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Mineta National Transit Research Consortium Now Operating Under \$3.49 Million Grant from US Department of Transportation

Nine universities, led by SJSU's Mineta Transportation Institute, join efforts to improve transit.

San Jose, Calif., February 27, 2012 – The [Mineta Transportation Institute](http://transweb.sjsu.edu) (transweb.sjsu.edu) and eight other leading university transportation centers, functioning together as the Mineta National Transit Research Consortium (MNTRC), have now begun operating under a \$3.49 million grant from the US Department of Transportation ([DOT](#)). The funds, which will be used for research, education, and other projects that help improve public transit, are provided by the Federal Transit Administration ([FTA](#)) and distributed through DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration ([RITA](#)). The federal grant will be matched with funds from local departments of transportation and other sources.

The nine MNTRC universities include:

- Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) at San Jose State University (SJSU), San Jose CA (lead institute for the consortium);
- Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center ([VTC](#)) and the Intelligent Cyberphysical Systems Center ([ICS](#)) at Rutgers University, New Brunswick NJ
- Howard University Transportation Safety Data and Research Center ([HUTRC](#)) at Howard University, Washington DC
- Four members of the Michigan-Ohio University Transportation Center ([MIOH](#)), led by the University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit MI; with Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green OH; Grand Valley State University, Allendale MI; and University of Toledo, Toledo OH
- Nevada University Transportation Center ([NUTC](#)) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas NV
- Thomas D. Larson Pennsylvania Transportation Institute's Bus Research and Testing Center ([BRTC](#)) at Penn State University, University Park PA

“We all are honored that the Mineta National Transit Research Consortium was given this award,” said Rod Diridon, Sr., executive director of MTI. “The need to support mass transit in America has never been more profound. Americans must set an example for the rest of the world by reducing highway congestion in metropolitan areas, combating our deficit balance of trade from oil imports, and fighting climate change.”

Representing the four universities of MIOH, director Leo Hanifin, PhD, was equally enthusiastic about the grant. “The MNTRC members have conducted timely and exceedingly important academic research, and the University of Detroit Mercy and the other three members of the Michigan Ohio University Transportation Center are honored to join this exceptional group. At the University of Detroit Mercy, we will build upon our past work to investigate the ways in which effective regional transit systems are developed. We will apply the resulting knowledge to enable such systems in our region of Southeastern Michigan and other urban areas across the nation.”

A few sample research projects that will be completed within the MNTRC include:

- *Analysis of Bus Transit Crashes in the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area*, in which Howard University will identify predominant causal human factors of bus crashes;
- *Assessing Socioeconomic Impacts of Transit Systems on the Small Regional Community and Improving Service Quality of Transit Authorities in Small Urban Areas*, in which Bowling Green State University will identify the leading causes of low transit ridership, evaluate the operating efficiency of the current transit system relative to other benchmark systems, and assess the various impacts of transit on the local community welfare;
- *Evaluation of New and Modified Bus Models* in which Penn State University's Larson Institute will use RITA funding to meet the Secretary of Transportation's strategic goal for safety by engineering and testing vehicles, equipment, and infrastructure;
- *A Study of Factors that Inhibit and Enable Effective Development of Sustainable Regional Transit Systems in Southeastern Michigan*, in which Detroit-Mercy will analyze the factors that inhibit and enable the effective planning, development, and operation of regional transit systems in southeastern Michigan; and
- *Transit Users' Perceptions of Bike-Friendly Policy Impacts on Accessibility to Transit Services: The First and Last Mile Bridge*, in which Penn State will partner with MTI to assess the extent to which geographic access to public transit services is greater as a result of particular facilities and policies.

David Klinikowski, director of Bus Research and Testing at Penn State, said, "The consortium will be a resource to help the US Federal Transit Administration provide safe, reliable, convenient, and environmentally friendly transportation that is affordable for all people."

Robert B. Noland, PhD, director of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University, also noted, "The Voorhees Transportation Center has focused on policy research that can inform decision makers. The MNTRC will allow us to expand our research on transit and provide useful information to understand the social, economic, and environmental implications of different policy choices."

The research project reports will continue to be available for download from the [MTI web site](#) as consortium leader, and through public meetings, symposia, professional conferences, and other distribution outlets.

Besides research, the MNTRC universities will continue to offer a variety of education and workforce development programs, including multi-disciplinary and more traditional undergraduate, masters, and doctoral-level degree programs. The educational opportunities presented by the consortium primarily will span the managerial, policy, and more technical aspects of transit. Educational programs also will continue to be offered to young people in primary, middle, and high school.

ABOUT THE MINETA NATIONAL TRANSIT RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

The Mineta National Transit Research Consortium (MNTRC) conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer, focusing on transportation policy, technology, and management issues, especially as they relate to transit. MNTRC was established in 2011 as part of SAFETEA-LU legislation authorized by Congress. Six of the Consortium's nine university transportation centers were originally authorized under ISTEA in 1991, TEA-21 in 1998, and/or SAFETEA-LU in 2006. The MNTRC has been funded by Congress through the US Department of Transportation's (DOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), by individual state departments of transportation, and by other public and private grants and donations. The nine Consortium universities include Bowling Green, Detroit Mercy, Grand Valley, Howard University, Penn State, Rutgers, San Jose State, University of Nevada Las Vegas, and University of Toledo.

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