

A Transportation Policy
for the Manhattan Central Business District

The Region's Central Business District (CBD) occupies the $8\frac{1}{2}$ square miles of Manhattan below Central Park. It is a unique urban complex vital to our regional prosperity. Its functioning depends on a transportation system which provides good access and easy internal circulation. The scale of the CBD, unequalled in the world, dramatizes the need for careful transportation planning: $3\frac{1}{2}$ million people enter the CBD every workday, 860,000 in a single hour, 2 million people work there; and jobs and peak hour entries are expected to rise.

If the Manhattan CBD is to continue to serve efficiently as the economic heart of the Region, all forms of transportation should be considered as constituting one transportation system. With this in mind, three transportation priorities should be pursued at this time:

1. Better access to the CBD by rapid transit and railroad.

Public transportation, especially the subway system, makes the CBD possible. Over 80 percent of all peak hour entries are by rail; less than 10 percent are by auto and taxi. Only 6 percent is by bus and more than half of this number is from New Jersey. One example illustrates what these facts mean. The proposed new tube for the Queens-Midtown Tunnel would handle 5,000 people in autos at the peak hour, or about one-half of one percent of all peak hour entries, at an estimated cost of \$120 million; the proposed new rail transit tunnel under the East River would bring in 16,000 people seated or 60,000 with standees at the peak hour at a cost of \$50 million.

Highest priority should be given to increased capacity, faster speeds and greater comfort for rail transit riders. At this time, there should be no investment in competing facilities such as major new radial access highways and vehicular river crossings to the CBD or all-day parking facilities within it. Rather, highway investment should be in the many projects for which there is no rail alternative, such as circumferential routes which bypass the CBD.

These policies, to give better access to the CBD, should be implemented by appropriate coordination, regulation and pricing of all modes of transportation.

2. Better public transportation and smoother flow of street traffic within the CBD.

Quick and easy delivery of passengers to their destination and good communications within the CBD, by both public transportation and auto, is a condition of a productive central business district.

At present, circulation in the CBD is impeded by a saturated street system and an obsolescent and poorly inter-related public transportation network.

There is need (a) to refrain from providing additional access by auto which will aggravate the street traffic problem and (b) to design an improved (mostly sub-surface) system for circulation and distribution within the CBD, which should include new short-distance, high-capacity transit facilities as well as new vehicular underpasses and other highway improvements designed to facilitate cross-town and other intra-CBD movements and (c) off-street parking in the CBD should be constructed, regulated and priced so as to serve off-peak travellers and to increase traffic flow. It should not induce more all-day parking and (d) a new

attempt should be made to increase off-street loading facilities and to speed up curb side loading practices.

3. Smoother pedestrian flow and greatly enhanced environment for pedestrians within the CBD.

The greatest benefit from transportation investment will come from those improvements which increase speed and improve conditions for the greatest number of people. In the CBD this includes investing in better pedestrian flow. For example, redesigning subway stations where pedestrian movement is now held up through poor layout or long transfers would save many more person-minutes per day than almost any other transportation change. Generally, subway and rail stations, bus stops and CBD streets and sidewalks should be redesigned for greater pedestrian safety, convenience and pleasantness. Everyone has to walk in the CBD, yet there has been virtually no attention to needs of pedestrians.