MULTIGENERATIONAL PLANNING

Using smart growth and universal design to link the needs of children and the aging population

Kimberley Hodgson

FAMILY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES BRIEFING PAPERS 02

The United States is undergoing a critical demographic transition: The population is aging. By 2040, the proportion of people over the age of 65 will top 20 percent, and people under the age of 18 will make up almost 23 percent of the population. As a result, the oldest and the youngest populations combined will make up almost half of all U.S. residents. This trend is also a global one, directly affecting planning practice worldwide (WHO 2007). As planners work to plan and design sustainable and livable communities they will need to simultaneously consider the needs of these similar, yet different, populations in future plans, policies, and projects.

KEYPOINT #1:

Multigenerational planning creates new coalition-building opportunities.

KEYPOINT #2:

Civic participation and engagement is fundamental in multigenerational planning.

KEYPOINT #3:

Multigenerational planning uses smart growth principles.

KEYPOINT #4:

Multigenerational planning applies universal design principles.

APA

American Planning Association

Making Great Communities Happen

Prepared by the American Planning Association, as part of a collaborative project with Cornell University Linking Economic Development and Child Care Project, with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Peppercorn Foundation.

Much of the literature discussing sustainability, smart growth, and the creation of livable communities focuses on a single age group, such as the aging population, families with children, or young professionals. Multigenerational planning is a holistic approach that takes into consideration the needs of all age groups throughout all stages of planning (from needs assessment to visioning, plan making, design, implementation, and evaluation) and how government policies, zoning, and building codes can be changed to ensure generational equality and access. Multigenerational planning:

- strives to make cities and neighborhoods accessible, safe, and inclusive for children, youth, families, adults, and the elderly;
- allows people to age in place, be it in their homes or neighborhoods;
- promotes civic participation by both the older and younger generations; and
- tackles the common and specific concerns of each age group.

This briefing paper begins with an exploration of a variety of planning issues and principles related to multigenerational planning, including an overview of key demographic changes in U.S. household composition; common needs, interests, and concerns of these different yet similar populations; and the role of planners in addressing these needs and concerns. It concludes with four major key points for planners to consider when addressing the needs of multiple generations in the planning and development of healthy, sustainable communities.

Specifically, this brief explains how multigenerational planning creates new coalition-building opportunities; why civic participation and engagement is essential for all age groups; and why an understanding of the needs of multiple generations is essential to smart growth and sustainable design and development.

Multigenerational Households Are Back!

According to a report by the Pew Research Center on social and demographic trends, more generations are living together in the same household than before (Pew Research Center 2010). Figure 1 shows the percentage of the U.S. population living in multigenerational households from 1940 to 2008. Since World War II the percentage of multigenerational households fell from about 25 percent in 1940 to 12 percent in 1980.

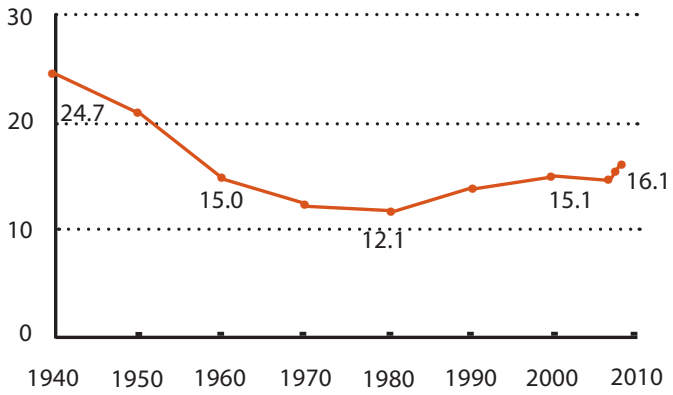

Figure 1. *Share of U.S. population living in multigenerational family households, 1940–2008*

Pew Research Center analysis of the U.S. Decennial Census data, 1940–2000, and 2006, 2007, and 2008 American Community Surveys, based on IPUMS samplers.

The decline can be attributed to "the rapid growth of the nuclear-family-centered suburbs; the decline in the share of immigrants in the population; and the sharp rise in the health and economic well-being of adults ages 65 and older" (Pew Research Center 2010).

However, since 1980, the trend began to reverse in favor of extended family housing, growing constantly until reaching 16.1 percent in 2008. The report attributes this shift to various social and economic factors. The rise in the median age of marriage and increases in the cost of living cause more people to live with their parents for a longer period of time.

Another factor contributing to the shift back to multigenerational households is the wave of immigrants to the United States since 1970, especially of Latin and Asian origins. In these cultures, it is common to live in a multigenerational family household, with children, youth, parents, and grandparents living under the same roof.

The recent economic recession and the associated increase in unemployment and housing foreclosures have also contributed to the increase in multigenerational family households. In 2008, 2.6 million more Americans lived in a multigenerational family household than in 2007 (Pew Research Center 2010).

These major demographic changes require planners to reexamine their planning approaches and draft plans and visions in a manner that responds to the various needs of each generation. Designing livable and inclusive communities for all age groups should be a priority in community planning, design, and development.

The Aging Population

The population of aging baby boomers is expected to double in size by 2030 (Administration on Aging 2008). This age group is predominantly white (80.4 percent in 2008), and enjoys more health and prosperity than previous generations due to the increase in labor force participation beyond the age of 55 over the past two decades, especially among women (Administration on Aging 2008). However, disparities still exist between the older white and black populations because of lower educational attainment and fewer financial resources.

The senior population is the one most likely to live in multigenerational housing. Currently, 27.4 percent of adults age 65 and over are living alone, while 20 percent live in multigenerational households (Pew Research Center 2010).

This older generation is also the group that prefers to age in place, is less likely to relocate, and represents the majority of home owners. From 2007 to 2008, only 3.7 percent of older persons moved, as opposed to 13.1 percent of people under the age 65 (Administration on Aging 2009).

Aging is associated with various health problems and limited physical ability. In 2009, 42 percent of people aged 65 and older reported some form of functional limitation preventing them from performing their daily living activities (Administration on Aging 2008). Unfortunately, the current built environment and housing conditions disregard the physical limitations seniors face, rendering their living experience less enjoyable and many instances, quite hazardous. Housing that is not properly designed can actually cause preventable disabilities and unnecessarily force seniors to live at lower levels of functioning and independence.

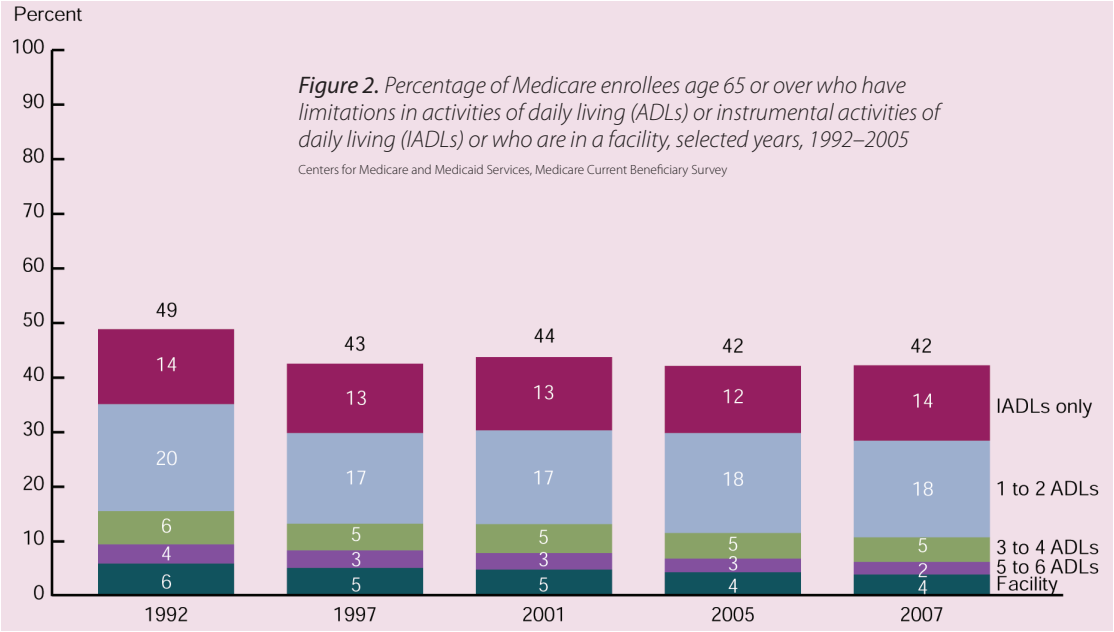

Figure 2. *Percentage of Medicare enrollees age 65 or over who have limitations in activities of daily living (ADLs) or instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) or who are in a facility, selected years, 1992–2005*

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey

NOTE: A residence is considered a long-term care facility if it is certified by Medicare or Medicaid; has 3 or more beds and is licensed as a nursing home or other long-term care facility and provides at least one personal care service; or provides 24-hour, 7-day-a-week supervision by a caregiver. ADL limitations refer to difficulty performing (or inability to perform for a health reason) one or more of the following tasks: bathing, dressing, eating, getting in/out of chairs, walking, or using the toilet. IADL limitations refer to difficulty performing (or inability to perform for a health reason) one or more of the following tasks: using the telephone, light housework, heavy housework, meal preparation, shopping, or managing money. Rates are age adjusted using the 2000 standard population. Data for 1992, 2001, and 2007 do not sum to the totals because of rounding.

Reference population: These data refer to Medicare enrollees.

Families with Children and Youth

While the aging population is predominantly white, families with children and youth represent a wide variety of ethnicities and cultures. Overall, the Asian and Hispanic populations are the two fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States, reaching 4.5 percent and 15.4 percent respectively in 2008 (U.S. Census 2008).These groups are also fairly young; the median age among the minority populations is 36.6 years, lower than the median age of the total population, while the white population median age (40.8 years) is higher than the national average (U.S. Census 2008).

As for families with children under 18 years of age, statistics reveal that they constitute one-third of the total population (U.S. Census 2008). Looking at the living arrangements of children across the United States reveals that 85 percent of Asian children lived with both their parents, as opposed to 78 percent of white non-Hispanic children, 70 percent of Hispanic children, and 38 percent of black children (U.S. Census 2008).

The majority of children under 18 years of age in the United States is also predominantly white (56 percent). In comparison, 15 percent of children were black; four percent were Asian; and five percent were "all other races" (U.S. Census 2008). Intriguingly, the percentage of Hispanic children increased faster than that of any other racial or ethnic group in the last three decades, growing from nine percent in 1980 to 22 percent in 2008 (Childstats.gov 2008).

The racial and cultural background of families living in the United States greatly influences their tendency to live in multigenerational households. A racial comparison shows that in 2008, 22 percent of Hispanics, 23 percent of blacks, and 25 percent of Asians lived in multigenerational households, compared to only 13 percent of the white population (Pew Research Center 2010).

Looking at the economic status of families reveals that married couple families have the highest income and home ownership rate of all households, 82.8 percent (U.S. Census 2008). This coincides with the fact that these families have more adult earners than other households. However, the recession of 2007 had negative impacts on U.S. families. The percentage of married couples with children under 18, where both parents are employed, dropped from 63 percent to 59 percent between 2007 and 2009 (U.S. Census 2010).

The racial breakdown shows that Hispanic families of married couples with children under 18, where both parents were employed, were hit the hardest by the recession. Hispanic families faced a seven percent increase in unemployment between 2007 and 2009. In comparison, black families witnessed a five percent increase in unemployment, followed by white, non-Hispanic families with a three percent decrease, and Asian families with a two percent decrease (U.S. Census 2010).

The Young Adult Population

Young adults aged 18 to 34 constitute one-fourth of the total population (Rumbaut and Komaie 2007). Looking at the racial composition of young adults in the United States reveals that in 2005, 61 percent were white, 18.2 percent were Hispanic, 12.9 were black, and 4.9 were Asian (Rumbaut and Komaie 2007).

While seniors and families with children are more likely to settle and own a home, young adults, including young professionals, are much more mobile. Many in this age cohort leave their homes for educational attainment or in search of new career opportunities. As a result, this age group is less likely to own a home, and resorts to temporary or shared housing arrangements like renting or living with classmates, friends, or family members.

The recession and its impacts on employment and the ability of young adults to become financially independent caused many of them to delay their plans for independent household formation. This caused a decrease in the number of adults living alone and increased the percentage of young people living in multigenerational settings (Pew Research Center 2010). While more young adults where living alone in 1980 than the age group between 30 to 49 years (7.5 versus 6.5 percent), currently "the opposite is true, with those ages 30 to 49 more likely to be living alone than younger adults (9.5 percent versus 7.3 percent)" (Pew Research Center 2009).

Common Needs, Interests, and Concerns

Older citizens, families with young children, and the young adult population share many common needs, interests, and concerns. The key community components that the elderly need to successfully age in place are the same as those needed by the young adults and the families with children: safe, walkable neighborhoods, a complete range of services nearby (child care, senior centers, parks, food stores, health care, etc.), an opportunity for civic engagement, affordable and mixed use housing, and adequate transportation options (Lynott et al. 2009). In addition, cultural diversity and recreational activities, proximity to theaters and cafes, tolerance of diversity, and proliferation of employment opportunities is what attracts young professionals, many of whom have families, to the cities and contribute to its prosperity (Florida 2008).

Failure to fulfill the needs of all generations living within the cities or suburbs results in damaging consequences to all population groups. For example, when examining obesity among seniors and youth, nearly eight out of 10 men and seven out of 10 women over 60 are overweight and about one-third of seniors are considered obese (Flegal et al. 2010). On the other hand, one-third of all U.S. children and adolescents, more than 23 million people, are either overweight or obese (Leadership for Healthy Communities 2008). Since the late 1970s, the rate of obesity has more than doubled for children aged two to five years to 10.4 percent. For those aged six to 11, the rate of obesity tripled to 19.6 percent, and for teenagers obesity jumped from five percent to more than 18 percent (Centers for Disease Control 2010).

Obesity among low-income and minority children is even higher than that of the national rate (31.9), reaching 38 percent among Latino children, 34.9 percent among African American children and 39 percent among Native American youth aged 12 to 19 (Leadership for Health Communities 2010). Reinforcing the escalating obesity rate is the lack of access and proximity to healthy food choices. A study of more than 200 neighborhoods found that there are three times more supermarkets in wealthy areas than in poor areas (Leadership for Healthy Communities 2010). These are all indicators of the need to rectify the built environment in a manner that allows for frequent physical activity and provides access to quality food in the local neighborhood.

Another unmet need for all age groups is adequate and affordable housing. The housing accommodation and conditions prove problematic for all age groups. Statistics show that 43 percent of households with children had one or more of three housing problems: physical inadequacy, crowding, or a cost burden exceeding 30 percent of their income in 2007 (*America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being* 2009). Similarly, 41 percent of people above 65 also reported the same housing-related problems (Administration on Aging 2008). Among young people, affordability is also a major obstacle when it comes to relocating away from their parents' home (Pew Research Center 2010).

Many families move to the suburbs to fulfill the need for larger housing and quality education since cities are often focused primarily on the needs of young professionals—Richard Florida's (2002) famous "creative class"—and often do not take into account the needs of families with young children. However, the suburbs may be losing some of their appeal for families and adults. Both groups are currently enduring longer hours in traffic, and their children are spending more time in cars and buses commuting to school or extracurricular activities. The desire for walkability, diversity, density, and vibrancy is drawing some families back to the city and increasing the demand for transit-oriented development, smart growth solutions, and affordable housing choices for all groups in both suburbs and cities.

Independent mobility is another concern, particularly among adults and children. Among the 42 percent of adults reporting functional limitations prohibiting them from performing their daily activities (Administration on Aging 2008), many are isolated in their suburban neighborhoods depending on caregivers for mobility and assistance. Reliance on cars to run errands and reach service amenities puts a burden on parents and caregivers of children and seniors, who have to be available to drive them. The inability to reach services and facilities also deprives seniors and children of their independence and incurs unnecessary costs, time, and effort that can be easily avoided in compact development, where such facilities are reachable by foot or by affordable and efficient public transit.

Affordable and efficient transit choices are also a concern for young professionals who cannot afford a car and opt to relocate closer to their jobs. Similarly, seniors and families with children may relocate closer to jobs, schools, and other amenities when the public transit options are either too expensive or inefficient or both.

Safety is another multigenerational concern that greatly impacts location choice. While many families look for communities where children can play and learn in a safe and culturally diverse environment, seniors also consider safety a major component in their housing design and neighborhood setting. Many adults with limited mobility struggle to navigate their space due to the poor design of their homes and neighborhoods. Others face the risk of accidents while driving due to their weakening vision. In 2008, older individuals accounted for eight percent of all the people injured in traffic crashes and amounted to 15 percent of all traffic fatalities, 14 percent of all vehicle occupant fatalities, and 18 percent of all pedestrian fatalities (*Traffic Safety Facts* 2008).

Much like the older generation, children are at high risk as pedestrians. In 2008, one-fifth of the total fatalities in the 14 and younger age group were pedestrians. (*Traffic Safety Facts* 2008). In addition to pedestrian safety, neighborhood safety is also a concern among families with children, especially for low-income and minority groups. More minority parents reported fear of crime and lack of safe environments as a barrier to their children's physical activity than white parents (Leadership for Healthy Communities 2010).

What Can Planners Do to Meet Multigenerational Needs?

Planners need to focus their efforts on the design and provision of services for all populations. No generation can be left out. The recruitment of young families, children, and young adults, including immigrants, is necessary for long-term community sustainability as well as the fiscal health of the nation. This will require cross-generational collaboration, comprehensive thinking on the part of planners, and openness to immigrants on the part of citizens.

According to a 2008 survey by Cornell University and the American Planning Association, nine out of 10 planners understand that communities populated by people of every age bracket are more vibrant and about two-thirds recognize the connection between the needs of seniors and those of families with young children. The problem, the survey found, is translating this understanding of multigenerational communities into action on the ground (Israel and Warner 2008).

Planners must take up the charge of creating programs and policies to foster friendly communities for all generations and ethnicities. Weathering the demographic changes ahead requires people to think deliberately about working multigenerationally when developing plans and policies. Multigenerational needs and concerns should be an integral part in the visioning, design, coalition-building, implementation, and evaluation process.

This brief will elaborate four key points to move in that direction. First, the demographic transition requires new collaboration across the generations. Second, civic participation enhances political support and promotes community building. Third, using smart growth principles in multigenerational planning helps all community members remain active, connected, and safe. Fourth, raising awareness of universal design principles will accommodate the needs of all community members, not just seniors or people with disabilities.

KEYPOINT #1:

Multigenerational planning creates new coalition building opportunities.

Older people, young adults, and families share many important priorities and issues within a community—physically, socially, and culturally. For example, a safe, well-maintained sidewalk benefits seniors desiring exercise or who no longer drive. At the same time it helps a young mother pushing a stroller or a child learning to ride a bicycle.

One problem within communities is that different population groups do not always recognize their reliance on one another. A Cornell University/APA survey of planners found that the biggest barrier to the creation of a family-friendly community is NIMBYism (Israel and Warner 2008). With each age segment defending its perceived narrow position, there are many missed opportunities and wasted resources.

Older citizens in particular, with their increased level of involvement in community affairs and politics, are well positioned to build connections and support younger families upon which they ultimately rely. Unfortunately, most programs for the elderly have been built on the notion of age segregation—in services, housing, and even transportation. Yet recent research by AARP has shown that most aging Americans do not want to live in communities separate from younger people. A 2000 survey of adults older than 55 found that 89 percent would like to stay in their current residence as long as possible (Bayer and Harper 2000).

Just as importantly, demographic analysis shows that more households will host three generations of a family. In 2000, the U.S. Census found 5.8 million grandparents living in the same home as their grandchildren, with 2.4 million of those seniors acting as the heads of the households. Most of those seniors were responsible for their grandchildren for five years or more. The trend is particularly strong amongst Latino households, which make up an increasing part of the population (Simmons and Dye 2003).

One example of involving seniors as caregivers in multigenerational planning is colocating child care and elder care. In Ithaca, New York, a local Head Start program is permanently housed at a retirement community. Each week, the seniors work with preschoolers on a variety of activities such as reading, singing, and crafts. The intergenerational program (which includes bowling and a choir with college students) allows older people to participate in the mentorship of younger community members. Studies of such structured interaction between young children and the elderly show children become more helpful, empathize with older people, and develop better self-control as a result (Femia et al. 2008).

Aging in place requires programs that break down age-segregated barriers. Huntington Beach, California, developed a comprehensive plan to transform a 23-acre site originally intended for single-family homes into a multigenerational neighborhood with affordable homes to fit different lifestyles and stages. The Gen M 2345 team, which stands for the multiple (two, three, four, or five) generations that might live together, designed a neighborhood with a mix of town houses and carriage houses that could accommodate home-based businesses and young families, downsizing baby boomers, their aging parents, and their boomerang adult children. The program won the Gold Nugget Award for architectural design excellence in 2009 (www.martin-associates.net).

A related effort is occurring on a former Air Force base in central Illinois, where seniors live in close community with families of at-risk adopted children. The seniors build close relationships with the young families, and that support allows the seniors to age in place and helps the families with broader community support for the children. Because the existing housing does not meet minimum levels of accessibility, a new building is under way to enable all the seniors to remain in the community as they age. The creators of Hope Meadows are working with 12 sites around the country to duplicate their success (Eheart et al. 2009).

Another example of a multigenerational strategy is found in Denver, where young professionals want to age in place as they have children. Kiddo (Kids in Downtown Denver Organized) is a group that aims improve livability for families in downtown. Their goals include creating intergenerational programs, advocating for more play areas and services for children downtown, and developing education programs for home owners associations, neighborhoods, and civic leaders to bring together the generations for a common development agenda.

Planners need to craft a common vision that recognizes the interdependence of the generations. Particularly in the preparation of comprehensive and neighborhood plans, planners can use public meetings and planning documents to draw attention to the connections and help seniors understand that their political power can help shape communities more supportive of children and young parents—and that, in turn, will help them build a quality and comfortable community where they can age in place.

KEYPOINT #2:

Civic participation and engagement Is fundamental in multigenerational planning.

Planners know the importance of citizen involvement to a healthy community—especially when the community receives input from different generations. Longtime residents have the history of place that can help ground a particular planning project. At the same time, newcomers can provide fresh perspectives.

Children and youth have their own kind of wisdom, and studies have shown a work ethic to back it up. Youth involved in planning projects take active roles in gathering data, surveying neighborhoods, and relaying their findings. And they seek to tackle a broad range of community challenges, not just those focused on young people (Frank 2006). However, it is important to bring the generations together and not just meet with seniors at the senior center and children and youth in the school.

Remaining active civically helps seniors live longer, healthier, and happier lives. Research shows a positive association between engaging in civic activities and better health in later life (Hinterlong, Morrow-Howell, and Rozario 2007). Participation provides the opportunity to give back to the community. The younger end of the spectrum benefits as well. A public planning process fosters local knowledge and environmental responsibility in children and promotes personal development and citizenship (Frank 2006).

A "Futures Festival" workshop format can increase public participation. The process engages youths and older adults together through murals, models, photographs, theatrical displays, and other communications media. The strategy brought young and old together in Kaneohe, Hawaii, to work out conflicting visions for a local park. By the session's end, the participants modeled a "Park for All Ages" that included areas for skateboarding, shuffleboard, picnic areas, and a Braille trail (Kaplan 2001).

As part of the 2020 Community Plan on Aging in the Charlottesville, Virginia, area, planners decided to be intentionally age inclusive. High school students were recruited as members of the planning committee. They acted as ambassadors to other young people through focus groups and student surveys. In the end, the students wrote a chapter of the plan titled "Strengthening Intergenerational Connections" with recommendations that included: recruiting students as health care workers; encouraging alternative transportation options; promoting intergenerational volunteering to bring together seniors and youth in meaningful service; and educating youth on the need for lifelong financial planning. One outcome of this intergenerational planning was a program that recruited more than 20 seniors to volunteer in seven elementary schools to help tutor reading, math, and languages as well as provide library and landscaping assistance.

KEYPOINT #3:

Multigenerational planning uses smart growth principles.

It is important to recognize that general policies have benefits across different age groups. For example, the 2002 APA *Policy Guide on Smart Growth* supports "compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development patterns" along with transportation choice and human-scale mixed use centers. These smart growth strategies benefit older persons with limited mobility as well as children, young adults, and families. In addition, many programs and smart growth policies targeted at older persons or children have multigenerational benefits.

Communities built to address the needs of older persons and families are communities that can serve all residents well. Livable communities have physical and social features that benefit people of all ages. When a wide range of needs is addressed, families and individuals have the option to stay and thrive in their communities as they age. But planners must make the connections between young and old before starting to plan for them. Multigenerational planning uses smart growth principles to create livable communities where members of all age groups remain active, connected, and safe (EPA 2009).

First, staying active through creating walkable and dense development patterns is a positive feature of smart growth development. Positioning schools, grocery stores, libraries, recreational amenities, and playgrounds within walking distance when designing or redesigning neighborhoods can help achieve the physical activity needs required to remain healthy and combat obesity. Biking and walking lanes, safe and well-designed parks, open space and recreational systems, and pedestrian access are all components of smart growth principles that promote physical health for all community members.

AARP implemented two pilot programs in Richmond, Virginia, and Madison, Wisconsin, to increase activity by improving the physical environment, and conducted a social marketing campaign that looked at places where both students and seniors walk. The program raised awareness of the environmental barriers to walking and biking; conducted audits of 150 city blocks in Richmond and 30 residential streets in Madison; and crafted a plan of changes to policies and environments in each city. Under the leadership of AARP, in the spring of 2010, volunteers conducted walkability audits at thousands of sites across the nation. The resulting information was shared with local officials, who in many cases promptly enacted safety-related changes such as extending crossing times.

The organizers intentionally targeted programs and places that would help both seniors and school kids. In Richmond an intergenerational "Walk to School" event encouraged relatives over 50 years old to walk children to school. The school district changed its policy to allow students to document their walking routes to school for future organized events. Many sidewalks, crosswalks, and intersections were repaired around town, especially near the schools and senior housing (Emery, Crump, and Hawkins 2007).

Second, staying connected through a range of transportation and mobility options helps reduce dependency on caregivers for both adults and children. Increased connectivity also helps overcome the financial burden of rising gas costs and is beneficial to health and the environment. Smart growth planning benefits all generations by allowing them access to a complete range of goods, services, and public facilities.

Achieving connectivity through affordable transit options provides physical and economic access to amenities specific to each age group or shared by both, including workplaces, schools, retail shops, restaurants, grocery stores, child care facilities, senior centers, health care and services, museums, libraries, community centers, community gardens, etc. Smart growth principles also encourage sharing mobility means, hence reducing the ecological footprint.

In New York City, the city school department teamed with the Department of Aging to shuttle older New Yorkers from senior centers around the city to museums, parks, supermarkets and other public places in school buses when they were not being used for children. For seniors, the trips are free. The multigenerational bus strategy took planning and coordination between two New York City bureaucracies. It also took vision to realize that the two departments with distinct missions and target populations had a shared problem. By tackling that problem together, they also found a way to make more efficient use of a large investment. Such a strategy would be even more valuable in many suburban and rural places where public transit services are poor. Rural Chenango County, New York, combined funds and services for disabled and elderly paratransit, Medicaid transit, and Meals on Wheels programs to form the core of a broader public transit system for users of all ages (Ray 1993).

Furthermore, increasing connectivity can take place through encouraging new development on vast, rarely used grayfields of asphalt along commercial corridors adjacent to residential development. Rebuilding traditional mixed use downtown neighborhoods offers housing options for an array of age groups and helps reconnect existing communities to their commercial corridors by increasing the density of development along them (EPA 2009).

Finally, following smart growth principles helps increase safety among adults and children by establishing the "eyes on the street" offered by dense development. Housing with windows on the street helps create a sense of constant neighborhood surveillance, which discourages criminal behavior. In this situation, seniors can be involved as guardians of children playing in the park or walking home from school.

Another smart growth strategy that allows safe and equal mobility for all users is the concept of "complete streets." By using traffic-calming solutions, curb extensions, median crosswalks, and wider sidewalks, complete streets increase pedestrian safety and reduce runoff. Such strategies can be implemented in new and existing development projects to increase mobility and access to goods and services. (EPA 2009).

Another product of smart growth and dense development patterns is an increased sense of safety through companionship. Multigenerational housing choices, like accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and co-housing arrangements, help seniors and young adults with physical or financial limitations. Accessory dwelling units are small, self-contained spaces within a house or on its lot. They keep both ends of the extended family together by allowing grandparents or returning adult children to have their private spaces. On the other hand, co-housing arrangements allow each resident to have a private space while sharing the common areas and services. This arrangement can follow the "Golden Girls" model (from the television show of the same name) of similar age groups, or different age groups can share the home. ADUs can also be rented to earn extra income and enhance financial security for families or seniors. Moreover, such housing arrangements grant both seniors and families peace of mind knowing they have someone available to help with child care or elder care or in case of emergency.

Unfortunately, zoning does not allow accessory apartments in many neighborhoods. Many communities fear that allowing such accessory units would overwhelm single-family neighborhoods, but that may not be the case. Seattle saw only 101 accessory unit additions throughout the entire city over a three-and-a-half-year span after a zoning change allowed people of any age to add apartments. (It is believed that many of those units existed earlier, but this made them legal.) Many of the home owners who added the apartments were middle-aged, yet their tenants tended to be from older and younger generations, broadening the age diversity in a community. In one study, 35 percent of respondents reported exchanging some kind of assistance between the main and accessory households. When seniors lived in the accessory apartment, the amount of help that flowed between the households increased dramatically (Chapman and Howe 2001).

KEYPOINT #4:

Multigenerational planning applies universal design principles.

Physical barriers to mobility exist inside many homes and neighborhoods. Universal design (UD) standards improve the livability of homes and neighborhoods, *not only for the elderly and the disabled, but for every member of the community.* The guiding philosophy of UD is to design spaces with the transformative ability to meet the changing needs of its users and allow them to navigate space freely and without barriers. This helps enrich the living experience by maintaining independence and safety of users throughout all life stages, from youth to old age.

Universal design promotes accessibility, safety, flexibility, functionality, simplicity, and comfort without compromising the aesthetics of space. One of the key concepts of UD is visitability, meaning that all housing meets minimum levels of accessibility to enable persons with disabilities to visit and navigate other people's houses freely and without barriers. The basic requirements for visitability include zero-step entries, wide doorways, and at least a half-bath on the first floor. An additional benefit is that these design features make homes more livable for both residents and visitors, as well as persons with perceived disabilities, at little or no extra cost.

Universal design requires the cooperation of planners, architects, and designers, and not only addresses internal design and functionality but also helps tackle issues of exterior access to buildings and spaces, landscaping, and maintenance.

Disability access to public buildings and projects has been incorporated within zoning codes to include such requirements as the number of parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities and the availability of ramps or elevators. Accessibility in public buildings is mandated under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a civil rights law. Currently, in most of the nation, visitability principles are optional. They could be expanded to neighborhood design and all housing types. Neighborhoods with (zero-step) housing solutions, proper street signs, reduced speed limits, proper sidewalks, and sufficient lighting are crucial and beneficial to people with disabilities across all ages, as well as seniors and families with children.

Promoting visitability principles through density development and accessibility bonuses helps encourage developers to incorporate them in their housing and neighborhood design schemes. Arvada, Colorado, uses impact fees for accessibility to force developers to abide by universal design and visitability principles. The city developed a fee-in-lieu of visitability; the developer must pay $2,500 if the built home does not incorporate visitability standards and $10,000 if the model home is not visitable. The funds are used to provide financial assistance to people seeking assistance in making existing housing stock visitable. Under ADA, both model homes and rental offices must be fully accessible, not simply visitable.

Before attempting to amend those codes to include visitability principles, housing accessiblility for all generations—regardless of disability status—needs to become an integral part of the community's comprehensive plan. Amendments in the requirements of the zoning ordinance can be made according to the multigenerational objectives and considerations of the comprehensive plan.

Conclusion

The new pressures of an aging society require that we recognize the shared economic and community issues faced by different generations and across different ethnicities. In this brief, we have discussed ways that such a mindset has started to germinate. Planners can take the lead in building new conversations, new coalitions, and new shared strategies that link the generations and build more sustainable communities.

Planners must be at the forefront in educating residents about the benefits of multigenerational planning. Comprehensive planning must be expanded to encompass multiple generations and identify those issues that can bring the interests of the generations together. Strategies that emphasize the design of safe, walkable communities, the convenient location (and co-location) of adequate and quality child care and senior services, and universal design in building codes are important steps. However, real progress will come when the attitudes of planners, political leaders, and the general public shift to the realization that communities are more sustainable if generations work together.

This briefing paper was written by Rana Abu Ghazaleh, APA's Planning and Community Health Research Center intern; Esther Greenhouse, environmental gerontologist; George Homsy, AICP, PhD planning student at Cornell University; and Mildred Warner, professor of planning and director of the Linking Economic Development and Child Care Project at Cornell University.

TOOLKIT

- 2020 Community Plan on Aging: www.jabacares.org/page/full/2020-plan.
- APA *Policy Guide on Housing:* www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/housing.htm.
- APA *Policy Guide on Smart Growth:* www.planning.org/conference/previous/2009/coverage/worldkeynote.htm.
- Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University: www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about_ud/about_ud.htm.
- Generations United: www.gu.org.
- Hope Meadows intergenerational neighborhood: www.generationsofhope.org.
- Intergenerational Programs and Aging, Penn State Agriculture and Extension Education: www.intergenerational.cas.psu.edu.
- Kiddo, Kids in Downtown Denver Organized, has a Facebook page at: http://zh-hk.facebook.com/pages/Kids-in-Downtown-Denver Organized/362320531736.
- Linking Economic Development and Child Care Project at Cornell University: http://economicdevelopmentandchildcare.org.
- National Complete Streets Coalition: www.completestreets.org.

REFERENCES

Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2009. *A Profile of Older Americans*. Available at www.mowaa.org/Document.Doc?id=69.

Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2009. *A Profile of Older Americans*. Available at www.mowaa.org/Document.Doc?id=203.

Bayer, Ada-Helen, and Leon Harper. 2000. *Fixing to Stay: A National Survey of Housing and Home Modification Issues.* Washington, D.C.: AARP Independent Living Program. Available at http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/home_mod.pdf.

Building Health Communities for Active Aging Awards: www.epa.gov/aging/bhc/awards/2009/ActiveAging2009.pdf.

Centers for Disease Control. 2010. "Childhood Overweight and Obesity." *Obesity and Overweight for Professionals: Childhood* | DNPAO | CDC. Available at www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/index.html.

Chapman, Nancy J., and Deborah A. Howe. 2001. "Accessory Apartments: Are They a Realistic Alternative for Aging in Place?" *Housing Studies* 16(5): 637–50.

Eheart, Brenda K., et al. 2009. "Generations of Hope Communities." *Children and Youth Services Review* 31(1): 47–52.

Emery, J., C. Crump, and M. Hawkins. 2007. "Formative Evaluation of AARP's Active for Life Campaign to Improve Walking and Bicycling Environments in Two Cities." *Health Promotion Practice* 8(4): 403–14.

Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics. 2008. *Older Americans 2008: Key Indicators of Well Being.* Available at www.agingstats.gov/Main_Site/Data/2008_Documents/OA_2008
.pdf.

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2009*. Available at www.childstats.gov/pdf/ac2009/ac_09.pdf.

Femia, Elia E. et al. 2008. "Intergenerational preschool experiences and the young child: Potential benefits to development." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 23(2): 272–87.

Flegal, Katherine M., et al. 2010. "Prevalence and Trends in Obesity Among US Adults, 1999–2008." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 303(3): 235–41. http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/2009.2014.

Florida, Richard. 2002. *Rise of the Creative Class.* New York: Basic Books.

Florida, Richard. 2008. *Who's Your City?: How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life*. New York: Basic Books.

Frank, Kathryn I. 2006. "The Potential of Youth Participation in Planning." *Journal of Planning Literature* 20(4): 351–71.

Hinterlong, James E., Nancy Morrow-Howell, and Philip A. Rozario. 2007. "Productive Engagement and Late Life Physical and Mental Health: Findings from a Nationally Representative Panel Study." *Research on Aging* 29(4): 348–70.

Israel, Evelyn, and Mildred Warner. 2008. "Planning for Family Friendly Communities." *PAS Memo*. American Planning Association. Available at www.planning .org/pas/memo/open/nov2008/index.htm.

Kaplan, Matt. 2001. "The FUTURES FESTIVAL: An Intergenerational approach to community participation." University Park, Pa.: Penn State College of Agricultural Services–Cooperative Extension.

Leadership for Healthy Communities. Fact sheets. 2010. Available at www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/component/option,com_advancedtags/view,tag/id,33/Itemid,89.

Leadership for Healthy Communities. Action Strategies Toolkit. 2008. www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/content/view/352/154.

Lynott, Jana, et al. 2009. *Planning for Complete Streets for an Aging America*. Washington, D.C.: AARP Public Policy Institute. Available at www.aarp.org/research/ppi/liv-com/transport/articles/Planning_Complete_Streets_for_an_Aging_America.html.

NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis. 2008a. *Traffic Safety Facts 2008 Data: Older Population.* Available atwww-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811161.PDF.

———. 2008b. *Traffic Safety Facts 2008 Data: Children*. Available at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/811157.pdf.

Pew Research Center. 2010. "The Return of the Multigenerational Family Household." Available at http://pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/752-multi-generational-families.pdf.

———. 2009. "Home for the Holidays... and Every Other Day: Recession Brings Many Young Adults Back to the Nest." Available at http://pewsocialtrends.org/assets/pdf/home-for-the-holidays.pdf.

———. 2006. "America's Immigration Quandary." Washington, D.C. Available at http://people-press.org/report/274/americas-immigration-quandary.

Ray, Marilyn. 1993. "Three Counties Succeed in Expanding Services While Cutting Costs." *Community Development: Research Briefs and Case Studies,* May, Cornell Community and Rural Development Institute.

Rumbaut, Rubén G., and Komaie, Golnaz. 2007. "Young Adults in the United States: A Mid-Decade Profile." Network on Transitions to Adulthood Research Network Working Paper. Available at www.transad.pop.upenn.edu/downloads/Rumbaut%20Komaie%20-%20Young%20Adults%20in%20US.pdf.

Schools for Successful Communities: An Element of Smart Growth. 2004. Council of Educational Facility Planners International. Available at www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/SmartGrowth_schools_Pub.pdf.

Simmons, Tavia, and Jane Lawler Dye. 2003. *Grandparents Living with Grandchildren: 2000.* U.S. Census Bureau.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2008. *An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury*. Available at www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb08-123. html.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2010. *Census Bureau Reports Families with Children Increasingly Face Unemployment*. Available at www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/families_households/cb10-08.html.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2009. *Growing Smarter, Living Healthier: A Guide to Smart Growth and Active Aging.* Available at www.epa.gov/aging/bhc/guide/2009_Aging.pdf.

World Health Organization (WHO). 2007. *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide.* Available at www.who.int/aging/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf.

Family-Friendly Communities Briefing Papers

This is one in a series of briefing papers on how planners can create family-friendly communities where families enjoy housing that is affordable, child care, parks to play in, quality schools, and safe neighborhoods.

Please visit APA's website at www.planning.org/research/family to learn more about this series.