



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

COUNCILMEMBERS

Calvin Ball, Chairperson
District 2
Jon Weinstein, Vice Chairperson
District 1
Jennifer Terrasa
District 3
Mary Kay Sigaty
District 4
Greg Fox
District 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Eric Solomon – Public Information Officer
esolomon@howardcountymd.gov
(410) 313-1143

County Council Receives Highlights from Office on Aging's Report on *Creating an Age-Friendly Community* during Monthly Meeting

Ellicott City, MD (December 14, 2015) – Today, representatives of the Department of Citizen Services, Howard County Office on Aging, and the Commission on Aging provided a brief discussion on the Aging Master Plan, *Planning for the Growth of the Older Adult Population in Howard County: Creating an Age-Friendly Community*, during the Council's Monthly Meeting.

The report is the culmination of a year-long effort that engaged more than 1,600 community members from the public, private and non-profit sectors, as well as the faith-based community. It also involved countless hours of collecting, synthesizing and analyzing data to inform the priorities and recommendations. According to the latest trends in Howard County, the proportion of residents aged 65 and older will increase from 10.12% in 2010 to 21.63% in 2035.

"The Council appreciates today's update on how Howard County is preparing for an increased population of older adults in our community," said Council Chairperson Calvin Ball. "This was a very informative and thoughtful discussion on the many age-friendly programs in place or coming down the pipeline to address to our needs over the next 20 years."

What has emerged from this collaboration is a vision of Howard County as an age-friendly community where older adults comfortably age in place and residents of all ages have the resources they need to grow, thrive and live with dignity.

"Both the Commission and the Columbia Association's Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) will be reaching out with their memberships to actively listen and provide input for creating truly age-friendly communities," said Sharonlee Vogel, Chair of the Howard County Commission on Aging and Chair of SAC. "It's vitally important that we help with each of the priorities and recommendations to push this agenda forward, drawing on all resources available and creating new ones. We need to make successful "aging" a goal for everyone as we all begin aging as soon as we're born."

The following highlights were addressed at today's meeting:

- Offering an evidence-based caregiver support program, "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" this year.
- The Loan Closet will be expanding the capacity and operating hours of the program in this fiscal year, at the Long Reach Village Center. The Loan Closet will be able serve up to 2,500 residents and will be able to accept donations of larger items, such as scooters and stair glides.

-more-

- Using recommendations for 50+ Center facilities to guide the design, construction, and renovation of new and existing centers (ongoing).
- A new Elkrige 50+ Center is in the design phase.
- Expanding the Kindred Spirits program to 5 days per week in 2016.
- Making technology in the centers more user-friendly for participants.
- Collaborating with Columbia Association on areas where plans overlap.
- Created an elder abuse campaign in partnership with the Howard County Police Department and the Vulnerable Older Adult Committee.
- Rebranded senior centers as 50+ Centers in July 2015.

“Since Howard County has one of the fastest growing older adult populations in Maryland, it is good for the community to know that the County is ahead of the curve of preparing for the future,” said Phyllis B. Madachy, Director of the Department of Citizen Services. “Creating an age-friendly community has room enough for everyone to see their role. People of all ages have a shared future and this plan helps move that vision forward.”

With leadership provided by the Department of Citizen Services and the Office on Aging, the Advisory Committee, Work Groups and Commission on Aging will be convened to lay out strategies specific to each priority. In addition, individuals, organizations, and businesses in the community will be engaged in this effort to create an environment that ensures an age-friendly community that is relevant across the lifespan of Howard County citizens.

To view the complete report, visit
www.howardcountymd.gov/displayprimary.aspx?id=6442474748.

###