Age-Friendly Communities: Innovative Strategies for Placemaking

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Working Towards a *Sense of Place*

- “Our communities should be places where we can grow up and grow old and where, no matter what our age, we feel connected and engaged.”
  Donna Butts, Executive Director of Generations United

- “The concept of aging in place involves more than the ability to remain in one’s home; it includes the ability to continue functioning and thriving in one’s community.”
  Mark Freedman, Founder of Civic Ventures Organization
What is Placemaking?

- Integrated, asset-based approach to community & economic development
- Attractive & accessible physical environment
- Opportunities for entertainment & engagement
- Emphasis on quality & preservation of character
- Provide variety & choice
The Generational Wave

- By 2030, 1 in 5 U.S. residents will be 65 years or older

Cohort Population Projections for U.S. by Percent of Total Population, 2010 to 2060

Note: 2010 Observed population.
Source: Table 2. Projections of the Population by Selected Age Groups and Sex for the United States: 2015 to 2060 (NP2012-T2), U.S. Census 2010
The Generational Wave

- The U.S. population aged 65 and older is expected to more than double between 2012 and 2060.
- “Senior ratio” is climbing and Medicare expenses are rising
- At this rate, Social Security assets will not be able to keep up with Boomer demands
Today’s Seniors

- Aging in Place
- Living longer
- Highly educated
- Diverse
- Wealthy but with debt
- Physically active
Today’s Seniors (Contd.)

- Remaining in workforce
- Technologically savvy
- Creative class
- More single living arrangements
- Economic and social resources to impact political agendas

Source: www.eastbaysmartsenior.com
Michigan Counties with More than 20% of Total Population 65 years and Over, in 2010

Alcona County, 31.5%
Ten Largest Michigan Counties by Population with Increasing Percentage of Residents 65 Years and Over, in 2010

Washtenaw County
8.1% in 2000
10.1% in 2010
Community for a Lifetime
Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (OSA)

Why would a community want to be elder friendly?

- Older adults remain engaged in community life longer and as a result contribute to community life longer
- Older adults will be healthier, reducing the demands on and costs of local health care
- The community will attract residents of all ages who will contribute to community vitality
- The community will attract resources, businesses, infrastructure, others to meet the needs of its older adult members

Communities Involved:
Alpena
Auburn Hills
Bay County
Bellaire
Farmington
Farmington, Hills
Gaylord
Greater Battle Creek
Holland
Inkster
Kent County
Manistique
Monroe County
Northwest Ottawa County
Traverse City
Washtenaw County
Cultivating Age-Friendly Communities

**Access & Mobility**
- Universal Design
- Transportation
- Parks & Open Space

**Engagement**
- Aging & Disability Resource Centers
- Volunteer Opportunities & Civic Engagement
- Arts & Culture

**Wellbeing**
- Planning & Zoning
- Housing & Community
- Preventative Health & Medical Services
Access & Mobility Universal Design

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design. Universal Design is Flexible, Impartial, Safe, and Simple

• Strategies
  • Educate City/Township staff on Universal Design
  • Complete a Universal Design Audit
  • Provide information on Certified Aging-in-Place Specialists
  • Improve Way-finding
  • Establish developer incentives for Universal Design and Visitability in new construction
**Access & Mobility Universal Design**

**Michigan Home Builders**

**Universal Design Features**

- **Single Story** keeps Living Area on One Level.
- **ADA-Compliant Cabinetry** and Kitchen & Bath Fixtures.
- **60-Inch-Wide Circular Area** of clear floor space in middle of rooms, including kitchen, laundry and on main floor bathroom.
- **Other Considerations:**
  - 18 to 24-Inch-High Electrical Outlets.
  - Rocker-Style Light Switches.
  - Lever-Style Door and Faucet Handles.
  - Design a closet as a future elevator shaft.
- **Zero-Step Entryways,** including porch, front door and garage entry doors.
- **36-Inch-Wide Doorways,** (interior and exterior) including bedrooms, closets, baths and laundry.
- **42-Inch-Wide Hallways and Stairways** (48-inches-wide is better). Double handrails on stairways.
- **Smooth, Durable Flooring** surfaces in all traffic areas.
- **Zero-Step Entry to Shower.**

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Source: Heartland Builders [http://www.heartlandbuildersllc.com/univ_design.htm](http://www.heartlandbuildersllc.com/univ_design.htm)
Access & Mobility Universal Design

Townhomes at Carver Park: Milwaukee, WI

- The Milwaukee Housing Authority demolished a blighted, non-accessible, public housing superblock and replaced it with a traditional neighborhood development with universal design principles to create accessible, visitable and adaptable housing.

Source: [www.visitablewisconsin.com](http://www.visitablewisconsin.com)
Access & Mobility  Transportation

- **Residents must be able to safely and comfortably travel around their community.** Services must be readily available, easily accessible, adaptable, and affordable.

  - **Improved Motorized Access**
    - Public Transportation
    - Discounted/Free Taxi Service
    - Senior Buses
    - Personalized Driving Services
  
  - **Improved Walkability**
    - Complete Streets
    - Transit-Oriented Development
    - Way-finding
Access & Mobility Transportation

Shepherd’s Center of Kalamazoo: Escort Transportation

- Shepherd’s Center: Non-profit interfaith organization that promotes healthy aging in Kalamazoo.

- Volunteer-based personalized transportation service:
  - Volunteers use their own vehicles.
  - Provide door-to-door service for medical and non medical-related needs.

Source: http://www.famservcc.org/senior-transportation/
Complete Streets and Walkability

**Strategies:**
- Reduce vehicle travel speed in pedestrian-heavy areas;
- Improve physical layout of streets to make it easier for drivers, buses, cyclists, and pedestrians to navigate;
- Enhance visual cues and information for drivers and pedestrians;
- Make it comfortable and inviting!
  - Benches, water fountains, public restrooms, sheltered/covered walkways, social spaces.
Access & Mobility Transportation
Complete Streets: Re-Imagine Washtenaw
Access & Mobility Parks & Open Space

- Promote health and well-being for age-friendly communities by providing convenient access to parks, open spaces and quality recreational facilities and programs.

- **Strategies**
  - Identify recreational program opportunities
  - Provide convenient accessibility
  - Promote walkable environment
Access & Mobility Parks & Open Space

Lakeshore Park: Novi, MI

• “From Strollers to seniors, summer is a great time for all ages to celebrate and appreciate the outdoors.” www.cityofnovi.org

• Lakeshore Park offers summer programs to promote intergenerational recreational opportunities.
  - Intergenerational Nature Walk and Stand-up Paddle-boarding programs
  - Promote physical activity, public health, and increase social interaction for a variety of ages.

Source: www.recmanagement.com
Cultivating Age-Friendly Communities

Access & Mobility
- Universal Design
- Transportation
- Parks & Open Space

Engagement
- One-Stop Shop
- Volunteer Opportunities & Civic Engagement
- Arts & Culture

Wellbeing
- Planning & Zoning
- Housing & Community
- Preventative Health & Medical Services
**Engagement One-Stop-Shop**

- *Provide easy and convenient access to elder care services, active aging resources, community opportunities, and local government information in person, online, and on the phone.*

**Strategies**

- Evaluate municipal customer service strengths and weaknesses
- Hold an *Active Aging Summit* event
- Connect with local aging & disability resource centers
- Identify potential One Stop Shop centers
- Rebrand community’s senior center
**Engagement One Stop Shop**

**Turner Senior Resource Center: Ann Arbor, MI**

- Outreach programs of the University of Michigan Health System.

- **Programming**
  - Wellness programs
  - Medicare counseling
  - Support groups
  - Social, cultural and educational activities
  - A Caregiver Resource Center
  - Gallery 55+ (art gallery)
  - Silver Club Programs (memory loss)
  - Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UM
  - Housing Bureau for Seniors

Source: [http://kathleennavarrevenzke.wordpress.com/](http://kathleennavarrevenzke.wordpress.com/)
Engagement Volunteer Opportunities & Civic Engagement

- Provides individual, economic, and societal benefits. Intergenerational programs often provide the greatest community benefit.

- Strategies
  - Acknowledge and promote local volunteer efforts
  - Complete a Needs Assessment for local organizations and businesses
  - List local volunteer opportunities online

Source: Volunteer Centers of Michigan
Generations Together: Dexter, MI

- Opened in 1993, Generations Together is an intergenerational day care and learning center.
  - Provides opportunities for seniors to volunteer their time to support various learning activities
  - Utilizes High Scope’s Active Learning Curriculum
  - Involves active participatory learning & sharing

Source: http://www.angelfire.com
**Engagement Arts & Culture**

- Provide social and cultural opportunities and programs to increase economic development, participation in community affairs and intergenerational connections.

**Strategies**
- Senior Centers
- Cultural Centers
- Community Engagement Programs/Activities

Source: www.rsh.sagepub.com
Engagement Arts, Culture & Leisure
Creative Aging Festival: Bloomington, Indiana

➢ “Communities need to think about how they integrate generations because one of the things that keep a senior young is interacting with younger people.” - USA TODAY

• Creative Aging Annual Festival aims to advance the understanding of aging and the beneficial link between creativity, culture and aging.

• Festival Highlights / Programs
  ▫ Creative Storytelling
  ▫ Stroll for well being...walking meditation
  ▫ Generations and gardening together
  ▫ Art by bike
  ▫ Intergenerational song and story extravaganza
  ▫ Intergenerational screen printing programs

Source  www.bloomington.in.gov
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Wellbeing Planning & Zoning

- Efforts to create livable communities for all ages must include planning and policy making that address land use, zoning and building codes.

- Strategies
  - Achieve Mixed and Diverse Uses Through Zoning
  - Diversify Housing Stock
  - Increased Densities
  - Universal Design
  - Transportation Options
Wellbeing Planning & Zoning
Elderly Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO) Village: Hamburg Township, Livingston County, MI

- Amendment to zoning ordinance offering an alternative to traditional single family detached housing for elderly persons while still providing a self-sufficient individual dwelling unit.
- Encourages:
  - More affordable detached dwelling units for seniors.
  - Alternative to multi-family residential developments for less dense neighborhoods.
  - Clustering of ECHO units promotes safety and security of senior citizen residents.
  - Specifically designed to meet the physical and social needs of senior residents.
- Universal Design Standards such as:
  - 32” minimum door openings
  - 3’6” width for hallways
  - Level thresholds
  - Senior accessible bathroom and kitchen features

Source www.morefront.blogspot.com
Wellbeing Housing & Community

Age-Friendly communities feature a variety of housing options that are accessible, affordable, and adaptable to changing needs.

Strategies

- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Cooperative Housing
- Home-Sharing
Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are self-contained living units built into, attached to, or detached from an existing primary residence.

- Contain kitchen, sleeping facilities, and bathroom.
- Subordinate in size, location, and appearance to the primary unit.
- Affordable!

ADU housing typically take ones of three forms:

- Internal modification to the existing house.
- External expansion of the existing house.
- Detached “accessory cottages” (or Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity).
Wellbeing Housing & Community

Grand Rapids: Accessory Dwelling Units

• Grand Rapids permits attached and detached ADUs in all residential zoning districts.
• Regulations include:
  ▫ Maximum of two bedrooms.
  ▫ No greater than 850 s.f. in gross floor area.
  ▫ Detached ADUs must be located in backyard.

Source: http://www.indyweek.com/binary/1c75/1346078727-aducopy.jpg

Sec. 2.4.2. Backyard Cottage

Source: http://www.indyweek.com/binary/1c75/1346078727-aducopy.jpg
Wellbeing Preventative Health & Medical Services

➤ Give older residents access to homecare service, clinics and programs that promote their overall wellness.

• Strategies
  • Affordable in-home nursing services.
  • Medical and non medical-related transportation services.
  • Connect seniors with affordable chore services.
  • Connect with neighborhood volunteers to provide companionship.
  • Connect caregivers to support, information and training.

Source: http://www.massresources.org/images/ProgramHCBSWaiver2.jpg
Free Resources & Toolkits

- **Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (OSA)**
  Community for a Lifetime Assessment

- **EPA** Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging

- **AARP** Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide

- **MetLife** Livability for All Community Report Card

- **Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access**
  Universal Design Audit New York 2

- **WHO** Age-Friendly Cities Project Methodology Vancouver Protocol

- **CDC Health Aging Research Network** Creating Aging-Friendly Communities
  Online Modules

- **Walkable and Livable Communities Institute** Walkability Workbook

- **Communities for All Ages** Intergenerational Community Building Resource Guide
Age-Friendly is Placemaking

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Age-Friendly IS Placemaking: Conclusion

• Planning for Older Adults is Good for the Overall Community:
  ▫ Creates walkable communities
  ▫ Preserves open space
  ▫ Appropriately directs new development
  ▫ Compact design