



Technology and Data Working Group Meeting 2

February 21, 2018

A recording of this meeting is available upon request.

Champion:

- Dan Murray, American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI)

Facilitators:

- Tiffany Julien, FHWA
- Jeff Purdy, FHWA
- Jordan Wainer, Volpe

Welcome and Introductions

Jordan welcomed the Working Group members to the meeting and gave an overview of the functionality of the web room. She then introduced Dan Murray, the Champion of the Working Group.

Dan greeted the Working Group and reminded the members that this group is intended to be an aggressive, quickly-moving group that will produce a few deliverables within a short amount of time. Dan provided the following reasons for why he thought this Working Group is intended to move quickly:

- 1) One or two dozen States are involved in or about to commence truck parking planning and research initiatives.
- 2) Jason's Law Part 2 is going to be starting at some point in 2018 and this Working Group has the opportunity to potentially influence the activities that come out of it.
- 3) The country is in the throes of a major discussion on infrastructure investment, including where the money is going to come from and where it's going to go.

FHWA shared that they plan to conduct the updated Jason's Law survey this summer. It will look at new focus areas, including technology. The final report will probably be released in 2019.

Dan stated that today's goal will be to walk through the products of the Working Group, identify individuals who could serve as champions of the products, and make sure that the Working Group's mission statement is comprehensive enough.

Champion Meeting Debrief

Dan shared with the Working Group that he met with Tiffany Julien (FHWA), Jeff Purdy (FHWA), Jordan Wainer (Volpe), and Kara Chisholm (Volpe) following the first meeting of the Working Group to discuss in more detail the priority area products identified in the first Working Group meeting. Dan listed the Working Group priorities and then described the priority area products that the Working Group will develop. During today's meeting the Working Group will gather information related to the priority area products and think about the best ways to disseminate that information to stakeholders.

Working Group Priorities

1. Disseminate real-time parking utilization information to maximize use of existing sites.
2. Tie parking apps/technology to existing platforms.
3. Collect data about occurrence of parking on the side of the roads and on ramps.
4. Provide contour maps to predict truck parking needs.

Dan then transitioned the discussion to focus on the individual priority area products and solicited input and examples from the Working Group members about each one.

Products suggested for development

1. **Develop guidance related to common standards for truck parking data; delivery targeted towards State DOTs.**
 - Members mentioned that there is a need for a standard truck parking performance measure.
 - Dan solicited examples from the Group of truck performance measures and indicators along the interstate system of capacity, such as how many spaces should be provided per 1,000 miles.
 - Dan stated that a lot of States are racing to develop freight performance measures. A number of plans are trying to come up with truck parking standards.
 - Dan also shared that the report from Jason's Law Part 1 had a formula for how to calculate this performance measure. States are now looking for more discrete metrics for measuring truck parking performance.
 - An FHWA representative stated that improved mechanisms for estimating demand would be useful in providing a finer-grain understanding of locations where truck parking is most needed. Some people have asked whether there is a formula for determining the number of truck parking spaces needed based on the amount of industrial area. Unfortunately, this sort of simple calculation doesn't exist. It would require better sources of information.
 - One source of information would be to identify driving distances from major freight generators. An example would be delineating the distance when the hours of service would expire if driving from the port of Los Angeles. These types of measurements will have a lot of variability due to the fact that the distance a truck can drive depends on the time of day and congestion. Demand for parking also depends on the time of day. However, this type of analysis could can be applied to other ports and major distribution centers.

- A Working Group member stated that the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) could conduct a survey of States asking whether they've developed a truck parking performance measure, and what measures they're using.
 - Standards for truck parking apps:
 - A Working Group member stated that there are at least four apps and twelve States with their own standards, and data is not fed into the apps in a uniform way. When drivers use apps, they're looking at how many spaces are available at a parking facility, whether there is food, what type of fuel is available, or whether there is a gym.
 - One Working Group member said that the mapping functionality is the most important part of an app to most drivers. Maps that display the facilities (retail, rest areas, weigh stations) along the route and how far away they are help drivers plan. A simple list of truck parking areas, by contrast, isn't as useful.
 - Dan offered to ask drivers at the Mid-America Truck Show (MATS) next month which apps they use and what they like and dislike about each app. He said that the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) will develop 4-5 questions for a survey then distribute it at MATS. This could be used to create a one-page document that summarizes truck drivers' app preferences.
2. [Host a webinar that brings together Working Group members with State Departments of Transportation \(DOT\) and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials \(AASHTO\) representatives to further the discussion of data standardization and the use of Variable Message Signs \(VMS\).](#)
- Dan told the Working Group that he believes it will be helpful for the Working Group to develop a coordinated and formal relationship with AASHTO and the State DOTs. This could be accomplished with a webinar, to share with States what the Working Group is recommending.
 - The Working Group members said that they would be interested in hearing from AASHTO or its member States about what they are doing about truck parking. Perhaps the Working Group could ask AASHTO to do an informal survey of its members States.
 - Dan, FHWA, and Volpe decided that they will think about how to approach this.
 - An FHWA representative stated that the State, Local, and Regional Government Coordination Working Group is planning to hold a webinar as part of the FHWA Talking Freight webinar series and proposed that this Working Group's webinar could perhaps be combined with theirs. Working Group members liked this idea.
3. [Create a best practices/findings document that compiles information from current and completed truck parking reports related to technology and data.](#)
- Dan asked the Working Group members for ideas about how it could go about gathering information for this priority area product.
 - A Working Group member stated that the Jason's Law Part 2 survey might yield additional information, and AASHTO is involved in this survey as well.
 - ATRI will be providing a generic literature review of current and completed truck parking reports. Volpe could conduct a literature review in the absence of information from ATRI.

The Volpe review would be reviewed internally, then circulated. Additional input by the Working Group members would be appreciated.

- One Working Group member noted that there's often a disconnect in communication between the organizations doing research and the organizations enforcing current truck parking regulations. It would be helpful to have the researching organizations notify law enforcement and communities that they're looking into improving truck parking conditions.

4. [Develop a document that details the commonalities in data standards for truck parking apps, as well as data sources and data collection methods.](#)

- Dan provided an overview of the purpose of this priority area product, which will be to assist both the app users and providers gain a better understanding of the various truck parking apps and how they relate to each other. Dan asked the Working Group members whether they think this will be useful.
- One of the Working Group members wondered whether the app developers would allow the Working Group to access information about how the app is developed and populated. Dan stated that he believes a fairly significant amount of information is available publicly.
- Dan noted that the Working Group could provide information to the app creators based on the results of ATRI's MATS survey to suggest improvements that could be made to the apps to make them more useful to drivers. This could be considered "free market research." This research could also assist the States, who provide electronic data that populates some of the apps.
- A Working Group member mentioned that a \$25 million TIGER grant was awarded to implement a regional truck parking information management system along interstates in Kansas, Kentucky, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The project will be complete in September 2018. This could also be a helpful resource.
- After some additional discussion, the Working Group agreed overall that there doesn't seem to be a real reason for the Working Group to do in-depth research into how each app operates.
- The group determined they should focus on the survey of what drivers like and dislike about each app instead of creating this product.

5. [Provide contour maps to predict truck parking needs relative to major origins and destinations.](#)

- Dan noted that the purpose of this priority area product is to do some mapping to identify origins and destinations, key freight routes, and truck parking locations. This would be useful to drivers as well as States in planning for truck parking. This product should also review the data behind www.americantruckparking.com, which shows all the facilities available at a truck parking area. It may be possible to combine this with a way to predict demand for truck parking.

Dan transitioned the Working Group discussion to the questions that Jordan sent out to Working Group members prior to today's meeting.

Discussion of “Questions for Consideration”

1. What are three steps you would take to get information about truck parking app standards disseminated to your organization?
 - A Working Group member said that the Group should reach out to the app providers to ask what they’re looking for in a data feed and how the Working Group could help improve how the app gets its data.
 - One Working Group member said that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) used a website to disseminate information. It showed truck parking space availability in approximate numbers.
 - One of the truck drivers in the Working Group noted she finds the "no spaces, some spaces, a lot of spaces" way of measuring availability useful. This app also shows whether the spaces are reservation only, and shows the history of parking availability so drivers can predict whether a space will fill up.
2. What are best practices you are aware of for use of VMS?
 - Dan shared that recent surveys of drivers indicated that their favorite ways to get information about truck parking availability are VMS and apps.
 - One Working Group member stated that he believes that VMS should be set up 1 hour, 1 mile, and again ¼ mile before the entrance to the parking area. However, many drivers recommend using any funding available to create spaces rather than signs.

Once Working Group members had finished responding to the Questions for Consideration, Dan transitioned the discussion to the Next Steps for the Working Group. Dan and Jordan listed action items and upcoming dates for the Working Group members.

Next Steps

- Volpe will prepare draft notes from today’s meeting and distribute them to the group.
- Working Group members should send follow up items from today's meeting to Jordan Wainer by March 16th.
- Volpe will prepare drafts of the products by the next Working Group meeting in April. The exact date is to be determined.

Dan asked the Working Group members whether they had any final questions or comments and hearing none, he and Jordan closed the meeting.