ITS/Intermodal Freight Operational Test Project

listening sessions

proceedings

prepared for

U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
Office of Intermodalism

prepared by

Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

in association with

VZM/TranSystems

January 29, 1999

listening sessions proceedings

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Cambridge Systematics, Inc.
150 CambridgePark Drive, Suite 4000
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

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January 29, 1999

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Re: Listening Sessions Proceedings

Dear Attendee:

Enclosed you will find a summary, notes, and the slide presentation from the meeting you attended this fall to discuss information technology and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) applications across the intermodal freight system that can enhance productivity and safety. The "listening session" was conducted as part of a new initiative in which the U.S. DOT will solicit and fund proposals for operational tests to demonstrate improvements in intermodal freight operations from information sharing.

Listening sessions were held in Seattle, Norfolk, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and New York City. The objectives of each session were to assess the market for an ITS/intermodal freight program and to discuss the scope of ITS/intermodal freight operational tests.

If you are interested in the proceedings from any one of the other five listening sessions that were held, you may find the proceedings on the Cambridge Systematics website at http://webservices.camsys.com/national.htm under the U.S. DOT ITS/Intermodal Freight Operational Test Database icon. Please feel free to call me at (617) 354-0167 if you have any questions about the listening sessions or the operational test project.

Sincerely,

CAMBRIDGE SYSTEMATICS, INC.

Cathy Erickson
Senior Associate

CLE/ef/6560
Enclosure

Houston Listening Session

Memorandum

TO: Chip Wood, U.S. DOT Secretary's Office of Intermodalism

FROM: Lance R. Grenzeback

DATE: December 13, 1998

RE: Houston Listening Session – Meeting Notes
ITS/Intermodal Freight Program
December 9, 1998

The meeting was held in Conference Room C at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons, Houston, Texas. A list of attendees is attached to this memorandum.

SUMMARY

The objectives of the meeting were to assess the market for an ITS/intermodal freight program; and discuss the scope of an RFP for ITS/intermodal freight operational tests. The following issues were discussed:

Market

Impediments to intermodal freight movement

- Congestion at the ports is a continuing problem. More attention must be given to basic operational problems, including traffic signals, on major truck routes.
- The TxDOT I-10 ITS Early Deployment Study identified intermodal freight problems along I-10, including the Houston area. One of the findings was that drivers frequently lost their way trying to get into and out of the Port of Houston.
- Increases in NAFTA trade through the Texas ports has created new bottlenecks and strained some facilities. A recent TxDOT study estimated the impact to transportation facilities at $500 million.
- The problems created by the UP-SP railroad merger have heightened awareness of freight movement problems and their impact on the Houston economy.
- Texas has submitted a proposal under TEA-21 Sections 1118 and 1119 for an I-69 corridor management program.

- Houston does not currently have a forum at which the public and private sectors can meet to discuss freight movement issues.
- The Houston traffic management system does not yet collect information on the arterial routes that are most used by motor carriers moving containers to and from the port.

Current IT (information technology) and ITS applications to intermodal freight operations

- The TxDOT Multimodal office is currently working on development of a model of the movement of containers along the Gulf region.
- The focus of the TranStar traffic management system, a joint venture of TxDOT, Harris Co., the City, and Metro Transit Authority, is linking traffic and incident management.
- TxDOT is working with Customs to streamline the clearance of truck across the international border.
- TxDOT will soon implement a fully automated system for issuing permits for trucks carrying oversize/overweight loads.
- TxDOT and local governments are studying the feasibility of congestion pricing as part of a study of a four-lane special-use managed facility on I-10 west of Houston.
- Sea-Land has invested $5 million system in its freight information tracking and management system; the system will go into operation in April.

Opportunities for public-private cooperation to accelerate the application of ITS to intermodal freight operations

- Provide direct video feeds of traffic conditions to motor carrier and port terminal managers; this information would be especially useful when accidents or flooding occur.
- Develop models of truck trip-generation patterns (in-bound and out-bound) at the port; use this information to manage traffic signals and traffic along the port access corridors.
- Install transponder readers along truck routes to and from the ports; use trucks, containers, or chassis equipped with transponder tags as traffic probes; provide information on traffic flows to motor carriers and terminal managers.
- Use toll or other transponders to provide better and more timely information on hazardous materials involved in truck accidents.

RFP

Scope of operational tests and anticipated benefits

- The region should demonstrate a clear understanding of its problems and how different stakeholders are affected; any project must benefit the private sector as well as the government.

- The longer-term impacts of the operational test should be spelled out, especially responsibility for the cost of the long-term operation and maintenance of any system developed under the operational test.

- The motor carrier industry wants an universal tag, not a different tag for every application; e.g., tolls, port access, weigh station clearance, etc.

Operational test roles and responsibilities

- Operational test funds could be managed by the TxDOT, the MPO, TTI, etc. Funds could be passed through to private sector participants if they are active partners in the test.

- The Houston-Galveston Area Council is interested in having follow-up discussions with the public and private sector.

- The Texas Motor Transportation Association and the Texas Intermodal Truckers Association would be a good way to involve the carriers.

Proposal submission and selection process

- Competition for the ITS/Intermodal Freight Program operational test funds will be open and competitive.

- The U.S. DOT will post a copy of the consultants' report on their website; notify participants of the Federal Register listing of the RFP; and provide a copy of the RFP to meeting participants.

Attachments

Agenda

- Introductions
- Opening Remarks
  - Purpose of the Program
  - Session Objectives
- Participant Perspectives of Intermodal Freight Issues and Bottlenecks
- Discussion – one hour
- Break
- ITS Initiatives and Opportunities
- Presentation on ITS/Intermodal Freight Program: Preliminary Recommendations
- Private Perspectives on Testing Intermodal Concepts
- Next Steps

List of Attendees

Houston Listening Session, December 9, 1998

Chip Wood, U.S. DOT

John Basilotto, TTI

Pat Younger, Port of Houston

Rick Couch, Sea-Land

Gene Schroeder, TxDOT-Austin

Les Findeisen, TMTA

Gary Conner, Empire Truck Lines

Chris Olavson, TxDOT-Houston

Mark Olson, FHWA-Austin

Karo Hackett, G-GAC

Jim Randall, TxDOT-Multimodal

Alan Clark, H-GAC Director

Lance Grenzeback, Cambridge Systematics

Carl Seiberlich, VZM/TranSystems

Thomas Smith, Port of Houston

Eddie Fuller, Port of Houston

Jena Moreno, Houston Chronicle

Marcia Faschingauer, Excargo

Richard Walker, MARAD

Earl Washington, H-GAC

Jerry Bobo, H-GAC

Travis Black, H-GAC

Houston Listening Session Notes

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

Opened meeting at about 9:10 a.m. Explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss ITS applications that would benefit intermodal freight movement. Key issue is: How can we make public and private information available for public sector traffic management and private sector asset management? Asked for self-introductions. (See attached attendance list.)

Congress has funded ITS programs for some years, but we are at the end of the grace period for ITS for intermodal freight applications. Congress would like to see actual deployments of ITS applications for intermodal freight.

We are looking for input from state, local, and private officials. What are the opportunities to share public and private platforms (e.g., traffic management and cargo tracking) to improve intermodal freight movement? We need to show that ITS deployments yield benefits for freight community and intermodal operations.

We have held listening sessions in four areas; Houston is the fifth of six listening sessions. The last one will be in NYC next week. We will combine the results of listening sessions with information from other studies and conferences into a report to be delivered in January 1999. The report will serve as resource document for a request for proposals (RFP) to be issued by the U.S. DOT in February. The RFP will solicit proposals for ITS/ intermodal operational tests.

Up to $500K to be given to one or more entities to test improvements in operations from information sharing. Our deadline is to close the RFP process in March 1999, and make the operational test awards in April. We believe that this process will address Congressional interest in intermodal applications of ITS. If the operational tests are successful, the tests will convince people of value of ITS for freight and intermodal operations, and the program will grow. If there is no interest, then the program will not be funded further.

Reviewed agenda items. We would like to review ITS and freight applications from the states' perspectives; then the MPO's perspective; then open the floor for discussion. We would like to hear your opinions on the question: What are your priorities for data interchange applications? At 10:45 a.m., we will give you a short presentation on what we have learned about IT and possible ITS applications for intermodal freight operations. In the second half of our discussions we will focus on what should be done in Houston. If there is an ITS/intermodal operational test in Houston, who would participate? Who might run it? What would be the focus of the test? What selection criteria should be include in the RFP?

Chris Olavson/TxDOT-Houston

Welcomed meeting participants on behalf of Texas DOT's Houston office. We are interested to see what we can do to improve freight movement in the region. Freight issues are not new to TxDOT, but we recognized the increasing importance of good freight move-

ment for international trade and the economic health of Houston and Texas. Al Kosik (of TxDOT) may join us later; he has been directing much of TxDOT's work in the freight and ITS areas. Gene Schroeder, who works with Al Kosik, can provide the group with a briefing on the ITS Early Deployment Program work we have been doing on the I-10. That study identified freight movement bottlenecks and related problems, some of which might be addressed by ITS.

Jim Randall/TxDOT-Multimodal

My office is responsible for issues involving the Gulf and coastal freight movement; rail operations; bicycle transport; and research on container movements along the Texas Gulf coast. We are. Our role is to support the districts. TxDOT is divided into 25 districts, and the districts take the lead of identifying and developing transportation projects, including freight projects. The Houston district is on the front line in this work.

I would echo what Chris said, that the increase in trade through our ports because of NAFTA has impacted our transportation system creating new bottlenecks and straining some facilities. We are eager to look at ways of improving freight service.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

TxDOT has just completed and submitted a report to the legislature about the impact of NAFTA on transportation needs. The impact was estimated at $500 million dollars.

Chris Olavson/TxDOT-Houston

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) also has published a report (based on 1996 data) that describes the impact of NAFTA trade. The report shows that over one million containers move across the border; much of it moving up I-35 and onto I-30. Even in Texarkana we are seeing 60,000(?) units annually. We expect this traffic will shift to I-69 when that route is upgraded, but the overall impact of NAFTA and freight movement on the state's highway infrastructure has been large.

The MPO has submitted three proposals for funding under the TEA-21 freight corridors and international gateways program (Section 1118 and 1119). One proposal is for an I-69 corridor management program; the other two are to upgrade an interchange and add grade separations in Montgomery County. These are freight issues because the crossings are not safe, but they are not ITS issues.

The TranStar system, which is a joint venture of TxDOT, Harris Co., the City, and Metro Transit Authority, is the core of our traffic management program. Our focus is linking traffic and incident management.

Mark Olson/FHWA-Austin

The ITS Early Deployment Program Study for the I-10 corridor from San Antonio to New Orleans is just now wrapping up; the final report will be submitted soon. The report identifies many issues with intermodal freight movement along the corridor. Among the more surprising problems identified was the fact that many drivers lost their way getting to port. Drivers work all over the country and change jobs frequently, so many are not as familiar with the port access routes we expected. The report recommended, as an immediate action, better signing, especially in the Houston area. Other issues identified by the

truckers were rough pavements in part of the corridor. We anticipated that the drivers would complain about delays for safety inspections since we had heard that complaint from dispatchers, but this apparently was not a major issue for the drivers.

TranStar is a multi-organizational group. Its primary focus is helping to respond to accidents. We have similar efforts going on in San Antonio and other areas of the state, working with the fire and police. The major need that shows up is for better communications among cities and areas so that people can reroute around accidents and congestion. We need information sharing so that people can benefit.

Many ITS projects are being considered in Texas; however, we are in the early stages of gathering information about our problems and making sure that we focus out ITS efforts effectively.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

The rail problems that were triggered by the UP/SP merger do not involve surface (road) transportation directly, but the impact of those problems were a lesson in how important freight movement is to the region.

Access to the ports is an issue for the MPOs. We have programmed one project to double track the rail line into our main container facility. The next several projects are roadway projects: one will add double lanes to a grain storage area; the other will provide a place for trucks to park while waiting to enter the main terminal so that they do not have to wait in the traffic lanes. We also are looking at intermodal connectors. We are starting the second phase of this work, working with TxDOT to update data on the connectors.

A major problem in the Houston area is the absence of public-private dialog on freight issues; we will be working on that this year.

In ITS area, we are looking at potential applications. Last summer's crisis pointed out the importance of being able to track the movement of boxes. The railroads could not get things out of terminals; people could not find them. Better information on the location of containers would have been good. But we need to know how much information is actually used. What are problems?

The accessibility of the region to the world is growing in importance. The I-69 facility will be a national corridor linking Mexico to the U.S. and to Canada. We also are widening of Houston Ship Channel; port has plans to expand quite rapidly.

We are working with local governments on freight-related projects; for example, we are working on getting information out about how to handle over-dimensional cargo. We have occasional issues on hazmat transport in region. That would be a good area for ITS applications. TranStar has integrated emergency management service. Now, can we get quicker information on hazmat freight incidents?

We have discussions underway on working more effectively to identify rail corridors and prioritize investment in surface transportation projects that supports freight movement. There is work on this underway by Harris Co., which is looking at strategic corridors. On

the northbound Hardy Corridor at-grade crossings have been eliminated and this has improve rail access.

Jerry Bobo/H-GAC

The H-GAC will host a workshop this spring [1999]on goods issues.

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

What data are collected for ITS transportation planning and traffic management? How could it be used by the private sector? We would like to see operational test that get at systems operated by separate groups that have information that could be shared. What real time data could be shared?

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

At the management center, we collect real-time data on travel speeds from loops and toll tags. The tags are used a probes to compute speed, so we have real-time speed data by direction. The information is posted on the website and mirrored on other sites. HOV lanes are identified separately. A weakness of the system is that under low-volume conditions, the speeds are not accurate, but that is usually not issue since there is very little congestion under low-volume conditions. We provide the information to public and private new outlets and other groups that report traffic.

Because of the low-lying geography of region, the flood control district monitors stream levels and rainfall to predict roadway flooding; in fact, we may have water gauges on some roads. We also have video camera surveillance on roads for incident response, but those video feeds are not available to public (although there may be long-term plans to make them available). We are not planning separate highway advisory radios, nor are we capturing travel times on arterial streets.

Chris Olavson/TxDOT-Houston

We have dynamic message signs along highway corridors (usually blank), but we report expected travel times, not precisely, but usually at the right order of magnitude. The signs are used for traffic management around accidents. We will soon go to a fully automated permit system for oversize/overweight trucks; and we are working with Mexico on smarter nonstop clearance of trucks across the border.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

The SmartTraveler program in North Corridor tested palm-top computer that provide traveler with information on traffic speeds, congestion, and accidents. The results should be available soon.

Gene Schroeder/TxDOT-Austin

TTI is generating the report which should be out within six months. The project was effective, but advances in technology have bypassed the equipment that was handed out. If the test continues, it will use newer or different technology. The biggest need is for information delivered simply, accurately, and right now, not a new gadget. San Antonio is gathering data on the TransLink program for TTI research; we would like to gather data

from all the traffic operations centers to compare before and after conditions and see what improvement was made.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

Detroit is producing cars with onboard systems that are no longer compatible with our old technology so we will be looking for new ideas and technologies. On the Katy Freeway there is interest in using congestion pricing for autos and commercial vehicles. There is a major investment study (MIS) underway for I-10 (west) that is looking at the feasibility a four-lane, special-use managed facility that could be managed by congestion pricing.

Chris Olavson/TxDOT-Houston

We are looking at similar approach on (the now) Route 59 (and future I-69). That project will look at truck lanes, special handling of trucks, and pricing management.

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

I do not hear much about collecting real-time traffic data for the arterials, but the arterials serve ports and railheads. Would better arterial information, for example, about traffic surges, help? Could you adjust signal timing?

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

We are trying to build that capability into the regional traffic signal system as a logical extension of regional transit plan. We have an open-box architecture. Information on truck routes and port access routes would fit into that. There is some deployment going on now to test the technology, but we are still trying to figure out how to use all the information we collect. What do we keep? Who uses it? Who gets it? Who pays for it, especially with few federal dollars for ITS and traffic management?

Mark Olson/FHWA-Austin

The real-time traffic information that we collect now is focused on dealing with incidents, that is, what happens when things are not working as usual. I do not think that ITS will eliminate traffic congestion, but it can provide help to drivers in making alternatives clear and getting them timely information. The focus is on the different and unusual. We are just broaching the use of information for planning: for example, What happens to traffic the day after Thanksgiving? How do we use that information to adjust signals? We are looking at actions, but do not yet have enough information to act.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

Data warehousing is a big current issue. We cannot afford to keep it all, but how do we share it and with whom? How do you react and use the data? We are talking about the difference between data and information.

Mark Olson/FHWA-Austin

We also need to consider the rapid development of in-vehicle navigation devices. In San Antonio, they are installing in-vehicle navigation systems in public vehicles so that they can reroute around congestion. I see installing this equipment in private cars and trucks as a private endeavor, but getting good information to drivers as a public or public/private issue.

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

Alan and Jerry talked about using toll tags used as probes. If you had trucks with tags, could you use the information for fleet management? Could you use it for in-bound scheduling at terminals or ports? Could you look at the truck traffic contribution to traffic flow?

Mark Olson/FHWA-Austin

I expect that we will probably see more use of GPS for trucks.

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

I am stressing local opportunities and GPS may be more regional and national. The [ITS/ Intermodal Program] proposals could be modest, with limited applications of technology to test sharing of data. We will need to be fairly constrained in designing these operational tests. Five hundred thousand is decent money, but it is certainly not enough to build a system from scratch or build an elegant ITS system.

Jerry Bobo/H-GAC

We have worried that faster routes are avoided by trucks and auto drivers because of tolls. Perhaps we should look at using bypass lanes.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

We are not wedded to toll tags; it is and expensive way to get data.

Mark Olson/FHWA-Austin

But it is quick and relatively cheap. San Antonio has proposed replacing your stick-on registration tag with an intelligent sticker/tag. Then that could be used traffic monitoring. The tags are cheap and would be replaced every year or two, but there is the cost of the readers as well as concerns about privacy.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

The tags do not tell you type of vehicle, which would be important for helping truck traffic. Loops can classify vehicles and the CVO systems could send information back to carriers, but they would not want a system that worked in one area only. We may need statewide system if it is to benefit carriers. Can we use toll tag to identify cargo in case of incident? Or are we too far away from the motor carriers' everyday issues? Our upcoming study will look at current bottlenecks.

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

[Addressing the motor carriers:] Of what have you heard, what data could you use?

Marcia Faschingauer/Excargo

One of our big problems is small lane-change accidents, sideswipes, that have to do with visibility. Intermodal freight movement is local in nature; it serves the port areas, because the truck-to-rail pass-off is about a 500-mile radius. National solutions, like GPS which are good, are generally not cost effective for intermodal operations. We use satellite because we want to get voice communication out of the trucks and replace it with digital data. We want the drivers to see the information when it is sent. Satellites work well, but

it is an expensive service. We like to see drivers as they are driving around town. In a hurricane, we have to make decisions: What do we do with our drivers and our customers? How do we get information to make the right decisions? When there is a real problem, the phone lines are always jammed. I would like to see a system that gets better information out when we need it the most.

The problems with congestion at the ports and rail terminal are not historic, they are current. Information is bad; access to equipment is bad; service is bad. You often cannot get intelligence on where containers are. Are they on the correct chassis? Is the chassis roadworthy? If you got ticketed for a bad rental car, would you like it? Most of the drivers that have left the industry have done so because of frustration; they want to drive, not to sit in lines or on the roadside because the steamship line did not fix the chassis. We like the recent FHWA move (at Werner) to allow carriers to substitute electronic logs for paper logs.

Gary Conner/Empire Truck Lines

We have national and local organizations could help show how private sector works and figure out how information flows could be improved. We like TranStar, but the information is not detailed enough. We keep up on the TxDOT website; but we would like to be able to watch the video to check specific routes. We know the normal congestion and plan for it in our routing and dispatching. What we want to see is the exceptions. If we know there is a problem and the truck is making a delivery, we would look and tell driver to reroute.

Some of the problems can be worked around. Ships have to be worked when they are in. Our customers only work 8-5. We cannot adjust the shipper or receiver schedules, so the motor carriers must do what they can.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

We use information as a competitive edge in our business. I do not know implication of sharing information on traffic sharing, but we have models that project ship arrivals and the number of containers. We could develop a model for the terminals that show typical inbound traffic flows. If there is fog, then here are patterns and how they will change when the ships hit. If we stick to general patterns, then there would not be problem with business confidentiality.

We can project the type of traffic in and out by the type of vessel traffic. Most of traffic (all but eight percent) operates on next-day appointment. We give the railroads information two or three days out (and sometimes they make it).

Gary Conner/Empire Truck Lines

A big source of delay for motor carriers serving the port is the red light on 225 to 146, largest feeder route to the port. There are mile-long back-ups on 146. Why not build a flyover? I would guess that 95 percent of all traffic to the port uses this route. It is the only signal; and it is a left-hand turn signal going in. There is probably 15 minutes delay per truck. There is an opportunity to make an operational fix.

Chris Olavson/TxDOT-Houston and Mark Olson/FHWA-Austin

That is the focus of the new highway legislation and the MPO work; although part of our problem is that these type of problems do not always find their way to the people who can address them.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

The volume of freight through the port has been growing so fast that it has outstripped our ability to do planning.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

But maybe we need a top-10 list?

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

Why not look at reversible lanes?

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

Would the carriers support a toll facility, but maybe not a toll all day long?

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

I think that you should carry over the I-69 corridor planning efforts to the arterial corridors. Go over them and get a full list of needs.

John Basilotto/TTI

I am in the research business. The problem is that we do not have a good idea of the problems. Before we have a test, we need to have a clear understanding of problems. I would underscore the need for a front-end analysis. Who are the players? What are their present needs vis-a-vis information? ITS is all about movement and information. It should be clearly stated in the RFP that we need to have the problems identified. There are different stakeholders have different interests. We need to know where are the common needs and use those as a platform to move from.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

We can give you information on 30-40 percent of the traffic through the ports, including ship arrivals and container moves, but what are we going to do with it?

Les Findeisen/TMTA

The Texas Motor Transportation Association had members involved in the early HELP project; but the carriers wanted out. Early on it was test. The transponders were free, but then they charged for all reader transactions – they hit you for a dollar every time you passed a weigh station. The carriers yanked the transponders off trucks. We need a groundwork for the pilot and for long-term utilization of any system we build. Some carriers use satellite, but they are charged only when used, not when government wants. We need to make sure that this project benefits the carriers, not just the government.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

Our trucking operations use satellites; it helps speed up the process. How long would it take to put the operational test in place and get results and payback? Two or three years is a long time for carriers.

Carl Seiberlich/VZM/TranSystems

What are the incentives to carriers to overcome impediments?

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

May we could tradeoff information on [truck trip generation at the port] for video traffic information?

Gary Conner/Empire Truck Lines

We do not have a problem with sharing data.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

We could not make all our data public, but we could do limited sharing.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

We do not need individual information, more patterns. Our basic issues are facilities planning, management, and operation. We need to make investments in new and improved facilities and we need information to make those decisions. ITS can help in operations, but we have the same issues on the public side; for example, Who pays the bills after the pilot?

Les Findeisen/TMTA

Are we tracking the cargo and the containers? What ties the vehicle to cargo? Individual trucking companies know that information Is the cargo information on the container or on the truck? It is an issue for cross-border moves. Are we pre-clearing the truck or the cargo or both? Do we need different toll tags? We do not want different ones; we want a universal tag.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

We would probably only put information about cargo in the tag for hazmat shipments.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

We do not need information about the cargo; that is more for the carriers and shippers/ receivers.

Les Findeisen/TMTA

We want to know where cargo x is, but we do not want to know what cargo x is.

Meeting break from 10:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Lance Grenzeback/Cambridge Systematics

Made 15-minute presentation of the preliminary recommendations for a national ITS/ Intermodal Program. (Copies of the presentation are attached to the meeting minutes.)

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

Could the MPO lead in this type of operational test?

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

We could lead if TxDOT agreed.

Les Findeisen/TMTA

Is there a limit on who can propose?

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

No. This is a wildcard RFP. We will make it as flexible as possible.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

Is this a program looking for an application? We are not there yet. What is it we want to walk away with when we are done? We do not want to chase this just because its there; it must have relevance to the freight community.

Chris Olavson/TxDOT-Houston

Why not more study?

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

We know the general issues. What do we want to do is provide an incentive for people at the subregion or metropolitan level to define specific problems and solve them. We hope that many of the solutions will be transferable to other areas after they have been proven.

Alan Clark/H-GAC Director

We would be interested in having follow-up on this discussion to see where we go. Sharing video would be possible. Monitoring a few key access points, then intervening (even a traffic cop at the corner) may be worth doing.

Mark Olson/FHWA-Austin

Can we get advance notice of the RFP on the website?

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

We are planning to post the Cambridge Systematics/VZM report on the Internet to get a broader review and stimulate initial thinking about the framework. But we do not have too much time; we want to move quickly to get money out by mid-March. However, if climate is not right, then we would not force it. We will learn from proposals and outcome of the pilots; we would not learn anything more from additional reports without benefit of

operational input. We would want to see an advisory board with representatives from the participating groups.

Gary Conner/Empire Truck Lines

The Texas Intermodal Truckers Association, which meets monthly, represent most of the intermodal truckers, would be a good way to involve the carriers. Marcia [Faschingauer/ Excargo] is an officer of the association.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

We operate the terminal as well as operate as a carrier. Sea-Land is putting in a $5 million system in April to make sure that information moves. We have done the research and will invest to get the competitive advantage.

Les Findeisen/TMTA

You have done the IT, not the ITS, side.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

We are doing trucker notification so that the client can see the drop.

Les Findeisen/TMTA

But not the flow on the road network?

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

Correct. We do not own the trucks so we are not involved there.

John Basilotto/TTI

TTI has a big ITS research component. We would be interested in participating. We see working with Sea-Land as a big plus since they have the state-of-the-art.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

Sea-Land wants to be the lowest-costs operator as a means of staying competitive. We see vertical integration as a competitive edge. We know the set up of the ship before it arrives or leaves. The value of a pilot may be to explore what we could do with that information. Houston is primarily an export port; there is an influx of empties for repositioning. Those operate on 24-hour cycle.

Mark Olson/FHWA-Austin

If we knew about the freight movement cycles, then we might be able to change signal systems to help traffic flows into and out of the port.

Rick Couch/Sea-Land

We could tell you if the ships hitting today, then pattern A; if not, then pattern B.

Gary Conner/Empire Truck Lines

We do not specify the routes for the drivers all the time; there are not that many routes. There is only one way out of the Cut. But we could interdict the trucks for problems.

General discussion of the need to share information; e.g., video links might also provide weather and flooding information.

Chip Wood/U.S. DOT

Closed meeting, thanking the participants for a good discussion of issues. I liked hearing people say that it is only worth participating in an operational test if the results benefit private sector. [Referring back to the earlier discussion:] The MPO could act as a holding company for the operational test money with money going to different entities, including Sea-Land, depending on who wanted to play.

We will mail copies of the RFP to participants of today's meeting, and we will put the consultant's report on web. We also will try to get the Federal Register date out to participants and can an electronic copy of the notice out to participants.