

Transportation Awareness Partnership (TAP) Summary Steps Report

Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce you to an initiative, which has received the unanimous support and endorsement of the WCR&HCA Board of Directors. It is referred to as the "Transportation Awareness Partnership (TAP).

In my presentation I will attempt to briefly cover the following topic areas:

- Purpose
- Background
- Current partners
- Steering Committee
- Message
- Principles
- Action Plan
- Next Steps
- Success criteria
- Conclusion

"If the public had an appreciation for the critical contribution that transportation makes towards life in Canada, to the same extent it has for healthcare and education, the public sector would be better able to address its policy challenges and issues more effectively."

Independent of one another, a broad range of transportation stakeholder organizations came to similar conclusions. To change public policy, we must have the support of an informed and active public opinion.

It is in this regard that the Transportation Awareness Partnership (TAP) was formed. Its objective quite simply is to participate in an awareness campaign that seeks to accomplish the following objective:

"To raise public awareness, understanding and appreciation of the significance of transportation in people's daily lives."

The transportation and heavy construction industries today face many challenges, both in the short and long term future. Most in the industry will view the issues we face as critical to the Canadian economy's long-term survival.

But we have been unable to convince the public of this point. Much of the public, media and some politicians under appreciate transportation and its contribution to the economy and society in general. Most observers agree that transportation does not receive the profile it should in a trade dependant economy like Canada's.

The signs are everywhere.

- There is little understanding and appreciation by the public of the capital funding crisis that is facing the nation's transportation infrastructure.
- Transportation policy issues do not seem to engage the public, government and the media in the way other policy areas such as health care, education and social programs.

Background

There are several parallel initiatives currently under way in Canada, all working towards a goal of raising the public's awareness of the importance of transportation infrastructure. For example

The *"Building the New Dream"* conference (Calgary, 6 & 7 March 2003) was an initiative spearheaded by the Canada West Foundation, the outcome of which was the beginning of a blue print for new transportation infrastructure to support growth in Western Canada over the next century.

The focus of *"National Transportation Week"* (Edmonton, 26, 27, 28 May 2003) will be *"The need to raise the public's awareness of the importance of Transportation in their daily lives."*

The Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) has *"Raising the general public's awareness of the value of transportation, and its impact on their daily lives"* as one of its strategic objectives for the next three years.

With the support from the WCR&HCA Board of Directors and participation of the four Association Chief Operating officers, the multi-stakeholder *"Transportation Awareness Partnership (TAP)"*¹ was formed in February 2003. Its mission is *"To raise public awareness, understanding and appreciation of the significance of transportation in people's daily lives."*

The members of TAP realize that political lobbying, and other traditional methods usually employed to raise awareness of these issues are having little impact, when compared to healthcare, education and other socially significant sectors. It is therefore necessary to raise awareness at the "grass roots" level in order that there be acceptance of the importance and significance of transportation in people's daily lives.

To this end, TAP has initiated a *"Public Awareness Project"* to develop a "Plan" to achieve this goal. Once a "Plan" is in place, TAP will seek the active support of other organizations involved in Transportation to fund and roll out the plan(s).

TAP realizes that this undertaking is significant, and will stand the best chance of success if it can coordinate or incorporate the efforts of other organizations, and ensure that the "Plan" is supported by and delivered through all sectors of the transportation (and related) industry sectors.

The membership of TAP is therefore not fixed, and will expand over time, but currently the membership comprises:

Van Horne Institute
 Western Transportation Advisory Council (WESTAC)
 Canada West Foundation (CWF)
 Transportation Association of Canada (TAC)

¹ February 20, 2003 meeting summary notes attached.

Trans Canada Yellowhead Highway Association
 National Transportation Week (NTW)
 Alberta Transportation (Government of Alberta)
 Western Canada Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association (WCR&HCA)
 B.C. Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association (BRRB&HCA)
 Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association (ARHCA)
 Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association of Saskatchewan (RB&HCAS)
 Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA)
 Consulting Engineers of Alberta (CEA)
 University of Manitoba Transport Institute (UMTI)

TAP Steering Committee

To provide management oversight, a TAP Steering Committee was struck consisting of the following:

Peter Wallis, Chair, President & CEO Van Horne Institute
 Chris Lorenc, President WCR&HCA
 Michel Gravel, Executive Director, TAC
 Dr. Barry Prentice, Director, Transport Institute
 Tim Hawnt, Alberta Transportation
 Heidi Harris, ARHCA
 Irene Davidson-Fisher, Trans Canada Yellowhead Highway Association

TAP's "Public Awareness Project" Schedule – Our Main Principles

TAP has developed a three-phase approach:

- Phase 1 – Definition
- Phase 2 – Preparation
- Phase 3 - Implementation

In Phase 1, we must stay focused, small and flexible, keeping the broad picture in mind, and assuring that our message does not conflict with an overall national picture or activities.

In Phase 2, we expand the base of partners utilizing the networking and connections of our initial partners. We want to make sure that our message to the public as developed reaches it at the personal level:

- Transportation – you can't leave home without it
- Transportation touches every single person every single day
- Transportation – how to you think what you bought today got to the store you bought it from?

The point? We focus on individuals, not groups.

In Phase 3, with an assumed and expected brought coalition, fully developed action plan and messages which resonate with the public, led by *'name champions'* we begin implementing the public education and awareness campaign.

TAP's Action Plan

Phase 1: Definition – by May 15, 2003

- RFPs to choose a media relations consultant
- Present broad plan at national Transportation week, May 26, 2003
- Find/announce right champion(s), May 2003

Phase 2: Preparation – by September 30, 2003

- Broaden the partnership
- Fund raise based upon media plan

Phase 3: Implementation

- Production, creative and fund raising
- Ready to roll out the campaign as early as November 2003

TAP's Next Steps – Summary

In summary then, our next steps are as follows:

- Select the right media relations consultant to develop the message plan
- Secure name champions
- Expansion of TAP's membership based upon the plan and strategy
- Select, finalize, budget and fund raise for implementation, AND
- Be ready to roll out the campaign as early as November 2003 keeping in mind the Liberal Party Leadership race and the next federal election and/or other evolving or then existing circumstances.

TAP's expectations of the successful proponent, and contents of the Action Plan

The member organizations in TAP are not experienced in conducting "public education", "public awareness", or "social marketing" campaigns. TAP is therefore seeking to hire a company with experience in one or more of the following areas: public communications, advertising, public awareness, or social marketing, to draw up an Action Plan comprising a list of potential options available to achieve its goal. Compilation of this Action Plan is the first phase of TAP's project, and by May this year, will lead to the selection of an overall "plan" (or plans) to achieve its goal.

The Action Plan should list, describe and cost the various types of campaigns that are deemed to be appropriate to achieve TAP's goal. It is anticipated that the various options may range from low cost, volunteer based communications plans, (utilizing a very broad base of volunteer organizations), to large multi dimensional and multi media campaigns requiring significant financial commitment. It is realized that a large campaign, or number of different co-coordinated campaigns may require some form of fulltime dedicated management effort. This need will be addressed once the "Plan" has been established.

The Action Plan should describe what lasting effects it hopes to leave behind (e.g. heightened public awareness, ongoing reporting on transportation issues in the TV, radio, and written media, interest in transportation as a career option etc)

The Action Plan should suggest and discuss the various performance measures that may be used to measure the success of the initiative.

TAP has some ideas on what the focus of the various Plans laid out in the Action Plan should be but is open for new suggestions. There are, however, some areas in which TAP has made some firm decisions, which should be used as guiding principles when developing the Action Plan. These are

- "Message" needs to be applicable to all modes of transportation, not only one.
- National campaign, instead of a purely regional focus
- It will be a campaign to educate or advise the "public", not to lobby politicians
- The message should affect individuals at a personal level, (not focus on regions or industries)

The successful proponent will submit The Action Plan by the beginning of May, in order that TAP can select a Plan(s) to be presented to the Symposium at National Transportation Week on 28 May. This represents the completion of Phase 1 of the Transportation Awareness Project, and the work envisaged under this call for proposals.

The successful proponent will be expected to meet with TAP at the beginning of the assignment (sometime shortly after 18 March 2003), not only to obtain any necessary additional guidance they may need, but also to make TAP aware of any factors it may not be aware of, and to require TAP to make such decisions as may be necessary for the successful completion of the assignment.

A draft Action Plan will be provided to the TAP Steering committee, for review and comment at the beginning of May. The successful proponent may then be required to meet with TAP to discuss the Action Plan and assist in selecting a go forward plan(s), shortly after which, the proponent may be invited to present the "Plan" (15 minute presentation) at the Symposium of National Transportation Week on the afternoon of 28 May 2003, in Edmonton.

The next steps

The next phase will be an expansion of the membership of TAP, from a predominantly Western Canadian base, to a truly National base, by "selling" participation in the "plan" to other interested entities. This phase will start in May (at the NTW Symposium), as soon as the plan has been identified and scoped, and will be substantially completed by the end of September (but will continue throughout the duration campaign).

Next, the selected plan(s) will be finalized, designed and made ready for implementation and roll out. This can be started soon after ratification of the Action Plan, (but in any case before the end of September) and must be completed by November.

Finally, the plan(s) will be rolled out at the appropriate time and the success measured. It is envisaged that possible triggers for rolling out the plan may be the Liberal Leadership Campaign, the receipt of the federal Auditor General's report on national infrastructure, a general election or some other appropriate trigger that might bring transportation into the public eye. The object of this request for proposals is to select a company to deliver an Action Plan, as described as "Phase 1" above. A decision on the design and roll out of the final plan will be made once the Action Plan has been accepted.

Budget


To date, a budget through to the completion of Phase 2 is anticipated in the range of \$20-50,000, the bulk of which has already been funded from contributions as follows: WCR&HCA \$15,000; TAC \$2000; ARHCA \$5000; WESTAC \$5000 and secretariat through the Van Horne Institute.

As the Plan is developed, champions selected and strategy rolled out, there is optimism within the ranks of the existing TAP ranks, that funds will be solicited and received during the period May – September 2003 from stakeholders regionally and nationally to fully fund the campaign.

Conclusion

In conclusion I wish to acknowledge and thank the WCR&HCA Board of Directors and the four Roadbuilder COOS – Jack Davidson, Allan Lowe and Val Jakubowski, without whose input, support and participation the above initiative would not have been possible.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Lorenc, B.A., LL.B.,
President WCR&HCA

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