

I-80 Coalition

Kick-Off Workshop – Meeting Summary

January 26-27, 2010 Reno, Nevada

1. Overview

Four state DOTs convened in Reno, Nevada to discuss traffic operations and maintenance activities during winter weather conditions. The focus of the meeting was on sharing existing programs/systems with other Coalition states and developing key strategies to move states closer in coordination, sharing resources and information, and leveraging state strengths to build more cohesive traffic operations and maintenance activities across all four states. Representatives from North/West Passage and I-95 Coalition presented guidance in formulating a Coalition.

2. Presentations

- **Caltrans** – summary of winter operations, TMC/ITS capabilities, trucking volumes, and closure coordination with Nevada
- **Nevada DOT** – summary of truck parking and volumes, coordination with Caltrans, and ITS capabilities, including District 2 and District 3
- **Utah DOT** – summary of statewide TMC activities, weather integration into TMC operations, traveler information programs/services and ITS capabilities
- **Wyoming DOT** – summary of variable speed limit project, traveler road condition reporting system (ECAR), 511 traveler information push system (511 Notify), and snow fence installations
- **FHWA** – overview of national initiatives with the *Clarus* system and MDSS (Maintenance Decision Support System) as well as IntelliDriveSM
- **New Hampshire DOT** – summary of RWIS integration projects and considerations when implementing ITS devices to support data collection and operational decision-making
- **Northwest Weathernet** – summary of Meteorological Operations Center concept and importance of weather forecasting in sharing road conditions information and traffic operations for each state

2. Maintenance

Needs:

- Need to distribute the impact of trucks and traveler information available to trucks on I-80 across the states
- Need consistent level of service and weather and road condition descriptors
- Need communication between states TMCs and maintenance divisions
- Need operational understanding of neighbor states maintenance activities
- Coordination between states from a weather perspective BEFORE a storm hits
- TMC information receiving and dissemination – TMC needs to be a conduit to pass information
- Need to have the right people to understand the need for coordination between states – champions for each state
- Maintenance activities are not limited to winter months – coordination needs to extend into the rest of the year

3. TMC/Operations

Needs:

- Operate and use HAR more effectively
- Focus on how to get information out to customers
- Corridor-specific information for I-80
- Targeted surveys of corridor users, with emphasis on freight community
- Coalition role – research best practices from elsewhere, synthesize (what are others doing with tools?)
- Consistent content guidelines for traveler information
- Gather inventory for I-80 – what’s currently out there

4. North/West Passage Overview

Provided guidance on implementing Coalition, including:

- Begin Coalition activities with “low hanging fruit” – operational strategies that could jump start the coordination efforts
- Formalize Coalition in terms of organization charter, operating rules, voting procedures, roles and responsibilities, and funding requirements of members
- Chairs of technical committees and steering committee need to keep momentum and prioritize commitment to championing projects set forth by the Coalition
- As part of a formal agreement due to the changing levels of involvement during voting opportunities, each state should only be allowed one vote to maintain balance among the states on the direction of the Coalition
- As part of a Coalition, each champion of the committees should establish a network at their agency to collect ideas to enable the champion to be the representative for that agency on a holistic level rather than an individual experience level
- Publicizing the value and success of the program is an important and ongoing challenge
- Funding may not be a reality from a federal level – therefore the Coalition states need to drive the objectives forward through alternative options and potentially smaller individual projects
- Management consultant needs to have knowledge and understanding of Coalition issues and national best practices/trends/programs will guide objectives and projects developed for the Coalition
- Make sure the people at the table are engaged and champion Coalition objectives – participants should be committed to the Coalition goals and understand that individual needs may not always be met in every Coalition action
- Equal state involvement is key to moving a Coalition forward and an unbalanced state leadership can drive state-specific projects away from multi-state cooperation/coordination
- Program chair needs to keep focus and attention on moving Coalition forward – leadership of the Coalition as a whole is needed as well as consistency in formal involvement in activities

5. Summary Discussion

- Some interest in MOC concept – potential for UDOT MOC to provide forecasts for other states?
- Need consistent level of service – need to measure performance and describe and report winter and road conditions consistently

- Information sharing from TMC to maintenance crews needs to be a focus as incident information can affect operations in the field
- Benefits to evaluating best practices on maintenance equipment
- Need to establish standard operating procedures for sharing information across states and could apply these procedures to other corridors (such as I-15)
- Investigate the opportunity in the future to create a Pooled Fund Study from this Coalition and possibly include more states
- Gather data on I-80 statistics with regards to crashes, fatalities, congestion, closure lengths, and economic impacts to support request for funding – justification of need
- Establish a roster of contacts from each state as resource for coordination efforts between states
- Develop timetable and action plan for near-term Coalition activities and longer-term Coalition objectives/formalization – focus on independent activities for each state with Coalition objectives in mind and look to expand the involvement and deployment of projects to multi-state limits in the future
- Focus near-term activities on operational strategies that require less funding
- Need to be creative in funding Coalition projects – potentially look at use of ITS discretionary funds
- Survey users of I-80 to gather key focus areas important to their travel along I-80 – travelers and trucking industry – NDOT has begun a survey that can be used by other states to distribute at Ports of Entry and during freeway closures this winter
- Provide updates to Coalition states on what each state is working on through published information on Coalition website (include activities in safety, training, equipment, 511 enhancements, etc.) – benefit/cost information can help other states initiate projects on an individual basis
- Potentially expand I-80 Coalition website to include real-time road condition information to be shared between states
- Coordinate with planning groups from each state for data and needs to support justification of Coalition activities
- Meetings can be conducted via videoconferencing, webinars, and telephone conference calls to continue Coalition involvement between annual meetings
- Leverage Clear Roads research and development activities to support multi-state interest in maintenance equipment and testing of new products/technologies
- Coordinated efforts that are consistent in application and involvement such as the North/West Passage can show patterns that are justifiable to support from a federal perspective
- Implement outreach efforts beyond Coalition states to promote project impacts

6. Other Partners to Involve and/or Gather Needs From

- Trucking industry – need to understand what information is useful for their operations and how that information needs to be transmitted to them effectively and potentially invite trucking industry to attend Coalition meeting and present their needs
- Tourism industry (resorts, ski areas, welcome centers, etc.)
- Special Event Planners/Organizations (such as Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority [RSCVA])