



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 policymakers.



See the full report and infographic

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR POLICYMAKERS

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 policies will do both.



1 Plan for mobility across the life course, including the transition from driving.

Driving remains an important source of independence for many older persons, but mobility needs can change over time, and policy still tends to treat the moment someone stops driving as a personal problem rather than a public one. Policy should support safe driving for as long as it's viable, while ensuring that transitioning away from driving does not mean losing access to healthcare, essential services, employment, or community life.

Policy opportunities:

- + Pair licensing assessments, driver education, and road safety initiatives with continued investment in accessible public transit, community transportation, and age-friendly community design.
- + Build population aging into long-term infrastructure and fiscal planning. Investing in accessible mobility can support independence and aging in place while helping reduce pressure on healthcare, long-term care, and other public services.
- + Support proactive transition planning — such as driving-cessation conversations built into routine healthcare or licensing renewal — so the shift away from driving happens by design, not by crisis.

2 Treat age-friendly communities as an investment in healthy aging.

Where people live can determine how easily they remain independent and engaged as they age. Accessible housing, walkable neighbourhoods, safe pedestrian infrastructure, reliable public transportation, and nearby community services can support aging in place while enabling older persons to continue contributing socially and economically.

Policy opportunities:

- + Invest in accessible housing, walkable neighbourhoods, safe pedestrian infrastructure, reliable public transportation, and integrated community services, targeting investment where infrastructure gaps are greatest.
- + Incorporate healthy-aging outcomes, including employment, volunteering, caregiving, and preventive healthcare, into cost-benefit models for transportation investment decisions, so that funding reflects the full value of enabling older persons to participate fully in the economy and community life. Adopt age-friendly community standards and require regular accessibility audits of transportation and public infrastructure, so that gaps are tracked and addressed, not just assumed.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR POLICYMAKERS



3 Connect transportation, healthcare, and community services around the person.

Fragmented transportation, healthcare, and community services can make everyday mobility complex, particularly when people must navigate separate providers, booking systems, and payment systems.

Policy opportunities:

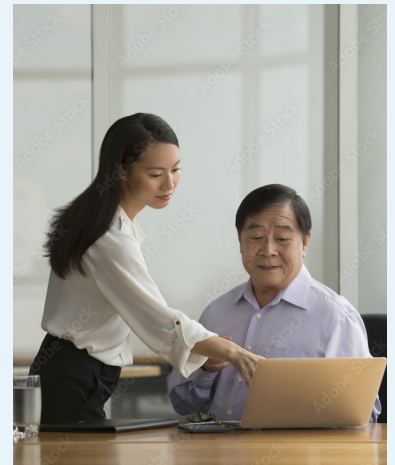
- + Support interoperability through common data standards and joint procurement across municipalities, transportation agencies, healthcare providers, and community organizations.
- + Make affordability a core component of mobility policy. Digital tools can make transportation easier to navigate, but their benefits will remain out of reach if the transportation options themselves are unaffordable.
- + Invest in integrated and affordable mobility systems that make it easier for older persons to access healthcare and community services while supporting more efficient, sustainable, and person-centred models of care as demand for health and long-term care grows.

4 Make co-design and universal design standard practice.

Transportation systems and technologies are more likely to be accessible, trusted, and usable – and less likely to require costly retrofits – when the people who rely on them are involved in their design from the outset.

Policy opportunities:

- + Embed co-design requirements into public procurement, funding, and evaluation processes for transportation technologies and services.
- + Engage older persons and care partners from diverse communities throughout planning, development, implementation, and evaluation.
- + Promote universal design standards, accessible digital services, and digital literacy initiatives so that transportation systems remain usable across different physical, sensory, cognitive, and technological abilities and throughout the life course.

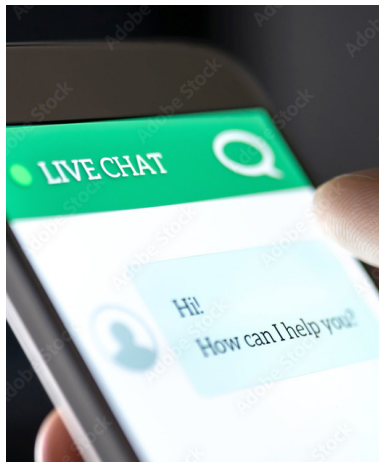


5 Build trust and accountability into AI-enabled mobility from the start.

As AI becomes more commonly integrated into transportation and mobility systems, policy frameworks will need to ensure that innovation does not come at the expense of accessibility, privacy, transparency, or user control.

Policy opportunities:

- + Establish governance frameworks and standards for transparency, accessibility, privacy, and oversight in AI-enabled mobility systems, covering both initial approval and ongoing use.
- + Require ongoing monitoring and public reporting on the accessibility and equity impacts of AI-enabled mobility tools.
- + Invest in digital literacy that goes beyond basic use, helping older persons develop informed trust in AI-enabled tools, recognizing their limitations, spotting when a recommendation seems off, and knowing how to get human support when it does.



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Ensures end users remain central to how agetech priorities are identified, developed, and advanced

Based on a report developed in collaboration between CABHI and:



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