

New York Metropolitan Transportation Council



Improvements in Transportation Since the Advent of
I S T E A



Annual Report Fiscal Year 1996/1997

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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

The theme of this year's Annual Report is very appropriate for both our transportation system and NYMTC. Since the enactment of ISTEA in December 1991, we have seen significant improvements to our transit and highway systems. The emphasis over the past five and a half years has been on restoring the existing infrastructure. This is absolutely the correct focus. We have been and need to continue to address the deterioration of the infrastructure as we come to the end of the

tegration which facilitate the flow of traffic and thus reduce emissions from stop and go traffic. Our air quality has improved and is projected to continue to improve in the future.

Finally, we have seen some modest improvements to expand our highway and transit systems to better accommodate our ever growing travel demand. Despite these efforts, however, demand continues to outgrow the ability to expand these systems and congestion, although less severe than it could be



Joseph H. Boardman
(Co-Chairperson)
Commissioner, NYSDOT



Christopher R. Lynn
(Co-Chairperson)
Commissioner, NYCDOT

Co-Chairs Remarks

decade and the century. This emphasis will provide the solid foundation upon which we can develop our transportation system for the 21st Century.

At the same time, however, ISTEA has allowed us, indeed forced us to look at the transportation system multimodally. There has been increased focus on inclusion of all modes from the flexing of highway funds to our transit systems to planning and implementation of projects to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Some critics may argue that not enough has been done for these modes but every journey begins with a first step.

Our environment is important to each of us. Obviously, transportation has a significant impact on the quality of the air we all breathe. The Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program has helped improve the quality of air by reducing emissions from transportation activities. This has taken the form of funding transit improvements to encourage people to shift their travel from single occupant vehicles (SOV) to transit or ride sharing to funding pedestrian and bicycle projects to highway projects such as traffic signal in-

tegration which facilitate the flow of traffic and thus reduce emissions from stop and go traffic. Our air quality has improved and is projected to continue to improve in the future.

without these efforts, continues to increase. This issue requires greater attention as we move into the future.

Speaking of the future, the debate now ongoing in Washington, D.C. will greatly impact on our future transportation system. Some representatives from other parts of the country are proposing to retreat to the policies and actions taken prior to the adoption of ISTEA. We believe that this is the wrong approach. We are fortunate that Governor Pataki shares the enthusiasm for reauthorizing ISTEA largely unchanged and has selected former NYSDOT Commissioner (and NYMTC Co-Chair) John Daly to convince lawmakers and decision makers from other parts of the country to support the reauthorization of ISTEA. The "ISTEA Works" coalition has worked tirelessly to educate others on the benefit accrued from ISTEA and has made significant progress. The Council has been a strong supporter of this effort and we are advocating and supporting its reauthorization with all our resources. We can do no less. The future of the Region's transportation system is at stake, if the region is to retain its competitive position in the global economy.

The theme for this year's Annual Report is *Improvements in Transportation Since the Advent of ISTEA*. The current ongoing debate in Washington, D.C. and other areas of the country regarding the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation legislation provides a good framework for identifying how transportation planning and implementation has changed in the past five plus years.

Changes have been many and, without exception, they have helped enhance our

lanes and technology such as E-ZPass, MetroCard and ITS initiatives. The condition of our transportation system has continued to improve as we have stressed investment in maintaining and improving our existing infrastructure. The Region has also seen the implementation of night construction to minimize the impact of construction activities in the metropolitan area. ISTEA has also reraised the awareness of the Region's natural resource, its waterways. Ferries have re-

From the Director

transportation system. ISTEA was and is landmark legislation which fundamentally changed the way we view, plan and implement improvements to our transportation system. In this Annual Report are articles which focus on some of the areas impacted by ISTEA. In the years since ISTEA was enacted, NYMTC has embraced the principles set forth enthusiastically. A new twenty year Regional Transportation Plan entitled "Critical Issues, Critical Choices" was developed and adopted. Public outreach and participation procedures have been adopted and implemented. Coordination of major investments in our transportation system has been greatly enhanced by the development and implementation of Major Investment Study procedures. We have developed and adopted the metropolitan portion of the National Highway System (NHS). ISTEA similarly created the Transportation Enhancement program which has resulted in many non traditional but important projects being implemented. We have also seen the transportation system become more efficient through initial implementation of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

ceived much greater attention as we look at our transportation system from a multimodal perspective. Finally, we need to recognize that the ambient air quality in the metropolitan area has improved since the inception of ISTEA. Improvements to the system to provide travelers with options other than single occupant vehicles have certainly helped. However, I think it is generally recognized that the major element of improvement has resulted from cleaner vehicles, reformulated fuels and enhanced inspection and maintenance.

Taking all these activities, actions and products into account, I believe it must be concluded that ISTEA has been an overwhelming success. Are we satisfied? The answer is no. We have many additional challenges facing us. Can we make further improvements? Absolutely. Does ISTEA provide the framework for the improvements? I think it does with minor modifications.



James W. Harris
Executive Director

James W. Harris

The Council is performing an update of its region wide plan since it was last approved in March 1994. As with the 1994 plan, it will include three levels of recommendations: Level 1 (fundable infrastructure needs), Level 2 (fundable mobility needs), and Level 3 (unconstrained mobility recommendations). The first phase of the plan

Staten Island and Rockland County Action Plans: During 1995 and 1996, the Central Staff of NYMTC was asked to assist in carrying out and producing an “Action Plan” at the request of the then NYCDOT Commissioner Elliot Sander, and in conjunction with other Council members, and Staten Island Borough President

Regional Transportation Plan Update

update will include goals and objectives, demographic and travel trends, and a pedestrian/bicycle element. The second phase of the update will focus on corridor analyses, infrastructure needs, and a financial plan. Providing local input into the region’s plan is the Council’s intent. Local input makes the regional plan more viable and more relevant.

Guy Molinari’s Office. A second Action Plan, Rockland County Transportation Action Plan, requested by County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef followed. The intent of the action plans was to focus on the recommendations of NYMTC’s Regional Transportation Plan, “Critical Issues, Critical Choices” and translate that into a plan to address the needs of residents and businesses in a specific area of the NYMTC region. Also addressing the needs of specific areas are the individual county plans such as Westchester County’s initiative known as “Connections”. The Action Plans developed specific project level recommendations for four travel markets and four planning horizons. Many of these recommendations were completed and many others saw significant progress. The recommendations consisted of transit improvements, road reconstructions, rail freight improvements and bicycle projects. Those that are not yet addressed wholly or in part will be addressed in the future. Longer term projects, such as in the 10-20



year time frame will be refined further during the continuation of the updating of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Westchester County Pursues A Local Planning Initiative - Local Long - Range Planning Within The Regional Transportation Plan: Certain elements of regional plans are local in nature and are best addressed at the community level. Such elements include the consideration of land use policies and de-

O'Rourke and Dr. Anthony Cupaiulo, Director of Pace University's Michaelian Institute of Public Policy and Management. The joint initiative is known as "Connections" and seeks to develop a transportation vision plan for Westchester County, through which local officials, citizens' groups, and other interested parties will play an active role in long-range planning.

"Connections" is meant to capture these and other local issues in the Regional



velopment patterns, preservation of rights-of-way, goods movement, enhancement of transit services, consideration of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and the development of transportation improvements.

The initiation of a cooperative effort to involve local municipal officials and citizens groups in the long-range planning process was announced in January 1997 by Westchester County Executive Andrew P.

Transportation Plan update process. The initiative is highlighted by locally held focus group meetings and local municipal conferences through which participants assess conditions and gather ideas in a "visioning" approach. The information gathered will then be fashioned into a vision plan complete with short- and long-term implementation actions. This local vision plan will in turn be "nested" within

the overall Regional Transportation Plan update and incorporate significant local issues and actions into the long-range planning process.

Most of the research activity of “Connections” will be completed during the first half of 1997, with a final report available during the fall.

Enhanced Public Outreach and Participation: ISTEA highlighted the need and requirement for involving the public in decision making. To this end NYMTC has endeavored to contact, inform, and solicit the input of a broad range of interested individuals and organizations. The Council adopted public participation procedures in September 1994. The procedures were revised in November 1995. The future of public participation for NYMTC will see greater resources applied to improving current practices.

NYMTC Central Staff has developed and utilized a number of mechanisms to engage the public with its available resources. Some of these mechanisms are cutting edge, such as a World Wide Web site (www.dot.state.ny.us/reg/nymtc/council.html). Others are traditional such as small brochures with tear off mail back cards which are designed to convey essential information about the MPO and obtain public feedback.

NYMTC has also tried to inform the public about important current issues such as the Conrail restructuring. NYMTC Central Staff hosted a public meeting in October of 1996 during which the implications of the merger on the region were discussed.

A follow up meeting was held in April 1997. NYMTC’s Transportation Coordinating Committees (TCC) provide many opportunities to involve the public through the plethora of open meetings at the local level. The agendas of these meetings have included Council emphasis areas such as the Transportation Improvement Program, the Regional Transportation Plan as well as specific topics. The TCCs and the Central Staff maintain mailing lists of hundreds of individuals and organizations that routinely receive important products and notices.

Council Contact, NYMTC’s newsletter, has continued to provide articles on important issues and trends. It also serves to inform the public about meetings and important milestones in planning and other areas.

One sure way to reach the public is with broadcast media. Twice during 1996 Central Staff were guests on radio shows. The shows were about walking/bicycling and traffic congestion. It is hoped the Council can use more of this medium and other broadcast media in 1997.

Lastly, because NYMTC recognizes public involvement can be improved, it has engaged a consultant which specializes in this field. The focus is on assessing the Council’s current practices and recommending changes on audience, involvement mechanism, and conveying the Council’s message in the most efficient manner possible. With these new tools we hope to reach more people and determine just what the public is thinking.



The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 provides authorizations for highways, highway safety and mass transportation. The purpose of the act is “to develop a National Intermodal Transportation System that is economically efficient, environmentally sound, provides the foundation for the Nation to compete in

planning directed toward improving air quality and mobility.

In 1993, the USEPA issued the transportation conformity rule which states that, in non-attainment and maintenance areas, transportation plans and programs which are funded with Federal aid are required to be in conformance with the transportation

Progress in Improving Air Quality in the Region under ISTEA

the global economy and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner”. This act is unique in that it links the Clean Air Act Amendment of 1990 (CAA) and the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality with transportation. There is a stipulation that areas that fail to meet the Federal air quality standards or National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) set forth by the CAA require transportation

provisions of the SIP, to reduce or eliminate the severity and number of violations of air quality standards. To help these non-attainment and maintenance areas do this, special Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds had been set aside in ISTEA. To meet these standards, the Long Range Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) have to prioritize specific transportation projects to meet air quality standards. Some examples of projects that would be eligible for these funds are public transit, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, integrated traffic control systems, flexible work schedules, bicycle and pedestrian programs, electronic fare payment systems, and electronic toll collection.

There are various strategies to reduce transportation emissions. In general, improvements in transportation efficiency, like increased use of transit, carpooling, and measures like cleaner fuels, reduction emission rates from tailpipes and improved inspection and maintenance, all add up to reductions in pollutants. NYMTC and State and local agencies have been working together to develop programs to encourage

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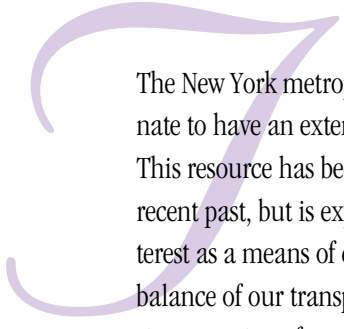


emissions reduction. Many improvements are already in effect. HOV lanes on the Long Island Expressway and Gowanus Expressway have opened, as well as new bicycle lanes and the E-ZPass toll collection systems. New ferries are operating and more are proposed to be funded using CMAQ dollars.

The results of this proactive stance have been positive. Ozone levels have been improving significantly for the past decade. In fact, the number of days in which ozone was above the 0.12 ppm (parts per million) standard, has decreased from 69 days in 1980 to 9 days in 1996. The reductions are especially significant because, in the intermittent years when the temperature distributions were higher, the ozone still

declined. There were definite improvements in the New York metropolitan area. However, progress was not only limited to this area. Several upstate New York areas, which were originally designated as non-attainment, are now in attainment.

ISTEA has raised the awareness of the importance of transportation and environmental coordination and has encouraged the region to develop the tools to reduce the emissions generated by mobile sources. The first steps toward protecting the environment and the public's health have been taken and further progress is anticipated as we move toward achieving the federal attainment standard in the next decade.



The New York metropolitan area is fortunate to have an extensive waterway system. This resource has been underutilized in the recent past, but is experiencing renewed interest as a means of complementing the balance of our transportation system. Ferries comprise a form of transportation for commuters and recreational travelers that is making a comeback in the NYMTC re-

Ferries

gion. They provide a scenic alternative to bridges and highways that is not subject to traffic delays, so they are seen as a speedy, reliable service. In the metropolitan region today, the average daily ferry ridership is about 80,000 trips; three fourths of these are made on the Staten Island Ferry.

Currently, there are thirteen ferry routes crossing New York Harbor. Almost half of these routes were newly proposed during the last two years. Of the new ferry services currently being proposed, some are to be privately funded, others are to be publicly funded through ISTEA. New York Waterway, Harbor Shuttle, Express Navigation, and New York Water Taxi are private operators who are planning to expand their services by adding new commuter routes or seasonal services for tourists and special events. Since 1990, private ferry ridership jumped by 64%, from 12,000 in 1990 to 19,700 in 1995. Some of the new ferry proposals being considered are: a proposed ferry route from Manhattan to downtown Brooklyn, ferry service from Westchester and Southwest Connecticut to Manhattan, and a water taxi along Manhattan's West Side.

ISTEA funds are being used to develop a new ferry service by Metro-North Commuter Railroad that is proposed to start in 1997 to link Haverstraw, Rockland County, residents with the Metro-North commuter station in Ossining across the Hudson River. This innovative service will provide Rockland and Orange County residents with a fifteen minute ride across the river and well-coordinated, direct access to Metro-North Railroad for a competitively priced, multi-modal trip to Manhattan.

This service is anticipated to divert autos off both the Bear Mountain and the Tappan Zee Bridges. ISTEA CMAQ funding makes this innovative project possible because New York State's Transit Operating Assistance is not available for ferry service (other than the Staten Island Ferry) and all regular federal Operating Assistance is already needed to sustain existing transit systems.

Another new ferry service proposed by PANY&NJ will link Manhattan to LaGuardia Airport and will be less costly than a typical taxi ride from Manhattan with a round-trip ride costing about \$20 from Midtown Manhattan to LaGuardia Airport and about \$25 from Downtown. Recently, New York City has requested ISTEA money to build three new ferry boats, including a new design to run on compressed natural gas. In addition, New Jersey DOT had proposed a ferry study for Weehawken.

Ferry proposals are not only geared toward improving passenger mobility, but also to improving freight mobility and to reduce the number of trucks clogging city streets and river crossings, thereby reducing congestion and pollution. ISTEA CMAQ funds have been used to start the Red Hook



barge, which aimed to alleviate truck congestion by loading trucks onto a ferry and carrying them to their destinations, typically from New York to New Jersey or vice versa. This was a nationally-recognized CMAQ project. CMAQ funds are also being proposed for barges to transport recyclable paper to paper plants, thereby reducing truck traffic on the highway network.

Some ferry service proposals have raised community concerns, such as fear of an increase in traffic around the ferry terminals and the lack of adequate parking space around the terminal. Solutions to overcome some of these issues have been recommended or even implemented, such as intermodal connections and providing free bus service from the ferry terminal to other destinations.

The return of ferries as an alternative travel mode has not only occurred in the New York metropolitan region, but also in other parts of the country, such as San Francisco, Seattle, and New Orleans. Along with waterfront rehabilitation, the ferry, as a travel option, will be more and more popular. Another advantage of a ferry ride is the scenic water route that the passenger experiences. In addition, during severe winter months when the highways and rail tracks are hampered by snow, ferries usually continue to operate smoothly. If more people choose to use the ferry as a mode of travel, fewer cars or trucks will be on highways which translates to reduced traffic and cleaner air.



A new wind is sweeping the New York Metropolitan region, a wind of innovations based on advanced transportation technologies. This new wind is called Intelligent Transportation System, ITS in short. ITS will improve our individual mobility by enabling seamless intermodal transportation without taxing the environment that we live

In the Summer of 1996 the United States Department of Transportation awarded \$10.36 million for the ITS Model Deployment Initiative (MDI) project to the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut area. This project, which is managed by the Transportation Operation Coordinating Committee (TRANSCOM), consists of a

Intelligent Transportation System Initiatives in the NYMTC Region

in. ITS will deliver the mobility promise by integrating operational systems such as highway ramp metering and local street signal control, by providing travelers with real-time information about their route, including transit schedule and congestion location, and by providing transportation planners with better tools for improving the transportation system. Finally, ITS will help improve the safety and security of our transportation system and those that use it.

ITS is defined as a system of travel-support technology, smoothly coordinated among modes and jurisdictions to promote safe, expeditious, and economical movement of goods and people. Originally called Intelligent Vehicle-Highway System, ITS was enacted by the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of December 18, 1991 (Sections 6051 through 6059). To date, more than \$40 million has been programmed for ITS projects by the Council, and more projects may be programmed in the future as a result of the ITS Early Deployment Planning Studies for New York City and for the Lower Hudson Valley, and the Long Island ITS Strategic Plan.

public-private consortium including 14 core transportation agencies, 45 ancillary transportation agencies, and private sector partners. The private sector partners are contributing more than \$6.5 million toward the project. The scope of MDI includes an increase in interagency cooperation and communication, integration of existing Intelligent Transportation Systems, and deployment of Advanced Traveler Information System (ATIS) to disseminate information to travelers on travel options and schedules. A trip planning component will be developed by MDI. The trip planning, which could be accessed via Internet, telephone, and kiosks, will provide intermodal route information to traveler from point of trip origin to point of trip destination. Below are a few examples of operational ITS systems in the NYMTC area.

The oldest operational ITS in the NYMTC area is the Information For Motorist (INFORM) system which is operated by the New York State Department of Transportation in Long Island. INFORM currently covers the Northern State Parkway, the Long Island Expressway and service


roads, Route 25, and portions of Veterans Memorial Highway in Long Island, and extends into the Cross Island Parkway and Grand Central Parkway in Queens County. This system is programmed for expansion to a number of key arterials in Long Island in the near future. The system continuously monitors the conditions on the affected highways. The information is used to dispatch assistance to motorists involved in accidents or breakdowns, modify signal timing on arterial highways and alert motorists of road conditions ahead.

In the five counties of New York City, the Vehicular Traffic Control System (VTCS) coordinates 6,000 signalized intersections and 4,000 roadway sensors. VTCS is operated by the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) Traffic Management Center (TMC). Through VTCS sensors, real-time traffic speed is fed into the Computerized Area Tracking System (CATS) that provides information on traffic flow to coordinate the signals and emergency response. The NYCDOT TMC is scheduled for expansion in the future.

Other operational ITS systems include: E-ZPass automatic toll collection system (now operational at all MTA Bridge and Tunnel locations and the entire New York State Thruway system) and TRANSMIT (TRANSCOM System for Managing Incident and Traffic) which uses probe vehicles to detect incidents and traffic congestion. TRANSMIT is now operational on segments of the New York State Thruway and the Garden State Parkway in New Jersey and is slated for expansion.

Several other ITS programs are in various phases of design or implementation. Among these are Automated Vehicle Location Systems for transit vehicles which uses Geographic Information System (GIS), Global Positioning System (GPS) and other technologies to track the real-time location of a transit vehicle to enhance vehicle schedule and information to the public and Parking Management System, which will provide real time information on availability and cost of public parking at intermodal locations.





ISTEA and the Clean Air Act Amendments established a consistent framework and the need for new major transportation investment planning procedures, as defined in the FHWA/FTA Final Rule on Statewide and Metropolitan Planning, issued in the *Federal Register* on October 28, 1993. With this Rule, ISTEA incorporated major transportation investments into regional transporta-

Corporation-NYC Department of City Planning-NYC Mayor's Office of Transportation Intermodal Goods Movement Study to the list of the Council's MISs, now totaling 18. In the Council's active MIS's, the inter-agency process remains vibrant through Technical Advisory Committees. It is noteworthy that the FHWA and FTA consider themselves partners in the MIS process.

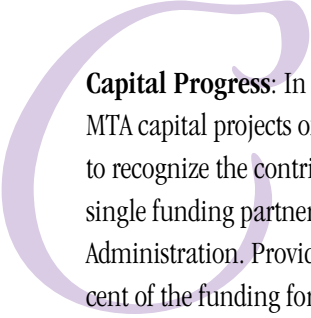
ISTEA + MIS = Coordination

tion planning, thus ensuring cooperation and coordination among state, MPO, and transit agencies, and strengthening the role of the MPO. In February 1995, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, as the designated MPO for downstate New York, developed and adopted MIS procedures and a list of Major Metropolitan Transportation Investments, to be carried out under the MIS procedures. Basically, a major investment study is required when an agency identifies the potential need for both a major investment and federal funds. It establishes a framework for a thorough assessment of all alternatives in a corridor or subarea.

The determination of an MIS could only be made after an initial interagency consultation meeting where the participants include the state DOT, the MPO, relevant transit agencies, environmental resource and permit agencies, affected local officials, the FHWA, the FTA, and other agencies related that may be affected by the proposed scope of the study. Testimony to this process was the addition of the jointly sponsored NYC Economic Development

Another important aspect MIS coordination is proactive public involvement, initiated early in the process. The public continues to be actively involved in the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)-sponsored East River Crossing, Manhattan East Side Alternatives, East Side Access Studies, and the MTA-Port Authority of New York & New Jersey-New Jersey Transit-sponsored Access to the Region's Core Study, having originally participated in setting the goals and objectives. Over 200 public outreach meetings have been held for these studies including those hosted by the Council.

The necessity for MISs to be closely integrated with the Council's Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (including conformity analysis), and other ISTEA activities, such as Management Systems, also ensure coordination among member agencies. Without this coordination, regional transportation planning can become even more complicated.



Capital Progress: In describing the major MTA capital projects of 1996, it is important to recognize the contribution of the largest single funding partner, the Federal Transit Administration. Providing almost 30 percent of the funding for our capital program (\$800 million in 1996), the FTA was instrumental in helping the MTA move forward on several key projects.

63rd Street Connector: Called one of the most cost-effective new-start projects in the nation by the FTA, this \$645 million project stayed within budget and maintained its construction schedule in 1996. The connector, which to date has received \$271 million in federal funds for transit plus \$45 million of highly competitive flexible funding, will allow the addition of 15

Towards Transit 2000

Installation and expansion of automated fare and toll collection systems in 1996 were but two of the more important capital investments aimed at bringing a new era of transportation efficiency and value to MTA customers. Similarly, they were only two of the projects seeking to improve the network through the application of the latest transportation technology.

New Subway Cars: The MTA received proposals in 1996 for the \$1.7 billion purchase of 740 new cars to replace NYC Transit's aging "redbirds"; the FTA has committed to pay \$916 million of this amount, and approved \$48 million in 1996. With design features based on the performance of prototype trains that have been tested in passenger service for three years, the cars promise to deliver improved safety, reliability, and customer comfort while consuming less energy. The contract for these cars was awarded in spring 1997, after approval of the capital plan by the Capital Program Review Board; it will be one of the largest procurements ever made by a single entity.

trains per hour between Queens and Manhattan, significantly reducing overcrowding on E and F lines.

Park Avenue Viaduct: Work continued on schedule on one of Metro-North's most important construction projects. The two-mile viaduct, parts of which were built in the 19th century, carries more than 530 trains a day into and out of Grand Central Terminal. The FTA-financed \$120 million rehabilitation of the viaduct and 125th Street station will be completed in 1999.

Subway Rail Control Center: Construction began on the new rail control center for the central nervous system of the subway in the 21st century. Being built on the site of a former bus depot on 54th Street in Manhattan, it is the first phase of a command facility that will guide all subway traffic. Included will be automated train supervision and a computerized system to adjust service and train schedules when disruptions occur. Eventually, the center will send "real time" information about train locations, schedules, and travel alternatives to customers in stations.

Grand Central Terminal Revitalization: A grand moment for the metropolitan region in 1996 occurred when New York Governor Pataki inaugurated the long-awaited \$175 million restoration and retail redevelopment of Grand Central Terminal. The project includes \$2.1 million in Federal Enhancement funding for the restoration of the terminal's magnificent sky ceiling. Work progressed well during the year, with minimum disruption of service to customers. Completion is expected in 1998.

Major Capital Projects That Advanced In 1996 With Local Funding Included:

New buses: NYC Transit received 616 new buses and 22 rebuilt buses for passenger service and ordered 200 more new ones.

Some of these buses will replace older vehicles; others will increase the fleet size to accommodate more riders when two-fare zones are eliminated in 1997.

New commuter railroad rolling stock: 15 diesel coaches were ordered for Metro-North to accommodate ridership increases.

Automated vending machines for MetroCard: NYC Transit ordered the first 1,000 automated vending machines for selling MetroCard, which will make the new fare medium far easier to buy. The machines will begin to arrive in the third quarter of 1997.

The Vision of Master Links: On May 2, 1996, Governor Pataki challenged

the MTA, the Port Authority, and the Empire State Development Corporation to deploy the latest technology to create a seamless transportation network linking New York City's business centers, communities, and airports with each other and with the rest of the region. He called the concept Master Links. Its goals, he said, would be to make trips to work and airports faster and more reliable, to cut down on

congestion and pollution, to create a stronger regional economy providing more jobs, and to boost tourism.

Master Links endorses a series of projects that have long sparked the imagination of transportation experts and planners. For the near future these include access to the East Side of Man-



hattan for the MTA Long Island Rail Road and to the West Side of Manhattan for the MTA Metro-North Railroad, rail access to JFK and La Guardia airports, and the restoration of New York's rail terminals.

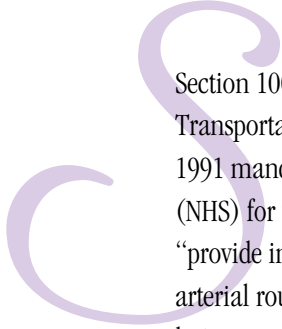
The governor directed the MTA and Port Authority to develop a "seamless method of collecting fares that enables passengers to carry a single card so they can transfer from one system to another", noting that the MTA's MetroCard is the logical candidate to become the single fare medium. Master Links supports an MTA proposal to eliminate two-fare zones, whereby commuters must pay a bus and subway fare in order to complete a one-way commute.

**E-ZPass Exceeds Expectations:**

For commuters, E-ZPass is not only a welcome convenience, it is a quantifiable timesaver and moneysaver. By the end of 1996, only 14 months after the inauguration of E-ZPass at the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, 370,000 tags had been sold - more than twice the number expected by the end of 1997. Thanks to E-ZPass, rush-hour congestion at the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge now breaks around 6 p.m. instead of 7 p.m. When E-ZPass market share at any facility reaches 35% (which it did for most of 1996 at the Verrazano) the average wait at toll plazas will decrease from 7.7 minutes to 1.5 minutes.

Fare Policy:

By January 1996, all NYC Transit buses were MetroCard equipped. The number of subway stations equipped to accept MetroCard increased significantly in 1996. In addition, starting in January 1997, MetroCard will serve as a joint monthly commuter rail/transit ticket allowing mail and ride customers to pay fares seamlessly between MTA services. In July 1997, when all subway stations will have been equipped to accept MetroCard, free transfers between connecting bus and subway service will begin. Multi-ride discounts will follow in 1998.



Section 1006 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 mandated a National Highway System (NHS) for the country. The NHS would “provide interconnected system of principal arterial routes which will serve major population centers, international border crossing, ports, airports, public transportation

mileage but carries more than 42 percent of the travel.

In New York State the NHS includes approximately 2,700 center line miles of rural roads and approximately 2,300 center line miles of urban roads. Slightly more than half of the urban road mileage of the State is in the New York Metropolitan area.

America on Wheels: The National Highway System

facilities, and other intermodal transportation facilities and other travel destinations; meet national defense requirements; and serve interstate and interregional travel.” In New York State, the Department of Transportation selected the NHS routes in cooperation with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations in urbanized areas, and recommended these routes to the federal government for designation. The US Department of Transportation submitted the National Highway System to Congress in December 1993. Congress approved the NHS in 1996.

Nationwide, the NHS consists of approximately 155,000 center lane miles of roads that include the entire Interstate System, the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET), the STRAHNET major highway connectors, and a number of congressional high priority corridors. The NHS also provides connections with water ports, airports, AMTRAK stations, intermodal facilities, military facilities and, outside the NYMTC region, with international border crossings. The NHS represents only about 4 percent of the Nation’s total public road

There are about 300 center line miles of NHS in the Mid-Hudson region, about 420 center line miles of NHS in New York City, and about 450 center line miles of NHS in the Long Island region.

In the NYMTC area, the NHS connects the following facilities:

- ▼ **Water ports:** The Port of New York .
- ▼ **Airports:** John F. Kennedy International Airport, LaGuardia International Airport.
- ▼ **AMTRAK Stations:** Penn Station.
- ▼ **Intermodal Facilities:** Oak Point, Red Hook, and Howland Hook Marine Terminal.
- ▼ **Military Facilities:** Staten Island Naval Complex.

Most of the responsibility for maintaining, rehabilitating, and operating the NHS falls within the jurisdiction of the State, but several major NHS arterials are locally owned and maintained. The City of New York, for example, owns approximately 220 center line miles of NHS. The cost of maintaining, rehabilitating , and operating

the NHS is provided by a dedicated federal fund. Congress appropriated approximately \$21 billion for this task over six years of the ISTEA mandate. However, following the flexibility spirit of ISTEA, 50 percent of the NHS funds, or more with congressional ap-

proval, could be transferred to the Surface Transportation Program (STP), which includes funding for all other road categories outside NHS, transit modes, as well as pedestrian and bicycle facilities.



As you can see from the articles in this annual report, ISTEA was and is a revolutionary approach to transportation planning and implementation. It offers us a unique opportunity to look at our entire transportation system from a holistic perspective, make decisions and investments based upon the best use of limited resources and

ISTEA and limit changes to minor adjustments that will improve an already outstanding planning process.

Our transportation system, indeed all society, is much more complex than in days past. This requires review, analysis, and decision making that takes into account all of these issues and complexities.

Conclusion

customize the system to meet our unique local needs.

We have taken advantage of the opportunities and flexibility provided by ISTEA. As we move toward the reauthorization of ISTEA, we look forward to continuing down the path upon which we have embarked. We trust that Congress, in their wisdom, will retain the major elements of

ISTEA has offered us the opportunity to do that and we have responded. With the assistance of all of you, we intend to continue to improve the transportation planning process, our transportation system, air quality, economic development and the quality of life of the entire metropolitan area in the years ahead. I look forward to that partnership.



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NYMTC Central Staff

Office of the Director

James W. Harris, P.E., *Director*
Valli Gadsden-Smith
Emma Gaitan
Norma HESSIC
Gretchen Kunca

Planning Group

Gerald J. Bogacz, *Assistant Director*
Clement Ayim
Michele Bager
Swati Desai
Stephen Hausch
Bernice Hoffner
Reza Khalili
Jan Khan
Pamela Lee
Howard Mann
Guy La Monaca
Wesley C. Stephen

Technical Group

Tom Schulze, *Assistant Director*
Christina Adidjaja
Juliette E. Bergman
Sangeeta Bhowmick
Stephanie Ceballos
Kuo-Ann Chiao
Leokadia Glogowski
Charles S. Henry, Jr.
Mary Hrabowska
Ashfaq Khan
Calys J. Maloney
Ronald Reid
Joseph Reyes
Pingning Shen
Yuri Teleshevsky
Mary Vogel
Yu-Fang Zhang
Yalan Zou

Administration Group

Alan Borenstein, *Deputy Director*
Ismet Apdiroglu
George Crawford
Lenn Ditman
Robert Donohue
Anthony Gawrych
Michael Harmel
Gerald Jonassen
Rachel Lavan
John Lopez
Louise Morisi
Vera Olichney
Kalpana Shah
See Wong Shum
Lee Skelton
Chew Wong

Transportation Coordinating Committee Staff

Mid-Hudson South

Sarah Rios, *Staff Director*
Alexis Broadhead
Jean Shanahan
Wendy Van Eaton

Nassau Suffolk

David Glass, *Acting Director*
Georgine Faltys
David Kletsman

New York City

Larry T. Malsam, *Staff Director*
Emmanuel A. Erondu
Angelina Foster
Chris Hardej

THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

One World Trade Center ♦ Suite 82 East ♦ New York ♦ New York ♦ 10048 ♦ 212.938.3300

Fax 212.938.3295 ♦ BBS 212.938.437 ♦ Website <http://www.dot.state.ny.us/reg/nymtc/council.html>



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