

San Benito - Summary MPA Combined Workgroups

Meeting Details:

Date: January 28, 2026

Time: 1:30 PM

Location: via Zoom

Summary:

The Master Plan for Aging (MPA) workgroups met in a combined format to support alignment across overlapping goals (housing, affordability, access, transportation, and social connection). Corey shared the September meeting summary in the chat for reference and also shared the Hollister General Plan (noting it is a large document but includes a helpful glossary and relevant age-friendly/community design content). The group welcomed participants and introductions included Seniors Council/ADRC staff, HHSA, County Supervisors/AAA representation, community providers, and partners (including Institute on Aging, Teen Kitchen Project, Alzheimer's Association, Health Projects Center, Central California Alliance for Health, Community Bridges, and others).

Housing for All Ages and Stages The group discussed recent housing landscape updates and acknowledged staffing transitions within county planning, including the departure of key housing-related county representatives. Supervisors shared that the County Housing Element has been submitted to HCD and the County is awaiting feedback. Supervisors also described an Affordable Housing Ad Hoc (including Supervisors Curro and Velasquez) working to advance affordable housing strategy and partnerships with nonprofits and developers.

The group revisited the previously discussed "senior-friendly housing fact sheet/packet" concept and noted it was drafted at some point, with plans for follow-up to confirm status and next steps. The group also discussed coordinating May recognitions tied to Older Americans Month and Affordable Housing Month, including potential proclamations and public presentations to elevate the MPA local playbook.

Additional housing-related items included:

- Interest in advocating for participation in the Assisted Living Waiver (ALW) program (not currently available in San Benito/Monterey/Santa Cruz), with Institute on Aging offering to coordinate an offline discussion and provide more information.
- A practical resource reminder that Section 8 waitlists remain very long, and a helpful note that veterans may access VASH vouchers with a shorter wait time compared to the general Section 8 list.

Housing – Action Items / Follow-ups

- Confirm who the best County housing/planning point of contact is for future meetings (Planning Director mentioned as a lead contact).
- Follow up with Clay and Angela on the status of the senior-friendly housing fact sheet/packet.
- Coordinate proclamation/presentation planning for May (and potentially April for San Juan Bautista timing).

Health Reimagined The group shared updates focused on wellness, prevention, and senior engagement. The Matter of Balance fall prevention classes continue to run regularly (with strong activity in San Juan Bautista) and the group reiterated that expanding the program depends heavily on having more trained volunteers and locations with interested participants.

The group also discussed community activity options such as Tai Chi, chair yoga, and partnerships with Parks & Rec, along with broader “community design” concepts like Blue Zones / walkability, tying back to planning and city general plan efforts.

The group discussed opportunities to increase senior engagement through arts-based and enrichment programming, with ideas ranging from small-scale activities (such as watercolor or art sessions) to broader programming, recognizing that funding and/or grants would be needed.

Health – Action Items / Follow-ups

- Explore alternative Matter of Balance host locations (including possible PT-related locations, as seen in other counties).
- Confirm the status of chair yoga programming in San Juan Bautista (grant ongoing vs ended).
- Continue exploring Parks & Rec partnership opportunities and “Blue Zones/walkability” alignment.

Inclusion and Equity, Not Isolation The group celebrated progress with technology support programming through the library. Tech Help Tuesdays (third Tuesday of the month, 10:30 AM–12:00 PM) continues through at least April. January’s session served three seniors, with the group noting that even small attendance can require significant one-on-one time due to account setup, passwords, app downloads, and troubleshooting.

A major idea discussed was expanding tech help capacity by partnering with Gavilan College students who may be willing to volunteer one day per month—potentially growing the program and even offering an additional session at Gavilan’s computer lab. The ADRC also reminded the group that device help is part of ADRC services and that participants can be referred there if they can’t wait for the monthly tech help session.

Corey also noted plans to distribute the tech help flyer broadly to support participation.

Inclusion/Equity – Action Items / Follow-ups

- Reach out to Gavilan College (point of contact referenced as “Judy”) about student volunteers for Tech Help Tuesdays.
- Continue promoting Tech Help Tuesdays and share flyer with partners.
- Refer individuals to ADRC for more immediate device support needs.

Caregiving That Works The group focused on the status of the caregiver training course through Gavilan College and the challenge of low enrollment and unclear ongoing updates. It was noted that course details/placement in published materials may not be effective for recruitment, and cost remains a concern (previously discussed around ~\$1,200).

Clay shared that Seniors Council explored using one-time Family Caregiver Support dollars for scholarships/offsetting costs, but CDA requested additional information (including curriculum, verification that recipients would be family caregivers vs paid caregivers, outreach approach, and estimated enrollment). Lack of curriculum details created a bottleneck, leaving the scholarship approach unresolved for the current semester. A fallback plan discussed was using those one-time dollars for respite if scholarships could not be structured in time.

A strong alternative concept emerged: offering a shorter caregiver education session (half-day or “intro” training) as a bridge into the full course—especially for untrained family caregivers. Another strategic idea was marketing the course through Caregiver University, where a large caregiver audience is expected, and using that platform to build a pipeline to reach the minimum enrollment.

A real-time update shared near the end: Gavilan reported no registrations yet and is exploring whether the County benefits office might support course cost; Rosio plans to attend the next meeting and provide updates.

The group also discussed the importance of tracking longer-term outcomes and benchmarks across goals, including ways to measure impacts over time (and referencing frameworks like AARP’s age-friendly domains).

Caregiving – Action Items / Follow-ups

- Obtain and share the course curriculum details from Gavilan (needed for CDA scholarship discussions).
- Confirm whether the class is running this semester and establish a regular update process.
- Explore marketing through Caregiver University and/or piloting a shorter caregiver education session as an entry point.
- Follow up with County benefits office contact (Amanda Duffy referenced) if needed.

Affording Aging The group revisited the “Financial Guide” project and acknowledged it has been stalled due to two main barriers: (1) getting a qualified reviewer and (2) identifying a sustainable printing/distribution plan. Britt shared that a recent connection with a financial planner reignited momentum; she agreed to review the guide and emphasized that financial literacy cannot be assumed simply because someone is older.

The group discussed a key strategic question: whether the guide should be digital-first rather than printed, given that tax information and programs change frequently. A digital format would allow easier updates and let users print only what they need. A proposed approach was distributing “kiosk cards” or postcards with a QR code that links to the guide hosted on a central site (such as the Seniors Council website), reducing storage and printing burdens while still enabling access.

Participants broadened the conversation to the importance of financial literacy earlier in life and suggested multi-channel distribution strategies including schools, Gavilan College, and community workshops. Philip shared experience delivering financial planning education at Twin Oaks and offered a strong resource connection: Alexis Winder (Edward Jones), who has supported educational programs and helped secure sponsors (including meals) that drive turnout. Several participants emphasized moving forward now—finalizing a “good” product rather than delaying for perfection—and then improving it over time.

Affording Aging – Action Items / Follow-ups

- Identify a small working group to finalize the guide quickly (review + distribution plan).

- Decide on digital-first vs print, and if digital-first, develop QR/postcard outreach.
- Consider adding community education sessions (panel/workshops) alongside the guide.
- Follow up with suggested financial planning contacts and possible sponsors.

Additional Updates Shared (Cross-Workgroup)

- Older Americans Month / Affordable Housing Month (May): Supervisors are preparing agenda items and coordinating across jurisdictions (County BOS, City of Hollister, City of San Juan Bautista). San Juan Bautista may need to act earlier (April) based on meeting timing. Clay requested that proclamation template language be researched and shared with jurisdictions. Theme discussed as “Serving Up Solutions.”
- Hazel Hawkins Community Needs Assessment: Meetings scheduled Feb 10 (6:00 PM) and Feb 11 (3:30 PM) at Hazel Hawkins (Support & Services Building, 2nd Floor Great Room). Partners were encouraged to participate via survey and/or meetings.
- Free Taco Tax Prep event: Currently planned for Feb 27 at Pauline Valdivia Memorial Community Center (Hollister) but may be postponed due to permits/insurance/logistics; update expected soon, possibly moving to March or early May.
- Volunteer spotlights + volunteer recognition event: Corey invited partners to submit volunteers to spotlight in the newsletter and shared early planning for an in-person volunteer/organization gathering at the Community Foundation (potentially June/July, using the patio/doors to accommodate tables).
- Community event share: Teen Kitchen Project will be at the Chocolate Festival at Coconut Grove on Sunday, Feb 8 (12–4) (tickets noted as \$30 adult / \$20 youth).

The group also discussed inviting hospital representatives connected to the Aging & Long-Term Care Commission to future MPA meetings once voting membership is confirmed.

You can review the notes from the Breakout Groups, which will guide our work on county-wide solutions, by clicking on the link below. This page also includes video recordings of the group meetings and outlines the goals from the Master Plan for Aging Solutions Summit <https://seniorscouncil.org/solutions-summit-2024/>

Next Meeting:

- Date: 4.30.26
- Time: 1:30 PM
- Location: via Zoom



Seniors Council and the Community Foundation for San Benito County are partners in local aging initiatives, including San Benito Connect – Neighbor to Neighbor Volunteer Network and the State of California’s Local Master Plan for Aging planning and development initiative, working together to address local community aging and disability needs.

Funding for this work has been provided by the California Department of Aging, the State of California, Seniors Council of Santa Cruz & San Benito Counties, and the Community Foundation for San Benito County.