

Chapter 3: Offering Choices: Affordable Living Options for Seniors and Support to Family Caregivers

Affordable housing was identified as one of the top three priorities in four localities in Planning District Ten during public forums in 2001. There is a documented shortage of affordable housing throughout the region, most notably rental properties that promote aging in place.

Although decent affordable housing is integral to quality of life, the term “living options” means much more than that. In order for seniors to live in reasonable safety, comfort and well-being, a number of conditions must exist. In-home resources and community supports should be available. Older people should be able to live where they choose when possible, and feel at home wherever they live. Housing should incorporate universal design principles, so that it is accessible to all. If care is needed, the caregivers should be well-supported and, along with the seniors involved, encouraged to participate in decisions affecting care. The recommendations that follow focus on this broader picture of housing and community living, in a comprehensive approach to promote choice, dignity, and decent quality of life for area seniors.

1. PROVIDE A VARIETY OF QUALITY AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE SENIOR HOUSING OPTIONS INTEGRATED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

- 1.1 Incorporate a variety of affordable universal-designed senior housing into mixed use developments near community amenities and transit. (*Types of housing may include assisted living, nursing facilities, apartments, rental or owner-occupied homes, etc.*)
- 1.2 Develop a sufficient amount of accessible housing to meet market demand.
- 1.3 Establish local government policies that support senior choices, to include aging in place.

2. PROMOTE A FULL RANGE OF LONG-TERM LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES SO THAT SENIORS CAN MAINTAIN THEIR MAXIMUM LEVEL OF INDEPENDENCE AND CHOICE.

- 2.1 Provide a range of options for living and elder care.
- 2.2 Offer a range of services to support independent living.
- 2.3 Enhance support for informal (non-paid) caregiving.
- 2.4 Develop and support quality long-term residential care.