



# Atlanta Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan

The Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan is intended to help stakeholders leverage existing programs and build on the TDM concepts within PLAN 2040, the region’s long-range comprehensive transportation and development plan. The TDM Plan is a framework for developing and integrating TDM strategies into planning, project development and system operations, and investment decision-making.

TDM+ strategies have been used in the Atlanta region for many years, but a regional plan to coordinate TDM planning, programs and operations has not yet been adopted. With congestion continuing to increase and limited funding to expand roadway and transit capacity, there is a growing need to develop consensus on how to better coordinate established TDM programs and set a regional vision for an expanded TDM+ system. These TDM+ strategies will augment existing transportation programs in the Atlanta region through improvements to the built environment that reduce barriers and increase transportation choices.

This plan is intended to be a “call to action” for program operators, local governments, policy makers, and agencies to support and advance transportation demand management strategies in the region.

## A Vision for Atlanta Regional Transportation

The TDM Plan is aligned with PLAN 2040’s vision for the Atlanta region: *Visionary leadership for sustainable growth by balancing environmental responsibility, economic growth and social needs while maximizing benefits to all.*

TDM+ strategies, when implemented in a coordinated manner, will work to simultaneously achieve many of the goals and objectives outlined in PLAN 2040. Not only will TDM+ help achieve transportation, livability and air quality goals, but it also has the potential to have a significant economic impact on the region by maximizing the value of existing infrastructure and alleviating the need to invest in costly roadway and transit capacity expansions.

## WHAT IS TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT?

**TDM** is defined as “...helping people change their travel behavior to meet their travel needs by using different modes, traveling at different times, making fewer or shorter trips, or taking different routes.”

Source: [cutr.usf.edu/programs-1/transportation-demand-management-2/](http://cutr.usf.edu/programs-1/transportation-demand-management-2/)

**Conventional TDM** has typically focused on commuter-based programs such as ridesharing, van-pooling, telework, and employer-focused incentive and marketing efforts aimed at reducing single-occupant-vehicle trips.

**TDM+** expands traditional TDM to increase and market travel choices beyond work commutes. It connects traditional TDM programs with livability, sustainability, transit, walking and biking, transportation and land use planning, systems operations, economic development, climate change, healthy communities, and active aging.

## WHAT WILL THE TDM PLAN DO?

As it is implemented by stakeholders, the TDM Plan is intended to:

- Better integrate travel planning with transportation planning, system operations, land use, economic development and healthy communities.
- Maximize the value, connectivity, and efficiency of existing transportation infrastructure.
- Achieve cost savings through better coordination of existing efforts.
- Support and connect transit, walking and biking, and activity center redevelopment investments.
- Establish a framework for funding decisions to support program innovation and long term strategies.

## Why Does This Matter?

### The Region's Population and Demographics are Changing

One of the fastest growing in the nation, the Atlanta region is expected to continue experiencing population and employment growth through 2040, including a dynamic demographic shift. The younger and older populations will both increase. Both groups are transitioning away from a car-based lifestyle, and are seeking more transportation and housing choices that cater to all ages and abilities. With the region projected to grow to more than 8 million people by 2040 (an increase of almost 3 million people from 2010), congested vehicle hours traveled are also forecasted to increase approximately 110%. This will reduce the quality of life for residents with few travel alternatives, and impact public health and environmental quality.

### Driving Alone is Often the Easiest Choice

Auto-centric development patterns and existing parking management policies have made driving alone an easy decision for most commuters, and in many cases, the only realistic option. Solo driving contributes to traffic congestion and worsens air quality. Even with transit options like MARTA and Xpress bus, the 2010 Metro Atlanta Regional Commuter Survey found that 82% of commuters still choose to drive alone.

### Sprawl is Continuing Outside the Region's Core

Due to the Atlanta region's fragmented government structure and building industry practices, development continues to sprawl further from the region's core and job centers. This trend will likely continue, with land use densities and connectivity remaining low in the outer areas, making it hard to provide other travel options than the automobile. The region's freeway system cannot keep up with demand, and planned projects will not alleviate the demand created by population increase if residents continue to move further from the urban core. This will increase congestion and potentially affect Atlanta's competitive advantage when attracting or keeping businesses and jobs.

### Current Program Management is Fragmented, and Not Well-Linked to the Regional Planning Process

There is a long history of TDM services and programs in the region dating to the early 1990s. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) programs the funds to support TDM, but most decision-making for TDM is not made through the regional planning process where local, regional, and state policymakers collaborate. There is no single organization that is the contractually defined TDM program leader, with different agencies funding and overseeing regional and local marketing and operations, limited data sharing, and other gaps.

### Federal Funding is Not Guaranteed

Although there has long been a dedicated federal funding source to support TDM services in the region, there has been growing uncertainty about the longevity of this sort of funding for needed transportation projects. With less money to invest in new transportation capacity projects, the current assets should be maintained and used more efficiently.



## The TDM Plan Call to Action

The TDM Plan defines five key goals for implementing a coordinated regional TDM strategy.

### »»» GOAL 1 ■ Improve customer convenience and user experience.

Information on all TDM-related services and programs should be provided seamlessly to the public. Although the region has adopted a new statewide TDM brand – Georgia Commute Options – the region’s service providers still sometimes operate under multiple brands and messages, creating confusion for travelers. Co-branding, cross-marketing, messaging and web tools can be improved to more efficiently promote mobility options.

### »»» GOAL 2 ■ Increase transportation connectivity, mode choice, and access.

Poor infrastructure and connections for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit riders can make promoting travel choices difficult. Better linking transportation and land use policies and investments can improve connections, offer more mobility, and provide better access and choices for travelers. While land use and development decisions are largely made by local governments, land owners and developers, their decisions can be supported and coordinated by regional and local transportation agencies and TDM service providers.

### »»» GOAL 3 ■ Streamline regional coordination of policies, programs, services, and investments.

Decisions on TDM funding, programming and operations do not currently align fully with the regional transportation planning process. Aligning regional TDM decision-making with the regional planning process and designating an overall regional program manager will improve accountability for programs and services, and promote cost-effective investments.

### »»» GOAL 4 ■ Leverage and diversify funding sources for program sustainability.

The long-term sustainability of existing funding sources is unknown. Expanding and diversifying funding sources for TDM programs can contribute to program sustainability, and also may help to fund innovative programs and services.

### »»» GOAL 5 ■ Pursue continuous performance and operations improvements.

Although the region and state have a strong evaluation program, action is not always taken to implement program improvements and aid in strategy development. The extensive performance evaluation activities can be better used by the funding agencies to guide and determine programming and operational improvements.



“TDM is a vital part of the Atlanta region’s transportation future and a critical component of PLAN 2040. A strong regional TDM program will provide options to regional commuters and help minimize congestion as the region continues to grow.”

Doug Hooker, ARC Executive Director

## Next Steps

Based on the goals, objectives and actions developed for this plan, a set of priority strategies were developed. These priority strategies were selected by the Technical Advisory Committee as best suited and most needed for swift implementation. Each priority strategy includes specific implementation steps, partners involved and lead organization, and a timeframe for completion.

The MPO will support the implementation of all priority strategies. **The seven priority strategies are:**

- 1.1 ■ Build on Georgia Commute Options rebranding to promote seamless customer experience
- 1.2 ■ Improve connection of TDM to regional information systems
- 2.1 ■ Improve regional coordination of transportation planning, land use, and travel choice
- 2.5 ■ Strategically link express bus service, local transit, vanpools, managed lanes and park and ride lots
- 3.4 ■ Enhance integrated operations, branding and marketing of the regional vanpool program
- 4.4 ■ Leverage and diversify existing and potential funding sources to support creative, long-term and innovative strategies
- 5 ■ Develop metrics for all programs and services and use the data to make strategic improvements (combines 5.2 and 5.3)

## For More Information

For a full copy of the TDM Plan, please refer to [www.atlantaregional.com/tdmplan](http://www.atlantaregional.com/tdmplan).

Plan development was guided by a Technical Advisory Committee, including representatives from Employer Service Organizations, Community Improvement Districts, transit and vanpool operators, employers, institutions, and federal, state, regional and local agencies. Refer to the full plan for a listing of the agencies/organizations.