A greater reliance on trains over trucks to transport freight could improve efficiency within the transportation sector and result in a dramatic increase in productivity throughout metropolitan Chicago. Sound good so far? But it gets better: One projected benefit from this development is lower transaction costs and commodity prices for area businesses, which could mean millions of dollars in additional investment and savings.

These are among the key findings from a recently completed UTC study, “Economic Benefits of Productivity Increases Through Truck-to-Rail Mode Shift in Freight Transport.” To reach conclusions, researchers developed an analytical framework and applied an economic model — the Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model for the Chicago region — to analyze freight mode shifts from truck-to-rail by simulating projected impacts resulting from this mode change.

Two scenarios were employed to secure plausible hypothetical results from a freight shift from truck to rail:

1) Benefits in trucking through greater productivity due to less road congestion and the ability to move more high-valued freight.

2) Negative factors to the trucking industry related to a decrease in capital expenditures and labor costs.

The study was funded through the NURail Center headquartered at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Kazuya Kawamura, Associate Professor in the Department of Urban Planning and Public Affairs, served as principal investigator; he was supported by graduate student Elizabeth Fu and graduate research assistant Alexandra McNally.

UTC Alumni Anthony Grande Charts Future in Unalaska, AK

Urban planning for a small community in Alaska certainly poses different challenges than a big metro area like Chicago. After leaving the Midwest in 2013, Anthony Grande, MUPP and former UTC graduate student researcher, demonstrated he was prepared to guide planning initiatives for the city of Unalaska, where he was named Director of Planning in late 2015.

“In general, local planning is done a certain way, and Unalaska is no different. Almost everything I learned at UIC is directly relevant to my current work,” Grande reported.

Learn more about Grande’s career and role in shaping the future of Unalaska, a coastal town of 5,000 with a maritime-driven economy, by reading this online report.
UTC and UIC Researchers Contribute to Transportation Dialogue at TRB 2016

Faculty researchers from the Urban Transportation Center and University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) affiliated faculty colleagues played an active role in one of the world’s foremost gatherings of industry scholars and professionals — the Transportation Research Board 95th Annual Meeting held in Washington, D.C. January 10-14.

UTC and UIC affiliated faculty and PhD candidates participated in more than 15 lectern and poster sessions. Topics addressed included: freight modeling, activity travel choices, transit safety, and travel behavior modeling.

A highlight of this annual event is the UTC and CUPPA Alumni Association Reception. This year, the reception was held January 12 at Arcadiana Restaurant, located across from the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, the headquarters for the TRB 2016 conference.

More than 60 transportation researchers, public and private professionals and graduate students attended the reception, which was sponsored by Benesch and LTK Engineering, Inc.

Interim Executive Director Dr. P.S. Sriraj welcomed sponsors and guests, which included around 20 alumni from the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) and other academic departments at UIC. Dr. Sriraj also provided a recap of key UTC accomplishments in 2015: Events like the Transit Governance Forum (January 6, 2015) and NURail Annual Meeting (June 3-4, 2015), initiatives like the IDOT internship program, and of course, recently completed transportation research projects that addressed freight, transit planning and safety. He also recognized former UTC Executive Director Steve Schlickman, who retired at the end of 2015 after leading the Center for five years.

And, the UTC recognized winners of the 2015 George Krambles Transportation Scholarship Awards, the annual competition that bestows cash prizes to students who submit an original research paper and demonstrate a commitment to a career in public transportation. These current UIC graduate students were 2015 winners:


- **2nd Place: Mohamadhossein Noruzoliasae** for the paper: “Infrastructure Investment Decisions in Multimodal Intercity Transportation Networks: An Equilibrium Approach.”

- **3rd place: Ramin Shabanpour Anbarani** for the paper: “Expanding the Applicability of Random Regret Minimization: An Exploratory Analysis in the Context of Travel Mode Choice in the Greater Chicago Area.”

Want more? Here are other images from the reception.
Key goals of transit oriented development (TOD) initiatives are to encourage ridership and create opportunities for community and economic improvement. During the Spring 2016 semester, CUPPA graduate students prepared station-specific TOD recommendations to help grow transit and development potential in two very different metropolitan Chicago communities.

The students are enrolled in the *Topics in Urban Planning and Policy: Transit Oriented Development Studio* course offered through the CUPPA *Department of Urban Planning and Policy*. This spring student teams drafted recommendations for the businesses, homes and schools surrounding the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) 63rd/Ashland station on the Green Line in the Englewood neighborhood and the Linden station on the Purple Line in north suburban Wilmette.

The course is funded by the CTA and the Regional Transportation Authority and managed by the Urban Transportation Center. Students work in the classroom and in the field — the communities adjacent to the two CTA stations — to analyze development potential in the immediate area and participate in meetings with elected officials, economic development organizations and business and civic leaders.

“For the students, the TOD studio class is a great opportunity to get hands-on experience in the real world with real world pressures,” said Visiting Program Director Jim Keene, who conducts the class with fellow UIC adjunct instructor Tom Bothen. “They get feedback on the community and market framework of their proposals.”

Students bring a wide range of skill sets to their respective teams, Keene said. This diversity is essential to studio class concept, as teams need to incorporate design, public policy, financial and other relevant components of transit planning into their work.

Upon completion of on-site visits and in-class work, the student teams will deliver their recommendations in a formal presentation to CTA officials later in the Spring 2016 semester.

In 2015, the TOD studio class focused on the Wilson Avenue station on the Red Line in Chicago’s diverse and gentrifying Uptown neighborhood. The class presented recommendations that included a proposal for joint development between the CTA and nearby Truman College, an analysis of housing in Uptown and ways to better utilize the physical spaces under the Red Line elevated tracks.

**Executive Director’s Message: Remembering Steve Schlickman**

By Dr. P.S. Sriraj, Interim Executive Director

Over the past five years, **Steve Schlickman** made a profound impact on the Urban Transportation Center, the UIC community and the transportation industry here and nationally. On April 14, colleagues, friends and family gathered at a retirement party to recognize Steve for his many contributions to the Center, to its faculty, staff and student researchers, to the University and to improving transportation.

Steve served as UTC executive director from 2010 to 2015, and during that time, the Center grew exponentially. Funding for UTC research grew. New staff members were recruited. The number of graduate student researchers was expanded. And, the UTC was invited to participate in three national US DOT university research consortia.

I’ve had the honor and privilege to have worked closely with Steve on UTC research projects and on the CUPPA faculty. He’s a consummate professional who’s dedicated his entire career to enhancing livability through improved transportation. Steve and his wife, Allison, now plan to spend more time at their home in Colorado. He’s earned it.
UTC and CUPPA Colleagues Return to East Campus

After a 12-month relocation, the UTC and colleagues from most departments and research units within the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) returned to offices in CUPPA Hall in late January. UTC faculty researchers, staff and graduate students returned to freshly-painted offices and new windows in the kitchen and graduate student work areas.

As of late February, workers resumed construction to address structural issues and complete modernization projects within CUPPA Hall, and to rebuild a tunnel running west to the adjacent Art & Exhibition Hall building.

UTC Administrator Jody Plahm coordinated the January move from the UIC Student Residence Hall building back to CUPPA Hall. On February 4, the Dean’s Office hosted a “welcome back” luncheon to celebrate the return to the East Campus.

CUPPA Certificate in Public Transit Planning & Management

Along with transportation-focused education that leads to graduate and undergraduate degrees, the UIC College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) offers a certificate program designed for public transit professionals or anyone interested in a public transit career. Through the Public Transit Planning & Management (PTPM) Certificate program, participants receive state-of-the-art instruction in transit finance and funding, management, planning and methods. The PTPM certificate curriculum is structured around three courses taught by UTC Interim Executive Director Dr. P.S. Sriraj and former executive director Steve Schlickman. Students learn about the various functions of a public transit system, how levels of management interact, the complicated context of a transit agency and ways to better communicate within transit agencies. The PTPM program is offered through the CUPPA Department of Urban Planning and Policy (UPP). Visit this web page to learn more or call the department at 312-996-5240.