

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, April 14, 2009

TIME: 12:30 PM

PLACE: COG, First Floor, Meeting Room 1

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

Yanlin Li, District of Columbia Department of Transportation, Chair,
Technical Committee

VICE CHAIRS: Pete Buckley, Montgomery County Ride On
Mark Miller, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
J.D. Schneeberger, Virginia Department of Transportation

Attendance:

John Binks, CapWIN

Peter Buckley, Montgomery Ride On (by phone)

Kirk Dand, Arlington DOT

Buddy Ey, Telvent/MATOC

Ed Jones, Prince George's County DPW&T (by phone)

Yanlin Li, DDOT

Curt McCullough, City of Fairfax (by phone)

Amy McElwain, VDOT

Mark Miller, WMATA

Frank Mirack, FHWA

Kamal Munawar, VDOT (by phone)

Hadi Quaiyum, Prince George's County DPW&T (by phone)

Robert Winick, Motion Maps LLC

James Witherspoon, VDOT

COG Staff Attendance:

Andrew Meese

Wenjing Pu

Ryan Whytlaw

Jim Yin

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Actions:

1. Welcome and Review of Notes from the January 6, 2009 Meeting and the February 10, 2009 RESF-1/MOITS Joint Meeting

Participants introduced themselves. Notes from the January and February MOITS meetings were approved. No MOITS meeting was held in March.

2. Continued Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of 2009 MOITS Technical Subcommittee Vice Chairs

The report from the Nominations Committee was given, identifying nominees for the two 2009 MOITS Technical Subcommittee Vice Chair positions that had not yet been filled, the Virginia and WMATA/Regional Agency Vice Chair positions. The Committee elected J.D. Schneeberger of VDOT as the Virginia Vice Chair and Mark Miller of WMATA as the WMATA/Regional Agency Vice Chair.

3. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Discussions: Department of Energy Grants and Other Activities

Mr. Meese spoke to handouts. The handouts included a memorandum summarizing the provisions of the transportation components of ARRA. There was also a more general summary of all the categories of ARRA funding, including housing, energy, and other topics. Particularly noted was the federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funding within ARRA. EECBG was to be assigned on a population basis to the states and major counties and cities, with a small amount of potential competitive funds to be addressed later. Among the numerous potential energy efficiency activities that were listed in the EECBG were traffic signal optimization, transportation demand management, and efficient street lighting.

Regarding the ARRA transportation funds, the state departments of transportation and WMATA had already submitted or processed a number of amendments and administrative modifications to the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Certain percentages of the ARRA funding must be committed by an early date, and the remainder can be specified later. The committee discussed that a number of agencies internally have considered MOITS-related projects for the ARRA funding, but few of them had been chosen within agency processes to date, most of the funds being devoted to "shovel-ready" capital projects.

Regarding the EECBG funding, Mr. Meese noted that COG/TPB was not an eligible agency to apply for the current funds (applicants must be states, counties, or cities), and recommended that committee participants coordinate with energy agency contacts within their jurisdictions for potential applications. In response to a question from Mr. Quaiyum, Mr. Meese noted that it would be best for them to work with their own county's energy agency, noting the way that the federal grant application forms were structured seemed to be for energy agencies to be the applicants, even in the case of transportation-related uses.

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Mr. Li reported DDOT had identified some candidate ARRA projects in the ITS area, such as city wide traffic signal re-timing and construction of city wide detection. DDOT had earmarked about 1% of its ARRA funds to date to ITS/operations projects.

Mr. Meese noted that in talking with COG energy staff, there was great interest in energy agencies in energy-efficient street lighting.

4. Update on Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program Trial Phase Activities

Mr. Ey of MATOC reported. During the last month, Mr. Ey notified on 12 incidents. In reviewing the process, there were a couple of questions needed to be answered. When to send notifications? Who was on the sending list? MATOC was also working on preparing for the upcoming Fourth of July events. Since Mr. Ey is the only person in MATOC, he suggested adding more staff for the Fourth of July events, working hours should be 5:00 AM to 9:00 PM, which was consistent with SHA's operational practices. Also, MATOC was trying to get a physical location for operations. Currently, it was being looked at to be co-hosted with CapWIN.

On March 5, 2009, MATOC held a special focus group meeting of stakeholders from outside the MATOC member agencies, including representatives from Montgomery Ride On, the Prince George's Trip Center, PRTC Transit, VRE, and Fairfax County public safety communications. The purpose of the meeting was to review how and when to share information in significant incidents.

In response to a question from Mr. Meese on the use of RICCS paging system, Mr. Ey noted the question was how to get Maryland and Virginia engaged, since both SHA and VDOT already had significant paging lists within their agencies. One proposal that had been discussed was if there were a major incident and RICCS had not been activated within 15 minutes, MATOC would follow up and find what was going on and initiate sending a RICCS message.

Mr. Whytlaw noted that the issue of planning for the Fourth of July would be a discussion item at the next RESF-1 meeting.

5. Program Updates

• Regional Integrated Transportation Information Systems (RITIS)

The MATOC Information Systems Subcommittee was meeting regularly and was starting to provide configuration advice to RITIS. This allowed multiple agencies to work with and comment directly with the University of Maryland CATT Lab on features and technical aspects of RITIS system. This was a critical step to take RITIS from prototype mode to production mode. The subcommittee had also discussed operational and budget issues as needed. Mr. Ey and the MATOC Operations Subcommittee were also working closely with the CATT Lab providing operational advice for RITIS.

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• Traffic Signals Subcommittee

The results of the recently completed regional traffic signals survey were reported to the TPB Board meeting by Signals Subcommittee Chair Ed Jones on March 18. The results of the survey indicated that 56% of the signals in the region had undergone a signal optimization process during the calendar years 2006-2008; 24% of the signals received other adjustments such as a spot check; 18% were not checked; and there was no report for about 2%. It should be noted that the 18% unchecked traffic signals in the region might be isolated signals not critical for optimization, and critical signals that underwent an optimization process may have been optimized multiple times in the period. The overall result reported was that 80% signals in the region had undergone a computer optimization or other spot check in the three-year period.

However, at the TPB meeting, MOITS Policy Task Force Chair David Snyder expressed strong doubts on the survey findings, noting anecdotes of driving in places in the region where the signals did not seem to be operating correctly. At the MOITS meeting, it was discussed that though the memorandum and presentation tried to make clear that an optimization or check process did not necessarily result in "perfect" signal operations, due to a number of factors, perhaps that remained unclear to non-technicians. It was still felt that the region had made progress on signal optimization since 2002, and there was now a more regularized commitment to look at traffic signal issues.

Mr. Yin added that the next Traffic Signals Subcommittee meeting would be held at the new VDOT operation center and there will be a facility tour.

• Regional ITS Architecture

Mr. Yin noted that the Maryland SHA had finished its Maryland Statewide ITS Architecture update last month, and that the final report would be available in a couple of months. Ms. McElwain mentioned that the VDOT Northern Region Operations Architecture Team would like to brief the signal subcommittee on the status of VDOT's Architecture Validation Process. Mr. Dand suggested asking Sean Kennedy of WMATA to provide a status report to MOITS on WMATA's TSP project.

• MOITS Strategic Plan

The special MOITS Strategic Plan Working Group had held a conference call on April 2, and was to meet immediately after today's MOITS meeting for further discussion. The Working Group and staff were discussing potential next steps for the plan.

6. Other Business: ITS America Annual Meeting

As noted at last month's MOITS meeting, the ITS America Annual Meeting would take place at National Harbor, Maryland from June 1st to June 3rd. Registration information is available on the Web at www.itsa.org. There were some unfilled exhibit spots available. There would be a session on MATOC.