

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, June 13, 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
TPB, Virginia

Attendance:

Kevin Barron, TrafficLand
Brien Benson, George Mason University
Sam Beydoun, Virginia Department of Transportation
Peter Buckley, Montgomery County Ride On
Raul Catangui, Synergy Alliances
John Contestabile, Maryland Department of Transportation
Soumya Dey, District Department of Transportation
Dan Godwin, TrafficLand
Noah Goodall, Parson Brinkerhoff
Rick Gordon, Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation
Calvin Green, Montgomery County Ride On
Doug Hansen, Fairfax County
Yanlin Li, District Department of Transportation
Peter Meenehan, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Mark Miller, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Frank Mirack, Federal Highway Administration, DC Division
Michael Pack, University of Maryland
Richard Steeg, Virginia Department of Transportation
Alex Verzosa, City of Fairfax
John Ward, IBI Group

COG/TPB Staff Attendance:

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Update on the Regional Transportation Coordination Program

The Regional Transportation Coordination Program Steering Committee had agreed to hire a consultant through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the Transportation Planning Board using funding from a SAFETEA-LU grant. The Steering Committee was in the process of selecting a firm. Three proposals had been received and reviewed and all three submitters were interviewed. The committee had ranked the proposals and sent their recommendation to the COG's Executive Director. The recommendation is currently waiting for final approval before an official announcement will be made. A master agreement between COG, the TPB, the three Departments of Transportation and WMATA is under development.

Michael Pack gave a brief update on the RITIS project. The Volpe Center has begun work on a conceptual operations study for RITIS. The Volpe Center had also produced a draft study for the operation of the Regional Transportation Coordination Program. That study will remain in draft form until the selected company is hired and approves and implements it.

3. Update on Addressing SAFETEA-LU Congestion Management Process (CMP) Requirements

Mr. Meese provided the group with some preliminary highlights from the recently released federal rulemaking under SAFETEA-LU. There was a sense that the Congestion Management System that had been introduced under TEA-21 was frequently stove-piped and wasn't being integrated into the overall transportation planning process. The new rulemaking changes from making individual requirements for each project to an overall process, although the documentation on projects that increase capacity for single-occupancy vehicles will remain. The new CMP appears to focus more on operating and managing the system, not just on the planning process. The rulemaking also appears to place a strong emphasis on performance measures and finding measurable goals that are shared among the Long Range Plan and the CMP.

4. Overview of TPB Committee Structure

Mr. Meese spoke to a handout that was excerpted from the TPB's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP explicitly describes every activity that TPB staff is budgeted to do throughout the fiscal year. Significant changes to the UPWP must be amended by the Board. The Work Program is split up into five major sections: Policy Products, Technical Products, Methods, Data, and Technical Assistance. Activities of the MOITS Policy and Technical Task Forces are covered under the Policy Products. Technical Products, Methods and Data are all based around Travel Forecasting activities. The handout showed the relationship of the MOITS Task Forces to the TPB and the rest of its subcommittees, as well as the RTCP Steering Committee and RESF #1 – the Emergency Transportation Committee.

The MOITS Task Forces are peers to the TPB's Technical Committee, although MOITS activities are usually presented to the Technical Committee as a courtesy. The MOITS Policy Task Force was established by the TPB and chaired by a TPB member because the Technical Task Force had been asked to make funding decisions from time to time and the Board was not comfortable with them doing so without oversight. The members briefly discussed options for consolidating the Policy and Technical Task Forces since the two generally no longer meet independently. Mr. Meese suggested that any attempts to do that wait until after the Board has determined its relationships with the RTCP and RESF #1 groups.

The diagram depicts the RTCP with a tentative relationship below the TPB. All RTCP activities are currently ad hoc and the Steering Committee is not yet an official subcommittee. There are two possible subcommittees for the RTCP dealing with technology and procedures.

A connection is also shown between the MOITS Task Forces and RESF #1; that committee is under the direction of COG's Public Safety Program.

The members discussed where CMP activities should fit into the committee structure and who should be responsible for addressing that. Mr. Meese remarked that both the Travel Forecasting and the Travel Management Subcommittees have some relevance to the CMP along with the MOITS Task Forces and even Commuter Connections. The Travel Management Subcommittee is now largely focused on Transportation Emissions Reduction Measures (TERMs) that are associated with the air quality conformity determination. Their activities are concerned with reducing emissions and cleaning the air, but not necessarily managing congestion.

In recent years, the CMS has been a relatively passive process. There was no stand-alone CMS document, but the Long Range Plan featured a CMS section that described processes and actions that the spirit of the requirements was being met. Additionally, individual projects that increased SOV capacity required an additional form to be filled out that was associated with the CLRP description forms. In the last federal review of the TPB's planning process, a recommendation was made that documentation should be provided to show how the CMS was actively influencing project selection.

Under SAFETEA-LU, the CMP focuses more on managing and operating the transportation system as opposed to creating barriers to expanding system capacity.

The rulemaking is still in draft form, and this topic would likely have to be addressed again at the next meeting. It is the responsibility of the MOITS Task Forces to report to the Board on the new requirements for the CMP and to get their input, particularly if the responsibility is to be shared among other TPB subcommittees.

5. Update on Regional Emergency Support Function (RESF)-1 – Transportation Activities

The RESF-1 committee had met twice. Mr. Young distributed a handout that outlined the Scope, Purpose and Mission Statement for the committee and described the near and long-term goals.

Mr. Contestabile remarked that the wording in the Scope Statement was chosen very carefully to determine where the line between a MOITS response should leave off and be taken over by an RESF-1 response. RESF-1's scope includes response and recovery phases during and after a *declared emergency*.

The next RESF-1 meeting will be June 27 and will focus on evacuation issues and coordination with other RESFs and the Regional Incident Communications and Coordination System (RICCS).

Many participants of RESF-1 would be engaging in an exercise called Fast Forward II, using the 4th of July celebrations on the Mall as a proxy for a mass evacuation from downtown. This will be the second year for the exercise and it will be used to learn lessons and identify gaps in communication and coordination.

Mr. Young briefed the committee on the latest developments in the FY 2006 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Program. Funding for the Washington Region had been substantially reduced from the amount that was originally expected. Funding was awarded for six projects including WMATA's operations center, a critical infrastructure program, enhancements to the Emergency Transportation Annex, a public/private bus cooperation, planning for populations with special needs, and the suggested consolidation of several evacuation planning projects. The projects are being reviewed to see if they are scalable in light of the lower funding amount.

Tom Lockwood's Office of National Capital Region Coordination of DHS had been asked to ensure development of an evacuation plan for the National Capital Region. Mr. Miller stated that since evacuations are not solely the responsibility of transportation, such a program should be developed by a multi-disciplinary group.

The RESF-1 committee was also making an effort to clean up the RICCS distribution lists and identify personnel that should be on short lists for conference calls. Mr. Meese suggested that the RESF-1 committee may want to revisit the RECP diagram to improve means of getting the right information out to the right people without overwhelming people with information or sending out conflicting messages. Mr. Young said he would gather feedback from the RESF-1 committee and then distribute it to the MOITS Task Forces for their review.

Mr. Miller also suggested that the issue of timeliness of RICCS messaging should be examined. Many messages were delivered 20 to 30 minutes after the same news was available via news media. Others agreed, stating that the media is often the first source for many agencies.

6. Update on Traffic Signals Activities

Mr. Yin reported that the Traffic Signals Working Group met in May. The TPB has called for an annual report from each transportation agency describing their implementation of transportation operations improvement programs and the impacts of those programs. Among these programs are the Traffic Signal Optimization TERM which has proven very successful. Agencies have also addressed emergency preparedness issues by providing back-up power systems for traffic signals. Many agencies are also implementing LED traffic signals which save energy and reduce labor costs for replacing bulbs.

The working group also discussed regional traffic signal operations during emergencies. DDOT would be conducting a study on the impact of regional signal coordination during the Fast Forward II exercise on July 4th. The results of the study will be presented at the next Signal Group meeting.

Mr. Yin reported that the Virginia Tech Signal Preemption/Prioritization Study Final Report had been completed and was available on COG's website.

A proposal was made by the working group to jointly host the next Regional Traffic Signal Forum with the Baltimore region.

The working group determined that it would be most efficient for each state or agency to develop their own Signal Inventory Database rather than developing a unified regional database. Mr. Contestabile agreed that this was likely the best approach, but suggested that a set of common definitions be developed and used so that if equipment or crews are being shared across agencies, they'll be speaking the same language. He characterized the database as an inventory of what kind of equipment an agency used, not necessarily how many pieces of that equipment were available at any given moment. Mr. Miller suggested that Mr. Contestabile attend the July 26 meeting to discuss this further.

7. Update on ITS Architecture Activities

Mr. Yin reported that the Regional ITS Architecture Working Group met on May 25. They discussed the procedure for updating the ITS Architecture on an annual basis. The Working Group also discussed the consistency between the Regional ITS Architecture and the architectures of other jurisdictions.

Future activities for the Working Group include determining how to ensure that the Regional Architecture complies with Federal Rule 940, determining the common process for maintaining

the Regional Architecture and promoting the use of the Architecture in regional ITS development and deployment.

Mr. Meenehan emphasized the importance of the National Capital Region Interoperability Program. He stressed the need for a larger vision of our ITS Architecture and how that fits into the region's technology infrastructure.

Mr. Meese noted that the architecture cannot function as an enterprise-architecture, dictating detail for local plans. It should instead focus on how various elements and systems interact with each other. Mr. Contestabile suggested that the Regional Interoperability Working Group provide a briefing to the MOITS Task Forces.

8. Other Business

No other business was discussed. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 11, 2006.