



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Social Services
Department No.: 044
Agenda Date: January 14, 2025
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 30 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director: Daniel Nielson (805) 346-7101
Contact Info: Barbara Finch, Adult and Aging Network Director, (805) 681-4678
SUBJECT: Transforming the Experience of Aging in Santa Barbara County

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file a presentation from the Adult and Aging Network on the development of a local Master Plan for Aging and provide additional direction as appropriate; and
- b) Determine that the activity is not a "Project" subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review per CEQA Guideline Section 15378(b)(4), since the activity is an organizational or administrative activity of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the Board agenda to share findings and recommendations from the "Aging Well in Santa Barbara County" report that was recently released by the Santa Barbara County Adult & Aging Network (AAN). The report was developed as a foundational document to highlight the County's shifting demographics and to encourage city and county planners to consider the needs and vulnerabilities of a rapidly aging and diversifying population. Since 2021, the AAN has taken a lead role in building public awareness and engaging key stakeholders to align local efforts with the goals and strategies of California's Master Plan for Aging (MPA). The report outlines recommendations for addressing three of the MPA's five goals, and describes how state investments are already having an impact in Santa Barbara County.

The MPA provides a framework for working in partnership with policymakers, planners, stakeholders, and service providers to proactively address the demographic shifts impacting our communities. Leadership and support from the Board of Supervisors will be critical for engaging an all-government approach that looks comprehensively at current infrastructure and opportunities for innovation and collaboration, with the goal of creating a future where every individual in Santa Barbara County has the opportunity to age well, with dignity, and in a community that supports their needs.

Background:

The AAN was established by Board Resolution in 1999 to serve as an advisory body on issues relating to older adults and people with disabilities. The AAN Chair and Vice-Chair are members of the Board of Supervisors, and the current Chair is Supervisor Joan Hartmann. AAN is administered and staffed by the Department of Social Services. Members include representatives from 30 different public and private organizations, who meet every other month to discuss key issues and emerging trends and to facilitate collaboration, education, and advocacy at the local level. As one of the Regional Coalitions participating in the California Collaborative for Long-Term Services and Supports, AAN has been an engaged participant in the statewide movement to create a comprehensive MPA.

Launched by the Newsom Administration in January 2021, the California MPA is a visionary statewide initiative designed to address long-standing systemic challenges that have hindered service providers, funders, and policy makers for decades. It identifies five goals: Housing for All Ages and Stages; Health Reimagined; Inclusion and Equity, Not Isolation; Caregiving that Works; and Affording Aging. There are 23 strategies, and hundreds of actionable initiatives linked to the five goals, with new opportunities introduced each year. The MPA website (<https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/>) offers a platform for tracking the initiatives and budget investments while providing essential tools such as a data dashboard and local playbook to guide planning and foster partnerships at the local level.

Key findings from the “Aging Well in Santa Barbara County” report include a strong foundation of services and supports within a larger context of fragmented programs, short-term funding cycles, and a growing and more diverse aging population with unmet needs. In less than six years, older adults will comprise a quarter of California’s population, with Santa Barbara County already seeing 23% of its residents aged 60 or older. The urgency for this work is reflected in the challenges faced by local residents who struggle to find the help they need: the “missing middle” who cannot afford the cost of care yet don’t qualify for public assistance, “sandwich generation” adults who are trying to raise children while also caring for aging parents, older adults who are isolated and lonely, people with complex health and mental health needs who may not receive care until there is a crisis, and elders who lose their housing and begin sleeping in their car because their fixed income isn’t enough to pay their bills. Older adults and people with disabilities are increasingly living without the basic necessities required for healthy aging due to a lack of affordable in-home care and a shortage of care providers. Long wait lists for affordable housing and senior housing facilities are marked by increased rental evictions and homelessness. Providers are stretched thin and unable to build capacity for expanded services.

AAN held an online forum in October 2021 to begin soliciting community input on the five goals. Housing, Caregiving, and Health Reimagined emerged as priority issues, with affordability entering the discussion as a concern that arises in each goal area. An Ad Hoc Committee began working to gather local data and stories related to these priorities. The Committee developed recommendations to inform the Housing Elements as they were prepared by each jurisdiction. A partner network, Caring Together Santa Barbara County, provided their expertise on the needs of family caregivers and the challenges of the caregiving workforce. A second event was held in person in October 2023, to bring service providers and caregivers together to learn more about the MPA and to begin to envision

age and disability-friendly communities throughout Santa Barbara County. This convening also marked the launch of the local planning process, supported by a Local Aging and Disability Action Planning (LADAP) grant from the California Department of Aging.

The LADAP grant represents a partnership between AAN and the Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC). An MPA Coordinator was hired, and an Advisory Committee formed to begin working on the local plan in earnest. With funding and guidance from the state, AAN and ILRC worked with consultants to conduct a Community Needs Assessment that would solicit input, especially from underserved communities, to ensure the plan is responsive to community needs and concerns. The grant requires that each local MPA be approved by a legislative body within the County. The MPA Coordinator has done presentations for the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) and seven of the eight city councils, and with this presentation, we invite the Board to consider reviewing and approving the finished plan.

AAN will finalize a Local MPA for Santa Barbara County and bring it back to the Board or to another legislative body within the County for approval. The approved Plan will be submitted to the California Department of Aging by June 30, 2025.

Special Instructions:

Please scan, email and send a copy of the minute order to Tricia Beebe (tbeebe@countyofsb.org).

Attachments:

Attachment A – “Aging Well in Santa Barbara County – Moving Forward with the California Master Plan for Aging” Full Report

Attachment B – “Aging Well in Santa Barbara County – Moving Forward with the California Master Plan for Aging” Executive Summary

Attachment C – “Why a Master Plan for Aging?” Infographic

Attachment D – PowerPoint “Transforming the Experience of Aging and Disability in Santa Barbara County: Moving Forward with the California Master Plan for Aging”

Authored by:

Barbara Finch, Adult and Aging Network Director
Tricia Beebe, Procurement and Contracts Supervisor