CUTR receives $3.5M contract from the U.S. Department of Energy

The Center for Urban Transportation Research has been selected by the U.S. Department of Energy Vehicle Technologies Office to receive a $3.5M award! CUTR joins 23 other organizations in advancing the important R&D necessary to decarbonize the transportation sector. The team includes Xiaopeng Li, Ph.D. (PI), Dr. Handong Yao Ph.D. (co-PI), Sudeep Sarkar, Ph.D. (USF’s Department of Computer Science and Engineering), Lisa Staes, Pei-Sung Lin, Ph.D., Sisinnio Concas, Ph.D., Jodi Godfrey, Alexander Kolpakov, and Austin Sipiora.

CUTR is proud to collaborate with the following organizations:

- University of Utah: Dr. Xianfeng Yang, Dr. Mingxi Liu, Dr. Mingyue Ji, and Dr. Armin Tajalli
- Argonne National Laboratory: Aymeric Rousseau, Dr. Josh Auld, and Dr. Ömer Verbas
- Connected Wise, LLC: Dr. Enes Karaaslan, Dr. Tolga Ercan, and Dr. Haluk Laman
- Utah Department of Transportation: Blaine D. Leonard
- Utah Clean Cities: Tammie Bostick
- MetroPlan Orlando: Eric Hill
- ENSCO, INC: Eric T. Sherrock
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority
- BOSCH
- Tampa Bay Clean Cities Coalition
- Port Tampa Bay
- Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council
- Plan Hillsborough

+ Read more about our award online

Upcoming Webcasts

August 26, 2021: Susan Shaheen, Ph.D., "What Role Can the Built Environment and Incentives Play in Supporting Pooling with Shared Mobility? A Photovoice Study in the San Francisco Bay Area"

Learn more and subscribe to the National Institute for Congestion Reduction (NICR) newsletter.

Friday Transportation Seminar Series

CUTR’s Friday Transportation Seminar Series will continue this fall. Join CUTR for discussions on engineering, safety, and transportation. Links to join...
Tampa Bay Clean Cities Coalition approved for re-designation

CUTR’s Tampa Bay Clean Cities Coalition (TBCCC) project was recently approved for a re-designation. Through technical assistance, networking and sharing transportation and fuel options, TBCCC’s mission is to reduce petroleum use in transportation in a six-county region. TBCCC was praised for its technical expertise, responsiveness and communication and education with the public and stakeholders. TBCCC has continued to meet with stakeholders and stress the importance of alternative fuels, fuel-saving technologies and practices, and new mobility choices.

“This redesignation from the U.S. Department of Energy’s Vehicle Technologies Office means that the Tampa Bay region will continue to have access to Clean Cities tools, resources, and support network to help convert fleets to non-petroleum fuels that can help decrease harmful vehicle emissions, achieve suitability goals, and reduce long-term transportation costs. This redesignation signals national recognition of the continued efforts by local fleets and government entities to build a more sustainable transportation system in Tampa Bay that supports local economy and quality of life,” said Alexander Kolpakov, senior researcher at CUTR.

The re-designation is valid for four years.

The program is a part of the Transit Research Program at CUTR and led by Alexander Kolpakov and Austin Sipiora, and supported by staff Jana Huss and intern Briana Derosa.

Nikhil Menon, PhD joins Penn State Harrisburg

Even at a young age, Nikhil Menon, PhD knew he wanted to pursue a career in transportation.

“Growing up, I was always fascinated by the buses and trains that ran through my home state and country. My life goal at five years old was to become an engine driver,” said Menon. “I was so captivated by how much of an impact transportation made – transporting people and goods from point A to point B. With time, like always, things changed. After high school, I
Rather than pursuing structure or water resources, Menon studied Civil Engineering at the University of South Florida (USF), still fascinated with the direct impact that transportation has on life. While at USF, Menon served as the USF-ITE President (2015-2016) and, after his tenure, assisted new chapters. After graduating with his doctorate, Menon worked with USF/CUTR researchers on several state-level projects in the fields of logistics and aviation.

After eight years, Menon leaves Florida for Pennsylvania. Menon joins Penn State Harrisburg as an Assistant Professor in Civil Engineering. He will work on developing the transportation concentration and setting up the STEMS lab. The lab plans to focus on research in the areas of sustainable transportation and emerging mobility solutions to address challenges in transportation.

“I would like to thank everyone I worked with at the University of South Florida and the Center for Urban Transportation Research…for all of the wonderful memories, life lessons, and their roles in shaping me to become the researcher I am today. I will miss CUTR and the wonderful people that work there, and I am sure our paths will cross again. I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement. I also want to thank my partner, Vidya, for being an amazing support system and pushing us in our pursuit of excellence.”

Although CUTR is saddened to see Nikhil leave, we are excited for his upcoming position and new opportunity! The Center for Urban Transportation Research would like to thank Nikhil for his constant dedication to improving transportation research and safety. We wish you the best, Nikhil and Vidya!

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**Florida LTAP Center presents Horizontal Alignment – Determining Curve Signage and Setting Advisory Speeds**

The Florida LTAP Center presents this two-part webinar series on Horizontal Alignment – Determining Curve Signage and Setting Advisory Speeds. A focus on horizontal curves can prove to be a cost-effective approach to reducing roadway departure crashes. Horizontal alignment signage is low-cost and can be installed at prioritized horizontal curves to address safety issues. This workshop will cover the importance of curve warning signage, how to select the appropriate curve signage, and how to properly set curve advisory speeds, the basic rules of signage, and other options to improve safety on curves. This webinar series will help local agencies meet compliance dates for horizontal curve signage from the MUTCD.

Register

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Sean Barbeau, PhD featured in TR News
CUTR’s Sean Barbeau, Ph.D. partnered with Interline to help transit agencies improve the quality of their real-time arrival information as part of a TRB IDEA Project. Past research has shown that while real-time information in mobile apps improves rider perception and experience of transit and can even help increase ridership, poor quality information can result in fewer riders.

Dr. Barbeau helped Interline integrate the open-source GTFS Realtime Validator tool that was developed as part of a previous NITC project with Interline’s TransitLand global platform for transit data. This project will allow a large number of transit agencies to easily monitor their real-time data feeds for errors so they can be fixed before they impact riders.

Stephanie Lewis awarded Outstanding Staff Award

Congratulations to CUTR’s Stephanie Lewis! Stephanie was awarded the 2021 University of South Florida’s Outstanding Staff Award. She works with the Transit Safety and Workforce Development program and other various projects within CUTR. Senior researcher Jodi Godfrey writes, “I personally could not accomplish half of what I get done in a day if it were not for the amazing support of Ms. Lewis! Stephanie goes out of her way to make everyone feel special, and that is a quality that is remarkable.” Congratulations again, Stephanie!

Tia Boyd earns new title at CUTR
Talia Coon is a senior in the geography program at the University of South Florida. She currently works with CUTR promoting bicyclist and pedestrian safety through various outreach programs. Talia gravitated towards transportation in college because of her experiences in her hometown. Without a car, Talia found maneuvering through her hometown was difficult and dangerous. "I believe there's a large amount of inequity when it comes to transportation," said Talia. "It's an injustice. I am passionate about spreading awareness and educating others."

CUTR Student Researcher: Talia Coon

Talia also loves mapping and geospatial-related research; transportation was the best choice. As former president of the USF Bicycle Club, Talia is interested in multimodal travel. Before the pandemic, Talia was also a part of a study abroad course that traveled to the Netherlands to study sustainable transportation. Talia and her classmates learned about incorporating bicycles into everyday options and the importance of city and road design.

"If I could change something in the field of transportation, I would want to try and shift the public perception in Florida away from cars and have multimodal ideas like rail and dedicated bicycle lanes be more accepted for commuting. These solutions are not only more equitable financially, but they are better for the environment and can be cheaper than yearly road maintenance in the long run."

Outside of school and work, Talia loves to watch anime, practice her graphic design skills, taking long, nighttime drives, and drinking coffee.

For more information, please visit www.cutr.usf.edu

CUTR was established in 1988 in the College of Engineering at the University of South Florida, in Tampa, Florida. CUTR's mission is to proactively support implementation of innovative multimodal transportation solutions and develop leaders through research, education and action. Our work supports transportation agencies, the transportation profession and community, policymakers, and the public. CUTR provides high quality, objective expertise in the form of insightful research, comprehensive training and education, effective technical assistance and in-depth policy analysis, that translates directly into benefits for CUTR's project sponsors. CUTR's 45 research faculty, 60 students and post-docs combine academic knowledge and extensive “real world” experience in developing innovative, implementable solutions for all modes of transportation. The multidisciplinary research faculty includes experts in engineering, planning, computer science, economics, public policy, public health, and geography. CUTR logs nearly $20 million per year in expenditures through contracts and grants to support its research, education, training and technical assistance missions.