Focus groups were conducted with residents of the four first suburbs communities that piloted the Communities for All Ages checklist during the spring, 2014.

- Raytown  April 22, 2014
- Mission   April 24, 2014
- Prairie Village  April 29, 2014
- Gladstone  April 30, 2014

Overview
Each of the four focus groups had sufficient respondents to allow for a full discussion of the topics. The Gladstone group was much larger which slightly restricted the time for each participant to speak.

The ages of participants had a stronger representation of older adults — as was expected. The groups generally had reasonable representation from younger residents. Mission notably had a healthy mix of participants in their 30s. The results could be supplemented with additional input from younger residents if it is believed the groups skew too old. Ages of the participants are available in the appendix. Supplementing the results could be done with individual interviews on key topics without repeating full focus groups.

The questions posed to the groups broadly followed the policy categories in the “Become a Community for All Ages” checklist document. The purpose was to obtain qualitative responses to these topics in order to provide guidance to the pilot communities as they consider the relative importance of individual policies moving forward. The groups working on these policies will need to apply this qualitative response to the checklist items to judge the merits of requiring their inclusion.

To a significant degree, each of the four groups had similar priorities and concerns about many of the topics. They also reaffirmed the findings from 2013 First Suburbs focus groups that explored some of the same general topics. Variations do exist, though, from community to community on operational definitions and, in some cases, priorities for action.

Among the age group that is in retirement or about to enter retirement, there is strong agreement on many of the barriers to aging in place and being able to thrive in the community as they age. Home maintenance is one of those prominent issues. Younger residents have different concerns about housing and accessibility. The picture is certainly clearer about the needs and wishes of the older adults. The different age groups are more likely to share a viewpoint on issues such as the importance of walkability. Again, supplemental research confined to younger adults could be beneficial, particularly in terms of community attractors and how to engage them in community affairs.

The importance of outdoor space and recreation, and walkability in particular, is an example of an issue that cuts across the ages and the communities. All ages see this as important. While the focus groups did not reveal any issue where the age groups are at odds, some concerns are naturally more important to age segments. Transportation is an example. For older adults it will become critical to have transportation available when they can no longer drive. Many younger participants relish not relying on a car for transportation, but it is a lifestyle choice rather than a survival necessity.
Most of the participants have already made the decision to stay in their communities and feel a strong affinity to the community. The decision to stay is more embedded in the older adults, as one might expect, but a number of younger people can see themselves staying put as well.

The summary of the discussion is organized in the order the questions were posed, which followed the checklist document. Each group was briefed on the coming demographic changes and the degree to which the population will be aging in coming years. However, the groups were asked to think in terms of sustaining communities that will be attractive to all ages, not just to accommodate the coming wave of older adults. The appendix includes a list of sample questions, the record of responses and the agenda for the evening.

Focus Group Results
Topic areas organized around checklist categories

Outdoor spaces
Outdoor space is keenly important to all ages. In fact, they describe the outdoor spaces, primarily the parks, as one place where a broad spectrum of ages can be found. It is the true crossover space. A community’s green space is important. Most people are pleased with the parks in their communities and usually describe them as the best outdoor space. Some people want to see an expansion of the green space in the community, not only in parks, but in trails as well.

Walkability is a prime consideration that cuts across all ages. The components of walkability that are important include sidewalks, streetlights, trails, connectivity, destinations, maintenance, gathering places and resting places.

Sidewalks are important for being safe and fundamental to walkability. Every discussion emphasized this. Prairie Village was the only community where some residents expressed reservations about sidewalks in “quiet” neighborhoods (meaning minimal traffic) where it is easy to walk in the street. Prairie Village residents also raised two other issues related to sidewalks: the feeling that sidewalks directly abutting the street are not as safe or desirable as those with a buffer and that snow removal is a critical issue to make them walkable. While Prairie Village was not the only community where snow removal came up, it was the only one where it was suggested that the city should be responsible for it. That was raised in the context that older adults are not able to maintain the walks. In other communities, it is seen as a problem of enforcing existing codes on keeping walks clean. More than one participant lamented that not cleaning the walk was “unthinkable” among previous generations.

Sidewalk maintenance is a critical component. They must be kept in good repair. Connectivity is important. Sidewalks and trails should connect key infrastructure: schools, parks, commercial districts and community centers. People of all ages want to walk to these key amenities. They want destinations on the routes, not just the ability to walk for the sake of walking. They want amenities along the way: pocket parks, benches and gathering places. They think of the sidewalks and trails as part of the outdoor space and prefer these pedestrian connections link to other outdoor spaces, such as the parks.

Even though it is a commercial district, residents in Mission expressed a hope that the rebuilt Johnson Drive becomes one of those walkable places where people of all ages are gathering and interacting as they visit shops. Gladstone residents talked about their hopes that downtown becomes a destination point for convergence of walking links. Prairie Village participants noted that commercial districts at Corinth and the Village are walkable from many neighborhoods.

In the view of these residents, cities should see pedestrian access as a network connecting key assets around the community. The pedestrian access must be well lighted, well maintained and safe. Gathering points and resting points should be included in the plan. What is along the path is important. Those desires cross age boundaries. Younger participants want a walkable city as much as older people. All ages want children to be able to walk to school safely.

As mentioned, commercial space that is walkable has a strong appeal to all ages. Arriving at a method to make future development pedestrian-friendly has strong appeal.
Several participants in the sessions ride bikes and do not see the cities as particularly bike-friendly. The reasons can vary by city: the lack of bike lanes or paths, the impediments to crossing major road like Shawnee Mission Parkway, bike lanes that dead end or don’t connect to each other were among the complaints.

**Housing**

Many of the older participants are contemplating downsizing or have already made that move. For aging seniors, a universal concern is home maintenance. Those who have downsized cited maintenance as a contributing factor. Others see it as a chief concern for the future. In fact, it is a primary barrier to being able to age in place. While they don’t expect the cities to become involved in home maintenance, they are looking for information that would give them access to vetted home repair and maintenance services. They don’t know where to get the service and they don’t know whom to trust. A clear need exists to fill this gap, which would then keep more people in the homes where they prefer to stay. It is a question of trusted information being available and making the connections as easy as possible.

A related issue with housing is understanding the options for remodeling a house to fit special needs for aging and having the finances to do it. While a few participants had experience making physical changes in the house, most had not and were not familiar with how practical it might be to remodel. Some residents also don’t know what repairs are actually needed in their homes.

Finance is a concern with remodeling, with moving to a new house or apartment and in paying for services, such as home maintenance or home health care, that might be required to age in place. Seniors are wary of making a financial mistake and would like to have a reliable source for trusted information.

Code enforcement is important in many cities. Residents fear losing value in their homes because neighborhood houses are not maintained by newer residents moving in. Clearly, this is neighborhood specific, but robust code enforcement is important.

While a Gladstone resident said that city needed more “mid-range” housing choices as downsizing options, other communities seemed to think a range of housing stock is available. More often, they thought more maintenance-free housing options would be desirable: smaller units with some green space, but maintenance provided.

When asked about different types of housing, different types of living arrangements, such as accessory dwellings or shared living quarters, received mixed reviews from city to city. Some Raytown residents were already sharing space with relatives. A downside to these different arrangements, they said, is the small lot sizes in the communities. Accessory dwellings raised another concern about how it would be used after the relative it was built to house was no longer in residence. Shared space is much more acceptable for relatives than for non-related individuals.

Younger residents are not facing the same housing issues, but their concerns run to outgrowing their current house, being in a school district of acceptable quality and finding apartment options in the city.

**Health**

Universally, people feel they have access to good health care, though there is some concern about transportation and physicians moving offices out of the inner-ring suburbs. Many residents use clinics for convenience.

**Transportation**

Along with housing choices, this is a concern for the aging population. Without the ability to drive, most residents see their lifestyle radically restricted. While solutions differed, people universally see lack of transportation as a problem. Older residents see it as a barrier to aging in place. Younger residents see it as a missing amenity for life in an urban environment.

Without the ability to drive, older residents see themselves as dependent on friends or relatives. They do not believe current transportation options are adequate. The solutions range from light rail to on-demand bus service. Transportation poses a critical stumbling block to aging in place.
Information sources
The lack of uniform use of technology means that no single method of connecting with people offers the solution for getting information out. Younger people are more inclined to use social media or a phone app. Older residents vary in how they receive information, with many of them still preferring printed materials such as brochures and directories.

Participation
People like the idea of smaller meetings to have face-to-face discussions. Older people worried about younger residents not being involved in neighborhood or city issues, but younger participants said their generation likes to be involved. Many people complimented their cities’ efforts to include residents in discussions. Like information services, cities will need to embrace a number of techniques from technology applications to old-fashioned direct invitation.

Community priorities
Participants were asked to give their priorities for community investments: “What is the single most important action the city could take to keep you as a resident?”

The responses often fell into the categories already addressed, emphasizing the importance of transportation, walkability, housing, information and participation. The list did include some new ideas and differs from community to community. The full list of responses organized by city has been included in the appendix and is a pertinent resource for understanding their concerns.

New ideas
Residents were also asked about ideas that had not come up during the discussion. Specifically, they were asked to think about what would be a good selling point to get someone to move to their city — whether that asset currently exists or not. Many of the responses involved ideas to create a sense of community: places to gather and pedestrian access to central locations. They also included retail offerings that featured locally-owned, diverse shopping choices in a dense, walkable area. Safety, good schools, green space and farmers markets were also part of the mix. Again, these ideas vary by community and the full list is contained in the appendix sorted by city.

Conclusion
The themes that ran across the cities and age groups become fairly pronounced in these discussions. Positioned against the items in the checklist, the residents’ comments can provide additional support for decisions about which checklist items might be more relevant. Beyond the checklist, cities can use the information to determine if they are on a planning path to meet the priorities that residents articulated. While subtle differences exist between cities, many residents share common concerns, emphasizing their importance in creating viable communities of the future. Most importantly, residents want to continue to be involved in helping with the challenges their communities face.
Welcome by city officials
- Thank you for participating.
- This is an important issue facing many of our communities.
- Communities need your input to make decisions that affect your future.
- What you say tonight will be used to make decisions into the future.

Overview of Project
- Demographic changes coming.
- Goals for the project.
- Why the project is important to the future of our communities.

Focus Group Discussion
- Questions and exercises.
- Closing questions.

Closing statement from city
- Thanks for participation.
- How to stay involved.
- Re-iterate how information will be used.

Adjourn

Time schedule
- 5:30–6:00 p.m. Registration, individual welcome, food available.
- 6:00–6:0 p.m. 2 Welcome by city.
- 6:03–6:05 p.m. Overview of demographics.
- 6:05–7:25 p.m. Focus Group discussion.
- 7:25–7:30 p.m. Closing statement, survey.
- 7:30 p.m. Adjourn.
KCC/FSC Pilot Community Resident Focus Group
Question Set

6:00 Opening presentation on the importance to the city of hearing your opinions.

6:02 Opening presentation on coming demographic changes.

6:05 Introductions
Let’s go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves.

- Name.
- Where you live.
- Vocation or something about what occupies your time.
- Do you plan to stay in your community for life or foreseeable future? Tell us a little about your answer — what is the attraction or the impediments?

6:20 Openers:
You have heard about what we all are facing in terms of the changing demographics headed our way and how cities here are working to both meet the challenge of that demographic shift, but at the same time make sure they are relevant, attractive and can accommodate the needs of every age group.

- When you heard our opening presentation on the coming demographic changes, what was your first reaction?
- What effect, if any, do you believe the changes will have on you or your family in the years to come?

Together I want us to explore several different components of life in your community. You heard a bit about the project and how the cities are trying to work through the areas that seem most important to address. As we go through these questions, please remember to think of this in terms of a community for all ages. While it is triggered by the demographic change, it is important to focus on keeping communities viable and attractive for every age group as the new demographics are addressed. So, you may need to think of your answers in the context of your family — as well as yourself and where you fit.

6:25 Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Do you use the parks in your city? Why or why not?
- When you go to the park, do you see people of different ages there? Do you need to drive or can you walk or bike there?
- A lot of discussion these days revolves around “walkability.” What do you think makes a city “walkable”? How important is it across the age range for it to be walkable?
- Do any of you walk or ride your bike? Is it easy and safe?
  - If not, what needs to change to make it easier for you to do that?
  - If yes, what makes it easy for you to do that
- How easy is it to walk anywhere you want to go in the city? When you do walk or bike, where are you usually going? What prevents you from walking or biking? How could that be remedied?
- What about other places you go in the city: think of the best outdoor space that is not in a public park? What makes it good? What could improve it?
- What would you include in parks or other outdoor spaces — even commercial space — that would make it more usable for you?
In the commercial parts of the city how easy is it to walk to the store you want to visit?

6:30

**Housing**

We know from our many other studies and from our focus groups last year that most people prefer to age in place — stay where they are living — even as they get older. So, let’s talk about how easy it is to live in the city, no matter what your age.

- What barriers do you see to being able to stay in your house — at any age, not just as you get older?
- Would you consider either having a relative live with you or moving in with a relative?
- Can you see yourself staying in the neighborhood where you live now? What do you like most about it? What would prevent you from staying there?
- What is the one thing the city could do to make it easier for you to stay in your neighborhood — again, regardless of age and circumstance?
- If you were to move, where would you go? What would be most important to you in choosing a new place to live? Where would you get information about your options?
- When you are out shopping, is it easy to find places to take a break? What would improve the experience for someone who has difficulty walking or for someone with small children, or other circumstances?

6:35

**Health**

- Besides going to the doctor, how many of you get any kind of health service (blood pressure, shots, hearing test, etc.) someplace else — like a drugstore or some other community-based spot?
- Where would it be most convenient for you to get them?
- How would you like to receive the information about your options?

6:40

**Transportation**

- If you did not drive, could you get everywhere you want to go in the city? How would you do it?
- What transportation options would you like to see that don’t currently exist?
- If you did not have your car tomorrow, where would you go to get information about your transportation options?
- Besides driving, how else do you get around the city?
- Where are the places you need to get to in town?
- If you could not drive, how would you get your health care needs addressed?
- If you could not drive, how would you get groceries? Where would you get them?

6:45

**Information**

Now we turn to how you get information, where you get it and what kinds of information you want to receive.

- How would you be most likely to access information?
- What are the kinds of information you want to see from the city?

6:50

**Participation and social inclusion**

Let’s talk for a minute about what you do with your time, both now and how that might change in the future.

- Besides tonight, do you think residents are asked to participate in community decisions regularly? How are they asked?
- If you were running the city, how would you get more people of all ages involved in the decision making?
- Besides work, where outside the home do you spend your time? How did you get involved?
- If you wanted to volunteer, find a new hobby, get involved in a group, where would you go to find out about what’s out there for you?
- Do you know any people — neighbors, relatives — who just are not involved or active in anything? What keeps them isolated? What groups in your community look out for people like that?
- What would make it easier for you to get involved with an activity?
• How difficult do you think it is for older adults to find employment? How about younger people — like teenagers or college students? Could the city be of any help as a resource for employment — for all ages?

6:55
The community priorities
I want you to think about the demographic statistics that you heard at our opening and with the benefit of our discussion so far, jot down on the index cards some ideas or features that are the most important for the city to start working on right now.

• What is the single most important action the city could take to keep you as a resident?
• What kinds of investments should the city make to prepare for the future?
• What are the most important categories to be addressed?
• Which are the areas where you think plans are already in place?
• Where do you think the biggest gaps exist?

Now that you have had a moment to think about what that means, please share one item on your list. (Sharing is one person at a time, only one item from the list until the lists are exhausted).

7:10
New ideas
We have covered a lot of ground tonight. Finally, I want you to take a moment to jot down ideas that have not come up tonight. Think about places you have been — maybe on vacation — that you liked or places relatives live. What do those communities have that are attractive to different age groups that we don’t have here?

• If you were asking people to move to your community — all ages — what would be a good selling point that you would like to use?

Again, jot down a few items and then we will share them quickly with the group.

7:20
Closer:
How would you like to be involved as the city keeps working on addressing this challenge? I will hand out a quick questionnaire for you to fill out and leave on the table as you go.

7:25
Thank you
City representative closing — thanking participants for attending and suggesting how they can stay abreast of the project as it continues.

7:30
Adjourn
First Suburbs Coalition / KC Communities for All Ages
Pilot Community Resident Focus Groups
Demographic Summary

Focus groups were conducted in the four first suburbs communities involved in piloting the Communities for All Ages checklist. All focus groups were held in April 2014. Residents were asked to complete a brief demographic survey, including a question asking if they would be willing to participate in future discussion related to communities for all ages.

In total, 66 residents participated in the focus group sessions. 27 participants were male; 39 were female.

The average age of all four groups was 57.8 years old.
- The average age of each of the four resident focus groups were as follows:
  - Gladstone 63.6 years
  - Mission 49.1 years
  - Prairie Village 57.4 years
  - Raytown 59.2 years

The average number of years focus group residents have lived in their community was 23.7 years.
- The average number of years focus group residents have lived in their community — by pilot community city:
  - Gladstone 30.3 years
  - Mission 14.6 years
  - Prairie Village 23.1 years
  - Raytown 26.8 years

Focus group residents were asked to provide one response to the question “Who is primarily responsible for creating age-friendly communities?” Response choices included 1) planning professionals, 2) elected officials, 3) faith communities, 4) business owners/developers, 5) residents and families, and 6) older adults. Responses, ranked in priority order, include:
- Residents and families 18 responses
- Elected officials 7 responses
- Planning professionals 5 responses
- Business owners/developers 3 responses
- Faith community 1 response

The majority of residents selected multiple responses. Items, in descending order, that were most frequently included:
- All of the above 10 responses
- Residents and families 8 responses
- Planning professionals 5 responses
- Elected officials 4 responses (tied)
- Business owners/developers 4 responses (tied)
- Faith community 2 responses (tied)
- Older adults 2 responses (tied)

Most significant is high level of responses to the question “Would you be willing to participate in future discussion related to communities for all ages?” 99 percent of residents who participated in the focus groups answered “yes” and provided their name and contact information. This information was provided to city staff.
When you heard our opening presentation on the coming demographic changes, what was your first reaction?

- Need more senior services availability — especially if they no longer are able to drive.
- More transportation/support services.
- More services for the disabled.
- Need to get more younger people in Gladstone.
- More to attract young people — plus schools need updating.
- Less schooling — if bigger portion of population will be older.
- Where will all the older people live?
- Homeowners Association — as board turns over, how do we get younger people involved in the neighborhood? Would love their involvement.
  - Come to annual meeting, smaller events or board members.
  - Suggest moving annual meeting away from December.

Outdoor Spaces and buildings

Do you use the parks in your city? Why or why not?

- Approximately three-fourths of the groups use parks.

When you go to the park, do you see people of different ages there? Do you need to drive or can you walk or bike there?

- Yes — so it’s at least one place where Gladstone engages all ages.

A lot of discussion these days revolves around ‘walkability.’ What do you think makes a city “walkable”? How important is it across the age range for it to be walkable?

- Streetlights — need more.
- Sidewalks (not enough in Gladstone).
- Sidewalks in good repair.
- Trails (one person lives five minutes from Walmart, but cannot walk across the highway to get there — four lanes).
- If you are designing something walkable, what would you include?
  - Pedestrian bridge.
  - Inter-connect-ability ... continuation ... being able to explore ... also connecting to a destination.
- Gladstone built on a grid pattern... is trying to connect grids to a downtown, invigorating city square (center point). Downtown becomes a destination point for walkability. By Central Park, would like to have diagonals that would link neighborhoods through a center point. Trying to make downtown a walkable destination.
- When walking along M-1 — noise is deafening from traffic (unfriendly).
• Seating is important for a place to rest (group feels there aren’t enough seats/benches).
• Sidewalks need to be cleared of snow.

**Do any of you walk or ride your bike? Is it easy and safe?**
• If not, what needs to change to make it easier for you to do that?
• If yes, what makes it easy for you to do that
  o Several ride bikes – but feel Gladstone is not a good bike-able city. Trails that lead nowhere.

**What about other places you go in the city: think of the best outdoor space that is not in a public park? What makes it good? What could improve it?**
• Rock Park.
• Central Park Play Area.
• Oak Grove.
• Linden Square — gathering spot.
• Trails — Happy Rock to Maple Woods College.
• Bike/Walk trails — not connected to anything.
• Outdoor pool.
• New central park play area

**In the commercial parts of the city, how easy is it to walk to the store you want to visit?**
• Downtown has a community center, city hall and other attributes that are envisioned or under construction.
• Currently downtown does not have a commercial destination, but there are some retail business in plans.
• For younger people to be in the city, streets don’t accommodate enough traffic (Antioch is bogged down). Would this be the same for walking?

**Housing**
We know from our many other studies and from our focus groups last year that most people prefer to age in place — stay where they are living — even as they get older. So, let’s talk about how easy it is to live in the city, no matter what your age.

**What barriers do you see to being able to stay in your house — at any age, not just as you get older?**
• Called the OATS bus (for a doctor’s appointment), but was not eligible (not on Medicaid) — relevant to this question, as if she can’t get to medical appointments she may have to move to a location where she can access these services.
• Most of us are reaching the point where they know someone who has a house that does not accommodate a wheelchair, walker — reaching a point of having an accessible home, ranch.
• A lot of housing in Gladstone, hallways/doors are too narrow for wheelchair, assistive devices.
• One woman had to remodel to accommodate having her mother live with them (physical needs).
• Two bathrooms, but neither are on the first floor. Cost of building out was so expensive; felt they might as well move to another house. Semi-maintenance free.
• Taking care of the yard.
• Maintenance-free or semi-maintenance free. (Hire someone to help take care of yard, etc — but allow them to remain in the home.)
• Would like to downsize — either to a smaller home, or downsize the amount of “things” in their home.
• Lack of “mid-range” affordable homes in Gladstone (to downsize).
• Not only retired people are considering downsizing, but younger people are interested in smaller homes (expense of a home and large yard).
• Maybe consider assistive living — with a series of apartments.
• Young member thinking of leaving Gladstone: schools (has a young son and is interested in good schools — doesn’t think current school is adequate).
• Young person looking for an apartment in Gladstone — couldn’t find one — lives in another suburb, but close to Gladstone (because of lack of apartments).
• Lack of a resource to pay someone to stay with you — or your parents.
• Resources that would be helpful: pool of people to call upon (vetted). City could provide a list of resources.
• Clay County Senior Services and Shepherd’s Center are resources — but there are no nutritional sites (place where people can come to congregate once a day and have a good, nutritional meal and opportunity to visit — and access to other resources that might be present).
• One resource place to provide list of resources.
• Need to accommodate wheelchair, walker. Reaching point where need to reconsider two story houses for more accessible.
• Would like to have maintenance-free options, even semi-maintenance free — need place that can accommodate or move.

*What is the one thing the city could do to make it easier for you to stay in your neighborhood — again, regardless of age and circumstance?*
• Snow removal.
• Schools — good schools for young families.

*When you are out shopping, is it easy to find places to take a break? What would improve the experience for someone who has difficulty walking or for someone with small children, or other circumstances?*

*Horizontal Mixed Use — in close proximity to commercial and other amenities. Thoughts?*
• Likes Zona Rosa, but where do you walk your dog? Not enough open space in horizontal.
• Great if cities can make it work without TIFS.
• Should be market driven.

*Shared?*
• Would have appealed several years ago when parents were living.
• Majority said “no” (lack of privacy).

*Common green space with smaller cottages around green space?*
• Most said yes.
• Issues: covered parking would be essential.
• Does it fit in neighborhoods? Group does not think there is enough land in the city for this. But could have pocket places (in-fill).
• Consideration is given to losing friends and neighbors — so to some extent finds this appealing.
• Someone described a four-plex with individual entrances and small back patio that’s available in St. Joseph — liked that style.
• Some houses need to be redone — could be pocket places for small developments (e.g. infill).
Accessory dwelling?
- No — would change the character of the neighborhood.
- Another would be happy to accommodate this.
- Zoning codes — can’t link separate housing types. Can this be fixed? Gladstone is revising zoning ordinances to allow for a mix of housing in certain areas. Evolution is slow, though.
- One person sees the issue of financial assistance to help a family member — should be able to consider innovative housing options. City should not provide barriers (zoning).
- One indicated she would be happy to give up some of her lot to allow for this option.
- Residential lots in Gladstone too close.
- Gladstone developing revised zoning to permit different structures but evolution slow.
- Side comment, “Sounds like more regulation.”
- Discussion about lack of financial of assistance for families trying to care for people at home.

Health
Besides going to the doctor, how many of you get any kind of health service (blood pressure, shots, hearing test, etc.) someplace else — like a drugstore or some other community-based spot?
- Walgreens/CVS

Transportation
If you did not drive, could you get everyplace you want to go in the city? How would you do it?
- Metro-flex (some question on service area).
- Clay County Senior Services — has limited amount of transportation rides per ride (limited to doctor’s appointments).
- Taxis.

What transportation options would you like to see that don’t currently exist?
- Shuttle to grocery store — door to door.
- Little bus — but are not willing to have taxes raised to have this.
- ITN (volunteer driver service).

Where are the places you need to get to in town?
- Grocery stores.

If you could not drive, how would you get groceries? Where would you get them?
- Shepherd’s Center has a program to help with groceries.

Information
Now we turn to how you get information, where you get it and what kinds of information you want to receive.

How would you be most likely to access information?
- Current difficulty in getting information about city services.
- 50+ directories are available through park district, etc.
- Google, computer, IT.
- 211.
- IT doesn’t help those without computers.
• Gladstone magazine twice a year. Perhaps include a resource page in the magazine that could be torn out and saved.
• Telephone — take the initiative to make calls.
• Police department used to have an office near the mall.
• Call City Hall — they will refer you to the right resource.
• Through city and county officials.
• Parks Department is a resource — I bet they could get the info anyone needs.
• Clay County Senior Services brochure available in community center.

What are the kinds of information you want to see from the city?

Participation and Social Inclusion
Let’s talk for a minute about what you do with your time both now and how that might change in the future.

Besides tonight, do you think residents are asked to participate in community decisions regularly?
How are they asked?
How do you involve young people?
If you were running the city, how would you get more people of all ages involved in the decision-making?
• Need to find a way to describe benefits of being involved in the city.
• Walkability is important for young people — does not want to rely on a car.

The community priorities
I want you to think about the demographic statistics that you heard at our opening and with the benefit of our discussion so far, jot down on the index cards some ideas or features that are the most important for the city to start working on right now?

What is the single most important action the city could take to keep you as a resident?
• More links with buses with covered waiting areas, connect from edges into Linden Square, like a city bus.
• More busses (city) with regular routes.
• Walkability — destination.
• Senior center with noontime meals and meals-on-wheels.
• Crossing for streets — no walk place to cross streets.
• Better schools.
• Community center is great, but for kids too old for babysitters there isn’t much for them (10-15 years old). Programming or things for them to do (e.g. work out).
• Connectivity — sidewalks, trails need to go somewhere.
• Need a list of services available to seniors (printed).
• Housing — older people can’t just go out and get a different kind of house — some kind of help for people to renovate. Vetted references. Grant funding to provide funding. Organization that provides renovation services.
• Development strategy — without using TIF (working with developers).
• Consolidated directory to include city and county for all types of services for all ages.
• Contract with city to work with HyVee.
• A city can’t meet everyone’s needs without raising taxes or charging — may need to tear down some old houses and build new.
• Senior services — have a directory.
• In one person’s neighborhood — lots of young people who are not homeowners so do not have investment in the city.
• Codes enforcement to the “nth” degree — and maybe even make them tighter — to make the city more attractive.
• Person is on city’s capital investment committee — learned a lot about what one can do with the dollars they have — Gladstone is operating on a budget based on 2007 (same as school district) — difference is school district is growing.
• Need a senior center within the new community center — lunch, information booth, socialization areas. 18 percent of population are older adults.
• Continue to promote the city to young people. Beautification of the area — keep properties maintained. Promote excellent city services they currently have (positive city services).
• Get rid of Section 8 housing in Gladstone.
• Keep crime rate low.
• Snow removal — top notch.
• Walkable downtown — destination (like Parkville).
• If you want those things you have to pay for them.
• 911-type statewide situation on older adult services.
• Neighborhood associations use their newsletters more — especially to promote services.
• In-house sewage treatment (contracted to smaller cities surrounding Gladstone).
• Information — spreading information — make it easier for people to know what’s going on.
• Walkability and connect-ability (not disjointed neighborhoods).
• Could the water bill include a resource list?
• Stop and think back 40-50 years ago — how involved were you in your neighborhood when you were younger? Too busy.
• Gladstone needs to do something about the sewer situation — expensive, issues being hooked up with KC.
• Transportation for seniors. Get on a bus to go wherever they need to go.
• Plenty of young people.
• Our job in neighborhood association is to show how coming to neighborhood associations benefits them.
• Younger participant response:
  o If I could walk to work out, community center — didn’t need a car.
  o Didn’t find apartments here with walkability, affordability.
  o Schools — doesn’t like transfer policy.
  o Housing — not great — like my house, though.
• Health care gaps? Get to it? Convenience? Issues that need to be addressed?
  o Mosaic on every corner!
  o CVS and Walmart across from each other!
• Walkability connecting living space to destinations.
• Senior center with noon time meal and meals-on-wheels.
• Safer street crossings — no walk place at some intersections.
• Better schools. Need activities for kids at community center that doesn’t require adult supervisors, especially age 10-15 programming.
• Sidewalks curbs and trails that go somewhere whether retail, services.
• Need a printed list of services available to seniors as they age — our neighborhood has older people asking who do I call for this, that. Would help people, keep city hall from getting calls.
• Housing — some kind of help to help people renovate, reference services. Maybe grant money to make the needed changes.
• Attract private developers to do infill projects that city can’t afford — having a development strategy that doesn’t put the city out on a limb (financially).
• Consolidated directly with city and county resources for seniors and youth. See if groceries will make deliveries.
• Gladstone limited on space and finances. Need more senior services; directory — older people don’t have computers.
• Want codes enforcement to the nth degree and maybe even adjust them tighter to avoid having houses that look like they need to be bulldozed. Make city more attractive. So we don’t look blighted.
• City providing budget based on 2007, true for school district and it’s been growing. I think city needs to build Gladstone Parkway to connect downtown area to connect to US69. If we want these things, we’ll have to pony up.
• Nutrition center that would also be senior center with other activities including ability to get information, resources, socialization areas. Gladstone is 18 percent seniors now.
• Promote city to attract younger people, beautification. Help keep properties maintained. Promote excellent public services, public safety, parks and other positive city services.
  o Agreement that city safety.
• Keep crime rate low, snow removal top notch.
• Agree with more walkable downtown, destinations. Agree if want them have to pay for them just can put on wish list.
• Covered by others — stand out is senior services.
• Have neighborhood associations use their newsletter more.
• Need more year-round activities.
• Information — resources. Push it out. Biggest gap is getting younger people involved — we’ve worked with parents, we’ve worked with kids. Limited success.
• Walkability and connect-ability.
• Cyclic re: involvement of younger adults/families. Do something about sewer situation — increase in bill. Build a sewer station. Young people don’t want to pay double for sewer over water.

What kinds of investments should the city make to prepare for the future?
• Downtown — make areas a destination (signature restaurant, entertainment venue) — essentially develop downtown.
• Make Gladstone’s Town Center attractive to other areas in the region. Connect primary road to 169 Highway to connect Gladstone to region.
• Light rail.
• Sidewalks repaired and filled in — have sidewalks connected.
• Somewhere in Gladstone — build a senior housing development.

*Where do you think the biggest gaps exist?*
• Getting and keeping young people involved.
• Transportation.
• Accommodations for independent living (services/support).
• Increase number of year-round activities.

*New ideas*
We have covered a lot of ground tonight. Finally, I want you to take a moment to jot down ideas that have not come up tonight. Think about places you have been — maybe on vacation — that you liked or places relatives live. What do those communities have that are attractive to different age groups that we don’t have here?

*If you were asking people to move to your community — all ages — what would be a good selling point that you would like to use? What could Gladstone add that would be an attractive place for someone to move to?*
• City hall is accessible, good city services.
• Modern city.
• Proximity to downtown — and 30 minutes to anyplace in metro area.
• Public safety — no sirens at night.
• City staff is forward thinking.
• Citizens need to be willing to pay for upgrades.
• Great city staff and forward thinking elected officials.
• Quiet, safe.
• Need more retail/downtown.
• Tear down blighted buildings.

*Last thoughts:*

*What is not here now?*
• More shopping, in downtown.
• Tear down blighted buildings.

*Sense of community — how do you build community?*
• More shops around amphitheater.
• More coffee shops where you can visit, in addition to going to amphitheater.
• City parks — allow neighborhood/homes association to hold a picnic in one of the parks once a year without paying a fee.
**KCC/FSC Mission Resident Focus Group**  
**April 24, 2014**  
**Responses**

*When you heard our opening presentation on the coming demographic changes, what was your first reaction?*

- Does this include inflow and outflow of residents?
- Thought about transportation — has neighbors that are losing their ability to drive. How will they get to places when they can’t drive and there are few transportation options available in Mission?
- Had a walker for a time, even at the community center — there were difficulties getting around.
- Neighborhood can’t support this demographic change ... Construction style of house. So question would be how do you modify a community of homes like this?
- Notices doctors’ offices (that once were located in Milhaven) are moving to southern Johnson County — and as people age they will need more doctors close by.
- Current house structure — couldn’t get a walker through a door — so remodeled home to accommodate new needs. (universal design features)
- To remodel, people need money — not everyone can afford remodeling.
- If city was on track with new building going on — should be helpful for Mission. (referring to new senior housing)
- Senior housing in Mission is one person’s back up plan.

**Outdoor Spaces and buildings**  
*Do you use the parks in your city? Why or why not?*

- Yes — and don’t need to leave Mission to do so.

*When you go to the park, do you see people of different ages there? Do you need to drive or can you walk or bike there?*

- Mainly young families.
- One park has all ages — walking.
- Some neighborhoods don't have parks to walk to, but a short drive will get them to one of the parks.

*A lot of discussion these days revolves around “walkability.” What do you think makes a city “walkable”? How important is it across the age range for it to be walkable?*

- Sidewalks planned for at least one side of the street — or both sides of the road.
- Access to parks, grocery stores or a service. School, friend's house.
- People are using it for function — and cars need to be aware of walkers.
- Importance? Huge. Especially in winter time when sidewalks are not shoveled — hard for people who have to walk.
- Some people have a four-wheel chair — they have to have sidewalks that are clear (of snow, leaves, etc.)
- Parts of Mission have no sidewalks — so are walking in the street all the way to their destination.

*Do any of you walk or ride your bike? Is it easy and safe? If not, what needs to change to make it easier for you to do that? If yes, what makes it easy for you to do that?*

- Biker — most of what he does is on or near Johnson Drive/Martway (along bike trail). Difficulty as they closed an access cross point across Shawnee Mission Parkway.
What would you include in parks or other outdoor spaces — even commercial space — that would make it more usable for you?

- Have Deffenbaugh — put containers behind sidewalk.
- State mandates the city clean the streets (snow) — then is pushed on sidewalks and is hard to clear. Challenge for kids going to school.
- Moved from Dubuque, Iowa, which was very walkable. Sidewalks are prevalent — some of the more travelled areas there have sidewalks, park benches, trash cans, water for pets — encouraged people to walk — and enjoy the walk. Not just the path, but what’s along it.
- Townhome just started to put in benches in and around the area. Encourages conversation with neighbors — “neighborliness.”
- KC in general is car-centric — plenty of parking. Mission could be more focused on walkability and biking. Less focus on cars.
- At the park by their house, has a station with dog bags.

In the commercial parts of the city, how easy is it to walk to the store you want to visit?

- Want Johnson Drive to be a nice pedestrian area — can see it having families getting ice cream, etc. so will need to be walkable.
- Likes the trail — that can provide access to commercial — and connected to a destination (one end of Mission to another).
- Would like to see a shopping center — so don’t have to go so far. Inside mall would be helpful.
- Cycling — imposition when they shut down the median access from Milhaven across Shawnee Mission Parkway.

Housing

We know from our many other studies and from our focus groups last year that most people prefer to age in place — stay where they are living — even as they get older. So, let’s talk about how easy it is to live in the city, no matter what your age.

Would you consider either having a relative live with you or moving in with a relative?

- Group generally sees this as a viable option. Would not have a problem if this was in their neighborhood — but more supportive if residents were related.

Accessory dwelling?

- Used to have in Mission — but no longer legal. Generally supportive, but concerned that yards are too small. If parents are on same lot — allows them independence.
- Universal design (UD) — depends on the modifications that were done — might be a put-off for younger people.
- UD — would make things better for all ages.
- UD — concerned about a big ramp in front, but interior elements, no problem.
- Third Street Cottages — if maintenance were required would be in favor of the concept. Great as a theory when it starts — but will it work?

What is the one thing the city could do to make it easier for you to stay in your neighborhood — again, regardless of age and circumstance?

- Some type of services that older adults could take advantage of — pay for (housework, yard, remodeling). Knowing who to go to that is reputable. City providing some type of list of companies willing to work at a reduced rate (affordability) — some type of vetting list (good references) — or volunteers.
• Village concept (nonprofit, become a member).
• Modification and affordable maintenance are equally important.
• Knows her house needs work, but doesn’t know what. Would be helpful to have a resource to go to for guidance. This would be helpful for all ages, and both sexes.

Health

Besides going to the doctor, how many of you get any kind of health service (blood pressure, shots, hearing test, etc.) someplace else – like a drugstore or some other community-based spot?

• No problem getting flu shots at a drug store.

Where would it be most convenient for you to get them?

• Drugstore for immunizations, flu shots, etc. Convenient.
• Used to go to Hy-Vee where there used to be a clinic — but it’s closed.

Transportation

If you did not drive, could you get everywhere you want to go in the city? How would you do it?

• No! Transportation is huge problem.
• Cabs not that easy.
• With small children, would not use public transportation.

What transportation options would you like to see that don’t currently exist?

• Need some kind of door-to-door service for older adults to keep independence as long as possible.
• Delivery from places like Hy-Vee would be helpful.

Information

Now we turn to how you get information, where you get it and what kinds of information you want to receive.

How would you be most likely to access information?

• City has a neighborhood services department that has a wealth of information — access by phone or email. Residents go to them.
• Occasional emails from city.
• Mission magazine.

What are the kinds of information you want to see from the city?

• On-line — Mission website.
• Social media.
• Neighborhood associations have newsletter — including an exchange of recommended contractors (arranged by neighborhoods).
• City, or whatever agency does this, is important. One doesn’t know what they don’t know — so pushing the information out is important.
• Needs to be in different formats.
• Word of mouth at coffee shop, community center, walking trails, etc.

Participation and Social Inclusion

Let’s talk for a minute about what you do with your time both now and how that might change in the future.
Besides tonight, do you think residents are asked to participate in community decisions regularly? How are they asked?

If you were running the city, how would you get more people of all ages involved in the decision-making?

- Having people who come to events/meetings — talk personally to their neighbors about getting involved.
- Face to face conversations.
- Appreciates how Mission convened groups — allowed citizen engagement and input.
- Facebook message.
- Young people want to be involved.
- Council people should be charged with getting input from their neighborhood residents.
- Look for natural gathering places and engage people through that means.

The community priorities
I want you to think about the demographic statistics that you heard at our opening and with the benefit of our discussion so far, jot down on the index cards some ideas or features that are the most important for the city to start working on right now.

What is the single most important action the city could take to keep you as a resident?

- Transportation
  - Better public transportation — options.
  - Transportation — shuttle bus within city with key stops — nominal fee.
  - Flexible bus service — ability to call in and request ride.
  - Walk down to bus terminal and take him to Westport.
  - Transportation — thinking of connectivity and local services.
    - Bus idea (intra-city) is great idea.
- Finish Johnson Drive.
- Finish Eastgate.
- Codes/compliance.
  - Would like to see neighborhoods looked at for codes (keeping properties up).
  - Compliance issues with neighbors.
  - Compliance issues.
- Police Department — looked at not as a revenue resource, but as community outreach (serve public good).
- City activities, festivals, events for all ages.
- Safety — feels safe, but it’s very important. If this were to change — would influence their leaving.
- City reaching out to residents, keeping people involved (like tonight’s meeting).
- Community location and proximity to lifestyle.
- City — make better choices for businesses to bring to Mission (lots of fast food — more options)
  - Type and density.
- Long-range planning — how do we create lawns that don’t have to be mowed — different types of landscape — and how to make this OK with neighbors (sustainable issues — city sponsored solar panels — how to make this a part of our lives and have it be OK with neighbors).
- Get kids engaged early on in schools — what do children want?
  - The reason one person likes Mission — best of both worlds. Not so far south (strip malls) — but also not downtown. More middle ground. Think about this when Mission engages in
long-range planning. Variety of restaurants and other venues — so we don’t have to go to
the Plaza or Prairie Village. Get all things one would want in Mission.
  o Zoning — live in 90-year-old house. Coming up to zoning, codes — older homes this is a
challenge. “Sensible codes.” Mission may inadvertently make things difficult.
  o Natural place where people gather and hang out — get to know each other. Farmers
Market. Shops.
  o Mission could do more to promote its location to the larger metro region.
  o Need a department store.

What kinds of investments should the city make to prepare for the future?
  • Provide tax breaks for businesses.
  • Enhance stores on Johnson Drive.

New ideas
We have covered a lot of ground tonight. Finally, I want you to take a moment to jot down ideas that have
not come up tonight. Think about places you have been — maybe on vacation — that you liked or places
relatives live. What do those communities have that are attractive to different age groups that we don’t
have here?

If you were asking people to move to your community — all ages — what would be a good selling
point that you would like to use? What could Mission add that would be an attractive place for
someone to move to?
  • Being a community — know your neighbors.
  • Pedestrian- and bike-friendly.
  • Front porch-friendly — more a community.
  • Now: we have diversity.
  • Would like to see more green space.
  • Farmers Market and a Community Garden.
  • Walkable, diverse retail and services.
  • Vitality of downtown — lots of activity and things going on.
  • Location and nice people.
  • Diverse retail along Johnson Drive (vet to tattoo to camera repair).
  • Destination type of places — where you can walk from one end of Johnson Drive to another. Being
able to “hang out” all day if you’d like.
  • Artistic venues and opportunities.
  • Zona Rosa type area — density, mixed use. Expand into more residential areas as people age.
  • Light rail (similar to Minneapolis) Tram/trolley on rails. Outside of city, park in parking garage,
hop on light rail and go into the city. Bring people in that way. Run rail system through residential
areas, too.
  • Variety of business. Nice department store.
  • Have a lot to offer through parks, community center.
  • Appreciate the neighborhood.
  • Reasonable prices for most services.
  • Wish there was a middle price range for senior living.
  • Location, location, location.
  • Benches along business areas — encourage business, but also conversation and ideas. Walkability.
  • Green space (mostly concern of younger people).
Last thoughts

- While neighborhood services exist, many in this group didn't know about it. The city might consider ways to communicate its existence in new ways.
When you heard our opening presentation on the coming demographic changes, what was your first reaction?

- Different needs, but what are the commonalities? Find the middle ground that will work for everyone. Any policy change will incorporate as many age groups as possible.
- Interested in the commonalities between boomers and millennials. Challenges will be programs that accommodate both bubbles. Maybe policy area is less about responding to baby boom bubble, but commonalities between boomers and millennials. Millennials tend to be more communitarian. Look at this as an opportunity.
- As a millennial (participant), most of her friends have a desire to feel connected to neighbors and friends — connectedness. Many don’t live near families, so connectedness to community is important.
- As boomers come into retirement, they are developing more of a sense of community. Have freedom to give back and do more of what they want. How would this differ from millennials' perspective of sense of community? Things become more important to a boomer would be community areas, like Corinth or PV shops, restaurants, movie theater.

Outdoor Spaces and buildings

Do you use the parks in your city? Why or why not?

- Most hands went up when asked how many use parks. Most see people across the age-span at parks.

A lot of discussion these days revolves around “walkability.” What do you think makes a city “walkable”? How important is it across the age range for it to be walkable?

- Sounds like something with a nice sound, but not very practical. If someone has come from a walkable community, PV isn't all that walkable.

Do any of you walk or ride your bike? Is it easy and safe? If not, what needs to change to make it easier for you to do that? If yes, what makes it easy for you to do that?

- PV is not a bike-friendly city. (Generally all agree.)
- Contention between bikers and motorists.
- Is being bike-friendly important for all ages? Biking and walking are intertwined.
- Sidewalks are important. Prairie Hills had a culture of walking — to destination, e.g., grocery store. People with dogs walk all the time.
- Thinks PV is very walkable — lives on south side of town. Everybody walks there for exercise (Ranchmart). Sidewalks are on main thoroughfare — but not on side streets /quiet streets.
- To be walkable, traffic level is important distinction on what is a walkable neighborhood.
- Reinhardt — not an example of a walkable community — may be good for walking (stroll) — but not to a destination. Not an easily navigable trip in any direction. Now living in Homestead Drive — very walkable to destinations.
- Issue of walkability is a little deceptive — what a city may have to achieve to be walkable is daunting for a city. For example, Mission and Shawnee Mission Parkway — daunting to cross either by foot or bike. How cities manage walk lights, etc. to make walking safer.
Now that she’s retired, notices that many people are out walking — either just to walk or to destination. Sidewalk is right by the road, and isn’t comfortable walking there. Is more comfortable walking in daughter’s neighborhood without sidewalks as it’s quieter and she feels safer. Cars are more respectful of pedestrians.

Not sure we are acclimated to walking to grocery stores, etc. — more conditioned to hop in the car and drive to a destination.

Walkability is important for all ages. For cities looking at policies — what are the pieces that need to be a part of policy? Need to think of parents with young children (so sidewalks are important) — How accessible are parks for children/parents to walk to? Pathways — connectivity is important. Accessibility to sidewalks is important. Walkability for health, shopping, pleasure — for many reasons.

If a community is going to commit to being walkable, then they need to commit to the maintenance of sidewalks. (Ticketing homeowners if they don’t shovel snow from their sidewalks). Don’t throw maintenance on homeowners. How do cities properly maintain and commit to sidewalks, bike paths, etc.

For aging people, strenuous to clear snow from sidewalk.

What would you include in parks or other outdoor spaces — even commercial space — that would make it more usable for you?

- Seating areas — should be a priority.
- Thinks PV should have more parks — not enough green space. Most teams don’t have enough fields to practice on — have to drive a long ways to a field.
- Again, an all age consideration.
- Parks should also have play areas for children.

Housing

We know from our many other studies and from our focus groups last year that most people prefer to age in place — stay where they are living — even as they get older. So, let’s talk about how easy it is to live in the city, no matter what your age.

What barriers do you see to being able to stay in your house — at any age, not just as you get older?

- Easy to age in place when healthy — but PV falls short for those who need remodeling, etc. Her next step will not be in a senior living facility, but in a maintenance-free community. PV needs more maintenance-free housing options.
- One has a small house, but a huge yard. But would like to move her house into a maintenance-free area.
- PV has housing stock that is perfect for people who want to age in place.
- Cities create incentives to build in services to support people aging in place.
- If a homeowner could have a supply of businesses that could come in and maintain the yard, inside of house, shoveling, gutters, etc.
- One person knows of a current business for a monthly fee that provides this service.
- Downsizing was to a smaller house in PV — thinking they could manage a smaller home, yard, etc. Says one can hire yard maintenance.
- Importance of finding ONE service that provides all these services.

What is the one thing the city could do to make it easier for you to stay in your neighborhood — again, regardless of age and circumstance?
• Thinks there’s a gap between small and large homes — gap between value of housing — need more “mid-size” homes.
• More accessibility inside the home — remodeling to accommodate evolving health needs.
• City needs to take care of snow/sidewalks. Better lighting — outdoor. All the things we pay taxes for that the county does not provide.
• What works for Gladstone, Phoenix does not work for PV. PV is unique and need to look at this from a neighborhood to neighborhood thing.
• PV has the resources — boomers are highly educated. Millennials are more diverse.

_Courtyard Housing_?
• Have some in Corinth area.
• Fairly open to this — but is concerned there might be push-back.

_Shared Housing_?
• Thinks PV has a lot of housing variety and keeps people from moving.
• Predominantly response is no.

_In general, housing options for people of all ages — if you were putting this on a priority issue for the city — where would you put this?_
• May be an issue of planning, coding — adapting reuse of some of these kinds of housing. If you are going to be accommodating of older people’s being able to stay at home — coding issues might need to adapt. Opportunity for city to embrace the fact there is a fairly rich housing stock that will need to adapt to evolving needs.

_Health_
_Besides going to the doctor, how many of you get any kind of health service (blood pressure, shots, hearing test, etc.) someplace else — like a drugstore or some other community-based spot?_
• Some go to urgent care, pharmacy.
• Some go only to doctor — generally close to their home.
• Medical options are close — points out PV has cities all around them and can get to services outside PV relatively easy.

_Transportation_
_If you did not drive, could you get everyplace you want to go in the city? How would you do it?_
• Big issue — would not have access to most services.
• Johnson County has some public transportation and para-transit for older adults.

_What transportation options would you like to see that don’t currently exist?_
• Driverless cars.
• Rail services — extended west and east.
  o Some examples of other cities where aging population moves close to rail service.
  o Pointed out public transportation in Chicago would allow older adults mobility for a long time. First ring suburbs — this will be an issue.
• Need to bump up public transportation.
• Corner-to-corner transportation.
• Millennials — want more public transportation — closer to accessible bus services and light rail should it ever be there. Ample transportation services.
Where does transportation stack up as a priority?
• Critical – probably the #1 issue for older adults.

Participation and Social Inclusion
Let’s talk for a minute about what you do with your time both now and how that might change in the future.

If you were running the city, how would you get more people of all ages involved in the decision-making?
• Use technology somehow — social media, group text to the whole city.
• PV Post is a good example of getting the word out to all citizens.
• Town Hall meetings in different areas of the city at different times. (Ward meetings — people liked this idea.)
• Millennials — generally like face to face — getting off FB, going back to talking to people.
• Innovative solutions — come up with specifications. If we get too much — it gets too confusing.
  (electronic voting) — Ask people to decide through electronic voting.
• Invite people to come together to help make decisions — Ward meetings very popular idea.

The community priorities
I want you to think about the demographic statistics that you heard at our opening and with the benefit of our discussion so far, jot down on the index cards some ideas or features that are the most important for the city to start working on right now.

What is the single most important action the city could take to keep you as a resident?
• Housing — first thing to fix. Obsolete home — what do you do with an aging housing stock from the city’s point of view? Can’t be all to everyone — pick one or two areas.
• Transportation — fully integrated Transportation — connect within PV and to KC metro. First step is busses — cost effective, more attainable.
• Transportation — no desire for rail, but busses can easily make changes (route to route). Convenient and affordable. Define convenient: busses running every 30 minutes — mini-buses, don’t need big busses. Half mile radius.
• Walkability/bikeability — Walkable is better than bike-able (meaning better conditions in PV for walking).
• Destinations — parks, services, businesses. Vibrant community that has more than housing stock, but a variety of services.
• In northeast Johnson County — where we have easy access to services (unlike Denver) — can get to any grocery store within five minutes.
• Affordable patio homes.
• Density/infill. Houses on smaller lots.

What kinds of investments should the city make to prepare for the future?
• City to provide the service for sidewalk shoveling. Points out 75th Street when it snows and it’s hard for the SME students to walk.
• As people age, some have less money. Programs that have grants to help people with home repair, etc. Infrastructure — continually needs to be upgraded and maintained. Streets, roads, sidewalks “bones” of the city — park improvements. Moving as needs change (parks, bike lanes).
• Significant challenges around codes, master planning — need to look towards planning guidelines, codes — that allow for more density. Consider going from 90 to 120 foot frontages to a lesser —
but need to grant more density and diversity. But need to plan for this — and commit to this. Look at how to evolve neighborhoods to look distinctively different — but better. Stuck in the "tear down build new."

- Not enough green space in PV. Specific parks and open green space available for all ages.
- Preserve what PV has — as PV is a locked-in community.

**What are the most important categories to be addressed?**
- Transportation.
- Housing.
- Mobility/Walkability.

**Where do you think the biggest gaps exist?**
- Rapid bus transit.
- Transportation services.
- Regional transportation.
- Curb-to-Curb through Johnson County Transit (80% of funding goes to this).
- Specific funding from Fed/State to support curb-to-curb services.

**New ideas**
We have covered a lot of ground tonight. Finally, I want you to take a moment to jot down ideas that have not come up tonight. Think about places you have been — maybe on vacation — that you liked or places relatives live. What do those communities have that are attractive to different age groups that we don’t have here?

**If you were asking people to move to your community — all ages — what would be a good selling point that you would like to use? What could Raytown add that would be an attractive place for someone to move to?**
- You would probably be talking to a peer. Convenience of getting to most everyone in a short period of time. Doesn’t have to drive a half hour to anywhere. Makes life more simple.
- Livable city — family oriented.
- Very safe community.
- Neighbors watch out for neighbors.
- Negative: Schools closing down and class sizes are increasing. Good education used to be more of a priority. Must attract young families. So what is the biggest attraction for young families? Affordable housing and affordable lifestyle.

**Last thoughts:**
- Everything that was mentioned pertains to all ages.
When you heard our opening presentation on the coming demographic changes, what was your first reaction?

- Wasn’t surprised — well aware of aging boomers.
- Would have thought the numbers would decrease sooner than what is predicted. Would reach a leveling out sooner than is predicted.

What effect, if any, do you believe the changes will have on you or your family in the years to come?

- Economic impact. People on fixed income … not adding to their income or investments, but drawing from these assets. Tax base on Raytown could decline at some point in the future if a large percentage of older adults are economically strapped.
- Adult children and grandkids may move in — or older adults may be supporting younger generations.
- Feels bad that some older adults will be negatively economically affected as they should enjoy their older years.
- First instinct is more of our community may have more intergenerational families living together.
- One participant indicated a former neighbor took responsibility/helped him and his family when they were starting to have trouble with home maintenance. Misses this neighbor. Thinks more people should help their neighbors.

Outdoor Spaces and buildings

Do you use the parks in your city? Why or why not?

- Yes, as gathering spaces.
- Walking (but only during the day).
- Raytown has really nice parks.

When you go to the park, do you see people of different ages there? Do you need to drive or can you walk or bike there?

- Some parks are within walking distance – another is a long way away.

A lot of discussion these days revolves around “walkability.” What do you think makes a city “walkable”? How important is it across the age range for it to be walkable?

- Accessible to places.
- Sidewalks.
- Safety.
- Places to go to. If you live closer in, more walkable. But if in outlying areas, nothing is within walking distance.
- Applies to commercial places as well as parks, etc.
- Portland — pocket parks. Raytown has one pocket park. Would like to see more.
- Benches — having a place to rest.
- Bike trails.
How easy is it to walk anywhere you want to go in the city? When you do walk or bike, where are you usually going? What prevents you from walking or biking? How could that be remedied?

- In hindsight, when they bought their house, they would have placed a higher priority on sidewalks and walkability features.

What about other places you go in the city: think of the best outdoor space that is not in a public park? What makes it good? What could improve it?

- Parks (Kenagy Park). Walkability, tennis courts, softball fields.

What would you include in parks or other outdoor spaces – even commercial space – that would make it more usable for you?

- Benches.
- Raytown needs lots more sidewalks, drainage. Good for all ages.
- Need transportation to access outdoor spaces.
- Dog park.
- More sidewalks.

In the commercial parts of the city how easy is it to walk to the store you want to visit?

- All residents indicated when they are no longer able to drive, they will have a hard time getting to places.

Housing

We know from our many other studies and from our focus groups last year that most people prefer to age in place — stay where they are living — even as they get older. So, let’s talk about how easy it is to live in the city, no matter what your age.

What barriers do you see to being able to stay in your house — at any age, not just as you get older?

- Lack of transportation to access services, entertainment.
- Decrease in home value.
- Used to have neighbors who respected their homes, and home value. Now, a different group of people coming in and they seem to not care about keeping home values up – in turn, they are lowering her home value.
- Young families — what are their barriers? House is like any other investment, value may drop for a while — but important to hang on. His concern was when they moved in every house was owner occupied in the neighborhood, now only 50 percent.
- Maintenance to keeping up the house.
- Steps — safety.

Would you consider either having a relative live with you or moving in with a relative?

- One resident said his sister is moving in with them in the next couple months.
- Another resident has a friend living with her.
- House sharing seemed to be OK with this group.

Would you like:

Shared?

- No problem with having this in their neighborhoods.
- Depends on value of home.
• The group has a hard time answering this question definitively. They had lots of questions on how many would live in the house. Needed more detail on who all would be living there.

**Accessory Dwelling?**
• Liked this concept — but city codes would have to change. (If support family members — that’s one thing. But if one sells the house, how would it be used?)
• Third Street Houses: (common area) — looks nice. Sees themselves living there. Especially if maintenance free.
• In general, this group seemed fairly open to considering non-traditional housing options.

**What is the one thing the city could do to make it easier for you to stay in your neighborhood – again regardless of age and circumstance?**
• Community Center – isn’t anything for seniors to go to. When they lost the YM, they lost the ability to sit and talk with others (social interaction.)
• Enforce codes, ordinances.

**Horizontal Mixed Use — in close proximity to commercial and other amenities. Thoughts?**
• Excellent Idea — gives people destinations, drug/grocery stores close by. No parking lots to deal with.

**Vertical Mixed Use — also like this style.**
• Hard time for a vertical housing unit (multi housing) in Raytown (one person).
• Most liked the concept — especially with green space and walkability.

One person described his mother’s situation in Wyoming – did a reverse mortgage – and wiped her savings when she needed assisted living.

**Health**

*Besides going to the doctor, how many of you get any kind of health service (blood pressure, shots, hearing test, etc.) someplace else — like a drugstore or some other community-based spot?*
• Drug store — convenience (decentralized health is more convenient – for certain things, eg. Shots)
• Health clinics — are scarce in Raytown.
• Nice emergency care clinics in Lee’s Summit — nice to have in Raytown.

**Where would it be most convenient for you to get them?**
• Transportation, e.g., a van to pick up and take to a clinic (and return to home).
• If one can't drive in Raytown, very difficult to get to a health clinic (or anything else for that matter).

**Transportation**

*If you did not drive, could you get everyplace you want to go in the city? How would you do it?*
• No, transportation, particularly lack of public transportation a major issue.

**What transportation options would you like to see that don’t currently exist?**
• Very car-centric — but is a barrier for low income who cannot afford cars, maintenance and gas
• Decent public transportation system is critical.
Information
Now we turn to how you get information, where you get it and what kinds of information you want to receive.

How would you be most likely to access information?
• Currently their website is a significant form.
• But many residents want to see a brochure or hold an informational piece in their hands.

What are the kinds of information you want to see from the city?
• Telephone messages.
• Develop an app for people’s phones on Raytown opportunities and news.

Participation and Social Inclusion
Let’s talk for a minute about what you do with your time both now and how that might change in the future.

Besides tonight, do you think residents are asked to participate in community decisions regularly? How are they asked?
• Lots of opportunities in Raytown.

If you were running the city, how would you get more people of all ages involved in the decision-making?
• Open invitation exists to participate on the council and participate on community input groups.
• Young people — seem to have a lack of concern about getting involved in the city.

The community priorities
I want you to think about the demographic statistics that you heard at our opening and with the benefit of our discussion so far, jot down on the index cards some ideas or features that are the most important for the city to start working on right now?

What is the single most important action the city could take to keep you as a resident?
• City/neighborhood needs to find ways for neighborhoods to interact with each other (all ages).
• Need to start something in the schools to develop civic pride — starting from a young age (e.g., although not an athlete, he always attended sports events).

What kinds of investments should the city make to prepare for the future?
• Neighborhood development.
• Community Outreach.
• Non-smoking ordinances (Raytown has open smoking law)
• Neighborhood Associations.
• City purchase or build a building for a community center.
• Walkable areas, benches.
• Code enforcement.

What are the most important categories to be addressed?
• Safe neighborhoods
Which are the areas where you think plans are already in place?
- Good schools. Never had a problem with passing bond issues.
  - Use the school system as a focal point to develop civic pride.

Where do you think the biggest gaps exist?
- Civic Pride.
- Create more organized activities (especially for teenagers — but a variety of activities would be a benefit to all ages).
- Affordable housing.
- More homes built with universal design standards (work for any age).
- Recreation center for all ages.
- Senior center — lots of different activities where older adults (seniors and mature adults) can interact with one another.
- One place where community members may gather — either formally or informally — to talk about and solve community problems. City-wide neighborhood association.
- Transportation — critical gap.
- More attractive buildings in the city.
- New retail — mixed use (restaurants, beauty shops).

New ideas
We have covered a lot of ground tonight. Finally, I want you to take a moment to jot down ideas that have not come up tonight. Think about places you have been – maybe on vacation – that you liked or places relatives live. What do those communities have that are attractive to different age groups that we don’t have here?

If you were asking people to move to your community — all ages — what would be a good selling point that you would like to use? What could Raytown add that would be an attractive place for someone to move to?
- Gave Portland as an example — fabulous city, people care, open-hearted. Would like to have Raytown become more of a caring community. Open hearts to others — and more welcoming.
- Safety — all around. Crime, neighborhoods.
- Unique retail and restaurants (not all chains, but a variety).
- Smaller neighborhood grocery stores (locally owned).
- Outlet mall (including eating establishments) — walkable.
- More shopping.
- A place for single (widowed, divorce) people to congregate.

Last thoughts
- First Suburbs really have a challenge — how to transition into a city with city amenities when they were started as a suburb (and all that implies).