



# TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION SERIES

*A strategic outreach series hosted by the  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology*

## Connecting Communities to Opportunities: A UTC Perspective on Placemaking with Big Data and Smart Cities Technologies

Dr. Lei Zhang, University of Maryland

Wednesday, November 16, 2016 • 1:00pm – 2:00pm

USDOT Headquarters West Building Conference Center – Rooms 8-9-10



The “Disconnected Community,” characterized by a lack of adequate physical and virtual access to jobs, food, education, and healthcare which leads to poverty, inequality, and social division, is one of the most challenging problems of our time. The National University Transportation Center at the

University of Maryland (UMD) is committed to reducing the cost (monetary and social barriers) of connecting these communities to opportunities through data analytics, innovative mobility, and smart cities solutions. The key is to employ self-sustained, community-empowering and context-sensitive technology solutions

to significantly reduce and even eliminate the cost of connection, and thereby free community residents from income, time and cultural constraints to pursue economic prosperity. Improved accessibility and placemaking strategies can also attract new jobs to these communities. Specific solutions developed by UMD researchers that will be highlighted include: (1) Big data and data analytics for monitoring accessibility to economic and other vital opportunities, especially those important for underserved populations and vulnerable areas; (2) Development and application of analysis, modeling and simulation tools for assisting transportation decision-making regarding underinvested communities and disadvantaged groups; and (3) The role of sharing economy, innovative mobility, and smart cities technologies in addressing opportunity gaps and economic development for all.

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TTY: 202-366-6242 at least 3 business days prior to the event.