

News Release

New Report Documents Transportation Trends in Arizona: *Decline in Driving, Increase in Public Transit*

According to new research, Arizona is experiencing a shift in how people travel. *Bikes, Trains and Less Driving*, a report by the Arizona PIRG Education Fund and St. Luke's Health Initiatives, found that between 2005-2012 Arizona saw a 10.5 percent decline in annual vehicle miles traveled per capita and Arizonans increasingly look to public transportation to get around.

Diane E. Brown, Executive Director of the Arizona PIRG Education Fund stated, "As transportation dollars become scarcer, the time has come for Arizona to shift its transportation priorities away from expensive new highways and toward the maintenance and repair of our existing infrastructure and the development of new transportation choices."

Despite increasing population, fewer vehicles are on Arizona's roads. Between 2007 and 2012, the number of registered vehicles in Arizona dropped by 4.16 percent. The percent of households with no vehicle increased 1.9 percent from 2006 to 2011 for the Phoenix urbanized area, while at the same time, the percent of households with two or more vehicles decreased 2.9 percent.

The report stated that some people might assume that the decrease in driving is a result of the recent economic recession and that driving will rebound once the economy improves. However, it goes on to say that many factors show that this shift away from driving and to other modes of transportation is a trend that is likely to be long-lasting.

According to the report:

- The trend away from driving is led by the Millennial generation, which is already the largest generation in the United States. In 2012, 23.4 percent of Arizonans were young people aged 18-34. Young people are more likely than the rest of the population to use public transportation and walk or bike to their destination, and many young people reduce their driving in an effort to protect the environment.
- Arizona's population skews slightly older than the national average. In 2012, 14.8 percent of Arizonans were at least 65 years old, compared to 13.7 percent nationally. Public transportation offers a good alternative for seniors who may feel that managing a car is too burdensome or for those who can no longer safely operate a vehicle.
- 11.7 percent of Arizonans have a disability that may restrict their driving abilities. In addition, most Arizona public transit systems offer paratransit service, which is specialized, door-to-door transportation service for people with disabilities or seniors who are not able to ride fixed-route public transportation.
- Fewer Arizonans are making a regular commute to and from work. In 2012, 5.4 percent of Arizonans worked from home, compared to 4.0 percent in 2005.

As personal vehicle travel has decreased, the number of trips and the number of miles traveled by public transportation has increased in Arizona.

John Andoh, Transit Director of the Yuma County Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority (YCIPTA) and operate of the Yuma County Area Transit (YCAT) system, said that ridership on YCAT has tripled since 2011. Prior to YCIPTA's start, the transit system carried approximately 250,000 passenger trips annually or 800 passenger trips per average day. Since YCIPTA assumed operations, YCAT has carried 490,000 passenger trips in FY 2014 or 2,500 passenger trips per average day. With the partnerships formed with Arizona Western College, Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona, Yuma Regional Medical Center, Greyhound and area high schools, YCIPTA has been able to demonstrate the importance of public transportation service in our community.