



## TRANSIT RECOVERY TASK FORCE

TO: Blue Ribbon Task Force Members

DATE: May 24, 2021

FR: Ursula Vogler, MTC Staff & Transit Operator Marketing Staff

**RE: Blue Ribbon Engagement Update: Return to Transit**

MTC, in partnership with Bay Area transit operator marketing staff, initiated the Return to Transit campaign to develop a high impact messaging to encourage the Bay Area public to get back on public transit. Critically, the campaign seeks to ensure consistency in messaging across the region's public transit systems to maximize impact while ensuring resources are deployed as efficiently as possible. MTC staff have been working with the transit operator marketing staff on the campaign elements, which will be promoted by MTC and provided to the transit operators to customize and promote. Below is an update and status report on campaign development.

The Return to Transit project consists of four phases:

**1. Focus Group Research (Complete)**

In January 2021, EMC Research and the Bay Area Council conducted several focus groups with Bay Area transit riders and employers to understand attitudes and timing on a return to transit. Topline findings indicated that a return to transit would be highly dependent on external factors such as school reopening, large community events resuming (e.g., concerts) and broader vaccination rates increasing. This research served as the basis for the concepts and potential timing of the campaign.

**2. Development of Creative Concepts (Complete)**

Leveraging the insights from EMC's and Bay Area Council's research, and conversations with the transit operator marketing staff, MTC's media/creative agency, Craft & Commerce, developed core campaign positioning and five creative concepts to bring the campaign options to life. Based on conversations with MTC, Imprinta Communications (a multicultural marketing agency hired to ensure the campaign's cultural competency) and the transit operator marketing staff, the five concepts were pared down to three. These three concepts will be message-tested with the public.

**3. Campaign Message Testing: (Through May 2021)**

The final three creative concepts are currently being tested by EMC Research and Imprinta Communications. EMC is focusing on English speaking audiences with three sets of 100 participants, each responding to a single creative concept. Findings from the groups will be compared across one another to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the individual concepts. Concurrently, Imprinta is holding conversations with community groups to test the ads in Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog and Vietnamese to



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understand the strengths and weaknesses of the concepts with those communities. This research will yield a recommended campaign that will be presented to the transit operator marketing staff for final approval.

#### 4. **Communications Toolkit Development: (June 2021)**

Once the final campaign has been selected, Craft & Commerce will develop a communications toolkit to be leveraged by MTC and the transit operators. The toolkit will include assets for a wide range of channels including social, digital, out-of-home and audio. Final parameters of what will be included in the toolkit will be based on additional conversations with the transit operator marketing staff.

#### **Campaign Launch**

Once the campaign toolkit is finalized, the campaign elements can be promoted by each transit operator and MTC individually. MTC and the transit operator marketing staff are currently determining the best timeframe for campaign launch. In addition to transit operator promotion, pending budget approval, MTC has set aside funds to promote the campaign. Additionally, Craft + Commerce will explore other avenues to help drive reach and awareness, including potential partnerships and unlocking ad credits from Facebook, Google and Twitter.