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Can measuring the benefits of accessible transport enable a seamless journey?

Alice Maynard

Abstract

For disabled and older people, journeys need to be seamless – with no failures in access to destination. Because the public transport environment, including walking and cycling made accessible, the use of private cars remains essential to social inclusion. Consequently, strategies relating to private car use in relation to health, environment and land-use will be harder to implement. Greater attention needs to be paid to the detail of the “journey chain” with access considered throughout, making for seamless journeys. This attention needs to be paid in all aspects of planning as well as delivery, including in the appraisal process. In transport projects appraisal costs of providing access are monetized, but not the benefits. The author undertook an appraisal to value the benefits of step-free access for everyone and found significant economic benefits. This enhanced the benefit:cost ratio. Until the benefits of accessible transport are properly considered in appraisal, everybody across the whole planning process including appraisal, providing access will remain an uphill struggle and access throughout the journey chain will remain hit and miss.

Full Text: PDF

The Journal is housed at the University of Minnesota and sponsored by the Center for Transportation Studies

Contact JTLU | ISSN: 1938-7849

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