

Creating a Coordinated Regional Approach to Transit and Traffic Management

A truck overturns on the Beltway. A building fire closes a major roadway. Service to a transit station is interrupted due to police activity. Events such as these occur frequently in the Washington metropolitan area.

Fortunately, the immediate scenes of these incidents are handled skillfully and responsibly by police, fire, transportation, and other responder personnel. Following well-established incident command procedures, they work to clear the problems as quickly as possible, while providing safety and security.

However, these occurrences can have impacts on the transportation system miles from the incident scene – generating major traffic tie-ups or transit delays. Often on-scene responders are too busy to spend significant time addressing these faraway secondary “ripple effects” that could affect thousands of people. Until now, the region has addressed such ripple effects on a case-by-case basis without a central region-wide entity officially responsible for coordination.

Meet MATOC

Following experiences from the 9/11 attacks and other major incidents, transportation officials from Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) have committed to share and coordinate their transportation systems' conditions and information management during regional incidents. On behalf of the region, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) has partnered with the major transportation agencies in creating MATOC, the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination Program.



By integrating systems' technologies, improving procedures and planning, and providing more accurate

and timely transportation information to the public, regional transportation agencies are working together to make travel smoother and safer. This is the vision of MATOC.

Mission

MATOC's mission is to provide situational awareness of transportation operations in the National Capital Region (NCR). This will be achieved through the communication of consistent and reliable information that enables operating agencies and the traveling public to make effective and timely decisions. MATOC will develop the tools and processes needed to facilitate coordinated operating agency responses.



Goals

To improve traveler safety and reduce the delay that results from incidents and emergencies by:

- Enabling better coordination of the transportation management strategies employed in response to incidents and emergencies by operating agencies throughout the NCR.
- Providing timely and reliable information that enables individuals to make better travel decisions.

Objectives

- To provide for the quick and reliable exchange of transportation system information among operating agencies in the NCR.
- To enable agency operations' staffs to more effectively and reliably coordinate with each other, and their peers in other agencies, when a major incident or emergency has occurred.
- To continually improve the region's ability to inform the public and manage the transportation system.
- To continually improve regional preparedness for effectively managing the transportation system in response to major incidents.

Strategies

- Develop and maintain standard procedures for interagency communication and coordination during major incidents or emergencies.
- Develop and maintain automated and personal communications channels between the regional information sharing systems, operations staffs, and public and private information disseminators.
- Enhance regionally coordinated transportation management response plans for major incidents or emergencies on critical transportation system links.
- Conduct post-incident reviews and identify improvements in information sharing technologies, standard operating procedures, and operations staff performance.
- Identify and provide training and table-top exercises to improve the performance of operations staffs relative to regional coordination.



RITIS

The Regional Integrated Transportation Information System, or RITIS, is an automated system that supports MATOC activities by:

- Compiling real-time traffic and transit data from agencies around the region;
- Consolidating the data into a common format; and
- Enabling the data to be shared with agencies, the media, and the public.

RITIS was developed by the Center for Advanced Transportation Technology Laboratory at the University of Maryland on behalf of the region. Data provided through RITIS is in daily use by the region's major transportation operations centers.

Glossary of Terms

CATT	Center for Advanced Transportation Technology Laboratory
DDOT	District Department of Transportation
MATOC	Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination Program
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation
NCR	National Capital Region
RITIS	Regional Integrated Transportation Information System
TPB	Transportation Planning Board
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

MATOC Facilitator

The MATOC Facilitator acts as a “communications hub,” ensuring that accurate and timely information on transportation incidents of a regional significance is shared among operations agencies and with the public. In addition to these responsibilities, the Facilitator leads, coordinates, and participates in the development of operating procedures, communications protocols, new system functionality, regional incident management plans, post-incident reviews, and training.

MATOC Steering Committee

To further the regional coordination commitment, Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia and WMATA have collaboratively established the MATOC Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is the governing body of the MATOC Program and works through subcommittees specializing in operations and systems issues.

Schedule

The inaugural year of MATOC operations launched on July 1, 2009. During the first year, MATOC will test and improve its operating procedures. Personnel will be hired to provide coverage for five days a week, 16-hours per day, and for special events. MATOC will expand its scope to include coverage of major arterials. MATOC will also enlarge its information network to include more regional organizations, including local traffic, transit, and public safety agencies. MATOC will define its role and establish procedures for sharing information with the media and public. Finally, MATOC will more precisely define ongoing resource needs, identify stable funding resources, and establish a permanent organizational home.

MATOC

Metropolitan Area Transportation
Operations Coordination

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