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Growing Smarter, Living Healthier

A Guide to Smart Growth and Active Aging

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EPA

Aging Initiative

Protecting the Health of Older Americans

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Trailblazers

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Introduction

Age-friendly communities use Smart Growth principles **(development that improves the community, environment, economy, and public health)** to become healthier places to grow old in — and better places for people of all ages.

This guidebook is intended for older adults who are interested in how our communities work and how we might help them become more 'age-friendly.' Many of us have longed for the kind of age-friendly neighborhood that has different types of homes for people at different stages of life; walking paths and public transit to make it easy to get around without a car; and parks, shops, services, and homes that are closer together. Older adults are finding that by designing new neighborhoods differently — as well as redeveloping existing neighborhoods and roadways — we can make places that are healthier for ourselves, our neighbors, and the environment. Rather than let aging limit our options, we can actually become *more* independent by reducing our dependence on the auto, increasing our travel choices, and improving our quality of life right when we've started to have time to enjoy it. We can enrich our own remaining decades, as well as hand off a more sustainable community to future generations. That is, if we decide to do something about it.

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In this guide, we address the basic principles of neighborhood and town design. But it is also intended to help you understand ***why*** community design matters, and ***how*** becoming involved in your community's decisions about growth can make it a better place in which to grow old. You'll find suggestions for ideas to try, and links to resources to learn more about ***how*** to remake your neighborhoods to be easier to get around, whether you live in a city, suburb, or small town. We'll also give you a few ideas for ***getting involved*** and staying engaged, providing more housing options and gathering places, eating healthier, and making it easier to carry out your daily activities. After all, our age group spans decades, and some of us are very active, while others have limited mobility.

Active Aging concepts *(activities that increase endurance, strength, flexibility, balance, and the principles of injury prevention)* can also be built into community design and development to encourage walking, biking, and active use of parks, so that people of all ages get exercise in the course of daily life.

The first chapter, *Staying Active, Connected, and Engaged,* outlines why our choices of where and how to live can have an impact on our health and well-being. The next three chapters — *Development and Housing, Transportation and Mobility,* and *Staying Healthy* — outline strategies and include project examples that address these key issues. Within each chapter, the *What You Can Do* section provides some ideas for what you can work on with your friends and neighbors. The *Conclusion: Next Steps* chapter summarizes additional follow-up ideas. In the *Resources* chapter, you'll find links to more detailed strategies, websites, and information about each of the ideas discussed in the guide. We included a community self-assessment checklist for you to identify what your community is already doing, and where you might want to focus your energy — so get together, and get moving!

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1 Staying Active, Connected, and Engaged

Where and how we choose to live can affect our health and well-being

Where and how we choose to live makes a difference. It matters even more as we get older. The neighborhood and housing we select can help keep us active, connected, and engaged — or make these critical needs difficult to achieve.

- ***Staying active*** — walking, wheeling, and getting moderate regular exercise — helps with both our physical and mental well-being. The way our neighborhoods are designed and built can make carrying out our daily activities an easy task or a chore. Does our neighborhood have sidewalks and public transportation, or do we need to get in a car to run errands?

- ***Staying connected*** with friends, family, and community is critical to remaining healthy, vital, and active, and is easier if our neighborhood is designed to support interactions. Staying active socially is good for us and good for the community. Connecting with friends and family and sharing our time, wisdom, and experience helps us maintain a sense of purpose, gets us out of the house, and keeps us engaged, focused, and learning.

- ***Staying engaged*** also benefits the community at large. Many nonprofits, boards, and commissions would be unable to function without the time and dedication of older volunteers. Places of worship depend on older members' wisdom and labor. Businesses know that mature workers are among their most productive, with strong work ethics, flexible schedules, can-do attitudes, and decades of experience.

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What we need from home and community changes over time. Traditional downtown neighborhoods (pre-1950s) and rural small towns have a range of housing types that fit the needs of individuals, couples, friends, and families throughout each stage of life. As we age, we may choose to stay near friends and family in the same home *(aging in place)* or neighborhood *(aging in community)* or choose to move to a smaller, easier-to-maintain home or new community. That choice directly influences how we get around, how we stay connected, and how we get help when we need it. We may also discover that we want to be involved in how our communities grow and redevelop.

Age-friendly communities have gathering places that are within walking distance of homes, or a short bike ride, drive, or shuttle trip away. These critical neighborhood 'meet-ups' can include parks, libraries, community centers, places of worship, gyms, Internet cafes, ice cream stores, or neighborhood diners. Small neighborhood parks, town squares, and plazas are great places to sit and read, catch up on e-mail, talk with friends, or watch kids play. Larger parks and greenways can offer walking trails, bike paths, and sports fields.

Having grocery stores, restaurants, and cafés within walking distance — along with sidewalks to walk on — is the best predictor of how much older adults will walk, according to a recent Seattle study led by Abby King. Fordie Ross, 93, goes on a three- to four-mile walk nearly every day around his Beacon Hill neighborhood, where every street has sidewalks. "Safe? Oh, yes. I've never had any safety problems," he said. Seattle's Comprehensive Plan identifies 25 urban villages to be built in areas that had old warehouses and empty lots. Residents of retirement communities in the redeveloped Northgate neighborhood will find them safer to walk. A new, 141-unit senior residence will be connected by pathways to retail shops and the transit center.

New growth and public services are directed into urban villages that include apartments, condominiums, or townhouses along with commercial uses, small parks, and schools.

New development must be designed to accommodate pedestrians and include wider sidewalks, outdoor seating, dining, and public plazas to encourage activity.

As we age in place, whether in the same house or the same community, these gathering places become even more important. Getting to these meeting places provides some of the physical activity that keeps us healthy. Being there in the company of friends provides the critical social interactions that keep us connected and engaged. Being part of a community also triggers an informal network of folks who might keep an eye out for each other. As a recent study of low-income Hispanic seniors found, traditional neighborhoods with 'eyes on the street' *(porches, stoops, windows, and buildings along sidewalks just above street level)* showed improved physical functioning for older residents over a three-year period; they also showed more social support and reduced psychological distress.

Long-time residents of Manoa, a traditional Honolulu neighborhood near the University of Hawaii (UH), were excited when a new senior housing project was added to a community park. They could continue getting the benefits of living in a great neighborhood while enjoying the advantages of new housing that meets their changing needs. It is on a bus line, a short ride to the UH campus and downtown — just $30 for an annual senior pass — and a short walk to their neighborhood shopping center, plate lunch stand, churches, coffeehouse, and sports fields. Because it is next to the elementary school, residents can stay involved with intergenerational activities and help maintain the adjacent community garden with their friends and neighbors.

Staying connected can become more difficult over time. Families and friends can move away, or we may downsize or move to another community. Many older adults find that maintaining a large house becomes a burden, physically and economically, especially with rising energy prices. Others choose to move for climate, economic, health, or quality of life reasons, or to be closer to a family member. Those who want to stay in the same house may find that their community lacks the accessible gathering places, or the non-driving ways to get there, which might be found in a traditional neighborhood. Those who want to move to a smaller home might find their choices lacking if they live in a more conventional neighborhood developed in the last 60 years. If they are fortunate enough to live in a more age-friendly neighborhood, it is likely there will be other options.

Staying engaged and learning. Staying engaged is easier for people who live in an age-friendly community. In addition to the interactions that are just 'part of daily life,' more organized opportunities are available. Communities are co-locating senior centers and housing near schools, libraries, or daycare centers, and finding that developers of senior housing and medical facilities want to locate nearby as well.

In Burlington, VT, the McClure MultiGenerational Center houses the Champlain Senior Center, which provides meals, educational, health, social, and recreational programs for those 50 and older. Across the shared hallway is Burlington Children's Space, which runs early child care and preschool programs. This intergenerational shared space helps connect older adults with children both informally and in more structured tutoring, classes, and storytelling.

Colleges like Tompkins-Cortland Community College, in rural Dryden, NY, have established satellite campuses to make courses more accessible. Their downtown Ithaca campus is in an old department store on the Ithaca Commons, an active pedestrian mall in a historic downtown. A nearby elementary school on the town square was redeveloped into residential condos, with lower floors occupied by tenants like Moosewood (a well-known restaurant) and the Ithaca Guitar Works, offering lessons on all kinds of instruments.

Universities, senior centers, and school districts are establishing learning initiatives that older adults can access in their neighborhoods and churches, like

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the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA. Participation in learning activities in our neighborhoods provides double the benefits. Researchers have long known that physical activity keeps both our bodies and brains in shape, and that mental exercise helps keep our brains younger.

Participating in community activities doesn't just benefit us. It can be a rewarding opportunity to give back, to share our hard-won wisdom, to pass on our skills and experience. Older adults are a tremendous resource, and we often have the time — and patience — to spare. When the elementary school is next to our homes, when the places where we pass time are next to the playing fields, when the lifelong learning center is across the street from the library or co-located across the hall from a day-care center, it is much easier, more convenient, and more likely that we will spend some time mentoring, coaching, cheering, teaching, or just plain interacting with the community. Foster grandparent programs, pairing seniors with elementary and preschool students, have long been effective at making these intergenerational connections — but there is no organized substitute for just being around and available informally for the young people in our communities.

What You Can Do:

Use this guide to make connections

Follow up on something that matters to you. As you read the following sections, think about whether the issues raised would apply to your own neighborhood, your housing situation, the streets or parks you use, and the growth and development issues your community faces. Look at both short-term and long-range plans for how and where you will live, the choices you prefer, and whether they are available — or whether it's time to roll up your sleeves and initiate or join a group working to make your community more age-friendly.

Look around you and talk with others about what you have discovered. This guide is intended to spark your interest; the ***Next Steps*** and ***Resources*** chapters will lead you to more detailed information, programs, organizations, and guidebooks for the strategies you want to work on. You're not alone. Efforts like AARP's *Mobility Agenda,* The Project for Public Space's *Citizen's Guide to Better Streets* and *Placemaking Guidebook,* and others are listed for you to reference.

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2 Development and Housing

Healthy neighborhoods offer diverse housing choices, gathering places, and ways to connect

Healthy neighborhoods offer plenty of housing choices, for us, our friends, and our relatives, so we don't have to leave behind the people and places we know and love. With a diverse housing mix (single-family homes of all sizes, duplexes, small and large apartments, studios above garages or shops, condominiums, and lofts), most traditional neighborhoods allow people to stay near friends, families, work, and worship as they move through life. While we like to maintain our independence, staying connected can greatly improve our lives as we age. Maintaining access to services, shopping, activities, work, and volunteer efforts will help keep us active, healthy, and engaged. Whether staying in the neighborhood or moving to another that has more housing options and a vital center, having access to a broad range of housing choices is one key to remaining independent.

Photo courtesy of EPA Smart Growth

Most residential neighborhoods built in the last 60 years do not provide this mix of nearby destinations and different kinds of housing. Developers built big groups of similar houses of the same size and price, separated from another group of larger or smaller houses by unusable open space. Housing was segregated by income and family size, mostly separated from commercial destinations. Some developments included a large block of apartments, or a retirement community, or maybe a school or library. One positive result was that, in many new subdivisions, parents were similar in age, in career status, and in the ages of their children. This encouraged lots of group activities. However, as individual and family status changes, many people eventually move out of these more homogenous neighborhoods to find new housing that fits their new circumstances: an apartment for a newly single parent, a house with attached studio for an aging grandparent, or a smaller house or condo for the empty nester. Although these housing options are not usually available in conventional residential developments, Smart Growth activists are

finding that such neighborhoods can be redeveloped over time to increase choice in housing, mobility, and activities.

Smart Growth development

Developers of new Smart Growth neighborhoods have learned that providing a wider range of housing choices within one community helps make it more attractive and interesting, provides community character, and holds value over time. Rather than build a few hundred of one house type here, and a different type over there, each with its own private 'amenity package,' Smart Growth neighborhoods mimic older, traditional places. They add amenities like parks, trails, and community centers that create places for generations to gather. Housing options vary according to where they are located in the community. Typically, more compact housing types like apartments, lofts, condos, and townhouses are built closer to the town center or on major streets to make it easy to walk to activities. Single-family homes and cottages are on quieter streets a few blocks away, but still within walking and wheeling distance.

Photo courtesy of Carlton Eley

Smart Growth principles can also be used to redevelop underused properties along roadways at the edge of existing neighborhoods, replacing aging shopping centers and cleaning up neglected properties. Redeveloped properties are a convenient destination for shopping, activities, and catching an express bus to downtown. When the time comes to choose a smaller or more accessible home or apartment, the town centers provide a number of options — without having to leave the neighborhood. Since developers often prefer to develop in outlying 'greenfield' areas rather than to redevelop existing places, helping to facilitate such redevelopment is a perfect volunteer activity for residents of surrounding neighborhoods, and an opportunity to make sure developers get it right.

Eyes on the street can make us safer. Traditional development concepts can actually make our neighborhoods safer and improve mobility. Architects use the term 'eyes on the street' to refer to buildings that have windows, doors, and porches overlooking streets and neighborhood parks. Communities like Norfolk, VA, have discovered significant decreases in crime in neighborhoods and public housing that redevelop using these principles. Many are starting to change development codes to require eyes on the street instead of blank walls in new buildings. Development with buildings that have eyes on the streets are not only safer for everyone to use, they also encourage a community to stay connected. There is no better crime deterrent than *you* sitting on your porch, or watching over your block or neighborhood park from the front window.

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Each year, 40 to 50 homeowners in **Santa Cruz, CA,** take advantage of the city's award-winning Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Program to increase housing choice by making accessory units easier to build. The Program helps homeowners convert garages or build new structures they can either rent out or move into themselves — giving them extra income while creating more affordable housing. To make it easy for homeowners to implement, the city provides 7 preapproved, architect-designed plans for 500-square-foot units, as well as an ADU How-To Manual to guide homeowners through approvals, construction, making the unit neighbor-friendly, and being a good landlord. They also revised zoning to no longer require covered parking and to allow garage conversions.

Housing options

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which we used to call 'granny flats' or garage apartments, are a traditional housing option currently returning to favor. These are typically a converted or expanded garage, a basement apartment, or a newly built cottage. Accessory dwelling units actually provide homeowners housing flexibility on site, along with added income. Homeowners can rent them out while remaining in the larger house, or move into the smaller, easy-to-maintain, fully accessible unit when downsizing. Whether the main house is occupied by other family members or rented for extra income, the homeowner is able to stay in the neighborhood and stay connected. Despite their many benefits, ADUs are usually prohibited by local zoning ordinances. Some communities are changing zoning codes to allow ADUs on any lot, as well as providing preapproved designs and other program support. Others, like rural Fluvanna and Louisa Counties in Virginia, are offering programs to help provide modular units or kits that can be quickly erected when the homeowner needs a fully accessible unit.

Cohousing is collaborative housing; typically small-scale neighborhoods made up of individual houses and shared common facilities, like open space, courtyards, gardens, play areas, and a common house. The common house serves as the community gathering space, with a large kitchen and dining room, a playroom, sometimes a library or lounge, and a shared laundry room and workshop. While individual homes have kitchens, residents typically eat together a few times a week, sharing cooking and cleanup. Individual units can be smaller, since the common house is available for parties, and often has a guest bedroom for visitors.

Silver Sage Village in Boulder, CO, is a 50+ cohousing community with 16 accessible homes around a common courtyard and an accessible two-story, common house with a guest bedroom for friends and family and a large great room for community meals and celebrations. Ten homes are market rate; six are permanently affordable. The project won Best of Senior Living from the National Association of Home Builders.

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Residents are committed to living as a community, participating in its design and operations, and ensuring the neighborhood encourages social interaction while protecting individual private space. Generally 20 to 40 units of single-family or attached homes centered on a walkway or courtyard, cohousing projects have also been developed in downtown neighborhoods and commercial buildings.

Although most cohousing is intergenerational, several newer projects are restricted to active seniors. Elder cohousing typically consists of attached, accessible units, often focused on wellness and staying active.

What You Can Do:

Get involved in planning

Get involved in planning projects, programs, and policies — one of the best ways to help our communities become more age-friendly. Older adults who have fewer family duties and a more flexible work schedule often have time to join committees, boards, and working groups. Local planning and zoning boards, regional transportation committees, bicycle and pedestrian advisory groups, affordable housing task forces, etc., are all fueled by volunteer members. You can look for ads in the paper or on the web or call your local planning department — the positions are rarely highly competitive. Since many strategies outlined in this guidebook are still not permitted by each locality's codes and zoning regulations, it will take time and patience to identify and correct the contradictions.

Participate in or initiate a community planning process — an exciting way to make a difference. You can help create a broad regional vision, a neighborhood plan, or just work on a single intersection. Often conducted in day-long workshops, or in a week-long intensive series of design meetings called a charrette, these efforts require active, committed community participants to be effective. A well-designed process meshes the technical expertise of agency staff, the creativity and fresh ideas of outside consultants, and the in-depth local knowledge of residents and business people. ***(See Resources.)***

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3 Transportation and Mobility

We can build choice back into our transportation system — and make it easier for people of all ages to get around

We all cherish our freedom to move around: from those early halting steps to our first time behind the wheel, from running errands to a drive in the country. The freedom to move around feels like a fundamental American right — to connect with our families, friends, and neighbors; to conduct business; to access work, shopping, and volunteer activities; to go to worship; and to vote. Both government and business have made significant investments to support that freedom since the country's birth — from our ports and fleets, to river barges and railroads, to the Interstate Highway System. For the last 60 years or so, that freedom has mostly depended on the automobile — and boy, have we loved the ride. Our favorite songs, restaurants, vacations, movies, and memories are still with us in the front seat as we start looking back along life's highway.

Photo courtesy of Liisa Ecola

Most of us drive, and expect to continue driving as long as we are able. Overall, we're pretty safe drivers too: observant, experienced, and cautious. Some of us have more flexible work or volunteer schedules. We can avoid the crowds at rush hour; stay off the bigger, faster roads if we are lucky enough to have an alternative; stay home during inclement weather; and, at some point, reduce or eliminate night-time driving. As much as we love our cars

Realizing that 40 percent of the population is adults over 60, local leaders in **Dunedin, FL,** decided to improve sidewalks and intersections to make them easier and safer to use. By widening sidewalks, installing curb ramps and curb extensions to reduce crossing distance and slow traffic, and adding extra time to crossing signals, they made it safer and more pleasant for older adults — and people of all ages — to walk around the compact city. They also added a new senior center along the Pinellas Trail through downtown, making it easy for older adults and the center's walking club to access the trail.

and our memories, maybe it's time for us to look ahead to how we will move around in the future. Conventional developments of the last 60 years were a great place for many of us to grow up, go to school, and raise our own families. However, we probably didn't build enough options into them — for getting around by walking, biking, transit, or even for short car trips off the main highways. Increasing traffic congestion can lead to delays, frustration, and even road rage, limiting the times of day we are comfortable driving. The growing national conversation about energy costs and availability, coupled with awareness of the impacts of global climate change, have amplified the need for a long, hard look at how our daily lives and independence are affected by the way our neighborhoods developed. And maybe — for some of us — now is the time to start building some choice back into our communities. To paraphrase Robert Kennedy and Rabbi Hillel: When — if not now? Who — if not us?

Rather than let aging limit our options, we can actually become more independent. We can reduce our dependence on the car, increase our travel choices, and improve our quality of life. Right when we've started to have time to enjoy it. We can enrich our own remaining decades, and hand off a more sustainable community to future generations. That is, if we decide to do something about it.

Community design influences how we get around

Elders and kids are the 'canaries in the coal mine' of walkability. If we build places and streets that make it easier for our oldest and youngest to navigate, we all will benefit. Of course, the reverse is also true. Many communities built when gas was cheap and housing was booming followed a model of bigger lots and wider roads. They dumped drivers onto even wider, faster highways that were often the only way to get to work, shopping, or schools. As we grew farther out, all that new traffic required us to go back in and widen the roads through existing neighborhoods so that outlying drivers could get to work, while making it harder for downtown residents to get around.

The good news is that this challenge — of redefining and rebuilding American neighborhoods and roadways — is realistic and achievable, and older adults are well-equipped for it. We understand how things work; how decisions are made at town meetings, city boards, and state agencies; and we have the patience and tenacity to attend meetings, conduct research, and take action. Activists, professionals, and elected officials

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have been working on solutions for a couple of decades. Called by many names, such as Smart Growth, New Urbanism, walkable neighborhoods, livable communities, or sustainable development, one central theme has been making places that work for people, not just for cars. Our infrastructure investments can benefit older adults: safer streets and intersections, expanded bus and rail, and more accessible parks and trail systems. It's not rocket science, either. There are many guidebooks *(see Resources)* that help citizens remake their communities by increasing transportation choices, offering greater housing options, and weaving a stronger social fabric, healthier environment, and more vital economy.

We can 'complete the streets'

It's not just about walking. Complete Streets work for everyone. We can restore an age-friendly network of smaller-scale streets as we reinvent suburbia and rebuild downtowns. Our youngest and oldest drivers then can safely move around the community instead of being forced onto those fast-moving five- and seven-lane roads. The same 'traffic-calming' strategies that communities have applied to reduce speed and improve safety in existing neighborhoods can be used to design street networks that 'get it right the first time.' These new designs are called 'Complete Streets' since they work for all users: walkers, bikers, drivers, and transit users. With narrower lanes *(to slow traffic speeds and reduce run-off)*, safer intersection designs *(to reduce crashes and encourage crossing in the right place)*, curb extensions and median crosswalks *(to shorten crossing distances and have a stopping place)*, bike lanes *(to give bikes the same treatment as cars)*, wider sidewalks and

Over 19,000 older residents in Kirkland, WA, can move around more safely after the Kirkland Senior Council and the Active Living Task Force got involved. They helped City staff design and implement innovative programs and policies like the **Complete Streets Ordinance**, to design streets for walkers, bicyclists, and drivers, including wider sidewalks, pedestrian-friendly medians, and in-street bike lanes. For more immediate impact, the **PedFlag Program** placed yellow flags at over 60 crosswalks that walkers pick up and carry across to remind drivers to yield to pedestrians, and then return flags to another holder after crossing. The **Flashing Crosswalk Program** incorporates flashing lights embedded into the pavement for 30 crosswalks at busier intersections.

Photo courtesy of the City of Kirkland, Washington

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street trees *(to make walking a safe, pleasant option)*, and a host of other details, we can build Complete Street networks that make it easier for *everyone* to get around: driving, walking, wheeling, or taking transit. A well-planned system of clear, easy-to-read signage will also help us to get where we're going, however we choose to travel.

Rebuilding along the highway corridors

Commercial highway corridors running through our downtowns, small towns, and suburban strips are a great place to make better connections. Downtown commercial districts started to fade, followed by adjacent suburban shopping centers and mini-malls as development moved further out. These fading 'greyfield' properties — named for the acres of little-used asphalt parking surrounding shopping centers — are often bordered by residential neighborhoods concerned by the properties' condition. These neighborhood residents would likely support well-designed new uses for nearby greyfields. Many of these properties are being converted to new town centers that are modeled on older traditional neighborhoods and downtowns. They usually provide a range of housing choices and a gathering place that is easily accessible to surrounding neighborhoods, via a walkable network of smaller streets.

Creating a community plan can coordinate redevelopment of a string of similar aging properties, typically found along a commercial roadway. The resulting street network through the redeveloped properties can provide complete streets for local travel parallel to the busy main highway. It can also connect existing neighborhoods to the newly developed 'town centers,' as well as to each other, and support more efficient transit service. If the new centers are developed as compact transit targets *(focal points for improved bus or rail service)* with a mix of homes, stores, and workplaces, many roadway corridors would eventually have the ridership needed for fast, frequent, dependable transit. However, this kind of planning requires significant

Older residents, activists, and business owners along US 29 in Albemarle County and Charlottesville, VA, decided that the aging suburban strip needed an update. While they knew that the regional highway needed to carry lots of traffic, they also wanted a redesign that would provide an interconnected Complete Street network parallel to US 29 so local pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers had more choices for short trips. They enlisted the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC), the regional planning agency, to work with the county, city, and Virginia DOT to create **Places29,** a joint transportation and land use plan for the rapidly developing corridor. The solutions will reduce congestion and improve safety on US 29; guide development toward compact, mixed-use, walkable, transit-ready neighborhoods and centers; and support development of an enhanced regional transit system. The planning process included extensive community participation by residents, business owners, and the Jefferson Area Board for Aging and the Senior Center.

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community involvement over a long period to make sure the plans meet community needs and that projects are actually built according to the original vision. Older adults are especially capable of participating in, tracking, supporting approvals for, and watching over project implementation.

Providing travel choices can save money

Seniors have a well-deserved reputation for watching the bottom line. We learned the value of a buck, like to hang on to what we've saved, and expect our elected officials to use what we give them wisely. With extreme fluctuations in gas prices and housing values, and transportation agency budgets dwindling, it seems worth trying a new approach. We can't afford to keep expanding and then maintaining the current publicly funded road system. One advantage of the corridor-based redevelopment approach outlined above is that many of the new roads, walkways, parks, and gathering places would be built by the private sector as development occurs. This would save significant public investment. If fuel costs are high, those on fixed incomes that live near or in the new neighborhood-scaled developments will have plenty of low-cost ways to get around, and easy access to community gathering places. Some of those travel choices might reduce our dependence on foreign oil, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and help mitigate the effects of climate change. All while keeping us active and healthy.

Build choice back into the transportation network. Although many of us might say 'the bus is not for me' or 'I'd rather drive than walk,' it's really about providing ourselves with more choices than we currently have. More transportation options give us the chance to stay active and independent. More than one-third of Americans over 65 report no daily physical activity, while research shows that just a half-hour of activity three times a week can greatly improve our health and sense of well-being. By adding places we can walk or wheel to from nearby neighborhoods, and

The average annual cost of owning and operating a car is $8,121 for fuel, maintenance, new tires, insurance, depreciation, and financing *(at $2.94/gal and 15,000 miles/yr, per AAA).* A compact costs over $6,000, and an SUV over $10,000. Although seniors drive fewer miles on average, car ownership might be one of the largest items in their household budget. **Maris Grove, an Erickson retirement community** near Philadelphia, has partnered with **PhillyCarShare** to give residents and staff an affordable, easy-to-use option — a shared Toyota Hybrid. Membership is free, and reservations can be made over the phone or online. According to resident Joe Peronace, "You don't have to buy a car, no maintenance, no insurance, you use their gas card and pay an hourly rate," Peronace said. "It's too good to be true. If you sit down with pencil and paper, it's a big savings." PhillyCarShare estimates members save over $4,000/yr over owning a car.

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making streets pleasant and safe, the walk to the library, the store, or to meet friends in the park provides us with an opportunity to be active. Even the driving trips on neighborhood streets can be shorter and safer with the right community design. And though many of us don't see ourselves as bus riders right now, we might eventually live in some of this newly developed housing — a downtown loft, a quiet townhouse, a charming cottage, or a well-located assisted living community. Having the *choice* to get to downtown shopping or cultural events on our own terms and schedule, rather than waiting for a friend or an on-call van can ensure independent living for much longer.

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What You Can Do:

Make it easier to get around

Start a walking group with a sense of purpose — at the park, on downtown streets, even at the mall. Read some of the resources outlined in this section and discuss issues and strategies as you exercise together.

Join or start a car-sharing program. If one is available in your region, call and try it out. Work with your locality, university, or transit agency to gauge local interest. Focus on specific walkable neighborhoods near transit stations.

Try transit. Check out the bus (or train, if you're lucky). Get a schedule, grab a friend, and see where it goes. Ask if the agency provides 'travel training' for older adults. If it stops nearby but isn't easy to get to, do an informal walking audit to see what improvements would make you and your neighbors more likely to ride.

Make one street safer. Older adults are often prime movers of such efforts, as demonstrated in Albemarle County, VA's Hillsdale Drive Safety project *(see Places29 sidebar).* The senior center and Jefferson Area Board for the Aging were concerned about speeding on the adjacent suburban road. When a slow-moving grandmother was almost hit crossing the road, they asked the regional transportation agency, TJPDC, to come up with a solution. Gathering local and state agency staff, they conducted a **walking audit** and a series of **community workshops** with area residents and businesses to develop a **safety improvement plan.** Solutions included safer median crosswalks (at places participants indicated they wanted to cross), sidewalks, lighting, narrower lanes, bike paths, and landscaping. Since it was their plan, area seniors have been strong supporters of the project as it worked its way through design, funding, and construction.

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Staying Healthy

4

Finding healthy food, keeping active, and getting help when you need it can be easier in an age-friendly community

Eating healthy food

Finding, preparing, and eating healthy foods is critical to our well-being as we age. We tend not to eat as much, which makes it harder to get critical nutrients. Sometimes we just don't feel like eating, are tired of cooking, or are worried about the cost of fresh ingredients.

Meals-on-wheels programs, which deliver prepared meals to older adults, are finding it harder to absorb increasing food costs, and their volunteer drivers can be hit hard by higher fuel expenses for deliveries. Such programs are often the only link to healthy food available to low-income seniors as their personal mobility fades. In the long term, building more places with compact, walkable neighborhoods might make it easier for volunteers to deliver meals on three-wheeled bikes, or in small electric vehicles. However, we also need to address the 'supply side' by developing more local sources of fresh, healthy food.

Community gardens are located on public or donated land, with small plots assigned to individuals. The concept of taking individual and community action in a crisis to grow our own food is not new. Remember the World War II Victory Gardens planted proudly in every front yard? Since many of us travel to visit friends, family, or far-off places, a new twist or two could update the Victory Gardens' success. Community gardens

Photo courtesy of Julianne Sammut

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are often neighborhood-based and support social interaction, so a group of older adults could work the plots cooperatively, taking care of each other's weeds and harvests when they are traveling or under the weather. Since community gardens usually have long waiting lists, senior organizations could promote new sites, find locations, and help operate them.

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) is an update of the truck farm, which grows produce just outside the city to truck into weekly farmers' markets. The CSA business model is a way for community members to share farmers' business risk, while providing early capital for seeds, fertilizer, and equipment. Customers buy 'shares' of a season's produce, paying part or all up front, and then receive a weekly share of the grower's harvest. Some CSAs also encourage customers to spend a day or two helping to plant and harvest major crops in spring and fall. Senior centers make an ideal drop-off point for the weekly deliveries, and overall costs could be reduced if volunteers agreed to help bag and box the individual shares for pickup. Another way to help reduce food costs is to form buying clubs or food co-ops, which buy food in bulk (usually pre-ordered by individuals), then divide it up on delivery. This can also be a rewarding social activity.

Keeping active

Healthy neighborhoods have plenty of opportunities for older adults to remain active, whether informally as part of daily life, or in more organized activities. If our neighborhood has great places within walking or biking distance, just going to meet a friend or pick up a few things can add up to regular activity. The doctor-recommended 30 minutes per day (or at least 3 times per week) can be broken into 10- or 15-minute segments and still add up to significant health benefits. The average transit user walks or bikes 20 minutes as part of his or her regular transit trip; a 5-minute walk to the park or café becomes a 10-minute round trip. Having nearby parks for tennis, swimming, jogging, or speedwalking can also keep us active and connected. As we stay healthier and active longer, many older adults are remaining involved in organized sports like softball or swimming competitions.

In extreme heat and cold, we like to stay indoors, but that doesn't have to slow us down. Suburban shopping malls have long opened early so seniors could get their exercise in a group mallwalk. The community college in rural Dryden, NY,

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Photo courtesy of the City of Rogers, Arkansas

reserves its downstairs hallways for exercise walking during inclement weather. Many public facilities can find some time to set aside for indoor activities for older adults: an hour scheduled in the school pool or gym, or special daytime hours in the bowling alley. And, of course, there is the traditional senior center, with organized activities just for us.

A new approach to senior centers

Many active older adults don't yet see themselves as 'senior center types,' and a new model is emerging. These multipurpose lifestyle centers fit with the kind of intergenerational, age-friendly neighborhoods we are choosing to live in. Designed to attract and retain active, 50+ older adults, they are typically located in urban or neighborhood settings, integrating them into the community social life and making them more accessible to drop by as we make our way around downtown.

From the street, they could be a business-friendly coffeehouse (a 'Starbucks for Seniors'), a place to meet with clients or hang out with friends, surf the net, or catch up on e-mail. You might see groups discussing books, sports, art, or a concert, or a small group getting help on a new computer program. Larger places may also have gyms, yoga and dance workshops, or educational classes in a learning center. As we try to integrate our own active aging fully into the place we live in, maybe creating a new kind of community center at the heart of it all isn't a bad way to start.

Older adults in the Chicago area can find a new kind of gathering place that fits active lifestyles in a community setting. **Mather LifeWay Cafés** are more like typical coffee shops than senior centers, with attractive, inviting, hip interiors to appeal to 50+ adults and their friends.

Usually located in a downtown storefront-type building, they are technology-friendly to connect older adults with Internet, e-mail, and computer classes, and often have learning centers and gym/exercise facilities. Some even have full restaurants and entertainment — but customers say the cafés feel more like a coffeehouse than a typical senior center.

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Getting help when we need it

We all want to remain independent for as long as possible. That's human nature, and most of us put off asking for help as long as we can, even when we might really need it.

There are basic tasks we have to do to live on our own — feeding ourselves, dressing, walking, getting out of bed, bathing and hygiene, drinking and taking medication — and more complicated tasks like preparing meals, doing housework, driving, shopping, and managing our money. Eldercare professionals can advise families when such help is required, and what kind, but that advice is not usually triggered unless someone — family, friend, or neighbor — notices the need.

Photo courtesy of the City of Kirkland, Washington

The signs that people need help are usually obvious to those who know them well and see them often. In an age-friendly Smart Growth neighborhood or small town, regular interaction with people is more possible, more convenient, and more frequent. The people we interact with are more likely to be from the same neighborhood. Whether in a park down the street, a neighborhood diner or coffee shop, or library or place of worship, odds are someone in the room lives a block or two away and is concerned about our well-being. We're used to hearing the phrase 'it takes a village' refer to raising children, but the same is true at our own end of the timeline. With a neighborhood structure that allows and encourages us to get out and about, and nearby places that are worth going to, we're more likely to be noticed, and our absence noted as well.

Once the need for help has been identified, actual assistance may be easier to obtain in an age-friendly neighbor-

In 2001, long-time residents of Boston's Beacon Hill neighborhood decided they wanted to age in place in their own homes — but with the same access to services, maintenance help, home care, and social activities they might receive in a retirement community. They founded **Beacon Hill Village**, a member organization that links area seniors to 'discounted, vetted, guaranteed' service providers, home health care, classes, and activities.

hood, where people of all income levels and ages live nearby. In rural and suburban neighborhoods, the economics of driving around to several houses daily to provide low-wage assistance are even more difficult in an era of rising gas prices. Compact communities offer the potential for both paid assistants and volunteers to have low-cost, efficient access to multiple clients in a day, whether walking, taking a bus from another neighborhood, or a shorter drive.

Caregiving

In traditional neighborhoods, caregiving was primarily an extended family affair. There were usually enough brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandkids in the community to help keep an eye out and take care of family elders. As we scattered across the country, and more household members worked outside the home, a need emerged for organized networks of caregivers, both paid and volunteer. Area Agencies on Aging and other senior-focused groups have developed programs to address caregiving needs, and private companies have found strong market demand for affordable home healthcare and personal services. The most successful programs have been community-based nonprofits that coordinate both paid professional and volunteer services of local residents to provide healthcare and nursing, social connections, and help with chores and maintenance to older neighbors.

This core idea of neighbor helping neighbor is key to making the community-based approach work. It works best in a real neighborhood or small town where people know and care about each other. The in-home health care and companionship help older adults stay in their homes and connected to their communities, avoiding both the extra cost and reduced quality of life in a nursing home. Where family and friends are available, their assistance can be coordinated by the community organization. This approach saves money for the aging adults and their families, enables families to share caregiver management tasks, and reduces costs compared to institutionalization. In traditional mixed-use neighborhoods — with workplaces near homes — family members can arrange to drop by on a lunch break or before and after work, to help with meals, shopping, or medication, or just to visit.

Elderberry Institute's Living at Home/Block Nurse Program helps seniors stay healthy and connected while living in their own homes. Started in St. Paul, MN, it has expanded to local efforts across the country.

- Seniors receive in-home social support, health care, and chore services from a paid and volunteer network, administered by a local nonprofit.
- Elders live at home longer, avoiding nursing home expenses, and staying productive and socially connected — while reducing overall community costs.
- The program also coordinates assistance from family and neighbors.

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Homesharing is another emerging option, where two or more unrelated people share a home, with their own private space and common living areas. It can work well in rural areas, where organized caregiving can be harder and more expensive to deliver. Frequently coordinated by a local nonprofit, the homeowner benefits by receiving 10 to 15 hours per week of household help, like cooking, shopping, or cleaning, and the roommate (often a student) receives free rent. Having someone in the home informally helps keep an eye out for changes in the homeowner's condition, while the older adult gets to remain at home and independent longer, enjoying the help and the informal companionship.

Older and disabled homeowners who need assistance with daily living can stay in their homes, after organizations like **HomeShare Vermont** link them with individuals who desire free or low-cost housing. The roommates help with housework, yard work, meals, transportation, and companionship, or whatever is negotiated, in return for free or reduced rent. For seniors who need more help, caregivers provide more personal services like bathing, dressing, shopping, and cooking, in return for room, board, and salary.

The organization can also arrange for paid live-in or hourly non-medical caregiving.

Photo used with permission of Eric Vance

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What You Can Do:

Staying healthy

Find healthy food. Locate a Community-Supported Agriculture farm and join up, with your friends, neighbors, or a group like the senior center. If you can't find one, talk to neighbors and friends to see if there is sufficient interest to inspire an area farmer to start one. Join or start a community garden — there is always land available somewhere. You might try it on some of the leftover space at public buildings, apartments, senior centers, schools, churches — or in a park. Organize a food co-op (buying club). Make ordering, picking up, and dividing the food a social event, and even deliver it to those who can't get out.

Make a gathering place. Talk with local senior organizations, nonprofits, and housing developers about exploring the market for a new kind of lifestyle café. Take advantage of other gathering places — like your place of worship, the library, the courthouse steps, or wherever it is in your town — and test out some of these ideas with neighbors you don't yet know.

Look out for others. Keep an eye out for someone who needs help — on your block or on your street. Connect them with some of the resources mentioned here. If they have a need that isn't available, see what you can do about it. Talk with your friends and community organizations about whether a neighborhood caregiving and home-services group (1) is needed in your community, and (2) what it would take to get one started. Explore the home-sharing idea with local service organizations and housing nonprofits.

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5 Conclusion: Next Steps

How you can get involved and act

At the end of each chapter, the *What You Can Do* sections list ideas to get you thinking about how your community influences your everyday decisions. Where to live. Where to go and meet friends, or if there is even a place to meet in your neighborhood. How to get there. Whether it is safe to cross the street. How to fit exercise into the day's activities. Where to find healthy food. How and where to get help when you can no longer do everything yourself. Altogether overwhelming, if you had to deal with all those issues at once. Fortunately, you don't have to.

Follow up on something that matters to you. Pick an easy item from the *What You Can Do* sections and get started today, while doing some more homework on longer-term strategies. Use the leads in the *Resources* section. Call your community's planning department and ask about openings on boards and commissions, or look on their website or the bulletin board in city hall. At the same time, ask if there are any upcoming planning workshops, and get your name on the mailing list. Use EPA's *Community Self-Assessment* checklist (see page 31) to understand what kinds of policies and programs your community has that support active aging, and identify missing ones you could work on.

Walk or bike around the neighborhood to explore these issues. Better yet, do it with a friend or group. You can learn a lot about neighborhood planning and design just by walking around and comparing places that feel comfortable with those that do not seem meant for walking. Many of the publications in *Resources* have checklists or forms you can use to rate your neighborhood or street, identify what you like, and uncover problems that need to be addressed. The Local Government Commission (**www.lgc.org**) has published several easy-to-use guides and videos on Smart Growth and streets.

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Photo courtesy of the City of Portland, Oregon, Bureau of Transportation

- *Streets and Sidewalks, People and Cars: The Citizens' Guide to Traffic Calming* includes forms for measuring street details and evaluating speeding and traffic.

- *Real Towns: Making your neighborhood work* contains a RoadWork section at the end of each chapter to help you compare your neighborhood's buildings, blocks, and streets with others.

- *Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods* has simple standards for what makes a walkable, comfortable street.

Learn more about planning issues. The organizations in the *Resources* section provide guidebooks and training for the strategies you may want to work on. The Project for Public Spaces (PPS), in partnership with AARP, developed a series of publications on what citizens can do to effect change in their communities, especially focused on streets and transportation planning, all available for free download (**www.pps.org** — see *Resources*). PPS also offers training programs including *Streets as Places* and *How to Turn a Place Around.* The PPS/AARP series includes:

- *A Citizen's Guide to Better Streets: How to Engage Your Transportation Agency* shows citizens how to interact effectively with transportation agencies.

- *Streets as Places: Using Streets to Rebuild Communities* shows citizens how to enhance streets to become lively, walkable, community-friendly environments.

- *The Quiet Revolution in Transportation Planning: How Great Corridors Make Great Communities* describes how planning transportation within the context of a larger corridor can benefit both mobility needs and community quality of life.

Explore Smart Growth strategies. Smart Growth America (**www.smartgrowthamerica.org**) is a terrific resource for ideas to improve housing, transportation, economy and environment, open space and farmland, and health and aging. One of their best new publications is *Choosing Our Community's Future: A Guide to Getting the Most Out of New Development,* which includes descriptions of many of the issues and strategies in this guide, along with tips on working together to plan and implement them.

Connect the dots. Go back and look through the *What You Can Do* sections and see how many issues are relevant to your neighborhood or community. As you toured your

neighborhood and talked with friends, did you notice sites that could become a gathering place, or a farmer's market? Are there housing options nearby if you want to move? How about improving and connecting parks with greenways, or finding locations for a new park? Are there any neglected properties that could be redeveloped? While you are reading some of the other guidebooks, keep your own neighborhood in mind. If your community already has an organized planning process, join in — and be the person who asks the questions about making the plan more age-friendly.

Initiate a community planning process. If there is not an existing group or effort to join, make it happen. Many of the guides mentioned above and in *Resources* can equip you to get something started. A well-designed process meshes the technical expertise of agency staff, the creativity and fresh ideas of consultants, and the in-depth local knowledge of residents and business people. Coupled with training in Smart Growth principles and workshop facilitation, walking tours of the neighborhood, and broad participation, a community planning effort will help get creative plans implemented.

Look out for others. Keep an eye out for someone who needs help, on your block or street, at the library, or your place of worship. If the assistance needed is not readily available, look into whether there is enough interest in organizing a new program.

Photo courtesy of the Atlanta Regional Commission

Citizen activists in Honolulu were pleased when the city introduced Smart Growth principles in 1998 and transformed the city planning process. The Citizen Planner Institute trained agency staff and neighborhood leaders (many of them elders) to facilitate community planning workshops.
The projects included:

- Urban Center Development Plan — changed codes for transit-oriented development
- Islandwide Traffic Calming Program — focused on 34 neighborhoods with schools and parks at the center, with extensive participation by kupuna (elders)
- Vision Teams and Sustainable Island — focused on green solutions and projects
- Oahu Trans2K Mobility Plan — for a Bus Rapid Transit system

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Resources

Links to more details and strategies

How You Can Get Started
The following list of resources, organizations, publications, and web links will help you get started — learning new strategies, tips and techniques, approaches, and examples of places that have applied these ideas successfully around the country. Many of them are available for free web download.

Active Aging

Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging

www.epa.gov/aging/bhc/about.htm

AARP's Advancing Mobility Options: Producing a State Transportation Report

http://aarpvolunteers.com/dsp/Advancing_Mobility_Options.pdf

Active Living Network (no longer in operation)

www.activeliving.org

Smart Growth

Smart Growth America

www.smartgrowthamerica.org

Choosing Our Community's Future: A Guide to Getting the Most Out of New Development

www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/GuidebookPreview1.pdf (first chapter)

http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5184/t/1623/signUp.jsp?key=192 (register to download)

This Is Smart Growth

www.smartgrowthonlineaudio.org/pdf/TISG_2006_8-5x11.pdf

Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation

www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/gettosg.pdf

Getting to Smart Growth II: 100 More Policies for Implementation

www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/gettosg2.pdf

The Project for Public Spaces

www.pps.org

AARP

www.aarp.org

Building Community Through Transportation

www.pps.org/info/place-makingtools/Books_Videos/Building_Community_through_Transportation

A Citizen's Guide to Better Streets: How to Engage Your Transportation Agency

www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/How_to_Engage_Your_Transportation_Agency_AARP.pdf

Streets as Places: Using Streets to Rebuild Communities

www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Using_Streets_to_Rebuild_Communities.pdf

The Quiet Revolution in Transportation Planning: How Great Corridors Make Great Communities

www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Great_Corridors_Great_Communities.pdf

The Local Government Commission

Streets and Sidewalks, People and Cars: The Citizens' Guide to Traffic Calming

www2.lgc.org/bookstore/detail.cfm?itemId=15

Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods

www2.lgc.org/bookstore/detail.cfm?itemId=13

Real Towns: Making Your Neighborhood Work

www2.lgc.org/bookstore/detail.cfm?categoryId=1&typeId=0&itemId=16

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Links to projects or material mentioned in text and sidebars

McClure MultiGenerational Center, Champlain Senior Center, and Burlington Children's Space

www.cedo.ci.burlington.vt.us/legacy/strategies/09-org-mcclure-main.html

www.cedo.ci.burlington.vt.us/legacy/strategies/09-org-mcclure-intv.html

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Virginia

www.virginia.edu/olliuva

Santa Cruz Accessory Dwelling Unit Program

www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/pl/hcd/ADU/adu.html

The Elder Cohousing Network

www.eldercohousing.org

Silver Sage Village-Elder Cohousing, Boulder, CO

www.silversagevillage.com

Cohousing Association of the United States

www.cohousing.org/what_is_cohousing

Kirkland Washington Pedestrian Programs

www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/Community/healthy.htm?PageMode=Print

Complete Streets

www.completestreets.org

Places29 Corridor Study and Master Plan

www.albemarle.org/department.asp?department=planning&relpage=6916

www.tjpdc.org/transportation/places_29.asp

Maris Grove and PhillyCarShare

www.erickson.com/EricksonNews/publicsite/pressreleases.aspx?PRID=1324

www.phillycarshare.org

Community-Supported Agriculture

www.localharvest.org (search for farms and markets near you)

Mather LifeWays Cafés

www.matherlifeways.com/iyc_inyourcommunity.asp

Beacon Hill Village

www.beaconhillvillage.org/index.html

Elderberry Institute's Living at Home/Block Nurse Program

www.elderberry.org

HomeShare Vermont

http://homesharevermont.org

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Community Self-Assessment

Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging

Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging was developed to encourage communities to incorporate the concepts of Smart Growth and Active Aging in community planning and development. Website link: **www.epa.gov/aging/bhc/about.htm**

The 20 questions in this Community Self-Assessment will help you understand what is required to achieve Smart Growth and Active Aging in your community. Your responses to the questions will provide you with a clear vision of what your community has achieved so far and what remains to be accomplished.

1. Our community has defined goals or a mission for advancing or applying Smart Growth principles.

   ☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

2. Our community's governing body has conducted or commissioned a community assessment for applying Smart Growth principles.

   ☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

3. Our community has defined goals or a mission for increasing older adult participation in active aging/physical activity.

   ☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

4. Our community's governing body has conducted or commissioned a community assessment of older adult participation in active aging/physical programs or opportunities.

   ☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

5. Our community has developed a plan that includes feasibility, costs, and impacts of adopting a Smart Growth approach to plan for the future.

   ☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

6. Our community has studied the feasibility, costs, impacts, time frame, and leadership for creating/promoting active aging/physical activity for aging adults.

   ☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

7. Our community is actively engaged in formulating plans and strategies for specifically linking Smart Growth initiatives with programs, amenities, or opportunities that include active aging/physical activity for older adults.

   ☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

8. Our community has established interagency committees, task forces, or other community partnerships with local aging organizations, service providers, and agencies as a means of coordinating activities and programs with Smart Growth and active aging/physical activity components.

   ☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

9. Our community has legislative, zoning, comprehensive plan initiatives and other policies in place or in consideration that include provision for both Smart Growth and active aging/physical activity programs or opportunities for older adults.

   ☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

10. Our community has created pilot programs, or has existing programs for active aging/physical activity for older adults, which take advantage of the resources and environments created by local Smart Growth activities such as safe walking areas, biking amenities, age-sensitive exercise trails, safe parks, etc.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

11. Our community's comprehensive planning integrates Smart Growth principles and promotes application of these to encompass active aging/physical activity programs and opportunities for older adults.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

12. Our community is increasing its capacity through actions such as budget allocation, staff resources, infrastructure improvement, etc., for systematically expanding on Smart Growth activities.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

13. Our community is reaching out to local/county/state officials and departments, land developers, and community organizations to expand Smart Growth activities.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

14. Our community gathers evidence about and evaluates the effectiveness and level of participation in our active aging/physical activity programs and opportunities for older adults.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

15. Our community has an initiative that includes promotion, advertising, recruitment, and widely available programs and opportunities to engage more older adults in active aging/physical activity.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

16. Our community has the capacity to implement a model program combining Smart Growth principles with programs emphasizing active aging/physical activity for older adults.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

17. Our community has a well-established Smart Growth initiative and active aging/physical activity programs and opportunities.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

18. Our community is planning to expand these to a wider segment of our population as well as the partnerships that will support these programs.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

19. Our community has an established coalition of service providers, advocacy organizations, businesses, and governmental agencies that are cooperating to create more innovative and widely available programs that integrate Smart Growth principles and active aging/physical activity programs and opportunities.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

20. Our community has an existing model program integrating active aging/physical activity and Smart Growth for older adults, and we can provide technical assistance and a contact person to share information with other communities.

☐ Not at all ☐ Partially Completed ☐ Fully Completed

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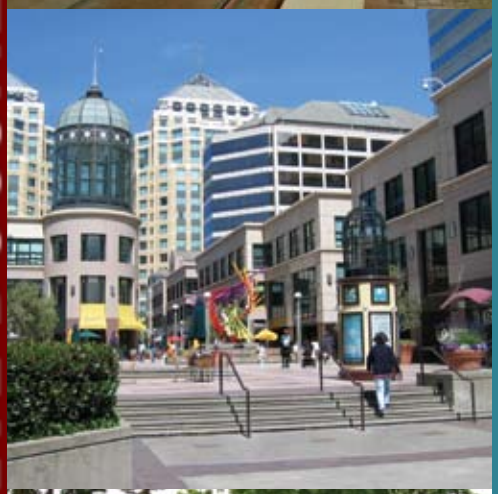

Smart Growth principles include:

1. Mix land use;
2. Take advantage of compact building design;
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
4. Create walkable neighborhoods;
5. Foster distinctive, attractive neighborhoods with a sense of place;
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical resources;
7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities;
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices;
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective; and
10. Encourage community collaboration in development decisions.

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Photo courtesy of the City of Portland, Oregon, Bureau of Transportation

EPA

Aging Initiative
Protecting the Health of Older Americans

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Children's Health Protection and
Environmental Education (1107)
The Child and Aging Health Protection Division
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Room 2512 Ariel Rios North
Washington, DC 20460
www.epa.gov/aging

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