NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF MPOs
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS WORKING GROUP
June 9, 2020
Conference Call
2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

MEETING NOTES

Participating

- GTC – Joe Bovenzi (Chair)
- CDTC – Chris O'Neill
- CDTC – Andy Tracy
- CS – Rich Denbow
- DCTC – Mark Debald
- ECTC – Mike Perry
- FHWA – Tim Crothers
- NYMTC – John Simpson
- OCTC – Ashlee Long
- SMTC – Mario Colone

1. Introductions

Joe Bovenzi welcomed Working Group (WG) members and kicked off the meeting.

2. Regional Operations and Travel Reliability: CDTC's Congestion Management Process

Chris O'Neill and Andrew Tracy presented on CDTC's process to update the New Visions 2050 Plan and the CDTC CMP. Chris said that a key planning principle for CDTC is that reliable traffic flow is often more important than reducing congestion. Managing traffic flow is critical, and congestion management is more cost effective than adding new lanes. With these principles in mind, travel reliability is an important performance measure for the Plan.

Chris discussed work CDTC is doing to use NPMRDS data during development of the new CMP. CDTC uses the Planning Time Index (PTI) for corridor level analysis. PTI is defined as 95% travel time divided by free flow travel time. CDTC also uses the federal LOTTR and TTTR measures but these measures do not apply as well at the corridor level as PTI. Chris showed graphs created by CDTC to demonstrate reliability along several corridors using the PTI measure, and a table of average speed, 95th percentile speed, and PTI for the corridors. Chris said that reliability is a difficult concept to explain to the public but the graphs help convey the concept.

CDTC is also looking at a Peak Hour Excessive Delay (PHED) measure used to identify locations in the region with a high amount of delay. At some of these locations there is no

available right-of-way for widening the road. These are ideal locations to look at applying ITS and TSMO solutions.

Andrew discussed strategies considered in the CMP and recommendations for implementation. Key recommendations include: major highway expansion should not be considered; right-size existing roadways so that underutilized right-of-way can be used to improve access for other modes; CDTC should continue to support funding for operations; explore the option of establishing a community traffic engineering services program; establish a Regional Traffic Signal Timing Program to determine which regional arterials would benefit most from timing optimization; and further evaluate active traffic management (ATM) strategies. The traffic signal timing work is currently on hold during the pandemic until traffic returns to normal levels.

3. Role of TSM&O in a Pandemic

The WG briefly discussed TSM&O considerations during a pandemic. Mark Debald noted that the NYSDOT traffic count program has been suspended. It will be interesting to see what post-pandemic travel will look like; for example, will working from home be more common.

Andrew said he is looking at data sources that show traffic patterns during the Covid-19 pandemic and can help us determine when a new equilibrium is reached. These include VMT data by Streetlight, which is available for every county; INRIX data, which compares VMT with confirmed Covid-19 cases on national level; NPMRDS; and permanent count station data, which is available for some stations and is updated monthly.

The WG will continue to discuss this topic at future meetings.

4. Roundtable

MPO Updates:

- Mario Colone said SMTC's new UPWP includes a feasibility analysis of a joint transportation management center for the State, County, and City. Currently, member agencies operate standalone traffic operations centers.

FHWA Update:

- Tim Crothers said a new YouTube video is available that explains the concept of reliability is and why it is important. He also mentioned that a new data business plan resource for MPOs will be available soon. Tim asked if there is interest in a workshop on planning for reliability. Joe will reach out to Tim to discuss further.

5. Next Meeting/Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2020