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Press Release

January 8, 2009

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IMMEDIATE

Public Transportation Stands at Center of the Green Stimulus 'Sweet Spot'

Study Concludes That Investing in Mass Transit Creates Jobs, Rebuilds Infrastructure, Promotes Energy Security, and Dramatically Reduces Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Blue Ribbon Commission on Sustainability and the MTA today released a synopsis of its final report on strategies that the transit agency and government officials can use to reduce the MTA region's environmental impact. The report, which provides a model for urban and suburban regions across the nation, quantifies the environmental benefits of mass transit, and includes nearly 100 recommendations for strategies and technologies to reduce the MTA region's carbon footprint while generating long-term savings and economic growth. The report was presented by Jonathan F.P. Rose, Chairman of the Sustainability Commission, to MTA Executive Director and CEO Elliot G. Sander.

Among its many transformational recommendations, the report calls for the MTA to draw 80 percent of its operating energy from clean, renewable energy sources by 2050, and suggests ways this should be done. At the same time, it urges a significant expansion of transit access in order for the MTA transit system to reach and absorb two thirds of the New York metropolitan area's projected growth of 4 million people between now and 2030. By ensuring that an increased share of this growth develops as transit-oriented clusters rather than sprawl, the MTA's expansion will have a significant impact not only on regional productivity, but on our national energy and climate-stabilization goals. The report points to strategies that will reduce regional CO2 emissions while expanding the mobility needed to remain competitive in a global financial, educational, and cultural marketplace.

Initial assessment of the report's recommendations indicates a possible yield of 105,500 net new jobs per year, employment income of \$5.1 billion a year, and regional economic output of fully \$17 billion per year for the period from 2010 to 2019. This urgent stimulus priority at the federal level intersects with the equally urgent international commitment to contain global warming, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote renewable energy.

By removing some 3 million drivers from the roads each day, the MTA already avoids more carbon emissions than 648,000 acres of forest absorb. This "carbon avoidance" benefit is increasingly viewed as a measurable commodity with societal benefits and a market value. In effect, the MTA provides unreimbursed carbon reduction services for which many industries now claim financial and funding credits.

Governor David A. Paterson said: "I commend the MTA and the Commission for addressing these critically important and challenging issues. These recommendations are in line with my commitment to environmental sustainability, including my work convening and leading the Renewable Energy Task Force. In the State of the State Address yesterday, I called for New York to meet 45 percent of its energy needs from improved energy efficiency and clean renewable energy by 2015. These recommendations will play an important part in that effort."

U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler, a senior Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said: "Sustainability and environmental sensitivity in our transit systems are now more essential than ever. The MTA's Blue Ribbon Commission is not simply charged with exploring cost-cutting measures for the agency but is an important new model for bringing mass transit into the 21st century. The current economic crisis – combined with our expanding population, urban pollution and an aging infrastructure – demands that we invest in cleaner, more energy efficient transit. We must also create a new green workforce to get Americans back to work. I commend the MTA, Lee Sander, Jonathan Rose and the Blue Ribbon Commission for their initiative in modernizing New York's transit systems."

U.S. Representative John Hall, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, said: "Investments in green infrastructure create three to five times as many jobs as investments in traditional infrastructure or sources of energy. I applaud the MTA for committing itself not only to upgrading and improving its service and access but also to reducing CO2 emissions and its environmental footprint. This will not only hire more people but keep everyone in the metropolitan area healthier."

Elliot G Sander, MTA Executive Director and CEO, said: "Everything the MTA does – providing 8½ million rides each day, increasing ridership by nearly 50% since 1996, achieving record breaking on-time performance and mechanical reliability, pulling off innovations like MetroCard, EZ Pass, and hybrid

electric and clean diesel buses, and passing the test virtually every rush hour – contributes to environmental sustainability. As the Federal government considers economic stimulus legislation and the upcoming T4 transportation reauthorization, it needs to recognize the enormous benefits that transit provides in terms of environmental sustainability and economic growth."

Jonathan F.P. Rose, Chairman of the MTA Sustainability Commission, said: "If we as a nation are to begin working seriously to prevent global warming, we need to radically rethink the way we fund mass transit. Our national discussion about public transit needs to acknowledge, and put a value on, the enormous carbon avoidance that transit creates while providing mobility to keep our economy competitive. Funding levels for transit need to be commensurate with an enterprise that accomplishes both of these critical goals."

Robert D. Yaro, President of the Regional Plan Association, said: "Should we fail to act now, there is little doubt that much of the projected economic growth will be diverted to those global cities capable of sustaining it, placing New York's position of global economic leadership at serious risk and undermining the economic potential for future generations."

David Lewis, Senior Vice President and National Director, Economics and Financial Services for HDR, Inc., said: "The current financial crisis gives these recommendations an even more immediate economic relevance. The crisis is widely viewed as a unique opportunity to frame stimulus actions in a way that will redirect public investment over the long term. Such redirection focuses on three long-standing concerns: climate change; energy security; and infrastructure renewal and expansion. All three of these priorities argue for expanded investment in transit. In other words, a transit system such as the MTA stands dead center at the stimulus sweet spot."

William W. Millar, President of the American Public Transportation Association, said: "As the largest public transportation system in North America and one of the biggest in the world, MTA's actions will serve as a model for how we as a nation can reduce our carbon footprint and achieve energy independence. We call on the federal government and Congress to increase investment for public transit, so that America can create more jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and become more carbon efficient."

Geoff Anderson, Co-Chair of Transportation for America said: "Now is the time to invest in transportation infrastructure for the 21st century that can create a true 'green' recovery from the ongoing economic crisis. The MTA report underscores the untapped potential to create and support millions of jobs, and cut our dependence on oil through smart, targeted investments in clean, green infrastructure."

Deron Lovaas, Federal Transportation Policy Director for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said: "This report underscores that investment in public transportation is win-win-win: It provides a stimulative shot-in-the-arm for an ailing economy and is indispensable as a tool for achieving energy security and tackling climate change."

As the largest regional mass transit system in the country and with a third of all U.S. transit ridership, this new investment and operating philosophy by the MTA can serve as a forward-looking model for other organizations and metropolitan regions in adapting to a changing economy. It is crucial to keep pace with the other major global transit systems that are now rapidly modernizing, expanding and adjusting to rising energy costs and the pricing of CO2 emissions.

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Blue Ribbon Commission on Sustainability and the MTA

Why Greening Transit Makes Economic Sense:

Transit's Four Key Economic Impacts

David Lewis, Senior VP, National Director, Economics and Financial Services, HDR, Inc., notes that failure to enact deep reductions in greenhouse gasses (GHGs) will result in overall costs from climate change equal to the loss of as much as 20 percent of global GDP. There is a clear connection between environmental sustainability and economic viability. Mr. Lewis's chapter in the report, drawing from a variety of sources, including research from the American Public Transportation Association, highlights four key factors through which transit leverages environmental and economic gains:

Avoiding Carbon Emissions: A regional "mode shift" from automobiles to transit yields economic and environmental benefits at many levels. For example, the CO₂ emissions from transit ridership are about one-fifth of those produced by single occupancy automobiles, as measured on a per-passenger-mile basis. Thus, in addition to overall fuel efficiency, the shift from automobiles to transit means an 80 percent rate of "carbon avoidance." Since transportation accounts for nearly 40 percent of GHG emissions in the U.S., the greening of the nation's largest transit system has significant value, both directly and as an infrastructure model for other urban areas. As it continues to quantify its carbon avoidance rates, the MTA will also be well positioned for emerging carbon trade markets and carbon-based funding criteria.

Managing Regional Congestion: Transit reduces traffic congestion, which cost the regional economy some \$13 billion in 2007 alone, according to the Partnership for New York City. By improving traffic flow, transit optimizes regional mobility for both passenger and freight sectors. This in turn reduces fuel costs, vehicle operating costs, and the costs associated with traffic accidents. By easing congestion, transit also reduces CO₂ emissions from the remaining auto traffic, resulting in yet another level of "carbon avoidance." Moreover, studies show that in periods of rapid land development and population growth, transit rail systems in highway corridors will absorb and stabilize any related rise in traffic congestion.

Optimizing Land Use: Transit enables more clustered residential and commercial development, which brings dramatic economic and sustainability gains. According to a major study by the National Research Council, more compact settlement patterns could save the nation \$540 billion in building and infrastructure costs. Moreover, compact, transit-based development not only reduces automobile travel, it reduces the average miles between destinations for all modes of travel, including automobiles. Thus the land-use patterns generated by transit produce a "virtuous spiral" with an ongoing decline in energy consumption and corresponding rise in carbon avoidance. This is clearly evident in the high-density, transit-rich MTA region, where per capita energy consumption is now one quarter the national average.

Generating Higher Values: The value of transit to regional economies will be felt through higher worker mobility, lower energy costs, reduced pressure on public services and other effects. Significantly, those benefits will also extend beyond direct transit system users to the economy at large. One example is the impact on property values, as demonstrated in numerous studies. A study for the Federal Transit Administration, for example, indicates an increase in residential equity value of about \$160 for every 100 additional feet of transit station proximity. Another study in Washington, D.C. shows that for each 1,000 foot decrease in the distance to a transit rail station, commercial property values increased by \$2.30 per square foot, while the total value for properties averaging 30,500 square feet rose by over \$70,000.

For more information, see the full report online at www.mta.info/environment

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Top Recommendations for Greening the MTA and the MTA Region

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Sustainability and the MTA, appointed in September 2007 by MTA Executive Director and CEO Elliot G. Sander, was charged with developing sustainability-related recommendations for the MTA and its operating agencies. To develop a strategy, the Commission's 22 members divided into working groups covering key areas of sustainability planning: Energy/Carbon; Smart-growth/Transit-Oriented Development; Water Management; Materials Flow; Facilities; and Climate Adaptation. In addition to the commissioners, each group worked with designated MTA staff, research consultants, and pro bono experts to arrive at the following recommendations.

The Commission believes these recommendations are applicable to transit agencies across the country, and the regions they serve.

Energy/Carbon

- The MTA should draw 80 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2050. To achieve this, the MTA should join a consortium of public entities to pursue offshore wind farms capable of generating up to 1,500 megawatts of clean energy.
- The MTA should identify carbon avoidance as a revenue source to underscore the MTA's role as a provider of climate stabilization services in its region and to establish the value of MTA services under any decarbonization policy (carbon tax, cap-and-trade, post-Kyoto/Copenhagen rules, etc.).
- The MTA should reduce operational energy use and GHG emissions by 25 percent by 2019 (on a per-passenger-mile basis) through energy retrofits, smart fleet technologies and more.
- The MTA should establish a "green" MetroCard contribution program, through which customers could make voluntary, tax-deductible donations to fund green aspects of sustainable capital and operating projects at the MTA.
- The MTA should field test and implement weight reduction and regenerative braking technologies, as recommended by the Commission's Smart Fleets

task force.

Smart Growth/Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

- The MTA should capture two-thirds of all new vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generated within its region through 2030. To achieve this, the MTA should advise communities and collaborate with them on how to create and expand feeder and distributor lines and eliminate gaps in the regional transit network.
- The MTA should promote clustered development throughout its region, seeking to draw two-thirds of all new development to within a quarter-mile to a half-mile of transit access within the MTA network.
- The MTA should take the lead in closing the "last mile" transportation gap by improving access to transit through robust, flexible feeder and distributor services, as well as pedestrian and bike improvements.
- The MTA should develop a system-wide TOD program that articulates principles and guidelines for TOD project development and should assist communities, developers and stakeholders throughout the region in planning these community-based initiatives.

Water Management

- The MTA should identify beneficial uses for the millions of gallons of groundwater pumped out of subway system tunnels.
- The MTA should reduce its use of potable water by 25 percent or more by 2020 by substituting rainwater, recycling greywater, and/or other conservation practices.
- The MTA should install system-wide metering and sub-metering to reduce its water consumption.
- The MTA should improve water fixtures and conservation at MTA facilities through water-efficient designs, water-saving fixtures, and employee programs.
- The MTA should improve the efficiency of its vehicle washes system-wide.

Materials Flow

- The MTA should institute a green Lifecycle Analysis (LCA) system to manage its procurements and waste flow, including purchasing guidelines for green products and services.
- The MTA should expand its recycling programs, with added waste recovery, pilot programs for site-separation bins at stations and more.
- The MTA should enhance its efforts to find practical uses and market opportunities for its waste flow.
- The MTA should use its flex market power to spur the creation of green goods and services in the mid-Atlantic region.
- The MTA should encourage the use of low-carbon, local materials at all agencies, and by local vendors.
- The MTA should expand the procurement of sustainable railroad ties at all rail agencies.

Facilities

- The MTA should adopt Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED™) Silver as its standard for all building projects, new construction, and major renovations wherever applicable and either re-commission existing buildings or pursue LEED-Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance (LEED-EB) where possible.
- For all other transit facilities not covered by LEED standards, the MTA should develop MTA Green Design Guidelines, based on the LEED system.
- The MTA should develop a green Lifecycle Analysis (LCA) system for facilities to track the upfront costs and long-term savings from high- performance and regenerative design features.
- The MTA should increase the number of LEED accredited employees.
- The MTA should seek LEED-EB Rating for Grand Central Terminal.

Climate Adaptation

- The MTA should develop a climate-adaptation decision matrix to identify options for protecting transit infrastructure from storm surge, extreme heat, and

other manifestations of climate change.

· The MTA should implement a Climate Adaptation Resiliency Evaluation Procedure (CARE Trigger Elevation), which would be triggered when any new projects or major alterations are undertaken where critical structural components are located in present or potential coastal surge flood zones.

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Federal Legislative and Policy Recommendations

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Sustainability and the MTA, appointed in September 2007 by MTA Executive Director and CEO Elliot G. Sander, was charged with developing sustainability-related recommendations for the MTA and its operating agencies. The Commission supports providing the MTA with \$75 billion to \$100 billion over the course of the next two MTA capital plans (2010-2014 and 2015-2019) to prepare the MTA and its service region for a sustainable future. Investments at these higher levels will help the MTA region and the nation weather the current recession as well as accelerate the region's transition from fossil-fuel dependency to a low-carbon economy.

Today's report contains nearly 100 recommendations in all, with about 20 that are transformational, 40 near-term, and about 30 that require legislative and/or policy action by decision makers at the federal, state and local levels. This activity will not only strengthen and green the MTA system, it will have a positive, lasting impact on sustainability and economic recovery – regionally, nationally, and globally. The federal actions should include:

1. Pass a \$1 Trillion Green Stimulus Bill

· Focusing on 21st century transit and renewable energy

2. Authorize and Reform 2010-15 Transportation Bill at \$1 Trillion

- Emphasize state of good repair
- Reform funds distribution process and prioritize funding for metropolitan areas
- Develop performance measures that recognize existing densities/transit use
- Incentivize regional, intermodal, and pricing projects
- Streamline federal processes/procedures
- Require minimum green standards for receipt of federal funds

3. Require Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reductions

Link land use and infrastructure investment to reduce GHG emissions by adapting California's SB 375 to work on a national scale through regional reduction targets and plans

4. Provide Leadership/Funding for Climate Adaptation

Establish a lead federal agency to coordinate federal, state, and local efforts and funding for climate-adaptation plans, programs, and strategies

5. Raise Federal Gas Tax 40 Cents Over 5 Years and Fund Shift to Mileage-Based User Fees

6. Establish Carbon Emissions Avoidance Market and Dedicate 25 Percent of Revenues to Transit

7. Increase Monthly Commuter Tax Benefit to \$230/Month for Transit Commuters

8. Provide Incentives to Lenders that Offer Location Efficient Mortgages (LEMS)

9. Provide Incentives to Developers Who Design and Construct to LEED-Neighborhood Development Standards and Achieve Gold Rating

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