

Appendix C – Strategy Development Workshop Minutes



STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

MINUTES

May 15, 2012 – Southwest Region Office, Kalamazoo, MI

Attendance

Steve Albrecht – MDOT	Jim Hoekstra – Kalamazoo County Road Commission
Luke Biernbaum – MDOT	Alissa Hubbell – MDOT
Michael Bippley – MDOT	Angie Kremer – MDOT
John Blue – Portage Police	Don Martin – Kalamazoo Township
Steve Brink – MDOT	Joe McDonnell – Portage Police
Lisa Burgess – KHA	Michelle O’Neill – MDOT
John Byrnes – Kalamazoo County Road Commission	Deb Pallett – Allegan Central Dispatch
Kelly Ciolk – Allegan Central Dispatch	Robert Peterson – Ingham County Road Commission
Zach Clothier – MDOT	Lucio Ramos – MDOT
Andre’ Clover – MDOT	Jill Rantz – Allegan Central Dispatch
James Coleman – MSP Coldwater	Greg Rickmar – City of Battle Creek
Mike Corfman – Texas Twp Fire/Rescue	Steve Shaughnessy – MDOT
Lou Davenport – URS	Jon Smith – MDOT
Kerry DenBraber – MDOT	Al Svilpe – Van Buren County
Jim D’Lamater – MDOT	Connie Vallier – MDOT
Robert Doud – Comstock Fire/Rescue	David VanLopik – MSP Paw Paw
Amanda Good – KHM	Richard VanOosterum – Comstock Fire/Rescue
Rick Griffin – Oshtemo Fire	Nick Vlahos – Cambridge Systematics
Barbara Hamilton – City of Lansing EM	Jim Wiley – Oshtemo Fire
Rich Hassenzahl – MDOT	Sarah Woolcock – MDOT

Minutes

Introductions

Amanda Good welcomed everyone to the *Emergency Rerouting Strategic Workshop*. She began by introducing the project consultant team (Kimley-Horn, Cambridge Systematics, and Jim Bolger), Amanda Good, Lisa Burgess, and Nick Vlahos; the MDOT project manager, Angie Kremer, and the MDOT research manager, Andre’ Clover. Amanda then asked each stakeholder to introduce themselves and the agency they were with. Angie provided an overview of the project and the purpose of the research effort. Amanda provided an additional overview about the identified results and outcome of the project, the workshop, the agenda, and the intent of the handout. The information gathered at each of the three workshops will help feed into the development of the Best Practice Manual.

Project Overview

Amanda reiterated this project is a research project and not an implementation project. The outcome of this project is to provide a guidance document with recommendations on how to develop emergency reroutes and how to determine the need and implement signing those routes as needed, for consistency statewide. The manual will become be a tool that can be used to apply and implement the



findings from the research. It also will help to provide a consistent approach for MDOT and local partnering agencies to take when identifying, designating, and evaluating the reroutes.

Research Findings

The consultant team performed a literature review based on similar research efforts and information that is publicly available. It was noted that there is limited information publically available about existing programs.

Secondly, the team identified a number of states known to have successful implementation programs. Some of the states were identified and further documented through the Literature Review, but most were not. The team asked each state to answer survey questions about their emergency rerouting program. A total of nine states completed the survey. They include:

- Tennessee
- Wisconsin
- Washington
- California
- North Carolina
- Idaho
- Minnesota
- Arizona
- Texas

The survey consisted of 32 general questions about each state's program. Some of the questions included: the length the program had been in place; the motivating factor to begin the program; who was involved in developing the reroutes; considerations during development; who has authority to implement; and how does the information get displayed to the public.

Based on the information provided by the survey, five states were identified for more in-depth interviews. The criteria for those five were based on the maturity of their program and similarities they had with Michigan, such as weather, road agency partnerships, and the geographic mixture of rural vs. urban areas.

The states wanted to ensure the reroutes were in place for inclement weather rather than identify the reroutes based on the weather. All of the states involved local agencies and the maintenance representation from the DOT. They felt those who were constantly working on the roads would be the most knowledgeable for determining the best reroutes. The states followed different approaches to debriefings for a review of the incident and the effectiveness or performance of the reroute. The frequency of the debriefings included multiple approaches such as bi-monthly, every 6 months, yearly, or ad hoc after a very large scale incident. However there were a few who regularly communicated on a biweekly or monthly timeframe.

The motivation behind the development of the emergency rerouting program for each state was different. They were developed either as an extension of an existing coalition, a large scale event, or the simply the need for additional emergency planning. Several states store the reroutes in a central repository for easy access to multiple partners. This could be through the transportation management center (TMC) central software, directly with the operators at the TMC per hard copy, or with the 911 dispatch. Most of the states identified the incident commander as the ultimate decision maker to implement the reroutes, but the TMC would continuously monitor the incident in case additional coordination is necessary.

During the development of the reroutes the states considered a number of factors for evaluation. They include the road geometry, existing traffic volumes/conditions, traffic impact, key infrastructure along the reroute, infrastructure restrictions, such as at-grade rail crossing and bridges with height and weight limitations.

All of the states agreed that an electronic manual that was dynamic and interactive would be the most beneficial. Several have hard copies, while some have them on CD. There were a couple of states that were beginning to or have already migrated to an internet based tool with interactive links.

Strategies

Before beginning the break-out session, the consultant team wanted to obtain feedback from the stakeholders on their thoughts of Michigan's current approach to emergency reroutes. Amanda asked the group some questions such as how the emergency reroutes were handled in their area, who was involved, how often are they revisited, other concerns and challenges they may have, and etc. The answers are reflected in the information within the break-out session (*below*).

Break-Out Sessions

The stakeholders were broken into three groups with members from each of the different agencies. The groups were tasked to review two different incidents; one incident on a route with established reroutes and an incident on a route without an established reroute. The purpose of the breakout is to have the group step through the process of identifying an emergency reroute that would be implemented during an incident. This includes identification of who to contact first, who would become the incident commander, and what roles each of the first responders and dispatch have during this process. Following, the groups were to identify the reroute for the incident that occurs on a route without an established reroute and confirm the applicability of the established reroute.

Feedback

The stakeholders came back to one group to discuss what the three groups came up with.

Most of the interstates in the Southwest and Grand regions have designated reroutes and most are signed. For the Southwest region, the road commissions typically do not get involved during an incident. Also the first responders typically do not reroute traffic; their main goal is to secure the situation and begin diversions by placing requested signs for traffic control. MDOT typically will not sign a reroute for incidents lasting less than four hours, although in some parts of the state, MDOT will implement reroute signage for short-term reroutes. Once the window for the number of hours for a reroute has been established, the 911 dispatch will notify those on their contact list. However, this is not the case for all dispatch centers.

The reroutes were developed 5-6 years ago in the Southwest region and some were updated in 2009, but there are several plans throughout the state that still have not been updated since their first implementation. However, they are not necessarily revisited during construction projects. Also, many first responders felt there was a slight disconnect between MDOT and dispatch. If a reroute is reviewed and the revision does not affect a county road, the road commission may not be contacted. MDOT did mention during inclement weather, they would plow reroutes, more frequently than other reroutes to ensure those are accessible during an incident.

The group agreed the format should include a series of integrated checklists designated by role. It also was suggested to include a list of key elements each role would need to be mindful towards as well as key personnel to contact. Also, an online version was not necessarily agreed upon since it assumes

first responders have access. They felt a hard copy should be the primary format with online as a secondary format.

Overlying themes of the workshop include the lack of notification process of implementing a route. A process should be established based on the terms of the area. The plans should capture not only viable routes, but non-viable routes so first responders are aware of elements in the area in case they need to establish a different reroute. It does appear the group prefers the unified command, but wants a checklist on establishing a notification process.

Next Steps

After the workshops, the information will be integrated to refine the strategy development for the manual. A technical document would be developed to discuss the strategies. This document would be provided to MDOT for their review. These strategies would be the starting point for the manual. During this development, evaluation methods will be developed as a tool to determine if the reroutes work. All of the research and development of the guide will be integrated together into one final manual.

Signing Strategies

Several of the states contacted have some sort of signage. Washington has permanent dynamic trailblazers; Idaho has some districts with signage, and the districts have the authority to determine a reference to sign; Wisconsin has some arterial dynamic message signs (DMS), but not many on the major highways.

Most of the interstates of established reroutes in the region are signed. They resemble a static trailblazer sign and are orange and black. The group was asked whether to continue to sign the same way or with a different type of sign. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) recommends the signs for emergency reroutes be a coral-pink color. However the sheeting for that color only lasts about 5 years. The costs would not outweigh the benefits. Also if the signs are to keep as the orange and black, the group was worried most motorists associate orange with construction rather than emergency reroute.

Another comment presented by the group was the concern that too many signs may desensitize the motorists to the permanent signage. Regard of which reroute to sign should be considered if additional signs are to be placed on arterial roadway. Most of the feedback stated the freeways should be signed prior to the non-freeway routes. Also, they believed portable message signs should be used as soon as 911 dispatch is notified of an incident. If an incident occurs, the statewide transportation operations center (STOC) in Lansing would monitor the incident and place pertinent messages as needed on existing DMS signs to inform the public.

Amanda reminded the stakeholders there was a blank page in the handout for additional notes to be left for input. Additional comments can be provided once minutes have been sent.

Closing Remarks

Amanda and Angie thanked everyone for coming and participating. The information gathered at these workshops will be invaluable to the development of the manual. If there are additional comments from those who attended or unable to attend the workshop, please provide.



STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

MINUTES

May 16, 2012 – Andersen Enrichment Center, Saginaw, MI

Attendance

Pat Andres – MDOT	Ron Lattimer – Genesee County Road Commission
Paul Arends – MDOT	Beth London – City of Saginaw
Brian Atkinson – MDOT	Simeon Martin – City of Saginaw
Ahmad Azmoudeh – MDOT	Ryan McDonnell – MDOT
Keith Brown – MDOT	Eric Mueller – MDOT
Greg Brunner – MDOT	Jon Myers – MDOT
Lisa Burgess – KHA	Barry Nelson – Saginaw County 911
Andre' Clover – MDOT Research	Fred Peivandi – Genesee County Road Commission
Michael Coote – Flint Police	Steve Pethers – MDOT
Paula Diem – City of Saginaw	Adam Rivard – MDOT
Dave Engelhardt – Bay County	Scott Singer – MDOT
Ponce Esparzo – MDOT	Steve Solomon – City of Grand Blanc – Police
Dan Everett – MDOT	Steve Stramsak – MDOT
Tim Genovese – Saginaw County EM	Matt Tompkins – MDOT
Amanda Good – KHM	Nick Vlahos – Cambridge Systematics
Dan Grupido – MDOT	Cory Waley – Bay County Road Commission
Darryl Heid – Road Commission for Oakland County	Ray Welke – Gratiot County Road Commission
Neal Hentschl – Huron County Road Commission	Ryan Whiteherse – Saginaw County Road Commission
David Hundley – MDOT	Dan Winnie – MDOT
Phil Karwat – City of Saginaw	Kim Zimmer – MDOT
Angie Kremer – MDOT	

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Before beginning the break-out session, the consultant team wanted to obtain feedback from the stakeholders on their thoughts of Michigan's current approach to emergency reroutes. Amanda asked the group some questions such as how the emergency reroutes were handled in their area, who was involved, how often are they revisited, other concerns and challenges they may have, and etc. The answers are reflected in the information within the break-out session (*below*).

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Feedback

The stakeholders came back to one group to discuss the findings of the three groups.

For the two regions represented at the workshop, Bay region has most of their interstates designated with reroutes while Metro region has only one reroute designated throughout the entire region. The reroutes are not signed and there are several alternatives available to travelers, so the need for signage typically is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The group felt with their communication both phone or email with MDOT, they are aware of the reroutes and signing would crowd the roadway rather than provide valuable information. If motorists are unfamiliar with the area, they are likely to use their GPS to get around the incident.

During a road closure, the type of incident will determine who is in charge. Fire will assume incident command to then pass onto law enforcement while in other regions, they do not. The decision to reroute is a collective decision with communication between MDOT, dispatch, and first responders. It also depends on the length of closure and resources available.

In the event of inclement weather, snow plows will plow the snow on the reroutes prior to other arterial roadways. The idea is to ensure those reroutes are accessible during an incident or if the emergency operations center is activated.

Overlying themes of the workshop include the lack of notification process of implementing a route. A process should be established based on the terms of the area. The plans should capture not only viable routes, but non-viable routes so first responders are aware of elements in the area in case they need to

establish a different reroute. It does appear the group prefers the unified command, but wants a checklist on establishing a notification process.

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None of the reroutes in Bay or Metro are signed. If MDOT did decide to sign the reroutes, the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) recommends the signs for emergency reroutes be a coral-pink color. However the sheeting for that color only lasts about 5 years. The costs would not outweigh the benefits. So then do you sign or not sign?

If the decision is to sign, the question arises whether to use the MUTCD recommendations or use another color. Also, the group was asked on opinions of permanent signs. The group had differing ideas on signage, but most agreed they did not want to. The stakeholders were reminded of the blank page in the handout to draw or detail notes on types of signs that would be useful and leave them when the workshop was completed.

Both regions have permanent message boards while some counties have portable DMS that can be used during an incident to inform the public. If an incident occurs, the statewide transportation operations center (STOC) or the southeast Michigan transportation operations center (SEMTOC) would monitor the incident and place pertinent messages as needed on the signs to inform the public. Additional comments can be provided once minutes have been sent. A suggested design was provided for considerations.



Suggested design provided by a stakeholder. Colors were not designated.

Closing Remarks

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STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

MINUTES

May 17, 2012 – Alpine Center, Gaylord, MI

Attendance

Michael Baker – Cheboygan County Road Commission	Tim Johnson – Otsego County Road Commission
Sarah Benson – Wexford County EM	Jim Kargol – Emmett County Road Commission
Lisa Burgess – KHA	Jackie Klepadlo – MSP
Michael Cain – City of Boyne City Police	Angie Kremer – MDOT
Andre’ Clover – MDOT	Phil Lechowicz – Emmett County Road Commission
Garrett Dawe – MDOT	Chris Martin – Otsego County 911
Jon Deming – Otsego County EM	Eric Precord – MDOT
William Elliott – MSP	Mary Sanders – Hayes Township
Amanda Good – KHM	Peter Stumm – Antrim County Road Commission
Dawn Gustafson – MDOT	Margaret Szajner – MDOT
Brian Haag – Otsego EMS	Bryce Tracy – Mackinac County 911
Patrick Harmonz – Charlevoix County Road Commission	Nick Vlahos – Cambridge Systematics
Linda Hartshorne-Shafer – Missaukee County EM	Al Welsheimer – Resort Bear Creek Fire
Bob Helsel – MDOT	Justin Wing – MDOT
Jeff Hunt – MDOT	Lyn Zuiderveen – MDOT

Minutes

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Feedback

The stakeholders came back to one group to discuss what the two groups came up with.

The Upper Peninsula (UP) had great communication with MDOT, first responders, and dispatch. They have reroutes designated and those who respond to an incident are aware or know who to contact to get the information. The UP has determined if the incident will take less than 30 minutes, the motorists will stay put; if over an hour, law enforcement and MDOT will work together to implement a reroute in the field based on the existing plans and rerouting strategies; if greater than four hours, MDOT will reroute motorists on trunk lines only.

The North region has a communication disconnect with MDOT. Notification and level of information varies depending on which dispatch receives the call. Local agencies, such the road commission would prefer to have input on local routing decisions, but they are not always contacted for reference or information. It was agreed those local agencies as well as MDOT maintenance know the local roads best and should be involved.

The group thought there should be a cohesive plan in place, similar to the UP plan. The UP has one with county agreements to use local routes if the incident is less than four hours to ensure motorists keep moving. However the stakeholders were concerned with a statewide manual. They felt it may not reflect the challenges and demeanor of the local regions. The manual should be developed with a regional perspective in mind so local demographics can be reflected.

Next Steps

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work. All of the research and development of the guide will be integrated together into one final manual.

Signing Strategies

Several of the states contacted have some sort of signage. Washington has permanent dynamic trailblazers; Idaho has some districts with signage, and the districts have the authority to determine a reference to sign; Wisconsin has some arterial dynamic message signs (DMS), but not many on the major highways.

The two regions (Superior and North) do have designated reroutes, but only I-75 and parts of US-2 in the Superior region are signed as designated alternate routes. The current MDOT signs used in the Southwest and Grand regions resemble a static trailblazer sign and are orange and black. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) recommends the signs for emergency reroutes be a coral-pink color. However the sheeting for that color only lasts about 5 years. The costs would not outweigh the benefits.

The group was indecisive of whether or not to mandatory signed the routes and whether to use the coral-pink color due to the longevity of the sheeting material. However they did agree that current signage does not stand out to the motorists and can be confusing. They should be different than other types of signage. Suggestions included: flip signs; portable changeable message signs; and hard-frame signs during the night while windmaster signs during the day. If an incident occurs, the statewide transportation operations center (STOC) in Lansing would monitor the incident and place pertinent messages as needed on existing DMS signs to inform the public.

Amanda reminded the stakeholders there was a blank page in the handout for additional notes to be left for input. Additional comments can be provided once minutes have been sent. A suggested design was provided for considerations.



Suggested design provided by a stakeholder. Colors were not provided.

Closing Remarks

Amanda and Angie thanked everyone for coming and participating. The information gathered at these workshops will be invaluable to the development of the manual. If there are additional comments from those who attended or unable to attend the workshop, please provide.



STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT FOLLOW-UP CALL

MINUTES

July 11, 2012 – Conference Call

Attendance

Brandon Boatman – MDOT	Angie Kremer – MDOT
Jim Bolger – JBB and Associates	Lisa March-McCarty – MDOT
Lisa Burgess – KHA	Kevin Manns – St. Clair County Sheriff
Andre' Clover – MDOT	Hilary Owen – MDOT
Amanda Good – KHM	Bill Timmerman – Kalamazoo County Sheriff

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Call Questions

Initiation

What would be a typical timeframe from initiating a re-route to implementing it? – Dependent on where incident occurs and how many people can help. It could be as less as 20 min. Scene controlled by fire until initial response then onto police for road closure. It might be apparent to the first officers at the scene to make a determination on whether to reroute. Time of day can also affect as well as weather.

Who/which agencies are informed about the re-routing plan? Who initiates communications?

What interim steps are taken until an emergency re-route is established? (how is traffic diverted, how are motorists notified, etc.) Depends upon on the highway – rural and urban -



Describe the process for initiating an emergency re-route for traffic for a long-term closure. Who initiates? Notify MDOT and send out media blasts; surrounding departments (state police); MDOT then send out email chain to STOC and then onto MI Drive

Rerouting

Who/which entity makes the final routing decision? Collaboration – police begins reroute, then MDOT may drive the route and see if they see any issues and state if there needs to be any changes. MDOT may not have the resources, so the signs used during reroute, so they contact the CRC to use their signs (contracting services)

How is re-routing handled when Incident Command is transitioned? (Example – fire initiates incident command as first on scene, but the longer-term routing decision/monitoring transitions to whom?)

For routes with no existing plans, what are the key factors that are considered to establish a re-route? (i.e. roadway characteristics, limitations, proximity of specific facilities such as schools, etc.)

How many different entities would be involved with deciding, establishing or monitoring an emergency re-route?

Are there any specific agreements that are needed in this region in order to re-route traffic on to certain routes? Do these agreements exist? Police will try to get the folks off the road as quickly – magnitude, may have officers tied up with the scene and then have MDOT as well as county come out with signs. Sometimes the city police come out and divert motorists to help out the sheriff and state police.

Communication changes to how it is handles or works well as they are? It would be nice to have a supervisor in the field that knows the reroute and can communicate to those that needs to get the news

Signage

What kinds of signage are used for the re-route? Portable signs are great; the signage in SW region works;

Are there any special signing considerations based on the route? Interstates yes should have signage, M-routes, not b/c mainly local

How effective are current signing strategies? Think they are effective, but people are going to divert they want using a GPS.

Other Considerations

How does weather affect re-routing decisions or options? In particular winter weather/heavy snow. (i.e., can they elevate the priority of plow routes?) – the reroute is going to be the main line so it is important; once the route has been established, then MDOT takes responsibility to be sure roads stay open

What kind of format would be ideal to be able to store/maintain pre-planned emergency re-routes? Electronically off the MDOT site – can be updated easily; available to everyone (trucking companies to reroute trucks)



Next Steps

The information gathered on the call will be used to supplement the information obtained at the workshops which will be used in development of the Best Practices Manual.

Closing Remarks

Amanda and Angie thanked everyone for coming and participating. The information gathered at these workshops will be invaluable to the development of the manual. If there are additional comments from those who attended or unable to attend the workshop, please provide.