

# Changing Populations

## Changing Populations Issues

**Changing populations:** As our future workforce shrinks and ages, it is important that every citizen has the skills necessary to be productive, valued, and self-reliant, rather than dependent on society. Ethnic diversity will continue to grow and expand from existing clusters that are now mostly associated with areas of food processing jobs and will be an important source of future workforce growth. The region's aging population impacts every area for which we are planning. Housing, transportation, land use, and the current and future workforce will all be affected by the age of our population.

## Changing Populations Goal

**Changing populations:** As the region's population changes, make adjustments to meet the need and seize the opportunities these changes present.

## Recommendation 1

***Public transit:*** Focus on developing low-cost, reasonable access to transit service for communities, specifically to serve the aging population.

### Action Step A

**Map transit system and identify gaps:** Examine current data to map the region's existing and planned public transit system. Identify gaps in the systems and seek opportunities to provide appropriate forms of public transit for the region's existing density pattern and that will support independence and self-reliance to the extent possible.

### Action Step B

**Funding:** Work with county, state and federal transportation organizations to pursue funding for Public Transit and get regional needs on their plans. Consider the ability of some parts of the aging population to contribute toward the cost of these systems as they utilize them

## Recommendation 2

***Housing support services:*** Provide housing support services to the elderly and mentally ill that would allow them the option of remaining as independent as possible under their circumstances.

### Action Step A

**Map services and identify gaps:** Map existing services for elderly and mentally ill individuals throughout the region. Identify any gaps in housing support services for the elderly and mentally ill populations.

### Action Step B

**Collaborate:** Bring together organizations with an interest in these areas to collectively plan how to meet identified support service needs.

### Recommendation 3

***Diverse workforce:*** As our population becomes more diverse and the need for new workers increases, the region must offer services and opportunities to welcome newcomers into our communities and workforce.

#### **Action Step A**

**Identify changes:** Use data to track and identify areas in the region where newcomers are commonly locating.

#### **Action Step B**

**Map services:** Research and map existing and planned services for newcomers in areas where they live and/or tend to be locating.

#### **Action Step C**

**Identify and address service gaps:** Collaborate with local governments, schools, nonprofits, churches, and local businesses to identify and address gaps in services needed to incorporate newcomers into the social and work fabric of the region.

### Recommendation 4

***Older workers:*** As the workforce in the region grows and many older workers need to continue working longer for financial reasons, or for personal satisfaction, the region will need to offer opportunities and services to update the skills of older workers.

#### **Action Step A**

**Identify and address skills gaps:** Work with local and regional businesses to identify the gaps between the existing skills of older workers and the skills they will need to be productive workers in today's world. Support the efforts of local and regional educational organizations and businesses as they work together to address older workers' skill gaps in a way that is effective and timely

#### **Action Step B**

**Funding:** Gain and coordinate local support and advocate with federal elected officials to increase funding levels for effective programs for older workers.