

ITEM 7 – Information
June 15, 2016

**Briefing on Actions in Support of the WMATA SafeTrack
Safety Surge Plan**

Staff

Recommendation: Receive briefing

Issues: None

Background: The board will be briefed on experiences and mitigation actions taken by local jurisdictions and WMATA at the first of the 15 locations identified to undergo significant safety and maintenance work as part of WMATA's SafeTrack work plan. Updates from Commuter Connections, COG public information officer coordination, and transportation agencies will also be provided.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Eric Randall, TPB Transportation Engineer
SUBJECT: TPB and COG Activities in support of the WMATA SafeTrack Plan
DATE: June 9, 2016

This memorandum provides an overview of TPB and COG activities in support of the WMATA SafeTrack safety surges.

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS UPDATE

The Commuter Connections Subcommittee has established a SafeTrack Work Group that will be meeting on a periodic basis prior to each of the SafeTrack Surges. The purpose of the group is to exchange information and best practices on demand management program services implemented regionally and locally throughout the course of the plan.

COG/TPB staff developed and deployed established a SafeTrack web hub on the Commuter Connections home page at <http://www.commuterconnections.org/news-events/construction-projects/safetrack-plan/>. The page will feature the WMATA SafeTrack Plan as well as any other Traffic mitigation/operations plans put forth by the impacted jurisdictions, web links to SafeTrack information and links to each of the SafeTrack surge maps and impact data provided through WMATA.

Geo-targeted messages to employees and residents in the Commuter Connections software system database surrounding the impacted Metrorail stations for Surges 1 and 2 were developed and sent along with geo-targeted messages to employers from the Employer Outreach database in the same areas. The goal is to get information into the hands of those commuters impacted and to also encourage those that are already and carpool and vanpools to consider adding additional passengers. Other alternative modes of travel have also been promoted including flextime, telework, and commuter rail, commuter bus, bicycling and walking. Public Service Announcements have been placed with media outlets through COG's Office of Communications. COG/TPB staff also developed and has deployed paid media on radio and print and both non-paid and paid social media.

COG/TPB staff attended and presented information during a DDOT sponsored meeting on SafeTrack.

COG/TPB staff attended three Greater Washington Board of Trade meetings focused on the SafeTrack Plan and how to assist employers and their respective employees during the 15 Surges. COG/TPB staff also attended and presented information at a Greater Washington Board of Trade SafeTrack Briefing.

COG/TPB staff has also been coordinating messaging on SafeTrack through the General Services Administration to all federal agencies in the National Capital Region with Employee Transportation Coordinator's. Messaging on SafeTrack has been placed on the www.FederalETC.org web site.

COG PUBLIC OUTREACH

COG's Office of Communications has been sponsoring conference calls with each of the jurisdiction's Public Information Officers (PIOs) in order to coordinate outreach and messaging activities for each of the SafeTrack surges. Calls were held on May 18th and 26th and another call is planned for June 13th.

Metro's marketing and media relations officials provided details on their paid advertising campaign designed to publicize SafeTrack, their work with reporters, editors and producers as well as their plans to personally engage their customers during the SafeTrack surges. The region's PIOs asked questions and were able to coordinate their messaging efforts with those of Metro. Almost all of the PIOs mentioned that they were encouraging their residents to visit WMATA's web site for detailed information on the track work and the rail system's mitigation efforts.

However, some jurisdictions, including Fairfax and Arlington Counties were able to share their very robust communication and outreach plans as well as the mitigation steps those jurisdictions have in place during SafeTrack events.

Commuter Connections staff has also joined the calls to reiterate the steps taken to provide additional service to their customers and those who are new to the service.

The PIO conference calls have proved very popular with both communications and transportation officials around the region. As a result only questions and comments from PIOs are entertained during the call.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Briefings and discussions of SafeTrack have taken place at meetings of the COG Board of Directors and the COG Emergency Transportation Committee (RESF-1), as well as TPB's Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Technical Subcommittee and Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee. MOITS has examined preliminary traffic analysis undertaken by TPB staff. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee discussed ways to facilitate bicycling and walking where these modes provide viable options to Metro.

The Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program has added a special focus on SafeTrack-impacted highway corridors in its ongoing monitoring and incident notification program. MATOC staff has coordinated directly with members of MATOC's Transit Task Force, and has been examining ways to get additional related information into MATOC's interagency data sharing tool, the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS).

COG/TPB staff continues to participate in numerous regional and sub-regional meetings and conference calls among stakeholder agencies to facilitate sharing of information and lessons learned in managing impacts of SafeTrack.

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY INFORMATION

Agencies in the region are implementing a number of mitigation measures to provide transportation alternatives during the SafeTrack safety surges, including:

- Additional bus/shuttle service on routes in or near the surge work zones;
- Expanded rush hour parking restrictions along primary commuter and bus routes;
- Traffic signal re-timing and additional traffic control officers;
- Additional Capital Bikeshare bikes and stations, along with a new payment option;
- Bike convoys with guides;
- Promotion of carpooling, telework and flexible work options.

WMATA has also had customer service agents positioned in the impacted Metro stations guiding customers to alternative modes of travel and will also be hosting “pop-up” events at some of the key impacted stations.

The Office of Personnel Management issued a [memorandum](#) on May 20th to all agencies encouraging the use of Telecommuting and Flexible Work Schedules.

Specific actions by jurisdictions or transportation agencies can be found on their websites:

City of Alexandria	https://www.alexandriava.gov/SafeTrack
Arlington County	https://topics.arlingtonva.us/safetrack/
District of Columbia	http://safetrack.godcgo.com/
Fairfax County	http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/safetrack/
Montgomery County	http://gomontgomery.blogspot.com/2016/06/safetrack-to-affect-montgomery-county.html
Prince George’s County	http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/publicworks/Pages/default.aspx
Virginia Railway Express (VRE)	http://www.vre.org/service/safetrack-information/
WMATA	https://wmata.com/rail/safetrack.cfm