

VA/WV/MD/PA Incident Management Meeting

Martinsburg, WV

Friday, April 19th, 2019

The I-81 Corridor Coalition organized and hosted a meeting in Martinsburg, WV on April 19th to discuss traffic incident management issues in the Virginia-West Virginia-Maryland-Pennsylvania border region, and particularly those occurring on Interstate 81.

Those in attendance were: Randy Lilly, Berkeley County Homeland Security; Monica Wesner, PennDOT; Ed Dashiell, Berkeley County Homeland Security; Eddie Smith, Wrenches & Wreckers; Matt Kendall, Franklin County PA EMS; Eric Fogle, MDOT/CHART; Scott Yinger, MDOT/CHART; Kevin Abshire, Big K's Towing; Steve Thomas, HEPMPO; Bill Keller, WVDOH; Jonathan Smith, VSP; Tim Peck, MDOT/SHA-CHART; Barry Stonestreet, MDOT/CHART; George Johnson, VDOT; Jason Bewley, PennDOT; Michelle Abshire, Big K's Towing; Mike Finch, Les's Towing; Jason Hoover, Martinsburg Fire Department; Jeff Wilkerson, City of Martinsburg; Brinton Byers, Berkeley County Emergency Ambulance Authority; Chad Winebrenner, Berkeley County Emergency Ambulance Authority; Glenn Oden, WVDOH; Eric Dubbert, MDOT/CHART; Vic McCusker, SHA Highway; Roy Reid, VDOT; Lester Walls, Jr., Les's Towing; Eddie Gochenour, Berkeley County Homeland Security/Emergency Management; Brian Davis, VSP; Fred Rowe, VSP; Ken Clohan, WVDOH; Jeff Boyer, VDOT; Kevin Jones, Berkeley County Animal Control; Mary Kackley, Berkeley County Central Dispatch/911; Joseph Flanigan, WVSP; Kyle Stephens, Stephens Towing; William George, MSP; Paula Wilson, Berkeley County 911; Brandon Evans, WVANG; Charles Gray, WVANG; Willie Johnson, Berkeley County Sheriff's Office; Carolyn Blanton, I-81 Corridor Coalition.

VDOT

Roy Reid, Regional Traffic Operations Manager, shared some information on proposed upcoming I-81 improvements:

- New Camera – adding 30-40
- New Signs – adding 10-12
- Safety Service Patrol Expansion on I-81

Commercial Truck Parking Pilot Program on I-66

- Available spaces shown on message signs
- Issues we have experienced

Raised question on the proposed bridge/overpass replacement on I-81NB at 3.2mm in WV.

Raised question on email distribution of Commercial motor vehicle restrictions during snow events

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George Johnson, Regional Incident Management Coordinator shared several topics regarding Incident Management:

- The inclusion of Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, VDACS, as part of an incident involving consumable products.
 - Contacted if product is involved in an accident
 - To condemn product if damaged preventing consumers from purchasing tainted good, i.e. meats, produce.
- Open communications between neighboring states that may be impacted from an incident so as we can prepare for congestion.
 - 20 miles of backup due to VDOT losing the interstate from a snow event.
 - Which resulted in problem/solution fact-finding endeavor to prevent it happening again.
 - One of the solutions is to establish using "rate of snow fall" and how to manage the event appropriately, plow trains, use of graders and targeting a problematic area.
- Freeway Traffic Detour Re-Entry Management Concept, which I am changing to Traffic Entry Arterial Management "TEAM" concept.
 - I just came up with this to detour traffic away from detoured traffic.
 - Allowing interstate traffic to flow through a re-entry point at a higher rate by removing normal traffic at that intersection.
 - The challenge
 - We do well in detouring traffic around major incidents, but poorly in bringing traffic back onto the mainline
 - Consequence:
 - Traffic backup along detour routes
 - Gridlock in local communities
 - We have not been successful in managing the impacts of traffic incidents in many cases
- Incident Management Meetings talked about creating or enhancing partnerships
 - That did not exist or were weak due to personnel movement, new hires or retirement.
 - Build a unified command structure that VDOT is a part of
 - VDOT field level commander and the importance of VDOT participating at incidents.
- Instant Tow that uses VSP or county wrecker list
 - Tow is dispatched right after law enforcement to decrease scene time.
 - VDOT pays a stipend of \$35 if a wrecker is not needed or the tow company can go back to the top of the list.

WVDOH

Ken Clohan, District Five Traffic Engineer shared information regarding six projects along I-81

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- I-81 WV Exit 23 to MD Exit 1
 - 4 lanes widening to six lanes
 - Widening and superstructure work on the Potomac River Bridge
 - Completion 2020
 - Joint project is administered by MDSHA
- I-81 Exit 16 Ramp Repair
 - Repair of cloverleaf ramp pavement
 - Temporary closure of inside ramps
 - Possible start Spring 2020
- Rock Cliff Drive Bridge
 - Replacement of two lane bridge
 - Possible start 2019 – one year completion
- I-81 Tabler Station – Apple Harvest Dr
 - 3.6 miles of widening to six lanes
 - Rubblization of concrete pavement
 - Fall 2020 completion
- Inwood (Phase 2)
 - Widening/replacement of WV 51 bridge
 - Roundabouts at ramp intersections
 - Early 2020
- I-81 Mill Creek Overpass
 - Widening/replacement of I-81 bridges
 - Fall 2019 – estimated duration one year

MDOT

Eric Fogle, CHART Regional Manager

- Sunday Enhanced CHART Patrols from May through September
- FITM Routes impacting neighboring states
- New ramps extended on I-81 at I-70 interchange
- Monthly Traffic Advisory Council Meetings held in Washington County
- Current traffic cameras on I-81:
 - I-81 at Showalter just south of MD/PA Line
 - I-81 at I-70
- Proposed and Planned Future Cameras:

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- I-81 at Exit 2 south of U.S. Rt. 11 north of MD/WV Line
- I-81 at U.S. Rt. 40 between I-70 and MD/PA Line
- Proposed Dynamic Message Sign:
 - Southbound I-81 at Maugensville Road south of MD/PA

Tim Peck, MDOT-SHA-CHART

- D. M. Bowman Inc. Secure Truck Parking
 - 176 spaces in a gated area
 - 1 mile north of I-81/70 interchange
 - \$15 day/\$300 monthly
 - Opening May

PennDOT

Monica Wesner, Emergency and Incident Management

Jason Bewley, Maintenance Division/Traffic Division

- Widening projects were completed last year, north and south of Harrisburg, significantly improving the level of service.
- A \$33M project is in preliminary engineering phase to construct an interchange at mile marker 11. The bid letting is scheduled for 2022, resources permitting.
- A previous study regarding the widening I-81 in PA has been refreshed with current costs. The estimate is approximately \$2.9B to widen the first 90 miles, excluding the already-widened sections.
- Highway infrastructure funding is a key issue in PA, with some major funding reform needed in the next 3 years to sustain operations. Federal assistance, to modify the 1993, \$0.0184 gas tax, is being discussed.
- The PennTIME program, led by the PA Turnpike, for traffic incident management has been very successful and is growing, especially in the areas of quick clearance, public education and outreach, technology and training. It's a multi-agency effort.
- The PennSTART project is moving forward, with planned construction in 2022. It's a \$30M facility to be built in State College, in conjunction with Penn State University. It will be a test track for, among other transportation-related things, temporary traffic control tests, incident

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management practices, highly automated vehicle experiments, and training. It will be useable by external stakeholders, such as other states.

- New legislation was passed in 2018 relative to Automated Speed Enforcement in Work Zones. A few number of pilot projects may be deployed in 2019, and more will be deployed in 2020.
- New legislation was passed in 2018 to widen the permissible vehicle width to 102", effectively allowing full-size trucks to travel on all PA roads, unless prohibited by signs. This significantly expands the available trucking network.
- Much median cable guide rail has been installed in the past 2 years to help freeway crossover crashes. As expected, PA is now experiencing more incident management issues, since more crashes are occurring, especially with lane blocking.
- PA relies heavily on the hard work of local, usually voluntary, first responders. PA greatly appreciates their work and understands they have staffing and funding challenges. PA is searching new ways to encourage reliable emergency response from our volunteers and local responders, including traffic control on preplanned detour routes.
- Over 9,000 of our 60,000 emergency responders have received NIMS Incident Management training. This training program has expanded quickly in PA through a good train-the-trainer program.
- During the 2018-19 winter season, PA was more aggressive in implementing traffic restrictions during severe winter storms. The decision to implement restrictions, such as reduced speed limits, vehicle kind/class, or selective closures, is discussed in a multi-agency, collaborative effort before each storm.
- PA participates in TRANSCOM conference calls with NY-area agencies, to discuss traffic restrictions. There's an opportunity to incorporate MD, WV, and VA in this, or similar discussions, for network consistency.

Steve Thomas, HEPMPO

- I-81 in Maryland
 - In Maryland, I-81 is only about 11 miles long or, but there are 9 interchanges within those limits, including one with another major interstate (I-70). There are a large number of traffic movements and pinch points that contribute to congestion and crashes
 - Washington County (MD) applied for INFRA Grant funding through US DOT for the I-81 Widening Project, Phase 2, from Williamsport north to the I-70 interchanges. Of special

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note is that Washington County committed \$1 million in local grant match funding to the application. We expect to hear back sometime in the fall.

- HEPMPO is beginning a special study called the “Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) Plan” that will be created in conjunction with MD State Highway Administration / CHART and Washington County, MD.
 - To identify implementation strategies to effectively manage and operate the existing facilities to their full potential.
 - With capital funding limitations that prohibit capacity expansion of the interstates, TSMO strategies focus on:
 - ITS technologies, communications and other support systems to provide a more cost-effective approach to optimize the flow of traffic during recurring and non-recurring congestion.
 - Some of the focus areas will be work zone management, freight management, ramp management, traffic incident management and access management, among others.

Closing comments

Scott Yinger, Operations Manager – Field Office of CHART & ITS Development – Recapped the meeting and presentations.

- Common issues among those there
- Truck crashes – really on the rise and some reasons
- Tow-truck operators left venerable at crash sites

This meeting turned out to be a great team building event, with positive results and friendships formed. The I-81 Corridor Coalition would like to thank everyone that took the time to make the trek and for being willing participants in all the discussions.