



Chapter 5: Demand Management

Limited funding for expanded highways, unstable fuel prices, increased congestion, and concern for our air quality emphasize the need for reducing driving alone. For many years now, transportation demand management (TDM) strategies have shown effectiveness in reducing traffic congestion and environmental pollution caused by motor vehicles.

This chapter focuses on managing transportation demand by advancing alternatives to using one's personal vehicle to make a trip alone. The TDM strategies and projects focus on the opportunities to rideshare, use transit, bike, or walk to meet some of the travel needs of the region. Alternatives that reduce travel demand also include telecommuting and alternate work schedules that compress the work week or allow for commuting at non-peak hours.



5.1 Demand Management

TDM refers to a myriad of programs and strategies that encourage more efficient use of existing transportation infrastructure by reducing the amount of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on the system. As the name implies, TDM aims to reduce the demand side of congestion (i.e., reducing the number of people commuting alone in private vehicles) rather than expanding the supply side (i.e., costly infrastructure). By reducing the number of people commuting alone in private vehicles, benefits such as the following can be achieved.

- Reduced roadway congestion
- Reduced commuting and travel costs
- Reduced energy use and greenhouse gas emissions
- Improved air quality
- Improved public health

THE CASE FOR TDM

The Central Ohio region finds itself in a unique predicament as it pertains to commuting trends and congestion rates. Land use policies that encourage low-density development have caused decades of sprawling suburban and exurban growth. This growth has fueled the need for substantial roadway investments that provide the Columbus area with a large network of streets, arterials, and highways to help shorten commute times throughout the region. However, heavy dependence upon the automobile, coupled with significant growth projections, will likely lead to an abundance of major congestion issues if TDM measures are not implemented simultaneously with this expected growth.

TDM ACTIVITIES

MORPC updated the *Transportation Demand Management Strategic Plan* in 2015. This internal document will guide the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) activities of MORPC. It is one of the many occurrences where MORPC has been engaged in providing a fully multi-modal transportation system in Central Ohio.

The intent of the TDM Strategic Plan is to deliver a strategy for accomplishing predetermined TDM-related goals identified in the MTP and analyze the effectiveness of MORPC's current TDM actions. The strategies and actions developed in this plan are meant to help MORPC implement TDM throughout the region. MORPC's *RideSolutions* program currently coordinates TDM activities in the region.

The primary focus of *RideSolutions* is maintaining and administering ridematching services for Central Ohio commuters. Commuters may call in or search online for other commuters who live and work in similar locations and commute at similar times. Through this matching service, *RideSolutions* accomplishes the TDM mission by forming carpools or vanpools of two or more riders, thus reducing the

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE

The MTP targets a 7% reduction in commuters driving alone, from 82% to 75% by 2040.



MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE

The MTP targets a 30% reduction in VMT per capita from 9,700 to 6,800 by 2040.





TABLE 5.1
RideSolutions Vanpool Program
Impact

Impact	2013	2014
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	689,035	677,821
Passenger Miles	4,159,668	4,146,900
VMT Savings	3,470,633	unavailable

number of vehicles on Central Ohio roads. Table 5.1 summarizes the impact of the vanpool program. The service has mostly been advertised at local events such as job fairs or with individual employers, and has also been promoted through a PSA partnership with the Air Quality team.

While ridesharing is the predominant function of the RideSolutions program, other modes of transportation are also supported such as transit, biking, walking, or telecommuting. Interested commuters may seek guidance from RideSolutions in finding a safe biking route, determining which bus to take, or by matching with a bike/walk buddy of similar commute interests.

TDM STRATEGIES & PROJECTS

The TDM Strategic Plan suggests taking the following actions to execute the MTP strategies focused on reducing vehicular demand on the roadway.

- 1. Create travel demand management (TDM) partnerships among the facilitators and providers of alternative modes of transportation, community leaders, and institutions that make up high-density trip generating districts.**



Promote Coordination among Local TDM Agencies

The scope of TDM services varies widely and requires buy-in from a variety of local agencies if they wish to be an effective means of reducing congestion. Doing so will require a unified front that exists both at the state and regional levels. Effective local implementation will be enhanced by partnering with other agencies in Central Ohio that promote a TDM service, such as Yay Bikes, COTA, and DATABus. Partnerships such as these and catalytic stakeholders like the Columbus Mayor’s Green Team will aid in the creation of a regional umbrella for organizations that wish to promote the advancement of TDM within the Central Ohio region. This “TDM Consortium” will offer frequent coordination among participating agencies in order to create a framework that will best utilize the complimentary TDM services currently existing throughout the region. This consortium will be a hub of discussion and research that will help expand upon current TDM activities by exploring new policies and TDM implementation techniques.

Promote Coordination among Statewide Rideshare MPOs

From a statewide perspective, MORPC is working toward a united multi-regional rideshare service that will be implemented at the local level. This includes working with other MPOs such as OKI, TMACOG, MVRPC, Eastgate, NOACA, and AMATS to create a statewide partnership when delivering TDM services. Coordinating ridesharing efforts among MPOs will be a more efficient method of spending funds.

Rideshare Service Area Review

As it currently stands, several counties in Central Ohio do not have official Memoranda of Understanding with MORPC regarding the rideshare service area. Seeing as this area helps distinguish the different geographies as they relate to NTD reporting, taking action to formalize MORPC’s rideshare service area should be a top priority. This area can then be reviewed on a yearly basis and updated on an as-needed basis.

RideSolutions:
Total Program
Participation (2012-2015)

- 5,982 commuters added to the database
- 8,296 carpool match-list requests
- 66.9% success rate in identifying a carpool match
- 1,050 commuters signed up for Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program
- 83 approved GRH requests



2. Improve marketing of regional travel demand management (TDM) programs to increase use of transit, ride-share, bicycling, and walking.



Marketing & Outreach

A new RideSolutions Marketing Strategy is being developed that will include collecting data and performing analysis that will evaluate the effectiveness of suggested marketing techniques. Utilizing a newly developed *Marketing Tracking Database*, track the effectiveness of certain outreach events and coordination efforts. The data gathered will then contribute to the development of a new, combined marketing strategy with MORPC's Air Quality Program. A combined marketing strategy will allow for expanded budgets, enhanced programming & messaging, and opportunities to develop a greater base of TDM partners.

In addition to exploring the proper marketing balance, determining effective outreach techniques is another key issue that will be addressed in the Marketing Strategy. RideSolutions will continue to investigate Best Practices and will continue to incorporate them into future Marketing Strategies.

In addition to the new Marketing Strategy, RideSolutions is to undergo brand evaluation. The main impact of rebranding will allow the rideshare team to broaden the scope of TDM services that RideSolutions advertises, and may end up being a branch of a statewide rideshare re-brand. Timing of the brand evaluation should coordinate with the launch of the new RideshareOhio website. The feasibility and plausibility of rebranding will hinge largely upon the interest of MORPC's rideshare-MPO partners.

3. Improve employee and customer access to businesses through infrastructure and outreach.



Explore Funding Opportunities to Engage in Comprehensive TDM activities.

RideSolutions funding - predominantly CMAQ dollars - funds only projects associated with ridesharing, such as carpooling and vanpooling. These are the two main pillars of RideSolutions' current outreach. Expanding into transit, active transportation and land use components of TDM will potentially require more broad funding opportunities. In particular, land use regulations oftentimes inadvertently prohibit the use of alternative transit. Wide roads may deter commuters from walking and biking, while low-density developments make transit an infeasible option. Using appropriate funds to impact land use policy or zoning code (Action 7) may inherently improve alternative transit options across the region.

Policy Research & Planning Integration

Policy research pairs well with the need to integrate TDM into various plans throughout the region. One of the most effective ways to integrate TDM with local plans is simply through communication. MORPC is an effective communications hub between local governments. One of MORPC's services is educating its member governments about policy and legislation that impact the region. Finding ways to incorporate TDM into the policy discussion could be an effective approach in developing a relevant regional message. When appropriate, incorporating TDM strategies into local planning efforts can be used, such as influencing parking requirements, land use recommendations, and promoting MORPC's Complete Streets policy.