

Resolution No: 17-623  
Introduced: November 27, 2012  
Adopted: December 4, 2012

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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By: County Council

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**SUBJECT:** Resolution in Support of the Commission on Aging's Senior Agenda

**Background**

1. The Commission on Aging was established in 1974 to improve conditions of older adults in the County; work toward the elimination of restrictions that impede older citizens from full participation in the mainstream of community life, and to assist and stimulate all levels of government and the community to be more responsive to the needs of the County's older residents.
2. In 2010, the Census estimated that 119,770 seniors (aged 65 and above) live in Montgomery County. This was 12.3% of the population. The number of seniors is projected to increase to 174,290 by the year 2020, a 45% increase. By the year 2040, over 21% of the population is projected to be 65 years old or older.
3. Recognizing the projected growth in the senior population, in 2007 the County began a strategic planning process that included a report from Towson University's Center for Productive Aging, titled "Imagining an Aging Future for Montgomery County" and a separate study on senior outreach and communications. In 2008, the County Executive convened a Senior Summit that identified eight policy areas affecting older adults: (1) Communication and Outreach, (2) Housing and Zoning, (3) Transportation and Mobility, (4) Health and Wellness, (5) Civic and Social Engagement, (6) Home and Community Support Services, (7) Safety, and (8) Employment. The County Executive also established his Senior Subcabinet on Vital Aging to support his Senior Initiative.
4. In 2010, the Commission on Aging issued a "Call to Action" asking the County to adopt a Senior Agenda to plan over the next five years for the projected increase in adults over the age of 65. In October 2011, the Commission on Aging approved its Senior Agenda. The Agenda's vision is that "Montgomery County will be a Community for a Lifetime – a place for older adults to live safe, healthy and vital lives." The Agenda calls for a commitment to older adults in its policies and planning and provides a vision statement with action steps for Transportation, Housing, Socialization and Leisure, Health and Wellness, Communications, Employment, and Security and Safety.

5. In May 2012, the County Executive sent a request to the County Council to approve a resolution in support of the Senior Agenda. In his memo, the County Executive says that he fully endorses the vision articulated in the Commission's Senior Agenda and the key elements identified as optimal to aging in place/community. He notes that the Senior Agenda aligns closely with the areas identified in his Senior Summit and the focus of his Senior Subcabinet on Vital Aging.
6. On November 1, 2012 the Council's Health and Human Services Committee met with the Commission on Aging to discuss its Senior Agenda and priorities for Fiscal Year 2014. The Commission told the HHS Committee that Council approval of the Senior Agenda would establish a policy around older adults that can be used as a guidepost for now and the future and would encourage County departments to take actions each year. The Commission also shared that there are critical housing, transportation, and mental health priorities for older adults who are needy and at-risk and, also, for those of low and middle-incomes whose continued independence relies on some services. The Commission's FY 2014 priorities include funding for the Housing Initiative Fund to enable more affordable housing for seniors, a coordinator for "villages" (particularly for lower income residents), budget enhancements to connect transportation to community centers for activities for mental and physical health, funding for senior center maintenance and staffing, increased case management, senior outreach services, and respite care. The Commission also urged that funds be approved to allow more information to be printed, as many older residents rely on printed information.

#### Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following action:

The County Council endorses the Commission on Aging's Senior Agenda (attached) as a blueprint for planning for the growth of the senior population and making "Montgomery County a Community for a Lifetime."

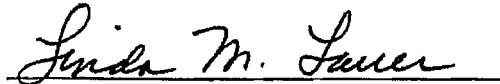
Requests that, as a part of developing his FY 2014 Recommended Operating Budget, the County Executive consult with the Commission on Aging on its FY 2014 priorities that were presented to the Health and Human Services Committee.

Requests that the County Executive consider the Senior Agenda's vision and action steps for transportation, housing, socialization and leisure, health and wellness, communications, employment, and safety and security as a part of his planning and budgeting process, and that in developing his Recommended 2015-2020 Capital Improvements Program address accessibility of recreation programs for seniors, using libraries as a location of activities and resources for older adults, and connecting transportation to senior programs.

Requests the Executive provide outcome measures for his Senior Initiative to facilitate evaluation of specific items funded in the capital and operating budgets and progress being made in achieving the vision of the Senior Agenda.

Affirms its commitment to make funding senior programs that support the vision in the Senior Agenda a priority within the resources available for FY 2014.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

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Linda Lauer, Clerk of the Council

## Montgomery County Commission on Aging

### SENIOR AGENDA

#### **A Community for a Lifetime : A Proposal for a Senior Agenda Submitted by the Montgomery County Commission on Aging**

In August 2010, the Montgomery County Commission on Aging (COA) issued a **Call to Action** in which the COA asked that the County adopt a **Senior Agenda** to plan over the next five years for the significant increase in County residents over age 65. The following **Senior Agenda** represents the Commission's perspective on how the County can become a place for older adults to live safe, health and vital lives.

#### **Montgomery County will be a Community for a Lifetime— a place for older adults to live safe, healthy and vital lives.**

##### **Commitment to Older Adults**

- The County will have a policy against ageism, including age stereotyping.
- Older adults are a valuable economic, cultural, and social resource and will be included in all County planning activities at the Executive and Council levels.
- Planning related to older adults will include consideration of diversity, inclusiveness, and intergenerational elements.
- Demographic data about older adults will be maintained, analyzed, and incorporated into planning.
- Resource information relevant to older adults will be distributed and accessible.
- The County will have a plan to address options for aging in place and alternatives.
- The County will promote public-private partnerships that contribute to implementation of this Agenda.

##### **Transportation**

**Vision:** *Montgomery County will have public and private transportation and mobility systems that enable older adults to go where they want to go, when they want to go and how they want to get there.*

- Affordable senior transportation will be a priority.
- Planning will include in-neighborhood options to make transportation accessible and to make affordable escorted transportation available.
- Planning will encompass the needs and safety of both pedestrians and those who do not drive.
- Transportation planning will include a focus on the needs of older adults as they become less able to drive.

##### **Housing**

**Vision:** *Montgomery County will promote choices of dwelling types so that as the needs and preferences of older adults change, they can age in place, downsize, choose rental or ownership, or find housing with the appropriate level of supportive services without having to leave the community.*

- Affordable senior housing will be promoted and made available.
  - Housing options and alternatives will be part of County planning efforts.
  - Visitable and livable options will be included in County planning.
  - New and existing construction and redevelopment will consider the needs of both current and prospective older residents.
  - The County will assist and encourage efforts to create supportive communities such as villages, co-housing and other options.
  - Redevelopment planning will encourage walkable communities.
  - Planning efforts will include public-private partnerships as an option to providing housing suitable for older adults.
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**Socialization and Leisure**

**Vision:** *Montgomery County will encourage and support vital living of older adults by providing opportunities for physical, mental and social interaction.*

- Recreation programs will facilitate socialization and other activities that integrate health and wellness.
- Recreation programs will be available and easily accessible to older adults throughout the County, particularly in areas where there are no senior centers.
- Lifelong learning opportunities will be available.
- Libraries will be a location of activities and resources for older adults.
- Active efforts will be made to engage older adults as volunteers.

**Health and Wellness**

**Vision:** *Montgomery County will expand public health and prevention programs that promote physical, mental, social and environmental health for older adults.*

- Medical care for older adults will be available, accessible, and affordable.
- Healthcare providers will be encouraged to accept private and public health insurance including Medicare and Medicaid.
- Direct services and educational programs to plan for serious illness and to manage chronic diseases including promotion of self-management programs will be a priority.
- Access to hearing and dental care will be available.
- Nutrition support including education and meals will be provided.
- Specialized mental health care will be available as an integral part of the health services delivery system.
- Caregiver support will be a priority.
- Services to address cognitive impairment will be available, accessible and affordable for affected older adults and their families and caregivers.

**Communications**

**Vision:** *Montgomery County will distribute and publicize recognizable, understandable, timely, and accessible information on County and public resources and services for older adults.*

- Information will be understandable and accessible by older adults and their caregivers in diverse ethnic population groups
- Information will clearly state who is eligible for services at no cost and who is eligible at specified costs.
- Information for older adults will be branded uniformly for consistency and recognizable identification
- The County will use and publicize multiple media to disseminate information relevant to older adults, including social media, its regularly updated website and a 24/7 information resource line.

**Employment**

**Vision:** *Montgomery County will recognize the extent and value of the contribution of older adults to the economy.*

- The County will encourage County agencies and private companies to offer employment opportunities as older adults transition to retirement.
- The County will encourage job fairs, partnerships, and forums to help older adults prepare themselves to continue in or reenter the workforce and find jobs.
- The County will provide information that promotes the value of older workers.

**Security and Safety**

**Vision:** *Montgomery County will provide physical, financial, and technological protection and safety for older adults.*

- The County will expand its police and fire safety programs targeted toward older adults.
- The County will educate both older adults and their caregivers about the potential for financial crimes, including telephone and computer scams.
- The County's Ombudsman Program will increase its monitoring of the safety of group homes and assisted living facilities.
- The County will work to assure legal protection from financial exploitation of older adults. ■