

Volume 23

March 2003

Model Evaluation Study Gears Up for Upcoming Model Task Force Meeting

FDOT Systems Planning Office

Introduction

Since publication of the last *Florida Transportation Modeling* newsletter, the Florida Model Task Force Model Evaluation Study team has continued its work to identify modeling tools that should be incorporated into the FSUTMS toolbox. During the months of January and February, the model evaluation team members gained additional hands-on experience in the use of two modeling packages: TransCAD 4.5 and CUBE/Voyager. Two teams implemented the Broward 2025 Planning Model in each program to better understand their operations, features, and functionalities. With new information and insights into the operation of the two software packages, the steering committee met face-to-face for the final time on February 19-20, 2003 in Orlando.

February 19-20 Steering Committee Meeting

The first day of the two-day event was primarily a model evaluation team and software vendor setup day. The evaluation teams that had worked on each software package met to finalize their presentations, perform additional analyses and model runs, and test various aspects of the software assigned to them. The two vendors, i.e., Caliper Corporation and Citilabs, were provided separate meeting room space so that they could set up computers, presentations, and demonstrations of the latest features of their respective software packages. Several steering committee members took advantage of the first day to obtain personalized instruction and demonstrations of the software from model evaluation team members and software vendors.



MTF Tri-chairs from left to right: Dennis Hooker, Shi-Chiang Li and Danny Lamb



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Model Evaluation Study Gears Up for Upcoming Model Task Force Meeting *Continued*

The formal steering committee meeting took place on the second day, February 20, 2003. All steering committee members were present for the entire duration of the meeting. To facilitate a free and open discussion among steering committee members on the merits of each modeling package under consideration, the vendors were requested to stay in their respective vendor-assigned rooms and be on-call in case the steering committee needed their input. The morning session of the meeting was dedicated to a series of presentations by evaluation team members who had worked with the two software packages. The team members presented and demonstrated selected aspects of the Broward 2025 model in the two software

packages and answered questions from the steering committee members on their operation, features, and ease of use. The presentations covered a wide range of software features and highlighted highway assignment, transit assignment, and special applications and utilities using the modeling packages.

Following the evaluation team presentations, the vendors were given 30 minutes each to present the latest developments in their respective software packages. As nearly three months had elapsed since the steering committee members had attended their two-day software workshop, it was felt that a software update would be useful before the steering committee developed a final recommendation.



From left to right, front row: Frank Baron, Mike Doherty, Danny Lamb, Ossama Al Aschkar, Yew Song. *From left to right, middle row:* Kevin Feldt, Vidya Mysore, Dan McMurphy, Dane Ismart, Scot Leftwich, Bill Olsen, Paul Rhoads, Bud Whitehead, Arturo Perez, Dennis Hooker. *From left to right, back row:* Bob McCullough, Gary Kramer, Ram Pendyala, Ken Kaltenbach, William Roll, Rob Schiffer, Terry Corkery, Shi-Chiang Li, Imran Ghani, Tom Rossi, Mike Neidhart, Suraya Teeple, Paul Larson

Model Evaluation Study Gears Up for Upcoming Model Task Force Meeting *Continued*

After the vendor presentations, the steering committee members decided to proceed with a vote where they would allocate 10 points between the two software packages and identify the steering committee team to which they belong. Prior to the vote, there was considerable discussion about the merits of each package under consideration. The steering committee members noted that both packages constituted powerful travel demand modeling packages that could serve a wide range of planning applications and thus meet Florida's modeling needs well into the future. The vote tally confirmed the discussions as each software obtained exactly 110 points. Even after weighting and adjusting for differential group sizes within the steering committee (i.e., consultant, MPO, and District), the scores were identical for the two software packages. When the points assigned by each steering committee member were converted to rankings (of 1 and 2) and then added up, the two software packages once again came out exactly tied, each receiving 32 points.

Steering Committee Develops Recommendation

While each software systems had different areas of strength, the tie vote prompted further discussion among the steering committee members. It was felt that it would not be possible to eliminate either package as the vote was clearly a tie and both packages are able to meet the planning and modeling needs of the state. The steering committee then proceeded to develop a recommendation for presentation to the Model Task Force.

The steering committee voted to recommend to the Model Task Force that both TransCAD and CUBE be considered for addition to the FSUTMS toolbox, each with differing strength equally effective in meeting the planning and modeling needs of Florida. The committee further recommended that the Central Office be given the flexibility to negotiate with both software vendors to work out the best arrangement for the modeling community in the state.

In addition, the steering committee spent some time discussing how information from the evaluation study could be conveyed to the Model Task Force in the most effective way. It was felt that it would be appropriate to provide the Model Task Force a presentation that summarizes the pros and cons of both TransCAD and CUBE/Voyager and include brief side-by-side demonstrations of both packages so that all Model Task Force members and friends could have the benefit of seeing both modeling software in action. Suraya Teeple, District Two, volunteered to lead a small subcommittee that would collect comments (in the form of pros and cons) on both software packages from each steering committee evaluation team and develop a presentation for the Model Task Force.

Agency Survey

Meanwhile, a survey is being administered to about a dozen transportation planning agencies around the country to learn about their experience with transportation modeling software and in particular, with TransCAD and CUBE/Voyager. The survey, being administered over the phone to transportation modelers within the agencies, asks respondents to comment on the user-friendliness, flexibility, technical support, training availability, and other capabilities of the software they are using. Any information that agencies might have regarding transitioning between modeling software is also being obtained as part of the survey. Agencies targeted for participation in the survey include San Francisco MTC, Atlanta Regional Commission, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Clark County (Nevada), North Carolina Department of Transportation, Ohio Department of Transportation, Iowa Department of Transportation, Texas Department of Transportation, Wasatch Front Regional Council (Salt Lake City Regional Models, Utah), Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, North Central Texas Council of Governments, Southern California Association of Governments, and Denver Regional Council of Governments.

Model Evaluation Study Gears Up for Upcoming Model Task Force Meeting *Continued*

A full report and presentation on the results of the agency survey will be provided in time for the Model Task Force meeting discussions on March 26-27, 2003 in Orlando.

Nearing the Finish Line

It is envisioned that the steering committee will make detailed presentations on the model evaluation study

and software packages to the full Model Task Force so that the task force will have the information necessary to develop a final recommendation to the Florida Department of Transportation Systems Planning Office regarding the future of transportation modeling in Florida.

Florida Model Task Force Meeting

March 26-27, 2003

From Wednesday 8:30 AM until Thursday, 4:30 PM

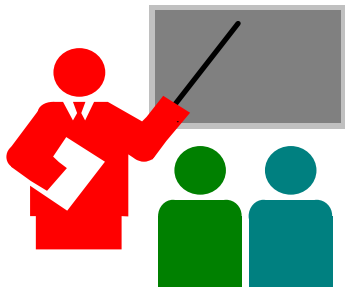
Embassy Suites Hotel
8978 International Drive Orlando
Phone: 407.352.1400
\$89.00 Single/Double

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Workshop Schedule



GIS-TM Modeling Workshop

Hotel: Embassy Suites
 Dates: May 12-15, 2003
 Rate: \$95.00 Single/Double
 Address: 8250 Jamaican Court Orlando
 Phone: 407.345.8250
 Starting: Monday 1:00 PM
 Ending: Thursday, 11:30 AM
 Reservation Deadline: April 28, 2003

DRI Analysis and Modeling Workshop

Hotel: Homewood Suites
 Dates: April 22-24, 2003
 Rate: \$89.00 Single/Double
 Address: 5500 Blue Lagoon Drive Miami
 Phone: 305.261.3335
 Starting: Tuesday 8:30 AM
 Ending: Thursday, 4:30 PM
 Reservation Deadline: April 8, 2003

FSUTMS Basic Workshop

Hotel: Homewood Suites
 Dates: June 2-6, 2003
 Rate: \$89.00 Single/Double
 Address: 8745 International Drive Orlando
 Phone: 407.248.2232
 Starting: Monday 1:00 PM
 Ending: Friday, 11:30 AM
 Reservation Deadline: May 19, 2003

Registration can be completed on-line at: www11.myflorida.com/planning click on "Training" and "Modeling Workshops." **Be sure to notify us if you are a P.E. needing professional development hour credits.**

FSUTMS Users' Group News

The **Central Florida Users' Group** will hold their next meeting in April. The exact date and time will be announced. The meetings are held at FDOT District 5 Orlando Urban Office. For additional information about the group, please contact [Dawn Bisplinghoff \(407\) 482-7879](mailto:Dawn.Bisplinghoff@fdot.com)



The **Southwest Florida Users' Group** will set their next meeting date after the MTF meeting. All users' group meetings are held at the Charlotte County Airport (2800 A-6 Airport Rd., Punta Gorda, FL). For additional information about the group, please contact [Jim Baxter \(863\) 519-2562](mailto:Jim.Baxter@fdot.com)

The next meeting for the **Northeast Florida Transportation Applications Forum** is set for Wednesday **May 14, 2003**. The Applications Forum meets at the FDOT-District 2 Jacksonville Urban Office-Training Facility. The meeting starts at 2:00 PM and runs until approximately 4:00 PM. For additional information, please contact [Imran Ghani \(904\)360-5682](mailto:Imran.Ghani@fdot.com)

The **Southeast Florida Users' Group** has scheduled their next meeting on **May 1, 2003**. Jim Fennessy will make a presentation on new modeling practices, which will include a Q & A session for TRANPLAN. The meeting will be held at 1:30 PM at the FDOT-District 4 "New Auditorium." For additional information, please contact [Shi-Chiang Li \(954\) 777-4655](mailto:Shi-Chiang.Li@fdot.com)

The **Tampa Bay Applications Group** will hold their next meeting on **May 29, 2003**. The meeting will be a workshop on New Methodologies. This brown-bag lunch workshop will be held from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM at the FDOT-District 7 office. For more information, please contact [Danny Lamb \(813\) 975-6437](mailto:Danny.Lamb@fdot.com).



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