

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT INITIATIVE (METSI)

QUARTERLY REPORT

for the quarter ending March 31, 2005

CURRENT QUARTER ACTIVITIES

GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

The following are highlights from the recent quarter:

-Sue McNeil, Director of the UTC and Professor in the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs announced her resignation in order to accept a faculty position at the University of Delaware. Her resignation is effective August 16, 2005. She will be missed.

-An Advisory Board Meeting was held in the Metra Board Room on February 23 where the Board approved a resolution supporting the Center's designation as an earmarked Transportation Center in the federal TEA 21 reauthorization legislation.

-Three new members have been named to the Board: Jason Tai, Director, Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation, IDOT, Don Kopec, Acting Executive Director, CATS and Don Gismondi, Acting Regional Administrator, FTA.

-Three meetings of the Special Committee on Mass Transit chaired by Rep. Julie Hamos, two meetings with the Paratransit Subcommittee chaired by Rep. Kathy Ryg, a meeting of the Interagency Coordinating Committee for Transportation (ICCT) in Springfield and two ICCT Subcommittee meetings were attended.

-Two proposals; "Measuring the Benefits of Implementing Asset Management Tools" and "Impact of Increased Freight Traffic on Pavement Maintenance Costs" were submitted to the Midwest Regional University Transportation Center (MRUTC) using METSI as a match.

-Presentations of research were presented at the Annual Meetings of the Transportation Research Board and the Transportation Research Forum.

An issue of the UTC Newsletter *Connector* has been prepared for distribution in April. Below is a description of progress during the quarter.

RESEARCH PROGRAM

Regional Intermodal Freight Planning

Kazuya Kawamura and Sue McNeil continue to chair the subcommittees of CATS Intermodal Advisory Task Force (IATF). Dr. Kawamura continues to serve on the editorial board of the IATF e-newsletter available at www.catsmpo.com and is a regular contributor.

Business and Site Specific Trip Generation Methodology for Truck Trips

This project is funded from the Midwest Regional University Transportation Center with a match provided by METSI. The first task, Conceptual Model Development obtained input from logistics companies to identify independent variables. The second task, Data Collection has developed a contact list and a data wish list to be completed by businesses. A paper has been presented at the TRF Annual Meeting in March.

Location, Design and Operation of Future Intermodal Rail Yards

This is a project funded by MRUTC using METSI as match. The task of data collection from national retail chains has been completed and the conceptual model developed earlier is being applied to the data sets.

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 has developed a phase 3 project to the JARC funded Transportation Information Clearinghouse project for consideration by RTA.

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. This project has been chosen as a thesis by one of the student research assistants.

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

This project is ending with staff efforts concentrating on Context Sensitive Solutions.

McHenry County Transportation Study

A project status meeting was held on January 7 at which time Employer and Municipal Workshops were scheduled. A total of five half day Workshops were scheduled on February 28, and March 1 and 2 in Woodstock, McHenry and Crystal Lake to get input on stakeholder needs.

Sprawl

Professor Soot's sprawl-related work continues in these two areas:

Census 2000 and ACS:

We are continuing our work with the 2000 Census and American Community Survey (ACS). Our focus has been on Lake County, an early test site for the ACS. The 1999 to 2003 annual summaries show remarkable trends that have important impacts for transportation systems. These findings were presented at the Annual Meetings of the TRB and TRF held in Washington in January and March. Work is continuing and the most recent findings are planned to be presented at the forthcoming TRB conference on the ACS.

Sprawl and Public Health -- Obesity:

We are still processing the driver's license data that has been received from the Secretary of State's office to compute the body mass indexes (BMIs). We were initially provided with more than ten million records, more than the population of the Northeastern Illinois area. Duplicates have been discarded and there is now a suitable working file. The data has been mapped and several regression analysis run. The preliminary work shows a strong association with household income. Zip-codes with high incomes have very low body mass indexes while many

low income areas in the city of Chicago have high indexes. To date there has been little relationship between sprawl and BMI. The Chicago Tribune Magazine Section carried an article describing our work in the Sunday April 3 edition.

Routine Use of Locomotive Horns

The work has been completed. However, during the quarter, the FRA posted another rebuttal to our work and restate its previous criticism. Most surprising about the FRA critic is that they explain the use of statistics and continue to inappropriately use the word “prove” in verifying statistical results. Statistics cannot be used to prove results; they are used to support conclusions. We are not impressed by their critic and if requested will respond to the criticisms.

Midwest Regional University Transportation Center Proposals

Two proposals using METSI as match have been submitted to MRUTC; “Measuring the Benefits of Implementing Asset Management Tools” and “Impact of Increased Freight Traffic on Pavement Maintenance Costs”.

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. A student research assistant has chosen this project for their thesis.

CATS Household Travel Survey

Staff continues the ongoing effort to assist CATS in developing the data requirements for CATS for the future travel survey to support regional transportation modeling activities. Progress to date has focused on trip generation model data needs.

Emergency Ride Home (ERH)

Held meetings with the CATS ERH Task Force to develop demonstration program components. Developed and submitted a CMAQ application for consideration by CATS for a region-wide ERH demonstration project.

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)

Mary Kaufman is working with Kathy Ames, IDOT, who has created a cadre of people who are undertaking internal training and the development of CSS training seminars. Staff is assisting by providing a bibliography and research support for the internal cadre. This information will be accessible on the IDOT website for reference and further training. Ongoing efforts continue to develop the program and coordinate efforts. In addition, other CSS activities include:

- Staff continues to supply support for Route 53 in DuPage County. An improved design for stakeholder input has resulted in a better perspective for both the stakeholders and IDOT.

- Staff is participating in CSS Forum, a Context Sensitive Design/Solutions Yahoo Group. Issues and questions from around the country are discussed. Members include planners, civil engineers, academics and the general public.

Finally, several seminars on CSS have been offered to students, faculty and staff.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Special Committee on Mass Transit for Northeastern Illinois

Undertaking data analysis at the direction of the Committee chaired by Rep. Julie Hamos. Meetings were held on January 25, February 4, 14, March 6, 7 and 28. A presentation on the history of partransit and the ADA in the Chicago region was given to the Paratransit Subcommittee chaired by Rep. Kathy Ryg on February 14.

CATS Community Mobility Task Force

Participated with the Task Force meeting held on March 15.

CATS Intermodal Advisory Task Force (IATF)

Continued participation with the Task Force and Subcommittees. Attended IATF meeting held on March 24.

CATS Private Providers Task Force

Participating with the Task Force and providing assistance in the areas of inventorying private transit providers and on JARC and ERH issues.

CATS Task Force on Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Attended and participated in a Task Force meeting on February 1.

CATS TDM Annex

Attended a meeting on January 19.

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

At the request of CATS, participating in the Work Group and attended a meeting on March 29.

Commuter Choice

Continuing efforts with RTA, 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.

Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (GNMAA)

Staff continues its participation as a member of the GNMAA Traffic and Transportation Committee meetings held on February 24 and March 24.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- Ongoing assistance the EPA in their Partnership for Clean Air program by promoting Best Workplaces Campaign (BWC) designation in conjunction with the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and the RTA.

Statewide Funding Database

The Database was developed as a result of a contract with IDHS and the predecessor to the ICCT. The database has been transmitted to IDOT- DPT and the ICCT. CATS has also requested we participate in developing a Chicago regional database as a UWP funded project.

Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission

At the request of NIPC, met with their staff on March 30 to brief them on issues surrounding transportation coordination and van pool programs.

Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation (ICCT)

Participating as a member of the committee and attended a meeting in Springfield on February 2. Also participating in three subcommittees which held meetings on March 17 and 24.

Information Coordination Advisory Committee

At the request of the MPC, have been asked to participate in a committee to advise the RTA in the development of regional design standards for transit passenger information.

WORKSHOPS, TRAINING AND VISITING SCHOLARS

Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting

The following METSI supported research was presented at the Annual Meeting held in Washington, DC on January 10-13: “Hedonic Analysis of Impacts of Traffic Volumes on Property Values” and “Planning Considerations for Projected Intermodal Rail Yards in the Chicago Region” by Kazuya Kawamura and “Urban Sprawl: Changing Impacts on the Urban Environment” by Siim Soot.

Transportation Research Forum Annual Meeting

The following METSI supported research was presented at the Annual Meeting held in Washington, DC on March 6-8: “Strategies for Overcoming Barriers to Paratransit Brokerage” by Paul Metaxatos, “Framework for the Disaggregate Truck Trip Generation Model Based on the Survey of Retail Business” by Kazuya Kawamura and “Emerging Commuting Trends: Evidence from the Chicago Area” by Joe DiJohn (co-authored by Siim Soot and Gidon Berman). In addition, “Transportation Information Clearinghouse” an RTA funded project was presented by Joseph DiJohn (co-authored by Karin Allen and Shamus Misek).

Transportation Research Forum (TRF)

Meetings were held on February 8 and 24 and the result is the formation of a Chicago Chapter of the TRF. Seed money in the amount of \$1,500 was received from the national TRF to assist in forming the Chapter.

Regional Freight Summit

At IDOT’s request, assisting in the development of a Regional Freight Summit.

Batavia Transportation Committee

At the request of the Kane County Transportation Department, presented a brief Transit Basics to a local Transportation Committee formed to address transportation issues in their community.

Clean Air Counts

Met with members of the Village of Matteson and the Chamber of Commerce to develop a presentation for a business leaders workshop with south suburban businesses.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER

RESEARCH PROGRAM

Regional Intermodal Freight Planning- Continued participation with the CATS IATF.

Business and Site Specific Trip Generation Methodology for Truck Trips- Continue data collection and analysis and prepare final report.

Location, Design and Operation fo Future Intermodal Rail Yards- Undertake a joint study with the Center of Neighborhood Technology to conduct a case study that combines the findings of this study with the CNT's Cargo Oriented Development Report.

Job Access Reverse Commute- Continue communications with project partners and pursue second phase of the Transportation Information Clearinghouse project.

Economic and Productivity Impacts of ITS- Continue the development of data needs to estimate economic productivity resulting from ITS projects 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.

McHenry County Transportation Study- Attend an all-day open house on May 24 to provide a draft report to stakeholders and the public. The Final Report should be completed in the summer.

Sprawl- Research continues in the areas of Census 2000 and ACS and Sprawl and Public Health-Obesity. Findings on the Census 2000 will be presented at an upcoming TRB meeting and a draft report on Sprawl and Obesity will be prepared.

Midwest Regional University Transportation Center Proposals- Awaiting status.

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

CATS Household Travel Survey- Complete the identification of data needs, develop survey questions and prepare final report recommendations.

Emergency Ride Home (ERH)- Assist in the CMAQ process to develop a region-wide demonstration project.

Context Sensitive Solutions- Continued development of seminars.

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 and attend meeting on June 2.

CATS Private Providers Task Force- Ongoing assistance to CATS.

CATS Task Force with Seniors and Persons with Disabilities- Ongoing assistance to CATS and attend next meeting on April 5..

CATS TDM Annex- Ongoing assistance to CATS.

CATS TM&O- Ongoing assistance and attend next meeting on June 28.

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

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

EPA- Ongoing assistance in conjunction with Best Workplaces for Commuters (BWC).

Statewide Funding Database- Continue to develop proposals for a regional and statewide database for use by IDOT, ICCT and CATS.

Special Committee on Mass Transit for Northeastern Illinois- Continue to meet with the Committee chaired by Rep. Julie Hamos and present final report.

NIPC- Continue to provide transportation coordination and van pool information as requested.

ICCT- Attend next Committee meeting on April 7 and June 2 as well as subcommittee meetings.

Information Coordination Advisory Committee- Attend initial meeting on April 14.

WORKSHOPS, TRAINING AND VISITING SCHOLARS

Clean Air Counts- Presenting Commuter Choice Benefits to a south suburban business leaders workshop on April 5.

ACT Net Conference- Hosting a Net Conference on April 7 titled “The Effects of Commuter Benefit Programs on Transit Systems”.

Chicago Chapter of TRF- The first local chapter meeting will be held on April 14 at CATS and additional meetings and events will be planned..

Regional Freight Summit- Continue to assist IDOT in developing program. Awaiting direction from IDOT prior to proceeding.

Sixth Annual Symposium- Created a committee to begin planning for the Annual Symposium to be held in the fall.

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PROJECTS COMPLETED DURING CURRENT CALENDAR YEAR

Routine Use of Locomotive Horns
Rural Public Transportation Brokerage Research Project
NEPA and the Planning Process
City of North Chicago
City of Waukegan
Olive Harvey College
GNMAA Annual Meeting
TRB Annual Meeting
TRF Annual Meeting
Batavia Transportation Committee

4/07