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**MEETING MINUTES
METRO DETROIT TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT
PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE**

Date: October 24, 2006
Time: 9:00 AM
Meeting Held: HRC Bloomfield Hills Office

HRC Job No. 20050887.02

<u>Present:</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>	<u>Email</u>
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The agenda for the November 3, 2006 Incident Management Coordinating Committee was discussed. Items on the agenda include discussions of the nationally unified goal for traffic incident management, the emergency responder safety program, the regional concept of transportation operations, and the report of the Freeway Courtesy Patrol Operations, and report on the Freeway Operations Subcommittee.

Freeway Courtesy Patrol

Chade Sagir, from SEMCOG, prepared a list of Freeway Courtesy Patrol planning issues. The committee then spent the majority of the meeting discussing these issues and outlining directions for Metro Detroit Incident Management in response to these issues.

The Incident Management Coordinating Committee has identified legislation needed to improve incident response. The legislation includes both quick clearance and hold harmless provisions. The Michigan State Police and the Southeast Michigan Chiefs of Police are preparing that legislation to be considered. We understand that both the MSP and MDOT will be taking appropriate recommendations to the Michigan State Legislature.

Expansion of Freeway Courtesy Patrol Operations was discussed and focused primarily on geographic expansion. MDOT expects that Washtenaw and Livingston Counties are the first candidates for geographic expansion because they would follow the freeway system. Cooperation with the University Region of MDOT would be required for this expansion. The current contract for Freeway Courtesy Patrol services with Emergency Road Response goes until 2008 and it appears unlikely that the geographic expansion could be considered until the new contract is in place.



Metro Detroit Traffic Incident Management Planning Subcommittee

October 24, 2006

HRC Job Number 20050887.02

Page 2 of 3

The Freeway Courtesy Patrol service is currently funded by MDOT with Congestion Management Air Quality funds. Local agency congestion management funds might be used to expand the service, but that would suggest that some arterial operations should be included in the program.

MDOT has been considering the establishment of a telephone number for motorists to call for help for the Freeway Courtesy Patrol. It is not in the current contract. The next contract might include this dispatch by the contractor. MDOT has programmed a Fiscal Year 2007 project to implement this number.

Establishment of a tow desk for tow services on Michigan DOT freeways is being investigated by Tony Kratofil at MDOT Metro Region office. Morrie Hoevel from FHWA will check with other states to see how telephone calls for service by Freeway Courtesy Patrol are handled.

The question of contract operations versus MDOT internal operators was discussed. Emergency Road Response currently employs 36 drivers for the service they provide. It is unlikely that MDOT would use MDOT employees to provide this service because it would require a major increase in MDOT employees.

Improvements to automatic vehicle location were discussed. AVL is now available on all vehicles for the Freeway Courtesy Patrol.

Currently, approximately 20% of the Freeway Courtesy Patrol responses are dispatched and the remainder are discovered by roaming vehicles. MDOT intends to increase the percentage of dispatched vehicles because dispatch means a better response time. MDOT should identify and quantify the improvement in the response time with dispatch operation versus roaming operations.

Strategic placement of the response vehicles would help reduce response time. Currently, the response provider saves fuel by dispatching vehicles from MSP North in Oak Park and MSP Metro South in Taylor. The possibility of dispatching from the Traffic Control Centers at Oakland County and Macomb County was discussed. This would be something that would have to be desired by the respective County Road Commissions operating these centers. Typically, the County Road Commissions are more oriented to arterial operations than to freeway operations, so the dispatch of Freeway Courtesy Patrol vehicles from these centers might be more appropriate when arterials are included in the response universe. County Traffic Operations Centers currently do not operate 24-hours a day and 7 days a week.

The discussion of reporting and data for the Freeway Courtesy Patrol suggested that considerable savings would be realized if the patrol operators had access to a personal data assistant for data collection. This would save data processing time. It is our understanding that the State of Indiana is currently using PDA for recording Freeway Courtesy Patrol data.

A discussion on funding for the Freeway Courtesy Patrol centered on whether CMAQ funds would be available indefinitely. Competition for these funds has increased as traffic signal retiming becomes more prevalent as an operation strategy. The possibility of privatizing this service was considered. Auto clubs in Europe and Australia provide this kind of service currently. MDOT may investigate how other nations provide this service through private operators. The committee concluded that some public oversight was needed to coordinate operations, but a public/private partnership is worth pursuing. Morrie Hoevel noted that any



Metro Detroit Traffic Incident Management Planning Subcommittee

October 24, 2006

HRC Job Number 20050887.02

Page 3 of 3

operations strategy would be eligible for federal funding, so other federal aid programs besides CMAQ could be used.

Matt Smith indicated that an incident response vehicle pilot project is expected to be launched next year using GLITS funds. The intent is to buy one (1) vehicle and operate it for 1-2 years to show the effectiveness of this technique. Several questions for this pilot project remain unanswered. One question is "will the vehicle be operated by MDOT?" The second question is whether it can be contracted and the third question is whether a county could operate the van. The service would be dispatched and could be combined with Freeway Courtesy Patrol at some future date.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Metro Detroit Traffic Incident Management Planning Subcommittee is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, November 28, 2006 at 9:00 AM at the HRC offices in Bloomfield Hills.

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,

HUBBELL, ROTH & CLARK, INC.

Richard F. Beaubien, P.E., P.T.O.E.

Metro Detroit Traffic Incident Management Coordinating Committee Chair

RFB/jjb

pc: All present

HRC; File