APA

American Planning Association

Making Great Communities Happen

Aging in Community Policy Guide

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DECLARATIONS

INTRODUCTION

America is aging—rapidly. Older adults—65 and over—represent 13 percent of the population today. By 2030, one in every five people living in the US will be over the age of 65. This aging of America is fueled by 72 million baby boomers aging through the life cycle in combination with a profound increase in longevity. Average life expectancy doubled from the mid-thirties in the 19th century to age 78 today. Currently there are more than 70,000 centenarians in the United States, roughly four times the number from just ten years ago. And according to the U.S. Census, that number will likely exceed 1 million by 2050.

The American Planning Association (APA) recognizes that the aging of the population creates a unique opportunity and responsibility to apply sound planning approaches and policy to improve communities to serve the spectrum of needs and abilities of older adults. The APA supports the creation and integration of housing, land-use, transportation, economic, social service and health systems that support a high quality of life for people of all ages and abilities. A multigenerational planning approach ensures that the needs of all residents are met and that older members of our communities are not at risk of social isolation, poverty, declining health, and poor economic well- being. The planning community can be a leader in encouraging comprehensive approaches and in mobilizing resources to enhance the quality of life of our aging population

GUIDING POLICIES

A. **Actively Involve Older Adults and Engage the Aging Perspective in the Planning Process**

Older adults are the experts on their own lives, so effective planning in all dimensions—physical design, social and community supports—must involve older adult participation on an ongoing basis. Older adults are producers, consumers, leaders, community and family members, and when their potential is maximized, people of all ages benefit. Planners also must take a lead role in

bringing together leaders across sectors to assess and plan for the needs of older adults living in their jurisdictions.

B. **Ensure a Range of Affordable Housing Options are Available for Older Adults**
The promise of aging in community can be challenging to deliver. Communities should make provisions for ensuring a continuum of housing options to support older adults ranging from those who are fully independent to those requiring progressively more assistance in daily life. Policies and programs should promote affordability, safety and accessibility, incorporate enabling design-based home and energy efficiency modifications, and foster upkeep and sustainability of the housing stock. The design of homes should be adaptable and allow different generations or household types to live in a single home, as well as allow for technologies, devices and in-home management systems that optimize active aging. In addition, planners will need to work diligently to ensure access to fair housing, and address the disparate impacts of housing location and availability for elders of all races and incomes. There may also be an exit of older adults from homeownership as they seek to relocate, downsize, or withdraw from the housing market. Planners may need to anticipate and prepare for this transition.

C. **Ensure Access to Quality Transportation Options for Older Adults**
A range of transportation choices, including grassroots services such as shared autos, is critical for older adults to be able to maintain their independence. Transforming transportation systems to maximize connections with land-uses critical to older adults, particularly housing, health care, and human services will enhance the livability of our communities. Viable transportation options can directly benefit older adults, their caregivers, and health care workers, and emergency responders. Funding mechanisms should support new and improved transportation options. Funding and appropriate design of transportation components such as benches, bus shelters, good lighting, cross walks that are well marked, and crossing signals with adequate time to cross for persons of all abilities is essential. The cross- disciplinary education of planners, transportation engineers, and the people who use transportation systems in support of increasing these choices is imperative. When transportation systems are properly designed and implemented, they can help individuals maintain their independence and mobility by ensuring accessibility to destinations important to older adults. This includes the maintenance of sidewalks and lights for safe and walkable neighborhoods.

D. **Use Land-Use and Zoning Tools to Create Welcoming Communities for Older Adults**
In many communities, planning for an aging population often has been limited to concerns over providing space for nursing homes and age-restricted housing. As planners, we recognize that the location of where we develop or re-develop housing is equally as important as what type of housing we build, as is proximity

to essential goods and services. Policies, investments, and new tools such as form-based codes should help create a built environment that intentionally provides opportunities for older people to easily participate in community life and activities. This allows them to age in community and not in isolated age-specific enclaves. Because mobility limitations may increase with age, it is important to facilitate quality of life for older adults by creating mixed-use, well-connected neighborhoods with access to health centers, pharmacies, grocery stores, parks and cultural activities. This includes the maintenance of sidewalks and lights for safe environments, walkable neighborhoods, and natural areas to recreate. Redevelopment should occur in areas with an existing network of community supports and services.

E. **Support the Economic Well-Being of Older Adults and their Caregivers**
Local economic development policies and planning should address the needs of community members of all ages and income levels. When economic development policies and local businesses recognize the needs and assets of older adults as consumers, workers, mentors, and entrepreneurs, resilient economies are built. Additionally, formal and informal caregivers represent a large and largely invisible and undercounted component of local economies. Caregivers should be recognized and considered in planning, land-use, and economic policy development. Home care workers, in particular, need access to efficient transportation and affordable housing options.

F. **Strengthen the Community Assets of and Supports for Older Adults**
Planners need to design policy and planning responses that address the needs of older adults— particularly, those at-risk of homelessness—and also take advantage of the contributions of older adults in all community contexts. Inadequate physical design must be recognized as a barrier and addressed to ensure segments of our society are not excluded. Community services and the assets that older adults and their social networks represent are key complements to physical design. Older adults have the skills, connections, and time to put toward helping their communities and are looking to keep active and remain engaged in civic life. Communities that incorporate opportunities and services for older adults in all aspects of zoning and economic, land-use, and transportation planning will allow older adults and their families to engage more fully in community and economic activities, reducing the individual and societal costs of institutionalizing older adults who could be better cared for in community settings. Moreover, community inclusion of older adults will reduce both individual and societal costs associated with institutionalization. Greener buildings may also improve the health of their occupants.

DEFINITION, KEY FACTS, AND RATIONALE

Aging in community means that older adults are able to live as independently as possible as members of the community of their choice. For some, this means growing older in a long-time home; for others, it means transitioning to a more appropriate and supportive setting but still in their community. During a lifetime, people develop connections to place and form important social relationships within their neighborhoods and communities. Sustaining these relationships plays an important role in aging well. The aging population presents both a challenge and opportunity to transform and improve our communities. It will bring profound challenges to health care and social services, housing and transportation, the workforce and retirement safety net and every aspect of life. It is also an extraordinary opportunity to create healthy environments that encourage active lifestyles so all residents may thrive. Planners play a key role in the provision of access to the structures and services that either support or hinder resident well-being, independence, productivity, and prosperity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Jurisdictional plans should reflect the input and experience of people of all ages who live in different circumstances and with different abilities. The aging of the population demands a fundamental shift in planning in order to maximize the engagement of older adults and minimize the economic, social and health challenges that will otherwise overwhelm communities. Anticipating this demographic change early facilitates developing key relationships, coordinating critical strategies as well as creating new options. Finding common themes and opportunities to work with other strategic alliances will prove beneficial. Collaborative efforts allow partners to advance initiatives more quickly, share resources, and leverage funding.

HOUSING
Affordability is a major factor determining where older people live and their quality of life, especially for those with fixed, low-, or extremely-low incomes. There are long open and closed waiting lists for publicly-subsidized housing, and the need for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture 515 and 521 programs continues to increase as people with limited incomes age.

The Seniors Commission Report shows that by 2020, there will be 2.6 million older Americans who require assistance with activities of daily living or have cognitive or mental disabilities living at or below 150% of poverty. At the same time, fiscal constraints have limited the construction of new units and the rehabilitation of existing units. This affordable housing shortage is a serious problem. Planners should initiate a dialogue with providers of federally-assisted housing to identify collaborative opportunities to assist in the rehabilitation of the housing stock and explore mechanisms and innovative models to create new housing units. Preserving existing

affordable rental housing offers cost advantages over new construction, especially if funding for new subsidized housing is limited.

The maintenance of the existing housing stock is not only critical to older adults, but also to their neighborhoods. Keeping homes affordable reduces deferred maintenance and its cumulative effects on the functioning, appearance, and quality of the home and neighborhood. Energy-efficiency improvements contribute to a high- performing housing stock and healthy neighborhoods. Making a home more energy efficient and maintenance-free can also help older adults remain in their homes longer. Other changes that can help improve affordability include co-housing, smaller housing types, and no minimum parking requirements.

Since its creation as part of corporate income tax reform in 1986, Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) has become the principal source of development equity for the production of low-income housing nationwide, including specific state-based allocations for senior housing. Over time, existing projects often lack sufficient resources to make necessary retrofits and are faced with raising rents to meet this need. The National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) was authorized by Congress in 2008, and once funded can become a mainstay of capital for the development of affordable senior housing and other forms of affordable housing that can serve people of all ages.

Universal design and visitability standards promote the well-being of people of all ages. Enhancing the mobility and independence of people of all abilities, young as well as old, contributes to community vitality. Whether by ordinances or incentives, communities should explore the benefits of design features that enable residents with a range of ages and abilities to live as independently and interdependently as possible across their lifespan. With longer life expectancies and with less personal and societal economic resources available, minimizing or eliminating the need to retrofit a home, especially when on a fixed income, is a practical solution. If home modifications are needed, they should be affordable and from providers who understand the needs of older adults. Accessible housing environments may be considered a public health issue via building codes and a civil rights issue from a disability perspective. The applicability of accessibility standards such as Universal Design extends beyond housing to promote long-term stability for a wide range of mobility and sight disabilities.

TRANSPORTATION
Age-sensitive design and proper maintenance of the transportation system enables persons of all ages and abilities to benefit from system investments. Residents who are forced to navigate a system that does not address age- related changes will experience a lowered level of functioning, leading to reduced mobility, increased dependence on family and community supports, and be at greater risk for falls and other accidents. The consequence of poor environmental design is costly—to individuals, families, and the community in terms of overall health, quality life, and financial impacts. Communities

earn a greater return on investment from enabling design and a menu of active living opportunities.

Communities benefit when their planners and designers are well versed in design methods that result in enabling environments. Similarly, educational programs, such as transit travel training, encourage greater use of the transportation system by older adults, which connects them to community activities and services and potentially lowers the overall cost of providing transportation. It also encourages physical activity which can lower healthcare costs.

People differ in their degree of physical and cognitive ability, especially among the oldest community members. As such, a variety of transportation options are needed. Fixed route bus and rail services will meet the needs of many able to navigate their communities independently. Demand responsive service may be the most cost-effective form of public transportation in rural areas. For those unable to access fixed-route service, specialized transportation services, including human services transportation, provide an invaluable lifeline. Coordination of public, specialized, and human services transportation results in more efficient and effective service delivery.

Public funding for specialized transportation has not kept pace with growing demand. In some cases, private sector resources may be harnessed simply by removing legal barriers. In other cases, outreach to non-traditional funders can result in untapped resources for community benefit. After all, community transportation providers often transport the patients and residents of nursing homes, hospitals and health clinics.. Employers benefit from reduced time off work when their employees can rely on community transportation services for family members. Home health care workers caring for older adults often rely on public transportation to get to and from their jobs.

The availability of transportation options facilitates personal independence. Older adults in many communities rely on their own personal vehicle for transportation, and if that option is restricted or removed, older adults may become isolated and depressed, as well as lose their ability to contribute to the economy and the community. This can be a particular problem in rural and suburban areas, but also in urban areas. Maintaining social connections is critical for the health and well-being of older adults.

LAND-USE
Enabling design standards which respect the varied needs and abilities of older adults can decrease demand for services, increase housing choice, and increase level of functioning, independence, physical activity, social interaction, community involvement, and civic and economic engagement.

A jurisdiction's policies, services, settings and structures affect people's ability to age actively in community. For example, policies such as tax abatements may lead to aging-in-community by going beyond minimum accessibility levels when transit-oriented.

Optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security will enhance the quality of life as people age. Communities must provide the structures and services to support active aging including the redesign and retrofit of community centers and neighborhood hubs to serve as one-stop resource centers for wellness and social engagement including the joint use of schools, churches, and other community institutions.

Older adults often require supportive and enabling living environments to compensate for physical and social changes associated with aging. The use of new technologies for affordable home-centric assistance products and broadband connectivity provide social engagement and stimulation, a sense of purpose, safety, and healthcare applications to cope with and embrace aging. These technologies include innovative, "smart home" models and environments that access in-home healthcare and wellness options, caregiving, and social and learning opportunities. Planners need to be flexible and address planning and zoning barriers to emerging home-centric options.

Parks and recreation facilities and community amenities provide opportunities for not only physical activity, but also social engagement, education, nature study, and environmental awareness. Proper nutrition is a key to maintaining good health; farmer's markets and community gardens can facilitate healthy eating and access to fresh fruits and vegetables as well as opportunities for social engagement.

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING
Older adults and their caregivers represent an under-recognized market segment; serving these groups offers a new business niche that can meet the needs of older adults while at the same time promoting economic development.

Older adults continue to work long past traditional retirement age. For many, the supplemental income is critical for reducing poverty. Older adults also provide a skilled labor force for the local economy, and work is valued by many as a way to stay engaged in community life. Tapping into the experience, skills, and wisdom of older adults can offer tremendous educational and training benefits to younger workers. Volunteer efforts provide another opportunity for civic engagement and social involvement.

Most caregiving is informal—from neighbors helping neighbors to family caregivers to car shares and time banks. Planners can facilitate these informal networks and link them to formal support systems. The caregiver support ratio (number of potential caregivers aged 45 to 64 for each person aged 80 and older) is expected to decline sharply, placing increasing demands on local services. Today, women outnumber men as caregivers three to one. Leaving the primary burden of care for children and elders on women is poor economic policy, inequitable toward women and has been shown to reduce women's health and economic well-being in older age. Long-term lifetime earnings and subsequent retirement benefits are negatively affected by the inequitable care burden that women face throughout their lifetimes. Formal child care, elder care and other

social service supports, including transportation, are critical economic infrastructure for healthy aging.

People live in all types of households. Discriminatory family definitions unnecessarily burden older adults who wish to cohabitate for financial or other reasons, including the LGBT and immigrant communities of elders. Discriminatory practices undermine the potential for new, more innovative housing arrangements that promote household sharing across generations and non-family members.

Immigration status and work in the informal sector can render subsets of older adults ineligible for appropriate income support and necessary health insurance. Planners have an ethical obligation to support federal, state, and local policies that overcome such discrimination. The perception of growing inequality—especially among residents outside the labor force, e.g., children and older adults—must be addressed through public policies at all levels—federal, state, and local. Planners should be careful not to deepen inequalities through policies that privilege the financially well-off.

COMMUNITY ASSETS OF AND SUPPORTS

Currently, housing and services designed for older adults are principally age-segregated (senior housing, senior centers, home-delivered meals, adult day care, etc.) This service design model has several unintended negative effects: it reinforces ageism, as there is less contact with older people by other generations; areas with smaller populations or fewer resources lack many of these facilities; and the many existing community assets (libraries, schools, parks, public transportation, cultural institutions, and businesses) are often not physically accessible and inviting to older adults. Communities—large and small—where individuals of all ages, identities, and abilities have opportunities to both contribute and receive support and share each other's efforts, talents, and assistance, promote interdependence and connectedness that make people happy and communities resilient.

Interdependencies between generations are beneficial to communities, including both the critical role of informal family caregivers in caring for older adults and the critical role of older adults within families (caring for grandchildren, contributing to household support, providing emotional support, and performing other key domestic roles). Communities where people of different generations live in proximity, work together and engage in civic activities together, are more sustainable and more resilient. A community's policies, services, settings, and structures support and enable people to age actively in community. Optimizing opportunities for maintaining health, participation, and security will enhance the quality of life as people age. Communities must provide the structures and services to support active aging, including the redesign and retrofit of community centers and neighborhood hubs to serve as one-stop resource centers for wellness and social engagement, including the joint use of schools, churches and other community institutions.

Older adults represent untapped, vital human resources for communities, contributing their talents and experience to social, cultural, economic, and civic life. Care-related services are an economic investment, not just expenditures. These services provide the foundation for economic development and also provide critical support to family caregivers. Services such as transportation and home-delivered meals can help ensure full functionality of older adults. Services for older adults can be linked to services for children and caregivers thereby increasing access and quality of life for all. Such shared services also help build political will for community financing.

POLICY OUTCOMES
This section summarizes the desired results from implementation of the guiding policies above.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Actively Involve Older Adults and Engage the Aging Perspective in the Planning Process

1. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support community engagement of older adults in all dimensions of planning. Planners must reach out to all members of the community, making participation possible across age, language, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, ability and technology barriers.

1.1 Planners should develop mechanisms to regularly consult with older adults on specific plans, policies, and codes (form-based codes, building codes and land use codes), Planning paradigms such as Healthy Communities, (codes) Sustainability, Complete Streets, Transit-Oriented Development and Traditional Neighborhood Design should be systematically reviewed from an aging perspective. For older adults particularly, it is important to consider meeting times, physical accessibility of locations, transportation options, accessibility of oral and written communications, and relevant agendas. Planners must actively seek out those who are homebound, who speak languages other than English and those who may not have access to computers. Family caregivers and paid caregivers can also provide planners with insight into their needs and desires, and those of their loved ones.

2. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions encourage planners to meet with public, private, and community stakeholders (including older adults) in their jurisdictions to assess, discuss, and develop strategies to address unmet needs as well as apply the strengths of older adults living in their jurisdictions.

2.1 Planners should foster opportunities for community-wide dialogue to bring together professionals from a variety of fields, including transportation, planning, physical and mental health, architecture, developers, geriatrics, gerontology, housing, faith communities, and social work to identify appropriate community designs to support and

involve older adults throughout their lifetime. Planners should align the goals of aging in community with broader local community priorities to gain trust and participation in the process and intentionally facilitate intergenerational dialogue.

HOUSING

Ensure that a Range of Affordable and Accessible Housing Options are Available for Older Adults

3. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support federal funding for the production of new and preservation of existing low-income rental housing, including subsidies and financing structures that ensure long-term viability of affordable rental housing developments, and programs to prevent and reduce homelessness in an aging population. There should be greater flexibility in management policies and within rental subsidy programs to allow for the development and preservation of co-housing and other intergenerational living opportunities.

3.1 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support programs such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and increased allocations, as well as increased funding for Community Development Block Grants, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program and funding to capitalize the National Housing Trust Fund.

3.2 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support strategies that ensure quality housing choices for older adults, such as the maintenance and modernization of the existing housing stock through direct financial assistance from loan and grant programs, mortgage default avoidance education, home maintenance assistance, home modification programs for people with disabilities, and weatherization assistance programs.

3.3 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support adopting policies, ordinances and incentives that facilitate affordable and inclusive housing and include enabling design - design that enables residents of varying levels of physical ability to live - in all multifamily housing and single family residential and advocates its use in housing assisted with federal subsidies.

3.4 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support the preservation and modernization of federally-assisted housing for older residents; including the HUD Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture 515 and 521 programs.

3.5 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support the identification and reuse of underutilized or vacant properties for the development of affordable housing, particularly housing for older adults.

TRANSPORTATION
Ensure Access to Quality Transportation Options for Older Adults

4. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions recommend that local, state, federal, and private entities evaluate and modify their transportation planning policies and land use practices to ensure accessibility, affordability, convenience and safety for older adults of all abilities.

4.1 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support requiring design for the specific needs and abilities of older adults of each component of the transportation systems, including physical attributes (e.g., interior spaces, sidewalks, lighting, large button crosswalk controls, retro- reflective signs and pavement paint, low floor buses with stop enunciators, seating at bus stops), and information features (e.g., signage, schedules and website).

4.2 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support the adoption of policies and implementation of plans consistent with the principles of Complete Streets, whereby everyone has convenient, safe, and reliable transportation regardless of whether they get around by car, bicycle, on foot, or by public transportation, and regardless of age and ability.

4.3 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions urge states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Commissions to explicitly address the needs and capacity of older road users (drivers, passengers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists) in their transportation plans, policies, and design standards including their state-level Strategic Highway Safety Plans and Highway Design Manuals.

4.4 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support cost benefit analyses of transportation investments to consider age- sensitive designs and systems to identify the best use of resources and potential savings in both transportation and broader community budgets.

4.5 Planners should advocate for funding to plan and develop well-integrated networks of pedestrian and bicycle paths, trails and facilities such as bus stops and rail stations.

5. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support the education of the general public, stakeholders such as developers, decision makers, planners and older adults on the components of transportation systems and the effects such systems have on daily living.

5.1 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support educational activities for planners, as well as other professionals in related disciplines, on enabling design to ensure that planning and design professionals understand how their work impacts older adults' mobility and overall quality of life.

5.2 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support educational activities geared towards older adults and their support networks as well as the general public. All citizens must be more aware of and better-educated on transportation options and their successful use, including public transportation, mobility management, driver and car assessment programs, and other public and private services.

6. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support increased local, state, and federal funding, and coordination of, fixed-route public transportation, specialized transportation (including demand responsive, paratransit, and human services transportation), and intercity bus and rail transit. The overall goal is a well-integrated or connected transportation system to allow access to daily needs and to ease moving from one mode of transport to another (e.g. bus to rail).

7. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support policies that create incentives for private resources to support specialized transportation services for older adults, including volunteer driver programs, rideshare programs, and demand responsive paratransit service.

7.1 Congress should adjust the Internal Revenue Service charitable mileage deduction rate to the higher business-related mileage deduction rate to encourage participation in volunteer driver programs (in 2014, a $0.42 difference).

7.2 States should establish policies that protect volunteer drivers from unreasonable or unfair increases in liability or insurance rates that arise solely from volunteer driver status.

7.3 States and localities should exempt non-profit volunteer driver programs from livery laws when those programs collect payment for rides to help cover operating expenses.

7.4 States should establish policies that exempt non-profit volunteer driver programs from car dealership laws that impede their ability to exchange vehicles from older adults for transportation service.

7.5 Specialized transportation providers should be encouraged to reach out to hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, employers, etc. to help fund their services.

8. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions recognize the importance of transportation systems to the health and well-being of older adults.

LAND-USE

Use Land-use and Zoning Tools to Create Welcoming Communities for Older Adults

9. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions recognize that a gap exists between the needs and abilities of older adults and the design of the built environment throughout most communities and supports policies which eliminate this gap, using land-use and zoning as a vehicle for creating enabling environments to raise the level of functioning and independence of older adults.

9.1 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support the development of zoning policies for accessible Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which are recognized as an important mechanism to allow people to remain in their communities. ADUs can support caregiving and provide a source of essential income. Other residential design options include cottage housing, multigenerational homes, co-housing, or other creative designs.

9.2 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions recognize that the scale of development impacts an aging population with mobility concerns and supports policies that encourage smaller minimum floor areas, smaller lot sizes, and more compact development.

9.3 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support land-use policies and building codes for the development and application of enabling design standards (such as large- button cross walk controls, large font signage, wayfinding and zero-step entries in housing) to ensure that design is accessible at a human-scale throughout a community.

9.4 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions recognizes that the provisions of independent and assisted living communities represent essential community facilities for which required mitigation of exactions may be reduced or eliminated.

10. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support planning policies and zoning regulations that foster mixed-use development as opportunities to co-locate services, land-uses, and programs to offer a continuum of affordable, supportive living options for healthier, independent living.

11. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support policies and zoning that facilitates the infrastructure, including emerging technologies, needed to promote and sustain aging in community and maintenance of day-to-day functioning, engagement, and contribution to community life.

12. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions recognize that physical and social connectivity such as lighting and wayfinding are critical for the health and well-being of older adults. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and

Divisions support policies that create seamless physical and social networks that facilitate improved health, economic opportunity, and community engagement.

12.1 Planners should coordinate transportation and land use that support community development policies that require homes, neighborhoods, goods, services, and community facilities to be physically connected to each other by a variety of comfortable, safe, and logical mobility options.

12.2 Planners should promote land use planning and zoning changes that support access to an efficient transportation network, such as mixed use development, transit-oriented development, and higher density development as appropriate for the community.

12.3 Planners should advocate for community parks and open space that offer opportunities to improve and maintain physical health and well-being, as well as park amenities to meet the needs of those with mobility and sensory issues.

12.4 Planners should advance policies that permit and encourage community gardening [consistent with the adopted Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning] that offers opportunities for social connectivity, physical activity, and healthy food choices and use of products in senior nutrition programs. Raised planters can facilitate participation of those with difficulties with bending or kneeling.

12.5 Planners should eliminate physical and regulatory barriers as needed to promote communities with connected and accessible informal and formal gathering spaces, both indoor and outdoor.

12.6 Planners should encourage communities to consider proximity to environmental health risks when planning for citing location of residential uses for sensitive populations.

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Support the Economic Well-Being of Older Adults

13. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support economic development policies that address the needs of people of all ages.

13.1 Planners should promote age-friendly businesses that facilitate access, employment and use by older adults.

13.2 Planners should promote workforce development programs and volunteer opportunities for and by   older adults.

14. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support the development of policies and programs that recognizes the importance of informal caregivers (and often family members who are unpaid) as integral supports for the aging population.

14.1 Planners should change planning and zoning codes to allow child and elder care in residential settings and to allow older adults and caregivers to reside together.

14.2 Public and private sector employers should support informal caregiving by offering through strategies such as flexible work hours, referral to caregiver resources in the community, on-site support groups for working caregivers, and discounted backup home care for emergency needs.

15. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions believe that local, state and federal policy should not discriminate by gender, immigration status, employment status or family definition.

15.1 Planners should remove discriminatory definitions of family from zoning codes

15.2 Planners should design policies that encourage economic access for all ages.

COMMUNITY ASSETS AND SUPPORTS

Strengthen the Community Assets of and Supports for Older Adults

16. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support an "age in everything" approach to planning, where older adults are considered in all program and facility planning along with green building practices to ensure healthy environments. This is especially critical in suburban and rural areas, where there may not be the population to support "older adult only" services, but where modification of existing assets makes them useful to older adults. New models such as the Village to Village Network and World Health Organization/AARP Age-friendly Cities/Communities are valuable approaches for active aging in community.

17. Planners should recognize that interdependencies between generations are beneficial to communities.

17.1 The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions support planning policies and zoning regulations that foster mixed-use development as opportunities to co-locate services and programs in intergenerational settings such as schools and community parks and offer a continuum of affordable housing and service options for healthier, independent living.

18. The American Planning Association and its Chapters and Divisions believe that planners—who help shape the physical design of a neighborhood and community—are key leaders who can help ensure that older adults remain active and engaged in their community and that support services are easy to access so that frail older adults may continue to reside in the community and improve their health and quality of life.

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RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICY GUIDES OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION
This Policy Guide is related to other Policy Guides adopted by the American Planning Association in recent years, including:

- Smart Growth Policy Guide (adopted 2012)
- Surface Transportation Policy Guide (adopted in 2010)
- Housing Policy Guide (adopted in 2006)
- Other policy guides addressing food systems planning, security, neighborhood collaboration, sustainability and public redevelopment all indirectly address the needs of the elderly. Please refer directly to these closely allied policy guides for additional policy reference on those topics: http://planning.org/policy/guides/.

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