

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, June 10, 2008

TIME: 12:30 PM

PLACE: COG, First Floor, Meeting Room 1

CHAIRS: Hon. David Snyder, City of Falls Church, Chair, Policy Task Force
Amy Tang McElwain, Virginia Department of Transportation, Chair, Technical Subcommittee

VICE CHAIRS: Pete Buckley, Montgomery County Ride On
Yanlin Li, District of Columbia Department Transportation
Mark Miller, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

ATTENDANCE:

Jeff Anderson, WMATA
Brien Benson, George Mason University
Peter Buckley, Montgomery County Ride On
Scott Cowherd, VDOT
Gary Euler, Telvent Farradyne
Dan Godwin, TrafficLand
Noah Goodall, Telvent Farradyne
Egua Igbinosun, MSHA
Steve Kuciemba, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Yanlin Li, DDOT
Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT
Greg McFarland, NVTC
Michael Pack, University of Maryland
Martin Parker, Open Roads Consulting
Hadi Quaiyum, Prince George's County DPW&T
Mona Sutton, MDSA
Alex Verzosa, City of Fairfax
Joe Vicente, WMATA

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COG/TPB STAFF ATTENDANCE:

Karin Foster
Andrew Meese
Ryan Whytlaw
Jim Yin

ACTIONS:

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Review of Notes from Last meeting

Participants introduced themselves. Minutes from the April meeting were approved.

2. Results of Survey of MOITS Participants

Karin Foster presented the results of the MOITS survey to the committee. The survey was distributed to MOITS committee members in March 2008. Its objective was to learn what topics appeal to MOITS members and which topic approaches are most preferable. A total of 24 surveys were returned, 18 from the public sector, two from the private sector, and two from academia. The survey was divided into four sections: (1) Section A—Which of the following ways of sharing information and conducting business most interest you? (2) Section B—Which of the following topic areas would you like the MOITS to spend its time and focus on? (3) Section C—What is your level of interest in MOITS reviewing potential projects and formulating recommendations on projects? And (4) Section D—If MOITS were to formulate recommendations on projects, what would be your three highest priorities?

For Section A, regular face-to-face meetings were preferred to webcasts or conference calls. Face-to-face meetings at various locations were also favored.

For Section B, traffic management, ITS technologies, and bus priority/BRT scored the highest. The range of scores for Section B were clustered, and did not show as strong of a separation of top and bottom answers as did Section A.

For Section C, responses fell across the board, mostly around 6, 7, 9, and 10 indicating a moderate to high appeal. The average score was 7.09.

The Section D top three priorities were ITS Technologies, Transit/Traffic Operations and Communications Integrations, and Traffic Management. There is a preference toward the “status quo” for current committee format and topic areas.

In response to a question from Michael Pack, Ms. Foster noted that survey responses were from a wide cross-section of respondents, and were not concentrated from any particular agency.

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In response to a question from Alex Verzosa, Mr. Meese stated that it was technically possible to provide a simultaneous teleconference call-in option to the regular MOITS meetings, through there were concerns about persons on the telephone being able to participate fully in the meeting. Also it may detract from in-person participation.

In response to a question from Pete Buckley, Mr. Meese noted that people should contact him if they were interested in hosting a MOITS meeting at an alternate location, if there is some specific purpose for visiting that location. For example, the MOITS Traffic Signals Subcommittee recently was hosted by Prince George's County at the new National Harbor development, to examine the traffic signal installations there. Mr. Buckley offered that the Subcommittee could meet sometime at Montgomery County's offices. Remote locations could have impacts on attendance, but the Subcommittee could look at meetings at WMATA or other central locations, or remote locations when there is specific technology to look at.

Ms. McElwain summarized that technical issues may advise against having teleconferences at this time, but the meeting could be held at alternate locations on an exception basis when there is something important to see.

Ms. McElwain recommended looking at how the results of the survey might advise the structuring of the MOITS agendas, as well as the structuring of the MOITS subcommittees.

Mr. Meese noted that the survey identified traffic management as a top priority area, but this had not been a major topic of discussion lately at MOITS meetings. Ms. McElwain agreed with the suggestion to bring in more discussions on this.

Brien Benson noted that some of the lower-ranked topics were actually subsets of topics that were higher on the list. Ms. McElwain agreed, and noted this will help advise how to realign the agendas. Mr. Meese noted that specialized topics might be covered on the Web site or in blogs instead of at the main meeting.

Mr. Meese noted the topic of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), since there had been some discussion of using the MOITS structure to bring together stakeholders and discuss it in a neutral, technical forum. Joe Vicente stated that Metro is actively planning to implement BRTs, and will be inviting stakeholders to be involved. Mr. Vicente noted that he had previously worked in Los Angeles, and noted the successful implementations of BRTs there involved the support of traffic signal agencies. Ms. McElwain noted that there were several transit technology projects in VDOT jurisdictions. Mr. Meese noted the significant number of different traffic signal technical systems in the region. Yanlin Li noted DDOT's efforts to include bus route information in signal timing activities. Ms. McElwain suggested the issue be discussed further.

Mr. Vicente noted the need to better share alert information about buses. Ms. McElwain asked if the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS) could play a role. Mr. Pack stated he had an upcoming meeting with Jamey Harvey of WMATA on RITIS-WMATA information sharing.

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The committee discussed the recent event where key WMATA personnel apparently had not received information about a forecast air quality code red day, which triggers suspension of collecting bus fares in some jurisdictions. Apparently there were formatting problems regarding the email sent from COG to WMATA. Mr. Buckley noted that Montgomery County Ride On and other suburban transit agencies successfully received the email sent out by COG on Sunday afternoon, and were able to act upon it. Mr. Vicente asked if there could be a "hot line" where the air quality information could be verified; Mr. Verzosa noted that there was already such a number. Mr. Meese noted the posting of information on the Web site; Mr. Vicente stated that the information was not updated in time since it occurred on a Sunday outside regular business hours.

In response to a comment from Ms. McElwain, Mr. Meese noted that there had in the past been limited discussions of air quality forecast information being shared through RITIS. However, it is a unique piece of information put out on rare occasion by personnel otherwise not involved in transportation management, presenting some challenges. Gary Euler noted that MATOC was considering core agency information in its initial deployment, and this might have to be considered later.

3. Outlook and Scope for the MOITS Strategic Plan

This activity followed up on Ms. McElwain's suggestion of reviving previous years' efforts to create a MOITS Strategic Plan. Such a plan was drafted in 2001 but never finalized. MOITS recently looked at the outline for the 2001 Plan. In a related effort, staff took a survey of MOITS participants. Staff activities to initiate a new effort included: (1) Review of the 2001 outline and draft plan; (2) Scanned web for similar MPO ITS Strategic Plan examples; (3) Reviewed related MATOC and RESF-1 activities; (4) Reviewed results of the MOITS Survey.

Other MPO examples of Strategic Plans included North Central Texas and the Atlanta Regional Commission. The North Central Texas Strategic Plan was an overall strategic plan of which ITS was one component. There were other sections on land use, environment, and other topics. The document was written with policy-level language with little project specificity. Policies were tied to "visions of success," indicators, and steps. The Atlanta Regional Commission's Strategic Plan was very detailed, with specific projects listed. It delved into individual installations at specific points. Overall, few MPOs have Strategic Plans of any sort.

Some considerations for the Washington D.C. region include the three jurisdictions (Maryland, Virginia, DC). The MPO role does not include directing programming or installation of technologies or operational programs at a site-specific level.

Recommendations including keeping the focus on only those limited number of topics that are truly regional and interagency in nature. It may be kept similar to the 2001 outline, with some ability to clarify structure and content. Next steps are to identify which topics to be included in the Strategic Plan. Identify which resources are needed. Once topics are identified, do a Strategic Plan inventory of the region, likely using in-house COG staff. An overview document was targeted by September

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30, 2008, with a strategic inventory to take place in the October/November time frame. Finalization would be by December 31, 2008.

Ms. McElwain agreed with the overall approach. She noted that MOTIS cannot have a role of telling agencies what to do, rather it is regional coordination. She also noted the importance of the Regional ITS Architecture in helping structure the recommendations.

In response to a question from Egua Igbinosun, Mr. Meese noted that he was planning on using in-house staff to undertake the inventory, but had not mapped out the details of that process. We may use a variety of methods to gather information.

In response to a question from Mr. Benson, Ms. McElwain confirmed that there will be a connection between the strategic plan and the ITS architecture. Mr. Igbinosun recommended that the subcommittee be briefed again on the architecture at a future meeting.

4. Update on 2008 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Technical Report

A Congestion Management Process is required by SAFETEA-LU legislation for transportation planning. Federal regulations for metropolitan planning were issued February 14, 2007. All metropolitan long-range plans developed after February 14, 2007 must have a CMP. March 2006 Federal certification of the TPB process recommended demonstrating how the Congestion Management System (CMS, now CMP) was applied at critical stages of the metropolitan planning process, in the CLRP or a stand-alone document. Three major CMP activities include: (1) CMP components of 2007 CLRP (completed); (2) Congestion Management for the CLRP and TIP; (3) CMP Technical Report. Since the April 2008 meeting, Chapter 1, the Executive Summary has been written, Chapter 3, clarifying information has been written, Chapter 4, additional information on traffic management is complete, Chapter 5, revised information on TERMS, Chapter 6, New information on how results of CMP are integrated into the CLRP, and Chapter 7, new material for several sections of background information. For next steps, the committee will review the CMP, and for comments that cannot be accommodated this year, will be looked at for a revised report during FY2009.

The draft CMP report was also presented to the TPB Technical Committee at its June 6 meeting. Any comments were requested to be sent to Mr. Meese by June 18, and the report was to be finalized by the end of June.

5. Program Updates

a) Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program—Gary Euler noted the team is working on a Proof of Concept, defining what that means. Standard Operating Procedures are being merged into each agency. Subcommittees were being formed on operations and on regional information systems. MATOC Steering Committee chair Richard Steeg had provided briefings to a number of interested committees.

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b) Regional Emergency Support Function (RESF)-1 Committee—Ryan Whytlaw commented that a consultant was hired, and a survey was conducted similar to the MOITS survey. A focus group was to be held on June 16 to provide a “gap analysis.”

c) Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS)—Mr. Euler also updated on the RITIS work on behalf of Mr. Pack, who had to leave the meeting. He commented on the 24-hour technical/user support needed. Work continued on connections with CapWIN. Mr. Pack had a number of new students enhancing components of RITIS.

In response to a question from Mr. Verzosa on the schedule of when RITIS would be operational, Mr. Euler noted that RITIS had some functionalities operating now. The next milestone will be the initial MATOC deployment in December. It was noted there had been MATOC discussions of transitioning RITIS from a university prototype mode to a production mode. The message can be given to the MATOC Steering Committee that there is a lot of interest in what information RITIS can provide and when. Sustaining funding is also an issue that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Vicente noted that a similar system to RITIS was developed in Los Angeles among several key agencies, with the production system housed in the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

d) Capital Wireless Information Net (CapWIN) and Common Field Reporting System (CFRS) – No report.

e) I-270 Integrated Corridor Management (ICM) Project – Mr. Igbinosun noted that the I-270 Corridor was not chosen by USDOT for continuance to the Phase 2 of the ICM program. It is unlikely that corridors not continued for Phase 2 will be chosen for the eventual Phase 3. SHA is committee to continuing actions from the project even absent being in Phase 2. Mr. Meese suggested that there be a presentation at a future MOITS meeting.

f) Maryland Statewide Operations Summit (May 1) – Mr. Igbinosun thanked everyone who participated, and noted that the summit was a success. Conference presentations are posted on the Web. They were now looking at how to move forward in the future with future summits or other activities.

Mr. Meese also noted that a meeting of the Transportation Safety Subcommittee was set to take place on Monday, June 23, 10:00 AM, at COG, and all were welcome to attend.

g) Freight Subcommittee—Karin Foster briefed the committee on the April 24, 2008 Freight Subcommittee meeting. Marygrace Parker of the I-95 Corridor Coalition had presented an updated on several I-95 projects such as the Mid-Atlantic Truck Operations Study and the Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Study. Potential future activities were also discussed. The next meeting was scheduled for July 24 at 12:30 PM.

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h) Regional ITS Architecture – Jim Yin noted that the Subcommittee met in May. Consultants for the Northern Virginia architecture presented on plans for their upcoming update.

Mr. Yin also presented on the Traffic Signals Subcommittee, and its June 4 site visit to National Harbor. The subcommittee plans to hold more such site visits in the future. There was a request to visit the new Baltimore City traffic signals center at a future Traffic Signals Subcommittee meeting.

The next meeting Traffic Signals Subcommittee was scheduled for July 23 at 10:00 AM at COG.

6. Other Business

There was no other business. The next MOITS meeting was scheduled for July 8 at 12:30 PM at COG.