

0-6691: Managing the TDM Process: Developing MPO Institutional Capacity

Background

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is invested in and committed to supporting the state's metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in their travel forecasting activities. Transportation Planning and Programming (TxDOT-TPP) is the specific division charged with oversight of and assistance to Texas MPOs to ensure a consistent and appropriate planning process; this includes both planning and administrative support, as well as technical travel forecasting for the majority of MPOs statewide. This research developed methods and guidelines so that MPO directors and planning managers may better manage the MPO portion of the overall travel modeling process (Figure 1).

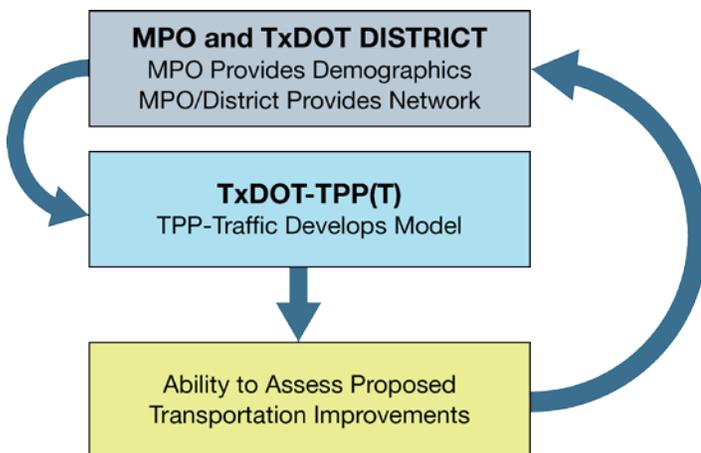


Figure 1. Cooperative Model Development Process in Texas.

What the Researchers Did

Researchers conducted extensive interviews with:

- Texas MPO directors and staff involved with the travel demand modeling (TDM) process.
- Other stakeholders in the Texas transportation planning process including TxDOT districts, TxDOT regions, and the Texas Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- Representatives from non-Texas MPOs, other state DOTs, and FHWA representatives from the national Planning Office and Modeling Resource Center.

Researchers investigated approaches used in and outside of the transportation planning field for institutional capacity building. They also developed training materials to address the non-technical, managerial aspects of TDM in support of MPO activities and conducted a pilot course to test these materials.

Research Performed by:

Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Research Supervisor:

Karen Lorenzini, TTI

Researchers:

Chandra Bhat, The University of Texas at Austin (UT)

Tina Geiselbrecht, TTI

John Overman, TTI

Rajesh Paleti, UT

Sriram Narayanamoorthy, UT

Project Completed:

2-28-2013

What They Found

Researchers found a variety of non-technical, managerial strategies that MPOs can effectively use to improve MPO effectiveness in delivering the travel model inputs that the MPOs are responsible for. The strategies can also help them have a better understanding of the entire model development process so that they may manage MPO responsibilities within that larger context.

Researchers also found additional opportunities for process improvement that TxDOT or the MPOs may consider in the future.

What This Means

Researchers recommend that:

- TxDOT implement the training course that was developed as part of the project.
- TxDOT and MPOs use a variety of strategies to expand and maximize staff resources devoted to traffic analysis and travel modeling.
- TxDOT provide technical modeling training courses on a regular schedule, informing the MPOs in time to incorporate scheduled training into their Unified Planning Work Plans.
- TxDOT incorporate web-based communication as a tool to facilitate TDM guidelines, data sharing, and process management.

For More Information

Project Manager:

Wade Odell, TxDOT, (512) 416-4737

Research Supervisor:

Karen Lorenzini, TTI, (512) 467-0952

Technical reports when published are available at <http://library.ctr.utexas.edu>.

Research and Technology Implementation Office
Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701-2483
www.txdot.gov
Keyword: Research