

CHAPTER III - THE REGION





OVERVIEW

The Genesee-Finger Lakes Region is a diverse area encompassing nearly 4,700 square miles. This diversity is evidenced by the transition from the dense, urban form of the cities and villages to the vast, open areas of the rural towns.

The economic activities that take place within the region's borders are as diverse as the physical terrain. The region's development is strongly rooted in its history of manufacturing and agriculture. While these industries remain top contributors to the regional economy, an evolution through diversification continues as a host of business support, photonics, and biotechnology-related firms continue to increase their contribution.

For the transportation system to contribute effectively to the social and economic vitality of the region, it must be responsive to not only existing socioeconomic conditions but also to reaching the desired state of the region in the future, as determined by the community.

POPULATION

Who We Are

Based on the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, approximately 1.2 million people reside in the nine-county Genesee-Finger Lakes Region.

This represents an increase of nearly 40,000 residents between 1990 and 2000. The region experienced a steady growth rate over the past twenty years - just above three percent over each of the two 10-year periods of 1980 to 1990 and 1990 to 2000.

Exhibit 4 presents the growth rates of the region, Upstate New York, and New York State between 1980 and 2000 in 10-year increments and over the entire 20-year period. The region's growth in population outpaced population growth in Upstate New York over both 10-year periods. While the region maintained a steady growth rate in population between 1980

and 2000, the pace of growth in Upstate New York declined by more than half between 1990 and 2000 compared to the previous 10-year period.

Population growth for the state as a whole was just the opposite of that in Upstate New York over the 20-year period. While population growth in the region outpaced that of the state between 1980 and 1990, the large influx of new residents in New York City and the surrounding downstate area (largely due to immigration) resulted in a growth rate for the state that exceeded the region's between 1990 and 2000.

EXHIBIT 4 - POPULATION GROWTH RATE, 1980 TO 2000

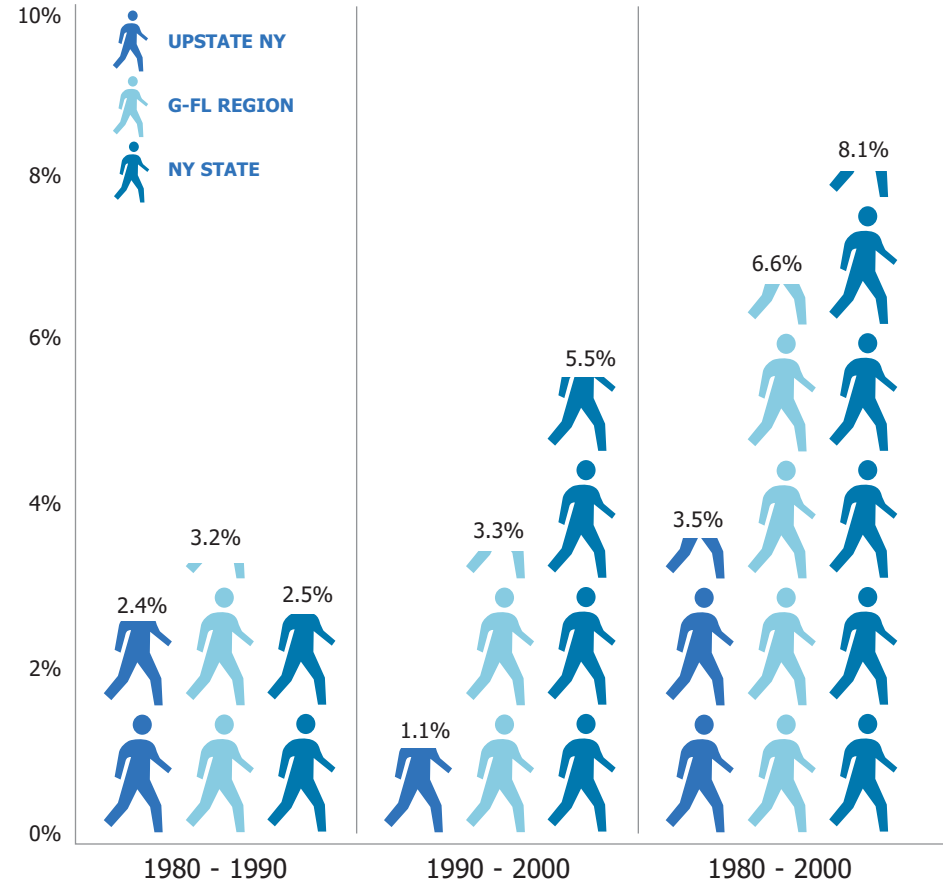
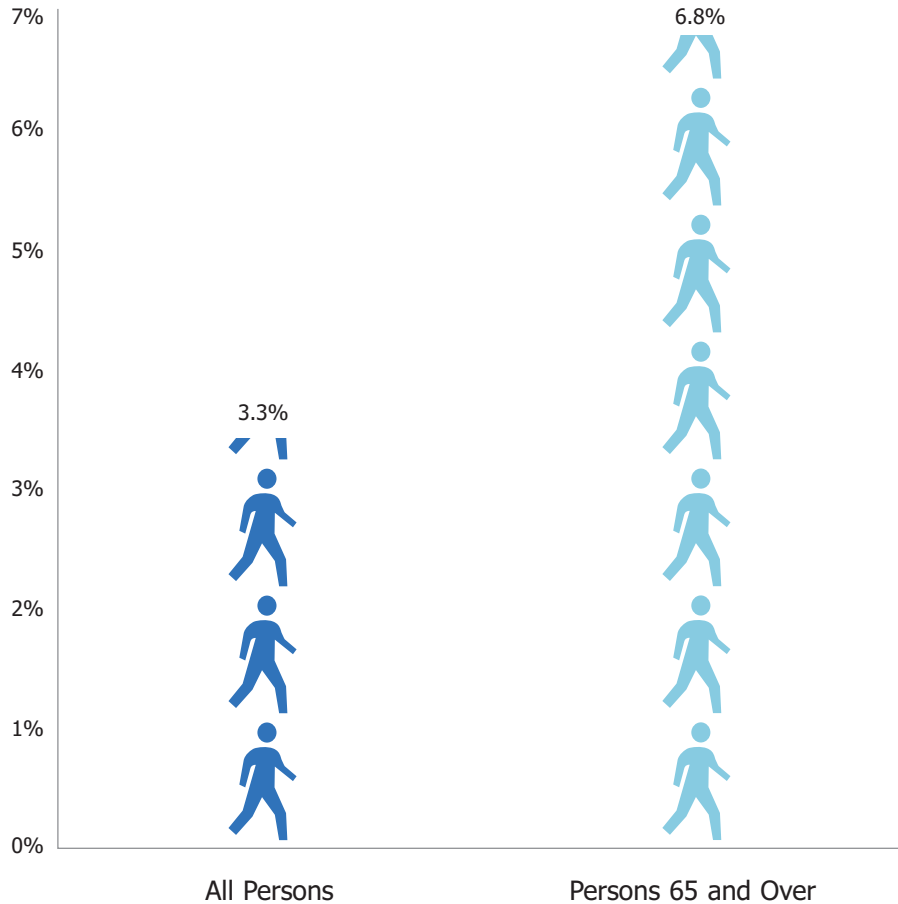




EXHIBIT 5 - POPULATION GROWTH RATE OF PERSONS 65 AND OVER, 1990 TO 2000



Population growth in the region is expected to continue over the 20-year time period of the LRTP. However, this increase in population is forecasted to occur at a slower rate than in the past. The population of the region is projected to reach nearly 1.25 million residents in 2025. Regardless of the decreasing growth rate, the increase in population will result in more trips on the region's transportation system.

As presented in Exhibit 5, the growth rate of persons 65 years and older in the region between 1990 and 2000 was more than double that of the population as a whole. In 2000, one out of every eight residents of the region was 65 or older - consistent with Upstate New York as a whole. Increases in life expectancy rates and the aging "Baby Boomer" generation will continue this trend over the period of the LRTP. The increasing senior segment of the Region's population will impact both the purpose of trips and the means by which they are made.

Where We Live

Approximately 60% (735,343) of the region's 1.2 million residents lived in Monroe County in 2000. Nearly 30% (219,773) of these persons resided in the City of Rochester, representing a decrease of over 10,000 residents between 1990 and 2000.

The largest number of persons outside Monroe County were to the east and south in Ontario (100,224 persons), Wayne (93,765), and Livingston (64,328) counties, combining for over 20% of the region's population. Exhibit 6 presents the distribution of population by county in the region in 2000.

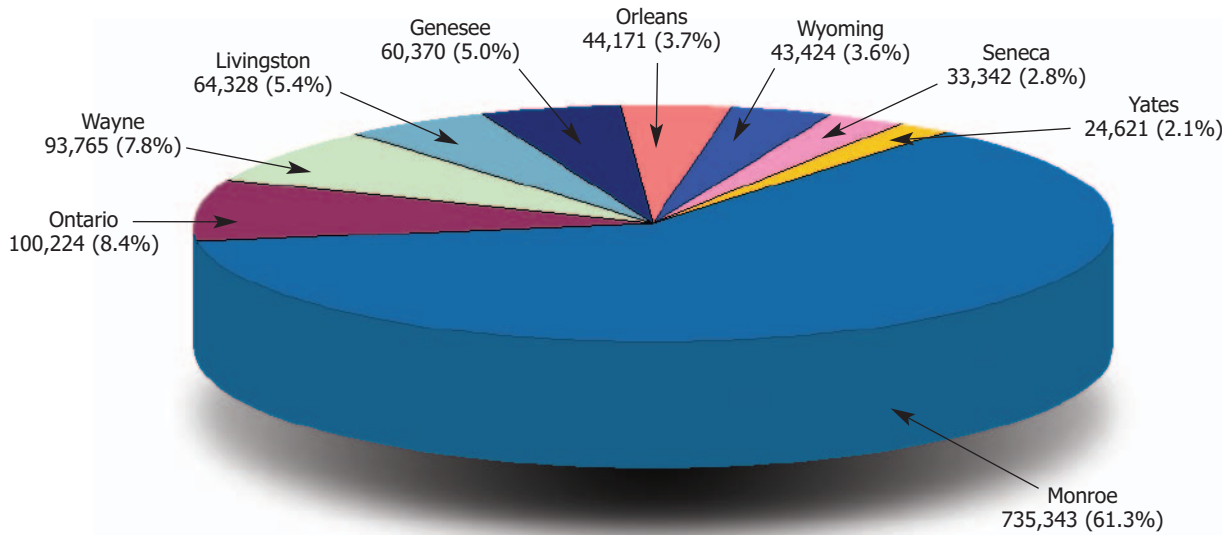
While Genesee and Seneca counties are forecasted to experience very slight decreases in population (less than 1.5% each), the distribution of population within the region by county is projected to be nearly identical in 2025.

The distribution of population within the region is expected to remain fairly constant but the trend in the number of households increasing at a greater rate than residents means that trips are originating from a greater number of locations.

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of persons in the region increased 3.3%. During the same period, the number of households grew by 6.0%, with most of the growth in one-person households. Two-person households also increased and three or more-person households declined.



EXHIBIT 6 - POPULATION BY COUNTY, 2000



The result was a decrease of .09 persons per household (-3.2%) across the region in 2000 compared with 1990. Exhibit 7 on the following page presents the rates of change in number of persons, households, and persons per household.

EMPLOYMENT

What We Do

Based on 2002 NYS Department of Labor ES-202 data, over 27,000 establishments employing over one-half million workers are located in the region. Workers employed in the region earned nearly \$19 billion in wages in 2002.

Over 80% of the workers in the region are employed in private businesses. In 2001, these establishments produced goods and services worth approximately \$50 billion - more than 12 of the 50 states.

Along with the rest of New York State and the majority of states in the Northeast and Midwest, manufacturing-related employment has and continues to decline as the industry continues its transition to higher value-added products. Still, manufacturing firms employ nearly 20% of all workers in the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region - a larger percentage than any other region in New York State.

For the most part, the regional economy has been able to absorb the significant decreases in manufacturing employment through increases in business-support and information services, wholesale trade, and technology-

related job opportunities.

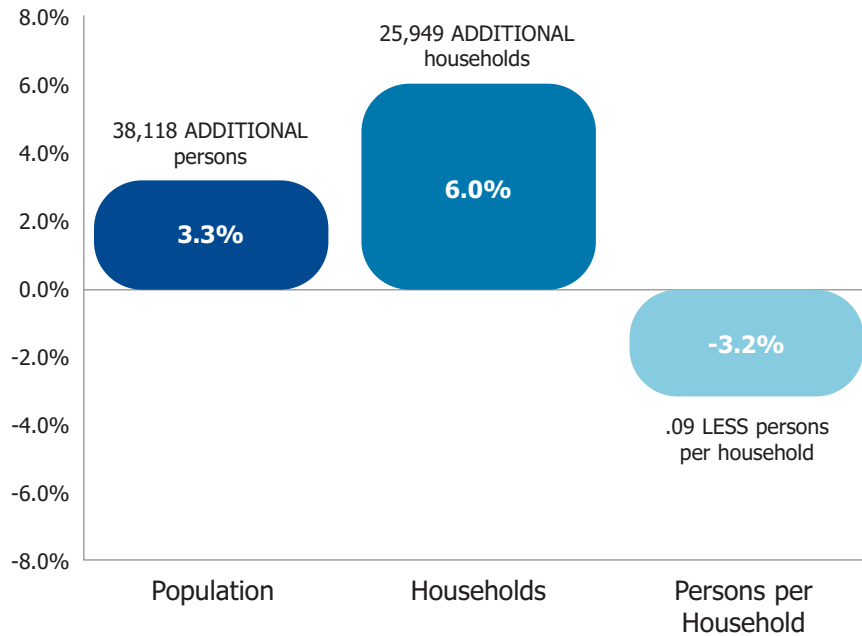
In addition, agriculture and related agribusiness activity remains a major component of the economy. Along with the change in the type of manufactured goods produced by regional businesses, the transportation system will still need to safely and efficiently transport goods - a predominantly service-oriented economy is likely not in the region's future.

Where We Work

As with population and households, approximately 60% of the region's businesses are located in Monroe County (see Exhibit 8). However, 70% of the region's employees work for establishments located in Monroe County. This is the result of a greater proportion of larger businesses being located in Monroe County.



EXHIBIT 7 - HOUSEHOLDS & PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD GROWTH RATES, 1990 TO 2000

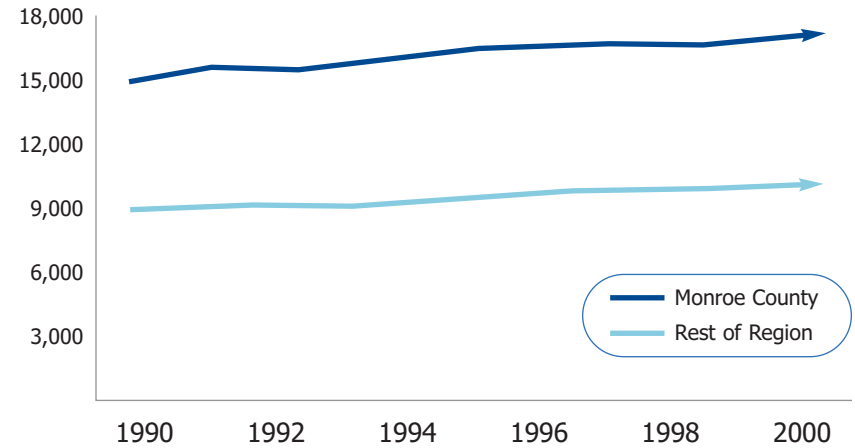


As presented in Exhibit 9, the number of at-home workers increased by just over 2,000 workers between 1990 and 2000. In terms of work-related commuting, the number of at-home workers has and will continue to have minimal impact. Even at-home workers make trips - particularly, sales and service professionals - and many of these may occur at morning and evening peak travel periods.

Travel to work is the single largest generator of trips on the region's transportation system. The vast majority of workers in the region use personal automobiles to travel to work, either driving alone or carpooling (81.5% and 9.3%, respectively).

Nearly four percent of workers biked or walked to work and approximately two percent used public transportation.

EXHIBIT 8 - NUMBER OF BUSINESSES, 1990 TO 2000



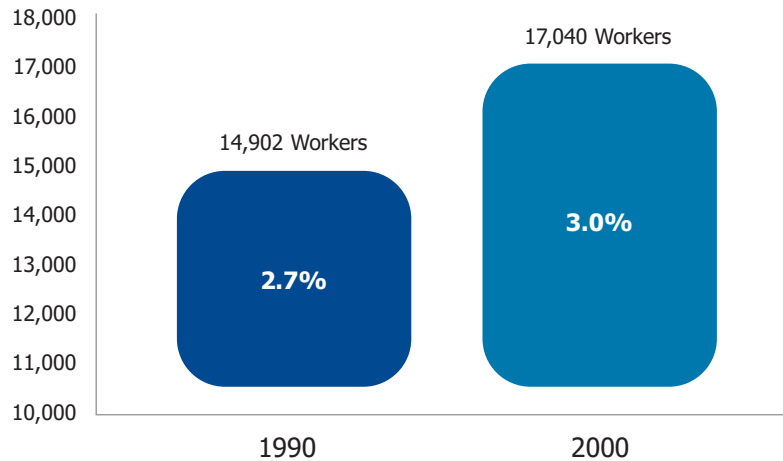
Between 1990 and 2000, the number of workers driving alone increased while all other means of transportation to work decreased. Exhibit 10 presents the means of transportation to work by employees residing in the region in 2000.

Principal Themes

Based on the analysis of existing and projected demographic and economic conditions and comments received during the public involvement periods, six principal themes emerged with respect to the opportunities and issues facing the region in which transportation can play a role.



EXHIBIT 9 - **AT-HOME WORKERS, 1990 TO 2000**



Creating Jobs

Throughout the public involvement periods it became evident that the primary concern of the region's residents was economic development and the associated creation of employment opportunities for residents.

Projections of future employment follow those of population - the number of jobs supplied by regional employers will continue to increase but at a slower rate than in the past. Given that job growth in the region has lagged that of the nation and the rest of New York State, the forecasted increases are not satisfactory for a community with the quality of life that this region has to offer.

Of particular importance is the loss of younger workers to other areas - the "Brain Drain". There is a perception that job creation is hindered because employers do not feel there is an adequate supply of labor. Improved retention of younger workers may solve this dilemma.

Public comments suggested that the retention of younger workers would be improved by increasing their awareness of and connections to regional attractions and social opportunities.

Enhancing Community Character

Transportation facilities are integral to community character. As gateways, transportation facilities announce to residents (current and past) that they have returned home while providing an important first impression to visitors.

Given the importance of transportation facilities to the historical development of the region (most notably, the Erie Canal), the current and future transportation system has an immediate impact on the perception and reputation of our community to visitors and residents alike.

Public comments suggested that improving the appearance of our gateways - highways and bridges leading into and out of the region as well as interregional transportation facilities - is essential to creating a positive impression of our region.

Improving Mobility for the Physically Challenged

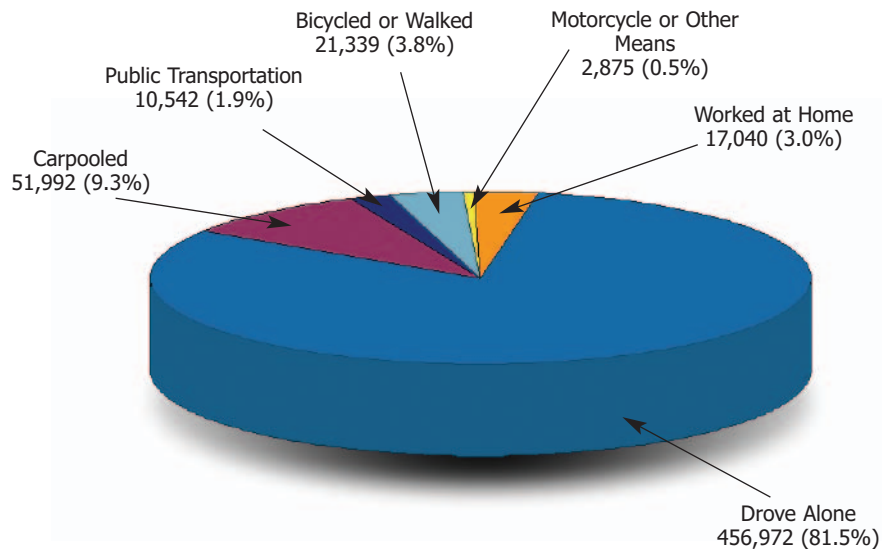
The ability to access employment, social, and recreational opportunities can be difficult for the physically challenged. The quality of life of these individuals is directly related to their independence in performing day-to-day activities. The transportation system is a major determinant of the independence of these individuals.

The aging population of the region will place an increased emphasis on the need of individuals with physical disabilities to have adequate mobility options.

Public comments suggested that components of the transportation system beyond public transportation services must be responsive to the needs of physically challenged individuals.



EXHIBIT 10 - MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK, 2000



Accessing Medical Services

The ability to access needed medical services, both emergency- and non-emergency-related, varies greatly across the region. Residents of Monroe County and surrounding areas have multiple health care facilities within a closer proximity than their rural counterparts.

The consolidation, and subsequent closings, of hospitals and health care facilities along with the emergence of new technologies has changed the nature of access to medical services within the region.

At present, a variety of transportation means are currently used to access medical services: private vehicles, public transportation (including paratransit), taxi services, specialized medical transportation services, public and private human service agency transportation programs, volunteer services, and Medicaid transportation programs.

Public comments suggested that transportation's role in accessing medical services in the near future and over the 20-year period covered by the LRTP will need to quickly adapt to changes in the provision of medical services.

Integrating Air Quality Considerations

On April 15, 2004, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designated the Rochester Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as being in nonattainment of the newly promulgated National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone.

This designation was the result of more stringent standards and does not reflect worsening air quality in the region. In fact, the amount of ozone in the region has decreased over the last decade.

Ground-level ozone is created when volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides combine with sunlight. Ozone in the upper levels of the atmosphere is beneficial because it blocks harmful ultraviolet rays. However, ground-level ozone can have serious adverse health consequences, particularly for the very young and elderly.

Regardless, GTC and its member agencies are now subject to increased regulatory requirements to ensure the uninterrupted receipt of federal transportation funds.

While the majority of ozone present in the region is created by sources outside its borders, the region has a responsibility to ensure that its transportation policy, planning, and investment decision making does not exacerbate air quality problems in areas downwind.

Given the need to increase job creation in the region, an increased importance will need to be placed on ensuring that transportation improvements balance economic development with environmental protection in a manner consistent with federal and state requirements.



Balancing Regional Objectives and Local Priorities

As the designated MPO for the region, GTC is charged with ensuring that the transportation system is responsive to the needs of each individual community and the region as an integrated network of communities.

The policies and actions contained in the LRTP strive to balance regional objectives with local priorities in a manner that respects the decisions made at both levels. Of particular relevance is the impact that transportation and land use decisions have on each other. While land use decisions are made at the local level, many major transportation investment decisions are made at the regional level through GTC.

The public comments received acknowledged the periodic difficulties in coordinating the decisions made at the local and regional levels with respect to land use and transportation planning and investment.

The LRTP must provide a framework for ensuring that the transportation system allows for the parts and the whole to simultaneously thrive socially and economically.