

Stranded by Transit Cuts: Denver

As the coronavirus batters public finances, transit agencies are implementing or proposing the deepest service cuts in a generation. While public transportation received relief funding in the federal CARES Act, this aid has been nearly exhausted in major cities as the crisis stretches on.

Agencies across the U.S. are warning of service cuts as deep as 40%. What would the impact of those cuts be in a region like Denver? An analysis using the Center for Neighborhood Technology's AllTransit tool suggests they would be deep and profound.

The Impact on the Denver Region

Public transportation that runs frequently is key to economic mobility. But in the Denver region, the vast majority of people and jobs who benefit from access to frequent full-day service today would lose that service. 95,793 people would lose access to frequent full-day transit; businesses would suffer as 39,535 jobs currently near frequent full-day transit lose that access.

- The impact would fall more heavily on Black residents and people of color. Black residents make up 5% of the region, but 13% of those who would lose access to frequent full-day service. Non-white and Hispanic residents make up 36% of the region, but 54% of those who would lose access to frequent full-day service.
- 6,486 households without access to a private vehicle would lose access to frequent transit, imperiling their ability to meet essential needs. Overall, 41,093 households would lose access to frequent full-day transit.

DISCLAIMER: This analysis is based on the potential impact of budget shortfalls without further emergency aid, not specific transit agency proposals.

How Many Will Lose Access to Frequent Full-Day Transit: Denver

	How Many Will Lose Access to Frequent Full-Day Transit	Currently Within 1/2-Mile of Frequent Transit	Near Frequent Transit After 50% Peak and 30% Off-Peak Cut	% Change
People	95,793	126,324	30,531	-76%
<i>Black</i>	12,696	15,148	2,452	-84%
<i>Total Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, other and multiple races</i>	51,701	62,681	10,980	-82%
Households	41,093	58,421	17,328	-70%
<i>With incomes under \$25,000</i>	11,328	15,894	4,566	-71%
<i>Without access to a private vehicle</i>	6,486	10,383	3,897	-62%
Jobs	39,535	197,040	157,505	-20%
<p><i>Notes:</i> Figures are for the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metropolitan Statistical Area using Census figures from 2017 and transit service data from 2018.</p> <p>“Frequent full-day transit” is defined as transit that runs at least every 15 minutes between 7 am and 10 pm.</p>				

Methods and Background

For this analysis, the Center for Neighborhood Technology ran an analysis using the AllTransit tool, which combines publicly available transit schedule information (GTFS feeds) and new data created by CNT for more than 300 regions where it did not previously exist.

The analysis is focused on frequent full-day service, defined as transit that runs at least every 15 minutes between 7 am and 10 pm. CNT modelled a schedule where peak service (service between 7-9 am and 4-6 pm) was reduced by 50% while off-peak service was reduced by 30%. This reflects that many transit agencies are likely to tailor service cuts to attempt to preserve full-day service.