

Welcome!

Aging Well Whatcom Blueprint

July 14, 2022

Please share your name and affiliation in the chat.



Goals



- Understand demographics of Whatcom County's older adults.
→ *Demographic data, Q & A (15 mins)*
- Recognize what's important to older adults.
→ *Older Adult Survey findings, Q & A (15 mins)*
- Consider what's needed to achieve the Blueprint strategies.
→ *2022 Blueprint overview (10)*
→ *Focus areas (20 mins)*
→ *What will it take? (20 mins)*

Context: Blueprint History

Build Aging Well Coalition
2017-2018

Assessment & Research
2018

Develop Blueprint
2018-2019

Aging Well Summit
2019

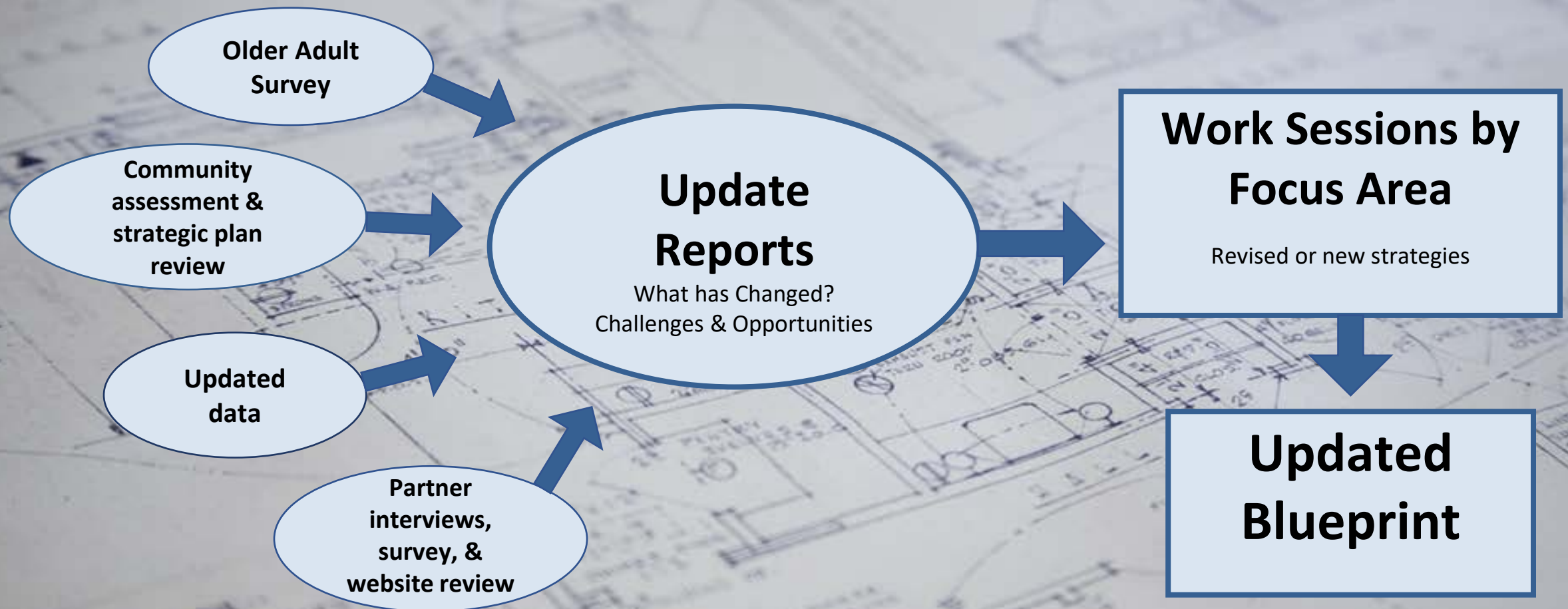
Implement

Other Organizations' Work, Aging Well Grants,
AWW Well Steering Committee

Blueprint Update
2022

- **What has changed**
- **Current challenges and opportunities**

2022 Blueprint Update



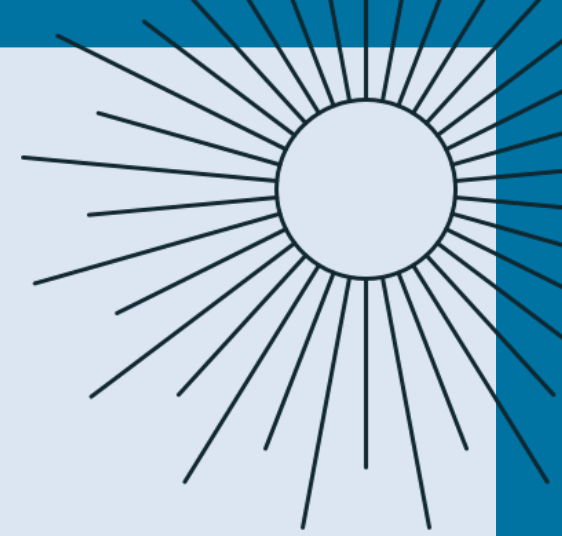


2022 Blueprint

Second Edition

Presented June 2022

Supported by



agingwellwhatcom.org/blueprint



2022 Blueprint

What's the same?

Six focus areas:

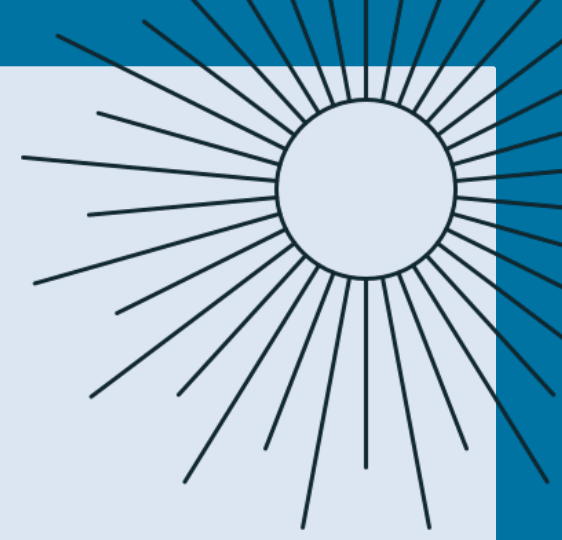
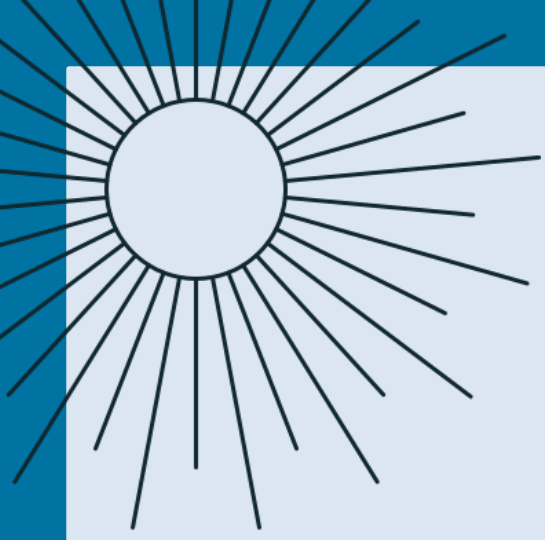
- **Cultural Shift**
- **Housing**
- **Intergenerational Community**
- **Information & Navigation**
- **Transportation**
- **Wellness & Healthcare**



2022 Blueprint

What's new?

- **Updated demographic data**
- **Key survey findings**
- **COVID impacts**
- **Significant community changes**
- **Revised, prioritized, and new strategies**
- **Blueprint intersections**



Older Adults in Whatcom County: Demographic Data

Amy Hockenberry
Whatcom County Health Department

Fig 1 - Population change in Whatcom County and those 65 and older, 2017-2020

Data Source: WA State Office of Financial Management, SADE

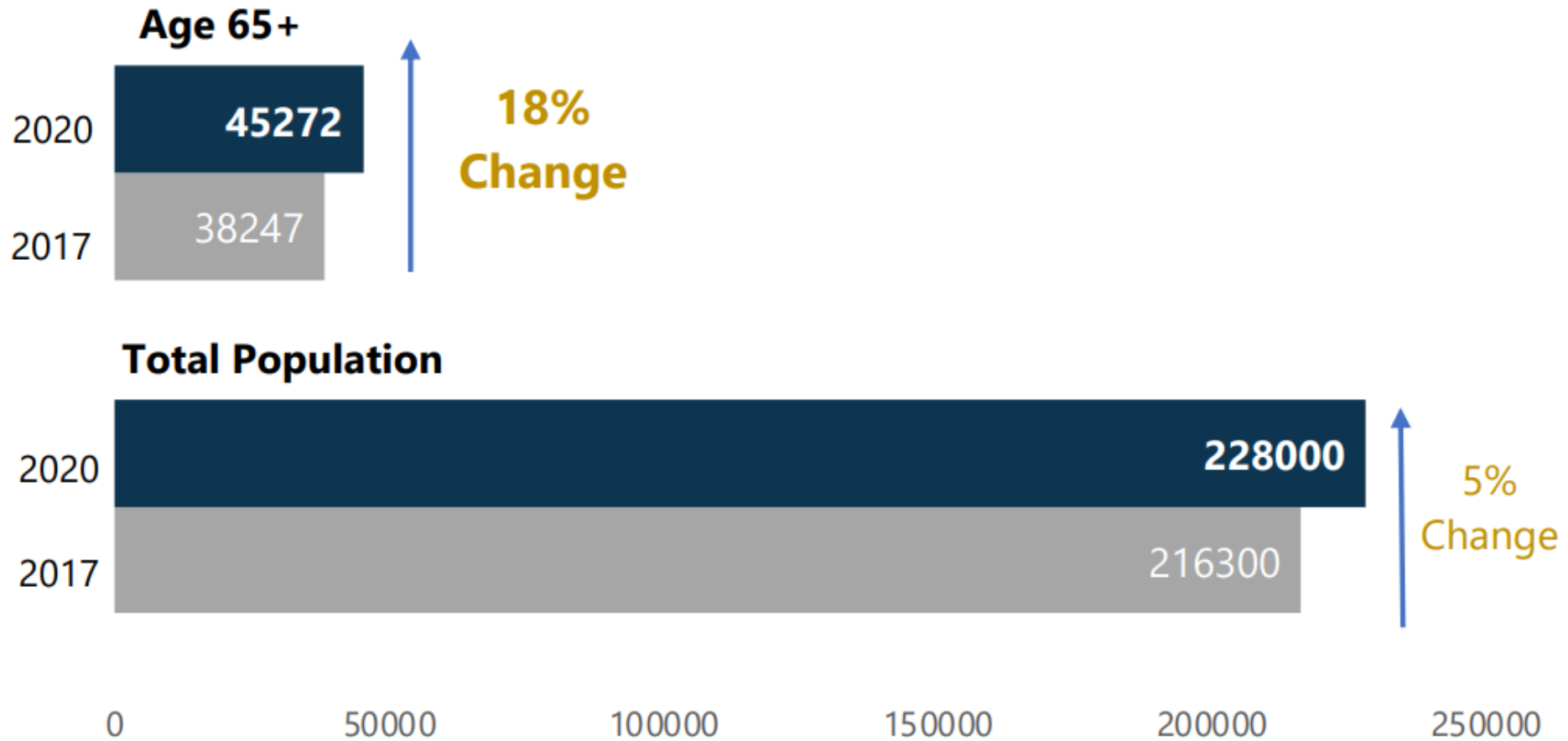
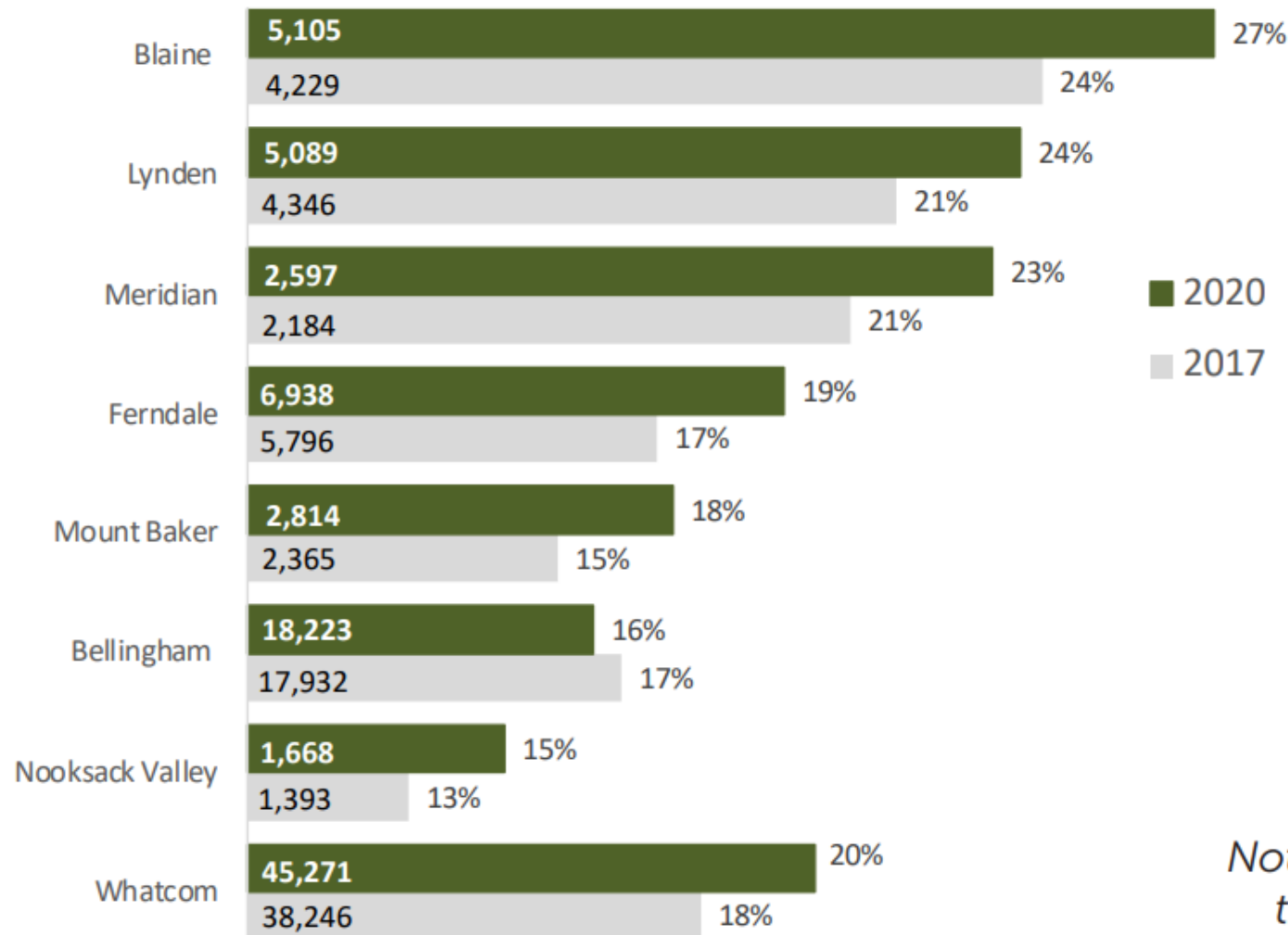


Fig 2 - Change in 65 and older population within sub-county areas, 2017-2020

Data Source: WA State Office of Financial Management



Note: Percent of sub-county area represents the proportion of 65+ for the specific area

Fig 3 – Map of sub-county areas with percent of population age 65 and over, 2020

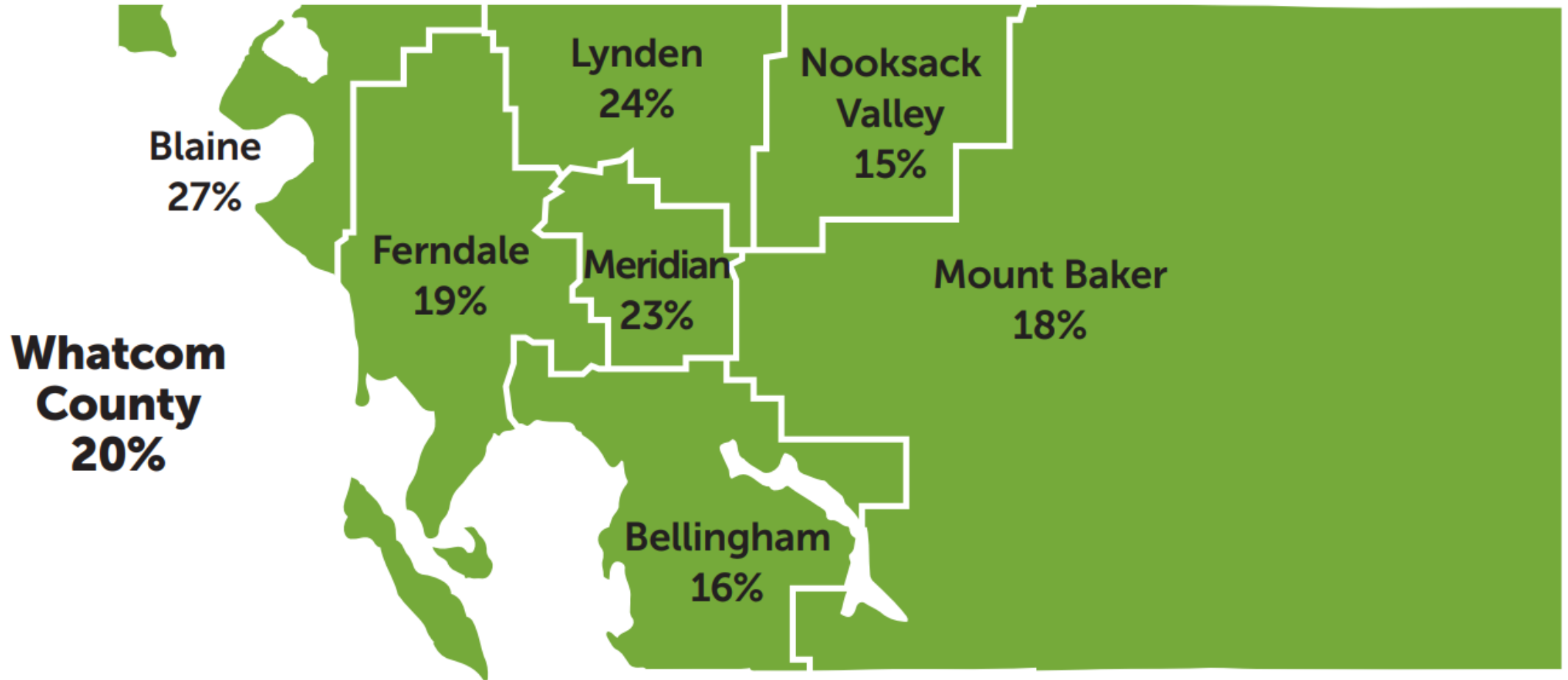


Fig 5 - Whatcom County Race and Ethnicity Population Estimates, 2020

Data Source: WA State Office of Financial Management

	Total Population	65+
Whatcom County Population Counts	228,000	45,272
Non-Hispanic White	78.2%	90.7%
Hispanic as a Race	9.7%	2.8%
Non-Hispanic Asian	4.5%	3.3%
Non-Hispanic AIAN (<i>American Indian and Alaska Natives</i>)	2.5%	1.5%
Non-Hispanic Black	1.0%	0.5%
Non-Hispanic NHOPI (<i>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</i>)	0.3%	0.1%
Non-Hispanic Two or More Races	3.7%	1.2%

Fig 6 – Percent of population age 65 and older living alone, 2012-2019

Data Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

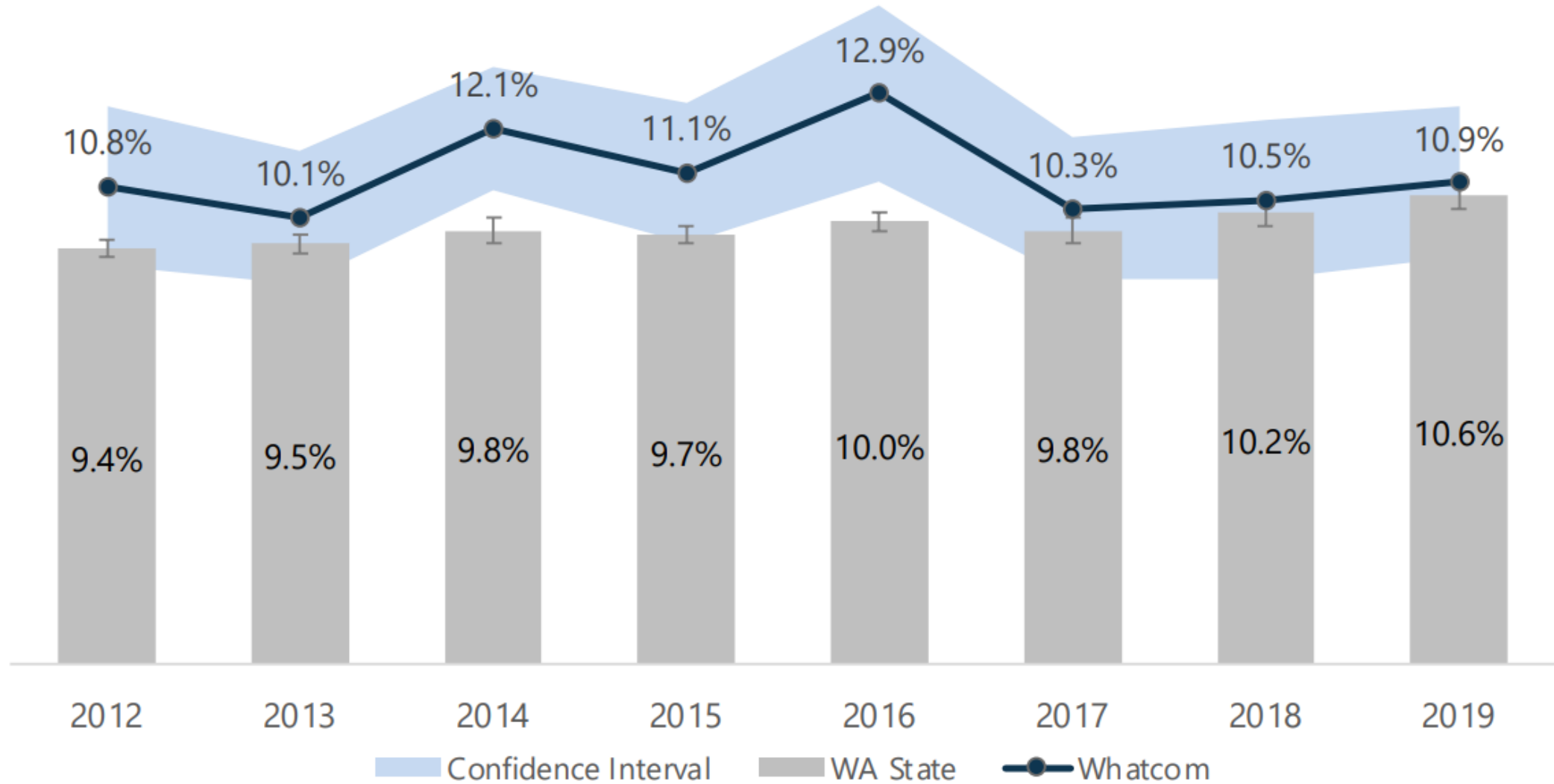


Fig 7 – Percent of householder 65 and older living alone by city jurisdiction area compared to Whatcom County and WA State, 2020

Data Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

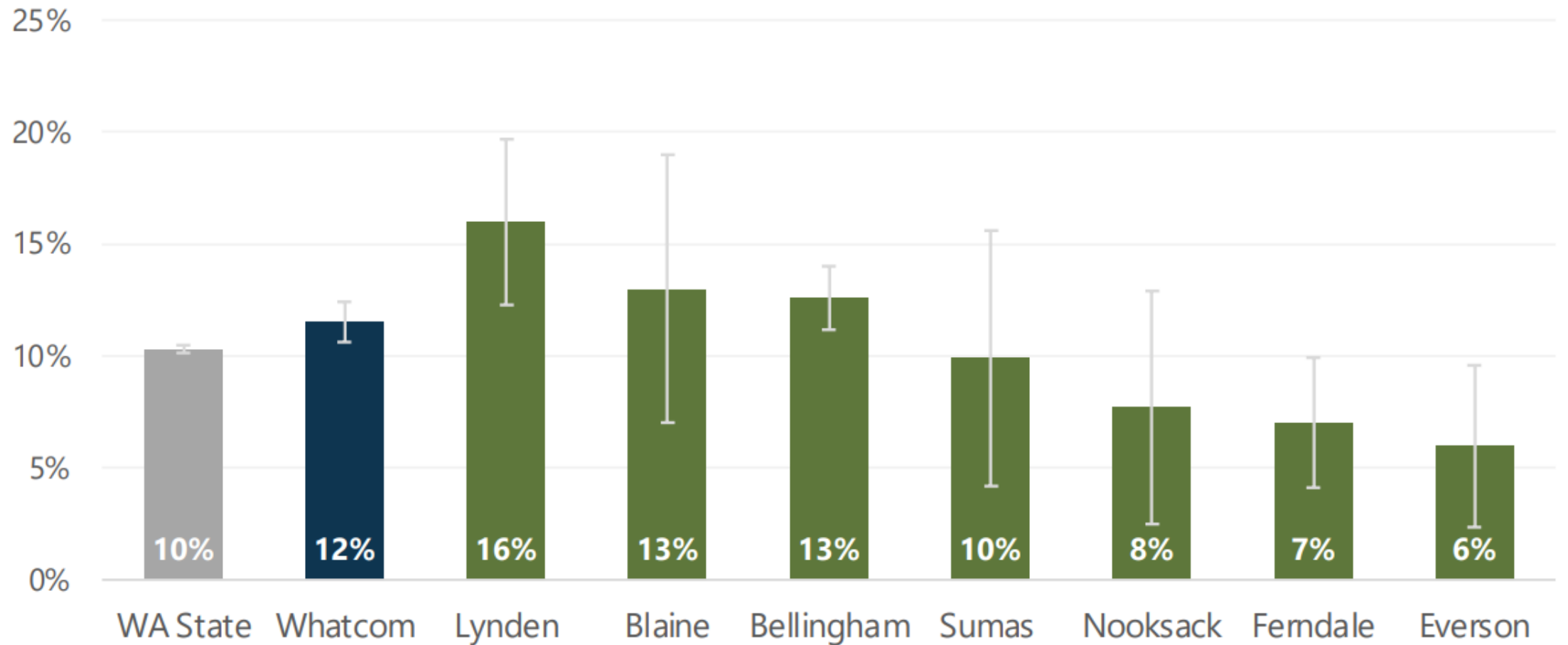
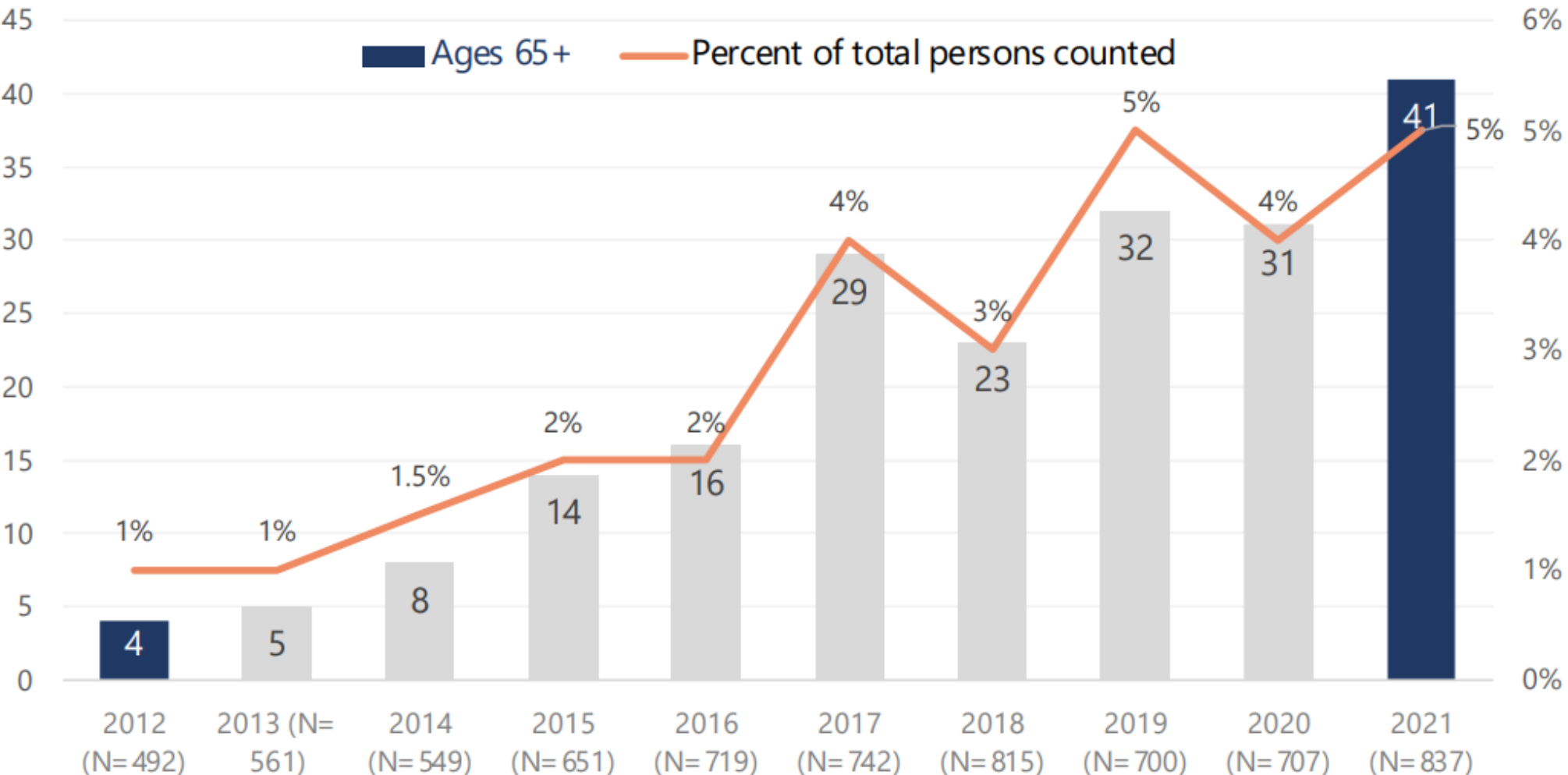


Fig 8 – Number of seniors counted in the Point in Time Counts, 2012-2021

Data Source: Whatcom Homeless Service Center



Note: N = total number of people counted in the Point in Time Count

Fig 9 - Projected Older Adult Populations, Whatcom County, 2010-2040

Data Source: WA State Office of Financial Management

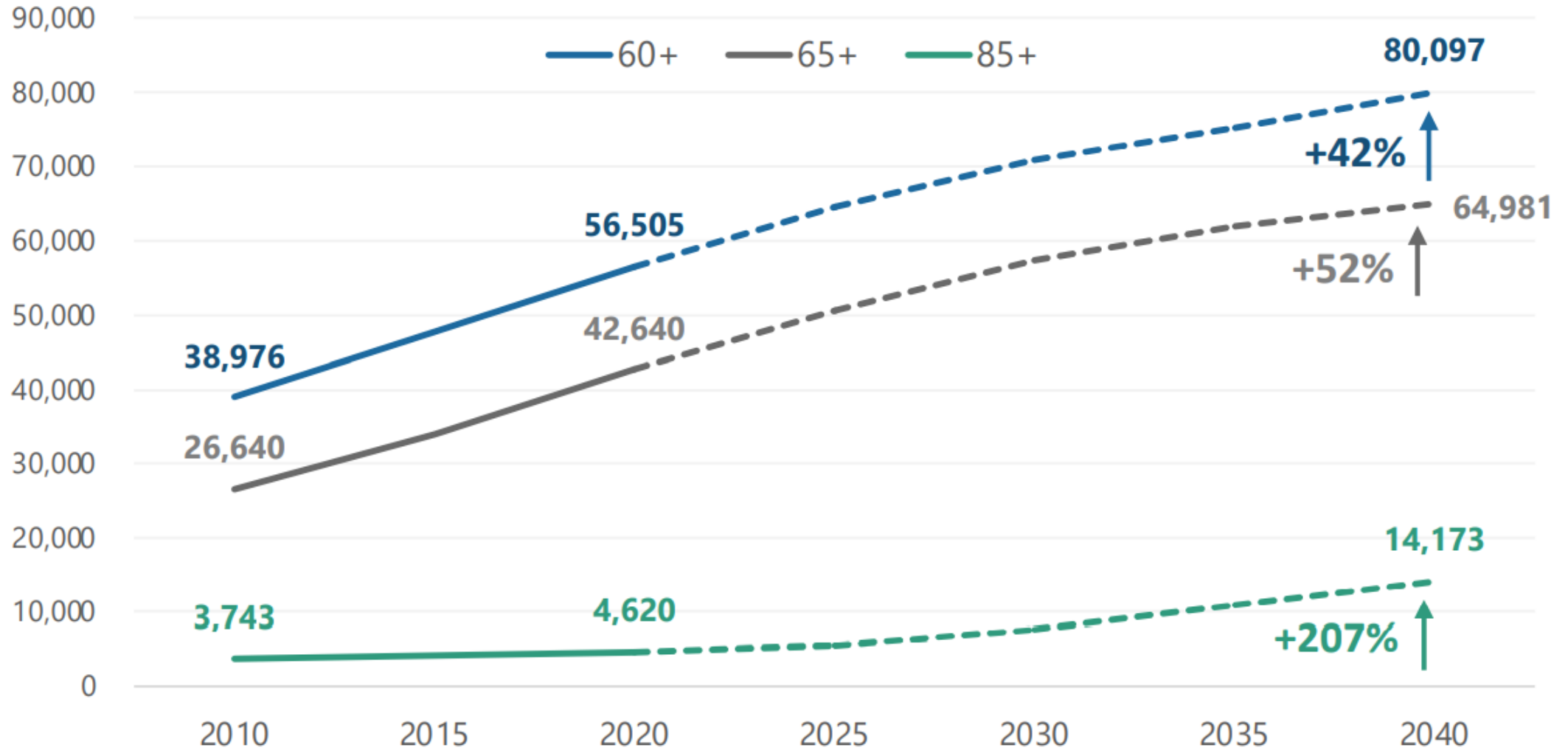


Fig 10 - Projected Whatcom County 85+ Population, 2010-2040

Data Source: WA State Office of Financial Management

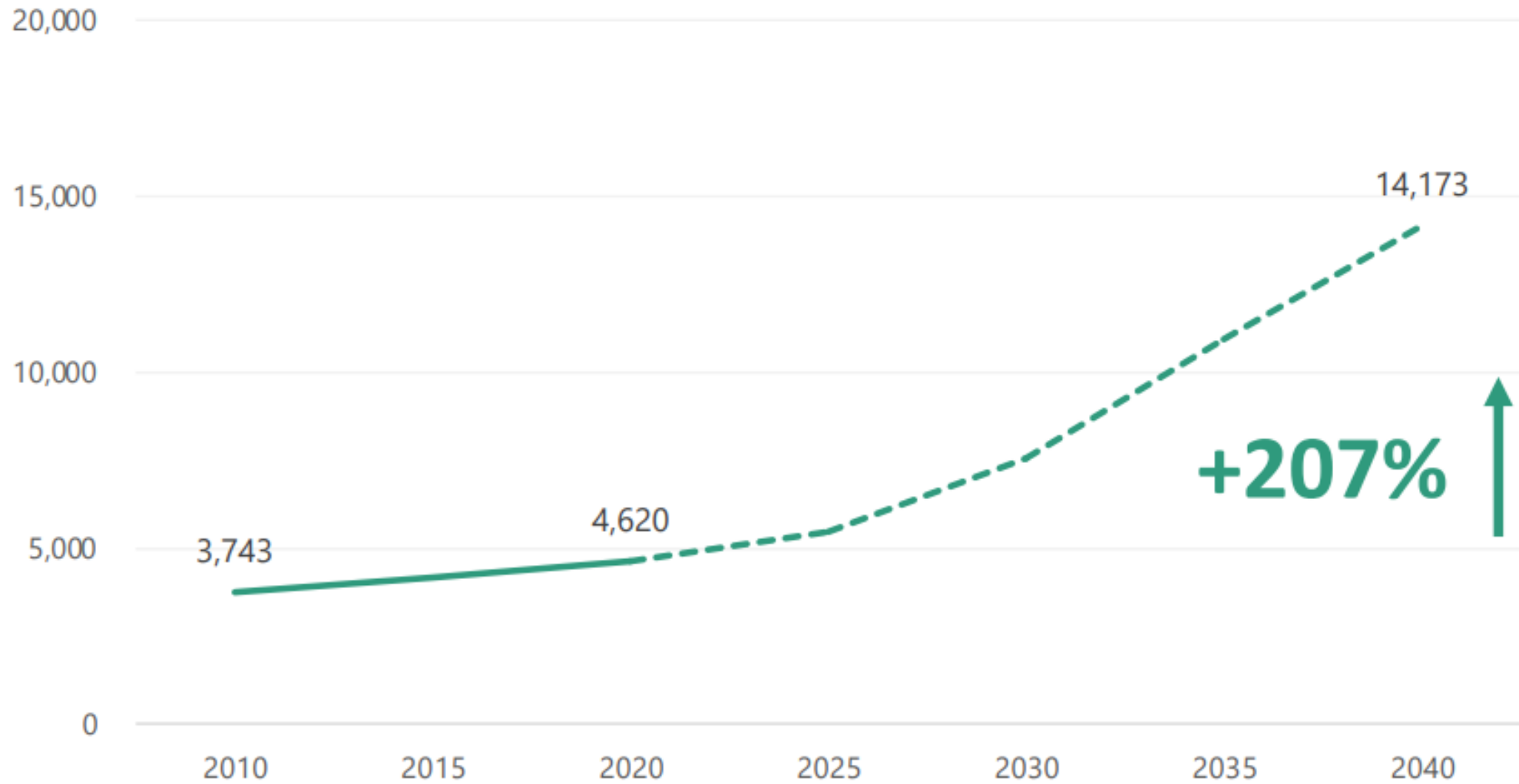
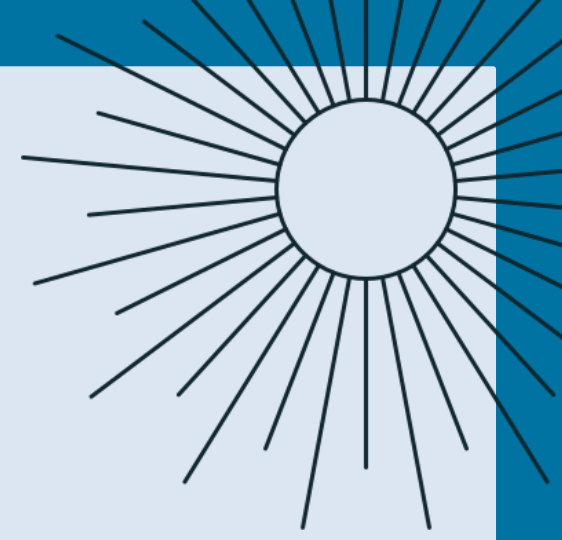
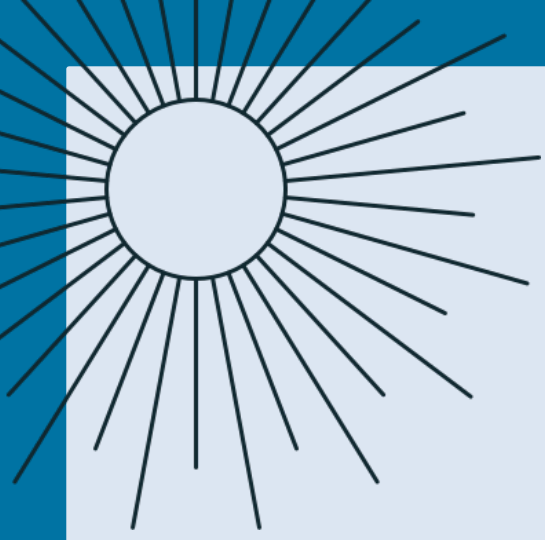


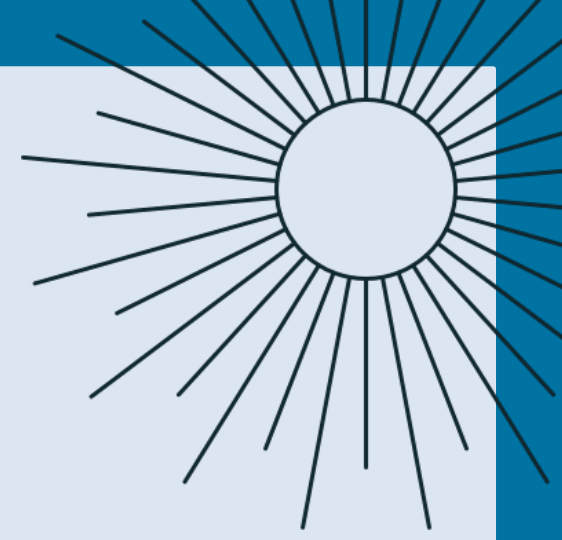
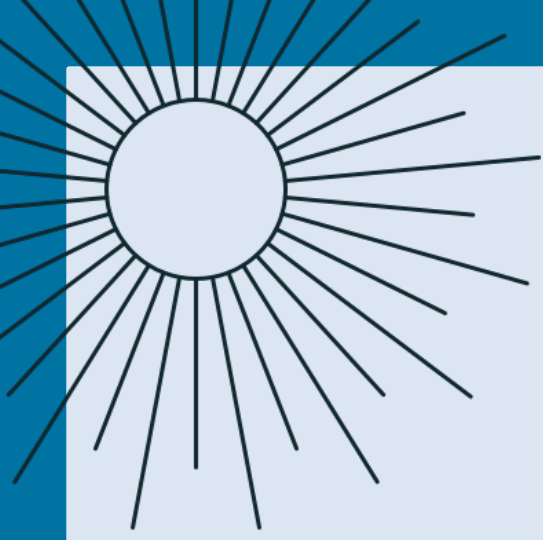
Fig 11 - Selected Population and Aging Service Utilization Forecast, Whatcom County, 2021

Data Source: WA State Department of Social and Health Services, Aging and Long-term Support Administration

	2020	2030	Percent Change
Number of persons aged 60 or above	57,472	71,004	24%
Number of persons aged 60 or above and at or below 100% FPL*	6,347	8,332	31%
Number of persons aged 60 or above and minority	5,111	7,523	47%
Number of persons aged 60 or above and at or below 100% FPL and minority	827	1,296	57%
Number of persons aged 60 or above with limited English proficiency	1,970	2,853	45%
Number of persons aged 60 or above and Disabled (ACS 18b or 18c)	11,736	16,202	38%
Number of persons aged 60 or above with IADL** (ACS 19)	7,304	10,521	44%
Number of persons aged 65 or above with dementia	4,133	6,387	55%



Questions?
Comments?



Older Adult Survey

Chris Orr

Whatcom Council on Aging

www.agingwellwhatcom.org/2022-blueprint-update



Older Adult Survey

- November-December 2021
- Same three questions as 2018
- New question regarding COVID impacts
- Online and paper options
- Distributed via AWW and community partners



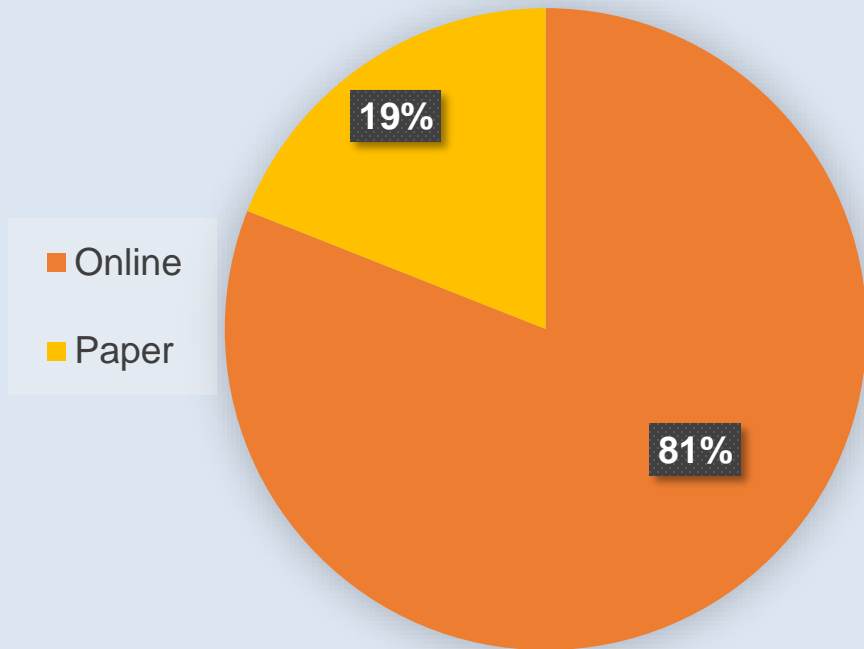
Survey Questions

- 1) What things do you feel are the most important to your quality of life?
- 2) What challenges or concerns do you have in regards to your health and well-being?
- 3) What are the main ways the pandemic has impacted you?
- 4) If you could add or change one thing that is available for older adults and their families in Whatcom County, what would that be?

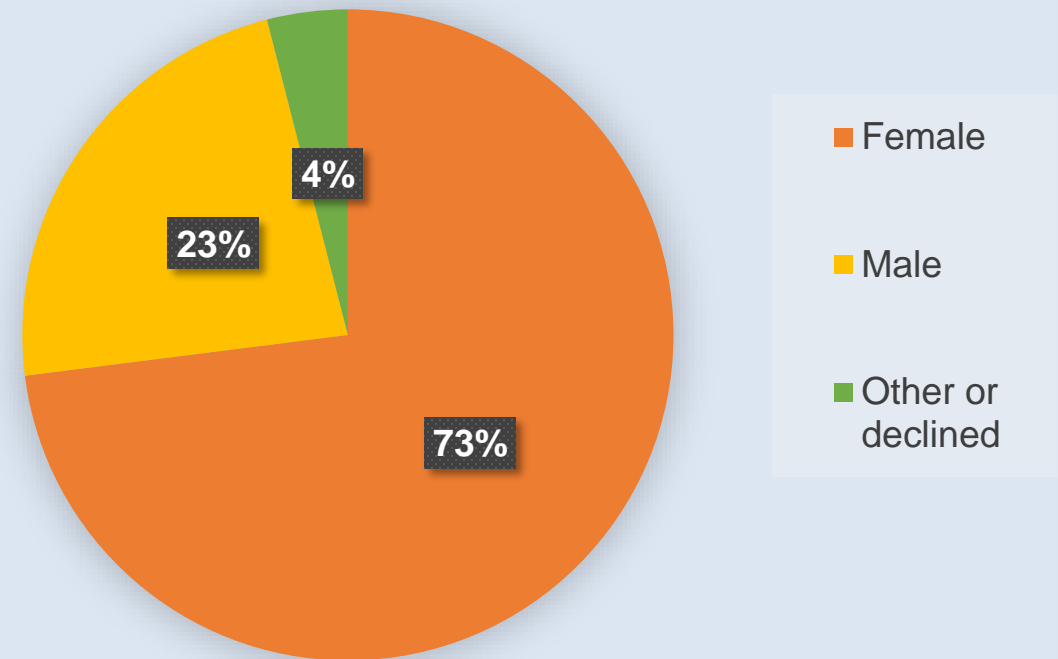
Survey Respondents

N=512

Survey Type



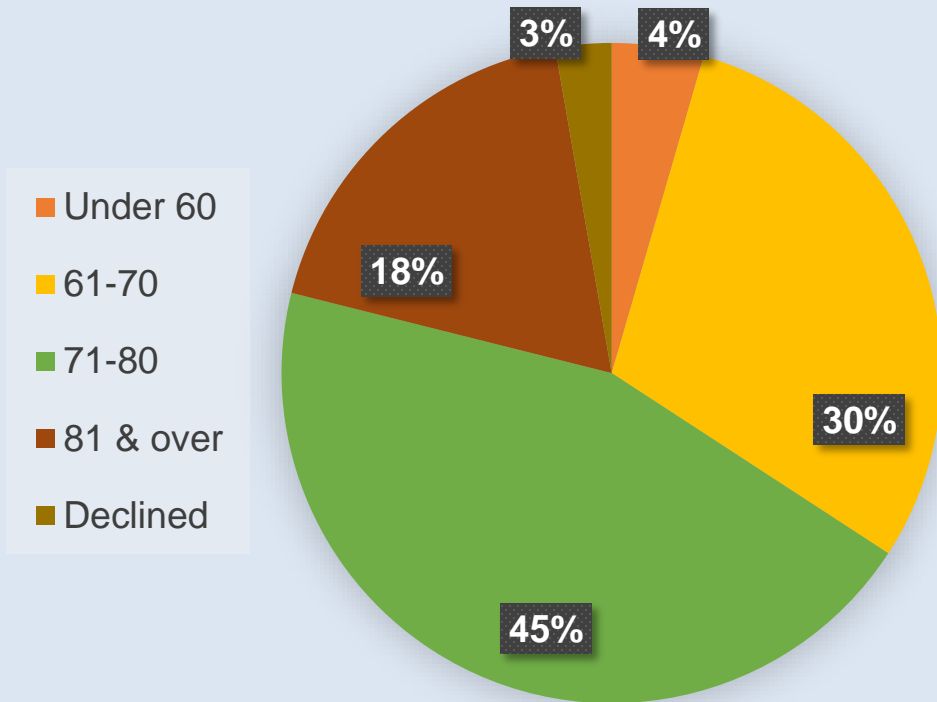
Gender



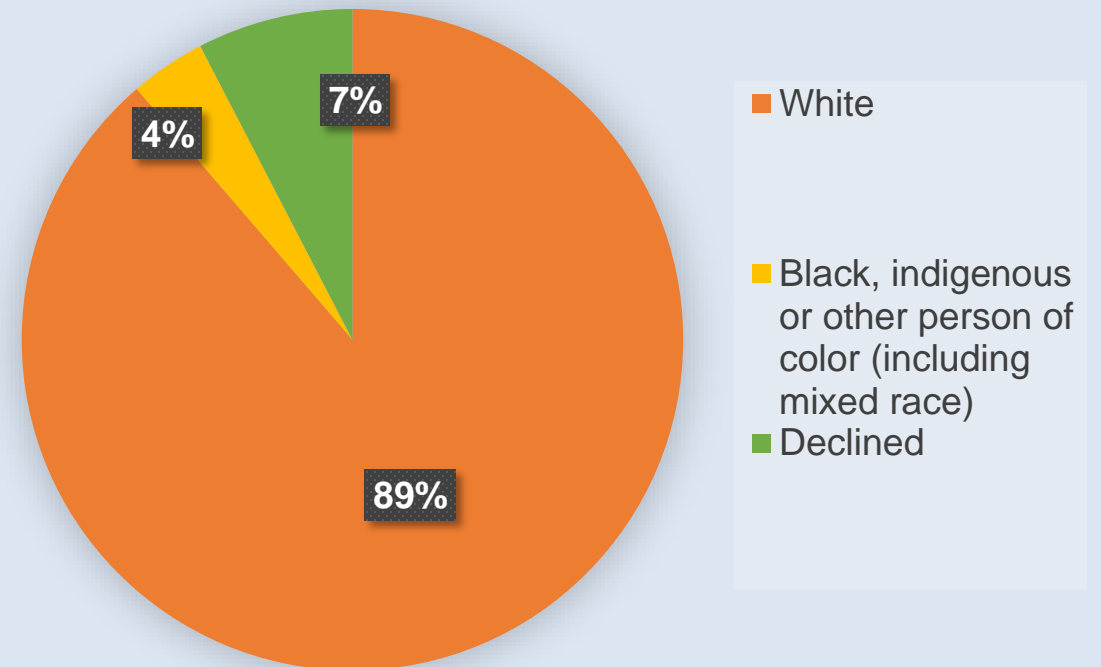
Survey Respondents

N=512

Age



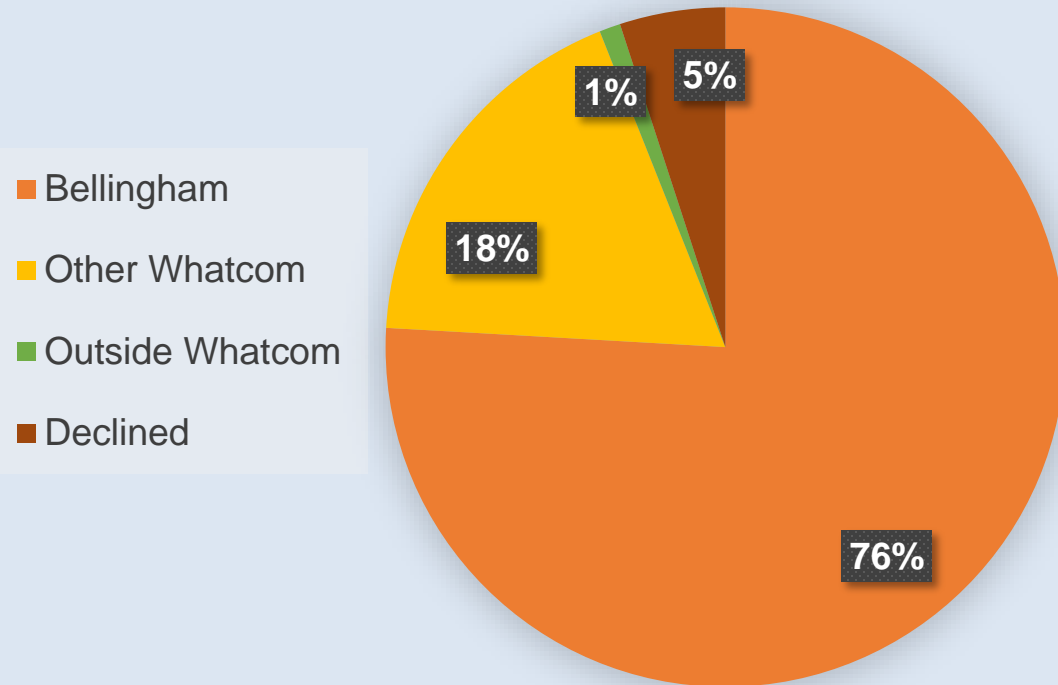
Race



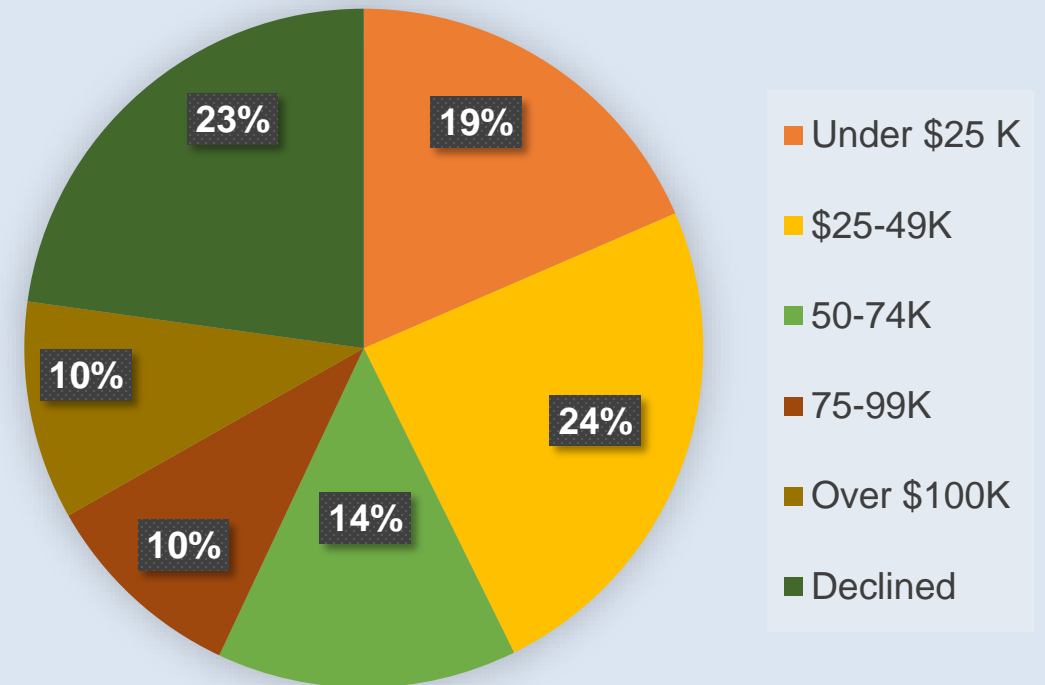
Survey Respondents

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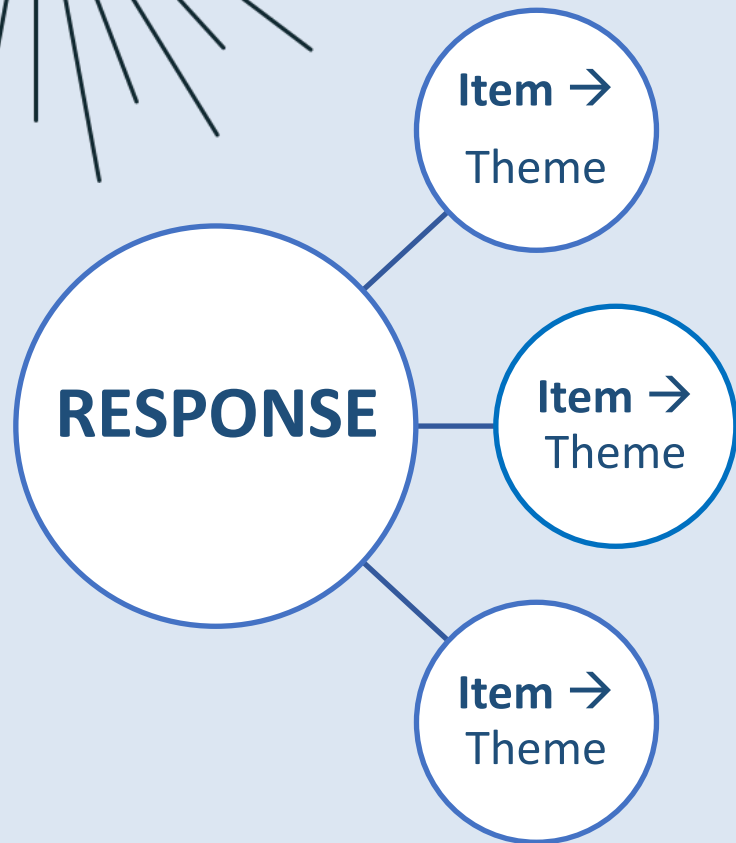
Location (ZIP code)



Annual Income



Analysis Methodology



Example

“Getting together with friends, my dog, and being able to get outside”

Getting together with friends = Interaction, connection, relationships

My dog = Pets, animals

Being able to get outside = Nature, outdoors



Key Findings: What's Important

Top Five:

- 1) Family and friends
- 2) Health
- 3) Interaction, relationships, and connection
- 4) Food and nutrition
- 5) Healthcare

Relationships and **connection** (#1 + #3) are overwhelmingly the most important factors for older adults' quality of life.



Key Findings: Challenges & Concerns



Top Five:

- 1) Healthcare
- 2) Medical condition(s)
- 3) Physical activity
- 4) Pandemic
- 5) Concern regarding future needs



Key Findings: COVID Impacts



Top Five:

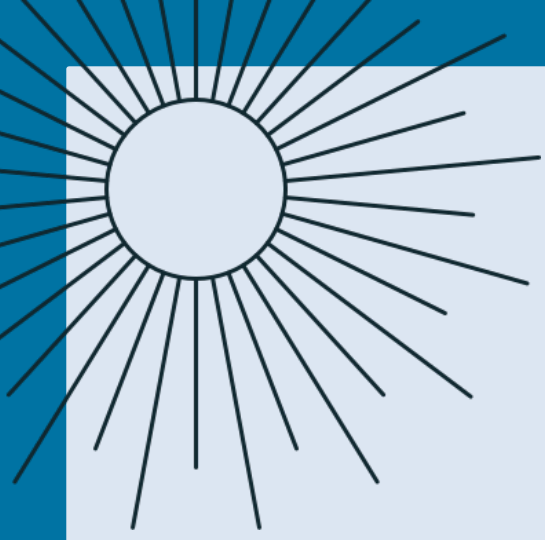
- 1) Less interaction, relationships, connection
 - 2) Isolation
-
- 3) Fewer activities
 - 4) [Less] travel
 - 5) Fear, worry, and stress



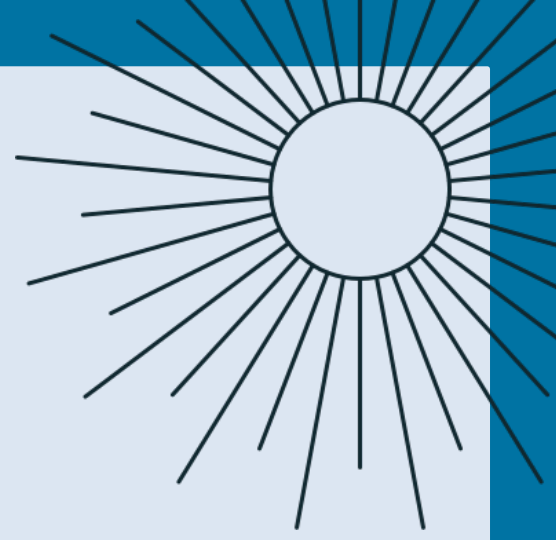
Key Findings: Add or Change

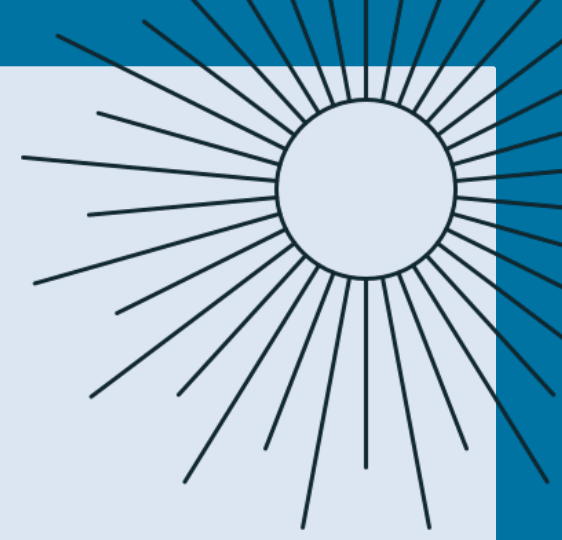
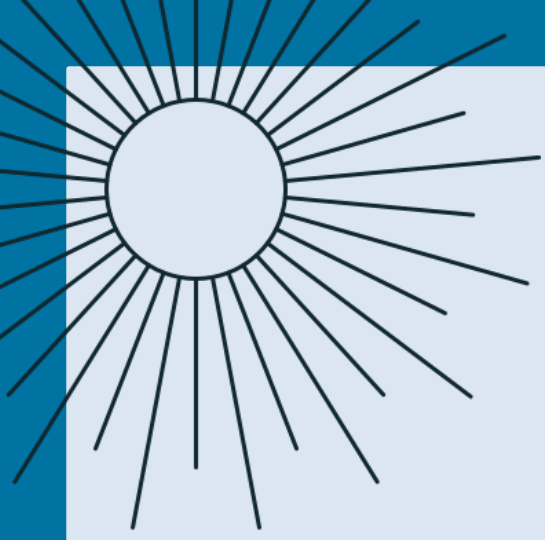
Top Five:

- 1) Transportation
- 2) Housing
- 3) Healthcare
- 4) Social & recreational activities
- 5) Physical activity



Questions?
Comments?





2022 **Blueprint**

Impacts of COVID on Older Adults

While the COVID pandemic was felt by everyone in our communities, older adults have been especially impacted.¹

High burden of hospitalization and death

People age 65 and older comprise about 20% of Whatcom County's population. Of the 1,153 COVID-related hospitalizations in Whatcom County since the beginning of the pandemic, 45% were for people age 65 and older, and 81% of the COVID deaths were in this age group. As of May 9, 2022, there were 38,607 reported COVID cases in Whatcom County, with about 10% in older adult community members. (Source:



Negative Impacts

- High burden of hospitalization and death
- Social Isolation
- Healthcare system impacts

Opportunities

- Awareness of older adults
- Technology
- Innovation



Focus Areas



- 1) Community vision
- 2) Desired outcomes
- 3) Key challenges
- 4) Community assets, resources and partners
- 5) **Community-based strategies**
- 6) **Policy strategies**
- 7) **Workforce development strategies**

Key to symbols in “Strategies” sections

- ★ Strategies deemed **high priority** by Blueprint work session participants
- Strategies that are **new** in the 2022 Blueprint



Cultural Shift

When a society has an incomplete and biased vision of aging, individuals often face more barriers to aging well. Shifting the culture around how we view aging and older adults is foundational to building a community for aging well, and people of all ages will benefit from a community culture that honors aging and respects and values older adults.

Community Based Strategies:

- ★ 1 **Create opportunities for telling the stories of aging** in all their diversity and messiness, wonders and challenges. Use multiple genres (music, documentary, visual arts, film), all available channels (print, social media), and intergenerational exchanges and narratives.



"I don't want to be seen/treated as 'old' which can be seen as less worthy than the young. I'm an individual continuing to work hard to have a healthy, vital life."

"Older people make a difference. Older people are showing up to help make change. Look around at the climate, women's, and BLM marches."



Information & Navigation Services

Navigating information and resources for the aging process is often a daunting task. Our community offers a variety of services and resources; however, they often have specific qualification and eligibility criteria that can be difficult to navigate. Our community can improve how it provides information to individuals and families, and how we help people sort through the many variables to determine the best option for their situation.

Community Based Strategies:

- ★ 1 **Actively engage with the Whatcom Resource Information Collaborative (WRIC)**, contributing to its design and implementation to ensure it meets the needs of older adults, their families and caregivers, and the organizations that serve them. This includes facilitating the navigation of complex and inconsistent eligibility requirements.
- ★ 3 **Develop a network of informal referral sources** – people who come into contact with older adults through their everyday activities – to identify and refer to at-risk older adults.

Policy Strategies:

- ★ 1 **Ensure that City and County representatives are aware of and committed to addressing issues affecting older adults.**

“Lack of technology or tech know-how is now a greater barrier to access, since so much is online or virtual.”



“There’s a missing component: some older adults don’t need assisted living, but the current apartment buildings aren’t good for aging in. [We] need some accommodations for mobility, e.g., the number of stairs and steps, easy-to-reach outlets (higher up, not down at floor level), walk-in shower vs. step over tub.”

Housing

Affordable housing is a significant challenge in Whatcom County; as costs of renting and home ownership continue to rise, housing options become increasingly scarce for many older adults **with fixed incomes**. More housing, and the right mix of housing at various price points, will ensure all older adults are housed, and that a wider variety of housing arrangements are available, including a continuum of long-term care options.

Community Based Strategies:

- ★ 1 **Develop a single information resource for older adults** seeking housing in Whatcom County; eventually expand to serve all community members.
- ★ 4 **Cultivate shared housing arrangements with beneficial interdependence**, such as roommate matching, intergenerational models, co-ownership models, apartments with private bathroom/bedroom and shared accommodations (single-room occupancy).
- 6 **Ensure housing for older adults experiencing homelessness**, with care coordination for health and social services.

Policy Strategies:

- ★ 3 **Prevent conversion of existing subsidized senior housing** stock to non-senior or market-rate.
- ★ 5 **Revise land use and building codes county-wide** to facilitate fostering accessibility and diversity of housing (flexibility around roommate arrangements in single family homes, construction of Accessory Dwelling Units, development of adult family homes, etc.).



Intergenerational Community

Research shows that purpose and strong social interaction lead to increased longevity and improved health outcomes, and that both youth and older adults benefit from intergenerational relationships that offer support, mutual learning, and shared meaning. Of the more than 500 older adults who responded to the 2021 Aging Well Whatcom survey, the number one theme when asked “what’s most important” was interaction, relationships, and connection. Expanding structures for organic intergenerational connections will strengthen our community and benefit people of all ages.

Community Based Strategies:

- ★ 3 **Build “Connection Teams” to reach out and connect people across generations.** This could include a visiting program to help address isolation and loneliness in older adults and provide support and learning for younger adults.



“I believe it is unhealthy, certainly for me, to age in an age vacuum where all my interactions are with people my own age. I seek interactions with all age groups. It’s invigorating and helps me know how many of different ages live and feel.”

“Multi-generational experiences help decrease feeling of invisibility [as an older adult].”



Transportation is critical to community members' well-being, as it impacts housing options, access to services, social activities, and many other aspects of life. Whatcom County's current transportation options include personal vehicles, vehicles for hire, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and the Whatcom Transportation Authority, which offers fixed route buses, paratransit, and other services. However, more options are needed to meet the needs of all members of our community, especially those who are unable or choose not to drive.

Community Based Strategies:

- ★ 1 **Increase outreach, education and community engagement about existing transportation options** to older adults, their family members, and in-home caregivers (bus rider education and training, easier-to-read materials, maps of ADA accessible features such as unobstructed sidewalks, crosswalks, bus stops, and information about the cost of driving and the impact of transportation decisions on climate change.)
- 4 **Develop more service models that go to where older adults are**, reducing the need for transportation to access programs and services.
- 5 **Address the disproportionate rate of traffic-related fatalities and injuries among older adults** and people with disabilities by partnering with the WA Department of Transportation (Active Transportation Plan) and the Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (Target Zero and Older Drivers).

Policy Strategies:

- 4 **Advocate for planning that connects transportation, land use, and housing**, such as siting housing for older adults in close proximity to services, and developing neighborhood infrastructure and services that support older adults to age in place.

A photograph of two men jogging outdoors. The man on the left is wearing a dark grey hoodie and has a focused expression. The man on the right is wearing a white hoodie with blue stripes on the sleeves and is smiling broadly. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a clear sky. A large white bracket is positioned to the left of the text.

Wellness & Healthcare

Physical and mental changes that often come with aging can impact the ability to engage in the social, physical, and professional activities that older adults highly value. Those living in rural locations may experience more barriers to maintaining social connections, accessing healthy food and safe physical activity, and receiving timely and appropriate healthcare. A strong community healthcare system with adequate mental health, dental, medical, and social services, and coordination among these services, contributes to living and aging well. A critical part of this system is ensuring an adequate caregiver workforce, and providing financial and other supports to those who care for older adults.

Community Based Strategies:

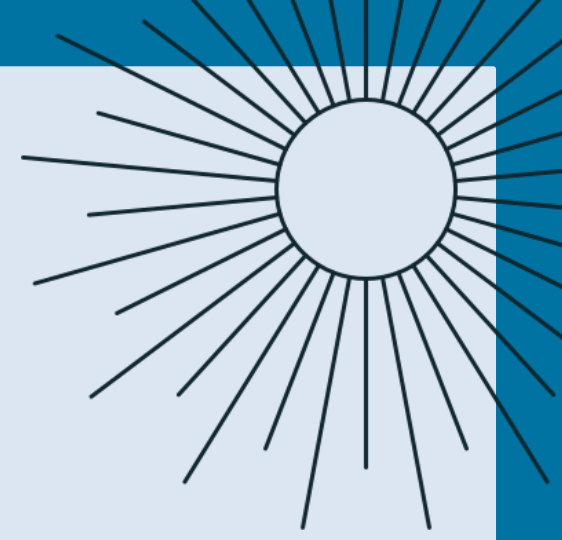
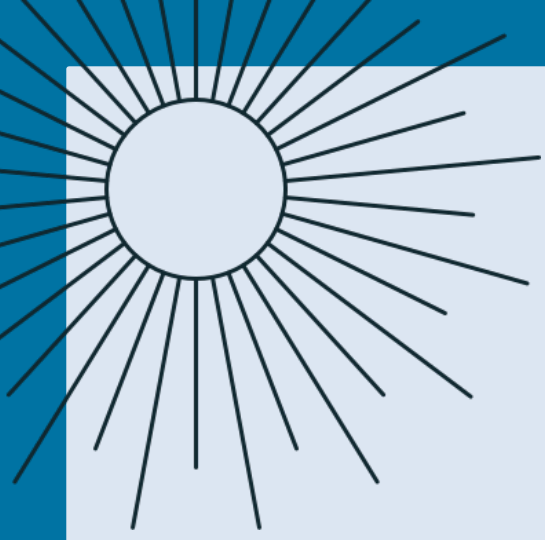
- ★ 4 **Build on outreach-based health programs** such as Faith Community Nurses, community paramedics, the Health Home program and the GRACE program; consider developing a peer-based community health worker model.
- 7 **Leverage the expansion of telehealth services and older adults' increased use of technology** during COVID to continue and enhance telehealth options. Focus on creatively enhancing telehealth for individuals and communities with barriers to access, for example, establishing telehealth portals in rural areas.
- 8 **Assess the incidence of elder abuse in our community** and develop ways to prevent and intervene on this problem.

Policy Strategies:

- ★ 1 **Encourage healthcare organizations to assess and prioritize addressing older adults' behavioral health needs, including psychiatric care.**

Workforce Development Strategies:

- ★ 1 **Assess expected future demand for healthcare providers and caregivers in Whatcom County,** and work with local leaders to develop a plan to address our community's healthcare workforce needs.
- 5 **Facilitate ways for older adults to stay in, or return to, the workforce** by addressing employer ageism and advocating for greater employment flexibility, such as part-time positions or job-sharing.



Questions?

Comments?

What is interesting or surprising?



Blueprint Update Key Learnings

- **Interaction, relationships, and connection** remain the most important for older adults' quality of life.
- **Progress has been made**, but issues are complex.
- **Resources exist** - need for more awareness and/or navigation.
- Less activity around **Cultural Shift** and **Intergenerational Community**.



Key Learnings

Interaction, relationships, and connection

- Intentionally increase informal interactions
- Design services, programs, policies, buildings and physical environment for social interaction

Issues are complex

- Will take many partners, cross-sector collaboration
- Long-term

Existing resources

- More awareness and/or navigation
- Simplify/streamline access

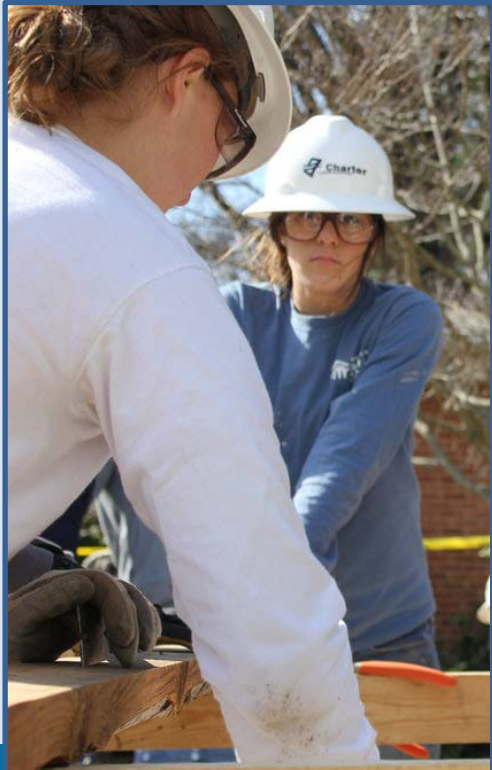
Cultural Shift and Intergenerational Community

- Build leadership & coordination
- Learning communities

The Blueprint gives us a vision & strategies...



What will it take to build it?





Construction is underway



Projects that advance Blueprint strategies were highlighted at the Aging Well Summer meeting.

- Individuals
- Informal groups
- Organizations
- Businesses
- Government
- Philanthropy

<https://www.agingwellwhatcom.org/2022-blueprint-update>



Ways to build

Organizations/businesses/government

- Use the Blueprint as a planning and program development tool
- Expand the focus on older adults in programs and services
- Implement policy and practices that consider and include older adults
- Partner with other organizations to advance a Blueprint strategy
- Ensure that staff, boards, advisory committees, etc. include older adults

Individuals

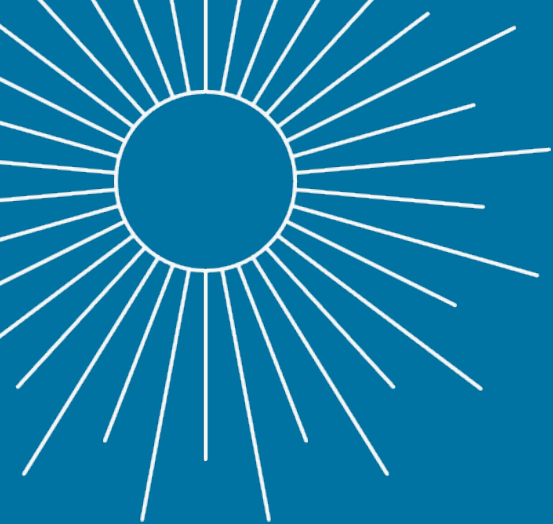
- Reflect on our perceptions of older adults and aging
- Connect more intentionally with people of all ages
- Host a book group with a focus on aging
- Create intergenerational interactions with our families, faith communities, or neighborhood groups



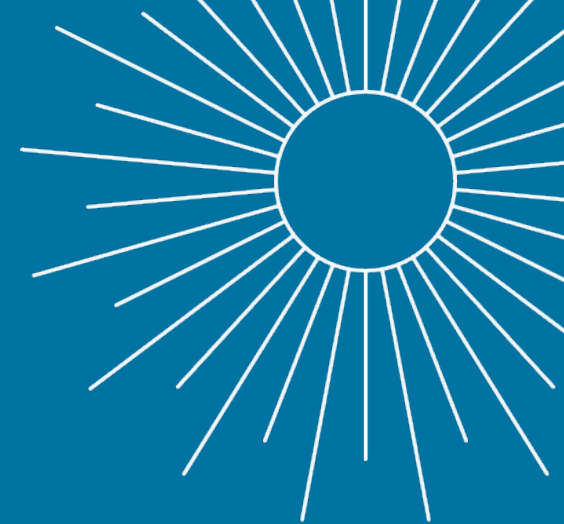
What will it take to build it?



- At a community level, what would help advance the construction?
- What actions are you or your organization inspired to take?



**Thank you
for joining us!**



Keep in touch:

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