

Session: How to capture accessibility benefits in transport planning

25 May 2023, 09:00-10:30 | [Session outline](#)

Nobody should be excluded from the benefits of modern mobility. To ensure accessibility in transport planning, a comprehensive and inclusive approach is necessary, taking into account the specific requirements of different groups. In doing so, it is important to challenge the current transport planning paradigm – which primarily focuses on the male business commuter.

Improving mobility options, service reliability and safety are crucial goals in expanding transportation in cities. But the optimal allocation of resources remains a challenge. It is essential to provide appropriate transport options that accommodate diverse travel patterns. While personalised services may be more costly, operational efficiency is necessary for achieving financial sustainability, where supply and demand are well matched. Governments and decision makers should allocate adequate funds to understand and address people's accessibility needs. Prioritising investments in active and sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling, can lead to more accessible and equitable transport systems.

Affordability should be considered in addressing accessibility, as transportation costs are a significant concern for many households. Monitoring the cost of mobility for different modes and gathering disaggregated data can ensure practical and affordable solutions for all user categories. Initiatives like the Affordability Index developed by the Australian Automobile Association contribute to promoting financially accessible transport.

Access to healthcare, employment, leisure, and opportunities helps prevent disadvantages. But accessibility planning should go beyond wheelchair access and consider people with hidden disabilities such as low vision, hearing loss and neurodiverse conditions. Including these users from the beginning and capturing their experiences through post-implementation surveys are crucial. The best solution for accessibility enhancement is to adopt universal design principles that benefit everyone, rather than separate facilities for specific groups. For individuals with disabilities, driving may be one of the few viable options available, so transport planning should not fully disregard private vehicles.

International dialogue and co-operation are crucial to making accessibility a central criterion in project appraisal and policy making. Sharing ideas, lessons and best practices allows stakeholders to adapt knowledge to their local contexts. Leveraging data technology is also vital for creating efficient and accessible mobility services. Real-time data sharing and collaboration between public and private sectors minimise operational waste and maintenance costs. Incentives such as subsidies and budget redistribution can encourage private businesses to engage in accessibility planning, leading to profitable and sustainable services.

Creating accessible transport systems is an essential part of achieving decarbonisation and liveability goals. Investments should focus on both electrification of vehicles and sustainable modes in compact city development. An equal investment in public transport, walking and cycling – which benefits more people – is necessary for a just and equitable transportation future.

This session complemented the Research in Focus session on [safe and equitable transport systems](#).