

On the Move

News from the **Senior-Friendly Transportation Options Network**

Summer 2008

Sharing information gets us off to a great start

Over 40 representatives of almost thirty different organizations attended the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation's first *Roundtable on Seniors' Alternative Transportation Needs* on June 12, 2008.

With our population aging, more and more seniors are on the road. Some put themselves and others at risk each time they get behind the wheel. And, the number of seniors who either cannot or choose not to drive is also increasing. Yet, mobility and independence remain vitally important to every senior.

A number of transportation alternatives are available, but for many seniors, **the options simply do not meet their needs.**

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation initiated the Roundtable to:

- Learn about the transportation needs of seniors
- Discuss the various alternatives
- Identify existing barriers

In this newsletter, you'll find a summary of the presentations and discussions from the Roundtable, as well as the list of next steps and recommendations that were compiled.

Please share this information with your colleagues and other stakeholders. If you have ideas, resources, or comments on senior-friendly transportation options, please contact David.Dunne@bcaa.com. We are on the move!

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We all have a stake in seniors' mobility and independence.

We were pleased that so many organizations could join us at our first Roundtable.

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| Abbotsford Community Services | Pacific Transit Cooperative |
| Alberta Motor Association | Silver Harbour Centre |
| Alzheimer Society of BC | SPARC |
| Bonsor Recreation Complex | SUCCESS |
| BCAA | TransLink |
| BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation | Union of BC Municipalities |
| BC Research and Prevention Unit | University of Alberta,
Department of Family Medicine |
| BC Transit | University of Victoria,
Centre on Aging |
| Canadian Cancer Society | Vancouver Coastal Health,
Coastal HSDA (North Shore) |
| Cooperative Auto Network | West Vancouver
Seniors' Activity Centre |
| Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC | <i>Living Well – Driving Well</i> |
| Driving Miss Daisy | Mature Drivers Workshop
presenters from North Vancouver,
Victoria and Langley. |
| ITN America | <i>Did we miss you? Our apologies! Please
notify David.Dunne@bcaa.com</i> |
| Ministry of Community Services | |
| Ministry of Health | |
| Ministry of Public Safety and
Solicitor General, Office of
the Superintendent of Motor
Vehicles | |
| Ministry of Transportation | |



Drive to Save Lives

www.MatureDrivers.ca

Notes from around the table

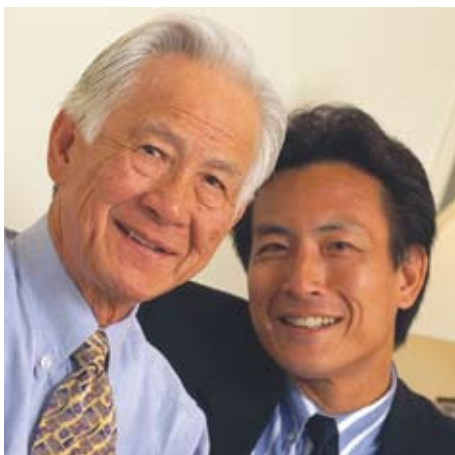
A summary of the presentations and discussions

Former Minister of Community Services, the Honourable Ida Chong, began the discussion by highlighting her own family's experiences and challenges with accessing transportation services for seniors. She also outlined the BC government's commitment to building senior-friendly communities.

Presentations by David Dunne (BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation), Dr. Bonnie Dobbs (University of Alberta) and Janet Stepaniuk (University of Victoria) provided an overview of the issues that face medically at-risk drivers and that seniors face when looking for alternative transportation options. It was noted that these challenges are not age-related *per se*, but are related to various medical conditions – both physical and cognitive. It was also noted that driving is a privilege, but that mobility is a right and an important part of healthy aging.

The discussion that followed raised a number of important observations, including:

- The transportation needs of a senior can change over time and



Family members are often the first to recognize changes in the abilities of an aging driver.

can vary from individual to individual.

- Transportation alternatives that would work for one group (e.g., scooters and taxis may work for the physically challenged) may not for another (e.g., those experiencing cognitive changes may require more support).
- One important challenge is seniors who don't recognize their changing abilities (e.g., those experiencing cognitive changes, dementia).
- It is important to provide information and education to individuals, families and caregivers **before** they need it.
- Doctors, family members and caregivers face challenges and need support as individuals go through the driving cessation process.
- Meeting transportation needs is a community issue. A wide range of options is needed so that individuals can make choices that work for them. Many seniors require more customized services than the average taxi- or transit-user.
- Infrastructure challenges exist (e.g., uneven sidewalks, the placement of bus stops, etc.).
- Language and cultural barriers can affect a senior's ability to access alternative transportation.



Many seniors require more customized services than the average taxi- or transit-user.

A number of qualities or attributes were identified that would be important to consider in designing an alternative transportation network for seniors. It would have to recognize the individual's dignity, be flexible, affordable, individualized and available on-demand, provide personalized assistance (e.g., arm to arm) when needed and be sustainable.

Katherine Freund of ITN America made a presentation about her organization's not-for-profit alternative transportation network. Tracey Axelsson of the Co-operative Auto Network described their program and her vision for a transportation alternative designed around seniors. In addition, brief descriptions were given on the services provided by the North Shore Go Bus, Driving Miss Daisy and the Westside Senior's Shuttle. There was significant interest in the ITN model and discussion continued through the lunch hour.

Focussing on the issues

In the afternoon, break-out groups provided an opportunity for more in-depth discussion. Each group focussed on a different topic.

New transportation services for seniors

A great deal of interest was expressed in further exploration of personalized car-based services to meet the needs of physically and cognitively challenged individuals. Key action items:

- to identify/remove barriers
- to create a receptive policy/regulatory environment for alternatives/options
- to create incentives to enable development of alternative transportation
- to explore feasibility and develop business cases, as required
- to talk to stakeholders to create “buy-in”

Community planning and infrastructure

Many challenges related to community planning, infrastructure and access to transportation were identified. Concerns ranged from the design of sidewalks (too narrow, height of curbs, uneven sidewalks, etc.) to the need for BC Transit to consider seniors in designs and operations (e.g., location of bus stops, policies, etc.).

Education and communication

A wide range of communication and education needs were discussed (e.g., training and education for doctors, service providers, families, etc.). Availability and access to information on driving alternatives emerged as key focuses and were seen as central to moving forward. The group also felt that it was important for stakeholders to interact regularly, to learn more about each other and work together.



Availability and access to information on transportation alternatives emerged as a key focus.

We have presentation notes from several of the speakers and will send them to you upon request.

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Transportation group meets again

The *New Transportation Services for Seniors* break-out group met on July 24 to continue their discussions. Representatives of the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation, TransLink, the Co-operative Auto Network, Pacific Transit Co-operative, the Union of BC Municipalities, Driving Miss Daisy and Vancouver Coastal Health (North Shore) attended. Part of the discussion focussed on exploring the possibility of an ITN Canada and the initial steps that would be required.

In addition:

1. BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation’s David Dunne agreed to follow up with regulatory bodies to gain an understanding of the current situation, to identify most the feasible strategies and changes that would be required.
2. David Dunne will work with Lynda Griffiths (Traffic Safety Foundation contractor) on the development of a grid showing existing services and where there are gaps.

The group agreed to meet again in the fall.

Where do we go from here?

Next steps and recommendations

The Roundtable has generated plenty of ideas. Here are the recommendations from our June 12 meeting.

Regulations and Policies

1. Create a receptive policy/regulatory environment in which transportation alternatives/options can operate.
2. Develop a needs assessment and related planning tools for local

government and community planners, encouraging them to adopt new planning guidelines and by-laws to make communities more senior friendly.

Communications

3. Create and maintain a database of the alternative transportation services currently available and provide access to the information through a wide range of sources.

4. Develop and implement communications to provide information about alternative transportation options to seniors, their families, caregivers and others.

Networking

5. Provide opportunities for groups in the transportation sector, seniors and service providers to network and talk about how to make services more senior-friendly.

6. Create opportunities for service providers to interact and foster cooperation, to improve overall coordination and service.

Next Steps

7. Organize a meeting to discuss strategy/approach to creating a 'receptive' regulatory environment for transportation alternatives (*Completed July 24*).
8. Explore funding for the development of an ITN Canada business case (*Underway*).
9. Explore the possibility of adding information about the mature drivers programs and transportation alternatives (when available) in renewal notices sent to seniors (*Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles*).
10. Link the work of the Roundtable with the provincial initiatives on age-friendly communities (*Ministry of Community Services*). Explore opportunities to integrate follow-up on Recommendations 2 and 6 with work that is currently underway.
11. Establish an on-going working/advisory group to help identify and enable development of new transportation alternatives.



Mobility is a right and an important part of healthy aging.

We'll keep in touch! In the meantime, your comments and suggestions are welcome.

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