

Evaluation of New Data Sources for Operations & Planning

By

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Work began on this project during the second quarter of 2017. Following a Citilabs webinar for Sugar Analyst, discussions began with Citilabs for a 90 day evaluation copy of the software. The evaluation would take place during the summer of 2017. The evaluation copy and sample data for Madison, WI were received in June 2017 and the evaluation work began. The instruction manuals provided by Citilabs were generally excellent and when questions arose, Matt Pettit from Citilabs was quick to help.

A decision was made to purchase a full license in September, 2017 and a Delaware data set was provided which included all roads, transit census and employment data for Delaware's three counties plus a 15 mile buffer. Based on the evaluation, it was noted that Sugar Analyst was excellent in working with auto and transit accessibility issues, but the network lacked accurate coding for bike and pedestrian accessibility issues. The data sources that Sugar relied on included data from Here (formerly NAVTEQ). That data set did not include data on presence of bike facilities or sidewalks. Therefore, an assumption was made in coding the street network that all roads except interstates and limited access highways were bike and ped accessible. It was decided that the Sugar evaluation would consist of evaluating its usefulness for vehicle and transit for DelDOT and DTC and begin work to improve the pedestrian and bike network construction and coding.

SSTI from the University of Wisconsin, Madison also joined the work in an advisory role. SSTI had worked with DelDOT in the past on projects including the LUTSAM tool and had worked with Citilabs on Sugar Analyst on several projects including a large project with the State of Virginia.

In January, 2018, the project team met with SSTI and representatives of Smart Growth America (SGA). A grant proposal was developed and submitted to the Governor's Institute which was funded. This grant was for UD, SSTI and SGA to identify state needs for accessibility analyses and measures and investigate how Sugar Analyst could be useful in meeting those needs. That grant culminated in a workshop held at DelDOT in November, 2018.

Sugar has been shown to be useful in evaluating transit routes and in justifying changes in routes. The Sugar tool can provide transit system owners with the increases in access to jobs or other points of interest (POI) that can be realized by altering a bus route. Sugar can also "measure" the value of a route in terms of job or POI access.

At the end of this project, work regarding bike and pedestrian access were still being investigated and progress was being made.

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