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Traffic Simulator May Be Answer To NYC's Prayers

Imagine Getting 30-Minute Advance Notice On Congestion



NEW YORK (CBS) — Getting stuck in traffic is part of driving in New York City. But a new traffic simulator could make the commute smoother and cleaner for drivers and pedestrians.

Reporting
[Jay Dow](#)

There's nothing like a little traffic to throw a wrench in your schedule.

"Traffic ... it gets hectic...definitely gets hectic in the city," said Enrique Rivera of East Harlem.

But thanks to a new super computer-powered transportation simulator City College of New York researchers, students and transportation officials are now one step closer to being able to direct drivers away from traffic jams -- before they occur.

Researchers will eventually pull raw data from E-Z Pass toll crossings and weight-sensitive strips buried in the road. As technology advances, the updated traffic info would then be delivered back to drivers through their radio.

"Our vision is that we'll be able to provide a 30-minute look ahead, so that we'll be able to tell you what's going to happen," said CCNY engineering professor Dr. Neville Parker.

"Because it really is no good to be in a traffic jam and then be told there is a traffic jam."

The simulator's first project will be based in East Harlem, where transportation officials will analyze new traffic models designed to lower air pollution levels.

"In this community, one out of four children have asthma," Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer said. "There's a high rate of diabetes, there's a high rate of obesity. So there's health issues related to traffic congestion."

"A lot of kids, when they run, they're like breathing very heavily. And even if they're walking they breath very heavy. The air gets so thick," resident Betina Toro said.

Computer maker Silicon Graphics supplied the Linux-based super server which will ultimately tackle congestion issues across the region. Judging by the traffic on Wednesday at East 160th Street and Lexington Avenue, relief can't come soon enough.

The supercomputer, partly paid for by the Manhattan Borough president's office, costs about \$1.5 million.

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