



2022-07

THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR OLDER ADULT ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

WHEREAS, according to the National Council on Aging, by 2025, approximately 1 in 5 drivers will be age 65 or older and many older adults may start to lose their ability to drive safely due to aging-related factors, and may eventually rely on alternative methods to meet their transportation needs. Along with public transit, self-driving ride-hailing vehicles could provide mobility as a service (MaaS) to expand older adults' mobility and independenceⁱ, and;

WHEREAS, the Rural Health Information Hub, a national clearinghouse on rural health issues states that transportation can reduce social isolation and enhance individual autonomy and psychosocial well-being, and that in many rural communities, there is a need for safe, accessible, convenient, and affordable transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities, and that a lack of transportation impacts health and well-being due to missed healthcare appointmentsⁱⁱ, and;

WHEREAS, it is estimated that approximately 25% of all Americans aged 65 and older live in a rural area of the U.S., and this number will grow as baby boomers continue to age into retirement, and older adults living in rural communities may live far from social contacts, healthcare providers, shopping, community resources, activities, and rural communities may lack public transportationⁱⁱⁱ, and;

WHEREAS, according to the Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities, a research institute at the University of Montana, approximately 40 percent of all rural residents live in the 1,200 counties that offer no public transportation services^{iv}, and;

WHEREAS, a 2004 study found that seniors age 65 and older who no longer drive make 15 percent fewer trips to the doctor, 59 percent fewer trips to shop or eat out, and 65 percent fewer trips to visit friends and family, than drivers of the same age^v, and;

WHEREAS, a study in the American Journal of Public Health found that men in their early 70s who stop driving will need access to transportation alternatives for an average of six years and women in the same age group will need transportation alternatives for ten years^{vi}, and,

WHEREAS, according to Transportation for America's report "Aging in Place, Stuck without Options," more than 11.5 million Americans 65 and older lived with "poor" transit access in

2000, and that by 2015, this figure increased to more than 15.5 million older Americans, meaning a substantial majority of that population will be faced with declining mobility options, and that the aging in place phenomenon will continue until well beyond 2030, when the last baby boomer turns 65^{vii}, and;

WHEREAS, listed in this same report, for a metro area with fewer than 250,000 residents, a typical senior with poor transit service has access, on average, to less than .8 bus, rail, or ferry routes, for a metro area with between 250,000-1 million residents, a typical senior with poor transit service has access, on average, to fewer than 1.1 bus, rail, or ferry routes, and for a metro area with between 1-3 million residents, a typical senior with poor transit service has access, on average, to fewer than 1.7 bus, rail, or ferry routes, and;

WHEREAS, AARP found that nearly 20 percent of respondents age 75 to 79 used ride-sharing as their primary means of travel and this number rises to 40 percent for respondents age 85 or over^{viii},

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Sheriffs' Association supports public and private sector alternative means of transportation for older adults for access to healthcare, food access, social contacts, events, and family, increased roadway safety and encourages large and small law enforcement agencies to explore and support alternative means of transportation in their communities for older adults, particularly in unincorporated areas, such as ridesharing companies, pooled transportation resources, and public transit.

ⁱ <https://www.ncoa.org/article/older-adults-and-perceptions-in-self-driving-ride-hailing-services>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/transportation/4/population-considerations/older-adults-people-with-disabilities>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/transportation/4/population-considerations/older-adults-people-with-disabilities>

^{iv} Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities, "Rural Facts: Inequities in Rural Transportation" <http://rtc.ruralinstitute.umn.edu/Trn/TrnInequitiesFact.htm>

^v Bailey, Linda (2004), "Aging Americans: Stranded without Options" Surface Transportation Policy Project, Washington, D.C

^{vi} Foley, Daniel, Heimovitz, Harley, Guralnik, Jack and Dwight Brock "Driving Life Expectancy of Persons Aged 70 Years and Older in the United States" American Journal of Public Health, August 2002, Vol 92, No. 8

^{vii} <https://t4america.org/docs/SeniorsMobilityCrisis.pdf>

^{viii} AARP "Neighbors Helping Neighbors: A Qualitative Study of Villages Operating in the District of Columbia" <http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/devillages.pdf>