

**REGIONAL CONCEPTS OF OPERATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS** (Includes Committee report of June 30, 2003, FHWA White Paper of February 6, 2003 and attachments)

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The Committee on Developing a Regional Concept for Managing Surface Transportation Operations submitted a letter report to Mr. Jeffrey Paniati, Associate Administrator of Operations and Acting Director of the ITS Joint Program Office for FHWA, dated June 30, 2003. This committee was convened by the TRB, in response to an FHWA request. The following section provides a summary of the letter and selected attachment items:

**Purpose**

- The committee was “charged with conducting a workshop to obtain stakeholder input on developing the Regional Concept of Operations approach.”
- Improve transportation system performance through **improved customer service and emergency response**
- Basis is a **shared** vision of transportation system operators and service providers

**Committee Findings and Recommendations**

- Building and maintaining a **multi-jurisdictional approach** is a key to success of operating regional transportation systems more effectively.
- Although many technological solutions have been developed and deployed, they only provide part of an answer in dealing with transportation challenges of metropolitan areas. **Jurisdictional fragmentation and varying agency priorities** pose major challenges to achieving a necessary level of consistent regional deployment and integrated operations to fully capitalize on new technology and functional concepts.
- Some areas are already using innovative approaches to improve regional collaboration and coordination, such as TRANSCOM (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut), Southern California, Maricopa Association of Governments (Arizona), and MTC in San Francisco Bay Area.
- High priority should be given to aggressively extending FHWA efforts toward supporting improvement of *regional* transportation operations.
- In order to support regional transportation operations, FHWA should give guidance through a leadership coalition, national leadership and guidance, offer education and training, conduct research, and address funding needs.
- During the reauthorization for TEA-21 (a.k.a. SAFETEA), every opportunity should be taken to encourage improvement of regional operations, including providing incentives and seed money.
- The term “Regional Concept of Operations” should be replaced with “**Regional Transportation Operations Strategy (RTOS)**.” The acronym “CONOPS” should no longer be used either.
- The term “operations” needs to be defined consistently with AASHTO’s definition in all FHWA efforts.

*FHWA Documentation Summary*

**Regional Transportation Operations Strategy (RTOS)**

- RTOS should define:
  - ❖ expectations
  - ❖ processes
  - ❖ roles
  - ❖ resources
- Current efforts of various regions generally parallel the approaches in FHWA's Primer, entitled "Regional Transportation Operations Collaboration and Coordination – A Primer for Working Together to Improve Transportation Safety, Reliability, and Security."
- 5 key elements: Structure, Process, Products, Resources, and Performance
- Long-term or vision of concept of operations is a **forum** (venue) in which owner-operators and service providers commit to the Regional Concept of Operations approach. 3-year to 5-year "shared set of expectations" collaboratively among operators, service providers, and public safety officials, and buy-in of transportation planning agencies.
- **Transportation security, safety, and congestion mitigation** are motivating issues to bridging the significant barriers and challenges of inter-jurisdictional interests.
- The focus of an RTOS should be on "outcomes", rather than "process." Stressing the outcomes and potential benefits, rather than detailing a rigid process with a single-model approach, will help region's acceptance of the RTOS approach.
- Additional service improvements through an RTOS approach to the customer identified by the committee includes, but not limited to:
  - ❖ Reduced delay and improved reliability for passenger and freight movements
  - ❖ Concentration of regional traffic on regional roadways, rather than on local roads and streets
  - ❖ Consistent transit fare policies and schedules
  - ❖ Improved safety on major regional facilities
  - ❖ Improved traffic operations during major emergencies and special events
  - ❖ Increased reliability and faster emergency response times
  - ❖ More consistent, timely and accurate weather and travel information
- FHWA White Paper suggests that the Regional Concept of Operations (or RTOS) should serve as strategic management tool to assist in guiding a region's expectations and activities. It should set forth the strategy to achieve transportation operations and performance goals that may include policies, programs, protocols, procedures, and projects. This document should be created by system operators and managers and shared by transportation and public safety policy officials, executives, and policy boards.
- A contractual framework, such as a simple Memorandum of Understanding, is suggested for developing and implementing the RTOS. The form and content should be guided by previous agreements, relationships, and experiences between operators and service providers.
- Attachment C – "Elements to be Considered by a Region in Establishing a RTOS" was included within the letter and contains a useful list for consideration.