



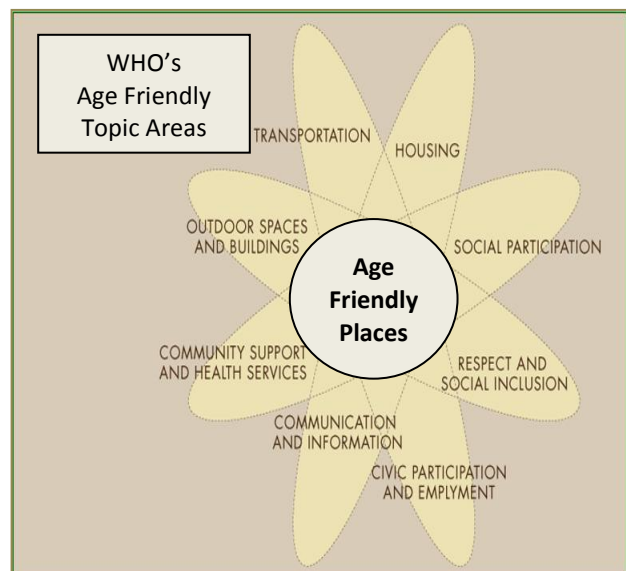
Is Your Community Involved?

engAGE in Community is a community-based participatory action initiative with a mission of establishing Clackamas County as an age-friendly place that supports the ability of all people to age actively and successfully in their residence or community of choice. **engAGE in Community** teams identify and map assets and barriers to place-based aging in local communities. We are recruiting, individuals and organizations within Clackamas County to work together toward our goal of empowering Clackamas County communities to create the supports and infrastructure that will allow all county residents to live in age-friendly places.

Key partners include Clackamas County Social Services, OSU Extension Service, and AARP Oregon. **engAGE in Community** would not be possible without the efforts of engaged and engaging community partners and volunteers!

Why is it important to focus on aging?

The aging population is driving our nation's demographic transition. The Census Bureau anticipates that by 2050, one American in 20 will be 85 years old or older, compared to one in 100 today.¹ Aging adults in Clackamas County are no exception. Between 2005 and 2015, the number of people aged 65 and over living in Clackamas County will increase by nearly 20,000. The Oregon Department of Human Services states in their 2009 Healthy Aging by County Report that within just one generation the population of adults 60-74 years will increase by about 130 percent in Oregon. The number of adults 75 years and older will increase by approximately 170 percent. Older adults represent an underutilized reservoir of experience, talent, and expertise that can strengthen communities.



Approach – Community-engaged Participatory Assessment

By exploring issue addressed by the World Health Organization (WHO), we can put into place structures and services that help people stay in their own communities, make lifelong connections, build upon community assets, increase their quality of life and prevent unnecessary public expenditures. Areas identified by WHO include; outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, respect and social inclusion, social participation, communication and information, civic participation and employment opportunities, and community support and health.

engAGE in Community includes several components that will allow us to explore these areas:

- Community Forum
- One-on-One Interviews
- County-wide Telephone Survey
- Online survey
- Community Asset MAPPS (Mapping Attributes: Participatory Photographic Surveys)
- Results and Resources Summit

Community Forum

The **engAGE in Community** initiative was officially launched on May 18th, 2010 at the Clackamas Community College Gregory Forum. Over 100 local residents and numerous key decision-makers attended the event. Following educational presentations by local aging-in-place experts, including Margaret Neal from the PSU Institute on Aging, a forum polling activity revealed that over 83 percent of attendees agreed that today, Clackamas County is NOT an age-friendly place. Further discussion of age-friendly issues continued during two “break-out” group conversations - first, organized by geographic regions and the second based on self-selected area of interest, such as transportation or housing.

One-on-One Interviews



Over a dozen trained **engAGE in Community** interviewers have volunteered over 63 hours conducting interviews with 121 older adults who utilize senior centers or who live in low income senior housing. Participants, 33% of whom were 75 years or older, were interviewed regarding their experience of community supports and barriers to living and aging successfully in their place of choice. Interviews have been conducted in Clackamas County communities: Canby, Estacada, Hoodland, Hillside, Lake Oswego, Milwaukie, Molalla, Sandy, and just recently Wilsonville. Additional interviews are being

scheduled for early 2011 intended to reach out to the Hispanic community across the County. Interview data is intended to be anecdotal in nature and will be used to personalize the experience of aging in Clackamas County and supplement the objective data that will be collected in the county-wide survey. While most interviews have been completed, a detailed evaluation of these data will be conducted when all project components are completed and reported. (*Wilsonville data not represented in this report –to be included in future report*). However, we can share that an initial review of the data tells us the following:

Housing environment:

- ❖ When asked, *have you moved from one residence to another in the last three years*, about 85 percent responded “No”. Some of the responses to the question “What are some of the reasons you might consider moving?” include “needing or wanting a different physical residence, changes in family composition, financial considerations, need for assistance with daily activities and self care, lack of transportation, not wanting to live alone, too much land, wanting to live with a family member, and loneliness.

Social environment:

- ❖ When asked, *do you get out and socialize as much as you would like?* , about 35 percent of interviewees responded “No”. When asked *why*, responses included “poor health, medical problems, language barriers, no transportation, no one to go with, and not knowing why”.

Transportation

- ❖ When ask, *what are the ways that you get around?* 57 percent of people responded that they drove themselves, 42 percent said they walked or rode a bicycle, 35 percent said they got around with help from friends and family, 34 percent said they used public transportation, 32 percent said they used the a senior center bus, and 15 percent said they car pooled. Clearly, older adults in Clackamas County utilize more than one mode of transportation to get around. Other forms include: a scooter, taxi service, a caregiver driver, and ATV.

Access to services

- ❖ When ask, *who do you call when you need help?* 88 percent of people questioned said they would call a friend or family member. 25 percent said they would call a senior

center, 15 percent said they would call a church, two people said they would call no one, one person said they would call the Clackamas County I &R referral number (211), and one person said they didn't know who to call. A few other others comments include: calling their doctor, caregiver, or Clackamas County Social Services.

- ❖ When asked, *do you have an emergency preparedness plan?* 47 percent responded "Yes".

Physical activity

- ❖ When asked about issues regarding physical activity, such as, *do you get as much physical activity as you would like to or should?*, over 40 percent responded "No". When ask why not, reasons included health constraints, lack of interest, no companion to exercise with, wheelchair bound, no sidewalks, and an environment that makes exercising difficult.

We also asked people to share with us what they liked about growing older in Clackamas County and to share with us challenges they see themselves facing now and in the future. Responses varied greatly to these opened ended questions:

- ❖ Assets: Many people expressed how fortunate they are to be able to access resources available through the senior centers in their communities, and through Clackamas County Social Services. Here are a few of their comments: *social network the local adult community center provides, local transportation, a city park on the river with many amenities, being close to natural areas, volunteer opportunities, and a sense of community.*
- ❖ Barriers: Some of the reported challenges to living and aging independently include: *transportation schedule for weekends is lacking, [need] more assisted living centers, isolation, negative attitude [stereotyping] of aging by others, personal 'coming out' of denial regarding aging, getting the medical care I need and when I need it, fuel cost, [not having] resources to take care of oneself, living in rural place - no police, less services from government, property taxes, loneliness, and adjusting to being older.*

Giving people an opportunity to reflect on their life in their communities resulted in a sense of value for the participants and provided positive immediate feedback. For example, one participant offered, *"I appreciated the opportunity to talk about issues that are sometimes hard to discuss. Now I am better prepared and feel more at ease going to my children and talking about my future, my needs, with them. Thank you so very much"*. At the end of each interview,

engAGE volunteers or project team members distributed the Clackamas County Resource Guide and an American Red Cross emergency preparedness pamphlet.

County Survey



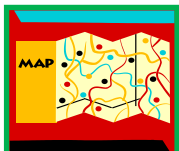
The **engAGE in Community** county-wide, random dialed telephone survey will provide objective baseline data that will identify residents' opinions of availability and importance of specific physical, social, and service environment features of their residential community. The survey was developed with the assistance of researchers from Oregon State (OSU) and Portland State (PSU) Universities and with input from Clackamas County Social Services and the **engAGE in Community** advisory group; is intended to measure individuals' perceptions of community assets, needs, and beliefs about those features. Results will be representative of the demographic and geographic profile of the County, and will provide an understanding of the environmental supports and barriers that contribute to the age-friendliness of each community and across the County. Survey findings can be used to identify areas for improvements and as baseline indicators of future progress. The survey will be conducted by PSU over a one month period beginning in mid-January and completed in early February 2011. OSU will provide data analysis and integrate the findings into a final report.

Online Survey

The **engAGE in Community** online survey will be available in English and Spanish for County residents of all ages as a web link on both the Clackamas County Social Services and OSU Extension websites. Topics explored will be an abbreviated version of the previously described telephone survey. Access to the web-based survey is scheduled for early February 2011 and will continue through April. The **engAGE in Community** Social Services County web page may be accessed at <http://www.clackamas.us/socialservices/engage.jsp>.



Community Asset MAPPS (Mapping Attributes: Participatory Photographic Surveys)



engAGE in Community will use an exciting OSU Extension community engagement program, MAPPS (Mapping Attributes-Participatory Photographic Surveys), to document and discuss residents' experience of place with respect to age-friendly supports and barriers in their Clackamas County communities. Community teams are recruited by local 'champions' with a strong interest in age-related community actions. **engAGE community** teams are trained to conduct audits using photographs that are coded and mapped using geographic information systems (GPS). Community conversations based on the

photographic data provide narratives which helps link people's experiences with their community place.

The Hoodland area was the first community to participate in the **engAGE MAPPS** process. Local residents documented their experience of their community using participatory photo mapping. Community members gathered for the '*engAGE in Community Hoodland Conversation*' on December 9th, 2010 to create their community profile through dialogue explaining specific images as supports and/or barriers to place-based aging in their community. The engagement was tremendous! Over 50 people participated in the conversation at the Mt. Hood Lions Club in Welches on one of the worst weather events of the winter season. Our goal is to "map" five to seven communities in Clackamas County by May 2011.

The MAPPS process will be sustained beyond the initial project period by OSU Extension Family and Community program in Clackamas County so that communities with an interest in **engAGE in Community** outcomes can become involved and engaged. The hope is that, as a result of the community mapping process, **engAGE in Community** coalitions will emerge and organize, with the support of our key partners, and continue to work to address the barriers and expand the assets that create age-friendly communities across Clackamas County. With great and positive response from the Hoodland area, a follow-up meeting is scheduled for early February. We are pleased to report that Wilsonville is on board and scheduled to be the next '**engAGE MAPPS**' community!

Results and Resource Summit

A culminating and launch event is tentatively scheduled for late spring/early summer 2011 – the **engAGE in Community Results and Resource Summit**. The purpose of the summit is to honor our community partners and volunteers, and to share our findings and create ways to move forward together and uniquely to find solutions to the challenges that emerged during the assessment process. Shared knowledge will support a shared value for and importance of age-friendly communities, rich with physical, social, and service environmental supports and with few barriers to place-based aging for all County residents. Our findings will allow **engAGE** teams and project partners to communicate with local stakeholders and decision-makers, such as health professionals, business owners, community organizations and policy makers, with the goal of enhancing quality of life for all people in the community across every life stage. Please join us in our efforts to establish Clackamas County as an age-friendly place that supports the ability of people to age actively and successfully in their home or community of choice.

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¹ Robert B. Hudson, ed. *Boomer Bust? Economic and Political Issues of the Graying Society* (Vol. 1) and *The Boomer and Their Future* (Praeger, 2008)