TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FOR THE BALTIMORE REGION (TIMBR) COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 1, 2022
10:00 A.M.

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Eileen Singleton welcomed attendees.

2. REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 2, 2022

There were no comments on the minutes.

3. UPDATE ON CHART AND OTMO

Mr. Jason Dicembre, Director of MDOT State Highway Administration Office of Transportation Mobility and Operations (OTMO) provided an update on OTMO and CHART. Mr. Dicembre started by explaining that the name of the office changed to OTMO to acknowledge the expanded function and responsibilities to include traffic management, in addition to the other functions of traveler information, traffic monitoring, emergency operations, and traffic incident management. The traffic management function includes recent expansion of doing signal timing adjustments and developing transportation systems management and operations (TSMO) systems.

OTMO includes a broader array of functions and larger staff. Mr. Dicembre is the Director of OTMO, Mr. Eric Fogle is the Deputy Director. Mr. Rashad Rice was recently named the TMC Division Chief. Mr. Pat Rooney remains the Training and Certification Manager. Mr. Tim Peck is the Regional Division Chief. There are four regional centers – National Capital Region, Baltimore Region, and Western Region – as well as a new Eastern Region.

There has been significant expansion in equipment/devices from 1995 to today. In addition, there are two managed corridors coming online soon:
- I-270 ramp meters: southbound is online;
  - northbound will be online later this year
- I-695 hard shoulder running (HSR):
  - HSR will allow temporary use of the shoulders by traffic
  - operational in 2024 and operated from the Statewide Operations Center (SOC)

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Voting: City of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, Howard County, Queen Anne's County, MD Department of Transportation and Annapolis Transit. Non-Voting: MD Department of the Environment, MD Department of Planning, and MD Transit Administration.

      o operated as "static/dynamic" meaning there will be set times for HSR but HSR can turned on manually if needed during unexpected congestion during the day

Real time signal operations will be starting soon from the SOC.

The SOC has recently been reconfigured to better meet the needs of the OTMO functions. One goal has been to keep people off the SOC floor who are not working there and provide areas for them to congregate and meet. Another goal of the reconfiguration has been to improve communication of workers on the SOC floor, particularly between operators and supervisors.

Mr. Dicembre also said the CCTV cameras on the CHART patrol vehicles have been upgraded. They were previously attached by suction cup on the inside of the truck; the pan-tilt-zoom cameras are now fixed to the outside of the truck and can be fully controlled by operators in the SOC. These cameras are not recorded; they are visible through mView.

Eastern Region is now a fully operational region, with additional CHART patrols on the Eastern and Western shore.

Patrols are now sponsored by GEICO. Mr. Dicembre said that OTMO is looking into having just one type of patrol vehicle and adding a "hide-away stinger" that can be used to tow vehicles off the road. He also noted that the CHART patrols are certified emergency vehicles with MDOT MVA; however, the patrol vehicles that are sponsored do not have this designation.

Maryland State Police have expanded their TIM coordination capabilities through the creation of a dedicated TIM Unit, and there is a goal to have a TIM liaison officer in each MSP Troop.

There is now a focus on increasing traffic management functions from the TMC and to develop tools where operators can interact with the roadway system to do more than just advise drivers, but to impact their actions (close roads so they detour, etc.). Operators can now add incidents and road closures directly in Waze.

TMC operators can use Waze for planning by building routes in Waze to see where vehicles would if there was an incident. This can help OTMO identify roads and signals that would be impacted and signal timing plans can be prepared for use during incident detours.

OTMO is also working to develop enhanced decision support for Freeway Incident Traffic Management (FITM) Plans. In the past, FITM Plans were used for complete roadway closures. New technology and data allow an incident to be assigned a "severity score" and if this score meets a set threshold, TMC operators will see a message suggesting the use of a FITM plan. Operators will also see which signals are impacted. OTMO will be working to create incident timing plans that can be implemented during an incident to more actively manage the roadway network.

OTMO is also developing predictive tools to estimate how long an incident will last and how long the queue will be. Initial results of a test of the incident duration tool were promising. There have not been any results on the use of the queue length estimation tool.

Other enhancements being considered:

- using tethered unmanned aerial systems for crash investigations and situational awareness
- enhanced FITM planning to include signal timing plans
- enhanced CHART vehicle technology for quicker debris removal
- sending messages to vehicles trapped in a queue during a major road closure, similar to the PA511 Connect system:
  - since the alerting system uses the federal IPAWS system, there are additional steps to go through to set up the system
  - people receiving the message will be able to send a message back to the TMC

There was a question about working with Waze and past concerns about where Waze sends traffic during incidents. Mr. Dicembre said that if staff from an agency that has an agreement with Waze adds a false road closure in Waze to avoid having traffic be routed that way, the agency could lose its agreement and user privileges with Waze. In addition, he noted that Waze ranks users of their system based on confidence in the user, and some "power users" are ranked higher than DOT staff. In addition, if Waze detects traffic traveling on a road that has a road closure placed on it, Waze will lift the road closure.

Another issue found is that Waze has difficulty identifying an incident in a hot lane versus in a through lane.

[Presentation: MDOT SHA OTMO Updates]

4. TIM SELF-ASSESSMENT FOLLOW UP

Ms. Singleton highlighted a few 2021 TIM self-assessment action items.

- Question 6 pertains to TIM training. Ms. Singleton noted there is still a need for more people who have taken the TIM training to teach TIM classes. People should contact Mr. Rooney with any questions about scheduling training or teaching a class.
- Questions 18 and 19 pertain to collecting and using data from secondary crashes. Ms. Singleton drafted a document that summarizes the need to collect this data. She will continue to work on the document.
- Question 39a pertains to CAD integration with public safety, and we are still interested in learning if there has been any change in incident clearance time in Frederick County from the integration of Frederick emergency dispatch with CHART.

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5. STATE AND LOCAL TIM UPDATES

Legislative update:

- Maryland HB105/SB147: Expanding Maryland's Move Over law to apply to any "stopped, standing, or parked vehicle displaying hazard warning lights, road flares, or other caution signals." This bill has been approved by the governor.
- Maryland HB254/SB874: SHA-Pedestrian & Bicyclist Fatalities – Infrastructure Review (Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022): New law requiring that MDOT SHA conduct road safety audits in areas with high fatalities of non-motorized road users.
  - Related to federal regulations, Mr. Breck Jeffers said that FHWA recently notified states about the status of reaching their safety targets, which they are federally mandated to set. Maryland did not meet its targets for fatalities or serious injuries for non-motorized users. He added that one of the key strategies to try to reduce these numbers is to conduct road safety audits to identify countermeasures. In the past year, non-motorized fatalities have been about 25% of all fatalities. This number includes responders who are out of their vehicles and struck at incident scenes.
  - Mr. Jeffers said that some TIM measures may have been used for TIM countermeasures.
- Upcoming and Special Events
  - Baltimore City Fleet Week: September 10 – 11, 2022
  - Maryland Cycling Classic: September 4, 2022
  - Susquehanna River Running Festival: September 24, 2022
    - Hatem Bridge, typically attended by about 8,000 people
- TIM Training updates:
  - Number of responders trained in Maryland is increasing slowly, up to 39.4%.
  - Ms. Pat McElroy continues to work to make TIM training mandatory for towers.

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6. OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be in September; the group was in favor of meeting in person. The agenda will include a tour of the renovated SOC. We will need to change the date to avoid conflicts with Fleet Week. The new date will be sent out to the group.

ATTENDEES

Members:
Major Ronce Alford, Maryland Transportation Authority Police
Golnaz Askari, MDOT State Highway Administration OTMO
1/Sgt. Colin Bristow, Maryland State Police, CHART Liaison
Andrew Burke, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Tony Clarke, Jacobs

Jason Dicembre, MDOT State Highway Administration OTMO
Eric Fogle, MDOT State Highway Administration OTMO
Hiwot Habtemariam, MDOT State Highway Administration
Dan Janousek, MDOT Secretary's Office
Breck Jeffers, Federal Highway Administration Maryland Division
Bill Johnson, MDOT State Highway Administration
Tanya King, Daniel Consultants
Pat McElroy, Tim's Automotive and Towing
Roxane Mukai, Maryland Transportation Authority
Timothy Peck, MDOT State Highway Administration OTMO
Cpt. Jason Pulliam, Maryland Transportation Authority Police
Raj Sharma, MDOT State Highway Administration OTMO
Kristen Skogsberg, Maryland Dept. of Transportation
Off. Jonathan Strickler, Baltimore Co Police
Phil Westcott, MDOT State Highway Administration, District 7

Staff
Cindy Burch, Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Eileen Singleton, Baltimore Metropolitan Council