CONNECT CENTRALINA

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) PLAN



A Blueprint for Launching a Regional TDM Program in the Greater Charlotte Region

AUGUST 2024

CENTRALINA REGIONAL COUNCIL

Integrated Mobility Division
N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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01 INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)?

CONNECT CENTRALINA IS A TDM PROGRAM FOR THE GREATER CHARLOTTE REGION.

Transportation Demand Management is a broad term that may include any type of program or infrastructure that helps people shift their travel behavior away from single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) and toward healthier, more sustainable travel choices, like walking, biking, carpooling, riding transit, making shorter trips, remote/flex-work, and travel during off-peak hours. TDM also helps communities meet goals related to creating walkable and bikeable places, supporting business and job growth, addressing public health challenges, reinforcing sustainability measures, and providing access for all.

TDM programs:

- "Seek to change how and when people travel[1];"
- Influence the everyday travel choices that people make to support more livable, sustainable; communities and a more efficient transportation system;
- "Are either focused on increasing mobility options or changing travel behaviors[1];"
- Can be tailored to urban, suburban, and/or rural communities; and
- Proven to be successful and effective in other metropolitan areas around the country.

WHY CENTRALINA?

Centralina Regional Council (Centralina) is a lead sponsor and implementor of the regional CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility plan (2021) for the greater Charlotte area. This effort created a shared regional vision with specific recommendations for attaining a reliable, efficient, and well-connected transportation system that benefits everyone. Developing a regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program was a key recommendation of the CONNECT Beyond Plan (see next page). Through the CONNECT Beyond plan development process, Centralina was identified to serve as a lead agency for hosting a future regional TDM program, now called CONNECT Centralina.

[1] **CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan**. *(page 58). Centralina Regional Council & Metropolitan Transit Commission. October 2021.*

Key CONNECT Beyond Recommendation

"DEVELOP A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) PLAN

TIMEFRAME: IMMEDIATE.

CONNECT Beyond recommends our regional partners work together to develop a regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan."[1]

[1] ***CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan***. *(pg. 59). Centralina Regional Council & Metropolitan Transit Commission. October 2021.*

WHY NOW?

Centralina's region has been one of the fastest growing metro regions in the country over the past decade and is continuing to experience rapid growth. The region is at a crossroads. Elected officials, policymakers, local planners, and residents are involved in frequent conversations about navigating the region's transportation challenges. Decisions made now will shape the region's mobility future for decades.

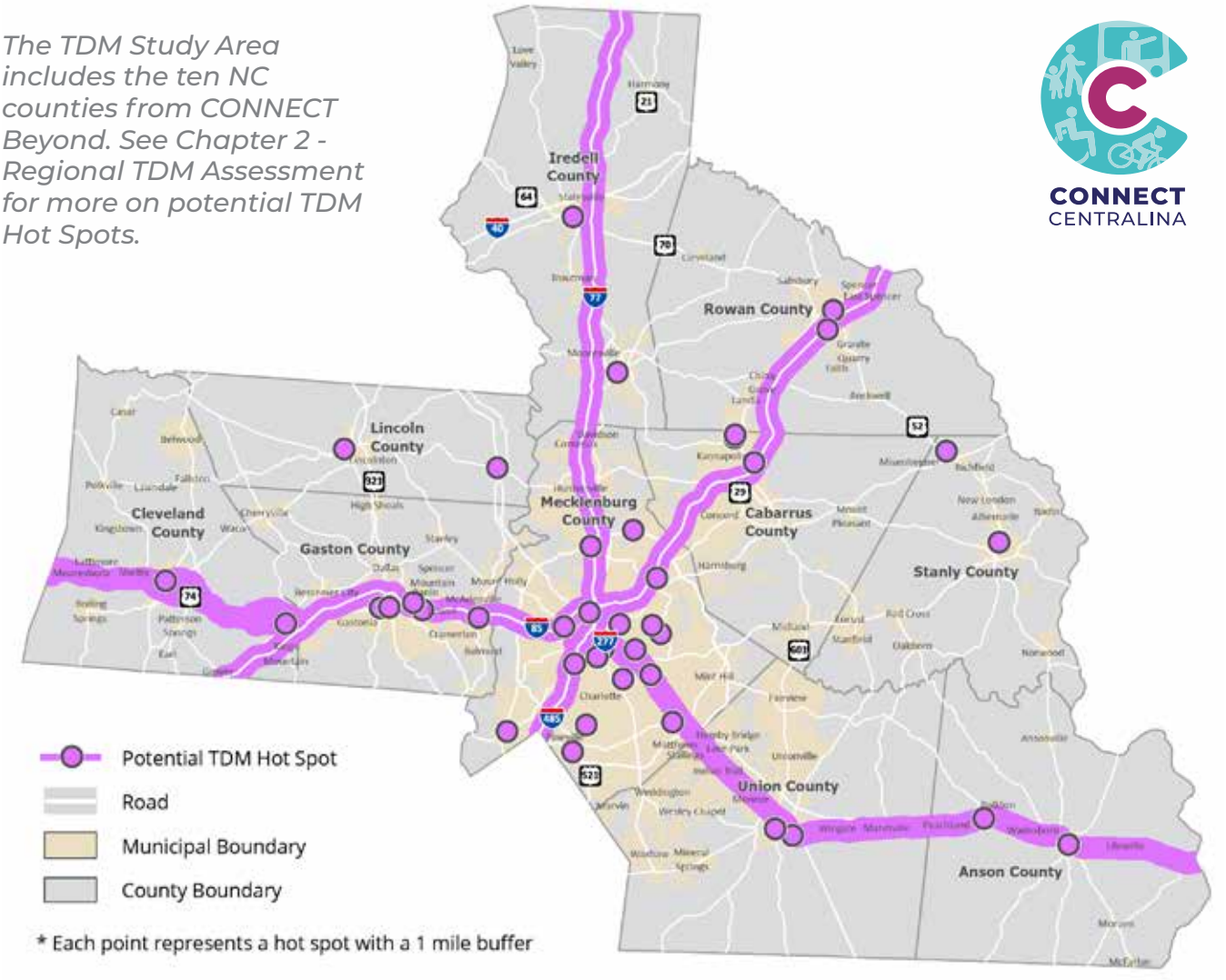
The transportation challenges facing the Charlotte region include:

- Providing transportation choices that keep pace with growth;
- Serving an increasing diversity of transportation needs and preferences;
- Prioritizing safety, health, and livability, particularly for the region's most vulnerable residents and roadway users;
- Understanding how to maximize existing transportation assets and reduce the strain on road networks;
- Navigating a post-Covid reset of travel behavior and mobility expectations;
- Implementing policies and regulations that manage the transportation impacts of new development; and
- Addressing the public health and climate impacts of air pollution from the transportation sector.

Through a coordinated, region-wide effort, the CONNECT Centralina TDM program can help shift regional travel behaviors to support a more resilient, efficient, and sustainable mobility system. This approach complements ongoing regional efforts to advance large-scale investments in roads, transit, and other infrastructure.

CONNECT CENTRALINA TDM STUDY AREA

The TDM Study Area includes the ten NC counties from CONNECT Beyond. See Chapter 2 - Regional TDM Assessment for more on potential TDM Hot Spots.



WITH THE LARGEST POPULATION IN NORTH CAROLINA AND THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONGESTION ISSUES, THE CHARLOTTE METROPOLITAN REGION COULD BENEFIT THE MOST FROM TDM STRATEGIES...

(North Carolina Dept. of Transportation (NCDOT) Statewide TDM Strategic Plan Update | 2018)

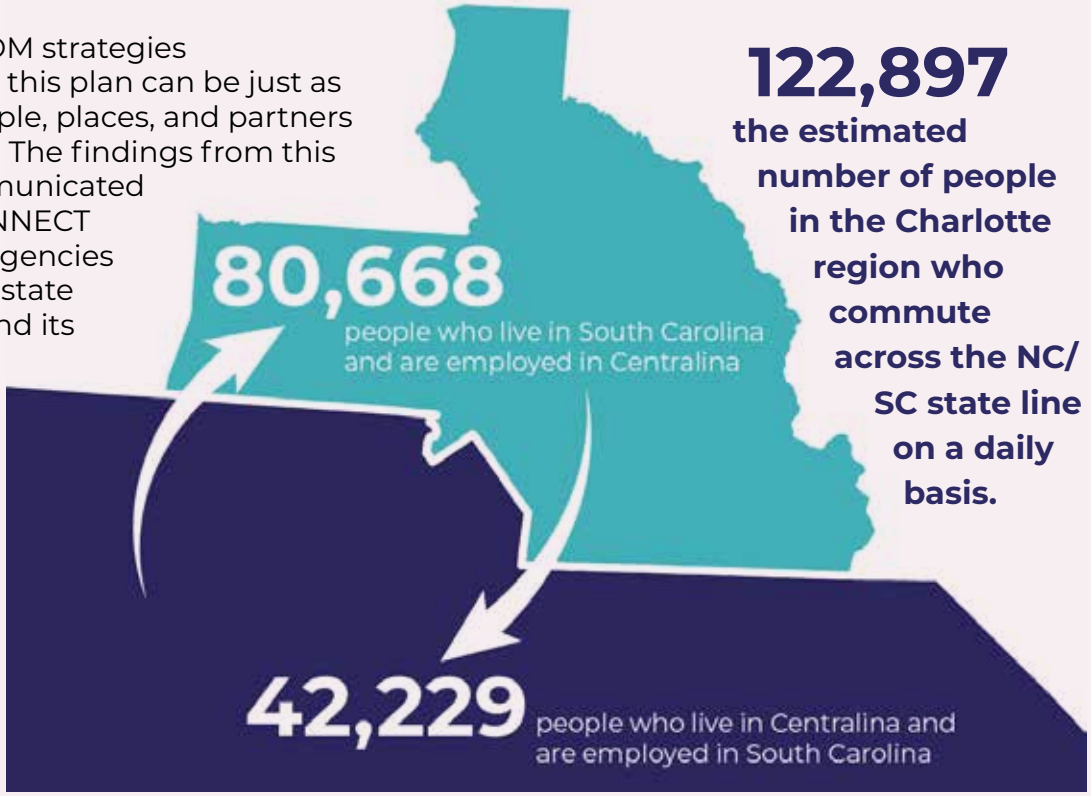
A BI-STATE TRANSPORTATION REGION



The greater Charlotte area is at the center of a region that sees significant travel across state lines. There are extensive daily commute patterns to/from South Carolina counties like York County, Lancaster County, and Chester County. I-77 and I-85 are major transportation arteries that carry drivers and freight between the Carolinas. At the finalizing of this document, the Charlotte Area Transit System has two routes that cross state lines, the 42 (Carowinds) and 82X (Rock Hill Express) bus routes, which serve local stops and three park & ride locations in York County. Recently, the Cross Charlotte Trail (Little Sugar Creek Greenway) was completed through southern Mecklenburg County to the South Carolina State line, with plans in development to extend that major pedestrian and bicycle trail to the Anne Springs Close Greenway. Tourism/recreation destinations also reinforce a bistate transportation pattern as residents on both sides of the state line travel to enjoy amenities like Anne Springs Close Greenway, the US National Whitewater Center, Lake Wylie and Lake Norman, Carowinds, and the Rock Hill BMX Supercross complex, among many others.

Due to the timing and funding of this regional TDM Plan, this effort is focused on the ten North Carolina counties from CONNECT Beyond. However, the reality of bi-state transportation patterns is not absent from the plan's context. Some of the maps and takeaways in the Regional TDM Assessment (Appendix B) are based on data from the Metrolina Regional Travel Demand Model, which includes York County, SC and a portion of Lancaster County, SC.

Ultimately, the TDM strategies recommended in this plan can be just as applicable to people, places, and partners in South Carolina. The findings from this plan will be communicated to applicable CONNECT Beyond partner agencies across the NC/SC state line. Centralina, and its partners, will be eager to champion coordination with any future South Carolina TDM activities.



"Centralina" in the graphic above refers to the ten North Carolina counties from the CONNECT Beyond study area as shown on page 6. Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2021). Accessed on 07.02.2024 at https://onthemap.ces.census.gov. LODES 8.1.

OUR PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for the CONNECT Centralina TDM plan was built upon the extensive engagement conducted for the CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan. The regional engagement behind CONNECT Beyond resulted in a clear recommendation for the development of the CONNECT Centralina TDM program.

Like CONNECT Beyond, this CONNECT Centralina TDM plan and program development was a stakeholder-driven process. The planning process was informed by four primary audiences:

1. **The Project Management Team (PMT),**
2. **The Program Development Steering Committee,**
3. **Stakeholder Groups, and**
4. **Focus Groups.**



TDM PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT RECAP

3 TDM Focus Groups

4 NCDOT Coordination Meetings

6 Stakeholder Meetings

5 Interviews/Case Studies of Peer Programs

8 Steering Committee Meetings

12 Interagency Project Management Team Meetings

The **Project Management Team (PMT)** was a decision-making group that provided specific guidance on project coordination and direction. This group reviewed all deliverables, assisted in coordination among critical stakeholder groups, and helped navigate any interagency sensitivities.

The **Program Development Steering Committee** guided the plan/program development process and ensured that our region's diverse viewpoints were represented. As Centralina staff prepares to launch the CONNECT Centralina TDM program, it is anticipated that the Steering Committee will also support and inform immediate next steps to support the program's launch.

Additionally, a series of meetings was conducted with **Stakeholder Groups** who have an interest and influence in our region's travel patterns. Through these outreach opportunities, the project team engaged with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), economic and workforce development groups, transit service providers, and other key partners.

Finally, to receive additional input from specific focus areas, the project team facilitated three **Focus Groups** with sustainable transportation advocates, major employers, and local land use planners.



Steering Committee Meeting Kick off June 7, 2023

TDM PROGRAM STRUCTURE & GOALS

During the planning process, Centralina and its partners developed a vision statement and identified five guiding principles with corresponding TDM program goals to help guide the TDM program development and future implementation.

The **vision statement** describes the desired future vision for the greater Charlotte region.

The **guiding principles** are intended to communicate broad aspirations for the region, which the TDM program hopes to support.

The TDM **program goals** are intended to guide the TDM program's efforts to achieve the vision.



VISION STATEMENT – Comprehensive statement that defines the future we want

GUIDING PRINCIPLES – Used to communicate broad aspirations for the region



TDM PROGRAM GOALS – Used to guide the TDM program's efforts to achieve the vision

PERFORMANCE METRICS – Used to track progress on goals over time



RECOMMENDED TDM STRATEGIES & PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

What the TDM program actually does to support the things above

The structure of the TDM plan & program was developed and confirmed by the Steering Committee and key agency partners.

CONNECT CENTRALINA TDM PROGRAM VISION STATEMENT:

THE GREATER CHARLOTTE REGION IS A PLACE WHERE SUSTAINABLE AND AFFORDABLE TRAVEL OPTIONS ARE ACCESSIBLE, KNOWN, AND CONVENIENT FOR ALL.

SUSTAINABLE

- **Guiding Principle**
  - Participants integrate travel options into their daily lives that benefit environmental sustainability, personal health, and regional quality of life.
- **Program Goal**
  - Centralina's TDM program has reliable funding and is administered effectively as an enduring program.

AFFORDABLE

- **Guiding Principle**
  - A growing number of residents are able to choose travel options that are more affordable than owning and maintaining a car.
- **Program Goal**
  - Participating in Centralina's TDM program is affordable to members, partners, and employers.

ACCESSIBLE

- **Guiding Principle**
  - Residents across the region have equitable access to transportation options.
- **Program Goal**
  - Centralina's TDM program actively identifies and works to resolve barriers to increasing travel options throughout the region.

KNOWN

- **Guiding Principle**
  - Residents and employers are aware of the various travel options available to them and the support available for choosing non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) options.
- **Program Goal**
  - Centralina's TDM program actively promotes the availability, use, and benefits of travel options to local governments, partners, employers, and people throughout the region.

CONVENIENT

- **Guiding Principle**
  - It is convenient for residents to use non-SOV trips to accomplish a growing number of daily needs.
- **Program Goal**
  - Centralina's TDM program provides a range of programs and strategies that are applicable in rural, suburban, and urban areas.

CONNECT CENTRALINA

02 REGIONAL TDM ASSESSMENT

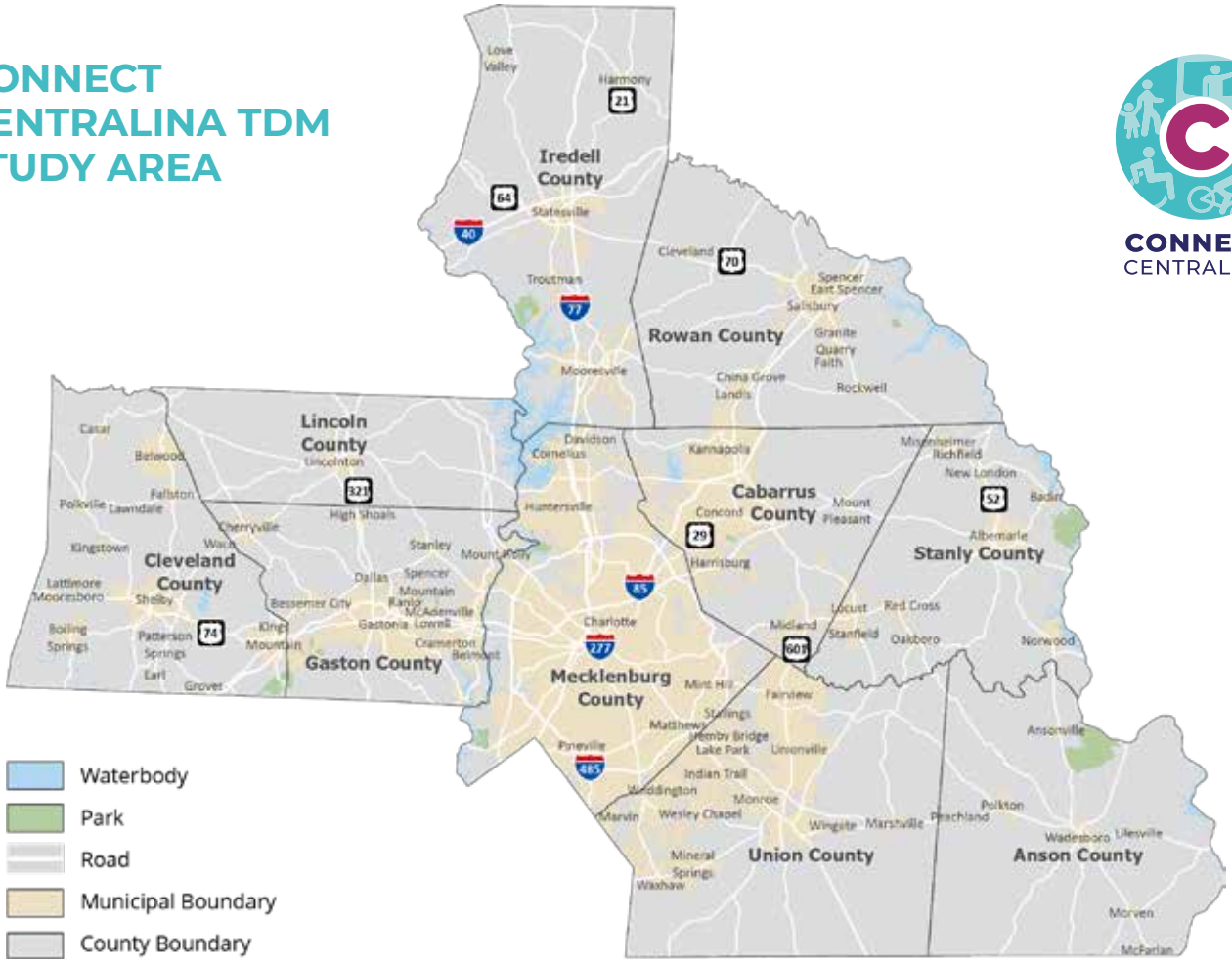
HOW "READY" IS OUR REGION FOR A TDM PROGRAM?

Completing a Regional TDM Assessment (see Appendix B) was the first step in the development of a TDM plan and program for Centralina's region. The report included:

1. Assessment of existing conditions (transportation, demographic, socio-economic, and spatial data); and
2. Identification of potential TDM "Hot Spots" (to help Centralina staff focus their early efforts for the CONNECT Centralina TDM program).

Important context and key takeaways have been included in the full Regional TDM Assessment. The study area for the Regional TDM Assessment covers the ten North Carolina counties included in the CONNECT Beyond Plan geography.

CONNECT CENTRALINA TDM STUDY AREA



CONNECT CENTRALINA

EXISTING CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

The existing conditions assessment details high-level regional trends and includes a multi-modal evaluation of needs and challenges facing the region. It evaluates a variety of factors including socioeconomic patterns; equity considerations; trip attractors; traffic, congestion, and other road network characteristics; existing and future active transportation and transit infrastructure and facilities; land use; and existing TDM programs and activities.

The Existing Conditions Assessment resulted in seven key takeaways:



1. Driving is the easiest and most convenient way to get around the region. It's not close.



2. TDM efforts to date have been fragmented and lack geographic coverage.



3. The multi-centric region lends itself to Transportation Management Associations (TMAs)* that focus on district-scaled strategies.



4. The next frontier in supporting affordable living for more people is access to high-quality, non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) transportation choices.



5. Rural areas are the most challenging to reach. TDM strategies here will require creativity and strategic partnerships.



6. TDM is about more than work commutes. The types of trips people take, and the way they are taking them, is changing.



7. The public transit landscape is changing (microtransit, micromobility, demand-responsive service, autonomous shuttles, Mobility as a Service (Maas), cleaner fuels and technologies, etc.). TDM should help people in the region understand options and support increased coordination across service providers and service types.

**TMAs are member-controlled non-profit organizations focused on managing the movement of people and goods in particular area. They can very significantly in size, geography, membership, structure, and approach. They have been used effectively in other regions to support district-scaled strategies for influencing travel behavior.* *See pages 21-22.*

TDM "HOT SPOTS" IDENTIFICATION

Because the ten-county Study Area is so large (4,750 square miles), it will be necessary for Centralina to determine where and how to focus their early TDM implementation efforts through the CONNECT Centralina TDM program. The Hot Spot Assessment provides some preliminary guidance for early TDM program focus by identifying the places that are the most "ready" for the implementation of TDM strategies.

Identifying Hot Spots also follows a recommendation from the CONNECT Beyond plan to "identify highest priority locations to target through the TDM Plan, i.e., largest employment centers and congested corridors.[1]"

The identified Hot Spots are a combination of Places and Corridors.

PLACES: Determined through a data-driven screening of the potential mobility hubs identified in CONNECT Beyond

CORRIDORS: The primary SOV commuting corridors across the ten-county region

(For more information on the Hot Spot Assessment see Appendix B).





TDM Hot Spots look different in different places. The TDM project team was careful to identify potential TDM Hot Spots across the region that are located in all six Community Character Types described in the CONNECT Beyond plan.

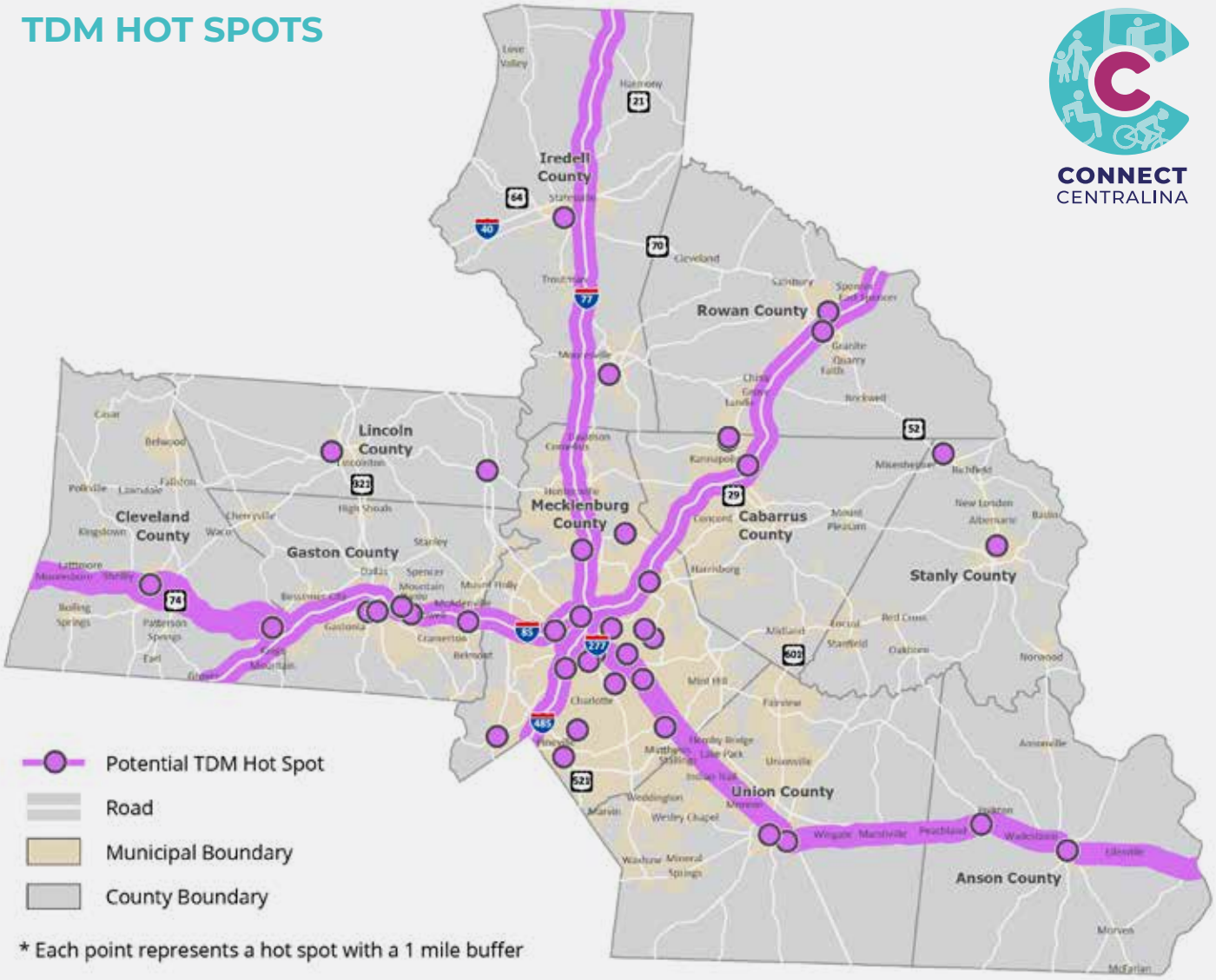
The Hot Spots are simply a snapshot, using the best available regional data. They are the locations in the Study Area that have demonstrated a propensity toward future mode shift away from SOVs and where Centralina may elect to focus early TDM implementation efforts. They are NOT intended to limit where and how Centralina responds to future TDM implementation opportunities or spends future TDM program funding.

For example, Centralina should be opportunistic by engaging with employers and key partners who demonstrate interest in participating in a regional TDM program, whether or not those partners are located in a Hot Spot.

The map on the following page shows the TDM Hot Spots identified in the study area.

[1] **CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan**. *(pg. 60). Centralina Regional Council & Metropolitan Transit Commission. October 2021.*

TDM HOT SPOTS



METHODOLOGY

Data-driven screening of Mobility Hubs identified in CONNECT Beyond (*103 mobility hubs total*)

+

Primary SOV commuting corridors across the ten-county region

(For more information on the methodology for identifying Potential TDM Hot Spots, see Appendix B: Regional TDM Assessment.)

TDM HOT SPOTS ARE:

- Places where Centralina **may elect** to focus early TDM implementation efforts;
- Places that have demonstrated a propensity toward future mode shift away from SOV.

TDM HOT SPOTS ARE NOT:

- **Intended to limit** where Centralina directs their TDM implementation efforts
- Intended to indicate where/how and TDM programming funds are spent.

SIMPLY PUT – HOT SPOTS PROVIDE SOME PRELIMINARY GUIDANCE FOR EARLY TDM PROGRAM FOCUS.

03 TDM STRATEGIES

HOW WILL WE INFLUENCE TRAVEL BEHAVIOR?

After confirming the program vision and goals, Centralina's TDM project team developed a menu of TDM strategies for consideration. TDM strategies represent actions that the TDM program will pursue to influence regional travel behaviors and support the goals and guiding principles of the TDM Plan.



SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON TDM STRATEGIES

Over the course of six months, Centralina TDM project team studied TDM programs in peer regions and listened to stakeholders, focus groups, and the Steering Committee to understand the types of TDM strategies that would be most engaging and effective for Centralina's region. A summary of that benchmarking and listening effort is included below.

PROGRAM FOCUS

In the near term (Years 0-2) Centralina should focus TDM program efforts in two areas:

1. **Coordinating/Convening**
    - ◊ Driving force for advancing regional TDM vision and goals
    - ◊ Providing resources and incentives to partners
2. **Marketing/Education**
    - ◊ Focus on interested employers and working across jurisdictional boundaries
    - ◊ Pilot projects – test TDM in different community types (urban, suburban, rural) and along key corridors

In the longer term (Years 3+) Centralina should seek to expand its TDM program to offer additional services:

3. **Funder/Grant Provider**
    - ◊ Explore providing "pass-through" grant funds to support TDM implementation by partners
4. **Research & Policy**
    - ◊ Creating analysis reports, model ordinance and policy recommendations, assessing other opportunities for implementation.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR TDM STRATEGIES

- Centralina plays a unique and important role within the region. Centralina is different from some other TDM program host agencies across the United States in that they do not have access to direct funding (like some Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)), nor do they have regulatory authority to implement TDM policies/requirements (like municipal governments). Centralina's organizational role and strengths are focused on supporting regional collaboration, convening multi-jurisdictional partnerships, providing technical assistance, and supporting local governments to take action. **The TDM strategies that Centralina pursues should be calibrated to the unique role that they play in the region, acknowledging their organizational authority, capacity, and strengths.**
- It is also clear that Centralina's TDM efforts must work across a wide range of places. **The TDM program should focus on strategies that can reach people in the diverse community contexts that exist across Centralina's region.** While urban areas have the greatest potential for prompting travel behavior change across larger numbers of people, the rural and suburban areas within the region are a significant asset and play a key role within our overall transportation story.

- **Partners expressed enthusiasm for TDM strategies that can support their existing work and promote greater awareness and collaboration for supporting non-SOV travel across the region.** Feedback emphasized the following ideas:
  - Promote and incentivize sustainable commuting (unified website/ app – Mobility as a Service (MaaS); ShareTheRideNC; commuter training/ ambassador programs; discounted/ free transit passes)
  - Worksite/employer-based strategies are important (flex-work/telework & enhancing the commuter experience; guaranteed ride home)
  - Provide technical guidance (opportunity to develop model ordinances and policies for the region)
  - Urban planning integration (unbundling the cost of parking from office or apartment leases; developing walkable employment centers; connection between transportation and land use needs to be an ongoing focus)
  - Diversify transportation options (district shuttles; vanpools; pass-through grant funding to service providers)
- The target audience for TDM strategies is important. Some program strategies will be targeted directly to travelers across the region, others may be directed to employers, campuses, or local governments. **Understanding the desired outcome of TDM strategies, and calibrating communications and outreach to the right audiences, will be critical.**



Groups such as the Advancing the Plan Committee were engaged at various points throughout the planning process to hear ideas and feedback about the TDM program development.

TDM STRATEGIES MENU

The TDM Strategies Menu (see Appendix A) describes potential program activities to help guide the launch and future direction of a TDM program hosted by Centralina. Centralina staff may also elect to use this menu as a dynamic tool for tracking implementation and outcomes of various TDM strategies over time.

The TDM strategies reflect opportunities to leverage existing resources and tools at the state, regional, and local levels (e.g., Share The Ride NC). The menu features descriptions of each TDM strategy, examples of successful applications in other places, regional organizations most likely to be responsible for implementing/supporting the strategy, and the relationship of each strategy to the TDM program goals and community character types identified in CONNECT Beyond.

Informed by the peer agency benchmarking, the focus groups/stakeholder meetings, and the TDM Steering Committee, Centralina's potential TDM strategies fell into four primary categories:



Education & Marketing: Through these strategies Centralina would lead communications and outreach efforts to advance TDM throughout the region.



Regional Partnerships & Coordination: Through these strategies Centralina would work across jurisdictional boundaries to convene partnerships that advance TDM goals.



Incentives & Facilitation: Through these strategies Centralina would seek to overcome barriers, real or perceived, to choosing non-SOV travel options. This category of strategies may include offering people incentives, or encouraging/equipping partners to provide direct incentives, for choosing non-SOV travel.



Technical Assistance: Through these strategies Centralina would provide technical assistance to support the implementation of TDM plans/policies/regulations by others.

HIGH PRIORITY TDM STRATEGIES

The specific strategies that were identified as most important for early implementation are described in the following table. In general, high priority TDM strategies include those that focus on partnerships, communications, and marketing. These are the most effective TDM strategies to pursue as Centralina launches the programs and builds internal staff capacity and communications resources. As the TDM program matures, Centralina should consider pursuing a broader range of TDM strategies. Appendix A includes the full TDM Strategy Matrix with strategies beyond those identified as high priority.

HIGH PRIORITY TDM STRATEGIES

STRATEGY CATEGORY	STRATEGY - NAME	STRATEGY - BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Education & Marketing	**Launch a Regional Marketing Campaign**	Centralina will conduct a region-wide marketing campaign to help promote their TDM program and educate residents/employers about the resources available for non-SOV travel in the region.
Regional Partnerships & Coordination	**Pursue Dedicated Funding & Grants**	Pursuing sustainable funding is a critical TDM program strategy. With a sustainable funding mix - one that is not heavily reliant on competitive yearly grants - a regional TDM program will mature to have adequate staff support and broad influence. Centralina will pursue dedicated funding set-asides and low-match grant opportunities to support its regional TDM activities. Centralina will collaborate with potential program funders including North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), regional MPOs/RPOs, USDOT, local governments, etc. to demonstrate the value the TDM program can bring to their shared goals.
Regional Partnerships & Coordination	**Form a Regional TDM Advisory Committee**	Centralina will form and manage a regional TDM Advisory Committee. This will be a working group charged with recruiting the participation of major employers in the TDM program, provide guidance on funding strategies, and overseeing regional branding, messaging, and communications for the program, among other tasks.
Education & Marketing	**Develop a Travel Options/ TDM Program Website**	Centralina will develop and maintain a new TDM program website that provides a central hub of information where commuters and employers can find detailed information about all travel options in the region (what the CONNECT Beyond plan refers to as the region's "Total Mobility Network"). The website will aggregate information about existing non-SOV travel options from transit providers, ShareTheRideNC, non-profits (e.g. Carolina Thread Trail), local governments, MPOs/RPOs, and NCDOT in one, easy-to-use resource.

STRATEGY CATEGORY	STRATEGY - NAME	STRATEGY - BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Education & Marketing	**Promote Carpool Matching**	ShareTheRideNC is the best existing statewide resource for facilitating carpool matching and coordinating new vanpools. Centralina will use the education and marketing activities of its TDM program to promote ShareTheRideNC to partners, employers, and commuters through pop-up events, sign-up drives, promotional campaigns/ contests, and other communications.
Education & Marketing	**Promote Vanpool**	
Regional Partnerships & Coordination	**Support Expansion of the Emergency Ride Home Program**	The Emergency Ride Home program offered through ShareTheRideNC is currently not available within Centralina's region. Centralina will encourage participation from employers in the Emergency Ride Home program and engage transit providers and other organizations in conversations about supporting (financially and administratively) broad regional coverage, similar to the Triangle area.
Regional Partnerships & Coordination	**Support the Development of TMAs**	A Transportation Management Association (TMA) is a member-controlled, non-profit organization formed to help manage the movement of people and goods in a particular area. TMAs can provide structure and focus for the implementation of broader TDM programs in multi-centric regions. Centralina will target key areas for the development of TMAs and provide education and technical resources to areas/organizations interested in starting a TMA. The multi-centric greater Charlotte region is well-suited to the development of TMAs that focus on district-scaled strategies championed by large employers and existing municipal service districts. (For more information on TMAs see pages 21-22.)
Education & Marketing	**Provide Workplace Travel Resources & Planning**	Centralina will partner with major employers (e.g. healthcare providers and university campuses) to conduct needs assessments and develop a toolbox of strategies for employers to engage their employees. Centralina will support employers in providing commuter education and provide resources/advice to employers and employees on transportation options available at their worksite.

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS (TMA)

A TMA is a member-controlled, non-profit organization formed to help manage the movement of people and goods in a particular area.

TMAs can provide structure and focus for the implementation of broader TDM programs in multi-centric regions. Typical TMA coverage areas often include employment campuses, activity centers, colleges/universities, healthcare districts, airports, and large mixed-use developments.

TMA members may include employers, developers, property managers, building owners, local government representatives, and others. TMA members work together to establish policies, programs, and services to address transportation needs within a specified geographical area. TMAs can be funded through grants, member dues, and/or developers/property managers.

TYPICAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY TMAS INCLUDE:

- District shuttles (first/last mile to transit stations and "park-once" connections within activity centers)
- Workplace travel planning & education resources (events, websites, toolkits)
- Sustainable commute incentives (free transit passes, gas cards for carpoolers, prize drawings, etc.)
- Emergency ride home programs/ reimbursement
- District-level parking management (parking pricing and parking cash-out programs)
- Ride matching services (carpool/ vanpool)

TDM PROGRAM AND TMA PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT: GEORGIA COMMUTE OPTIONS

Georgia Commute Options (GCO) is Atlanta's regional TDM program serving 20 counties in the metro-Atlanta area. GCO has over 600 participating employer/property manager partners who support TDM at their jobsites, many through district-scale TMAs. GCO partners with seven TMAs:

- Airport Employee Ride Options
- Atlantic Station Access Program
- Clifton Corridor TMA
- Livable Buckhead
- Midtown Transportation
- Perimeter Connects
- Atlanta Downtown TMA

GCO and TMAs have different roles to assist in furthering the TDM program:

GEORGIA COMMUTE OPTIONS (REGIONAL TDM PROGRAM)	TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (DISTRICT-SCALED IMPLEMENTATION)
Umbrella organization; regional convener and connector	Implementor/provider of localized services and resources
Manages federal grants for program funding (e.g. Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ))	Membership fees fund the local match for federal grant funds.
Provides a flexible TDM evaluation framework based on: Awareness, Influence, Participation, and Impact.	Customizes performance goals based on local conditions and unique strategies.

04 PERFORMANCE METRICS

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE METRICS

Performance metrics allow TDM program staff to evaluate program activities and progress against broader TDM program goals. They also allow program staff to demonstrate the value of TDM programs to potential partners and funders.

NCDOT's TDM grant program includes a scorecard of performance metrics that grant recipients are required to track and report each year. That NCDOT scorecard informed the development of the recommended performance metrics, but it was not the primary driver in identifying recommended metrics, which are included in the tables below.

It is important to note that program staff may need to track and report on additional performance metrics in order to satisfy the requirements of specific grant programs. The metrics recommended in this plan are not presumed to satisfy all potential funding sources and grant requirements. Instead, they are suggested as a smaller, more accessible, set of performance metrics.

The intent of the evaluation process is to identify TDM performance metrics that:

- **Succinctly communicate what the TDM program is about;**
- **Align with the TDM plan goals;**
- **Are easily understood by potential funders and the general public;**
- **Are supported by available data; and**
- **Can be measured/ updated on an annual basis.**

TRIANGLE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES FY23 SCORECARD

IMPACTS OF TDM IN FY23:

6 million vehicle trips avoided	That's over **104,000 days** *not* spent driving a car
3.5 million gallons of gas saved	It would take **411 tanker trucks** to hold that much gas
87 million commute miles reduced	That's roughly **30,000 trips** from San Francisco to New York
33,000 alternative transportation users supported	If they all drove alone, their cars would span **94 miles** bumper-to-bumper
68 million pounds of Carbon dioxide (CO_2) release prevented	That's the same as **6,000 homes** not using electricity for a year

The Triangle Transportation Choices program publishes an annual scorecard that estimates the impact of that TDM program in the Triangle area (Central Pines Regional Council).

MEASURING INPUTS VS. OUTCOMES

Recognizing that the specific "outcomes" of TDM strategies (like Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction, and shift in mode share) are difficult to accurately quantify, the recommended performance metrics also include benchmarks for key "inputs" of the TDM program (like number of key partners, and number of educational events hosted by program staff). It is easier to control and achieve performance metrics related to program inputs, especially in the short term.

As the program matures, it may be possible to measure the most significant outcomes of the TDM program more accurately and consistently. Centralina might deploy survey tools and more sophisticated data analytics that help to describe the impact of the program on transportation behaviors across the region. Those types of performance metrics will likely require more resources, more time, and more data than other types of performance metrics. For that reason, several of the more outcome-focused performance metrics have been recommended as "Future Potential Metrics" for Centralina to consider.



AN EVOLVING APPROACH FOR MEASURING SUCCESS

As the TDM program changes and matures, the way that Centralina evaluates the program's success should also change and mature. Program staff may discover that some performance metrics are less useful than originally expected, while other potential metrics may be needed to describe a different program direction. The performance metrics used to measure success should be evaluated and adjusted at least every two years to make sure they are still serving the needs of the program.

The two tables below suggest a possible evolution in the approach for measuring success of Centralina's regional TDM program. The first table highlights important performance measures that Centralina should use to evaluate success in the early years (years one-two) of the program's operation. The second table includes performance metrics that Centralina may choose to add in later years (years three+) of the program's operation if more resources become available for data tracking/analytics, region-wide surveys, and staff support.

Centralina should publish an annual TDM program year-in-review report that documents the program's activities and progress on performance metrics. The year-in-review report should be used as a key tool for demonstrating the value and impact of the TDM program to key partners, potential funders, and regional decision makers. To a lesser extent, the media and general public may have some interest in the content of a year-in-review report.

RECOMMENDED TDM PROGRAM PERFORMANCE METRICS

RECOMMENDED METRIC	DATA AVAILABILITY DATA
1. FUNDING SOURCES	Calculated total - Percentage of grant funds vs. dedicated funds
2. DEDICATED STAFF SUPPORT	Calculated total - Number of FTEs dedicated to the program
3. PROGRAM COST-EFFECTIVENESS	Overall expenditures divided by number of program participants
4. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES REACH	Estimate of the number of people taking advantage of some sort of financial incentive for utilizing non-SOV modes – Calculated total from Transit Service Providers (TSP) programs (Discounted transit passes) + employer/TMA programs (parking cashout, bikeshare subsidy, free transit passes, guaranteed ride home, etc.)
5. COMMUTE MODE SHARE	Number or % of commute trips by mode of transportation
6. EQUITY POPULATIONS REACH	Number or % of ShareTheRideNC users located in areas with high NCDOT Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) rating; and/or Number or % or partner organizations working in areas with high NCDOT Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) rating *(NOTE – could also benchmark to NCDOT Environmental Justice Index instead of TDI)*
7. PROGRAM EVENTS REACH	Number of TDM events held annually; Total events in each county; Attendance; Level of Engagement at events
8. DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS REACH	Website & Social Media Traffic - Total Page Views, New Visitors/ Users, Average Session Duration, Total Followers/Impressions
9. PARTNERSHIPS REACH	Number of organizations involved as key partners OR Number of counties/municipalities with key partners
10. COMMUTERS REACH	Number of commuters represented by partner organizations; Reported totals from partners

	SOURCE/ RESPONSIBILITY FOR UPDATING	**PRIMARY TDM GOAL**	*OTHER RELATED TDM GOALS*
	Centralina	***Sustainable***	Accessible, Known
	Centralina	***Sustainable***	Accessible, Known
	Centralina	***Affordable***	Convenient, Sustainable
	Transit Service Providers, Employers, TMAs	***Affordable***	Accessible, Convenient
	US Census, ShareTheRideNC, Centralina	***Accessible***	Known, Convenient
	NCDOT, Centralina, ShareTheRideNC	***Accessible***	Known, Convenient
	Centralina	***Known***	Accessible, Convenient
	Centralina	***Known***	Accessible, Convenient
	Centralina	***Convenient***	Sustainable, Accessible
	Centralina	***Convenient***	Affordable, Known

FUTURE PROGRAM PERFORMANCE METRICS TO CONSIDER

POTENTIAL FUTURE METRIC	DATA AVAILABILITY DATA
1. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (GHG) EMISSIONS REDUCED	Calculated total from household travel survey responses and other sources
2. VMT REDUCED	Calculated total from household travel survey responses and other sources
3. PARTNER AFFORDABILITY	Partner cost per participant
4. HOUSEHOLD COST-EFFECTIVENESS	Proportion of household income spent on transportation
5. TDM ORDINANCE ADOPTION	Number or % of jurisdictions that have integrated TDM requirements into local zoning or regulations. (NOTE - could include parking unbundling requirements)
6. LAND USE INTEGRATION	Number or % of jurisdictions with land use policies/ regulations that support mixed-use and transit-oriented development
7. TOTAL SHARETHERIDENC TRIPS	Logged trips (by mode – carpool, vanpool, other logged trips)
8. TOTAL SHARETHERIDENC USERS	Active registered users, New accounts created, Change in total registered users over time
9. NON-SOV SERVICE COVERAGE	Percent of region served by non-SOV modes/services; Land area within half mile of non-SOV access points (bus stops, park and ride, bikeshare stations, greenways) vs. total land area
10. NON-COMMUTE TRIPS BY MODE	Number or % of non-commute trips by mode of transportation

	SOURCE/ RESPONSIBILITY FOR UPDATING	**PRIMARY TDM GOAL**	*OTHER RELATED TDM GOALS*
	ShareTheRideNC, Centralina, Replica	***Sustainable***	Known, Convenient
	ShareTheRideNC, Centralina, Replica	***Sustainable***	Known, Convenient
	Centralina, Partner organizations	***Affordable***	Accessible, Convenient
	ShareTheRideNC, Replica	***Affordable***	Accessible, Convenient
	Municipalities, Centralina	***Accessible***	Sustainable, Affordable
	Municipalities, Centralina	***Accessible***	Sustainable, Known
	ShareTheRideNC	***Known***	Accessible, Convenient
	ShareTheRideNC	***Known***	Sustainable, Convenient
	Centralina, Transit Service Providers, NCDOT	***Convenient***	Sustainable, Accessible
	Replica, ShareTheRideNC, Centralina	***Convenient***	Known, Accessible

05 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

HOW WILL WE SUPPORT AN ONGOING REGIONAL TDM PROGRAM?

The TDM project team developed program management recommendations after reviewing Centralina's current organizational structure and staff time availability, interviewing Centralina staff, and conducting a review of five peer-region TDM programs. The team reviewed the program structure, funding sources, program costs, number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, and staff roles for the following peer TDM programs.

- **Triangle Transportation Choices** – Triangle Region, NC
- **Regional Travel Options** – Portland, OR
- **Get There ATX** – Austin, TX
- **Go Coast** – Wilmington, NC
- **Georgia Commute Options** – Atlanta, GA

Of these peers, the TDM programs in the Triangle Region, Portland, and Austin best represent the scale of a potential TDM program in the greater Charlotte region. They serve relatively similar population sizes, demographics, and geographic areas. The examples from Wilmington and Atlanta also offer important insights into funding and operating a TDM program.



ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW TAKEAWAYS

STAFFING

- TDM programs that operate in regions similar to the greater Charlotte area employ between 1.5 and 4.75 FTEs.
- Primary roles in all five peer programs include TDM program managers, grants administrators, program administrators, and transportation planners, with some programs also employing marketing and communications staff, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and/or data analysts.
- Centralina's current staff has necessary policy and technical expertise, but they need more bandwidth to support a TDM program. Similarly, current staff has the necessary grant management/accounting expertise to administer the launch of a TDM program. However, with the anticipated number and complexity of the funding streams, and the associated reporting requirements, adding a dedicated grant administrator may be needed as the program grows.

FUNDING

- The mix of funding for peer programs includes dedicated funds (set asides that are allocated to TDM programs on a year-over-year basis from funding organizations) and other revenue available through competitive grant processes.
- TDM programs that operate in regions similar to the greater Charlotte area receive between $1.2 million and $3.4 million in annual funding.
- All five peers receive some amount of federal funding, especially through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), and Carbon Reduction (CRP) programs. These funds may be administered through MPOs.
- Some peer programs also receive funding through state DOTs.
- Centralina is a unique region, which includes multiple MPOs and an RPO. This can impact the way requests for funding are made. However, support has already been received from NCDOT to assist with the exploratory TDM efforts taken to date.
- Match requirements vary based on the grant and the funder. NCDOT's TDM grant program requires a 50/50 match. Most federal programs have 80/20 or 90/10 match requirements. It is difficult for Centralina to find cash to meet match requirements. It will be critical for Centralina to find low-match funding to support their early TDM program operations.
- Some funding sources have limitations that can be restrictive for supporting TDM strategies like providing direct incentives to commuters/employers. Currently, the only Centralina funds that are accessible without these limitations are membership dues, but these can be difficult to access. Finding more flexible funding options is a priority.

PROGRAM AND PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

- All five peer programs have a “host” agency – such as a local government, regional council or MPO – which manages the program and coordinates between TDM program partners.
- All five peer programs partner with local transit service providers to implement program services.
- In Austin and Wilmington, host agencies are partially responsible for administering TDM funds. In the Triangle Region, Portland, and Atlanta, funds are administered by MPOs, state DOTs, and/or regional councils or advisory committees.
- Existing Boards and departments within Centralina are available to help manage the TDM program.
- Centralina is interested in convening a TDM Advisory Committee, which can help to tie together and coordinate between the various boards, working groups and transit providers already working on TDM or TDM-adjacent programs.



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

PROGRAM STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Within four years of the program launch, Centralina should hire staff necessary to allocate 3.5 full-time equivalents (FTE) staff to TDM program support.** The 3.5 FTEs should include a program manager, communications and outreach specialist, a grant writer/administrator, and a part-time data or GIS analyst. *(Appendix F includes descriptions of these proposed roles and example job descriptions from case study agencies. Chapter 6 - Implementation Action plan includes more information on the proposed timing and order of these hires.)*
- This recommendation is in line with Centralina staff's goals to add capacity in the next one to three years, and in particular, to hire a communications and outreach expert. This increase in capacity could start with the program manager and the communications expert. As the program grows, the grant administrator and the data/GIS analyst could be brought in. Adding these new employees would help to support current staff by opening bandwidth for TDM. This staffing strategy is similar to Centralina's Clean Fuels Coalition, which currently employs a program director, a planner, and an intern.
- These roles would be similar to positions utilized in peer TDM programs, which cover program management, data and/or GIS analysis, communications, and finances (at a minimum). Having both dedicated staff and part-time staff in these roles has been crucial to the success of peer TDM programs.

(Also see Appendix F: Recommended Staff Roles & Job Descriptions)



PROGRAM FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Dedicated funding set asides will be critical, especially in the early years of the TDM program.** It will be very challenging and inefficient to build a sustainable program based on competitive yearly grant cycles. The program will not be able to achieve its goals and reach the broader region without dedicated funding. Discretionary funds from the MPO's/RPO in the region and NCDOT are the most likely sources of dedicated funding.
- **Funding "cocktails" will be required to align funding to program activities across the region.** The ten-county TDM planning region crosses boundaries of likely funders. This is a key reason why NCDOT and MPO/RPO funds are so critical to achieving the program's desired geographic reach.
- **Low-match funding will be important for supporting Centralina as the host agency for the TDM program.** Centralina should continue to advocate for TDM in the Charlotte region by requesting low-match administrative support funding from NCDOT. NCDOT TDM funds come from state sources, so they may be able to be leveraged as match funds for certain federal programs to further support TDM in Centralina's region.
    - In some instances, match funds can be made from non-cash or in-kind sources. Calculating the value of the advisory committee's time and efforts is one way to capture some of these dollars. Another is to document the value of any donated or discounted materials, supplies and services provided on behalf of the program.
- **Centralina should seek out further federal funding, based on the success of peer programs in receiving federal grants for TDM**. In addition to their application for CRTPO funding, Centralina should seek out Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funding. Peer programs have been successful in winning these federal grants. Both Wilmington, North Carolina and Portland, Oregon have received STBG funding with an 80/20 match requirement, while Austin has received CRP funding, also with an 80/20 match requirement. Depending on the strategies deployed, other grants may be an opportunity, such as Safe Routes to School funding, which has been used to support TDM in Portland, OR. The Association for Commuter Transportation also published a list of potential grants for TDM available through the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
- **Seek funding from regional employers and/or community foundations who may also be willing to provide support for the program launch or specific pilot projects.**



TDM ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Centralina should form and manage a regional TDM Advisory Committee.** The purpose of TDM Advisory Committee is to influence the broad TDM goals of the region, coordinate program activities with other regional boards/organizations, and help demonstrate the value of TDM for supporting transportation equity, economic prosperity, public health, and livable communities.
- As with other Centralina programs, Centralina's Board of Delegates and Centralina staff leadership would oversee the TDM program activities and expenditures. The TDM Advisory Committee would play a supporting role to the Board of Delegates and Centralina staff.

- The TDM Advisory Committee should be a working group charged with:



Collaborating with other regional boards/working groups (like the CRTPO Transit Providers Work Group) to coordinate regional TDM activities;



Convening regional stakeholders, similar to Centralina's Clean Fuels Coalition's standing board meetings, to promote a common regional TDM vision;



Using its membership and industry relationships to facilitate the participation of major employers and the development of TMA's;



Advising staff on the policy direction, overall focus, and messaging for the TDM program; and



Encouraging an equity lens when developing new TDM programs and policies.

- The TDM Advisory Committee would be strategic in purpose, while being able to provide feedback on operational issues (as needed). The members could include representatives from the MPOs/RPO, transit operators, business community, local municipalities, workforce development specialists, health & human service providers, educational institutions, non-profits, and interested commuters. The membership of this committee could draw from the current TDM Plan/Program Development Steering Committee.
- The TDM Advisory Committee should adopt bylaws to formalize the structure and composition of the committee and ensure a diverse membership – in terms of geographic and public/private representation. Peer TDM programs have utilized similar advisory committees to create long- and short-term plans for TDM programs, to facilitate stakeholder buy-in on TDM projects, to help implement and monitor TDM strategies and performance measures, and ensure the goals and objectives of TDM programs, policies, and strategic plans are aligned with the other regional goals.

LEGAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Approach all services as opt-in to insulate Centralina from liability.** For example, Centralina may issue disclaimers about inherent risks of TDM programs and may require program participants to sign waivers. Centralina may not necessarily need to hire a dedicated TDM attorney but should consult with an attorney on strategies that help Centralina avoid liability.
- **Provide any direct services through "Purchased Transportation" agreements.** By not directly operating the service, Centralina can be indemnified and held harmless, so long as this is written in applicable contracts/agreements with service providers. Centralina may contract TDM services directly (e.g., a vanpool operator), or can provide funding to transit agencies to contract companies, which can provide further insulation from liability.
- **Remain transparent with TDM participants regarding physical risk, as well as the use of their personal information.** Provide public notice of the inherent risk from all transportation-related activities (i.e., taking transit, riding bike, carpool, etc.), and provide suggested tips for safe travel. When implementing any TDM program, disclose what personal information will be collected and how it will be used.
- **Consult an attorney who can help Centralina understand the potential need to:**
  - Alter by-laws or implement additional financial controls.
  - Address potential authority or jurisdiction issues with implementing TDM.
  - Operate the TDM program as a non-profit to insulate Centralina from legal risk.





06 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS FOR PROGRAM LAUNCH AND IMPLEMENTATION?

Transportation Demand Management programs play an important role in addressing transportation challenges, promoting sustainable mobility, and creating more efficient, equitable, and environmentally conscious transportation systems.

There are a variety of different roles that TDM programs can play in supporting non-SOV travel, including:

1. **Coordinator/Convener**
2. **Marketer/Educator**
3. **Researcher/Policy Developer/Technical Assistance Provider**
4. **Funder/Grant Provider**
5. **Direct Services Provider**

Centralina staff, the Project Management Team, the Steering Committee, and other stakeholders offered thoughtful insight on the type of role that a TDM program, hosted by Centralina, should play within our region.



WHAT WE HEARD FROM PMT, STEERING COMMITTEE, AND STAKEHOLDERS:

In the first years after program launch Centralina should lean into the regional coordinator/convener role that it already plays. This is a clear organizational strength that Centralina should leverage to advance the TDM program. Focus on Marketer/Educator roles early on will also enable Centralina to have influence in TDM-related efforts of its partners.

THERE IS STRONG INTEREST IN A COORDINATED REGIONAL STRATEGY AROUND TDM EFFORTS.

Centralina should start by focusing on a small number of achievable strategies and goals. If Centralina staff try to pursue too many implementation actions at that outset, it may dilute the messaging and effectiveness of the program.

As Centralina's TDM program matures, staff should consider broadening efforts to include additional roles, like being a Research/Policy Development/ Technical Assistance leader for the region.

In the long-term, and with sufficient funding and staff capacity, Centralina's TDM program should consider expanding its efforts into the roles of Funder/Grant Provider and Indirect/Direct Services Provider.

Based on feedback from project partners, the program management recommendations, the identified high priority TDM strategies, and benchmarking against peer programs, the project team developed the following action plan for implementation of a TDM Program in Centralina's region. Action items are listed by program year to provide staff clear steps for launching and implementing a TDM Program

PROGRAM LAUNCH AND TRANSITION YEAR

(FISCAL YEAR 2025)

Focus: Leverage existing staff resources to launch the program and secure additional funding.

FIND A SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM FUNDING "COCKTAIL"

As Centralina launches the program with existing staff resources, its primary goal should be securing funding in future fiscal years to support a transition toward hiring a full-time TDM program manager. Centralina will receive fiscal year 2025 funding for TDM activities through CRTPO's Discretionary Projects Program. This will be the first available funding to support the TDM program's early efforts. (See "*Use pilot projects to deploy and demonstrate high priority TDM Strategies*" below.) Additional sources of funding will be necessary for the TDM program to hire full-time staff and expand its footprint beyond this CRTPO pilot project.

Finding additional, sustainable program funding will require securing funds from multiple sources.



State Funding: Ideally, NCDOT's TDM grant funds would play a significant role. Centralina's ability to come up with local grant match funding is limited, with available funding already spoken for by other grant match and staff commitments. Centralina will have to calibrate future NCDOT funding applications to their ability to meet the state's current 50/50 match requirement. (*See "Secure low-match funding from NCDOT" below.*)

TPO Funding: Discretionary funds from the MPOs/RPO in the region may be the most likely conduits for regular funding set asides. As is the case for other TDM programs across the country, funding from these transportation planning organizations will likely be an important part of establishing sustainable TDM program funding.

Federal Grants: Federal grant funds (e.g. Climate Pollution Reduction Grants) will likely play an important role as well.

In this transition year, Centralina staff should continue their efforts to secure dedicated, low-match funding with a focus on these three sources. Centralina staff should expect grant-writing and conversations/presentations with TPO staff and boards to be a significant part of the workload in this initial transition year of the TDM program.

PRESENT THE TDM PLAN TO KEY PARTNERS

The first audience for the TDM program will be key organizational partners that may be involved as future funders and implementers of the CONNECT Centralina TDM Program. Staff should schedule presentations to Centralina's Board of Delegates; the CATS Metropolitan Transit Commission; and the boards of the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization, the Gaston Cleveland Lincoln MPO, the Cabarrus Rowan MPO, and the Rocky River RPO. The purpose of these presentations should be to:

- Introduce these partners to the TDM plan and the CONNECT Centralina program;
- Clarify the alignment of the TDM plan and program with the broader CONNECT Beyond implementation effort;
- Discuss the planned activities for the first several years of the CONNECT Centralina TDM program and how those activities will support the work of those partners; and
- Highlight the need for sustainable program funding from key partners.

This series of partner presentations can serve as a precursor to the yearlong traveling TDM education program to follow in the next year of the CONNECT Centralina program implementation.

USE PILOT PROJECTS TO DEPLOY AND DEMONSTRATE HIGH PRIORITY TDM STRATEGIES

Because Centralina's regional TDM program will serve such a large geographic area, pilot programs should be developed to determine the best methods for implementing TDM strategies. Using the identified "TDM Hot Spots" can help focus pilot project efforts. These pilot programs should dedicate efforts towards testing a small number of TDM strategies in different ways and with different audiences.

For example, Centralina will receive fiscal year 2025 funding for TDM activities through CRTPO's Discretionary Projects Program. This is the first available funding to support TDM program implementation. It will focus the TDM program's early efforts on identifying pilot projects through key partners, ideally located within previously identified "TDM Hot Spots." Partners will be engaged in the development of TDM toolkits that could be use to engage their employees, and ultimately, rolled out to the broader region.

LAUNCH THE TDM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The TDM Advisory Committee will be staff's first resource for help in implementing the high priority TDM strategies. Advisory Committee members can assist in collaborating with other regional boards/working groups and amplifying the message of the TDM program within their own organizations. Advisory Committee members can also use their relationships to recruit the participation of major employers. Establishing a committed TDM Advisory Committee with diverse representation will help give staff the support necessary for the TDM program to be successful and effective.

YEAR ONE *(FISCAL YEAR 2026)*

Focus: Build awareness of the TDM program and establish key partners.

HIRE A FULL-TIME TDM PROGRAM MANAGER

Dedicated staff capacity is necessary for the TDM program to have the desired reach and impact. This starts with hiring a full-time TDM program manager. *If funds become available sooner, this should be an earlier action.* Centralina should expect that early work for the TDM program manager will be focused on 1) seeking funding from grants and potential partners, and 2) implementing the high priority TDM strategies. As the program matures, and more dedicated staff are hired to support grant writing and revenue growth, the TDM program manager responsibilities can shift toward expanding the reach of the TDM program.

SECURE LOW-MATCH FUNDING FROM NCDOT

Centralina staff should continue to collaborate with NCDOT on the future availability of low-match funding to support the administration of the TDM program, ideally as early as fiscal year 2026.

HOST A YEARLONG TRAVELING TDM EDUCATION PROGRAM

A coordinated, regional, TDM education and marketing effort is one of the most important actions that Centralina can take in the program's early years. Centralina should host a program event in all ten counties. The identified "TDM Hot Spots" can provide some focus for targeting launch events throughout the region.

The TDM program should develop a simple narrative and messaging that can be easily shared with potential partners. Simple, quick, and repeated messaging will help with program recognition, allow community members and leaders to become quickly informed, and help the media and other marketing efforts remain consistent.

A calendar of events should be targeted toward a variety of audiences, and could include pop-up events at existing festivals, briefings to elected officials, presentations at MPO/RPO board meetings and technical coordinating committee meetings, "lunch-and-learn" presentations for local planners and decision-makers, and engagement drives at large worksites/campuses.



DEVELOP A PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND ESTABLISH TEN "KEY PARTNERS"

The first year should be about developing partners to help amplify the message of the TDM program and reach targeted audiences with the TDM strategies. Staff should cultivate a mix of partners from the private and public sector, and focus partner recruitment efforts within the identified "TDM Hot Spots."

It will be important to define exactly what it means to be a "partner" to the TDM program. Over the first year, staff should develop and refine an internal facing partnership structure based on varying levels of involvement and effort in advancing TDM. An organization could be multiple "partner" types. For example:

Education Partner: Partner provides opportunities for Centralina staff to distribute educational resources and promote non-SOV travel options to partner's audiences/ employees.

Marketing Partner: Partner actively promotes non-SOV travel to their own audiences/ employees.

Incentive Partner: Partner provides direct incentives for non-SOV travel options to their own audiences/employees.

Funding Partner: Partner provides significant funding to Centralina's TDM program or operates a third-party non-SOV transportation service.

Centralina should establish a goal to cultivate partnerships with 20 organizations/agencies. Ten of those should be key partners at higher levels of participation.



MODEL TDM STRATEGIES IN YOUR OWN WORKPLACE POLICIES/PRACTICES

Employer-based TDM implementation will be an important growth area for the TDM program as it matures. Centralina should start by implementing TDM policies within their own workplace. This will help staff and Centralina leadership to better understand the implications of the employer-based TDM strategies that they'll be encouraging others to adopt.

Specific workplace policies/practices that Centralina should consider adopting include:

- A parking cash-out program,
- A guaranteed ride home program for non-SOV commuters,
- A commuter training program,
- Direct incentives like transit passes, bike share memberships, access to physical bicycle maps, and bicycle maintenance reimbursement, and
- Telework/flexwork policies.

Centralina should reassess how internal TDM policies/practices are working every year to better understand how they might hone strategies for their own employees and for employers/employees across the region. This will help in the development of technical guidance that the TDM program offers to other employers. It will also allow TDM program staff to speak from a place of authority and internal innovation.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR POTENTIAL TMA "EARLY ADOPTERS"

Our multi-centric region lends itself well to the creation of TMAs that can help develop and implement district-scaled TDM strategies. A TMA is a membership organization formed to provide a forum for employers, developers, building owners, local government representatives, and others to work together to collectively establish policies, programs, and services to address local transportation needs within a specified geographical area. TDM programs have successfully established TMAs by identifying a geographic area that can benefit from a shared mission and service, through a membership structure that is tailored to meet the specific needs of people living of working that geographical area. TMAs are typically located in areas where there are large concentrations of employers or business parks and can also be corridor specific.

As staff host launch events and recruit partners over the program's first year, they should keep in the mind the future goal of establishing TMAs in the region. The first year of the program is an opportunity to identify potential employers, municipal service districts, non-profits, campuses, etc. that may have an interest in helping organize a TMA. In particular, staff should pay attention to places like South Park, University Research Park, Ballantyne, Charlotte Douglas International Airport, North Mecklenburg/Lake Norman towns, and areas along I-77 and I-85. The identified "TDM Hot Spots" should help guide the identification of potential TMA candidates as well. At the end of the first program year, staff should develop a strategy for convening organizations that may have interest in organizing TMAs. That strategy should become a part of the following program year action items.

REFINE YOUR TDM TOOLBOX

This regional TDM plan describes a variety of "tools" (TDM strategies, communications resources, performance metrics) that staff will use to launch and implement the TDM program. The first year of Centralina's TDM program should be viewed as an opportunity for staff to learn, test, and refine those tools.

Centralina's successful grant application with CRTPO will give staff an opportunity to test and refine the recommendations of this plan through a pilot project, which will inform the TDM program approach in subsequent years. Centralina staff should use the foundational actions proposed within the CRTPO pilot project:

- Test their communications and outreach approach to potential partners, especially major employers; and
- Confirm the types of TDM strategies that are most attractive/effective to employers in the region.

At the conclusion of the year, staff should plan to complete a comprehensive program evaluation. This should include documenting and evaluating:

TDM Strategies: Did the TDM strategies deployed achieve program goals and influence travel behaviors?

Communications Tools: Did the program's marketing and outreach activities drive engagement, attract partners, reach a diverse regional audience, and compel action?

Performance Metrics: Are the performance metrics working as intended to help measure success and demonstrate the value of the program?

Program Management: Do program staff have the capacity, funding, and guidance to effectively manage an ongoing TDM program.

This exercise should start as an internal evaluation completed by program staff and Centralina leadership. It should conclude with a session with the TDM Advisory Committee to get useful feedback from external partners.



YEAR TWO *(FISCAL YEAR 2027)*

Focus: Build internal capacity and amplify your message.

LAUNCH AN INTEGRATED TRAVEL OPTIONS WEBSITE

The TDM program should develop a regional travel options website as a primary communication tool within the early years after the program launch. The website should be a mobile-friendly, one-stop-shop that aggregates the variety of transportation options and programs available throughout the region. The website should promote the Share the Ride NC program and link to non-SOV travel providers and resources. *If funds and/or staff capacity become available to support this sooner, this should be an earlier action.*

SUPPORT THE RESEARCH AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF TMAS

After identifying ideal candidates for the development of TMAs in Year One, Centralina should focus on supporting the development of TMAs in Year Two. This can start by convening the organizations most likely to be the "early adopters" in creating and leading a TMA. Staff should profile successful TMAs in other regions to understand how they started, how they're governed, and what TDM strategies they deploy. There are several TMAs partnered with the Georgia Commute Options program in the Atlanta metro that could provide instructive examples for this. Centralina staff should provide technical guidance as necessary to help external organizations organize and launch TMAs following that model.



HIRE A FULL-TIME TDM COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH SPECIALIST

Reaching a broad and diverse audience of TDM program partners and participants requires specific communications expertise. Hiring a full-time TDM communications & outreach specialist will amplify program engagement and increase the TDM program manager's bandwidth to pursue additional TDM strategies and funding sources. *If funds become available sooner, this this should be an earlier action.*

HONE YOUR MESSAGE

Staff should build on lessons learned from the first program year, and the program evaluation completed after Year One, to hone the program's messaging, communication, and partner outreach. Program staff should update their communications toolkit to highlight success stories from Year One. Performance metrics and success stories from Year One can help demonstrate the value of the program to additional partners and funders.

GO BACK OUT TO THE REGION

Consistent and ongoing regional engagement should be a hallmark of Centralina's regional TDM program. As a follow up to the Year One traveling TDM education series, and after taking time to hone/refine the program's message and communications, staff should go back out to the region to with another series of education and outreach events. The focus should be on demonstrating the value that the program provided in its first year, highlighting the partnerships that were cultivated, and encouraging others to participate.

INCREASE PARTNERSHIPS

Building on the partnership structure and program partners established in Year One, staff should increase participation across the region. Centralina should establish a goal to cultivate at least one program partner within each of the ten participating counties. This could be accomplished through an expansion of the TDM pilot program funded through a CRTPO discretionary grant.



YEAR THREE *(FISCAL YEAR 2028)*

Focus: Target worksites and broaden external partnerships.

BROADEN TDM STRATEGIES

With the benefit of established staff and communications resources, Centralina staff should start exploring additional TDM strategies from the TDM Strategies Menu. Toward the end of program Year Three, staff should look at deploying strategies in the "Technical Assistance" and "Incentives & Facilitation" categories. This could include strategies like:

- Pass-through grants to third party transportation/TDM service providers;
- Development of model ordinance language (parking unbundling ordinance; TDM ordinance);
- Development/training on model street design guidance (complete streets policies) that recommend reallocation of existing roadway space to support transportation equity; or
- Develop a direct incentives initiative for non-SOV travelers through the Share The Ride NC platform or the program website.

Broadening the program to provide pass through grants will be an important part of the evolution of the current mechanisms for TDM deployment in the region (i.e. NCDOT grants to individual TDM providers) to a more coordinated approach through Centralina's TDM program.

As part of the annual program evaluation at the end of program Year Three, staff should document the strategies deployed to date and develop a strategy for deploying additional TDM strategies that will expand the reach and impact of the program.

FOCUS ON WORKSITE/ EMPLOYER-DRIVEN STRATEGIES

TDM programs work best when major employers/worksites are actively engaged in promoting/encouraging non-SOV travel among their employees. Program staff should focus first on large employers and worksites, taking advantage of resources like the Charlotte Business Journal's list of largest companies/employers.

In 2027 our region will be seven years removed from the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and five-years removed from a return-to-work posture for most places of employment. We'll have more understanding for how Covid-19 has permanently shifted employer/employee expectations and travel behaviors. With the benefit of that knowledge, it will be possible to craft more precise and informed employer-based TDM strategies – strategies that balance the ongoing reality and quality-of-life benefits of telework/work-from-home schedules and the economic and innovation benefits that come from in-person collaboration and increasing office space occupancy across the region.

Using their experience from implementing workplace TDM policies/practices within Centralina, program staff should consider encouraging employers to adopt key strategies like:

- A parking cash-out program,
- A guaranteed ride home program for non-SOV commuters,
- A commuter training program,
- Direct incentives like transit passes, bike share memberships, and bicycle maintenance reimbursement, and
- Telework/flexwork policies.

DIVERSIFY YOUR MIX OF PARTNERS/PARTICIPANTS

Program staff should assess the TDM program's partners and participants to figure out what groups/populations/audiences are missing. Early outreach to partners should be guided by the identified "TDM Hot Spots." As the program matures staff should verify that Hot-Spot-based outreach is achieving the desired breadth of geographic participation and an appropriate diversity of partner organizations (public/private, various industry sectors, etc.). Similarly, staff should verify that individual participants in the TDM program (e.g., Share the Ride NC users and/or recipients of any direct incentives) reflect the diversity of the region. If any gaps are identified in current program partners or participants, staff should begin targeting recruitment and outreach efforts to fill those gaps.

START A REGIONAL RECOGNITION/AWARDS PROGRAM

Staff should consider creating an awards program to recognize and celebrate program partners and individual program participants who are the greatest champions for TDM efforts in the region. This could be integrated with an existing awards program like Centralina's Region of Excellence Awards. Or, it could become part of a larger, statewide recognition of TDM efforts through the NCDOT Mobi Awards, Sustain Charlotte Awards, CommuteFriendly NC, BikeWalkNC, or something similar. Celebrating the people and organizations who advance TDM in the region, or across the state, can become a regular part of the program's communications calendar and documenting the program's impact.



YEARS FOUR+ *(FISCAL YEAR 2029+)*

Focus: Expand the program to reach more people and places.

HIRE ADDITIONAL TDM SUPPORT STAFF

Reaching more people and places will require more dedicated staff capacity. The recommended staffing goal for the TDM program is to achieve 3.5 dedicated FTEs within four years of program launch. Centralina should hire grant writing/ administration support and planning/ GIS support to hit that target and expand the program's capacity. *If funds become available sooner, this should be an earlier action.*

TRAIN TDM AMBASSADORS

Marketing and education efforts can be enhanced by equipping others to help spread the word. Centralina staff should develop a TDM Ambassador program to train residents across the region to serve as ambassadors for people who might want to try non-SOV commutes. TDM Ambassadors can be embedded with major employers/worksites or TMAs to support things like Commuter Training Programs. TDM Ambassadors can also be an effective resource for supporting vulnerable populations. Ambassadors can be people who are already trusted and active within minority communities, senior centers, and youth-oriented programs.



EXPLORE PROVIDER APP INTEGRATION (MAAS)

Building on the integration of information in the travel options website, Centralina should explore different levels of potential integration for transportation service providers throughout the region. By program Year Four (2028), conversations around MaaS are likely to have advanced significantly, globally and within Centralina's region. A useful example to track will be the Concept grant project that Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is pursuing over the next two years to integrate surrounding transit providers into the CATS mobile app.

Leveraging the partnerships and experiences developed over the early years of the program, the regional TDM program should convene transportation providers to help identify possibilities for integrating various travel options/service providers into a single digital platform. Ideally users would be able to plan, book, and pay for a variety of travel options/service providers in one app or website. Progress may come slowly, but provider app integration offers an opportunity to significantly enhance the non-SOV travel experience and support TDM. Centralina's regional TDM program will be uniquely positioned within the region to lead those efforts.

ACKNOWLEDGE OUR BI-STATE TRANSPORTATION PATTERNS

Centralina's region is a bi-state region with bi-state travel patterns. As the program matures, coordinating with partners across the state line on TDM activities should be a goal. Staff should pursue funding and partnerships that support TDM coordination across the stateline.

SERVE AS A STATEWIDE MODEL

Program staff should seek out partnerships with organizations like BikeWalk NC, American Planning Association North Carolina, and Association for Commuter Transportation to help lead conversations around TDM on a statewide scale. This may include education and outreach to NCDOT and statewide policymakers. There are a wide variety of TDM strategies that would require state legislation to advance. Broadening North Carolina's toolkit of TDM strategies will be dependent upon demonstrating the success of regional TDM programs in supporting transportation network efficiency, economic prosperity, and sustainability/ climate goals.

The ultimate goal for Centralina's regional TDM program should be to serve as a model, within NC and beyond, for effective transportation demand management. As NCDOT's Integrated Mobility Division pursues TDM implementation across the state, the development, launch, and maturation of Centralina's TDM program should be an example that is used to demonstrate success.





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REGIONAL COUNCIL

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MPO
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CITY OF
CHARLOTTE
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CATS
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