

## Options remain after the car keys are gone

*By Ellen Waldman  
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What happens when people are no longer able to drive their own cars? How do they get around? What are the options? It's a good idea to research some of this information in advance. Once the driver's license is gone, knowing what is readily available could really help with the transition from being a driver to having a driver. If a family member is going to forfeit their license, this information lets them know that they still have options.

In our local community, here are some of the best known resources for transportation.

Valley Lift, managed by Rogue Valley Transportation District, (RVTD) is a shared ride, curb-to-curb, wheelchair accessible transportation service for people whose disabilities prevent them from using the RVTD lift-equipped buses. Valley Lift provides transportation anywhere within a three-quarter-mile radius on either side of RVTD's fixed bus routes. This has made it somewhat challenging for those who live farther from the bus stops than their guidelines allow. For more details go to: [Rvtd.org/valley\\_lift](http://Rvtd.org/valley_lift).

Also, while on the website, under Valley Lift Forms, you will find two documents: Valley Lift Riders Guide (48 pages) and the Valley Lift application (seven pages). You can also call Valley Lift at 541-842-2080 and request an application. Professional verification of your disability is required on the last page of the application. Here are some examples of who qualifies for filling out this portion: physician's assistant, physician, physical therapist, registered nurse, nurse practitioner and several others. The fare is quite reasonable, usually \$2 in each direction.

Yell Oh Taxi service is a locally owned transportation dispatching service company providing services since 2009. Contact them online at [yellohtaxi.com](http://yellohtaxi.com), or call 541-973-0800 or 541-880-8884. It might be possible to open an account so that the rider does not need to pay each time he or she travels, if this is a going to occur on an ongoing, regular basis. There are a few other taxi services as well, among them [CraterLakeTaxi.com](http://CraterLakeTaxi.com), 541-414-7647, and [CascadeShuttle.com](http://CascadeShuttle.com), 541-488-1998.

For medical appointments, there are several other options listed in the Senior Resource Directory that are also wheelchair accessible. These include Mobile Care, 541-664-2114, and N.E.T. Care, 541-770-2922.

Meeting transportation needs is often the best way to bring additional care providers into the lives of aging adults. For those who do not think they need any help, (even if others think they do), a caregiver serving as a driver often fits the bill. For many, this is the first step towards bringing in real support around the home.

The caregiver/driver can begin by having a set time and day each week when they accompany their client to appointments, shopping, errands, or just for a fun outing seeing the sights. The need for socialization is met during these seemingly simple rides, and alleviates the need for family members to fill in this gap. Caregivers can come through a caregiving agency or might be a private individual. Consult

with an auto insurance company to see if changes need to be made to the policy if someone else is now driving the care recipient's car.

When people are asked about the one thing that most concerns them about aging, loss of their valued driver's license is way at the top. If you have to remove a license with one hand, be ready to hand over the "good news" of these options with the other hand.

A woman who lives here in Ashland relies on her taxi driver whenever she needs to get around town. She would have preferred to come and go without having to plan her trips, but she now enjoys her time with her driver. She also has a wonderful young man who helps her one day a week with errands that require a car. She figured out how to make the most of what was offered and continues to fully enjoy her life.

Making these local resources something you can count on is not such a bad idea. In fact, these regular visits with a driver/caregiver becomes an event that people actually look forward to each week.