

SYPC

SINGAPORE YOUTH POLICY COMPETITION 2025

Formerly Known as Singapore Undergraduate Policy Competition (SUPC)

Domain Area:

Transport Inclusivity

Topic: Accessibility and Inclusivity in Singapore's Public Transport System

Guiding Question: TO BE RELEASED ON 14TH JUNE 2025 12PM (GMT +8)

Singapore's public transport system plays an important role in the daily lives of citizens, with the nation attaining an average 7.2 million daily ridership in 2023. It connects people to work and school, forming the backbone of urban mobility. In view of the growing population and need for enhanced connectivity, the government has set ambitious targets under the Land Transport Master Plan 2040, aiming for a 20-minute town and a 45-minute city. This means that residents should be able to walk, cycle, or ride to their nearest neighborhood centre within 20 minutes and travel between their home and workplace in less than 45 minutes during peak hours.

To achieve these goals, over \$60 billion is being invested in expanding the rail network by the early 2030s. New MRT stations and lines are set to open almost every year, with the long term goal of matching the MRT network density of cities like London and New York. Other improvements are in progress, including expanding the walking and cycling network, as well as increasing bus speeds.

Beyond increasing the accessibility of public transport, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) has also implemented policies to make it more inclusive for vulnerable groups. For example, 98% of bus stops are barrier-free to improve the mobility and access of wheelchair users. A Hearing Enhancement System (HES) has also been implemented in all Thomson-East Coast Line MRT stations to help commuters with hearing-aids communicate effectively with station service staff. Plans are being made to expand this system to all MRT stations and bus interchanges.

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Despite these achievements and ambitious plans, accessibility and affordability remain significant concerns for some groups. Persons with disabilities (PWDs), and individuals with cognitive disabilities like dementia continue to face challenges. These include confusing tactile paving at MRT stations, a lack of accessible maps for wheelchair users, and limited information on emergency protocols for people with disabilities. Infrastructure issues such as broken lifts and poorly designed bus stops, further limit access for those with mobility needs.

Additionally, affordability is another pressing issue. Rising transport fares, combined with inflation, have put additional strain on low income households and seniors. A 2023 survey showed that 76% of Singaporeans aged 55 and above struggled to afford basic necessities such as food, clothing, and transport due to increasing costs, suggesting that they are unable to comfortably manage essential expenses, including daily commuting costs.

These problems accentuates the need to develop targeted, sustainable solutions that address accessibility and affordability in Singapore's public transport system, which are central to ensuring that marginalised communities can benefit from the nation's transportation infrastructure.

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