

# **The Benefits of Regional Collaboration in Managing Network Transportation Operations**

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PIARC

Technical Committee 1.4

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# Traffic Congestion: A National Problem

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- **6 billion** hours of person delay annually
- **\$384 per person** in wasted time and extra fuel in 2003
- A peak period trip takes **40% longer** today than in 1982
- **59% of the major roads are congested** during peak periods
- The average length of the **peak period has grown to 7 hours** from 4.5 hours in 1982.

# What Do Our Customers Want?

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- Traffic smoothly and safely
- Be kept informed of conditions
- More mode choices
- Goods moved efficiently and quickly
- Incidents detected and cleared quickly
- Efficient evacuations
- Coordination of construction projects

**Consistently across jurisdictional boundaries**

# How can we better deliver what our customers want?

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- More investment in transportation infrastructure
- Application of advanced technologies to better manage traffic demand and traffic operations
- Unprecedented levels of institutional collaboration within a region

# What Does “*Unprecedented levels of collaboration and coordination within a region*” mean?

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- *Regional* partnerships among managers with responsibility for day-to-day transportation operations
- Stronger and better linkages between planners and operations managers.

# Activities that Benefit from Regional Collaboration

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- Traffic Incident Management
- Emergency Response and Homeland Security
- Traffic Signal Coordination and Timing
- Traveler Information Services
- Work Zone Traffic Management
- Roadway Weather Management
- Freight Management
- Special Events

# Benefits of Collaboration

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- Well-developed relationships among key agencies and jurisdictions
- A shared vision among operators, planners, and public safety providers for regional transportation system performance
- Effective allocation of limited resources
- Information sharing (real-time and historical) on a regular basis
- Coordination of systems and organizational procedures that have a regional benefit

# Success Story: The Washington State Traffic Incident Response Team

- A coalition of transportation, police, fire and emergency response agencies.
- Collaboration is continuous to develop and improve response planning
- Plan addresses incident detection, response, investigation, re-routing traffic, and clearance.
- Most major traffic incidents are cleared in less than 2 hours





# Success Story: The Southeast Michigan Snow and Ice Management (SEMSIM) Partnership

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- Four jurisdictions work together on winter road maintenance
- Collaboration facilitates information and resource sharing
- Decisions are made locally
- Common purchasing
- Standard use of technology
- Jurisdictions save money



# Key Challenges

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- Developing a shared understanding of the benefits of collaboration and coordination
- Inertia
- Overcoming the cultural differences between agencies, jurisdictions, etc.
- Inertia
- Achieving institutional consensus on how to work together, but retain control
- Inertia
- Need for technical guidance and tools

Did I mention inertia?

# A Final Thought

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"Traffic Congestion is essentially a regional phenomenon requiring regional approaches to mitigate its impacts."

Anthony Downs, The Brookings Institute,  
"The Need for Regional Anti-Congestion Policies"