

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Meeting Notes

MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS, AND INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS (MOITS) POLICY TASK FORCE AND MOITS TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, April 10, 2012

TIME: 12:30 PM

PLACE: COG, First Floor, Meeting Room 1

CHAIRS: Hon. David Snyder, City of Falls Church, Chair, Policy Task Force
Jean Yves Point-du-Jour, Maryland State Highway Administration,
Technical Committee

Attendance:

James Austrich, Parsons Brinkerhoff
James Cheeks, DDOT
Ed Daniel, Montgomery County Police Department
Pooja Dwivedi, IBI Group
Michael Eichler, WMATA
Gary Euler, Parsons Brinkerhoff
Craig Franklin, Trichord, Inc.
Egua Igbinosun, MD SHA
Ndanaan Jallow, WMATA
Wendy Jia, WMATA
Brian Laverty, Parsons Brinkerhoff
Curt McCullough, City of Fairfax (phone)
Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT (phone)
Jean Yves Point-du-Jour, MD SHA
Joseph Sagal, MD SHA
Daryl Sensenig, WMATA
Paul Silverman, Sabra Wang

COG Staff Attendance:

Andrew Meese
Erin Morrow
Eric Randall
Daivamani Sivasailam

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Actions:

1. Welcome and Review of Notes from the March 13, 2012 MOITS Joint Meeting

Participants introduced themselves. Notes from the March MOITS meeting were distributed. Mr. Meese asked members if they had any changes or corrections to the notes to let him know either at that time or to contact him later.

Item 2: Report on the Nominations Committee and Election of New MOITS Technical Subcommittee Chair

Sean Kennedy, the immediate past technical subcommittee chair from WMATA, resigned when he took a new position in San Francisco and a new technical subcommittee chair was needed, and it was the turn of a representative from Maryland. Mr. Meese announced that the nominations committee nominated Jean Yves Point-du-Jour of the Maryland State Highway Administration, and the subcommittee elected Mr. Point-du-Jour. The group congratulated and thanked Mr. Point-du-Jour for his upcoming service.

Item 3: Milestone #2 Presentation on the Multimodal Coordination for *Bus Priority Hot Spots* Study

Mr. Lavery noted that he and Mr. Silverman were there today to get reaction from the subcommittee on the hot spots that had been selected and to get suggestions for the study as it moves forward from Task 3 to Task 4. For the study, data was pulled from all of the transit agencies in the COG/TPB region, primarily from the major core agencies (WMATA, RideOn, Fairfax Connector, etc.) where the consultant team was able to get ridership and bus speed information. For commuter buses, the team was able to get ridership data, but not speeds, so speeds from either the core agencies or general traffic were applied to those routes. He reviewed the study approach and the initial screening process which resulted in a top 10 list of hot spots for each state. The consultant team was requesting feedback on (1) the general findings of the field survey, (2) findings for specific locations, (3) input for methods to consider for Task 4, and (4) go/no recommendations for sites for Task 4. Mr. Silverman said that some comments had already been received on related studies that affected the recommendations.

Ms. McElwain asked if there had been any concern from other VDOT staff on the Virginia recommendations. Mr. Lavery responded that there were reservations to the recommendation for queue jumps on the left hand lane at the Van Dorn site and the consultant team's response was that part of Task 4 is to go into a more detailed analysis to see the impacts of the recommendations. Ms. McElwain asked if there was a representative from the City of Alexandria at the meetings as VDOT does not own all of the traffic signals in that area. Mr. Silverman responded that the consultant team had not yet contacted the City of Alexandria and would be coordinating with COG staff on the timing of that. Mr. Randall mentioned that Pierre Holloman was at the Regional Bus Subcommittee meeting and was aware of the Van Dorn Street location. Staff agreed to follow up with Alexandria representatives.

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The presentation continued with the slide listing the top 10 hot spots in the District of Columbia. In response to the question of which measures of effectiveness were used, Mr. Lavery stated that a database was created to look at the difference in average bus speeds on a segment versus 15 mph, and the number of buses travelling on that segment. Mr. Silverman added that the analysis was about travel time reliability and not schedule adherence.

The presenters were asked why K Street was not included. Mr. Lavery responded that K Street, along with other areas such as Dupont Circle, M St in Georgetown, and Franklin Square, were being addressed in other studies which the consultant team learned about in part through stakeholder feedback. A question was asked if the database differentiated between an intersection and midblock speed difference. Mr. Silverman responded that they looked at the average for the corridor using link level data (NAVTEQ center line data).

Mr. Eichler commented that the 14th Street corridor is much longer than the term “hot spot” would indicate. The presenters responded that the consultant team will be determining the critical sections of the corridors in Task 4. A question was asked if congestion due to construction was taken into account and Mr. Lavery responded that field observation was used to verify the data. He presented the example of the downtown Silver Spring area in Maryland where the new transit center is being constructed and whether it makes sense to make recommendations from data collected during the construction period or see what happens in a few years.

Moving on to the list of hot spots in Virginia, Mr. Lavery said that a few of the hot spots were recommended by Fairfax County. In response to a question of why data from February was used as opposed to another month, Mr. Lavery stated that the consultant team wanted to use an average month and February was the best option within the study timeframe.

There was discussion on the recommendations for District of Columbia focusing on the top two recommendations – 14th Street NW from Corcoran Street to Otis Street and North Capitol Street/New York Ave/ P Street. In response to the presenter saying that at a location in Columbia Heights, it took several traffic cycles for a bus to clear the intersection, Mr. Cheeks asked if the consultant team had taken into account that the design was intended to calm traffic. Mr. Cheeks continued to say that DDOT is working on a design for the Columbia Heights Streetscape and safety is a priority. He said that most of the locations on the list for the District of Columbia have some project under development. He suggested that the consultant team bring the list of hot spots to the safety team at DDOT and for further discussion the projects that are ongoing. Mr. Eichler noted that this particular study was focused on buses, particularly how to make the buses move faster, in addition to other opportunities for interaction between the TPB and all of its partners. He continued to say that this study has been data driven, and may not be identifying the hottest of the hot spots in the region, but the goal is to find areas where improvements could actually be made.

Ms. Jia asked if there was going to be a feedback process since the study is looking at corridors by looking at specific locations. Mr. Lavery responded yes, and he believes coordination will be good to make sure the consultant team is not making a recommendation that conflicts with another study.

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In response to a question from Mr. Franklin on the “multimodal” aspect of the project, Mr. Meese noted that this study is not just looking at the bus system or traffic engineering, but both, which is what was intended by the "multimodal" focus, and that the title of the project was assigned by WMATA and COG in the original RFP. Mr. Franklin recommended that there be metrics to show that the bus hot spot solutions would work better than traffic signal optimization. Mr. Silverman answered that there is a separate optimization study underway.

Mr. Eichler said that there is an option for a bus lane on N. Capitol St, but buses that turn left will need special consideration.

Mr. Lavery told the group that there are currently three hot spots highlighted in Maryland (Reedie/Veirs Mill, Pine Branch Rd, and Annapolis Rd), but the consultant team will likely end up with two.

In Virginia, there are two top hot spots identified – Van Dorn Street and Glebe Road. Ms. McElwain asked if any of the Virginia locations were removed from the list because VDOT added two. Mr. Lavery responded that there were not and the consultant team had a difficult time coming up with ten locations because there are so many locations where VDOT has a study underway as well as there being less bus density in that area. Ms. McElwain requested that the consultant team continue to coordinate with Valerie Pardo from VDOT.

Mr. Lavery showed a slide with the schedule for the study which needs to be completed in June. Mr. Meese commented that the lessons and discussions that come out of this study could be applied to other corridors. Subcommittee members made suggestions for the consultant team to connect with local traffic engineers. Mr. Meese said the list of potential hot spots was too long prior to this point in the study for discussions at that level, but now was a good time for that coordination to take place.

Mr. Meese said that he appreciated the comments from this group as there is no regional traffic engineers subcommittee. The MOITS subcommittee is asked to review the full memorandum for Task 3 which was posted on the MOITS website along with a memorandum from Mr. Meese with instructions for how to review and comment. Comments should be e-mailed to Mr. Meese with a copy to Mr. Lavery.

Item 4: Coordination Updates

a. Regional Emergency Support Function #1 (RESF-1) Emergency Transportation Committee Update

Mr. Meese told the subcommittee that Urban Area Security Initiative discussion process is underway at the leadership level of regional homeland security planning. A few concepts were forwarded from the RESF-1 subcommittee mostly having to do with RITIS and they are in the review process. It is possible that the leadership could make a decision in mid-April as to whether funding will be available for those projects. That group is scheduled to meet on April 20th.

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b. Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program Activities

Mr. Meese reported that MATOC is converting from an e-mail based notification system to a more robust "RSAN" system which can allow for multiple messages to be sent to multiple devices. The steering committee is currently reviewing the work plan for FY 2013 and he does not anticipate much in the way of major changes. MATOC does have a green light for an additional staff person to provide notification coverage as well as background outreach and coordination. Additionally, they are in planning stages of working with VDOT to have a webinar on their contractor-based transportation video and data distribution system. The MOITS subcommittee will be notified when there is more information on that webinar.

Mr. Meese was asked if there were any updates on RIC. He responded that the staff person, hired through COG, has been announced. Beauty Stevens, a longtime DDOT operations center staff person, will be the RIC coordinator. She will be assisted by Eric Hauser, and backed-up by DC HSEMA and physically operating out of that office. Mr. Meese was asked if the MATOC funding was secure. He responded that he was not aware of any issues regarding FY 2013 funding, though commitments may not yet have been finalized.

c. Status Report on the Regional Survey on Traffic Signal Power Backup Systems

Mr. Meese said that this topic is also in response to the COG Incident Management and Response (IMR) report following the January 26, 2011 snow storm. Phil Andrews, Montgomery County Councilmember and Chair of the IMR Oversight Committee, had a specific interest in traffic signal power backup systems. In past months, staff has undertaken a regional survey and found that approximately 15% of signals in the region have battery backup and another 5% or so are generator ready. The next question is, from a regional perspective, do critical signals have battery backup? The Traffic Signal Subcommittee is working to address that question by beginning to look at the Maryland and Virginia state emergency transportation plans as a starting point. The District of Columbia completed a similar exercise identifying major signalized intersections several years ago and determined that they currently have either battery or generator backup on those signals. The Traffic Signal Subcommittee is expecting to meet in early May (date TBD) and provide an update to the IMR Oversight Committee on May 31st.

Mr. Meese was asked to clarify the number of traffic signals in the region with battery backup in place. He said it was 15% with various reasons for why agencies may have chosen particular intersections for backup, including not only traffic volumes, but also potentially intersection geometry, how long it could take to make a repair, and happenstance opportunities when a signal was being built or replaced. The Traffic Signal Subcommittee's focus, on the other hand, is this information in the context of a regional emergency.

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Item 5: Jurisdictional Roundtable

Mr. Point-du-Jour introduced Joe Sagal as the new deputy director for operations at MD SHA.

Mr. Igbinosun announced that MD SHA is moving ahead to install backups for all CCTV cameras in Maryland. The first phase will be between 200 and 300 cameras. He felt that the contract they have for installation was very reasonable, but the maintenance and recurring costs will be high. He was asked how long the backup would last and he responded that it is eight hours. He was asked about the cost per location and responded that he would be able to provide that information offline.

Mr. Cheeks reported about the upcoming ITS America Annual Meeting in National Harbor, Maryland, that the program was basically set and registration was available on the website. There is a discount for public agency attendees from DC, Maryland, and Virginia. There is a set of activities on the Washington technology corridor which will be kicked-off with a roundtable discussion with the DOT secretaries from DC, Maryland, and Virginia that will be followed with presentations at three sessions. He was asked if anyone from WMATA would be participating in the presentations. He responded that Mr. Kennedy set that up before leaving WMATA and a contractor would be presenting in his place. There are tours set up by all three state DOTs. There will also be a pavilion at the exhibit hall to show some of the interagency coordination in the region. There are volunteer opportunities to help offset the registration costs.

Item 6: Other Business

There was no other business.

Item 7: Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at 12:30 PM in COG Meeting Room 1 [later rescheduled to Tuesday, June 12].