



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, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (DOT) 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).

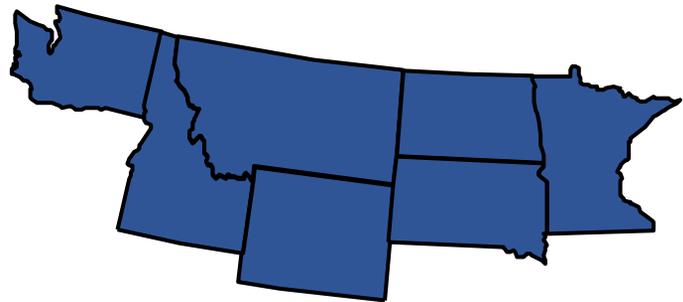
The North/West Passage Corridor has developed an ITS Integrated Strategic Plan and has successfully implemented fourteen work plans. Currently the group is working on its fifteenth work plan consisting of eight projects. Complete details on previous work plans and individual projects are available through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

Contact

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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.

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 reports and provides a history of the corridor.

Member Benefits

The North/West Passage member states have identified many benefits they have gained from participating in the pooled fund.

- Provided important contacts
- Served as a forum to share lessons learned
- Led to the revamping of one state's 511 system
- Provided topics and addressed issues that have been timely and important before moving forward with a project
- Led to an evaluation of the way business is conducted in our state
- Assisted in making revisions to road condition reporting phrases
- Promoted exchange of traveler information with neighboring states
- Provided the opportunity to share ITS experiences as well as operation and maintenance experiences
- Promoted data sharing between state agencies and public safety
- Closer working efforts with border states
- Program website provides a resource to show decision makers on the benefits for continued financial contribution to the program
- Quality of virtual meetings and annual in-person meeting
- Allows other staff within member states involvement in program and project efforts (e.g. workshops) to expand knowledge of other state efforts as well as extend networks internally
- Peer exchange
- Provides motivation and project ideas of value to consider within each state

Accomplishments

Following are key accomplishments of the North/West Passage.

- Conducted numerous webinars and peer exchanges on operations, maintenance and TSMO related topics.
- Conduct annual technician's forum.
- Documented and shared COVID-19 responses.
- Documented workforce practices.
- Examined crowdsourcing practices.
- Examined similarities, differences, and usage of state DOT traveler information website features.
- Best of ITS Rural Award recipient in 2010.
- Development of one proposal to hire a contractor to perform work in two states.
- 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 that developed a corridor Concept of Operations.
- Signed a Corridor-Wide MOU for coordination of traveler information.
- Created a benefit/cost spreadsheet tool for typical rural ITS projects.
- Researched freight funding opportunities, truck platooning and parking for the NWP states.
- Documented how each state plans and prioritizes ITS deployments.
- Federal Grant: Multistate Corridor Operations and Management Program (MCOM) recipient.
- Hosted a NWP Regional Operations Forum.
- Summarized NWP winter performance measures practices and approaches for forecasting road conditions.
- Evaluated Rural 511 Phone Service.
- Documented current work zone practices of member states.

