ABSTRACT:
The Corpus Christi metro area has a rapidly growing population aged 60 years or older due in part to migration of baby boomers. Those older adults make up almost half of the population in Aransas County today. Their share of the metro area population will exceed 25 percent by 2030. This development has profound implications for long-term community plans such as Plan CC 2035.

The Corpus Christi metro area has had a rapidly growing elderly population in the past decade or so. According to the data reported by Murdock and Cline (2015), the elderly aged 60 years or older currently make up more than one in four (25.4%) area residents. In 1970, their share of the area population was about 10 percent. This growth in the share of elderly population is the highest among all metro areas in Texas.

The elderly are typically defined as those at least 65 years old and they are ready to retire. Because the last Census year was 2010, persons 60 years old in 2010 would be 65 years old in 2015. As such, the patterns for the population 60 years or older in the 2010 Census would reflect the current retirement-age population.

In addition to increased life expectancy, the growing elderly population in Corpus Christi is driven mainly by in-migration of baby boomers. The baby-boom generation...
is composed of the 70 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964. Those born in 1946 reached the typical retirement age of 65 in 2011. Between 2011 and 2029, baby boomers make up the largest elderly population in U.S. history.

As Murdock and Cline (2015) noted, elderly migrants are attracted to areas with recreational facilities and amenities, such as parks and museums, as well as communities that are in close proximity to urban locations, which tend to have more health care and educational facilities. Accordingly, the Texas Gulf Coast region and, in particular, Aransas County in the Corpus Christi metro area, are considered prime migration destinations for retirees.

**Migration Destinations**

Indeed, in contrast to the other two counties in the Corpus Christi metro area, Aransas County has seen a steady flow of migrants since 1970. According to Murdock and Cline’s (2015) data, the number of net migration of people aged 60 or older averaged around 100 persons per year before 2000, and this migration rate has almost doubled since 2010 (**Chart 1**).

The surge in the new arrivals of the elderly is attributable to the baby boomers who have reached their retirement age. The majority of those elderly migrants reside in such coastal communities as Fulton and Rockport.

Murdock and Cline’s (2015) report also contain future population projections for all Texas metro areas. The current migration patterns of the elderly for Corpus Christi are expected to extend through 2020, and then decline appreciably through 2050.

Migration of older adults to Corpus Christi has significant effects on the overall makeup of the local population. In 1970, only one in 10 Corpus Christi residents was 60 years or older (**Chart 2**). Today, the share of this elderly population has more than doubled to an estimate of 21 percent, compared to the Texas state average of 15 percent. For Aransas County, the elderly make up almost half of the county population.

The increased presence of the elderly in Corpus Christi is the outcome of a high rate of in-migration from other parts of the nation. Since 1970, this older population segment has grown at least twice as fast as the growth rate of the general population. This gap in the population growth rates is expected to hold through 2030.

The elderly population segment in the Corpus Christi metro area is expected to expand from about 100,000 today to 130,000 in 2050 (**Chart 3**). The local population share...
of those older adults is expected to hover around 25 percent between 2020 and 2050.

Implications for Plan CC
The patterns of change in the elderly population in Corpus Christi have profound impacts on local communities and policy implications. According to Murdock and Cline (2015), the baby boom generation represents one of the best educated and socio-economically successful cohorts in U.S. history.

Another unique characteristic of this population segment is that only 27 percent of them join the labor force. As such, the majority of those individuals are consumers as opposed to being both consumers and workers.

In addition to different housing needs, older adults have different choices for local goods and services than the younger population. In particular, a growing elderly population means an increased community demand for health care and public services.

The implications of such a change in the regional population demographics should be taken into consideration for city planners and developers, particularly in their development of future planning strategies, such as Plan CC 2035.

Plan CC is the City of Corpus Christi’s long term plan for the community over the next 20 years. Prospective changes in the city’s neighborhoods (Chart 4) would affect not only local business opportunities but also the mix of public infrastructure supports for sustainable community development.

Reference:
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