



TRANSIT ACCESS CHECKLIST



When it comes to increasing access to transit, context matters. Understanding the various characteristics—both existing and planned—that influence transit access and how they interact are necessary for identifying the needs, challenges, and opportunities for improving everyone’s ability to get to and use transit.

The Transit Access Checklist provides a consistent framework for stakeholders—including local jurisdictions, transit agencies, WSDOT, and others—to assess transit access in and around major sites of transit service. The Checklist approaches transit access comprehensively to provide a 360-degree understanding of particular locations, and will result in a complete picture of the transit access environment.

What's in the Transit Access Checklist

The Checklist asks 44 questions to collectively assess and diagnose the overall transit access conditions at a given location. Questions are organized in the following categories:

- **Urban Form and the Built Environment.** Questions focus on current and future land use and growth, street network characteristics, and nonmotorized capacity.
- **Transit Service.** Questions focus on existing and planned transit operating characteristics, the user experience, and local transit and drop-off attributes.
- **Parking.** Questions focus on the capacity, utilization, and other transit, off-street, and on-street parking characteristics.

In addition to the questions that must be answered to assess transit access, the Checklist identifies relevant data and resources (in a grey box like this one) to answer each question. Given the wide-ranging nature of the Checklist, multiple data sources will need to be consulted from a variety of agencies. Please be sure to consult the Data and Resources Contact List at the end of the Checklist for help assembling data.

Before you begin...

Before completing the Checklist, there are a few things to establish at the outset:

- **Identify your location.** The Checklist was created to help assess existing conditions at major sites of transit service—light rail and Sounder stations, transit centers and park and rides, ferry terminals and bus rapid transit corridors. Many questions refer to “the surrounding area” of the location in question, which typically refers to a ½-mile radius, but should be adjusted according to the particulars of the location and Checklist question.
- **Identify your stakeholders.** Once you have identified your location, you should next identify the relevant stakeholders. This is sure to include a local jurisdiction and a transit agency, but is likely to involve more than one of each. WSDOT may be a stakeholder as may large employers or institutions. There may be neighborhood groups and community organizations with an interest in improving transit access. All of these stakeholders’ interests and needs should be considered while completing the Checklist.
- **Collect your data.** Review the Checklist and begin collecting the data you don’t already have at your disposal. Consult the Data and Resources Contact List at the end of the Checklist for help in assembling information.
- **Share your findings.** Once you have completed the Checklist and have a better sense of the transit access conditions, issues, and needs, share what you learned with the relevant stakeholders. Also, consult the Transit Access Toolkit to learn more about the strategies that increase access to transit and specific improvements to consider in your location.

Ultimately, completing the Transit Access Checklist can help create consensus about the transit access issues present at a particular location, the opportunities that exist for maximizing transit access, and the short, medium, and long-term investment needs necessary to increase access to transit.

Urban Form & the Built Environment

Land Use + Growth

Land use, density, existing demographics, and the amount of population and employment growth expected have major implications for how, when, and why residents and employees will access transit.

U1. Which of the following most accurately describes the type of land use currently in place?

- Mostly residential
- Mostly commercial
- A mix of uses
- Something else (e.g. industrial, highway right of way, water)

Consult the planning department or its website for a zoning map. PSRC staff can provide current and future land use designations as well.

U2. What are the current population demographics in the surrounding area?

PSRC staff can provide recent population demographics as well as trend data to show how these demographics have changed in the recent past. Also consider less quantifiable data points like key community groups, any relevant growth-related challenges, and other important contextual information.

U3. What are the current employment demographics in the surrounding area?

PSRC staff can provide recent employment demographics as well as trend data to show these demographics have changed in the recent past. PSRC can also provide state Commute Trip Reduction data if there are CTR-affected employment sites in the surrounding area. Also consider less quantifiable data points like key business groups, any relevant growth-related challenges, local economic development initiatives, and other important contextual information.

U4. How much residential population growth is expected in the surrounding area?

- A lot (greater than 75%)
- Some (between 25%-75%)
- A little (less than 25%)

U5. How much employment growth is expected in the surrounding area?

- A lot (greater than 75%)
- Some (between 25%-75%)
- A little (less than 25%)

PSRC staff can provide current and future population and employment data.

U6. Based on recent and planned development, which best describes the alignment between expected and actual growth?

- Growth is happening faster than expected
- Growth is happening slower than expected
- Growth is happening as expected
- Growth is happening, but in a different character than expected

PSRC staff can provide trend data for specific geographies. It may also be worth consulting the Buildable Lands Report of the county where the location is found to consider broader growth patterns. It should be noted that perceptions of the pace of growth can vary widely.

U7. Will the area see any major transit capital improvements (e.g. new light rail or bus rapid transit construction) in the future?

- Yes, within the next five years
- Yes, but more than five years from now
- No

For Sound Transit projects, consult their [projects and plans site](#). For local transit agencies, consult the relevant agency's long range plan (for beyond five years) or transit development plans (for within five years).

Urban Form & the Built Environment

Street Network Characteristics

The urban form and street network around a location impact everything from transit operations to walking distances between places. Block size, vehicle volumes, and traffic speeds all have an effect on access options.

U8. Which of the following most accurately describes the street and block size characteristics in the surrounding area?

- Superblock structure
- Larger blocks with some connection
- Smaller blocks with a relatively intact network of streets

Consult the planning, public works, or engineering department, or the respective website, for a roadway map. PSRC can provide maps of current and future roadways as well.

U9. Are there significant bottlenecks or chokepoints in the surrounding area?

- Yes
- No, but streets experience frequent congestion
- No

U10. Which of the following best describes traffic volumes on the streets in the surrounding area?

- Very high volumes on certain key roads (>25K)
- Moderate volumes on several facilities (Between 10K-25K)
- Lower volumes spread across the roadway network (<10K)

Travel time information can be difficult to acquire, but more options are becoming available. Travel speeds are available by Google Maps and many jurisdictions have level of service information available. PSRC staff can coordinate with local jurisdiction staff (typically from the county or city planning, public works, or engineering department) to acquire this data.

U11. Which of the following best describes traffic congestion in the surrounding area?

- Consistent and heavy, typically every day
- Occasional, but manageable, not every day
- Rare and usually due to nonrecurring events

Consult the planning, public works, or engineering department, or the respective website, for a roadway map. PSRC can provide maps of current and future roadways as well.

U12. Which of the following best describes the vehicle speeds on the streets in the surrounding area?

- Mostly higher speeds (40mph or faster)
- A mixture, but lower speeds than higher speeds (typically between 25mph and 35mph)
- Mostly lower speeds (25mph or lower)

Consult the planning, public works, or engineering department, or the respective website, for a roadway map. PSRC can provide maps of current and future roadways as well.

U13. Which of the following best describes the presence of transit-supportive infrastructure (e.g. queue jumps, bus bulbs, bus-only lanes, etc.) in the street network in the surrounding area?

- There isn't any transit-supportive infrastructure present
- There isn't any transit-supportive infrastructure currently, but work has occurred or is underway to identify possible investments
- Some transit-supportive infrastructure is in place and more is planned
- Most significant transit-supportive investments have been made

Consult transit agency and/or local jurisdiction staff to determine what transit-supportive infrastructure is planned or has been implemented.

Urban Form & the Built Environment

Nonmotorized Capacity

The quality of nonmotorized facilities determines the ability of people to easily get to or from major sites of transit service on foot or by bike.

U14. Which of the following best characterizes the state of sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities in the surrounding area?

- Mostly incomplete with a lot of missing sidewalks
- Okay with some connections and some gaps
- Mostly complete with multiple connections

U15. Which of the following best characterizes the state of bicycle facilities in the surrounding area?

- Mostly incomplete with multiple gaps
- Okay with some connections and some gaps
- Mostly complete with multiple connections

U16. Which of the following best describes the quality of nonmotorized facilities in the surrounding area?

- Poor quality with many gaps in the network that is characterized by poor or absent sidewalks and few bicycle lanes
- Good quality with some gaps in the network that is characterized by ADA-compliant sidewalks and on-street bicycle lanes
- High quality with a mostly complete network that is characterized by wide sidewalks and protected bicycle lanes

Nonmotorized data is not always available at every geography. Start with the local jurisdiction's transportation or planning department. Also, consult PSRC staff for data they may have as well as to determine if the [Nonmotorized Connectivity Tool](#) can be used. Some data collection/observations may need to occur to answer these questions.

U17. Have there been incidents/collisions involving pedestrians and bicyclists in the surrounding area?

- Yes, there are documented incidents/collisions in the surrounding area
- No, but there is a perception that the area is unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists
- No, there are very few or no documented incidents/collisions in the surrounding area

PSRC has serious and fatal collisions data involving pedestrians and bicyclists. Consider other elements like near-misses or street design features that may limit the amount of nonmotorized behavior as well. It should be noted that an absence of incidents doesn't necessarily mean an absence of risk—it may mean that people choose not to use it because users perceive it as unsafe.

U18. What best describes the bicycle parking at the site in question?

- There is very little or no bicycle parking
- There are a few racks that are in the open and uncovered
- There is plenty of bicycle parking, some of which is secure

Consult the agency that operates and maintains the site for bicycle parking capacity.

U19. Are there significant barriers that restrict nonmotorized movement in the surrounding areas?

- Yes, in the form of major roadways
- Yes, in the form of hills/natural features
- No

Consult with local jurisdiction transportation/planning staff as well as bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups. As the answers suggest, obvious barriers are often plain enough, but subtler barriers may also exist.

Transit Service

Operating Characteristics

Transit access is influenced by the type of transit service available. Understanding service characteristics and how people are using transit can help indicate access needs.

T1. Will the area see any major transit operational improvements (e.g. new light rail or BRT service)?

- Yes, within the next five years
- Yes, but more than five years from now
- No

For Sound Transit projects, consult their [projects and plans site](#). For local transit agencies, consult the relevant agency's long range plan (for beyond five years) or transit development plans (for within five years).

T2. How many routes serve this site?

- Less than 3
- Between 3 and 7
- More than 7

T3. What modes serve this site? Mark all that apply.

- Bus
- Light rail
- Commuter rail
- Streetcar

T4. How many destinations are served by the routes serving this site?

- Less than 3
- Between 3 and 7
- More than 7

T5. What best describes the type of transit service available at this site?

- Primarily express/peak-oriented
- A mix of both express and frequent, all-day service
- Primarily frequent, all-day service

Consult transit schedule information at the site in question. Consult with transit agency or PSRC to run the Remix transit planning tool to indicate existing and planned transit travelsheds from the site in question.

T6. How many average weekday boardings occur at this site?

- Less than 1,000 average weekday boardings
- Between 1,000-3,000 average weekday boardings
- More than 3,000 average weekday boardings

T7. When during the day do boardings take place at this site?

- Overwhelmingly (+75%) in the morning peak
- A majority (+50%) in the morning peak
- Spread throughout all periods of the day

Transit agency staff can provide boarding and alighting data by stop and time of day.

T8. Which of the following best describes the type of location from a transit network perspective?

- Origin, meaning the place primarily serves transit users traveling to other locations
- Destination, meaning the place primarily serves transit users arriving at/near their final destination
- Transfer point, meaning the place functions as major transfer point between local and regional transit services
- All of the above, meaning the place plays portions of each of the above functions

T9. How many transfers are happening or are anticipated to happen?

- A few (less than 10% of boardings are transfers)
- Some (between 10% and 50% of boardings are transfers)
- A lot (more than 50% of boardings are transfers)

Contact transit agency staff to consult their most recent on-board survey. PSRC has access to 2015 and 2016 ORCA data that can provide transfer behavior of ORCA riders (but not cash-paying riders). ORCA data should also indicate what type of transfers are happening (e.g. bus-to-rail, bus-to-bus, etc.). Some conclusions can be drawn by looking at the relationship between the walk-shed, the number of parking spaces, and boarding and alighting data by time of day. For future light rail stations, anticipated future transfers can be found in the applicable Environmental Impact Statement.

Transit Service

User Experience

Access is also about someone's willingness to use transit—if places aren't inviting or comfortable or safe, people may choose not to access transit at all.

T10. Which best describes the areas where riders wait for transit at the site?

- Unprotected from the environment, few places to sit
- Some weather protection, some places to sit
- Totally covered, well-lit, many places to sit

T11. Which best describes the availability of customer information and wayfinding at the site in question?

- No real-time information, no posted schedules, poor customer information
- No real-time information, but posted schedules, some signage
- Real-time information, posted schedules, and good customer information and signage

The best way to answer these questions is to visit the site in question and directly assess conditions. Alternatively, consult with local jurisdiction and transit agency staff who are familiar with the site.

T12. Which best describes the perception and reality of safety and security for rider at/near the site in question?

- Reported events of crime occur, and perception of being unsafe
- Reported events of crime are rare, but perception of being unsafe
- Reported events of crime are very rare and the site perceived as safe

Local police as well as transit police/security can provide data on actual incidents. Perception issues are more challenging to address, but can be relatively easy to identify based on the subjective, reputational character of the site in question.

Transit + Drop-off Connections

Many people access transit by transferring from local transit or another kind of arriving vehicle. The design and operation of places can impact access for these users.

T13. Is there a lot of private vehicle (e.g. personal vehicle, taxi/Uber/Lyft) drop off behavior happening or anticipated?

- Very little (Less than 5% of boardings)
- Some (Between 5% and 10% of boardings)
- A lot (More than 10% of boardings)

It is unlikely that there is already-collected data regarding local transit and/or drop-off behavior happening at existing locations. In the absence of such data, consult with local jurisdiction or transit agency staff with knowledge of the site in question. Consider conducting site audits of local transit and/or drop-off behavior. For future light rail station, access by mode data can be found in the applicable Environmental Impact Statement.

T14. How far do passengers that transfer from connecting transit service need to walk?

- More than a block
- Less than a block
- A few steps

Perhaps the simplest way to answer this question is to use either Google Maps or Google Earth to calculate the walking distance between the connecting transit service stops.

T15. How well are other connecting modes (e.g. paratransit, shuttles, taxis, and rideshare vehicles) accommodated?

- Poorly
- Okay
- Very well with sufficient capacity to accommodate future needs

The best way to answer these questions is to visit the site in question and directly assess conditions. Alternatively, consult with local jurisdiction and transit agency staff with familiarity with the site.

T16. Are there conflicts between the various user groups (e.g. transit vehicles, other vehicles using the site (e.g. shuttles, private vehicles, taxi/Uber/Lyft, bicyclists, and pedestrians) at the site in question?

- Yes, there are often between all users
- Yes, but conflicts involve specific users (e.g. between private vehicles and bicyclists)
- Not often and usually due to user behavior

Consult with transit agency or local jurisdiction staff regarding the frequency of conflicts between vehicles dropping off transit riders and transit vehicles or pedestrians.

Parking

Capacity + Utilization

How much parking supply is there and what is the demand for that supply—these questions are fundamental for a better understanding of vehicle access to transit.

P1. How many parking stalls are at the site in question?

- Less than 250
- Between 250 and 750
- More than 750

P2. What is the utilization rate of parking at the site in question?

- Less than 85%
- Between 85% and 95%
- More than 95%

Transit agencies can provide capacity and utilization data for the transit parking facilities they own or operate. PSRC also compiles transit parking capacity and utilization data on an annual basis for all transit parking facilities.

P3. By what time are the parking spaces typically full?

- By 6:30am
- By 8:30am
- There are always spaces available

Consult with staff from the transit agency that owns or operates the transit parking facility to determine by when the facility is typically full.

P4. Are there any lots (e.g. other permanent or leased lots) within 3/4-mile of the site in question?

- No
- Yes (if yes, note stall count and utilization rate)

This is primarily a mapping exercise to determine proximate additional parking. Transit agency websites typically list all transit parking facilities in their respective service area, and are the best source to consult.

P5. What is the ratio of average weekday transit boardings to parking stalls?

- Less than 1.5
- Between 1.50 and 3
- More than 3

This can be calculated based on the data supporting question T6 divided by the data supporting question P1. A lower number indicates that people using transit at this location are primarily accessing it by car, while a higher number indicates that people riding transit at this location are also accessing it by other modes.

Parking Behavior

Understanding how people use the available parking supply—both at the site in question and in the immediate vicinity—can suggest approaches for improving vehicle access to transit.

P6. How many vanpool groups use the site in question?

- Less than 10
- Between 11 and 25
- More than 25

Consult with transit agency staff that you suspect may have vanpool groups forming at the site in question.

P7. Based on license plate survey data (if available), what percentage of people are coming from two miles or less to park?

- Less than 20%
- Between 20% and 40%
- More than 40%

P8. Based on license plate survey data (if available), what percentage of people are coming from four miles or more to park?

- Less than 20%
- Between 20% and 40%
- More than 40%

Transit agencies have traditionally conducted periodic license plate surveys of transit parking facilities to determine where users are arriving from. Based on the site in question, consult with transit agency staff to determine if license plate surveys are available.

P9. Is there hide and ride parking occurring in the surrounding area?

- Yes, and it is creating challenges
- Yes, but it is manageable
- No

Consult with local jurisdiction or transit agency staff to determine if hide and ride parking is occurring and to what extent.

Completing the Transit Access Checklist requires data and information from a number of sources. Beyond what you need to collect, the sources of which are documented below, these two additional inputs will help as well: 1) conduct a site visit—there is no better way to understand the particulars of transit access at a location than actually going and seeing for yourself; and 2) consult Google Maps—the base and satellite layers of a Google Map of the area in question will immediately orient you to the characteristics of the urban form and transportation network.

Local jurisdictions are the best source for data needed to answer questions U1, U8-18, and P9. Because it's not possible to provide a staff contact for every local jurisdiction in the central Puget Sound, start by contacting the planning and/or transportation department of the relevant local jurisdiction.

Transit agencies are the best source for data needed to answer questions U13, U18, T1-T8, T10-T15, P1-P4, and P6-P8. Included below is the staff contact from each transit agency in the region to help provide data and resources to support the completion of the Transit Access Checklist.

- Community Transit: Kate Tourtellot (kate.tourtellot@commtrans.org)
- Everett Transit: Sabina Popa (spopa@everettwa.gov)
- King County Metro: Daniel Rowe (daniel.rowe@kingcounty.gov)
- Kitsap Transit: Edward Coviello (edwardc@kitsaptransit.com)
- Pierce Transit: Monica Adams (madams@piercettransit.org)
- Sound Transit: Rachel Wilch (rachel.wilch@soundtransit.org)

The Puget Sound Regional Council is the best source for data needed to answer questions U2-U6, U17, T8, and P1-P2. In addition, because PSRC developed the Transit Access Checklist, staff can support the completion of the Checklist as well as help compile additional data and resources as appropriate. Contact Alex Krieg (akrieg@psrc.org).

There may be additional resources available to help complete the Checklist depending on a particular location. Ask staff from each of the above if they know of additional data to support completing the Checklist. Consider consulting with staff from WSDOT if there is a state facility or construction project in the vicinity as well.

