



# APA AGING IN COMMUNITY POLICY GUIDE TALKING POINTS FOR PLANNERS

The aging of the population demands a fundamental shift in planning in order to minimize the economic, social and health challenges that will otherwise overwhelm communities.

*This guide contains policies that are designed to:*

- Help older adults remain functional and active in their communities so that they can successfully age in their homes and communities.
- Enhance the local economic benefits from older adults and their caregivers.
- Combat ageism and tap the assets that older adults represent by facilitating contact and interdependencies across generations.

## 6 Guiding Policies for Planners:

- 1. Actively engage the aging perspective in the planning process.** Ensure participation across age, language, race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, ability and technology barriers, and solicit input in all dimensions of planning and policies.
- 2. Provide a range of affordable and accessible housing options.** Promote housing development of differing sizes and costs. Better utilize existing housing resources, and advance universal design and visitability standards to promote accessibility in new housing.
- 3. Ensure access to a variety of quality transportation options.** Provide choices that facilitate the maximum degree of personal independence for people of differing abilities. Design and fund appropriate mobility components.
- 4. Use land-use and zoning tools to create welcoming communities.** Maximize connections among housing, transportation, health care, recreation, human services and community engagement, to facilitate health, participation, security and quality of life.
- 5. Support the economic well-being of older adults and their caregivers.** Advance local economic development policies and planning that support older adults remaining in the workforce longer, serving as employees, entrepreneurs and mentors.
- 6. Strengthen the community assets of and supports for older adults.** Shift the housing and service design model and ensure that community services and assets are accessible to older adults. Promote and nurture the rich human asset of older adults who wish to engage in civic and community life.

### THE AGING OF AMERICA By the Numbers



By 2030, nearly **20%** of the U.S. population will be over 65.



The fastest growing age demographic is **85+**.

The Census Bureau projects



living in the U.S. by 2050.

Boomers control **70%** of consumer spending.



Older adult shoppers outspent younger ones by **\$1 trillion** in 2010.

**THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN KEY POLICY AREAS:**

	Challenges	Action Opportunities
<b>Housing</b>	<p><b>Affordability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of 65 to 74-year-olds with “severe rent burdens” (half of income expended on housing) is projected to rise 42% over the next decade.</li> <li>Older adults are the fastest growing homeless demographic, estimated to increase by 33 percent from 2010 to 2020.</li> </ul> <p><b>Disability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-thirds of those 85+ today have at least one disability.</li> <li>90 percent of those 65+ with disabilities still live in private homes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Isolation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 of 5 age-80+ households consist of a single person.</li> <li>The number of people 75+ living alone is expected to double from 2015 to 2035.</li> <li>Isolation is linked to deterioration of mental and physical health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create housing options along a continuum of size that are affordable, accessible, close to services and located within existing communities (including nursing homes and rehabilitation centers).</li> <li>Utilize existing housing more effectively through infill that advances gentle density, including home sharing and accessory dwelling unit programs. These can enable on-site caregivers (family or paid), provide essential income for a homeowner, and mitigate isolation.</li> <li>Eliminate discriminatory rules or practices that undermine the potential for new, more innovative housing arrangements, such as limited definitions of “family” and “maximum unrelated” restrictions.</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<p><b>Options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People live on average for a decade after they reach “driving retirement.” Consequences of older adults giving up their car keys include: 15 percent fewer trips to the doctor; 59 percent fewer shopping trips; and 65 percent fewer trips for social, family, religious and other life-enhancing activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 65+ population comprises 13 percent of the population yet suffers 19 percent of pedestrian fatalities (vs. 14 percent of motor vehicle fatalities).</li> <li>Falls account for 68 percent of seniors’ hospitalizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible, convenient and safe transportation choices and funding mechanisms should support new and improved options for older adults to move around. These options include specialized transportation services, e.g., demand responsive, paratransit, volunteer driver and rideshare programs.</li> <li>Address first and last mile connectivity and make it easier to move from one mode of transportation to another.</li> <li>Provide walkable environments including well-maintained sidewalks, no-skid surfaces, good lighting, bus shelters, benches, traffic islands, well-marked crosswalks, and crossing signals with adequate time to cross.</li> </ul>
<b>Connected Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As mobility limitations increase, the distance from home to essential goods and services must decrease.</li> <li>Experts narrow the acceptable living distance to healthy food options for older adults to a ¼-mile radius (the USDA defines a food desert as 1 mile for the general population).</li> <li>Medication non-adherence is responsible for 50 percent of health costs; easy access to a pharmacy is one reason many prescriptions are never filled.</li> <li>Lower levels of intergenerational contact have been linked to more negative attitudes about older adults and aging.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use land-use and zoning as a vehicle for creating enabling environments that raise the level of functioning and independence of older adults.</li> <li>Promote mixed-use and infill development that provide proximity to transportation, health centers, pharmacy, grocery stores and parks.</li> <li>Create built environments that co-locate services and increase the participation of older adults in cultural and community life.</li> <li>Promote adaptive reuse of community structures, shared facilities and public spaces where multiple generations can formally and informally interact, which has a secondary benefit of addressing ageism.</li> </ul>