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COMMUNITY PLANNING

AGING READINESS PLAN – REPORT TO COMMUNITY October 27, 2011

The following is a summary of the Q&A Session from the Aging Readiness Plan Report event that was held on October 27, 2011 at Clark College, Foster Hall.

Note: Additional research was done after the meeting by staff to add in the web page references and contact information on some of the topics.



Is there any financial assistance available for modifications on my car?

At this time, there is not assistance available for controls through the State; however, each of the automobile companies like GMC, Dodge, Ford do have \$1000 that they apply towards application of brand new vehicles for modifications. Follow up: Staff has found web sites for some of the auto manufacturers for the assistance information.

<http://www.fordmobilitymotoring.com/>

<http://www.acura.com/mobilityoverview.aspx>

<http://www.gmmobility.com/>

<http://automobiles.honda.com/information/mobility-assistance.aspx>

http://www.lexus.com/models/LS/accessories/mobility_program.html

<http://www.subaru.com/engineering/mobility-guidelines.html>

<http://www.toyotamobility.com/>

http://www.volvocars.com/us/sales-services/sales/volvo_mobility_program/pages/default.aspx

<http://www.hyundaiusa.com/financial-tools/mobility-program.aspx>



At the Oak Brook neighborhood/park there are no places to sit or to get a drink of water. Question as to why benches are so expensive?

Throughout the park system, there are amenities. Standards are established for the amenities to keep the costs down overall by reducing the costs of repair, maintenance and replacement. You can apply to replace or add amenities through the Parks department bench donation programs to reduce the cost. Bench donation web site:

http://www.cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/make_difference/park_donations.asp

Tree donation web site:

http://www.cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/parks_trails/urban_forestry/witness_tree.asp

Giving opportunities to recreation programs: http://www.cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/make_difference/recreation_giving.asp



Another speaker added that Oakbrook Park has two benches now.



Ideas on senior housing: Speaker is familiar with affordable housing programs from back in the 50's and 60's. In the affordable housing business there are VWs and Cadillacs. More people need VWs than Cadillacs. HUD is building affordable housing that is not affordable for most. The biggest obstacle from this observer is the lack of affordable land to build on. Complimented the Task Force on what we are doing and the start that we have made on the process.



Comment: There are opportunities for assisted living that are good facilities that are more affordable. Suggestions for the task force to look at those options. Question as to whether there are affordable options and programs for remodeling programs to make housing more accommodating. There is not currently a County program. Habitat for Humanity has some programs.

How can I get involved?

This task force will be ending the planning process, but there will be future opportunities to be involved. There are a number of other groups that are working on these issues: You can do a "google.com" search on Aging and that will pull up multiple opportunities. Mentioned:

- There is a senior advisory group at Luepke Center
<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/centers/luepke/index.asp>
- Loaves & Fishes
<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/centers/luepke/snap.asp>
- SW WA agency on Agency has an advisory group with a planning board on behalf of the region with 10 members from Clark County.
www.HelpingElders.org
- Community Action advisory board through the county web site or call 360-397-2130 X 7834. <http://www.clark.wa.gov/community-action/>

Also, the slides from this summary presentation will be up on the web page within a few days.



What access is being made available for organic food?

There is a Food Systems Council that is reviewing the process for growing and distributing food. They are working with a number of communities and small farmers, and also working to build community gardens with churches and parks & recreation departments, which also supports community interaction. These parks become one of those third places discussed in the Aging Readiness report.

Clark Public Health Food Systems Council website:

<http://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/about/foodsystemscouncil.html>

There are a number of community gardens through the parks & recreation department and WSU Heritage Farm is also another great resource which supplements the County food bank.

Web site for community gardens through Clark Parks & Recreation:

http://www.cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/parks_trails/parks/community_gardens.asp



How can we get more reasonable cost transportation from a public point of view?

The C-TRAN board adopted a 2030 plan for a long range plan for our area. This requires support of a sales tax measure. Second phase will contain high capacity transit. General details are that fuel prices are going up and we are trying to contain the costs, but some reductions of service are possible in the future without additional funding.

There has been a recent demonstration of several low speed Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs) at the County Public Service Center. The County is continuing to demo one of the vehicles and will likely be adding some to the County fleet for travel around the campus for maintenance. This will be a lower cost option for investment and for maintenance.



One of the biggest challenges is wheelchair transportation in assisted living neighborhoods and it is very expensive. Would the NEV's have ability to transport wheelchairs?

This will be checked on by the subcommittee and the question will be followed up on.

Below are some web pages that have examples of wheelchair access, but some links are advertisements. The County is providing these links for information purposes only and is not endorsing any of the vendors.

- <http://www.usatechguide.org/blog/wheelchair-accessible-three-wheel-electric-drive-vehicle/>
- <http://electric-vehicle-discussion-list.413529.n4.nabble.com/Kenguru-wheelchair-accessible-nEV-td3319250.html>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-J5Sc6zWKc>
- <http://neurotalk.psychcentral.com/showthread.php?t=24535>



Commenter: Challenging the aging in place idea. Today's discussion on NPR was on long term care and that it is paid for by Medicaid in the majority of cases. September housing numbers came in and single family homes are not increasing but multifamily units are up. In many cases, residents have less equity in their homes, so there is concern associated with the upside-down mortgages and foreclosures in the current market. Will baby boomers have the ability to get out of their homes and move to another residence? Concern expressed that the aging-in-place concept will become obsolete because of the current economic conditions. The complexity becomes more unpredictable because of these numbers.



Commenter: There's a difference between a house and a home, and we need to be addressing that structures other than single family residences are "homes". We will need to continue to review and challenge the past idea that a multi-family residence is not a home.

85% of the population desires to stay in their current locality and recognizing that this is going to be a challenge is why we are looking at options prospectively. The reality is that there is a real problem and that people are struggling with this. We have to as a society be thinking differently as to how we are going to be in a residence that we can afford in a different way.



From being involved in this process, it has created more personal awareness of the community around them and looking at sidewalks and where we are as far as access in our neighborhoods for people with disabilities, moms with strollers, getting to school, etc. Where and how are we going to take care of the huge deficiencies that we have in our community today?

This is one of our greatest challenges with this particular economic state. It is hard to fund sidewalks. We currently spend about \$3/4 M per year. There are hundreds of miles of deficiencies and it is not just important for the aging community, it is for our youth and all of our neighborhoods that we (County Public Works) are working on the issue.



Commenter: Noticed that there was a high ratio of volunteers. Suggestion offered by commenter to have some of these volunteers visit the area nursing homes. Doesn't have to be a long period of time, just a half hour of your time will really brighten someone's day. Giving a gift to those listening, but you have to give it away. Three things: 1. Smile, 2. Encourage, 3. Compliment. If we would all do these three things, we would have a better community.



Commenter: I have been attending the focus groups and commend the process. With the number of people that are aging, question of what are we doing systemically with the banks so that people can age-in-place? How are we going to handle low income and poverty?

Supportive services for those in poverty are drying up right now because of cuts in local and state funding and pending cuts in federal funding. Looking for solutions that are other than government funding; faith based organizations and private organizations. Regarding banks, there is a coalition that is working with the banks to develop programs to work on asset building and to teach the unbanked. The current formula/system is not going to support these proposed programs and the community is going to have to come to the fore to address the issues. The fact that we have cash in the community that we need to have released is a policy-based issue that also needs to be addressed.



The previous generation bought their homes and expected to pay them off and use their equity to retire on; the value is either lower now and not supporting their previous plan, or they cannot sell the property at all. Wanting to know how we can work to provide the home sales to the younger families to benefit both ends of the spectrum and the community as a whole.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) provides about \$1.3M per year and we do some work at the County with the Vancouver Housing Authority on this. The first choice is going to be to age-in-place, but it may not be the most practical choice, so we need to expand the options that are available within the same neighborhoods to be able to live independently. We have to have different ranges. There is a cost in providing affordable housing by the government process. There are rent subsidy programs, and there are many levels of complexity.



Comments on assisted living: Sometimes people choose to move to assisted living because they want to go there, but some move because they require the care that is provided there. Let's not overlook the choice of assisted living facilities. In some cases the cost is not as high as it seems at first review because of the cost of maintaining the household with hired care.



Comments that single family residences are pretty much gone. (As in "not saleable" or marketable.) The 20-40 year olds have downsized and the market doesn't support larger, car-dependent neighborhoods. The future of the market is moving towards mixed-use housing and cottages.



Comments closed and meeting adjourned after reminders of upcoming events:

- Planning Commission hearing on January 19, 2012
- Board of County Commissioners hearing on February 7, 2012

