

Agging

in Alameda County

TRENDS / CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES

With the aging of the Baby Boom generation, America's older adult population is growing at a faster rate than any other population group. In Alameda County, the 65 and older population is expected to grow from approximately 145,000 in 2005 to 390,000 in 2030 - a 170% increase.¹ The magnitude of this expected growth has economic, health, transportation, and social support implications that all communities must prepare to address.

This fact sheet provides an overview of some of the key trends related to the aging population, and how ACTIA is working to promote access to a spectrum of affordable and reliable mobility options for Alameda County’s older adults.

THE NATIONAL AGING TREND

Aging of the U.S. population is being driven by the Baby Boom generation—those Americans born between 1946 and 1964. Due to the size of this generation and its anticipated longevity, the U.S. population age 65 and over is expected to double in size—from 34.8 million in 2000 (12% of the population) to 72 million in 2030 (nearly 20% of the total population). As shown in Figure 1, the U.S. is currently about to embark on the steepest part of this aging curve. Between 2010 and 2030, the over 65 age group will grow nearly four times faster than the population as a whole.

Some additional characteristics of aging America have important mobility implications:

- The 85 and older age group is now the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population, and also has some of the most challenging mobility barriers to address.
- The trend for older Americans to “age in place” means that many suburban and rural communities will be home to large numbers of older adults.² In many cases these areas will have fewer transit and paratransit services and pedestrian facilities to serve as transportation alternatives than their urban counterparts.
- The 2007 American Community Survey estimates that 41% of Americans 65 or older have some form of disability—a reality that has significant ramifications for maintaining the mobility of an aging population.

“Beginning January 1, 2006, on average, a new 60 year old was celebrating a birthday every seven seconds, and these celebrations will continue for another 18 years. The impact of this demographic shift will affect every level of our social, economic and political systems.”

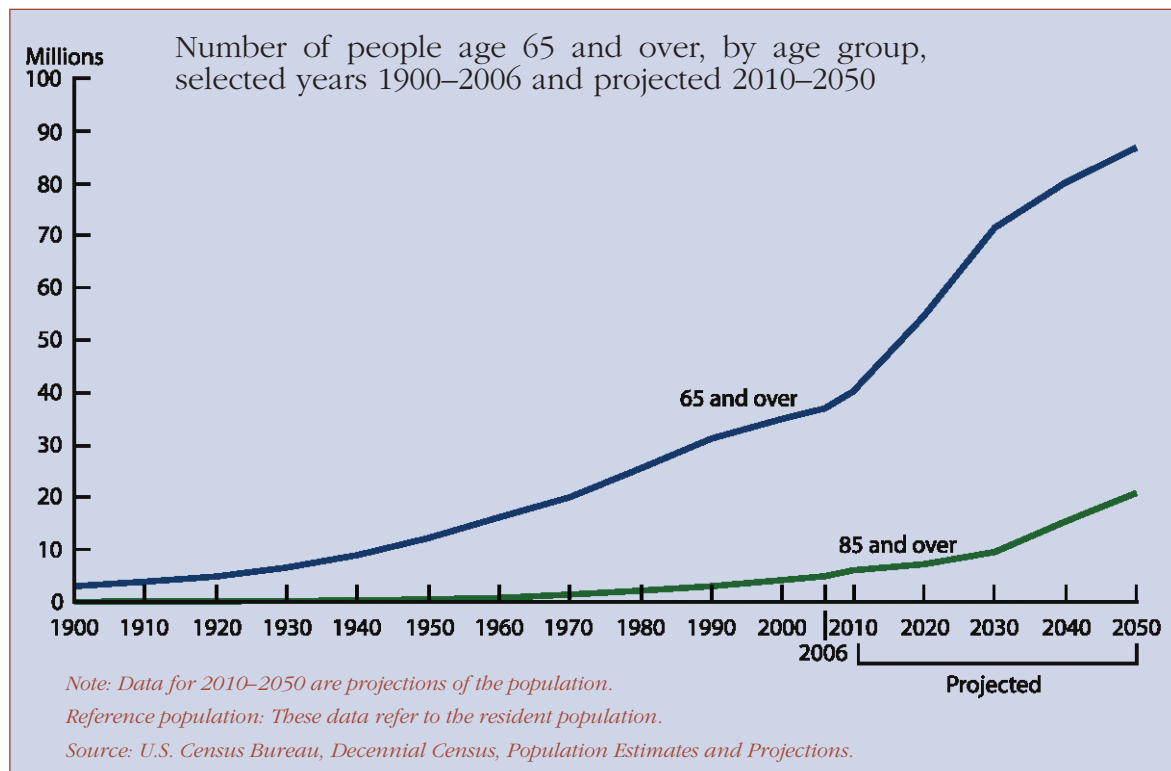
— Report of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging, *The Booming Dynamics of Aging: From Awareness to Action*



FIGURE 1:

U.S. Older Adult Population 1900-2050 (Projected)

Source: *Older Americans 2008: Key Indicators of Well-Being, Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics*





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Mirroring the national aging trend, Alameda County's 65 and older population is projected to increase by 170% between 2005 and 2030, growing from 145,000 to 390,000 (Figure 2). This growth in the older adult population substantially outpaces the 33% increase projected for the county's population as a whole. In 2005, older adults in Alameda County made up 10% of the county's total population, but by 2030, 21% of the total population will be 65 or older.³

The special characteristics of Alameda County's older adult population point to some of the challenges of providing for the ongoing mobility of an aging population.

Of Alameda County residents who were 65 or older in 2000:⁴

- **38% had some form of disability, compared with 15% for the population as a whole.⁵ The higher prevalence of disability and mobility limitations among the older adult population has important ramifications for mobility and transportation access.**
- **15% lived in households with no motor vehicle—nearly twice the rate for the population as a whole.**
- **Over 14% were actively engaged in the labor force. In 2007, 25% of people between 65 and 74 years of age in the Bay Area were working, an increase of 21% from 2000 levels.⁶ In the future, it is expected that growing numbers of older adults will need access to reliable employment transportation.**
- **27% lived in low-income households. Older adults may have limited transportation options based on their ability to pay for services.**

“Today’s older Americans are among the most active and community-engaged seniors in our nation’s history, and mobility and independence are essential to preserve those great qualities.”

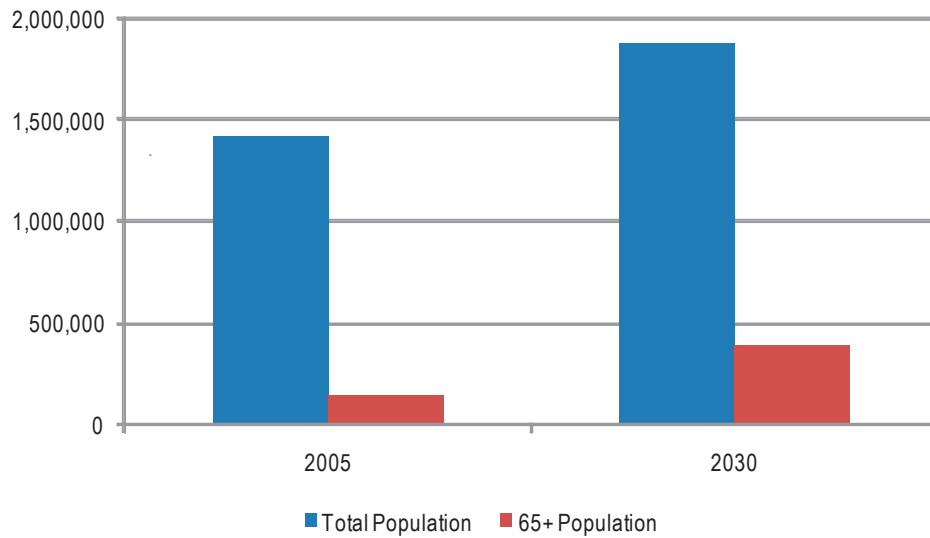
ITNAmerica Founder and President,
Katherine Freund

“Of California’s older non-drivers, 46% reported that they stayed home on a given day due to lack of transportation options.”

Linda Bailey (2004). Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options. Washington D.C.: Surface Transportation Policy Project

FIGURE 2:

Alameda County Total Population and Older Adult Population, 2005 and 2030 (Projected)



WHAT THESE TRENDS MEAN FOR

The aging population presents distinct challenges to local communities and the nation as a whole, but also offers important opportunities. Alameda County's older residents are a key resource for our economy and civic life. The Baby Boom generation in particular is expected to extend its participation in the labor force beyond "retirement age" and to place a high value on community involvement and volunteerism.

Mobility is essential to maintaining independence, health, social connections, and economic participation. An estimated 90% of older Californians travel by automobile either as a driver or passenger.⁷ However, as individuals age, they often lose the skills necessary to drive safely. Research suggests that a 75-year old today is likely to experience 6-10 years of non-driving. Public transportation and services offered by social service agencies, community-based organizations, and healthcare providers are critical links for many. But often these services can meet only "lifeline" mobility needs.

Will You Join Us in Creating an Aging-Friendly Future?

To find out more about the ACTIA Special Transportation Program and opportunities to partner with ACTIA, or to request an outreach presentation about services funded by Measure B, please contact:

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"Research indicates that a 75 year old woman today is likely to experience 10 years of nondriving and a 75 year old man, 6 years."

AARP (2005), Beyond 50.05:
A Report to the Nation on
Livable Communities: Creating
Environments for Successful Aging

ALAMEDA COUNTY

Without access to reliable and appropriate mobility options, older adults' levels of social and community engagement and access to healthcare, shopping, and employment can suffer dramatically. A recent survey by the AARP found that among adults 50 and over, non-drivers were six times more likely to "frequently or occasionally" miss doing something they would like to do because of a lack of transportation. The Surface Transportation Policy Project has found that older non-drivers make 15% fewer trips to the doctor than drivers, half as many shopping trips, and 65% fewer trips for social, family, and religious purposes.⁸

In order to meet the challenges of an aging society and realize the opportunities presented by a healthy, active, and engaged older adult population, a multi-faceted and multi-modal approach to ensuring the ongoing mobility of Alameda County residents is needed.

¹ MTC Coordinated Public Transit/Human Services Transportation Plan (2007), ABAG Projections 2005.

² American Public Transportation Association. "Mobility for an Aging Population." Available from <http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/aging.cfm>.

³ U.S. Census 2006 American Community Survey, ABAG Projections 2005.

⁴ Data from MTC Coordinated Public Transit/Human Services Transportation Plan unless otherwise noted.

⁵ General population figure from American Community Survey 2005.

⁶ San Francisco Chronicle (September 21, 2007). "More Americans at Work in Retirement Years – Especially in Bay Area". Available from www.sfgate.com.

⁷ Martin Wachs (2001). "Mobility for California's Aging Population". CPRC Brief No. 6 (Strategic Planning on Aging Series). Berkeley: California Policy Research Center.

⁸ Linda Bailey (2004). *Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options*. Washington, D.C.: Surface Transportation Policy Project.



WORKING TO CREATE A MORE AGING-FRIENDLY ALAMEDA COUNTY

As the agency administering the nearly 10.5% of Measure B sales tax revenues dedicated to Special Transportation for Seniors and People with Disabilities, ACTIA is actively working to meet the mobility needs of Alameda County's growing number of older residents. Through the funding and coordination of 13 paratransit programs and a range of innovative gap-filling projects throughout the county, ACTIA has seen first-hand the benefits of meeting the mobility needs of older adults and people with disabilities, as well as the growing challenges transportation providers and community-based organizations face as demand for services increases.

ACTIA recognizes that sustaining mobility is critical to maintaining good health, quality of life, community engagement and economic security for an aging population. Projects and programs funded by ACTIA to meet the growing mobility needs present in Alameda County include:

- Special transportation services, including paratransit, senior-oriented shuttles, services for individuals with dementia, and taxi-based transportation programs
- Educational initiatives providing comprehensive, easily-accessible, and multi-lingual information about existing mobility options
- Travel training to promote use of fixed-route transit services by seniors and people with disabilities
- Programs to prolong safe driving for older adults
- Projects and activities that improve the pedestrian environment and access to transit for older adults and people with disabilities

In addition, ACTIA works to promote better coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness among the transportation providers it funds, and supports the development of more aging-friendly communities throughout Alameda County. The work of ACTIA and its grantees is guided by the Paratransit Advisory and Planning Committee (PAPCO), a community advisory committee to the ACTIA Board of Directors that is made up of accessible transportation consumers.

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