

Presentation title:

Spatial-temporal analysis of crime near activity nodes in Milwaukee, WI

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Crime is not randomly distributed in time or space, rather, is clustered and influenced by why and how people move in the environment. Geographic areas most prone to high mobility and the clustering of people are those where transit routes and activity nodes are highly concentrated. In attracting a large number of people through the use of transit at a fixed geographic space, transit can shape crime patterns in an urban environment by becoming a crime generator in that a high number of people congregate in one geographic area as a result of converging nodes and routes to use the service. If such activity nodes are unprepared for such high activity through design, security, and maintenance, these areas can develop into crime attractors, where motivated offenders seek certain places due to known opportunities to engage in crime. To this point, the literature has focused on understanding whether crime, specifically burglary and robbery events concentrate near transit and other activity nodes. Findings are inconsistent in that some research has found certain activity nodes to act as “risky facilities” that attract crime, while others detract crime through heightened guardianship, observation, and environmental design measures. This forms a unique opportunity to continue the conversation regarding whether transit facilities are “risky” and “criminogenic” in accordance with how environmental criminology would traditionally measure such a phenomenon. In this study, we have analyzed the spatial distribution and concentration of burglary and robbery crimes near transit and other activity nodes found to act as crime generators, attractors, or detractors in accordance with the existing literature. Implications of this study are scanning, analyzing, responding, and assessing (SARA) the Milwaukee County Transit Service (MCTS), while providing a framework for studying the impact of the built environment on the concentration of crime in other environments.