

## **AGING AMERICANS: STRANDED WITHOUT OPTIONS**

### FACT SHEET

- More than half of all non-drivers aged 65 and over stay at home in a given day, often because they do not have transportation options.
- By the year 2025, 60 million Americans will be 65 or older. Our transportation network must be prepared to meet the needs of a rapidly changing America where 1 in 5 people will be age 65 or older.
- Because of a lack of transportation options, most Americans rely on driving to get where they need to go. Physical limitations from aging force many older Americans to stop driving which often leaves them isolated and without a means of transportation.
- Only one half of Americans 65 or older have access to public transportation to meet their daily needs. Older Americans living in sparsely populated geographical areas, including rural and small town America, are disproportionately affected by isolation because they have even fewer transportation options than seniors living in denser geographic areas.
- Older persons who do not drive take an estimated 310 million trips per year on public transportation. Research shows older people use public transportation when it is available, and access to goods and services reduces isolation among older people and increases their mobility.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that maintaining current public transportation services would require a 30 percent increase in current funding levels. A Cambridge Systematics study estimated that improving services would require more than twice the current funding levels.
- Congress must pass long-term surface transportation legislation with increased funding for public transportation, and pedestrian and bicycle programs this year. Recently, The Senate passed a bill with \$318 billion in funding and the House passed a version with \$275 billion in funding. Both Houses of Congress are expected to meet and work out a compromise between the two bills in late April so a new funding level agreement can be passed and signed into law.
- The House and Senate bills both increase funding for the Section 5310 Specialized Transportation Program for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities. Congress should *substantially* increase funding to help meet the growing mobility needs of older Americans. Further, Congress should adopt the House position, preserving Section 5310 as a free-standing program, and permitting operating costs as an allowable expense.
- Both the House and Senate bills create a new program, the New Freedoms Initiative, which would provide transportation for individuals with disabilities, beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The House provides a separate program; the Senate combines New Freedom Initiative with the Section 5310 program.
- Congress should support the new federal Safe Routes to School program in order to fund pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements at the House level of \$1 billion over 6 years.
- Federal, state and local governments must:
  - Increase investment in public transportation to meet the growing needs of America's aging population.
  - Work with communities and transportation agencies to integrate seniors into future planning to ensure transportation infrastructure meets their needs.
  - Introduce and support transportation policies that make streets and surrounding areas safer for walking, bicycling and driving.
  - Preserve the ability of states and local governments to spend federal transportation dollars on public transportation, pedestrians and bicycle infrastructure.