

Playa Vista's Ability2Change Program

February 24, 2017

Webinar Transcript





Landmark Designation

The program described in this case study was designated in 2016.

Designation as a Landmark (best practice) case study through our peer selection process recognizes programs and social marketing approaches considered to be among the most successful in the world. They are nominated both by our peer-selection panels and by Tools of Change staff, and are then scored by the selection panels based on impact, innovation, replicability and adaptability.

The panel that designated this program consisted of:

- Ryan Lanyon, City of Toronto
- Nathalie Lapointe, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- JoAnn Woodhall, Translink
- David Levinger, Mobility Education Foundation
- Geoff Noxon, Noxon Associates
- Phil Winters, CUTR and the University of South Florida

This transcript covers a webinar held on Wednesday, February 24, 2017. Additional materials about this program can be found at: <http://www.toolsofchange.com/en/case-studies/detail/702>.

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Introduction by Jay Kassirer

Introduced Aaron Gaul, Urban Trans North America

Aaron Gaul

Thank you. It is a true honor to have been selected by the committee. They are the who's who of this industry, and I've had the pleasure of working, chatting, and brainstorming with them.

[Slide] I'm probably one of the biggest transportation nerds out there. If you're listening to us today or going to be listening to this through a video, it probably means you're also a giant transportation nerd. It's great to be amongst friends.

It's great to be working collectively in this space to try and get everyone to change how they actually travel. It's a unique niche community, and I think by all of us sharing our best practices and understanding what's working, what's not working, we can make some really big, important things happen.

Background

[Two slides] Playa Vista is a community name. Think of it as, in your own community, a big neighbourhood or a big suburb. In Los Angeles (LA), we're notorious for traffic. If you saw the latest [INRIX](#) survey of worldwide traffic, we hit No. 1. It's not something we're proud of, but when an approach like ours can work in car-centric Los Angeles, it could and should work in your backyard too.

It's a pocket of "transit-oriented development," and I use that term in quotes because when they started putting shovels in the ground, there was no transit. It was actually a transit desert. However, the intention was to be a mixed-use community for retail, commercial, and residential, west of L.A. towards the water, just south of Santa Monica.

Playa Vista is undergoing an extreme amount of growth, but I don't think that affected things much, other than adding to the complexity.

What's really interesting is the makeup of who is setting up their businesses here. It literally is becoming known as Silicon Beach, with 83% of the workforce in large, quickly growing tech, media, and advertising companies. The firm may be growing so fast that last year, they had 100 people; this year, they have 500 people. It has gained the moniker "Silicon Beach" due to some of the big names: Google, Yahoo, Fox News, Belkin, and EA Games.

[Slide] This screen grab is only meant to showcase that extreme growth happening. Two years ago, you see on the top there, all of that dirt that's in that swath right in the middle, and then you see last year, how much of that dirt has now become rooftops. If I had the ability to send a Google satellite over again today, this would be even more filled in,

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those dirt pockets. It's just blooming. This community is coming to life in a matter of years.

[Slide] Also contextually important is that Los Angeles Department of Transportation had a lot of specific requirements (a.k.a. 'sticks'). This area, Playa Vista, used to be home to the Spruce Goose. If you love the movie *The Aviator*, you know the Spruce Goose. This used to be an airfield on wetland. Very little protected wetland surrounds Playa Vista today.

In the development process, LADOT said, "You've got to promise us certain things. We can't be developing this part of LA and not be promising that it's going to be managed to minimize single-occupant vehicles and traffic overall."

As a result, we have to ensure an afternoon peak-period trip cap. During the p.m. rush hour, there's an hour during which we have to ensure we're not going over a certain number of cars coming into or going out of Playa Vista.

Another one of the sticks was that you have to use a well-rounded approach – and I say well-rounded in that it must include some essential contextual elements needed for a transportation demand management program.

On top of that, they said, "Hey, you're gonna have to provide subsidized transit passes." That was one that is a little bit too granular, in my opinion, as far as how to implement a strategy for behavior change. But we took lemons and we made lemonade.

And then, finally, we had to leverage the existing regional evaluation framework. LA, while we are the car capital, has had some fantastic TDM and transportation demand management policies put in place that force big employers to mitigate the impacts of their employment sites with respect to cars.

The evaluation framework (called Rule 2202) is basically one of the framework elements. We had to use that evaluation framework, which is great because it allows us to compare "apples to apples" across the region, but it very much prescribed how this program would evolve. Now you know the background. Now you know the 'carrots' and the 'sticks.'

The Key Players

[Slide] Here is how the players played out. Playa Vista as a whole is a major development made up of three sectors: commercial, retail, and residential.

The owners' association had a number of mandates for development. Brookfield Residential, a Canadian company with assets all over the world, was the entity hired to ensure that these mandates were followed through. They were the ones developing the Transportation Master Plan. They were the ones working with the local entities to say, "These are some of the things we're going to do."

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In turn, Brookfield built Compass as a transportation management association (TMA). From there, Brookfield and this TMA hired Urban Trans North America (my firm) to implement this program.

Funding and Budget

[Slide] How is it funded? That's a big, important part of this. Everyone wants to know, "Well, how did you get your money? What kind of money do you have? What kind of money do you have coming in the future?" It comes from existing property owners. They all feed in to fund the amenities across the development. Part of that fee goes towards the delivery of these incentive and interventions for transportation.

Brookfield had the fantastic foresight to arrange this. Many transportation management associations spend a lot of time trying to track down money instead of trying to actually deliver programs. This fully pays for the TMA. It also means that the TMA services are subsidized to all the employers and the employees.

We've gotten slight increases in funding. Just this last year, we got a slight increase in funding to deliver the Compass program. It wasn't humongous, and there was no specific forecast of it, but it does match the growth of the development. As more employers come in, the program funding gets a little bit better.

The funding 'sticks' are great because if this all starts falling apart, and we're not able to mitigate these trips, more funding 'sticks' come in to boost program funding so the TMA has more resources to deliver interventions.

Finally, the only way that we're going to continue to get more funding is to be seen as a proper tenant 'amenity'. As I said before, these tenants are big, big brands in the world of global brands. We've got to be able to show them that we're a true tenant amenity. We designed a program that would showcase return on investment.

[Slide] It's not a huge development, just over 5,000 employees right now, so it can't have a crazy huge budget. From conception to the growth stage in 2014, we had about three-fourths of one full-time equivalent position – less than one full-time equivalent.

That is probably why a firm like Urban Trans was running this, because you can't often hire three-fourths of a person, but you can hire a firm like Urban Trans, and they can run that, utilizing varied skillsets across the staffing to fill up three-fourths of a full-time. By 2017, we are up to a one full-time equivalent. Again, it's all associated with growth.

We were the first in LA to offer an emergency ride-home or guaranteed ride-home program, which gets anyone home from Playa Vista if they have unscheduled overtime, get sick, etc.

We were also the first that looped in the Ubers and the Lyfts of the world, and we knew that we had to do that based on our constituents. We have a free shuttle that runs

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throughout the development that has real-time information on it, and we really highlight this Rule 2202 and base a lot of our programs on that.

Measuring Impacts

[Slide] Finally, we understand some of the elements that change behavior, and those are what we've highlighted here.

[Slide] The project starts with data. I think we all could say most of our projects should and could and do start with data, but in the reality of my 12 or so years, I don't necessarily think that's quite true.

[Slide] Sometimes we really mix up the cart and the horse. We can easily do that when our evaluation mechanisms are not prescribed to us. We can design an intervention and then ask how we can measure it. What's unique about Playa Vista, as I've said, is that the evaluation was very much prescribed. We knew what we had to measure, and what we were going to do, based on those measurements. [slide] That gave us a really solid foundation.

[Slide] What is required? Every year we have to do annual gate counts. This slide shows a newer garage where employees have to provide a little gate fob as they enter the parking facility. The barrier arm goes up and then it goes back down. What's great about that is you know exactly when people are arriving and leaving.

[Slide] We also have to do an annual survey. What that annual survey does, on top of the gate count, is to identify the modal split and the growth in different transport modes. If you are not going through that gate in a car, it still counts you.

We are required to have a 60% response rate on the survey (pretty high!) according to the regional evaluation framework. But 60% on a development scale is really hard to get. You've got rapid growth and new people; you've got people that have plenty of other things to deal with. But to get 60% response rate during a specific week each year is one of the major elements that we had to do.

[Slide] We had to have an approved survey instrument. That also goes back to the regional evaluation framework. That survey is a specific type of survey. We don't get to design it. That's key.

Then we measure the average vehicle ridership (AVR). We divide the total number of employees arriving at the worksite through that work week and divide by the number of vehicles. That's the metric that's utilized across Southern California to measure transportation intervention programs. That's the big thing.

[Slide] This is the survey instrument. Like I said, we don't get to design this. People actually have to work with the regional evaluators to have their survey instrument

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approved, so it's very much prescribed. What's great about it is that we have a tool that is approved and that is electronic.

Not everyone's electronic, so we also have to utilize paper-based, and we also translated those paper-based forms into Spanish for employees who don't speak English.

What's important about this slide is that it's not easy to fill this puppy out. While it is only asking about certain elements, it is a very hard thing to look at. Getting people to fill this out correctly, to get our data correct, is hard work.

[Slide] What do we capture in all of that? We get the name of the employee, contact info, name of the employer that they're working at, their home zip code (postal code), and then the time and the mode, a.m. and p.m., over five days. That's it. It's not very much, but it is very important.

[Slide] We invest in good data, and I think that's part of what makes this program so successful. We have super strong relationships with our property managers, who are the gatekeepers to our employers, and then we also have really, really big employers that we target for specific outreach. We know we're going to have to use incentives. From all that we then have to gauge our response rate. How much are people actually participating in this?

[Slide] This last year, 85% of our employers participated in the survey, which is fantastic, but there's still 15% out there that we've got to track down. In 2016, we had to get 60%; we got 73%, which is huge.

[Slide] What were the survey incentives? For the employer, if your employment site gets over a 65% response rate, we give you \$100. That is leveraging the power of that person, that authority figure at the worksite.

We also give awards to specific employers when we bring all the employers together. They really love that, like the highest response rate, the lowest single-occupant vehicle rate, the newbie award, just to make it fun because it's a lot of hard work by everybody.

[Slide] For the employees, we found that doing a couple of big draws at the end is great, and also providing a lot of small incentives during the survey week to get people excited and talking about it. We got 100 five dollar gift cards and we randomly distributed them throughout the week at different employment sites, to people who completed the survey. That helped spawn word-of-mouth promotion. If the worksite has over a 5% participation rate, someone at that worksite wins a big prize as well.

We also do outreach with major tenants, and we give them this card [slide] because people don't want to sit and fill out a survey. We gave them these little cards and they took the cards back to their desks to fill out.

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Formative Research

[Slide] We focused the intervention on “ability” because the complexities and variables involved in making transportation decisions are so great that for one small organization like Compass, we can't have the conversation one-on-one with everybody. We need to be able to focus on the people that have the ability to do these behaviors, and that's primary.

[Slide] We focus on change, secondarily, and on changing the ability of single-occupant vehicle drivers to choose more sustainable travel options.

[Slide] We match the right mode with the right person at the right time. That is our motto around Compass. It's simple, but it keeps us focused, and it keeps the client focused.

[Slide] In 2015, we plotted all of the home locations of the employees, and we drew some concentric circles out from Playa Vista. You'll see these purple lines on the right hand side of this slide. The blue dots are the home locations of all of our commuters. We drew those circles, and we started to look at how far out people were. That dictated specific behavioral abilities.

[Slide] When we looked at the trends we started to see something really interesting. We saw a pretty incredible increase, almost a 7% increase, in the long-distance commuters living over 20 miles away. That's important because 20 miles in LA in a drive is basically half your day going to and from. You've got to really love driving to be able to handle that, and the transportation options become limited. We also found a really large (15%) increase in short-distance commuters - people living within three miles. Living within three miles really focuses modal options.

[Slide] We focused on transit, ridesharing, carpool/vanpooling, and cycling, basically because of those two big major shifts in our population.

Program Development

[Slide] We focus on modal evaluation: - existing programs in LA, the ability of people to use the modes that I just talked about, and the applicable infrastructure in LA - then we really dig into the barriers to doing the desired behaviors.

Then we do a behavior change assessment. That's really just trying to figure out what we already know and can learn from other programs about what we need to do in order to tip the scales to bring about change.

We ensure that we're maintaining those behaviors. I think there are a lot of unintended consequences of incentive schemes for transportation behavior, and you can end up divesting a lot of your budget towards people who are already doing the behaviors. We really thought about when you can do these behaviors in LA, and when should you be doing them. Then we did a marketing plan, and came up with the campaigns after that.

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For the most part, this isn't unique. This isn't a "eureka" moment, but it illustrates an important process. We often get clients that want us to start with the messaging and the campaign ideas first, and that is really not what we want to do.

Lastly, we set goals for each of the interventions, the relative number of commuters that could do each behavior, and then we created a target for each.

[Slides] I talked about infrastructure. We map the infrastructure that applies to these behaviors. It makes this hodgepodge of colours, which is fantastic to look at if you're a transportation nerd, but most people, they're like "Whoa", which shows you the complexity of transportation choice to the average commuter.

These are only the transit routes and only the bicycle infrastructure and only the rideshare infrastructure for getting people to Playa Vista. There's a lot more that could be on this map that isn't there. You can see some maps in the background of where people are, home origination points, based on the survey. Every year, we create this map to show where people are coming from, and then match it up based on that.

[Slide] For each of those three campaign modes, we then do a service design. Service design is something I could probably spend an entire hour on. Google it because it's a really awesome skillset that I think more transportation planners, implementers, etc., should be using because, at the end of the day, service design really forces you to understand that what we do with transportation behavior change is provide a service.

Service design is a process that's used in other industries. It ensures that you map out how a commuter will go through this process, and you instantly find pitfalls and places where they're going to not be able to maintain what you're asking of them. Then you subsequently refresh your campaign, or you edit how it works.

Transit Campaign

I'm going to speak briefly about the three different modal campaigns that we did, so you can kind of see how it all played out.

[Slide] We targeted single-occupant vehicle drivers who lived within a half mile and a one-transfer transit ride. You could easily find a million people that could take three or four transit rides, but who in their right mind would do that?

[Slide] One of the transit barriers that we analyzed is choice confusion. Not only are there so many different types of modes you could choose from within the LA regional context, there's 24 municipal transit agencies. I think that's quite analogous to many of the jurisdictions across North America. When I worked in Toronto, there was a ton of brands out there for transit. That's a challenge when helping someone understand all their choices.

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Convenience and realistic behaviors are paramount. We could convince someone to try transit, but if that transit experience is awful, we've lost them. They're never going to listen to us again, and that's not what we wanted to do.

Then there is the fear of being stranded or missing your bus; you can overcome those with an emergency ride home program. Not knowing how to ride the bus is a simple one that we took to heart: how to quickly educate people how to ride when they're not willing to admit they don't know how to do it.

We also had to take into account the recent introduction of a multi-modal fare payment card across all of the different brands. That functionality was also an issue.

[Slide] This slide shows the three major transit routes serving Playa Vista with the criteria of one convenient transfer. Only zip codes were available to us based on our prescribed survey methodology. That's important because zip codes in LA can be gigantic. How could we determine with more accuracy where people lived? This is an important part of our lemon that we turned into lemonade.

[Slide] We created this interactive map for our target audience where they could put in their home address and find out if they live in what we have branded "transit zones." They can quickly see, "Oh, my gosh, these are the lines that lead right to Playa Vista. My house is in there." We created this area around those direct lines so someone could instantly say, "Yeah, Culver City Bus Drop 4, that's me. I'm ready to roll. Tell me about how I get going."

[Slide] That's when we give them this package. It's as simple as a package. We don't have enough staff resources to work one-on-one, so we deliver these packages with just the right amount of information.

[Slide] We created these quick rack cards -again nothing crazy, just simple, solid design-on what it takes to do the behavior. They describe the emergency ride home service (that car-free community insurance that gets people home quickly when necessary), the different types of pass incentives that we're going to give them (whether it be the Culver City one or the easy transit pass), and then a "pro tips" for your transit trip, which is a big one. If you're a transit rider, you know these things, but if you're debating completely changing your travel behavior and you're worried about the repercussions, you want those tips.

[Slide] Then we gathered up swag from the transit agencies, we stuck that pass right there on the lid of this box (you can see the Compass-branded tap pass that we created) and then we mailed them out. In this process, people actually are signing waivers so we can audit their behavior and take back their passes with the long-term incentive if they're not actually using the passes to commute.

[Slide] Lessons learned. The initial tap card recipients were given faulty cards. This is the problem with pilots. The major tap provider, in doing something that was as unique as we

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were doing, provided faulty cards. We ended up having to do a lot of customer service to replace them with working cards. The maps were key to honing in on the segments that we identified.

Because zip codes are so large, we always gave people an option to opt out so that they didn't feel like they were being talked to in an incorrect manner. And we found that that's extremely important because it also opens a new door for us to talk about the right things with them.

The results for this are underway, but currently 24% of our segment has engaged in this and has requested one of the two passes. That's huge for us. Now, the segment isn't 5,000 people; it's around a 200-person segment, but if we can up our transit riders' share by 24%, we're going to be all-stars.

Ridesharing and Carpooling Campaign

[Slide]. We really honed in on locations where there were no other practical behavior options for current SOV drivers, great HOV infrastructure along the way, and park-and-ride facilities. Those were our target markets.

[Slide] How do we remove the barriers? A lot of the employers that are setting up shop have their own TDM or transportation programs. We brought them all together and created a critical mass. That's huge. That's one of the main reasons organizations like ours exist. We were able to prove that to the employers when we brought them together. The emergency ride home is vital.

[Slide] We've created an incentive scheme that walks people through the baby steps of ridesharing because there's a lot of stuff that has to go into it, based on the technology that we have today.

We emphasize committing to trying, not committing to long-term use. That's all part of our message. We don't say, "Think about your five-day commute as a carpool or a vanpool now." Instead, we say "Try it on a Friday (or some other convenient) day, and see how it works for you."

[Slide] We also wanted to help people visualize the benefits vividly. This slide is from a video that shows the feeling going down the HOV lane so fast compared to that stopped traffic on the right. That's something that's really hard to get into someone's mind until they do the behavior, so we wanted to showcase that feeling that they would get before they ever tried it.

Again, we mapped everything out. We found where those people were, and we specifically reached out only to them. We ran another baby-step incentive scheme in this campaign - \$5 if you created an account with the rideshare program.

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For posting a carpool matching request, which means, "I'm literally looking for a carpool," you get another \$15. I know that sounds like a lot, but we saw a huge barrier to people actually posting up a carpool request, so we built that in. We give them another \$5 if they message their carpoolers through our online tool.

Many of the HOV (high-occupancy vehicle) lanes are toll lanes. We give them the transponder at no cost or, if you're not using those HOV lanes, we give you a \$35 gas card if they start, and then lots of other gift cards based on a lottery system. Then we send out these very basic messages just to those people and other people that are perfect for a vanpool.

[Slide] On this chart each colored line or chunk is an employer. The chart showcases when our marketing is working to generate more rideshare participants in the system over time.

We matched up this rideshare intervention with an existing regional rideshare campaign that happens in October. That created a big issue for us because we did our survey after that. That meant we would have to wait until the following October to utilize the data to do the campaign, basically an 11-month gap before we worked with the segment. We're not going to do that because the data would be too old by then; we wouldn't have the right people to talk to. Instead, we're completely changing the date.

[Slide] We're also creating tips on forming a carpool or a vanpool, based on the success of the transit tips. We're going to start applying that across the board. It seems so simple, just simple rack cards, but it's clearly working.

Then we monitor technology changes. You guys all know it. This stuff is changing. When I say this stuff, even the definition of ridesharing technology changes every day. How do we apply the best technology to improve or even facilitate ridesharing?

The chart shows that 27% of our segment participated, yet we didn't get one single person to register for a carpool. This first intervention got a lot of great people into the system. We got a lot of people interacting about rideshare, but we also didn't get people to register (maintenance stage for us.) We have set a new goal for that.

Cycling Campaign

[Slide] Again, only the drivers of single-occupant vehicles are targeted as a segment. Can you imagine this scene being your bike commute? Literally, this is part of the major infrastructure that serves Playa Vista. I've had the pleasure to bike on this. It's beautiful.

[Slide] The big barrier here is infrastructure – this is a car-centric community. You've got to really have the infrastructure to create new behaviors. We try to really understand the existing experiences of the people who are cycling; that was huge for us. A lot of the programs assume someone owns a bike, which is often not the case, so we have to

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overcome that. Some people just don't know how to cycle properly on roads and in the infrastructure. Comfort and hygiene is also a big barrier.

[Slides] We did a poll at the start of this intervention about what support services people wanted. The "Loan-a-Bike" program was wanted by everyone. They wanted a Playa Vista wide campaign. They also wanted to learn cycling skills.

From there, we did a series of focus groups with people already cycling. Until you ask the people who are actually doing these behaviors, you don't really know what is going on for them. We had them draw on a map where new cyclists could easily cycle to Playa Vista. We also had them draw how they got to Playa Vista. From that, we started to really hone in on the infrastructure that would be the best for creating the behaviors because there were obvious gaps in our infrastructure system that we needed to understand. Where could a newbie bicyclist overcome the gaps most easily?

[Slide] We brought in registered trainers; they did a great job ensuring people could get educated. The lunchtime format was big. We tried a few different times - morning, lunch, and afternoon. Lunch was the big one.

While we had heard that hygiene was a big barrier, we had also heard that none of the existing cyclists were using the showers at work. In fact, showers were actually somewhat of a barrier to doing the behavior because there are so many other things you have to plan to do when you shower at work.

[Slide] We gave them these Google Action Wipes. They're a great thing to give out to someone to start a new behavior. They're giant baby wipes, and you can use them for camping, at the airport, or doing things like cycling to work. I used one and I'd actually say I felt a little cleaner than if I had taken a shower.

[Slide] We built a bike loaner program with a local bike shop that had just opened shop at Playa Vista. We had about 40 people participate in it. It took a lot longer to get off the ground than we had thought. This was partly because it was a brand new bike shop with its own priorities, and it didn't display the registration details with sufficient visibility. We learned some important lessons about working with bike partners. This past year, 22% of the segment participated. Next year, we're shooting for 31%.

Budget

[Slide] Where did all the money go? This is the pie chart. The largest chunk of it is the intervention labour, at 66%; only 1% went for evaluation incentives; 12% was for the actual work to get the survey. The intervention incentives are about 21% of the program's budget.

Program Impacts

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[Slide] Average vehicle ridership (AVR). We started with a lower AVR - where that orange star is – when we came and turned Compass on and started doing these programs. You can see how that has spiked up. We're aiming for a 1.5 average vehicle ridership. That would be great success, especially in LA, and we're clearly on our way with these interventions.

[Slide] Modal Split. You've got to love the big piece in the middle, with drive-alone going down, and we're seeing marked improvements over the three years in cycling and transit.

Carpooling has been about the same. We obviously have work to do there, but our cycling and transit programs are working quite well and telework is growing significantly.

[Slide] Thank you for listening. It's been a pleasure chatting with you, and let's keep that chat going.

Q&A

Jay Kassirer: Thank you, Aaron, for a very practical presentation. First of all, for the 200 people in the transit segment, was your first contact for the program sending them the box? Did they have to opt in before they got the transit pass, or did they all receive one automatically?

Aaron Gaul (AG): Based on the segment analysis of the roughly 200 people, we sent them a series of tailored emails asking them to select one or more of three ways to participate, and to look at that transit zone map. That was the primary step. From there, they opted in to receiving each type of incentives. All of our programs work that way.

We don't use a lot of marketing materials. We have a brand, we have those rack cards, and we have a MailChimp account, and that's pretty much it. We also have the relationships with those employers, which is huge. That's really all you need.

Jay Kassirer: Would you consider that aspect of your program, "Individualized Marketing"?

AG: You know, I think it's built out of Individualized marketing, but I think the approach here is to hone in on the person's ability rather than the person's motivations. I think that's been a differentiator in this program; we can work on motivation later. But if we super focus on ability, then we can use a lot less work to get them motivated because the reality of the day, even in all of our backyards, is that no one loves traffic. No one loves the cost of driving, and everyone loves having more time in their day to do whatever on their phone.

Jay Kassirer: Can you explain what is involved in the intervention incentives (21% of the budget)?

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AG: A big part of the 'lemons' I started with was incentives that had already been outlined even before the program or the transportation master plan had been finalized. Basically, the development agreed they would subsidize 100 of the transit tap cards that, I think, each have ten years of transit fare. I do not want to give someone ten years of free transit. I want to give them six months of free transit.

On an annual basis, we carve out how much of our budget is going towards each incentive (transit fares, carpool incentives gift cards etc.). There is also the \$100 easy transit pass; you could utilize it on any of those 24 transit lines, and that's enough for a month of unlimited transit. We think that's enough.

I'd rather have that easy pass for all of it, but we were given these ten years of free transit, which is why we created the six-month. We check to make sure they are utilizing the card in the correct way, and then we bring that card back after six months.

Jay Kassirer: What do you say to people who are concerned that such a strong emphasis on incentives is going to undermine intrinsic motivation?

AG: I think it's all in how you view the word incentive. I've worked in a lot of jurisdictions where the incentives are ongoing and long-term. But these incentives are all temporary - try it, or tipping-point incentives - because, at the end of the day, you've got to lower the barrier to entry. If you're only changing single-occupant vehicles to other modes, the return on investment for that incentive is easy to explain to anybody. Although we're seeing across-the-board decreases in bus ridership overall, we can show across-the-board increases on our transit lines to Playa Vista. Our marketing strategies work and are getting people, literally, on the bus.

Jay Kassirer: Did you have any engagement with people already biking, taking transit, and carpooling?

AG: Totally and that kind of goes back to learning from them. I always tell people I only do lunch-and-learns as focus groups now. I get the people that are already doing the behavior into the lunch-and-learn to do a focus group, instead of getting other people into the lunch-and-learn to talk about their modes, mainly because I can learn way more from them. If there are things that are coming up that are impeding their ability to do the behavior, we've got to come up with a strategy to address that.

For example - and those of you in Canada are all going to roll your eyes at this - but when we brought all the cyclists in, they almost unanimously said, "We stop cycling at Daylight Savings because it's too dark. We don't feel safe," etc. That was a huge element that we had to address. We're finding ways that we can change that perception, including lighting some areas and equipping riders with lighting too. And if they won't cycle we want to know their secondary sustainable travel option, so that they don't fall into being a single-occupant vehicle driver.

Playa Vista's Ability2Change Program

Some of these bigger employers have their own incentive schemes to maintain behaviors based on some of the regional framework. If they're a big employer, they are forced to do certain things. We let them manage those existing behaviors. We use those existing behaviors more to refine the interventions than we do to keep them going.

Jay Kassirer: What do you say to those jurisdictions that are concerned about privacy in relation to collecting employees' personalized data?

AG: The biggest part is ensuring that you're managing the data correctly. This strategy only works when you get a lot of people providing the data and opting in. That goes right back to your relationship with your key stakeholders - for us, it's the employers. In many cases, the employer literally says, "You have to do this." But if you build in opt-in loops, it helps a client overcome the issues of privacy. In addition, we have clear exit strategies for everyone. Every time we send them a message, we give them a door to leave, without unsubscribing. MailChimp and other email systems allow people to unsubscribe; we don't want that because then we might get flagged as a spammer. Instead, we give them an easy way to say, "This isn't for me, but thanks for reaching out." That allows us to really respect the communication with them.

That's why I think this whole ability to change strategy is so successful. It goes back to the client buying in and to the data being the foundation. The data tell us what people are doing and how can we contact them to make a change. That is why our five questions are so specific.

Regarding the waivers, I need to get the passes back after six months. I really wasn't expecting anyone to sign the waivers, but I needed them to sign them so that I have some sort of leverage. And people are actually signing the waiver. When they get to that six-month period they think it's pretty much legit to sign it. They sign the waiver saying we can go in and check that behavior. That's a mechanism that's used by employers as well in many jurisdictions. If the employer provides the pass, they send them a similar waiver and ask them the same thing. We have had some issues; people have moved away without giving us their passes, for example, and then we had to turn off their passes.

Jay Kassirer: Thank you, Aaron. That was a great webinar from start to finish.