

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

## **QUARTERLY REPORT**

for the quarter ending September 30, 2003

### **CURRENT QUARTER ACTIVITIES**

#### **GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE**

During the quarter, an Advisory Board meeting was held on August 27, the first meeting for new members Paula Thibeault, Executive Director, RTA, Jack Hartman, Executive Director, Tollway and Mike Tryon, Chairman, McHenry County Board. Planning for the Fall Symposium "Circumferential Transportation Systems-Meeting the Needs of the Future?" to take place on October 17 is complete. On September 12, gave a presentation of the Urban Transportation Center and METSU activities at the IDOT Fall Planning Conference held at Rend Lake Resort. Also attended meetings Business Leaders for Transportation (BLT), Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (GNMAA) Transportation Committee, CATS Open House and Private Providers Task Force, Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) Incident Command System Workshop, Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and ACT annual meetings. Also preparing the UTC Connector Newsletter for distribution in October.

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

#### **RESEARCH PROGRAM**

##### **Intermodal Freight**

The proposal to the NSF by Northwestern University and UIC has been selected for funding. The project will receive \$600,000 over three years to develop a decision support tool for freight infrastructure planning and operation. The UTC team will contribute in the areas of cost and benefit calculations and coordination of stakeholders. During the period, attended a workshop given by Northwestern University.

##### **Freight Impact Analysis Methodology – Impact of Truck Traffic on the Value of Land**

The methodology has been expanded to include the cost of pavement damage and truck labor cost using a hypothetical widening of Cicero Avenue for evaluation purposes. A paper titled "Assessment of the Relationship between Vehicle Type Mix and the Benefit of Freight Projects" was presented at the Third International Congress of City Logistics in June.

##### **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 and presented a statewide database of transportation funding to IDOT and IDHS on July 28.

##### **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**

Developed and provided County Transportation Department with draft outline of Phase 2 project.

### **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.

### **Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery in Civil Infrastructure Systems**

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](http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/utc). The project is continuing.

### **Economic and Productivity Impacts of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)**

Developing a proposal to undertake this research project. Completed a literature review and developing 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. This includes 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 and is putting together a list of contacts from the states identified by IDOT as crucial to learn from. Assistance is being sought from IDOT in enlisting cooperation from these states. 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.

### **McHenry County Transportation Study**

Assisted the County in rewriting the scope of work for the RFP for a county-wide Transit Study. Ten proposals were received and evaluated by the County's Transportation Committee. Will continue to provide assistance during the undertaking of the project.

## **Sprawl**

Our current sprawl-related work continues in the following three areas. A presentation of the status of these projects was given at the IDOT Fall Planning Conference.

**Sprawl and Pedestrian:** The report on pedestrian safety in Illinois has been completed and will be put on our web site shortly. We are working with the University Public Affairs Office to publicize the report.

**Census 2000:** Work continues mapping and analyzing data from the 2000 Census. The report on county-to-county trip data revealing changes in commuting patterns was completed in March. We are currently pursuing other data sources to better understand the changes in demographics that are leading to lower than expected levels of traffic.

The Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) data released in September verifies many of the trends we have anticipated in our earlier work. Highlights of the TTI are as follows:

-From 1961 to 2001 the Chicago area has a '5 point' increase in the travel time index. Fourteen metropolitan areas had double digit increases during the same period.

-Per-person annual hours of delay rose from 26 to 27 (1996-2001) in the Chicago region. This one hour increase is in contrast to double digit increases in nine other metropolitan areas.

-Based on per person hours of delay the Chicago region has slipped from seventh highest to 16<sup>th</sup> highest in 2001, clearly a positive result.

Lastly, we anticipate the arrival of the full CTPP. This will provide us with journey-to-work data by small area in order that further study in changes in travel behavior can be made as it relates to urban decentralization.

**Sprawl and Public Health - Obesity:** Awaiting driver's license data from the Secretary of State's Office. In the meantime, we are processing the utility of the Smart Growth America and Surface Transportation Policy Project report on *Measuring the Health Effects of Sprawl*, (September, 2003). The report concludes "people living in counties marked by sprawling developments are likely to walk less and weigh more than people who live in less sprawling counties." (Page 1). Since there are only conclusions, without the model used to fit the data analyzed, it is difficult to critique the results. Further, the appendix lists data on the 448 counties but only the 'expected' weight of the average individual (5'7" tall). For example, the expected weight for the average person in Cook County is 165.54 lbs., 165.73 in Los Angeles County and 166.32 in DuPage County. The differences seem rather small and the actual weights would certainly have been informative. Examining other counties in Illinois (Will - 166.67, Kendall - 166.84, Madison - 166.58 and St. Clair - 166.54 shows little variation among urban counties. Cook County had the lowest expected rate in Illinois.

## **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**

### **Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT)**

Shamus Misek was elected to two-year term on the Board of Directors and during the period co-sponsored two workshops.

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

Providing ongoing Job Access Reverse Commute related assistance to the task force. **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). During the period,

### **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. Participated in a task force meeting on July 29.

### **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. Minor issues were identified to be addressed prior to launch in October.

### **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. RTA has entered into a contract with the Center to provide technical assistance for the Transit check program.

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

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

### **Transportation Coordination Committee**

Presented the statewide Transportation Funding Database to IDOT and IDHS on July 28 and offered to assist IDOT in staffing the Transportation Coordinating Committee established by the State Legislature.

### **Work, Welfare and Families**

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

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

### **Incident Command System Management Workshop**

Attended a workshop sponsored by Illinois Emergency Management Agency on August 15.

### **Visitors from Houston, Texas**

Gave a tour and presentation jointly with CATS and Metra of the region's transit facilities on August 18.

### **Access Management Workshop**

Jointly sponsored a web based workshop with the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) and the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of Florida on August 20.

### **IDOT Fall Planning Conference**

Attended and gave a presentation to the conference in Rend Lake on September 11 and 12.

## **PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER**

### **RESEARCH PROGRAM**

**Intermodal Freight**- ongoing project with Northwestern University and NSF.

**Freight Impact Analysis Methodology-Impact of Truck Traffic on the Value of Land**- social and environmental impacts of freight traffic on property values will be analyzed.

**Job Access Reverse Commute**- continue communications with project partners and continue seeking local match to federal JARC grant.

**Environmental Justice**- Awaiting CATS comments.

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

**Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Report**- awaiting review of report by CATS.

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

**UIC Campus Shuttle Bus Program**- continue demonstration with hopes of implementing the full system permanently.

**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 transportations' experience with the NEPA process and planning issues.

**McHenry County Transportation Study**- assist county staff in review and evaluation of consultant proposals and in managing the ongoing project..

**Sprawl**- Sprawl and Public Safety portion of the study has been completed and seeking avenues for publicizing results. 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 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 newly enhanced Rideshare program will be launched in October.

**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 Mitigation Committee.

**Transportation Coordinating Committee**- offer to assist IDOT in staffing Committee.

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

**UTC Fall Symposium**- Planning to hold the event titled "Circumferential Transportation Systems- Meeting the Needs of the Future?" on October 17. Kirk Brown, retired Secretary of Transportation is the keynote luncheon speaker.

**Commuter Choice Benefits Workshop**- Jointly sponsoring workshop with ACT and CATS on October 16.

**Traffic Management for Special Events**- Jointly sponsoring web based seminar with ACT and CUTR on October 15.

**Research + Action = Results**- Giving a presentation on Census Transportation information to UIC CUPPA Alumni Association Annual Workshop on November 8.

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

## **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**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Urban Sprawl Symposium, Transportation and Housing**  
**DuPage Area Transit Plan**  
**Atlanta Leadership Delegation**  
**1<sup>st</sup> 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)**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

10/03