



USDOT Region V Regional University Transportation Center Final Report

137CSUY2.1

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**A STUDY OF THE USAGE POTENTIAL OF A PROPOSED EXPANDED
COMMUTER RAIL STATION AT CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY**

By

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DISCLAIMER

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TECHNICAL SUMMARY

137CSUY2.1

Final Report, Jan. 18, 2017

A Study of the Usage Potential of a Proposed Expanded Commuter Rail Station at Chicago State University

Introduction

The CSU NEXTRANS team worked with the CSU administration to develop surveys addressing potential improvements to student commutes that would occur due to possible improvements in the 95th Street Metra station, and to model current and theoretical commute times, which indicated what areas might be under-recruited by Chicago State University relatively to their current commuting times. Beyond the general goal of aiding CSU in the development of the new transportation center, the study allowed CSU students and GIS faculty to integrate transportation GIS within its existing GIS program as well as receive training in transportation GIS and related GIS areas.

Findings

Findings of the transportation study include: 1) students generally drive alone to school (77.5%); 15 students (out of 352 answering) used Metra....most likely (given Metra's counts) not every day; 2) 99 students (out of 321 answering) said they had considered using Metra; 3) The mean commuting time for students was 36 Minutes; 4) for students using public transportation the mean commuting time was 55 minutes; for those not using public transportation the mean commuting time was 29 minutes. Spatial modeling indicated that while Cook County is the main source of CSU students, it was still under-recruited compared to its expected numbers due to the low commutes from many parts of the county. The under-utilization of the adjacent Metra station, which serves downtown Chicago, the South Side as well as the southern suburbs, may be one of the reasons for the lower than expected attractiveness of CSU to potential Cook County students.

Recommendations

1. Raising the number of Metra commuters at CSU at Chicago State is possible, but is constrained by the age of the students, the fact that graduate students seem much less likely to commute
2. In general, many CSU students seem to be evening students with families and careers---less time available for commutes
3. Next Steps:
 - a. Study relationships between distance to CSU, reported commute time, modeled commute time and possible commute time with improved station
 - b. Further explore student data including issues such as the role of children and errands in commuting patterns
 - c. Complete faculty surveys and community focus groups to bring non-student perspectives to the project.

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