



Transit Watch: Public Transit in Crisis



October 2, 2020

Friends,

A recent TransitCenter report, “Stranded by Transit Cuts,” demonstrates how a lack of federal funding could cause more than three million households and 1.4 million workplaces to lose their access to life-sustaining public transportation. The study also reveals that Black, brown and low-income city residents will be most affected as agencies across the U.S. are warning of service cuts as deep as 40%.

[Transit Center Report: Three Million People Could Lose Transit Access Soon](#)

In early spring, COVID-19 shuttered offices, schools, and the economy. Across America, people locked down. But public transportation systems kept going, with bus and rail operators facing the risks of the virus in order to help millions of people get to work in essential industries like healthcare, and meet essential needs like grocery shopping.

Along with other essential services, public transit kept communities going through the pandemic. But the pandemic has eroded the revenue streams that pay for transit. Fare revenue is down sharply, due to lower ridership and the decisions by many agencies to stop collecting fares as a safety measure. Taxes on retail sales and other goods are coming in below forecast. Local and state budgets face almost unprecedented stress.

In many cities, transit is now at a financial breaking point, even as the coronavirus rages on. Transit agencies have asked for \$32 billion in federal relief funding. Without it, transit leaders in places like Denver and New York have warned that they may need to cut service by 40%. What would cuts of these magnitude mean? To find out, TransitCenter and the Center for Neighborhood Technology modeled the effect of service cuts in nine regions, using AllTransit - an analysis tool that combines Census and public transit data. They modeled a 50% service cut to peak service and a 30% cut to off-peak service, reflecting the likelihood that cuts would attempt to preserve some full-day service.

The modeling suggests that the impacts would be deep and profound. In the 10 regions they modeled alone, which includes Los Angeles, more than 3 million households and 1.4 million jobs would lose access to frequent transit. Black and Hispanic residents would be hardest-hit. Second- and third-shift workers would lose an affordable way to commute, and households without vehicles would have an even harder time meeting everyday needs. Transportation cuts would take out the legs from under cities engaged in a life-or-death struggle with the virus.

[Read the full report](#), including additional [information about the severe impacts that a lack of transit funding will have on the Los Angeles region](#).

For more information, please contact the California Transit Association at COVID-19@caltransit.org.