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May 19, 2004



## **ITEM 9 - Action**

May 19, 2004

### **Approval of Recommended Actions to Improve Regional Transportation Communications and Coordination During Incidents**

#### **Staff**

**Recommendation:** Adopt Resolution R17-2004 to endorse recommended actions to improve regional transportation communications and coordination during incidents.

**Issues:** None

**Background:** At the April 2, 2004 TPB meeting, the Board was briefed on options and recommendations for improving regional transportation communication and coordination during incidents. These options were developed in response to a request by the National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC) at its March 4 meeting. On May 4 the recommendations were reviewed by the TPB Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Task Forces. The EPC was briefed on the recommended improvements at its May 6 meeting.



**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD  
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.E.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002-4239**

**RESOLUTION TO ENDORSE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS  
TO IMPROVE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATIONS AND  
COORDINATION DURING INCIDENTS**

**WHEREAS**, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), as the metropolitan planning organization for the Washington Metropolitan area, is responsible under the provisions of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) for developing and carrying out a comprehensive, continuing and coordinated transportation planning process for the metropolitan area; and

**WHEREAS**, among the planning factors that TEA-21 requires to be addressed in the metropolitan transportation planning process is consideration of projects and strategies that will promote efficient system management and operation; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 11, 2002, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors adopted the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) which was developed in response to the attack of September 11, 2001; and

**WHEREAS**, the RECP includes a Regional Emergency Support Function 1 –Transportation Chapter and a Regional Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination (REETC) Annex, which were developed by representatives of all of the transportation agencies in the region; and

**WHEREAS**, an update of the REETC Annex engaging a broad-based group of transportation, emergency management, federal, and other stakeholders in the region was completed in 2003, endorsed by the National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC) on March 4, 2004, reviewed by the TPB on March 17, 2004, and endorsed by the COG Board of Directors on April 14, 2004; and

**WHEREAS**, the new REETC Annex identified three key recommendations for future regional emergency planning activities to be pursued by the EPC, including carrying out regional emergency management coordination efforts on a continuing basis, conducting a coordinated regional public education campaign on emergency preparedness, and ensuring that timely information is provided to the public during incidents; and

**WHEREAS**, the REETC Annex identified a fourth key recommendation, that of strengthening emergency communications and coordination in the transportation sector, to be pursued by the TPB; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to this fourth recommendation, the TPB at its April 21 meeting was briefed on options and a follow-up recommendation on a course of action for improving regional transportation communication and coordination during incidents, the TPB Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Task Forces at their May 4 meeting reviewed the recommendations and course of action for implementing these improvements, and the EPC at its May 6 meeting reviewed the recommended proposed course of action; and

**WHEREAS**, the course of action for strengthening regional transportation communication and coordination during incidents includes a program of technical and procedural improvements, training, and deployment of the region's transportation agency staffs as described in the attached materials; and

**WHEREAS**, the pending Administration, House, and Senate proposals for reauthorization of TEA-21 all provide new authority and funding eligibility for improving regional transportation communication and coordination response to traffic incidents and for emergency evacuation; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 4 the MOITS Task Forces established working groups to facilitate the implementation of the course of action;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

- endorses the recommended course of action for improving regional transportation communication and coordination during incidents as described in the attached materials, and
- directs the MOITS Task Forces and working groups to develop a work program identifying the specific technical and operational improvements and duty rotation procedure, the funding requirements and schedule to ensure the expeditious implementation of the course of action over the next six months.

# **Recommended Improvements to Regional Transportation Communication and Coordination During Incidents**

**David Snyder**

Falls Church City Council

And Chair, Management, Operations, and  
Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Policy Task Force

Presentation to the

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

May 19, 2004

# Background

- On April 21, the TPB reviewed options and follow-up recommendations from the revised Regional Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination (REETC) Annex of the RECPSM
- Since the April 21 TPB:
  - May 4 – Proposed course of action reviewed by TPB's Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Task Forces, and new working groups established to oversee implementation
  - May 6 – Follow-up options and recommendations reviewed by EPC



# Response to REETC Annex Recommendations

- First three recommendations being pursued by EPC:
  - 1) Carrying out regional emergency management coordination efforts on a continuing basis
  - 2) Conducting a coordinated regional public education campaign on emergency preparedness
  - 3) Ensuring that timely information is provided to the public during incidents
- Fourth recommendation being pursued by TPB:
  - 4) Strengthening emergency communications and coordination in the transportation sector

# Strengthening Transportation Communications and Coordination

- The TPB has reviewed alternatives and proposed a course of action for strengthening transportation communications and coordination during significant transportation incidents and emergency situations
- Anticipated additional costs for proposed actions are moderate for a metropolitan area the size of the Washington region, on the order of a few million dollars per year

# **Course of Action for Strengthening Transportation Communications and Coordination**

- A program of technical and procedural improvements, training, and duty rotation of the region's transportation agency staffs will be implemented over the next six months
  - Working groups have been established to address technical systems upgrades and procedural changes
  - First changes could be implemented by end of summer
- If implementation of the above actions proves insufficient, creation of a new organization should be considered, modeled after New York's TRANSCOM

# Technical Improvements

- Integration of technical systems and databases among key transportation and public safety operations centers
- Examples:
  - Automated sharing of computerized roadway condition data among DDOT, MDOT, VDOT, WMATA, and other agencies
  - Automated sharing of traffic incident information received by public safety agencies with transportation agencies
  - Automated communication between computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems, geographic information systems (GIS), and other data systems
  - Improved linkages and compatibility between paging systems maintained by individual transportation agencies and the RICCS<sup>SM</sup>

# Operational Improvements

- Review and update of major transportation agencies' standard operating procedures to
  - Better reflect regional coordination duties
  - Ensure interagency compatibility of procedures
- Examples:
  - Improved procedures for public safety field personnel to quickly report situations to transportation centers so that transportation agencies can immediately address ripple effects
  - Clear guidelines on when agency operations personnel should send RICCS<sup>SM</sup> messages
  - Monthly test exercises of transportation and public safety communications and coordination procedures

# Duty Rotation Among Major Transportation Agencies

- DOTs and WMATA will dedicate existing or new members of their staffs within their own operations centers exclusively for regional coordination duties on a rotating basis
- Examples:
  - Designating operations staff persons exclusively to monitor regional roadway and transit systems, and be ready to initiate and shepherd regional communications in the event of an incident
  - Monitoring, updating, and sharing of construction and rehabilitation schedules among all agencies
  - Shepherding advance regional transportation communications and coordination for large special events

# Strengthening Transportation Communications and Coordination

## Will Require New Funding

- A funding structure needs to be identified for these improvements
- Critical that the funding structure not detract from existing transportation operations resources
- Pending Administration, House, and Senate bills for reauthorization of the federal transportation program all provide:
  - Overall increased funding levels
  - New authority and funding eligibility for
    - Regional coordination of transportation system management and operations
    - Emergency evacuation and response

# Pending Federal Transportation Reauthorization Legislation

- Aims to "...ensure efficient and effective transportation systems management and operations...through collaboration, coordination, and real-time information sharing, at a regional level, between transportation system managers and operators, public safety officials, and the general public..."
- Encourages the implementation of regional transportation system management and operations initiatives including emergency response, evacuation, and traffic incident management
- Enables use of CMAQ and STP funds for these purposes
- Provides the Secretary of Transportation with additional discretionary funds for these purposes
- Since all three bills (Administration, House, and Senate) contain nearly identical language on this topic, this is certain to be an emphasis area



# Next Steps

- In consultation with the newly-formed working groups:
  - Develop a work program with funding requirements and schedule for implementation
  - Develop a recommendation on an oversight structure for collaborative activities
  - Provide periodic progress reports to the TPB on the transportation strengthening activities as well as related EPC emergency management, public education, and public information activities

# Outlook

- There is strong momentum among transportation agencies for implementing improvements in regional communications and coordination capabilities to respond to significant transportation incidents and emergency situations
- Continued close two-way coordination is needed with EPC's ongoing work on regional emergency management, public education, and provision of timely public information
- We ask TPB endorsement today of Resolution R17-2004 to initiate these activities

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**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**

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**MINUTES OF THE  
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD  
May 19, 2004**

Members and Alternates Present

Chris Zimmerman, Arlington County Board  
Phil Mendelson, D.C. Council  
Michelle Pourciau, DDOT  
Marsha Kaiser, MDOT  
Carol Petzold, Maryland House of Delegates  
Cicero Salles, Prince George's DPW&T  
Catherine Hudgins, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
Kathy Porter, City of Takoma Park  
Bruce Reeder, Frederick County Commissioners  
Jeff Jennings, Councilmember Jim Graham's office  
Karina Ricks, D.C. Office of Planning  
Linda Smyth, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
Ludwig Gaines, City of Alexandria  
Kanti Srikantia, VDOT  
Brian A. Glenn, FTA  
Bill Wrett, City of Manassas Park  
Richard White, WMATA  
Patrice Winter, City of Fairfax  
Edgar Gonzalez, Montgomery County Executive Branch  
Robert Dorsey, City of Rockville  
Skip Coburn, D.C. City Council (Office of Sharon Ambrose)  
Hilda M. Bary, Prince William County  
David Snyder, City of Falls Church  
Ron Spalding, MDOT  
Zak Krebeck, Charles County

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Farley has managed to work with people under some very difficult circumstances. He said Mr. Farley has earned the respect of people who agree with him and those who do not. He said he hoped the new district administrator would have at least some of his qualities.

Mr. Farley thanked Chairman Zimmerman for his kind remarks. He said that while they have not been on the same side of all issues, they have grown to respect each other's positions. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the TPB. He said he believed that some of the major decisions that have made over his years on the board have really advanced transportation in the region.

Mr. Farley said that VDOT has changed over the years in a number of positive ways, including discussion and consideration of public transportation and increased public involvement. He said that VDOT used to have the reputation of "slash and burn"; it would basically do as it chose to do, without taking into account any of the public impact or associated problems. He said that the department has come a long way from that approach to doing business. He said that today it tries to do everything possible to garner public input and to address and mitigate negative impacts. But he said he could not say that things have improved with regard to regulation. He said it seems like regulations are creating increasing pressures and making it increasingly difficult to address transportation needs in the region. But he said the TPB is looked to for leadership in terms of addressing those concerns, and he was proud to be associated with the decisions of the Board. He said he imagined a good replacement will be found to carry on the leadership, fellowship and good decisions of the board, but he said he would miss it. He also said that he thought he would be pursuing other interests in transportation, and he imagined he might be returning to the TPB in the future, perhaps during the public comment period, to advance his own theories on what transportation should be like in the region.

#### **9. Approval of Recommended Actions to Improve Regional Transportation Communications and Coordination During Incidents**

Referring to the mailout material, Mr. Snyder briefed the Board. He noted that a revision to slide 5 had been handed out.

In his presentation, Mr. Snyder spoke about actions taken after September 11, 2001, to address public education, informational and operational problems and issues, particularly related to transportation. He said the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) was approved in 2002, and a revision to the transportation annex in the RECP was approved by the COG board and the Emergency Preparedness Council earlier this year. He said that four key recommendations were made in that process:

- Carrying out regional emergency management coordination efforts on a continuing basis
- Conducting a coordinated regional public education campaign on emergency preparedness

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- Ensuring that timely information is provided to the public during incidents
  - Strengthening emergency communications and coordination in the transportation sector.

Mr. Snyder noted that the recommendations 1-3 were being pursued by the Emergency Preparedness Council. Recommendation 4 was being pursued by the TPB. He said that a program of technical and procedural improvements, training, and duty rotation of the region's transportation agency staffs will be implemented over the next six months. He noted that some additional funding may be needed for these efforts, but he expressed optimism that this funding would be identified through upcoming Congressional reauthorization of the federal surface transportation legislation. If implementation of the above actions proves insufficient, creation of a new organization should be considered, possibly modeled after New York's TRANSCOM.

Mr. Snyder moved approval of Resolution R17-2004.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Mendelson.

Chairman Zimmerman said that the action being requested included two components: Endorsement of the overall course of action for the improvement of regional transportation communication coordination during such incidents, and 2) that the task force would be directed to develop a work program identifying specific technical and operational improvements over the next six months. He asked if this meant the resulting recommendations might look something like TRANSCOM.

Mr. Snyder said the TRANSCOM model would be pursued only if the other options do not work.

Chairman Zimmerman asked if that meant that after six months, Mr. Snyder would be coming back with a specific course of action.

Mr. Snyder said he would be returning with a specific course of action along with a report on actions that have already been taken.

Chairman Zimmerman remarked that comments by the Citizens Advisory Committee and Mr. White's frequent comments were two examples of the sense of urgency that the region needs to do something and stop talking about what it needs to do. He said he understood from Mr. Snyder's comments that the region has not reached that point yet, but it is getting closer.

Mr. Snyder said this was correct.

Ms. Hudgins asked if it would be feasible for Mr. Snyder's committee to comply with the Citizens Advisory Committee's request for interim progress reports every two months.

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Mr. Snyder said they would comply with that request.

Mr. Fellows asked if the task forces and work groups would be addressing incident prevention and risk minimization.

Mr. Snyder said the work would be focusing on response. He said that demand management does involve risk management. For example, when people get on highways after an incident, the risks they encounter can be mitigated if certain actions are taken. But for the most part, risk mitigation would fall under the purview of the Emergency Preparedness Council.

Ms. Pourciau thanked Mr. Snyder for keeping this issue on the TPB's agenda. She emphasized that emergency preparedness activities also positively affect people's lives on a daily basis in terms of less congestion and improved operability. She said the task force of senior staff that has convened should be able to achieve the ends that Mr. Snyder had laid out. She said she believed that six months would be enough time for this purpose.

Mr. Salles thanked Mr. Snyder for his leadership. He also mentioned that Prince George's County had just opened its transportation operations center. He emphasized that a partnership with MDOT and the federal government was essential to establishing this center.

Mr. Gonzales also commended Mr. Snyder's work. He said he was pleased that the approach being taken had been modified so that TRANSCOM was not being seen as the only way to pursue these important objectives. He said it was important to maintain flexibility in how these objectives are achieved. He emphasized that it was important that the county agencies continue to be involved in this process.

Ms. Kaiser congratulated Mr. Snyder for his work. She said that these types of systems have been extremely important in Maryland for some time. She indicated that the state has helped the counties to set up transportation management systems that would be coordinated with the state's CHART system. She cited a recent example of a tanker accident in which I-95 had to be closed down and the information was quickly spread from Virginia to New England. She added that she felt sorry for staff that would be assigned to duty rotation between facilities near BWI Airport and in Northern Virginia.

The motion was passed unanimously.

## **10. Status Report on the TPB Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study**

Referring to the mailout material, Mr. Griffith provided a briefing on the Regional Mobility and