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Letter from the Editors

Another summer is behind us and some of us are probably already beginning to prepare for winter. How apropos that both the upcoming Rudin Center Conference and our first article are about a major issue that people face in the winter of their lives — mobility. Robert Hodder of AARP talks about the increasing driving and public transportation challenges that seniors face as they get older, also discussing how transit-friendly development (livable communities) is also senior-friendly development.

Recognizing that the link between land-use and transportation investments is one of the key components of building a quality community, the New York State Department of

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Inside NYTJ

Beyond "Living Behind the Geraniums:" Enhancing Mobility to Create Livable Communities for Successful Aging

By Robert Hodder, Ph.D.

Ya know that old trees just grow stronger
And old rivers grow wilder ev'ry day,
Old people just grow lonesome
Waiting for someone to say "Hello in there, Hello."

So if you're walking down the street sometime
And spot some hollow ancient eyes,
Please don't just pass 'em by and stare
As if you didn't care, say "Hello in there, Hello."

—*Hello in There*, John Prine

Prine's description of "hollow ancient eyes" scares us all. And yet we are gratified when he urges us to reach out and say "hello in there." We know that it is the right thing to do, and yet our frustration is that there must be more.

In fact, there is much more that can be done, especially in transportation. Even as those who deal with the older adult community work to transform this stereotype of aging — persons "living behind the geraniums," isolated and viewing the world rather than engaging with it — the transportation community can help with improved public policies, better planning, and a more astute approach to the community building process. In short, we can work to enhance community design so that places become more "livable" and people stay socially active. Indeed, AARP believes the imperative to create environments for successful aging is a principal design challenge of the 21st Century.

We all need to move between the places where we live and the places that we work, shop, and play. Transportation planners think about these locations as "origins" and "destinations," and they routinely examine the demand for trips and seek to build and maintain transportation facilities that will accommodate the projected demand. Historically that network capacity-building has been centered on roads, reflecting Americans' allegiance to the automobile and their political support for federal, state, and local policies that have created metropolitan regions dominated by auto-dependent suburbs.[1]

As a consequence, Americans spend more time "stuck in traffic" than ever before.[2] In the early 1990s federal transportation policies such as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) began to marginally shift federal funding to alternative modes (e.g., rail and bus transit); that movement toward "multimodalism" has continued and been refined to include other modes of travel such as biking and walking. Nevertheless, we remain a predominantly auto-dependent society, and it is exactly that overdependence on a single mode that threatens our autonomy and independence as we age rapidly.

Communities throughout the United States are already grappling with changing regional demographics. Policymakers and community residents alike are recognizing that design changes will be required to enhance opportunities for economic activity and social engagement as residents seek to "age in place." Obviously more than physical design is needed to confront the challenges associated with an aging population, but community design establishes the parameters that guide both public and private actions.

Changing Demographics and the Significance of Mobility in Community Engagement

The demographics of the United States will change dramatically over the next several decades, in large part due to the aging of the

(Continued on page 2)

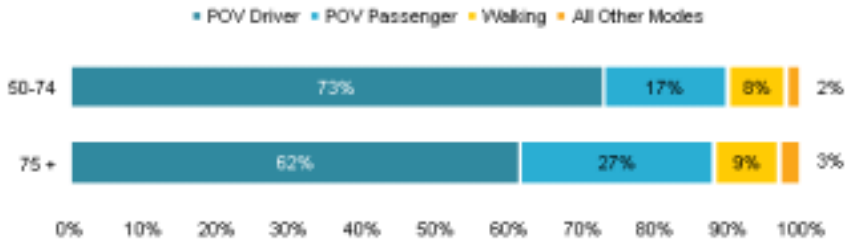
Living Behind the Geraniums cont.

(Cont. from page 1)

"Baby Boomers" — those individuals born between 1946 and 1964. These roughly 78 million people will start turning 65 in 2011, and the ranks of the 65+ population will increase by over 100% between 2000 (35 million) and 2030 (71 million). Importantly, there will be similar changes in the 50+ population. The roughly 87 million individuals who were 50+ in 2005 are projected to increase to over 155 million in 2050. While there are variations in the geography of aging throughout the country, census figures show that in the 1990s all but 11 of 318 metropolitan areas saw an increase in their 65+ population.

The policy consequences of this shift are evident when one pairs the travel choices of most Americans with the dominant auto-dependent landscape. For most Americans age 50 and older, transportation means driving themselves. Nine out of 10 trips made by individuals 50 and older are made in a privately owned automobile. Although that figure is reduced somewhat in terms of individuals age 75+ who drive themselves in private vehicles, the modal preference of those persons remains the automobile, although there are marginal increases in walking and other modes. (Figure 1)

This dependence on the private automobile is troubling for the future independence of many Americans. As individuals age they confront increasing limitations to their physical skills. Declining health, eyesight, physical or mental abilities, in conjunction with the cost considerations of car ownership and concerns over safety, suggest that a large number of persons will confront significant limitations to their independence once they are faced with "giving up the keys."[3] Additionally, states are looking closely at driver licensing requirements for older drivers.[4] While AARP does not support age-based testing for licensing renewal, it does support uniform functional assessments that screen drivers for their abilities regardless of age, or medical screening and assessment if indicated by an individual's history. Nevertheless, AARP recognizes that there is a life cycle to driving. It is, thus, all the more imperative that mobility options be available to persons who no longer drive. Today more than one in five (21%) of Americans age 65 and older do not drive, and that number is expected to increase.[5] The average male will outlive his driving abilities by six years and the average female will outlive hers by ten years.



Source: National Household Travel Survey, 2001

Figure 1: Most Age 50+ Drive, Decrease Post 75

In 2005, AARP conducted a survey that looked at the connections between mobility options and community engagement. Looking at the differences between drivers and nondrivers, the survey asked respondents to quantify how often they "missed doing something that they wanted to do" in their community. The results indicate that drivers frequently missed these activities only 2% of the time; in contrast, nondrivers missed such activities 33% of the time. (Figure 2)

This analysis suggests a strong correlation between driving abilities and opportunities to have a satisfying life outside of the home. Indeed, looking at trip purpose, the survey research demonstrated that nondrivers who are 50+ make fewer trips for all purposes except medical and dental when compared with drivers. (Figure 3, on page 13)

Further, AARP research demonstrates that people overwhelmingly want to live in their own homes and communities as they age. Most, in fact, do so. But many others confront transportation barriers that take the choice away from them or make it difficult or impossible to remain independent and involved in their community.[6]

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Enhancing the Travel Environment and Diversifying Transportation Options

So, how do we enhance the travel environment and diversity transportation options to allow for greater access to transportation and a resulting better quality of life?

Driving. One method to facilitate continued independence for persons as they age is to enhance the travel environment to accommodate older drivers. Expanding shoulders, increasing the fonts on road signage, and widening road-striping are all suggested techniques for accomplishing this goal.[7] Alternatively, refreshing the driving skills of older drivers is a method for improving road safety for all individuals. (AARP has a Driver Safety Program (DSP) course that has taught over 10 million individuals since 1979. And recently the DSP staff released an online version of the course to complement the classroom offering.)

> ***"Because many baby-boomers have never ridden transit, they often confront difficulties understanding the service as first-time customers."***

Lastly, an examination of the interface between car and driver may reveal opportunities for safety improvements. In partnership with the American Automobile Association (AAA), the American Occupational Therapists Association (AOTA), and the American Society on Aging (ASA), AARP initiated a Carfit program in which a certified occupational therapist examines an individual in his/her vehicle to see if the "fit" is correct and if there are any devices or physical therapies that could enhance the individual's driving safety.

Nondriving Options. Diversifying mobility options is an essential element in developing a sustainable transportation network. Transit options, whether they be fixed-guideway (e.g., rail or bus rapid transit) or traditional fixed-route services, carry many older persons for affordable fares.[8] All public transit providers are required by Federal Law to charge half of the base fare for certified seniors and those who are disabled during off-peak travel times. Many providers extend this discount to peak travel times as well.

	Drivers	Nondrivers
Frequently	2%	33%
Occasionally	6%	17%
Rarely	14%	15%
Never	78%	35%

Figure 2: Nondrivers miss doing something they wanted to do much more often than drivers

On the land development side, many communities are rezoning parcels for more intensive uses within fixed guideway corridors to take advantage of the value associated with such transit investments. In congested regions, this approach to transit-oriented development (TOD) builds upon market demand as residential, commercial, retail, and public uses are allowed, which creates enhanced demand for transit and, thus, yields a more vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood precinct.[9]

Public transportation is often a complex service to deliver because agencies are trying to connect multiple origins and destinations with limited capital equipment and operating funds. Because many baby-boomers have never ridden transit, they often confront difficulties understanding the service as first-time customers. Transit properties have responded to this market opportunity by providing "travel training," which instructs new riders on how to use the bus or train. AARP has worked with the Transit Authority of River City in Louisville, Kentucky to develop a video training module that can be used by transit agencies without established travel training curricula.

Many older adults require specialized transportation services because of physical or cognitive frailties. Public transportation agencies are required by Federal Law to provide lift-equipped, curb-to-curb paratransit service for persons within $^{3}/_{4}$ miles of a fixed-route transit service who are physically unable to make it to the stop. The service hours have to be consistent with that of the fixed-route offerings, and the service level is determined through local planning. Importantly, providers are limited to charging twice the standard base fare. The cost of these trips to the taxpayer is considerable. In 2004, an average of $2.21 was collected for an unlinked paratransit trip while the cost of furnishing the service averaged nearly $23.[10] Demand responsive service has expanded rapidly nationally, nearly doubling in annual mileage in the last ten years reported.[11] This is creating an unsustainable cost/revenue model. The highest level of specialized transit is taxicab service or volunteer staffed vehicles.

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Robert Hodder, Ph.D., is Manager of Editorial Content, Integrated Communications, for AARP.

AARP's Strategic Vision

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization of over 36 million individuals. Guided by a ten-year strategic plan that focuses on policy areas where our actions can have a "social impact," AARP national and state staffs, complemented by a cadre of engaged volunteers and enthusiastic members, work to adopt, maintain, and enhance programs that protect economic security (e.g., Social Security reform), enhance health and supportive services (e.g., Medicare, part D), and provide housing and mobility options for community residents (e.g., housing and transportation).

While economic security and health/supportive services advocacy generally centers on federal and state regulatory and funding initiatives, livable communities advocacy in the housing and transportation arenas is frequently more local and/or regional in nature. Such initiatives can be strongly influenced by federal legislation and funding but much of the community building process that affects the character of community "livability" is shaped by private market activities, as well as local land use decisions, transportation programming and funding, and housing policies and regulatory requirements.

AARP defines a livable community as "a place that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community services, and adequate mobility options, which together facilitate personal independence and engagement of residents in civic and social life."* While every community has a unique history and land use-transportation pattern, "getting around" in that landscape is essential to sustaining life, engaging in economic activity, and maintaining the relationships that define us as social creatures.

* A. Kochera and A. Straight, *A Report to the Nation on Livable Communities: Creating Environments for Successful Aging* (Washington, DC: AARP, 2005).

Rudin Center Research

Pennsylvania's "Key" to Successful High-Speed Rail

By Allison L. C. de Cerreño, Ph.D.

Many countries have or will soon deploy new high-speed rail (HSR) (separate right-of-way (ROW) using technologies that allow speeds over 200 mph) or Maglev (separate ROW using magnetic levitation technologies allowing speeds beyond 300 mph). In the United States, however, though Congress first authorized studies aimed at deploying HSR in 1965, and despite at least 17 different efforts (some with multiple attempts), over the past 40 years nearly all HSR projects have failed to progress. Further, the two which do exist — the Empire Corridor (between New York City and Albany, NY) and Northeast Corridor (NEC) — fall far short of speeds and performance levels elsewhere.

Last year, the Rudin Center completed a study, funded by the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI), aimed at identifying key elements for successful US HSR outcomes. The resulting report, described in *NYTJ* (Spring 2005), summarized US HSR legislative history and developed in-depth case studies for Florida, the Pacific Northwest, and California. This year, MTI funded the Center to develop three more cases — the Chicago Hub, the NEC, and the Keystone Corridor.

The following discussion is derived from the Keystone case which, along with the others is undergoing peer review. As one of the few cases where HSR has been (or is about to be) implemented in the United States, the Keystone holds important lessons for future efforts.

Summary History of HSR in the Corridor

Legally a branch line of the NEC, the Keystone Corridor was formally designated as a federal HSR corridor by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) in December 1998. The initial designation spanned 104 miles between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, PA (the eastern portion, owned by Amtrak). An extension of the designation from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh (the western segment, owned by Norfolk Southern Corporation (NS) was approved in 2000, for a total length of 349 miles.

While HSR on the Keystone was briefly explored in the late 1960s, serious efforts began in 1981 when the Commonwealth established the Pennsylvania High Speed Intercity Rail Passenger Commission (PHSIRPC). Tasked with "overall responsibility, power and duty to investigate, study and make recommendations concerning the need for and establishment and operation of a high speed intercity rail passenger system in the Commonwealth"(55 P.S. § 684), the PHSIRPC began its work in early 1983 with $4.2 million in state, federal and West German grant funding.

> ***"...despite at least 17 different efforts (some with multiple attempts), over the past 40 years, nearly all HSR projects have failed to progress..."***

Within several months, the PHSIRPC issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a feasibility study and selected Parsons Brinckerhoff/Gannett Fleming (PBGF) in June 1983. PBGF's first report was released in February 1985, presenting various alternatives for the full Keystone Corridor, including incremental HSR, new HSR, and Maglev. Preliminary analysis suggested incremental HSR offered the highest rate of return and lowest risk. However, in its *Final Report*, the PHSIRPC formally recommended Maglev, though a "substantial minority" felt incremental HSR should be pursued.

Regardless, the recommendations were "dropped" before th ey were formally announced. The *Final Report* was published two years after Governor Robert P. Casey (D, 1987 – 1995) entered office and terminated the PHSIRPC staff, halting all HSR work with no reason publicly stated.

In 1995, faced with deteriorating infrastructure but convinced the corridor was strategically important to the state's overall transportation system, the Commonwealth entered into agreement with Amtrak to increase operating assistance on the corridor. In 1999 Amtrak and the Commonwealth signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)/Supplemental MOA, which outlined objectives and responsibilities under a Keystone Corridor Improvement Plan (KCIP). A joint $140 million infrastructure and equipment upgrade program, the KCIP aimed to reduce trip times from over two hours to 90 minutes by 2004, enhance several stations, and improve overall reliability of service in the corridor. Costs would be shared equally.

Work on the KCIP was to begin in 2000, but due to a worsening financial crisis, Amtrak was unable to meet this deadline. Meanwhile the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) continued its overall statewide transportation planning process, looking to develop an integrated multi-modal plan, dealing with highways, rail, aviation, waterways, freight and passenger services. In January 2000, PennDOT issued *PennPlan Moves!*, a 25-year transportation plan which identified several statewide goals related to HSR. This was followed, in December 2001, by the *Pennsylvania Statewide Passenger Rail Needs Assessment*, which provided a broad evaluation of the need for

Source: US Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration, Technical Monograph: Transportation Planning for the Philadelphia-Harrisburg "Keystone" Railroad Corridor, volume 2 (Washington, DC: FRA, March 2004)

statewide intercity passenger rail in key transportation corridors. The plan prioritized the corridors, developed a baseline comparison across them, developed profiles for those with high potential, and identified needs and opportunities, as well as future policy considerations for intercity passenger rail service within the Commonwealth.[1] The eastern portion of the Keystone was given the highest rating, with the western portion of the corridor much lower.

Still seeking to enhance service on the corridor, in April 2002 the Commonwealth entered into a formal Agreement with Amtrak based on the earlier MOA, but work on the KCIP still lagged. By September 2003, only one-third of the funds scheduled had been spent. According to David Gunn, former CEO and President of Amtrak, the key reason for this delay was lack of managerial commitment to the KCIP on the part of Amtrak.[2]

This finally changed when David Gunn became President and CEO of Amtrak in May 2002. In the early months after joining Amtrak, Gunn took a trip to Pittsburgh on the Keystone and determined that improvements needed to be made immediately. Upon returning, Gunn approached his colleagues at Amtrak and asked them to work closely with PennDOT to develop a plan that would improve service and infrastructure along the corridor, within the earlier KCIP budget. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) and NS were brought into the discussion with the hope that they would finance several improvements related to their services.

In July 2004, Governor Rendell and Gunn issued a joint announcement of an amended $145.5 million plan under which costs would be split equally between Amtrak and PennDOT.[3] As with the original KCIP Agreement, the key goals of the project were to reduce local trip times from two hours to one hour and forty-five minutes (now by fall 2006), introduce ninety-minute express service, and increase the number of Amtrak trains from nine to thirteen.[4] The Amendment provided a formal set of production goals and objectives and additional planned improvements. Specific projects within each of the program elements were identified, along with clear timelines for each and expenditures tied to them.

With this commitment from the highest levels of Amtrak and PennDOT, the program began to move more swiftly, and in December 2004, based on a financial analysis of planned and actual expenditures, the funding schedule was again revised. This time, a number of expenditures were moved ahead and the timeline for project completion looked like it would not only be met, but would likely finish ahead of schedule for at least some elements. Completion of the majority of the elements under the amended project is expected in fall 2006, at which time electrified trains will be placed into revenue service. Speeds will be increased to 110 mph for much of the line, with corresponding trip times of 90 minutes for express trains and 105 minutes for local trains between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, significantly shorter than the two hours it takes to drive.[5]

Elements for Success

The initial goal on the Keystone is for modest 110 mph service, but many suggest that once this service is fully running, there is potential to increase maximum authorized speeds up to 150 mph in places. While it is too early to determine whether all the original program goals will be met, many have been completed ahead of schedule or will soon be successfully addressed. Several factors have clearly contributed to the Keystone's recent success which holds lessons for other HSR initiatives.

Leadership, Coupled With the Financial Means and Authority to Implement Change. This is perhaps the most important set of factors contributing to the current success of this HSR effort. Any one of them alone proved insufficient to implement HSR. Indeed, part of what makes the most recent experience

(Continued on page 12)

Allison L. C. de Cerreño, Ph.D., is Co-Director of the NYU Wagner Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management.

Selected US High-Speed Ground Transportation Efforts

**denotes federally designated*

***California Corridor.** A 700-mile new HSR system linking San Francisco, Oakland, and Sacramento with Los Angeles and San Diego. In planning for almost 10 years, its future is questionable. CA has also been pursuing Maglev in some areas.

***Chicago Hub.** A 2,313-mile incremental HSR system, linking 8 states — Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The larger Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI), which also includes Iowa, is more extensive and adds another 700 miles to the federally designated Chicago Hub. Though some incremental improvements have been made on short segments of the Hub (primarily in Illinois), neither the Hub nor the MWRRI have moved past the planning phases.

***Florida Corridor.** A 356-mile system linking Tampa, Orlando, and Miami, both incremental HSR and new HSR were pursued. Neither has succeeded.

***Keystone Corridor.** The full corridor links Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, PA, for a total of 349 miles. After having previously pursued new HSR and Maglev along the full corridor, the recent incremental HSR effort focuses only on the 104 miles between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, PA. Speeds will be increased to 110 mph and electric trains introduced in fall 2006.

Northeast Corridor (NEC). The 456-mile NEC mainline links Washington, DC and Boston, MA via New York City. Legally, there are two branch lines: the Empire Corridor between New York City and Albany, NY, and the Keystone Corridor, both of which are federally designated HSR corridors. Incremental HSR has been introduced on the NEC.

Ohio & Lake Erie Regional Rail. This incremental HSR system would link 5 states and Toronto, Canada and could serve as a link between the Chicago Hub, and the Northeast, Keystone, and Empire Corridors. It has been pursued unsuccessfully since 1975.

***Pacific Northwest Corridor.** An incremental HSR system of 466 miles linking Eugene, OR with Vancouver, BC, via Tacoma and Seattle, WA. Improvements have lagged due to uneven interest among the states and Canada. Current maximum speeds remain at 79 mph.

Texas Triangle. Linking Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio, TX, new HSR was pursued in the 1980s but failed after five years.

In the Region

Quality Communities Workshop:
Advancing the Transportation – Land Use Connection

By Clifford A. Thomas

On June 13, 2006, in Binghamton, New York, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) in conjunction with the University Transportation Research Center, held "Quality Communities Workshop: Advancing the Transportation – Land Use Connection." The purpose of the workshop was to provide transportation stakeholders an opportunity to influence New York's approach to integrating transportation investment decisions with community land use planning. Participants included representatives from local and state government, regional planning organizations, academic experts and other transportation professionals interested in having a constructive dialogue on this subject.

Lieutenant Governor Mary O. Donohue spoke on the Quality Communities Initiative, a program built on creating strong partnerships between state and local governments for the purpose of investing in those communities. The Lt. Governor noted that the City of Binghamton, a pilot Quality Communities location, is applying innovative solutions to strengthen its economy, enhance the local community, and improve the quality of its natural environment. One of the important components of the Quality Communities Initiative involves ensuring transportation improvements contribute to a community's continued growth and are in keeping with the community's vision.

NYSDOT Commissioner Thomas J. Madison framed the workshop as a learning and listening effort and encouraged everyone to be generous with comments and input. Allison L. C. de Cerreño, Co-Director of the NYU Wagner Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management, served as the day's overall moderator and facilitator. Four interactive sessions were held that included both presentations and follow-up discussions on: *Integrating Land Use and Transportation, Transportation Visioning, Transportation-Land Use Management Tools, and The Economy-Planning for Growth*. Session moderators were John Poorman, of the Capital District Transportation Committee; Peter Plumeau of Wilbur Smith Associates; Stephen Ferranti of SRF Associates; and Steve Munson of NYSDOT. Georges Jacquemart of Buckhurst, Fish & Jacquemart, provided the Keynote, suggesting that communities use tools and strategies which consider all transportation users and the system as a whole and that are appropriate to each community's unique needs. A concluding panel summarized the major workshop themes and presented some potential next step actions.

Clearly, the concept of linking transportation investment decisions with land use planning is not a new concept to transportation professionals or the municipalities affected by these decisions. In many respects, NYSDOT has endorsed this concept through several of the Department's programs, such as the Arterial Access Management Program, Context Sensitive Solutions, and its Public Involvement processes. The thirteen Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) throughout New York

Coutesy of NYSDOT

Panel members from left to right: Steve Munson, NYSDOT; Stephen Ferranti, SRF & Associates; Peter Plumeau, Wilbur Smith Associates; John Poorman, Capital District Transportation Committee; Allison C. de Cerreño, NYU Wagner Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management; and Tim Gilchrist, NYSDOT

State have made considerable effort to address the transportation investment/land use planning linkage through technical assistance by MPO staffs and through various studies. In addition, Commissioner Madison, as a member of the Quality Communities Interagency Working Group, is committed to working with local governments and community organizations to find smart, innovative transportation solutions to improve the quality of communities.

Nevertheless, the Department has recognized shortcomings in its overall approach to integrating investment decisions with land use planning. The 2004 report of the N.Y.S. Advisory Panel on Transportation Policy for 2025, *Transportation — Trouble Ahead: Findings and Recommendations*, found traffic congestion is often the result of poor land use decisions. Further, the report recommended that NYSDOT must lead the effort to link land use and transportation decisions to ensure quality communities with effective transportation systems. The Department appreciates the need to take a more proactive role through collaborative leadership. This concept was among the common themes that resonated throughout the workshop sessions. The major themes are provided below:

- ***There is a need for coordination, cooperation, communication, and information sharing among the various stakeholders in the land-use and transportation decision making process***. The key to success in transportation investment decisions and land-use planning is forging a strong partnership with all affected parties, taking advantage of the locals'

knowledge in terms of their vision for the area, and reaching common goals and objectives through communication and information sharing. As Peter Plumeau stated in the *Transportation Visioning* session, "use transportation investment as a way to improve the community rather than a way to get through the community."

> ***"There is a need for coordination, cooperation, communication, and information sharing among the various stakeholders in the land-use and transportation decision-making process."***

- ***Growth can happen quickly and exponentially, so communities need to be pro-active and have a comprehensive plan in place.*** It was noted that communities are better equipped to manage growth when they have a plan that adequately addresses how to best balance competing goals, such as preserving open space, maintaining a small town character, and promoting growth.

- ***There is a need for consistency and complementarity in community comprehensive plans in their discussions on economic sustainability, transportation, and public health.*** Many communities do, in fact, have comprehensive plans but transportation is only a small or separate component of the plan. In some cases, local governments simply do not have the resources to conduct the right kind of planning.

- ***It is important to look at the needs of each town and village independently, but also to look next door and beyond.*** A transportation-land use decision made by a community will undoubtedly affect surrounding communities, and in some instances, those communities may be competing for similar goals. On this point, Tim Gilchrist, NYSDOT's Chief of Transportation Strategy, made it clear that the role of the Department will not be an arbiter between competing parties, but rather a resource to use in making the difficult decisions.

- ***Change is possible.*** For instance, zoning regulations can be changed to accommodate a community's vision. Several case studies were discussed where zoning was changed to restrict residential density and/or identify parcels for permanent protection, with the intent of controlling growth. The challenge, however, is educating local officials on the appropriate use of these tools (e.g., re-zoning, levels of service analysis, etc.) to initiate positive change.

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Next Steps

The NYS Department of Transportation is just beginning to identify appropriate strategies on how to move forward with integrating transportation investment decisions with community land use planning. The goal is to institutionalize a best approach, or a series of best approaches, in the way the Department works with local governments in the planning and programming of transportation investments.

The Department's draft Statewide Transportation Master Plan, entitled *Transportation Strategies for a New Age: New York's Transportation Plan for 2030*, recognizes that land use planning authority rests with local governments. The Plan also recognizes that the transportation sector must play a proactive role in support of these efforts along with ensuring that the transportation implications of local plans are considered. In fact, throughout New York State, there are numerous examples of communities that are doing the right kind of visionary planning and are factoring in the transportation component. Conversely, there are other communities that struggle with this concept.

As a next step action, the Department will convene a working group of transportation stakeholders to collaboratively advise the Department and develop an overall strategy to enhance coordination of transportation and land use planning. Some of the strategy actions may include holding workshops and training sessions for municipalities to educate local officials on planning tools and showcase best practices. The Department is also considering a new community transportation planning grant program as a future state budget initiative. NYSDOT has recently been collaborating with neighboring states concerning this issue and will be pursuing these engagements to enhance the effort. Finally, the Department will continue to work closely with its MPO partners in their efforts to assist municipalities in developing plans and conducting various studies. A summary of the proceedings from the June 13th Workshop will be available in the fall. ◆

(Letter from the Editor Cont.)

Transportation (NYSDOT) held a seminal workshop this past June, with various stakeholders to explore this connection. Clifford Thomas writes an **In the Region** article summarizing key highlights from the workshop and NYSDOT's future plans to action.

Mobility of a higher speed is the focus of Allison C. de Cerreño's piece about a current Rudin Center research project on High-Speed Rail (HSR) efforts in the United States, specifically looking at Pennsylvania's Keystone Corridor and lessons learned that may apply to future HSR initiatives.

People traveling through New York's Airports have noticed that delays have reached new levels. For decades, Stewart International Airport has been suggested as a fourth airport to serve the region. However, various impediments, mostly due to its distance from Manhattan and landside access, have prevented the airport from really taking off except for some regional jet service. In a **Surface, Air, and Waterways** article, Doreen Frasca discusses Stewart's history, recent improvements at the airport and what still needs to occur for Stewart to reach its potential.

The Rudin Center is keenly interested in transportation projects that reduce sprawl and improve the quality of urban life. Overtime, the *Journal* has presented articles in support of this goal and in this edition offers a **Beyond the Region** article by Liz Drake of EDAW about the proposed Atlanta Beltline project, under which the pattern of urban sprawl would be changed by organizing some of that region's future growth around parks, transit, and trails located in the inner core of Atlanta.

Finally, since his arrival last year at the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), Joel Ettinger has been introducing new approaches for improving transportation planning in the New York metropolitan area. In a **back-page feature** article, he and the NYMTC staff discuss what they are learning from metropolitan planning organizations in other urbanized areas that could have useful applications in this region.

As always, we hope you enjoy reading this edition of the *Journal*.

Surface, Air, and Waterways: Focusing In

Is Stewart Ready to be the Fourth New York Airport?

By Doreen Frasca

Courtesy of http://www.stewartintlairport.com/gettingto.html

The Tri-State metropolitan region's three major airports are some of the busiest in the United States. The 100 million annual travelers passing through them are subject to extensive delays. La Guardia, Newark Liberty International, and John F. Kennedy International (JFK) Airports all ranked in the top five in airport departure delays. On the land side, travelers accessing these airports are also faced with substantial traffic congestion and limited choices.

For decades, there has been talk of a "fourth New York airport" to relieve congestion and allow for growth in air travel. In the 1960s, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) advanced a plan to build the region's biggest airport on 6,000 acres in New Jersey's "Great Swamp," located about 26 miles west of New York City. Local and environmental opposition was swift and effective in curtailing their plans.

Since then, whenever talk turns to a fourth airport, Stewart International Airport near Newburgh, NY is foremost in the discussion. Fifty-five miles from Midtown Manhattan, Stewart is located in the rapidly growing suburbs of Orange County. It is within an hour's drive of 2 million people, and within 90 minutes of 9 million. In acreage it is larger than JKF and LaGuardia combined and at nearly 12,000 feet in length, its primary runway is an alternate landing site for the space shuttle. In addition, Stewart has its own air traffic control sector that operates independently of the New York metropolitan airports, contributing to the highest levels of on time performance in the northeast.

Ground access, a historical obstacle, is being greatly improved. New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) will complete construction in late 2007 of a $50 million interchange from I-84 at Drury Lane, leading directly to the airport. The New York State Thruway Authority will connect I-84 and I-87 by early 2008. These two projects representing collectively $100 million of investment will facilitate road access to Stewart from all directions.

The Airport also has the potential to serve Manhattan with a one-seat train ride. Under SAFETEA-LU, Congress authorized $100 million for the extension of Metro North's Port Jervis line to the airport. The 3 1/2-mile spur would connect over an existing active rail line from the Salisbury Mills-Cornwall station. The Port Jervis line will have direct access to Manhattan upon completion of the "Access to the Region's Core" project.

Other possible airports that have been cited as a fourth New York airport, including Atlantic City, Trenton – Mercer County and Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania, will not have the access, facilities or space to grow that Stewart possesses or could possess in coming years. Yet, while Stewart offers many advantages, its commercial history developed in fits and starts, additional, significant challenges remain.

Stewart's Early History

In 1970, 1,854 acres of Stewart Air Force Base was acquired by New York State, which transferred operational control to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to develop and operate it for domestic and international airfreight transport, general aviation and other airport purposes. The MTA saw the opportunity to create at Stewart the elusive fourth New York airport. It condemned 8,600 acres of adjoining properties to the west, paying in excess of $100 million, extended Runway 9/27 by 4,000 feet, and made several other major improvements. However, development costs, a boom in activity and capital development at the three PANYNJ airports, coupled with the 55-mile distance between Stewart and its desired customer base in New York City prompted the MTA to abandon its plans.

In 1982, the State transferred operating responsibility to NYSDOT which, in partnership with the Urban Development Corporation, embarked on a program to encourage the development of airport property for appropriate aviation and industrial uses. By the late 1980s, tenants on the property included WR Grace, Anheuser Busch, Johnson Controls, Grand Union, and American Express.

Finally in 1990, American Airlines inaugurated the first commercial service with three daily roundtrips to its Chicago and Raleigh-Durham hubs. It was joined by its American Eagle affiliate (to JFK), United Express (to Dulles and Boston Logan), USAir and USAir Express (to Pittsburgh and later Charlotte, and to Philadelphia and BWI, respectively), and Delta (to Atlanta). New carriers and incumbents inaugurated point-to-point commercial and charter service to a few upstate New York communities (Syracuse and Rochester), business centers (New York City and Washington, DC) and the most heavily trafficked leisure destinations (Orlando, Fort Lauderdale and Las Vegas).

The Privatization of Stewart

Stewart appeared to be finding its footing. Traffic peaked in 1995 at just over 800,000 total passengers. In 1997, a new $13 million, 7-gate passenger terminal was opened. The following year, after the International Arrivals Building at JFK had been leased for a 30-year term to a private consortium, Governor Pataki announced his

intention to pursue the privatization of Stewart International Airport.

Commercial service airports in the United States are typically publicly owned and operated by municipal, state governments or public authorities operating in their stead. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) only recently permitted airports to be privatized under a pilot program that initially limited the number to five. The Stewart privatization attracted five bidders, the highest of which was National Express Group (NEG), a British-based company that ran East Midlands and Bournemouth Airports in England. NEG's winning bid furnished the State $35 million upfront, with a provision for additional lease payments totaling 5% of gross revenue annually beginning in year 10 of its 99-year lease. The total net present value to the State was estimated to be approximately $60 million. NEG proposed a $48.6 million capital improvement program during its initial five -year period, with $10 million coming from company funds and the balance from Federal Airport Improvement Funds, Passenger Facility Charges and third party investment.

In the final year of NYSDOT operations (1999), the airport turned a profit of approximately $1.9 million on gross operating revenues of $8.2 million. Over the first five years of private operations the profit margin declined to about $1.5 million in 2003 as traffic fell precipitously. The effects of 9/11, a weakened economy and rising fuel prices have been devastating to airports of all sizes and Stewart is no exception. From the moment NEG was declared the winning bidder in 1998 through the end of 2002, airline traffic decreased 62% from 665,000 to 252,000 total passengers. It recovered in 2004, to approximately 530,000 passengers but boomeranged sharply in 2005 to 325,000 as the result of additional airline bankruptcies and service cutbacks.

Despite the downturn in demand, airport management has continued a plan of investment and airport improvements including:

- a $3 million renovation to the terminal building to improve passenger flow, which is about three-quarters complete;
- a new corporate jet center opened in July 2006;
- a $15 million Hilton all-suites hotel and conference center at the airport's front entrance; and,
- a 100,000 sq. ft. cargo complex.

Four carriers currently provide service atStewart, three with commuter jet aircraft: US Airways Express to Philadelphia, American Eagle to Chicago, and NWA to Detroit. A fourth, Allegiant Air, serves the Orlando (Sanford) market from Stewart with MD80 aircraft and is planning to add more Florida destinations before the end of this year.

The Future

In the words of Charles Dickens, it is "the best of times and the worst of times" in the airline industry. Load factors are up and fares have improved from the airline's perspective, but system capacity is still down about 12% from pre-9/11 levels and bankruptcies have reduced the number of new entrants. Further, the 50-seat commuter jets (the aircraft predominantly used at Stewart) are not delivering on their promise of being more cost effective to operate. With the price of oil in excess of $70 per barrel and little to no capacity in the system, now is not the most propitious time for an airline to test out a market like Stewart's.

"The congestion problem in the New York market has few solutions. Developing Stewart as the fourth New York airport is one of the better ones."

Thus the principal challenges are the cost and frequency of service. Low fare service is critically important to the airport's growth. Ticket prices into connecting hubs like Detroit, Philadelphia and Chicago are very expensive — a weekday roundtrip ticket to Detroit on Northwest purchased on the internet three weeks in advance costs over $700. Even with a one-seat ride from New York City, few people will want to travel more than 90 minutes by train unless fares are competitive and schedules reasonable, both on the train and on the plane.

Nevertheless, as ground access improvements enhance the airport's reach beyond its immediate service area, as the airline industry continues its slow return to better health, Stewart should get some much-needed attention. And, Stewart's potential has again attracted the Port Authority's interest.

The congestion problem in the New York market has few solutions. Developing Stewart as the fourth New York airport is one of the better ones. ◆

Doreen Frasca is President and Principal of Frasca & Associates, L.L.C., a leading transportation advisory firm which currently provides financial advisory services to Stewart Airport.

FACTS & FIGURES

Airport Delays

TOP 5 MOST DELAYED DEPARTURE AIRPORTS

	CITY	% DELAYED
1	Atlanta, GA (ATL)	39%
2	Philadelphia, PA (PHL)	38%
3	New York, NY (JFK)	37%
4	Newark, NJ (EWR)	35%
5	Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX (DFW)	34%

TOP 5 MOST DELAYED ARRIVAL AIRPORTS

	CITY	% DELAYED
1	Newark, NJ (EWR)	45%
2	New York, NY (JFK)	43%
3	Atlanta, GA (ATL)	42%
4	Philadelphia, PA (PHL)	40%
5	New York, NY (LGA)	39%

CAUSES OF FLIGHT DELAYS AMONG THE NATION'S TOP 10 AIRPORTS

1. National Aviation System (47%)
2. Aircraft Arriving Late (25%)
3. Air Carrier (19%)
4. Cancelled (5%)
5. Weather (3%)
6. Diverted (1%)
7. Security (0%)

Sources:
http://www.avoiddelays.com and
http://www.avoiddelays.com/why-delays/truth-about-delays.asp

Beyond the Region

The Next Big Thing in Atlanta

By Liz Drake

Atlanta, more than most other American cities, has a gift for periodic reinvention. In the 1970s, city visionaries laid the foundation for Hartsfield-Jackson to become the world's busiest airport. In 1996, the Centennial Olympic Games made Atlanta a notable international destination. The Atlanta Beltline may very well be the next great thing that transforms the landscape and identity of the southeast's capital.

The Atlanta region has grown as quickly as any major metropolitan area in recent US history. Population forecasts suggest that the negative consequences of rapid, unplanned development — long commutes, poor air quality, auto dependency — are likely to worsen. The City of Atlanta is expected to add another 150,000 residents by 2030, while the region will expand from 3.7 to 6 million people. Moreover, not all of Atlanta's communities have participated fully in the region's unprecedented growth. Many core neighborhoods, particularly in the south and west, continue to suffer from economic disinvestment.

The BeltLine — by attracting and organizing some of the region's future growth around parks, transit, and trails located in the inner core of Atlanta — will change this pattern of regional sprawl and lead to a vibrant and livable Atlanta with an enhanced quality of life for all city residents.

While most major urban areas sprung up around water, it was transportation that gave rise to Atlanta. Atlanta's freight railroads were built after the Civil War to expand the industrial base of the city. These rails for the most part predate the adjacent neighborhoods, weaving through early industrial areas to form a rough loop around the City center.

The concept of the BeltLine is to create a special funding district focused mainly around the rail corridors that would preserve historic assets, create signature parks, trails, and gathering spaces, revitalize streets, and build neighborhood-friendly transit. This revitalized public realm would in turn attract quality, vibrant mixed use development and new residential opportunities.

The BeltLine is a sustainable new model of growth that proposes to combine greenspace, transit, and development along four historic railroad segments that encircle the urban core. Abandoned industrial landscapes are more often associated with declining Rust Belt cities than Sun Belt metropolises. Yet, the 22 miles of rail corridor and the nearly 3,000 acres of adjacent underused land pose a major challenge to Atlanta's intown regeneration. When looked at more closely, however, these rail rights-of-way and nearby properties form the basis of an unrivaled network of distinctive buildings, public spaces, and convenient transportation links that could join over 45 historic neighborhoods and many prominent institutions.

> *"Unique among Atlanta's recent planning efforts, the BeltLine project gave rise to a comprehensive dialogue about many of the City's most complex issues, including transportation, affordable housing, public health, and economic equity."*

The BeltLine proposes to convert underused rail corridors around the city core into a continuous system of transit and greenways surrounded by parks and pedestrian-friendly mixed use centers of development. Essential to the concept is that each of the three key elements — transit, greenspace and development — is interrelated and that the resulting network connects seamlessly with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority's (MARTA) bus and rail services and other transit opportunities, as well as adjacent neighborhoods.

The proposed Beltline is unique as a transportation route because it is based on railroad corridors, which predate the surrounding neighborhoods. As a result, the BeltLine typically runs between neighborhoods, rather than through them, resulting in a complex set of connectivity issues. With its industrial roots, many parcels along the BeltLine are large and irregularly shaped "super blocks" that further hamper pedestrian access and often create discontinuous streets. The project must address these issues as the corridor re-orients from freight activity to transit and recreational use.

Over the years, various proposals to reuse parts of these historic railroads have emerged. In the early 1990s, the City of Atlanta envisioned a Cultural Loop as tourist-oriented transportation for the 1996 Olympic Games. The route would serve Underground Atlanta and other cultural sites such as the King Center, the Atlanta Botanical Gardens and King Plow Arts Center. The concept also included a bicycle path in some areas.

Courtesy of EDAW

The BeltLine will consist of transit, trails, and adjacent development

Ryan Gravel outlined the current Atlanta BeltLine proposal in his 1999 graduate thesis in Architecture and City Planning at the Georgia Institute of Technology. The concept is based on the premise that public infrastructure spurs and shapes urban growth. Gravel's thesis expanded the Cultural Loop idea, adding mixed use redevelopment of the underused industrial land adjacent to the rail corridor and promoting a transit system that serves tourists and local residents. The transit line would include intown neighborhoods and connect to the MARTA system. Parallel bicycle and walking paths would provide a 22-mile linear park along the corridor.

Beginning in the summer of 2001, with the support of Councilmember and then City Council President Cathy Woolard, a grassroots campaign launched the BeltLine to the forefront of regional transportation projects. In February 2004, Councilwoman Woolard helped Gravel to establish Friends of the BeltLine, a non-profit group dedicated to the preservation and comprehensive redevelopment of the BeltLine.

In May of 2004 Mayor Shirley Franklin declared the BeltLine a priority of her administration. As the project gained momentum, the Atlanta Development Authority chose a team led by EDAW to assess the feasibility of a financing mechanism for the BeltLine. The March 2005 Feasibility Study determined that a tax allocation district (TAD), which dedicates future increases in property tax revenue, could fund a major portion of the project costs and leverage additional financial support.

Unique among Atlanta's recent planning efforts, the BeltLine project gave rise to a comprehensive dialogue about many of the city's most complex issues, including transportation, affordable housing, public health, and economic equity. As a result, public and stakeholder involvement in the plan was especially intense with almost 100 coordination meetings held from May to September of 2005.

The specific alignment of the transit system, as well as the mode of transit, is still under study by MARTA and others. Nonetheless, The BeltLine represents a fundamental new approach to mobility around the central core.

By finally linking comprehensive land use and transportation decisions, the BeltLine becomes a framework for long-term sustainability that emphasizes a range of convenient mobility choices in a region that has been very heavily dependent upon the single occupant vehicle. To support this vision, the initial land use framework for the BeltLine calls for pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development with higher employment and residential densities at strategic points, such as proposed transit stops. While some areas around the

(Continued on page 12)

Liz Drake is Senior Associate of EDAW.

Rudin Center Highlights

SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday
September 26, 2006
8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Good to Go: Transit Options for Older Adults

NYU Kimmel Center
Rosenthal Pavilion

Wednesday
November 1, 2006
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Transit-Oriented Development Forum

NYU Wagner Rudin Center
Puck Building

FEATURED PROJECT

Best Practices for Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) in Urban Areas.

Funded by the Mineta Transportation Institute in San José, CA, the goal of this study is to provide an assessment and identify best practices related to how CSS is used in practice in urban areas. The effort will examine the role of the states and municipalities and the types of coordination either present or needed while exploring several related areas, including: how CSS is incorporated into basic planning, programming, and design; what kind of policies have grown out of this process or help guide it; how public participation and stakeholder involvement is carried out and measured; what kinds of obstacles exist to successfully incorporating CSS in practice; and, what kinds of decisions are finally made in terms of balancing the various needs related to parking, non-motorized traffic, and throughput.

For more information on events or projects, please call 212-998-7545 or visit our website at: wagner.nyu.edu/rudincenter

Next Big Thing in Atlanta (Cont. from page 11)

corridor do not yet achieve densities sufficient to support transit ridership, the framework places more people, jobs and entertainment options close to future transit.

After a summer of intense debate and community participation, the Atlanta City Council, the Atlanta public school board and the Fulton County Commission voted in November and December 2005 to direct all property tax increases (through a tax allocation district or TAD) over 25 years in the redevelopment area toward parks, trails, transit and housing.

The BeltLine concept has progressed considerably in a short time frame as a result of a strong commitment and coordinated effort by multiple organizations, including the Atlanta Development Authority, the BeltLine Partnership, MARTA, the Trust for Public Land, and the PATH Foundation. The BeltLine's success will continue to rely on public involvement, strong neighborhood participation, coordination among many partners, and a combination of public and private resources.

The BeltLine TAD will begin an extraordinary, 25 year effort to shape a truly sustainable 21st-century Atlanta. ◆

Keystone Corridor (Cont. from page 5)

with HSR in the Keystone different from earlier attempts is that all three of these factors came into play concurrently. In earlier years, there was some leadership, but either the means and/or the authority was lacking. In the 1960s, all three elements were missing. In the 1980s, the PHSIRPC was mandated to expire even as it was established, undermining its authority. In the early years of the KCIP, the financial means and authority were present, but leadership at Amtrak was lacking.

In the most recent effort, however, Amtrak (under Gunn), PennDOT, and the Governor played key roles in galvanizing support and demonstrating a serious commitment to HSR. The funding was available and the authority was present. Amtrak owned the line and viewed the KCIP as fitting into its broader goals for the nation-wide system. The Commonwealth, via PennDOT, was already actively providing financial support for Amtrak operations along the corridor. Further, PennDOT had been exploring opportunities for the Keystone for some time and had the support from the Governor based on its broader transportation goals and objectives.

Clear Benefits and Roles for All Operators. All the key operators along the Keystone see benefit from the KCIP. Amtrak will be able to increase and enhance service, with corresponding ridership and revenue increases. PennDOT will be able to realize several key objectives related to its broader transportation goals for the Commonwealth. NS remains concerned about horizontal clearance and weight restrictions, but recognizes that the improvements will aid their operations by making the entire corridor more efficient. Similarly, SEPTA is concerned about capacity as intercity service increases, but recognizes benefits to its own services from track, communication, and signal improvements.

With respect to roles, in the most recent effort, there has been a clear division of responsibilities in implementing the program and related elements. The KCIP, as ultimately developed, designated which agency would be responsible for what both in terms of payments and overall management of the project. Additional funding solicited from NS, for example, was tied specifically to work that would benefit freight rail by allowing greater weights. Similarly, additional funding contributed by SEPTA has been specifically tied to improvements that will aid commuter rail.

The ROW Is Already Prepared for High-Speed Service. The Philadelphia-Harrisburg portion of the Keystone was already electrified, and almost fully grade separated. Thus, the opportunity existed to deploy HSR at a relatively low cost. Further, because the work is being performed mainly in the current ROW, certain environmental requirements have been avoided, reducing time and cost, while helping to mitigate political and/or community opposition.

A clear counterpoint for this is provided by the remainder of the western portion of the corridor. This portion of the line is characterized by numerous curves, steep grades, and at-grade crossings, and no electrification. Just bringing the tracks and power supply up to current standards for HSR service would be significantly more difficult and therefore more expensive.

Amtrak Owns the ROW. Not owning the ROW proved a key difficulty for HSR in Florida. With full operational control of the Keystone between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Amtrak is able to more easily deal with signaling, dispatching, power distribution, and maintenance decisions. Further, when the agency implementing the changes is the actual operator of the service, the direct benefits from investment are more evident.

In contrast, NS owns the corridor between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh and as a matter of policy requires separate tracks for passenger trains operating in excess of 90 mph. According to NS,

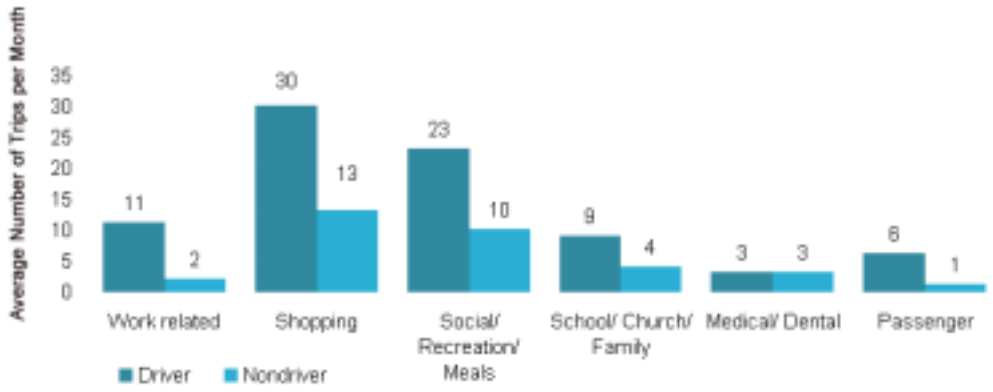
> No heavy-duty rail freight line has 110-mph passenger trains operating over it today. Where freight trains do operate over 110-mph track…the penalties imposed on freight trains are substantial. In a heavy-duty freight environment…high-speed passenger trains must operate over tracks dedicated to their use.[6]

Again, making such changes would significantly add to the cost to implement HSR along this portion of the line and there are fewer incentives for doing so.

The Costs to Reach the 90-minute, 110 mph Trip Time and Speed Goals Were Considered Reasonable. Finally, and in part related to the elements identified above (Amtrak ownership of the ROW, electrification, and grade separation), and in part because of the decision to pursue modest changes resulting in incremental HSR rather than new HSR or Maglev, both Amtrak and PennDOT were able to cover program costs within their annual budgets, thus avoiding the need for political support to raise project funds. ◆

1. *Pennsylvania State Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), Pennsylvania Statewide Passenger Rail Needs Assessment: Technical Report (Harrisburg: TAC, December 2001).*
2. *David Gunn, former CEO and President of Amtrak, Personal Communication, 3/21/06.*
3. *"Pennsylvania Governor Rendell, Amtrak President Gunn Announce Keystone Corridor Improvement Plan; Philadelphia-Harrisburg Trip Will be Shorter; Safety to be Improved," PR Newswire 7/20/04, http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi-m4PRN/is_2004_July_20/ai_n6115256 (accessed 1/24/05).*
4. *"Keystone Corridor to Be Upgraded," International Railway Journal (September 2004), online, accessed 1/24/05, http://www.findarticles.com/articles/mi_inOBQQ/is_9_44/ai_n6239858.*
5. *Calvin Cassidy, Rail Project Coordinator, Bureau of Public Transportation, PennDOT, Personal Communication, 2/2/06.*
6. *Norfolk Southern Corporation, Corporate Affairs, Letter to Planners of Passenger Train Projects, June 15, 2005.*

Living Behind the Geraniums (Cont. from page 3)



Source: National Household Travel Survey, 2001

Figure 3: Only for medical and dental visits do nondrivers age 50+ make as many trips as drivers

Given the high level of service, fares for taxicabs can often be quite high in low-density areas. Volunteer driver programs are a common alternative throughout the country and provide an important means of keeping older persons connected to their community. Many of these programs offer door-to-door service, whereby volunteers enter private homes or facilities to assist customers with physical movements, putting away groceries, or even dressing.

Nonmotorized transportation options have received renewed attention over the last twenty years. Bicycling and walking are excellent methods to complete trips within regions, but adequate sidewalks and travel signage are often not present to protect the pedestrian. Similarly, bike lanes and signage are extremely inconsistent in many cities, counties, and towns.

The National Complete Streets Coalition calls for developing transportation networks that accommodate all users. Planning professionals encourage increased connectivity among modal paths and greater attention to the land use-transportation connection.[12] Adjustments to road design geometry, signal timing, and traffic-calming techniques can help protect pedestrians and bicyclists as they share the road with other modes.[13] And with all of these mobility options — with the possible exception of volunteer driver programs — the capital equipment, public infrastructure design and construction, and the operating characteristics of the facilities and services are determined by a local, regional, and/or state planning process.

Invigorating the Public Planning and Community Building Process

Local elected officials, planners, engineers, and designers are responsible for overseeing the design, construction, and operations/maintenance of the transportation network across all modes. Local circumstances vary, but the individuals who have oversight responsibilities should be available for consultation. These are the practitioners who can adjust the timing of a signalized intersection to allow more time for a pedestrian to cross, or who can build a turn lane on a congested roadway to improve traffic flow. These transportation professionals pursue policy goals as directed by local officials, and there are usually numerous opportunities for input through established public participation channels.

At the regional level, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) make decisions regarding the expenditure of federal funds within designated metropolitan areas. Citizen participation has been required in the MPO planning and decision-making processes for many years by the planning regulations issued by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. However, the recently passed federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU, includes stronger requirements for public involvement. AARP is seeking to engage volunteers to be the voice of the 50+ consumer at metropolitan transportation planning tables. The national staff is currently training state staff and volunteers to engage in the local, regional, and state transportation processes. If the transportation network is to be diversified, the 50+ population should be key stakeholders in determining the character and extent of those investments.

AARP's commitment to safe driving and mobility options is central to achieving our livable communities vision, as well as the broader goal of facilitating independence, choice, and control for individuals as they

(Continued on page 15)

RUDIN CENTER SUPPORTERS, 2006

The NYU Wagner Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management acknowledges the following entities for their generous support in 2006.

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- The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey

Best Practices (Cont. from page 16)

national organizations is to learn the best practices of others as well as to share NYMTC'S innovative practices.

Anecdotally, it is recognized that some of the most innovative activities in transportation are currently being undertaken by some of the smallest metropolitan areas of the nation. A review of the Federal Transit Administration's Innovative Practices to Increase Ridership web page bears out this observation.

In recent years, NYMTC has looked to MPOs across the country for guidance and best practices in a number of issue areas. This is particularly true in instances in which NYMTC was attempting to undertake activities that were new to our region. Four good examples of this are discussed below: Emissions Reduction Planning, Integrating Demand Management Programs, Best Practices Model, and Socio-economic and Demographic Forecasts.

Emissions Reduction Planning. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 at the World Trade Center, the New York metropolitan region received a Federal waiver of certain requirements of the Clean Air Act. Specifically, the requirement for a quantitative assessment of the region's transportation plans and programs to determine conformity with relevant motor vehicle emissions milestones was waived for a three year period. This was to allow adjustments to be made to regional transportation simulation models to accommodate the displacement of tens of thousands of jobs in lower Manhattan. In turn, the legislation which granted the waiver required a concerted effort by the region to enhance its motor vehicle emissions reduction programs.

As the MPO in the region, NYMTC was on point for coordinating this new emissions reduction planning effort. Eighty supplemental measures were reviewed and analyzed in this process, many of which were drawn from experiences in other regions. NYMTC worked with organizations such as the North East States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) and Environmental Defense to tap into best practices from around the country, as well as pursuing independent research. These efforts uncovered information on programs to incent the use of cleaner fuels, scrappage programs and electrification programs for trucks, retrofit programs for school buses, and idling mitigation programs. NYMTC has convened a Clean Technologies Group to bring its members together with manufacturers, fuel providers, trade associations, fleet owners and other stakeholders to share information and work toward implementing best practices.

Integrating Demand Management Programs. Federal monies which flow through NYMTC's planning process have since the 1980s been used to provide transportation demand management programs that incent and facilitate alternatives to driving alone in a car. However, these programs were established and developed in each of NYMTC's sub areas (New York City, Long Island and the lower Hudson Valley) independently with many differences. Over time, they were also supplemented by regional programs that offered and marketed transit vouchers and travel information. All of this resulted in a healthy but disjointed regional program of demand management activities, which suffered in terms of overall identity and visibility.

The recent attempts to enhance motor vehicle emissions reduction have brought new focus to the need to better integrate these programs and improve their overall visibility and effectiveness. Similar situations existed in other regions and their solutions were used as models for what could be accomplished by NYMTC. Specifically, the San Francisco Bay Area faced a similar situation in that its demand management programs had been fragmented with no coordinated operating or marketing plan. Despite that, the Bay Area had managed to integrate its programs and brand them with a common identity.

"...some of the most innovative activities in transportation are currently being undertaken by some of the smallest metropolitan areas of the nation."

Using the Bay Area as a model, NYMTC is in the process of integrating and enhancing its demand management programs. This was accomplished through the development of a "core" demand management work program to be used universally and a significant increase in funding for demand management programs in general. On the marketing side, NYMTC is currently in the process of developing a regional brand for these services. Once in place, additional effort will be put towards the implementation of that brand.

Best Practices Model. The development of the Best Practices Model (BPM), which covers parts of three states, nine MPOs and 28 counties, included major data collection efforts and the creation of an integrated land use, forecasting, travel demand, and air quality model. Working with federal, state and local transportation and environmental agencies and other stakeholders, the project team successfully addressed complex technical and institutional issues and developed the first activity-based transportation model in the nation. In doing so, NYMTC became a national leader in travel demand modeling and a regional source of transportation data for policy analyses.

To create the Best Practices Model, a technical committee was formed at the very beginning of the project to facilitate the work. Given the scope of the model, a large amount of data was needed, so stakeholders' participation was crucial to getting all the necessary information and guiding the development. Special efforts were made to reach out to other states and MPOs in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region to reach agreement on crucial regional issues, including forecasts, networks, zones, and survey data. An advisory committee of experts from the San Francisco Bay Area MPO,

Best Practices (Cont. from page 14)

the Chicago MPO, and others was formed to provide critical advice throughout the model development.

Socio-economic and Demographic Forecasts. Through the use of socioeconomic forecasting models, NYMTC has the ability to take a number of inputs, including economic drivers and demographic trends, to predict how the region's residents and workers will change by 2030 in terms of age, race, employment, and more. To further learn and improve this forecasting process, NYMTC hosted a video conference in July of 2005 with six MPOs from around the country including the MPOs from: Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Dallas, Texas; Houston, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona and Newark, New Jersey. These MPOs presented their own forecasting process and methodology and also critiqued NYMTC's process. The participants commended NYMTC on its work. A land use model integrated into the travel demand modeling process and the ability to do "what if" analysis was discussed.

Applying Best Practices to New Challenges

NYMTC will be continuing to learn from others in the months and years ahead. We plan to hold a series of conferences on important issues related to transportation planning and programming in the New York metropolitan area. Our first conference will be on September 26, 2006 and will focus on the transportation needs of older adults. The conference will be jointly sponsored by NYMTC, AARP, MTA and NYU Wagner Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management. One of the panels at the conference will explore what is currently being done to address the transportation needs of older adults in the New York area as well as across the nation. What types of services have worked, what types have not and why? Are there models that could work in the New York area?

The four examples discussed above, in which we have borrowed from other regions, illustrate how important it is to know what is going on so we can all learn from each other. ◆

(Living Behind the Geraniums (Cont. from page 13)

seek to age in place. A family of transportation services allows for individuals to find the best fit for their unique circumstances and abilities. With mobility options across a range of modes, older persons have the opportunity to get to destinations that enhance both their physical and social well-being.

Making communities more livable through transportation improvements is a principal means of helping people to live better. There are a host of other policies that AARP is pursuing concurrently, and we will continue to comment on trends/decisions in the policymaking process. Our attention to the mobility dimension of community building reflects a core belief — that we should engage public officials and assorted stakeholders through established channels for citizen participation. By focusing on mobility policies and programs that support successful aging, we seek to move beyond "living behind the geraniums." It is an approach that will enrich the entire community as civic design is improved and social connections are strengthened. ◆

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Learning from Other Regions: The Importance of Best Practices

By Joel Ettinger, Gerry Bogacz, Alan Borenstein, and Kuo-Ann Chiao

Courtesy of NYMTC

NYMTC employees from left to right: Sangeeta Bhowmick, Gerry Bogacz, Stephanie Ceballos, Joel Ettinger, Munnesh Patel, Alan Borenstein, Ali Mohseni, and Kuo-Ann Chiao

Successful regional planning is an enormous challenge, especially in a large, complex region like the New York City metropolitan area. Spread across three states — New York, New Jersey and Connecticut — and home to more than 18 million residents, the region's size, political complexity and the diversity of its constituent communities all conspire to test even the most thoughtful approaches to planning on a regional scale. It is a region where there are more governmental jurisdictions per square mile than perhaps anywhere else in the world.

Despite its size and complexity, the New York City metropolitan area can learn much from other regions across the country. Recent experiences of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for New York City, Long Island and the lower Hudson Valley, provide an illustration of how best practices from around the country can be brought to bear on regional issues and solutions. NYMTC is comprised of the City of New York, five suburban counties and state and federal agencies and regional authorities. NYMTC has the daunting task of providing its members with a collaborative regional transportation planning forum in which to meet federal planning requirements to receive federal transportation funding.

NYMTC's recent innovations rely in many cases on lessons learned from other regions and agencies across the nation. To further see what is out there, NYMTC recently joined the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), and is becoming more active in the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO). The goal of this increased participation with

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