

Northwest Transportation Consortium

A Transportation Pooled Fund Study in Development

August 29, 2007

The Region X Consortium¹ is developing a collaborative research program through the [Transportation Pooled Fund \(TPF\) Program](#). The research program is called the Northwest Transportation Consortium and is intended to address high priority transportation research topics of common interest to the four states and for which expertise exists in the four University Transportation Centers (UTC).

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.

The region's universities collectively offer a broad range of talent and expertise. This project seeks to foster intra-regional growth in knowledge, skills and abilities amongst the academic partners in the region to produce superior research.

Benefits of the Northwest Transportation Consortium

1. Regional collaboration on common problems will allow the participants to more effectively use of resources.
2. Collaboration will provide an effective way to focus resources on the Region's transportation research priorities.
3. A focused program will help promote the interest in transportation-related fields by researchers and students within the research institutions in the region.
4. The program will provide an additional way leverage funding of the UTCs and state DOTs.

What is the Transportation Pooled Fund Program?

This program was created by state DOTs over 20 years ago to:

- Facilitate multi-state research collaboration
- Simplifies the administration of multi-state cost sharing

A TPF project requires at least two state DOTs or a DOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to have a common interest in and willingness to commit resources to a study of common interest.

The program also provides mechanisms for other organizations to contribute to and participate in these collaborative research studies.

FHWA manages administration of the program.

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.

The New England Transportation Consortium

A similar TPF program called the [New England Transportation Consortium](#) (NETC) has been active in New England for over ten years. The NETC is a collaboration of the six New England States that was developed to address regional transportation research issues. They solicit and select research problem statements annually. The NETC has grown to contribute \$100,000 per state each year.

The Northwest Transportation Consortium differs from the NETC in two ways.

1. Proposals will only be accepted from participating universities in the Region 10 Consortium.
2. Each state DOT's initial contribution will be only \$25,000. Region 10 UTCs will also contribute funding to match the state DOTs.

Research Focus Areas

The focus of our first RFP has yet to be determined. State DOTs will identify priority topics that they hold in common and for which expertise exists at more than one UTC in the region. Early discussions have identified the following as potential focus areas:

- Environmental topics related to water quality and habitat connectivity
- Freight issues
- Highway infrastructure issues
- Traffic simulation models.

Status of the Northwest Transportation Consortium

The Washington State Department of Transportation has agreed to act as the lead for this TPF Project.

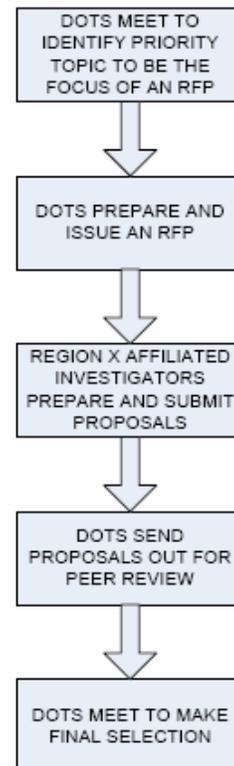
The four state DOTs in the Region X Consortium are ready to commit funding to the Northwest Transportation Consortium. Formal paperwork will be submitted to FHWA in the next month to establish the project and allow funds to be transferred

We need to finalize the mechanism for how UTCs will match the funds. Universities have frequently conducted work sponsored by a TPF project but UTCs have not typically contributed up front funding as a partner in the project. The mechanism for contributing UTC match funding is still in discussion.

As the fiscal process steps are finalized, the state DOTs will meet to identify potential research focus areas.

The Region X consortium will discuss solicitation timing and procedures that will best fit the academic and funding cycles in the region.

PROJECT SELECTION PHASE



ⁱ The Region X Consortium includes the Washington State Department of Transportation, Transportation Northwest, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium, Idaho Transportation Department, National Institute of Advanced Transportation Technology, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, and Alaska Transportation Research Center.