

Hamilton, Ontario  
September 10, 2024

**REF: Nomination Doctoral Research Workshop at 2025 TRB Meeting**

Dear Members of the Organizing Committee:

It is my pleasure to nominate Ms. Anastasia Soukhov for the workshop to be held during the 2025 TRB meetings. Anastasia is a doctoral candidate at McMaster University working under my supervision, currently on track to graduate in the **summer of 2025**.

Anastasia's doctoral work has already made important contributions to the project Mobilizing Justice in Canada. For the workshop, and as a continuation of her doctoral research, she proposes to present her latest work on a family of accessibility measures. As you well know, researchers in the field of transportation have been sounding the alarm for some time about the inefficient and energy-intensive character of existing transportation systems, and urging a change of focus from mobility to accessibility. Since transportation is seldom an end in and of itself, accessibility planning offers a perspective that satisfy the need for reaching destinations with a reduced focus on the mobility.

This is why the development of accessibility planning practice is important. However, despite decades of accessibility research, its adoption into planning practice has yet to be realized more fully—at least in part due to the challenges of interpreting the output of existing accessibility measures. If, as Susan Handy says, accessibility is an idea whose time has come, it must be in a way that facilitates the communication and interpretation of this type of analysis. Anastasia's research is, in my opinion, an important step in this direction. Anastasia's work will show how a historical divergence between accessibility analysis and spatial interaction modeling led to a vast field of accessibility measures that lack proportionality constants—and can therefore only be interpreted in an ordinal fashion (more or less accessibility). By remarrying accessibility to spatial interaction modeling, Anastasia will demonstrate how a family of highly interpretable, easy to implement accessibility measures obtain, that map into Wilson's classical typology of spatial interaction models. In this way, the research can be significant and timely, especially since a deeper understanding of the outputs of *potential* interaction is required to respond to the rapidly changing transportation and land-use in urban areas and beyond.

Besides the significance of Anastasia's research topic, a notable aspect of her research is that it is developed following key principles of open science. As her previous doctoral work<sup>1,2</sup>, the research that Anastasia proposes for presentation in the Doctoral Workshop will be an open, reproducible project.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://github.com/soukhova/TTS2016R>

<sup>2</sup> <https://github.com/soukhova/Spatial-Availability-Measure>



In summary, Anastasia is a top-notch student who is on track to graduate in 2025. She has a well-defined project to present, that in my opinion will prove groundbreaking and will considerably increase the appeal of accessibility analysis for transportation planning practice. I could not recommend her more highly for participation in this important event.

If you would like to discuss Anastasia's qualifications or her proposed research, I am at your disposition.

Sincerely,

Antonio Páez,

Professor

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