

# National Accessibility Evaluation Technical Advisory Panel Meeting

## Notes

May 8, 2018

2:00 - 3:30 p.m. CST via webinar

### Participants:

University of Minnesota:

Andrew Owen, Brendan Murphy, Claire Johnson, Kristin Carlson, Laurie McGinnis, Shannon Engstrom

Arkansas: Michael Henry

D.C.: Stephanie Dock

FHWA: Jeremy Raw

Florida: Monica Zhong

Minnesota: Deanna Belden, Michael Iacono

Tennessee: Chris McPhilamy

Virginia: Peter Ohlms

**\*Action items are denoted in bold.**

### Welcome from MnDOT & Introductions

Deanna welcomed the group to the TAP meeting. Shannon led the group in introductions.

### Project Updates – Andrew Owen

Andrew shared a staffing transition at the Accessibility Observatory. Shannon will leave CTS on May 10 and Claire Johnson has been hired to replace her as program coordinator. Claire introduced herself. Shannon thanked the Accessibility Observatory staff and TAP for the opportunity to work with this group.

### **Status Updates: Current and Future Deliverables**

Year 2 (2016):

- Transit: complete and published November 2017
- Auto: complete and published April 2018

Year 3 (2017)

- Transit: report is drafted and TAP members should expect a draft report the end of May. The report is expected to release end of June and a final date will be shared via email when the draft report is sent.

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- Auto: final publication date is TBD but targeting August or September 2018.
- Biking & Walking: TBD but targeting summer 2018

Andrew explained the technical challenges the team has faced with regards to biking and walking calculations. The team needed more time but didn't want to push back the transit 2016 report, therefore delaying the bike/walk report to summer 2018.

Brendan provided an update on bike & walk. He noted these were separate calculations, with biking needing the recalculations. The issues requiring the recalculation were related to how intersections and LTS networks intersected. Intersections must be handled properly -- e.g. if a bikeway crosses an LTS 4 roadway, and the intersection is uncontrolled, that intersection is not low-stress. Currently, OpenTripPlanner doesn't have traversal permissions for intersections, so that functionality must be added. A few other improvements related to how the router attaches to low-stress bikeways are to be added as well.

Monica (FDOT) inquired about the bike pilot studies. Brendan explained they have been completed. During the process they learned of the issues mentioned above. The pilot cities were Miami, Little Rock, D.C., and Minneapolis. This pilot served its purpose because they brought up issues that the team was then able to resolve prior to doing the national report. They will now move forward with a second round of calculations on the pilot studies. **Results of the second round of calculations for the pilot studies will be shared with TAP members as soon as they are ready.**

### **Data/Map API and Web Visualization**

With the auto calculation issues out of the way, AO staff are now able to focus on this initiative again. Kristin Carlson, another Accessibility Observatory researcher, will be the project lead. She will be conducting usability testing and asking for feedback on the process. The results of the tests will inform how they proceed. Testing will take place in June. Timeline post-user testing is TBD.

### **Accessibility & Freight Subcommittee**

Andrew will continue to lead this effort. They will focus on access to freight terminals. He noted that he will need TAP members' help with documenting data availability. A freight subgroup will be meeting in June (calendar invite forthcoming). All TAP members will be invited.

Michael Iacono (MnDOT) asked whether there is a threshold for size of freight terminals that will be considered in freight accessibility. Andrew asked Michael to bring this and questions like it to the June freight subcommittee meeting.

### **Outreach & Development:**

Andrew shared plans for outreach and development activities planned for this summer. AO staff plan to host an in-person event at the AASHTO Joint Policy Conference (July 17-19 in Spokane,

WA) followed by a public webinar in late July. MnDOT staff will advertise for both events at the **TRB Asset Management Conference (July 14 - 17 in San Diego, CA)**. **Andrew also hopes to present at the AMPO Annual Conference (Sept 24 - 28 in San Antonio, TX)**.

### **AAA Auto 2016 Report: Review of Press Release Process**

Shannon reviewed the steps AO staff took in preparation for the Auto 2016 report distribution and press release process. At a high-level, TAP members were given their state-level reports, data, and a draft of the national report a month prior to the national report publication date. TAP members were asked about their plans for press releases and were given three options: 1) AO staff release local press releases on behalf of TAP state, 2) TAP state works with their DOT to handle their local press releases, or 3) no local press releases distributed by the TAP member or AO staff for the state. AO staff asked for TAP member feedback on the process.

#### *TAP member comments:*

- Minnesota decided to have AO conduct their local release. For MnDOT, getting approval from the governor's office takes time. They appreciated that AO staff could handle the press release process.
- Virginia: Peter appreciated the process and made sense in theory if the VDOT communications department had the capacity. A concern at VDOT was that media outlets would not understand the findings in whole and would mischaracterize the findings. They also felt the release would be too lengthy because it would cover both cities. They did not consider separate press releases for each city. Peter plans to discuss the process and the pooled fund with VDOT's communications group.
- D.C.: They decided to put out the press release on their own. They appreciated the notice and were able to ask the Mayor's office if they would like to release this themselves. If not they would have had AO staff handle the release. She wondered how it would be released if AO managed the press release process and if it would be branded as a DDOT press release or an AO press release.
- Florida: Agreed with Stephanie that she was unsure on how a press release would be delivered by AO. Their DOT was also going through a reorganization and their communications group did not have adequate time to review the report.
  - Stephanie mentioned graphics were really helpful and represented telling gaps in the network. It was helpful to have the data and maps ahead of time.

AO staff will move forward with the following next steps:

- Review press release and determine the right language if AO will release the press release on behalf of a TAP member.
- Figure out a way to make it easier for TAP members to compare data and highlight the importance of the study. Consider including a photo in the press release.

- TAP members should know that each report topic can have a different report release process given the states may be interested in one mode over another.

### **Member Updates**

- NCHRP problem statement 2019-B-04:  
Deanna invited TAP members to consider serving on the panel for the problem statement related to operationalizing accessibility data in DOTs. Deanna will send out the problem statement to the group and invite them to self-nominate. Deanna plans to nominate herself for the panel. The panel's role is to review the problem statement draft and revise and then it goes through the RFP process. The time commitment is two travel meetings and conference calls in between. Deadline is June 15. Deanna is happy to answer any questions offline.
- Monica (Florida): Mentioned a FDOT District used the data for a [2045 Unfunded Needs Plan](#).
- Peter (Virginia) will be presenting about the National Accessibility Evaluation at VDOT's Coordinating Transportation and Land Use Planning Forum. The forum is internal to VDOT but welcomes community developers and the public to attend. AO staff shared a sample slidedeck with him for the presentation.

**The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. CST**