

Los Angeles



From Lancaster to Long Beach, West Covina to Santa Monica, all Angelenos deserve reliable, affordable access to the places they need to go.

Public transit already provides many LA residents reasonably good access to jobs, healthcare, supermarkets, and other daily essentials.

Both civic leadership and public support for public transit in LA are gaining momentum. LA Metro is strategically expanding its network and making service more equitable. In 2024, Los Angeles residents voted to require the City of Los Angeles to build bus lanes, bike lanes, and other infrastructure to make it easier not to drive.

Still, drivers have dramatically better access than transit riders, an imbalance that can only be ameliorated with seismic changes to funding and planning.



40
minute trip home

35
minute commute

20
minute trip from the supermarket

During the first few years of COVID-19, job access by public transit for LA County residents fluctuated as LA Metro responded to operational challenges—including a major bus operator shortfall—by reducing scheduled service and canceling trips in large numbers.

LA Metro has stabilized its workforce, in part by raising operators' wages. As a result, since mid-2022,...

...LA County residents have had slightly higher access by transit than they did before the pandemic.

Compared to the average, access by transit has improved more, and is higher, for people of color and people with low incomes. These groups also ride transit more. This equitable shift is thanks to LA Metro's Equity Platform, which targets resources to improve access to opportunity by transit for those with the greatest mobility need.



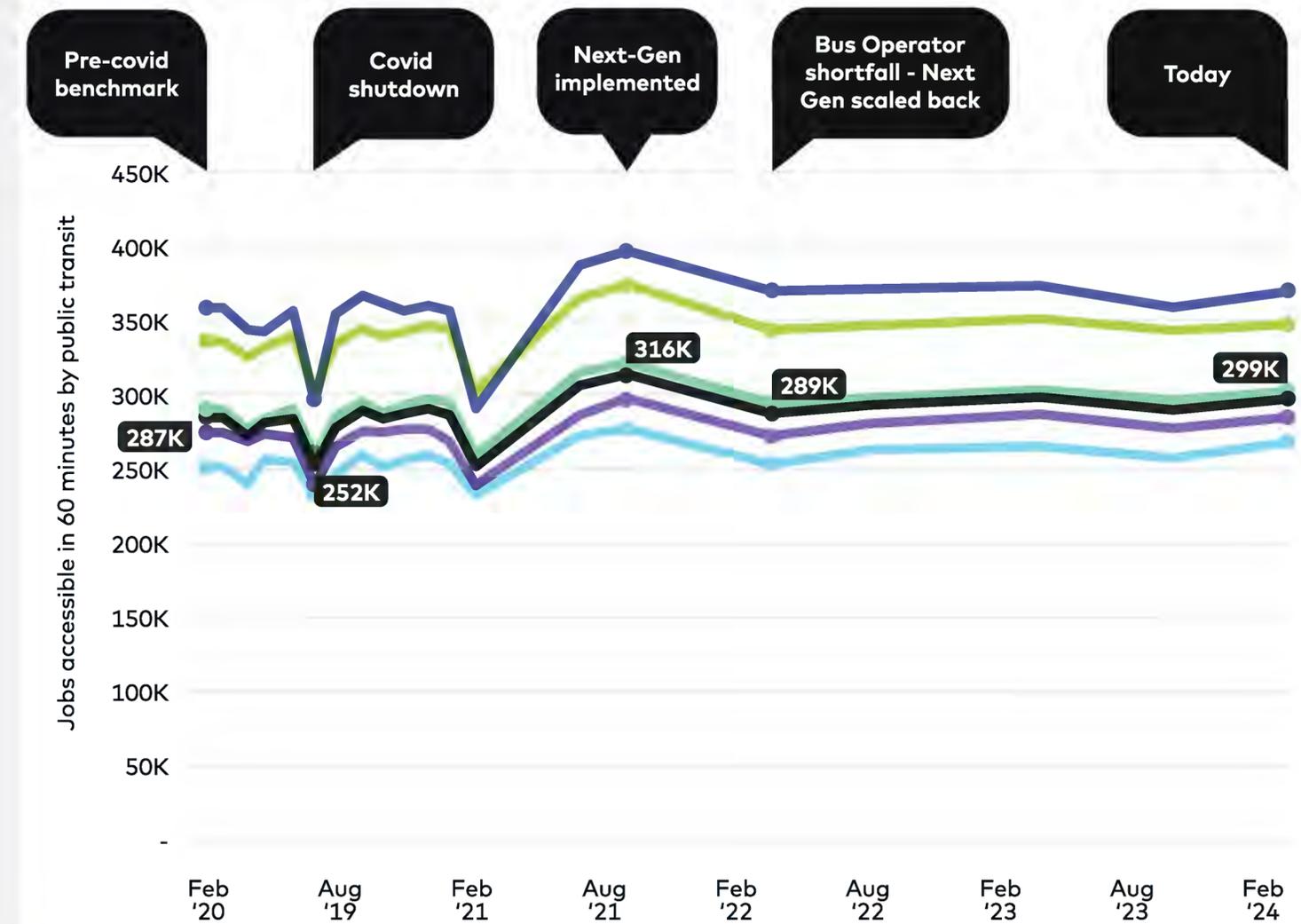
Jobs accessible in 60 minutes by public transit for LA County residents

★ Chart Insight

Access to jobs via transit in LA County has increased for some groups of people who tend to ride public transit more—including Black and Brown people, and people with low incomes.

Chart Key

- Everyone
- White people
- Black people
- Asian people
- Hispanic people
- People with low incomes



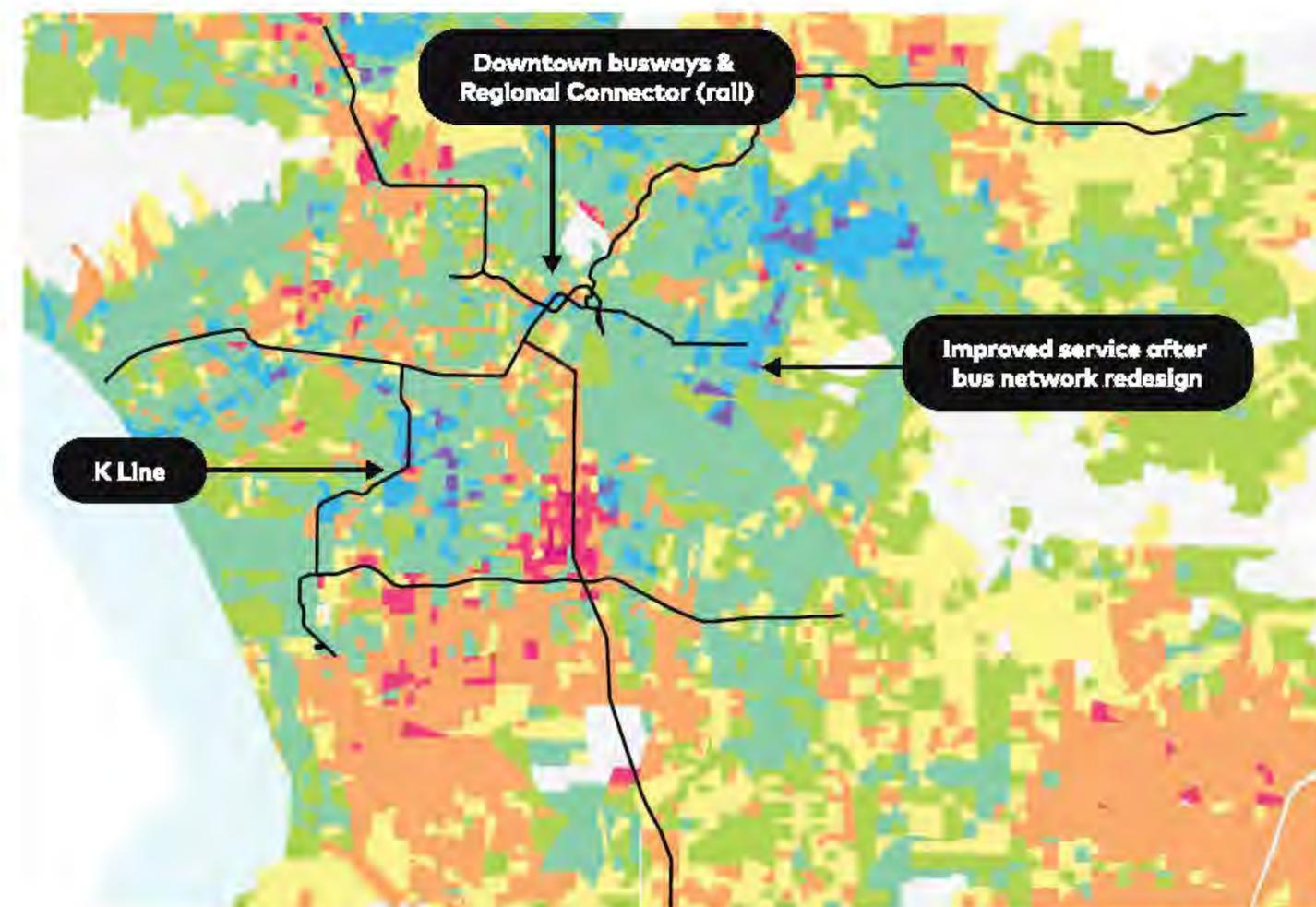
Several recent transit projects improved network connectivity and increased access by transit for Angelenos living near and far.

LA Metro connected train routes in Downtown and opened a new train line in South LA. The City of LA and LA Metro built dedicated busways in congested areas, allowing buses to run faster and more frequently. (Some busways that LA Metro planned haven't been implemented, pending cooperation from Caltrans and local municipal partners.)

Some people have less access now by transit than before COVID-19, which ate into LA Metro's operational budget and workforce, forcing changes to service. Most Metro Rail lines are less frequent now than before the pandemic. A new bus network was scaled back in 2022 due to a shortfall of bus drivers to operate service.



Change in jobs accessible in 60 minutes by public transit for LA region residents, Feb. 2020–March 2024



The LA transportation system provides less access to people with less travel flexibility.

Commute patterns have changed since COVID-19, and many people with 9-5 jobs now work remotely. However, access to jobs by transit is still substantially better for people traveling during the morning peak than for second- and third-shift workers, most of whom continue to work in person.

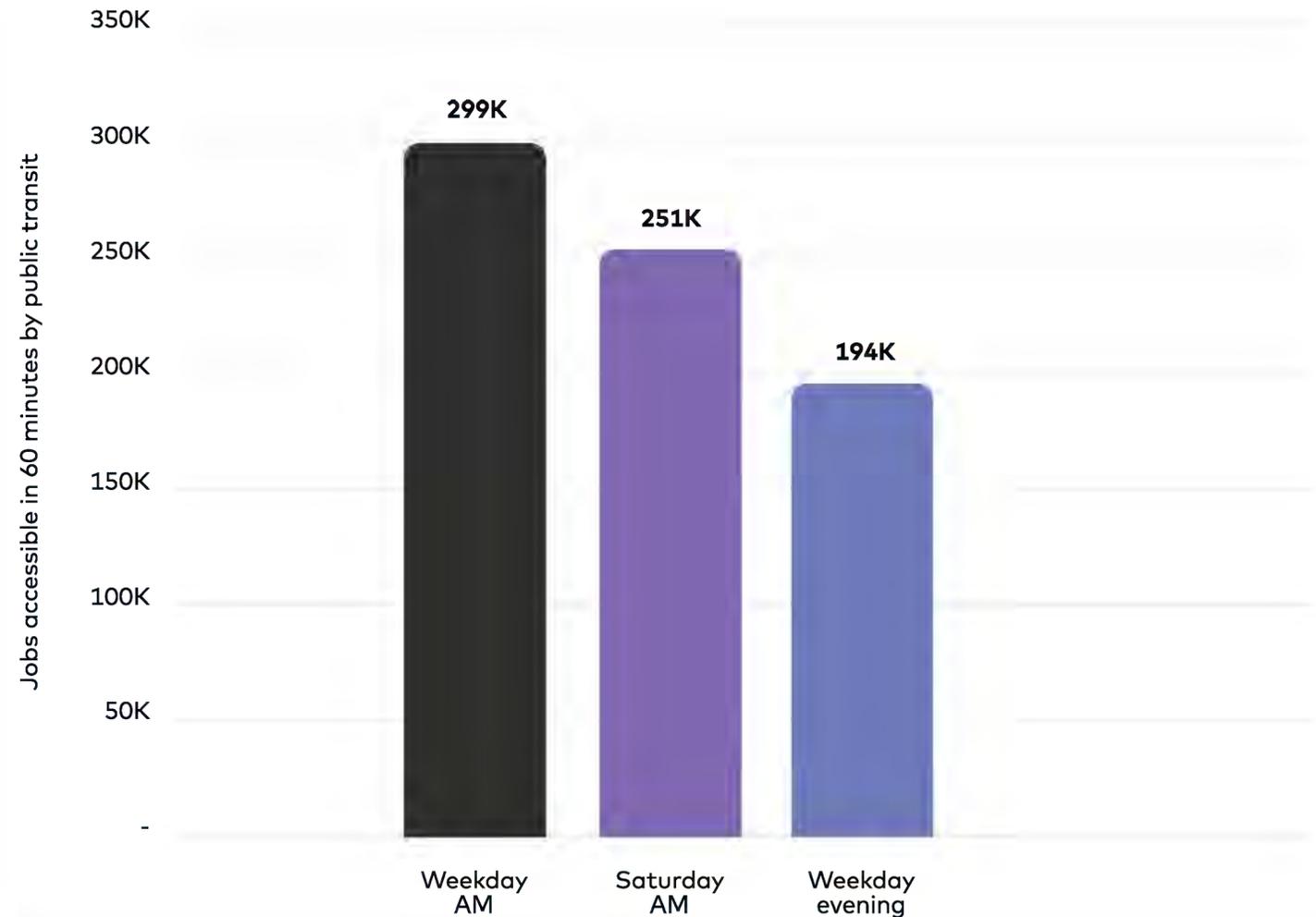
LA Metro and other regional transit agencies should add trips to midday, evening, and weekend periods—by shifting trips from rush hour periods or better yet, adding new service—to align better with post-pandemic travel patterns.



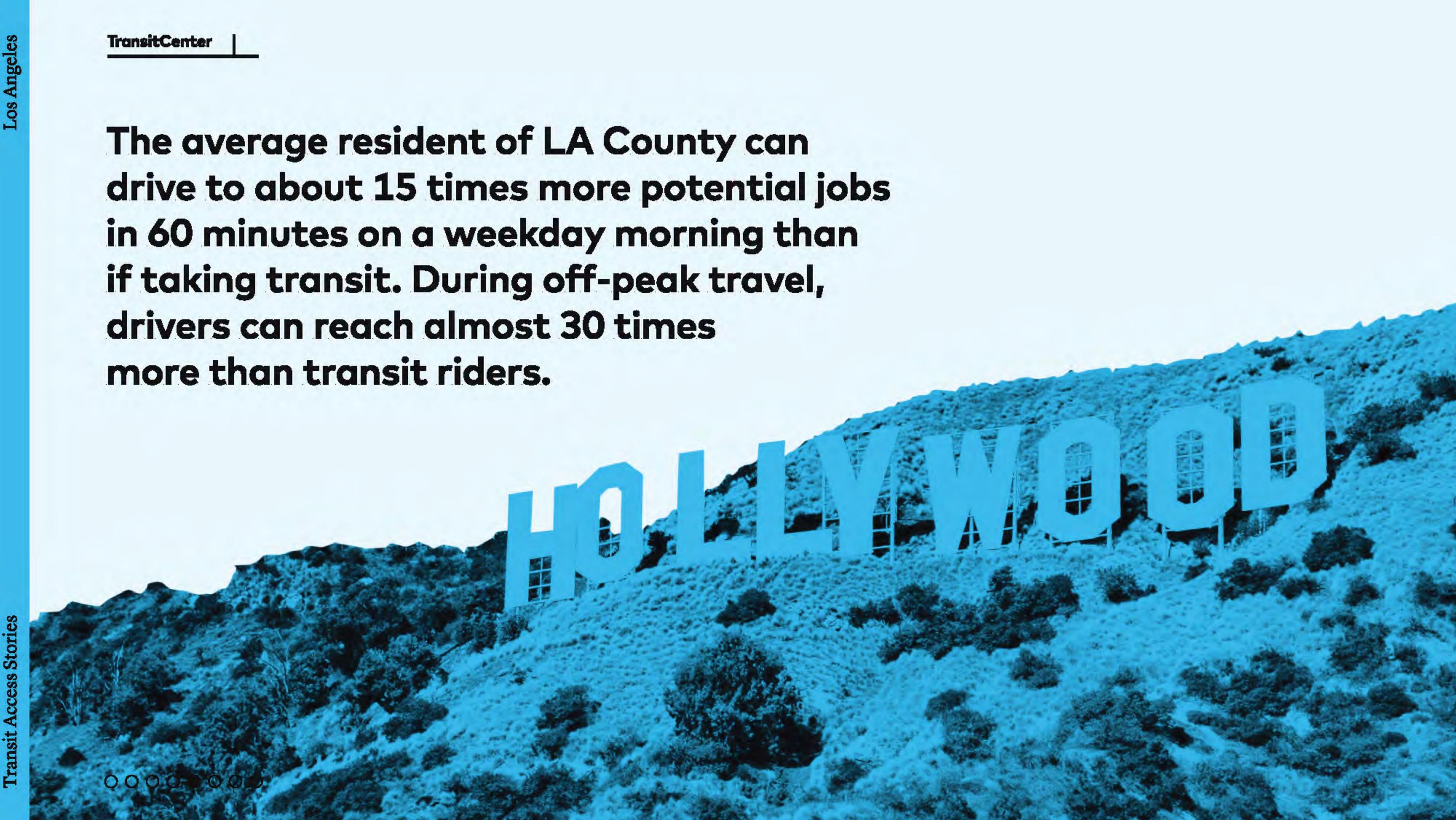
Jobs accessible in 60 minutes by public transit for LA County residents

★ Chart Insight

Access for weekday morning riders is 50% higher than for weekday evening riders, and 20% higher than for Saturday morning riders.



The average resident of LA County can drive to about 15 times more potential jobs in 60 minutes on a weekday morning than if taking transit. During off-peak travel, drivers can reach almost 30 times more than transit riders.

A photograph of the Hollywood sign on a hillside, with the word "HOLLYWOOD" written in large, white, block letters. The sign is set against a backdrop of a rocky, sparsely vegetated hillside under a clear sky. The entire image has a blue color cast.

HOLLYWOOD

At \$72 for unlimited rides on LA Metro for a month, public transit is much more affordable than owning and driving a car, which typically costs more than \$1,000 per month.

Over the past few years, LA Metro has expanded its reduced fare program and introduced fare capping, making trips even more affordable. From a cost perspective, public transit is much more accessible than driving.

But public transit provides dramatically lower access than driving: LA County drivers can reach 15-30 times more jobs in an hour than transit riders.

Would-be transit riders face a bad choice: save money riding transit but sacrifice easy access opportunities across the region, or shoulder the financial hardship of owning a car.

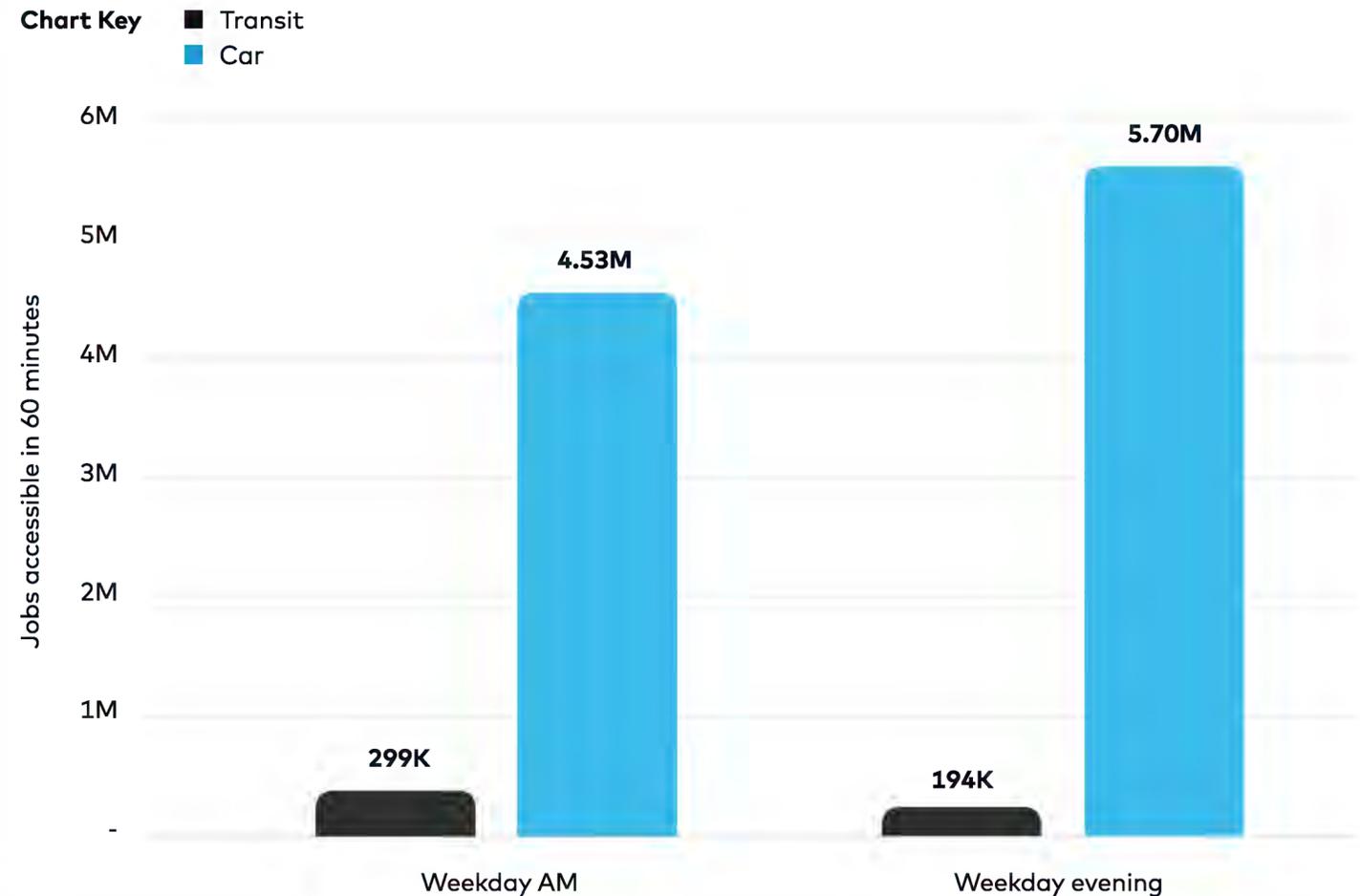


Jobs accessible in 60 minutes by public transit vs. driving for LA County residents

★ Chart Insight

LA County residents can drive to 15 times more potential jobs in 60 minutes on weekdays morning than by taking transit.

On weekday evenings when transit runs less often and traffic calms down, drivers can reach almost 30 times more jobs than transit riders.



Access data from TransitCenter based on transit schedules for March 2024



“The buses only run every hour. If you miss the bus, you have to wait another whole hour to catch it. And the buses during rush hour can be crowded. People are packed in like sardines. I wish they had more frequent service.

We need the bus system. We don't have the option to drive. Insurance is too expensive. Owning a car isn't doable, it's just too much for people to afford.”

Martha
Los Angeles bus rider

Accessing essential destinations by public transit is possible in LA but impractical as it takes much longer than driving.

On weekend mornings, it takes the average LA County resident 22 minutes to reach the third-nearest supermarket (in other words, a variety of food options)—or 3 minutes by car.

State and local officials—past and present—are responsible for this transportation inequity. They’ve chosen to devote the bare minimum of resources to public transit but spared no expense for expanding and maintaining roads for cars—even though driving is more expensive, dangerous, and polluting than public transit.

Public transit can be a viable mode of transport for Angelenos. Elected and government officials must prioritize transit riders in decisions from state funding down to street space.

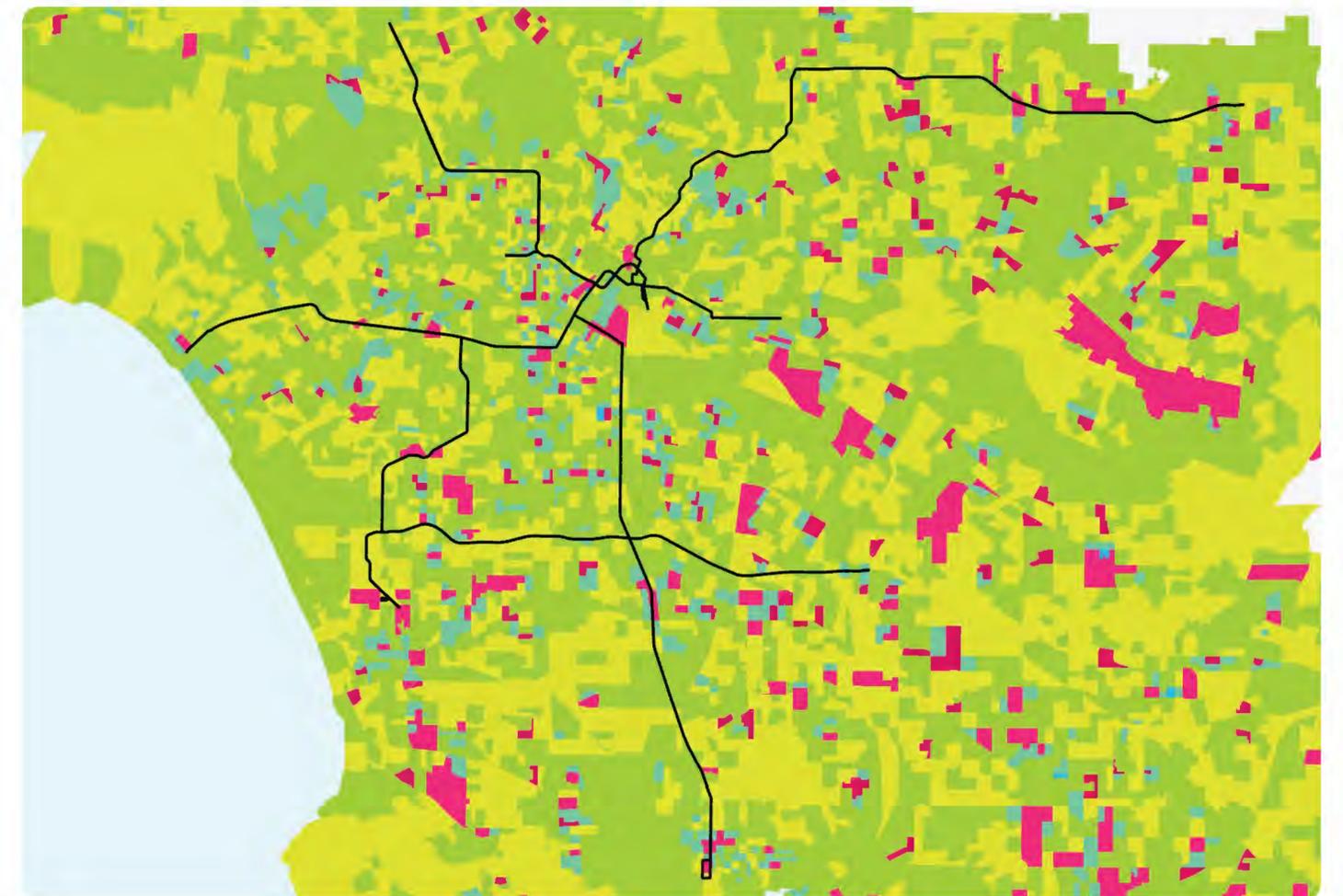


Transit vs. driving time to three nearest supermarkets for LA region residents

★ Map Insight

Even where transit is the most competitive—along rail lines and in neighborhoods next to supermarkets—trips are between 2-5 times slower by public transit than by car.

- Map Key**
- Location of 3 supermarkets
 - Transit 1-2x slower than car
 - Transit 2-5x slower than car
 - Transit 5-10x slower than car
 - Transit more than 10x slower than car



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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