The summary for the first meeting of the CRC’s Traffic Forecasting Task Force (TFTF) was held on April 17, 2015 at 1:00 PM at the GDOT Building (Room 409). The following individuals attended. Tom McQueen (GDOT) and Jamie Cochran (GS&P) are co-chairs of the committee. Keli Kemp (HNTB) is also assisting in the committee’s work.

Tom McQueen welcomed the group and expressed that GDOT is very happy to have the group working with them to incorporate good ideas and innovation into the revision of GDOT’s planned Chapter 13 Update (GDOT Design Manual addressing traffic forecasting). Tom stated that there is strong senior GDOT management support for the effort.

The group made self-introductions and Tom went on to explain what GDOT wanted to achieve with this project. Tom stated that we need to better communicate to GDOT professionals involved in delivering projects and also the consultant community about what is expected in the traffic forecasting phase of projects. Our task force needs to let the practitioners know how the traffic forecasting process products are used by multiple internal and external customers, and what GDOT’s expectations are in this area. Being one of the leaders in the area of design traffic forecasting among State DOTs is a central goal of the Department. Tom thanked the representatives of the group for volunteering to help.

Jamie Cochran and Keli Kemp facilitated a group discussion to review the draft Work Process Diagram for the project (see attachment). The “core group” of the task force, GDOT representatives, Tom McQueen and Abby Ebodaghe; GS&P representatives, Jamie Cochran and Nithin Gomez, and HNTB representatives (Keli Kemp and Xuewen Le) developed a draft work flow process diagram to guide the overall work of the task force. The purpose of the first task force meeting was to review this work program, identify the need for any adjustments, and discuss the overall approach to the project. GS&P and HNTB were recently selected by GDOT’s Office of Planning to carry out traffic forecasting work across the state.

In order to implement the process improvements as soon as possible, GDOT would like to complete the revision of Chapter 13 by the end of September, 2015, about six months from now. There are many stakeholder groups that the task force will need to work with to identify key issues in the traffic forecasting process where revisions are needed – primarily focusing on those who develop and review traffic forecasting products, as well as the “customers” who use the products and often have unique needs and requests. These include GDOT’s Office of Planning, FHWA, GDOT’s Office of Environmental Services (OES); GDOT’s Office of Program Delivery (OPD); GDOT’s Office of Materials and Research (OMR); GDOT’s Office of Traffic Operations, GDOT’s Bridge and Road Design groups, the District Offices, the consultant community (about 50 firms prequalified in traffic forecasting); and local governments and/or MPOs that use the GDOT forecasting process or provide technical documentation to support it.

At the suggestion of some of the task force members, the group was asked to talk about “what success looks like” in this effort. The group made the following observations:

- We need to all focus on streamlining delivery of traffic forecasting products.
- We should have a well-thought-out, understandable traffic forecasting process.
- The information needed by the practitioners to do the work must be available.
- The task force will need to consider what is needed for the traffic forecasting of newer types of projects, such as DDIs, roundabouts, etc.
- Our most pressing need for the project is to establish an overall framework for the traffic forecasting process and activities, the next level of detail will address the technical requirements, which will likely be outside the scope of this initial effort (beyond the September 2015 time frame).

The group then reviewed the proposed time line and work flow for the project; a solid discussion occurred and consensus was established on the proposed approach. The first phase of the process is for the task force to schedule and hold meetings with all of the stakeholder groups during the months of April and May, 2015 and summarize comments and key themes in the feedback. The core team will contact the various stakeholder groups, hold, and document the interviews. The task force has already contacted the various CRC committees by coordinating with Tommy Crochet and a master list of comments and suggestions has been developed. Finally, the Office of Planning has individually contacted all of the firms prequalified by GDOT to perform traffic forecasting to get their comments and feedback. At the end of May, the task force will be compiling the results of the stakeholder outreach process and distribute the results to its members. On May 19, 2015, Tom McQueen, Jamie Cochran, and Keli Kemp will attend the CRC Subcommittee Meeting to brief the group on the task force’s progress and upcoming work plan.

In early June, the task force will meet again to synthesize the results of the outreach program and develop potential solutions or future actions to address the needs. The group will also identify opportunities to update/streamline Chapter 13 and make writing assignments for the revised document.

During July, 2015, the group will meet again to review the progress in the Chapter 13 revisions and review the need for recontacting the stakeholder groups for their input.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>E-Mail Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nithin Gomez</td>
<td>Gresham, Smith and Partners</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nithin.gomez@gspnet.com">nithin.gomez@gspnet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keli Kemp</td>
<td>HNTB</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kkemp@hntb.com">kkemp@hntb.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abby Abodaghe</td>
<td>GDOT Office of Planning</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aebodaghe@dot.ga.gov">aebodaghe@dot.ga.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Kassa</td>
<td>AECOM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tim.kassa@aecom.com">tim.kassa@aecom.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prasoon Sinha</td>
<td>Arcadis</td>
<td><a href="mailto:prasoon.sinha@arcadis-us.com">prasoon.sinha@arcadis-us.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mario Macrina</td>
<td>Wolverton &amp; Associates</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mmacrina@wolverton-assoc.com">mmacrina@wolverton-assoc.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuewen Le</td>
<td>HNTB</td>
<td><a href="mailto:xle@hntb.com">xle@hntb.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jagan Kaja</td>
<td>Parsons Brinckerhoff</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jkaja@pbworld.com">jkaja@pbworld.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom McQueen</td>
<td>GDOT Office of Planning</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tmcqueen@dot.ga.gov">tmcqueen@dot.ga.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie Cochran</td>
<td>Gresham, Smith and Partners</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jamie.cochran@gspnet.com">jamie.cochran@gspnet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speedy Boutwell</td>
<td>Wilburn Engineering</td>
<td><a href="mailto:speedy@wilburnengineering.com">speedy@wilburnengineering.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sameer Patharkar</td>
<td>Foresight Group</td>
<td><a href="mailto:spatharkar@fg-inc.net">spatharkar@fg-inc.net</a></td>
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**Absent:**
- Speedy Boutwell

**Organization**
- CRC TRAFFIC FORECASTING TASK FORCE
- MEETING SUMMARY – APRIL 17, 2015
- GDOT BUILDING – ROOM 409
During August, 2015, the draft revised Chapter 13 will be distributed to task force members and the CRC subcommittees for further comments and the task force will incorporate any suggested changes, if appropriate. The task force will also finalize the “roll out plan” for implementing the new guidance.

In September, 2015, the final revised Chapter 13 will be completed and other appropriate guidance, such as “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs) posted to GDOT’s website. The task force will also develop a schedule and materials for sharing the new information – an initial idea is to do this via one or more “lunch and learn” sessions; it was noted that the task force will not be developing technical traffic forecasting training materials. Once the document is finalized, the task force will complete an e-mail “blast” to all interested parties, including GDOT departments, District offices and the consultant community, on the new document.

During the task force meeting on April 17th, the following comments and suggestions were made by the members:

- The new process should address how to determine the growth factor for traffic projections from the various MPO models. This has been a problem in the past.
- The task force needs to remember that one of the issues in the traffic forecasting done by consultants is that it is very difficult now to budget and write a scope for what is needed. When the traffic requirements are not clear and work has to be re-done, this causes delays in project delivery.
- We need to include the GDOT folks that work on noise and air quality in the process.
- The task force needs to consider whether to produce a “stand alone” document (like other State DOTs have done) or just a chapter in the Design Manual. Several people mentioned that because of the limitation on how much material could be posted on GDOT’s website, the chapter on traffic forecasting was reduced in size. This reduction likely has caused some difficulty in carrying out GDOT’s requirements.
- The task force needs to identify the “key questions” that the traffic forecasting activities need to answer.
- The task force needs to identify the traffic forecasting requirements for various types of projects. A matrix of requirements would be helpful to the practitioners.
- We need to find a way to help the consultants determine what the scope and budget for traffic forecasting must be for the various types of projects.
- The task force should also determine how long the traffic forecasting process should take (based on the type of project), so GDOT project managers who are trying to streamline project delivery have this information.
- The task force should try to obtain data on how well the new process is working for the various GDOT groups and the consultants (after 12 months with the new process and guidance).
- The task force should also find ways to expedite the traffic forecasting by creating a repository for data that can be used by the practitioners that GDOT accepts (i.e. traffic count data).
- The task force should develop a way for the guidance to be updated periodically as conditions change.
- The task force should identify a list of risks associated with traffic forecasting for each project (as part of the required risk assessment at the beginning of each project).
- The task force needs a review of the current process used by GDOT (this will try to be scheduled at the next meeting).
- The task force needs to work on a common definition of the “no build network”. When one or more projects are included in this network for traffic forecasting purposes, then the projects are delayed or removed from the network (due to funding, etc.), this causes problems in the completion of the traffic forecasting.
- The task force also needs to define the terms “independent utility” and “logical termini”. These terms have significance to federal funding agencies, such as FHWA. The task force will need to research these issues, with the understanding that in-depth discussion of these issues is not the mission of the task force.

The task force members agreed to collect examples of guidance materials developed by other State DOTs to see if there are examples of tools and methods that we can use in Georgia (i.e. Ohio). Jamie Cochran will send contact information to all of the task force members. Dagan Kaja mentioned that he is moderating a session at the ITE Summer Seminar in St. Simon’s Island in July and has an opening for someone from the task force to participate. Tom McQueen will think about this opportunity and report back to the group. Also, on June 18-21, 2015 at the Brasstown Resort, ACECGA is holding their Summer Engineering Conference. This may also be another opportunity to discuss the work of the task force. Tom McQueen will research this item.

JACc:
Attachment