

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, October 14, 2008

TIME: 12:30 PM

PLACE: COG, First Floor, Meeting Room 1

CHAIRS: Hon. David Snyder, City of Falls Church, Chair, Policy Task Force
Amy Tang McElwain, Virginia Department of Transportation, Chair,
Technical Subcommittee

Attendance:

Kirk Dand, Arlington DOT
Gary Euler, Telvent
Michael Harris, Virginia DRPT
Al Himes, Alexandria Transit
Egua Igbinosun, MD SHA
Sean Kennedy, WMATA
Yanlin Li, DDOT
Andy Mangene, Montgomery County Transit
Alvin Marquess, MD SHA
Nick Mazzenga, Kimley Horn and Associates
Curt McCullough, City of Fairfax
Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT
Frank Mirack, FHWA
Kamal Munawar, VDOT
Michael Pack, UMD-CATT Lab
Martin Parker, Open Roads Consulting
Alex Verzosa, City of Fairfax

COG/TPB Staff Attendance:

Michael Eichler
Karin Foster
Andrew Meese
Gerald Miller
Ryan Whytlaw, COG Public Safety
Jim Yin

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Actions:

1. Welcome and Review of Notes from the September 9, 2008 Meeting

Participants introduced themselves. Notes from the September MOITS meeting were approved.

2. Formation of Nominating Committee for 2009 MOITS Technical Subcommittee Officers

Mr. Meese announced that it was time to form a Nominating Committee for 2009 MOITS Technical Subcommittee officers. In the rotation cycle, in 2009 it will be DDOT's turn to chair. The Nominating Committee will put together a slate of nominees to be considered by MOITS at the December meeting. Kirk Dand, Sean Kennedy, and Alvin Marquess volunteered for the Nominating Committee. Mr. Meese agreed to contact the volunteers to proceed with the process.

3. Program Updates

a. Regional Emergency Support Function (RESF) – 1 Committee

Mr. Whytlaw reported. The most recent meeting of the RESF-1 Committee took place on September 23, and was focused on RICCS training. Mr. Whytlaw noted that RICCS training also is regularly scheduled once a month at COG for anyone who needs it. The next RESF-1 meeting will discuss how RESF-1 will utilize RICCS.

Other topics under discussion include RESF-1 plans for next year, and the traffic monitoring tool (later on today's MOITS agenda). The traffic monitoring tool was the one RESF-1-nominated project that was approved for UASI funding this year. However, there was now a further effort to look at how UASI projects can be further integrated. The CAOs/SPG appointed John Contestabile to lead the effort to look at this, with meetings on this taking place over the next two days. Also, a CAOs Homeland Security Executive Committee meeting planned for sometime in November will bring in all RESF chairs to help determine priorities for next year's UASI funding. Finally, Mr. Whytlaw noted that the next RESF-1 meeting was scheduled for October 28.

The group agreed to revisit the topic of integration during the traffic monitoring tool project discussion later in today's agenda.

b. Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program

Mr. Euler reported. The most recent MATOC activities included an October 2 regional operations workshop hosted by the University of Maryland CATT Lab. The workshop

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presented scenarios and talked through procedures on what would happen today under an incident scenario, and then later posed the question if there were a MATOC capability and facilitator, how could it be better. The workshop resulted in a good day of discussion. The team was still in the process of preparing the summary of the workshop, which will be used to help develop operating procedures. This and other work was toward the kickoff in December to establish MATOC as an operating entity for a proof of concept. Alvin Marquess chairs the operations committee.

A related development was the hiring of a MATOC Facilitator, Buddy Ey, who will be working for Telvent initially. Mr. Ey comes from a long career with Montgomery County Fire and Rescue, where he served as a fire chief, and also worked with communications and FEMA issues. Initially Mr. Ey will spend time in the various operating centers observing current procedures.

A second MATOC Subcommittee works with Michael Pack on developing RITIS. Currently they were working on an Operations and Maintenance Guide that lays out resource needs to establish RITIS as an operating tool. A notable issue is where future resources will be coming from to support RITIS. This work will also be coordinated with the MATOC facilitator.

A third major MATOC activity was on outreach. A first draft of an outreach/communications plan had been developed to be presented soon to the MATOC Steering Committee. A key feature was the formation of a focus group going beyond the four major agencies now involved in MATOC, to a broader representation of local agency engineering, transit, public outreach, and public safety people. This will look at what their needs are, and will help shape MATOC through the proof of concept period. The MOITS Technical Subcommittee Chair will be a member. Invitations were to be sent soon to focus group invitees.

In response to a question from Ms. McElwain, Mr. Euler stated that initial efforts will be on providing input to MATOC regional standard operating procedures (SOPs), but he would not be surprised if agencies during this process also determine needed changes to their individual SOPs.

In response to an additional question from Ms. McElwain, Mr. Euler noted that the MATOC Facilitator does not yet have a final permanent location. Mr. Ey will be starting out at the Telvent offices in Rockville, and is then anticipated to rotate to various agency operations centers for a period, for lengths of time to be determined. In the long run, MATOC member agencies have said it would be beneficial for him to be located in one of the operations centers, but which one was still to be determined.

c. Ideas for Future Presentations – Group Discussion

Additional ideas for future MOITS meeting presentations were suggested, including delving into specific issues in the MOITS Strategic Plan; traffic detector projects; and VDOT's ITS Master Plan, including the issue of coordinating with HOT lanes and construction projects. Ms. McElwain encouraged participants to email in further ideas.

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d. Other Updates: There were no other updates.

4. Briefing on Regional Evacuation Traffic Monitoring Management Tool Development Activities

Mr. Marquess reported, referring to a handout copy of the project proposal as submitted for UASI funding. This was one of several projects submitted by RESF-1 Transportation, but the only one approved for funding by the CAOs/SPG. Other projects that had been submitted were for Virginia State Police laptops, incident management trailers for evacuations, and a RITIS expansion. Though this project was accepted so far, but since acceptance there have been two meetings justifying the project again, and as we stand the funding has not been awarded.

The project was put in to fill gaps in traffic detection, to help in real-time modeling for evacuation clearance times, and to show how sys are operating and when they are failing. Page 7 of the handout showed the cost breakdown. A game plan was needed before getting the funding among DDOT, MSHA, and VODT on how to line up the funding for the various locations identified. In response to a question, Mr. Marquess noted that the detection does not have to be on the Beltway or I-95 itself, but can be on other nearby roadways if that is what is needed for the evacuation modeling.

The next step was to put the committee together to advise this project. This would advise the design work, and identify basic packages for each agency responsible for putting in and maintaining the locations. Mr. Marquess noted that he needed more information on DC's detection systems, and Mr. Li agreed to be in contact with him on this, including providing available GIS files.

In response to a question, Mr. Marquess agreed that detection on key arterials, such as on major arterials just inside the Beltway rather than on the Beltway itself, might be just as helpful.

Ms. McElwain commented that whether detection gaps are should be identified from the modeling perspective, then overlaid with agency knowledge on where agencies are putting in new detection, for coordination. Both perspectives are needed to make the best decisions.

In response to a question, Mr. Marquess stated that to date the accuracy of the I-95 probe vehicle monitoring project has not been in line with expectations.

Ms. McElwain noted the need for a concept of operations, and that VDOT had a document that could be used as a start that would be shared with the project team. It was also noted that the CAOs/SPG will be interested in integration with other systems or projects, including RITIS.

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In response to a question, Mr. Marquess noted that cost estimates were for installation only; pre-engineering and design would have to be covered in-house by the transportation agencies.

It was recommended that there will be a meeting with Dr. Chang out at the University of Maryland to see the modeling work, to see where he thinks we might have some gaps.

In response to a question from Mr. Verzosa, Mr. Marquess agreed it will be critical to place detectors on arterials if funding could be available. Coverage varies around the region. VDOT has more than MSHA. Mr. Marquess was also interested in tapping into detection information that might be available from traffic signal systems on arterials. Mr. Harris noted that recent Virginia work in the Dulles Corridor and Tysons Corner may be of interest, including new infrastructure capturing real-time information.

In response to a question from Mr. Verzosa, Mr. Marquess noted that funding sources beyond UASI were being considered, including emergency transit grant funds, and other sources would be welcome. Ms. McElwain encouraged further efforts for this because other funding sources were drying up.

In response to a question from Ms. McElwain, Mr. Marquess stated that Joe Geckle of MSHA was working on the formal agreement for the project, but that was expected to take some time to complete.

In response to a question from Mr. Mirack, Mr. Euler noted that the MATOC Steering Committee was looking at the issue of funding, but had concentrated so far only on the needs of the core MATOC coordination function. It was noted that MATOC to date has been funded by a special grant, and that it does not have an independent source of funding.

Mr. Marquess noted that this was also being looked at for the Baltimore region. Overall, it was getting a lot of good attention, and people will see the results in the future in better traffic management.

5. Presentation on the DDOT CapTOP System and Related Activities

Mr. Li reported, and referred to a PowerPoint presentation that described numerous DDOT needs and activities, including CapTOP.

In response to a question from Ms. McElwain, Mr. Li noted that CapTOP is an information input device rather than a control device. It is to make operations center personnel's job easier.

In response to a question from Mr. Igbinosun, Mr. Li noted that DDOT had looked at utilizing the Maryland CHART system as their basis, but found that was not right for DDOT

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for a number of reasons, including that DDOT's roadway system was mainly arterials rather than freeways, and that many other functions needed to be integrated.

In response to a question from Mr. Meese, Mr. Li stated that the many technical failures of DDOT's variable message signs have been due to necessary communications infrastructure not being installed in the first place, as well as maintenance issues over time.

In response to a question from Mr. Euler, Mr. Li noted that they were not planning to add ATMS control features to CapTOP, because of the need to separate maintenance and operations activities. The operators involved will not be qualified, for example, to troubleshoot system repairs, only to use tools to share information.

6. Presentation on WMATA Transit Signal Priority Activities

Mr. Kennedy presented, referring to a handout on WMATA's plans and proposals for Transit Signal Priority (TSP) in the region. WMATA's proposal included that there be a regional workshop on TSP in the December time frame.

In response to a question from Mr. Dand, Mr. Kennedy said that identifying a lead agency for the TSP effort would be a topic for the workshop. WMATA will need involvement of agencies responsible for roads and signals. Mr. Dand expressed concern that, though TSP may be widely supported, no agency wants to take the lead. Mr. Dand also noted that though Virginia jurisdictions may be similar, DC and Montgomery County technologies and practices are different.

Mr. Harris noted the VDRPT state strategic plan just kicked off that may be helpful.

Mr. Pack questioned whether TSP was widely supported, and noted that he had been in meetings where signal maintenance personnel objected to such systems. A point of discussion was whether TSP helped just bus riders, or helped everyone.

Mr. Marquess and Mr. Harris noted the need to look at technology issues. However, institutional and funding issues were seen as bigger stumbling blocks than technology. Mr. Marquess suggested that Mr. Kennedy talk to Phil Tarnoff. Mr. Marquess also recommended consideration of costs and benefit/cost ratios.

In response to a question on data, Mr. Kennedy noted they were to review data from DDOT on traffic impacts from the Georgia Avenue system.

In response to a question from Mr. Igbinosun, Mr. Kennedy stated that the 25% not-on-time figure he quoted for WMATA buses was comparable to national figures.

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In response to a question from Mr. Euler, Mr. Kennedy stated that this effort was more on how to do TSP as opposed to whether to do TSP. Mr. Euler recommended that there be a focus on what the benefits will be for each agency.

Mr. Verzosa noted that in the case of real-time bus arrival systems, each agency ended up putting in its own systems. Therefore, in the case of TSP, he stated that it may be better to proceed with individual systems and see if one wins out over the others, or try to integrate the systems later.

Ms. McElwain noted that implications of TSP can be great for signal operations. There are a wide variety of signal systems in the region with varying capabilities. VDOT has estimated that an intersection needs three full cycles to recover from a preemption/prioritization call. She felt that signals personnel were not necessarily opposed to TSP, but they did want to know what the overall impacts would be to their systems. She asked that MOITS participants send contact information to Mr. Kennedy on people who should be involved in this effort.

7. Update on MOITS Strategic Plan Development

Mr. Meese reported that strategic plan development was taking more time than anticipated, due to the complexities of the topic and because of being down one staff person. The completion date likely will be extended from December 31 to June 30, but this will allow for more in-depth discussions of strategic plan topics by MOITS.

8. Other Business

Ms. Foster invited everyone to the Freight Subcommittee meeting to take place on October 16. The meeting was being followed by a tour of CSX rail facilities in the region.

Mr. Igbinosun noted that MSHA was putting together a committee to help plan the hosting of the 2009 ITS America Annual Meeting in Washington. Planning meetings were to begin soon.

The committee discussed the scheduling of upcoming MOITS meetings. There was a reminder that there would be no November MOITS meeting, and that the December meeting had been moved to Tuesday, December 2 instead of December 9. The January 2009 meeting was moved to January 6 instead of January 13 to avoid conflict with the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting the second week of January. The December 2 and January 6 meetings will still take place in Room 1 beginning at 12:30 PM.