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NYMTC'S Annual Travel Patterns Study Shows Increased Vehicular River Crossings, but Public Transit Volume Still Lags Pre-Covid Levels

NEW YORK, Nov. 15, 2024 – Increased vehicle river crossings and a growing use of public transportation were among the highlights of the [New York Metropolitan Transportation Council's \(NYMTC\) Travel Patterns Fourth Quarter 2023](#) report, released today. Created annually and each quarter year since 2002, the Travel Patterns Reports measure ridership on buses, rails, subways, and ferries along with the vehicular traffic crossing the area's waterway bridges and tunnels in New York City, Long Island, the Lower Hudson Valley, and Northern New Jersey.

Vehicle traffic volume – which includes all motorized vehicles - at the 23 major river crossings documented in Travel Patterns was up 2.6 percent, or 55,000 vehicles, during the fourth quarter of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Significant increases in traffic were noted at the Brooklyn Bridge (20.1%), the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge (8.1%), and the Throgs Neck Bridge (7.5%). However, the total number of vehicles using these crossings in 2023 remains 4.1% below the pre-Covid levels of 2019, the study reported.

Bus and rail ridership during the fourth quarter of 2023 also showed an upswing compared to the same period in 2022, with the most significant increase in passenger volume coming from the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) Rail (37.6%); the Orange County buses (34.8%); the JFK AirTrain (34.3%) and the MTA Long Island Rail Road (19.2%). Across the board, all public transportation ridership was up an average of 6.4% (6.5% when including ferries) - or 413,000 additional trips – during the fourth quarter of 2023 compared to 2022. However, Travel Patterns reported that passenger volume on public transit still trails 32% below the pre-COVID of 2019 during the fourth quarter, representing about 3.2 million trips.

Ferry ridership on the 38 routes measured in Travel Patterns during the fourth quarter of 2023 gained an additional 13% in passenger volume from the same period in 2022, averaging 83,280 passengers per month during October, November, and December. It is worth noting that several of these routes didn't exist or operate during 2022's fourth quarter, and this was even more pronounced in 2019.

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“One of the many uses Travel Patterns has for us, our members, and the public is that it allows us to track route usage in our area and anticipate future needs for funding,” said Adam S. Levine, executive director of NYMTC. “This is key since anyone taking public transportation in the New York metropolitan area can see that it is on its way to returning to pre-Covid levels.”

Travel Patterns’ reports for the first, second, and third quarters of 2023 – as well as all quarters dating back to 2002 - are available on the NYMTC website at nymtc.org. The study is one of many sources of transportation research and data available through NYMTC, including its Socioeconomic and Demographic (SED) Forecasts, the Hub Bound Travel report, the Transportation Information Gateway (TIG), and the New York Best Practice Model.

ABOUT NYMTC:

NYMTC is the federally mandated council of governments that directs the use of billions of dollars in federal transportation funds for New York City, Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley. As the area’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), NYMTC provides a collaborative planning forum that addresses transportation-related issues and develops regional plans and goals through a shared vision for its regional transportation network. NYMTC has nine voting members and seven advisory members representing 2,440 square miles and serving a population of 13 million – approximately 65% of New York State’s residents. Between federal fiscal years 2023-2027, over 1,000 transportation projects will be funded in the NYMTC region totaling \$36.9 billion.

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