

Investigating the Intersection of Aging And Community Transportation

Santo A. Grande, Ed.D
October/2016

Population Growth of Aging Persons in the United States

Major growth in population of older persons will require an increase of services to help individuals maintain independence including mobility and transportation.

- 2010 – seniors (65+) = 35,000,000
- 2025 – seniors (65+) = 62,000,000
- 2020 – **senior drivers** (65+) = 40,000,000
- More than 1- 5, 21% of Americans aged 65 + do not drive

U.S. Bureau of the Census

Reported by Surface Transportation Policy Project

Bailey, 2004

In The United States

- 1 in every 8 individuals is over 65
- The elderly population will double between 2000 – 2030
- By 2030, 1 in every 4 individuals will be over 65
- 10% over 65+ will develop Alzheimer's Disease
- 50% over 85+ will develop Alzheimer's Disease

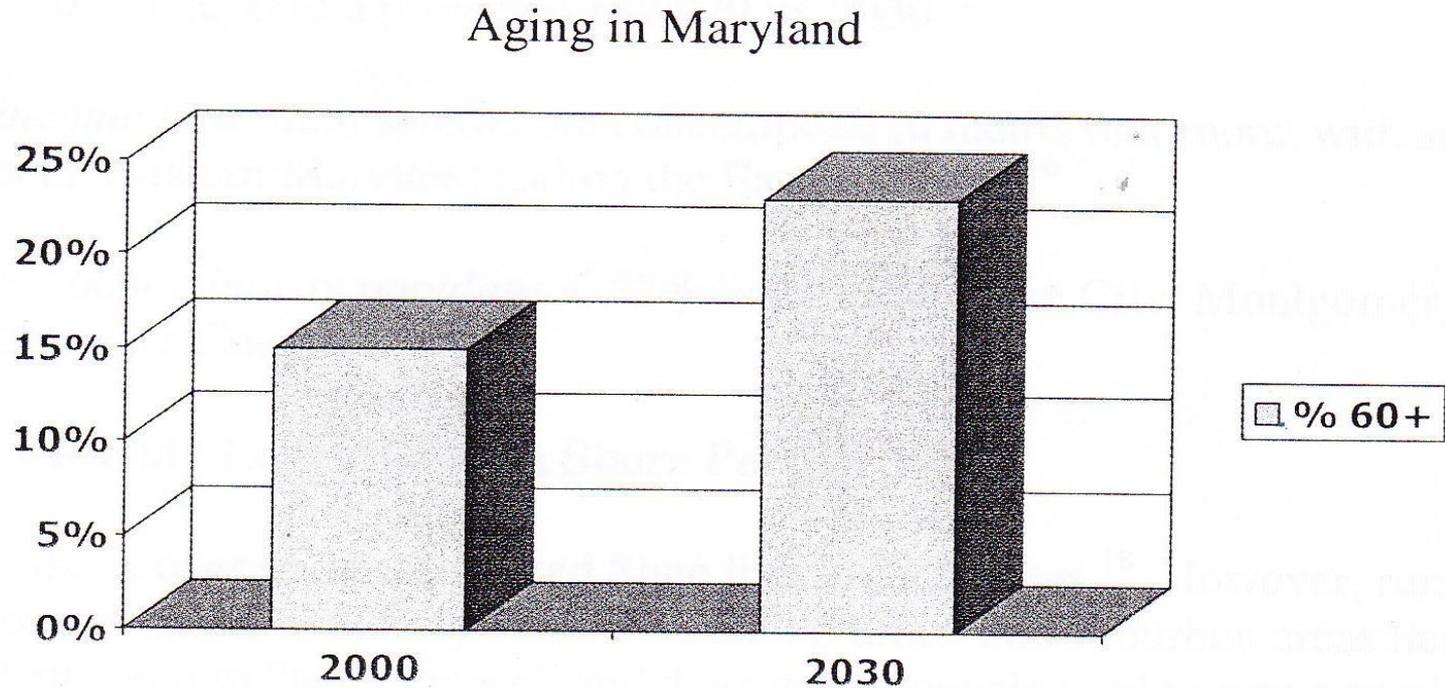
In New York State

Most rapid growth is projected to be among the oldest and most frail at a rate of 28.2% for those over 85 years of age

- 16% for impaired individuals
- 60% will need assistance with daily living
- 40% will also have related problems requiring treatment or management

The growth rate for those under 60 will be only 3% while rate for those 60+ will be 40%

Maryland projections are compatible with National Projections



Maryland Department of Aging, <http://www.mdoa.state.md.us/demographicsn.html>, 1.

“I’d rather die than give up driving”

A frequent remark stated by senior drivers at focus groups conducted by Research professor Jean Shope.

“Driving isn’t just a matter of convenience in our society – it’s a symbol of independence, of competence of being in control”.

Jean Shope

Factors contributing to older person's driving difficulties

- Poor eyesight and hearing
- Declining motor skills and reflexes
- Cognitive impairment and memory loss
- Issues with medication
- Chronic illness and medical emergencies

Relationship Between the Trusted Driver and the Senior Rider

Comments from Beverly Foundation Driver Study 2009

- “All of our drivers are working here because they like people (specifically the senior population). They are retired workers or retirement age and are truly socially conscious and very concerned about their passengers”.
- “Most drivers see the passengers several times a week, so they become part of their families”.
- “I have had several comments from different senior passengers...they wouldn't be alive today if it wasn't for our transportation system.” (p 20)

Three national incidents resulting in fatalities reflect on older drivers pre and post accident behavior

Weller – 86 yr. old man kills 10 people, injures 70 after driving car in to farmer's market in California

Grimes – 90 yr. old woman backs out of driveway across lawn, curb, mistook gas pedal for brake and kills 17 yr. old

Walke – 83 yr. old woman turns into path of 20 yr. old bicyclist who was thrown under car. Observers stated driver stared into space until someone told her to switch off her engine.

Hurricane Katrina: A Focus on Natural Disasters, Transportation and Fatalities

Hurricane Katrina, Category 5, New Orleans, LA Aug.23- 30, 2005

1,833 deaths 1,100 in LA Analyzed 771 fatalities

The majority of victims were elderly: nearly 60% of fatalities were over the age of 65 years old.

33% of analyzed fatalities occurred outside flooded areas or in hospital or shelters inside the flooded areas

Jonkman

Relationship of Katrina to Community Transportation

There were an estimated 300 public transit buses and 200 public school buses available but never moved during the crisis.

What occurred was a response so ineffective that all the buses previously noted never left their secured facilities

Staff advised Mayor Nagens not to release school buses

Levees broke and vehicles, even those of the national guard were under water

Many fatalities overwhelmingly due to adverse public health situations that developed after floods, eg: the overcrowding of the Superdome. The facility was ill-prepared for the onslaught of citizens and there was the unavailability of public water or sanitary facilities.

Bus drivers then were unable to leave their homes to help transport to the superdome.

Suggesting that a parent or older relative stop driving is
“almost as tense an issue and potentially insulting as saying
it’s time to move,”

Dr. Jean Shope

One of the problems for families is that no one wants to raise
this issue, so while professionals say you should plan ahead,
few people do,”

Jeff Finn, American Society on Aging

Senior Driver Evaluation/Licensing

By 2025 people 65+ will account for 25 % of US drivers

State licensing systems and mobility alternatives for older drivers are for the most part inadequate and inconsistent

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety 2008

States should screen all drivers applying for new or renewed licenses to ensure they are medially/functionally fit to driver through eye exams and in person renewal but this is not happening. If remedies aren't put in place today we can expect a significant rise in highway safety deaths in the years ahead.

Peter Kissinger, AAA Foundation CEO 2008

Senior Citizens and Mobility

A Study Winter Park (Florida) 2005

The Winter Park (Florida) Health Foundation found six key issues facing Orange County Communities regarding senior citizens and mobility

- Seniors want to preserve their independence and mobility as a last bastion of personal freedom.
- Lack of mobility is the primary contributing factor to social isolation, and social isolation is directly related to depression.
- Transportation alternatives are the linchpin for safe mobility for life. It is not available in sufficient quantity or style in most communities across the U.S.

Winter Park Study Cont'd

- The public wants innovative solutions which are available in very limited locations and quantities.
- Support or provide community education efforts to bring visibility to the issue of safe mobility for seniors.
- The percentage of seniors who elect to use public transportation is small (2% nationally). The number of seniors who stop driving and convert to use of public transportation is even smaller (1%).