

# Individualized Marketing Programs

## What is it?

Individualized marketing programs are education and outreach efforts that encourage voluntary travel behavior change (VTBC). These programs differ from traditional mass marketing campaigns in that they are tailored to the travel needs of individuals instead of the general public. Typically, customized information on travel options and alternatives are provided to individuals based on their unique interests and home and/or work location.

## What are the benefits?

- **Mobility:** Helps reduce congestion and vehicle miles traveled by encouraging a shift to transit, rideshare, and non-motorized travel modes.
- **Environmental:** Helps reduce the emission of criteria air pollutants and greenhouse gases that are harmful to the environment and human health by encouraging shifts to more sustainable transportation modes.
- **Quality of Life:** Helps increase awareness of the active transportation mode options available and helps remove barriers to adoption and use.

## Where is it being used?

Individualized marketing programs are used in cities throughout the U.S. and around the world, including: <sup>2</sup>

- [Whatcom SmartTrips](#), Bellingham, Washington
- [SmartTrips](#) in Portland, Oregon
- [TravelSmart](#) in Perth, Australia
- Influencing Travel Behavior Program, United Kingdom

## How effective is it?

From 2009 to 2011, the Portland Smart Trips Green Line program reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by an estimated 15,713,667 to 23,570,500 (approximately 0.08% to 0.12% of regional VMT).<sup>3</sup> The Portland Smart Trips NNW program reduced VMT by an estimated 6,605,922 to 9,908,882

Which Mosaic Categories does the program support?



TravelSmart, Perth, Australia<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/activetransport/active-transport.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> In this summary, the best available data on program effectiveness is used. Whenever possible, information is provided for the referenced examples; however, that was not always available.

<sup>3</sup> Regional VMT for the Portland MSA in 2009 and 2010, estimated on the basis of freeway and arterial VMT data in the *2011 Urban Mobility Report*, published by the Texas Transportation Institute. <https://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/archive/>. Note that regional VMT data are for 2009 and 2010, while the VMR reported for the RTO rideshare program are for *fiscal years* 2009 to 2011.

(approximately 0.03% to 0.05% of regional VMT).<sup>4</sup> On average, the Portland SmartTrips program serves approximately 20,000 households in a program year.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, SmartTrips and TravelSmart projects have been shown to reduce drive-alone car trips by area residents within the SmartTrips service area 9% to 13%, with a corresponding increase in walking, bicycling, and transit mode shares.<sup>6,7</sup>

The Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Individualized Marketing Demonstration Program, 2003 to 2006, produced average mode share results from four cities across the U.S.: Bellingham, Washington; Cleveland, Ohio; Durham, North Carolina; and Sacramento, California (see Table 1).

**Table 1: FTA Individualized Marketing Demonstration Program Results**

Travel Mode	“Before” Mode Share	“After” Mode Share	% Change	Absolute Shifts (% Points)
Walk	8%	9%	+20%	+1%
Bike	2%	3%	+25%	+1%
Public Transit	2%	2%	+25%	<+1%
Auto Driver	69%	66%	-5%	-3%
Auto Passenger	19%	20%	+6%	+1%

Source: Brög and Barta (2007) as reported in *TCRP Report 95*, “Chapter 16: Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities,” Table 16-57.

Additional findings from other sources include:

- Quantification of individualized marketing effects on physical activity shows a typical increase of 11 to 13 hours per year per person.<sup>8</sup>
- Travel mode shifts attributable to individualized marketing have been shown to hold for up to 4 years, compared with a few months to 1 year for conventional promotions.
- Launching individualized marketing programs and improving transit facilities at the same time has been shown to more than double the increase in transit use. In a study of nine cities, the average increase in transit trips per person in neighborhoods near recent transit expansions was 23%. This increased to 48% in areas where individualized marketing programs were implemented in conjunction with transit improvements.<sup>9</sup>

## How much does it cost to implement?

On average, a typical Portland SmartTrips 20,000-household program costs about \$570,000.<sup>10</sup> Information on the costs, benefits, and estimated cost-effectiveness of two SmartTrips programs in the

<sup>4</sup> Portland Metro. *RTO 2012 Program Evaluation*. [https://library.oregonmetro.gov/files/appendix\\_d\\_rto\\_evaluation\\_2012.pdf](https://library.oregonmetro.gov/files/appendix_d_rto_evaluation_2012.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/43801>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/>.

<sup>7</sup> Regional VMT for the Portland MSA in 2009 and 2010 estimated on the basis of freeway and arterial VMT data in the *2011 Urban Mobility Report*, published by the Texas Transportation Institute. <https://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/archive/>. Note that regional VMT data are for 2009 and 2010, while the VMT reported for the RTO individualized marketing programs are for fiscal years 2009 to 2011.

<sup>8</sup> *Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 95*. “Chapter 16: Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities.” 2009. p. 16-372.

<sup>9</sup> Brög et al. as reported in *TCRP Report 95*. “Chapter 16: Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities.” 2009. p. 16-220.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/43801>.



Portland area from 2009 to 2011 are provided in Table 2 below. These programs involved a total of 58,684 households and 146,112 residents.

**Table 2: Portland SmartTrips Programs**

Portland SmartTrips Program	Total Expenditures (FY 09/10 & 10/11)	Vehicle Miles Reduced (low estimate) <sub>a</sub>	Vehicle Miles Reduced (high estimate) <sub>a</sub>	Cost-effectiveness (\$ per VMR) <sub>b</sub>
Green Line	\$751,539	15,713,700	23,570,500	\$.03 - \$.05
North /Northwest	\$507,405	6,605,900	9,908,900	\$.05 - \$.08

Source: Portland Metro RTO 2012 Program Evaluation. [https://library.oregonmetro.gov/files//appendix\\_d\\_rto\\_evaluation\\_2012.pdf](https://library.oregonmetro.gov/files//appendix_d_rto_evaluation_2012.pdf)

Table Notes:

a. The VMR shows a “high” and a “low” estimate, assuming that only between 40% and 60% of VMR reduced can be attributed to the program.

b. Cost-effectiveness estimated by Mosaic Program Guide authors is based on total expenditures (including Metro and local matching funds). The \$ per VMR reported is based on the total costs and vehicle miles reduced reported over the 2-year study period. Cost-effectiveness may even be greater if the finding that individualized marketing programs typically produce results that last up to 4 years is taken into consideration.

There is a growing body of international evidence that individualized marketing programs produce positive benefit/cost ratios:<sup>11</sup>

- **Linz, Australia:** Based only on cost recovery from increased transit revenues, the first year rate of return ranged from 1.1 to 1.6 (more than 100% of program costs were recovered in the first year).
- **South Perth, Australia:** Benefit-cost estimates were 44:1 for 10 years and 77:1 for 25 years. The analysis examined a broad range of benefits, including transit net fare revenue gain, avoided road construction costs, avoided traffic control costs, and public health savings from reduced air pollution and improved health and fitness.
- **Influencing Travel Behavior Program, United Kingdom:** The average benefit-cost ratio of early individualized marketing pilot projects was estimated to be 31:1. The study noted that individualized marketing cost-effectiveness appears to improve as the scale of implementation is increased.

## Implementation resources

Individualized marketing programs are frequently run by city transportation departments and may receive additional funding through grants and/or regional/state funds. The SmartTrips programs in Oregon was originally brought to the U.S. in 2002 by the Portland Office of Transportation and adapted from individualized marketing programs, TravelSmart in Australia and in Europe. The following case study provides more information on the history of SmartTrips and includes ideas and resources for implementation:

- [Portland Smart Trips Case Study](#), Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

<sup>11</sup> Parker et al. As reported in *TCRP Report 95*. Chapter 16. 2007. p. 16-396.