

**Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging
Community Discussion Groups: Four Year Plan for Aging Services
May 2015**

Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging's new Four Year Plan for Aging Services primarily covers services funded by the Older Americans Act through the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). It is a planning and budget document that also highlights other funding sources, trends, needs, opportunities and challenges for the four year period of October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2019. As part of the process to inform the outcomes for the next 4 years, Community Discussion Groups were held in all 8 of the localities of Planning District 15.

The Agency received feedback on the current services and visibility of Senior Connections and the local community supports and partnerships. There were a total of 152 individuals who attended the community discussion groups and attendees were comprised of older adults, caregivers, community partners and other community stakeholders. There were common themes throughout all the sessions. Those themes were around the benefits of living in that particular locality and the challenges that older adults are facing in each locality.

Common themes regarding the strengths that localities offered to older adults included: older adults having family ties to the area and Friendship Cafés being highly visible. Family ties were identified as strong informal networks that older adults rely upon to remain as independent as possible in their community. Family ties were also identified as a reason why older adults came to live and why they have chosen to remain living in that community. The faith community is a valuable and important core resource for both older adults and caregivers. The Friendship Cafés in the communities were highly visible and considered an accessible and invaluable resource. The Cafés are also an important hub for participants to receive information. It was suggested in some communities that the expansion of Café sites would improve the lives of older adults. Senior Connections is seen as having many valuable services, including Senior Law Day. Senior Law Day is provided through Williams Mullen Law Firm and seniors/caregivers receive pro bono assistance in executing Wills, Powers of Attorney, and Advance Health Care Directives.

The themes surrounding the challenges and barriers that older adults experience in their individual communities included: lack of affordable and accessible transportation; lack of access to information about available services and resources before they need them; lack of coordination and communication among aging service agencies; lack of culturally competent and culturally specific programs; lack of caregiver support services, including adult day care and respite in the more rural areas; and lack of access to

computers and training on how to use them. Attendees indicated that a more consistent and effective means of marketing and messaging to the vast age range of older adults is needed.

Transportation was identified as the most urgent issue in all communities. The challenges with transportation include the lack of accessible and affordable transportation; people's knowledge of what resources exist and how to access them; and a gap in services for those individuals who fall above the eligibility line, but who are not financially independent enough to be able to manage the additional, higher cost of transportation. The lack of transportation was also identified as the cause of additional challenges to older adults.

Attendees identified that there is an information sharing and collaboration gap among aging service programs and providers. This gap was identified as an opportunity to enhance services and resources in all communities. Attendees indicated that there is a lack of services and programs that are culturally specific. The programs and services that do exist are limited in their cultural competence, specifically for Asian Americans and Latinos. It was also indicated that non cultural related policies and procedures and staff's lack of understanding of how different cultures view dementia and other age related diseases create additional challenges in accessing resources and information for caregivers.

The last theme throughout each discussion was how to reach a community that is comprised of such a wide age range. This range impacts how and where the individual and caregivers are accessing information. Information and technology are being accessed by some of the population; others are relying on informal networks of friends, family and the faith community to disseminate information.

Each community discussion was informative and helpful to Senior Connections in formulating the new Four Year Plan for Aging Services. These discussions are summarized in the sections that follow:

Charles City County Community Discussion- May 8, 2015

The value of living in Charles City for older adults is that there is a strong sense of community, the cost of living is low and it is a quiet and less expensive community. Charles City is a unique County in the fact that it is served by multiple jurisdictions, including Williamsburg and Richmond.

Charles City's Friendship Café is highly visible and has a strong relationship with the YMCA. These two organizations engage in a collaboration which is an asset to the community as a whole. Attendees expressed that there could be more effective coordination between these two entities and that collaboration should also occur with other aging service agencies.

The primary issues for older adults in this County are the limited transportation and the lack of an adult day care facility. These two issues may affect individuals' overall well-being and may increase their isolation within the community. There is a lack of access to computers.

Limited collaboration between the two jurisdictions and the lack of knowledge of what resources are available create barriers for older adults. A resource guide for Charles City and New Kent were suggested as a solution to disseminating information. Charles City has a population of older adults who are providing care for older loved ones along with a population who is taking care of younger grandchildren. This duality in caregiving has led to a unique need for additional training and education programs in a local setting for a diverse group of caregivers.

Chesterfield County Community Discussion, May 20, 2015

Chesterfield County's community discussion had the highest attendance with diverse participation and standing room only. The value of living in Chesterfield County for older adults is that it is a safe community that has access and availability of medical services along with lots of activities for older adult residents. Overall Chesterfield County Government is considered very forward thinking; they were the first locality in Virginia to develop a Senior Advocate position. There is a strong culture of volunteerism along with highly effective means of communication. Chesterfield County is rich with a wide range of diverse resources that are valuable to the residents that range from lifelong learning and the Shepherd's Center to the local farmers markets and the Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department.

There are challenges within the culturally diverse communities, specifically the Asian American and Latino communities. These communities are not as aware and engaged in the development of programs and services; however, both are rapidly growing communities within the County.

There are aging neighborhoods that may lack resources, such as no clubhouse or access to computers; a lot of these older adults may be unaware of resources and some are being left behind. Transportation is limited and there is no hub from which transportation is coordinated. There is a lack of safe places to walk within and outside of neighborhoods. This may further isolate older adults and put them at risk of injury. Additionally there is a lack of "park and rides" leaving inadequate safe places to leave a car to carpool. Chesterfield County is spread out and there are pockets in the County which have secondary roads and lack services such as Internet which limits an older adult's access to online resources.

Opportunities where services are needed or where there is a need for enhancement include transportation, affordable and accessible housing, mental health services, services and assistance to older adults raising grandchildren and a permanent

placement for the senior center. There is a need for culturally competent services and to have information on services and programs available in multiple languages.

Chesterfield County is a large county that has a diverse community of older adults widely ranging in age, income and cultural backgrounds. It is a community that has a significant number of strengths and resources for older adults and the Chesterfield County Age Wave Plan has been identified in the County's master plan.

Goochland County Community Discussion, May 7, 2015

The value of living in Goochland County for older adults is the availability of local shopping with food and drug stores, churches and transportation to medical appointments. The most significant challenges faced by older adults are the limited services for persons with disabilities.

There is a lack of access to hearing aid services and assistance with eye glasses. Older adults in the area may not know how to access services or know what services are available to them. Older adult residents may have a lack of food and limited access to others in the community or may be too proud to ask for assistance. There is a gap in services for individuals who are above the poverty line, but who also may not have the resources to be financially independent.

The family physician was identified as the gateway for older adults in the County. Beyond the gateway it was noted that faith communities and families are the most significant sources of support and information identified by the attendees. Programs and services may exist in the County but people are not aware of what they are and they may not know how to find out about them. The Friendship Café is a resource for individuals and helps them be connected socially along with it being a mechanism for disseminating information. Coordination and collaboration between Senior Connections' Care Coordinator and community service agencies needs to be strengthened. There was interest in having access to computers and training on how to use them.

Hanover County Community Discussion, May 20, 2015

The value of living in Hanover County for older adults is that is considered a safe place to live with a high level of community engagement by the Department of Social Services, Hanover Sheriff's office and the Ashland Police Department. Both the sheriff's office and police department are vested in the older adult community and participate in Project Lifesaver for children and older adults. Hanover is considered a beautiful county where people feel they have history. Hanover offers a sense of community that allows for autonomy as well as privacy. Attendees feel that Hanover is a beautiful county with a variety of activities and faith organizations for older adults to participate with. There are good schools, places to eat and access to medical service.

The most significant challenges faced by older adults are that there is no affordable and accessible public transportation. There is volunteer transportation for individuals who are ambulatory; however, it is not well-known that the service is available. There is also a lack of affordable senior housing and limited or no alternative housing options, such as Assisted Living, Nursing Home, income based or senior housing. Hanover County is spread out and services are offered in limited parts of the County. The Friendship Café and the partnership with the YMCA for the Growing Younger Program are significant resources to the community. While the community is very spread out churches and word of mouth are the most effective ways that older adult are receiving information. Senior Law Day was also recognized as a valuable resource. There was interest in training on how to use technology.

Henrico County Community Discussion, May 7, 2015

The value of living in Henrico County for older adults according to attendees is the easy access to health care and the fiscal stability of the community. While the County is viewed as fiscally sound there is a lack of resources in the Eastern part of the County.

Lack of transportation and the ability to access resources and service providers were identified as the most significant barriers.

A lack of Asian American centric services to serve the growing multigenerational Asian American community was identified as an area where services need to be expanded. It was stated that current services are not culturally sensitive on multiple issues including language and dietary and cultural norms. These issues decrease the ability for socialization, compounding the issue of isolation. Identifying leadership channels to access as a means of effectively disseminating information was a recommended solution.

Expanded utilization of No Wrong Door and PeerPlace are possible strategies to link individuals to resources, in addition to increasing the branding of programs to make them more identifiable to older adults in the community.

New Kent County Community Discussion, May 18, 2015

The value of living in New Kent County for older adult is that it is a quiet, growing community that is conveniently located between Richmond and Williamsburg. It is an area that feels safe with a low crime rate and where you get a lot of value for your money.

Limited transportation and an overall lack of programs specifically for older adults are the most significant challenges for older adults. New Kent does not have alternative living opportunities such as Assisted Living or nursing homes. There is no adult day care provider and there are limited in-home care services which serve the County.

These limitations make it make it difficult on caregivers and older adults. Additional training for caregivers along with respite opportunities are needed in response to these gaps. Additionally there are limited opportunities for older adults to socialize and recreate with no specific senior programs offered through Parks and Recreation. Older adult residents expressed the feeling that they have no voice in the County. It was further expressed that seniors need "to come together."

Opportunities for addressing the issues were to provide a Resource Center for older adults where they could come together and connect and to offer older adult specific programs through the Parks and Recreation Department. It was also suggested that creating partnerships with the schools and the libraries would be an opportunity to provide computer education and multi-generational programs and encourage older adult peer mentors.

Powhatan Community Discussion, May 14th, 2015

Powhatan County is viewed as a beautiful County with easy access to shopping. People are viewed as generous and there is a low crime rate. The Village where county offices are housed is centrally located and there is little traffic in the county.

Several agencies serve the older adult population including Parks and Recreation, the Library and the Sheriffs' Department. Partnerships in the County are easy to establish with examples such as TRIAD and the Friendship Café which connect older adults.

The County has no affordable housing and is limited in assisted living options with only two in the County. There is no public transportation available. Additionally accessing information presents a barrier to older adults in the County. Other challenges faced by older adults and their caregivers are there are no support groups and there is a need for additional education and resources. Help with repairing homes, with legal documents and legal issues, and help finding benefits are needed.

Community partners and the Department of Social Services are working together to keep people safe through the Emergency services program and the Energy Share program along with additional heating assistance.

Opportunities for multigenerational programs are offered through the YMCA at special events and festivals within the county. The library and faith organizations also offer multigenerational programs. Additional services are needed for adolescents and teens within the county.

Richmond City Community Discussion, May 14, 2015

The value of living in Richmond City for older adults is the vast opportunities available to them which range from cultural, social, and volunteer opportunities to lifelong learning and employment. It is an area that is the right size that offers four continuing care communities along with a strong and active Area Agency on Aging. The Virginia

Commonwealth University Department of Gerontology and the collaborative work with the Age Wave are both important assets to the older adult population.

Significant challenges in Richmond include all aspects of transportation, including lack of knowledge of how to effectively use public transportation (GRTC), lack of affordable specialized transportation, and lack of transportation for shopping and nonmedical trips. For those who drive, the downtown area can be confusing to navigate. There are older neighborhoods that have issues of safety and those issues are impacting the housing markets and fiscal security of the older adults living in those neighborhoods. Additionally neighborhoods are also lacking in services and may be food deserts leaving some older adults in a state of isolation. Low income older adults may experience different barriers and challenges that have not been fully identified in the discourse.

Richmond has multiple organizations that are working and collaborating to ensure the well-being of older adult and to combat the issues of isolation. Friendship Cafes, YMCA, Senior Navigator and TRIAD are important programs and partnerships offering services and resources to the community. Having the Senior Advocate in local government is helpful. Churches are an integral part of the network supporting older adults.

Transportation remains the primary service that needs to be expanded upon in Richmond City. Additional opportunities to expand services include increasing affordable housing options and affordable options with adult day care centers. These services could be expanded and/or improved upon through the use of best practices. An emergency room that was designed with the geriatric population in mind and increasing the work force of gerontologically trained professionals were also identified as opportunities to expand services. Combating ageism and certifying age-friendly businesses are important issues to address.

Summary of Themes for All Community Discussions

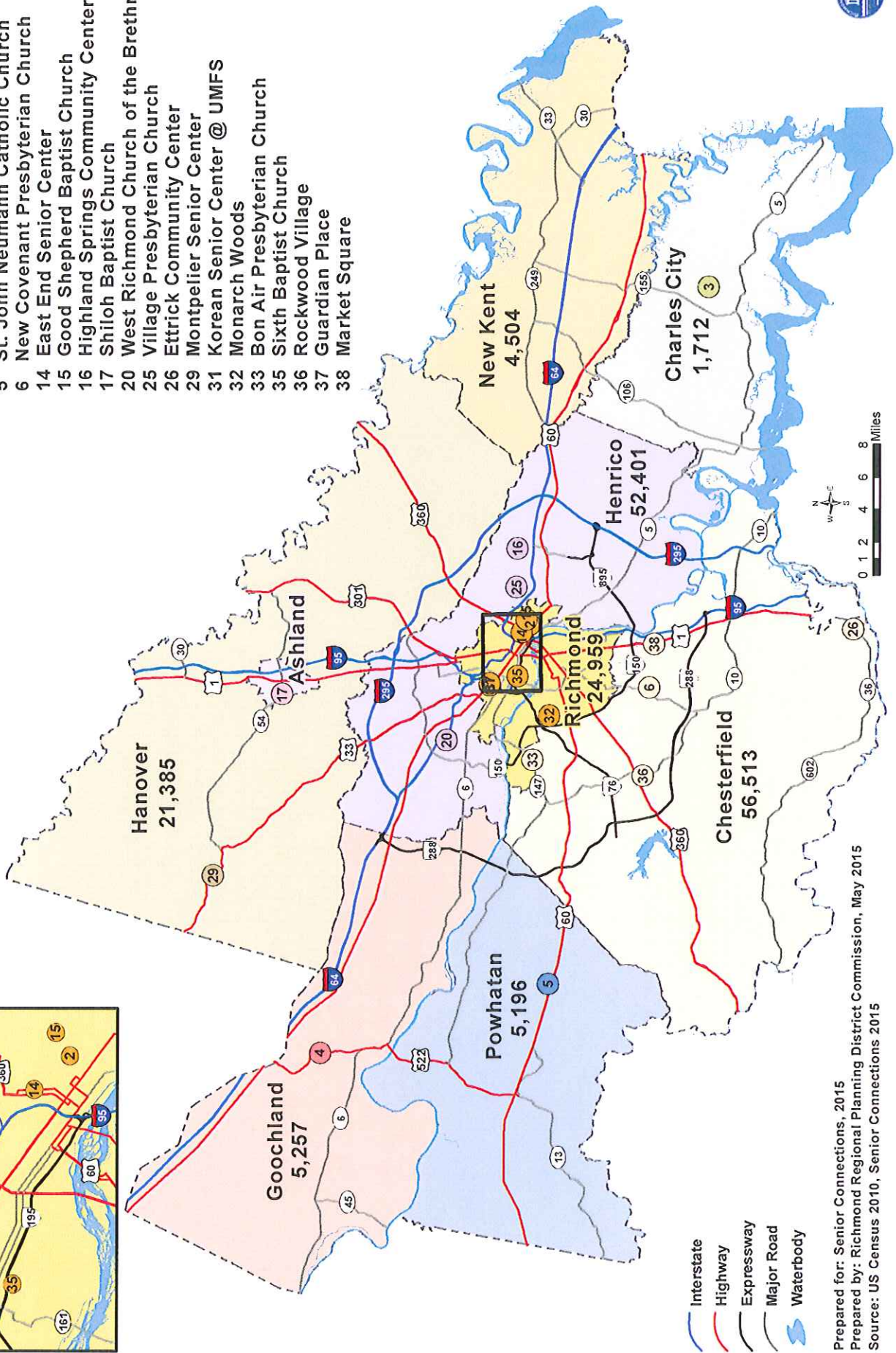
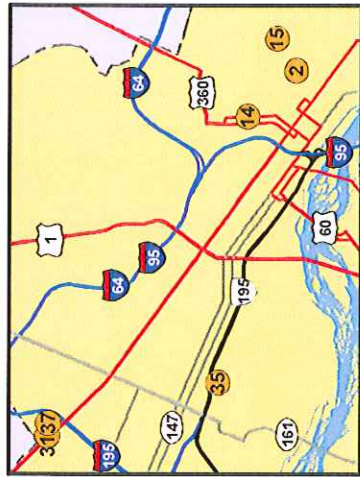
Themes which emerged out of all the discussions are:

- People of all ages need to know about available resources before they need them.
- Senior Connections is seen as an umbrella Agency and can serve as a hub for other service providers, especially with resources such as No Wrong Door.
- There is a need to address expansion of service for cultural groups, especially the Asian American and Hispanic Communities.
- Transportation resources need to be both accessible and affordable.
- Safety and crime prevention are important concerns.
- Computer and related technology is being used by some seniors. Classes may help to expand this use.
- Friendship Cafés are highly visible and considered valuable services.
- There is a large array of valuable Agency Services. They need to be defined individually based on local needs.

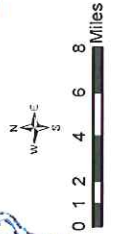
- Senior Law Day (Wills, Powers of Attorney and Advance Health Directives) is a much needed service for seniors and caregivers.
- Caregivers need assistance with respite and support is needed for grandparents raising grandchildren.
- There are many examples of collaboration and coordination between local service providers and these partnerships should continue to be strengthened.

2020 Senior Population 65+ and Friendship Cafes 2015

- 2 Linwood Robinson Senior Center
- 3 Ruthville Gymnasium Complex
- 4 Goochland Recreation Center
- 5 St. John Neumann Catholic Church
- 6 New Covenant Presbyterian Church
- 14 East End Senior Center
- 15 Good Shepherd Baptist Church
- 16 Highland Springs Community Center
- 17 Shiloh Baptist Church
- 20 West Richmond Church of the Brethren
- 25 Village Presbyterian Church
- 26 Ettrick Community Center
- 29 Montpelier Senior Center
- 31 Korean Senior Center @ UMFS
- 32 Monarch Woods
- 33 Bon Air Presbyterian Church
- 35 Sixth Baptist Church
- 36 Rockwood Village
- 37 Guardian Place
- 38 Market Square



- Interstate
- Highway
- Expressway
- Major Road
- Waterbody



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