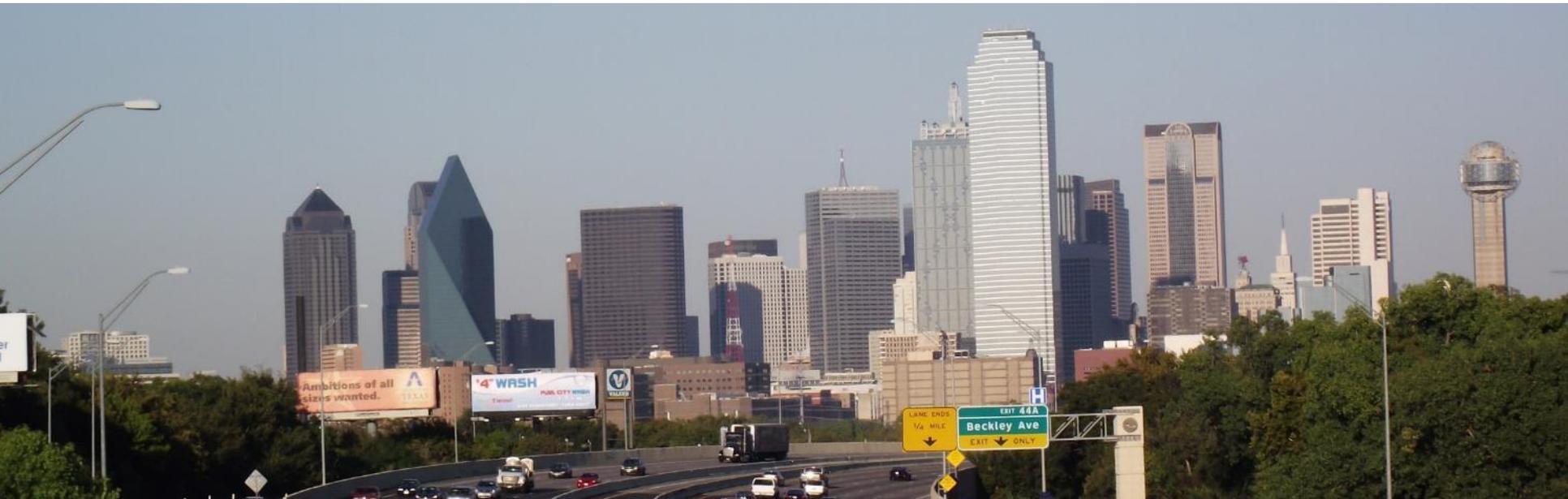


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# Driving to Opportunity

## Transportation in the lives of low-income families

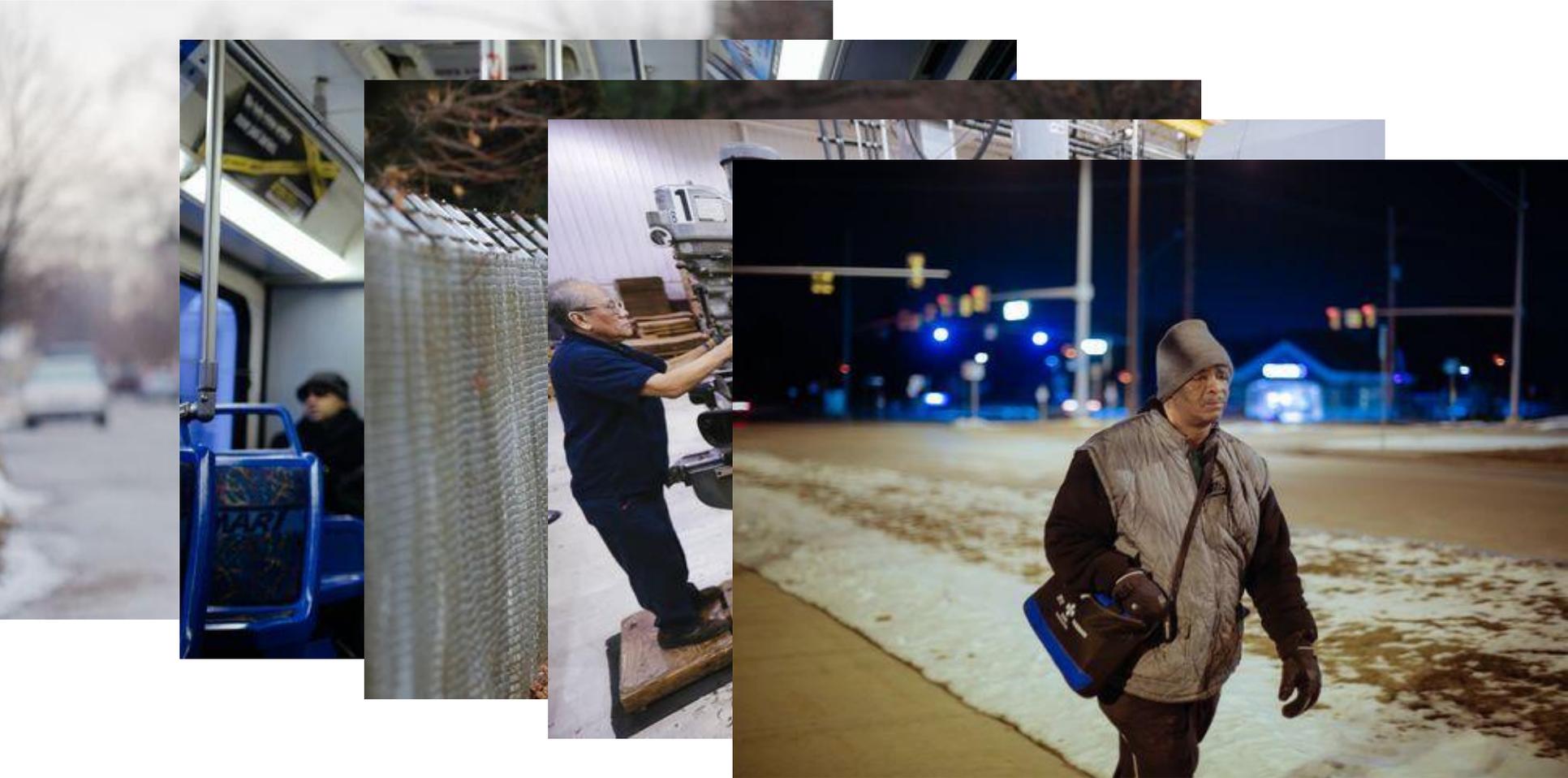


Dallas Skyline [CC BY 2.0], medea\_material, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skyline\\_of\\_Dallas,\\_TX.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skyline_of_Dallas,_TX.jpg)

*Rolf Pendall, Ph.D., Urban Institute*

**The Road to Economic Mobility: Removing Transportation Barriers for Working Families, Dallas, Texas, February 20, 2018**

# The extremes of commuting without a car: James Robertson's 21-mile Detroit walk



Photos: Ryan Garza. Used by permission of the *Detroit Free Press*.  
Original story: Bill Laitner, Heart and sole: Detrouer walks 21 miles in  
work commute, *Detroit Free Press*, Jan. 31, 2015.

**We have better things to do than spend so many hours just getting where we need to go.**



Mother's Day [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0], Elvis Kennedy <https://www.flickr.com/photos/elviskennedy/5697684827>.

# Every day is a busy day.



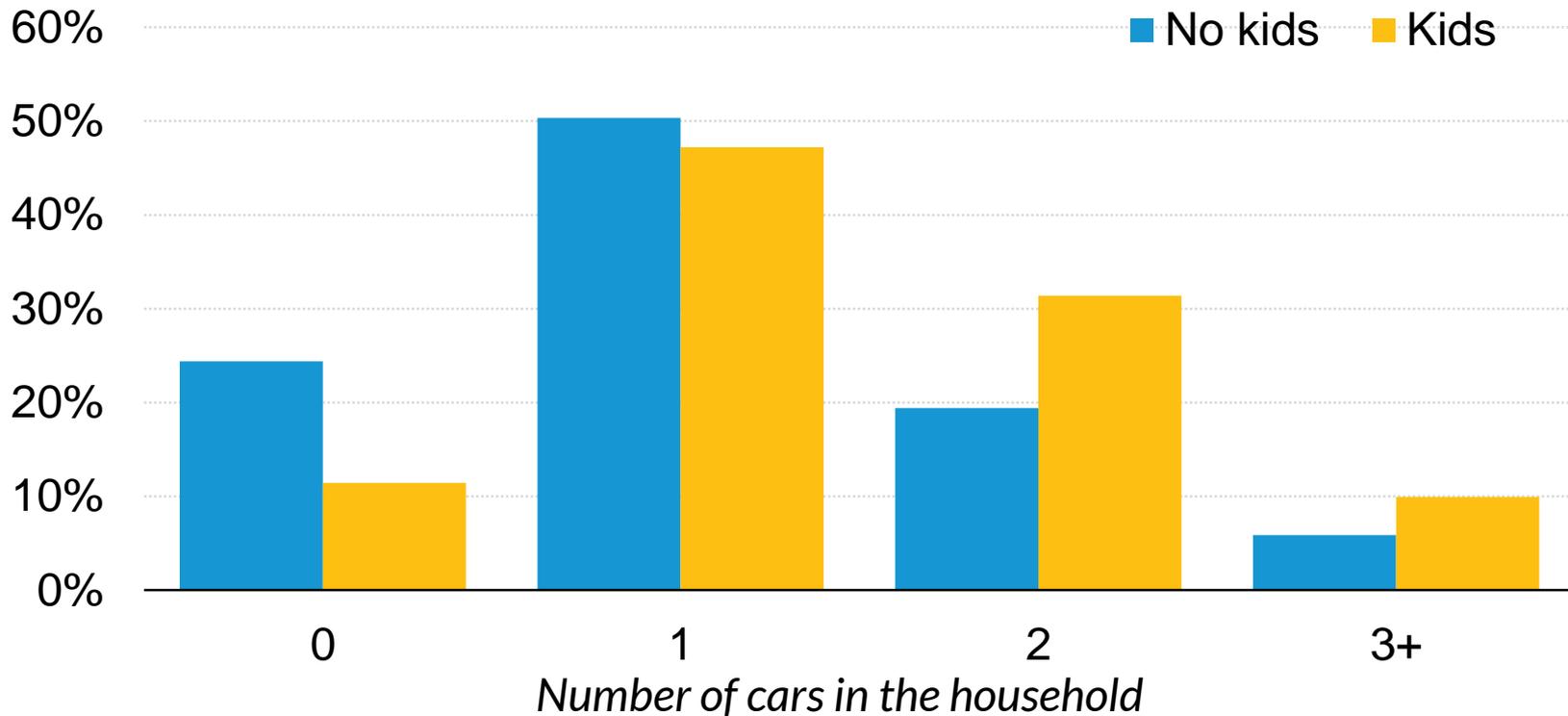
Falcarragh-Spar convenience store off N56 [CC BY-SA 2.0], Joseph Mischyshyn, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Falcarragh\\_Spar\\_convenience\\_store\\_off\\_N56\\_-\\_geograph.org.uk\\_-\\_1332763.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Falcarragh_Spar_convenience_store_off_N56_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1332763.jpg)

Kensington Gardens Apartment Complex [Public domain], Pubdog (Own work), [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kensington\\_Gardens\\_Apartment\\_Complex\\_Apr\\_11.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kensington_Gardens_Apartment_Complex_Apr_11.JPG).

# That's why even households in poverty get a car when they can, especially when they have kids.

Percent of Texas households in poverty who own the specified number of cars

Children under 18 in the household



Source: U.S. Census, 2012-2016 American Community, extracted 2/15/2018 from IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).

# It isn't easy for low-income families to afford a car.



Buy Here, Pay Here [CC BY 2.0], John Lloyd,  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/hugo90/6980713459>



Booted [CC BY-SA 2.0], Kim Scarborough,  
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/kim\\_scarborough/1417670067/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/kim_scarborough/1417670067/).



New Jersey State Police Traffic Stop [CC BY SA 2.0], versageek,  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:New\\_Jersey\\_State\\_Police\\_Traffic\\_Stop.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:New_Jersey_State_Police_Traffic_Stop.jpg)



Car breakdown [CC BY 2.0], Andrij Bulba  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/andrijbulba/978245492>

# But for low-income households, car access pays off in neighborhood quality...



Craddock Park, Dallas [CC-BY-SA-3.0], drunguy8800,  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ACraddock\\_Park.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ACraddock_Park.jpg)



Maple Hill ES [CC-BY-SA-3.0], Daniel Case,  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maple\\_Hill\\_Elementary\\_School.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maple_Hill_Elementary_School.jpg)



Do not cross [CC BY-SA 2.0], Yumi Kimura,  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ADo\\_Not\\_Cross%2C\\_Crime\\_Scene.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ADo_Not_Cross%2C_Crime_Scene.jpg)

Source: Pendall, R., Hayes, C., Dawkins, C., Jeon, J. S., Knaap, E., Blumenberg, E., & Smart, M. (2015). Driving to opportunities: Voucher users, cars, and movement to sustainable neighborhoods. *Cityscape*, 17(2), 57.

## ... and in employment.

Compared to families without car access, HUD-assisted households with car access:

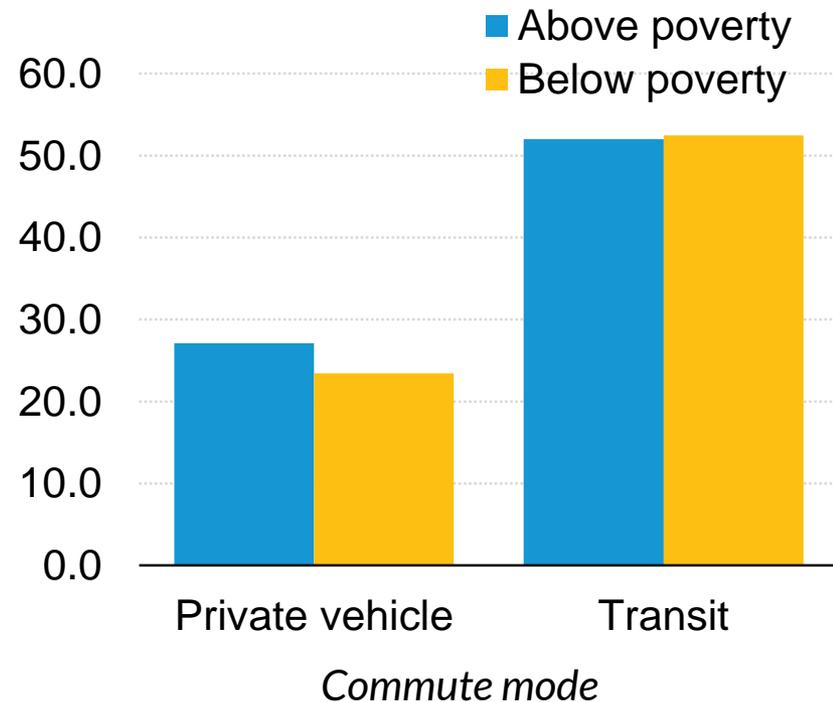
- Were more likely to get and keep jobs
- Enjoyed significantly higher wages

Good transit access also helps voucher users keep jobs.

Source: Blumenberg, E., & Pierce, G. (2014). "A driving factor in mobility? Transportation's role in connecting subsidized housing and employment outcomes in the moving to opportunity (MTO) program." *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 80(1), 52-66.

Low-income Texans take more than twice as long to commute with transit as they do with cars.

*Average minutes, commute from home to work, TX*



Source: U.S. Census, 2012-2016 American Community, extracted 2/15/2018 from IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).

# Principles: Transportation policies and investments for economic mobility

Plan for people, not just modes.

- Like all households, low-income households are diverse.
- Get over “cars vs. transit”; leverage all modes to meet economic and social mobility goals.

Improve low-income people’s transportation access.

- Make sure transit improves access for low-income people.
- Reduce barriers to driving and burdens of car ownership.

Build cities that support diverse travel.

- Plan mixed use, mixed income, higher-density neighborhoods to support transit and reduce trip length for drivers.

# Thank you!

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