

Transit Committee
Daytona Beach – May 4, 2004
9:50 AM – 12:00 PM

Introduction & Welcome

Kevin Feldt opened the meeting and read the mission, goals and objectives of the Transit Committee. The mission of the Transit Committee is: “To lead the Florida Model Task Force in improving transit modeling within Florida, and in addressing Federal and State planning requirements as they relate to transit planning.”

The goals and objectives are as follows:

GOAL 1: Sustain Research & Development for Advancement of Transit Modeling

Objective 1.1 Promote securing and maintaining funding for transit modeling research

Objective 1.2 Conduct research into developing and disseminating short-range forecasting tools

GOAL 2: Promote Adoption and Implementation of the State-of-the-Practice for the Conduct of Transit Modeling Procedures

Objective 2.1 Refine the Mode of Access process in transit

Objective 2.2 Improve Network Editing capabilities

Objective 2.3 Continue advancement of Mode Choice modeling

Objective 2.4 Initiating modeling of non-motorized modes within FSUTMS

GOAL 3: Support Continued Training in Transit Modeling within Florida

Objective 3.1 Act as the Florida clearinghouse & conduit for transit modeling-related information

Objective 3.2 Support continued training in transit modeling, contribute to its ongoing improvement, and sustain its excellence

Objective 3.3 Promote increasing user-friendliness in modeling procedures

Summary of Transit Workshop with Jim Ryan

Kevin pointed out that the purpose of the workshop was to obtain better insight into the Federal requirements concerning transit modeling and New Starts projects in particular.

From FTA’s point of view, it is important to create a level playing field among the modeling results. To accomplish this goal, the FTA has developed a reporting program named Summit, which reports user benefits directly from the local mode choice model. The transportation user benefits are the changes in mobility for individual travelers that are caused by a project or policy change, measured in hours of travel time, and summed over all travelers. The user benefits are reported by district-to-district summaries (developed by the local agencies/consultants) and zone level trip end mapping for each individual travel market. What is reported is the change in mobility due to changes in the transit system.

Summit has brought to light many previously unknown properties of the models and has allowed for a better analysis of the forecast. Most importantly for Florida are the inaccuracies in the highway travel times which carry over into the transit travel times and the constants used in the models. Other modeling issues are the unusual coefficients (FTA has established ranges for acceptable values for the coefficients) and non-logit decision rules, which cause unrealistic difference when comparing alternatives.

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The distribution of zero car households has been noted to be a problem in most models. The distribution of these trips is based on the highway travel time and trip interchanges. More research and data will be needed to address this particular issue. Another issue is the introduction of a new mode. FTA will not allow the use of constants from other areas due to the fact that the constants not only reflect the unincorporated characteristics from the service but also contain a corrective k factor. The “k factor portion” is not transferable among models. Instead FTA will accept an adjustment to the local constant if it is based on research conducted on the “new mode” within the USA. The research would have to indicate what value of adjustment would be which would reflect the unincorporated characteristic of the service.

Jeff Bruggeman with AECOM presented the Summit program at the workshop. As a result, the Systems Planning Office is organizing Summit training in the fall of 2004.

Discussion and Prioritization of Action Items

Huiwei Shen stated that the Systems Planning Office has secured research money in an effort to focus on what is needed to bring the transit models in line with the Federal standards. The Systems Planning Office is working with the Public Transit Office in putting together a scope that would address pressing transit issues.

A discussion took place concerning the transit validation/calibration effort associated with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) effort. The FTA requires the use of the adopted LRTP model, yet it appears that revalidation/calibration is necessary prior to the use of LRTP model in the New Start analysis process. The suggestion was made to write a generic scope for the MPOs addressing the transit validation needs, which can be inserted in the general LRTP scope in an effort to ensure that enough time and effort is spent on the transit validation during the LRTP process.

Next, it was pointed out that it might be better to address the needs of the transit models in the scope which the Systems Planning Office and PTO are working on, rather than discussing it within a large group.

It was decided that Systems Planning and PTO would put a proposal together to analyze the transit models and formulate recommendations as to the acceptability of the transit models, as well as address the text that could be incorporated in the scope for a LRTP.

The draft scope will be circulated among the Transit Committee members either late June or beginning July 2004. The initial meeting to discuss the scope will be done through teleconference. A notice to proceed on the contract could be executed as early as July. A face-to-face meeting will be planned for in July. Any items of concern can be emailed to Huiwei Shen, Ram Pendyala or Kevin Feldt.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.

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