
PEER GROUP CHARTER

**For
Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks
Technical Assistance Center**

**Prepared by
The Western Transportation Institute
Technical Assistance Center Team**

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Introduction

The purpose of this Charter is to present background, context and specific functions, roles and responsibilities for the Peer Group of the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks (TRIP) Technical Assistance Center (TAC). The Charter document will also provide details regarding meeting schedule and process, and serves as an informational reference for member roles of the Group. It should be noted that this Charter describes how input will be received by the TAC Team and has no relational reference to the specific Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program however and all such issues and needs relating to such Program. The Charter reflects January 14, 2010 Peer Group meeting input.

Technical Assistance Center Background

The following section provides historical context for the TAC's mission, purpose and primary function of delivering technical assistance.

Legislative History, Purpose and Funding

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU) established a program called the Alternative Transportation in the Parks and Public Lands. That program, codified in 49 U.S.C. Section 5320, now named the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program (TRIP), annually awards grants to carry out projects that provide alternative transportation facilities and services that enhance existing transportation services in national parks and public lands. Alternative Transportation means transportation by bus, rail or other conveyance including facilities for pedestrians, bicycles and non-motorized watercraft. The Secretary of Transportation may use up to 10 percent of the amounts available to carry out planning, research and technical assistance.

Under this authority, the Secretary, through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), has allocated \$4.5 million over three years for the purpose of creating a Technical Assistance Center for the TRIP program. To assist in this effort, the FTA has entered in to a cooperative agreement with a team of consultants headed up by the Western Transportation Institute of Montana State University.

Technical Assistance Center Purpose

The Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Technical Assistance Center (TAC) is being created to provide federal land managers with an expanded set of readily-available tools to meet the goals of TRIP, which are to conserve natural, historical and cultural resources, reduce congestion and pollution, and improve visitor access and experience.

The mission of the TAC is to “*provide transportation – related technical assistance and enhanced coordination among Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMAs) to continually improve visitors access, quality experience and resource stewardship.*” The Center will provide an information, training, and technical support on alternative transportation systems (ATS) for federal land managers offering them a single point of contact/one-stop shop for desired services. Specific services will include person-to-person technical liaisons, a toll-free Help Desk and Web site, training workshops, a mentoring program, and an online system to help public land managers find documents, technical manuals and other resources. Managers at the country's national parks and public lands will ultimately look to the Center for comprehensive support as they initiate and expand ATS projects.

The vision is to “*serve as the nationally-recognized center for transportation-related technical decision support and the coordination hub for FLMAs.*” As an important outcome, the efforts of

the TAC will result in a *learning network* that involves the many independent, not-for-profit, and private organizations and institutions that share, with the Land Management Agencies, the goals of TRIP. The TAC must shape its efforts in such a way that it involves these entities in a collaborative effort so that the programs of each combine smoothly and efficiently to accomplish the end result, an enhanced capacity for all to advance alternative transportation facilities and services on National Parks and Public Lands.

Technical Assistance Center Team

The TAC is being developed by a team of universities and consultants with extensive experience on transportation and public lands issues. The team is lead by the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) at Montana State University, and team partners include: Shapiro Transportation Consulting, Inc; Center for Urban Transportation Research, University of South Florida; David Evans and Associates; University of Vermont Transportation Research Center and Park Studies Laboratory; University of Maine Parks, Recreation and Tourism; Franz Gimmler, and Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

The TAC Peer Group

Primary Function

The primary function of the TAC Peer Group is to ensure that the TAC is best positioned to provide technical assistance to federal land managers and serve to catalyze other supporting organizations to build a TAC centered network of cooperating and collaborating assistance resources. It will work closely with the Interagency Working Group (IWG) to foster a comprehensive, long-term, and well articulated strategy and action plan for the TAC. In other words, the Group will help envision how alternative transportation can enhance the future of enjoyment and protection of public lands, will generate innovative ideas, and will champion the development of multi-agency activities supported by and coordinated through the TAC.

The knowledge and experience of Group members will be used to gain information and viewpoints that will assist the TAC in the execution of its program. The focus will be on seeking to optimize the contribution of each member of the Group and not to seek advice, opinions, or recommendations from the group acting in a collective mode.

Ongoing tasks may include but not be limited to:

- Informing the TAC on technical assistance coordination opportunities;
- Providing information on the development of alternative transportation systems and infrastructure;
- Identifying technical assistance needs at the nation-wide, agency-specific and unit-specific levels,
- Identifying and peer-reviewing the products/resources created by the TAC for accuracy and completeness;
- Identifying, coordinating, and creating collaborative partnerships that will enhance the TAC's capabilities and activities; and
- Acting as independent, objective evaluators, Group members will serve to ensure quality control and continuous improvement of the TAC.

Membership

Members of the Peer Group will play a key leadership role in the ongoing development of the TAC. Members must appreciate the unique mission of America's public lands – making it as easy as possible for visitors to fully experience historical landmarks and natural wonders, while protecting these fragile resources for future generations. They must also see the potential roles that alternative transportation has in fulfilling this mission, and must have the specialized experience and expertise to understand what public land managers need to maximize accessibility while maintaining best practices in resource stewardship.

Name	Agency/Business	Role
Henrika Buchanan-Smith	Federal Transit Administration	Ex-officio
Terry Holman	US Department of the Interior	Ex-officio
Eric Plosky	Volpe National Transportation Systems Center	Ex-officio
Jack Placchi	Bureau of Land Management	
Jim Evans	U.S. National Park Service	
Steve Suder	National Wildlife Refuge System	
Nathan Caldwell	National Wildlife Refuge System	
Frank Corrado	Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division	
Susan Law	Central Federal Lands Highway Division	
Floyd Thompson	U.S. Forest Service	
Alan Yamada	U.S. Forest Service	
Victoria Stinson	Grand Canyon National Park	
Bill Legg	Washington State DOT	
Marianne Fowler	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	
Laura Loomis	National Parks Conservation Association	
Rick Potts	Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance	
Tony Giancola	National Association of County Engineers	
Rich Denbow	Assoc. of Metropolitan Planning Organizations	
Michael Wackerly	START Bus	

Member Roles and Responsibilities

Members will share their experience, expertise, and insight, as well as that of their respective organizations to:

- Promote values of Alternative Transportation (AT) in public lands;
- Advance institutional integration and cooperation among;
 - Federal Land Management Agencies and land units;
 - Interested partners, funders, users and other beneficiaries;
- Enhance understanding of AT technical assistance needs at all levels;
- Ensure comprehensive technical assistance documentation, training;
- Assure professional quality of TAC products/services;
- Advance peer-to-peer discourse and support;
- Promote active collaborations, partnerships;
- Identify cost sharing partnerships and synergies;
- Empower individual leaders, peers, supporters; and
- Encourage innovative techniques and services.

To fulfill the above, members will be expected to take the initiative to involve themselves actively in pursuing global TAC initiatives, but more importantly, to engage in those aspects of ATS or TAC programs in which they have specific interest. Members may also be assigned to specific Peer Group activities as appropriate.

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Meeting Schedule and Process

Schedule

The Peer Group is expected to convene for a half-day meeting twice per year. Ad hoc meetings may occur more frequently as necessary.

Administrative Support and Communication

The Peer Group will be supported administratively by the TAC. The agenda for Group meetings will be prepared by the TAC in consultation with FTA, the IWG, and Group members. Between meetings, it is anticipated that general and specialized communications will include all or selected members of the Group.

Meeting Agendas

At each meeting, the TAC representative(s) will provide updates on progress. Other agenda items as proposed by FTA, TAC staff, the land management agencies and Group members will then be covered.