Memphis in May Workshop
Technologies, Topics, and Activities
Streamlining Transportation Corridor Planning Processes and Validating the Application of CRS&SI Technologies for Environmental Impact Assessments

Project Research Team

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Partners

Consortia Partners:
GeoResources Institute, Mississippi State University
MichiganTech Research Institute
Oak Ridge National Laboratory, NTRC and CTA

DOT Partners:
Mississippi DOT
Tennessee DOT
Michigan DOT
Advisory Panel Structure

- National Policy & Technical Review Panel
- MSU Project Research Team
- FHWA HQ Contract & Peer Review Support Team
- Local Advisory Panel

Initial Challenges and Opportunities Identified by Advisory Panel

- Executive Order 13274: Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Reviews and Associated Work Groups
- Ecosystem Approaches and Banking
- Watershed Approaches
- Cooperative Conservation
- Initial Scenario Planning

- GIS for Environmental Streamlining and Stewardship Workshops
- Programmatic Approaches to the Endangered Species Act
- Wildlife Crossings and Habitat Fragmentation
- Context Sensitive Solutions
- Green Highways Initiative
I-69 SIU 9: The I-69/269 Corridor Study

Different planning and environmental challenges were noted in various segments within the project area. These segments provide an ideal set of test beds for analysis and a basis for conducting direct comparative studies.

http://www.ncrste.msstate.edu
The US DOT RITA selected the MSU project for addressing corridor planning and environmental assessment in new and innovative ways that can be compared to traditional approaches.

Our primary focus is on the application and validation of new and innovative approaches that can be compared to results of an EIS recently completed for I-69 segment 9. The results of this will enable adoption of methods and accelerate the acceptance and technology transfer needed to deliver the new technologies.
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<th>PROJECT TASKS/ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Project Scoping</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Public participation plan and process</td>
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<td>- Develop resource agency involvement plan</td>
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<td>- Analyze current and future projected multi-modal demand and performance</td>
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<td>- Map the characteristics and conditions of the existing transportation systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Document existing and projected environmental and land use conditions</td>
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<td>- Establish purpose and prioritize needs to meet goals</td>
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<td>- Generate alternatives that meet goals</td>
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<td>- Identify feasible alternatives by evaluating all alternatives</td>
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<td>- Compare alternatives to generate preferred alternatives</td>
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<td>- Compile results into a corridor plan document</td>
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Early Key Opportunities Identified

- Identify low-hanging fruit for injecting data/tools/technologies into pre-NEPA processes that will enable enhanced screening/constraints analysis as well as identification of avoidance areas that are mutually understood by DOT, stakeholders, and resource agencies.
- Develop strategies/methods for communicating, visualizing, exchanging specific resource agency issues of concern for a given project so that key resource agency concerns can be rapidly quantified and mitigation options presented.
- Look at things like the 20 year plans to identify opportunities to “get ahead” of environmental issues that can not be easily minimized and develop basis for common agreement with resource agencies that these are viable directions.
- Provide data to enable an informed conversation. Other issues will be raised and documented as they arise, but these “data enabled” decision processes may benefit significantly from appropriate injection of data/tools and applicable products.
- Injecting qualitative attribution to the matrix of impacts as well as contextual basis for evaluating relative impacts for alternative assessment – “context and intensity.”
Workshop – Purpose & Objectives

The NCRST-SEPP project activities are maturing and we have exciting results in many areas. This workshop is intended to provide an opportunity and forum to gather specific directions and insight about delivering products that

• Meet needs,
• Link to applications of national significance, and are
• Appropriately developed for and delivered to intended audiences.

We are here to present our results and gather feedback and directions about taking findings and turning them into final deliverables, producing materials suited for technology transfer, and reaching out to the community of practitioners.
Workshop – Agenda, Thursday Morning

- We have just gathered some insight from US DOT RITA, FHWA, and the Advisory Panel.
- State DOT environmental personnel from this region have given some perspective about major challenges and issues that they face in moving projects forward.
- For the balance of the morning we will present some of our research results in a project review set of summary presentations.
- Presentations will provide insight about our progress, directions, and results that will stimulate follow-on panel sessions.
Workshop – Agenda, Thursday Lunch

• During lunch we have asked several people to give brief talks. These talks will cover the following areas:

  ♦ A brief demo and walk-through of the NCRST-SEPP web site will be provided by Chuck O’Hara.

  ♦ MS DOT’s Claiborne Barnwell will speak about directions in wetland banking and mitigation.

  ♦ Jeremiah will lead a “Panel Preview” discussion in which we will discuss the plan for panel sessions.
Workshop – Agenda, Thursday Afternoon

- A series of “Precedent Studies” talks will provide insight about initiatives/programs in other areas of the country. (Beth Hobbs, Patti Caswell, Bill Shaw, and Mary Gray)
- Panel Sessions 1 & 2 will address areas of highest needs and how our research project addresses those needs.
- Jeremiah will lead a panel synthesis discussion that will capture highlights from the first panel sessions.
- Caesar and Shari will give some insights relevant commentary and about panel session outcomes.

THURSDAY EVENING – Group Dinner at the Rendezvous!
Workshop – Agenda, Friday Morning

• To kick off Friday, Jeremiah will recap the process and results from Thursday and review the agenda for the day. Keith will provide a recap of Thursday and set expectations for Friday from the Advisory Panel Perspective.

• Panel sessions 3 & 4 will address relevant applications of national significance that benefits from the research and how our final products should be structured to deliver the highest value and benefits to intended audiences.
Workshop – Agenda, Friday Wrap-up

• After the Friday panel sessions, Keith, Shari, and Caesar will provide some closing commentary about the workshop and guidance about areas where the project may focus efforts to deliver payoff results to the benefit of the user community.

• Jeremiah and I will close with commitments for next steps concerning workshop materials, preparation of products, and summarizing our accomplishments at the workshop.

We look forward to a great workshop and the engagement of all participants. We also expect that many of you will be excited about our results and your feedback will help us better understand how best to prepare and extend our deliverables to the community of practitioners.