



News Release

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Snohomish County

Aaron Reardon
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County Executive Launches Planning Initiative

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon attended a meeting of the Snohomish County Council on Aging to launch a new planning initiative to be called *Snohomish County 2020*. The Council on Aging is a 30-member council which advises the Snohomish County government on matters of policy and implementation affecting older residents. Citing the enormous demographic shift in age and ethnicity coming to Snohomish County, County Executive Reardon presented his vision for “long term living” and what that means for Snohomish County.

Over the next 15 years, County demographers estimate that one in every five people living here will be age 60 or older – almost 200,000 people. Additionally, up to twenty percent of the County’s residents will be ethnically diverse, many of whom will speak English as a second language, if at all.

These changes in the population present opportunities as well as challenges in meeting the needs of County residents. It will require changes in the way the County does business. County Executive Reardon said: “I am asking that each department of County government identify changes it can make *now* to prepare us to serve our citizens over the next two decades.” He added: “Our goals will include making services more accessible for the growing number of people who may not be able to drive. We want to make buildings and services more usable for people with limited mobility; and we will be making critical information available in languages spoken by large numbers of County citizens.”

Snohomish County 2020 will set out the blueprint for a response to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the 21st century, and the promotion of the concept of a community that is friendly for people of all ages, backgrounds, and walks of life. According to Reardon, “I want to be able to look back at 2005, 2006, 2007 and be able to say, ‘When it came to meeting the needs of our County’s elderly, Snohomish County was ahead of the curve.’”