

## Improving Pathways to Transit for People with Disabilities

*The Bus is Only Accessible if You Can Get to the Bus Stop*

**San Jose, Calif., August 15, 2016** — The Mineta Transportation Institute of San Jose State University just released a study in which researchers from universities in California, New Jersey, Florida and Australia looked for ways to make the infrastructure surrounding public transit more accessible to people with disabilities. The investigators recognized that it wasn't enough to make buses and trains accessible; the pathways to those stations and stops must also be accessible, or people with disabilities wouldn't be able to get there to use them. The research team explored strategies to increase access to the built environment surrounding transit facilities in five United States transportation systems. From those five case studies, they developed a list of policy recommendations for future improvements to pathways to transit. They also addressed the challenges of making changes beyond transit agency property that allow people with disabilities fuller access to public transportation, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The research team focused their study on five agencies: Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA), Memphis, Tennessee; Broward County Transit (BCT), Florida; Link Transit, Wenatchee, Washington; TriMet, Portland, Oregon; and NJ TRANSIT, Newark and New Brunswick, New Jersey. Findings showed that the five profiled transit agencies employed seventeen projects and programs to improve the accessibility of the pathways to transportation for users with disabilities. Positive change was achieved through the use of evaluation and planning practices, physical improvements to station or stop areas, adoption and implementation of Complete Street policies, and enhancement of passenger capacity through initiatives such as passenger travel training.

The resulting policy recommendations from the study's authors is a multi-pronged approach toward improving pathways to transit that allows agencies to: ***understand the needs*** of their consumers with disabilities through direct outreach to them, evaluation of routes, and ongoing data collection to monitor progress; ***pursue partnerships*** with advocacy groups, metropolitan planning organizations, and local governments to promote connectivity between land use and transit and to allow for cost sharing; ***communicate*** their plans to promote information sharing; ***approach cost and funding issues creatively*** by exploring less expensive means to meet goals and pooling resources; ***think holistically about projects*** to more closely align transportation services with consumer needs; and ***incorporate new technologies*** while taking into consideration long-term costs, reuse of materials and the use of green materials.

Ultimately, say the investigators, "improving the pathways to transit for people with disabilities enhances travel for all users, creating (ideally) a seamless trip from origin to destination."

### ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

**Stephanie DiPetrillo, M.Arch, MCRP** and **Andrea Lubin, MS** are Senior Research Specialists at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, Rutgers University.

**Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Ph.D.** is a Professor of Urban Planning and Associate

Dean of the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. **Carla Salehian, MA** is a Project and Research Manager at UCLA's cityLAB. **Stephen C. Gibson, MURP** is currently Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture in the Architecture, Landscape, and Visual Arts Department at the University of Western Australia. **Kristine Williams, MUP, AICP** is Program Director, Planning and Corridor Management Research at the Center for Urban Transportation Research, University of South Florida. **Theodore Trent Green, M.Arch** is an Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at the School of Architecture and Community Design – University of South Florida.

#### **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 Department of Transportation, the US Department of Homeland Security, the California Department of Transportation, and public and private grants. 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 Lucas College and Graduate School of Business. Visit [transweb.sjsu.edu](http://transweb.sjsu.edu)

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