



May 17, 2016

Chairman Marc Boldt and the
Clark County Board of Councilors
1300 Franklin Street
Vancouver, WA 98660

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR NEW POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RELATED TO AGING READINESS PLAN

Chair Boldt and Board,

This letter is on behalf of the members of the Clark County Commission on Aging, who are in support of the new policies and strategies proposed for the 2016 Clark County Comprehensive Plan related to the Aging Readiness Plan.

The Aging Readiness Task Force developed the Aging Readiness Plan which has a goal to improve the quality of life in all our communities. The plan provides leadership to do this through existing regional collaboration and heightened public engagement. The plan, approved on February 7, 2012 by the Board of County Commissioners, was introduced by then County Administrator Bill Barron who described it as one of the finest examples of public policy making at the grassroots level that he had had in his 40 years of public service. That statement demonstrates the level of community involvement and support that went into the creation of the Aging Readiness Plan. We have strived to continue that level of public engagement.

The Commission on Aging encourages the BOCC to include two new policies and twelve strategies for the **Housing Element**:

- **Policy 2.4.7 Encourage the creation of housing that is energy efficient, resource efficient and has high indoor air quality.**
Energy efficient homes reduce costs and increase comfort, which can make the prospect of aging-in-place more likely for older adults with limited incomes.
- **Policy 2.7.3 Encourage housing that is created using the principles of Universal Design.**
Appropriate design helps people enjoy the full use of their home, host guests with varying abilities, and maintain their independence.
- **Strategies:**
 1. Preserve and expand rental housing for seniors with incomes below 60 percent (established federal guidelines) of the area's median income.
 2. Weatherize homes to reduce energy costs. Provide information, education and assistance to moderate income households who do not qualify for the federal weatherization assistance program but cannot afford the initial weatherization investment.
 3. Encourage a not-for-profit organization or community land trust to purchase homes, remodel using universal design principles, then resell the homes at affordable costs. To ensure that homes will remain affordable, the organization or trust could employ resale-restricted principles of shared equity ownership.
 4. Develop a Clark County Universal Design Information Guide to assist homeowners in increasing the ease and flexibility of their home. *This is for accessible homes.*



- 5 Incorporate universal design principles in Clark County's building code review process
- 6 Facilitate the development of Accessory dwelling units (ADU's) – by exempting them from site plan review Consider exempting ADU's from TIF's and PIF's ,if age restricted to 62 plus
- 7 Allow more flexibility in the creation of duplexes by allowing them in all single family zones
- 8 Encourage new developments of senior housing to be within a half-mile of transit, services and retail amenities
- 9 Allow cohousing to be developed in single family residential zones *Cohousing is a residential model that offers adults an opportunity to age in place*
- 10 Allow assisted living facilities in single-family residential zones as a conditional use
- 11 Develop a shared housing program
- 12 Partner with the Building Industry Association to provide a universal-designed home and information at the Clark County Parade of Homes

The Commission on Aging encourages the BOCC to include the new policy related to age-friendly communities in the **Community Design Element**

- **Policy 11.2.9 Encourage the development of age-friendly communities that have affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options, to facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life.**

This policy summarizes all the elements of the Aging Readiness Plan (healthy communities, housing, mobility options, supportive services and community engagement) that are critical to improve the community's capacity to support the growing older population, which will ultimately benefit all ages

All of these policies and strategies supports the concept of Aging in Place, which research shows, is what most people want to be able to do As stated in such studies as the *Livable Community Indicators for Sustainable Aging in Place by the Stanford Center on Longevity and MetLife Mature Market Institute*, the concept of livable communities, calls attention to the ways the physical, social, and economic infrastructure of cities and towns can promote or hinder older residents' ability to age in place Aging in place has the potential to benefit not only older adults, but also their families and communities

The Board of County Councilors has charged the Commission on Aging to implement the Aging Readiness Plan and to provide leadership, advocacy, community awareness and partnerships to move toward an all-age-friendly, livable community The Commission on Aging believes these new policies and goals should be added to the county's comprehensive plan reinforcing the community's vision of the future of Clark County

Sincerely,



Bill Ritchie, Ph D
Chair, Commission on Aging

C Oliver Orjiako, Director Community Planning