

Program Progress Report for University Transportation Centers Funded by the Research and Innovative Technology Administration

Project Title: **Pacific Northwest Transportation Consortium (PacTrans): Using Advanced Technologies to Develop Data-driven, Sustainable Solutions for the Diverse Transportation Needs of the Pacific Northwest**

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Report #1, PPPR reporting on first six months

1. Accomplishments

- **What are the major goals and objectives of the program?**

Major goals and objectives of the PacTrans program will have major implications for policy changes, education, outreach, and technology transfer.

- **What was accomplished under these goals?**

During the first six months of the project:

- The PacTrans Website www.pactrans.org was registered as the domain name for the consortium. The website has been updated with the key personnel working on the project. A complete redesign of the website is planned for the next reporting period. The assistant director has collected bids from several web development firms and interviewed over the phone several developers.
- During the half-year funding gap, the previous Region 10 UTC lost its entire staff. Re-establishing the PacTrans workforce became an important and urgent task. With the understanding that it takes time to build the staff team correctly, the procedure was to hire the assistant director first and then rely on the assistant director to hire the half-time program assistant and the half-time fiscal person.
- PacTrans leadership established a regional Outreach and Technology Transfer Committee to help identify potential partners who may be interested in the research products generated from PacTrans projects. Involving these partners early has helped the research team direct limited resource to the functions or features with clear user demands.
- PacTrans leadership set up project monitoring teams to review and provide regular feedback on the multi-institution projects. Each team is composed of a PacTrans Board Member, an expert from an external research institution, and a third from a local transportation agency or company. The review panel assures that the project goals and activities are in line with an important regional transportation issue and that the agency or private industry sponsor's concerns are sufficiently accounted for. Choosing the appropriate projects for funding is a critical step for future technology transfer.
- To publicize our new center, a Launching Summit event was hosted on May 24, 2012 at the Talaris Conference Center near the University of Washington. Nearly 100 transportation professionals participated in the event and contributed their

ideas on research, education, workforce development, and outreach activities for PacTrans to consider and collaborate.

- Subcontracts between the University of Washington and its consortium partners – Washington State University, Oregon State University, Alaska University Fairbanks and University of Idaho – were successfully negotiated and finalized.
- Seven large multi-institution projects and over a dozen small to medium-sized research projects were launched.

- **What opportunities for training and professional development has the program provided?**

Nothing to report at this time.

- **How have the results been disseminated? If so, in what way/s?**

Nothing to report at this time.

2. What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals and objectives?

- **Website Redesign**

The PacTrans website will be completely redesigned, so to better publicize the Consortium's research projects and other activities. Updates on the research projects will be posted as well.

- **PacTrans Monthly Seminar Series**

Starting this fall, internationally recognized researchers and transportation leaders will be invited to deliver speeches on hot transportation issues at the monthly PacTrans Seminar Series. This seminar series will be open to all transportation professionals in Region 10. All speeches are video recorded and published on the PacTrans website immediately after the talk.

- **External Advisory Board**

The PacTrans External Advisory Board, composed of state DOT and industry leaders in the region, will meet with PacTrans leadership in the fall.

- **Multi-institution Monitoring Group**

This group, which was established by PacTrans leadership during the first six months, has already submitted their feedback on all the multi-institutional projects. During the next reporting period, this feedback will be shared with all PIs and Co-investigators through teleconference calls.

3. Participants and Other Collaborating Organizations: Who has been involved?

- **What individuals have worked on the program?**

PacTrans Director, Yinhai Wang, PhD., professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Washington (UW), devotes 50 percent of this time directing PacTrans. Dr. Wang has overall responsibility for program management, oversight of the PacTrans operations, including the Research Committee, the Education and Workforce Development Committee, and the Outreach and Technology Transfer Committee, and Student Leadership Council. He is the regional and national leadership for PacTrans, and the contact person for management relationships with USDOT Research and Innovative Administration (RITA) and other USDOT organizations.

PacTrans Associate Director in research, Linda Ng Boyle, PhD, associate professor with joint appointments in industrial and systems engineering, and civil and environmental engineering at the UW spends 15 percent of her time on managing the research program as the research committee chair for PacTrans and organizing the research collaboration across the five partner institutions. She is also appointed to coordinate management relationships in the unlikely situations when Dr. Wang may have conflicts.

PacTrans Associate Director in education and workforce development, Anne Vernez Moudon, Dr es Sc, Professor of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design and Planning; she is Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology and Civil and Environmental Engineering at the UW. She devotes 10 percent of her time leading the education and workforce development Committee. She is involved in curriculum changes, professional training program development, and educational enhancements among the partner institutions. She works closely with Mr. Hallenbeck in student seminars, internship, and fellowship programs.

PacTrans Associate Director in Oregon State University (OSU), Chris Bell, PhD, professor of civil and environmental engineering at OSU, devotes 10 percent of his time to managing and organizing the education, outreach, and research activities

within OSU. He coordinates all results and outcomes with the UW on a regular basis.

PacTrans Associate Director in University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), Billy Connor, director of Alaska University Transportation Center, devotes 10 percent of his time to managing and organizing the education, outreach, and research activities within UAF. He coordinates all results and outcomes with the UW on a regular basis.

PacTrans Associate Director in University of Idaho (UI), Karen Den Braven, PhD, professor of mechanical engineering at UI, devotes 10 percent of her time to managing and organizing the education, outreach, and research activities within UI. She coordinates all results and outcomes with the UW on a regular basis.

PacTrans Associate Director in Washington State University (WSU), David McLean, PhD, professor and chair of civil and environmental engineering at WSU, devotes 10 percent of his time to managing and organizing the education, outreach, and research activities within WSU. He also coordinates all results and outcomes with the UW on a regular basis.

Center staff at the UW include a full-time assistant director, Ms. Meghan MacKrell, who devotes 100 percent of her time to day-to-day operations in support of the PacTrans Board of Directors, ensuring scheduled activities are on track. Ms. Wanjiku Gitahi has also been working as a temporary half-time program assistant since May. Her responsibilities include maintaining the website, event planning, facilitating the schedule of meetings, and data entry duties.

The Student Leadership Council, composed of graduate students at all Consortium partner universities, is an active part of the PacTrans management structure. The Student Leadership Council facilitates student and center communications and plans their own activities. For example, one important student event already on the PacTrans schedule is the Region 10 Student Conference. Leaders of the three UTCs in this region, PacTrans, National Institution for Transportation and Communities (NITC) and Transportation for Livability by Integrating Vehicles and the Environment (TranLIVE), plan to host a joint student conference next year.

- **What other organizations have been involved as partners?**

The state DOTs in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington, have been very much involved.

4. Impact: What is the impact of the program? How has it contributed to transportation education, research and technology transfer?

Nothing to report at this time.

5. Changes/Problems

Nothing to report at this time.

6. Special Reporting Requirements

Nothing to report at this time.