



New York State agencies celebrate "Green Your Commute Day" by launching summer-long "Green Your Commute Challenge"

May 20, 2019 - Front Section

Albany, NY According to the New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Transportation (DOT) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), 2,768 state employees celebrated "Green Your Commute Day" the largest number of participants in the event's history. Green Your Commute Day supports New York's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050, from 1990 levels. There was a jump of more than 80% in this year's Green Your Commute Day for both the amount of carbon dioxide emissions prevented and gallons of gas used, which is attributable to many workers travelling farther or taking mass transit than in 2018. In addition, the new Green Your Commute Challenge to encourage state agencies, SUNY and CUNY schools, and municipalities to participate in a new summer-long challenge to green employees' commutes.

"We want to encourage everyone in New York State to be environmentally conscious and take actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said lieutenant governor Kathy Hochul. "Our state agencies are stepping up and serving as an example of how we can contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment as part of our everyday lives. These efforts complement New York's aggressive clean energy goals of reducing emissions, leveraging renewable energy sources, and combatting climate change for a greener and safer environment for the future."

Building upon the success of Green Your Commute Day, DEC is partnering with DOT and NYSERDA, with support from the 511NY Rideshare Program, to launch the first-ever Green Your Commute Challenge. The challenge is a summer-long competition between state agencies, SUNY and CUNY schools, and municipalities to see which employees can reduce carbon emissions the most by utilizing green commutes. During the competition, employees at participating entities will utilize 511NY Rideshare's software platform and the Trip Tracker App to log their green commutes. DEC, DOT, and NYSERDA will provide technical assistance to all participating entities to engage their employees and encourage them to participate.

"Fighting climate change is an all hands-on deck effort and I am proud that every year State employees lead by example by lowering their greenhouse gas emissions on Green Your Commute Day," said DEC commissioner Basil Seggos. "This year, New York State is expanding the Green Your Commute effort to a summer long challenge for state agencies and municipalities. So whether they are walking in Woodstock, biking in Brooklyn, or carpooling in Corning, New Yorkers are building on the momentum of Green Your Commute Day all summer long in the state's new

challenge.”

State DOT acting commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez said, “Under governor Cuomo’s leadership, New York State leads the nation in investing in transportation alternatives that reduce harmful carbon emissions. These initiatives include unparalleled support for public transportation services statewide; incentivizing ride-share and carpool programs; and construction of new safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian networks. I encourage everyone to green their commute for a day by walking, biking or taking the bus to see what a huge difference such a small change can make when we all join together.”

Alicia Barton, president and CEO, NYSERDA, said, “Municipalities and employees are showing true environmental stewardship by changing their daily commuting habits and adopting green transportation alternatives which will drive down the harmful pollution that affects the air quality of our communities. I commend everyone who has already registered to green their commute and urge everyone to join their co-workers and friends in making the planet healthier for future generations by taking advantage of the cleaner transportation options available in their communities.”

The Green Your Commute Challenge builds upon work municipalities throughout the state have already done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through green commuting. The Shared Mobility Network for New York State, a project managed by NYSERDA and DOT, brought together representatives from municipalities (e.g., cities, counties, local transportation agencies) with transportation experts to assist them in expanding alternative transportation methods for their constituents such as ridesharing and bike sharing programs. As a result, over the past three years, local municipalities and transportation agencies throughout New York have expanded their green mobility networks such as carpooling, bike lanes, and made more than \$7 million in capital and operating investments in transportation systems, resulting in a reduction of 30,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide from 2015 through 2017, the equivalent of taking 2,123 cars off the road. Projects include:

- **Capital Region:** The Capital District Transportation Authority facilitated the expansion of the Capital Carshare fleet, which now has 10 cars including one battery electric vehicle and two hybrids. It also invested \$2 million in the state’s first multi-city bikeshare network covering Albany, Troy, Schenectady, and Saratoga Springs.
- **Buffalo:** The city, local transit authority and Zipcar worked together to secure more than \$3 million in public and private investment for a bikeshare network with more than 250 bikes. The city of Buffalo also integrated shared mobility networks such as Zipcar and Reddy bikeshare into Buffalo’s downtown Transportation Management Association pilot.
- **Niagara Falls:** The city raised \$641,000 in public and private investments for a bikesharing system to be launched later this year. The system will connect with Buffalo’s Reddy bikeshare to become a regional operation, similar to the Capital Region.
- **Rochester:** An integrated shared mobility program was developed by the city of Rochester and its

partners that included carsharing, bike sharing, and vanpooling. The city of Rochester has invested more than \$1 million for the deployment of more than 250 shared bikes from Pace and the planning and development of an all-electric carsharing network. In addition, the Rochester Genesee Regional Transit Authority formalized its partnership with Enterprise Rideshare adding vans and ridership for city residents commuting to job locations in suburban and rural locations outside the city.

- North Country: Using a new software system, the Volunteer Transportation Center of Watertown was able to expand to six counties and provide transportation services for residents who don't have transportation and need to attend medical appointments or need medical treatment. The new system allows the Volunteer Transportation Center to better coordinate appointments so multiple trips are combined into one, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

2,768 employees from multiple state agencies across New York are leading by example and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector by commuting to work using a means other than driving alone in a gasoline or diesel-powered vehicle. The record number of participants represents an 18% increase in participation over last year. Their actions directly offset 41.2 tons of carbon dioxide emissions, the equivalent of burning 4,348 gallons of gas.

The Green Your Commute Challenge starts on June 10, and ends on August 30. Participating entities must register by May 31, to sign up for the challenge. Interested entities are encouraged to attend a planning webinar on Wednesday, May 22, at 10 a.m. and can register [here](#).

The transportation sector is currently the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in New York, representing 34 percent of the state's total emissions. Green Your Commute Day and the Green Your Commute Challenge tackle these emissions by reducing these greenhouse gases and by highlighting how state employees and citizens can act to lower these emissions by utilizing a more sustainable mode of transportation. This year, employees walked, biked, took transit, carpooled, and drove electric vehicles to get to work.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540