

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

## **QUARTERLY REPORT**

for the quarter ending September 30, 2005

### **CURRENT QUARTER ACTIVITIES**

#### **GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE**

The following are highlights from the recent quarter:

Vonu Thakuria, Associate Professor, Urban Planning and Public Affairs was named Interim Director of the Urban Transportation Center (UTC). She was the Associate Director to Sue McNeil and a long time member of the UTC. Under Vonu's Leadership, we are meeting to develop an improved focus of METSU activities recognizing the needs of our constituent agencies and the strengths of the Center. There will also be an increased effort to develop academic papers as a result of our activities. In addition, Ashish Sen, former UTC Director and past Director of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) has become associated with the Center.

An effort is also being made to improve the administration and finances of the METSU grant. With the transfer of Jim Kelly to the Dean's office, Karin Allen, MS, MBA has been appointed to review, coordinate and facilitate administrative activities. The efforts by IDOT staff, especially Nancy Dial, to assist in the resolution of past difficulties is appreciated.

An Advisory Board meeting was held in August to review Center and METSU activities. Afterwards, a farewell reception for Sue McNeil was held. At the meeting, the MPC and RTA requested the Advisory Board to be the Host Committee for the Rail-Volution meeting to be held in Chicago in 2006.

Finally, during the current quarter, the Annual Symposium titled "Technology Impacts on Regional Mobility" will be held on October 21 and a Fall Issue of the *Connector* Newsletter will be published.

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). Dr. Kawamura also continues to serve on the editorial board of the IATF e-newsletter available at [www.catsmpo.com](http://www.catsmpo.com) and is a regular contributor.

##### **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 has developed a phase 3 project to the JARC funded Transportation Information Clearinghouse project for consideration by RTA. During the quarter, contracts for the first two phases are being addressed with RTA paving the way to begin phase 3.

### **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**

Meetings of the Paratransit Steering Committee, the Public Transit Advisory Committee and a day long Open House were held during the last quarter. The project will be completed upon a presentation of the final report to the McHenry County Board. UTC staff have been asked by the County to continue to provide assistance during the implementation phase.

### **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 RTA to provide the match for the program. Obtained preliminary approval from the RTA Executive Director.

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

Mary Kaufman, UTC Research Assistant continues work on CSS projects. She reports that CSS\_Forum grew from 60 to 75 members and is working with them to plan next years conference. Also, she attended the TRB Midwest CSD Seminar in Minnesota. The Minnesota DOT will be undertaking a cost/benefit analysis of different CSS strategies employed by state DOTs around the nation.

### **TMA of Lake County**

At the request of officials in the city of Waukegan, assisting in the development of a Transportation Management Association of north Lake County. A meeting was held on July 20 to finalize a letter requesting participation and a list of potential TMA members. Awaiting final approval by the City of Waukegan.

### **Universal Design Proposal**

Nothing new to report on a proposal to track wheelchair users mobility and the relationship of accessible design. Our role is to install GPS units and track individuals' movements before and after improved accessibility design.

### **Coordination Activities**

Preparing a report documenting the UTC's activities in transportation coordination. This includes regional, state and federal activities.

### **Data Library**

Staff is developing a data 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.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

### **Association for Commuter Transportation**

Attended Midwest Chapter Board meeting via conference call on August 26.

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

Participated with the Task Force meeting held on August 2 where reports were presented on the UIC's JARC activities. We are facilitating the release of TANF client database for use by CATS to develop the Regional JARC Plan. IDHS is requiring a confidentiality agreement.

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

Continued participation with the Task Force and Subcommittees. There were no meetings during the quarter.

### **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 August 2.

### **CATS TDM Annex**

There were no meetings during the quarter.

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

Participated in the Work Group meeting on September 27 and provided comments to the draft writing outline and exhibits B and C.

### **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 program. A proposal to establish a regional demonstration was approved for funding under the region's CMAQ program. We are attempting to obtain the required match from RTA.

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

Staff continues its participation as a member of the GNMAA Traffic and Transportation Committee meetings held on July 8, 28 and September 22. In addition, participated in a Research Subcommittee and developed transit and pedestrian information for their website.

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

Participating as a member of the committee and attended meetings on July 21 and August 4. Participated in a Sub-committee on August 3. Provided statewide data base information to NIPC who mapped statewide recipients on their web site at [www.chicagoclearinghouse.org](http://www.chicagoclearinghouse.org). Also, assisting CATS in obtaining TANF data from IDHS.

### **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. No meetings

were held during the quarter.

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

### **Transportation Research Forum (TRF)**

A local chapter meeting was held on July 20 at DePaul. Presentations were given by Larry Wilson, Consultant and Mary Wells, ISTHA. The topics were truck size and weight regulations and the impact of the I-Pass and variable truck tolls. An officers meeting was held on August 26 to plan for the next local chapter meeting to be held on November 14.

### **Regional Freight Summit**

Nothing new on IDOT's request to assist in the development of a Regional Freight Summit.

**Sixth Annual Symposium**- Plans are underway for the Annual Symposium to be held on October 21, 2005 at UIC. The topic is "Technology Impacts on Regional Mobility". We have confirmed speakers 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.

**Work Welfare & Families Getting To Work Forum**- participated in Lake County Employment Transportation Workshop on June 18.

**NIPC 2040 Regional Framework Plan**- attended meeting on September 28.

**Work/Life Forum for Fortune Companies**- jointly sponsored Best Workplaces for Commuters workshop with AWLP on July 13.

**Ticket to Ride; Meeting the Region's Transit Needs**- attended MPC luncheon on July 21.

**Distinguish Your Community**- jointly sponsored Best Workplaces for Commuters workshop with AWLP on July 26.

**Business Leaders for Transportation**- attended meeting on August 5.

**Access for All**- attended CTAA sponsored conference on August 23.

**McHenry County Council of Governments**- attended meeting in Union on August 24.

**U. S. DOT Certification Hearing**- gave testimony supporting CATS, IDOT and RTA planning efforts at hearing on August 9.

**Northwestern University Sandhouse Gang**- attended presentation on "When the Railroads Left Town" by Joe Schwieterman, DePaul University on August 29.

**DuPage Public Transit Discovery Conference**- attended meeting on September 9.

## **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.

**TMA of Lake County-** Mail invitations and hold an organization meeting 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, attend meeting on

October 17, execute confidentiality agreement and obtain IDHS TANF client database.

**CATS Intermodal Advisory Task Force (IATF)**- Ongoing assistance to CATS and attend meeting scheduled for October 13, the same day as the IDOT Fall Planning Conference.

**CATS Private Providers Task Force**- Ongoing assistance to CATS.

**CATS Task Force with Seniors and Persons with Disabilities**- Ongoing assistance to CATS and attend joint meeting with CMTF on October 17.

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

**CATS TM&O**- Ongoing assistance to CATS and attend meeting in the Fall.

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

**GNMAA**- Ongoing assistance with GNMAA and attend meeting on November 17.

**ICCT**- Attend next Committee meetings on October 6 and December 1.

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

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

**IDOT Fall Planning Conference**- members of UTC staff will be attending the Conference on October 13 and 14.

**Chicago Chapter of TRF**- The next meeting will be held on November 14 with senior executives of United Air Lines and former *Chicago Tribune* transportation editor Dave Young to discuss United's operating plans as they emerge from bankruptcy. There is also an officers meeting planned during the quarter.

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

**Sixth Annual UTC Symposium**- The Symposium "Technology and Regional Mobility" will be held on October 21.

**New Transportation Opportunities**- Jointly sponsored webinar with ACT on TEA-LU and Transportation Demand Management.

## **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**  
**DuPage Public Transit Discovery Conference**  
**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**

10/06/05