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## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Advanced Technology Task Force

Date: March 20, 2008 From: Claire Bozic

Re: Northeastern Illinois Operations Group Development

The GCM Corridor group is currently evolving into an interstate operations focused group, leaving a gap in operations/management on the remaining system. There are a number of potential steps northeastern Illinois could take towards the emerging gap.

- 1) The region could do nothing. This is an inappropriate course if the region wants to move forward on more coordinated and effective management of the entire system.
- 2) The Advanced Technology Task Force (ATTF) could be pressed into service for this task. However, the ATTF seems focused on the planning side of ITS. Planning is a necessary aspect of the systems development process, but strong linkages between planning and operations must be developed. The ATTF is well-positioned to accomplish the large scale planning, but what regional group will fill the operations function?
- 3) The gap could be addressed by a subgroup of the ATTF, because the necessary organizations participate in the ATTF. Since we are free to form or reform the ATTF in any way we think will be useful, should we create an operations and a planning subgroup?
- 4) A wholly independent group could be formed.

CMAP has agreed to provide staffing and organizational support to establish an effective operations group, however that process plays out. Some initial suggestions were that the regional operations group should include counties, large cities, IDOT, ISTHA, RTA and each service board. The group should be flexible and able to address specific needs as they arise. It should include the right people to address the issues.

In addition, the regional group could advocate for moving needed large-scale or multi-user projects forward. For example, the Gateway requires significant upgrades to become more useful to the region as a data and communications hub. The region's agencies have not viewed this as a critical project, but an operations group with roots inside these agencies could change that opinion.

## **Next Steps- Move the Discussion Forward**

- 1) Identify a small group of individuals to discuss and guide the development of an operations group.
- 2) Since so much of the focus is on issues and needs as they arise, it seems wise to do some outreach to identify some of issues impacting operating agencies today.