



Memorandum

U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**


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Subject: **INFORMATION:** Distribution of the
Report, "A Snapshot of Travel Modeling Activities"

Date: September 10, 2008

From: 
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Director, Office of Planning

In Reply
Refer to: HEPP-20

To: Division Administrators

The National Academy of Sciences Special Report 288, *Metropolitan Travel Forecasting: Current Practice and Future Direction* concluded that demands on travel forecasting models have grown significantly in recent years as a result of new policy concerns, and that existing models are inadequate to address many of these concerns.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) have taken different approaches to address these issues, including refining the traditional four-step travel demand modeling process to improve internal consistency, providing additional analysis capabilities, and redeveloping travel demand models to focus on individual traveler behavior.

The Office of Planning staff visited five MPO's in March 2008 to determine how travel demand models and the resulting travel forecasts have been used in the regional planning process, and how the travel demand models are used to address emerging issues. These MPO's were selected from agencies which have been proactive in developing improved travel forecasting methods.

Based on the interviews, we prepared "A Snapshot of Travel Modeling Activities." This report concludes that due to tightening budgets, objective evaluation criteria provided by travel models have become increasingly important in the planning and programming process. It also points out that four-step models in common practice today have limited ability to address emerging issues and that MPO's can take steps to address the shortcomings of current practice. Lastly, the need for quality data is clearly identified. The report identifies additional conclusions as well.

Attached please find the Executive Summary of the report. You may access the full report at http://tmip.fhwa.dot.gov/clearinghouse/docs/mpo/mpo_snapshot.pdf.

We have included sufficient copies for you to share with the State DOT and MPO's. We look forward to working with you on additional activities to improve the state of the practice in travel demand forecasting.

Attachments