

## Older and Wiser: Why good transit matters for North Shore seniors

How do you get around? A 2025 report is highlighting the urgent need for improved and accessible transit options for North Shore seniors

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North Shore transit riders wait for their bus in West Vancouver. | Mike Wakefield, North Shore News files

How do you usually get around in your community? Do you drive, take public transit, use ride shares or taxis, walk, or bike? Or are you finding that many of these options are becoming harder to use?

Driving remains a preferred mode of transportation for many older adults, especially on the North Shore with its challenging, hilly terrain. However, research shows that reliance on driving declines with age.

According to the Office of the Seniors Advocate, the proportion of British Columbians holding an active driver's licence decreases steadily in later life, and by 2018, more than half of residents aged 85 and older had stopped driving.

The Office of the Seniors Advocate emphasized though that the loss of driving independence carries significant social consequences. Older adults who can no longer drive and who cannot rely on public transit or taxis, face a much higher risk of social isolation.

Older people may also find with declining cognitive abilities and mobility, using other forms of transportation can be difficult.

Also, there are other barriers that seniors experience, not always equally. According to a recent report undertaken by Lionsview Seniors Planning Society, *On the Move: Mapping Senior Transportation Gaps on the North Shore*, "seniors experiencing disability, cognitive change, financial insecurity, social isolation, or living in geographically underserved neighbourhoods often face compounded challenges when accessing transportation."

So why does this matter? Essentially, good transportation options are crucial for seniors to stay active, independent and involved in their communities. Moreover, decent transportation options must be accessible and easy to use.

But what about when we cease to be able to move around easily and safely. Are there good options available? The *On the Move* report says that despite the range of transportation services available, many older adults continue to face barriers that make travel difficult or unreliable. Older adults face barriers like mobility limits, cost, reliability and internalized ageism. Some feel "not old enough" or hesitate to ask for help, not wanting to be a burden. Raising awareness and normalizing support could help more seniors access the services they need.

What can be done? A respondent to a survey that formed the basis of the *On the Move* report said, "Grants and public funding need to be made available, so when a senior is ready to 'hang up their keys,' they have options".

In 2025 grants were made available for transportation programs on the North Shore by the Ministry of Health via the United Way of BC. Five organizations benefited from this funding allowing them to "help stabilize and sustain essential transportation services and, for some organizations, enabled the continued operation of shuttle programs."

Of course, while this funding has been essential to sustaining current service levels, rising demand means additional resources are needed to expand capacity and reach more older adults. Ensuring that seniors can get to a medical appointment, a recreation program, or even to church with ease isn't optional on the North Shore, it's a necessity.

The report argues that to create a viable transportation system for the North Shore, "Long term planning should aim to embed community-based transportation into broader age-friendly and accessibility planning across the North Shore, ensuring solutions evolve alongside the needs of older adults."

The *On the Move: Mapping Senior Transportation Gaps on the North Shore* can be found at: [On the Move](#)

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