
OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The elderly population in the United States will increase significantly by the year 2030. Mobility will be a critical concern to the continued independence of older persons and their ability to access the goods, services, and community connections necessary to maintain a good quality of life. Many factors will affect their mobility options including health, income, and ease of navigation and accessible transportation choices in their communities.

Most of the older persons of the future are projected to be more highly educated, healthier, and enjoying higher incomes than the older persons of today. They are likely to be residents of suburban or rural communities, which seldom have good public transit service today. Older persons of the future are also likely to be highly active and to travel more frequently to a wider range of destinations. Most will have

been automobile drivers all their lives and are likely to demand high levels of mobility and high-quality transportation services from all the travel modes that they use.

At the same time, there may be greater numbers of older persons who have mobility or income limitations in 2030 than today. There may be substantial numbers of frail and poor older women living alone at a low level of independence. These older persons will need new travel alternatives. Decreasing family ties may lead to a greater focus on non-family sources of travel assistance such as public transportation. Advanced travel options will need to consider a much larger number of elderly people from other backgrounds and cultures.

The objective of the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) is to provide information for public transportation

providers and planners to address the future transportation challenges generated by an increasingly older society. This report describes exemplary transportation services and innovative transportation alternatives that will enable older persons in the United States to maintain the independence that we all cherish. The preparation of these materials has involved an in-depth literature review, analyses of various large-scale databases, focus groups with older persons, focus groups and expert interviews with transit industry representatives, case studies of the best practices from transportation programs designed to improve travel opportunities for older persons, and the

identification of opportunities for further innovations.

The future promises substantial challenges for public transportation providers who wish to capture a significant portion of the trips of tomorrow's older persons. A much greater diversity of travel options will be needed. Services offering flexible routing and scheduling are likely to be in high demand. High-quality travel modes will receive greater emphasis, but low-cost travel alternatives will also have a strong role to play in both urban and non-urban areas. This report documents the kinds of innovative practices and procedures that will be needed.