**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**USRC Grants Kent County Local Management Board Funding for Transportation Marketing**

**CHESTERTOWN, Md. (September 10, 2021) -** The Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) continues to support solutions to impact areas of need in Kent County. In February of 2018,The United Way of Kent County (UWKC) released a comprehensive needs assessment of the county, uncovering the need for reliable and affordable transportation throughout Kent County. On the heels of the UWKC needs assessment, the USRC commissioned an in-depth Upper Shore Target Industry Analysis Report to evaluate the strengths and opportunities in the region, identifying transportation as a critical industry cluster for the Upper Shore region. In January of 2020, the Kent County Transportation Task Force released its key findings.

The top two recommendations from the task force were to hire a transit coordinator to advocate for and manage public transportation efforts, and to implement a comprehensive marketing plan to increase awareness and usage of the existing Delmarva Community Transit (DCT) services. As a result of these key findings, USRC granted the Kent County Local Management Board (LMB) $40,000 to fund a comprehensive marketing plan for transportation services in Kent County. This plan includes developing and executing a marketing plan, increasing awareness of existing public transportation and developing a plan to install additional bus stop signage as needed.

“As clearly demonstrated in multiple reports, bettering public transportation in Kent County is an opportunity to further connect the region and grow our workforce,” said Susan O’Neill, Executive Director of the USRC. “The USRC strives to make the Upper Shore Region more accessible for all, and through working with the Kent County Local Management Board, we believe transportation can be improved.”

“We learned a lot from Kent County people when executing surveys through the primary employers and direct to residents' homes. The key takeaway is that Kent County people would use public transportation if it was affordable, reliable, and frequent,” said Bill Harr, board member of the United Way of Kent County.

“The Kent County Local Management Board is using the Upper Shore Regional Grant opportunity to advertise and raise awareness of the bus system that operates within Kent County and on the Eastern Shore,” said Dawson Hunter, Housing and Transportation Coordinator for the LMB. “The impact is to raise the awareness of the bus system, so [residents] know how to access and how to use the bus system. Our first step in this effort is the launch of [www.KentCountyRides.com](http://www.KentCountyRides.com).”

USRC’s collaboration with the UWKC and the Kent County LMB will help increase the effectiveness of current transportation options; therefore, improving the quality of life for residents in the Upper Shore Region by enabling access to work, medical appointments, and food for all residents. Marketing materials are available, the new bus stop signs were installed last fall, and further information is expected to be added. Kent County LMB has been working hand-in-hand with Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST) and DCT throughout the marketing campaign to ensure their efforts align and community feedback is addressed.

For more information about the USRC, visit [www.USRCMD.org](https://usrcmd.org). To learn more about the Kent County LMB, visit [www.KentCounty.com](https://www.kentcounty.com/committees/lmb). Learn more about the United Way of Kent County, visit [www.UnitedWayofKentCounty.org](http://www.unitedwayofkentcounty.org). Visit [www.KentCountyRides.com](http://www.KentCountyRides.com) for more information.

**About the Upper Shore Regional Council**

Since 2003, the Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC) has fostered planning and development in Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne’s counties. USRC affords federal, state, county, and local governments a regional forum to identify issues and opportunities. USRC plans and implements programs to improve the quality of life in the Upper Shore Region of Maryland.

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