

## MEMORANDUM

Date: October 31, 2014

To: Technical Committee members

From: Don Samdahl, Dan Grayuski and Aaron Gooze, Fehr & Peers

**Subject: Port of Tacoma Emergency Response and ITS Plan:  
Notes from the 10/29 Technical Committee**

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1. Don Samdahl reviewed the updated 15 study locations and the response types for those locations. Mike Fitzgerald explained the justification for dropping five sites from the original draft study list. The Technical Committee noted that the pulp mill is now operated under RockTenn after a recent purchase. There was discussion regarding the schools in Fife and ensuring that coverage for those areas was part of the analysis. The police and fire departments responded that they have conducted substantial evaluation of response to the schools and this analysis could be folded into the Tideflats Emergency Response study.
2. Josh Diekmann stated that ITS improvements will likely have benefits that extend beyond the emergency response element and asked how the project will distinguish between an emergency response benefit and other general circulation benefits.
3. Steve Brezler highlighted the findings from their two day field visits and fire department meetings. The risks identified in the Tideflats area are substantial and roadway conditions have an effect on the speed of response. Many of the roads in the Tideflats area are in poor condition. Steve also reviewed existing conditions maps that represented response times into the Tideflats area from the nearby fire stations. A 4-minute response time is a generally accepted national standard for first response to an emergency. A notable gap exists in the 4-minute response window particularly for the Port of Tacoma portion of the Tideflats area. He also reviewed sensitivity tests that were conducted to test the response times with the inclusion of recently closed fire stations and the reopening of the 11<sup>th</sup> Street viaduct. These analyses are preliminary, since they use posted speed limits rather than actual conditions.



4. Don Samdahl and Aaron Gooze reviewed land use forecasts and key transportation projects planned for the Tideflats area. Substantial employment growth is forecasted in downtown Tacoma and the Tideflats area. Steve Brezler noted that future street vacations will likely have a negative effect on emergency response times.
5. Aaron Gooze described examples of ITS strategies that might be appropriate for the Tideflats. These include strategies in information management, traffic management, incident and emergency management and commercial vehicle operations. Forest Suttmiller of WSDOT highlighted the agency's 6-year vision for the area that includes ITS improvements on SR 509 and I-705. These improvements are currently unfunded with a total of \$6.6 million. If funding is secured, this project will be implemented over three phases.
6. The group then discussed specific issues and needs that could be addressed by ITS strategies including:
  - a. The congestion near Station 12 is substantial and affects their response times. Additionally, if a ship is currently being loaded or unloaded, this congestion becomes worse.
  - b. During the lunch hour from noon until 1pm, no terminals operate, so substantial truck queues develop.
  - c. The Alexander Avenue street vacation is moving through the process for the portion south of the gate. The northern portion is still working through the interlocal agreement.
  - d. Real-time camera images are being used by truckers on the website [seattletrucker.com](http://seattletrucker.com). They are cameras focused primarily on the terminal gates
  - e. The WSDOT Traffic Management Center is co-located with Washington State Patrol as a means to coordinate their incident response.
  - f. The FRATIS Tacoma Port Drayage Productivity Improvement Pilot is a proposed USDOT funded project that would evaluate the feasibility of Dedicated Short Range Communication 5.9GHZ technology to improve drayage and terminal operations. This pilot would allow for communication directly between the terminal operators and trucking companies as a measure to optimize drayage operations and reduce truck waiting times.
  - g. Even with improvements for in-vehicle or cellphone traveler information, it is still important to have real-time information displayed via Variable Message Signs (VMS) or other means for the near-term.
  - h. Terminal wait-time notification should be a key element within the ITS plan.
  - i. Tacoma Rail is not completely real-time, but coordinates calls to notify the control center and the crew of train movements. There is currently an informal communication link between the Tacoma Fire Department and Tacoma Rail to



notify them of emergencies to limit potential conflicts. A more automated ITS method could improve this communication significantly. Tacoma Rail could cut a train if notified of an emergency in order to clear an at-grade crossing. However, it still would require time to respond and move the trains.

- j. If there was a major incident within the Port, Tacoma Rail could stop all rail activity to prevent any additional at-grade crossing blockages.
  - k. Tacoma Fire Department does have some existing fiber optics capability that could tap into the existing WSDOT or other agency installations.
  - l. VMS on I-5 could allow travelers to use different routes if there is an issue away from the freeway.
  - m. Expanding WSDOT's congestion maps to include more Port-area roads would be useful.
7. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 12/10/2014.

#### **Action Items**

- 1. Email a copy of the ITS survey to Shirley Schultz for distribution.
- 2. Terminal operator TOTE (Totem Ocean Trailer Express) would like to be a member of the Technical Committee. All agreed that it would be good to have a terminal operator as part of the committee. Mike Fitzgerald and Ian Munce will discuss this separately. The Port of Tacoma will then contact TOTE.
- 3. Fehr & Peers will update the study locations map to note the change in ownership of the pulp mill to RockTenn.
- 4. Mike Fitzgerald will discuss with the Fire Chief, the Police Department, Port Security and Ian Munce how to incorporate the three schools in Fife in the report. A school response element may be included as an appendix to the final report.
- 5. Fehr & Peers will provide to TriData the full 2020 and 2035 network as well as the identification of points where congestion substantially reduces the travel speed for particular road segments
- 6. TriData will leverage the Fehr & Peers congestion data and the existing response time data from TFD to calibrate their model appropriately
- 7. TriData will evaluate the 4-minute and 8-minute response sheds for the existing, 2020 and 2035 horizon years
- 8. Fehr & Peers will perform additional sensitivity tests regarding railroad blockages, bridge closures, response type and new station locations based on continued coordination with TFD.



9. Fehr & Peers will follow-up individually with interested stakeholders as a part of the needs and vision development for the ITS plan
10. Fehr & Peers will conduct more detailed dynamic traffic assignment analysis to identify specific congestion hotspots in addition to quantifying impacts from at-grade railroad blockages
11. Fehr & Peers will develop a list of additional transportation improvements that may address the congestion and emergency response issues
12. Fehr & Peers will develop ITS framework from upcoming meetings with WSDOT, the City of Tacoma, Tacoma Rail, the Port, and Pierce County.