

memorandum

DATE: May 2025, 3rd edition

TITLE: Strategic Plan for Regional TDM Programs

DVRPC PRODUCT ID: 25150

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ABSTRACT: This strategic plan is a working document that is intended to guide the solicitation, selection, and implementation of transportation demand management (TDM) work conducted in the bi-state DVRPC region.

KEYWORDS: DVRPC, grants, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Region, TDM

GEOGRAPHY: DVRPC region, New Jersey, Pennsylvania

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Vision

The Greater Philadelphia area will be a region of connected communities, where residents and workers have the freedom to choose from multiple reliable, affordable, safe, sustainable, and well-connected mobility options that suit them best, other than driving alone for every trip.

Purpose

This strategic plan memo is a working document that is intended to guide the solicitation, selection, and implementation of transportation demand management (TDM) work conducted in the bi-state DVRPC region. It was developed with direction from the Regional TDM Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from each state Department of Transportation (NJDOT and PennDOT), each of eight county planning departments within the DVRPC service area, the City of Philadelphia (the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems [OTIS] and the Philadelphia City Planning Commission [PCPC]), North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), NJ TRANSIT, PATCO, SEPTA, and FHWA (New Jersey and Pennsylvania). This committee also helped develop guidelines for DVRPC's ongoing and competitive TDM grant programs.

Defining Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Transportation demand management (TDM) is a set of strategies aimed at improving the efficiency and service quality of transportation systems by providing options for how, when, and why people travel. Instead of focusing on building new infrastructure to meet growing transportation needs, TDM focuses on reducing the demand placed on existing systems. This approach helps alleviate congestion and enhance mobility options for everyone.

TDM Programs

Although TDM is incorporated into many regional projects and programs, there are two primary programs administered by DVRPC to implement regional TDM work:

- **TripSmart PA**, which primarily funds ongoing commuter service and marketing activities. These activities are baseline, ongoing TDM work tasks for Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) and other grantees in the Pennsylvania portion of the DVRPC region.
- **Travel Options Program (TOP)**, a competitive grant program designed to fund creative and more experimental TDM projects in the region. Grants are administered on a two-year cycle and are open to organizations in both the PA and NJ portions of the DVRPC region.

DVRPC also provides regional funding support to the New Jersey TMA program, which is administered statewide by NJTPA.

The Regional TDM programs and committees are shown in Figure 1. The TDM Advisory Committee in the center of this chart leads both programs and decisions made about them.

Figure 1: DVRPC TDM Program and Committee Structure

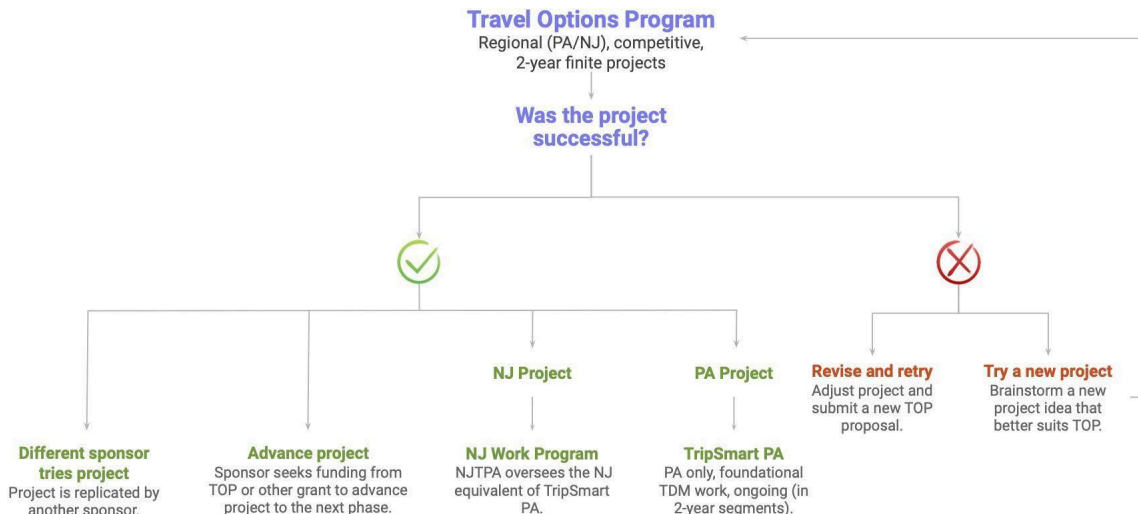


Source: DVRPC (2023)

If TOP projects are successful, they have the potential to either (1) be replicated or adapted for another service area, (2) be further developed in a new phase of work, or (3) become established as an ongoing work activity under TripSmart PA or the statewide NJ TMA program that NJTPA administers. See Figure 2 for an illustration of these workflows.

Figure 2: How Are TDM Projects Evaluated?

How Are TDM Projects Evaluated?



Source: DVRPC (2023)

TOP provides federal funding from the Surface Transportation Program (STP) in Pennsylvania, and a combination of the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) programs in New Jersey to implement selected projects. A set of goals, outcomes, and strategies are identified in the sections that follow, which are intended to guide the selection of projects to fund through TOP. **Any project proposed for funding must identify and explain how the proposed project aims to achieve one or more of the four goals identified in the Regional TDM Plan.** The Regional TDM Advisory Committee also assists DVRPC staff with the selection and recommendation of applicant projects to fund in each two-year period. For more information on TOP, go to www.dvrpc.org/top.

Additional principles to guide TOP project selection decisions are:

- In keeping with the Vision Zero goal in DVRPC's *Connections 2050 Long-Range Plan for Greater Philadelphia*, projects proposed for funding should contribute to improving overall transportation system safety.
- Any project proposed for funding should be designed to have measurable impacts on travel behavior change and a plan to document performance (e.g., user counts or surveys). There should be a proposed way to measure project cost effectiveness during an evaluation period following the conclusion of the project.

Goals

- **Reduce Vehicle Trips and Improve Air Quality:** Contribute to air quality conformity for the region and improve congestion by helping reduce total vehicle miles traveled.
 - Outcome: Reduce estimated single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips through each TDM project.
 - Project Strategy: Support strategies that promote non-SOV transportation modes and help reduce SOV trips, even during times of economic growth. This includes telework, as relevant, particularly in areas with limited public transit options. Examples include:
 - Employer/employee programs (telework, compressed work schedule)
 - General marketing
 - Operational solutions
 - Concept development for a new or existing transportation service
 - Programmatic Strategy: Require applicants to estimate the number of vehicle trips their pilot or project will reduce, and to collect performance data during/after implementation. Data collection methods may include surveys, transit ridership data, and traffic, bicycle, or pedestrian counts.
 - Programmatic Strategy: Prioritize funding for projects that propose innovative solutions and demonstrate a strong potential for significant vehicle trip reduction.
- **Expand Economic Opportunity:** Improve access to jobs and economic opportunity, especially for lower-income households, families in poverty, and individuals with disabilities.
 - Outcome: TDM programs should be designed to expand economic opportunity.

- **Project Strategy:** Make investments that improve the affordability or quality of travel options for higher-poverty populations or provide new mobility options. For planning purposes, this means:
 - Places showing a higher than average score in these categories in [DVRPC's Title VI Compliance Tool for the Greater Philadelphia Region](#). Clicking on a Census Tract displays scores by category, including a scale from below to above average.
 - Projects that would help address access to essential services as shown in DVRPC's [Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan \(CHSTP\) map toolkit](#).
- **Improve Reliability:** Make trips by all modes more reliable, especially during peak travel travel times.
 - **Outcome 1:** Improve Planning Time Index (PTI) at one or more priority locations.

One reference tool to identify a priority location is DVRPC's [Congestion Management Process \(CMP\)](#). This tool provides information on transportation system performance that will be updated annually. It recommends a range of strategies to minimize congestion and enhance the mobility of people and goods. PTI is an estimate of travel time reliability, representing the 95th-percentile travel time for a road segment. PTI is often reflective of nonlocal factors, but is a good guide for where strategies can have meaningful impact.

 - **Project Strategy:** Make place-based TDM investments that will have benefits for roadway facilities and intersections identified in [DVRPC's CMP analysis](#) under the **Travel Time Performance Measures** tab, indicating that they have particularly poor reliability.

Note: Consistent with DVRPC planning principles and this plan's vision, the focus here is on improving and incentivizing non-SOV options in these locations.
 - **Outcome 2:** Improve transit reliability on priority road segments traveled by high ridership bus routes.

One reference tool to identify these routes is [DVRPC's Regional Transit Screening Platform](#). A variety of factors such as infrastructure, congestion, and enforcement impact surface transit reliability. This tool can be used to find out where reliability issues are likely to impact the most passengers.

 - **Project Strategy:** Make place-based investments that will have benefits for transit service on high ridership-weighted reliability score road segments.
- **Expand Freedom of Choice:** Expand access to multiple high-quality and affordable modal options. Projects should focus on expanding multimodal choices, with a limited focus on private vehicle access.
 - **Outcome:** Enable measurably more bike, walk, or transit trip-making.
 - **Project Strategy:** Prioritize place-based, non-SOV projects that can balance

demand, such as bicycle or pedestrian improvements that could encourage people to not choose to drive alone for short trips in congested areas (e.g. near focus roadways and intersections from the regional CMP analysis).

- Project Strategy: Use place-based focus group outreach to identify potential systemic changes to improve a transportation mode or network in a service area.
- Programmatic Strategy: Require applicants to collect performance data specific to this measure during/after implementation. Data collection methods may include surveys, transit ridership data, and traffic, bicycle, or pedestrian counts.