

Office of the Auditor General
Preliminary Survey Summary

Transportation Operations Centers
Michigan Department of Transportation

September 2017

State of Michigan Auditor General
Doug A. Ringler, CPA, CIA

The auditor general shall conduct post audits of financial transactions and accounts of the state and of all branches, departments, offices, boards, commissions, agencies, authorities and institutions of the state established by this constitution or by law, and performance post audits thereof.

Article IV, Section 53 of the Michigan Constitution



OAG

Office of the Auditor General

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Doug A. Ringler, CPA, CIA
Auditor General

September 13, 2017

Mr. Todd Wyett, Chair
State Transportation Commission
and
Kirk T. Steudle, PE, Director
Michigan Department of Transportation
Murray D. Van Wagoner Building
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Mr. Wyett and Mr. Steudle:

This is our preliminary survey summary of the Transportation Operations Centers, Michigan Department of Transportation. Because we did not identify significant concerns that would warrant the additional use of our audit resources, we have decided to terminate this performance audit.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us during our preliminary survey. If you have any questions, please call me or Laura J. Hirst, CPA, Deputy Auditor General.

Sincerely,

Doug Ringler
Auditor General

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PRELIMINARY SURVEY SUMMARY

TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS CENTERS

RESULTS

Our preliminary survey did not identify significant concerns that would warrant the additional use of our audit resources to complete a performance audit. Therefore, we have terminated this project and did not conduct sufficient testing to conclude on the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Transportation Operations Centers (TOCs), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

FACTORS IMPACTING AUDIT TERMINATION

TOCs:

- Established a federally mandated real-time information program to provide traffic and travel condition information for all State-operated freeways.
- Maintained the MiDrive (<https://mdotnetpublic.state.mi.us/drive/>) Web site and mobile application to provide Michigan drivers with real-time traffic and construction information.
- Reported traffic incident notifications to motorists, MDOT first responders, and other appropriate stakeholders in a timely manner for the 40 traffic incidents that we reviewed.
- Documented quality assurance and control activity reviews of the control room operators' (CROs') timeliness and accuracy relating to traffic incident notifications for the 20 CROs that we reviewed.
- Appropriately documented required certification and training histories for the 9 CROs that we reviewed.
- Collected and analyzed control room performance measurement data on a monthly and annual basis.
- Documented daily checks of the functionality of the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) devices and submitted ITS maintenance work orders, as necessary.
- Properly monitored the ITS maintenance contractor to ensure timely completion of ITS maintenance work orders for the 10 work orders that we reviewed.
- Performed regular outreach efforts to establish emergency management coordination with the traffic incident management community, including providing incident responder safety workshops.

BACKGROUND

Description: MDOT operates four TOCs throughout Michigan to monitor and manage traffic on State-maintained roadways:

- Southeast Michigan (SEMTOC), located in Detroit, covers MDOT's Metro Region.
- Statewide (STOC), located in Lansing, covers MDOT's Bay, North, Southwest, Superior, and University Regions.
- West Michigan (WMTOC), located in Grand Rapids, covers MDOT's Grand Region.
- Blue Water Bridge (BWBTOC), located in Port Huron, monitors Blue Water Bridge traffic.

TOCs provide motorists with real-time travel information utilizing vehicle detection devices, strategically placed throughout the State to collect volume and speed data, and notify motorists of travel information using dynamic message signs and the MiDrive Web site and mobile application. The MiDrive Web site is updated in real time with freeway incidents, construction, camera feeds, and speed data. In addition, TOCs partner with emergency responders to provide response services to traffic incidents.

TOCs' responsibilities include:

- Traffic incident management - Dispatch Freeway Courtesy Patrol drivers and MDOT first responders from the regional transportation service center offices to incident scenes to assist police, fire, and emergency personnel with traffic control, cleanup, and road patching and to assess damage to the roadways.
- Incident prevention and response time reduction efforts - Collect and analyze traffic and weather data to anticipate incident activity using predictive modeling.
- Traffic information/notification - Monitor and timely notify Michigan drivers of construction activity, roadway or lane blocking incidents, roadway weather observations, and travel time information.
- Traffic congestion reduction - Coordinate with State and local police, MDOT transportation service centers, and Freeway Courtesy Patrol drivers to manage traffic flow during incidents, construction, and special events.

Expenditures: Based on information provided by MDOT, the TOCs expended approximately \$9.6 million and \$10.1 million during fiscal years 2015 and 2016, respectively.

Employees: As of June 30, 2017, MDOT indicated that the TOCs had 4 full-time MDOT employees and 39 full-time contract employees responsible for control room operations.

SCOPE

Our preliminary survey generally covered October 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017 and included a limited review of the following TOC activities:

- Traffic incident management.
- Incident prevention and response time reduction efforts.
- Traffic information/notification.
- Traffic congestion reduction.

PURPOSE

Within a performance audit, we design the preliminary survey to obtain an understanding of the core activities within an entity or a program and to identify potential program improvements and/or deficiencies that could impair management's ability to conduct its operations in an effective and efficient manner. If the results of a preliminary survey do not identify significant concerns, our practice is to terminate the planned performance audit.

Preliminary survey procedures are limited in nature and should not be considered a completed performance audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. In addition, our preliminary survey procedures would not necessarily disclose the presence or absence of any material conditions and/or reportable conditions. Given that the procedures we employed did not constitute a performance audit, we will not issue a performance audit report and we do not express conclusions regarding the effectiveness or efficiency of TOCs.



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