



AGING IN PLACE
PLANNER'S PORTFOLIO
ISSUE 16 MAY 2018





PLANNER'S PORTFOLIO **AGING IN PLACE**

- 1 OVERVIEW**
- 2 HOUSING**
- 4 MOBILITY**
- 5 PUBLIC SPACES AND PARKS**
- 6 SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Planner's Portfolio Series

The Planner's Portfolio Series is an outreach effort developed by Delaware County Council in order to explore the planning concepts available for communities to take advantage of the unique opportunities across Delaware County.

The pattern on the cover page, and found throughout this series, represents the importance of each individual component in the larger network. The Planner's Portfolio Series explores several of these components and how they can support community character in Delaware County.

For more information, contact the Delaware County Planning Department at 610-891-5200 or visit www.co.delaware.pa.us/planning to see the complete Planner's Portfolio series.

OVERVIEW

Aging-in-Place states that people should be able to remain in their existing homes or communities even as they age and their needs change. According to census data, the population of people 65 and older in Pennsylvania has grown at a much faster rate than the general population in the past 5 years, and is expected to keep growing. This means significant portions of the population will have changing needs and demands in the years ahead. There are issues that municipalities should be aware of and steps they can take to ensure that their older residents feel safe, welcome, and engaged.

This Planner's Portfolio looks at issues related to aging-in-place and provides recommendations for creating "age-friendly" communities. It focuses on the topics of housing, mobility, public spaces, parks, social opportunities, and civic engagement.



(Photo Credit: pixabay.com)

Aging Population in Delaware County

Pennsylvania has the fifth highest percentage of elderly population in the country. The 2010 census already indicates that the 55-59 cohort has increased 45 percent in the past ten years, foreshadowing an increasing wave of Delaware County seniors who will require increased investment in health care and social services.

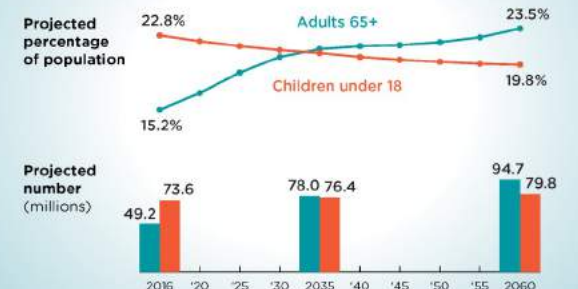
Pennsylvania's senior citizens are aging in place while the Commonwealth has traditionally lost younger people with college degrees. This phenomenon can challenge the fiscal strength of state and local governments since it generally leads to a higher demand for health services by older residents without the benefit of infusing the tax base with young high-earning workers.



An Aging Nation

Projected Number of Children and Older Adults

For the First Time in U.S. History Older Adults Are Projected to Outnumber Children by 2035



Note: 2016 data are estimates not projections.

United States
Census
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

Source: National Population
Projections, 2017
www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj.html

AGING IN PLACE **HOUSING**

Housing is among the most essential of human needs, and is particularly important to aging populations. Age-friendly communities offer a variety of affordable, safe, and accessible housing options. Zoning can facilitate aging-in-place by allowing for a variety of housing types from large managed care facilities to accessory dwelling units in rear yards. New construction can be encouraged to utilize the “Universal Design” concept, which encourages design usable by everyone, regardless of age or ability.

Different types of communities may have different issues related to housing aging residents. Growing Suburbs may have newer homes in better condition, but homes may also be larger and more expensive to heat and cool, or on larger lots that require more yard maintenance. On the other hand, Mature Neighborhoods may offer a greater variety of housing sizes including multi-family units, but older homes might need more upkeep, or be harder to adapt to ADA accessibility.



Ridley Township (Photo Credit: Delaware County Housing Authority)

Age-Friendly Housing

Communities with many seniors may see an increase in demand for development of Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) such as Plush Mills (top), but some residents may be able to stay in their existing homes if retrofitted with handicap-accessible features (above). New developments such as those at Kinder Park (left) can accommodate seniors and disabled people by using Universal Design principals such as no-step entryways.



(Photo Credit: www.aiadc.com)



(Photo Credit: www.medcottage.com)

Accessory Dwelling Units

Sometimes called “Granny Flats” or “In-law Units,” Accessory Dwelling Units are an increasingly popular option for allowing seniors to downsize while remaining within their communities or in close proximity to family or other caregivers. Zoning does not always allow for this type of construction, so communities looking to encourage aging-in-place should examine their ordinances to see where allowances can be made.



Photo Credit: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov>



(Photo Credit: <http://accessorydwellings.org>)

AGING IN PLACE MOBILITY

Driving a car may not always be an option for senior citizens, so age-friendly communities should provide a variety of transportation options. Transit routes should be easily accessible and transit stops should be ADA accessible and have adequate shelter and seating. Sidewalks should be clear, well-lit, and in good repair, with ADA compliant curbs and clearly marked crosswalks.

Different types of communities may have different issues related to senior mobility. Growing Suburbs tend to have fewer sidewalks and less transit access, often creating the need for private transportation services. Mature neighborhoods are generally walkable and transit connected, with access to retail, dining, and services.



Yeadon Borough



Darby Borough



Upper Darby Township

Age-Friendly Transportation

Many seniors rely on transit for their daily trips, and their experiences can be improved through amenities such as accessible ramps, sheltered waiting areas (above), clearly marked signage and route information (far left), and accessible buses and trains (left). Van services can connect areas not completely covered by transit (opposite, bottom). In walkable areas, sidewalks should be free of obstructions and wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, with clearly marked street crossings and ramped curbs (opposite, top).



Prospect Park Borough



Media Borough



Media Borough

Multimodal Access

Seniors are a prime user of public transportation if given the opportunity, especially as senior citizens with are able to ride transit for free on SEPTA. To allow seniors to access this benefit, they need to be able to reach transportation route safely on foot. This means having a safe sidewalk network to connect places where seniors live to transit routes.

Locating senior living facilities and 55 and over communities near public transportation not only benefits seniors, but also ensures that employees of the community have better access to these facilities. The integration of these communities into the larger neighborhood is a key component of a successful age-restricted community.

PUBLIC SPACES AND PARKS

Senior citizens are frequent users of public spaces and parks, whether for exercise or social gatherings. Age-friendly communities should plan to incorporate public gathering spaces and parks in easily accessible locations. Even in areas where public spaces and parks are already readily accessible, seniors may need additional resources, such as more frequent benches, restrooms, and water or food stops. Events hosted in public spaces should plan for the needs of older attendees, including providing first aid centers and seating areas. Seniors should be included in the decision making process to help ensure that their needs are met.



Lansdowne Borough



(Photo Credit: kaboompics.com)



Nether Providence Township

Age-Friendly Public Spaces

Public spaces can be designed to meet senior needs through the addition of certain amenities. Parks (left) and public plazas (top) should include plenty of opportunities for seating, as well as publically-accessible restrooms and water or food if possible. Parks should provide paved trails to accommodate visitors with mobility issues (above).

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Even as they age, seniors still enjoy engaging in social and civic life, and age-friendly communities can take steps to provide enriching activities for older citizens. Public assets such as libraries and community centers can provide opportunities for multi-generational activities and programs. Additionally, municipalities should take care to continue to involve their older residents in the planning process when undertaking projects such as zoning and comprehensive planning. This may involve directly reaching out to senior groups as well as distributing information through channels that older residents are more likely to see. Many seniors are active on social media, but it is important to disseminate municipal information through a variety of mediums to make sure the greatest number of people can be reached.



Intergenerational Cooperation
Communities benefit when seniors are engaged and given the opportunity to utilize their talents. This can include activities such as beautifying civic spaces (left), volunteering at libraries and schools (right), and participating in the community planning process (below).



Senior Community Centers
Senior centers provide opportunities for senior activity and connect seniors to vital services. The Redwood Community Center in Upland County Park hosts activities for seniors every day of the week.

OTHER PLANNER'S PORTFOLIOS:



COMPLETE STREETS

April 2016



TACTICAL PLACEMAKING

September 2017



DOWNTOWN CASE STUDIES

October 2016



Court House and Government Center
201 West Front Street
Media, Pennsylvania 19063

Delaware County Council

John P. McBlain, Chairman
Colleen P. Morrone, Vice Chairman
Michael Culp
Kevin M. Madden
Brian P. Zidek

County Executive

Marianne Grace

Planning Department

Linda F. Hill, Director
Rebecca Ross, AICP, Principal Planner

For more information, contact the Delaware County Planning Department at 610-891-5200 or visit www.co.delaware.pa.us/planning to see the complete Planner's Portfolio series.