiatives, as well as ongoing efforts to influence transportation demand. Additionally, the information gained from the survey will supplement the existing conditions analysis and best practices review to develop goals and priorities for the SPC's Regional TDM Strategic Action Plan.

The survey was programmed in Survey Monkey and the link was distributed to TDM stakeholders via email in late March 2019. After the first TDM Stakeholder Visioning Workshop on April 5th, the survey link was distributed to a broader list of contacts in municipal planning departments across the SPC region. The survey link was not posted to the project website spcmobility.org in order to limit respondents to TDM and planning stakeholders in the region, including government agencies, nonprofits, universities, and private sector employers and transportation providers. This is because the survey was not distributed to obtain a statistically significant sample but simply provides a range of perspectives from stakeholders in the region who chose to participate.

II. Results

The survey was open for one month and generated over 120 responses during this time. Responses by individuals with no organizational affiliation were excluded, yielding a sample size of 117 respondents for the analysis. The survey questions addressed basic organization demographics, how organizations perceive demand management in their locality and the region, challenges and impediments, strengths and opportunities, organizations efforts to impact TDM, awareness of TDM programs and outreach efforts (including CommuteInfo), the ranking of various TDM strategies by priority level, and general feedback.

1. Organization Information

The survey asked respondents about their organization type and location to provide context for their responses and to ensure geographic representation across the SPC region. This representation is instrumental in creating applicable goals and policies at the regional and local levels.

1.1 Organization Type

As shown in Figure 1, a variety of organizations in the SPC region participated in the survey, but local governments/agencies predominated with almost half (43%) of the respondents. Many of these agencies represented various townships and boroughs in the SPC region, as well as multiple counties' children & youth services departments. Non-profit organizations comprised 22% of respondents, mostly from the bike coalition, Bike PGH, and research-based advocacy

organizations such as the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation, RAND Corporation, and Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County. Nine percent of respondents were from educational institutions with notable representation from universities including the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, Carlow University, Duquesne University, and Pitt-Greensburg. Eleven percent of respondents identified as the “other” category and included such entities as a public library, trade union, and housing authority.

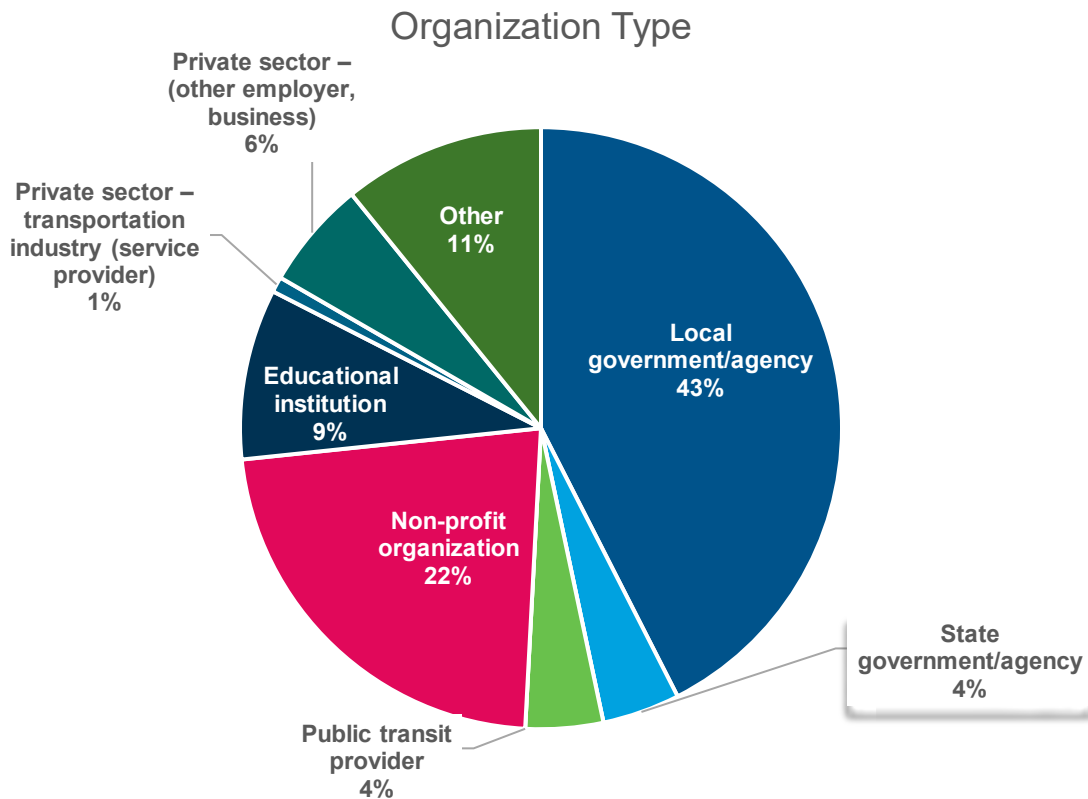


Figure 1: Types of organizations which completed the TDM survey.

1.2 Location

Figure 2 shows the location of organizations represented by survey respondents. The SPC region spans ten counties, but the largest group of respondents (46%) were located in Allegheny County, with 29% in the City of Pittsburgh, and 17% outside of Pittsburgh. Westmoreland and Washington County were 11% and 8% of the respondents respectively. Some of the “other” responses included organizations serving multiple counties and an organization based just outside of Southwestern Pennsylvania that serves individuals inside of the SPC’s jurisdiction. The distribution of respondents’ organizations corresponds roughly to the population distribution within the SPC region, with Allegheny County comprising just under half of respondents and population, followed by Westmoreland County and Washington County. The response rate from Butler and Beaver County also reflect their population composition (7%), with representation ranging from 1% to 4% each from Armstrong, Greene, Fayette, Lawrence, and Indiana Counties.

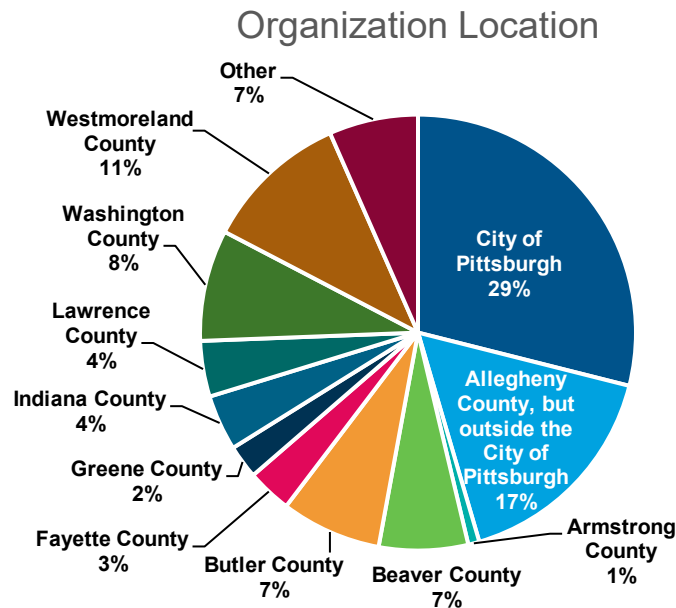


Figure 2: Organization location of TDM survey

2. Current Transportation Demand Management

The second section of the survey asked respondents about their perspectives on current transportation demand management in the SPC region. These questions included the quality of TDM regionally and locally, challenges, strengths, opportunities, awareness of TDM programs, and efforts by respondents' organizations to encourage TDM.

2.1 Regional and Local Quality of TDM

In Figure 3, respondents rated how well they think transportation demand is being managed within their local jurisdiction and across the entire SPC region. As shown in Figure 3, most respondents rated TDM as "Fair" both within their own jurisdictions and regionally. Overall attitudes about TDM quality are lower regionally compared to locally. Notable comments about local TDM recognized the quality efforts by the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County to promote TDM. Comments also addressed needs and challenges such as the need for walking and transit to be promoted more, car dependency in rural areas limiting alternative options, roads failing to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians, and that most workplaces don't promote TDM strategies except for some large organizations. Regionally, respondents noted the need for better public transportation that is coordinated across the region. Respondents also noted limitations such as public transportation's limited geographic coverage, lack of express bus service, limited biking and walking facilities, a disproportionate amount of resources going to highways compared to public or alternative transportation, and poor growth patterns outside of urban areas resulting in sprawl. Respondents also commented that TDM efforts are much more concentrated in Allegheny County in comparison to the other counties in the SPC region.

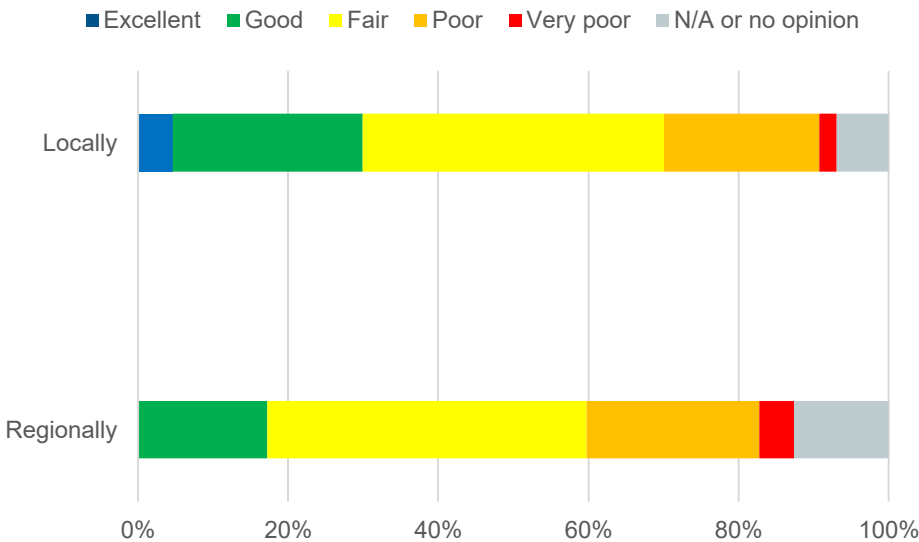


Figure 3: How well TDM is being managed locally and regionally within the SPC region.

2.2 Challenges or Impediments

Figure 4 shows that over 75% of the respondents felt there are existing conditions in the region that create challenges or impediments for managing travel demand. The main themes from respondents' comments are summarized below:

- Challenges
 - Long travel distances from home to work
 - Lack of political leadership and support for public transportation
 - The prioritization of the single occupancy vehicle (SOV)
 - Public transit being stigmatized or seen as unprofessional compared to driving
 - Limitations imposed on rural transit due to frequency, routes, and connections, the topography, age of the existing transportation infrastructure
 - Unsuitable conditions to accommodate existing automobile traffic or alternative means of transportation
 - Biking and walking may not be considered a safe or viable mode of transportation
 - Poor public transportation connections to the airport
 - Significant congestion along the airport corridor

Existing conditions creating challenges or impediments to manage travel demand?

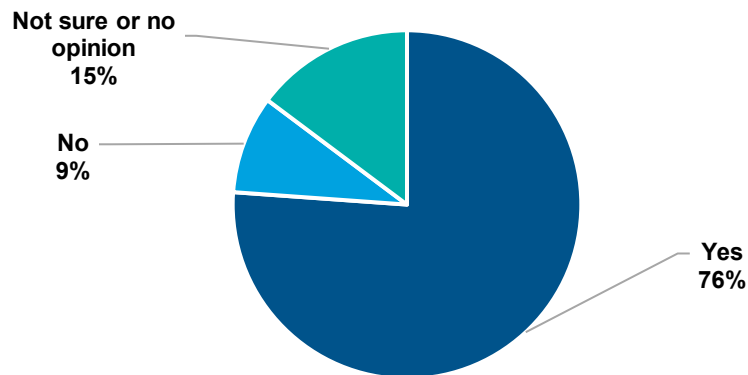


Figure 4: Existing conditions that create challenges or impediments to manage travel demand.

2.3 Strengths or Opportunities

In Figure 5, over half of respondents (55%) said there are existing strengths and opportunities to manage travel demand, 31% said they weren't sure or had no opinion, and 14% said there were no strengths or opportunities. Comments about strengths and opportunities are summarized below.

- Strengths
 - Downtown Pittsburgh is fairly compact and alternative modes of transportation such as transit, biking, and walking can be very practical
 - Existing railways in the SPC region
 - The extensive bus system, especially through the Port Authority
 - People who design and implement transportation services are willing to work together
 - There are many existing walkable neighborhoods in the region
- Opportunities
 - There is workplace flexibility for telecommuting and it seems very possible to shift or stagger work hours
 - There is new and planned bike infrastructure in the region
 - There is an ongoing effort to re-urbanize Pittsburgh and from this there is large potential to concurrently grow transit
 - Existing Park and Ride lots in the area can be easily spruced up
 - Populated suburbs and cities in the area are working to implement more TDM opportunities
 - The major universities in the area offer free transit

Are there Existing Strengths or Opportunities to Manage Travel Demand

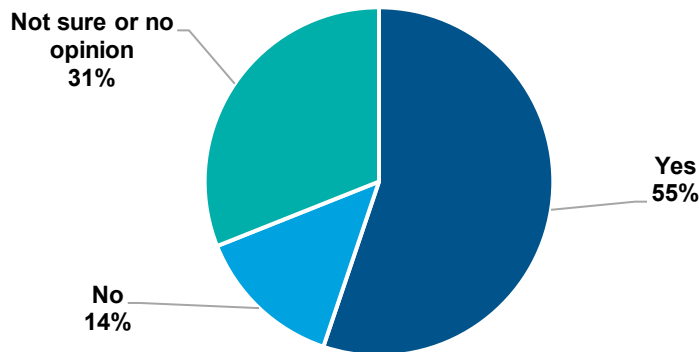


Figure 5: Existing strengths or opportunities to manage travel demand.

2.4 Awareness of Local or Regional Programs

Figure 6 shows that half of the survey respondents were aware of local and regional programs that support the utilization of carpools and/or vanpools for commuting to and from work. Forty one percent of the respondents weren't aware of any programs, and a little less than 10% of the respondents were not sure. CommuteInfo, which is an SPC program that supports carpool, transit, vanpool, bikepool, and walking opportunities, was frequently mentioned in respondents' comments. Other notable recurring comments were carpool opportunities with University of Pittsburgh employees and awareness of park and ride lots in the region.

Aware of any Local or Regional Programs Supporting Carpooling and/or Vanpooling

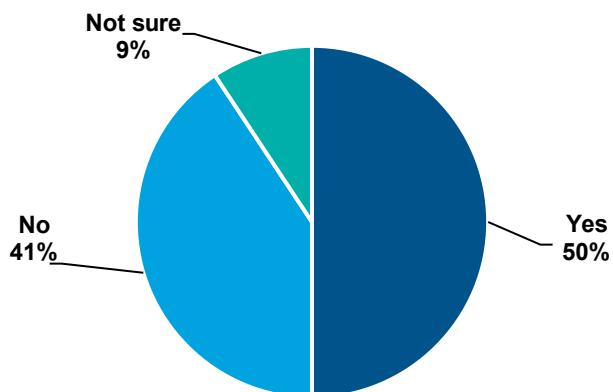


Figure 6: Awareness of Local or Regional Programs Supporting Carpooling or Vanpooling

2.5 Encouragement Efforts

When asked if they were undertaking efforts to encourage their constituency to travel by alternatives to driving alone or to shift their travel to off-peak periods, 39% of respondents said Yes and 37% said No. Figure 7 below shows this split, as well as the 17% that answered not applicable and 7% were not sure. For respondents that were undertaking encouragement efforts, common responses referred to broad support for active transportation and further biking and walking opportunities, as well as support for TDM measures in the Oakland neighborhood. Respondents also noted workplace factors that affect encouragement: some workers don't have flexible work hours available to make alternative transportation or travel time adjustments practical, while some workplaces don't offer travel incentives. One respondent noted that because gas is inexpensive, they feel no reason to avoid driving alone.

Encouragement efforts for alternative means of transportation or off-peak periods

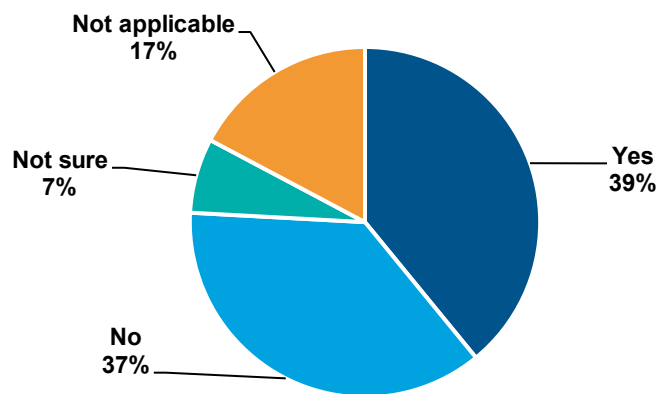


Figure 7: Encouragement efforts for alternative means of transportation or shifting travel to off-peak period travel times.

3. CommuteInfo

The survey asked about stakeholders' awareness of the SPC's regional TDM program CommuteInfo, and also asked for any feedback about the program's existing initiatives.

3.1 Awareness

Figure 8 below shows that 45% of the survey respondents have heard advertisements or seen any information in the past year on the regional CommuteInfo program while 49% have not and 6% were not sure. This awareness level is lower than desired by the SPC, especially among the audience of TDM stakeholders and municipal governments. Many respondents indicated that they were aware or had a general idea of the program but weren't knowledgeable about specific program activities. Other respondents said they saw or heard advertisements for CommuteInfo on newsletters, websites, bus stops, television commercials, Facebook, radio, and presentations hosted or attended by their organizations. Some respondents have even

been visited by CommuteInfo representatives or are signed up to receive emails from the program.

Knowledge on advertisements or information from the regional CommuteInfo program

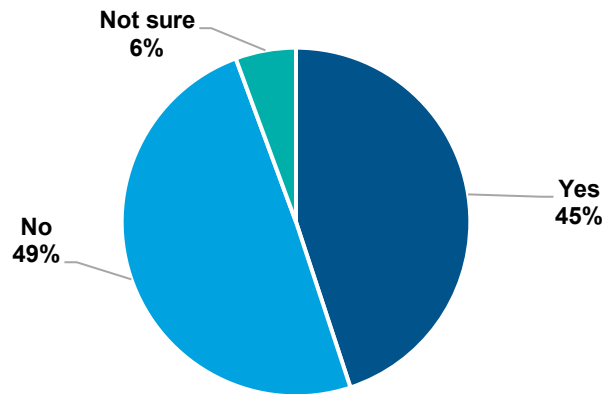


Figure 8: If participants have knowledge on advertisements or information from the regional CommuteInfo program.

3.2 Feedback

Respondents were asked if they had any feedback or suggestions to improve the CommuteInfo program. Most comments referred to promotion and visibility, and are summarized below.

- Increase visibility and communication efforts especially with major employers (5 comments)
- CommuteInfo should partner with local businesses, non-profits, and government agencies to better advertise the program (2 comments)
- Most people don't really know about the CommuteInfo program
- The program should be paired with a guaranteed ride home program
- Could benefit from being translated into Spanish
- More park and ride lots should be advertised using the Commute Info program
- CommuteInfo is very willing to work with people with disabilities
- The program should do a better job showing reliability and dependability as benefits in addition to just simply economic benefits

4. TDM Priorities

Figure 9 displays various TDM priorities ranked from 0 (not a priority) to 3 (high priority). The three TDM strategies ranked as highest priority by respondents (with the highest weighted averages) were: 1) More incentives for transit, 2) Enhanced tools for travelers to see real-time information about travel options and conditions, and 3) Improvements to transit access and/or operations (e.g., transit signal priority, bus-only lanes to improve transit speeds and reliability).

- Other suggested priorities include:
 - Expanding transit to underserved and more rural areas
 - Making urban areas more accessible to biking and walking
 - Better advertisement of all the transportation options available

TDM Strategies priority ranked from 0-3

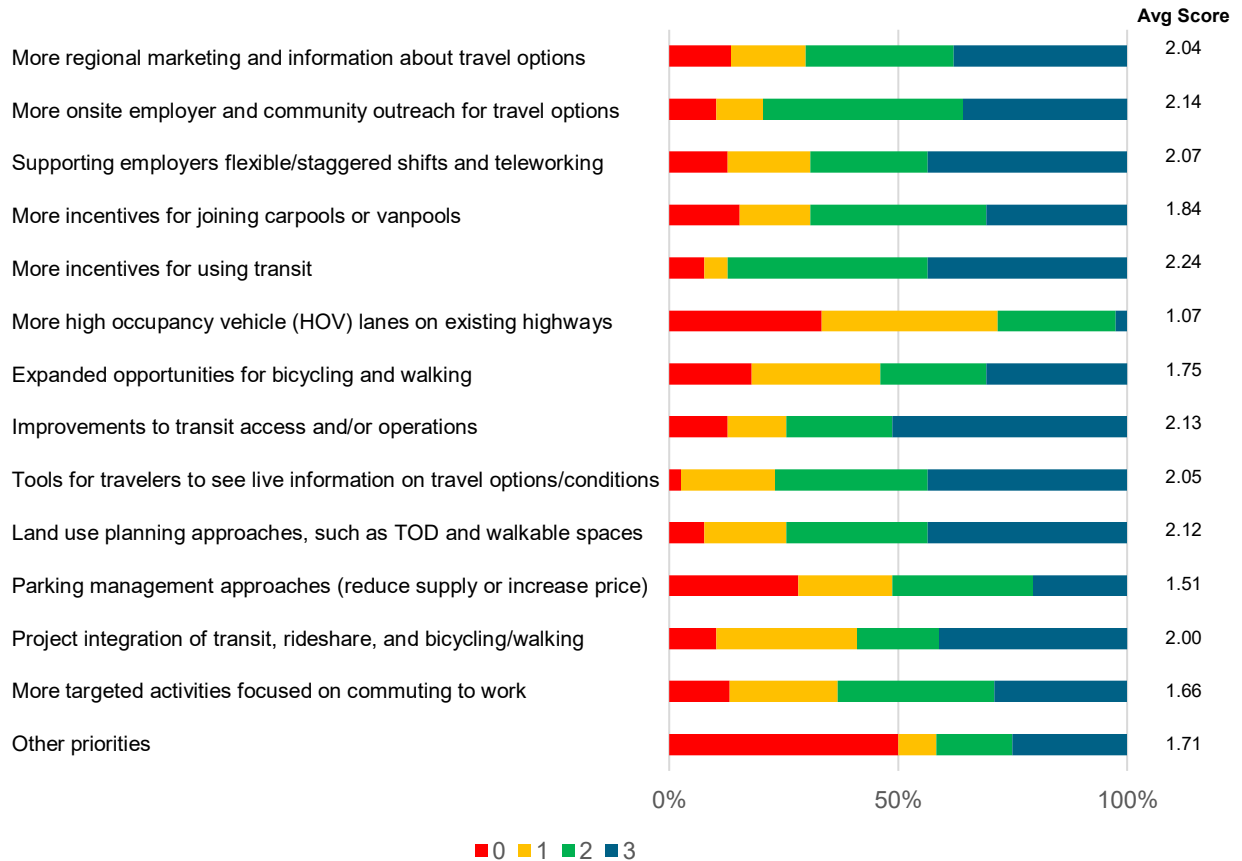


Figure 9: TDM strategies priority ranked.

5. Interest in Future Activities

Thirty four respondents indicated interest in being contacted to participate in future activities related to TDM and provided their name and email, and 29 of them provided their phone numbers. Twelve of the respondents that were interested in future activities represented nonprofit organizations, six represented municipal governments, five represented county governments, three represented transit operators, and four represented employers or universities. Eighty eight respondents skipped the question, indicating they did not wish to be contacted in the future. While the SPC has the CommuteInfo Partners forum and has also established a steering committee for the Regional TDM Strategic Action Plan, there is no permanent committee in place to advise the SPC on regional TDM initiatives. The 2017 FHWA

TDM Planning Workshop held at the SPC identified the action step to establish a regional TDM committee to inform the SPC Commission, discuss TDM strategies from a corridor perspective, and develop a coordinated plan that is integrated into regional planning and project programming. Building on the CommuteInfo Partners forum and the steering committee for the Regional TDM Strategic Action Plan, the 34 survey respondents with interest in future activities demonstrate robust support for a permanent regional TDM Advisory Committee at the SPC.