

FREIGHT MOVEMENT TASK FORCE

June 26, 2024
10:00 to 11:30 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

SUMMARY

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

2. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Keith Kucharek asked if there were any comments to the minutes from the December 2023 meeting. Minutes to the previous FMTF meeting were approved with no comments or changes.

3. FORTERRA PRESENTATION

Mr. Kucharek introduced Mr. Chad Rubin from Forterra. Mr. Rubin gave some background on Forterra which is based out of Clarksburg, Maryland. Forterra's main product is called AutoDrive which is hardware and software to make vehicles autonomous.

Forterra offers advanced autonomous driving systems that enhance vehicle platforms running on-road or off-road in complex commercial and industrial environments. Over 20 year ago, Forterra began working with the Department of Defense and in 2014 began working with commercial vehicles and now concentrates on Class A trucks and tractors. Over 50 different vehicle types have been integrated to autonomous vehicles.

Forterra works with numerous logistics facilities such as distribution centers, ports, inland ports, railroads and natural resource harvesting and processing. They provide autonomy for Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) holding 90% of the international yard truck market.

What is next? Forterra is working to make sure anyone wanting to buy or repair autonomous vehicles, can do that through a normal process and don't have to go to special locations. They are also expanding vehicle software for local and remote autonomous vehicle oversight.

Capabilities of autonomous ground navigation include:

- On-road/off-road operation
- Operational in all weather conditions
- Operates in GPS-denied areas

- Does not require roadway infrastructure
- Single-vehicle waypoint route navigation
- Multi-vehicle leader-follower, unscrewed platooning and convoys
- Retro-traverse and reverse platooning, with trailers
- Static and dynamic obstacle avoidance and re-pathing
- Onboard or remote operator control or oversight

Long-term customer value and AV adoption are best served by a future state point of view on transportation and logistics. Addressing hard-to-automate tasks alongside vehicle autonomy enables maximum seamlessness in yard operations.

TerraLink is the system used to operate oversight. Forterra is committed to safety and is ISO9001 certified. In military areas, operations follow military standards.

Question: What is the biggest challenge you've seen.

Answer: Lack of federal legislation. Cars have crashes every day, but one issue with an autonomous vehicle could shut us down. Also, production in mass and costs have been prohibitive for users.

[PowerPoint: Autonomous Trucks Presentation]

4. HOWARD STREET TUNNEL

Mr. Kucharek introduced Mr. Bradley Smith, MDOT Maryland Port Administration, to provide an update on the Howard Street Tunnel.

Mr. Smith provided some background information on the evolution of the Howard Street Tunnel (HST) Project. The HST is a single-track rail tunnel in Baltimore City. The tunnel was constructed between 1890 and 1895 and is about 1.7 miles long. The tunnel is owned, maintained and used by CSX RR. The existing tunnel is about 18 inches too short to support double stack trains. Completion of this project will break a long-standing rail bottleneck and create a double-stack rail network to/from the Port of Baltimore and along the I-95 Rail corridor.

Along with the HST improvements, 21 other structures between Baltimore and Philadelphia need to be modified to complete the north-south corridor. Baltimore would make a more efficient route to the Midwest compared to current routes. Because the project is split between multiple states, work has been grouped into ten packages for design and construction. Five packages in Maryland, one in Delaware and four in Pennsylvania. Three packages in Pennsylvania are complete, and the fourth is under construction. One package in Delaware is under construction. One package in Maryland is under construction with completion expected in 2025. Three other packages are expected to begin construction in 2024. And of course the HST package has begun some preliminary construction activities, but more significant work is set to begin this year.

Question: Once Pennsylvania and Delaware sections are complete, will they open to traffic prior to Maryland sections opening?

Answer: Currently discussing with CSX what service could be implemented once those sections are finalized. Will know more soon.

[PowerPoint: Howard Street Tunnel Project]

5. MARYLAND MOTOR TRUCK ASSOCIATION LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Kucharek introduced Mr. Louis Campion, Maryland Motor Truck Association (MMTA), to provide an update on legislation resulting from the latest MD General Assembly session.

The MMTA is a 1,000 member organization that provides legislative, regulatory assistance and training. Most of the legislation relates to trucking but there was some rail legislation as well.

Maryland had a \$3.3 billion shortfall in the CTP. A number of Bills in the house but very few standalone bills passed such as vehicle excise tax and trade difference and sales tax expansion to services. The Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act which introduced modified proposals raised transportation funds.

Vehicle registration fee increases. Vehicle fees now based on vehicle weight (trucks already have that). Also passed is a transportation network fee and electric vehicle surcharges. Electric vehicles will be assessed \$200-\$250 depending on if the vehicle is fully electric or a hybrid. This fee will be assessed every two years.

Some of the safety related legislation that did not pass included the Railway Safety Act which would have required two-man crews, wayside detectors, and hazmat transportation databases. Work Zone Safety measures did get passed. These include increased fines for speeding in work zones up to \$500 and possibly double if workers are actually present.

The Port of Baltimore uses a lot of independent drivers. Fines for purposely misclassifying employees increased to \$10,000. Legislation that did not pass was the elimination of license plate decal, climate change and fossil fuel fees, climate change adaption and mitigation program and highway capacity projects.

Mr. Campion briefly addressed the Key Bridge collapse. The Port Act, Small Business Administration Loans, Department of Labor and Department of Commerce grant programs did an outstanding job of recognizing and acting to assist all those impacted by the collapse. The regulatory assistance from FMCSA, international Fuel Tax Agreement, International Registration Plan, and Containerized Cargo Permitting for diverted freight was amazing and helped many of the MMTA members.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that will be approved in July did not include funding for the Key Bridge replacement in the May Draft, but funds have been added for the final version. MDTA believes that construction for the new bridge can begin as early as January of 2025 with completion in 2028.

[PowerPoint: FMTF General Assembly Report 2024]

ATTENDANCE

Members and Guests:

Louis Campion, Maryland Motor Truck Association (MMTA)
Youngmin Choi, MDOT Innovative Programming Division
Kevin Clarke, BWI
Angelica Daniel, Baltimore County DPW&T
Robert King, FMCSA
Parto Mazdeyasni, MDOT Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA)
Lydia McPhearson, Norfolk Southern
Ed Mihalski, Ecologix Group
Armand Patella, MMTA
Chad Rubin, Forterra
Tina Sanders, MDOT, Motor Carrier Division
Nanette Schieke, MDOT MVA
Brad Smith, MDOT MPA
John (JT) Thomas, MDOT Capital Planning and Programming
Jacqueline Thorne, MDOT Office of the Secretary
Reidel Vichot, University of Delaware

BMC Staff:

Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)
Cindy Burch, BMC
Ndemazea Fonkem, BMC
Keith Kucharek, BMC