



A PORTRAIT OF
NEW YORK CITY 2018
 WELL-BEING IN THE FIVE BOROUGHS AND THE GREATER METRO AREA



TRANSPORTATION IN NEW YORK CITY TODAY

Consider this fact: White workers have the shortest commutes on average, followed by Latino, Asian, and black workers.

Transportation is a human development issue because affordable, accessible, and dependable transportation expands the opportunities people have to access jobs, health and education services, and recreation without eating up what are often their scarcest, most valuable resources—time and money. Quality transportation, in short, gives people freedom.

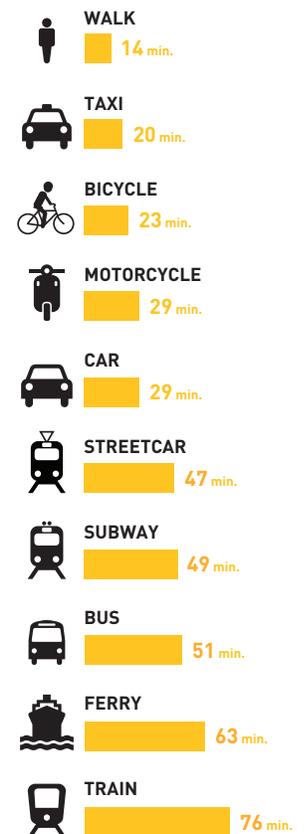
Residential segregation is fundamentally reflected in the metro area transportation system. Communities with low scores on the American Human Development Index are ill-served by public transportation. Communities that abut heavily trafficked roads like the Cross Bronx Expressway, which generate health-harming particulate matter and other pollutants, are disproportionately home to low-income people of color. The principle underlying environmental justice is that everyone, not just those who enjoy a privileged position in society, deserves protection from environmental toxins. Moreover, people of color, people working in the service industry, and residents of areas that score poorly on the American Human Development Index are most likely to be at the mercy of a transportation system that fails to meet their needs but from which they cannot afford to exit.

Black and Latino residents are more likely than white residents to live in geographically isolated pockets of the metro area, far from the reach of the subway or train lines, and because these groups are disproportionately low income, they are less likely to own cars. Furthermore, white workers are the most likely to walk to work in the city but are the least likely to do so outside the city, where Latinos are the most likely. Walking to work outside the city is more likely to be a necessity for those without cars or access to public transportation.

STRIKING FINDINGS IN TRANSPORTATION FROM A PORTRAIT OF NEW YORK CITY

DELAYS: The New York City subway system has the “worst on-time performance of any major rapid transit system in the world.” New York also ranks third on a recent list of 100 major global metro areas for the number of peak hours the average car commuter spent in traffic congestion in 2017 at ninety-one hours. The Cross Bronx Expressway has the dubious distinction of being the country’s worst traffic corridor, with the “average driver on the 4.7 mile stretch wasting 118 hours per year in congestion, an increase of 37% over [2016].”

Metro Area Commute Times by Mode of Transportation



UNEVEN ACCESS: According to the Regional Plan Association, less than two-thirds of the city’s population lives within walking distance of a subway station. Many neighborhoods with poor access to subway lines have high population density and have low-income residents who rely heavily on public transportation to get to work, including the Bronx in the southeast and along the Third Avenue corridor, East Harlem and the Lower East Side in Manhattan, central and northeastern Queens, and southeastern Brooklyn.

OCCUPATION AND THE TRAIN: Workers in management, business, science, and the arts are the most likely to take the train and the least likely to take the bus. Over 80 percent of train commuters work in management or sales and office occupations. Though train commutes are longest on average, they are also the most comfortable, comparatively quiet, and more reliable than other types, and many commuters use their train time to work or read.

PROXIMITY: Workers who live in counties outside the five boroughs but work in the city have the longest commutes; city residents who commute to work across borough lines have the second- longest average travel times, a consequence of the Manhattan-centric design of the subway system and the tremendous traffic congestion across the city.

DIFFERENCES BY RACE: Outside of NYC, of those commuting within their own county by bus, a whopping 77 percent are black or Latino, and 46 percent are black or Latino blue-collar workers more specifically.

Commuting to and from NYC by Race and Ethnicity

	ALL METRO AREA COMMUTERS (%)	ASIAN COMMUTERS (%)	BLACK COMMUTERS (%)	LATINO COMMUTERS (%)	WHITE COMMUTERS (%)
WHERE					
Lives and works outside NYC	54	37	39	50	65
Lives and works in NYC	34	46	49	41	23
Commutes into NYC	9	12	8	6	10
Commutes out of NYC	3	5	4	3	2
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100
HOW MUCH TIME					
Average commute time (mins)	35	39	40	35	33

POLICY LEVERS FOR CHANGE

INVESTMENT: Decades of disinvestment and mismanagement, long-term neglect of maintenance, and the lingering effects of Hurricane Sandy in 2012 have together created a system characterized by inequitable access and quality and a disconnect between those who benefit from different types of transportation and those who pay the costs.

Click [here](#) to read *A Portrait of New York City 2018*. For more information, visit www.measureofamerica.org.