



NEWS RELEASE

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Rochester Ranks 13 in U.S. for Increased Public Transit Use

Two reports say driving is down, public transit is up

A recent study on transportation trends in the U.S. revealed that the Rochester community saw a 37.4 percent increase in public transit miles traveled per-capita from 2005 to 2010—ranking it 13th highest in that category in the nation. During the same period, Rochester commuters who traveled by car decreased 1.2 percent. While Rochester saw an increase greater than most other urban areas, the numbers reflect a steady national trend—a decline in driving in three-quarters of America’s largest urban areas and an increase in use of public transit.

“Transportation in Transition,” the December report published by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (US PIRG), also said, overall, the average American drives 7.6 percent fewer miles today than when per-capita driving peaked in 2004. Urban areas also have seen the greatest increase in public transit use, bicycle commuting and decrease in the share of households owning a car.

Millennial generation may drive trend

In October, The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) also issued a paper titled, “Millennials and Mobility” which reported that the use of public transit is poised to increase dramatically in the years ahead—largely driven by the Millennial generation—those born between 1982 and 2003. Study results show that Millennials’ propensity for a greener lifestyle and urban living may be responsible for the shift. Their numbers also are bolstered by Baby Boomers who are downsizing and moving back into urban areas.

RTS CEO Bill Carpenter said, “These numbers are in line with the data we report each month to the National Transit Database. In 2005 our ridership was 13.1M and by 2010 it had grown to 17.2M. Considering that the population of Rochester has remained flat, this is a significant

increase.” He added, “Owning, parking and maintaining a car is estimated to cost about \$9,000 per year and an RTS bus ride is still only \$1. Young and old alike can appreciate the value of using the bus—it’s affordable, convenient and on-time.”

At the conclusion of the US PIRG report, researchers recommended public officials reallocate resources for public transit, collect better data, and revisit transportation plans to ensure that they reflect recent declines in driving and new understandings of the future demand for travel.

“Transportation in Transition” is available online at <http://www.uspirg.org/reports/usp/transportation-transition>. The study was conducted by the U.S. PIRG Education Fund, a 501©(3) independent consumer research fund, The Frontier Group, an organization that conducts research and policy analysis, and through the support of The Rockefeller Foundation. Visit their websites at www.uspirg.org/edfund and www.frontiergroup.org.

APTA’s “Millennials and Mobility” is available online at www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/APTA-Millennials-and-Mobility.pdf. The report was conducted with funding provided through the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Project on long-term strategic issues in transportation. The TCRP is sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration and directed by the Transit Development Corporation, the research arm of APTA. For more information, visit their website at www.apta.org.

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Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority provides public bus transportation in Monroe, Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties. Recognized as one of the best-run transit systems in the nation, our 800+ employees proudly enjoy serving our customers who count on us for 18 million rides each year. A public benefit entity, RGRTA is governed by 13 appointed commissioners who represent the City of Rochester, County of Monroe, and the surrounding counties in which RGRTA provides services. For more information, visit rgta.com.