



# Age Matters Report Update April, 2015



# Age Matters



**DENVER**  
THE MILE HIGH CITY

## **Age Matters Release**

Updated April 1, 2015

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Thank You.



# Age Matters Report

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary ..... 4

Background..... 6

Demographics ..... 9

Identified Focus Areas ..... 11

Social Health.....12

Transportation .....17

Housing .....21

Coordinated Services..... 26

Employment/Entrepreneurial ..... 29

Implementation of Strategies and Action Steps..... 32

References.....33

Appendix .....33

Acknowledgments ..... 34



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# Executive Summary



**B**y 2020, older adults (65+) are expected to be 13% of the population living, working and playing in the City and County of Denver. In our growing metropolis, resources in the areas of social health, housing, transportation, coordinated services, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities will face steady demand from shifting demographics. The concept of “aging in community” will broach new challenges. **WILL WE BE READY?**

Building upon the first Age Matters report, which was published in 2010, this update of the Age Matters Report takes a look at five (5) primary focus areas identified by those in the communities of the City and County of Denver through structured Community Conversations conducted in 2014. These focus areas include: 1) **social health**; 2) **housing**; 3) **transportation**; 4) **coordinated services**; and 5) **employment/entrepreneurial opportunities**. The report includes data from thirteen (13) Community Conversations with 218 participants and an AARP Survey conducted in October 2014. Comprehensive meetings with content experts were also conducted through the commissions of Denver’s Human Rights and Community Partnerships (HRCP), including the Denver Commission on Aging. Findings in this report include:

**Social health implications include the needs and desires for individuals to stay vibrant, active and engaged members of their communities.** Social health encompasses many aspects of life. Discussion in this area includes the desire to age in community, to understand and engage in volunteer opportunities, and to make intergenerational connections. Social health strategies and action steps outline possibilities for enhancement, engagement and empowerment of older adults in the community.

**Housing remains a source of great opportunity and growth in the near future in considering the demographic shift.** Indications are that stabilization of housing rates in the market, homeownership support and supportive services for those living in the community form a strong base for all to age well in their own communities. Many in the area have called the City and County of Denver home for decades and want to continue to do so as they age and watch their children raise their own families. Housing brings challenges and with it comes opportunities for action. The strategies and action steps in this area identify needs to stabilize rates and other supportive options so that aging in community continues.

**Ability to get around the City provides opportunities to connect to social engagement and necessary services.** Accessible and affordable transportation options have been discussed for years. There is opportunity to use and enhance the systems that exist, but some key strategies, such as one-on-one rider training and evaluation of transportation options, structure, and costs, provide a point of reference to make changes.

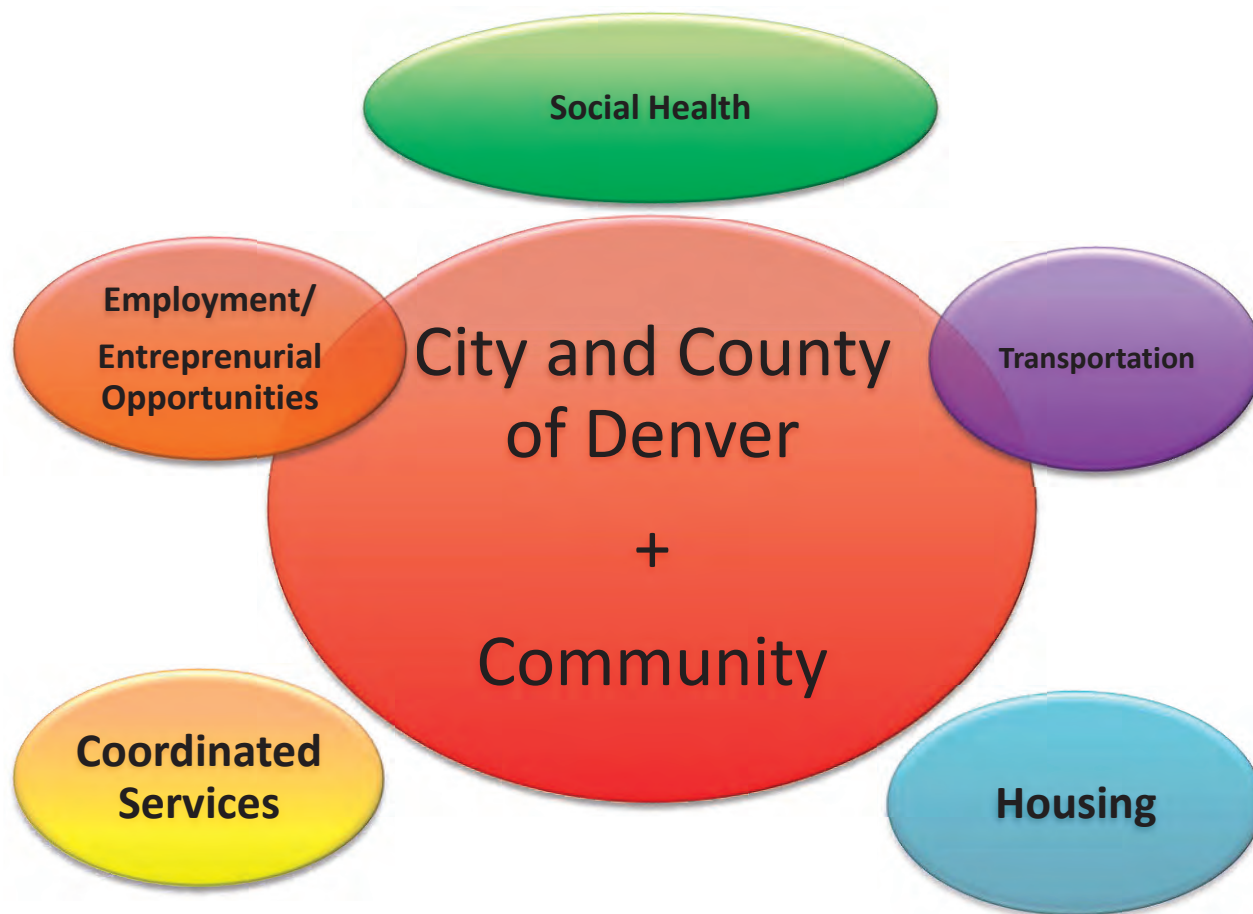
“By 2020, older adults (65+) are expected to comprise at least 13% of the population living, working and playing in the City and County of Denver.”

**The need for coordinated services – where to go when you need something in the community – remains of paramount importance.** There are reliable sources in the community to find the right service at the right moment needed. The discussion in this area includes the need for a centralized system to provide virtual and physical support to older adults in the community. The strategy and corresponding action steps in this area will make service only a phone call or a mouse click away.

**The traditional idea of “retirement” has once again been changed entirely by a generation that has challenged all the systems supporting their age group.** Staying active and vibrant directly connects to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities extending well beyond those traditional “retirement years.” Older adults are looking for opportunities to share and improve the skills that they have been developing for years. The workforce needs their knowledge and insight, this area includes strategies of education, training and industry opportunities to ensure economic and social viability.

Most of the strategies are familiar and have been echoed several times in many conversations. A greater sense of urgency is needed to demonstrate that change will come – **SO GET READY.**

### Five Focus Areas of the 2015 Age Matters Report



# Background



The Age Matters Initiative began in 2007 with then Mayor John Hickenlooper's Summit on Aging. The Summit brought great minds together to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the City and County of Denver as the demographic shift of the older adult population continued. The Director of the Office on Aging at the time mobilized a taskforce of individuals from various agencies within the city to link the information gathered from the summit. This taskforce published the first Age Matters Report in 2010, complete with recommendations for the city that involved bringing a "seniors lens" to policy, internal decisions and discussions. The report was meant to be a blueprint to empower and engage older adults in the planning process, as well as enhance important services in the community. Work began on the recommendations from the 2010 Age Matters Report; however, momentum slowed with leadership changes in several areas, including the Denver Office on Aging.

Fast-forward to 2014, the Age Matters Report is found to be an important tool in the city's planning for older adults with Mayor Michael B. Hancock's vision "to deliver a world class city where everyone matters." Within this framework, the Denver Office on Aging and the Denver Commission on Aging are dedicated to recognizing the value and contributions of older adults within the community. The year 2014 offered an opportune time to update the Age Matters Report with community engagement and opportunity for input.

From May to October 2014, the Denver Office on Aging and the Denver Commission on Aging hosted several Community Coffees and Commission feedback meetings (all referred to as Community Conversations throughout this report). There were 218 participants in the Community Conversations who focused on creating a vision for the City to become the model city for older adults. This visioning process helped participants focus on new opportunities rather than concentrating on the ways in which the system was broken. It also allowed participants to arrive at innovative action steps that are attainable and measurable moving forward. The conversations were held at libraries, nonprofit organizations serving older adults, congregate meal sites and programs such as Volunteers of America's Foster Grandparent Program. The conversations included a mix of participants, 76% of which serve older adults and 60% of which were 60 years of age or older. Participants answered a survey to identify the demographics of this group - the male to female ratio was 20% male and 80% female. Additionally, 57% of participants self-identified as Caucasian, 22% as African American, 10% as Hispanic/Latino and 11% as Asian. The intent of the Community Conversations was to establish a consensus on purpose and values to guide opportunity and strategy identification.

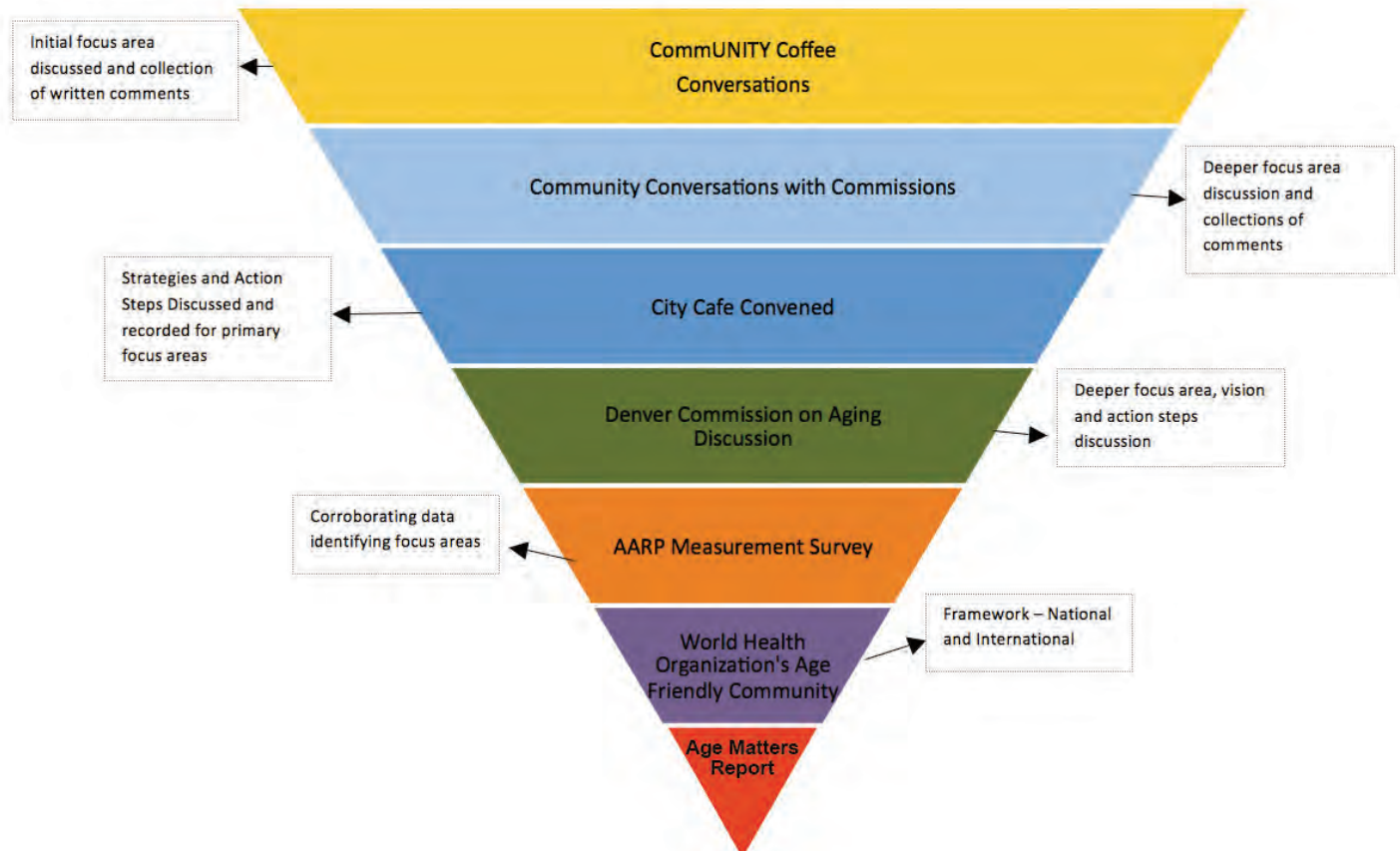
**"The intent of the Community Conversations was to reach far and wide to get the communities' input on the important process of updating the Age Matters Report."**

Simultaneously, the Director of the Denver Office on Aging had the opportunity to survey each of ten different Commissions within HRCP.

- Denver African American Commission
- Denver Commission on Aging
- Denver American Indian Commission
- Denver Asian Pacific American Commission
- Denver GLBT Commission
- Denver Immigrant & Refugee Commission
- Denver Latino Commission
- Denver Strategic Partnerships Commission
- Denver Commission for People with Disabilities
- Denver Women’s Commission

Participants from the commissions were, asked to envision a model city for older adults. The opportunity to talk with content experts from each commission gave new insight into the important relationship between age, class, race, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. The ideas generated from these conversations were recorded and utilized in updating the Age Matters Report.

### AGE MATTERS UPDATE PROCESS



## Background

The Denver Commission on Aging (DCOA) participated in the overall process by refining the results from the Community Conversations to determine appropriate vision statements for each primary focus area. Additionally, DCOA members carefully considered the strategies and action steps from the Community Conversations. They looked at each strategy to decide on: 1) clarity; 2) changes; and 3) additional information needed. This process encouraged further refining of the results by key informants in the area of aging.

To bring the strategies and action steps of the 2015 Age Matters Report to a new level, Mayor Michael B. Hancock signed a Letter of Intent to become a member of the World Health Organization's Network of Age-Friendly Communities Program in partnership with AARP in September 2014. This network provides a national and international framework to the updated Age Matters Report and will further hold the city accountable to the plan for making "Denver a world class city where everyone matters." Through this partnership, AARP conducted a baseline survey in October 2014 entitled "Creating an Age Friendly City: The 2014 Neighborhood Survey of AARP Members Age 50-plus in Denver, CO" (Appendix D and E). It was distributed to 3,000 AARP members in the City, 727 responded. In this survey, 47% of participants self-identified as Caucasian, 38% as African American, 5% as American Indian, 7% as Hispanic/Latino and 0% as Asian. Additionally, 80 individuals were asked by the Denver Office on Aging to complete the AARP survey, separate from the sample of AARP Members Age 50-plus – 43 surveys were received. Seventy-two percent (72%) of those answering this survey identified as being 65 years of age and older. The results from this survey were compiled by AARP and a preliminary report was sent and included in the Age Matters Update. To view the full AARP survey report, please visit [www.denvergov.org/aging](http://www.denvergov.org/aging).



# Demographics



## Colorado Demographics

**D**enver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) reports that currently one in six Coloradans are age 60 and older and by 2035 that proportion will have expanded to one in four.<sup>1</sup> The Colorado Demographer's Office, using 2012 data, forecasted "by 2030, Colorado's population 65+ will be 125% larger than it was in 2010 growing from 555,000 to 1,243,000."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in the decade between 2010 and 2020, there will be 155 Coloradans turning 65 years of age on a daily basis.

"In the decade between 2010 and 2020 – there will be 155 Coloradans turning 65 years of age on a daily basis."

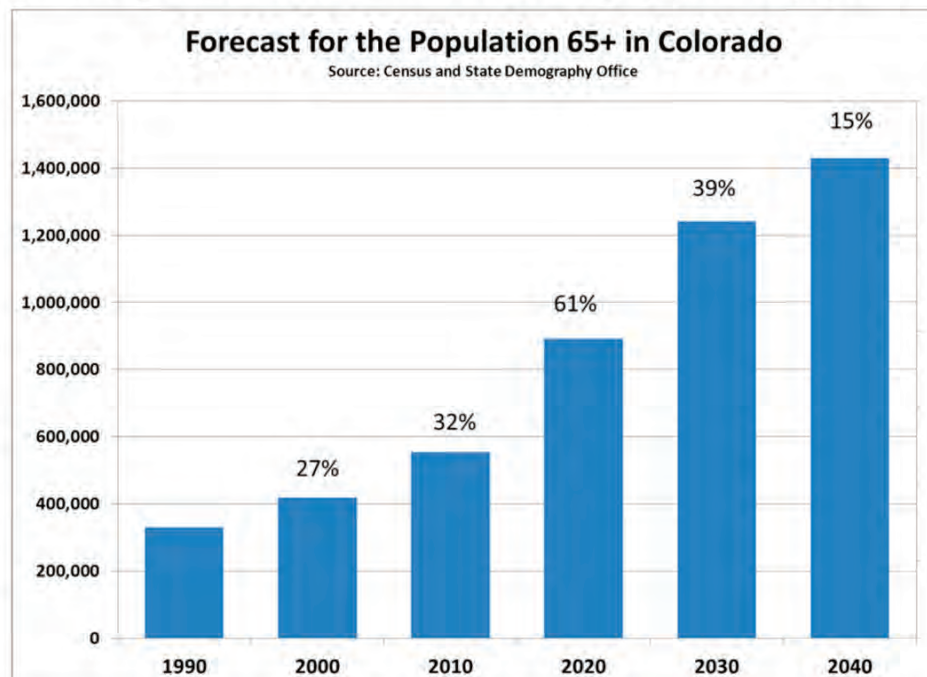
Additionally, the Colorado Latino Age Wave projects in "*It, Too, Takes a Village Caregiving for Metro Denver's Latino Elders – A Report from Colorado Latino Age Wave*," that "...from 2000-2010 the number of Colorado Latinos 55+ rose 76.9% compared to 51.9% for all races in the same age group. By 2030 Latinos of all ages will increase by 174% compared to a projected 31% rise among white non-Latinos."<sup>3</sup>

The question now for the state of Colorado becomes, "Are We Ready?" At this time, the consensus seems to be not to the extent that we need to be. DRCOG reports, "As the largest generation in history begins to retire, unprecedented demands are being placed on public and private systems that service Colorado's older adults and their families. It is of paramount importance we lay the groundwork for outcome-based initiatives when addressing the growing population."<sup>4</sup> There are opportunities that come with a population shift this drastic, and it is necessary for communities to think creatively to harness the possibilities.

## City and County of Denver Demographics

This brings us to the demographics being recorded in the City and County of Denver. The Colorado Demographer's Office recognizes Denver as the second largest county in

Source: Department of Local Affairs State Demography Office – July 2012



Source: Department of Local Affairs State Demography Office – July 2012

## Demographics

the state, right behind El Paso, with a total population of 622,263 in 2012.<sup>5</sup> Older Adults (65+) in the City and County of Denver account for 10% of the population at 62,132, as recorded by Housing Denver.<sup>6</sup> By 2020, the 65+ population is forecast to be 13% of the Denver population. Housing Denver also notes that “27% of seniors earn less than 30% AMI (Average Median Income) and 15% are living in poverty. In addition, 39% of seniors have a disability.” Therefore, the population is increasing on a daily basis and a percentage of older adults are finding challenges with finances and physical capabilities as they age. As 2015 begins, the opportunity and the need for the City and County of Denver to affect systems change is unprecedented.

“... this update of the Age Matters Report is designed to highlight identified focus areas that contribute to economic and social viability.”

Another important finding from the Colorado Demographer’s Offices is that older adults, those 65+, are migrating out of the City and County of Denver at a rate of 3% annually.<sup>7</sup> Most of these individuals are relocating to Jefferson and Douglas counties at the highest rates. The discussion of migration is related to many of the topics found in this report: transportation, housing, social health and coordinated services. The 2014 AARP survey indicates that a majority of those citizens polled believe it is “not very likely” or “not at all likely” that they will move outside of the City and County of Denver in their retirement years. However, while this may reflect the feeling of individuals not wanting to leave the city, other realities may make it difficult to continue maintaining homes within the City and County of Denver.

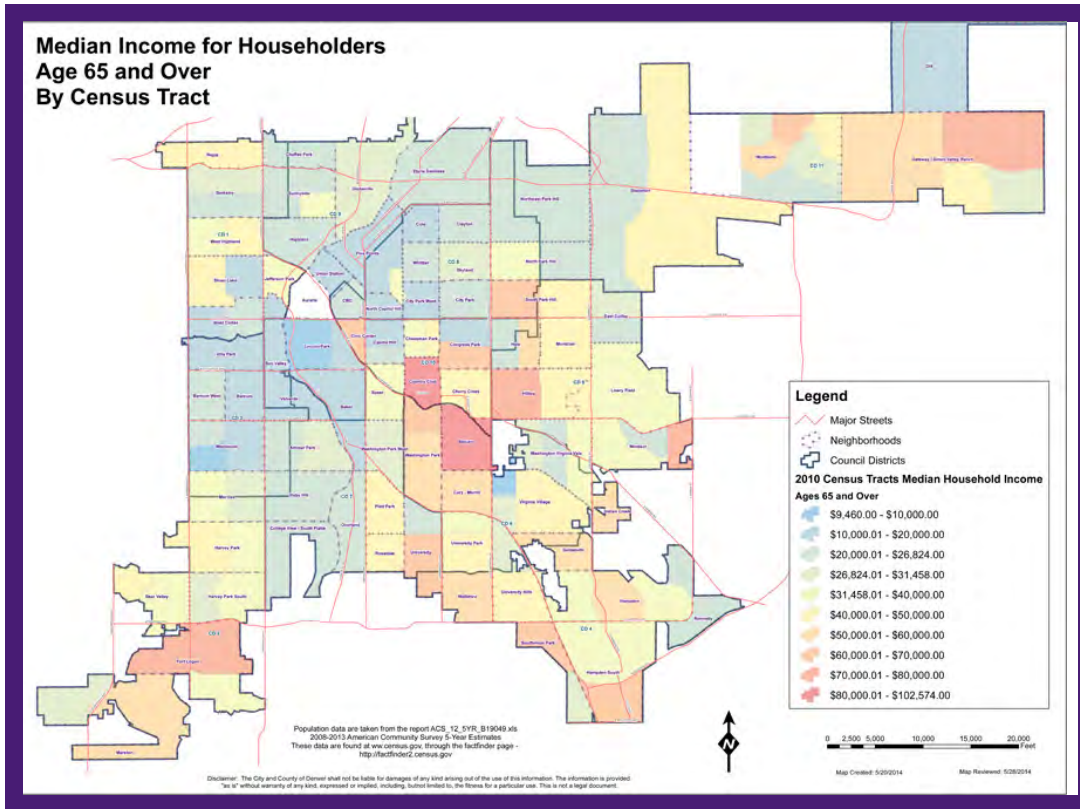
### City and County of Denver Population of 65+ by Ethnicity

	2010	2011	2012	2013
American Indian	375	402	436	472
Asian	1957	2085	2241	2414
African American/Black	6930	7290	7675	8098
Hispanic	10661	11668	12346	13245
Caucasian	42754	44012	43162	48256
<b>Grand Total 65+ Popu</b>	<b>62677</b>	<b>65457</b>	<b>65860</b>	<b>72485</b>

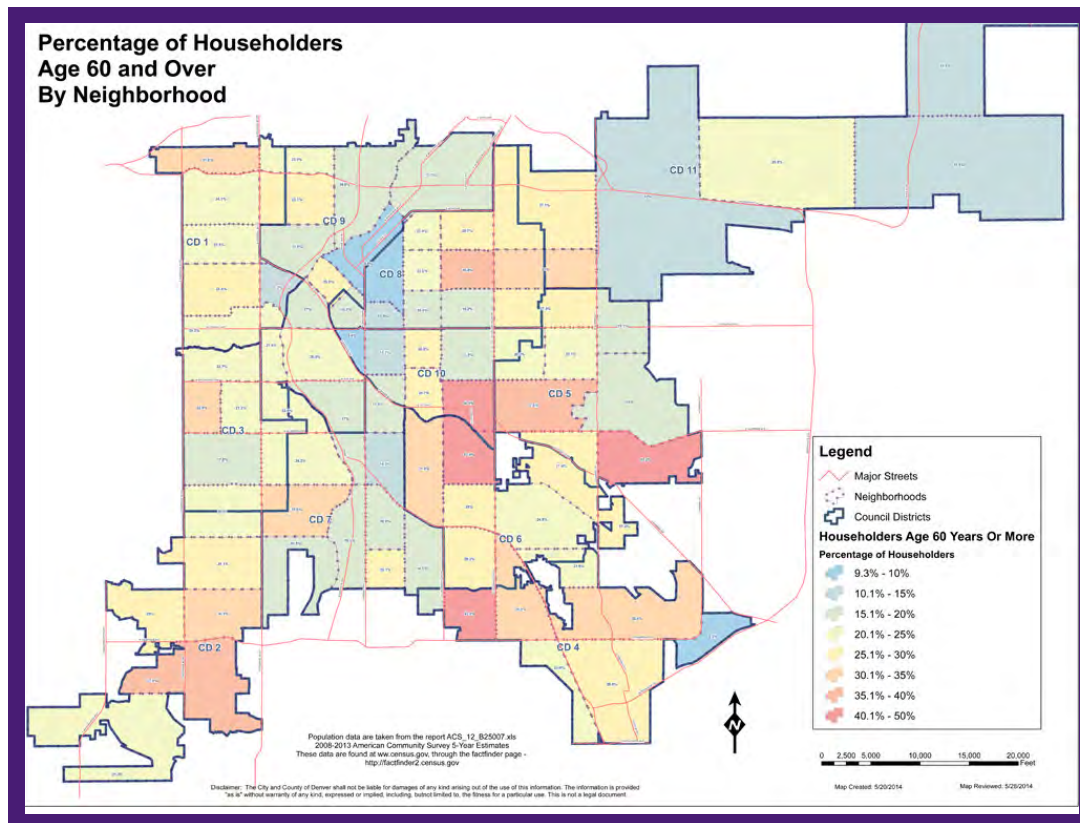
Source - Census Data 2010 - 2013

Keeping intact the wealth of knowledge, wisdom and experience that embodies the City and County of Denver’s older adult population, this update of the Age Matters Report is designed to highlight identified focus areas that contribute to economic and social viability.

# Median Income for Households Age 65 & Over By Census



# Percentage of Household Age 60 & Over By Neighborhood



# Identified Focus Areas

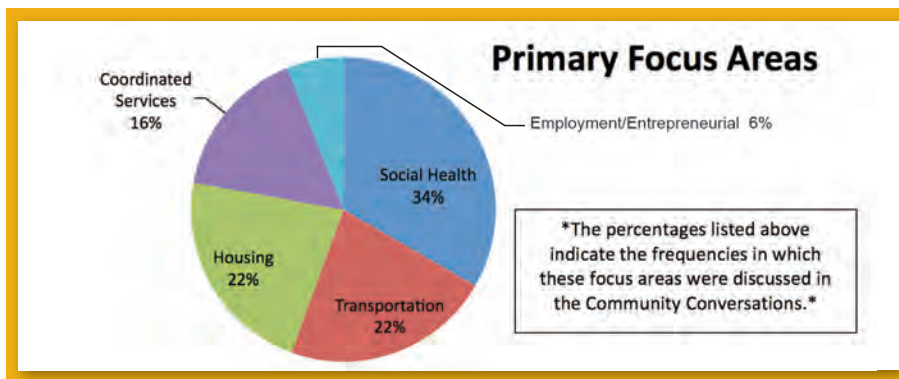


The Community Conversations conducted by the Denver Office on Aging and the Denver Commission on Aging identify areas of primary and secondary focus for the Age Matters Report Update. Not surprisingly, when compared to the recommendations from the original Age Matters Report published in 2010, a majority of the focus areas were consistent with the focus areas from the earlier report.

“The focus areas were identified by the frequency of their discussion within each Community Conversation.”

The focus areas were identified by the frequency of their discussion within each Community Conversation. These areas were then broken into primary and secondary focus areas as the frequency of the topics were recorded. The areas were then solidified by the action items through which the City and County of Denver could engage and empower older adults, while enhancing community services.

The results of the primary and secondary focus areas as identified from the Community Conversations are as follows:



The Age Matters Report update is then placed in the framework provided by the World Health Organization, through the Age Friendly Communities.

## THE EIGHT (8) DOMAINS OF AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

- Open Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Respect and Inclusion
- Housing
- Communications and Information
- Civic Partnership and Employment
- Health and Community
- Social Participation

Finally, the secondary focus areas following these, while no less important but mentioned less frequently, include: Health and Wellness, Nutrition, Financial, Safety, Business Engagement with Older Adult Community and Advocacy.

# Social Health



**Social Health Vision:** Promote a vibrant quality of life that allows older adults the opportunity to continue their social growth and development.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION – AGE FRIENDLY DOMAIN: **Social Participation**

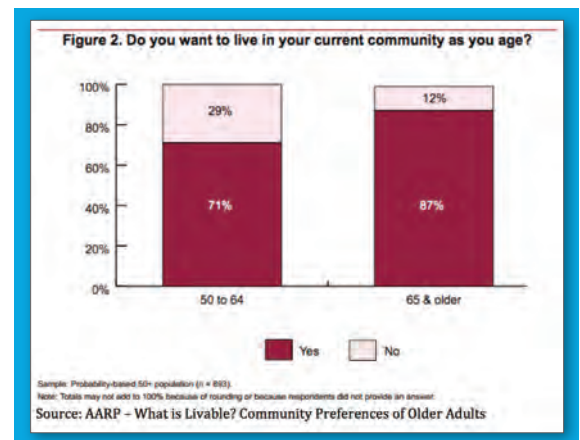
## Why is Social Health Important to the Older Adults of the City and County of Denver?

The concept of Social Health has several components that were discussed during the Community Conversations. The comments revealed that many older adults wanted to connect to their community and remain in the location they loved (Age in Community); to give back to the community they have embraced and watched grow throughout the years (Volunteerism), and to connect with younger generations in meaningful ways (Intergenerational). In general, the participants in the Community Conversations mentioned these three aspects of Social Health a total of one hundred and fifty-nine (159) times out of four hundred and seventy-six (476) responses. These comments were the most discussed in the Community Conversations.

Participants expressed a desire to see “senior centers that provide older adults the opportunity to socialize, make new friends, and be physically active.” Social health also encompasses the opportunity to connect significantly with one’s community. One participant in the Community Conversations captured it well when he/she stated, “Older adults are valued for their experience and perspective they bring, not only from a history standpoint, but because of their diverse perspective on today and the future.” The opportunity for social health is great and many older adults see this as their ideal path for inclusion as they age in the community they love.

### Aging in Community

AARP research found that nearly 90% of older adults want to stay in their homes rather than move to the home of a relative or to the more common path of assisted living or a nursing home before it is a necessity.<sup>9</sup> While services and support vary for individuals, the desire to stay in the community is very strong. This feeling was reflected frequently in the Community Conversations. Older adults wanted to find a way to continue their social growth and development, while giving back to the community in which they have become an integral part. Additionally, a number of HRCP Commissions participating in the Community Conversations addressed the need for services to support aging in



**“Aging in community promotes social capital – a sense of social connectedness and interdependence – enhanced over time through positive interactions and collaboration in shared interests and pursuits.”**

Janice Blanchard,  
President of Aging Better, Together, in Denver, Colorado.<sup>8</sup>

community. These included the Women’s Commission, Strategic Partnerships Commission and GLBT Commission. The discussions indicated that the vision for the city would include “opportunity to have inclusion and connection (more than just one-on-one) to all aspects of society,” and “moving from feelings of isolation to connectedness.” The word *connection* continues to come up in conversations regarding aging in community, as an important aspect of aging well. The 2014 AARP survey entitled, “*Creating an Age Friendly City*,” found that 83.1% of participants believe their neighborhood is either a “good,” “very good” or “excellent” place for people to live as they age.

The following strategies and action steps create opportunities for collaboration to enhance, engage and empower older adults to age in community and thrive through connection with health/recreational opportunities:

### SOCIAL HEALTH STRATEGY #1 (SH1):

**Collaborate to promote programs that offer education on how to stay active, healthy and vibrant, and allow for aging well.**

Action Steps:

1. Identify programs and providers offering such educational programming.
2. Review 2014 AARP Survey “*Creating an Age Friendly City*” to find where older adults access their information.
3. Convene providers to develop campaign.
4. Implement campaign.

### SOCIAL HEALTH STRATEGY #2 (SH2):

**Ensure that every older adult is afforded recreational and cultural experiences that enhance their quality of life.**

Action Steps:

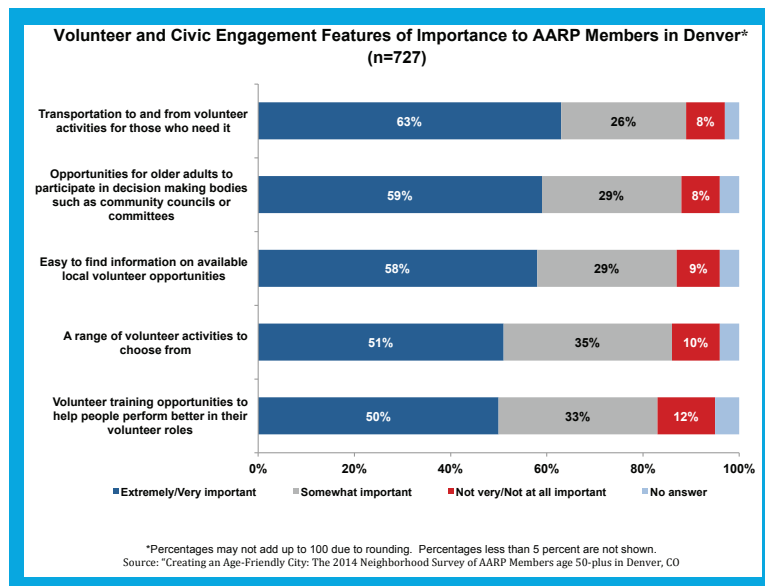
1. Research to understand how the My Denver Card (currently for youth) works.
2. Inventory existing programs for older adults in Denver Recreation Centers.
3. Identify costs to implement existing and create new programs for older adults.
4. Identify advocates to start an older adult My Denver Initiative.
5. Identify and implement process required to fund the initiative.

## Volunteerism

The participants in the Community Conversations said that Denver would be the model city for older adults if there was the “opportunity for seniors to give back using their expertise,” and if “there was a collective understanding of seniors as a valuable resource for community growth.” Throughout the conversations, themes of development for meaningful volunteer opportunities, organization of opportunities and the possibility for compensation emerged. As an increasing number of older adults transition into retirement, the desire for volunteer opportunities will continue to increase. The aggregate sentiment of baby boomers is one of involvement and giving back for the greater

good. According to Edgar Bronfman, author of *The Third Act: Reinventing Yourself After Retirement*, “The United States today possesses the fastest-growing, best-educated, and most vigorous population of older adults in the history of the world. The whole structure of volunteerism is about to be reinvented. There exists a virtual tidal wave of skilled professionals, talented individuals and top drawer executives who are ready to do good.”<sup>10</sup> This is definitely true in Denver, as community members expressed their desire to use their knowledge and expertise to better the community through meaningful volunteerism.

The opportunities for community engagement are vast; however, the connections to such opportunities must be facilitated. The 2014 AARP survey indicated that 52.4% participants were “not sure” if their neighborhood where they live had easy to find information on available local volunteer opportunities. Being aware of, organizing and communicating with the community will enable individuals to understand the volunteer options and find what best fits their expertise and talents.



### ORGANIZATION PROFILE

*There are currently various organizations in Denver providing volunteer opportunities, both specifically for older adults and also for the general population. One such organization is Boomers Leading Change in Health (BLCIH), created by the Rose Community Foundation in 2007. The Rose Community Foundation strives to create strategic and innovative solutions for existing problems and emerging issues in the Greater Denver Community. BLCIH offers three ways to volunteer, ranging from direct service to advocacy, all helping the community. Other organizations that offer volunteer opportunities are Denver Parks and Recreation, Denver Public Libraries, Volunteers of America, Metro Volunteers, A Little Help, AARP Life Re-imagined and SpellBinders, to name a few. It is clear the aging population in Denver plans to continue working and giving back to the community through volunteer opportunities.*

The strategy and action steps recorded below are opportunities for enhancing the current and potential volunteer opportunities for older adults:

### SOCIAL HEALTH STRATEGY #3 (SH3):

#### Promote volunteer opportunities for older adults in the City and County of Denver.

Action Steps:

1. Identify programs and providers offering volunteer opportunities tailored to older adults.
2. Create mechanisms to access the “list” – via phone, web, social media and hard copy.
3. Promote the “list” to the community thru media and partners.
4. Implement campaign.

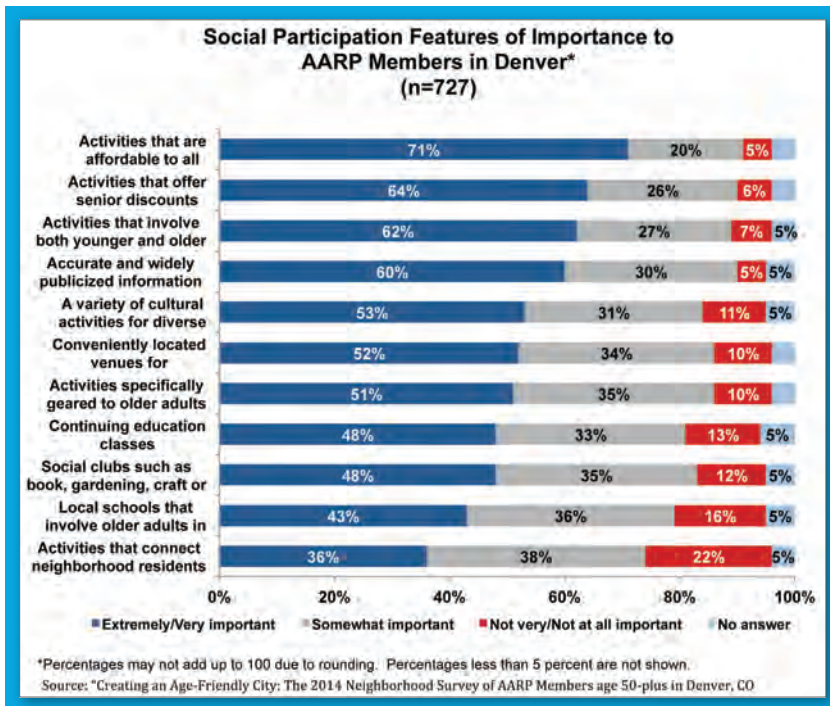
### Intergenerational

The desire for Intergenerational connections came up consistently in the Community Conversations; however, this concept has many interpretations. Comments from participants ranged from “ Denver is a model city for older adults because of its multi-generational scope and growth” to “Denver has the highest percentage of intergenerational neighborhoods and housing developments” to “The City and County of Denver facilitates the coordination and communication about intergenerational activities for grandparents and grandchildren.” The 2010 US Census found there were 80 million baby boomers (46-66); 62 million gen-Xers (32-45); 85 million millennials (13-31).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, quantitatively speaking, there are great possibilities for generations to come together to learn from one another.

**“The term ‘intergenerational community’ refers to a place that**

- (1) Provides adequately for the safety, health, education and basic necessities of life for people of all ages.
- (2) Promotes programs, policies, and practices that increase cooperation, interaction, and exchange between people of different generations.
- (3) Enables all ages to share their talents and resources, and support each other in relationships that benefit both individuals and their community. (From Generations United’s *America’s Best Intergenerational Communities: Building Livable Communities for Children, Youth, Families, and Older Adults.*)<sup>12</sup>

The intergenerational connection is one that is very valuable to all involved. It brings experiences of all generations together for a richer exchange and a greater sense of social health. Organizations that bring together these aspects, especially between older adults and younger generations, find both generations have experienced increased feelings of self-worth and incidents of depression have lessened in older adults. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Community Conversations included intergenerational opportunities in Denver. The 2014 AARP survey noted that 88% of participants indicated it was important to have activities that involve both younger and older people. When asked if their neighborhood had such activities, a large percentage of both participants indicated they were “not sure.”



“Organizations that bring together this aspect, especially between older adults and younger generations, find both generations have experienced increased feelings of self-worth and incidents of depression have lessened in older adults.”



## ORGANIZATION PROFILE

*There are many community organizations that strive to bring together generations to learn from one another, including Spellbinders. Nationally, and through a very active Denver chapter, the Spellbinder's organization teaches older adults the art of storytelling, which allows them to successfully deliver their stories to school-age students— this model is meant to benefit both parties. The older adults receive the benefit of giving back, telling their stories, helping others to learn and grow, while the younger generation learns more about and better understands the world. These activities connect the generations in a very unique way.*

## ORGANIZATION PROFILE

*Another community organization focused on intergenerational connections is, A Little Help, a grassroots nonprofit whose mission is connecting neighbors across ages to enhance lives and strengthen our communities. The work of this organization focuses on connecting generations and creating a social movement for meaningful, reciprocal intergenerational volunteerism. Currently, A Little Help has successful community engagement in the mission in several areas in metro Denver. This particular movement first began in Washington Park and has expanded in areas served since that time.*

There are several organizations in the community that support intergenerational opportunities. In the City and County of Denver, there are many opportunities to enhance collaboration and communication while furthering the mission of such organizations.

The strategy and action steps below outline the opportunity that “each generation has to offer each other and those around them.”

### SOCIAL HEALTH STRATEGY #4 (SH4):

**Influence the attitude of the City and County of Denver to be one that values and respects older adults in the community.**

1. Survey the community to identify the shared values that would be in place that tells us we value older adults.
2. Use survey results to create campaign of valuing older adults.
3. Implement campaign where the messages are integrated all sectors and community segments (i.e. Business, Education...).
4. Promote and spotlight programs focusing on mentoring/interaction between generations, allowing the interface and respect between generations.

Action Steps:

# Transportation



**Transportation Vision:** All modes of transportation will support mobility needs of the aging population.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION – AGE FRIENDLY DOMAIN: **Transportation**

## Why is Transportation so Important when it comes to Affordability and Accessibility?

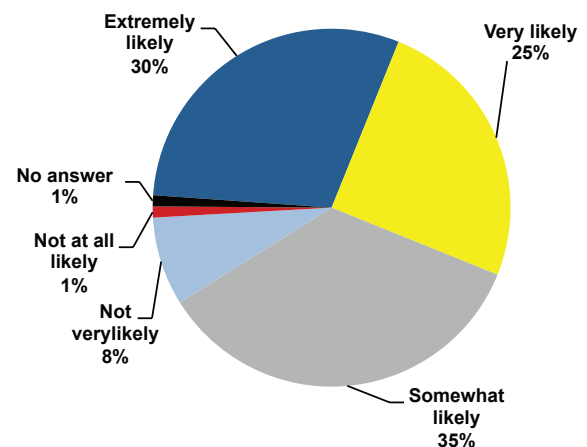
In the Community Conversations held throughout the summer of 2014, transportation was discussed consistently and came up as a very important topic for older adults in the community. From the total of 476 comments in the conversations, transportation was mentioned 22% of the time. Forty-six (46) of the comments mentioned accessibility, and 37 mentioned affordability. In the conversations, comments regarding transportation included the need for: “An easily accessible transportation system that is economical and available” and “The City and County of Denver makes affordable transportation options for older adults.” One-quarter (26%) of AARP 50-plus members in Denver (AARP Survey 2014) say they use public transportation to get around while three in five (61%) say they do not use it. When asked how likely they would be to use public transportation if it were more affordable and easily accessible in their neighborhood, it is not surprising that over half (55%) of current users say they would be extremely or very likely to use it; and more than a third (35%) would be at least somewhat likely to use it. The transportation opportunities that participants focused on during the Community Conversations were those involving riding the bus, light rail, Paratransit service (Access-a-Ride), as well as low cost transportation options such as First Ride and InnovaAge for older adults.

“In order to keep independence and safety within the community, the affordability and accessibility of public modes of transportation have been and will continue to be looked at for adjustment and innovative thinking.”

### Affordability

In 2010, DRCOG, while conducting the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA), found that “The last symbol of independence for many older adults is their automobile. Even after they should have given up driving, many older adults remain behind the wheel. Alternatives to the automobile, if attractive and pervasive, can help relinquish their cars while still maintaining their mobility.”<sup>13</sup> In order to keep independence and safety within the community, the affordability and accessibility of public

**Likelihood of Using Public Transportation Among Current Users (n=187)**



\*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.  
Source: “Creating an Age-Friendly City: The 2014 Neighborhood Survey of AARP Members age 50-plus in Denver, CO

modes of transportation have been and will continue to be looked at for adjustment and innovative thinking. Comments during the Community Conversations included:

### COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

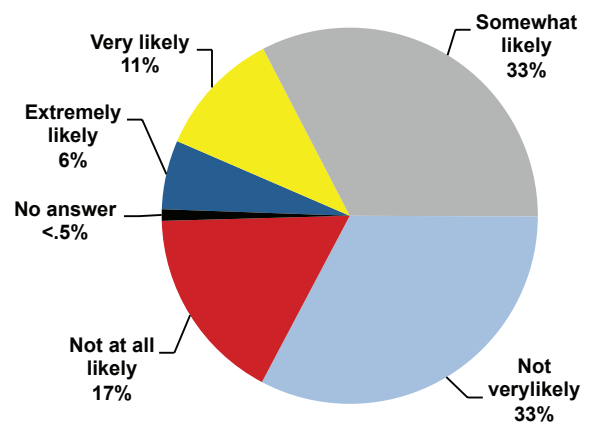
- >> “Transportation access that is affordable for any reason needed. RTD is too expensive.”
- >> “Being independent using public transportation – reasonable pricing and more accessibility.”
- >> “Increased access to affordable transportation options in order to enable activities and community participation.”
- >> “Older adults have easy access to transportation, free of charge, safe and reliable and at convenient times.”

From these comments, individuals continue to pinpoint the need for affordable transportation even with the current pay structures. Currently, older adults are offered a discount on the RTD system for those providing proof of age 65 years or older. The one-way discounted rate for local transportation on RTD fixed-route buses is \$1.10, express rate is \$2.00 and regional rates is \$2.50. Additionally, older adults can have, with proof of disability within the last three months, a Special Discount Card. This card allows an individual to ride all fixed-route buses for free and provides access to Access-a-Ride services at the one-way rate of \$4.50 for local services, \$8.00 for express services and \$10.00 for regional services (rates as of December 2014).

In 2014, RTD conducted a Fare Study with community involvement and feedback. The fare structure is scheduled to be updated by the end of 2015. Older adult involvement in this process is crucial; however, the structure for the discounted rates for those 65+ is not specifically being discussed.

Other low cost options for older adults exist with a limited number of volunteer driver programs within the City and County of Denver. However, as the needs of older adults grow in the community the work to collaborate on affordable options, will only increase. The possibility to be collaborative in this process is essential to ensure that options exist at a low cost for those that need it.

**Likelihood of Using Public Transportation Among Current Non-Users\***  
(n=447)



\*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.  
Source: “Creating an Age-Friendly City: The 2014 Neighborhood Survey of AARP Members age 50-plus in Denver, CO

The following strategy and action steps address the need for affordability of transportation for older adults:

**TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY #1 (SH1):**

**Collaborate on methods to increase affordable transportation options and service.**

Action Steps:

1. Identify current committees and workgroups focused on transportation options and services.
2. Research what the cost would be to provide no cost transportation services to City and County of Denver residents of all ages.
3. Create Position Paper on findings and share with key stakeholders.
4. Design funding opportunity for implementation plan.

**Accessibility**

In 2010, DRCOG reported that, “older residents rated the ease of travel for three modes in the DRCOG region (including Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Gilpin, Clear Creek, Douglas, Jefferson counties): bus, car and walking. Of these, car travel was rated the highest, followed by walking. While a majority of older residents reported never using public transit, about 28% reported using it up to 12 times in the 12 months prior to the survey and 8% reported frequent use (13 or more times in the last 12 months).”<sup>13</sup> The difference in reported uses in the Community Conversations indicated that some older adults need an opportunity to travel with another person in order to become comfortable with the public transportation system. This is not to say that they wouldn’t prefer traveling by car, but once this is not an option or becomes unsafe for the older adults and those around them, participants of the discussion consistently suggested that there should be a program or service to connect people with a companion rider. Of the 43 participants of the AARP survey in 2014, 55.8% indicated they currently utilize public transportation and 93% believe that it is extremely/very important to have accessible and convenient public transportation. It was felt that once older adults rode the bus and/or light rail once or twice with an experienced rider, their use of the public transportation system would increase. Comments during the Community Conversations included:

“...some older adults need an opportunity to travel with another person in order to become comfortable with the public transportation system.”

**TRANSPORTATION CONVERSATIONS**

- >> “Increased education and awareness around public transit for older adults to encourage greater independence and increase travel options.”
- >> “Seniors need reliable and convenient transportation in order to be able to continue to do the things they love, try new things, etc.”
- >> “Have more free access to transportation to and from doctors’ appointments, to grocery stores, maybe free delivery of groceries.”
- >> “Increase public transit service – including more frequent service and connectivity.
- >> “Universal access – whatever is good for seniors is good for all.”
- >> “There is more dedicated focus and solutions provided for transportation – more access to transportation outside of medical and grocery.”

The comments in the Community Conversations include both the opportunity for increased education and awareness for older adults, which combines both the infrastructure of transportation (stations, terminals, transit stops, etc...) and the actual action of riding public transportation. Currently, Via Mobility, a community organization has been working with the Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC) to engage riders in Denver with a travel training program that is free to those 60 and older or those with a disability. This program provides as many opportunities as necessary for an individual to become confident in riding the fixed route buses. This confidence leads to a feeling of independence. The information about this opportunity is spreading.

“This program provides as many opportunities as necessary for an individual to become confident in riding the fixed route buses.”

The challenge remains that as each person in the community continues to age, transportation becomes very important for successful aging in familiar places and surrounded by familiar faces.

The strategy and action steps below will increase the opportunity for older adults to access the public transportation options:

### TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY #2 (SH2):

**Collaborate on methods to provide older adult-friendly public transportation and increased accessibility including but not limited to: terminals/transit, stops/stations, and surrounding area.**

Action Steps:

1. Identify current committees and workgroups focused on transportation options and services.
2. Research what the cost would be to provide no cost transportation services to City and County of Denver residents of all ages.
3. Create Position Paper on findings and share with key stakeholders.
4. Design funding opportunity for implementation plan.

### TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY #3 (SH3):

**Outreach and communicate about the education available for older adults who want to learn to use public transportation and include Travel Training to increase their confidence in using public transportation.**

Action Steps:

1. Integrate community services agencies and collaborate with transportation programs and community.
2. Research opportunity and create a plan for transportation engagement incentive program.
3. Assist in creating public service announcements for programs (through public media outlets and social media).
4. Research funding opportunities and implement.

# Housing



**Housing Vision:** Support aging in community through innovative, safe and accessible housing options

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION – AGE FRIENDLY DOMAIN: **Housing**

## Why is Housing a Growing Concern for Older Adults in the Community?

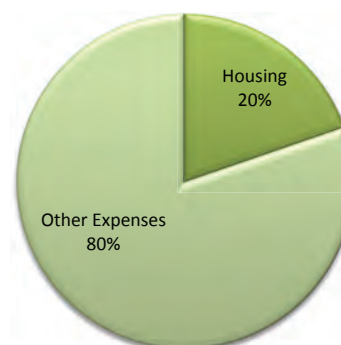
In the 2014 Community Conversations, participants discussed housing and aging in community frequently. From the 476 comments, housing was mentioned 22% of the time. The primary housing goal discussed at the Community Conversations, as well as on a national scale, is a desire to “age in community.” From the AARP Survey conducted in 2014, most 50-plus AARP members in Denver are homeowners and say they want to live in their homes and neighborhood for as long as possible. It is not surprising that the majority place importance on affordable home prices that promote being able to stay in their home and neighborhood.

“The primary housing goal discussed at the Community Conversations, as well as on a national scale, is a desire to “age in community.”

Recently, former HUD Secretary and San Antonio mayor Henry Cisneros and current consultant with Stanford University’s Center for Longevity, stated that “We need policies and design strategies now to ensure safe, accessible and affordable housing for seniors. And with our nation’s fastest population growth occurring among people over 65, finding solutions is important not only for individual families, but for our whole society.”<sup>14</sup> The Center for Longevity reported that nearly 90% of Americans want to stay at home as they age. To meet this need, the Center put out a call nationally “to examine the ways that we can modify or build homes and communities to support aging in community for an unprecedented number of older Americans.”<sup>14</sup>

Successful strategies for aging in community must include evaluating two things. The first is the status of the available spectrum of senior housing options, both rental and ownership, and ways that will help make this more affordable and accessible to older adults so that they will be able to stay in their own home in Denver. The second important aspect is to look at whether the housing in Denver

**% of Income spent on Housing for a Buyer in Denver**



\*Source – The Denver Post Business (12/9/2014) – “Renting in Denver?”

has a wide array of services intentionally and thoughtfully integrated to allow older adult to successfully age in community.

### Stabilization of Housing Rates

Many Community Conversation participants reported that they are experiencing the impact of the rising rents and low rental vacancy rates in Metro Denver. Specific comments by older adults about housing include that there are not enough “affordable apartments for seniors allowing them to live independently” and that “senior rents need to be reduced or at least kept at the same level.” Many participants saw the ideal as “rent is controlled and stabilized,” and “cannot go up over time so that seniors can stay in the same location.”

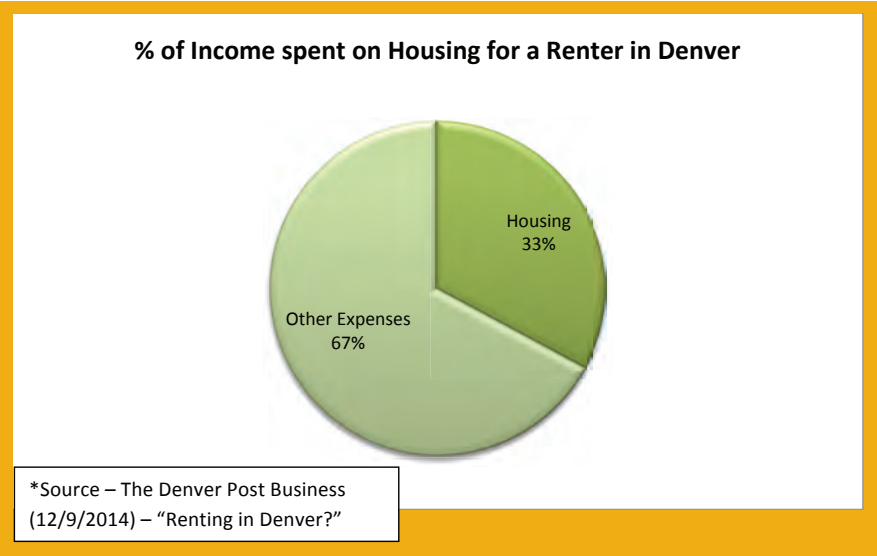
*The Denver Post* highlighted a report released November 2014, which identifies Denver as having the fastest rent growth in the nation, up 14.2 % from a year ago.<sup>15</sup> An increase of 14.2% in one year is in stark contrast to the 18-year statewide average of a 3.7% rent increase.

Post-foreclosure renters and in-migration to Colorado have put even more pressure on rents and vacancy rates. The Metro Denver Economic Development Corp. stated in *The Denver Post* on October 24, 2014, that Metro Denver apartment vacancies are at a “near historic low at 3.9%” and predicted a “continual escalation of rental rates.”<sup>16</sup>

Rising rents and the resulting lack of affordable rental housing are of particular concern to older adults because so many are on fixed incomes that often do not keep pace with inflation or provide cost of living increases. Participants in the Community Conversations explained that although they have lived in the same location for years, they now find that they can no longer pay the rent and also cannot find affordable equivalent housing. Many stated they were considering moving out of Denver as a result.

Mayor Hancock’s five-year affordable housing plan unveiled in 2014, and titled *Housing Denver*, describes Denver housing needs in many areas but with a specific focus on affordable housing. The 2012 Task Force recommendations included in *Housing Denver* find that “Senior Housing should be a priority (seniors are moving out because of lack of appropriate housing, such as single-level or accessible options),” and that “supportive services to seniors” should be a priority for Denver.<sup>6</sup>

The report outlines many different priority areas for housing in the City and County of Denver. *Housing Denver* indicates specifically, “Priority 6: Preserve Workforce and Critical Needs Housing – Preserving and rehabilitating existing low-income and workforce rental housing stock is the most cost-effective strategy in addressing the need for affordable housing. Rehabilitating an existing affordable unit can cost one-third less than a newly constructed affordable apartment. It is critical that our community’s massive investment



“Rising rents and the resulting lack of affordable rental housing are of particular concern to older adults because so many are on fixed incomes that often do not keep pace with inflation or provide cost of living increases.”

in income-restricted rental properties be retained for the future (pg. 19).” Within this priority, Action 6D (pg. 20) states, “Pursue policies and programs that allow seniors the choice to continue living in the homes and communities in which they are accustomed. Provide assistance in circumstances where elderly residents struggle to maintain their properties or are in need of basic living amenities.”<sup>6</sup>

The strategies and action steps outlined below will provide assistance to older adults struggling to maintain their properties or basic living conditions:

#### HOUSING STRATEGY #1 (SH1):

**Monitor actions/discussions taking place regarding stabilizing housing costs in the City and County of Denver. Promote the rental rebate program (for both those with disabilities and/or older adults) offered by the City and County of Denver and ensure that it continues.**

##### Action Steps:

1. Research and identify best practices for rental laws.
2. Collaborate with Denver Office of Economic Development on priorities outlined in *Housing Denver*, specifically Priority 6D.
3. Gather data on the cost implications of homelessness in the older adult population.
4. Research equivalently sized cities that currently have stabilization laws.
5. Explore most feasible means to implement best practices.

#### HOUSING STRATEGY #2 (SH2):

**Communicate and promote programs for older adults in emergencies (i.e. fire, broken furnace, etc...) to help immediately with services.**

##### Action Steps:

1. Review list of all handyman organizations.
2. Establish and review how emergency needs of older adults are communicated by handyman programs.
3. Streamline processes for older adults to access emergency handyman services
4. Publish resource numbers and a list of older adult discounted programs and services.
5. Identify funding sources.
6. Promote/publicize services.

### Homeownership

In the Community Conversations, older adults expressed great concern about paying rising property taxes given their fixed and limited incomes. Some explained that they have lived in their homes for years but as the taxes increase, they fear they will not be able to make the payments and have to move. However, if they decided to move, they cannot find other housing that they can afford. A 2010 AARP survey found that 23% of



homeowners ages 45+ are severely burdened by homeowner costs, paying more than 50% of their income on housing. In that same surveyed group, 73% said that they would like to stay in their current residence for as long as possible.<sup>17</sup>

Participants of the Community Conversations asked for “additional subsidies for senior housing.” Those who owned a home requested that property taxes be reviewed and reduced for older adults. With the continued appreciation of home values in Denver, property taxes also continue to rise. Again older adults frequently live on a fixed and often limited income, many live alone, and do not want to leave their community. As a result, they expressed anxiety around losing their homes as they make financial choices around their basic needs, most of which are also increasing in cost. Statistically, 80% of homes owned by those 65 and older are owner-occupied.<sup>18</sup> This is another indicator that older adults’ desire to stay in their homes and the community they love.

The strategy and action steps outlined below continue to offer financial relief for those that own their home:

### HOUSING STRATEGY #3 (SH3):

**Ensure Property Tax Exception for older adults remains in place and is available in the future.**

Action Steps:

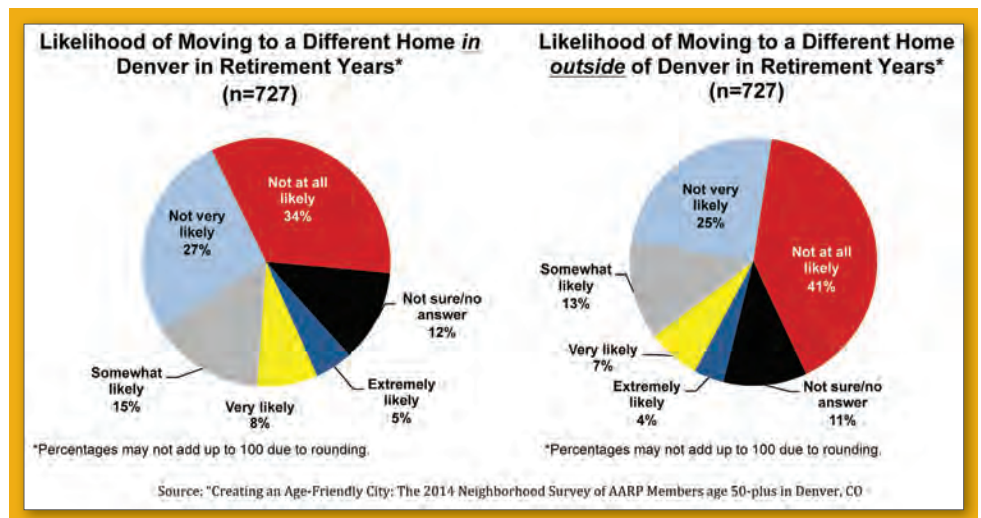
1. Develop an understanding of Property Tax Exemption regulations and laws.
2. Educate public as to why keeping the initiative is crucial.
3. Promote the initiative to ensure eligible older adults utilize program.
4. Create a “reserve” plan to be used when the exception is challenged.

### Housing: Aging in Community

The other housing concern expressed frequently by participants was the need for housing in a community that allows older adults “to live independently.” Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the 43 participants surveyed by AARP in 2014, indicated that it is important to be able to live independently in their own home as they age. The report from The Center for Longevity describes the need for city officials and contractors in the United States to adopt an approach that creates “life span homes.”<sup>14</sup> Older adults in Denver asked for housing that is part of a “planned community with essential services fully integrated in the housing or within a few miles radius.” The services Denver’s older adults said that they needed to easily access include “shopping, medical, mental health and recreational centers, as well as parks, personal care services and transportation.”

Older adults also asked that developers and city planners think “outside the box” and incorporate ideas like “intergenerational co-housing communities, zoning changes, and tax credits and other incentives for developers and landlords to create or offer affordable housing.” Specifically, developers should be required to create and maintain a percentage of older adult and low-income housing in their projects. Other ideas included “room-mate matching assistance,” and “support of tiny houses or mini-housing units that allow seniors to scale down and live affordably and are easily connected to needed services.”

The Commission-GLBT, Commission on Strategic Partnerships and the Women’s Commission all support this need for housing close to services to make aging in community easier to attain and maintain. For example, Strategic Partnerships asked that “Older adults [be] highly connected to city-wide resources, services and activities through the investment in transportation, housing and infrastructure...”



### ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Denver Housing Authority provides services to older adults. These include: on-site medical and health services, meal services and education about nutrition, service coordination, access to technology, and access to education and other resources and referrals that promote aging in community. AARP Foundation supports LeadingAge, a membership organization consisting of 6,000+ nonprofit organizations using best practices and representing the entire field of aging services. LeadingAge offers a downloadable Services Guide, available to housing properties. The Guide contains information on creating health and social service partnerships.<sup>19</sup> In addition, since 2010, Habitat for Humanity has expanded its program to work with local builders who are certified Aging in Place Specialists, as well as certified green construction companies. All these are samples of programming focused on aging in community.

The following strategy and action steps facilitate aging in community:

#### HOUSING STRATEGY #4 (SH4):

**Promote and enhance “aging in community” through easily accessible medical/mental health/personal care/transportation services.**

Action Steps:

1. Research and establish a set of standards for desirable amenities in senior housing, research aging in community service ideas.
2. Existing senior housing facilities employ social workers and mental health professionals and contract with transportation companies.
3. Build a coalition of applicable organizations, both public and private.
4. Develop an advocacy campaign around policy goals and aging in community.

# Coordinated Services



**Coordinated Services Vision:** Facilitate the dissemination and education of current resources available to the aging population of the Denver community.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION – AGE FRIENDLY DOMAIN: **Communication and Information**

## Why is Finding the Right Services and Support Important?

In each Community Conversation, access to information about services for older adults emerged as a strong theme. From the 476 comments in the conversations, coordinated service were mentioned 16% of the time. Participants agreed that some services for older adults are available in the community; however, the road leading to these resources and services can sometimes prove to be difficult. Participants' visions for the future include: "There is a central place for senior services and resource information," "centralization and coordination of services in local community buildings (i.e. utilize 'kiosks' in various areas to ensure older adults can find the information they need)," and "There is a streamlined center for all the resources and it reaches out to organizations in which seniors frequent." Thirty-two (32) of seventy-eight (78) comments in this area mention a system that is more efficient and centralized in either a physical space or virtual space. The access to internet and computers continues to be challenging for a percentage of older adults, either because of lack of financial means to afford internet services or because they do not have the computer skills to search for needed services.

The AARP Survey conducted in 2014 found that 64% of participants found it extremely/very important to have an easy to navigate website that has local service information. In addition, 56% of participants believed access to community information in one central source was extremely/very important.

## Centralized System

One example of a centralized and streamlined system in the Denver Metro Area (Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin, Jefferson counties) is the Network of Care. Five years ago the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Area Agency on Aging embarked on a vision of creating a one-stop shop for older adults and later added community services for people 18 and older with disabilities. The Network of Care website is administered by DRCOG. The website, [networkofcare.org](http://networkofcare.org) has a strong base of provider listings and community information, and continues to be updated by both DRCOG staff, as well as service providers. A recent survey on DRCOG's Network of Care website was distributed to the providers listed in the service directory. The results of the survey indicated that usage of the system by service providers was low in contrast to the high volume of consumers who access the website. Providers indicated they tend to prefer using their own referrals lists.

"Participants agreed that some services for older adults are available in the community; however, the road leading to these resources and services can sometimes prove to be difficult."

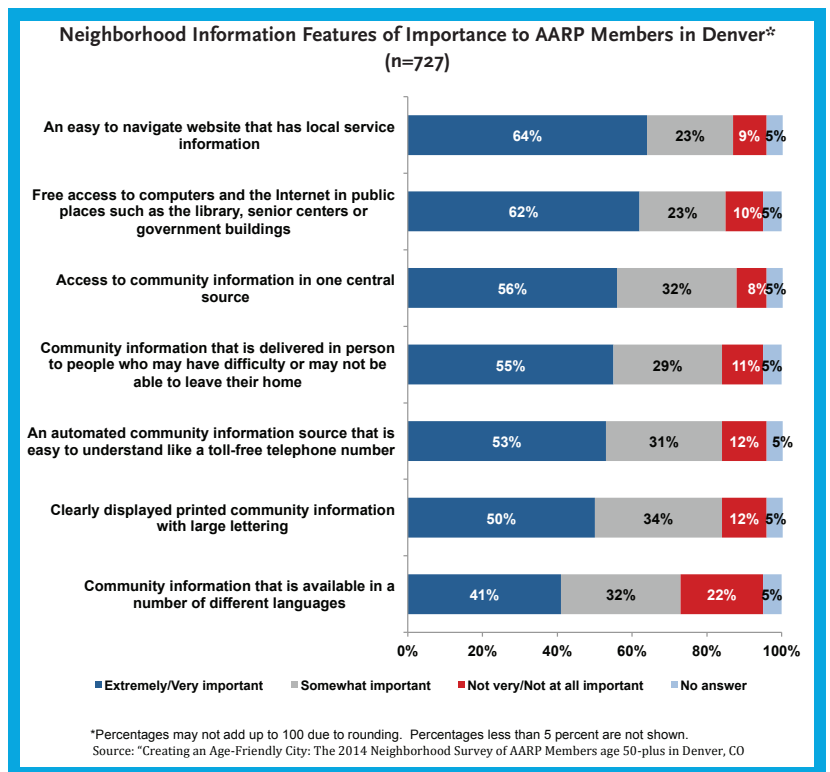
There is not only an online system (i.e. virtual space), but also a local and toll-free phone numbers (i.e. physical space) that people can call for information and assistance from a resource specialist if they do not have access to a computer with internet service.

The Network of Care website allows users to add services and information on an existing listing makes it possible for “real-time” information to be included. DRCOG staff review these submittals for new or updated listings before they are posted on the site or utilized as information to callers. There are also other printed listings that exist in the community that older adults have relied on for several years. Therefore, the conclusion from the Community Conversations seems to be that there are too many entry points and linking them would help with confusion and time spent looking for services. This was supported by the following comments from the Community Conversations:

**COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS**

- >> “Seniors have access to help when they need it. There is a centralized resource. And the system is easy to use. It covers housing needs, food, utilities, and emergency situations of all sorts.”
- >> “Elders have safe places to live, know where to go for information and their unique needs are met (both needs and use of their expertise), there would be a center for diverse Aging/Clearinghouse for resources/collaboration, etc.”

In addition, during the Community Conversations, the phone numbers 211 and 311 were mentioned. The resource 211 is a community resource line provided by the United Way. The phone number 311 is the City and County of Denver’s resource line. Both have been in existence for many years – they have been centralized resources to warehouse community information, 211 being more community-based services, while 311 is more city-based services. However, the discussions from the community concluded that these systems are not as centralized as community members had hoped. One comment indicated that it would be ideal if “Government services talk to each other, there is awareness of codes and also enforcement and 311 is better known and expanded.” Both 211 and 311 are services for the entire population of the city, it could be deduced from the Community Conversations that older adults are hoping for a specialized system for resources for older adults only. However, as mentioned above, an example of such a system does exist with the Network of Care offered by phone and internet based by DRCOG.



## No Wrong Door

Another idea discussed in the Community Conversations was the need for the centralized system to also further accommodate those speaking different languages and those individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Participants from the Commissions of Human Rights and Community Partnerships voiced the concern that “Language and Culture create a barrier” and there is a need to “create a welcoming feeling for all to access services.” The Network of Care has the option to provide 81 language different options, but there still seems to be a barrier to service when it comes to this system. Additionally, it seems that individuals have their trusted sources for information, whether that being their church, grocery store, neighbor or local library. In general, older adults access information in ways that are easy, feel safe and are comfortable, especially when it comes to languages and abilities. This discussion compares and contrasts the centralized and the streamlined systems identified in the Community Conversations.

“In general, older adults access information in ways that are easy, feel safe and are comfortable, especially when it comes to languages and abilities.”

In the Community Conversations, another contradiction seen in the ideal centralized and streamlined system for services is the idea of a “No Wrong Door” approach. The Department of Communities explains, “The No Wrong Door philosophy is about working together, innovative thinking and new ways of sharing information to achieve the best possible client outcomes. The vision for No Wrong Door is: Client-centered, accessible coordinated services.”<sup>20</sup> A participant pointed out that “Denver would be a part of a fully functional and integrated no wrong door system for Long Term Services and Support for older adults, their caregivers and individuals with disabilities.” This idea came from the coordination among several organizations, both governmental, community-based, and others. These organizations came together to understand the most effective way to refer individuals on to the next “door,” which ultimately creates a system that will lead those in need to the right services. In the conversation this system can be frustrating as so many phone numbers are given. However, one participant pointed out that if someone is looking for a particular service and begins to research the options, “doors” do begin to open, and the person will find the right service. For some this could be hours, but for others this may be days, months or years depending upon their vigor in researching and understanding of the systems in place for services. It seems that both types of systems exist in some shape or form, either centralized or the “No Wrong Door” approach.

The strategy and corresponding action steps that follow establish the need for the City and County of Denver to enhance one centralized and streamlined process that is friendly to all languages and abilities of older adults in the community:

### COORDINATED SERVICES STRATEGY #1 (SH1):

#### Enhance the utilization of existing resource clearinghouses by older adults.

1. Identify barriers to older adults utilizing existing resource clearinghouses.
2. Collaborate to enhance one single list identifying all options for services and to address needs of older adults.
3. Promote clearinghouse through a variety of mediums (i.e. phone, web, partnering agencies).

Action Steps:

# Employment/ Entrepreneurial



**Employment Entrepreneurial Vision:** Support and promote employment/entrepreneurial opportunities for older adults.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION – AGE FRIENDLY DOMAIN: Civic Partnership and Employment

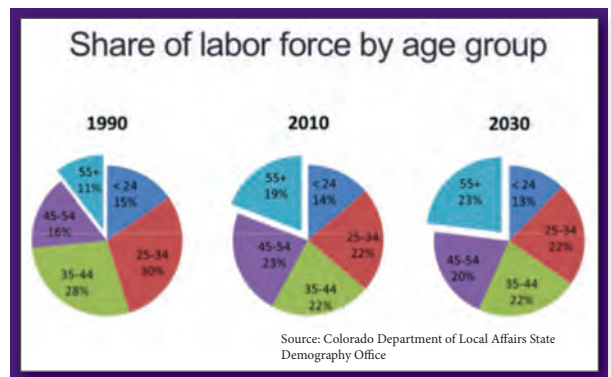
## Why is Employment/Entrepreneurial an important Aspect of the Lives of Older Adults?

Employment was mentioned in 6% of the comments solicited from the Community Conversations. The Source-Senior Community Service reports that, “By 2020, it is estimated that workers 55 and over will make up 25% of the U.S. civilian labor force, up from 13% in 2000. In addition, individual workers are tending to remain in the workforce longer and retire later. The number of workers over the traditional retirement age of 65 is seeing a marked increase, and it is projected that they will make up more than 7% of the American labor force by 2020.”<sup>21</sup> As the nation is seeing older adults staying longer in the workplace and delaying their retirement, several opportunities arise. The reasons for this shift include: the income is important for their survival and that of dependent family members; people want to continue working, and there is a desire to contribute to their community by working. A 2013 Gallup Poll found that “61% of Americans are worried about having enough money for retirement.”<sup>22</sup>

The lack of planning for retirement and reliance on Social Security, which is under great stress with the population increase, have put people in different situations financially and there is an increased need and/or desire to continue to stay in the workforce. Participants of the Community Conversations echoed these very findings by mentioning the following visions for the City and County of Denver to pursue:

### COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

- » “Equal opportunity employment without age discrimination.”
- » “Seniors have the opportunity to work in order to maintain a healthy level of living.”
- » “Fairness in the workplace – seniors still feel valued/appreciated at the workplace. They are encouraged to continue to work, and feel they are making a contribution.”



“As the nation is seeing older adults staying longer in the workplace and delaying their retirement, several opportunities arise.”

The discussions showed that older adults are staying longer in the workplace but are finding challenges as the traditional ideas of “retirement age” change.

Also it seemed evident in the Community Conversations that older adults and the organizations who serve them felt that a concentrated effort to assist older adults with employment opportunities is needed. Participants suggested that the services for employment, just like the services for older adults’ needs, should be centralized and streamlined to provide meaningful assistance to those searching for employment. The results from the Community Conversations can be categorized in two different areas: education and training.

### Education

Participants in the Community Conversations said that as older adults exit the workforce for one reason or another, it is difficult to re-enter because the environment or finding a job has changed drastically. Therefore, understanding how to navigate the process is important to keeping the talent and experience in the workforce. Some comments from the Community Conversations that pointed toward the need for education in this area:

#### COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

- >> “The City and County of Denver provides a communication system for educational/service opportunities for older adults.”
- >> “Create the avenues that connect able seniors with community needs and help the city meet its vision.”

### ORGANIZATION PROFILE

*Several organizations are available in the City and County of Denver, both community-based and governmental, which provide assistance with workforce development for those searching for employment in the community. Such organizations include the AARP Foundation, Denver Public Libraries, Denver Office of Economic Development – Workforce Development, Rocky Mountain Micro Finance Institute, several colleges in the area, and federally funded programs such as the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) offered by SER and AARP in the Denver Metro area.*

However, even with all the programs listed above -- and many more -- participants of the Community Conversations continually indicated that older workers are not welcome back into the workforce. Participants in several conversations argued that older adults have a vast amount of experience and can contribute to the workplace in valuable ways; however, many older workers feel discriminated against because of their age.

The following strategy and corresponding action steps may provide more employment opportunities and enhance those that already exist, as well as create a more welcoming environment for older adults in the workplace:

## EMPLOYMENT/ENTREPRENEURIAL STRATEGY #1 (SH1):

### Promote opportunities for employment/entrepreneurial activities among older adults in the City and County of Denver

#### Action Steps:

1. Identify existing employment/entrepreneurial networks.
2. Gather existing and current data identifying employment needs, opportunities and entrepreneurial opportunities.
3. Support current venue(s) that provide help and promote available resources.
4. Promote the value of hiring older adults.

## Training

Technology advances were also discussed as one of the barriers that older adults face in the workplace. Some individuals have had the opportunity for training in this area, while others have little or no training. However, it is also note-worthy that older adults, through experience in the workforce and life in general, have skills and valuable insights to offer the workforce. These may far exceed any need to understand technology advances. One study supports this with findings that indicate, “Employers rate older workers high on characteristics such as judgment, commitment to quality, attendance, and punctuality”.<sup>20</sup>

Participants of the Community Conversations highlighted the need for “Opportunities for training and re-tooling for seasoned adults geared towards increasing resources and networks that serve the population.” Older adults strongly desire to be valued in the workforce. They consistently said that they need to understand the training available.

The following strategies and corresponding action steps can provide and enhance employment opportunities, as well as create a welcoming environment for older adults through training:

## EMPLOYMENT/ENTREPRENEURIAL STRATEGY #2 (SH2):

#### Action Steps:

### Promote existing opportunities for employment/entrepreneurial training for older adults.

1. Identify existing training programs.
2. Communication opportunities with older adults through various mediums.
3. Track usage of existing training opportunities.

## EMPLOYMENT/ENTREPRENEURIAL STRATEGY #3 (SH3):

#### Action Steps:

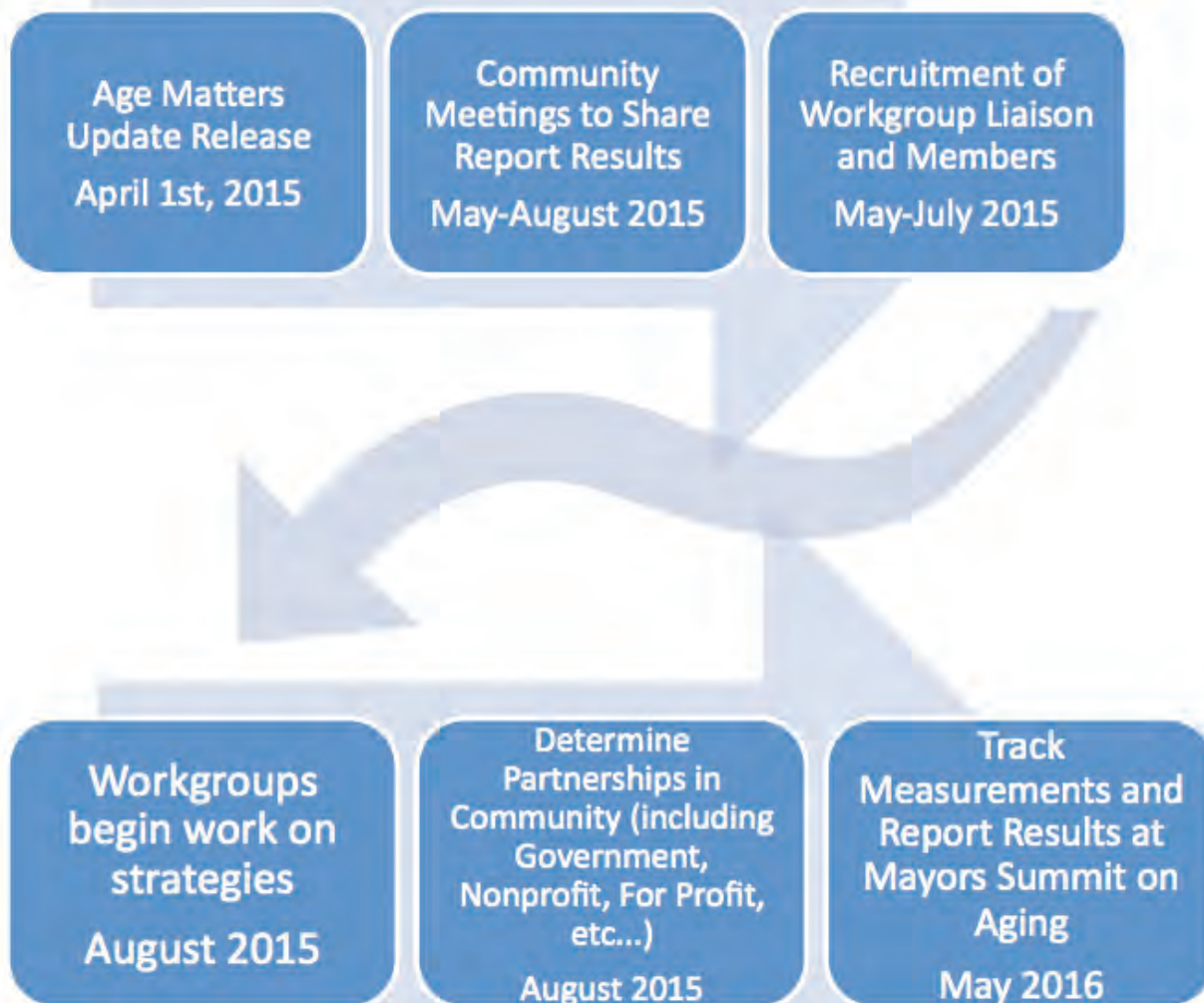
### Identify and highlight existing corporate partnerships that ensure employment/entrepreneurial opportunities for older adults in the City and County of Denver.

1. Identify corporate partnerships with best practices.
2. Support current venue(s) that provide help and promote available resources.
3. Develop support for other corporations to implement identified best practices.
4. Track progress of implementation for collaborations.



# Implementation of Age Matters Strategies and Action Steps

The update of the Age Matters Report offers insight into the opportunities for older adults within the City and County of Denver. With this blueprint of strategies and action steps, the Denver Office on Aging looks ahead to the implementation and opportunities of collaboration to get the next steps accomplished.



If you feel you have a connection to this work and are interested in getting involved please contact Amanda Gregg, Director of the Denver Office on Aging at 720.913.8456 or [amanda.gregg@denvergov.org](mailto:amanda.gregg@denvergov.org).

Thank you for taking the time to read the Age Matters Report.

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## Appendix

Available at [www.denvergov.org/aging](http://www.denvergov.org/aging)

Appendix A: Denver CommUNITY Coffee Feedback

Appendix B: Denver HRCP Commission Feedback

Appendix C: Sample Survey Questions of "Creating an Age Friendly City: The 2014 Neighborhood Survey of AARP Members Age 50-plus in Denver, CO"

Appendix D: Results of "Creating an Age Friendly City: The 2014 Neighborhood Survey of AARP Members Age 50-plus in Denver, CO"

Appendix E: Results of "Creating an Age Friendly City: The 2014 Neighborhood Survey of AARP Hispanic Members Age 50-plus in Denver, CO"

Appendix F: Data from Results of "Creating an Age Friendly City: The 2014 Neighborhood Survey of Denver Residents identified during Seniors in September 2014"

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