

**DRAFT Cabarrus County Aging Strategic Plan
Submitted March 17, 2014**

Executive Summary

Cabarrus County Government is working to understand how to best meet the needs of the older adult population. This includes residents in varying stages of activity, ability, health and need.

In 2013, the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners charged County staff with the development of a strategic plan to assist older adults and their families over the next five years. A task force comprised of Cabarrus County employees identified six priority areas of focus, initiated an informational survey, determined primary goals for the areas of focus and developed an Aging Strategic Plan for five fiscal years, 2015-2020.

The six priority areas of focus identified in the strategic planning process are education and information, housing and home improvement, health and wellness, recreation and entertainment, transportation and accessibility, and employment and income. The task force branched out into subcommittees comprised of County staff, and representatives from local municipalities, faith-based, non-profit and for-profit partners for each area of focus. The subcommittees held meetings over a 10-month period to address current research, demographic trends and challenges.

Residents of Cabarrus County provided input through an unscientific survey that gathered information on the type services and programs respondents feel are needed as they or someone they know ages.

The Aging Strategic Plan task force used the public and subcommittee input to develop two primary goals of focus for the aging strategic plan.

1. Develop partnerships to identify, evaluate and collaborate on programs and services.
2. Raise awareness of the programs and services offered in Cabarrus County.

Using these goals, each subcommittee formulated action steps that help meet current and future needs of older adults in Cabarrus County.

In the Aging Strategic Plan, commissioners can review an abbreviated analysis of research trends and challenges and explore options for addressing the increasing percentage of older adults within our population.

The Board's vision to identify strategies and proactively focus our initiatives is the first of many steps our County government can take to help limit the physical, social and financial effects of aging experienced by Cabarrus County residents. This report aims to clarify how Cabarrus County Government can serve the varying abilities and stages of the aging population, and identify action steps the Board can consider for implementation over the next five years.

The right time to move forward

The Baby Boomer era is moving from a statistical projection to our new reality, with needs that will impact multiple aspects of local government over the next several decades.

Nationally, each day 10,000 Baby Boomers turn 65 and Baby Boomers are different from the seniors of today. Initiatives focused on stable workforce, accessibility, affordable housing and responsive community services are essential to keeping them active, engaged and contributing to their communities and to the economy. They also require new approaches and better use of technology.

By 2030, the percentage of adults ages 65 and older is statistically equal to the percentage school-aged children (ages 5-17) in Cabarrus County—each accounting for 17 percent of the population. This is a slow but steady projected shift in our population with a substantial impact on future Board decisions. It's important for the County to look forward and consider ways to balance the needs of the two populations through effective operations and resource allocation.

The plan addresses meeting those needs with services and programs that are currently utilized, evaluating those programs and make adjustments for maximum effectiveness, and identifying the potential for new or updated programming.

If we plan and begin to act now with a focus on prevention and awareness over the first five years, by 2020, we hope to position Cabarrus County as having a more informed public, improved access to services and housing, a healthier and more active aging population, safer communities, and better prevention of abuse and exploitation of older adults.

Understanding the Baby Boomer population

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the total population of Cabarrus County was 178,011 with 20,085 (11 percent) ages 65 and older. By the year 2030, the total Cabarrus County population is projected as 236,177 with 40,653 (17 percent) ages 65 or older.

According to the Pew Research Center, beginning January 1, 2011 the oldest Baby Boomer turned 65, with roughly 10,000 crossing that threshold each day. The trend will continue through 2030, when the last of the Baby Boomers turn 65. At that time, 18 percent of the nation will be at least that age -- a percentage that nearly equals projections for Cabarrus County.

As our population ages, research also indicates life expectancy is on the rise. According to the Social Security Administration, life expectancy at age 65 in 2014 is projected as 18 years for men and 20.1 years for women. In 2030, life expectancy at age 65 will be 19.2 years for men and 21.1 years for women. Not only will the Baby Boomer generation age in unprecedented numbers and live longer, they will do so with vastly different attitudes, faiths, experiences, preferences, cultures and lifestyle choices.

The Pew Research Center study indicates the typical Boomer believes old age does not begin until age 72. To many Baby Boomers, turning 65 is no longer a gateway to retirement. The Census office indicates 6.5 million people 65 and older were in the labor force in 2009 (55 percent of whom worked full time), with projections indicating by 2018, that number will grow to 11.1 million.

Though more seniors are working, Census office reports the 2009 median income of households with householders ages 65 and older was \$31,354, 37 percent lower than the corresponding median for all households, and in 2009 the poverty rate was 8.9 percent for people ages 65 and older. The qualifying age to receive full Social Security retirement benefits has been incrementally increasing since 1998 and will reach age 67 by 2020.

The average age of the workforce has slowly risen and is projected to continue rising. This increase in workers' age is attributed to overall health of the older population, the change in eligibility in Social Security retirement benefits, general economic climate, need for health insurance and the availability and design of employer-sponsored benefits, which typically transfers greater responsibility to the retiree.

There are some barriers that keep older adults out of the work force. Those can include reduced employment opportunities, decreased training participation, increased discrimination, increased disparities in health and more challenging workplace conditions.

The social structure of families has changed. The Census office also reports more and more grandparents find themselves in the role of caregivers, with 2.7 million grandparents responsible for the basic needs of one or more grandchildren under 18. The preponderance of multi-generational homes is on the rise, with Census data reporting approximately 16.7 percent of the population live in a house with at least two adult generations under one roof.

There is a disparity when it comes to access to health care. A 1998 survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that elderly households making less than \$40,000 spend between 13.1 to 26.8 percent of their income on health, whereas elderly households making more than \$40,000 spend between 4.6 and 8.2 percent of their income on health.

The cost of advanced health care is on the rise. A 2012 MetLife Mature Market Institute Survey's key findings show that in the Charlotte area, the average monthly base rate in an assisted living facility is \$3,770, the average daily rate of a semi-private room in a nursing home is \$215, the average daily rate for adult day care is \$58 and the average hourly rate for home health aides is \$19.

HealthyPeople.gov reports that more than 37 million people, 60 percent of Baby Boomers, will manage more than one chronic condition by 2030. Early prevention and physical activity can help prevent such declines. Unfortunately, less than 20 percent of older adults engage in the recommended 150 minutes a week of physical activity and even fewer do strength exercises.

Aging Strategic Plan Goals

There are real and significant implications to the aging of the Baby Boomer population. By working now to commit public, private and community resources, we can help older adults meet their future needs.

The Aging Strategic Plan task force determined two primary goals related to how Cabarrus County can most effectively serve the aging community. It is important to note in relation to these goals, however, that County management and staff will not be able to provide services and programs for this growing population without external support. The Aging Strategic Plan incorporates collaboration with outside agencies and partners who serve the interests of adults ages 65 and older.

The primary goals of the Aging Strategic Plan are to identify, evaluate and collaborate on programs and services and to raise awareness for what Cabarrus County has to offer for the aging population.

The first step in understanding the community's needs was through distribution of an unscientific community survey in English and Spanish. Over a three-week period, individuals could take the survey at any branch of the Cabarrus County Public Library, Cabarrus County parks, senior centers and administrative offices, at local YMCA locations, at the 2013 Cabarrus County Fair and online through the Cabarrus County website. There were no age restrictions for survey participants; however, 79 percent of respondents who provided their age indicated they were 55 or older. The 244 survey respondents provided useful feedback and guidance for the overall planning process. Complete survey results are attached as **Appendix A**.

Who will benefit from the plan

The plan design focuses on Cabarrus County residents ages 65 and older. The distinction is based on the age requirements for federal programs, including Medicare and full payment of Social Security. Age 65 is also considered a monumental age for research data, including the Census.

Since a major focus of the plan is on prevention, the task force believes that early outreach and education can have a positive and significant impact on future behaviors. Including residents ages 55-64 as a secondary audience can potentially change their health outcomes and also positively impact their understanding of issues experienced by their parents and older adults for whom they care. Following a similar structure, the Older Americans Act pertains to ages 60 and older, and AARP includes ages 50 and older.

The third audience that could benefit from the strategic plan is caregivers throughout our community. The plan includes information, resources and opportunities that can help meet the needs and expand the understanding of professional and amateur caregivers as they serve older adults in Cabarrus County.

Key players

The plan core was developed by a task force of representatives led by the Active Living and Parks department, with input from Cabarrus County's Human Services, Human Resources, Communications and Outreach, and the County Manager's Office.

The subcommittees were driven by collaboration with additional County departments, government agencies, faith-based groups, for-profit and non-profit organizations, and local municipalities. The plan also incorporates the findings for the community survey.

Much like the federal Aging 2020 plan, the Cabarrus County Aging Strategic Plan is a living document with strategies added, deleted and amended over time in accordance with emerging opportunities, resources and changing realities.

If adopted, the planning task force and subcommittees will develop local initiatives and partnerships to advance the Aging Strategic Plan goals. Each participating agency will prioritize its work, set timelines for accomplishing goals and meet with our local community partners to coordinate the Aging Strategic Plan process.

The task force will also establish a process for regularly updating the public on the accomplishments under the Aging Strategic Plan and for continued input on the needs of aging citizens of Cabarrus County.

Under the direction of the Board of Commissioners, County-led subcommittees and agencies will meet semiannually to report their progress, accomplishments and barriers encountered while implementing their strategies. This process will be recorded and reported to the Board of Commissioners annually.

Strategies

The following information details the discussions and recommendations of each subcommittee.

Education and Information

The Education and Information Subcommittee includes representatives from the City of Concord, Cooperative Christian Ministries, City of Kannapolis, and Cabarrus County Communications and Outreach, Department of Human Services, Public Library System, ITS and Human Resources.

Through a SWOT analysis, the subcommittee identified elements of a successful educational/information opportunity for older adults as increasing awareness of topics; increasing attendance, audience diversity or program use; getting participants to information in a timely manner and changing participant behaviors. The County and its partners can accomplish this by developing compelling content that would reside on websites for daily reference, repurposing information in varied formats, distributing it in more places to reach a broader audience, and emphasizing the importance of tools and resources that can help participants continue their education beyond a one-time event.

The subcommittee also identified challenges that affect the ability to create successful educational and/or informational opportunities for older adults in our community. This can include limitations in how seniors receive information, transportation and accessibility limitations, reluctance by seniors to participate in programs because of scams, generalized assumptions of assistance programs, difficulty in finding an audience that is willing and interested in learning, declining civic engagement and the limited reach of single-agency promotion.

Three recommendations were developed to help raise awareness of the previously identified programs and services and establish consistency among the brand, marketing opportunities and educational opportunities.

#1 - Create a brand for the Aging Strategic Plan

To begin the process, the subcommittee recommends creating a brand for the Aging Strategic Plan and developing guidelines for its use, in order to standardize communications related to the plan and develop trust between our audience and plan-related activities. This can include messaging and logos that should be used when a program, communication, meeting or event is presented on behalf of a strategic plan element.

#2 - Create communication guidelines

Once the plan is implemented, the Education and Information Subcommittee recommends creating and distributing standardized communication guidelines so subcommittees and their designees can independently promote strategic plan programs and services. The communication guidelines would incorporate the collective knowledge and contacts of plan partners and identify communication best-practices. This includes how to identify target audiences, communication tactic suggestions and communication strategies (i.e., how to contact media, how to promote plan elements with our partner agencies, how to establish a promotional timeline and the processes for exhibiting on behalf of the strategic plan at community events).

#3 – Create guidelines for design of educational opportunities

The third recommendation of the Education and Information Subcommittee is to create and distribute standardized guidelines so subcommittees and their designees can independently design live-, online- and/or print-based education opportunities related to elements of the strategic plan. This can include developing a basic structure and minimum standard that must apply to all educational formats (i.e., speaker standards, topic submission guidelines, basic language that must be incorporated, educational value standards, tool and resource standards and evaluation standards).

The Education and Information Subcommittee recommends reviewing these standards on a yearly basis. Evaluation summaries should be reviewed by the originating subcommittee following each event in order to determine the effectiveness of the outreach and program.

This approach is designed to provide freedom and flexibility with accountability; allowing subcommittees to determine the best ways to use the brand, educational opportunities and outreach to meet their specific recommendations.

Health and Wellness

The Health and Wellness Subcommittee includes representatives from County and city staff, senior participants, community partners and professionals in the health and wellness industry.

The subcommittee identified target areas of focus to address the senior community. Of these, the most important areas of focus are identified as information about resources, including home-and community-based support services, nonprofit and private organizations, mental health topics, caregiver support, nutrition, physical activities and evidence-based programs that focus on healthcare.

The subcommittee discussed and identified health and wellness challenges faced by older adults. They included an increasing number of seniors with chronic disease, lack of knowledge about how to manage chronic disease, decreased availability of caregivers, increased cost of healthcare, lack of knowledge about cultural sensitivity for treating a diverse community and lack of preventative health care.

Boomers are healthier than previous generations of older adults; however, they continue to follow trends of becoming weaker and more susceptible to negative health outcomes as they advance in age. Service demands have changed from adapting to life with a chronic disease to early awareness and prevention of symptom exasperation. Evidence-based programs can relieve stress and provide manageable practices for addressing chronic disease. Health People 2020 indicates that limitations caused by illness, chronic disease or injury can decrease the ability to complete basic daily living activities and may not allow older adults to stay in their own home.

The Health and Wellness Subcommittee used this information to develop three recommendations that address the challenges previously identified. The recommendations are to promote healthy living; create sensitivity training for medical providers, employees and community partners; and develop an active community initiative "Cabarrus County Walks."

#1-Promote healthy living

Behaviors, such as participation in physical activities, self management of chronic diseases and use of preventative health measures can improve health outcomes for older adults. To begin this process, the subcommittee recommends developing and administering a survey about health promotion programs. With this information, the subcommittee will determine the need of programs and types of programs. Second, develop additional support groups for caregivers that address concerns and challenges they face on a daily basis with the Aging Services Department of Cabarrus County. Third, offer evidenced-based programs on the topics of depression, stress, anxiety, balance, healthy lifestyle, exercise, falls prevention,

medication education, Alzheimer's Disease and nutrition at multiple locations throughout Cabarrus County.

#2- Develop sensitivity training programs

Develop a sensitivity program for County employees and community partners. Develop an educational program on cultural sensitivity that teaches County and city staff, and our community partners skills and techniques to help communicate more effectively with the senior population. This can include the development of an educational campaign, as well as community resource directories in multiple languages that medical providers can distribute to seniors. By relying on resources, such as The Area Agency on Aging, the subcommittee hopes sensitivity training will help address the senior population in a positive way.

#3-Develop an active community "Cabarrus County Walks"

The subcommittee identified a goal-orientated walking program targeting older adults as a way to strengthen the community in spirit and health. As a first step, the subcommittee would use the communications guidelines to develop a brand for the program that aims to raise county-wide awareness of Cabarrus County as a community for active older adults. Second, the subcommittee would develop partnerships with local agencies to assist in the Cabarrus County Walks Campaign. The campaign would consist of County-wide community walks at local parks, towns and within county limits to bring community spirit and health.

By providing preventative and educational opportunities about health and wellness for older adults in Cabarrus County, the plan can help delay or prevent chronic conditions and provide more access to programs and services that can improve quality of life for older adults.

Housing and Home Improvement

The Housing and Home Improvement Subcommittee comprises of staff from the municipalities of Concord, Kannapolis and Harrisburg; non-profits, including Prosperity Unlimited, Baptist Men and Cooperative Christian Ministry and a private sector architect.

This subcommittee considered existing programs, including how they could be improved and new policies or actions to address housing oriented towards an older population. Each of the participating cities and the County have some form of housing repair, rehabilitation, and construction program for existing and new housing. The non-profits that participated in the subcommittee also work directly or indirectly to help provide housing for low income residents, including aging clients.

There was considerable discussion on how the private sector could be encouraged and supported to create additional housing for older adults. There is private sector housing for low income and high income older adults, but seems to be little options for middle income residents. In addition, there are programs to adapt housing for low income individuals so they may remain in their existing homes, but the concept of universal housing (that housing adapted for older adults, handicapped and impaired individuals) has not been employed in this market.

The Housing and Home Improvement Subcommittee discussed existing public and non-profit programs and how to increase the marketing and use of programs. The most popular of these programs, Weatherization, has been commonly used throughout the community, but full house rehabilitation has declined due to a number of factors. The group discussed how to continue and improve the programs to reach the growing population of older adults.

Another issue that dominated the discussion was how to encourage and increase construction by private enterprise. There are some purely private facilities and facilities supported through public tax credits, but it is anticipated that there may not be enough housing to support the growing population. The subcommittee met with a consultant on tax credit supported housing as well as individuals who may be interested in constructing private elderly housing.

Trends and gaps in the housing and home improvement services and programs consist of the population aged 50 years and older growing faster than housing adapted to meet the needs of that population. Private housing is being constructed for older residents, but the income levels required for that housing are higher than much of the population can afford. There are also gaps, including little new congregate housing for older adults and the need for more programs and services to adapt housing so that older adults have the ability to remain in their own homes.

The Housing and Home Improvement Subcommittee ultimately arrived at the following main goals and action steps as a result of the identification of issues and discussion that followed.

#1 Market and promote existing housing programs that aid the older population

Create single or multiple source listings of existing programs that include descriptions of those programs. The Community Resource Connection (CRC) at Human Services is creating this listing as part of a project on which they are working. Make presentations to groups that may be eligible for the programs to increase awareness of the offerings. Work with non-profit providers to market their classes and programs.

#2 Promote the construction of private sector housing to serve the older population

Conduct workshop(s) on tax credit options for elderly and low income housing. Consider joint venture projects for elderly housing such that public services (such as senior centers, libraries) and private services (medical and pharmacy) are sited near land that can be used for private sector construction. There was a recommendation that the local government entities explore combining or coordinating grant funds in order to fund a joint project. Work with potential developers to understand all costs of the project development so that accurate project budgeting can occur.

Income and Employment

The Income and Employment Subcommittee comprised of partners, non-profit organizations, County staff, and professionals in the field of finance and employment. The goal of the subcommittee was to increase knowledge and access of older adults and their families about

community resources and/or programs that promote financial security and employment through community partnerships.

The subcommittee identified several income and employment needs for older adults in our community. These include raising awareness, initiating conversations and providing easily accessible information on the availability of programs and services; partnering with community agencies and working with them to evaluate their services and reduce duplication of services across agencies; promote unbiased information on financial planning, scams, fraud and exploitation prevention; create support channels for seniors who are in the workforce or in retirement; develop a channel to provide ongoing information related to financial planning, funeral/burial arrangements, long-term care options, counseling and legal issues.

The Income and Employment Subcommittee identified research to support the subcommittee recommendations. Almost 75 percent of single Social Security recipients ages 65 and older depend on Social Security for all or most of their monthly income. The average older adult receiving Supplemental Security Income receives just \$423 each month. Older women typically receive about \$4,000 less annually in Social Security than older men due to lower lifetime earnings, time taken off for caregiving, occupational segregation into lower wage work and other issues. One-third of senior households have no money left over at the end of each month or are in debt after meeting essential expenses.

The Income and Employment Subcommittee used the information to develop three recommendations. The recommendations are as follows:

#1 - Identify and promote awareness of available resources that address relevant information in regards to insurance, final arrangements, legal issues for older adults and their families

#2 - Identify and promote awareness of programs that provide short- and long-term public financial assistance

#3 - Promote awareness and participation through workforce development to refocus, retrain and reemploy older adults

During the first year of the plan, the Income and Employment Subcommittee would establish its own subcommittees for financial resources, public assistance and workforce training. These subcommittees would be asked to identify community agencies to increase participation in speakers bureaus and establish a list of locations for information sessions that would be delivered in five areas across Cabarrus; develop agendas for timely hot topics and provide a training calendar; and to increase accessibility, videotape each type of session for YouTube for online distribution. Finally, implement a survey to evaluate effectiveness of these activities.

During the next few years, the subcommittees will conduct ongoing review of the action steps for effectiveness and make changes as reviews and surveys indicate. This will provide accountability and access to information needed by older adults, while allowing the

subcommittee to determine the best way to use the information to meet their specific recommendations.

Recreation and Entertainment

The Recreation and Entertainment Subcommittee comprises of County and City staff, professionals in the recreational field, senior residents, community partners and non-profit and for-profit organizations. The purpose of the Recreation and Entertainment Subcommittee is to develop partnerships, seek funding and identify the needs of facilities and programs to increase the quality of life for older adults.

Recreation activities provide socialization opportunities and keep seniors active in the community. Positive and enjoyable recreation experiences can decrease stress, anxiety, loneliness and isolation. Common outcomes of success for older adults that participate in recreational activities include increased fun, reduced incidences of depression, and can lead to fewer doctor visits, less medications, decreased pain, increased energy, increased positivity, better sleep patterns, reduced medical costs, increased socialization and increased incidents of having something to which they can look forward.

Local senior centers, parks and community events are among the few facilities and programs designed to provide services to meet recreational activity needs for older adults.

The subcommittee identified challenges that affect the ability to create successful recreational and entertainment opportunities in Cabarrus County. These include the participants willingness to spend money on leisure pursuits, cultural and language diversity in the community, seniors who don't feel old or believe senior centers facilities and programs are for older adults who are more elderly, limited programs offered on evenings and weekends that can result in fewer and less frequent opportunities to serve working seniors, and limited access of transportation to events and activities.

The Recreation and Entertainment Subcommittee used the trends and challenges to develop four recommendations to raise awareness and provide adequate access to programs and services offered. The recommendations identify resources, develop partnerships, expand programs to increase social interactions, expand communication and seek additional funding resources.

#1 – Identify resources

Conduct a needs assessment to see what the older adults of Cabarrus County need and create measurement tools and satisfaction surveys for senior programs and facilities. To ensure efficiency of current programs and use of facility space, identify programs that are currently running within each of those facilities, indicate on a map where the facilities are located, and identify any gaps that may exist. Second, develop an ongoing action plan to encourage development of programs, services or facilities in areas of need. Conduct community forums about what is needed in all recreational entertainment atmospheres for

older adults throughout Cabarrus County and, with guidance and assistance from additional resources, determine needs and prioritize action steps.

#2 - Encourage expansion of recreational programs and activities to increase social group interactions among seniors

The first step to meet this recommendation would be to research intergenerational activities and implement new ideas. Other ideas are that senior centers can offer popular classes at alternate times during the day and/or try opening on weekends to attract working seniors. Utilize outdoor space at parks and facilities other than the senior centers to implement outdoor activities. Develop partnerships to increase the programs and services you can offer to Cabarrus County residents.

#3 - Expand communication to seniors about volunteer and community service opportunities throughout Cabarrus County

Create a list of volunteer opportunities throughout the county. Use the communication guidelines to create an ongoing marketing plan that uses media and grassroots efforts to inform seniors about available volunteer opportunities. Develop new senior volunteer opportunities throughout the County.

#4 - Seek funds for programs through grants, donations and volunteers

Establish a senior council donor committee that will support funding opportunities through researching grants, planning fundraiser events and submitting grant applications to support expansion of impacted programs.

Transportation and Accessibility

The Transportation and Accessibility Subcommittee comprises of Cabarrus County and City of Concord employees.

The subcommittee evaluated current transportation services to determine how effective they are in meeting today's demand. Alternative resources and/or ways to increase transportation services were discussed and will continue to be considered as necessary means to better serve the older adults of Cabarrus County. The alternative programs include public transportation services, coordinated volunteer transportation services, family/friend support, and collaborative efforts by any combination of public, private and/or volunteer programs.

A review of current publicly provided transportation and associated resources indicates a need that outweighs the level of service currently available. Funding continues to be the variable with the most impact on the ability to meet demand with service levels. Additional routes (KC Rider and Cabarrus County Transportation Services [CCTS]) will require additional vehicles, staff and operational costs associated with fuel and maintenance.

Challenges addressed by the Transportation and Accessibility Subcommittee include stagnant funding sources and available resources; rapid increase in demand on services and resources; stereotypical views and/or perceptions of older adults and people with disabilities;

unmet/under-served rural transportation needs due to lack of connectivity to service providers and/or public transit; limited resources that force transportation providers to prioritize available resources for the highest level of support, which can result in a gap in transportation services for many Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) that provide independence and supports aging in place; and policy issues associated with partnerships and volunteer opportunities that limit opportunities for innovation and collaborative work.

The Transportation and Accessibility Subcommittee identified the following goals and action steps to be considered as part of the Aging Strategic Plan for Cabarrus County:

#1 - Identify additional resources to expand existing services to meet the current demand and expand the scope of services to address needs

This includes continued support of current funding for CCTS and CK Rider; research and identification of new/additional grant funding available to transportation service providers to enhance transportation services; and new collaborations that may enhance service delivery for local transportation service providers. To accomplish this step, the initiative will require the sustainability of existing resources, as well as additional resources from local, state, federal and private funding sources, fees for service, volunteer resources and collaborative partnerships.

#2 - Enhance marketing and public education about transportation services

Use the communications guidelines to develop marketing and communication opportunities to raise awareness of transportation services. Develop a plan to help elected officials and key community leaders better understand current trends, needs, value and impact of local transportation on the community and other supportive services.

#3 - Develop and implement volunteer transportation programs

Develop a relationship with the Centralina Council of Governments new volunteer transportation program and implement this program to best serve Cabarrus County residents. Additional research is suggested to identify and evaluate existing volunteer transportation services (churches, coordinated volunteer programs, etc.) to determine if such programs can be implemented in Cabarrus County.

#4 - Develop and implement a rural transportation transition plan to better access public transit

Develop a committee to study local ridership within Cabarrus County and use the results to identify the best locations for "rural hubs" to connect CCTS clients to public transit.

#5 - Enhance transportation to Veterans Administration centers outside of Cabarrus County

Develop family support groups to encourage/support ongoing transportation by family members, collaborate with volunteer transportation services that are available, continue to develop and enhance collaborations with all surrounding counties and/or other transportation service providers to better serve Cabarrus County veterans.

In conclusion

Through the Aging Strategic Plan, the needs of our aging community are closely aligned to the County's mission of visionary leadership and good stewardship to provide services to continually enhance quality of life.

The plan provides a glimpse at the drastic changes in our County's demographic landscape. In less than two decades, the percentage of senior citizens in Cabarrus County will increase as the percentage of school-aged children in the County decreases. As the County plans for future programs, facilities and opportunities, it's important to consider the impact of our aging population on our resources.

The Aging Strategic Plan has incorporated the voices of our entire community in a unique and comprehensive public/private partnership that involves nearly every County department and our local municipalities, faith-based groups, and non-profit and for-profit partners. A community survey provided plan developers with a guide to understanding resident's current and future needs. With the input of the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners, plan developers will build on these initial assessments and create an action plan that follows the vision of Cabarrus County Government. As an active document, there is room for the plan to grow and change as we progress over the five years of implementation.

Staff identified six priority areas to develop the Aging Strategic Plan core: education and information, housing and home improvement, health and wellness, recreation and entertainment, transportation and accessibility, and employment and income. These were narrowed to two specific and attainable goals: develop partnerships to identify, evaluate and collaborate on programs and services; and raise awareness of the programs and services offered in Cabarrus County.

The plan also identifies specific tactics for each area of focus. Accomplishing these tactics at a professional level will require support from the Board of Commissioners, operational support and guidance from County leadership, continued partnerships and additional resources.

There are many options and decisions to consider as we define how to implement the Aging Strategic Plan. However, there are steps that our County government can take to help limit the physical, social and financial effects of aging experienced by Cabarrus County residents and reduce future time, money and risk to the County.

The taskforce hopes the County, our community and our partners can stand behind this assessment and move forward with the Aging Strategic Plan as a gateway to a more informed public, improved access to services and housing, a healthier and more active aging population, safer communities, and better prevention of abuse and exploitation of older adults by the year 2020.

Unleash the power of age

1. Rank in order the categories of programs and services most important to you, as you grow older. (1=most important, 6=least important):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Rating Count
Daily living/in-home services (assistance with bathing, dressing, eating, housekeeping, errands, etc.)	27.2% (67)	13.8% (34)	9.3% (23)	14.6% (36)	15.4% (38)	19.5% (48)	3.36	246
Health/specialized services (eye glasses, hearing aids, adult day care/health, assisted living and/or nursing home)	18.7% (46)	30.9% (76)	17.9% (44)	13.4% (33)	15.9% (39)	3.3% (8)	2.87	246
Financial services (assistance with medical and/or household expenses)	16.7% (41)	10.2% (25)	22.8% (56)	18.3% (45)	15.9% (39)	16.3% (40)	3.55	246
Physical activities	21.1% (52)	15.0% (37)	19.5% (48)	30.9% (76)	11.0% (27)	2.4% (6)	3.03	246
Social activities	10.2% (25)	24.0% (59)	15.4% (38)	14.2% (35)	30.1% (74)	6.1% (15)	3.48	246
Continuing education	6.1% (15)	6.1% (15)	15.0% (37)	8.5% (21)	11.8% (29)	52.4% (129)	4.71	246
answered question								246
skipped question								0

2. Daily living/in-home programs and services:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Transportation		70.0%	156
Home delivered meals		44.4%	99
Congregate/group nutrition		27.4%	61
Home improvement programs		53.8%	120
Other (please specify)		9.9%	22
answered question			223
skipped question			23

3. Health/specialized assistance programs and services:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Medical/dental referrals		35.0%	78
Skilled nursing		36.8%	82
Medical equipment		31.4%	70
Home health care/personal care aide		52.0%	116
Nutrition		44.8%	100
Assistance with health related issues (Medicare, Medicaid, Option Counseling, etc.)		54.3%	121
Case managers		18.4%	41
Caregiver information and support		39.9%	89
Support groups		32.7%	73
Other (please specify)		5.8%	13
answered question			223
skipped question			23

4. Financial/employment programs and services:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Financial Planning		47.5%	106
Insurance		52.0%	116
Low-income housing options		20.6%	46
Public Assistance		20.6%	46
Reentry to Workplace		22.4%	50
Other (please specify)		10.3%	23
answered question			223
skipped question			23

5. Physical activities:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Sports		19.3%	43
Exercise classes		63.2%	141
Walking		78.5%	175
Yoga/meditation		31.8%	71
Parks		52.0%	116
Games		32.7%	73
Other (please specify)		8.1%	18
answered question			223
skipped question			23

6. Social activities:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Special interest clubs		38.6%	86
Discussion groups		25.6%	57
Hobbies and crafts		45.3%	101
Park programs		40.8%	91
Performing and visual arts		38.1%	85
Entertainment outings		61.4%	137
Volunteer opportunities		58.3%	130
Other (please specify)		8.1%	18
answered question			223
skipped question			23

7. Continuing education:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Health and wellness		76.2%	170
Computer skills		49.3%	110
Trade skills		17.5%	39
Arts		22.9%	51
Other (please specify)		8.5%	19
answered question			223
skipped question			23

8. In which of the following Cabarrus County programs and services do you currently participate? Check all that apply.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Daily living/in-home services		3.7%	8
Health/specialized services		6.5%	14
Financial services		4.6%	10
Physical activities		28.7%	62
Social activities		33.3%	72
Continuing education		7.9%	17
I do not know if I currently participate in Cabarrus County programs and services.		9.7%	21
I do not currently participate in Cabarrus County programs and services because... (e.g., not needed, not aware of programs, no transportation, etc.)		40.3%	87
answered question			216
skipped question			30

9. Would you like to learn more about programs and services currently offered by Cabarrus County government?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I would like to learn more about programs and services currently offered by Cabarrus County.		53.7%	116
No, I am not interested in programs and services currently offered by Cabarrus County.		46.3%	100
		answered question	216
		skipped question	30

10. Please check the programs and services in which you are interested. (Check all that apply.)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Daily living/in-home services (assistance with bathing, dressing, eating, housekeeping, errands, etc.)		18.3%	17
Health/specialized services (eye glasses, hearing aids, adult day care/health, assisted living and/or nursing home)		26.9%	25
Financial services (assistance with medical and/or household expenses)		30.1%	28
Physical activities		57.0%	53
Social activities		60.2%	56
Continuing education		47.3%	44
Other (please specify)		12.9%	12
answered question			93
skipped question			153

11. For follow-up purposes, please provide the best way to contact you.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Name:		94.1%	64
Address:		88.2%	60
Address 2:		1.5%	1
City/Town:		92.6%	63
ZIP:		92.6%	63
Email Address:		85.3%	58
Phone Number:		64.7%	44
answered question			68
skipped question			178

12. Would you like to volunteer your time and/or services to help Cabarrus County meet the needs of aging adults?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities.		15.2%	32
I cannot volunteer at this time, but I am interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities.		35.5%	75
No, I am not interested in volunteer opportunities.		49.3%	104
answered question			211
skipped question			35

13. I would like to learn more about the following volunteer opportunities. (Check all that apply.)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Special events		59.7%	46
Meal programs		36.4%	28
Teaching classes or workshops		31.2%	24
Administrative/clerical support		41.6%	32
Other (please specify)		15.6%	12
answered question			77
skipped question			169

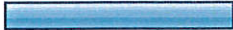
14. For follow-up purposes, please provide the best way to contact you.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Name:		90.3%	56
Address:		82.3%	51
Address 2:		3.2%	2
City/Town:		83.9%	52
ZIP:		82.3%	51
Email Address:		90.3%	56
Phone Number:		61.3%	38
answered question			62
skipped question			184

15. Size of household (number of persons):

		Response Percent	Response Count
1		26.6%	53
2		57.3%	114
3		6.5%	13
4 or more		9.5%	19
answered question			199
skipped question			47

16. Age:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Under 55		20.9%	42
55-64		35.3%	71
65-74		28.4%	57
75-84		12.9%	26
85 and older		2.5%	5
answered question			201
skipped question			45

17. Are you currently or do you expect to become a caregiver for an older relative or friend in Cabarrus County?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		23.2%	45
No		56.7%	110
Undetermined at this time		20.1%	39
answered question			194
skipped question			52

18. Annual Household Income

		Response Percent	Response Count
Under \$25,000		19.8%	32
\$25,000 - \$49,000		24.1%	39
\$50,000 - \$74,000		22.8%	37
\$75,000 or over		33.3%	54
answered question			162
skipped question			84

19. Please provide your zip code so that we can target the appropriate services to your specific location in the county.

	Response Count
	192
answered question	192
skipped question	54

20. Are you willing to participate in a focus group in your community?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		39.2%	73
No		60.8%	113
answered question			186
skipped question			60

21. For follow-up purposes, please provide the following information.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Name:		95.9%	47
Address:		91.8%	45
Address 2:		4.1%	2
City/Town:		91.8%	45
State:		91.8%	45
ZIP:		91.8%	45
Email Address:		89.8%	44
Phone Number:		67.3%	33
answered question			49
skipped question			197

22. Please feel free to share any other information that you may feel is important to this survey in the space provided.

	Response Count
	28
answered question	28
skipped question	218