

## **Job sprawl in Northeast Ohio: The impact of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority**

Access to opportunity is a bedrock American value. But access to many opportunities varies widely depending on where one lives. This is especially true with access to good jobs.

A 2015 Brookings Institution report on [“The growing distance between people and jobs in metropolitan America”](#) found that Northeast Ohio was placing jobs out of reach faster than 96 metropolitan regions. Between 2000 and 2012, the number of jobs within the typical commute distance for U.S. residents living in a major metro area fell by 7%. For the Cleveland-Lorain-Mentor region, job proximity fell by 26% in that same time period.

It confirmed the findings from The Fund for Our Economic Future’s [“What matters to metros”](#) report. Access to jobs, the fund writes, is one of the three pillars of strong regional economies. Unfortunately, the region’s “growth” in jobs is leaving a segment of the population behind.

“Job growth in Northeast’s Ohio’s major cities has occurred predominantly in the suburbs, leaving many residents, particularly low-income residents less likely to own a vehicle, at a disadvantage,” the report concludes.

### **Local public policy and job sprawl**

Given the importance of access, it's vital that public policy support economic development in good locations -- that is, locations that are close to population density and are well served by public transit. To see if this is happening in Northeast Ohio, GreenCityBlueLake developed a methodology to measure whether new developments are improving the region's overall transit access and walkability. Then, as a first example, we applied the methodology to 64 projects receiving publicly subsidized low-interest bonds from the [Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority](#) during the period of 1993 to 2015.

We used [WalkScore](#) to provide some insight on how many basic needs can be met at those locations for populations who rely on or simply choose to walk, bike and take transit. The locations where companies secured bonds from the port are then compared to the average WalkScore for Cleveland.

The WalkScore tool was also used to supply data on the average transit time from the port sites to the center of Cleveland (using Public Square as a point of reference).

A summary of our findings:

#### WalkScore (average)

Project sites that received port development bonds -- 46.5

City of Cleveland -- 57\*

*\*WalkScore considers Cleveland's score "somewhat walkable." By comparison, Pittsburgh's WalkScore is 60; Chicago's WalkScore is 75.*

#### Transit time to central business district (average)

From port projects -- 42.7 minutes

Standard metric for transit journey to work -- 30 minutes\*

*\*Industry standard metric for transit access comes from the study, "Access Across America: Transit 2014" conducted by University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies. It looked at how many jobs are within a 30-minute transit ride at the Census block level in 50 metro areas including Cleveland. The study can be found here:*

<http://www.cts.umn.edu/research/featured/access>

Why does this matter? For the person who cannot afford a car but who gains employment at a site where the port invested, we found that 50% of locations are within a 30-minute transit ride of downtown Cleveland. But that means 50% of the sites that the port supported would take more than 30 minutes to commute from the center of Cleveland by a bus or train. If a person living in Cleveland without a car got a job at one of those sites, he or she would face the daunting prospect of arriving on time with an average daily commute of 59 minutes on RTA.

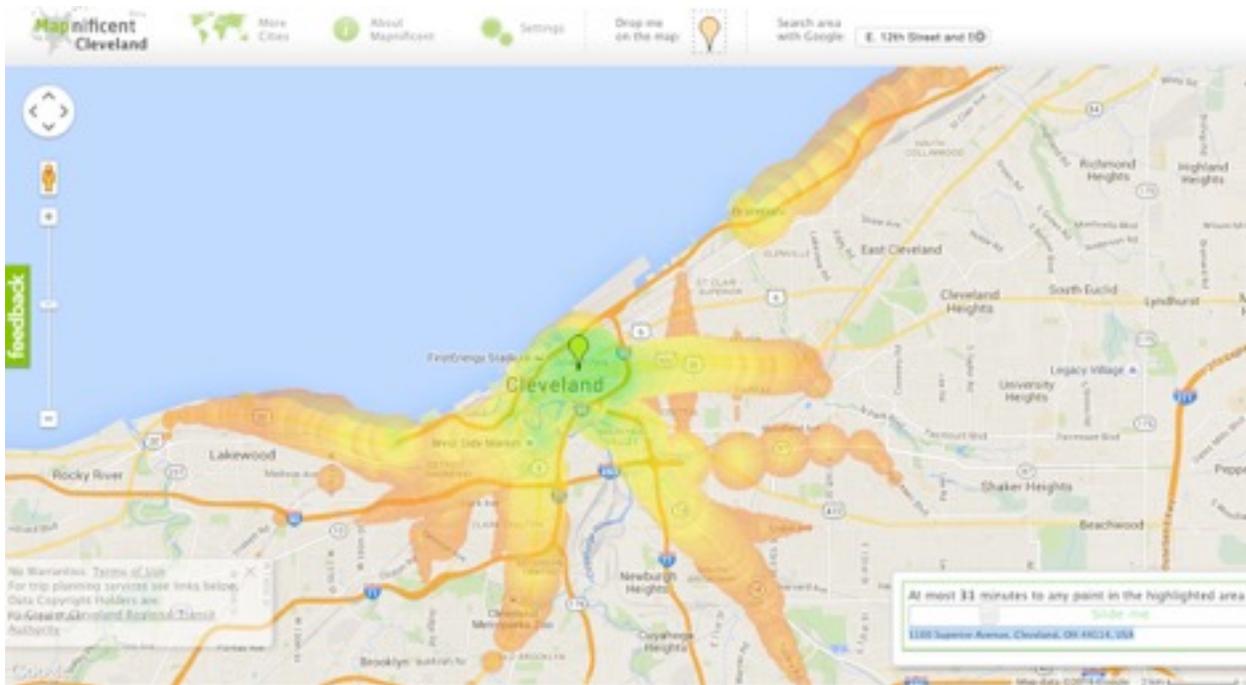
Again, this is a snapshot of half of the port supported sites. It calls into question, though, how public transportation can best play a role in getting Northeast Ohio workers to and from work in an environmentally preferred, economically and time-efficient manner.

What if workers at these job sites wanted to walk somewhere off campus; what necessities could they access? At 32 of the locations where the port invested, the density of places within a 10-minute walk is low. This is relevant because attitudes about where companies locate are changing. A younger, well-educated work force is expressing their preference for walkable locations, evidenced in the double-digit decline in miles driven and numerous reports about the tastes of Millennials.

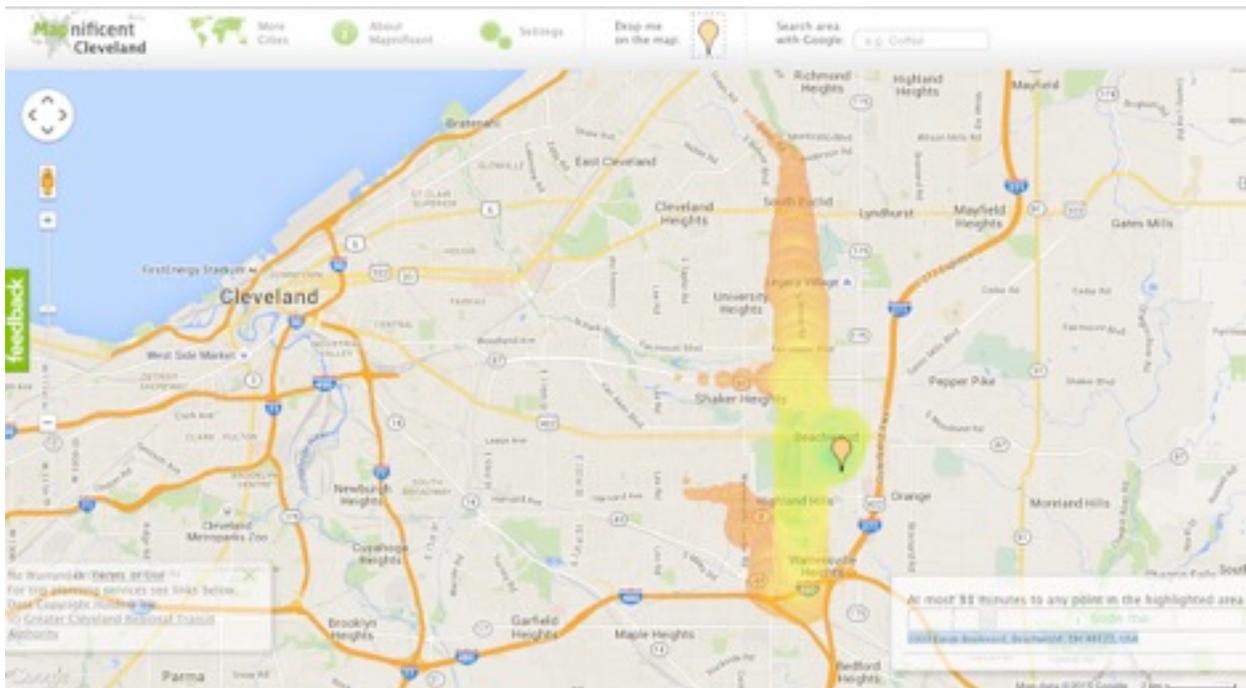
### **Two case studies**

Here's a snapshot of how this plays out for two developments aided by the port: Eaton Corporation and American Greetings. They rank in the top ten largest port projects by dollar figure and represent big corporate relocations from more central, transit-connected areas to those primarily served by single-occupant vehicles.

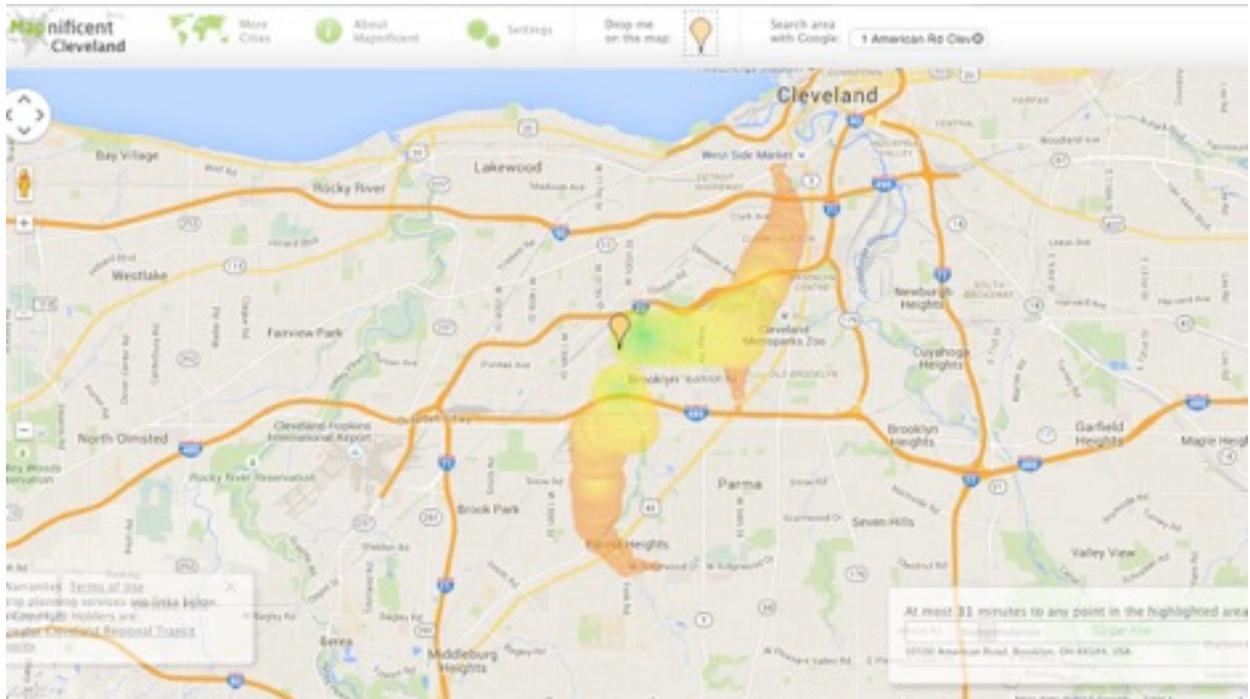
Using [Mapnificent](#), a website with publicly available transit schedule and route data, we created the following transit "heat maps" to compare how much area is connected to Eaton's and American Greetings' former and current headquarters with a 30-minute public transit ride. There is considerable difference in the area covered.



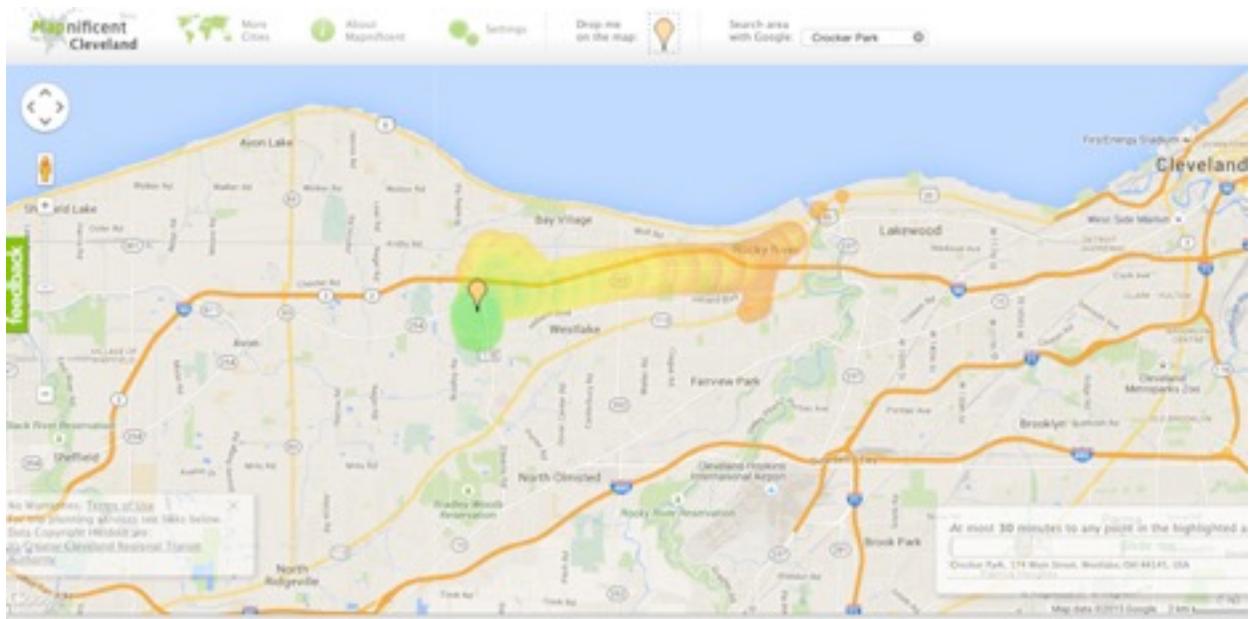
Transit access from Eaton Corporation's former headquarters at E. 12th Street and Superior in downtown Cleveland



Transit access from Eaton Corporation's new headquarters in Beachwood / Chagrin / I-271 corridor



Transit access from American Greetings' old headquarters in Brooklyn (an inner-ring suburb of Cleveland)



Transit access from American Greetings' new headquarters in Westlake/Crocker Park. Color on the maps show a 30-minute transit trip at 8 a.m. with a maximum of 10 minute walk on either end. The map tool works from data provided by [RTA](#) in the [Google Transit format](#).

The maps do not speak to where current employees of the two employers live. It could very well be that the net impact on vehicle miles traveled to the new suburban main campuses in private automobiles will decrease overall for Eaton and American Greetings based on the miles it takes to drive to the campus from home -- and that might be a good environmental outcome. But how would someone arrive at the new campus via the bus or train? What happens to take home pay if gas prices spike and a car becomes less affordable?

### **Commutes and economic mobility**

Findings such as these are notable in light of recent reports that access to employment has a disproportionate impact on low- to moderate-income households.

"In a large, continuing study of upward mobility based at Harvard, commuting time has emerged as the single strongest factor in the odds of escaping poverty," *The New York Times* reports. "The longer an average commute in a given county, the worse the chances of low-income families there moving up the ladder."

Also, Brookings notes, households that are closer to jobs have an edge in remaining employed.

Combined, these factors raise significant questions about not only the sustainable accessibility of corporate campuses, but future recruitment of employees to both of these locations.

It is also likely that both of these employers will ask that the RTA increase service or add new service to their new locations, something that is difficult to justify after massive service cuts and budget issues over the past few years to existing RTA routes.

### **Conclusions and recommendation**

While the port has supported many projects that reinvest in the urban core and create walkable, transit-friendly places that improve job access, about half of recent projects have the effect of reducing access to economic opportunity.

This methodology can be applied to other economic development programs, such as Jobs Ohio.

It's vital for all economic development programs to take these issues into account. Too often, such programs are "spatially agnostic." They don't care where the new jobs appear, as long as they are in a particular political jurisdiction. But the particular location matters a lot. Public investment should not promote job sprawl that moves opportunities away from the people who need opportunity the most.

A secondary trend that emerges from the analysis of the port's investment is the direct investment in parking. Structured and surface parking was added in nearly all cases. In seven deals, the creation of structured parking was either a significant or sole purpose.

Of particular concern is the supply of parking attached to developments in transit-rich areas of the region. As an agent of change, the port may consider how parking induces more driving and carbon emissions from single-occupant vehicle use. One potential solution to explore could be a policy overlay to its development finance projects that encourages sustainable forms of transportation. As cities and suburbs across Northeast Ohio begin to revisit parking requirements in zoning codes, the port could support where parking maximums, pedestrian zoning overlays and transit-oriented development plans attempt to reduce the supply of parking (i.e. in appropriate locations within 1/2 mile radius of a high-frequency transit station) and perhaps offer development bonuses for consideration of local plans or recent investments in transit.

### Sources

Location, WalkScore and Transit Time of development projects receiving bonds issued by the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority from 1993 - 2015

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17EI9Ld3eOonM4ywei0HhyBk28yTeDrRonP8Cc9SsKE/pubhtml?gid=0&single=true>

Greater Cleveland jobs access and transit mobility map (University of Minnesota)

[https://a.tiles.mapbox.com/v4/ctswebrequest.jlhh2m2p/page.html?access\\_token=pk.eyJ1IjoiY3Rzd2VicmVxdWVzdCIsImEiOiJTb19VUHM0In0.muGg6tMDG4NOGrV4qQQ8yw#10/41.4288/-81.6174](https://a.tiles.mapbox.com/v4/ctswebrequest.jlhh2m2p/page.html?access_token=pk.eyJ1IjoiY3Rzd2VicmVxdWVzdCIsImEiOiJTb19VUHM0In0.muGg6tMDG4NOGrV4qQQ8yw#10/41.4288/-81.6174)

The Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium [\*Vibrant NEO 2040: A vision, framework and action products for our future?\*](#)

Salt Lake City is an example of a city that has embraced transit and land use planning. It has one of the [best job access](#) rates in the country. [Regional leaders think](#) that is why economic growth in the region has been more equitable than most regions, with larger gains across all income groups.

Another example is Minneapolis which is growing five times faster than Chicago. The reason is jobs and economic growth. The Metropolitan Council confirms that two of the keys to their success was eliminating regional competition (job sprawl) and smart transportation policies that reduce inefficiency.

Enterprise Community Partners studied jobs access In its 2015 report, "Promoting Opportunity through Equitable Transit-Oriented Development: Making the Case." Enterprise recommends that cities close the jobs access gap through a land-use policy

that recognizes the inherent efficiencies of transit to move lots of people through an urbanized area.