Mission Statement

The Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Institute is a congressionally designated national University Transportation Center (UTC) funded through the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the federal surface transportation bill passed in 2005. This funding continues the Institute’s efforts initiated under SAFETEA-LU’s predecessors, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA).

The ITS Institute plans and conducts activities that further the mission of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s UTC program. That mission is to advance U.S. technology and expertise in the many disciplines that make up transportation through education, research, and technology transfer activities at university-based centers of excellence. To help us accomplish this, we direct the work of researchers from multiple disciplines to advance the state of the art in the core ITS technologies of computing, sensing, communications, and control systems to solve today’s challenging transportation problems.

Our focus is on human-centered technology that enhances the safety and mobility of road- and transit-based transportation. To that end, we bring together technologists and those who study human behavior from the University with our partners—the U.S. Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Transportation, other government agencies, and private industry—to ensure that Institute-developed technologies become tools that help us understand and optimize human capabilities as they relate to transportation.

Additionally, the Institute addresses issues related to transportation in a northern climate, investigates technologies for improving the safety of travel in rural environments, and considers social and economic policy issues related to the use of core ITS technologies.
Management Structure
The ITS Institute is located on the Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota and is housed within the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS). (A satellite laboratory is located on the Duluth campus.) Much of the Institute's successful leadership in the development and application of intelligent transportation systems and technologies results from its state and national partnerships, including those with CTS, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, private industry, and county and city engineers.

The Institute director leads its operation, implements its strategic plan, and assumes overall responsibility for its success. In this role, he directs Institute programs, personnel, and funds.

The Institute’s board guides and oversees the implementation of the Institute’s work. The board works with the director to ensure that the USDOT’s Research and Innovative Technology Administration requirements are met, approves annual plans and budgets, and meets at least twice yearly to provide direction to, and approval of, the Institute’s activities.

Institute staff and University researchers, drawing from various areas of expertise, help create and spread knowledge related to intelligent transportation systems through research, education, and technology transfer activities. In addition, the leadership and staff of CTS provide connections and access to an extensive transportation research and education network. The Institute’s affiliation with the Center allows it to work seamlessly with CTS staff and benefit from its diverse outreach, administration, and communications capabilities.

Board member whose term ended during the fiscal year:
Ron Hynes
Deputy Associate Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

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Support and guidance for NATSRL are provided by its advisory board and research advisory panel, whose members are staff from partnership agencies, including Mn/DOT, St. Louis County, and the City of Duluth.

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