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READERS' VIEWS

To aid the elderly, transit plan a must

The June 29 editorial "Ky. must do better by elders," well described our bottom ranking for long-term care. A study of transportation for seniors would reflect the same.

People outlive their ability to drive by about 10 years. Yet Kentucky has no transit plan for people to age economically in their own homes.

Medicare has no transportation budget. Low-income, Medicaid-eligible seniors may access low-cost transportation only for medical appointments. A senior above the poverty line pays 80 cents to \$1.75 a mile for the service. But it's not an option in rural counties, which lack matching funds to access federal funds for transit capital and operating costs. And without an integrated system, riders still will not access other necessary services along the same route.

Kentucky's transportation plan for the next 20 years is in its final stages. Just over four of its 180 pages are devoted to transit as opposed to roads.

On a list of 11 states used for comparison, Kentucky is the only one with no operating assistance and one of four with no dedicated funding for public transit. Yet in 2013 Kentucky spent over \$1 billion on road construction and maintenance.

What about seniors living on that newly paved rural road, stranded in their homes, making a few thousand dollars a year over the Medicaid limit? What use is that road to them?

How about including them in the budget? Or in a transit system that leverages other funding streams with Medicaid transport to get to medical and other services in the same ride?

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