**Active travel-based accessibility: A review of data sources and needs from a Canadian perspective**

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# Abstract

Active travel is a key element to achieve robust and healthy urban transportation polycultures. As analysis of transportation needs in cities shifts from a focus on mobility to accessibility, the need to assess accessibility by cycling and walking has become incresingly pressing. The distinguishing features of these modes – lower speeds, shorter trips, potentially different purposes compared to motorized trips – means that the data inputs required for accessibility analysis are not necessarily the same as those used for the study of accessibility for motorized travel. The objective of this review is to assess the sources of data and data needs to implement active accessibility analysis. Walking-specific and cycling-specific geographic accessibility measures and data applied within recently published literature are reviewed. Walking and cycling accessibility measures are compared in terms of the types of metrics, the origins and destinations considered, geographic scales, and travel time or distance calculations. In comparing approaches for walking versus cycling, this report also highlights possible considerations, challenges, and questions that emerge when considering the future of active travel accessibility-based analysis. The discussion in this review is centered on the Canadian context but the lessons may be more broadly applicable to other national contexts.

# Introduction

Active travel is a key component of efforts in urban areas as they try to achieve more robust and healthy urban transportation polycultures (REFERENCES). Cycling and walking are effective modes for short- and mid-range travel in urban areas that have, over a period of decades, grown to accommodate travel by automobile (REFERENCE) while treating other modes almost as afterthoughts (REFERENCES). Along with a focus on motorized travel, the focus of transportation planning has been to plan for mobility mainly by car. Transportation and land use systems have been designed to produce mobility, and this is reflected in the use of measures of efficiency that ignore the reason for most travel, which is to reach destinations (REFERENCE).

The idea of producing mobility seems intuitive when planning for inexpensive motorized travel, in an era when automobile users have been, as a matter of policy, shielded from paying – and even becoming aware – of the full cost of their travel (REFERENCE). In recognition of the contradiction of trying to generate mobility while also hoping to reduce the ill effects of mobility, an argument in the transportation literature for decades has been to shift from mobility-based to accessibility-based planning (REFERENCE). Transportation accessibility is commonly defined as the potential of transportation-land use systems to generate access to opportunities (REFERENCES) and conceptually strikes at the heart of wasteful mobility-based planning by focusing on the ability to reach destinations. Despite mixed evidence regarding the adoption of accessibility in planning practice (REFERENCE) there are reasons to believe that the future belongs to accessibility-based planning (REFERENCE).

The relevance of accessibility-based planning is even more evident when active modes are considered: who would rather make long trips if equivalent destinations could be reached with shorter trips? Not only can pedestrians and cyclists not be shielded from the cost of travel, the effort of reaching destinations is inherently visceral (REFERENCES). As interest in active travel-based accessibility (ATB accessibility) grows globally (e.g., REFERENCES) transportation scholars have built on decades-worth of accessibility research that mainly focused on motorized travel. In principle, accessibility analysis is sufficiently general to be applicable for ATB accessibility analysis. In practice, it is important to recognize the differences between motorized and active travel, and how they can impact their implementation with a focus on active travel (Iacono et al., 2010). Compared to motorized travel, active travel tends to be slower, happens at smaller scales, is used to reach potentially different destinations, and involves costs, such as physical effort, that are usually are ignored in the analysis of motorized travel.

The objective of the present study is to investigate ATB accessibility with a focus on data sources and needs, using Canada as case study. The research is prompted by a recent Canadian project that has been tasked with developing data-driven standards for the analysis of transportation equity (REFERENCE??). The need to propose methods that can be used consistently across regions requires a sound understanding of how analysis and outputs can be conditioned by the data inputs. it is important to acknowledge that other reviews of ATB accessibility measures exist (e.g., Geurs and Van Wee 2004; Iacono, Krizek, and El-Geneidy 2010; Maghelal and Capp 2011; Talen and Koschinsky 2013; Vale et al., 2016). The contribution of this paper is to fill a gap in the literature by focusing on the data required by various measures of ATB accessibility and comparing measures that can be implemented consistently in different contexts, as well as data needs for consistent implementation of the rest.

The reminder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents a review of methods. Section 3 presents a categorization of the required data according to each of the accessibility measurements. Section 4 provides Important considerations and possible challenges for calculating accessibility by active mode; discussions and conclusions are provided in Section 5.

# Background

Accessibility analysis is implemented using two main approaches i.e., place-based and individual-based accessibility (Kwan, 1998; Horner, 2004). Place-based measures focus on the physical separation of key locations, say an origin and potential destinations, whereas individual-based measures take into account some representation of the space-time behavior of individuals (Harris, 2001; Vale, 2009; REFERENCE). These two approaches are related, and place-based measures can in fact be seen as a special case of individual-based measures, where the impedance function and cost are a constant by origin.

NOTE: Write all

Placed-based accessibility measures include activity-based measures, distance-based, topological or infrastructure-based measures, utility-based measures, as well as, walkability, and bikeability. Activity-based measures (includes gravity-based and cumulative opportunities measures) are based on the gravity model and weight opportunities according to a travel impedance function and the accessibility of a place is assessed as the combined effect of the size of opportunities and the cost of traveling to them. Distance-based measures analyze the closest facilities and include: 1) distance to the closest opportunity, 2) the number of opportunities within a defined distance or time, 3) the mean distance to all opportunities, and 4) the mean distance to a defined number of closest opportunities. Infrastructure-based measures are based exclusively on features of the street and transportation network and are insensitive to the location of activities in space. utility-based measures (also designated benefit measures) are developed from microeconomic random utility theory and describe accessibility as the result of a (rational) choice from a set of destination transportation alternatives (Apparicio et al., 2008; Geurs and van Eck 2001; Halden et al. 2000; Kwan 1998). Walkability and bikeability measure the number of people, households or jobs distributed over a unit of area or measures how many types—offices, housing, retail, entertainment, services, and so on—are located in a given area (Frank et al., 2003 and Leslie et al., 2007). Indeed, using accurate accessibility measures for walking or cycling trips can assist transport planners in making more rational decisions in infrastructure provision for non-motorized transportation (Iacono et al., 2010; Levine, 2010; Devkota, Dudycha, & Andrey, 2012).

Moreover, calculating ATB accessibility in both approaches requires multiple data sets relating to travel behavior and land use. Unfortunately, this has suffered from a lack of appropriate data. In particular, little information is available on the geography of walking and cycling behavior such as travel episode origins and destinations, routes, and lengths (durations and distances). So, in most cases, required data is obtained from local/national questionnaires and local maps (Millward et al., 2013; Devkota, Dudycha, & Andrey, 2012; Yang and Diez- Roux, 2012; Levine, 2010; Iacono et al., 2010). In addition, available data are extremely location specific or cover a small geographic area and are not adequately covered in most large-scale survey instruments, such as national transportation survey (Ulmer and Hoel, 2003; Achuthan et al., 2007).

# Methods for ATB accessibility analysis

Research about walking and cycling tend to categorize these modes into two different parts of literature (The first is about health and leisure and the second is about transport and land-use), and both have their own viewpoints, data, methods, and policy orientations (Pucher et al., 2010; Millward et al., 2013; Fishman, 2016).

Measures of ATB accessibility can either be location-based, focused on the spatial separation to opportunities from specific locations, or individual-based with the incorporation of the space and time constraints of individuals. This review focuses on location-based accessibility. Vale et al. (2015) categorized location-based accessibility measures into four main groups: first, activity-based, which includes gravity-based (also designated attraction-accessibility or potential) and cumulative opportunities measures (also known as isochrones or contour measures). In addition, this measure has been widely used in non-motorized accessibility studies (Iacono et al., 2010; Lowry et al., 2012; Millward et al., 2013; Prins et al., 2014; Li et al., 2020); second, topology infrastructure-based, which include topological measures of the network (Hull, Silva, & Bertolini, 2012; Lundberg, 2012); third, distance-based, which include analyses of the closest facilities (Apparicio, Abdelmajid, Riva, & Shearmur, 2008; Sadler, Gilliland, & Arku, 2011), and the last category being utility-based measures which are also known as benefits measures (Geurs & Van Wee, 2004; Hunt & Abraham, 2007; Vale 2010; El-Geneidy and Levinson 2011).

potential compatibility with regional travel forecasting models is an essential reason for the wide use of location-based measures instead of individual-based measures for active transport mode. So, it is easy to extract travel times from one area to another area using the coded network. moreover, number of potential opportunities are available at the area level (Iacono et al., 2010; Saghapour et al., 2017).

There are some limitations of using these measure for active travel modes. first, active travel modes are less sensitive to travel times and levels of network congestion rather than motorized modes. as well, walking and cycling route choices tend to include qualitative, experiential, or difficult to measure factors (Hunt & Abraham, 2007; Iacono et al., 2010; Tilahun, Levinson, & Krizek, 2007). second, measuring active transport accessibility is mostly dependent on travel diary data. besides, The methods applied so far to measure cycling accessibility have not focused on the accessibility of cycling destinations in terms of service areas (D. Harkey, Reinfurt, & Knuiman, 1998; D. L. Harkey, Reinfurt, Knuiman, Stewart, & Sorton, 1998; Landis, Vattikuti, & Brannick, 1997; Landis et al., 2003). some studies have investigated the level of services such as Bicycle Compatibility Index (BCI) or Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) for a bicycle network. indeed, these measures focused on measuring the performance of a bicycle network using various geometric measures such as the width of the bicycle routes, pavement, route types, and connectivity. Nonetheless, there are other methods that consider bikeability in terms of how accessible different destinations are for bicycles as a transport mode. Such methods measure the potential for cycling using travel behaviour data (Ian Espada & Luk, 2011; Wahlgren & Schantz, 2012; Rybarczyk & Gallagher, 2014; Milakis et al., 2015).

## Activity-based measures

Activity-based measures include both gravity-based (also known as Hansen-type (Hansen, 1959)) and cumulative opportunities measures. Gravity-based measures designated attraction-accessibility or potential and consider the number of opportunities weighted by the cost of traveling to them - using a travel impedance function that values closer opportunities higher. The same researchers underlined the importance of choosing a suitable impedance function and it can be observed that a large variety of functions are applied. Commonly used functions are power, negative exponential, logistic and Gaussian functions (Iacono et al., 2010; M. Lowry, Callister, Gresham, & Moore, 2012; Vasconcelos & Farias, 2012; Vale et al., 2017). More recently Vale and Pereira (2017) conducted a study testing 20 pedestrian accessibility measures and identified the modified Gaussian and exponential function as the most robust ones for modeling walking accessibility. Cumulative opportunities (also known as isochrones or contour measures), measures count the number of opportunities within a defined catchment area.

Gravity-based and cumulative opportunities measures are specific instances of a more general formulation (Paez et al., 2012):

This equation gives the accessibility from the origin location i, to opportunities of type k, from the perspective of individual p. This measure of accessibility is a function of the number of opportunities W of type k at location j, and the cost of moving between i and j as perceived/experienced by person p. Function f() defines a kernel around location i, usually symmetric if cij is given by Euclidean distance, but not necessarily, for instance if cij is measured over a network. Activity-based measures are useful when opportunities are complementary (e.g., jobs, people, services, parks) and when access to more opportunities and being closer (with gravity-based models) is advantageous.

## Distance-based measures

Distance-based measures consider accessibility in terms of proximity, either by travel distance, time, or a generalized cost measure between locations. A distance measure analyses the closest facilities, including 1) distance to the closest opportunity, 2) the number of opportunities within a defined distance or time, 3) the mean distance to all opportunities, and 4) the mean distance to a defined number of closest opportunities (Apparicio et al., 2008). These measures are applicable when destinations are regarded as substitutes for one another (i.e., hospitals, transit stops, convenience stores etc.), under the assumption that individuals want to access the nearest facility.

Distance is considered as the travel impedance and four types of distances are usually used in distance-based accessibility measures: 1) Euclidean distance, that has been mainly used for walkability measures, particularly in health studies (Apparicio et al., 2008). 2) Manhattan distance, 3) shortest network distance (Hochmair, 2015; Lundberg, 2012) 4) shortest network time (Páez et al., 2012; Pearce et al., 2006). As well, there are two different ways for measuring distance, first calculates the distance to the closest facility of each type - The first method calculates the distance from each zone centroid to the closest or the first n closest facilities (e.g. medical centers).and second, calculates the distance to all facilities close by. This approach is based on floating catchment areas that finds the closest facility regardless of distance and measures the distance from each zone centre to the closest or the first n closest different facilities (e.g. medical centres, shopping centres, etc.).

Distance to nearest location is calculated based on (1):

In this equation, is accessibility of zone i to location of type p, is set of locations of type p, and is distance (or travel time for a given mode) from i to location j in set 𝐿𝑝. This measure is consistent with an extremely simple location model in which the nearest location is always chosen with probability 1.0. (2)

In equation 2, is the probability of choosing location j for purpose p given that one is located in zone i. This measure has two limitations, first, doesn’t consider the size/attractiveness of locations and second, doesn’t investigate the cumulative effect of multiple accessible locations. So, it is not recommended to calculate accessibility using this method as an independent measure.

## Topological or infrastructure-based measures

Topological-based measures consider accessibility in terms of the street network, rather than access from origins to destinations. Topology measures may evaluate network connectivity, the quality of infrastructure within a catchment area, or some combination of connectivity and infrastructure quality. Indeed, this measure emphasizes on infrastructure evaluation. Such approaches are applicable in the context of planning – for example, in identifying priorities for development, or identifying potential impacts of redevelopment.

There are three types of topological measure: the first, this group evaluate the level of service (LOS) within a floating catchment area (FCA) (Sisson et al. 2006). The second type is similar the first one. however, this one used a pre-defined spatial unit to evaluate LOS, and this is based on the segment instead of the point (Emery and Crump 2011; Lowry and Callister 2012; Horacek et al. 2012). The third one is very different, since traffic is not considered as a relevant parameter (Hoedl, Titze, and Oja 2010; Zielstra and Hochmair 2011; Jabbari et all., 2021). These measures are based on and the evaluation of network segments, infrastructure characteristics, and include variables such as sidewalk or bike path availability, quality, and length among others.

## Utility-based measures

utility-based measures evaluate accessibility based on individual preferences and the log-sum of discrete choice models applied to destination choice analysis (Ben-Akiva and Lerman, 1977). This measure, which is known as benefits measures, can better represent individual accessibility than location-based measures. Utility-based measure can be calculated using two methods:

1. Assume that a decision-maker perceives the utility of a destination as: 𝑈𝑗 = 𝑉𝑗 + 𝜀𝑗 where 𝜀𝑗 is the individual’s idiosyncratic deviation in terms of how s/he perceives the utility of alternative j relative to the population average utility, 𝑉𝑗. The person chooses the alternative that generates the maximum perceived utility, 𝑈𝑗. Under very common assumptions, the probability that j is the maximum utility alternative and so is chosen is given by the multinomial logit (MNL) model (Train, 2009):

In this equision, 𝑉𝑗 = βZj: The systematic utility of alternative j

Zj: Vector of explanatory variables

Β: (Row) vector of parameters

1. The actual perceived maximum utility is unobservable, but, for the case of the MNL model, it can be shown (Ben-Akiva & Lerman, 1985) that the expected maximum utility (𝐼𝑖𝑝) associated with this choice is given by:

That is, it is the natural logarithm of the denominator of the logit choice model (sometimes referred to as the “logsum” term). Further, it can also be shown that this expected maximum utility is the consumer’s surplus for this choice. Thus it is a standard measure of economic benefit. Given this, Ben-Akiva and Lerman (1985) argue that it also provides a behaviourally and economically sound definition of accessibility: accessibility for a given activity is the expected utility that would be derived from participation in this activity, which is also the consumer surplus associated with this participation. That is:

𝐴𝑖𝑝 =

In the following, Tables 1 and 2 have categorized recent studies based on the accessibility by walking and cycling. However, Vale et al. (2016) found relatively few studies examining cycling-specific accessibility in comparison to walking. For a comprehensive review of all 84 papers on walking and cycling accessibility (published by September 2013) refer to Vale et al. (2016).

**Table 1.** Studies employing cycling-specific accessibility measures.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of metric | Study | Measure | Travel time / distance threshold | Origins / Destinations | Geographic scale | Travel time / distance calculation |
| Activity-based | Murphy & Owen (2019) | * **Cumulative job opportunities** * ‘Access gap’: comparing LTS 1-4 * Weighted accessibility by number of workers | 20 mins  (Tested 5 to 60 mins) | Census block centroids | Neighbourhoods -> city level | Network travel time  15 km/h |
| Faghih Imani et al. (2019) | * **Cumulative opportunities: jobs & population access** * Calculated isochrones for LTS 1-4 | 30 mins | Dissemination area centroids | Dissemination areas | Network travel time |
| Wu et al. (2019) | * **Gravity-based measure: accessibility to POIS at metro stations** * Lognormal distance-decay function (confirmed using distribution of bicycle-metro trip data) | 2.5 km | Metro stations *(origins)*  POIs *(destinations)* | 2.5 km buffer | Euclidean distance |
| Distance-based | Houde et al. (2008) | * **Proximity of bike paths:** * 1. Network distance to nearest section of cycling network * 2. Network distance to cyclist-only bike path | - | Census tract centroids *(origins)*  Bike paths *(destinations)* | Census tracts | Network distance |
| [Paez et al., (2017)](#Paez1) | 1)the dedicated cycling network - The distance from census tract centroid to **nearest bike network** segment was measured to estimate the accessibility of each tract.  2) level of traffic stress (**LTS network**) was used to assess accessibility in the district. |  | census tract centroid to nearest bike network | The District of Columbia | Euclidean distance |
| Topology-based | Mekuria et al. (2012) | * **Network connectivity by LTS 1-4:** * Percent trips connected * Percent nodes connected | - | Home-to-work O-D pairs from regional trip table  Land parcel ‘attraction strength’ (size and land-use attraction) *(destinations)* | Census blocks | Network |

**Table 2.** Studies examining walking-specific accessibility

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Metric | Study | Measure | Travel time / distance threshold | Origins / Destinations | Geographic scale | Travel time / distance calculation |
| Activity-based | Cheng et al. (2019) | * **Cumulative opportunities: chess/card rooms and urban parks for older and younger adults** * Park spaces weighted by their size | Adaptive distance thresholds (based on location and socio-economic variables) | locations from travel survey *(origins)*  Parks and chess/card rooms *(destinations)* | Traffic analysis zones | Network distance |
|  | Reyes, Páez et al. (2014) | * **Cumulative opportunities to urban parks for children** * Park spaces weighted by their size * 1. Accessibility based on all individual attributes from travel survey * 2. Accessibility based on scenario profiles (gender, age, income etc.) | Based on statistical model of travel behavior | Locations from household travel survey  Rasterized parks 25x25m *(destinations)* | Dissemination areas  (Weighted average) | Euclidean distance |
|  | Garcia-Palomares et al. (2013) | * **Access quality indicator for metro stations: population served** * Access by age groups * Distance-decay function by age group | 1500m  & Distance thresholds calculated for different age groups | Metro stations *(origins)*  Transport-zone level populations | 1500m metro station catchment areas | Network distance |
|  | Papa et al. (2018) | * **Contour accessibility measure: bus catchment areas** * Number of inhabitants served by age group * Catchment areas calculated with and without network slope | Dependent on frequency of bus service | Bus stops | Hexagonal cells 50m | Network distance  Walking speeds dependent on age |

## Walkability measures

Walkability indices can be defines based on the both the social and physical environment, a predictive indicator of active travel and physical activity to access facilities; based on indicator of the usability of the built environment to people (frank et al., 2004; 2006) who walk to different destinations and for different purposes (i.e., from a clear origin to a clear set of destinations) (Blečić et al., 2015; Saelensand Handy, 2008; Vale et al., 2016; Dovey and Pafka , 2020). There is a difference between gravity- and distance-based accessibility measures and the walkability index so that for measuring walkability, area characteristics around the origins and destinations are also taken into account in the calculation, but still, this index does not consider route characteristics.

Walkability measures are divided into 4 categories including Frank’s Walkability Index, Walk score, Objective Walkability Index (OWI), and Graz Walkability Index. In the Frank’s index, a walkability score is calculated by summing the normalized scores across factors that are identified based on a definition of the concept of walkability. This index uses residential density, land use mix, retail floor area ratio, and intersection density as variables to measure walkability. Then Grasser et al. (2013) improved Frank’s index for assessing Europe cities by considering population density, household density, and entropy index for land-use mix, and three-way intersection density in order to construct the Graz walkability index (Grasser et al., 2013). In addition, some other theory-based methods such as Objective Walkability Index (OWI) are also proposed. Weiss et al. (2010) constructed the OWI, which includes street connectivity, land use mix, pedestrian safety, neighborhood aesthetics, neighborhood safety, and neighborhood infrastructure. In 2011, Duncan et al. (2011) developed Walk Score for measuring walkability of neighborhoods. Indeed, Walk Score recognizes eight types of walking attractors: Errands, Culture, Grocery, Park, Dining and Drinking, School, and Shopping. Walk Score can be assessed for any location worldwide, however, locations outside the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand should be additionally validated, since the geo-located data is not always complete (Duncan et al. 2011; walkscore.com).

most of the studies assessed walkability using two Frank’s index and walk score (Frank et al. 2010; Frank et al. 2006; Frank et al. 2005; Vale et all., 2016). The major difference between these approaches is that Walk Score uses a gravity-based methodology. Opportunities are weighted using a distance decay function, while the Walkability Index is based on a cumulative opportunities measure. In the following, Table 3 provides a summary of this categorization.

**Table 3.** Studies examining walkability

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Methods** | **Author** | **Variables** | **Data** | **Descriptions** |
| ***Methods based on a theory-driven approach*** | | | | |
| **Frank’s Walkability**  **Index** | Frank et al. (2005a,b), [Frank et al., (2010)](#Frank), | * Net residential/ Population density * Retail floor area ratio * Intersection density * Land use mix | * **travel data** from both Census Journey to Work for both regions * **Household Travel Survey Data**   census-based **demographic** data |  |
| [Manaugh and El-Geneidy (2011)](#Manaugh) | * Net residential/ Population density * Retail floor area ratio * Intersection density * Land use mix | * **Retail information** *(shopping and school)* was obtained from the Dun and Bradstreet business database and combined with a weighted intersection index. * used a database of over 100,000 postal code points from Walkscore.[[1]](#footnote-1) * **Household level data** and travel behavior characteristics are obtained from the 2003 Montréal Origin–Destination survey. * census tract level **demographic data** derived from Statistics Canada | * nine models were generated for each trip purpose using a different walkability measure in every run (**Walkscore, walk opportunities, the WI at four scales and three sizes for the pedshed connectivity measure**) * The walkability index generated at **four scales:** 400, 800 and 1200 m network buffers as well as at the census tract level. * used a simple **gravity-based measure** to weight nearby locations higher than those more distant. |
| [Adhikari et al.,(2021)](#Adhikari) | * residential density * the commercial floor-to-area ratio * land-use mix * intersection density | * **demographic characteristics** of participants | * The **walkability index** uses **1 km** pedestrian “walksheds” that map pedestrian-accessible roads around each postal code centroid. * Each walkshed corresponds to approximately **10–15 min of walking** time, a commonly used time frame to assess perceived proximity to amenities and services. |
| [Azmi et al., (2013)](#Azmi) | * Mixed-use planning * Density * Street connectivity | * data was gathered by using the **questionnaire survey** * asking the **accessibility of residents walk from their home to community facilities or services** provided within the walkable catchment * indicated **the amount of time** they thought it would take for them to walk from their home to the nearest destination. | * the type of **community facilities or services** selected was based on the availability of the services provided within a radius of **400 meter** (approximately 5 minute of walking) * There are a total of **13 community facilities and services** such as grocery store/supermarket, park or recreational facility (indoor or outdoor), elementary school, other school, community center, restaurant or other places, bank, medical clinic/pharmacy, personal shop (laundry, salon), workplace, bus stop, post office and place of worship. |
| [Liao et al., (2020](#Lio)) | * The **variables** of this section are divided into **four parts**: * ***density*** * ***facilities*** * ***green space*** * ***land use mix*** | * as a **source of walking frequency** data, the Dutch national travel survey. * **neighborhood data** as a source for **socio-demographic** and **physical neighborhood** variables and used as **control variables** include ***gender***, *age*, ***income status, work status, household status, and migration background***. * All **walkability variables** were derived from the Esri-open postcode plane and the CBS data. | * ***density*** variables: population density, intersection density, and business property density * ***facilities*** variables: a range of facilities the **distance to the nearest facilit**y (average distance from the center of the neighborhood) and **the number of facilities** available within a 1 km radius (from the center of the neighborhood) * ***green space*** variables: total area of different types of **open green space and recreational space**. * ***land use mix*** variables: the **separate lower-level land-use** variables in the form of a percentage of the total land covered by the land-use were used |
| [Arellana et al., (2021)](#Arellana) | * intersection density * land use entropy score * population density * commercial density | * latest **household Origin Destination** **survey**. * **Land use data**, the location of **commercial** zones, the **population**, and the **characteristics of the walking** **trips** from each zone (TAZ). | * Calculated **potential accessibilit**y. * The measure evaluates the **access to shop, job, study, and institutional opportunitie**s |
| [Ruiz-Padillo et al., (2018)](#RuizPadillo) | * Public Security * Traffic Safety * Convenience and attractiveness: * Street connectivity * Destination's proximity (number of shops and services) * Mix of uses proximity (number of shops and services) * attractiveness * Characters of the roots: * Pavement Quality * Pavement width * Slope | * Census tracts were used that including size and number of households | all census tracts were classified according to **three variables**:   * ***motorization rate*** * ***density of commercial and service establishments*** * ***average slope*** |
| **Walk Score** (Walk Score calculates a score by determining the **walking distance to amenities** in nine different amenity categories) | Duncan et al., (2011) | * Walking distance to amenities * Intersection density metrics * Average block length | * **Google AJAX** Search application program interface (API) provides data for the Walk Score. |  |
| **Graz Walkability Index** (based on American city and Frank's walkability index) | [Grasser et al. (2017)](#Grasser) | * Net residential/ Population density/ household density * Intersection density * Land use mix (entropy index for land-use mix) | * Outcome data were derived from the representative cross-sectional survey * **Walking** (for at least 10 min) and **cycling** (in the warm season) | present study reported the results of the **1000 m circular buffer** and the **1500 m street network** buffer[[2]](#footnote-2). |

## Bikeability measures

Bikeability can be defined as the ability of a person to bike or the ability of the urban landscape to be biked or as a baseline definition of the likelihood that individuals or groups of people will choose the bicycle as a mode of transport or leisure (Krizek et al., 2009; Winters et al., 2013; Nielsen and [Skov-Petersen](https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=FcWkBoIAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=sra), 2018) .However, It should be noted that the bikeability index described by several scientists: in 2012, Lowry and Callister explained the Bikeability index as the comfort and convenience of an entire bikeway network for accessing important destinations. Then they referd that this index is the only methodology exclusively dedicated to bicycle travel (Lowry and Callister 2012). In additional, The Bikeability Index described by Winters et al. (2013) includes the three basic measures, but adds the length of bicycle routes, slope, and the separation from car traffic. Each variable is given a score of 1 to 10, which is then summed to produce the final score.

Explaining the Bikeability of an environment has included the following characteristics:

* Single principles of the townscape or the infrastructure, such as bicycle tracks, crossings, and parking facilities, which are referred to by Lowry et al. (2012) as ‘bicycle suitability’.
* Neighbourhoods are delineated based on airline/Euclidian distance rather than network distance (Nielsen et al., 2013; Greenberg and Renne, 2005).
* Explicit polygon features generated around specific trajectories of individual respondents – e.g., as recorded by GPS. Such features can be purely geometric, such as buffers or ellipsoids, or be based on the topology of a transport network (Madsen et al., 2014; Frank et al.,2017).
* Connected infrastructures as a functional component of entire towns and urban fabrics (Lowry et al., 2012). According to Lowry et al. (2012), this is in fact what covers the term ‘Bikeability’. In the following, Table 4 prepares some of the studies that used bikeability index.

Table 4: Studies examining bikeability

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Author** | **Study area** | **Measure** | **Data** | **Descriptions** |
| [Lowry et al., (2012)](#Lowry) | Moscow, Idaho | * proposed calculation for **bikeability** was developed on the basis of a common accessibility equation (Hansen's model). * calculation finds the **shortest routes** between zone i and every destination j | * bikeway is any roadway where bicycle travel is permitted regardless of the presence of a bike lane * Complete entire bikeway network and important destinations in the case study community * only arterials, collectors, and shared-use paths were considered part of the major bikeway network. | * Assessment of **bikeability** considers comfort and safety of the entire bikeway network for access to important destinations. * **impedance functions** were estimated based on a negative exponential function. * bikeability was assessed for all **commercial destinations** |
| [Nielsen and Skov-Petersen (2018)](#Nielsen) | Denmark | * presented a micro-level analysis of the **Bikeability** **variables** included density/accessibility,   infrastructure provision and terrain measured   * The **accessibility** was based on the **shortest path network** **distance** from trip origins. | * **cycling data** obtained from the Danish National Travel survey * a **classification** **of all roads** and paths into **seven** classes is provided: roads without bicycle infrastructure, roads with bicycle lanes, roads with bicycle paths (protection by kerb and/or separating strip), fully separated bicycle and foot paths, fully separated foot paths, roads without access for pedestrians or bicycles, and roads without public access. * the **number of residents, jobs, retail jobs, schools, high schools, and further education** were counted within 1 km, 2 km, 3 km, 4 km, and 5 km of each trip origin and added to the travel survey dataset. | * The survey's account of **cycling** includes cycling as the main mode of transport as well as cycling as a stage mode, e.g., connecting to public transport and leisure cycling without a destination purpose. * The **average slope** of the terrain within the same distances (Euclidian measure) was applied. |
| [McNeil, N. (2011)](#Mcneil) | Portland, Oregon | * assessing a neighborhood’s bicycle **accessibility** or “**bikeability**” on the basis of 20-min neighborhood for bicycles. * Using **a scoring method** in order to assessment the bikeability, | * the 2009 National Household Transportation Survey * Geocoded data for **parks, schools, libraries, and transit connections** (light rail stops and bus lines) were obtained from Metro’s Regional Land Information System. * **Business address data** for other destination types were acquired through a data clearinghouse, Reference USA. | * this research focused on **home-based utilitarian** trips and excluded any trips to and from work. * Business addresses were gathered and geocoded for all **childcare providers, grocery stores, clothing stores, general goods stores, beauty services** (e.g., salons, barbers), **banks, mail services** (e.g., post offices, private mail providers), **laundries and cleaners, gyms, general entertainment** (e.g., bowling, performance venues), **drinking establishments, movie theaters, restaurants, coffee and snack shops, and religious organizations**. |
| [Saghapour et al., (2017)](#Saghapour) |  | * Introducing a **new index** for measuring **bikeability;**   **Cycling Accessibility Index (CAI)** was developed for quantifying cycling accessibility using the **travel distance as impedance** along with **cycling catchments** within local areas in metropolitan area  Using **gravity-based measures** of accessibility.   * **Network models** are applied to identify acceptable cycling catchments as well as an **Origin-Destination (O-D) cost matrix** | **database** included **urban centres**, significant **buildings**, **landmarks**, **public spaces**, **community facilities** and **indigenous locations.**- considered as destinations and categorized into **four groups** of **activities.**   * A datab`ase of **Mesh Blocks** from the 2011 Census and contained the **total usual resident population** and **total number of dwellings.** * *Point of Interests (POIs):* * Education Centres * Health and Care Facilities * Retails and Recreation Centres * Community Services | * **Service area** and OD-cost matrix analysis was undertaken for each set of destinations separately: * ***4 km buffers*** were calculated for *education centres* and health and care facilities * used the **median desirable travel** **time/distance** * uses the speed of **16 km/h** which has been adopted from the Austroads network operation planning framework * the **median desirable travel time** was defined as **20 minutes** for community services |

# A framework for assessing data sources and needs

For calculating accessibility in active transport mode, multiple data sources are required. After reviewing most of active travel mode articles, we have divided the data used to calculate accessibility in these studies into 7 different categories, which are: Travel data (trips), Users data (Socio-economic and personal data), Origin- destination, Cycling and walking network, Spatial data (boundary, land use, postal code, . . . ), additional data (such as Traffic data, weather data, slope, Level of Traffic Stress, impedance value, speed ). Table 5, shows required data based on the each measure.

Table 5: Required data according to each measure

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Data / Methods** | **Travel Data** | **Users Data** | **Origin- destination Data** | **Cycling and walking network** | **Spatial data** | **additional data** |
| Activity-based | Travel data is usually obtained from surveys and includes information about each trip such as duration, start point, end point, origin and destination. | travel behavior characteristics such as age, gender, income, can be considered if the data are available | The origin and destinations spatial data or a database of POIs that is obtained from local map. Indeed, a database of POIs consists of the location of all of the facilities such as home, workplace, parks, schools, groceries, etc. | Walking and cycling network data are required for calculating time or distances (using network analysis or nearest distance) that can be obtained from both the OpenStreetMap and the local government data portals. | spatial data of statistical areas such as blocks, mesh, zones, areas, etc. This data set includes some information such as population, number of dwellings, employment data, etc. This dataset is required for calculating accessibility in each area. | * Impedance functions are required that are usually estimated based on a negative exponential function and it is mostly based on the travel time. * Slope can be considered for calculating accessibility. |
| Distance-based | ----- | ----- | Required to calculating the shortest distance to nearest facilities. | Required to calculating nearest distance or time to facilities using network analysis. | Required to census tracts data. |  |
| infrastructure-based | ----- | ----- | ----- | Walking and cycling network data are required | Spatial data of essential services or origins/destinations are required. For example, grocery stores, hospitals, schools, bikeshare systems etc |  |
| Utility-based | Travel data is required. | travel behavior characteristics are required such as age, gender, etc. | ----- | Walking and cycling network data are required | Spatial data of essential services |  |
| Walkability | Travel data is usually obtained from surveys and includes information about each trip such as duration, start point, end point, origin and destination. | travel behavior characteristics are required such as age, gender, income, car availability and etc. | The origin and destinations database is required | Walking and cycling network data are required | Spatial data of net residential/ Population density, Retail floor area, Intersection density, and Land use mix are required |  |
| Bikeability | Travel data is required and includes information about each trip such as duration, start point, end point, origin and destination. | - | The origin and destinations database is required . | Walking and cycling network data are required for calculating time or distances (using network analysis or nearest distance) | spatial data of statistical areas such as blocks, mesh, zones, areas, etc. is required for calculating accessibility in each area. | Impedance functions are required that are usually estimated based on a negative exponential function and it is mostly based on the travel time. |

# Data needs and sources

## Travel data (trips)

Travel data provides information about the trips, including the mode of travel, duration of travel, and trip origins and destinations. This data can obtain from General social survey (GSS) for all over the Canada. The (GSS)-time uses is conducting every 5 years and the last survey was done in 2015. This survey monitors changes in time use to better understand how Canadians spend and manage their time. This dataset contains travel time data of Many of the Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and non-CMA areas all over Canada. CMAs are including St. John’s, Halifax, Saint John, Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver. and the non-CMA areas of each of the ten provinces were also grouped to form ten more strata. In addition, this dataset contains 301 bicycle and 4236 walking trips. Each trip contains pumID, start time, end time, duration, origin and destination.

In addition to the general social survey, travel time data can be obtained for the cities of Toronto and Montreal from the Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) and the Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain (ARTM) survey. The 2016 Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) was conducted on behalf of 22 local, regional, provincial and transit operating agencies in Greater Toronto and surrounding regions. the TTS database for the city of Toronto includes Travel data (e.g., mode, trip length), personal data (e.g., age, gender), household data (e.g., number of persons, income), and transit data (e.g., access distance, access mode to transit). As well, the Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain (ARTM) is an origin-destination survey and one of the most critical transportation studies in Quebec that has been carried out every five years since 1970. Data are collected for each household (home location, size, number of cars), each person in the household (age, gender, driving license ownership, main occupation, public transit monthly pass ownership), and each trip made by each person of 5 years and older (departure time, origin and destination locations, trip purpose, mode sequence, and others).

## Users data (Socio-economic and personal data)

Demographic variables of users including age, gender, and the number of households can be obtained from General Social Survey (GSS) in 2015. In addition, the Statistics Canada population census provides a statistical overview of various geographic areas all over Canada such as provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas (CMAs), census agglomerations (CAs), Census divisions (CDs), etc in 2021 and includes different variables for example number of population, age, and gender (Statistics Canada, 2021 Census).

## Origin- destination data

Various articles examine bicycle and walking trips to different purposes. the most important destinations are educational facilities, cultural and Art Facilities, recreational and Sports Facilities, healthcare facilities, grocery stores and markets, services and government offices (such as banks, post offices, and insurance company, etc ), work, and home. Origins and destinations data of cycling and walking trips all over Canada can be obtained from two sources of General Social Survey (GSS)-time uses data and The Linkable Open Data Environment (LODE).

In the GSS database, different travel destinations and locations are considered and each location is identified with a specific code, as follows: home or on the property, someone else’s home or property, work or school, in the neighbourhood, Outdoors, Grocery store, other stores or mall, Library, museum or theatre, Sports center, field or arena, Restaurant, bar or club, Place of worship, medical, dental or another health clinic, and Elsewhere.

In addition, the Linkable Open Data Environment (LODE) is an exploratory initiative that aims at enhancing the use and harmonization of open microdata primarily from municipal, provincial and federal sources. It has been compiled by the Centre for Special Business Projects (CSBP) at Statistics Canada in 2020. This database includes variables such as address, postal code, city, province and latitude and longitude of each facility and includes a Canada-wide Open Database of educational facilities (this database covers facilities such as early childhood education, kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions, and specific vocational training centers. The database does not include virtual educational institutions.), healthcare facilities (including ambulatory health care services, hospitals, and nursing and residential care facilities), cultural and art facilities (such as arts or cultural centers, artists, festival sites, galleries, heritage or historic site, library or archive, museum, theatre/performance and concert hall, and miscellaneous), and recreational and sports facilities (including trails(such as urban and rural trails or pathways for walking, hiking, or biking), sports fields, arenas (facilities where sports and/or recreational activities take place), athletic parks, beaches, casinos, community centers, gyms, marinas, parks and green spaces, playgrounds, pools, race tracks, ice rinks, skate parks, splash pads, stadiums, miscellaneous), and Businesses (this database contains addresses of business, name, type of business and locations).

## Cycling and walking networks

Cycling and walking networks can be obtained from different sources such as Can-BICS, open street map (OSM), and municipal open data.

Can-BICS is a classification system of five broad bicycle facilities assigned to three categories: high, medium, and low comfort, based on the facility’s contribution to user safety and comfort while cycling. 1) High comfort includes low-stress routes that are comfortable for most people, including those of all ages and abilities, with a record for best safety. for example, cycle track, local street bikeway, and bike path. 2) medium comfort is low- or medium-stress routes that are comfortable for some people, but whose safety requires careful design, such as multi-use paths (A two-way paved path shared by cyclists, pedestrians and other users). 3) low comfort bikeways are high-stress routes that are comfortable for few people, with little or no additional safety, compared to no bicycle facility, such as painted bike lanes that are designated by bicycle and diamond pavement markings and signs as exclusively for cyclists. And 4) non-conforming bicycle facilities do not meet minimum Can-BICS standards, such as non-conforming - trail (these are multi-use trails with unpaved surface), non-conforming – major road (shared lanes on major roads provide connectivity), and non-conforming - other.

Can-BICS measured bicycle infrastructure for all communities in Canada, at the neighborhood level, using open data sources such as OpenStreetMap (OSM). This data was completed in 15 pilot cities such as Edmonton, Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Halifax, Regina, Saint John, Victoria, Canmore, Cornwall, Courtenay, Whistler, and Whitehorse.

Another source for obtaining cycling and walking networks is OpenStreetMap (OSM). This dataset is a collaborative global map that using for active transportation researches. OSM considered cycle lanes, tracks and sidewalks. A cycle lane lies within the roadway itself (on-road), whereas a cycle track is separate from the road (off-road). Tracks are typically separated from the road by e.g. curbs, parking lots, grass verges, trees, etc. as well, trails line that indicates the paths or routes suitable for walking, hiking, bicycling, and other outdoor activities from 2015 to 2019 can be obtained from scholars Geoportal.

As well, municipal open data is a standard source of bicycling infrastructure data that city governments are making this spatial data for bicycling infrastructure. In Canada, some cities have this dataset such as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, etc. However, open data of different cities use different definitions for bicycling infrastructure, and they may have different levels of timeliness, completeness, and documentation (Schoner & Levinson, 2014). For example, bicycle facilities the City of Toronto Open Data portal consists of a high-resolution geospatial data set with attributes accumulated from several sources of cycle tracks or bike lanes, road classification (local, collector, minor arterial, etc.), number of lanes, directions, stop signs and signalized intersections. (City of Toronto, 2017).

## Spatial data (boundary, land use, postal code, etc)

Spatial data such as boundary, land use, postal code, origin and destinations and etc can be obtained from scholars Geoportal and open street map (OMP).

scholars Geoportal has different shape file layers such as Land Cover Region (including seven land use categories: commercial; government and institutional; open area; parks and recreational; residential; resource and industrial; or waterbody in 2019), education Point (includes the point locations of elementary schools, high schools, colleges, cégeps and universities in 2020.There is also additional information about teaching languages and grade levels), enhanced Points of Interest (EPOI) in 2019, which indicates the locations of business and recreational points of interest across Canada in 2020, Healthcare (HCR) that contains the location of hospitals, long-term care facilities, outpatient clinics, nursing stations, and community health centres in 2020, Tourist Attractions Point that indicates the point locations for various tourist sites (such as National, Provincial, and Municipal parks, Art Galleries, Historic Sites, Museums, Science Centres, Tourist Information Booths, and Zoos) in 2020, Park sports field point in 2019 across Canada, Cinemas Point, Religious Buildings Point, Retail Point that indicates the locations shopping centers and department stores in 2020, and accommodations Point such as hotels, motels, campgrounds, inns, hostels, resorts, etc., in Canada.

# Important considerations and possible challenges

## Travel time/distance thresholds

Selecting an appropriate cut-off distance for travel has been acknowledged as an important step that has the potential to significantly impact results. Different distance thresholds should apply to both cycling and walking, however, there remains considerable variation among the threshold values applied within each mode.

Some analyses choose to vary thresholds according to the destination type, or by population group. For example, Saghapour et al. (2017) use a 10-minute travel time for retail and recreation centres and a 20-minute travel time for cycling to community services. Applying the same threshold to all age groups also disregards the fact that certain groups (for example, seniors and children) may travel slower or require greater effort to travel the same distance. Although applicable to both cycling and walking, this distinction by age group has only been applied among walking measures. In the following, Tables 5 shows the thresholds of bicycle and walking travel time and distance in different studies.

Table5: Thresholds of bicycle and walking travel time and distance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Distance/Time thresholds** | |
| **walking trips** | |
| Gutiérrez and Garci's (2008); Hsiao et al. (1997); Kimpel et al. (2007); Murray and Wu (2003); Neilson and Fowler (1972); O’Neill et al. (1992); Zhao et al., (2003) | The most common standard measure of walking distance to transit stops and stations has been **400 m** (0.25 miles). |
| Lam and Morrall (1982) | In Calgary, Canada, observed a **median walking distance** to bus stops of **292 m,** while **the average** was **327 m** and the 75th percentile, **450 m**. |
| O’Sullivan and Morrall (1996) | distinguished between walking to light-rail transit stations in the suburbs and in the central business district. They found **an average distance** of 649 m and a 75th percentile equal to 840 m in the former, while **the average distance** was 326 metres and the 75th percentile was 419 metres in the latter (Calgary, Canada) |
| Arasan et al. (1996) | an average critical trip time is **20 min for walking**. |
| Nicholls (2001); Smoyer-Tomic, Hewko, and Hodgson (2004) | used a distance of **0.8 km** as a reasonable threshold for walking trips (the threshold is not specific to a population group) |
| Zhao et al. (2003) | in southeast Florida, the number of riders walking over half a mile **(800m) was negligible**. |
| Van Herzele and Wiedemann (2003) | Maximum distance from home to: 1) Residential green (150 m); Neighborhood green (400 m); Quarter green (800 m); District green (1600 m); City green (3200 m); Urban forest (5000 m) |
| Tsou et al., (2005) | Defined **varying distances** that depended on the type of facility:   * the service range of municipal facilities such as town parks, universities, museums and dump sites cover the **entire city**. * community facilities, including junior and senior high schools, transformer stations, etc., are typically in the **2 km** range. * The service range of neighborhood facilities like playgrounds and elementary schools is typically in **the 1 km** range. |
| Schlossberg et al. (2007) | walking distances to rail transit stations in Portland, WA, and San Francisco, were **a median distance** of **0.47 miles (756 m)** |
| Alshalalfah and Shalaby (2007) | showed that among transit users, 60 % live **within 300 m** from their stop and 80 % within **500 m** in Canada. |
| Larsen and Gilliland (2008) | Population within **500** m walk distance of supermarkets |
| Manaugh and El-Geneidy (2011) | used 400, 800 and 1200 m thresholds for calculating walkability score |
| Daniels and Mulley (2013) | the **mean walking distance** to bus service **461 m** with 75th percentile at **566 m**.  In the same study they found **mean walking** to rail around **805 m** and the 75th percentile at **1,018 m**.  Also, it is clear that these distances are significantly beyond the **400** m for buses and **800** for rail. |
| El-Geneidy et al., (2014) | The 85th percentile walking distance to bus transit service is found to be around **524 m** for home-based trip origins, **1,259 m** for home-based commuter rail trip origins. |
| Azmi et al., (2013) | considered radius of **400 meter** (approximately 5 minute of walking) in the neighborhood area. |
| Saghapour et al. (2017) | considered **20-30 mins** or **1.6 – 2.4 km** (Based on POI type) |
| van Soest et al., (2019) | **400 or 800** m thresholds for walking to public transport |
| Adhikari et al., (2021) | **10–15 min of walking** time, a commonly used time frame to assess perceived proximity to amenities and services |
| **Cycling trips** | |
| Arasan et al. (1996) | found an average critical trip time of **24 min** for bicycling. |
| Seneviratne (1985), Arasan et al. (1994), Rastogi and Rao (2003) | proposed an average critical distance of **1100 m** across the categories of trip type, and **1050 m** and **750 m** respectively for the categories of male and female. |
| Houde et al.,(2008) | access to the cycling network within a **500-metre** radius and the access to a cyclist-only bike path within a **500-metre** radius from the centroid of the census tract. |
| McNeil (2011) | the average cyclist would be willing to travel between **1 mi and 2.5 mi** for most utilitarian nonwork trips |
| Saghapour et al. (2017) | Considered **10-20 mins or 2.5 - 4km** (Based on POI type) |
| Tucker and Manaugh (2018) | A cut-off length of **7 km** was used. |
| Manum et al., (2019) | a travel-time threshold of **15 minutes** in one direction is a reasonable value for calculating the catchment area. (bicycling speeds vary) |
| [Imani et al., (2019)](#Imani) | calculated the **30-minute** cycling thresholds to accessibility to jobs |
| [Manum et al., (2019)](#Manum) | a travel-time threshold of **15 minutes** for accessibility by bicycle for daily commuting |
| Li et al., (2020) | consider the trips whose **trip distance** and **duration** are between the 1st (**301m and 180 s**) |
| Chen and Wang (2020) | five thresholds (**10-, 20-, 30-, 45-, and 60-minute**) by cycling. |
| [Mora et al., (2021)](#Mora) | Access to bicycle lanes from the blocks was modeled in consideration of three critical distances: **300 m, and 500 m or 1000 m** (Average minimum distance to bicycle lane) |

## Impedance functions

Impedance function is used to describe willingness of cyclists and pedestrian to travel to a destination as a function of cost (distance, time, etc.); it is a component of accessibility (Iacono et al., 2010; Yang and Diez-Roux, 2012; Arranz-López et al., 2018). The impedance function obtained by fitting to a real dataset provides a continuous description of cycling and walking probability at different costs. The spatial distribution of bicycle and pedestrian travel can be expressed using distance decay functions (Iacono et al., 2010) as travel distance is a limiting factor for implementing use (Larsen & El-Geneidy, 2011). Distance decay functions describe the effect of distance on spatial interactions and typically express distance as a function of travel impedance (time or cost). Rybarczyk and Wu (2010) identified the importance of the spatial patterns of bicycle facilities and connectivity of a local network when studying accessibility. Furthermore, increased connectivity within a network also allows for increased accessibility.

Some researchers have argued that – like maximum travel thresholds – distance-decay rates should differ according to trip purpose and different population groups (García-Palomares et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2019). Similarly, researchers also argue that walking and cycling impedance functions should be calculated separately due to their differing travel speeds and maximum travel ranges (Cheng et al., 2019). For example, the distance-decay curve for work trips shown in Figure 1 assumes that cyclists are half as likely to reach a work destination 20 minutes away than one 10 minutes away, and therefore, any jobs 20 minutes away would be applied half the weight of jobs 10 minutes away. These cycling weights differ slightly from walking trips since fewer people are willing to walk a longer distance to work. While adjusting the distance-decay functions by mode has the potential to improve accuracy, it can also be said that a consistent approach to measuring accessibility across modes is preferrable due to the possibility of causing one mode seem less accessible when applying different decay functions (State Smart Transportation Initiative, 2021).

In terms of the types of impedance functions considered, a negative exponential curve is common (Saghapour et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2019) – example shown in Figure 1. However, some studies have also calculated study-specific distance-decay curves based on trip data rather than assuming a standard function. Wu et al. (2019) calculated a distance-decay function using data from Shenzhen’s dockless bicycle-sharing system. Their findings show that a lognormal distance decay best fit the distribution of bike-sharing trips, with the willingness to cycle increasing up to ~500m and decreasing thereafter. Garcia-Palomares et al. (2013) took a similar approach for measuring walking accessibility to metro stations and found a linear distance-decay trend that varied significantly by age.

Chart, histogram

Description automatically generated

Figure 1: Example travel time decay functions by mode for work vs. non-work trips. (Source: State Smart Transportation Initiative - based on data from 2017 National Household Travel Survey)

## Slope

One of the factors associated with the natural environment and has an effect on bicycle and walking trips is slope. hence, pedestrians and cyclists will travel out of their way to by-pass segments with steep slopes. because, For them, small positive increments in slope decrease travel speeds while increasing energy use and travel time. Besides, due to the differences in efforts to go up-slope versus down-slope, pedestrians and cyclists may not select the same way. This is referred to as anisotropic movement (Ebener et al., 2005).

There are few studies that have considered slope in measures of active accessibility, yet it is acknowledged as an important factor to include since people will often avoid routes with significant elevation gain, and routes with steep slopes may significantly impact accessibility. Often, network analyst tools use the shortest path from the road network, which may not reflect actual cycling or walking behaviour. Vale et al. (2016) concluded that slope should always be included in accessibility of bicycling and that it is also important for walking, however it is largely absent from walking accessibility measures. However, the greater availability of elevation data and advances in research in various disciplines offer opportunities to better understand the behavior of individuals when travelling in infrastructure-poor contexts and challenge assumptions surrounding the most important costs to be minimized. Papa et al. (2018) also highlighted a significant difference in catchment areas when including versus excluding the slope attribute (~33% km2 difference for adults over 75). Wood et al. (2018) studied the sensitivity in distance calculation to variations in three travel-time modeling approaches, taking as reference a model that accounted for variations in land cover and directionality in slope (anisotropy). They found that an approach based on measuring Euclidean distances on a flat surface underestimated the distance traveled, relative to the reference. The second approach, which calculated the distances constrained to a road network, also varied substantially from the reference, underestimating it in some areas and overestimating in others. Finally, the third approach, which accounted for land cover and elevation but ignored the directionality of slopes slightly underestimated travel times.

Lundberg et al., (2012) examined the local cycling and walking networks through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) using accessibility. They extracted a percent slope raster layer from DEM layer that was obtained from part of the National Elevation Dataset (NED). the percent slope of the DEM ranged from 0 to 360. In ArcMap, when the slope angle equals 45 degrees, the rise is equal to the run. Expressed as a percentage, the slope of this angle is 100%. As the slope angle approaches vertical (90o), the percentage slope approaches infinity. To calculate percent slope, this research used methods described by Price (2009). An X,Y coordinate was first calculated for the start point of each line segment. Next an X,Y coordinate was calculated for the end point of each line segment. ArcMap's 3D Analyst extension was used to convert the street network into a 3D layer, at which point percent slope could then be calculated as the Z-value for each of the line segments in the network. A Z-value (elevation) was calculated at the start points and end points of each line segment. The following equation was used to derive percent slope for each line segment:

slope values indicate uphill travel while negative slope values indicate downhill travel. In this regard, they proposed different walking and cycling speeds based on the different slopes using Parkin and Rotheram’s (2010) findings on the impact of slope on bicycle travel speeds. Fig.2 summarizes the various bicycle travel speeds used in the GIS modeling.

![Table

Description automatically generated]()

Figure 2: Bicycle travel speeds used in GIS modeling

Pedestrian travel speeds were also calculated based on the effect of slope. Tobler’s hiking function was used to identify the effect of slope on travel speed. The following equation represents the modified Tobler's formula adjusted for percent slope:

Where v is velocity, e is the base for natural logarithms, and s is the slope in percent. Fig. 3 summarizes a pedestrian’s travel speed used in the modeling in GIS.

![Table

Description automatically generated]()

Figure 3: Pedestrian travel speeds used in GIS modeling

In another study, Paez et al., (2020) calculated the slope from the vertical and horizontal displacements. The instantaneous slope (m) is given by the derivative of y = f(x) with respect to x. this is given by the following expression:

In a DEM layer, two physical aspects of the landscape that relate to resistance can be obtained directly from the grid, namely the vertical displacement and the horizontal displacement between nodes i and j. Δv and Δh are vertical and/or horizontal displacements respectively. This slope is linked to speed via Tobler's formula for hiking travel (Tobler, 1993):

where the speed s is in m/min. The amount of speed can be converted into travel time in minutes if it is divided the distance by speed as follows:

where di can be the distance on the surface as discussed above or can be approximated by the horizontal distance Δh. As seen in Fig. 2, travel time tends to increase as the slope increases.

Diagram

Description automatically generated

Figure 4: Relationship between surface distance/travel time and slope

## Weather

Other factors that are associated with the natural environment and have also been shown to affect cycling and walking trips are as follows: weather, temperature, shade, and aesthetics. The type of weather an individual has to travel through has been identified as a principal factor in the decision process for employing non-motorized travel modes. The pinnacle conditions that individuals consider using non-motorized travel include dry weather and pleasant temperatures (60o to 75oF) (Zacharias, 2001). High amounts of shade cover over a network and available aesthetics along a route increase the rates for non-motorized travel (Zahran et al., 2008).

## Level of Traffic Stress

Several of the cycling accessibility approaches incorporate bicycle infrastructure using level of traffic stress (LTS) (Faghih Imani et al., 2019; Murphy & Owen, 2019). The LTS method was first proposed by Furth et al. (2016) to categorize street segments into 4 categories based on the number of lanes, presence of a parking lane, the speed limit, the bike lane and parking lane width, and any bike lane blockage. Murphy & Owen (2019) and Faghih Imani et al. (2019) compare cycling accessibility measures using different LTS categorizes to calculate service areas. Both studies exclude highways and high-volume roads from the network and classify into LTS categories using attribute information available from the network dataset (Faghih Imani et al. using the City of Toronto open data and Murphy & Owen using OSM data).

The Canadian Bikeway Comfort and Safety (Can-BICS) Classification System aims to provide a common nomenclature for bicycle facilities based on user safety and comfort. The Can-BICS classification designates bicycling facilities into three categories: high, medium, and low comfort infrastructure. There is some general alignment between Can-BICS categories and LTS criteria, however, there are a few main differences:

Local street bikeways are classified as high comfort using Can-BICS, but either LTS 1 or 2 depending on the number of lanes.

Painted bike lanes may be assigned LTS 1 to 4 depending on the speed, width, and presence of parking lanes, whereas in Can-BICS, painted lanes are low comfort facilities.

Trails and walkways in parks are LTS 1 but may be categorized as non-conforming Can-BICS facilities depending on the trail surface (e.g., gravel or dirt vs. paved).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Facility Type | Can-BICS Class | LTS Category |
| Cycle tracks | High comfort | 1 |
| Local street bikeways | High comfort | 1 or 2 |
| Bike paths | High comfort | 1 |
| Multi-use paths | Medium comfort | 1 |
| Painted bike lanes | Low comfort | 1 to 4 |
| Park trails and walkways | Non-conforming | 1 |

## Origins/destinations & applying weights

Typically, the way in which opportunities are measured depends on the type of opportunity and whether one or multiple opportunity types are considered. For example, the studies measuring job accessibility or number of people served by transit consider a total count, whereas for urban park access, Reyes, Páez et al. (2014) and Cheng et al. (2019) consider cell counts to account for park area. Among walkability and bikeability indices it is also common to apply weights to the variables depending on the goals for analysis (Arellana et al., 2021; Frank et al., 2010; Vale et al., 2016).

The majority of studies focus on origin-based accessibility (access to destinations), however, as argued by Vale et al. (2016), accessibility at destinations is also important. For example, individuals may reside in high accessible areas, but work in low-accessibility areas. In this respect, topology-based measures, may be preferred, or it may be useful to consider accessibility in terms of the population served around destinations of interest.

# Conclusion

Overall, there remains considerable variation in the types of accessibility measures applied in the context of walking and cycling. Among the four main types of active accessibility measures identified, the majority of recent studies use an activity-based approach, either measuring cumulative opportunities (within a catchment area / weighted by distance from the origin) or measuring gravity models. The activity-based approaches mainly vary in terms of the travel time and distance thresholds, and weighting impedance functions considered.

Many of the walking approaches, for instance, aim to incorporate a variable walking threshold (depending on age or location), while this is not seen within the context of cycling – where a prioritization of measures by route infrastructure is more apparent. Conversely, attention to infrastructure type, or comfort and safety, is not seen among pedestrian-focused studies.

When selecting an accessibility measure, there is evidently a trade-off between complexity and measure interpretability. While adding more complexity or multiple indices for different population groups, may increase accuracy, a simple, and easy to implement measure may be more important for widespread use.

Questions to address for future work include: (Jeneva’s thoughts in blue)

1. What type of measure is best suited for analysis across Canada given the available data and the project aims?
   * An-origin or destination-based measure? Or a topology-based measure?

An origin-destination based measure – cumulative opportunities

(Assuming it is preferable to have comparable metrics for cycling & walking)

1. If an origin/destination-based measure is selected:
   * What are destinations of interest? And how should they be measured? (E.g., number of opportunities, square footage)
   * Should opportunities be weighted?
2. How should travel be measured?
   * Travel distance or time? Euclidean or network distances?

Network distances would be preferrable although some researchers argue that results differ very little from Euclidean distances, and ease of implementation for a Canada-wide metric is an important consideration

Time might be better (could compare cycling vs. walking with same time threshold)

1. What geographic scale to consider?
   * Should accessibility measures be limited to CMAs?

Dissemination areas

1. Should analysis differ by population groups?
2. Should accessibility be measured within a catchment area? What would be the maximum distance/time-threshold for cycling vs. walking?

~15 minutes? Could compare varying thresholds

1. Should an impedance function be used? If so, what kind of function?

Distance-decay weighting seems preferrable

1. Can slope be incorporated?

Yes, see Paez et al. (2021) metabolic energy functions

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1. Walkscore.com. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. most studies (conducted mainly in USA and Australia) use 1000 m buffers. The European environmental questionnaire ALPHA used a distance of 10- to 15-min walk (i.e. \_1–1.6 km) as a neighborhood scale. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)