



Why Codify the Definition of TDM?

Without a codified definition of Transportation Demand Management (TDM), federal funding cannot be dispersed in the most efficient way possible. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Headquarters has indicated that the lack of a clear definition of TDM creates an inconsistent funding mechanism for states and local communities to receive funding, as each Regional FHWA is responsible for allocating these funds.

Our proposed definition of TDM is as follows: “The term ‘Transportation Demand Management’ means the use of strategies to inform and encourage travelers to maximize the efficiency of a transportation system, leading to improved mobility, reduced congestion, and improved air quality, including strategies that use planning, programs, operations, policies, marketing, communications, incentives, pricing, data, and technology.”

ACT would like to share some examples we’ve collected from our membership highlighting why they feel a codified definition of TDM is essential for the transportation community.

Examples:

Tennessee DOT (TDOT)

“The feedback I received from our recently departed FHWA-TN planner...was that **the [Carbon Reduction Program] team was not aware of the language contained in the FAA reauthorization, so they would not honor TDM operations as an eligible expense under CRP at this time.**”

“It ensures consistency across TDOT and other state DOTs of what the definition of TDM is. TDM is such a broad industry ranging from policy to community planning & design to public engagement. A concise, codified definition establishes a consistent understanding for the association’s multi-pronged efforts. **It will reduce the risk of misinterpretation and ensures that decisions are applied uniformly.”**

“Codification lends creditability to state DOTs to establish regulatory efforts as they align with the terms and our own priorities and initiatives. It’s difficult for a government agency to regulate initiatives like TDM if it doesn’t have the legislative backing. If there’s nonpartisan support, then it makes our job in Tennessee much easier.”

“Codification supports transparency from federal to state and local government, making it easier for the DOTs, their stakeholders, and the public to understand how decisions are being made around all modes of transportation.”

“Codified terms establish a common language so that DOTs may communicate more clearly. For example, transportation demand management would be the codified term to use versus traffic optimization. **The acronym TDM would be more rightfully owned by our industry versus other competing initiatives like traffic demand modeling.**”

Spokane, Washington

“We were told we could not use CMAQ dollars for incentives....We’ve had a significant drop in participants after losing the funding, from 3,628 to 2,841. We’ve luckily been successful in being able to secure sponsorships to provide some incentives, i.e. about \$250 a month for 10 - \$25 gift cards. Those have at least help us keep some people participating and logging their trips. However as you know, \$25 gift cards and only 10 a month are not that enticing odds for winning.”

Mongomery County, PA

“I just dealt with was with a local community that is developing a TDM ordinance. That plan is being funded through a grant that is monitored and awarded by our MPO. One member of the communities planning commission kept focusing on level of service (LOS) at intersections which is great for throughput but it’s not TDM. LOS is what DOT’s have been using for years to justify expansion of roadways, new ITS in traffic signals etc. and in many states there is already funding for these types of programs. In essence, he wanted the ordinance in place so we could just enhance traffic signals at intersections and he voted no on the ordinance as he felt that improving LOS was more important.

“What is TDM is often misinterpreted or interpreted to advance a project or program that meets an agenda.”

“I just went through their draft 2050 plan and TDM was called Travel Demand Management, I’ve asked that they change that, and TDM wasn’t included in many areas vs. a small myopic area that involved carpooling activities. **It’s another example of a region that interprets TDM differently as the local, county, MPO and state levels do despite our work here educating them on TDM and its potential to help solve our complex challenges.”**

Bay Area, California

“In SoCal, the Southern California Association of Governments manages the STBG and CMAQ funds for the region. In the past, the majority of projects were infrastructure-based bike and roadway improvement projects. However, this year SCAG updated its program guidelines and included regional priorities, with **TDM being identified as a Tier 1 priority**... In the Bay Area, the One Bay Area Grant funding is tied to MTC’s Transit Oriented Communities Policy compliance which has a TDM component. **Based on the latest round of funding, several TDM projects are included.**”