

## Seniors on the Move

Extracted from: <http://alliesinaging.ca/get-involved/seniors-on-the-move/>

Seniors on the Move has a Steering Committee which meets monthly and plays a large role in both programming and public policy discussions.

There are quarterly Seniors Advisory Committee meetings with seniors across the region to better understand their transportation needs and test possible solutions to filling gaps.

### Under Discussion

Many initiatives have helped make Metro Vancouver more accessible to seniors needing to get around. For example, all buses are now accessible to mobility devices, and kneeling buses make it easier for seniors to get on the bus. Senior-serving agencies provide rides from volunteer drivers. More needs to be done to make our communities inclusive for everyone. Priority issues:

**Built environment**– small improvements can make big changes for the safety of many seniors and others with limited mobility or wheeled mobility devices. Curb cuts, longer pedestrian crossing times, leading pedestrian intervals, benches, washrooms, covered bus shelters, good street lighting, shorter walking distances to transit stops- these need to be planned in future projects, but also need to be retrofitted to our existing communities.

**Systems-level change**– Increased coordination in the sector needs to occur between volunteer ride programs, community-based and formal transportation sectors, and health agencies and the transportation sector.

**Driver cessation**– For many seniors who have driven to get around for most of their lives, making the decision to use other forms of transportation is a hard decision. With it comes a very real risk of social isolation if not planned for properly. Of course, alternative transportation options need to be vastly improved, but planning for the decision to drive less needs to occur, earlier.

**Improvements to HandyDART**– TransLink recently commissioned a review of HandyDART, Metro Vancouver’s public transit system for people with disabilities, and adopted many recommendations from its Stakeholder Advisory Committee. We’re watching the process closely and providing our own feedback from the perspective of seniors, particularly those who might not be using HandyDART due to current service restrictions. We are supportive of many of the initiatives recommended, including a “family of services” approach, but we believe it needs to include more than HandyDART with conventional transit, such as seniors shuttles.

### Initiatives

**Capacity building in the community sector**- Partner agencies are offering rides to seniors to keep them connected to the community. With limited resources, priority is often given to medical transportation. Working to reduce social isolation means increasing opportunities for social connectedness – and getting seniors out and about.

Coordination, developing and sharing best practices– Many seniors agencies operate volunteer ride programs, but face limitations in how many rides they can provide due to a lack of volunteer drivers, uncertainty due to a lack of coherent information around insurance and training, and referrals from coordinated efforts across transportation providers. Therefore, we are developing new volunteer driver recruitment and training strategies by combining best practices and trying out new methods, such as partnering with Modo the Car Co-op to provide access to cars for volunteers. We are also working with ICBC to develop an insurance toolkit for managing risk, and beginning to coordinate with other volunteer ride providers.

Transit Training– With the generous support of TransLink, we’re testing out transit training workshops for seniors. In particular, we’re working on building the knowledge and understanding of seniors to increase their use of transit, but also help others use the system effectively. Sessions currently include online trip-planning, safety overviews, Compass card review, transit station visits, and how to transfer between modes within the system.

Bus-Sharing– Expanding the Bus Co-op from Langley to Metro Vancouver. Three of our project partners have joined the co-op and now have access to a 12 person shuttle bus to help transport seniors.