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FMTF Transit and Multimodal Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date:**  **Wednesday, April 19, 2023**

**Time:**  **3:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. EDT**

**Where:** **TEAMS Web Conference**

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| **Attendee** | | **Agency** | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Dan McMurphy | Traf-O-Data | | Ann McLaughlin | Collier MPO | | Cesar Segovia | AECOM / Turnpike | | Chris Wigglesworth | FDOT Central Office | | Heath Lupton | Cambridge Systematics | | Hoyt Davis | Gannett Fleming | | Jeanette Berk | Gannett Fleming | | Jerry Graham | Traf-O-Data | | Ken Kaltenbach | Corradino Group | | Krishnan Viswanathan | WRA | | Mike Escalante | Gainesville MPO | | Richard Pascoe | HDR | | Rob Schiffer | FuturePlan | | Roberto Miquel | WRA | | Rodney Bonner | Service Edge Solutions | | Sheldon Harrison | Cambridge Systematics | | SungRyong Han | BCC Engineering | | Terry Corkery | FDOT Central Office | | Tewarie Edmonson | Miami-Dade TPO | | Thomas Hill | FDOT Central Office | | Tom Rossi | Cambridge Systematics | | Xia Jin | FIU | | |  | |
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**Introductions**

The first few minutes of the meeting were spent on introductions of the attendees. Following introductions, Tewarie handed over the agenda to Thomas from Central Office to discuss some developments regarding the Statewide Model status and ongoing FSUTMSNG activities. The following describes the discussion that entailed.

## Florida Statewide Model Status Discussion

* Thomas relayed to the group the plan to place the Statewide model in a “holding status on the shelf” and consequently mentioned that no further updates are planned for the near future. He stated that when needed for LRTP purposes for example, components from the model will be available for use as necessary, particularly related to freight related questions and external station calibration within the regional models as they get updated. He mentioned that Central Office will investigate stand-alone applications of some of the components, including FreightSIM, and also regional model implementations of the Hurricane Evacuation modeling work, among other items. He then asked for group feedback on the plans.

Following his solicitation of feedback, there was plenty of commentary from at least half of the

attendees in the meeting. The following are the main comments received.

* What would be the replacement for EI trips, which are typically provided by the SWM?
* Thomas responded that current LRTPs should be able to use the model for this latest round of LRTPs
* He also stated that longer term, investigation of methodologies to do this using LBS data, AI application, geographic stitching together of adjacent models etc. are possible avenues of pursuit to resolve this question. This is where FSUTMSNG comes into the picture.
* He then mentioned that general use of targeted tools for specific analyses, especially when evaluating shorter planning horizons should be pursued.
* Cesar Segovia then asked about using a common database for all models, and then tailoring the application to each agency’s specific need.
  + One option that was mentioned is the Turnpike model, but it's focused and validated to analyze toll facilities only.
  + Cesar then stressed It would be a mistake to think we could handle other projects using the Turnpike Statewide Model as it is not suited for general planning application statewide. Examples of such needs include hurricane evacuation, tourists, air quality etc.
* Adding to the discussion, Mike Escalante also asked about hurricane evacuation modeling;  If there are infrastructure maladies, how will mobility be monitored/evaluated in real time and forecasts?  He also expressed concern about what AI is truly capable of.
* Thomas then mentioned that the TIME model will still be used for hurricane evacuations and can be implemented at regional level
* Rob Schiffer then stated that it's perplexing as to why this decision has come up. He highlighted that Florida was one of the leaders in the development of statewide models and pointed out some key uses for the model including:
* Modeling across district boundaries which can only be done with the FLSWM
* Modeling regions for which no regional model coverage exists (mostly rural District 2 and the Keys). He recently used it for a traffic impact study in Lake City which has no regional model coverage.
* Rob then mentioned a statewide model peer exchange that was held recently and that results of this effort may be shared if members express interest.
* Ken Kaltenbach then chimed in stating that many states now have statewide models. It's something they find very useful and see great value in it. He highlighted several statewide model advantages including:
* They are a great way to organize statewide data (networks, zonal data, etc.)

He stated that he hopes CO will rethink this decision to let it fall by the wayside, as it will be a heavy lift to pick it back up later down the line if deemed necessary.

* Thomas then asked if the states with statewide models also have regional model coverage alongside it.
* The response was that Florida has better regional model coverage, with only rural District 2 and the Keys being missing but Ken stressed that it doesn't negate the helpfulness of the statewide perspective of the tool.
* Jerry Graham echoed what others have stated and highlighted that District 1 uses the FLSWM to develop the heavy truck matrix that comes from FreightSIM

* Jeanette Berk also echoed Ken and the others and stated that if we let the model fall by the wayside, it'll be an even heavier lift to pick it back up later in time if it is decided that the model is generally necessary for some statewide planning analyses.
* She mentioned that it might be good to set a timeline for this pause in SWM work.

* As a follow up to the data repository theme, Thomas then asked how many times do we point to the statewide model to work as a repository.
* He then suggested that a new generation stitches together all of the regional models into a comprehensive statewide tool.
* Tom Rossi chimed in that he shares the opinions that have been shared regarding the value of the statewide model.  He however, pointed out that that those making the decisions are hearing that these are the opinions of modelers with a vested interest in models in general. He suggested that it might be useful to the decision makers if we can share opinions from others such as planners who use model results--about the value of the statewide model.

* Mike Escalante added that existing and proposed development at the perimeter of MPO/Regional models may be better evaluated for external trips on the statewide model as was expressed by others. He then asked if FHWA chimed in on a possible Statewide model hiatus.
  + Thomas responded that unlike the regional models that cover MPOs and are a statutory requirement, the SWM is developed at the discretion of the Department and FHWA is not a direct legislative stakeholder.

* Jeanette then added that Intercity travel cannot be realistically addressed in the regional models and is key for some corridor analyses. Editorial comment. *Understanding I-4, I-10, I-75 and I-95 flows along with competing mode travel patterns are important for long term statewide project planning.*

* Roberto Miquel, responding to Thomas' earlier comment about regional model coverage, stated that North Carolina DOT does use their statewide model extensively for project prioritization. He also added that they are in the process of developing regional models that are geographically congruent across the entire state boundary but the plan is to still maintain and use the statewide model where the regional models do not provide enough coverage for the analysis at hand.
* Xia Jin also chimed in on the importance of maintaining the model, which is a good tool in her opinion, for the purposes of statewide travel analyses. She mentioned that the role of the statewide model is different from the regional models but no less important. Among the items she highlighted are:
  + The proper tool for Intercity travel analyses and flow patterns
  + Multi regional studies that the regional models do not offer enough coverage for
  + Different focus
    - Regional models are mostly focused on the urban core with increasingly less focus as the periphery is approached
    - The Statewide model is focused on intercity, multi-regional or statewide analyses. It provides a consistent dataset for statewide comparisons
* Other similar comments were received from the group at large echoing the same theme that it is a well utilized and useful tool that is worth maintaining.

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## Overview of FSUTMS NextGen – Thomas Hill, Terry Corkery

* Terry Corkery provided an overview of the history of FSUTMS, dating back to 1980.
* Given the shift in the modeling practice, with the increased use of Activity Based Models and the change of software used, the current FSUTMS standards are outdated.
* The focus of FSUTMS NextGen (NextGen) will be to expand the user base outside of just modelers and accommodate advances in data science, which includes but is not limited to the following:
  + Big Data analytics, dashboards, and visualizations.
  + Short-term forecasting
  + Multimodal modeling
* Like the current FSUTMS, NextGen will be a set of guidelines that modelers and model users are encouraged to follow, but not required.
* The development organization of NextGen is comprised of four groups, the Internal Technical Team, FDOT Stakeholders, the Working Group, and the Model Task Force (MTF). Their makeup and roles are as follows:
  + Internal Technical Team
    - Members
      * Technical staff developing FSUTMS NextGen.
    - Role
      * Identify existing standards and guidelines to be retained, modified, or discarded.
      * Identify new standards and guidelines that need to be developed.
      * Develop and communicate standards and guidelines to other groups and receive feedback.
  + FDOT Stakeholders
    - Members
      * District Model Coordinators representing the Department’s interests.
    - Role
      * Attend informational sessions on FSUTMS NextGen progress.
      * Communicate updates on progress to District management and local stakeholders as needed.
  + Working Group
    - Members
      * MTF committee chairs and members representing the modeling community’s interests.
    - Role
      * Attend FSUTMS NextGen Working Group meetings.
      * Provide guidance to the Internal Technical Team on which standards and guidelines to pursue.
      * Review developing standards and guidelines and provide comments.
  + Model Task Force
    - Members
      * Full MTF membership
    - Role
      * Review final FSUTMS NextGen standards and guidelines.
      * Adopt FSUTMS NextGen Implementation Plan during the MTF meeting.
  + These groups will work individually and together to develop and review our updated standards, with active communication between them.

**Notable Dates and Announcements**

* LRTPs are coming up and agencies need to begin working on scope development and to begin getting familiar with their respective converted models.
* The next Model Task Force meeting will be held November 7-9, 2023 in Orlando at the usual Embassy Suites on Jamaican Court.
* The statewide Bentley license expires on October 30, 2023.