

The Future of Institutional Support for Travel Modeling

Jeremy Raw, PE
Modeling Mobility, Minneapolis, MN

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Sharing Information supports Modeling

- Sharing information among practitioners has been a cornerstone of maintaining and improving transport models
- Our traditional institutions for supporting model development have been dwindling
- It is important for us to develop new paths for information sharing and peer support

Forms of Institutional Support

- Institutional support has taken many forms
- TRB annual meetings
- TRB and other conferences
- TMIP program
- FHWA capacity building and review
- State DOT support / Travel Model User Groups

My Own Experience

- NEPA Modeling Review and Guidance
- VisionEval collaborative effort (Pooled Fund)
- Travel Model Improvement Guidance
- Peer Reviews
- TRB Subcommittees

Institutional Support has been Evaporating

- The trend has been underway for some time (not just now)
- Due in part to funding limitations
- Reflects the idea that “we know all we need to know to do it”
- Modeling is expensive
- Many non-modelers don’t understand its value

Institutional Support has been Evaporating

- Defunding the FHWA Travel Model Improvement Program
- TRB Reorganization
 - Many fewer conferences (hello MoMo!)
 - No more subcommittees
- Fewer modeling efforts in NCHRP pipeline
- Shortage of widely available training options for new practitioners (e.g. NHI Travel Modeling Course is in person only, and expensive)

Communication Remains Vital

- Almost everything I know about travel modeling I've learned from peers and co-workers
 - Trying it out and getting feedback
- Maintaining lines of communication is critical to effective modeling!
- You can read all the technical materials you want, but seeing it in practice is the key

Emerging Strategies

- States are stepping to the plate
 - Travel model user groups
 - Pooled Funds (Virginia taking on VisionEval, for instance)
 - Free OTDMUG Travel Modeling Training
- Self-organized Conferences
- Technical Consortia
 - ActivitySim
 - VisionEval
 - Zephyr Transportation Foundation
- TMIP Email List
 - Thanks Zephyr! Everyone here should be on the list!

You are Responsible ... Keep the channels open

- Talk to your peers
- Seek them out
- Offer help / Ask for help
- Get to know your peers
 - Follow your interests and find your people
 - My experience with R and travel modeling
- Try This: Send a personal follow-up email to someone you met at this conference

Resources

- Zephyr Transport Foundation
 - <https://zephyrtransport.org>
- VisionEval Project
 - <https://visioneval.org>
- ActivitySim Project
 - <https://activitysim.github.io/activitysim/v1.2.0/>
- TMIP Email List
 - <https://tmip.zephyrtransport.org>
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