



Transportation Committee

February 25, 2009

511 and STARNET Enhancements Demonstration

Issue: Significant new features have been added over the past year to the 511 traveler information phone system and website (sacregion511.org), with further enhancements anticipated as the deployment of the STARNET intelligent transportation system (ITS) advances.

Recommendation: None; this item is for information only.

Discussion: In response to Board input, a number of new enhancements to improve public access have been added to the Regional 511 telephone system over the past year. These enhancements include the installation of a voice recognition feature to facilitate hands free use in navigating the phone tree menu, along with a modified menu structure to allow for easier access to most features. Another new initiative is a “roadside assistance feature” which will allow motorists to access all the services of a roadside call box from their cell phones. Presently, this enhancement is being deployed within the immediate Capitol Valley Regional Service (CVRS) region. Additional recent 511 enhancements include the website redesign last November and the first 511 system in California to offer a comprehensive set of information in Spanish.

Although recent 511 improvements have greatly increased the safety, access and services offered, the largest demand from the public is for real-time traffic information that has been limited by data gaps. This demand will soon be met as the STARNET system becomes operational this summer. The implementation of the STARNET system, which began development in 2009 and will continue for the next two years, has three primary objectives: coordination, data gathering/performance measurement, and traveler information. Through improved understanding of the complete transportation system and communications, STARNET is allowing the 34 participating agencies and departments to share information to better manage the system in a coordinated manner. The capabilities of this data management will increase over the next two years as additional features are implemented, including signal system status, Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) controls and improved communications.

In addition to regional data sharing benefits, STARNET will also support the aggregation of data for use in real-time traveler information systems and tracking performance measurements to support the evaluation of potential transportation investments. Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data from the region’s transit agencies will be available on the website later this year to allow users to know when a transit vehicle is going to arrive with much greater confidence. Future improvements will allow for personalized messaging on specific routes and monitoring conditions, such as chain controls, or incidents along your travel route.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Executive Director

MM:MH:gg

Key Staff: Matt Carpenter, Director of Transportation Services, (916) 340-6276
Mark Heiman, Manager of ITS/511, (916) 340-6232