Joint TRF and Sandhouse Gang Meeting
Brown Bag Luncheon….

Michael J. Shiffer, Ph.D.
Vice President, Planning, Strategy & Technology
TransLink (South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority)

A Chicagoan’s Transportation Odyssey: Adventures in Planning for Automated Trains, Electric Buses and Smart Roadways in Vancouver

Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2010
11:30 pm – 1:30 pm
Talk will begin at 12:00 noon

Location:
DePaul University - CDM Building
243 S. Wabash, Ste. 900, Chicago
(northeast corner of Jackson & Wabash)

Abstract: How can transit planning and funding be effectively tied to a major road network? Are automated trains running every 108 seconds a thing of beauty? Do trolley wires for electric buses really become invisible after three months? How do you balance the need to shape future demand in suburban areas while still serving the needs of a densely populated urbanized setting?

About a year and a half ago Mike Shiffer moved from Chicago to Vancouver to lead transportation planning in Canada’s only multi-modal transportation agency, TransLink. There, he heads a team of planning professionals in a transportation agency that finances, plans, implements and operates a network of major roads, bridges, bike paths, buses, ferries, commuter trains, and an automated rail transit system (that rivals the ‘L’ in scale and passengers carried). Yet, working in this environment is not without its challenges, especially given that TransLink serves 22 communities with vastly different land use and travel patterns. Although the agency is working with increased resources, there is still a significant appetite for expanded service and the ever-present challenge of how to fund it.

This highly illustrated presentation will describe how Metro Vancouver plans for and funds a multimodal transportation network. It will also describe how information technology is used to leverage more productivity out of the existing network. Along the way, we’ll learn more about North America’s most extensive electric trolley bus network. We’ll also highlight a bus corridor that provides 100,000 trips a day and discuss plans for improving it. We’ll hear about a highly efficient ferry service and the challenges of balancing increasing demand for commuter rail while addressing needs for efficient freight movement. Finally, the presentation will describe recent success surrounding the delivery of transit services during the Winter Olympics and transit and roadway infrastructure improvements that will have a legacy for generations to come.

Bio_ Michael J. Shiffer is Vice President for Planning, Strategy & Technology at TransLink (the regional transportation authority for greater Vancouver). There, he is responsible for planning activities that support all land transportation modes. He is also responsible for applications and management of technology for the transportation network. Dr. Shiffer was formerly Vice President for Planning and Development at the Chicago Transit Authority. For over six years in Chicago, Shiffer led the strategic and operations planning efforts of the second largest public transit system in the United States.

Dr. Shiffer has also served as an academic for nearly 20 years. He has held faculty posts at both MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning and the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at UIC. His research has focused on how information technologies can better inform deliberation, debate and decision-making. Shiffer received a Ph.D. in Regional Planning and Master's of Urban Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Last, but not least, he started his academic career with a BA in Geography from DePaul University.