

Problem assessment, the challenge or need that prompted the local government to develop the program

The City of Valdosta has been steadily growing over the past decade in both area and population. In fact, Valdosta was designated as one of the newest Metropolitan Statistical areas in 2003. Valdosta is also a regional shopping center and routinely draws shoppers from fourteen to sixteen counties around us. Recreational opportunities also draw visitors to our city. Valdosta State University is one of the regional universities in the state and currently serves over forty-one counties. Many of these students commute for classes several times a week. Wild Adventures Theme Park also draws a large number of visitors each year and has well over one million visitors annually. This has resulted in an increased traffic volume on city streets and presented the city with a challenge of coordinating traffic flows in an efficient manner as well as providing for public safety. During the period 1991 until 1996 the city saw a steady increase in the number of accidents reported on city streets. This created an opportunity for a partnership between the Engineering and Police Departments to work together to improve traffic safety. The City established the Valdosta Advance Traffic management Center (TMC) in 2005 which was awarded the Georgia Section Agency Award for distinguished improvement in the field of transportation from the Georgia Chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

Program implementation and costs

In December 2005 Valdosta was unanimously selected for implementing new transportation technologies to respond and plan for continued growth in our area. Specific transportation improvements that were cited include the full implementation of

the Valdosta Advance Traffic Management Center (TMC) and new networking technologies being integrated into the TMC. Georgia Transportation Commissioner Harold Linnenkohl added, "Valdosta is on the 'cutting edge' of transportation management technology and everyone associated with the project is to be commended. Signal coordination and other intelligent transportation system technologies are critical tools to maintaining optimum traffic flow. Valdosta will be one of the first cities in the state to fully implement the new networking 2070 controllers at all traffic signals by the end of the year. The 2070 controllers will improve city traffic by utilizing state-of-the-art communication and coordination software to control traffic through the TMC. According to City Engineer Von Shipman, P.E., the entire state is moving toward utilizing the new networking software and for Valdosta to be one of the cities to use it first shows the city's commitment to move traffic in a more fluid manner, decreasing travel time, the number of accidents and environmental impact, all while using our existing infrastructure. The city uses Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax funds to help pay for transportation improvements, but has also been successful in requesting financial assistance from both the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to help promote and expand efforts to implement intelligent transportation system solutions.

Tangible results or measurable outcomes of the program

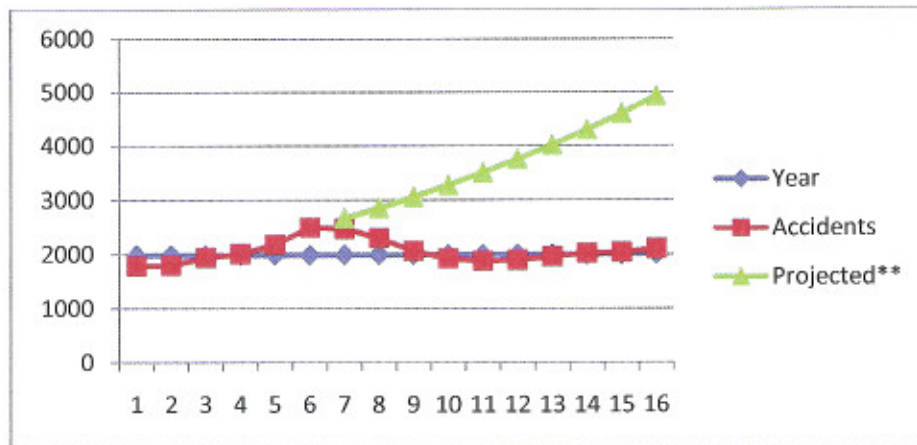
Even though Valdosta is steadily growing and has a much heavier traffic flow on city streets, this hasn't lead to an increase in the number of wrecks. According to City Engineer, Von Shipman, they are on the decrease. Over the past three years, the Valdosta Police Department and Traffic Engineering Departments have worked closely

together in an attempt to reduce accidents and traffic fatalities in the city. The process includes the following efforts:

- Improved communications between both departments;
- Response to traffic analysis and complaints by modifying traffic flows, signage, and selected enforcement of traffic in areas where traffic analysis reveals issues;
- Coordination with the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety by participating in traffic safety campaigns such as "Click it or Ticket It. Operation Zero Tolerance, Over the Limit, Under Arrest, Saved by the Belt and Highway Enforcement of Aggressive Traffic (HEAT), etc;
- Increased traffic presence by adding more officers to the police department traffic unit (3 officers to 9 officers, which includes 1 Sergeant);
- Monthly roadside sobriety checkpoints;
- Valdosta Police Department Sergeant Earl Durrance coordinating the Southern Regional Traffic Enforcement Network.
- Traffic fatalities over the last four years have decreased
 - 2005 – 10
 - 2006 – 6
 - 2007 – 1
 - 2008 – 0

Charted below is the accident traffic history for the city from the period 1991 – 2006

Year	Accidents	Increase		Projected**	Accident Reduction
		Decrease	% + or -		
1991	1797				
1992	1808	11	0.006%		
1993	1949	141	7.800%		
1994	2019	70	3.600%		
1995	2187	168	8.300%		
1996	2503	316	14.400%		
1997	2483	-20	-0.008%	2678	195
1998	2308	-175	-7.000%	2866	558
1999	2068	-240	-10.400%	3066	998
2000	1932	-136	-6.600%	3281	1349
2001	1887	-45	-2.300%	3511	1624
2002	1903	16	0.008%	3756	1853
2003	1970	67	3.500%	4019	2049
2004	2027	57	2.900%	4301	2274
2005	2043	16	8.000%	4602	2559
2006	2109	66	3.200%	4924	2815



Lessons learned during planning, implementation, and analysis of the program

The city realized that this team approach of the Police Department and the Engineering Department working together resulted in achieving a goal of zero traffic fatalities in 2008. This program has been highly effective for the city and will continue to advance as the city grows to meet the need and help ensure public safety.



Valdosta Traffic Management Center

