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, February 14, 2012

TIME: 12:30 PM

PLACE: COG, First Floor, Meeting Room 1

CHAIRS: Hon. David Snyder, City of Falls Church, Chair, Policy Task Force

Sean Kennedy, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Chair, Technical Committee

Attendance:
James Cheeks, DDOT
Ed Daniel, Montgomery County Police Department (via phone)
Gary Euler, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Craig Franklin, Trichord, Inc.
Claire Gron, NVTC
Michael Guarino, Fairfax County DOT
Warren Henry, Jacobs Engineering/MSHA
Tara Hutchinson, MATOC
Ndanaan Jallow, WMATA
Sean Kennedy, WMATA
Nick Mazzenga, Kimley Horn & Associates
Curt McCullough, City of Fairfax (via phone)
Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT (via phone)
Tom Scherer, Arlington County DES
Greg Williams, Joint Forces HQ NCR
Dwight Wright, Telvent USA

COG Staff Attendance:
Michael Farrell
Karin Foster
Andrew Meese
Erin Morrow
Wenjing Pu
Huijing Qiang
Eric Randall
Betsy Self
Daivamani Sivasailam

Actions:

1. Welcome and Review of Notes from the December 20, 2011 MOITS Joint Meeting

Participants introduced themselves. Notes from the December 2011 MOITS meeting were approved.

Mr. Kennedy briefed on the Traffic Signal Subcommittee February 9 meeting at Arlington County, the 91st TRB Annual Meeting presentations made by MOITS participants, and the upcoming (March 1st) Mid-Atlantic Discussions of Regional Use of Archived Operations Data to be held at DVRPC in Philadelphia, PA.

2. Coordination Updates

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

Ms. Self reported that the RESF-1 committee is currently in the UASI process seeking transportation proposals. In view of a possible lack of funding in the next several years, the committee is looking for sustainment proposals only. The RESF-1 committee will discuss proposals on this Friday (February 17), which is the deadline to submit proposals to the committee. March 15th is the deadline for the RESF-1 committee to submit all transportation proposals to the UASI process. An exact funding level for this year's UASI process is expected by the end of February. The UASI process will have a major meeting on April 4th to discuss all the proposals received and a decision of projects funding is expected.

In response to Mr. Meese's question, Ms. Self replied that the RESF-1 committee is looking at existing projects whose components need to be renewed or progressed. The committee has received three such proposals and expects two more by this Friday. Mr. Meese asked if detection systems along critical evacuation routes are considered. Ms. Self said it would be categorized as system expansion and would be discussed if additional funding becomes available.

Ms. Self reminded the participants that this Friday's RESF-1 meeting will start at 1 pm in COG meeting room 4&5.

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

Mr. Hutchinson reported several MATOC Program activities, including the MATOC Snow Mobilization Coordination Effort conducted late last year, working with the COG Incident Management and Response (IMR) committee, the MATOC website (www.matoc.org) and its "Traveler Information" tab (a lite version of the RITIS website) that have been recently launched for general public access. The current "Traveler Information" website has a limit of 12,000 users at a time; improvements to increase this number are being made.

Mr. Hutchinson demonstrated the "Traveler Information" website and explained each layer of the map. For the "Camera Feeds" layer, users could click several cameras and a camera wall will be automatically built within one browser window. Currently, only SHA cameras are shown on the layer and the MATOC program and RITIS are working with other jurisdictions to add more camera feeds. For the "Congestion" layer, Mr. Hutchinson noted that the INRIX live data now cover many major arterials in Virginia. Mr. Meese noted that this was enabled by a recent procurement made by VA 511; the availability of the archive data for the expanded arterials is still being examined.

c. Briefing on the Initiation of the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program Website and the National Capital Region Web Portal

Mr. Meese reported on two recently initiated websites that help address recommendations of the post-January 26 COG Incident Management and Response (IMR) Steering Committee. The first is the MATOC public website, available by visiting www.matoc.org and selecting the "Traveler Information" tab. This website makes publicly available real-time transportation information from the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS) site demonstrated at a previous meeting. The second is the National Capital Region Web Portal at www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov, developed by the region's public information officers (PIOs), aiding communications with the public during weather events and other emergencies.

Hosted by Fairfax County on behalf of the region, the www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov website provides the latest news for Emergency Alerts, Weather, Utilities and Traffic. Mr. Meese toured the participants on the website. Currently, the Traffic tab links only to news feeds from transportation agencies. There is a potential possibility in the future that this tab could take users to the "Traffic Information" website currently linked to the www.matoc.org website.

Mr. Meese noted that this website is a convenient "one-stop shop" of regional emergency information for the general public or the private sector, especially during a regional emergency. Mr. Euler asked what would be the future of the two websites. Mr. Meese replied that the websites are not intended to supplant existing individual or cooperative institution efforts; rather it aims to facilitate the communications with the pubic during weather events and other emergencies – for this purpose the websites will continue to improve.

3. Status Report on the Regional Survey on Traffic Signal Power Backup Systems, and Other Follow-Up Items to the COG for Incident Management and Response (IMR) Action Plan

Mr. Meese made a presentation titled "Update on COG Incident Management and Responses (IMR) Action Plan Transportation Recommendations", which will also be presented to the TPB Board meeting on Wednesday (February 15). The presentation briefly reviewed the COG IMR effort, which made two transportation-related recommendations in the Action Plan: 1) expand MATOC operations from the current 16 hours, 5 days/week to 24/7, and 2) conduct an assessment of and expeditiously install back-up power for major traffic signals.

The MATOC program already ramps up to temporary 24/7 operations on an as-needed basis (and did so during the January 26, 2011 storm). In view of the IMR Action Plan also calls for a creation of Regional Incident Coordination (RIC) program that will be operating 24/7, the MATOC program will enable itself the ability for the RIC program to request off-hours activation on an on-call basis. The MATOC program also conducted a Snow Mobilization Coordination effort to facilitate the transportation sector's communications with the larger regional decision-making process for such events.

TPB staff has conducted a regional survey on traffic signals power back-up systems. The draft survey results found that about 20% of the region's signals are already equipped with a back-up system, 15% of which are battery-based systems (instant-on but limited duration) and 5% are generator-ready systems (generators must be transported to the site when needed). There are more than 5,000 signalized intersections, and 19 separate jurisdictions agencies that maintain and operate these signals in the TPB region. The draft survey results will be updated as the initial survey was a snapshot as of December 31, 2011 and several agencies are currently installing back-up systems for additional intersections.

Mr. Franklin commented on the summary of "Automatic power failure alarms back to signals agencies? – generally no" on slide 12 by pointing out that there are solutions to get automatic alarms at certain cost. Mr. Cheeks added that all the signals in DC have this capability and can also differentiate between power outage and loss of communication. Several participants noted that utility companies do not have meters for some signals (a flat fee is charged in this case) and this adds difficulties for automatic power failure alarms.

4. Update on the Congestion Management Process (CMP)

a. Request for Information Updates for the 2012 CMP Technical Report

Ms. Morrow distributed a memorandum requesting update from the committee members regarding ongoing local jurisdictional travel demand management strategies for the 2012 CMP Technical Report. Members or any appropriate personal in their organizations were encouraged to send Ms. Morrow any updated information by March 31, 2012. There is a table attached to this memorandum: "Ongoing Local Jurisdictional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies in the 2010 CMP Technical Report". Ms. Morrow noted that an electronic version of this table that could facilitate text editing can be retrieved from the MOITS committee website. She will also send an email with the memo and table to all MOITS committee members after this meeting.

b. Update on the Congestion Dashboard

Mr. Pu presented the 4th Quarter, 2011 National Capital Region Congestion Report and announced that a dedicated webpage for this report (and previous ones) has been developed. Users could access this webpage via www.mwcog.org/congestion or the "Congestion Dashboard" entry on the menu bar at www.mwcog.org/transportation.

The 4th Quarter 2011 Report observed slightly increased congestion and unreliability compared to the previous quarter (Q3, 2011) and the last quarter of 2010. An additional column, "In Construction Zone?", was added for the Most Severe Freeway Bottlenecks on page 9 and Most Unreliable Freeway Segments on page 10. The 4th Quarter 2011 Spotlight (on page 15) examined the traffic on Black Friday (the day after Thanksgiving) from 2008 to 2011 and observed increased traffic and significantly different traffic pattern in 2011.

Ms. McElwain asked for which time period the bottleneck was reported on page 9. Mr. Pu replied that the bottlenecks were identified using all time data from the reporting quarter, including peak, off-peak, nighttime, weekends and holidays. In response to Mr. Scherer's question, Mr. Pu clarified that the ranking of the bottleneck is based on both Weekly Hours of Cogestion and Average Speed when Congested, not solely one of them. A clarification footnote regarding the ranking critira will be added in future reports.

5. Discussion of MOITS-Related Input to the Upcoming FY2013 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Meese distributed a handout and went over the MOITS-related task in the draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FY 2013 (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013). All the FY 2013 MOITS-related tasks have the same budget to FY 2012 in the draft UPWP, which is scheduled to be approved by the TPB on March 21, 2012. Mr. Meese noted that item 5.A Cordon Counts on page 65 of the draft UPWP is not a MOITS-related task although it is included in the handout.

6. Jurisdictional Roundtable

Mr. Cheeks informed the participants with relevant preparations for the ITS America Annual Meeting to be held in Washington, DC in the last week of May. Mr. Kennedy reported Transit Signal Priority (TSP) related activities, including selecting a vender for the VA-7 TSP project, regional TSP protocol, and a MOU between Virginia and WMATA. Mr. Scherer informed the committee that Arlington County is going to have three more energy efficient buses.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned around 2:15 PM.