



Invest in Transit Services for Opportunity, Freedom, & Racial Justice

Ohio

**National Campaign for Transit Justice | Just Strategy
Clevelanders for Public Transit | MOVE Ohio
Better Bus Coalition | Sunrise Movement in Ohio**

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Introduction

Buses and trains mean mobility, opportunity, and freedom. For this reason, public transit historically has been at the center of civil rights efforts. One example is the Civil Rights Movement's victory over formal segregation of buses and trains. Yet the work of building equitable public transit is far from over, as evidenced by the persistent neglect of bus systems around the country.¹

For more than forty years, federal transportation funding has been out of balance, with only a small share going to public transit. This disinvestment has deprived Black Ohioans of the frequent, reliable, and accessible bus and train service they need to get to work and take care of other day-to-day needs. The result is lost job opportunities, setting back racial equity, depressing economic activity, and hurting the state as a whole.

Congress now has an opportunity to make a historic investment in public transit, including funding to put more buses on the road and more trains on track. With \$20 billion in annual transit services funding, Congress can help reduce wait times, increase bus and train frequency, expand service, promote racial justice, and tackle climate change.

The data in this report shows how this funding will boost transit service in nine Ohio metropolitan regions. It then shows the number of jobs this increased service will put within reach of residents of a West End neighborhood of Cincinnati where 94 percent of residents identify as Black² and where over 50 percent of workers walk or use public transportation for their work commutes.³

1. Inclusive Transit: Advancing Equity Through Improved Access & Opportunity, TransitCenter, July 17, 2018, <https://transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Inclusive-1-1.pdf>

2. American Community Survey Demographic and Housing Estimates Table, DP05, 2019: Five-Year Estimate for Hamilton County, Ohio, Census Tract 2. Figure is rounded and includes people who identify as Black alone or in combination with one or more other races.

3. American Community Survey Selected Economic Characteristics Table, DP03, 2019: Five-Year Estimate for Hamilton County, Ohio, Census Tract 2. Figure is rounded.



More transit service is a vehicle for racial equity

No matter where a person lives, or how much money they have, they should be able to count on safe, reliable, and accessible transit. Yet fewer than 10 percent of people in the U.S. now live within walking distance of transit that comes every 15 minutes or less.⁴

The disinvestment in frequent, reliable transit blocks economic opportunity for Black Ohioans. Nationally, 60 percent of all public transit riders nationally are people of color, and one quarter are Black.⁵ Black people across the country are more likely than whites to count on buses, trains, and other forms of public transit as their primary transportation option,⁶ and are more likely to use public transportation to get to work.⁷ People of color who take public transit to work are more likely than their white counterparts to have commutes that take 60 minutes or longer, one-way.⁸

According to TransitCenter data, 42 percent of Cincinnati residents are Black, while Black Cincinnatians represent 69 percent of riders.⁹ Similarly, in Cleveland, 49 percent of residents identify as Black, while Black Clevelanders account for 71 percent of riders.

When bus and subway service is unreliable or infrequent — or when service is cut — Black Ohioans bear the brunt and lose economic opportunity. For instance, a recent analysis of potential transit cuts in Cincinnati found that more than almost half of those losing access to frequent full-transit would be Black residents, and slightly more than half people of color and/or Latino.¹⁰ Furthermore, recent shifts in residency patterns have put jobs further out of geographic reach for residents of many neighborhoods where people of color are a majority of residents. This makes frequent, reliable transit service all the more important.

Conversely, investments in public transit contribute to Black and brown working people gaining an economic foothold.¹¹ And, through this transit ridership, Black Americans make a crucial contribution to cooling the planet. Policymakers can do their part by investing in making public transit reliable, frequent, safe, and accessible.

4. To Tackle the Climate Crisis and Racial Inequity, We Need to Run a Lot More Transit Service, TransitCenter, January 25, 2021, <https://transitcenter.org/we-need-federal-to-tackle-the-climate-crisis-we-need-support-for-transit-operations/>

5. Who Rides Public Transportation, American Public Transportation Association, January 2017, <https://www.apta.com/research-technical-resources/research-reports/who-rides-public-transportation/>

6. National Equity Atlas: Car Access, https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Car_access.

7. Monica Anderson, Who Relies on Public Transit in the U.S., Pew Research Center, April 7, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/07/who-relies-on-public-transit-in-the-u-s/>

8. Algernon Austin, To Move Is to Thrive, Demos, 2017, <https://www.demos.org/research/move-thrive-public-transit-and-economic-opportunity-people-color>

9. Figure is for workers, 16 and over, who are riders.

10. <https://transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/stranded.pdf>

11. Ibid.



A historic opportunity to invest in equitable transit services

Congress is now discussing proposals to fund a national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Transit is essential to this effort. Yet, for decades federal funding of transportation has been out of balance, with 80 percent of transportation funding going to highways and only 20 percent to public transit in cities, towns, and rural areas. Moreover, traditionally the federal government has funded capital projects – such as new subway or light rail systems -- without providing the funding that keeps buses and subways running.

The federal government now has the opportunity to invest not only in building new projects but also in the transit services that get people where they need to go. An annual investment of \$20 billion for operations could translate into large improvements in service – more frequent bus and train service, lower wait times, and more reliability.

This federal investment would spur service increases ranging from 33 to 105 percent across Ohio's major metropolitan regions (including Huntington, West Virginia), depending on the formula for distribution. As described in the methodological note, TransitCenter researchers modeled three different potential formulas for distributing the investment among urban regions. The table below shows the minimum and maximum amount each urban region would receive.



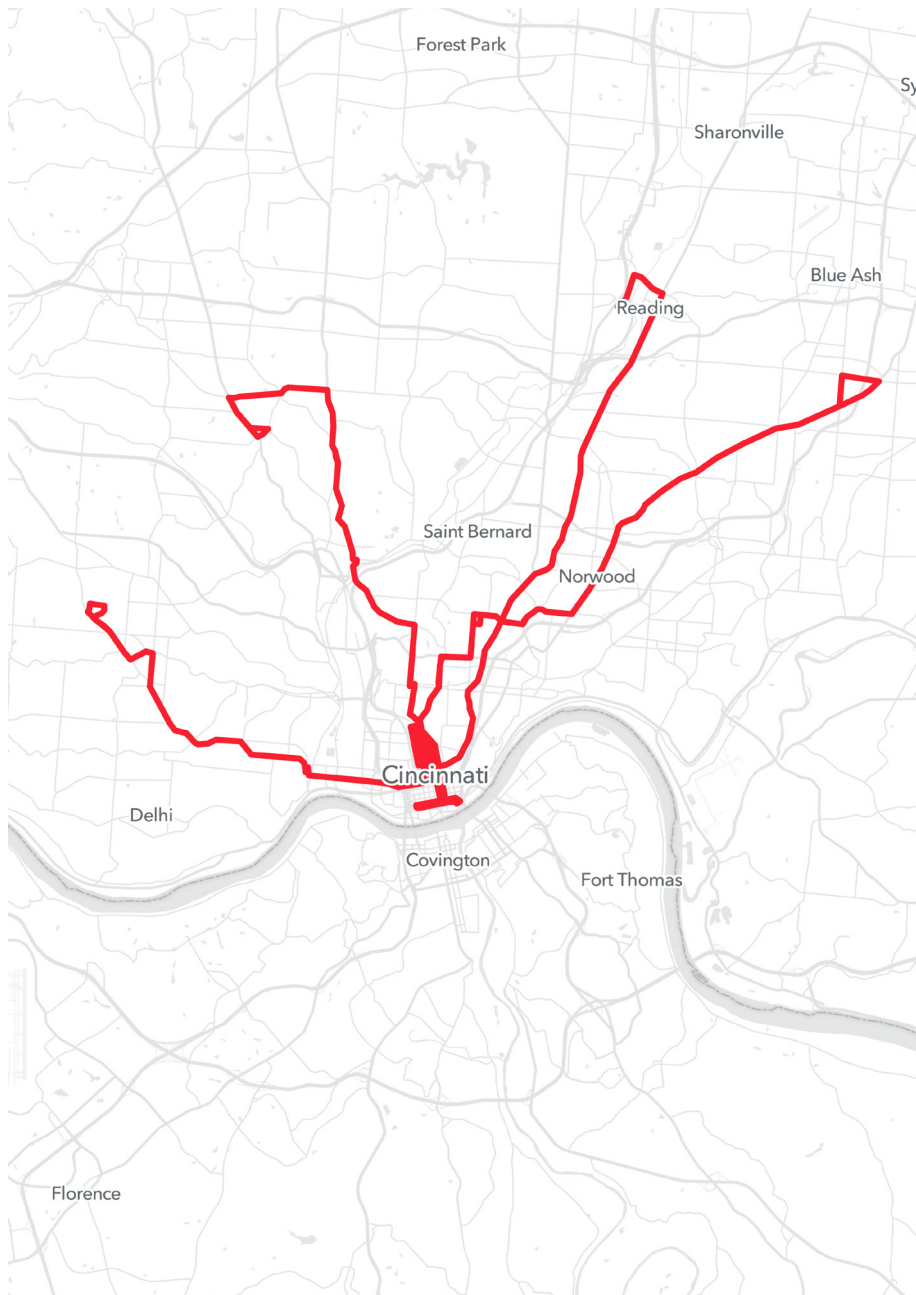
For example, depending on the formula, Cincinnati could see a minimum 44 percent increase or a maximum 51 percent increase. The modeled funding formula that delivers the maximum investment to Youngstown would mean a 99 percent increase in service. Notably, under any of these approaches to distribution, the \$20 billion investment would support significant increases in service across urban regions in Ohio.

Region	Operating Funds from New Program (Min)	Operating Funds from New Program (Max)	% Increase in Service Hours (Min)	% Increase in Service Hours (Max)
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	\$ 58,899,346	\$ 67,018,627	44%	51%
Cleveland, OH	\$ 87,734,703	\$ 97,341,751	33%	37%
Columbus, OH	\$ 58,195,126	\$ 62,179,254	37%	40%
Akron, OH	\$ 25,000,145	\$ 29,769,602	41%	49%
Canton, OH	\$ 10,799,121	\$ 14,769,856	50%	69%
Dayton, OH	\$ 41,825,613	\$ 59,443,625	54%	76%
Huntington, WV-KY-OH	\$ 5,325,177	\$ 8,381,415	66%	105%
Toledo, OH-MI	\$ 16,554,330	\$ 24,234,396	57%	83%
Youngstown, OH-PA	\$ 10,312,636	\$ 15,990,345	64%	99%

These before and after maps illustrate what a 51 percent increase in service could look like in Cincinnati (focusing on routes with all-day frequent service, as frequent service is the most important driver of increased access to opportunity):

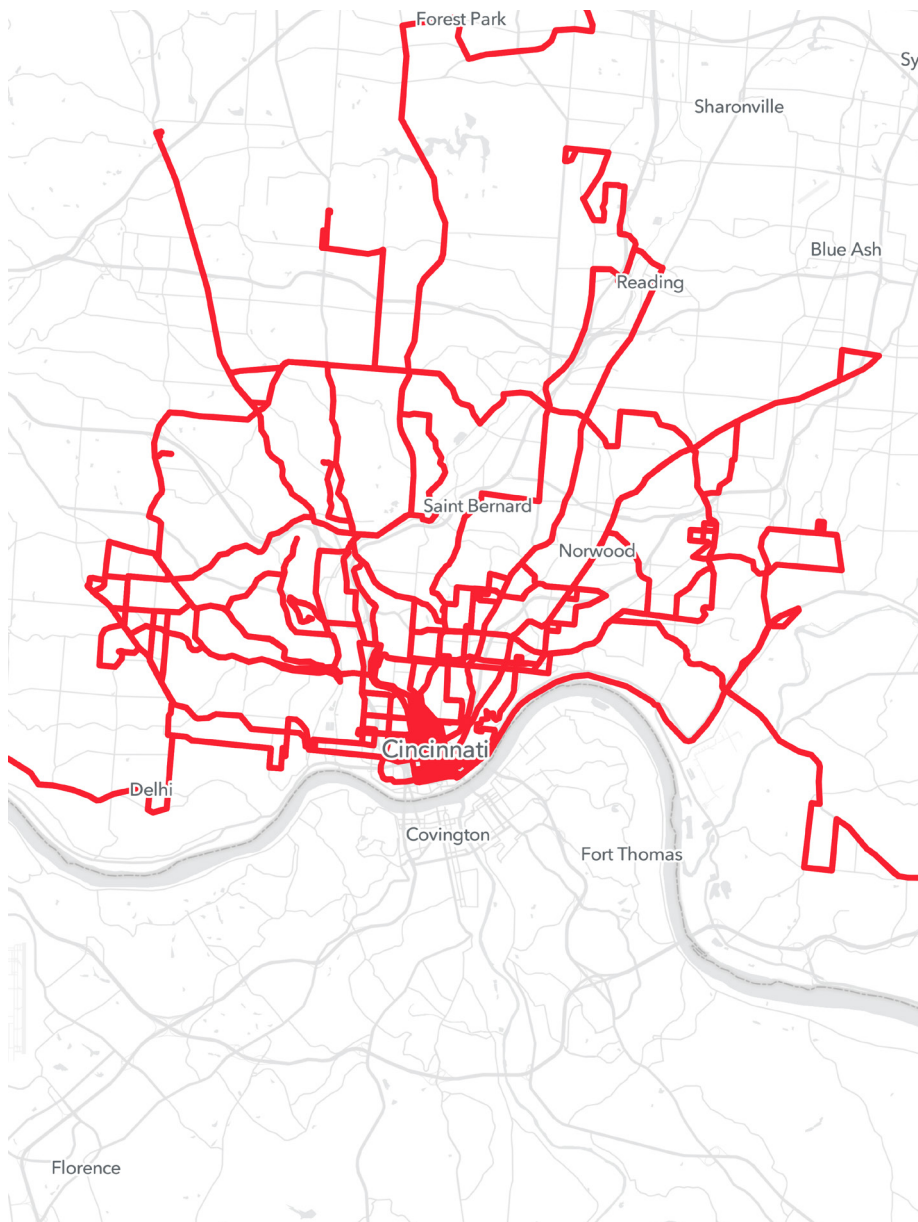
Before

This map shows the routes in Cincinnati that arrive every 15 minutes or less throughout the day.



After

If service is increased, frequent routes will have broader reach over the city.



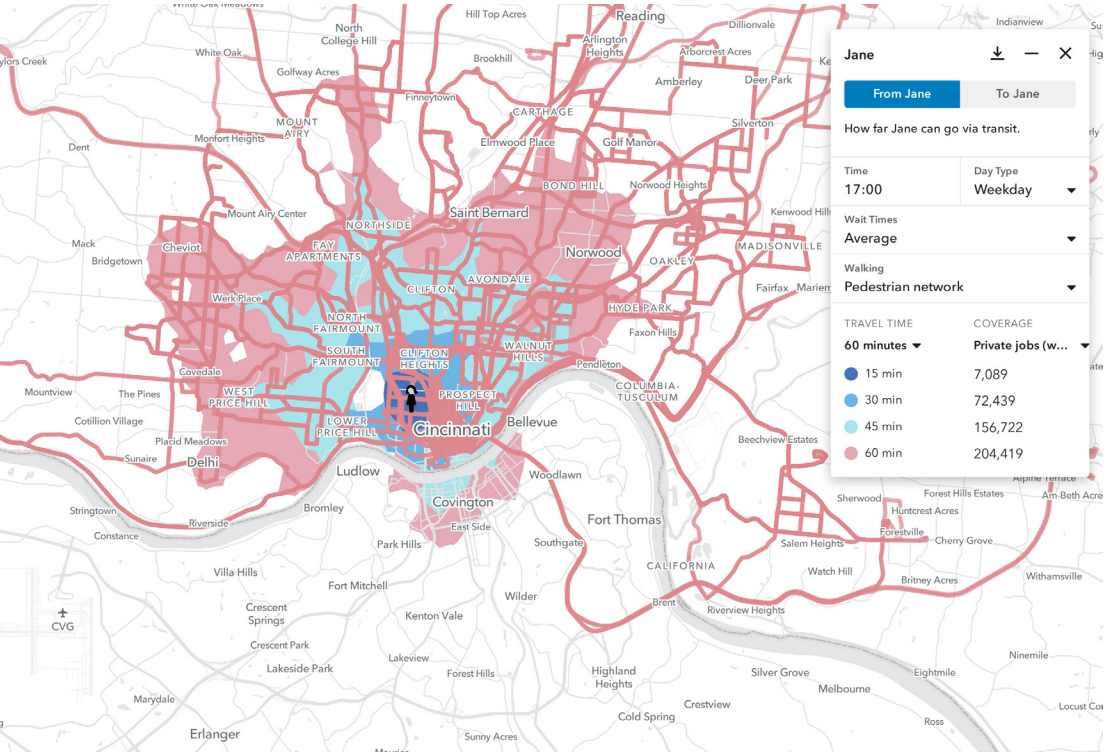


Investing in bus and train service will mean more jobs and opportunity for Black Ohioans

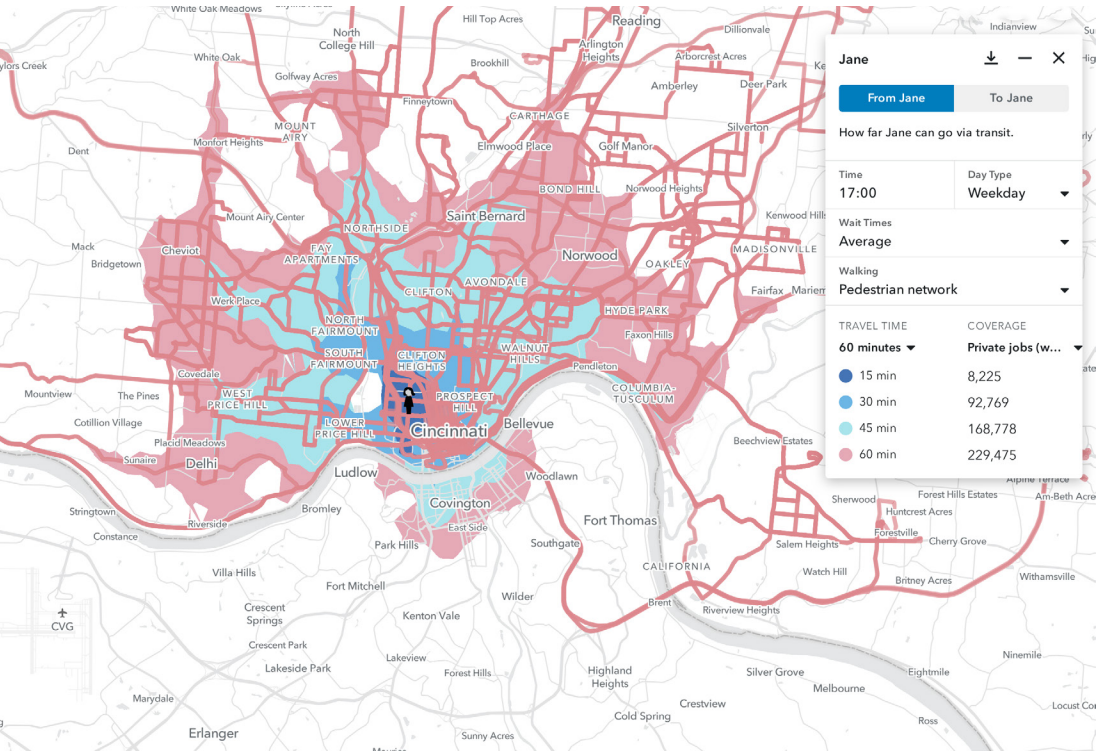
This increase in transit service would mean an increase in the number of jobs available to Black Ohioans. The following maps illustrate the impact from the perspective of a resident of a West End neighborhood of Cincinnati where 94 percent of residents identify as Black.

The first map shows that, today, an average resident of this West End neighborhood can reach 72,439 jobs within 30 minutes on public transit. The second map shows the difference that a 51 percent increase in transit service would make. With that service increase, an average resident of this Cincinnati West End neighborhood could reach 92,769 jobs within 30 minutes on transit.

Current



With a 51 Percent Increase in Service





Conclusion

Access to frequent, safe, reliable, and accessible public transit is a matter of civil rights. This year, Congress has the opportunity to make public transit work better for Ohioans of all races, particularly Black Ohioans, and nationwide by investing in more frequent transit service and reduced wait times. This investment will be an investment in economic opportunity, racial equity, and a cooler climate.

Methodology

The service increase data was produced by the TransitCenter modeling three scenarios for distributing \$17.8 billion in operating support to urban areas. The first scales up Urbanized Area Formula Funding Section (Section 5307) as it was distributed in regular FY20 appropriations. A second formula is based 50 percent on the 5307 program and 50 percent on the cost of operating transit in 2018. A third formula scales up the section 5307 program but reapportions it so that 65 percent of the funding goes to urban areas with populations of 1 million, 21 percent goes to urban areas with populations of 200,000-1 million, and 14 percent goes to urban areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 people. The remaining \$2.2 billion is assumed to be dedicated to transit in rural areas.

The jobs reach data was produced by the TransitCenter and Remix. An explanation of the methodology is available at the link in this footnote.¹²

12. https://transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Transit_Center_Methodology-.pdf