

Tribal Transportation Planning Organization

Yakama Nations Legends Conference Center – Toppenish

July 20, 2011

Minutes

I. Introductions

Kirk Vinish, TTPO Chairman, welcomed all to the third quarterly meeting of the TTPO. Kirk asked for any revisions to the agenda but none were offered. No additions or modifications to the agenda were suggested.

II. Minutes

III. Yakama Nation Transportation Project Presentation

Al Pinkham, Jr., Transportation Planner for the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation spoke about the Tribe's "Local Transportation Improvements". He noted that their casino, Yakama Nation Legends Casino, was the "driver" of many of their transportation developments. The Tribal Complex includes state, county, and BIA roads which serve the casino, school, RV park retail, BIA offices and the hotel/conference area offices. Highway 97 is the main highway that intersects with county, BIA, and City of Toppenish roads and is the subject of significant safety improvements including access improvements, road widening, additional signals and enhanced illumination, sidewalks, bike lanes, a roundabout and extension of frontage roads. The project funding will come from BIA -IRR funding and from Yakima County.

IV. Election of Officers

It was suggested that the election of officers be conducted at next meeting once a review of the by-laws is completed by Miller-Nash. **Motion** by Casey Stevens to postpone the elections until our next meeting. Second by Keri Shepherd. Motion carries.

V. Tribal Transit Systems in WA State

Jonathan Ciesla was unable to attend the meeting due to illness; Keri Shepherd graciously offered to provide this update in his place. Keri gave a summary of the available transit funding options

and discussed the many operational models. This year many tribal transit programs, previously funded by FTA, were not provided with continued funding. The question for FTA is “why were some Tribes with existing service, previously funded by FTA, not funded for 2012? FTA did award seven Tribal Transit grants to new Tribal applicants for 2012.

Although FTA was invited to attend the meeting to discuss this matter they were not able to attend.

Keri noted that the competition for available funds was keen and that it is likely that only high quality of applications were funded. She noted Lummi’s exceptional application submitted for WSDOT’s Consolidated Transit funding as an example to follow. Additionally, she urged that tribe’s get creative in choosing funding resources such as emergency management grants. Over the last few years the Northwest has received 1/3 of FTA money nationwide. It may be that FTA is trying to spread the money around. The main issues for Tribes regarding the FTA program:

- How are funds distributed
- Work with State and FTA to coordinate grant release dates so Tribes can more effectively apply for funding.
- Should the FTA money be formula?

WSDOT prepares a report each year regarding the status of transit systems in Washington to be published in December, 2011. All public transportation services, including Tribes, will be asked for information. All organizations will only be asked for information that they already collect.

Jim Longley suggested we create a standing TTPO transit sub-committee to address these issues and that we ask FTA to provide technical assist within the tribal transit track at the biennial WSDOT transit conference. The following people volunteered to spearhead this effort; Kim Stube, Cowlitz Tribe, will lead the effort with help from Julia Seyler of the Kalispel Tribe, Keri Shepherd of the Nooksack Tribe, Jonathon Ciesla of the Quinault Nation, Carl XXXX of the Yakama Nation, Coey Gilliland of the Stillaguamish Tribe, Liz Mares of the Yakama Nation and Dana Moses of the Spokane Tribe.

Motion made by Jim Longley to send FTA a letter expressing disappointment that they didn’t attend the TTPO meeting and to request a meeting with FTA and tribal transit providers. Second by Julia Seyler. Motion carries.

VI. WSDOT Public Transportation

Cathy Silins, Deputy Director for WSDOT’s Public Transportation Division, spoke about the process and schedule for applying for transit grant from WSDOT. She outlined the necessary steps as follows:

1. Coordinate Planning – regional focus such as coordinated services plan – spring of even years
2. Identify Un-met Need – Capital and Operations are opportunity for funding - summer of even years
3. Rank Application – regional and State based on need/cost effective/partner cooperation - fall of even years
4. Award on Contract – Required training – “Guide to Managing Your Public Transportation Grant” – summer of odd years
5. Implementation – July of odd years
 - a. Quarterly Reports and Invoicing
 - b. Performance Measures and Reports
 - c. Site Visits – compliance
 - d. Tech Assistance
6. Compliance – throughout the grant process oversee processes and procedures on behalf of the federal government such as procurement, ADA, maintenance, financial management, record keeping.

Available State Funding for 2011-2013:

- a) Special Needs Funds – competitive for Tribes
- b) Rural Mobility – competitive for Tribes
- c) Regional Mobility - competitive but legislature selects projects. Mainly for major capital construction projects.
- d) Federal - 5310, 5311, 5316, 5317

Question - Can WSDOT provide webinar training? Answer – Yes, they already do.

Training and Technical Assistance - RTAP training scholarships available – just apply (see hand-out). Upcoming classes are listed on RTAP website.

Public Transportation Conference – held every other year, the next one is in 2012

WSDOT Tech Assistance is available as well as Peer Review Programs – see website for more information - www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/pttraining.html

IV. Transit Plan Presentation – Yakima Valley Council of Governments Coordinated Human Services Plan

Page Scott, from the Yakima Valley Council of Governments (YVCOG), described the coordinated human services plan as a “bus ride” to available state and federal transit funding as the plan is a requirement of SAFETEA-LU. Washington State was prepared to take

advantage of applying for transit funding when 14 RTPO's and MPO's submitted plans with support from the State Agency on Transit and the ability to meet the statutory definition of special needs.

The YVCOG coordinated with a local group called "People to People" to prepare their human services plan. People to People were very aware of the community's transit needs and the plan was eventually approved by the local MPO/RTPO. Page noted that coordination with the Yakama Nation has been very good regarding outreach to the Tribal population which resulted in Tribal interests being well represented on most local transit groups.

Although three local transit service providers, Yakima Transit, Union Gap Transit, and Pahto – Yakama Nation, provide services with well-defined areas, rural service is outside of their routes is lacking.

VII. WSDOT Tribal Survey

Judy Lorenzo, WSDOT was on hand to discuss WSDOT's survey of the MPO's, RTPO's and Tribes to better understand how communication with Tribes is happening at each MPO/RTPO. The survey was developed by WSDOT and is now being beta tested. It is hoped that data collected will help identify what is working and where improvements can be made.

VIII. Using IRR Funds for Transit

Casey Stevens and Coey Gilliland of the Stillaguamish Tribe, described how they are using BIA IRR funds for their transit program. They have successfully used BIA-IRR funds to match other federal funding as mandated in 23 USC 204 and 25 CFR 170. Also, USDOT funding can be used if the funds come under the Federal Lands Highway. The FTA said "no" regarding BIA-IRR Match and FHWA said "Yes". Richard Rolland cautioned that regional staff are not always authorized to make a determination regarding match eligibility. He urged those with questions to get an answer from a federal staff person at the central office.

IX. Federal Transportation/Transit Program Update

Several years ago the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) developed a white paper which discussed the federal transportation reauthorization process. In response the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) produced a paper called "ATNI Leadership Position on Reauthorization". ATNI passed a resolution approving the white paper but ultimately, NCAI tabled it. There remains a need to clarify the position of the northwest Tribe's on the NCAI paper. Kirk Vinish asked each Tribal representative to request Tribal leader support of the Northwest tribes' position on reauthorization at the upcoming NCAI Conference in Portland in October 11th with Tribal leader attendance at the NCAI

Transportation Committee Meeting to support the position expressed in the white paper. Kirk agreed to send out the ATNI paper to the TTPO membership. The Yakama Tribal Council noted that they will be attending NCAI Transportation Committee meeting.

X. TTPO Business Discussion

The TTPO by-laws are currently under review by the law firm of Miller-Nash who will offer suggestions regarding the changes necessary to meet IRS requirements for a tax-exempt organization. The recommendations will be sent out to the membership prior to our next meeting so we can be prepared to make decision on the changes and the officers' re-election status.

Motion by Kerri Shepherd to approve the April minutes and financials. Seconded by Jim Longley. Motion carries.

XI. Announcements

- Tribal Capacity Survey Update - Results are slow to come in due length of survey and problems with access to the survey tool.
- Richard Rolland provided the following meeting/conference dates:
 - Sept 19th - ATNI Transportation Meeting -
 - Nov. 14-17 - National Tribal Transportation Conference – Nashville, TN
 - April 9-12, 2012 - NWTT Symposium - Grand Mound, WA or Portland, OR
- The Transportation Research Board – has a Native American Research Committee that has produced a Tribal Transit Guidebook. Also, their Tech Advisory Committee has stated that “successful, sustainable Tribal Transit program are those with multiple funding sources and those who have used Technical Assistance”.

Good of the Order

Next meeting location – The Makah Nation invited us to meet in Neah Bay for our October 5th meeting. Kirk will email Greig Arnold to confirm date and see about overnight accommodations. The second choice is PSRC in Seattle.

Adjourn