

Building Communities for Healthy Aging:

The Role of Mobility, Transportation, and Technology

Older persons already make up more than 20% of Canada's population and nearly 30% of Japan's. Yet the transportation, technology, and communities they rely on too often aren't designed to support them. Because mobility shapes access to healthcare, physical activity, and social connection, the stakes are high: without action, mobility challenges risk contributing to poorer health outcomes, increased dementia risk, and rising healthcare and economic costs.

This piece is a companion to CABHI's latest AgeTech Insights report, *Building Communities for Healthy Aging: The Role of Mobility, Transportation, and Technology*. The report draws on more than 2,300 respondents aged 50+ in Canada and Japan, alongside market intelligence and the latest research and policy evidence. Here, we distill what its findings mean for innovators.



See the full report and infographic

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR INNOVATORS

Mobility isn't one problem, it's a series of connected ones.

Get mobility right, and you're not just solving a transportation problem. You're investing in healthy aging and cognitive health at a population scale. These five opportunities move from the individual's own transition and daily experience, to the communities and systems around them, to the technologies now shaping decisions at a population level. Along the way, they hold two things in tension: meeting the mobility needs of individual older persons, and stewarding the infrastructure, budgets, and systems that must serve entire populations sustainably. The strongest innovations will do both.



1 Rethink mobility around life's transitions, not just the driver's seat.

As populations age, there is a growing market for solutions that help older persons drive safely for longer while also supporting a smooth transition to other forms of transportation when driving is no longer preferred or possible. The real opportunity spans the whole arc: helping people drive safely for longer, and making what comes next feel like a new kind of independence, not a loss.

Innovation opportunities:

- + Extend safe driving with driver-assistance systems, in-vehicle health and safety monitoring, and navigation systems designed for age-related needs.
- + Ease the shift away from driving with services like on-demand community shuttles, volunteer driver programs, concierge transportation, and tools that bridge driving with public transit and ride-sharing.
- + Recognize older persons as a defined consumer market, designing products and services around their specific needs, preferences, and purchasing power.

2 Use technology to make communities easier to navigate.

Mobility extends beyond transportation. The ability to find accessible routes, navigate the built environment, and connect with nearby services can determine whether older persons are able to participate fully in their communities and maintain their independence.

Innovation opportunities:

- + Build tools that provide real-time accessibility information, such as accessible entrances, elevator outages, sidewalk conditions, and other barriers that can affect a journey.
- + Connect older persons with nearby healthcare, recreation, community services, and other resources that support independent living.
- + Tap into the longevity market: as this population grows, so does its economic influence and demand for products and services that support mobility, accessibility, and independent living.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR INNOVATORS



3

Turn fragmented systems into one connected experience.

Transportation, healthcare, and community services often operate separately, leaving older persons to navigate multiple systems to meet their everyday needs, system by system, appointment by appointment. Innovators have an opportunity to reduce this complexity by connecting services around the individual.

Innovation opportunities:

- + Develop Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) platforms that integrate public transit, ride-hailing, community transportation, and payment systems.
- + Link mobility with healthcare directly – coordinating transportation with medical appointments, or combining trip planning, scheduling, accessibility information and community resources in one place.
- + Prioritize interoperability and affordability so that technologies work across providers and adapt to diverse mobility needs.

4

Turn co-design and universal design into a market advantage.

Older persons are not a single, uniform user group. Mobility technologies must accommodate a wide range of physical, sensory, cognitive, and technological abilities. Involving older persons throughout product development improves usability, trust, and adoption, while reducing the need for costly redesign after launch.

Innovation opportunities:

- + Co-design with older persons throughout every stage – design, development, and evaluation – so products reflect real-world needs, not assumptions.
- + Prioritize intuitive interfaces, clear instructions, minimal cognitive demand, and accessibility features.
- + Design for a broader market: universal design benefits older persons, people with disabilities, care partners, and anyone experiencing temporary or changing mobility needs.



5

Build artificial intelligence (AI) that empowers decisions, not one that replaces them.

As AI becomes more integrated into transportation systems, the bigger opportunity isn't replacing human decision-making, it's helping people make mobility decisions with greater ease and confidence.

Innovation opportunities:

- + Prioritize AI-enabled navigation, trip planning, and decision-support tools that inform travel decisions while maintaining control over their journeys.
- + Build trust through transparency and user control, including recommendations that can be easily understood and overridden.
- + Combine personalization with intuitive interfaces, accessible design, and access to a real person, to strengthen confidence and long-term adoption.

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Based on a report developed in collaboration between CABHI and:



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