



The Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules

The Active Communities Tool (ACT): An Action Planning Guide and Assessment Modules to Improve Community Built Environments to Promote Physical Activity



<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/community-strategies/active-communities-tool>



MODULE 3:

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- » This module assesses the plans, policies, environments, and resources devoted to public transportation, including public transit infrastructure and access.
- » Who should be involved – technical experts with knowledge of the community’s planning, transportation, and public transit plans, policies, and resources; specifically experts in planning, transportation, and public transit.
- » Approximate time to complete – 30 minutes.



Term	Definition
Branches	Refers to the various “forks” in the transit network and which ones are main lines (trunklines) and which are less well served.
Bus stop siting	Mostly relates to whether there are stops at all and where the stops are located
Bus stop spacing	Relates to getting the spacing correct. Too infrequent spacing and people will not walk that far. Too often and the physical activity is limited with the buses stopping so frequently.
Fleet	A number of vehicles operating together or under the same ownership.
General Transit Feed Specification	A format to describe public transportation schedules and associated geographic information (e.g., stops, routes, schedules, calendar, fares, and other element) for fixed-route transit services. It is typically used to supply data on public transit for use in multi-modal trip planning applications.
Health disparities	Particular types of health differences closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health and/or a clean environment based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.
Health equity	When everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible.
Intelligent transportation systems	An application to provide services relating to different modes of transport and traffic management that enables users to make better use of transportation networks through transmission of real-time information.
Level boarding	A system that places boarding platforms on the same level as the floor of the bus.
Multimodal	Refers to the availability of multiple transportation options, especially within a system or corridor. A multimodal approach to transportation planning focuses on the most efficient way of getting people or goods from place to place by means other than privately owned vehicles; by bus, trolley, light rail, streetcar, cable car, and / or ferry systems.
Network connectivity	Trunklines connect key hubs, making travel between dense centers quick and simple. More trips can be made more quickly on a network of high-frequency routes with predictable, rapid-style service. More destinations can be connected if riders can transfer conveniently along the grid network with minimal added trip time.
Transit-oriented development (TOD)	A type of urban development that maximizes the amount of residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transportation.
Transit facility	A place providing access to transit services, including but not limited to transit stations, bus stops, bus stations, interchanges on a highway used by one or more transit providers, ferry landings, train stations, and bus rapid transit stops.
Transit infrastructure	Those primary components of a public transportation system, including: 1) facilities (e.g., transit stations, bus stops, train tracks, transit station amenities), 2) vehicles (e.g., trains, streetcars, buses, ferries), and 3) equipment (e.g., fare card machines, real time arrival displays, wheelchair lifts, elevators, bus shelters).
Transit service area	A measure of access to transit service in terms of population served and area coverage (square miles).

Please answer these questions based on the community / municipality selected.

3.1 Is the community currently served by public transit?

Yes

No, but planning for transit → skip to #3.4

No → skip to #3.4

Not applicable → skip to #3.4

Don't know → skip to #3.4

3.2 Public transit

What type of public transit is available in the community?	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Bus (e.g. fixed-route)				
b. Light rail				
c. Van pool				
d. Dial-a-ride				
e. Subway or commuter rail				
f. Paratransit (e.g., county or regional van service)				

3.3 List any other types of public transit available in the community not covered by the previous question.

3.4 Does your state have planning or policy guidance/ requirements that affect local or regional products or processes related to public transportation?

Yes → describe: _____

No

Not applicable

Don't know

PLANS

The **Plans** referred to in this module are those written and adopted by a local or regional authority. Plans can stand alone (e.g., Transit Plan) or be part of a Comprehensive Plan (e.g., Master Plan, General Plan). “Plan” is capitalized to indicate that it is a document adopted by a local or regional authority.

3.5 Does the community address making connections between residential and commercial areas through a public transit network through a Plan?

- Yes, and the Plan was adopted 0-<5 years ago
- Yes, and the Plan was adopted 5-<10 years ago
- Yes, and the Plan was adopted 10 or more years ago
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

The next set of questions refer to transit plans. The Federal Transportation Authority requires transit agencies to have a variety of plans.

3.6 Does the community have a Plan focused on public transit?

- Yes, and the Plan was adopted 0-<5 years ago
- Yes, and the Plan was adopted 5-<10 years ago
- Yes, and the Plan was adopted 10 or more years ago
- No → skip to #3.10
- Not applicable → skip to #3.10
- Don't know → skip to #3.10

3.7 In the past year, how often was this Plan consulted when making relevant decisions?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Not applicable
- Don't know

3.8 Transit Plan

Does this Plan:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Provide public transit to densely populated areas and major employment centers?				
b. Address increasing frequency of service in response to increasing demand of all users?				

Does this Plan:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
c. Address improving quality of service (e.g., frequency and timing, location of stops) to create equitable access among populations experiencing greater obstacles to health?				
d. Expand transit through the development of transit only lanes?				
e. Include coordination between community agencies that provide transportation for community members who are not served by transportation?				

3.9 In the past year, were any public transit goals or priorities in the Plan accomplished?

Yes → describe: _____

No

Not applicable

Don't know

The next question refers to health equity and health disparities. Health equity is when everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Health disparities are particular types of health differences closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health and/or a clean environment based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

3.10 During the planning process for transit facilities and services, does local government or its consultants try to engage individuals experiencing greater obstacles to health or who may be hard to contact?

Yes → describe: _____

No

Not applicable

Don't know

POLICIES

The **Policies** referred to in this module are those written and adopted by a local or regional authority. Policies include local ordinances (such as zoning regulations, subdivision ordinances, street design guidelines, etc.) which are passed by local or regional governing authorities, such as a city council or board of commissioners.

3.11 Does the community address making connections between residential and commercial areas through a public transit network through a policy?

Yes, and the policy is routinely enforced

Yes, but the policy is not routinely enforced

No

Not applicable

Don't know

3.12 Policies

In the community's policies:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Are there specifications for the design and installation of transit lanes and transit ways?				
b. Are multimodal transit centers identified?				
c. Do established criteria determine transit service areas?				
d. Are there requirements for how often the transit service area designation should be revisited?				
e. Are there requirements about sharing or coordinating transit services with neighboring jurisdictions?				
f. Are requirements for public transit facilities specified (e.g., access, lighting, shelter)?				
g. Are there incentives offered to promote transit-oriented development (TOD) (e.g., increased density, different parking requirements)?				
h. Do transit-oriented developments (TODs) prioritize bicycle and pedestrian access?				
i. Are there inclusionary requirements for low-income areas in transit-oriented developments (TODs)?				
j. Are local and regional transportation choices linked (e.g., a local bus route connected to a regional light rail system or greyhound)?				
k. Are there multimodal use requirements near transit stops (e.g., provisions of bicycle lanes and sidewalks present within a certain radius of a transit stop)?				
l. Are there requirements for bicycle parking at transit stations and centers?				
m. Are public school students allowed to use the transit system to get to and from school free of charge or at a reduced charge?				
n. Is there support for a public transit system program that provides "fare free" (e.g., Transit costs funded from sources other than rider fees) for economically-disadvantaged populations?				
o. Is there consideration of opportunity to co-locate services (e.g., health clinic, farmer's market) inside or in close proximity?				

The next question asks about the standards included in your community's policies on public transit route design related to equitable transit infrastructure. Equitable public transit route and system design standards provide the guidance for the location and design of transit stops and other transit facilities within the transit service area. Elements may include guides to the location and design of proper stops based on population characteristics and needs, proper placement of amenities at stops, timing and frequency of service, and general guidelines for other transit facilities.

3.13 Equitable transit infrastructure

Does your community's policies on public transit route and system design standards address equitable transit infrastructure through:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Population density?				
b. Employment density?				
c. Spacing between other routes/corridors?				
d. Limits on the number of branches?				
e. Equitable access throughout the area covered by the local tax base?				
f. Network connectivity?				
g. Service equity?				
h. Route directness?				
i. Proximity to residence?				
j. Bus stop siting requirements?				
k. Bus stop spacing requirements?				

3.14 New residential and commercial development project requirements

Are new residential and commercial development projects required to be within a certain distance of:	Yes	If Yes, what distance	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. A local transit stop?					
b. A regional transit stop?					

ENVIRONMENT

The following questions focus on the built environment infrastructure that exists in the community. If your community does not have public transit then skip to #3.28.

3.15 Percentage

What percent of:	None	Very few (<25%)	Some (25-75%)	Most (>75%)	All	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Routes are high frequency?							
b. Routes run early morning/late night?							
c. Routes run on weekends?							
d. Transit stops have bicycle parking?							
e. Transit stops provide light, shelter, and space to sit?							
f. Buses have bicycle racks?							
g. Fleet offers level boarding?							

The next question asks about the process the community uses to maintain transit infrastructure. This includes routine maintenance like cleaning, as well as repairs.

3.16 Does the community maintain transit infrastructure through

a. A scheduled process?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

b. Routine inspections?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

c. At citizen's request?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

d. Other?

Please describe. _____

3.17 Is route planning or trip information provided for transit passengers

a. On board?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Not applicable
- Don't know

b. At stops?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Not applicable
- Don't know

c. Online?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Not applicable
- Don't know

d. On a mobile app?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Not applicable
- Don't know

e. Using intelligent transportation systems?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Not applicable
- Don't know

f. Through general transit feed specification participation?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Not applicable
- Don't know

g. Other?

Please describe. _____

3.18 Does the community collect data on the population's use of transit (e.g., access to, knowledge of, purpose of trips)?

- Yes
- No → skip to #3.20
- Not applicable → skip to #3.20
- Don't know → skip to #3.20

3.19 Does the community use the data collected to assure that the population with the greatest need for transit is served, with considerations for equity?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

3.20 Transit stops and stations

Do transit stops and stations in the community have:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Good lighting and visibility?				
b. Facilities that are well-lit to accommodate early-morning, late-afternoon, and evening travelers?				
c. Open sight lines maintained between approaching vehicles and passenger waiting and loading areas?				
d. Clear sight lines into and out of waiting areas (including shelters)?				
e. Well-lit waiting areas?				
f. Landscaping that does not create dead-ends or hiding places?				

3.21 Transit stations

Do transit stations in the community have:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Security staff available?				
b. Emergency call boxes?				
c. Video camera surveillance?				
d. Increased police presence?				

3.22 Are there ways for riders to report harassment or feelings of discomfort?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

3.23 Supports for using transit system

Does the community's transit agency:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Provide information and training materials on how to use local transportation				
b. Provide transportation coaches (ambassadors, facilitators) to provide travel training or trip planning for individuals, including seniors, children, or groups of people experiencing greater obstacles to health.				

RESOURCES

The following questions ask about resources to support plans, policies, and built environments that impact physical activity through transit.

3.24 Has the community set aside funding for walking and bicycle infrastructure investments to improve accessibility around major transit stops to improve accessibility?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

3.25 Is funding available to maintain transit facilities, such as at bus stops and park-and-ride areas?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Don't know

3.26 Do new residential, commercial, and/or institutional projects subsidize discounted public transit passes for households with income below 200% of the Federal poverty level?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

3.27 Does the transit provider(s) work with employers to create incentives for employee ridership on public transit?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

3.28 What percent of the community's total local annual transportation funding was invested in public transportation in the last 12 months?

- _____ %
- Not applicable
- Don't know

3.29 Does the community have a group tasked with advising on transit-related policies and/or plans?

- Yes
- No → End of Module 3
- Not applicable → End of Module 3
- Don't know → End of Module 3

3.30 Group tasked with advising on transit-related policies and/or plan

Does the group:	Yes	No	Not applicable	Don't know
a. Exist as a stand-alone body?				
b. Meet at least quarterly?				
c. Have a public health representative?				
d. Have a planning and/or transportation representative?				
e. Have paid staff support to coordinate the meetings?				
f. Have a budget?				
g. Conduct assessments of transit facilities in the community (e.g., quality assessment, mapping of facilities)?				
h. Intentionally address equity?				
i. Have representation by residents most impacted by poor health outcomes in the community?				
j. Have a long term strategic or sustainability plan?				
k. Include elected officials?				
l. Conduct an evaluation to assess progress toward meeting goals/objectives?				



US Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Obesity