

MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM REGIONAL DIALOG SESSION

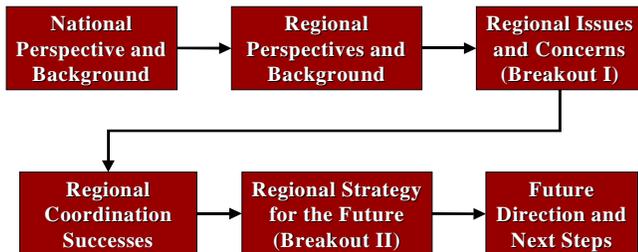
Houston, TX

July 17-18, 2000



Galveston District Corps of Engineers Hosts Final Regional Dialog Session

One hundred twenty-five participants gathered at the J.W. Marriott-Galaria in Houston, TX, for the last of seven Marine Transportation System Regional Dialog Sessions. These sessions were designed to help regional groups develop strategies for addressing regional maritime transportation issues. Port directors, terminal operators, cargo and passenger vessel operators, shippers, pilots, and representatives from federal, state and local agencies identified, discussed, and proposed strategies about wide-ranging issues affecting marine transportation in the Gulf Region. Participants heard reports from national and regional leadership and broke into small groups to identify and clarify regional issues and recommend mechanisms for addressing issues from the regional perspective.



The MTS Dialog Session structure gives participants opportunities to listen and to speak.

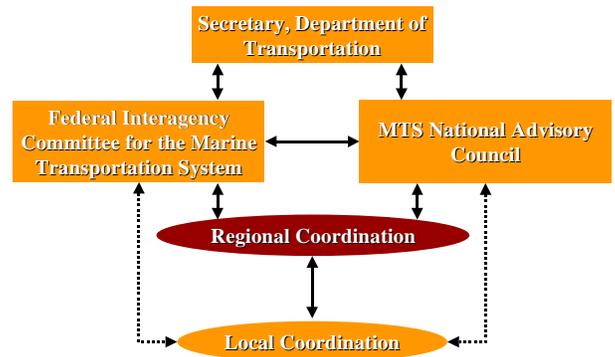
Federal Leadership Sets Context

Colonel Nick Buechler, Commander, District Engineer, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston, TX, welcomed participants to the session, reviewed the meeting objectives and introduced MGEN Hans Vans Winkle, Director, Civil Works, USACE, and RADM Paul Pluta, Commander 8th District, USCG. MGEN Van Winkle expressed gratitude for everyone's participation but cautioned them that the US maritime transportation system is ten years behind what it should be and immediate and rapid movement is needed. He said that major program often take eight to ten years but we cannot work that slowly and be successful. We must keep a balanced approach, ensuring that environmental issues are given proper consideration. Van Winkle sees resource flattening and reduction as a critical problem but is encouraged by new construction projects in some of our nation's major seaports.

RADM Pluta sees the need to focus on two critical elements to achieving fair economic competition: better *planning* and greater *coordination*. He sees the need to address regional issues – things “we have control over” – but he sees the need for greater commitment among regional stakeholders. Pluta volunteered to host a future meeting of an *ad hoc* regional steering committee representing all interests to ensure the regional process continues. Pluta challenged participants to “give your best ideas” for accomplishing MTS objectives.

The MTS Vision: “The U.S. Marine Transportation System will be the world's most technologically advanced, safe, secure, efficient, effective, accessible, globally competitive, dynamic and environmentally responsible system for moving goods and people.”

John Carnes, Director, Central Region, U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD), reported federal government and its industry partner activities at the national level to promote marine transportation system initiatives. CAPT Mark Johnson, USCG, Chief, Office of Waterway Management Policy and Planning gave the MTS vision and explained how activities at the national and local levels are moving forward and that what is needed now are mechanisms that provide communication and coordination at the regional level.



Regional coordination is essential to successful implementation of MTS initiatives

CAPT Johnson spoke to seven areas addressed in the MTS Report to Congress where action is needed to achieve the MTS vision:

- Coordination
- Funding
- Competitiveness & Mobility
- Improving Awareness
- Information Management & Infrastructure
- Security
- Safety & Environmental Protection

Panel Describes Gulf Coast Issues

Seven individuals from public and private sector organizations in the spoke briefly to regional issues from their unique perspectives.



Cross-Cutting Panel Raises Regional MTS Issues

Tom Kornegay, Director of the Port of Houston and panel moderator, listed all weather navigation, rail access, bridge heights, and competition among federal agencies as his greatest concerns. **Channing Hayden**, President of the Steamship Association of Louisiana, cited increased trade with Latin America, enforcement of navigation regulations and 100% participation in VTS, and greater cooperation and participation by ALL of the relevant state and federal agencies (e.g., US Customs, USDA, INS, FDA, FCC), many of which were not in attendance. **Robert Van Borssum**, President, Texas Port Association, voiced concerns over dredging availability, maintenance, and disposal and intermodal access and overcrowded highways and urged the audience to stimulate greater local awareness of the MTS and monitor legislation affecting the MTS. **Patrick Gallwey**, Port of New Orleans, sees better planning as critical to port facilities, including appropriate responses to market growth and economic expansion. He emphasized the need to keep locals involved and to accommodate environmental concerns and the growing Gulf Coast cruise ship volume. **James Lyons**, Alabama State Docks, expressed concern for continued funding for the Corps of Engineers and the USCG to keep waterways navigable but does not see user fees as a viable answer to funding problems. He encouraged consolidation of government agencies to improve efficiency. **Wayne Dennis**, from the Texas Department of Transportation, noted that the TXDOT role is limited by funding but that ports must work closely with local TXDOT Districts to develop landside facilities for ports. **William Mathis**, Texas City Terminal Railway Association, said that the integrity of the entire transportation chain must be considered because every link must be maintained. The size of the load often determines whether it moves by rail or water and restriction in one area restricts the system. According to Mathis, "you affect Houston, you affect the world."

Breakout Groups Consider Regional Issues

Informed by presentations on the national MTS initiatives and on issues identified by the regional panel, participants divided into four groups to review, clarify, augment, and prioritize issues of regional significance. Later, they developed regional strategies for addressing high priority needs. Each breakout group was intentionally diverse so that multiple perspectives were aired across all issues. After reviewing issues from previous regional listening sessions and surfaced by the regional panelists, each breakout group prepared a list of issues they

felt needed to be addressed through regional coordination and cooperation. Session facilitators organized the individual lists of issues into categories as follows. Note that within each category, items may be similar since multiple groups included them on their individual lists:

After listing issues requiring regional coordination, breakout groups assigned priority to issues by voting for those they felt needed regional coordination most as shown in the chart following the list. Facilitators sorted them into major categories as follows:

Planning Issues

- Need for national direction in order to make regional plans/programs successful (Empower regional port authorities, prioritize regional issues, establish national policies for port development, develop a framework tied to a federal budget)
- Need for regional intermodal mobility plans (trunk carriers, highways, etc. to complement port authority operations) Need to broaden perspectives of traditional State DOTs to include ports in their planning and operations.
- Create regional port authority based on logical size and contiguous agency jurisdiction
- Disposal area availability
- How can rail and other DOT agencies prepare for safe and efficient intermodal transportation in the future

Awareness Issues

- Public outreach versus MTS value (united approach to endure funding for MTS issues)
- Need for national or regional public relations campaign highlighting the benefits of the MTS
- Public awareness campaign

Collaboration Issues

- Regional issue is to get full participation of federal/state/local agencies plus interest groups to address regional MTS issues
- Establish regional MTS with government, private sector, and interest groups
- Enlarge concept of MTS stakeholders
- Use MTS to improve coordination and operations within MTS (inspections, regulations, etc.)
- Regional coordination and cooperation is key to successful funding requests to address issues
- Better communications on a regional basis -- concerns, success stories, etc.

Regulatory Issues

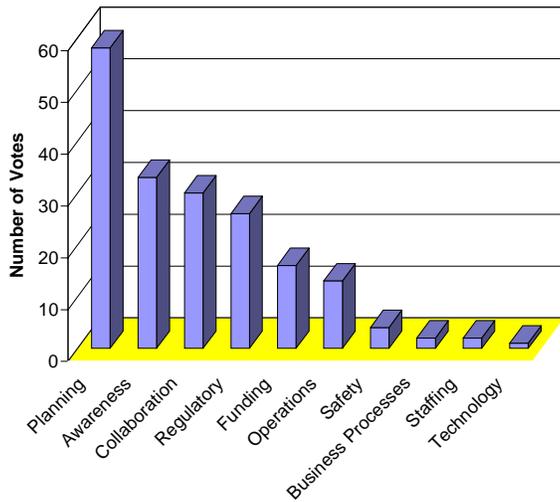
- Regulatory agency interface
- Regulatory agency coordination (e.g., using e-commerce)
- Regulatory port authority threat assessment (vulnerability and threat assessment)
- Simplify the regulatory environment and improve facilities and channels

Funding Issues

- Define and allocate a 'real' budget for MTS
- MTS may provide regional process guidance (opportunity) to allocate MTS federal budget to meet regional needs
- Proper funding for ATON funding (80%)
- Securing adequate funding to maintain and improve the region's navigation infrastructure

Operational Issues

- All weather navigation (24 hours)
- Waterway congestion -- and related delays/safety concerns



Success Stories Lay Groundwork for Action

Before addressing the regional issues identified during the first breakout session, participants heard regional success stories from six individuals who reported on partnerships and other cooperative approaches that are working well. **Barry Holliday**, Chief, Navigation and Operations Branch, USACE, moderated the panel discussion. **John Carnes**, MARAD’s Central Region Director, reported on the Gulf/Rivers Intermodal Partnership (GRIP) where a partnership between local, state, federal, and private sector partners is addressing maritime issues in the Gulf area. **Rick Medina**, USACE Chief, Planning Branch, Planning, Environmental and Regulatory

Relative Priority of Regional Issue Categories

Division, described the activities of the Galveston Interagency Coordination Teams as moving from “controversy to consensus.” **CAPT Wayne Gusman**, USCG, Commander MSO Houston/Galveston described the accomplishments of the Houston Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Group (HOGANSAC), the local Harbor Safety Committee. **Raul Cantu**, Texas Department of Transportation, described the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway “2020” Vision, encompassing 27 ports and inland waterways. Cantu called this an illustration of the partnership between local TxDOT agencies and the USACE. **C.E. Joe Clayton**, President of the New Orleans-Baton Rouge Steamship Pilots, described the public/private cooperative process used to resolve a radio interference

problem between vessels and local police radios. He asserted that we must look ahead as we solve problems but that it will do no good to solve “2020” problems if we do not solve problems we face today. **Julia Rathgeber**, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, discussed the Clean Air Act Amendments and their effects on Texas. She described processes that allow industry to suggest alternatives plans for accomplishing air quality compliance.

Breakout Groups Recommend Strategies

Following presentations about regional successes, participants reconvened in breakout groups to identify how they could work together as regional stakeholders to address high priority regional interests. Each group considered one or more categories of the high priority regional issues identified during the first breakout session (e.g., planning and funding, awareness, and regulatory streamlining) and developed specific recommendations for actions that would lead to better regional coordination and communication on issues in those categories. Breakout group spokespersons presented each group’s recommendations to all participants. Breakout group recommendations, shown in the table below provide both near term and longer-term strategies and mechanism that regional stakeholders can pursue to increase awareness, communication, coordination, and cooperation. Some actions are underway, some build upon existing partnerships and activities, and some are proposed initiatives that require new partnerships. Each of the proposed strategies is designed to address regional issues and concerns but all require local, regional, and, in some cases, federal participation.

Closing Comments Reaffirm Value of Dialog

After hearing breakout group presentations, MGEN Van Winkle and RADM Pluta made comments on the dialog session and the recommendations offered. MGEN Van Winkle encouraged the regional approach, emphasizing again that the entire intermodal system must be represented in the process. He stated that the USACE will step up and make factual data available to support good planning and decision making. The waterways have been a ‘silent industry’ because they work well most of the time but we must find ways to use resources effectively to meet future challenges. RADM Pluta reiterated the USCG’s offer to move the regional process forward. He will pull together a small *ad hoc* group to look at what has been said and develop a plan of action with the hope of establishing a Regional Coordination Committee by September 2000.

Summary of Action Plans for Regional Coordination

High Priority Regional Coordination Need: Planning and Funding			
Action – Form Regional Team	Who	When	Desired Outcome
Form a consortium of MTS interests in the Gulf Region	Federal agencies, ports, state agencies, railroads, trucking interests, environmental interests, other users/interests	Very soon	Determine MTS needs, prioritize needs, recommend action, develop relationships with the MTS caucus
Action – Political Support in Congress			
- Build small group representing all interests (<i>less people, less confusion</i>)	- Identify appropriation committee and selected committee chairs		
- Private sector selects their own representatives (for their own regions)	- Regional customer (industry) organization meets with committee		

<i>Action – Develop a Broad-Based Intermodal Gulf Regional Strategic Plan</i>			
1. Assemble stakeholder group		4. Prioritize components of the integrated plan	
2. Perform a data/information/initiative search (do not re-create the wheel)		5. Determine cost of each component/project	
3. Integrate various plans (i.e., TxDoT, MARAD, etc.)		6. Pass on to the political and federal “champion” for funding	
<i>High Priority Regional Coordination Need: MTS Awareness</i>			
<i>Action – National Campaign</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
Start awareness program at local school level to enhance awareness of global impact/benefits of maritime industry	COE/CG and maritime professional groups	ASAP	Heighten awareness, increase funding, build infrastructure
Develop regional economic marine partnership	Local chamber of commerce	ASAP	Sponsor outreach to local schools, groups entities
Use HOGANSAC model to congressionally establish a regional MTS group to ensure permanence	Local federal agencies, ports, users, industry	ASAP	Support marine industry
<i>Action- Public Outreach to Secure MTS Funding</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
Establish coalition with other modes and get help in delivering the message	MTS stakeholders	Before fallout of election	Broader base of support, improved funding
Send a positive environmental message	Seagrant and MTS		
Project value of coastal zone inland			Increase inland awareness of impact of coastal zone
Questions: Who develops consensus? Who delivers the message?			
<i>Action- Value of Marine Transportation</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
Outreach effort to primary and secondary schools to show how the marine transportation system impacts their daily lives	DOT’s, port authorities, industry association, private sector stakeholders	ASAP	Change future culture
Outreach to post-secondary institutions to show the value of career/value of marine transportation	Public and professional associations	ASAP	Raise public awareness and support for MTS issues
Build bridges to local media to transmit information of MTS value	Federal, state, local gov’t, industry stakeholders	ASAP	Create media culture to support MTS
<i>Action- Reach the Silent Majority (General Public)</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
National information campaign (TV, radio, etc.) to schools and trade associations	Jointly funded by USACE, MARAD, etc.	2-3 year effort	Public knowledge of industry contribution to their well-being
Direct information contacts with already known industry and government entities	USACE and USCG (account organization in place – i.e., PAO and/or regulatory)	Current	Educate the at-large entities as to the purpose and possibilities of MTS
Better educate agency (gov’t) personnel in the MTS and its value	Each participating agency (DOT, states, etc)		Have personnel in a better position to explain MTS
Concerted effort to establish strong partnerships among government agencies involved with MTS	USACE, MARAD, state agencies, others	Now; complete in 2 yrs	Effective collaboration to educate silent stakeholders about MTS
Internet strategy (web-site and related efforts)	Stakeholders	2001	Disseminating information about the maritime industry
Corporate tax incentives which meets specific guidelines to educate the public on the value of transportation	DOT recommends law; USCG/ MARAD prepare regulation; industry avails themselves	2001	Industry partners with government to educate all silent stakeholders
Increase MARAD Office of Public Affairs budget	Congress, DOT/ MARAD, OMB, industry supporters	2001	MARAD achieves equity with other DOT agencies
<i>High Priority Regional Coordination Need: Regulatory Streamlining</i>			
<i>Action</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
Regulatory streamlining, reduction, accountability, efficiency - Responsible industry program (AWO), Old regulations, Legislative reform, Policy reviews	Agency/industry	ASAP, virtual meetings	Opportunities for self-regulation, less redundancy, increased efficiency
Model – comprehensive, inclusive	All	ASAP	Ensure all transportation modes involved
Champions (regional), e.g., GRIP	MARAD	ASAP	Include all modes, all regulatory agencies
Technology applications	Agencies/legislative funding, authorization	Longer term	Data, information exchange systems on web

Learn more about the Marine Transportation System at the MTS websites: www.marad.dot.gov/mtsnac/index.html or <http://www.dot.gov/mts>.