

City Council Workshop

Agenda Item #1

July 24, 2017

Establish *ad hoc* Senior Citizen
Advisory Committee

As noted in the attached request from Councilors Beecher and Henderson, the focus of this workshop item is to discuss having the City Council form an *ad hoc* Senior Citizen Advisory Committee to help ensure that senior citizens are able to “age safely and with dignity in the community where they have roots.” As Maine has the distinction of being the oldest state in the nation, many communities have or are beginning to grapple with the issue of aging place.

The proposed committee would be charged with five tasks over the course of 16 months:

1. Conducting a needs assessment of those aged 65+ in South Portland.
2. Identifying current programs in place that meet the needs of seniors.
3. Identify gaps between needs and available services and determine partnerships and options that could meet these needs.
4. Develop a comprehensive strategy for communicating to our seniors the programs available to them.
5. Delivering recommendations to the City Council.

More information will be presented by these councilors on Monday night. I am recommending Council proceed with the creation of this committee so that our City’s policymakers and staff members have additional information on the unmet needs of this population within our community.



City Manager

Request for Ad Hoc Senior Citizen Advisory Committee

The purpose of this request to the South Portland City Council is for an Ad Hoc Senior Citizen Advisory Committee of the Council to be established to ensure senior citizens in our community have access to services enabling them to age safely and with dignity in the community where they have roots. This is an important issue for the Council to address because Maine's population is the oldest in the country. "By 2030, it is estimated that one out of every four Mainers will be over 65".¹ South Portland's total population is 25,556. The population over 65 is 3,741 or 14.6%. These numbers will soon be increased as census data identified 3,346 fifty-five to sixty-four year olds. While the city's median income is \$54,598, for the senior population it is \$36,000. (Data source: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimate. 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5 yr- Estimate (ZCTA504106). Those over sixty-five are an increasing component of our community.

According to the State Plan on Aging "... our aging population does not consider itself old, highlighting a distinct interest in remaining independent, regardless of physical age. The biggest concerns for Maine's older population are in fact physical limitations and loss of independence, although other concerns include falling down, homes in need of repair, and failure to afford their current lifestyle as they continue growing older".² Retirement and fixed incomes present economic difficulties for many. As cost of living increases along with increased need for health care and services, people may be forced to choose between essentials such as medications, food and heat. Chronic conditions that impact functional abilities tend to increase as people age. Normal changes of aging effect all body systems impacting balance, bone and muscle strength, heart and lung function, the immune system, nutrition, elimination, hearing and vision. Physical and mental limitations can hinder the ability to safely perform activities of daily living and diminish independence. For example, if balance is poor, climbing on stools or ladders for cleaning and repairing can be hazardous. Raking leaves or shoving snow may be too strenuous for those with decreased cardiac, respiratory or muscular-skeletal function and walking on uneven or icy surfaces can be difficult. Fall risk can be increased by reactions to medications. Vulnerability to crime and injury increases with vision, hearing and mobility impairment. These changes can result in inability to continue driving. Physical and mental limitations impact an entire spectrum of self care abilities from intimate personal care, to the ability to shop and pay bills, seek medical services, socialize with friends and family and participate the life of the community. However, accommodations and services can be provided that assist people to age in their community in their homes or other housing (age in place) with safely and with dignity.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) references eight domains of livability identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) that assist people to age in place. These include: safe and accessible outdoor space and buildings, transportation, and housing; opportunities for social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and

employment, access to communication and information and community support and health services.³ If we do not identify unmet needs of senior citizens to age in place, then, as a society, we will encounter increased health care costs and institutionalization of elders. As significantly, their contributions in terms of wisdom, judgment, skills, and knowledge will be lost. If we work to develop communities that provide supports that facilitate aging in place, senior citizens can continue to fulfill their desired roles and the city becomes a more thriving, dynamic environment for all ages and abilities.

Goals of the Ad Hoc Committee

1. Conduct a needs assessment of those over 65 in South Portland. This will be accomplished in three ways: one, conduct a convenience survey of those over sixty five from around the city by reaching out to individuals in all voting districts/neighborhoods; two, conduct focus groups in voting districts/neighborhoods of the city and three, interview representatives of agencies and professional groups that work with the elderly to ascertain their perception of the needs of seniors.
2. Identify current programs in place that meet needs of older adults.
3. Identify gaps between needs and available services and determine partnerships and options to fill.
4. Develop comprehensive strategy for communication of available programs and aids.
5. Recommendations will be delivered to city council within 16 months of Council approval of project.

References

1. *Building a Collaborative Community Response to Aging in Place*. AARP, Maine. September, 2013. p 1
2. *Building a Collaborative Community Response to Aging in Place*. AARP, Maine. September, 2013. p 4
3. *The Maine Guide: Building Livable, Age friendly Communities* AARP, Maine, September 1, 2016. P 14



City Council Proposal
Senior Citizen Advisory Committee
Councilors Maxine Beecher and Susan Henderson
July 24, 2017

Workshop Proposal



Establish an Ad Hoc Senior Citizen Advisory Committee

Mission:

Establish an ad hoc committee to ensure seniors have access to services and infrastructure enabling them to live safely and with dignity as they age.

Committee Goals:

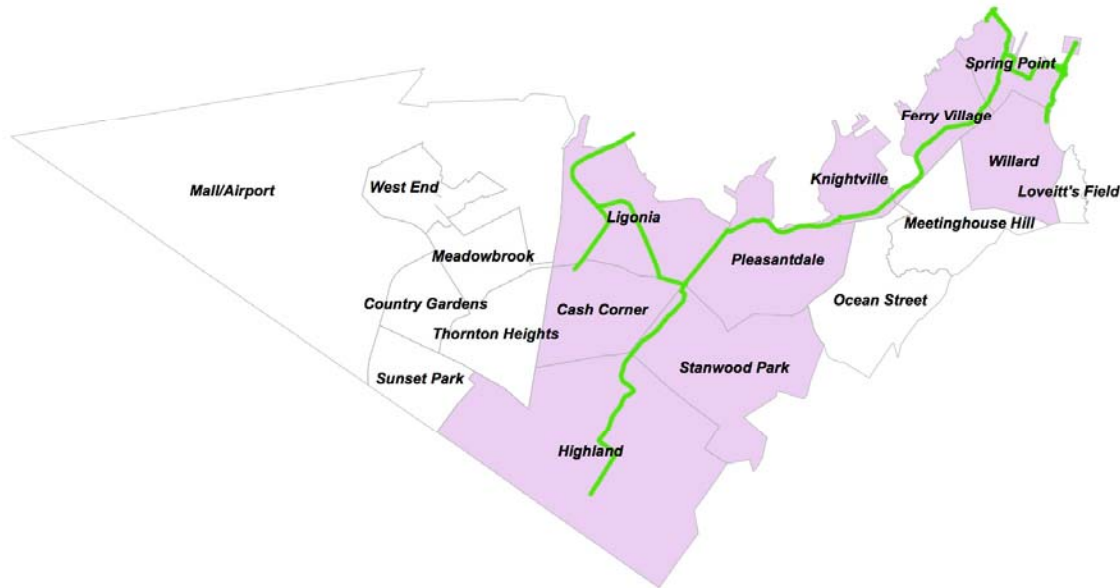


1. Conduct needs assessment by age group (i.e. 60-69, 70-79, 80-90, 91+) and dwelling type (Apartment, home-owner, condo, SPHA, etc).
2. Identify current programs in place to meet identified needs.
3. Identify Gaps between needs and available services and determine partnerships and options to fill.
4. Develop comprehensive strategy for communication of available programs and aids.
5. Recommendations will be delivered to city council within 16 months of project ad hoc committee starting meetings.

Neighborhoods:



Neighborhoods Served by Existing or Planned Multi-Use Paths

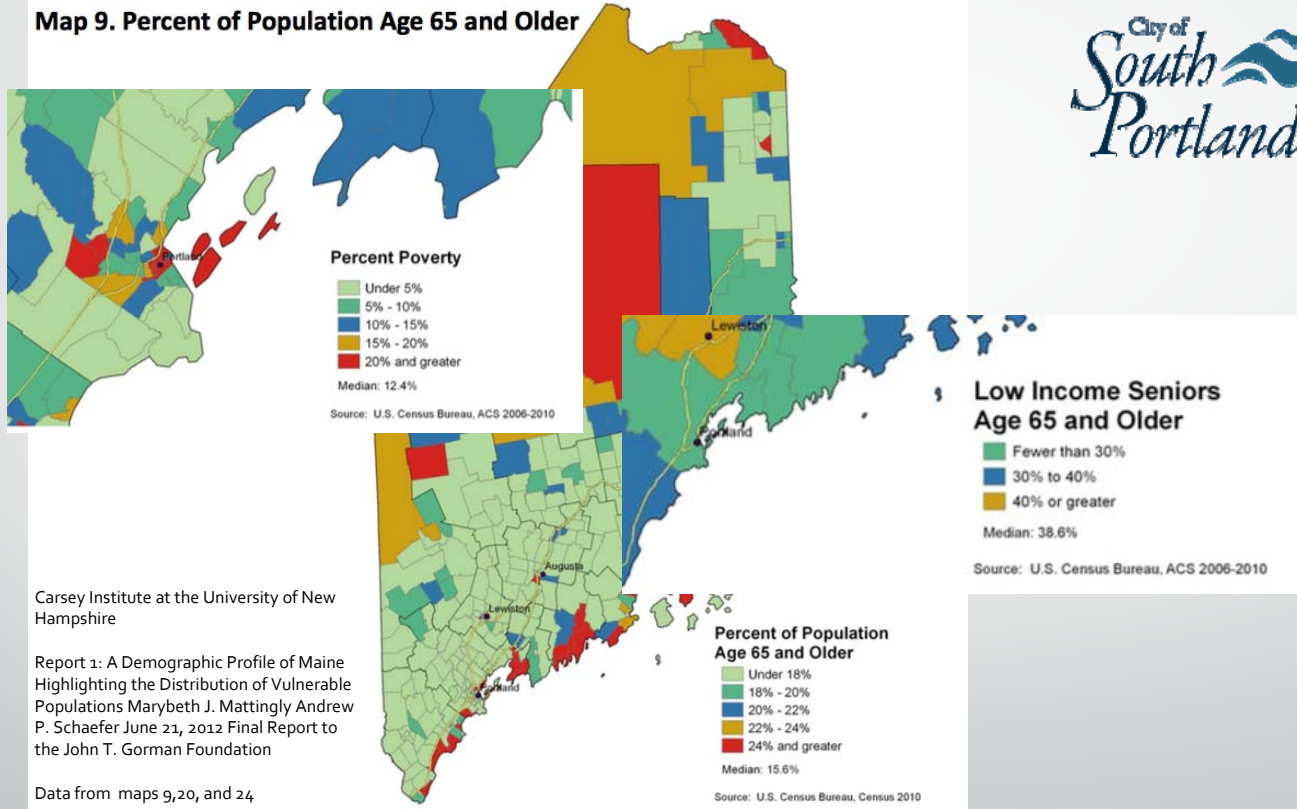


8 Domains for Aging in Place World Health Organization



Global age-friendly cities : a guide.
1.Aged - statistics. 2.Aging. 3.Urban health. 4.City planning. 5.Residence characteristics. 6.Quality of life.
7.Consumer participation. 8.Strategic planning. I.World Health Organization.
ISBN 978 92 4 154730 7 (NLM classification: WT 31)
© World Health Organization 2007

Map 9. Percent of Population Age 65 and Older

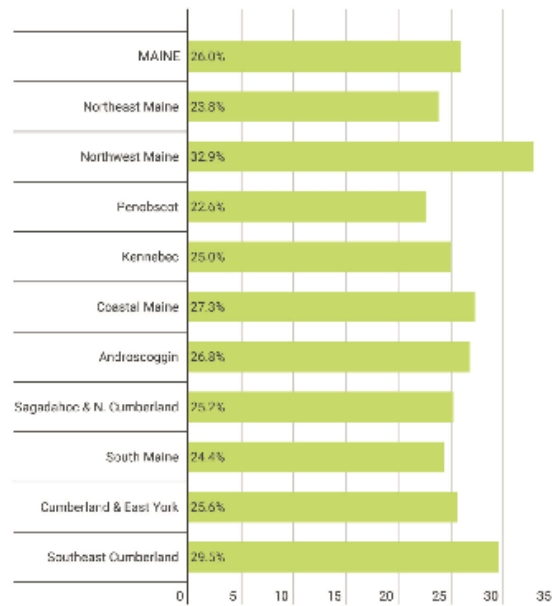


Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire

Report 1: A Demographic Profile of Maine Highlighting the Distribution of Vulnerable Populations Marybeth J. Mattingly Andrew P. Schaefer June 21, 2012 Final Report to the John T. Gorman Foundation

Data from maps 9,20, and 24

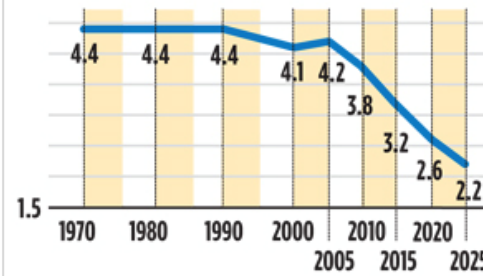
Figure 21. Percent of Maine Seniors Living Alone by Region



Source: A Portrait of Wellbeing, The Status of Seniors in Maine, John T Gorman – Page 26

Projected ratio of elder dependency in Maine

By 2025, there will be only two working-age Mainers for each person age 65 and older. In the 1980s and 1990s, there were four people ages 20-64 for each retired Mainer. The dwindling number of people in the work force, contributing to pension funds and supporting government programs that assist seniors, is expected to deepen the strain created by a growing senior population.



SOURCE: Muskie School of Public Service

STAFF GRAPHIC | MICHAEL FISHER



Governance: There are two primary approaches to governing an aging friendly community. A **top-down approach** relies on information coming from, and decisions being made by, policy makers and planners. A **bottom-up approach** focuses on programs that emphasize participation by older people themselves.

1. Thriving versus Surviving

When we set up systems or infrastructure to support aging in place, we must consider the quality of life indicators that are specific, but not exclusive, to older individuals. It is not enough to facilitate “systems” that allow people to age in place. Rather, we need to focus on the indicators that promote a high quality of life and ultimately allow people to thrive in older age rather than simply survive. These indicators include opportunities for lifelong learning, a sense of belonging and contribution, and being embraced for one’s virtues rather than being shunned because of one’s disabilities.

2. Opportunities versus Accommodation

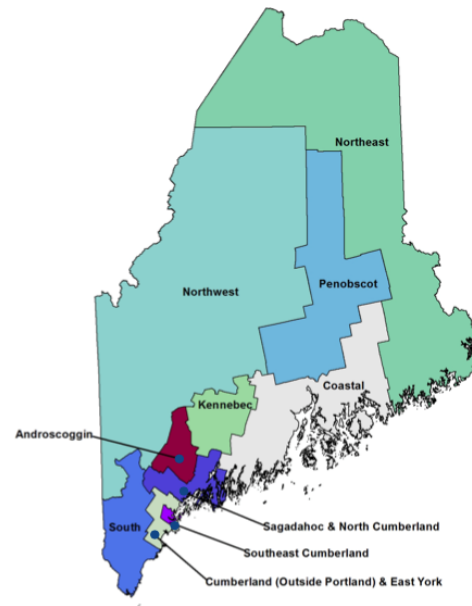
It is not news that as a society we display a lack of respect toward our older neighbors. Policy makers talk about the drain that Medicare and Social Security place on our federal budget. We often talk about the exploding Baby Boomer population and the strain they will put on the various systems they will need to access as they age. When we shift our focus, however, we can see older adults, with their wisdom, skills and abilities, as an abundance rather than scarcity.

Building a Collaborative Community Response to Aging in Place
A Guide to Creating an Age Friendly Maine, One Community at a Time. Sept 2013, Pg. 12, 26

Key Findings

- Maine seniors are less likely to be poor than seniors nationwide, but more often poor than their counterparts across Northern New England. In Maine, 8.9 percent of seniors age 55 and older are poor, compared to 9.5 percent across the United States, 6.0 percent in New Hampshire, and 6.8 percent in Vermont.
- Maine seniors are more likely to be low-income (that is, to live below twice the official poverty line¹) (29.0 percent) than their counterparts across the United States (27.4 percent) and in New Hampshire (21.1 percent) and Vermont (23.5 percent).
- Within Maine, seniors' wellbeing on economic, housing, and social indicators varies dramatically by age category. Younger seniors are less often poor, somewhat less burdened by housing costs, less likely to live alone, and more often married than older seniors.
- Within Maine, outcomes also vary dramatically by income category. Low-income seniors are more burdened by housing costs that constitute more than 30 percent of household income, regardless of whether they rent or own, and are far more likely to live alone and be unmarried.
- Across Maine's ten regions (see Figure 1), we find relative consistency across all indicators. For the most part, outcomes in each of the ten regions look similar to those in Maine as a whole, with a few exceptions:
 - Penobscot County seniors are less likely to be poor or low-income than seniors across Maine as a whole, while Southeast Cumberland County seniors are more likely to be poor or low-income.
 - Seniors in rented homes in Northeast Maine and Southeast Cumberland County are somewhat more likely to be housing-cost burdened (or live in homes where more than 30 percent of household income goes to owner costs or gross rent) than their counterparts across Maine, while renting seniors in Penobscot are somewhat less likely to be housing-cost burdened.
 - Seniors in Northwest Maine and Southeast Cumberland County are more likely than seniors across Maine to live alone, and seniors in Penobscot County are somewhat less likely to live alone.
- We find little variation in patterns by income category across Maine's ten regions. In general, the story of low-income seniors faring worse on social and housing indicators is consistent throughout the state.

Figure 1. Map of Maine Region Boundaries



Source: A Portrait of Wellbeing, The Status of Seniors in Maine, John T Gorman – Page 4