

## Conclusion

The need for multi-modal transportation such as public transportation, carpooling, and active transportation is essential in rural communities. A network of public and active transportation is essential in creating age-friendly communities. There is no one source of transportation that will satisfy the needs of residents in rural communities. There need to be a variety of options presented as alternatives to personal automobile use that fit different lifestyles. Public and active transportation will aid the independence and health of people in rural communities.

## Sources:

- CBC (2012, April 5). Greyhound drops 12 bus routes in Manitoba. *CBC News Manitoba*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/story/2012/04/05/mb-greyhound-drop-routes-manitoba.html>
- Government of Canada. (2010). Sustainable transportation in small and rural communities. Transport Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs/environment-utsp-smallruralcomms-1012.htm>
- Government of Canada. (2010). Vertigogogo – Phase 1. Transport Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs/environment-most-vertigogogo-745.htm>
- Green, H. (2006). Transportation Challenges in Rural Healthcare. *Nurse Practitioner*, 21, 31-38.
- Green Rider. (2009). The vans from outer places. Retrieved from <http://www.greenrider.ca/>
- Kootenay Rideshare. (2012). Retrieved October 17, 2012, from <http://kootenayrideshare.com/rideshare/v2/>
- Loverseed, H. (2005, Feb 22). Canada hops on transit train for development. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/383727801?accountid=14569>
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2009). Age friendly rural and remote communities: A guide. Commissioned by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for seniors. Retrieved from [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/healthy-sante/age\\_friendly\\_rural/AFRRC\\_en.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/healthy-sante/age_friendly_rural/AFRRC_en.pdf)
- Public transit for rural P.E.I. would cost \$2 million to start, says report. (2008). *The Canadian Press*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/360094515?accountid=14569>
- The Independent. (2012). Public Transit – rural to urban .Retrieved from [http://www.theindependent.com/news/local/public-transit---rural-to-urban/article\\_675eb712-06cc-11e2-8d91-0019bb2963f4.html?mode=image&photo=0](http://www.theindependent.com/news/local/public-transit---rural-to-urban/article_675eb712-06cc-11e2-8d91-0019bb2963f4.html?mode=image&photo=0)



## Rural Transportation

Figure 1: Shuttle service in rural communities.

Jasreen  
Sidhu

Providing a wide range of transportation options is essential for the development of age-friendly communities. Factors such as an aging and limited mobility support the need for transportation services that allow populations to remain active in their daily lives. This may include public transit, community run transportation services, and active transportation. In order for rural towns to support their aging populations they must facilitate the use of a variety of transportation methods so that residents remain active and healthy in their communities. The following overview will discuss the benefits of various transportation alternatives to people who no longer have personal automobile use (6).

### Challenges

There is often a struggle to provide rural communities with the necessary transportation due to the low population density and low ridership that results in transportation systems that cannot support themselves. Rural communities are commonly auto-oriented, therefore active transportation infrastructure is also often lacking in these areas.

This lack of transportation options in rural communities poses many challenges to older adults. Day to day activities become unmanageable with limited ways to reach services and amenities; some of which may be provided in the surrounding towns or cities. For example, while most rural towns have health care services, more specialized care may need to be accessed in a larger centre (Green, 2006). However, it is not always easy to travel multiple times into the city for follow ups and specialized services such as x-rays. Seniors and those with limited mobility may ask friends and family for rides but this can quickly become hard to do as they may feel like a burden or embarrassed to continually ask for these favours. This results in seniors becoming homebound and socially excluded (10) due to a lack of transportation alternatives.

### Public transportation/charter programs

Public transportation can greatly improve the quality of life for people who no longer operate their own vehicles. For example, public transportation provides seniors with the opportunity to participate in “social, cultural, volunteer and recreational activities” if they are mobile (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2009).

“We all agree here we do need transportation and friends are fine, family are fine, but they can only go so far.” - Public Health Agency of Canada, 2009



Figure 2: Handi-van services provide transportation to older adults and those with limited mobility.

In spite of this, rural transportation has its limitations. Rural transit systems can not financially support themselves because of low population density, low ridership, and inconvenient scheduling. Unfortunately governments do not always fund rural transportation. As a result, rural towns are without public transportation.

However, examples do exist of successful transportation systems. For example, in 2002, the OC Transpo in Ottawa began servicing rural communities. This service operates during rush hour, transporting between 35 and 230 riders every day. Transit routes that connect several rural communities at once will have increased ridership (Government of Canada, 2010). While this is a great initiative, it does not address the issue that people may need to travel outside of peak hours. For those requiring public transportation, there need to be additional services provided.

In addition to public transportation, chartered services are another form of transportation for residents in rural communities. For example, Greyhound provides chartered bus services to rural towns in Manitoba, but due to low ridership in some areas, that service has ceased to exist (CBC, 2012). Some communities continue to see the value in chartered bus services. In Nova Scotia, the chartered service, Green Rider Ltd, provides rural commuters access to major centres and surrounding towns. This daily bus services provides transportation for people needing to attend medical appointments in nearby towns or cities (Green Rider, 2009).

### Ride sharing/car sharing

Where public transit is not an option or does not meet individuals' needs, alternatives need to be available. Ride sharing, also known as carpooling, is an alternative to the often rigid scheduling of public transit. People with similar needs or who share common destinations can arrange a carsharing trip. This trip links amenities and services of towns and cities nearby. There are two notable ride sharing programs servicing rural communities in Canada. Nelson and Area Rideshare, services populations of less than 10,000 people in the Nelson, British Columbia area (Kootenay Rideshare, 2012). The second program is Vertigogogo which services Ville de Morin, Quebec. It began as a pilot project for touring cyclists but due to increase of popularity, now serves tourists as well as residents (Gouvernement of Canada, 2010).

**Transit routes that connect several rural communities at once will have increased ridership.**



Figure 3: Paved pathways encourage active transportation.



Figure 4: On-road cycling infrastructure provides a safe cycling environment.

Community run services such as handi-transit or volunteer shuttle services are effective ways of ensuring everyone has access to amenities outside of their town. In cases where older adults can no longer operate a vehicle, this may prompt intergenerational interactions where younger people act as chauffeurs (2).

### Transit oriented development

Transit oriented development (TOD) is a well-known concept in Europe but is relatively new to Canada. TOD is a densely built area that contains mixed use buildings including services, amenities and residences. These developments are pedestrian oriented emphasizing the use of public transit. Transit oriented development places “transit close enough to people’s homes and workplaces [which] reduces their reliance on cars” (Loveseed, 2005). Rural towns would benefit from this development by reducing dependence on personal automobiles. TOD is an age-friendly planning practice.

Mont-Saint-Hilaire located 40km south of Montreal, is a successful example of a rural transit-oriented development. The town is connected to Montreal via a commuter rail system provided by Agence métropolitaine de transport (Loveseed, 2005).

### Active transportation

**Pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure is essential to enabling people to remain healthy and active.**

The majority of rural towns are auto-oriented, as a result residents are not walking or cycling as transportation. There may be a lack of infrastructure to support active transportation. In rural towns where there is a network of sidewalks, they are discontinuous or are poorly maintained, posing safety issues to pedestrians (2,8) (Government of Canada, 2010). This leads to health issues such as obesity and lack of mobility in older adults. An alternative needs to be provided to automobile use. Whether it is for long trips to neighbouring communities or short ones within town, active transportation infrastructure is essential to connect communities and encourage people to remain healthy (5).

Saanich, B.C. has improved their active transportation system by the addition of cycling infrastructure, sidewalks and trail systems throughout the community. Due to the improved infrastructure, there has been an increase of residents commuting by bicycle (Government of Canada, 2012).