**MEETING MINUTES**

**SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS**

**COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

Date: April 13, 2012

Time: 9:00 AM

Meeting Held: Michigan Intelligent Transportation Systems Center (MITSC), Detroit, Michigan

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Green Light for Emergency Vehicles

Terry Martin from Global Traffic Technologies described traffic signal preemption for emergency vehicles. Emergency Vehicle Preemption Systems (EVP) are designed to give emergency vehicles a green light on their approach to a signalized intersection while providing a red light to conflicting approaches. EVP allows First Responders to intervene in the normal operation of traffic control systems using wireless communications installed on traffic intersections and emergency vehicles. As the emergency vehicle approaches a traffic signal it is recognized by the traffic signal controller thorough light, radio waves, or sound. The normal green-yellow-red cycle can then be interrupted to change the traffic signal light to green.

EVP improves safety by reducing intersection crash rates up to 70%. It improves travel times to meet NFPA 1710 Fire Standards, and it reduces liability of crashes where motorists are injured. One priority control solution features infrared technology to benefit emergency service and transit vehicles opeations. The equipment mounted on an approaching vehicle broadcasts a secure encoded request to detection equipment at the intersection. The detector at the intersection receives the IR transmission and relays the request to the phase selector. The phase selector validates the request and provides input to the traffic signal controller, which provides the green light through normal traffic signal operations.

A second priority control solution features global positioning satellite technology. It receives GPS position information at the vehicle and transmits the information via secured dedicated 2.4 GHz radio. The vehicle data is received at intersections where real-time assessments of whether the signal meets the request criteria. Data is collected and stored for each request and output to the traffic controller’s internal system to initiate action. This provides safe and efficient results for emergency and transit vehicles and a higher level of intersection management and control.

Emergency Vehicle Visibility

Phil Wagner from Westshore Fire reported on a research study on how to make emergency vehicles more visible. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Fire Administration, supported by the U.S. Department of Justice National Institute of Justice has initiated a study of emergency vehicle markings, lighting, and design to recommend best practices for increased visibility to approaching motorists. Sometimes lights on emergency vehicles are more of a distraction than an aid to keep motorists away from the incident scene. This study will address the appropriate balance between visibility and distraction.

The goal of this study is to develop best practices in the application of various chevron patterns, creative use of reflective decal markings, new arrangements of warning lights and other innovative designs, all with the intent of increasing the visibility of emergency vehicles to motorists approaching them. The study will focus on emergency vehicles not covered by existing standards in this area. The study is intended to increase the safety of law enforcement officers and firefighters, reducing deaths and injuries from crashes and being struck by vehicles.

Freeway Operations Report

Dayo Akinyemi from MDOT MITSC reported on Freeway Operation activities. One of the freeway courtesy patrol operators was struck by a passing vehicle while assisting a motorist on I-96. This reinforces the understanding that working in freeway traffic can be hazardous. MDOT is initiating monthly reports to TSC Managers on freeway lane closures. These reports will document lane closures and serve as a basis for performance measures. Travel times are expected to be posted on I-94 dynamic message signs by June 1, 2012.

Freeway Operations goals include reducing user delays by 10%, and scheduling more after action reviews. Another goal is to clear 75% of incidents within 2 hours. This percentage currently stands at 83% statewide. MDOT is considering establishing crash investigation sites along Metro Detroit freeways. More the dynamic message signs are online with travel time information. Travel times are now available on 40 of the 63 dynamic message signs.

The MITSC operation expects to move into the new building on the south side of Lafayette on June 1. The Michigan State Police dispatch operation expects to move into this building on June 27. As a result, the July 13, 2012 Coordinating Committee meeting will be held in the new building. An open house for the new building will likely be held in the fall of 2012. The building will house the Detroit Transportation Service Center, the Michigan State Police dispatch, Metro Detroit Freeway Operations, and Michigan Small Business Development.

Traffic Incident Management Workshop – March 15, 2012

A summary of the highlights of the Traffic Incident Management Workshop at AAA Michigan Headquarters in Dearborn is attached. Committee members recommended that more time be allocated for questions and answers. It was worthwhile to have representatives of the different responders provide insights on their roles and expectations. Future meetings of this type should invite more first responders. Notification of southeast Michigan fire chiefs should occur in December for a March meeting. It may be appropriate to host a meeting of southeast Michigan fire chiefs at MITSC.

Statewide Traffic Incident Management Report

MDOT Traffic Incident Management Engineer Angie Kremer reported on statewide traffic incident management progress. One of her research projects explores how to get information on the “steer it, clear it” law to the public. A telephone survey of 800 people has been completed, and a workshop on the subject will be scheduled in the Jackson area. A second research project will develop best practices for emergency detour signing. It will develop standard agreements. Workshops for these best practices are planned for Taylor, Kalamazoo, and Saginaw. A campaign to inform motorists about the “move over or slow down” law is being planned by the Michigan State Police. Although “hold harmless” legislation is a priority for the Michigan Towing Association, it is not clear whether the Michigan State Police is ready to take a leadership role in developing this legislation.

Next Meeting

The next meeting for the Southeast Michigan Regional Transportations Operations Coordinating Committee is scheduled for July 13, 2012 at the Southeast Michigan Transportation Operations Center. These minutes are intended to be a summary of those items discussed. Any corrections and/or comments should be noted to the writer as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted.

BEAUBIEN ENGINEERING



Richard F. Beaubien, P.E., PTOE

Chair-Southeast Michigan Regional Transportation Operations Coordinating Committee

pc: All present

**Traffic Incident Management Workshop – March 15, 2012**

On March 15, 2012, AAA Michigan hosted a Traffic Incident Management Workshop to promote partnerships among the various responders to traffic incidents. This workshop was sponsored by the Intelligent Transportation Society of Michigan, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and it was supported by Beaubien Engineering. This workshop was the seventh in a series of annual workshops to develop partnering relationships among those with an interest in safe, quick clearance of traffic incidents. It was the third time that this workshop was held at AAA Michigan Headquarters in Dearborn.

The program was intended to clarify the roles of the different responders to a traffic incident and to answer the question, “Who’s in charge?” The workshop identified the roles of the different responders so the participants could get a better understanding of who is in charge of what. The presenters included Oladayo Akinyemi from the Michigan Department of Transportation Intelligent Transportation Systems Center, Rich Marinucci from the Northville Township Fire Service, Craig Shackleford from the Bloomfield Township Police Department, Rick Leonard from the Auburn Hills Police Department, Sgt. Cramer from the St. Clair Shores Police Department, Roger Simpson from Huron Valley Ambulance, Bill Giorgis from the Michigan Towing Association, Annjanette Kremer Traffic Incident Management Engineer from the Michigan Department of Transportation, and Ron Savage from Fox 2 Detroit. In addition to being a traffic reporter, Ron Savage is also a Firefighter/EMT with the Brighton Fire Department.

Michigan Department of Transportation participants came from Lansing and the Bay, University, Grand and Metro Regions. Other participants at the conference represented Alliance Mobile Health, Canton Township, Detroit, Lyon Township, Federal Highway Administration, Michigan State Police, Oakland County, Official Towing, Roseville, SEMCOG, URS, Troy, Utica Van Dyke Towing, Wayne County, Westland, and Westshore Fire.

Dayo Akinyemi from the MDOT Intelligent Transportation Systems Center described the technologies available to assist with traffic incident management including the closed circuit television cameras and the dynamic message signs. The Freeway Courtesy Patrol operates out of the Intelligent Transportation Systems Center, and the Michigan State Police regional dispatch shares the center and has access to the more than 200 cameras on Metro Detroit Freeways to assist with their dispatch operations. The cameras are also available for local public safety answering points (PSAPs) to dispatch local police, fire, ambulance, and tow services. MDOT hosts responder safety workshops to promote awareness of the camera technology availability and best practices to keep first responders safe on the road.

Rich Marinucci highlighted the dangers firefighters face when responding to traffic incidents. In 2011 there were 78 incidents where Fire Fighters, EMS personnel, or their vehicles were struck. Communication, collaboration, and cooperation among the fire, EMS, law enforcement, towing & recovery, and the Department of Transportation services are needed. After action reviews for all involved provided lessons learned for the various responders. There is a need to balance the safety of responders and the opening of the roadway to traffic. The roadway must be considered a “kill zone” for responders.

Police agencies from Bloomfield Township and Auburn Hills described how they share resources with the City of Troy to provide improved service to travelers along I-75. By making responders from all three communities available to respond to an incident, the communities have improved both the response time and the clearance time. Law enforcement from the City of St. Clair Shores also described the development of a quick clearance policy to get traffic incidents and first responders out of harm’s way more safely and efficiently.

Roger Simpson described how Huron Valley Ambulance provides ambulance service to all or part of eight counties in southeast and central Michigan with 100 ambulances and 600 employees. The information helpful to EMS prior to arrival on scene include information from 911 callers, the number of vehicles involved, the type of vehicles, obvious injuries, and exact location. The EMS role is to respond in a careful and safe manner, park in a defensive position, respect the roles of other responders, and always do what is best for the patient. Huron Valley uses 800 MHz radio to communicate ambulance response information with other first responders among the various communities they serve.

Bill Giorgis noted that the tow services are usually the only private parties on the scene of a traffic incident. Although they may be called to the scene by other first responders they may or may not be paid for their services. They usually have traffic control devices to deploy on the roadway to direct traffic around the incident, and their employees are subject to the same traffic hazards as other first responders. Tow services would support the passage of hold harmless by the state legislature so that the roads could be cleared of incidents more safely and quickly.

Annjanette Kremer, MDOT Traffic Incident Management Engineer, led a panel discussion of the speakers to respond to questions from the audience and her own questions for the panel. Ron Savage from Fox 2 News spoke after lunch about his experiences as a traffic reporter and a fire service first responder. He reinforced the general emergency response protocol – provide temporary traffic control, leave space, be visible, limit your exposure, appoint a safety officer, turn wheels away from the scene, and advise media about closures or lengthy delays. All of the first responders advised that you should never turn your back to traffic.

**Summary**

The goals of the workshop were met because the program highlighted the roles of the different responders to a traffic incident. Law enforcement represented 23% of the attendees, Fire 10%, Dispatch 2%, Towing 2%, Road Agencies 56%, and Other 20%. Respondents strongly agreed that the MDOT Freeway Operations Update will be valuable in their work. The respondents also strongly agreed that the information on First Responder Safety, Sharing Police Resources, Emergency Medical Responders, and Tow Services Best Practices will be valuable in their work. They found Guest Speaker Ron Savage to be interesting and entertaining. Overall, 35% rated the workshop Good, and 65% rated it Excellent. The list of major challenges faced when responding to traffic incidents included:

* Communication and updated information to all
* Having the road back open within two hours
* Safety of responders
* Limited resources and notification of incidents
* Failure of traffic to move away from emergency vehicles
* Fewer staff

Having different speakers for each of the responder roles was considered a plus for this workshop

The Committee would like to compile best practices as a resource. These might be in the form of one page Traffic Incident Management Tips. These tips would include lessons learned such as traffic control, communications, police issues, fire issues. An example of best practices from SOCCIT is shown below:

**Southeast Oakland County Crash Investigation Team (SOCCIT)**

Executive

* Recognize the need to improve travel time reliability from better traffic incident management.
* Have a plan and agreements in place before they are needed. A (MOU) provides the framework to promote a collaborative effort to further refine and promote coordinated decision-making and information sharing in planning, design, deployment, operations, funding and evaluation of crash team.
* Adopt an “Open Roads Philosophy” and make “Quick Clearance” part of your agency’s daily operational plan.

Operations

* Utilize the Incident Command System. Keep everyone’s training updated.
* Establish an Incident Action Plan. Make it scalable based on current need. This plan will promote consistent response to traffic incidents irrespective of which organization is the first to respond.
* Develop response objectives based on priority, assign roles, set a clearance time target and execute procedures to achieve your target. SOCCIT uses a 2-hour standard for clearance of serious and fatal crashes.
* Build your team’s competency in the areas of incident management and crash investigation. Improve your overall ability to properly access incidents and efficiently execute investigative protocols. Identify gaps in skills, recruit and train to fill those gaps.
* Pre-package or pre-load as many response assets as you can. Carry a base-line capability with you at all times- This is sometimes referred to as a “Go Kit”.
* Conduct a pre-opening safety briefing and coordinate the roadway opening process.

Supervision/Incident Command

* Have a supervisor on the scene-Their role is to keep the response moving forward. Document the team’s progress. Review as a team.

Responder safety

* Ensure responders are wearing the appropriate ANSI class garment for their role.
* Vehicle lighting and position should add to a safety positive worksite. Blocking vehicles should not be occupied.
* Lane tapers should be established consistent with the current version of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Proper lane tapers improve the safety of everyone by separating moving traffic from the incident response area. Your actions should protect responders by defining clear, or buffer, zones near moving traffic that responders should not occupy.

Communication

* Improve communications: Ensure same-channel radio capability and establish alternate methods such as cell radios and mobile data devices.
* Simultaneously dispatch police, EMS and towing responders to incidents.

After Action Review

* Identify solutions that target and mitigate deficiencies. Streamline processes that slowed you down. Institutionalize the operating procedures and processes that contributed to your success.

Adopt the basic operational philosophy “Get in, Get the job done, Get out, and review how you did”.