National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Draft
as of 03/05/26

TPB TRAVEL FORECASTING SUBCOMMITTEE

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY 23, 2026 MEETING, 9:30 AM TO 11:15 AM

Meeting was held virtually via web conferencing software. There was no on-site meeting.

MEETING ATTENDEES

MEMBERS, ALTERNATES, AND PARTICIPANTS

- Jonathan Avner (Whitman, Requardt & Assoc.)
- Matt Bewley (NVTA)
- Manfredo Davila (M-NCPPC, Prince George's Co.)
- Jim Bunch (Mead & Hunt)
- Kevin Chai (Fairfax County)
- Xiao Cui (VDOT)
- Ali Etezady (RSG, Inc.)
- John Gliebe (Cambridge Systematics)
- Anson Gock (Delaware DOT)
- Li Li (Whitman, Requardt & Assoc.)
- Tom Li (ASRI)
- Mary Martchouk (MMTAM)
- Chaitanya Paleti (RK&K)
- Maggie Qi (Fairfax Co. DOT)
- Mushtaq Rahman (BMG)
- Andrew Rohne (Caliper)
- Thomas Rossi (Cambridge Systematics)
- Steve Weller (Atlas Arteria)
- Jun Yang (M-NCPPC, Montgomery Co.)
- Elham Shayanfar (MDOT)

COG STAFF

- Robert d'Abadie
- Laura Bachle
- Nazneen Ferdous
- Kenneth (Ken) Joh
- Glenn Lang
- Mark Moran
- Ray Ngo
- Wanda Owens
- Ceriann Price
- Meseret Seifu
- Bahar Shahverdi
- Suraj Vujjini
- Dusan Vuksan
- Feng Xie
- Zhuo Yang
- Jim Yin

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1. OPENING: MEETING ROLES, RULES, AND ROLL CALL OF PARTICIPANTS

Mark Moran opened the meeting by discussing the roles of the meeting participants (e.g., chair, host, technical host, note taker), meeting rules, and performing a roll call of participants. This meeting of the TFS was chaired by Jun Yang.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING, HELD ON NOVEMBER 21, 2025

The highlights of the November 21, 2025 meeting of the TFS were approved without any changes.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE AND FORMAT FOR 2026

This item was presented by Mark. He first explained that, since the start of the Covid pandemic, the TFS meetings had been held virtually. However, he noted that, periodically, COG/TPB staff confer with the chair of the TFS to decide whether to keep the current format or change to a hybrid or in-person schedule. Mark then announced that, after a discussion with the new chair in December 2025, a decision was made to switch to an alternating schedule (half virtual - half hybrid). Though the hybrid meetings offer a virtual option, Mark encouraged the members of the TFS to come to the in-person/hybrid meetings in person if they live in the region.

4. STATUS REPORT ON COG/TPB'S REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) NO. 26-004, CONSULTANT ASSISTANCE WITH TRAVEL DEMAND FORECASTING METHODS USED BY THE COG/TPB STAFF

Mark presented this item. He explained that, to develop the Gen3 Travel Model, a multi-year contract was issued, which ended in December 2025. With the previous contract expiring, a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit help from consultants with future model development activities was issued in fall of 2025. He further noted that, though the intent was to have a single award, if beneficial to the project, COG/TPB staff did reserve the right to award multiple awards. In this case, it was decided that two awards would be awarded. The first consultant will be responsible for Task 2: Developing a strategic plan for the improvement of travel demand forecasting methods used by TPB staff. Mark highlighted that the previous two plans were developed in 1992 and 2015. The second consultant will be responsible for the remaining tasks (1, 3, 4, and 5). Task 1 is a general task to assist on topics not covered under the other tasks; Task 3 is a review of travel demand forecasting software; Task 4 is assistance for the Gen2 Travel Model; and Task 5 is assistance for the Gen3 Travel Model. Mark concluded by noting that the names of the firms who have been awarded the work would not be disclosed to the public yet, as the contracts have not been finalized.

5. COG/TPB GEN3 TRAVEL MODEL: STATUS REPORT FROM COG/TPB STAFF

This item was presented by Dr. Feng Xie who spoke from a set of presentation slides. In his presentation, Feng provided a regular status report on the development of the COG/TPB's Gen3 Travel Model. Feng first talked about the beta release of the Gen3 Model which was announced in November. Thus far, TPB staff has fulfilled 11 requests for the beta model and followed up with the model recipients to get their feedback. Next, Feng talked about the post-beta model enhancements, bugfixes and software updates, as well as the planned official release of the Gen3 Model for production this spring. He concluded the presentation with next steps for the next couple of months.

After the presentation, Jim Bunch asked if the Python environment management software uv[1] will also be replacing conda[2] in the Gen2 Model. Feng pointed out that the Gen2 Model currently uses an environment that is much simpler than that of the Gen3 Model so it can be sufficiently handled using conda. However, Feng also noted that now that uv has been successfully implemented in the Gen3 Model, TPB staff can certainly consider replacing conda with uv in a future Gen2 Model version.

6. TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD (TRB) ANNUAL MEETING: SHARING SESSION

Mark was the first to share his experience at the 2026 TRB Annual Meeting and spoke from a set of presentation slides. He first noted that he went to a committee meeting, where the TRB representative at the meeting explained that they were not an employee of TRB, but of the National Academies of

[1] uv Documentation, 2026: https://docs.astral.sh/uv/
[2] Conda Documentation, 2026: https://docs.conda.io/projects/conda/en/latest/index.html

Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), and that TRB was one of the program centers of NASEM. Mark noted that the TRB representative also explained that NASEM and thus TRB received most of their funding from federal sources. Mark then briefly mentioned that 10 COG/TPB Department of Transportation Planning (DTP) staff attended TRB this year, of which three gave presentations. Mark continued by highlighting three of the sessions he went to:

- "Lectern Session 2007 Transportation, Land Use, and Economic Development: Innovative Tools and Insights." Presented at the Transportation Research Board 105th Annual Meeting, January 11-15, 2026, Washington, D.C., January 12, 2026.
- "Lectern Session 2089 Travel Surveys Versus Passive Data: What is Worth Keeping?" Presented at the Transportation Research Board 105th Annual Meeting, January 11-15, 2026, Washington, D.C., January 12, 2026.
- "Lectern Session 2135 Agentic AI in Travel Data and Methods: Potential and Pitfalls." Presented at the Transportation Research Board 105th Annual Meeting, January 11-15, 2026, Washington, D.C., January 12, 2026.

In the first session, Mark learned about a standardized framework developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for forecasting sociodemographic, land use, and economic indicators that planning organizations throughout the state may use. From another presentation held in the first highlighted session, Mark learned that, even in high-accessibility neighborhoods (15-minute cities), residents still choose to drive beyond the 15-min. walkshed for certain activities. Mark proceeded to explain that the second session he attended was very engaging. It was a discussion between four panelists, one of whom was Ken Joh, who argued for/against active (household travel surveys) and passive (Big Data) data gathering methods to gain insight into regional travel patterns. In the final session he attended, Mark learned about the definitions of Generative and Agentic AI used by different agencies, as well as their potential use cases, such as meeting summarization or coding aid, and where AI is not allowed to be used.

Suraj Vujjini was the second TRB attendee to share his experience. He noted that, similar to Mark, he found sessions 2089 and 2135 very interesting, especially the former, as it was very engaging and unlike any of the other sessions he attended this year. For the second session, Suraj noted his interest in the presentation about how StreetLight Data was using AI, such as using AI to summarize public comments and draft replies for them. Suraj then briefly talked about a session he went to about Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), where he heard about what AAM is and the challenges they are facing. Mark noted that the AAM movement is very interesting, with many companies developing products though some companies have gone out of business. In particular, vertical take-off aircraft have been part of the discussion for many years, but it is not clear when they will enter into regular service.

Next, Tom Rossi explained that, as a TRB attendee for the last 40 years, he noticed many changes to the conference, in particular over the last few years. One of the changes he mentioned is the committee structure and membership. He elaborated that, this year, many committees were dissolved and some were re-established under different names, with members being carried over from one committee to the next. However, a new rule was set that only a single member from any organization could join the same committee. He also noted that the committee for Travel Demand Modeling was not re-established, but that three topic-adjacent committees broached the subject. He concluded by mentioning that AI was a recurrent topic throughout the conference and noted that awareness and proper use of the technology are paramount moving forward.

Ken Joh was the next to speak up and wanted to share a few observations. He noted that he is a member of the Travel Data Methods Committee, which has priority research topics for the upcoming

year, among which are: improving travel survey design, dissipation, and data quality. Ken then highlighted that transparency and comparability of third-party data is an important component of these topics, as using both Travel Surveys and passive (Big) data together is key to painting a complete picture of travel patterns.

Feng was the next attendee to share his experience. He first shared that he noticed fewer sessions on travel demand forecasting. However, he wanted to mention two sessions on the topic he did attend:

- "Lectern Session 3007 AI and Machine Learning in Travel Demand Forecasting." Presented at the Transportation Research Board 105th Annual Meeting, January 11-15, 2026, Washington, D.C., January 13, 2026.
- "Lectern Session 4052 Drones, Robots, and Autonomous Fleets: The Frontier of Freight Logistics." Presented at the Transportation Research Board 105th Annual Meeting, January 11-15, 2026, Washington, D.C., January 14, 2026.

For the first session, Feng highlighted a presentation by Dr. Huang about a new model which combined Discrete Choice Modeling (DCM) and Deep Neural Networks (DNN), a highly tractable model and a black-box model. He noted how the combined model was able to improve the prediction-level of the model while keeping the explainability from the DCM. Another presentation during the same session compared travel demand models using different AI algorithms and showed that the combined model by Dr. Huang performed the best. In the second session, Feng learned that most of the AI startups related to driverless cars choose Texas as the first place to launch, as it is relatively flat.

Zhuo Yang continued the discussion by highlighting three of his observations. He first noted that he thinks that active data through travel surveys will still be important in the decade to come. Next, he noted that AI in transportation is becoming more practical and not just smarter. Zhuo elaborated that accuracy is no longer the main reason for AI development, but usefulness. For example, by helping to understand why crashes occur and how to avoid them. Finally, he noted that AI is being used to analyze public comments and aggregate opinions on transportation instead of only relying on a feedback survey.

7. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF CURRENT MODELING EFFORTS AROUND THE REGION

Jun briefly provided an update on the work with the M-NCPPC Travel/4 Model. At the July 2025 meeting, Jun mentioned that M-NCPPC was working on updating their model with help from Cambridge Systematics. He announced that this effort was complete and that their Travel/4 Model was now more aligned with the latest COG/TPB Gen2 Model. He noted, however, that the documentation had not been finalized yet.

8. STAFF UPDATES: RETIREMENTS

Mark announced the upcoming retirements of Meseret Seifu and himself.

He noted that Meseret will be retiring from COG after 31 years of service. Her last day will be Friday, February 27. Meseret started working for COG as an intern in the mid-1990s under her first supervisor, Patrick Zilliacus. She got a permanent position at COG in 1995. Two years later, in 1997, she began working for Ron Milone to support the development of the regional travel demand forecasting model. She has worked on a wide variety of projects at COG in the areas of model development, network development, analysis of traffic counts, and servicing data requests related to the regional travel demand model. During her time at COG, Meseret has become an expert on the TPB regional travel model and the associated transportation networks. Everyone wished Meseret success and happiness in the next chapter of her life!

Mark noted that he would also be retiring from COG, but, in his case, after 35 years of service. Mark provided a summary of his career path before and during his tenure at COG. Before COG, he worked as an aerospace engineer at a Navy research lab, including working in transonic wind tunnel. Also, before COG, he spent one year studying aerospace engineering at a university in Toulouse, France, which was a full French language immersion experience for him. He began working at COG in 1988 as a Research Assistant, where he first worked in aviation system planning. He worked on a variety of tasks, including conducting a study of the feasibility of vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) taxi service connecting major cities along the East Coast. Early in his COG career, he served as the COG staff liaison for both the Bicycle Technical Subcommittee and the Aviation Technical Subcommittee. In the 1990s, he transferred to a different team so that he could learn about and work on the regional travel demand forecasting model, under Jim Hogan and Ron Milone. His most recent work at COG has focused on both the regional travel demand forecasting model and the mobile emissions models. In 2015, he advocated for and managed a consultant-led strategic plan for modeling methods used by COG/TPB staff. The 2015 strategic plan led to the development of the Gen3 Travel Model, which is currently in beta release, and which is planned to become the TPB's next-generation travel demand forecasting model. Mark noted that, after retiring from COG, he hopes to continue working, and is currently exploring various opportunities. Everyone wished Mark success and happiness in the next chapter of his life!

9. NEXT MEETING AND OTHER BUSINESS

Mark first announced that COG/TPB appreciates having a non-COG presenter at each meeting and would like to encourage any interested parties to email him or Feng. He proceeded to note that the next meeting would be held on March 20, 2026, and that the meeting will be held in a hybrid format.

10. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at about 11:15 AM.

Attribution: This meeting summary was developed using a variety of sources, including notes from participants, a recording of the meeting, presentation slides, and a meeting summary generated by artificial intelligence (AI), via Webex and ChatGPT. Any sections of the meeting summary based on AI-generated content were reviewed and edited for accuracy by humans. The primary authors of the meeting summary were the meeting presenters, Glenn Lang, and Mark Moran.