



West Coast Corridor Coalition

Alaska • Washington • Oregon • California

WCCC Participating Agencies include:

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Alaska Railroad Corporation

Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation System

California Department of Transportation

California State Senator Alan Lowenthal

Cascadia Discovery Institute

County of Benton, Oregon

Lane Council of Governments

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments

Oregon Department of Transportation

Port of Anchorage

Portland METRO

Port of Portland

Port of Seattle

Port of Tacoma

Puget Sound Regional Council

Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

San Diego Association of Governments

Southern California Association of Governments

Washington State Department of Transportation

Whatcom Council of Governments

WEST COAST CORRIDOR COALITION BUSINESS PLAN

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For More Information, see:

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Introduction

The emergence of the mega-region concept and the globalization of the economy and environmental issues reinforces the opportunities, for and the necessity of, interstate cooperation among the transportation stakeholders along the west coast. There are a plethora of mobility-related issues which present significant opportunities for a multi-state west coast coalition to thrive through a willing and proactive membership. These issues need to be considered on a broader geographic and institutional basis more now than ever before as programs and strategies are implemented by Coalition members. The genesis of the Coalition was based on the I-5 north/south corridor but it has evolved. The "west coast corridor" should be considered emblematic of the complex transportation network that supports the movement of people and goods within and through the west coast area. It encompasses all modes of transportation that can help these three mega-regions address their mobility issues.

The primary objective of this business plan is to define strategies that will position the West Coast Corridor Coalition to support its members in meeting their responsibilities and to gain continued support and funding for the Coalition. The best way for this to occur is for the membership to find the Coalition useful in helping them have collaborative discussions to address common issues and to achieve their respective goals in this context. The past work of the Coalition is a good foundation upon which to begin. The consensus approach to decision making should continued to be followed.

WCCC Trade & Transportation Study

Trade underpins not only the Corridor's economy, but WCCC trade also fuels in the national and global economy.

The West Coast economy is the sixth largest in the world and the Corridor's aggregate gross domestic product (GDP) in 2006 was a stunning \$2.2 trillion. In the last few years, the vigor of the WCCC region contributed about one-fifth of the national increases in GDP. In short, with a host of highly stressed international trade portals at the ports and airports, linked by similarly congested rail and highway networks, the West Coast Corridor MUST develop a voice and a leadership initiative to tackle common freight challenges.

In April 2008, the Coalition released the *West Coast Corridor Coalition Trade and Transportation Study* that highlights the freight challenges in the Corridor. This study is the first step by Coalition members to inform decision makers about the importance of the Corridor as an imperiled driver of economic growth and innovative technology.

Clean, Green, and Smart Corridor

The Coalition has created a vision of creating the Clean, Green and Smart corridor.

There are three objectives that the Coalition will pursue towards this vision. The first is the pursuit of additional funding from all sources for infrastructure and environmental improvements sought by the Coalition's membership. Second, the Coalition will continue its efforts to bring Best Practices to the attention of its members with an aim to assist its members to address significant regional, national, or global issues such as climate change that impact mobility and that advance the vision of

Clean, Green and Smart. Third, the Coalition will help the membership coordinate and collaborate on issues of mutual concern and interest to promote Clean, Green and Smart cost savings, efficiencies and effectiveness throughout the corridor for both the public and private sectors. The Coalition has decided that it will focus on goods movement related issues as its top priority but it is open to dealing with other mobility related issues as the membership desires and the budget allows.

History

The West Coast Corridor Coalition's evolution began in the late 90's and early 2000's to pursue the issue of mounting common concern about the movement of freight and other mobility issues from the Mexican border northward to the Canadian border amongst state departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, ports, public policy groups and private transport providers. More recently the state of Alaska joined the Coalition. It has held numerous workshops on issues of interest, received special funding to conduct its activities, completed the West Coast trade and transportation study, initiated the development of a Best Practices Manual for Clean Green and Smart projects and formulated key principles for the next federal transportation legislation.

Mission of the Coalition

The Coalition's mission is to advocate collaborative solutions to the transportation system challenges on the West Coast Corridor.

To accomplish that mission it has established the following objectives:

- Develop and mutually support a roster of projects of corridor significance;
- Share best practices to optimize the capacity and performance of the system;
- Encourage joint efforts and effective cooperation among West Coast state, regional and local governments and the private sector; and,
- Advocate for financing options to fund transportation improvements serving the interest of the Coalition, including additional funding and regulatory changes.

Strategy

In order to accomplish the three objectives of this business plan there are five strategic action areas for the Coalition to accomplish: Organizational, External relations, Initiatives, Communications and Staffing.

Organizational Actions

Some of the actions included in this plan would require changes in the bylaws.

Ensure the Board of the Coalition includes senior management/policy makers of the member organization. As the Coalition takes positions on key policy issues, allocating a budget, or helping to fund mutually important projects, it is imperative that it have representation from its members that can "speak" for its organization.

Adjust the Board meeting schedule to once or twice a year for approval of budget, work program and significant changes in the organization

Expand the Executive Committee to have a broader representation of the membership. Each state should continue to have at least one representative. The Executive Committee would make policy decisions and oversee the Coalition's program as necessary. The Executive Committee would meet quarterly or as needed.

Reconsider the need for the Chairs of the Committees to be a member of the Board. Currently the by-laws indicate this. While there are good reasons for this requirement, the success of the coalition depends on the time commitments that individuals can make and the more we can separate functions, maintain coordination and accomplish agreed upon projects the better the Coalition will be. Having the chair required to be participating in both their committee and the Board might inhibit more senior management participation on the Board. Expertise and recognized leadership on a specific issue is what is needed at the working group/committee level and it offers the opportunity to "spread the workload" among the membership.

Focus the efforts on three of its committees in the near term and have each committee working towards a specific, agreed upon, issue. The issues would be identified and budgets established through a biennial work program approved by the board. The Coalition has already agreed that freight should be its focus. Therefore, a premier committee should be the Goods Movement Committee. A starting point might be the major findings from the *WCCC Trade & Transportation Study* or other identified common issues brought through the committee itself. The other premier committee is the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), Operations, Environment Committee. The search by public and private members for environmental solutions to problems including green house gases reduction is an issue that is corridor and world wide. The Federal Relations committee is also crucial particularly through this period of federal reauthorization.

The committees should not necessarily meet at the same time period as the Board of Directors or Executive Committee meetings. Recommendations for actions by the Coalition should come through the Committees unless there is an urgency involved that would prevent such a process. In this event the Chair of the committee should be consulted prior to the Coalition acting.

The Coalition needs to strengthen the participation of the private sector. The Plan envisions this occurring through several actions. First, clarification of who the private sector's participants are on the Coalition's Board and potentially the Executive Committee. Second, and of utmost importance, is to advance projects of mutual interest, conduct activities and take positions that are of interest and concern to the private sector. Other recommendations and strategies in the plan should support this effort.

External Relations Actions

There are numerous organizations, both public and private, that are addressing some aspect of either mobility or environmental issues along the west coast. These include international organizations along the Canadian and Mexican borders, international maritime associations, environmental groups and countless others. The Coalition should seek out those that have common interests or goals and create appropriate working partnerships. One of the key areas that the Coalition is already working on through the Clean, Green and Smart Project is reducing emissions.

Many organizations, both public and private, are working on projects and programs in this issue area. Given the importance of the states in the Coalition, one such organization is the Western Governors Association. It already has its Climate Change Initiative and is exploring the start-up of a freight study.

While the Coalition needs to explore coordination and working relationships with all groups who have similar interest, a priority should be with the Western Governors Association and the Coalition should work to create a partnership or working relationship with them. This action might entail the enlargement of the WCCC's membership to other western states east-ward to the Rocky Mountains. At a minimum, the Coalition needs to establish a working relationship with the Governor's Association.

Participate in appropriate national organizations that serve the Coalition's interests. Distribute work products and policy positions to interested parties as quickly as possible including the use of the web and other electronic and conventional means. All materials should become branded with the Clean, Green and Smart phraseology. Making sure that both the membership and others know what the Coalition is accomplishing is essential to obtaining ongoing funding for the organization. Creating more awareness of the Coalition's activities is crucial to the effectiveness of this plan.

Strategic Initiatives

The Coalition's committees are vital in identifying initiatives and in carrying out the work program to address them. The preference and basic premise of this Business plan is to have initiatives come from the membership. The members have to agree that an activity is useful for the Coalition to be successful in the long run. This plan envisions the committees act more like working groups bringing experts together in their respective fields to collaborate, coordinate and communicate on specific issues that improve mobility in their area and in the corridor.

The work of the ITS, Operations, and Environment Committee has to be a showpiece of Coalition work. The Best Practices Manual is only the beginning of this effort. It has to be kept alive by an effective Peer Review Group which is constantly updating the manual. A second aspect of this work is to identify one or two Best Practices at a time that can be pursued by multiple entities, establish a task force, identify funding to support the effort and help implementation of the practice happen in a coordinated manner that enhances the benefits of the strategy. The Climate change issue is one that all entities, both public and private, are facing which points toward this being a critical issue on which the Coalition ought to focus. The Coalition could augment this effort with another that could be helpful. That is, the identification of "at risk" infrastructure due to the global warming phenomenon. As climate change occurs additional costs will probably be incurred to repair, replace, remove infrastructure that is no longer viable under those changing circumstances.

The Goods Movement Committee has to do a similar effort. They have accomplished a major effort with the completion of the *West Coast Corridor Coalition Trade & Transportation Study*. Establishing new initiatives for the Coalition is critical and urgent for Coalition success. This Plan proposes to jump start the effort with the following proposals for the Committee to pursue. These proposals should be reviewed and priorities established.

There are many opportunities for the Coalition to engage and provide assistance to the membership. These include a multistate truck traveler information system, truck parking, and

alleviating bottlenecks on the system. The Coalition should also provide a broader, more strategic, look at significant national and international trends, issues or proposals for its members. Global economic trends, environmental issues, the development of new international facilities such as the Panama Canal, Prince Rupert and potential Mexican port development all could have significant impacts on the West Coast transportation system. These overarching types of issues could be evaluated by the Coalition instead of each member having to do such an evaluation saving the membership money.

There are key, strategic freight improvement projects throughout the Coalition's area of interest. While the Coalition can make clear it supports the projects of its members it needs to also be able to highlight really crucial ones that need additional support without members feeling that "their project" isn't identified. While there are numerous important projects throughout the Corridor the following are several examples of key projects: the I-5 Columbia River Crossing at the Oregon and Washington border, the Gerald Desmond Bridge in California, the Fast Corridor in the Seattle Tacoma region, and the 800 mile Alaskan Natural Gas Pipeline Corridor project.

Strengthen Communications

Establish a new website with an information sharing capability where members can post information and exchange ideas or issues through a bulletin board or blog approach or other means to provide a method for peer exchange of information, data and activities that is easy for the members to use. Having the Coalition thought of as a place to share and get information should be an important function for the Coalition.

There should be distribution of the actions and other activities of the Coalition on a regular basis. Members are inundated with emails and other material from many sources. The Coalition's material needs to be considered useful to by the recipients. We can consider some type of electronic distribution method when we establish a good flow of information.

The Coalition can be useful to the membership by convening effective workshops, seminars, conferences, or organizing training sessions on topics of interest and priority with the membership.

When we are successful at getting the membership and others to share information through and with the Coalition we should consider distribution of a regular electronic piece highlighting key activities of the membership. Once something like this is started it is important to be able to maintain it.

Staffing Actions

Hire a permanent Executive Director, a half-time assistant and web administrator. All of these could be done through contract. The latter could be with a member, university or private vendor. The Executive Director should be independent from a member organization.

On a project by project basis, consider whether the project needs a project manager (through contract).

Business Plan Phasing

It is anticipated that a number of the plan's strategies have to be taken on at the same time. Priority will be given to the following.

The Goods Movement Committee should recommend to the Board 1-2 projects that it believes is worthwhile and can be initiated immediately. It also needs to develop a work plan for accomplishing the objective. Funding also needs to be secured to complete the effort.

The Coalition's positions on Reauthorization should be refined in light of the Stimulus Program and the current fiscal realities that the public sector is facing. This should include support for additional funding for the Coalition. However, the timing of Reauthorization will probably require some other options to be pursued for the near term.

Completing the Best Practices Manual for the Clean, Green and Smart project. This program is of utmost importance to the Coalition. It offers a strong opportunity to help the membership address the very significant environmental issues that all of the members are facing. This should be coupled with initiating a dialogue with the Western Governors Association on Climate Change Issues to see how the two organizations can help each other.

The Coalition has to raise the senior management participation by its members on the Board. Several, but not all, of the Board's member are from a senior management position, or policy board, at the respective member organization. It is desirable that the Board be comprised of policy members and CEOs (or their specifically delegated alternate) who can clearly speak for their respective organization. Accomplishing this and providing clarity on the membership of each committee will enhance the effectiveness of the organization.

Each committee should have a core membership of organizations with all members be able to participate. For example, the Goods Movement Committee should have core participation by the four state Departments of Transportation (DOTs), any Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that has an international border or large port or other shipping center, at least one large and small port, an airport with significant air cargo, at least one trucking association, one maritime private sector member, one railroad, and one shipper. The respective committees could have working groups of appropriate members when a specific project was initiated.

Financing

Obtaining adequate financing is often the most difficult part of an organization's life. Funding requires the Coalition to have a good project that its members want. While there are some funds remaining from the prior federal appropriation and matching provided by some of the members; a new revenue stream needs to be created. These funds may lapse September 30 even if there is unspent money left. The Coalition should pursue efforts to ensure that available budgeted funds remain available after September 30, 2009. This plan envisions several possible sources of continuing revenue for the Coalition.

In the longer term the federal reauthorization legislation will likely have a reasonable national freight funding program that may provide for multistate organizations to carry out portions of that program. With AASHTO's support and the recognition that freight can be a multistate, corridor

type issue; the multistate approach has a real possibility of being included. Regardless of whether the multistate approach is in a final bill, the legislation will provide a strong vehicle for Coalition activities. However, it appears highly likely that this legislation will not get final passage until at least 2010. This probability necessitates the Coalition to have some short term funding options including the pursuit of other special funding requests from Congress.

Depending on the nature of the Coalition's activities that the Board decides, there are funding opportunities in other federal funding programs (e.g. energy, homeland security, maritime). Exploration of these other departments is important and necessary.

Other multistate coalitions exist around the country and may offer models for funding. While some receive federal funds directly, others have funding from their members through "pooled resources" in planning and research. One coalition uses a matching program with a University to complete projects. This pooled financing approach offers an alternative but with the current financial situation of most of our members it may prove to be difficult to obtain. It would be substantially easier, the more members the cost is shared among. It depends on the importance of the project to those paying.

This shared cost approach also extends to the private sector. Depending on the projects the Coalition undertakes it is entirely possible to obtain private or foundation funding. The Coalition may need to clarify its legal status vis a vis obtaining funding from the private sector so as to ensure the public sector members have no conflicts.

Creating a new website provides a vehicle for some funding, probably not enough for specific projects, through allowing others to showcase on the site. Sponsorship of events, conferences, workshops is also a possibility that should be explored.

While charging dues for membership is an obvious funding strategy it is, interestingly, not one followed by most multistate groups. Also, most of these have members that are exclusively state DOTs and that makes the West Coast Corridor Coalition somewhat unique in the country.

A few of the recommendations in the plan can be implemented within the existing budget. New initiatives will likely need additional resources.

The success of this business plan depends on the membership having its policy or senior management involvement in the Coalition, selecting key programs it wants to collectively work on to support its Clean, Green and Smart vision, and having a good external relations/communications program. The programs must be viewed as important to the membership and must address the needs of the constituents of the west coast.