

# Older Adults Perceptions Regarding Transportation Services in San José, CA: Access, Barriers, and Innovations

Project 1738  
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Older adults living in cities may have never driven, or may have stopped as they aged. The purpose of this study was to examine older adults' barriers to the use of public transportation, to identify programs and services that best meet transportation needs, and to obtain suggestions for improvements or innovations to allow them to participate more fully in community activities.

## Study Methods

Four focus groups, with a total of 25

participants, were held in three locations in San Jose, CA.

*While buses are physically accessible for older adults, the walk to the bus stop, cost, and amount of time required for trips remains challenging for seniors.*

## Findings

While the older adults in the focus groups were able to use public transportation for shopping, medical services and other destinations, they expressed a number of concerns. Only 48% of the participants reported they were in good or excellent health, and 56% found it somewhat hard or not possible to walk six blocks. Canes or walkers were used by 52% of participants. Concerns expressed by the groups were related to distance they needed to walk to use public transportation, comfort and availability of waiting areas, frequency of service, bus driver training, personal safety, and cost of ridership. Overall, the participants expressed satisfaction with their ability to reach stores, medical offices, senior centers, and church, although weekend travel was more limited because of limited bus and train schedules.

## Policy Recommendations

It is recommended that older adult riders be involved in the planning and implementation phase of changes to ensure their unique needs are met. The participants lived in an urban area with relatively close access to transportation lines, and additional study is needed to examine the needs of older adults in less urban parts of the city.

## About the Authors

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## To Learn More

For more details about the study, download the full report at [transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1738](https://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1738)



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