

MISSED OPPORTUNITY:
TRANSIT AND JOBS IN METRO
AMERICA
A REPORT BY THE
BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

August 19, 2011

Brookings Report

- Analysis of 371 transit providers in the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas.
- Combines transit alignments/schedules, household income and employment to determine transit accessibility of jobs.

Three Accessibility Metrics

- Coverage
 - ▣ The share of working age residents living in block groups served by transit
- Service Frequency
 - ▣ Median headway for morning rush hour (6-9 AM) transit service
- Job Access
 - ▣ The share of metropolitan jobs that the typical working-age resident can reach within 90 minutes using transit

Major Findings at National Level

- Nearly 70 percent of residents in large metro areas live in neighborhoods with access to transit service.
- In neighborhoods served by transit, morning rush hour service frequency is every 10 minutes.
- **Only about 1/4 of jobs in low and middle-skill industries are accessible via transit, compared to 1/3 of jobs in high skill industries.**

And locally...

- Cleveland metro area performed better than the average for service frequency, and near the average for coverage and job accessibility:
 - ▣ Coverage – 46 of 100 metro areas
 - ▣ Service frequency – 22 of 100 metro areas
 - ▣ Job accessibility – 51 of 100 metro areas

Cleveland: Middle of the Pack

Metro Area	Coverage (%)	Service Frequency (min)	Job Access (%)	Combined Access Ranking
Salt Lake City, UT	89.0	8.5	58.9	3
Milwaukee, WI	67.4	6.4	48.6	14
Buffalo, NY	77.7	14.0	33.1	21
Dayton, OH	67.0	12.9	34.5	27
Baltimore, MD	68.3	7.7	30.2	36
Cleveland, OH	66.2	9.5	29.5	41
Chicago, IL	78.8	7.2	23.9	46
Akron, OH	65.1	19.2	24.7	58
St. Louis, MO	56.6	11.2	24.1	68
Cincinnati, OH	48.0	11.4	27.8	71
Orlando, FL	60.1	14.5	15.8	83
Nashville, TN	32.2	15.7	27.4	88

Cleveland: Middle of the Pack

- Western Metro Areas (Salt Lake, Denver, Seattle) did best
- Southern Metro Areas (Nashville, Atlanta, Chattanooga) did worst
- Key factor-distribution of jobs

Coverage

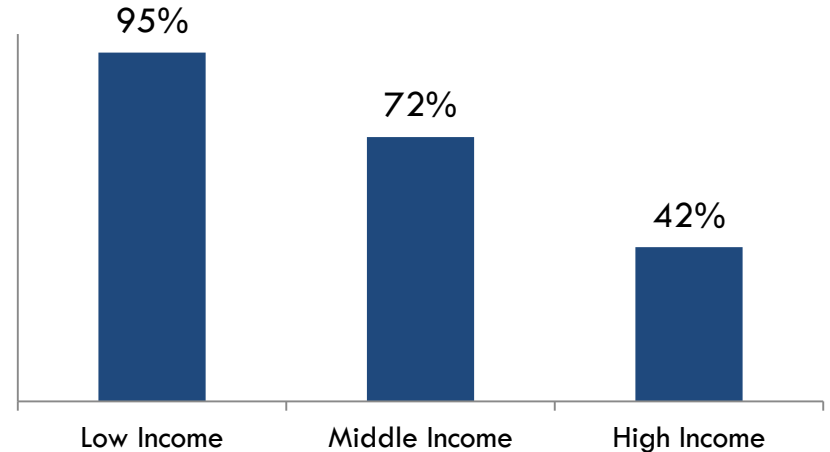


66%
Coverage

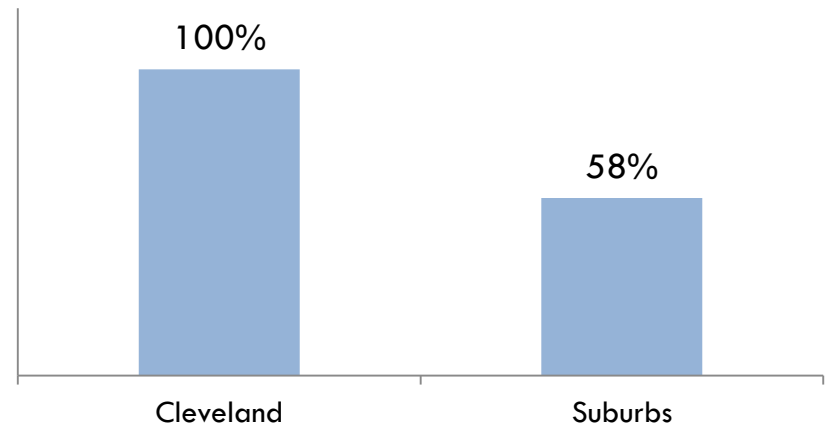
Share of working-age
residents near a transit stop

100 Metro Average: 69%

Coverage by Income



Coverage by Location



Service Frequency

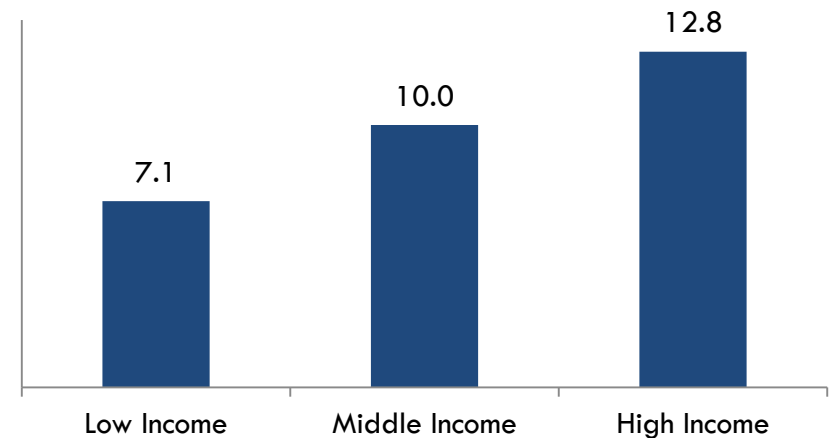


9.5
Service Frequency

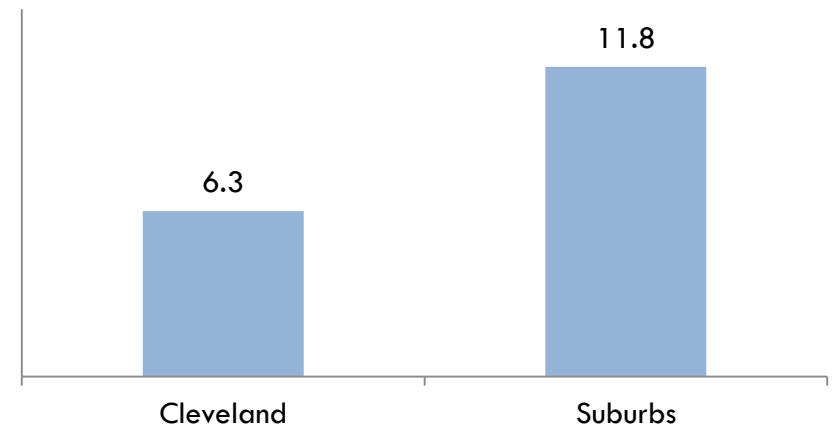
Median wait (minutes) for
any rush hour transit vehicle

100 Metro Average: 10.1

Frequency by Income



Frequency by Location



Job Accessibility

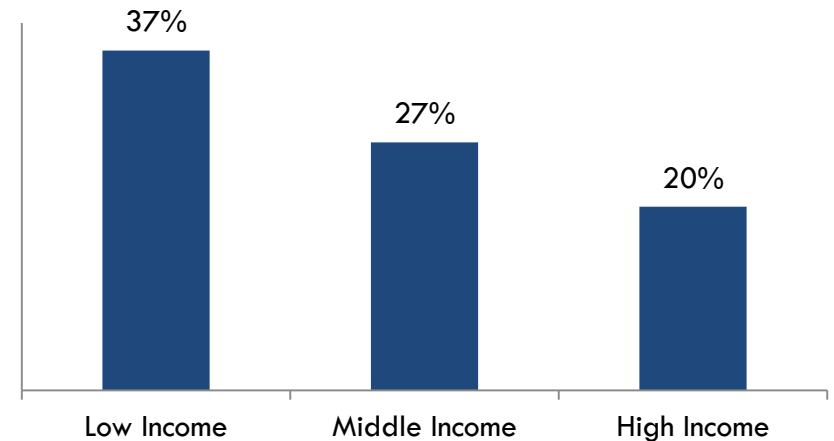


29%
Job Access

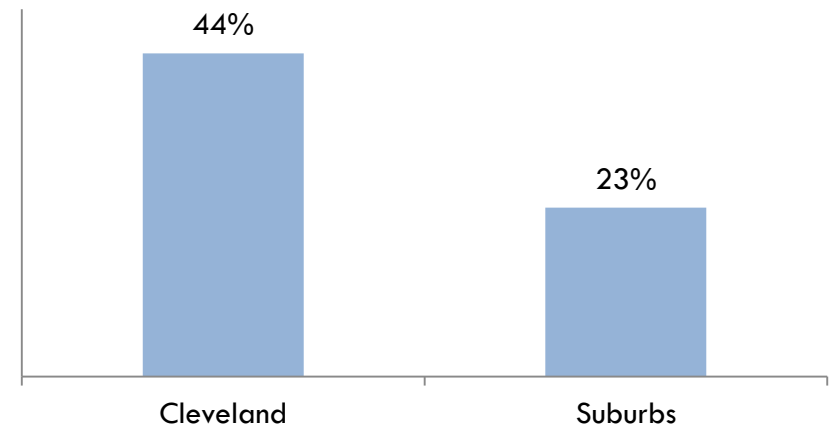
Share of all jobs reachable
via transit in 90 minutes

100 Metro Average: 30%

Job Access by Income



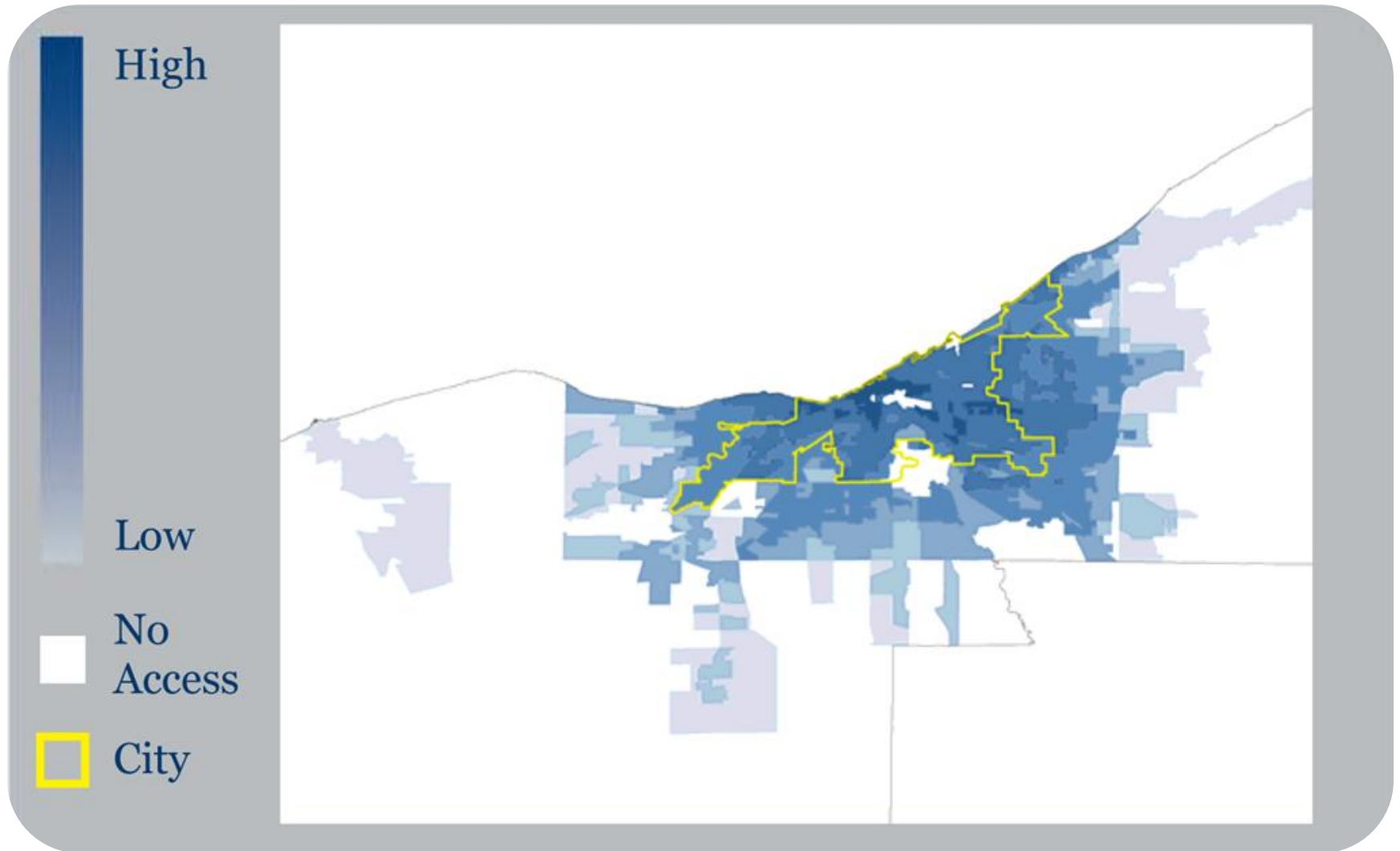
Job Access by Location



Problem may be worse than it appears

- Brookings used 90 minutes as its commute-time threshold.
- Share of jobs that are accessible by transit falls sharply when using a 45 or 60 minute threshold:
 - ▣ 90 minutes: 29.9% of jobs
 - ▣ 60 minutes: 13.3% of jobs
 - ▣ 45 minutes: 6.5% of jobs
- Average commute time in Cleveland metro area is 26.2 minutes. Only 1.6% of commutes exceed 90 minutes.

Job Accessibility



Report Recommendations

- **Brookings:** “Transportation leaders should make access to jobs an explicit priority in their spending and service decisions, especially given the budgetary issues they face.”
- **2010-2020 Strategic Plan:**



Recommit

STRATEGIC PLAN VISION: RTA WILL BE THE PREFERRED MODE OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE CLEVELAND AREA

RTA aims to be the first choice for regional transportation and a one-stop source for integrated transportation information in the region, through changes in decisions regarding transportation priorities, land use and development decisions.

RTA will continue to put customer needs first. RTA's motto is "Quality Service: Every Customer, Every Day." RTA has put this motto into practice with success, and this success culminated in RTA being named APJA's Best Large Transit System of the Year in 2007.

RTA will focus on ensuring access to employment and educational opportunities for residents throughout the region. RTA's most important role in the community is to provide transportation services that maximize residents' access to employment and educational opportunities throughout the region. RTA's capital investment and service allocation decisions will be made in light of the need to promote employment and workforce development in Northeastern Ohio.

RTA will support regional approaches to transportation and land use planning that reinforce investment in existing employment and population centers, infrastructure and services: Downtown Cleveland, the Euclid Corridor and University Circle are the primary employment, medical and entertainment centers of our county and our region. Maintaining and renewing these and other existing residential and employment nodes are critical to the economic and environmental health of our entire region, particularly for Cleveland's neighborhoods and inner suburbs.

RTA will provide services cost effectively. RTA's services are funded by a combination of local sales tax revenues, passenger fares, State and Federal grants. Taxpayers have a right to expect that RTA's services will be provided in a cost-effective way. State and Federal funding levels have steadily fallen and have become more restrictive, while local sales tax revenues rise and fall with changing economic conditions. RTA will seek to provide appropriate levels and types of services for various markets within its service area, while continuing to seek cost savings as well as additional funding at the State and Federal levels, and grants from non-traditional sources to support services and capital improvements.

RTA will improve services to suburban employment centers. RTA will take steps to connect workers in many large and growing suburban employment areas of the region, through the use of innovative technologies, service options and funding mechanisms to provide alternatives or supplements to its feed-route transit network.

RTA will provide special transportation service support to those who need it most. RTA's bus, rail and paratransit network is the primary form of transportation for thousands of the Cleveland area's most vulnerable citizens - lower-income people, people with disabilities, students

and senior citizens. RTA will continue its commitment to providing high-quality transit services to provide mobility and dignity to all the citizens of its service area.

RTA will provide services at a sustainable level given its financial resources. RTA's services are funded by a combination of local sales tax revenues, passenger fares, State and Federal grants, along with other sources. State and Federal funding levels have steadily fallen and have become more restrictive, while local sales tax revenues rise and fall with changing economic conditions. RTA will seek to provide appropriate levels and types of services for various markets within its service area, while continuing to seek additional funding at the State and Federal levels, and grants from non-traditional sources to support services and capital improvements.

RTA will increase its contribution to maintaining our natural environment. Transportation is an inherently environmentally friendly mode of travel because of its ability to move more efficiently and with far less environmental impact than the private automobile. Transit reduces America's dependence on foreign oil, providing mobility in the face of unpredictable fuel prices, and reduces emissions. RTA is committed to the principles of environmental sustainability and has made sustainability an organizational goal.

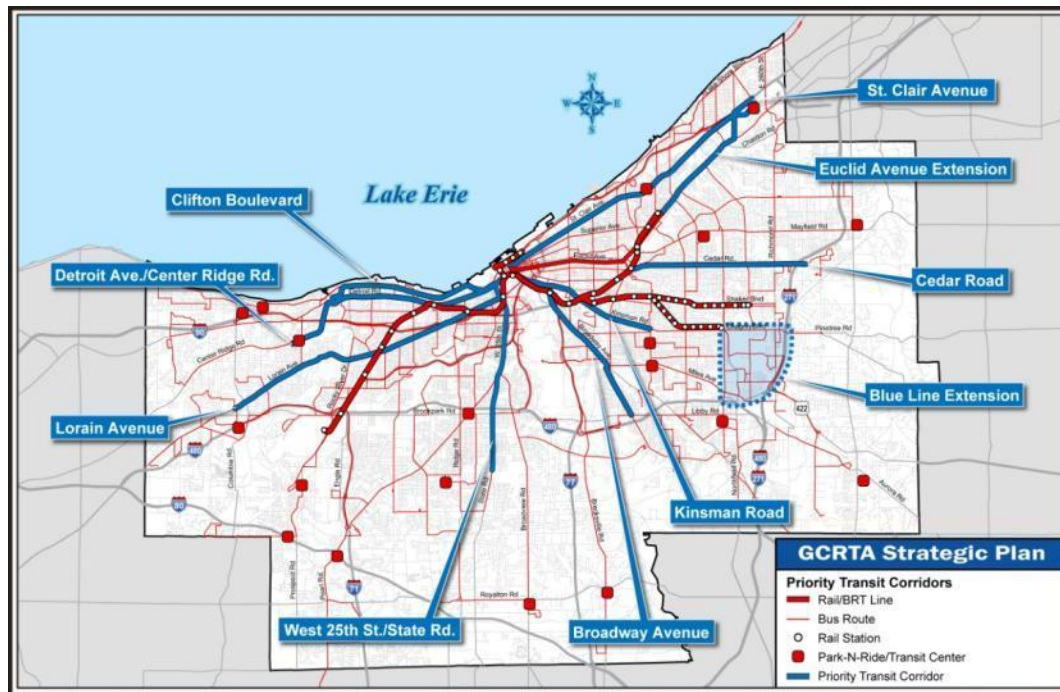
GOAL: RTA will focus on ensuring access to employment and educational opportunities for residents throughout the region.

RTA's most important role in the community is to provide transportation services that maximize residents' access to employment and educational opportunities throughout the region.



Report Recommendations

- **Brookings:** “Metro leaders should coordinate strategies regarding land use, economic development, and housing with transit decisions in order to ensure that transit reaches more people and more jobs efficiently.”

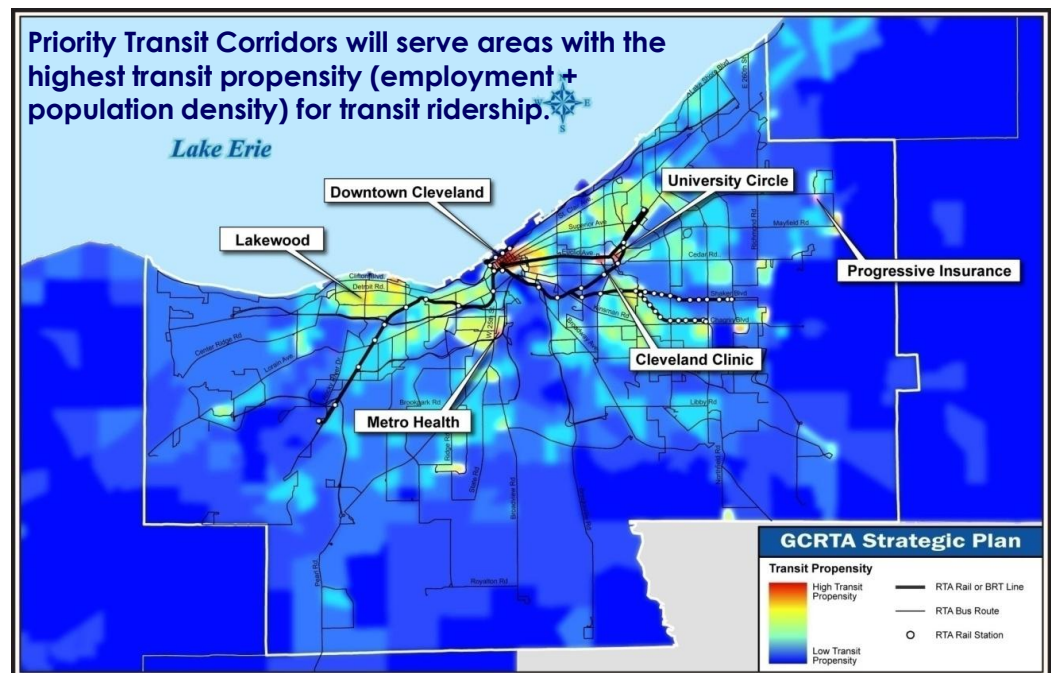


RTA has identified priority corridors including its existing rail and BRT lines and major transit corridors. RTA's commitment to these corridors will make them prime locations for new development and demonstrate RTA's commitment to providing high quality transit service.

Report Recommendations

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The Strategic Plan recommends Van Pools, to be operated in cooperation between employers, local communities, and RTA, to serve employers in remote areas of the county.



Report Recommendations

- **Brookings:** “Federal officials should collect and disseminate standardized transit data to enable public, private, and non-profit actors to make more informed decisions and ultimately maximized the benefits of transit for labor markets.”
- Strategic Plan report made specific recommendations for RTA’s transit data collection processes

Suburbanization of Poverty

- Both low income people and jobs have suburbanized over time, but poor suburban residents are less likely to live in a jobs-rich area than their higher-income counterparts.
- Future efficacy of transit systems will depend on ability to reach growing segment of low-income suburban commuters.

Employment Distribution

- The jobs access measure better reflects where jobs are within metro areas than the extent of transit coverage.
- Spatial distribution of different types of industries within a region affects the kinds of jobs residents can reach via transit.
 - ▣ In the Midwest, 34% of high-skill industry jobs are accessible by transit, but only 23% of low and middle-skill industry jobs are accessible by transit.

Employment Distribution



Closing Argument

- Transit on its own does not dictate access. Land use patterns, where people choose to live, and where jobs are located, also determine how well transit can efficiently and effectively serve jobs.
- GCRTA's Strategic Plan provides Northeastern Ohio with a framework for future development that would place more people AND jobs within areas easy to serve with transit.

Where Do We Go From Here?

- GCRTA's Strategic Plan recommends...
 - Directing future development to transit supportive corridors.
 - Promoting transit-oriented development everywhere, but especially around existing and proposed high capacity transit.
 - Integrating the region's transit systems across county lines and extending transit into counties with no service.
 - Educating employers about the transportation impacts of their workplace location decisions.

Thank You

- **Contact Information**

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