

# The Future of Institutional Support for Travel Modeling

Jeremy Raw, PE  
Modeling Mobility, Minneapolis, MN

September 19, 2025

# 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>
  - Subscribe to TMIP  
<https://tmip.zephyrtransport.org/scripts/wa-ZEPHYRTRANS.exe?SUBED1=TMIP&A=1>

Subscribe to TMIP

