

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

## **QUARTERLY REPORT**

for the quarter ending March 31, 2006

### **CURRENT QUARTER ACTIVITIES**

#### **GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE**

The following are highlights from the recent quarter:

A meeting was held in Springfield with Secretary Tim Martin, Randy Blankenhorn, Dick Smith, Vonu Thakuriah and Joe DiJohn on February 28, 2006 to discuss past and future METSU programs.

Three urban sprawl papers were completed and disseminated during the quarter; *Homeownership in the Chicago Area: Trends Leading the Nation, Are Sprawl and Obesity Related? Evidence from the Chicago Area* and *Where is the 2000-2005 Growth in Metropolitan Chicago: Collar or Fringe Counties?* There was extensive broadcast and print media coverage on these papers.

The Chairman of the McHenry County Board formally requested UIC staff to participate on the Transit Implementation Task Force.

Two Regional Transportation Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) grant applications were submitted to the RTA; Lake County Coordinated Transportation Paratransit Study and RTA Transit Check Ridership Impact Analysis.

The Spring 2006 Vol. 7, Issue 2 of the *Connector* was completed and distributed during the quarter.

Completed the Transportation Section of *North Michigan Avenue By The Numbers*.

An Advisory Board meeting was held on February 1, 2006.

Below is a description of progress during the quarter.

#### **RESEARCH PROGRAM**

##### **Attitude Surveys**

Research into commuters attitudes regarding the impact of congestion, the value of congestion relief and the willingness to pay through taxes or user fees will be examined. The UIC Survey Research Lab (SRL) was contacted in order to determine the status of the annual state survey undertaken by SRL. They are in the process of establishing an online survey mechanism.

##### **Safety Analysis**

Staff met with Mehdi Nassirpour and Priscilla Tobias, IDOT Division of Traffic Safety on February 24 to discuss possible research topics, including improving databases, pooling traffic court related data, analytic studies, such as classes of accidents and assistance to local jurisdictions.

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

Kazuya Kawamura continues to chair the Research and Planning Subcommittee of CATS Intermodal Advisory Task Force (IATF). As chair of the Research Committee, he developed several freight related proposals submitted to IDOT- DPIT for consideration by the Illinois Center for Transportation Program. He is also co-chair of the UTC Symposium which will focus

on goods movement.

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

The aim of this project is to develop next generation of disaggregated truck trip generation model for use in planning and engineering applications. In September the project draft report was reviewed by the expert panel set up by the Midwest Region University Transportation Center (MRUTC) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the primary sponsor of the study. The doctoral student working on this project successfully defended his dissertation during the current period. Two papers were presented and published during the quarter: *Development of Disaggregate Level Truck Trip Generation Model: A Case Study of Furniture Chain Stores* was presented at the TRB annual meeting in January and *Business and Site Specific Trip Generation Model for Truck Trips* was presented at the National Urban Freight Conference in February.

### **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 seek to improve the decision support tool developed by CNT by incorporating their insights into the intermodal rail terminal design and operations. A paper *Development and Testing of Model Planning Process for Freight Oriented Development* has been prepared for presentation at an overseas Chinese Conference.

### **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 in Lake County that would identify a reverse commute problem and utilize innovation by private sector providers to develop solutions to the problem.

### **McHenry County Transportation Study Implementation**

The County Board Chairman has requested staff participation in the implementation phase of the project. Awaiting direction from the County.

### **Highways and Sprawl**

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

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

Work continues on the 2000 Census and the American Community Survey (ACS). We prepared a report on homeownership and how it relates to urban sprawl and is available on our website [www.uic.edu/cuppa/utc/publications](http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/utc/publications). The report shows county-level population change from 2000 to 2005. Cook County had the largest absolute decrease in population in the nation while Kendall County was the fourth fastest growing county in the nation. The emphasis by the media was misleading and we prepared a report that interprets the change in a more scholarly fashion. The population change data has significant transportation consequences because, in absolute terms, Will County is the fastest growing county in the region. The recent population change data reinforces other data that shows that population decentralization has continued in the

Chicago region for over 100 years. The report received media coverage from Crain's Chicago Business, the Daily Herald and several web sites, including www.Realtor.org.

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

The report on sprawl and obesity is complete and is available on our website. It examines the relationship between Body Mass Index (BMI) and a variety of built environment and personal characteristics. The basic finding is that the characteristics of the population are more important than the built environment. The highest BMIs are found in the City of Chicago and the lowest levels in the affluent suburbs. Professor Soot presented the paper at the TRB meeting in Washington and chaired the session on transportation and public health. The work also received media coverage from CBS-TV, the Chicago Sun-Times, Daily Herald, Chicago Tribune, Daily Southtown, Geneva Sun, and the following web sites; AxcassNews.com, United Press International (UPI.com), AcraMax.com, Newswise.com and WebMD.com.

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

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

### **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. A kick-off meeting was held on January 12 at Abbott Labs in Waukegan where the County, municipalities and employers outlined their transportation needs. These needs were brought to Sen. Susan Garrett's Reverse Commute Committee meeting on March 6. Metra was asked to develop a proposal to add an early morning rush hour train in each direction on the UP North Line.

### **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.

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

Staff developed a scope of work for a paratransit coordination study in Lake County and submitted it to RTA as an RTAP grant application. A draft Paratransit Provider Survey was developed and submitted to the Committee for their review on March 15.

### **Transit Check Ridership Analysis**

Continue advocacy for commuter choice benefits and 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.

### **Locomotive Horns**

Staff is participating in a CATS Work Group to develop a strategy to deal with the FRA regulations regarding blowing of locomotive horns at highway grade crossings. Developed a proposed budget to undertake statistical analysis. The project is currently on hold.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

### **Association for Commuter Transportation**

Participate as a member on the Board of Directors and to develop jointly sponsored workshops.

### **CATS Community Mobility Task Force**

There were no meetings during the quarter.

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

Continued participation with the Task Force and Subcommittees. Developed several freight research proposals and submitted to IDOT- DPIT for consideration by the Illinois Center for Transportation.

### **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**

There were no meetings during the quarter.

### **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 for consideration by the Committee at the January 24 meeting.

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

Participated in various Transportation and Research Committee meetings February 8, 23 and March 16 and completed the Transportation Section of *North Michigan Avenue By The Numbers*.

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

A meeting was held on January 19 and the final report was completed and submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly on January 24.

### **Information Coordination Advisory Committee**

Had been asked by the MPC 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.

### **Peoria MPO**

Met with the Peoria Tri-County Regional Planning Commission via conference calls during the quarter to provide technical support for their travel demand model development.

### **Champaign MPO**

Met with the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission on February 13 to provide technical support for their model development. Offered to provide mode split modeling for their New Start analysis.

### **Center for Supply Chain Management and Logistics**

Providing in-kind match to the project which received seed funding from UIC. The Center is planning a freight conference in the fall in conjunction with the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and is a potential partner in the Freight Symposium.

### **Rail~Volution Chicago 2006 Program Committee**

Assisting IDOT and RTA plan the program and mobile workshops for the Annual Rail~Volution meeting to be held in Chicago in November. Attended meetings on February 15 and March 15.

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

### **Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting**

The following METSI supported papers were presented at the meeting held in Washington in January; *Short Term Trends in Commuting Behavior: Putting the American Community Survey to Work*, *Trends in Minority Commuting Behavior: What Does the American Community Survey Tell Us?*, *Merging Your Neighborhood BMI with Census Data: a Closer Look* and *Structures for Paratransit Brokerage Services*, *Development of Disaggregate Level Truck Trip Generation Model: A Case Study of Furniture Chain Stores*, and *Hedonic Analysis of the Impacts of Traffic Volumes on Property Values*.

### **Transportation Research Forum Annual Meeting**

The following METSI supported paper was presented at the meeting held in New York City in March; *Deployment Strategies for Paratransit Computer Assisted Scheduling and Dispatching Systems: Results for Focus Groups in Illinois*.

### **9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Applications of Advanced Technology in Transportation**

The following paper was accepted for presentation; *Computer Assisted Scheduling and Dispatching Systems for Paratransit Transportation: Planning for Statewide Deployment*.

### **TRF Chicago Chapter Luncheon**

The Chicago Chapter of the TRF sponsored a luncheon titled "The RTA Cook-DuPage Corridor Market Analysis" on March 15.

### **How To Make TDM Programs Boom With Boomers**

Jointly sponsored a Webinar Conference with ACT on February 28.

### **George Krambles Distinguished Lecture**

Sponsored a video on February 24 featuring of David Gunn, President of Amtrak giving the lecture last year at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

### **Why Your University Should Achieve the Best Workplaces for Commuters Designation**

Jointly sponsored a Teleconference with ACT and EPA on March 29.

## **PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER**

## **RESEARCH PROGRAM**

**Attitude Surveys-** Identify potential survey methodology and begin drafting survey questions regarding commuter attitudes toward congestion.

**Safety Analysis-** Develop research ideas and have a follow-up meeting with IDOT Division of Traffic Safety personnel.

**Regional Intermodal Freight Planning-** Continued participation with the CATS IATF and support freight proposals to the Illinois Transportation Center.

**Business and Site Specific Trip Generation Methodology for Truck Trips-** Continued study of the impact of truck trips.

**Cargo Oriented Development-** Continue work with CNT and Blue Island.

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

**McHenry County Transportation Study Implementation (ITF)-** The first meeting of the ITF is scheduled for April 20.

**Highways and Sprawl-** Research continues in the areas of Census 2000 and ACS and Sprawl and Public Health-Obesity.

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

**Northeast Lake County TMA-** Follow up on earlier meetings and obtain proposal from Metra to add service on the UP North Line. The next Reverse Commute Committee meeting is scheduled for May 2.

**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.

**Lake County Coordinated Transportation Services Committee-** Meet with the Committee on April 19 to obtain input on draft Paratransit Provider Survey. Begin work on the Paratransit Coordination Study upon approval of the RTAP grant.

**Transit Check Ridership Analysis-** continue commuter choice benefits advocacy and begin work upon RTAP grant approval.

**Locomotive Horns-** Continue participation with and await direction from CATS Work Group.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

**ACT-** Continued activity on Board of Directors and seek to continue 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.

**GNMAA-** Ongoing assistance GNMAA Transportation and Research Committees on April 27.

**ICCT-** Planning to attend meeting on May 4.

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

**Peoria MPO-** Continue to assist Peoria metro area in the development of travel demand models.

**Champaign MPO-** Continue to discuss the modeling needs of the Champaign metro area.

**Center for Supply Chain Management and Logistics-** Pursue discussions regarding the possibility of a joint Freight Symposium.

**Rail-Volution Chicago 2006 Program Committee-** Develop mobile workshops and plenary sessions for next meeting on April 25.

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

**Analyzing the Effectiveness of Commuter Benefit Programs-** Planning for a Webinar jointly with National Transit Institute (NTI) for April 13.

**The Case for Searches on Public Transportation-** Planning for a Webinar jointly with NTI for May 4.

**"411 on 511"-** Planning for a Webinar with ACT which examines the 511 public transit information phone number around the country on June 1.

**Freight Symposium-** After a discussion with Secretary Tim Martin, will plan to jointly sponsor a freight symposium with IDOT and possibly the Center for Supply Chain Management and Logistics as UTC's Fall Symposium.

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

**How To Make TDM Programs Boom with the Boomers Net Conference**

**TRF Chicago Chapter Luncheon- RTA Cook-DuPage Corridor Market Analysis**

**North Michigan Avenue By The Numbers- Transportation Section**  
**Homeownership in the Chicago Area: Trends Leading the Nation**  
**Are Sprawl and Obesity Relate? Evidence from the Chicago Area**  
**Where is the 2000-2005 Growth in Metropolitan Chicago: Collar or Fringe Counties?**  
**TRB Annual Meeting Presentations**  
**TRF Annual Meeting Presentation**  
**9<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Advanced Technology Presentation**  
**National Urban Freight Conference Presentation**

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