



RUTGERS

Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy

Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center

STRATEGIC PLAN FY 2021-2025

Last Revised: 08/01/2021

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Finally, VTC would like to thank all the members of VTC's advisory board for sharing their thoughts, perspectives, and insights at the board's strategic planning session held in December of 2019.

FORWARD

The Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center will soon be celebrating 25 years of providing research and service to the State of New Jersey and nationally. In that time period the Center has greatly expanded its research expertise with over 25 full-time research staff. The variety of funders supporting the Center stretches beyond New Jersey and includes national funding sources. This success is due to the hard work of the staff in obtaining research funding, providing quality research products to research customers, and achieving recognition for the Center.

In the spring of 2019, VTC embarked on an almost year-long planning process that ended in March of 2020, just as the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic was coming into view. Although the drafting of our new strategic plan was put on hold for much of 2020 due to the pandemic, we are very excited now to share it with our community.

The plan charts a course for future success and is the product of consultation with all staff, current and past research sponsors, the VTC advisory board, and other internal and external stakeholders. The plan is aimed at building on our past success and being prepared for the transportation challenges of the future. New analytical approaches, new data sources, and new ways of thinking about the impact of transportation and the role transportation plays in people's lives are all challenging the status quo. Our goal is to be prepared and ready to provide the analysis needed to understand these changes and provide policy guidance, training and technical assistance to decision makers seeking to map the road, rail, or bike paths to the future.

Robert B. Noland

Distinguished Professor of Transportation Planning and Policy
Director, Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center
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THE LEGACY OF ALAN M. VOORHEES

The Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center was established at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy in 1998 to honor the significant contributions made by Alan M. Voorhees to the field of transportation planning and engineering. Mr. Voorhees was one of the nation's pivotal figures in city planning and transportation concerns. From Atlanta to Zurich, Alan M. Voorhees set the pace in initiating a myriad of ventures related to planning and transportation. A list of the many projects piloted by Mr. Voorhees reflects the visionary role he took in creating blueprints for change, including development of planned cities such as Columbia, Maryland, and Canberra, Australia, and metropolitan transit systems such as the Washington Metro.

In 1961, he founded the transportation consulting firm of Alan M. Voorhees & Associates, Inc., which grew to include ten offices in the United States, as well as offices in Caracas, London, Melbourne, Sao Paulo, Toronto, and Zurich. With Mr. Voorhees steering the course, the firm planned many of the metropolitan transit systems built in the free world in the 1960s and 1970s, including those in Washington, DC, and Atlanta, Georgia. In 1967, his firm merged with Planning Research Corporation, where he continued to work in transportation planning.

In the late 1970s, Mr. Voorhees moved his career into a new area to become dean of the College of Architecture, Art, and Urban Sciences at the University of Illinois-Chicago. In 1980, Mr. Voorhees' multifaceted interests took him in new directions. He founded Atlantic Southeast Airlines (ASA), which became one of the most successful commuter airlines in the country, eventually becoming a subsidiary of Delta Air Lines, Inc. As of 2020 it operates as ExpressJet Airlines, LLC, under the United Express brand for United Airlines.

Throughout his prolific career, Mr. Voorhees contributed extensively to the field of planning, serving as president of the American Institute of Planners and chairman of the Transportation Research Board, the largest unit of the National Academy of Sciences. He was the recipient of numerous awards and received honorary doctoral degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Voorhees College.

Mr. Voorhees was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and was a veteran of World War II. He received both a silver and bronze star for his distinguished service in the Pacific as a Navy Frogman, the precursor of today's U.S. Navy SEAL.



*Alan M. Voorhees
1922-2005*

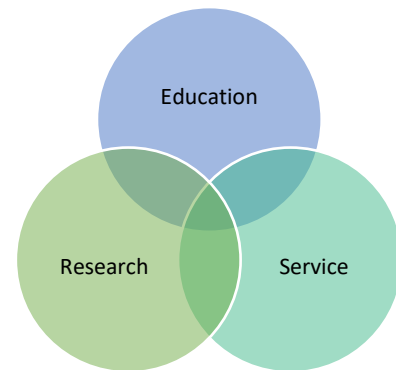
Photo Credit: Nancy Voorhees

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC), established by the Rutgers University Board of Governors in 1998, is a national leader in the research and development of innovative transportation policy. The Center brings to bear the full array of resources of a major research university on transportation issues of regional and national significance.

Our Context

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is among America's highest-ranked, most diverse public research universities. The University has three main campuses in New Jersey, located in the Cities of Camden, Newark and New Brunswick, New Jersey, however, its footprint can be seen around the region, including at satellite facilities located statewide and research and teaching that has global reach. The University has more than 71,000 undergraduate and graduate students and 530,000 alumni around the world. In 2019, the University was awarded more than \$750 million on research grants and sponsored programs.



The University has a threefold mission:

- Provide for the instructional needs of New Jersey's residents through its undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs;
- Conduct innovative research that contributes to the medical, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of the state, as well as aiding the economy and the state's businesses and industries; and
- Perform public service in support of the needs of the residents of the state and its local, county, and state governments.

Each component of the university's mission reinforces and supports the other two.

The Voorhees Transportation Center is a unit of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, which was established at Rutgers in 1992. With its graduate urban planning program ranked nationally, an accredited graduate public policy program, the undergraduate public health program ranked 4th nationally, and new research interests in health administration, public administration, and public informatics added more recently, the Bloustein School is one of the nation's premiere professional schools focused on the theory and practice of planning and public policy scholarship and analysis in the United States.

Key areas of focus at the school include excellence in civic design in its broadest sense, encompassing such endeavors as housing, transportation, workforce development, public health, economic development, ecological balance, and social justice for the disadvantaged. The school supports a wide variety of educational activities, including undergraduate, master's and doctoral degree programs, continuing education and conferences for professionals and alumni, and a range of research centers focused on major planning and policy issues.

Our Vision

VTC is a leader in transportation planning and policy research and education at the national, regional, and state levels.

Our Mission

VTC solves problems, shares knowledge, and informs decisions. We do this by engaging with our research customers, policy makers, and civic leaders, conducting leading-edge research, delivering high-quality training and education programs, and providing insightful technical assistance on a range of critical transportation planning and policy topics. We pursue our mission with a strong commitment to equity, empathy, empowerment, and social justice.

Our Core Activities

VTC addresses a broad array of transportation and mobility topics. In addition to addressing emerging topics in transportation such as shared mobility, micro-mobility, automated vehicles, and big data in transportation, the Center has long-standing, core strengths related to:

- **Transportation and the built environment**, including transit-oriented development, pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety, complete streets, “healthy community” design, and smart growth.
- **Transportation and social equity**, including access for the transportation disadvantaged, environmental justice and safe routes to school.
- **Transportation and the environment**, including energy consumption, air pollution, climate change, and green infrastructure solutions to mitigate the negative effects of transportation on the environment.
- **Transportation finance and the economy**, including the costs of transportation, sustainable funding, and the economic impacts of transportation investments.

Other areas of expertise include strategic governance, motor vehicle licensing policy, transportation resilience, and the role transportation plays in emergency management and evacuation planning. Consistent with the missions of both the University and the Bloustein School, VTC undertakes activity in three core areas.

Research

VTC conducts interdisciplinary applied and academic research on aspects of transportation policy and planning which are of a critical nature and which are not otherwise addressed by conventional sponsors.

Education and Training

VTC provides educational opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students through opportunities to participate in “hands-on” research projects and transportation planning studio courses. In collaboration with the Federal Transit Administration and other transportation agencies at all levels, VTC develops and delivers training and education programs for the transit industry, government officials and the public at-large.

Service

VTC provides transportation expertise to citizens and policy makers on a range of transportation issues; convenes forums, conferences, and seminars on critical issues involving transportation, focusing especially on the complex interrelationship with other sectors of society and the long-term implications of short-term choices; and maintains a communications function with a commitment to disseminating information related to critical transportation issues, and simplifying and clarifying transportation data and information for popular understanding, leading to improved quality of choices made by voters and public officials.

Our Signature Programs and Initiatives

National Transit Institute

The National Transit Institute (NTI) was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 to develop, promote, and deliver training and education programs for the public transit industry. The Institute’s mission is to provide training, education, and clearinghouse services in support of public transportation and quality of life in the United States. NTI identifies needs; promotes, develops, and delivers high quality programs and materials through cooperative partnerships with industry, government, institutions, and associations; and serves as a catalyst for enhancing skills and performance in public transportation.

NJTIP@Rutgers – New Jersey Travel Independence Program

The mission of the NJTIP@Rutgers is to increase the independence and self-sufficiency of people with disabilities, older adults and others by empowering them to use the public transit system safely and independently. NJTIP@Rutgers offers training via a variety of modes and platforms, including one-on-one travel instruction; group travel instruction; Connect-to-Transit

Solving problems.

Sharing knowledge.

Informing decisions.

seminars for care and service providers; in-school travel instruction for young adults transitioning out of an educational setting.

NJ Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center

The New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center (BPRC) assists public officials, transportation and health professionals, and the public in creating a safer and more accessible walking and bicycling environment through primary research, education and dissemination of information about best practices in policy and design. The Center is supported by the New Jersey Department of Transportation through funds provided by the Federal Highway Administration.

NJ Safe Routes to School Program

The New Jersey Safe Routes Program is a federal, state, and local effort that creates safer and more appealing conditions for walking, bicycling, and using other wheeled active transportation devices as a healthy part of everyday life. The program enables and encourages children and youth, including those with disabilities, to travel by foot, bike, or other wheeled devices; seeks to make walking and bicycling a safer and more appealing transportation option, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and facilitates the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution for people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods. The Safe Routes program is supported by the New Jersey Department of Transportation through funds provided by the Federal Highway Administration.

Together North Jersey

Together North Jersey (TNJ) was created in 2011 to develop the first comprehensive plan for sustainable development for North Jersey. Funded by a \$5 million federal Sustainable Communities grant and nearly \$5 million in leveraged funds from members, the TNJ planning effort brought together a coalition of nearly 100 diverse partners—counties, municipalities, educational institutions, nonprofits, businesses and other stakeholders—to develop the TNJ regional plan. The TNJ planning process identified a shared vision for a sustainable future for North Jersey consisting of four themes: Competitive, Efficient, Livable, and Resilient. The Plan is comprehensive, including a broad range of topics such as housing, education, energy, water, the arts, and environmental stewardship, but is centered on land use and transportation. Since 2016, TNJ partners have been working together to implement the Plan, led by four Task Forces, one for each of the Plan's four themes. TNJ advances the Plan's recommended strategies and actions through convenings, outreach, local technical assistance and trainings. The TNJ planning region consists of the 13 counties in the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) planning area: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren.

P.O.E.T. – Public Outreach and Engagement Team

POET is a multi-disciplinary group of VTC staff and partners with expertise in planning, public policy, marketing, communication, and public engagement techniques. POET offers a full range of outreach and engagement services, from concept and advisory to full implementation of

outreach and engagement events. The team specializes in innovative outreach methods tailored to the specific demographic and community profile of the target population.

Our Organizational Structure and Governance

The Voorhees Transportation Center is made up of a core group of researchers, professional staff, and administrative support personnel. This group pursues grant and contract funded research and programs. The core group is complemented by two quasi-independent units—NTI and NJTIP@Rutgers, which pursue their own unique missions within the context of the work undertaken by VTC. In total VTC's team includes more than 40 researchers, professional and administrative staff and affiliated faculty.

The Center's organizational structure includes a senior management team that consists of a Faculty Director that reports to the Bloustein School Dean; an Executive Director that serves as the Center's chief financial and operating officer; an Assistant Director of Research, Planning, and Technical Assistance; a Managing Director of Active Transportation and Mobility Safety projects and programs; a Managing Director of NJTIP@Rutgers; and a Director of NTI. The Assistant Director and Managing Directors report to the Executive Director and the Executive Director and NTI director report to VTC's Faculty Director.

VTC is guided by a 15-member advisory board. The advisory board is comprised of subject matter experts in the field of transportation planning and policy representing public, private and non-governmental perspectives. The advisory board typically meets once per year and provides strategic input and direction that helps to shape the Center's research program. The board has no fiduciary or personnel-related responsibilities.

Our Strategic Planning Process

Overview

VTC's current strategic plan was last updated in 2004. That plan served the Center well; however, since that time, the Center has grown significantly. The University and the Bloustein School context have also changed significantly in the past two years. The School is under the leadership of a new Dean and the University is under the leadership of a new President. Innovations in the field of transportation planning and policy and change in leadership at the School and University provide a foundation for the Center to build on past successes and take advantage of a number of emerging opportunities.

With this as context, in the Fall of 2019, VTC's senior management team launched a strategic planning process to lay the foundation for new initiatives and growth over the next five years. The process was designed to:

- 1) Take stock of the Center's accomplishments since its inception;
- 2) Understand better how people view the Center within the University community, in New Jersey more broadly, as well as nationally; and
- 3) Identify opportunities to build on the Center's reputation and increase the reach and impact of VTC's research, planning, technical assistance and training activities.

To achieve these ends, VTC staff and managers completed a five-year review of the Center's accomplishments related to several key indicators; conducted a series of 14 one-on-one

interviews with current and former VTC collaborators and funders; completed an internal S.W.O.T analysis to identify challenges and opportunities from a faculty and staff perspective; and convened two retreats—one with VTC staff and faculty and another with VTC’s advisory board. The following section summarizes the key takeaways from these activities.

Key Findings

VTC has a number of important strengths on which to build:

- Since our founding, VTC has grown and expanded our research, planning, technical assistance, and training portfolio significantly. In the past three years alone, we prepared and submitted more than 160 project proposals and received more than 100 new grants and contract awards from 38 project sponsors, totaling more than \$20 million.
- We have a well established reputation for high-quality research, project management and delivery, as well as curriculum development and training.
 - In particular, the reputation and visibility of the National Transit Institute is a key asset.
- Our research faculty and professional staff are recognized subject matter experts in a range of topics in New Jersey and in some cases nationally and internationally.
- Over the past five years, VTC researchers have published 107 peer-reviewed journal articles, 132 project reports, and more than 150 other project-related publications. We made 325 conference presentations and our work was cited more than 8,600 times.

At the same time, the Center faces a number of inter-related weaknesses and challenges:

- We are perceived to lack a clear focus. This is partially due to our funding structure that requires us to pursue external funding based on the opportunities available. This has led to work in a wide-range of transportation planning and policy areas.
- We are very well known in New Jersey and parts of the region, but our work is under-recognized nationally and internationally.
 - In this regard, our work is often overshadowed by better known peer institutions such as Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University in California, the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, and the Center for Advanced Transportation and Infrastructure at Rutgers. All of these centers and institutes are funded by USDOT as part of the University Transportation Center program.
- Our visibility within the University and among University leadership is too limited.
- We need to broaden our range of collaborators and partners inside Rutgers, with trade associations such as APTA, CTAA, AASHTO, AMPO and others, at Transportation Research Board, with other Universities and with private consultants and philanthropic foundations.

- Communication of our mission and the results of our work remains a continuing challenge with the many demands on the time of our audiences.
- We have limited organization capacity to respond to emergent opportunities.
- Our advisory board is an underutilized resource.

These challenges require a coordinated effort from all staff to develop new ways of working together, new approaches to collaboration and in some cases building new capacity in areas of real weakness. In addition, the Center must position itself to take advantage of potential opportunities and to establish itself as a leader in New Jersey, nationally, and internationally on emerging topics such as micro-mobility, autonomous, connected, and electric vehicles, mobility-as-a-service and climate resilience. Finally, the field of transportation planning is becoming increasingly analytical as new sources of data become readily available. This is both a challenge and an opportunity, requiring staff to develop new analytical skills to address these new needs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS



Priority #1 – Strengthen our program of research, technical assistance, and training.

While VTC has been very successful with our current portfolio of work, we see the need to strengthen our capabilities in various areas. Transportation research and planning calls upon many disciplines ranging from the social sciences, public health, engineering, and physical sciences to fully address the many problems that transportation causes and solves. Rutgers faculty and faculty at other institutions are an underutilized resource available to the Center. Forging more and stronger partnerships to engage in interdisciplinary research can help meet

this priority. The engagement of Rutgers and Bloustein School faculty and faculty from outside institutions in VTC's research is currently limited. In addition, VTC research staff are constrained by their current workload and lack a structured mechanism to pursue targeted professional development and skill-building. Strategic and sustained partnership-building can strengthen our research program and provide a foundation for attracting national-scale grants. Structured staff development and enhanced mentoring can improve morale, strengthen the quality of our research, and provide a foundation for expanding into new areas of research and development.

Strategies & Actions

1. Increase faculty involvement in our research activities.

- a. Document the level of faculty engagement at peer centers.
- b. Develop a program for faculty "affiliation" that includes guidelines for engagement modeling on practices from peer centers.
- c. Recruit faculty from other departments and programs within the University on all three campuses to "affiliate" with the Center.
 - i. Identify and promote incentives to encourage faculty affiliation and engagement in the center's work.
- d. Recruit faculty from outside institutions to "affiliate" with the Center.
- e. Develop a strategy for keeping these researchers engaged and disseminating news about their research and involvement with center.
 - i. Create regular opportunities for faculty and staff interaction via a visiting-scholar program, lunch-time talks, etc.

2. Proactively develop subject matter expertise and skills that can facilitate the funding of self-generated research ideas, particularly via larger, multi-year grants for USDOT, NSF, NIH, and other sources.

- a. Enhance the Center's capabilities in the area of public informatics and data analytics.
 - i. Identify and nurture research relationships with faculty and staff in the computer sciences and similar departments.
 - ii. Invest in staff professional development aimed at skill acquisition related to public informatics and data analytics.
 - iii. Hire a research data analyst with experience and training in public informatics to support the Center's research program.
 - iv. Identify a series of small proof-of-concept research projects to build a portfolio of research outputs demonstrating the Center's capabilities and innovative applications of data analytics in transportation planning and policy.

- b. Continue to build the Center’s expertise and knowledgebase related to micro-mobility, automated, connected, and electric vehicles, shared mobility, and mobility-as-a-service.
 - i. Build faculty and staff knowledge in these areas by proactively engaging and supporting faculty and staff participation in academic and industry conferences and learning events on these topics.
 - ii. Identify opportunities to incorporate these topics in existing VTC projects, programs and signature initiative, including but not limited to: NJBPRC, NJSRTS program, Together North Jersey, NJTIP@Rutgers, NJTOD.org, NTI training courses, and others.
- 3. Increase VTC’s visibility within the network of transportation research centers nationally.**
- a. Become a member of and regularly attend Association of University Transportation Centers meetings.

Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target	By when
Peer institution benchmarking study completed		08/31/2021
Data analyst and Post-doctoral research associated hired		08/31/2021
Faculty affiliation criteria established		12/31/2021
No. of RU and outside faculty affiliated with VTC	10 15 20 25	06/30/2022 06/30/2023 06/30/2024 06/30/2025
No. of RU and outside faculty participating on grant/contract funded research		
No. of RU faculty serving as PIs on grants/contracts managed through VTC		
No. of collaborations with researchers in the fields of computer science and related fields		
No. of affiliated/visiting scholar talks held		
Attendance at scholar talks		
Staff professional development activities completed related to new knowledge and/or skills development		
No. of research projects complete/articles written involving “big data” and data analytics, in particular using of Location-based Service (LBS) data		
No. of VTC research, TA and training project incorporating targeted skills and expertise.		

Priority #2 – Improve our marketing and external communication capabilities.

VTC includes several resource centers, programs and initiatives. Each has its own identity. In addition, given the Center’s need to secure external funding support, VTC is very opportunistic with regard to its business development activities. This results in a broad-ranging project portfolio. As a result, the Center is perceived to lack a clear and identifiable focus. There is a need to restructure our marketing, communication, and messaging in a way that promotes a more singular identity. The recasting of the Center’s identity should respect our existing core strengths while also accommodating work in emerging areas of focus such as automated

vehicles, micro-mobility solutions, racial justice and others. Reorientation of the Center’s identity and messaging can and should be done in the context of developing and implementing a comprehensive marketing and communication strategy.

Strategies & Actions

1. Hire full-time professional staff to support our ongoing marketing and communications needs.

- a. Consult with peer centers within and outside Rutgers regarding their marketing and communication functions and budgets.
- b. Work with the Dean’s office and University Human Resource to create, classify and post a new marketing and communications position within VTC.
- c. Identify project and unrestricted funding resources to support the position.
- d. Complete the hiring process to fill the new position.

2. Streamline and strengthen our identity.

- a. Create a “brand architecture” that can be used to help unify our visual identity within the constraints of the University’s visual identity system (e.g., color standards, font standards, icons, coordinating graphical elements, styles, etc.).
 - i. This should include an organizing framework or visually-engaging depiction of the Center’s topical expertise, projects, programs, and initiatives. See Figures 1 and 2 for examples.

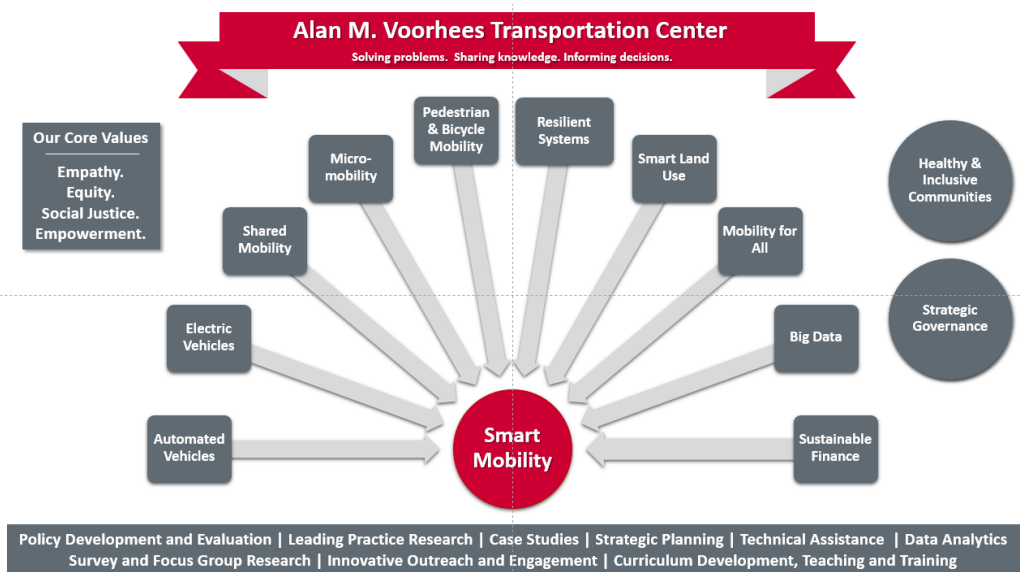
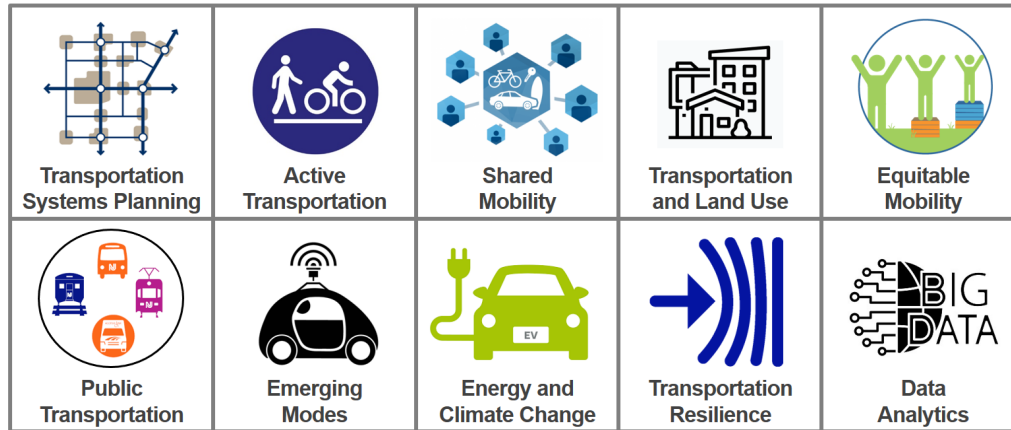


Figure 1

Research, Planning, and Policy



Policy Development and Evaluation | Leading Practice Research | Case Studies | Strategic Planning | Technical Assistance | Data Analytics
Survey and Focus Group Research | Innovative Outreach and Engagement | Curriculum Development, Teaching and Training

Figure 2

3. Develop uniform style guide and messaging guidance.

- a. Develop a style guide for how to use the brand architecture and guidance for how to talk about who we are, what we do, and how we do it. This should include an “elevator pitch” and messaging related to describing how VTC nests within the School and University identities.
- b. Conduct training for all faculty and staff on how to use the brand architecture, style guide and messaging guidance.

4. Develop suite of collateral marketing/communication materials consistent with the new brand architecture and messaging guidelines.

- a. This should include resume templates, report and report cover templates, proposal templates, project sheets, a short form annual report, e-newsletter template, and other materials as needed.

5. Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy.

- a. Redesign and relaunch VTC’s website.
- b. Regularly communicate VTC’s capabilities and successes.
 - i. Produce a series of regular research talks, webinars etc. to communicate research output and other successes.

- ii. Produce short research briefs for customers and other interested stakeholders.
- iii. Launch a VTC e-newsletter.
- c. Enhance our social media presence.
 - i. Empower staff to develop materials for social media engagement.
 - ii. Expand our outreach efforts on social media to attract larger audiences.
- d. Strengthen relationships with traditional media.
 - i. Develop press release/media advisory templates to get the word out about VTC accomplishments, events, research results, etc.
 - ii. Include a page on VTC’s redesigned website for media inquiries and respond to requests from the media in a timely manner.
 - iii. Create opportunities to publish Op/Ed articles and seek regular meetings with Editorial page editors to establish VTC as a go-to resource on transportation topics in New Jersey, the Region and nationally.

Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target	By when
Peer institution benchmarking memo completed		08/31/2021
Marketing and Communications professional hired		08/31/2021 11/01/2021
- Position classified by UHR		
- Hiring complete		
Brand architecture, style guide and messaging guidelines complete		04/30/2022
Staff/faculty training complete		04/30/2022
Comprehensive marketing and communication strategy developed		06/30/2022
VTC website redesigned and launched		06/30/2022
Suite of marketing collateral materials available for use		06/30/2022
No. of research talks, webinars, events held		
No. of research e-newsletters, research briefs published		
No. of social media posts, likes, retweets, etc.		
No. of regular social media followers		
No. of website visits and related analytics		
No. of Op/Ed pieces published		
No. of paper and digital media mentions		

Priority #3 – Implement an annual signature or “flagship” event.

An annual event can provide a venue for increasing the visibility of the Center and its work within New Jersey, the region, and nationally. VTC currently hosts the Annual Alan M. Voorhees Distinguished Lecture series, and we do bring nationally recognized scholars and practitioners to New Brunswick for this series. Other transportation centers host similar annual events, but some have larger research events that are off-site and last several days. Building on our current Annual lecture series we will seek to develop and plan for an annual “flagship” event that highlights our capabilities and research results. A model to aspire to is UCLA’s Annual Lake

Arrowhead Symposium, which brings together academics, practitioners, and leaders to discuss a variety of transportation policy issues each year.

Strategies & Actions

1. Identify potential models for a signature event.

- a. Document events undertaken by peer centers. This should include the size/scale of events, topics covered, relationship to their research program, frequency, budget, fees charged and use of sponsorships.
 - i. Participate in events at other centers to understand best practices.
- b. Document successful events undertaken by VTC as part of projects/programs (e.g., Complete Streets Summit, Future of Transportation and the Economy Symposium, others).

2. Develop a strategy and timeline for launching and funding the event.

- a. Explore how our existing distinguished lecture might be expanded to a full-day event with additional research presentations capped by a Distinguished Lecture.
- b. Explore how the event could be used to support fundraising efforts.

3. Implement an inaugural event and evaluate the success of the event to determine the efficacy of making it permanent.

Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target	By when
Peer institution benchmarking/Event models memo completed		08/31/2021
No. of peer institution events attended		
Flagship event format, timeline, and funding strategy developed		12/31/2021
Inaugural event planned and convened		06/30/2022
- Attendance at event		
- Event evaluation completed		08/31/2022

Priority #4 – Increase the discoverability of our work products.

VTC produces a significant level of research output and data for our customers. Much of this is not currently visible beyond being placed on our website. There are many ways to use various research archiving platforms to increase the discoverability and reach of our work products and to reach wider audiences.

Strategies & Actions

1. Develop and implement center-wide data management plan.

- c. Adopt a comprehensive definition of data that includes datasets, reports, journal articles, blog posts, videos, and other work products.

- d. Develop policies, procedures, and standards for data/file storage, documentation, naming conventions, metadata standards, website posting, and archiving (for example on SOAR - Scholarly Open Access at Rutgers).
- e. Use Google Scholar, Researchgate, and other networks for sharing and making documents more widely available.

2. Amend project management checklists and job duty performance standards to incorporate data management requirements.

- a. Conduct training for staff on the data management procedures and checklist.

Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target	By when
Data management plan prepared and disseminated		11/30/2021
Project management and close-out checklists amended to incorporate new procedures		11/30/2021
Staff training complete		12/31/2021
No. and type of materials archived according to procedures		
Rate of staff compliance with new procedures		
Data download and use statistics		
Faculty and staff citation statistics		

Priority #5 – Restructure and better utilize our advisory board.

Since its founding, VTC has had periodic meetings of its Advisory Board. The current membership of the Board consists of senior professionals (retired and active) from consulting agencies and public authorities. The board has generally had a New Jersey and Northeast corridor perspective on the direction of VTC. Many of the Board members have served for well over a decade. Since inception, board engagement has been mostly limited to information sharing regarding VTC’s program of research and planning work and the Center’s management team soliciting advice and connections relate to potential research opportunities and partnerships. Members of the Board have expressed interest in being more actively and substantively engaged in the Center’s work. To do this, the board will need to be restructured. A board restructuring also provides an opportunity to increase the diversity of board membership and to utilize the board more extensively for the purpose of fundraising.

Strategies & Actions

- 1. Document the structure and composition of advisory boards serving peer centers at Rutgers (e.g., Eagleton, CAIT, Heldrich, etc.) and at outside institutions.**
- 2. Develop new guidelines/bylaws governing board membership, including board member responsibilities, term limits, committee structure (if appropriate), meeting frequency, etc.**
- 3. Work with current board members to adopt and implement new guidelines/bylaws.**
 - a. Invite new members to join the board in line with our future research objectives, diversity, and other criteria.

4. Work with Board to develop research initiatives and new opportunities for VTC.

- a. Advance and build upon the AMV legacy project and document archive.
- b. Continue to develop research proposals with Board members who are research-active, including Cooperative Research Proposals offered by the Transportation Research Board.
- c. Involve the Board in planning for a future “flagship” event and contributing to the event’s success.

Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target	By when
Peer institution benchmarking memo completed		10/31/2021
New advisory board guidelines/bylaws developed and approved by board		12/31/2021
New board member invitations accepted		
Diversity of board members		
Board interactions (virtual and in-person) interactions		
Level of board engagement between formal meetings		
Board satisfaction		

Priority #6 – Enhance and improve our institutional effectiveness.

VTC is committed to institutional effectiveness, sound stewardship of financial resources, great customer service, and ongoing improvement. Toward this end, we will continue to strive to attract and retain exceptional staff, maintain a high morale, improve and streamline administrative procedures, sustain a strong financial position, and expand the capacity of staff and affiliated faculty to advance the mission of the Center, the Bloustein School, and Rutgers University.

Strategies & Actions

1. Attract and retain exceptional staff by offering competitive compensation, excellent workplace environment, and outstanding professional opportunities.

- a. Strive to increase the diversity of our professional and administrative staff and affiliated faculty.
- b. Implement a staff recognition program.
- c. Enhance internal communications and provide team-building opportunities to increase collaboration among staff as we all work to advance the center’s mission.
- d. Adopt formal professional development and mentoring policies and procedures,
 - i. Implement an annual development goal planning process for all center staff.
 - ii. Establish a staff development fund to support participation in professional development activities.

- e. Continue to promote a “culture of learning” by providing regular opportunities for faculty and staff to share ideas and lessons learned from their research and projects.

2. Provide high-quality and efficient internal support services and systems.

- a. Increase the level of support available to principal investigators when preparing proposals, in particular, design and layout of proposal documents and managing the assemblage of boiler plate and related materials.
 - i. Create and implement a proposal development/pre-award process checklist and continue to improve compliance with University policies and proposal submission timelines.
- b. Improve the accuracy and timeliness of financial reporting data available to principal investigators and project managers.
 - i. Continue to improve student, staff, and faculty compliance with time keeping submission and approval deadlines.
- c. Continue to improve and enhance the tools (PI reports, budget templates, etc.) and software (Dovico, etc.) available to faculty and staff to meet high standards of project management and budget responsibility.
 - i. Conduct training at least annually and more often as needed to ensure staff and faculty are aware of the tools and software available and their functionality.
- d. Continually reinforce University policies and procedures related to hiring, purchasing, cash handling, expense reporting, etc.
 - i. Conduct administrative training at least once per semester to ensure all staff and faculty are aware of current requirements and any changes in University policies and procedures that occur.

3. Maintain the quality of technology needed to facilitate effectiveness in research, technical assistance, and training.

- a. Allocate funding to refresh everyone’s computer technology at least every three years.
 - i. Where feasible and appropriate, convert existing desktop computers to more flexible laptops with docking stations to make remote work easier.
- b. Regularly invest in software and the technology tools needed for staff and affiliated faculty to function at the highest level.

4. Sustain our recent track record of strong financial performance.

- a. Strive to maintain an average Facility and Administration return rate that meets or exceeds 35 percent.

- b. Create and maintain a “rainy day” fund to insulate the Center against unforeseen expenses.
- c. Continue to pursue large Federally-funded research grants.
- d. Create and maintain a structured process for participating in the TRB problem statement and proposal development process.
 - i. Identify proposal opportunities early and improve “pre-teaming” efforts prior to the issuance of RFPs.
 - ii. Experiment with the submission of problem statements to create a pipeline of potential projects well-suited to our research strengths and subject matter expertise.
- e. Work with the Dean’s office and advisory board to develop and implement a fundraising strategy to increase the level of unrestricted funds available to support our strategic priorities.

Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target	By when
Annual staff development/goal planning process completed		08/31/2021
Professional development procedures/fund established		12/31/2021
Staff recognition program created		03/31/2022
Unrestricted fundraising strategy established and implemented		06/30/2022
No. of recognition acknowledgements issued		
No. of staff development/goal plans successfully achieved		
No. of “culture of learning” events held		
No. of staff training sessions held for staff related to administrative tools and procedures		
Staff compliance rate with time keeping deadlines		
No. of administrative support tools/tool enhancements put in place		
Average age of staff computer technology		
No. of staff transitioned to laptops		
Average F&A rate on externally funded grants/contracts		
Status and balance of “rainy day” fund		
Number and size of Federally-funded projects		
Number of TRB proposals submitted and success rate		
Number of TRB problem statements submitted		
Number and size of gifts received		