

From: [Kathleen Kelso](#)
To: [Richardson, Mike \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [Liz Boyer](#)
Subject: Mac-Grovelnd Community plan
Date: Monday, October 05, 2015 12:20:45 PM
Attachments: [Metrohsg.memo.docx](#)

Hi, Mike.

I'm writing in support of the Mac-Groveland District 14 Plan. I particularly support the Housing Chapter and the following statement:

Coordinate with the City to initiate a study of the implications of revising the Saint Paul zoning ordinance to promote the rehabilitation of existing single-family homes over the teardown of existing single-family homes.

This is CRITICAL to the future of the city...my cohort (ages 66-70) are looking for places to move to right here in Saint Paul to no avail. Downtown condos are not of any interest, and more to the point, unaffordable. The \$700,000 house next door is the norm now for new homes in our District. The message is loud and clear: our city is not interested in keeping an aging population in our communities. Assisted Living will be the LAST place anyone under the age of 90 will be looking at - right?

You will hear more from my cohorts as the months go by...

I've attached the memo I sent to the Metro Council in reply to their woeful chapter on Housing in the 2040 Plan.

Thanks,

Kathy

To: Metropolitan Council and the Housing Policy Plan Work Group

From: St. Paul Advisory Committee on Aging

Re: Thrive 2040, Draft Regional Housing Policy Plan

The St. Paul Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA) welcomes the opportunity for community-wide discussions about the future of affordable and life-cycle housing in the metropolitan region. We look forward to thoughtful and intentional direction through regional and municipality based Housing Policy Plans. We especially appreciate the possibility for multiple strategies to advance the stated policy priority: ***Create housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable and affordable homes.***

Review and Comments

In our review of the July 2014 Draft Housing Policy Plan, we note the Metropolitan Council's recognition that "our region is aging rapidly" and that aging households "...will shape the location and type of real estate added over the next three decades." Additionally, the Metro Council cites this fact: "In the next decade, the number of baby boomers likely to downsize their homes will be greater than the number of younger buyers to move into larger housing." All these statements in the introduction suggested to us that the Housing Policy Plan would at least minimally address the dramatic implications of this changing demographic. However, we find limited insight about how to proceed.

We are all aging. Affordable and life-cycle housing as it relates to aging is not just about "boomers" but whole neighborhoods (please put to rest the term "Baby Boomers" – we are long past usefulness of that term). As we age, the demographic shift will drive housing demand. Housing that is built or modified for aging households will leave an indelible mark on our housing stock.

Where will aging residents of the metro region move to as we age? Will there be affordable housing for us over the next two decades as we experience decreasing mobility? How will that come about? Will there be a regional effort to achieve economies of scale? Will there be a blueprint for our metro region to create "age-friendly" communities at the very least? If the Council is committed to "...increasing livability for people of all ages, races, ethnicities, incomes, national origins, and abilities..." how do we proceed over the next twenty-five years to make this happen for ALL of us aging "boomers" on the front lines in all the categories just listed?

The Draft Housing Policy Plan offers three paragraphs in the section, Plan housing choices for the growing senior population, on page 35. The Metro Council indicates an awareness of the complexity of the problem in the critical question: "Are there adequate housing choices, including age-integrated options, available for seniors to

stay active, conveniently access goods and services, and/or be near friends and family?”(page 36)

Of course, the answer is NO. The limited Metro Council response to this question is disappointing, given the facts presented in this extremely brief review about the “Silver Tsunami” – the “fastest growing segment of our population, doubling in absolute numbers by 2030 and reaching one in five of our regions residents by 2040.” The Metro Council response to this challenge does not imagine its primary leadership role to be anything other than to “*encourage the use of flexible design principles in projects funded through the Livable Communities Act.*”

Preparing Communities for All Ages

The ACOA finds it helpful to note that the Metro Council, through staff, will offer Expanded Technical Assistance and a means to share “best practices” as gleaned by and through other organizations. We hope that some form of “cross fertilization” will result in more informed and prepared neighborhoods willing and able to build communities for all ages - *from the ground up rather than top down.*

We encourage the Metro Council and the Housing Policy Plan Work Group to read, ***Housing America’s Older Adults: Meeting the Needs of An Aging Population***, recently published by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. (jchs.harvard.edu)

In their introduction, the Joint Center for Housing report states:

The public policy challenges are immense. Recognizing the implications of this profound demographic shift and taking immediate steps to address the deficiencies in the housing stock, community preparedness, and the health care system are vital to our national standard of living. The private and nonprofit sectors also have critical roles to play in developing new housing and care options that support aging in the community.

The report sets out policies that support aging in our communities and suggest an array of housing options. The sheer size and future growth of the older population, in number and share of our economy, is well on its way and demands immediate attention. Granted, the largest impacts of this shift is still a decade away as millions reach the ages when physical, financial, and social challenges increase sharply. Given what’s ahead, we feel a sense of urgency and magnitude of need that require our efforts to be scaled up dramatically. We must begin to see accomplishments decades before 2040.

Another excellent model for the Metro Council to consider are the resources supplied by the Intergenerational Center of Temple University, located in Philadelphia, PA. Their model, *Communities for All Ages*, is funded by W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and nine others. (www.communitiesforallages.org)

The Center published an exemplary document for all communities seeking to bring generations together to address critical concerns and promote lifelong civic engagement as described in their publication, *Intergenerational Community Building: Resource Guide, 2012*.

The promise and potential of an intergenerational approach lies in the intersection of four current trends, all of which are acknowledged by the Metro Council. These trends, as described by the Intergenerational Center, are:

- A growing older population that is seeking opportunities for contribution and connection;
- A “racial generation gap” in which the majority of older adults are white and an increasing percentage of youth are African-American, Latino, Asian-American and Native American;
- The need to re-engage people in the social compact in order to better meet our mutual obligations to each other; and
- Growing recognition that new, more comprehensive approaches are required to meet the needs of all age groups.

THE ACOA supports this model because it gives us all a way of thinking that encourages intergenerational alliances rather than competing for resources. This intentional approach creates communities in which people of ALL ages are supported and engage in community life. Features of such a community might include the same outcomes the Metro Council seeks:

- Policies, facilities and public spaces that foster interaction across generations;
- Opportunities for lifelong civic engagement and learning;
- **Diverse and affordable housing and transportation options that address changing needs** (emphasis added);
- A physical environment that promotes healthy living and the wise use of natural resources; and
- An integrated system of accessible health and social services that supports individuals and families throughout life.

We all know that it is now possible to access a tremendous amount of information about what’s ahead as we age but precious little about the exact way to plan a prevention strategy to divert a crisis. The St. Paul Advisory Committee on Aging supports a Housing Policy Plan that assists the metropolitan region to think differently about aging, affordable and life-cycle housing. We will work with our city planners to this end. In addition, ***we encourage the Metropolitan Council to work with the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging to find a complimentary design that will help people help themselves in creating community as we ALL grow older.***