



# Guidelines for Travel Demand Study and Management Plans

v1.1 June 16, 2023

## Introduction

Whereas Chicago Department of Transportation rules required by sections 17-3-0308 and 17-4-0301 of the zoning code of the city of Chicago (aka the Connected Communities Ordinance), regarding Travel Demand Study and Management Plans, have not yet been established, the following are interim guidelines for projects within transit served locations. These guidelines will be considered and implemented to determine how the rules will ultimately be drafted.

New construction projects in Business (B), Commercial (C), and Downtown (D) zoning districts within transit served locations, as defined in the ordinance, are required to comply. These guidelines may also apply to any projects seeking CDOT approval (e.g. Planned Development (PD), Planned Manufacturing District (PMD), or Air Quality review) if determined to be necessary by CDOT review staff.

Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) staff, in collaboration with the Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Zoning division, will advise each project on the scope required to fulfil these requirements.

This document will be updated and added to, as the TDM program and regional TDM planning efforts are developed. Project requirements will be bound to the version of the current guidelines or rules upon approval.

## Background

Since 2013, the City of Chicago has been encouraging compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD) near CTA and Metra rail stations, as well as high-frequency bus routes, through zoning code updates. This development model can create additional community benefits such as increased transit ridership and more walkable communities, both of which reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, while also promoting public health and adding to the City's tax base. In 2020, the City published its comprehensive Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Policy Plan, which not only built upon the earlier TOD initiatives, but established equity as a guiding framework for TOD initiatives moving forward. Implementing TDM is an ETOD

Policy Plan recommendation. The Travel Demand Management rule-making authority granted to CDOT in the 2022 Connected Communities Ordinance provides another tool—alongside related efforts—to align the building design and programming of developments located near the City’s public transit assets with the City’s adopted ETOD, climate action, street safety goals.

- *What is TDM?*

Travel Demand Management (TDM), also known as Transportation Demand Management, is the practice of implementing strategies that influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route or trip length to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips.

- *How are Travel Demand Study & Management Plans different than a standard Traffic Study?*

A Traffic Impact Study (TIS), often currently required of developments, and a Travel Demand Management (TDM) study are both related to transportation planning, but they serve different purposes.

A TIS is a comprehensive analysis of how a development will affect the transportation network in the surrounding area. The study typically includes an analysis of existing traffic conditions; projection of traffic volumes generated by the new development; and modeling the impact of the new traffic on roadway capacity, safety, and congestion. The TIS will also recommend mitigation measures to offset any negative impacts, such as adding turn lanes, widening roads, or implementing traffic signal improvements. With a greater focus on traffic engineering, a TIS uses industry standards and assumptions, observed traffic counts, and calculated projections to derive conclusions.

On the other hand, a TDM study is an exercise in planning and operations. It is a set of strategies designed to reduce the amount of vehicular travel generated by a development. The goal of a TDM plan is to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit, biking, walking, or carpooling by providing safety infrastructure, amenities, and other strategies to reduce the addition of traffic congestion. In addition to infrastructure, TDM strategies can include programs such as transit subsidies, carpool matching services, bike share programs, and telecommuting options.

In summary, a Traffic Impact Study focuses on analyzing the traffic impacts of a specific development on the surrounding transportation network, while a Travel Demand Management plan is a set of strategies designed to reduce the amount of single occupancy vehicle travel and overall trip generation of a specific development, supported by infrastructure and program incentives for other modes of transportation for the users of the development.

Ultimately, the Rules established will provide more specific guidance and regulation, however in the interim, this document is designed to inform and guide developers to provide acceptable measures to meet the requirement in the ordinance.

## Criteria

Projects that are **not** located within a half-mile of CTA and Metra rail stations, per the Connected Communities ordinance, are not required to comply with TDM Rules established by CDOT.

New construction projects under Business (B), Commercial (C), and Downtown (D) zoning districts and within a half-mile of CTA and Metra rail transit stations, are required to comply with TDM Rules issued by CDOT, per the Connected Communities ordinance. Until those rules are issued, a site plan and project narrative shall be

submitted to the CDOT Plan Review Committee (CDOT PRC) via email at to: [CDOTPRC@CityOfChicago.org](mailto:CDOTPRC@CityOfChicago.org) for review to determine the scope of TDM requirements, *however* projects below a certain threshold will not be required to submit for review. While these guidelines are in effect and final approved rules are developed, CDOT will consider location, proposed use, traffic intensity, anticipated trip generation, among other criteria, in making a determination if a review is needed, if a memo or study & plan will be required, and what the scope of that requirement would include. (see Table 1 for more detail - note this is subject to change and interpretation during this interim period).

<b>TABLE 1:</b>  <i>TDM Requirement Criteria</i>	<b>No TDM compliance requirements; proceed under normal process</b>	<b>Send to CDOT for determination</b>		
		<i>CDOT Review</i>	<i>TDM Project Memo</i>	<i>Full TDM Study &amp; Plan</i>
	<b>Tier 0</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
<b>Residential</b>	<20 du	20-50 du	51-175 du	>175 du
<b>Retail</b>	<10,000 sf	10,000-30,000 sf	30,001 – 75,000 sf	>75,000 sf
<b>Commercial (non-retail)</b>	<30,000 sf	30,000-50,000 sf	50,001 – 150,000 sf	>150,000 sf
<b>Industrial</b>	<50,000 sf	50,001 + sf		

“**Tier 0**” requires no CDOT review if the project is a single use. Any mixed-use development that falls in the “Tier 0” range should convert their other uses square footage to dwelling units to adjust the tier: Divide: total retail square footage by 500, office or commercial by 1500, and/or industrial or manufacturing 2500 to get equivalent dwelling units.

“**Tier 1**” projects should submit a site plan and project narrative to CDOT Plan Review Committee. The PRC will determine if the project requires a memo or if the proposal can proceed without further requirements.

“**Tier 2**” projects are more likely to require a memo, CDOT PRC will review and advise on the scope of the response. However, it may be possible that a full TDM study & plan could be required, depending on the specific proposal and conditions of the surrounding area.

“**Tier 3**” projects are more likely to require a study and management plan; CDOT PRC will advise on the scope of the study & plan required.

Requirements for Tier 1, 2, and 3 will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The criteria above are designed to give general guidance, but CDOT staff will inform the project team of the requirements upon initial review. Once all materials are submitted, the CDOT PRC will provide comments until they are fit for approval. Upon approval, a CDOT-stamped site plan and any other final documents will be provided so the applicant may proceed in their respective process.

All projects under any zoning that require CDOT PRC approval as part of other processes, such as zoning changes or special use, administrative adjustments, Planned Developments (PD), Planned Manufacturing Districts (PMD), Lake Front Protection District (LFPD), or projects triggering Air Quality review, and which are within a half-mile of a CTA or Metra rail transit station, will also be subject to these guidelines. If an intake meeting is held, CDOT staff will give direction at that time, if possible.

## Travel Demand Management Memo

Projects that fall within Tier 1, 3 or 3 of the TDM requirement criteria, may be subject to completing a short TDM memo in lieu of a full Travel Demand Study and Management Plan. This memo is intended to provide extensive details regarding how the project will minimize SOV trips of building users and tenants as well as maximize trips via transit, biking, or walking. In addition to being in a transit served location, potentially reducing on-site parking, and following all guidelines set in the code, the memo should describe how the development is incorporating best practices in pedestrian-oriented design, transportation related infrastructure improvements, and any TDM strategies being implemented. If a traffic impact study is also being produced for a project, the memo may outline other infrastructure improvements related to its findings. There is no requirement as to who produces this memo. The TDM memo may be completed by an owner, consultant, attorney, or any other part of the applicant's team, as long as it clearly outlines the approach to the transportation issues and needs of the project. CDOT may provide comments and suggestions if the memo is not satisfactory, along with plan review.

## Travel Demand Study & Management Plan

To arrive at a TDM Plan, a Transportation Demand Study may be necessary. This would combine information and analysis typically found in a TIS with more detailed consideration of the specific site location and form as well as the specific uses and users, to help inform the best management strategies to plan. Due to the scope, a consultant will likely be necessary to produce this plan.

The following is a general outline of the process for both the Travel Demand Study, which includes the TDM Plan. However, it can be adjusted to fit the appropriate scope of the project, in collaboration with CDOT reviewers.

1. Introduction: This section should provide an overview of the purpose and scope of the study, as well as the planning context (e.g., location, size, and characteristics of the study area). Essentially, this is the same as the project narrative required in the typical CDOT Plan Review process. Single occupancy vehicle (SOV) reduction goals should be set in this introduction, with direction from CDOT.
2. Data collection and analysis: This section should describe the data sources and methods used to collect and analyze information on current and future land use, population and employment patterns, transportation network characteristics, and travel behavior.
  - a. This may include methods such as household travel surveys, traffic counts, and geographic information systems (GIS) analysis.
  - b. Travel demand forecasts: This section should present the results of the data analysis in the form of travel demand forecasts, which estimate the future levels of vehicle travel, mode share (e.g., the percentage of trips made by different modes of transportation), and trip purpose (e.g., work, school, shopping) in the study area. If a TIS is required, data from that also may need to be cited.
3. Transportation alternatives: This section should describe the potential transportation alternatives that were considered as part of the study, including any relevant costs, benefits, and impacts. This may include options such as adding new roads or transit service, improving existing infrastructure, or implementing TDM strategies.
4. Conclusions and summary: This section should provide a summary of the main findings and conclusions of the study, including a summary of the data analysis, along with any additional recommendations or considerations.

5. Recommendations: **This section is the TDM Plan.** It should present the recommended transportation improvements or strategies based on the results of the study. It should also outline any next steps or actions that need to be taken to implement the recommendations.
  - a. Transportation demand management (TDM) strategies: This section should describe the TDM strategies that will be implemented to reduce the need for single-occupancy vehicle travel and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit, biking, and walking. Examples of TDM strategies may include providing transit subsidies, incentives for carpooling, offering additional on-site bike storage or shower facilities, and providing shuttle services to public transit stations.
  - b. TDM plan implementation: This section should outline the steps that will be taken to implement the TDM strategies, including any necessary infrastructure improvements or operational changes. The section should also describe the persons or entities that will be responsible for both coordinating and implementing the TDM strategies that have been selected for the development. Additionally, outline how tenants or building user will receive assistance in the event complications arise or troubleshooting is needed to properly utilize the TDM strategies (e.g., difficulties accessing transit pass subsidy or repairs needed to pedestrian-oriented infrastructure).
  - c. Stakeholder outreach and participant engagement: This section should describe the on-going outreach and engagement efforts that will be undertaken throughout the life of the project to inform the public, residents, or tenants of the development about the TDM plan and encourage participation in TDM programs.
  - d. Monitoring and reporting plan. Define how the implementation of the plan will be analyzed and reported throughout the life of the project.
    - i. A designated contact person with the project must be filed with CDOT and updated if the position or ownership ever changes.
    - ii. All reviewed projects must participate in a yearly survey regarding their TDM strategies and SOV goals.
    - iii. At minimum, a survey form will be provided to confirm:
      1. population/occupancy
      2. parking counts
      3. parking utilization
      4. current mode split
      5. TDM strategy participation
    - iv. Depending on the strategies and size of the project, additional information may be required.
6. Appendices: This section may include raw data, additional information, and supporting materials, such as maps, tables, and survey results.

Based on the scope of the project, a study may be scaled back, if there is little data to consider, and obvious strategies to implement. These may be less structured and analytical, formatted as a technical memo outlining the efforts the project is making to adapt to a TOD environment, reach SOV reduction goals, and to speak to any TDM strategies they choose to implement. Scope of the study, plan, and/or memo will be determined by CDOT PRC staff.

Studies, plans, and memos all must be approved by CDOT PRC staff. Upon approval a commitment letter from the applicant must be produced, committing the project to the participation, implementation of strategies, and ongoing reporting defined therein.

## Submittal and Implementation

Submit site plans and other project materials for review to [CDOTPRC@CityOfChicago.org](mailto:CDOTPRC@CityOfChicago.org). Follow the existing PRC submittal guidelines; if any materials are unavailable or don't exist, note why they are not included. CDOT PRC staff will review and expediently provide input on the required materials needed for the specific project.

In the review of a TDM Memo or TDM Plan, the scope of Strategies will be established. As a baseline, following the Chicago Climate Action Plan, enabling Chicagoans to walk, bike, take transit, or use shared micromobility for 45% of all trips, however as it stands today, much of the city is already reaching this goal. For the purposes of maximizing SOV reduction in transit served locations, a goal of reducing all single occupancy vehicle trips to at most 50% of the total generated by the project should be established; less if determined attainable by the study. Over time, CDOT reserves the right to change this baseline or implement more specific goals, possibly for certain geographies and targeted areas, in collaboration with other City departments and planning efforts.

Operational goals for specific strategies can be set in the conclusion of the TDM Study by the applicant, exceeding these above, and citing other metrics such as reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) or providing more specific programmatic goals. Data should be provided back to CDOT on an annual basis, as directed by CDOT PRC, for subsequent analysis and further refinement of the Rules. The Monitoring and reporting plan should outline how and what data is tracked, and how and where it is reported. At this time, monitoring and reporting will be negotiable during the review process. During the term of these guidelines, most project will only be subject to an annual survey (as noted in 5 d. iii. above) provided by CDOT to document the success and participation of the TDM strategies to aid in future refinement of this program and the subsequent Rules.

As these guidelines are an extension of CDOT review authority, they are subject to interpretation and application on a case-by-case basis. CDOT will continue to refine these guidelines over the course of the next year, after which Rules will be established. We expect draft rules to be posted for public comment in Q1 2024 and in place by June 1, 2024. Requirements and commitments made by developers at their point of approval, if prior to that date will be honored.

## Notes:

- Submit review materials to [CDOTPRC@CityOfChicago.org](mailto:CDOTPRC@CityOfChicago.org).
- Please refer to [www.chicago.gov/cdotprc](http://www.chicago.gov/cdotprc) for FAQs and other related documents.
- Direct any questions to Project Manager Bill Higgins at [William.Higgins@Cityofchicago.org](mailto:William.Higgins@Cityofchicago.org).
- Examples of Memos and Travel Demand Study and Management Plans will be posted in the coming weeks.
- Future revisions and versions of this document may be updated.