Tennessee Model User’s Group (TNMUG)
Exchanging Travel Model Information for More Than a Decade

Jerry Everett, Ph.D.
Associate Director
UT Center for Transportation Research
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TDOT Constraints - 2003

- Institutional knowledge
- Limits on technical staff hiring
- Multiple roles and expectations
- Relationships with MPO staffs
- Out-of-state travel limitations
TN MPO Constraints – 2003

- Multiple roles and expectations
- Modeling expertise
- Technical capacity
- Staff turnover
- 11 MPOs spread across the state
Example Model User Groups - 2003

- Event Emphasis - Alabama
  - Training orientation – MPO based
- Single Metro Area - Atlanta & NY City
  - Distribute model results, perform QA/QC, discuss model improvements
- Regional - Multi-state
  - Midwestern - Iowa DOT based with CTRE assistance
- Florida - Two levels
  - Florida Model Task force & District Level User Groups
- Oregon - OR Modeling Improvement Program
  - Cutting edge, state-of-the-art modeling
- Ohio - DOT based
  - Broad mission statement
- Kentucky -DOT based
  - Well organized, but informal - Good example for TN
  - Weakness - Driven by a single individual
MUG Characteristics - 2003

- **Formality and structure of organization**
  - Varies and depends on purpose of MUG

- **Technical Topics**
  - Usually include research, modeling techniques, data and application issues

- **Activities**
  - Norm is regular meeting with structured technical agenda
  - Most variable parameter

- **Membership**
  - Ranges from anyone to only agency staff

- **Frequency of meetings**
  - Bimonthly to annually

- **Continuity**
  - Ongoing support is critical
  - State DOT support is most feasible option
TNMUG - History

- Developed based on 2003 examples
- Formally began in January 2004
- Quasi-formal group
- Leadership - chair and a vice-chair from among the voting members
TNMUG - Overview

- Designed to improve state of the practice of modeling & forecasting in Tennessee
- Oriented to MPOs
- Cooperatively developed by CTR and TDOT
- Financial support provided by TDOT
TNMUG – Mission Statement

The mission of the Tennessee Travel Model User Group is to serve as a forum for improving the state-of-the-practice of travel demand modeling and related endeavors in the state of Tennessee.
TNMUG – Membership

- Each MPO in the state has one official member and one vote
- TDOT may have up to three official members each with one vote
- Consultants, academicians, local governments, other state agencies, advocacy groups and others are welcome to participate as nonvoting members
TNMUG: Quasi-Formal Role

- TNMUG serves as a technical working group for travel model related issues in TN
- TNMUG strives for a consensus of opinion
- The decisions of the MUG are presented to TAMPO, TDOT, FHWA and FTA as appropriate
- Ex. – “Minimum Travel Demand Model Calibration and Validation Guidelines for the State of Tennessee”
TNMUG - Key Activities

✓ Holding 3 to 4 meetings/year with technical presentations
✓ Facilitate sharing of modeling experience between TN MPOs and TDOT
✓ Improve proficiency in TransCAD through training, seminars and information exchange
✓ Serve as a forum for linking TDOT statewide modeling & data collection to MPO modeling and data collection
✓ Help planning staff members to stay up-to-date on modeling activities in other areas
✓ Organize and/or sponsor training related to travel modeling such as introduction to travel demand modeling, CTPP, and travel model applications
TNMUG – Operation of Organization

- Bulk of work performed by UT CTR staff
  - Solicit input from members
  - Meeting planning and implementation
  - Training class organization
  - Website maintenance
- University of Memphis & Tennessee Tech faculty provide assistance
- Consultants, vendors, researchers, members project staff and others provide presentations
- TDOT provides funding, guidance and direction
TNMUG – Meetings

- Include 4-5 technical presentations
- Periodic MPO roundtable discussions
- Usually 6 hours with about 1.5 hours of networking build-in
- Primarily held in the Nashville area
- Opportunity for discussion and critique of modeling and analysis procedures
Topics Addressed

94 + Presentation Topics
Presenters

84+ Unique Presenters

- TNMUG Staff
- Federal
- Vendors
- Academia
- TDOT
- Others
- MPOs
- Consultants
TNMUG Through the Years

- 30+ Meetings
- 12+ Training events
- 94+ Presentations
- 40+ Unique Topics
- 1 Bi-state joint MUG meeting
Discussion & Questions

Jerry Everett

jeverett@utk.edu
Example Meeting

Update on TransCAD Features
Other Project Activities

- Short-term Technical assistance
  - Review of RFPs
  - Review of consultant proposals
- Training
- Website
- Information Sharing
UT CTR Background

- UT Center for Transportation Research
  - Founded in 1972
  - Our work – Education, Research, Training, and Workforce Aspects of Transportation
  - Topics - Modeling, Planning, Freight, etc.
  - Our sponsors – TDOT, FHWA, FTA, USDOT, TN THSO & TDOS, Private Sector