

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES

A VIABLE FUTURES TOOLKIT

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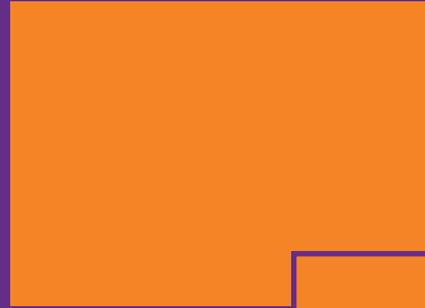
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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**“One of our main responsibilities is to leave to
successor generations a sustainable future.”**

Kofi Annan

Is the Toolkit *Really* for Me?

Suppose you're a lifeguard at the beach and you see huge waves headed to shore and ominous clouds gathering overhead. Would you:

- a Let only the older adults take shelter?
- b Let only the children take shelter?
- c Let your own family members stay put at water's edge?
- d Pretend that the storm forecasts are wrong?

Probably not. Fortunately, we don't have to respond to the gathering storm of pressing social issues by choosing some people over others or ignoring the distress signals. Everyone can find protection from the storm by seeking higher ground together. This Toolkit shows the pathway to higher ground.

If you care about what life will be like in the years ahead for you, your parents, or your grandchildren, then this Toolkit is for you. It's for you if you are on the front lines facing the most pressing community issues of today and tomorrow.

You've heard a lot of talk about the coming "crisis" related to the unparalleled aging of the U.S. population. **Instead of being viewed as a problem, the aging of the population is actually opening up opportunities for people to think and act differently—for the greater good, on higher ground—with regard to both our**

human and natural resources. The financial, social, and health care issues raised by today's elders and the aging baby boomers can be harnessed to create a **viable future** for generations to come. It is time to shift our vantage point about the aging of our nation, focus on our shared destiny, and build on our common concerns.



There's room under the aging tent for everyone's issues. This different way of thinking and working realizes that elders and baby boomers are resources for their families and communities and potential policy allies on issues affecting current generations and the generations to come. For example:

- Energies worrying about a distant Social Security crisis can be re-directed to creating better schools and better jobs so that the intergenerational compact can be maintained.
- The disappearance of jobs can be countered by building vibrant local economies offering family-supporting wages and benefits so that family members have the basics to care for one another.
- Concerns about skyrocketing health care costs can turn our attention to what it takes to promote healthy living on the preventative side of the equation—walkable communities, clean air, good nutrition, regular exercise.
- Even the erosion of the environment can be halted, community by community, through the use of energy-saving construction and transportation options, which are good for everyone's health.

- Our increasingly diverse communities—within age groups and across age groups—can become models of democracy through renewed appreciation for those aspirations we all share and the respective talents we bring to their realization.

If we work together for the greater good, the legacy we have come to expect—that the future will be better than the past—can remain the inheritance that is passed on to subsequent generations. Those who are on the front lines of this work are indeed our lifeguards on the beach.



Are You on the Front Lines?

- If you are an **administrator, advocate, or practitioner in aging**, *you are on the front lines* of planning and providing services for a society that is aging. How you make your decisions and use your resources will go a long way to determine the quality of later life for today's older adults, and the legacy that elders will leave for generations to come. You need strategies that connect the generations.
- If you are an **administrator, advocate, or practitioner for children and youth**, *you are on the front lines* of ensuring that younger generations get a good start and have a hopeful future. Your work will be easier if you find ways to turn elders into allies and resources to reach your specific goals. You need strategies for an aging society that will benefit the quality of life for all age groups.
- If you are an **administrator, advocate, or practitioner in environmental issues**, *you are on the front lines* to ensure that a sustainable quality of life is possible for generations to come. You will be more successful if you find ways to turn elders into advocates for a clean environment for themselves, their children and grandchildren. You need strategies to turn the attention of an aging society toward promoting sound environmental practice.

- If you are a **community planner or a city or county manager**, *you are on the front lines* to sustain a good quality of life for all residents. Your work has to take account of changing demographics, fiscal constraints, and political pressures. You need strategies for creating cost-efficient sustainable communities for all residents.
- If you are a **policy-maker at the local, state, or federal level**, *you are on the front lines* to address demanding public expectations and an expanding field of advocacy groups with severely strained resources. You need strategies for policy-making and resource allocation shaped by “economies of scope”—the ability to solve multiple problems with single solutions.
- If you are with a community-wide organization like a **United Way** or a **Community Foundation**, *you are on the front lines* to fund community issues across a range of groups and needs. Your investment decisions will yield greater returns in the short-term and over time if groups can identify their common interests and work together with pooled resources. You need strategies for allowing your dollars to go farther and yield greater return on investment.

If you are on the front lines, then this Toolkit is for you. For a wide range of decision-makers this Toolkit provides strategies that move everyone in the same direction, toward a greater good—the creation of sustainable communities for all ages.

What Is a Sustainable Community for All Ages?

The phrase “sustainable community for all ages” sounds more complicated than it actually is. In fact, neighborhoods, organizations, and communities around the country are taking substantial steps in that direction every day.

Above all else, a sustainable community for all ages is one where:

- Decisions have staying power because:
 - community residents, organizations, and officials work together to address concerns of all ages and cultural groups, and
 - the future is taken into account when setting current directions.
- Financial, human, and natural resources are used wisely by looking for “economies of scope” — single solutions that solve multiple problems
- The needs of current generations are addressed across the lifespan without overburdening future generations

Here are a few examples of the starting places some communities have chosen to build sustainable communities for all ages:

- **High-performing schools as intergenerational crossroads.**
The growing Los Angeles Unified School District, with plans to construct 150 new schools,¹ has committed to green building design. Green school design can be incorporated into the science curriculum, lessens the impact of building construction on the environment, improves student and teacher health and attendance, heightens student performance, and lowers operating costs. Elsewhere around the country older adult tutors in classrooms and after-school activities in programs like Experience Corps boost student performance and improve their own health at the same time.² From Connecticut to Oklahoma to Oregon and Hawaii, schools and after-school programs promote greater community involvement by sharing sites with nursing homes, senior centers, and community resource centers.³
- **Healthy food, cleaner air, and community development.**
The ability of families and businesses to buy healthy locally grown food is made possible through community-supported agriculture. Because the average meal in the U.S. travels 1,500 miles from farm to table, the unhealthy result is high consumption of fossil fuels and compromised food freshness. In rural areas across the nation that grow food for towns,

suburbs and cities, community-supported agriculture lessens the environmental impact of industrial food production, minimizes potential food-borne illnesses, and keeps local economies vibrant.⁴ In both rural and urban America, community gardens provide nutritious foods, reduce family food budgets, offer exercise, stimulate social interaction, and catalyze community development.⁵ Local farmers markets and mercados make fresh produce available to communities and provide a neighborhood gathering place for residents and other shoppers.

- **Jobs for health.** In Trenton, New Jersey, the nonprofit community development and environmental organization Isles, Inc., is rebuilding a distressed community into a self-reliant and healthy community through interconnected improvements in the physical infrastructure, the economy, and resident health. Its EPA-funded job training program enables unemployed and underemployed local residents to become environmental technicians with highly marketable skills for assessment and cleanup activities associated with brownfield redevelopment and environmental remediation.⁶ Focusing on a more traditional definition of health workers, the Charlottesville, Virginia, Area Agency on Aging realized that the region's rapidly expanding aging population would require considerably more health care workers. Along with

retired medical personnel, they assisted the local school district to create new aging modules for its high school curriculum in an effort to attract more of the area's young adults into health care occupations.

- **The arts as a bridge across cultural groups.** Full Circle Theater in Philadelphia, an intergenerational ensemble of actors created by the Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning, helps audiences grapple with the toughest community issues through improvisation and interactive techniques. In operation since 1984, the actors come from diverse racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds and range in age from 16 to 90, giving them a unique set of perspectives to bring to workshops and performances on issues like AIDS, ageism, conflict resolution, drugs, parenting, and diversity.⁷



In the broadest sense, imagine a sustainable community for all ages where:

- Civic participation is encouraged from residents of all ages and cultures to shape the community's future
- Community decisions and community design are focused on promoting resident health and well-being
- Decision-makers work together across specialty areas to promote the well-being of all residents
- Educational institutions offer rich learning opportunities for all ages
- Good jobs, fair retail outlets, and affordable housing are available to all families and located in close proximity
- The local economy is strong, opportunities abound in the labor market, and businesses and services are family-friendly
- A range of health and social services designed to support people across the life course are accessible and affordable
- Neighborhoods have parks and community centers within walking distance where residents can interact
- Strong social networks develop across all ages and cultures so that the community is friendly and safe for all residents
- Energy-efficient housing and environmentally sound transportation protect resident health and the environment
- Natural resources are used wisely and toxic conditions are cleaned up

These are some of the key features of a sustainable community for all ages.

Sustainable Communities for All Ages Are Within Our Reach...

Optimism about the future is deeply embedded in the American spirit. As a nation, we believe in our ability to solve any challenges that we face. This Toolkit harnesses that spirit and those beliefs into **practical approaches and concrete solutions for key issues of our time: an aging population, other generations in need of support, and strained financial and environmental resources.** The Toolkit uses these immediate and growing pressures as a wake-up call. We need to think and act differently to ensure the long-term well-being of all generations and the communities we inhabit.

Changing demographics will undoubtedly affect the ways that we redesign communities, shape services, use resources, and write social policies. At a time when new paths must be set, it's important to the fabric of our nation to find higher common ground—policies and practices that reject intergenerational conflict and defeat the notion that things can only get worse. The Toolkit identifies innovations already under way in communities throughout the country that point in sustainable directions. These innovations demonstrate above all else that greater returns are possible when problems and challenges are considered together. The Toolkit guides you to use issues prompted by the aging of the population to create solutions that benefit multiple generations and honor the limits on our financial and environmental resources.

Tools to Carry With You on That Path

The Toolkit contains the following tools to build sustainable communities for all ages:

User’s Guide—the instruction manual that’s advisable to read at the beginning of your work. If you don’t do it then, you’ll certainly want to read this once you hit a roadblock with the other tools!

Found in the Back Pocket

Video—stories of three locales where steps are being taken toward becoming sustainable communities for all ages. **Found in the Back Pocket**

Planning Worksheet—a step-by-step application of each of the tools in a manageable sequence, focusing on your specific priorities. **TAB II**

Community Checklist—a menu that defines the features of a sustainable community for all ages, offers a system for assessing your community’s accomplishments in relation to those features, and provides a process for deciding your next steps in building a sustainable community for all ages. **TAB III**

Issue Briefs—mapped to the key areas of the Community Checklist, these tools make the case for specific approaches, and describe strategies and resources already in use to build sustainable communities for all ages. **TAB IV**

Organizational Assessment—an evaluation instrument to identify your organization’s strengths and its areas for building capacity in order to do the work of sustainable communities for all ages. **TAB V**

Tips for Coalition Building & Collaboration—strategies to promote and sustain the shared work required by the vision of a sustainable community for all ages. **TAB VI**

Communication Guide—steps to help you create simple and compelling messages around the complex issues of sustainable communities for all ages. **TAB VII**

Resource Development—a practical guide for ways community organizations can share data, funds, staff, volunteers, and space in order to achieve greater cost-efficiencies from collaborative undertakings. **TAB VIII**

**If you think this Toolkit may be for you,
your community, and your family,
you will benefit by reading on.**

1 Green Schools Initiative, Global Green USA, www.globalgreen.org/greenbuilding/GreenSchools-SC.html See also www.policylink.org/Research/schoolovercrowding/ about school overcrowding.

2 www.experiencecorps.org/about_us/index.html

3 National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, www.edfacilities.org

4 www.livingeconomies.org/resources/localinthenews/ksstar

5 www.communitygarden.org/

6 www.isles.org/progs.html

7 Generations United, “Young and Old Serving Together”, June, 2002. Also, <http://fullcircletheatre.org/>



THE PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES: A PLANNING WORKSHEET



“Virtue without action is meaningless.”

Cicero

THE PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES: A PLANNING WORKSHEET

Why Should I Use This Tool?

When your community is ready to move into action, it's important to have a systematic approach to advance the vision of a sustainable community for all ages. This worksheet guides you through planning and implementation by tying all of the Toolkit components together. It keeps you on track from your initial community assessment to the achievement of measurable results.



What Will This Tool Help Me Accomplish?

This tool takes you from start to finish to realize your community's vision. It helps you:

- 1 assess your community's strengths and needs and prioritize its next steps
- 2 strengthen your own organization's capacity for the work
- 3 have the right partners at the table to improve the chances of success
- 4 communicate your goal in ways that gain support
- 5 identify objectives for achieving your goal
- 6 mobilize the resources you need to reach your objectives
- 7 take action and measure the results, and
- 8 communicate and celebrate your success

How Do I Use This Tool?

It's easy! This tool is organized to work in conjunction with all of the other tools in the Toolkit. Each step below represents a distinct stage of planning and implementation for creating sustainable communities for all ages. Simply follow the instructions with each of the steps. By the end of this worksheet, you will have a solid strategy for achieving the goals you've chosen.

Most steps are designed so that they can be the subject of one meeting. At the end of about six meetings, the community can be well on its way—together—to becoming a sustainable community for all ages.

THE PATHWAY STEP BY STEP

1. Assess Your Community's Strengths and Needs and Prioritize its Next Steps

- Read pp. 5-7 in the *User's Guide* (found in the back pocket) before you begin.
- Convene a broadly representative group of community members and leaders.
- Then use the *Community Checklist* (TAB III) to (1) identify your community's strengths for becoming a sustainable community for all ages and (2) figure out what the next steps should be toward that vision. The Issue Briefs in TAB IV are worth reviewing to complete the checklist. Record your conclusions below.

Strengths as a Sustainable Community	Goals for Next Step(s)

- The next step helps each participant organization assess its capacity for contribution to the collaboration.



2. Strengthen Your Own Capacity for the Work

- This step is typically done by individual organizations outside of a community meeting. It can be done at any time but will be most effective at the beginning of collaborative work.
- Read p. 8 in the *User's Guide* before you begin.
- Use the *Organizational Assessment* (TAB V) to identify your group's strengths as well as areas in which it may want to build capacity further. Record your conclusions and next steps below. You can decide how much of the information about individual organizations is useful to share in the larger group.

Organizational Strengths and Other Conclusions	Steps for Building Additional Organizational Capacity

- The next step helps you figure out who else should be at the table and how to keep everyone there. 

3. Have the Right Partners at the Table and Keep Them Engaged

- Read p. 8-10 in the *User's Guide* before you begin.
- Then review the *Tips for Coalition-Building and Collaboration* (TAB VI) for answers to some typical questions that arise when groups work together.
- Record below who else needs to be at the table and what particular advice about collaboration your group wants to keep in mind as you move forward.

Who Else Should be at the Table & Plan for Their Inclusion	Key Points to Keep in Mind about Collaboration in Our Community

- You may want to return to this step later, too, if you see that you have overlooked significant allies or if the group needs to revisit what's important for its ongoing ability to work together.
- Now you're ready as a group to gain broad support for your work. 

4. Communicate Your Goal in Ways that Gain Support

- Read p. 10 in the *User's Guide* before you begin.
- Then use the *Communication Guide* (TAB VII) to develop messages that generate support for the work. Record your key message(s) below.

Key Message(s) for Generating Support for Next Steps

- Use the message(s) to bring other supporters on board. Throughout the course of your work, you may want to return to this step to fine-tune your message.
- Now it's time to get into details... 

5. Identify Objectives for Achieving Your Goal

- Read pp. 11-13 in the *User's Guide* before you begin.
- Then review the *Issue Brief* (TAB IV) that most closely aligns with the work you want to undertake. If it doesn't include promising practices that are directly aligned with your goal, then look at the website links in the references or on p. 15 of the *User's Guide* to get additional ideas.
- Below, fill in the overall goal that the group wants to achieve. Then record the group's logic about (a) what strategies it believes will achieve each of the identified objectives and (b) how it will measure that success has been achieved.

Overall Goal: _____

What Objectives Must be Met to Achieve the Goal?	What Actions Will be Taken to Achieve Each Objective?	How Will Success be Measured for Each Objective?

- Now it's time, in the next step, to identify available resources to achieve your goal. ↓

6. Mobilize the Resources You Need to Reach Your Objectives

- Read p. 13 in the *User's Guide* before you begin.
- Use the *Resource Development* tool (TAB VIII) to foster creative thinking about resource identification. Record the resources below that can be brought to bear on each objective that's been identified. If sufficient resources can't be identified for a specific objective, the group will need to revisit and modify the previous step.

Objectives	Available and Potential Resources	Are These Sufficient?

- Now it's time to move from planning to implementation. So far, so good. All of the work to date has prepared you to take this next decisive step. ↓

7. Take Action and Measure the Results

- Read pp. 11-13 in the *User's Guide* before you begin.
- Record below the actions that are needed to reach each objective (the same as those you recorded in Step 5), including results measurement, and identify who is responsible for each action.

Objectives	Specific Actions Required to Accomplish It	Who is Responsible?

- Determine periodic times to reconvene to review what's been achieved. Then take the next step at the appropriate time(s). 

8. Communicate, Celebrate and Sustain Success

- Read p. 14 in the *User's Guide* before you begin.
- Revisit Step 4 and the *Communication Guide* to ensure that you communicate what's been accomplished with the best message for the moment. Record your message below.

Key Message(s) for Communicating Success

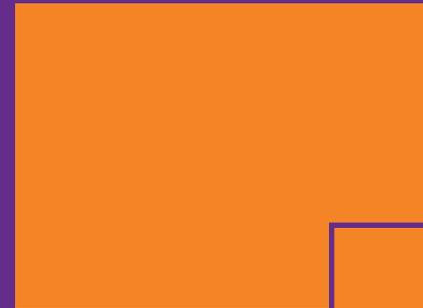
Key Message(s) for Communicating Success

- Use the message(s) to affirm what's possible when groups come together to create sustainable communities for all ages. Each success should be used to build momentum and expand allies.

Now, you are well positioned to return to Step 1 to identify new priorities and keep the cycle of success going.

A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY FOR ALL AGES IS WITHIN YOUR REACH!

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES: A COMMUNITY CHECKLIST



**“The great use of life is to spend it for
something that will outlast us.”**

William James

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES: A COMMUNITY CHECKLIST

Why Should I Use This Tool?

Your own work is demanding enough. So it's probably not often that you have the luxury to look beyond your immediate concerns or outside of your particular organization, program, or policy area. This tool makes it easier for you to think more broadly about what it will take to build communities that are good places for people of all ages to live. It offers a menu of approaches in key areas of community life—**lifelong education and civic engagement, community and economic development, individual and family wellness, affordable quality housing, and land use, transportation, and natural resources**—that together produce a sustainable community for all ages. It helps you envision and prioritize the concrete work that would make your community a leader in meeting the needs of a wide range of today's residents while also protecting the quality of life for generations to come.

This tool is designed for:

- organizations looking for opportunities to draw upon others' strengths to achieve their own goals, and
- organizations that already have collaborative relationships and would like to strengthen them.

Any organization can become an engine or an ally in the drive for sustainable communities for all ages, whether it has a broad or a narrow mandate. Examples of organizations and agencies with

a broad mandate that can become an engine include a Regional Planning Commission or the office of a City or County Manager. Those with a broad investment focus—such as a United Way or a Community Foundation, or a broad political constituency—such as a City Council or a County Commission—are also readily positioned to be an engine. If you have a more specific focus like a housing or employment agency, or a more specific constituency like an Area Agency on Aging, a Department of Family and Child Services, or a local affiliate of the National Council of La Raza or the National Urban League, your impact can be broadened and your specific work reinforced by becoming an engine or an ally for sustainable communities for all ages.

What Will This Tool Help Me Accomplish?

- An understanding of the particular features that go into a sustainable community for all ages
- An assessment of your community's strengths and achievements in moving toward this vision
- A systematic way to prioritize opportunities within your community to move toward being a sustainable community for all ages

How Do I Use This Tool?

FIRST: RELAX!

The tool is easier than it looks on first glance. Recognize that there are no right or wrong answers on this Checklist. Communities that use it will be coming with different experiences. The important thing to keep in mind is that YOUR community has decided to use the Checklist. That moves you toward the front of the line in pursuit of being a sustainable community for all ages.



Courtesy of Jefferson Area Board for Aging

SECOND: REVIEW THE AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Notice that for each Area of Opportunity, you are given both broad goals and sample approaches for advancing those goals. Before you move into the rating process, discuss whether your group wants to add any items for Checklist consideration, since this list is not exhaustive. You should be able to describe how any new item contributes to sustainable communities for all ages.*

*Additional items for consideration should meet at least one of the following criteria for inclusion:

- benefits diverse community members,
- promotes interaction across the generations, builds upon their common interests and respective assets,
- creates opportunities and spaces for lifelong community engagement,
- offers housing and transportation options that are easy for all people to use,
- encourages people to walk or use energy-efficient alternatives to automobile travel,
- creates healthy living environments that promote physical activity and reduce environmentally related diseases,
- promotes wise use of natural resources to protect the environment,
- encourages clean local economic development and supports local businesses.

THIRD: RATE YOUR COMMUNITY'S LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN EACH AREA

On the Checklist you are asked to give two ratings: (1) your community's current level of activity around a particular feature of sustainable communities for all ages, and (2) the priority your community gives this feature as an opportunity to move forward toward its vision. **Go through all of the Activity Ratings first.** You can choose to do this separately first and then as a group to compare ratings and seek agreement. Or, you can do the rating as a full group by determining the most appropriate rating for each item through group discussion. The activity rating scale is as follows:

0. Do not know
1. No activity—our community isn't addressing this
2. Initial activity—our community is in a planning process
3. Moving into action—we have started implementation
4. High level of activity—we're well along our way
5. Highest level of activity—our community is adequately addressing this

FOURTH: PRIORITIZE YOUR COMMUNITY'S OPPORTUNITIES

After you've finished the ratings for Level of Activity, then provide Priority Ratings **for all items that received a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating.** Again, you can choose to do this separately first and then as a group to compare ratings and seek agreement. Or, you can do the rating as a full group by determining the most appropriate rating for each item through group discussion. The priority rating scale is as follows:

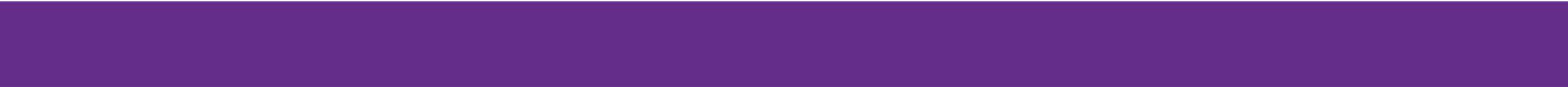
1. Lowest priority – not applicable, not interested in pursuing in the next year, or not possible to pursue in the next year
2. Moderate interest in pursuing in the next year
3. High interest in pursuing in the next year

AND THEN: TALK SOME MORE!

What do the numbers mean? You're now in a position to use the ratings to have a systematic discussion about the prospects for your community to be a sustainable community for all ages. Use the Discussion Questions at the end of the Checklist (and add any others you wish) to get the most out of this tool.

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST

<p style="text-align: center;">Areas of Opportunity for Building Sustainable Communities for All Ages</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level of Activity <i>(Rate as 0-5)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Priority Rating <i>(Rate as 1-3 those items that got a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating)</i></p>
<p>1. Lifelong Education and Civic Engagement For more information, see the accompanying Issue Brief (TAB IV)</p>	<p>0. Do not know 1. No activity 2. In the planning process 3. Implementation begun 4. Well along 5. Adequately addressing it</p>	<p>1. Low interest 2. Moderate interest 3. High interest</p>
<p>GOAL: LIFELONG OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING AND CIVIC INVOLVEMENT</p> <p>APPROACHES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inclusion of older citizens and youth in community planning and in decision-making (task forces, advisory boards) ○ System for recruiting, training and supporting volunteers of all ages ○ Intergenerational approaches used in educational and after-school programs ○ Involvement of all ages in environmental education and protection programs ○ Community arts and recreational activities inclusive of all ages and cultures <p>GOAL: INSTITUTIONS THAT OFFER HIGH QUALITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGE GROUPS</p> <p>APPROACHES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement of all generations in schools so that student success is viewed as everyone’s responsibility ○ Adequate resources for all public schools through equitable financing 		



<p style="text-align: center;">Areas of Opportunity for Building Sustainable Communities for All Ages</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level of Activity <i>(Rate as 0-5)</i></p> <p>0. Do not know 1. No activity 2. In the planning process 3. Implementation begun 4. Well along 5. Adequately addressing it</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Priority Rating <i>(Rate as 1-3 those items that got a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating)</i></p> <p>1. Low interest 2. Moderate interest 3. High interest</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of neighborhood-based schools for community programs and services responsive to all age and culture groups ○ Partnerships between the community and institutions of higher education for resource sharing and lifelong learning ○ Workforce and education systems with career paths 		
<p>2. Community and Economic Development For more information, see the accompanying Issue Brief (TAB IV)</p>		
<p>GOAL: A STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY AND LABOR MARKET</p> <p>APPROACHES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training programs for people entering or changing careers ○ Commitment to local hiring and livable wages on projects using public expenditures and on new economic development ○ Use of locally grown food at schools, restaurants and nonprofit nutrition sites 		

Areas of Opportunity for Building Sustainable Communities for All Ages

Level of Activity (Rate as 0-5)

0. Do not know
1. No activity
2. In the planning process
3. Implementation begun
4. Well along
5. Adequately addressing it

Priority Rating (Rate as 1-3 those items that got a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating)

1. Low interest
2. Moderate interest
3. High interest

- Support for locally made products to promote local economic stability
- Efforts to address quality retail voids in under-served neighborhoods

GOAL: COMMUNITY- AND FAMILY-SUPPORTIVE BUSINESSES AND SERVICES

APPROACHES:

- Community Development Financial Institutions
- Employee stock ownership plans
- Work environments that encourage family leave, flexible schedules and job-sharing to support child and elder care

GOAL: SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

APPROACHES:

- Removal of barriers to safe neighborhoods—vacant lots and buildings, dark streets and walkways, overgrown vegetation
- Support to enable public sector employees to live in the communities where they work



<p style="text-align: center;">Areas of Opportunity for Building Sustainable Communities for All Ages</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level of Activity <i>(Rate as 0-5)</i></p> <p>0. Do not know 1. No activity 2. In the planning process 3. Implementation begun 4. Well along 5. Adequately addressing it</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Priority Rating <i>(Rate as 1-3 those items that got a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating)</i></p> <p>1. Low interest 2. Moderate interest 3. High interest</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public safety and emergency services that are responsive to all neighborhoods and sensitive to the needs of diverse ages and cultures 		
<p>3. Individual and Family Wellness For more information, see the accompanying Issue Brief (TAB IV)</p>		
<p>GOAL: HEALTHY LIVING</p> <p>APPROACHES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health, wellness, and nutrition education programs that are tailored to different generations and cultural groups ○ Nutritious foods in schools, community service sites, and vending machines ○ Campaigns addressed to all ages to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and drug (prescription, over-the-counter, and illegal) abuse ○ Community design (sidewalks, crosswalks, street lighting, parks) that encourages walking and outdoor recreation ○ Farmers markets, mercados, community gardens for fresh, nutritional produce 		

Areas of Opportunity for Building Sustainable Communities for All Ages

Level of Activity (Rate as 0-5)

0. Do not know
1. No activity
2. In the planning process
3. Implementation begun
4. Well along
5. Adequately addressing it

Priority Rating (Rate as 1-3 those items that got a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating)

1. Low interest
2. Moderate interest
3. High interest

GOAL: ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE PHYSICAL HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

APPROACHES:

- Promotion of, and education about, available physical health, mental health, and social services and benefits
- Community health care centers for persons of all ages and cultures within close proximity to where people live or accessible by public transportation
- Affordable in-home services that allow the opportunity to “age in place” and support people who have disabilities
- Well trained, compensated, and adequate workforce to address local health care demand
- Coordinated service delivery systems that are age- and culture-appropriate

Areas of Opportunity for Building Sustainable Communities for All Ages

Level of Activity (Rate as 0-5)

0. Do not know
1. No activity
2. In the planning process
3. Implementation begun
4. Well along
5. Adequately addressing it

Priority Rating

(Rate as 1-3 those items that got a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating)

1. Low interest
2. Moderate interest
3. High interest

GOAL: SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVING FAMILIES

APPROACHES:

- Respite services that provide temporary relief from caregiving responsibilities for families throughout the life course
- Assistance to caregivers to navigate service systems
- Workplace programs that support family caregivers

4. Affordable Quality Housing

For more information, see the accompanying Issue Brief (TAB IV)

GOAL: AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

APPROACHES:

- Ordinances that link new commercial development to the creation of affordable, environmentally sound housing
- Inclusionary zoning for mixed income housing
- Zoning for Accessing Dwelling Units and availability of housing options for independent living across a range of ability levels and family arrangements

Areas of Opportunity for Building Sustainable Communities for All Ages

Level of Activity (Rate as 0-5)

0. Do not know
1. No activity
2. In the planning process
3. Implementation begun
4. Well along
5. Adequately addressing it

Priority Rating (Rate as 1-3 those items that got a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating)

1. Low interest
2. Moderate interest
3. High interest

- New concepts in housing and community building—e.g., co-housing, intentional communities
- Building code enforcement that protects existing residents from displacement
- Housing that is use-flexible for people with special needs (universal design)

GOAL: ENERGY-EFFICIENT, HEALTHY BUILDINGS AND DWELLINGS

APPROACHES:

- Building design and construction materials and methods that conserve energy and water and enhance health
- Energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, appliances and lighting
- Public education on healthy indoor environments (improving air quality, reducing use of indoor chemicals)
- Easily accessible recycling and garbage collection
- State and local policy incentives for sustainable building practices

Areas of Opportunity for Building Sustainable Communities for All Ages

Level of Activity (Rate as 0-5)

0. Do not know
1. No activity
2. In the planning process
3. Implementation begun
4. Well along
5. Adequately addressing it

Priority Rating (Rate as 1-3 those items that got a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating)

1. Low interest
2. Moderate interest
3. High interest

5. Land Use, Transportation, and Natural Resources

For more information, see the accompanying Issue Brief (TAB IV)

GOAL: PLANNING AND ZONING FOR MIXED RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS USES

APPROACHES:

- Comprehensive plans that establish incentives for mixed-use development
- Requirement of private investment in infrastructure for large-scale rezoning decisions
- Housing located close to schools, businesses and services, medical care, child-care facilities, social services, and recreation
- Open spaces (parks, gardens) that attract all ages and are accessible to people of all abilities
- Infill development incentives to improve vacant lots
- Vacant buildings and brownfields reclaimed for housing, stores, and community gathering spaces
- Community land trusts for local control over local land use

Areas of Opportunity for Building Sustainable Communities for All Ages

Level of Activity (Rate as 0-5)

0. Do not know
1. No activity
2. In the planning process
3. Implementation begun
4. Well along
5. Adequately addressing it

Priority Rating (Rate as 1-3 those items that got a 0, 1, or 2 Activity Rating)

1. Low interest
2. Moderate interest
3. High interest

GOAL: ACCESSIBLE, ENERGY-EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION

APPROACHES:

- Public transportation linked to housing, jobs, schools, businesses, and services
- Transportation options to address the needs of individuals with special health issues and a variety of physical abilities
- Clean fuel public transportation vehicles — public buses, school buses
- Safe driving programs for people of all ages
- Affordable door-to-door transportation programs

GOAL: IMPROVED AIR AND WATER QUALITY

APPROACHES:

- Regular monitoring of, and efforts to improve:
 - Air Quality Index
 - Children’s asthma rates
 - Bronchial diseases among 50+ population
- Regulations promoting smoke-free environments
- Regular monitoring of public water systems and timely efforts to rectify problems
- Water conservation efforts, such as rainwater recovery

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS MEAN? QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION ONCE RATINGS HAVE BEEN GIVEN

1. **Activity Rating.** Note which items received a 3, 4, or 5 on the Activity Rating and discuss the following:

- Are there any gaps in what we're already doing that may still need to be filled? (Sometimes gaps are related to inadequate reach—i.e., specific groups and potential partners are being left out of the good work.) If so, how can we close those gaps?
- What are we already doing that should be better publicized, promoted, and celebrated? (Take time to celebrate achievements!)
- How can we use our achievements to build a public relations campaign about sustainable communities for all ages? (See the *Communication Guide* (TAB VII) for ideas)

2. **Priority Rating.** Note which items received a 1 or 2 on the Priority Rating, and discuss the following:

- Would the areas that are not considered a priority be assessed in the same way by all community groups? If not, should this assessment be reconsidered? (If you reconsider it by giving it a 3, then add it to your items for the rest of the discussion. Also, plan to involve the identified community groups who consider it a priority. You need their voice at the table.)

3. **Priority Rating.** Focusing still on the Priority Rating, note which items received a 3, and discuss the following:

- For the areas that received a 3, what are the possible next steps? (Keep in mind the value of starting small and working toward immediate and interim successes.) What can be coordinated with what we're already doing well? (Look for economies of scale, effort, and resources.)
- How can we get information about those items that received a 0 on the Activity Rating but a 3 on the Priority Rating?
- Once we have all of the information we need, how should we focus our attention? What should be the top priority on which we move ahead together?



DON'T FORGET!

Record what you've concluded from this tool on the *Planning Worksheet* (TAB II). It asks for information in the following categories:

Strengths as a Sustainable Community

Goals for Next Step(s)

Resources:

Kretzman and McKnight, "Building Communities from the Inside Out," www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/community/buildingblurb.html and "Discovering Community Power: A Guide to Mobilizing Local Assets and Your Organization's Capacity," www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd/kelloggabcd.pdf; Florida Department of Elder Affairs, "Communities for a Lifetime Blueprint," elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/CFL/cfl10.html; Smart Growth Network, "Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation" and "Getting to Smart Growth II: 100 More Policies for Implementation," www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/publications.htm; City of Seattle Office of Housing, "SeaGreen, Greening Seattle's Affordable Housing," www.seattle.gov/housing/SeaGreen; U.S. Green Building Council, "LEED for Neighborhood Development," www.usgbc.org; Atlanta Regional Commission, "Community Choices Quality Growth Toolkit," www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xchg/SID-3F57FEE7-D1EF9F39/arc/hs.xsl/392_ENU_HTML.htm, and "Aging in Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments," www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xbcr/SID-3F57FEE7-EBAF3EA6/arc/Aging_Place_Tool.pdf; International City/County Management Association, "Active Living and Social Equity: Creating Healthy Communities for All Residents," www.icma.org/main/ld.asp?from=search&ldid=18849&hsid=10; Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Elders as Resources," www.aecf.org/initiatives/mc/readingroomdocuments/POV.pdf; National Council on Family Relations, "A Checklist for Assessing the Impact of Policies and Programs on Families," www.ncfr.org/pdf/NCFR_Checklist.pdf; National Association of Area Agencies on Aging "Maturing of America Final Report" www.n4a.org/pdf/MCAFinalReport.pdf; Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning, "Toolkit for Intergenerational Program Planners," www.templecil.org/resources/toolkit/index.htm; AARP, "Beyond 50.05, A Report to the Nation on Livable Communities," http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/beyond_50_communities.pdf; AdvantAge, "Best Practices: Lessons for Communities" www.vnsny.org/advantage/tools/advantage_best.pdf; National Association of Counties, Joint Center for Sustainable Communities and the Smart Growth Network, "Local Tools for Smart Growth: Practical Strategies and Techniques to Improve our Communities," www.naco.org/content/contentgroups/programs_and_projects/environmental1/sources/1528LocalTools.pdf; K. Rusch, "The Emerging New Society," The Democracy Collaborative, www.democracycollaborative.org/; J. Torney-Purta, "Creating Citizenship," Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, www.livingeconomies.org; PolicyLink, www.policylink.org; American Planning Association, www.planning.org

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES: ISSUE BRIEFS



Issue Briefs

- 1. Lifelong Education and Civic Engagement**
- 2. Community and Economic Development**
- 3. Individual and Family Wellness**
- 4. Affordable Quality Housing**
- 5. Land Use, Transportation and Natural Resources**

Why Should I Use This Tool?

When we face challenges, it is always heartening to know that others prevailed when they faced similar challenges. The Issue Briefs lay out some of the most pressing issues facing communities today and offer a menu of workable and mutually reinforcing approaches to address them. Every single day, governments, organizations, and coalitions around the country are taking steps to build sustainable communities for all ages. We can learn from one another what works, under what conditions, in what sequence, and with what effort. These practical and concrete ideas provide reason for optimism that sustainable communities for all ages are within our reach.

What Will This Tool Help Me Accomplish?

The Issue Briefs identify key community challenges within broad issue areas and suggest concrete approaches to address them. Using the Briefs enables you to:

- recognize the inter-related nature of these challenging issues
- start a substantive conversation about how to address specific challenges
- access more detailed resources to go deeper on specific approaches
- identify single solutions that solve multiple community problems
- make the case that solutions are achievable in your own community because other communities have met similar challenges

How Do I Use This Tool?

The topics of the Issue Briefs are aligned with the five sections of the Community Checklist (Tab III). If your community has identified its priorities -- either by using the Checklist or through some other process -- read the relevant Issue Brief to get a substantive conversation started about possible solutions. For specific approaches that interest you, use the references to go deeper. If you haven't completed the Community Checklist (Tab III), you may want to do so at this time.

If your community is faced with a host of issues, read across all of the Briefs for a useful summary of how one issue impacts another. Use this broad understanding to identify "economies of scope" – how to impact multiple problems with single solutions. If possible, select as your priority issues those that can employ economies of scope and that identify a wider range of allies than usual.



Imagine a community where:

- Educational institutions offer rich learning opportunities so that people of all ages can achieve their potential
- Residents of all ages and cultures participate in community life and shape the community's future

Importance of This Issue for Sustainable Communities for All Ages

At all stages of life, individuals want to achieve self-sufficiency, reach their potential, and lead purposeful lives. No matter what our age, we all have a stake in education and an obligation to contribute to our communities. Access to lifelong learning and opportunities for civic participation (political activity, mutual aid, volunteering, and advocacy) are the life blood of democracy.

Sustainable communities for all ages need to ensure that residents have the resources (time, skills, information) and opportunities to participate in civic life and that their participation reinforces their sense of connection to the community. The fabric of community life that has become noticeably frayed can be rewoven. By utilizing residents' talents to address community concerns, offering learning opportunities across the lifespan, and building strong social networks, we can renew the intergenerational social compact and strengthen our democracy.

I. Educational Success for Children and Youth

The Challenge:

- **Different Starting Lines.** Forty percent of kindergartners do not enter school fully prepared to learn. Teachers report that at least half of the children lack specific academic skills. Children that do not attend a preschool program have been shown to have lower high school graduation rates, less college attendance, higher juvenile crime rates, and lower lifetime earnings.¹
- **Low-Performing Schools.** Students relegated to high-poverty, racially segregated, or linguistically isolated schools continue to have fewer school resources and academic opportunities than those in schools with White majorities. By the end of high school, White students are more prepared to succeed in college, where educational gaps widen further.²

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

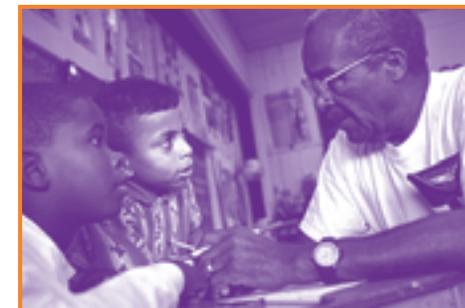
- **Revenue Strategies for Student Success.** Regional revenue-sharing and greater state responsibility for school funding are more likely to create equitable school funding. The state of New Mexico provides about 84% of funds for local schools, with specific emphasis on at-risk students, a formula considered to be one of the most equalized in the nation.³



- **Readiness of Schools for Diverse Populations.** Student success is more likely when school practices and student home culture are well aligned. Considerable resources exist for reducing cultural “mismatches” between learners and schools, including guidance for teachers, principals, and school system administrators.⁴ The Idaho Department of Education, for example, with a growing number of Hispanic students, offers professional development so that teachers can learn about their students’ culture, language, and learning styles in order to create effective instructional strategies.⁵
- **Support for High-Performing Schools and Teachers.** More than 100 members of South Carolina Education Association–Retired have become trained lobbyists to work on behalf of improved public education. Their advocacy ensured full funding of the state’s education improvement law.⁶ Members of National Education Association–Retired provide constructive solutions and transitional help for new teachers and student teachers by sharing their knowledge about the challenges facing educators and educational institutions in the promotion of student success.⁷
- **Student Mentoring.** Experience Corps deploys more than 1,800 Corps members over age 55 in 19 cities to serve as tutors and mentors to children in urban public schools and after-school programs. Experience Corps boosts student academic performance, helps schools and youth-serving

organizations become more successful, strengthens ties between these institutions and surrounding neighborhoods, and enhances the health of the volunteers in the process.⁸ Volunteers with the National Retired Teachers Association’s *With Our Youth!* program provide children and youth with educational and life-skills support. Since 1999, it has reached more than 2.5 million youth in 42 states as well as influenced educational policy.⁹

- **Building Language Skills.** Intergenerational Bridges in Rockville, Maryland, an after-school mentoring program of Interages, pairs a student learning English with an older adult for language practice and cultural exchange.¹⁰ In other settings, elders with first languages other than English offer language instruction for college students so that the next generation will have stronger language skills for a multicultural and global workplace.



Courtesy of Temple University
Center for Intergenerational Learning



II. Educational Institutions as Community Resources

The Challenge:

- **Underutilized Schools.** As community resources, school facilities remain under-utilized. School buildings too often are isolated islands within their communities, used at less than a third of their potential, operating six or seven hours a day, five days a week, nine months a year, while their maintenance, debt service, and other costs continue year round.¹¹
- **Campus-Community Divides.** While a growing number of colleges and universities are engaged with their surrounding communities in service learning, mentoring, community service, and economic development, the resources of higher education remain to be fully tapped in the creation of sustainable communities for all ages.¹²

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Community Schools.** Community schools are essentially community resource centers open to all members of the community well beyond the traditional school schedules, with a range of services provided on site. When schools are used around the clock and offer programs and services for all community members, residents are more likely to support school levies,¹³ buildings are used more efficiently, people become more aware of community agencies, the

safety of the surrounding area increases, and community pride in the school is strengthened.¹⁴ In Milwaukee, WI, the Neighborhood School Initiative will construct, expand, and renovate schools in walkable neighborhoods, and design them as community centers, encouraging community use of the library, gym, parent center, cafeteria, art, and music rooms.¹⁵

- **Shared Facilities.** Educational facilities adapted to become intergenerational sites are embraced by advocates for afterschool activities and welcomed by parents concerned about the safety of their children. In Jefferson County, KY, the School Board operates senior center programs at Louisville schools. Originally focused on nutrition, with older adults eating their meals in the school cafeteria, the program has grown into a thriving intergenerational initiative with older adults tutoring through the America-Reads challenge, chaperoning school activities, and auditing classes. Students in turn deliver meals to homebound elderly.¹⁶
- **Intergenerational Coordination.** San Diego County's Helix Charter High School hired an Intergenerational Coordinator to manage a large cadre of elder volunteers and to serve as an ombudsman to solve problems experienced by grandparent guardians as they try to promote children's school success.¹⁷ Chelsea, MA, Public Schools, in cooperation with community organizations and Boston University, operate an Intergenerational Literacy Program. Non-English



speaking immigrant parents who participate in English literacy classes are able more fully to support their children's education in American schools—while maintaining their existing rich literacy and language practices within the family.¹⁸

- **Campus-Community Partnerships at the Institutional Level.** Higher educational institutions are important community partners as employers, workforce development specialists, land developers, purchasers of goods and services, and civic activists. The University of Pennsylvania's commitment to local purchasing in Philadelphia resulted in recent annual purchases of more than \$70 million in goods and services from neighborhood businesses, with \$49 million going to minority vendors.¹⁹
- **Campus-Community Partnerships at the Individual Level.** Project SHINE is a national service-learning initiative for college students to assist older immigrants and refugees to learn English and navigate the path to U.S. citizenship.²⁰

III. Job Preparation, Career Development, and Life-long Learning

The Challenge:

- **Disconnection from the Workforce.** Over 20% of Native American, African American, and Hispanic youth 18-24, along with 12% of White youth and 7% of Asian American youth, are “disconnected” from opportunities for successful adulthood. They do not have an education beyond high school, are not enrolled in school, are not currently working, and are vulnerable to incarceration.²¹
- **Lack of Transferable Skills.** Skill transfer is the ability to apply what one already knows to a new situation. Because today's workers will not remain in jobs over a lifetime, a stock of transferable skills is essential for ongoing self-sufficiency. But these assets are less likely among workers in sectors where jobs are disappearing.²²
- **Later Life Opportunities.** Almost 60% of older Americans see retirement as “a time to be active and involved, to start new activities, and to set new goals.”²³ Half of all Americans age 50 to 70 are interested in taking jobs now and in retirement that help improve community quality of life, especially education and social services.²⁴ Communities should prepare to tap the energies of this generation.



Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Career Pathways.** Workforce and education systems that are reorganized around “career pathways” integrate education, training, and work. Because they focus on high-wage, high-demand sectors, they hold considerable promise for promoting the economic self-sufficiency of workers entering the workplace with limited basic skills and limited English proficiency.²⁴
- **Support for Transition from Welfare to Work.** Older adults and aging organizations can provide support for individuals moving from welfare to work. Senior Connections of DeKalb County, GA, is piloting a project to transport welfare-to-work clients to and from job sites, and also drop off and pick up children at day care centers.²⁵ In San Diego, older volunteers mentor and offer family-focused assistance to workers transitioning from welfare.²⁶
- **Keys to Job Access and Advancement.** For disconnected workers, job success is optimized through job readiness training for short-term retention, “hard-skills” training for long-term retention, employer-subsidized benefits, positive wage changes after initial placement, and basic support services for other aspects of their lives.²⁷ The success of Milwaukee’s Jobs Initiative, which provides customized training for employers’ up-front hiring commitments, fostered the creation of a Wisconsin Workforce Attachment and Advancement Fund.²⁸

- **Lifelong Learning.** Almost 100 colleges and universities in 39 states plus the District of Columbia have Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes dedicated to excellence in educational programming for older adults, where the focus is on the joy of learning.²⁹
- **“Third Age” Leadership.** The Center for Third Age Leadership helps companies maximize the value of their maturing employees by ensuring that their knowledge and expertise are fully utilized and transferred. It also works with older adults to identify new possibilities for life and work after the age of 50 and develop those aspirations into realities.³⁰

V. Civic Engagement

The Challenge:

- **Declining Civic Trust and Involvement.** The index of the nation’s civic health—our degree of social and political engagement—has declined rapidly in the past 30 years, with fewer Americans trusting one another and key institutions, and evidence of declining participation in civic groups. The decline has been greatest among people without college education.³¹



- **Unpreparedness for Interested Volunteers.** The value of unpaid contributions by older Americans to their families and communities exceeded \$161 billion in 2002.³³ Youth also are looking for opportunities—their volunteering has increased since 9/11.³⁴ Organizations and communities, however, may lack the civic infrastructure to tap into this potential.³⁵

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Engagement for Healthy Environments.** The Environmental Health Coaches Program mobilizes older adults from low-income neighborhoods in Philadelphia that have the highest rates of asthma and diabetes to build their skills as community leaders. They work with elementary school teachers to educate children about environmental triggers for chronic health conditions and help them develop action steps to protect themselves, their families, and their communities.³⁶
- **Engagement for Health Access.** The VIM (Volunteers in Medicine) Institute is developing a national network of free clinics using retired medical and lay volunteers to care for the “working uninsured.”³⁷ The effort has spawned new policies allowing special volunteer licenses in South Carolina for retired physicians from other states and extending the state’s Good Samaritan Law to reduce the cost of malpractice insurance.

- **Engagement for the Workplace.** At its 389 offices, the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) donates time and talent to assist micro-enterprise development.³⁸ Volunteers with Senior Corps work closely with organizations that help children and families in low-income communities develop the computer skills needed as a requisite for many kinds of employment.³⁹
- **Engagement for Community Justice.** In Alaska, the Emmonak Elders’ Group handles certain non-felony juvenile cases, permitting youth to remain within the community while their offenses are adjudicated through the body of elders. Youth are held accountable within the context of the local community and its traditions.⁴⁰
- **Use of the Arts for Community Building.** Arts nurture intergenerational and intercultural capital by building bridges across boundaries, celebrating and preserving heritage in a rapidly changing world, and providing safe ways to discuss and resolve tough social issues.⁴¹ Placing an emphasis on the jazz and rhythm tap tradition, and led by two staff with a 100+ years of tap dancing, teaching, and choreographic experience, Tappers with Attitude in Washington, D.C., provides tap dance education and performance opportunities for dancers of all ages and abilities in order to preserve and promote the uniquely American art of tap dance.⁴² The San Francisco, CA, Center



for Elders and Youth in the Arts teams youth and elders in collaborative arts programs and cross-generational community performances, under the instruction of professional visual and performing artists.⁴³

○ **Development of Infrastructures to Support Volunteers.**

Effective civic mobilization requires compelling and flexible service opportunities as well as strategies for volunteer recruitment, training, supervision, and retention. Temple University’s Center for Intergenerational Learning has created a Toolkit for Intergenerational Program Planners that takes users from start to finish to launch intergenerational approaches to addressing individual, family, and community needs.⁴⁴

A sustainable community for all ages nurtures the potential of all residents, fosters the opportunity to participate in civic life, and promotes learning across the lifespan.

Endnotes

¹ Kauffman Early Learning Exchange, Set for Success, v.1 no,1 2002. Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
² The Education Trust, www2.edtrust.org/edtrust
³ www.newrules.org/equity/nmfund.html
⁴ E.g., www.californiatomorrow.org; www.nwrel.org/request/2005june/culturally.pdf
⁵ www.nwrel.org/request/2005june/culturally.pdf
⁶ National Retired Teachers Association, With Our Youth! Program, www.aarp.org/about_aarp/nrta/nrta_programs/2006youthawards.html
⁷ National Education Association, www.nea.org/retired/programs/outreach-mentoring.html
⁸ Experience Corps, www.experiencecorps.org/about_us/index.html
⁹ National Retired Teachers Association, With Our Youth! Program, www.aarp.org/about_aarp/nrta/nrta_programs/2006youthawards.html
¹⁰ Volunteer Match, www.volunteermatch.org/opps/opp223120.html; www.interagesmd.org/programs/report2003.php
¹¹ www.nasbe.org/Educational_Issues/Policy_Updates/6_14p.html
¹² www.compact.org/; Kellogg Commission, Returning to Our Roots, www.nasulgc.org
¹³ Knowledge Works Foundation, www.kwfdn.org/poll/2001
¹⁴ Coalition for Community Schools, www.communityschools.org/CCSFullReport.pdf
¹⁵ Environmental Protection Agency, “Travel and Environmental Implications of School Siting,” www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/school_travel.pdf
¹⁶ National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, www.edfacilities.org/pubs/pubs_html.cfm?abstract=AgeWave
¹⁷ Smith, Pamela B., “Intergenerational Programs” PowerPoint, County of San Diego Aging & Independent Services
¹⁸ www.bu.edu/sed/ilip/#Overview
¹⁹ <http://www.upenn.edu/compact/locally.html#economy>
²⁰ www.projectshine.org
²¹ Casey Foundation, “Race Matters,” www.aecf.org/publications/racematters/factsheet_youthintransition.pdf
²² www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/default.htm
²³ www.civicventures.org/publications/articles/fact_sheet_on_older_americans.cfm
²⁴ Workforce Strategy Center, “Building Bridges to College and Careers,” www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/Contextualized_basic_ed_report.pdf
²⁵ Generations United, “Reaching Across the Ages,” http://ipath.gu.org/documents/A0/Reaching_Across_Ages.pdf
²⁶ Smith, Pamela B., testimony before the Senate Special Committee on Aging, May 3, 2006, aging.senate.gov/public_files/hr155ps.pdf
²⁷ www.aecf.org/publications/data/goodjobs.pdf
²⁸ www.aecf.org/publications/data/extending.pdf
²⁹ Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes, <http://www.osherfoundation.org>
³⁰ www.thirdagecenter.com
³¹ National Conference on Citizenship, “America’s Civic Health Index: Broken Engagement,” www.ncoc.net/conferences/2006civichealth.pdf
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Imagine a community where:

- The local economy is strong, and opportunities abound in the labor market
- Businesses and services are community- and family-friendly
- Strong social networks develop across all ages and cultures so that the community is friendly and safe for all residents

Importance of the Issue for Sustainable Communities for All Ages

In order for communities to thrive, their economies must thrive. A local economy needs anchor workplaces, job stability, and a strong tax base in order to support all generations and underwrite essential public services. Residents need access to quality affordable goods and services. Even in the face of the forces of globalization, a vibrant local economy is possible.

Neighborhood vitality is further strengthened by resident feelings of safety.¹ Strong social ties among residents promote cohesion and security. Beyond neighborhoods, community safety must be ensured by public services that are trusted and effective. Safe communities for all ages depend on both formal and informal mechanisms working in concert.

The distance that's opened up between individuals and their local institutions can be bridged. We know what to do to ensure

sound community and economic development. A sustainable community for all ages recognizes that all generations benefit from living in a vibrant community.

I. Strong Local Economies and Labor Markets

The Challenge:

- **Community Economic Insecurity.** The lack of economic control experienced by local communities in an era of globalization combines with fiscal pressures on local governments from unfunded federal mandates and devolved federal responsibilities to create unprecedented challenges for planners, government officials, and nonprofit organizations.
- **Job Insecurity.** De-industrialization, job out-sourcing, the use of temporary workers, and the globalization of corporate enterprise have created a sense of job insecurity² and reduced job tenure.³ These factors erode community revenue sources, make families less economically secure, and threaten the intergenerational compact.
- **Under-Developed and Emerging Markets.** The retail void in inner cities is up to \$42 billion annually, which in turn produces an employment void.⁴

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Support for Locally Owned Businesses.** Money spent with local businesses stays in the community longer and



strengthens the local economic base. Local businesses are more likely to make charitable contributions to their communities, make more efficient use of public services, tax the local ecosystem less, maintain the local culture, and stay committed to the local workforce. Local First Campaigns are being launched in major cities⁵, and Alaska and Wyoming give a preference to in-state bidders in government purchasing.⁶

- **Community-Supported Agriculture.** Over 1,000 such efforts link farmers to nearby consumers who each receive benefits: the farmers, guaranteed annual purchasers and lower costs because of direct delivery, and the consumers, regular access to fresh agricultural products. The farms emphasize biodiversity and environmental stewardship.⁷
- **Commercial Stabilization.**⁸ A vibrant commercial district with locally owned businesses addresses neighborhood needs, provides local jobs, and withstands gentrification pressures. Commercial stabilization usually involves façade and streetscape improvements, cultural preservation, business assistance, and community-initiated commercial development. Under the leadership of the Unity Council, the primarily Latino Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland, CA, has been stabilized, a vibrant year-round farmers market contributes to healthy lifestyles, and the annual Día de los Muertos festival attracts 90,000 visitors to the

neighborhood.⁹ The organization has also built housing for families and older citizens in the neighborhood and operates child care centers for hundreds of neighborhood children.

- **Local Hiring.** Local hiring strategies, typically enacted through city/county ordinances or community benefit agreements, require developers who benefit from public money to reserve a percentage of jobs for local residents. This ensures that residents in economically isolated communities benefit from regional economic development and reinvestment.¹⁰ Hartford, CT, offers incentives to companies that hire more than the recommended percentage of local workers.¹¹
- **Livable Wages.** The rationale for a living wage ordinance is that city and county governments should not contract with or subsidize employers who pay poverty-level wages. Ordinances usually cover people employed by businesses that have a contract with a city or county government or those who receive economic development subsidies from the locality. In Baltimore, MD, the provision of a higher wage was offset by decreases in employee turnover, which reduced recruitment and training costs.¹²
- **Closing Inner City Retail Gaps.** Successful retailers in inner cities are willing to adapt their product mix and operations to the community. Successful developers are ones who invest sufficient resources and leverage community support.



Successful cities clear hurdles for retail development and invest in targeted sites. Eight of the top fifty cities over the past decade have exceeded 20% inner city job growth.¹³

II. Community- and Family-Supportive Businesses and Services

The Challenge:

- **Predatory Institutions.** Individuals and families, especially those over 65, those who are African American or Latino, and those in the military are vulnerable to exploitative financial practices in mortgage lending, payday lending, overdraft loans, car title loans, and refund anticipation loans.¹⁴
- **Lack of Commercial Civic-Mindedness.** Communities can be hurt if commercial and service establishments are not committed to the neighborhoods in which they do business. Business prosperity and community prosperity can go hand-in-hand, as the growing emphasis on corporate responsibility demonstrates.

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs).** CDFIs provide low-wealth communities with fair banking services, loans, and equity products. Some offer residents a direct ownership stake in the institution. City First Bank

of Washington, D.C. offers accounts with low minimum balance requirements as well as youth and senior accounts. On the lending side, City First primarily provides business loans such as working capital, bridge loans, and commercial real estate development loans, with about 90% of those in the District and about 60% in low and moderate-income neighborhoods.¹⁵

- **Employee Stock Ownership.** Thousands of workers have responded to the impending shut-down of their workplaces by setting up an employee-owned company. Employee Stock Ownership Plans have created successful employee-owned companies that are less likely to relocate because they are locally owned.¹⁶ Acadian Ambulance Services of Lafayette, LA, a majority employee-owned company since 1998, has over 200 ambulances and 2,000 employees. When Hurricane Katrina hit, Acadian was the only local institution to have a reliable back-up communications system, and Acadian employees rescued more than 7,000 people.¹⁷
- **Accessible Quality Retail Outlets.** Market Creek Plaza, located on a former abandoned factory site in the underserved Diamond Neighborhoods of San Diego, CA, is among the nation's first real estate development projects to be designed, built, and ultimately owned by community residents. Plans are for a portion of profits to go back into the neighborhood. Market Creek Plaza is a thriving 10-acre,



mixed-use commercial and cultural center anchored by a supermarket.¹⁸

- **Land Trusts.** Land trusts are nonprofit organizations that buy land on behalf of communities. They typically preserve affordable housing, shield communities from land speculation and residents from dislocation, and may also preserve open space.¹⁹ The Durham, NC, Community Land Trust has created 100 housing units, two commercial developments, a community garden, and a youth savings club, and assisted with other physical improvements in the neighborhood.²⁰

III. Safe Neighborhoods

The Challenge:

- **A Vicious Downward Spiral.** Unsafe neighborhoods are often created by inattention to physical neglect and disrepair. If crime rises, merchants and residents may seek to leave, adding to the initial signs of disinvestment and undermining the social cohesion that has a preventative effect on crime.²¹ Residents who remain become socially isolated because of their fear of going outside their homes; children kept indoors for their safety fail to get the exercise necessary for their health.

- **Protection for the Most Vulnerable.** The most vulnerable members of society too often are among the least well-served by community safety personnel. The poor are most victimized by neighborhood crime,²² elders may fear leaving their homes, and people who are disabled or non-English speakers are highly vulnerable in disasters.²³

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Barrier Removal.** Broken windows, boarded up buildings, neglected lots, and similar barriers to neighborhood safety should be removed. As part of its crime prevention initiative, the Vallejo, CA, Neighborhood Housing Services trains landlords how to better maintain and manage their properties in order to prevent drug and criminal activity, emphasizes code enforcement, sponsors clean-up days, and refers residents in need of help with drug/alcohol abuse and employment to a family resource center.²⁴





- **Home Assistance Programs for Public Employees.** Local strategies that offer home ownership assistance for public employees to live near their work give teachers and public safety personnel a better understanding of the neighborhoods and communities their work affects. In turn, neighborhoods with higher home ownership appear to be more protected against crime, less fuel is consumed by long commutes, and employee turnover may be reduced.²⁵
- **Responsive Public Safety and Emergency Services.** Neighborhood safety is enhanced when residents play a role. Community policing practices that see residents as partners and stress problem-solving reduce residents' fear of reporting crime.²⁶ Emergency services can give attention to disinvested communities and special populations that often are underserved through inclusion in plan development and training and the use of culturally-appropriate materials.²⁷

Sustainable communities for all ages find ways to promote economic vitality, create community wealth, and ensure community safety.

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Imagine a community where:

- Community decisions and community design are focused on promoting resident health and well-being
- A range of health and social services designed to support people across the life course are accessible and affordable

Importance of This Issue for Sustainable Communities for All Ages

Quality of life depends in large part on good health. Community design should promote healthy lifestyles and communities should offer affordable and responsive health care and support services. Conventional design can present significant obstacles to “aging in community”—remaining in one’s own home and community as long as possible—and for children to live in a healthy environment. Individuals and families needing assistance often are met with limited information, fragmented service systems, and unaffordable care.

We know what to do to promote wellness across the lifespan and how to control health care costs through healthier lifestyles. A sustainable community for all ages recognizes that all generations have a stake in healthy living.

I. Health, Community Design, and Good Nutrition

The Challenge:

- **Lifestyle Issues.** A strong relationship exists between health, physical activity, and community design. Regular physical activity and a healthy diet are two major components of a healthy lifestyle. The U.S. is facing an escalating trend in the rate of chronic disease—diabetes, heart disease, depression, cancer, and arthritis—associated with our tendency to be obese or overweight, and have a sedentary lifestyle. The health impact is cumulative over the lifespan. Treatment of obesity, chronic diseases, and other health conditions associated with physical inactivity has an economic cost of at least \$117 billion per year.¹
- **Lack of Exercise.** Since the 1970s, the percentage of obese children age 6 to 11 years has tripled, and obesity has doubled among preschool children and adolescents. Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight adults.² For the aging population, physical activity can help people maintain independent living and enhance their overall quality of life. Even among frail and older adults, physical activity can improve mobility and functioning. But only 22% of the 65+ population report engaging in regular physical activity, with the percentage dropping off at older ages.³



- **Poor Diet.** A poor diet is costly to individuals and to the economy. In addition to helping maintain a healthy weight, a good diet is associated with a lower risk of mortality in all age groups.⁴ Families with incomes below \$15,000 are less likely to consume fruits and vegetables. Low-income neighborhoods have fewer healthy, affordable retail food options and still are charged up to 76% more for basic groceries.⁵ The nearest sources of healthy foods often require transportation, which is inaccessible or unavailable to many residents.⁶
- **Unhealthy Vending Machine Choices.** A direct link exists between the foods school children eat and their academic performance.⁷ As much as 85% of snacks in school vending machines are of poor nutritional quality. Food and beverage companies spend \$10 to \$12 billion a year to persuade youth and children to buy their products.⁸
- **Food Insecurity.** More than 1 in every 9 households in the U.S.—36 million people, including 13 million children, has difficulty providing enough food for its members. Even mild under-nutrition during critical growth periods for young children can reduce their growth, affect brain development, and limit academic achievement. Households without enough money for food change their eating habits to cheaper, high-calorie foods over more expensive nutrient-rich foods to maximize caloric intake for every dollar spent.⁹

- **Insufficient Food Assistance.** Twenty percent of requests for emergency food assistance go unmet because of lack of local resources. When the 16 million children receiving free or reduced school lunches are out of school in the summer, demands rise at food pantries and soup kitchens. Twenty-eight percent of communities don't have an emergency food pantry.¹⁰ While 3.2 million older Americans participate in senior meal programs each year, an estimated 4 million still suffer from the inability to afford, prepare, or access food.¹¹

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Nutritious Breakfasts.** Participation in school breakfast programs is associated with increased test scores, improved attendance, and reduced tardiness.¹² Seattle's "Strong Start Program" produces multiple health benefits: children walk to school, eat a nutritious breakfast, and participate in demonstrations on healthy foods. Plans are underway for neighborhood elders to join the children once a week as Walking School Bus Champions.¹³
- **Nutritious Vending Machine Choices.** A 50% reduction in the price of low-fat foods in vending machines in secondary schools increased the proportion of low-fat snacks sold by 93% over a one-year period.¹⁴ The Alliance for a Healthier Generation, an initiative of the William J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association, has developed agreements with soft drink and snack food producers to provide more nutritious foods to schools.¹⁵



- **Farmers Markets and Mercados.** The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Pilot Program awards grants to states and Indian tribal governments to provide coupons for low-income older adults to use at farmers markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs.¹⁶ States are testing electronic benefit transfers for food stamp utilization at farmers markets and other non-traditional retailers,¹⁷ and 45 states offer farmers market and roadside stand options for participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.¹⁸
- **Open Space for Recreational Opportunities.** Communities with gardens, pocket parks, trees and grass, parks and playgrounds, and other well-maintained open space afford residents opportunities for exercise and interaction, alleviate noise, reduce air pollution, and contribute to crime reduction.¹⁹

[Also see: *Issue Brief: Land Use, Transportation, and Natural Resources* for ideas related to exercise and community design and *Issue Brief: Community and Economic Development* on locally grown foods and community supported agriculture.]

II. Affordable and Accessible Health Care Services and Long-Term Care

The Challenge:

- **Uninsured Americans.** The number of uninsured Americans rose from 41 million in 2001 to 47 million in 2005, with the greatest coverage gaps for Native Americans and Hispanics.²⁰ Nationally, one in seven children lacks health insurance. Inferior medical care is linked to unnecessarily serious health problems and indirectly to children failing in school due to poor health and extended absences.²¹
- **Failure to Enroll.** More than 7 million uninsured children are eligible for, but are not receiving, public health insurance through Medicaid and the joint federal-state program called SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program). The reasons why parents fail to enroll their children include misinformation, the stigma of welfare, and bureaucratic complications.²²
- **Special Health Care Needs.** Medicaid is particularly important for children with special health needs, disabilities, and chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, developmental delays, and cancer. Estimates of the percentage of all children with special health care needs are as high as 18%, with about 1/3 of these children relying on public insurance.²³



- **Long-Term Care.** Not only is Medicaid the backbone of health care for children. It is the largest source of funding for long-term care for low-income older adults and persons with disabilities. Although the term “long-term care” is often associated with nursing homes, over 80% of people who need care are community residents. Home and community-based services (HCBS)—assistance with bathing, meal preparation, and home health care—allow individuals to maintain independence and dignity in their own homes in familiar neighborhoods and communities.
- **Limited Funding.** Funding for HCBS is limited. Medicare only pays for short-term care where the patient is expected to fully recover. Medicaid entitles individuals to nursing home care, but states have the option to provide HCBS. Other federal programs like the Older Americans Act and state home-based care programs are under-funded and unable to meet the need.
- **Barriers to Health Care Access and Quality.** Language barriers prevent 1 in 5 Spanish-speakers from seeking medical care. Some cultural groups may mistrust a Western health care model. Disinvested low income minority neighborhoods are less likely to have adequately stocked pharmacies for health care needs. And racial and ethnic minorities receive a lower quality and intensity of health care than Whites.²⁴

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Covering Kids.** The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s “Covering Kids & Families” program supports state and local coalitions that seek simpler application processes for State Children’s Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP) and that conduct outreach and communication campaigns. Its work contributed to almost 5 million more eligible children being enrolled and to some states granting coverage for the children’s parents.²⁵
- **Home-and Community-Based Services.** States have been “rebalancing” Medicaid long-term care (LTC) dollars to send a higher proportion to HCBS, instead of institutional (nursing home) care. In 1992, states allocated only 15% of total Medicaid LTC expenditures to HCBS—by 2005, this had increased to 37%. Oregon and New Mexico lead the nation by spending over two-thirds of their Medicaid long-term care dollars on HCBS. A new federal grant program, “Money Follows the Person,” will give states a total of \$1.75 billion over five years to develop more service choices for older adults and persons with disabilities.²⁶
- **Systems Change Grants.** Over the past five years the federal government has awarded grants for states to reform their long-term care systems. These Systems Change Grants address transitions from institutions to the community, respite services for caregivers, transportation options,



resource centers to provide information and assistance, housing linked to support services, the need for personal assistance services, and shortages of direct care workers.²⁷

- **Culturally Competent Health Care Practice.** The availability of interpreter services, coordination of health care with indigenous or traditional healers, recruitment and retention of minority staff, and cultural skills training for all staff can reduce health care and outcome disparities.²⁹ The Kaiser Family Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have launched an initiative to raise physician awareness and promote dialogue about care disparities.³⁰
- **Community Health Outreach Workers/Promotoras/Cultural Case Managers.** The use of local health workers improves patient access to services, their adherence to treatment regimens, and health care provider understanding of community needs and culture.³¹ Community House Calls in Seattle, WA, employs bilingual, bicultural outreach workers in partnership with community leaders to mediate between immigrant community members and the biomedical system. This approach achieved 82% treatment completion among refugees, compared to 37% completion using a clinic-centered approach.³²

III. Support for Care Giving Families

The Challenge:

- **Support for Activities of Daily Living.** An estimated 44 million caregivers, or 21% of the U.S. population age 18 and older, provide unpaid care for people who need assistance with activities of daily living.³³ Activities of Daily Living include eating, bathing, and using the toilet. The value of this care from unpaid caregivers is estimated at \$257 billion annually.³⁴
- **Youthful Caregivers.** About 1.4 million youth ages 8 to 18 are themselves caregivers. This figure constitutes 3% of all U.S. households with a child. Seven in 10 child caregivers care for a parent or grandparent and have primary responsibilities for helping with chores, grocery shopping, and meal preparation.³⁵
- **Older Adult Caregivers.** More than 6 million children — approximately one in 12 — live in households headed by grandparents (4.5 million children) or other relatives (1.5 million children). About 2.4 million grandparents have primary responsibility for their grandchildren's basic needs. These caregivers have a need for accurate information about the programs and services available to their families.³⁶ Nationwide, an estimated 475,000 older caregivers support children and adults with developmental disabilities.³⁷



- **Burdens of Care.** Providing care can exact a high cost. Family members commonly face health risks, financial burdens, emotional strain, workplace conflicts, and retirement insecurity. Keeping family caregivers healthy and able to provide care helps families remain together with their loved one. When caregivers are asked what they need most, their response is often “a little time to myself.” Known as “respite care,” this temporary, short-term help enables caregivers to take a break.
- **Work vs. Family.** Many caregivers juggle work and care giving responsibilities. Today 45% of workers with families report significant interference between jobs and families, compared to 34% 25 years ago.³⁸ Nearly 6 in 10 caregivers of older adults and persons with disabilities are currently employed. Sixty percent have made adjustments in their work life, from reporting to work late, to taking time off to provide care, to giving up work entirely.³⁹
- **Lost Productivity.** The total estimated cost to employers for all full-time employees with care giving responsibilities is \$33.6 billion per year, averaging \$2,110 per care giving employee. These costs are related to absenteeism, worker replacement, workday interruptions, supervisor time, and unpaid leave.⁴⁰ About 70% of employers reported increases in care giving-related staffing problems over a 10 year period.⁴¹

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Caregiver Support.** The National Family Caregiver Support Program, funded through the Older Americans Act, provides information and assistance, counseling, support services, and respite care for family members caring for persons with disabilities and grandparents caring for grandchildren.⁴² The program has limitations—there is a need to increase funding and ensure full application of the 10% of funds that can be allocated for services for grandparents and other older relatives raising children.
- **Family Friends.** The National Council on Aging’s Family Friends program matches volunteers 55 years and older with families who have children with disabilities or chronic illnesses, and who are otherwise at risk. The volunteers connect families to resources and services to which they are entitled, accompany the family on doctor visits and teacher meetings, engage the children in educational and recreational activities that promote their development, provide a break for parents, and become a friend to the family as a whole.⁴³
- **Grandparent Support.** With support from the Older Americans Act and the Brookdale Foundation, the Fulton County, NY, Office for Aging offers a support program for grandparents raising their grandchildren. Activities include support groups, legal services, parenting seminars, respite



care, and benefits counseling. School districts train high school mentors to work with the children for remedial instruction.⁴⁴ A number of states offer information and assistance especially tailored to these family circumstances.⁴⁵

- **Volunteer Exchange.** Through the Greenbelt, MD, Intergenerational Volunteer Exchange Services (GIVES), caregivers of any age receive credits for donating their time to provide services for older adults and persons with disabilities. Credits may be used to “buy-back” services or they may be donated to individuals or groups.⁴⁶
- **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).** Passed in 1993, FMLA is the first U.S. national policy designed to assist working caregivers to meet both their work and care giving responsibilities. The FMLA allows employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for an ill family member or newborn child. Yet, unpaid leave is not an option for most working families. The State of California has created a paid family leave law.
- **Work-Life Initiatives.** Employers offer work life initiatives (such as flexible work schedules, job sharing, family leave, child care or elder assistance) to recruit and retain employees, enhance productivity and commitment, and support employees and their families.⁴⁷ Employees with more supportive workplaces are more likely than other workers to have higher levels of job satisfaction, more

commitment to their companies’ success, and greater loyalty to their companies.⁴⁸ Employee Assistance Programs offer considerable opportunity to be tailored to support the diverse needs that different groups of workers experience.⁴⁹

- **Corporate Eldercare Support.** AT&T’s award-winning Work and Family Program is a pioneer in corporate eldercare. The company offers round-the-clock information, referral, and consultation with aging experts to locate, evaluate, and manage care for family members over 60, long-term care insurance coverage, assistance with financial planning and intergenerational communication, and grant support for community-based elder-care and child-care facilities used by employees.⁵⁰

IV. A Well-Trained Direct Care Workforce

The Challenge:

- **Worker Shortages.** More than a million direct care workers in the U.S. provide an estimated 70-80% of the paid hands-on care and personal assistance received by Americans who are chronically ill or living with disabilities.⁵¹ Demand is increasing for paraprofessionals—personal care assistants, home health aides, nursing home aides, and certified nursing assistants. At the same time, recruitment and retention provide major challenges. High turnover and worker shortages are related to low pay and poor benefits,



burdensome workloads, workplace injuries, minimal training opportunities, and limited room for advancement.⁵²

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Better Opportunities.** State efforts include higher Medicaid reimbursements designated for wages or benefits, enhanced training opportunities, and media campaigns promoting direct care careers. PATHS (Professional Advancement through Training and Education in Human Services) is an employer-directed professional skills training and certificate program for entry and mid-level workers who provide direct support to people with developmental disabilities in Ohio.⁵³ Cooperative Home Care Associates in the South Bronx, NY, employs targeted recruitment strategies, supportive services, opportunities for advancement, and wage and benefit enhancements to attract its workforce.⁵⁴
- **Workplace Decision-Making.** For workers in congregate settings, the Culture Change Movement promotes a model of household living environments that contrast to the long-term care settings many elders fear and workers dread. In clusters of small group homes, permanently assigned staff share decision-making with residents, an approach that offers higher quality of life for elders and higher staff retention.⁵⁵ The Virginia Cultural Change Coalition's Long Term Care Workforce Initiative increases decision-making by both residents and direct care staff. Working conditions have

been improved by changing the way decisions are made and changing the environment where people work.⁵⁶

- **Support for Front Line Workers.** Human service systems that offer the following work conditions have a good chance of attracting and retaining quality workers: clear performance expectations, performance rewards, reasonable workloads, career paths, training and development, and adequate base compensation.⁵⁷ Maine recently passed legislation requiring that its Department of Health and Human Services study options and costs for increasing wages and providing health coverage for direct-care workers.⁵⁸

A sustainable community for all ages recognizes the importance of improved health through improved lifestyle choices, affordable care, and support for family care givers.



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Imagine a community where:

- Affordable housing is available to all individuals and families and is located in opportunity-rich neighborhoods
- Housing and other buildings are energy efficient and accessible to people of all ages and abilities

Importance of This Issue for Sustainable Communities for All Ages

Housing is the physical foundation on which we build home and community. Yet, many people in the U.S. lack affordable and healthy housing options. Substandard housing conditions create chronic health problems; high rents mean fewer dollars for other basic needs; and design barriers make access and navigation difficult for some people.

Individuals and families also need housing that's located in opportunity-rich areas¹—where high-performing schools, stable jobs, fairly priced commercial goods and services, adequate transportation, and healthy environments are readily available.

Despite barriers to affordable housing in opportunity-rich areas due to economic and racial segregation, and barriers to accessibility for people of different abilities, we know how to provide quality housing. A sustainable community for all ages recognizes that all generations benefit from quality housing.

I. Affordable Housing in Vibrant Neighborhoods

The Challenge:

- **Inadequate Housing.** About 3.5 million people, 1/3 of them children, are likely to experience homelessness in any given year. In 2001 52% of emergency shelter requests from families were denied. Rural areas may have no shelters at all.² For families living in housing units, 1.3 million lack complete plumbing and 1.5 million lack complete kitchen facilities.³ Far more are in need of structural repair.



- **High Cost of Housing.** About 12 million renter and owner households pay over 50% of their annual incomes for housing.⁴ Among very low-income renters who pay over half of their income for housing or live in severely substandard housing, over one-third (36%) are families with children. Almost half of these work full-time, year-round for low wages. Older adults make up 22% of worst case need households. About 10% of families have non-elderly members with disabilities.⁵



- **Opportunity-poor neighborhoods.** Housing, especially that occupied disproportionately by minority individuals and families, may be situated in areas where opportunity is limited—low environmental quality, inadequate transportation, under-performing schools, low-wage jobs, inadequate retail and social services, and compromised community safety. Lack of such opportunities has a critical impact on quality of life.⁶

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Assisted Housing.** Expanded funding for a variety of federal, state, and local housing assistance programs would support low-to-moderate income, “age-friendly,” environmentally friendly, and energy efficient-housing design. (See funding strategies on pp. 67-68)
- In Milwaukee, WI, the city’s first “green” public housing facility is transforming a blighted block into an economically integrated neighborhood. Offering units for families, older adults, persons with disabilities, and people who previously lived in nursing homes, the project is financed through HOPE VI, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), and U.S. Bank.⁷

- In Seattle, WA, a contaminated industrial dumping ground was cleaned up for affordable senior housing and a commercial/ retail complex served by public transportation. Funding is from CDBG, LIHTC, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and state and local sources.⁸
- In Charlottesville, VA, the Jefferson Area Board for Aging used tax-credit financing for low- to moderate-income senior housing developments. One in a very rural area combined LIHTC, CDBG, HOME, FHLB, and USDA rural housing funds to renovate a school that had been vacant for 60 years into homes for very low-income persons.⁹





Assisted Housing Funding Strategies	Description
<p>Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Sponsor: federal government</p>	<p>The primary vehicle for production of affordable rental housing in the U.S. Subsidizes the capital costs of units with rents affordable to households with incomes at or below 60% of area median income. Enables states to achieve housing and community development goals and gives investors a financial incentive to invest in low-income housing.¹⁰</p>
<p>Hope VI Sponsor: federal government</p>	<p>Transforms severely distressed public housing. Hope VI Revitalization grants fund capital costs of major rehabilitation, new construction, physical improvements, demolition of severely distressed public housing, acquisition of sites, and supportive service programs for residents.¹¹</p>
<p>HOME Investment Partnership Sponsor: federal government</p>	<p>Largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households, first-time homebuyers, and renters.¹²</p>
<p>Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Sponsor: federal government</p>	<p>Significant catalyst for local community development. Gives relatively unrestricted grants directly to states and large communities to provide aid primarily to low- and moderate-income persons; aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight; and address urgent community development needs.¹³</p>
<p>Rural Assistance Programs Sponsor: federal government (USDA)</p>	<p>Assistance to rural areas, including financing quality affordable housing. Programs are available for land purchase, construction, and rental subsidy for single family and multi-family housing for low- to moderate-income families. Additional funds are available for home repairs and improvements.¹⁴</p>
<p>Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) Sponsor: federal government</p>	<p>Affordable housing programs (AHP) grants for home ownership and rental units for very low to moderate income individuals and families.</p>



Assisted Housing Funding Strategies	Description
Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Sponsor: federal government	Provides vouchers to low-income households in affordable privately owned housing units. In general, families are required to pay 30% of their income for rent. Project-based Section 8 assistance is associated with a particular unit, while tenant-based Section 8 provides vouchers that tenants can use to rent a range of apartments from willing landlords. ¹⁵
Rental Assistance Programs Sponsor: federal government	Federal rental assistance programs are available for specific populations, such as the elderly (Section 202 housing) and persons with disabilities (Section 811 housing). ¹⁶
State Housing Finance Agencies Sponsor: state government	State Housing Finance Agencies and community development departments are usually very active in funding affordable housing. They distribute federal funds (e.g., LIHTC and CDBG), and raise their own funds through dedicated taxes for a housing fund or bond sales. State programs differ, but they usually involve below-market loans and grants; some have their own housing tax credits. ¹⁷
Housing Funds and Conduits Sponsor: local government	Counties and municipalities serve as conduits for state and federal money and set up their own housing funds for loans or grants. Larger cities also do bond sales. Some have passed tax levies dedicated to green, affordable public housing. ¹⁸
Financing Sponsor: financial institutions	Financial institutions, such as banks, play a key role in financing affordable housing. Community development financial institutions (CDFIs) provide loans for housing and commercial development to low-wealth communities. ¹⁹



- **Public-Private Investment.** Enterprise Community Partners, Inc., pioneers neighborhood solutions through public-private partnerships with financial institutions, governments, and community organizations. Enterprise has raised and invested \$6 billion in equity, grants, and below-market loans and currently invests in communities at a rate of almost \$1 billion per year. In 2004, Enterprise and the Natural Resources Defense Council launched the Green Communities Initiative to build more than 8,500 environmentally friendly homes across the country.²⁰
- **Zoning and Building Codes.** Revised zoning and building codes can promote a wider variety of housing. Among developer incentives is a “density bonus” for inclusion of affordable units that encourage multi-generational, environmentally friendly design. Amherst, MA, has an Open Space “density bonus” for developments that preserve 50%-70% of a site as open space. Additional density bonus points are given for the provision of accessible and affordable units.²¹ Inclusionary zoning requires that some portion of every new housing development beyond a given size be affordable to low-income residents. Boulder, CO, requires that 20% of a project’s units be affordable for all new residential developments regardless of project size. In Montgomery County, MD, developers of 50 units or more must set aside at least 12% of units as affordable in exchange for a density bonus.²²

II. Environmentally Sound and Healthy Housing/Buildings

The Challenge:

- **Buildings.** Buildings consume or are responsible for: greenhouse gas emissions (35% of all carbon dioxide emissions); energy consumption (39% of U.S. primary energy use); electricity consumption (70% of electricity consumed in the United States); water use (12% of all potable water); materials use (40% of raw materials globally); and construction and demolition waste (136 million tons every year).²³
- **Indoor Pollutants.** People in the United States spend about 90% of their time indoors, where levels of pollutants may be two to five times higher—and occasionally more than 100 times higher—than outdoor levels. The EPA projects that up to 6,500 premature deaths per year are the result of the effects of indoor air pollutants, with older adults being the most vulnerable. Two percent of all pre-schoolers have enough lead in their blood to permanently damage their brain and nervous system. Sixty thousand schools were reported to have unsatisfactory indoor air quality.²⁴



Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Housing Credits for Sustainability.** Through LIHTC and other housing credit programs, states can encourage green development by awarding additional points to developments that focus on smart site locations, energy and resource conservation, and healthy living environments.²⁵
- **Building Green.** Design and construction can maximize energy and resource efficiency, protect the environment, and promote more affordable and healthy places to live and work. Green buildings consume up to 40% less energy and water than conventional buildings and can significantly reduce occupant utility costs. Through use of better ventilation systems and safer construction materials, green buildings provide cleaner indoor air, helping to reduce the occurrence of asthma, respiratory diseases, and other ailments.²⁶ An upfront investment of 2% in green building design, on average, results in life cycle savings of 20% of the total construction costs—more than 10 times the initial investment.²⁷
- **State Policy Incentives.** Twenty-four states award development points for proximity of housing developments to amenities and services. Twenty states encourage site locations close to transportation. Twenty states give priority for meeting or exceeding energy codes. AZ and NM require standards for indoor air quality; CT awards points to developments that meet agency requirements for asthma-safe homes.²⁸



- **Local Policy Incentives.** Local governments throughout the country have instituted incentives for sustainable building practices, including Seattle's SeaGreen and Portland, OR's Office of Sustainability Design and Construction Guidelines for Affordable Housing.²⁹
- **LEED Standards (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design).** This Green Building Rating System™ was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) as a voluntary building certification program. It defines high-performance green buildings that are more environmentally responsible, healthier, and more profitable structures. The USGBC, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Congress for New Urbanism are currently crafting standards for neighborhood development (LEED-ND). LEED-ND will emphasize compact, walkable neighborhoods as well as important green-building practices.³⁰



III. Supportive Housing for People of All Ages and Abilities

The Challenge:

- **Design.** Buildings and their surroundings are often difficult to navigate, not just for people with disabilities and frail older adults, but also for parents with strollers and people pulling suitcases.
- **Isolation.** Too many people live in isolation inside their homes, not knowing their neighbors or having a sense of control over community circumstances.

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Universal Design.** Also known as Inclusive Design and Transgenerational Design, this standard makes products, communications, and the built environment more usable, by as many people as possible, at little or no extra cost. Builders experience less construction coordination due to economies of scale; designers have fewer compliance and liability problems; manufacturers can focus on a larger volume of fewer products; building owners can make all units available for multiple generations and residents of all abilities. Iowa State University's Universal Design for Better Living program provides detailed instructions for universal design that facilitates aging in place. The program is widely used throughout Iowa by Area Agencies on Aging, extension agents, and community volunteers.³¹

- **Accessibility Codes.** The North Carolina Accessibility Code specifies that at least 5% of privately funded multifamily housing projects must be "fully accessible." Under North Carolina's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Allocation Plan, extra bonus points may be awarded to developers who add accessible features to some bathrooms.³²
- **Co-Housing.** A type of collaborative housing often described as intentional neighborhoods, co-housing is created and managed by residents and combines the autonomy of private homes with the benefits of close and ongoing connection with neighbors.³³ Types of co-housing include:
 - **Multigenerational Housing.** The mixed income Nomad Co-housing in Boulder, CO, uses sustainable design: the homes have a passive solar orientation, are energy efficient, and incorporate a wide range of natural, recycled, and non-toxic materials.³⁴ Hope Meadows is a planned intergenerational community sited on a converted military base in IL. It provides a caring community to move children from the foster care system into adoptive homes, offers extended support to adoptive families, and creates purpose in the lives of older adults.³⁵ In Dorchester, MA, the Boston Housing Authority reconstructed vacant public housing into apartments for grandfamilies.³⁶



- **Elder Communities.** In Sherburne, NY, the Avalon co-housing project will have approximately 30 independent houses on about 15 acres of rural farmland to form “elder-rich” communities.³⁷ The vision of the Eldershire™ Community project is a network of communities that will redefine retirement, nurture elders, and allow them to contribute to the well-being of the community. For elders in congregate settings, the Culture Change Movement promotes household living environments that contrast to usual long-term care settings. Clusters of small group homes with permanently assigned staff who share decision-making with residents promote higher quality of life and higher staff retention.³⁸
- **Accessory Housing.** Spaces above garages, finished basements, and attics with separate entrances all represent potential homes for elderly people, singles, or small families. These Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), elder cottages, and granny flats provide a way for children who have grown up in a neighborhood, or older adults who have outgrown their large family homes, to remain in the area near family and friends. Santa Cruz, CA, is one the leaders in ADU policy with an ADU Development Program that’s intended to meet housing needs, use land efficiently, and protect open space.³⁹

Sustainable communities for all ages create housing that encourages people to walk, know their neighbors, take pride in their community, age in place, and protect the environment for future generations.



Courtesy of Jefferson Area Board for Aging



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Imagine a community where:

- Land-use design minimizes distances people must travel for work or shopping
- Physical activity is encouraged through community design and safety
- Natural resources are protected and toxic sites are cleaned up

Importance of This Issue for Sustainable Communities for All Ages

How we design our communities—from the orientation of homes and streets, to the presence and width of sidewalks, to the proximity of residences to shopping, jobs, transit, schools, and services—determines for years to come how comfortable our neighborhoods will be. Overcrowding, pollution, dependence on the automobile, unsustainable land consumption, and physical and social isolation threaten the quality of life in communities. Car-dependent communities contribute to air and water pollution, exacerbate certain health issues, and are key contributors to energy problems and climate change.

We know how to design and rehabilitate our built environment so that it contributes to residents' health and protects our natural resources. A sustainable community for all ages recognizes that all generations benefit when the environmental and health impacts of community design are taken into account.

I. Land Use, Mobility, and Health

The Challenge:

- **Transportation Dependence.** Children and youth depend on parents to transport them, adults without cars or public transportation have reduced job options, and many older adults who no longer drive rely on rides or specialized transportation. The majority (60%) of older adults report they do not have public transportation within a 10-minute walk of their homes.¹ Today fewer than 15% of children and adolescents walk or bike to school.² Dependence on automobiles adds to environmental pollution and a sedentary lifestyle.
- **Social and Economic Isolation.** Sprawling suburbs and remote rural areas can produce social isolation, particularly among older adults. Non-driving older adults travel half as much as drivers, are more likely to miss something they wanted to do, and feel isolated from other people.³ Economic isolation results from a narrowing of job prospects when a worker does not have reliable transportation. A serious spatial mismatch exists for inner city residents, especially African Americans, who cannot access job growth in the suburbs because of limited public transportation.⁴
- **Obesity.** Compared to those living in more compact neighborhoods, adults living in sprawling counties walk less in their leisure time, weigh more, and are more likely to



be obese and have high blood pressure.⁵ Sixty-four percent of U.S. adults are overweight, and 30% are obese.⁶ Fifteen percent of children and youth, ages 6-19, are considered obese.⁷ Rates of physical activity are lowest among African Americans and Hispanics, who are less likely to have access to safe local recreational spaces for exercise.⁸ Obesity increases the risk for heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

- **Respiratory Problems.** Older adults and young children are especially vulnerable to the respiratory problems associated with air pollution from motor vehicles.⁹ Asthma is the #1 chronic disease of childhood, affecting more than 9 million children and keeping students home from school more than any other ailment. Children in the U.S. are disproportionately exposed to harmful diesel fumes while riding in school buses, and when buses idle. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), a diagnosis of mostly middle-age and older adults that includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis, is the fourth largest cause of death in the U.S. Aggravated by air pollution, COPD caused 1.5 million emergency room visits in 2000. Soot particles in outdoor air are particularly hazardous to older adults with heart disease, chronic lung disease, and asthma.¹⁰

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Community Livability.** Pedestrian amenities, such as continuous sidewalks, cross walks, and adequate

lighting enable more children to walk to school and also can encourage elders to get much needed exercise. Redevelopment of vacant lots in lieu of sprawl promotes walkable destinations for residents, reduces the need for driving, and improves air quality. Investments in convenient and safe public transit can get residents to jobs and reduce the burden on family caregivers by allowing older adults to travel more independently.¹¹ A Seattle-based advocacy group, *Feet First*, integrates education about all transportation modes into the standard driver education program, discussing the health and environmental impacts of driving a car, and helping communities to perform walking audits to improve community walkability.¹²

- **Transit-Oriented Development.** Transportation projects can be used as anchors for population and economic growth. Arlington County, VA, adopted a General Land Use Plan to concentrate dense, mixed-use development at train stations and developed sector plans to ensure that each station maintained a distinct sense of community. The sector plans focused growth within a walkable radius of the stations, and preserved established neighborhoods through building height restrictions and boundaries that denser development could not cross. Over half of the residents living in this area take the train, bus, bike, or walk to work, with car ownership in the area far below the national norm. In 2001, Arlington expanded its bonus density provision to encourage developers to build affordable housing.¹³



- **Safe Routes to School.** With federal funding for a Safe Routes to School initiative, a growing number of cities, counties, and states are upgrading sidewalks and bicycle paths and installing traffic calming measures, on-street bicycle facilities, and crossing improvements to encourage students to walk or bike to school. California, which also has a state Safe Routes to School law, observed that children using “Safe Routes” were three times more likely to walk to school than other children.¹⁴ For children and youth in high-crime neighborhoods, safe routes to school must also address neighborhood crime reduction strategies.
- **Elder-Friendly Streets.** The New York-based Transportation Alternatives is increasing the safety of local streets and intersections for older pedestrians. While elders comprise only 13% of the city’s population, they represent 33% of pedestrian fatalities. In 2006, Transportation Alternatives created “Elder Districts” that prescribe guidelines for street design in elder-rich neighborhoods. Recommended improvements include: changing pedestrian walk signals to reflect a walking speed of 2.5 feet per second; repairing streets and sidewalks to prevent falls; installing pedestrian “refuges” or medians where street widths exceed 90 feet; and installing traffic calming measures. The organization aspires to change laws to require such improvements.¹⁵

- **Transit Use Encouragement.** Even in communities where public transportation is offered, older adults may be unwilling or unable to use it due to their lack of experience or fears about unknown risks. Seniors in Motion is a public awareness and training program in Palm Beach County, FL, for older adults to increase their comfort with public transportation.¹⁶ The Atlanta, GA, Regional Commission provides transportation vouchers to older adults to ride the bus or train, take a cab, or even pay friends or a family member for a ride. This allowance gives older adults flexibility and independence and is cheaper than providing special van services.¹⁷

II. Environmental Protection

The Challenge:

- **Water Pollution and Runoff.** Growth over the past few decades has occurred mostly on the edge of developed areas in greenfields, farmland, meadows, and forests. Impervious surfaces such as asphalt prevent the absorption of rainwater and lead to runoff, water pollution, and flooding. Older adults and low-income individuals are particularly vulnerable to the negative consequences of flooding and water pollution.
- **Air Pollution.** Sprawl creates dependence on gasoline-powered vehicles. With rising gas prices, outlying development has become increasingly expensive—and



those on fixed incomes are particularly affected.¹⁸ Emissions from motor vehicles and other transportation contribute significantly to air pollution and comprise nearly one-third of all U.S.- generated greenhouse gases.¹⁹

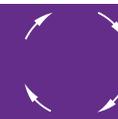
- **Toxic Neighborhoods.** Low income neighborhoods are differentially exposed to air, water, and soil pollutants, lead hazards, and dust molecules that fail to meet EPA standards for air quality. These neighborhoods are also disproportionately located near contaminated sites, or “brownfields.”²⁰
- **Climate Change.** Older adults and isolated individuals are particularly vulnerable to the erratic storm events and heating patterns associated with climate change. In Chicago’s heat wave of 1995, 739 more individuals died than normally would have, with many of the victims being isolated older adults who lived alone.²¹ Segregated low-income African American residents were most dramatically affected by Hurricane Katrina.²²

Ideas for Policy and Practice:

- **Improved Design for Water Management.** Well-functioning watersheds, large tracts of undisturbed open space, wetlands, and buffers are needed to absorb, filter, and store rainwater.²³ Additionally, pocket parks, town squares, and urban green spaces can help to absorb rainwater within

cities. This lowers urban temperature and increases the livability of neighborhoods by providing places for people to gather, exercise, and enjoy nature.

- **Water Quality Monitoring.** On the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, older adults in the Chippewa/East Mackinaw Conservation District (C/EMCD) serve as leaders of their rural communities to monitor and protect water quality. With broad participation from both public and private sectors, C/EMCD is creating a volunteer-based network of skilled and knowledgeable ‘Water Guardians’ who assist local, state, and federal regulators in monitoring water quality in the region.²⁴
- **Clean Buses.** Some communities are making great strides to reduce polluting emissions from buses. Medford Township Public School District, NJ operates school buses on a B20 blend (20% biodiesel, 80% petroleum diesel). Through its use of biodiesel, the school district has significantly reduced toxic emissions, resulting in increased public health and energy security benefits. Two Colorado Springs School Districts use a combination of diesel oxidation catalysts, particulate matter filters, and biodiesel to reduce harmful diesel emissions from their fleets, while reducing idle times.²⁵



- **State and Local Commitments.** Currently 28 U.S. states and about 230 U.S. Mayors have committed to reducing greenhouse gases—which have been shown to raise global temperature. A range of innovations about transportation, clean fuels, clean fleets, land use, and infrastructure have occurred along with this commitment.²⁶
- **Brownfield Reclamation and Re-Use.** An array of state clean-up and redevelopment tax credits and loans are available for the reclamation and re-use of brownfield areas²⁷—abandoned or idled industrial or commercial sites with perceived environmental contamination.²⁸ Huntington, WV, turned the devastating loss of its last large business into an award-winning story of reclamation and redevelopment of the abandoned and contaminated glass plant. After the site was clean, the development authority created an industrial park where new jobs have been created, four of the five businesses there are locally owned, and the majority of the employees are residents of Huntington.²⁹

Land use, physical activity, health, safety and social engagement are inter-related. Sustainable communities for all ages support a clean environment and community design that decreases dependence on single-car traffic to ensure the health of all generations.

Endnotes:

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- ¹² Feet First, www.feetfirst.info/act
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- ¹⁷ Lawler, Kathryn, Aging Atlanta, Atlanta Regional Commission, EESI Briefing, May 1, 2006, www.eesi.org/briefings/2006/Transp&SmartGrowth/5.1.06Livability/EESI_Lawler_05-06-2.pdf
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- ²² kirwaninstitute.org/projects/KatrinaNO.htm
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- ²⁵ www.eesi.org/programs/cleanBus/about_us.htm
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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES: AN ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT



**“Management is doing things right.
Leadership is doing the right things.”**

Peter Drucker

Why Should I Use This Tool?

Organizational demands reinforce a tendency to work in issue or program “silos,” even when the work would benefit from being connected to a broader agenda. Despite barriers to collaborative work, it is still possible to forge productive connections across silos. Certain features of your organization—from its culture and operations to how it approaches programs and policy—may or may not support the organization’s ability to be a leader in collaborative work. This tool can help your organization better position itself for leadership in order to advance the quality of life for all generations.

What Will This Tool Help Me Accomplish?

This tool helps you assess the strengths your organization brings to collaboration that is “silo-spanning” or “boundary-crossing.” It also allows you to identify areas for building further capacity to be a strong collaborative partner. Using the tool helps you understand your level of readiness for playing a leadership role in building sustainable communities for all ages.

How Do I Use This Tool?

Answer each question by checking the response that most closely applies. Then, read the range of possible “Next Steps” for suggestions about how to maximize your organization’s capacity for collaborative leadership.



Assessing Organizational Culture and Operations

- 1 Does my organization's **vision statement** allow for enhancing the quality of life across the generations?
 Yes No Not Sure
- 2 Does my organization's **mission statement** allow for enhancing the quality of life across the generations?
 Yes No Not Sure
- 3 Do **board** meetings and trainings include discussion of the needs of other populations, now and into the future?
 Never Sometimes On a Regular Basis
- 4 Do **board** meetings and trainings include discussion of how to achieve our goals in ways that protect the environment?
 Never Sometimes On a Regular Basis
- 5 Do my organization's **staff** meetings and trainings include discussion about the needs of other populations (e.g. an aging organization's discussion of children's issues)?
 Never Sometimes On a Regular Basis
- 6 Do my organization's **staff** meetings and trainings include discussion of how to achieve our goals in environmentally sustainable ways?
 Never Sometimes On a Regular Basis

- 7 Do my organization's **written and press materials** connect issues across the generations?
 Never Sometimes On a Regular Basis
- 8 Does my organization have an **internal team** that guides the development of policy, services, and practices that enhance the quality of life for all generations?
 Yes No Moving in That Direction
- 9 Does my organization have a **multicultural and intergenerational** staff and board?
 Yes No Moving in That Direction

Next Steps...

If you answered **NEVER** or **NO** to any of the above items, the following tools in this Toolkit may be helpful to strengthen your leadership capacity:

- **Issue Briefs** (TAB IV) for ways to think about how your work relates to the work of potential allies
- **Communication Guide** (TAB VII) for useful ways to talk about how the work of various groups “fits together”
- **Video** (in Back Cover Pocket) for examples of work focused on the vision of Sustainable Communities for All Ages

If you answered **YES** or **ON A REGULAR BASIS** to many of the above items, your organization is positioned to take a leadership role, or may already be creating a sustainable community for all ages.

Assessing Approaches to Programs and Policy Advocacy

- 1 Is my organization working to **develop policies, services, and practices** that enhance the well-being of all generations in at least one of the following areas:

Lifelong health and wellness?

- Yes No Moving in That Direction

Strong community and economic development?

- Yes No Moving in That Direction

Lifelong education and civic engagement?

- Yes No Moving in That Direction

Affordable neighborhoods with energy-efficient buildings and transportation?

- Yes No Moving in That Direction

Clean environmental practices?

- Yes No Moving in That Direction

- 2 Has my organization **developed partnerships** across traditional organizational boundaries (such as across the categories listed in the previous question) to enhance the quality of life for all generations:

Organized meetings of potential allies to discuss issues of common concern?

- Yes No Moving in That Direction

Developed concepts and plans for joint initiatives?

Yes

No

Moving in That Direction

Shared non-financial resources (staffing, space, volunteers, data)?

Yes

No

Moving in That Direction

Jointly sought funding and/or pooled our respective funding?

Yes

No

Moving in That Direction

Shared risk, responsibility and accountability for joint initiatives?

Yes

No

Moving in That Direction

3 Does my organization **draw on the strengths and assets of all ages** in our policy advocacy and programming?

Yes

No

Moving in That Direction

Next Steps...

If you answered **NO** to any of the above items, the following tools in this Toolkit may be helpful to strengthen your leadership capacity:

- **Community Checklist** (TAB III) for areas where holistic approaches are desirable
- **Issue Briefs** (TAB IV) for ways to connect your work to the work of potential allies
- **Resource Development** (TAB VIII) for creative ways to achieve more with existing resources
- **Tips for Coalition Building** (TAB VI) to utilize the assets residing within the community

If you answered **YES** to many of the above items, your organization is positioned to take a leadership role, or may already be creating a sustainable community for all ages.

DON'T FORGET!

Record what you've concluded from this tool on the *Planning Worksheet* (TAB II). It asks for information in the following categories:

Organizational Strengths and Other Conclusions	Steps for Building Additional Organizational Capacity
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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES: TIPS FOR COALITION-BUILDING & COLLABORATION



**“...Let us unite together so that we may
have the strength to protect our future...”**

*Spiritual Message from Elders
National Indian Council on Aging, 2000*

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES: TIPS FOR COALITION-BUILDING & COLLABORATION

Why Should I Use This Tool?

Generating broad community involvement and support is an essential ingredient for building sustainable communities for all ages. Too many well intended projects fail because insufficient attention is given to building coalitions and developing collaborative leadership. But there are time-tested steps you can follow to get the right people at the table and keep them there.



Courtesy of Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning

What Will This Tool Help Me Accomplish?

This tool answers questions that you might have when putting together coalitions and maintaining their momentum. It helps you:

- select issues that can engage and empower residents and communities
- identify people and organizations that have similar goals
- clearly state problems and their desired outcomes
- cultivate leadership and inter-group cooperation

How Do I Use This Tool?

This tool uses a question-and-answer format. The questions address common barriers that can cause an initiative to fail. You will get the most from reading the entire set of Q&A, but you can also go directly to the specific questions that pose a challenge to your work. The responses to the questions offer guidance about how to address these challenges. The inset boxes show how other communities have successfully addressed the same questions.

Q & A #1 How can we identify issues or rallying points where diverse community members can find common ground?

ANSWER: Capitalize on what's happening now. People are more likely to come together if there is a sense of urgency that provides initial momentum such as:

- a crisis in the community (child or older adult killed at a busy intersection, rise in neighborhood violence)
- demographic changes (a rapidly growing older population, an increasingly diverse school population)
- a threat (proposed development that would infringe on existing open space, a steep rise in energy costs)
- an opportunity (new interest among City Council members in health and wellness issues)

Beyond a sense of urgency, common ground is more likely to be found around issues that:

- are defined by shared values (see the *Communication Guide* (TAB VII))
- focus on a widely-endorsed, achievable goal
- require the participation of multiple groups and organizations to reach a particular goal
- have high costs for failing to come together

The *Community Checklist* (TAB III) and *Issue Briefs* (TAB IV) offer approaches that can generate broad public support.

Common ground forged through demographic changes. Florida's growing older population is being mobilized as a powerful resource for younger generations, who are more diverse in racial and ethnic background. In doing so, all generations benefit and intergenerational respect is cultivated.

In the Intergenerational/Service Learning Programs of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, high school students and elders work together on community service programs that improve the quality of life for all generations. Intergenerational Citizens Action Forums foster common ground on urban development, civic engagement, Social Security, health care reform, crime, ageism, and racism. The Social Security/Economic Studies Program, sponsored by AARP, the Gray Panthers, and the Social Security Administration, enables students to become knowledgeable participants in the dialogue about the intergenerational aspects of Social Security.

Website: www2.dadeschools.net

Contact: Ramona Frischman, 305-995-1215, rfrischman@dadeschools.net

Seniors4Kids, a campaign sponsored by Generations United and endorsed by five of Florida's former governors, mobilizes older adults in support of universal, high-quality pre-kindergarten. Older adult volunteers in early learning centers encourage policy-makers to improve the state's pre-K program. Recruits from civic groups, retired educators, participants in retirement centers and their friends and family have laid the foundation for a successful grassroots coalition committed to promoting excellence in early education.

Website: www.gu.org

Contact: Brent Elrod, 202-289-3979, belrod@gu.org

Q & A #2 What ingredients are necessary for collaboration to be successful?

ANSWER: Collaborations work best when:

- stakeholders are engaged from the onset
- everyone remains sufficiently informed to ensure the quality of their input into discussions and decisions
- individuals and organizations have meaningful roles and a real voice
- participants understand the strengths and limitations of each member and organization
- assigned roles build on individual interests and strengths
- responsible parties have specific “job” descriptions and are accountable to all involved
- the shared goal is always out front and anchors conversations, especially when personality conflicts arise and conversations become tense or difficult
- ground rules for participation respect diverse styles of participation, create equitable opportunities to contribute, and ensure that no one group or individual dominates
- the group acknowledges that difficult times will occur and is prepared to work through any that do
- credit is shared widely and visibly
- a process exists to monitor progress and recognize success along the way

Success through stakeholder engagement. The Hawaii Intergenerational Network (HIN) has created an infrastructure of supportive volunteers and organizations to give intergenerational projects a good chance of sustainability despite staff and funding changes. HIN implements its demonstration projects through the work of cross-sector committees and volunteers, with a paid staff of only two people.

A prime example of stakeholder engagement and defined responsibilities occurred when preschool teachers in Hawaii identified the need to have more assistance in the classroom to help care for disruptive children. A working committee helped secure funding from the State Department of Health and private foundations for a two-year demonstration project that placed older adult volunteers (50+) in preschools to offer classroom assistance.

Members of this committee included representatives from preschool and early childhood development; trainers of older adult volunteers; a pediatrician, a legislator, a health department worker and a foundation spokesperson. The HIN provided staff and materials to support the committee, but committee members defined their own guiding principles, goals, and objectives for working together.

After nine months the program showed changes in children’s behavior. As a result of stakeholder engagement from the start and ongoing planning and evaluation, funding for the program has been absorbed by the participating schools, and the program has expanded to additional preschools.

Website: www.hingeneration.org

Contact: Maeona Mendelson, 808-220-8686, maeonas@yahoo.com

Q & A #3 Collaborations often fail because they aren't able to define problems in ways that make sense to affected community members or they fail to identify workable solutions. How can these pitfalls be avoided?

ANSWER: The following questions will help you define problems and solutions more carefully:

- How do various people with an interest in this issue view the problem/concern?
- What is the real problem? (in specific terms)
- Why is it a problem?
- Who in the community is directly affected by this issue, and how?
- What are possible solutions to the problem?
- What are the pros and cons of each possible solution?
- What solution does the group think is the best approach?
- What will be the benefits to interested parties?
- What strategies are needed to reach your goals?
- What community resources are already in place (human, organizational, financial, and physical)?
- What additional resources are needed?
- How will outcomes be measured?

The Toolkit's *Planning Worksheet* (TAB II) walks you through every step of the planning and implementation process in order to avoid the pitfalls of inadequate problem definition or unworkable solutions.

You can save a lot of headaches by anticipating opposition to the way you frame an issue or the proposed solution. Reach out early to those who might see things differently and work

with them to find common ground. Otherwise, those who are resistant to change, see the issue differently, or fear their turf is being challenged can negatively affect public discussions, media coverage, and desired results.

Aging is everyone's business. The Jefferson Area Board for Aging in the Charlottesville, Virginia region spearheaded a 2020 Community Plan on Aging to help prepare for the pending increase in the area's older population. But instead of focusing solely on older residents, the exercise became an extensive community-wide planning effort with a goal of exploring how generations can work together. The 2020 Plan includes a strong focus on intergenerational solutions: recruiting health care workers from the high school level; promoting intergenerational living; creating health care centers that serve both youth and older adults; and creating physical environments accessible to youth and older pedestrians. An Intergenerational Advocacy Council of 2020 (IACT) has been established to ensure that local and state legislation are youth- and elder-friendly.

Website: www.jabacares.org

Contact: Karen Wilcox, 434-817-5224, kwilcox@jabacares.org

Q & A #4 How can we identify the important “stakeholders” for any given issue?

ANSWER: Stakeholders are individuals, groups, or organizations that:

- are affected by an issue or situation and thus have legitimacy for seeking action
- have an interest in either making change or keeping the status quo
- have knowledge about an issue or project
- may be able to do something about a problem
- can give visibility and credibility to the work as high-profile champions

To identify stakeholders around an issue, think through:

- Who is already involved in addressing this issue?
- Who else must be engaged to ensure that all affected persons are represented and all community resources are enlisted?

One key reason that initiatives fail is the lack of political will by those who can make the difference but have not been engaged from the start. Get their buy-in early! And don't forget to look at existing successful partnerships to see if your efforts can build upon established relationships.

The right stakeholders ensure sustainability. Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods P-Patch Program illustrates how a wide range of stakeholders—elected officials, city agencies, private non-profit organizations, resident activists, and consumers—have joined forces for over 30 years to develop and sustain community gardens. Community gardening is an important tool for promoting health, building social ties, and improving land in urban and rural areas across the nation.²

Seattle's community gardens originated through the combined efforts of a truck farming family, a community activist who wanted to teach children about gardening, and city council leaders. To spread support for the program through tight budgetary years, a non-profit P-Patch Advisory Council was formed, which later became the Friends of P-Patch, a grassroots membership organization. This organization subsequently evolved into the P-Patch Trust, a community gardening land trust. At each step of the way, the cadre of stakeholders increased and the infrastructure evolved to accommodate the issue's development. Today, the City Department of Neighborhoods and the non-profit P-Patch Trust provide community gardening space, water, and technical assistance to residents of 44 Seattle neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Matching Fund, which encourages neighborhoods to use their own resources, provides small start-up grants for new gardens. Participants include older adults, persons with disabilities, low-income families, and immigrant populations. Supporting a strong environmental and social ethic, the P-Patch program allows organic gardening only, and supplies 7 to 10 tons of produce to Seattle food banks each year.

Website: Seattle Department of Neighborhoods,
www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/

Contact: p-patch.don@seattle.gov

Q & A #5 We want to organize a group that adequately represents diverse residents and groups. How can we build a collaborative process that respects diverse vantage points?³

ANSWER: Inclusiveness enriches the quality of ideas. It also increases the likelihood of short-term success and long-term sustainability. But inclusiveness does not come naturally in many communities. Adequate preparation for power sharing and leadership across the boundaries of age, race, gender, and class may require building “cross-cultural” capacity for all members. It also may include conversations focused on addressing sensitive issues in the community’s history and agreeing to move beyond them with improved collaboration and respectfulness.

Consider taking the following steps toward inclusiveness:

- Wait to make any critical decisions until all groups are at the table that should be there. Otherwise, you risk defining issues and solutions in ways that aren’t inclusive.
 - Find each group’s most respected community leaders, who can be valuable allies in communicating informally as well as formally about collaborative efforts.
 - Get the word out about collaborative efforts through announcements at neighborhood and senior centers, faith institutions, schools, medical facilities, social service agencies, housing communities, popular small businesses, and any other locales that specific groups frequent.
- Meeting location can have a big impact on who turns out. Strategically select neighborhoods and sites that are considered “neutral” and are accessible to public transportation. Or rotate meeting locations across sites familiar to the groups you want to involve.
 - Timing and support matter. If your goal is to bring together high school students, working parents, and older adults, schedule meetings on weekends in a familiar location like a school or a library. Be sure to offer child care and adult day care, and meet in a location that is accessible for persons with disabilities.
 - Language access must be considered. Key materials should be available in the languages of the involved populations, and simultaneous translation may need to be offered at community meetings.
 - Rotate or share leadership at meetings among the various groups who need to be part of the coalition. Be sure that everyone has access to the coalition’s important materials and resources. Where necessary, provide auxiliary leadership instruction for participants wanting to build their capacity for success as a coalition leader.

From dialogue to action. In the South Park neighborhood of Tucson, AZ, a grassroots organizing effort involves diverse residents in shaping their own community. PRO Neighborhoods, with funding from the Arizona Community Foundation, organized neighborhood conversations for diverse community members to voice what was important to them. Dialogue, which was intentionally intergenerational, was opened between the primarily Mexican American and African American residents of South Park.

At the start, outreach efforts were conducted with established leaders in the neighborhood. Through these leaders, the initiative made links with other residents primarily through “word of mouth” among neighbors and at local institutions. Participants in the conversations identified neighborhood priorities and formed multi-generational and multi-cultural committees to act on them. The PRO neighborhood organizer facilitated the process, but the essential components of success were the involvement of community members from the beginning and the grassroots leadership that emerged to move the project forward.

Committees now are working to:

- create opportunities for multi-cultural programming at the neighborhood library focused on the traditions of European American, African American, and Mexican American residents

- keep neighborhood parks clean and attractive so that community members of all ages can intermingle
- use art as a way for the community to celebrate its African American and Mexican American heritage
- encourage more open communication and familiarity among residents for crime prevention, intervention, and neighborhood restoration

Website: www.proneighborhoods.org

Contact: Linda Duran, 520-882-5886,
lduran@proneighborhoods.org



Courtesy of Temple University Center
for Intergenerational Learning

Q & A #6 What types of leaders are needed for collaboration to succeed?

ANSWER: Leadership occurs whenever someone steps up to the plate on his or her own, someone responds to being asked to help, or there is a place for someone to be heard and their talents utilized. Collaboratives need to identify and mobilize diverse and energetic leadership, especially individuals who:

- thrive in an environment where diverse groups work together to solve common problems
- have “bridging capital,” the skills to work respectfully across diverse groups
- have a passion for cooperation, be open to changes, and know how to mediate conflict
- stay anchored to a shared vision, while being resolute and driven
- commit to the long haul to ensure continuity and success
- see how small issues are connected to something larger
- understand the value of, and have the capacity for, working with a wide range of stakeholders to achieve the desired outcomes.

A process should be established to identify, promote, and sustain new leaders. Opportunities to take on leadership roles should reach broadly into the community (e.g., older volunteers, teachers, youth groups, health care workers, lay faith leaders, small business owners, newcomers). Established community leaders and those most respected among newcomer residents can help to identify emerging or potential leaders. Training for potential leaders to enhance their self-confidence and build their capacity to succeed by working with others is critical.

Grassroots leadership development. The Land-of-Sky Regional Council in western North Carolina, with funding from EPA, developed an environmental leadership initiative known as “Champions of Environmental Progress.” Following a training conference that addressed environmental issues in Southern Appalachia, including clean air, water quality, transportation options, land conservation and solid waste management, self-managed older adult leadership teams were created to educate the broader public about regional environmental issues. These “E-teams” now spearhead grassroots environmental education through a mobile environmental learning center, a speaker’s bureau, and a grassroots land care management team.

Website: www.landofsky.org

Contact: Lee Ann Tucker, 828-251-6000, leeanne@landofsky.org

The value of a well-positioned champion. The Mayor of Falcon Heights, MN, has championed making the city intentionally intergenerational by:

- encouraging intergenerational participation in developing public policy through the City Council and advisory boards
- giving highest priority to policy proposals (such as intergenerational housing) that incorporate the ideas and concerns of multiple generations
- using an intergenerational approach to emergency preparedness planning and response by identifying ways that all age groups can contribute their unique skills and experience in any disaster situation.

Website: www.falcon-heights.ci.mn.us

Q & A #7 Once we get people mobilized around an issue, how can we keep them active?

ANSWER: People and organizations stay involved when they see that their involvement pays off. Start small and pick either an issue where there is a good likelihood of initial victory, or an issue that has the potential for early and multiple points of success. This way you can sustain visibility, credibility, and momentum.

People and organizations also stay involved and feel ownership when they understand specifically how they can contribute. Setting up a system where each participant is responsible for taking certain actions and reporting on specific results validates the importance of all coalition members for achieving the coalition's goals.

Once initial victories have been realized, the benefits of working together will become evident. It will then be easier to build upon your success, bring others on board, and sustain your achievements.

Success breeds further mobilization. The Atlanta, GA Regional Commission's (ARC) Aging Atlanta Initiative, a public-private consortium, works to increase accessible and affordable housing and transportation so that older adults can live independently.

In the Atlanta region, housing is often built on the fringe, away from existing neighborhoods, shopping, services, and public transportation that are all critical for community integration. Zoning regulations generally had not supported mixed land usage. ARC involved older adults in public education campaigns, public meetings, and advocacy initiatives, telling their stories about the need for affordable housing with near-by opportunities.

Initially one key county changed its zoning rules to allow for higher density if developers designed housing that was located near existing neighborhoods, services, and other amenities. This success added to ARC's credibility as an effective planner for vibrant, multi-generational neighborhoods. Building upon their initial success, older adults met with elected officials in other counties that were initially opposed to zoning changes. They emphasized that they would have to leave the county if they did not have alternative housing options. As of this writing, another county is poised to pass a similar zoning ordinance.

Website: www.atlantaregional.com

Contact: Kathryn Lawler, klawler@atlantaregional.com

DON'T FORGET!

Record what you've concluded from this tool on the *Planning Worksheet* (TAB II). It asks for information in the following categories:

Who Else Should be at the Table &
Plan for Their Inclusion

Key Points to Keep in Mind about
Collaboration in our Community

¹ Appreciation to: Morse, *Smart Communities: How Citizens and Local Leaders Can Use Strategic Thinking to Build a Brighter Future*, Jossey-Bass, 2004; Kretzman and McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, ACTA Publications, 1993; Linden, *Working Across Boundaries, Making Collaboration Work in Government and Nonprofit Organizations*; Jossey-Bass, 2002; Chrislip, D.D., *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook*, Jossey-Bass, 2002; Annie E. Casey Foundation www.aecf.org, *Race Matters Toolkit* 2006; Diers, *Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way*, University of Washington Press, 2004.

² International City/County Management Association, "Active Living and Social Equity: Creating Healthy Communities for All Residents, 2005 www.icma.org; American Community gardening Association, www.communitygarden.org

³ For detailed guidance, see *15 Tools for Creating Healthy, Productive Interracial/Multicultural Communities*, Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, www.race-democracy.org; also, *Multiracial Formation*, Applied Research Center. www.arc.org



A THREE-STEP COMMUNICATION GUIDE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES



**“A good community exists when its elders plant
trees to shade the next generation.”**

Chinese Proverb

A THREE-STEP COMMUNICATION GUIDE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES

Why Should I Use This Tool?

The ability to achieve the change you want requires good analysis, good work, and good communication. Building support for the work depends on how well you:

- convince others that sustainable communities are shared concerns,
- demonstrate that a sustainable community for all ages is possible, and
- make convincing arguments about the benefits of partnerships across diverse groups in order to achieve your goal.

What Will This Tool Help Me Accomplish?

This tool helps you talk about the importance of the work in short and compelling ways. It gives you communication approaches that have a good chance to build support for sustainable communities for all ages by:

- creating messages based on peoples' shared values,
- translating complex issues and tough problems into understandable solutions,
- promoting reasons for working together, and
- using images, data, and spokespeople effectively.

How Do I Use This Tool?

Before you start to work on an issue, review the following steps for advice on how to talk strategically about sustainable communities for all ages. Apply each of the steps to your work. Revisit your messages from time to time, using this tool to ensure that your communication remains fresh and effective.



Before You Start Crafting Your Message...

Before you develop your communications, it's important to understand the usual ways that people think about community issues. Creating sustainable communities for all ages requires *doing business differently*. So you will need to develop a message that helps people *think differently*. The following chart shows the way people tend to think and then illustrates a better way to communicate.

The Usual Way	A Better Way —for a Viable Future
<p>Silo Thinking. Typically community issues are thought about and addressed one at a time — in “silos” or “stovepipes.” In this usual way of thinking, issues generally have their own advocacy groups, different policies affecting them, and separate sources of funding. The perceived difficulty and imagined expense of tackling big and complex problems means that decision-makers usually try to break them into smaller pieces.</p>	<p>Devise Shared Solutions. A community might tackle the need for after-school programs at one time and the desire to provide volunteer opportunities for older residents at another time. But these two issues, if addressed together, would create a shared solution. Older volunteers could provide their services in after-school programs.</p>





The Usual Way	A Better Way — for a Viable Future
<p>Competition Among Advocates. In the usual way of thinking and doing business, issues are addressed one at a time, and their advocates end up competing for attention, power, resources, and turf.</p>	<p>Promote Collaboration. If a community first spends money for after-school programs, advocates for elders may then be told that there aren't enough resources to set up volunteer programs for older residents. One group wins, the other loses, and they become positioned as competitors for limited community resources. The shared solution highlighted above promotes cooperation rather than competition and is more cost-effective.</p>
<p>Short-Term Thinking. The focus of problem-solving is often on short-term solutions, or seeking the fastest way to address an immediate problem. This approach doesn't take into account the root causes — how the problem came about in the first place. Decisions using this approach often don't produce lasting results, and they don't use resources as efficiently as a longer-term solution might.</p>	<p>Think Long-Term. The need for after-school programs often arises because of the absence of adult supervision in the lives of children and youth outside of school. Engaging elders as volunteers for after-school programs would address both a root cause and an immediate need at the same time. This approach has staying power because it offers both a short-term solution and long-term returns. It increases the chance that younger generations will succeed, older volunteers' health will improve, and parents can work with less worry because their children are supervised. The cost-savings are obvious in the short-term and more dramatic over the long haul.</p>

Effective communication strategies, then, need to offer a different way of thinking for the general public and community decision-makers so that we move to cost-effective, shared solutions that are made to last.

HERE ARE 3 CRITICAL STEPS TO DIFFERENT THINKING

STEP 1

Messages draw people in by tapping into widely held values. Identify the widely held values that your issue represents, and start your message with these. Wait to state the issue until you've drawn listeners in with the value(s).

Some possible value lead-ins include:

- "Since we're all growing older and will live longer, we need to be sure we have healthy communities for all ages."
- "We need policies that are built to last so that we're not always re-inventing the wheel."
- "We all want our community to keep its reputation as a great place to live."
- "Officials should get the greatest value when they spend taxpayer dollars."
- "We believe in our ability to solve any challenges that we face. That's the American spirit."
- (Add your own ideas, depending on the groups you're trying to persuade.)

Connected to a specific communication scenario, these phrases might appear as:

"We urge the county planning commission to make a decision that will use taxpayer dollars wisely and benefit the whole community. (Value) Creating safe, walkable communities for people of all ages (Issue) is good for our health, and it's good for the environment."

OR

"This Task Force has been convened by the Governor to protect our state's legacy as a desirable place to live (Value). Together we will update the state's blueprint for healthy and affordable communities (Issues)."

And so on. . . . Get a diverse group together and enjoy the creativity of crafting your own value-based starting points.

STEP 2

Once you've stated the widely held value(s) and named the issue, be sure to bundle practical, attainable, and sustainable solutions with the problem statement.

In doing so, you:

- communicate that situations are manageable
- keep an audience from feeling “compassion fatigue” from not knowing how to respond effectively
- recommend how to get a handle on the problem
- signal how a lot of people can win around any issue

So let's put this recommendation together with Step 1 to illustrate how an advocate's appeal might continue:

“We urge the county planning commission to make a decision that will use taxpayer dollars wisely and benefit the whole community. (Value) Creating safe, walkable communities for people of all ages (Issue) is good for our health, and it's good for the environment.

“We know we can improve everyone's health through regular exercise. (States the problem but signals that it can be solved.) By developing communities with well-placed sidewalks and accessible bus stops, we can encourage walking and decrease the unnecessary use of cars. This will take some of the sting out of families' high fuel prices and also decrease toxic emissions that contribute to children's asthma — the leading cause of school absenteeism in our community.” (Offers the solution, which has sustainable intergenerational health consequences, as well as positive spin-off effects for family pocketbooks, asthma sufferers and the environment.)



Courtesy of Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning

STEP 3

Following communication of the widely held value(s) and identification of the issue coupled with the solution, focus on the reasons for working together.

Sustainable communities for all ages require a dedication to sustainable results *and* a dedication to collaboration. Your communication challenge, then, is not only about the results—it's also about what it will take to achieve them. So, you will need to sprinkle communications with the additional values of partnership and collaboration. Let's go back to the example in #2 and respond to this point with a rounded-out message:

"We urge the county planning commission to make a decision that will use taxpayer dollars wisely and benefit the whole community. (Value) Creating safe, walkable communities for people of all ages (Issue) is good for our health, and it's good for the environment.

"We know we can improve everyone's health through regular exercise. (States the problem but signals that it can be solved.) By developing communities with well-placed sidewalks and accessible bus stops, we can encourage walking and decrease the unnecessary use of cars. This will take some of the sting out of families' high fuel prices and also decrease toxic emissions that contribute to children's asthma—the leading cause of

school absenteeism in our community." (Offers the solution, which has sustainable intergenerational health consequences, as well as positive spin-off effects for family pocketbooks, asthma sufferers and the environment.)

"Everyone will win if we can all work together. That's why we've come together—school administrators, youth service providers, agencies on aging, and environmental groups. Alone we're just another interest group. Together we are powerful because we represent residents of all ages and a wide range of views that converge on this issue. (Describes the value of working together.) We urge the county planning commission to promote healthy communities for all ages by creating safe, walkable communities."

This example focuses on some of the key reasons for working together:

- the ability to achieve something that you probably can't achieve on your own
- more efficient use of scarce resources such as political influence and taxpayer dollars

- a solution that benefits a wide range of residents
- the opportunity for decision-makers to be responsive to a lot of groups by using single solutions

You can probably think of additional reasons to add to this list.

Three basic steps are all it takes to create effective messages about complex issues. But for good measure, we've added three **bonus** reminders that also contribute to a stronger message:

Bonus #1

Use images that create easy ways for people to get a handle on complex issues.

People need to be able to “boil down” complex situations to things they can more easily grasp. For example:

“Creating a sustainable community for all ages is like protecting children through required vaccinations”. How?

- It will keep people healthy through all stages of life.
- It's a decision that can be made once and last a lifetime.
- What's good for each child also protects others.
- New vaccines come along to adapt to changing conditions.
- Investment in vaccines reduces health care costs down the road.

A complex issue—sustainable communities for all ages—but an understandable image.

OR

“Chicken Little would have us believe that the sky is falling because of baby boomer aging, environmental pollution, child poverty, and all of the other critical issues that communities are facing. But Chicken Little got it wrong. The sky's not falling. It's opening up so that we can reach for the stars in new ways. And we can reach for the stars together.”

A lot of challenges, but no need to think that the sky is falling.

Bonus #2

Numbers don't “speak for themselves.” Let them speak through the larger values you're advancing.

If you let numbers “speak for themselves,” they will use the language of peoples' usual way of thinking. Instead, it's essential that you wrap them in widely held values that include shared solutions. For example, pointing out the serious problem that 35% of older adults and 50% of children in your community live in the midst of toxic hazards allows the usual way of thinking to come into play in the following ways:

- Three or four or five different interest groups—advocates for the aging, for children, for community health, for affordable housing, and for the environment—might consider the data separately and seek funds to take action separately.
- The public might not see this as a community problem—they may say it’s up to families to avoid selecting hazardous housing or neighborhoods.

Here’s one way you could frame the numbers for the city housing authority:

*“Creating a healthy community for all ages begins at home. **(Value)** Yet, landlords in rental units in our community have allowed their buildings to become unsafe, and too many neighborhoods are near dumping sites for hazardous waste. The health of 35% of our community’s older adults and 50% of our children is at risk. **(Embeds the data in an Issue definition that identifies intervention points)** Many other communities have solved this problem. **(Signals that solutions are available.)**”*

*“We are a broad coalition of agencies and organizations whose caseloads will be overwhelmed and whose achievements will be undermined if this happens. **(Reason for partnership)** With the housing authority’s leadership to enforce the city’s building codes, some hazards can be reduced. And with the planning department’s commitment to cleaning up the dump sites, we can prevent further harm to our neighborhoods. The results*

*will be dramatic.” **(Immediate and long-lasting health results and cost-savings can be cited here)***

Bonus #3

Messages will get more attention if the messenger is neither suspect nor a “usual suspect.”

As your coalition becomes broad, capitalize on the range of voices available around your issue. Consider the following:

- Surprise listeners by having your message delivered by new voices—people not usually associated with the issue. This choice conveys to others that even if they’re not usually interested in an issue, they should pay attention or rethink their position. For example, have the head of the Chamber of Commerce endorse construction of an environmentally sound community center that will house shared activities for residents of all ages.
- Use messengers who convey trustworthiness and don’t have an obvious self-interest in an issue, regardless of how new or how longstanding their relationship is to the work. The previous example is applicable here as well.

Wrapping it up...or going deeper...

These are some quick and effective ways to craft your messages. Use the key steps and bonus suggestions as a filter before going public with any press release, policy proposal, mobilization campaign, or other critical communication. For users who would like more guidance, Frameworks Institute offers an extensive Checklist, which is available in the Frameworks Toolkit at www.frameworksinstitute.org, on pp. 34-35 of the publication "Framing Public Issues."

DON'T FORGET!

Record what you've concluded from this tool on the *Planning Worksheet* (TAB II). It asks for information in the following categories:

Key Message(s) for Generating Support for Next Steps

¹ This tool is based on research and analysis by Frameworks Institute (www.frameworksinstitute.org) and Cultural Logic (www.culturallogic.com), but they are not responsible for any of the tool's contents.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AGES



**“If we have a big enough ‘why,’ we
will always discover the ‘how.’”**

Tara Semisch

Why Should I Use This Tool?

In order for a community to be sustainable, organizations and residents must draw upon their collective assets and think creatively about sharing resources. These resources go beyond money to include space, data, staff, and volunteers. Collaborative resource development can reduce competition in two ways: it can make the pie bigger, and it can expand who benefits from the same size pie. The value of working together is that collaborative efforts can cost less than the sum of unconnected individual efforts.

What Will This Tool Help Me Accomplish?

This tool helps you think about non-traditional strategies for expanding community resources and benefits. The examples will give you ideas about possible funding sources, programs, and community partners.



How Do I Use This Tool?

Review each of the areas—funding, space, data, and staff/volunteers—to learn about specific ways that communities are creatively sharing resources. The Tips at the end of each section will give you some additional suggestions for moving toward a more sustainable future.

HOW TO EXPAND **FUNDING** RESOURCES: STRATEGIES AND CASE EXAMPLES

Blend Funding for Shared Programming/Services

- Funds from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Area Agency on Aging are used to support a program in which older adults serve as environmental health coaches in elementary schools and senior centers. (www.epa.gov/aging)
- Funds from HUD and the Department of Education are used to support a literacy program for kinship caregivers.
- The Champions of the Environment Project in North Carolina, which is currently funded through EPA, will be sustained through the local Retired Senior Volunteer Program chapter. (www.epa.gov/aging)

Use Separate Funding Sources for Complementary Activities

- Fee-for-service funds for child care and adult day care are used to support programming in a shared site.
- Separate funds for after-school and older adult programming are used by a settlement house to coordinate a lifelong wellness program.

Infuse Intergenerational Approaches into Funding Designated for Specific Populations

- The Philadelphia Department of Human Services provides funding for older adults to support families raising children with special needs. (www.TempleCIL.org)
- Learn and Serve funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service is used to support college students teaching English to older immigrants. (www.projectshine.org)
- School district funds are used to cover the costs of transporting older volunteers to schools and providing meals.
- Senior Connections of DeKalb County, GA, is piloting a project in which they take welfare-to-work clients to and from job sites and on the way drop off and pick up their children at daycare centers. http://ipath.gu.org/documents/A0/Reaching_Across_Ages.pdf

Seek Greater Reach within Existing Funding Streams

- The federal Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO) program could be adapted to allow elders to add bedrooms to their homes to accommodate children they did not expect to raise. It currently provides resources solely for families taking in elders. (Generations United, *Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children: The Second Intergenerational Action Agenda*, 2004)

HOW TO EXPAND **FUNDING** RESOURCES: STRATEGIES AND CASE EXAMPLES

Expand Reimbursement for Services

- Some intergenerational shared sites are eligible for government reimbursements from sources such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Medicaid, Medicare, and the Centers for Mental Health Services (Generations United, *Under One Roof*, www.gu.org).

Create Income-Generating Activities

- A shared site in California runs a farmer's market with the talents of older farmers from the area and students who fulfill community service requirements. (www.onegeneration.org)
- An adult day care center in Charlottesville, VA houses a Montessori school and a greenhouse where children and adults grow plants for sale. (www.jabacares.org)

Seek Support from Community or Family Foundations to Engage in Comprehensive Community Building Efforts

- With support from the Arizona Community Foundation, six communities are implementing strategies to build communities for all ages. Efforts include developing multi-generational learning centers, engaging all ages in environmental projects, using the arts to foster understanding across ages and cultures, and creating services that support caregiving families. (www.azfoundation.org)

Tips on Funding

- Focus on developing partnerships across systems—not just programs
- Decide up front who is most appropriate to be the lead agency for a grant proposal—avoid competition with your partners
- Build upon existing relationships that organizations have with funders and other key stakeholders
- Market the strengths of each member of your collaboration; show how each contributes to the overall initiative, and why a collaborative approach is more effective than individual organizations working separately
- Think beyond the “usual suspects” in the funding world and try to blend funding from different systems
- Educate funding community and practitioners to the advantages of “economies of scope”—single solutions to multiple problems; conduct public education campaigns to coordinate with funding appeals
- Leverage funding sources – public to private or private to private
- Show examples of how shared data, space, and staff produce cost-effectiveness
- Think about the portability/replicability of your proposal and advance that value to a funding source
- Use the monetary value equivalent of volunteers as match for funding requests where possible

HOW TO USE SPACE COLLABORATIVELY: STRATEGIES AND CASE EXAMPLES

Consider Co-located Programs with Shared Common Space

- Adult day care and child care centers can be attached physically, with each having dedicated individual program space in addition to shared common space. (Generations United, *Under One Roof*, www.gu.org) Some Head Start facilities offer intergenerational programming. (Generations United, *Reaching Across the Ages*, http://ipath.gu.org/documents/A0/Reaching_Across_Ages.pdf)
- Hope Meadows is a planned intergenerational community on 22 acres of a converted military base in Illinois. It provides a caring community, so that children can move from the foster care system into adoptive homes. It also creates neighborhoods to provide extended support to adoptive families and to create purpose and meaning in the lives of older adult residents. (www.generationsofhope.org)

Consider Contiguous/Attached Space with Simultaneous Use

- Senior centers can be located in schools, such as in Jefferson County, KY, (www.edfacilities.org/pubs/pubs.html.cfm?abstract=AgeWave) or Hawaii (www.hingeneration.org/fellows.asp).
- Starting from an intergenerational garden project, a San Diego County Boys and Girls Club and a Senior Center located across the parking lot regularly co-develop community-based service projects that engage both youth and older adults. (www.aging.senate.gov/public_files/hr155ps.pdf)

Employ Sequential Use of the Same Space

- Recreation centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, and faith settings can offer programming for older adults in the morning and for youth in the afternoon.

Make the Most of Outdoor Space

- Vacant lots transformed into community gardens can be cared for by residents of all ages and generate income for their neighborhoods.

Tips on Space

- Think of ways to derive income from space by renting to complementary businesses (medical office in a senior center or child care center)
- Encourage donors to invest in multi-agency facilities that are environmentally sound
- Pursue intergenerational and one-stop programs in new and renovated community centers, where “green” building principles have been used to maximize the healthiness of the space
- Coordinate with school districts to enhance community use
- Encourage businesses to identify unused space that can meet a multi-agency community need
- Include green design components to leverage tax credits and tap additional sources of foundation giving

Identify and Share Existing Reports that Focus on Specific Issues or Age Groups

- Reports from Area Agencies on Aging and Departments of Human Services on the needs of caregiving families could be used to explore additional support services for families caring for members of all ages.

Synthesize Data from Various Reports into a Comprehensive Community Profile that Presents the Needs and Resources of All Age Groups

- In Yavapai County, AZ, representatives from diverse agencies developed a community profile that included demographic information, existing resources, major issues faced by different age groups, and suggestions by residents about what would make their community good for all generations. This is being used to create a common agenda for organizations and residents in specific parts of the county.

Work Collaboratively Across Agencies Serving Different Groups to Collect Data About a Specific Issue

- In order to promote health and wellness among all generations, a coalition of agencies in Mt. Vernon, NY, is developing a tool to assess the extent to which restaurants offer healthy choices. Those that do will be identified and publicized by the Mayor.

Use Intergenerational Teams to Collect Data About a Specific Issue

- In Yonkers, NY, teams of older adults and youth are using hand held computers to assess problems associated with the city's physical infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks, street lighting, pot holes). Results are sent to city agencies and teams follow up to ensure that improvements are made.

Build New Issues into Existing Data Bases for Cost Efficiency and Easy Analysis of Complex Issues

- The Commission on Children and Families and the Area Agency on Aging in Charlottesville, VA, agreed that the Commission, which issues regular reports on the status of children and families, should also be the lead in data collection and analysis about elders in the community.

Tips on Data

- Contact your county or city planning office, local and state agencies, and large nonprofits to find reports on the issues you want to address
- Draw upon the resources of your planning team to conduct focus groups, develop surveys, or interview key community stakeholders
- If people from different agencies are collecting data, train them together to ensure that data collection methods have consistency

HOW TO MULTIPLY **STAFF** AND **VOLUNTEERS**: STRATEGIES AND CASE EXAMPLES

Share Staff

- Many adult day care and child care shared sites have an intergenerational coordinator who is responsible for coordinating ongoing activities between the children and older adults.
- San Diego County's Helix Charter High School hired an Intergenerational Coordinator to increase meaningful interaction between age groups and to serve as an ombudsman to solve problems experienced by grandparent guardians as they try to promote children's school success.
- Administrative/business management functions and technical expertise can be shared among agencies for cost-effectiveness.



Have Separate Staff Coordinate Activities

- Often the activities director of a senior center and an after-school coordinator will plan joint intergenerational activities.

Use Older Adults and Youth in Direct Service and Leadership Roles

- Older adults through Senior Corps and youth through Americorps, Learn and Serve, and VISTA have served in paid and unpaid roles as direct service providers, program planners, recruiters, fundraisers, and trainers. (www.cns.gov)
- Through the Corporation for National and Community Service Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), volunteers provide help getting children immunized, participate in neighborhood watch programs, and offer disaster relief to victims of natural disasters. (Generations United, *Public Policy Agenda for the 109th Congress, 2005*)

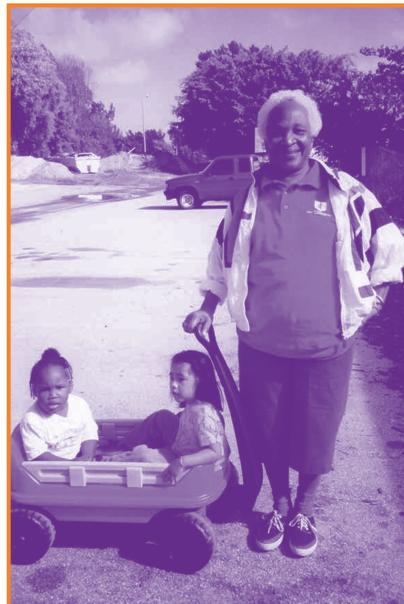
Tips on Staffing/Volunteers

- Coordinate recruitment, retention and training programs
- Develop mentoring programs across agencies
- Mobilize older adults to serve as volunteers for youth, community, and environmental groups

DON'T FORGET!

Record what you've concluded from this tool on the *Planning Worksheet* (TAB II).
It asks for information in the following categories for each objective:

Objective	Available & Potential Resources	Are These Sufficient?
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Courtesy of Temple University Center
for Intergenerational Learning

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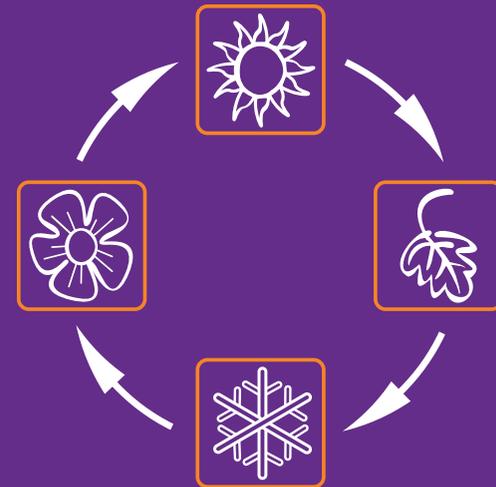
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Coming soon – a Toolkit website with even more ideas to build sustainable communities for all ages. Until then, you can download a PDF of the Toolkit from www.justpartners.org

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NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

"...an invaluable guide in redefining and reshaping the future of an aging society. Finally, we have a way to think realistically and in a practical manner how, when and where we can proactively respond to the aging of our next greatest generation, the baby boomers."

Fernando Torres-Gil, Director
UCLA Center for Policy Research on Aging
Former Assistant Secretary on Aging,
US Dept. of Health and Human Services

"The growth in our elderly and youth populations gives us a fresh opportunity to appreciate their respective talents and their shared concerns. The Viable Futures Toolkit builds on both of these to find sustainable solutions for pressing community problems."

Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Co-Director
Aspen Institute Roundtable on
Community Change

"This toolkit covers new ground -- it provides practical strategies for AARP staff, volunteers and members as they work toward developing livable communities that are good places for all ages."

Elinor Ginzler, Director,
Livable Communities, AARP

"Connecting generations to build communities that engage people of all ages simply makes sense. Our cities and towns will benefit from the hands on activities and inspiring examples this new toolkit offers."

Donna Butts, Executive Director
Generations United

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