

BRISTOL REGIONAL ITS ARCHITECTURE UPDATE KICK-OFF MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: October 26, 2016

MEETING TIME: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

MEETING LOCATION: Bristol Municipal Annex

ATTENDEES:

- Tim Beavens, City of Bristol, TN
- Jay Detrick City of Bristol, VA
- Mathew Justice, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- Rex Montgomery, Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization (MTPO)
- Donny Necessary, VDOT
- Corey Osborne, First Tennessee Rural Planning Organization (RPO)
- Rashad Pinckney, Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)
- Joe Roach, TDOT
- Tyler Vencill, Town of Abingdon
- Tom Fowler, Kimley-Horn
- Terrance Hill, Kimley-Horn

SUBJECT: Bristol Regional ITS Architecture Update – Project Kick-Off Workshop

INTRODUCTIONS

Terrance Hill, with Kimley-Horn, welcomed everyone and thanked the stakeholders for their participation in the update of the Bristol Regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Architecture. He also introduced the consultant team managing the update of the Regional ITS Architecture.

PROJECT OVERVIEW PRESENTATION

Terrance and Tom Fowler, also with Kimley-Horn, gave a presentation on the Bristol Regional ITS Architecture Update project. The presentation included an overview of ITS, explanation of a regional ITS architecture, and a description of the steps that will be followed to update the Bristol Regional ITS Architecture.

The purpose of a regional ITS architecture is to provide a vision and framework for the deployment, integration, and operation of ITS. The regional ITS architecture is also necessary in order to meet the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) ITS architecture conformity guidelines, which require that any ITS projects funded with federal transportation funds conform to a regional ITS architecture. Although updating the regional ITS architecture does not guarantee funding for a region, it does allow the region to be eligible for federal funding of ITS projects.

In addition to the Kick-off Workshop, there will be a series of stakeholder interviews conducted in October and November. The purpose of the interviews will be to identify any changes that have occurred since the Bristol Regional ITS Architecture was completed in 2008, identify ITS needs, document any current and planned ITS projects, and develop a list of project needs. Once the interviews have been completed, a Draft Regional ITS Architecture and Deployment Plan Update report will be developed. A second workshop, tentatively to be held in January, will allow stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the document before it is finalized.

A list of stakeholder agencies that were invited to participate in the process was also presented. Attendees were to identify any missing stakeholders from the list. Everyone in attendance was encouraged to extend an invitation to anyone else within their own agency that they thought might be interested in participating. The following is a list of additional agencies or organizations that the stakeholders in attendance agreed should be included in the update process:

- Bristol Tennessee Transit
- Bristol Virginia Transit
- Railroad Operators
- District Three Public Transit

It was also mentioned that the boundaries of the MPO have changed since the last update of the regional ITS architecture. Bluff City is now within the Johnson City MTPO planning area boundaries.

Additionally, as the region continues to grow, Bristol, VA will likely surpass Bristol, TN in terms of total population. If this occurs, Bristol, VA will become the lead agency of the MPO. It is estimated that there are between 250,000 and 300,00 people in the region.

EXISTING AND PLANNED ITS PROJECTS

Terrance Hill led a discussion to identify any new projects that have been deployed or planned in the Region since the completion of the Regional ITS Architecture in 2008. The inventory will assist the project team in preparing a Draft Regional ITS Architecture and Deployment Plan Update for the next workshop. The following is a summary of ITS deployments and projects identified by the stakeholders in attendance at the workshop:

Bristol, Tennessee

- The City uses TDOT's portable dynamic message signs (DMS) for the races at Bristol Motor Speedway (BMS).
- There are a limited number of cameras located near and at BMS that were installed for security purposes by the Bristol Police Department. However, these cameras are frequently used for monitoring of traffic during races event, but they have limited visibility along roadways.
- The City would like to install closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras along several key corridors including US 11E and SR 394.
- The Police Department also has CCTV cameras in downtown Bristol along with emergency call boxes. The Police Department CCTV cameras are used primarily for law enforcement and are generally not located in areas that allow for traffic monitoring.

- The City would like to have central control of the it's traffic signals, especially the one located on routes that lead to BMS.
- Implementation of emergency vehicle preemption is potential project for certain signals in the City.

Bristol, Virginia

- The City of Bristol, VA is an independent city that provides its own services related to emergency and roadway maintenance and construction.
- There are several signals within the City, primarily at interstate ramps, that are controlled by VDOT.
- There is no centralized control of signals, but the City would like to implement this in the future.
- The City does have video detection at some of their signals, and those detection cameras can also obtain turning movement counts.

Town of Abingdon

- The Town of Abingdon is an independent city in Virginia that provides its own services related to emergency and roadway maintenance and construction.
- District Three Public Transit provides transit in rural locations in Virginia including the Town of Abingdon.
- There are several signals within the City, primarily at interstate ramps, are controlled by VDOT.
- The City does employ video detection at a few signals.

VDOT

- Near exit 10 along I-81, there is a truck over height detection system with flashing beacons and a nearby DMS for each direction of travel.
- There are currently four DMS in the region including one in Tennessee northbound on I-81 and one on I-381 northbound. Additionally, there are cameras located along I-81.
- VDOT frequently uses portable DMS in the Bristol region especially for the races at BMS.
- VDOT's Safety Service Patrol (SSP) traverse I-81 from the state line north to exit 22, which is the boundary of the MPO. They provide services such as tire changes, jump start, fuel in addition to incident management and emergency response. Currently, there is one truck that operates in the Bristol Region.
- The SSP operators have direct communication with the Virginia State Police (VSP), and #77 is the number that motorists can dial to contact VSP if they are in distress and need assistance. VSP will often dispatch the SSP vehicles
- Emergency Vehicle Preemption is available to local agencies on VDOT owned signals, but the emergency management agencies would need to incur all the associated costs. There is signal at exit 19 that is proposed to have preemption when constructed.
- There is a queue detection system on both ramps of exit 7 and exit 17. This system monitors the queues that form on the ramps, and if the queues become too long, the signal will respond by providing a green indication flush traffic from the ramps.
- Contractors working for VDOT have AVL on their maintenance vehicles for work along the interstate.
- The Virginia Roads website (virginiaroads.org) allows the public to obtain a multitude of information that VDOT provides including crash data, snow plow locations (for Northern Virginia), existing and future projects, maps, toll, and pavement conditions.

- The Virginia 511 website has traffic data including the ability to view messages on the DMS and CCTV cameras and road work.
- Snow plow locations will be available for the entire state in the near future.
- There is a redundant fiber line that runs from exit 10 to exit 71 on VDOT right-of-way that may be available to use for ITS deployment.

ITS NEEDS

Tom and Terrance also led a discussion on the Region's ITS needs. The following general regional needs were identified:

- One of VDOT's long-term goals is to establish a traffic management center (TMC) located in Bristol as the current TMC for the Bristol District is located in Salem.
- VDOT proposed the idea of establishing a bi-state regional TMC that would be a joint venture between TDOT and VDOT and could incorporate all the cities in the -Tri-Cities Region.
- VDOT would like additional DMS and CCTV cameras along I-81 for 100 percent coverage in the interstate.
- VDOT would like better coordination with local agencies regarding detouring vehicles onto arterials during an incident on the interstate that causes a complete closure. This would include signal coordination.
- Lack of funding is the primary deterrent to implementing new ITS related projects.
- Improved signal coordination between Bristol, TN; Bristol, VA; and VDOT.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

Terrance Hill thanked everyone for their participation. Stakeholders were encouraged to contact any of the project team members if they had any questions or if they would like to add additional items to the ITS inventory or needs. Contact information is included below:

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