



**Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments**

**FY26 First Half  
Marketing Campaign Summary  
Draft Report**

**Regional TDM Marketing Group**

**January 20, 2026**

**FY26 First Half  
Marketing Campaign Summary**

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## **Executive Summary**

This document summarizes FY26 marketing activity by Commuter Connections occurring between July and December 2025.

### **Ridesharing & GRH Fall Campaigns**

The fall 2025 rideshare campaign theme was “Carpool Together” and focused on the social side of sharing the commute, as well as saving time and money. For Guaranteed Ride Home, the “Life Happens” concept presented relatable scenarios of why commuters would need the GRH service. The FY26 first half fall media buy was \$368,839 for Rideshare and \$249,354 for GRH, and included digital, traditional and streaming radio, podcasts, video and social media advertising. The GRH Baltimore media buy of \$23,750 was comprised of streaming radio and digital.

### **Incentive Programs**

A marketing campaign for CommuterCash regional and CommuterCash MDOT ran September through November 2025. The CommuterCash regional media investment was \$123,500, and CommuterCash MDOT was \$47,500.

### **Employer Recognition Awards**

A concept was designed for the 2026 call for nominations, which opened in late November. Images were used for the website, email blasts, social media, and postcard mailing.

## Introduction

The following reports were assessed as part of the planning process to help shape approaches and media selection during the first half of FY26. These survey reports indicate respondents' attitudes, preferences, behaviors, and patterns about commuting and Commuter Connections programs, services, and events. Many of the surveys also gathered demographic data to help understand the age, income, gender, and ethnic backgrounds of the region's populous and Commuter Connections members.

- 2024 Commuter Connections Applicant Database Annual Placement Survey Report
- 2023 Commuter Connections TDM Analysis Report (FY21–FY23)
- 2022 Commuter Connections Bike to Work Survey Analysis Report
- 2022 Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Survey Report, Washington, DC Region
- 2022 Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Survey Report, Baltimore Region
- 2022 Commuter Connections State of the Commute Survey Report

The first half of FY26 included the following activities:

- Regional TDM Marketing Group and Bike to Work Day meetings
- GRH and Rideshare fall campaigns
- CommuterCash/CommuterCash MDOT campaigns
- Employer Recognition Awards call for nominations
- Bike to Work Day sponsor drive, creative design, and new website development
- goDMV sponsor drive and campaign planning
- Spring umbrella campaign creative development

## About Commuter Connections

Commuter Connections is a network of transportation organizations coordinated at the regional level through the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Commuter Connections offers free services largely to commuters in the Washington, DC metropolitan region, as well as some services to support the Baltimore region. Primary focus includes ridematching for carpools and vanpools, and administration of the Guaranteed Ride Home program. Other key elements include incentive programs such as CommuterCash, special events such as Bike to Work Day and the goDMV Commuter Competition, Employer Outreach, and TDM evaluation.

Organizations represented in the Commuter Connections Regional TDM Marketing Group include:

- Arlington County Commuter Services
- Bethesda Transportation Solutions
- City of Alexandria GO Alex
- City of Fairfax
- District Department of Transportation
- Dulles Area Transportation Association
- Enterprise Rideshare
- Fairfax Connector
- Fairfax County Commuter Services
- GW Ride Connect
- Loudoun County Commuter Services
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Maryland State Highway Administration
- Maryland Transit Administration
- Montgomery County Commuter Services
- Montgomery County Ride On
- National Institutes of Health
- North Bethesda Transportation Center
- Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
- OmniRide (PRTC)
- Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation
- Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
- Transit Services of Frederick County
- Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
- Tysons Partnership Transportation Council
- U.S. General Services Administration
- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Railway Express
- Washington Area Bicyclist Association
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

## Brand Character

Commuter Connections delivers a brand promise as the preeminent and trusted regional network of transportation organizations in the Washington region, providing free commuting assistance, services, and solutions for more than 50 years. Through Commuter Connections' Ridematching system, commuters are given free direct access to others interested in carpooling and vanpooling, along with information on routes, and options such as transit, bicycling, and teleworking. Sharing a ride to work positively affects air quality and mobility for the region.



## Rideshare Fall Campaign

The fall Rideshare campaign reflected the “Carpool Together” creative which debuted in spring 2025. This concept connected the word “together” with visuals of shared positive carpool scenes.

Media buy and associated impressions are below:

Ridesharing Spending	Description	COG Cost	Estimated Impressions
iHeart Radio	WASH, WWDC, WMZQ	\$42,037	3,392,940
Audacy Radio	WIAD, WJFK, WPGC	\$29,172	1,738,200
WTOP	WTOP	\$25,373	2,290,800
WAMU	WAMU	\$15,300	1,900,500
WHUR	WHUR	\$9,758	1,080,000
iHeart	Streaming, Podcasting	\$43,200	2,913,583
Causal IQ	Digital Display	\$60,000	13,333,333
Causal IQ	OTT, CTV	\$54,000	1,500,000
ESPN	ESPN-Display Advertising	\$48,000	4,401,668
Social Media	Facebook, Google, Instagram, YouTube	\$42,000	NA
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$368,840</b>	<b>32,551,024</b>

## Value-add

A total of approximately \$10,825 in value-add was negotiated for Ridesharing.

## **Radio (Rideshare)**

Radio for the Rideshare campaign aired/streamed on multiple stations with various formats.

### **Radio Scripts**

#### **:30 Ridesharing**

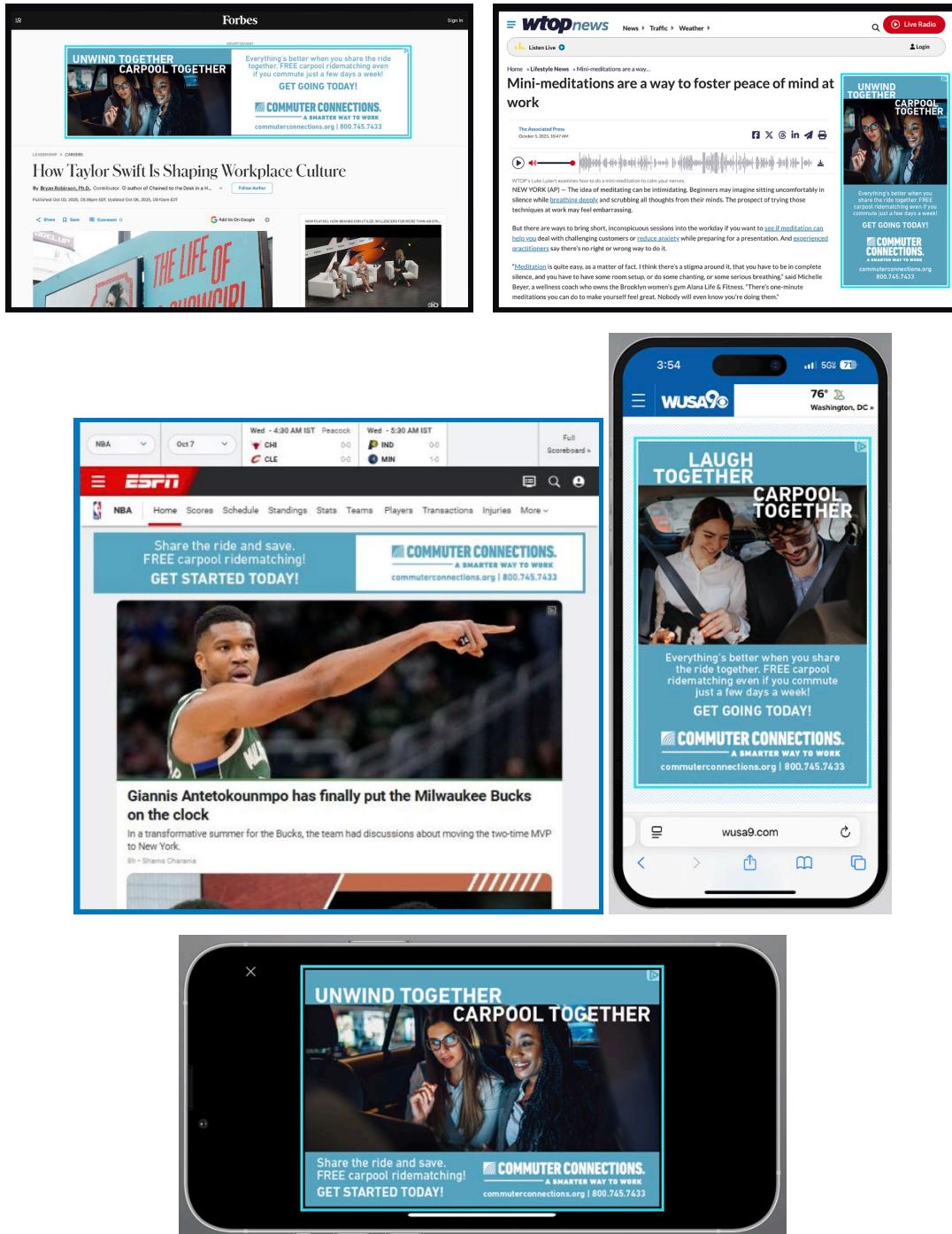
Laugh together, carpool together! Everything's better when you share the ride together. Even if you're commuting just a few days a week, Commuter Connections can match you into carpools with others who live and work near you. It's a free service for commuters! Save time and money when you share the ride. Get *your carpool* together. Register today for FREE at Commuter Connections Dot Org or call 800-745-RIDE. That's Commuter Connections Dot Org.

#### **:15 Ridesharing**

Laugh together, carpool together! Everything's better when you share the ride together. Get matched into carpools with others who live and work near you. Register for free at Commuter Connections Dot Org or call 800-745-RIDE.

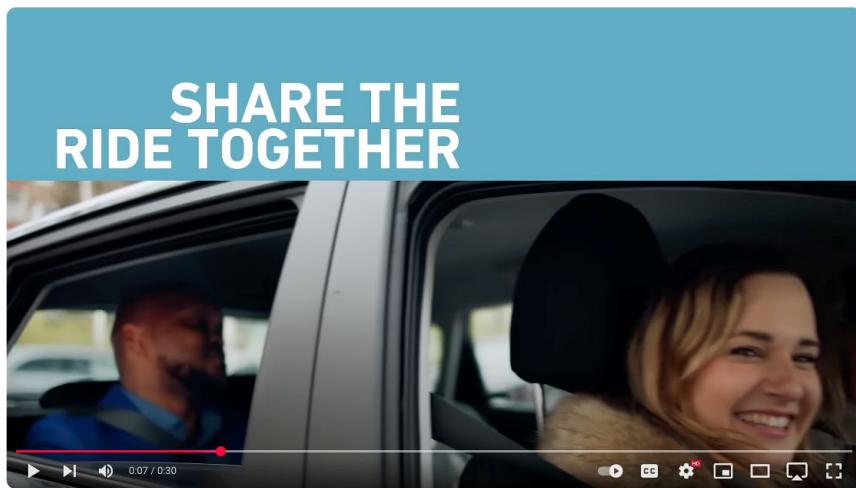
## Digital Display Ads (Rideshare)

Digital display banner ads in various sizes ran on ESPN.com and the Causal IQ network of targeted websites, optimized for performance.



## Streaming Video (Rideshare)

A 30-second video was created to promote ridesharing and ran as paid advertising on YouTube and the Causal IQ network of targeted websites, optimized for performance.



Carpool Smarter: Share the Ride Together

## Social Media (Rideshare)

A series of social media images were created for the fall campaign and were used for paid ads on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Google, and Instagram.



## GRH Fall Campaign

The fall Guaranteed Ride Home campaign reflected the “Life Happens” creative which debuted in spring 2025. The concept presented relatable life situations, such as having a sick child or the need to work overtime. This theme presented GRH as a valuable support service providing a free ride home for commuters using SOV alternatives, when illness, emergencies, or unscheduled overtime arise.

Guaranteed Ride Home Spending	Description	COG Cost	Estimated Impressions
iHeart Radio	WASH, WWDC, WMZQ	\$30,090	2,261,960
Audacy Radio	WIAD, WJFK, WPGC	\$20,379	1,158,800
WTOP	WTOP	\$16,915	1,527,200
WAMU	WAMU	\$10,200	1,267,000
WHUR	WHUR	\$6,970	720,000
iHeart	Streaming, Podcasting	\$28,800	1,942,388
Causal IQ	Digital Display	\$40,000	8,888,890
Causal IQ	OTT/CTV	\$36,000	1,000,000
ESPN	ESPN-Display Advertising	\$32,000	2,933,334
Social Media	Facebook, Google, Instagram, YouTube	\$28,000	NA
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$249,354</b>	<b>21,699,572</b>

## Value-add

A total of approximately \$7,950 in value-add was negotiated for Guaranteed Ride Home.

## **Radio (GRH)**

Radio for the Guaranteed Ride Home campaign aired/streamed on multiple stations with various formats.

### **Radio Scripts**

#### **:30 Guaranteed Ride Home**

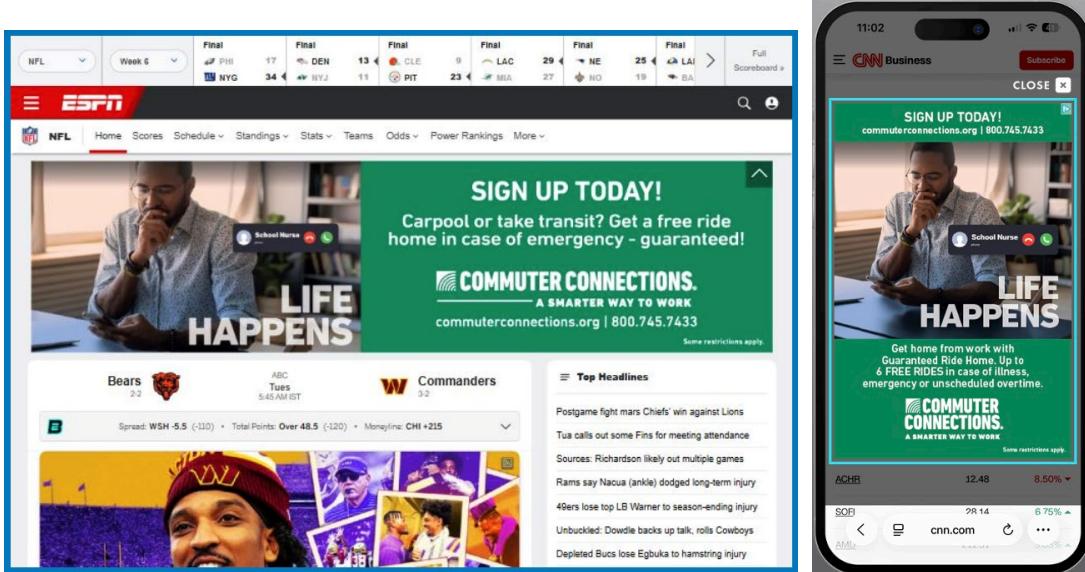
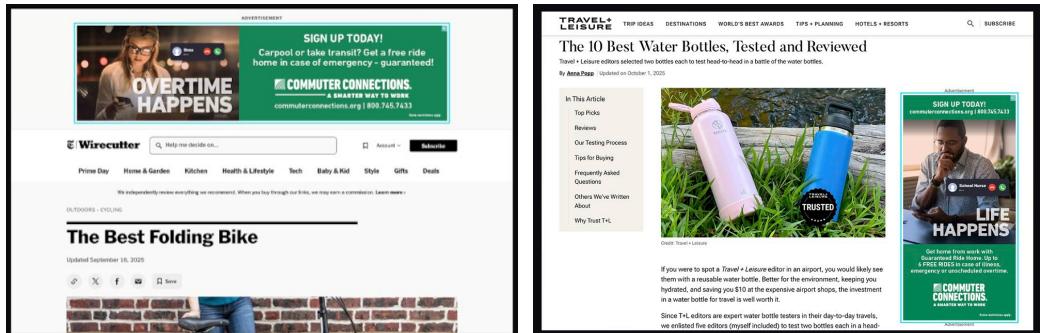
Sick child? Working late? Not feeling well? Life happens. When it does, it's good to know you can get home with Commuter Connections. If you carpool, vanpool or use transit, you can get up to 6 FREE rides home in case of illness, emergency or unscheduled overtime—even if you're commuting just a few times a week. Register or renew for FREE for Guaranteed Ride Home at Commuter Connections Dot Org or call 800-745-RIDE. That's Commuter Connections.org. Some restrictions apply.

#### **:15 Guaranteed Ride Home**

Working late? Life happens. If you carpool or take transit to work, you can get a free guaranteed ride home for unexpected emergencies—even if you're commuting just a few times a week. Learn more at Commuter Connections Dot Org or call 800-745-RIDE.

## Digital Display Ads (GRH)

Digital display banner ads in various sizes ran on ESPN.com and the Causal IQ network of targeted websites, optimized for performance.



### Streaming Video (GRH)

A 30-second video was created to promote ridesharing and ran as paid advertising on YouTube and the Causal IQ network of targeted websites, optimized for performance.



## Social Media (GRH)

A series of social media posts were created for the spring campaign and were used for paid ads on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Google, and Instagram.



## Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH Baltimore)

GRH Baltimore Spending	Description	COG Cost	Estimated Impressions
Causal IQ	Digital Display	\$13,750	3,055,555
iHeart	Streaming	\$10,000	653,594
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$23,750</b>	<b>3,709,149</b>

### Radio Script

#### :30 Guaranteed Ride Home

Sick child? Working late? Not feeling well? Life happens. When it does, it's good to know you can get home with Commuter Connections. If you carpool, vanpool or use transit, you can get up to 6 FREE rides home in case of illness, emergency or unscheduled overtime—even if you're commuting just a few times a week. Register or renew for FREE for Guaranteed Ride Home at Commuter Connections Dot Org or call 800-745-RIDE. That's Commuter Connections.org. Some restrictions apply.

### Digital Display Ads (GRH Baltimore)

Digital display banner ads in various sizes ran on the Causal IQ network of targeted websites, optimized for performance.

### Guaranteed Ride Home Logos

In fall 2025, a logo was created for Guaranteed Ride Home for the very first time since the service was launched in 1997. The GRH logo will be introduced as part of the spring 2026 marketing campaign. The version without mention of Commuter Connections will appear along with the Commuter Connections logo, within the same GRH ad. The logo with the “by Commuter Connections” tag will appear in GRH ads where there is not enough space to also include the traditional Commuter Connections logo.



## CommuterCash

CommuterCash rewards commuters who carpool, vanpool, bike, walk, scooter, or take transit and log their trips into the app. Points are earned for each trip, which can be redeemed for cash, up to \$600 per year, through PayPal, Venmo, or Visa card, and can also be exchanged for credit towards SmartTrip, Capital Bikeshare, or Virginia E-ZPass.

Two separate yet interrelated targeted marketing campaigns ran from September through November 2025 to encourage commuters to download and use the app. The media buy included streaming and traditional radio ads, podcasts, digital banner ads, and social media advertising.

## Target Audience

### CommuterCash Regional

Commuters within the Washington, DC metropolitan region.



CommuterCash Regional Spending	Description	COG Cost	Estimated Impressions
Causal IQ	Digital Display	\$52,500	11,666,667
iHeart Radio	WWDC-FM/ WASH-FM / WMZQ-FM / WBIG-FM / WIHT-FM	\$30,702	2,792,400
iHeart	Streaming/Podcasting	\$20,298	1,226,666
Social Media	Facebook/Instagram/Google	\$20,000	NA
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$123,500</b>	

## Value-add

A total of approximately \$6,000 in value-add was negotiated for CommuterCash.

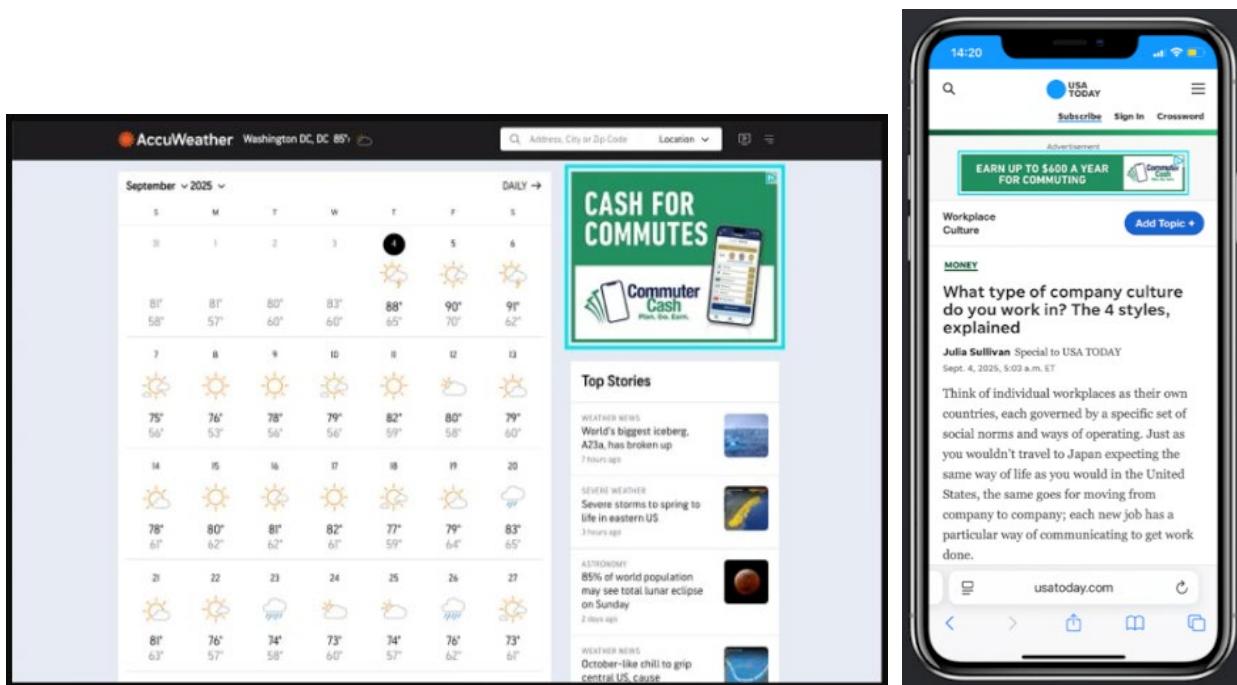
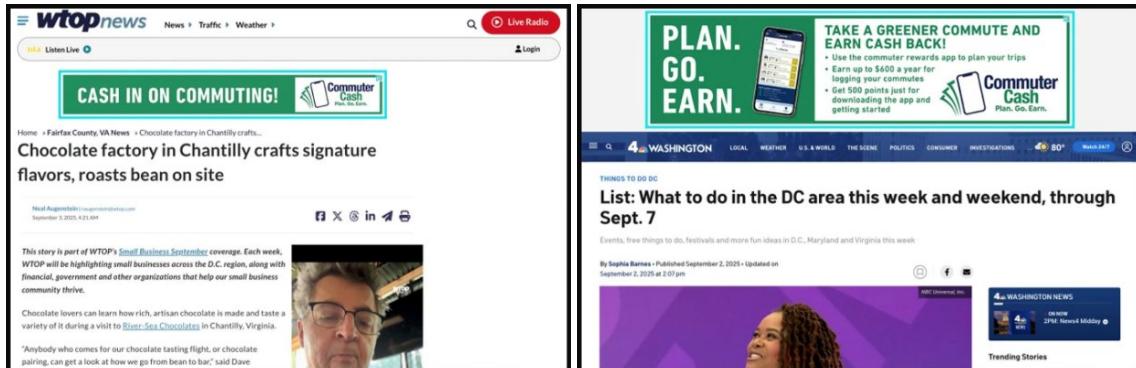
## Radio Script

### :30 Radio Script (Regional)

Want to earn CASH for your commute? You can with CommuterCash, the trip-planning app from Commuter Connections. CommuterCash makes it easy to earn points every time you use it to find and take greener ways to work—like transit, carpooling, and bicycling. Redeem points for cash, Visa gift cards, and other rewards, up to \$600 a year. Save time and money! Download the CommuterCash app to start earning cash rewards today. Learn more at CommuterCash dot org.

## Digital Display Ads (Regional)

Animated and static digital display banner ads in various sizes ran on the Causal IQ network of targeted websites, optimized for performance.



## Social Media (Regional)

A social media campaign ran on Facebook, Instagram, and Google.



## CommuterCash MDOT

Commuters living or working in the entire state of Maryland, with an emphasis on the following counties and cities: Allegany County, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Cecil County, Harford County, Howard County, Queen Anne's County, St. Mary's County, or Washington County. Commuters working in the Maryland areas listed above and living in Berkeley County WV, Jefferson County WV, or New Castle County DE.

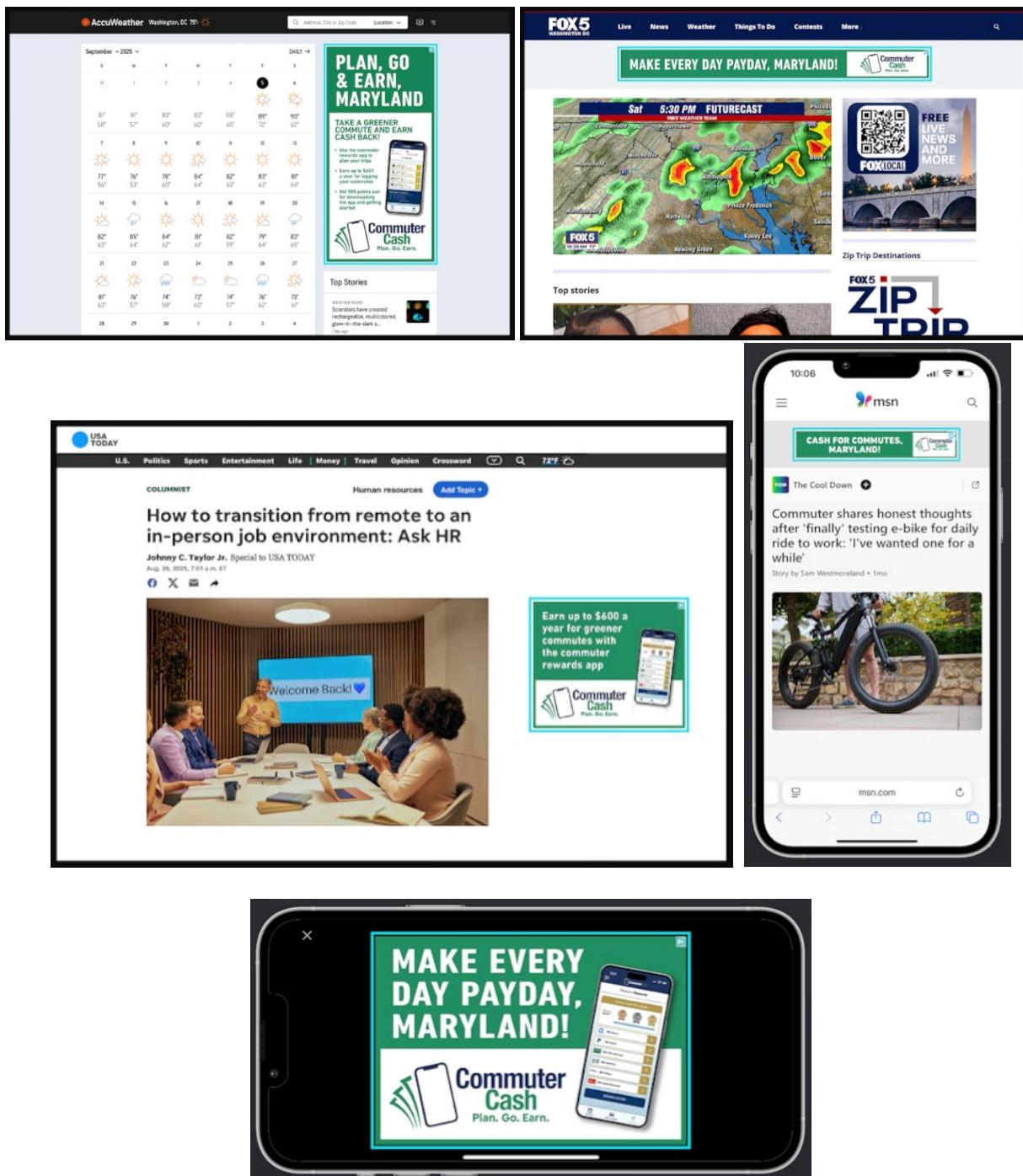
CommuterCash MDOT Spending	Description	COG Cost	Estimated Impressions
Causal IQ	Digital Display	\$21,500	4,777,778
iHeart Radio	WWDC-FM/ WASH-FM	\$16,000	793,731
Social Media	Facebook/ Instagram/Google	\$10,000	NA
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$47,500</b>	<b>5,571,509</b>

### :30 Radio Script (MDOT)

Make every day payday with the CommuterCash app! That's right, Maryland, CommuterCash makes it easy to earn quick rewards points every time you find and take a greener trip to work, like transit, carpools and bicycling. Redeem points for cash or Visa gift cards – up to \$600 a year through the Maryland Department of Transportation and Commuter Connections! Now that's savings you can take to the bank! Download the app today! Learn more at CommuterCash dot org.

## Digital Display Ads (MDOT)

A similar set of animated and static digital display banner ads in various sizes appeared on the Causal IQ network of targeted websites frequented by Maryland commuters and were optimized for performance.



## Social Media (MDOT)

A social media campaign ran on Facebook, Instagram and Google, specifically focused on Maryland commuters.



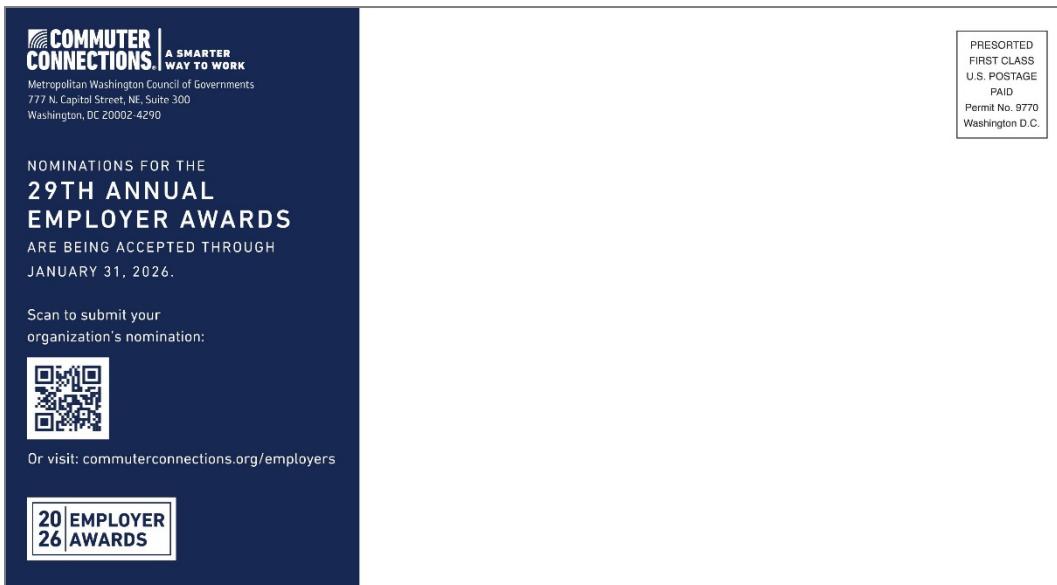
## Employer Awards 2026

The Employer Awards program recognizes employers who initiate outstanding commuter benefits and/or telework programs to assist their employees. A concept was designed for the call for nominations email sent in late November 2025. The nomination period will be open through January 31, 2026.



## Employer Awards Postcard

An 11 x 6" postcard was mailed to approximately 1,800 level 3 & 4 employers to help spark interest in nominations.



## APPENDIX A

### Performance Measures

#### Web Visits

Month	FY 2025 Web Visits (Sessions)	FY 2026 Web Visits (Sessions)	Year to Year # Change	Year to Year % Change
July	7,419	16,102	8,683	117.0%
August	11,357	8,323	-3,034	-26.7%
September	7,467	34,661	27,194	364.2%
October	27,060	137,682	110,622	408.8%
November	26,867	100,269	73,402	273.2%
December	2,129	37,083	34,954	1641.8%
	<b>82,299</b>	<b>334,120</b>	<b>251,821</b>	<b>305.98%</b>

#### Phone Calls

Month	FY 2025 Phone Calls	FY 2026 Phone Calls	+/-	+/- %
July	354	720	366	103.4%
August	367	583	216	58.9%
September	347	701	354	102.0%
October	362	561	199	55.0%
November	332	495	163	49.1%
December	283	617	334	118.0%
	<b>2,045</b>	<b>3,677</b>	<b>1,632</b>	<b>79.8%</b>