

NEW YORK METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL



Q U A L I T Y O F L I F E



ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 1995/1996





1995-96 NEW YORK METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

JOHN B. DALY Permanent Co-Chair Commissioner, New York State Department of Transportation

ROBERT J. BONDI Putnam County Executive

ROBERT J. GAFFNEY Suffolk County Executive (rotating Co-Chair through 3/96)

THOMAS S. GULOTTA Nassau County Executive

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SHIRLEY A. DELIBERO Executive Director New Jersey Transit

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New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

THOMAS J. RYAN Regional Administrator Federal Transit Administration

JOEL S. WEINER Executive Director North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Inc.

THOMAS W. CLASH (Council Secretary) Director, Office of Planning & Program Management New York State Department of Transportation



PROGRAM, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS 1995/1996

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JERRY LITT Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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Footnotes:

- 1. New York City Transportation Coordinating Committee
- 2. Nassau/Suffolk Transportation Coordinating Committee
- 3. Mid-Hudson South Transportation Coordinating Committee

THOMAS WATERS Federal Highway Administration

RUDOLPH KAPICHAK U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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RICHARD ROBERTS

Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (through December, 1995)

Q U A L I T Y O F L I F E

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS We want to thank our colleagues on the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council for serving with us during the past year. Since the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was signed into law on December 18, 1991, Council members have invested over \$18 billion in our transportation system. We made that investment to improve safety and mobility, to create and to retain jobs, and to serve our customers' diverse needs; in other words, to enhance our region's quality of life. Every day we serve over 11 million residents, 8 million job holders, and well over 25 million visitors in our region. Every day we enable our customers to make over 19 million trips for every purpose imaginable. Every day we handle 6 million transit trips, 137 million vehicle miles of travel, and over 2 million pedestrian and bike trips. The Long Island Expressway alone serves the needs of over one million people per day. Yes, transportation is the key to our region's quality of life. This Council remains committed to keeping that key in the hands of our residents, our businesses, and our visitors.



John B. Daly (Co-Chairperson) Commissioner, New York State Department of Transportation



Robert J. Gaffney (Co-Chairperson) Suffolk County Executive

FROM THE DIRECTOR The theme of the Council's Annual Report this year is transportation's role in this region's quality of life. Other than the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat, nothing is more fundamental to our quality of life than transportation.

Transportation is our lifeblood, providing access to jobs, to schools, to recreation, to shopping, to health care, to places of worship, to friends and family, to social services. Transportation enables businesses to receive the information and raw materials their employees turn into products, which are then transported to their customers - you and me. Come to think of it, transportation is inextricably linked to our air, water, and food. The quality of our air has improved significantly, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Transportation is a big reason. Our water and food have to be moved, sometimes over great distances, to the point of consumption. Once, again, transportation meets our needs. **II** Transportation *is* quality of life. Improving transportation - making it safer, more efficient, and aesthetically pleasing - enhances our quality of life. This year's Annual Report focuses on examples of transportation projects Council members have implemented which have improved the quality of life in the NYMTC region. Transportation - our way to a better region.





NYMTC, THE TRANSIT CAPITAL OF THE WORLD The lives of downstate New Yorkers are inextricably linked to transit and infrastructure investment can only serve to enhance the quality of life in the Region. The NYMTC region accounts for one out of every five transit trips taken in the United States. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority has identified a number of expansion and system improvement projects which, when completed, will ensure improved service to customers, contribute to air quality improvement, and better equip the Region to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Two such projects are: **1** *63rd Street - Queens Boulevard Connection* - Presently under construction (in Queens) is a \$645 million connection which will allow Queens Boulevard trains (E,F,G, and R) to use the 63rd Street as well as 53rd Street tunnels, permitting an additional 15 trains per hour to be routed via 63rd Street. Provisions for a possible future extension to the nearby Sunnyside Yard could make the operation of MTA Long Island Railroad (LIRR) trains to Manhattan's East Side a reality. When opened in 2001, this connection is likely to reduce vehicle miles traveled by 2.3 million miles, attract 4,800 new daily riders (including 3,000 from auto diversion), and save riders approximately 7.2 million hours per year. **1** *MTA Metro-North Railroad Harlem Line Third Track* - Metro-North's Harlem Line, with a combination of mainly one and two-track sections, serves over 19 million

riders annually; this is expected to increase to over 23 million

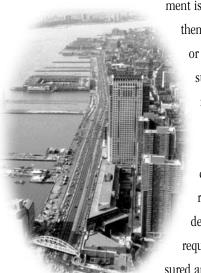
by year 2013. In order to accommodate future ridership levels and improve service along this line, existing constraints, which limit the number of trains to/from Grand Central Terminal during the morning peak period, must be overcome. After reviewing various options, Metro-North



concluded that an additional (third) track is needed in the Mt.

Vernon West to Crestwood section, in Westchester County. When completed, this project will allow an additional eight peak hour trains on the Harlem Line. In addition to service quality improvements, the Harlem Line third track should result in improved air quality, not only by providing improved and reliable transit service, but also by the possible diversion of motor vehicle users of the Bronx River and Sprain Brook Parkways.

PUTTING "EFFICIENCY" IN ISTEA Life cycle cost analysis is not the most flashy and innovative topic in transportation, like telecommuting or Intelligent Highway Vehicle Systems, but it is an important one. It impacts daily travel and quality of life in more subtle ways. Life cycle cost analysis (LCCA) is an economic evaluation of all current and future costs associated with investment alternatives. The typical analysis could be made of a roadway such as the Brooklyn Queens Expressway. If the pave-



ment is full of holes and bumps, what would be the best strategy to fix them? Quick and dirty resurfacing, which would only last a few years, or lengthier structural repair which would produce longer lasting results? The analysis of projects is subject to such factors as actual monetary cost, delays and accidents, costs of rerouting traffic, environmental and other costs, all factored by the estimated life of the project. The best alternative would be the one with the least cost over the life of the project. The Federal Government has recognized the significance of life cycle cost analysis. Executive Order 12893, "Principles of Federal Infrastructure Investment", requires that costs and benefits of infrastructure investment be measured and duly appropriated over the life cycle of each project. Sections 1024 and 1025 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991

also require the consideration of "... the use of life cycle cost in the design and engineering of bridges, tunnels, or pavement." I According to Federal policy on LCCA, life cycle costs should be a vital consideration for all highway investment decisions. The level of detail of the analysis should be commensurate with the level of investment and the types of alternatives being considered. The analysis period should be for the life of the project. The costs during the analysis period should also be consid-

ered, including the traffic control costs and costs of special construction procedures required to maintain traffic. User costs should be added, including increased vehicle operating costs, accident costs and delay-related costs throughout the analysis period. Future agency and user costs should be discounted to net present value or converted to equivalent uniform annual costs. Budgetary, environmental, and safety considerations influence highway investment decisions and should be included in the LCCA results. Once an analysis is made of all the alternatives, the best alternative should be implemented, reducing overall costs for the life of the project.



TRANSPORTATION IS FOR EVERYONE Inner city residents, who may be economically disadvantaged, can now better gain access to suburban job sites using Westchester County's expanded bus system, and a reverse commuting service which links to the MTA Metro-North Railroad. Other examples of reverse commuting include bus shuttles between MTA Long Island Rail Road stations at Hicksville Michele Bage



and Farmingdale to local corporate office parks that offer job opportunities to transit dependent workers in need of reverse commuting transportation. Throughout the region, Council members have made critical choices on how to comply with the *Americans With Disabilities Act* to provide full access to transportation services for all those with physical or mental disabilities. System improvement projects include installation of elevators, ramps, reconstruction of stations, providing para-transit, and installation of wheelchair lifts on buses. Many local community groups and churches have also taken up the challenge to provide mobility to the elderly and disabled

using vans and minibuses funded by the Federal Transit Administration Section 16(b)2 program.

SAFETY IS THE KEY Fear of crime can influence the dynamics of cities, and invariably this fear spills over into the use and provision of public transit. The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) region is no exception. Passengers perceive it to be the responsibility of the transit system to ensure that they are safe. At the same time, the system is also responsible for the security of its own personnel, facilities, and equipment. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) contains a number of provisions relating to transit security and crime, ensuring the integration of this quality of life issue into NYMTC's planning process. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and our suburban transit operators have continuously sought to address the issue of crime and well-being of customers (including customers' perceptions of crime and personal security) using various strategies. Some of the strategies adopted by the

MTA Agencies - New York City Transit, Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), and Metro-North Railroad - are: station and tunnel lighting improvements, use of closed circuit television, improved police communications and facilities, greater police/staff visibility, adoption of a corporate security approach (for better coordination), modification

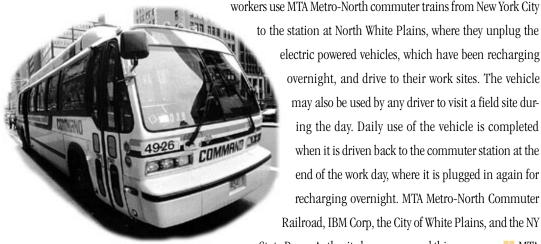


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of operating procedures (e.g. late night request-a-stop for buses), and the LIRR Auto Crime Unit. Over the next five years, the MTA plans to spend over \$360 million on station security, lighting, police facilities/communication equipment, and station signage; New York City Transit will spend over \$754 million on station repairs, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. In New York City statistics show that crime on the subway system has been declining at a steady rate. Between 1990 and 1994, felony crime was reduced by half, and the number of robberies by nearly two thirds. This decline has been a major contributing factor to increases in ridership.

DOING MORE WITH LESS ENERGY As the most densely developed region in the United States, the NYMTC region is the most energy efficient in the country in terms of transportation. The region continues to improve. The most recent demonstration of this can be seen in Westchester County, where several Geo Metro vehicles converted to electric battery power have been purchased by IBM for a voluntary carpool program by reverse commuters from New York City to suburban IBM work centers. These



to the station at North White Plains, where they unplug the electric powered vehicles, which have been recharging overnight, and drive to their work sites. The vehicle may also be used by any driver to visit a field site during the day. Daily use of the vehicle is completed when it is driven back to the commuter station at the end of the work day, where it is plugged in again for recharging overnight. MTA Metro-North Commuter Railroad, IBM Corp, the City of White Plains, and the NY State Power Authority have sponsored this program.

Long Island Bus is completing a two year demonstration project with ten, full size transit buses running on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). CNG lowers pollution and reduces demands on imported foreign fuel oil. The program has been successful enough to lead to an expansion, by an additional 30 buses being delivered now, and another 86 to be ordered soon. 📕 New York City is the location of a variety of additional transportation energy conservation and alternate fuel projects, with a number of CNG buses in the privately operated, City sponsored transit fleet. An expanding number of service vehicles using alternate fuels are owned by public utilities and City agencies. MTA New York City Transit is developing an electric hybrid transit bus, energy-conserving subway cars, and new tunnel lighting technology, which saves energy. The partners in this effort include the New York State Power Authority, Con Edison, General Electric,

Orion Bus Industries, the New York City Department Of Environmental Protection, and various New York State research agencies, universities, and entrepreneurships. In Much of the impetus for these developments is the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and the Energy Policy Act of 1992; nevertheless, a good deal of this effort is motivated by our collective, enlightened self-interest in a cleaner and more prosperous future. We will all be better off upon the success and expansion of these developments.

THERE IS MORE TO TRANSPORTATION THAN RAILS AND ROADS Many municipalities and transportation agencies have recently looked back at vigorous actions taken over the last few decades to sell off as much of their unused transportation right-of-ways, (ROWs) (primarily highway and rail) as possible. When it became clear that earlier plans to build, to expand, or to revive highway or

> rail projects had stalled, many municipalities quickly jumped on the band wagon to sell off these ROWs as a quick revenue source. Fortunately a few municipalities had the foresight to realize the valuable assets in their possession. They realized that these ROWs could be reused, to provide alternative forms of non-traditional transportation. Westchester and Putnam counties, along with the New York State Department of Transportation, have been in the forefront in developing successful alternative transportation projects on the old Penn Central Putnam Division rail line, which was abandoned in the 1960s. In 1995, the Westchester portion of the North County Trailway was opened along this line. The remaining 2 miles in Putnam County are expected to be completed by the end of this year. A similar bike project is also underway on the Brewster line. This line, purchased last year by the MTA Metro-North Commuter Railroad, was formerly known as the Maybrook line,

and owned by the Housatonic Railroad. It runs from Danbury, through Brewster, and

north into Dutchess County. Both projects have been developed to address congestion along Routes 6, 23 and 311 corridors. In On the other hand, other transportation right-of-ways can be developed as pedestrian/recreation facilities. In 1988 a Richmond Parkway Alternatives study was commissioned to relook at the unbuilt portion of the Richmond Parkway in Staten Island. After the study's completion, recommendations were made to demap the unbuilt portion of the highway to assure preservation of the area's ecology. Although a formal decision has not been made on the demapping issue, this unbuilt portion of the parkway has been used for several years by many as a recreational trail along this designated greenway. While some transportation ROWs have enjoyed a rebirth by again serving a transporta-

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tion need, others have been used as ways that seek to avoid or to minimize adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, historic and cultural sites, greenways, agricultural land, recreational areas, and other valuable natural resources.

YOU CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE For many years the condition of some of the region's infrastructure was poor. So poor, in fact, that these facilities became inoperable or unusable. The rebuild-ing effort of the last few decades has begun to restore the infrastructure. The Council's long range plan, *Critical Issues, Critical Choices: A Mobility Plan for the New York Region Through The Year 2015* includes \$75 billion for restoring infrastructure to a state of good repair and maintaining it that way. **Security Plan for the New York Region Through The Year 2015** includes \$75 billion for restoring infrastructure to a state of good repair and maintaining it that way. **Security Plan for the New York Region Through The Year 2015** includes \$75 billion for restoring infrastructure and protection of traffic on the Williamsburg Bridge, reconstruction of Columbus Avenue in Manhattan, and rebuilding the subway system's rolling stock. Each of these projects has resulted in fewer delays for users of the facilities. Delay and congestion are two factors that the public rate highly as quality of life issues. **Security Plan a road or bridge is under reconstruction**, one aspect of the project has the potential to either disrupt

or smooth the way for motorists- maintenance and protection of traffic. The New York City Department of Transportation has undertaken the reconstruction of the Williamsburg Bridge with the intention of reducing the delay and congestion normally associated with a job of this size. Several strategies will be used to aid bridge users during the project including the use of traffic enforcement agents, signage, signal timing adjust-

ments, intelligent transportation systems (including closed

circuit TV), tow truck service, and variable message signs. The city will also conduct a media campaign. This will help speed travel and reduce headaches. Another example of making a potentially onerous construction job more palatable to all users is the Columbus Avenue reconstruction. In this project the New York City Department of Transportation consolidated as many operations as possible at a given location, brought on additional crews at the locations of consolidated sites, and extended work hours. City staff ensured that parts suppliers were aware of the accelerated program. As a result of the program the project was completed 16 months ahead of schedule. The MTA New York City Transit has improved the reliability of the subway fleet greatly. Due to replacement and re-

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habilitation, the subway fleet achieved a state of good repair in 1992, a goal of the Council's long range plan. In addition, subway ridership reached the highest level in twenty years in 1994. This growth in ridership is due in part to the continuing reliability of the system. Quality of life is not just a phrase, it is something these agencies are concerned about and are doing something about.

YES, YOU CAN! Federal and state highway systems are numbered to provide an easy guide to roadway identification throughout the country and state. For example, I-87 will take a traveler from New York City to Montreal, crossing four Metropolitan Planning Organizations boundaries, and a myriad of local jurisdictions. Because of the connectivity of the roadway in terms of continuity of function, facility type design, and other features, the traveler can drive through both major cities and very rural areas with relative ease. To make travel even easier, projects like *E-ZPass Electronic Toll Collection* will enable vehicles to proceed through a toll barrier at a low speed rather than stopping. E-ZPass is sponsored by the New York State Thruway Authority, MTA Tunnels and Bridges, the Port Authority, TRANSCOM, and others. It is anticipated that congestion at toll barriers will be reduced as well as vehicular emissions due to idling. E-ZPass is being implemented on the section of I-87 operated by the NYS Thruway Authority that extends from the Harriman toll barrier to Albany, about 150 miles.



It is also being implemented on I-90 in the Thruway's Buffalo Division. Approximately \$14 million has been programmed to expand the system on the Thomas E. Dewey and New England thruways. Intelligent Vehicle System Early Deployment Demonstration Studies being undertaken by the New York State Department of Transportation will further enhance travel by reducing congestion and increasing safety. These Intelligent

Vehicle System (ITS) studies will investigate new technology that could be

used in the I-95 Corridor, which includes the Bronx/Northern Manhattan corridor, and will be coordinated with the activities of the I-95 Corridor Coalition. As part of this program, an Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) will be developed. ATMS will use sensing, communications, and control technologies to better manage travel on about 140 miles of limited access highways in New York City. ATMS program costs are estimated at \$180 million.

HELPING TO NAVIGATE TRAFFIC IN THE CITY With the Intermodal Surface Transportaton Efficiency Act, came the Management Systems: a set of requirements to increase the per-





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formance of the transportation system. One of the most important is the Congestion Management Systems (CMS) which Council members implemented quickly. One project that resulted from the CMS was set forth by the New York City Mayor's Office, in collaboration with the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT.) III In November, 1995, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani announced an attack on so-called "quality of life offenses." The program's main goal was to reduce double-parking, gridlock at intersections, and unauthorized construction that blocks traffic. As part of the offensive, police officers, rather than special traffic agents, took on the task of regulating traffic. Their main point of concentration is the borough of Manhattan and the central business districts of the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. In addition, Mayor Giuliani announced that a new traffic safety program was being undertaken by NYCDOT. The program's main concentration is on the safety of pedestrians and drivers. This task eventually brought the New York State Department of Transportation back to the basics of traffic engineering and geometric design of streets and intersections. These traffic calming solutions involve new pedestrian fences and traffic signals, installation of rumble strips, shortening of crosswalks through the redesigning of street corners, construction of traffic circles, and installation of speed boards and traffic violation cameras. III These are just a few examples of how Council members are improving the region's quality of life.

LAND USE AND 'TRANSPORTATION, 'THE MISSING LINK? Low density growth in suburban areas places a strain on the region's transportation system. The increase in travel within and between our suburbs is a national trend. At the same time, concerns over congestion and air quality have increased the demand for expanded transit service. An example is the Taconic-Wassaic Corridor, in Dutchess County, one of MTA Metro-North Railroad's fastest growing markets. Considerations of the impact of land use and transportation on each other have come to take on increasing significance in transportation planning. Land use is the dominant determinant of traffic generation and mode split. Land use is critical in ensuring the effectiveness of alternatives to single oc-

cupant vehicles to meet mobility needs and local concerns for quality of life. In the Taconic-Wassaic corridor land use activities, travel demand, and available facilities have been carefully studied so that extended rail service can meet the requirements of the growing ridership market and that land use decisions will support and protect transportation investment to expand capacity. This project is an example of an effective approach



to promote quality of life by expanding current transportation facilities in moderate and high density areas where housing, jobs, retail and services are concentrated.

LET THE PUBLIC BE HEARD! It is important every resident in the region understand that transportation can be their path to a better quality of life. The Council continues to seek the active participation of the public in a variety of ways. Over the past year, the Council, in its effort to reach out and touch as many people as possible, has added a Spanish/English toll-free number (800.938.6957) to its public outreach program. Current announcements provide schedules for public meetings held at the World Trade Center and at Council members' offices. In addition, the Council's electronic bulletin board, "NYMTC-TIE," continues to provide a wealth of transportation information to the public. III n addition to Spanish/English announcements and the electronic bulletin board, the Council recently published and distributed an introductory information brochure aimed at the grassroot public, who have little or no previous involvement in transportation planning activities. To determine which areas of transportation the Council should focus on, an expanded public outreach survey was conducted. III To further improve and to expand the Council's outreach efforts, a consultant was hired to design, and to assist staff in implementing, an expanded public participation program. III Educating the public to become involved in transportation planning, as one of the important issues to secure a better quality of life, remains a top priority for the Council.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING: BEYOND WASHINGTON Quality of life can be improved in a variety of ways through better transportation facilities: improved transportation access to



facilities for work, recreation, and shopping; rehabilitation and repair of existing facilities; or, by improving the visual impact of an existing transportation facility. While many transportation improvements are federally funded, most are constructed with state or local monies or are 100% privately funded. The Gowanus Expressway Rehabilitation in Brooklyn is currently programmed in the Federal Fis-

cal Year 1995-1999 Transportation Improvement Program, to be

funded mainly through the State Dedicated Fund (this could change in the new program.) The Gowanus Expressway is the viaduct portion of I-278, which connects the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway to the Shore Parkway and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge; I-278 also connects to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. It was built in 1941 and carries 175,000 vehicles daily. According to



the Draft Design Report/Environmental Assessment, the estimated project cost "... is \$596.8 million in current dollars, exclusive of right-of-way costs. Transportation Systems Management measures would add an estimated \$74.9 million dollars for a total cost of \$672.7 million." Another example of a non-federally or privately funded project proposal is the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's Goethals Bridge proposal of constructing a second, or "twin" bridge, on a southern parallel. A Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) has been released by the U. S. Coast Guard because it involves construction of a major bridge crossing over a navigable waterway of the United States. The proposal includes modernization of the existing span, and the possible addition of a lane in each direction as a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) or possible truck priority lane. The proposed new bridge could also accommodate possible future introduction of rail transit across the bridge.

IT'S 10:30 A.M., DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR PACKAGE IS? Most of us take it for granted that we will find grapefruit, oranges, and melons at our local supermarket, fresh Maine lobsters at the local restaurant, or computers from the Hudson Valley, Silicon Valley, or the Far East in our stores. We do not know or care about the logistics involved in the nation's superb freight transportation network which makes this miracle possible. Most freight (70 million tons per year) destined for the New York metropolitan area arrives by truck, which accounts for 95% of all freight movements in the area. Rail freight, the logical alternative to trucks, has for years been hampered by lack of a direct route from the west and south to the metropolitan region east of the Hudson

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River. Most rail transport goes through Selkirk Yard near Albany, and through a circuitous and difficult route in the South Bronx. A new transportation initiative includes a new rail freight line along the Harlem River. The Oak Point Link will considerably shorten the route. Upon completion of this line, extending nearly two miles from High Bridge near Yankee Stadium to Conrail's Oak Point Yard, the

limited vertical clearance for direct rail access will be increased from 15'3" to 17'6". Freight traffic will be removed from the congested MTA Metro-North line at Mott Haven Junction. It is predicted that more than 700 trucks daily will be diverted from the roads upon completion of this link. The Harlem River Yard is being developed to offer freight service in the area. This yard, owned by the New York State Department

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of Transportation and operated by Harlem River Yard Venture, has a potential to handle two inbound trains daily, has 500 parking spaces for railcars, can load and unload 600 trailers per 10 hours of operation, and can store 900 trailers within its boundaries. Successful implementation, based on a market driven strategy for developing new services, will require the active collaboration of Conrail, MTA Long Island Rail Road, and Harlem River Yard Venture, among others. The completion of these two important regional rail facilities will significantly improve freight movement in the region.

FREIGHT IS GREAT While the United States economy depends increasingly on producers and consumers from all over the world, the efficiency of international port operation is threatened by existing bottlenecks in the landside transportation system serving the ports. This issue is most significant for the Port of New York, the largest container port on

the east coast, and the third largest in the United States. Most of the 115 million tons of ocean borne cargo is handled by terminals located on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. Since 80% of the freight originates from, or is destined for, the metropolitan region, most of it is handled by



trucks. Growing traffic congestion on the major truck routes serving the ports causes increases in transportation costs and vehicular emissions, which reduce air quality. An important decision involving the revitalization of New York ocean borne trade was to reopen the long abandoned city-owned Howland Hook Container Terminal on the west shore of Staten Island. The access channel has been dredged to 42", and the dredging issue, which delayed the opening of the container port about a year, was finally solved by finding an out-of-state dumping site for 150,000 square yards of contaminated silt in Utah. Not only will the opening of this huge, strategically located port create hundreds of local jobs, but it is essential to revitalize the area's stagnant economy. Through the Goethals Bridge and the revitalized Staten Island Railroad North Shore line, this terminal will have unlimited access to major regional highways, and to the Conrail main line which leads to various regions in the United States. This terminal has 2,500 foot long wharfs, seven cranes, a rail connection, and is expected to handle 400,000 containers annually. Possible future expansion depends on market development. Upon completion in 1996, this terminal will have the leading position in the regional market share. The future success of Howland Hook, and the surrounding area, depends on the re-opening of the Staten Island Railroad North Shore Line - a 15 mile stretch of abandoned tracks and rundown stations, linking Staten Island with the major rail routes. The rebirth of this railroad will make the economically depressed north shore more attractive to manufacturers and carriers. In 1994, the City, in cooperation with NJDOT, bought this railroad with the goal of restoring freight service from Staten Island to points west over the next two years, creating a new, less expensive way for freight to reach Brooklyn and Long Island. The re-opening of Howland Hook and the Staten Island Railroad will have a most significant impact on the entire freight transportation system in the metropolitan region.

FOOT POWER! One of the most significant innovations created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), was the transportation enhancement program as a component of the Surface Transportation Program (STP). These funds are available for enhancement activities which directly impact the quality of life. Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles is one of the



ties focuses on providing a combination of ample road space to accommodate bicyclists and motorists safely, as well as separate multi-use trails exclusively for non-motorized use. Space for pedestrians includes facilities such as sidewalks, and gradeseparated crossings such as underpasses, overpasses, and pedestrian malls. A bicyclist-and-pedestrian-friendly transportation network provides increased travel options and a supportive environment for bicycling and walking. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, such as reserved trails or on street bike lanes, are an important component of the transportation system, and are the best alternative to the single occupancy vehicle. II The Metro-New York Bikeway-Walkway Working Group, which was recently approved by the

Program, Finance and Administration Committee, is composed of representatives from interested public agencies and citizen stakeholders to help NYMTC complete the bike/ped portion of its long range plan. The Greenway Plan identifies 500 miles of trails and corridors and will provide a more flexible and environmentally sound means of travel. The suburbs are also considering this alternative in transportation developments. Putnam County has identified a bikeway along the Route 6 corridor. Similarly, Rockland and Westchester Counties have begun a rail to trail conversion that will become linked in the Hudson River Greenway. Nassau and Suffolk counties are developing a com-

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prehensive bikeway network. The first component of this network, the Central Corridor, is included in the Nassau-Suffolk Transportation Improvement Program.

TRANSPORTATION GETS SMART! The NYMTC region is densely populated - 11 million residents and 5 million jobs. Their travel needs place a huge demand on the region's 20,000 miles of roads and 720 miles of railways. According to a New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) Central Staff survey, congestion is a major public concern. Since new capital construction to expand highways and railways is an expensive and time consuming effort, NYMTC members have decided to go "smart" with modern technology, upgrading existing transportation facili-

ties, to relieve and to prevent congestion. To relieve highway congestion and to improve air quality at toll plazas, the MTA Bridges and Tunnel Authority has begun operation of an electronic toll system called E-ZPass on their seven bridges and tunnels. The E-ZPass system uses coded cards located on the vehicles windshield. Each vehicles's card is instantly scanned by an electronic recorder and processed through a computer, which then bills the user's



account. In New York City the E-ZPass first became available at the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge at the end of October, 1995. It has since received enthusiastic public reviews. The E-ZPass has been available for two years at the Tappan Zee Bridge and at the Spring Valley toll plaza on the New York State Thruway. Other locations in upstate New York also use electronic toll collection. Relieving congestion on the region's highways could encourage more people to travel by car. To attract and to retain customers, the MTA New York City Transit is implementing a number of "smart" projects that will make transit use more pleasant, efficient, and appealing to the public. One project consists of replacing the subway token with an electronic toll card called Metro Card. The Metro Card, which is more convenient to carry than tokens, can be used in New York City to ride both the subway and the bus. Farebox replacement for using this electronic card will be fully implemented in all 469 stations by 1997. Another MTA New York City Transit project is to replace the New York City subway public address system with a state-of-the-art public information system. The public information system will consist of screen displays at the stations to inform passengers of the arrival time of the next train and other information, and modern speakers to broadcast information to passengers. The MTA plans to install the public information system in 330 subway stations by 1999.

Q U A L I T Y O F L I F E

I LOVE NEW YORK, DON'T YOU? Tourism is one of the most important industries in the New York metropolitan region. Among the many agencies promoting tourism, Council members have an important role. Each agency takes tourism into consideration in their planning, whether by simple measures such as improved signs on highways or transit related promotions. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)-Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) and MTA Metro-North Railroad have ex-



tensive programs to encourage tourism while promoting transit ridership. Since tourism travel is generally during the off-peak period, this provides additional ridership at times when there is excess capacity available, at little additional cost. These programs also enable pleasure travelers to enjoy their trip in an economic and energy efficient way,

without being aggravated by traffic. If MTA LIRR's summer program provides transportation and entry to numerous events around Long Island, such as the Long Island Jazz Festival, the Long Island Fair; beach transportation and admission; as well as a tour of New York City from Long Island stations. There are also travel-admission packages from Long Island stations to events or shows held in New York City. MTA Metro-North has similar programs, including travel packages to New York City for shows, exhibitions or shopping.

EPILOG Did you ever wonder why transportation seems to attract so much attention from so many advocacy groups that have little or no apparent connection to transportation? I used to. I finally figured it out. The reason is the advocacy groups have long recognized that there is a connection, a very direct connection, between transportation decisions and our quality of life. So the advocacy groups attempt to influence transportation decisions in order to improve the quality of life of their constituencies, at least from their perspective. The transportation community understands this connection, but we may sometimes fail to communicate it to our elected officials and to our customers. Perhaps this is why debates over the level of transportation funding sometimes degenerate into arguing about transportation versus education, to welfare, and to every purpose for which people or freight travel. Transportation is not about going from point A to point B; transportation is about the ability to participate in the benefits of our society. It is about our quality of life. We have highlighted just a handful of the hundreds of ways the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council attempts to improve our region's quality of life every day. Stay tuned, there is much more to come.

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