

# 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, July 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,  
Chair, Technical Committee

**Attendance:**

James Austrich, Parsons Brinkerhoff  
Tad Borkowski, Fairfax County Department of Transportation  
Melissa Chow, WMATA  
Craig Franklin, Trichord, Inc.  
Claire Gron, NVTC  
Taran Hutchinson, MATOC  
Steve Kimble, Sensys Networks  
Ling Li, VDOT  
Curt McCullough, City of Fairfax (phone)  
Bob Souza, VDOT  
Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT  
Jean Yves Point-du-Jour, MD SHA  
Dwight Wright, Televent USA

COG Staff Attendance:

Andrew Meese  
Erin Morrow  
Wenjing Pu  
Huijing Qiang  
Eric Randall  
Betsy Self  
Daivamani Sivasailam

## **MOITS Policy Task Force and Technical Subcommittee**

Notes from the July 10, 2012 Joint Meeting

Page 2 of 5

### **Actions:**

#### **Item 1: Welcome and Review of Notes from the June 12, 2012 MOITS Joint Meeting**

Participants introduced themselves. Notes from the June MOITS meeting were distributed. There were no comments. Any comments after the meeting can be sent to Mr. Meese.

#### **Item 2: Briefing from the Traffic Signals Subcommittee**

Ms. Li and Mr. Meese briefed the group on the activities of the Traffic Signals Subcommittee which met immediately before the MOITS Subcommittee meeting. The primary work of the Traffic Signals Subcommittee has focused on responding to the recommendation of the IMR committee to the survey and plan for traffic signal power back-ups in the region. Each agency that owns traffic signals has a plan in place for moving towards providing power back-up for critical intersections. There is general regional consensus on the criteria that determines a critical intersection; however, power back-ups are installed based on funding availability, both capital and maintenance. At this time there are no plans to apply for UASI grants as the agencies were concerned about lack of funding for ongoing maintenance costs due to the back-up systems. There were discussions at the meeting on the aftermath of the June 29<sup>th</sup> derecho storm and how those issues relate to the work being done in response to the January 26, 2011 snowstorm. It was noted in discussions that in the case of the June 29<sup>th</sup> derecho storm, traffic signal battery back-up would not have helped much where power was out for days since the life of the battery back-up is hours and not days. Some jurisdictions switched to back-up generators at critical intersections. Additionally, a traffic signal may have been working on back-up power, but downed trees or electrical wires could be blocking the intersection. There may be an after-action review of the June 26<sup>th</sup> storms, led by COG Board, with discussions of preparations and warnings prior to the storm, lessons learned, and plans for the future.

Another topic discussed at the meeting was signal operations from the Fourth of July. Multiple agencies worked together and shared their experiences at the meeting. This year, MATOC had limited involvement with traffic signals, but next year, more regional coordination is expected especially if the Fourth of July is being used as a test for signal coordination. It was hoped that next year DC's Fast Forward plan for the Fourth could be shared much earlier with other agencies.

Mr. Randall briefed the Traffic Signal Subcommittee on the TIGER Transit Signal Priority (TSP) plan which is to be installed in multiple corridors requiring agencies to work together. There was to be a follow-up meeting on the TIGER TSP the following week with FTA the funding agency to review the progress on the program.

An upcoming major event for traffic signal coordination as well as MATOC will be the presidential inauguration in January. This is a large event involving multiple committees, multiple agencies, and multiple responders far beyond the transportation sector.

## **MOITS Policy Task Force and Technical Subcommittee**

Notes from the July 10, 2012 Joint Meeting

Page 3 of 5

### **Item 3: Coordination Updates**

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

Ms. Self briefed the subcommittee on RESF-1 activities. She noted that the agenda for the COG Board meeting scheduled for the next day has been changed to focus on the June 29<sup>th</sup> storms. At the last RESF-1 meeting, there were discussions about reprogramming remaining UASI funds. At this time, the amount of funding is uncertain. Four projects were discussed for support to be submitted on July 20<sup>th</sup>. There is an 18 month turnaround time to complete a funded project. In order of priority, the projects are Mobile CCTV (5 in Maryland, 5 in Virginia), fixed corridor CCTV cameras throughout the region (mostly in Maryland affixed to cellular towers), evacuation support trailers (SHA and DDOT), and an evacuation plan annex for the University of Maryland, College Park.

The RESF-1 Strategic Plan was currently being revised. The plan reflects goals for the region in the next two years and comments on the plan are welcome.

Lastly, on July 18<sup>th</sup>, there will be a management review session where discussions will take place on where projects need to be in the next few months to be ready to receive the first round of UASI funding.

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

Mr. Hutchinson reported that MATOC was still conducting RITIS training sessions, including a training session at the DC Department of Homeland Security last month. There was a training session scheduled in September in Montgomery County and Prince William County has requested RITIS training.

RITIS went down during the June 29<sup>th</sup> storms and was offline through Saturday morning. This will likely be a topic at the next MATOC Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was not unaware of this potential vulnerability, but the cost to prevent such an outage has been beyond the available budget. The MATOC phone system also went down. Arrangements were made to move operations to the DC Department of Homeland Security Office in time for the Monday morning rush hour.

A new RITIS version was to be released in August which will include more transit data and more data in Montgomery County.

MATOC has requested the VPP suite for the region to include a 15 minute analysis option instead of the current 1 hour option.

## **MOITS Policy Task Force and Technical Subcommittee**

Notes from the July 10, 2012 Joint Meeting

Page 4 of 5

### **Item 4: Final Report of the *Multimodal Coordination for Bus Priority Hot Spots Study***

Mr. Meese and Mr. Randall presented an overview of the final report on the *Multimodal Coordination for Bus Priority Hot Spots Study*. MOITS was one of the two committees involved in the study. The goal of the study, which was divided into four tasks, was to develop a prioritized list of the top 10 hot spots for buses in the region (10 each in DC, Maryland, and Virginia) and provide input on the implementation of bus priority treatments (15% level of design) and scope possible costs, savings, and impacts within the scope and funding of the study. It was noted that the final Task 4 report which focuses on the impact assessment was not the only product of this study. The outcome of Task 2 was a list of the top 15 hot spots for each state with a methodology for using available data to determine those locations. Task 3 involved field visits to gather more specific data for each location. This information is available for use by the states and local jurisdictions for their planning efforts. Each task had an independent product.

The study found that overall, specific bus priority improvements were fairly modest. The capital costs could be sizeable (~\$100K per intersection); however, that could go down if the work was integrated with other work. The modeling showed that the proposed improvements did not negatively impact the level of service for general traffic. Many of the locations that were identified after Task 2 were already being studied or already have improvements planned and thus there was less “low-hanging fruit” for bus priority treatments at the corridor/segment or intersection level than initially thought. The benefit cost work showed only modest benefits; however, within the scope of the study, the team was not able to develop a way to fully measure the benefits and there is a recommendation to review literature in order to develop a methodology for future work.

The final deliverables have been received from the consulting team and final comments have been received from regional participants. TPB Staff will conduct a final review and distribute the final Task 4 report in late July.

There was a question as to whether the benefits captured person time savings. Mr. Randall said it did not because of data limitations. He also noted that one of the main reasons for this study was to find ways to improve bus travel speeds which have been deteriorating consistently over time. Because of increasing congestion, WMATA has to add approximately 25 buses to its fleet annually at the cost of half a million dollars each to maintain service levels.

### **Item 5: Presentation on the Draft 2012 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Technical Report**

Mr. Pu presented a memo which details the comments received on the draft 2012 CMP Technical report and the staff responses to those comments. A new version of the memo that addresses the comments is available on the MOITS website. There were 15 total comments received from VDOT, WMATA, and the City of Fairfax. The majority of the comments were addressed directly in the report. Mr. Pu discussed the comments received on the recommendations section in the CMP Technical Report. One comment was that the recommendations are very conservative. He explained that the reason is the report is a technical document, not a policy document, and staff

## **MOITS Policy Task Force and Technical Subcommittee**

Notes from the July 10, 2012 Joint Meeting

Page 5 of 5

intentionally avoids using strong policy-making language. However, the comment about adding a recommendation for integrated corridor management (ICM) and active traffic management was incorporated bringing the total number of recommendations in the report from 11 to 12. In response to a comment about the quality of the INRIX arterial data, Mr. Pu said that staff will work to further verify the quality of the data during FY 2013.

The draft 2012 CMT Technical Report will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee on July 17<sup>th</sup> and the Travel Forecasting Subcommittee on July 20<sup>th</sup>. It is expected to be presented to the TPB Technical Committee in September. If any subcommittee members still have comments on the draft, they can submit them by the end of the month.

There was a question as to whether over the last 6-10 years, is the region doing better or worse in terms of congestion. There has been some decrease in overall congestion, but it is more likely due to fuel prices and the economy rather than operational strategies. Operational strategies are good at reducing bottlenecks and spot congestion and staff discussed examples of operational improvements in the region. That theory of economy and gas prices playing a major role in reducing congestion is consistent with studies worldwide.

There was some discussion on the newly approved federal transportation bill. Mr. Meese said that he felt that from the MPO perspective, it is not all that different from the previous transportation bill. There is a new focus on performance based planning. Mr. Pu pointed out that out of the seven national goals, two of them, congestion reduction and system reliability, relate directly to the activities of the MOITS Subcommittee.

### **Item 6: Jurisdictional Roundtable**

Mr. Meese asked subcommittee members to think about projects in their jurisdiction, either operations or technology, which would be good topics for briefings at future meetings. Some of the topics mentioned included a RITIS overview or training, a presentation on MATOC Steering Committee projects, a briefing on MATOC's role in the severe weather coordination group, and a presentation on the University of Maryland database being developed with MATOC funding for use by I-95 Corridor Collation members.

### **Item 7: Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Item 8: Adjourn**

There is no meeting in August. The next meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, September 11 at 12:30 pm in COG Meeting Room 1.