

## **For Returning Military Vets, Transportation Is Key to Reintegration as Civilians**

Mineta National Transit Research Consortium's study of New Jersey vets can apply nationwide

**San Jose, Calif., November 17, 2014** – Returning military veterans and support agencies must consider transportation access to essential services, lest returning military veterans can have a more difficult time reintegrating into civilian life. Transit-oriented development (TOD) may provide a viable option for veterans with disability to help meet their post-service needs independently and successfully. That is the conclusion of the Mineta National Transit Research Consortium's latest peer-reviewed research report, [\*Exploring Transportation, Employment, Housing, and Location Issues for New Jersey Veterans with Disability\*](#). The study included interviews with personnel at veterans' services organizations, along with focus-group interviews with veterans themselves. Principal investigators were Stephanie DiPetrillo and Andrea Lubin of Rutgers University. The free report can be downloaded from <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1144.html>

“Mobility limitations can adversely affect veterans’ ability to reach medical services and employment,” said Ms. DiPetrillo. “Isolation, both physical and emotional, can make reintegration more difficult. Adequately addressing transportation concerns can allow veterans with disabilities to more easily meet their diverse needs. Promoting transportation independence, through access to public transportation and locational efficiency, is one way to meet these needs.”

The research team conducted a series of structured interviews/listening sessions with diverse public and private stakeholders in New Jersey and beyond related to the US veteran community. Specific attention was given to identifying and interviewing entities that assist working-age veterans with disabilities.

The majority agreed that transition to civilian life for many veterans involves learning to address a range of physical and/or mental/emotional illnesses or conditions. Seeking treatment is often difficult if transportation is not readily available. This factor also is a significant obstacle to finding gainful employment, stable housing, services, continuing education opportunities, and the ability to reconnect with family, friends, and community. Many interviewees emphasized that locating where public transit is limited or nonexistent can create significant obstacles for transition to civilian life and contributes to the high costs of providing transportation.

### **Among the report's recommendations:**

- Create a one-stop resource center to support veterans' reintegration. This would guide a veteran through the discharge process and continue to provide consistent support from a single point of contact for the extended transition period.
- Establish an exploratory task force at the state level to discuss holistic approaches to veteran housing that can support multiple needs, including housing, employment, and transportation.
- Work to foster a more informed dialogue within the state and throughout the nation about the need to pursue holistic approaches to serve veterans seeking reintegration. Developing a media strategy to communicate study findings will contribute to this undertaking.
- Pursue additional research, gathering data on the transportation and siting characteristics of successful veteran transit-oriented development. This would help communities establish

facilities that would support veterans' transition.

The authors found that reintegrating with civilian society is daunting for all veterans and can easily be overwhelming without appropriate information and supports. Veterans coping with the additional strain of service-related disabilities must address and overcome even more obstacles.

### **Download the full report**

The 119-page report, including two figures and nine tables, is available for free, no-registration; download at <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1144.html>.

**Tweet this:** #Mineta research on #military vets shows that #transportation is critical to civilian reintegration <http://ow.ly/DAPi9>

### **ABOUT THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**

**Stephanie DiPetrillo** is Senior Research Specialist at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, Rutgers University. She has more than ten years of experience in transportation and urban planning research, examining the connections between transportation and land use and their impacts on society. She holds a BA in economics and a Master of City and Regional Planning from Rutgers, as well as a Master of Architecture from the NJIT.

**Andrea Lubin** is a senior research specialist at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, Rutgers University, with more than ten years of experience in transportation policy analysis, research, and outreach, with the focus of her work often on disability issues. She received her undergraduate degree from Tufts University and a Master of Science in public policy from the Eagleton Institute/Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University.

### **ABOUT THE MINETA NATIONAL TRANSIT RESEARCH CONSORTIUM**

The Mineta National Transit Research Consortium (MNTRC) is composed of nine university transportation centers led by the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University. The Consortium was organized in January 2012 after winning a competition sponsored by the US Department of Transportation (DOT) to create consortia tasked with "Delivering Solutions that Improve Public Transportation." Member universities include Bowling Green State University, Grand Valley State University, Howard University, Penn State University, Rutgers University, San Jose State University, University of Detroit Mercy, University of Nevada Las Vegas, and University of Toledo. Visit [transweb.sjsu.edu/mntrc](http://transweb.sjsu.edu/mntrc)

### **ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE**

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) conducts research, education, and information transfer programs regarding surface transportation policy and management issues, especially related to transit. Congress established MTI in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. MTI won national re-designation competitions in 2002, 2006 and 2012. The Institute is funded through the US Secretary of Transportation's Research and Technology Office, US Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration, the California Department of Transportation's Division of Research, Innovation and Systems Development, and public and private grants. In 2006 the US Department of Homeland Security selected MTI as a National Transportation Security Center of Excellence. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI, the lead institute for the nine-university Mineta National Transit Research Consortium, is affiliated with San Jose (CA) State University's College of Business. Visit [transweb.sjsu.edu](http://transweb.sjsu.edu)

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