

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, November 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
Mark Miller, 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
Peter Buckley, Montgomery County Ride-On
Hubert Clay, Delcan Corp.
John Contestabile, MDOT
Scott Cowherd, Virginia Department of Transportation
Kirk Dand, Arlington County DOT
Noah Goodall, Telvent Farradyne
Doug Hansen, Fairfax County
Mike Harris, Parsons-Brinkerhoff
Al Himes, Montgomery County Transit
Yanlin Li, DDOT
Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT
Peter Meenehan, WMATA
Mark Miller, WMATA
Frank Mirack, FHWA DC Division
Michael Pack, UMD-CATT Lab
Sharmila Samarasinghe, Dept. of Rail & Public Transportation, VA
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:

Michael Farrell

Andrew Meese

Gerald Miller

Jim Yin

1. Welcome, Introductions & Review of September 12 Minutes

Participants introduced themselves. Minutes from September 12 were reviewed. The September 12 attendance list had been misplaced, so participants were asked to contact Mr. Meese with any additions or corrections to the list in the meeting notes. Minutes and agendas will be posted on the web site for MOITS.

2. Formation of Nominating Committee for MOITS Technical Task Force 2007-2008 Officers

Mr. Meese asked for volunteers for a nominating committee for the next term of MOITS Technical Task Force officers. It was suggested that starting with 2007, the MOITS chairmanships would be a one-year term, whereas it has been a two-year term up to now. Nominees were need for the Chair and three Vice Chairs. Nominating committee members customarily are not candidates for office. The Chairmanship rotates among the jurisdictions, and it is Maryland's turn in 2007. Amy Tang McElwain and John Contestabile volunteered for the nominating committee. Mr. Meese was to ask Soumya Dey of DDOT to join the nominating committee, and was to contact nominating committee members after Thanksgiving.

3. Update on Regional Transportation Coordination Program

Mr. Meese reported that the steering committee has chosen a new name for the program, to replace CapCom, which has potential trademark conflicts. The new name will be MATOC, which stands for Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination. Mark Miller urged everyone to adopt this name rather than CapCom. The change will also help distinguish the program from CapWIN, the Capital Wireless Information Net. It was noted that "Network" was dropped from the CapWIN name because it implies towers and wires, which CapWIN is not.

At the November 8, 2006 National Capital Region Incident Management and Homeland Security Conference in Chantilly, Virginia, there was a presentation from Doug Ham, the nominated MATOC program manager, with Michael Pack who spoke about RITIS, and Tom Henderson, the Executive Director of CapWIN. MOITS should receive a similar briefing at some point about how these three programs are working together. A core mission for CapWIN is communication with field devices used by transportation and public safety, while RITIS focuses on exchange of information between technical systems. MATOC looks at the people and process part of the equation – what are the procedures, who is responsible, how do the region's transportation providers cooperate on problems that require collaborative action.

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The MATOC steering committee was to meet directly after this meeting, and they also met in October. The funding agreement was close to being finished. This would be part of a package of funding agreement information that would be circulated to the heads of VDOT, MDOT, DDOT, and WMATA for official signatures.

During the course of reviews of the draft funding agreement, it was determined that COG's contracting procedures, which were being used to hire the MATOC program manager and technical support team, necessitated changes in order to be compliant with federal and Virginia state requirements. The process of updating these procedures may affect the timing of signing the MATOC agreement. However, preparatory work will continue.

4. Update on Traffic Signals Activities

The MOITS Traffic Signals Working Group met on October 25. The working group discussed the upcoming regional signals forum, the upcoming regional bus conference, and the status of regional traffic signal optimization.

Staff had compiled information for a report requested by the TPB as part of the annual Constrained Long-Range Plan Call for Projects, to address signals and operations activities. Data similar to that compiled during the 2002-2005 traffic signal optimization TERM was collected by TPB staff and reviewed by the working group. Overall the numbers indicated that optimization was kept at a similar level regionally in 2006 as it was at the completion of the TERM in 2005, though differences in methodologies made precise year-to-year or jurisdiction-to-jurisdiction comparisons difficult. The signals group also pointed out that a signal we count as optimized may appear to have been adjusted only once within the past three years, whereas in fact many signals are revisited frequently.

Staff was looking at this annual report as a step to a wider range of performance measurement activities. They include both output measurements, such as numbers of signals optimized, lanes added, etc. and outcomes measurements, such as average delay, VMT, etc. The FHWA and the Board are encouraging performance measures planning. The region has approximately 5100 signals. Northern Virginia has the most signals, and is also adding them the fastest.

Mr. Hansen noted that signal optimization involves running the intersection on Synchro or some other optimization tool, and then making adjustments to the timing if needed to improve the operation of the intersection. Optimization is usually done in the context of a corridor of nearby traffic signals.

In response to a question from Mr. Contestabile, Mr. Meese noted that data were not held to be statistically significant to the individual signal level. Rather, staff used an average reduction in delay per vehicle for purposes of estimating air quality, reported rounded numbers, and then chose a handful of concrete examples to illustrate the benefits of signal optimization.

The distinction between transit signal priority and emergency vehicle pre-emption was discussed. Transit signal priority usually involves extending the green time, rather than changing a red to

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green as with emergency vehicle preemption. Mr. Meese noted the importance of achieving good signal optimization before transit signal priority is implemented.

The Baltimore-Washington regional traffic signals summit is scheduled for March 14, 2007, at the Maritime Institute near BWI. For the first time, the TPB Signals Subcommittee will hold a joint meeting with the Baltimore Traffic Signals Committee, on November 29, 2006, 10:00 AM at the SHA District Office in Greenbelt. The purpose of the joint meeting is to plan the March 2007 summit, as well as to provide an information exchange between the two committees.

The November 30 WMATA bus conference is of interest to MOITS, since one of the topics is traffic management. There will likely be a request for action coming back to MOITS from this bus conference.

Mr. Contestabile will be serving on a National Academies Panel, which former WMATA General Manager Dick White is chairing, on the use of transit in evacuations, on November 27, 28, and 29.

5. Update on ITS Architecture Activities

Mr. Yin reported that the ITS Architecture working group met on November 3, 2006, and the next meeting date was to be December 7. Updating the ITS Architecture, last completed in 2005, was a central focus. The working group also received a presentation from the University of Maryland on RITIS. The potential role of a regional ITS project inventory was also under discussion by the working group. There is a need to move towards using the regional architecture. Ms. McElwain said that there was a question as to what the scope of the regional architecture might be.

Under Item 6 below, the Task Forces discussed the reflection of ITS Architecture Federal Rule 940 in the CLRP Call for Projects (see below).

6. Update on Transportation Safety Activities

Mr. Farrell presented. Safety is an expanding item in regional planning. MOITS is a possible home for it, at least for the time being, though we may have a Safety Committee later on. SAFETEA-LU mandates that safety planning now be a separate planning factor, distinct from security planning, within the MPO long-range transportation plan. From a practical standpoint, the stakeholders for security planning are different than those for safety planning. In response to a question, it was noted that transit safety would be included.

In the CLRP Call for Projects document, submitting agencies will be asked to check a box as to whether projects being submitted for inclusion of the TIP are primarily safety projects.

Ms. McElwain suggested that there be a similar check box for whether a submitted project was an ITS project subject to Federal Rule 940 (to comply with the National ITS Architecture and utilize a systems engineering process). Staff agreed to look into this, noting that for many

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projects, ITS is a feature contained in a larger non-ITS project, and the exact eventual nature of the ITS features uncertain at this early stage.

Safety programs usually encompass engineering, education, and enforcement. Most MOITS participants are involved only in engineering. Thus additional stakeholders may be sought. It will need to be explored in what ways safety lends itself to the regional geography, as opposed to being done on a national, state, or local level.

In response to a question from Mr. Contestabile, staff noted that initial activities will pivot from the existing State Strategic Highway Safety Plans of D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, including goals, performance measurement, gaps, commonalities, and elements meaningful at the regional level. Mr. Contestabile suggested that staff examine the state plans and produce a white paper outlining the plans, bring it back to this forum, and try to develop some consensus about what should be put into place for the region.

Regarding stakeholders and potential membership of a safety subcommittee, the Street Smart working group oversees the Street Smart program and deals with pedestrian safety. States administer "402" safety grants, and staff involved may have ideas for potential safety subcommittee participants.

7. Update on Freight Planning Activities and the DDOT/National Capital Planning Commission Freight Rail Relocation Study

Responding to a recommendation from the most recent U.S. Department of Transportation review of the TPB planning process, TPB has gone through a procurement process for a consultant for freight planning. The consultant will do a four-month study to advise what kind of information should be gathered, who should be involved, and what kind of committee structure should be involved to integrate freight into the planning process. VDOT, MDOT, and DDOT representatives are already participating on an initial freight planning committee. Mr. Meese invited nominations for other agencies and people interested in being involved. Ms. Samarasinghe asked that a freight rail representative from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation be contacted.

Mr. Meese discussed the status of the ongoing DDOT/National Capital Planning Commission freight rail relocation study. A consultant team had presented information to a study steering committee at several meetings, examining potential alternatives for detailed analysis. In response to a question, it was noted that the scope of this study did not include focusing on hazmats on forms of transportation other than rail.

8. Update on Regional Emergency Support Function (RESF) – 1, Transportation Activities

A handout was distributed. An RESF-1 tabletop exercise was to take place on Tuesday, November 28 in the Board Room starting at 9:30 a.m. All transportation operational agencies were encouraged to participate. There was also room for observers from member agencies.

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Members were to contact Robert Young if their agency would like to send someone. Mark Miller added that the purpose of this tabletop is to give us a picture of what we would do under these circumstances, and give us some ideas for improvements.

The exercise is based on what was done in the REETC annex. The goal is to focus on the decisions of transportation agency personnel, not public safety, though they have been invited as observers.

There was an evacuation and shelter plan project under way. COG is the contracting agency, though direction is coming from a steering committee led by the DC Emergency Management Agency. The project was still in its initial phases. Mr. Contestabile noted that this project was requesting information on the cross-section of the evacuation routes. If it is available electronically, that does not pose a problem, but gathering the data by hand would be a huge undertaking. That data would also have to be maintained. We need to think carefully about how that data would be used, to make sure we are not simply gathering data and ducking some of the hard questions, such as where evacuees will go, and what will be done with them when they get there.

There was also concern about the “walk-out” scenario in terms of what will happen to people once they reach the DC border. Some of the walk-out routes might pose safety problems. Mark Miller added that walk-out will occur spontaneously, and we need to plan for it.

Mr. Farrell noted that our real experience of walk-out evacuations is that many people walk all the way home.

9. Updating MOITS Technical Task Force Membership Lists

Mr. Meese distributed an update draft MOITS Technical Task Force membership list, and asked members to check and update all information. This included whether the designated member or other participants of MOITS for a given agency should change given the separation of the RESF-1 group. Members were asked to contact Mr. Meese with any changes.

10. Other Business

- **Regional Bus Subcommittee:** A Regional Bus Subcommittee of the TPB Technical Committee was being formed at the request of the TPB. Likely there will be coordination issues between the Regional Bus Subcommittee and MOITS on operational issues. Further briefings will be provided at future meetings.
- **Next meeting:** The next meeting remained scheduled for December 12 [later changed to January 9, 2007].