

METRO ATLANTA TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC VISION



THE PROBLEM

- The Atlanta Region's population has increased by 11.2% since 2000 and is expected to increase by 62.4% by 2030, resulting in a 13-county regional population of 6,005,288¹. This dramatic growth in the region—and the corresponding traffic demand—continues, and will continue, to exceed the capacity of the highway system.
- Georgia DOT HERO units supported other emergency responders at 10,395 freeway crashes and assisted over 63,000 motorists in 2005, this is a 10% increase from 2004.
- Recurring congestion impacts tens of thousands of motorists daily and has a direct impact on the economy of the region and the quality of life for residents.



THE SOLUTION

Georgia's highly successful "NaviGator" and Highway Emergency Response Operations (HERO) are the two key parts of Georgia's Traffic Incident Management (TIM) program. Supported by the Governor's Fast Forward Initiative, they are expanding to meet the growing problem of incidents and daily traffic congestion.

In addition, the Traffic Incident Management Enhancement Task Force (TIME) was implemented to develop and sustain a region-wide incident management program to facilitate the safest and fastest roadway clearance, lessening the impact on emergency responders and the motoring public.

The TIME Task Force, supported by the Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, and the Federal Highway Administration, has developed an executive-level "Strategic Vision" of the best methods to achieve a measurable improvement in TIM that can have an immediate, substantial, and lasting impact on reducing non-recurring congestion. These solutions are based on a review of regional issues and national "Best Practices".



THE STRATEGIC VISION

"Public and private stakeholders will join together to improve the management of response and clearance of all types of roadway incidents."

The Strategic Vision identified five priority initiatives for consideration in the region.

1. "OPEN ROADS" POLICY

The purpose of the Policy is to establish the quick clearance of traffic incidents as an overarching priority, with a mandate delivered by senior departmental and elected officials. The process will include getting state, county, and city leaders in the region to ensure the policy is followed by all personnel with a direct or indirect responsibility for managing any aspect of traffic incidents.

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¹ This information is from the Atlanta Regional Commission 2005 Population and Housing Report.



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2. INCENTIVE FOR HEAVY DUTY TOWING AND RECOVERY

Incentive towing is based on a comprehensive set of guidelines designed to ensure only well trained, competent operators with proper heavy duty equipment are dispatched to any truck crashes that have a significant impact on major highway traffic. They will receive a monetary incentive for quick and safe clearance of truck crashes.

3. FORMAL TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FOR TOWING AND RECOVERY OPERATORS

This will require both a driver training and certification program for towing operators that respond to incidents on the highways. Currently public agencies do not require any type of training documentation or certification from tow companies.

4. MEDICAL EXAMINER/CORONER MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Medical Examiner offices in the region have a 24-hour/7-day response system for death investigations including highway crashes. Lengthy response times by the ME due to other deaths can delay removal of deceased victims from the crash location. This memorandum of understanding will allow for the deceased to be moved out of travel lanes as soon as police have completed their preliminary investigation.

5. TIM TEAMS

A TIM Team is a local jurisdictional program consisting of members of local emergency service and transportation stakeholders that work together to enhance coordination, cooperation, and communication between agencies. The Atlanta Metro region is so large that additional TIM Teams are needed to address operational problems and developing strategies at the local levels and then share these ideas and experiences at the regional level. There are currently two TIM Teams operating in Metro Atlanta, but approximately 15 more Teams will be formed representing the Atlanta Regional Commission 13-County Region.



ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

- Multi-agency responder safety and training to resolve a large number of delays and confusion at traffic collisions caused by improvements needed in collective responses.
- Abandoned vehicles policies to prevent unattended vehicles in highway clear zones leading to injuries, fatalities, and secondary incidents.
- Improvements in accident investigations by adopting improved technologies and using software to speed up crash investigations and clear lanes more quickly.
- Memorandums of understanding for clearing motor vehicle fluids to speed up the clearing of spills to open lanes more quickly.

THE CONCLUSION

Improvements in Traffic Incident management will improve responder and motorist safety as well as increase traffic mobility. Your support is vital to the success of this program.



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