

## **ITEM 11- Information**

May 18, 2005

### Update on Actions to Improve Regional Transportation Communications and Coordination During Incidents

#### **Staff**

**Recommendation:** Receive briefing on progress establishing and funding CapCom, including a \$1 million FY2005 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant for the program.

**Issues:** None.

**Background:** At the March 16, 2005 meeting, the Board was updated on actions toward establishment of the CapCom regional transportation coordination program partnership of the region's transportation agencies and the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Transportation Technology.

# **CapCom – The Need for Regional Transportation Coordination And the Plan for Its Implementation**

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## **Background**

CapCom represents a cooperative effort of the Washington region's transportation agencies with the support of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) and the Greater Washington Board of Trade. CapCom is a targeted activity responsible for overseeing the planning, communications and dissemination of status information associated with the region's transportation system during incidents. The region's support of the CapCom effort results from an evaluation of previous incidents, a review of existing operating procedures, and a review of the Regional Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination Annex for transportation (R-ESF #1) worksheets. From these reviews, it was concluded that continued and accelerated progress was needed toward improved regional coordination during transportation incidents and other major events.

## **The Need**

A number of significant procedural and communications improvements have been made in the area of transportation incident response in general, and emergency response in particular, over the past few years, and transportation agency personnel have strong working relationships that facilitate coordination of the transportation sector's response to incidents. However, with current operational procedures it is an added challenge for individuals who are participating directly in the response to incidents to provide real-time regional information about the status of the transportation system. The best incident management requires real-time receipt of information, predefined action plans, and quick information dissemination to providers and the public.

- Coordination at the incident scene is the responsibility of individuals with many other important responsibilities.
- Currently, the media must contact multiple agencies to develop a comprehensive picture of regional transportation status.
- It has been a challenge for response personnel from individual agencies to convene and create coordinated regionwide, multi-agency operations plans. This may be accomplished in a more timely fashion if a regional program with experienced operations personnel, able and assigned to take a regionwide perspective, is assigned the responsibility for ensuring that such plans are developed.
- For existing regional communications systems to operate effectively, clear responsibilities, procedures, and protocols must exist for initiating and following up on inter-agency communications, and this could be facilitated by a program with a regional perspective.

There is a need for enhancements that expedite the region's capability to coordinate regional response to transportation incidents.

### **The CapCom Concept**

CapCom is being established to fulfill the following roles:

- Information Backbone – CapCom will be responsible for the development, implementation, and maintenance of the RITIS (Regional Integrated Transportation Information System) data/status information exchange system, and the use of the integrated electronic communications paths, both wireline and wireless, as the electronic backbone of the RITIS regional transportation data exchanges. In their award of a \$1 million FY2005 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant in response to the University of Maryland's CapCom proposal, the states' Homeland Security Senior Policy Group singled out the importance of this activity.
- Live Transportation Information Exchange Among Agencies – CapCom will serve as a focal point for information regarding the status of the transportation system regionally on an everyday basis, including at critical times during incidents. CapCom would receive and disseminate all available data regarding the status of all modes and major transportation routes in the region. While the incident is in progress, CapCom personnel would be responsible for establishing and scheduling communications among all involved parties in the transportation sector.
- Public Information – CapCom, through its tracking of regional incidents and shared data, will play a vital role in ensuring that transportation status information is provided to the public. It will make transportation information available directly to the public through the Internet and potential future 511 telephone systems, relying upon RITIS and its associated automated transportation information sharing systems. It will also enhance information availability through individual agency public information officers as well as the traditional commercial radio and television media traffic information outlets. CapCom will help ensure that this transportation status information is coordinated, timely, and thorough.
- Planning – CapCom will be responsible for development of concepts of operations required to define transportation sector procedures and responsibilities for coordination and communication during major incidents. CapCom will support coordination of transportation sector preparation activities prior to incidents, as well as post-incident analysis to advise future regional emergency preparation, with the objective of continuous improvement in regional coordination through modifications to standard operating procedures, training and exercises.

The creation of an organization whose sole responsibility is the planning, communication and information dissemination for regional incidents is a critical step toward improved incident management for the transportation system in the Metropolitan Washington region.