

TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FOR THE BALTIMORE REGION (TIMBR)

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

GoToMeeting Online Conference Call

10:00 A.M.

MINUTES

Electronic Attachments: Agenda

The June 3, 2020 minutes will be sent in the future for review and comment. Eileen Singleton will post the minutes on the website after they have been reviewed.

1. FIRST RESPONDER GRANT APPLICATION

Roxanne Mukai presented the 1st Responder Grant application. She indicated that there is \$35 million in grants from the Federal government and 5-7 grants will be awarded. Maryland is looking to apply for the grant regarding 5.9 MHz technology.

- They are seeking involvement from all jurisdictions. Currently Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County, Montgomery County, SHA, MSP, MDTA are involved. An effort was made to reach out to Queen Anne's County. Please contact Roxane if there is any interest to be involved.
- Roxane mentioned that the Federal government has not asked for applications and only provided notice at this time.
- Eileen will send out the application information and material to the TIMBR group.

2. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC AND CRASHES DURING THE PANDEMIC

Jason Dicembre and First Sgt. Colin Bristow presented the next topic on traffic and crashes during the pandemic.

- Jason stated that in their findings comparing 2019 and 2020 statistics, even though the number of crashes is significantly lower, the severity of the crashes is higher.
- Jason mentioned that there has been a lot of high-speed related crashes involving commercial vehicles around the interstate ramps, particularly from I-70 ramps onto the I-695 beltway. The severity of these crashes has extended closure times and delays.
- Jason talked about the trend in the number of crashes before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The graph shows that the number of crashes in 2020 was slightly higher than 2019 before COVID-19. The numbers show a drastic decline in the first four (4) weeks and then a

gradual increase during Week 6 thru Week 12. He stated that high speed and adverse weather (i.e., heavy rain storms) may have attributed to the increase in the number of crashes.

- Jason indicated that while it appears on the surface that the number of all types of crashes are down, the ratio of fatal crashes per incidents is much higher.
- From the perspective of Maryland State Police (MSP), Colin said they observed motorists speeding because there were fewer police patrolling the highways because of COVID. He mentioned that MSP got together with the Commanders of National Capitol Region and the Baltimore Metropolitan Region to set up traffic control initiatives to control the surge in speeding.
 - At one point 12 troopers were staged on the Capital Beltway for a 1-hr window during the middle of the afternoon.
 - The troopers captured a range of speeds from 70 MPH to 110 MPH.
 - 22 troopers were shifted to I-83 and I-695 for another 1-hr window.
 - 115 speeding citations (60 of these were over 85 MPH in a 55 MPH zone).
 - These numbers coincide with the numbers that Jason mentioned with regards to higher speeds witnessed on the roads during COVID-19 pandemic. He hopes that these initiatives will deter speeding, especially when MSP can return to normal operations.
- Jason talked about finding the balance in safety and mobility. Congestion can help reduce the severity of the crashes but at the same time, SHA would like to ensure motorists have a reliable travel time.
- Colin mentioned that MSP works closely with the Command staff at the NCR and are seeking input to reduce the number of commercial vehicle crashes on the Capital Beltway. He mentioned that tractor trailer crashes are a recurring issue along roadway curves closer to the Virginia state line. He believes there is more room for the trucks to operate and thus cause them to exceed the speed limit which results in more crashes during this pandemic. More portable dynamic message signs and static signs have been deployed as warnings with suggested speed limits for trucks to reduce the number of crashes.
- There was a question regarding any findings near construction zones involving crashes or injuries. Jason said that he does not have any data on this; anecdotally there has been no noticeable increase in the number of work zone crashes. Due to the reduced traffic volumes, Districts have adjusted work zone hours—typically work ends at 3PM but during the pandemic, jobs can operate as late as 5PM or 6PM.
- There was a question about the implementation of automatic speed cameras in local jurisdictions due to COVID. Jason mentioned that he is not aware of any programs on automatic speed cameras on state roads. Colin said that he has seen media outreach in Montgomery County where people noticed higher occurrences of speeding from the same operator but also has not heard about any initiatives to control speeding on local roads.
- It was noted that speed cameras should only be active in school zones and construction zones, the question was raised if the cameras were operating in school zones since schools are out. It was noted that cameras in Montgomery County (and it may be valid in other

Counties) are active because the school centers are still open to feed children and the grounds are open for general activities (playgrounds, tennis courts, track field, etc.).

- The group would also like to see a graph of the crash trends for specific counties over the last few months. Jason said the data is easy to pull since it can be queried by county or even roadway. This was done through their internal CHART reporting tool which uses data from RITIS. Regarding the data specific to the type of crash, that was through ACRS. Jason can reach out to them to provide a breakdown of numbers with respect to the types of crashes and by County to those that request it.

3. DISCUSSION: HOW IS YOUR AGENCY ADJUSTING PROTOCOLS TO RESPOND TO INCIDENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

- The local jurisdictions did not indicate any changes in protocols.
- CHART has not made any changes to protocols regarding what the agency will or will not respond to. However, they have included guidelines and personal protection equipment (PPE) in response to the pandemic. If they stop to assist a motorist, it is mandatory that responders have their masks and gloves on. He mentioned that the SOC is following protocols that require temperature checks, in addition to the questionnaire screening. The SOC provides PPE to the operators; hand sanitizers and masks are provided, and they require that employees clean their stations at the end of their shift. With the 6-ft social distancing rule, they limit each bay to one operator; in the past SHA had two operators per bay in the SOC. Only operators are allowed in the SOC. On rare occasions, when people other than operators must enter the SOC, they must show their wristband that indicates that they have been through a thorough screening before entering, like getting temperature checks.
- The MDTA Authority Operations Center has one entry point where people are screened. AOC staff are given two masks, one to wear while the other one is getting cleaned. PPE is given and hand sanitizer is provided. They have the proper cleaning supplies to wipe down their workstations. MDTA has prepared a backup center and made sure it was fully operational in the event that employees had to move to a different location. Alternate schedules have been created, in the event of another outbreak. The Point Breeze facility has gone through a deep clean. If there is an outbreak after a deep clean, they have a contractor in place to do another deep clean as needed. The deep cleaning can be expensive; the cost is based on square footage and in a facility like the AOC, it could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. It was mentioned that cleaning of HVAC systems is not required during deep cleans. Lastly, the layout of the AOC allows them to comply with the 6-ft social distancing recommendations.

4. STATE AND LOCAL TIM UPDATES

- TIM Training updates
 - Eileen mentioned that there are not too many changes since our last meeting in February in terms of numbers trained.
 - Pat Rooney mentioned that Maryland is ranked 33 in terms of the total trained in the nation but this is not a reflection of our progress. He indicated that they have a large amount of people who have been trained but they have not all been accounted for in the tracking portal.

- Pat mentioned that he has been working with Eileen, Baltimore County, and Anne Arundel County to develop a 1-hr refresher course that will be available starting June 14th, 2020, which is during National Fire Department Stand Down week. There will be multiple sessions each day that week.
- Eileen will send out invitation links to the refresher courses.
- The Responder Safety Learning Network of the Emergency Responder Safety Institute has many training modules.
- TIM Conference
 - We have requested funds through the Maryland Highway Safety Office and were told we will not be receiving full funding for it. We are working to see about partial funding and will look to seek funding elsewhere. Efforts will resume to identify funds once the pandemic restrictions are eased.
- Upcoming planned and special events
 - Fleet Week 2020 is cancelled.
 - In general, everything has been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic.
- The next meeting will be held on September 2, 2020, the location is to be determined but may need to be another remote meeting. The meetings are typically held quarterly, on the first Wednesday of the Month. Remaining 2020 meetings:
 - September 2, 2020
 - December 2, 2020

ATTENDEES

Members

T.J. Bathras, Maryland Transportation Authority, Operations
Colin Bristow, Maryland State Police, CHART Liaison
Tina Bui, Daniel Consultants, Inc.
David Cookson, Howard Co Dept of Planning & Zoning
Jason Dicembre, State Highway Administration, CHART
Nestor Flores, Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works
Mark Harris, Maryland Dept of Transportation
Dan Janousek, Maryland Dept of Transportation
Breck Jeffers, Federal Highway Admin., MD Div.
Shelley Kellam, Maryland Transportation Authority
Tanya King, Daniel Consultants, Inc.
JJ Lynott, Maryland Transit Administration
Alvin Marquess, Jacobs
Roxane Mukai, Maryland Transportation Authority
Ben Myrick, State Highway Administration, OOTS
Jason Pulliam, Maryland Transportation Authority Police
Patrick Rooney, State Highway Administration - CHART
Raj Sharma, Baltimore City Dept of Transportation
Patrick Zilliacus, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Staff

Bala Akundi, Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Cindy Burch, Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Eileen Singleton, Baltimore Metropolitan Council