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IMPLEMENTING TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS:
THE FLORIDA EXPERIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

Major transportation demand management initiatives were undertaken in the United States in the early and mid-1970s in response to the requirements of the Clean Air Act and as a result of the energy shortages of the seventies. In 1975, the U.S. Department of Transportation codified these programs by requiring the preparation and updating of regional transportation systems management plans. In recent years, widespread traffic congestion has created a renewed interest in transportation demand management.

Recently, TDM has received a great deal of attention in the state of Florida. Growth management laws and widespread traffic congestion are the impetus for a renewed interest in this burgeoning field. The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida and the Florida Department of Transportation have become a leading resource for the promotion and implementation of transportation demand management programs in the southeastern United States and has embarked upon a major initiative to educate the public and private sectors on the benefit of transportation demand management through various projects in the TDM area. These project include the formation of transportation management associations, the organization of a regional demand management agency in the Tampa Bay area, and the implementation of a statewide program to promote TDM to the citizens of the state of Florida.

This paper describes recent TDM programs undertaken by CUTR and the Florida DOT and addresses the role of a major state university being used as a catalyst for the implementation of innovative transportation solutions. It also emphasizes the importance of a cooperative approach to implementation, which encourages all elements of the public and private sectors to participate in the development of a shared vision of a program they can enthusiastically support.

INTRODUCTION

Major transportation demand management (TDM) initiatives were undertaken in the United States in the early and mid-1970s in response to the requirements of the Clean Air Act and as a result of the energy shortages of the 1970s. In 1975, the U.S. Department of Transportation codified these programs by requiring the preparation and updating of regional transportation systems management plans. Now, as a result of the recently passed U.S. Clean Air Act, the world energy situation, and widespread traffic congestion, there is a renewed interest in TDM.

Florida is in the process of implementing a far-reaching growth management initiative that will have major implications for years to come. An important component of this initiative deals with transportation. Recent years have seen the inability of investment in new transportation infrastructure to keep up with the demands of an increasing and active population. Florida has embarked upon a comprehensive approach to growth management that will require a dedicated partnership between all levels of government and the private sector in order to meet current and future transportation needs and enhance liveability in urban areas of our state.

Florida has been identified as a high growth state. The majority of this growth is occurring in low density suburban areas, resulting in a rate of land urbanization that is far outracing our population growth (Governors Task Force on Urban Growth Patterns, 1989). Growth in transportation demand has been particularly dramatic in Florida, where large in-migrations have accelerated travel demand increases beyond the national experience.

As part of Florida's growth management initiative, local governments are now required to adhere to a new state policy known as concurrency. There is evidence that nearly every community in this fast-growing state is far behind in expanding its road network to meet the needs of the population. In the past, the lack of roads has done little to dissuade local officials from approving development permits. The concurrency requirement will prohibit local government from permitting new developments unless adequate infrastructure is in place to support growth. As a result, the development community is being forced to deal with issues such as adequate public facility ordinances, impact fees, concurrency and transportation demand management.

The construction of new roadways is only part of the solution to the problem of burgeoning transportation demand. An often neglected tactic is transportation demand management (TDM). Developers, community planners, corporation management, and members of local governments have expressed a renewed interest in this area. To not only accommodate growth but to meet our future transportation needs as well, the Florida Department of Transportation has embarked upon a major initiative to educate the public and private sectors on the benefits of TDM. With the assistance of the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), a variety of State agencies, transportation management associations, and existing rideshare programs, the Florida DOT has undertaken a massive program that is designed to generate enthusiasm for TDM measures through the creation of public-private partnerships to meet the state's transportation needs.

GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON URBAN GROWTH PATTERNS

To address Florida's rapid growth and its related problems, the Governor's Task Force on Urban Growth Patterns was appointed. In June 1989, the Task Force issued its final report, which will form an important resource for the State's planning policy for years to come. As part of a rational policy toward development in urban areas, the Task Force report noted that:

emphasis must be given to integrated transportation planning ... if Florida's urban areas are to preserve their urban mobility as they continue to grow. Non-structural approaches to increasing transportation capacity, especially programs that reduce peak traffic demand, should be encouraged.

The following are specific recommendations of the Task Force:

- Transportation demand management should be incorporated into the metropolitan planning organization transportation planning process. TDM coordinators should be designated on the MPO professional staffs to coordinate the MPO's participation in local TDM activities such as transportation management associations. It was further recommended that Florida Statutes be amended to require TDM as part of the local transportation improvement plans.
- Transportation demand management should be a required component of every Development of Regional Impact, and Florida Statutes should be amended to require that planning for and funding of adequate TDM measures should be a part of applications for development approval.

- A statewide clearinghouse should be established for information and technical support on transportation demand management and transportation management associations. The purpose of the Clearinghouse will be to provide support to local governments to encourage the formation of transportation management associations in Florida's urban areas and provide support to local governments in their efforts to include TDM measures in their transportation planning process.
- The State of Florida should provide seed monies for the start-up of transportation management associations.
- TMAs should be given State authority to operate shuttle systems in their particular service area.
- Judicial principles restricting use of impact fees to capital projects should be altered to allow their use for operating costs associated with TDM programs, including the funding of transportation management associations.
- The costs of establishing TMAs should be allowable as a credit to impact fees.

TDM ACTIVITIES IN FLORIDA

Gold Coast Commuter Services

The Florida Department of Transportation is encouraging the development of transportation demand management programs in Florida. Several of these programs are currently operating, as described below.

In southeast Florida, the Florida DOT has established the Gold Coast Commuter Services office, which provides "user friendly" commuter services in Miami, Fort Lauderdale and the West Palm Beach areas. This regional commuter assistance program was created to assist in maintaining the mobility of southeast Florida in conjunction with the reconstruction of Interstate 95. Gold Coast's services include transit information for the area's three bus systems, for the Tri-Rail Commuter Service, and for Metro-Rail/Metromover in Miami. In addition, Gold Coast aggressively promotes ridesharing services throughout the region and provides daily construction updates and emergency vehicle control on I-95.

Bay Area Commuter Services

In the Tampa Bay area, several major TDM initiatives have been undertaken by the Florida DOT, Center for Urban Transportation Research and local agencies. The Florida DOT contracted with CUTR for the planning and implementation of a regional commuter assistance program in the Tampa Bay area, known as Bay Area Commuter Services, Inc. This non-profit regional commuter assistance program is being created under the auspices of the Florida Department of Transportation to work with Bay area TMAs to provide

rideshare matching services and marketing services, to develop TDM actions such as vanpooling, carpooling, and pedestrian and bicycle improvements, and to implement other TDM strategies. The initial efforts to establish this regional commuter assistance program consisted of substantial analysis of various institutional models, resulting in a recommended organizational structure. Local governments were involved, primarily in an advisory role, with CUTR staff actively guiding the project. The evolution of Bay Area Commuter Services has taken longer than expected. It is important to realize that a project of this magnitude might not be operational overnight and will require the consensus of all players, public and private. Based on this experience, it has become apparent that implementation of TDM organizations proceeds much more smoothly when local public and private organizations play an active role in all organizational decisions. This approach is fully described later in this paper under the Tallahassee TMA discussion.

Westshore TMA

The Tampa Bay area has also witnessed the evolution of one of Florida's three operational transportation management associations. The West Shore TMA operates in a highly concentrated urban area comprising over 40,000 employees. Presently, there are limited opportunities for expanding existing roadways in the Westshore area, and, as a result, local businesses working through the Westshore Alliance have recognized the need to get the most out of existing transportation infrastructure. In addition to traditional ridesharing, the TMA is promoting pedestrian improvements throughout the area and is promoting noon-time shuttle services connecting employment centers with shopping/restaurant areas.

The Westshore TMA recently played a very important role in preserving Sunday bus service for service workers employed by numerous hotels in the district. Because of budgetary shortfalls, the local transit authority has been curtailing service, particularly Sunday service. Faced with the prospect of elimination of Sunday service on which numerous hotels were dependent to enable their employees to get to work, the TMA organized the hotel industry, convincing them to adopt uniform work shift hours. This grass roots solution enabled the transit authority to meet the work trip needs of these workers with a single run, rather than the several runs that were previously required to serve the varied work shifts in the area.

Central Florida TMA / Downtown Orlando TMA

The Orlando area has seen the evolution of two area TMAs. A TMA was recently organized in the vicinity of the University of Central Florida and the Central Florida Research Park. Formally created in December 1989, the University Activity Center Transportation Authority (UACTA) is performing detailed market research studies to identify the specific commuting needs of the area. This TMA has convinced the University to shift class hours by twenty minutes, thus shifting vehicles off the roads during the peak congestion period. Florida's newest operational TMA is in the downtown Orlando area. The Downtown Orlando TMA was created under the auspices of the Orlando Chamber of Commerce and is working with businesses in the downtown Orlando area to identify the specific needs of the commuting public.

A key element of all of these successful programs has been the active involvement and participation of all elements of the community in the total development of the

organization. It has become apparent that successful implementation requires the inclusion of all interest groups from the very outset of program planning.

Tallahassee Transportation Management Association

Recently, the Florida DOT and the Governor's Energy Office contracted with CUTR for the planning and implementation of a transportation management association in Tallahassee. CUTR has joined forces with Florida State University to implement this TMA as recommended by the comprehensive plan for the city of Tallahassee.

The evolution of the Tallahassee TMA is based upon the steering committee approach, which was utilized by one of the authors while at the New Jersey Department of Transportation during the initial formation of the Cross County Connection Transportation Management Association in a five-county area in Southern New Jersey. It reflects the deeply-held conviction that the implementation of TDM programs can be successful only if local ownership and advocacy are nurtured.

To initiate the Tallahassee TMA, CUTR with the Florida Department of Transportation, the Tallahassee-Leon County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Florida State University and the Governor's Energy Office organized a one-day transportation conference that included presentations from TMA experts from throughout the country. Attendees included developers, area business owners, legislative representatives, government officials, neighborhood association representatives, and others. The purpose of the conference was to expose the public and private sectors in Tallahassee to the benefits of a transportation management association and to encourage them to support the TMA concept.

The conference generated substantial enthusiasm and resulted in the formation of a grass roots steering committee comprised of conference attendees. The committee, which is representative of more than fifty public and private sector members, will provide a forum to identify and discuss issues of concern and jointly recommend public-private responses. Operating under the guidance of the Center for Urban Transportation Research and Florida State University, the committee will provide the input necessary for the design of an organizational framework, a marketing program, and a work plan for the transportation management association.

Florida State University graduate students, under the direction of CUTR professional staff, are currently acting as staff for the TMA steering committee. Subcommittees have been set up and each steering committee member has been asked to participate on a subcommittee to design the framework for the TMA. The subcommittees and their objectives are as follows:

- The **Goals and Objectives** subcommittee will strive to reach a consensus among committee members and to establish a mission statement for the transportation management association.
- The **Organizational** subcommittee is developing TMA bylaws and incorporation papers, a funding mechanism, and an organizational framework for the TMA. This subcommittee is also working with the Goals and Objectives subcommittee to develop a detailed work plan for the TMA and a service area for the TMA.
- The **Data Gathering** subcommittee is developing an attitude survey of area employers. The results of this survey will be useful in developing a detailed

work plan for the TMA and will create the enthusiasm for the TMA among employees in the area.

- The **Marketing** subcommittee is developing promotional material for the TMA and a detailed program to attract members to the association. Committee members will work with University representatives to design letterhead, a membership brochure and a newsletter for the organization.

The steering committee structure will allow the public and private sectors to be involved in the formation of the Tallahassee TMA from the very beginning and creates the impetus for a true public-private partnership. This grass roots support will be instrumental in the success of the TMA. Development of the TMA has also created a partnership between by Florida State University, located in Tallahassee, and the University of South Florida, located in Tampa, that will allow these two major academic institutions the opportunity to work together to educate the public and private sectors.

Integration of Commute Alternatives into the Growth Management Process

As a result of the recently passed U.S. Clean Air Act, six areas of non-attainment have been identified in Florida. To address this problem, the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation has embarked on a program that includes transportation management measures such as roadway improvements, new mass transit routes, car and vanpooling, bus shelters, bus turnout lanes, transportation management plans for developers for VMT reduction, and other measures to limit or restrict vehicle use during periods of

peak use, such as road use charges, tolls, parking surcharges, or vehicle registration programs.

If the full benefits of these TDM measures are to be realized, it is important that implementation be made as easy as possible. The Florida DOT recently contracted with CUTR to promote the benefits of transportation demand management and to ease in its implementation. The project, entitled "Integration of Commute Alternatives into the Growth Management Process," will assist the State in meeting concurrency requirements and air quality objectives.

As part of this project, CUTR has written two handbooks and will be presenting a series of workshops, producing a TDM video, and producing a statewide TDM conference. The handbooks will be the basis of a series of 40, one-day workshops to be held throughout the state to educate the public and private sectors on the benefits of TDM. The workshops will be taught by CUTR staff with the assistance of staff from cooperating Florida universities. A TDM video will also be produced that will target employees of businesses and other participants in TDM programs. Also, a statewide TDM conference will be held as a forum for the exchange of experiences to generate innovative ideas for implementing and promoting TDM and developing innovative solutions to Florida mobility problems. It is anticipated that the results of this program will be the widespread application of TDM techniques on a statewide basis.

TMA Clearinghouse

Through funding from the Florida DOT and the Governor's Energy Office, CUTR is establishing a TMA Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse will assist the Florida DOT in the establishment, promotion and efficiency of area TMAs and commuter assistance programs. It will complement, foster the development of, and assure the existence of one central resource to area TMAs and commuter assistance program. In the state of Florida, there is currently no central source of information on TMAs that can readily provide a wide variety of resources to the large number of professionals, businesses, and government entities that have expressed an interest in this field. CUTR, through the Clearinghouse, will implement a coordinated approach to provide up-to-date information to TMAs, commuter assistance programs, developers, and citizens of the state of Florida.

Other TDM Projects

A variety of other TDM projects are planned or have been held throughout the state, including a Suburban Mobility Initiatives conference in Jacksonville and a TMA conference in Key West. Related activities are planned for Miami and Pensacola.

CONCLUSIONS

The Florida DOT has developed a comprehensive approach to addressing its mobility and congestion problems through implementation of a variety of TDM programs. Its approach is unique in that it utilizes the University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research as a catalyst for the promotion of new programs. The expertise and objectivity offered by a research center housed at a major state university have made

it possible to bring public and private decisionmakers to the table where traditional government may not have succeeded. Other states may want to explore using educational and research centers for the implementation of innovative transportation solutions.

Florida's and CUTR's experience with TDM programs in the state have emphasized the importance of grass roots involvement of all interested parties from the earliest stages of development. Local ownership and advocacy are instrumental to the success of these programs. Through a substantial educational and marketing approach, the Florida DOT, CUTR, and other Florida universities are making every effort to build TDM into the consciousness of the community.