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TRANSPORTATION AND A LIVABLE REGION THE FOCUS OF NYMTC'S 2010 ANNUAL MEETING

Key Officials Discuss Planning for Sustainable Regional Growth for the Next 20 Years

NEW YORK, March 18, 2010 – Planning for a more livable region led the members of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) to collaboratively develop a shared vision for sustainable growth based on integrated transportation and land use planning. The 2010 - 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, entitled *A Shared Vision for A Shared Future*, is the culmination of their efforts to date. On the whole, livability is based on concepts of sustainable development that support and enhance quality of life, access to transportation, land use management, housing, economic vitality, public health and the environment. The ongoing efforts of the Council members, individually and working collaboratively as NYMTC, embody the integrated planning required to achieve these outcomes. NYMTC is a regional council of governments that is a collaborative forum for transportation planning for New York City, Long Island and the lower Hudson Valley.

Livability in the region was the focus of NYMTC's 2010 Annual Meeting, featuring keynote speaker Adolfo Carrión, director of the White House Office of Urban Affairs, who discussed the Administration's urban policy agenda with a focus on building strong regional economies, supporting responsible and sustainable infrastructure, and capitalizing on human capital in urban areas. The meeting culminated in a roundtable discussion among the Council members on transportation and a livable region, at which they reiterated their commitment to supporting sustainable growth and development for the region through a shared vision based on integrated planning and strategic transportation investments. The Council's ongoing work to support transportation and a livable region furthers their goals of enhanced livability in communities throughout the NYMTC region.

The basic building blocks of livability are the transportation services and facilities that support expanded housing opportunities, economic activity and employment opportunities, while minimizing environmental consequences. The Council members of NYMTC recognize and support these components of livability in the 2010 - 2035 Plan through the identification of ten desired growth areas and 28 strategic transportation investments, which incorporate integrated transportation planning and land use planning. The Council members of NYMTC include county executives from Nassau, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester counties, the New York City and New York State transportation commissioners, New York City's City planning director, and the executive directors of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

"We have come together as the members of NYMTC to develop a vision that sets the conditions for sustainable, transit-oriented growth across the region," said Amanda Burden, Director of the Department of City Planning and outgoing NYMTC co-chair. "Recent years have seen a growing and significant trend toward the integration of land use planning and transportation planning, which is key to sustainability and livability in our communities. In New York City, we have undertaken an ambitious rezoning effort to both focus growth opportunities within walking distance of transit and redirect most

growth away from low-density areas where the predominant mode of travel is the automobile. Through the Council members' vision, we have a real opportunity to decrease congestion and improve mobility, have a substantive effect on environmental quality and overall quality of life, and secure a great future for our growing region."

" *A Shared Vision for A Shared Future* provides the basis for cost-effective investments in New York's transportation system and reflects the Council's commitment to enhancing regional mobility while maintaining our infrastructure in a state of good repair," said Stanley Gee, Acting Commission of the New York State Department of Transportation and NYMTC co-chair. "It is important that we be able to address critical transportation issues also on our horizon. During this time of fiscal uncertainty and continued population growth, we must work together to identify funding solutions to fulfill the vision of a more sustainable transportation system."

Despite the current economic situation, it is apparent from forecasts by planners, economists and demographers that the region's future will be defined by growth in population, jobs, and economic activity, and attendant growth in travel, transportation congestion, and vehicular emissions. This is an optimistic view, but it also raises pointed questions about the capacity of the current transportation infrastructure and services to accommodate such growth while simultaneously safeguarding the region's economic vitality and quality of life.

The 2010 - 2035 Plan proposes optimizing growth, to the greatest extent possible, in ten desired growth areas through a combination of integrated land use policies and strategic transportation investments. The desired growth areas and related strategic transportation investments that are the core of the Plan form the heart of NYMTC's livability agenda, encompassing transportation services that support efficient and sustainable patterns of land use development for the region as a whole. If this approach is successfully implemented, the impact from increases in vehicular trips and transportation congestion that would normally result from the anticipated growth in population and jobs will be lessened.

The livability aspects of NYMTC's planning process are consistent with the recent federal emphasis on livable communities. In June of 2009, the Obama Administration announced a Sustainable Communities Partnership, spearheaded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Transportation to help improve access to affordable housing, provide more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide.

"Sitting as we do at the crossroads of the tri-state region, in the center of the northeast mega-region, the New York metropolitan area offers many elements of livability," said Joel P. Ettinger, executive director of NYMTC. "The challenge we face is to continually enhance and expand these aspects of the region and to invest in the area's vast transportation system. The shared vision the Council members have crafted will help the region grow more sustainably over the next 25 years, further contributing to a more livable future."

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The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) is a regional council of governments that is a collaborative forum for transportation planning for New York City, Long island and the lower Hudson valley. NYMTC's 16 Council member organizations include: Nassau, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester counties; New York State Department of Transportation; New York City Department of Transportation; New York City Department of City Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Federal Highway Administration; Federal Transit Administration; New Jersey Transit; North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority; the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. www.nymtc.org.