

National Accessibility Evaluation Freight Subgroup Panel Meeting

Notes

August 17, 2017
10:00 - 11:00 a.m. CST

Action items denoted in bold.

Present:

University of MN: Shannon Engstrom, Brendan Murphy, Andrew Owen
DC DOT: Stephanie Dock
FHWA: Brian Gardner
Florida DOT: Monica Zhong
Maryland DOT: Meredith Hill
Minnesota DOT: Andrew Andrusko, Deanna Belden, Michael Iacono
Virginia DOT: Erik Johnson

Welcome and introductions - Andrew Owen

Andrew noted this is the first meeting of the freight subgroup. Introductions followed.

Project overview - Andrew Owen

- At a high level, the project is measuring the ability to reach destinations. Time travel calculations are for auto and transit. This is done block by block, up to a hour. These measurements can help calculate how many jobs can be reached within an hour, for example. The calculation is also weighted by population - higher block densities lead to a higher accessibility number.
- Products: National Accessibility Evaluation produces local, state and national-level reports. The transit calculations may not be immediately relevant to the freight community but they could be in the future. For now, the focus will be on the auto calculations.

Discussion: how the project might connect to freight - Andrew Owen, All

Three areas of focus for National Accessibility Evaluation:

1. Access to what?: The focus has been on access to jobs. What will the focus be for freight movement?

2. Access from what?: The origin needs to be identified. In order to understand accessibility, we need to understand the user origins.
3. What networks?: Which networks should be included? Also need to consider that not all networks are accessible to freight (e.g. neighborhood roads and hazardous waste restrictions).

The group then reacted to the above three questions.

- Routing considerations:
 - Erik (VDOT) noted that categories of freight may be important since many have specific supply chains. These chains might start with timber farms, mining areas, pipeline connections, etc. Each of these activities eventually lead to a sorting, manufacturing, distribution, manufacturing distribution and then eventually retail distribution. Also mentioned that shippers prefer certain routes than the average driver. Will need to create an understanding of which freight routes will be required (e.g. prefer right-hand turns v. left-hand turns).
 - Andrew (UMN) noted that terminals are critical here - such as airports, intermodal terminals, etc.
 - Andrew (MnDOT) asked who the customer or user is in these calculations. Andrew (UMN) says that is still up for discussion.
 - Monica (FDOT) noted that Florida is focused on the last mile connectivity for freight and business. (E.g. from port/rail to road access, airport to road access, road to retailers > when freight gets off the highway.)

Andrew (UMN) asked the group: what is the destination? Fedex, Amazon and other facilities?

- Andrew (MnDOT) suggested looking at Surface Transportation Board - Waybills data
- Others on the call could not identify any data sets with this information.
- Andrew Owen feels confident that gathering this data is possible but is not certain of the availability at this time.

Andrew (UMN) summarized the two areas to focus:

- Residential delivery - access to and from them - access from freight facilities.
- Transitions from highway to street network - access to freight facilities.

Andrew (UMN) asked: would it be helpful to understand accessibility for the rail network?

- Erik (VDOT): Yes.
- Monica (FDOT): Already have two measures in FL.
- Meredith (MDOT): Interested in this data but would need to check with MDOT's subject matter experts.

The group then discussed how the two focus areas could be calculated.

- Deanna (MnDOT) suggested calculating for areas with access to multiple facilities. **Deanna will pass along products from a project she managed in Chicago that looked at this data in the south suburbs of Chicago.**
- Travel times and access to freight terminal facilities - could also look at how congestion impacts freight activity - both low and high levels of congestion. Mike (MnDOT) mentioned that measuring the distribution of the travel time is critical as well.

- Meredith (MDOT): freight bottlenecks are often times not in areas where typical auto congestion occurs in Maryland. It would be helpful to understand why these differences occur (could be due to network challenges/construction?). Specifics and understanding of freight congestion will help.

Next Steps:

- **UMN will create a proposal for what National Accessibility Evaluation can do right now that might cover access to and from terminals AND to/from residential delivery.** This will require looking at the needs for these calculations and better understand the data available. A prototype could be developed. The goal would be to develop the prototype and proposal and present at the October TAP meeting.
- **AO will update the full TAP group at their next meeting in September.**
- **AO will share notes from this discussion.**

Andrew thanked members for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.