**The Aging of Atlanta’s Suburban Region: The Time to Plan Accordingly is Now**

By Jenny Leigh Evans

Over the past several years, the restoration of many of Atlanta’s inner city historic neighborhoods has increased significantly thanks to the community activists and young professionals who have been devoted to neighborhood gentrification. These community development initiatives have led to the formation of a plethora of readily accessible neighborhood resources via numerous methods of alternative transportation.

While inner city historic neighborhoods are quickly redeveloping, Atlanta’s suburban region is reshaping in a vastly different way. Its residents are growing older at rapid rates. In fact, the Atlanta Regional Commission reported that the older adult population in the region doubled between 1970 and 2000 and is expected to double again by 2015. This growing population of older people has not been a large part of the movement back into the city. Instead, these residents have decided to age in place by remaining in their suburban homes. With a decreasing young population in the suburban regions and a lack of alternative transportation options, these older residents are increasingly finding access to community resources more difficult.

This trend is not likely to change. The Atlanta Regional Commission recently reported that 78 percent of older adults in the suburban region are homeowners. As the population continues to reshape, these homes will only become more difficult to sell, leaving older residents no choice but to remain in place. Consequently, accessibility issues for the aging population will likely continue to grow due to a lack of focus on alternative methods transportation and the area’s congested roadways. As the younger population continues to move into the city region, leaving older family members in the suburbs, access to vital resources will become more restricted for aging adults who planned to rely on family members for support.

The time to address this issue is now. The Atlanta Regional Commission has made it a priority to focus on resources for the aging population. The Atlanta Regional Commission’s current *Area Plan on Aging* focuses on lifelong community development, encourages healthy living, and expands information and access to services. Wondering how you can help plan for this issue in the future? Take the Atlanta Regional Commission Plan for 2040 survey located at [https://atlantaregionalplan.metroquest.com/](https://atlantaregionalplan.metroquest.com/)

**Jenny Leigh Evans**, a native of Dublin, Georgia, graduated from the Andrew Young School of Public Policy at Georgia State University in 2011 with summa cum laude honors and completed an A.A. in Liberal Arts from Oxford College of Emory University in 2008. At Georgia State University College of Law, Jenny currently serves as an Honor Court Justice. She has also served as Co-President of the Environmental Law Society and Scholarship and Admissions Chair of the Student Bar Association. Jenny is a member of Georgia Association of Women Lawyers and has served on the organization’s leadership committee. Jenny joined the Urban Fellows Program because of her interest in local government. The Urban Fellows Program has allowed her to become more deeply involved with local organizations and community projects. Jenny has been committed to the practice of family law since entering law school at Georgia State University. She is an active member of the Atlanta Bar Association Family Law Section and served as Judicial Extern to The Honorable Wendy Shoob in 2014. She has also participated in numerous trainings and has worked significantly on an in-depth research project focusing on Georgia’s Legitimation Law. Along with her two research partners, her most recent work was featured at the 2014 Georgia Family Law Institute. Over the past two years, Jenny has been dedicated to volunteer work with the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation in the Safe Families Office, where she now represents clients in Temporary Protective Orders under Georgia’s Third Year Practice Act. Jenny is also a Law Clerk at Davis, Matthews and Quigley, P.C.