## Newsletter Announcement for study: Developing Agent-Based Models for Urban Planning: A Workshop and Focus Group

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Local land-use and economic development decisions are often made without a clear assessment of their regional and environmental impacts, mostly because of the complexity and inevitable uncertainty in our region. Policy-makers and stakeholders do not have appropriate tools to assess the consequences of their decisions. The diversity of needs also makes it hard to reach an agreement over what measures to implement to achieve desired planning objectives. Such planning requires appropriate tools to produce information about future effects that is interpreted in relation to the values, purposes and experience of local stakeholders and scientists from different disciplines. Computer-based tools, like simulations, could help, but they need to be designed with the end user - planning meeting attendees - in mind. A group of University of Illinois at Chicago researchers with expertise in urban planning and policy and in simulation and user interface design would like to create software that will assist policy planners to make more effective policies, and is looking for volunteers to participate in a 3-hour workshop/focus group. In this workshop, volunteers will learn how to use a freely-available simulation program (NetLogo) and provide feedback, which will be used to design software specifically for urban planning (this feedback will be audio/video-taped to aid us in our analysis, but these records will never be made public and will be destroyed after analysis). The workshop is tentatively scheduled for March 5, 2010, from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at CMAP. If you are a former, current, or future participant in urban planning meetings and are interested in taking part in this research, please contact Dr. Moira Zellner by email (mzellner@uic.edu) or phone (312-996-2149), and let us know if you could bring a laptop for use in the workshop.