

# Transit and Underserved Communities

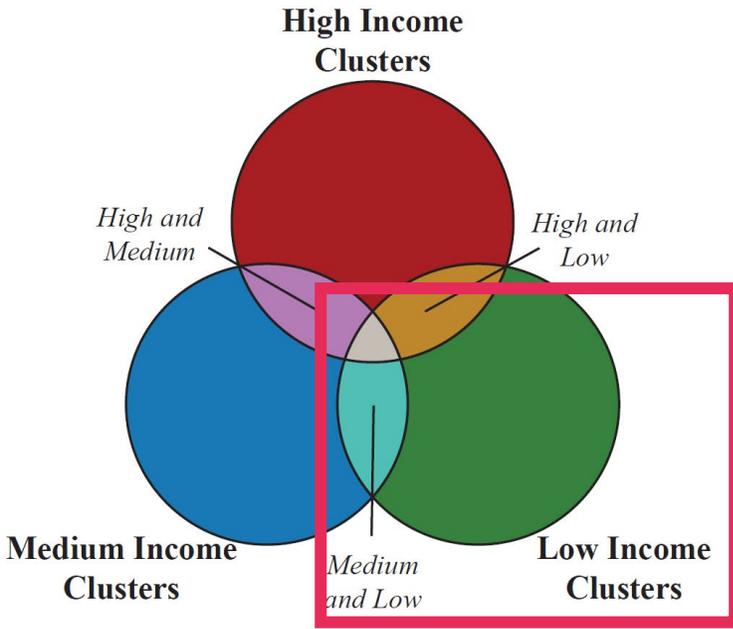
Carrie Makarewicz, PhD



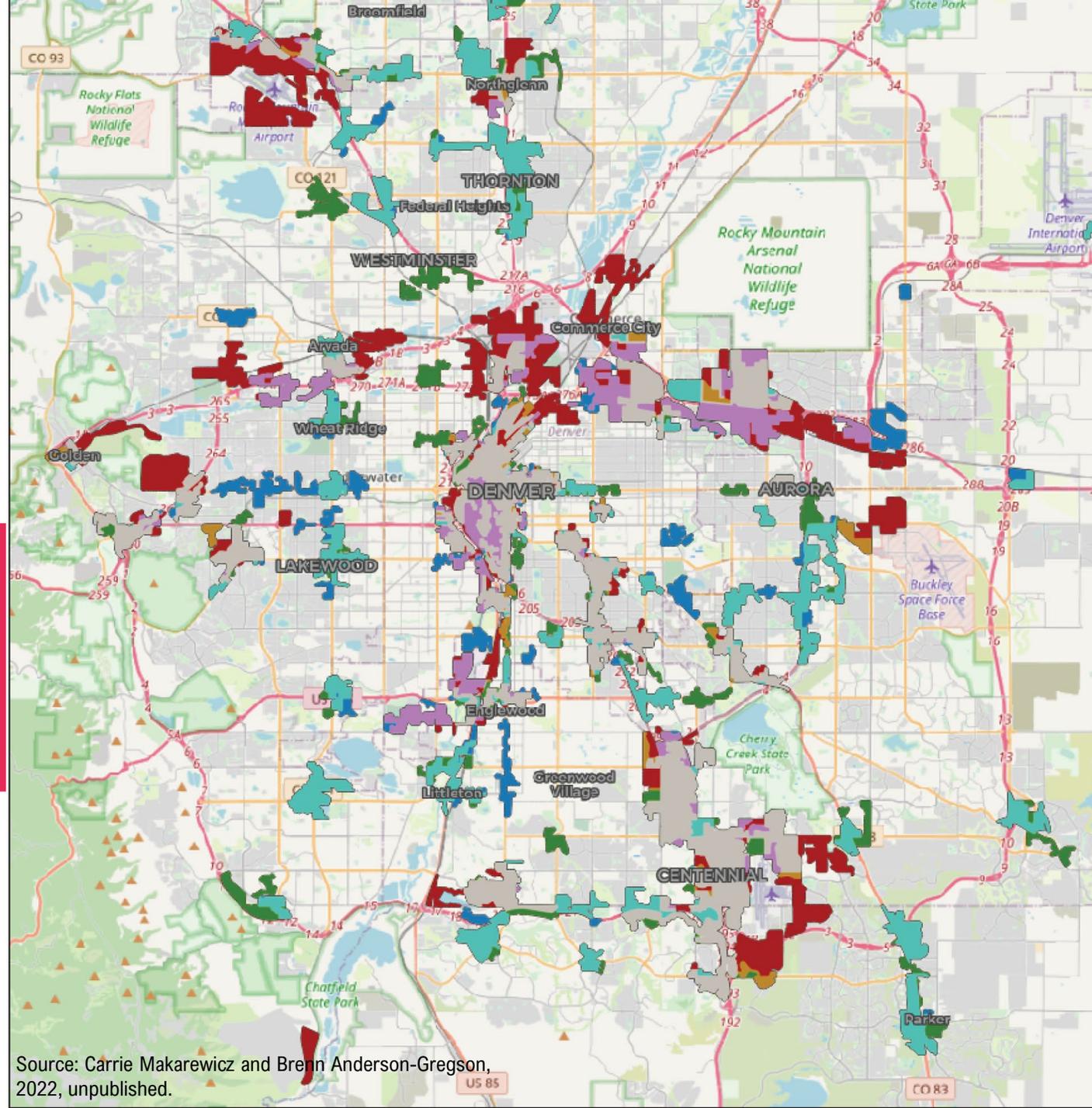
# Communities?

- Communities by identity
- Communities by geography / neighborhoods

# Differential Distributions of Primary Employment Clusters for High, Medium, and Low Income Groups



*158,000 jobs paying <\$39K are not in these centers, and not well-served by transit*



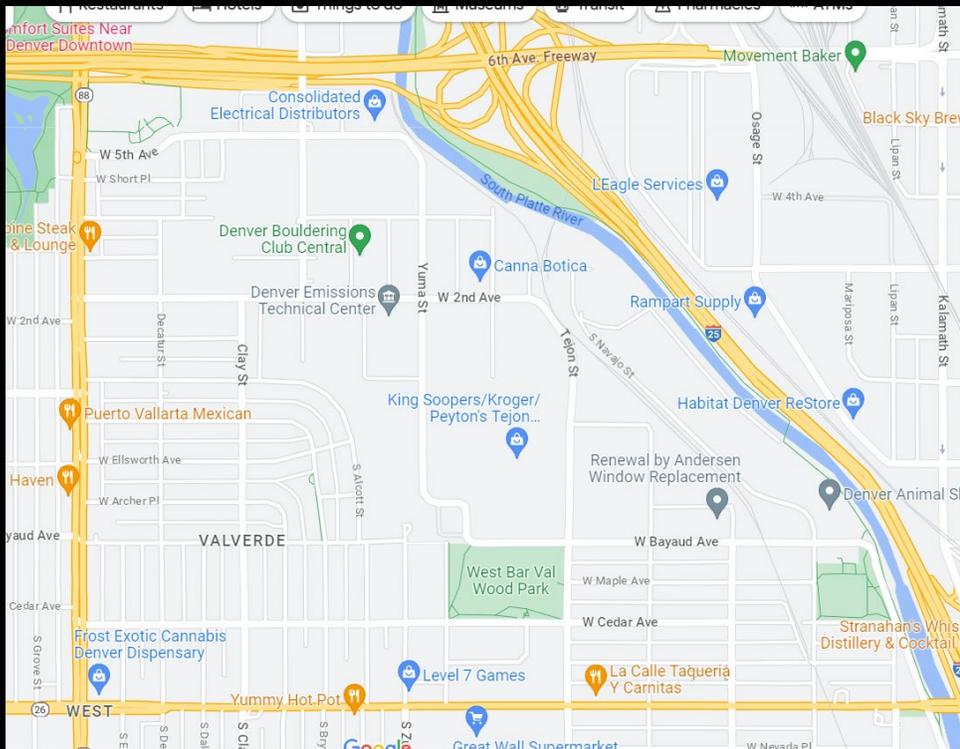
Source: Carrie Makarewicz and Brenn Anderson-Gregson, 2022, unpublished.

60% of jobs are in centers

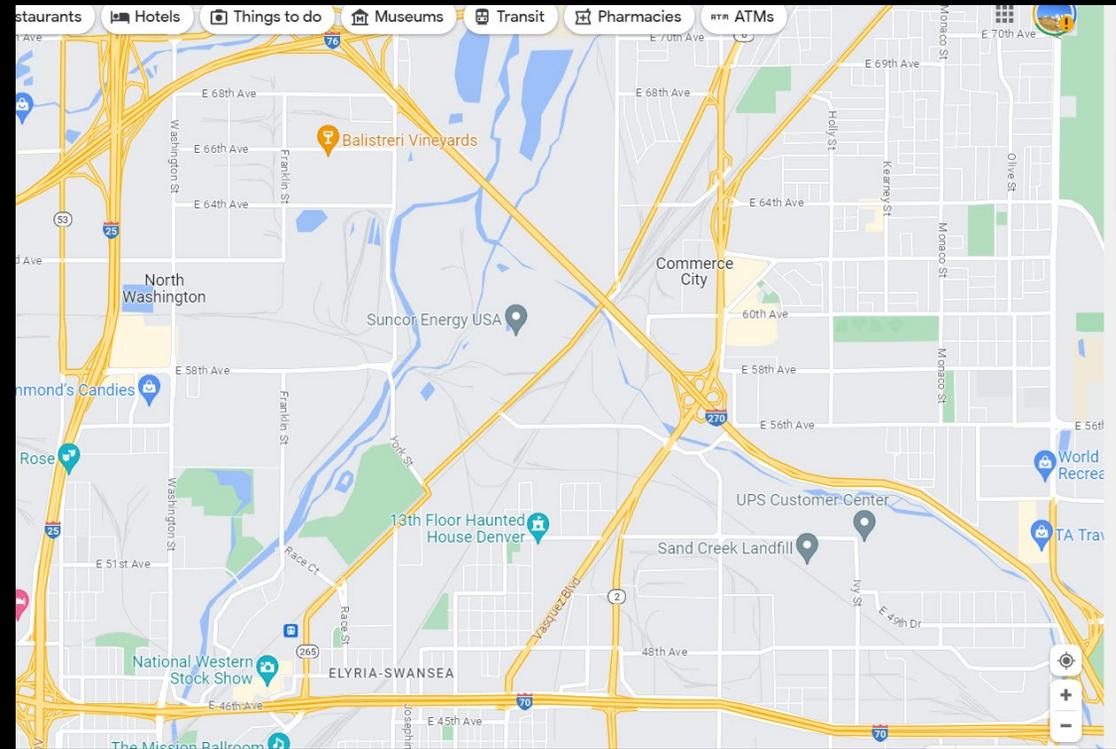
- **High** High/Medium wage jobs are near light rail
- **Low/Low-Med** wage jobs in centers and, not in centers are further from bus and rail transit
- Low-wage jobs, transit, and affordable housing are not proximate

# Unsubsidized Affordable housing, persistence of redlining, and little to no transit

- Because of existing car use and presence of major arterials and highways, market studies for micromobility deem these places unsuitable for demand-responsive transit, despite needs for youth, people with disabilities, older adults, and single-car, but multi-worker households.
- Opportunities for community-planned and operated micro-transit in these areas



Valverde, West Denver

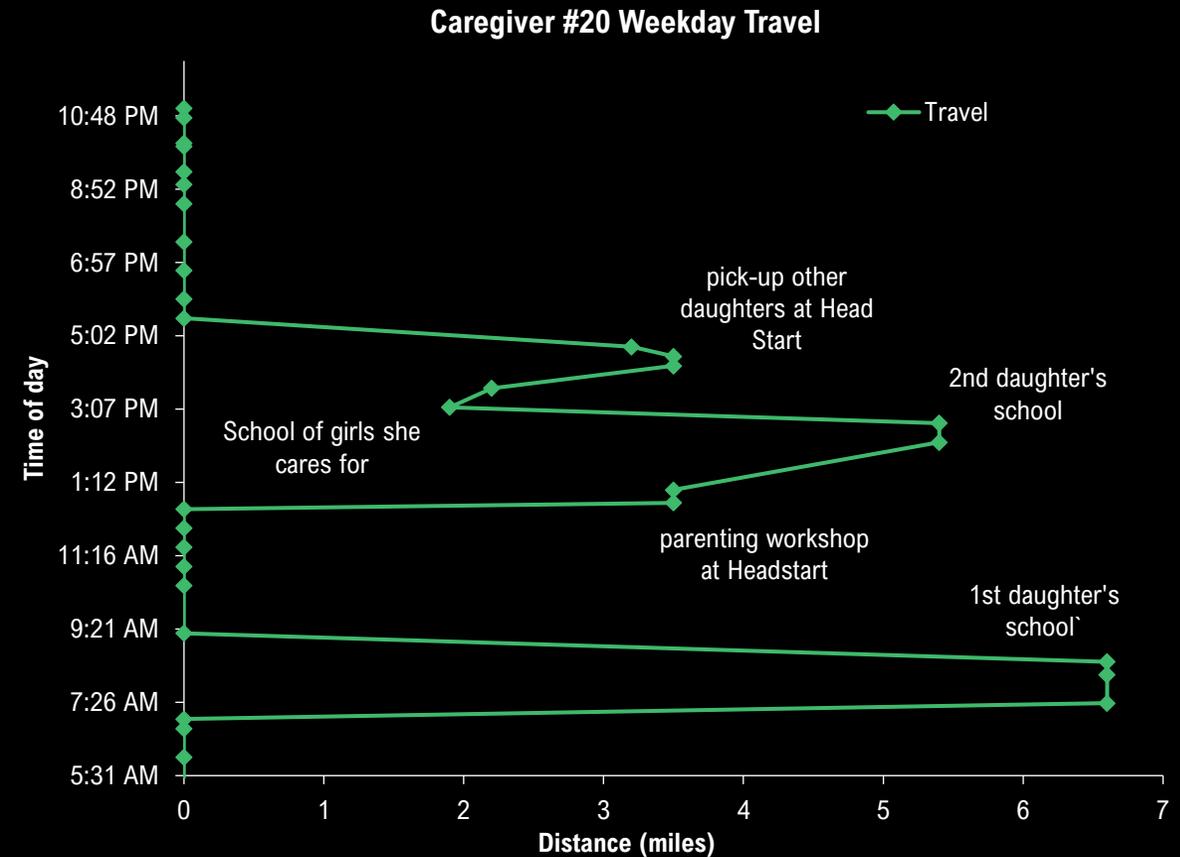


Globeville, North Denver

# We don't plan transit for working parents of pre-k to 5th

- If transit is available, traveling from affordable housing, to schools of choice, childcare, and low wage work, can double or triple trip times.
- **Time poverty:** the opportunity costs caused by extraordinary travel times, which directly affects household well-being.

Daily time-space prism of parent and childcare provider using transit, earning <\$25,000/year



Daily miles: 52

Daily time on transit: 200 minutes

# Researcher to Watch: Hildana Liben

McNair Scholar and CU Denver  
Undergraduate Poli Sci major

Studying safety and equity across the transit system from the perspective of a woman of color and member of a community with low-moderate incomes.

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RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES  
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COMMUNITIES

**103**

**BACKGROUND**  
The Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) provides principles for transit agencies to practice that cultivate an inviting and safe environment for riders. The policy handbook approved by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) states US transit systems lack resources to maintain satisfactory security measures. CPTED works to overcome these shortcomings through establishing "early" design and planning guidelines to reduce potential incidents. The objective of this study is to conduct field research observing five Regional Transportation District (RTD) light rail stations in low-income communities and five stations in upper-middle to higher-income communities located within the Denver Metro area to observe if CPTED guidelines are properly executed and interpret if these guidelines provide an adequate evaluation tool via a qualitative study conducted by myself as a participant-observer.

**RESEARCH AIM**  
Are Denver transit rider's experiencing equitable safety measures across varying economic backgrounds?  
What are the different subjective experiences of perceived safety?

The data collected from each station will be compared to the CPTED principles to answer the question on whether Denver transit riders are receiving equitable and appropriate safety measures across the RTD system.

Conducting this research will provide RTD with the rider's perspective, situated in the identity of persons from underreported groups, which I and my co-researcher represent.

By providing a systematic review of the experience of transit riders from underrepresented groups, this study will reveal inconsistencies between the agency's service representation, rider's experiences, and national standards to properly evaluate and address the gap in transit experiences.

**KEY FINDINGS**  
Regional Transportation District's official website ensures the safety of their transit riders, BUT it focuses on safety while riding vehicles, not waiting for vehicles at transit stations....

"The safety and security of our riders is a top priority. We have implemented several measures to improve your security while riding RTD"

**STUDY DESIGN**  
Survey Question Examples  
A scale from 1-6 will be used, 1 being "strongly disagree" and 6 being "agree"

Does the art/architectural design create an inviting environment?  
Grey and black colors  
Standard designs  
Dark and tucked away

Visible trash in the surrounding areas?  
Photos will be utilized to help determine ratings

**Method**  
1. Visit RTD stations independently and fill out surveys assessing locations while recording journal observations.  
2. Revisit locations partnered with a co-researcher who will complete the same surveys and record their own personal observations.

Phase I: Researcher A rides Denver transit system  
Phase II: Both Researchers A and B visit the same 10 stations  
Researchers A and B co-evaluate collected data from 10 stations

**EXPECTED FINDINGS**  
Colorado Station - RTD Light Rail  
An example of "NO 'Eyes on the Street'"  
Visit empty space  
No foot traffic  
No visible commercial activity

24th and Mission - BART Bus Station  
An example of "Eyes on the Street" theory applied  
Sidewalk vendors near the transit location  
Foot traffic  
Lots of eyes on the street due to economic activity

**REFERENCES**  
1. "A New Way of Understanding Eyes on the Street" Research.com  
2. "How to Increase Eyes on the Street" Research.com  
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