

Meeting Notes

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

DATE: Tuesday, April 11, 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:

Peter Buckley, Montgomery County Ride-On
Randy Carroll, Maryland Department of the Environment
Raul Catangui, Synergy Alliances
John Contestabile, MDOT
Joseph Geckle, Maryland State Highway Administration
Noah Goodall, Parson Brinckerhoff
Calvin Green, Montgomery County Transit
Doug Hansen, Fairfax County
Joe Langley, Virginia Department of Transportation
Yanlin Li, DDOT
Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT
Peter Meenehan, WMATA
Mark Miller, WMATA
Frank Mirack, FHWA DC Division
Michael Pack, UMD-CATT Lab
Barry Sandler, Trafficland
Hon. David Snyder, City of Falls Church
Richard Steeg, VDOT
Alex Verzosa, City of Fairfax
Michael Zezeski, Maryland State Highway Administration

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COG/TPB Staff Attendance:

Andrew Austin
Michael Farrell
Ron Kirby
Andrew Meese
Gerald Miller
Jim Yin
Robert Young

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Nomination and Election of New MOITS Chair Technical Task Force Chair and Virginia Vice Chair

Mark Miller of WMATA was nominated and elected Chair of the MOITS Technical Task Force. He will be serving out Lora Byala's term, which runs to the end of the calendar year, Ms. Byala having left WMATA for a new position. Action on a Virginia Vice Chair was deferred to a future meeting.

3. Update on the Regional Emergency Support Function (RESF) #1 – Transportation Activities

A. Re-establishment of RESF #1 under the Public Safety Program

As noted in previous meetings, an RESF #1 group was now being established separate from the MOITS Task Forces to concentrate on transportation emergency preparedness planning. MOITS was returning to a focus on traditional management, operations and ITS. Robert Young from COG's Public Safety section will be staffing the emergency transportation group.

The new RESF #1 Committee was to kickoff its activities with a workshop to be held at COG on April 19, 2006. A flyer was distributed. Participants will come from MOITS as well as from other stakeholders. Natalie Jones Best of the District Department of Transportation will chair the RESF #1 group. The workshop was to focus on hearing participants' experience in the regional planning process, and advise how planning for RESF #1 should go forward. It would also allow the group to hear about the status of the non-transportation aspects of emergency response planning. The new RESF #1 committee will

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have monthly meetings, starting in May. It was hoped also to have participation from emergency managers.

Mr. Young also staff COG's RESF #14, which addresses long-term recovery and mitigation. This is a new focus area for the COG emergency preparedness planning program. Mr. Young has been meeting with the emergency managers of various jurisdictions to gauge how they want to handle this issue.

In response to a question from Ron Kirby, it was discussed that the new RESF #1 group would consider the topic of evacuation, but transportation could not be solely responsible for that topic without significant participation of emergency management and other stakeholders. Whether critical information for evacuation planning involved secret or sensitive relevant information was also an issue to be addressed.

Mark Miller suggested that a regional programmatic working group should be set up specifically to deal with evacuation, and bring in the different disciplines relevant to evacuation, such as the emergency managers and communications.

Mr. Kirby noted that evacuation is what the public and the media always want to hear about. Transportation must make it known to the entire emergency preparedness community that a cross-functional working group is needed; otherwise transportation is likely to be asked to do the job alone.

It was noted that VDOT is under some pressure to produce an evacuation plan for northern Virginia.

B. Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)

At the March MOITS meeting, it was reported that the region had submitted its proposal to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for FY2006 UASI funds. DHS was anticipated to inform the in late May regarding the level of UASI funds which the region will receive for FY 2006. The region requested approximately \$190 million, compared to a national funding amount of about \$700 million.

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4. Briefing on the Recent U.S. Department of Transportation Review and Certification of the TPB Transportation Planning Process, and Findings and Recommendations for MOITS Program Areas

Mr. Meese referred to a slide presentation. The FHWA presented to the TPB in March, reporting on the FHWA/FTA periodic federal certification of the TPB's metropolitan planning process. These certifications have taken place once every three years in recent years, but will become once every four years under SAFETEA-LU. An executive summary of the report was distributed to the committee. First and foremost, the region was certified by FHWA and FTA to meet relevant federal requirements. The MOITS program area received a commendation. The certification, however, also identified a number of recommendations for changes or enhancements to the TPB planning process. Overall, most recommendations concerned better documentation of activities that were already ongoing in the region, rather than new activities. Mr. Meese reviewed the federal recommendations that were relevant for MOITS program areas:

- Congestion Management Systems (CMS) have been renamed the Congestion Management Process (CMP) under SAFETEA-LU. The region needs to demonstrate a more active CMS process at all points in the metropolitan planning process. The CMS/CMP is integrated into the long-range plan, which comes under the purview of the TPB Technical Committee. CMS/CMP components are split among several different committees, including the TPB Technical Committee, Travel Management Subcommittee, Travel Forecasting Subcommittee, and MOITS. Mr. Kirby noted that the USDOT is looking for more of a stand-alone document on CMS/CMP issues, or making it more self-contained within the long-range plan. It was noted that an ad hoc CMS Task Force that had met in the mid-1990s recommended wholly integrating the CMS within the long-range plan, and meet the minimum level of CMS legal requirements. It may be revisited whether the region now wants a CMS in a separate document and reach beyond the minimum level.
- The federal certification recognized that the region has developed a Regional ITS Architecture, but it was recommended that more should be done in applying the architecture in project development.
- Freight and goods movement planning should be expanded. Not having a major port in this region, there has been less pressure for freight planning than in some other areas.
- Safety and security planning should be more specifically addressed, such as for example whether safety and security considerations are reflected in the selection of projects for the TIP. Safety and security planning were treated as one program area (SAFETEA-LU addresses them as two separate items). There was no mention of DHS requirements for security planning (as opposed to USDOT requirements). The new RESF #1 group will help address the security planning requirements. Security planning can be problematic in a public setting, such as

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public statements of reasons for project selection. It is not good to call public attention to existing security flaws. Safety planning is an emerging topic area for the MOITS.

Non-MOITS areas discussed in the certification included public involvement, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and environmental justice.

Following from the earlier discussion on what committees may be involved in the CMP, Mr. Meese suggested and the group agreed that he give a presentation to this committee sometime in the near future on the larger TPB committee structure.

5. Update on Traffic Signals Activities

The Traffic Signals Working Group, with Doug Hansen of Fairfax County as Chair, had set a meeting schedule on the fourth or fifth Wednesday of every other month starting May 31. Following successful Baltimore regional annual traffic signals forums in the last few years, a Baltimore-Washington regional forum was being planned for early 2007. Staff was now working on compiling Synchro (traffic signal timing software) files from agencies around the region, to examine the utility of amalgamating this data. A regional inventory of signals equipment was also under consideration.

A notable near-term activity for the Traffic Signals Working Group was an operations annual report requested as part of the TPB's annual "Call for Projects" for the long-range plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This expands from November 2005 report given to the TPB on the results of the 2002-2005 traffic signals optimization Transportation Emissions Reduction Measure (TERM). Signal optimization continues to be in the public eye, so the region will be called upon to explain how signals are being managed.

In response to a question from Mr. Mirack, it was noted that in the past the Traffic Signals Working Group had looked into ways to improve signal problem reporting, including a links page on COG/TPB's Web site which would enable the public to report problems. However, signals are out of order less often now, since the LED bulbs now used are more reliable than incandescent bulbs. Also, individual agencies now have stronger presence on the Web. A single reporting Web site is not practical within existing budgets, but TPB staff could consider providing a links page if that is deemed helpful. Such a regional problem reporting system might also cover other problems besides signals.

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6. Update on ITS Architecture

After a period of relative inactivity, the MOITS Regional ITS Architecture Working Group was to be reconvened in May with Peter Meenehan of WMATA as Chair. This group was to examine the existing TPB Regional ITS Architecture (available on the COG/TPB Web site), for needed enhancements as well as applications. The subcommittee will study how the region can make more use of the architecture. Coordination is needed among state, regional, and individual agency architectures. Implications of DHS-driven architecture issues will have to be examined. Federal Rule 940 provides policies and procedures relating to conformance with federal ITS architecture requirements, and the Working Group will examine these requirements.

7. Update on the Regional Transportation Coordination Program

Mr. Meese referred to a slide presentation, which was distributed.

The TPB endorsed the concept of a Regional Transportation Coordination Program in 2004, and endorsed use of SAFETEA-LU grant in 2005 for a program manager. The effort is overseen by a Steering Committee comprising DDOT, MDOT, VDOT, and WMATA.

A major related activity included the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS), by the University of Maryland CATT Lab, and funded by TEA-21 and UASI grants. A USDOT Volpe Center Study for program planning and implementation, funded by DDOT, advised the Steering Committee.

The latest activity was that COG/TPB had issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to hire a program manager on behalf of the region, funded by a SAFETEA-LU grant. The RFQ was issued March 10 for a "Program Implementation Manager and Technical Support Team". Proposals were due April 7. A number of proposals were received, and were to undergo Steering Committee review by end of April. The goal was for notice to proceed to be issued in May. The Steering Committee was also reviewing VDOT funding agreement paperwork that would enable grant monies to flow to COG/TPB. A briefing memo was to be provided to TPB for its April meeting, and a "live" update in May or June.

In response to a question from Mr. Hansen about the Volpe study, Mr. Meese noted that the Volpe study laid out a draft plan of a number of projects being done under a number of different budgets, with a small coordination element. The Volpe study also influenced the direction of the RITIS. The Steering Committee has suggested that there be a program manager, but that the bulk of the work will be done by the existing agencies, coupled with the work being done by the CATT Lab. The CATT Lab was taking the existing

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systems and changing them to fulfill the functions of regional coordination without necessarily having a separate regional staff performing this duty. Day to day notifications and information sharing will still go through the existing operations and personnel of the DOTs and WMATA.

David Snyder stated that this was a substantial change from his understanding of what would be done to address the TPB directive. This was supposed to be more than a data fusion project; in his understanding there was supposed to be a staffed regional coordinating entity. Mr. Snyder believed that direction should not be reversed based upon the Volpe report.

John Contestabile replied that the regional program manager would provide a single point of contact and better accountability, and it might be a first step towards a TRANSCOM-style organization, but that there had been considerable push-back against that concept. The Steering Committee decided to move in a more deliberate fashion, and take advantage of existing 24/7 operations centers and staffs. Mr. Snyder hoped the DOTs were still on the same page at the TPB, albeit moving in a deliberate fashion, rather than rethinking the fundamental direction.

8. Other Business

Due to a schedule conflict with the ITS America Annual Meeting in Philadelphia on May 8 and 9, the group agreed to cancel the MOITS Task Forces meeting slated for May 9. The subsequent MOITS meeting would be June 13 at 12:30 PM.

The ITS Virginia Annual Meeting was scheduled for June 1-2 in Arlington.