

New York City



From Midtown to Midwood, from Newark to the Bronx, all New Yorkers deserve reliable, affordable access to the places they need to go.

Millions of people region-wide take the subway, bus, commuter rail, and other public transit to access their daily needs.

Congestion pricing, passed by New York state reps in 2019, would reduce traffic and generate new funding for transit by charging \$15 to drive in most of Manhattan. This would greatly improve access by transit. But congestion pricing's future is uncertain after New York Governor Hochul called off its implementation, weeks before it was to start.

And transportation access is inequitable across race, place, and income. New Yorkers who use public transit less often tend to have better access.

40
minute trip home

35
minute commute

20
minute trip from the supermarket



In March 2024, the average New York City resident could reach over 2 million potential jobs within an hourlong public transit commute.

According to transit schedules, weekday morning and weekend access is now better than pre-pandemic levels. New York residents also enjoy much higher transit access overall than residents of other cities.

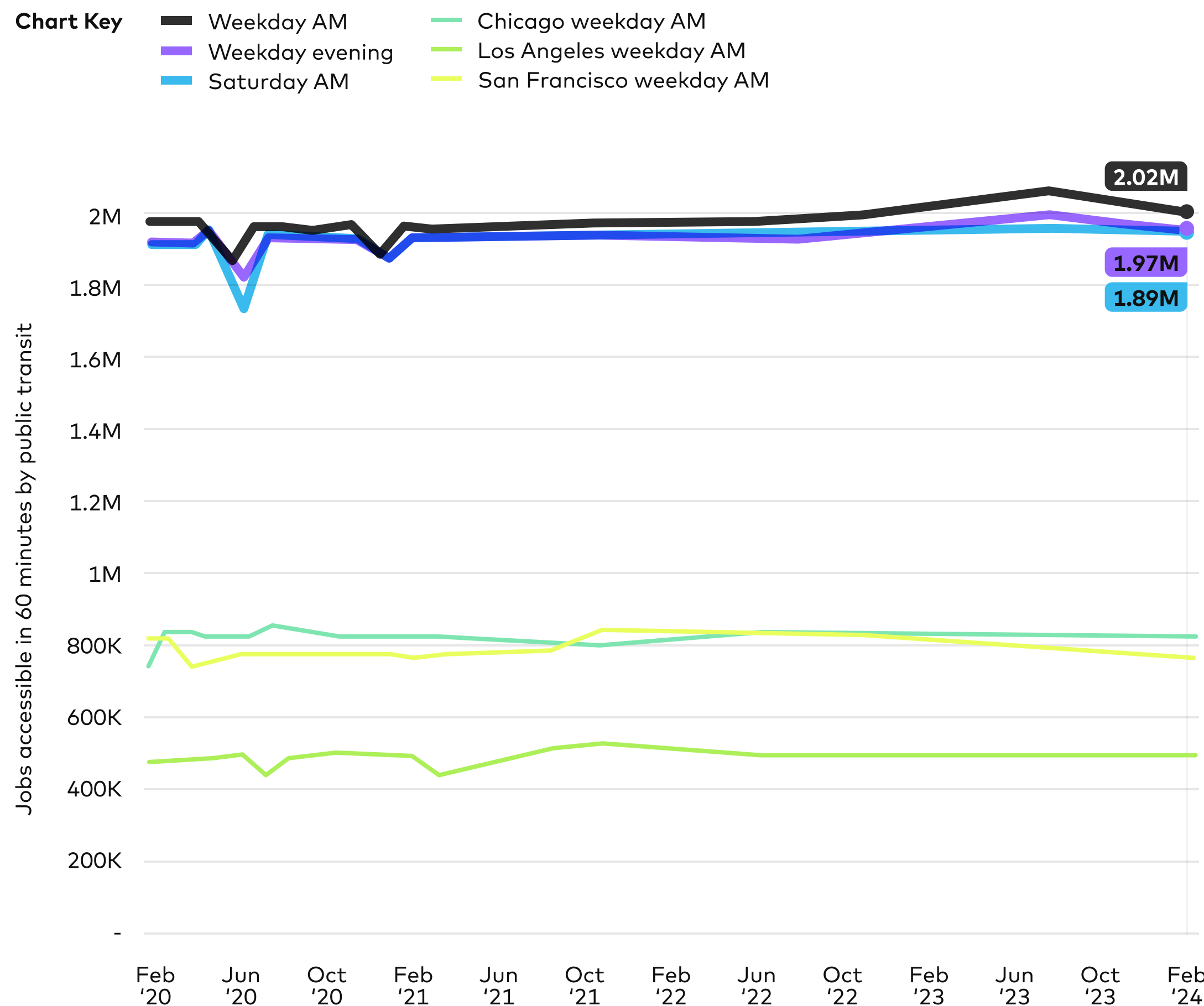
In 2023, the MTA added subway trips (particularly on weekends, which have seen strong ridership retention) and Long Island Rail Road trips after completing a years-long capital project.



Jobs accessible in 60 minutes by public transit for New York City residents

★ Chart Insight

Access by transit has improved in New York City since 2020. In other cities, access by transit is much lower and has been more volatile since COVID-19 began.



An equitable public transit system would provide the best access by transit to people who ride transit the most.

But in New York City, people with better access to jobs by public transit use it less to commute...

...because they can afford Uber, driving, or high rents within walking distance of work, or because they work from home more often.

Transportation agencies can mitigate the access mismatch by improving transit service in outer boroughs and inner-ring neighborhoods, which are home to more people of color and people with low incomes.

The MTA and NYCDOT, which controls city streets, must make bus service more frequent and reliable with dedicated busways. The MTA and NJ Transit can make commuter service into Manhattan more frequent and affordable.



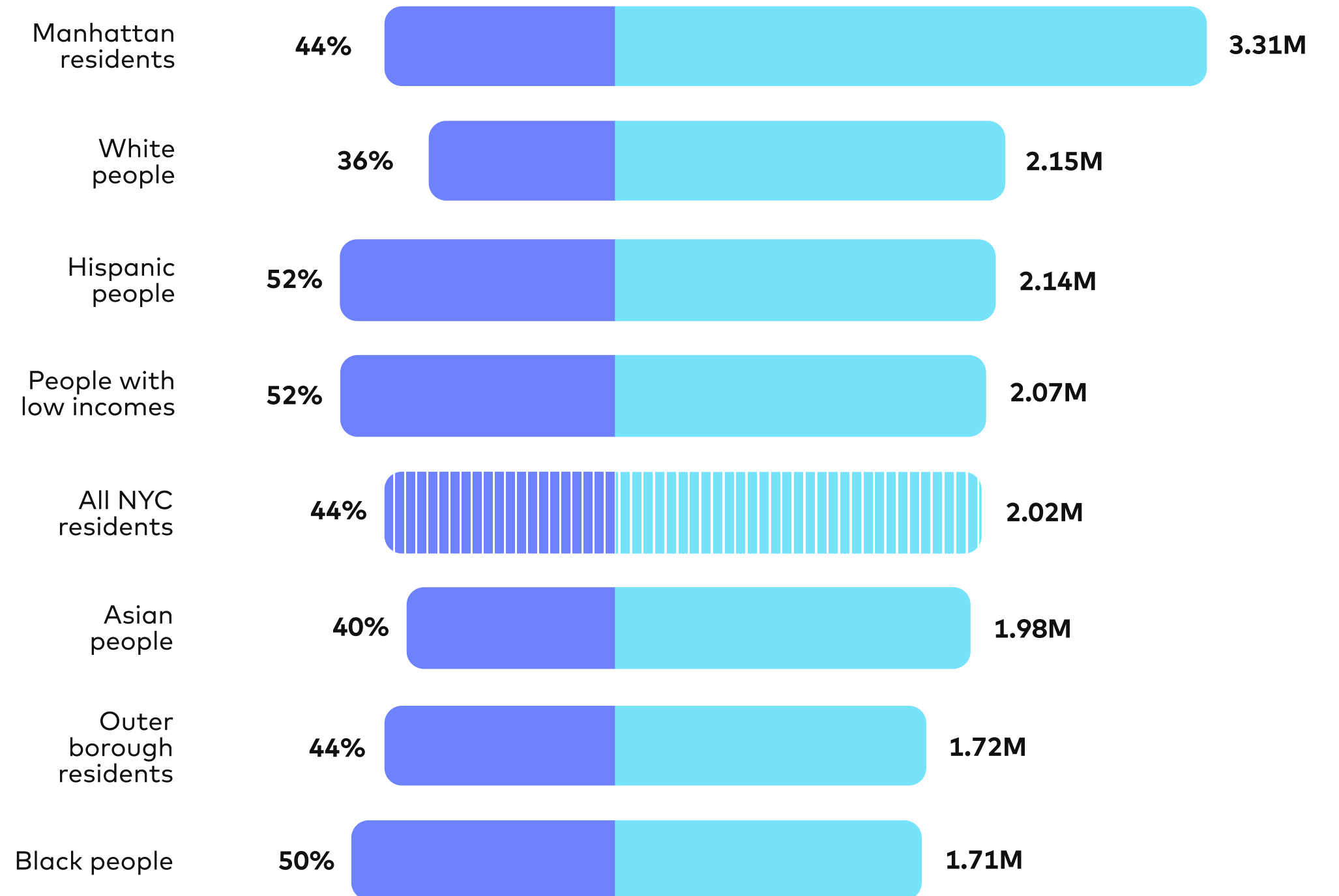
Commuting and jobs accessible in 60 minutes by public transit, New York City residents

★ Chart Insight

White people can reach 25% more jobs by public transit than Black people, but white people are 20% less likely to commute by transit than Black people.

Chart Key

- % of workers who commute by transit
- Jobs accessible by public transit



Access data from TransitCenter based on transit schedules for weekday mornings, March 2024; Transit commuter data from 2022 American Community Survey

In New York City, people who use public transit less often tend to have better access to jobs. White people can reach 25% more jobs by public transit, but are 20% less likely to commute by public transit, than Black people.



Access by affordable public transit shrinks as distance from the subway (and racial and economic diversity) grows.

Residents of some outer borough neighborhoods—and nearly all non-New Yorkers—have one-fifth the access of most Manhattanites.

Policies that improve slow, unreliable bus service can mitigate this gap in the short term.

Queens and Brooklyn network redesigns can improve connections to essential destinations. Congestion pricing, if implemented, would speed up buses entering Manhattan from the outer boroughs and New Jersey. Mayor Adams' yet-unfilled plan to build 150 miles of bus lanes would allow NYCT to run faster, more frequent routes citywide.

Long-term capital plans should prioritize building cross-borough transit routes, like the Interborough Express, rather than widening highways, like the in-progress Van Wyck Expressway expansion.

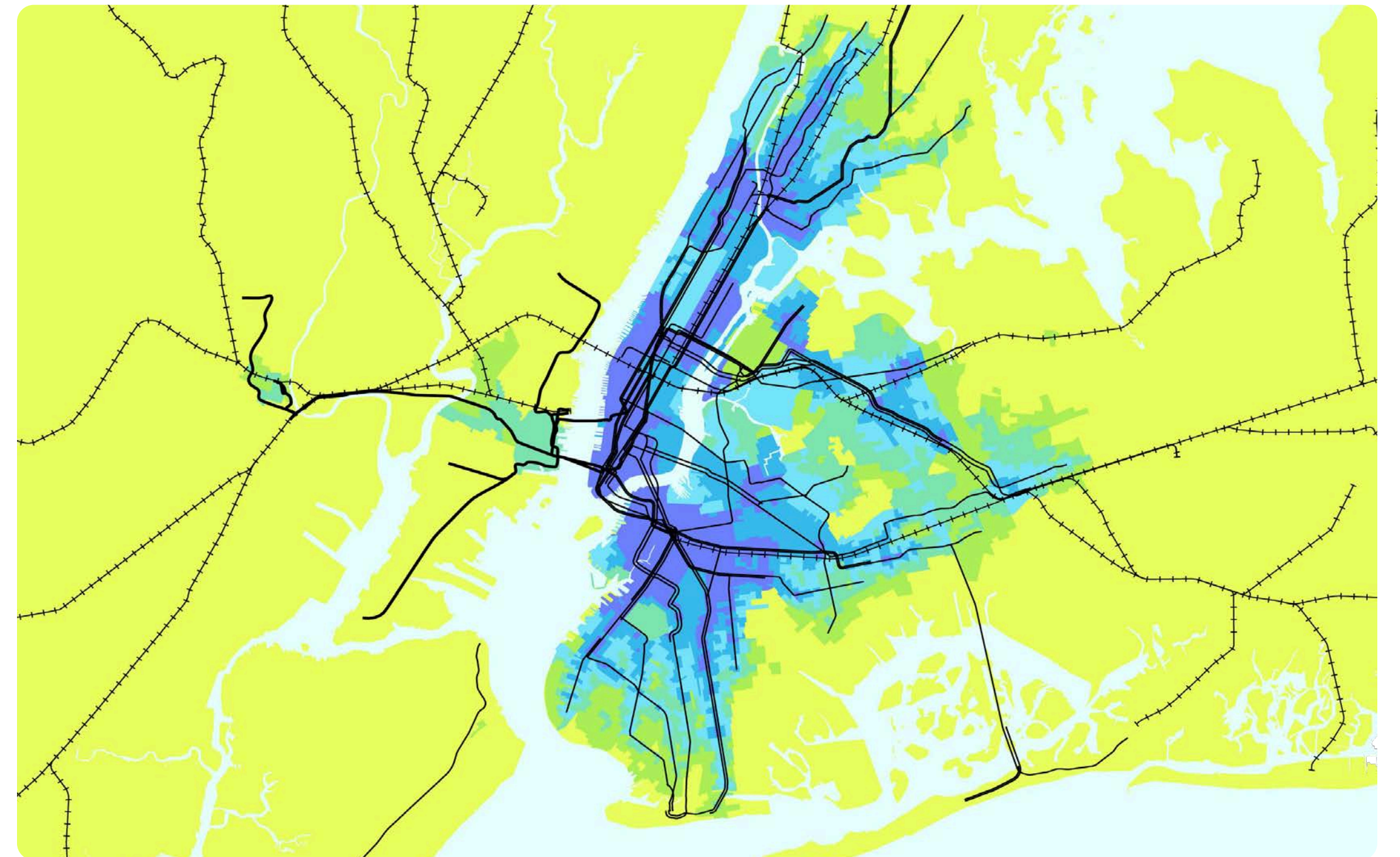


Jobs accessible in 60 minutes by public transit for \$5 or less, New York City region

★ Map Insight

Residents of the most transit-rich, and richest, neighborhoods in the region can reach over 2.5 million jobs in an hour by transit that costs under \$5, which includes the local subway, bus, ferry, and light rail.

- Map Key**
- 5M or more jobs
 - 2.5M-5M
 - 2M-2.5M
 - 1.5M-2M
 - 1M-1.5M
 - 500-1M
 - 0-500K jobs





"Between my jobs, appointments, and visiting family, I am constantly using trains and buses to get to where I need to be. Public transportation is often unreliable and takes a financial and mental toll on my life. Due to buses not showing up on time, I have been written up for being late to work multiple times. To avoid losing my job, I am sometimes forced to pay for Uber—between \$30 and \$40—to make it to work on time."

Benjie

New York City public transit rider

The commuter network makes fast connections from job centers to towns across the region. But fares can reach \$15 for trips within an hour of the city.

The commuter network prices out those with limited means—who can't afford other modes like ride-sharing or driving either.

Affordable fares, all day, on Long Island Rail Road, Metro North, and NJ Transit would greatly increase access for people with low incomes.

Some progress is underway: the MTA reduced off-peak commuter trips to \$5 in the city. Congestion pricing would fund more fare reductions on commuter rail trips. To lower fares universally, city and state governments can pay for constituents' fares directly or increase transit operations funding to agencies so that they can reduce fares without impacting their operations budget.

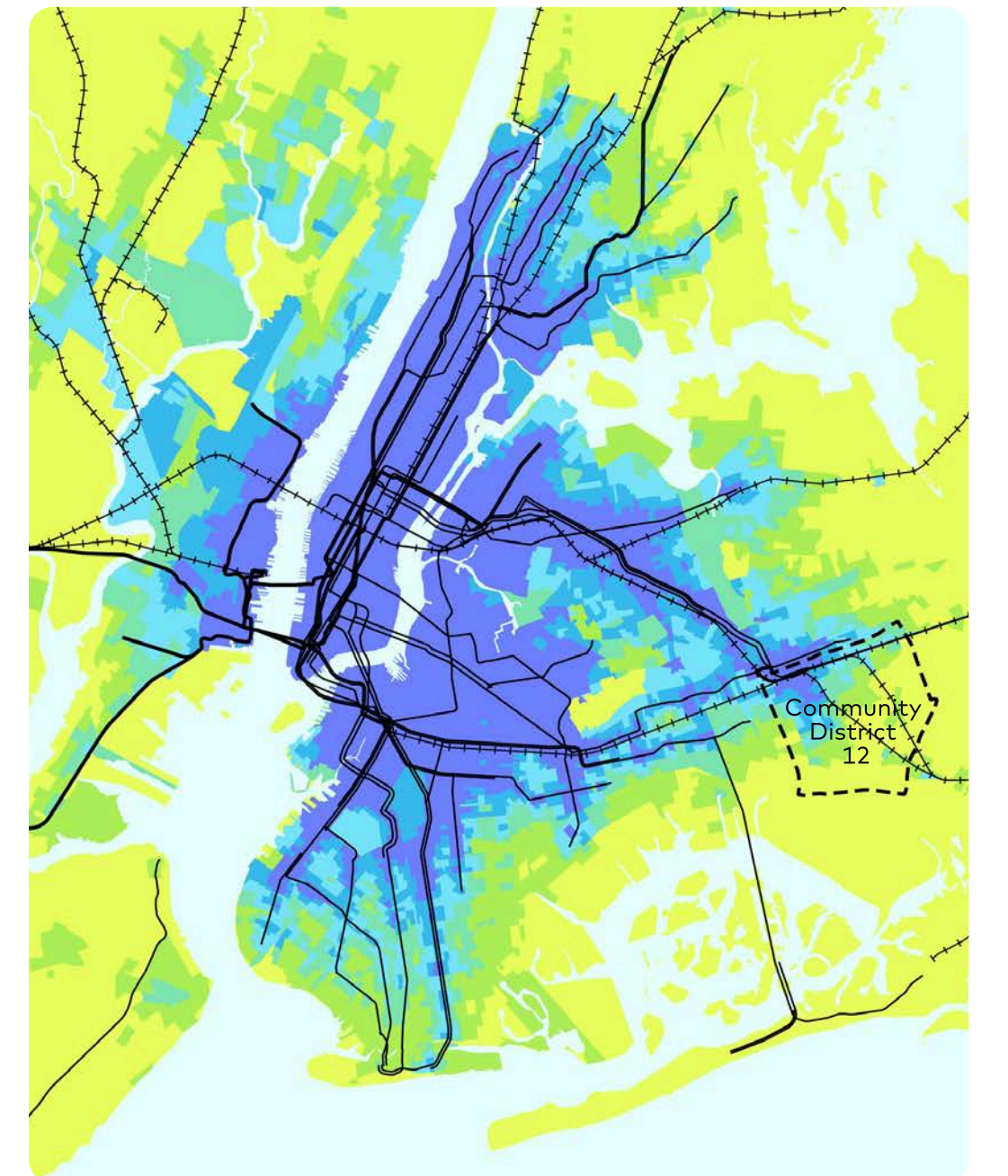
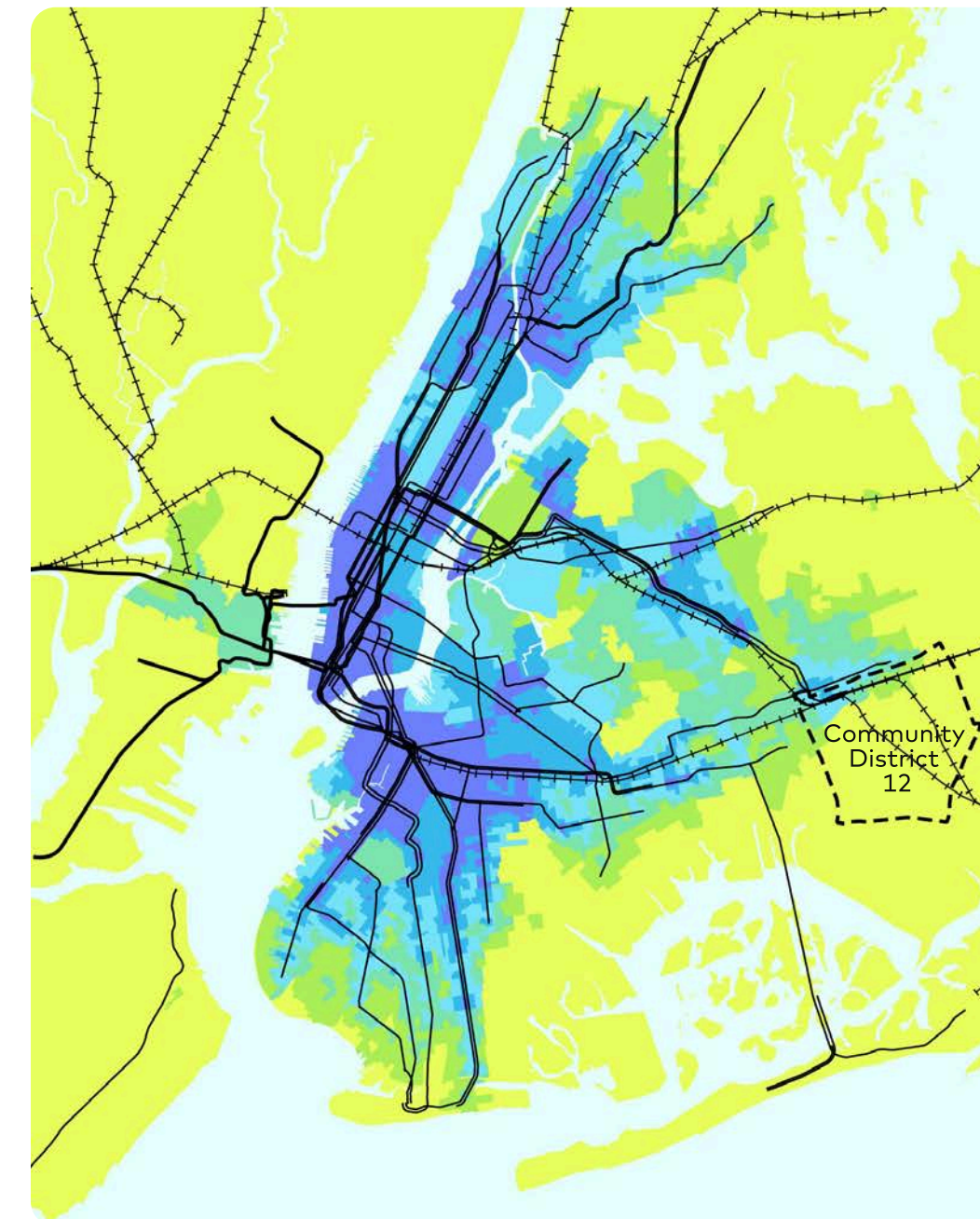
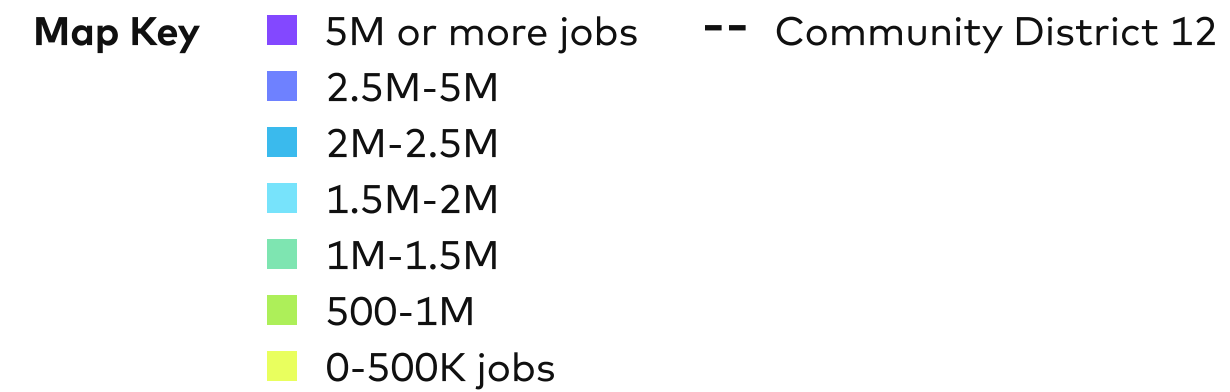


★ Map Insight

People spending \$5 or less on public transit trips can reach two-thirds the jobs that are accessible to people traveling without a budget, who can ride all public transit. Affordable access is even less in much of New Jersey, Queens, and the Bronx. Residents of Community District 12 in Southeast Queens can reach one-quarter the jobs by trips under \$5 versus taking all public transit.

Job access in 60 minutes, public transit trips \$5 or less

Job access in 60 minutes, all public transit trips



People who can afford the steep cost of owning and driving a car (at least \$2,000/month) have far better access than transit riders.

New York and New Jersey officials have prioritized expanding highways, maintaining traffic lanes, and subsidizing the cost of driving. This comes at the expense of improving public transit, even though driving is also more dangerous, polluting, and expensive. Governor Hochul’s decision to call off congestion pricing is the latest example of this destructive pattern.

All New Yorkers and New Jerseyans should have affordable, convenient access to what they need to thrive. With government investment, public transit can provide that access.

Our leaders must shift our public resources —road space and government funding— from cars to transit.



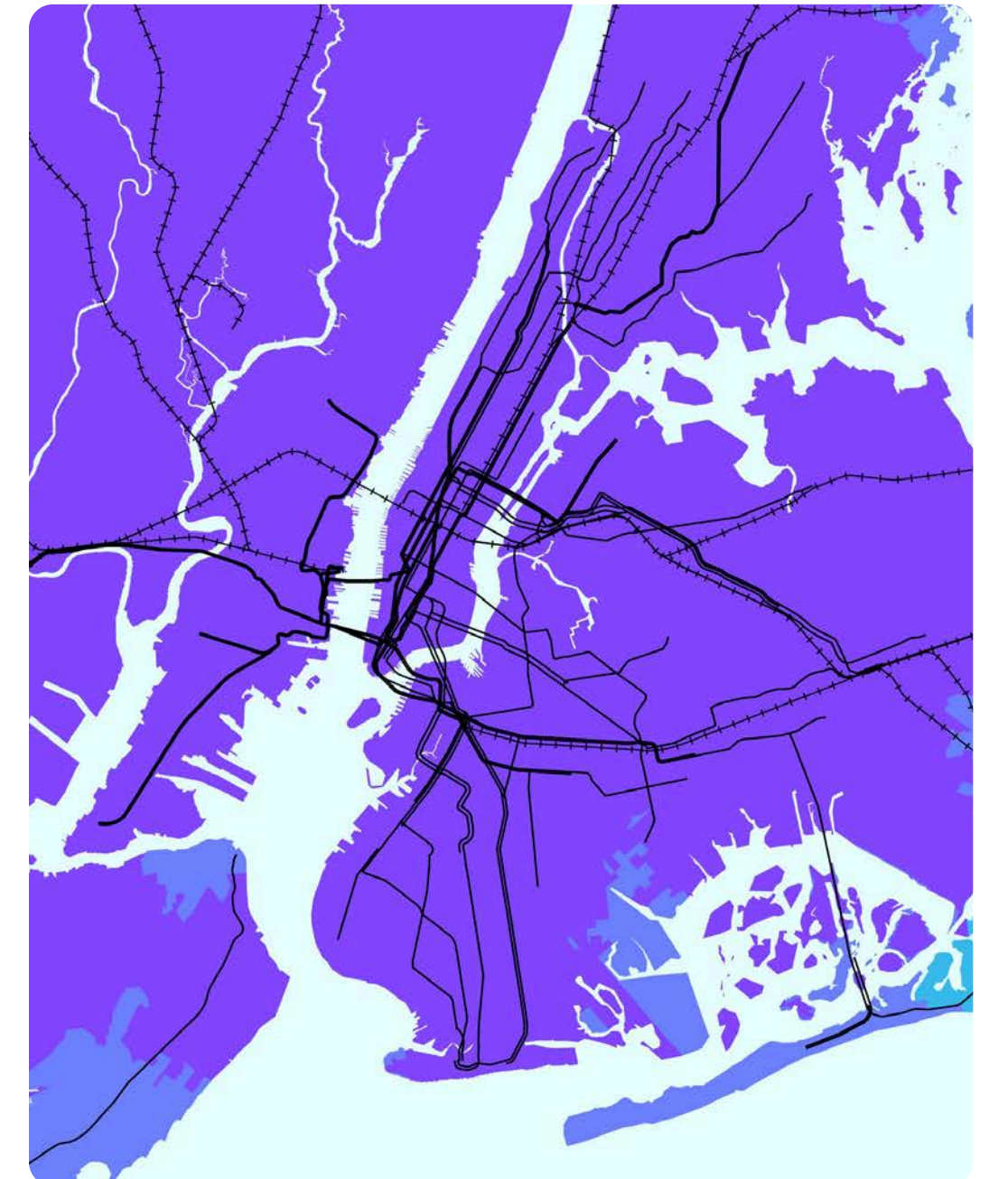
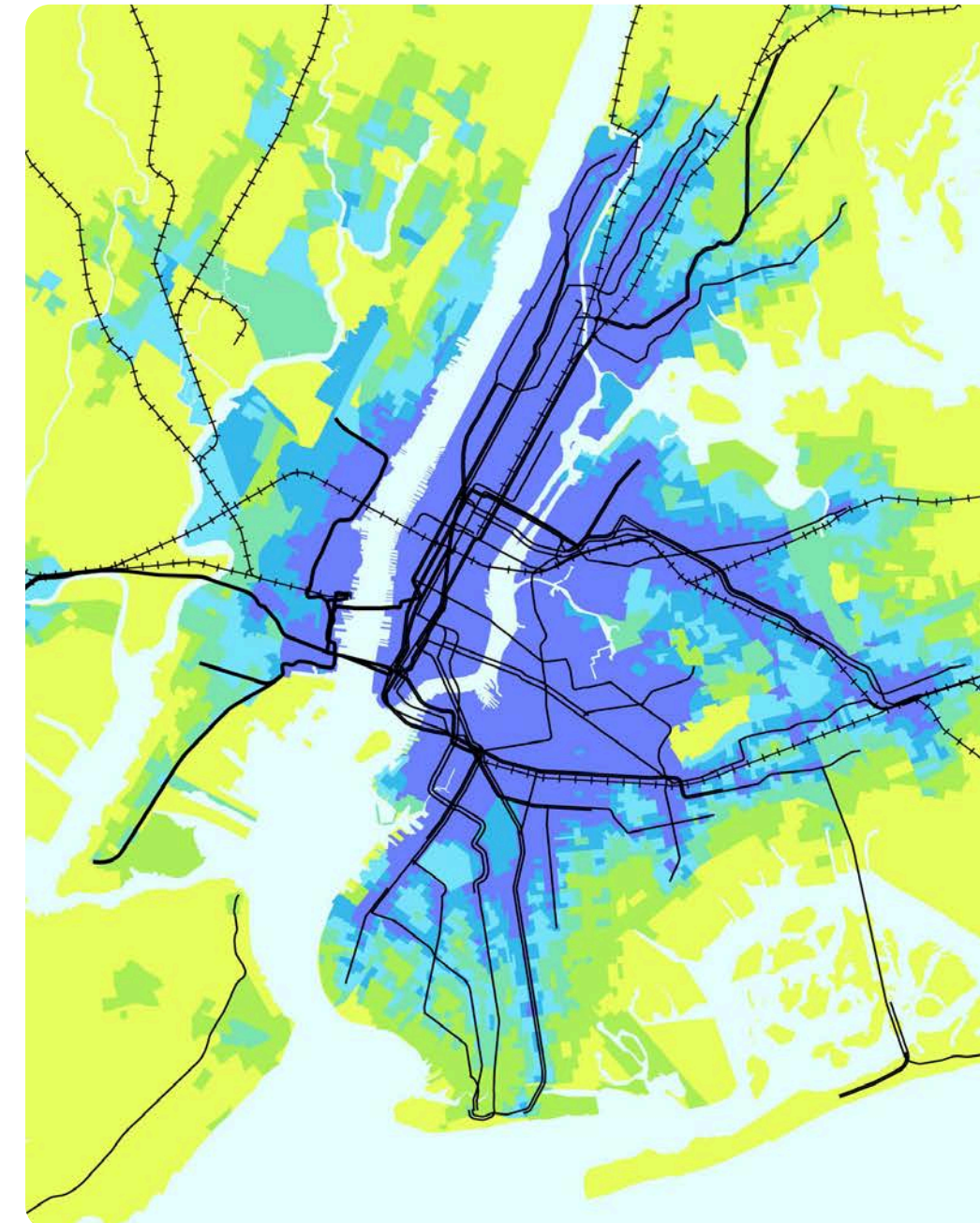
★ Map Insight

The average New York City resident can reach at least 3 times more jobs by driving than public transit. Outside the city, job access is more than 25 times higher for drivers than transit riders.

Job access in 60 minutes, all public transit trips

Job access in 60 minutes, driving (\$2,000+ a month)

- Map Key
- 5M or more jobs
 - 2.5M-5M
 - 2M-2.5M
 - 1.5M-2M
 - 1M-1.5M
 - 500-1M
 - 0-500K jobs



About this analysis

The access to opportunity data used in this analysis comes from TransitCenter's Transportation Equity Dashboard (TED). Data are based on changes to transit agency schedules and fare policy, where people live (data from 2017-2021 American Community Survey), where jobs are (data from 2021 LEHD), and where other essential places are (based on open-source geospatial data).

Because the TED access to opportunity data is based on transit schedules, it does not factor in reliability issues or on-time performance. Time periods are: weekday mornings from 7-9am; weekday evenings from 9-11pm; and Saturday mornings from 10-12am. The "region" described in this analysis is the Census-defined urbanized area.

Visit

To explore more access to opportunity data, visit the Transportation Equity Dashboard at www.dashboard.transitcenter.org. For more information on the methods used to generate the access to opportunity data, visit the TED About page.

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TransitCenter

TransitCenter is a foundation that works to secure a more just and sustainable future with abundant public transportation options. We recognize that our current transportation system is contributing to climate change, that transit systems poorly serve many of their riders, and that access to opportunity in the U.S. is deeply inequitable because of unjust, historical barriers based on race, gender, culture, and identity.

We believe that targeted research and effective grassroots advocacy can persuade leaders to make better choices that center both climate and justice outcomes in transportation. We make grants, conduct research, and coordinate a national network of local advocates to build a successful movement pushing for bold shifts in transportation funding and strategy.

For more information, please visit www.TransitCenter.org.

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