Regional Travel Survey Results Released

New York Metropolitan Transportatin Council (NYMTC)

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)

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First Detailed Picture of Regional Travel in Three Decades

New York City, New York and Newark, New Jersey, April 10, 2000 -- New York-New Jersey metropolitan area transportation planning groups today released the results of an 18-month study, setting the stage for cooperative planning and decision making in the metropolitan region.

According to the survey, residents of the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut metropolitan area make nearly 60 million trips – an average of 3.2 trips per person – every day for work, school, recreation, shopping and other business. The survey provides the first detailed picture of travel in the region since a similar study conducted in 1963. The U.S. Census, conducted every 10 years and under way right now, collects some information about travel, but only for commuting trips between home and work.

The study of travel patterns of thousands of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut residents has created a shared database that provides a foundation for transportation decision making in the metropolitan region. The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) oversees federal transportation investment in 13 northern New Jersey counties, while the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) does the same for New York City and five other New York counties.

"For public officials addressing multibillion dollar decisions about investments in transportation, we now have what is essentially a customer survey," said Robert C. Janiszewski, Chairman, NJTPA and Hudson County Executive. "It will help us understand the many ways residents travel and it will help this thriving metropolitan area meet demanding and changing needs."

The survey creates the clearest picture yet of travel patterns within the region. It shows the percentage of trips made by car, bus, commuter rail, subway, foot and other modes. It also reveals travel patterns by age, gender and other factors.

"The information gathered forms an extraordinarily deep source of data," said Tom Schulze, Acting Executive Director, NYMTC. "It will allow for better transportation planning for several decades, from major rail projects to neighborhood intersection improvements."

Among the most dramatic findings of the survey are differences between urban areas and the suburbs in the extent of pedestrian travel, travel by car, and use of bus/rail mass transit. Within Manhattan, residents walk for more than 50 percent of trips. Suburban residents, meanwhile, use their cars for 90 percent of trips. For travel to Manhattan, transit serves up to 63 percent of all weekday trips and 75 percent of work-related trips.

The survey also shows that travel in the region doesn't necessarily fall into preconceived patterns. Most weekday trips, more than three in four, are made locally within a single county. Manhattan's pull varies – it is felt most strongly in New York City's outer boroughs and adjacent counties. While a quarter of Hudson, Westchester, and Nassau County work trips are to Manhattan, less than 10 percent of such trips in the northern New Jersey region as a whole are destined for Manhattan.

Overall, residents of the metropolitan region spend 77 minutes per day traveling. Household composition, combined with gender and employment status, exercises a strong influence over travel patterns. Women who work part-time and have two or more children travel more than any other group.

The study addresses requirements of the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990 and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century of 1998. These laws required the use of computer models to simulate regional travel and its impact on air quality. The survey data will be instrumental in updating those models.

"With thousands of commuters crossing state boundaries every day, we recognized the need for cooperative initiatives to improve transportation planning in the wider region," added Schulze. "Better planning will make travel easier, reduce unnecessary auto use and encourage more efficient commuting."

The information released today is the culmination of an 18-month, $1.5 million effort. The survey gathered responses from 27,369 people in 11,264 households who kept diaries of all their daily travel. The study was conducted for NYMTC and NJTPA by Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. in association with NuStats International. Additional analysis was performed by Schaller Consulting. Residents of the following counties participated:

New Jersey: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Warren and Union.
New York: New York City (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island), Nassau, Suffolk, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester.
Connecticut: Fairfield, New Haven

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