



To: Craig Abernathy, MDT

From: Jerry Stephens, MSU

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jerry Stephens'.

Date: 6/17/2013

Subject: Minutes of WIM/ATR Project Kickoff Meeting, June 6, 2013

The WIM/ATR Project Kickoff Meeting was held at 12:00 on June 6, 2013 in the Commission Room at MDT Headquarters in Helena, MT.

Present at the meeting were:

WTI/MSU

Jerry Stephens, PI
David Veneziano, Co-PI
Shane Forsythe, Grad Student

MT Tech

Yan Qi, Co-PI

FHWA

Jeff Patten

MDT

Craig Abernathy, Research Programs
Chris Dorrington, Data and Statistics Bureau
Ted Little, Data and Statistics Bureau
Becky Duke, Data and Statistics Bureau
Kate Callin, Research Programs
Dan Hill, Pavement Design
Hal Fossum, Planning
Dennis Hult, Motor Carrier Services

The meeting opened at 12:00 pm with introductions. Craig Abernathy then reviewed the contract obligations and communication protocols for the project.

Jerry Stephens then reviewed the Research Plan with the Technical Panel (see attached PowerPoint presentation). This review closely followed the project proposal, which was frequently referred to during the presentation (the full proposal is available at: http://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/research/external/docs/research_proj/wim/proposal.pdf). Comments during the discussion of each project task (generally offered as clarification/further definition of these tasks) included:

Task 0 – Project Management

This project involves extensive collaboration between the research team and MDT personnel. All communications on administrative matters (i.e., budget, scheduling and other contract matters) and formal deliverables will be channeled through Craig Abernathy at MDT and Jerry Stephens at MSU. To facilitate project progress, interchanges on technical matters can occur directly between MDT personnel and members of the project team, with Craig Abernathy and Jerry Stephens copied on any such communication.

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Mountains & Minds

Task 1 – State-of-the-Practice Review

Use of new technologies such as Bluetooth, cell phones, etc. in traffic monitoring should be included as part of the review of the state-of-the-practice. Information should be collected as possible on calibration procedures used by states (e.g., basic approach and frequency). Similarly, information should be collected as possible on systems/processes used by states to manage the WIM/ATR equipment they have deployed in the field.

Task 2 – Program Description/Inventory

A good inventory of the WIM/ATR equipment that MDT has deployed in the field exists, but processes/procedures for using this information in managing this equipment may be lacking. At the conclusion of Tasks 1 and 2, recommendations should be made on possible improvements in a) how equipment condition and associated maintenance requirements are assessed and reported, and b) how this information is acted on in managing upkeep/replacement requirements.

Traffic data is also collected by MPOs, counties, etc. This project should address how this data can be integrated into the state's program.

Task 3 – Data Collection/Analysis/Presentation

This task includes (among many other things) identifying significant traffic flows associated with specific economic activity, in specific parts of the state, and at specific times of the year. Relative to scope, this task could begin by simply generally (but formally) documenting any such known traffic events (i.e., their nature, general location, time of occurrence, routes that are affected, etc.), with some form of associated assessment of their relative importance and potential impacts. Once this step is completed, further work on this part of this task can be discussed with the Technical Panel.

Task 4 – Identification of Data Users

Ted Little will share with the research team a graphic he has showing the entities that use data provided by the Traffic Data Collection and Analysis Section. Road designers and traffic engineers need to be included in the list of current data users. In speaking with data users, every effort will be made to identify the benefit realized through the use of the data, and the assignment of a dollar value to this benefit.

Task 5 – Assessment of Adequacy of Data Collection Effort

This task includes determination of the cost-to-benefit ratio of MDT's data collection, analysis and dissemination efforts. Determining the value of the benefits realized by these activities could be a challenging task; it may be possible to offer both conservative and best-guess estimates in this regard.

There are some powerful, graphics based data display formats available that should be addressed as part of this project.

Task 6 – Review of Traffic Factor Groups

It was noted that historically a large number of traffic data monitoring sites have been perceived as necessary by other analysts to capture variations in traffic patterns around the state.

Task 7 – Planning/Prioritization of New Sites

It was re-iterated that the methodology to be developed for prioritizing future WIM deployments is expected to provide input on, rather than necessarily fully determine any such priorities. There may often/always be elements of professional judgment involved in these prioritizations.

Task 8 – Reporting

Task reports will be delivered throughout the duration of the project as each of Tasks 1 -7 are completed. These task reports will be followed by a final report, essentially assembled from the task reports.

The project schedule was reviewed following the above discussion of the work to be done. The project start date is May 1, 2013; the end date, January 31, 2015.

MDT's involvement in each project task was summarized. In light of the nature of this project, MDT's active participation is essential. MDT and the research team discussed working collaboratively in this regard, particularly relative to formulating and responding to information requests.

At the conclusion of the meeting the technical panel and the research team discussed various future activities on Tasks 1, 2 and 3. Activities on Task 1 - Review of the State-of-the-Practice - dominated this discussion, as this task is the first to be completed on the project. As part of Task 1, the research team will be contacting other states regarding their WIM/ATR practices. The group reviewed a draft of the proposed questions to be asked, as well as what states should be contacted. Yan Qi from the research team indicated that she would update this draft of the questions and send it electronically to TDCA for further comment, with such comments expected back within a couple of weeks.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.