

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS, AND INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS (MOITS) TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

MEETING SUMMARY

DATE: Tuesday, February 10, 2015

TIME: 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

PLACE: By Conference Call

CHAIR: Jean Yves Point-du-Jour, Maryland State Highway
Administration

ATTENDANCE:

Warren Henry – Maryland SHA
Taran Hutchinson – MATOC
Amy Tang McElwain – VDOT
Jean Yves Point-du-Jour – Maryland SHA
Tom Scherer, Arlington County

Staff:

Elliot Harkavy – COG Public Safety Staff
Andrew Meese – COG/TPB
Erin Morrow – COG/TPB
Wenjing Pu – COG/TPB
Jon Schermann – COG/TPB
Daivamani Sivasailam – COG/TPB
Marco Trigueros – COG/TPB

1. Welcome

Participants introduced themselves. Review of notes from the January 6, 2015 meeting was deferred to the next in-person meeting.

2. Update on the Greenhouse Gas COG Multi-Sector Working Group (MSWG)

Mr. Sivasailam briefed the subcommittee on COG's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Multi-Sector Working Group (MSWG) which had its inaugural meeting on January 30, 2015. The MSWG is

MOITS Technical Subcommittee

Summary of the February 10, 2015 Conference Call

Page 2 of 4

a professional technical working group of COG members and transportation agencies. Membership is by invitation, but meetings are open to observers. The MSWG is tasked with identifying and analyzing viable strategies for GHG reduction potential and also for costs, timeframe for implementation, and potential co-benefits. In addition, the MSWG will examine the regional GHG reductions targets adopted by the COG Board in 2008 and explore the potential for establishing sector-specific GHG reduction goals in four sectors: transportation, land-use, energy, and built environment. A consultant team will be hired to complete the technical work. Oversight will be provided by the COG Board in parallel with the TPB and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC).

Three subgroups for the MSWG have been established: energy and environment, transportation, and land use. These three subgroups will each meet in February. At these meetings, the members will brainstorm a preliminary list of GHG reduction strategies.

The outcome of the MSWG's work will be a "What We Can Do" report. The MSWG has an ambitious schedule for its work. An interim draft report is expected in September and the group's work will be finalized in December.

If members of the MOITS subcommittee have recommendations for strategies, they can send them to Mr. Sivasailam or contact their MSWG representative. It is his understanding that the group is looking for "high-level" strategies rather than project level strategies. For operations, for example, it could be reducing vehicle-hours of delay in the region by 10%.

Mr. Point-du-Jour noted that Mr. Sivasailam did not mention anything regarding the role of the federal government in this work, specifically noting that implementation of GHG strategies could place an additional burden on an already tight funding situation. Mr. Sivasailam responded that the federal government is not involved in this work; it is a regionally driven effort. Ms. Morrow added that the basic mission for the MSWG is to find strategies that are viable and achievable and cost plays a large role in that. The consultant team should be able to provide feedback to the group. Mr. Sivasailam noted that the group does realize that there are strategies that are beyond the region's control, like federal fuel economy standards, that play a significant role in GHG reductions.

Mr. Sivasailam and Ms. Morrow were asked to provide a little background on how management and strategies can reduce GHG emissions and what kinds of strategies the MOITS Subcommittee members should be thinking about. Ms. Morrow responded that it is her understanding that the MSWG is looking for very high-level strategies and she will report back to this group when she has some further clarification. She noted that carbon dioxide emissions are very high at low speeds so strategies that reduce bottlenecks, reduce idling and improve traffic flow, like traffic signal optimization and incident management, reduce emissions.

Mr. Point-du-Jour nominated a strategy of changing all traffic lights in the region to LED. Ms. Morrow agreed and noted that the transportation sector subgroup is focusing on on-road emissions and LEDs would likely fall under the built environment sector. She noted that one of the opportunities the MSWG has is looking at the interactions of strategies between sectors. For

MOITS Technical Subcommittee

Summary of the February 10, 2015 Conference Call

Page 3 of 4

example, transportation looks at traffic signals for their optimization potential while, as Mr. Point-du-jour noted, the built environment sector would look at traffic signals for their energy savings potential.

3. Update on Regional Emergency Support Function 1 – Emergency Transportation Committee (RESF-1) and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Activities

Mr. Sivasailam reported that RESF-1 was meeting immediately after the MOITS meeting. They would be discussing the four projects funded through UASI during FY 2014. Two of the projects are for RITIS, one is for emergency support trailers, and the last is for traffic signal power back-up. RESF-1 has asked for letters of interest for projects for FY 2015. At this time, the traffic signal back-up project is still underway and the jurisdictions involved do not plan to apply for more funds for FY 2015. There is interest for applying for more support for RITIS. There is interest in an application for a project on radio interoperability. Mike Wood from VDOT would take the lead on the grant application. It was noted that COG's Project Management Office (PMO) has requested that RESF-1 develop a strategic plan for traffic signal power back-up.

Mr. Harkavy noted the letter received by the region from Senator Warner on the communications issues during the fatal incident near the L'Enfant Metrorail Station and COG's official response letter. It may lead to discussion about opportunities for collaboration between RESF-1 and the Fire Chiefs' Rail Passenger Subcommittee.

4. Update on Traffic Signals-Related Activities

Mr. Trigueros reported that the Traffic Signals Subcommittee met the previous week. The subcommittee received an update on the transit signal priority (TSP) TIGER project. WMATA should be ready to move forward with installing the cellular service required at the intersections in the TSP corridors once MOUs are executed with the jurisdictions. The pilot site for testing is on Route 7 in Virginia.

The Traffic Signals Subcommittee also discussed the results of the recently completed annual power back-up survey which has data as of June 2014. There has been a continual increase in the number of battery back-ups. Results indicated a decrease in the percentage of generator ready signals in the region, but that is due to more agencies reporting to this year's the survey than had participated in previous years' surveys, rather than an actual drop in numbers, and one of those agencies is participating in the UASI grant, which will bring the percentages back up.

Staff was still concerned that the responses received regarding availability of generators were overly conservative. For example, during the derecho storm, there were many VDOT operated signals running on generator back-up, but VDOT responded that there are no dedicated generators. It is difficult to capture the number of signals that will actually be generator-powered during an emergency because in many cases, the police, rather than the DOT, are deploying the generators. While there are many generator-ready signals in the region, there are not that many dedicated generators and it is difficult to assign personnel to those generators, which limits the

MOITS Technical Subcommittee

Summary of the February 10, 2015 Conference Call

Page 4 of 4

number of signals that can run on generators during a long, widespread power outage. Mr. Sivasailam noted that there are differences in how the RESF-1 would prioritize signals for power-back-up versus how local jurisdictions would decide.

Mr. Point-du-Jour asked if backplates are being considered. Mr. Meese responded there has been limited discussion by the Subcommittee, and those discussions have generally indicated those backplates are an expense with limited benefits for widespread implementation versus competing investment needs.

The Traffic Signals Subcommittee had also received a presentation on personal signal assistance, an international system under development in the private sector where signal timing may be automatically shared with car computers for purposes of safety, travel efficiency/fuel savings, and pollution reduction.

5. Update on the 2014 Freeway Congestion Monitoring Using Aerial Surveying – Draft Report

Mr. Meese provided an update on the 2014 freeway congestion monitoring. Since 1993, the TPB has undertaken an aerial survey to study congestion on the region's freeways. For 2014, there are three components to the study. The first component, a draft report completed by Skycomp, which is comparable to all of the previous aerial studies, was presented to MOITS last month. The second component, the pilot study using time lapse photography, is in the processing stage. The third component will be a companion report by staff which will attempt to identify reasons for areas congestion reported in the aerial study.

Initially, staff planned to release all three components at once. However, because of interest in the aerial photographs and the accompanying analysis, it was decided that the report by Skycomp will be released while the two components are being completed. By next month, there may be more substantive action for the MOITS Subcommittee to take.

6. Other Business

Mr. Pu announced that the congestion report for the last quarter of 2014 is available on the COG website. He also announced that on Thursday, the second meeting of the probe data users group will be take place. He was asked if congestion increased in the last quarter due to the decrease in gas prices. He responded that he found that some interstates were not as congested, but the arterials were a little more congested; however there was not a clear pattern.

7. Adjourn

The next meeting was announced as in-person and is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, 2015, 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM, COG Meeting Room 1