MINUTES OF MEETING (FINAL)

PROJECT: PENNDOT Agreement E00229
Open-end Agreement for ITS, Traffic and Highway Safety Engineering Services
Work Order 015- District 1-0 Regional Operations Plan (ROP)

PURPOSE OF MEETING: NW PA Regional Operations Forum Meeting

LOCATION: Erie Intermodal Center
208 East Bayfront Parkway
Erie, PA 16507

DATE OF MEETING: December 12, 2006

ATTENDEES:

PennDOT Engineering District 1-0 (D-1)
Randy Brink (814-678-7181 / rabrink@state.pa.us)
Tom McClelland (814-678-7157 / thmcclella@state.pa.us)
Cheryl Pastor (814-678-7047 / cpastor@state.pa.us)
Mike Kapp (814-678-7046 / mkapp@state.pa.us)
E. Mariah Hanson (814-678-7078 / emhanson@state.pa.us)
Sue Roach (814-678-7177 / sroach@state.pa.us)

PennDOT Engineering District 10-0 (D-10)
Jason M. Previte (724-357-0133 / jprevite@state.pa.us)
David Tomaswick (724-357-3016 / dtomaswick@state.pa.us)

PennDOT BHSTE
Brenda Murphy (412-429-6038 / bremurphy@state.pa.us)

City of Erie
LeAnn Parmenter (814-870-1379 / lparmenter@erie.pa.us)

EMTA
Lorene McGuire (814-454-4012 / lmcguire@emtaerie.com)
Mike Will (814-452-2801 / mwill@emtaerie.com)

Pennsylvania State Police
Brad Allen (814-898-1641 / brallen@state.pa.us)
Douglas A. McGee (814-898-1641 / dmcgee@state.pa.us)

Erie County Department of Public Safety
Joe Weindorf (814-451-7920 / jweindorf@ecdops.org)
Ann Bloxdorf (814-451-7920 / abloxdorf@ecdops.org)
The purpose of the Regional Operations Forum (ROF) Meeting was to bring together the transportation and planning members of the Northwest PA Region to help discuss the technical direction of operations. The purpose of the meeting is to review the background and development of the plan, as well as discuss critical transportation operations needs and planned projects in the Northwest PA Region.

**Background**

The meeting began with introductions and an overview of the project from Randy Brink. Randy spoke about the importance of the Regional Operations Plan (ROP) for the Northwest PA Region and the key role the attendees at today’s meeting have on the development of the ROP. The ROP introduces more Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to the District 1-0 Region. He made the group familiar with Edwards and Kelcey’s (EK) involvement in the ROP and their recent efforts on the Erie Bayfront Traffic & Planning Study that addressed the deployment of ITS projects for the Erie Metropolitan Area.

Keith Mullins (EK) gave a brief background regarding the ROP. He spoke about the Regional ITS Architecture being the first step in defining the needs of the district and operations that address the needs. Many of the current ROF members were a part of the Regional ITS Architecture development. The Regional Guidance Document was put together for PennDOT to be used in the ROP process so that it can be formatted the same for all Districts. The document goes through a step-by-step process to be followed for the development of the ROP.

The other document that provides a foundation for the ROP is the Transportation Systems Operations Plan (TSOP). The TSOP outlines the operation goals for the state of Pennsylvania. The goals are general for the entire state and each district is to adapt them to their own operational needs. The ROP will be a living document that is to be updated every 2 years. It is being done for all the PennDOT Districts of Pennsylvania and each ROP is following the same format.

**ROP Development**

Keith discussed Operations and how the goal of ITS devices is to help Operations improve the performance of the transportation system. The goal of the ROP is to program projects on the TIP or identify other funding sources. The ROP is a programming effort, not a deployment effort. The ROP is to be completed by July 31st, 2007 in order for projects to be listed on the 2009 TIP.

It was expressed how District 1-0 is behind on the deployment of ITS, but it was made clear that it’s not a bad thing. The Northwest PA Region has the opportunity to set the right goals and do things correctly the first time based on what can be learned from the operations in other districts of the state.

**ROF Purpose**

Keith discussed the purpose of the ROF meeting is to bring together representatives of the transportation and operations departments in the Northwest PA Region. Representation from the planning partners is
also important for verifying the needs and goals of the Regions. There are two (2) ROF meetings set and two (2) workshop meetings planned for stakeholders from the region. Randy Brink made it clear that the Regional Guidance Document will be followed in the development of the ROP, but the amount of meetings will be kept to a minimum to streamline the process.

It is essential to the development of the ROP to have the round table discussions and share ideas on the needs and goals of all agencies in the region. The intent of the Workshop Meeting will be to express a need, identify an operation system that would address the need, and potentially plan a project that the operation would be deployed under.

Mariah Hanson, from PennDOT Program Services, shared the fact that projects need to be incorporated into other projects in order to get funded. The TIP projects are being cut because no funding is available. The NW Commission RPO and Mercer County RPO just finished updating their Long Range Plans. It is important to list specific projects in the Long Range Plan in order for the TIP to give money to them. The Long Range Plan can be updated through an amendment.

EK is reviewing the projects previously planned and/or completed for the region. The projects being reviewed include:

- I-79 ITS Deployment Plan
- Regional ITS Architecture
- Transportation Systems Operation Plan (TSOP)
- ITS Strategic Plan
- Erie Bayfront Traffic & Planning Study

A memorandum summarizing the information on existing and planned projects is to be completed and sent to ROF members. The memo will list the projects reviewed and identify what projects have been deployed in the Northwest PA Region.

**Existing / Planned Operations**

*PennDOT District 1-0*

Randy Brink gave a summary of the existing PennDOT operations projects in the region and identified the locations for additional ITS devices. He identified that much of the ITS equipment in the region now, is from an old manufacturer and does not work efficiently. The I-79/ I-80 Interchange has semi-permanent DMS located in all four directions that need rehabilitation. HAR Beacon signs are operational at several locations in the region and more are anticipated for deployment. The deployments of five (5) DMS are in construction along I-90. The gateway from Ohio to Pennsylvania on I-80 has plans for an overhead DMS to be a welcome board into PA. There is need for more HAR and VMS to be deployed in the region.

The interconnection of traffic signals is another identified need for Erie, including the Bayfront Connector, 12th Street and the Bayfront Parkway. The City of Erie ideally maintains all the traffic signals. Summit and Millcreek Township operate their own traffic signals. Cameras are needed to monitor traffic conditions from a TMC. CCTV and high speed communication is needed in order to be able to monitor traffic operations.
Currently the traffic operations are controlled out of Oil City, PA, where dial-up connection is used to change the messages on DMS. The hours of operation are 7:30am to 4:30 pm and in the event of an incident the police call PennDOT to change the DMS message. Each PennDOT county maintenance division operates their own DMS. A new TMC operation is necessary for more ITS devices to be deployed and operating efficiently in the Region. The TMC in District 11-0 is planning to operate 24/7 and will control operations in District 1-0 when this transition is complete. There is no TIP funding for any planned PennDOT projects with the exception of some signal projects.

**PennDOT District 10-0 (Clarion County)**

PennDOT District 10-0 (Clarion County) is currently deploying DMS on I-80. The entire I-80 corridor is in-construction with DMS at every interchange in the east and west directions. HAR transmitters are being located at the interchanges and Type B signs at the cross streets to I-80 for traveler information in advance of getting on the interstate. All of these devices will run on dial-up connections. Federal funds were used for this project. No other ITS is planned for Clarion County at this time. The signs will be controlled by D-10 and D-11 in off-hours.

**EMTA Plans**

EMTA confirmed the deployment of Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) systems in Spring 2007 that there is TIP money for. This includes kiosks in the downtown business locations including, the Convention Center, Library, Hamot Hospital and Erie Insurance. A new EMTA facility that is connected with Paratransit Services is planned and also has dedicated funding on the TIP.

**Erie County Department of Public Safety**

Joe Weindorf of the Erie County Department of Public Safety (ECDOPS) discussed the new building plans to be located in Summit. It is an $18 million facility which will consolidate seven (7) individual dispatch centers. The project offers a wireless network for the entire County of Erie. The ECDOPS can share the technology with PennDOT and help make possible easier connections to ITS devices through a portable network. The wireless network will permit the use of lap tops anywhere in the City of Erie. The current plan is for the Emergency Management Agency and Public Safety to work out of one building and have wireless network working in August 2007. By the Spring of 2008, the plan is for all seven (7) dispatch centers to be consolidated into one unit.

**PSP**

The Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) are looking to purchase land in Clarion County for a consolidated dispatch center. The PSP are waiting on the fully operational 800 MHz radio system. The current PSP operation at the time of an incident is for the PSP to call PennDOT. PennDOT can then change messages on DMS and alert travelers to an incident.

**Questions / Comments**

The ROF Meeting brought to the table a lot of discussions on the current plans and future needs of each agency in the Northwest PA Region. The regional needs and priorities will be discussed at Workshop #1 to verify that they are the same for all stakeholders. If additional information is needed or documents
wanted about the ROP, the ROP website is www.paits.org/rop. The website includes updated information on meetings, ROP background and the process.

Next Steps / Action Items

The Workshop has been set for January 24th at 1:00 pm at the PennDOT District 1-0 Office.

- Workshop Meeting #1 invitation will be sent out to stakeholders;
- EK will Review/Update the Existing and Planned Projects Memorandum and send to ROF members;
- The planning partners will be encouraged to attend the Workshop;
- EMTA will provide EK with a project description on their AVL deployment;
- EK will contact Sue Roach and D-10 for information on Traffic Signal Systems in D-1;

We believe the foregoing minutes to be an accurate summary of the meeting and related decisions. Failing written notification to the contrary, after ten (10) days, we will consider these minutes a statement of facts.

Minutes prepared by:

Keith R. Mullins, P.E.
Edwards and Kelcey

cc: All Meeting Attendees
    EK Project File 040015.038
    EK Project Team