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City Tech and UIC Launch Innovation Program to Tackle Mobility Challenges
Working with Bosch, Microsoft, and HERE Technologies, City Tech Brings Collaboration to the Classroom

Chicago — City Tech today announced a partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Innovation Center to explore how technology can address urban mobility challenges. The nearly year-long project kicked off this fall and will feature a collaborative effort between City Tech, UIC, Bosch, Microsoft, and HERE Technologies to help students across multiple colleges develop mobility solutions and encourage Chicago residents to prioritize high capacity transit systems as part of their daily journey.

The UIC Innovation Center features an interdisciplinary approach, including corporate-funded classes, labs and sponsored projects. Students in the program will not solely focus on public transit as a mode of transportation, but on the complete journey that city residents take each day. They will explore specific opportunities to increase public transit accessibility; facilitate seamless transfers across multiple modes of transportation; improve and prioritize bus and train options as part of resident journeys; and envision what public transit may look like for future generations. The collaboration will research these concepts and develop potential pilots using Chicago as a testbed.

City Tech will work closely with the students throughout the semesters and apply its proven city solution methodology to address universal mobility challenges. With growing populations and urban congestion on the rise, the collaboration will deliver solution prototypes tested in the field and based on human-centered research and understanding, which aligns with City Tech’s recently launched Advanced Mobility Initiative (link to press release).

“City Tech is thrilled to partner with the UIC Innovation Center to guide a challenge-driven program to deliver real solutions that will impact the city of Chicago and beyond,” said Brenna Berman, CEO of City Tech Collaborative. “This level of resourcing extends the reach and impact of City Tech’s Advanced Mobility Initiative, all while staying grounded in commitments to safer, more equitable and sustainable mobility systems.”

Urban transportation is facing a proliferation of new modes, increasing urban congestion, an influx of data, and rising calls for expanded mobility services and access. These trends are forcing cities to reevaluate the way they design and manage the public way. At the same time, new competition and shifting consumer demand requires a rethinking of public transportation operations and design. The partnership will dedicate nearly a year’s worth of human-centered research, user experience testing,
and prototyping to help solve these urban challenges. The level of dedicated support from 40 students working in teams of five, and nearly 10 faculty and mentors over 32 weeks will result in a broad range of deliverables – from research and descriptions of user-behavior, to design development concepts and field-tested prototypes.

“The Innovation Center’s interdisciplinary approach is key to solving problems that have as much reach and complexity as urban mobility,” said Peter Pfanner, Executive Director of the UIC Innovation Center. “The Innovation Center has delivered thousands of concepts, dozens of products and systems, significant IP and incalculable financial benefit to multiple partners over the past decade; we are excited to have City Tech, Bosch, Microsoft, and HERE Technologies on the team.”

“Collaboration between the university and corporate partners will bring an action-oriented perspective in applying technology to cities’ emerging challenges,” said Lon Tierney, Director of Business Strategy Leadership at Microsoft Corp. “Providing students with industry-leading technology will help them solve these challenges of today and enable them with tools to take on new challenges in the future.”

“As a sponsor of the UIC Innovation Center program, HERE Technologies is committed to enhancing our cities’ mobility systems,” said Olga Selina, Vice President of Planning and Innovation Enablement of HERE Technologies. “This partnership will provide fresh insights and open new pathways to improve how city residents navigate through and interact with the urban landscape, while ensuring that cities continue to evolve as thriving, equitable centers for all residents.”

Launched in April 2019, City Tech’s Advanced Mobility Initiative will help cities take a more proactive role in transportation planning in the face of urban mobility’s rapidly evolving landscape. The Initiative will apply existing technologies and products to mobility challenges, integrating them into comprehensive solutions to create a more seamless and frictionless transportation system with increased accessibility and reach for cities and their residents. Extending the current advanced mobility corporate partnerships to a university innovation program will lend dedicated work to further understand the urban mobility landscape.

For more information about the UIC Innovation Center partnership or about City Tech’s Advanced Mobility Initiative, contact City Tech at Collaborate@CityTech.org.

About City Tech Collaborative (City Tech)
City Tech reinvents cities. We convene cross-sector leaders to tackle urban problems that are too big for any one group to solve on its own. We remake essential city services and infrastructure using advanced technology and then expand these solutions to other cities. With our partners, we have diverted rainwater from overloaded sewer systems, eased subway congestion during large events, and launched a digital directory of public health services. Chicago is our proving ground and every city is a potential partner. Visit www.CityTech.org for more information and follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn.

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