

OREGON MODELING STEERING COMMITTEE
Large Conference Room, ODOT Materials Lab
800 Airport Rd SE, Salem, OR
Wednesday, March 9, 2005, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Richard Walker, Chair	Portland Metro
Dave Nordberg	OR Department of Environmental Quality
Richard Bjelland	OR Department of Housing & Community Services
Bill Upton	OR Department of Transportation
Jerri Bohard	OR Department of Transportation
Brian Dunn	OR Department of Transportation
Carl Switzer	Corvallis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Shinwon Kim	Regional Transportation Council
Jon Young	Federal Highway Administration
Scott Drumm	Port of Portland
Michal Wert	MW Consulting

INTRODUCTIONS

Dick Walker welcomed Jon Young and Carl Switzer as new members of the OMSC. He asked for self-introductions for the benefit of new members.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Michal Wert stated that the Long-Range Strategy Subcommittee recommended the following slate of officers for 2005:

- Chair – Dick Walker, Metro
- Vice Chair – Richard Bjelland, OHCDD
- Technical Services Standing Subcommittee Chair – Bill Upton, ODOT
- Applications Standing Subcommittee Chair – Bud Reiff, LCOG

There were no additional nominations and officers were accepted as recommended. The officers were thanked for their service in 2004 and for agreeing to serve again in 2005.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Technical Services Subcommittee – Bill Upton, Chair

Bill Upton stated that the Users Group is being reactivated and a meeting should be held soon. He stated that a meeting will be held next week between Metro, ODOT and the

modeling team staff to discuss the Metro “Big Look”. This is an effort to consider future growth of the Portland Metro region, following Metro 2040.

Richard stated that the legislature has a project called the “Big Look” to take a long term look at land use in Oregon. Money will likely be provided to DLCDC to evaluate the overall land use program in Oregon.

Dick stated that ODOT and Metro are reviewing the software that they use. ODOT recently purchased VSUM and Metro is reviewing packages carefully and should have a decision in the next month.

Brian Dunn stated that ODOT and Metro staff gave presentations at the TRB annual meeting in January. Several presentations included the OMSC and the effectiveness of this group for coordination and collaboration. There is a lot of interest in integrated modeling around the country. Oregon and Metro were well-represented in introducing new concepts for modeling. Land use and transportation is a significant topic and more areas around the country are talking about the importance of linking them together.

Jerri Bohard stated that land use transportation integration meetings that she attended at TRB made it apparent that other states are much less connected than Oregon. Projects are done on a project-by-project basis and there is a lack of working together between MPOs and DOTs. The Oregon example is unusual around the country. There was also much discussion on freight – what is important and how should it be addressed. There is interest in link freight with economic development. Streamlining and integrating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) into planning was also of interest.

Bill stated that ODOT is using the Oregon Small Urban Model (OSUM) and the Jem-in-R (Joint estimation model in R code) around the state. He stated a need for documentation and outreach for these programs outside of Oregon.

Dick stated that the National Academy of Sciences Committee has been looking at state-of-the-practice of economic forecasting over the past couple years. There is a lot going on but no good survey of state-of-the-practice exists. A contractor has been hired to interview and do a survey of states that do modeling. It will probably be a web-based survey and will take 18 months or more. The result will be a report that outlines the state of the practice. It may present recommendations but it is not intended to develop guidelines.

Dick stated that Metroscope is a population-employment application tool that incorporates land values, pricing, and accessibility from the transport model. It brings these elements together to look at population allocations. The current process is not efficient and Metro hired PTV America to help simplify the transport model. The simplified transport model and Metroscope will be linked by an interface in R code. The product will be open source and available to anyone interested. Bill recommended that Metro be specific in its contract language with the consultant to make sure that the program will be open source.

Dave Nordberg asked if models are being used to respond to Measure 37. Jerri stated that there is too much uncertainty around the issue to attempt any modeling. Most agencies are waiting to see how the legislature will respond to Measure 37 and how legal arguments play out.

Michal stated that the ODOT website will be updated to include a link to the TRB website and to the April TRB conference in Portland. She asked OMSC members to contact her if there are other links that should be included on the ODOT modeling site.

Performance Measures Subcommittee – Bud Reiff, Chair

Bud Reiff was not present and no report was given.

Continuous Survey Modeling for Oregon (COSMO)

Bill stated that 65 households have been recruited for the COSMO pilot project. Twenty have done travel and have data available. Data has been retrieved from 11 of these 20. Metro received two telephone inquiries about the survey – one was to make sure that the survey is legitimate and the other asked what to do when the Portland Art Museum would not allow transponders into the Museum. Generally, the survey appears to be going smoothly with minimal concerns or questions. Bill stated that the OMSC COSMO Subcommittee will be convened soon to review information that is being collected.

Michal circulated a packet of information being used for the pilot survey in the Portland area. This included the recruitment questionnaire, retrieval questionnaire, letters of introduction, a personal one-day travel log, samples of completed logs, a survey overview brochure, and a household questionnaire. Copies of this information will be emailed to OMSC COSMO Subcommittee members and are available to other OMSC members on request.

Dick stated that this is a pilot project of 300 people in the Portland metro area in a single Census District. It is exploring three different techniques for collecting data. Becky Knudson/ODOT and Jennifer John/Metro were recognized for their efforts to get the pilot study under contract and underway.

Brian Dunn stated that the pilot project will be completed by late July or early August. Dick stated that after the pilot is complete, data must be evaluated and decisions made on how to proceed with the full survey. A funding plan will be developed and implemented with the hope of starting the full statewide survey in fiscal year 2007.

In response to a question, Michal stated that COSMO is the result of the expert panel meetings held two years ago to evaluate use of a longitudinal panel survey. The decision as a result of the expert panel discussion was to develop a continuous cross-sectional survey with a longitudinal panel survey component. COSMO is the acronym selected for this next phase of the survey program.

Scott Drumm requested that Brian Kidd, Senior Research Analysis at the Port of Portland, be added to the OMSC COSMO Subcommittee.

Modeling Program Coordination (MPC) - Mike Jaffe, Chair – In Mike Jaffe's absence, Michal stated that the MPC is scheduled to meet following the OMSC meeting. At its last meeting, the MPO provided a forum for discussion on how the MPOs can assist ODOT in development of the Oregon Transportation Plan performance measures and data collection. A follow-up meeting was held with ODOT OTP staff to explore this collaborative opportunity in more detail.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP) Update

Jerri stated that the OTP Steering Committee has been meeting regularly. A presentation on needs for everything but highways and the local systems was made last month. This information will be presented on March 17 along with some preliminary information on the reference case. Performance measures have been finalized for testing purposes.

Ethan Seltzer/Portland State University resigned because he could not commit the time required. The Steering Committee talked about the time commitment required to complete the OTP update and the remainder of the Committee agreed to commit the time necessary to complete the project.

Michael Rock is doing a good job of keeping the ODOT OTP website up-to-date. The local needs analysis will be on the website after the March meeting. OTP information is available at <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/ortransplanupdate.shtml>.

Bill stated that the OR1 model is being used for the OTP update. It had to be recalibrated and has taken longer than anticipated but is moving forward. He stated that the OMSC OTP Subcommittee should be scheduled as soon as reference case information is available and as alternative scenarios are being developed.

Jerri stated that projects included in the OTP are from the MPO constrained project lists and rural Transportation System Plans. The Oregon Transportation Commission is expected to begin public discussions at the end of the year and Spring 2006 is the target date for adoption of the OTP.

Research Projects

Jerri stated that the Research Advisory Committee met last month and selected several projects for 2006. These included:

- *Economic Assessment of Upgrading Oregon's Shortline Rail Network* - The Port of Portland

- *Operational Benefits of a Systemwide Adaptive Ramp Metering System* – Portland State University and ODOT Region 1
- *Establishing Advisory Exit, Ramp and Curve Speeds on Oregon Highways* – ODOT Traffic Management
- *Field Verification of Load Capacity Model* – ODOT Bridge Section and Oregon State University
- Several construction-oriented projects

Bill stated that UrbanSim was originally being developed to push modeling from the bottom up and the statewide model pushed modeling down from the higher statewide level. Lessons were learned on why UrbanSim did not work and the modeling team is looking at how much further economics and land use should be pushed down to the local level. Because of the level of aggregation, land use may be more accessible to local modeling than economics.

Scott Drumm reported that the POP freight data collection project is moving forward. A contract should be signed with ODOT and Metro soon. POP, RTC, Multnomah County, ODOT and WSDOT are collecting commodity flow information. Two approaches are being used to obtain specific information:

- There will be a coordinated series of truck counters in the region and this will be the start of an on-going system of through traffic counts.
- Origin-destination data for truck trips will be collected through the OSU TRANSNOW grant. Additional information will be collected by intercept surveys through weigh stations. Scott noted that mail surveys do not generally provide the level of detail needed.

The project will take approximately 20 months to complete. Data should be available by the end of the 13th month. Total contract amount is \$729,000.

Carl Switzer asked if the trucking industry is involved or if information is being obtained from outside sources. Scott stated that both approaches are being used. OSU is conducting “cold calls” directly to trucking companies and have had good success obtaining information. The POP is also working with the trucking industry to get information.

Dick stated that he and Scott will be meeting to update the airport passenger model. Before the Airport MAX was completed, a consultant was hired to develop a tool to estimate ridership. A stated preference survey asks people to choose from several options for getting from A to B (with estimates of time required for bus, car, light rail, etc) to state the choice they would make if all were available. Using this data, the probability of a person choosing a mode that does not exist today is estimated. With MAX operating to the airport today, it is timely to see what data is being collected and available and see how this information is or can be used in modeling.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRB Planning Applications Conference Update

Dick gave an update on the TRB Planning Applications Conference to be held in Portland from April 24-28. Information on the conference is available at www.trb-portland-05.com. He encouraged all members of the OMSC to register, to participate in the Conference, and to encourage others so that there is a good Oregon turnout. Michal commended the OMSC on soliciting over \$20,000 from conference sponsors and exhibitors.

Dick stated that details for the conference are almost complete but a host is needed for one of the technical tours. Carl Switzer volunteered to participate as a “shepherd” for the South Waterfront/Tram tour. Dick reviewed general conference topics and noted the closing session on *Making Oregon Oregon* with the following speakers:

- Tony Vecchio, Oregon Zoo: “Creating a Natural Oregon Zoo” - incorporating the beach, mountains and special Oregon projects
- Jack McGowen, SOLV: “Enhancing Oregon Livability” – a national model of business and community partnership
- Michael Houck, Portland naturalist: “Creating Livable Cities--Nature in the City” – Portland’s approach to nature in the urban environment

ANNUAL REPORT

Michal reviewed highlights of the 2004 Annual Report. She stated that this report is prepared based on minutes of the OMSC and subcommittees, correspondence, and other activities of the OMSC throughout the year. It is intended to document the accomplishments of the OMSC over the year. Comments, additions or corrections should be sent to Michal at mwert@teleport.com. A copy of the report will be posted on the ODOT website.

WORK PROGRAM/MISSION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Dick stated that the original OMSC mission, goals and objectives were adopted in 1998. At the December OMSC meeting, members brainstormed on the role and responsibilities of the OMSC. As the Long-Range Strategy Subcommittee considered the information from the December meeting and reviewed the draft work program, it became clear that the focus of the OMSC has transitioned from research and development to applications and implementation. Although the statewide model is an important part of the Oregon modeling program, data sources and other models are also of importance, including housing, economic, transport and land use.

Richard noted that earlier modeling efforts were to build models. Now that statewide, MPO and local models are being widely used, the emphasis is on use of models and analysis as tools for decision-makers and policy-makers. Brian Dunn cautioned members on how the term “analysis” is used. It means different things to different people, especially technical people.

Michal noted that this transition is a logical progression on a continuum that begins with research and development and moves into using the tools and processes developed for the intended purposes. All elements on the continuum are important and will be worked on simultaneously, but different elements will have a higher profile depending on the status of the tools being developed.

Jeri stated that partnerships and efficiencies from the OMSC are important to recognize. There are many programs and tools being developed around the state and the OMSC forum provides significant value to members.

Dick stated that the OMSC Long-Range Strategy Subcommittee will continue to work on the work program and mission/goals and objectives and will circulate a draft for discussion at the June meeting.

Operating Procedures

Michal reviewed operating procedures adopted in 1998 and noted several areas to be updated. Several comments were noted:

- Membership criteria included OR agencies responsible for receiving and administering federal transportation funds. This could include agencies like Tri-Met, etc. because they get federal money and the OMSC should think about the effective size of the group.
- Under deliberations, the OMSC does not make binding decisions and therefore voting requirements and quorums are not needed.
- It is important to have oversight to ensure that guidelines and applications are consistent and appropriate across the state, but this should be considered a coordination role, not a decision-making role.

The operating procedures will be updated to incorporate these comments and will be posted on the ODOT website.

Other Agenda Items

Dick Walker was asked for an update on the TRANSIMS project. This project is funded by FHWA and is pushing the envelope in the way that travel demand modeling is done. Typically, modeling focuses on zone totals but TRANSIMS goes to the individual level. It involves microsimulation on a regional scale. Metro is a project partner with FHWA for TRANSIMS and Portland was selected as a test site because of its size and mix of transportation, and because staff and tools are available to do the work.

The first track will be done in June. Track 2, which will be complete at the end of the year, is the travel demand model which is determining decisions and choices of individuals. This will not look at the traditional routing on roads but will get to decisions on mode choice. All TRANSIMS products will be open source.

TRANSIMS is computer intensive. It runs on a Linux cluster with 25 nodes but efforts are being made to streamline the program to a size that can run on a desktop computer. The project has been under development for quite a while and some of the software is already being used by others in a variety of applications.

Dave asked if TRANSIMS will be a good tool to help make investment decisions for non-traditional transportation elements, like transit-oriented development or multi-purpose bicycle paths. Dick stated this is unlikely because these are minor contributions to the total and have too much variability. A report on completion of the first track will be given at the next OMSC meeting.

NEXT MEETING/AGENDA

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 15, 2005, from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the ODOT Human Resources Building in Salem.

Agenda items include:

- Subcommittee Reports
 - Technical Services
 - Performance Measures
 - Modeling Program Coordination
 - COSMO
- Program Updates
 - Oregon Transportation Plan
 - Research Projects
 - TRANSIMS
- Announcements
 - 2005 TRB Planning Methods Conference Debrief
 - 2005 Modeling Symposium
- Draft Mission, Goals & Objectives

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

MEETING HANDOUTS

The following handout materials or links were provided at the OMSC meeting. For copies or more information, please contact the link provided or email Michal Wert at mwert@teleport.com:

- OTP Update, available at www.odot.state.or.us/tdb/planning/OTPUupdate
- Continuous Survey for Modeling in Oregon (COSMO) pilot project materials
- OMSC 2004 Annual Report and updated operating procedures - <http://www.odot.state.or.us/tddtpau/modeling>