

# Integrating a traffic router and micro-simulator into a land use and transportation model

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1 **Abstract**

2 Because accessibility is a critical factor in determining land use, land use models  
3 have long been integrated with travel demand models. As travel modeling moves  
4 from the traditional four-step approach toward advanced modeling techniques,  
5 including microsimulation, integrated land use-transportation models are  
6 expected to evolve as well. This paper describes a first-of-its-kind attempt at  
7 integrating a dynamic, second-by-second traffic router/micro-simulator with a  
8 highly disaggregated and dynamic land use model. The traffic microsimulator  
9 captures the emergence of congestion and its impact on traffic flow, rather than  
10 looking solely at the ratio of traffic volume to capacity as the traditional four-  
11 step models do. In comparing the land use outputs of a model system that  
12 includes the micro-simulator with the results from the system without micro-  
13 simulation for our study area of Chittenden County, Vermont, statistical tests  
14 found only slight differences in the land use predictions between the two model  
15 integrations for a 40-year simulation. Although these differences were slight,  
16 their spatial patterns shed light on how transportation models influence the  
17 outcome of land use models. In particular, differences in land use predictions  
18 appear to relate to the traffic micro-simulator's predictions of emergent traffic  
19 bottlenecks along routes that serve peripheral areas where there is poor  
20 redundancy in route choice. These results suggest that land use models are at  
21 least somewhat sensitive to the type of transportation model that is used to  
22 generate accessibility measures. Our study site is a small metropolitan area with  
23 only modest population pressures and limited traffic congestion. Differences in  
24 predictions between model integrations grow as population forecasts are  
25 artificially increased, suggesting that integration of traffic micro-simulation may  
26 be of greater use in more congested areas.

27 **Introduction**

28 The linkages between land use and transportation and the need to incorporate  
29 those linkages in planning are well established (1-4). Under the Intermodal  
30 Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 and the Transportation  
31 Equity Act for the Twenty First Century (TEA-21) of 1997 (to a lesser extent), in  
32 order to receive certain types of federal transportation funds, state or regional  
33 transportation agencies are required to model the effect of transportation  
34 infrastructure development on land use patterns and to consider whether  
35 transportation plans and programs are consistent with land use plans.  
36 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are increasingly integrating  
37 dynamic land-use modeling into those efforts to evaluate transportation  
38 infrastructure performance, investment alternatives, and air quality impacts.

39 Dynamic-coupled models differ from stand-alone models in that they simulate  
40 the dynamic interactions between transportation and human activities. Because  
41 accessibility is an important factor in determining land use, dynamic land use  
42 models have long been integrated with four-step travel demand models (5).

1 However, as dynamic components are added, model integrations become  
2 increasingly complex and difficult to implement. Little guidance exists about  
3 what levels of complexity or disaggregation is needed or appropriate for  
4 modeling land use and transportation and how that changes for different planning  
5 applications. The correct balance likely depends on the particular application of  
6 the model. Many new approaches to comprehensive model-integration are being  
7 unveiled in the research community. However, as noted by Hunt et al. (6), few of  
8 these models have been conclusively shown to increase the accuracy of the  
9 model output.

10 This paper presents one of the first known attempts to integrate a traffic  
11 router/micro-simulator operations model with a highly disaggregated and  
12 dynamic land use model. Ongoing work by others demonstrates the possibilities  
13 of incorporating activity-based modeling into land use (Waddell 2010) and of  
14 incorporating activity-based modeling with traffic micro-simulation (Lin 2010).

15 Three components are used in this modeling effort: UrbanSim for land use (7-9),  
16 TransCAD (Caliper, Inc) for travel demand modeling and traffic routing and  
17 assignment, and TRANSIMS for traffic routing through micro-simulation (10-  
18 11). We compare the more commonly-used integration of the land use model  
19 with the static traffic assignment (TransCAD) to the novel integration of the land  
20 use model with the dynamic router/micro-simulator (TRANSIMS). The latter  
21 integration also requires use of TransCAD for trip generation, so we refer to the  
22 simpler integration as the “two-way model” and the more complex one as the  
23 “three-way model.”

24 UrbanSim is a land-use allocation model that simulates urban growth for a region  
25 based on externally derived estimates of population and employment growth  
26 (control totals). Expected growth is spatially allocated across the landscape to  
27 simulate the pattern of future development and land use. Agents in UrbanSim  
28 include households, employers, and real estate developers. The landscape is  
29 divided into grid cells of a user-defined size (geographic units like parcels can  
30 also be used). Each simulated development event is assigned to one of those  
31 cells based on factors like accessibility, site constraints, zoning, and land value.  
32 Model features include the ability to simulate the mobility and location choices  
33 of households and businesses; developer choices for quantity, location and type  
34 of development; fluxes and short-term imbalances in supply and demand at  
35 explicit locations; and housing price adjustments as a function of those  
36 imbalances.

37 While almost all other urban growth models rely on aggregate cross-sectional  
38 equilibrium predictive approaches, UrbanSim is an agent-based behavioral  
39 simulation model that operates under dynamic disequilibrium, which allows for  
40 more realistic modeling of economic behavior; supply-demand imbalances are  
41 addressed incrementally in each time period but are never fully satisfied  
42 (Iancono 2008). Because of its dynamic nature, UrbanSim endogenizes factors  
43 that older models took as exogenous, such as location of employment and the  
44 price of land and buildings.

1 Because accessibility can play an important role in land use decisions, UrbanSim  
2 is generally integrated with some type of transportation model. The assumption  
3 is that accessibility changes over time, so transportation should be dynamically  
4 linked with land use to improve model results. The degree to which accessibility  
5 affects land use in a given implementation of the model system depends on the  
6 way that the various statistical models in UrbanSim are parameterized and the  
7 extent to which the data reveals a relationship. In our version of UrbanSim, the  
8 residential development choice location model and the commercial development  
9 choice location model both include coefficients for accessibility.

10 TransCAD is a traditional four-step travel demand model, including trip  
11 generation, trip distribution, mode split and traffic assignment. The trip  
12 generation step quantifies the number of incoming and outgoing trips for each  
13 zone based on land use and employment patterns, and classifies these trips  
14 according to their purpose (e.g., home to work, home to shopping). Trip  
15 distribution assigns the incoming and outgoing travel from the trip generation  
16 step to specific zones. The mode split step estimates the number of trips by mode  
17 of transport. Finally, the traffic assignment identifies the route for each trip.  
18 Traffic assignment is based on an equilibrium model which employs an iterative  
19 procedure to reach convergence.

20 TRANSIMS is a detailed, data-intensive operations model that is designed to  
21 simulate traffic behavior with great spatial and temporal disaggregation. It  
22 consists of four modules: (1) synthetic population generator; (2) activity  
23 generator; (3) router; and (4) micro-simulator. In standalone implementations,  
24 TRANSIMS starts by creating a synthetic population based on census and land  
25 use data, among other data sets. The Activity Generator then creates an activity  
26 list for each synthetic traveler. The router then computes combined route and  
27 mode trip plans to accomplish the desired activities. Finally, the micro-simulator  
28 simulates the resulting traffic dynamics based on a cellular automata model,  
29 yielding detailed, second-by-second trajectories of every traveler in the system  
30 over a 24-hour period. The micro-simulator allows for a highly detailed  
31 characterization of traffic flows and is able to take into account factors like  
32 cueing, car-following, and lane changing behavior. As an operations model, it is  
33 designed to help optimize microscopic factors such as signal timing and  
34 actuation.

35 While TRANSIMS allows for an activity-based approach to transportation  
36 demand modeling (using the population synthesizer and activity generator), the  
37 model's router and micro-simulator modules can be applied using standard  
38 Origin-Destination (O-D) matrices. Implementing only TRANSIMS's router and  
39 micro-simulator is typically referred to as a "Track 1" TRANSIMS  
40 implementation. "Track 1" TRANSIMS implementation has been the focus of  
41 the current work so far. While some have suggested that using only the traffic  
42 supply modules of a microsimulator and not the traffic demand modules fails to  
43 exploit the overall purpose of microsimulation (12), in our view the Track 1  
44 implementation provides a cost-effective approach for regional planning

1 organizations, which can take advantage of the increased resolution of the  
2 TRANSIMS micro-simulator, while continuing to depend upon familiar O-D  
3 matrices. It also sets the stage for a more complete implementation in the future.

4 Since we have not yet incorporated TRANSIMS' activity-based approach to  
5 transportation demand in this model system, the primary difference between the  
6 2-way model and the 3-way model is the way each one characterizes traffic and  
7 resulting accessibilities (which are an input into UrbanSim). TransCAD uses a  
8 volume-delay function, where the congested travel time on the link is equal to  
9 the ratio of the number of vehicles on the link divided by the total capacity of the  
10 link. It assumes that inflow equals outflow for all individual links in the network.  
11 TRANSIMS, on the other hand, calculates congested travel times based on a  
12 simulated interaction of vehicles on the roadway that takes into account factors  
13 like weaving, merging, queuing, traffic signals, and intersection spill-back.  
14 TRANSIMS is designed to replicate the real-world phenomenon that lead to  
15 increased travel time and congestion that cannot be explained by just a simple  
16 volume-to-capacity ratio. This means that failure can occur at some intersections  
17 where inflow no longer equals outflow. As a result, TRANSIMS is likely to  
18 predict more localized bottlenecks.

19

## 20 **Objectives**

21 The first purpose of this paper is to introduce and describe the integration of the  
22 TRANSIMS router/micro-simulator with the UrbanSim land use model. The  
23 second purpose is to determine whether the two model integrations lead to  
24 different land use predictions. To the extent the land use predictions differ, we  
25 analyze the pattern of outputs to better understand how the two approaches to  
26 calculating accessibilities in each transportation model contributes to these  
27 differences. By characterizing and analyzing these differences we hope to shed  
28 light on the role that transportation and accessibility modeling play in long-term  
29 land use predictions and the tradeoffs to added complexity in such modeling  
30 efforts.

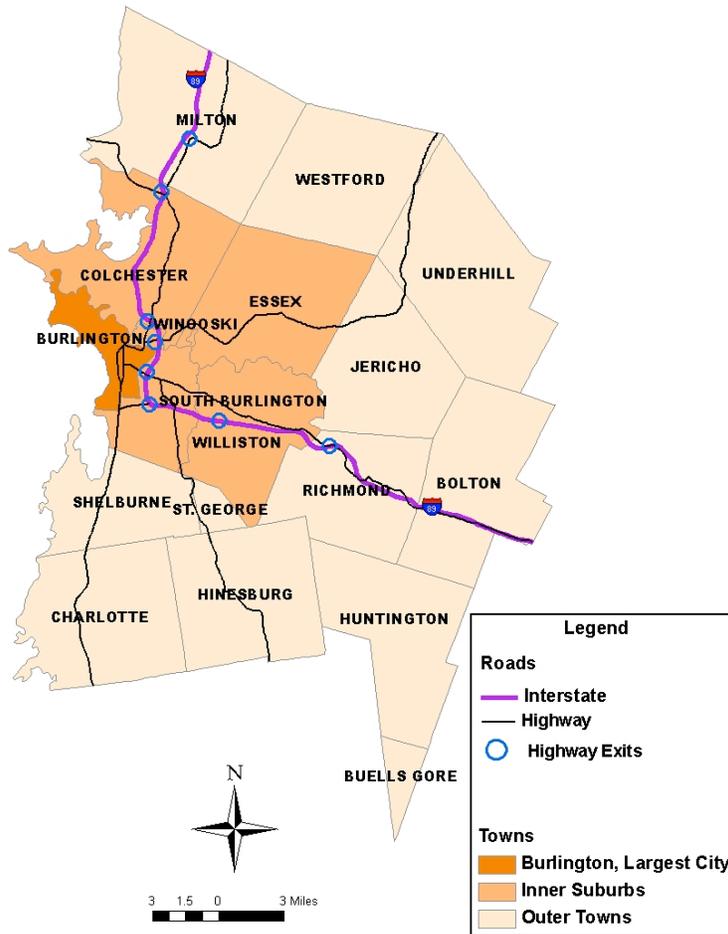
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## 32 **Methods**

### 33 Modeling Site

34 Our models are run for Chittenden County, VT (Figure 1), the most populous  
35 county in the state and the home to its largest city, Burlington. Chittenden  
36 County is among the smallest metropolitan areas where UrbanSim has been  
37 implemented, with an estimated 2009 population of 152,000. It is an excellent  
38 location for modeling for two reasons: first, its small size makes highly  
39 disaggregate and data-intensive modeling tractable; second, its isolation from  
40 other cities (the nearest metropolitan area is Montreal, more than 90 miles away),  
41 means it approximates "closed city" modeling conditions (although we do use 17

1 external TAZs to account for inter-county traffic, this is a small component of  
2 the county's overall transportation). Despite its small size, Chittenden County  
3 has its own Metropolitan Planning Organization, which conducts extensive  
4 modeling.



5  
6 **FIGURE 1 Map of Chittenden County.**

7 Description of the Models

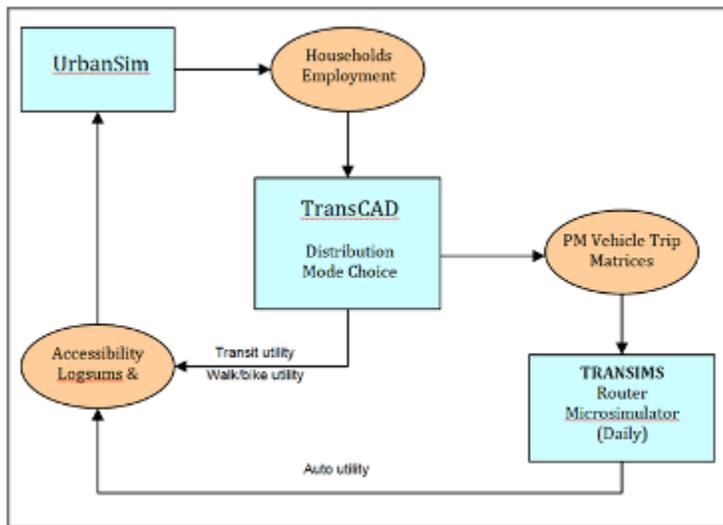
8 This analysis was conducted by integrating previously developed  
9 implementations of three models. We used an implementation of UrbanSim  
10 developed for Chittenden County, Vermont, by Austin Troy and Brian Voigt (6,  
11 14, 15). We used the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization's  
12 (CCMPO) implementation of TransCAD, which was developed for the MPO by  
13 Resource Systems Group, Inc. The model includes 335 internal traffic analysis  
14 zones (TAZs) to simulate traffic flow, and includes an additional 17 external  
15 zones to represent traffic entering (or passing through) the County from outside  
16 its borders (14). The travel model is based on household travel diaries collected  
17 for the CCMPO. Customized scripts were developed that automated the

1 integrated models. We used the implementation of TRANSIMS developed by  
2 Resource Systems Group and Adel Sadek (12, 13).

3 The 2-way configuration consists of UrbanSim, which generates the socio-  
4 economic land use data like total number of households and employment in each  
5 traffic analysis zone, and TransCAD, which derives accessibilities using travel  
6 times from the static vehicle assignment. These travel times are then sent as  
7 input to UrbanSim. After every five years of model time TransCAD is rerun  
8 using updated land use data from UrbanSim, and in turn updating UrbanSim's  
9 accessibilities (6, 14, 15).

10 The 3-way configuration adds a third component: the TRANSIMS router/micro-  
11 simulator. In this configuration (Figure 2), TransCAD performs trip generation,  
12 trip distribution, and mode choice, and exports a PM peak vehicle trip matrix to  
13 TRANSIMS. TransCAD's static vehicle assignment is replaced by TRANSIMS'  
14 regional vehicle micro-simulation. The amount and distribution of regional auto  
15 travel demand is identical in the two models, but in the 3-way model  
16 accessibilities are derived using the simulation-based auto travel times and sent  
17 as input to UrbanSim.

18



**FIGURE 2 Three-way model configuration.**

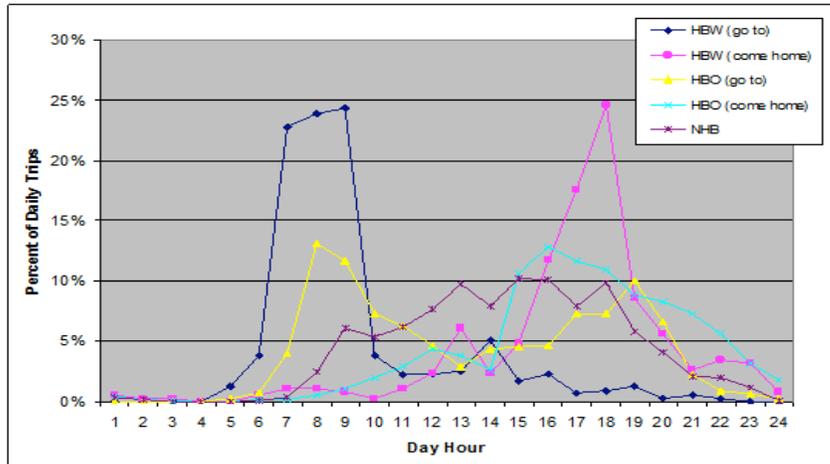
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## 20 Integration of the Traffic Micro-simulation Model

21 Because the 3-way model still uses TransCAD for trip generation and because  
22 TransCAD operates at an aggregate level, a significant task in integrating the 3-  
23 way model was to convert the PM peak hour vehicle trip matrices produced by  
24 TransCAD to daily vehicle trips that could be used by the microsimulator. Using  
25 diurnal distribution data collected during the development of the daily CCMPO  
26 TRANSIMS model, and daily peak PM hour traffic volume (defined as 5:00 pm  
27 to 6:00 pm in the TransCAD model, we derived a PM peak hour to daily  
28 adjustment factor for each of five trip types. The diurnal distribution data is

1 presented in Figure 3 below. The calculated PM peak hour to daily adjustment  
 2 factors are set forth in Troy, et al. (14). A macro was added to apply the daily  
 3 adjustment factors to the PM-peak hour CCMPO TransCAD model to generate  
 4 daily vehicle matrices from the PM vehicle trip matrices, convert all values to  
 5 integers while maintaining row totals, and export the results so they are available  
 6 for input into the first module of the TRANSIMS model.

7



**FIGURE 2 CCMPO TRANSIMS model diurnal distributions.**

8

9

10 The second significant difference in the 3-way model is the calculation of auto  
 11 travel times, which are the most significant component of accessibility in the  
 12 model system. In the 2-way model, TransCAD generates a file that contains  
 13 auto, walk/bike, and transit utilities as well as the logsum (composite measure of  
 14 accessibility across modes) for each zone-to-zone pair. This file is fed back to  
 15 UrbanSim for the next iteration. By incorporating TRANSIMS into the model  
 16 chain in the 3-way model, we replace the auto utilities in this file with auto  
 17 utilities based on zone-to-zone travel times calculated by the TRANSIMS  
 18 microsimulator instead of the TransCAD model assignment module.

19 TRANSIMS-based auto utilities are calculated using the following regression  
 20 equation:

21 
$$\text{Utility (Auto)} = -1.09438 - 0.020795 * \text{TRANSIMS Time}$$

22 Logsum value for each zone-to-zone pair are calculated based on the new auto  
 23 utilities.

24 
$$\text{Logsum} = \text{LN}(\text{EXP}[\text{Utility}(\text{Walk-Bike})] + \text{EXP}[\text{Utility}(\text{Transit})] +$$
  
 25 
$$\text{EXP}[\text{Utility}(\text{Auto})])$$

1 A python script reads the existing logsum file generated by the TransCAD model  
2 as well as a TRANSIMS zone-to-zone travel time skim file. The program updates  
3 the logsum file by calculating a new auto utility and then recalculating the  
4 logsum for each zone pair using the equations presented above. The revised  
5 logsum file can then be used as input to UrbanSim to complete the feedback  
6 process.

7 A new module was added to the CCMPO TRANSIMS model that writes out a  
8 zone-to-zone travel time skim matrix. The skim file output contains the zone-to-  
9 zone congested travel time for the 5:00pm to 6:00pm hour calculated by the  
10 microsimulator.

### 11 Model Runs and Analysis

12 We ran forty year simulations of both the 2-way and 3-way model integrations  
13 using the same data sets, starting in 1990 and ending in 2030. In both cases,  
14 UrbanSim iterated every year while the transportation model ran every five  
15 years. A fixed seed was used in choice-set delineation for UrbanSim to minimize  
16 stochasticity and maximize comparability between the model integrations. Both  
17 model integrations use the same UrbanSim model coefficients.

18 Two versions of each model were run, one using population and employment  
19 forecasts obtained from the MPO as control totals, ( the “baseline scenario”), and  
20 another using controls totals artificially increased by 50% ( the “increased  
21 control total scenario”). This was done to help determine whether differences in  
22 the model outputs relate to population development pressures.

23 Finally, we analyzed the outputs. While a large number of indicators are  
24 produced by these model integrations, we focus this analysis on three: residential  
25 units (at the town and TAZ level), commercial square footage (at the town and  
26 TAZ level) and accessibilities, characterized as logsum values (at the TAZ level  
27 only). Because our model base year is 1990, we were able to conduct a  
28 preliminary validation of both model integrations against observed data from  
29 later years (2006 for household development and 2009 for commercial  
30 development). We found no statistically significant differences in prediction  
31 accuracies for the two model integrations. For that reason, we do not present the  
32 results here. Nevertheless, we ran statistical analyses to look for differences in  
33 the 2030 outputs of the two models and analyzed geographic patterns in those  
34 differences.

35

## 36 **Results**

### 37 Statistical differences in models

38 Variance ratio tests for the whole population of TAZs revealed no significant  
39 difference in variance across the whole population of TAZs between models for  
40 both sets of indicators for 2030. Using paired t-tests, slight significant differences

1 were found in predicted commercial square footage for 2030 at the TAZ level  
2 when grouped by town. For the baseline population scenario, significant  
3 differences in commercial square footage were found at the 95% confidence level  
4 for the town of Williston ( $t=2.654$ ,  $p=0.011$ ), which has the third largest number  
5 of TAZs in the county. Westford had significant differences at the 90%  
6 confidence level ( $t=-2.366$ ,  $p=0.099$ ). With the increased control total scenario,  
7 differences were fewer: there were no significant differences in commercial  
8 square footage at the 95% confidence level, although Burlington ( $t=-1.825$ ,  
9  $p=0.072$ ) and Shelburne ( $t=-1.867$ ,  $p=0.092$ ) were different at the 90% level. A  
10 significant difference in residential units was found for Milton at the 95%  
11 confidence level in the baseline scenario ( $t=-2.487$ ,  $p=.03$ ). In the increased  
12 control total scenario, significant differences at the 95% level were found in  
13 residential units for Jericho ( $t=-3.61$ ,  $p=.037$ ) and at the 90% level for Milton ( $t=-$   
14  $2.12$ ,  $p=.058$ ). A spatial statistical analysis was also conducted using Moran's I  
15 (Moran (1950) to see if measures of spatial autocorrelation differed between the  
16 outputs of the two models, but no difference was found.

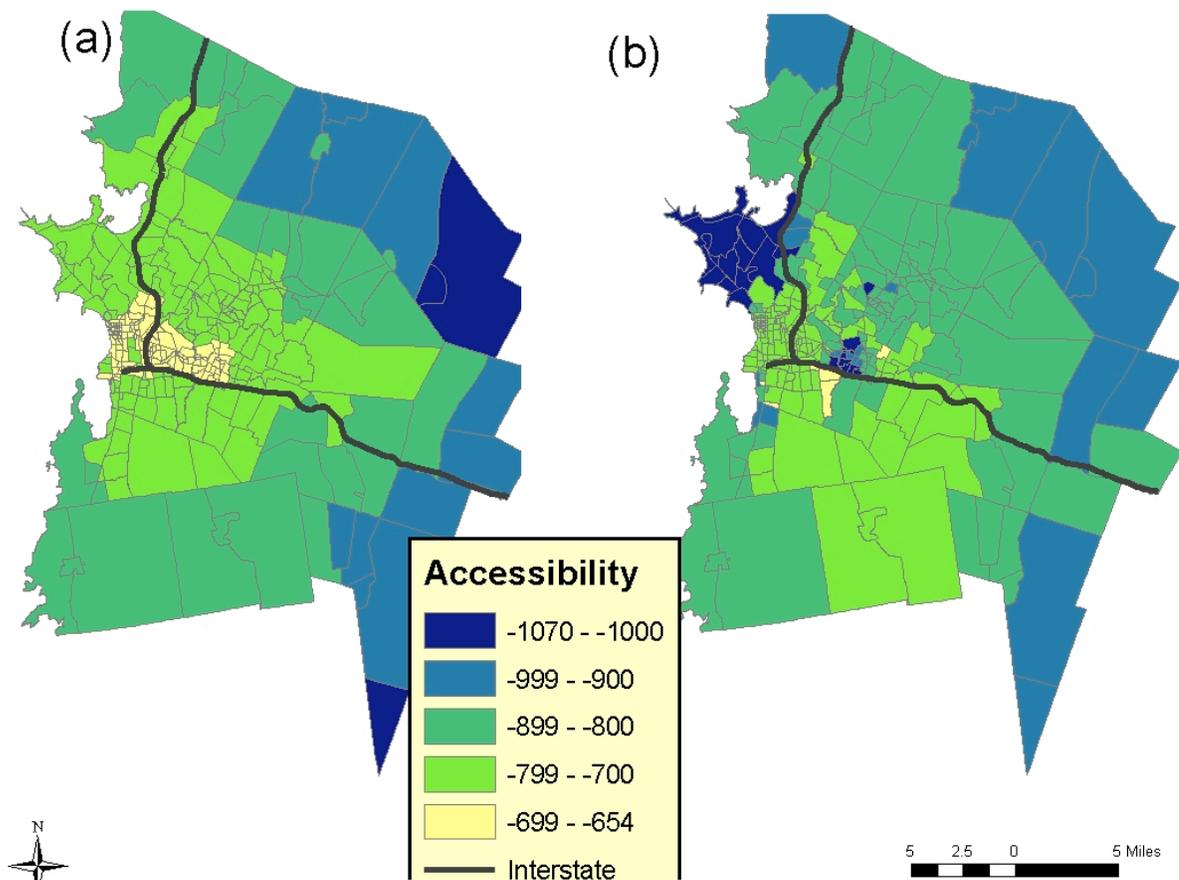
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#### 18 Preliminary Comparison of Travel Times

19 Figure 4 shows the difference in predicted logsum accessibilities between the 2-  
20 way model and the 3-way model for the year 2030 under a scenario with baseline  
21 population forecast control totals. Because accessibility is one of the factors in  
22 the land use development choices, the fact that there are clear differences in the  
23 spatial pattern of accessibility served as an indication that differences in land use  
24 outputs were a distinct possibility, and that further analysis was warranted.

25

26



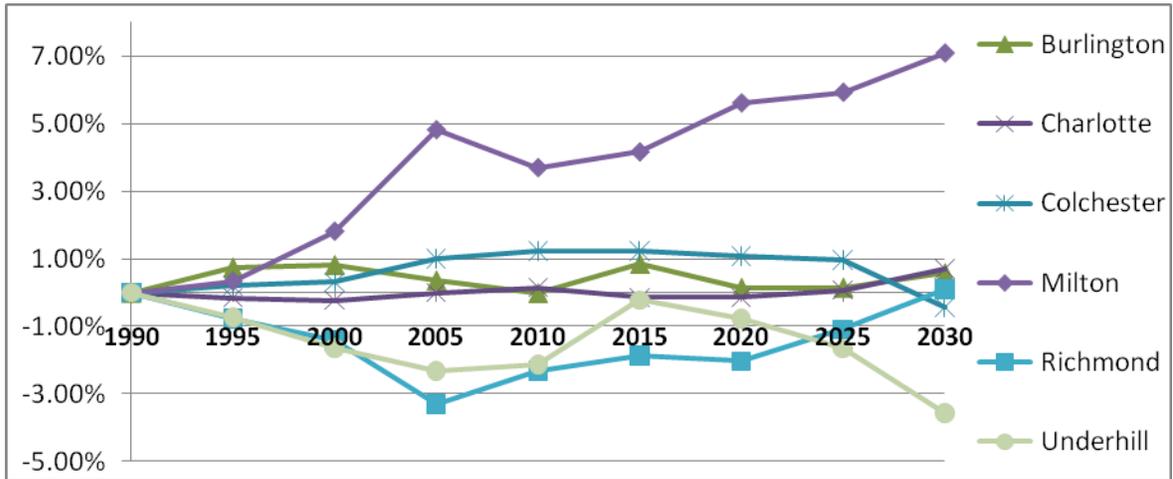
**FIGURE 4 Comparison of accessibilities characterized as logsums by TAZ for 2-way (a) and 3-way (b) models in the year 2030. Logsums are unitless measures of relative accessibility. Yellow indicates TAZs with better accessibility, blue indicates worse. [Note: I think that a more useful graphic would be to do this by quantiles instead of by values, so that the worst 20% of TAZs in each model are the same color ]**

1

2 Long-term trends

3 We looked at graphs of key indicators to see when large discrepancies emerge  
 4 between the models, if at all. Figure 5 shows the percent difference in predicted  
 5 housing units between the two models for a sample of six towns from 1990 to  
 6 2030. It indicates a continuously growing difference for the outlying towns of  
 7 Milton and Underhill. Milton has higher predictions for the 2-way model, while  
 8 Underhill has the opposite. Other towns, like Bolton, show divergence between  
 9 the models in early years and then return to smaller differences later. Several  
 10 towns start to show patterns of divergence between models and then return to  
 11 small differences in later years, such as South Burlington, Richmond and  
 12 Colchester. Others are in close agreement throughout all forty years of model  
 13 time, such as Charlotte and Burlington. Commercial square footage prediction  
 14 graphs (not shown here) show a somewhat similar pattern with Milton also  
 15 having increasingly positive 2-way prediction differences over time, several

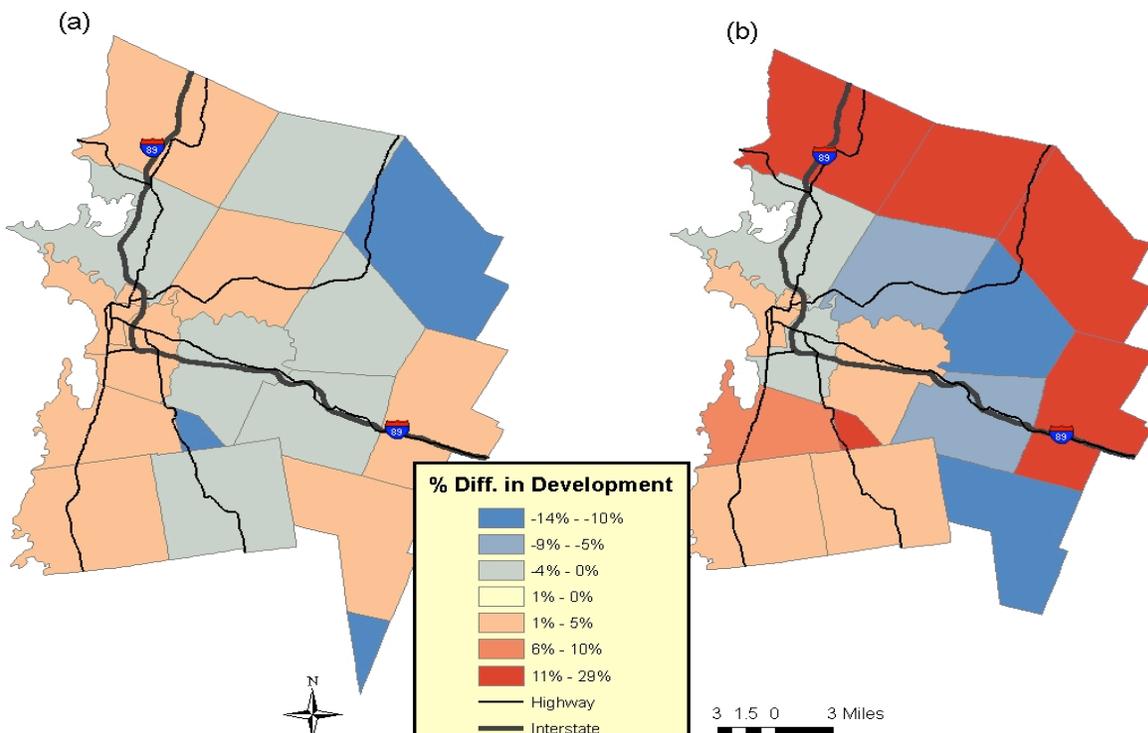
1 outlying towns with the opposite pattern and a number of towns in the middle,  
 2 with relatively little difference.



3  
 4 **FIGURE 5 Percent difference in predicted residential units between models**  
 5 **(2-way minus 3-way divided by total units) for a sample of 6 towns.**

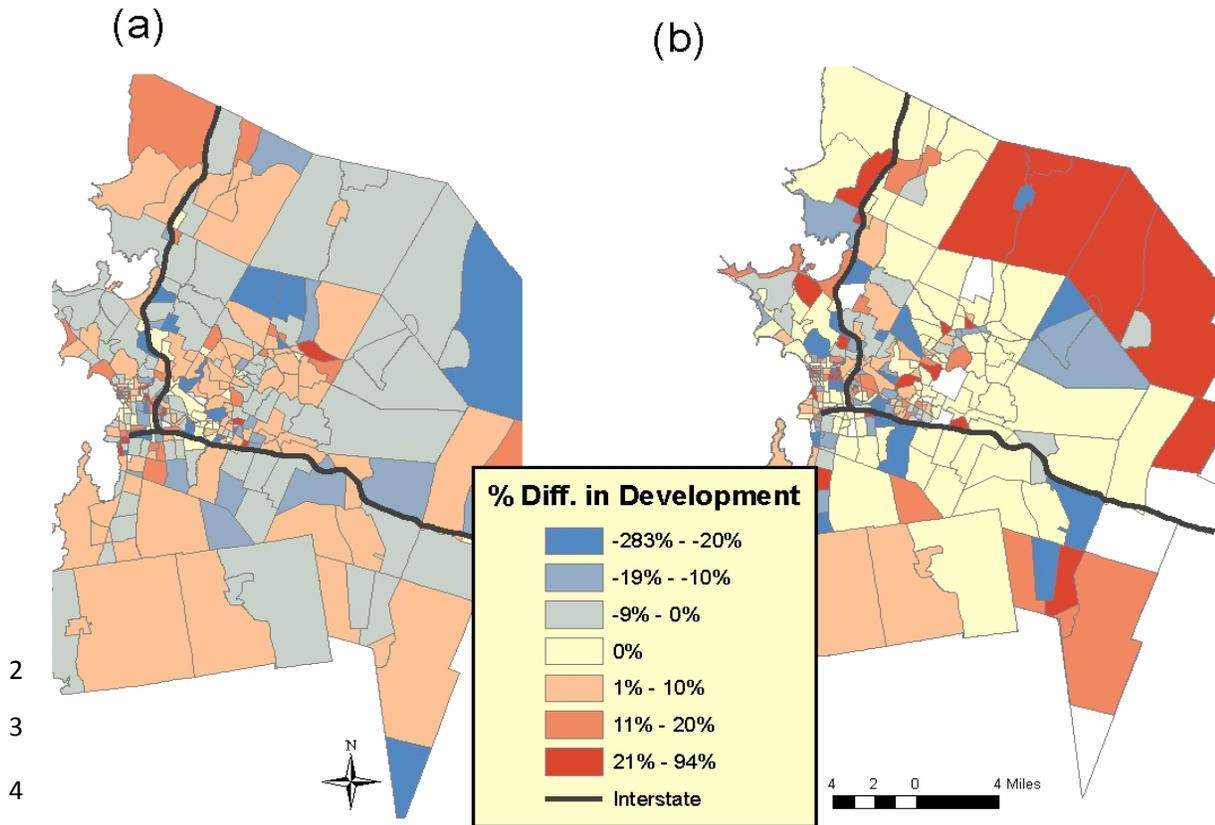
6 Side by side maps in Figure 6 and 7 show percentage differences in predicted  
 7 residential units (a) and commercial square footage (b) for 2030 at the town level  
 8 and the TAZ level, respectively, under the increased control total scenario.  
 9 Baseline control total maps are not shown in the interests of space and because  
 10 the patterns are similar but much weaker.

11



**FIGURE 6 Town-level comparison under increased control totals: (a) Percent difference in residential development forecasts from the 2-way and 3-way models for 2030 using baseline control totals. (b) Percent difference in commercial development forecasts from the 2-way and 3-way models for 2030 using baseline control totals. Blue**

1



2

3

4

5 **FIGURE 7 Same as Figure 6 but at the TAZ level.**

6

7

## 8 **Discussion**

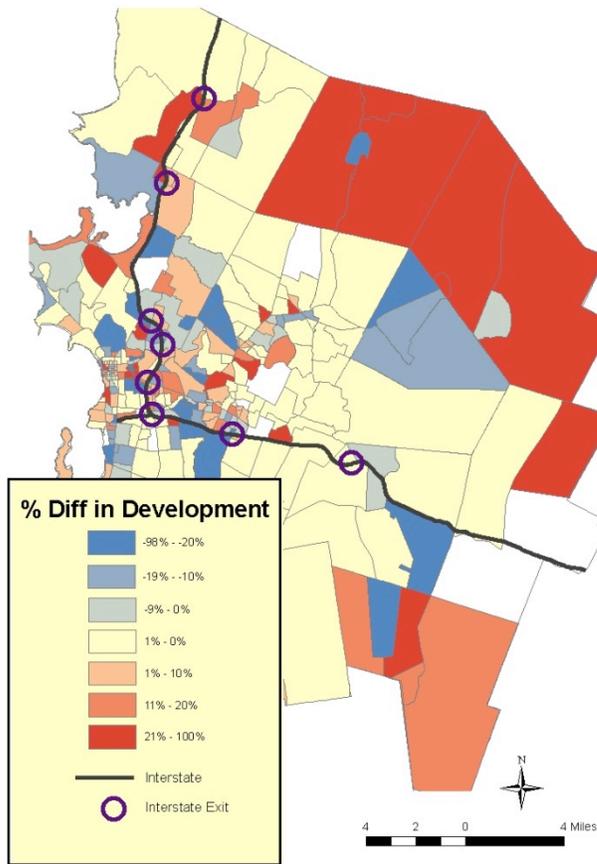
9 This project was the first of its kind to integrate a traffic router/micro-simulator  
10 with a highly disaggregated and dynamic land use model. This project shows that  
11 such an integration is feasible, although it is also difficult, time consuming, and  
12 expensive. With hundreds of gigabytes of outputs, far more analysis of the  
13 results of these models remains to be done before any final assessment of the  
14 value of this project can be made. However, this analysis represents a  
15 preliminary attempt to address it, at least in the context of a region with little  
16 competitive pressure on land use and low rates of congestion.

17 The fact that accessibilities are far more spatially heterogeneous in the 3-way  
18 model (Figure 4), would lead us to believe that, theoretically, there could be  
19 systematic differences in the land use outputs. Our UrbanSim implementation

1 consists of ten statistical models that drive activities like household and  
2 employment moves, land price, and development events. While many include  
3 spatial parameters such as location within the “urban core,” or the amount of  
4 commercial or residential development within walking distance, only the  
5 residential and commercial development models include parameters on  
6 accessibility from the travel model. Because TRANSIMS predicted more  
7 localized areas of reduced accessibility within the interior of the county, we  
8 expected to find that some more centrally located areas might develop slightly  
9 less in the 3-way model than in the 2-way model.

10 While the results of our two models are different, it is not clear that these  
11 differences are important enough to matter for the purposes of land use change  
12 prediction. Our validation results (not presented here) show minimal differences  
13 between the two in predicting intermediate-year data. Statistical pairwise  
14 comparisons of TAZ-level results grouped by town suggest that differences in  
15 predicted indicators for 2030 are present for only a few towns. Tests of the whole  
16 population of TAZs found no significant difference in variance for both land use  
17 indicators.

18 Nonetheless, our maps of 2030 prediction differences in commercial  
19 development under increased control totals (which was used because it  
20 emphasizes the differences between models more) show some interesting patterns  
21 that suggest potential systematic spatial differences in predictions. As Figure 6  
22 shows, all the peripheral towns along the northern and eastern boundaries of the  
23 county have more commercial development under the 2-way model than under  
24 the 3-way. The same pattern is evident at the TAZ level, although heterogeneity  
25 is slightly greater along the periphery. This result is intuitive given what we  
26 know of the models. As population grows, TRANSIMS predicts more congestion  
27 and delay and hence lesser accessibility in the outer TAZs than TransCAD. This  
28 pattern is particularly evident for TAZs that do not adjoin the Interstate (where  
29 the Interstate runs through, there are fewer red TAZs). Redundancy of routes is  
30 very poor the further out one travels in the county, so just a few high-delay links  
31 can make a big impact on accessibility in areas that require a long drive on non-  
32 Interstate routes. Our preliminary analysis of TRANSIMS’s link level outputs  
33 (not presented here) shows a number of predicted traffic bottlenecks along such  
34 key arterials that connect outer suburbs to the urban core that TransCAD does  
35 not capture. Not all of these “red TAZs” are on the outer periphery. Some are  
36 more central, but require significant driving on bottleneck-prone arterials.  
37 Interestingly, as is reflected in Figure 8, most of the TAZs containing an  
38 Interstate exit appear to have higher employment predictions in the 2-way model,  
39 which is consistent with this explanation.



1

2 **FIGURE 8 Blow-up of Figure 7(b) showing Interstate Exits.**

3

4 No clear spatial pattern is evident for differences in residential predictions.  
 5 Figure 6 suggests that only one of the towns included in the graph experience  
 6 steadily increasing differences over time between models. Otherwise, differences  
 7 oscillated within a small range over time. This difference between residential and  
 8 commercial indicators is likely due to the model coefficients that relate to output  
 9 from the transportation models. The residential developer model includes a  
 10 parameter for home accessibility to employment while the commercial developer  
 11 model includes a parameter for work accessibility to employment. Further, the  
 12 commercial development coefficient is almost twice the magnitude of the  
 13 residential coefficient.

14

15 **Conclusion**

16 TRANSIMS is designed as an operations model for assessing and optimizing  
 17 microscopic factors in the traffic network. Some believe that models like this are  
 18 inappropriate for coupling with long-term land use change models. Our land use  
 19 results from the 2030 simulation look generally reasonable, but our preliminary

1 analysis of link level data from TRANSIMS indicates that after forty years of  
2 simulation, a number of unrealistic bottlenecks and congestion points develop.  
3 This is probably because, as an operations model, TRANSIMS runs with an  
4 assumption that factors like signal timing and lane rules are to be changed over  
5 time. When they remain static over long periods like forty years, this may lead to  
6 unrealistic characterizations of accessibility. Nonetheless, these bottlenecks only  
7 had a very minor impact on development predictions. This may be because of our  
8 model coefficients, which were estimated in an area where traffic congestion is  
9 relatively minimal. Had we estimated these coefficients in a larger urban area  
10 with extensive congestions, it is possible that the impacts of these accessibility  
11 differences on development would have been greater. Hence, the impact of  
12 transportation model type on land use results is extremely sensitive to model  
13 coefficient specification. It is also possible that had we run the TRANSIMS  
14 Track 2 implementation which includes the activity model with disaggregated  
15 activity locations, differences would have been more pronounced.

16 Given our current results, there appears to be little justification for expending the  
17 large amount of time and money required to implement TRANSIMS for the  
18 purposes of long-term land use modeling in a context like Chittenden County.  
19 However, this approach might be more valuable in large metropolitan areas  
20 where population pressures and traffic delays are much greater. In such cases, we  
21 would expect to find delay-related (as opposed to distance-related) accessibility  
22 having a greater impact on land use. It is possible that in such cases a land use  
23 model integrated with TRANSIMS would yield a more accurate characterization  
24 of accessibility, leading to better land use predictions. However, such a model  
25 should probably only be run for short-term predictions in highly congested areas,  
26 as long-term simulations could result in unrealistic localized stoppages of traffic  
27 flow which, in real life, could be addressed through minor interventions, like re-  
28 timing signals. Further research is warranted to determine the usefulness of  
29 including a micro-simulator in land use modeling for more populous and  
30 congested regions and to determine the appropriate time frame of modeling in  
31 this context.

32 The integration of TRANSIMS with a land use model may also be valuable in  
33 assessing how hypothetical changes to the transportation network might  
34 influence the spatial pattern of development, potentially even in smaller  
35 metropolitan areas. We are currently in the process of running the 2-way and 3-  
36 way models on an alternative scenario involving the construction of a large  
37 number of new roads to determine if the 3-way model's land use predictions are  
38 more spatially sensitive to the new infrastructure. This and other future research  
39 will help us better understand the usefulness and cost effectiveness of complex  
40 integrated modeling tools for the planning process.

41

## 42 **Acknowledgements**

1 This work was funded by grants from the USDOT administered through the  
2 University of Vermont Transportation Research Center and through FHWA. The  
3 authors also wish to thank the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning  
4 Organization and Regional Planning Commission for their collaboration, as well  
5 as Stephen Lawe, Brian Grady, and John Lobb of Resource Systems Group, Inc.,  
6 and James Sullivan of the University of Vermont Transportation Research  
7 Center.

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