As the population of older adults grows so does the desire and need for communities to support people of all ages to ensure that they can grow up and grow old with maximum independence, safety and well-being. Although there is much that individuals can and should do to maximize their independence as they age, public policy makers make critical decisions about issues such as transportation systems, housing opportunities and land-use regulations that affect whether older adults can live successfully and productively at home and in their community. The Aging Network and others have seen escalating demand and interest from older adults in transportation and mobility services; this need will grow tremendously with the aging of the baby boomer generation.

Improve Senior Mobility Options
Given the anticipated growth in the older population, the need for transportation services will continue to increase rapidly. Many older adults drive, and we want to ensure their ability to stay safely on the road for as long as possible. Nevertheless, the functional and health issues that affect many people as they age will inevitably result in a loss of driving ability for many. Family caregivers, friends and neighbors continue to transport their older loved ones, but cannot meet all their needs. Many older adults find it difficult to access essential transportation services. This is particularly true for older adults in suburban or rural communities where destinations are too far to walk and public transit is inadequate or non-existent (e.g., does not offer...
Older Americans represent the fastest growing demographic in the country, and they have an increasing desire and need to “age in place” in their communities. Their ability to achieve this largely depends on access to transportation. n4a supports the following recommendations to ensure that older adults have adequate mobility options.

Provide dedicated, trust-fund funding through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for continued and expanded demonstration, outreach, and training and technical assistance activities, such as those provided under the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST), to meet the growing needs of the aging population.

The NCST, originally authorized under the 2005 surface transportation law and co-administered by n4a and Easter Seals, has proven to be a valuable resource for communities nationwide, providing needed technical assistance to promote best practices for non-governmental organizations and public agencies. Since beginning operations in 2006, the NCST has provided $1.3 million in funding to 32 projects in 22 states. Continued, dedicated funding for technical assistance efforts address the unique needs of an aging and often underserved population. Preserve the unique mission and role of the NCST to provide more intensive one-on-one support and grant funding to communities to seed the development of new options and approaches for meeting the mobility needs of older adults. These activities include promoting increased use of public transit where available and encouraging partnerships between aging and transportation agencies; sharing models and best practices with communities nationwide on issues such as person-centered mobility management; and serving as a clearinghouse and educational resource on senior mobility.

To meet this goal, n4a recommends the following actions:

- Ensure the NCST and its focus on serving older adults is preserved in any FTA initiatives to streamline technical assistance programs.
- In FY 2016, the FTA should allocate a minimum of $1 million of its technical assistance funding to support the NCST and/or other efforts targeted to seniors.
- Congressional authorizers updating the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) should raise the authorization level for the NCST to $5 million in future years to provide this dedicated funding for senior transportation.

As part of the surface transportation reauthorization process, n4a also recommends the following actions:

**Strong investments in public transit:** Make the major new investments in public transportation that are urgently needed. Older adults rely on public transportation for employment, independence, engagement in community life and more. Expanding transportation options will significantly improve the mobility of older adults. This is particularly true for transit programs serving rural and tribal communities.

**Senior transit programs:** Boost funding for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 program that supports transit accessibility and provides services to promote mobility and independence for seniors. Additionally, increase funding for operating assistance under this important program.

**Senior transportation services evaluation:** Ensure 5310 program information is publicly available through an integrated national database, and that program performance measures are targeted and accurately reflect both the value of and gaps in transit access for older adults. Authorize a study by the General Accountability Office (GAO) or other neutral party to better identify, understand and document the unmet needs of older adults in all FTA programs.

**Technical assistance for senior transportation programs:** Increase funding for targeted technical assistance and training activities. Additionally, transfer the funding for TA programs back into the Highway Trust Fund as it was under the previous surface transportation bill. This growth and stability will allow further demonstration, outreach, training and technical assistance activities to meet the increasing needs of older adults and transit providers.

**Service coordination with local planning agencies:** Provide incentives and support for further coordination of transit and other human services programs by strengthening accountability and transparency of planning processes and integrating transportation.
and transit planning into broader community and Aging Network-planning efforts.

Mobility management: Invest in mobility management solutions to better help transit and human services systems meet the needs of older adults.

Safe streets for all: Address the disproportionate share of older adult pedestrian fatalities by directing states and metropolitan planning organizations to adopt policies that ensure the needs of all users, including seniors, are taken into account in planning, constructing and operating federally funded roads.

Livable Communities for All Ages
The U.S. is facing the aging of the largest demographic cohort in its history. The aging of the baby boomers over the next three decades will have a direct and dramatic impact on every community in the nation. By 2030, more than 70 million Americans—twice the number in 2000—will be age 65 or over. With a high percentage of baby boomers projected to live beyond 85, between 2030 and 2040 forecasters expect a 60 percent surge in the age 85 and older population.

The rise in the number of aging citizens will affect the social, physical and economic fabric of our nation’s cities and counties, dramatically affecting local policies, programs and services in the areas of aging, health and human services; land-use, housing and transportation; public safety and disaster planning; workforce and economic development; education and recreation; and volunteerism, lifelong learning and civic engagement.

Federal leadership in livable and sustainable communities is vitally needed, yet federal investments in promoting sustainable and livable communities has lagged significantly since 2010. In the meantime, states and local governments tasked with developing and implementing broad long-term community infrastructure and service systems have increasingly recognized the value of ensuring that these systems meet the needs of the ever-growing aging population. These community efforts will only be cost-effective and efficient if they reflect our aging reality. This means directing a portion of new infrastructure spending to community agencies and nonprofit organizations by encouraging states and local governments to embrace livable-communities-for-all-ages principles and make them central to the core work of all government departments.

n4a is appreciative of and supports the spirit behind the Administration’s efforts to promote livable communities through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, first announced in June 2009 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. n4a also encourages congressional leaders to once again support federal investment in interagency collaboration and partnerships to address the community living needs of the growing aging population.