

# THE CANAL AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY, TRACK II

**Fact Sheet #1**  
**September 2005**

The Canal Area Transportation Study (CATS) is a two-phase effort on the part of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), the agencies responsible for transportation services and infrastructure, and the community to define solutions to transportation problems in the Canal Street area. NYMTC is a regional council of governments which serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for New York City, Long Island and the lower Hudson Valley



The first phase, CATS Track I, which was initiated in 2002, identified short-term, localized improvements to the study area. CATS Track II (CATS II) encompasses a more regional, multi-modal study of transportation issues to identify and develop medium and long-term transportation improvements that are



focused on Canal Street in a study area that stretches from Houston Street to Chambers Street and from the East River to the Hudson River.

Canal Street itself is a major east-west artery in Lower Manhattan that serves cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, delivery trucks, and public transit. The study is designed to respond to and balance dual concerns about the continued viability of Canal Street as a “main street” and as a critical regional transportation link between the Manhattan Bridge and the Holland Tunnel.

## Steering Committee

The CATS II Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from all of the relevant public agencies with jurisdiction over Canal Street and serves to facilitate coordination among the agencies, represent the diverse uses of the corridor, and guide the course of the study. Members include:

- New York City Department of Transportation
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
- New York State Department of Transportation
- New York City Department of City Planning
- Lower Manhattan Development Corporation
- New York City Economic Development Corporation
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

## Stakeholder Committee

The CATS II Stakeholder Committee provides an opportunity for community voices to be heard through representatives from a diverse cross-section of interests and organizations. The Stakeholder Committee is vital to ensuring that a wide range of opinions are considered throughout the study and for bringing back information about the study to members’ constituents. Current members represent:

- Automobile Associations
- Business Associations
- Business Owners
- Community Based Organizations
- Community Boards
- Elected Officials
- Neighborhood Residents
- Residents' Coalitions
- Trucking Associations
- Transportation Advocates

## PROJECT STATUS

### Study Coordination

An important part of CATS II is coordination with other initiatives in and around the study area. This coordination effort will help develop multi-modal transportation recommendations that reflect not only CATS II, but also other initiatives. It is critical that CATS II work with studies to avoid duplication of efforts, to maximize the interchange of ideas and findings and to improve efficiency and effectiveness. CATS II will coordinate with the agencies conducting the LMDC Chinatown Access and Circulation Study, the AAFE Rebuild Chinatown Initiative, the future AAFNY/CCBA Chinatown Parking & Access Study and the NYCDOT Street Management Project to integrate initiatives into a comprehensive plan.

### Data Collection

In the spring of 2005, the study team completed most of the data collection effort for CATS II, which produced traffic and pedestrian counts, speed data, and a physical inventory of the Canal Street corridor. It also identified congestion areas, truck percentages, and showed travel patterns through an origin-destination survey. Parking, curbside, and land use inventories will be completed in late fall.

### Developed CATS II website

A website was developed to help disseminate project information and receive input from the community and other stakeholders. The website is used as a mechanism to keep the public informed of progress and upcoming events and to allow interested members of the public to provide input directly to the project team. Please visit us online at [www.nymtc.org/catsII/index.html](http://www.nymtc.org/catsII/index.html) for the most updated information about CATS II.

### Walking Tour

On May 15th, the study team hosted a walking tour of the Canal Street area where Stakeholder and Steering Committee members were able to interact directly with the CATS II study team and to point out, in the field, specific areas and issues of concern.

### Community Meetings

Over 140 people attended three CATS II Community Meetings in the Canal Street area on June 7th and 8th. The meetings provided an opportunity for the community to confirm an assessment of existing conditions, provide initial input for developing medium and long-term improvements in the study area, and to review, comment on, and add to a draft list of principles and values that will guide the study. Some major themes that emerged from the meetings were:



- **Pedestrian safety and mobility:** The community confirmed the identified need to reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts and to find new and innovative ways to ease pedestrian congestion.

- **Context sensitive design:** Participants stressed the need to preserve the Canal Street area's character and vitality, including the cultural aspects contributed by Chinatown, Tribeca, and Soho and its often "gritty" feel.
- **Parking supply and management:** Residents expressed a strong desire to see the area's parking shortage addressed through increased capacity and better management of existing spaces.
- **Health and air quality:** The community expressed concern about the extent that traffic congestion and bus and truck operations affect the corridor's air quality. The community would like to see improvement alternatives that consider air quality and health issues.
- **Traffic calming and mitigation:** There is near universal agreement within the study area that traffic congestion needs to be addressed.
- **Improved transportation services:** Members of the community hope to see more emphasis on increasing accessibility to the study area through such options as enhanced city bus service, implementation of a local shuttle bus, and management of commuter vans.
- **Action is needed:** The communities along Canal Street have participated in numerous studies over the past few years. Residents are eager to see action. CATS II results will guide the programmed NYCDOT Canal Street Reconstruction project.

#### Current Activities

Currently, the study team is working on completing the data collection effort as well as developing a screening process for suggested actions for the study area. In addition, the team is making preparations for smaller meetings with civic and business leaders and a Public Workshop in the late fall.

#### Upcoming Events

Public Workshop – late fall, 2005

### **GET INVOLVED**

NYMTC and the study team are committed to engaging community members and other stakeholders in the outreach area in a continuing, inclusive, and productive dialogue. Extensive public participation will help ensure issues and concerns of stakeholders and the public shape and inform the decisions and recommendations that emerge from CATS II. The study team is interested in hearing your ideas and opinions. If you have any questions or ideas about the study, please tell us what they are by calling or writing to us at:

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Or, visit us online at [www.nymtc.org/catsII/index.html](http://www.nymtc.org/catsII/index.html).