

Breakout 11: Safety and Mobility of Older Road Users

Moderator: Sarah Young, Operations and Design Division, TTI

Session Summary:

The proportion of drivers over the age of 65 is forecasted to reach more than 20% by the year 2020. Due to their frailty, older drivers and passengers are more likely to be seriously injured or killed when in a motor vehicle crash. This session presented information concerning improving roadways, screening, and transportation services for older road users.

The first presentation (Sue Chrysler, TTI) highlighted roadway infrastructure improvements implemented in Australia and Japan to help older drivers and pedestrians. Dr. Chrysler noted in her discussion that improving conditions for older road users improves conditions for all road users.

Geri Adler of the Graduate College of Social Work at the University of Houston presented results of a current study on early stage dementia patients that identified driving problems and how families cope with the decision to stop driving. She also addressed the definition of critical driving skills, including safety, tactical, and operational skills and provided insight into the experiences that the Occupational Therapists (Driver Rehabilitation Specialists) involved with the study had in regard to driving with the impaired drivers in this study.

The final speaker, Patricia Bordie (Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services), presented information concerning transportation services for the elderly provided by the Texas state government and the private sector. Ms. Bordie noted there are 2.7 million adults over the age of 60 in Texas and 95% of older adults are choosing to age in the community. While there are transportation options available to older adults, as epitomized by the best practices (or 5 A's) of: Availability, Acceptability, Accessibility, Affordability, and Adaptability, quality of life trips are what are lacking in current systems. She recommended 2-1-1 as the first step in finding transportation options for seniors.