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, April 10, 2007

TIME: 12:30 PM

PLACE: COG, First Floor, Meeting Room 1

CHAIRS: Hon. David Snyder, City of Falls Church, Chair, Policy
Task Force
Egua Igbinosun, Maryland State Highway Administration, Chair,
Technical Task Force

VICE CHAIRS: Kirk Dand, Arlington County
Yanlin Li, District of Columbia Department Transportation
Mark Miller, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

ATTENDANCE:

John Contestabile, MDOT
Kirk Dand, Arlington County DOT
Maha Gilini, City of Alexandria
Noah Goodall, Telvent Farradyne
Doug Hansen, Fairfax County
Egua Igbinosun, Maryland State Highway Administration
Natalie Jones Best, DDOT
Yanlin Li, DDOT
Alvin Marquess, MSHA
Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT
Peter Meenehan, WMATA
Frank Mirack, FHWA DC Division
Erica Mowbray, Maryland Emergency Management Agency
Michael Pack, UMD-CATT Lab
Lev Pinelis, IBI Group
Hadi Quaiyum, Prince George's County DPW&T
Sharmila Samarasinghe, Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation, Virginia
Hon. David Snyder, City of Falls Church
Richard Steeg, VDOT
Alex Verzosa, City of Fairfax

COG/TPB Staff Attendance:

Michael Farrell
Andrew Meese
Gerald Miller
Jim Yin

1. Welcome, Introductions and Review of Notes from the March 13, 2007 meeting

Mr. Igbinosun chaired the meeting. Minutes from the March 13 MOITS meeting were approved.

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

Ms. Jones Best gave an overview of RESF-1. The one year anniversary of the committee has just passed. There is a new round UASI funding applications coming up. RESF-1 has been providing its input into the investment plans. The next work item for RESF-1 is to look at what projects should be funded. Four projects were funded last year; quite a few more were proposed but not funded. RESF-1 will try to get those projects funded this year. In November there was a tabletop exercise to bring in the operations managers from the EOCs. Many participants said that they lacked opportunities to meet their colleagues, so an operations subcommittee of RESF-1 will be created that will meet quarterly, starting in May. A liaison from the group will report to RESF-1 every month. The group will start with those who attended the November tabletop exercise. RESF-1 is a mid-level group, while the Subcommittee will consist of operations personnel. MOITS will get an after-action report for the November tabletop exercise. Ms. Jones Best has also briefed the CAO's on the activities of RESF-1. RESF-1 is developing a developing a white paper to explain RESF-1's activities. RESF-1 is also discussing how to implement the NIMS system and conduct training. Operation Fast Forward Part III is coming up. It has not yet been decided what will be tested. This exercise should go to the highest level, to ensure regional emergency exercises and plans are connected.

Ms. McElwain asked if we would revisit some of the issues and projects identified earlier. Ms. Jones Best replied that they would, but that the deadline for CIP projects was coming up.

3. Update on the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operation Coordination (MATOC) Program

The Secretary of MDOT, John Porcari, had signed the funding agreement for MATOC. The next task will be to re-advertise for the contractor, make the steering committee an official entity, and set a meeting date. A memo in the hand-outs describes MATOC. MATOC is a consortium of agencies meant to provide for better operations coordination and traveler information in the region. Maryland is the final agency to sign the funding agreement. The TPB will be briefed in some future month, at

which time they will be given the opportunity to meet some of the MATOC steering committee members. The MATOC Steering Committee will continue to discuss integration of operations personnel on a regional basis.

Secretary Porcari suggested that he himself be the Maryland representative to the MATOC, and have the other principals to be designated representatives to the MATOC, who will then assign staff to attend as alternates. Mr. Contestabile would be the likely alternate for MDOT. Mr. Contestabile thought that naming the principals as representatives to the MATOC would increase their buy-in to the process. Secretary Porcari sees MATOC as a forum to bring regional leaders together.

4. **TPB Request for MOITS Response to *Traffic Technologies International* Magazine Article**

Mr. Meese discussed the hand-out. John Mason, former TPB board member, asked that an article by Phil Tarnoff be shared with the TPB, which was done at the March 21st TPB meeting. The article describes success stories in traffic technology. Policy Chair David Snyder had asked that the article be referred to the MOITS for response. This is a good opportunity to talk with the TPB about the basics of traffic technology, and why these investments are so important.

Mr. Meese developed a memo summarizing what he knows about deployment of new traffic technologies mentioned in the Tarnoff article in this region. The memo does not have all the specifics about what the agencies are doing. Mr. Meese suggested that this group might want to provide more details and comments. Mr. Igbinosun noted that we have one more meeting, May 9th, before this memo has to go to the TPB on May 16th. If any agencies have comments or more specifics on what they are doing with traffic technology, that would be helpful.

Mr. Contestabile suggested that on page 6 of the memo that we note what has been done with RITIS. Under page 7, productivity-enhancing tools, RITIS/MATOC could be discussed. Other than that, Mr. Contestabile thought that the memo was a reasonable summary of regional activities in transportation technology.

Mr. Marquess said that there should be a means of getting a good form of detection employed. Mr. Meese asked what the issues are with detection – quality of the detectors, or not enough detectors? Maryland has ten-mile intervals between detectors, compared to Chicago which has tenth of a mile detection. More and better detection is needed for real-time operations, evacuation, etc.

VDOT Northern Virginia just completed a major upgrade of signal detection. The system has been upgraded to accept new technologies. It can provide predictive travel time and a reliability index. VDOT has half-mile intervals between detectors.

Mr. Verzosa said that detection was defective in terms of quantity and quality on the arterials. Adaptive signal control does not work without enough detection.

Is the purpose of the memo to state what we have been accomplishing, or highlight problems? Mr. Snyder replied that this memo will give the MOITS members the opportunity to report to the TPB both what is being done, and what needs to be done.

Mr. Meese said that, in line with Mr. Verzosa's comments, that this region has tended to go with fixed time signals rather than adaptive, because fixed-time is easier to implement, and more robust if there is missing or failed detection. How much better would adaptive traffic control be if detection were functional?

Mr. Dand replied that adaptive traffic control does not work well if you have to move a lot of pedestrians. Arlington will not move to adaptive for that reason. Instead more CCTV cameras will be added for detection. Cameras allow for better information for police and emergency services as well.

Mr. Marquess said that more Counties are installing cameras, which enables emergency responders to send the right equipment faster, saving lives. MDOT currently has nearly 250 cameras, and will have more than 300 cameras by the end of the year. Many of those cameras were paid for through joint investment by the Counties and MDOT. Cameras are cheap if the communications infrastructure is in place. The quality of the communications determines how much information can be sent.

More coverage by safety patrols is also needed to respond to information. If no one is on duty, there is no response.

Mr. Steeg noted that there is no mention in the memo of centralized signal control, just local adaptive controls. Interface of cameras with centralized signal control systems is useful. VDOT has fewer cameras than Montgomery County. Known safety and congestion issues drive installation of cameras in Northern Virginia.

Mr. Verzosa added that cameras used to be deployed just on the freeways, but now they are found more often on arterials. Between local jurisdiction and VDOT cameras, Northern Virginia could have the same coverage as Maryland. But VDOT and local cameras are not on the same system yet.

Mr. Igbinosun announced that a public/private partnership has broken ground to establish more point detection. The I-95 coalition corridor's detection project is also coming up; and that contract might be used to go into other parts of the State.

Mr. Meese asked again if MOITS members could let him know, by e-mail, what they are doing in the fields of traffic technology such as those listed in the memo. Technology deployment relates to the ITS architectures as well. The more information-sharing there is about these types of projects, the sooner we can appreciate their implications for the ITS architecture and vice versa.

FHWA is pushing the States to move ahead with traveler information projects. However, Mr. Marquess noted that there is no use in putting out inaccurate information, and more accurate information depends on better detection.

Ms. McElwain announced that a project to evaluate data collection and dissemination has kicked off.

Mr. Verzosa announced that the City of Fairfax is installing variable message signs.

Mr. Steeg added that portable HAR units and portable cameras and detection, are useful, especially because more things can be wireless now. We do not have to depend so much on hard-wired fiber connections as in the past.

Mr. Meenehan suggested that traffic information be distributed on FM band radio.

Mr. Snyder thanked the group and asked them to send Mr. Meese information.

Mr. Meese said that comprehensive inventories are difficult to gather and keep up, but illustrative examples and photos would be helpful. The deadline for comments on the draft memo is May 1.

5. MOITS Program Updates

- **Congestion Management Process**

SAFETEA-LU re-emphasizes the Congestion Management Process, which is the new name for Congestion Management Systems. This new emphasis will have substantial impact on our long-range transportation planning process. In the future the region will identify congested locations, and examine the impact of alternative strategies. The general knowledge of performance measures and detection in this committee will be helpful, and TPB staff will be seeking MOITS advice. The region will talk about non-recurring congestion and incident management, and the impacts of programs that we have undertaken to address those issues. The dedicated budget for CMP begins July 1. CMP will be prominent on this subcommittee's agenda in the future.

Mr. Marquess said that the State of Maryland's CMP activities will increase. Virginia Beach has a model program.

- **Traffic Signals Activities.**

The March 14 Baltimore-Washington Traffic Signals Conference was a success. About 150 attended. There were 23 break-out sessions. The FHWA director of operations spoke about federal activities. There are plans to have such a conference every two years.

Mr. Hansen discussed a session at the conference on how the City of Baltimore had replaced all its LED signals, with advance funding through a contractor that installed the signals, to be paid out of the electricity savings from conversion over a number of years. This was an interesting option for agencies that wanted to upgrade signals to LEDs but did not have the budget to do so.

Mr. Marquess said that with the new requirements for intersections, such as ADA, costs have gone up, and perhaps not as many intersections can be upgraded within current budgets.

Second generation LED's are more economical than the older ones. There are savings not only in replacing incandescent bulbs, but also in replacing first-generation LED's with newer ones.

- **Regional ITS Architecture**

Mr. Yin distributed a hand-out. The working group met March 22, and the next meeting was to take place on April 12. The working group decided to host an ITS workshop around the end of August and September. It will be a free, two-day event. The purpose will be to help the ITS professional understand the ITS architecture and also apply the architecture in project development. Another issue is the short term update of the ITS architecture, which will be done by end of June. The long-term update will be done by the end of the year.

Mr. Meenehan, Chair of the ITS architecture working group, noted that the July 2006 new ITS architecture guidance includes sections on maintaining the ITS architecture.

The transportation architecture will not be the architecture for public safety, etc., but public safety should probably be reflected in the transportation architecture.

Ms. McElwain has put out a booklet on ITS architecture which she would like to share. It will be available on the VDOT web site.

- **Transportation Safety Planning**

SAFETEA-LU requires that we have a safety element in the long-range transportation plan, which should "incorporate or summarize" elements of the State Strategic Highway Safety Plans. Mr. Farrell is also compiling safety information for the region. That information will be presented, along with the State plans, at a summit, which will likely take place towards the end of May.

TPB has just finished the Street Smart pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign. Brochures are available. Most brochures went to law enforcement, as well as funding jurisdictions. The tips cards are often used by law enforcement as warnings, in lieu of a citation.

Mr. Meese noted that this year the internet presence has been ramped up, including advertisements and a web site, which is listed on the brochure. All the materials are available on the web site in PDF format.

6. Regional Activity Updates

- **USDOT Initiatives:** The federal Urban Partnerships Agreements program was discussed at the last MOITS meeting. The TPB is willing to be a supporting member for any member agency that wishes to apply. The application deadline is April 30.

- **I-270 Integrated Corridor Management Project:** Work continued, with the consultant looking at options for the corridor. A full update to the MOITS was planned for the May 8 meeting.

- **RITIS:** Mr. Pack announced that RITIS will be released next month in prototype.

7. Other Business: None.