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SUMMARY

Staying Mobile

A guide to mobility management in ageing societies



About AENEAS

Attaining Energy-Efficient Mobility in an Ageing Society (AENEAS), an EU project that ran from August 2008 to May 2011, was co-funded by the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) under the Intelligent Energy Europe programme (ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent).

AENEAS's mandate was to apply "soft" measures (e.g. training, individualised travel marketing, awareness raising and events) in five European cities to encourage and enable older people to use alternatives to the private car. The project also transferred knowledge to other cities, forging links among those working in the field in Europe and beyond. Training materials and good practice case studies in English, Basque, Danish, French, German, Polish and Spanish can be downloaded from the AENEAS website (www.aeneas-project.eu).

The present brochure is a summary of the AENEAS publication *Staying Mobile: A guide to mobility management in ageing societies*, which was produced to highlight exemplary programmes and projects that help older citizens to remain active and mobile. The guide is aimed at practitioners and stakeholders who are thinking of implementing similar measures and can be downloaded from <http://www.aeneas-project.eu/?page=download>.

Who is old?

In terms of mobility behaviour, there is a clear difference between the working population and retirees. AENEAS focused on the latter group, also using as a point of reference the age of 50, at which point the share of retired people in Europe roughly equals the share of those still working. A second line was drawn at 75, the age at which people's mobility tends to become restricted. Thus the AENEAS target group was broadly divided into the "young old" (50-75 years) and the "older old" (those over 75). Physical age, however, was used mainly for orientation: personal abilities and preferences in mobility behaviour were the deciding factors.

General trends and challenges

The impacts of ageing societies and demographic change on urban transport and mobility have been discussed for some time across Europe and beyond. Most local authorities and transport providers are aware of the challenges. However, due to the heterogeneity of the target group, many practitioners and decision makers are uncertain as to the most appropriate approach.

TOP MARKS: Graduates of a training programme in Manchester (UK) collect their completion certificates.
Photo: CTC

TWO'S COMPANY: Travelling is more fun with a friend.
Photo: Gábor Bodó

Today's ageing baby boomers clearly cannot be compared with their parents. Life expectancy and levels of overall fitness are higher. Many older people today are still active, forward looking and keen to participate in society. Car ownership has risen among the elderly — especially women — in Europe. Today's senior citizens acquired their driving licences at the age of 18 and most have never used public transport, which has a particularly poor image among this group. Growing old today often means ageing in suburbia, but urban patterns are also changing: in suburban areas many smaller shops and services are closing or moving to new retail centres, making access to everyday items limited without a car. All of this makes today's seniors very different from earlier generations, and makes them a demanding target group.

Accessibility and mobility management

Accessibility includes more than physical access to transport services: it implies a basic level of trust and safety. The transport system — including walking, cycling and innovative concepts such as car sharing — needs to be easy to reach, easy to use and attractive to all, old and young, disabled and able-bodied.

Public transport companies must address the wants and needs of senior citizens as a legitimate market segment. Most changes to date have focused on physical accessibility, with the introduction of low-floor vehicles and other technical features. Older people have simply been grouped with physically impaired passengers.

Mobility management employs soft measures such as marketing, communication, training and the coordination of activities to change travellers' attitudes, to influence behaviour, to promote sustainable transport, and to address the demand for car use.

As these behaviour-related measures do not usually require large financial investments, they are a cost-effective alternative to making changes in infrastructure.

To date, older people have not been a focus of mobility management, largely because, until recently, their mobility behaviour was relatively stable and less car focused and they were a "captive audience". However, this target group has proved difficult to reach through standard marketing. Producers of television commercials, for example, consider 49 as the upper age limit of their effective reach. Promoting sustainable mobility among older people therefore requires highly developed communication skills and an attractive product. AENEAS's aim is to create multi-modal older travellers: ones who are independent and flexible in their mobility choices and who have sustainable alternatives to the private car.





Needs and expectations of older people

Older people's needs and expectations cannot be met by changes in infrastructure alone. Older people desire independent living, active and healthy ageing, participation in society, an easy-to-use transport system that provides quality service, safety and security, and support when they need it. At the same time, they dislike being talked down to and associated with negative images of ageing.

Projects involving innovative soft approaches targeting older people have been developed in recent years across Europe. These projects recognise the heterogeneity and relevance of the target group. They involve organisations already working with older people and do not address senior citizens using the term "older people".

Implementation of good practices

This section describes briefly the seven chapters of AENEAS's *Staying Mobile* guide, which highlight many of the innovative projects taking place in Europe around seniors and mobility.

Enabling travel by public transport

Travel training helps older passengers to make independent use of public transport confidently, safely and without fear. It introduces them to new technologies such as e-ticketing, or less-known features such as pram buttons. The majority of schemes focus on bus travel, since older people have particular problems entering or alighting from these vehicles or walking inside them. The introduction of ticketing machines or

e-ticketing, and the rising number of accidents involving older people in public transport, are typical triggers for initiating a public transport training scheme.

Benefits:

- Older people feel safer, more secure and confident when using public transport.
- People are helped to stay independent for as long as possible.
- The number of accidents involving older people in public transport vehicles is reduced.
- The image of the public transport operator is improved, and its ridership numbers increase.

Target audience: Older people who are still able to travel independently but who do not know how to use public transport and/or do not feel safe.

Key partners: Public transport operators and associations, local authorities and public transport authorities, and older people's interest groups

Other stakeholders: Local politicians, the media, health services and public authorities.

Enabling cycling

Older people cycle less, and in some European countries no cycling culture existed when today's senior citizens were young. While there are clearly physical limits to cycling, training may contribute to prolonging skills, and, in a virtuous circle, cycling

ON BOARD: Bus passenger training is a good way to orient seniors to new ticketing systems and other on-board technologies. Photo: Salzburg AG

STEADYING HAND: A Paris programme offers personal escorts for public transport trips.
Photo: Compagnons du Voyage

will help senior citizens to remain healthy. Age-specific analysis has shown that the relative benefits of cycling are highest among older age groups.

Benefits:

- Older people gain confidence cycling and enjoy greater flexibility and independence.
- Opportunities are created for group activities, overcoming social isolation.
- Training sessions — on traffic rules, appropriate clothing and riding skills — contribute to road safety as well as the safety of the individual cyclists.
- Regular cycling improves health, even among those with chronic diseases.
- A Cycling England study revealed that the economic benefits of encouraging cycling among those aged between 45 and 64 are approximately EUR 270 per year per cyclist.

Target audiences: Older people who are still active but who have problems using standard bicycles; senior citizens who feel challenged by today's traffic; younger senior citizens who suffer from chronic diseases due to low levels of physical activity; and younger senior citizens who never learned to cycle.

Key partners: NGOs or specialised organisations to implement the cycling training; cycling or environmental groups or agencies specialised in sports and health to participate in the organising team; and the local municipality and those experienced in working with older people.

Other stakeholders: Social or community centres, local bicycle clubs, health services, bicycle retailers, renters and manufacturers, the police, physiotherapists, bicycle mechanics, and the local media.

Mobility events and campaigns

Many lifestyle-related diseases can be prevented simply by incorporating regular physical activity into older people's lives. Campaigns and programmes can encourage the use of active and sustainable modes of transport in leisure-time activities. Rather than training people in a skill, such campaigns motivate people by offering programmes that are interesting and social, while at the same time incorporating physical activity.





Benefits:

- Road safety campaigns make drivers aware of older people as pedestrians and of their specific needs. Older people are given tips on road safety, encouraging them to walk and explore their neighbourhood.
- Mobility days give public transport providers a chance to show they care about their loyal customers, and to promote public transport as an energy-efficient mobility mode.
- Walking campaigns can lead to the emergence of new local walking clubs that can carry on the walking training.
- Senior citizens' maps are far more useful if they are created with input from participating senior citizens.

Target audience: Specific groups can be targeted for particular events or tours. Even those with mobility problems can benefit from tailored physical (and social) activities. Cycling campaigns should focus on those who cycled regularly in the past and who still feel relatively confident on a bicycle. Road safety campaigns should target drivers of all ages. City planners can be targeted if encouraging walking through improving facilities in urban areas.

Key partners: Activities can be spearheaded by city departments, senior citizens' organisations, road safety organisations, health-focused organisations or NGOs.

Other stakeholders: Doctors or physical therapists; road safety organisations or police road safety units; (volunteer)

leaders for walking or cycling groups; historical societies, nature societies or other groups that can set up themed walks; organisations that provide mobility-related information or services; and driving schools.

Bus driver training

More senior citizens than ever before hold a driving licence. Public transport providers must therefore make their services attractive to those who have the option of driving. If elderly passengers frequently have bad experiences on buses, they will stop travelling by bus altogether, resulting either in them losing mobility and independence, or in them putting another car on the road. In either case, the transportation company loses a paying customer. Conversely, bus drivers who make a good impression instantly improve the image of the entire company.

Benefits:

- Bus companies get fewer complaints (and more compliments) from passengers who travel with well-trained bus drivers.
- Accident rates go down when drivers understand and accommodate the challenges that older passengers face (e.g. giving senior citizens time to find a seat before leaving a stop).
- A public transport provider's image can be improved significantly by improving services to senior citizens.

WIRED GENERATION: Internet courses in Munich (above) show how passengers can get travel information.

Photo: Green City



Target audience: Bus drivers.

Key partners: Training programmes can be initiated by the municipality, senior citizens organisation, non-profit society or the public transport operator itself. Whoever initiates it, the public transport operator must fully support such an undertaking if it is to succeed.

Passenger support services in public transport

Using public transport can be challenging for the uninitiated of any age, and fears for personal safety may also put people off using buses or trams. However, with the proportion of older people increasing, public transport providers must recognise the need to provide them with services that enable them to travel safely and confidently. This includes helping them enter and exit vehicles; ensuring they have seats; accompanying them on a practice journey; providing information and tips on schedules, connections and tickets; and showing them how to use ticket machines. If elderly passengers know that vehicles are clean, that support is available, and that they can be certain of encountering helpful and friendly people, they are more likely to use public transport.

PLATFORM FOR CHANGE: In Cologne's PatentTicket scheme (above), public transport pass holders are encouraged to introduce their friends to the service. Photo: Birgit Kasper

Benefits:

- The public transport provider's image can be improved significantly, leading to revenue growth.
- Through their on-the-ground experience, assistants can help public transport providers identify gaps in services.
- Young people providing help to senior citizens set an example for others.
- Personalised tips on how to optimise their use of the system greatly increase senior citizens' satisfaction with public transport services.
- Training and awareness raising among young people on the needs of older people are lessons for a lifetime.

Target audience: Older people who are physically able to get around on their own but who rarely use public transport, have difficulties in doing so, or simply need some assistance. One programme is unique in targeting children, who often tend to be unaware of the needs of those around them.

Key partners: Programmes can be initiated by a municipality, a senior citizens' organisation, an NGO, or community volunteers. However, without the support of the public transport provider, such projects stand little chance of success. Schools and youth centres are important partners in awareness-raising programmes aimed at young bus passengers.

Other stakeholders: The media are important for information dissemination and awareness raising.

Individualised travel marketing

Individualised travel marketing materials provide information about transportation choices. Creating such materials does not (necessarily) require the development of new mobility programmes: the main task is to gather information on existing active mobility services, training, seminars or activities relevant to older citizens, as well as providing personal contact, information and training (where necessary) on the most suitable options for each individual.

Benefits:

- Promotes valuable existing programmes, projects and services rather than creating new, competing ones.
- People talk about the project and share the handbook with friends and relatives.
- A positive image is created for the city as a “messenger” bringing news to its citizens.
- Although the handbook is aimed at senior citizens, the information can be re-used for other audiences.
- Increases the customer base for public transport.
- Builds relationships among existing service providers, thus strengthening local networks.

Target audience: Those around retirement age and/or relatively active senior citizens (between 60 and 75 years old).

Key partners: NGOs, senior citizens’ group or the city. Support from the city greatly increases the programme’s credibility to the target audience.

Other stakeholders: Environmental groups, public transport providers, the police, and cycling organisations.

Peer-to-peer approaches in public transport

Older people are considered a difficult-to-reach target group in mobility management. Some older people also find it odd to receive training on age-related constraints by a young person. Peer-to-peer approaches take advantage of senior citizens’ understanding of each other’s needs. A recommendation about a monthly bus ticket or car-sharing scheme may be more readily received from a friend than from a marketing brochure.

Benefits:

- An increase in the number of passengers and season ticket holders, including young old people.
- The public transport provider benefits from the skills of its experienced passengers, and peer trainers value a behind-the-scenes look at their local public transport system.
- Older people share a common language and can benefit from one another’s personal experience.
- Most trainers find it rewarding to share their knowledge with their peers and to help them improve their mobility.

Target audience: Peer-to-peer approaches have two main target groups: senior citizens who can explain and promote public transportation to other senior citizens (trainers); and senior citizens who receive information, recommendations and support (trainees).

Key partners: The local public transport authority (possibly) local or regional authorities, a moderator or consultant facilitating the process, and older citizens who act as volunteer trainers or ambassadors.

Other stakeholders: These could include the media and possibly NGOs dealing with sustainable transport.

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