Archived Content

Mobility Acceleration Coalition

Homeland Security
Science and Technology

MOBILE DATA INTEROPERABILITY

As public safety agencies advance their communication technology tools based on individual priorities and budgets, there is the potential problem that the disparate communication systems are incompatible with those of other jurisdictions. In the absence of regional coordination and strategic planning, public safety runs the risk of adopting non-interoperable and incompatible mobile data systems. Given the diversity of applications, the interoperability issues for mobile data could be significantly more challenging than those seen in technologies like land mobile radio and computer aided dispatch systems.

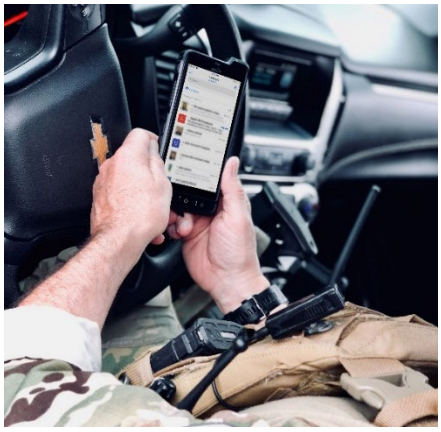
The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) collaborated with Mobility 4 Public Safety, the Los Angeles region and the Houston/Harris County region to create the Mobility Acceleration Coalition (MAC). By working with public safety stakeholders in both regions, DHS S&T sought to enhance strategic planning to develop repeatable interoperable mobile data architectures, governance, and associated policies and procedures with tactical use case development for public safety purposes.

LESSONS LEARNED IN HOUSTON/HARRIS COUNTY AND LOS ANGELES REGIONS

As a FirstNet Early Builder, Houston/Harris County region was one of the initial regions to test, deploy and evaluate mobile broadband technologies several years before the rest of the nation. The Harris County Long-Term Evolution (HCLTE) program had the unique opportunity to support all public safety practitioners regardless of agency, jurisdiction or discipline. Due to the region's numerous high-profile special events, to include the nation's first large-scale operational deployment of Public Safety LTE at Super Bowl LI, the region experienced significant end-user adoption of mobile solutions. Houston/Harris County successfully demonstrated the value of mobility solutions for multi-agency operations, but it lacked the elements for sustainability.

The Los Angeles region was also a FirstNet Early Builder, but with different priorities and development path. The Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System (LA-RICS) is a quasi-governmental organization that focused on formal governance, policies and procedures, and public safety grade network deployment.

The regions' public safety agencies jointly reached out to DHS for funding to develop the MAC, which could continue the momentum of the Early Builder programs and accelerate the operationalizing of mobility solutions.



Houston Police SWAT Officer uses the Bridge4PS app during a public event. The app helps populate operations plans, maps and other event information, and allows users to share messages, photos and videos to enhance situational awareness.

MAC GOALS

The goal of the MAC is to share lessons learned between the two regions. Since each program developed differently due to differing Key Learning Conditions, they could each learn and benefit from the different experiences and results. MAC aimed to leverage (1) use cases from the Houston region to drive end-user adoption in LA, as well as (2) lessons learned from LA-RICS to formalize a regional mobility program in Houston/Harris County area. By building on the successes of the Early Builders programs, the MAC could develop a sustainable and scalable program for continued support and adoption of interoperable mobility solutions.

INTEROPERABILITY STRATEGIES & PILOTS

Phase 1 of the MAC laid the foundation for regional, interoperable mobility adoption. The Houston/Harris County Working Group focuses on developing a regional governance model, how to share first responder identities and recommendations for leveraging the cloud for interoperability. The Los Angeles Working Group focuses on numerous special event deployments to understand first-hand the operational value of mobility technologies and regional collaboration.