

KINGSPORT REGIONAL ITS ARCHITECTURE UPDATE KICK-OFF MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: October 25, 2016

MEETING TIME: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

MEETING LOCATION: The Improvement Building

ATTENDEES:

- Mark Best, Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)
- Michelle Bradburn, TDOT
- Troy Ebbert, Kingsport Metro Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)
- Preston Elliott, RPM Transportation
- Tim Elsea, City of Kingsport
- Donny Necessary, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- Chris Osborne, First Tennessee Rural Planning Organization
- Rashad Pinckney, TDOT
- Brett Randolph, VDOT
- Joe Roach, TDOT
- Nicholas Renna, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Michael Thompson, City of Kingsport
- Terrance Hill, Kimley-Horn
- Tom Fowler, Kimley-Horn

SUBJECT: Kingsport Metro 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 Kingsport 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 Kingsport Metro 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 Kingsport Metro 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 Kingsport Metro 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, 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 asked 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. Hawkins County Emergency Management is an additional agency that the stakeholders in attendance agreed should be included in the update process:

EXISTING AND PLANNED ITS PROJECTS

Terrance and Tom 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:

Kingsport

- The City has moved from a closed loop system to a centrally controlled signal system using Centracos and Econolite controllers. The City can also view traffic conditions utilizing cameras at the signals that are used for detection.
- Fiber optic cable was installed along certain corridors for the central signal system.
- The City has no signal preemption for railroads since most crossings are grade separated. There are only three at-grade railroad crossings in the City.
- Coordination with VDOT may be necessary in the future as the US 23 corridor continues to develop.
- Emergency vehicle preemption has not been installed at any of the signals. It was used in the past, but the fire department currently does not want to use it.
- The City of Kingsport maintains the signals in the City of Church Hill and the Town of Mt. Carmel.

TDOT

- TDOT would like to install closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras along I-26 at major interchanges from the state line to Johnson City; however, this project is at least five or more years from implementation.
- CCTV cameras and dynamic message signs (DMS) have been installed along I-81 near the interchange with I-26.
- Highway advisory radios (HAR) have also been installed in the region.

- TDOT freeway service patrol (HELP) vehicles are deployed in the Kingsport Region during major traffic incidents (such as rock slides), severe weather, or special events (primarily races at Bristol Motor Speedway [BMS]). However, TDOT does not anticipate that traffic will warrant full-time deployment in the next five to ten years.
- Protect the queue trucks are vehicles that are deployed and help warn drivers that there is stopped traffic ahead. These trucks are located throughout the state.
- Mark Dykes of TDOT provides training for incident management and protect the queue program to local agencies.
- The Tennessee Highway Patrol will be relocating their dispatch to the TDOT Region 1 Traffic Management Center (TMC) in Knoxville.

VDOT

- The traffic signals along the US 23 corridor now have video cameras detection cameras. Additionally, CCTV cameras have been deployed at the intersection of US 23 and Wadlow Gap Road.
- VDOT would like to install DMS along the US 23 corridor entering in both directions. Weber City has a major alternate route into and out of Kingsport. This location would be a prime location for a DMS to give drivers the decision on which route to take.
- Snow plows have AVL and the location of the plows will be available to the public in southern Virginia in the near future.
- There is a narrow gap in Weber City containing US 23 and a rail line that connects Weber City with Gate City. If an incident occurs in this location, vehicles must detour as much as 50 miles.
- 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.

Kingsport Metro TPO

- The TPO would like to implement freeway service patrol vehicles similar to the TDOT HELP trucks along I-26 from the Virginia state line to the North Carolina state line. It was noted that Johnson City is possibly starting a similar program sponsored by the MTPO in the Johnson City Region.
- The school system would like AVL on their buses, and NET Trans, which provides public transit for rural areas in Tennessee near Kingsport, may already have AVL on their busses.
- The MPO would like DMS installed along I-81 near the SR 93 exit to allow drivers the ability to make a decision to use that exit when traveling toward Kingsport region from the south.

ITS NEEDS

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

- The City of Kingsport would like better communication with TDOT regarding incidents and rerouting of traffic from the interstates. TDOT has developed a manual that outlines proposed alternatives for incidents along the interstate.

- There is good coordination for the BMS races among area agencies as they have meetings twice a year. However, it was noted that the City of Kingsport Public Works is not involved during table top exercises for BMS.
- Nicholas Renna of FHWA informed the City of Kingsport and the TPO that they can compete a Traffic Incident Management (TIM) self-assessment to evaluate their traffic incident management programs and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Donny Necessary with VDOT noted that their incident management reviews that are done on a regular basis really help the agencies with improving their handling of incidents. However, Donny noted that these review should occur within a week of incident to get good participation from agencies.
- Joe Roach with TDOT mentioned that he thinks that for any incident that closes the road more than two hours, an after action review by TDOT is required.
- The Kingsport Metro TPO is very interested in looking at funding opportunities to move the CCTV camera deployment forward.

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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