

**Emerging “Smart Growth” Community Designed with a Transportation Infrastructure
& a built-in Mobility Management Association**

NORTH NATOMAS TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

North Natomas TMA Mission Statement:

To promote efficient accessibility and foster improved air quality through the cooperation of employers, residents, developers, landowners, and public agencies.

Introduction

This paper presents the incorporation of the North Natomas Transportation Management Association (TMA), a mobility management association, into the “Smart Growth” North Natomas Community, Sacramento, California, USA. The 1994 North Natomas Community Plan (NNCP) was designed with a transportation infrastructure integrated into an emerging new urban residential and commercial, retail and industrial development community. Formation of the community-based, Transportation Management Association for North Natomas is one of the action steps of the NNCP to meet the trip and emission reduction goals and to integrate mobility management. The TMA is the first active TMA in the United States that is truly community based and was formed in advance of the development of the North Natomas community. As such, it will be a proactive force in the implementation of alternate transportation usage before congestion problems arise. Mobility measures, trip reduction strategies and positive rewards support sustainable single occupancy trip reduction and regional air quality pollutant reduction.

The TMA is a private non-profit organization and the prime transportation product and service provider for the new developing urban community. The North Natomas TMA serves both the residential, developer and business community. Partly, the potential future success for the TMA to reduce vehicle trip and air emissions is due to the inclusion of the transportation infrastructure into the new land use development. In addition, creating a stable source of funding through a tax revenue source for the TMA allowed for effective creative products and services to be implemented to meet the mobility needs of the dynamic growing community. The role of the TMA simply stated is that "We are the silver thread that weaves the cloth together for transportation mobility".

**Applicability of a Transportation Management Association to other “Smart Growth”
Communities**

New and improved transit services, financial incentives to encourage bicycle use, walking and increase shuttle/transit ridership and teleworking are afterthoughts in the principle design of a “Smart Growth” community, with little or no detail as how they will be implemented. The integration of a model TMA into a “Smart Growth” community plan ensures the implementation of these market-based mobility strategies. The TMA mobility management programs tend to be more cost effective than highway expansion and should be implemented foremost.

The resolution of a TMA can be part of the policy development in the planning of a “Smart Growth” community and applicable to any entity worldwide that governs land use planning processes.

Vehicle trip and air emission regulations, special tax districts and private and public investments to support “Smart Growth” can be justified when all mobility strategies are implemented and the transportation infrastructure is completed, at that time their full potential can be realized.

The North Natomas Community Overview

The North Natomas Community is the product of a far-reaching vision, excellent planning and now first-class implementation. Residents, environmentalists, planners, developers, business owners and a host of other interested people and organizations conceived the North Natomas Community Plan – the blueprint for this area – through decades of collaboration. The result is an area with the potential to be one of the most “livable communities” in the nation.

The Community Plan envisions a new urban form for North Natomas that includes a well-integrated mixture of residential, employment, commercial and civic uses, interdependent on quality transit service and a radial network of connections linking activity centers with streets, transit routes, and linear parkways with pedestrian and bike trails. A Town Center, located at the heart of the community, serves as the hub of the circulation web and provides a sense of place to the community's residents, workers, and visitors. The Town Center includes civic uses, higher impact Regional Park uses, high-density residential, and intense employment centers, anchored at both ends by commercial centers.

The community is interdependent on transit; high-density residential uses and intense employment generators near transit provide transit riders for each of the light rail stations and bus transit centers. The community is designed with a web of transit services, including a future light rail system with six stations, major bus and shuttle service. In addition, the community area will have linear parkways with pedestrian trails, on-street bike lanes along all major streets and off-street bike trails along all drainage canals. The area is also served by two interstate freeways- north south I-5 and east-west Interstate-80. The Sacramento International Airport is within three miles of the plan area.

The Employment Centers, located at the light rail stations and along the freeways, are mixed-use centers consisting of primary employment generators and secondary support retail, industrial, and residential uses, to serve the employees and employers of the center. Like elsewhere in the plan, integration of the many land uses helps decrease the distance and travel time between them.

The Background and Role of the North Natomas TMA

The 1994 North Natomas Community Plan (NNCP) requires development in North Natomas to comply with the Federal and State Clean Air Acts. In order to comply with these laws, the plan states the following goals:

- Reduce vehicle trips 35 percent below the single occupant vehicle baseline, and
- Reduce reactive organic gases (ROG) emissions by 35 percent community-plan wide.

Non-residential uses are required to reduce trips and emissions by 50 percent. In addition, residential uses are required to contribute to compliance by reducing trips and emissions by 20 percent.

The North Natomas Transportation Management Association assists developers, employers, residents and others with the implementation of mobility management strategies in support of the community goals and objectives. Each development is required to submit a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) that demonstrates how the trip and emission reduction goals are

proposed to be met. The City, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, and several developers worked together to create a menu of options and each option's relative value at achieving the trip and emission reduction goals. One of the requirements of each TMP is participation in the North Natomas Transportation Management Association.

Formation of the North Natomas Transportation Management Association

Formation of a community-based, transportation management association for North Natomas is one of the action steps of the NNCP to meet the trip and emission reduction goals. In December 1998, the North Natomas TMA was incorporated and in February 1999, a Board of Directors was formed and Bylaws adopted. Currently, members of the Board include residential developers, homebuilders, and residents, non-residential developers, and existing businesses in both the City and County portions of North Natomas. In addition, the TMA coordinates with Regional Transit, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD), the City's Alternative Modes Coordinator, Natomas Manager, and Special Districts staff, Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), and other Sacramento area TMAs to accomplish its goals.

Formation of the TMA Community Facilities District (CFD)

To accomplish the goals of the TMA, a stable source of funding was needed, so the concept of the TMA Community Facilities District (CFD) was proposed. Establishing a district with annual assessments, has generated a firm funding source to be used to provide the transportation and air quality services needed to meet the trip and emission reduction goals of the North Natomas Community Plan. The City has a contractual agreement with the TMA to use the assessments to provide the transportation and air quality services.

TMA CFD Funding

The North Natomas CFD No. 99-01 (TMA CFD) was formed June 29, 1999. An annual report is prepared each year that includes the tax roll for the CFD. The annual report (on file in the Public Works - Special Districts Office) also provides a background of the CFD, current status of land uses within the district, maximum special taxes for each CFD parcel, and the calculation of that fiscal year's special tax levy. The total Fiscal Year (FY) Maximum Special Tax Levy is \$283,499 with each taxable parcel levied at 100 percent of the maximum annual special tax. For comparison, the levy for FY 2002/03 was \$229,926 and FY 2001/2002 - \$197,209, FY 2000/01 - \$135,287, and for FY 1999/ 2000 - \$74,941. The Maximum Tax Levy is \$18 per year per single-family unit, \$14 per year per multi-family unit, \$0.03 per square foot for industrial, \$0.06 per square foot for office, \$0.10 per square foot for retail, and \$200 per acre for sports complex uses. The administration costs of the CFD for the first five years of the TMA's operation will be covered by the North Natomas Transit Fee, a development impact fee that pays for transit services, including the formation costs of the TMA.

TMA Successes and Challenges

The year 1999/2000 was challenging for the TMA. The TMA Board adopted a Five-Year Business Plan to chart the course of the organization with projected revenues and expenses. The revenues primarily come from the CFD annual assessments, annual membership dues from the County businesses until such time they annex into the City and the CFD, grants, and other sources of funding. Tasks completed and services provided with the revenue include: hired an Executive Director; received formation funding from City of Sacramento, Sacramento International Airport, and Buzz Oates Enterprises; received grant money from the Air District and Sacramento County to conduct incentive promotions; developed a web site, TMA logo, and other marketing information; advocated for the Downtown Natomas Airport light rail extension and express bus service to North Natomas; and provided free shuttle service, using the Natomas Marketplace shuttle.

In year 2000/2001, the TMA contracted with a consultant, Erik Ferguson, to conduct the Baseline Travel Survey for North Natomas Residents and Employees. The results of the survey will be used to gauge the success of transportation and air quality programs initiated by the TMA and others to meet the trip and emission reduction goals of the North Natomas Community Plan and the Clean Air Acts.

The accomplishments of the TMA in year 2000/2001 convey the organization's shift from formation efforts into providing services and products to North Natomas residents and employees. Tasks completed and services provided:

- ◆ conducted baseline travel survey;
- ◆ produced a residential brochure;
- ◆ provided bicycle and carpool subsidies;
- ◆ received grants from TEA-21 and SACOG to implement baseline survey and subsidy program;
- ◆ created residential database of over 3,000 households;
- ◆ formed a Bikeways/Trails Subcommittee to help design the Natomas Master Bikeway Plan;
- ◆ launched the TMA web site;
- ◆ advocated for the Downtown Natomas Airport (DNA) light rail extension and express bus service to North Natomas.

TMA Baseline Travel Survey

The TMA conducted a baseline travel survey of North Natomas residents and employees in year 2001. Residents were contacted directly by telephone. Employees were contacted via interoffice mail through their employers. The response rate to both surveys was more than adequate to determine an initial baseline against which future progress can be measured in subsequent years.

ROG emissions reductions for both residents and employees included the following:

- ◆ Carpoolers received a 50% emissions reduction, transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians a 100% emissions reduction.
- ◆ Compressed workweeks received a 20% emission reduction, flexible work hours a 10% emissions reduction.
- ◆ Telecommuters received a 20% emissions reduction if they telecommuted once per week or more, 5%, if they telecommuted less than once per week.

Peak Period Travel

Peak period travel reductions were the same as ROG emissions reductions, with the following addition:

- ◆ The peak travel period was defined as 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Travel to and from work outside these peak travel periods was granted a 100% peak period travel reduction

Calculated peak period travel reductions were as follows:

- ◆ Residents achieved a 26% peak period travel reduction (there is no goal for residential peak period trip reduction under the City of Sacramento's TSM Ordinance)
- ◆ Employees achieved a 59% peak period travel reduction, greatly exceeding their 35% goal

Calculated ROG emissions reductions were as follows:

- ◆ Residents achieved a 17% ROG emissions reduction, just short of their 20% goal
- ◆ Employees achieved a 13% ROG emissions reduction, far short of their 50% goal

North Natomas employers and employees achieved their peak period trip reduction target. Residents expressed the most interest in alternatives to driving alone, especially light rail and bicycling. Office employees may provide opportunities for telecommuting. Retail employees were most likely to use transit and to live and work in the Natomas area. Distribution employees work a 24-hour schedule, making the avoidance of peak period.

In year 2002, the TMA applied the baseline transportation survey information to develop mobility strategies and projects to meet the trip and emission reduction goals of the North Natomas Community Plan. Products and services include:

- ◆ a Community Shuttle pilot in partnership with developers, City of Sacramento and Paratransit, Inc.;
- ◆ a Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV) pilot program in partnership with SMUD and developers;
- ◆ NEV access through Discovery Park in partnership with Parks and Recreation;
- ◆ an Interactive Transportation Kiosk product;
- ◆ a "Walk to School" pilot program in partnership with Natomas Park Elementary School;
- ◆ continue the subsidized start-up of commuter bicycling for residents;
- ◆ established a residential Mobility Committee;
- ◆ oversee development of the Natomas Bikeways/Trail Master Plan;
- ◆ develop a Five Year Business Plan;
- ◆ promote teleworking;
- ◆ secure additional revenue and
- ◆ advocated for the Downtown Natomas Airport (DNA) light rail extension and express bus service.
- Received the ACT Organizational Leadership Group Award - Natomas Bikeways/Trails Committee
- Presenter and panelist at the International Symposium on Kansai Region's Transportation and Town Planning, November 2002

For Year 2003, the TMA conducted the following new tasks and mobility activities:

- ◆ Implemented the bi-annual travel survey to evaluate programs and track vehicle trip and air emission goal;
- ◆ advanced the pilot Community Shuttle program into a route and dial a ride system and increased ridership;
- ◆ promoted and increased the bike subsidy participation;
- ◆ designed a new web site to support and facilitate services and programs;
- ◆ promoted the expansion of the Interactive Kiosk program regionally and
- ◆ successfully advocated and secured the Truxel DNA (Downtown to the Airport) light rail corridor and express bus service.
- Received the ACT Community Award – "Walk to School" program
- Presenter and panelist at the International ACT Conference, Montreal, Canada, May 2003

Conclusions

The fast growing North Natomas community is overwhelming the funding resources available to the TMA to impact travel behavior. The programs the TMA offers are completely full due to success and if no further funding is found, the TMA may stagnate. Two to three thousand new residents every year is making the marketing efforts impracticable in cost to be effective. The Community Access and Subscription Shuttles are filled to capacity and the challenge is securing added funding to expand the system. The population in North Natomas could merit at least five

more shuttles on a route system. The “Walk to School” program at the one local elementary does not have enough adult volunteers to supervise all the children who wish to walk to school. Transit service is insufficient. The bike and pedestrian pathways are not networked yet, since the community is not fully developed. The lesson learned is it takes additional money than originally anticipated to provide quality transportation services to the North Natomas population. In the Sacramento region, the TMA is the model for future new developments and now with the knowledge of increased funding, the potential for success is good.

Challenges of the TMA for the next few years include:

- ◆ meeting the transportation demands of the fast growing population of residents and employees;
- ◆ advocating for strong, transit friendly projects that comply with the community plan; and
- ◆ providing valuable transportation and air quality services to all residents and employers in North Natomas.

Closing:

Nonetheless, the TMA has a formidable task. The area is expected to generate 165,000 trips over 5 years and 700,000 trips at the build-out of the community in 2022. The TMA will seize the initiative; do what needs to be done, continually seek to understand our members needs; to meet the objectives of the community plan, recognize valuable partnerships; to ensure collaboration, work hard and take time to celebrate our successes and accomplishments.