



TO: Director, ITS JPO

FROM: Vehicle Traffic Information Coalition (VTIC)

DATE: April 23, 2008

RE: Future Strategic Direction of the ITS Joint Program Office

The Vehicle Traffic Information Coalition (VTIC) is a coalition of leading auto manufacturers and technology suppliers in the real-time traffic information industry. VTIC represents the traffic information value chain. Our members include: automobile manufacturers; suppliers to the auto manufacturers; traffic data collectors; dynamic data companies; emergency communications system designers; and disseminators of real-time traffic data to the end user, the driver. VTIC exists to promote advanced ITS solutions, particularly the development of real-time traffic information, which we believe is the foundation of any advanced traffic solution.

The vision of the Vehicle Traffic Information Coalition (VTIC) is to have every road enabled to deliver real-time traffic data at high quality and low cost. Our purpose is to promote the creation, collection and availability of meaningful, real-time traffic data for travelers everywhere in the United States. Drivers when empowered with real-time data become active participants in congestion mitigation instead of passive targets of top-down decision making. Rather than a series of dots on a screen to be managed by transportation officials, real-time traffic technologies empower drivers to make logical, congestion-mitigating decisions. Drivers become part of the solution instead of the problem.

VTIC is pleased to see the ITS JPO open this dialogue and engage the private sector regarding purposes and goals. We applaud the considerable effort put forth to date and appreciate the opportunity to contribute to a greater understanding of how we can all best move forward. Much of the current “Real-Time Information on All Roads and for All Modes” focus area corresponds with or otherwise complements VTIC’s mission goals. We see much to commend in this document and our further recommendations are as follows:

- VTIC is focused on the advancement of the state of the art of real-time information as it relates drivers, and while we see value in broadening the provision of information to all travelers, we recommend maintaining a significant

focus on the largest deliverable – data for all roads. Roads contain the most independent variables (drivers) relative to other travel modes and therefore provide a rich opportunity to see mobility benefits. With millions of drivers on the road making independent decisions, we have the greatest potential for systemic benefits by harmonizing the decisions and actions of drivers through real-time traffic information.

- JPO should continue to be the leading edge of high-tech transportation policy solutions. We encourage the JPO to aggressively push forward and serve as the lead government actor in facilitating the development of advanced ITS solutions. At a minimum, the JPO should continue to work as a clearinghouse of ITS information. JPO should continue to develop “state of the traveler information industry” indices – e.g. further develop the “deployment statistics” and “ITS in my state” weblinks. The public and private sector can better deploy investments when information on system status is readily available.
- JPO should make the development of data exchange formats a high priority. We look forward to further supporting developments regarding Section 1201 of SAFETEA-LU.
- The JPO goals to “(a)chieve measurable improvements in mobility, system performance, and economic productivity through research & demonstration of ITS technology” would be enhanced by continuing to promote large-scale, comprehensive solutions that allow for a clear demonstration of benefits. Premier programs such as the Urban Partnership Agreements, the Corridors of the Future and other large scale initiatives provide a significant testbed from which to demonstrate the benefits of ITS solutions. VTIC encourages the further development of additional comprehensive ITS/VII testbeds to demonstrate and fully evaluate the benefits of advanced transportation technologies. Real-time traffic data creation and distribution should be an essential element of these premier programs.
- The development of a robust, nationwide real-time traffic system is sufficiently large that the public and private sectors should continue to leverage each other’s strengths to achieve mutual goals. The JPO should lead by co-hosting with ITS industry organizations, semi-annual events/summits related to road data collection, distribution and utilization, and to create synergies for the public and private sectors. Private sector support of JPO initiatives through public events would further momentum behind advanced transportation research, development and utilization.
- JPO should seek to catalyze development of a green ethic in transportation issues. Real-time traffic information could be used as a measurement of system performance. Once measured, it can be better managed and, potentially monetized. If monetized, real-time traffic information can support additional transportation investment. The JPO should coordinate projects, with the private

sector, to study the use of real-time traffic information as a proxy for real-time carbon measurement from vehicles. Using traffic information to measure (and predict) carbon impact could give traffic managers and drivers an opportunity for a dynamic response to pollution. Traffic and carbon could be dialed up or down using real-time traffic advisories, ramp metering, signal timing, HOV lanes, variable tolling and other means. In a carbon trading environment, real-time traffic information could be used to more precisely measure the impact of road infrastructure and potentially generate investment dividends for mitigating congestion and carbon impact.

- The JPO should support and promote the work of University Transportation Centers (UTC's) as they research advance technology solutions. Where UTC efforts complement JPO goals they should be promoted through the JPO website and shared with ITS professionals at summits/leadership forums.
- JPO should take the lead in identifying untapped public sector data and liberate this data so that it may be used by the traveling public. The value to be found is not in the selling of raw data but the improvements in system performance from sharing raw data with the private sector to then add value and distribute to the driving public. The JPO should encourage the sharing of data between Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and transportation operations centers to foster a more integrated approach to traffic operations. This ethic of shared data needs to be instilled particularly as we develop the Next Generation 911 system.
- Whenever transportation infrastructure investments are made there should be a performance standard related to making available data related to that infrastructure.

VTIC is encouraged by direction the ITS JPO is taking and would support further opportunities to develop goals and purposes in the medium and longer-term. We believe the greater collection and distribution of real-time traffic information to drivers – so that they become part of the solution – is an essential part of any transportation plan. With the goals as stated to date, we are hopeful for more aggressive development of advanced ITS solutions and look forward to continuing to work with you as you seek to implement these plans.