

**CANAL AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY, TRACK II (CATS II)  
C000757- PIN PT19.64.914**

**Summary of  
Alternative Scenarios Presentation and Modeling Workshop**

Dates & Times:        Session 1: Wednesday, November 28, 2007, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
                              Session 2: Wednesday, November 28, 2007, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Locations:                Session 1  
                              New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC)  
                              One Seaport Plaza  
                              199 Water Street, 22nd Floor  
                              New York, NY

                                  Session 2  
                                  PS 130  
                                  143 Baxter St.  
                                  New York, NY

Subject:                    CATS Track II

Attendees:                Please see the attached attendee sign in sheets

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**1.     PURPOSE:**

On November 28, 2007, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) sponsored two community meetings for the Canal Area Transportation Study Track II (CATS II). The meetings covered the following topics:

- What is CATS II?
- How does the NYMTC Best Practice Model (BPM) work?
- How was the BPM used to model the CATS II Scenarios?
- What are the CATS II traffic reduction/diversion scenarios?
- What were the results of Level One and Level Two testing?
- What are the next steps?

There were questions and discussion during and after the presentations.

## **2. ITEMS DISPLAYED/DISTRIBUTED:**

A PowerPoint slideshow was presented by the study team. There were display boards illustrating the CATS II traffic reduction/diversion scenarios. There were also handouts that included copies of the CATS II Fact Sheet, CATS II Parking Study Overview, NYMTC background materials, and CATS I Summary.

## **3. PRESENTATION/HIGHLIGHTS:**

The following is an overview of the presentation (the complete presentation is available at the NYMTC CATS II website):

- Mr. Gerry Bogacz of NYMTC welcomed the audience and introduced the CATS II study team. He gave a brief overview of CATS and presented the study's history and CATS II key aspects, study area, milestones, and progress to date.
- Mr. James Kahng of PB Americas explained how the NYMTC Best Practice Model (BPM) works and how it is being used to model CATS II scenarios.
- Mr. Jerry Gluck of Urbitran provided an overview of the traffic reduction/diversion scenarios and why they were developed.
- Mr. Joseph Setteducato of PB Americas presented the BPM results for the CATS II Level One and Level Two scenarios.
- Mr. Gerry Bogacz concluded the presentation by describing the next steps of CATS II. There was an overview provided of the parking study. There was then an opportunity for more comments from and discussion with attendees.

The following is a summary of the highlights of the discussion based on comments and questions during each segment of the presentation:

### **What is CATS II?**

- There was discussion regarding the status of the CATS I recommendations and accomplishments as shown in the CATS I handout, including whether they were implemented or discussed with implementing agencies. The handout will be reviewed to identify needed changes.

### **How does the NYMTC Best Practice Model (BPM) work?**

- In response to a question of how the BPM estimates shifts from single-occupancy vehicles to multi-occupancy vehicles, it was explained that the estimate is based on an extensive household survey of regional travel. The household survey provided information on the preference of people to travel alone, travel with one other person, or travel with two or more other persons.
- In response to a question as to whether the recent increase in the price of gasoline was incorporated, it was stated that the BPM has not been adjusted to reflect the recent increase in the price of gasoline. However, in general, the BPM accounts for differences in travel costs between modes.
- There was discussion regarding the need for more park-and ride facilities to help provide alternatives to driving into the city.

- The BPM covers a much larger area than the CATS II study area; therefore, the broader transportation system that extends outside the CATS II area is reflected in the CATS II model.

#### **How was the BPM used to model the CATS II Scenarios?**

- Sensitivity tests have been performed on the BPM to identify if its results are consistent with the extent of changes in the different scenarios.
- In estimating the impacts of the alternative scenarios on the future 2030 traffic condition, the projection of future traffic volumes reflected the approved socio-economic forecasts for the region.
- In response to a question as to whether the effects of recent rezonings in the City have been accounted for, it was stated that the effects of rezonings are accounted for in the BPM to the extent that they are included in the NYC Department of City Planning forecasts.
- In response to questions as to whether two-way tolls at the Verrazano Narrow Bridge were considered, it was stated that it was assumed that the one-way toll at the Verrazano Narrows Bridge would be retained. A change to a two-way toll would require Federal legislation. CATS II is restricted to only consider actions that are under the authority of local agencies to implement. There was a comment that the proposed PlaNYC congestion pricing program may have a similar effect on travel patterns through Manhattan as a two-way toll on the Verrazano Narrows Bridge.
- There was discussion regarding the potential effects a Cross Harbor Freight Tunnel could have on traffic volumes in the study area. However, since it is not a programmed improvement it is not reflected in the projections of future traffic volumes.
- There was discussion regarding how people could change their travel patterns to use the high-occupancy vehicle lanes. Examples, such as using “suburban park-and-ride lots”, were mentioned as possible ways that commuters could form carpools to use the HOV lanes.

#### **What are the CATS II traffic reduction/diversion scenarios?**

- The scenarios were developed to identify the potential alternatives for reducing the congestion in the study area.
- The scenarios were considered to possibly reduce through traffic along Canal Street. It was also noted that an origin-destination survey was done by CATS II to help identify the extent of through traffic in the corridor. This information is available on the CATS II website.

#### **What were the results of Level One and Level Two testing?**

- General
  - In response to a question regarding how traffic varies throughout the day, it was stated that the predominant flow on Canal Street is generally westbound during the AM peak and eastbound during the PM peak. However, congestion is more pronounced in the westbound direction during the PM peak in the vicinity of the Holland Tunnel. Overall, during the course of a day, westbound and eastbound traffic volumes tend to be balanced.

- Holland Tunnel
  - In response to a question regarding the impact of traffic diversions related to the Holland Tunnel HOV 3+ scenario, it was explained that the HOV 3+ restriction during the AM peak creates a cascading effect that results in traffic volume increases of non-HOV 3+ vehicles at other crossings.
  - In response to a question regarding truck restrictions in the Holland Tunnel, it was explained that tractor-trailers are now prohibited from traveling in both directions, and all commercial traffic is prohibited in the eastbound direction. Commercial traffic is allowed westbound in the Holland Tunnel and, therefore, is included in the vehicle mix in the BPM. If there is an impact from HOV lanes on commercial traffic, then the impact would be reflected in the model.
  - A concern was raised about the current operation of Route 9A and Canal Street. Police do not allow the right-turn movement from northbound Route 9A onto Canal Street during peak traffic periods. This movement is routed to continue northbound to Spring Street, from where vehicles must turn onto southbound Varick Street to access the Holland Tunnel. This diversion of traffic adds to the congestion on Varick Street, as well as creating queues on Spring Street. The lack of enforcement agents was noted as contributing to the problems on Spring Street.
  
- One-Way Pair
  - The one-way pair of eastbound Canal Street and westbound Grand Street was selected for inclusion in the Level One and Level Two testing based on discussions with the implementing agencies.
  - There was comment and discussion on the possible impact of the one-way operation on the quality of life on Grand Street, which has become a thoroughfare for shopping.
  - It was stated that the possibility of making Canal Street one-way eastbound as far west as Route 9A should be considered. However, it was noted that the western end of Canal Street may need to remain two-way to allow for adequate access to the adjacent residences and businesses.
  - The importance, to the Asian community living in Queens, of the route between the Williamsburg Bridge and Canal Street was noted.
  - In response to a question regarding the BPM's capability to assess the impact of one-way operation on the street network, it was explained that the model is able to provide a measure of the additional travel that would be involved with the one-way operation.
  - It was stated that additional testing of the eastbound Canal Street and westbound Grand Street one-way pair is needed to identify specific traffic impacts. This would involve the application of a microscopic simulation model that could be used to analyze traffic operations along the corridor and assess impacts on local traffic circulation around Canal Street and Grand Street. One area of concern was the intersection of Grand Street and the Bowery.
  - It was stated that a micro-simulation model will be key in identifying possible issues at intersections affected by the one-way pair.

### **Other Comments**

- As the study progresses, there should be consideration to allowing left turns to be made from eastbound Canal Street onto Avenue of the Americas.
- There was a concern raised about the lack of transit in the Canal Street corridor.
- A request was made to provide the results of the BPM sensitivity tests
- There was concern expressed to relieve the congestion on Canal Street between Route 9A and Varick Street

### **What are the next steps?**

- It was stated that meetings involving the community and elected officials have been conducted and used in the study process to date. There will be more outreach later in the study to provide an understanding of CATS II recommendations.
- It was requested that the CATS II parking study look into placard parking.
- It was stated that the effects of congestion pricing may be considered in a Level Three testing of potential future scenarios. The findings of the Congestion Mitigation Commission will be reviewed when they become available early in 2008 and decisions will be made, in conjunction with the Steering Committee, in terms of how they will be reflected in CATS II.
- The Port Authority representative present noted that a toll increase has been proposed for the trans-Hudson facilities, including the Holland Tunnel. This increase is independent of congestion pricing. Public hearings will be held to provide opportunity for comments. More information is available on the PANY&NJ website.

Prepared by:  
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