



Evaluating Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Performance

IS IT IMPORTANT TO EVALUATE THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR TDM PROJECTS?

Absolutely! Assessing the performance of your TDM efforts allows you to determine their effectiveness. It is also necessary to communicate the overall value of your TDM work to others. TDM performance data can be used for everything from helping secure future grant funding to influencing transportation and land use policy.

WHEN SHOULD YOU EVALUATE PERFORMANCE?

You should evaluate your TDM efforts while they are happening. Ideally, this ongoing assessment of your work – often referred to as a “feedback loop” – will help you determine how to strengthen portions of your programs to increase your desired outcomes.

HOW DO YOU SET YOUR GOALS?

Whereas a business’ bottom line is profit, TDM’s bottom line is usually behavior change. Start by determining what behavior you want to change and use that to create a high-level goal. Common TDM goals are mode shift, vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled reduced, and greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants reduced.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE PROGRESS TOWARDS THOSE GOALS?

Think of specific objectives (high-level actions) to accomplish your goal. Determine actions or strategies to help achieve those objectives. Finally, create specific performance measures that will indicate your success. These are where you will focus your evaluation.

EXAMPLE:

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
Reduce number of single-occupancy vehicle equivalent commute trips to your worksite	1. Promote pooled trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee ride-matching service Vanpool program Preferred parking for pool vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees participating in ride-matching service Vanpool ridership People using pooled trips
	2. Decrease number of necessary physical commutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telework and compressed work week policies Home worksite setup stipend Incentives for teleworking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee schedules Employees receiving stipend and/or incentives Employee mode choice



How do you monitor progress?

There are many ways to get the necessary data to assess your performance measures. Your exact approach will depend on the scope of your project and the information you need. Travel diaries, traffic data, observational data, canvassing, GIS layers, studies, Census data, GPS-trace data, travel calendar data, or other sources might be right for your needs. In the example above, other less traditional methods, such as number of employees completing telework agreements, can also be used to assess the effectiveness of a strategy.

WHAT ABOUT SURVEYS?

Surveys are a popular way to get detailed information from specific groups, but there are pitfalls: self-selection bias, sample size, leading word choice, improper baselining, et cetera, can skew your results. If you are new to surveying, consider reaching out to someone with more experience.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH ALL YOUR GREAT DATA?

Once you have collected all the thrilling data that shows your TDM project to be a smashing success, make sure to communicate your results! You did awesome work. Go tell the world how great TDM can be!