Larimer's senior population to double within 15 years

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Larimer County's population of older adults is projected to more than double during the next 15 years, spurring concerns about transportation, available homes and other resources.

The county's 65-and-older population will reach 81,041 by 2030 — up 141 percent from 2010, State Demographer Elizabeth Garner said Thursday at the Larimer County Summit on Aging.

More than 230 people attended the event held at the Fort Collins Senior Center to hear ways to create age-friendly communities throughout Northern Colorado.

The majority of Larimer's growth in adults 65 and older will come from the county's current baby boomer population — those born between 1946 and 1964, Garner said.

"There's about 1.3 million boomers in the state. If all goes well in the next 15 years, all of them will be aging over the age 65," she said.

Baby boomers need to start planning for their own future, said Sandy Markwood, CEO of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

In addition to individual planning, families need to plan to support their loved ones and communities need to plan to support citizens across their lifespans, Markwood said. "This last point is gaining momentum here in Larimer County and is part of movement throughout the country."
Larimer County was featured in the "Making Your Community Livable for All Ages: What's Working" report Markwood's association submitted to Capitol Hill on Wednesday. The report highlights the county's successes in collaborating, honoring local communities and identifying opportunities to bring age-related issues to the forefront.

Chief among those issues are finding ways for older adults to access resources and amenities when driving may no longer be an option and creating housing options to accommodate older adults, Markwood said.

More rental units, multi-family shared units, accessible homes without steps and housing within walking distance from amenities are all needed in Larimer County, according to the "Needs and Opportunities in Housing and Care in Larimer County: Next 25 Years" report prepared Monday by The Highland Group. The Boulder-based research firm's findings were presented Thursday at the summit.

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