TODAY AND TOMORROW
TRANSFORMING PUBLIC TRANSPORT
FOR AGEING COMMUNITIES

REPORT ON ENGAGING ELDERS IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
Research commissioned by Bay of Plenty Regional Council 2019
Carole Gordon
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PREFACE

“We need to envision a desirable future and start to navigate our way through the transition.”

Peter Mersi. Chief Executive, Ministry of Transport

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council has shown strategic leadership by investing in this first transportation project to engage Elders in the planning of future transportation services.

The research contributes to improving our collective understanding and efforts to shape the future of public transport innovation in livable environments so that Elders may enjoy longevity and age successfully as contributors to sustainability and regional prosperity. The outcomes contribute to meeting the key challenge of population-ageing identified in the Regional Council Land Transport Plan 2018.

Thank you to the Elders, Kaumatua, and Matua, who took part in interviews, neighborhood discussions, fono, community focus groups, the questionnaire and the many phone calls. Thank you for the laughter and the cups of tea.

Congruent with the vision, “Best transport systems for a growing economy and a safe, healthy and vibrant Bay lifestyle for all,” identified in the Regional Public Transport Plan 2018, this project provides a greater understanding of Elder aspirations for policy makers in the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City, Tangata Whenua, NZTA, SmartGrowth, the Western Bay of Plenty sub-region partnerships and community interest groups. It reflects the needs and the diversity of transport challenges that older people experience as they age. The insights shared will serve to inform investment that has long term longevity outcomes.

Further active engagement of Elders in transport planning processes will enable a focus on developing transport improvements that are vital to the liveability of communities. Elders know best what challenges are faced on a daily basis. Participation in decision-making is empowering and significantly contributes to a sense of community belonging, meaning and purpose in later life.

I trust that learning from this project will begin to overcome the socially constructed silencing of Elders in community engagement and decision-making processes. Further that New Zealand policy platforms will recognize the demographic transformation in strategies and funding models, to meet local Elder needs.

The outcomes of this project highlight actions to transform public transport provision to meet growing and ageing populations needs for connectivity within local urban centers and neighborhood communities.

Improving urban transportation connectivity, efficiency and savings through cultivating operational innovation is now vital as our populations in the Bay of Plenty age, budgets are prioritized, and community expectations grow to meet transportation demands that limit congestion, pollution and social deprivation.

Thank you to Amber and Lisa for bringing compassion and enthusiasm to the project.

Carole Gordon.

CGConsulting specialist services in social and political gerontology.

Cover photo acknowledgment: Bay of Plenty Times
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is clear that a profound transformation of the transport system is required to provide a sustainable, integrated, technology led, people focused age-friendly and critically, an accessible public transport service in livable urban environments.

Transport planning is a challenging environment in the Bay of Plenty and Tauranga City. Strategies acknowledge the need to “enable better mobility for all,” to critically link the challenges of bulging urban boundaries, a successful port, growing export market productivity, social inequality, a rapidly ageing population, community aspirations, low utilization of public transport and new government transport funding priorities. There are issues and actions to address.

We have more older people, more houses, more cars and more people needing community services. The research, commissioned by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, to gain insights from mature and older people as key stakeholders in shaping urban mobility, is undertaken in a context of efforts to increase public transport patronage. The project focused on engaging with Elders on transport issues, it canvassed current and future public transport planning issues to further align ‘fit for purpose’ transport provision to the needs of increasing longevity, wellbeing, safety, accessibility and connectivity. Elders have highlighted improvements.

Elder participants, the majority of whom were over 75 years, indicated a preference to drive their own car (74%) while they can, because the public transport environment is not well understood or very accessible. They are keen to use “the bus” if it goes where they want to go. Public transport is the main means of mobility for 22% of participants in this study.

This report is a timely, people focused contribution to Bay of Plenty Regional Council public transportation planning. The qualitative and quantitative enquiry asked a sample of mature, older, and older-old people living in Tauranga, about their current mobility behaviors and experience using public transport. As key stakeholders they were asked about barriers that limit public transport use, infrastructure improvements, possible future technologies.

Participants said that bus travel was not very accessible, that they need a bus service that links to community amenities. Today transport is at a transition point. Climate change imperatives, increasing urbanization and rapid demographic transformation are key drivers of transport policy change. 82% of all NZ household travel is currently by car. Community groups are expressing demands for a future that reflects efficiencies in transport and mobility mode shift in services to enhance environmental values and improve social and economic wellbeing.

Increasing longevity means that multi-modal accessibility must be addressed. While communities will be ‘older’ the nature of ageing is changing. People are healthier, working longer, contributing more and have higher expectations about the quality of products they want and the services they receive. Many older people are not regular public transport users.

Driving is central to the way most New Zealand suburban and regional communities are constructed. For many older people, a driver’s licence is a symbol of independence, freedom and individuality, proof that the threshold to old age has not been crossed. Independence is critical to Elder wellbeing, and transport is critical to independent living.

Transport services and infrastructure provision that plans for Elders today and tomorrow is vital given generational difference, longevity and growing diversity in the ageing process, use of emerging technologies in mobility services and engagement in policy making.
What did elders say?

Elders want to stay connected. They want to use convenient and accessible public transport, often instead of their car. They feel that their needs are unrecognized. Bus services do not go where they want to go.

**A lack of good transport options is a significant barrier to social inclusion and independence.** This study suggests that sincere engagement will increase understanding and expose the outdated social myths about older people that continue to influence discourse and policies, thereby serving to constrain lives and the social and economic wellbeing of communities. Action and funding is achievable in current plan review processes and further negotiation with Government and NZTA on transportation transformation.

Understanding the longevity needs of Elders, means understanding accessibility.

- Bus size and design, signage, low floor fleet, comfort and safety, accommodating mobility walkers, driver behavior.
- The bus environment, route, safety, footpaths, crossings and bus shelter locations
- Joining up options e.g. park and ride, connectivity to urban shopping, medical services.
- Care and respect, appropriate marketing and communication and community awareness.
- Co-design. “We are not listened to.” Ensuring inclusive community-based Elder engagement on planned changes, transport system design and delivery, particularly infrastructure investment and walkability.
- Accessibility can be enhanced as mobility options and innovation in autonomous travel is initiated. Public transport improvements will benefit future generations.

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**What did Elders say about public transport?**

Our research survey and engagement told us that they seek:

- Better public transport infrastructure particularly bus shelters, seating, signage footpath safety.
- Connectivity to places they want to go
- To share their views and be listened to.
- Single routes with no transfers
- Improved bus accessibility and comfort
- Smaller more convenient buses or community shuttles. bus to Airport
- Courtesy and kindness
- Drivers who know the route
- Park and ride
- All time access to Super Gold Card
- Readable bus signage and timetables.
- Better management of disruptions
- Safety and security

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“Today’s decisions and investments will shape our cities of the future. Public transport could make our cities better places to live, while making mobility cheaper, safer, more accessible and better for the environment. But we can’t wait thirty years for that to happen.”

Peter Mersi 2018. Public Transport 2045. NZ Ministry of Transport

CGConsulting.2019. Specialist services in social and political gerontology
Advancing Agendas:

A future focused public transport service requires transformative multi-modal transport planning and a tolerant re-thinking of strategies, policies and resource use to provision a transportation plan that is people-centred, inclusive, efficient, safe, affordable, accessible and acceptable.

An urban community linked micro-transit public transport service to better serve vulnerable people without mobility choices, will compliment key transit routes reducing congestion.

TODAY

The insights in this report have potential to enrich a reshaping of a new futures vision for accessible, human-centered mobility as new policy frameworks for regional public transport investment are aligned to regional sustainability, urban development, population-ageing, longevity and livable communities congruent with the Government’s national wellbeing agenda.

TOMORROW

People of all ages will be commuters in a smart City, able to travel with ease. A place where the world’s leading-edge intelligent technologies will enable safe transportation accessibility and policies will ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

THE PROJECT

The purpose and objectives for this project were clear (P17).

The following actions arise to address an improved transport system and infrastructure for lifetime mobility. Key actions are framed to meet the research objectives and to enable clarity.

1. To talk with mature and older people about transport issues.
   What did people say? Elder insights from participants are documented in various sections throughout the report and summarized in the Executive Summary (p4 and 5).

2. To canvas current and future transport planning challenges.
   What current and future transport planning challenges were identified?

3. To understand the perspectives of older and older-old people towards public transport and barriers to increased patronage
   How did Elders perceive public transport services and what barriers limit their patronage?

4. To gain more information to further align ‘fit for purpose’ public transport provision to the needs of increased longevity, wellbeing, safety, accessibility and connectivity.
   What can be changed to better provision public transport services for the wellbeing (safety, accessibility, connectivity) needs of increasing numbers of older people living longer.

Further sections 5, 6 and 7 highlight policy and planning considerations for future development.

Transport and how people move around is also an important part of place-making. Making our urban areas into places where people want to live, work and play requires that thought be given to getting people to the places they want to go, particularly key services, and ensuring communities are walkable.

Ken Tremaine. SmartGrowth 2019
Issues Today

ACTION SUMMARY

1 It is important to acknowledge the strengths and limitations of the current ‘transit’ model.
   - Key transit routes have more frequent bus services.
   - Community connectivity is not well served
   - Infrastructure planning and budgets have failed to deliver
   - Demographic transformation demands new responses
   - Technological advancement offers immediate opportunity.

2 The public is not satisfied with the public transport delivery landscape.

3 New ways of delivering acceptable accessible public transport, increase patronage and deal with congestion and emissions are urgently needed. Transport technologies offer a context for transitioning policy frameworks and delivering community connected services to compliment transit routes.

4 Local governments urgently need to be more deliberate and proactive in delivering a multi-modal transportation platform for active ageing to meet the wellbeing aspirations of Elders through actions in an Age-friendly transport strategy and sincere engagement to meet Government stated wellbeing goals.

5 The timing is right, and Government policy settings are right, to maximise the scope for creating a new transport and mobility culture. Evidence shows that is time for immediate actions to improve public transport patronage with Elders in mind. In effect this then delivers to all.

Considerations

It is recommended that the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Public Transport Committee commit the following actions for immediate attention.

- BOPRC -Recommend to the Bay of Plenty Regional Land Transport Committee, A proposal to: Vision and structure a development plan to introduce a staged complimentary urban, community focussed “micro-transit’ public transport services, For inclusion in the BOPRC 2019/2020 Annual plan and BOPRC LTP.

- BOPRC: Engage with PT Stakeholder Group and others to develop a Bay of Plenty Elder Transport and Mobility Action Plan by 2021.

- TCC / BOPRC/UFTI collaborate with communities to fast track community-based park and ride capacity and installation of key bus clearways.

- Advocate strongly on May 15th to Minister of Transport Twyford for innovation project funding to: grow public transport confidence and patronage by developing a new ‘culture’ of complimentary community focussed transportation provision. To plan and develop a micro- transit model to provide community shuttles for enhancing connectivity to key urban centres and essential medical services.

Further to grow patronage, enhance safety and community connectivity, reduce cost, congestion, emissions and parking demand, by transitioning overtime, to driverless on demand services.
1 – REALIGNMENT

1 What did people say? Elder insights from participants are documented in various sections throughout the report and summarized in the Executive Summary. It is clear that a realignment is necessary to provide community linked transportation that is safe, accessible and connected.

- Planning for people of all ages, particularly the growing ageing sector and their mobility needs should become the key focus of public transport provision.
- A focus on and provision of transport connectivity within urban centers will enable improved wellbeing, reduce social isolation, transportation poverty, congestion and carbon emissions.
- Progressing a transition to transport technologies is vital for people, the environment and economy.

KEY ACTIONS

1.1 Advance provision of community-based shuttle / bus services by 2021 in readiness for progressing a transition to implementing AV transport technologies

1.2 Advocate for a national strategy on Transport Futures and Ageing Communities.

2 - INCREASING PATRONAGE

What current and future transport planning challenges were identified? People said that that wanted to be included, to be considered, respected and heard. They indicated that environments need improving to facilitate their participation in a meaningful life. They were interested in using buses more if routes were convenient and if buses went where they need to go. They prefer to drive a car.

- Public Transport impacts on social inequality, work, health and family outcomes.
- It is essential to provide bus routes to high ageing and vulnerable communities, including communities where Maori, and Pacifica or other ethnicities predominantly live.
- Accessible and enabling transport infrastructure environments are critical to public transport patronage, – footpaths, bus stops shelters, signage, crossings, park and ride priority investment.
- Increasing numbers of elder women survivors living alone are very reliant on safe public transport.
- Bus acceptability is a social construct that requires routes from high ageing densities linked to desired destinations, bus size, signage, marketing.
- Inclusion. Sincere community planning engagement is capacity building thereby facilitating co-creation investment in empowered social capital.

KEY ACTIONS:

2.1 Advance provision of community-based shuttle / bus services by 2021

2.2 Progress and integrate following priority actions.

ACTIONS

1. Age bias. Develop transportation guidelines for contracts, review and training purposes
2. Remove Gold Card time use barriers.
5. Infrastructure. Prioritise park and ride in community locations to enable transit to key destinations. Examine crossing locations or bus route deviation in dense traffic areas.

6. Evaluate and improve prime neighborhood walkability and City high quality footpaths.

7. Convene an Elder/disability group to undertake an accessibility audit of bus contract compliance with NZTA Requirements for urban buses in NZ,(RUB), and signage standards.

8. Replace some large buses with smaller ones to enable access to urban amenities.

9. Engage Elders and social sector agencies in review and priority funding process.

10. Invest in further engagement with Elders in the wider Bay of Plenty high ageing Local Authorities: Katikati, Omokoroa, Waihi Beach, Te Puke, Whakatane, Kawerau, Opotiki.

3 UNDERSTANDING ELDERS

How did Elders perceive public transport services and what barriers limit their patronage?

- Communities in the region will experience high ageing over the next two decades
  - 83% of all population growth in WBoP sub-region is projected to be 65+. Noting actions above.
- People over 65 are not all the same. Everyone ages differently, some with disabilities.
- In a rapidly ageing world, it is vital that transport/urban planners and decisionmakers:
  - Recognise age-bias including generational and individual diversity in later life, and plan for services that align with longevity with more people living longer older.
  - Appreciate and respect a lifetime of accumulated experience and wisdom
  - Commit to transformation of policy platforms

KEY ACTION

BOPRC Invests in Elder engagement in BOP TLA’s to provide a Bay of Plenty wide regional analysis congruent with BOP Regional Public Transport Plan.

ACTIONS

1. BOPRC offers urgent training in understanding age bias and visioning a 100+ life.
2. Talk to Elders everywhere on all transport projects.
3. Set policy age-friendly goal reviews and include principles in standard processes.
4. Advocate for inclusion and social equity.
5. Critique outdated ageing assumptions and processes.
6. Early adoption of MAAS.
7. Strongly advocate on population-ageing transformation policy issues to Government.
4 THE TRANSPORT ENVIRONMENT

What can be changed to better provision public transport services for the wellbeing, purposeful and successful ageing needs of increasing numbers of older people living longer?

- Communities in the region will experience high ageing transitions over the next two decades
- Walkability is a vital component of a multi-modal system
- Community place-making infrastructure is an enabler of access to public transport.
- It is vital that Elders are not ‘left behind’ in regional spatial planning.
- Transport infrastructure is essential to accessibility of public transport.

KEY ACTIONS:

4.1 Assess Western Bay of Plenty Transport Blueprint infrastructure investment planning to maximise Elder connectivity.
4.2 Provision smaller buses in non-peak hours to maximise connectivity to community amenity.
4.3 BOPRC/City/SmartGrowth/UFTI, Strengthen walkability in infrastructure plans (GPS funding)
4.4 BOPRC Develop regional walkability plan guidelines in collaboration with TLA’s
4.5 TCC progress plans to establish a pedestrian only CBD environment

4.1 - SOCIAL EQUITY

- The Bay of Plenty region has high deprivation areas above the national average
- Some Elders live later life in relative poverty that limits adequate food, heating and social connection.
- Poverty is an issue that demands a breadth of policy responses
- Public transport is a service that has traditionally enabled transport choice.
- Vulnerable people and low decile communities need PRORITY access to affordable accessible transport that provides community connectivity.
- A policy shift in public transport provision is required to enable those without mobility choices to access community amenity and work opportunities.

KEY ACTIONS:

4.6. Adapt bus routes to ensure all Maori, low decile and super-ageing communities have public transport connectivity.
4.7 Change bus sizes on some non-peak routes in 2019/20 to enable route adjustment to serve local urban community centre connectivity
4.8 Assess social equity capacity in and implications for the Western Bay of Plenty Transport Blueprint Business cases and the Bay of Plenty Regional Public Transport Plan.
Issues Tomorrow

What can be changed to better provision public transport services for the wellbeing (safety, accessibility, connectivity) purposeful and successful ageing needs of increasing numbers of older people living longer?

Communities can actively determine their own vision for transportation—describing an ideal that reflects their values, concerns and priorities.

Recognising the scale and impact of the demographic transformation, and environmental pressures, plans should continuously be responsive to the adoption of new technologies.

Congruent with global initiatives, Bay of Plenty evidence indicates the need for transformative actions.

5 POLICY REVIEW

- Transport policy and plans need to urgently reflect the dynamics of changing environments and community expectations.
- Super-ageing communities will increasingly become dependent on a reliable age-friendly public transport service that goes where they need, in order to manage their lives.
- Consideration of, and investment in suitable infrastructure provision will be a key enabler of active mobility.
- National NZTA policy guidelines are needed to enable improved Elder access to multi-modal transport

KEY ACTIONS:

5.1 Integrate report actions in proposed Public Transport stage 3 review.
5.2 Review and adapt the Western Bay of Plenty Transport Blueprint
5.3 Review TCC 10 year infrastructure plan to progress age-friendly, accessible CBD City transport centre, bus and ride share interchanges, urban and semi-rural community park and ride sites within 2 years
5.4 Further align the Tauranga Transport Programme Business Case to recognise demographics.
5.5 Fully Integrate outcomes from this report into transformative objectives and actions in the Bay of Plenty Land Transport Plan.

ACTIONS

1. Ensure that Elders are active participants in engagement and consultation processes.
2. SmartGrowth: review settlement pattern structure plans to ensure adequacy of multi-modal elder accessibility.
3. SmartGrowth / BOPRC provide leadership through proactive efforts to include population-ageing impact inclusion in transport and urban planning policy priorities, and responses to GPS statements, with Government.
4. Ensure that the Tauranga Transport Blueprint and Programme Business case, the Western Bay of Plenty Public Transport Blueprint and Bay of Plenty Regional Land Transport Plan include accessibility priorities in public transport infrastructure with connected funding proposals.
5. Draft new demographic transformation policy settings and actions through the BOP Regional Land Transport Plan and the Western Bay of Plenty Public Transport Blueprint.
6 TRANSPORT AGEING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
- The Bay of Plenty is a rapidly super-ageing region.
- Transportation is a vital link to longevity well-being.
- The multi-modal mobility needs of ageing generational diversity should be reflected in a strategy that enhances accessibility requirements and smart mobility technologies.

KEY ACTION:
Develop a Bay of Plenty Elder Transport Action Plan by 2022.

ACTIONS
1. Make connections with global innovation, trends and implementation.
2. BOPRC invest in events / efforts that:
   - Stimulate community transport awareness in value of public transport
   - Expand community understanding of new transport technologies.

7 - EMBRACING INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY - FUTURE MOBILITY
- A clear breadth of vision is required to enable innovation that supports social, economic and environment sustainability in new transport accessible multi-modal environments.
- The region and City can build on global innovation in Smart Cities and transportation. MRCagney recommended action to implement technologies to improve PT patronage.
- Global knowledge of the digital AV transport world is growing. Trials and use are achieving positive transportation outcomes and savings.

KEY ACTIONS:
5.1 BOPRC decides now to begin to transition technology related transport mode environments within 10 years.
5.2 Establish a transport innovation and technology working group to provide advice on developing: a 5-year transport innovation and technologies vision & transition plan
5.3 Advocate strongly with NZTA and Minister of Transport for support to this initiative as an Urban Transport Innovation Project.

“After spending billions to achieve longevity, we have not made equitable investments in the physical infrastructure necessary to ensure healthy independent living in later years.”
INTRODUCTION

This project is a first step in gaining insights from mature and older people as key stakeholders in shaping our future urban mobility.

This project is an unprecedented peek into Tauranga City Elder’s travel behaviors, their travel preferences, perceptions of current provisions, and changes they need to make public transport accessible and attractive as a mobility option. The Bay of Plenty Regional Council recognised that future transport systems and services will play an essential role in supporting independent, healthy ageing and sustainable liveable communities. That it is timely to consider the right strategic framework, where transportation will be critical to unlocking the power of the longevity dividend and environmental responsibility.

The majority of participants in this study were 75 years and over including Elders ninety years of age living in the community. Some 24% were very dependent on ‘their bus.’ Most were experienced in various modes of transport linked to trips and social activities. The majority, 74% of participants prefer to drive their own car, both in City urban environments to meet essential needs, and on longer journeys within New Zealand to visit family or friends.

In the coming decade one in three people walking down the street in Tauranga City will be a person over 65 years. The confluence of increasing longevity and a community desire for environmental responsibility in public policy and personal lifestyles puts transport at the heart of urban matters. There is social and economic sustainability imperative to adapt, plan and deliver age-friendly transportation choices that link to suburban and neighborhood services. Elder New Zealanders have expressed similar mobility desires as they age to those in international studies. Global efforts are transforming transport policy frameworks. Australia, Europe and Singapore strategies reflect core elements of service values and age-friendly delivery to enable safe, accessible and convenient public transport for increasing numbers of people living longer.

The Engaging Older People in Transportation Planning project was initiated because the City and sub-region is experiencing growing traffic congestion and concern over Super Gold Card public transport patronage. Given rapid ageing of community populations there were questions that needed answers.

The issue of transport and an ageing population has been discussed and acknowledged for many years. A 2016 Bay of Plenty Times article addressed urgency and action on the same issues as today. “more needed to be done to reduce long-term traffic congestion by building communities with increased local amenities, which would reduce the need for elderly people to make unnecessary trips. "We need to move past saying this demographic change is happening, to recognising that we have to act with urgency on new outcomes,"5

As more people remain at work, or choose to live in their home past 65, MSD 2019, suggests that “we’ll see greater demand for safe and accessible transport options.”6 Elders today tend to travel more than earlier generations.7 This tendency is expected to continue given improved health. According to global transportation reports, there will be growing demand for transport services involving a high level of perceived security and reliability, and solutions for users with reduced mobility.7

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7 NZ Household Travel Survey 2014
Further, the near futures planning context is one where innovation already offers efficient and accessible autonomous on demand transportation systems. They will increasingly play a vital role in ensuring an active quality of life, where meaningful purpose is linked to social inclusion, ageing-in-place and vital contributions to the family, community, and silver economy.

The purpose of this project is to talk with older people about transport issues.

The research canvased current mobility patterns, service provision and future transport planning challenges. The focus included: encouraging mature and older people to think about their future needs, and their engagement in transport planning processes as an opportunity for their voice and views to be heard.

Elder Diversity

This transportation project is positioned in a context of generational difference increasing longevity and ageing diversity. The key points of this are:

- Increasing longevity, active ageing, social change, chronic conditions and disability, technological innovation, and changing urban living environments create a ‘new world of living’ for the unprecedented and largest cohort of people ever in our City, the region and globally
- It is time for reviewing policy assumptions, and the power of the gerontocracy
- Today is a transformative time where myths and views on being older, and successful ageing have become outdated
- Mature and older people’s desires and expectations of a purposeful and meaningful later life are unfolding. It is not always OK that older people are expected to behave like all other people in the public space. A possible 100 year lifespan opens a door to decades of dreams, wellbeing, generational difference and opportunity
- Insights in this report contribute to an agenda for accessible public transport planning and delivery that will increase patronage and provide sustainable convenient urban connectivity in livable communities
Project Relevance

*All sectors and stakeholders have a role to play in enabling progress towards the creation of healthy and vibrant older societies...*

*World Economic Forum 2016*

Simply, this project reflects a regional positioning of transport and population ageing issues as a high priority agenda, to be included in the 2019 SmartGrowth collaborative Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI). The project will impact on public transport service delivery.

Contextual matters include:

1. The context of three major global megatrends impacting future sustainability: climate change, population-ageing, and technological innovation.
2. A world-wide reshaping of urban mobility.
3. New Zealand Government efforts to reprioritize transportation investment.
5. Bay of Plenty Regional Council commitment to improving public transport as a strategy to achieve modal shift in a changing policy climate and exacerbated Tauranga City congestion and carbon levels concerns.
6. SmartGrowth history of investment in impact of population-ageing research and sub-regional demographic transformation in spatial planning including the FDS\(^\text{17}\). 
7. Bay of Plenty District Health Board strategic planning to maintain the wellbeing of populations with “a higher life expectancy than New Zealand as a whole, despite being relatively more deprived.”
8. Western Bay of Plenty sub-regional community Tauranga Transport Alignment Project and Greater Tauranga, action group focus on transport challenges, public transport alignment to meet urban growth, climate change imperatives, needs of vulnerable people, enhancement of multi-modal mobility options, and a recognition of super-ageing community wellbeing.
9. The importance of responding to the disruption and public feelings caused by a change to bus system routes, contract services and infrastructure inconvenience which impacted on old and young bus dependent patrons.
10. People do not yet have good mobility alternatives to using a car.
11. Life in the city has become increasingly difficult to negotiate traffic congestion, roundabouts, interchanges, merging port trucking traffic, access to shopping centers.
12. Kaumatua have a strong cultural role and responsibility as Elders which demands access to transport and whanau support.
13. Many Elder New Zealanders live alone and strive to live independently. Elder participants in a Successful Ageing Symposium highlighted their worry about losing independence.
14. Outcomes from a Bay of Plenty Regional Council, SUPA-NZ collaboration Silver Economy Symposium and related research. Older people make a significant economic contribution to society. The BOP 2016 silver economy had a value of $2.55 Billion.\(^9\)
15. Waikato University 2014 Active Ageing research where purpose and significance were found to be vital for a meaningful life.\(^10\)
16. Tauranga City Age-friendly Strategy 2013-2023

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17. Global efforts to enhance elder wellbeing, grow silver economies and achieve age-friendly environments, products and services.

18. Access to transport options enables older people to contribute to family and community volunteer organisations.

19. Achieving core Age-friendly City transport goals is interlinked to accessible public transport as a key factor influencing enhanced wellbeing and health budgets.

Simply, this project additionally reflects a regional positioning of transport and population ageing issues as a high priority agenda, to be included in the 2019 Phase 3 of the Regional Council Public Transport Committee and Bay of Plenty Regional Council effort to re-align the Western Bay of Plenty Public Transport Blueprint.

This study and community meeting feedback indicated a vital need for more in-depth consideration of older people who are public transport dependent and their wider needs for multi-modal infrastructural environments.

Optimising transport networks to meet Elder and socially vulnerable people’s needs must become a strategic goal given the demographic transformation and increasing inequality. Despite Tauranga City experiencing booming population growth, Super Gold Card use or patronage data shows minimal increase in the Bay of Plenty. Increased patronage is not relative to the increased structural and numerical ageing of the populations in Tauranga City, Rotorua and wider townships such as Katikati or Kawerau.

Public transport is failing to meet people’s service requirements. Rapidly increasing numbers of older people living longer are an obvious ‘customer’ for public transport services and long term investment. Bay of Plenty regional data in Fig. 1 shows total Gold Card use over a four year period, from 2014/2015 to 2017/2018.

The total number of trips in the BOP increased by 7,872 an average of 1,968 per year. In Tauranga the number grew by 36,501 trips or an average of 9,125 per year or 760 per month.

The concern for public transport trends is noted in a 2019 MR Cagney report. It notes, While the decline of patronage trends can in some part be attributed to external factors such as the economy … the conclusion may be drawn that the current public transport network and service is falling short in terms of its true potential.

Further it suggests that BOPRC should close the gap between current passenger demand and the latent potential to move greater numbers of customers. The Cagney report on use of transport technologies recommends the
application of new and emerging technologies to enhance scheduling/network planning P.28 and to: deliver new types of transit services to customers as the highest priority.

Fig. 2 Bay of Plenty Public Transport monthly public transport trends 2017-2018 (MRCagney)

Source: Bay of Plenty Regional Council (October 2017) Public Transport Patronage Report

The transit model utilised to restructure transport systems in Tauranga City is essentially designed for traffic movement. It does not serve public connectivity to urban centers. The provision of connecting ‘transit’ through interlinked bus hubs has not been satisfactory for Elder bus users. Similar sentiments were expressed as frustrations at community meetings. Older people found change confusing and could no longer get to essential community services. They did not like time consuming waiting in poor transfer environments. Parents were concerned for child safety.

It is absolutely crucial that all transport planning initiatives focus more on people, Elder safety and accessibility considering all parts of the mobility journey from home to destination.

Source: Tauranga City Urban Centres and Public Transport Routes (December 2019)
METHODOLOGY

We want to talk to mature and older people about their transport needs now and their vision for tomorrow’s mobility challenges.

Purpose:
To gain insights from mature and older people as key stakeholders in shaping urban mobility.

Objectives:
1. To talk with mature and older people about transport issues.
2. To canvas current and future transport planning challenges.
3. To understand the perspectives of older and older-old people towards public transport and barriers to increased patronage.
4. To gain more information to further align ‘fit for purpose’ public transport provision to the needs of increased longevity, wellbeing, safety, accessibility and connectivity.

Methodology:
The research methodology utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Both bus users and non-bus users were engaged. Group discussion provided an arena for debate and generating ideas.

- Focused literature review
- Comprehensive Questionnaire
- Interviews to respect the diversity of needs arising in later life.
- Interviews were undertaken with a representative sample of Maori kaumatua.
- The bus service crisis created phone call storytelling.
- Four focus groups involved a range of people across localities within Tauranga City. One fono was held with Pacifica Matua (Elders)

Timeframe:
The project was commissioned in December 2018. Despite being an unsuitable period, connection with Elders began in late January and continued throughout February 2019.

Project Outcomes:
Project timing was structured to allow for outcomes to be integrated in 2019 reviews of public transport policy, planning and service delivery, including the Tauranga Transport Business Case. Further, to be incorporated into the proposed 2019 review of the Bay of Plenty Regional Transport Plan and Local Government Long Term Plan reviews. It is expected that the project will inform the 2019 SmartGrowth Urban Form and Transport Initiative. Outcomes have potential to further:

- Contribute to the health and well-being of older people
- Inform investment in future study on Longevity and Transport within wider Bay of Plenty communities.
- Increase public transport patronage.
- Reduce congestion and emissions
- Improve safety, reduce accidents, injuries and hospital admissions.
- Enhance community connectivity, and strengthen social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- Enable elder independence and give older people a sense of belonging, community care and security.
Transforming Public Transport

- Contribute to Silver Economic development.
- Inform urban bus service connectivity and infrastructure
- Stimulate social justice debate regarding Super Gold Card transport entitlements.
- Align WHO Age-friendly Cities goals
- Adapt transport systems, as a key lead to innovation and adoption of new urban transport technologies.

A further context in the sub-region, is SmartGrowth action to develop future strategies to sustainably manage urban growth. The Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI) is underway and emphasizes.

“Public transport, active modes, emerging technologies and the right measures and conditions must play a greater role to meet the growing transport need.”

SmartGrowth 2019

Harry likes driving, he bought a new car recently.
In his late eighties he is an active Lions member and enjoys driving to Wellington to visit friends and family.

“I go out on the bus most days.”
Gloria is an active 90+ who lives independently and likes to have fun

“We went to the City Council Transport Committee meeting.”
Myrtle, Reta and Gloria are in their 90’s
They are vital members of their community.
They are regular bus users.

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11 UFTI SmartGrowth collaborative project with NZTA. Newsletter 28/3/2019
OVERVIEW

“Our transport system is on the edge of a major transition.”

Most older people who drive a car prefer to continue for as long as possible, because it is part of their cultural lifestyle and the landscape of their living environment.

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council recognized that a cultural shift is required in policy frameworks and mobility choices. Increasing longevity, urbanization and transport congestion challenges are now a feature of growing NZ cities such as Tauranga. In order to reduce travel and parking frustrations, accidents, and carbon emissions, more people of all ages will need to access services through walking, cycling and public transport systems.

People are making work, volunteer, shopping, sporting and recreation, holiday, family and lifestyle, transport choices to avoid the hassle of congestion, stress, time and parking cost.

Coming generations of older people will be more technologically intelligent and proficient in managing communication platforms. All will eventually reach the point of longevity where the same age-related limitations of perception, motor and cognitive skills, will be challenging to driving a car or access public transport services. Significant limitations are caused by a lack of age-friendly design features in mobility modes and access to transportation options.

“Parking will not be an issue if TCC gets bus related issues sorted.”

“It is all too confusing.”

In planning for a twenty or fifty-year transport horizon, evidence indicates that generational difference, longevity and age-related diversity will be influenced by biology and greater technological advancement. It is very clear, that our communities will increasingly have many more, older people living longer, who can no longer drive, and those who choose to drive, because public transport is not yet a preferred accessible and convenient option.

International studies indicate a range of elder concerns and barriers affecting patronage of traditional modes of public transport. These include accessibility, safety, personal security, flexibility, reliability, and comfort concerns.

New systems will need to become elder customer focused in order to support safe, sustainable and accessible urban services. Transformative technological innovation has potential to generate sustainable social value from urban mobility, because global ageing and New Zealand population ageing is a long-term phenomenon where generations of Elders will be dependent on the reshaping of communities and urban transport services for decades to come.

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Demographic transformation

How and where will increasing numbers of older people living longer live, including Tangata Whenua, and how will this impact on appropriate infrastructure investment, types of service, levels of travel demand, autonomy and dependency?

This is a key query central to the future dynamics of urban transportation services. Where do older people live today? (see map p.16) Is this pattern of living going to change given a universal desire to live in their own home for as long as possible, and given the growing desirability of segregated aged communities that offer more suitable smaller and newer homes?

**Our population is ageing rapidly.**

There will soon be more grandparents than grandchildren.

- By 2039 New Zealand will have 1.3m people 65 and older.
- By 2020 Tauranga City will be home to 11,500 elders over 75 years.
- The BOP population is older than the national average with 8.7% of the population being over 75 years compared with 6.4% across NZ
- By 2030 the number of people 80 and over will quadruple
- By 2031 mature, older and older-old will make up 52% of the SmartGrowth population
- By 2048 30% of the population will be over 70 years.
- By 2050, 39% of people living in Tauranga City will be over 65
- 83% of all growth in the SmartGrowth sub-region is projected to be people over 65.

How will transport systems evolve?

Tauranga is New Zealand’s fifth largest City. With rapid growth in the Western Bay of Plenty, there is a high dependency on cars. Together with a busy port, the City has high transport emissions.

Transport planning is expected to further align with Government goals through a BOP Regional Transport Plan review and to meet goals of the City Urban Strategy 2018 which includes mobility aspirations:

- More people living within walking distance to shops, services and public transport
- An enhanced public transport network to service growing town centres and
- Investment in infrastructure, facilities, services, amenity, streetscape and quality urban design in and around town centres.

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council is a partner in SmartGrowth, developing collaborative Local Government planning in the Western Bay of Plenty through a Future Development Strategy. It is undertaking a major project in collaboration with the New Zealand Transport Authority. The Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI) 2019, plan will align a sub-regional approach to housing, transport and urban development.

If Elder residents living here do not have a car, could they access family, friends, shops, yoga or exercise classes, the movies, the dentist, a medical centre or access specialist services at the hospital, buy an ice-cream or go to the beach?

It will be challenging to provide accessible public transport to the many ageing communities in the City and Western Bay of Plenty. The Bay of Plenty Regional Transport Plan 2018 states a goal to provide: **Reliable, frequent convenient and efficient public transport.**

However, there is no specific transportation strategy that targets actions to ensure convenient accessible Elder focused transportation services. 16

16 AARP 2005 developed a comprehensive 5 yr action agenda. *Enhancing Mobility Options for Older Americans.*

In Australia the NSW State Government has recently released an Elder Transport and Mobility Plan.

Singapore has A successful Ageing Plan that includes silver zones and elder education on safe access to public transport.
There are a growing number of international examples of transport and ageing policy developments including the New South Wales 2019 Older Persons Transport and Mobility Plan. The European Commission\footnote{European Commission 2015. Growing Older and Staying Mobile.} has provided a valuable leadership, comprehensively investing in ageing transportation research, policy and provision. There are a variety of localized initiatives.\footnote{Miami 2011. Engaging Older Adults in Transport Planning.} The World Economic Forum is a major leader in supporting innovation in public transport.

The map below (Fig. 4) shows mesh block demographic data related to the 2013 Census. By advancing a projection of 6 years, those over 65 in 2013 are now in 2019, 71 years and over. The map shows areas where 40\% to 70\% of residents are older people. There are many areas where longevity is a reality with 70\% of residents 70 years and over. The map also shows new transport routes launched by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council December 2018.

**Fig. 4** Showing 40\% and 70\% density of 65+ people from Census 2013, now 70+ in 2019 and living longer

Social equity is a major factor in the planning, provision and accessibility of public transport.

Engagement with Maori Elders revealed that bus routes do not connect with some traditional Maori settlements, thereby limiting access to public transport, and increasing costly dependency on whanau, IWI and government services.

Communities are ageing rapidly. There are now areas in the City where 70\% of people are over 70 years, actively living longer. There will be more people over 80 and more people living beyond 100 years.

It is widely recognized that policies at a national and local level need to change to maintain social and economic wellbeing. The transition requires deliberate effort to understand the impact of structural ageing of the population, ageing diversity and the factors that contribute to enhancing autonomy, dignity, health and wellbeing.

Transportation and the environments that influence mobility are of critical importance in the landscape longevity liveable communities and lifetime neighborhoods for ageing-in-place.
The number of people 75 years and older in the SmartGrowth region will increase by 229% from 2016 to 2036.

Are we prepared for tomorrow’s complex challenges?
Are our policies being viewed through an age-friendly lens?

Fig. 5. Tauranga City Structural ageing 2018-2045. *Tauranga Urban Strategy 2019*

Fig. 6. Showing demographic transformation in the Bay of Plenty region 2016-2036

This Bay of Plenty District Health Board diagram clearly shows rapid ageing in the BOP region.

From: *BOP DHB Health and Service Profile 2016*.

In 2018, 29,000 (22%) of Tauranga’s residents were aged 65 years and over, higher than the national average of 15%. The number of Elders is expected to double by 2030. Tauranga City populations are growing and ageing to become home to 60,000 Elders over 65 by 2060 (see Fig. 3) Regional districts and towns in the Bay of Plenty are also ageing rapidly. The BOPDHB reports that:

- The region’s population is older than the national average with 8.4% over 75 years (NZ Av. 6.4%)
- The region has a significantly higher proportion of Māori people than the national average.
System Disruption

The public transport environment changed significantly during the research process. Key queries focused on a broad range of issues however, it became important to hear personal stories of bus service failures as a major current focus for some stranded Elder participants.

The impact of the bus route changes created an historical moment. The review process now requires an understanding of the demographic dynamic, one of elder mobility compassion. It highlighted an urgent policy re-evaluation to recognize that Elders live in our communities and that they, and many more will, need an accessible safe public transport service and infrastructure that is designed to meet their and other vulnerable people’s needs.

“We are glad this project is asking us our views.”

The information informs a space where a socially constructed silence has prevailed. Elders have learned to speak up through this study opportunity, and through the community meetings held by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council. Much community wisdom on Elder needs for convenient bus services has been shared. Elders may face more confusing bus route change that impacts their wellbeing and independence. Elected members and planners have had an opportunity to hear from people and families who have valued and trusted transport services.

Age-friendly message targeting will be essential to attract Elders to public transport, particularly that which is Maori and Pacifica inclusive.

Participant feedback indicates a need for a better systems approach to infrastructure environment investment. Some new bus stop locations were considered too dangerous without crossings e.g. Mt Maunganui Rd, Pyes Pa. Additional seating and toilets are needed at bus interchanges. The experience of some passengers suggests that quality accessibility and infrastructure and bus safety standards require monitoring.

“I cannot reach the stop button.”

“If you sit on the right side of the bus you fall into the aisle because there is no arm rest and seats are hard and are slippery.”

“We just don’t go to the City anymore.”

“Don’t they know we gave up going into town a long time ago.”

“It is impossible to cross over four lanes of traffic to get to the bus stop.”

“The bus went past me today and didn’t stop and I was even wearing a pink coat.”

Older citizens have become more aware of transport issues and the need for investment in infrastructure in the City. The viability and cost of public service provision was a concern, especially given observable large empty buses running in their community.

“Air NZ does not fly empty planes, no business survives without attention to customers.”
Evolving policies

Many countries, including those in Europe, Australia, Singapore and America are responding to the challenges of transportation and ageing. An Australian study noted that without significant change to community environments, non-driving Elders would be stranded or have to retreat to age segregated living environments.19

Nations are engaging older people in shaping age-friendly communities and investing in transforming transport strategies and action plans to meet the long-term impact of longevity and structural population-ageing. The efforts focus on ensuring Elder wellbeing, safety, independence, social inclusion, while maximising the silver economic contribution to society.20

Communities, even Mega-Cities such as New York and London have invested in transport innovation to meet age-friendly guidelines, some of which includes:

**Enabling Elders** to manage bus systems by taking training journeys to build confidence in: reaching the nearest bus stop and suitable route, reading timetables, using local apps, managing to alight and get off in the right place, managing walkers, using stop signals, hand rails, safely being in a moving vehicle and specific personal and local destination challenges.

**Adapting environments, and service provisions**, through age-friendly assessments with Elders to establish convenient routes, bus park and ride capacity, walkable public places, and seating location.

**Transport Innovation.** Many cities in Europe and America are now investing in age inclusive accessible energy efficient, safe transportation harnessing rapidly evolving technologies. Autonomous shuttles are integrated with other transport modes to reduce costs and parking.21

**Opportunity** Participants in this research project were keen to share their views and generally agreed that the development of public transport services is vital to the sustainability of our region and for them to continue living well in their community. This report reflects the views of Elders, many in their eighties and nineties, whose voice has not been heard before in regional transport policy engagement and consultation processes.

This project builds on earlier BOPRC reports recognizing the vital place of transport relevance to the demographic transformation.28 The research took place in the midst of local public clamour for Local Government to respect new standards sustainability, of affordable people centered urban housing and transportation service design and delivery. The research process has been undertaken within a City context of implementing a new public transport contract, new bus routes, disruption and a climate of vulnerable bus user ‘abandonment.’

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19 Mackett 2015. *Improving Accessibility for Older People*
20 WHO.2007 *Active Ageing.*
Elder bus passengers who are regular users commented on the need for buses to be more age-friendly, to be designed for the older patron. It is timely to assess the level of comfort in the bus environment and to consider how contracts can be strengthened to ensure safety and satisfaction. The experience of some older passengers suggests that accessibility, infrastructure and bus safety standards require monitoring.

“I cannot reach the stop button.”

“If you sit on the right side of the bus you fall into the aisle because there is no arm rest and seats are hard and are slippery.”

“It is impossible to cross over four lanes of traffic to get to the bus stop.”

The context of transport planning in the Bay of Plenty is complex, further disrupted by the complexities of ageing populations with a breadth of increasing longevity mobility demands.

NZ studies have not yet examined the socio dynamics of ageing and transport, in an urban technological change context. Rosenbloom considers possible policy options, concluding that the “most promising” options are technological improvements to “responsive” public transport and to enhance the liveability of communities and neighbourhoods (to reduce the need to drive).

The EU noted in a sustainable transport futures report that, “transport is a complex system that depends on multiple factors, including the pattern of human settlements and consumption, the organisation of production and the availability of infrastructure.” The Global Coalition on Ageing stresses that the confluence of rapid urbanization and increased longevity has received little attention in the public discourse and is rarely discussed as an opportunity for growth and innovation in cities. It states: “The 21st Century social contract for urban life must be rooted in an age-friendly philosophy.”

The current planning context includes an opportunity to evolve policies: Policies that integrate global megatrends can benefit growth in innovation and experience of global cutting-edge technologies currently reshaping accessible transportation services.

In New Zealand Frith comments that older people will move to the types of accommodation easily served by public transport. That vehicle safety, operator and accessibility issues need to be resolved to improve acceptability. In particular, that town planning and public transport policy needs to change substantially, that the absolute size of public and special transport will need to increase to cater for the greater older population. Like climate change, a response to population-ageing and increased longevity is imbedded in some of the most complex social and political economic problems of our day.

The challenge is a first time in history journey, and we have to navigate solutions in the same way as we are navigating responses to the Fourth Industrial Revolution so silently speeding transport innovation. The two are now inextricably interlinked with climate change imperatives.

The driverless revolution must be about more than innovative technology; it must be about change at a system level. By planning with the ageing population in mind, revisioning communities, and shifting attitudes about the value of older adults, we’ll ensure that driverless vehicles put people of all ages on the road to a better future.

Paul Irving, Milken Institute 2017.


23 Frith.2012. Demand for transport services: impact on networks of older persons’ travel as the population of New Zealand ages.

ELDER INSIGHTS

To live independently and age successfully Elders must be able to maintain a mobile lifestyle.

The project focus was to engage mature and older people in discussions on transport planning, their use, needs and views on using various modes of transport today and tomorrow.

Despite time-frame constraints and related “summer holiday” period, hot summer days and family commitments of many older people, a spectrum of elder age groups participated. The qualitative view was valuable.

60% of participants were 75 years and over (see Fig. 4)

The quantitative data collated and shown in graphs reflects the number who completed questionnaires. It does not reflect qualitative information gained from interviews and informal discussions.

Their views may be considered as indicative of future policy complexities related to structural ageing (e.g. 150% increase in 75+ by 2021, and a quadrupling of 85+ by 2050)

Participant views show that older-old people over 80 years are really concerned about services today and the tomorrow future of the bus services they rely on.

While resilient, some have mobility issues or are dependent (22%) on public transport. Their experience informs a platform from which to gain valuable transportation knowledge. Twice as many women than men responded to the questionnaire. This also reflects the fact that women live longer and live alone as “survivors” later in life. Some men phoned to discuss related topics, some reluctant to fully participate.

Women in later life had more experience with public transport and were keen to share views.

It was most pleasing to engage participants who live in locations all over the City, including, Otumoetai, Parkvale, Gate Pa, Judea, Maungatapu, Oropi, Cherrywood, Papamoa, Greerton, Matua, Matapihi, and Mt. Maunganui

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25 2016. Bay of Plenty District Health Board.

CGConsulting 2019. Specialist services in social and political gerontology
Modes of Transport

The majority of participants drive their own car as their main means of transport. Nearly one quarter of participants regularly use or rely on bus services (see Fig. 5). Older generations are keen car drivers, who speak of adapting time and distance of travel to circumstances and increasing age.

Passing a driver’s test is viewed as a later life personal triumph. While this ‘fitness’ is regarded as a personal achievement, it has been a social and economic necessity in the absence of mobility options and public transport services.

Interviews and discussion with Maori leaders, kuia, kaumatua, and young people, suggested that public transport, ‘the buses,’ were not considered as a mobility option for Kuia and Kaumatua because it is outside their cultural experience. The safety of elders is highly valued.

“We wouldn’t let our Nanny go on the bus because it is too dangerous.”

In this study Elder women participant “survivors” living alone, were key users and informers on improving the public transport system and the infrastructure that they use. They spoke of hardship during the ‘bus crisis’. Of waiting for hours in the hot day sun without shelters, waiting for a bus that never came. They spoke about the confusion arising from getting on and off buses to get to their destination; of arriving in places unexpectedly; of having to direct an untrained driver where the route was supposed to go; of buses going past and not seeing them waiting; of having to walk longer distances to the nearest bus stop.

The impact of being abandoned by the current bus service performance, has been extremely stressful. It has upset their ability to confidently manage their lives. Some participants indicated that they had been forced to give up their voluntary services or were considering their ability to continue. Several very older women spoke about now being unable to reach care homes to feed friends or family suffering from dementia.

“A proper City bus station with toilets is needed”
Many participants utilize various mobility options, including public transport, and ride share with friends and family (see Fig. 6). Some use an agency mobility service or a taxi, when really necessary. One participant uses a mobility scooter, one an e-cycle. Many indicated that they regularly walk in their neighborhood. Some indicated they need to walk a distance to the bus.

Discussion with a representative sample of Tauranga Moana tangata whenua indicated that the use of public transport for older Maori people is limited because current bus routes do not service the Maori semi-rural population centres, thereby reducing independence and autonomy. Areas identified were the Te Puna – Wairoa area, Bethlehem (the Hangarau marae area) and Matapihi (school bus services only) and eastern Welcome Bay/Mangatawa. As a consequence Elder Maori have no choice but to rely on whanau or Hauora vans for their transport needs e.g. getting to hospital and medical appointments. Most Maori communities accept care of elders as a whanau responsibility.

Pacifica elders, Matua, were very clear that going places in a car was the way to go. That their future mobility needs could be met by daughters, family and friends. They indicated that they would be unlikely to try public transport because it was not a familiar context for them. However, they expressed a wish to be more engaged in decision-making.

Participants indicated that they are adapting to the opportunity of using local public transport services. 40% said they have used ‘the bus.’ Most are travel wise and understand the climate change imperatives for future generations. Many participants indicated their desire to leave the car at home when they can. They strongly seek convenient small bus services that go to the places where they need to go (see key destinations graph p. 29)

The use of large buses that often appear empty or with few passengers is most incongruous to this generation of prudent older people, they were critical of “wasteful” civic dollars.
Choice

The majority of survey participants indicated that they prefer to drive their own car to their key destinations. Some participants were totally reliant on bus services. In general, many were open to, and some do use public transport to go places “once a week” where the bus service is accessible, e.g. going to the Library or visit friends.

Data shown in Figure 7 as public transport bus users also includes people who did use the bus until recently when timetable and route changes occurred. They are now unable to use the service. Some said they don’t feel safe.

Participants said that the bus system was not convenient.

“I use it if I have time.”
“Going by car is far quicker.”
“Too many changes to get to my destination”
“Stops not close enough”

People using bus services, here in the City and elsewhere used their Super Gold Card on a regular basis (see Fig 8). They plan their travel accordingly. Some participants said the Super Gold Card time restrictions were not congruent with their active lifestyle, social and family and volunteer needs.

Gold Card time restrictions were perceived as an outdated approach given the traffic congestion pressures, their own budget constraints, volunteer and grandparenting obligations. Comparisons were made with other countries such as the UK and Australian States where 'senior' public transport travel is free and where they felt more respected.

People appreciate using the Super Gold Card when visiting family, friends or events, in other places, such as Wellington, where public transport is more accessible.

Elder commentary on Gold Card travel time frame availability is congruent with international values that regard Elder choice as a human dignity. EU and OECD nations are undertaking strategic planning efforts to ensure that all policies enhance the well-being, independence, active ageing, and economic contribution of older citizens to curb the cost of increasing elder dependency, health care and social isolation. Some comments related to Gold Card:

“Very helpful”
“Should be all day, every day”
“When I start using the bus, I will use it.”
**Going Places**

The travel behavior of people living in City suburbs reflects similar patterns of travel purpose evidenced internationally. A New Zealand study of travel patterns suggests that older people will travel more, both length and timing of travel on the roads and public transport. 26. Frith 2012 27 The New Zealand Household Travel Survey 2014 found that older people’s travel experience had increased, that Elders are making a significantly greater share of all trip segments; older drivers were a higher proportion of the traffic stream; women were vehicle passengers more often than men; trips were shorter among older-old age groups.

Frith suggests that healthier older populations might travel more if travelling was made easier and that older women feel slightly more constrained in their travel choices than do older men. The New Zealand Household Travel Survey 2014 found that older people’s travel experience had increased, that Elders are making a significantly greater share of all trip segments; older drivers were a higher proportion of the traffic stream; women were vehicle passengers more often than men; trips were shorter among older-old age groups.

This study evidenced three broad reasons for travel: essential services to shopping centers or supermarket, medical and hospital destinations, and connection to friends and family.

**Fig. 12 Travel destinations**

Discussion indicated that Elders are valued supportive community members, assisting with travel needs, and helping each other to age successfully. It is notable that travel trip destinations indicate active engagement in a range of recreational activities, including a reason why some people retire here – going to the beach.

However, for another set of participants, with disabling health conditions, ‘the bus’, is a lifeline, but it is not always easy. It is their main means of mobility for accessing vital health services and social connection in later life.

The data and views clearly demonstrate an urgent need to ensure that bus route connectivity to urban shopping centers, supermarkets, and medical facilities, are given priority

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26 NZTA 2014 NZ Household Travel Survey, and O Fallon and Sullivan 2009 Trends in Older People’s Travel Patterns.

27 Frith 2012
The Future of Transport

Participants wanted to know more about transport innovations. They enjoyed discussing the future of mobility options and their use of technologies. In particular, innovation in self-driving technology and digital navigation tools is giving rise to a next-generation, point-to-point transit systems that complements pedestrian, cycling, and bus or rail options to improve convenience, reduce costs, and enhance street safety.

Acknowledging the current transport challenges, they wondered why a ferry from Mt Maunganui is not considered worthy of public transport subsidy like buses are to enable commuters to connect with bus services and reduce congestion.

They had mixed reactions to possible use of cycles, and E-scooters. Concerns included the safety for young and old on footpaths that are inadequate for multi-modal use. They were amused that local government considers walking and cycling options on pavements when even mobility scooters have great difficulty negotiating safe passage.

Walking environments are not considered very safe. “need improving” are “too uneven,” “scooters and cyclists need to use bells.”

47% of participants expressed concern for climate change issues and were keen to see transport related carbon reduction measures. 46% expressed interest in owning electric cars, realistically limited by price and practicality. Most, 42%, were hesitant over the practicality of whether they could change transport modes to meet climate change goals given ageing limitations and the state of footpaths.

Discussion indicated a keen desire for options they might consider. Similar to international perspectives, as Elder consumers they sought to balance capability, convenience, cost and environmental impact. Gerontechnologies in cars now enable elders to maintain their autonomy or to compensate for functional impairments. 93% said they would consider using an autonomous shuttle (see Fig. 11).

The World Economic Forum, (WEF) Shaping the Future of Urban Mobility initiative surveyed 5,500 urban dwellers in 27 cities around the world in 2015 to understand attitudes to this emergent and transformative technology which has last mile value.

Current lessons from a comprehensive analysis of the collaborative Boston project note that automated vehicles will reshape urban mobility systems to make public transport less costly, cities safer, cleaner and more inclusive, enabling people to reclaim streets.
More than 100 AV pilots are taking place around the world. Analysis of a recent Boston AV project showed a 48% decrease in parking space, a reduction of travel time by 4%, more, 12% in neighbourhoods, and reduction of vehicles on the road of 15%. Commercial robo-taxis became available in some cities in 2018.

According to the WEF, AV integration into urban mobility fleets will happen faster than most predict. IBM and Local Motors have launched the world’s first 12 seater accessible, electric, self-driving, cognitively responsive, 3D printed vehicle named Olli. 35

**Mobility Needs**

Participants showed a reluctance to answer the query. A sense of helplessness prevailed because as they stated, if you do not have ‘the money’ there are few options. Some were appreciative that they lived near a bus stop. The majority of participants did not consider they were well informed on mobility options when they can no longer drive their car.

Walking environments were considered hazardous, with pavements needing repair and mostly too narrow to walk safely. The CBD was considered unfriendly with slippery streets and poor toilet access.

Some participants said they do have times when they need travel assistance. While most indicated that they had friends or family support, there were some who stated they had,  

“No one that they could rely on.”

Friends and neighbors featured highly in responding to emergency travel. Participants said they would only call a taxi or St John if really necessary. The majority did not belong to or use a volunteer agency that provided transport services. No-one had used a commercial provider, such as Uber or Driving Miss Daisy. Using a mobility scooter was reluctantly considered a choice by a number of participants, “Maybe if I have to.”

The facts indicate that the majority of older people, pakeke, kuia, kaumatua and matua people are living healthier and longer lives as active contributors to society. Their portrayal is, however, still embedded in unrealistic role models and often in deficit framed policy discourse. This limits our capacity to view the breadth of mobility needs that may occur in later life and translate this to policy platforms that ensure accessibility.

New Zealand research by Davy on *Coping Without a Car*, showed that people over 75 years simply stayed at home more when public transport was not accessible. Further in “Making Active Ageing a Reality” 2014 Koopman-Boyden noted that mobility was associated with freedom and greater choice by older people living alone. That a meaningful life is one where people “keep busy, stay connected and be valued.” The report suggested that there is a role for communities and government to foster these goals to avoid health decline and social isolation.

“There is a whole world of people not being catered for.”

Amber Johnsen Project Intern Student.

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Participation in policy making processes

Community-led development is a means of actively engaging people to invest in co-creating their community and to ensure that policies are ‘fit for purpose.’ The OECD recommends engaging Elders in policy development.³⁰

Transport plans are developed locally according to Government policy statement funding criteria, without requirements for community support or to widely consider marginalized populations of difference. Project by project consultation is undertaken, particularly by NZTA and Councils offer consultation through formal notification. Participants in this study had little experience in, or knowledge of, Local Government planning processes.

Few had taken part in transport surveys despite Councils citing survey responses as community views (see Fig. 12). None had participated in online surveys, few had gone to Council meetings, presentations or submitted on transport matters. A number of Elders said that they follow political matters and had wanted to tell Council what they thought about transport issues but didn’t bother. Generally, participants expressed little trust in engagement processes and felt that older people’s views were not heard, listened to, or respected.

"Because Council doesn’t listen."
"Why bother."

Pacifica Matua were really interested in transport issues. They formed a planning group. In general Elders expressed a feeling of lack of control in transport planning, that suggestions were not understood or there is a lack of will to meet their needs. Generational difference is a possible reason for non-participation in civic affairs. However, it may highlight a systemic age bias issue. Many participants said that they would like to take part in community planning processes. There is a clear disconnect with participation in decisions that impact on their lives. Three ninety year-old participants came to a City Transport Committee Meeting. They loved the experience and are keen to actively participate, as they have much to say.

CONCLUSION

TOWARDS A SHARED VISION

Informed transportation policy making is now positioned at the nexus of global megatrends that affect the lives of people of all ages today and tomorrow.

Engaging Elders in transport planning is an imperative given increased longevity. Insights in this report contribute to an agenda for accessible public transport planning and delivery that will increase patronage and provide sustainable convenient urban connectivity in livable communities.

The Bay of Plenty has a higher than the national average proportion of older people living here, particularly among the older-old.

Elders are an unprecedented rapidly increasing proportion of community populations who care about the future and have much wisdom to share. They have diverse and distinctive multi-modal transportation requirements that critically influence their and their family capacity for living an active quality of life. One where meaningful purpose is linked to social inclusion, staying active, ageing-in-place and vital contributions to the family, community, and regional silver economy.

Local Government is placed in a position of trust and leadership opportunity.

The transformation of community populations and urban living occurs in a transport environment of exciting technological advancement to support climate change values and community demand for people focused places and services that enrich lives.

Today’s transportation decisions and investments will significantly impact on the wellbeing environments of tomorrow.
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