

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Traffic Incident Management Group and Interested Parties

**From:** Josh Mack, Transportation Planner

**Date:** April 2, 2007

**RE:** Meeting Notes from Traffic Incident Management Group on March 30, 2007

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Those in attendance included: Mathew Baker, York County Sheriff's Office; Dan Blanchette, Town of Eliot; Robert Bohlmann, York County EMA; Doug Bracy, Lt. York Police; David Bridges, York Beach Fire; Jon Carter, Town of Kittery; Jim Colburn, New Hampshire DOT; Kevin Conger, State Police, Troop A; Gary Eaton, Kittery Police; Gil Emery, Portsmouth Police; Ruth Farnsworth, Wells Police; David Ferland, Portsmouth NH Police; Russell French, Kittery Police; Jon Hanson, New Hampshire DOT/Turnpike; Bruce Ibarguen, Maine DOT; Pam L'Heureux, York County EMA; Josh Mack, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC); Daniel Moore, Wells Fire/EMA; Arthur Murdock, State Police, Troop B (Turnpike); Jo Ann Putnam, Wells Police; Tom Reinauer, SMRPC; Robert Scamman, Lt., York Police; Earl Sorensen, U.S. Coast Guard; Gregory J. Stone, Maine Turnpike Authority; Charles Szeniaowski, York Police Department. The meeting was held at the Maine Turnpike Authority's York Maintenance Facility.

### 1. Staff Updates

- **Communications Interoperability Subgroup:** There has not been an opportunity to schedule a subgroup meeting looking at communications interoperability. A subgroup was formed to discuss various communications issues and report back to the larger group some of their ideas. Some of the issues for discussion are:
  - ü development of a call down list/tree,
  - ü determination of what is most appropriate location/authority for incident management command center(s);
  - ü how computer-aided dispatch systems can be integrated with traveler information technology
  - ü mapping out of communications capabilities of various groups
- **Maine DOT Communications Initiatives:** Maine DOT's Cliff Curtis and staff are working on a couple of items that should enhance communications:
  - ü Maine DOT is looking into the installation of hi-band radio in all of its foreman's trucks. Foreman's can be used for communicating important traffic incident information.
  - ü Maine DOT is placing a CAD work item under contract
  - ü Maine DOT is sponsoring a Traffic Incident Management workshop in Augusta. The workshop is on the morning of April 3<sup>rd</sup> in the main conference room of the Transportation Building. Bruce Ibarguen passed around a flyer.

## 2. Incident Management Routing Plan & Next Steps

- Staff explained that they met with Kittery and Portsmouth to review the seven routing scenario maps developed by a former I-95 Incident Management Group. The seven scenarios look at combinations of one or more of the three bridges (I-95 High Level, Sara Long & Memorial) closing down. Kittery and Portsmouth police made some very significant changes to the local routing shown in the older maps. Staff pulled up the first scenario map up on the screen, which displayed local routing if the Memorial Bridge is closed. Routes on the maps show detour routes as well as significant points on detour routes that might be equipped with signs, barricades and traffic police. All seven maps were available to discuss at the meeting, but it was decided that upon, Kittery and Portsmouth approval of the draft maps, the rest of the group should be given pdf's of the maps for closer examination.
- There were two major discussion points that surfaced in the smaller meeting with SMRPC, Kittery and Portsmouth, which were presented to the larger group.
  - ü Should the group examine possibilities of allowing for contraflow traffic on one side of the I-95 High Level Bridge if bridge conditions are such that one side of the bridge can be utilized and the situation warrants moving large amounts of traffic?
  - ü How can the group take advantage of the new spur in Portsmouth that connects the Route One bypass directly to Market Street?

Major feedback on these two discussion points were as follows:

- ü The Seabrook Plan does not look at contraflow, because all the traffic is going in one direction.
  - ü If the incident was long term, jersey barriers could be put up to facilitate contraflow by DOT and Turnpike. Similar contraflow movements have been facilitated in the past when associated with long-term construction projects.
  - ü New Hampshire DOT would need to check with bridge people on the contraflow idea.
  - ü If bridge is disabled it would likely disable both sides of bridge (the entire bridge would be unsafe). However, there might be conditions in which just upstream or downstream of a bridge, a contraflow situation might be warranted.
  - ü What are next steps to look at contraflow option? SMRPC can see if NHDOT and MEDOT can meet on this subject.
  - ü With regard to the spur, NHDOT will open the spur up in cases where an incident is long-term.
- The group decided that for next steps, SMRPC should meet with additional towns and test some other likely scenarios. First SMRPC will make sure that the initial maps are satisfactory.

## 3. Traffic Incident Management Action Plan Discussion

- Tom Reinauer gave a brief introduction to the draft Traffic Incident Management Plan. The plan takes insights and feedback from the Traffic Incident Management group meetings as well as recommendations from Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Traffic Incident Manual for things to work on. The action plan is broken up

by themes, which are recommended by the FHWA manual as well as a theme that addresses long-term needs for Traffic Incident Management. These themes include:

- Incident Detection
- Incident Verification
- Incident Response and Preparedness
- Site Management
- Traffic Management
- Incident Clearance
- Long Term Strategic Planning for Incident Management

Tom explained that some of the things staff are already working on. At some point the group may want to become more formalized to work on these issues, but up until this point there was no clear indication that they should formalize. The group may also want to prioritize items. Tom explained that the plan is organized in such a way that there are strategies or actions that can be worked on now. The plan will also document progress on each item as the group meets. Tom asked for the group's feedback on the existing draft plan.

- Greg Stone asked if signal timing optimization be included? Tom responded that this topic has come up in the past, and the group thought that during an incident, it is more likely that important intersections will be manned or signed/coned/barricaded. Nevertheless Tom is working with Maine DOT's Steve Landry to develop a KACTS MPO work plan item to hire a consultant to look at signal timing in this region. Perhaps signalization as it pertains to traffic incidents could be part of the scope of that work. Bruce Ibarguen noted that traffic incidents are notoriously unpredictable, something that signal technology may not be able to manage. Doug Bracy noted the signal issues they have at the Route One spur, when people run through red lights during an incident. Jim Colburn said that NHDOT is trying to look outside the box and determine if there are other municipal employees such as public works or fire that could assist in intersection traffic management.
- Jim Colburn asked if Maine has highway advisory radio? Maine does. New Hampshire only has a couple of locations where this is possible.
- Gil Emery suggested that public radio be part of a travel advisory plan.
- Jim Colburn asked if Maine has mile reference markers. Maine has mile markers but not markers every 2/10ths of a mile. Off I-95 local landmarks or street intersections are used to describe an incident location.
- Jon Hanson asked if Maine has a \*77 number to call in crashes. Maine did have a system but it has been dropped. Call ins come into the 911 call system.
- Arthur Murdock asked if he could get a copy of the N.H. Move Over legislation? Discussion about bringing this Move Over legislation to Maine has been going on for at least 5 years, and he believes that most of the issue has to do with how it will legislation might be worded. Tom noted that the action plan currently supports this legislation, but staff can change that to research and engage legislators in this idea. Josh Mack offered to do research of Move Over legislation beyond N.H.
- Josh asked if Maine and New Hampshire have had a chance to discuss the New Hampshire photogrammetry technology used for traffic incidents. Arthur Murdock that the research they have done thus far show that the costs are prohibitive. Jim Colburn agreed to follow up and provide some more information about the costs and capabilities of the N.H. photo-gammetry application.

- Daniel Moore asked if a goal of the group is for the local towns to adopt similar standards or processes for managing traffic incidents. Tom responded that it is definitely a goal of this process.
- Josh Mack asked if the group should request a presentation regarding the Maine Mall Evacuation Study? Arthur Murdock responded that it would probably be adequate to share the report with the group.
- It was asked if an inventory of signs/cones/trailers should be made available to the group. Tom answered that staff already has some of that information. That information will be shared with the group in the near future including telephone numbers to reach contacts that can access that equipment. Doug Bracy noted that one of the issues of using Maine DOT equipment is that staff might not be available after hours.

**The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, June 1 at the Maine Turnpike Authority's York Maintenance Facility.**