

# **METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT INITIATIVE (METSU)**

## **QUARTERLY REPORT**

for the quarter ending December 31, 2005

### **CURRENT QUARTER ACTIVITIES**

#### **GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE**

The following are highlights from the recent quarter:

Vonu Thakuriah, Director of UTC made appointments with members of the Advisory Board to introduce herself as the new Director and to obtain input on how the UTC and METSU can better serve our member agencies.

The Sixth Annual Fall Symposium was held on October 21 on the topic of "Technology Impacts on Regional Mobility". Speakers included Jason Tai, DPIT, Michael Christie, UPS, Earl Wacker, CTOO, Dave Zavaterro, IDOT ITS and Tom Vick, CATS. The George Krambles Transportation Scholarship Fund awarded \$50,000 for a perpetual scholarship to the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs for an outstanding transportation student at the Symposium.

The final draft McHenry County Transit Plan report was presented to and accepted by the County Board at their Board meeting on November 15.

The Chicago Chapter of TRF sponsored their first annual luncheon meeting titled "A Critical Look at the United Airlines Restructuring" on November 14. Speakers included Jake Brace, Executive VP & CFO, Greg Taylor, Senior VP- Planning, both of United Air Lines and Dave Young, former Chicago Tribune Transportation Reporter and historian.

The Fall 2005 Vol. 7, Issue 1 of the *Connector* was published and distributed.

An Advisory Board meeting is being planned for February 1, 2006.

Below is a description of progress during the quarter.

#### **RESEARCH PROGRAM**

##### **Regional Intermodal Freight Planning**

Kazuya Kawamura continues to chair the Research and Planning Subcommittee of CATS Intermodal Advisory Task Force (IATF). At the meeting held on December 13, as chair of the Research Committee, he was asked to develop and prioritize several freight related proposals to be submitted to IDOT- DPIT for possible funding under the Illinois Center for Transportation Program.

##### **Business and Site Specific Trip Generation Methodology for Truck Trips**

The aim of this project is to develop a disaggregated truck trip generation model for use in planning and engineering applications. The project draft report was reviewed by an expert panel set up by MRUTC, the primary sponsor of the study. A doctoral student working on the project defended his dissertation during the period. Two papers have been submitted for presentation next quarter: "The Comparison of Different Truck Trip Generation Techniques at the Disaggregate Level: A Case Study of Retail Stores" and "Development of Disaggregate Level Truck Trip Generation Model: A Case Study of Furniture Chain Stores" to the TRB and to ACSP annual conferences.

##### **Cargo Oriented Development**

The study, conducted jointly with the Center of Neighborhood Technology (CNT), aims to apply the knowledge from the past rail freight research efforts to the proposed economic development plan for Blue Island. As advisory panel members, project staff are seeking to improve the decision support tool developed by CNT by incorporating their insights into the intermodal rail terminal design and operations. A paper describing the project was presented at the Transport Chicago Conference held in June and a paper titled “A Model Planning Process for Cargo Oriented Development- A Case Study in Chicago” has been accepted for presentation at ACSP Annual Conference in October.

### **Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC)**

Staff continues 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 developing a proposal that would identify a reverse commute problem and utilize innovation by private sector providers to develop solutions to the problem.

### **Exploration of Tools for Regional Transportation and Land Use Modeling**

The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) project provided a framework for the development of tools to evaluate land use modeling. The project was completed and the doctoral student defended her thesis related to the project; “Estimating Transportation Impact Indicators for a Regional Participatory Visioning Process: An Approach”.

### **McHenry County Transportation Study**

A final meeting of the Public Transportation Authority Commission was held on November 2 and a presentation of the final report was given to the McHenry County Board on November 15 where it was accepted by the Board. This closes this project and leads to the implementation phase.

### **McHenry County Transportation Implementation**

The County has requested that staff participate in the implementation phase of the project.

### **Highways and Sprawl**

Our current sprawl-related work continues in two primary areas:

#### **Census 2000 and ACS:**

We are continuing our work with the 2000 Census and American Community Survey (ACS). Using annual data our analysis shows that commuting in some areas reflects the slowing economy in the early 2000s. For example in Lake County, the proportion of the population that is employed (commuting) is declining while the unemployment rate is increasing. This clearly has congestion implications in a county that is importing more workers from nearby counties than are commuting from Lake County. One of the consequences is a decline in transit use in the commute. Findings from the research have been presented in the following publications during the quarter: *USA Today*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Daily Herald*, *Daily Southtown* and the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

#### **Sprawl and Public Health -- Obesity:**

We continue to process driver's license data that we received from the Secretary of State's office to compute Body Mass Index (BMI). This quarter, we have asked Ashish Sen to review the

paper, particularly the regression analysis that is the centerpiece of the research effort. The analysis has been completed and we are editing the text. A paper is being prepared for submission at the TRB and TRF Annual Meetings next year. During the quarter, the *Chicago Tribune Magazine* published an article about the work. Related work includes the work done on pedestrian traffic and fatalities. Dr. Soot appeared on Channel 11's *Chicago Tonight* program to discuss pedestrian safety based on the results of the study.

### **Measuring the Benefits of Implementing Asset Management Systems and Tools**

The project developed a generic methodology for measuring the benefits, both financial benefits to the agency and performance benefits to the users. A paper was prepared for presentation to the First Annual Inter-University Symposium on Infrastructure Management.

### **Emergency Ride Home (ERH)**

Developed a region-wide demonstration program, submitted to CATS as a UWP project and received approval and funding for the project. Seeking a source of match funding in order to proceed with the demonstration project.

### **Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)**

A graduate Research Assistant completed assistance to IDOT and the project is closed.

### **Northeast Lake County TMA**

At the request of officials in the city of Waukegan, assisting in the development of a Transportation Management Association of north Lake County. Letters requesting interest were sent to potential members and a kick-off meeting is scheduled for next quarter.

### **Universal Design Proposal**

The proposal to track wheelchair users mobility and the relationship of accessible design was not successful. This project is closed.

### **Coordination Activities**

Prepared a report documenting the UTC's activities in transportation coordination. This includes regional, state and federal activities. This project is completed.

### **Database and Library**

Staff continues developing a database and library of UTC and METSI as a project-level resource. In addition, the UTC website is being updated.

### **Travel Demand Model**

Developed data request of CATS for socio-economic data used for trip generation, corresponding geography, EMME2 data banks, mode splits, link loadings and other relevant model outputs.

### **Lake County Coordinated Transportation Services Committee**

Attended meetings on November 16 and December 15 with the Committee. Staff is developing a scope of work for a paratransit coordination study in Lake County that would be the basis of an

RTA Regional Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) grant application.

**Transit Check Ridership Analysis**

Prepared a scope of work to undertake a study of the impact of Transit Check usage on ridership volume and patterns and was submitted to the RTA as an RTAP grant application.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

**CATS Community Mobility Task Force**

Participated with the Task Force meetings held on October 17 and December 5 where reports were presented on the UIC's JARC activities.

**CATS Intermodal Advisory Task Force (IATF)**

Continued participation with the Task Force and Subcommittees. Attended the meeting on December 13.

**CATS Private Providers Task Force**

Participating with the Task Force on a proposal to develop a private enterprise demonstration project to get low income residents to jobs as a regional JARC project.

**CATS Task Force on Seniors and Persons with Disabilities**

Attended and participated in a joint meeting with the CMTF on October 17 and December 5.

**CATS TDM Annex**

There were no meetings during the quarter.

**CATS Transportation Management and Operations (TM&O) Work Group**

Provided comments to the draft writing outline; no meetings during the quarter.

**Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (GNMAA)**

Participated in various Transportation and Research Committee meetings on November 4, 17 and December 14.

**Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation (ICCT)**

Attended meetings on October 6 and December 1. Reviewed and commented on four Objective reports in preparation for final report to the General Assembly. Also provided input and comments on the task to develop a statewide transportation database.

**Information Coordination Advisory Committee**

Have been asked to participate in a committee to advise the RTA in the development of regional design standards for transit passenger information. No meetings were held during the quarter.

**WORKSHOPS, TRAINING AND VISITING SCHOLARS**

**Transportation Research Forum (TRF)**

The first annual Chicago Chapter luncheon titled "A Critical Look at the United Air Lines Restructuring" was held on November 14. Two top executives from United Jake Brace and Greg

Taylor gave presentations with commentary by Dave Young, historian and former Chicago Tribune Transportation Reporter.

### **Sixth Annual Symposium**

The Sixth Annual Symposium titled “Technology Impacts on Regional Mobility” was held on October 21. Speakers were from IDOT ITS Office, United Parcel Service (UPS), Chicago Department of Aviation, Chicago (rail freight) Transportation Coordination Office (CTCO), Yellow Freight and Jason Tai, IDOT-DPIT as keynote.

### **Show Me the Money: How New Federal Legislation Is Changing the TDM Landscape**

Jointly sponsored a net conference with the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) on December 1.

### **IDOT Fall Planning Conference**

Attended the conference on October 13 and 14 in Chicago.

### **MPC Transportation Luncheon**

Attended transportation luncheon at the Union League Club on October 31.

## **PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER**

### **RESEARCH PROGRAM**

**Regional Intermodal Freight Planning-** Continued participation with the CATS IATF. The next meeting is scheduled for October 13.

**Business and Site Specific Trip Generation Methodology for Truck Trips-** Prepare final report and prepare paper for presentation at ACSP and TRB conferences in October.

**Cargo Oriented Development-** Continue work and prepare for presentation at ACSP conference in October.

**Job Access Reverse Commute-** Continue communications with project partners and pursue the private providers demonstration project.

**McHenry County Transportation Study-** While the final meetings and Open House have been completed, a presentation of the results will be made to the County Board. Staff will continue to work with the County next quarter in the implementation phase.

**Highways and Sprawl-** Research continues in the areas of Census 2000 and ACS and Sprawl and Public Health-Obesity. Work continues on the Census 2000 and ACS. Papers are being prepared for presentation next year. The draft report on Sprawl and Obesity has been completed, and papers are being prepared for presentation next year.

**Emergency Ride Home (ERH)-** Obtain the match to the CMAQ grant and begin to develop a region-wide demonstration project.

**Context Sensitive Solutions-** in conjunction with IDOT staff, continue development of training seminars.

**Northeast Lake County TMA-** Mail invitations and hold a kick-off organizational meeting on January 12 at Abbott Labs in Waukegan in order to seek interest in forming a TMA.

**Universal Design Proposal-** announcement expected of proposal status.

**Coordination Activities-** Complete report documenting the Centers coordination activities.

**Database and Library-** Develop a database of transportation information for use in determining research focus and to provide data to constituent transportation and planning agencies. Also, continue development of library and associated website.

**Travel Demand Model-** obtain data and provide to UTC researchers for analysis.

#### **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 Task Force with Seniors and Persons with Disabilities-** Ongoing assistance to CATS.

**CATS TDM Annex-** Ongoing assistance to CATS.

**CATS TM&O-** Ongoing assistance to CATS.

**Commuter Choice-** Continue to develop marketing plan statewide and assist CATS in giving presentations and workshops.

**GNMAA-** Ongoing assistance GNMAA Transportation and Research Committees.

**ICCT-** Planning to attend meetings on January 19, February 2 and assist in preparation of final report to General Assembly.

**Information Coordination Advisory Committee-** Continued participation with MPC and RTA.

#### **WORKSHOPS, TRAINING AND VISITING SCHOLARS**

**Regional Freight Summit-** Nothing to report; awaiting direction from IDOT- DPIT.

#### **PROJECTS COMPLETED DURING CURRENT CALENDAR YEAR**

**Routine Use of Locomotive Horns**  
**Rural Public Transportation Brokerage Research Project**  
**NEPA and the Planning Process**  
**Economic and Productivity Impacts of Intelligent Transportation Systems**  
**Traffic Impacts of In-fill Development**  
**City of North Chicago**  
**City of Waukegan**  
**Olive Harvey College**  
**GNMAA Annual Meeting**  
**TRB Annual Meeting**  
**TRF Annual Meeting**  
**Batavia Transportation Committee**  
**CATS Household Travel Survey**  
**Clean Air Counts**  
**ACT Net Conference**  
**Transportation Research Forum Annual Meeting**  
**Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting**  
**CATS Household Travel Survey**  
**Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting**  
**Location, Design and Operation of Future Intermodal Rail Yards**  
**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**  
**Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission**  
**Guide to the Urban Transportation Center**  
**Getting to Work: Employee Transportation Forum**  
**What Every Employer Should Know About Commuter Choice Pre-Tax Benefits**  
**Transport Chicago Conference**  
**TRB Planning Conference**  
**Webinar- Commuter Benefit Programs**  
**Webinar- Best Workplaces for Commuters**  
**Webinar for Campus Communities**  
**Routine Use of Locomotive Horns**  
**Special Committee on Mass Transit for Northeastern Illinois**  
**Ticket to Ride: Meeting the Region's Transit Needs**  
**Webinar- Work Life Forum**  
**Special Committee on Mass Transit**  
**Statewide Funding Database**  
**Midwest Regional University Transportation Center Proposals**  
**Exploration of Tools for Regional Transportation and Land Use Modeling**  
**Measuring the Benefits of Implementing Asset Management Systems and Tools-**  
**Work Welfare & Families Getting to Work Forum**  
**NIPC 2040 Regional Framework Plan Meeting**  
**Ticket to Ride: Meeting the Region's Transit Needs**  
**Business Leaders for Transportation Meeting**  
**U. S. DOT Certification Hearing**  
**Northwestern University Joe Schwieterman Lecture**  
**Work/Life Forum for Fortune Companies**

**Distinguish Your Community Workshop**  
**Access for All Conference**  
**McHenry County Council of Governments Meeting**  
**DuPage Public Transit Discovery Conference**  
**Sixth Annual UTC Symposium**  
**Chicago Chapter of TRF First Annual Luncheon**  
**New Transportation Opportunities Webinar**  
**McHenry County Transportation Study**  
**Context Sensitive Solutions**  
**Universal Design Proposal**  
**Coordination Activities Report**  
**First Annual TRF Chicago Chapter Luncheon**  
**Sixth Annual Fall Symposium**  
**Show Me the Money...Net Conference**  
**IDOT Fall Planning Conference**  
**MPC Transportation Luncheon**

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