Congratulations to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for being selected to receive the 2022 TSMO Council Organization Award for its success in Transforming the Rail Operations Control Center. This award is given to an organization that demonstrate the successful use of TSMO/Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies to improve the efficiency of surface transportation facilities with significant societal mobility.

Like many aging transit infrastructure systems across large metropolitan service areas, WMATA has been challenged to meet the evolving demands of its Metrorail users. In particular, WMATA’s system incident management required needed attention due to a dynamic Metrorail workforce functioning with outdated technological systems and operational procedures.

The solution to resolving system volatility issues across the rail network was to restructure the core operating system of the Rail Operations Control Center (ROCC). WMATA leadership initiated a significant change management program in September 2020 to address a number of key areas related to transit reliability, safety, Metrorail system resilience, and culture at its ROCC.

They executed an objective organizational assessment to identify key areas of improvement and identify key outcomes of the program relative to its newly created Mission, Vision, and Values centering on safety. Some of the key improvement areas identified were 1) a revamped staffing plan, including recruitment and retention, 2) a collaborative and transparent Conduct Review Process, 3) a comprehensive Safety Management System across all levels of the ROCC, and 4) a new operating model, including restructuring operational leadership roles and overhauling key processes for incident management.

The elements identified above formed the cornerstones upon which the Management Reorganization launched in August 2021. By rebuilding the ROCC from the ground up, the Metrorail network has been improved to current transit industry standards with a self-sustaining operating system better suited to meet the evolving operational needs of the network.

Congratulations WMATA team members Rachel Lesniak and Amelia Gannon for their contributions to this project. Read more.