



Perceptions at street level: Centring lived experience in accessibility and transport justice research

Call for abstracts for a joint NECTAR Cluster 6 (Accessibility) and 7 (Social and Health Issues) workshop

Helsinki, Finland 7-8 December 2026

The Spatial Planning and Transport Group of Aalto University (Finland) is organising a workshop titled 'Perceptions at street level: Centring lived experience in accessibility and transport justice research.' The workshop will be held at the Espoo Otaniemi campus of Aalto University on 7-8 December 2026.

Workshop topics

Abstracts that centre subjective experience, perception, and meaning-making as analytically productive objects of study in accessibility and transport-related health and social research. Submissions are particularly welcome from peri-urban, suburban, and rural contexts, from research that foregrounds care, vulnerability, and justice, and that use citizen science (participatory or co-produced) research approaches. Topics include:

- *Perceived accessibility*: How individuals cognitively and emotionally experience ease of access, distinct from objective measures. Abstracts might examine perception-behaviour gaps, or how spatial and social context shapes what people feel is within reach.
- *Perception of vulnerable users*: How cyclists, pedestrians, older adults, disabled people, children, and caregivers are perceived by planners, drivers, and fellow users, and how those perceptions shape infrastructure provision, street-level interactions, and policy priorities, including risks of paternalism or misrepresentation.
- *Everyday lived realities and travel experience*: Work that considers the texture of travel (e.g. waiting, uncertainty, exposure, fear, fatigue, and pleasure).
- *Mobility of care*: Abstracts reframing mobility through the lens of care as a social practice and ethical obligation. This includes how care destinations are poorly served by accessibility planning, how caring mobilities are disproportionately borne by women, low-income households, and those in peripheral areas, and how transport system design enables or undermines the health of those who provide and receive care.
- *Accessibility for whom?*: Justice-oriented investigation of whose accessibility gains are prioritised in investment decisions, how benefits are distributed across space and social groups, and whether dominant frameworks account for the access needs of care-dependent and spatially or socially peripheral populations.

- *Rural and peri-urban lived experience*: Specific challenges of low-density areas, such as car dependency, service absence, long distances to care and social infrastructure, and the compounding of transport disadvantage with age, disability, and income. Abstracts might address informal and community transport, the experience of isolation, or how peripherality shapes perceptions of both accessibility and belonging.
- *Accessibility models*: Integrating accessibility models with perceived accessibility for vulnerable population/transport users.

We seek an open discussion about each presentation. Early-career researchers and PhD students are especially encouraged to submit an abstract.

Abstract submission

Colleagues interested in presenting a paper are invited to send a long abstract of maximum 500 words by email to: Hannah Hook (hannah.hook@aalto.fi) and Mansi Garg (mansi.garg@aalto.fi) by 7 August 2026. Please, also indicate the title, author(s), affiliations, corresponding contact, and three keywords. A maximum of three bibliographic references are allowed.

Travel and Accommodation Expenses

Up to 25 NECTAR Members will be invited to present a paper. The participation of one author per paper is free and includes a dinner and coffee/lunch breaks. One night's hotel accommodation will be provided for 10 attendees, prioritising young researchers. NECTAR membership for the year 2026 is required in order to attend the meeting. Non-members can find details on how to join the association on the 'Membership' page of NECTAR's website: <https://www.nectar-eu.eu/membership/>

Important dates

Abstract submission: 7 August 2026

Abstract acceptance notice: 4 September 2026

Meeting dates: 7-8 December 2026

Venue

The workshop is hosted by Aalto University and will be held at the [Undergraduate Centre](#) at the Otaniemi Campus in Espoo (Otakaari 1, 02150 Espoo).

Organising committee:

Hannah Hook, Cluster 7 co-chair, Aalto University (Finland)

Shaya Vosough, Aalto University (Finland)

Dominic Stead, Aalto University (Finland)

Mansi Garg, Aalto University (Finland)

Benjamin Büttner, Cluster 6 co-chair, Technical University of Munich (Germany)

NECTAR is a European-based scientific association. The primary objective is to foster research collaboration and exchange of information between experts in the field of transport, communication and mobility from all European countries and the rest of the world. It is a multidisciplinary social science network bringing together a wide variety of perspectives on transport and communication problems and their impacts on society from an international perspective. For further information on NECTAR, use the link: <http://www.nectar-eu.eu>.