

CAPITAL PROJECTS DETAIL

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627 UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANS INST

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Capital Project

Center for Transportation Study

	Request/Optional	Recommendation
Total Project Cost	5,500,000	5,500,000
General Fund	0	0
Federal Funds	5,500,000	5,500,000
Special Funds	0	0
Bonding	0	0

Is this a multiennium project? No No of Biens: Est. Costs

Future Increased Costs Associated with Project Approval

	2007-2009	2009-2011	2011-2013		2007-2009	2009-2011	2011-2013
Salaries and Wages	25,000	50,000	50,000	FTE	.00	.00	.00
Operating Expenses	75,000	150,000	150,000				
Equipment > \$5,000	0	0	0	General Fund	100,000	200,000	200,000
IT Equipment > \$5000	0	0	0	Federal Funds	0	0	0
Special Lines	0	0	0	Special Funds	0	0	0
Total	100,000	200,000	200,000	Total	100,000	200,000	200,000

Project Specifics and Justification

A Center for Transportation Study - NDSU Campus

The Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute

The Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (UGPTI) is an independent center at North Dakota State University (NDSU) which is guided, in part, by an advisory council composed of representatives of various organizations industries and agencies affecting or affected by transportation. The mission of the institute is to educate people, conduct research, and provide outreach in the areas of small urban and rural transportation and logistics to enhance the mobility of people, goods, and agricultural commodities. The UGPTI administration and advisory council have outlined a vision for the institute to become and excel as one of the premiere university transportation centers in the United States.

UGPTI's program areas focus on specific transportation issues, but united within the Institute, they share expertise, staff and other resources to form an overall program with the flexibility to address emerging challenges and opportunities. Program areas include:

- Advanced Traffic Analysis Center (ATAC)
- Agricultural and Industrial Freight Center
- DOT Support Center (DOTSC)
- Mountain-Plains Consortium (MPC)
- Small Urban & Rural Transit Center (SURTC)

Biennial Strategic Transportation Analysis Center
Transportation Learning Network (TLN)
Transportation Safety Systems Center (TSSC)
Rural Transportation Safety and Security Center (RTSSC)

The UGPTI has an annual budget of more than \$8.2 million and 50 staff members at its Fargo location. About 40 students are enrolled in UGPTI administered/supported graduate programs.

Need for a building

The Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute has grown rapidly in program diversity, staff size and funding. UGPTI staff is located in fragmented and crowded space in three buildings across campus. This arrangement has led to operational and managerial inefficiencies. Not as easily quantified, but equally serious, is the lack of synergy that results from locating staff members at multiple locations where interaction and collaboration are hindered. As issues of transportation safety and security emerge as a national focus and the challenges of providing passenger and freight mobility in the Upper Great Plains region continue to grow, the UGPTI's programs will continue to grow in size and impact.

In particular, the UGPTI's educational program is growing to meet demand for professionals with specialized training in transportation and logistics topics. This program includes distance education programs, on-site short courses, and more traditional undergraduate and graduate programs. In 2006, the UGPTI launched a Masters of Military Logistics program tailored for civilian and military transportation and logistics professionals. The emergence and growth of these programs is creating a demand for classroom space and technology. Well-designed and equipped classrooms that are located close to affiliated resources and staff will be important to the future success of UGPTI's academic programs. This will be especially important for collaborators and professionals that visit campus for short-term education and training programs.

What will happen if the State does not fund this project?

Through its research, education and outreach programs, the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute enhances the mobility of people, goods and agricultural commodities in North Dakota and the entire Upper Great Plains region. Its ability to fully utilize the expertise and talents of its staff is being compromised by inadequate facilities. Staff members collaborate with academic colleagues and professional practitioners from across the country. That collaboration is limited by space and technology constraints that can not be adequately addressed in existing facilities. These limitations will become more acute as programs continue to grow and stretch the confines of existing facilities. The UGPTI currently has a national reputation for aggressive, forward-thinking, and innovative programs. That deserved reputation may be compromised if programs are limited by space and technology limitations, resulting in reduced competitiveness for grant and contract funding, a key component of the UGPTI's funding.

Has adequate planning for this project been done? Should a planning appropriation be made first?

Building size and configuration projections are based on UGPTI experience and staffing levels as well as projected growth. The building, which will be located on the campus of NDSU, is estimated to be about 50,000 square feet and will house the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute and will also include 4-5 state-of-the-art classrooms and labs, a Transportation Museum and Interpretive Center, Hands-on specialized training stations, computer cluster, library and study area, joint traffic operations center, and an interactive video classroom. Construction, design and upkeep projections are based on NDSU campus averages for similar projects. Since the project may not be completed until 2009, the costs are lower for the first biennium.

Can the cost of this project be shared?

The UGPTI is seeking partners to share in the development of this project. Potential partners include:

North Dakota Department of Transportation – Because of its close relationship with the UGPTI, this agency is likely to provide support for a North Dakota Transportation Museum and Interpretive Center, a Traffic Operations Center, and overall design and construction.

City of Fargo – The Traffic Operations Center will be a key component of the center. Because of its potential for improving traffic operations and planning within the city of Fargo, the city is likely to be a partner in this portion of the project.

Corporate and Individual Donors – The UGPTI's programs have enhanced transportation and logistics operations for companies across the Upper Great Plains. Many of those companies are now collaborators in UGPTI efforts, recognizing the value of its research and outreach programs. Those companies and individuals recognize the value in providing a dedicated home to transportation-related programs at NDSU and will be willing to provide support to constructing such a facility.

Would it be cheaper to renovate or remodel an unused facility?

Space is at a premium at NDSU. There are currently no facilities available on the NDSU campus adequate to meet the needs of the UGPTI.

Can this project wait until the next biennium?

As describe above, the UGPTI is already experiencing space-related issues related to management and collaboration among staff members. As the institute continues to grow and programs become more diverse, delay in designing and constructing a building would only make the situation worse.

Would this project be necessary if the size of government decreased, if population declined, if a technological breakthrough occurred, or demand declined? If not, what is the likelihood of any of these happening the next ten years?

Regional trends in manufacturing, agricultural processing and shipping bulk commodities and manufactured goods suggest a continued need for research, education and outreach into transportation and outreach. For firms in the Upper Great Plains region to compete in a global marketplace, they must have access to efficient transportation options to access raw materials and market finished products. Similarly, a shrinking and aging population in rural areas and growth in mid-size towns and small-cities in the region assures that personal mobility will continue to be a challenge. To meet that challenge, transit agencies will need to become more efficient, develop innovative programs and approaches to mobility, and learn from each others experiences. Increasing fossil fuel prices will make peak efficiency essential for both passenger and freight mobility.

In this environment, the UGPTI's research, education and outreach programs will be essential to help passenger and freight transportation providers find, adapt and adopt innovative and cost-effective practices and technology. Radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, geographic positioning systems (GPS) and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) are examples of technology that UGPTI staff members are helping transportation providers. The use of these and other technologies and techniques will continue to grow into the future.

What are the operating costs over the life of this project once it is completed? Are they reasonable? Will the State have to pay for them? Can total costs be saved by spending more at the outset of the project?

The operating costs for this building would be consistent with those expected with similar campus classroom/office/laboratory building: utilities, custodial services, short-term and long-term maintenance. Other than computers and associated electronic equipment associated with the traffic operations center and equipment associated with distance education/outreach classrooms, there will be little or no specialized equipment that would require unusual maintenance or operation costs for either the building or equipment. Operating costs are expected to be paid for by the state of North Dakota.