

FROM: Regional Plan Association
CONTACT: Chris Jones at (212) 253-5763 or chris@rpa.org
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RPA STATEMENT ON NEW BROOKINGS REPORT SHOWING TRI-STATE REGION RANKS 13TH IN NATION IN CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JOBS

(New York, NY) – In a report released today by the Brookings Institution, the New York-New Jersey region ranks 13th out of the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the nation in providing its residents with transit access to jobs. A separate ranking for the region covering most of Fairfield County ranked 31st. The report, *Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America*, found that while 70 percent of all residents in the largest metro areas can get to public transit, the typical resident can reach only 30 percent of the region’s jobs by transit. The story is even worse for low-skill workers, as only about a quarter of jobs in low- and middle-skill industries are accessible by transit.

The Tri-State region came in lower than one might expect for several reasons. With the most extensive transit network in the nation, the New York metropolitan area ranked 1st in the frequency of transit service and 7th in the share of the working age residents within ³/₄ of a mile of transit service. However, the region ranked 25th in the share of jobs that a typical resident can reach via transit. As documented in Regional Plan Association’s 2008 report, *Tomorrow’s Transit*, http://www.rpa.org/pdf/RPA_tomorrows_transit.pdf, there are still many neighborhoods in both the urban core and the suburbs that lack robust transit service, including many low-income communities where auto ownership is low. And as jobs moved farther out in the suburbs in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, a growing share of the region’s jobs located beyond the reach of the subway, commuter rail and bus network.

The Brookings report, written by a team of authors led by Robert Puentes, Senior Fellow and Director of Brookings’ Metropolitan Infrastructure Initiative, is a comprehensive study of a critical issue that often falls between the cracks of transportation, housing and economic development policy. The report can be found in its entirety at http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2011/0512_jobs_and_transit.aspx.

“This is an important study that highlights the need to invest in our transit network to expand economic opportunity,” said Robert D. Yaro, President of Regional Plan Association. “Most immediately, this means making sure that our subways, buses and commuter rails maintain a state of good repair and finish critical expansion projects, including the Second Avenue Subway and connecting the Long Island Rail Road to Grand Central Terminal.”

“A big implication of the story is that we need to do a better job of locating mixed-income housing and jobs close to commuter rail stations in the suburbs,” said Christopher Jones, Vice President for Research at Regional Plan Association. “RPA will be working with the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities and 16 cities, counties and metropolitan planning organizations as part of the New York- Connecticut Sustainable Communities Initiative to make that happen.” For additional information on the initiative, go to www.SustainableNYCT.org.