

UPWARDLY MOBILE



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What is the University Transportation Center for Mobility?

UTCM was designated in SAFETEA-LU as one of approximately 60 University Transportation Centers (UTCs) in the nation. The University Transportation Centers Program (UTCP) is funded by USDOT and administered by RITA (Research and Innovative Technology Administration). UTCM is a part of the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), located within the Texas A&M University System, along with the Southwest Region University Transportation Center (SWUTC) which serves as the Regional UTC for Region VI.

About TTI. The Texas Transportation Institute is the nation's largest university-affiliated transportation research agency, with a breadth and depth of programs, facilities, and capabilities. Created in 1950 in response to the needs of the Texas Highway Department, TTI has since broadened its focus to address all modes of transportation: highway, air, water, rail and pipeline. As a state agency and a member of The Texas A&M University System, the cooperative relationship that TTI has cultivated with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has been key to the success and applicability of TTI programs. The institute also partners with other universities through regional divisions, allowing greater focus on region-specific transportation solutions.

UTCM's Unique Position. As one of two UTCs within TTI, we have an exceptional opportunity to reach and connect transportation researchers, students and professionals. UTCM's research, education and technology transfer programs will fulfill our goal of enhancing mobility at the local, regional and national levels.



Director's Statement

I am pleased to present the inaugural issue of *Upwardly Mobile*, the semi-annual newsletter for the University Transportation Center for Mobility. This past year has been busy with strategic planning, getting settled at TTI, staffing the center, and creating our web site, logo and first newsletter. But one of the greatest accomplishments of the past year has been the development of UTCM's Executive Committee and Advisory Boards. We are honored to have **Dr. Herbert H. Richardson**, former Chancellor of the TAMU System and Director Emeritus of TTI, chairing the UTCM Executive Committee. Under his leadership, highly accomplished and distinguished leaders from colleges and programs



Melissa S. Tooley,
Director, UTCM

across campus and beyond have agreed to serve on the Executive Committee and Advisory Board, and are introduced herein. UTCM is fortunate to have their experience and vision to guide its programs.

UTCM Research Focus Areas

UTCM's theme, "improving the quality of life by enhancing mobility," describes our mission to conduct research, education and technology transfer activities that address the nation's mobility issues. Through our strategic planning process we identified four focus areas for the UTCM research program:

- **Coast-to-coast, border-to-border mobility**
- **Rural public transportation**
- **Congestion management and mitigation**
- **Innovative financing**

Coast-to-coast, border-to-border mobility includes all modes and the regional and national linkages between them. Since a breakdown in one area's transportation system may affect the entire country, UTCM seeks to develop methods to predict, analyze and mitigate such failures, to identify "chokepoints" and how they affect the nationwide transportation system, and develop programs that would positively impact this area.

Rural public transportation research represents an opportunity for UTCM to improve the quality of life for rural residents. Research topics

include better routing methods, the use of technology in rural transit systems, safety issues and more. In Texas and contiguous states, many areas of opportunity exist for such studies, including the Colonias (a series of economically disadvantaged small communities along the Texas/Mexico Rio Grande border), the Mississippi Delta, and the Four Corners area of the American Southwest.

Congestion management and mitigation research currently underway at TTI will be expanded by the UTCM, providing a greater understanding of the benefits of mobility improvement programs and projects. Through such efforts, UTCM will set the stage for major, long-term research initiatives in this area.

Innovative financing methods can provide alternative sources of funding for transportation improvements and new construction. Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) have the potential to generate revenue to fill the widening gap between ever-increasing vehicle miles traveled and the decreasing resources available for both new construction and existing infrastructure improvements. UTCM therefore solicits projects that seek to better understand the policy implications and implementation issues involved with P3s and other financing options.

UTCM's theme is "Improving the quality of life by enhancing mobility," and the resources and expertise of TTI and the Texas A&M University System provide a unique opportunity to make a difference in mobility in this country. Our vision is that the UTC grant will be used to develop programs with a lasting impact on this campus and beyond. For UTCM, that means meaningful research in our four focus areas that will develop into long-term initiatives, and education programs that will continue to positively impact the development of the transportation workforce long after the grant has ended. It also means forging and strengthening lasting relationships between TTI and the academic units on campus.

This issue of *Upwardly Mobile* contains information on our research focus areas, our upcoming Request for Preliminary Proposals, and some good news about how our research is already making a difference in the national debate on congestion management and mitigation. I am excited about the opportunities this grant provides and I look forward to the challenges ahead.

Cordially,

Melissa S Tooley



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Lomax Addresses U.S. Congress

UTCM researcher **Tim Lomax**, Research Engineer at Texas Transportation Institute, offered testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on June 7, 2007.

Dr. Lomax presented a solution framework for America's congestion problems, emphasizing the following points to the Congressional subcommittee:

- There are multiple transportation problems and solutions, and many are related, such that fixing one will help relieve others.
- Simple solutions that build trust with the public can often be accomplished at relatively low cost.
- Engaging the public is key and should include discussion that emphasizes a benefit to the public, such as improving quality of life and economic development.
- Transportation is a service with travelers and shippers its consumers. We should manage the transportation system to bring the most reliable service to the consumer at the best price.



Tim Lomax, TTI
Research Engineer

Lomax and **David L. Schrank** are recent recipients of a grant from the UTCM to produce an enhanced urban mobility report. For more than 20 years, TTI has produced urban congestion and mobility information heavily used for discussions of the nation's transportation challenges, of which this Congressional subcommittee meeting is a recent example. The 2007 Urban Mobility Report will include updated mobility data, estimates of congestion in all US urban regions, improved freeway speed estimates and more.

The transcript of Dr. Lomax's testimony can be found on the UTCM web site at <http://utcm.tamu.edu>, under "News".

Meet UTCM'S Business Coordinator

Martha Raney Taylor joined the UTCM in May as our Business Coordinator, bringing with her a wealth of expertise from her two decades with Texas A&M University.



Martha Raney Taylor
UTCM Business
Coordinator

Martha has been an administrative staff member of an academic department, a research institute, a council representing university principal investigators, and a high profile research project in ambulance technology. But her most memorable and challenging role was coordinating the university staff, designers, families and others involved in the construction and dedication of the Bonfire Memorial honoring the twelve students killed in the 1999 collapse of Texas A&M's Bonfire.

Martha specializes in marketing, PR, project coordination and team building in research, academia and business. We are fortunate to have her enthusiasm and experience on the UTCM team.

CALL FOR PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS

Submissions Due October 1, 2007

Complete RFPP: <http://utcm.tamu.edu> under "News"

UTCM invites researchers to submit Preliminary Proposals as a first step in the approval process for projects to be awarded by the UTCM in FY 2008. Proposals must fit the UTCM theme and one or more of the center's Research Focus Areas (see p. 1 of this newsletter). All research projects sponsored by UTCM shall have research, education and technology transfer (T2) components. The education component may include direct student involvement and/or new course or program development. T2 may include such activities as conferences, professional development, peer-reviewed publication, outreach for K-12 or higher education, diversity initiatives or activities enhancing collaboration and communication between programs.

Preliminary Proposals should be no more than two pages in length and will be used to determine which projects will be invited to submit a formal proposal. Helpful hints, format, submission procedure and other details can be found in the Request for Preliminary Proposals (RFPP) on the UTCM web site.

Submission deadline for Preliminary Proposals is October 1, 2007.