Developing a Livable Tampa Bay Region for All Ages
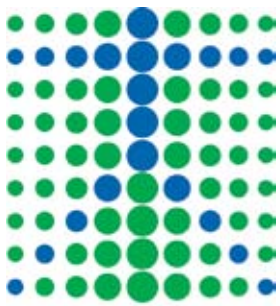
Workshop Report One:
Aging with a Comprehensive Approach
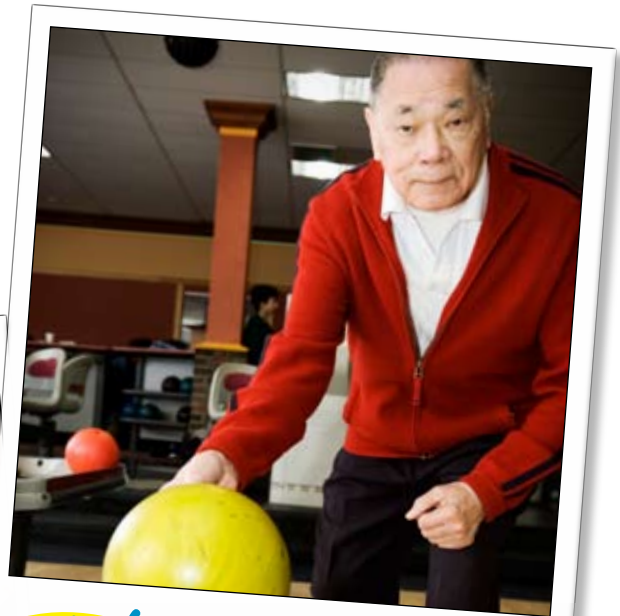
Partners for Livable Communities

n4a

Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging

MetLife Foundation

take action now!

Through the generous support of MetLife Foundation, the first-ever regional workshop of the Aging in Place Initiative was held in Tampa, Florida, on June 26, 2007, at the Museum of Science & Industry.

www.aginginplaceinitiative.org

Today, there are more than 35 million Americans age 65 or above—a tenfold increase in the 65 and over population since 1900. Over the next 25 years, that number will double, and one in every five Americans will be age 65 or older. As studies show that the vast majority of this growing-older demographic want to age in place in their own homes, communities working to provide the services and quality of life that older adults demand will face more challenges and opportunities.

Partners for Livable Communities, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and other national civic groups began the Aging in Place Initiative to bring attention to the increasing aging demographic and the need to develop livable communities for all ages. With support from the MetLife Foundation, together, we have supported the development of practical tools and resources to help communities jumpstart their conversations and take action to address the needs of older adults in their cities and neighborhoods.

As part of this initiative, the partners supported *The Maturing of America* survey in 2006. The results of this questionnaire found that although many communities have some programs to address the needs of older adults, very few have undertaken a comprehensive assessment of what it would take to make their community livable for all. As a result of these findings, we took the initiative further through the development of a comprehensive resource, *A Blueprint for Action:Developing Livable Communities for All Ages*, because we felt it was important to provide communities with a tangible and concrete tool to help them plan for the future. The strategies and best practices outlined in the *Blueprint* can help communities make the incremental changes needed to create livable communities that are good places for the young and old alike.

And now, the Initiative is going on the road, hosting regional workshops across the country that focus on one particular aspect, or theme, of Aging in Place. This report from the Tampa Bay Region workshop is the first in our series and aims to document and analyze the outcomes of the workshop. It is intended for both the attendees as well as others who wish to learn about the new ideas that emerge when a diverse group of national leaders and community stakeholders come together to tackle such an important livability issue. We hope that this report will serve as yet another tool for communities and individuals everywhere who are working to build livable communities for all ages.

Your national hosts,
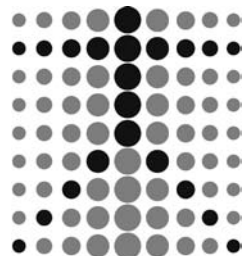
Partners for Livable Communities

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Partners for Livable Communities (Partners) and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) began the Aging in Place Initiative with the goal of raising awareness for the coming age boom and equipping communities with resources and ideas they can use to better allow seniors to age in place. Through the generous support of MetLife Foundation, the first-ever regional workshop of the Aging in Place Initiative was held in Tampa, Florida, on June 26, 2007, at the Museum of Science & Industry. This gathering, attended by individuals representing all sectors of the community, was a great success in educating, sharing, collaborating and jumpstarting the community into action.

In addition to the diversity of the participants, the Tampa Bay Region workshop brought together leading experts on aging with both national and local perspectives. This report offers the reader an insight into, and analysis of, the comments and ideas that were shared by the speakers, panelists and participants at the workshop.

Theme

The specific theme of the Tampa Bay Region workshop was "Aging with a Comprehensive Approach." This theme was selected because often different government agencies, community groups and private service providers are not crossing boundaries or working together to provide efficient and comprehensive services to older adults. The phrase "Aging with a Comprehensive Approach" may hold a different meaning to different parties in a community, all of which are useful. Partners President, Robert McNulty, explained at least three variations of comprehensive planning:

- Geographic — various municipalities working together and planning across a region
- Issue-based — a community thinking about how to better provide a specific type of service by working with new partners
- Outreach-focused — a community working at the neighborhood level to engage everyone in the Aging in Place agenda

What is clear is that the growing aging population will require models that go beyond what is currently in place, and that a comprehensive approach is a necessary pre-requisite to the proper use of resources and tax dollars. The new ideas and best practices that the panelists, speakers and participants at the Tampa Bay Region workshop came together to discuss represent a giant step forward in thinking about Aging in Place.

Workshop Recap

This first Aging in Place workshop was hosted by Hillsborough County, Florida, a county constantly being challenged to provide important services to the growing older adult population. The Tampa Bay Region is home to some of the most comprehensive Aging in Place strategies in the country—a fitting fact for a large region with one of the nation's highest percentage of residents over the age of 65.

Pat Bean, Hillsborough County Administrator, began the workshop with introductory remarks and discussed several current aging initiatives that encourage coalition

building and partnerships. She highlighted the Hillsborough County Department of Aging Services' Master Plan, a comprehensive strategy that was developed in collaboration with the University of South Florida (see p. 21). The groundbreaking plan includes a series of benchmarks to measure progress and define success, and it serves as a model to local governments everywhere.

After welcoming remarks from Barbara Dillon of MetLife Foundation, Helen Eltzeroth of n4a, and Robert McNulty of Partners, a national perspective on comprehensive planning was provided by Mae Carpenter, Commissioner of the Westchester County, NY, Department of Senior Programs and Services. Ms. Carpenter shared her insights as a 25-year veteran of managing services for older adults in a uniquely diverse and densely populated community. An interview with Ms. Carpenter and highlights from her presentation can be found in the section National Perspectives on Comprehensive Planning (see p. 5).

The panel discussion that followed featured four local Aging in Place experts who raised ideas that had regional appeal and national applicability. An audience of over 100 community members engaged the panel on a number of topics including the value of bringing the Aging in Place agenda to the neighborhood level, the underutilization of the faith community as a key player, and Natural Occurring Retirement Communities or NORCs. A complete analysis of the panel discussion can be found in the section Different Perspectives on Aging in Place: Panel Discussion (see p. 9).

One of the workshop panelists, Maureen Kelly, described her strategies and achievements as President and CEO of the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging. She has become known throughout the region as an innovative leader with a knack for coalition building and is profiled in the section Coalition Building as a Path to Comprehensive Planning (see p. 13).

The last chapter of this report describes the many best practices and model programs discussed by the panelists, participants, and others from the Tampa Bay Region and beyond (see p. 15). They are intended to provide specific examples of what counties, cities, neighborhoods, community groups and private service providers are doing to make real change in the quality of life for older adults.

Altogether, this report captures the many ideas and outcomes of a groundbreaking event in the Tampa Bay Region. However, the greatest results of the workshop are yet to be known. Eligible workshop attendees were invited to apply for small "JumpStart the Conversation" grants of either $1,000 or $2,500 to finance their own Aging in Place projects and take change into their own hands. Please visit the Aging in Place website, www.aginginplaceinitiative.org, where the winners will be announced and their impact on the lives of older adults will inspire a new group of communities and citizens. ◂◂

Welcoming Remarks

Wit Ostrenko
President & CEO
Museum of Science & Industry

Pat Bean
County Administrator
Hillsborough County, Florida

Barbara Dillon
Director
Health Program, MetLife Foundation

Helen Eltzeroth
Deputy Director
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Robert McNulty
President
Partners for Livable Communities

Keynote Speaker

Mae Carpenter
Commissioner
Westchester County, NY, Department of Senior Programs and Services

National Perspectives on Comprehensive Planning

Mae Carpenter, Commissioner of the Westchester County, NY, Department of Senior Programs and Services, delivered the national perspective on aging with a comprehensive approach. After more than 25 years as the chief aging officer for a county as large and diverse as Westchester, Ms. Carpenter knows how to build partnerships and mobilize stakeholders to build a livable community for all ages.

She began with an allusion to the Hudson Valley legend of Sleepy Hollow. Just as Rip Van Winkle slept through the American Revolution, Carpenter referenced the demographic revolution and said that most communities have not adequately planned for its arrival.

"We do not want to be the 'Rip Van Winkle of Aging' by sleeping through our aging revolution; we have got to be prepared to meet the needs caused by the changing demographics throughout the country," Carpenter exhorted.

The Commissioner emphasized the need to 'wake up' and plan for a comprehensive approach that crosses municipal lines—and embrace a strategic approach that goes from the highest levels of government, right down to the neighborhood and block level.

A conversation with Mae Carpenter

Question: *We have been exploring the term "comprehensive approach." What does that mean in the context of creating a livable community for aging in place?*

Mae Carpenter: Our comprehensive approach involves all sectors of the community, dealing not only with the formal and informal social services (that the aging network deals with every day) but also dealing with housing, dealing with transportation, dealing with the arts, dealing with planning, and dealing with the environment. It is a holistic approach that examines all aspects and all dimensions of community living. Livable Communities was launched in Westchester County to bring together the stakeholders from all of these different areas.

Q: *And what does it take to make a comprehensive approach happen? How do you bring stakeholders together to think about the same issues?*

MC: First of all, it requires providing education and information in terms of what we're all up against. And then, if you bring all the stakeholders together, they see that we're all intertwined, that we're all connected. I often refer to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. If you are at the lower rung, dealing just with housing and dealing just with health care, you are not going to climb up the ladder to deal with volunteerism, to deal with the arts. You've got more pressing things on your mind.

Q: *Meeting basic needs is a prerequisite?*

MC: Yes, otherwise the ability to fully participate in the community can

spot*light*

Mae Carpenter

Commissioner, Westchester County, NY, Department of Senior Programs and Services
(see bio on p. 19)

About Westchester County, New York

Westchester County, with a population of 950,000, is primarily a suburban county in the New York City metropolitan area. Westchester has forty-three municipalities including six cities and nineteen towns.

The county was designated one of 64 'First Suburbs' by The Brookings Institution to describe a unique set of challenges faced by post-war communities such as concentrations of older adults and immigrant populations as well as outmoded housing and commercial buildings.

By the year 2020 the current senior citizen population of 123,000 is predicted to grow by 37%. Although the county is purported to have the eighth highest per capita income in the U.S. at $58,592, an estimated 7.6% of the aging adult population live below the poverty line. [1]

just sort of stagnate. I'm using Maslow's model to parallel the individual's growth and development, with the community's growth and development. The more people you have in your community who can be all they can be, the more the community can be all it can be.

Q: According to Maslow, support from the right environment enables a person to reach their potential. It requires a supportive environment, right?

> "The more people you have in your community who can be all they can be, the more the community can be all it can be."

MC: Yes, if individuals are to actualize, if individuals are to give back, if they are to leave an honorable legacy for their community, we have to make sure basics like housing and health care are taken care of. In terms of health—walkability. People need sidewalks so they can get exercise.

In Westchester, it is also in terms of affordable and appropriate housing. In our community we have a horrible affordable housing problem, where older people are spending eighty, ninety percent of their incomes just to keep a roof over their heads, which doesn't leave very much money for health care. It doesn't leave very much interest in volunteering and giving back to the community.

Q: Communication and education are critical for an effective "comprehensive approach." How have you done this in Westchester County?

MC: Yes that's true. We have had community educational meetings, inviting the public out. We can't restrict ourselves just to senior citizen centers and clubs. We have to go into houses of worship. We have to sponsor public educational forums in public libraries.

Q: You use a strategic approach to reach out?

MC: That's right. You have to work with civic and service organizations, the faith-based community, the League of Women Voters, Junior League, the Lions, the Kiwanis, sororities and fraternities. You have to reach out to all sectors of the community.

Q: It's truly an example of comprehensive, big-picture thinking. How does that happen? Is that you?

MC: Well, (laughs) I'm an old community organizer. When people understand that they are stakeholders, they will come out of their silos and work together to address some of the issues. And, of course, we're always putting out what our issues are.

In Westchester County we have the highest property taxes in the nation, we have the highest longevity rate of any other county in the state, we have the largest out-migration of our 60 to 64 year olds, because they

can't afford to stay when they retire. And then, of course, we have this large influx and in-migration of our 85+ population.

So, we get the word out that we are a "First-Suburb" from the Brookings Institute study, that we have outmoded housing—I mean who needs a 10 room house with steps? Where are the older people who have aged in place going to move? The community is not building appropriate affordable housing, and I'm not talking about just subsidized senior housing. We've lost all our middle income rental property in Westchester County. Building housing for middle-income senior citizens is not a high priority for the development community in Westchester County.

Q: How do you share your model? How do you communicate with other agencies throughout the state, throughout the country?

MC: Well, first of all, we document all of our steps and procedures, and we develop work plans. We just treat this as a business project that we modify and update regularly, and that we can share with others.

We sort of see ourselves as a laboratory. I tell my staff, "Where we are located is just geography, act as if you are running the country, solving the problems of the world."

"When people understand that they are stakeholders, they will come out of their silos and work together to address some of the issues."

So, Westchester is a microcosm. It's very diverse — economically, ethnically and culturally. And there's a lot that we can do to contribute. We can actualize right there and share our results.

Q: By documenting what you're doing. Would you advise that to other agencies as well?

MC: Absolutely. And you can share that information with other communities. We present at national conferences, and we have a very active website. If others are interested in reading about what we've done, they can visit our website. ◄◄

For more information on Westchester County and the Department of Senior Programs and Services, visit:
http://www.westchestergov. com/aging

Asset Mapping: Identifying and Cultivating a Community's Assets

Ms. Carpenter's presentation to the workshop attendees included a discussion of asset mapping, a comprehensive planning tool that Westchester County uses to bring services to the neighborhood level. Asset mapping is the process of cataloging all of a community's assets including local institutions (i.e. libraries, schools, community colleges, churches and museums), civic, social and cultural associations, and even local artists and community leaders.

In Westchester, the asset mapping initiative was carried out in partnership with the county and the local Westchester Alliance, a consortium of college, university and community-based organizations. College students from Iona College conducted the research and developed a comprehensive map of Westchester's community assets. Because of their efforts, the county is now able to reach out to these assets and involve them in projects that will make the community more livable for everyone.

Westchester's experience shows that once a community's assets, both traditional and nontraditional, are identified and put to work, they can have great impact on the ability of older adults to age in place.

Library
Older adults provide tax preparation for neighbors. Library provides space for early-morning discussion club.

Nonprofit Organization
Older adults provide skilled consultancy in organizational structure and development. Nonprofit provides interesting volunteer opportunities that utilize older adults expertise.

Bakery or Restaurant
Older adults assist with holiday mailing, grant free use of senior center parking lot. Bakery or restaurant prepares free holiday meal for older adults, gives stipend for assistance with mailing.

Ethnic Associations
Older adults write for monthly publication and organize ethnic celebrations. Ethnic associations provide opportunity for gatherings and celebrations.

Parks
Older adults work with community organizing group to develop multi-use intergenerational center. Parks provide space for older adults club meetings.

Older Adults

Hospital
Older adults visit and play with children with long-term illnesses. Hospital facilitates meaningful contact with children.

Faith Organizations
Older adults present historical skits and songs along with ethnic food. Faith organizations provide contact with community, opportunity to tell stories.

Colleges & Universities
Older adults teach native language and history courses. Colleges & universities provide opportunity to pass down hertiage within own ethnic communities.

Dept. on Aging
Older adults organize others around pertinent issues. Dept. on Aging provides nutrition and health sites.

Community Based Organization
Older adults disseminate community information throughout senior buildings. Organizations provide information and tips on crime.

Figure

This is an example of how asset mapping is used to identify a community's assets and establish how they can be put to work to improve the quality of life for everyone.[2]

Different Perspectives on Aging in Place: Panel Discussion

Central to the half-day workshop was a panel discussion that examined critical issues around comprehensive planning. The panel looked at the various ways organizations factor a broader portfolio of needs and services to support an Aging in Place agenda. Panel members represented the private sector, public and nonprofit agencies and the higher education world.

The audience of more than 100 members also represented diverse interests that included housing, health, transportation, cultural life, supportive services, education and life-long learning, public safety, civic participation and planning.

Starting the Discussion

At the start of the discussion, panelist Jack Bowersox anticipated the need for a comprehensive approach to aging by highlighting two key themes that reflect the changing needs of the baby boomer generation. One was activity. Bowersox emphasized that as the boomers become older adults they are not going to slow down or step aside. This theme calls for comprehensive planning that serves active aging adults who are more technologically savvy and engaged than their predecessors.

"We cannot look to the past as to what's been developed today; we have to look to the future."

Thus, the driving force for a comprehensive approach requires planning in both new and proven ways. It may mean crossing lines into the delivery of expanded services, developing organizational collaborations and extending out across a region while also drilling down into the neighborhood level. "We cannot look to the past as to what's been developed today; we have to look to the future," Boxersox said. One necessary aspect of planning, according to Bowersox, has been documented in research that examines the results of placing active older adults into settings that are overly supportive. These adults will soon adjust their functioning level to fit that environment, explaining why formerly active people admitted into an institution often prematurely experience a decline in health and self-sufficiency. The results from this research prove the need for appropriate housing alternatives. Planning will require governmental leadership on revisiting building codes and the creation of private sector incentives.

The concept of appropriate settings was raised by one member of the audience who said, "Design for the aging adult is simply just good design." He explained, "When the home is appropriately designed, it's not just good for the aging adult; it's good for anyone living there. The design we are looking for in our communities, whether it is sidewalks, access to shopping or safety in the home, really shouldn't be attributed

Moderator

Robert McNulty
President
Partners for Livable Communities

Panelists

Jack Bowersox
Partner
Life Wellness Communities Development Company

Maureen Kelly
President/CEO
West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging

Jono Miller
Director
Environmental Studies Program, New College of Florida,
Co-chair
SCOPE's "Aging: The Possibilities" Initiative

Larry Polivka, Ph.D.
Director
Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging
Associate Director
University of South Florida School of Aging Studies

to the elderly. It should be attributed to the type of design that we all deserve."

Panelist Larry Polivka agreed. Polivka noted obstacles encountered in trying to change building codes to reflect a lifespan approach to appropriate housing. Polivka said, "Twenty years ago we tried to change the code to require wider doorways from 38 to 42 inches in order to accommodate wheelchairs and other things. We were astonished. The cost was miniscule, but the resistance to change was monumental."

A designer himself, Bowersox shared that a study of building codes revealed that although one may think the codes are set up for older people, they really are not. He explained that codes for senior housing had been designed with the handicapped in mind. He concluded that the codes do not necessarily work for older people, and currently there is no attention to sensory loss, which he identified as a real need.

Panelists reiterated the advice of keynote speaker Mae Carpenter by echoing the value of planning for a neighborhood approach. Jono Miller spoke about intergenerational neighborhoods and the need to document services through the use of asset mapping, as described by Carpenter. These asset maps serve to make valuable neighborhood connections that take advantage of social capital, and, Miller emphasized, "do what many times, government cannot."

Polivka also spoke about neighborhood focus and Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs). He said that the creation of NORC programs exist to support people in these communities, and he cited an example of a NORC program in New York City where a social worker or a public health nurse was placed in the community to maintain daily contact with older persons. "This helps to determine the assets in those communities and what those residents really want," Polivka explained.

The conversation led into a discussion on the role of faith-based organi-

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Comprehensive Planning Around Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)

NORCs are communities with age-integrated housing where 50% or more of the 60+ population have aged in place. According to Fredda W. Vladeck, project director of the Aging in Place Initiative of the United Hospital Fund, a NORC program, it is a type of "supportive service program" that represents collaboration among community residents, housing companies, social services and health care providers, government agencies, and funders. Presenting examples of a variety of such programs in New York City, Vladeck noted that all 28 programs in New York City have a core set of social work, health promotion/management, and social-recreational activities. Because each community is unique, each has different strengths and challenges, and therefore chooses to focus on different issues.

For some programs, improving transportation and access to health and other services is a focus because geographic location makes access to health care difficult. Other programs have developed telephone reassurance efforts to help reduce the anxiety of neighbors worried about older residents living alone. Still others provide tax counseling assistance, while some have teen volunteer programs or education classes in English as a Second Language. Beyond the core set of services, these programs are designed to reflect and respond to each community's unique set of characteristics, resources, needs and interests. In the coming decades, as more and more communities become NORCs, one lesson is clear: it takes the whole community to create an elder-friendly environment.[3]

zations that have the potential to serve a vital function at the neighborhood level. Maureen Kelly noted that nationally Methodist churches are targeting the year 2009 to implement a two-pronged approach to provide services and engage the 60+ population. These are: 1. using congregations to provide care giving support, and 2. using congregations to provide intergenerational initiatives by mentoring children.

Kelly raised further discussion on comprehensive planning to develop neighborhood assets and resources. She cited the need for a central point of information to help people identify the everyday resources that assist them to remain in their own homes, such as a handy-man and neighbors who will assist with transportation. She said that the State of Florida had adopted a national trend by setting up Aging Resource Centers (which her organization has been designated) as focal points for older adults to access critical information. "We will need to form partnerships and coalitions to expand our database of information," Kelly asserted. She said that written steps are lacking in the comprehensive plans of more than 170 communities that the state has designated as "Communities for a Lifetime" or livable communities for all ages. She added that technology would increase in importance, as a tool for information management.

The issue of fragmentation of the health care system, brought up by an audience member, was not lost on the panelists in context of a comprehensive approach. Polivka pointed out that the state system is worse now than it was 20 years ago. However, he offered praise for the leadership taken by Hillsborough County, and he heralded the county as a model for orchestrating a comprehensive approach by leveraging 30 years of experience and dedication toward the coordination of services. Kelly agreed, emphasizing that Hillsborough County was a state leader in providing financial support for aging programs. Yet, she stressed that additional resources would be needed, which requires more active work with elected officials.

When queried about underutilized assets in the community, the panelists as well as the audience focused on older adults themselves. A community in Chicago, Fairview Village was cited by Bowersox as a model of engagement, as illustrated by the activity of older adults in their People Energized Through Purpose efforts. Polivka spoke about the need to reinvigorate civic participation in government, and Miller echoed Mae Carpenter's emphasis on providing advocacy skills to increase civic engagement. "There's a tremendous potential, but I think we don't teach advocacy skills to seniors for the same reason we don't want to teach teenagers about sex—we're afraid of what might happen," Miller said.

Finally, the role of comprehensive planning in education was discussed. One audience member, a faculty member of the Hillsborough Community College, described the formation of a program for employability skills, developed with the encouragement of the State's Department of

Aging Resource Centers (ARCs)

A product of landmark state legislation in 2004, Aging Resource Centers are essentially "one-stop shops" for information and referral services for older adults in Florida. The main function of ARCs is to provide:
- Information and referral
- Financial and functional eligibility determination
- Employment initiatives
- Health, wellness and Medicaid services

ARCs are designed to be elder friendly and efficient, so that older adults can have all their questions answered at once. Also, the resources of an ARC can be accessed by phone and on the Internet, and also through a host of local providers including senior centers, health care providers and other community agencies. *Website: http://elderaffairs.state. fl.us/english/arc.html*

Education. He noted that few educational programs deal with people who work with older adults. In reponse to the concern, the school developed a 450-hour certificate program targeted to employees in areas such as home health care, senior assistance and nursing homes.

In summary, the panelists looked at comprehensive planning as taking place in a variety of ways. It occurs through the development of regional and area groups and coalitions; it leverages public policy to operate on a neighborhood level; and, by crossing lines and boundaries, it can provide a better understanding of the population, so as to be better equipped to meet their needs at different life stages. ◄ ◄

Crossing Boundaries: Lessons for Identifying Community
(excerpt from the Community Empowerment Manual)

• Develop a basic idea of the needs, issues and priorities in your community. Work with a few core partners to develop a consensus on the basic needs, issues and priorities relating to Aging in Place.

• Looking beyond the "usual suspects." Build relationships with people with whom you wouldn't normally come into contact, but who have a strong interest in improving aspects of their community that will make it more livable for everyone. Ask a wide range of individuals for input about potential collaborators.

• Having your finger on your community's pulse. Who is doing what in your community? What other collaborations exist now, and what collaborations have been tried in the past? Being a diligent student of your community will give you tremendous credibility and help build relationships among the different elements that need to be at the table. [4]

Coalition Building as a Path to Comprehensive Planning

Ask Maureen Kelly what it takes to begin a comprehensive approach for an Aging in Place initiative and she'll say "Identify community leaders." Maureen Kelly knows, because she is a leader, and her leadership style is based on action. As president/CEO of the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging, she starts with coalition building in her strategic approach to the community's Aging in Place agenda.

A number of years ago, Kelly initiated the process of building coalitions by conducting a needs assessment to serve her constituents in the five-county area. She and area partners began by holding small focus groups at the University of South Florida. As ideas to address needs were identified, other interested community organizations were invited to participate, including hospitals, the United Way, home health agencies, housing providers and more. All thought a coalition approach was a terrific idea.

> ## "Leadership is required, and leaders can come from anywhere."

The coalition concept has proved to be an effective method in comprehensive planning. It promotes a cross-boundary approach based on needs identification, asset mapping and the use of shared resources to provide leadership in specific geographic areas. Leadership in a coalition relies on a flexible approach where strengths are leveraged, gaps identified, and mission, vision and goals are clearly communicated.

Kelly's approach to coalition building is Leadership 101: Establish goals, begin projects, and celebrate short-term wins. This is exemplified in the way a coalition was formed and worked across three years to create the nation's first Elder Justice Center in Tampa (see p. 14). This Center was developed to address the inevitable fear, confusion, uncertainty and lack of confidence experienced by many elders confronting the courts for the first time, especially those with dementia or mental health issues. It employs counselors and volunteers to assist older adults in navigating through the hallways of the courthouse and the channels of the legal system.

Kelly notes that coalitions form more easily around identified needs, and that leaders can emerge from anywhere. The Kinship Support Center (see p. 14) is a good example. For this initiative, the University of South Florida, School of Social Work collaborates with the community through an Advisory Committee to support the many grandparents and other relatives who are providing the primary care for children living in kinship care homes. The services are designed to develop, maintain and strengthen support groups for kinship caregivers and their children living in the community.

Not all coalitions are as formal as those formed to create the Kinship Center or the Elder Justice Center. Informal coalitions may be

profile »

Maureen Kelly

President/CEO, West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging
(see bio on p. 20)

West Central Florida Area Agency of Aging

The WCFAAA is a non-profit organization serving the needs of elder residents of Hillsborough, Polk, Manatee, Highlands and Hardee Counties. The Agency, mandated by the federal Older Americans Act, exists to promote the independence, dignity, health and well-being of elder citizens; to plan, fund and administer a coordinated system of services for seniors; to facilitate and enhance service delivery; and to advocate for the needs and concerns of older Americans.
Website: http://www.agingflorida.com

Coalitions in Action: Elder Justice Center

The Elder Justice Center (EJC), created in Hillsborough County, came about because of the need to support older adults engaged in the legal system. The actual physical layout of a municipal courthouse can be daunting, and the justice process intimidating.

The coalition moved into action, launching a three-year process in 1998. Various task forces considered issues of services and programs; grants and assistance; the physical location of the Center and access issues; guardianship and mental health issues; and criminal and civil law concerns. The task force also formulated four issues that any court considering a center should think about. These included gaps in community service, assessment of community strengths, identification of barriers, and strategies to overcome them. EJC was developed as a result, and became the first of its kind in the nation.

Although EJC does not offer legal advice, it employs two full-time court counselors who provide case management review in guardianship cases as well as legal and social issues.[5]
Website: http://www.fljud13.org/ejc.htm

Kinship Support Center

Goals of the Center include:
- Collaborate with the community through the establishment of a Kinship Care Advisory Committee and develop new, innovative services to address the needs and concerns of the kinship care family
- Serve as a statewide clearing house of kinship care information obtained at local, state and federal level of government for service providers and caregivers
- Provide training for service provider agencies, universities and kinship caregivers themselves that provides leadership and direction for statewide efforts to address the growing needs of all kinship caregivers
- Provide direct services to kinship caregivers throughout Florida by means of the Kinship Care Warmline, a statewide listening line for kinship caregivers who need emotional support and information and referral services; and provide direct services to children living in kinship care families through a school-based intervention pilot project

Website: http://www.cas.usf.edu/~krisman/

convened to address community needs though existing organizations. For instance, Kelly has worked with United Way to generate a loosely formed coalition called Elderlink, which coordinates a broad array of senior services delivered through a variety of organizations. The services are available to those whose income level exceeds the threshold for county services but do not have the financial resources needed to acquire assistance such as bill paying, household chores and other actions of everyday life necessary for aging in place.

In different areas, coalitions may take different forms. Across the wider five-county area served by Kelly's agency, the needs and population are more diverse. In rural communities, the challenges and opportunities differ from Hillsborough County and require different coalition members than those in the cities. Therefore, Kelly and local partner organizations use alternative kinds of resources and partnerships that extend to churches, hospitals, and health, fire and rescue departments. Their coalition partners commit for the long term because their members live in the community.

A good example of this is the Vial of Life program (see p. 15), coordinated with local fire and rescue services. The concept is simple, but powerful. When a first responder arrives at a call, all personal medical information is in one place, easily found.

Kelly believes that coalitions are the path to a comprehensive Aging in Place agenda. "It is going to take a lot more people," Kelly said, "that's why you work in coalitions." Employing coalitions as a model of comprehensive planning requires people to look at their plans and ask, 'what can we do to make a difference in the lives of seniors, and who needs to be at the table?' Once the process is begun, success is predicated on the understanding that it will change over time, and people will change with it. Leadership is required, but that leadership can come from anywhere. ◄◄

The following initiatives and programs are examples of comprehensive planning toward an Aging in Place agenda.

Hillsborough County, Florida

Hillsborough County is acknowledged as a leader in Florida in providing direct services for aging adults. Additional information may be obtained through their website, *http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org*.

The Vial of Life Program
The Vial of Life program of Polk County is nationally recognized as a tool in facilitating the delivery of essential medical information to emergency personnel. The Vial of Life contains all medical information in a prescription bottle, so in the case of an emergency the Vial of Life "speaks" for the person in need when they cannot speak for themselves. The Vial of Life contains forms with questions about an individual or family's medical history, including illnesses, diseases, allergies or prescription medications. *Website: http://www.polksheriff.org/briefings/CrimePrev/2005/Vial_Of_Life.pdf*

Hillsborough County Elder Services Master Plan
The leadership of the Hillsborough County Department of Aging Services in comprehensive planning is evident by their collaboration with the Center for Housing and Long-Term Care at the University of South Florida, which resulted in the development of an Elder Services Master Plan. The comprehensive planning process included consumer and stakeholder focus groups for needs identification and the establishment of benchmarks to measure progress. Much of the feedback focused on increased communication and collaboration between the county and aging network service providers, and increased efforts on the part of the county toward education and outreach efforts. (see p. 21 for an excerpt from the Elder Services Master Plan).

County-wide Senior Safety Zones for Traffic Safety
Older adults made it known at county sponsored meetings that they were having difficulty entering traffic from their adult-living communities. The County Board of Commissioners responded with an issue-based solution that addresses traffic safety in a number of ways. Forty-seven senior safety zones (analogous to the concept of school safety zones) were identified. To date, two have been created based on guidance from the State of Florida's Elder Road User Program and the Transportation Research Board's special report (#218), "Transportation in an Aging Society."

As a result, traffic speed limits have been lowered around concentrated senior living areas, lane change zones have been created to ease access onto main highways, and pedestrian access has been provided. Each of these improvements, though helpful to the older adults, raises the transportation safety level for everyone. [5]

Community Care for the Elderly

The Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) program provides support services in the home to frail, functionally impaired residents age 60 and older, enabling them to remain in the community and age in place rather than face nursing home placement. While the eligibility guidelines begin at 60, the average client is in his/her late 70s. Funding is made available through the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging, the State of Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners and client contributions. Clients are assessed co-payments based on a sliding scale.

Website: http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/aging/programsservices/community.cfm

Expanded Transportation Services

The Hillsborough County Sunshine Line provides door-to-door transportation and bus passes for elderly, low-income or disabled persons, including Hillsborough Health care clients who cannot afford their own transportation. Transportation is provided primarily to medical facilities and Aging Services daycare and The Senior Citizens Nutrition and Activity Program (SCNAP) sites; non-medical trips are provided on a space-available basis.

Website: http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hss/sunshine/home.cfm

Information and Referral for Social, Health and Government Services

Community Link is an innovative new project implemented by the Hillsborough County Citizen Action Center and its Hillsborough Information Line program to share vital resources in the community. The Action Center maintains an extensive database of information related to all social, health and government services available in Hillsborough County. This information is managed and used by the Hillsborough Information Line, a comprehensive information and referral service for community resources that answers more than 10,000 requests from citizens each month.

Community Link enables the Citizen Action Center to share this treasury of resource information with private, nonprofit or public service providers who deal with clients on a regular basis and have a need for this type of information. It allows caseworkers, case managers and social workers to access up-to-date information about community social and health resources on behalf of their clients.

Website: http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/communitylink/

National Best Practice: Planning for, and with, older adults

St. Louis Park, Minnesota, a post–World War II suburb to the west of Minneapolis, sponsored a visioning exercise in 1994 in response to the expressed interests of grassroots groups representing residents, the business community, school districts and social service agencies. This exercise produced a consensus vision of "a community so special that people will consciously choose to make St. Louis Park their lifelong home." The city revised its comprehensive plan to incorporate long-range policies that support land use changes allowing more mixed use and public works investments facilitating walking. Zoning and development standards were amended to allow higher densities and mixed uses.

St. Louis Park's planning effort reflects a dynamism that builds on strong grassroots interest and commitment and a political culture that is not adverse to risk. While some municipal planning initiatives that speak to the issue of aging tend to be more modest in that they have a narrower range of focus, St. Louis Park seeks to transform the entire community.[6]

SAGE: Collaboration and Networking

Hillsborough County helped to facilitate the first chapter of the Society for the Advancement of Gerontological Environments (SAGE) in the State of Florida. SAGE promotes networking and collaboration among individuals who are dedicated to making livable communities for older adults.
Website: http://www.sagefederation.org/index.htm

Tampa Bay Region

The University of South Florida, Collaborative for Children, Families and Communities

The University of South Florida Collaborative is a recognized central point of contact, facilitator and matchmaker for new partnerships. The Collaborative brings together university faculty and students, nationally known researchers, community service organizations and professionals, youth, neighborhood activists, government officials and ordinary moms and dads to build a better Tampa Bay community.

It addresses issues as diverse as teen resilience, elder care, community assets, children's literacy needs and family strengths through two working groups of faculty and community partners—Resilience & Protective Factors and Neighborhoods & Communities. The program strives to create sustained, collaborative relationships, where interdisciplinary teams work as co-learners in diverse settings. The Collaborative does not conduct any research itself. Instead, grants are awarded to faculty who conduct interdisciplinary field research.
Website: http://usfcollab.fmhi.usf.edu/about.cfm

The Rubin Center for Healthy Aging at Senior Friendship Centers in Sarasota

Serving as an example of leveraging the underutilized assets of an area's retired adult community, The Rubin Center is a pioneer of Florida's volunteer physician program and the first volunteer dental clinic. The center provides both primary and specialty medical services to low-income seniors on Florida's west coast. In addi-

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National Best Practice: Comprehensive Planning in Atlanta

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the regional planning and coordinating agency of intergovernmental affairs for the Atlanta region. Among its many roles, the ARC serves as the Atlanta Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and carries out the region's Area Plan on Aging through collaboration with 10 county-based aging programs and 13 specialized agencies. It provides older adults and their families with a broad range of home and community-based services including information and referral services, case management, transportation, home-delivered meals, senior centers, legal services and more.

Among the many publications put out by the ARC, the Aging in Place Toolkit provides a series of recommendations for communities to encourage responsible design for older adults. Georgia Generations, published quarterly with other AAAs around the state, addresses important issues for elder caregivers and is distributed to health care facilities, pharmacies and libraries.

Additionally, the ARC sponsors "Aging Atlanta," a partnership of 50 public, private and nonprofit organizations in the Atlanta region that provides even more services to create an age-friendly community in the region. Along with its growing public awareness campaign and effort to improve care coordination, Aging Atlanta uses GIS mapping technology to analyze the efficiency of the current community-based care system.
Websites: http://www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xchg/arc/hs.xsl/8_ENU_HTML.htm
http://www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xchg/arc/hs.xsl/473_ENU_HTML.htm

tion, the center provides continuing education to its volunteer physicians and conducts geriatric care training with three medical schools, a physician assistant program and several nursing schools. It also makes efforts to organize professionals and others to volunteer.
Website: http://www.seniorfriendship.com/sarasota/

The Polk Arts Alliance

The Polk Arts Alliance (PAA) mission is to cultivate an environment for the arts. According to executive director Mischelle Anderson, Aging in Place is an important aspect of livability in Polk, and it is an important consideration in PAA planning. As of 2006, almost one-third of the 500,000 residents of the county were over the age of 55. The majority of the 17 municipalities in the county has a historical society, and often celebrates the knowledge and contributions of their older citizens with accolades and ceremonies. PAA supports these efforts with oral history projects to capture their recollections and advice. Anderson said that pooling efforts to include and recognize what older Americans have to offer is often best expressed in artistic ways, and ensures that heritages and cultures will be preserved and will continue to serve as the tools that will connect people through generations.
Website: http://www.polkartsalliance.org/

Tampa's Museum of Science & Industry: Constructive Engagement for a Comprehensive Approach

Comprehensive planning at the Tampa Museum of Science & Industry (MOSI) begins with dialogue engaging the audience themselves. Led by President and CEO Wit Ostrenko, MOSI uses a model of facilitation based on 'conversations about questions that matter,' called World Café. Discussions are conducted on the strategic planning and accessibility of new exhibits and the museum's role in the community. MOSI participates in an established Tampa Bay Region network of providers to extend a culture of collaboration and encourage participation in all aspects of museum planning.
Website: http://www.mosi.org/ and http://theworldcafe.com/ ◄◄

Jack L. Bowersox has focused his professional efforts on the design of environments for elderly and handicapped individuals. These efforts have included major contributions in research, legislation, public policy and education, as well as planning, programming and design.

Mr. Bowersox's role in education includes numerous presentations at regional and national conferences including a United Nations sponsored conference, and a NATO symposium on aging and technological advances. Public awareness of design for older adults has been improved by both his live and taped radio and television programs in Minnesota, Florida and Louisiana, and by his course "Designed Environments and Aging," taught at the University of Minnesota.

He has directed numerous strategic and facility master plans and programming services for many retirement communities and individual buildings. In the area of design, Mr. Bowersox is recognized as a national expert in design concepts for making environments adaptable to the elderly and handicapped individuals.

Jack Bowersox
Partner, Life Wellness Communities Development Company

Mae Carpenter has been the commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services (DSPS) in New York since its creation in 2001. Prior to that, she served as director of the Westchester County Office for the Aging for more than 25 years before it was raised to the department level. She also is the fund administrator for the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services that she founded in 1990.

Her department provides services directly or through 130 subcontractors and service agencies throughout Westchester's 43 municipalities. DSPS is the federal and state designated Area Agency on Aging of the county. The department coordinates planning, develops programs, writes grants and provides professional training and community education to 170,000 seniors throughout the county.

Mrs. Carpenter is frequently called a "visionary" because of her groundbreaking and forward-looking contributions to the aging field. This is exemplified by several national award-wining and highly recognized program initiatives including Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages— Bringing People and Places Together. This initiative is designed to enable residents to grow old in place, with dignity and independence and remain involved in community life.

Mae Carpenter
Commissioner, Westchester County, NY, Department of Senior Programs and Services

Maureen Kelly
President/CEO, West Central Florida
Area Agency on Aging

Maureen S. Kelly has been the president and CEO of the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging since 1984. This not-for-profit corporation plans, coordinates, administers and manages public funds, private grants and donations for services in a five county area that helps older adults maintain high quality of life and remain in independent home environments.

The agency works closely with seniors, their families and caregivers to access resources that meet their needs. Ms. Kelly's experience includes more than 10 years providing management oversight to a wide range of mental health programs and services as well as working in a clinical capacity. She has also worked in the corporate sector in human resource functions.

Jono Miller
Director, Environmental Studies
Program, New College of Florida,
and *Co-chair*, SCOPE's "Aging: The
Possibilities" Initiative

Jono Miller has been working as a community and regional activist for three decades and is the director of the Environmental Studies Program at New College of Florida.

Mr. Miller is best known in Sarasota County for his work on land protection, the Myakka River and other water issues. He has received awards from The Nature Conservancy, Sarasota County, 1000 Friends of Florida and the National Sierra Club for his efforts and successes in protecting the environment and is both a charter fellow of the Florida Natural Resource Leadership Institute and a graduate of Leadership Florida.

He is a board member and former chair of SCOPE (Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence), a group of citizens dedicated to community engagement. He is currently co-chair of SCOPE's recent initiative "Aging: The Possibilities."

Larry Polivka, Ph.D.
Director, Florida Policy Exchange
Center on Aging, and *Associate
Director,* University of South
Florida School of Aging Studies

Larry Polivka, Ph.D., has served as director of the Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging, School of Aging Studies at the University of South Florida, since September of 1992. Since August 2003, he has served as associate director of the USF School of Aging Studies.

Dr. Polivka worked at the State of Florida's Health and Rehabilitative Services as assistant secretary for Aging and Adult Services from August 1989 through September 1992 and as policy coordinator for Health and Human Services, Office of Planning and Budgeting, Executive Office of the Governor from 1986 through August 1989. His primary research interests are in long-term care, housing, ethics and politics of care, globalization and population aging, cultures of aging, and the arts and humanities.

Dr. Polivka teaches aging-related classes on assisted living, directed research, health care policy, humanities, and social policy and planning for gerontologists. ◄◄

Hillsborough County is a recognized leader in providing direct services to the area's older adult population. This is made evident by examining their comprehensive planning process. The excerpts below highlight the collaborative planning model that leads to the establishment of metrics to measure progress.

Excerpts from the Hillsborough County Elder Services Master Plan

Collaborative Planning

The Hillsborough County Department of Aging Services contracted with the Center for Housing and Long-Term Care at the University of South Florida to develop an Elder Services Master Plan. The Master Plan provides a framework for elected officials, executive leadership, public servants, partners, and citizens to examine all issues pertaining to older adults and to provide long-term solutions that will benefit the greater Hillsborough County community. The Master Plan will help guide:

- The planning and improvement of existing programs;
- The development of new programs; and,
- The development and expansion or change of functions, services and facilities that will serve the growing population of older adults through 2030.

Consumer and Provider Stakeholder Focus Groups

Six meetings were held in the community to get feedback regarding service needs, including help for emergencies and evacuations. Three consumer focus group meetings were conducted with Hillsborough County community residents. These consumer focus groups included current consumers, disabled adults (age 40+), caregivers (age 40+), and younger adults (age 40-59).

Three provider focus group meetings were held with providers who responded to the Hillsborough County's Needs Assessment and Master Plan Survey. The purpose of this focus group was to obtain feedback from professional stakeholders, persons and organizations currently providing services for the 40+ population in Hillsborough County, regarding client service needs.

The recommendations based on data from these four sources are synthesized throughout the Master Plan. Community goals and key indicators are suggested to assess the success of these goals. They are organized in terms of the non-Medicaid and Medicaid eligible populations.

Some of the identified needs included:
- Improve transportation at night, on weekends and for leisure activities
- Improve safety for people in motorized wheelchairs
- Educate citizens about the County's health plan
- Form a think tank of stakeholders to keep the Department of Aging Services informed
- Educate citizens and service providers on emergency preparedness
- Improve turn around time when calling Department of Aging Services

Emphasizing the Need for Collaboration—Focus Group Results

Conclusions from the focus groups were not surprising. Florida residents are concerned

about the State's ability to support the older adult population. It is important that the government recognizes and responds to this concern by taking measures to ensure the needs and expectations of current and future residents are met. Much of the commentary focused on increased communication and collaboration between the county and aging network service providers, and increased efforts on the part of the county toward education and outreach efforts. This notion, that the county begin to shift its focus toward primary prevention, is in keeping with the development of a Community for a Lifetime.

Benchmarking for Success—Goals and Outcomes

A specific set of benchmarks against which to measure progress and assess success is a key aspect of the plan. Borrowed in part from a model created in Howard County, Maryland, the benchmarks are developed against the results gleaned from the survey data.

The Benchmark categories are:
- Aging Services Department Capacity and Awareness
- Caregiver Supports
- Financial Planning and Preparedness for Retirement
- Physical and Mental Health
- Housing and Transportation Infrastructure
- Leisure, Learning and Volunteering

For example, one of the benchmarks provides a metric to measure the ability of adults, aged 40+ to contact the Department of Aging Services, and obtain information on core services that are provided, a need identified in Question #40 on the Planning for an Aging Society survey. ◄◄

Sample of Benchmarks to Measure Progress for Aging Services Capacity and Awareness

Recommendations and Strategies	Benchmarks	Rationale
Most adults age 40 and older will know how to contact the Department of Aging Services and the array of core services provided by the Department: • The Department should maintain and publicize widely and often the Elder Helpline, which is staffed by Hillsborough County Information and Referral staff, or the Department of Elder Affairs helpline, or 211. • The Department should ensure that the Helpline staff are informed about all programs available from Hillsborough County.	• Annual reports from Information and Referral will show a doubling of phone calls to Aging Services by 2015 (5% increase each year). • Planning for Aging Society question #60 will increase from 40% to 80% by 2015 and 95% by 2030.	• The 40 and older population was knowledgeable about signature programs in the Department of Aging Services, home delivered meals, adult day care, senior center, and Alzheimer's programs. • There was less knowledge of legal services, RSVP, senior meal sites, case management, respite care, Elder Helpline, and housekeeping and personal care services. • There was very little knowledge about Medicaid paid for in-home and assisted living options.

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Florida Institute for Community Studies

Patricia Vail
Council on Elder Affairs

Mary Watson
University of South Florida

Mirtha Whaley
Health Education & Aging Resources

Lindsay Wilkes
Tampa Tribune

Florida Resources

Department of Elder Affairs
http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/
http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/arc.html

Elder Justice Center
http://www.fljud13.org/ejc.htm

Hillsborough County
http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org

Hillsborough County - Aging Resources
http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/aging/programsservices/community.cfm
http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/communitylink/
http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hss/sunshine/home.cfm

Kinship Support Center
http://www.cas.usf.edu/~krisman/

Society for the Advancement of Gerontological Environments
http://www.sagefederation.org/index.htm

The University of South Florida Collaborative for Children, Families and Communities
http://usfcollab.fmhi.usf.edu/about.cfm

The Vial of Life Program
www.polksheriff.org/briefings/CrimePrev/2005/Vial_Of_Life.pdf

West Central Florida Area Agency of Aging
http://www.agingflorida.com

National Resources

Aging in Place Initiative: Developing Livable Communities for All Ages
http://www.aginginplaceinitiative.org

Atlanta Regional Commission - Aging Resources
http://www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xchg/arc/hs.xsl/8_ENU_HTML.htm

ICMA - Aging
http://www.icma.org/main/topic.asp?tpid=13&stid=29&hsid=1&t=0

Partners for Livable Communities
http://www.livable.com

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
http://www.n4a.org

National Association of Counties
http://www.naco.org

National League of Cities
http://www.nlc.org

Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services
http://www.westchestergov.com/aging

All URLs valid as of August 2007

Appendix: Notes

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, *Westchester County, New York* (2006), available at *http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36119.html*

[2] John P. Kretzmann and John L. McNight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, 1993), 64. *http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html*

[3] *Building Elder-Friendly Communities: Opportunities for Creative Grantmaking* (Grantmakers in Aging, 2000), 3. *http://www.giaging.org/downloads/programs/GIA%20Conf%202000%20Summary. pdf*

[4] *Community Empowerment Manual: Accomplishing A Place-based People Strategy for Community Revitalization* (Partners for Livable Communities, Washington, D.C., 1990).

[5] *Hillsborough County Public Works Department Report*, presented to the Board of County Commissioners (December 6, 2006).

[6] Deborah Howe, *Aging and Smart Growth: Building Aging-Sensitive Communities* (The Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, 2001), 6–7. *http://www.fundersnetwork.org/info-url_nocat2778/info-url_nocat_show.htm?doc_ id=98175*

About the The Aging in Place Initiative

Aging in Place is an initiative of Partners for Livable Communities (Partners) and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), supported by the MetLife Foundation. It was developed to help America's communities prepare for the aging of their populations and to become places that are good to grow up, live in and grow old.
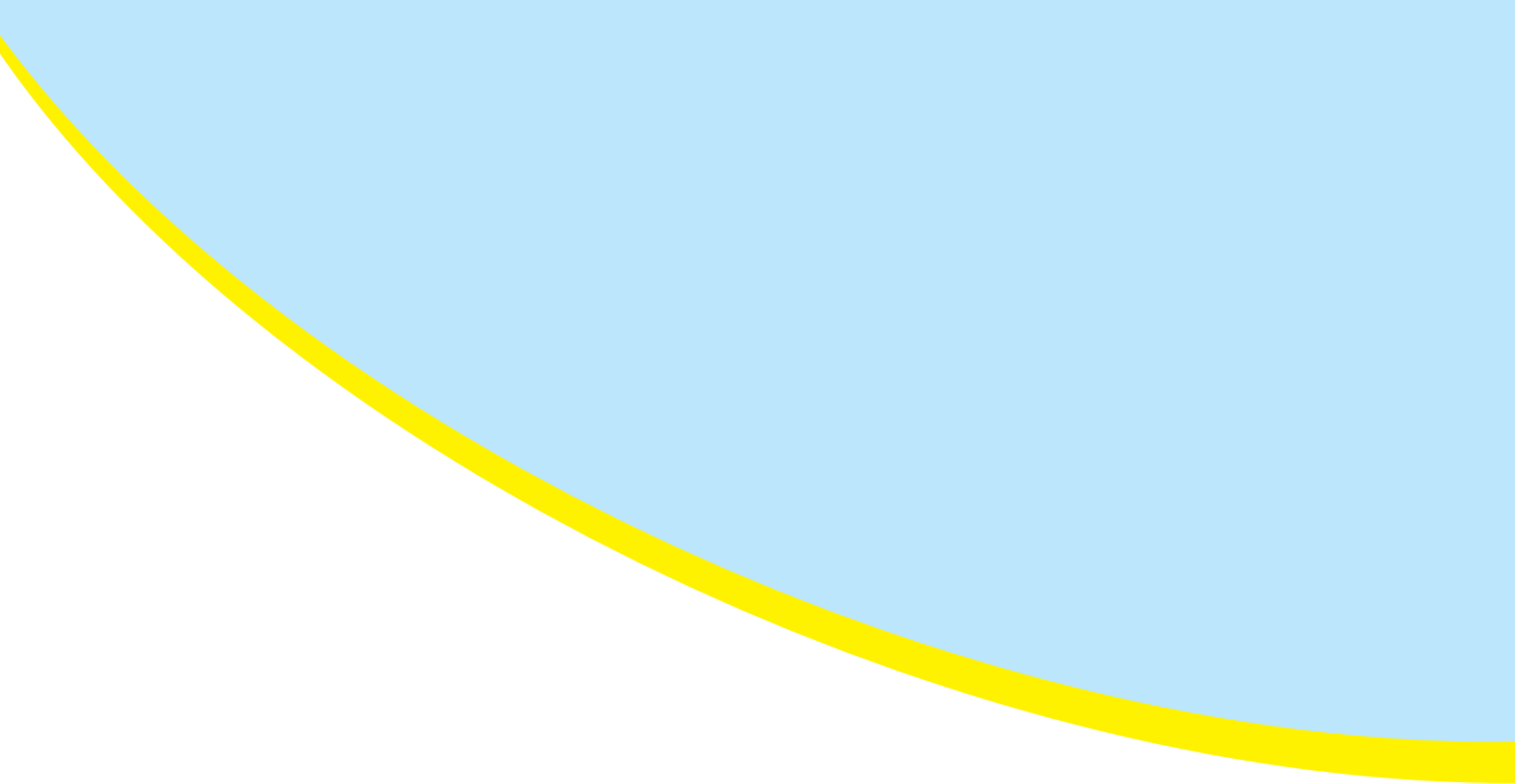
For the past three years, Partners and n4a have worked directly with nine laboratory communities to assist them in advancing policies, programs and services to promote Aging in Place. What we have learned from these efforts is that many community leaders are taking positive steps toward a livable community with no age boundaries, but other communities are unsure where to begin.

In 2006, Partners and n4a collaborated with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the National League of Cities (NLC) and the National Association of Counties (NACo), with support from MetLife Foundation, to conduct a survey of the nation's cities and counties to determine how they were addressing the needs of their aging populations. The report from this survey, *The Maturing of America: Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population*, found that less than half of American communities have begun planning to address the needs of the exploding population of aging baby boomers.

To help those communities that have begun the journey and those yet to take the first step, Partners and n4a joined again with ICMA, NLC and NACo and with additional support from MetLife Foundation to produce a comprehensive toolkit, *A Blueprint for Action: Developing Livable Communities for All Ages*. We hope the Blueprint will be used to facilitate community-wide discussion, assessment and action to ensure that America's cities and counties take advantage of the changing demographics to become livable for all ages. The *Blueprint*, *Maturing of America* and other useful resources can be downloaded at www.aginginplaceiniative.org.

For the next phase of the Aging in Place Initiative, Partners, n4a and MetLife are taking the *Blueprint* on the road to six regions across the U.S. Each of these regions will host an Aging in Place workshop which will focus on a particular theme.

Making a community ageless often requires the collaboration of numerous players from the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The workshops are leaving participants with a better understanding of how Aging in Place can be incorporated into all aspects of community life. We hope that individuals and organizations will continue to come together and form new partnerships that can serve as national models for Aging in Place.

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