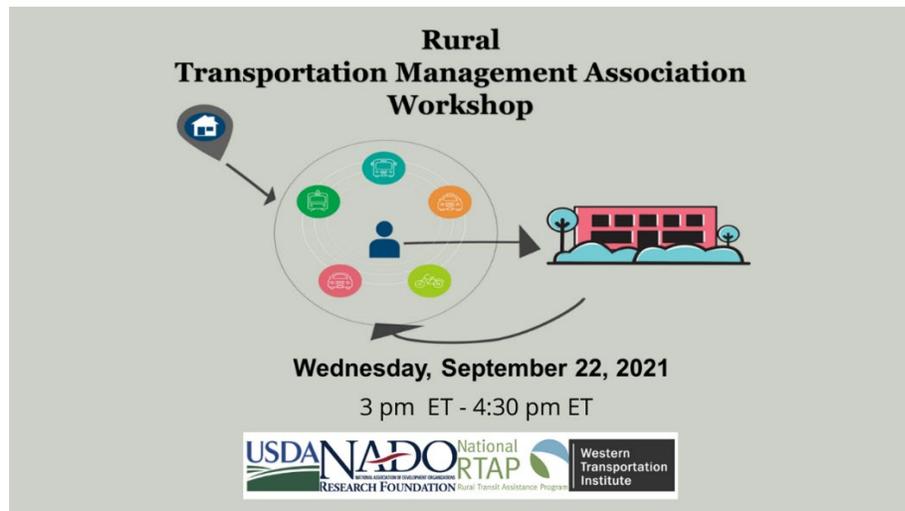


National RTAP

Rural Transportation Management Association (TMA) Workshop Companion Document



Prepared by: Michele Brooks | Vice President, TransAction Associates
mbrooks@transactionassoc.com | 781.895.1100 | transactionassoc.com | tcsuttles.com

National RTAP | nationalrtap.org | 888.589.6821 | info@nationalrtap.org

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Introduction:

This workshop is for rural operators, employers, and stakeholders interested in how to expand transportation programs in their region. It will explore how Transportation Management Associations work and how they can benefit rural areas, including how they help employers provide reliable transportation options that can increase transit ridership and other shared-ride modes.

Challenges around Rural Transportation:

- Public transportation services are limited due to:
 - Lack of availability of funding
 - Logistical challenges of covering large areas
 - Employment clusters, where they exist, are difficult to access
- Absence of first mile/last mile transportation services to connect from transportation hubs directly to housing and to employment.
- Infrequent or non-existent transportation services after 6:00 PM and on weekends limiting the types of jobs and shifts that can be accessed.
- Private transportation resources (such as employer, human services, or community-based vans) could improve access to options, however a lack of coordination of the regional transportation assets makes it hard to take advantage of any underutilized capacity.
- Difficulty in getting accurate real-time transportation information that would help to increase participation with available funding directed toward service provision, as opposed to marketing and outreach.

What Is a Transportation Management Association?

Transportation Management Associations began to form in the 1980s. They were largely member-based, regionally specific, and focused around implementing Transportation Demand Management strategies that addressed a problem unique to that area. Over time they have become more varied and complex in order to be responsive to the different evolving environments where they operate.

Generally speaking, a Transportation Management Association (TMA) is a formally organized public-private partnership between businesses, communities, representatives of state and local government, and stakeholders who join together for the purpose of addressing transportation issues in a specific region. Often TMAs work to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, and to improve transportation options in a defined region. They can vary considerably in the way that they look and operate depending on their members, the region in which they operate, their funding resources, and their specific mission.

Some common characteristics of TMAs:

Goals:

- Decrease traffic congestion
- Improve mobility
- Facilitate local economic development
- Develop local transportation infrastructure, services, and programs

- Reduce mobile source emissions
- Serve as a conduit between communities and businesses to facilitate compliance with zoning ordinances
- Coordinate existing resources

Focus:

- Establishing transportation networks
- Advocating for resources and legislation that benefit the region in which they operate
- Coordinating first mile/last mile connections, often by partnering to share the expense of providing shuttle services
- Offering commuter services such as a carpool matching database, an emergency ride home program, vanpool programs, active commuting incentives, and more
- Marketing programs to raise awareness of the availability of transportation options including a website that can serve as a central location for regional transportation information
- Working closely with public agencies and stakeholders to advance common goals
- Applying for grants to secure funds for program development
- Holding regular meetings brings the group together and fosters a close working relationship that ensures that progress is being made in all of the key areas outlined in the workplan
- Keeping members informed about key issues nationally, in the state, and in the region

Programs:

- Employing staff who can implement a workplan and achieve common goals
- Ridematching to form carpools, often through a database or cloud-based commuter tool
- Providing an Emergency Ride Home Program that guarantees people who carpool, vanpool, take transit, bike or walk, a ride home in an emergency at no cost to the individual
- Assisting with vanpool formation
- Promoting active commuting options
- Establishing shared shuttles to fill gaps in existing service
- Offering Incentive programs
- Assisting employers in implementing pre-tax transit benefits



TMA Programs Figure

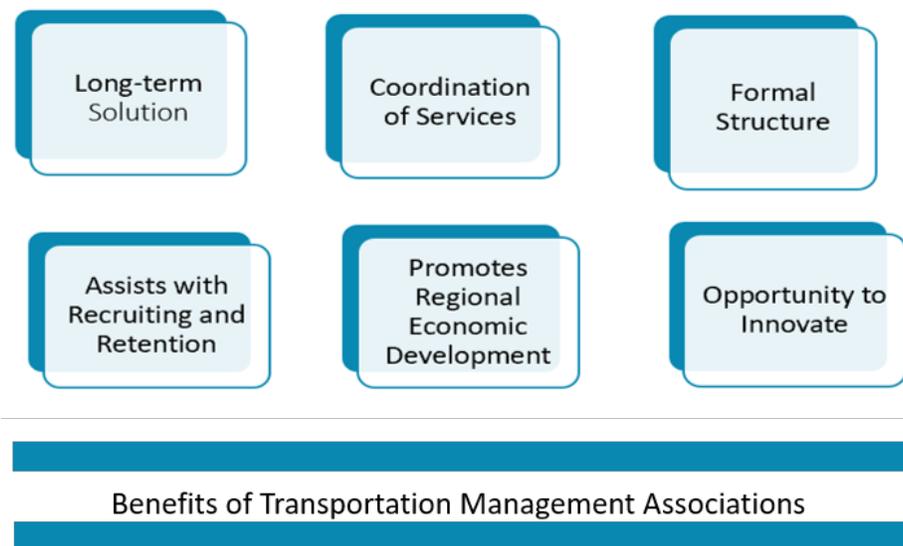
Examples of Innovative TMA Programs:

- Shared Dispatch Call Center for Council on Aging vans and regional transportation services
- Vanpool programs with vans owned by the TMA to reduce costs
- Surveys and research projects

Benefits of Establishing a Transportation Management Association:

A TMA can be a long-term solution for maintaining coordinated transportation services in a region by providing a formal structure for collaboration and cost-sharing of shared solutions. It creates a central focus on transportation issues. Programs offered by TMAs help businesses to recruit new employees and retain valued employees with low-cost transportation benefits.

In recent years many have expanded their mission to incorporate programs for residents of the communities they serve. This can have the effect of removing silos and refocusing the transportation conversation into a broader context of individuals who need to travel and the places they need to go. It can also make the transportation network more efficient by moving people both to and from origins and destinations, instead of focusing efforts only on commuting and bringing people from home to jobs and back again.



TMAs and Public Transit

At first glance it may seem like TMAs are in competition with public transit providers, but that is definitely not the case. Where TMAs can establish close working partnerships with public transit providers, they can develop very successful programs together, some examples:

- TMAs have the flexibility to pilot programs where public transit providers often can't without going through an extensive public review process. Once they are able to demonstrate that a program can be successful with a pilot, operations can be taken over by a public transit provider.
- TMAs can access grant funding that is set aside specifically for them to start pilot services.
- AS a public private partnership, a TMA can stretch public dollars further with contributions from its private-sector members.
- With a direct line to businesses, property owners and developers, TMAs can provide marketing support for public transportation helping to increase ridership.
- TMA members collectively can advocate for improved transit funding

Getting Started: 10 Steps to a TMA

Step 1: Identify Your Champion.

TMA's are most successful when they are driven by a champion who is passionate about the cause and invested in getting an organization started.

Step 2: Start a Working Group.

The group acts as a core committee who is willing to work on TMA formation. Often in a TMA, each member has a seat on the Board of Directors or oversight committee that manages the organization. The core organizing committee can be the basis for that group. It's important that those making a financial contribution to the organization have a voice in the priorities that are set. Municipal, legislative, or community partners can make valuable contributions to the mission of a TMA, but they generally don't take on formal leadership roles. The exception is when a TMA is driven by one or more municipalities. The group can either decide to make community participants advisory members or establish a membership category for community participation.

Step 3: Find a Home.

Most TMA's typically operate on a tight budget and can't afford the expense of rent. They are generally hosted by a member organization that can offer office space and resources.

Step 4: Set Priorities.

TMA's grow out of a shared agenda amongst participants, but it's still important to establish priorities and create a workplan that is a living document. Include a mission statement for the organization.

Step 5: Draft a Budget.

Once the priorities are set and the potential members have been identified, it should be possible to prepare a budget for the organization. It's important to acknowledge that this can grow over time. The initial budget may be small and include just a few committed partners and part-time staff to start. See below for a sample TMA Budget.

Step 6: Identify Funding.

TMA's are traditionally member-funded by businesses, property owners and developers through an established dues structure for the organization. Some states have grant programs available to assist with TMA formation and operations, often using money designated for Congestion Management Air Quality (CMAQ), 5311, Workforce, or Economic Development. Additional grant resources may be available with Mobility Management Funding (FTA), state Commute Trip Reduction funding, or USDA or Chamber of Commerce grant funding for economic development in rural areas. However, it's important to note that some funding sources can only be used for specific tasks. Given the potential that the size of a rural region to be served by a TMA may be larger than is typical, and the density and size of the businesses may be smaller, funding sources other than member dues would very likely be needed to operate a rural TMA.

10 Steps to a TMA continued

Step 7: Choose an Organizational Structure.

One of the first steps in developing a TMA is to establish what the formal structure for the organization will look like.

Options include:

a. *Create a Private 501 (c)(4) Non-profit*

Requires filing with state and IRS to apply for this status. By-laws are written and a Board of Directors is established to oversee the organization. Members pay dues according to a set fee structure. They are usually proportional to the number of employees, square footage, or number of residential locations at a location. This is one of the most common structures for a TMA.

b. *Form a Subgroup Under an Existing Organization*

Another potential structure is to have the TMA as a subgroup of an existing organization, typically an existing non-profit. A Chamber of Commerce or regional economic development group could be options. The TMA is set-up as an advisory board under the primary organization, which then also acts as the fiscal agent. Dues are managed for the TMA either separate from the primary organization dues or as a combined dues structure. The TMA has operating guidelines in place. This option tends to work well if all of the members are part of the same community or service area as the primary organization.

c. *Use an Intermunicipal Agreement*

Communities may be familiar with using an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) or an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for shared services so this can be a good option when there are several participating governmental entities, and they are the driving force behind the organization. The partners select a primary partner who is also the fiscal agent for the organization and the agreement defines how decisions will be made. This structure does tend to sideline business partners somewhat as they cannot participate as full members of the organization even though they may be providing financial support. Business members can become a quasi-advisory board for the organization. They can make recommendations to the partners; as long as there is a good working relationship amongst the group it can work well.

Step 8: Select Initial Programs.

TMA members typically receive direct services from the TMA for their employees or tenants. Common programs are identified in the above section. It is important to establish at the outset what services are included with each category of TMA membership. A Memorandum of Understanding outlining what is included in TMA membership should be signed by each member of the organization to clearly set expectations for participation in the organization.

SELECT TMA PROGRAMS



- Conduct Ridematching
- Form Carpools
- Facilitate Vanpools
- Promote Public Transit
- Active Commuting (Bike/Walk)
- Establish Shared shuttles
- Offer Emergency Ride Home Program
- Incentivize with programs
- Marketing and promotion

10 Steps to a TMA continued

Step 9: Find a Leader.

The group will need to decide on how the organization will be staffed and managed. This is generally done with paid staff as opposed to volunteers.

Step 10: Success.

Establish clear goals for the organization for the short and long term to ensure that progress is being made. It can be difficult for TMAs to document success since much of what it offered can be considered “soft programs.”

TMA Budget

A typical TMA budget to start ranges anywhere from \$100,000 - \$200,000 per year depending on the staffing and the programs offered. It includes a staff person to oversee the organization who would work somewhere between 20-40 hours a week, as well as the costs for the programs (marketing, promotional events, a website, participation in a ridematch database, an emergency ride home program, etc.). The costs of shared shuttle services are split by the members participating in that service. The TMA supports the shuttle services by providing marketing and promotion and coordinating operations.

All pricing outlined below is conceptual and can be used for planning purposes. Final pricing would depend on decisions made by the group on the service level and the organizational structure.

Typical TMA Budget with Part-time Staff and Basic Programs to Begin

Sample TMA Budget	
<u>Staff:</u>	<u>Budget:</u>
FT Program Manager Salary	\$85,000
Staff Oversight	\$25,000
Marketing Costs:	
Promotional items, print materials, design time, events, prizes	\$5,000
Travel & Entertainment/Meetings	\$5,000
TMA Programs/Services:	
Emergency Ride Home Program	\$5,000
Ridematching System	\$2,500
Bicycle/Pedestrian Programs	\$5,000
Incentive Program	\$5,000
Office and administrative costs:	
Office Supplies	\$2,000
Taxes, Insurance & Annual Reports	\$3,500
Total Expense	\$143,000

Outcomes of Forming a TMA:

It's clear that when there is access to safe, reliable transportation choices it can have a positive impact on:

- The economic vitality of a region
- Mobility options
- Health outcomes for individuals
- Development of more desirable housing patterns (as opposed to sprawl)
- Ability of seniors to age in place

While TMAs have more typically been established in urban and suburban areas, they can be a way to create an organization that brings together stakeholders and keeps the focus on improving transportation in a region.