

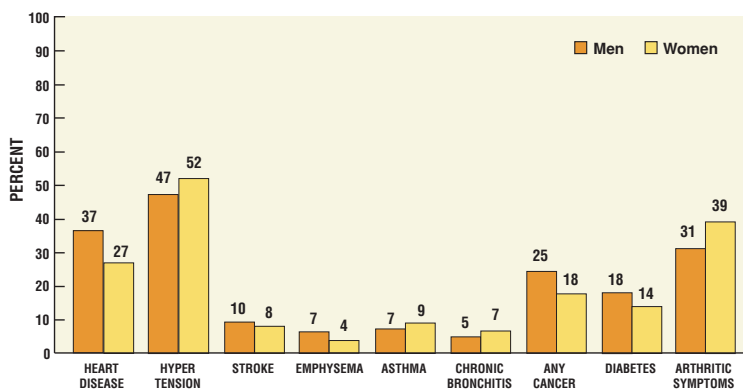
REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

THE AGING OF ATLANTA: ARE WE READY?

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) forecasts that the population of those 60 and over will triple in the next two decades or so. This trend will have ramifications for all aspects of community planning, including how we design our communities, our houses and our transportation networks. ARC is helping the region create age-friendly communities that provide the amenities and services that allow older adults to live independently.

ARC hosted an *Aging and Community Design* forum in June 2005 that examined why community design must integrate the needs of the burgeoning older adult population. Here is a quick look at some the needs of our aging population.

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE AGE 65 AND OVER WHO REPORTED HAVING SELECTED CHRONIC CONDITIONS, BY GENDER 2001-2002



Source: "Federal Interagency Forum on Aging. Older Americans 2004: Key Indicators of Well-Being"

OLDER ADULTS NEED ACCESSIBLE HOUSING CLOSE TO SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Fact: Approximately 20 percent of men and 30 percent of women aged 65 and over are unable to perform certain physical functions like walk two blocks, lift 10 pounds or more, reach over their heads or stoop and kneel. (Source: *Federal Interagency Forum on Aging*)

Fact: More than **one in five** (21 percent) Americans 65 and older do not drive. In the Atlanta region, 99,516 persons over 65 do not drive, some 32 percent of the region's older population. (Source: *Surface Transportation Policy Project - "Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options."* 2004)

Consequences: Locating housing close to services and medical facilities will enable those who do not drive to live more independently. Since a high percentage of older adults cannot perform basic functions, a growing number of houses need to be designed to accommodate these limitations, like having step-less entrances, a bedroom and bathroom on the main floor and wider hallways and doorways. Two programs in Georgia promote accessible housing - Easy Living Homes (www.easylivinghome.org) and Concrete Change (www.concretechange.org).

OLDER ADULTS NEED TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Fact: More than 50 percent of non-drivers age 65 and older (about 3.6 million Americans) stay at home on any given day due in part to a lack of transportation options, contributing to a greater social isolation from the community. (Source: *Surface Transportation Policy Project - "Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options."* 2004)

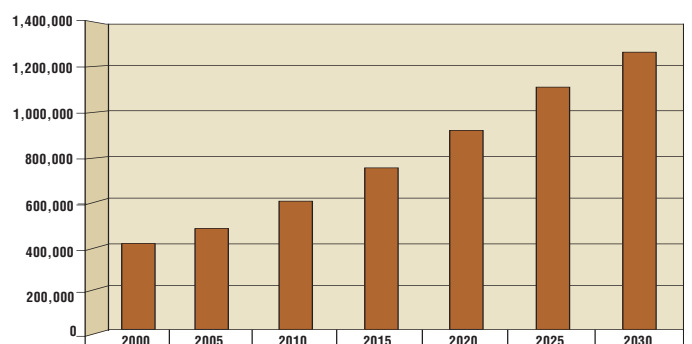
Fact: Driving alone is the prevalent mode of transportation for those 65 and older. (Brookings Institute, "Mobility Needs of Older Americans," 2003)

Fact: Drivers age 85 and older have fatality rates nine times higher than drivers aged 25-69. (Source: *Surface Transportation Policy Project - "Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options."* 2004)

Consequence: Older adults need greater access to different modes of transportation like public transportation, paratransit and walking, which points to the need for better community design where walking is more viable. To adequately prepare for a burgeoning older adult population:

- Roads should be made as safe as possible.
- Alternatives should be provided to those who are no longer able to drive.
- Communities or neighborhoods should be built that do not require vehicular transportation.

ATLANTA REGION 60+ POPULATION GROWTH



Source: ARC

WALKING PROVIDES BOTH MOBILITY AND HEALTH BENEFITS

Fact: A high percentage of older adults report suffering from a variety of ailments like heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and arthritis, all of which could be helped by more physical activity.

Fact: The CDC estimates that if 10 percent of adults began a regular walking program, some \$5.6 billion in heart disease costs could be saved.

Consequences: Communities need to better accommodate sidewalks and other infrastructure that promote walking as a viable mode of transportation. Studies have shown that if the infrastructure is present, older adults will take advantage of it. For example, in Germany, more than 50 percent of all trips taken by adults age 65 and over are on foot or bicycle. (See Pucher & Dijkstra, 2003)

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO WWW.AGINGATLANTA.COM



For more information on these issues or suggest new subjects, please email regionalsnapshot@atlantaregional.com or go to <http://www.atlantaregional.com/resourcecenter/regionaldata.html>

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