

Joint Council on Transit Wireless Communications

May 6, 2012 Joint Council Meeting
Slides with Inserted Discussion Notes



AGENDA

*Verbal comments
are indicated in blue
italics*

- ▶ Introductions 2:00
- ▶ New Topics 2:10
 - ▶ AASHTO Special Wireless Meeting
 - Soliciting suggested topics – send notice to all*
 - ▶ Cyber Security Support-Wireless
 - Technology Committee has taken this action item*
 - ▶ Transit Cooperative Research Program
 - See slides 3 and 4*
- ▶ Working Group Updates 2:20
 - ▶ Technology Committee
 - *Chaired ITS Best Practices Workshop*
 - *PTC White paper to be online later this month*



AGENDA *(continued)*



- ▶ Coordination Committee

Filed comments with the FCC on PTC and provided related information to APTA

- ▶ Industry Committee

- ▶ Narrowbanding/ 800 MHz Rebanding

As part of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, the FCC has been told to reallocate the T-band (470-512 MHz) within the next nine years through a system of competitive bidding. As a result, the FCC has waived the January 1, 2013 deadline for narrowbanding this band because new systems may not meet their useful life within 9 years.

Actions to notify affected transit agencies were discussed in addition to a white paper to identify options for affected agencies. [Post-meeting Note: Based on the TCRP survey completed in 2007, thirteen of the 272 responding transit agencies (5%) use the T band]

- ▶ Outreach Committee

- ▶ Future Directions: Sustaining the Joint Council 3:00

See slides 5 to 23

- ▶ Closing Remarks 3:50

Research Problem Statements for the Fiscal Year 2013 Transit Cooperative Research Program due by June 15, 2012



- ▶ *TCRP provides research funding for selected topics. Topics are considered based on submitted "Research Problem Statements". The JC should identify research needs and submit problem statements (these are just 1-3 paragraph statements).*
- ▶ *Projects most likely to be selected contain the following elements:*
 - ▶ *Universally applicable to transit*
 - ▶ *Produce a product (e.g., a report, guidance, etc.)*
 - ▶ *Include a clear research question*
- ▶ *We will solicit the JC members for ideas*
- ▶ *An excerpt from the TCRP request for problem statements follows.*

Research Problem Statements for the Fiscal Year 2013 Transit Cooperative Research Program due by June 15, 2012



” The purpose of this announcement is to solicit problem statements identifying research needs for the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Fiscal Year 2013 Program. These submittals form the basis for selection of the annual TCRP research program. It is easy to develop and submit a problem statement for consideration. Most are 1-3 pages in length using the enclosed outline.

The TCRP was authorized by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 and operates according to a memorandum of agreement among the cooperating organizations: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA); The National Academies, acting through the Transportation Research Board; and the Transit Development Corporation, Inc. (TDC), a nonprofit educational and research arm of the American Public Transportation Association. The TCRP undertakes applied research and technical activities focusing on the needs of transit operating agencies. Research is conducted in all areas of public transportation, including operations, policy, planning, service configuration, engineering of vehicles and facilities, maintenance, human resources, and administration.”

Sustaining the Joint Council

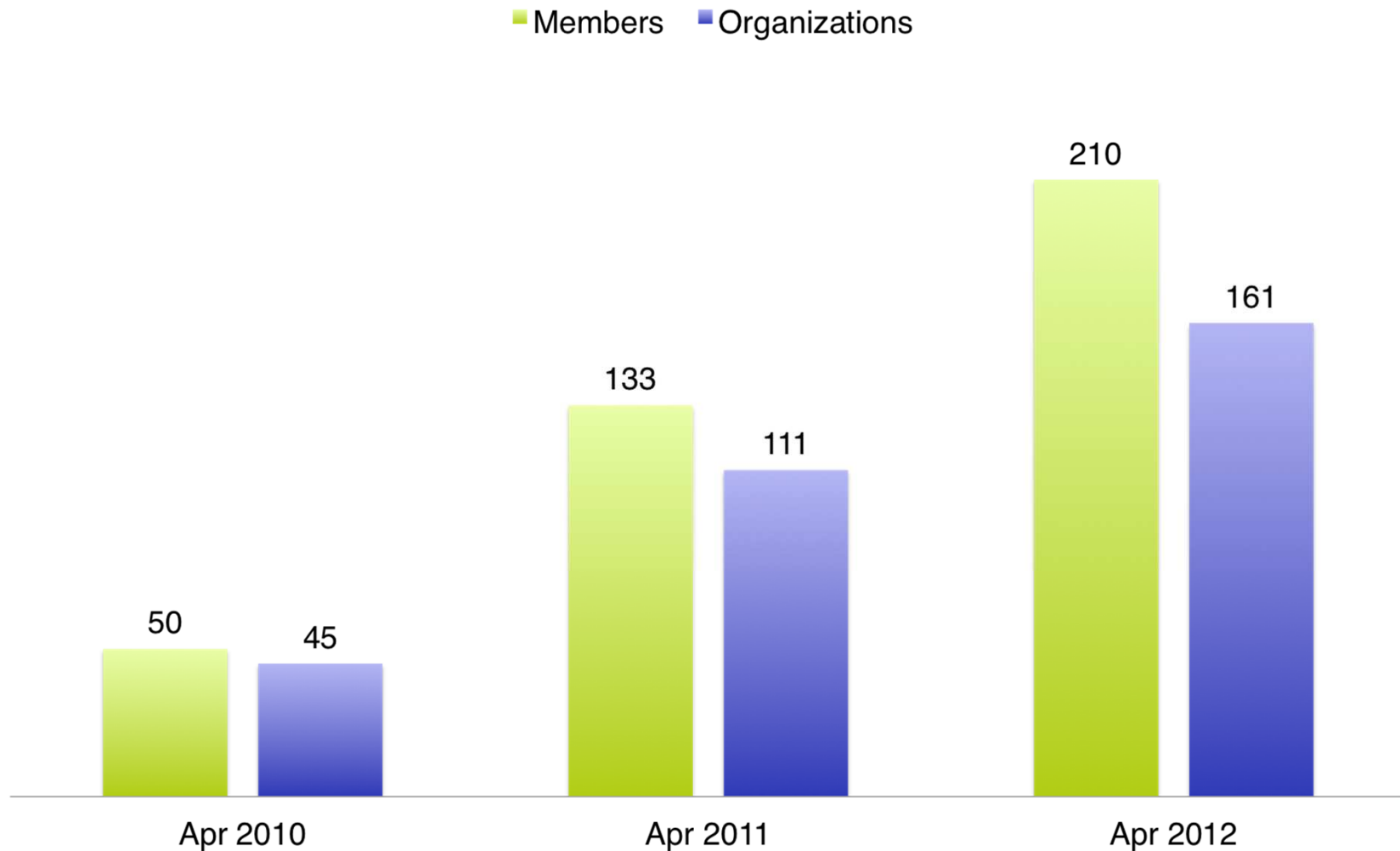
Jim Baker & Barry Einsig



Where we are today – Membership



*Our growth has been impressive . . .
It suggests there is a need for an organization such as the JC . . .
Since membership is free, it is difficult to gage how much we are valued.*



Where we are today – Outcome



- ▶ Proactive leadership from Chairs/Vice Chairs
 - ▶ 210 members, 161 organizations = significant growth over last two years
 - ▶ ‘Task Force’ contribution to industry discussion = wireless on the agenda
 - ▶ Thought leadership = dedicated conference in 2011
 - ▶ Raising profile = articles in magazines with JC bylines
 - ▶ Creating resources = white papers, reports
- ▶ Recognition as a body of experts
- ▶ Collective voice – people listen to what we have to say
- ▶ Real opportunity to make a difference; but we need to ‘look’ better

The FCC knows who we are, and that we are a recognized collective voice for transit – a very substantial achievement!!

What can we do to look better?



- ▶ Rebrand
 - ▶ Our current name is too much of a mouthful
 - ▶ Suggest change to Transit Wireless Council (TWC), new logo
 - ▶ Keep existing domain
- ▶ Create a web site that makes us distinctive, professional
 - ▶ Keep WordPress format; new design and features
 - ▶ Members Area for resources
 - ▶ Online membership application; opt-in for emails, newsletters
 - ▶ Consistent look and feel across all communication media; web, email etc
- ▶ Connect with social media; Twitter feed at bare minimum

How can we achieve this?



Jim Baker is coordinating initial efforts. Contact us if you have relevant experience and availability to assist!

- ▶ Group effort
 - ▶ Create Marketing Task Force from Committee members
 - ▶ Appoint interim Director of Marketing
 - ▶ Identify skills within group and assign tasks
 - ▶ Develop a presentation for May event, for Council review and approval
 - ▶ Launch new look Council by end May 2012
- ▶ Funding
 - ▶ Still an issue – how can we acquire funding/income for ongoing support of marketing materials beyond ‘sweat equity’?

Even if we had funding beyond October 2012 at a level similar to previous years, we would still be unsustainable. Our success and recognition is largely based on sweat equity of a few individuals who are not able to sustain their current level of effort.

Revision Considerations



- ▶ Dwindling FTA funding supported travel expenses for members to and meeting functions subject to available funding (section 5.04 Bylaws)
- ▶ Accepting FTA funds prohibits advocacy actions based on JC information sharing

To clarify, while we can collect information with Federal funds, and the information may suggest a particular course of action, we could not use the information to try to convince the FCC to take a particular course of action. However, other groups (e.g., APTA), can use the information we make available to lobby the FCC.

Costs to JC across spectrum (assumption of sweat equity for officers)

- ▶ Level 1: Supporting travel expenses and meeting room costs
- ▶ Level 2: add part time Secretarial pay
- ▶ Level 3: add limited advocacy when crucial (e.g. partnership with APTA)
- ▶ Level 4: add more advocacy, perhaps contracted on part time basis
- ▶ Level 5: add full time secretary and more advocacy
- ▶ Level 6: add full service organization, full time positions

Estimated annual budget of \$150,000 could cover part-time secretarial support, and limited analytical and legal support in addition to travel support, meeting room costs, and outreach booths. With current membership, that is roughly \$750 per member organization.

Big Picture Questions



- ▶ Has information sharing been valuable to the members? Is information sharing valuable enough to pay membership dues to support travel expenses of those providing sweat equity and provide meeting cost reimbursement?

and / or to assure representation of public transit agencies that would otherwise be unable to attend . . .

- ▶ How much would JC membership value advocacy? What is not getting done that might be? Where is the price point to offset travel/meeting costs and then have meaningful \$ left to perform advocacy (at any level)?
- ▶ How can rebranding help under various options?

Current: Mission Statement and Principal Functions



*This is what we are . . .
Do we want to change
any of this?*

- ▶ Mission Statement (in Bylaws):
 - ▶ To assure that the transit industry wireless communications needs are continuously met through information sharing

- ▶ Principal Function (in Charter)
 - ▶ Develop and make recommendations to appropriate governmental bodies...
 - ▶ Serve as an exchange of ideas...
 - ▶ Conduct outreach...
 - ▶ Develop tangible mediums to assist exchange of information...
 - ▶ Identify, support, and conduct studies and research...
 - ▶ Support and promote collaboration...
 - ▶ Promote technology neutral standards...

Funding Options



- ▶ Currently there are 4 separate funding options to consider
 - ▶ Option A: Continuing to seek out Federal (FTA) funding
 - ▶ Option B: Become a member funded/Sponsored organization
 - ▶ Option C: Create a hybrid solution of member funded and FTA funded
 - ▶ Option D: Merge into another established organization such as APTA
- ▶ On the next slides we will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these three options

SWOT for FTA Funded - Option A



Internal

Strengths

- Member agencies will not be conflicted
- Ability to sponsor agency travel
- Creates the view of an honest broker

Weaknesses

- Uncertainty of Federal dollars
- Federal dollars come with Federal rules

External

Opportunities

- We could begin to offer other services to agencies
- We could pay for marketing and communications

Threats

- Another organization takes over
- We run out of money and vanish

Discussion Comments on Option A (Federal Funded):

- *Many of our Federal members are with us precisely because we are an information sharing organization rather than a lobby group.*
- *Some of the public transit agencies that are members may not be able to stay with us if we become an advocacy group.*
- *Our membership includes many small companies that support transit but do not have the resources for membership fees.*
- *By having broad membership (unencumbered by dues requirements), we can more confidently represent a truly “collective voice” of transit*
- *Without paid membership, we get complimentary meeting and booth space from organizations such as APTA, IWCE, ASHTO, and APCO.*
- *Without paid membership, we can provide a bridge for organizations that otherwise may otherwise compete for membership (e.g., APTA and ITS America)*
- *Perhaps we should seek funding from APTA, IWCE, and other organizations that may benefit from our role.*
- *Is there sufficient justification for a Joint Council if we a just another paid-member organization?*

SWOT for Member or Sponsorship Funded- Option B



Internal

Strengths

- Sustained funding
- We would have the funds to do the things we have been unable to do
- We can establish our own rules

Weaknesses

- We could lose agency members
- We may lose private members
- Could lead to a hierarchy of members
- Loss of Travel reimbursement for agency members
- Can we raise enough money?

External

Opportunities

- We could get our legal status
- We could hire an admin
- We could pay for marketing and communications

Threats

- APTA, IWCE, and APCO may treat us differently
- Disenfranchised members could easily replicate our structure and create a new organization

Business Model Impacts of Option B



- ▶ Option B: Potential lack of future FTA funding means:
 - ▶ Loss of travel expense reimbursement and meeting location support costs
 - ▶ Questions:
 - ▶ Can officers and meeting attendees/organizations sustain travel expenses and then who supports the meeting location costs?
 - ▶ Do the meeting location costs alter the nature of the meetings or how they are supported? Are meeting costs themselves sustainable in some way?

SWOT for Hybrid Funded – Option C



Internal

Strengths

- Sustained funding
- We would have the funds to do the things we have been unable to do

Weaknesses

- We could lose agency members
- We may lose private members
- Could lead to a hierarchy of members

External

Opportunities

- We could still pay for member travel
- We could pay for marketing and communications
- We could do advocacy work

Threats

- May create legal challenges to the organizational structure
- May create financial auditing requirements for the color of money

Business Model Impacts of Option C



- ▶ Option C: Membership dues must offset all covered by Business Model
 - ▶ Low cost membership – creates a travel subsidy program for those doing the sweat equity; leaves little for advocacy
 - ▶ Advocacy program would require a level of bylaw/charter comprehensive reconsideration aligned with advocacy activities supported
 - ▶ High cost membership – Supports a travel subsidy program for those doing sweat equity; remainder of dues supports advocacy program
 - ▶ Advocacy program would require comprehensive bylaw/charter reconsideration aligned with an extensive advocacy program

Business Model Impacts of Option C



- ▶ Option C: JC continues to function with/without federal funding; sister JC developed per Option B commensurate with business model
 - ▶ Travel funding could fall into either JC or sister JC but the relationship probably complicates any future federal funding relationship
 - ▶ Likely JC bylaw/charter change required to clean up relationship with sister
 - ▶ Expert legal advice required to establish this relationship to remain federal fund eligible for information sharing; officers of JC may be eligible to be on sister JC
 - ▶ All aspects of Option B would remain

SWOT for Merging with another organization – Option D



Internal

Strengths

- Sustained funding
- We would have the funds to do the things we have been unable to do
- We would have the strength of the other organization
- The other organization could still lobby

Weaknesses

- We could lose agency members
- We may lose private members
- Members may have to pay the larger organizations fee

External

Opportunities

- We could still pay for member travel
- We could pay for marketing and communications
- We could do advocacy work

Threats

- We may lose our identity
- May create financial auditing requirements for the color of money
- We may lose some level of control under other organizations Bi-Laws and charter

Other Discussion Comments:

- This is a very lightly attended meeting – most of the people who have expressed the strongest interest in evolving the Joint Council to allow lobbying efforts are not present at this meeting.*
- The people who have expressed most interest in becoming a lobbying organization are among those who made the greatest contributions to the Joint Council – they want to move to a next step . . .*
- The APTA representative, Brian Tynan, responsible for lobbying was present at this meeting and stated that because wireless issues are often quite technical, they are more challenging to address, in addition to competing with much broader transit issues. However, he promises to pay more attention to these issues (with continued support from the Joint Council).*

Next Steps



- ▶ Continue Marketing Actions
- ▶ Poll membership on preferred options
- ▶ Vet nominated option at next meeting at APCO
- ▶ Others

It was suggested that this timeline seems quite aggressive for such an important topic. However, because current funding ends in October 2012, and we have no identified funds after this, we have to move quite quickly.

[Post-meeting note: As has been mentioned at previous meetings, FTA members of the Joint Council have sought FTA funding for us, but near-term funding is not likely in the current Federal budget climate.]