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## Mineta Transportation Institute Publishes Report on How to Ease Women's Fear of Transportation Environments

*Principal researcher Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Ph.D. analyzed the reasons women avoid some travel and offered mitigations.*

**San Jose, Calif., November 19, 2009** – The [Mineta Transportation Institute](http://www.mineta.edu) (MTI) has published Report 09-01, [\*How to Ease Women's Fear of Transportation Environments: Case Studies and Best Practices\*](#). This study examines women's safety on transit, with a thorough literature review on the topic, in-depth interviews with representatives of national interest groups, a survey of U.S. transit operators, and presentation of case studies and best practices from the U.S. and abroad.

“Most survey respondents believed that women have distinct safety and security needs, but only one-third of them believed that transit agencies should implement specific programs to address these needs,” said Dr. Loukaitou-Sideris. “The survey also suggested that there is a significant mismatch between the safety and security needs and desires of female passengers and the types and locations of strategies that transit agencies use. However, the survey of transit operators found that only a handful of agencies in the U.S. currently have programs that target the safety and security needs of women riders.”

The relationship between women's fear and the built environment has been a research topic. The findings have shown that women feel unsafe in many public spaces, including transportation environments such as desolate bus stops and train cars, dimly lit park-and-ride lots, and parking structures. Overcrowded transit vehicles also stress many women, who often avoid them by changing their transportation modes and travel patterns. This is especially true for particular groups of women, including those of a certain age, income, sexual orientation, and residence.

The women who were interviewed offered design, policing, security technology, education, and outreach strategies that would make women riders feel safer in public settings. Some of these initiatives already are used outside the U.S.

Based on lessons from those initiatives, as well as from the women's interviews, the study includes a list of recommendations, such as including women's opinions in transit planning, collaboration between transit agencies and non-profit groups, prioritizing safety and security needs in the transportation system, and other points.

The free document can be downloaded from [www.transweb.sjsu.edu](http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu). Click “Research” and then “Publications.” Scroll down to the report.

## **ABOUT THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

Dr. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris is professor and former chair, Department of Urban Planning, UCLA. She holds a doctorate in urban planning and master's degrees in architecture and urban planning from the University of Southern California. She specializes in urban design, and physical and land use planning. She has published extensively on issues of downtown development, inner-city revitalization, cultural uses of parks and open spaces, transit-oriented design, and transit safety.

She has consulted to the Transportation Research Board, Federal Highway Administration, Southern California Association of Governments, Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative, Transportation and Education Ministries of Greece, and many municipal governments and organizations on issues of urban design, land use and transportation, and higher education. She coauthored *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space* (MIT Press: 2009) and *Urban Design Downtown: Poetics and Politics of Form* (University of California Press: 1998), and co-edited *Jobs and Economic Development in Minority Communities* (Temple University Press: 2006).

The research team included Amanda Bornstein, who holds a Master's degree from the UCLA Department of Urban Planning; Camille Fink and Linda Samuels, both Ph.D. students, UCLA Department of Urban Planning; and Shahin Gerami, Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences, and Coordinator, Program of Women's Studies, San José State University.

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

The [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under TEA-21 and again under SAFETEA-LU. The institute is funded by Congress through the US DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by other public and private grants and donations, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The US DOT selected MTI as a national "Center of Excellence" following a 2002 competition.

The Institute has a Board of Trustees whose internationally-respected members represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from a board assessment of the industry's unmet needs and led directly to choosing the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. MTI conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer focusing on multi-modal surface transportation policy and management issues. Visit [www.transweb.sjsu.edu](http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu)

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