

Governor Charlie Baker visits AgeLab at MIT Center for Transportation and Logistics

Baker-Polito administration establishes council to address aging in Massachusetts.

MIT Center for Transportation and Logistics

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On April 12, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker visited the [MIT AgeLab](#) at the [MIT Center for Transportation and Logistics](#), where he signed an executive order establishing the state's first Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts. The council will develop a plan to improve public and private efforts to support healthy aging in Massachusetts, to achieve the goal of making the Commonwealth the most age-friendly state in the nation. Older adults are the largest and fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population, and they will make up 23 percent of the Commonwealth's population by 2035.

"The notion that people are fully retired at the age of 65 is inconsistent with what I see around Massachusetts every day," said Governor Baker. "Many of our older adults still have ample time, energy, and talent available to start a second or third career, volunteer in their community, become a mentor, or pursue an unfulfilled passion. I look forward to the council's work considering ways for the state to improve public and private means for supporting and engaging with older adults."

"Since CTL invested in AgeLab 15 years ago, it has become a major center for research on aging," said Yossi Sheffi, director of the Center for Transportation and Logistics. Initially, AgeLab focused on improving transportation for the elderly, but since then has expanded its research portfolio to look at technological innovation and improvements in lifestyle, home, and health. The implications for product supply chains as the demand for products tailored to elderly consumers increases, is another area of interest. "The fact that the governor chose to sign the executive order that brings this groundbreaking council into existence here at MIT reflects AgeLab's leadership position in the field," said Sheffi, who is the Elisha Gray II Professor of Engineering Systems and a professor in civil and environmental engineering at MIT.

A multidisciplinary research program, the MIT AgeLab is focused on improving the experience of life in old age. Its current directions of inquiry include research into the rapidly changing behavior of older consumers and their caregivers, older drivers, and even younger people as they face the prospect of a longer — and perhaps more uncertain — future than ever before. The ultimate goal, says Joseph F. Coughlin, the AgeLab's founder and director, is to expand how aging is framed in the eyes of researchers, product developers, marketers, startup founders, venture capitalists — and yes, government.

“Increased longevity is among humankind's greatest achievements,” Coughlin said.

“The challenge we now face is to live not just longer, but also better. Innovations being developed here at MIT and throughout the Commonwealth promise to improve life for older adults and their families. Moreover, these new technologies, services, and related businesses are fast positioning Massachusetts as the global leader in the rapidly growing longevity economy.” Coughlin is a member of the new council.

The council will be supported by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and is expected to deliver a preliminary report to Governor Baker by the end of the year.