

FHWA Report to TRB Committee on Freeway Operations: 2002 Mid-year Meeting

For further information on topics mentioned briefly below, visit the FHWA Operations web site (www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov) or the ITS Joint Program Office web site (www.its.dot.gov).

TMC pooled fund study: 25 agencies including FHWA are currently participating in a pooled fund study to pursue TMC-related projects that address issues and needs that are of common interest to the members. The following six projects have been initiated: TMC operator requirements matrix; maintenance concept and plans for transportation management systems; guidelines for CMS messages and operation; configuration management for transportation management systems; coordinated freeway and arterial operational plans and procedures; and TMC operational concept and requirements. TMC PFS members will select this fall the new projects that they will pursue from the five priorities that they have identified. Details on how to join or the latest information on the TMC PFS can be accessed at: <http://tmc pfs.ops.fhwa.dot.gov>. For additional information contact jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov.

Freeway Management Handbook Revision: This handbook is being revised to represent the current state-of-the-practice with freeway management and traffic operations. The TRB Freeway Operations Committee has volunteered to serve in an “editorial review board” capacity associated with providing input and guidance on the revisions that are being made to this handbook. The final document is expected to be available late in 2003. The proposed annotated outlines for each proposed chapter are currently available for review and comments are requested by Monday, August 12. The latest information available for this project can be accessed at: ops.fhwa.dot.gov/Travel/traffic/freeway_management.htm. For additional information contact jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov.

Managing Travel for Planned Special Events Handbook: This project is developing an introductory handbook that is intended to assist the team of individuals that may be involved in or responsible for the advanced planning; stakeholder coordination; developing operational strategies, control plans, and procedures; establishing and supporting a traffic management team; managing travel and controlling traffic the day-of-the-event; providing services; or post-event activities. Project information can be accessed at: <http://tmc pfs.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/cfprojects/>. For additional information contact jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov.

2003 National Conference on Planned Special Events: AASHTO, TRB Freeway Operations and Traffic Signal Systems Committees, ITS America ATMS Committee, ITE ITS Council, and FHWA have agreed to host a national conference on Managing Travel for Planned Special Events in 2003. This group is currently developing the program, identifying the key issues to be addressed, and reaching out to other interested organizations and stakeholder groups to co-sponsor, participate in the planning, and attend this conference. This conference seeks to raise the awareness of the importance of planning, coordinating, and proactively managing travel for planned special events. The latest information available related to this initiative can be accessed at: <http://www.tmcite.org>. For additional information contact jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov.

TMC Web Site: Working closely with ITE, a web site (<http://www.tmcite.org>) has been developed for practitioners to access, interact, and share information on TMC related activities or issues. This site provides links to technical references and manuals, publications and documents, case studies, best practices, training resources, and inventory of ITS deployment and TMC's. Have a question or need information related to a specific TMC issue? This site contains a listserv to allow practitioners to ask their peers a question directly. For additional information, contact jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov.

HOV Pooled Fund Study: Seven agencies including FHWA are participating in a pooled fund study to pursue projects that address issues and problems common among agencies or other interests that plan, manage, use, or provide services that support HOV systems. Details on how to join or obtain the latest information on the HOV PFS can be accessed at: <http://hovpfs.ops.fhwa.dot.gov>. For additional information contact jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov.

Revised FHWA HOV policy: FHWA issued a revised version of its policy on making significant operational changes to existing HOV facilities, including conversion to facilities to general purpose lanes, on March 28, 2001 (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legregs/directives/policy/hovmemgd.htm>). For additional information, contact jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov.

NHI Course Revisions: The following NHI courses are under development or being updated in 2002: Incident Management (david.helman@fhwa.dot.gov), Traffic Control Signalization and Software (pam.crenshaw@fhwa.dot.gov), Configuration Management for Transportation Management Systems (jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov), HOV Systems (jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov), and Freeway Management and Traffic Operations (jon.obenberger@fhwa.dot.gov). Individuals interested in participating in the development of these courses should contact the appropriate FHWA staff person to obtain additional information.

Technical and Program Resources: The following resources are available to assist individuals obtaining information or assistance related: Operations/ITS Help Line 888-367-7487, ITS Peer-to-Peer Program 888-700-PEER, ITS Resource Guide <http://www.its.dot.gov/guide.html>, and publications and document library <http://www.its.dot.gov/itsweb/welcome.htm>.

HOT lane guidance: The draft of the technical reference on how to implement and operate High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes is available for comments. This technical reference will be available in the fall of 2002. For additional information contact wayne.berman@fhwa.dot.gov.

MUTCD Millennium Edition: The initial version of the 2000 MUTCD was published on the FHWA MUTCD web site in December 2000 (<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>). On December 28, 2001, FHWA published on the FHWA MUTCD website Revision No. 1 to the 2000 MUTCD. This now is the official version of the MUTCD. On February 15, 2002, an Interim Final Rule for Revision No. 1 to the 2000 MUTCD was published in the Federal Register. A list of the changes included in Revision No. 1 and the full MUTCD with Revision No. 1 changes incorporated into the electronic text have been published on the MUTCD website.

National Conference on Traffic Incident Management was held on March 11-13, 2002 in Irvine, CA. This conference brought together practitioners and senior level leaders from state and local transportation organizations, law enforcement agencies, fire and rescue departments, the towing and recovery community, the emergency medical community, and technology providers. By exchanging ideas in plenary and eighteen small group sessions, participants developed a list of over 100 recommended actions in institutional, operational and technical program areas to implement a national agenda for traffic incident management. Conference proceedings are available at www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/Travel/IncidentMgmt/IncidentMgmt.htm. For additional information, contact david.helman@fhwa.dot.gov.

Traffic Incident Management Performance Measures. FHWA has initiated a study to investigate what performance measures are being used for traffic incident management programs and who is collecting the data. The draft report of this study, performed by Texas Transportation Institute, is completed and the final report is expected to be available in the fall of 2002. For additional information, contact david.helman@fhwa.dot.gov.

Model Procedures Guide for Traffic Incidents: FHWA and the National Fire Service Incident Management System Consortium (NFSIMSC) began work in the fall of 2001 on the development of a Model Procedures Guide for Traffic Incidents. This will be the seventh in a series of Model Procedures Guides produced by the NFSIMSC that formulate Incident Management (Incident Command) on scene command and control procedures for various types of incidents. The six previous guides have been produced primarily for firefighting community. This new guide will cover command and control procedures for highway incidents, addressing in more detail the concept of Unified Command. Work is expected to be completed in 2003. For additional information, contact david.helman@fhwa.dot.gov.

Traffic Incident Management Self-Assessment: This “TIM Self Assessment” will be a tool to be used by State and regional program managers to assess their achievement of a successful multi-agency program to manage traffic incidents effectively and safely. The tool will also be used to assess gaps and needs in existing multi-agency regional and statewide efforts to mitigate congestions caused by traffic incidents. The Self-Assessment will be field tested and completed by early fall of 2002. Local teams of transportation, public safety and private sector professionals will conduct the assessments. For additional information, contact david.helman@fhwa.dot.gov.

Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD)/ITS Integration Field Operational Test: A Field Operational Test (FOT) will be initiated in the fall of 2002 to demonstrate automated data exchange options across disparate and usually proprietary public safety and transportation information platforms. The FOT will feature a partnership of a state or local transportation agency that operates a TMC, a public safety agency that operates a CAD, and their respective systems integrators. The actual solicitation (RFA) was published on May 16. Proposals were due by July 11, 2002. Final selection of the successful application team will be made in August. For additional information, contact david.helman@fhwa.dot.gov.

Towing and Recovery – TIMTOW: Increasing involvement of the towing and recovery industry in traffic incident management programs and the success of the National Traffic Incident Management Conference has led to the development of the Traffic Incident Management Towing Operator Work Plan (TIMTOW) by the Towing and Recovery Association of America (TRAA). The TRAA will develop a TIMTOW Guide that will consider traffic incident management from a towing and recovery perspective and will describe how towing operators can and should work within the framework of a traffic incident management program. The TRAA's annual Legislative and Leadership Conference in March 2003 will focus on Traffic Incident Management and the Guide will be presented to the industry leaders at that conference. For additional information, contact david.helman@fhwa.dot.gov.

Traffic Incident Management Case Studies: While there are many good traffic incident management efforts underway in the United States, there are very few true programs. A program has a strategic focus and a multi-year work plan, updated yearly, developed through the collaboration of multiple agencies in a region or even statewide. The program plan is the budget-planning document for those participating agencies that report to disparate executive and legislative bodies to obtain resources to support their traffic incident management efforts. This study will document various program frameworks, both formal and less formal, their successes and challenges, and the lessons learned by the partner agencies and organizations in each of these programs. For additional information, contact david.helman@fhwa.dot.gov.

511 – America's Traveler Information Telephone Number: The 511 Deployment Coalition, created in response to the July 2000 FCC Report and Order assigning the 3-digit number for traveler information, developed the "511 Implementation Guidelines," which are available at http://www.its.dot.gov/511/511_Guidelines.htm. The guidelines address the content and consistency of the user interface for 511 services. In November and December of 2001, AASHTO and APTA passed resolutions adopting and embracing the initial 511 Implementation Guidelines. ITS America and ITE are also expected to pass resolutions related to the 511 Implementation Guidelines in early 2002. A 511 Deployment Conference will be held in Scottsdale, Arizona on March 19 – 21, to help provide information to those who are planning or will be starting 511 traveler information services. More information about the conference will be available at <http://www.itsa.org/511.html>. In the July 23, 2001 edition of the Federal Register, FHWA announced the 511 support assistance program. This program offers up to \$100,000 to States to develop statewide approaches or plans to deploy 511 services. The States that have received funding so far are: Arizona, California, Kentucky, North Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. Three areas have implemented area-wide 511 systems: metropolitan Cincinnati including northern Kentucky, and statewide in Nebraska and Utah. Other locations that expect to have 511 services in early 2002 include: statewide services in Arizona, Kentucky, and Minnesota; the San Francisco Bay area; Southeastern Florida (Miami area); and the I-81 corridor ("Travel Shenandoah") in Virginia. The USDOT issued a solicitation for a 511 Model Deployment in December, seeking to demonstrate a robust, state-of-the-art 511 traveler information service. Visit the ITS (<http://www.its.dot.gov/511/511.htm>) or Operations Travel Management (<http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/Travel>) web sites for further information.

Roadway Operations Self-Assessment Tool: FHWA has developed an easy-to-use self-assessment tool that state and local transportation agencies can use to assess their own roadway operations performance, and to find ideas of how to achieve better operations. The self-assessment covers a broad range of traffic operations areas, including traffic signal timing, incident management, work zones, and freeway service patrols. The self-assessment tool can be downloaded at http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/Travel/Deployment_Task_Force/registration.htm. For additional information contact vince.pearce@fhwa.dot.gov.

Traffic Signal Timing Video: FHWA's video on the benefits of optimally timing traffic signal, "It's About Time....." features testimonials from senior agency and elected officials on their experiences and the public's reception to improved signal timing. The video also covers the benefits of optimally timed traffic signals such as reduction in travel time, savings in fuel usage, and reductions in delay. For a copy of this video contact Pamela Crenshaw of FHWA at pam.crenshaw@fhwa.dot.gov. This video is also available as a streaming video for download on the Operations website <http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/index.htm>, go to the "Arterial Toolbox".

Communications Handbook for Traffic Control Systems and Traffic Control Systems Handbook. These two handbooks are in the process of being updated and will be available in 2003. For additional information, contact Pamela Crenshaw at pam.crenshaw@fhwa.dot.gov.

Small Communities Handbook. This is a new handbook for FHWA. It will reflect the traffic management strategies and traffic management systems used in small communities and rural regions. This handbook will be available in late 2003. For additional information, contact Pamela Crenshaw at pam.crenshaw@fhwa.dot.gov.

Traffic Detector Handbook. This book was last revised in 1990. It is currently being updated to include newer technology and will be available in late 2002. For additional information, contact Pamela Crenshaw at pam.crenshaw@fhwa.dot.gov.

TTI Freeway Performance Measures Study: FHWA is working closely with the Texas Transportation Institute to develop and calculate areawide, travel-time based performance measures using archived data from freeway management systems in 10 metropolitan areas. Visit the mobility monitoring program web site at <http://mobility.tamu.edu/mmp>. For additional information, contact vince.pearce@fhwa.dot.gov.

Regional Transportation Operations: The report on Organizing for Regional Operations has been released and is available online at http://www.ite.org/library/reg_trans_ops.htm. The report contains six case studies of regions in which groups of agencies have worked together to improve the effectiveness of transportation operations. For additional information, contact vince.pearce@fhwa.dot.gov.

Traffic Simulation Model Development: FHWA has announced its plan for the next generation of traffic modeling and microsimulation. The announcement describing the program in which FHWA desires to work cooperatively with industry is available at http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/Travel/Traffic_Analysis_Tools/ngsim_program.htm. For additional information, contact john.halkias@fhwa.dot.gov.

Traffic Operations Security: FHWA has extensive work underway to support transportation operations security efforts of State and local agencies. This work includes a surface transportation vulnerability assessment tool, case studies, an emergency preparedness checklist, and technical guidance. Five workshops are planned around the country in 2002. For additional information, contact vince.pearce@fhwa.dot.gov.

ITS Architecture Consistency: The final rule on this, which implemented the ITS architecture consistency language contained in TEA-21, was published in the Federal Register on January 8, 2001. The FHWA Rule and FTA Policy for conformance with the National ITS Architecture & Standards, and all related materials, are available at <http://www.its.dot.gov/aconform/aconform.htm>. Since April 2001, FHWA Division Offices have been in the process of implementing Final Rule outreach activities throughout each state; this outreach phase should be completed by April 2002. In addition, a Regional ITS Architecture Guidance document has been completed and will be distributed in early 2002. This guidance document will be the basis for the Regional ITS Architecture Process Workshop that is being developed and will be piloted on January 10. The first of 30 CY02 offerings of this workshop will be in Pennsylvania on Jan 23-24. Also, there will be 30 CY02 offerings of the Introduction to Systems Engineering course throughout the country. All CY02 sessions of both the architecture workshop and systems engineering training will be offered tuition-free to participants. Scheduling will be done through FHWA Division Offices. Visit the ITS web site (<http://www.its.dot.gov>) for further information.