



No Boundaries Phase II Transportation Pooled Fund #TPF-5(330)

Minutes - Teleconference

November 9, 2015 | 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Central

Attendees

Florida DOT: Kristin McCrary
Michigan DOT: Todd Rowley, Steve Cook
Missouri DOT: Mike Shea
New York State DOT: Joe Doherty, Mike Lashmet, Joe Thompson
North Dakota DOT: Les Noehre
Ohio DOT: John Stains, Zona Kahkonen
Keppler, Mitch Blackford

Pennsylvania DOT: Jon Fleming
South Carolina DOT: Jim Johannemann
Washington State DOT: Jay Wells
CTC: Kim Linsenmayer, Patrick Casey, Kirsten Seeber
DW Clonch: Diana Clonch, Diane Watkins

Scoping No Boundaries Activities

Discussion questions: What are the specific goals for No Boundaries? (Community of practice, clearinghouse, forum for sharing innovations, promoting innovations, supporting technology transfer. etc.) What can we be doing to meet those goals? (Training, focus on face-to-face meetings, database of innovations, on-site or video demonstrations, pilot projects, etc.)

- Jon Fleming – This study is an opportunity to break away from what the group did before. Each state presented their innovations and the group moved forward. Is this the best option? What are the recommendations from the consultants? Do what we've been doing or do something else? I'd like to hear from the other TAC members.
 - John Stains – During the previous pooled fund members shared ideas and created a flyer for each innovation. The goal is to build those innovations into a database or library that would be available to everyone. It would be searchable and others, including non-members, could populate it. We want to develop everyone's home grown ideas into a bigger scale.
 - Mike Shea – You can see the implemented practices shared during the first study on the No Boundaries website. Previously, members shared their innovations on teleconferences or at face-to-face meetings. At the on-site meetings, the host state would share an innovation and the attendees could take the information back to their states. The first study did not focus on research; it was about sharing.
- Jay Wells - How are members getting information from the field? People can hoard information and not want to share.
 - Mike Shea – We have an innovation showcase every spring. Each district brings their processes to share with the group at an expo format. Then I share what I learn with the No Boundaries members.
 - Jay Wells – I have an idea for setting up a private Facebook page for folks to have a conduit to share ideas. We just rolled out 800 iPads for data collection, and these could be used to take a picture of innovations.

- ≈ Kim Linsenmayer – Not every state can use Facebook, but it’s worth pursuing as one of several information sharing approaches. Folks could also upload information to the No Boundaries website to share ideas.

Discussion questions: Do you see the role of No Boundaries as sharing innovations within the TAC, especially at on-site meetings? Or do you see pushing out innovations and tech transfer to everyone? How will people use the database of innovations? We don’t want to create a database and have it sit there unused. Would members seek it out? Should we push out the innovations added so non-members would know what’s there?

- Jay Wells – Our local APWA just hosted an equipment rodeo. We don’t want to miss out on what the cities and counties are doing. Need to loop them in and get their ideas as well.
- Mike Shea – All 50 states, and even cities and counties, could share their innovations. The hope is that if a non-member gets a good idea from the study, they would want to join.
 - Kim Linsenmayer – What if a non-member wants to share an innovation, but not be a member? Could they pay their own way to a meeting or host a meeting, but not be a full member? Mike Shea –Yes. Jay Wells – The TAC would have to figure out what that would look like.
 - Kim – We could seek out the innovations from others, post them and share them in various ways (video demos, at face-to-face meetings, etc.)
- Mike Shea – Ohio had a tree trimming operation for knocking down a high canopy. We took the idea and used it here in Missouri. For No Boundaries we have done that and would like to do more to get successes shared and implemented. I like Jon Fleming’s idea—there might be a venue we haven’t tried in the past where states bring challenges of what we need to get done. They share what their managers are asking them to figure out and then No Boundaries could work on those topics that jump to the top.

Discussion questions: There is the question of scope of activities but also a question of the range of topics that we want to cover. Are there topics that you don’t consider maintenance? What should be under the umbrella of No Boundaries? Does broadening the range of topics change the function and focus of No Boundaries?

- Jay Wells – We don’t have to restrict it to maintenance. Incident management and emergency operations could be included.
- Steve Cook – What is the original mission statement of the study? It could get really big, really fast if we branch off into operational areas. I would like to focus on maintenance issues.
- Jay Wells – Has the group ever looked at maintenance issues by category so that you we see where the differences are among the members? Go A-Z to see where everyone is doing the same thing and where someone is different, then determine if the different method is an innovation the group can use.
- Jon Fleming – This is the perfect 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. portion of the December meeting. We have to find topics that are interesting. I can come up with cool things I’ve done that no one cares about but me, so there’s no sense in bringing those to the table.
- Mike Lashmet – It would be good to have innovations focus on one thing (versus presentations on many topics). Maybe we could identify a few areas within maintenance and survey everyone ahead of time to figure out key topics to discuss. Then throw in some state agency presentations to the mix.

- Jon Fleming – At the December meeting, have states present on their strengths, weaknesses and topics that are important to them as a basis for discussion at the meeting.
- Steve Cook – Maybe we need to figure out the topics during our first hour at the December meeting. My area has expanded so much and will be breaking into multiple units. We need to figure out how to define specific areas to focus on. It's nice to get into the operational areas but we have to get back to the mission statement and tagline. It's going to get big really fast if you branch into operational areas. AASHTO does pick up everything in work zones and traffic incident management.
- Jon Fleming – In the past we've handled it by recognizing that there are multiple ways to look at a topic or innovation. There's the maintenance perspective in each situation that we can focus on. For example, work zone issues can be viewed from safety, traffic operations and other perspectives. There is a maintenance aspect to it also. Take the topics that are related to maintenance (a work zone set up for crews to be safe) and talk about them so others can learn. Take operational aspects and how they relate to maintenance.
- Jim Johannemann – I would like to keep the range of topics broad because you never know what someone might share that might be useful.
- Les Noehre – I'm new and I'm trying to wrap my brain around both narrowing the focus and keeping it broad. Broader - It's more challenging to remain focused. Narrow – Why do we need a database of innovations if the focus is narrow? We can distribute the information easily without the database. Regional differences – The details of an innovation may not work for everyone.
- Kim Linsenmayer – CTC & Associates can survey the members about the topics they want No Boundaries to cover. When you see a topic does it mean maintenance, operations or something else to you? This will help us see if everyone is on the same page or if we need to discuss it further. We could also provide a list of topics for the members to say which fall within the scope of the study. The members could also add their own topics.
- Jay Wells – I have no problem with focusing on selected topics, but there will always be innovations that come up because someone in the field had to solve a problem.
- Diana Clonch – I support finding out needs and issues to identify the topics that we need to look at. Keep it broad so that they can be included in the database. There are a lot of maintenance activities going on that we don't even know about.
- Diane Watkins – I also want to make sure that we don't stifle any innovations, so keep it broad.

Discussion question: Do you see No Boundaries as duplicating any efforts or there is a real opportunity to provide this type of information?

- Mike Shea – The Maintenance Peer Network was good but it is not an ongoing group. Where are the innovations they shared? Are they open to everyone? We need a clearinghouse where ideas can live. Can we have a seat at the table with AASHTO and let the states know what maintenance needs are? Can we have an ongoing discussion with SCOM about the topic areas and needs?
 - Jay Wells – Excellent point. We need a cross conduit with other groups (e.g. Clear Roads, SCOM) to know what's going on with each other.
- Pat Casey – Looking at the MPN and SCOM is important because of their ongoing work. We need to find out from the TAC members their priorities on topics and needs. Start with the most

pressing and continue from there. We can find out what other states/agencies are doing in relation to those areas and disseminate the solutions.

- Steve Cook – I agree with prioritizing what topics the group needs to address. Surveying the group to see what everyone is doing to deal with those issues might be a good start.

Discussion question: Do you see a role in having No Boundaries reward (even if it's only recognition) individuals or agencies for an innovation they have come up with?

- John Stains – Yes, I like the idea of recognition by No Boundaries for innovations.
- Jay Wells – Yes, because folks would like to get recognition, especially on the Internet where everyone can see it. They can win a jacket, hat or something else for the top ideas. The group would vote and award a winner in each state.

Additional thoughts about December meeting:

- Mike Lashmet – During the first section of the December meeting, talk about topics. Each member can bring what they are working on and where they need help – to see where the commonalities are. In advance of meeting, provide a summary of the MPN topics. FHWA may have some information, from the 50 states and from other countries.
 - Pat Casey – We can pull together some themes and conclusions from the MPN. I like the idea of having each state identify their biggest needs AND their strengths.
- John Stains – Each agency should share strengths, weaknesses and topics that are important to them. It's valuable for folks to talk about their program so everyone can know where everyone else is. If someone has an innovation, then also present that.
 - Steve Cook – Agree. Each member can have a couple of slides on their strengths and a couple of slides on their gaps, to allow the group to see commonalities.

December Face-to-Face Meeting Update and Logistics

- Members who can attend the meeting or are optimistic about getting travel approval: Kristin McCrary, FL; Todd Rowley, MI DOT; Les Noehre, ND DOT; Mitch Blackford, OH DOT; Jim Johannemann, SC DOT
- Members who cannot attend the meeting: Mike Lashmet, NYS DOT; Jon Fleming, PA DOT; Jay Wells, WA DOT
- We will have a webinar available for those who cannot be there in person. MoDOT will arrange to have their equipment demonstration video recorded.
- Please send Kirsten your flight itineraries and travel information once you get travel approval. We are staying at the [Hampton Inn St. Louis Downtown](#).

Action Items

CTC & Associates:

- Pull together themes and conclusions from the MPN to help guide needs discussions at the meeting.
- Send out a survey about the topics No Boundaries could cover. Provide a list of topics for the members to say which ones fall within the scope of the study. Members could add their own topics.

- Revise the agenda according to our discussion today and send it out to the group for feedback.
- Put together a few bullets on what the member presentations should be on (program strengths, program weaknesses, knowledge gaps) and the group can provide feedback.