

Cobb County, along with communities across America, is preparing for a colossal demographic shift. According to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), today, [more than 30 percent of Cobb County's population is over the age of 50](#).¹ Forecasts predict that in just four years, this population will increase by almost 5 percent. ARC predicts that by 2040, nearly 40 percent of Cobb County's population will be over the age of 50.

This data poses both a challenge and a unique opportunity to the Board of Commissioners. While we are shaping policy to attract and retain the next generation of Cobb Countians, it is also our duty to ensure that we are creating an environment that meets the market demand of the older adult population that have, for decades, raised their families here and helped create this wonderful community.

For the entire time that I have served in elected office in Cobb County, senior housing has been a priority of mine. Like many Cobb County residents, I am planning for my family's future in this great community, while also being the primary caretaker of my elderly father. I fully understand and appreciate the very diverse needs of the older adult and senior populations, as well as, the difficulty in developing policies to accommodate these needs.

As a district commissioner, I led the initial effort to create a Continued Care Retirement Community (CCRC) ordinance. While many people devoted a great deal of personal time and talent to creating the CCRC, ultimately, it did not prove to meet the intended objectives. At the time, the Board necessarily put a moratorium on CCRCs so we could go back to the drawing board to develop a policy that is both effective and meets the needs of all of Cobb's older adult population.

Resident input is an essential element of crafting effective, successful policy. I also firmly believe that it is incumbent upon leadership to seek and consider input from technical experts, industry leaders, practitioners and proven best practices.

On Tuesday, I proposed, and the Board approved, delaying making a decision on the proposed RSL code amendments. I requested this delay to give staff time to research and incorporate up to date data, industry trends and best practices. Cobb County expects the best from the Board of Commission in every single decision-making process we undertake. In order to make an informed decision about this very important policy, the Board must fully understand, and take into consideration, all perspectives, data and technical expertise available.

Information, resources and consultation of industry experts may or may not result in changes to the proposed code amendment but it will absolutely inform the process. I am confident that by broadening the scope we will deliver the best, most informed senior housing code in the country.

I encourage you to visit [my webpage](#) to view the most up to date population data, forecasts and a host of resources and best practices related to senior housing.

¹ Please note that these numbers are accurate, most up to date and revised from a newsletter dated February 26, 2016.