

Metro Atlanta

**TIME**

Task Force

# METRO ATLANTA TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC VISION

MAY 2, 2006



## **INTRODUCTION**

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Fatality Analysis Reporting System, in 2004 Georgia had 1,463 fatal motor crashes resulting in 1,634 deaths. This is a 2% increase from the number of fatalities in 2003. Tragically 14 officers have died in traffic incidents in Georgia within the past five years. These statistics are overwhelming and represent the devastating results of traffic incidents.

The Atlanta Region’s population has increased by 11.2% since 2000 and is expected to increase by 62.4% by 2030, resulting in a 13-county regional population of 6,005,288<sup>1</sup>. This dramatic growth in the region—and the corresponding traffic demand—continues, and will continue, to exceed the capacity of the highway system. Recurring (normal) congestion impacts hundreds of thousands of motorists daily and has a direct impact on the economy of the region. Anyone who commutes within, or travels through, the region on a regular basis generally adds time to their travel plan to compensate for expected delays from recurrent congestion.

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), non-recurring (traffic incidents) congestion account for over 50% of all congestion nationally. Compounding the regional economic impact of these incidents is the personal quality of life impacts and trip reliability, in that motorists cannot plan for them and either have to allow additional time for commutes, are late to work, or miss critical appointments such as flight times.

Managing these non-recurring incidents in a safe and effective manner has become a high priority for elected and appointed leaders in the Atlanta region. In 2004 Governor Sonny Perdue introduced the Fast Forward Congestion Relief Program to address Georgia’s growing congestion problems. Fast Forward is a comprehensive 6-year, \$15.5 billion transportation program that will relieve congestion and spur economic growth through the acceleration of existing projects. This program includes strategies to lessen non-recurring congestion by expanding Georgia’s Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). Early success has fostered the belief that long-term measurable improvements are possible and can be sustained by developing a Traffic Incident Management “Strategic Vision”.

## **BACKGROUND**

Georgia’s highly successful statewide ITS, known as “NaviGator”, and Highway Emergency Response Operations (HERO) programs celebrated 10 years in business in April 2006. They are the two key parts of the Traffic Incident Management (TIM) programs implemented for the 1996 Olympic Games.

Both programs have grown and thrived in the past 10 years and will continually expand as part of the Governor’s Fast Forward Program. An approved expansion of the HERO program will double the number of units on the highways to 104 to focus on keeping traffic moving by removing all types of incidents. NaviGator has also expanded and continues to improve overall

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<sup>1</sup> This information is from the Atlanta Regional Commission 2005 Population and Housing Report.

delivery of real time traffic information to an ever increasing user group. Travel times displayed on changeable message signs is one of the most visible methods of keeping motorists informed.

NaviGator is based in the Atlanta traffic management center (TMC) and is linked to local traffic control centers and another state-run TMC in Macon, Georgia to provide the best real time traveler information possible for the entire region.

Transportation operations experts in the Atlanta Metro region determined that more involvement with response agencies was necessary if additional improvements were going to be accomplished on a regional basis. Local agencies in some parts of the region were operating exemplary programs with goals and objectives for response and clearance times, while others were not as aggressive. It became clear that consistent operations cannot be achieved unless there is a coordinated and cooperative region-wide program.

The Traffic Incident Management Enhancement Task Force (or just "TIME" for short) originated in 2002 to develop and sustain a region-wide incident management program to facilitate the safest and fastest roadway clearance, lessening the impact on emergency responders and the motoring public. TIME is made up of concerned incident responders from transportation agencies, fire, rescue, police, towing, emergency medical services, and others that communicate, coordinate, and cooperate (the "3-Cs") to improve the safety of responders and the overall management of traffic incidents.

Supported by the Georgia Department of Transportation, (GDOT), Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, (GRTA), FHWA, the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS), and numerous local agencies, TIME has led the way in improving TIM awareness throughout the region. This awareness is formally documented through several signed resolutions with local counties supporting traffic incident management initiatives and the TIME Task Force. These resolutions show the commitment to improve safety and reduce congestion, improve the quality of life in local communities, and encourage all emergency responders in the region to become active participants in TIME. Awareness of good ideas and innovative procedures have been shared in quarterly meetings, annual conferences, demonstrations, interactive exercises, and training hosted by the Task Force.

This group has worked toward a comprehensive plan for TIM by establishing and updating objectives for the region, increasing awareness of incident management among key government agencies through presentations, establishing the concept of localized TIM Teams, and obtaining an Incident Management Proclamation signed by the Governor. Participation and active involvement in TIME is increasing with the recognition that this group is a cost effective method for coordination of regional response initiatives.

TIME has established a set of goals and objectives for the improvement of TIM in the Atlanta region. Those goals reflect the cooperative efforts of the TIME Task Force and are consistent with programs located in other regions of the country. TIME divided the goals into three major areas with a list of priorities with action items to support their implementation. Their diligent work is a strong part of the basis for the recommendations in this "Strategic Vision" report.

Based on encouragement by the TIME Task Force, local (usually county-level) TIM Teams are being created throughout Metro Atlanta. These teams operate at the “working level” implementing such policies and practices as an “open roads philosophy” that sets goals for clearing the roadways of incidents, proper incident scene management, and post-incident debriefs to further develop quick-clearance best practices. Currently there are two TIM Teams operating in the Metro Atlanta region and more are forming.

The TIME group has affiliated with the I-95 Corridor Coalition, which is comprised of the 14 states that have a portion of I-95 within their boundaries, plus a number of toll authorities and major municipal agencies. The Coalition has formed a Southern Highway Operations Group to link with the other states in the Southeast U.S. to coordinate hurricane evacuations strategies and share TIM innovations. This group works closely with FHWA, who has been the leading supporter of broad-based TIM programs throughout the nation. Both groups provide a variety of support to state and local TIM programs, including sharing “best practices” information.

## **PURPOSE**

GDOT, GRITA, and FWHA, in close coordination with the TIME Task Force, have determined that new and innovative solutions should be considered and implemented in Metro Atlanta to improve the delivery and overall results of TIM services. The purpose of this project is to deliver an executive-level “Strategic Vision” of the best methods to achieve a measurable improvement in TIM that can have an immediate, substantial, and lasting impact on reducing non-recurring congestion.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Information gathering to identify current practices by the TIME Task Force, as well as additional transportation and response personnel, was completed with inputs from over 100 attendees at three geographic meetings in the Metro Atlanta region. A review of national “best practices” yielded several suggestions that also may fit the needs of this region. The project team then prepared recommendations as to how these suggestions could best be implemented on a regional basis. A summary of workshop participants’ comments can be found in the appendix to this document. The next step was a review by senior leadership of the “Strategic Vision” to prioritize and select projects for implementation.

## **Traffic Incident Management Strategic Principles**

In order to develop a “Strategic Vision” for the future of the TIM program in the Metro Atlanta region, the basic principles of traffic incident management developed over several years in a number of TIM projects have been considered. Those principles include:

- The rapid detection and verification of the type and location of traffic incidents,
- A prompt response by qualified responders matched to the needs of the incident,

- An effective site management to keep responders safe while reducing the impact on traffic,
- To provide real time accurate motorist information to travelers, and
- Result in efficient clearance with complete restoration of traffic as rapidly and safely as possible.

One of the first formal national efforts to determine best methods for managing traffic incidents was sponsored by FHWA. Demonstration Project 86 gathered information available and developed a presentation for several workshops throughout the nation. That process revealed that getting to and clearing incidents quickly was the most effective TIM practice.

All studies and projects completed since that effort have supported the basic principle that quick clearance is the most effective tool for mitigation of traffic incidents of all types. All other actions are important but do not yield the same impact as **quick clearance**. Based on the work completed by experts in the TIM field, and upon the excellent work already completed in the Atlanta region, this document was developed to provide strategies that will put Atlanta in the lead for comprehensive TIM programs nationwide.

## **ATLANTA TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT “STRATEGIC VISION”**

At the beginning of this process, regional leadership identified five high priority initiatives for consideration, which were supported in each of the stakeholder workshops. The top priority items are discussed below in the following sections.

### ***“Open Roads” Policy***

The purpose of the Policy is to establish the quick clearance of traffic incidents as an overarching priority, with a mandate delivered by senior departmental and elected officials. The Governor’s TIM proclamation, received in years 2003-2005 by TIME, is a form of an “Open Roads” Policy at the highest level. Additional agreements are needed for local areas that get the signatures and support of the elected and appointed leaders throughout the region. A critical part of this process is getting the leaders to ensure the policy is reviewed and signed by all of the personnel with a direct or indirect responsibility for managing any aspect of traffic incidents.

Open Roads agreements in Florida have expanded from state public safety and transportation agencies to local agencies. A good example is the agreement in the Orlando area that contains the signatures of each mayor, city manager, general council, sheriff, and county commissioners. These key senior leaders have also expanded the agreement to include the department heads, such as fire chiefs working for them.

The agreement contains a short description of the need for open roads and contains a short breakdown of duties. It is a positive statement of the benefits of quick clearance. “Open Roads” may also establish general guidelines for performance measures, although traditional emergency response measures have been limited to response times. Clearance times are not usually

measured and are not currently tracked with a high degree of accuracy in the Atlanta region. A 90-minute goal for clearance of all incidents is recommended for the “Open Roads” Policy to set a benchmark for which responders should strive. Certainly not all major incidents can be cleared that quickly and responders should be supported in their continuing efforts to reduce incident duration by looking for any unnecessary delays in clearing even the toughest incidents.

The TIME Task Force has developed a general template for a local “Open Roads” Policy in addition to a draft State “Open Roads” Policy. The City of Roswell has already used the general template to create a local policy as part of their TIM Team’s efforts. It is recommended that “Open Roads” Policies be formally adopted both regionally and statewide. The statewide policy should incorporate state agencies such as, but not limited to the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) GDOT, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Natural Resources, while the regional policy would include many more stakeholders, such as mayors, commissioners, police, fire, coroners, emergency management services, etc.

When the “Open Roads” agreements have been signed, they must have wide distribution and be provided to all responders as well as their leadership. These documents outlining the open roads philosophy must then be included in training programs for new responders.

### ***Incentive for Heavy Duty Towing and Recovery***

Large commercial vehicle incidents involving spilled loads are challenges to clear from the roadways in a timely manner. Georgia is one of several states that have not upgraded heavy duty towing regulations to meet the demand for quick and safe clearance of large commercial vehicle incidents. The new classes of tow trucks often times exceed the allowed weights when towing the vehicle. Georgia, like other states, should give special consideration to accommodating tow trucks at weigh stations to allow for quicker response times and clearance of large commercial vehicle incidents.

Compounding this problem is the method of compensation tow companies traditionally used for clearing wreckage and spilled cargo. The standard process is to charge by the hour for each piece of equipment and the number of personnel involved. By making it more profitable to take longer for the recovery, this by-the-hour billing system actually becomes a disincentive for quick clearance.

Workshop participants did report that a number of tow companies strive to meet the quick clearance needs of the emergency responders; however, it is not consistent throughout the region.

A program implemented in Florida nearly two years ago has significantly reduced the clearance times for all types of truck crashes. Clearance times for over 100 incidents involving large commercial vehicles have averaged 56 minutes from the time the tower is given the go-ahead to start the removal process. Preliminary discussions with key government and tow industry leaders in Atlanta have indicated strong support for working on better clearance methods such as an incentive program.

Incentive towing is based on a comprehensive set of guidelines designed to ensure only well trained, competent operators with proper heavy duty equipment are dispatched to any large commercial vehicle incidents that have a significant impact on major highway traffic. These guidelines replace long-standing outdated regulations that do not require modern hydraulic tow trucks or school-trained operators. The new guidelines would also require support equipment designed to address clean up of spilled loads and vehicle fluids as well as providing required traffic control devices.

Implementing a program of this type will require an experienced work group formed from the TIME Task Force and augmented by the Towing and Recovery Association of Georgia (TRAG). This group will be tasked with developing the overall business plan for implementation to include the agreements with key agencies, equipment specifications, training requirements, incentive package, operations guidelines, oversight process, and implementation process. The cost for this program should be broken into implementation and operation, with the approximate implementation cost being \$200K and \$350K per year for operations.

### ***Formal Certification and Training for Towing and Recovery Operators***

Towing and recovery is one of the last private enterprises that operate on our nation's public highways. The Towing and Recovery Association of America (TRAA) estimates there are between 35 and 40 thousand tow companies in the nation. Most are small with less than five employees and many have only two or three tow trucks. To respond to incidents on highways, the towing operators only must meet minimum requirements set by public agencies. Those requirements generally include operating hours, availability of the tow trucks, some equipment that is required on each truck, a yard or place to store impounded vehicles, licenses, and insurance coverage. Very few states require any type of training or competency certification for operators and the degree of skill level is left to the owner of the tow company.

In order to ensure that incidents are cleared as quickly and safely as possible, it is recommended that the Atlanta Metro region work with TRAG and TRAA to develop both a driver training and certification program that will include TIM practices TRAG and TRAA, along with FHWA, have been long-term supporters of training standards and formal certification for towers. This initiative could coordinate and consolidate these efforts and recognize the significant number of TRAG members who have gotten their drivers properly trained.

TIME has already partnered with TRAG to discuss the need for formal certification within the towing industry; however, training and certification will not be implemented without some resistance from others. TIME and TRAG should continue these efforts and determine whether the program will need to be presented to the Georgia State Legislature to become statewide standards. There will be costs anticipated for consultant support in the approximate amount of \$100K to formalize certification and training.

### ***Medical Examiner/Coroner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)***

Medical Examiner (ME) offices in the region have a 24-hour/7-day response system for death investigations including, highway crashes. Lengthy response times by the ME occasionally cause delays in clearance of the lanes. The deceased are not moved until the ME has determined the cause of death. Other regions of the nation have dealt with this delay by implementing changes in procedures. In Texas, a law was passed that authorizes police to move deceased to restore traffic, after their investigation. In Florida, a MOU with the coroner in several counties allows the Florida Highway Patrol to prompt the relocation of the deceased out of the road to restore traffic. They provide the coroner with digital pictures of the crash immediately after the incident is cleared.

Atlanta local police agencies have occasionally contacted the ME to ask for authority to move deceased. When the ME has been delayed, they have usually authorized the movement of the deceased to restore traffic as long as adequate pictures and documentation are available.

TIME members have met recently with the Coroner's Association and discussed a MOU for moving deceased, with positive results. It is recommended that this MOU be developed and signed by all parties to continue and expand this coordination and cooperation, and that legislation not be sought because of the excellent cooperation between agencies working with TIME.

### ***TIM Teams***

As discussed previously, a TIM Team is a local jurisdictional program consisting of members of local emergency service agencies that work together on a daily basis. These Teams are an excellent tool for enhancing the 3-Cs between various agencies within a local jurisdiction.

Regional or County TIM Teams have success in other parts of the nation. Teams in Utah, Maryland, Ohio, Florida, Texas, and other states have achieved a number of improvements in their regions and have fostered a much improved cooperation level between agencies that have gotten their personnel properly trained. Consideration for inclusion should be given to other industry or nationally recognized training programs when developing a regional training program.

The Atlanta Metro region is so large that TIM Teams can ultimately improve the effectiveness of the TIME Task Force by addressing operational problems and developing strategies at the local levels and then sharing these ideas and experiences at the regional level. This sharing of information and ideas between the TIME Task Force, TIM Teams, and stakeholders will assist in reaching the goal of enhancing traffic incident management in Metro Atlanta.

Currently there are two TIM Teams operating in Metro Atlanta including Gwinnett County and the City of Roswell. Cobb County has begun preliminary steps of developing a local Team and is anticipated to be the next formed Team. The TIME Task Force has recognized the need to develop TIM Teams in the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) 13-County Region, which includes the following counties:

- Cherokee
- Clayton

- Cobb
- DeKalb
- Douglas
- Fayette
- Fulton
- Gwinnett
- Henry
- Rockdale
- Coweta
- Forsyth
- Paulding

At the very minimum 13 TIM Teams should be formed; however, for true success of the TIM Team concept, some counties should have multiple Teams. For example, because of the large size of Fulton and Cobb Counties, perhaps smaller Teams should be developed in North Fulton, South Fulton, City of Atlanta and City of Marietta.

TIME members would coordinate efforts and support the formation and activities of teams in the local areas. They would provide both administrative and technical support for local team projects. GDOT and GRTA would be the sponsors and provide budget support for administrative and technical support. The approximate budget to implement 17-20 TIM Teams throughout Metro Atlanta would range from \$250K - \$1.3 Million depending on the amount of support from the TIME Task Force and the consultant support requested. The higher range would include providing membership support throughout the establishment of the team by developing necessary TIM documents, supplying needed resources, and facilitating TIM meetings.

### ***Additional Initiatives***

In the four years that TIME has been meeting, a significant number of TIM improvements have been implemented. TIME has also identified and highlighted regional programs that are having a positive impact on the management and clearance of incidents. The discussion below includes additional recommendations resulting from both the TIME Task Force and workshop participants.

### **Responder Safety and Training**

A primary goal of TIME is to improve safety for both motorists and responders. TIME has developed and sponsored a variety of training programs designed to reduce the exposure of responders to traffic at incident scenes. Better traffic control training, understanding and applying the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), prevention of secondary crashes at the end of the queues, and proper use of emergency equipment are all part of the Train-the-Trainer program developed and provided by Cobb County and the TIME Task Force.

Training programs can resolve a large number of the issues discussed at the three workshops. While it is very common for agencies to train internally on a frequent basis, they seldom

participate in training with other agencies, unless it is related to larger emergencies like severe weather, terrorism, aircraft crashes, or mass casualty issues.

Multi-agency responses to traffic collisions occur every day, yet, there is often confusion and delays. Most responders do a very good job on their portions of the response, but collectively there are areas to improve. It is recommended that the issues below be addressed in multi-agency training to increase the safety of responders.

- Safety equipment for all responders can help reduce injuries. Approved reflectorized vests are becoming more common for responders at incident scenes, but are still not available to, or used by, all.
- Site management training should be expanded to all responders and new TIM Teams could facilitate that process. New employees in HERO, transportation, police, fire, emergency medical services (EMS), and towing should be provided a training course on incident management highlighting their safety.
- Train-the-Trainer programs show the best promise for making the training available for a large number of responders in all agencies. It is recommended the Train-the-Trainer program be expanded to reach more agencies.
- Additional use of changeable message signs including more advanced warnings of incidents to reduce the number of secondary incidents.
- Emergency light discipline for responders can help reduce rubber-necking and decrease the possibility of secondary crashes, especially in the lanes opposite of the incident.
- Proper vehicle positioning at incidents can help reduce rubber-necking and secondary incidents. In addition, scene privacy can be improved by proper vehicle staging at an incident scene.
- The implementation of accident investigation sites should be expanded and their use should be further encouraged among responders.
- Traffic Control Training should be conducted on a multi-agency level to improve coordination at incident scenes.

## **Abandoned Vehicles**

Abandoned vehicles are vehicles left unattended for a period of time, as outlined by Georgia law. Abandoned vehicles are a serious issue relating to injuries, fatalities, and secondary incidents. They should be removed from highway clear zones to improve safety. In addition, wrecker companies are often stuck with unpaid tow bills resulting from recovering abandoned vehicles.

In 2005 North Carolina completed a five year study of abandoned vehicle crash involvement. 1300 vehicles were struck resulting in 47 fatality crashes and over 500 injuries.

Increased emphasis on removing abandoned vehicles from freeway emergency lanes is recommended by improving current impounding regulations to reduce the time it takes to get vehicles impounded.

In addition, policies should be developed that require owners to pay for the removal and storage of vehicles. Some states have implemented initiatives where owners will not be able to register additional vehicles until they have paid the tow bills on the vehicles they left abandoned on freeways.

## **Investigative Improvements**

The Atlanta region has some excellent investigative procedures and a number of police investigators work together with transportation officials to reduce the impact of traffic investigations on traffic. A number of agencies are aggressive about clearing the lanes as soon as possible. Some will return to complete the scene mapping when traffic conditions are better.

A number of agencies throughout the nation have updated their investigative tool kit by obtaining and implementing “Photogrammetry” software. This allows investigators to develop very accurate maps of the scene from digital photographs. Early software used in the late 1990s for this process proved difficult to use by police officers and a number of agencies returned to the use of “Total Stations” or Laser measuring devices. New software is far superior and much easier to use. It has been adopted for use in a growing number of police and state patrol agencies throughout the nation with extremely positive results.

A pilot project is recommended to demonstrate the value, accuracy, and speed of Photogrammetry for investigations on congested highways. Police agencies that need upgrades in their investigative tools and are interested in trying this program should be selected. To train and fully equip six investigators with software, cameras, evidence markers, and technical support for six months would cost less than \$35,000.

## **MOU for Clearing Motor Vehicle Fluids**

Highway incidents where fuels or other vehicle fluids have spilled are often treated as hazardous material incidents. Hazardous materials emergency response has often been determined simply by the size of the spill. When the spill is substantial, such as from ruptured saddle tanks on large trucks, environmental contractors are often called to mitigate the spill. Long delays occur in getting approval and payment terms for clean-up funding from the spiller. That often keeps highways closed for hours when immediate steps could have been taken to open all lanes. The US DOT, who regulates the transportation of hazardous materials, differentiates vehicle fluids that are used to operate a motor vehicle from liquid cargo. Therefore, spills like diesel fuel from a wrecked truck that are the most common can—and should—be cleared from the lanes by using expedient means.

Two recommendations are made to improve this process. First, a MOU outlining the proper steps and quick actions for minor vehicle fluid spills should be developed and signed by all Metro

response agencies. Second, GDOT should provide a minimum amount of money for clean up of travel lanes to ensure immediate contractor response and clean up of the larger fluid or cargo spills. This expenditure could be added to the GDOT charges for incident clean-up and highway damage, which are billed to the responsible party.

## **Legislative Policy Group**

There is a good possibility that policy or actual law changes may be needed for successful implementation of initiatives included in this report. Changing any statutes will require unified support of the TIME stakeholders. It is recommended the TIME group establish a legislative review committee to:

- Determine the best vehicle for implementing the change, such as legislation, Joint Operations Agreement, MOU or letter agreement.
- Draft the appropriate instrument.
- Seek sponsors (for legislative changes) with Executive approval.
- Provide TIME stakeholder support to bill sponsors.
- Brief executives (for policy changes) in the stakeholder agencies to explain the policy and seek acceptance.
- Have stakeholders sign and implement the instrument within their agencies.
- Implement a training program to inform responders how to implement the policies (these can be combined in a single workshop).

## **Conclusion**

NaviGator, HERO, and TIME have combined to improve the management of all types of traffic incidents in the Metro Atlanta region. The benefits of the NaviGator program prove Georgians saving time, money, and in some cases, lives with ITS. The following benefits were reported by GDOT Traffic Operations for year 2003-2005:

- Over 7 millions vehicle-hours of incident-delay savings,
- Over 350 crashes prevented from HERO patrolling the roadways, and
- Over 186 Million US Dollars saved.

This report is designed to continue and enhance these efforts by providing individual recommendations for new or expanded efforts. All are focused on reducing the time required to clear all types of incidents.

The appendix to this document contains all recommendations and issues discussed by workshop participants. This matrix should be further used by the TIME Task Force and other concerned transportation agencies to implement additional projects in the region, and statewide. In addition, it is recommended that this matrix remain a living document and updated by the TIME Task Force as projects are deployed and completed.

Implementation of these strategic and tactical actions will ensure that Georgia's highways are the safest that they can possibly be, thus maximizing the mobility of our citizens, commercial carriers, and visitors.

**APPENDIX**

**WORKSHOP RESULTS MATRIX**

## Appendix—Workshop Results Matrix

The table below captures the discussions, issues, and comments of the three stakeholder workshops. The table is broken into four sections including “Strategic Vision” high priority projects, additional “Strategic Vision” initiatives, additional issues discussed by workshop participants, and assorted comments by workshop participants. The legend below provides an explanation of the coloring scheme within the matrix.

### Legend

Identified in 3/3 workshops
Identified in 2/3 workshops
Identified in 1/3 workshops

Priority	Category	Identified Issues and Comments	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Solution	Additional Notes
<b>"Strategic Vision" High Priority Initiatives</b>							
1	Open Roads Policy	The region does not have uniform, formal clearance goals.	•	•	•	Open Roads Policy with 90-minute clearance goals.	State policies should be created and then local policies.
2	Incentive for Heavy Duty Towing and Recovery	Wrecker companies with improper training, skills and equipment are working big wrecks causing an increase in clearance times.	•	•	•	Incentive for heavy-duty towing and recovery.	
		Sometimes quick clearance conflicts with the hourly rates charged by wrecker companies.	•		•	Implement a quick-clearance incentive program with required training/certification regulations.	GDOT frequently sees delays in getting proper wreckers to incidents they support certification and equipment requirements.
3	Formal Certification and Training for Towing and Recovery Operators	Wrecker companies would like to see aggressive certification and cross training.	•	•	•	Formal training and certification.	Wrecker companies would like to be involved in setting the new standards.
		Inadequate training and certification for wrecker operations.		•	•	Proper training and certification.	

Priority	Category	Identified Issues and Comments	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Solution	Additional Notes
		Some wrecker companies are not able to clean-up fuel spills and pump-off leaking tanks.			•		
4	Medial Examiner/Coroner MOU	Agreements are needed with Medical Examiners.	•	•	•	Medial Examiner/Coroner MOU.	Preliminary meetings have already begun this process.
5	TIM Teams	Arterial highways, in addition to freeways, are in need of traffic incident management.	•	•	•	Develop TIM Teams in local jurisdictions.	
		Better cooperation is needed among agencies	•	•	•	Multi-agency training.	
		TIM needs timely response and quick clearance.		•		Educate all agencies on the impact of traffic incidents.	
		Traffic incidents contribute to more than half of total delay. The public will support more aggressive TIM.		•			
		Expand TIM to Macon and other areas.			•		

Category	Identified Issues and Comments	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Solution	Additional Notes
<b>Additional "Strategic Vision" Initiatives</b>						
Training	Excessive emergency lights cause rubber-necking and decreases the public's perception of the importance of emergency lights.	•	•	•	Develop training or an agreement on proper use of emergency lighting.	Light policy needs to include restrictions on front facing wig-wag flashers.
	Severe rubber-necking causing secondary incidents.	•	•	•	Proper training of vehicle placement to aid in traffic control and scene protection.	
	Wrecker operators should have MOT or MUTCD training.	•	•	•	Training.	This will reduce secondary crash potential.

Category	Identified Issues and Comments	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Solution	Additional Notes
Training Cont.	The use of accident investigation sites should be expanded. Look for areas that are accessible but can be mostly shielded from view of the mainline.	•				Seek support from police on using investigation sites.
	Responders do not know who can decide about dragging trucks or shoving cargo out of the road.	•			Training.	
	Some police vehicles do not have push bumpers and not all have cones.	•			Push bumpers and cones on all squad cars should be required.	
	Proper equipment is not being requested when calling upon wreckers.			•	Police should use the TRAA wrecker guide for calling out the proper equipment.	
	The new Georgia State Patrol Troopers dedicated to the connector should be trained with quick clearance and open roads as well as urban freeway operation safety. This training should be coordinated with HERO.	•			Establish a liaison with GSP.	
	Excessive travel lanes are being blocked by Fire Departments.		•		Proper training of vehicle placement to aid in traffic control and scene privacy.	
	TIME needs to schedule several multi agency training sessions and exercises.		•		Look for some early winners with TIME to energize the members.	
	Training is needed for all responders in quick clearance.			•	Include as part of expanded "Train-the-Trainer" training.	
	Quick response is a problem during bad weather conditions, especially ice.			•	Proper training of defensive positioning of response vehicles.	
	Safety concerns working at night on high speed highways.			•	Expand use of cones, reflective vests, etc.	
Comprehensive training with all responders will increase scene safety.			•			

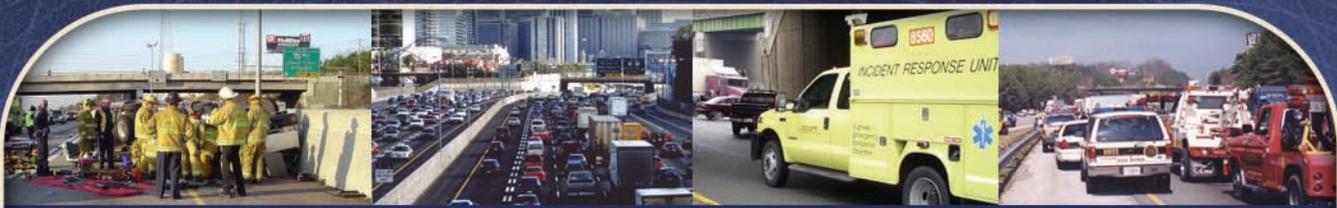
Category	Identified Issues and Comments	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Solution	Additional Notes
Training Cont.	Better communication is needed with wrecker companies on incident scenes.		•	•	Cross training between agencies and wrecker companies.	
	Wreckers are not notified of incidents until 40 or 50 minutes after the occurrence.		•		Work with responders to decrease delays.	
	GDOT is ultimately responsible for highway operations as the "owner/operator" of the highway, however this is not known by all other responders.	•		•	Continue outreach to emergency response agencies.	GDOT is moving toward being more actively "operating" the highway system.
	Promote mandatory use of safety vests at freeway incident scenes for all responders.	•		•	Supply departments with needed equipment.	
Abandoned Vehicles	Wrecker Companies get stuck with tow bills, especially for abandoned vehicles.	•	•	•	Change legislation or develop policy.	
	Abandoned vehicles are causing secondary crashes, fatalities, and difficulty for emergency vehicles to utilize shoulders during incidents.	•	•	•	Change legislation or develop policy.	
Investigation Improvements	Improvement needed on traffic crash investigations.	•	•	•	Look into technology options, including photogrammetry.	
Motor Vehicle Fluids	Georgia, or at least Metro Atlanta, needs a formal Vehicle Fluid Spill Policy.	•			Review examples from other states as a consideration.	
<b>Additional Issues Discussed by Workshop Participants</b>						
Public Awareness	Georgia's "Move-Over" law is difficult to enforce because the public is not aware of the law.	•	•	•	Increase public awareness of the "Move-Over" law.	TIME should get the auto insurance industry involved in TIM, especially the "Move-Over" law.
Communications	Communication between agencies, E-911 Centers, dispatchers and responders.		•	•	Educate agencies that GDOT has established a single phone number for 911 Centers to call GDOT.	

Category	Identified Issues and Comments	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Solution	Additional Notes
	Communication between agencies, E-911 Centers, dispatchers and responders.		•	•	Ensure all responders will be included in the Governor's Radio-Interoperability Project.	
	Direct data link needed between TMCs/TCCs and E-911 Centers.		•	•	Utilize NaviGator services.	
Detection and Notification	Agencies would like to see camera views of incident scenes prior to arrival.		•	•	Utilize the NaviGator Web tool available through GDOT.	TIME should educate responders on the availability of NaviGator Web.
Diversion Plans	Better notification about detours and diversions from the interstate.		•	•	Review all existing plans for updating.	Requires close coordination with all agencies.
Highway Design	Highway design (especially inadequate shoulders or emergency lanes) create problems with quick response and clearance.		•	•	TIM plans should be included with all major construction design projects.	
Performance Measures	Georgia needs to measure the performance of traffic incident management.	•	•		Georgia should adopt the 90-minute clearance goals.	
Public Awareness	The public is not aware of Georgia's "Steer It, Clear It" law.	•		•	Increase public awareness by signing major roadways.	
Work Zones	Police vehicles are needed in construction zones.		•	•	Develop operating guidelines.	
Education/Training	Education is needed about securing loads and the dangers of highway debris.		•		Public information campaign is needed to increase penalties.	
Equipment	Consider pre-staged response equipment for after-hours call.			•	Start with high incident locations.	
Training	Can special traffic units be created in area police departments with advanced training and equipment to enforce and respond to incidents on high-speed highways		•		Pilot project for reconstruction task force.	
	Atlanta being a target for terrorist actions is a concern, especially Hartsfield International Airport.			•	Prepare for possible terrorist attacks or disasters by improving coordination of traffic incidents.	

Category	Identified Issues and Comments	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Solution	Additional Notes
	Could private sector work with public agencies on training and team building?			•	Include private stakeholders in exercises.	
Arterials	Improve notification and coordination with county/city DOTs to modify traffic signal timing during incidents.		•		Procedure for upstream notification needed.	
CAD	Explore CAD sharing between state and local agencies and 911 centers.		•		Start with state agencies first.	
Congestion	Traffic congestion is a major economic drain while mobility is a quality of life issue that could limit businesses relocating to our community.		•		Increase priority of police response to blocking incidents.	Georgia government and businesses seem committed to efforts to reduce congestion and improve safety in Metro Atlanta.
Congestion Data	The true cost of traffic incident delay is unknown. Data would be useful per incident times and number of incidents.	•			Being included in HERO upgrades with NaviGator.	Detect the recovery time when traffic is restored to "normal".
Congestion Data	Secondary incidents are underestimated. Sometimes a secondary incident can occur in another jurisdiction or an hour later and are not associated with the original incident data.	•			Quick clearance and upstream queue protection.	
Coordination	There needs to be a more coordinated use of ITS resources in Metro Atlanta especially between different centers and local DOTs.		•		Increase outreach and TIME involvement with transportation agencies.	
	DOTs need to agree to improve the sharing of info on planned projects.		•		Outreach meetings with response agencies early in the process.	
	Continue working on good detailed information from incident scene to GDOT maintenance.			•	Implement 15 minute rule.	GDOT maintenance wants to be part of the solution.

Category	Identified Issues and Comments	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Solution	Additional Notes
Detection and Notification	It is difficult for responders to locate incidents reported by motorists because frequently travelers do not know their exact locations.			•	Increase the number of markers to help the public with accuracy when reporting incidents. Possibilities should include symbol- or color-coding methods on bridges and corridors to correctly identify locations.	Look at MUTCD for standard location markers.
Detection and Notification	Motorists are not notified in advance of traffic back-ups, causing secondary incidents.			•	Post advance warnings on CMS and place HERO or police upstream.	Find ways to get real time accurate incident details to the public.
Driver Enforcement	Aggressive driver enforcement programs are needed.		•		Support police funding and equipment for this.	
Driver Enforcement	Look for ways to enforce high speeds in HOV lanes.		•		Support police funding and equipment for this.	
ITS	How can ITS assist TIM in the region?			•	More aggressive use of CMS.	
Organ Donors	Trauma centers will help TIME push for a MOU on prompt transport of organ donors that may result from a fatal crash.	•			Explore possibilities with trauma centers.	
Public Awareness	Fatalities occur because motorists are dropping or picking up roadway debris.		•		Motorist education on highway debris and reporting information to 911.	
Special Events	Construction closures should be coordinated with special events.		•		Regional construction tracking by TMC.	
TMC	Video from TMC CCTV could really help law enforcement, can a policy be agreed upon for a specific area to be monitored and retained by DOT.		•		GDOT and County DOTs to meet with Atlanta area police and discuss a regional policy for law enforcement usage of selected video.	
Wrecker Services	Wrecker companies are being ticketed for driving on roadway shoulders to get to accident scenes.		•		GDOT should prepare an MOU to allow responding wreckers to be "authorized vehicles" so they are not ticketed for using shoulders.	Wrecker companies would like to become part of the congestion solution.

Category	Identified Issues and Comments	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Solution	Additional Notes
<b>Assorted Comments by Workshop Participants</b>						
HEROs	Move forward with the expanded HERO program. They take a load off many other agencies.	•	•	•		
Wrecker Services	Wrecker companies are in the business of making money.	•		•	Review method of compensation with clearance goals.	
Training	All responders should operate with a sense of urgency.	•			Training.	
	GSP is planning to put out a 10 person motorcycle unit in Atlanta.			•	Early coordination will help make the process smooth.	
Coordination	Involve ITSGA more in traffic incident management issues.		•			
	TRAG is an active member of TIME.			•		
	The Department of Agriculture needs to be involved in TIME.				This will help understand their role in spilled food and handling.	
Quick Clearance	Quick clearance of all incidents will make a huge difference.		•		Track clearance times.	
Recognition	HERO Operators need to get more recognition for their work.		•			
Safety	Safety is the number one concern for responders.	•	•	•		
Traffic Incident Management	Fast paced growth requires looking ahead for TIM efforts.			•	TIME expansion with more TIM Teams.	
Wrecker Liability	TIME should support HB 880 supporting wrecker operator liability exemptions.	•				Failed to pass in this (January 2006) session.



Metro Atlanta

# TIME

Task Force

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