

ACT TDM-Certified Professional Exam Study Guide Domain I for Preparing TDM-CP Exam Candidates

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Association for Commuter Transportation, (ACT), is an international non-profit 501(c)6 organization and leading advocate for commuter transportation and the application of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility, among many other transportation goals. The mission of ACT is “...to create an efficient multimodal transportation system by empowering the people, places, and organizations working to advance TDM in order to improve the quality of life of commuters, enhance the livability of communities, and stimulate economic activity.”¹ ACT serves over 1,200 individual members and over 450 organization members.² TDM is a set of strategies that includes programs, services, incentives, disincentives, information, outreach, and partnerships, which remove barriers to the use of transportation choices other than driving alone. TDM seeks to influence travel decisions by choice of mode, trip distance, trip frequency, trip time of day/day of week, and route. TDM strategies aim to create the most efficient multimodal transportation system that moves all people with the goal of reducing congestion, improving air quality, and stimulating economic activity.

To support the career development of transportation professionals and elevate the profile and standards of practice of TDM, ACT developed and launched the Transportation Demand Management Certified Professional (TDM-CP) program and exam in 2020. This national program lays the foundation for ensuring that highly qualified individuals are available to meet the challenge of addressing the diverse mobility needs of commuters, communities, and employers.

To support those who seek to earn the TDM-CP credential, the ACT TDM-CP Board of Trustees (BOT) has prepared the *TDM-CP Certification Candidate Handbook* (updated October 20, 2021), as well as hosted exam preparation webinars and offered practice exams. The TDM-CP BOT also organizes TDM-CP exam study support groups. In addition, the TDM-CP Exam Preparation Committee has compiled study resources for inclusion as chapters in the ongoing creation of a *TDM-CP Exam Study Guidebook*. These resources have been authored by TDM experts with deep knowledge of specific topics. While these materials are highly useful, the Exam Preparation Committee has found that this compilation effort has been a slow process due to reliance upon voluntary efforts of contributors. In addition, the TDM-CP Board of Trustees also has observed that many TDM professionals are hesitant to take the TDM-CP exam due to the desire to find more study materials to help them prepare.

To address these concerns and accelerate the development of a *TDM-CP Exam Study Guidebook*, NICR awarded CUTR an education and workforce development grant to develop study materials, and this grant was matched by ACT. The objectives of the *Study Guide* are to provide further resources to candidates preparing for the TDM-CP exam and help increase mastery of subject matter by the test takers, and bolster confidence to take the exam.

¹ Association for Commuter Transportation website, accessed November 8, 2022.
<https://www.actweb.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3277>

² Association for Commuter Transportation. “2020 Annual Report”, p. 2, accessed November 8, 2022.
[https://www.actweb.org/files/ACT/Publications/Annual%20Reports/2020 Annual Report reduced.pdf](https://www.actweb.org/files/ACT/Publications/Annual%20Reports/2020%20Annual%20Report_reduced.pdf)

METHODOLOGY

This research project had three primary tasks. These were to prepare a study guide outline, develop draft content for the selected subject matter domains, then prepare the Final Study Guide text. The development of this Study Guide has been a strongly collaborative process, working with Exam Preparation Committee members and the larger Certification Board of Trustees.

Initial work involved drafting a survey for distribution to the ACT membership, soliciting input about the TDM-CP certification, and topic areas that ACT members were most interested in receiving preparation support. Based upon survey feedback, researchers provided recommendations for subdomain topics, which the Exam Preparation Committee and the Certification Board of Trustees accepted. Text for each of six subdomains was prepared, first considering ACT's existing study support content, then finding reference documents, transportation manuals, and seminal research reports on which to base the text.

Part of the Study Guide preparation process also included participation in a panel session, "The TDM Talent Puzzle" as part of the ACT TDM Forum in Los Angeles, CA on November 2, 2023. The session focused on the topic of preparing the transportation profession for more effective use of transportation demand management strategies and careers in TDM, and on the TDM-CP certification.

Rounds of peer review of the draft final text for the ACT *TDM-CP Exam Study Guide* were completed by the ACT Exam Preparation Committee, the ACT Executive Director, the Exam Question Writing Committee, and the ACT Certification Board of Trustees, after which they voted to approve the Final Draft. Part of the review process also is review of the Study Guide against existing and future Exam questions by the Exam Writing Committee, to ensure that there were no conflicts in content.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The *TDM-CP Exam Study Guide* contains materials on the topics of federal legislation and funding programs, transportation planning and modeling, transportation systems management and operations, economic development, behavior change, and commuter transportation issues. The aim of the content for the *Study Guide* is to ensure that those preparing for the TDM-CP exam know the rudiments of key topic areas, understand how the TDM field integrates with the wider field of transportation planning, engineering and service delivery, and know how to navigate key information sources. The *Study Guide* also has an extensive list of references and a glossary.

The *TDM-CP Exam Study Guide* was introduced to the attendees at the 38th Annual International Association for Commuter Transportation Conference in Denver, CO, August 4-7, 2024, and is posted on the ACT website.

Researchers held the NICR webcast about the *TDM-CP Exam Study Guide* for November 7, 2024.

POLICY AND PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussions by the ACT Certification Board of Trustees have included looking beyond this project to develop new domains for exam study content development.

The CUTR researcher will develop and hold a 3-hour workshop, in collaboration with the Chair of the ACT Certification Board of Trustees at the 39th Annual International Association for Commuter Transportation Conference in New Orleans, LA, in August 2025. The workshop will be provided for Conference attendees interested in preparing for the exam.

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