

# Older Adults in Whatcom County

Public Works and Health Committee, Whatcom County Council  
**August 6, 2024**

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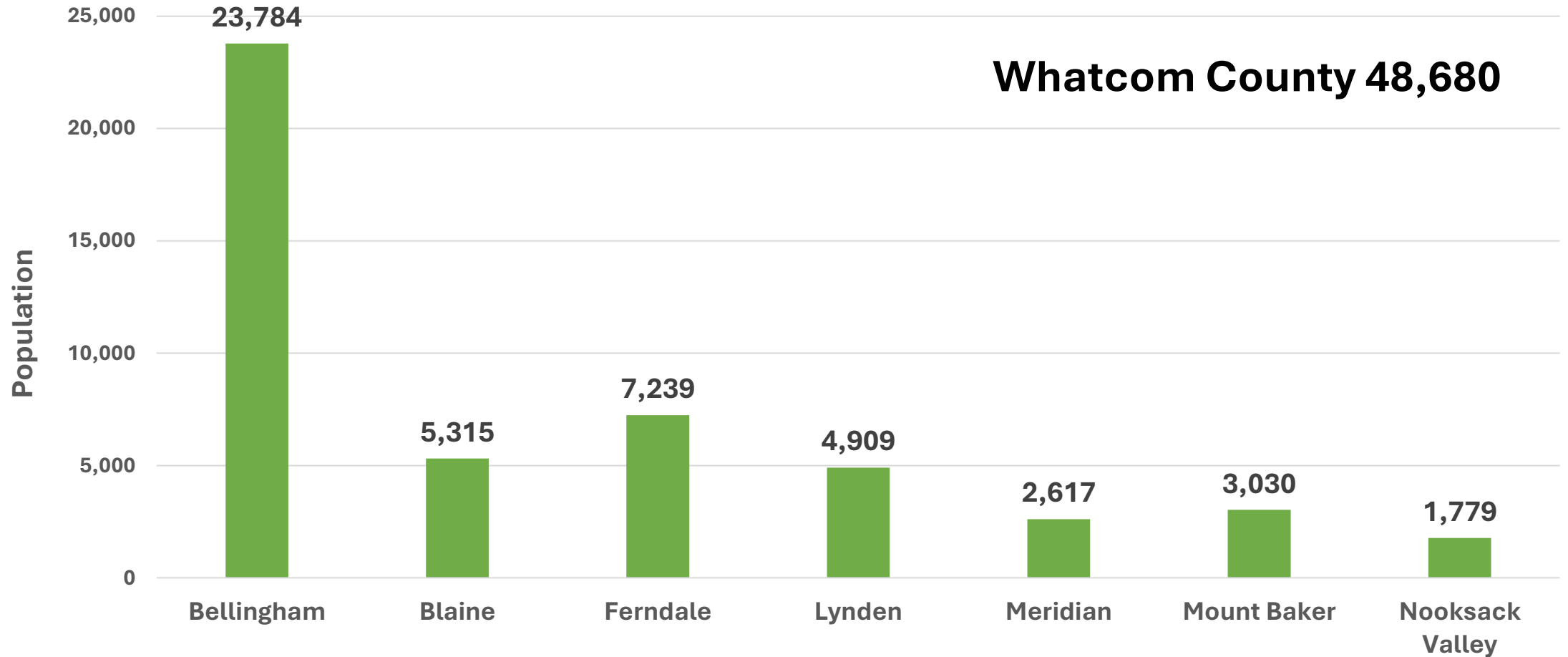
# Today

- Who Are Whatcom County's Older Adults?
- Aging Well Whatcom Blueprint
- Key Issues
- Opportunities
- Q & A, Discussion



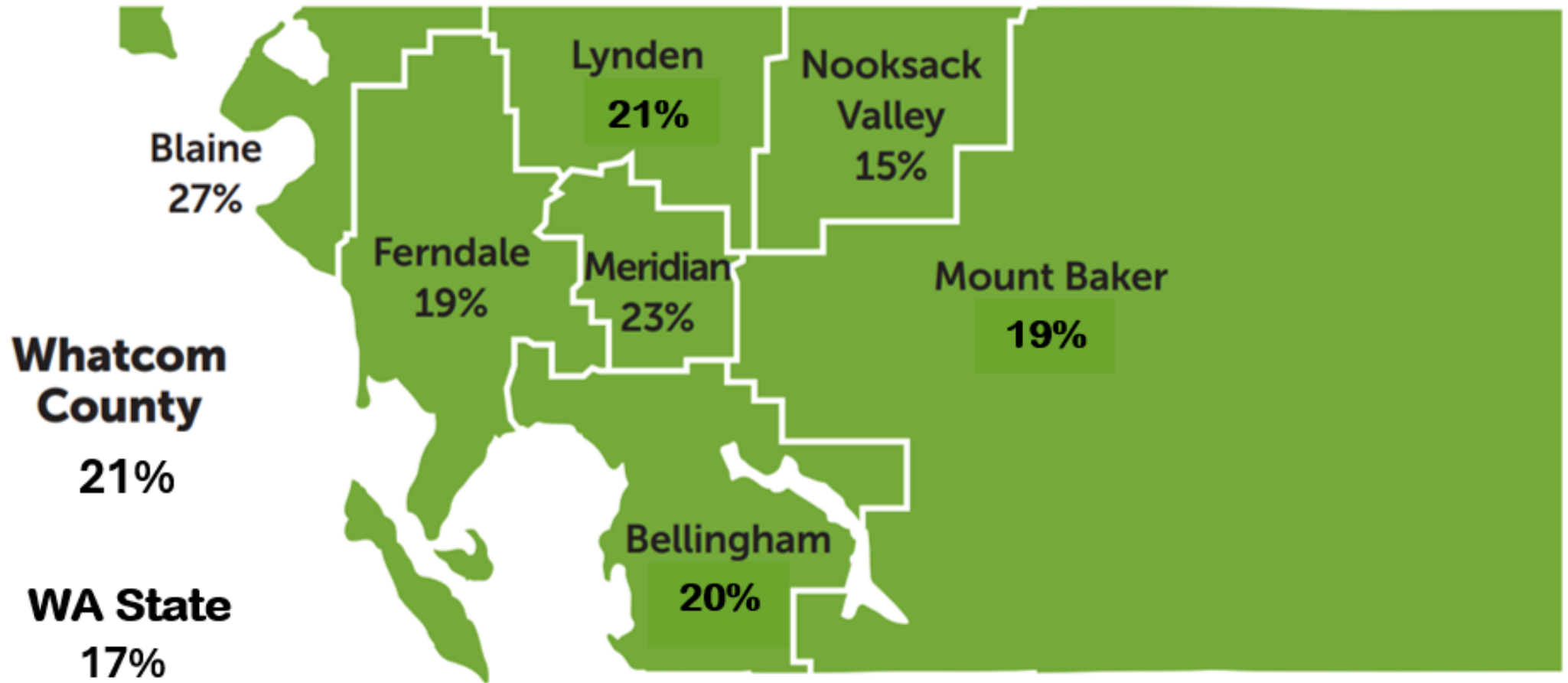
# Population Age 65+

Whatcom sub-county areas, 2023



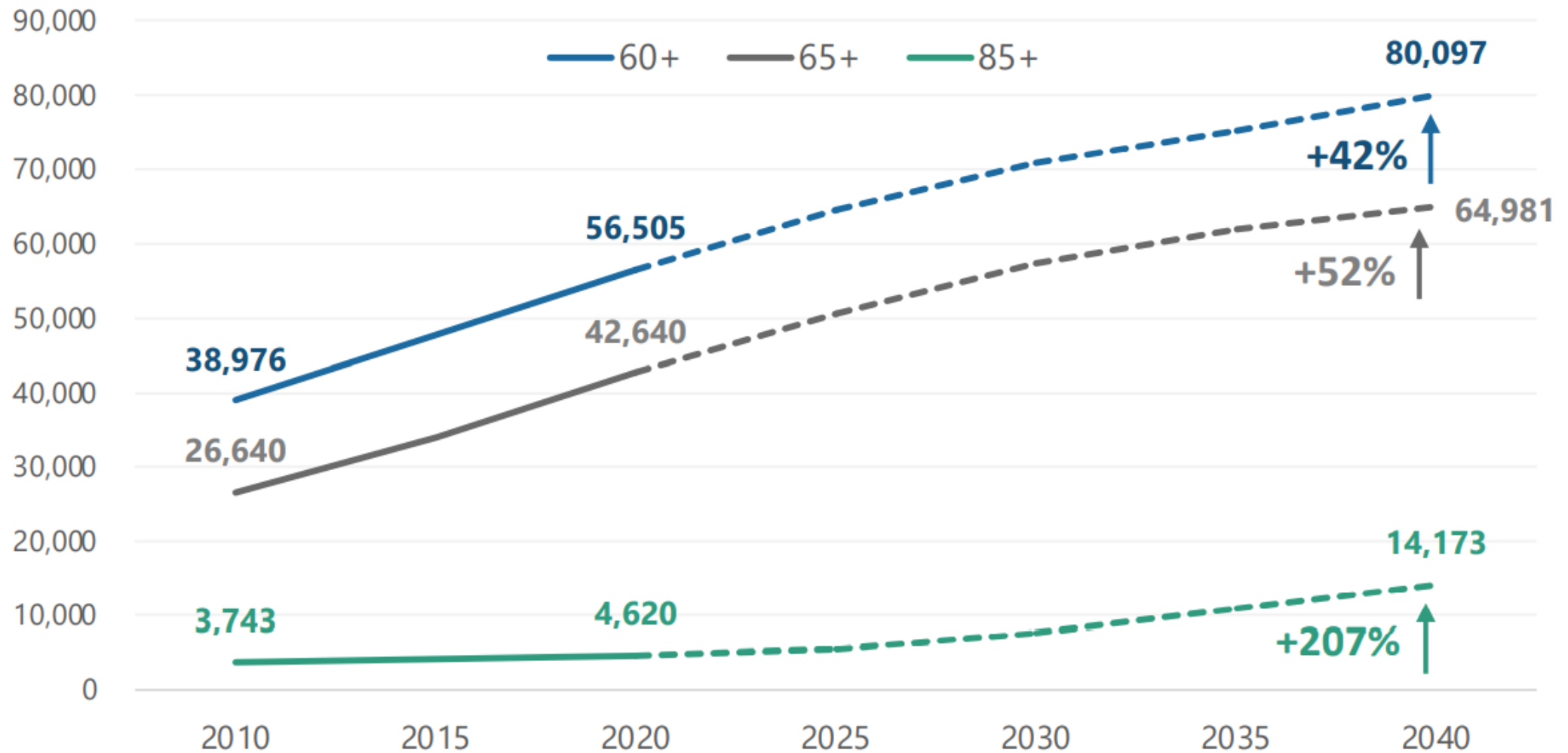
# Percent of Population Age 65+

Whatcom sub-county areas, 2023



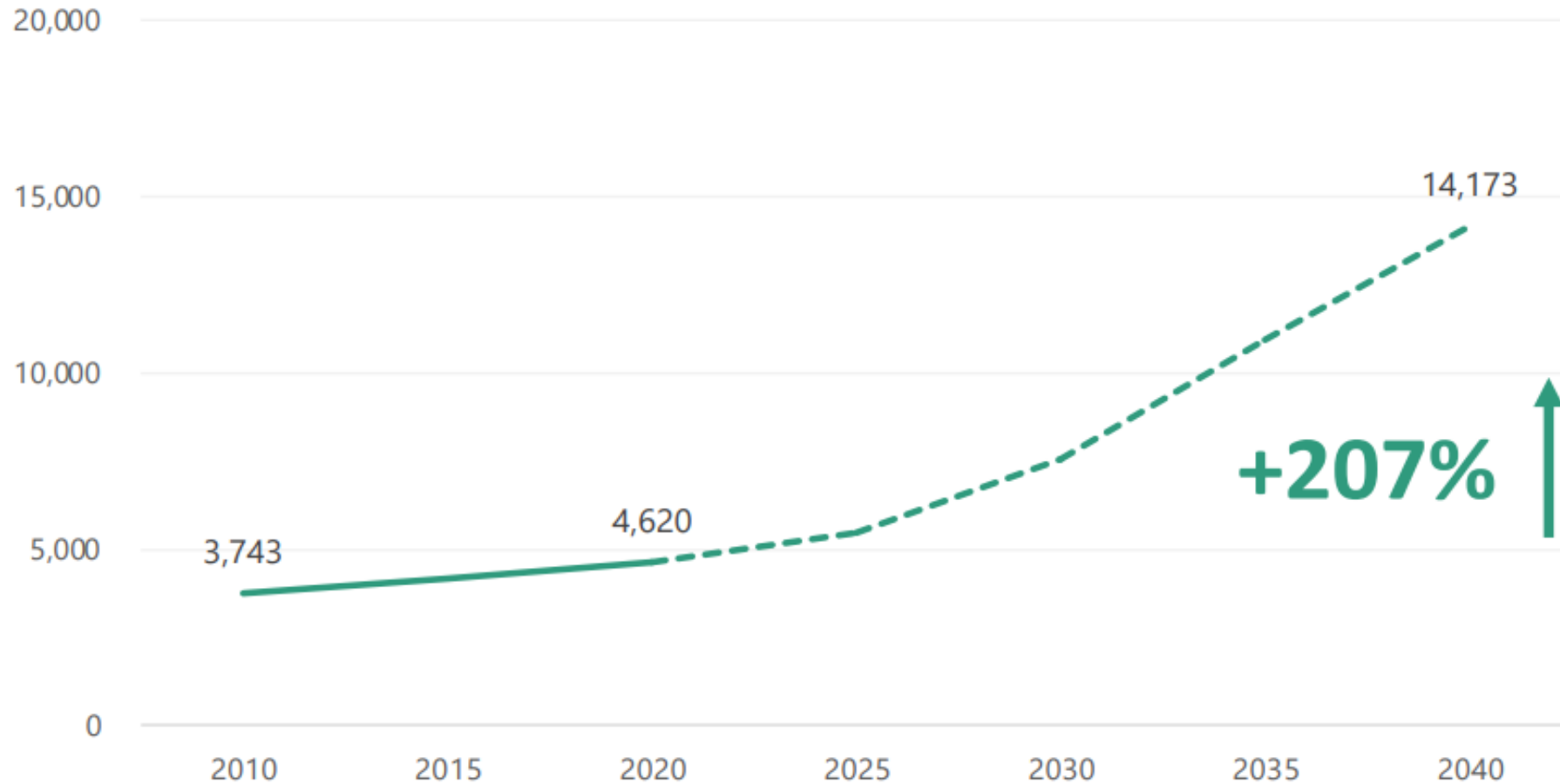
# Projected Older Adult Populations

## Whatcom County, 2010-2040



# Projected Population Age 85+

## Whatcom County, 2010-2040



# Selected Populations Projections

## Whatcom County, 2020-2030

	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	<b>57%</b>
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 <b>65</b> or above with dementia	4,133	6,387	<b>55%</b>



# Aging Well Whatcom Blueprints



A community vision for Whatcom County becoming a place with the culture, physical infrastructure, social supports, and services for all of us to age well.

Community Summit 2019



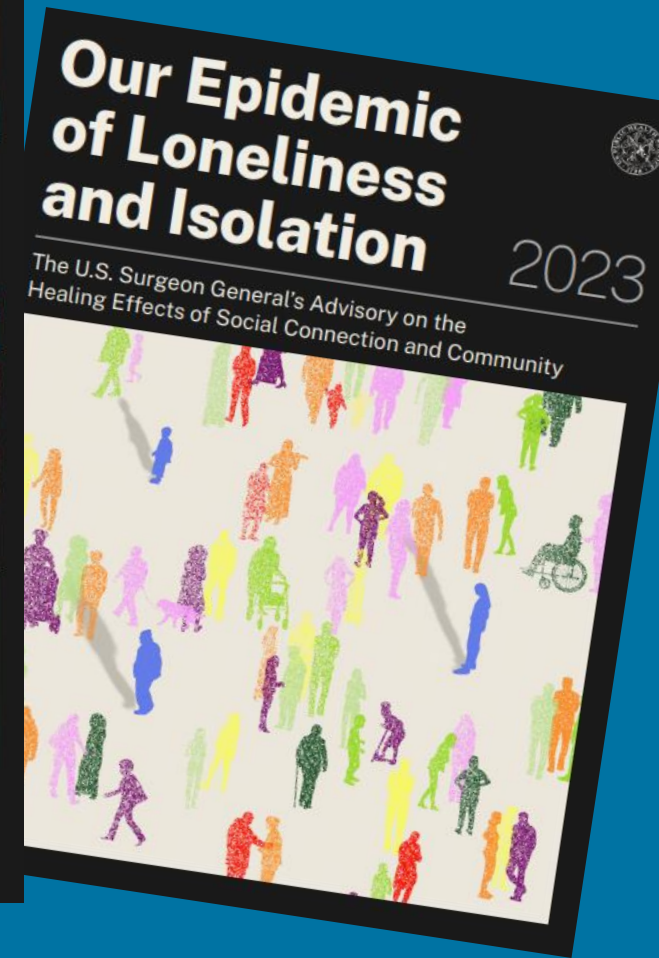
# Blueprint Update 2022

A grid of 20 video thumbnails from a Zoom meeting. Each thumbnail shows a participant's video feed with their name and a mute icon at the bottom. The participants are:

- Row 1: Heather Flaherty, Lara Welker, Lara Welker, Tammy Bennett, she/her, ..., Sharon Somers-Hill
- Row 2: Amy Hockenberry, WCHD, Kristi Slette, she/her(s), W..., Kristine Glasgow, NWRC, Mary Anderson | WTA, Marie Eaton, PCI, she | her
- Row 3: Brook Kuhn (she/her), Chris Comeau, Transport..., Sarah Lane, she/her, HMN, Tim Wilder | WTA, Susan Reece
- Row 4: Richard Scholtz, Kristin Hill, Kate Foster, Amy Harley, WCHD, Suzanne Carlson-Prandin...
- Row 5: Josselyn Winslow, Bob Anderson, glenda, Kate Massey--NWRC, Mary Lynne Courtney

At the bottom of the grid is a control bar with the following icons and labels from left to right:

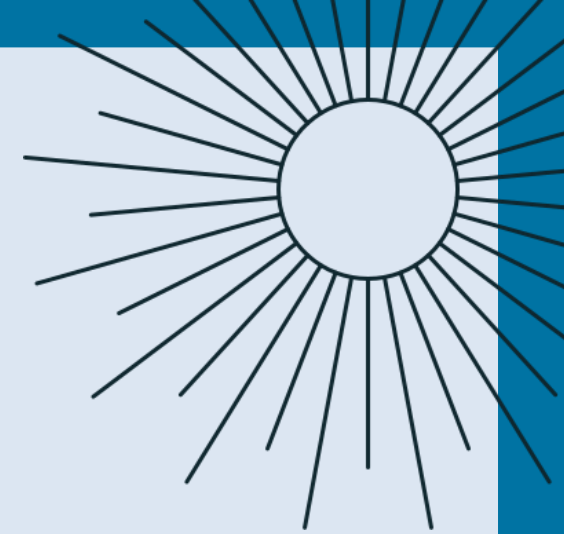
- Participants: 65
- Chat: 11
- Share Screen
- Record
- Live Transcript
- Reactions
- Apps
- Whiteboards





# 2022 Blueprint

Second Edition  
Presented June 2022



## Focus Areas:

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

# Key Issues

- Interaction, relationships and connection
- Housing affordability, “right sizing” & aging in place supports
- Caregiver availability & affordability
- Brain health & aging, dementia awareness & support
- Transportation, including micro-transit
- Healthcare access

# Opportunities

- Increase funding for senior centers
- Expand Whatcom County Health and Community Services' focus on aging and older adults
- Foster older adult representation and civic participation

# Increase funding for senior centers

## ▪ **Staffing support for**

- **Large independent senior centers:** Blaine, Lynden, Ferndale, Bellingham
- **“Satellite” or small centers:** Point Roberts, Sumas, Nooksack-Everson, Welcome
- **New and emerging community-led groups:** Kendall and Van Zandt (no County funding now)

## ▪ Increased **numbers** and **diversity** of center participants requires more varied and dynamic offerings

## ▪ **State and national recognition** of senior centers

- Senior Center Support is a [2024 Legislative Priority](#) of the Washington State Council on Aging
- National Council on Aging [affirmed commitment](#) to the vital work of senior centers

# WCHCS focus on aging and older adults

## Lead or contribute to prevention and intervention efforts

### ▪ Social isolation

- [Surgeon General's advisory](#) on the national epidemic of social isolation and loneliness

### ▪ Chronic disease

- Cardiovascular disease is the [#1 cause of death](#) in Whatcom County
- Chronic disease most prevalent among older adults

### ▪ Dementia

- The World Health Organization named [dementia a public health priority](#) over a decade ago.
- Alzheimer's was the 3<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in Whatcom County in 2020

### ▪ Falls

- Called an [urgent national public health crisis](#) by the American Public Health Association.



# Older adult representation & civic participation

- Intentionally seek older adults for County boards and commissions, considering age as a dimension of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Regard elders as resources: consider intergenerational approaches to existing work, e.g., some aspects of Healthy Children’s Fund implementation.
- Designate County Council representative to the Aging Well Whatcom Steering Committee to ensure ongoing connection to aging issues.
- Explore an “aging in all polices” approach, similar to [Health in All Policies](#), to evaluate policy decisions for impacts on older adults.

As of May 2024, Washington State is a member of the [Age-Friendly States and Communities](#) and [Dementia-Friendly America](#) networks.

# A community designed to work well for older adults benefits people of all ages



# Questions, answers & discussion

## Learn more...

- Visit with older adults and hear from them!
- [Older Adult Survey Report](#)
- [Blueprint Policy Recommendations](#)

