

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Meeting Notes

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

DATE: Tuesday, January 9, 2007

TIME: 12:30 PM

PLACE: COG, First Floor, Meeting Room 1

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

Attendance:

Brien Benson, George Mason University
Vinit Deshpande, Wilbur Smith Associates
Jason Ellison, University of Maryland
Anne Hopengarten, IBM
Imran Indamar, Telvent Farradyne
Edward Jones, Prince George's County DPW&T
Eric Marx, PRTC/Omniride
Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT
Peter Meenehan, WMATA
Mark Miller, WMATA
Frank Mirack, FHWA DC Division
Lev Pinelis, IBI Group
Jean Yves Point-du-Jour, Maryland SHA
Sharmila Samarasinghe, Dept. of Rail & Public Transportation, Virginia
Hon. David Snyder, City of Falls Church
Richard Steeg, VDOT
John Ward, IBI Group
James Witherspoon, VDOT
Bill Wolfe, Edwards and Kelcey

COG/TPB Staff Attendance:

Andrew Meese
Gerald Miller
Jim Yin
Robert Young

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1. Welcome, Introductions, and Review of Notes from the November 14, 2006 Meeting

Participants introduced themselves.

Mr. Snyder provided introductory comments noting the importance of the issues that the MOITS Task Forces address, issues that impact a great number of people, and complimenting the members who have risen to a number of specific challenges over recent years. Progress has been made addressing homeland security concerns and federal direction, especially finding ways to use existing transportation infrastructure more effectively and safely, and there is still much more work to be done. MOITS has an ambitious set of priorities, and Mr. Snyder challenged members to do everything they can to move forward with these agenda items. Mr. Miller thanked Mr. Snyder for his guidance and expressed support for his continuing involvement and leadership.

2. Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of MOITS Technical Task Force 2007 Officers

Ms. McElwain reported on behalf of the Nominating Committee, announcing a slate of nominees for 2007 MOITS Technical Task Force Chair and Vice Chairs. In the regular rotation of the Chairmanship, it is a Maryland jurisdiction's turn to be chair. The Vice Chairs would thus be one each from the District of Columbia, Virginia, and a regional agency.

The MOITS Technical Task Force approved the slate of new 2007 officers:

- Chair: Egua Igbinosun, Maryland State Highway Administration
- Vice Chairs: Kirk Dand, Arlington County Department of Transportation
Yanlin Li, District Department of Transportation
Mark Miller, WMATA.

Mr. Meese noted that nominees not in attendance at today's meeting had indicated their willingness to serve as Chair and Vice Chairs.

3. Update on Regional Emergency Support Function (RESF) #1 – Transportation Activities

Mr. Young reported, referring to a handout memo. The document provided an overview of the progress of the NCR RESF-1 Committee since the last presentation to MOITS in November 2006. This committee meets monthly to address Transportation's role in the NCR Homeland Security Program. The committee has representation at the local, state, regional, and federal levels from all NCR Jurisdictions. Mr. Young reported on major topics:

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- RESF-1 Tabletop Exercise

The exercise took place on November 28, 2006 at COG. There were 31 exercise participants and 28 observers. The exercise successfully convened a number of operational personnel from regional Traffic Management Centers, Transit Operations Centers, and Transportation Field Personnel. Evaluators/Observers included RESF-1 Committee Members (subject matter experts) as well as the regional Exercise and Training Oversight Panel and facilitation staff. An after-action report was still under development, and would have findings reported as appropriate to the RESF-1 Committee, the Emergency Managers Committee, the TPB, the Emergency Preparedness Council, and other stakeholders.

This exercise provided participants with an opportunity to identify formal and informal emergency coordination and communications between, and among, National Capital Region (NCR) transportation authorities at the operator and operation center levels. The exercise was particularly successful in identifying opportunities for participants to build relationships needed for more efficient strategic and operational-level communications between and among transit and transportation agencies.

Key strengths identified during this exercise included numerous transit and transportation system monitoring and response procedures, and efforts underway to coordinate some of the multiple electronic information sharing systems. Areas identified for additional efforts included providing more opportunities for operators to meet and interact regionally to increase awareness and education; ensuring awareness of collaboration and communications strategies and practices at multiple personnel levels; improving information flow; and increasing awareness of decision-making processes within and among transit and transportation agencies.

The RESF-1 Committee was exploring holding regular meetings, perhaps quarterly, of the directly-involved operations communications personnel from transportation management and control centers, to continue the information exchange that occurred at the exercise.

Mr. Miller noted that the region has a number of good communications practices, not all of which have been formalized, and these need to be shared with a wider range of agency personnel. The Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program will be a further means of addressing this.

Mr. Steeg stated that participants tended to focus on the tactical, here and now issues, and less on the more strategic or global issues of managing regional incidents. Both the day to day center staff and the next level up need to consider the strategic view more. The MATOC initiative will go a long way to resolve some of the strategic issues.

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Mr. Young noted that the findings from the exercise were further input for RESF-1 to champion MATOC efforts. Mr. Snyder welcomed the efforts to coordinate RESF-1 and MATOC, and appreciated the frankness of the after-action report to identify issues to be resolved.

- National Capital Region Evacuation and Sheltering Plan Project

The contractor had now been working for several months on this regional, multi-functional effort of which transportation (RESF-1) is a part. Other involved sectors include Emergency Management and Mass Care. A number of RESF-1 Committee members sit on the executive management team providing project oversight. The project was still in its initial stages of data requirements and collection. RESF-1 members have requested that work focus on improving jurisdictional plans to reach a common baseline where coordination of factors such as signal timing and route profiling (among others) can take place. The focus should be on improving procedures, not a database. RESF-1 will provide the MOITS Committee with more information in the coming months.

- FY2007 UASI Update

DHS released guidance for the FY2007 Urban Area Security Initiative program on January 5, 2007. The State Administrative Agency (SAA) is developing a process to reduce burdens placed on local practitioners for concept identification and development. Projects submitted for FY06 consideration that were not selected will be reconsidered for FY07. Many transportation related projects will fall into the Critical Infrastructure Protection investment area, a priority consideration. Further details will be provided during future MOITS meetings.

In response to a question from Mr. Snyder, Mr. Young explained that consultants to the Critical Infrastructure Work Group (of the states' Senior Policy Group for Homeland Security) were currently contacting a number of roadway transportation stakeholders for input on potential cross-system impacts of infrastructure failures. A similar transit systems outreach had been held in December. Anyone with further questions was asked to contact Mr. Young.

In response to a question from Mr. Mirack, Mr. Young stated he was not aware of the interjurisdictional communications that might be taking place because of the changeover of administrations in the District of Columbia and Maryland.

4. Update on the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program

Mr. Meese referred to copies of the December 20 update presentation to the TPB on the MATOC program. Mr. Snyder noted that the presentation was generally well-received by the Board, but also with reminders that it was critical to continue making progress as quickly as possible.

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Mr. Steeg reported the status of MATOC as of the information he currently had:

- Maryland: Secretary Robert Flanagan of the Maryland Department of Transportation had executed the memorandum of understanding to formalize the MATOC Steering Committee, as well as the funding agreement for the program management.
- Virginia: These documents and explanatory materials were being readied for a January 10 briefing of VDOT Commissioner David Ekern and a January 18 scheduled review for approval by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (legally required before the VDOT Commissioner can sign). No major issues were anticipated.
- District of Columbia: Prior to the administration changeover (January 2), this had been under senior personnel review. Mr. Steeg was not aware of the further status.
- The Steering Committee stood ready to proceed with work as soon as approvals are obtained, to follow the good work the Volpe Center had produced, a draft program management plan, concept of operations, mission and goals, and needs assessment.

Mr. Miller reported that no major issues were anticipated for WMATA approval, and their official signatures were anticipated soon. Mr. Meese similarly reported that no major issues were anticipated for COG approval, and this likely would be executed when all other parties have signed.

Mr. Meese called attention to Slide 6 of the December 20 presentation, a matrix showing the major recommendations of the TPB following 9/11, and regional activities addressing these recommendations within the MATOC program, by individual transportation agencies, and within the RESF structure. He noted that a MOITS column could have been added, but was left off for clarity of the slide. Such a MOITS column might include a focus on day-to-day incident management, performance measurement, transportation safety, technology, and ITS architecture.

Mr. Benson raised a question as to whether current plans for MATOC coordination with the Capital Wireless Information Net (CapWIN) were changed from previous proposals for CapWIN-CapCom coordination. Mr. Meese stated it was always his understanding that MATOC (formerly CapCom) and CapWIN would both have individual technologies meeting individual program needs (regional technology for MATOC and field-based for CapWIN); it had been joint governance that had been explored and, ultimately, not pursued. Mr. Steeg concurred, noting that he was also on the CapWIN Board, which was looking strategically at future roles for the CapWIN program. The CapWIN tool could be used within the MATOC program, but would not be the only technology used. CapWIN governance has never been finalized, and it appears that MATOC governance will be finalized first. Future MATOC-CapWIN coordination options will be explored. The MATOC Steering Committee bylaws were based upon the CapWIN bylaws, helping ensure compatibility. Mr. Miller concurred with Mr. Steeg's statements about the governance considerations.

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5. MOITS Components of the Draft FY2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Meese reported, referring to a handout. Each year, a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) describes the work to be accomplished in the TPB role as the metropolitan planning organization. Funding is defined by formula from Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration sources, matched by the three states. Each year in January, TPB staff provides a first draft in outline form of the next year's work program, in this case the FY2008 UPWP to begin July 1, 2007. The handout contained excerpts of the outline relevant to MOITS program areas.

An overall budget sheet was included. It was noted that for the first time, what had been a single Section I in previous UPWPs addressing plan and program requirements had been split into two sections. The new Section II addressed programs and activities specific to federal regulations, particularly those outside the core MPO work activity of travel forecasting. A number of MOITS program items would now be found in the new Section II, and Mr. Meese explained these briefly.

- II.A. Congestion Management Process (CMP) – In recent UPWPs, this had been a part of the Constrained Long-Range Plan task. The recent federal certification review had recommended this be separated, and an annual report developed. SAFETEA-LU had renamed this to CMP from the Congestion Management System (CMS), and emphasized the management of the existing transportation system. MOITS would be involved particularly regarding non-recurring congestion, and overall technology strategies for congestion reduction. The TPB Technical Committee and other committees would also be involved. Mr. Meese hoped to present a more detailed CMP proposal at the next meeting.
- II.B. MOITS – This was similar to previous years, with a slightly reduced budget due to MOITS focus areas now spun off into independent tasks, such as safety. It was also proposed to change the status of the MOITS Technical Task Force to become the MOITS Technical Subcommittee of the TPB Technical Committee, better ensuring coordination within the TPB process. This would formalize the need for MOITS items to be reviewed by the TPB Technical Committee before going to the TPB. No change was proposed for the MOITS Policy Task Force, which could continue to meet jointly with the MOITS Technical Subcommittee. Mr. Snyder expressed his concern that this not diminish the importance of MOITS program areas and goals. Anyone with comments on this proposal was asked to send them to Mr. Meese within the next two weeks.
- II.C. Transportation Emergency Preparedness Planning – This was proposed to be similar to FY2007, which was its initial year. The budget has been increased, in part to address the proposal to convene transportation emergency operations communications personnel on a regular basis.

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- II.D. Transportation Safety Planning – This will be a new task for FY2008. Mr. Meese referred to a handout that had been presented to the January 5 TPB Technical Committee meeting.
 - Safety is a SAFETEA-LU metropolitan planning factor, now distinguished from security. It is traditionally defined as achieving a trip purpose without incurring personal harm or damage to property, focused on the “4 E’s”: engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency services. A “safety element” must be developed as a component of the 2007 CLRP.
 - Safety has traditionally been a focus at the federal, state and local levels; a regional-level focus would be new. At the regional level, there is the ability to convene regional stakeholders, coordinate with other TPB and COG activities, and integrate into the CLRP and TIP.
 - A regional safety element would be developed in the context of the existing state Strategic Highway Safety Plans of DC, Maryland, and Virginia. The safety element will need to be developed by September. A regional workshop or summit meeting is proposed for the April or May time frame, allowing a mid-process review of materials developed.
 - Next steps were for staff to begin development of the safety element, especially information gathering. MOITS and the TPB Technical Committee will be briefed. The ongoing committee structure will be considered, perhaps forming a new specialized transportation safety subcommittee.
 - In response to a question from Mr. Miller, Mr. Meese noted that transit would be included in the considerations.
 - In response to a question from Mr. Point-du-Jour, Mr. Meese stated staff would explore both a systems approach and a location-specific approach for safety planning.
 - Mr. Snyder strongly supported this initiative, and offered his contacts with representatives of national safety-involved groups to aid the effort.

- II.F. Regional Bus Planning – A new Regional Bus Subcommittee had just been created by the TPB. MOITS was to coordinate with this new subcommittee and associated UPWP task, particularly regarding coordination of traffic and bus transit operations, including transit signal priority considerations.

6. MOITS Program Updates

- Traffic Signals: The Traffic Signals Working Group met jointly with the Baltimore Regional Traffic Signals Committee on November 29, 2006. This was the first ever such bi-regional signals meeting. The two groups were jointly planning for the March 14, 2007 Baltimore-Washington Regional Traffic Signals Forum to be held at the Maritime Institute near BWI Airport. Registration notices were to be sent soon. Mr. Meese thanked Mr. Jones for making a presentation at the November 29 meeting on signal equipment deployed by Prince George's County, and thanked the State Highway Administration for

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hosting the meeting at their District 3 offices in Greenbelt. The next Traffic Signals Working Group meeting was scheduled for January 31, location to be announced.

- Regional ITS Architecture: Mr. Yin reported. The Regional ITS Architecture Working Group last met on December 7, 2006, and was scheduled to meet next on January 18, 2007. The working group and staff are working on a short-term update of the architecture in the next couple of months, as well as a more comprehensive, long-term update of the architecture over the course of 2007. The long-term update will reconsider the structure of the architecture, and will go through a new validation process with stakeholders. Validation workshops are envisioned for the May to September time frame. Mr. Witherspoon suggested that the long-term update include an effort to develop an architecture "use and maintenance" documents.
- Transportation Safety Planning: This was covered by the earlier UPWP discussion.
- Congestion Management Process (CMP): This was covered by the earlier UPWP discussion.

7. Regional Activity Updates

- Regional Bus Conference and New Regional Bus Subcommittee: Mr. Meese noted that WMATA had held a successful Regional Bus Conference in Bethesda on November 30, convening well over 200 stakeholders, including numerous elected officials. The suggestion to form a regional bus subcommittee was affirmed in the recommendations of the conference. Ms. Samarasinghe noted the federal certification review recommendation for more regional transit planning was also a reason behind the efforts.
- Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS): Mr. Ellison reported. A draft RITIS concept of operations was anticipated to be provided to the MATOC Steering Committee the last week of January. A prototype was anticipated to be in operation in March, with 24/7 operations. The system was currently providing basic XML and JMS data feeds that some agencies are pulling from on a testing basis. The system was designed to accommodate either users who want data provided into their own agency software systems, or via a Web site for users who do not have their own systems. Other work activities included integrating Maryland and Virginia detector data, and a basic Web page for signing up for alerts. It was noted that these were agency-only activities that were not yet ready to go to the general public. Mr. Miller emphasized the importance of information verification before it is shared; if information is unreliable, users will ignore it. Mr. Ellison noted that the system will be able to keep track of where particular data came from. Mr. Point-du-Jour noted that information can become quickly obsolete. Mr. Meese noted that in large incidents such as hurricanes, the sheer volume of information to keep track of may force increased reliance on automated sources, with appropriate caveats to the users.

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8. Other Business

Mr. Mirack noted items announced recently in the Federal Register, for regions to enter into Urban Partnership Agreements with the USDOT, and associated grant programs in congestion relief and value pricing. It was also noted that there had been an award in the region under the federal Integrated Corridor Management program, to develop a traffic and transit concept of operations for the I-270 Corridor in Montgomery County.