National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Meeting Notes

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

DATE: Tuesday, March 14, 2006

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

VICE CHAIRS: John Contestabile, Maryland Department of Transportation
                  Soumya Dey, District Department of Transportation
                  TBD, Virginia

Attendance:
Brien Benson, George Mason University
Sam Beydoun, VDOT-511
Peter Buckley, Montgomery Ride On
John Contestabile, MDOT
Scott Cowherd, VDOT
Noah Goodall, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Calvin Green, Montgomery County Transit
Doug Hansen, Fairfax County
Michael Harris, Parson Brinckerhoff
Al Himes, Alexandria Transit
Egua Igbinosun, MDOT/SHA
Natalie Jones-Best, DDOT
Bill Knost, Trafficland
Eric Marx, Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation Commission
Amy McElwain, VDOT
Peter Meenehan, WMATA
Mark Miller, WMATA
Michael Pack, University of Maryland-CATT Lab
Hon. David Snyder, City of Falls Church
Alex Verzosa, City of Fairfax
Robert Winick, Motion Maps LLC

COG Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese
Gerald Miller
Jim Yin
Robert Young

ACTIONS:

1.   **Welcome and Introductions**

Participants introduced themselves. Mr. Contestabile chaired the meeting. Since the last MOITS Joint Task Forces meeting on January 17, 2006, Lora Byala, who had been MOITS Technical Task Force Chair since January 2005, had left WMATA for a new position and would no longer be Chair. William Haynes also had left the City of Alexandria for a new position, and would no longer be Vice Chair. Mr. Meenehan and Mr. Miller of WMATA agreed to return to a later meeting and identify a WMATA nominee to replace Ms. Byala as Chair for the remainder of the calendar year. Staff also agreed to follow up with Virginia representatives to identify a nominee or nominees for a new Virginia Vice Chair.

Mr. Meese introduced Robert Young, a new staff person in COG's Department of Human Services, Planning, and Public Safety. Mr. Young will staff the Regional Emergency Support Function (RESF) #1 – Transportation and RESF #14 – Recovery tasks under Homeland Security requirements. The RESF #1 – Transportation committee will be reestablished soon separate from the MOITS Task Forces, in order to more fully address both emergency preparedness and general MOITS activities.

2. **Update on Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Activities**

Mr. Meese reviewed activities since the January 17 meeting related to the development of regional FY2006 UASI program and funding proposals. January 27 was the first deadline, by which RESF #1 – Transportation representatives had developed and submitted a total of 18 Concept Papers for consideration. Key transportation representatives subsequently held conference calls to prepare for a February 9 meeting among all RESF and Regional Homeland Security Working Group chairs at which proposals were scored and ranked. Ms. Jones-Best, RESF #1 Chair-Designate, represented transportation at the February 9 meeting. Approximately 110 concepts from various RESFs were reviewed and scored. Input from the February 9 meeting was provided to the COG Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) Committee and the states' Homeland Security Senior Policy Group (SPG) for a February 15 meeting. Subsequent to the February 15 meeting, concepts and related initiative plans and investment justifications were packaged by the D.C. Office of the State Administrative Agent for Homeland Security (Steve Kral) and provided to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security by a March 2 national deadline.

Mr. Contestabile pointed that the process was different from last year. In the past, the amount of money that would be allocated to a given metropolitan area was known prior to development of concepts, and 80% of that funding was required to be passed down to local governments. This year, regions needed to submit applications first, and then the amount of money awarded to any given region will be determined based on those applications. The FY2006 UASI program totaled about $800 to $900 million nationally. Historically, the Washington region has received about 10% of total national UASI funding. So based on the history, the Washington region might expect to get in the range of $70-90 million. The investment justification turned in, on the other hand, as approved by the CAOs and SPG, contained about $190 million worth of proposals.

The regional application for the FY2006 UASI focused on national and local priorities rather than on specific projects, such as interoperability and critical infrastructure protection are on national priorities. Most concepts received as input to the February 15 meeting were included in the national application, those that scored above 30 points at the February 9 scoring session (concepts had possible scores in the range of 5 points to 50 points). No decisions had been made about which concepts ultimately were or were not recommended regionally to receive FY2006 UASI funding. Senior leaders were anticipated to take up that question in May, once the region knows the amount of funding it will be awarded.

In response to questions, Mr. Contestabile noted that the February scores did not per se ensure that any particular proposal would or would not be considered for funding by the CAOs and SPG in May. Ms. Jones-Best noted concerns about the scoring process that had taken place on February 9, especially that some of the proposals, all of which had merit, had earned only the minimum 5 points from some scorers.

As noted in the introductions to this meeting, work continued on reestablishment of the RESF #1 – Transportation Committee separate from MOITS. Mr. Meese explained that the new committee will focus on the transportation sector's participation in emergency management-led, usually declared emergencies, as well as addressing DHS-driven requirements. MOITS would focus on everyday transportation operations and technology issues, including incidents which are transportation in nature and for which transportation agencies are in the lead for response. Mr. Snyder and Mr. Contestabile noted the need to keep close coordination between the new RESF #1 group and MOITS. Mr. Snyder also noted the great number of needs that remain for regional emergency preparedness.

In response to questions, Ms. Jones-Best noted that membership and attendance at future RESF #1 Committee meetings was still to be determined. It was hoped that RESF #1 membership would focus on representatives who execute response duties on behalf of transportation agencies during emergencies, such as reporting to a duty station at their jurisdiction's emergency management agency. In addition, subcommittees to the RESF #1 Committee may be formed on focus areas to be identified, and additional representatives may have roles there. Policies on whether RESF #1 Committee meetings will be open-door or closed-door, as well as on the attendance of private sector representatives, were to be explored with COG's senior public safety staff. Staff was to follow up with Ms. Jones-Best overall on these issues.

3.   **Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS)**

Mr. Pack of the University of Maryland presented. A RITIS prototype, developed in recent months, was already operational. The prototype takes data from DDOT, MDOT, VDOT, and WMATA, and puts it in standard format. A standard format will enable partners potentially to view it, and could be provided in support of 511/traveler information services, public agencies' operations, research development, and the media. RITIS has both real-time and archive aspects. The real-time side of RITIS is to take real time data and pass to appropriate people at the appropriate time. Archive activities of RITIS take all transportation data and archive it for planning and research purposes.

RITIS obtains operational information from the Maryland State Highway Administration and DDOT through the Maryland CHART system. CHART is built on a system called CORBA. The University of Maryland wrote a CORBA "listener" to obtain information. As CHART changes its system, the CORBA listener will need to be adjusted accordingly, demonstrating the necessity of RITIS being an ongoing technical effort. It will be necessary for RITIS partner transportation agencies to coordinated changes to their operating systems (such as CHART) with the University of Maryland, and vice versa, to ensure ongoing RITIS functionality.

RITIS also now gets VDOT data and WMATA rail data (but not bus information at this time), as well as National Weather Service information and alerts. VDOT data are obtained through an interface specifically written for this project. WMATA data are obtained through the RSS (Real Simple Syndication) data feed that WMATA provides for a number of uses (such as on its own Web site). RITIS gets all these data and puts it in national standards, and can make data available in an Internet-compatible feed that can be pushed to anyone in the region. RITIS has also incorporated into the CapWIN system; transportation events noted in RITIS are now visible as events in CapWIN.

Mr. Pack demonstrated examples of data in RITIS. It was noted that RITIS was still in the prototype stage and data within it not ready for full public release through the system.

In response to a question, Mr. Pack noted that RITIS uses no-cost map and geographic information system data available from DDOT, VDOT and FHWA, avoiding costly private map and data services such as ADC and Navtech. Mr. Contestabile noted that Maryland had paid for ADC map coverages in their statewide EMMA system and may be able to share this with the RITIS development.

Mr. Pack also demonstrated a three-dimensional animation of traffic conditions that the CATT Lab was developing, which would help illustrate conditions in key corridors to users.

Mr. Contestabile asked Mr. Pack to make a presentation at the next meeting specifically what has been accomplished to date in RITIS and what will need to be done from now to September.

4.   **Update on the Regional Transportation Coordination Program ("CapCom")**

Mr. Meese distributed a handout with an excerpt from COG's Web site, on a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a CapCom Program Implementation Manager and Technical Support

Team. SAFETEA-LU included funding for the regional transportation coordination program. The RFQ was developed under the direction of the CapCom Steering Committee. The main focus will be on direct response to the Steering Committee to make sure CapCom is properly implemented. CapCom is a multi-phased program which has multiple funding sources and multiple agencies implement pieces of it in a coordinated fashion. A pre-proposal meeting on the RFQ was planned for March 23. Responses to the RFQ were due to COG on April 7. The CapCom Steering Committee meeting was held immediately after this MOITS meeting. Information coming out of that meeting would be provided to MOITS at a later time.

5.   **Traffic Signals Activities**

A meeting of the Traffic Signals Working Group of the MOITS Technical Task Force had been held on March 8, and Mr. Meese briefed several highlights. Associate Professor Hesham Rakha of Virginia Tech had given a presentation on March 8 on draft results of the university's studies performed under contract to VDOT regarding traffic signal preemption and prioritization. These studies included a guidelines report, a field study (on South U.S. 1 in Fairfax County and Columbia Pike in Arlington), and a computer simulation study.

Copies of Professor Rakha's presentation were distributed, and Mr. Meese noted highlights. To answer the question of whether transit signal priority was beneficial for bus travel time, the finding of the draft studies was that there was a benefit, but it was small (2% to 3%), much smaller than the typical day-to-day variation in travel times experienced on the studied bus routes. To answer the question of whether transit signal priority was detrimental to overall traffic conditions, the studies found the answer was no, in most cases there were not significant increases in delays for other traffic.

The Traffic Signals Working Group had noted the importance of transit operators and signals operators working together on operations planning for corridors, on such items as signal timing, bus route scheduling, and bus stop placement. Such cooperation may be more beneficial to transit services than the installation of prioritization technologies.

The Traffic Signals Working Group had also discussed the 'Call for Projects' issued by TPB in December 2005. Generally speaking, the purpose of this annual document is a broad solicitation for projects and programs to be included in the following year's long-range transportation plan (CLRP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This year, TPB added a request to the Call for Projects for an annual report on transportation operations, aimed at information on signal optimization. This will have to be completed by the Call for Projects deadline of September 14, 2006. Staff was to work with the Signals Committee, MOITS, and other interested parties to develop this report.

A final highlight from the Signals meeting was on the topical subject of power backups for signals. LEDs are being used increasingly for traffic signals, in replacement of incandescent bulbs. LEDs have much lower power consumption than incandescent bulbs, making battery backups at given intersections feasible. At the same time, terrorism, natural disasters, and recently publicized traffic

accidents have focused more attention on the utility of providing battery backups, so signals may continue to operate even when there is a power failure.

Addressing emergency preparedness, Mr. Contestabile asked staff to follow up with key contacts on whether inventories of signals equipment could be shared across jurisdictions. Staff noted that there had been some discussions of GIS mapping and inventorying of signals regionally.

6.   **Brief Discussions of Other MOITS-Related Program Areas**

- ITS Architecture – Federal Rule 940 requires any ITS project using federal money must be addressed in a regional ITS architecture conforming to the national ITS architecture, and must utilize a systems engineering process. Staff will be working on activities to help member agencies address Rule 940.

- Transportation Safety – SAFETEA-LU increased the emphasis on safety in MPO planning. Staff will work with MOITS and other necessary TPB and COG committees on this topic.

- Freight – Freight is another emphasis area in SAFETEA-LU. A committee might be formed for this area in FY2007.

- Congestion Management Process (CMP) – The Congestion Management Process (formerly Congestion Management Systems) is another feature of SAFETEA-LU. Multiple TPB committees will be involved. MOITS will need to provide input for this issue. Federal rulemaking for SAFETEA-LU requirements was anticipated for early calendar year 2007.