A New Route to Better Travel for All:
The Regional TDM Plan

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DVRPC's vision for the Greater Philadelphia Region is a prosperous, innovative, equitable, resilient, and sustainable region that increases mobility choices by investing in a safe and modern transportation system; that protects and preserves our natural resources while creating healthy communities; and that fosters greater opportunities for all.

DVRPC's mission is to achieve this vision by convening the widest array of partners to inform and facilitate data-driven decision-making. We are engaged across the region, and strive to be leaders and innovators, exploring new ideas and creating best practices.

<u>Vision</u>

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.

<u>Purpose</u>

This strategic plan is a working document that is intended to be the foundation for 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, Infrastructure and Sustainability [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.

There are two primary programs administered by DVRPC to implement regional TDM work: TripSmart PA formerly the Pennsylvania TDM Base Program, which primarily funds ongoing commuter service and marketing activities, and the Travel Options Program (TOP). TripSmart PA activities are baseline, ongoing TDM work tasks for Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) and other grantees in the Pennsylvania portion of the DVRPC region.

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. TOP is a competitive grant program designed to fund creative and novel TDM projects in the region, and grants are administered on a two-year cycle; TOP is open to organizations in both the PA and NJ portions of the DVRPC region.

Figure 1: DVRPC TDM Program and Committee Structure

Source: DVRPC (2023)

DVRPC Regional TDM Plan

If TOP projects are successful, they have the potential to either (1) be replicated or adapted for another service area, (2) advance to the next project stage, or (3) transition to an ongoing work program like TripSmart PA or a comparable program in New Jersey, such as the statewide TMA program that NJTPA administers. See Figure 2 for an illustration of these workflows.

Figure 2: How Are TDM Projects Evaluated?
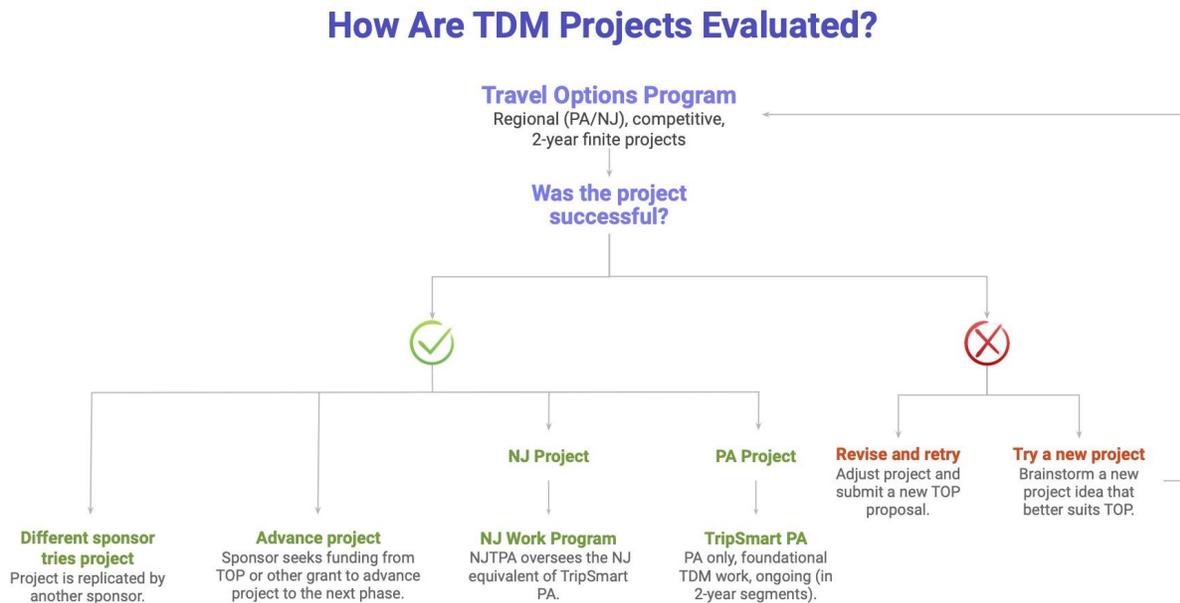
Source: DVRPC (2023)

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.** The Regional TDM Advisory Committee also assists DVRPC staff with the selection and recommendation of applications to fund in each two-year period. For more information on TOP, go to www.dvrpc.org/top.

Types of investments

For better understanding of the Plan's goals, it's important to note that TDM investments can be viewed as place-based or systemic. For this Plan, place-based strategies are either tangible and located in a specific place (e.g., a new bike facility or transit service), or less tangible but designed to benefit a specific place (e.g., promotion of carpool groups in a specific corridor). Systemic strategies are more regional in nature (e.g., promotion of public transit in an entire media market).

Additional principles to guide TOP project selection decisions are:
- In keeping with the Vision Zero goal in DVRPC's Connections 2050 Long Range Plan, projects proposed for funding should improve overall transportation system safety, or at minimum do no harm.

- 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), if funded. There should be a proposed way to measure project cost effectiveness during an evaluation period following the conclusion of the project.
- While this plan can support both place-based and systemic TDM strategies, *place-based strategies will be preferred and prioritized for funding.* Projects should illustrate how they will match the cause of an issue or problem with a search for a solution or the solution itself.

Goals

- **Climate Action and Air Quality improvement:** Contribute to air quality conformity for the region and respond to climate change by encouraging low/no-carbon travel and helping reduce total vehicle miles traveled.
  - Outcome: Reduce estimated SOV trips through each TDM project(s).
    - Project Strategy: Support strategies that promote non-SOV transportation modes, including telework--especially in areas where public transit options are limited--and help reduce SOV trips even during times of economic growth. 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 for funding to estimate how many vehicle trips they will reduce with their pilot or project, and collect performance data during/after the project (this could be accomplished by conducting surveys and/or collecting transit/traffic/bike/pedestrian count data).
    - Programmatic Strategy: Prioritize projects for funding that have more innovative solutions and likelihood of more significant trip reduction.

- **Equity:** Improve access to opportunity for communities of concern, particularly racial minorities, ethnic minorities, low-income households, and disabled persons.
  - Outcome: TDM programs should be designed to have benefits for communities of concern.
    - *TOP:* More than half of the selected projects per funding round should include a component that addresses equity.
    - *TripSmart PA:* At least one project or initiative per contract period should focus on an equity project for each grantee.
    - Project Strategy: Make place-based investments that will benefit specific communities of concern. For planning purposes, this means:
      - Places showing a higher than average score in these categories in DVRPC's Indicators of Potential Disadvantage (IPD) map. By clicking on a Census Tract, the tool displays the score by category, including a scale from below to above average.
      - Projects that would help address access to essential services as shown in DVRPC's Equity Through Access (ETA) map toolkit.

- ■ Project Strategy: Any systemic investments should be designed to consider and include communities of concern.
- ■ Programmatic Strategy: Incorporate equity casemaking into the application and evaluation process for project applicants, TripSmart PA scopes, and project beneficiaries.

- ● **Reliability:** Make trips by all modes more reliable, especially during peak 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 Index and Planning Time Index 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.

- ● **Freedom of Choice:** Enable multiple quality and affordable modal options for travelers to make each trip.
    - ○ 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 during/after the project, specific to this measure (e.g the conduct of surveys and/or collection of traffic/bike/pedestrian count data).

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Abstract:

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

Key Words:

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

Staff Contact:

Amy Bernknopf
abernknopf@dvrpc.org

Project Team:

Kayla Bancone, Najah Jackson, Greg Krykewycz, Stacy Bartels