

TESTIMONY REGARDING HOCO OFFICE ON AGING NEEDS

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The Office on Aging is currently starting a \$300K study on Senior Center Needs. Senior centers predominantly serve those age 75+ and not the 60 to 75 population. AARP has noted that those 60+ intend to continue living in their own homes and not move. Several issues have been highlighted in the recent completed "Columbia Older Adult Survey" that need to be addressed in the budget.

1. The HATS system needs higher frequency service as proposed in the 2030 PlanHoward. Neighbor Ride has been inundated with requests for rides after HoCo cut back their service.
2. "Less than half of older adults (41%) have at least partially planned for aging in their current home. Among those under the age of 65, a mere 25% have at least partially planned" HoCo should include a free service for those 60+ who would like a home retrofit evaluation to Age in Place. This should be done by hiring a private contractor or by a new position in the OA who has a Certified Aging In Place designation from the National Association of Home Builders. At one time, OA did provide this service, but it was stopped.
3. Pew Research has noted that 49% of those over 65 do not have Internet access in the home. HoCo Program information for Older adults are predominantly provided electronically yet only 6% of those over 45 access this information thru HoCo agency web sites. 22% however, access information thru HoCo written publications. While this may be expensive to do, a special information brochure should be developed and sent to each county residence on HoCo Senior Programs and Services.
4. Older adults heavily participate in a wide variety of cultural and entertainment activities. The CA Senior Events Shuttle, a formerly free service partially funded by HoCo to these events, should receive expanded HoCo funding so that it remains a free service.
5. CA is currently completing a Mature Adult 10 Year Plan. There are a number of items that look to HoCo for implementation. We suggest that an agreement be developed on what HoCo will provide and what CA will provide for Successful Aging in HoCo.

The HCCA conducted an Aging Successfully in the Community Forum in Sept. We had over 100 people attend and had to turn away folks at the door due to space limitations. This area has a high degree of interest in HoCo. A similar public meeting conducted by CA on the mature Adult 10 year plan had over 150 people attend. Aging in Place clearly means more than just Senior Centers. The Livable Homes HoCo tax credit should be expanded from \$100K to \$200k in the next budget so that the residential property tax base can continue to be maintained. Don't forget that most of the housing in HoCo has been built over the past 40 years and houses are now showing their age.