

Destination Transportation

HIGHLIGHTS

Automobile Ownership Cost

Outlines some of the factors that determine the cost of driving an automobile.

Alternatives to Driving

Describes how transportation options for older adults supplements existing transportation services.

Destination Continuum

Describes the broad range of transportation services that older adult passengers often want and need.

Destination Priorities

Identifies a wide range of destinations in which older adults need to travel.

Types of Destinations

Discusses the multiple types of destinations that transportation services offer to help older adults get to where they need to go.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit the numerous fact sheets and exercises in addition to the planning, implementation, and evaluation sections of the TurnKey Kit.

BACKGROUND

Data provided by AAA indicates that the personal automobile as a transportation service can be somewhat expensive. In fact, the average cost to own and operate a new vehicle in 2018 was \$8,849 per year.* The figure is based on the cost of fuel, maintenance, repairs, insurance, license/registration/taxes, depreciation, and loan interest. The example below illustrates a breakdown of these costs of the 45 topselling 2018 model-year vehicles.

AUTOMOBILE OWNERSHIP COST *

Vehicle Type	Annual Cost
Small Sedan	\$6,777
Hybrid	\$7,485
Small SUV	\$7,485
Electric Vehicle	\$8,384
Medium Sedan	\$8,866
Minivan	\$9,677
Medium SUV	\$9,697
Large Sedan	\$9,804
Pickup Truck	\$10,215
Average	\$8,848

For many automobile owners, the cost is not what is important. Owning and driving a car often is viewed as a symbol of freedom, independence, and control. While the symbolic purpose and related costs of owning an automobile may be considerable, the price of giving up the car (the loss of freedom, independence, and control) can be even greater. In fact, for many older adults, not being able to drive is said to be the worst thing that can ever happen in life.

At the same time, driving a car is really about getting where you need to go. And getting where you need to go is about destinations that include ones that are life sustaining (a medical appointment); life maintaining (the bank or post office), and life enriching (the beauty shop or a volunteer activity). The point is that many volunteer driver programs enable people to get where they need and want to go.

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* AAA 2018

ALTERNATIVES TO DRIVING

While driving an automobile may be the preferred mode of transportation for older adults, many communities offer a host of transportation options for them to use when they no longer want to, or are unable to drive. Many older adults are familiar with private and specialized transportation

Transportation Options

- **Automobile**
- **Public Transit** (buses, light rail, trains, subways)
- **Paratransit-Demand Response** (ADA transit, Dial-A-Ride programs, and community transit services)
- **Private Transit** (taxis, limousines, chauffeur services)
- **Specialized Transit** (shuttles and other vehicles serving businesses, senior centers, retirement communities, adult day centers, churches, and hospitals)
- **Senior Transit** (transportation services for older adult passengers and sometimes people with disabilities)
- **Volunteer Driver Programs** (transit by volunteers who drive passengers to destinations)

services. However, they may not see themselves as users of public transportation because they have not ridden a bus since grade school, or it hasn't been necessary for them to make advance reservations since the last time they reserved an airline ticket. Although they might enjoy "other" options, such as walking and even bicycling, they may not view them as their preferred method of getting to their destinations. Of course, a variety of transportation services may be available in a

community, yet volunteer driver programs often act as the "go to" option for older adults who need assistance and support.

DESTINATION CONTINUUM

Whatever the destination, it often takes some type of transportation to get there. Methods used by older adult nondrivers may be a bus, van, shuttle, taxi, private service, automobile, or even a golf cart. Whatever the method, destinations and the things they offer need to be available and accessible. Perhaps the best place to begin the destination discussion is to identify the destinations to which older adults need to travel. The continuum below offers a simple way of identifying types of destinations where all of us go.

Life Sustaining

Doctors' Offices
Nutrition Sites
Grocery Stores

Life Maintaining

Banks
Shopping Centers
Social Services

Life Enriching

Volunteer Centers
Friends' Homes
Beauty Shops

Passengers riding with community-based transportation services are no different than people who drive automobiles. They want and need to get to life-sustaining, life-maintaining and/or life-enriching destinations. The doctor's office or clinic may be considered the most important destination by policymakers and funding agencies, however, the grocery store, the bank, the shopping center, and even the beauty shop may be equally important to older adults who reside in their communities.

Life-Sustaining Destinations

At the left end of the continuum are what some call “food and water” or “needs” destinations because they keep people alive. These are the most frequently identified destinations to which transportation services take their older adult passengers. For example, 97% of recent survey respondents selected doctors’ offices, dialysis centers, and physical rehabilitation centers as the top three destinations to which they took passengers. It is not clear if the medical nature of the destinations was the first choice of the services, the funding sources, or the older adult passengers.

Life-Enriching Destinations

At the right end of the continuum are what some call “quality of life,” “productive,” or “wants” destinations because they may not be viewed as giving life, but rather as giving meaning to life. For some, such destinations are related to family life or education. For others, they promote socialization or enhance worship and spirituality. For still others, the reward is a connection with community. It isn’t that food, clothing, and activities cannot be enjoyed in the home, but rather that isolation can result in depression. In other words, life-enhancing and enriching destinations help ensure that more is at stake than mere survival. One person mentioned that these are related to the wise saying, “When the going gets tough, the tough go...”

Life-Maintaining Destinations

Maintaining everyday life by going to a bank, to a shopping center, or to a social service program may be important; but for most older adults these are not destinations that mean the difference between life and death, nor are they generally thought of as enhancing the quality of life. However, they can be important in addressing important needs and activities of daily life.

DESTINATION PRIORITIES

It is often said that the losses experienced in the course of the aging process eliminate many of the things that give life meaning. Losing the ability to drive is an example. However, that loss may be exacerbated when it is no longer possible to get to family, friends, activities, or events that promote social health and well-being. Some providers say transportation services that recognize the value of both physical and social health make major contributions to older adults who use their services. For example, a trip to the doctor may result in improved physical health, or a trip to the beauty shop may contribute to social health. However, it is not about prioritizing wants and needs with physical health winning the war. It is about appreciating both quantity and quality life destinations. In other words, it is important for transportation services to consider destination policies thoughtfully. The following comment from a woman in California best describes the paradox of single destination services.

“When I have a doctor’s appointment on Monday, I always go to the beauty shop on Friday, because if I hear bad news, I want to look my best.”

A REVIEW OF DESTINATIONS

The majority of trips may be to life-sustaining destinations (e.g., visits to the doctor, pharmacy, or grocery store). However, many volunteer driver programs say life-enriching destinations (e.g., to an exercise program, a volunteer activity, or the hair dresser)

are just as important. A sample of recent destinations of a volunteer transport service in the southwest suggest that although many trips are for medical and health care appointments, numerous destinations are for life-enriching and nonhealth related life-maintaining activities as well.

Older Adult Passenger Destinations

- 97% Non-emergency medical Services
- 79% Shopping
- 22% Social activities
- 21% Social services
- 13% Beauty shops

Survey data indicate that the majority of passenger trips provided by volunteer transportation services are to life-sustaining destinations. At the same time, data also indicate that older adults (and many transportation services) place a high value on life-maintaining and life-enriching trips. The chart below identifies the top selections by respondents to a destination question on a STAR Awards application that asked applicants to select the top three destinations of their older adult passengers.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ Imaging Center | ■ Fitness Center | ■ Oral Surgery |
| ■ Pain Clinic | ■ Computer Store | ■ Dialysis Clinic |
| ■ Medical Center | ■ Shopping Center | ■ Eye Specialist |
| ■ Neurological Center | ■ Public Library | ■ Chiropractic Clinic |
| ■ Spine & Rehab Center | ■ Animal Hospital | ■ Arboretum |
| ■ Cardiovascular Specialist | ■ Community Center | ■ Shoe Store |
| ■ Hearing & Balance Center | ■ Nursing Home | ■ Bank |
| ■ Neurology Center | ■ Hair Dresser | ■ Restaurant |

Destinations that were underrepresented were recreational activities (4%), volunteer activities (3%), religious activities (2%), and paid employment (1%). Other destinations identified by applicants included trips to the bank, post office, library, dry cleaners, assisted living facilities, special events, the outlet mall, community concerts, holiday sightseeing, the movies, the VA hospital, dialysis, dental appointments, grocery shopping, and fitness centers.

Although the list suggests that volunteer driver programs provide many types of trips, the emphasis appears to be on necessities of life. As one volunteer transportation program commented:

“While we do transportation for social services, beauty/hair, religious activities, social activities, and recreation, these are estimated at less than 5% of our miles.”

Data and information for this fact sheet are from a Beverly Foundation STAR Awards application in which 281 applicants responded. The applicants were located in 47 states, served 300,000 older adult passengers and provided 5,000,000 rides. The life sustaining, maintaining, and enriching framework was developed by Dr. Nina Silverstein a professor at U Mass Boston.

