

Second Roundtable is held in Langley

Over 30 representatives of 20 different organizations attended the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation's second *Roundtable on Seniors' Alternative Transportation Needs* in Langley on April 10, 2009. It was intended as a follow-up to the initial Roundtable held in June in Burnaby to:

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

Notes from around the table

Langley Mayor Peter Fassbender gave the opening presentation, indicating his support for the work of the Roundtable. Later, the Honourable Mary Polak, then Minister of Healthy Living and Sport, outlined the BC government's initiatives benefiting seniors and talked of her support for the concept of age-friendly communities.

In their presentations, both drew on their personal experiences with family members who were no longer able to drive. Their stories reminded participants that transportation and mobility issues for seniors affect so many families. Talking with seniors about their



The Honourable Mary Polak, Minister of Healthy Living and Sport

driving futures can be difficult, but those conversations are important to protect the safety of the seniors themselves as well as other road users, and to ensure their continued mobility.

A number of themes emerged throughout the day. Discussion focused primarily on those who no longer or should no longer drive, both rapidly growing segments of our population.

Need for education and awareness

As at the first Roundtable, the lack of information on transportation alternatives was a key theme. One strategy that was discussed was the development of a central listing of available transportation alternatives. The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation was suggested as being best positioned to make this happen. The difficulty in maintaining accurate information was acknowledged as was the need for the development of multiple strategies for the various audiences (individuals, families, social service providers, etc.).

Other topics relating to education and awareness that were discussed included:

- The importance of using respectful language and the need to avoid "labelling."
- The need to educate service providers (e.g., taxi and bus drivers) about seniors' needs in order to create senior-friendly transportation alternatives.
- The idea of providing opportunities to seniors to learn about transportation alternatives and how to use them.
- The need to continue to share information.

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Participants Lisa Kristalovich, Holy Family Hospital, and Craig Amundsen, BCAA

Network NEWS

Coming soon

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is in the process of updating their web site including the Mature Drivers pages. The new site will be launched in the fall and will address a much broader spectrum of issues related to seniors and driving. It will include pages relating to senior-friendly transportation alternatives, at-risk drivers and dementia and driving.

Medically-at-risk drivers

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is establishing a working group on drivers who are medically at risk. Are you interested in working with us to develop strategies? Write to David.Dunne@bcaa.com

Seniors planning tables

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is working with the United Way and helping community-based seniors planning tables on issues relating to transportation. David Dunne has now consulted with several of the Lower Mainland groups.

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

Abbotsford Community Services	Municipal Government and Community Relations
BCAA	Silver Harbour Centre
BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation	South Surrey D5 Community Policing District
BC Cancer Society	SPARC
City of Langley	United Community Services Co-Op
Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC (COSCO)	United Way of the Lower Mainland
Driving Miss Daisy	Vancouver Coastal HSDA (North Shore)
Fraser HSDA – Geriatrics, Planning and Services	Westcoast Facilitators Group
Holy Family	West Side Senior Empowerment Coalition
Home Instead Senior Care and 40/70	
<i>Living Well – Driving Well</i> Mature Drivers workshop presenters	<i>Did we miss you? Our apologies! Please notify David.Dunne@bcaa.com</i>
Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport	

...“Notes” continued

Support for Innovative Alternatives

Roundtable participants expressed support for alternative transportation programs similar to the Independent Transportation Network (ITN), featured at the first Roundtable. (The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is working in partnership with other organizations to determine the feasibility of adapting ITN to the Canadian context.) Advice from participants included the need to make the system easy to navigate and tailored to meet specific needs.

Other programs that were mentioned included Atlanta’s single electronic fare program and bus programs that pick up and drop off at locations other than posted stops. Education about alternatives should be targeted at future users long in advance of their need for them so that they can begin to plan for the future.

Acknowledgement of Rural Challenges

The challenges with making rural transportation alternatives sustainable were acknowledged. Discussion focused on multi-modal travel, where an individual uses a variety of different modes to make one trip. However, some felt that this could be intimidating for some.

Concerns Regarding Use of Scooters

Participants acknowledged the increasing reliance on scooters as a way of getting around for many seniors. Other forms of alternative transportation are also growing in popularity (e.g., electric bicycles, Segways, etc.). While these alternatives enhance an individual’s mobility, they bring new issues that need to be addressed. Regulations are lacking, licensing is not required and scooters are being used on sidewalks and roadways even though they are not covered under the laws pertaining to pedestrians or motor vehicles. The need for municipal and provincial governments to plan for a broader range of alternatives was discussed. (The University of the Fraser Valley’s Centre for Education and Research on Aging has conducted a recent study on scooter use. The report can be found at <http://www.ufv.ca/aging.htm>)

Please share this newsletter with your colleagues and other stakeholders. If you have ideas or resources or you’d like to tell us what’s happening in your community relating to senior-friendly transportation alternatives, please contact David.Dunne@bcaa.com. We are on the move!