



**San Mateo County**

# **Senior Mobility Action Plan**



**Final Action Plan  
September 2006**

The Senior Mobility Action Plan  
is a State Planning and Research Project  
funded by the Federal Transit Administration  
and administered by Caltrans and the  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission

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# Chapter 1. Introduction and Summary

The San Mateo County Senior Mobility Action Plan is the work of a broad coalition of concerned entities in San Mateo County, with the leadership of the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans). The Plan is a joint effort to keep older people safe and connected to their communities as problems related to aging make it harder for them to get around.

## The Need

Maintaining senior mobility is a concern because:

- The number of older people in San Mateo County is expected to double in the next 20 years. The number of older County residents who have difficulty driving or can't drive will also mushroom.
- Compared to the recent past, more older people will live in places that are difficult to serve by public transportation and will not be accustomed to using public transportation.
- Existing alternatives to driving and conventional public transportation, especially paratransit such as Redi-Wheels, will not be able to meet all the needs of seniors who must limit or cease driving.
- Because of recent waves of immigration, increasing numbers of older people will have difficulty accessing available transportation because of language and cultural barriers.

If action is not taken, these trends may result in:

- Rising numbers of traffic injuries and deaths due to rapidly increasing numbers of older drivers.
- Strain on families of older people as they deal with the practical and emotional issues of limited mobility.
- Isolation of older people who cannot reach services and activities.
- Strain on public, non-profit, and volunteer services as they attempt to assist older people and their families dealing with these issues.

## The Planning Process

Previous studies and plans have documented many of these needs. This plan builds on that earlier work, and is focused on working with organizations and local governments in the county to initiate effective action. A Steering Committee was formed consisting of 35 representatives of interested organizations and governments, including advisory and

advocacy groups. The Steering Committee reviewed information about the needs of older people in the county and existing transportation services. The Committee then reviewed strategies for improving senior mobility that have been successful in other places and identified seven that were most promising for San Mateo County. These seven mobility strategies are:

1. **Community Transit Services:** Local shuttles using small vehicles to serve short trips within communities.
2. **Community-Based Transportation Services:** A non-profit, community transportation network with public and private funding that would provide an alternative to Redi-Wheels for seniors who can't drive or use transit.
3. **Encouraging Use of Transit:** Efforts to communicate to seniors that transit is safe, modern, and provides independence.
4. **Safe Driving:** Driver training and helping people adapt to changes brought on by aging, including retiring gracefully from driving when necessary and adapting cars for older drivers.
5. **Taxicabs:** A pilot project demonstrating accessible cabs, service improvement, and a possible fare subsidy; in the long run apply lessons from the pilot countywide.
6. **Information & Referral:** Information about all modes of travel, available by telephone, the Internet, widely disseminated literature, and through agency staff that work with older people.
7. **Walking:** Improvements to sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and driver awareness, focusing on neighborhoods with high concentrations of seniors and walkable destinations.

The Steering Committee divided into working groups and refined these strategies, identifying organizations and governments in the county that could participate in implementing them, as well as potential funding sources.

At key points, the process included input from an Expert Advisory Panel consisting of representatives of Caltrans, the Division of Motor Vehicles, the California Department of Health Services, the American Society on Aging, the California Commission on Aging, AARP, the Beverly Foundation, and the California State Automobile Association.

## **Implementation**

Effective action to address the issue of senior mobility will require collaboration by all levels of government, public and non-profit agencies, the private sector, individual older people, and the general public. The Steering Committee and project staff have consulted with as many potential partners as possible to make them aware of the Senior Mobility Action Plan and determine how they can be involved in implementing the priority strategies.

This process has resulted in significant progress already. SamTrans and the Peninsula Congestion Relief Alliance have conducted a “Seniors on the Go” campaign to promote more transit use by older people. SamTrans promoted driving safety at the San Mateo County Fair. The Family Service Agency has applied for and been selected to receive funding to develop a new community-based program to provide volunteer rides for low-income seniors. The City of Redwood City has applied for and been selected to receive funding for a community shuttle. The City of Belmont is exploring a possible pedestrian safety project focused on seniors. SamTrans and the Steering Committee are coordinating with continuing efforts such as the California Highway Patrol’s Older Driving Traffic Safety Seminar, AARP’s Driver Safety Program, and the joint AAA/AARP CarFit program.

During the coming year SamTrans will continue to provide staff support and leadership for the Senior Mobility Action Plan process. SamTrans staff and the Steering Committee will continue to support the efforts that are already underway, determine how best to organize for long-term implementation, establish a mission statement and objectives, and identify ways to expand implementation efforts to include strategies that have not yet been addressed.

A web site has been developed and is available at [www.seniormobilityplan.com](http://www.seniormobilityplan.com). The web site includes an opportunity to provide comments about the plan and ideas for further action.

This document is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides additional detail about the seven priority mobility strategies developed by the Steering Committee.
- Chapter 3 provides background about the need for action about senior mobility, including demographic trends, how older people travel, and issues of linguistic isolation. The results of prior studies and plans are summarized.
- Chapter 4 describes existing transportation for older people in San Mateo County, and existing efforts that correspond to the mobility strategies.
- Chapter 5 provides information about examples of programs in other places that can serve as models for further action in San Mateo County.
- Chapter 6 is an implementation plan, including a status report and a framework for evaluating future proposals.

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## **Chapter 2. Priority Mobility Strategies**

The Steering Committee divided into working groups and refined seven strategies for San Mateo County, identifying organizations and governments in the county that could participate in implementing them, as well as potential funding sources. The seven strategies are briefly summarized in a matrix on the following page, followed by about one page of somewhat longer description for each strategy.

**Figure 2-1 Senior Mobility Action Plan – Summary Matrix of Mobility Strategies**

| Strategy  | Potential Lead Agencies   | Other Organizational Roles   |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>1. Community Transit Services</b><br/>Local shuttles to serve short trips within communities. Open to all with emphasis on seniors.</p>   | <p>Cities and possibly the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance (“the Alliance”).</p>                                       | <p>SamTrans: Coordination, technical assistance, planning, marketing in coordination with regional services.</p>   |
| <p><b>2. Community-Based Transportation Services</b><br/>Non-profit, community transportation network with public and private funding. An alternative to Redi-Wheels for seniors who can’t drive or use transit.</p>              | <p>Family Service Agency will coordinate a project. Other community-based organizations.</p>  | <p>Local community organizations: community outreach, initial contact with seniors needing rides, some volunteer recruitment and training.</p>   |
| <p><b>3. Encouraging Use of Transit</b><br/>“Try Transit” promotions, video, organized trips, tailored service descriptions. Communicate to seniors that transit is safe, modern, senior-friendly, and provides independence.</p> | <p>SamTrans with support from the Alliance and Aging and Adult Services.</p>  | <p>Participation by cities, Alliance, schools, Peninsula TV, businesses.</p>   |
| <p><b>4. Safe Driving</b><br/>Driver training, driving retirement, adapting cars for older drivers.</p>   | <p>AARP, California Highway Patrol, California State Automobile Association, Sequoia Hospital, cities.</p>                          | <p>Coordination with training providers. Providing information about alternatives for driving retirement. SamTrans: promote and arrange to demonstrate bus service in conjunction with events.</p> |
| <p><b>5. Taxicabs</b><br/>Pilot: Accessible cabs, service improvement, possible fare subsidy. Long term: uniform regulations.</p>   | <p>One or more cities, Alliance, City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG).</p>  |  |
| <p><b>6. Information &amp; Assistance</b><br/>Multi-modal telephone information, web site, literature distribution, seminar hosting for agency staff that work with older people.</p>   | <p>SamTrans and Aging and Adult Services are exploring methods in other counties and possible partnerships in San Mateo County.</p> | <p>Cities, community centers, senior centers, libraries, community organizations, Aging and Adult Services, healthcare providers.</p>  |
| <p><b>7. Walking</b><br/>Participatory process to identify priority improvements in neighborhoods with high concentrations of seniors and walkable destinations.</p>  | <p>One or more cities, neighborhood organizations. Housing advocates. Belmont is exploring.</p>                                     | <p>SamTrans: coordinate regarding transit routes and stops.</p>  |

## Strategy No. 1: Community Transit Services

### Transportation Needs Addressed

SamTrans, Caltrain, and BART can be difficult or time consuming to use for local trips within communities, especially trips with an east-west orientation. Bus service in the hills and in neighborhoods is generally less frequent than main line service. Seniors in particular may have difficulty walking the distance to a bus stop and waiting. Neighborhoods can be difficult to serve with large buses and may produce limited ridership. Presently only six cities (Brisbane, Daly City, Millbrae, Foster City, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto) have community transit services designed to address these needs for seniors.

### Project Objectives and Description

Community transit services would accommodate short distance trips within communities and link to regional bus and rail services. Small buses or vans would be utilized on routes designed to connect local points of interest and reduce walking distances to access service. There should be provision for trips between cities, whether by means of coordinated service involving two or more cities or by means of connections at transit hubs. Service would be available to the general public but designed and marketed with an emphasis on seniors. In some communities service may include demand-responsive deviations. Fares may be charged but should not be a barrier to usage, whether financially or through inconvenience.

### Potential Roles and Partnerships

**Cities:** Establish service design and priorities; contribute to funding; market locally; operate service if desired.

**Alliance:** Possible lead agency for planning and management.

**SamTrans:** Coordination, technical assistance, planning, marketing in coordination with regional services.

**Others:** C/CAG, Transportation Authority, County Human Services Agency and the Core Agencies that work with it.

### Implementation Steps

- Inventory existing shuttles, including those operated by cities, the Alliance, SamTrans, and private institutions and employers to determine service parameters (service area, users and user requirements, vehicle ownership and management, funding and fares), potential service enhancements, and opportunities for coordination and improved cost effectiveness.

- Develop pilot services in some cities and secure funding or execute MOUs, if necessary.
- Establish a countywide community transit services plan to enhance coordination and funding opportunities.
- Expand services.

## **Funding**

- Existing shuttles have annual budgets of \$24,000 to \$130,000 funded from C/CAG (Congestion Relief Plan), cities, Transportation Fund for Clean Air, FTA 5310 (for vehicles), and Older Americans Act Title IIIB.
- MTC Lifeline funds will be used to plan shuttle service in Redwood City and possibly South San Francisco.
- Measure A funding for shuttles, administered by the Transportation Authority, will become available in 2008.

## **Strategy No. 2: Community-Based Transportation**

### **Transportation Needs Addressed**

Seniors who do not drive have transportation needs that may not be met by conventional transit services, including ADA paratransit like Redi-Wheels. Some seniors who do not drive are not eligible for ADA paratransit and live in areas with limited bus and rail service, or need to travel when transit service is infrequent. Others are frail or need personalized assistance that is difficult to provide on Redi-Wheels, or need transportation arranged on short notice.

### **Project Description**

To supplement and provide an alternative to public transit, rides for seniors will be arranged through local community-based organizations (CBOs), including not for profit agencies and faith-based organizations. In one model, a coordinating CBO would screen seniors for eligibility, and would provide oversight, coordination with other participating CBOs and public transit providers, technical assistance, mileage reimbursement for drivers, and possible umbrella liability coverage. A coordinating CBO could also act as applicant for foundation, private-sector, or community support. Such a project could begin with one or two communities, with the intention of expanding throughout the County if it proves successful. In this model the main source of rides would be volunteers recruited by seniors themselves (friends, neighbors, family) with assistance from community organizations. Drivers could also be recruited directly by participating community organizations or a coordinating organization. In another model, a CBO would use purchased vehicles (which may be wheelchair accessible) and paid drivers who can provide a reliable, self-sustaining service in which seniors who can afford to will pay the

full cost of transportation. In this model, rides could also be provided at reduced prices based on sponsorship by business, drivers who operate vehicles in exchange for future ride credits, and vehicle donations in exchange for future ride credits.

## **Potential Roles and Partnerships**

**Coordinating Organization:** The Family Service Agency is coordinating a community-based transportation project beginning with the North Fair Oaks Area in Redwood City.

**Local community organizations:** Likely partners include non-profit senior centers, Core Agencies, ethnically-based organizations, faith-based organizations, Mills Peninsula Senior Focus, and service organizations. They would conduct community outreach, make initial contact with seniors needing rides, help seniors recruit volunteers, and possibly recruit and coordinate volunteers themselves.

**Cities:** Likely partners include city-based community and senior centers.

## **Implementation Steps**

- Identify one or more cities and/or agencies interested in conducting a pilot.
- Apply for and obtain funding.
- Detailed planning, operation, and evaluation of the pilot.
- Expand project functions and geographic reach.
- State legislative initiative to address unfair increases in liability insurance for volunteer drivers.

## **Funding**

- The regional Lifeline Transportation Program available through C/CAG and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission can be used for initial funding for programs serving low-income populations.
- Local foundations and non-profit organizations.

## **Strategy No. 3: Encouraging Use of Transit**

### **Transportation Needs Addressed**

Many older people have little recent experience using public transportation. Having driven for decades, they may be unaware of transit services or have inaccurate perceptions based on experiences from long ago or images from the media. As a result, they may not use transit when they begin to have difficulty driving, even though they are still physically and mentally fully capable of doing so. Failure to take advantage of available transit services can make older people more dependent than necessary on family members and may contribute to premature reliance on paratransit service.

## Project Description

Promotions and community efforts will be developed to communicate to older people that transit in San Mateo County is safe and comfortable, uses modern equipment, provides convenient service to many places, includes features such as kneeling buses to make transit “senior friendly,” and can help them maintain personal independence. Examples of potential efforts include:

- Organize group bus trips. SamTrans has done these using special trippers. In the future they could be organized by senior centers, housing complexes, or “senior transit ambassadors” on special trippers or regularly scheduled service.
- Market to older people using advertising in free newspapers, columns in these papers by seniors, tables at shopping locations patronized by seniors.
- Conduct focus groups with seniors about desired features of transit service and how to market transit service to older people.
- Create a video about older people using transit, possibly through a contest for high school or community college students, with sponsorship by Peninsula TV and local businesses. Show it on cable television, distribute it to senior centers and housing complexes, and provide it to senior transit ambassadors to use at events.
- Create city-focused map-schedules, with sponsorship by local businesses, and showing local destinations of interest to older riders.
- “Try Transit” promotions targeted to seniors with participation by businesses.

## Potential Roles and Partnerships

**SamTrans:** SamTrans’ Marketing Department would play a lead role in most efforts as it did for the June 2006 Seniors on the Go promotion.

**Cities:** Cities may be involved in promotions targeted to local service, such as city-focused map-schedules, and organizing trips from senior centers or community centers.

**Alliance:** Provided funding and planning and staffing support for Seniors on the Go and may include marketing to older people in future Try Transit promotions.

**Others:** Partners in various efforts may include schools and colleges, Peninsula TV, service organizations, local businesses, and healthcare providers.

## Funding

- The Alliance budgets \$40,000 annually for Try Transit promotions.
- Several ideas create opportunities for business sponsorship.
- Health care organizations such as the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and Sequoia Hospital may be interested in sponsorship opportunities.

- Within the existing SamTrans marketing budget, a portion may be available for efforts targeted to older people.

## **Strategy No. 4: Safe Driving**

### **Transportation Needs Addressed**

Driving is the preferred means of transportation for most older people. Many older people can drive safely even after physical limitations make it difficult or impossible for them to use public transportation. As a result, when they do have to limit or stop driving, they are dependent on family members, ADA paratransit, and other community services. Helping older people continue to drive safely will help them maintain independence and mobility, and reduce dependence on public services, including ADA paratransit. Helping them drive safely and helping them recognize when it is time to limit or stop driving will also reduce the rate of accidents involving older people. Widespread misconceptions about older drivers result in older people failing to get needed help and advice.

### **Project Description**

A variety of organizations will provide driving safety programs. Local volunteers will continue to provide the AARP Driver Safety course; the California Highway Patrol is testing a new driving safety program; and the AAA of Northern California is training people for the CarFit program to help older people adjust their cars for safety. At the same time, community members working with Sequoia Hospital Health and Wellness Services, using the DriveWell materials developed by the American Society on Aging, are building community awareness of older driver safety issues, including recognizing and compensating for the effects of aging; understanding the evolving DMV license renewal procedures; understanding the role of fitness in maintaining older driver safety; and alternatives to driving. Additional initiatives will include:

- Expanding the availability of older driver safety programs by recruiting and training older people as instructors, developing additional course locations, expanding the availability of training in languages other than English, and expanding availability of self-assessment aids such as the AAA's Roadwise Review.
- Developing additional resources to help people obtain confidential, expert assessments of their driving ability, at a reasonable price, and how they can make needed modifications for safer driving.
- Making information about driver safety programs available through numerous channels such as resource booklets distributed at senior centers, libraries, housing complexes, medical offices, and pharmacies; the Network of Care and SamTrans web sites; and local public television. Informational materials will identify the strengths of the various driver safety programs.
- Identifying resources to help people make recommended modifications to their cars.

- Public information to enhance general understanding of older drivers, their abilities, and needs.
- Including demonstrations of SamTrans bus service as part of driving safety events.

## Potential Roles and Partnerships

**Training Providers:** AARP and California Highway Patrol volunteers; AAA. Events are hosted by senior centers, community centers, and other organizations.

**Community Awareness and Driving Fitness:** Sequoia Hospital Health and Wellness with community volunteers; senior centers for availability of the AAA Roadwise Review.

**Information Dissemination:** San Mateo County Aging and Adult Services; SamTrans; Family Services Agency and other community organizations; ethnically-based organizations; senior and community centers; medical offices and pharmacies; Peninsula TV.

**Alternatives to Driving:** SamTrans will provide buses for demonstrations in conjunction with driver safety events.

## Funding

Funding needs are expected to be minimal. The cost of materials and refreshments for some events have been paid for by the Peninsula Community Foundation and Seton Medical Center.

## Strategy No. 5: Taxicab Services

### Transportation Needs Addressed

Taxicabs are a widespread form of alternative transportation that seniors can use when they do not drive. Taxis are available on short notice, in areas with limited bus service, and at times when bus service is infrequent or there is no bus service. However, taxi service is expensive, especially for people with limited incomes. In addition, many older people are not comfortable taking taxis because of concerns about service quality, safety, and driver behavior. Very few taxi companies operate vehicles that are accessible to people in wheelchairs. The details and degree of taxicab regulation vary widely from city to city.

### Project Description

One possible effort would have two phases. Phase I would consist of a pilot in one city in which the purchase of accessible taxi vehicles would be subsidized in exchange for an agreement to provide an enhanced level of service, with particular focus on seniors. Taxi fares may be subsidized for seniors, for example by means of scrip or vouchers, along with service incentives for drivers. As a second phase, the potential and need for a countywide approach to taxi regulation would be explored. This could take the form of developing a

model ordinance that cities can adopt, creating a joint powers authority, or adding taxi regulation to some existing body. Toward this end, lessons from countywide taxi regulation and efforts to enhance alternative services in other parts of California, including Marin and Orange counties, will be examined. The ultimate goal of a countywide approach to taxi regulation would be improving the quality of service for everyone, including seniors, and creating the conditions for more widespread adoption of taxicab subsidies for seniors.

A more targeted project might provide subsidies for seniors or others to get to specific programs or services.

### **Potential Roles and Partnerships**

**Cities:** The Phase One pilot program would be implemented by a city with particularly effective taxi regulation, for example Daly City, San Mateo, Burlingame, or Redwood City.

**Taxicab Companies and Drivers:** Consultation in program design; service delivery.

**Alliance:** Possible program management in partnership with SamTrans.

**C/CAG:** Possible funding through Congestion Relief Plan.

### **Implementation Steps**

- Identify one or more cities interested in conducting a pilot.
- Detailed planning, operation, and evaluation of the pilot.
- Tracking and exploration of countywide approaches to taxi regulation.
- Implementation of enhanced taxi services throughout San Mateo County.

### **Funding**

- The California State Bid price (through March 2006) for a wheelchair accessible minivan is \$35,950.
- Senior subsidies can be tailored in amount and availability according to available funding.
- MTC Lifeline funding may be used to support a project for low-income groups including seniors.

## **Strategy No. 6: Information and Assistance**

### **Transportation Needs Addressed**

Older people and those they turn to for information are not always aware of the full range of available transportation options, including SamTrans bus service, Redi-Wheels, community transit services, rides that can be arranged through community-based

organizations, and driver safety training, including modifications to cars to make them safer for older drivers. Existing sources of information serve their primary purposes, but do not address all the transportation needs of older people. Resources for non-English speakers are limited.

## Project Objectives and Description

Information about transportation resources for older people needs to be easily available, current, and accurate, so that older people can plan for a time when they have to limit or cease driving, and so that people who suddenly find themselves needing alternative transportation can find out what is available. A lead agency will gather, disseminate and update information about all forms of transportation available to older people and make it available through multiple channels including: telephone calls to a countywide information number; brochures and flyers distributed through senior centers, community centers, libraries, community agencies, and healthcare providers; a web site; and periodic seminars for staff of agencies that serve seniors. Information will be made available in forms that can reach people who do not speak English.

## Potential Roles and Partnerships

**Lead Agency:** Participating agencies may include the County, Family Services Agency, and SamTrans.

**Information Gathering:** Although a lead agency would gather information, SamTrans, cities, and community organizations that provide services would have significant responsibility for providing accurate information to the lead agency.

**Countywide Telephone Information:** This function could be provided by a County agency, Family Service Agency, or some other community-based organization.

**Web Site:** A web site about senior transportation could be located within the new San Mateo Network of Care site.

**Literature Distribution:** Cities would distribute brochures at community centers, senior centers, libraries, and possibly healthcare providers, and pharmacies. Community agencies would distribute information at their sites. As appropriate, literature in languages other than English would be distributed.

**In-person Communication:** Organizations that work with seniors, including ethnically-based organizations that work with non-English speakers, would designate staff who can stay current about transportation options and provide this information to their clients.

## **Implementation Steps**

- Research Information & Assistance programs to identify an organizational framework, service plan and potential funding sources appropriate to San Mateo County.
- Identify lead and partner agencies funding needs, and resources.
- Execute partnership agreements and hire or designate staffing.
- Review, update, and organize information, starting with existing resources.
- Establish and advertise telephone information and a web site; print brochures.
- Host periodic training sessions.

## **Funding**

- A similar function within the Orange County Office on Aging initially added two full-time positions to handle about 800 information calls per month. (Orange County has a population of about 3 million compared to 700,000 in San Mateo County.)
- There would be additional cost for printing, telephone, and web site administration. These would be minimized if performed by an office that already performs similar functions.

## **Strategy No. 7: Walking**

### **Transportation Needs Addressed**

The ability of older people to walk (or go by wheelchair) to local stores and services is often limited by issues such as lack of sidewalks or pedestrian pathways, poorly maintained sidewalks, lack of curb ramps, short crossing times for wide streets, widely spaced or inconveniently located crosswalks, confusing intersections or signal phasing, and failure of drivers to stop at crosswalks. These same issues can limit older people's ability to access bus stops. Improved opportunities to walk to local destinations could improve access to good services, and support increased physical activity, with its benefits for health and driving ability. More broadly, walking and access to transit are limited by communities that are designed without consideration of walking and are not close to local stores, services, and transit.

### **Project Description**

Desired pedestrian improvements would be identified in a neighborhood with a significant concentration of older people in good proximity to stores and services. Working with the responsible City, feasible improvements would be prioritized that can significantly improve the ability of older people to walk (or go by wheelchair) between their residences and local businesses. Desired improvements would be identified using a participatory process involving older people in the neighborhood. The process may be modeled on one

described in “Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide” published by the AARP Public Policy Institute. Preliminary candidates for such a project are the Carlmont and downtown neighborhoods in Belmont. Steps should be included to increase awareness of pedestrian safety issues among drivers, including enforcement of traffic rules pertaining to pedestrians.

## **Potential Roles and Partnerships**

**Cities:** City departments would work with local residents to prioritize improvements, provide relevant traffic engineering expertise, and program those improvements that can be implemented with available funds.

**Neighborhood associations, community groups, and senior organizations:** Organize residents to evaluate conditions and prioritize desired improvements.

**SamTrans:** Coordinate regarding transit routes and stops, including pedestrian pathways, possibilities for route or stop changes to accommodate pedestrian access, and connections to nearby destinations of interest to older people.

## **Implementation Steps**

- Identify one or more cities interested in conducting a pilot.
- Organize local residents and conduct evaluation.
- Evaluate the outcome of the pilot and publicize to other cities.

## **Funding**

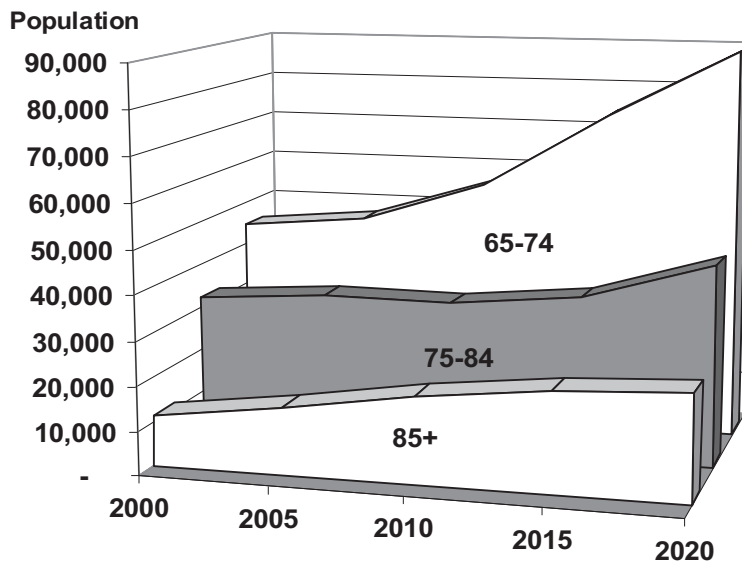
- Similar efforts have been funded by grants of \$20,000 to \$33,000 from the California Office of Traffic Safety.
- Pedestrian improvements could be funded by TDA Article 3 and the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Program (RBPP) using Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.

# Chapter 3. The Need for a Senior Mobility Action Plan

## A Growing Older Population

As in the rest of the country the older population in the county is increasing rapidly. For the immediate future, the biggest concern is the over-85 group, which is expected to grow by 50% in the next 10 years. The Baby Boomers will become a major factor around 2020 when the first of them reach the age of 75, which is when a lot of people begin having significant driving difficulties. These trends are shown in Figure 3-1.

**Figure 3-1 San Mateo County Senior Population Growth, 2000 - 2020**

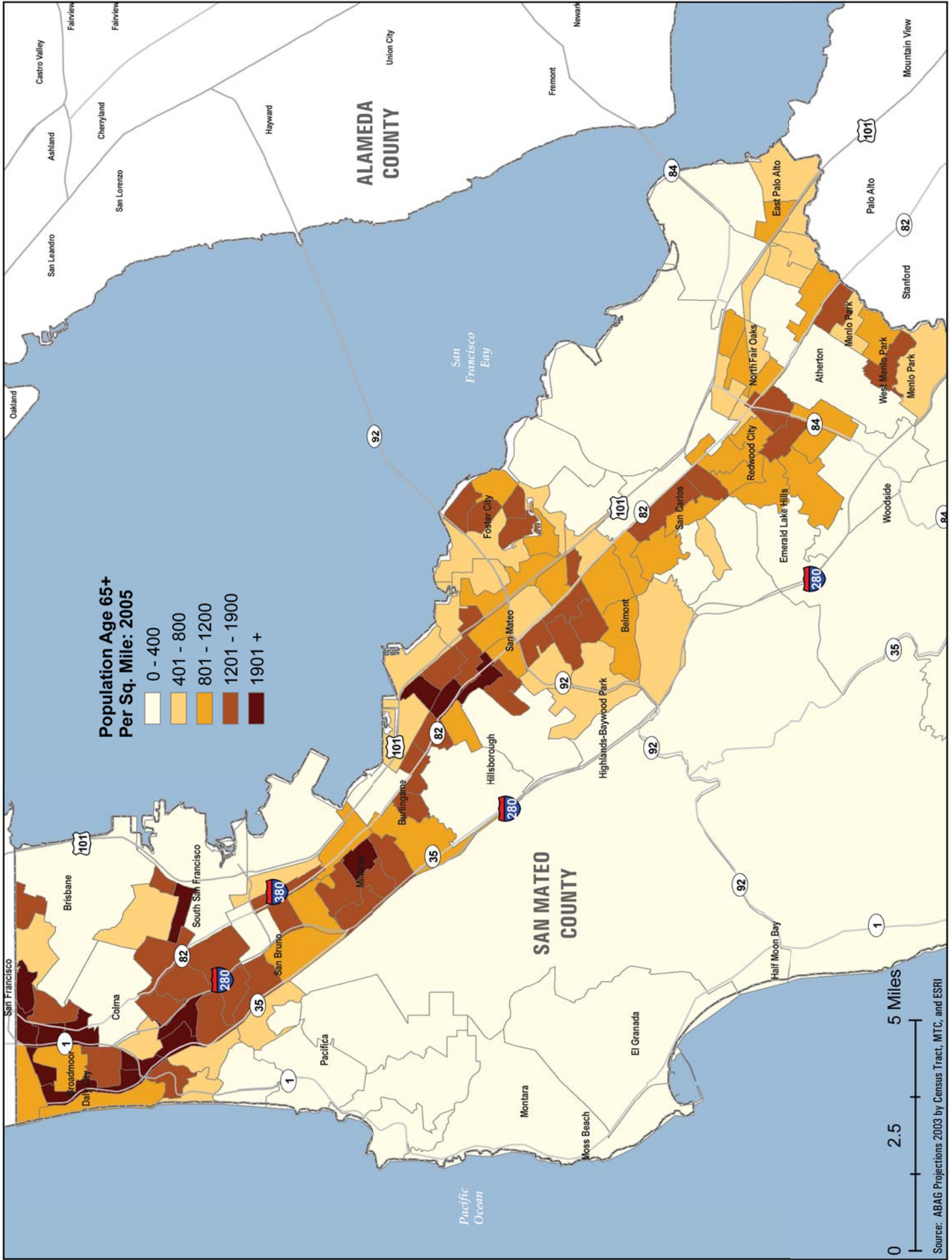


| Age            | 2000          | 2005          | 2010           | 2015           | 2020           |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 65-74          | 44,742        | 47,200        | 56,500         | 73,900         | 89,400         |
| 75-84          | 32,000        | 34,300        | 33,800         | 36,800         | 45,300         |
| 85+            | 11,343        | 15,100        | 19,600         | 22,700         | 24,100         |
| <b>All 65+</b> | <b>88,085</b> | <b>96,600</b> | <b>109,900</b> | <b>133,400</b> | <b>158,800</b> |

Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, Projections 2002.

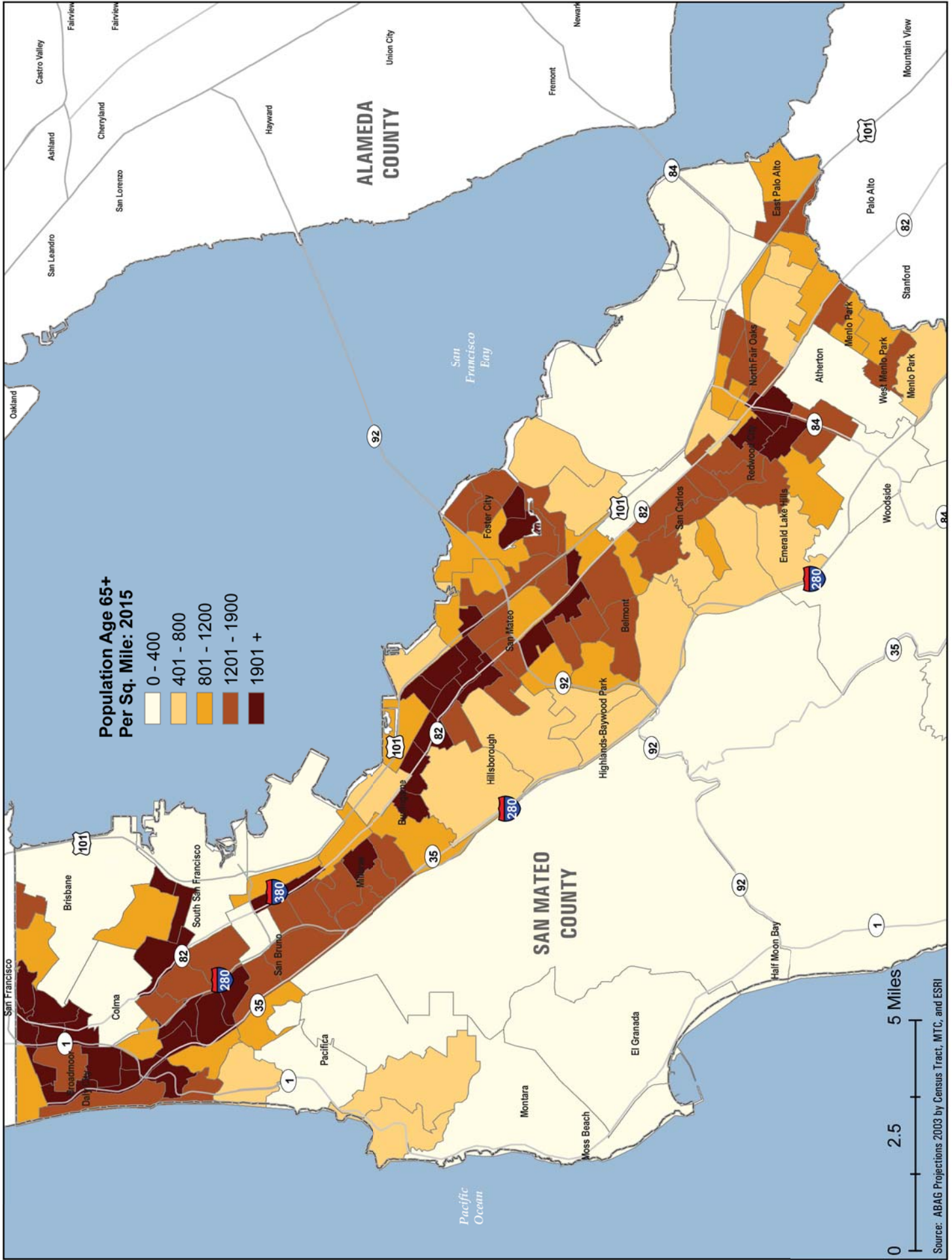
## **Where Older People Live**

Historically, older people have lived in areas of older development, including central cities and older suburbs. In San Mateo County, there are still concentrations of older people near the spine of development along El Camino Real, as shown in Figure 3-2. In these areas transit service is available and access to services is reasonably good. However, as the figure also shows, there are now also major concentrations of older people in areas of newer development including areas west of I-280 in the northern part of the county, Foster City, and west Menlo Park. These are areas that are harder to serve with transit, and that are often more distant from important services and shopping. This trend will continue in the future as shown by Figures 3-3 and 3-4, using data from the Association of Bay Area Governments' Projections 2003.



**Figure 3-2 Population Density Age 65+ by Census Tract (Year 2005)**





**Figure 3-3 Population Density Age 65+ by Census Tract (Year 2015)**

Source: ABAG Projections 2003 by Census Tract, MTC, and ESRI









## Linguistic Isolation

As large numbers of people from other countries have settled in San Mateo County, there are large numbers of older people who have limited ability to speak English or do not speak it all. For these people, it can be difficult to obtain information about services, including transportation, and it can be difficult to use these services, especially if they require requesting trips by telephone as in the case of paratransit. As shown by Figure 2-5, as of 2000, there were 8,498 people age 65 or older (10% of the total age-65-plus population) who spoke English not well or not at all. Forty-nine percent of these people live in households where Asian and Pacific languages are spoken, and 32% live in households where Spanish is spoken. The principal Asian and Pacific languages spoken in San Mateo County are Tagalog and Chinese. (The Census does not distinguish among Chinese dialects.)

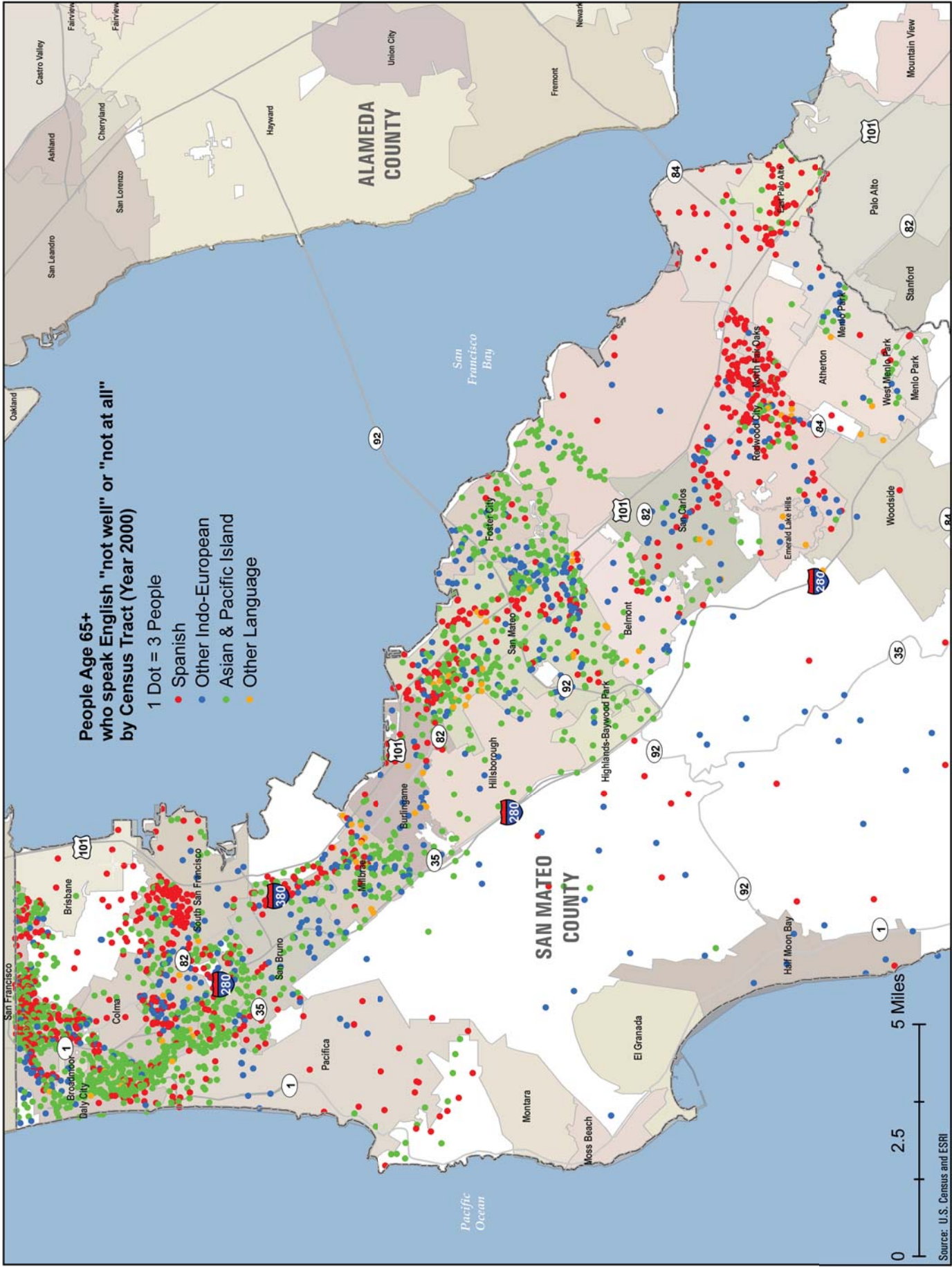
Some people with limited English can get help from other household members who speak English better. But 81% of seniors who speak English not well or not at all live alone or in households where no one 14 years or older speaks English well. These people are considered “linguistically isolated” by the Census. Within the group of linguistically isolated seniors, those who speak “other Indo-European languages” at home outnumber those who speak Spanish at home, but Spanish speakers would still far outnumber speakers of any single other Indo-European language, which include Russian, Hindi, Persian, Italian, Portuguese, French, and German, among others.

**Figure 3-5 Linguistic Isolation among Older People in San Mateo County**

| Language Spoken at Home       | Ability to Speak English |                        |               |                         |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
|                               | Very Well or Well        | Not Well or Not at All | Total Age 65+ | Linguistically Isolated |
| Only English                  | 60,196                   |                        | 60,196        |                         |
| Spanish                       | 4,189                    | 2,677                  | 6,866         | 1,567                   |
| Other Indo-European Languages | 7,132                    | 1,460                  | 8,592         | 1,946                   |
| Asian and Pacific Languages   | 7,569                    | 4,142                  | 1,1711        | 3,227                   |
| Other languages               | 656                      | 219                    | 875           | 171                     |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>79,742</b>            | <b>8,498</b>           | <b>88,240</b> | <b>6,911</b>            |

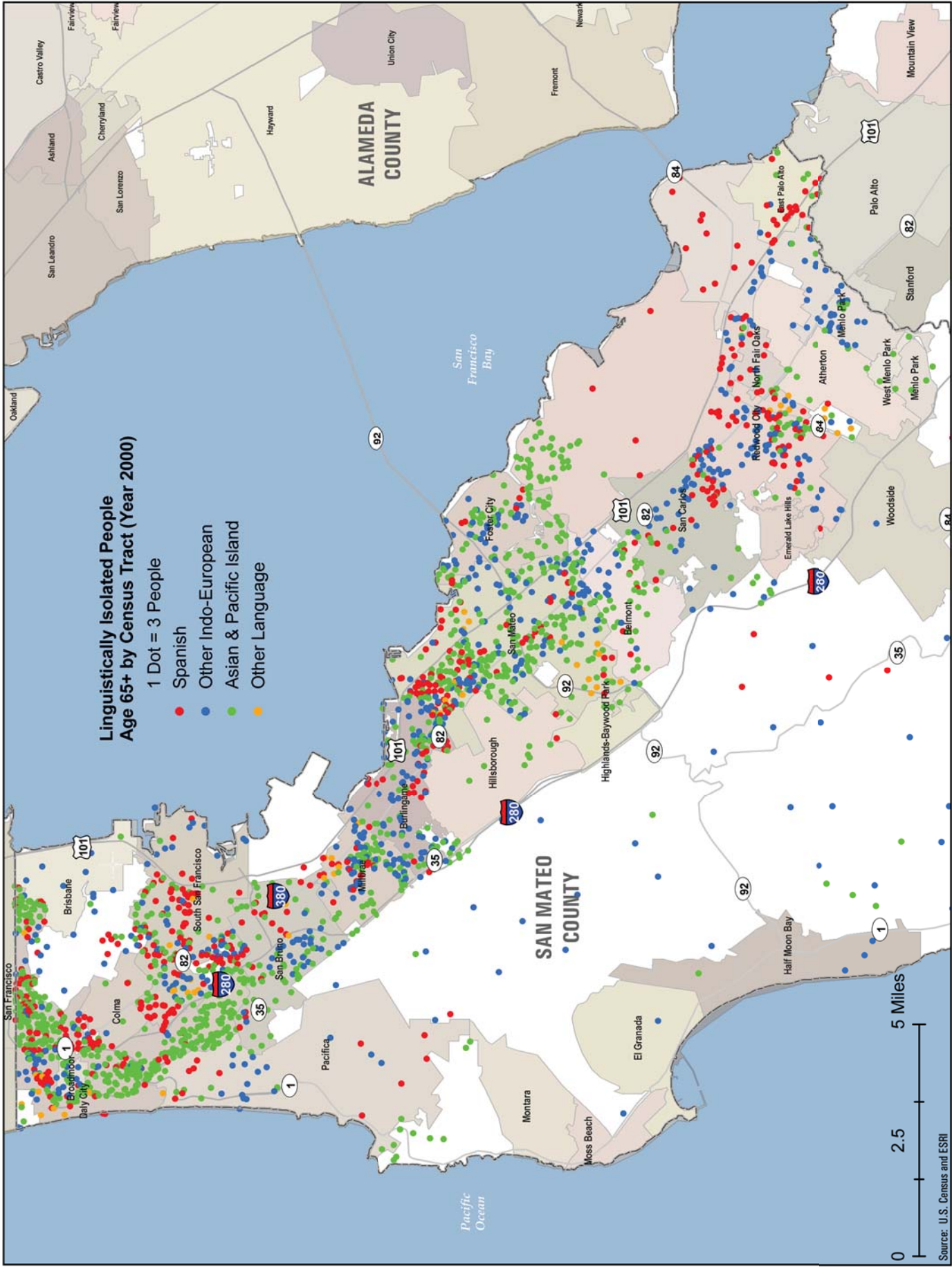
As illustrated in Figures 3-6 and 3-7, people with limited English ability are spread throughout the county, but there are differences in the location of various language groups. Asian and Pacific Island language speakers are concentrated in the north of the county and in San Mateo. There are concentrations of Spanish speakers in most cities, but especially in Redwood City, East Palo Alto, and the bayshore areas of San Mateo, Millbrae, San Bruno, South San Francisco, and Daly City.

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**Figure 3-6 People Age 65+ who speak English "not well" or "not at all" by Census Tract (Year 2000)**





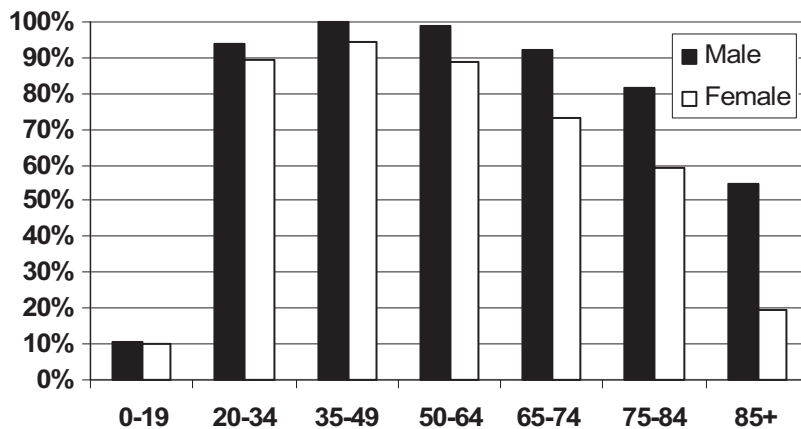
**Figure 3-7 Linguistically Isolated People Age 65+ by Census Tract (Year 2000)**



## Driving and Older People

For seniors as for other people, the most common way of getting around is driving. Figure 3-8 shows the percentage of people in San Mateo County who have a driver’s license by age and sex. In the middle age ranges, almost everyone has a license. Licensing declines most sharply after age 75. The reason for the decline is partly reduced ability or desire to drive and partly historical, since people who are now in the oldest age groups came of age in a time when driving was less universal. Women drive less than men, especially in the oldest age groups. This too is partly (maybe mostly) due to the fact even a few decades ago it was far more common for women not to drive than it is today. As a result, future seniors will drive more than current seniors, especially in the case of women.

**Figure 3-8 Percent with a Driver’s License in San Mateo County by Age Group**



Sources: Department of Motor Vehicles, U.S. Census

Despite occasional horror stories, the evidence from research and statistical analysis is that older drivers are generally safe drivers and do not cause an excessive number of accidents compared to other age groups. Older drivers actually tend to be more cautious than other drivers, are more likely to use seat belts, and are less likely to drink and drive. The biggest danger is to older people themselves – when they do have accidents they get killed and injured at far higher rates than younger drivers. Driving difficulties arise from reduced physical abilities (e.g. vision, reaction time) and problems related to medication. Most older people regulate or reduce their driving on their own, but there is a lot being done to help older people do this better, including better licensing procedures that restrict or revoke driving privileges when it becomes necessary, and no sooner than necessary.

## Alternatives to Driving

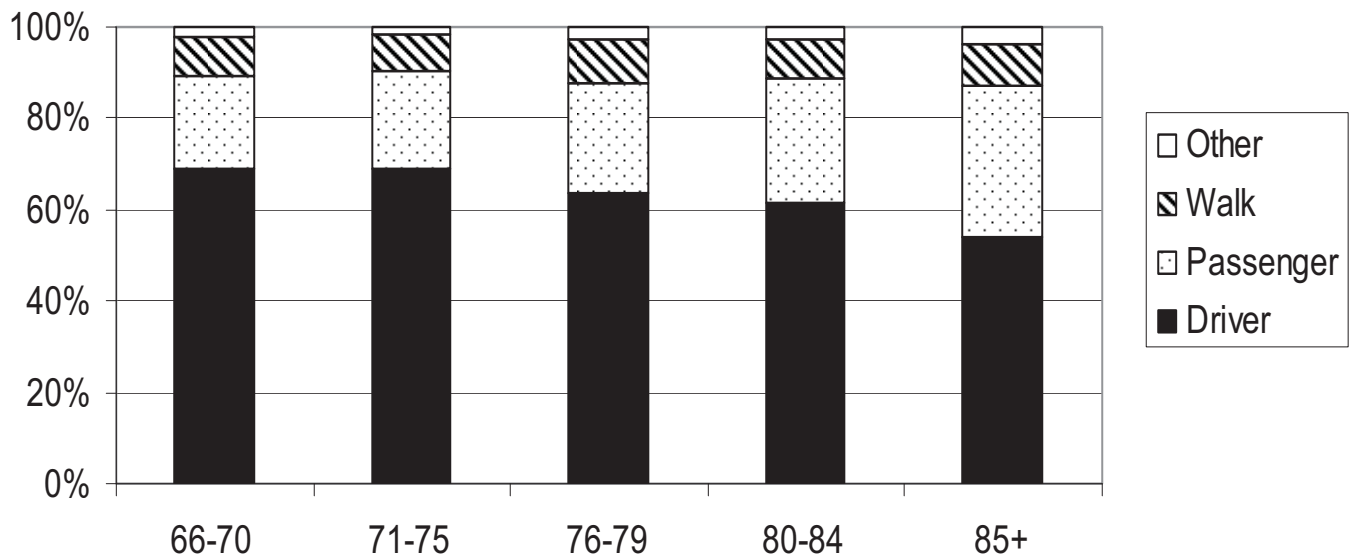
### Rides from Friends and Family

Figure 3-9 shows that driving accounts for a smaller share of total travel as people get older. However, as people drive less, they mainly rely on getting rides, mostly from other family members. This depends on the availability of family members to provide rides. Falling household sizes, and a higher ratio of older age groups to younger age groups may make it harder for people to get rides in the future.

### Transit

Transit and other modes (including paratransit, taxis, and bicycles) are a very small part of the larger picture. The percentage of trips by transit does increase with age, but this may not be a result of people switching from driving to transit—it may just reflect the fact that people in the oldest age groups came of age at a time when more people used transit (note these are national statistics). Even for the 85+ group, transit still only accounts for 2% of trips.

**Figure 3-9 Mode Shares by Age Group**

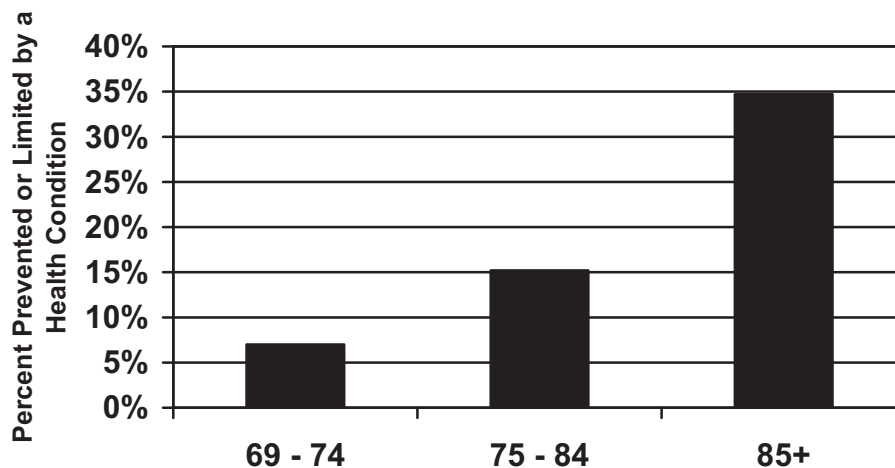


The main reason older people do not use transit is that they find that driving and getting rides are more convenient and practical. As the maps shown earlier illustrate, many older people live in places that have limited transit service and this situation will be even more of an issue in the future.

Another problem with transit as a solution is that many older people are no longer able to use it. Figure 3-10 shows how the percentage of people who are prevented or limited

from using transit increases with age, based on a national survey of people age 69 and older. The same survey showed that about half of people who can't drive due to age can't use transit either. On the bright side, this means that half of them can still use transit, or at least think they can when interviewed for a survey. This should be considered in light of the fact, illustrated by the previous figure, that very few older people actually have any recent experience using transit. It is possible that if more people had experience using transit before they need to limit driving, more of them would be willing or able to use it later.

**Figure 3-10 Difficulty Using Transit by Age Group**



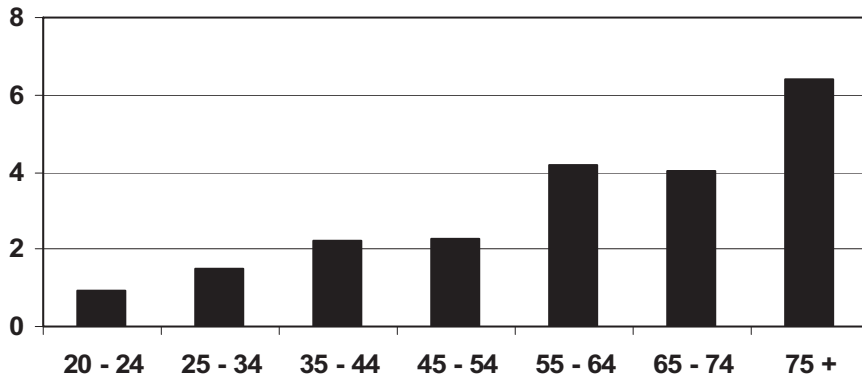
Source: National Health Interview Survey, Supplement on Aging II

## Walking

Figure 3-9 showed that walking is the third most common method of traveling for older people. Unfortunately, in a lot of places, streets are not really designed for walking. San Mateo County is better suited for walking than many parts of the Bay Area, but there are still many streets with no or inadequate sidewalks and few places to rest. Crossing at many intersections is difficult because of multiple lanes of traffic, limited crossing times, lack of medians, and poorly placed crosswalks. In hilly portions of the county, walking is difficult regardless of sidewalks. Finally, distances to a transit route or to services can be excessive for walking to be an attractive option for many people.

Walking can be dangerous for older people. As shown in Figure 3-11, fatality rates ride sharply for older pedestrians.

**Figure 3-11 Pedestrian Fatalities per 100,000 Population, California, 2000**



Source: California Department of Health Services, Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control Branch.

### Paratransit

Paratransit (Redi-Wheels in San Mateo County) is an option for many older people. However, this service is available only to people who are incapable of using transit due to a disability. Older people who have difficulty driving but are still physically and mentally capable of using transit are not eligible for paratransit, even though they may live in places where transit service is very limited or not available at all. Paratransit is very expensive to provide—about \$33 per one-way trip for Redi-Wheels in fiscal year 2003-04.

## Findings of the Strategic Plan for Accessible Transit Services

In 2003 the County of San Mateo, in partnership with SamTrans, completed a Strategic Plan for Accessible Transportation Services (SPATS) with extensive community input. Many of the principal themes that emerged from this process are relevant to the issue of senior mobility. The following listing includes all of the principal themes as summarized as follows in the SPATS final report:

### 1. Seniors who stop driving need more mobility options

Until recently there has not been adequate attention paid to the education of seniors who are either continuing to drive when it is no longer safe to do so, or who have recently stopped driving without developing alternative plans for their continued mobility in the community. The decline in mobility options that usually follows the decision to stop driving can be a significant impediment to seniors continuing to age in place.

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**2. Security is a concern for seniors and people with disabilities**

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While many seniors in the county are able to use public transportation, some are concerned about riding on a bus or train, or waiting at a bus stop during evening hours or when there are large numbers of youth onboard.

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**3. Public transportation is not convenient or available to many seniors and others who live in the hills and other less densely populated areas**

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Seniors and others who live in the low-density “hills” areas are unable to conveniently access the fixed-route bus system. They may face challenges using taxi service, such as cost; service quality; the need for more assistance than the driver is willing to provide; lack of accessible taxis; and the overall limit of available taxis.

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**4. Non-English speaking seniors and others find it difficult to use public transit**

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Approximately one-third of the county’s residents do not speak English as a first language. Some seniors and others who are not fluent in English report having difficulty using existing public transit. Fear of using available transportation resources or unfamiliarity with existing resources present barriers to non-English speakers or those unable to read English.

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**5. Many seniors and others are not aware of existing transportation resources**

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Many residents do not understand what public transportation resources are available and how to use them. This inability or unwillingness to use public transportation may be due to a lack of familiarity and stigmas associated with the use of public transportation. For some, financial considerations may also present a barrier to regular usage.

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**6. Residents of skilled nursing facilities may require a higher level of service than is provided by public transportation**

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Accessible public transportation services are generally geared towards those with a higher level of mobility than that of residents in the county’s 26 Skilled Nursing Facilities. A gap exists between the level of service provided through ADA paratransit and the higher level of service provided by ambulance and non-emergency transportation services. Limited attention has been paid to this population and their inability to access services in the community without relying on facility staff, friends or family members.

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**7. Children with disabilities are subject to long rides on special education buses**

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A fifth of the approximately 1,500 children with disabilities who attend special education programs have to spend an hour or more on the bus each way to reach their programs. While this is consistent with ride times on comparable programs for people with cognitive disabilities, it does represent a hardship for some children.

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**8. Residents of Coastside areas have a lower level of public transportation service**

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Many Pacifica focus group participants reported that their public transit trips require multiple transfers to other locations on the coast. Further south along the coast, development densities are so low that it is difficult to provide a transportation service that meets the needs of farm laborers and others in the Pescadero area who do not own a car.

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**9. Redi-Wheels riders do not have all their transportation needs met by ADA-level paratransit service**

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There are service parameters of the Redi-Wheels program that are ADA compliant (or go beyond ADA compliance) but do not meet the transportation needs of all those who rely on the service. These include the inability to make same day trip requests (e.g. for unanticipated medical appointments), the unavailability of service between midnight and 5:30 am outside of the route 391 corridor, and the lack of direct service between Pacifica and the communities around Half Moon Bay. In addition, the on-time performance requirements, which allow for a time window during which a rider can be picked up, make it difficult to rely on the service to keep tightly scheduled medical appointments or employment schedules. The outreach process pointed to other aspects of the service that may impact the usability of the system, including the difficulty of making inter-county trips, incidents of unreliability, vehicle comfort, and issues with program staff courtesy and competence.

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**10. Some people with mental health issues and cognitive disabilities have difficulty using public transportation**

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For many people with mental health issues, existing transportation services present formidable challenges for a variety of reasons. For those who experience paranoia or delusional behavior, traveling on SamTrans buses under certain circumstances is too intimidating, and yet some may not be considered eligible for ADA paratransit because their disability does not prevent them from using fixed-route buses. For those who are on medication, concentration problems may make it difficult to follow schedules or to get off at the correct bus stop.

SPATS also made numerous recommendations, which were grouped as Immediate Recommendations, Short Term Recommendations, and Long Term Recommendations. These recommendations are listed below, with those that are particularly relevant to the Senior Mobility Action Plan highlighted with italics.

**Immediate Recommendations (“Tier 1”) (FY 2003-04)**

**Education**

- 1. Provide transit education and trip planning to seniors and staff at senior centers and social service agencies, with an emphasis on those serving non-English-speaking clients.*

2. *Create a video on fixed-route bus usage that is targeted towards seniors.*
3. Continue to promote the SamTrans and Caltrain toll-free information number, public transit discounts for seniors and people with disabilities, large print bus schedules, non-cash fare media (e.g. monthly pass), and the RIDES program.
4. Continue to conduct outreach and consult with the community on transit route and schedule changes, find better ways to communicate these changes, and re-travel train affected customers.
5. Make sure those with visual impairments are aware of the availability of orientation and mobility training through the Peninsula Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (PCBVI).
6. Continue the current Redi-Wheels practice of educating customers about incorporating the allowable windows into their schedules.
7. Continue to train Redi-Wheels reservationists and schedulers to help customers set appropriate travel schedules, to adjust schedules and to inform customers when insufficient time has been allowed.
8. Explore expanding AARP 55 Alive Program to include non-auto options.
9. Invite mental health representatives to participate in driver training.

### **Service Improvements**

1. Explore transportation options to Cordilleras Center.
2. Explore carpools and vanpools for commuters with disabilities through the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance.
3. SamTrans should be encouraged to maintain the lifeline fares.
4. SamTrans, its contractor and the Paratransit Coordinating Council (PCC)'s Consumer Corps should continue monitoring driver performance.
5. SamTrans and its contractor should review the Multiple Stop Directory on an on-going basis, using the PCC as a review and advisory body.
6. SamTrans and Redi-Wheels staff should ensure that the list of common destinations is regularly updated to include those locations for which it is difficult to specify an address.
7. Maintenance staff and PCC should continue to review "state-of-the-art" equipment before the next vehicle purchase.

### **Assistance**

1. Continue paratransit escort program for Redi-Wheels users.
2. SamTrans should continue to meet with customers who have problems using the bus because of the size of their wheelchair or scooter. If appropriate, the mobility

device should be measured and the person assisted with practicing boarding and disembarking from a vehicle while it is out of service.

### **Additional Research**

1. *Develop a list of the community groups that provide transportation.*
2. Provide Redi-Wheels reservationists with a list of accessible recreation areas in San Mateo County.
3. Evaluate audibility of Caltrain and BART announcements.
4. SamTrans should review its capacity at different times of the day to determine if there is space available to offer same day rides without adversely affecting service.
5. Research availability of free and loaner children's car seats.
6. Evaluate access issues for Bayshore residents.

### **Follow up with Advisory Committees**

1. SamTrans should review complaints to determine if there are frequent complaints about drivers starting to move before seniors are fully seated and / or not asking people to move from preferential seating or if there is a pattern of confusion when in-bound and out-bound routes operate on different streets.
2. SamTrans should continue to monitor complaints about inter-county paratransit trips to identify if there is a systemic problem and report to the appropriate advisory group.

### **Other**

1. *Build legislative support for senior transportation funding.*
2. Continue senior representation on Measure A reauthorization committees
3. *Local senior advocates should work through the state legislature to introduce legislative measures to mitigate senior mobility limitations.*
4. Cities should be encouraged to review complaints received from taxi riders to determine if there is a pattern regarding a taxi company or specific taxi drivers.
5. Refer people with complaints about lack of curb cuts to the Department of Public Works in the appropriate city, the Aging & Adult Services brochure "Removing Barriers through Self-Advocacy", and the Commission on Disabilities' web site ([www.smco-cod.org](http://www.smco-cod.org)).

## **Short Term Recommendations (Tier 2 –FY 2004-2006)**

### **Education**

8. SamTrans should create a brochure specifically for parents of children with disabilities, explaining and promoting the travel training process.

9. Investigate the need for transit information in alternative languages and implement where feasible.
10. Work with the DMV to send transit information to people whose licenses are being suspended or revoked.
11. *Develop peer-to-peer mentor program (which would train seniors to use fixed-route transit before they lose their drivers' license).*
12. Educate consumers, wheelchair manufacturers, dealers, and funding agencies about limitations on bus usage by large wheelchairs and scooters.
13. Work with the local chapter of the American Medical Association to educate doctors on the dangers of people driving when it is no longer safe for them to do so and to counsel patients on their ability to drive safely.
14. Review National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and American Society on Aging (ASA) community education program kit.

### **Service Improvements**

1. Expand travel training.
2. Explore feasibility of renewing HealthRide service or other medical rides options.
3. Explore options for carrying large items on Redi-Wheels vehicles.

### **Assistance**

1. *Recruit more volunteer drivers for volunteer driver programs.*
2. Advocate for casual carpools and formalized housing facility Share-A-Ride Program including consideration of incentives for drivers.

### **Research**

1. *Work with cities to reduce hazards, improve lighting, and improve the path of travel to bus stops frequented by seniors.*
2. Research the process used in other suburban counties to strengthen taxi ordinances to require the use of accessible vehicles.
3. Encourage city ordinances to require accessible taxis.
4. Encourage city ordinances to require accessible shuttles.
5. *Work with Ombudsman to determine special needs of residents of skilled nursing facilities and residential care facilities.*

## **Long Term Recommendations (Tier 3 – FY 2006-2014)**

### **Education**

1. Develop a public education campaign to educate employers about the need to accommodate workers with disabilities regarding transportation issues.

2. SamTrans and partners should develop a continuum of education programs, including travel education.
3. Provide sensitivity training to professionals besides SamTrans staff.

### **Service Improvements**

1. Explore options to serve geographically isolated area (such as the Coastside or “the hills”) such as shuttles, deviated fixed-route, limited demand-response service, community bus, hybrid service, farm laborer vanpool, more accessible taxis, feeder service to El Camino Real, or assisting seniors to move closer to bus routes.
2. Explore hybrid transit services in low-density areas.
3. Evaluate increased feeder service to El Camino Real.
4. Evaluate feasibility of Simme bus stop seats.
5. Evaluate free transfers on SamTrans buses.
6. Evaluate all day fare discounts on fixed-route buses.
7. Evaluate paratransit options for emergency or same-day trips.
8. Get additional Redi-Wheels vehicles and staff.
9. Expand number of accessible taxis in county.
10. Explore alternatives for funding and maintenance of bus shelters.

### **Assistance**

1. Travel training at senior centers

### **Other**

1. Acquire on-going funding sources.
2. Evaluate use of detectable directional tiles at Caltrain stations.
3. Explore locations in San Mateo County where “talking signs” can be installed.
4. Install curb cuts.

A Steering Committee was formed to guide implementation of the SPATS recommendations. This committee continues to meet. However, the project final report recognized that many of the recommendations could not be implemented without additional funding.

## County Strategic Plan on Aging

The County of San Mateo periodically updates a “Strategic Plan for Services for Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities.” The updates are guided by the New Beginning Coalition, a broad-based group of persons with disabilities, seniors, caregivers, and service providers formed in 1992. The plan for FY 2005 – FY 2009, under the goal of “promote independent living,” states that, “Limitations in the county’s current transportation system inhibit seniors and adults with disabilities who live independently in the community from accessing a wide variety of resources. Housing and transportation are two of the major issues that are consistently identified in our needs assessment and will become increasingly problematic issues as the number of seniors (especially those who are older) increases.” As an action to improve availability and awareness of safe accessible transportation options, the plan lists “advocate for the transportation/paratransit needs of consumers” and specifies the SPATS Steering Committee as having responsibility.

The plan contains a summary of input from community and agency forums. Under the heading of Transportation, there are three pages of issues and a page and a half of suggestions. The largest category of issues consists of limitations and complaints about SamTrans bus service, Redi-Wheels, and Caltrain, including cost, convenience, coverable, eligibility rules, fares, service reliability, accessibility issues, lack of coordination, and customer service. Other issues mentioned include:

- Relying on family and friends for transportation can be an issue because people don’t want to bother them.
- Many group homes have limited transportation for residents. If and when people in group homes integrate into the community they must go in a group.
- Too short a time is allowed for pedestrians to cross the street.
- Need taxi voucher program for low-income seniors.

## Results from the SamTrans Strategic Plan Survey

Some additional information about travel by older people comes from a survey of 150 people age 65 and older that was conducted as part of SamTrans’ 2020 Strategic Plan project in 2002. Among other things, the survey showed that older people who currently drive are at least receptive to the idea of using public transportation.

The survey results are interesting but need to be considered in light of the small sample size and the possibility that the sample may not represent “typical” older people in San Mateo County. In the sample, only 9% were “married” or “living with partner.” In contrast, according to the Census, 51% of people age 65 and older in the county were married and living with their spouse. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents were between

the ages of 65 and 74, and 43% were age 75 or older. Seven percent lived in a household with no vehicle available.

Table 3-12 shows that 22% of elderly respondents reported a disability or health condition that affects travel decisions, compared to 7% of the general population.

**Figure 3-12 Disability or Health Condition That Affects Travel Decisions**

| Presence of Disability or Health Condition | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Yes  | 33                    | 22%                    |
| No   | 116                   | 77%                    |
| Don't Know/Refuse                          | 1                     | 1%                     |

Among the 33 respondents who reported disabilities or health conditions affecting travel decisions, the most common were “mobility impairment” (67%), “frailty or problem with energy” (18%), “other” (9%), and “blindness or low vision” (6%). As shown in Figure 3-13, the sample included no respondents with cognitive or mental impairments, developmental disabilities, or with deafness or hearing impairments. These are presumably limitations of the way the survey was administered.

**Figure 3-13 Main Disability or Health Condition That Affects Travel Decisions**

| Disability                     | Number of Respondents | Percent of Respondents |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Blindness or low vision        | 2                     | 6%                     |
| Mobility impairment            | 22                    | 67%                    |
| Developmental disability       | 0                     | 0%                     |
| Cognitive or mental impairment | 0                     | 0%                     |
| Frailty or problem with energy | 6                     | 18%                    |
| Deaf or hearing impairment     | 0                     | 0%                     |
| Other                          | 3                     | 9%                     |
| Don't know/Refused             | 0                     | 0%                     |
| Question not asked             | 117                   |                        |

The survey asked respondents how often they drove (Figure 3-14). However, the 33 respondents who had reported disabilities or health conditions affecting travel decisions were not asked this question. Of the 117 who were questioned, 48% drove for all of their trips, 35% drove for some of their trips, 15% no longer drove, and 2% had never driven.

Presumably many of those with disabilities or health conditions would be in the “no longer drive” category.

**Figure 3-14 How Often Do You Drive?**

| Driving Frequency          | Number | Percent |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|
| All of my trips            | 56     | 48%     |
| Some, not all, of my trips | 41     | 35%     |
| No longer drive            | 18     | 15%     |
| Never driven               | 2      | 2%      |
| Question not asked         | 33     |         |

The survey went on to ask about travel by people who don’t drive (Figure 3-15). The 97 people who drove at least some of the time were asked how they would be likely to travel if they stopped driving. Respondents were allowed to mention more than one mode of travel. The most commonly mentioned modes were transit (68% of respondents), “carpool” (41% of respondents), and taxi (27% of respondents). In this case, “carpool” indicates getting a ride from another person. Since people with disabilities or health conditions were not asked the question, the percentage of people who would use transit is probably overstated. In general, research shows that fewer people actually use transit than say they will. However, these results indicate that most current drivers are receptive to the idea of using public transportation.

**Figure 3-15 Transportation Forms Likely Used If Respondent Stopped Driving**

*(Mentioned By the Respondent)*

|                            | Number of Responses | Percent of Respondents |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Driving                    | 0                   | 0%                     |
| Carpool                    | 40                  | 41%                    |
| Public Transportation      | 66                  | 68%                    |
| Taxi                       | 26                  | 27%                    |
| Walk                       | 6                   | 6%                     |
| Bicycle                    | 6                   | 6%                     |
| Redi-Wheels or Paratransit | 5                   | 5%                     |
| Senior/Community Shuttle   | 5                   | 5%                     |
| Other                      | 5                   | 5%                     |
| Don’t Know/Refused         | 2                   | 2%                     |
| <b>Total responses</b>     | <b>161</b>          |                        |

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## **Chapter 4. Existing Services**

### **Public Transportation**

SamTrans provides fixed-route bus service and Redi-Wheels ADA paratransit. It also administers Caltrain on behalf of the Peninsula Joint Powers Board. Riders age 65 and older qualify for a half fare on all non-express routes bus routes and on Caltrain, and on express bus routes during off-peak hours. For fiscal year 2004-05, SamTrans fixed-route bus service provided 2,286,926 rides to seniors and people with disabilities. This was 16.1% of the total SamTrans bus ridership of 14,189,548.

The Bayshore/Brisbane Shuttle is a demand response shuttle pilot program funded by SamTrans and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority with the cooperation of Daly City, Brisbane and C/CAG. The shuttle circulates on the route until the driver gets a phone call booking a trip which must start in the Bayshore/Brisbane area. If demand is high, the trip will be booked at the next available time.

While the majority of Redi-Wheels riders are elderly, qualification is based entirely on inability to use fixed-route transit due to a disability. As a result, many older people are not eligible, even though they may not drive or need to limit their driving. As required by ADA, eligible riders can take as many trips as they want throughout SamTrans' operating area without regard to purpose. Trips must be reserved at least a day in advance. On September 1, 2005, the Redi-Wheels fare will increase to \$2.50 from \$2.00. A lifeline fare of \$1.00 (going to \$1.25 on September 1) is available to people who have qualified for state and federal means-tested programs.

SamTrans provides information about using transit at senior centers in the form of presentations and on occasion in the form a bus demonstration.

### **Driver Safety**

There are several initiatives in San Mateo County related to driver safety:

AARP's Mature Driver training is offered frequently at numerous Peninsula locations, including the Foster City Senior Center, Avenidas in Palo Alto, the Mills Wellness Center in San Mateo, the Burlingame Recreation Center, Burlingame Hospital, the Millbrae Community Center, the Twin Pines Senior Center in Belmont, and Little House in Menlo Park. This is an established national program that provides a 5% discount on automobile insurance. For that reason it is very popular. It consists of eight hours of class split over two days.

The California Highway Patrol is piloting a older driver safety program in San Mateo County. Depending on how well it is received, this program could be offered throughout the state. This program covers similar material as the AARP course, but in a much smaller format – only three hours. It also includes a segment about nutrition and health based on

ones developed by the American Society of Aging under the name "Road to Driving Wellness." It is being offered at several locations in San Mateo County including Redwood City, South San Francisco, and Daly City with funding from Seton Medical Center and the County of San Mateo through the office of Supervisor Adrienne Tissier. There will be a short SamTrans bus demonstration immediately following the course.

Sequoia Hospital Health and Wellness Services hosted a train-the trainer session for DriveWell, a program developed by the American Society of Aging that promotes "community conversations" about driving and older people. It was attended by 13 people who are presenting programs at several locations around the County. DriveWell, like the Road to Driving Wellness, is intended to help older people continue to drive safely as long as possible. Neither program provides an insurance discount. Sequoia is looking at holding training with an emphasis on driving fitness including exercises that will attract more people to attend than "driver safety".

The Doelger Senior Center in Daly City has installed the AAA Roadwise Review interactive CD-ROM on computers. The program helps older people assess their driving skills.

One Steering Committee member mentioned that there is a discussion of signs that it is time to stop/curtail driving as part of the annual Senior Safety Day presented by the Belmont Police Department.

## **Walking and Pedestrian Safety**

No organized initiatives were identified in San Mateo County related to walking by older people or pedestrian safety specifically for older people. Some examples of useful actions that were cited by Steering Committee members include:

- In San Carlos, countdown pedestrian signals have been installed at the intersection of Laurel and Walnut, and orange flags help seniors cross the street at the corner of Chestnut and San Carlos Ave.
- In San Mateo, automatic pedestrian activated blinker lights have been installed in two crosswalks at key locations. The police do safety presentations at Senior Centers and at Edgewater Apartments that include driving, identify theft, pedestrian safety, and neighborhood watch.
- To increase the awareness of drivers, the Belmont Police Department has sponsored several "stings" at selected busy unguarded crosswalks where drivers are cited for pedestrian right-of-way violations. The pedestrians are usually police officers in plain clothes and other volunteer citizens.

Similar efforts exist in other cities. For example orange flags are used at a busy crossing of Ravenswood Avenue near the Menlo Park library. No organized effort was made for this report to identify all the individual pedestrian safety improvements that have been made.

There are also several efforts to create transit-oriented developments (TODs) in the county. “Transit villages” are clusters of apartments, town homes, offices and stores near transit hubs. A related idea is “smart growth.” These developments are intended to create an environment in which people can walk to destinations. San Mateo County has two recent TOD developments: Franklin Street, in Redwood City near the Redwood City station, and the Hacienda Pacific development in San Carlos near the San Carlos station.

## **City Operated Shuttles**

Six cities in San Mateo County sponsor or operate shuttles, designed to serve older people. Four cities that operate shuttle programs in conjunction with the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) are Millbrae, Foster City, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto. Figure 4-1 provides basic information about these programs. A shuttle operated by the City of San Carlos, called SCOOT, ceased operation in June 2005. These programs use funds awarded by C/CAG. Cities must compete for the funds annually and must provide matching funds. In September 2004, the Cities of Brisbane and Daly City initiated an experimental shuttle service in the Bayshore area in which a driver receives trip requests via cell phone for trips to medical appointments, grocery and other shopping, and a food distribution site. There are numerous other shuttles in the county that mainly serve commuters, students, or staff of large employers. These include shuttles to BART and Caltrain stations in Daly City, South San Francisco, Burlingame, San Mateo, San Carlos, Belmont, Redwood City, Atherton, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto.

Figure 4-1 Shuttle Service Summary Overview

| Operating Characteristics  | Millbrae Senior Shuttle  |   | Foster City (Connections)  |   | Menlo Park   |                | East Palo Alto |  |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|----------------|----------------|--|
|  | Senior Door-to-Door  | Midday Shuttle (2 Routes)   | Midday Shuttle   | Shoppers Shuttle  | Senior Shuttle   | Senior Shuttle | Senior Shuttle |  |
| Brief Description  | Door-to-Door service for seniors within Millbrae and other select destinations | Red Line follows SamTrans 251. Blue Line connects residential areas.                        | 1 route (targeted to seniors) from homes to all key destinations; hourly headways (clock schedule) | Door-to-door serving seniors not living on Midday route | 3 different routes on different days (M/Th, T/F, W) to key senior destinations |                |                |  |
| Days and Hours of Operation                                      | M-F, 9am -3pm  | M-F, 9:30am-3:30pm  | M-F 9:30 am - 3:30 pm  | Weds and Fri 10 am - 1:30 pm                            | M, T, Th, F 10 am - 3 pm; Weds 10 am - 2 pm                                    |                |                |  |
| Contracted Service or In-House Operation                         | Operated in-house with city driver and city vehicle                            | Operations Contracted to Serendipity  | Contracted to PCA  | Operated in-house with city driver and city vehicle     | Contracted to PCA  |                |                |  |
| Vehicle Information (Vehicle Type/ owned or contractor supplied) | City owned vehicle; 16 pax van with space for 4 wheelchairs. Lift Equipped.    | Champion Diesel Bus. Seats 18 passenger with space for 1 wheelchair                         | 2 20-pax diesel cutaways with lifts  | 1 14-pax city owned van                                 | 20 pax ULS diesel cutaways with lifts  |                |                |  |
| Primary Users of the Service                                     | Seniors  | Students, seniors   | Seniors, school field trips  | Seniors   | Seniors  |                |                |  |
| Annual Ridership   | 2,836  | 40,508  | 20,751   | 434   | 1964   |                |                |  |
| Major Trip Purposes/Destinations                                 | Shopping within Millbrae, medical appointments, scenic drives                  | Shopping, school, transportation hubs   | Senior center, shopping, CalTrain, hospitals, Safeway  | Safeway, downtown, Stanford Shopping Center             | To key shopping and medical destinations                                       |                |                |  |
| Funding Sources  | FTA 5310 funds, AAA, C/CAG, user fees  | C/CAG:\$32,500; C/CAG One Time Congestion Relief Grant: \$27,950; and General Funds:\$4,550 | Redevelopment Agency \$50,000; TFCA \$30,732; Local transportation \$49,403                        | Funding included in Midday column                       | C/CAG \$34,715; Measure A \$ 16,215; In-kind \$18,500                          |                |                |  |

Notes: Most information is for FY 2003-04. Funding Sources for Foster City based on FY2004-05

## **Senior Center Vans**

Nine cities provide some form of transportation connected to their senior centers. Information about these services is provided in Figure 4-2. In most cases transportation is provided for city residents to and from the senior center. In a few cases, residents of neighboring cities are also carried, and in several cases medical and shopping trips are provided. Redwood City's Veteran's Memorial Senior Center has a program with Kaiser, which picks up seniors at the center for medical appointments. Seniors will take the ride from home to the senior center and then wait for the Kaiser shuttle.

Steering Committee members mentioned that some churches and religious organizations have vans. For example, the Peninsula Jewish Community Center reportedly operates a van for event-related transportation. Also senior residential facilities have vans for use of their residents. For example one assisted living facilities in Belmont has a van used only for facility planned outings and medical appointments. Other examples that were mentioned included the Elms in San Carlos, San Mateo Assisted Living, Steerling Court Senior Residence in Burlingame, and the Sequoias in Portola Valley, which brings its residents into Menlo Park.

**Figure 4-2 Senior Center Van Transportation**

| Agency                                       | Type of Service  | Vehicles           | Area Served  | Fare  | One-way trips per month  | Funding Source                                 |
|--|--|--------------------|--|---|--------------------------|--|
| Belmont Twin Pines Senior Center             | Take Belmont residents from their homes to the Senior Center   | 1                  | Belmont  | A suggested contribution of 50 cents one way                    | 200                      | City of Belmont                                |
| Foster City                                  | To and from the Senior Wing and to shopping and hospitals. Reserve 24 hours in advance. Mon-Thurs, 9 AM - 1 PM     | 1 21-passenger bus | Pick-ups in Foster city but will travel and as far as Burlingame to Palo Alto. | \$2 for one way (Foster city residents) Non-resident \$5        | 2,000 per year           | 5310 vehicle, contributions                    |
| Menlo Park Senior Center                     | To and from seniors' homes and senior center, M-F. Starting in Sept. one day a week to doctor appointments.        | 1                  | Menlo park and EPA, and part of RWC  | Free to/from the senior center. \$2.50 for doctor appointments. | 650                      | Area Agency on Aging and City of Menlo Park    |
| Pacifica (City)                              | To and from the community center. Shopping trips. Just started a Mystery Trip to unannounced destinations.         | 1                  | Within Pacifica, except for medical appointments.                              | \$2 donation for shopping trips, Medical appointments \$15.     | 100                      | City funds and Area Agency on Aging            |
| Redwood City Veterans Memorial Senior Center | Home to the senior center. Two part-time drivers. Starting service evenings and weekends. Rides to special events. | 1 van              |  |   | 400-500 rides per month. |  |
| San Bruno Senior Center                      | Bring frail older adults who live in San Bruno to the daily congregate nutrition program                           | 1 21-passenger van | City of San Bruno only   | 50 cents per trip donation.                                     | 450                      | Driver - Title III-C. Van is provided by city. |
| San Mateo Senior Center                      | Bring people to Senior Center on Tues. and Thurs, shopping twice a month.  | 1                  |  |   |                          |  |
| Senior Coastsiders                           | Monday-Friday to center, shopping, and medical center.   | 1 bus              | Coastside  | Suggested contribution \$.50 cents one way                      | 600                      | Federal grant 5310?                            |
| South San Francisco                          | To nutrition sites at two senior centers.  | 2                  |  | \$1.60 donation each way  |                          |  |

## **Community-Based Transportation Services**

Transportation provided by community-based organizations appears to be very limited. The American Cancer Society uses volunteers to provide rides for patients. FISH (Friends in Service to Humanity) uses volunteer drivers, with their personal cars, to take seniors to medical appointments in the area from Redwood City to San Mateo. The drivers either stay with the riders during their appointments or come back to pick them up after the appointment. The program, which has existed for 35 years, is operated entirely by volunteers. It has a network of about 50 volunteers, some of whom drive and some of whom help schedule rides. Volunteers are recruited through churches, and the board meets at Trinity Presbyterian Church in San Carlos. The volume of service has fluctuated a lot. In recent months from 150 to 500 rides have been provided. Service is available from Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM only. Donations are accepted.

## **Taxi Subsidies**

Although some cities may have had taxi subsidy programs in the past, currently there are currently no taxi subsidy programs for seniors in San Mateo County. The Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance operates a taxi subsidy program called the Downtown Dasher for employees in an East of Highway 101 business park in South San Francisco for lunch hour travel.

## **Information and Assistance**

The San Mateo County Aging and Adult Services Division operates the 24-hour TIES line at (800) 675-TIES (8437). The TIES line provides access to 24-hour emergency response for seniors and vulnerable adults in the community. Professional staff provide assessment and emergency protection such as shelter, food and in-home care to address immediate concerns, until a long-term care plan can be developed. In addition, TIES line staff answer questions about the wide variety of services available through the County and in the community. The TIES line is the main entry point for services provided by the Aging and Adult Services Division. According to the Strategic Plan for Services for Older People and Adults with Disabilities, FY 2005 - FY 2009, in fiscal year 2003-04, the TIES line answered 132 calls about transportation, which was 1.0% of all the calls to the TIES line. These calls are mainly referred to Redi-Wheels.

The San Mateo County Commission on Aging publishes "Help at Home," "a mini-reference guide to assist San Mateo County adults of all incomes to remain in their own homes when they are ill, disabled or in crisis." Information is provided about specialized transportation, including Redi-Wheels, San Francisco Paratransit, VTA, Coastside Opportunity Center, FISH, the private Need-A-Ride service, and the American Cancer Society. The guide suggests that people also contact their senior center or local religious organization for volunteer transportation assistance.

The Human Services Agency with the Peninsula Library System Community Information Program publishes an information brochure called "Guide to Community Resources." The section on transportation list telephone numbers and web site addresses for SamTrans, Redi-Wheels, CalTrain, RIDES for Bay Area Commuters, and BART. Mills Peninsula Hospital also published a pamphlet called "Guide to Community Resources" for patients and their families. In addition to contacts for Redi-Wheels, Coastside Opportunity Center, FISH, the American Cancer Society, and Need-A-Ride, the pamphlet lists six private wheelchair van companies.

The Belmont Senior Center has a part-time resource person (8 hours per week) who provides seniors with information and referrals to assist in applying for Redi-Wheel services, using SamTrans and CalTrain services, etc. Similar services are provided at the San Mateo Senior Center and the Fair Oaks Senior Center.

# Chapter 5. Strategies for Senior Mobility

Steering Committee members were interviewed to determine their priorities for ways to address senior mobility, and their specific ideas for programs or actions. These are summarized in Figure 5-1. The ideas have been grouped under general headings. The column labeled “Mentioned by” indicates those people who mentioned any of items under each heading. The table also indicates organizations that could be possible partners to assist in implementing this programs or actions.

**Figure 5-1 Strategies to Maintain Senior Mobility**

| Topic and Concepts  | Mentioned by   | Possible Partners   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Community Transit Services</b>   |  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local door-to-door service with ability to travel between cities.</li> <li>More east-west transit, including the hills, using small vehicles.</li> <li>City Shuttles</li> <li>“Feeder service” for areas that are too far from a bus route to walk.</li> </ul>   | Rich Bortoli/Belmont Senior Club<br>Bob Collins<br>Hope Whipple<br>Sue Horst<br>Susan Kennedy<br>Sandy Cohen                           | Cities<br>SamTrans<br>Taxi companies<br>Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance  |
| <b>Community-Based Transportation</b>   |  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public/private community transportation network</li> <li>Volunteer transportation</li> <li>Carpooling for seniors</li> <li>Help organizations acquire and operate 5310 vans</li> </ul>   | Rich Garbarino<br>Carlos Valenzuela<br>Marianne Mannia<br>Bill Welch<br>Maureen Dunn<br>May Nichols                                    | RSVP<br>Family Service Agency<br>Community organizations<br>Businesses patronized by seniors  |
| <b>Conventional Transit Services – Education and Outreach</b>   |  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education about how to read schedules, rights to seating, when to travel.</li> <li>Outreach and promotion using organized trips (“transit adventures”), escorts, buddies, incentives)</li> <li>Free passes for trainers and trainees.</li> <li>Bus demos at senior centers (e.g. in conjunction with other events, with a personal fee)</li> <li>Try-transit promotion with free passes</li> <li>Help people for whom language is a barrier to using transit or paratransit</li> </ul> | Sandy Cohen<br>Tom Elliot<br>Kent Michelson<br>Bill Welch<br>Christine Maley-Grubl<br>Marianne Mannia<br>Susan Kennedy<br>Maureen Dunn | Cities<br>SamTrans<br>RSVP<br>Senior centers<br>Minority Elders Committee of the SMC<br>Commission on Aging<br>Self Help for the Elderly<br>Community organizations |

| Topic and Concepts  | Mentioned by  | Possible Partners   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Transit Improvements</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better transit information, including visual aids</li> <li>Bus routes near senior centers</li> </ul>   | George Pappas<br>Jon Rubin  |   |
| <b>Transit Fares</b>  |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bus/train combination fares, day/monthly passes.</li> <li>Buy transit tickets and disseminate to seniors</li> </ul>  | Rich Bortoli/<br>Belmont Senior Club<br>Susan Kennedy   |   |
| <b>Safe Driving and Driving Cessation</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help people who need to stop driving learn about options.</li> <li>Help people maintain fitness for driving.</li> <li>DriveWell</li> <li>Work with caregivers on “taking the keys away.”</li> <li>Counseling for older adults and their families to prepare for giving up driving with transportation help</li> <li>Mandatory driver testing</li> <li>Education to improve driving skills</li> </ul> | Sandy Cohen<br>Bob Collins<br>Bill Welch<br>Marianne Mannia<br>Carlos Valenzuela<br>Pat Dixon | CHP<br>SamTrans<br>County Public Health<br>Sequoia Hospital Health and Wellness Services<br>Family Caregiver Alliance<br>DMV<br>Insurance companies |
| <b>Redi-Wheels</b>  |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide help for people who have difficulty using Redi-Wheels due to stairs or inability to make reservations.</li> <li>Advocate for seniors who are eligible for Redi-Wheels but don’t consider themselves “disabled”</li> <li>Improve Redi-Wheels reliability</li> </ul>   | Sandy Cohen<br>Marianne Mannia<br>George Pappas<br>Allen Newlands                             | SamTrans<br>Community organizations<br>Senior centers   |
| <b>Taxicabs</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve taxi service for seniors by providing training for taxi drivers about working with seniors and by providing incentives for drivers.</li> <li>Taxi vouchers</li> </ul>  | Daniel Arrellano<br>Rich Bortoli/Belmont Senior Club<br>Ellen Dunn-Malhotra                   | To be determined  |
| <b>Information and Referral</b>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobility manager—one stop shop for transportation</li> <li>On-line source for information and problem solving</li> </ul>   | Carlos Valenzuela<br>Marianne Mannia  | To be determined  |
| <b>Walking and Pedestrian Safety</b>  |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education for pedestrian safety</li> <li>Longer walk signals</li> <li>Pedestrian oriented communities</li> <li>Pedestrian amenities</li> <li>Senior housing near transportation and services</li> </ul>  | Kristin Lauria-Gurley<br>George Pappas<br>Bill Welch<br>Corinne Goodrich                      | Hospital-based wellness programs (Sequoia, Mills-Peninsula)<br>San Mateo County Fall Prevention Task Force<br>Cities                                |

## Models for Programs and Actions

There are good examples from other places of most of the strategies in which Steering Committee members expressed an interest. This section presents information about examples that could be applied in San Mateo County. This information was provided to the Steering Committee to help them create the priority mobility strategies that were described in Chapter 2. The example programs and actions are grouped under the headings:

- Community Transit Services
- Community-Based Transportation
- Conventional Transit Services – Education and Outreach
- Information and Referral
- Safe Driving and Driving Cessation
- Taxicabs
- Walking and Pedestrian Safety

Much of this information comes from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s “Senior Mobility Toolkit” which is available at <http://www.mtc.ca.gov/library/oats>.

## Community Transit Services

Community transit services include community shuttles of the type that are already operating in San Mateo County. Other types of community transit services include routes that deviate in response to rider requests, known as route deviation services. These are being operated in other places. However, if off-route activity is not strictly limited, these services become very inefficient and have trouble keeping to a schedule. If there is no other fixed-route service in the same area, route deviation service can be used in place of ADA paratransit. It is more efficient than ADA paratransit, but does not necessarily provide a higher level of service. A recent report from the Transit Cooperative Research Program, “Operational Experiences with Flexible Transit Services,” provides a summary of route deviation and similar services. The report is available at [http://www.trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp\\_syn\\_53.pdf](http://www.trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp_syn_53.pdf).

## Community-Based Transportation

Community-based transportation typically uses volunteers, sometimes in combination with paid drivers, to provide services. Compared to transit-agency ADA paratransit services like Redi-Wheels, these services commonly provide a much higher level of personalized assistance to riders, including escorting riders into and out of doctors’ offices, helping with packages, and making stops to pick up prescriptions. Eligibility is commonly less stringent than for ADA paratransit and may include age or vision impairment. Service is not

necessarily limited to people with a disability or incapacity to use public transportation. Community-based transportation, managed by non-profit organizations, can tap funding not available to a public agency, such as foundations, corporations, businesses, individuals and fundraising events. Transportation is often provided on private vehicles, but also on vehicles owned by the community-based organizations.

As described in Chapter 3, organized community-based transportation in San Mateo County is currently limited to the purely volunteer FISH program and rides provided by the American Cancer Society. Good models exist for expanded community-based transportation as described in this section.

### **Coordinating Volunteer Transportation (Ride Connection)**

The Ride Connection program in Portland, Oregon illustrates how a partnership between a regional coordinating organization and local providers can support volunteer transportation. Ride Connection is a not for profit corporation that coordinates transportation provided by community-based organizations in the four-county Portland metropolitan area. Ride Connection was formed in 1988 (originally under the name Volunteer Transportation, Inc.) following a collaborative process involving a citizen committee and Tri-Met, the principal public transit operator in the region. The process recognized that older people and people with disabilities had transportation needs that were not served by existing programs, and determined that a volunteer program could meet those needs.

Transportation is provided by a network of over 30 partner agencies. About half of these organizations currently use volunteers to provide transportation either exclusively or together with paid drivers. These include religious and ethnic organizations, medical and senior centers, youth clubs, public agencies, and general social service organizations. Ride Connection coordinates funding for specialized transportation for the region, makes vehicles obtained through the federal Section 5310 program available to its partner agencies, provides centralized driver training and insurance, provides management support to smaller agencies, and assists with volunteer recruitment. A recent program is RideWise, a collaborative effort between Tri-Met, Ride Connection and other organizations to assist older adults and people living with disabilities to travel independently on Tri-Met buses and trains.

All these activities help make volunteer transportation viable in the long term as a meaningful component of specialized transportation in the region. Working through Ride Connection, Tri-Met has been willing to maintain a substantial financial contribution to volunteer transportation.

Until recently, the partner organizations were entirely responsible for recruiting their own volunteers. Beginning several years ago, in response to requests from its partners, Ride Connection began recruiting directly and referring volunteers to appropriate organizations. As an established regional organization Ride Connection has the ability to recruit using methods that would be beyond the means of many of its smaller partner organizations. To

recruit volunteers, Ride Connection places notices in newspapers, arranges for public service radio announcements, lists opportunities on the national Volunteer Match web site, and makes presentations to interested groups. Retirement organizations such as retired teachers, bus drivers, fire fighters, and police officers are sources of volunteer drivers. Ride Connection also works with Chambers of Commerce and small business whose employees may have some flexibility in their hours. Building and maintaining long term relationships with these groups is important.

In making presentations to groups, it is important to tailor the presentation to each group's interests and to tell personal stories about how transportation has affected people's lives. Ride Connection conducts customer surveys and gets permission from respondents to use the comments they make about what volunteer-provided transportation means to them.

In recruiting volunteers, Ride Connection is as clear as possible about the commitment involved, including training, overall time commitment, and what to expect when providing rides. Even though this may slow down initial recruitment, it is important for maintaining satisfied, effective volunteers. Ride Connection recognizes that many volunteers today want short term activities, including assignments that are project oriented with a definite beginning and end. For volunteers who will be on-call drivers, Ride Connection recommends that they be clear on how much they are willing to do. Drivers need to know how to say no to a request and not feel guilty about it. Without this ability, volunteers are likely to drop out.

For all new volunteer drivers Ride Connection conducts a screening interview, a criminal history check, and a road test. They also provide eight hours of classroom defensive driving, a DMV driver history check, and four hours of training on mobility awareness and assistance, and give drivers a small blood-borne pathogen kit. For volunteers who will be driving a Ride Connection vehicle, the training includes all of the above plus a vehicle operations and daily vehicle inspection training. Ride Connection recommends but does not require that volunteer drivers have first aid and CPR training.

Ride Connection recommends conducting meetings for volunteer drivers. Too-frequent meetings or required meetings would be another time commitment that would deter some volunteers. However voluntary meetings on a quarterly basis provide an opportunity to share issues, establish a group identity, and socialize. It is helpful if drivers have a space in the organization's building that is theirs, at least a bulletin board.

It is common for volunteers who drive their own vehicle to assist their riders in and out of vehicles and buildings. Beyond that, some of Ride Connection's partner organizations have been able to mobilize volunteers to act specifically as escorts for frail riders being transported on a vehicle driven by someone else. For example if a vehicle is bringing more than one person to a destination, the escort may help one person into the building while the driver is operating the lift for another rider. The escort may also help obtaining directions from a rider without the driver needing to be distracted. Some organizations have volunteer couples, one of whom drives while the other acts as an escort. Offering this kind of joint activity can help with recruitment.

As of June 2003 Ride Connection and its partners had 405 volunteers and 243 paid drivers providing transportation to seniors and people with disabilities. The organization estimates that its service representatives schedule over 295,000 rides for more than 10,000 individuals annually. More information is available on Ride Connection's web site: [www.rideconnection.org](http://www.rideconnection.org).

## **Privately-Supported Community Transportation (ITN)**

The Independent Transportation Network<sup>1</sup> (ITN) is a non-profit transportation service for seniors and people with visual impairments in Portland, Maine, and vicinity. Rides are provided with a mix of paid and volunteer drivers. The program was developed with support from research grants, but is currently entirely community-based, operates without public subsidies. Part of the philosophy that led to creating the ITN is that older people who were used to driving, and used to the cost of driving, will be willing to pay to support transportation that offers them the dignity and independence of a private car. In accordance with this philosophy, the charge for the service is much higher than for typical public transportation. Riders pay by the mile or by the hour, and the average charge per trip is about \$7.

Rider fees alone are not sufficient to maintain the program. ITN developed a variety of methods for community support. Individuals support the program by volunteering as drivers (and building credits for future rides), by becoming dues-paying members, by donating automobiles, by making contributions, and hosting community teas. For all miles driven with a passenger in the vehicle, ITN volunteers receive \$.25 a mile. For all miles driven with no passenger in the vehicle (i.e. to and from passenger trips), volunteers receive mileage credits of .25 per mile. These credits may be stored for a volunteer's own use in the future, given to family or friends who are ITN customers, or donated to a fund for low-income riders.

Businesses also support the program. Whenever an ITN member uses ITN to travel to a participating business, the business contributes \$1.50 toward the cost of transportation. To avoid excessive processing costs, the businesses pay annual dues and establish an account with ITN. The merchant or health care provider's account is debited whenever a trip is provided by ITN to their business. The businesses receive regular statements showing the activity in their accounts. Participating businesses include grocery stores, a mall, a restaurant, a bank, arts groups, and lawyers specializing in elder law, eye doctors, audiologists, and podiatrists. The per trip support amount was chosen to be similar to a typical cost for parking validation. Businesses also support ITN by becoming members, by in-kind donations, and by sponsoring the program's newsletter.

With this combination of community resources, ITN was able to provide its members about 18,000 rides in 2002 with no public subsidy.

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<sup>1</sup> "Independent Transportation Network" and "ITN" are registered trademarks of Independent Transportation Network, Inc.

The founder of ITN has established an entity called ITN America to help replicate the ITN model in other places. According to a recent newsletter, pilot ITN replications are in the planning stages in Santa Monica, California; Orlando, Florida; West Hartford, Connecticut; Lincoln, Nebraska; and a community to be selected in New Jersey.

More information about ITN is available at the agency's web site, [www.itninc.org](http://www.itninc.org).

## **Volunteer Recruitment by Riders (Riverside TRIP)**

The Transportation Reimbursement and Information Project (TRIP) in Riverside County has developed a number of innovative approaches to volunteer transportation. These include having riders recruit and pay their own drivers with later reimbursement by TRIP, recruiting through other organizations, partnerships with human service agencies, and providing insurance for volunteer vehicles. TRIP is operated by the Partnership to Preserve Independent Living for Seniors and People with Disabilities.

The philosophy behind TRIP is that people must take responsibility for the outcomes in their lives. Therefore, riders are asked to recruit their own drivers. TRIP staff coaches them in how to approach friends and neighbors and assures them that they are not asking for charity, since they can reimburse the driver. TRIP has also developed audiotapes and videotapes that provide tips to its clients on how to solicit assistance from neighbors, friends, and other potential drivers. One of the problems of the elderly is isolation, which leads to giving up. Finding a driver encourages people to get to know their neighbors and reduces the feeling of dependency and victimization.

The volunteer drivers are reimbursed at a rate of \$.28 a mile for use of their personal vehicles. The reimbursement rate was set in 1993 based on the allowed IRS rate at that time. The ability to pay drivers may help the riders feel alright about asking for rides. However, according to the project's director, some drivers don't want the money so TRIP suggested that they contribute it to charity. The suggestion has been met with a lot of enthusiasm.

When TRIP started, riders were required to find their own drivers without TRIP's assistance. Otherwise, both the Board of Directors and Riverside County staff (who administer TRIP's main funding source) feared there could be liability claims against the agency and the County. Over time, they reconsidered. First, they were reassured by the experience of the national Retired Senior and Volunteer Program (RSVP), which insures its volunteer drivers. Second, they discovered that their own insurance underwriter would write the coverage for \$.50 per year per driver, for non-owned vehicles, in conjunction with the \$1 million liability policy TRIP carries (\$2 million aggregate). This insurance is "excess" insurance that covers liability that may exceed the coverage of volunteers' own insurance.

TRIP has learned that other organizations have received contradictory answers from their insurance carriers, denying coverage of volunteer activities. While the issue does not seem to be settled within the insurance industry, TRIP is willing to risk the uncertainty based upon its own continuing coverage of volunteer drivers.

Although 85% of TRIP clients are successful in recruiting a driver, TRIP staff has begun a Volunteer Driver Corps to help the remaining 15%. It does this by partnering with existing organizations to recruit reserve drivers from within those organizations. When an organization has developed a pool of at least six reserve drivers, TRIP performs a DMV check, adds them to its insurance, gives them an identification card and lapel pin, and refers riders to the organization as needed. Besides free publicity, the organizations are included in TRIP's grant proposals. As of June 2003, 17 organizations were participating in the Volunteer Driver Corps, including several senior centers, several community access (independent living) centers, several churches, Jewish Family Services, and both Riverside Transit Agency and the Palo Verde Valley Transit Agency. The Volunteer Driver Corps is also promoted on Vital Connections, a web site operated by the Partnership that provides all kinds of information about aging and caring for seniors, as well as links to a wide variety of volunteer opportunities

The driving record of a new Volunteer Driver Corps driver is checked through the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Drivers can have no moving violations in the past three years. Out-of-state drivers are turned down until they register with the DMV. Drivers must also have automobile insurance. Since drivers often help their frail or disabled riders out of the house and into the vehicles, TRIP's liability insurance also covers falls. In addition, the riders must sign a waiver, releasing TRIP from liability.

Another feature of TRIP that contributes to its success is its close connections to other organizations. TRIP is not advertised. Instead, individuals are referred to TRIP by its 200 non-profit and governmental partners, such as the Department of Social Services, the Office on Aging, visiting nurses, the Multipurpose Senior Services Program, and Care Teams comprised of the District Attorney's office, police, licensing agencies, adult day care programs, and the Better Business Bureau. Therefore TRIP is only one part of a much larger network aimed at keeping seniors healthy and independent. In fact, TRIP is not considered a transportation program, but rather a social assistance program with an escort and transportation component. A key feature is the education and counseling provided by the staff.

The principal source of referrals is the Riverside County Office on Aging's Senior HelpLink. This is the local information and referral program connected to the 1-800-510-2020 telephone number that is advertised statewide. Senior HelpLink receives about 17,000 transportation-related calls a year. Of those, 187 new clients were enrolled in TRIP in FY 2001-02. The rest were counseled on community resources available for specific problems and given information on other transportation options. The HelpLink staff determine eligibility by questions such as whether the caller is unable to drive, needs assistance getting in and out of a vehicle, or has no family members to provide a ride. Potentially eligible callers are then sent an application, which is subsequently reviewed by an eligibility review committee. About one-third of the applicants are denied eligibility, because the committee determines that the individual can use other transportation options, such as Dial-a-Ride. TRIP is considered a service of last resort.

In fiscal year 2000-01, TRIP's annual transportation expenses were \$350,157. With this budget, TRIP served 537 people by providing 48,350 one-way trips at a cost of \$7.24 a

trip. These trips were provided by over 1,000 volunteer drivers. TRIP is staffed by the Executive Director of the Partnership to Preserve Independent Living, an Administrative Coordinator, and a Clerical Assistant, who together spend 63 hours a week on TRIP functions. TRIP contracts with an accountant and pays \$41,000 a year to Senior HelpLink to screen potential applicants. This amount funds 1.5 full-time equivalent Office on Aging employees.

In a 2001 survey of 149 riders, 94% reported that, before enrollment in TRIP, they had not been able to travel for medical purposes when necessary, and 93% said that they had been unable to get needed groceries. Before TRIP was available to them, 13% said they never left their residence, and 49% said they could travel only one or two times a month. After enrolling in TRIP, 96% reported an increase in their ability to travel. TRIP's data indicate that participants take an average of 7.5 trips per month.

The Partnership to Preserve Independent Living has a description of TRIP on its web site at <http://www.livingpartnership.org/Transportation.htm>

## **Conventional Transit—Education and Outreach**

### **Encouraging Seniors to Try Transit**

Various kinds of public information campaigns, including promotions, presentations, and demonstrations can be used to encourage older people to become more familiar with transit and try using it. If this is done before people have to stop driving, then they may be more likely to consider transit a realistic option later on.

The City of Santa Rosa developed a very successful senior marketing campaign called "Seniors on the Go" for its CityBus fixed route transit system. "Seniors on the Go" was first introduced in October, 2001 and was repeated in 2002 and 2003. The City is looking at restarting the program again. The following information is based on the 2002 program.

For a period of one week in October, all seniors age 65 years and older enjoyed unlimited free access to all CityBus routes by showing a "Seniors on the Go" pass. The passes were available at numerous outlets around Santa Rosa, distributed by the City's campaign partners and mailed to all senior residences and complexes.

Seniors were encouraged to turn in their free pass with a CityBus transfer issued to them during the week of the promotion in order to be eligible to win one of twenty \$50 gift certificates from a local grocery store or one of ten CityBus passes good for the month of their choice. The program was specifically intended to take advantage of available capacity on the transit system during midday hours. "Riding Tips" in the brochure to which the passes were attached encouraged seniors to ride between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to avoid the work and school rush. In the first year of the program, senior and disabled ridership during the week of the promotion was 60% higher than the same week the previous year.

Partners for the campaign in 2002 included the Council on Aging, the Senior Center, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging, Oakmont Village Association (a retirement community), Kaiser Permanente, South West Community Health Center, AARP, and the KBBF public radio station. These partners publicized the program in their newsletters and provided mailing lists. The partnership helped CityBus establish coalitions with senior organizations to support other initiatives to build ridership by seniors and build support for transit. The City also created a Bus Buddy program that provided personalized bus training for seniors. The Bus Buddy program was promoted as part of Seniors on the Go and throughout the year.

Santa Rosa's Seniors on the Go campaign is modeled after a similar campaign implemented by the Metropolitan Transit Development Board in San Diego which has since been discontinued.

## **Information and Referral**

### **Transportation Options Booklet**

A booklet that identifies transportation options for older people can be useful as part of broader public information effort. For example it can be included in older driver training efforts and can be distributed by the DMV. The Beverly Foundation and Easter Seals have produced a customizable electronic template (sometimes referred to as a "drop in the facts" CD) that can be used in identifying transportation options that are available to seniors in the typical community. The template provides a framework from which to inventory and assess existing transportation options, gaps and needs, which can then be organized into a community-based transportation options booklet. Alameda and Contra Costa counties have recently published booklets describing transportation options in their counties. The Alameda County booklet is available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

### **Enhanced Information and Referral (Orange County, California)**

Another approach to helping older people access transportation services is to enhance the ability of information and referral staff to locate appropriate services and connect older people with them. The Orange County Office on Aging (OoA) implemented a program of this type in mid-2002. Orange County has dedicated a substantial portion of its Tobacco Settlement Revenue to creating and supporting non-emergency medical transportation services for older adults. In addition to funding several specific transportation services, the County has implemented a "one-stop" information and outreach program to inform seniors of available transportation options. Older adults can call the OoA's information and assistance toll-free number and reach specially trained professionals who assess the caller's transportation needs and refer them to options including:

- Services created under the County's non-emergency medical transportation program;
- City transportation services, including many implemented through the Orange County Transportation Authority's Senior Mobility Program;

- Any of the community-based and human service transportation programs in the county included in the annual list developed by the Transportation Committee of the Senior Citizen's Advisory Council;
- OCTA's fixed-route transit and ADA paratransit services; and
- Additional resources located by OoA staff.

Two full-time equivalent positions were added to OoA's information and assistance staffing. The staff of six now handle about 2,500 calls per month, of which about one third are about transportation. Transportation is the second most common topic of calls, exceeded only by housing. The volume of transportation calls is expected to increase as OoA conducts additional outreach.

OoA's Transportation Manager, who oversees the overall non-emergency medical transportation program, trained all six information and assistance staff people about transportation resources and issues. The training included how to determine callers' need and assess what resources are appropriate for them. As part of this effort, an updated and expanded database of transportation services was created. As a result of the enhancements to its information and assistance program, OoA is now able to provide far more customized information to callers than it did before. The representatives are able to find transportation even for many callers whose situation does not match any of the traditional transportation programs.

## **On-Line Information**

In Alameda County, the same information provided in the booklet referred to before is available on the web site [www.accessalameda.org](http://www.accessalameda.org). It includes information about fixed-route transit, ADA paratransit, and the ten city-operated paratransit programs in the county.

In San Diego County, a collaborative of community and government agencies created a web-based service with information about transportation services for seniors and persons with disabilities called STRIDE (Specialized Transportation Referral and Information for the Disabled and Elderly). Users can specify the origin and destination of their trips, based on cities, neighborhoods, and major facilities, and choose from a list of 23 types of service they may need, for example door-to-door service, transport to medical appointments, taxi vouchers, and wheelchair lifts. The web site will then provide information about all the services that meet the specified criteria. It is also possible to browse a list of all the more than 150 participating programs. The web site can also be used to create printed lists that can be provided to seniors who do not use the internet themselves, showing all the programs in a particular area.

STRIDE went live at [www.stridesd.org](http://www.stridesd.org) in July 2002 after more than a year of development effort by a collaborative including the Coordinated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA), Del Mar Community Connections, North County Lifeline, Inc., Out and About Vista, and Redwood Senior Homes and Services. The County's department of Aging and Independence Services provided a grant of \$25,000 that paid for computer programming

and the technical aspects of the web site development. The collaborative members contributed staff and volunteer time worth a similar amount that went into defining the functions that the site should perform and collecting the information about the transportation services included. Information from the Social Services Transportation Inventory conducted every four years by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) provided the starting point for the STRIDE database. Collaborative members then resurveyed all the listed agencies to update and complete the necessary information.

The principal users of STRIDE are social workers and other people who work with seniors, adult children of older people (especially those living outside of the San Diego area), and those older people who use computers themselves.

SANDAG, as the CTSA for the county, has assumed responsibility for maintaining the web site and plans to conduct a comprehensive update of the information every six months. Participating agencies can provide information to update their listings at any time using the Feedback link on the web site. The members of the STRIDE collaborative would like to keep improving the web site, adding more options to it and making it easier for seniors themselves to use.

## **Safe Driving and Driving Cessation**

Actions can be taken with respect to driving by older people in a number of ways including:

- Promoting safe driving by older people
- Helping older people maintain driving abilities as long as possible
- Modifying cars to accommodate age-related changes
- Modifying streets and intersections to be safer for older drivers

Models and resources for each of these are described in this section.

### **Promoting safe driving by older people**

The principal model in this area is AARP's Driver Safety course, which is offered frequently in numerous locations in San Mateo County. This is an established national program that provides a 5% discount on automobile insurance. For that reason it is very popular. It consists of eight hours of class split over two days. The course costs \$10 and is taught and coordinated by an extensive network of volunteers. According to AARP's web site, it covers the following topics:

1. Self-assessment of driving knowledge and experiences.
2. Areas that may help you prevent becoming involved in a crash, such as how frequently you drive, reaction time, driver distractions, and "close calls."

3. Changes in vision, hearing and physiology, ways to adjust driving to allow for these changes. Stretching exercises that can improve flexibility. The effects of alcohol and medications on driving are also discussed.
4. Potential trouble spots: cell phone use, backing up, parking, minimizing the effect of blind spots, skidding, and car crime.
5. Aggressive Driving/Road Rage: how to drive to avoid aggressive driver behavior and its extreme, road rage.
6. Proper following distance and other techniques that will make you less likely to be involved in a crash.
7. A review of the basic highway signs and shapes as well as pavement markings and highway barriers and work zones.
8. The Vehicle: key automobile features such as air bags, seat belts and anti-lock brakes; how to get the most out of these and other features.
9. Intersections: tips on minimizing crash risk at intersections.
10. Freeway driving: safely entering and exiting, and how to safely drive when there are large trucks around you.
11. Driving Retirement: how to periodically assess yourself and others to make sure that driving is still the safest method of transportation. Local transportation options are also discussed.

## **Helping older people maintain driving abilities as long as possible**

The American Society on Aging, with sponsorship from the Centers for Disease Control, has developed a set of materials called "The Road to Driving Wellness."

According to manual, the module:

"...describes an array of ways in which most older adults can take action to enhance their driving safety and remain mobile and connected to their communities. This module features physical and mental exercises for older drivers with excellent driving skills and shows how older adults can use them to maintain those skills. Highlighting the importance of discussions before a driving crisis arises, the module encourages older adults, their loved ones and the entire community to openly discuss driving issues and begin planning desirable options. The module also points to the ways, means and challenges that some communities have devised for those older adults who have reduced or retired from driving."

The materials are provided in a loose-leaf notebook or as downloadable segments from ASA's website, intended to help local groups create their own public awareness programs.

The Older Driver Traffic Safety Seminar being piloted by CHP uses some materials from ASA's Road to Driving Wellness module.

After completing The Road to Driving Wellness, ASA developed another set of materials with sponsorship from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) called DriveWell. It is similar to the first program in many ways but has a greater emphasis on alternatives to driving.

The AAA Foundation on Traffic Safety also offers a variety of free booklets:

- "How to Help an Older Driver" discusses how families and friends of older drivers can help them maintain their independence and mobility without sacrificing safety.
- "The Older and Wiser Driver" explains how to compensate for the effects of aging.
- "Drivers 55 Plus: Test Your Own Performance" is a questionnaire to test driving-related skills with suggested measures.
- "A Flexibility Fitness Training Program Package for Improving Older Driver Performance" outlines exercises that older drivers can perform at home.

A CD-ROM is distributed by AAA affiliates called "Roadwise Review." This interactive program is design to help older drivers:

- Identify health and fitness issues and check visual, mental and physical responses;
- Identify steps to reduce risk behind the wheel;
- Monitor "driving health" in privacy;
- Talk with one's doctor about how to maintain fitness to drive.

It is available free of charge for installation at senior centers, and has been installed at the Doelger Senior Center in Daly City.

## **Modifying cars to accommodate age-related changes**

National research programs and automobile manufacturers are examining ways to make automobiles safer for older drivers. Opportunities for local organizations in this area could include lobbying to support adoption of these changes, publicizing the availability of existing modifications, and helping people adapt their cars.

One model for a local program is CarFit®, an educational program developed by the American Society on Aging in collaboration with AAA, AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association. It offers older adults:

- The opportunity to check out how well their personal cars "fit" them.
- Information and materials for community-specific resources and activities that could make their cars "fit" better, enhance their safety as drivers, or increase their mobility in the community.

The program uses a trained team of volunteers and health professionals who work side-by-side and collaboratively with each participant requesting a car check at a scheduled CarFit event. The program is being pilot tested at ten sites during 2005.

CarFit is distinct from professional evaluations done by occupational therapists, based on referral from a physician, such as done by Mills Peninsula Hospital's occupational therapy department. The American Occupational Therapy Association has developed guidelines for driver rehabilitation to help older adults. The University of Massachusetts-Boston Gerontology Institute has developed a 23-minute DVD called "Keep Moving Longer: Features for Safe Driving," that tracks a certified driving rehabilitation specialist while demonstrating a dozen vehicle features that may alleviate challenges while driving that are commonly faced by older motorists.<sup>2</sup>

## **Comprehensive Driving Safety Services**

Various initiatives to maintain driving safety can be combined in a comprehensive package. For example, the Tampa Bay Area Agency on Aging created a program in 1995 called "Getting in Gear." It includes:

- Tests to measure physical and cognitive driving abilities.
- A portable computer test to measure useful field of view and visual training techniques to improve the field of view.
- A defensive driving course based on the National Safety Council curriculum.
- Case management services including counseling, rehabilitation, referral to alternative housing, access to memory clinics, medical care, occupational therapy, and adaptive equipment use.
- A Mobility Management service to help with self-assessment, analyzing the costs of continuing to operate a motor vehicle, and establishing other modes of transportation.

The program is described on the agency's website at <http://www.agingcarefl.org/services/programs/gear/>. Similar services are offered at a network of Senior Safety Resource Centers that have been created in five Florida cities with funding from the state department of Transportation.<sup>3</sup>

The New York State Office for the Aging has published a 56-page guide called "When You Are Concerned – A guide for families concerned about the safety of an aging driver." It covers topics such as how to bring up the topic of unsafe driving, ways to keep an older person driving safely, examples of successful interventions to assist an unsafe driver, and community resources.

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<sup>2</sup> "Safe Mobility of Older Persons," newsletter of the Transportation Research Board Committee on Safe Mobility of Older Persons, June 2005, pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> "Safe Mobility of Older Persons," newsletter of the Transportation Research Board Committee on Safe Mobility of Older Persons, November 2004, p. 17.

## Modifying streets and intersections to be safer for older drivers

In 2001, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published “Guidelines and Recommendations to Accommodate Older Drivers and Pedestrians” (Report No. FHWA-RD-01-051). This document provides guidance for signage, intersection design, pavement markings, lighting, merging lanes for entering freeways and many other roadway features that take into account the limitations of older drivers. It was based on an earlier FHWA “Older Driver Highway Design Handbook” that was published in 1998. The newer document incorporates later research and feedback from engineers. Many of the recommendations from the FHWA guidelines have been incorporated in the standard Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices used by traffic engineers and road builders nationwide, including Caltrans. Caltrans’ Office of Traffic Safety is engaged in implementing the new guidelines and in creating a California Supplement that will implement additional recommendations.

A private organization called The Road Information Project (TRIP) has produced the following list of recommended changes, based principally on the FHWA guidelines:<sup>4</sup>

### Signage and lighting:

- clearer and less complex signage that is easier to follow
- larger lettering on signs and larger pavement markings
- better street lighting, particularly at intersections
- higher-performing retroreflective material in signs and pavement markings for
- better nighttime visibility

### Intersections:

- bright, luminous lane markings and directional signals
- overhead indicators for turning lanes
- overhead street-name signs
- adding or widening left-turn lanes

### Streets and Highways:

- wider lanes and shoulders to reduce the consequences of driving mistakes
- longer merge and exit lanes
- rumble strips to warn motorists when they are running off roads
- curves that are not as sharp

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<sup>4</sup> “Designing Roadways to Safely Accommodate the Increasingly Mobile Older Driver: A Plan to Allow Older Americans to Maintain Their Independence,” The Road Information Program, Washington DC, July 2003

- Improvements to pedestrian features at intersections
- Improved intersection design
- Improved standards for acceptable stopping and reaction sight distances

## **Help older people plan for the time when they need to curtail driving**

Several models exist for helping older people plan for the time when they need to curtail or stop driving. ASA's DriveWell materials include a significant focus on alternatives to driving. DriveWell is a comprehensive information program designed to:

- Promote community conversations that can lead to increased driver safety and more transportation choices for adults ages 65 and older;
- Encourage older drivers to change when and how they drive;
- Prompt older adults to use alternative forms of transportation
- Stimulate communities to assess the need for and, if needed, offer transportation choices more responsive to the needs of older adults.

DriveWell "experts" conduct three-hour orientation programs at locations around the country. Sequoia Hospital hosted a DriveWell orientation recently. These are "train-the-trainer" programs designed to help others use the DriveWell materials effectively in their own communities. Additional information about DriveWell is located on ASA's website at <http://www.asaging.org/drivewell>.

## **Taxicabs**

Many cities have programs that allow qualified users to take taxi rides at a discount. These programs use vouchers, scrip, tickets, and similar mechanisms to provide the discount. In the Bay Area, most taxi discount programs are available only for ADA paratransit eligible riders. Examples are the programs in San Francisco and Oakland.

An agency that has created a taxi discount for older people, regardless of disability, is Reno, Nevada. The Regional Transportation Commission, which operates the public transit system in the Reno area, including ADA paratransit, recently began a program it calls Washoe Senior Ride for residents age 60 and older. Participants purchase books of "Taxi Bucks" at half their face value and use them to pay for taxi rides. All of the taxi companies in the Reno area participate in the program. About 2,000 people have registered for the program and are spending about \$12,000 per month worth of Taxi Bucks.

Mesa Senior Services in Mesa, Arizona, operates a similar program for residents age 65 and older. Participants pay \$2.50 for a coupon booklet containing ten \$1 "Coupons for Cab"; each booklet is valued at \$10. There is a limited number of booklets available.

Booklets must be ordered monthly and paid for by check. Mesa Senior Services also runs a volunteer mileage reimbursement program similar to

## **Walking and Pedestrian Safety**

### **Pedestrian Master Planning**

A number of cities have conducted comprehensive pedestrian plans with varying degrees of attention specifically developed to the concerns of older people. In the Bay Area, a prominent example is the City of Oakland.

The Oakland City Council adopted the Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) as part of the Land Use and Transportation Element of the City's General Plan in November 2002. The Plan aims to improve pedestrian conditions in the city of Oakland. It includes a summary of existing conditions including a collision analysis, establishment of a pedestrian route network, policy recommendations, engineering design elements and an implementation plan. In the formation of the plan, the Oakland Pedestrian Safety Project (OPSP) conducted extensive outreach including consultation with older adults. The Plan includes a number of components that show its consideration of older people who walk.

The PMP outreach included a wide spectrum of opportunities for seniors to provide input. Outreach was conducted through neighborhood associations and crime prevention councils (with the Oakland Police Department), which often take place in retirement homes and senior community centers and have a high attendance of older adults. In addition, community-based organizations for seniors, such as United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County and Asian Health Service, were involved in the outreach efforts. As a result the plan had a high level of input from Oakland's older population.

One element of the existing conditions chapter is an analysis of collision patterns including senior pedestrian collisions. The plan identifies the top ten intersections for senior pedestrian collisions relative to the location of senior centers. The analysis found that four of the top ten intersections had traffic signals and six were within one-quarter mile of a senior center. In addition, seniors suffer the highest rates of pedestrian fatalities (24% of fatal pedestrian/motor vehicle collisions and 10.5% of Oakland's population). Older adults are also most likely to be hit in crosswalks.

When formulating the PMP's recommendations, its authors used the "universal design" approach. This means that they chose designs for the most vulnerable populations with the expectation that everyone's needs would be served. One of the most significant issues for senior pedestrians is crossing light times. Oakland's PMP includes a section on crossing treatments, which suggests a variety of treatments that can be used at intersections where pedestrian safety is a concern. These treatments include high-visibility ladder striping and distinctive paving of crosswalks, longer pedestrian crossing times, leading pedestrian intervals, scramble and countdown pedestrian signals, and audible signals.

## **Walkable Neighborhoods for Seniors**

United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County managed community organizing in connection with implementing the Oakland Pedestrian Master Plan. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded United Seniors \$33,000 for the 18-month community-organizing process. The process used is similar to the “Safe Routes to School” model. Its process involved identifying pedestrian safety hotspots, educating older adults on the benefits of walking, identifying and attempting to address barriers to walking (like crossing time and the need for benches to rest along the way), a walking audit of neighborhoods with a high concentration of seniors, and holding politicians, engineers, planners, and public safety officials accountable for pedestrian conditions. This process involved a series of workshops and roadshows and was scheduled to end in June 2004.

## **Livable Communities Evaluation**

The AARP Public Policy Institute has released an evaluation guide designed to help residents, advocates, and local leaders make their communities more livable, with a particular focus on the needs of older people. It covers transportation, walking, safety and security, shopping, housing, health services, recreation and culture, and caring and mutual support. The transportation segment includes a model “drivability survey” to help a community organization identify issues and advocate for improvements to street signs, lighting, left-turn lanes, lane markings, focusing specifically on the needs of older drivers. The walking segment includes a similar “walkability survey” to assess sidewalks, crosswalks, resting places and similar issues. The guide is available at [http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/d18311\\_communities.pdf](http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/d18311_communities.pdf).

## **Re-Engineering Streets and Intersections**

In areas where there is a lot of pedestrian activity, traffic engineers have at their disposal an increasing array of treatments that can encourage walking, improve pedestrian safety, and encourage safer driving without significantly sacrificing capacity. These treatments include medians with pedestrian safety areas, simplifying signal phasing, placing crosswalks to better match pedestrian crossing needs, and realigning streets so they meet at right angles as much as possible. Projects such as the Grand Boulevard project to revitalize the El Camino Real corridor provide an ideal opportunity to implement these improvements.

One model for modifying intersections for senior safety comes from the Safe Routes for Seniors project based in the northern Manhattan neighborhoods of Washington Heights, Inwood and Harlem with funding from the New York State Department of Health. The goal of the project is to encourage seniors to walk more by improving their pedestrian environment. Detailed recommendations for intersection modifications were developed. The project reports are available at <http://www.transalt.org/campaigns/safeseniors>.

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## Chapter 6. Implementation

### Status Report

Numerous efforts are already underway to improve senior mobility, many as a result of the Senior Mobility Action Plan process.

- SamTrans co-sponsored a regional Older Driver Summit with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission that was held on January 18, 2006.
- In June, SamTrans and the Alliance partnered for a successful “Seniors on the Go” campaign to provide free monthly bus passes to 872 seniors who were new to transit. The 572 participants (65%) who responded to a survey about their transit experience also received free August bus passes.
- Family Service Agency has been selected to receive a Lifeline grant to implement a neighbor-helping-neighbor volunteer program, modeled on the TRIP program in Riverside. They plan to grow to serve 85 riders over two years. The program will begin using FSA’s existing relationship with Fair Oaks Community Center in Redwood City.
- SamTrans has researched other volunteer programs that may hold promise for San Mateo County, including one in Contra Costa County, El Camino Roadrunners in Mountain View, and the Independent Transportation Network (ITN) in Portland, Maine. These could serve different market segments than the FSA program.
- SamTrans staff visited the Orange County Office on Aging to learn about their very comprehensive information and assistance program. SamTrans and County Aging & Adult Services will continue to explore partnership opportunities for expanded implementation and assistance in San Mateo County.
- South San Francisco has been selected to receive Lifeline funding to conduct public transportation workshops aimed at non-English speaking and lower-income people. In addition to educating participants about existing transit service, the workshops will explore addition needs, including possible community transit services.
- Redwood City, with support from the Alliance, has been developing community transportation service. A group including City and Alliance staff, plus members of City commissions, met over a period of eight months. The Council approved preparing a plan for shuttle service. Current plans involve a combination of commute-hour employment service and off-peak subsidized taxi service that would be available to seniors and low-income people. Redwood City has been selected to receive Lifeline funding to support this process.
- Belmont is continuing to look at possibilities for a community based pedestrian safety survey in the neighborhood around the intersection of Ralston and Alameda de las Pulgas. Belmont is part of a group, also including Redwood City and the City of San Mateo, that applied to MTC for a Transportation for Livable Communities

capital grant for pedestrian, transit and traffic calming improvements to El Camino Real.

- Edgewater Isle apartments is contracting with Airline Coach company to take their residents to shopping twice a week.
- AARP has introduced a new revision of its driver training materials. Discussion of public transportation is now a significant part of their classes.
- Four or five sessions of the CHP driver training have been completed and more are planned for next year. These include having a SamTrans bus at each event.
- AAA and AARP held a CarFit event at the San Mateo Expo Center.
- At the San Mateo County Fair in August 2006, SamTrans, with assistance from volunteers, distributed information packets about driving safety for older people and alternatives to driving.
- Presentations were made to 21 city councils and other agencies and organizations to provide information about senior mobility needs and solicit input to the draft plan and strategies.

## **Activities for 2006-07**

During 2006-07 SamTrans will continue to dedicate staff time to support and provide leadership for the Senior Mobility Action Plan process. Staff will work with the Steering Committee to determine how best to organize for continuing implementation and planning. Most of the efforts already undertaken or underway will require continuing activity. Depending on the priorities expressed by Steering Committee members, planning and support efforts may also include:

- Working group meetings on priority issues such as education and outreach about using transit.
- Identifying additional specific projects or objectives for the coming year, including who will be involved in each one.
- Creating a marketing program format that all agencies can plug into and deliver a common message that reaches all segments of the senior community.
- Adopting a mission statement or overall statement of purpose, and similar statements for each of the action categories (strategies).
- Developing a business or strategic plan for each category, including what already exists, how it should be improved, what's been accomplished, who needs to be involved.
- Further outreach to involve all 20 cities in the county.
- Guidance and recommendations to the cities to help them understand what the plan is and what it means for them to support it or be involved in it.

## **Evaluation Framework**

As current projects and future proposals are evaluated, it will be useful to have a framework in which to evaluate them. Figure 6-1 provides a model for such a framework. The comments provided are general in nature, applying to entire strategies rather than specific projects. As specific projects are proposed, they can be evaluated in more detail.

Figure 6-1 Draft Evaluation Framework

| Evaluation Criteria                            | Community Transit Services  | Community-Based  | Encourage Use of Transit   | Safe Driving                                    |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| Cost-effective                                 | Depends on ridership.   | Potential for very cost-effective service, depending on administrative overhead. | High impact for little cost.   | High impact for little cost.                    |
| Widespread benefit                             | Serves seniors and general public, usually in one city.                   | Depends on the model.  | Increases mobility and improves viability of transit for all. Countywide | Yes– addresses dominant mode of transportation. |
| Addresses needs not currently being addressed  | Short local trips are often difficult to make on SamTrans, Caltrain, BART | People who need personalized service.  |  |   |
| Demonstrates Something New in San Mateo County | No  | Yes  | Limited marketing done in the past specifically targeted to seniors.     | No  |
| Partners available for implementation          | Several cities are interested   | Family Service Agency  | SamTrans and the Alliance  | AARP, CHP, CSAA, Sequoia Hospital               |
| Resources are available                        | Measure A and others  | MTC Lifeline   | Some   | Most programs are self-supporting               |
| No legal or regulatory barriers                | No barriers   | No barriers  | No barriers  | No barriers                                     |
| Sustainable                                    | Yes   | To be determined   | Probably   | Yes   |

Figure 6-1 Draft Evaluation Framework Continued

| Evaluation Criteria                            | Taxicabs  | Information and Assistance  | Walking                                  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Cost-effectiveness                             | Higher quality service would benefit many at little cost. Subsidies: depends on specific plans. | Increases as the variety of services increases for which to provide assistance about. | Potentially very high—to be determined.  |
| Widespread benefit                             | To be determined.   | Would serve the entire County   | Small scale projects most likely.        |
| Addresses needs not currently being addressed  | People for whom taxis are too expensive, need accessible vehicles, or better service.           | No comprehensive source of help on senior transportation issues.                      | Yes                                      |
| Demonstrates Something New in San Mateo County | Countywide regulation or senior-focused programs would be new.                                  | Yes   | One known model in Daly City             |
| Partners available for implementation          | Alliance has expressed some interest.   | To be determined  | City of Belmont. Others to be determined |
| Resources are available                        | None identified   | To be determined  | To be determined                         |
| No legal or regulatory barriers                | Separate, inconsistent regulation in each city.   | No barriers   | No barriers                              |
| Sustainable                                    | Service quality more sustainable than subsidies   | To be determined  | To be determined                         |

