

MEMORANDUM

To: Emergency Incident and Traffic Flow Management Group and Interested Parties

From: Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

Date: December 7, 2006

RE: Meeting Notes from Incident Management and Traffic Flow Management Group on December 6, 2006

Those in attendance included: Bob Bohlmann, York County EMA; Jon Carter, Town of Kittery; Jim Colburn, New Hampshire DOT; Kevin Conger, State Police, Troop A; Cliff Curtis, Maine DOT; David Ferland, Portsmouth NH Police; Robert Fisk, Maine DOT; Robert Gardner, Maine EMA; Bruce Ibarguen, Maine DOT; Josh Mack, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission; Arthur Murdock, State Police, Troop B (Turnpike); Tom Reinauer, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission; Gregory J. Stone, Maine Turnpike Authority; Ed Strong, Kittery Police; Charles Szeniaowski, York Police Department. The meeting was held at the Kittery Trading Post.

Updates:

- Tom Reinauer gave a brief background history of how this meeting evolved into the Incident Management and Traffic Flow Group. Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission's interest in starting the group was to respond to concerns of Corridor Committee groups and to address the state's Long Range Transportation Plan. These planning groups have expressed a need for emergency incident coordination on the southern coast corridor which includes I-95, Route One, Downeaster, and major arterials and collectors that feed into that system.
- Josh Mack explained that Cliff Curtis, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Manager at Maine DOT offered the group access to the Statewide Incident Management System (SWIMS) which provides updates on several items of interest including:
 - Road event information
 - National Weather Information Service reports
 - Power Outage reports
 - River Monitor advisory reports

Cliff Curtis is working on getting authorization from the Maine Office of Information Technology so that interested parties can sign up their own accounts. Accounts can be set up to receive real time incident information through e-mail, faxes or text messages. In the meantime, he has passed on a demo account for people to peruse, which was sent in an e-mail to all the attendees of the 10/19/06 meeting. Josh stated that he would work with Cliff to notify people of the account authorizations as soon as they are processed. York Police stated that they are also interested in inputting information into the system, and asked Josh to pass that request on to Cliff Curtis.

- Tom announced that a revised “Emergency Asset” map was created. The map shows southern Maine and parts of New Hampshire. It includes locations of police, fire, ambulance, hospitals, Maine DOT and Maine Turnpike maintenance facilities, Maine Turnpike highway advisory sign locations, median crossovers, camera locations, etc.,. 10 copies were provided to the group. Maine DOT Region One division made a request for 3 additional copies, the Town of Wells requested 2 additional copies and City of Portsmouth requested an electronic version of the map.
- Warren Knowles gave an update on the Sara Long Bridge. Maine DOT found in its own inventory a temporary cable needed for the Sara Long Bridge. It is anticipated that the bridge will be operational again on December 15th. This is a temporary fix. Replacement of the permanent cable is expected to begin in early spring of 2007 and be completed sometime in November. The bridge will be in service in the summer when summer traffic is greatest. However, the bridge cannot stay operating during part of the fix.
- Tom explained that staff are working on acquiring the Seabrook Evacuation Plan and the Greater Portland Council of Governments Maine Mall Evacuation Plan as references for this group’s planning activities. Maine DOT provided a copy of the traffic portion of the Seabrook Evacuation Plan at the meeting.
- Jim Calhoun made an announcement that the State of New Hampshire is hosting 2 incident management training sessions each year. In recent years, folks from Maine have attended these events including personnel from Maine DOT and the Maine State Police. The meetings, which are usually held in May and September, routinely train a cross-section of 40 people including folks involved in fire and rescue, police, towing, medical examiners, etc.,. New Hampshire has plans to broaden the scope of the program by developing it into a “Train the Trainer” program. Maine State Police also have plans to use the NH course as an outline to develop their own program.
- Bob Bohlmann made an announcement that the Army Corp of Engineers are developing Hurricane Evacuation Studies for Maine coastal areas. This information should provide useful information to the existing group. Bob will keep the group informed of the latest developments.
- Jim Colburn made an announcement that there was a “Maine and New Hampshire I-95 Security Issues” group that was developed a few years back that discussed many of the incident management questions the group is now facing. Jim passed out maps and meeting notes from this group. Jim would like to continue the work that the group has worked on. In particular, Jim wanted to have a mutually agreeable routing system developed for traffic diversion if there is an issue in southern Maine or New Hampshire. He also brought up the groups unfinished work of developing Maine and New Hampshire Incident Management Command Centers and establishing interoperability of radio communications.
- Jim Calhoun noted that New Hampshire DOT is slated to purchase 15 portable variable message signs, which it would use to coordinate with Maine if there is a spillover traffic issue for both states. Many of the portable signs would be stationed or stored in areas based on routes identified through the ME-NH strategic routing plan process mentioned above.

Review of Incident Management Issues & Opportunities:

The remainder of the meeting focused on revisiting resources, problems/issues, and possible incident management solutions/techniques that the group could work on. The discussion was guided by the issues and opportunities addressed at the October 19th meeting. Highlights of this discussion follow:

- **Resources:** Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission has found a mountain of information relating to incident management including self-assessment tools, handbooks, case examples and much more. Much of this information is available through the Federal Highway Administration. Tom suggested that the group revisit this information while the group identifies the region's needs and formulates its goals. The group can contact Tom for more information at 324-2952, treinauer@smrpc.org
- **Information Dissemination:** There was a discussion about public information dissemination of emergency incidents and the value of disseminating the information to the Chambers of Commerce. Bob Bohlman noted that the York County Emergency Management Agency has a growing list of people that he sends incident management information to, which includes several of the Chambers of Commerce that have expressed interest in receiving that information. This includes the Greater York Region Chamber of Commerce.
- **SWIMS:** There was a short discussion of the Statewide Information Management System (SWIMS) and how there should be a point person for disseminating and receiving information for each of the municipalities. Municipal officials agreed that in most cases dispatch or a telephone number is the appropriate point of contact, rather than a specific person.
- **Radio Interoperability:** Interoperability of communications was brought up as a significant need. Maine DOT cannot currently communicate with municipalities, nor can Maine DOT communicate with NH DOT. Some entities use digital communications, others analog, even within the same municipality. The former group was in the process of developing emergency operations centers, which would be equipped with interoperability hardware. The Maine operations center was slated for the Maine Turnpike Maintenance Facility in York. Equipment is sitting in the facility and frequency licenses were acquired to use the equipment, but no process or procedure was developed to use the equipment.
- **Scene Reconstruction Procedure:** Currently it takes up to four hours for an officer to reconstruct a scene. New Hampshire is now using a scene reconstruction tool called "photogrammetry." Photogrammetry is the process of extracting dimensions from two-dimensional photographs. The object(s) from which dimensions need to be extracted must appear in more than one photograph and viewed from different angles. Police use cones to outline a scene and then take photos, which are used to create three dimensional images of the scene. This photoshoot process at the scene can take 10 minutes. Backup shots are taken with 35 mm cameras. Potential concern with this technology is that photos could be doctored, but in the few court cases contesting this technology so far, the technology has been held up in the courts. This technology has been used mostly in the Western United States.
- **Scene Reconstruction Officers:** Currently there are very few officers capable of doing a reconstruction. Maine State Police have a process for scene reconstruction officers which take away this authority after so many times in which an officer does not respond to a call. There has been some difficulty in recruiting more officers. Part

- of the reason is that officers need to be “on-call” at all hours of the night, and the training for doing scene reconstruction is long and difficult.
- Traffic Lights and Timing: Group decided that this issue is too much to handle. The idea was to get inventory of traffic lights and timing. Municipalities noted that towns usually only have access to turning on a blinking yellow light and do not have access to the box that controls signal timing, anyway. Also, most intersections are usually staffed with an officer to direct traffic.
 - Variable Message Signs: It was agreed that staff should get telephone numbers of places that have access to Maine DOT Variable message signs and develop an inventory list for the group. This should also include information about the capabilities and the number of signs available at each site.
 - Categories of Emergency Incidents: The “Maine and New Hampshire I-95 Security Issues” group had started on developing different categories of emergency incidents or events, which would have their own distinct protocols. The group should consult the meeting notes for direction on this concept.
 - Quick Clearance Laws: The Maine State Police are currently working with legal counsel to propose a quick clearance law to the state legislature. If effort is not successful, then perhaps this group could talk to legislators involved in corridor planning processes.
 - I-95 Corridor Coalition: The I-95 Corridor Coalition is doing an incident management analysis. An outcome of this effort is that NH DOT has developed an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) plan. Jim Colburn suggested possibly having the consultant for that effort present at a future meeting.

Next Steps

- Tom proposed developing an action plan for the group outlining goals, actions to be taken, responsible parties for taking action, and updates on how that action is being addressed. SMRPC staff will attempt to develop a draft action plan.
- SMRPC staff will send additional copies of the “emergency assets” map to Wells, Maine DOT Region One office and City of Portsmouth, NH.
- SMRPC staff will follow up with Cliff Curtis for an update of setting up accounts for municipal users of the SWIMS database, as well as the ability to send information to that database.
- The group decided that they should take up the task of developing the Incident Command Center concept initially launched by the “Maine and New Hampshire I-95 Security Issues” group as well as the task of developing communications interoperability using equipment that is currently being used at the York Maintenance facility.
- The group decided to discuss the routing maps and ideas that came out of the “Maine and New Hampshire I-95 Security Issues” group at the next meeting. SMRPC will contact HNTB, who may have electronic files of these maps.

The next meeting was scheduled for January 31, 2007 at the York Maintenance Facility at 12 Noon.