Western States Rural Transportation Consortium (WSRTC)

Charter

May 2010

This document represents the governing principles of the WSRTC. The Consortium was officially established in 2010.

Western States Rural Transportation Consortium Charter

Identification
The collective name for this association shall be the Western States Rural Transportation Consortium (WSRTC)

Summary
The WSRTC shall promote innovative partnerships, technologies and educational opportunities to facilitate and enhance safe, seamless rural travel throughout the western United States.

The WSRTC shall also provide a collaborative mechanism to leverage research activities in a coordinated manner to respond to rural transportation issues among western states related to Technology, Operations and Safety.

Overview
Project Background
WSRTC is a continuation and broadening of the original California Oregon Advanced Transportation System (COATS). COATS began in 1998 as collaborative effort among the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Montana State University, Bozeman's Western Transportation Institute (WTI) to investigate the use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) in rural areas. The intent of the COATS project was to facilitate the use of ITS to enhance safety, improve the movement of people, goods and services, and subsequently promote the economic development of the bi-state region and to begin deployment of those solutions [1].

This included the use of ITS to provide solutions in rural areas such as non-recurrent congestion, weather, safety, tourism, mobility and freight movement [2].

Listed below are COATS Phases and the major deliverables of each phase:
COATS Phase I – July 1998 to June 2002
- A regional ITS architecture
- Two Caltrans rural Traffic Management Centers (TMC) were constructed in Redding and Eureka
- Numerous Caltrans and ODOT ITS field element sites were installed
- Siskiyou Pass winter operations guidelines

COATS Phase II – July 2002 to June 2006
- Evaluation of ITS Technologies in Rural Work Zones
- Case Studies of Maintaining ITS Devices in Rural Areas
- Communications and Power Improvements for Rural ITS Field Devices
- Oregon ITS Performance and Benefits Plan

COATS Phase III – July 2006 to June 2008
- COATS Integrated Corridor Management One Stop Shop
- 2006 and 2007 Western States Rural Transportation Implementers Forum

COATS Phase IV – July 2008 to June 2010
- 2008 and 2009 Western States Rural Transportation Implementers Forum
- Radar Speed Sign Deployment Guidelines
- Fredonyer Summit Icy Curve Warning System (ICWS) Evaluation

During the COATS Phase III effort, the Western States Rural Transportation Technology Implementers Forum (WSRTTIF) was created to bridge the technology transfer gap between practitioners. WSRTTIF consisted of nuts-and-bolts presentations that allowed frank discussions on how technology projects were implemented in the field. The WSRTTIF provided insight not only for the need of collaboration on rural ITS technology transfer, but also operations and safety research.

The COATS Steering Committee determined that it was in the best interest of the project to broaden its area of service to the western United States. This included a refocusing on three primary areas, technology, operations and safety, while leveraging research dollars to provide reliable, robust solutions to common rural transportation issues.

Sponsorship
Caltrans shall be the primary sponsor of this project. The chairperson of the Caltrans' Division of Research and Innovation's (DRI) Rural Program Steering Committee shall be the project champion. DRI shall provide project management funding for the project.

Each Member State and member Research Institution shall supply their own WSRTC sponsor and champion within their own respective organization.

Ownership
Caltrans shall retain ownership of the project documentation related to the management of WSRTC. Caltrans intends to grant unrestricted usage of all the project documentation to the member States and Research Institutions of the WSRTC, to the extent possible that California law allows. The intent of the WSRTC is free and open use of products created and developed with public funds by its membership.

States that fund spin-off projects formulated within the WSRTC retain ownership of the spin-off project, granting usage of the resultant deliverables to the member States and Research Institutions.

Intellectual property issues related to incubator and spin-off projects are to be handled within the Member State's organization.

Governance

Membership

Member State

At the present time, membership is limited to the States west of and including the Rocky Mountains. Member States are encouraged to have their own internal stakeholder sub-groups specific to the member State organization such as Districts, HQ, Research and first responders. Currently, the WSRTC consists of the following member States: California, Oregon, Washington and Nevada.

Member Research Institution

Limited to Research Institutions that are approved by the member States that provides research mechanisms and funding for incubator and spin-off projects. Currently, the WSRTC consists of the following member research institutions: Montana State University, Bozeman Western Transportation Institute (WTI) and the University of Washington (UW).

Both member States and member Research Institutions are encouraged to have their respective internal stakeholder groups attend Steering Committee and sub-committee meetings.

Project Manager

A DRI Project Manager shall provide project administration of this project.

Membership Organization

Charter Steering Committee

Caltrans, ODOT and WTI shall be considered the Charter Steering Committee for the WSRTC. This committee shall meet at least once a year. The Charter Steering Committee is permitted to make adjustments to the WSRTC Charter, Mission, Vision and Goals at will in order to ensure proper functioning and success of the organization.

Steering Committee

Each Member State and WTI shall have one member on the steering committee. This committee shall meet at least twice a year. The Steering committee is responsible for executing the WSRTC Charter, Mission, Vision and Goals in terms of meetings, outreach and projects. In addition, the Steering Committee is responsible for making an Annual Report to the Charter Steering Committee detailing the current state of the WSRTC. Finally, the Steering Committee is responsible for reporting on the previous semi-annual meeting action items.

The Steering Committee shall create sub-committees at its discretion to execute its duties efficiently.

Membership Voting

Each Member State and WTI shall have one vote in each of the three primary goals of the WSRTC – technology, safety and operations.

All other member Research Institutions and the WSRTC Project Manager may advise the Charter Committee, Steering Committee and its sub-committees, but are not voting members of the WSRTC.

Duration
Four years. At the end of the four-year period, the Charter Steering Committee and Steering Committee shall decide on the renewal of the WSRTC

Effort Estimate
Each Member State shall be responsible for attending meetings, teleconferences and reviewing documents in a timely manner. The estimated time commitment for each Member State is approximately 120 hours per year.

Cost Estimate
The administration cost of this project is approximately $150,000 per year, it will be provided by DRI and WTI.   Included in this cost are the following:
- WTI contract costs covering the administration of the WSRTC
- The preliminary research costs of three small research incubator projects
- The annual WSRTTIF meeting.

Any research institution utilizing its own University Transportation Center (UTC) funds shall not be obligated to share the UTC funds with another research institution.

The overhead costs of the WSRTC shall be the responsibility of the Member State or Research Institution, including salary and overhead expenses excluding travel. All travel related expenditures will be provided by WSRTC with prior approval of the Charter Steering Committee.

Incubator and Spin-Off Projects
Depending on scope and extent of the incubator projects and spin-off projects the Steering committee shall approve the facilities and resources for each incubator project. The Steering Committee shall also coordinate the development of operational guidelines for incubator projects and spin-off projects.

Each Member State or member States that elect to spin-off an incubator project shall provide resources for that project. A project management body will be determined by the lead Member State. It is necessary that the Steering Committee have the ability to provide review of the project scope and deliverables for a spin-off project. The aggregated comments of the Steering Committee are non-binding to the member State lead.

Each incubator project and spin-off project manager shall give status reports to the WSRTC Project Manager quarterly.

Each deliverable shall be posted on the WSRTC website.

In addition to the regular administration funding, the WSRTC shall pursue Federal and State grants as necessary to provide funding for incubator and spin-off projects.

External Communications
A website shall be provided for the WSRTC communication effort. The Project Manager and WTI shall be responsible for maintaining, updating and operation of the website. The Charter Committee, Steering Committee, together with the incubator and spin-off project managers shall provide content updates to the website in a timely manner.

The WSRTC shall participate in national transportation conferences, including but not limited to the National Rural ITS Annual Conference and the ITS America Annual Meetings.

Risk Management
The fiscal support of the administration of the WSRTC is subject to budget approval from Caltrans DRI and WTI. This support is granted on an annual basis and is subject to fluctuations, including total withdrawal of funding.

The Steering Committee is directed to approach the incubator projects as small, short-term efforts that can be wrapped up within the annual cycle of approved funding.

Charter Change Control
The Charter Steering Committee shall review and if appropriate, approve recommendations from the Steering committee related to the amendment of this charter. The WSRTC Project Manager shall maintain the Charter and shall keep a modification log for the Charter.

Appendices
Terminology
Caltrans – California Department of Transportation

COATS – California Oregon Advanced Transportation System

DRI – Caltrans Division of Research and Innovation

NDOT – Nevada Department of Transportation

ODOT – Oregon Department of Transportation

Incubator Project – A small, short-term pilot project to test a concept of operations

ITS - Intelligent Transportation Systems

Spin-off Project – An incubator project that has gone beyond the incubator project stage and requires its own set of project resources

UTC – University Transportation Center

UW – University of Washington

WSDOT – Washington Department of Transportation

WSRTC – Western States Rural Transportation Consortium

WSRTTIF – Western States Rural Transportation Technology Implementers Forum

WTI – Montana State University, Bozeman Western Transportation Institute

References
[1]   California-Oregon Advanced Transportation System: Strategic Deployment Plan, May 2001, Page 13
[2]   California-Oregon Advanced Transportation System: Strategic Deployment Plan, May 2001, Page xix

Approval

The signatures below indicate the organizations commitment to the content of this charter and the successful implementation of the Western States Rural Transportation Charter.

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Ed Lamkin, Deputy District Director for Maintenance and Operations, District 2
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