

## Northwest Transportation Consortium

4th DRAFT  
May 14, 2007

### Proposal

To establish a Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) project, titled the Northwest Transportation Consortium (NWTC), amongst the four states in the Northwestern United States to develop regional solutions to common transportation problems.

Its purpose is to pool the financial, professional, and academic resources of the region and to use them to conduct research and develop improved methods of dealing with common problems in the planning, design, construction, maintenance, management and operation of transportation systems in the participating states. Further, this project seeks to foster inter-regional growth in knowledge, skills and abilities amongst the academic partners in the region to produce superior research.

The consortium is further intended to be used to promote the interest in transportation related fields within the research institutions in the region and to leverage funding of the University Transportation Centers (UTC).

The program is intended to supplement, not to replace, ongoing state, federal, and university research activities and other national programs such as the National Cooperative Highway Research Program.

### Membership

The membership of the TPF project includes:

- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Oregon State Department of Transportation
- Idaho Transportation Department
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Other state departments of transportation (DOT) may review problem statements selected by the members and choose to provide funding. They will have the option to appoint a voting member to the Technical Committee for a project to which they have pledged funds.

### Affiliate Members

The Northwest University Transportation Centers will serve as affiliate members who may review, comment and advise the Northwest Transportation Consortium. The UTCs are not voting members because their universities will compete for the available funding.

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## Eligible Research Institutions

Researchers from the universities affiliated with the UTCs in the region may submit proposals to Requests for Proposals distributed by the ~~Northwest Transportation Consortium~~ NWTC. The research institutions include:

- Transportation Northwest (TransNow) – led by the University of Washington. Also includes Washington State University.
- National Institute of Advanced Transportation Technology (NIATT) – at the University of Idaho.
- ~~Alaska Transportation Research Center~~ Alaska University Transportation Center (AUTRC) – at the University of Alaska ~~system~~ Fairbanks
- Oregon National Transportation Center (not sure of official name) – led by Portland State University. Also includes Oregon State University, University of Oregon, and Oregon Institute of Technology.

These universities may engage subcontracts amongst them. The universities may also subcontract to other universities or other organizations when technical expertise is needed or the established partnership will substantially improve the quality of the research and anticipated outcome.

Pros: Allows us to leverage funding very specifically

Cons: Will this exclude some areas of research interest DOTs commonly share?

## Funding

It is proposed that each state contribute \$25,000 per year to the TPF project for a total of \$100,000 per year. This funding is eligible to be used as match by a University Transportation Center (State Planning and Research, Local Technical Assistance, or state funding).

The researchers must demonstrate a ~~50%~~ 1:1 match as a part of their proposal. ~~The UTCs are encouraged to include~~ have included participation in this collaborative project in their strategic plans in order as a possible means to expedite approval of matching funds if they are part of the UTC team that is awarded the project.

OR

The four eligible UTCs agree to contribute \$25,000 per year to the NWTC in order to support collaboration of transportation researchers amongst the participating universities.

The UTCs ~~agree~~ re-also-encouraged to waive Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs for subcontracts under \$25,000.

This means that the total value of research conducted under this agreement will be \$200,000 per year.

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Individual projects will be managed as separate TPF projects for purposes of fiscal clarity.

States may sponsor additional projects through the NWTC, with the approval of ¾ of the voting members.

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## **Project Identification, Solicitation, and Selection**

The oversight committee will be comprised of the four state DOT Research Directors. Recommendations for topics of study will be made to the NWTC voting members by the Region X Transportation Consortium (replace with our preferred name).

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The state DOT members will identify and prioritize research problem statements. The problem statements will represent a research need commonly shared by the DOTs and for which technical expertise exists within the eligible UTCs.

A request for proposal to address the problem statement will be circulated to the UTCs in the region.

Proposals will be rated by DOT representatives with technical expertise in the field of the proposal, and by technical peers from other research institutions, and by Region X Federal Highways Administration or Federal Transit Administration Division staff with technical knowledge in the field of the proposal. It is intended that the process meet the peer review requirements of the UTC Program.

Proposals shall be reviewed if the:

- Principal investigator is from one of the four eligible northwest UTCs.
- Proposal meets the 1:1 match requirement. (Delete depending on rating criteria)
- Proposal addresses the subject of the RFP.

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Proposals will be rated on criteria including but not limited to the following:

- Includes researchers from more than one university in the eligible UTCs.
- Demonstrates technical merit.
- Demonstrates regional perspective/awareness of differences and similarities in states.
- Identifies related ongoing research efforts
- Conveys a high probability of success

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## **Project Management**

The NWTC will identify a knowledgeable state DOT Project Lead to serve as the point of contact for the selected project(s).

The UTC will meet the reporting requirements of the UTC and State Planning and Research programs and, specifically, the requirements of the organization through which the project is funded.

Performance measures and management techniques will be utilized to assure ongoing success of the program.

## **Background**

The new federal transportation authorization (SAFETEA-LU) provides a significant increase in federal transportation research dollars to the four University Transportation Centers (UTCs) located in the Pacific Northwest (University of Washington, Portland State University, University of Alaska Anchorage, and University of Idaho). It is anticipated that over \$8 million per year will be available for transportation research from these four UTCs for FY's 2006 through 2009. SAFETEA-LU requires a 50% non-federal match for these dollars.

The four DOTs and UTCs are holding regular meetings to maintain awareness of each other's activities and to discuss additional ways to promote collaborative projects within the region. This TPF project is proposed as one mechanism to identify research needs of common interest to the state DOTs and common capability amongst the research institutions and to leverage resources.

This proposal is modeled after the New England Transportation Consortium (NETC). The NETC was formed in 19xx (<http://www.netc.umassd.edu/#top>) and has proven to be successful for the participating states. Unlike NETC, the Northwest Transportation Consortium seeks specifically to leverage UTC funding.

**Questions to answer:**

Which state will serve as lead?

What is the timing for a decision on committing funding to this TPF project?

One advisory committee or do we try to establish a policy committee of CEOs or chief engineers or... appointment of voting members for projects that receive funding

Who rates proposals and what are the criteria?

Report requirements

**To Do List**

Develop TPF 'solicitation'. Make commitments/obligations.

Establish bylaws or procedures for operation, including voting membership and roles and responsibilities for lead and partner roles.

Develop MOA.

Establish a review process for work in progress

**Potential Rating Criteria**

*Eligibility:*

- Researcher eligible for UTC funding.
- Proposal meets the 50% match requirement.
- Proposal addresses the subject of the RFP.
- Research that directly addresses the RFP.

*Rating:*

- Includes researchers from more than one university in the UTCs.
- Technical Merit.
- Regional perspective/awareness of differences and similarities in states
- Aware of ongoing research efforts
- Probability of success
- Plays to the strengths of one or more of the affiliated universities

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