

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT INITIATIVE (METSII)

QUARTERLY REPORT

for the quarter ending December 31, 2003

CURRENT QUARTER ACTIVITIES

GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

During the quarter, the Fall Symposium “Circumferential Transportation Systems- Meeting the Needs of the Future?” took place on October 17 at the UIC Student Services Building. Over 100 registrants attended the Symposium. Planning is underway for the Fourth Annual Fall Symposium which will be held in conjunction with the Urban Transportation Center’s 25th Anniversary. Also during the quarter, the *UTC Connector* Newsletter was distributed in October and workshops were held on the following topics:

Traffic Management for Special Events on October 15 with ACT and CUTR,
Commuter Choice Benefits on October 16 with CATS and ACT,
Research + Action = Results on November 8 with Alumni Association, and
Commuter Choice Training Workshop on November 12 and 13 with NTI.

Also attended meetings with McHenry County, Business Leaders for Transportation (BLT), Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (GNMAA) Transportation Committee, CATS Community Mobility Task Force and Private Providers Task Force, Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), General Accounting Office (GAO), Women’s Transportation Seminar (WTS) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) annual meeting. Finally, an Advisory Committee meeting is being planned for February, 2004.

Below is a progress report on the activities of the Research Program, Technical Assistance, Workshops and Training during the recent quarter.

RESEARCH PROGRAM

Large Scale Dynamic Simulation and Optimization Tools for Chicago Freight Infrastructure and Operations.

The project is partially funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Partners for Innovation (PFI) grant. Kazuya Kawamura, as a member of the team working with Northwestern University, is developing a framework for assessing the benefits of various innovative strategies to improve efficiency of intermodal truck operations in Chicago including reducing empty truck movements and constructing truck-only facilities.

Freight Impact Analysis Methodology: Social and Environmental Impacts

The third phase of the project continues with the assistance of a Graduate Research Assistant. In this phase, social and environmental impacts of freight traffic on property values are analyzed. During the quarter, real estate data in the City of Chicago was collected with the cooperation of UIC’s Center for Urban Economic Development. The parcel level data is extremely rich source of land use data that can be used for various types of research. Shruti Mahajan, the Research Assistant assigned to the project has been awarded the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Illinois Chapter Graduate Scholarship.

Integrated Economic Impact Analysis Tool for Equity Sensitive Projects

Dr. Kawamura is developing, in collaboration with others, the Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model for the six-county Chicago region to assess the benefits of reducing truck congestion. The CGE model is far more realistic and accurate than the input-output models used frequently in the economic development studies. Currently working on the most time-consuming task of the CGE development, the Social Accounting Matrix.

Job Access Reverse Commute

Staff is working cooperatively with various agencies in the state and the region to assist in the development of a plan, strategy and goals to address access to work and reverse commute issues in the Chicago region and the state of Illinois. Staff is also participating with the CATS Community Mobility Task Force where a presentation is given at each of their meetings on the status of various UTC activities. Developed a statewide database of transportation funding for presentation to IDOT and IDHS.

Environmental Justice

A preliminary report addressing Tier I measures has been submitted to CATS staff for review and Tier II measures are being developed. There is nothing new to report.

Kane County Transit Opportunity Assessment

Nothing new to report on phase 2 study to be funded by Metra.

Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Collision Report

Undertook an analysis of highway grade crossing accidents for CATS pertaining to the whistle ban issue in northeastern Illinois. A preliminary phase one report has been submitted to CATS for review and they indicated a review and comments would be forthcoming. Still waiting comments. The FRA proposed final rules which would allow whistle bans under certain circumstances.

Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery in Civil Infrastructure Systems

Continue compiling a series of case studies demonstrating the application of the data mining software to commonly used transportation data sets in order to explore data quality and completeness.

UIC Campus Shuttle Program

Developed a real time traveler information system on the UIC Campus Shuttle service that identifies the current location of the shuttle bus via GPS location technology and visually show the progress of the vehicle on the University website www.uic.edu/cuppa/utc. The project has been made permanent.

Economic and Productivity Impacts of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

Developing a proposal to undertake this research project. Continue the development of the data needs for economic productivity analysis in the Chicago region.

Exploration of Tools for Regional Transportation and Land Use Modeling

As the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) continues with the Common Ground project, we are providing technical support and developing a framework for evaluating the project. Current activities include a review of existing plans of municipalities and counties in the region as well as developing an understanding the role of transportation measures in the stakeholder input software.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Planning Process

The research team has completed the literature review, the draft survey instrument and is putting together a list of contacts from the states identified by IDOT as crucial to learn from. The survey has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and it is planned that the survey will be administered electronically (email, webpage) and followed up with telephone calls to assure a high return rate and to gather missing information. We will be requesting of IDOT staff for a list of potential candidates from respective state DOT's and their contact information.

McHenry County Transportation Study

Assisted the County in the process of obtaining a consultant acting as a non-voting member of the Transportation Committee. Provided review and comment on the scope of work and consultant contract.

Sprawl

Current sprawl related work continues in two of the three areas identified in the previous quarterly reports as described below.

Sprawl and Pedestrian Safety: The report has been completed and put on our web site at www.uic.edu/cuppa/utc.

Census 2000: Work continues mapping and analyzing data from the 2000 Census. We requested and received a pre-release version of the 2000 Census Transportation Package (CTPP) from CATS. We are currently examining the data as part of the assessment period to ascertain whether it should be released to the public. The current pre-release only includes Table 1, information on place of residence. It contains largely the same data as the 2000 Census but using the quarter-section based on Traffic Analysis Zones used in the six-county Chicago region. The geography in the CTPP is much preferable to the census-tract geography used by the regular Census releases and by the non-transportation community. Subsequent CTPP releases in the next few months will include Table 2, place of work information and Table 3, origin-destination data. Table 3 is the most useful for transportation analysis, especially for our work on sprawl.

Sprawl and Public Health - Obesity: Our efforts continue in assessing the relationship of sprawl and obesity. Obesity only grows as a major concern for politicians and policy-makers as well as the general public. Unfortunately, we are still awaiting the drivers license data that will allow us to proceed with this task.

Midwest Regional University Transportation Center Proposals

Prepare two proposals to MRUTC; Mode Matters: A Tool to Measure Impacts of Air Quality of Multi-Modal Investments and An Impact Analysis of Changes in the Warehousing and Distribution Industry on Modal Investments in Freight Transportation. Nothing new to report.

Traffic Impacts of In-fill Development

Partial support is being provided a project to develop a case study on the traffic impacts of in-fill development. The project will explore brownfield vs. greenfield development traffic impacts.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

CATS Community Mobility Task Force

Providing ongoing Job Access Reverse Commute related assistance to the task force and provided status report at their December 19 meeting.

CATS Intermodal Advisory Task Force (IATF)

Kazuya Kawamura continues to chair the Research and Planning Subcommittee and Sue McNeil continues to chair the Finance Subcommittee of the CATS (IATF).

CATS Private Providers Task Force

Participating with the Task Force and providing assistance in the areas of inventorying private transit providers and in JARC issues. Attended meeting on October 22.

CATS Rideshare Project

During the past quarter, CATS held one meeting with the full task force to review the status of the enhanced Rideshare System Program. CATS is planning to implement the Rideshare Program right after the first of the year.

Commuter Choice

Jointly sponsored a workshop with CATS and ACT to market Commuter Choice benefit program and the RTA Transit Check to facilitate the use of the tax-free transit benefit for employers and employees through the use of payroll deduction.

General Accounting Office (GAO)

Met with representatives of GAO from Chicago, Washington and Los Angeles on November 4 to assist in their assessment of transportation investment decision-making.

Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (GNMAA)

Staff continues its participation as a member of the GNMAA Traffic and Transportation Committee.

Transportation Coordination Committee

Completed the statewide Transportation Funding Database for presentation to IDOT and IDHS.

Work, Welfare and Families

Participating in the Transportation Working Group to address JARC transportation issues.

WORKSHOPS, TRAINING AND VISITING SCHOLARS

UTC Fall Symposium- Held the event titled "Circumferential Transportation Systems- Meeting the Needs of the Future?" on October 17. Kirk Brown, retired Secretary of Transportation was the keynote luncheon speaker. Over 100 individuals attended the Symposium.

Commuter Choice Benefits Workshop- Jointly sponsored the workshop with Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) and CATS on October 16.

Traffic Management for Special Events- Jointly sponsored the web based seminar with ACT and the University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) on October 15.

Research + Action = Results- Gave a presentation on the Bureau of Census Transportation information to UIC College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) Alumni Association at their Annual Workshop on November 8.

Commuter Choice Training Workshop- Jointly sponsored workshop with National Transit Institute (NTI) on November 12 and 13.

Visitors from Germany

Presented a description of the region's transit and history to faculty and students from the University of Dortmund.

Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS)

Moderated a panel discussion on careers, experience and paths in the transportation industry.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER

RESEARCH PROGRAM

Large Scale Dynamic Simulation and Optimization Tools for Chicago Freight

Infrastructure and Operations- ongoing project with Northwestern University and NSF.

Freight Impact Analysis Methodology- Social and Environmental Impacts- continued data collection and analysis of social and environmental impacts of freight traffic on property values.

Integrated Economic Impact Analysis Tool for Equity Sensitive Projects- complete the Social Accounting Matrix.

Job Access Reverse Commute- continue communications with project partners and present database to IDHS and IDOT and possibly the Transportation Coordinating Committee next quarter.

Environmental Justice- Still waiting CATS comments.

Kane County Transit Opportunity Study- await new Chairman to obtain input on Phase 2.

Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Report- still awaiting review and comments by CATS.

Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery in Civil Infrastructure Systems- continue compiling case studies demonstrating the use of data mining software.

Economic and Productivity Impacts of ITS- develop data needs to estimate economic productivity due to ITS in Illinois.

Exploration of Tools for Regional Transportation and Land Use Modeling- continue to provide technical support and review of existing municipal plans in the region.

NEPA and the Planning Process- administer and follow up with the survey of state departments of transportation experience with the NEPA process and planning issues. The survey will be administered upon identifying and hiring a research assistant for the project.

McHenry County Transportation Study- planning to attend kick-off meeting and assisting the County in managing the consultant.

Sprawl- Research will continue in the areas of Census 2000 and Sprawl and Public Health-Obesity.

Midwest Regional University Transportation Center Proposals- awaiting status.

Traffic Impacts of In-fill Development- explore traffic impacts of brown and green field development.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT)- continued activity on Board of Directors and seek to co-sponsoring workshops.

CATS Community Mobility Task Force- ongoing assistance to CATS.

CATS Intermodal Advisory Task Force (IATF)- ongoing assistance to CATS.

CATS Private Providers Task Force- ongoing assistance to CATS

CATS Rideshare Project- The Project will be implemented after the first of the year and we will assist CATS in monitoring and reviewing project performance.

Commuter Choice- continue to develop marketing plan for pre-tax RTA Transit Check and for Commuter Choice statewide and assist CATS in giving presentations and workshops.

GNMAA- ongoing assistance with GNMAA and the Traffic Operations Committee.

Transportation Coordinating Committee- present database and offer to assist IDOT in staffing Committee.

WORKSHOPS, TRAINING AND VISITING SCHOLARS

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)- planning to hold a web based seminar jointly with ACT and CUTR on January 27.

PROJECTS COMPLETED

Downtown Pedestrian Activities Analysis

South Central MTD Technical Assistance
Lake Cook Road TMA Technical Assistance
Bus Rapid Transit Workshop
ITS Systems for Transit: Solving Real Problems Workshop
Visiting Scholar from Netherlands
Reinventing Transit: Planning Information-Based Transit Service Workshop
Metropolitan Conference on Public Transportation Research
Managing the Cost of ADA Paratransit Pilot Workshop
Peoria Paratransit Study
The Future of Public Transit in Chicago Discussion Panel
First Urban Sprawl Symposium
CATS Transit Workshop
CTA Transit Workshop
Pace Management Symposium
Economic Importance of Transportation Committee
Greater North Michigan Avenue Association Workshop For Employers
Travel Time Activity And Time Use Analysis
Cook County TCSP Grant Application
Rural Transportation Brokerage Project
Visiting MIT Students
Springfield Mass Transit Appreciation Day
Visiting Delegation from China
Visiting Scholars from Saudi Arabia
ITS Presentation
Rural Transportation Assistance Program Presentation
I-55 Growth Corridor Study of Will County
GIS Mapping of Traffic Signals
Visiting Scholars from Norway
2nd Urban Sprawl Symposium, Transportation and Housing
DuPage Area Transit Plan
Atlanta Leadership Delegation
1st Upper Midwest Regional Freight Transportation Workshop
Big Ten Universities Transportation Conference
80,000 lb. Truck Weight Study
Travel Time Projections
Suburban Job-Link Corp.
Commuter Rail Station Vanpools
Visiting Scholars from China (2)
3rd Annual Sprawl Symposium, Fortuitous Failures or Missed Opportunities
Public-Private Partnerships in Transit Workshop
Jennifer L. Dorn, FTA Administrator Luncheon
Visiting Scholars from Germany
Illinois State University
Abbott Labs
Asset Management Presentation to TRB
Kane County Transit Opportunity Assessment, Phase 1

Asset Management
Employee Benefit Workshop
Creating Working Opportunities Through Affordable Transportation
State of the Region Conference
Conference on Community Planning Tools
Presentation on the History of the RTA
Bus Rapid Transit Virtual Seminar
Intercity Bus Strategic Plan (IDOT-DPT)
Computer Aided Scheduling and Dispatching (CASD) Systems (IDOT-DPT)
Bus Rapid Transit Virtual Seminar
Work Welfare and Families
Incident Command System Management Workshop
Visitors from Houston
Access Management Workshop
Presentation of Transportation Funding Database
IDOT Fall Planning Conference Presentation
Freight Impact Analysis Methodology – Impact of Truck Traffic on the Value of Land
Sprawl and Pedestrian Safety
UTC Fourth Fall Symposium
Commuter Choice Benefits Workshop
Traffic Management for Special Events
Research + Action = Results
UIC Campus Shuttle Program
General Accounting Office
Visitors from Germany
Women’s Transportation Seminar Panel