



**NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF MPOs  
MODELING WORKING GROUP  
February 26, 2021**

**Conference Call  
9:30 AM – 10:30 AM**

**MEETING NOTES**

**Participating**

- CDTC, Chris Bauer (Co-chair)
- SMTC, Jason Deshaies (Chair)
- AVAIL, Eric Krans
- AVAIL, Catherine Lawson
- AVAIL, Alex Muro
- AVAIL, Adam Tobey
- BMTS, Leigh McCullen
- CDTC, Andrew Tracy
- CS, Rich Denbow
- DCTC, Emily Dozier
- DCTC, Tara Grogan
- GBNRTC, Matt Grabau
- GTC, Chris Tortora
- FHWA, Sarah Sun
- NYMTC, Michael Chiume
- NYSDOT, Richard Batchelder
- NYSDOT, Jim Davis
- NYSDOT, Mark Grainer
- NYSDOT, Nathen Harp
- OCTC, Lauren Burns
- OCTC, Zach Coleman
- UCTC, David Staas

**1. Introductions**

Alex Muro (AVAIL) opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

**2. FHWA Forecasting and Analysis Training Session**

Jason and Rich provided an update on a FHWA Call for Service request to conduct a Transportation Analysis and Forecasting Training event for the Modeling Working Group and others. NYSAMPO submitted a response to the Call for Services to FHWA in the fall and FHWA agreed to develop a training seminar. The training will be held virtually over several days and will describe the types of forecasting and analyses that can be conducted using travel demand models, review the four-step travel demand model process, discuss model

inputs and outputs, and cover approaches for using travel demand models to analyze individual projects. Jason, Chris, and Rich will participate in a kick-off meeting with FHWA next week to develop a training outline. More details will be available during the next WG meeting.

### **3. Proposed Changes to Census Defined Urban Areas**

Rich discussed a proposed rule issued by the Census Bureau in a February 19, 2021 Federal Register notice. The proposed rule would change the criteria the Census Bureau uses to define urban areas, and would be applied to the results of the 2020 Decennial Census. The proposed changes are:

- Adopt a housing unit density threshold for qualification of census blocks,
- Qualify urban areas based on a minimum threshold of 4,000 housing units or 10,000 persons instead of a minimum threshold of 2,500 persons,
- Cease distinguishing different types of urban areas,
- Redefine maximum distances of jumps,
- No longer include the low density hop or jump "corridor" in the urban area,
- No longer include low-density territory located within indentations formed during the urban area delineation process, and
- Change how large agglomerations of densely settled territory are split.

The Census Bureau is taking comments on the proposed criteria through May 20, 2021.

### **4. Model Requests**

Lauren asked if other MPOs have a standard practice or policy for sharing their travel demand model with consultants or agencies, particularly when a project is being analyzed by another agency. OCTC recently received a request and does not currently have a policy in place, though a non-disclosure agreement was suggested. Chris Bauer added that he is also interested in this issue; CDTC has expressed a concern that another agency or user could change the model and then represent outputs as CDTC results.

Jason said that SMTC adopted procedures for sharing its model and model files. When there is a modeling work request it must be requested by an agency. SMTC makes it clear that once another agency has the model it is considered a separate model and SMTC no longer takes responsibility for it, and that the files are not to be transferred to other parties except where required by law. Jason will share this information with anyone that is interested.

### **5. Update on NPMRDS Software Development**

AVAIL discussed recent updates to the NPMRDS tool.

- The team is working on providing support to calculate the FHWA PM3 measures for 2020.
- They are also working on reloading data after changes to the shapefile and correcting a bug in the TMC Overview page.
- Alex demonstrated the tools used to do conflation. The team is continuing efforts to increase the accuracy of RIS inflation.

- Additional capability that is being added includes traffic circles, HOV lanes, V/C, recent pavement work, and others.

## **6. Next Meeting**

The next MWG meeting will take place on March 26, 2021.