

Aging at Home:

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Building Livable Communities for All Ages

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**Healthy Aging Partnership
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Aging and Disability Services Mission

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As a designated “Area Agency on Aging” (AAA) we develop a community that promotes independence, choice and quality of life for older people and adults with disabilities in King County.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

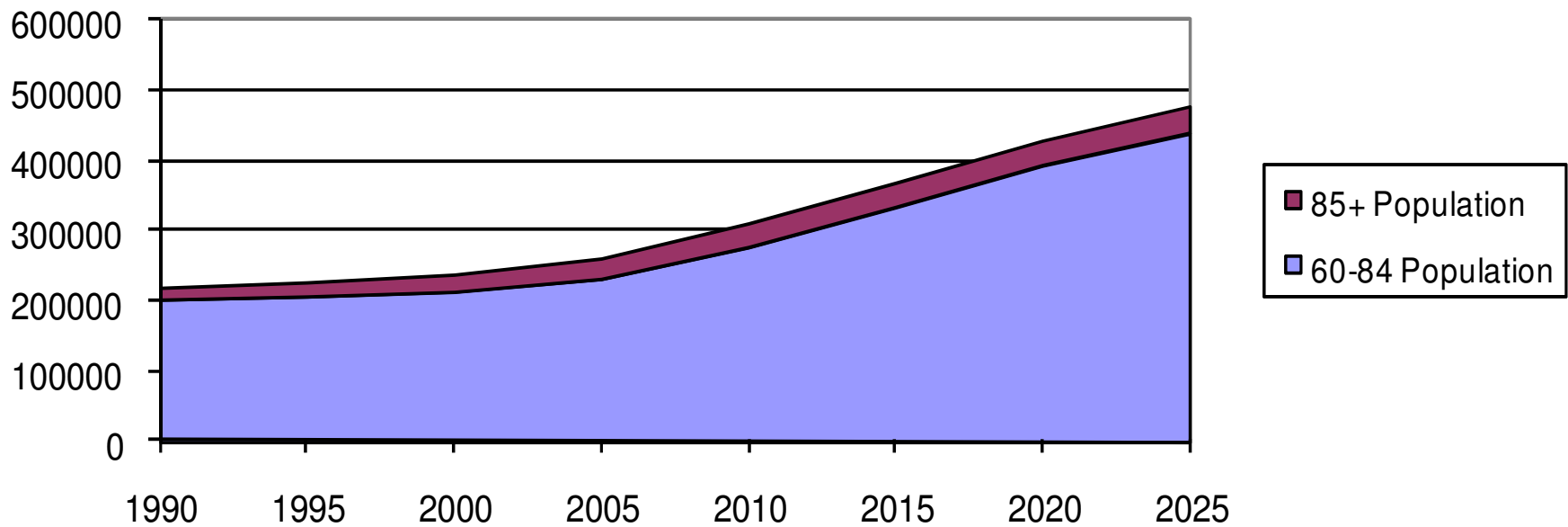
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- Chartered under Older Americans Act
- 625 AAAs in the U.S.
- 13 AAAs in Washington state
- King County has one AAA with three sponsors (King County, City of Seattle and United Way)
- 27-member Advisory Council

A Look at the Future

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Growth in King County Seniors by Age Group, 1990 to 2025 Projection

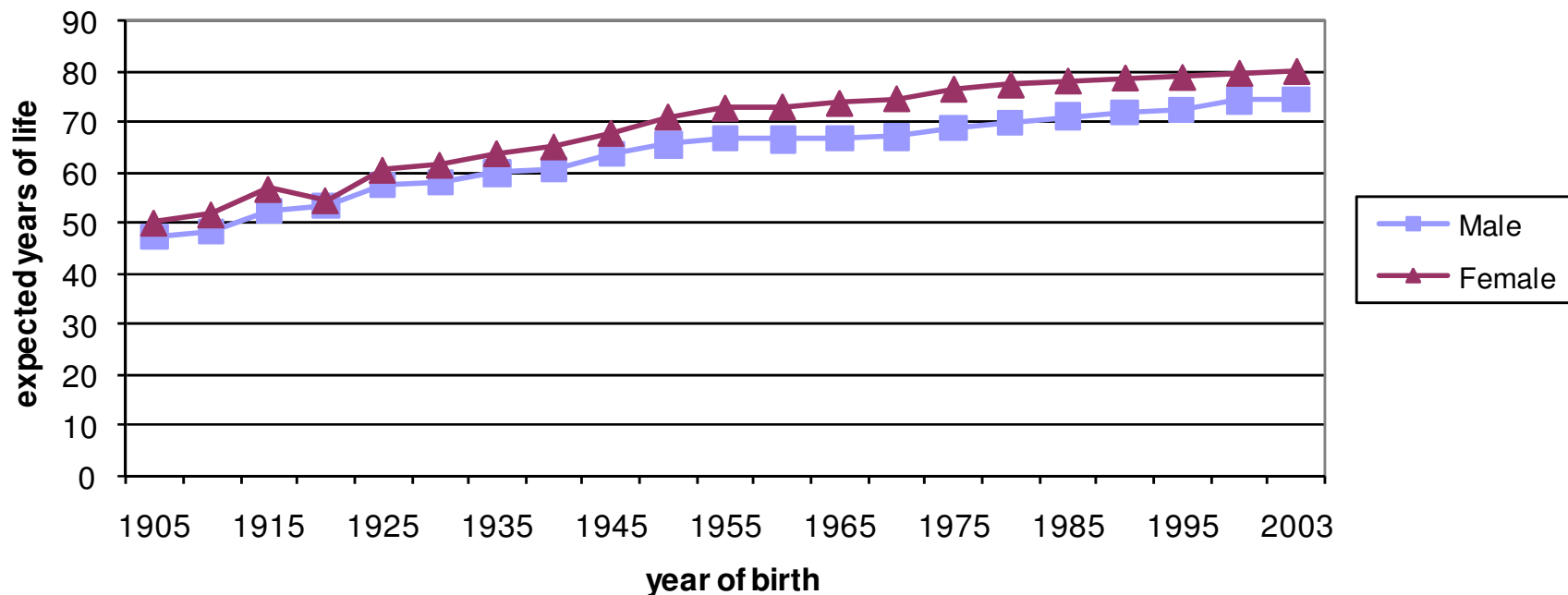


Aging baby boomers to double the number of seniors by 2025

A Look at the Future

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U.S. Life Expectancy at Year of Birth

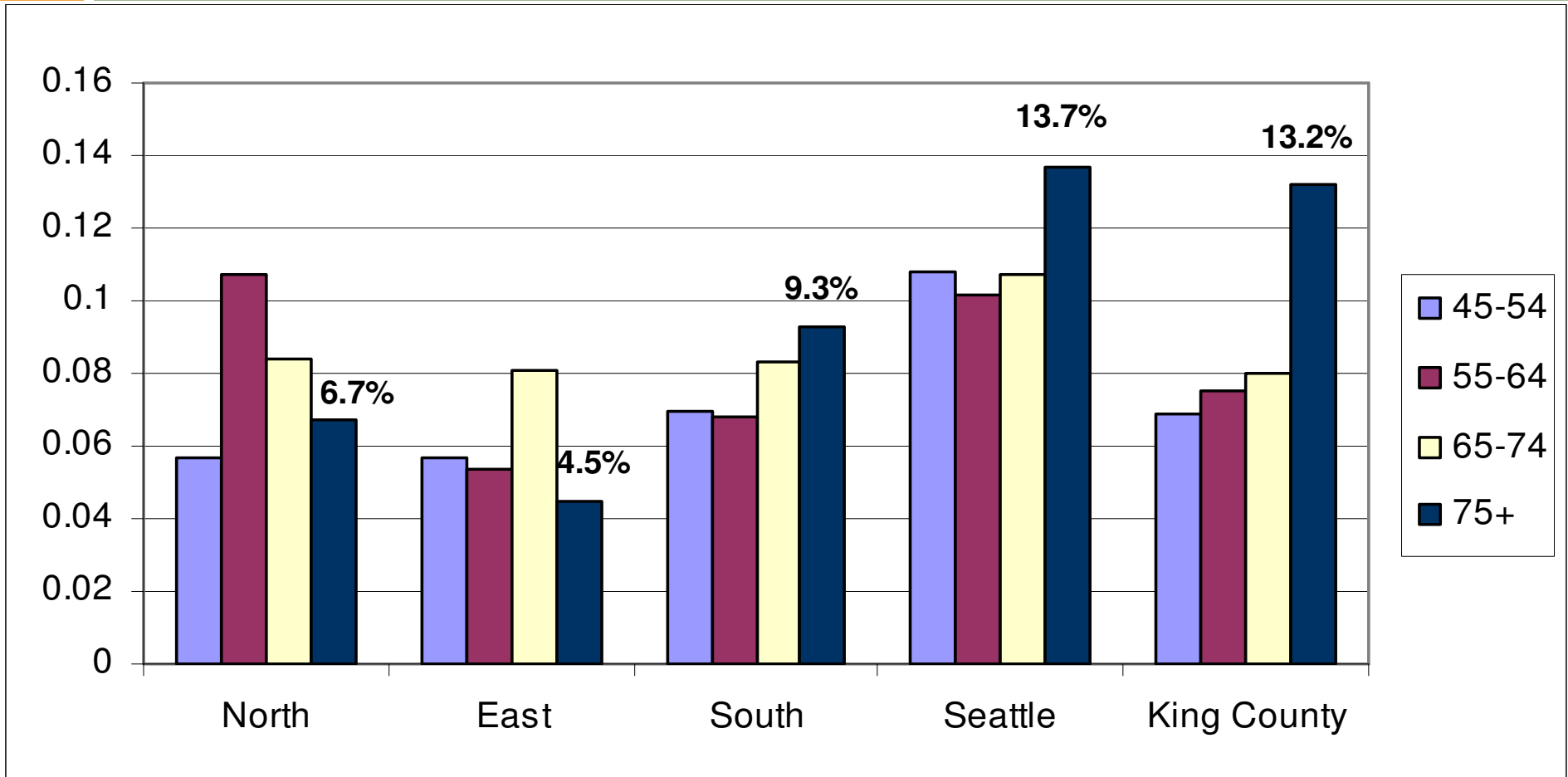


Trends of living longer:

- more years of poor health - outliving retirement funds

A Look at the Future

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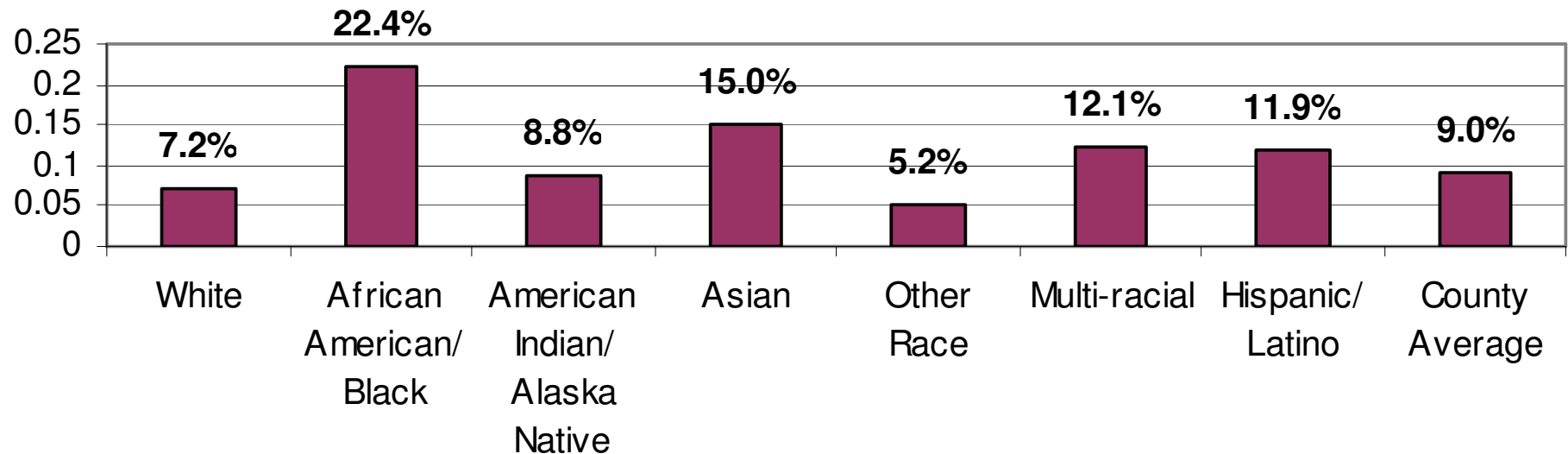


King County poverty rates increased from 7.3% in 2000 to 9% in 2006.

A Look at the Future

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Poverty Rate Age 65+ by Race/Ethnicity in King County



Disparity in poverty among racial and ethnic groups

A Blueprint for Action:

Developing a Livable Community for All Ages

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- **Housing**
- **Planning & Zoning**
- **Transportation**
- **Health & Supportive Services**
- **Culture & Lifelong Learning**
- **Public Safety**
- **Civic Engagement & Volunteerism**
- **Aging Workforce**

What is the definition of home?

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- Common definition – Where you live at a particular time, a dwelling, an environment offering affection, safety and security, a haven.
- Fuller definition – Home goes beyond four walls and a roof; home is also where one lives or where one's roots are; a place where something began and flourished, and even possibly the country or state or city where you live

Barriers to Aging at Home

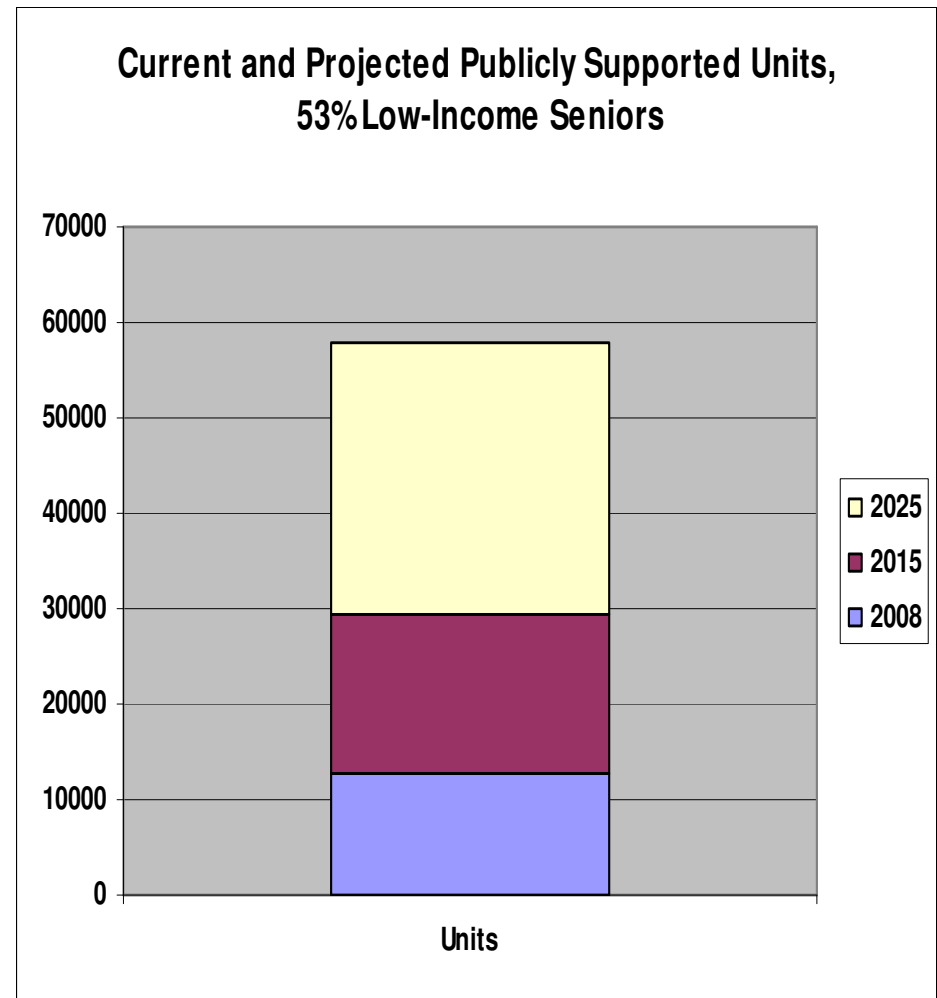
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- ❑ Lack of affordable and appropriate housing
- ❑ Few opportunities for walking or other forms of physical activity
- ❑ Inadequate mobility options
- ❑ Limited information about available health and supportive services
- ❑ Concerns about safety
- ❑ Limited opportunities for meaningful volunteerism

Housing: The Quiet Crisis, 2009 Housing Report

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- The need for affordable senior housing will more than double in the next 20 years
- 936 more publicly assisted units/year through 2025
- This would keep up our current ratio of housing 53% of low-income seniors



Strategies for Action

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- ❑ Help residents succeed in retirement
- ❑ Help seniors remain in their homes as they age
- ❑ Create a wider range of choices for low-income seniors
- ❑ Invest strategically for more and new types of supportive housing
- ❑ Create senior-friendly neighborhoods
- ❑ Encourage universal design

Strategies for Action

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- The Northwest Universal Design Council promote of universal design principals, products, and processes that enable all ages or ability to “live actively by design.”
- Meets quarterly and meetings are open to the public.
- www.environmentsforall.org



Planning & Zoning: Challenges

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- Creating new community designs that support aging at home lacks broad public understanding and support
- Zoning regulations discourage a broad range of age-appropriate housing options
- Planning concepts are very technical making it difficult to provide constructive comments

Strategies for Action

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- Engage older adults in the planning process (for example visioning workshops, charrettes)
- Promote use of accessory dwelling units (both attached and detached) and senior-friendly housing into zoning codes
- Learn more:
 - www.activelivingleadership.org
 - www.smartgrowth.org
 - www.aarp.org/family/housing/

Transportation: Challenges

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- ❑ Older people need better mobility links to stay active and age at home
- ❑ Older drivers experience difficulties related to the driving environment (signage, auto & road design)
- ❑ Linkages to goods, activities and services for those who have outlived their ability to drive



Strategies for Action

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- Support local efforts to maintain transportation funding for projects (e.g. community shuttles, additional volunteer transportation support, and “bus-friendly” training programs)
- Advocate for funds to coordinate transportation systems that serve in rural communities
- Participate in the coordinated special needs transportation structure for King County – The King Co. Mobility Coalition

Health & Supportive Services: Challenges

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- Effectively marketing community programs and supportive services
- Increase in older adults = increased need for home-based health and supportive services, especially for 85+
- Increase in older adults = greater focus on healthy aging, especially for caregivers
- The built environment affects people's well-being

Strategies for Action

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- Increase emphasis on social marketing
- Promote healthy eating and participation in evidenced-base physical activity programs
- Increase support for informal caregivers
- Advocate for investments to increase walkability in neighborhoods



Culture and Lifelong Learning: Challenges

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- ❑ Few community-based arts, culture, and enrichment program target or engage the talents of an increasingly diverse older population
- ❑ Need a new paradigm that articulates seeing older people for their potential rather than their problems
- ❑ “The ultimate expression of potential is creativity.” Dr Gene Cohen

Strategies for Action

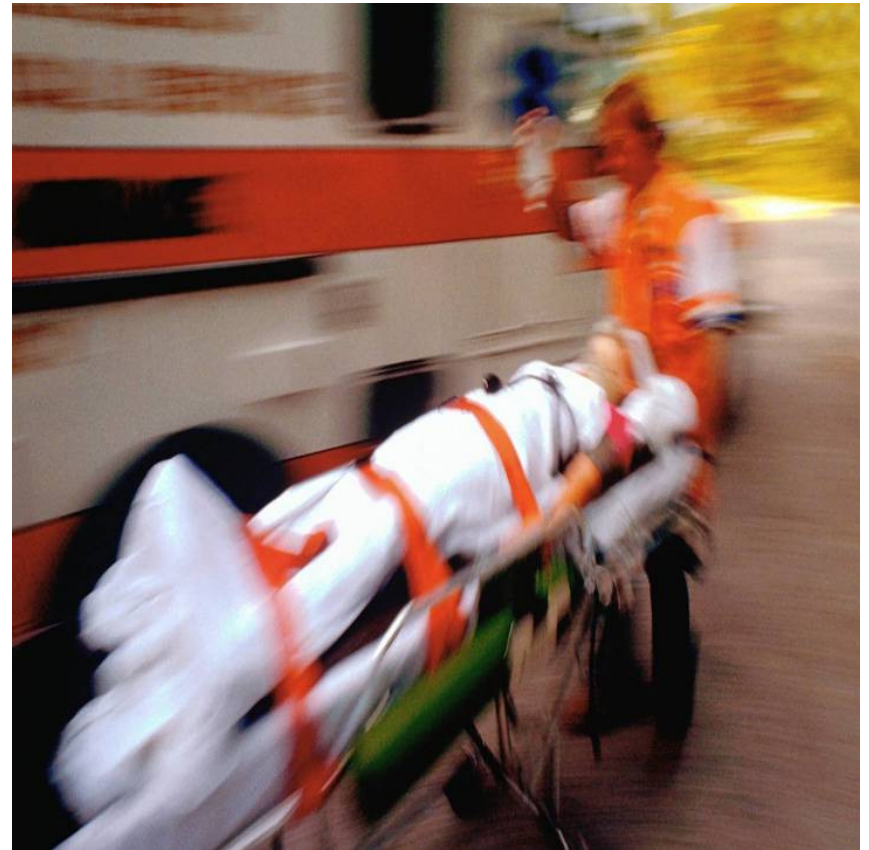
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- Modify expansion of community-based arts, culture, and enrichment programs that target older adults
- Promote lifelong learning opportunities
- Promote social networks
 - Beacon Hill **Virtual Village** Concept (e.g. NEST – North East Seattle Together, Debbie Anderson)
 - **Senior Co-Housing**: housing built around a common area and a social compact that all residents agree to

Personal/Public Safety: Challenges

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- Pedestrian safety a key issue
- Neighborhood isolation may breed fear
- Elder abuse issues often go unrecognized
- Emergency preparedness



Strategies for Action

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- ❑ Secure safe, walkable environments for retirement housing
- ❑ Increase neighborhood connections (block watch) to reduce isolation of seniors
- ❑ Increase awareness of elder abuse: gatekeeper training, elder abuse council, etc
- ❑ Prepare for pandemic influenza and other natural disasters with plans that include education for staff, clients, communication plans, etc

Civic Engagement & Volunteerism: Challenges

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- ❑ Older adults are looking for a broader array of civic engagement options that most communities currently provide
- ❑ Gifts and talents of every individual should be put to use so that communities can become better places for all
- ❑ Older adults need meaningful work for the common good

Strategies for Action

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- Promote opportunities for older adults to use the skills and experience they've developed over time to serve their communities
- Promote meaningful work for older people age 50+, whether paid or unpaid
- Senior Corps:
 - www.getinvolved.gov
 - www.experiencecorps.org

Discussion/Conclusion

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- Ideas for HAP activities?
- Resources?
- Aging Well Initiative?
- Connection to WAHA?