

Passing the Baton

For over two decades *ACCESS Magazine* has published short, engaging summaries of transportation research conducted at the University of California. We ask our authors to write for lay readers rather than solely for professional peers, without overestimating the readers' familiarity with the subject or underestimating their intelligence. We also ask authors to explain the practical significance of the problems they have studied, and to show how their research can affect current thinking and public policy.

Professor Melvin Webber founded *ACCESS* in 1992 to showcase the research funded by the University of California Transportation Center (UCTC). The 240 articles in our archive of first 44 issues testify to the long and productive association between UCTC and *ACCESS*, and chronicle the impressive range of research that UCTC has sponsored.

During the past year, *ACCESS* won two awards from the American Planning Association for excellence in communication. Many readers wrote letters to recommend these awards, showing that *ACCESS* is achieving its goal. Here is an example: "The hard work that academics put into scholarship rarely makes the leap into practice. Even in a professional field like planning, all too often policy makers, neighborhood activists, and community residents seldom get much benefit from academic research. The problem is not that academics are doing useless things. Instead, most academics are either unable or unwilling to explain their good work in plain and helpful ways. *ACCESS* is a rare example of doing just that; it translates sophisticated ideas into tight, punchy, and concise messages that appeal to a wide audience."

Beginning with this Fall 2014 issue, *ACCESS* will be sponsored by the new University of California Center on Economic Competitiveness in Transportation (UCCONNECT), which succeeds UCTC as the University Transportation Center for Region 9 of the US Department of Transportation. The transition may bring modest changes in the magazine's focus to reflect UCCONNECT's emphasis on economic competitiveness in transportation. Perhaps the future will also see greater efforts to report on research in California's neighboring states. But whatever changes may come, the high standard of readability that has become the hallmark of *ACCESS* will remain. We have a responsibility to honor the past and influence the future. We eagerly look forward to showcasing the new research sponsored by UCCONNECT.

ACCESS is dedicated to the vital last step in transportation research: making information accessible to a broad audience. By connecting scholars with transportation planners and elected officials, *ACCESS* aims to catapult academic research into public debate and translate knowledge into action.

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