

## **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 RECP<sup>SM</sup>
- 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