

**RTAP Peer Roundtable Notes**  
**Public Engagement & Marketing**  
10/16/2025 | 1:00–2:30PM | Online

**Attendees**

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Kimberly Keller      | 12. Cathleen Amick   |
| 2. Lisa Sabyan          | 13. Kirk Kuchera     |
| 3. Christine Thompson   | 14. Aaron Forstrom   |
| 4. Alan Hermann         | 15. Allison Karau    |
| 5. Hugh Killam          | 16. Randy Wadena     |
| 6. Kenneth Bakken       | 17. Bill Spitzer     |
| 7. Kimberly Keller      | 18. Rhonda Torgersen |
| 8. Paul Coyour          | 19. Mariah Kathan    |
| 9. Stephanie Noerenberg | 20. Jaycie Kratky    |
| 10. Kathy Schultz       |                      |
| 11. Annette Swenson     |                      |

**Roles**

- Timekeeper: Mariah & Jaycie
- Parking Lot: Chris Thompson
- Conversation Encourager: Alan Hermann

**Biggest Challenges**

- Public transit is a 'best kept secret' – lack of awareness that services exist
- Reaching the right audiences across different ages, abilities, and demographics
- Marketing across large, multi-county or multi-city service areas
- Limited marketing budgets and difficulty measuring return on investment
- Negative perceptions or belief that transit is only for certain groups
- Difficulty converting interest or feedback into actual ridership
- Balancing leadership priorities with customer-focused messaging

## Solutions and Effective Strategies Shared

- Partnerships with cities, counties, chambers of commerce, AARP, and community organizations
- Using city newsletters, utility bill inserts, and community mailings
- Storytelling: rider stories, staff spotlights, and blogs repurposed for social media
- Engaging drivers and frontline staff to help identify stories and feedback
- Attending community events, expos, council meetings, and public comment sessions
- High school outreach and QR codes on printed materials
- Targeted outreach to senior housing, low-income housing, and human service agencies
- Direct mail and billboard campaigns for broader awareness
- One-time or special event transit services to introduce new riders
- Tracking efforts with simple timelines or notes alongside ridership trends

## Ask a Peer – Questions and Answers

**Question 1:** Are apps or a statewide Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platform useful for rural and small transit agencies?

**Answer:** Many agencies expressed interest in using a shared statewide platform, especially if it reduces individual costs and increases visibility. The Transit App was discussed as a strong base because it already works statewide and uses GTFS data. Some agencies noted that app usefulness depends on rider demographics and local capacity, while others welcomed state-led marketing and implementation support.

**Question 2:** How can statewide marketing better support local transit agencies?

**Answer:** Participants suggested large-scale efforts such as billboards and direct mail campaigns funded or coordinated at the state level. These were seen as more impactful than small, fragmented local budgets. Participants also emphasized allowing vehicle wraps to count as eligible marketing expenses.

**Next Peer Roundtable:** November 21, 2025, Topic – Succession Planning