

Meeting Notes

Joint Special Meeting Transportation Planning Board Management, Operations, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (M&O/ITS) Policy Task Force

CHAIR: Honorable David Snyder, City of Falls Church

And

TPB M&O/ITS Technical Task Force

CHAIR: Alex Verzosa, City of Fairfax

VICE

CHAIRS: John Frankenhoff, D.C. Department of Public Works
Donald McCanless, Washington Area Metropolitan Transit
Authority
Jean Yves Point-du-Jour, Maryland State Highway Administration

DATE: Friday, December 14, 2001

TIME: 12:30 p.m.

PLACE: COG, 777 North Capitol Street, NE
First Floor, Room 1

ATTENDANCE:

Brien Benson, George Mason University
Marc Bounds, Lockheed Martin
Haikun Dong, Edwards and Kelsey, Inc.
Kathleen Donodeo, WMATA
John Frankenhoff, DC DOT
James G. Gaston
Kamal Hamud, DC DOT
Doug Hansen, Fairfax County DOT
Brandy Hicks, FHWA – HQ
Egua Igbinosun, MD SHA/CHART
Mike Kinney, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation

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Eric Marx, PRTC

Doug McCobb, City of Alexandria Transportation and Environmental Services

Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT NOVA

Frank Mirack, FHWA

Jean Yves Point-du-Jour, Maryland State Highway Administration

Kajaz Safarian, DC DOT

Sharmila Samarasinghe, NVTC

Kamal Suliman, VDOT/STC

Honorable David Snyder, City of Falls Church

Alfie Steele, Montgomery County Ride-On Amy Tang McElwain, VDOT NOVA

Phil Tarnoff, University of Maryland

Jose Thommana, Arlington County

Alex Verzosa, City of Fairfax, DPW

Bob Winick, Motion Maps, LLC

COG STAFF ATTENDANCE:

Malaika Abernathy

Kevin Adderly

Andrew Austin

Michael Farrell

Andrew Meese

Gerald Miller

Nicholas Ramfos

Joseph Zelinka

Actions:

General introductions were made.

1. Update and Discussion of Emergency Response and Preparedness in the National Capital Region.

- **Permanent Status for the M&O/ITS Task Forces.**

Chairman David Snyder proposed that the MOITS Policy and Technical Task Forces be made permanent. Chairman Mason of the TPB favors making these task forces permanent. Andrew Meese suggested that everything be kept the same, but made permanent. Chairman Snyder agreed to pass this recommendation on to the TPB. Alex asked whether both the task forces, both the policy and the technical task forces, were to

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be permanent. David Snyder said that we would send a recommendation for permanence to the bylaw committees, which would work out the details. David Snyder proposed that the group start with an information exchange. Our group cannot dictate anything to anyone, but we can make recommendations to the TPB where we see areas of opportunity.

- **Improving Communications for Coordination of Decision-Making Among Multiple Jurisdictions/Agencies.**

Andrew Meese discussed some handouts consisting of mailings recently sent to the TPB. Andy asked the task force to review and approve the action items in attachment. On the first item, identify the decision-makers, COG intends to follow the lead of the District of Columbia. The District has identified contact persons at different levels in each operating agency, and has obtained their phone numbers and other contact information. Each official will then know the names and phone numbers of his peers at the other operating agencies. We also intend to work with the COG task force headed by Carol Schwarz. Alex Verzosa asked about the involvement of smaller agencies. Andy explained that we had divided agencies into level A and level B. Level A will communicate with each other, then level A agencies will communicate individually with level B agencies. However, a level B agency can be on a level A agency conference call if the level A agencies think that is necessary. To date, staff efforts had focused on Level A agencies, but will expand to Level B agencies as soon as possible. We plan to make the calls needed to get the names and contact information for additional agencies. Our first line of defense is to be the 24-hour operations centers, who will have the means available to contact higher-ups. We also have the ability to set up a conference call through an 800-number. The initial call was to take place at the end of this meeting. Key agencies will be provided the 800-number and an access code. The initiator of the call must notify the others that a conference call will take place. We have no information on Level B agencies yet, though it may make sense to speak to those agencies directly, rather than through the relevant Level A agency. We also need to get priority access codes, so that people can bypass congestion on the phone network. Alex suggested that we need a reliable way of updating the contact list. Another person noted that during emergencies circumstances change rapidly, so there is a need for a means of providing information continuously to a central place. Chairman Snyder replied that for now we are working with what is readily available. Alex added that there is a need for two-way communications, so that anyone receiving information can always call with questions. Kathleen Donodeo thought the conference call system was cumbersome. David Snyder replied that we do not all have Nextel phones that would permit more rapid contact. The conference call system is what we can do with the existing equipment. Gerry Miller suggested that we pressure those who do not have Nextel phones to buy them, given that the costs are not large. Andy added that the conference call system was not meant to be part of incident management, but the secondary reaction to the consequences of incidents.

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- **Developing Transportation Policies and Procedures.**

Andy noted that the District of Columbia was examining its emergency plans. This group should assist in coordinating members' updates of emergency plans. We should engender as much compatibility among the various plans as possible. We can also develop a list of regional contingencies and scenarios that can be tested in a regional playbook, and that the various emergency plans should address. We also need to estimate funding and schedule for this playbook. David Snyder noted that the time of day affected the type of transportation decisions that would have to be made in an emergency. Kathleen Donodeo questioned whether the right people were present at this meeting. Some participants expressed concern that emergency response was pushing other ITS issues off the table. Andrew Meese urged that we continue to work through this committee and not form additional committees, since we already have the right people involved, and we are unlikely to be able to get more people to show up if they are not already involved. Alex Verzosa suggested that the task force members take responsibility for getting the right people from their agencies to come to the meeting. Chairman Snyder concluded that we should ask each key agency to prepare a briefing on its plans. The playbook is a difficult task because it involves the question of who will be making decisions.

- **Coordinate Transportation Emergency Information with the Public**

Andy discussed our efforts to date. We intend to re-vamp Partners in Motion. We will have a consultant devise some options. We expect an adequately funded system to cost somewhere in the millions per year. Chairman Snyder asked the group if Partners in Motion was worth continuing. Someone replied that a fresh effort would only cover the same ground that the Partners in Motion meetings had already covered. Chairman Snyder suggested that at the next meeting each agency explain how it currently communicates with the public. Once we have that information in hand, we can decide whether to continue Partners in Motion. Andy replied that the region already had a commitment to a 511 number, and that we need something like Partners in Motion if for no other reason than to feed information to that number. Chairman Snyder concluded that we need some kind of Partners in Motion function. The Washington Board of Trade, he said, should be added to the Level A agency list.

- **Funding and Unfunded Opportunities**

Andrew Meese explained that the list of potential communications improvements could cost as much as \$500 million, but that it should be considered a maximal shopping list, not a minimum requirement. Half the cost is creating redundant communications centers, which we are not likely to do. Some of these projects are already funded.

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2. Review of Notes from November 16, 2001 M&O/ITS Policy and Technical Task Forces Joint Special Meeting.

Notes were approved.

3. Review of Meeting Day and Time Slot of the M&O/ITS Technical Task Force Meeting for 2002

Andrew Meese suggested that the regular time slot for the technical task force to the second Tuesday of every month, at 1 p.m. This time slot will enable the group to feed information to the TPB board in a more timely manner, and avoid the need to call special meetings. The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 8 at 1 p.m. The group reacted unfavorably to the suggestion that lunch not be provided due to budgetary constraints. Ron Kirby hinted that we might reconsider that decision.

4. Report of the Nominations Committee and Election of 2002 Officers for the M&O/ITS Technical Task Force

The nominations committee has nominated the existing slate for another year. Due to changes in representation by WMATA staff, it was suggested that Kathleen Donodeo of WMATA be nominated in lieu of Donald McCanless of WMATA, and this was agreed. Alex Verzosa said that people should not be afraid to volunteer, since COG staff did nearly all the work. The group elected the new officers for 2002 of the M&O/ITS Technical Task Force: Alex Verzosa of the City of Fairfax as Chair, and Vice Chairs Kathleen Donodeo of WMATA, John Frankenhoff of DCDOT, and Jean Yves Point-du-Jour of the Maryland State Highway Administration.

5. Next Steps

Chairman Snyder said that we should talk about Partners in Motion, and about better communications technology. At some stage we should be able to devote more time to routine ITS matters.

6. Updates on Other M&O/ITS Activities

Andrew Meese announced a final meeting for the ITS as a Data Resource Study on Monday, December 17 at 9:30 AM. Our consultant, TransCore, has finished its study. Partners in Motion public sector partners were to meet on Thursday, January 3 at 1:00 PM. The Traffic Signals and Operations was to meet on Friday, January 11, at its regular 10:00 AM time slot [this was later changed to Thursday, January 24 at 10:00 AM due to schedule conflicts].

Adjourned.