

Florida Model Task Force Meeting
March 27, 2003 - Orlando
8:30 AM – 4:30 AM
MEETING SUMMARY

Participants:

See attached list

Introduction

The tri-chair welcomed all members and announced that the focus of the meeting would be discussions on the Model Evaluation Study Steering Committee recommendations.

Committee Status Report

Trip Generation Committee

Imran Ghani, Chair of the Trip Generation Committee, informed the MTF that a Trip Generation Committee meeting was held on March 26, 2003. Dr. Fang Zhao presented the findings on the research project analyzing statewide applicability of the Tampa Bay and the Southeast Regional lifestyle model. The presence and spatial distribution of retired and seasonal households should be analyzed to determine if a lifestyle model would improve traffic projections. The similarities in demographics with the existing lifestyle models need to be considered before a choice of a model structure is made or trip rates are borrowed. A standardized format of household surveys should be created to allow for the development of standard lifestyle trip rates.

The Trip Generation Committee is also looking into different methodologies to improve the trip generation process. The committee will formulate its recommendation over the next three months and report back to the MTF.

ITS Committee

Imran Ghani, chair of the ITS Committee, reported that the ITS committee was formed last April. Since its formation, the committee has been working on developing an interface between the Florida Standard Model and the ITS Deployment Analysis System (IDAS) to calculate cost benefit ratios for different ITS projects. The committee had a meeting last June and in held a training session in Orlando last September. The committee will have its next meeting on May 8, 2003 during which the use of IDAS in an I-95 ramp metering study conducted in Miami will be discussed. The meeting is going to focus on how IDAS was applied and what problems were encountered.

Land Use Committee

Gary Kramer, chair of the Land Use Committee, stated that a teleconference was held on July 23, 2002 to formulate strategies in response to the objectives outlined by the committee members. The Committee is currently working with Mike Brown on a white paper creating guidelines for developing different land use alternatives for analysis in a transportation model. The committee is also pursuing funding for research projects and on bringing one NHI land use modeling course to Florida.

GIS Committee

Glen Ahlert, chair of the GIS Committee stated that a meeting was held March 26, 2003 to demonstrate the latest version of GIS-TM. A beta version of the software will be distributed to

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committee members for testing. A GIS-TM training class is scheduled for May. At that time, the newly developed network conflation tool will be demonstrated and released to committee members for testing. A draft survey was developed to obtain directions for future research from committee members.

Trip Distribution Committee

Mike Neidhart, chair of the Trip Distribution Committee, reported that the committee has taken steps to pursue research on Destination Choice models and explore opportunities to enhance the existing gravity model. At the March 26, 2003 Committee meeting, Dr. Fang Zhao presented information on the effects of adding an employment density variable and an accessibility variable to the gravity model. The improvements were marginal and did not warrant the added complexity. The committee will conduct a survey contacting agencies in an attempt to confirm the findings of the research. A technical memorandum will be written on the findings and the survey results.

Transit Committee

Kevin Feldt, chair of the Transit Committee reported that a teleconference meeting was held on May 7, 2002 to approve the Committee mission statement and goals. A follow-up teleconference was held on June 18, 2002 to update members on several research projects. The Committee has been monitoring the Model Evaluation Study process and will work to improve transit modeling in Florida.

Freight Committee

Frank Baron, chair of the Freight Committee informed the members that the Statewide Freight model is completed. The Freight Corridor Study has a final draft report currently being reviewed. MetroPlan Orlando's Freight, Goods and Services Mobility Strategy Plan received the 2002 Engineering Excellence Award. A Freight Committee meeting will be held in the near future to discuss new developments in freight modeling.

Overview of Model Evaluation Study Process

Ram Pendyala from USF, the main investigator coordinating the Model Evaluation Study made a presentation on history of the study process and the findings of the steering committee. In April 2002 the Model Task Force held a Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP) meeting with modeling experts from throughout North America to assess current practice of modeling in Florida and provide directions for future improvements. Based on the BRP recommendations, the MTF embarked on a rigorous study of transportation modeling software packages in an effort to identify a primary software engine for the Florida Standard Model and other tools for inclusion in FSUTMS. USF coordinated the study with a consultant team. The project steering committee was formed at the Model Task Force meeting to guide the study and develop recommendations.

Four software vendors were identified for initial screening:

- CUBE/Voyager by Citilabs
- EMME/2 by INRO Consultants
- TransCAD by the Caliper Corporation
- VISUM by PTV/ITC

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Four software workshops were conducted using the Broward County Year 1999 Model as sample data. Based on the workshops and further evaluations, the members rank-ordered the software packages. The results of ranking process resulted in following prioritization, TransCAD, Cube/TP+/Voyager, VISUM, and EMME/2. The project steering committee then instructed the consultant team to perform detailed evaluation and benchmark testing of TransCAD and Cube/TP+/Voyager using Broward County Year 2025 Model.

In February the steering committee had a two-day meeting to discuss the results of the benchmark tests. The committee members were asked to vote with 10 points between the two software packages. The vote showed equal rating for each software packages. The un-weighted total score was 110 points for each of the software packages. The weighted and normalized scores, to account for different size of the MPO team versus the FDOT District, were 49.3 for TransCAD and 50.7 for Cube/Voyager. When the point scheme was converted to a ranking scheme the total score would be 32 points each and the weighted rank would be 1.46 for TransCAD and 1.44 for Cube/Voyager.

The project steering committee deemed the vote a tie between the TransCAD and Cube/Voyager and did not eliminate either package based on the assessment. The committee formulated the following recommendation for presentation to the full Model Task Force:

The Model Evaluation Study Steering Committee hereby recommends that the Model Task Force consider both TransCAD and CUBE as equally effective in meeting the planning and modeling needs of the State of Florida and give the Central Office the flexibility to negotiate with both software vendors to work out the best arrangement for the modeling community in the state.

Appreciations and Recognitions

Several people were recognized for their outstanding work by the MTF. Ram Pendyala was recognized with a certificate for his outstanding work supporting the Model Evaluation Steering committee. Hary Gramling and Don Draughon from FDOT Systems Planning Office, both to retire at the end of June, were presented with plaques for their dedication and support to the MTF. Speeches of appreciation were given to honor Bob McCullough, Administrator of the FDOT Central Transportation Modeling section, for all his support and outstanding work. He was also presented with a plaque. A song was composed and performed for Bob by Dennis Hooker. Bob McCullough received a standing ovation for all the hard work he has performed on behalf of the MTF.

Dennis Hooker asked for a resolution to allow the tri-chairs to write a letter to Warren Merrell, Bob McCullough's supervisor, asking him to intercede in some way to enable Bob McCullough to continue his work through the completion of the model evaluation project. The motion was made and seconded and passed unanimously.

Software Package Demonstrations

Ken Kaltenbach with the Corradino Group demonstrated the Transcad software package. Rob Schiffer with Cambridge Systematics demonstrated the Cube/Voyager package.

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Results of Users' Surveys

Ram Pandyala presented a summary of the result of the users's survey. The surveying team contacted seven agencies using Transcad, six agencies using TP+/CUBE/Tranplan. Among these agencies three used multiple platforms and one agency refused to participate. The results of the survey indicated that users are satisfied with their software package regardless which package they used.

Status of Software Vendor Negotiations

Next Bob McCullough reported that he had been negotiation on behave of the State and the MPOs with both software vendors. However, he reported that it was to early in the negotiation process to report any specifics on which the MTF could make a selection.

Conclusion/Discussion on Course of Action

After discussion, the MTF passed the following motions:

- *To accept a single software package as the primary engine for FSUTMS. (2 nays, 1 abstention)*
- *Direct Central Office to negotiate with both vendors and report back to MTF with information for MTF selection of primary engine at next meeting (4 nays, 1 abstention)*
- *Direct Central office to work with MTF tri-chairs (3) and Committee Chair (6) regarding specific issues/items/parameters to be considered in negotiations (3 nays, 1 abstention)*

The next Model Task Force meeting was scheduled for May 15, 2003 in Orlando at the Embassy Suites on Jamaican Court. The meeting will be held in the afternoon, starting at 1:30 PM.

The Model Task made a motion to start a new committee, which will focus on Data and Travel Surveys. The motion passed unanimously.

The tri-chairs thanked everybody for coming and adjourned the meeting at 5:00 PM.