



**The Eastern Transportation
RITIS User Group Web Meeting – May 20, 2021
Question and Answer Summary**

Spotlight Presentation: Update on the Transportation Disruption and Disaster Statistics

Q1: Alan Warde (New York State DOT): For the congestion pie charts, for states that have both large urban areas as well as significant rural areas, can separate pie charts be done?

A: Michael Pack (University of Maryland CATT Lab): The US DOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics is funding us to develop the pie charts at both the state level and at the county level. They were only able to fund this for the calendar year (CY) 2019.

Q2: Michael Iacono (Minnesota DOT): Are all of the currently available results based on CY 2019 data?

A: Michael Pack (University of Maryland CATT Lab): We are basing all results on CY 2019 data. You'll see a couple of results online now that don't cover exact calendar years, but those will be replaced this summer as we build out the entire country.

Q3: Alan Warde (New York State DOT): How are you defining bottlenecks? Are they individual TMCs (traffic message channels) or do you have a method for group high scoring TMCs that are near each other? Also, do you have a minimum value for the percentage of epochs that are reporting for each TMC?

A: Michael Pack (University of Maryland CATT Lab): These are not individual TMC segments. We have a methodology (vetted by a group of states) that is used to determine the grouping of TMCs to show growing, shrinking, and merging TMC segments that form bottlenecks. We can take an action item to send you links to our methodologies and other webinars where these were discussed.

Q4: Raymond Jackson (MWVCOG): Any plans for including MPOs for a geographic layer?

A: Michael Pack (University of Maryland CATT Lab): Not during this round of development; however, if your MPO covers county boundaries, you'd be able to add up the values for each county to get your results.

Note: Scott Benedict (Pennsylvania DOT): To clarify - Pennsylvania does assign multiple causes where we can identify them, but we choose a primary cause at the highest level of the pie chart. In our tool, you can drill down to see multi-cause.



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Q5: Keith Miller (NJTPA): Will the geographic controls allow you to group counties into a "region" to get one pie chart for the entire region?

A: Michael Pack (University of Maryland CATT Lab): No. However, we have a concept for a tool that would allow you to choose ANY geography (zip code, county, single road, group of roads, date ranges, just weekends, etc., and any combination in between. We are still seeking funding for this concept.

Q6: Russell Holt (Rhode Island DOT): For the new (latest) charts, can you please clarify: Does the "Signals" cause align with ALL delays (no matter how large or small) that you can definitively attribute to solely traffic signals? If yes, this is great (and it gets away from the older subjective "poor" signal timing reference), but going forward I hope viewers/users of the chart will understand that signal retiming alone cannot remove ALL such delay (signals balance delays, hopefully as best the owner/agency can - but some delays are inevitable given capacity). I'm sure the Steering Committee has already commented on this.

A: Mark Franz (University of Maryland CATT Lab): All delays must meet the bottleneck activation threshold of 60% of the free-flow speed for five (5) consecutive minutes. Based on the feedback from the committee, we decided to remove the word "poor" from the category as the current method does not investigate if the cause of delay is poor signal timing or saturation conditions. You make a good point about managing the expectations in reducing delays at intersections. Thanks for the feedback.

Response: Russell Holt (Rhode Island DOT): Thanks for this clarification. Good notes for me (or I think anyone) to keep in mind if/when we use or share the Charts with others. By chance, do you know if the older method did/was able to separate the cause of delay due to poor signal timing vs. saturated conditions, as you note?

A: Mark Franz (University of Maryland CATT Lab): [The 2004 study by TTI and Cambridge Systematic](#) labels their causes "Poor Signal Timing" and does not include saturation impacts.



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Spotlight Presentation: COVID-19 Impacts on Travel Trends Using the RITIS-PDA Suite

Q7: Enock Mtoi (Florida DOT (AECOM)): I heard Tom mentioning RITIS API. Is it available for all RITIS users?

A: Michael Pack (University of Maryland CATT Lab): We do have an API that we provide to agencies who are funding the full RITIS/PDA package. Send an email to support@ritis.org, and we can verify your rights to the API. We would then provide training on the acceptable use of the API to make sure you or your agency know how to use it properly. The API is meant for people who want to develop software applications.

Q8: Ira Levinton (New Jersey DOT): Is your process done using RITIS software or using your software? Are some steps done with RITIS software and some steps done using your software?

A: Tom Edinger (DVRPC): There are multiple processes. Processes 1, 2, and 7 are done with the PDA Suite, the others are more custom processes using Python and MS Excel because of the many TMC sets to analyze at once.

Q9: Jungwook Jun (Virginia DOT): When you calculated travel time indexes (TTIs) for corridors, did you eliminate very short TMCs (e.g., internal intersection TMCs) or did you use all TMCs available?

A: Tom Edinger (DVRPC): We used all the TMCs available, is there a better way?

Response: Jungwook Jun (Virginia DOT): We also do the same corridor analysis with TMC metrics, but we also found that some small TMCs (again, internal intersection TMCs) had very high TTIs than other down-and-upstream TMCs' value, which caused a skewed (or unrealistic) measure of the corridor. Because of this, we sometimes removed small TMCs from the analysis. We want to know if you have the same expertise or suggestion.



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PDA Suite Performance Measures Working Group Update

Q10: Russell Holt (Rhode Island DOT): So, all RITIS users will have access to at least the Templates hopefully by end of summer?

A: John Allen (University of Maryland CATT Lab): Most likely by the end of the summer. It's a priority for us to get these templates into the hands of folks as they will save a lot of time, money, and effort.

A: Michael Pack (University of Maryland CATT Lab): If anyone needs the templates ahead of time, we can probably get them to you. It's the framework around the templates that has all the instructions and is hard to get on the RITIS website.

Q11: Alvin Marquess (Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc.): How did you come up with the number of responders at the Woodrow Wilson bridge incident?

A: John Allen (University of Maryland CATT Lab): That information was provided by Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC), a partnership between transportation agencies in the area to improve safety and mobility in the region through information sharing, planning, and coordination.

Q12: Ira Levinton (New Jersey DOT): When the truck crash shut down traffic on the beltway by Washington DC, approximately how many miles of roadway were closed?

A: John Allen (University of Maryland CATT Lab): A truck crashed on the northbound outer loop of I-495 at the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, which involved fatalities and a fire. This resulted in closing down the entire northbound lanes on the bridge for over 10 hours.

Q13: Ira Levinton (New Jersey DOT): Is the incident clearance time part of the incident duration time or the time after?

A: John Allen (University of Maryland CATT Lab): The incident clearance time is part of the overall incident duration time – from when the incident was first detected until the clearance of the incident (and traffic beginning to return to normal).



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Agency Input Session

Q14: Jason Firman (Michigan DOT): Segment gaps are still an issue; many routes have gaps and we have to search for many names along the corridor, is there a systematic way to clean that up? If I was to search for M-66 (not sure if it's one of the routes) it's hundreds of miles long, but the whole route won't show up. Also, when selecting the map feature using XD data it combines both directions into one and does not separate them. I will have my staff work on some examples to send to you.

A: Michael Pack (University of Maryland CATT Lab): Let's talk so I understand which gaps you're talking about. For example, we need to figure out if this is a TMC/XD road ordering issue, or if it's an issue with different map versions (or something else). We can set up a time to go through this issue with you.

Note: Barbara Swan (Maryland DOT): Something that would be helpful in Michigan is the ability to create a layer that filters Michigan DOT M-Routes on the map w/ bottleneck data.