



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Report Reveals New Understanding of Transportation as Systemic Equity Issue

Rochester, NY: Reconnect Rochester, together with a host of leading organizations* in Rochester’s anti-poverty efforts and transportation sector, have released a commissioned report prepared by **Center for Governmental Research** titled [Transportation and Poverty in Monroe County: How Land Use, Job Locations and Commuting Options Affect Access to Jobs.](#)

“This report makes it clear that transportation is a structural barrier that forces people living in poverty into impossible choices, and that the situation has been exasperated by increased decentralization of jobs over time”, said Mike Governale, President of Reconnect Rochester. “The transportation needs of our most vulnerable workers should not be an after-thought in land use management and regional economic policy decision making. The report’s findings should be a call to action to improve the coordination between public and private dollars invested in transportation, economic development, and anti-poverty efforts.”

Transportation has long been identified as a key barrier for people living in poverty in Monroe County. The report provides a first of its kind “deep dive” study of the major factors and dynamics at play, such as:

- Where people live and how that has changed over time
- Where people work and how job distribution location has changed over time

- How people commute to work, and how long that commute takes by public transit
- The rates of car ownership and financial burdens of car ownership
- The accessibility of jobs depending on place of residence and mode of transit

Data in the report reveals that changing patterns of residential settlement and location of jobs, particularly during the period from 2002 - 2015, have made it increasingly difficult for people, especially low-income people, to access employment. Dozens of pages of in-depth data and mapping lead to the report's concluding section titled **Transportation is an Equity Issue**. The summary passage in full reads:

“The state of the transportation options in Monroe County and Rochester pose an equity issue for the community, both in terms of race and income. Drivers (who are whiter and wealthier than transit riders) face easy commutes and a wide access to jobs. Those who ride the bus face very long commutes and limited access to jobs.

Given these differences, the transportation system writ large reinforces the disparities that already exist in the community rather than helping to reduce them. Additionally, given how much longer it takes to get to work by bus, and how many fewer jobs one can reach, it is unlikely that those who can afford a vehicle would choose to take transit. Thus, transportation also becomes a segregating rather than integrating element in the community.

As various collective impact initiatives in the community work to address poverty and structural racism, it is critical that they consider the ways in which the transportation system contributes to or hinders their intended outcomes.”

INITIATIVE PARTNERS ON REPORT'S IMPORTANCE

“I want to thank Reconnect Rochester for shining a light on the connection between poverty and transportation. Good information leads to good policy decisions to improve our city's transportation system. With this information, we can build on the success of such programs as rideshare, bikeshare and vanpool to close the transportation gap and create more jobs, safer and more vibrant neighborhoods, and better educational opportunities for our citizens.”

– Mayor Lovely A. Warren, City of Rochester

“This insightful report under the auspices of Reconnect Rochester, reveals the direct connection between transportation systems and poverty, highlighting the structural

barriers in land use, economic development and transportation infrastructure that inhibit access to jobs by the poor in Rochester and Monroe County. With a better understanding of this connection, our community can work to advance changes and create a more robust transportation system that will effectively address current inequities in access to employment.”

– Rashid Muhammad, Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative

“Funding constraints limit public transit’s ability to meet the changing needs of the community and customers we serve. This report shows the impact of limited funding on access to jobs, education and health care and how barriers to transportation reduce quality of life in our community.”

– Bill Carpenter, Regional Transit Service

“The GTC Long Range Transportation Plan supports development that considers and integrates transportation needs. This report highlights the need for employers to consider the transportation options that potential employees can afford on the anticipated wages. Employers should consider the benefits of reduced turnover that locating near reliable transportation can provide.”

– James Stack, Genesee Transportation Council

“This report affirms the critical role that an affordable, accessible and efficient transportation system plays in advancing opportunities for workers as well as promoting the economic health and livability of our community. United Way of Greater Rochester was proud to support this study and to connect resources in our community.”

– Bill McDonald, United Way of Greater Rochester

“Transportation is a key component in the effort to address equity and poverty in our community. We are glad to have had the opportunity to help raise awareness and shed light on the intricacies of this important issue.”

– Erika Rosenberg, Center for Governmental Research

ABOUT THE INITIATIVE, PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

The *Transportation & Poverty in Monroe County* report is part of an ongoing, multi-faceted initiative to examine the intersection between transportation and poverty. Earlier efforts have included a [six-part blog series](#) that formed the basis for the report, as well as a [Rochester Street Films](#) event last September featuring a [30 minute locally produced documentary film](#) followed by a panel discussion.

*Committed initiative partners include the **City of Rochester, Connected Communities Inc., ESL Charitable Foundation, Genesee Transportation Council, Reconnect Rochester, Regional Transit Service, Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative, The Community Foundation, and the United Way of Greater Rochester.**

Funding for the report was provided by **ESL Charitable Foundation, the United Way of Greater Rochester,** and Center for Governmental Research Fund for the Public Interest.

The report will be used to inform the strategy and focus of the **Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative** transportation policy work group, which will work to translate the learnings into policy recommendations and action. The policy work group is chaired by Maggie Brooks of **Regional Transit Service** and Bill McDonald of **United Way of Greater Rochester.**

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ABOUT RECONNECT ROCHESTER

Whether by bus, by rail, on bike, or on foot, Reconnect Rochester champions transportation choices that enable a more vibrant and equitable community. We envision a community connected by a robust transportation network that makes it easy for everyone—regardless of physical or economic ability—to get around.