

Request for Letters of Interest—Papers— Applying Census Data for Transportation

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Our primary goal is to foster the development, operation, and maintenance of an integrated national transportation system. The Census Transportation Planning Products Program (CTPP) is a Technical Service Program of AASHTO that procures tabulations of American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year (and historical Census decennial) data. The chief differences between ACS data and CTPP data are FLOWS from home to work and WORKPLACE BASED data at small Geographies. The CTPP is seeking letters of interest for the preparation of commissioned papers and presentation of those papers at an upcoming conference.

In June 2022, AASHTO CTPP is hosting a conference; Applying Census Data for Transportation Planning. Qualified authors are sought to prepare four commissioned papers. The papers will be presented at the conference and used to assist the CTPP in the development of future products. Four separate paper topics have been identified and are presented below.

1. **Transportation Equity Data.** CTPP invites papers focusing on transportation equity data that is likely to address the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. The paper is expected but not limited to explore the gap on available data to help the transportation community address equity issues. Many publicly available datasets are not disaggregated in any meaningful way by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, income, veteran status, or other key demographic variables. This lack of data has cascading effects and impedes efforts to measure and advance equity. A first step to promoting equity in Government action is to gather the data necessary to inform that effort. The paper is expected to research/explore this critical issue, bring equity awareness and make recommendations to transportation practitioners how to include equity in transportation planning process.

2. **Data Fusion.** The use of Passive Origin-Destination Data to supplement traditional household travel surveys is becoming more commonplace in the transportation planning field. From the NextGen National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) to studies of special event travel around sports arenas, transportation professionals are using Passive Data to update, enhance, expand, or otherwise build upon traditional sources of travel behavior data like CTPP, Census data, and

commissioned surveys. While the practice is increasingly common, guidance, standards, and best practices for data fusion and cross-pollination are scarce. This paper will seek to scan the current and emerging state of the practice, document best practices, and provide practitioners with useful guidance for successful traditional/survey data fusion. Papers are especially invited from researchers who are exploring how these datasets address equity and digital access bias.

3. **Developing a baseline database for model calibration using Census data products (ACS 1-year and ACS 5-year).** The standard practice at MPOs and State DOTs is to develop a “base year” for purposes of calibrating their travel models. To do this, data sets like the CTPP, ACS and PUMS are used. Outputs from the base year calibration data base include estimates of population, households, jobs, and commuting flows. These estimates are produced at the lowest levels of geography possible that correspond to the areas analysis need. Given that the source data sets from the CTPP, ACS and PUMS come in different vintages, representing different time periods, levels of geography, and their own methodological concerns, the challenge becomes how to best utilize these data to represent a 1-year “base year” estimate of population, households, jobs, and commuting flows. Therefore, a commissioned paper is being sought to describe the issue and develop some guidance, advice and recommendations that could be used to develop the base line estimates. Items to consider include but are not limited to:

- How do you reconcile 1-year and 5-year ACS data in your model development efforts when establishing a baseline for model calibration?
- How do you best leverage 1-year and 5-year ACS data with PUMS in your synthetic population base case?

4. **Transportation Data Overload.** How to get insights and wisdom from the overload of data that is available from public and private data sources? Traditional data sources, such as Census data products, and newer passive sources are resources that transportation planners and modelers use to understand passenger and freight movements. Best practices for data filtering, sharing, storage, archiving, and retrieval are important administrative activities for transparent, efficient, and reproducible research. The commissioned paper should document and illustrate best practices established to remediate data overload.

The Conference Planning Team will select one author or team of authors per topic. Anyone may submit an abstract, within a Letter of Interest that demonstrates expertise in the topic area, and an author commitment to attend the conference to present the work. Authors must submit a separate Letter \ for each topic they wish to develop. AASHTO CTPP will retain all rights to publish the papers in the conference proceedings and will provide proper citation to the author. Selected authors will work with Conference Planning Committee members who will provide direction and support for the development of each paper. Papers should be between 12 to 15 pages in length, but may be shorter or longer depending on content. Funding (up to \$10,000 per paper), is available to cover conference travel, registration expenses and a stipend for producing the paper. Authors who are unable to accept the funding may still submit Letters of Interest and will be considered viable contenders.

Letters of Interest shall demonstrate experience and expertise in the subject matter, and detailed qualifications to write a paper on the selected topic. Letters of Interest should not exceed three

single-spaced pages. Letters are due by September 10th, 2021 via email to Guy Rousseau: <mailto:grousseau@atlantaregional.org>, with a copy to Penelope Weinberger (<mailto:pweinberger@ashto.org>). All authors will be notified via email regarding the disposition of their submissions.

Please direct any questions you may have in email to Guy Rousseau and Penelope Weinberger, please refer to which paper you are asking about, before August 25th, 2021.

AASHTO reserves the right to reject any or all Letters of Interest, to waive any or all information or irregularities, and to negotiate with selected authors.

