Access to resilient transportation in metropolitan New Orleans

by Adie Tomer and Benjamin Swedberg
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Overview

Transportation has always been central to New Orleans' identity. The city exists where it does because of travel opportunities made possible by the Mississippi River, and waterborne commerce continues to be a major source of industry and jobs. The city's iconic streetcars helped stretch settlements into new neighborhoods centuries ago, while continuing to beckon tourists today. Beginning in the middle of the 20th century, highways enabled the build-out of more suburban jurisdictions but left lasting barriers in many older, central neighborhoods where they were built.[1]

Today, the metropolitan region confronts a new set of transportation demands. The regional population is now slightly below 1 million residents, meaning nearly 200,000 less people are moving around each day than before Hurricane Katrina and the failure of the federal levees in 2005.[2] Continued suburbanization has stretched the distances between homes, offices, schools, and other activity centers. Worsening climate conditions pose an ever-growing threat to infrastructure operations and human security.

Photo source: Shutterstock

These shifting demands require residents, businesses, and government officials to reconsider whether the transportation networks of the New Orleans metro area are set up to deliver the connectivity they expect. The

region is now overly built for the automobile, pushing households to shoulder the private burden of owning one or more vehicles, each of which can easily cost $6,000 a year just in operating costs.[3] Transit operators continue to rebuild their services, but also are contending with fewer residents and businesses to carry the burden of increased operations or capital investments. Specific neighborhoods need extra protection from the kind of flooding that could physically isolate them, while every neighborhood needs ways to protect the travelers most exposed to extreme heat.[4]

Yet, there also are reasons for optimism. Planners at local transportation and land use agencies are aware of these constraints and have been conducting invaluable work to focus development along multimodal corridors, and upgrade neighborhood infrastructure to better manage storms and high-heat days. The business community and elected officials publicly back many of the same priorities.

The common theme across all these activities is a focus on resilience—delivering transportation networks that offer efficiency, affordability, and reliability for all users. When designed around these priorities, transportation both promotes economic opportunity and protects against economic and environmental shocks.

This report assesses those three foundational aspects of transportation resilience in metropolitan New Orleans, using original statistical analysis and reviews of official plans and strategies. It details where current networks are failing to uplift the region's needs and identifies opportunities for improvement, including:

- Use direct public funding and tax incentives to prioritize transit service, right-of-way redesigns, and private real estate investments along higher-density corridors flagged within existing long-term plans
- Urge officials and business leaders to ask state legislators to direct more transportation funding to the New Orleans metropolitan area
- Coordinate stormwater upgrades and extreme heat features such as tree canopies to align with both priority investment corridors and those neighborhoods with the highest rate of non-vehicle ownership

Overall, the report finds that key parties share a vision of what a more resilient transportation system looks like, but the region needs to adopt new public policies and secure significantly more financial capital to convert those ideas into reality.

Defining resilient transportation networks for New Orleans

Like every major metropolitan area, New Orleans relies on its local transportation networks to keep its economy and society moving. Networks serve as the physical connections between people and jobs, allowing both households and businesses to build wealth for themselves and their community. Transportation connects people to everyday essentials, including food, health care, education, and childcare. For businesses, transportation ensures customers can reach their front door and goods can be delivered and picked up. Transportation also enables people to build community by helping religious, entertainment, and other cultural institutions serve as physical meeting points.

A resilient transportation system is one that enables all these connections to be made, every day, regardless of any individual's or business' unique circumstances. Such a universal goal requires some underlying conditions to be met. Transportation services should be relatively efficient in terms of travel times. The services should also be relatively affordable for every user. Finally, transportation services should be reliable, both during typical daily conditions and in response to major disruptions.

Meeting such criteria isn't so simple. In the case of New Orleans, the state and local governments have built a 5,712-mile roadway network—plus some

critical streetcar and ferry routes—to serve as the foundation for various transportation services.[5] It's then up to residents to decide how to they want to choose between privately owned vehicles, public transportation, ridehail services, bicycles, and walking to reach their destinations.

Meanwhile, network design and people's travel demands are heavily influenced by the metropolitan area's underlying geography. Its older neighborhoods typically offer shorter trip distances, roadway designs often better accommodate biking and walking, and transit frequency is higher. Distances to and from suburban destinations are typically longer and involve a network far more hospitable for drivers, both in terms of speed limits and parking availability. A resilient transportation system would ensure travelers can use multiple modes in both land development patterns. This is not the case across all parishes in the New Orleans metropolitan area.

Local public agencies and civic organizations clearly understand the need to provide more flexibility. The New Orleans mayor's office and the two largest transit agencies, the Regional Planning Commission and Greater New Orleans, Inc., have each publicly stated they want all residents, regardless of their incomes, to have timely access to the region's jobs and other critical destinations. Those statements call for both high-quality public transit systems and access that can withstand environmental threats. The problems are the physical barriers stymieing those ambitions.

Land use in the city of New Orleans and neighboring Jefferson Parish and St. Bernard Parish continues to advantage commuting by private car

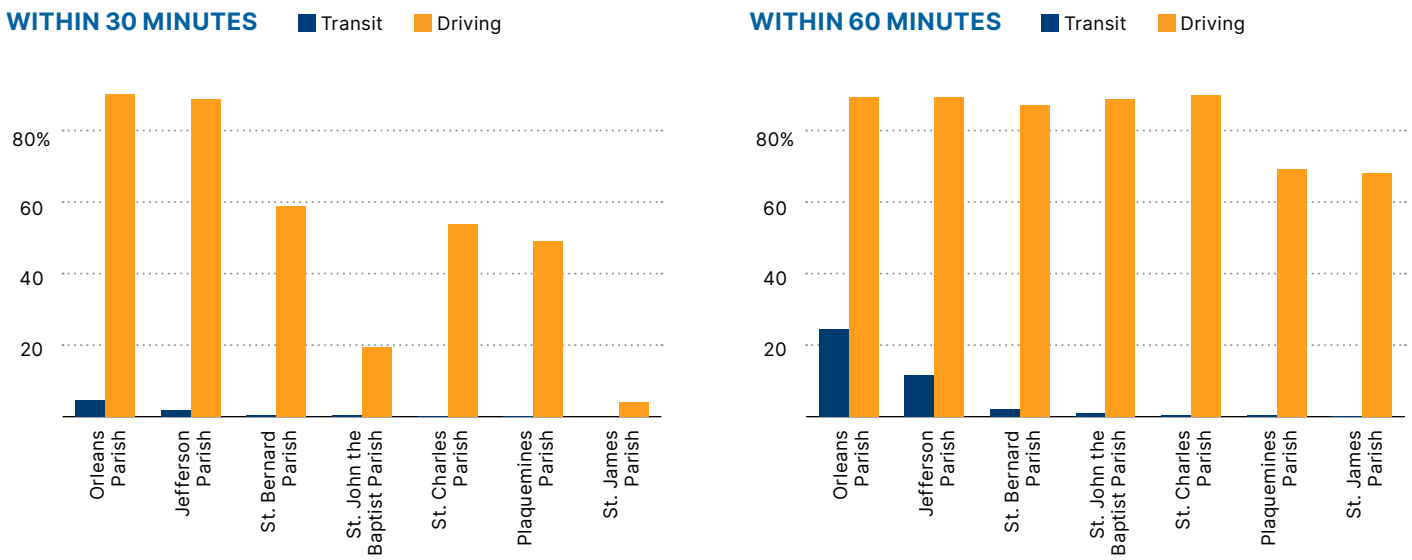
New Orleans is a special and distinct place, but less so when considering the metro area's underlying land development patterns. Decades of high-speed roadway investments and continued suburbanization mean that automobiles now wield enormous travel time advantages when it comes to reaching jobs and other essential activities. That's certainly to be expected in lower density development patterns in the more outlying parishes, but it also applies to most neighborhoods spread across the city of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish to the west and south of the city.

Driving's accessibility advantages are readily apparent when looking at the average parish resident.[6] Residents of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, for example, can expect to reach just about every job in the metro area within 30 minutes by car. By contrast, city residents can only reach about 4.7 percent of jobs in 30 minutes via some combination of transit and walking, and Jefferson Parish residents only 1.7 percent. The numbers do jump considerably when extending travel times to an hour, but transit's access rates still pale in comparison to driving. The differences between driving and transit are even more pronounced in St. Bernard Parish and the other more outlying parishes. (See Figure 1.)

FIGURE 1

Most residents of the New Orleans metro area must drive to work

The share of jobs accessible by car and public transit in 30 minutes and 60 minutes, as of June 2025



Source: Brookings analysis of JeT (service as of September 22, 2024), NORTA, (service as of May 29, 2025) and SBURT (service as of April 1, 2024) GTFS data, Open Street Maps (as of June 6, 2025), and U.S. Census LODES 8.0 LEHD 2022 data.

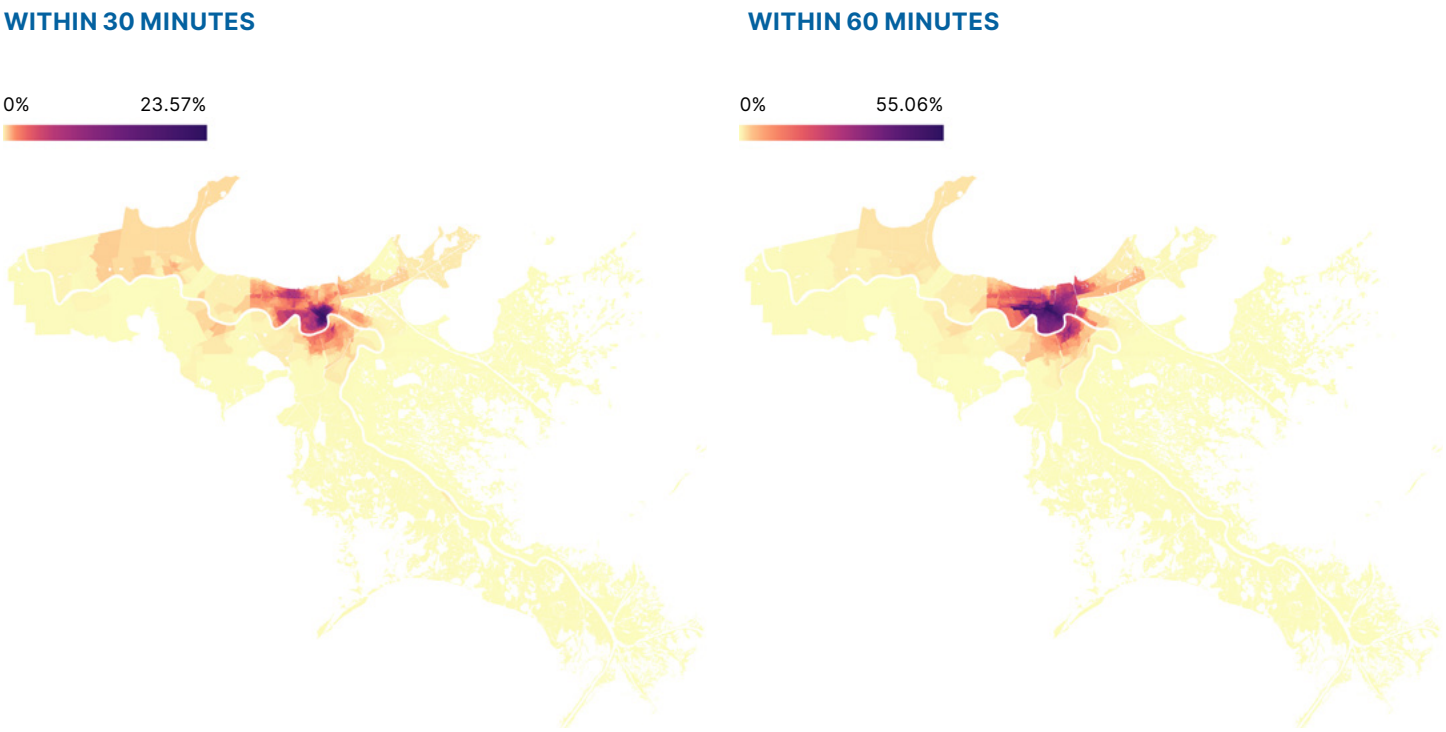
The gaps in access to work between driving and riding mass transit are particularly pronounced in the many neighborhoods that are either not served by transit at all or where the wait times between buses (also known as headways) are so long that it makes travel times especially burdensome. There are 83 out of 815 total block groups in New Orleans and neighboring Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes that don't have a bus, streetcar, or ferry stop within a quarter mile of their borders.[7] Of all the block groups in those parishes that have a transit stop, 63 percent have no stops with 20-minute or shorter headways during peak morning service.[8] It makes sense that residents of such underserved neighborhoods will prefer to take a private car to get to where they need to go.

Still, there are many neighborhoods where transit service is frequent enough that large swaths of jobs can be reached within 30 or 60 minutes. This is especially the case within the city of New Orleans, where the Regional Transit Authority, or RTA, runs the majority of its high-frequency routes. Downtown, the French Quarter, Mid-City, Uptown, Central City, and the Garden District all benefit from interwoven routes that help circulate workers between these locations. Residents of these neighborhoods can typically reach 30,000 jobs to 90,000 jobs in 30 minutes, and often three to five times more jobs if given an hour. It's not as many total jobs reachable as driving, but if a resident lives and works within those neighborhoods, transit service is time competitive. (See Figure 2.)

FIGURE 2

Public transit within the city of New Orleans far outperforms surrounding parishes

Share of jobs within 30 minutes and 60 minutes by public transit, as of June 2025



Source: Brookings analysis of JeT (service as of September 22, 2024), NORTA, (service as of May 29, 2025) and SBURT (service as of April 1, 2024) GTFS data, Open Street Maps (as of June 6, 2025), and U.S. Census LODES 8.0 LEHD 2022 data.

More challenging are commutes outside the high-frequency transit zones. Many of Jefferson Parish's job hubs—such as in Metairie, Elmwood, and Marrero—aren't served nearly as regularly by Jefferson Parish Transit, or JeT. It's a similar story for the job hubs in New Orleans East. Transit may work for the people who live closer to suburban hubs, but most residents do not. Travel times are also a challenge for those who want to travel crosstown, which can often lead to more circuitous routes via downtown transfers.

Unequal transportation access impacts employers, too. When only a portion of the region's labor pool can dependably reach a job site, employers are limited in who they can hire and face greater threats of employees not showing up due to a missed bus or broken-down car. This is exactly what employers in the New Orleans suburbs currently face. One block group in St. Charles Parish west of the airport, for example, is home to roughly 1,000 jobs, many of them at a Valero Refinery. Only 3,453 workers can access the block group via transit and walking (only walking, in this case, since St. Charles does not have a fixed-route transit service) in 60 minutes or less. In the same amount of time, more than 364,100 workers can arrive by car. (See Figure 3.)

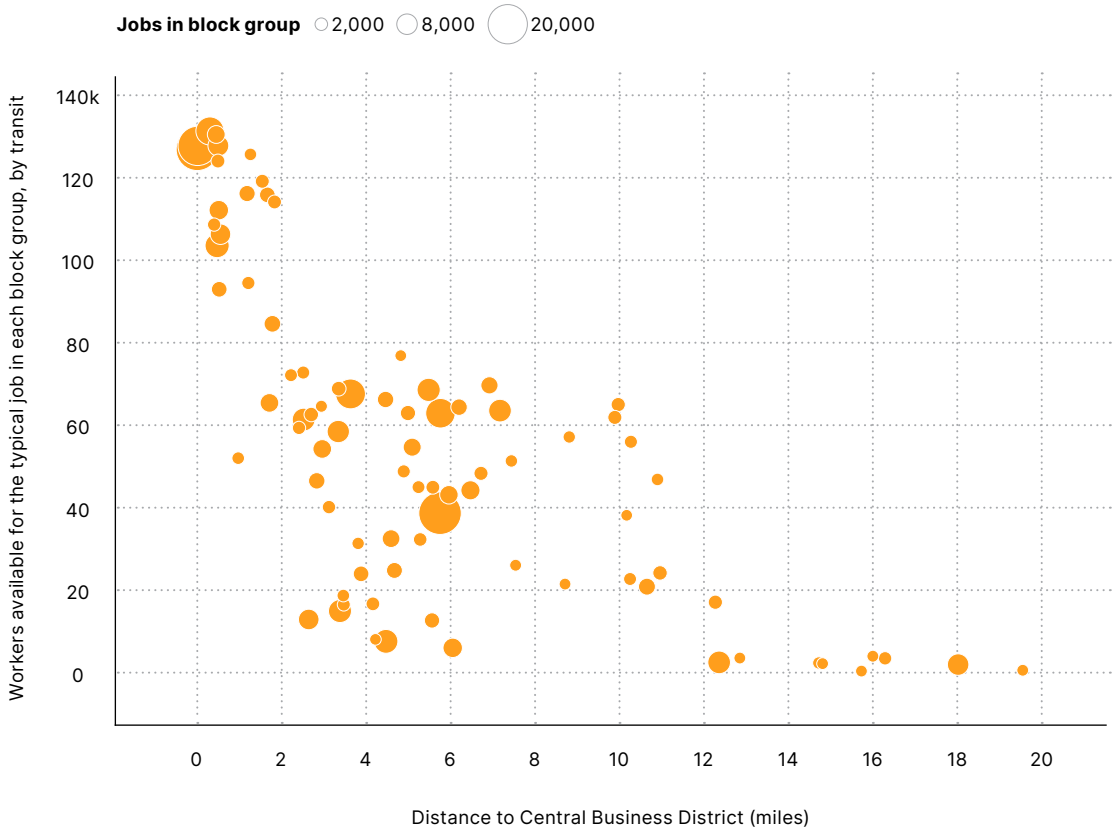
FIGURE 3

Public transit within the city of New Orleans far outperforms surrounding parishes

Share of jobs within 30 minutes and 60 minutes by public transit, as of June 2025

Source: Brookings analysis of JeT (service as of September 22, 2024), NORTA, (service as of May 29, 2025) and SBURT (service as of April 1, 2024) GTFS data, Open Street Maps (as of June 6, 2025), and U.S. Census LODES 8.0 LEHD 2022 data.

Note: Only the top decile of block groups by job count are plotted. Block groups more than 20 miles from the Central Business District are excluded.



Overall, public transit simply cannot keep up with the region's job sprawl. With 65.7 percent of jobs located in Census blocks more than three miles away from the Central Business District, workers need to be prepared to reach jobs spread all across the metro area.[9] The problem is that serving all those locations overly taxes the transit operators, requiring longer distance routes, more buses, and more staff. It's unreasonable to assume that public transit can serve so many lower-density locations, unless the agency receives even more generous public funding. That's just one of the many consequences of choosing to invest in private transportation at the expense of more multimodal choices.

Car-free and lower-earning households face significant economic barriers due to transportation and land use conditions

When travel times and service reliability are relatively unequal between transportation modes, travelers are forced to make a difficult, binary choice between driving and the alternatives. Those who choose time savings incur the costs of using a private vehicle, which can easily cost more than someone is comfortable paying. Those who choose not to pay high automobile costs—whether by preference or

necessity—ultimately choose to pay with their time, reduced safety as a biker and pedestrian, or both.[10] Such a harsh binary choice quickly exposes a lack of economic resilience.

The unequal access rates presented in the prior section underscore why many New Orleans residents face such difficult transportation choices, particularly those confronting any combination of lower vehicle access, lower earnings, and longer distances from activity centers. The situation is exacerbated by the overall loss of affordable housing within and around the metropolitan core since Hurricane Katrina, where employment opportunities and more frequent transit service best converge.[11]

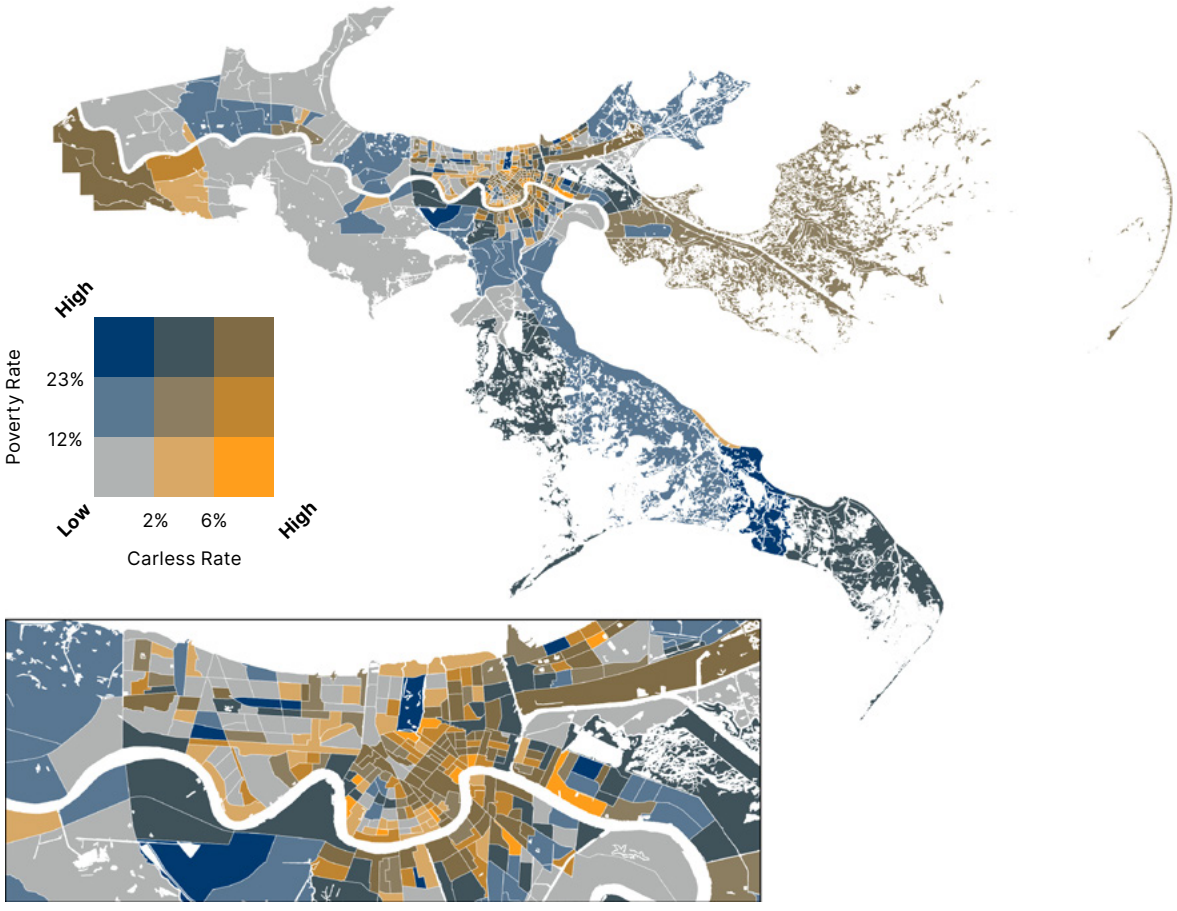
Metropolitan New Orleans is home to about 44,000 households who don't have access to a private vehicle, plus another 20,000-plus households who have access to less vehicles than workers in the households.[12] Longer distance trips are especially challenging for these households, either due to longer trip times via public transit, the costs of a rideshare trip, or the time spent finding a carpool or car to borrow. Such logistical and financial hurdles don't just impact commutes either; they create barriers to

FIGURE 4

Regardless of income, poor transit access makes car ownership the only path to work

Carless and poverty rates as of 2023, by Census tract

SOURCE: Brookings' analysis of American Community Survey data.



schools, medical care, and other key destinations that may not be within a short distance.[13]

It's impossible to know why every household forgoes car ownership, but relevant data suggest the bulk of those in the "lower vehicle" category are not there by choice. Per 2023 American Community Survey data, the median income of zero-vehicle households in the metro area is less than $20,000 per year.[14] JeT's survey of its riders found vehicle affordability was a major reason they used transit.[15]

Regional maps show that many zero-vehicle households tend to concentrate in relatively lower earning neighborhoods in the city of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, in this case defined as those with relatively higher poverty rates.[16] There are exceptions, such as around the French Quarter and portions of the Garden District, where households are more likely to go car-free by choice. (See Figure 4.)

This map also exposes the neighborhoods where relatively low-earning households, who have still opted to acquire a vehicle, are concentrated. These are predominantly located further from the central business district, including parts of New Orleans East, Metairie, and multiple Westbank neighborhoods where housing is often more affordable than central New Orleans. The choice of having a private vehicle reflects what the access maps reflects: with relatively low access by transit, owning a vehicle may be the only pathway to get to where one needs to go in a reasonable amount of time.

What's abundantly clear is just how much residential location and vehicle availability can impact a household's economic security.[17] For those residents who earn relatively lower incomes and still have access to a car, a vehicle breakdown or losing a job could quickly spiral into further economic and social hardship. There is a reason that households who already own a car will often go to extreme ends to keep it running; the alternative can feel far worse.[18] For those without a car, all it takes is a missed bus or transfer to suddenly find yourself without a job, late for an appointment, or unable to care for a child. Studies show that transit-dependent individuals often manage these risks by planning for extra redundancies, all of which take more time and can cause extra stress.[19]

Growing environmental threats only exacerbate the region's transportation insecurity

Since the tragic events of Hurricane Katrina and the failure of the federal levees, public authorities and their partners have made a concerted effort to better prepare the region and its residents for future superstorms. That includes improving evacuation procedures, such as advance notification procedures for all residents, modified transit routing, temporarily reversing some highway lanes, and establishing evacuation hubs.[20] All of these actions should make for a more resilient transportation system when the next major hurricane or similar event touches Southeastern Louisiana.

Yet, even if the New Orleans metropolitan area is better prepared for more extreme circumstances, there are more chronic challenges exposing residents and businesses to physical harm and service disruptions. Flooding, in particular, continues to grow in frequency and severity. Federal risk data finds that enormous swathes of every metropolitan parish face more than a 1 percent chance of a major flood event in any given year, a baseline measure of flood risk.[21]

These estimates align with on-the-ground reporting, which often finds major rainfall events inflicting flood damage upon roadways.[22] From a transportation perspective, floods can close roads, render private vehicles inoperable, and suspend transit services—all of which can disrupt the local economy in terms of lost wages, lower worker productivity, and delayed deliveries.[23]

Extreme heat poses an additional threat, and it is quickly worsening. New Orleans has always been one of the hotter metropolitan areas in the country, with Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Risk Index classifying the city of New Orleans in

its highest risk category from heat waves.[24] This reflects what it feels like in the parish's built-up areas, where all the roads and buildings create heat-island effects and where the region's largest share of people traveling by transit, bicycle, and foot are more exposed to the elements.[25]

Yet the city isn't alone when it comes to extreme heat. Temperatures are high across the entire metropolitan region, with most block groups already experiencing years where the maximum temperature exceeds 90 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 100 days.[26] The knock-on effects from such heat are especially pronounced in neighborhoods that concentrate people of color, lower income households, and those without a high school diploma.[27]

Flooding and extreme heat are harmful in isolation, but they compound to degrade the region's road quality. Approximately 65 percent of New Orleans' streets are in poor or worst condition—with municipal officials estimating it would take $5 billion to upgrade them.[28] Even if it's a cool, dry day, poor roadway conditions increase the likelihood of accidents such as a blown tire, which adds to the bill of drivers and governments alike.[29]

These environmental impacts should create a sense of urgency among stakeholders to adapt. Regardless of the parish, extreme heat puts the burden on transit agencies to provide shelter from the elements, local public works departments to offer shade on streets, and large real estate owners to do the same on private properties. Agencies that handle transportation need to work closely with their wastewater peers to ensure drainage systems can keep roads clear during extreme rainfall events.

There are pathways to greater transportation resilience in and around New Orleans

For those who live and do business in the New Orleans metropolitan region, the experience of local travel depends on how you choose to get around. Those with the financial means to comfortably own and operate a car likely find the experience relatively smooth: travel times to most jobs and other destinations generally clock in at under 30 minutes, parking is readily available and affordable almost everywhere, and all that driving keeps you out of the hot sun. But for anyone who either can't afford or simply chooses not to drive, the transportation system could just as easily feel like a barrier to opportunity instead of an enabler.

It's taken New Orleans roughly a century to develop this contemporary profile. It required decades of planning and investment to build all the single-family housing developments, commercial corridors solely oriented toward the car, and the highways to connect newly built neighborhoods and bisect many of the older ones. Then, Hurricane Katrina scrambled the population and demographic trajectories of the region. Past development and associated travel patterns won't simply reverse course because residents can now better understand who benefits and who doesn't. It'd be unreasonable to expect those patterns to suddenly unwind in two decades or through just a handful of publicly and privately financed projects.

The positive side is that many metropolitan leaders—including top officials throughout the city of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, executives at the Regional Planning Commission, and civic groups such as Greater New Orleans Inc.—understand the fragilities that automobile-oriented, sprawling development patterns create. Stormwater runoff and heat-island effects are more intense. Employers cannot access the full labor pool. Households spend more than they'd like on transportation services. Transit providers confront unreasonable expectations on how far and frequently their vehicles will travel.

Those same leaders also back a different development pathway. Their annual reports and strategic planning documents note that concentrating development along targeted corridors can promote transportation choice via shorter travel times and safer bicycle and pedestrian transportation designs. Investing in green infrastructure and shade features will adapt to new climate patterns and reduce risk exposure. And they

recognize that those kinds of investments will leave more disposable income for those who need it most, greater job security and social cohesion via faster and more dependable transportation, and a less fragile built environment for all residents.

Changing course will require the public agencies who oversee transportation construction and land use development to prioritize more resilient pathways, including the use of carrots and sticks to incentivize private land developers to support the same vision. Changing course will also require significant financial capital to be deployed. Fortunately, many current programs demonstrate change is possible.

The Regional Transit Authority is actively trying to expand the number of neighborhoods that benefit from more frequent and higher speed public transport services. The region's first bus rapid transit corridor, which would greatly speed-up travel between New Orleans East and the West Bank via the central city, has already received a federal planning grant and could receive major capital support from Washington.[30] There is a new downtown transit center under development, which will improve wait times and provide improved cover.[31]

Then there's the Opportunity Pass Program, a one-year pilot program that offers free transit service to residents ages 16 to 24, which could create new and more positive attitudes toward public transit and more durable customers going forward.[32] Combined with the launch of a redesigned bus network in 2022 and an upgrade of the agency's bond rating in 2024, there is positive momentum in New Orleans.[33,34]

The Transit-Oriented Communities Plan is a similar beacon.[35] A collaboration between the New Orleans City Planning Commission, the Regional Transit Authority, and the City Office of Resilience and Sustainability, the 2023 plan looks to use a combination of zoning reforms, developer incentives, targeted infrastructure investments, established design standards, and other policies to promote real estate development in neighborhoods best suited to support driving alternatives.

Following community input and detailed analysis, the resulting plan includes multiple distinct strategies to promote implementation. This effort is complemented by other city work bundled under the Complete Streets Program and Safe Streets for All efforts. Stakeholders should find ways to pool more capital to accelerate financing of the plan's recommended developments.

The Transit-Oriented Communities Plan is just one example of the public efforts underway. Jefferson Parish's most recent Comprehensive Plan explicitly aims to deliver on many of the same land use goals as their eastern neighbors, including thriving communities, purposeful infill development, and greater transportation choice via more compact and connected communities.[36] Ancillary plans for stormwater upgrades and improved tree canopies address more climate-focused outcomes, but they can create downstream benefits for residents who more frequently walk, bike, and ride public transit. We recommend stakeholders continue implementing existing plans, monitoring their progress, and galvanizing public and private support around increased funding to accelerate project delivery.

Of course, there are still significant gaps to overcome. There is not a clear pathway to improve transit connections between the city of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, even though a large share of trips cross those borders. It's not clear if households or businesses will choose to move into the corridors that promote greater transportation choice and reduce environmental risk, or how work-from-home patterns may impact housing choices.[37] Maybe most importantly, it's not clear where all the financial capital will come from to convert many of these plans into physical projects at scale.

This is where the role of the state becomes instrumental. According to a Brookings analysis of Federal Highway Administration data, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development spent only 4.3 percent of its $2.6 billion in roadway investments on locally owned roads in 2023.[38] This is far less than the roughly 22 percent of gas tax contributions that generated on those same

locally owned roads in 2022.[39] Meanwhile, the state contributed only 6 percent of total funding across all New Orleans area transit agencies in 2023.[40]

Officials and business leaders from across the metropolitan area should think about asking legislators to direct more funding to metropolitan areas. If New Orleans can access its fair share of funding, it could mean untold hundreds of millions of dollars to accelerate delivery of both transportation projects and the real estate developments surrounding them.

Conclusion

New Orleans' future trajectory is not set in stone. The transportation accessibility and environmental challenges the region now confronts were not preordained, and there is reason to be hopeful that local leaders and residents support a more resilient vision of the future. Continuing to invest in improved public transit services, incentivizing development in higher-density corridors, and doing more to mitigate flood and heat risks would help more households—regardless of how much they earn or where they live—to reach critical destinations.

Transportation agencies and their staffs cannot deliver such resilience on their own. If the region is serious about delivering a more economically inclusive and resilient transportation system going forward, it will require durable collaboration and a willingness to spend more. Change doesn't come easy.

Accessibility methodological appendix

We conducted the analysis of transit and auto accessibility using OpenStreetsMap data (as of June 2, 2025), and General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data for New Orleans Regional Transit Agency (as of May 29, 2025), Jefferson Parish Transit (as of September 22, 2024) and St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit (as of April 1, 2024).

The underlying geographic data was 2024 Census blocks, removing water features. For each Census block, we found the centermost interior point, then found the closest point on a road network within 1 mile. If there was no road network point within 1 mile, that Census block was not analyzed.

We then used the r5r package to compute a travel time matrix of all Census blocks in the New Orleans metropolitan area (for a discussion of the relative benefits of different network analysis tools, please see Calculating Place-Based Transit Accessibility: Methods, Tools and Algorithmic Dependence). For both automobile and transit-pedestrian matrices, trips longer than 60 minutes were not considered, and trips took place on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 7 a.m. To measure the time it takes to travel between Census blocks via transit and walking, the median of travel times at every minute between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. was taken. For the transit matrix, walking speed was 3 miles per hour.

To calculate the share of jobs accessible to the average worker, we used 2022 Census Lodes 8.0 data. For each geography less granular than the Census block group, we took the mean number of jobs accessible to each component Census block, weighted by the number of workers living in each. To calculate the share of workers available to fill each job, we used the same 2022 Census Lodes 8.0 data, taking the mean number of workers accessible to each component Census block, weighted by the number of jobs in each.

The non-profit Ride New Orleans performs similar analysis annually (see State of Transit 2024 for the most recent analysis). Though the results of our analyses are similar, they use different algorithms and inputs, and as such should not be taken as a 1:1 comparison.

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Endnotes

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4. Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and Louisiana State University AgCenter, *LA Floodmaps*, accessed June 2025. Available at http://maps.lsuagcenter.com/floodmaps/.

5. Brookings' analysis of 2023 Highway Performance Monitoring System data.

6. For more details on the accessibility analyses used in this piece, see the Accessibility Methodological Appendix.

7. Brookings' analysis of data from the United States Census Bureau, New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, and Jefferson Parish Transit.

8. Peak morning service is defined as service during a typical weekday, from 7:00 am to 9:00 am. Headways at each stop are calculated as the average of all headways in that period.

9. Brookings' analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

10. New Orleans having one of the poorest safety records for pedestrians and bicyclists of any of its city peers. For more information, see "City: Biking & Walking Road Safety," The League of American Bicyclists, accessed June 2025. Available at https://data.bikeleague.org/data/cities-biking-walking-road-safety/.

11. For one recent story and underlying research, see Carly Berlin, "New Orleans gets failing grade for affordable housing, according to report," *WWNO - New Orleans Public Radio*, October 10, 2022. Available at https://www.wwno.org/news/2022-10-10/new-orleans-gets-failing-grade-for-affordable-housing-according-to-report.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Adie Tomer
Senior Fellow
The Brookings Institution | Brookings Metro
atomer@brookings.edu

Ben Swedberg
Senior Research Assistant
The Brookings Institution | Brookings Metro
bswedberg@brookings.edu

About The Data Center

The Data Center, a project of Nonprofit Knowledge Works, is the most trusted resource for data about Southeast Louisiana. Founded in 1997, we provide fully independent research and analysis to offer a comprehensive look at issues that matter most to our region. With a mission of democratizing data, The Data Center has, and continues to be, an objective partner in bringing reliable, thoroughly researched data to conversations about building a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable region.

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The New Orleans Index at Twenty collection includes contributions from The Data Center, the Brookings Institution, and a dozen local scholars. The aim of this collection is to advance discussion and action among residents and leaders in greater New Orleans and maximize opportunities provided by the 20-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

The New Orleans Index at Twenty: Measuring Progress toward Resilience analyzes more than 20 indicators to track the region's progress toward metropolitan resiliency, organized by housing and infrastructure, economy and workforce, wealth and people. Essays contributed by leading local scholars and Brookings scholars systematically document major post-Katrina reforms, and hold up new policy opportunities. Together these reports provide New Orleanians with facts to form a common understanding of our progress and future possibilities.

The New Orleans Index series, developed in collaboration with the Brookings Institution, and published since shortly after Hurricane Katrina, has proven to be a widely used and cited publication. The Index's value as a regularly updated, one-stop shop of metrics made it the go-to resource for national and local media, decisionmakers across all levels of government, and leaders in the private and non-profit sectors.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lamar Gardere
Executive Director
The Data Center
lamarg@datacenterresearch.org

Andre M. Perry
Senior Fellow and Director, CCU
Brookings
officeofandreperry@brookings.edu

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