



Western States Rural Transportation Consortium (WSRTC)

**Steering Committee Meeting
February 9, 2012
Corvallis, Oregon**

Meeting Minutes

This document is the official record for the WSRTC Steering Committee meeting held February 9, 2012, in Corvallis, Oregon.

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Corvallis, Oregon

In conjunction with the Northwest Transportation Conference

Meeting Minutes

Prepared by

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Welcome and Introductions

David Veneziano called the meeting to order at 8:40 AM. He welcomed the group and introductions were made around the room and by those who had called in to the meeting. An overview of the agenda was given. The slides being presented were sent out in advance to the group via email for those calling in.

The meeting agenda, PowerPoint presentation from the meeting, and the meeting minutes are available on the Consortium website at: <http://www.westernstates.org/Documents/Default.html>.

Western States Forum

Leann Koon provided an update on the planning for the upcoming Western States Forum and a brief overview of the tentative speaker agenda.

Doug Galarus asked the group what it would take for different members from each state to be in attendance.

Galen McGill said that the Forum is close enough to Oregon to cross the border for one day. However, with administrative restrictions, ODOT employees can't go even if fully covered. This could be treated as in-state travel, and hopefully restrictions will be relaxed by June since he really wants to be there. The consortium wants them (ODOT) to participate if possible.

Nathaniel Price said from the FHWA standpoint, timing and less travel play a role. FHWA is encouraging more virtual attendance of events.

Ted Bailey said that for WSDOT, attendance shouldn't be a problem. The 100% sponsorship is key.

Ian Turnbull discussed that if someone was on the agenda, it might be easier for them to receive travel authorization. Poster sessions might be one way of doing this. Galen McGill said it depends on what rules they (ODOT) are under at the time and sometimes this does help. For example, ODOT staff could attend the Northwest Transportation Conference if they were on the agenda. As another approach to

this idea, Doug Galarus proposed formalizing the show and tell style demonstrations by putting them on the agenda.

Ted said this definitely helps WSDOT. He then asked how far in advance travel items are processed in Oregon? Galen indicated this would be discussed more after the legislative session concludes. Oregon is also looking at letting staff who need professional development hours (PDH) attend meetings for that purpose. Leann will investigate the possibility of offering PDH for Forum participation.

Ian said that it should be easy to put equipment/poster/demonstration items on the agenda.

Doug G. acknowledged that it has been challenging for some to be in attendance, and that the group appreciated the effort people have made to make it to the Forum. Ian said it was positive that states are participating, although they are not able to send as many people. Galen said that any lack of attendance on ODOT's part was not reflective of lack of interest.

Ted asked whether there could be a web or voice conference to go along with the Forum. Ian said that has been talked about, but we've stayed away from it because the atmosphere changes and the honesty/transparency/trust is reduced since it becomes more like a lecture and questions cannot be asked throughout the presentations. Doug G. added that a video feed is challenging logistically.

Sean Campbell pointed out to the group that last year WTI paid for the Forum out of UTC funds because Caltrans funds were not in place at the time. He proposed that this year funds left over from WSRTC Task Order 1 be used to cover Forum costs to make up for this previous expenditure. He asked for group discussion and whether others thought this was a good idea. Ted was in favor of this idea, and the mechanism in place allows for it, so let's use it. Galen thought this was important to keep going and also expressed approval. Sean asked for a motion to approve using remaining Task Order 1 funds for this purpose, Ian moved and Ted seconded, with the group approving unanimously.

Doug G. mentioned that WTI didn't get an UTC award during the recent proposal cycle. The Systems Group has sufficient upcoming work, although it may be a hit to other program areas, administration and individual staff. WTI will carry on with the work at hand. WTI is part of MSU, which offers stability.

Sean Campbell indicated the appreciation of the entire group for the hard work that Leann puts into organizing the Forum, and the rest of the group acknowledged this.

Incubator Project Progress

David provided an update on the progress of the Year 1 incubator projects, beginning with the Survey of Western State Rural Safety Warning Devices work. To date, the draft survey has been developed with the questions presented to the group, and an initial list of contacts has been put together. Once the slides discussing this project had been presented, a group discussion followed regarding a number of points needing clarification.

Regarding the setting of the devices (just rural devices or all settings including urban), Ian indicated that all should be included and Ted agreed. In terms of location, county, route, postmile (or that state's location convention) should be collected for the reader to reference in the future.

Doug Spencer thought that other useful items to ask were why a state did it this way (i.e., why something was done one way versus another), would they do it again, the historical aspects of decisions, and are they doing it the same today or doing something else instead.

The option of providing the survey via email, either in advance of a telephone interview or with the option to respond via email was suggested. The intention was to send it out via email in advance so respondents could be familiar with the questions, but providing the email response option is also a good idea. Telephone interviews could follow for more detailed information or clarification if needed. The option of a telephone interview or email response will be given to everyone that is contacted.

Sean said it would be good to talk to Ray Murphy, since he's (Sean) getting surveys from him. Ted indicated that he replies to surveys he's been directed to answer, but in this case, he would need to direct the survey to multiple staff for responses as well. Ray Murphy's success is that his surveys go to listservs intended for that purpose; the delivery method will be key in this case. Sean also thought that maybe going directly to Consortiums (e.g., I-80, NorthWest Passage, etc.) to get leads is a good approach. Regardless, Ian said that the intent is to go until we have no more leads; if we get 75% of stuff out there, great! Another mechanism to get responses is to state when they will see results in a published format.

Ted asked whether two other variables could be added to the survey: whether the device was installed on a high or low speed facility and whether or not it is a divided highway. These questions will be added.

Regarding the system component details, the manufacturer would be a follow-up point on the part of a reader. In essence, the survey done here would provide a couple of sentences as overview, including a little information on communications infrastructure but not so much as to be burdensome. Ted, Ian and Doug S. would want to know this sort of information.

Ted asked if there would be enough time to go through each system if states have many different systems. Ian thought there wouldn't be a large variety of systems, while ODOT thought there were more out there from a variety/wide spectrum perspective. The overall idea here is to get a 2-3 sentence narrative on each system with the tape recorder on to capture the information.

Based on the discussion, the approach that will be taken is to email contacts first, then follow-up with phone calls. Be clear about what we're looking for so that we reach the right contacts. The interest here is automated systems, not things that go through a TMC. For example, ODOT has some with operator validation before a system performs a certain function. Before/after analysis of the system would also be helpful to cover. The idea is to provide the reader of the survey results with more detail than just discussing the basics on a system.

David next discussed the work done to date on the Regional ICM Planning incubator. This included an updated literature review and the collection of USDOT ICM documents. Upcoming work will focus on Emergency Operations Center protocols in each of the consortium states, as well as the initial development of the ICM planning process. WTI will be asking the group for the contact information for appropriate EOC personnel to contact.

Ted asked about the end date of each project, and David indicated that this was the beginning of September for both incubators. A progress report for both incubator projects will be given at the June meeting.

One Stop Shop Phase 2

Doug G. discussed the updates and improvements that have been made to the One Stop Shop (OSS) website since the last meeting.

It was noted that we haven't spread the word too much yet regarding the availability of the website, but significant performance improvements have been made which should support the load.

A question was raised regarding the inclusion of traffic layers (speed and flow). There is ongoing discussion about this in Washington. Right now Google gets data from WSDOT, and they (Google) supplement with their own data. This information has improved dramatically over the last year.

Another question was asked regarding whether there was any benefit in going directly to DOT data.

Ron said that the way OSS is presenting the information now is better; Doug G. indicated that we don't want to just show Google maps with Google layers.

Over time, the plan is to go back to the group and revisit what other information has become available.

In California, the OSS will be a featured link on the District 2 website.

Ted asked what the long term approach to OSS is. Doug G. said that the intent is to still migrate the site to its own infrastructure. As part of the MCOM proposal, one of the tasks is to investigate long-term sustainability. One prospective approach is the use of advertising done in a sensible fashion that doesn't detract from the site. Another option is that participating states contribute to a fund to maintain the site, but right now, it is not clear what it will take to keep it going.

Sean asked the group who should be contacted when coordinate errors are encountered while working on OSS. For ODOT, Galen said he should be contacted.

A brief summary of the MCOM proposal was provided to the group. The intent is to cover Canada to Mexico, the Pacific Ocean to the Mississippi River. That area was carved into four regions to manage development and deployment of the system. The proposal asked for \$643k, including the match from Caltrans. Sean said that he can send a copy of proposal to anyone that wants to see it. Denise Inda expressed the I-80 Coalition's interest in the work and facilitated a support letter. The intent is for OSS to become the single source for cross border travel, not impose upon or supersede what states are already doing.

Other Ongoing/Upcoming Projects

Doug G. provided a brief update on other projects that are ongoing or upcoming that might be of interest to the Consortium. These included Controller, PCB for Communications, WeatherShare, AWOS/ASOS/RWIS and Responder.

Task Order 1 Update

Sean and Ted provided an update on Task Order 1. It will be allowed to expire, and another Research Order will be done with the funds rolled over. This will look the same as Task Order 1 but with a new budget.

Sean asked if the money in Task Order 1 would be lost when it expires. Ted indicated that he did not believe it would but would clarify with WSDOT's Research Office. [Note: Ted has since verified that the funds will not be lost upon expiration.]

Task Order 3 Update

Sean introduced a series of items to discuss regarding Task Order 3. The first was a need to get a good handle on participant support. The group has budgeted for three attendees from each state at different meetings, but we have not had that to date. Travel restrictions play a part in this.

A handle is also needed on realistic hotel and travel rates. Per diem for meals is strict, but vehicle rental and hotel are more flexible. This needs to be revisited with an understanding of where we'll be meeting in advance. Also, language should be included in the Task Order that is more flexible to avoid issues with hotel reimbursements, perhaps saying "prevailing conference rate".

Travel over the next year includes the Western States Forum and NRITS.

NRITS 2012 Discussion

NRITS 2012 will be in Biloxi, Mississippi. Sean asked the group how many were planning on going. Ian indicated he will not be. Galen indicated that ODOT probably would never be able to send three attendees with travel restrictions. Coupling these meetings with conferences helps a bit though. Ted indicated there may be some issues with Washington sending three attendees, although participation in the conference and associated meetings beyond just attendance helps justify increased attendance. Nevada will try to be present at NRITS if travel funds are available.

The thought was the Task Order should still say three attendees per state, just as was done previously. It is beneficial to figure on a higher number and then readjust if there is a surplus, provided the money isn't lost.

It was asked whether NRITS would be the official fall meeting for the Consortium, with the Western States Forum being the official annual meeting. The thought by the group was that it was wise to meet at the Forum, and that NRITS being three months later was too soon for another meeting. January or February was a better time for the second Consortium meeting. The NWTC was a nice venue for this second meeting, although it is only held biennially.

Ted thought that the Forum and NRITS meetings should be in-person. The other one in January or February should be the phone conference or minimal travel. For the time being, travel will be left as three attendees from each member state for three meetings per year. Ian made a motion to approve, Ted seconded, and the group unanimously agreed.

A written proposal for the new task order is needed, with Task Order 1 used as a basis. The draft proposal will be sent to the group by the end of February. It will include website maintenance and funds for the Forum. Estimates for travel reimbursements will be used.

Abstracts for NRITS are due March 2nd. The group thought it would be good to submit an abstract on the WSRTC.

Roundtable Discussion

WSDOT received a \$15m TIGER grant to work on mobility issues along I-5 through Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM). The project will install many ITS elements along with hard shoulder running. A consultant is doing a Concept of Operations. (See link for more details. <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Funding/Tiger3/>)

WSDOT has had discussions with their FHWA division officer about high risk ITS projects, specifically systems engineering and going further than what the CFR calls for. Ted asked if the group has any experience with this area. Sean will get Randy Wooley from Caltrans in contact with Ted on it. ODOT has a pretty streamlined process (2 page checklist)(level of effort for systems engineering is the same as level of effort for the project). Galen will send Ted his templates.

An urban arterial has been fully outfitted with a number of ITS technologies (ALPR (Pips Technology), Bluetooth (TrafficCast & UW in-house developed), Wireless Magnetometers (Sensys), loop detection, and video detection (Traficon)) for the purposed of conducting side-by-side comparisons. Bluetooth has also been extended over the I-90 Snoqualmie pass (70 miles) with the purpose of comparing Bluetooth to 3rd Party INRIX data.

Work is underway to pull roadside devices from 3rd party services and move them to 700 MHZ to get rid of the monthly data fees.

WSDOT is developing a 6 year plan for major electrical preservation prioritization (spreading the cash thinly). A University of Washington data integration program is also bringing data in house.

Politicians are asking why each region has its own TMC with a winter ops center—why can't WSDOT consolidate TMC's? Galen indicated that ODOT is right in the middle of that discussion now. Ian said that for Caltrans D2, he and Clint don't have operational familiarity regionally, nor is there a proper approach to familiarization with other regions. Unless there is proper training and familiarization between different regions along with consolidation, then level of service suffers. Caltrans D4 takes over the District 1 TMC at night, and it works mostly ok, but there are definitely issues. Clint said there is a night and day type attitude between urban vs. rural. The mandate to get incident information out to the public within 20 minutes will be affected by consolidations.

Ted asked about equipment contracting and purchasing, particularly proprietary items. Are there cost-recovery models or ways to expand to include evaluation so that it is a blanket process? These are issues WSDOT is looking at. ODOT has multi-year contracts while Caltrans has a hybrid system.

ODOT is currently signing new VMS contracts for signs that include color and images.

ODOT is moving forward with more of the automated chain control warning drum signs.

There are a number of Variable Speed Limit projects under construction or design. One is at a rural intersection on OR26 and one is weather based.

Adaptive signal timing projects are on-going. Work on highway advisory radio automation continues. HAR works well in snow zone areas, and they are still working to automate including chain control signs.

Inexpensive Bluetooth devices (under \$1k each) have been purchased for permanent installation to provide real-time data. Oregon State University electrical engineering built the device and OSU computer science did the software. The devices are going to sites with power/communications already in place, like signal cabinets. The software is Linux and decently hardened. ODOT will begin to build the devices in-house. Mac addresses are stripped before going to the server.

ODOT is preparing an RFP for video distribution software to move from analog to digital video streams. Automatic vehicle location for incident responders is being adapted from freight operations. Parking management at Multnomah Falls is being automated. TripCheck TV is providing a webpage with animation to cable systems using InfoCast software.

FHWA – No projects to discuss.

Caltrans D2 continues to work on the projects highlighted by Doug G. earlier in the meeting. The animal warning system on State Route 3 near Fort Jones is now functioning and has been turned on. The project has been very controversial with the local community and technically problematic.

The D2 field element network core is being completely upgraded, and work on several field element information relay systems is continuing. Deployment of the TMCAL CAD system for use in dispatch and the TMC is also proceeding. The first version of IRIS ATMS is near deployment in the district. The installation of 18 miles of fiber and several ITS field elements around Redding continues.

Sean indicated that Caltrans Division of Research and innovation has a new research director, Coco Briseno. There has been a soft launch of the Quickmaps system. Version 2 of the commercial wholesale web portal is presently being developed.

Other Discussions

One additional item brought before the group was that Shyam Sharma, formerly with ODOT and now with AASHTO, indicated that he would like to remain in the group, be involved and kept in the loop regarding reports, information, etc. No one had any objections to this, and he will be added.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Action Items

<u>Item</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
1. Develop a new Task Order.	End of February
2. Sean will get Randy Wooley in contact with Ted regarding systems engineering items.	As soon as possible
3. Galen will send Ted his document templates from working with FHWA on systems engineering items.	As soon as possible
4. The safety warning device survey will be updated and provided to the group for final review.	End of February
5. An abstract about what the WSRTC is and what it does will be submitted to NRITS.	March 2 nd

Meeting Participants

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