



North/West Passage Transportation Pooled Fund Study

History

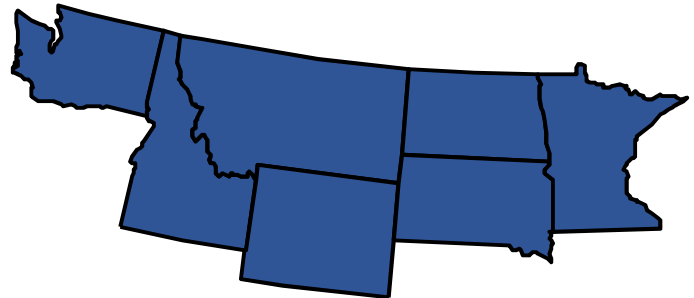
Interstates 90 and 94 between Washington and Wisconsin function as major corridors for commercial and recreational travel. Extreme winter weather conditions, prevalent in the northern states within this corridor, pose significant operational and travel-related challenges. Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming are predominantly rural and face similar transportation issues related to traffic management, traveler information, and commercial vehicle operations.

Recognizing the value of coordinated, cross-border collaboration for Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) deployment to address these issues, Minnesota initiated a meeting in 2002 with representatives from each of the states within the corridor. The group established itself as a Transportation Pooled Fund in 2003 through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The North/West Passage Corridor has developed an ITS Integrated Strategic Plan and has successfully implemented nine work plans containing 50 projects. Currently the group is working on its tenth work plan consisting of six projects. Complete details on previous work plans and individual projects are available through the program web site at www.nwpassage.info.

Member States

- Idaho Transportation Department
- Minnesota DOT
- Montana DOT
- North Dakota DOT
- South Dakota DOT
- Washington State DOT
- Wyoming DOT



Vision

The vision of the North/West Passage (NWP) Corridor is to focus on developing effective methods for sharing, coordinating, and integrating traveler information and operational activities across state and provincial borders. The vision provides a framework to guide the states' future projects in the corridor.

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Awards

At the Opening Session of the 2010 National Rural ITS Conference, the North/West Passage Program was recognized as the winner of the 2010 Best of ITS Rural Award. The Best of ITS Rural Awards is the only program in the world that recognizes the best and brightest of the rural ITS community.

In 2012, NWP initiated the Operations and Travel Information Integration Sharing (OTIIS) project (www.nwpassage.info/projects/mcom/). FHWA selected OTIIS for federal funding through the Multistate Corridor Operations Management Program (MCOM) Program. The purpose of the MCOM program is to promote regional cooperation, planning, and shared project implementation for research programs and projects that improve multimodal transportation system management and operations.

Research and development during the first phase of the OTIIS project was carried out by the Western Transportation Institute (WTI), which offers extensive experience developing multistate corridor plans and traveler information systems that integrate data from multiple sources. OTIIS leveraged previous North/West Passage projects to implement an enhanced corridor-wide traveler information website. Currently North/West Passage is in its second phase of the project which will focus on launching the website, gathering feedback on the website as well as operating and maintaining the site. Phase 2 will also include an evaluation.

Website

A program website (www.nwpassage.info) was created to provide easy access to North/West Passage information and to communicate and educate users about the pooled fund study. The website contains an archive of all project meetings and reports and provides a history of the corridor.

Accomplishments

The NWP states have collaborated since 2001.

Accomplishments of the corridor include:

- North and South Dakota 511 callers can select to receive information on Minnesota's highways.
- Development of one proposal to hire a contractor to perform work in two states.
- Each state uses their own phrases to describe road events. The NWP defined and agreed upon a set of consistent event description phrases to use across the I-90 and I-94 corridor.
- Provided a forum for state patrol/police and DOT staff to discuss integration of systems.
- Held a workshop to create action plans for increased cross-border operation and maintenance collaboration.
- Participated in the USDOT Clarus initiative. The result of the project was an example of all NWP states working together to develop a corridor Concept of Operations document.
- Shared the details of Wyoming's citizen reporting program for expansion to additional states. Idaho has implemented a citizen assisted reporting system.
- Signed a Corridor-Wide MOU for corridor wide coordination of traveler information.
- Created a benefit/cost spreadsheet tool for typical rural ITS projects.
- Held a webinar to open a dialogue with the freight industry.
- Evaluated traveler information tools used and coordination among the NWP states during major events.
- Documented how each state plans and prioritizes ITS deployments.
- Assessed each state's conformance to SAFETEA-LU 1201 regarding real-time system management information program.
- Held peer exchanges on the development of a concept for rural TMC/TOC operations, Variable Speed Limits, and DOT Efficiencies.
- Hosted a Regional Operations Forum for the NWP members

