

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Honorable Pierce Homer
Secretary
Virginia Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

December 16, 2009

Dear Secretary Homer,

As a member of the Falls Church City Council, First Vice Chairman of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), and TPB representative to the National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC), I am keenly aware of the challenges the Washington region faces regarding transportation management and operations, especially during incidents and emergencies. Though there is still much more to be done, the region has made great strides in preparing for and managing regional incidents in the years since the tragic 9/11 attacks. One of our key advancements has been the establishment, with the aid of one-time federal funding, of the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program. We are currently seeking funding commitments of \$400,000 each from the Virginia, District of Columbia, and Maryland departments of transportation (VDOT, DDOT, and MDOT) to support the continuation of MATOC for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010.

As you may recall, the MATOC Program is a joint effort overseen by VDOT, DDOT, MDOT, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. (A fact sheet on the MATOC Program is attached for your information.) MATOC's mission is to provide situational awareness of transportation operations in the National Capital Region (NCR) through the communication of consistent and reliable information. That information enables operating agencies and the traveling public to make effective and timely decisions. A full-time "MATOC Facilitator" and one assistant now monitor conditions, make notifications to key agency stakeholders, and facilitate regional coordination during incidents, helping mitigate the duration and severity of traffic backups and other transportation impacts. Their information is based upon the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS), a real-time data sharing system developed for use in the MATOC Program by the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Transportation Technology.

The development and operation of the MATOC Program to date has been funded by a federal grant secured for the region in the SAFETEA-LU legislation by U.S. Representative Jim Moran, with 20% matching funds provided by VDOT, DDOT, and MDOT. This original federal grant will expire on June 30, 2010, and alternative funding will be needed to continue the program beyond that date. We are hopeful that the new federal transportation authorization legislation, when enacted, will provide a means of funding important multi-agency operations programs like MATOC. Until then, however, we will need funding from existing sources. A total of \$1.2 million per year, \$400,000 each from VDOT, DDOT, and MDOT, would sustain MATOC Program operations. We have received preliminary positive indications from DDOT and MDOT that they

Honorable Pierce Homer

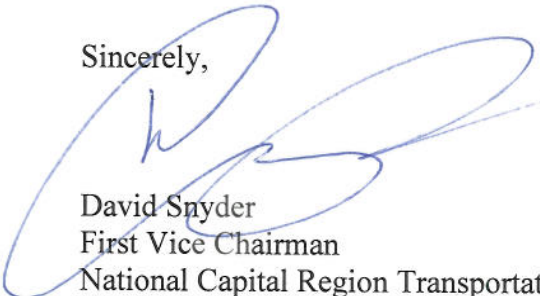
December 16, 2009

Page 2

will be able to provide their shares of funding for MATOC effective July 1, 2010, but have not yet received a similar positive indication from VDOT.

Following up on your November 30 discussion with Ron Kirby of the TPB staff, I am seeking your advice and assistance in securing Virginia's \$400,000 contribution to the MATOC Program for FY 2011. Knowing that Virginia's share will be forthcoming will be critical for continuing MATOC's current operations and planning for the future. The Washington region has overcome many challenges in establishing the MATOC Program. It would be a great disappointment for the program to be discontinued for want of this relatively modest investment. I would be glad to provide further information or answer any questions you may have. You can reach me at dsnyder@aiadc.org or (202) 828-7161. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



David Snyder
First Vice Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Attachment

cc: David Ekern, Commissioner, VDOT
Constance Sorrell, Chief of System Operations, VDOT

Creating a Coordinated Regional Approach to Transit and Traffic Management

A truck overturns on the Beltway. A building fire closes a major roadway. Service to a transit station is interrupted due to police activity. Events such as these occur frequently in the Washington metropolitan area.

Fortunately, the immediate scenes of these incidents are handled skillfully and responsibly by police, fire, transportation, and other responder personnel. Following well-established incident command procedures, they work to clear the problems as quickly as possible, while providing safety and security.

However, these occurrences can have impacts on the transportation system miles from the incident scene – generating major traffic tie-ups or transit delays. Often on-scene responders are too busy to spend significant time addressing these faraway secondary “ripple effects” that could affect thousands of people. Until now, the region has addressed such ripple effects on a case-by-case basis without a central region-wide entity officially responsible for coordination.

Meet MATOC

Following experiences from the 9/11 attacks and other major incidents, transportation officials from Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) have committed to share and coordinate their transportation systems' conditions and information management during regional incidents. On behalf of the region, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) has partnered with the major transportation agencies in creating MATOC, the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination Program.



By integrating systems' technologies, improving procedures and planning, and providing more accurate

and timely transportation information to the public, regional transportation agencies are working together to make travel smoother and safer. This is the vision of MATOC.

Mission

MATOC's mission is to provide situational awareness of transportation operations in the National Capital Region (NCR). This will be achieved through the communication of consistent and reliable information that enables operating agencies and the traveling public to make effective and timely decisions. MATOC will develop the tools and processes needed to facilitate coordinated operating agency responses.



Goals

To improve traveler safety and reduce the delay that results from incidents and emergencies by:

- Enabling better coordination of the transportation management strategies employed in response to incidents and emergencies by operating agencies throughout the NCR.
- Providing timely and reliable information that enables individuals to make better travel decisions.

Objectives

- To provide for the quick and reliable exchange of transportation system information among operating agencies in the NCR.
- To enable agency operations' staffs to more effectively and reliably coordinate with each other, and their peers in other agencies, when a major incident or emergency has occurred.
- To continually improve the region's ability to inform the public and manage the transportation system.
- To continually improve regional preparedness for effectively managing the transportation system in response to major incidents.

Strategies

- Develop and maintain standard procedures for interagency communication and coordination during major incidents or emergencies.
- Develop and maintain automated and personal communications channels between the regional information sharing systems, operations staffs, and public and private information disseminators.
- Enhance regionally coordinated transportation management response plans for major incidents or emergencies on critical transportation system links.
- Conduct post-incident reviews and identify improvements in information sharing technologies, standard operating procedures, and operations staff performance.
- Identify and provide training and table-top exercises to improve the performance of operations staffs relative to regional coordination.



RITIS

The Regional Integrated Transportation Information System, or RITIS, is an automated system that supports MATOC activities by:

- Compiling real-time traffic and transit data from agencies around the region;
- Consolidating the data into a common format; and
- Enabling the data to be shared with agencies, the media, and the public.

RITIS was developed by the Center for Advanced Transportation Technology Laboratory at the University of Maryland on behalf of the region. Data provided through RITIS is in daily use by the region's major transportation operations centers.

Glossary of Terms

CATT	Center for Advanced Transportation Technology Laboratory
DDOT	District Department of Transportation
MATOC	Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination Program
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation
NCR	National Capital Region
RITIS	Regional Integrated Transportation Information System
TPB	Transportation Planning Board
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

MATOC Facilitator

The MATOC Facilitator acts as a “communications hub,” ensuring that accurate and timely information on transportation incidents of a regional significance is shared among operations agencies and with the public. In addition to these responsibilities, the Facilitator leads, coordinates, and participates in the development of operating procedures, communications protocols, new system functionality, regional incident management plans, post-incident reviews, and training.

MATOC Steering Committee

To further the regional coordination commitment, Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia and WMATA have collaboratively established the MATOC Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is the governing body of the MATOC Program and works through subcommittees specializing in operations and systems issues.

Schedule

The inaugural year of MATOC operations launched on July 1, 2009. During the first year, MATOC will test and improve its operating procedures. Personnel will be hired to provide coverage for five days a week, 16-hours per day, and for special events. MATOC will expand its scope to include coverage of major arterials. MATOC will also enlarge its information network to include more regional organizations, including local traffic, transit, and public safety agencies. MATOC will define its role and establish procedures for sharing information with the media and public. Finally, MATOC will more precisely define ongoing resource needs, identify stable funding resources, and establish a permanent organizational home.

MATOC

Metropolitan Area Transportation
Operations Coordination

For more information, contact:
Buddy Ey
MATOC Facilitator
Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations
Coordination Program
Mobile: (240) 383-8723
Email: buddy.ey@telvent.com