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Turning Data into Action: Tackling Mobility Challenges with Traffic Intelligence

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Executive Summary

State and local transportation agencies are navigating converging pressures — urban growth, climate resilience commitments, and aging infrastructure — amid rapid technological innovation. The growing volume, variety, and dynamic nature of mobility and geospatial data that can be translated into traffic intelligence offers an opportunity to close visibility gaps, improve safety, and modernize planning workflows.

This IDC white paper examines how governments and transport planners can operationalize real-time historical mobility data to manage congestion, enhance safety outcomes, and build resilient multimodal systems. It also highlights the evolving role of traffic and location data providers as trusted data backbones within broader ecosystems of ITS vendors, consultants, and platforms, rather than one-stop turnkey solution providers.

Drawing on market evidence and public sector case studies, the analysis provides guidance for state and local government transportation leaders on where to invest for the next decade of mobility intelligence.

AT A GLANCE

KEY STATS

- Around 95% of public sector organizations consider geospatial intelligence to be critical for or very important to success.
- Only 36% have enterprise-wide strategies in place.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT

Mobility modernization is shifting from hardware expansion to data-driven strategies. Interoperable platforms, real-time traffic intelligence, and AI-powered analytics are essential to manage congestion, safety risks, and climate-related disruptions effectively.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Invest in interoperable data platforms for cross-agency collaboration.
Combine existing ITS infrastructure with high coverage floating car data to close visibility gaps and achieve network-wide coverage. Adopt agile procurement models to accelerate innovation. Align with trusted data providers to reduce integration risk and improve reliability.

Introduction

According to IDC, economic growth and development remains the top strategic priority for public sector leaders dealing with disruptive technological change and geopolitical volatility in 2025 and beyond, as governments seek to unlock job opportunities, strengthen industrial capacity, and foster inclusive economic growth.

Infrastructure and mobility are central to this ambition. Modernizing roads, bridges, and signaling systems is no longer sufficient. Government transportation and traffic departments, metro transit agencies, urban planners, and police authorities overseeing traffic safety are investing in cloud and data platforms and advanced AI models to enable safety, operational efficiency, resilience, and equitable access to next-generation mobility services. However, the path forward is complex.

Movement and geospatial data and intelligence platforms are among the most strategic pillars of next-generation mobility. IDC's 2025 *Power of Place Survey*[1] showed that while 95% of organizations consider geospatial intelligence to be critical for or very important to their success, only 36% have enterprise-wide strategies in place to support it. Technical challenges such as data quality (39%), privacy and security concerns (44%), and integration barriers (29%) persist. Organizationally, skills gaps (25%) and limited cross-departmental coordination (23%) hinder progress.

Societal expectations are also increasing: Citizens demand faster, more transparent, and location-aware services while policymakers seek to align infrastructure investments and policies with climate resilience, mobility equity, and regional development goals. To meet these demands, public sector leaders must embed intelligence across infrastructure planning, traffic management, and mobility services — transforming not only how services are delivered but also how policy is evidenced and decisions are scrutinized and made.

Framing Mobility Challenges

Across the globe, local governments are grappling with increasingly complex mobility challenges, shaped by both universal trends and region-specific dynamics. While the contours of these challenges vary by geography, climate, and socioeconomic context, the underlying pressures are strikingly similar — and growing in urgency.

Urbanization and Congestion

Urbanization continues to reshape the social and economic dynamics of transportation agencies, but not necessarily their physical form. While populations concentrate in metropolitan areas, increasing vehicle density and straining transport systems, the built environment itself evolves slowly. For example, in Greater Paris, only 0.8% of the housing stock is renewed annually, suggesting that the city of 2040 will look much as it does today. This pattern is mirrored in many regions and countries, such as Western Europe, North America, and Japan, where heritage preservation, budgetary constraints, and urban density limit large-scale infrastructure renewal.

"Urbanization continues to reshape the social and economic dynamics of transportation agencies, but not necessarily their physical form."

As a result, congestion is no longer a peak-hour inconvenience but a persistent barrier to productivity, emergency response, and citizen satisfaction. Governments must shift focus from radical physical transformation to maximizing the efficiency of existing roads. The next wave of innovation lies in the "soft" layers — mobility services, especially public transit service levels, affordability, digital infrastructure, and data intelligence — rather than in concrete and steel.

[1] **Source:** IDC's *Power of Place (Geospatial and Location Data) Survey 2025*; (N = 609), North America, Asia/Pacific, and Europe

In IDC's 2025 *Power of Place Survey*, over 35% of public sector respondents ranked traffic and mobility data among the most critical geospatial datasets for operational success. This underscores the growing importance of movement intelligence in urban governance.

Climate Imperatives and Sustainability

Climate change is no longer a distant threat but a present-day crisis reshaping public sector priorities. Economic development, the top strategic goal for governments globally, is increasingly intertwined with infrastructure resilience. Recent disasters — from floods in Germany and Belgium to droughts in Spain — expose vulnerabilities in urban systems. In Asia, monsoon-related flooding continues to displace millions annually, underscoring the need for adaptive infrastructure and proactive mobility strategies. The United States faces similar challenges. In 2023, Hurricane Idalia caused widespread damage across Florida and Georgia, disrupting transportation networks and highlighting the fragility of aging infrastructure.

"Climate change is no longer a distant threat but a present-day crisis reshaping public sector priorities."

Transportation is a major contributor to climate risk; it accounts for 28% of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States and 25% in Europe, where emissions have risen since 1990. Globally, fossil-fuel-based mobility results in carbon output, air pollution, health problems, and urban fragility (e.g., heat islands). The eventual financial toll has been staggering: $320 billion in global losses from natural disasters in 2024, with 93% being weather-related (Munich Re).

Today's infrastructure was designed for historical climate norms that no longer apply. To close the resilience gap, agencies must invest in permeable surfaces, stormwater systems, and nature-based solutions. Technology is also key: Internet of Things (IoT) sensors, digital twins, and geospatial intelligence enable real-time monitoring and scenario planning. According to IDC's *Power of Place Survey*, over 40% of organizations now use environmental data to support climate adaptation — a critical step toward future-proofing mobility systems.

As climate events grow more unpredictable and severe, cities, states, and provinces globally must evolve — not only in terms of how they build but how they plan, monitor, and respond. The future of mobility will depend on governments' ability to integrate environmental intelligence into every layer of infrastructure strategy, ensuring that transportation systems are both efficient and resilient. This means anticipating disruptions and adapting in real time. Movement data plays a critical role in this transformation; it enables authorities to optimize transportation flows during extreme weather, design evacuation routes that reflect actual traffic patterns, and coordinate rescue operations with precision. It supports emergency services planning by identifying congestion hotspots and alternative corridors, while improving communication with end users through timely, data-driven alerts. By leveraging these insights, subnational governments can move from reactive crisis management to proactive resilience.

Planned and Unplanned Events: Stress-Testing Urban Systems

Transportation agencies today must navigate a growing spectrum of disruptions — both planned events and unforeseen emergencies — that test the limits of traditional traffic management systems. International sporting events (e.g., the 2026 FIFA World Cup, taking place in three different countries) will require multi-agency coordination to manage road closures, crowd surges, and dynamic routing. Instead of relying on manual counts and slow field surveys, agencies can use a real-time and historical traffic analytics suite (including origin–destination insights) to adjust signal timing at critical junctions, coordinate green waves on key access routes, test and monitor diversion routes, track spillover into sensitive local streets, and evaluate which strategies actually reduced delay and protected access for emergency services. In parallel, large-scale festivals (e.g., Toronto's Caribana or Berlin's Carnival of Cultures) create temporary congestion hotspots that require agile, data-driven responses.

Unplanned events — including wildfires in California, floods in Germany, and public health crises such as COVID-19 — further underscore the need for resilient, interoperable traffic intelligence platforms. According to IDC's *Power of Place Survey*, over 50% of organizations are actively exploring real-time IoT data and AI-powered analytics to enhance situational awareness and response capabilities. These technologies are essential to building mobility systems that are not only reactive but predictive and adaptive.

The Evolution of Data and Traffic Intelligence

Public sector transportation modernization is increasingly defined by data infrastructure rather than hardware expansion. Across North America and Europe, city and state agencies are shifting budgets from fixed sensors and loop detectors toward digital twins, API-based traffic feeds, and AI-enhanced analytics.

Federal and regional programs (e.g., the U.S. IIJA and EU Green Deal mobility directives) are accelerating adoption by conditioning funding on performance metrics, emissions tracking, and interoperability standards.

These developments are reshaping procurement, requiring open data architectures and closer collaboration between mapping providers, integrators, and civic platforms.

The Power of Data in Mobility Management

Traffic data and location intelligence are becoming indispensable tools for public agencies seeking to plan for, evaluate, and respond to mobility challenges with precision and agility. Unlike traditional infrastructure-based monitoring systems, modern traffic intelligence leverages vast networks of connected vehicles already on the road. In some urban areas, data contributions come from as many as one in five vehicles, enabling unparalleled coverage and granularity.

By collecting anonymized, real-time data from GPS-enabled devices, agencies gain access to high-resolution insights across cities, regions, and entire countries. This includes the ability to pinpoint congestion hotspots, identify underutilized corridors, and track travel speeds and patterns with

remarkable accuracy. Crucially, traffic data provides broader coverage and deeper insights than camera-based systems, which are often limited by fixed locations and high maintenance costs. The combination of real-time and historical data empowers agencies to engage in predictive planning, congestion management, and safety optimization with greater confidence.

According to IDC's *Power of Place Survey*, over 50% of organizations are actively exploring real-time IoT data and AI-powered analytics to enhance situational awareness and operational decision-making. Traffic intelligence is enabling a new era of mobility — one that is proactive, inclusive, and resilient.

Location Intelligence as a Universal Language

Location intelligence is increasingly recognized as a universal language for public sector collaboration, enabling agencies to plan for, evaluate, and respond to mobility challenges with shared context and precision. The rise of distributed geospatial infrastructure is transforming how governments operate.

Cloud-native GIS platforms and interoperable location referencing systems are central to this transformation. These tools allow agencies to move beyond siloed datasets and toward common operating environments, where real-time and historical data can be seamlessly integrated across jurisdictions. A compelling example is the July 2020 flash flood in Palermo, Italy, which severely disrupted mobility along Viale Regione Siciliana, one of the city's main traffic corridors. Within two hours, 134mm of rain inundated nearly every underpass on this arterial road, rendering critical junctions impassable and causing traffic to collapse during peak hours. To assess and manage the disruption, researchers combined real-time traffic data with a dynamic microsimulation model in Dynasim. This approach enabled the creation of "reference" and "emergency" scenarios, simulating rerouting strategies and congestion impacts when key interchanges were closed.

By integrating geospatial data, traffic flow analytics, and adaptive control measures such as variable message signs, planners identified bottlenecks (e.g., the Via Belgio and Via Nebrodi junctions) where the level of service dropped from C/D to F under emergency conditions. These insights informed the development of an emergency mobility plan, resulting in the installation of underpass water-level sensors connected to traffic lights and mobile apps for real-time alerts. This case illustrates how data-driven modeling and smart infrastructure can "collapse the time to insight," transforming flood response from reactive to proactive and significantly enhancing urban resilience.

This shift is not only technical but also strategic. As governments prepare for large-scale events such as the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, interoperable geospatial systems will be critical for traffic management, emergency response, and public safety. Moreover, the integration of GeoAI capabilities (e.g., micro-mapping, crash diagnostics, and predictive modeling) is enabling agencies to move from reactive to proactive planning.

By embracing location intelligence as a shared framework, public sector leaders can foster cross-agency collaboration, accelerate decision-making, and deliver mobility solutions that are inclusive, resilient, and future-ready.

AI-Augmented Decision-Making

Public sector agencies are increasingly turning to AI-powered traffic intelligence to transform overwhelming volumes of mobility data into actionable insights. Traditional traffic management systems often struggle to keep pace with the complexity and speed of modern urban environments. AI offers a way to bridge this gap — enabling smarter planning, faster response, and more proactive safety interventions.

In transportation, AI is already being used to diagnose crash patterns, develop countermeasures, and optimize intersections through micro-mapping. Beyond traffic, AI is transforming emergency management, with agencies deploying real-time IoT sensors, cloud-based dispatch platforms, and AI-enhanced alerting systems to manage both planned disruptions and critical events. During wildfires, floods, or public health crises, these tools enable agencies to reroute traffic, coordinate staffing, and issue targeted alerts across multiple channels.

Additionally, AI agents are transforming how traffic analysis is done by eliminating the need for manual data pulls, chart building, and lengthy interpretation. Instead of analysts spending hours extracting floating car data, creating dashboards, and writing reports, users can simply ask the agent a question and receive actionable insights in seconds. For instance, an AI agent for traffic can answer complex queries such as "show me the most congested junctions in Barcelona with queues over 500m" or "compare traffic speeds this week versus last week during the event" instantly, without any coding or technical expertise required. This capability collapses the time from question to insight, empowering decision-makers to act faster and freeing skilled staff from repetitive tasks to focus on strategy and innovation. These agents operate on top of validated datasets and still allow analysts to drill down to the underlying numbers, enabling agencies to check and document how results were obtained.

According to IDC's *Power of Place Survey*, over 50% of organizations are exploring AI and real-time data to enhance situational awareness. As mobility challenges grow more complex, AI is becoming not just a tool but a strategic necessity.

Addressing Mobility Challenges through Traffic Intelligence: A Playbook

Challenge: Urbanization and Congestion, Network Efficiency Under Pressure

Use case: Transurban, which manages 22 toll roads across Australia and North America, faced the challenge of ensuring smooth travel for 2.5 million daily trips. Traditional in-road sensors provided limited visibility, making it difficult to understand congestion patterns and measure the impact of network changes. Integrating TomTom's real-time traffic analytics provided Transurban with granular insights into traffic flow, congestion hotspots, and infrastructure performance.

Technology: Modern traffic intelligence platforms allow cities, states, subnational governments, and operators to:

- Analyze speed and crash patterns to identify high-risk corridors
- Implement active demand management policies (e.g., reducing road space, diverting traffic from pedestrian zones while maintaining delivery access at night)
- Model long-term impacts of speed and flow changes using GIS-based scenario planning
- Integrate real-time probe data for dynamic traffic monitoring and compliance checks
- Coordinate across agencies (transport, police, and emergency services) via shared dashboards
- Simulate interventions such as signal timing adjustments or speed enforcement before implementation
- Leverage predictive analytics to anticipate congestion surges and optimize public transport priority

Outcome: Transurban's adoption of TomTom analytics delivered:

- Faster incident response, reducing delays during disruptions
- Improved network efficiency, ensuring smoother traffic flow for millions of drivers
- Enhanced safety, validated through before-and-after crash analysis
- Data-driven policy refinement, enabling transparent reporting and continuous improvement

Performance indicator: Travel time reliability (TTR) improved by up to 15% on optimized corridors after the implementation of real-time traffic intelligence and predictive modeling.

Challenge: Climate Imperatives and Sustainability, Building Resilience and Reliability

Use case: During the July 2020 floods in the Kuma River basin (Kyushu, Japan), authorities leveraged TomTom vehicle probe data to estimate inundation areas in real time. By correlating traffic patterns with hydraulic conditions, researchers demonstrated the following:

- Vehicle speed and traffic presence are strong indicators of flooding — speeds below 20km/h or an absence of traffic corresponded to inundation depths of 50cm or more.
- Real-time traffic data enabled dynamic evacuation planning, guiding residents away from flooded zones and prioritizing emergency routes.
- This approach complements traditional flood models, reducing reliance on costly fixed sensors and improving situational awareness during extreme weather.

Technology: Modern sustainability-focused mobility platforms enable agencies to:

- Integrate real-time traffic and environmental data to anticipate congestion and emissions hotspots
- Model climate risk scenarios (e.g., flooding, heat stress) using geospatial overlays and predictive analytics
- Optimize routes for low-emission zones and fuel efficiency, leveraging dynamic speed profiles and congestion forecasts
- Coordinate across agencies for emergency response during climate-related disruptions

- Monitor and report sustainability KPIs (emissions reduction, modal shift, resilience metrics) for compliance and transparency

Outcome: These capabilities deliver:

- Faster evacuation and emergency routing, reducing exposure during floods
- Lower emissions and improved air quality through optimized routing and reduced idle time
- Enhanced resilience to extreme weather, minimizing disruption during floods, storms, or heatwaves
- Data-driven policy refinement, enabling cities to meet climate targets while maintaining mobility efficiency

Performance Indicator:

Flood detection accuracy: Using vehicle probe data, inundation areas were estimated with precision of 0.67–0.85 and recall of up to 0.94 when combining traffic absence and low-speed thresholds (20km/h).

"Technology vendors that can deliver unified operational solutions across multiple entities will play a critical role in turning data into actionable insights," says Alison Brooks, Research Vice President, Smart City Strategies

Challenge: Planned and Unplanned Events, Managing Safety and Risk Intelligence

Use case: Bradshaw Consulting Services' MARVLIS suite, powered by TomTom traffic and geolocation data, demonstrates how predictive analytics can transform emergency response.

- **Demand forecasting:** MARVLIS Demand Monitor predicts where emergencies are most likely to occur based on historical patterns, time of day, and seasonality.
- **Dynamic deployment:** MARVLIS Deployment Planner uses these forecasts to reposition EMS units proactively, reducing response times without adding new stations or vehicles.
- **Real-world impact:** In Charlotte, North Carolina, predictive redeployment enabled EMS to reach a drowning victim in 2.5 minutes instead of 21 minutes and save the child's life. In Jersey City, New Jersey, ambulance arrival times improved by two minutes, doubling cardiac revival rates from 20% to 50%. Pinellas County, Florida, eliminated $400,000 in fines for missed response targets, achieving 90% compliance with time goals.

Amsterdam offers a strong example of proactive safety management. In December 2023, the city introduced a 30km/h speed limit on major distributor roads to enhance safety and livability without expanding infrastructure. The initiative involved reconfiguring 140 traffic lights, installing 4,500 signs, and repainting 200km of road markings — a clear case of anticipating rather than reacting to risks.

Technology: Modern traffic intelligence platforms powered by real-time probe data and geospatial overlays allow agencies to:

- Monitor congestion and travel speeds at network scale
- Map and communicate closures, detours, and hazards dynamically
- Coordinate across agencies (police, EMS, fire, public works) through shared dashboards
- Provide accurate traveler and responder information before, during, and after events
- Measure operational performance and compliance in real time

In the case of Amsterdam, urban mobility platforms enable transportation agencies to manage congestion and safety without large-scale infrastructure expansion by providing tools to:

- Analyze speed and crash patterns to identify high-risk corridors (as in Amsterdam's 30km/h rollout)
- Model long-term impacts of speed and flow changes using GIS-based scenario planning
- Integrate real-time probe data for dynamic traffic monitoring and compliance checks
- Coordinate across agencies (transport, police, emergency services) through shared geospatial dashboards
- Simulate interventions such as signal timing adjustments or speed enforcement before implementation
- Leverage predictive analytics to anticipate congestion surges and optimize public transport priority

Outcome: In doing so, we see a unified operational approach to disruption management, enabling:

- Faster, data-informed decision-making during emergencies
- Improved public safety and emergency response times, meeting NFPA and local standards
- Reduced congestion and driver frustration during planned events
- Transparent post-event analysis to refine future response plans

Performance Indicators:

Response time reduction: Up to 90% of calls are meeting target response times, with predictive redeployment cutting arrival times by up to 18 minutes in critical cases.

Safety improvement: Amsterdam saw an 11% drop in crashes and 15% fewer pedestrian/cyclist incidents.

Conclusion

To address the growing complexity of mobility challenges, public agencies must move beyond fragmented systems and embrace a unified, data-driven approach. This requires:

- Investing in interoperable data platforms to enable cross-jurisdictional and cross-agency collaboration
- Moving from hardware-only monitoring to an approach that combines existing sensors with floating car data, closing coverage gaps and providing network-wide visibility
- Adopting agile procurement and implementation models to accelerate innovation and reduce time-to-value

- Aligning with proven data providers to minimize integration risk and enhance reliability

Investing in traffic intelligence today delivers long-term benefits in environmental safety, funding efficiency, and operational performance. The evolution of AI and traffic intelligence is reshaping how transportation agencies predict, plan, and respond to mobility challenges — moving from reactive to proactive strategies. Over the next decade, trusted partnerships between data providers, technology integrators, and governments will define the future of smart mobility, creating systems that are inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

Where to Start?

- **Clarify priority use cases:** Identify the top mobility challenges you need to solve first (e.g., congestion hotspots, incident response, or corridor performance).
- **Assess current data coverage:** Understand gaps in visibility across your network and where floating car data can complement existing sensors.
- **Select a traffic intelligence partner:** Choose a provider with proven data quality and integration capabilities.
- **Pilot on one or two corridors:** Test the approach in a controlled environment to demonstrate impact and build momentum.

The next decade will be defined by partnerships between governments, technology integrators, and data providers, creating inclusive, resilient, and sustainable mobility systems. Now is the time to take the first step.

Sources

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MESSAGE FROM THE SPONSOR

TomTom provides high-quality traffic and location data that helps drivers, pedestrians, city planners, carmakers, and policymakers tackle traffic challenges and make informed decisions for a better tomorrow.

Our anonymized floating car data and map content support use cases ranging from congestion analysis and signal optimization to safety studies, event management, and resilience planning for events and emergencies.

Through products such as TomTom Traffic Stats, Origin Destination Analysis, Junction Analytics, Route Monitoring, Area Analytics, and historical traffic volumes, agencies and integrators can work with real-time and historical information on speeds, travel times, and routing behavior without deploying additional roadside hardware. The same data and tools feed many of the examples discussed in this paper, delivered directly or through partners.

TomTom works with transport authorities, consultants, and ITS solution providers worldwide to turn movement data into practical evidence for decisions.

To learn more about TomTom traffic analytics for the public sector, visit: https://www.tomtom.com/tomtom-traffic/

About the Analysts

Remi Letemple, Senior Research Analyst, IDC Government Insights

Remi Letemple leads IDC's Worldwide Sustainable Transportation and Smart Vehicles Strategies service, where he provides strategic guidance and thought leadership on the future of mobility and transportation. Operating at a global level, he is recognized as a subject matter expert in smart mobility and transportation technologies — including connected, autonomous, shared, and electric mobility — enabled by software-defined vehicle (SDV) architectures, over-the-air (OTA) updates, cloud and edge platforms, and AI (including generative AI).

His research also spans road, rail, and air-based transportation systems, with a focus on helping public sector leaders and technology providers design intelligent, sustainable transportation infrastructures. He advises on the adoption of smart IT solutions such as AI and cloud platforms to support digital transformation in mobility.

He also heads IDC's Worldwide Government Industry Intelligence service, delivering actionable market perspectives by industry subsegments, government processes, technology categories, and regions. This helps marketers, sales leaders, product managers, and channel professionals accelerate decision-making and go-to-market strategies.

Alison Brooks, Ph.D., Research Vice President — Worldwide Public Safety

As Research Vice President for IDC's Worldwide and US Public Safety practice, Dr. Alison Brooks focuses on public safety and first responder research and advisory services, with a specialization in Smart Cities and communities. Dr. Brooks' research provides detailed analysis of the digital transformation of public safety and first responders, covering topics such as digital evidence management, integrated physical security solutions, intelligence-led policing, advanced analytics, video surveillance and visualization, first responder communications, and alternative policing frameworks. Dr. Brooks has held a number of positions with IDC over the past 15 years, previously working as IDC Canada's director of public sector research.

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