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A New Direction for Amarillo, Texas

Charting a new path for programs and services that meet the needs of Amarillo adults as they age.

Blueprint for 21st Century Senior Centers

A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMARILLO, TEXAS

MISSION

The Blueprint for 21st Century Senior Centers initiative will inspire community organizations to establish a network of programs, anchored by centers, fostering economic, physical, and spiritual health that will make Amarillo a model community for a lifetime.

VISION

Amarillo citizens as they age, regardless of income or place of residence, have access to a network of diverse programs and services that enable them to maximize their physical, mental, and spiritual health; maintain their economic security; and contribute positively to the community.

BACKGROUND

There is a significant opportunity before Amarillo to reimagine what senior center services for the 21st century could be. Trends shaping local demographics, new models of senior center services, a nationally aging population, and the upcoming needs of Baby Boomers mean that many possibilities exist to shape the future.

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Executive Summary

In early 2014, at the prompting of the Amarillo Senior Citizens Association (ASCA), a group of community organizations met to determine the future of senior centers in Amarillo. Currently, the three centers struggle to sustain funds to meet their budgetary needs, and offer a limited amount of services to a small group of citizens. After their first few meetings, it became apparent that rather than come to the fiscal aid of any one center, Amarillo needed to take a fresh look at what was happening population-wise and how centers could become relevant and important places in the lives of adults as they age. The group felt that the need for reimagined centers stems from recent and future increases in the aging population, their cultural diversity and diverse socio-economic status.

Over the course of several months, the study group worked to develop bold yet realistic recommendations for how centers can assist adults as they age---staying or becoming economically secure; staying healthy in body, soul, and mind; and remaining involved community members throughout their lives. These fourteen recommendations resulted from researching national and state trends, asking Amarillo citizens their desires for the future, and then determining what would be feasible locally.

KEY FINDINGS

In the course of the planning process, three key findings emerged.

1. Senior centers across the country need to rethink programs and services to stay relevant despite changing attitudes about aging.

In its research, the study group found that communities across the country are either seeing their centers fade away with decreasing relevance or they are actively investing in new or upgraded facilities, programming that focuses on wellness and creativity, and higher levels of professionalism for both their staffs and volunteers.

2. Amarillo's senior centers are not prepared to offer engaging and challenging programs in the future for adults as they age.

In fieldwork, the study group found that Amarillo centers offer traditional "senior" programming that will increasingly hold little appeal for active seniors and Baby Boomers as they age. Also, the three centers all face financial uncertainties, have aging facilities, and spend most of their staff time fighting to maintain the status quo rather than developing plans for the long-term future.

The Amarillo Senior Citizens Association (ASCA) is no longer viable due to these factors. As a result, the group found that the Blueprint has the opportunity to develop plans and programs that would expand services and create something new that would move Amarillo into the 21st century in the field of aging.

3. The Amarillo community feels that addressing the needs of adults as they age is an important community issue.

The study group reached out to the broader community in different ways and found strong opinions. In a community survey, eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents said that addressing these issues should be a community priority. In focus groups, participants gave in-depth comments on how centers need to change to prepare for the Baby Boomers. In an Open House public meeting, attendees consistently

chose programs in health, wellness and fitness as key components of needed services.

STRATEGIES

With these key findings in mind, the study group developed fourteen recommendations for action using the collective assets in our community as the basis for change. As a way to manage the ideas, they are grouped under six different strategies.

- Build a stable foundation leveraging existing resources
- Support professional and sustainable leadership
- Establish a cooperative network of centers and services
- Provide sustainable financing
- Offer 21st century programs and services
- Develop recognizable centers with clear identities

CONCLUSION

Amarillo senior centers stand at a crossroads. One direction leads to their long-term obsolescence; the other direction leads to reinvigorated programs and services that all citizens could enjoy at some time in their lives. Without viable centers, seniors remain marginalized in our society, have no voice and very little opportunity to improve their physical and mental health, explore how they can continue to be contributing members of the community, and face a fixed or inadequate income at a time in their lives when they are least equipped to address their economic problems – literally having to choose between food or medications. These are the issues that we hope to address. The Blueprint shows the path ahead, and asks the community to join us in

the journey. The recommendations below are the start of the adventure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

| # | <i>Recommendation (listed in no particular order)</i> |
|----|--|
| 1 | Use and maintain an "asset map" of existing community assets to serve as the foundation on which to build a 21 st century network of centers. |
| 2 | Develop a "Joint Commission" structure to implement the Blueprint. |
| 3 | Provide professional development to board members and center staff to raise the professionalism of all boards and staff. |
| 4 | Create a new "hub" center that will energize the senior/boomer community, and neighborhood "spokes" comprised of two of the established centers and other partners that work together as a network |
| 5 | Develop a cooperative network of centers augmented by virtual/online activities and a "center without walls" concept. |
| 6 | Develop appropriate transitions from existing independent center structures to the Blueprint hub and neighborhood spoke structure. |
| 7 | Work toward public financing as part of a public-private partnership to provide base funding and leverage funding commitments from others. |
| 8 | Identify sustainable funding strategies to support the network using a multi-faceted approach. |
| 9 | Develop focus in economic security, health and wellness, and in giving back to the community, and identify key partners in each area. |
| 10 | Re-imagine meal programs with healthy food, increased food choices, and offsite meal opportunities. |
| 11 | Identify ways to make new members feel more welcome, to encourage growth and center volunteers, and to be culturally diverse. |
| 12 | Encourage development of intergenerational programs between adults as they age and young adults/children who are college age and younger. |
| 13 | Rebrand the new senior center(s) without the word 'senior'. |
| 14 | Educate the community on what centers have to offer. |

Background

During 2014, a Senior Center Study Committee worked to identify strategies that would enhance services to seniors in the community. The committee was formed in response to representatives of the Amarillo Senior Citizens Association (ASCA), who voiced concerns that rapidly shrinking resources were endangering their ability to provide current services. In initial meetings, which included other senior centers, the committee concluded that, because of limited resources, sustaining services for the long term at all three centers is at a significant risk.

As committee discussions continued, it became apparent that there is a tremendous opportunity before Amarillo to reimagine what senior center services for the 21st century could be. Trends shaping local demographics, new models of senior center services, a nationally aging population, and the upcoming needs of senior services by Baby Boomers mean that many possibilities exist to shape the future. The committee agreed that the Amarillo community would do itself a disservice if it did not make sure that these opportunities were fully explored.

As a result, an inclusive planning process was undertaken to prepare a Blueprint for 21st Century Senior Center Services that would identify and address critical components for providing comprehensive services, including governance, locations/facilities/technology, programming and supportive services, financing/sustainability, administration and human resources, and evaluation.

The organizations involved in the Blueprint study group were the Amarillo Area Foundation, Amarillo College, Amarillo Senior Citizens Association, Amarillo Wesley Community Center, Baptist Community

Services, City of Amarillo, Hilltop Senior Citizens Association, Mary E. Bivins Foundation, Panhandle Regional Planning Commission/Area Agency on Aging, the Senior Ambassadors Coalition, and the United Way of Amarillo and Canyon. All three of Amarillo's current senior centers were included.

The study was enabled by funding and/or in-kind resource contributions from the member organizations. A two-member consultant team assisted the committee. Ellen Cowell, a local community development consultant, served as the Project Director and Carol Zernial, Executive Director of the WellMed Charitable Foundation in San Antonio, Board Chair of the National Council on Aging, and Amarillo native, served as the Aging Resource Consultant.

Changing Demographics, Changing Responses

Senior center programs around the country are wrestling with the results of demographic shifts in the nation's population. This is also true in Amarillo as the number, diversity and generational differences of the population are significant changes that the community must prepare for, as they will affect the need for different kinds of center services.

Based upon data from the Census, people over 55 have made up about 22 percent of Amarillo's population since 2000. This composition is likely to continue. However, as the City's population increases, so does the absolute number of people over the age of 55. In 2000, the City's population had reached 173,627. In 2010, it reached 190,695. Its 55+ population went from 35,773 in 2000 to 43,176 in 2010. By 2020, the sheer number of people in this age group, as many as 68,292, will require greater emphasis on right-sizing programs and services to meet identified needs. According to nationally recognized gerontologist Carol Zernial, the current reach of Amarillo's centers is far too small; she states that, for a city the size of Amarillo, a goal of one percent (1%) to two percent (2%) of the 55+ population should be using center services. Currently, only four hundred people regularly participate. By 2020, that number should be around 1,366 people.

A second demographic issue driving changes in center services is the need to respond to increasing cultural diversity. Using recently released population projections for persons over 65 available from the Texas State Data Center, Caucasians make up eighty-four percent (84%) of the people in Potter and Randall counties in 2014, but by 2050, this

number drops to fifty-seven percent (57%) as Hispanics grow from nine (9%) to thirty-one percent (31%). This pattern of increasing cultural diversity is true for all age groups, not just 65+. The table on the following page shows how the ethnic/racial composition will change over time. What does this mean for center services? Essentially, centers must become flexible and responsive to citizens of all cultural backgrounds. Centers must become more adept at market research, program development, and recognizing cultural differences, while at the same time, identifying common program services that appeal to anyone, regardless of cultural background. For centers used to offering a standard mix of traditional programs, these changes could be quite challenging.

TABLE ONE
PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS OVER 65+ BY ETHNIC/RACIAL COMPOSITION
IN POTTER AND RANDALL COUNTIES

| Year | Anglo | Black | Hispanic | Other |
|------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 2014 | 84% | 3% | 9% | 3% |
| 2050 | 57% | 5% | 31% | 7% |

Texas State Data Center, .5% migration scenario

Amarillo’s cultural diversity mirrors its economic diversity. According to data from *The Changing Numbers Part 2*, incomes for the Hispanic and Black populations are lower than Caucasians, an increasing concern as the population mix changes over time. Responsive senior centers must provide 1) affordable programs and services so income isn’t a barrier to

participation and 2) robust services that help increase the economic security of older adults.

Finally, the biggest challenges that face senior center programs both across the country and locally will be the influx of the Baby Boomer generation. Baby Boomers will impact center services in two ways, first by their sheer number, and second, because of the generational differences between them and the generations prior.

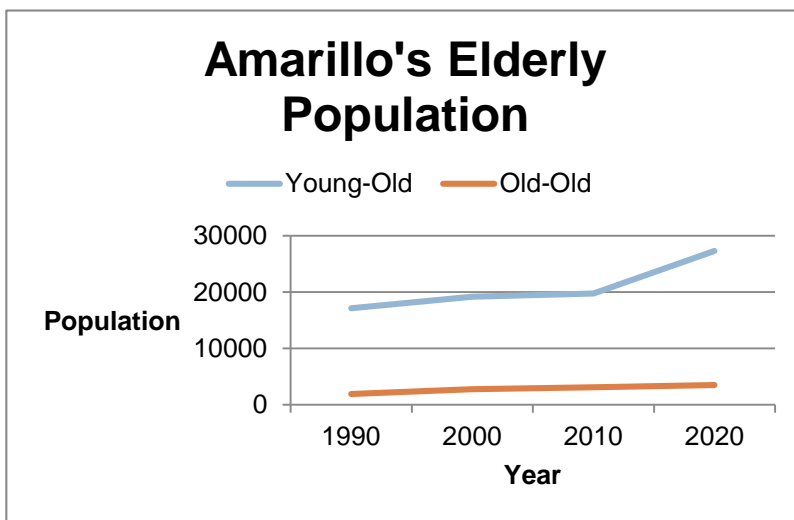


FIGURE ONE

Young-old: 65-84

Old-old: 85+

Data from *The Changing Numbers, Part 1*. City of Amarillo, Jan. 2013.

As Figure One shows, the number of young-old over 65 (including the oldest Boomers) will rise significantly as Amarillo approaches 2020 and beyond, while there will be a smaller but steady increase in old-old persons over 85. This means that centers will need to offer programs and services to a diverse span of age groups. Challenging? Yes, because of the second factor of the Boomer impact. In Amarillo, focus group research done during the Blueprint planning process indicates that centers should offer more health and wellness, personal enrichment offerings, volunteer opportunities, intergenerational offerings, and a

choice in programs and locations for service delivery to attract and serve the Boomer generation. These programs focus more on active aging than Amarillo's programs have done in the past. See the Technical Reports section for more focus group details.

NATIONAL AND STATE RESPONSES

According to research done by the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) in the report *New Models of Senior Centers Taskforce, Final Report*, the need to do something different is obvious. So, what are the trends for the future? The NISC report indicates that centers are upgrading or rebuilding facilities, offering new and expanded programming, expanding their health/fitness and intergenerational programming, and establishing new partnerships with the business community to expand outreach. Centers are transitioning to different service models as well. The NSIC report highlights six different models that have begun to emerge with centers usually focused on one or two areas or a blend of several.

- Community Senior Centers that focus on diverse and comprehensive programming, longer hours, and shared space and activities for intergenerational programs
- Wellness Centers with state of the art health and wellness programs coordinated by healthcare professionals
- Lifelong Learning Centers that focus on intellectual stimulation, personal growth and enhanced quality of life
- Continuum of Care/Transition Centers that serve as focal points for coordination, information, access, and service delivery for

seniors in collaboration with healthcare, social services, and education providers

- Next Chapter Centers that enable people in the second half of life to explore options for careers, volunteer opportunities and civic engagement
- Café Centers whose main attractions are informal social and café spaces that draw people into other programs offered for lifelong learning.

Across Texas, several centers are revamping their facilities and shifting their new program developments to attract Boomers. Wichita Falls has created a successful health and fitness-focused center called the *50 Plus Zone*. Abilene dedicates over \$775,000 dollars each year from the city budget to their Senior Services Division. Midland is intentionally shifting programming to attract Boomers, with a recent financial request to the

Peer Cities for Blueprint Research

Cities with >100,000 and geographically distinct

Abilene
Beaumont
Killeen
Lubbock
Midland
Odessa
Waco
Wichita Falls

City for additional programs and services targeted to this demographic. Other centers are struggling and have not yet figured out the need to change. Centers in Waco and Beaumont face declining numbers and outdated facilities respectively. Another key finding from the research done on peer cities is that all of them receive substantial if not sole support from their local government budget. For a complete look at what is happening across Texas in cities comparable to Amarillo, consult the Technical Report Section.

AMARILLO'S LOCAL CENTERS: NOT PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE

Three senior center programs exist in Amarillo. The oldest program, run by the Amarillo Senior Citizens Association (ASCA), began over forty years ago and has been housed in the downtown campus of Amarillo College since it started. Hilltop Senior Citizens Association was formed as a result of a study done in the mid-1970s by the Area Agency on Aging of the Panhandle that indicated a need for senior programming on the north side of Amarillo. Amarillo Wesley Community Center, a mission outreach of the United Methodist Church, was started back in the 1950s by members of the Polk Street United Methodist Church. Primarily serving as a community center for families, in the 1980s, Wesley began its outreach to neighborhood seniors.

All three centers offer traditional programming that appeals to adults in their seventies and beyond. Line dancing, quilting/sewing, games, socializing and a noon-time meal draw people to the centers during the mid-day each week. The majority of ASCA center users are Caucasian; the majority of Amarillo Wesley's users are Hispanic, and the Hilltop Center serves mostly Caucasians as well as a small population of African Americans at their center.

Amarillo Senior Citizens Association (ASCA)

In January 2014, ASCA representatives met with community leaders to tell them that the organization was in financial distress, and without something radically changing, they anticipated running out of money during 2015. As discussions continued, it became evident that ASCA does not have a business model for success. Factors that contributed to this situation include a 1) a decline in membership 2) poor use of reserve funds 3) meal costs that outstripped meal revenues 4) declining

community support due to a poor reputation for financial accountability, 5) declining financial support from area funders, and 5) governance structures ill-equipped to deal with strategic, financial, and operational planning.

Another issue facing ASCA is the growing need that Amarillo College's Continuing Education Department has to expand its programs. ASCA has been housed at Amarillo College's downtown campus since it was formed 41 years ago. Now, increasingly, the College is looking at other alternatives for that space as it seeks to expand its programs and services. Although the College has no immediate plans to take back the space from ASCA, it has become evident that the downtown spaces are becoming increasingly important to the mission of the College.

Amarillo Wesley Community Center

The senior programs at the Amarillo Wesley Community Center are financially sound; however, this is only because of its place within the budget of the overall community center. The Center has a robust grant and fund development effort and enjoys the support of many types of governmental, community and corporate funders who are pleased with its accountability practices.

However, Amarillo Wesley's senior programs are not immune to financial uncertainty. Several years ago, these programs were in danger of narrowing their scope as revenues constricted. According to center leadership, the programs are often on an up/down cycle of expansion and contraction.

Hilltop Senior Citizens Association

With a budget of just over \$25,000 a year, Hilltop Senior Citizens Association struggles to maintain and improve its financial footing. The past year has been a retrenchment year as new staff worked to trim expenses and provide only the most essential services. Programs and services at Hilltop continue on automatic pilot as most staff capacity is devoted to fundraising activities. Hilltop has yet to find a signature event or funding mix that provides a robust return for the time invested. To date, a series of smaller events have supplemented their budget with corresponding small revenue streams.

During her August 2014 site visit, gerontologist Carol Zernial toured each of the centers. In a report to the Blueprint Study Group, she prepared an analysis of Amarillo Senior Centers that summarizes critical weaknesses and threats. The analysis also highlights current strengths and opportunities that the group took into consideration as the planning process continued. Her findings are summarized on the following page.

TABLE TWO: AMARILLO CENTERS SWOT ANALYSIS

(SWOT=STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS)

8/8/14 Site Visit, Carol Zernial, Board Chair National Council on Aging

Strengths

- Study Group working to create a Blueprint for a 21st Century Senior Centers.
- Wesley is a true community center, with a focus on constant evaluation.
- Amarillo has existing community resources and leaders who might support change.
- Support exists for a developmental period between the current state of senior centers and where the community will go in the future.

Weaknesses

- Existing centers actively serve around 400 people. The current reach is too small. The goal should be around 1,366 by 2020.
- None of the centers have fitness equipment that inspires use. Wesley's is on the 2nd floor and they actively discourage use by seniors.
- Current centers don't challenge users to stretch physically, mentally and emotionally.
- Financial support has decreased over the years. Only Wesley has stable funding.
- Healthcare isn't at the table, and the study group believes they are two to three years away from recognizing the benefits of partnering with senior centers to change lifestyle behaviors and manage chronic illnesses.

Opportunities

- Many seniors who don't currently participate may be excited by something new.
- Hilltop is an important community resource with potential.
- Health plans might approve new centers as a Silver Sneakers benefit, a potential opportunity to bring in additional funding.
- Senior centers could rent out space, perhaps as a rehab site.
- Don't underestimate the power of the arts to change lives.
- Don't underestimate the willingness of seniors to get serious about fitness.
- Amarillo College eventually needs the space ASCA is occupying, which could facilitate something new.

Threats

- Membership attrition is happening in Amarillo and centers all over the country.
- Amarillo has a mindset of frugality. Will they invest in the Blueprint?
- The ASCA "brand" is negatively perceived by many because of its financial history.
- ASCA's funding is inadequate in the long run.
- Community may see Blueprint effort as the "same old, same old."

The overall analysis of the three existing senior centers concluded that Amarillo Wesley Community Center and Hilltop Senior Citizens Association were both serving a critical need in their local neighborhoods, were contributing positively to a diverse group of low income seniors that will see more growth in the near future, and have the potential to grow and offer more to a new network of senior center services. ASCA has a long, proud history in Amarillo; however, it faces too many obstacles to make it viable for the future. The study committee concluded that the time has come for a fresh start with a new hub that will anchor the other senior centers, draw in new partners and new funding, and fulfill the vision of this 21st Century Blueprint.

While understanding national trends and what is happening locally is important. It is equally important to hear what local citizens feel the needs and opportunities are before recommendations for change are proposed. What needs do Amarillo's aging adults see are important and what should a 21st Century center offer? The study group undertook several community outreach activities to give citizens the chance to answer those questions. The next section highlights thoughts from the public on 21st century senior centers and their role in Amarillo.

Thoughts from the Community

The Blueprint for 21st Century Senior Centers planning process has made multiple efforts to involve the public, including focus groups with health care representatives and aging services providers, seniors and boomers, and representatives from the education and faith communities; a community survey in hard copy and online forms; and Open House style public meeting. The results of these efforts follow.

FOCUS GROUPS

The purpose of the three focus groups was to convene groups of people with specialized knowledge or expertise in professions that support the aging network in Amarillo and to get first-person feedback from seniors and boomers. Participants were asked about the assets, gaps and future possibilities of 21st century senior center services for Amarillo. The full focus group report is included in the Technical Reports section of the Blueprint.

Each group provided good insights. Participants engaged with each other and with the focus group facilitator.

When asked which senior centers they had visited, participants were most familiar with the downtown center, ASCA. In each group, about half were familiar or had also visited one of the other two centers, Hilltop and Wesley. Fewer people had experience at all three, or if they had been to all three, they were not aware of Wesley as a senior center, just as a community center.

Overall, there were a few main themes. These are listed below and are coded with a hashtag.

#rebranding: Participants felt when marketing, you need to show the community what is possible in a new type of center and share stories of seniors. Let the seniors be the marketing voices so that the new ideas are shared in a way that gets community buy in and support.

#senior stigma: Community perceptions about seniors boomers are incorrect. Older adults are either not on the radar or people think the term "old" means grouchy and irrelevant. Consequently, programs receive limited support financially.

Boomer perceptions about themselves are that they never going to get old and if old means irrelevant, let's redefine it, and let's rebrand it. [We must] change the name and change the concept of aging and of senior centers.

#meaning and purpose: Seniors and boomers want activities that connect them to the larger community in ways that give back as volunteers, in new employment, and/or in other ways that make them still feel useful. This was a major topic in the senior focus group. They stated that when you feel useful, you want to stay active and purposeful. It was also a major topic in the health care group; they focused a lot on the benefits of intergenerational connections. They specifically mentioned sharing senior skills and expertise with those who aren't learning life skills at school or home, examples include financial planning and auto repair.

#connection: Participants mentioned the social aspects of senior centers as overwhelmingly positive assets, specifically, the ability to make

connections with people with similar views and experiences and the opportunity to connect with the community at large.

#intergenerational: Participants felt making connections to younger generations who need to know the stories of seniors and benefit from the wisdom and skills they have was very important.

#wellness: The major area of focus in each group and the category with the highest responses when asked about possible areas of focus for senior centers was wellness.

When participants said wellness, they meant it in a multifaceted way. First and foremost, they meant the bodily component. Groups felt staying physically active is the basic element to an active life as one grows older. Secondly, the mental component, enrichment, and creative expression were important parts of the discussion. These comments were made most directly in the senior/boomer group and by boomers who happened to be participating in either the healthcare or faith/education discussions.

#need a welcoming function: Participants felt the need to have a function in centers that helped people navigate the services and offerings. A welcoming function would enable more people feel a connection and see how they would like to participate.

These are only the top level themes mentioned in each group, for more details, consult the Technical Report section.

SURVEY AND OPEN HOUSE

Over 880 people participated in the community survey with responses from every part of the City and adult age group. Sixty-five (65) people came to the Blueprint Open House. Complete results are available in the Technical Report section of this document. A summary of the key findings from these activities follows.

Those who attend senior centers usually have attended the downtown location, drive themselves, and attend either one to two times a week or every once in a while. The top reasons they come are to socialize and eat lunch.

Of those who responded that they have a condition that makes it difficult to attend the center, over ninety percent (90%) said it was due to poor health.

Of those who don't attend senior centers, the top three reasons given were because they are busy with other activities, are still working, or that they didn't know anything about the centers' programs and services.

When asked what would make non-attendees change their mind, the top two responses were if the centers offered programs that interested them or if they had a change in their personal life, such as not working, a change in family responsibilities, or giving up some of their current hobbies.

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of survey respondents in every age group support the idea that expanding senior center services should be a community priority.

Eighty-two percent (82%) prefer that expanded services be dispersed across Amarillo.

When asked if senior center services should be located in a senior center serving seniors or a community center with senior programs and services included, there is a slight preference, 54 percent (54%), for the community center model.

When asked what the most important programs and services are for a 21st Century Senior Center, health, wellness, exercise equipment and fitness programs were the top programs chosen by respondents younger than age 70. Respondents over 70 chose lunch and educational programs.

Participants at the Open House were also asked what kinds of programs and services they felt were important. The top five mentioned were:

1. Day trips and travel opportunities
2. Exercise equipment and fitness programs
3. Computer training, tied with
- 4 Lunch programs with healthy and traditional choices
5. Volunteering opportunities/ ways to share skills

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Once the study group had heard from the community and learned more about the national, state and local context within which senior centers operate, the group spent many weeks developing recommendations that address these concerns. Their guiding principles when developing these recommendations were:

1. Focus on the long-term sustainability of what is proposed;

2. Provide reality checks to make sure recommendations are workable for Amarillo;
3. Use the skills of the consulting team to refine options to consider; and
4. Implement recommendations through a coalition of groups working together in partnership.

The study group recognized the good work and services provided by many senior programs at independent living facilities and faith based organizations. In the asset-based approach to developing recommendations, the group expressed the opportunities to work collaboratively with these types of groups.

With the guidance of these principles, what follows in the next section is the heart of the Blueprint. The pathway to change that will make 21st century senior centers a reality for Amarillo.

Recommendations: A Blueprint for Change

FIRST, A FICTIONAL STORY...SET SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE

It has been six years since Nancy took early retirement, and she doesn't quite know what to do with herself. The abrupt transition from a full work life to one with no structure took her by surprise. The first years were great; she visited family and finished some projects that she had always intended to complete. Now, she was just bored.

Jose woke up early and sighed. Another long day stuck at home. Ever since his son and daughter-in-law started their new business, he felt trapped. And while he loved his granddaughter, Eva, he was coming to dread the hours of playtime and caregiving duties thrust upon him each day. He'd love to talk to another adult, or get out and exercise, or even just to see four other walls.

Debbie had plans, big ones. Once Tom got out of the skilled nursing/rehab unit, they were going to make some major lifestyle changes. She knew they needed to start watching what they ate and exercising. A furrow of worry crossed her brow. She'd never been the greatest cook. How was she going to figure this out? At 57, is it too late to teach herself? And exercise, what were their options? Going to the local gym didn't sound appealing. She knew they would be self-conscious around all younger members, and that those feelings could be discouraging. The nurse navigator might be able to help her. When she visited the rehab unit on her lunch hour, she would ask him.

We've shared the stories of three different people with diverse needs for meaningful activities, caregiving support, and opportunities for relationships, educational classes, and wellness. Where do adults in a community go for these kinds of resources? Are they difficult to access?

In the Blueprint initiative, we propose an answer to these questions in the form of ...21st Century senior centers...otherwise known as community gathering places for adults just like Nancy, Jose and Debbie.

Our vision is that Amarillo citizens as they age, regardless of income or place of residence, have access to a network of diverse programs and services that enable them to maximize their physical, mental, and spiritual health; maintain their economic security; and contribute positively to the community.

We believe that economically viable community gathering places are essential in the delivery of these resources.

Further, we envision a network of facilities, programs, services, and organizations spread across Amarillo that effectively provide active and meaningful experiences for active adults.

Now, back to our fictional story...

So for Nancy, she found outlets for her skills and experiences. By talking to the center's life enrichment volunteer, she saw how she could connect with younger adults or children to share personal finance training. A few months later, she put her name on the ballot to serve on the advisory board for the center. Nancy happily remarked to her new friend Cindy that she doesn't think she would be bored any time soon with these new opportunities.

Jose found a supportive network of resources to make caregiving responsibilities manageable and several new friends. A couple of days a week, he takes Eva to the intergenerational music program held at the center. While Eva sings, Jose plays pool for an hour and is quickly gaining the respect of the center's pool sharks at the billiard tournaments held once a week.

And for Debbie and Tom, still working but increasingly focused on their health? Debbie improved their meal choices when she connected with a dietician who offered a "Healthy Dinners" class at the center one evening. They've begun workouts too. Tom's enrolled in the "Raring to Go Rehab" program the center offers in partnership with the local skilled nursing/rehab unit and Nancy is taking a Zumba class two nights a week.

According to the Census, in 2010, 43,176 people in Amarillo's population were over 55. This means that there are many real-life stories and many real needs that we could share. Perhaps even yours? The Blueprint initiative hopes Amarillo citizens will catch the vision of what is possible and join us creating 21st century community gathering places that meet the needs of Amarillo adults as they age. Following are the strategies, recommendations and timeline to move Amarillo toward these aims.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

The recommendations that the study group proposes in this Blueprint fall within six different strategies. These strategies provide the organizing principles for both the timing and direction needed to implement the plan, and for areas in which decisions will be made. The list below summarizes the strategies in order. Following the list is a

description of each strategy, accompanying recommendations, and overall timeline for implementation. The timeline given beside each action step is the suggested time for completion of the step listed. Start times for actions will vary.

- Build a stable foundation leveraging existing resources
- Support professional and sustainable leadership
- Establish a cooperative network of centers and services
- Provide sustainable financing
- Offer 21st century programs and services
- Develop recognizable centers with clear identities

Strategy: Build a stable foundation leveraging existing resources

The ideas expressed in the Blueprint do not exist in a vacuum and must engage existing resources found in the people, organizations, associations, economy, and environment of the Amarillo area. As part of the planning process, the community was asked to elaborate on these resources, so that an “asset map” could be created that could be referred to throughout the implementation phase as needs are identified. The map covers the following resource categories: associations, economy, individuals, institutions, and space. Under each category, resources are divided into those that are important and doable, and those that are important and difficult. The full Asset Map is included in the Technical Report section of the Blueprint.

Recommendation One details how the asset map should be used as the Blueprint is implemented.

1. Use and maintain an "asset map" of existing community assets to serve as the foundation on which to build a 21st century network of senior centers.

a) Activities to complete in 3-12 months:

- Mine Blueprint asset map to assist with all action items by engaging partners and resources that might be supportive of implementation.
- Develop strategies to cultivate important resources that still need to buy into the Blueprint implementation.

b) Activities to complete every 12 months:

- Annual review and update of asset map by broad reach of the community.

ASSET MAPPING: WHAT IS IT?

"Building on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions, asset-based community development draws upon existing community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future."

www.abcdinstitute.org

The Blueprint uses asset mapping to show citizens and organizations that there are existing resources available to help develop 21st century centers.

The Asset Based Community Development Institute is the preferred resource for asset mapping information. It also has tools, examples, and conducts community training.

Strategy: Support professional and sustainable leadership

Nothing gets done without leadership. This is especially true when new ideas and concepts are introduced in a community. As a new path is charted for programs and services that meet the needs of Amarillo adults as they age, it is critical that strong, capable leadership be in place. It must “own” the Blueprint plan both in terms of its broad concepts, and in the everyday details of center operations. The two recommendations under this strategy support leadership at both the highest cooperative levels of the aging services network and at the centers’ governance and operations levels.

2. Develop a “Joint Commission” structure to implement the Blueprint.

The new Joint Commission will coordinate strategic planning and activities, give voice to community recommendations, and support improved governance and financial health for the entire senior center network. The Joint Commission structure enables multiple groups with different purposes to come together on behalf of the community, and move everyone down the new path toward 21st century programs and services. The Blueprint study group suggests the name be the Amarillo Joint Commission on Active Aging.

- a) Activity to complete in 1 month: Create the Joint Commission on Active Aging to be made up of seniors, community leaders, and aging services professionals. They will provide policy guidance to the senior center network leadership of staff and boards, and serve as a fiscal agent that collects and disperses funds to the network.
- b) Activity to complete in 1 - 2 months: The Joint Commission has at least one paid staff person to help it do its work.

While the specifics of the Joint Commission must be worked out during implementation, this document offers the following guidance.

Mission: The Amarillo Joint Commission on Active Aging is an umbrella organization that provides policy guidance, ensures professional development of boards and staff, and maintains financial accountability for funds dedicated to improving the network of 21st century senior centers and services.

Proposed Initial Structure: A 15-member governance body

| | |
|---|----------|
| Representative from each senior center* | 3 |
| Representative from the AAA/PRPC | 1 |
| Representative from the Mary E. Bivins Foundation | 1 |
| Representative from the Amarillo Area Foundation | 1 |
| Representative from Baptist Community Services | 1 |
| Representative from the United Way of Amarillo and Canyon** | 1 |
| Community representatives with proven strategic planning skills | 2 |
| Community representatives with technical/operational skills | 2 |
| Representative from the Senior Ambassador Coalition | 1 |
| Representative from Amarillo College | 1 |
| Representative from the City of Amarillo | <u>1</u> |
| Total: | 15 |

- *An ASCA member who served on the study group should serve in this role until the new hub center’s governance structure is established.
- ** May be ex-officio pending United Way Board determination.

Membership composition of the Amarillo Joint Commission on Active Aging was designed to allow for representation of the senior centers and seniors, representation from the philanthropic community who have supported development of the Blueprint and have a vested interest in its

implementation, community leaders who bring successful business acumen, and community partners who share the vision of Amarillo as a community for a lifetime.

3. Provide professional development to board and center staff to raise the professionalism of all boards and staff.

Strong, capable leadership at the operations and management levels of each of the senior centers is critical. Board members must be able to lead their organizations strategically, while being guardians of the resources entrusted to them by their members and the Joint Commission. Secondly, employing center staff that are qualified to identify and respond to the changing needs of Amarillo adults as they age are what will truly enable citizens to become economically secure, healthy, and in positions to give back to the community. Recommendation three enables the Blueprint to “lift all boats” across the center network by formalizing training for these groups.

- a) Activity to complete in 12 months: Centers establish a budget line item to fund training at the local, regional, state and/or national levels. Training from the Amarillo Area Foundation’s Nonprofit Service Center should be a regular part of all training budgets for both board members and staff.

Strategy: Establish a cooperative network of centers and services

As already discussed in the community input section, eighty-two percent (82%) of survey respondents think that expanded center services should be dispersed throughout the community. In a departure from

the existing models of service with independent senior centers in just three locations, the Blueprint proposes that a city-wide hub and neighborhood-spoke model be created that forms the beginnings of a community-based network of programs and services to adults. Each "location" of the network, be it hub or spoke, would have different capabilities, but they would all be part of the network at the appropriate geographic area. The hub and spokes would all have individual identities, yet they would be connected to each other and make their programs available to members from any center. They would share information, economies of scale, and work cooperatively to meet the needs of the aging population.

Similar to the distinctions given to parks, such as a district park like the John Stiff Memorial Park, the hub would host the greatest number of program and services for adults as they age. The hub center would be developed to offer programs and services that any one neighborhood center could not provide, such as expanded health and wellness programs for example. Similar to the parks located throughout Amarillo neighborhoods, the spokes would be smaller neighborhood serving community centers or senior centers, like Amarillo Wesley Community Center and Hilltop Senior Citizens Center that specialize in the programs and services that are appropriate to their geographic area and local population.

Development of this new model would take place as the Amarillo Senior Citizens Association begins the process of winding down their business operations. The Joint Commission will work with ASCA and make a good faith effort to continue services between the time ASCA dissolves until the city-hub center is up and running. Planning for the hub center should take about 12-24 months from its start.

The hub/spoke concept also calls for the creation of wrap-around supports and services offered by organizations throughout the community such as the Amarillo Little Theater, the Amarillo Botanical Garden, and Amarillo College in a “center without walls” concept. Organizations that have programs of interest to seniors are invited to become part of the network as well. It allows for Internet-based virtual supports and services for seniors who are homebound or who lack access to transportation, leveraging technology to help address social and geographic isolation. As time progresses, other center locations and community partners could be developed within Potter and Randall counties. All of these “spokes” create a network of supports and services that are connected to each other and to the hub center.

The advantage of the hub and spoke approach is that it gives the Amarillo community the opportunity to create something new and different that still builds on what already exists. The new model enables the community to have a realistic yet bold vision for the future of services for adults as they age, and is designed to be accessible to all citizens, regardless of income or place of residence. Finally, fostering intentional connections between all centers will improve the use of community resources and expand access to a greater number of people.

HUB CENTERS: WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

- Hub centers offer the full range of center programming in a community.
- Sizes across Texas range from 10,000 to 25,000 square feet.
- Innovative models of hub centers in the state have been located in under-performing strip centers or buildings. By doing this, they offer the surrounding area opportunities for revitalization.
- Centers are staffed with between 5-8 professionals including the center director, receptionists, nutrition manager (if applicable), environmental services and personal trainers. Some of these staff could be shared between the hub and the spoke centers.
- Also, centers have relationships with staff in other organizations that come to the hub center to provide programs, such as health screenings, caregiver support, the arts, or specialized dance programs.
- Rooms in the center provide flexible spaces for socializing, exercise, nutrition, active and passive recreation, and creative expression. Hub centers may also have a dedicated outdoor space that allows users to enjoy the benefits of nature.

4. Create a new city "hub" that will energize the senior/boomer community, "spokes" of established centers, and other partners that work as a network.

a) Activities to complete in 12-24 months:

- Create one new "hub" center that is the anchor for new activities.
- Identify community organizations/faith-based partners to "adopt" Hilltop and Wesley to enhance volunteer and operational resources.

- Make upgrades/renovations to existing centers/spaces to strengthen operations and membership appeal.

b) Activities to complete in 3-4 years:

- Identify a second hub site (east or south) within three years in strategic location, and begin resource development to implement.
- Working in conjunction with their leadership, move Hilltop and Wesley's senior programs to expanded and/or upgraded locations.

c) Activities to be completed in 5 years:

- Create a second hub site within 5 years.
- Include Canyon Senior and other county sites as "spokes."

SPOKE CENTERS: WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

- Spoke centers are often smaller neighborhood centers that reflect the culture of the community around them.
- Sizes range from 5,000 to 8, 000 square feet.
- Permanent staffing at each spoke may range from 4-6 people, and each spoke may also have traveling staff from the hub center or other groups who come to offer programs.
- Spaces are flexible in a spoke center as well so that a range of programs can be offered.
- Locations for spokes vary widely. They may also be located in a small neighborhood commercial strip centers or stand-alone buildings. Spokes may or may not have dedicated outdoor spaces, and typically don't offer as diverse and comprehensive set of programs as the larger hub. For example, they may have limited fitness equipment but a variety of fitness classes.
- Spokes may or may not be local nutrition sites depending on the availability of funding.

5. Develop a cooperative "network" of centers augmented by virtual/online activities and a "center without walls" concept.

In the hub and spoke model, centers serve as community anchors for programs and services; however, the Blueprint also proposes that a network be established to foster relationships with other organizations who could offer programs at their own locations for adults as they age. By harnessing the creativity of the entire community, a broad calendar of activities would be available at dispersed sites, exactly the vision expressed by citizens.

- a) Activity to complete in 6-12 months: Connect Amarillo centers through cooperative agreements; and incorporate a "center without walls" approach that includes activities with partners at non-senior center locations such as Amarillo College, public libraries, Amarillo Little Theater, and the Amarillo Botanical Garden.
- b) Activity to complete in 18-24 months: Incorporate common senior center software to assist in collecting and sharing data, gaining better information, coordination of activities and planning for future.
- c) Activity to complete in 2-3 years: Add virtual/online center activities to address issues related to mobility and isolation thereby leveraging new technologies to expand the reach and scope of the "network."

6. *Develop appropriate transitions from existing center structures to the Blueprint structure.*

As noted earlier, the Blueprint study group was formed in response to representatives of the Amarillo Senior Citizens Association (ASCA), who voiced concerns that rapidly shrinking resources were endangering their ability to provide services over the long term.

Recommendation Six addresses the need to create a better governance and stewardship model to succeed ASCA, one that makes a good faith effort to ensure programming remains consistent until the hub center is operational, as well as increases collaboration and cooperative opportunities among all centers. The study group believes that these changes will position the surviving centers as well as the new hub center to effectively use resources to sustain and enhance services in the future.

- a) Activity to complete in 3-12 months: Dissolution plan for ASCA, establishing new stewards for finance and governance while making a good faith effort to continue services.
- b) Activity to complete in 4-6 months: Develop and execute the Wesley and Hilltop Memorandum of Agreement for Cooperation and Collaboration
- c) Activity to complete in 6-12 months: The center network leadership regularly meets to exchange information, coordinate planning and activities, and identify opportunities to improve the fiscal health of the network. The Blueprint Study Group recommends monthly meetings for staff with joint board meetings every six months.

Strategy: Provide sustainable financing

Short-term provision of financial resources will be needed to move the Blueprint toward implementation, but for the changes to be fully realized, the Blueprint recognizes the need to secure long-term reliable sources of financing for the Joint Commission's work, the operations of both the hub and spoke centers, and for the network of cooperative activities offered throughout the community.

Research done in the Blueprint planning process found that while most senior centers across Texas receive substantial or sole support from their local government, the City of Amarillo does not have the financing history to suggest that this be the way forward for the community. More realistically, the Blueprint suggests that a multi-faceted approach be undertaken that secures base funding commitments from public and private entities, membership fees from center members, and traditional and non-traditional funding approaches, such as grant support, special events, and an endowment. As mentioned previously, see the Technical Report section for details on senior center research conducted for the Blueprint.

7. Work toward public financing as part of a public-private partnership to provide base funding and leverage for funding commitments from others.

- a) Activity to complete in 6-9 months: The City of Amarillo has an established funding cycle and timeline in which it can accept requests for funding for the next budget year. The Joint Commission in partnership with community leaders and local seniors will need to prepare appropriate requests that meet the requirements of the City's funding cycle. The purpose of the

requests will be to secure funding in the developmental phase, and reliable base funding annually to enhance the long-term financial stability of the center network. City funding will be used to leverage additional funding from other sources. The City of Amarillo will also have a representative serve on the Joint Commission. This will ensure that the City has an active voice in shaping how public funds are used, and can provide leadership in securing other sources of new private or foundation funding for the center network.

8. Identify sustainable funding strategies to support the network using a multi-faceted approach.

- a) Activity to complete in 6 months: Funding in the short term is provided through public/private means to ensure the successful implementation of the Blueprint, and a good faith effort to continue services. The level of base funding, annual fund-raising, fee/dues, grants, and increased community support and community sponsorships will also be determined through the development process of the hub and spoke centers. Membership dues should be on a sliding scale so that financial barriers to center participation are lowered.
- b) Activity to complete in 3 years: Paid fund-raising professional working for the network fund-raises through a planned campaign of activities, entrepreneurial ventures, and possibly an endowed fund.

Strategy: Offer 21st century programs and services

Currently six generations are alive in America, they range from the Greatest Generation that lived and fought in WWII to Generation Z, who has never lived in a world without cell phones or computers. Perhaps the biggest upcoming challenge to organizations in the aging network are the 76 million Baby Boomers in America who, as they age, will radically redefine what programs and services they find appealing. Senior centers across the country, Amarillo included, are working to plan for this boomer-driven future.

Through the Blueprint planning process, adults of all ages told us what they want and need. As one might expect, specifics differed from those 80+ (old-old) to those 65-79 (young-old), and down to the boomers, the youngest of who are just now reaching their mid-fifties. There were some common elements as well. Three key areas of focus emerged repeatedly from all ages: health in all aspects of mind, body and soul; economic security; and the opportunity to give back to the community. As a result, recommendations in this strategy encompass a broad set of changes. These suggestions range from offering food options, new intergenerational programs and making changes in marketing strategies, to making centers attractive to increasing numbers of Amarillo adults as they age.

These recommendations position the 21st century centers to address some of the critical needs outlined in the 2014 Community Status Report recently released by the United Way of Amarillo and Canyon. Seniors can be important players in addressing other community issues such as teen pregnancy and obesity as they get involved in community

programs that encourage their volunteer participation. Also, opportunities exist to help reduce heart disease through health and fitness; to help prevent food insecurity for younger seniors through lunch programs; to provide enrichment and social opportunities that contribute to positive mental health; and to offer intergenerational programming that helps children and young adults at risk for low educational attainment.

9. Develop focus in 3 key areas and identify key partners in each area.

a) Activities to complete in 12-18 months:

- Create programs that assist struggling boomers and seniors such as job retraining, economic security and benefits access.
- Provide enhanced gym-quality fitness equipment and personal trainers as well as fitness classes in aerobics, strength and flexibility.
- Support enhanced volunteer programs and partnerships with volunteer-supported organizations such as continuing education at Amarillo College, libraries, and social service providers.

b) Activities to complete in 18-24 months:

- Add employment services. Explore partnership with Workforce Development.
- Add shared, paid personal trainer at centers and new equipment as needed.
- Formalize agreements that extend center services to offsite locations offered through partner organizations such as

Amarillo College, Amarillo Little Theater, and the Amarillo Botanical Garden as examples. The goal would be that these groups would become actively involved in developing coordinated enrichment programs specifically for adults as they age.

- Add paid “life enrichment/volunteer coordinator” at the network level.

10. Re-imagine meal programs with healthy food, increased food choices, and offsite meal opportunities.

a) Activities to complete in 6-12 months:

- Conduct focus groups on how to improve and modernize the existing meal program, which might or might not involve selecting a new food vendor. This discovery phase is fundamental to further changes.
- Study possible economies of scale across the center networks’ congregate and home-delivered meal programs

b) Activities to complete in 18-24 months:

- Create a choice of two entrees every day, taking into consideration choice of meats, or meat/vegetarian, or hot meal/hearty lunch salad.
- Investigate possibility of food court/restaurant voucher program as part of nutrition program.

11. Identify ways to make new members feel more welcome, to encourage growth and center volunteers, and to be culturally sensitive.

- a) Activity to complete in 6 -12 months: Create volunteer “welcome navigators” and trophies/awards for members who are the best

ambassadors for the centers, or who bring in the most visitors/new members.

- b) Activity to complete in 12-18 months: Formalize new member recruitment campaign with a group of volunteers who do outreach, orientation; develop new member handbooks, and other related activities.
- c) Activity to complete in 3 years: Add a paid outreach coordinator across the network to support the cadre of volunteers in recruitment and marketing activities.

12. Encourage development of intergenerational programs between adults as they age and young adults/children who are college age and younger.

- a) Activity to complete in 12-18 months: Establish one or two intergenerational programs at all centers.
- b) Activities to complete in 18-24 months:
 - Establish formal intergenerational programs with school systems and/or community programs.
 - Enable multiple network centers to share space for part of the day with youth programs.

The study group believes that intergenerational programs will be most successful and will arise naturally as centers work to eliminate the age barriers, perceived or real, that exist in some programs and services. These partnerships will increase the opportunities that centers function as multi-purpose community centers that effectively engage the young and old.

Strategy: Develop recognizable centers with clear identities

Along with regularly reviewing the Asset Map, constant communication will be an important function for the Joint Commission and members of the centers. The community must be aware and involved in shaping what centers will provide. Funders and other groups must be aware and involved in bringing resources to the table. And center members must be aware and involved in shaping what services the network will provide. Recommendations Thirteen and Fourteen give structure to the communication process to address the perceptions of the "senior" brand, and to share with the community the new opportunities the center network offers.

13. Rebrand the new senior center(s) without the word "senior".

- a) Activity to complete in 12-18 months: Work with staff, community volunteers and paid professionals to rebrand the name of the centers, other relevant senior programs, and to rework marketing materials. Professional assistance will be used to conduct focus groups to test names and develop marketing/outreach materials (photos, mission/vision, tagline, verbiage) and website.

14. Educate community on what centers have to offer.

- a) Activity to complete in 2 months: With assistance from a marketing professional, the Joint Commission will hold the Blueprint unveiling to share plan with community.
- b) Activity to complete in 12-24 months: Print, radio/TV media and social media serve as partners in a community conversation on what it means to age well in Amarillo and what the center

network offers to help. Paid campaign is developed with assistance from marketing professional.

Implementation plan

Many actions are proposed for the next few years, requiring significant effort from many actors. This section offers a pathway of change to illustrate the road ahead; details the steps involved; provide guidance on some of the near-term actions; and provides funding guidance for the development phase.

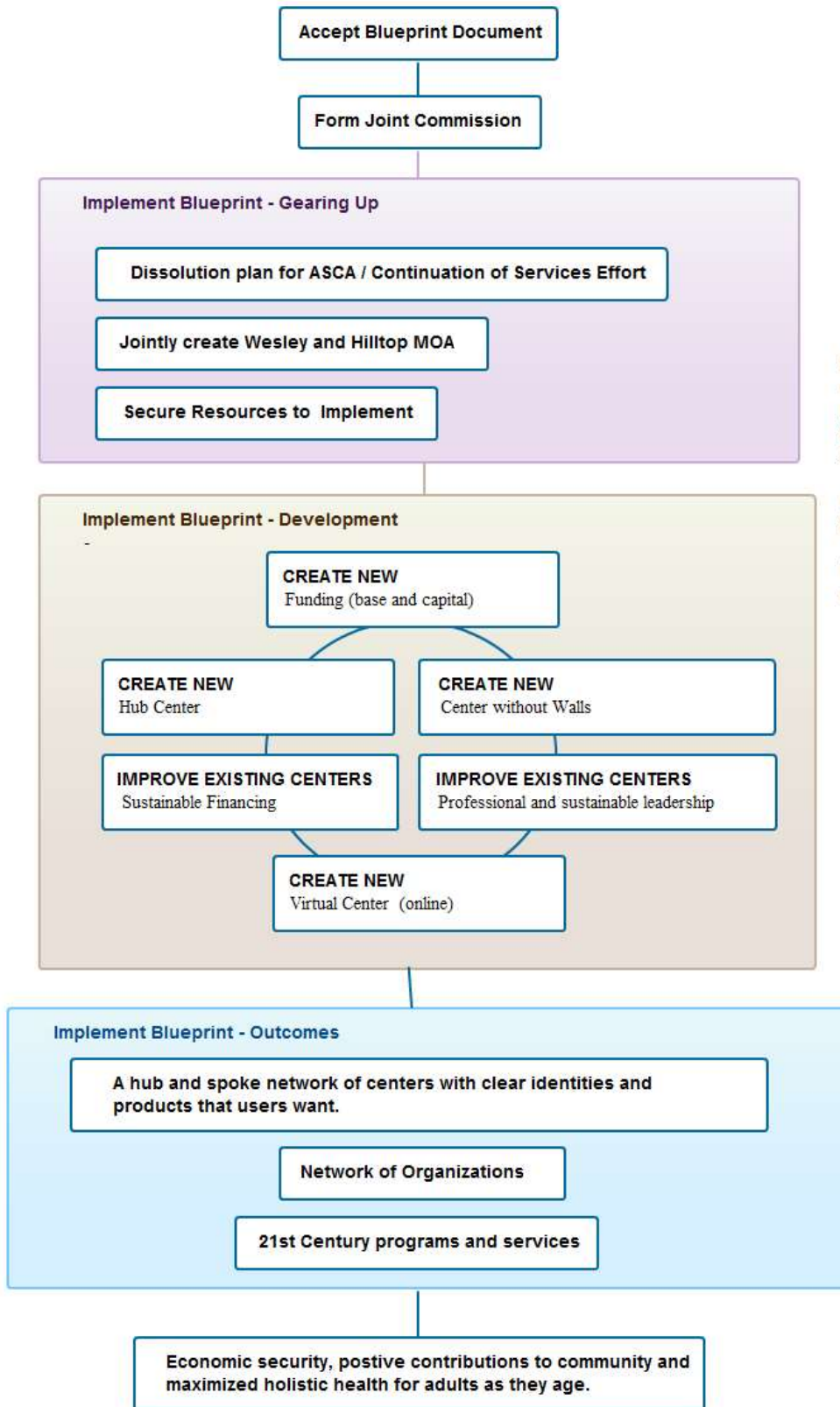
Any new concept or idea must take into account the possibility of many unknowns. This plan suggests the way forward, and builds in points where the Joint Commission and community can make mid-course corrections as opportunities and/or obstacles arise. The plan gives greater detail for the initial development phase, proposed to unfold over a twenty-four month span. Farther out, action steps and milestones are given with the understanding that these may take less time, more time, or change completely as the Blueprint moves forward.

The Blueprint is the beginning and the course is set to move toward the vision. How exactly that will actually occur will be the adventure ahead? As one reads the next few pages, it would be easy to get stuck in the weeds of details. The study group feels it is important at this point to remember the ultimate outcome that all of these details are heading toward and without which work should not continue.

Amarillo citizens as they age, regardless of income or place of residence, have access to a network of diverse programs and services that enable them to maximize their physical, mental, and spiritual health; maintain their economic security; and contribute positively to the community.

The following diagram illustrates the pathway of change from document to vision. It is loosely divided into gearing up, development, and outcomes phases with feedback loops possible back to earlier steps. This diagram can be shared with organizations and community members to help them understand Blueprint implementation.

PATHWAY OF CHANGE



NOTES:
 Communication Plan/
 Implementation activities
 take place throughout all
 steps in pathway.

Use Assets from Asset Map
 throughout process.

Feedback loops fully
 expected.

RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

| Year | Completed In | Activities (recommendation number.project level) | Implementation | Funding Required? |
|------|--------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Yr 1 | Month 1 | 2.a Create Joint Commission | Study Group | Yes |
| | | 0.0 Secure development funding | Study Group/JC | Yes |
| | Month 2 | 14.a Unveil Blueprint | Joint Commission (JC) | Yes |
| | | 2.a Staff Joint Commission to support its work | JC | Yes |
| | Month 3 | 1.a Mine Assets | JC | Yes |
| | | 6.b ASCA dissolution plan discussion begins | ASCA Board, JC | Yes |
| | Month 4-6 | 6.b MOA with Wesley and Hilltop | Wesley, Hilltop, JC | Yes |
| | Month 6-9 | 7.a Request to City for funding | JC | Yes |

| Year | Completed In | Activities (recommendation number.project level) | Implementation | Funding Required? |
|------|--------------|---|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Yr 1 | | 8.a Funding mechanisms in place and base funding needs identified | JC | Yes |
| | Months 6-12 | 6.a Center network begins meeting | Center network with JC support | No |
| | | 5.a Genesis of Center without Walls | Center network and JC | No |
| | | 10.a Meal focus groups | JC and center network | Yes |
| | | 10.a Study meal economies of scale | JC and center network | Yes |
| | | 11.a Create "welcome navigators" program | Center network | Yes |
| | Month 12 | 3.a Training budget established | Center network | Yes |
| | | 1.b Asset map updated/update timeline | JC | Yes |

| Year | Completed In | Activities (recommendation number.project level) | Implementation | Funding Required? |
|------|--------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Yr 2 | Months 1-6 | 4.a Hilltop and Wesley "adopted" | JC | No |
| | | 13.a Centers rebranded | JC and network | Yes |
| Yr 2 | Months 6-12 | 4.a Upgrades to Wesley and Hilltop centers | JC and centers | Yes |
| | | 9.a New economic security programs in place | Center network | Yes |
| | | 9.a Wellness equipment and training programs in place | JC and Center network | Yes |
| | | 9.a Volunteer opportunity programs in place | Center network | No |
| | | 11.b Formal member recruitment programs in place | Center network | Yes |
| | | 12.a Genesis intergenerational programs in place. | Center network | TBD |

| Year | Completed In | Activities (recommendation number.project level) | Implementation | Funding Required? |
|------|--------------|--|----------------------------|-------------------|
| | | 4.a. Hub Center Opens | JC | Yes |
| | | 5.b Common software | JC | Yes |
| | | 9.b Employment services in place | Center network | No |
| | | 9.b Personal trainer and new fitness equipment | JC | Yes |
| | | 9.b Mature center without walls | Center network | TBD |
| | | 9.b Paid network life enrichment volunteer coordinator | JC | Yes |
| | | 14.b Community conversation on aging well | JC and network partnership | Yes |
| | | 10.b Redesigned nutrition options in place | Network | TBD |
| | Months 12 | 1.b Asset map updated, update timelines | JC | TBD |

| Year | Completed In | Activities (recommendation number.project level) | Implementation | Funding Required? |
|------|--------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Yr 3 | Month 1 | 7.b Paid fund development staff at network level | JC | Yes |
| | | 5.c Online/virtual center started | JC and network partnership | Yes |
| | | 11.c Paid outreach coordinator at network level | JC | Yes |
| | Month 6 | 4.b Identify second hub site and begin resource development | JC | Yes |
| | | 12.b Formal intergenerational programs with schools and community groups | Center network | TBD |
| | | 12.b Share center space with youth | Center network | TBD |
| | Month 6 | 4.b Determine enhanced facility/locations for Hilltop and Wesley | JC and Centers in partnership | Yes |

| Year | Completed In | Activities (recommendation number.project level) | Implementation | Funding Required? |
|------|--------------|--|----------------|-------------------|
| | Month 12 | 1.b Asset map updated, update timelines | JC | TBD |
| Yr 4 | Month 12 | 4.c Second hub online | JC | Yes |
| | | 4.c Spoke planning for county locations | JC | Yes |
| | | 1.b Asset map updated, update timelines | JC | TBD |

NEAR-TERM ACTION STEPS

1. **Form Joint Commission:** The owner of the Blueprint document charged with its implementation will be the Amarillo Joint Commission on Active Aging. This group will have the full capacity and authority to facilitate and/or undertake all Blueprint recommendations, including and especially the hub and spoke model. As outlined earlier, this will be a 15-member group made up of a broad-based selection of community and organizational representatives. Members of the Blueprint study group may choose to serve as ex-officio advisors during the developmental phase to assist with implementation.

Once the group is formed, it should be charged with the following initial steps.

- Working with advisors from the Blueprint study group, finalize fiscal agent, legal status, staff support, and funding for all 24 month development tasks
- Begin planning for the hub center, including making a good faith effort to continue the existing level of services until the hub opens
- Secure and provide resources to the neighborhood spoke centers to guide their facilities, programs and services to the 21st century areas of focus: economic security, health in all forms, and in giving back to the community
- Serve as the common voice and common vessel for receiving funding for 21st century centers
- Facilitate relationships with others who may be natural partners in the “center without walls.”

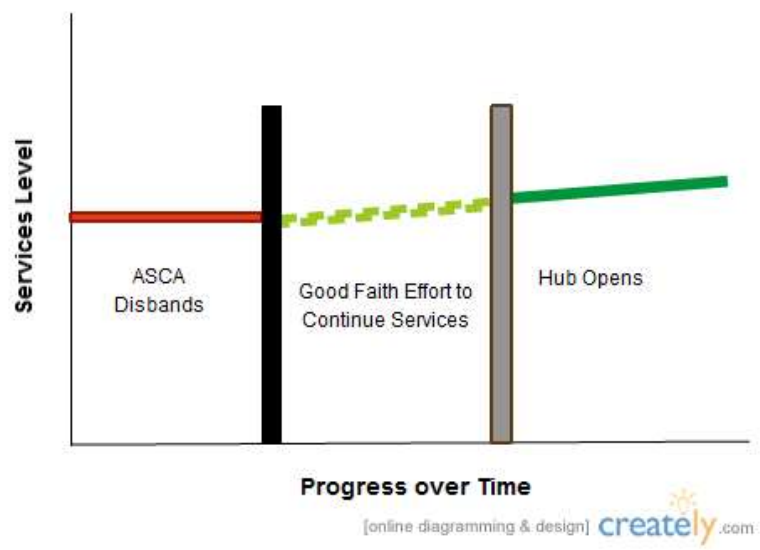
2. Implementation begins - fiscal agency, staff support and funding: Several items must be in place to enable the Joint Commission to begin Blueprint implementation. At the start, rather than establish itself as a separate entity with its own IRS designation, the study group recommends that the Joint Commission be taken under the umbrella of an organization, such as the Amarillo Area Foundation or the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, that would be willing to serve as its fiscal agent, and that an account be set up to which all financial resources could be directed. Once the Joint Commission begins working, steps should be taken to examine if and when an independent 501c3 organization should be formed.

The Blueprint Study Group with the guidance of the Blueprint document should determine resources needed to continue its work over the next 24 months. The group should then make requests to funding sources for the appropriate amount, which will be deposited into its account housed with the fiscal agent. Again, the need to plan and adjust for the unknowns in the implementation process will be necessary, and it is suggested that these initial funding levels may need to be adjusted as the Joint Commission moves into active implementation of the development phase.

3. Hub Planning - ASCA Dissolution Plan: The Blueprint study group recommends that the Amarillo Senior Citizens Association Board and membership meet to discuss their current fiscal viability, the need to eventually return the use of the downtown campus to Amarillo College, and the recommendations from the Blueprint to create a new hub senior center in a new location.

If ASCA agrees to the Blueprint concepts, a working group of ASCA, Amarillo College, and the Joint Commission will meet to determine the timing and process for the dissolution, the good faith effort to continue services after dissolution, and potential sources of funding (if available) for these services.

The ASCA board then must work to develop a dissolution plan that enables the organization to meet its obligations, and serve the membership until resources are exhausted. Concurrent to this effort, the Joint Commission should begin to make a good faith effort to continue the existing level of services while the new hub is being developed and becomes operational. Options for this good faith effort include establishing a new governance structure and/or executing a management contract with an existing center to continue services, as well as securing funds. Figure Two at right illustrates this.



4. **Hub Planning – hub center:** As conceived in the Blueprint, the hub center will offer a robust level of 21st century programs and services to ensure health of body, mind and soul, economic security, and ways for adults as they age to give back to the community. There are successful models in Texas of centers that have gone into renovated spaces within strip centers or other under-utilized buildings versus new construction, which can be very expensive. The study group

AMARILLO HUB AND SPOKES

In Amarillo, the hub center(s) proposed areas of focus are health and wellness, economic security, and programs that enable members to explore personal growth in later years and contribute back to the community.

Amarillo should have large hub, 20,000 square feet or more, offering comprehensive services in a centralized location. We envision the hub center(s) offering a full array of fitness and wellness options, social services targeting access to benefits and economic security, art classes, socialization, technology, and a variety of educational opportunities to foster personal growth and to volunteer. Some programs may be intergenerational in nature, linking older persons with youth up through college age.

Spokes in Amarillo would be smaller centers with sizes up to 8,000 square feet. In the beginning, Hilltop and Amarillo Wesley will serve as founding spokes.

As the Blueprint is implemented, there may be opportunities to add more spokes but for now, we recommend that the Joint Commission work with these two centers to help them identify opportunities to strengthen programming in the areas of focus, while the Commission works to get funding to assist in facility renovations that would support 21st century programming.

recommends that the Joint Commission look at all options to determine the best fit for Amarillo.

Initial steps the Joint Commission must begin include: 1) create a hub sub-committee with senior representation to assist in finalizing the concept for programs and services for the new center; 2) create specifications for spaces that would work for these services; 3) identify locations and cost profiles for renovation, and fully outfitting and operating the center; 4) identify potential funders and the governance model for the hub.

5. Amarillo Wesley Community Center and Hilltop Senior Citizens Association's Memorandum of Agreement: Cooperation and coordination of senior center services were important issues raised in the focus groups and in community meetings. Amarillo Wesley and Hilltop have the opportunity to participate in the Blueprint implementation process as full cooperative partners and members of the Joint Commission. Upon approval of their respective Boards, the senior centers should outline a memorandum that formalizes the cooperative aspects of their partnership, and in cooperation with the Joint Commission, how they anticipate participating in the change to 21st century senior centers.

Once the MOA is in place, one of the first steps should be to work with the Joint Commission to conduct an assessment of both programs to determine what resources would be needed to upgrade facilities and programs to the new model. The benefit of this cooperation is that all senior centers in Amarillo become part of a network, and will benefit from the Blueprint and the work of the Joint Commission, in effect, raising all of the boats.

6. Resource Development to implement Blueprint – base and capital funding: Amarillo's Centers for the 21st Century will require diverse and ongoing resources. These can be obtained by both bringing in new resources, and by leveraging existing resources.

The asset map developed through the public process identifies existing resources that can be utilized to build the foundation of the Blueprint and support its implementation. These resources can be financial support, in-kind support in the form of technical assistance, physical or

virtual space, programs and services, or leadership in supporting the Blueprint.

Despite the tremendous amount of resources already available in the Amarillo area that have been identified on the asset map, reliable base funding for the centers will need to be secured. Two of the existing senior centers in Amarillo have faced the instability of raising one hundred percent (100%) of their operational funds each year. A review of other successful senior centers in Texas revealed that most receive support from their local government. The Blueprint recommends that base funding be secured from a public-private partnership between the City of Amarillo and other interested partners.

The Joint Commission will be tasked with developing a budget for the full implementation of the Blueprint, which includes base funding for the centers, developing community support for the Blueprint, and preparing

A review of other successful senior centers in Texas revealed that most receive support from their local government.

a development phase budget request by the spring of 2015 for consideration by the City Council. The Joint Commission should also prepare requests to public and private funders for the base and capital funds needed to sustain the center network for the long term.

In addition to base funding for the hub center, the Blueprint also recommends support and improvements for the “spokes”: Hilltop and Amarillo Wesley Community Center. The Blueprint study group anticipates that the majority of the resources for facility and program improvements would come from the private sector.

Working in conjunction with knowledgeable community members, the Joint Commission will: 1) conduct a needs assessment and renovation plans for the spokes that identify the capital costs for the improvements; 2) identify likely sources of support and strategies to engage these prospects; 3) develop a strong statement of need that links back to the goals of the Blueprint and 4) apply for funding during the appropriate grant cycles of the Amarillo philanthropic community or to other business/community partners.

7. Resource Development to implement Blueprint – conserving resources: One of the main advantages of the Joint Commission structure is that it may serve as the vehicle to leverage economies of scale and efficiencies for the new cooperative network of centers. Working with the Joint Commission, the centers should identify ways to create operational efficiencies in purchasing, programming, provision of meals, and negotiated discounts that centers users could enjoy in the community. The Joint Commission in partnership with the center network can jointly assess the opportunities in these areas. They might also choose to secure assistance from professionals skilled in operations and non-profit management, or work with business students at a local college or university to assist in these efforts in either a paid or pro bono arrangement.

8. Start genesis of Center without Walls: A Center without Walls simply means that services for adults as they age don't necessarily have to take place inside the bricks and mortar buildings of the centers. Other community organizations can augment or complement the center services by offering programs at their own location. This ensures that services and programs for seniors are available at a variety of locations and are accessible throughout the community.

During the development phase, a shared calendar of events and programs can be created. The Joint Commission working in concert with the centers should identify: 1) groups that already provide programs for adults as they age or have a mission to serve older adults; 2) businesses who sell products/services to seniors that might provide sponsorships to increase the number of programs available; and 3) those organizations who would be of interested in adding their programs to create a Center without Walls in the Amarillo area. When initial ideas are finalized, the center network would promote events on a shared network calendar and continue to work with the partners to enhance offerings based on the needs and wants of the aging population.

As the Center without Walls begins to take shape, the center network can formalize the relationship with the partner programs, identify ways to publicize offerings and recognize the partners as part of the network, and develop policies for private for-profit partners to participate as well.

Sample Staff Costs and Permanent Staffing Plans

(Information based on figures from south central Texas, and is not meant to be representative of Amarillo anticipated costs)

- Manager: \$38,000 - \$52,000
- Receptionist: \$24,000 - \$30,000
- Fitness Instructor (full-time): \$32,000 - \$38,000
- Building Services (Janitor): \$26,000 - \$45,000

Large centers (hub) have one manager, 2 receptionists, 1 building services coordinator and a full-time fitness instructor. Everything else is contracted.

- Low end: \$144,000
- High end: \$195,000

Small centers (spokes) have one manager, 2 PT receptionists, 2 PT building services coordinators, and contract fitness instruction.

- Low end: \$88,000
- High end: \$127,000

FUNDING GUIDANCE

The cost of the development plan and Blueprint depends on many variables. It depends on the amount of in-kind support that defrays actual expenses. It depends upon the size and location of the new hub center that influences the cost per square foot. The size of the center informs the equipment, furniture, staffing and programming that can be offered.

The Blueprint calls for renovations and improvements for existing centers. The needs assessment will identify the scope of the improvements and their subsequent costs.

Sample Cost Illustrations of Center Renovations

(Information is not meant to be representative of Amarillo anticipated costs)

McAllen:

Square Footage: 4294
 Cost of Build Out: \$25,000
 Cost of furniture: \$15,000
 Cost of exercise equipment: \$25,000
 Rent: \$1.30/square foot plus \$1,050/month (\$6632/month) or \$79,584/year
 Average utilities: \$600/month
 Operations: \$115,000/year
 Members: 700
 Average Daily Attendance: 50

Austin:

Square Footage: 6,084
 Cost of Build Out: \$27/square foot or \$164,268
 Cost of Furniture: \$20,000
 Cost of Exercise equipment: \$25,000
 Rent: \$1.50/square foot or \$109,512/year
 Average utilities: \$500/month
 Operations: \$135,000 Members: 1000
 Average Daily Attendance: 75-80

San Antonio

Square Footage: 22,000
 Cost of Build Out: \$1.3 million
 Cost of furniture \$76,000
 Cost of exercise equipment: \$70,000
 Rent: \$10/square foot or \$220,000/year
 Average utilities: Estimate \$1,000/month
 Operations: \$800,000/year
 Members: Anticipating 4,000
 Average Daily Attendance: 450-500

The Blueprint highlights the need for increased public funding to provide a reliable base from which the centers can operate annually. Many successful centers around the U.S. secure their funding from a variety of sources in addition to the public funding. They have membership dues and fees. They conduct fund-raising activities and write grants. They have entrepreneurial endeavors such as thrift shops, facilities rental for events, adult day care, and contracts with health plans and medical organizations to provide specific services. They accept donations, develop sponsorships, and some have endowments and planned giving opportunities.

The Blueprint recommends that the space for the new hub center be located in former retail space that is no longer used or is under-used. It calls for a long-term lease versus building or purchasing a building. It also identifies potential partners to help secure the new space in the asset map.

Finally, it calls for creation of network, and cooperative agreements that leverage existing resources and take advantage of economies of scale. It calls for the creation of a Joint Commission to serve as the fiscal agent for the network, and to be a neutral entity that represents the interests of all of the network partners who serve the spectrum of members across the community. The Joint Commission is responsible for securing the necessary funds to implement the Blueprint, to establish the guidelines for participation in the network to be eligible to receive funds, and to be accountable to the funders for the appropriate use of the funds collected.