

Millennials have been observed to be utilizing sustainable modes of transportation more than their preceding generations as they enter adulthood (McDonald, 2015). The comparably lower rates of automobility among Millennials – those born between 1980 and 2000 – is cited as a positive development in context of general goals of environmental sustainability and traffic reduction. However, research has been conducted that attributes some (or all) of the unique travel behaviour of Millennials to the Great Recession that commenced in 2008. The claim that is central to this reasoning is that Millennials were disproportionately affected by this event; their employment rates are substantially lower than what was exhibited by preceding generations at similar ages. This leaves them with less ability to afford automobiles and gives them less reasons to make automobile trips.

This theory is tested in this report using the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) as a case study. Descriptive statistics are analyzed to assess if there is an association between employment status and the reduced automobility of Millennials. Data is examined from three cross-sections of the Transportation Tomorrow Survey – surveys were conducted in 2001, 2006, and 2011 – and extensive focus is centred on the changes in travel behaviour observed during the study period. Three automobility indicators are utilized to assess this behaviour including auto mode share, daily auto trips, and daily vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT). Another indicator – transit mode share – is included to assess concurrent trends in the growth of public transit in the GTHA. Each of these indicators are measured first for the entire GTHA and then separately for the City of Toronto and the remaining suburban municipalities. This tactic was utilized to compare Millennial travel behaviour in these areas that can be characterized by the vast differences of their built environment.

The data confirm that there is an association between employment status and travel behaviour. The proportion of people in the GTHA that drive automobiles is substantially higher for people

policymakers including planners and