Talking Points for the Olympic Games' Transportation Plan for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta

BACKGROUND:
The Olympic Games in Atlanta present a unique and timely opportunity for the United States to showcase traveler information services and technologies associated with Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), with the goals of stimulating further deployment throughout the country and of marketing these services and technologies worldwide. Application of these services and technologies will be critical to the efficient movement of people in the Atlanta region during the Olympics and eventual operation of our National Highway System.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES:
Deployment of advanced systems and technologies, along with capacity improvements at key locations, is already occurring in the Atlanta region, including:

- Capacity Improvements will be undertaken to improve the system capacity and improve traveler service facilities. These projects include bridge construction & widening, new interchanges, rest area and welcome center construction and reconstruction.

- Travel demand management strategies, including telecommuting and flexible work hours, will be implemented to alternative trip making opportunities.

- The Atlanta Regional Advanced Transportation Management System, currently under development by the Georgia Department of Transportation, will provide state-of-the-art traffic control, surveillance, and incident management for freeways and arterials in the five county metropolitan Atlanta region. Roadside video cameras, vehicle sensors, information from the Georgia State Patrol and other police agencies related to accidents and other highway incidents, and motorists using a cellular call-in service will provide traffic network information that will be used to control traffic signals and freeway ramp meters, respond to incidents, and provide real-time information to travelers and potential travelers. In addition to the ARATMS information, other sources of transportation-related information include private services such as Metro Traffic Control, WSB News Talk Radio, and TrafficScan.

- The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Transit Management will expand the transit system capabilities by providing new bus and shuttle service in parts of the region, and enhancing fringe parking lots and park-and-ride locations to improve access to public transportation. Bus location and status information will be fed to the Regional Transportation Management System for distribution to the public via kiosks, public television and other media.

- Georgia DOT is developing "kiosks" that are interactive, with region-wide, multimodal information.

- Scientific Atlanta is currently leading an ITS Operational Test (Atlanta En Route Driver Advisory System) that will use an FM subcarrier broadcast to communicate travel information to a limited number (200+) of in-vehicle devices. The test's schedule will allow the system to be tested, refined and expanded in time for the Olympics.

· Through partnering, we will create a traveler information system to distribute current roadway and transit system performance data to as many citizens as possible using ITS devices. This traveler information system provides unique opportunity to showcase ITS traveler information delivery to the average person providing them with comprehensive data on current status of both roadway and transit. Enhanced dissemination of travel information is the key to potential showcasing of additional ITS services in Atlanta. Potential channels of information delivery include: personal-communication devices, in-vehicle devices, interactive television (hotel-based, especially), cable television, and computer-based information networks such as the Internet. FHWA has acquired the services of a system integration firm (Battelle) to assist in pulling together the various aspects of this ITS Showcase effort. [NOTE: Detailed descriptions of these showcase efforts follow this briefing material.]

- FHWA issued a Request-for-Information on November 28 to obtain any and all information from interested firms or other entities relating to the Traveler Information Showcase. Issuing this RFI begins the process of determining potential Showcase participants and encourages participation by firms which may currently be considering transportation-related services in the Atlanta area. Over 30 responses were received by January 5, and are being reviewed by FHWA headquarters and field staffs.

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF ITS SHOWCASE AREAS

1- Personal Transportation Coordinator - Through integrating existing personal communication device technologies of "palm-sized" computers, mobile communications, and automated location determination through the Geographic Positioning System, this activity would produce a hand-held device to advise travelers of "real-time" traffic conditions and transit vehicle availability.  Whether in a car, bus, or walking: this device would guide the user to Olympic events, park-and-ride lots, tourist attractions, and businesses such as restaurants and motels.

2- In-Vehicle Guidance Devices - Automobile manufacturers currently are producing dash-mounted, color-video mapping systems to provide route guidance to drivers. In cooperation with companies such as mapping software firms, hardware producers, and rental car companies, this activity would work to include the NHS, tourist attractions, and Olympic fringe park-and-ride lots in the map database. A potential addition would be transmission of current traffic and transit information to allow the system to base route guidance decisions on actual conditions, as opposed to static data only.

3- Hotel Interactive Television - Building upon current hotel-based systems which provide "express check-out" and other services, this activity would provide real-time traffic and transit information to the user before leaving their room. Envisioned as a sort of "mini-kiosk," such a system would provide directions to specific events or sites, and printouts could be picked up at the desk as the guest is leaving.

4- Cable Television Station - This activity would provide transportation information over cable TV on a full-time basis.  A combination of rotating static displays and "live" reporters somewhat similar to the current "Weather Station" is envisioned.

5- Computer Information Services - Current computer-based interactive services such as Prodigy, CompuServe, and America On-Line could offer a special "Olympics Transportation Forum" showing real-time roadway and transit conditions and alerts.  Also to be investigated would be bulletin board services, and possible enhanced systems now becoming available through the Internet.


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System, currently under development by the Georgia Department of
Transportation, will provide state-of-the-art traffic control,
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TRAVELER INFORMATION SHOWCASE
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SPECIAL CHALLNGE

One caution which FHWA is aware is the extremely sensitive matter of licensing the use of Olympics' logos and official Olympic sponsorship.  Participants in the USDOT showcase can not imply that they are associated with the official Olympics.  We are working with ACOG and the ITS Showcase participants to assure that no licensing nor sponsorship agreements are infringed or violated.

Talking Points for Administrator Slater's Meeting with Mr. Morris Dillard of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) to Discuss the Transportation Plan for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta - January 6, 1995

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POTENTIAL ISSUES:
  ·  A proposal has been developed to procure and install signs and other traffic control devices (e.g. cones, barricades).  The original estimated cost was approximately $2 million, but has increased to $5 million.  Discussions and recommendations from FHWA are that usual sources of funding (State's regular Federal-aid funds, Georgia DOT funds, etc.) are appropriate sources for funding this activity, whereas it would not be the best use of directed/discretionary funding.

     Georgia DOT intends to fully utilize its spending obligation for fiscal year 1995, so requests that if any additional funding is directed to Georgia, it does not take from Georgia's obligation limitation (i.e. additional spending obligation is sent along with any additional funds).

  -  FHWA is aware of the extremely sensitive matter of licensing the use of Olympics[1] logos and official Olympic sponsorship, and will work with ACOG and the ITS Showcase participants to assure that no licensing nor sponsorship agreements are infringed or violated.

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