

Senior & Disabled Mobility Study



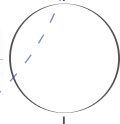
SACRAMENTO REGION

ISSUE BRIEF

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MTP2035
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN
THE NEXT STEP IN BLUEPRINT

The population of seniors will rise tremendously over the next 25 years. Taking into consideration mobility for seniors and those with disabilities, their needs will be addressed in the development of the MTP2035.



In the Sacramento region, getting from here to there is a challenge for transit dependent commuters, seniors and persons with disabilities using transportation options other than a car.

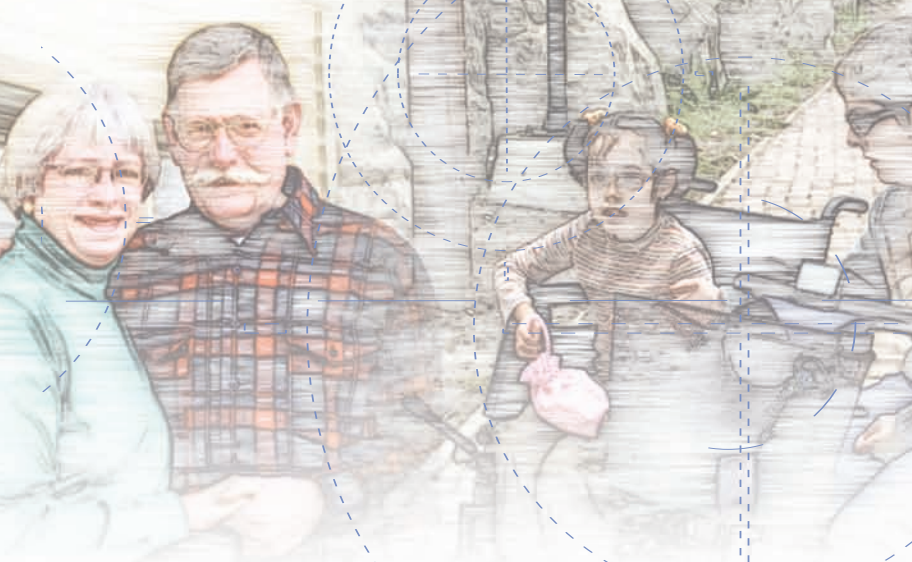
By 2030, the number of residents in SACOG region age 65 and over is expected to grow dramatically to 22 percent of the population, a sharp increase from the present 13 percent. As the population ages, older drivers seek out other forms of transportation, as driving may not be a feasible option. To address transportation mobility challenges for seniors and those who have disabilities, SACOG is developing the Senior & Disabled Mobility Study.

Access to Important Destinations

Reaching medical appointments was considered one of the greatest unmet needs for those who must rely on demand-responsive services. Those needing to reach medical facilities in another city or county may encounter difficulties trying to cross geographic boundaries, especially where eligibility requirements differ. Most demand-responsive services require advance reservations, making it difficult to reach a doctor for a same-day appointment because of an illness or emergency.

Additionally, predicting how long a medical appointment will last makes it difficult to schedule a timely pick-up. Transit agency demand-responsive programs, which are all curb-to-curb, require clients to wait outside for a

This brief highlights senior and disability transportation issues being studied for the MTP2035. For the complete Senior and Disability Transportation Issue Paper visit www.sacog.org/mtp/2035



pick-up, and if they are late it can be a particular hardship for someone who is frail or ill, especially in hot, cold or wet weather. Seniors with dementia can be too confused to successfully reach an appointment without escort. Meanwhile, requests for demand-responsive services, especially by dialysis clients, keeps growing, thereby decreasing capacity for other users.

Barriers

Driving

Barriers to driving for many seniors and persons with disabilities come from a variety of sources. Top concerns include: costs of driving — gas, maintenance, insurance, and high adaptive equipment costs for persons with disabilities. Additional concerns include heavy and high speed traffic, extreme weather, driving after dark, and insufficient parking close to desired destinations.

Fixed-route Transit

Senior and disabled riders face insufficient service, especially during mid-day, evenings, weekend, and in rural areas. When riders are able to ride transit, many are faced with a lack of sensitivity by drivers and bus stops that have poor physical access. Non-existent system integration among transit providers result in poor schedule coordination, requiring riders to make multiple transfers.

Demand-responsive Services

Unlike fixed-route service, Dial-A-Ride and taxi services do provide riders with door-to-door services, but requirements for advance scheduling, insufficient service in terms of hours and capacities, and limited geographic areas served, make utilizing this service difficult and potentially cost prohibitive. Identified problems in the region included long waits for pick-ups, difficulty of transferable connections, and curb-to-curb service that is insufficient for those who need additional help to and from the vehicle, or to carry packages.

Pedestrian Mobility

Senior or disabled pedestrians also face safety issues in the Sacramento region. Busy intersections make street crossings difficult, compounded further by insufficient signal crossing times. Often lack of sidewalk connectivity or poor conditions make for difficult travel conditions by foot, wheelchair or walker.



Suggested Improvements

Urban areas, busy streets and intimidating intersections can keep elderly and disabled residents from reaching light rail stations and other transit stops. Conversely, suggested improvements to meet these challenges include: improved coordination between transit providers; increased service; more neighborhood shuttles; and increasing safety at transit stops, intersections and sidewalks, and on vehicles.

Finding the money to finance transportation improvements for seniors and disabled is a significant challenge. Limited funding is available through competitive grants Caltrans administers while the new transportation bill (SAFETEA-LU) promises additional funds. Partnerships between public agencies and social service providers hold promise in closing some of this financial gap by providing new and improved transit services to serve the growing senior population.

Public Outreach

SACOG collaborated with Odyssey, a non-profit focused on transportation issues, to perform outreach and gain community input on SACOG's Senior & Disabled Mobility Study. From April to June 2005, SACOG and Odyssey conducted phone interviews and executed six public workshops throughout the six-county SACOG region. SACOG and Odyssey received input from transit providers, older community residents and persons with disabilities to better understand their barriers to mobility, and received input on local preferences for transportation-related improvements that would help people travel more easily to their destinations.

Findings from the study are being analyzed by a technical advisory committee and will be integrated into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035.



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