

MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM REGIONAL DIALOG SESSION

Jacksonville, FL

June 20-21, 2000



Jacksonville Draws Largest Number of Participants To Date

More than 120 public and private sector participants from throughout the southeast region attended the fourth of seven

Marine Transportation System (MTS) Regional Dialog Sessions (RDS) 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 this region. Participants heard reports from national and regional leaders and broke into small groups to identify and clarify regional issues and recommend mechanisms for addressing issues from the regional perspective. Several participants agreed to follow-on activities to start implementing selected action items.



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

Federal Leadership Sets Context for Regional Discussion

Captain Michael Rosecrans, USCG, Captain of the Port, Jacksonville, welcomed the participants to this RDS. He remarked that MTS has two letter c's in it – cooperation and

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.”

communication, which are key to making MTS work. He introduced *Captain William Fels* as the Master of Ceremonies, who introduced *RADM Thad Allen*, Commander, Seventh District, USCG who provided some historical context for the MTS and some interesting statistics on the ports in this region. Eight of the 25 most traveled ports in the nation and those ports with the heaviest national security needs and duties are in the seventh district. We have a wide variety of issues (cargo, passenger, refinery, drug trafficking, etc.) that need greater attention. He looked forward to the upcoming discussions and the action recommendations.

Mr. Nuns Jain, Director, South Atlantic Region, U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD), offered some additional welcoming remarks. The MTS is doing well in this region as reflected by the near doubling of cargo and passenger traffic, plus the increased use of inland waterways and introduction of mega ships. All of these demands put increased pressure on the MTS and our challenge is to figure out the better ways to address issues, meet all stakeholder needs, and coordinate the solution approaches.

After these welcoming comments, *Ms. Margaret Blum*, Associate Administrator for Port, Intermodal, and Environmental Activities, MARAD, gave attendees the MTS vision and told them how important the MTS initiative is to the Administration and Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater. Ms. Blum encouraged them to work together with their federal partners on issues that transcend traditional boundaries.

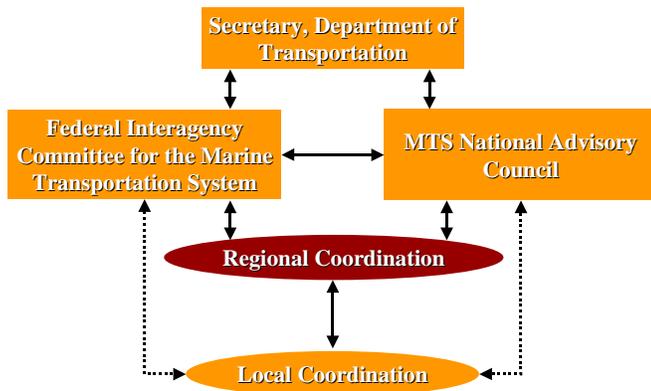
Jeff High, Director of the USCG Waterways Management, gave an update on what the federal government and its industry partners are doing nationally to promote MTS initiatives. Mr. High explained how activities at the national and local levels are advancing and what is needed now are mechanisms for regional discussions and coordination.

Mr. High 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

Mr. Robert Wayland, Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watershed, USEPA, spoke to EPA initiatives which complement the MTS vision and activities, including “Greenports” – ports where environmental success stories

occur; “Greenships” – efforts in support of the Chamber of Shipping; national and regional dredging teams for guidance on beneficial use of dredge materials; and greater regulatory effectiveness in controlling invasive species transported by ballast water and discharges from cruise ships.



Regional coordination is essential to successful implementation of MTS initiatives

Regional Panel Describes Current Coordination Efforts in Southeast Region

Mr. Nuns Jain moderated a panel of regional leaders who described several ongoing cooperative efforts that work well, and the role government can play. Jain reviewed the issues from the Charleston, South Carolina Regional Listening Session of two years ago (May 1998). These included:



Panelists describe successful regional coordination efforts

- Timely and safe water and land-side entry and exit to port facilities
- Planning and communications between public and private sectors
- Increase terminal efficiency and maximize investment by promoting ownership of chassis by trucking companies
- Improve education and understanding at the Washington, DC and public level
- Construction, deepening and maintenance of channels at depths that enable economies of scale in the markets served and disposal of spoils
- Systematic, ongoing, timely funding
- Timely response of government agencies
- Safety

- Customs clearances
- Effective throughput of cargo and passengers between ship and other intermodal connections
- Strong competition with provisions for survival of maritime professionals
- Improved safety, environmental standards

Each panelist then offered comments about their particular operation and their perspective on regional issues. *Mr. Joe Bryant*, Vice President for Terminal Development, South Carolina Port Authority, noted that an additional concern in their community is the impact of projects on the broad quality of life, not just on the environment. *Mr. Fitz Hiltzheimer*, Director of Strategic Development, Georgia Ports Authority, summarized his challenge as positioning the port for maximum growth and maximum benefit to the state and its citizens. *Mr. Doug Menefee*, Jacksonville Waterways Management Council, commented on the increased competitiveness in port operations and the need for competitive responses to the cost of moving cargo efficiently. *Mr. Tony Taormina*, Port Director, Palm Beach Port Authority, described the operation of the Florida Ports Council as an excellent example of local/regional coordination. *Mr. Robert Flint*, Port Operations, Port Everglades Port Authority, expressed concern about the lengthy time for environmental and other regulatory reviews and that competitive pressures are causing shippers to look elsewhere because we cannot meet their needs. *Mr. Gerry Caffierro*, Assistant Port Director, Port of Miami, remarked that ships are getting bigger, cruise ship operations or more extensive, and the pressure to expand is great, but counterbalanced by excessive permitting and funding hurdles. *Mr. Mac McLouth*, Executive Director, Port Canaveral Port Authority, cited the need for better coordination among agencies since it is difficult for the ports to deal with all the various rules and regulations from various agencies. *Mr. Bob Steiner*, Deputy Port Director, Tampa Port Authority, concluded with remarks about the need to educate public officials on the value and contribution of ports, as is being done through MAC – Marine Advisory Council, in the Tampa area.

Breakout Groups Consider Regional Issues

Informed by presentations on the national MTS initiatives and successful regional coordination efforts, 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. Each breakout group prepared a list of issues they felt needed to be addressed through regional coordination and cooperation. Session facilitators organized the brainstorming of ideas into individual lists. After listing issues requiring regional coordination, breakout groups assigned priority to issues by voting for those they felt needed regional coordination most. Votes were summed, resulting in the following listing of relatively high priority regional issues:



Breakout groups identified priority issues requiring regional coordination and cooperation

Group 1:

- Ports and waterway dredging – balancing environmental concerns with economic needs.
- Lack of systems approach to waterway planning and management.
- Need to balance livability and mobility issues
- Funding/resources
- More opportunities for better coordinated planning processes

Group 2:

- Channel construction, maintenance, spoil disposal and funding
- Redefine economic criteria
- Difficulties with environmental agencies
- Access to key decision makers
- Better federal coordination – more support for coordination efforts
- Organized/united effort to garner funding – one DOT approach

Group 3:

- Lack of systems approach – incremental planning, lack of commitment
- Dredging
- Funding
- Intercoastal waterways
- Public Awareness/communications

Group 4:

- Funding – get attention of Congress, linkage between revenue inputs and outputs for dredging, ports, and VTS
- Streamlining of processes – too long to upgrade
- Coordination of Federal agencies

Second Day – Panel Discusses MTS and Harbor Safety Committee Activities

Based on comments from the first day, Mr. High offered additional comments about MTS coordination at the national level. He noted that there are five standing subcommittees to address security, strategic planning, resources, research/technology, and safety/environmental protection. The MTS National Advisory Committee (MTSNAC), composed of industry and government representatives, had their first meeting in May 2000 to develop key issues and initial action steps. The MTSNAC is also coordinating with the work and interim findings of the five subcommittees.

LtJG John Hennigan, USCG, moderated a panel discussion of Harbor Safety Committees (HSC). HSCs are proving to be one of the better mechanisms for coordinating MTS issues and solutions. The panelists focused on their roles with HSCs and how they are used to facilitate the advancement and resolution of MTS issues.

Mr. John Hassell, President, Maritime Association of Port of Charleston, remarked that port issues a few years ago were relatively unimportant in the Charleston area. However, through a concerted effort of outreach, education, and building interest in the value of port operations, the image and importance of ports has changed dramatically. This turnaround has resulted in greater coordination and collaboration among agencies, industry partners, and the public for improving the vitality of the Port of Charleston. *Mr. Charles Sutlive*, Executive Director, Savannah Maritime Association, noted that the HSC has been helpful in addressing dredge and safety issues, resulting in good cooperation between federal and state (GADOT) officials. *Mr. Doug Menefee*, Chairman, Jacksonville Waterways Management Council (JWMC), discussed the role of the JWMC in regional coordination. The council has emerged as a critical community member addressing a number of issues such as better port condition information, marine terminal expansions, facility depth, and hurricane preparedness. This local/regional council has been helping in identifying key issues and making decisions. *Captain Lawrence Bowling*, Marine Safety Office, Miami, USCG, discussed the role of the HSC in the greater Miami area. The HSC has been useful in identifying issues and solutions for dredging, boat anchorage, recreational versus commercial interests, and safety. *Mr. Sal Litrico*, Vice Chairman, Tampa Bay HSC, discussed the successes of their vessel movement committee and port heavy weather advisory committee. They are now working on a more comprehensive port safety plan that involves a broader range of emergency service providers.

Breakout Groups Recommend Regional Coordination Strategies

Working again in their four breakout groups, participants identified mechanisms that would help advance regional coordination and cooperation. Each group focused on the triggering question “*What are regional coordination mechanisms or strategies which can address the important*

issues?” The breakout groups reported their ideas to a panel of federal and local agencies as well as private industry and port representatives. The major discussion points are:

Group 1 (Presenter – Mr. Lou Novak)

More Opportunities for Better Coordinated Planning Process:

- Lay the foundation for improved planning by “telling the story” of the marine system.
- Add marine component to existing local/regional/state comprehensive planning processes (Metropolitan Planning Organizations, statewide plans, etc.). Also confirm the existence of regional planning bodies where MTS is present.
- MTS should have similar planning framework as highways, as designate in TEA-21 and ISTEA (long-term plans, medium-term plans, and near-term/work plans (yearly))
- Overcome the traditional economic analysis bias of the USCOE to focus only on national benefits – must refocus on regional/local
- A remaining open question is will the Harbor Safety Committees expands their roles to take on these tasks?

Group 2 (Presenter – Ms. Victoria Robas)

- Establish a Regional MTS Council who would report directly to the National MTS Advisory Council. The Regional MTS Council would be informed and coordinate with port representative groups at the local levels.
 - Use standard regions (South Atlantic, Gulf, etc.)
 - Be a results-oriented body/decision-making body
 - Multi-modal
 - Membership/composition – use the Charleston Maritime Administration model
 - Carry regional recommendations to the National Council
- Create subcommittees of the Regional MTS Council to focus on regional issues of dredging, funding, Federal Agency coordination, public outreach/education, environmental agency coordination, and industry-government partnership.
- Monitor performance measures by creating and publicizing agency results (report cards).
- Identify regulatory/procedural problem areas in permitting process, funding process/regulations, and accountability to identify problems.

Group 3 (Presenter – Ms. Lauren Kotas)

Dredging

- Improve the process through:
 - Regional caucuses
 - Florida Ports Council
 - Regional Dredging Teams
 - Atlantic Intracoastal Waterways
 - Regional Response Team
 - OneDOT Regional Team

Need for a Systems Approach – Focus on regional issues of capacity, technology, and research. Use the OneDOT Team approach and recognize not all issues need a regional focus -- don’t force it.

Group 4 (Presenter – Mr. Phil Thomas)

Funding -- The strategy is to educate and lobby Congressional delegation at the local level. Tactics include a regional caucus organized by a working group from this session or by using the AAPA Southeast caucus.

Establish a Regional Caucus To:

- Define the minimum support levels for all ports here.
- Develop a matrix that shows money generated versus money received for all transportation sectors.



Ms. Victoria Robas presents the Group 2 deliberations on regional Coordination Mechanisms.

Closing Remarks

RADM Allen remarked that the range of issues and tasks are daunting, but they need to be addressed. The findings confirm the consensus that the MTS needs to be addressed in a systemic manner. There are upcoming opportunities to continue the dialogue and issue resolution in such forum as the national propeller conference and the international oil spill conference. He commended the participants for their hard work and interesting findings.

Ms. Blum noted that these regional issues are exactly the type of concerns they hoped would emerge. However, do not count on the federal government to be a leader, but partners in helping you, the participants, implement these changes. She also commended and congratulated the USCG on their hospitality and RDS coordination.

Finally, **Mr. John Hassell**, President, Maritime Association of Port of Charleston, invited everyone to Charleston on September 26-27 for the first regional MTS meeting. He will be contacting attendees to help coordinate a date and initial agenda to follow-up with the regional issues and solutions identified during this session.