

Living the Questions
Listening to Leaders Session
Transportation & Transit
June 28, 2006

Living the Questions

The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging is a collaborative of thirteen leading nonprofit organizations with statewide service and advocacy presence. Formed in 2004 to advocate for home and community-based services the Council has met with community leaders to raise awareness of and discuss the demographic, social and economic issues related to the aging of the Baby Boom generation through an initiative called *Living the Questions*.

Through a series of *Listening to Leaders* dialogue sessions, the Council is gathering information about community aging issues as viewed by foundations, housing and community developers, civic groups, education officials, transportation representatives, faith communities, disability organizations, business and industry, and others.

More information about the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging can be obtained from www.mnlcoa.org.

Background

Twenty-three transportation and transit planners and leaders participated in a *Listening to Leaders* session convened by Mark Hoisser, President of DARTS and held in West Saint Paul. Participants represented both aging and disability transportation providers from metropolitan, rural and statewide organizations such as the Minnesota Department of Transportation and Metropolitan Council. Overwhelmingly participants felt that transportation needed to be incorporated into a broader health and human initiatives.

Common themes of the session included the importance of coordination to maximize effectiveness and efficiency; the role of providers in educating the public about systems; folding transportation and transit into broader human service initiatives; and focusing on an asset based model when working on problems.

Key Questions

1. Current transit systems are arranged for a scheduled site to site transport. How will shifting demographics, many of which are unknown, affect the need for transportation and transit systems in the future?

2. How can we provide supportive mentorship to young leaders in transportation who will “carry the torch”?
3. Can models be developed in transportation that include the significance of economic models such as a decreasing tax base?
4. As the dispersion of trips increase in transportation as urbanization increases how can we refocus our transportation needs based on increased geographic development?
5. If an individual chooses to live in a community that does not offer transportation or transit services, what are the consequences for the personal responsibility and choice of this decision?
6. How can we as service providers and planners educate consumers about transportation and transit systems to maximize effectiveness? In addition, how can providers and planners educate themselves and policy makers about the changing demographics and needs?

Other Questions

- How will changing family systems affect transportation and transit infrastructures?
- To minimize risk, will the health insurance industry shift transportation costs back to the individual?
- How do we effectively blend funding streams to maximize effectiveness and efficiency?
- How do we serve individuals that don't have finances to pay for transportation?
- Will baby boomers use transit systems as they currently exist when they no longer have a need for transportation to and from the workplace?
- What is the impact of transit fare increases on low income seniors?

The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging exists to coalesce the resources and power of senior consumer, advocacy, social and health service organizations, and the individuals we serve and represent, to boldly advocate for and achieve positive system changes for elders in Minnesota.
www.mnlcoa.org