

Transport Poverty in Toronto

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Transport poverty occurs when individuals belonging to structurally marginalized groups experience barriers caused by inadequate transportation. In this briefing note we explore the landscape of transport poverty in Toronto, Canada through the lens of access to opportunities by public transit.

KEY FACTS

- Alleviating transport poverty is primarily focused on ensuring that structurally marginalized groups are provided with an adequate level of access to opportunities.
- Black people, refugees, visible minorities, and single-mother households experience disproportionate rates of transport poverty in Toronto (see Figure 1).
- Areas of high severity of transport poverty are primarily concentrated in Scarborough and north-west Toronto (see Figure 2).
- Toronto's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas do not entirely coincide with areas of high transport poverty.
- Existing and proposed rapid transit will serve areas of high transport poverty, however the extent to which this alleviates transport poverty is still under investigation.
- Transport poverty and reduced transit access is linked with lower participation in activities, especially non-work activities.

Disadvantage Rate of Access to Jobs in Toronto

An area is considered transport disadvantaged if it falls below the 25th percentile of access in Toronto.



Figure 1. Transport disadvantage rate of various marginalized population groups in Toronto.

Low-Income Transport Poverty in Toronto

This map shows where low-income people live, weighted by the amount of transport disadvantage they experience. Transport disadvantage is defined here as below the 25th percentile of access to jobs by transit on a weekday morning.

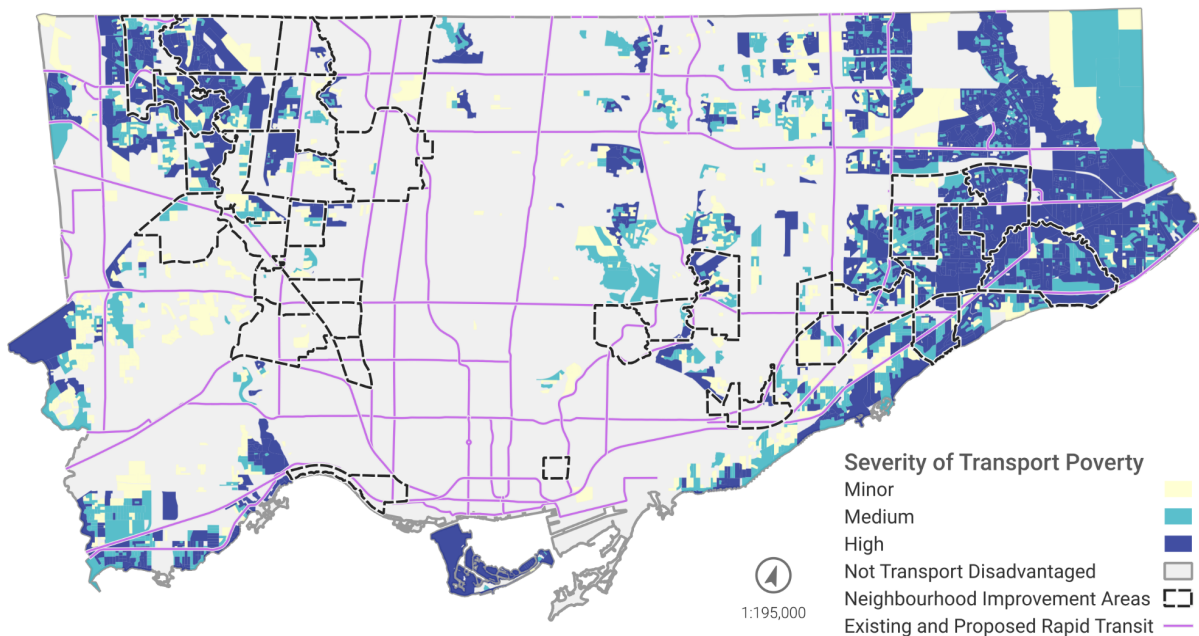


Figure 2. Locations of high transport poverty contribution when considering low-income individuals as the marginalized population group.

DETAILS

- Data on transit access to jobs by transit on a weekday morning is taken from Statistics Canada's [Spatial Access Measures](#) data. Population demographics are based on the [2021 Census of Population](#). Due to the normalization process used by Statistics Canada, values on total jobs accessible are not available.
- Data is computed at the Census Dissemination Block level. Population demographics were apportioned from the Dissemination Area level based on block-level population.
- Transport disadvantage was defined as falling below the population-weighted 25th percentile of access to jobs in Toronto. The size of an area's transport disadvantage is the indexed distance below the poverty line.
- The "severity" of low-income transport poverty is based on the product of the number of low-income individuals and the size of that area's transport disadvantage.
- Transport poverty measures are based on the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) measures of income poverty. For more information, see:
 - Foster, J., Greer, J., Thorbecke, E. (1984). A class of decomposable poverty measures. *Econometrica* 52(3), p. 761
 - Karner, A., Periera, R.H.M., Farber, S. (Preprint). Advances and pitfalls in measuring transportation equity.