



AGEING & SAFE MOBILITY  
21st Century Streets





## SAFE ROAD USE

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# SAFE ROAD USE

From a road user perspective, the ageing population doesn't come with lower travel or mobility demand. Basic mobility needs remain somewhat similar, with commuting being replaced by more travel to shops and for social purposes, more travelling to doctors, pharmacies and hospital, and grand-children care responsibilities (school runs, clubs, sports activities, etc).

## KEY FACTS – INCREASED VULNERABILITY



Older pedestrians and cyclists' vulnerability increases due to:

- *Deterioration in visual and hearing acuity* => under or overestimation of distances, sizes and speeds
- *Cognitive decline* => reduced ability to make safe judgements
- *Reduced mobility* => inability to react quickly
- *Frailty and existing health conditions* => greater injury severity when a crash does occur
- *Slower walking speeds* => stranded in the middle of the road
- *Cycling behaviour* => neglect checking traffic behind
- *Postural instability and balance* => higher risk of falling, tripping or stumbling

## KEY FACTS – MEDICATION

Many medical conditions can lead to diminished capability and impairment, which can affect:

- *Vision* (cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma)
- *Cognitive abilities* needed to drive/cycle/walk (dementia, stroke, sleep apnoea)
- *Psychomotor functioning* (musculoskeletal diseases – arthritis, neurological diseases - Parkinson’s disease)

# PART ONE: OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS



## Political opportunities

- Collaborative work between different departments and structures (Health, Transport, Economy)
- Cities start to unite in working groups and develop integrated approaches (POLIS, CIVITAS)

## Political threats

- Time pressure won't allow for thorough thinking and integration, which will backfire and demonstrate (apparent) lack of efficiency

## Social opportunities

- The social environment is favourable for more individual responsibility and accountability, and for integrating sustainability and health within community planning and development

## PART TWO: BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS



### Barriers:

- Overall approach needs changing – changing mode and mentality is not easy – need viable, safe and attractive alternatives (which is mostly not the case outside big urban conurbations)
- Funding – significant funding ought to be focused in several crucial directions: research, awareness, training, testing and screening programmes, and of course ensuring the safe and attractive alternatives

### Opportunities:

- Working groups or coalitions (POLIS Network, Civitas, etc.) – funding research together to overcome financial barriers, share of best practice, provide sound evidence
- Integrate with “more important” topics such as climate change, pollution – they have the benefit of urgency and urge for immediate actions
- Promote other transport options not as alternatives to cars, but as part of a healthy live

## PART THREE: EVIDENCE GAPS

### Areas to be improved:

- Fitness-to-drive evaluation tools for older drivers in different stages
- Exposure and accident patterns for elderly road users
- Prediction of non-fitness to drive levels
- The effect of innovative mobility modes and their impact on the shared space, on elderly safety
- The effectiveness of complex measures to improve older road user safety, under new sustainable mobility paradigms

### Proactive research:

- Predicted levels of mode switch by age bands and cohorts
- Predicted levels of technology uptake and behaviour change/adoption
- Predicted changes in infrastructure and transport design and offering



## PART FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS

### For national governments:

- Introduce standardised medical and driving protocols with respect to license restrictions, driving cessation, license renewal, screening and testing – based on fitness-to-drive, health and functional abilities (not on age)
- Encourage national health programmes that help reduce fragility and preserve mobility for longer
- Increase the importance of elderly road safety elements in the guidelines for holistic urban management
- Stimulate scientific research in the area of older road user safety
- Create and encourage the creation of additional awareness programmes and initiatives about older road users' topics at different level (national, regional, local)

Thank you



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