

Day 1

Welcome

Andrew Tyrell, FDOT D7, Dana Reiding FDOT- CO (FTO) and Thomas Hill FDOT – CO (FTO) welcomed everyone to the meeting and encouraged enthusiastic participation. Thomas gave a quick safety brief, announced bathroom locations and hotel meeting logistics, etc. The MTF meeting now contained sessions that were eligible for PE credits, which needed to be signed in and out of per session. The protocol for signing in and out was communicated to the attendees.

Keynote Address

Kim Holland, FDOT's Assistant Secretary for Strategic Development was introduced, and she proceeded to give her keynote address outlining FDOT's priorities and how the MTF fits within this framework. She specifically outlined the work of the MTF with its focus on data and advanced analytical approaches, collaboration and how that directly translates to FDOT's focus on safety, workforce development, development of resilient infrastructure and efficient use of resources.

MPO Perspectives

Jeanette Berk from Gannett Fleming moderated the session including Whit Blanton, MPO director from Forward Pinellas and Alex Trauger, director from MetroPlan Orlando. Whit and Alex provided overviews of the key issues and concerns in each of their regions. Both Whit and Alex mentioned that their regions are rapidly growing and the issues surrounding accommodation of that fast growth were front and center in their planning concerns. They mentioned that traditional models have not been used in recent times for prioritization and there is a need for better forecasting of operational elements, such as travel time reliability and ITS. They spoke of the need to better tailor our communications to the intended audience. Other items raised include a lack of trust between planning and forecasting and other stakeholders and steps that the MTF and broader forecasting community can take to rebuild such trust.

Facilitated Discussion

After directed questions to the panel and the panel discussion, there was healthy discussion amongst participants. Other topics that came up included data sharing between agencies, standardized data protocols and procurement statewide, multi-resolution models, dashboards, alternative metrics (such as safety, resilience, and level of traffic stress). Also discussed were the following:

- The need for better and more intuitive visualization.
- The need for consistent outreach to all stakeholders, including a broader group such as those we have not reached out to in the past like healthcare professionals.
- There should be an increased focus on Performance Based Planning.
- The modeling community needs to broaden its horizons and we need to think of models as one of a suite of tools to be used in the forecasting toolbox.

- Artificial Intelligence was suggested as something that we should consider and specifically how it may complement models and as a corollary, Data Pattern Recognition.
- The critical need for good and relevant household travel data was highlighted.
- MTF's role with data acquisition and standardization.
- What is the role of models to support data driven decision making?
- Standardization of output information and formats
- Investigating the Safety/AI linkage
- Resilience

Following the discussion Jeanette turned it over to Dana who proceeded to recap the afternoon's events and give a brief overview for the following day.

Day 2

Welcome and Recap

Thomas welcomed everyone to the meeting, recapping the events on Tuesday afternoon and reviewed Wednesday's agenda.

THE ART OF THE PRACTICE: A SHOWCASE

Thomas introduced the first four presentations, including Jeremy Raw, FHWA; Raj Shanmugam, FDOT District 4 and Ashutosh Kumar, Insight Transportation Consulting; Penelope Weinberger, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials; and Cesar Segovia, Turnpike.

The speakers proceeded in turn to deliver their presentations which may be reviewed at fsutmsonline.net. There was extra time left following the presentations to allow for a few questions. One of the key questions for the TMIP-EMAT presentation related to ease of local implementation and more generally, how does this support forecasting information. For the D4 Uncertainty presentation, a key topic involved how the uncertainties correlated with eventual project outcomes. Suggestions to expand to statewide scope were also noted. For the ACTS presentation, a big question involved the timetable for the next update, considering all that occurred in 2020 re COVID. There was also discussion about training on the use of ACTS products for Florida stakeholders. Florida does participate and is eligible for training. For the I-75 planning project, there was interest in the Visitor model component and also general interest in the availability of the model for statewide stakeholders.

After returning from the break, Thomas introduced the next 4 speakers including Lissy La Paix Puello, CTS Engineering; Shenhua Wang, UF; Crystal Goodison, University of Florida; and Nikhil Puri, Cambridge Systematics. The speakers proceeded to deliver their presentations and as was the case for the first session, there was time to answer questions. Among the themes in the questions were items like how the tool for the sea-level rise relates to pre-existing tools and what are the appropriate use cases. For the AI presentation, more detail on how AI was actually used and the connection with travel forecasting needs was suggested as a need. Regarding FAF disaggregation, a consistent theme was the feasibility of this dataset for use in statewide freight assignment analysis and the associated needs regarding inputs, such as converting to daily trucks. For the

Short-Term Forecasting presentation, a key question involved how transferable is the approach and general applicability to other scenarios. It was suggested that it is highly project specific.

The session was then concluded, and attendees subsequently went to lunch.

Workforce Development Discussion

Andrew introduced the workforce development topic focusing on labor shortages in modeling profession, the difficulty in hiring and retaining staff and strategies that may be shared in hiring good talent. He introduced Dennis Smith who directed the session activities that included a few Mentimeter prompts and flip chart questionnaires.

The responses indicated that recruiting, training and other aspects of workforce development are a challenge for most of the respondents.

Following discussion and responses via flip charts on concerns, strategies etc. some key themes emerged. They included paying attention to items like mentorship, focusing on employee needs, offering flexible approaches to working, providing varied opportunities for new employees to be engaged, among others.

At the end of the discussion, Dennis thanked all participants and transitioned to the next session focused on the history of the MTF.

Model Task Force: A Look Back

Terry Corkery, FTO Central Office presented a few slides and described the history of the MTF and its role in facilitating collaboration amongst the forecasting community in Florida for the past 30 years.

Model Task Force: A Path Forward

Andrew and Thomas proceeded to give an overview of the reason for a renewed look at the role of the MTF and outlined in a presentation the activities over the last year in support of this review and resulting priorities. Following the outline and overview, Dana presented the new MTF charge as follows *"The Model Task Force, as a statewide collaborative of travel demand modelers and other transportation professionals, will exchange ideas and provide input for consistent and efficient data and methodology practices that advance transportation data forecasting, including travel demand modeling. The Model Task Force will maintain partnerships and collaborate on modeling and forecasting activities."* and asked for feedback.

There was then healthy feedback regarding the stated charge. The suggested edits and comments are outlined in the following bullets:

- Add a statement concerning who is convening the MTF and why the MTF is convened.
- Add statement about influencing decision making.
- There should be specific reference to seeking consensus and agreement of the group given the collaborative history.

- The MTF should be conscious of the role of the statewide standards specified in its processes and the implications regarding legal defensibility.
- Focusing on travel demand may be too specific (“...advance transportation data forecasting”). No need to include “including travel demand modeling.”
- There should be an emphasis on promoting change and moving forward and the words “leading” and “driving” should be included.
- Data visualization should be specifically referenced in the language.
- There was also a comment regarding breaking up the statement into 4 shorter, targeted sentences.

One item that also came up was a comment regarding comparing the current MTF charge statement with the proposed charge statement. This would allow more informed feedback on the goals and stated wording.

Following the suggested edits, Dana proceeded to outline potential next steps. In response, the following comments were received. There should be development of a clear, actionable road map that the MTF stakeholders can pursue. Other topics that arose included the need for training, the proposed MTF structure and uncertainty thereof, and the history of the voting organization at the MTF, particularly regarding public sector voting involvement versus consultant roles.

Following the discussion, Thomas then highlighted the MTF survey results focusing on the top 3 survey responses including Relevancy and Timeliness; Accessibility and Communication; and Consistency and Efficiency. Thomas then closed out by summarizing the day’s events and gave a quick overview of the agenda for Thursday morning.

Day 3

Model Task Force Committee Forum

Dana and Thomas welcomed everybody back for the final session, recapping Day 2 activities and giving a brief review of the morning’s agenda with the breakout group sessions convened to address the survey priorities. The breakout groups were as follows:

Main 1	Short-term Predictive Analytics
Main 2	Communicating the Value of Forecasting Tools
Main 3	Communicating through Visualization
Optional	New Data

It should be noted that Micromobility was also an optional available group to participate in, but there was insufficient interest and consequently it was not convened. Participants assembled in the groups for about 45 minutes and subsequently reported on the agreed Charge of the group and specific action items and a timeframe in which they are to be pursued. A representative from each group reported to the full audience at the end of the exercise on the Charge of their respective committee. Participants were then asked to sign up for each committee they were interested in.

If you did not get the chance to sign up in person, we invite you to participate in the new committees by completing the sign-up sheet: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X6YX6J9>

The Charge statements from each of the committees are as follows:

Short Term Predictive Analytics

The Short-Term Forecast Committee, to better support the 5-year work program, operational improvements, and local CIP development, will conduct a scan of local, regional, statewide and national practices that considers performance measures, data needs, influencing factors, and tools for 5-year horizons and provide recommendations for next steps within the next 10 months.

Communicating the Value of Forecasting Tools

Develop talking points for decision makers to clearly communicate the value of forecasting tools. Update the MPO handbook. Update the mailing list to include a broad group of stakeholders (including decision makers). Develop webinar to explain in non-technical terms the benefits of forecasting tools in the overall planning process. Webinar can be delivered through LTAP series or repurposed for in-person delivery at TransPlex in May 2024.

Communicating Through Visualization

The committee shall lead efforts to investigate methods and best practices for visualizing inputs and outputs of model data in the next 8 - 10 months.

New Data

The Data Committee shall ID all the data that is of critical need, based on feedback from FDOT, MPOs, decision makers and the MTF. The committee should start with existing data sources and then focus on new data sources. The Identification process should be completed in 6 months with a goal of providing recommendations within a year. The recommendations include the pros and cons of each data set and guidelines and methods for using these data by stakeholders. The Performance Data Integration Space (PDIS) framework should be utilized for data sharing and silos that exist within and across departments should be brought down.

Following the committee exercise, Dana made final comments on the overall meeting and thanked the participants and staff for staging a productive meeting and encouraged everyone to continue participating and keep the momentum and energy of the meeting going.