

SPS-05: Access and Affordability

For States

1-15 points

Goal: Enhance accessibility and affordability of the transportation system to all users and by multiple modes.

Sustainability Linkage

Improved access and affordability benefit the social and economic sustainability principles by improving employment opportunities and enhancing opportunities to interact with the community. Increasing the modal choices available to the public supports the environmental principle by offering alternatives to motorized travel.



Background and Scoring Requirements

Background

This criterion is related to *SPS-08: Freight and Goods Access and Mobility*. This criterion includes a focus on access for people, while SPS-08 includes a focus on access for freight and goods access and mobility. As explained below, in the context of this self-evaluation tool, accessibility refers to three distinct and complementary issues—physical access, equitable access, and affordable access. To support and inform decision-making, agencies should conduct evaluations and analyses with regard to accessibility and affordability, and should use the results in the programming of transportation improvements.

The following are examples of accessibility issues that might be considered in a transportation planning context:

- **Complete Streets:** The transportation facility provides access to community destinations and public places—whether walking, driving, bicycling, or taking public transportation.
- **Jobs to Housing Imbalance:** Jobs and housing are concentrated in separate areas and jobs are not located adjacent to appropriate workers due to land development patterns.
- **Reverse commutes:** A community has high unemployment due in part to an inability to access service and retail jobs which are on the periphery of the metropolitan area. An accessibility analysis is performed to determine what highway or transit investments or improvements are needed to enhance the accessibility of these workers to job sites. The analysis considers the mismatches between the skills of the unemployed and locally available jobs, as well as auto ownership rates.
- **Economically depressed/isolated rural communities:** A specific region of a state is economically depressed and isolated and wants additional highway investment to spur economic growth and enhance access to services (e.g., hospitals, airports, grocery stores). The political leadership requests that the State transportation agency evaluate whether a lack of accessibility is contributing to the area's economic woes and isolation. The agency conducts an accessibility analysis to determine the extent to which the area needs additional access and scopes specific projects/programs. These programs address both time and cost barriers to access.
- **Access for people with limited mobility or disabilities:** An older metropolitan area has many transportation facilities that are not accessible to users with limited mobility or disabilities. This issue has been raised by the MPO's constituency as a primary concern that should be addressed in the transportation plan. In cooperation with the appropriate implementing agencies, the MPO conducts a study of areas where accessible facilities are

lacking and needed, and creates a plan for strategically implementing projects/programs to enhance access to the transportation system for these populations. The results of the study are incorporated into its LRTP.

As these examples show, the terms access and accessibility have a number of dimensions. In developing plans, agencies should consider the following (the associated details are illustrative only):

Physical Access

- Compliance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#)¹ (ADA), and more broadly to the principles of universal design, which go above and beyond ADA requirements.
- The [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)² as signed into law on September 26, 1973. Section 504 of the Act provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- The ability to reach desired goods, services, activities, and destinations (collectively called opportunities). Providing a broad range of transportation choices increases accessibility.
- Trip connectivity which allows convenient, seamless, and intuitive connections between modes.
- Connected streets, traditional street patterns that facilitate walking and shorter trip length (not cul-de-sacs).

Access and Equity

- Executive Order 12898, called the [Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations](#)³ states that "Each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations."
- The availability of road, rail, bus, bike, and pedestrian facilities and transit service for all members of the public and specifically for minority and low-income communities.
- The impacts of transportation on all members of the public and specifically on minority communities and low-income communities.
- The cumulative opportunities afforded by access to jobs, education, food, recreation, health care, social services, places of worship, libraries, retail centers, etc. Good access is especially important for:
 - Rural isolated and/or poor communities
 - Transit-dependent households
 - Other zero-car households
 - Low-income households
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Older adults
 - Children

Affordability

Increase the affordability of the transportation system as a whole through the following transportation planning projects and programs:

- Planning and programming that specifically addresses the minimization of transportation costs, particularly for those that are poor or disadvantaged.

- Conduct planning activities that are focused on minimizing the cost of transportation:
 - Encourage non-motorized access
 - Encourage higher density and mixed-use developments in close proximity to existing transportation services or in conjunction with the development of new services
 - Allow flexibility for non-traditional transportation modes of transportation structures (e.g., jitneys, personal car-sharing, etc.)
- Specific outreach and communication strategies focused on the transportation needs of the disadvantaged.

Scoring Requirements

To achieve points, the agency must demonstrate that it effectively evaluates and monitors the distribution of user benefits and relative accessibility through planned transportation improvements to communities and areas/populations of concern. Points can be earned for increasing levels of activity in the planning process as follows:

Requirement SPS-05.1

1-6 points. Discussion/Consideration in Planning Documents

Scoring is based on the following, cumulative requirements. The first requirement must be accomplished to earn the second.

- **Requirement SPS-05.1a**

1 point. Aggregate and Synthesize Physical Access Data

Aggregate and synthesize available and relevant physical access data and analyses from state and partner agencies, such as MPOs or COGs, into system planning documents. To achieve points, the data from partner agencies must include:

- Identification of specific population groups or areas where physical access is an issue,
- A discussion of time and cost barriers, as well as their consequences, and
- Specific, planned programs or improvements that address physical access issues.

- **Requirement SPR-05.1b**

1 point. Aggregate and Synthesize Access and Equity Data

Aggregate and synthesize available and relevant access and equity data and analyses from state and partner agencies, such as MPOs or COGs, into system planning documents. To achieve points, the data from partner agencies must include:

- Identification of specific population groups or areas where access and equity is an issue,
- A discussion of time and cost barriers, as well as their consequences, and
- Specific, planned programs or improvements that address access and equity issues.

- **Requirement SPR-05.1c**

2 points. Aggregate and Synthesize Affordability Data

Aggregate and synthesize available and relevant affordability data and analyses from state and partner agencies, such as MPOs or COGs, into system planning documents. To achieve points, the data from partner agencies must include:

- Identification of specific population groups or areas where affordability is an issue,
- A discussion of time and cost barriers, as well as their consequences, and
- Specific, planned programs or improvements that address affordability issues.

- **Requirement SPS-05.1d**

2 points. Include Documentation of Outreach Communications

For all dimensions of accessibility included in SPR-05.1a, SPR-05.1b and SPR-05.1c, the planning document includes documentation of outreach with partner agencies and stakeholders as appropriate to coordinate information and analyses sharing. In addition, information collected from partner agencies shall include documentation of targeted, enhanced outreach or communications that was used to engage interested and affected population groups or areas in the planning process.

Requirement SPS-05.2

2-5 points. Use Quantitative Analysis in the Development of Plans and Policies

Scoring is based on the following, cumulative requirements:

- **Requirement SPS-05.2a**

2 points. Integrate Quantitatively Evaluated Accessibility and Affordability Concerns

The agency integrates travel model, census, geospatial, and other data that has quantitatively evaluated the nature and distribution of accessibility and affordability concerns in its jurisdiction into the development of plans and policies. For a statewide plans and policy development, this data will typically be collected and evaluated by partner agencies, such as other state agencies or MPOs.

- **Requirement SPS-05.2b**

3 points. Integrate Quantitative Analysis of How System Addresses Concerns

The agency integrates a quantitative analysis of how its system plan or program addresses or improves concerns/issues into the development of plans and policies. These concerns and issues might include:

- Access to commercial centers, jobs, hospitals, schools, and other civic institutions and social and emergency services,
- The equitable cost of access,
- The affordability of travel choices, and
- The affordability of housing through its relationship to transportation investments.

For a statewide plans and policy development, this analysis will typically be performed by partner agencies, such as other state agencies or MPOs.

Requirement SPS-05.3

2 or 4 points. Regular Monitoring of Plans and Programs

Scoring is based on the following, cumulative requirements. The first requirement must be accomplished to earn the second.

- **Requirement SPS-05.3a**

2 points. Include Sustainability Performance Measures

The system plan or program includes sustainability-related performance measures that can be used to monitor the effects of plan implementation on transportation accessibility and affordability.

- **Requirement SPS-05.3b**

2 additional points. Monitor Progress and Demonstrate Sustainable Outcomes

The agency is monitoring progress against the performance measures and adjusts its program efforts as necessary to meet its goals.

Resources

Above-Referenced Resources

The following resources are referenced in this criterion and consolidated here:

1. U.S. Department of Justice, *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*, <https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/1990s/ada.html>
2. U.S. Department of Justice, *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/sec504.htm>
3. U.S. Department of Justice, *Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (1994), <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/1994/02/16/94-3685/federal-actions-to-address-environmental-justice-in-minority-populations-and-low-income-populations>

Additional Resources

The following resources provide information on this criterion topic in addition to the sources directly referenced:

1. Yingling Fan and Arthur Huang, *How Affordable is Transportation? An Accessibility-Based Evaluation* (2011), CTS Report 11-12, Transitway Impacts Research Program, Center for Transportation Studies, <http://www.cts.umn.edu/Publications/ResearchReports/reportdetail.html?id=2024>
2. Todd Litman, *Transportation Affordability: Evaluation and Improvement Strategies* (2013), Victoria Transport Policy Institute, <http://www.vtppi.org/affordability.pdf>
3. Todd Litman, *Evaluating Accessibility for Transportation Planning: Measuring People's Ability to Reach Desired Goods and Activities* (2015), Victoria Transport Policy Institute, <http://www.vtppi.org/access.pdf>
4. EPA, GeoPlatform Online, <http://epa.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=cb6ee8434c054e3bba37995f06e644d3#>

Scoring Sources

The program is considered to have met this criterion if the requirements above can be reasonably substantiated through the existence of one or more of the following sources (or equivalent), as appropriate:

1. LRTP and STIP include accessibility and affordability content.
2. Supplemental documentation of accessibility and affordability analyses and evaluations.
3. Documentation of targeted and enhanced communication and outreach to “traditionally underserved” populations.
4. Documentation of implemented projects or activities to improve access and affordability in response to discussion/analysis.
5. Documentation of the agency’s performance measures, monitoring process, and progress to date.