



CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

Aging Readiness Task Force

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Housing Workshop September 16, 2010

1. Do you think people plan for their housing needs to change as they age? At what age should people start planning for their retirement housing? What factors, if any are considered such as unique needs, age-related physical changes, lifestyle, location and type of housing? What is our obligation as a society to provide public awareness and education? If so, what should we do that we are currently not doing?
2. Although it is assumed that older people move to retirement communities or specialized senior housing as they age, the vast majority "age in place" in single-family homes. Aging in place is the ability to live in one's own home – wherever that might be – for as long as confidently and comfortably possible. What other alternatives for staying in your home are feasible, but have not been developed? What types of services and amenities should be nearby? How close should these services be to homes? Adjacent to the residential area? Mixed within the residential area?
3. Universal design refers to a broad-spectrum solution that produces buildings, products and environments that are usable and effective for everyone, not just people with disabilities. It emerged from "barrier-free" or "accessible design" and "assistive technology" and recognizes the importance of aesthetics. Universal design is a part of everyday living and is all around us such as curb cuts or sidewalk ramps, extra-wide doorways, lever door handles, rocker light switches, cabinets with pull-out shelves, kitchen counters at several heights, and stair railings. Since aging in place can be extended through the incorporation of universal design principles, telecare and other assistive technologies, what do you think the developers should consider as they build housing and communities in the future to accommodate residents of all ages? What can be done to assist with retrofitting existing homes?

4. The generally accepted definition of affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual gross income on housing (owners and renters). Housing costs usually include taxes, insurance and utility costs. As older adults exit or spend less time in the workplace, their earnings historically fall after age 60. This decrease in income can lead to difficulties affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. What is our obligation as a society to address the needs of affordable housing? What should we do that we are currently not doing to meet this need? Are there barriers? If yes, what do we need to break down those barriers? What is our obligation to address the needs of individuals who might not meet the definition of affordable housing yet are unable to pay for services to remain in their home?