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CONCLUSION



This study was initiated to evaluate existing and long-term transportation needs in the boroughs other than Manhattan which are forecast to gain more than 550,000 residents between 2010 and 2030. These increases will impact travel in all boroughs. Together with a series of related parking and mobility studies completed or underway by the Department of City Planning and other public agencies, this study will inform public policy decisions on how to best maintain and improve mobility while minimizing congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

New York City is already the least auto-dependent city in the nation. This study documents that a key factor in the City's limited reliance on the automobile, at least for the journey-to-work trips for which data is available, is the City's land use pattern with higher-density and more walkable neighborhoods concentrated in Manhattan and in the inner ring of communities of Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx located near to Manhattan. These neighborhoods score high in walkability on the independent site, Walkscore.com™ which measures the availability of destinations such as retail and public facilities within walking distance. These are also the neighborhoods with the highest shares of Other as a means of travelling to work. Land use policies that foster development in walkable mixed-use communities that are well-served by transit offer considerable promise in promoting convenient, non-automotive travel. They also have the most robust subway service.

Since a significant share of people work relatively close to home, in the same Super-PUMA or adjacent Super-PUMA to the one in which they reside, public improvements, such as improved streetscapes, better bus service, safe bike routes and, perhaps, bike sharing, could provide practical and convenient means of travel for these modest-distance trips. Although not the subject of this study, it is anticipated that any improvements or land use policies that make nonautomotive trips better alternatives for journey-to-work trips are likely to provide better alternatives for other trips as well.

Some New Yorkers, particularly those in Staten Island and Southeast Queens have average commute times that are among the longest in the nation. Projects now underway or understudy, such as expanded LIRR service made possible by the East Side Access project and reuse of right-of-way of Staten Island's former North Shore rail line, may be able to reduce travel times for some residents of these areas. Using the Hellgate line for Metro North service could provide similar benefits to some Bronx residents. Provision of express buses or Bus Rapid Transit from some outer locations to employment clusters may also be worthy of consideration as would increased inter-borough connectivity.

This study documents that the automobile remains an important means of commuting to work for workers arriving in almost all of the Super-PUMAs in this study. Workers are coming from diverse locations which, at least to date, have made the automobile the most attractive means of commuting for many people. It is hoped that implementing a number of the suggestions in this report could provide convenient alternatives for some of these auto commuters. However, automobile commuting is likely to remain a preferred alternative for people traveling long distances especially from and to dispersed locations.

While the automobile is likely to remain important for many trips, reports by both the Department of City Planning (Changes in Employment and Commuting Patterns Among Workers in New York City and the New York Metropolitan Area, 2000-2007, http://nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/census/census_commute_patterns0007.pdf) and the Department of Transportation (2009 Sustainable Streets Index, http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/sustainable_streets_index_09.pdf;) demonstrate that the City can absorb significant population and employment growth while holding steady and in some cases, decreasing automobile use.