

“Building of Aging- Friendly Communities”

**By
Orange County Government**

Recommendation:

Engage all departments (and their boards) of Orange County Government in the process of improving the infrastructure and services to meet the needs of all older adults, especially the moderately-impaired older residents.

Background:

The problems facing the moderately-impaired older population in Orange County will greatly increase over the next 20 years due to the projected population growth of residents over age 60 and the number of older residents without local family/social supports, adequate health insurance, or financial security.

Solutions:

The solutions are not just the responsibility of the Department on Aging, but all departments of county government can help make the marketing campaign ring true – “You’ll be a fan for life”. With all departments (and boards) identifying long-term infrastructure and services to address the needs of the aging population and orchestrating their efforts, we can impact the future. **A process for engaging all departments (and their boards) should be undertaken as part of the planning and budgeting process.** The county staff are familiar with potential opportunities to better serve older residents, particularly if they are aware of the problems facing older population and the projected trends. The framework and recommendations of the “Aging-Friendly Communities” program, which addresses a broad range of issues, may be a valuable resource to assist with this process.

Examples:

Some examples of potential actions to make long-term improvements for moderately-impaired older residents include:

Planning – Monitor and map the location of the older population (70+) as part of planning process for roads, side walks, shopping, housing developments, EMS, etc..

Budget Office/Inspections – Consider new fees on building permits to encourage homes to be built using “universal design principles” to help make housing more accessible and livable to future residents. (e.g. Plans that met criteria for universal design would have no additional fees levied.)

Economic Development – Provide support (advice, liability protection, incentives, etc) for small business to provide a wide range of services needed by moderately-impaired older residents from yard/chore to personal care and transportation

Public Works – Review all new/modifications to county buildings to improve accessibility (public transport routes & ramps), sound systems (for hearing impaired), etc.

In addition to the departments listed above the functions of Human Services, Public Safety, Culture and Recreation, Education, General Services, and Management all need to be involved. With leadership from the Board of Commissioners, all functions of government can *identify* innovative ways to improve the services to meet the needs of a growing older population, especially the moderately-impaired older adult and then effectively *implement* and *communicate* these services.