Age-friendly Buncombe County
Acton Plan Report

COMMITTED TO AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY
WHERE OLDER ADULTS ARE SAFE, WELL AND ENGAGED

January 2020
Executive Summary

Buncombe County has one of North Carolina’s fastest growing older adult populations. Nearly one in five are age 65 or older and projections suggest this percentage will be closer to one in 4 in fewer than twenty years. Since 2007, the County has intentionally broadened the scope of its Aging Plans (2008-12; 2013-17; 2018-22) from a sole focus on how Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) and County aging funds are allocated, to include domains such as financial wellbeing, social engagement and living environments. This shift was prompted originally by the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services’ adoption of a framework for a livable, senior-friendly communities. When it came time to create the 2018-2022 Aging Plan, the Division was no longer promoting its framework, so Buncombe County opted to align its next plan with the WHO/AARP Network of Age-friendly Communities (the Network).

This report tells the story of the more than 10-years history of aging planning in Buncombe County. It describes the community assessment, planning process and resulting Aging Plan for 2018-2022. It describes how and why the County ended up selecting housing options for aging in place as the focus for the 5-year change project associated with joining the Network, and it begins to outline an action plan for that project.

However, while the Age-friendly Buncombe County Committee focused on creating the housing/aging in place initiative during 2018 and 2019, other committees and groups were focused on other goals of the Aging Plan and established other projects and activities. Only after two years or so did a picture begin to emerge that enabled Age-friendly Buncombe County to be understood as a conceptual umbrella that encompasses many existing and potential activities that align strategically with the Aging Plan’s vision that Buncombe County is an age-friendly community where older adults are safe, well and engaged. This includes Housing Options for Aging in Place, which is the “signature” project in this report. However, it also includes the Buncombe Elder Justice Coalition, the Experienced Workforce Initiative, Dementia Friendly WNC and the Buncombe Aging Services Alliance.

This report is the story of where we came from and how we got here. The foundation that has been laid now points us squarely toward becoming an increasingly age-friendly community where older adults are safe, well and engaged.

Submitted respectfully on behalf of Buncombe County,

Alison H. Climo, MSW, PhD
Buncombe County Aging Plan Coordinator
July 25, 2017

Mr. Doug Dickerson
AARP State Director
1511 Capital Center Drive
Raleigh, NC 27607

Dear Mr. Dickerson:

On behalf of Buncombe County, I’m pleased to offer this letter of our ongoing commitment to creating an age-friendly environment and respectively request membership to the World Health Organization’s Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Buncombe County recognizes the importance of encouraging and promoting age-friendly planning and policies to address the changing demographics and to enhance independent living; it is committed to a process of continual improvement to support active and healthy aging and sustain economic and social vitality.

Buncombe County continues to support the creation and active implementation of an aging plan, and has done so since 2007. Buncombe County’s support includes funding to support a project coordinator and the dedication of County human resources to participate in the implementation of planning efforts. Over the past decade, this investment has yielded multiple results such as: (1) a committee dedicated to the implementation of the aging plan; (2) coordinated education and systems to reduce incidences of fraud and financial exploitation; (3) outreach to enlighten the community about resources for financial security; and (4) education for consumers and suppliers about how to live and age in community. These are but a few examples of the foundation we have built in cultivating a community for all ages and ability levels.

This is a strong framework to build upon in addressing the World Health Organization’s eight domains that help to influence the health and quality of life that of people as they age in our community. We look forward to joining the global network of communities committed to giving all residents the opportunity to age with opportunities for rewards, productivity and safety. Thank you for considering Buncombe County’s membership in the World Health Organization’s Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

Sincerely,

Brownie Newman
Chairman
Introduction to Buncombe County, North Carolina

Buncombe County is located in the mountain region of western North Carolina. The County’s estimated population is 257,607 with a growth rate of 3.00% in the past year according to the most recent (2018) US census data. Buncombe County is the 7th largest county in North Carolina and its land includes parts of the Great Craggy Mountains and the Blue Ridge Mountains. A section of the Eastern Continental Divide passes through it.

Asheville, the county seat, is the largest city in Western North Carolina, and the 12th most populous city in North Carolina. The city's population was 89,121 according to 2016 estimates.

Buncombe County has one of North Carolina’s fastest growing older adult populations. The overall population of Buncombe County is 257,607 and nearly one in five are age 65 or older. According to projections, this percentage will be closer to one in four in only sixteen years (by 2036). It’s age 65+ population is already greater in numbers, and as a percentage of the population, than its ages 0-17 population.

| Table 1. Buncombe vs. NC People Ages 65+ and 85+ as a Percentage of the Population |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| % of Pop. | Buncombe | NC |
| 2000 | 12.0% | 12.0% |
| 2010 | 12.9% | 12.9% |
| 2020* | 16.8% | 16.8% |
| 2030p | 20.6% | 20.6% |
| 2040p | 23.5% | 23.5% |

The majority of the county is white (89.5%), with 6.4% African American, and 6.6% Hispanic or Latino. Among those residents age 65 and over, 28.5% live alone, and 8% live at or below poverty.

Aging Planning History

In 1988, the Council on Aging of Buncombe County, together with the County’s Department of Social Services, hosted a conference on “The State of the Elderly in Buncombe County.” Out of this conference, the Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC), was formed, whose mission was “to provide a structure for agencies, organizations and individuals to work together to plan, promote community awareness, and advocate for public and private support for services to the older adults of Buncombe County.”
The following year, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation (H.B. 69) directing the Division of Aging to submit to the General Assembly a regularly updated plan for serving older adults. In response to this, the Division on Aging established a process to document contributions that counties make in the provision of services to older adults and to provide mechanisms for counties to have voice in the identification of service priorities and issues affecting older adults. County information is forwarded to the Area Agency on Aging for inclusion in its regional report, which is submitted to the Division on Aging (now, Division on Aging and Adult Services).

In 1990, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners established the Aging Planning Committee within the ACC to develop the (first) Buncombe County Aging Plan to identify service priorities and issues. The following year, in 1991, the NC General Assembly enacted legislation (S.B.165) establishing the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) for Older Adults. The County Commissioners thus designated the ACC Steering Committee as the Advisory Committee for HBCCG service priorities and funding recommendations.

Over the next fifteen years, the ACC and the Buncombe County Aging Plans were focused on aging services, primarily those in the funded block grant areas. In its summary report to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging, North Carolina committed to establishing itself and its communities as livable and senior-friendly. Working in partnership with Area Agencies on Aging, the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services provided planning and assessment tools and a vision for a Livable and Senior-Friendly Community.

Early in 2007, the ACC agreed to apply the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services concept of a livable and senior-friendly community in developing its 2008-2012 Aging Plan for Buncombe County, and identified six components that frame its vision for Buncombe County: safety and security, health and wellness, financial wellbeing, social engagement, living environments, and service and support coordination. These components framed both the 2008-12 and 2013-17 Aging Plans.

By 2017, the Division of Aging and Adult Services had discontinued its Livable and Senior-Friendly Community model, and the ACC sought out potential models for its next Aging Plan (2018-22), including the Milken Institute’s Best Cities for Successful Aging, and the WHO/AARP’s Age-friendly Communities models.

Ultimately, in May 2017, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners directed the ACC to incorporate the WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Communities framework into the 2018-2022 Aging Plan.

Creating the 2018-2022 Aging Plan

The ACC’s Aging Plan Committee was determined to be the initial ‘steering team’ referred to in the resolution (see Appendix A for committee roster).
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUNCOMBE COUNTY
TO APPLY TO JOIN THE WHO/AARP NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Approved by the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners on May 2, 2017

WHEREAS: In the United States, the percentage of people aged 65 and over grew from 13% in 2010 to 15% in 2015; it is projected to grow to 17% by 2020 and 21% by 2030; and

WHEREAS: In Buncombe County, the population of people aged 65 and over grew from 16% in 2010 to 18.6% in 2015; it is projected to grow to over 20.6% by 2020 and 23.7% by 2030; and

WHEREAS: Research shows that older Americans overwhelmingly wish to remain in their homes and communities as they age; and

WHEREAS: There are numerous social and economic benefits to building a community that is inclusive and meets the changing needs of all age levels of our residents; and

WHEREAS: Aging is a life-long process, such that an age-friendly community is not just “elder-friendly” but also facilitates the well-being of all ages; and

WHEREAS: An age-friendly community has policies, services, and structures that facilitate older adults staying healthy, participating in economic growth, remaining socially active, and living in security. Communities in which older adults can “successfully age” are more likely to both mitigate the challenges and enjoy the opportunities related to their older citizens.

WHEREAS: Buncombe County is widely recognized as leading North Carolina in identifying the needs of its older adult citizens and launching age-friendly initiatives through its strategic, 5-year Aging Plans; and

WHEREAS: The Buncombe County Aging Coordinating Consortium is currently developing the next 5-year Aging Plan (2018-2022), which is expected to be presented to the Commission in November of 2017; and

WHEREAS: The World Health Organization (WHO) has noted that “[m]aking cities and communities age-friendly is one of the most effective policy approaches for responding to the demographic aging;” and

WHEREAS: The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities and has partnered with AARP to encourage its use. One hundred and thirty-seven U.S. communities participate in this network, employing a common planning model, utilizing comparative benchmarks of progress, and freely sharing consultation for successful application of the planning model.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners for the County of Buncombe as follows:

1. That the month of May 2017 be proclaimed OLDER AMERICANS MONTH in Buncombe County. This Board calls upon all our citizen, business leaders, elected and staff government officials, philanthropists, educators, civic groups, advocacy and service organizations, (a) to recognize that older adults constitute a valuable human resource, and (b) to engage older adults in all aspects of community and civic life.

2. That Buncombe County will initiate action to join the WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

3. That this Board directs the Buncombe County Aging Coordinating Consortium to:
   a. Convene a steering team to lead the Age-Friendly Community Initiative. The steering team should actively seek input from diverse stakeholders, with significant participation from older Buncombe County residents; and
   b. Incorporate the WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Community framework into the 2018-2022 Buncombe County Aging Plan.
The first step that the ACC’s Planning Committee took was to establish a vision and clear set of values to inform the 2018-2022 Aging Plan.

Vision: Buncombe County is an age-friendly community where older adults are safe, well and engaged.

Values:
1. We value all older adults in Buncombe County, regardless of income or education level, race, ethnicity or nationality, ability, health or cognitive status, gender identity or sexual orientation, veteran status or religious affiliation.
2. We value a systems perspective to help us understand and address the many complex challenges we face with changing demographics.
3. We value a multi-dimensional definition of “livable, age-friendly community.”
4. The term of a five-year plan allows Buncombe County sufficient time to engage many organizations and institutions in the creation and implementation of a sustained process of improvement toward becoming an age-friendly community.

Community Assessment

Community Survey

The Aging Planning Committee then created a survey for Buncombe County residents ages 50+ (see Appendix B for survey). The survey was distributed between June and August 2017 online, via Survey Monkey, and in paper form through organizations such as Meals on Wheels, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UNC-Asheville, churches, gyms, senior dining sites and community centers; programs, such as adult day and caregiver support groups; events such as the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Walk and health fairs; and housing locations including low-income/senior apartments and assisted living.
facilities. In total, 1189 residents completed the survey. Local think-tank Communities for Older Adult Health (COAH) provided funding to support data entry and analysis.

Efforts were made to reach into both the African American community as well as the rural areas of the county. In all, 11% of the survey was completed by people of color, the majority of whom identified as African American. Eighty-nine percent of the surveys were completed by white residents, mirroring the county’s white population.

Approximately one third of the surveys were completed by residents living outside of the City of Asheville. Over two thirds of the surveys were completed by women (72%). Over half were completed by residents ages 65-79 (55%), with 29% ages 50-64 and 11% ages 80+.

The survey asked about satisfaction with the following age-friendly features: housing options, home repair services, transportation options, volunteer opportunities, employment options, access to information about
services and supports, health care services, social support services, parks & other outdoor spaces. The areas of greatest dissatisfaction were transportation (43% not satisfied) and housing options (34%).

The survey also asked, “What suggestions do you have that would improve our community for you and other people growing older?” Open ended responses were analyzed and coded for mentions of the AARP/WHO eight domains of livability. Results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO/AARP Domain of Livability</th>
<th>% of Responses Mentioning the Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor spaces and buildings</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and social services</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and access to information</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social participation</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and inclusion</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic engagement</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much of these survey results were not surprising to the Aging Planning Committee nor to the broader ACC. For instance, transportation for years has been cited as a major challenge in our hilly and partially rural county. In addition, both the city and the county have active groups engaged in pursuing affordable housing.

**Other Data Sources**

The Aging Planning Committee also consulted other available data. In addition to the survey results, the Committee reviewed data from the 2-1-1 call log data, a recent, major regional housing study, and the community health assessment report.

Taking the data all into account, and building on the successes and lessons learned from earlier Aging Plans, and with direction from County Health and Human Services personnel regarding the plan’s format and length, the committee drafted the 2018-2022 Aging Plan. The Plan was approved by the Aging Coordinating Consortium on October 27, 2018 and by the Buncombe County Commissioners on January 16, 2018 (see Appendix D for full Aging Plan).

**The 2018-2022 Aging Plan**

This Aging Plan is aligned with and runs parallel to Buncombe County joining the World Health Organization (WHO)/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

Whereas earlier aging plans set goals and made recommendations within specific areas similar to the AFC domains (e.g., “social engagement,” or “financial wellbeing”), in this plan the goals stand independent of any particular domain assignment, recognizing that to truly improve the livability of a community for
older adults, we must enable a diversity of community entities to forge strategic partnerships across silos. Within any given domain there exist multiple dimensions and stakeholders, thus to achieve the goals of this Aging Plan will require effort across many sectors.

Goal 3.3 “Increase age-friendly capability of Buncombe County,” reflects the nexus between the Aging Plan and the Age-friendly Communities initiative.

**Age-friendly Buncombe County – Attempt #1**

The Aging Planning Committee recommended that the Aging Coordinating Consortium establish a new Age-friendly Buncombe County (ABC) Committee (see Appendix A for committee roster). An older adult volunteer ACC member agreed to co-chair the effort, along with the Aging Plan Coordinator and with the support and guidance of the AARP associate state director for our region.

The Aging Plan Committee also established a guiding document to launch the ABC Committee. In that document, the committee recommended that the ABC goal build directly from the Aging Plan Goal 3.3, “to increase age-friendly capability of Buncombe County,” and that age-friendly capability be defined as “a demonstrated awareness that a) the changing age demographic is a significant influencer of community and economic life; and b) the older adult population represents an important and valuable resource. (a + b = age awareness).”

Rather than creating a new plan, the committee recommended that ABC’s objective be to infuse age-awareness into programs, plans and initiatives across multiple sectors and throughout Buncombe County. Including, but not limited to: Asheville Comprehensive Plan, housing plan, transportation plan, sustainability plan, walkability/greenways plan; United Way community hubs of service plan; workforce development; economic development; health and wellness

The ABC Committee would be populated with 12-15 key community leaders who were determined to be able to access the landscape of existing programs, plans and initiatives across multiple domains in order to help identify and carry out actions that build and promote age-awareness. These individuals would serve as “domain navigators.”

For nearly 8 months the Aging Plan Committee and ABC co-chairs worked to recruit domain navigators and establish an engaged steering team. Those who were brought on board established grounding principles for working together, and began identifying existing programs, plans an initiatives. However, the entire endeavor felt sluggish and uninspired. The leadership found it challenging to communicate their vision for this work and recruit a sufficiently robust steering team. Many individual who were approached said, “that sounds great and it is very important, but I’m just too busy.” Finally, the leadership decided to pause and regroup.
Table 2. The Buncombe County Aging Plan (2018-2022) Goals and Example Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Example Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAFE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Prevent abuse and neglect and exploitation of older adults</td>
<td>Increase the numbers of vulnerable older adults who accept supportive services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase numbers of Adult Care Home staff and administrators reached through training and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Increase awareness of fraud, scam and financial exploitation among older adults</td>
<td>Increase formats and distribution of fraud, scam and financial exploitation outreach and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase numbers of older adults reached through fraud, scam and financial exploitation outreach and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WELL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Improve health and wellbeing among older adults</td>
<td>Increase healthy behaviors among older adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce rate of injuries due to falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Support financial wellbeing among older adults</td>
<td>Increase numbers of older adults enrolled in economic support programs for which they are eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase numbers of older adults reached through financial literacy outreach and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Support caregivers providing care to older adults</td>
<td>Increase numbers of caregivers reached through support groups and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENGAGED</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Increase older adults’ access to transportation</td>
<td>Increase number and geographical reach of transportation options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Improve older adults’ access to services and supports</td>
<td>Increase awareness among older adults of how to access information about services and supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Increase age-friendly capability of Buncombe County</td>
<td>Join WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase the number of businesses and organizations designated as age- and/or dementia-friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase numbers of frontline County employees and first responders who participate in dementia-friendly training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Age-friendly Buncombe County – Attempt #2

To regroup, the small leadership team (see Appendix A for committee roster) decided to look back at the data compiled for the 2018-22 Aging Plan, as well as to look further back at the two previous Aging Plans (2008-12 and 2013-17) to understand other age-friendly efforts that had been successful and to identify potential new directions for this (2018-2022) work.

In fact, beginning in 2008, there was a clear ten-year trajectory of goals, events and other activities in Buncombe County, that all hung together around the topic of housing and aging in place (see Appendix E for full 10-year history):

For instance, the 2008-2012 Aging Plan introduced living environments (built and natural) as one of six components of a livable, age-friendly Buncombe County. In that plan, Goal 1, Objective 1 read, “Provide a broad range of options that promote physical safety and independence for older adults, in a setting of their choice.”

By 2012, the community held a conference at UNC-Asheville OLLI titled “Envisioning Home: Creating Options of Home & Community in Later Life,” and a new group – Culture Change and Aging Network (CCAN) – was established by interested organizations and volunteers to pursue alternative housing options for older adults in Buncombe County.

Finally, in 2016, two local entities, AARP NC in the Mountain Region and the Universal Design Institute collaborated to produce Livable Homes for a Lifetime: Policy Analysis & Recommendations Report, the same year that the ACC began advocating with the City of Asheville and to Buncombe County to join the WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

When the small leadership team brought this 10-year history to the attention of the ABC Steering Team, there was an instant sense that this was a topic that resonates across domains, that has existing momentum already in place, but not yet a single driving force such as a steering team. Furthermore, housing is key to remaining safe, well and engaged in one’s community, and is closely intertwined with transportation, which was the most frequently cited need in the Buncombe County Aging Survey.

Housing Options for Aging in Place (HOAP)

The small selection team was expanded to now include two additional individuals, a community planner who was involved in Culture Change in Aging Network, a Special Interest Group at UNC-Asheville’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), and the Livable Homes for a Lifetime project, and the executive director of the Universal Design Institute, who had co-authored the Livable Homes for a Lifetime report.

At the end of 2018, a grant deadline (applied for but not received) pushed the leadership team to draft a vision and strategy for the proposed ABC focus on Housing Options for Aging in Place (HOAP):
Vision: All older adults living in Buncombe County have the ability and choice to age in place in order to remain safe, well and engaged in their communities.

Strategy: Create a comprehensive, coordinated initiative that knits together diverse stakeholders across multiple domains to effectively work toward a community where older adults have the ability and choice to age in place.

Strategy Rationale: In just a few years, one in five residents of Buncombe County will be age 65 or older and in fewer than twenty years (by 2035) projections suggest this ratio will be closer to one in four. Yet neither the current housing stock nor the booming development of new housing matches the expressed desire among older and aging residents to age in place. According to AARP almost 90 percent of adults age 65 and over want to stay in their current home and community as they age. However, only 1 percent of the current U.S. housing stock offers the five key Universal Design features to enable aging in place. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level."

HOAP Working Group

With this draft vision and strategy focused on Housing Options for Aging in Place, the small leadership team set about reconstituting a larger steering team. The topic immediately spoke to individuals and organizations across the eight domains and between January and July 2019, the “steering team” tripled, from 10 to over 30, warranting a change in terminology from steering team to Working Group (see Appendix A for Working Group roster).

Meanwhile, there is a six-person HOAP Leadership Team that supports the Working Group by planning agendas, leading meetings, maintaining meeting notes, seeking potential funding, recruiting new partners, and other logistical support (see Appendix A for Leadership Team roster). For most, this is volunteer work on top of their own professional work. For the Associate State Director of AARP for the Mountain Region, and the Coordinator of the Buncombe County Aging Plan, this is part of their paid work.

Monthly 90-minute meetings, held at the Habitat for Humanity Administrative Offices in Asheville, consist of a 30-minute “learning agenda” presentation, to enable the group to continually grow its knowledge and understanding of issues related to housing and aging in place. Examples include: Understanding Universal Design; existing and emerging models for aging in place; Vermont’s Support and Services at Home (SASH) Program and a local initiatives including Health Engagement Leading to Prevention (HELP) by the Asheville Buncombe Institute for Parity Achievement (ABIPA), and the Givens Gerber Villages model.
Over the first six months (January–June, 2019), the Working Group established the following two desired outcomes:

1. The community recognizes and supports safe, accessible, affordable housing as a social determinant of health for older adults.
2. New and modified policies and practices (government, organizations) support and promote affordable and accessible housing options.

Through a facilitated process, the HOAP Working Group spent the next six months (July—December, 2019) developing an action plan which will be discussed below.

In addition, and along the way, HOAP experienced some early wins that are worth noting:

**Early Wins**

- On behalf of HOAP, the Universal Design Institute applied for and received a grant from Buncombe County to offer the Safe and Accessible Modifications for Independence (SAMI) Training program for professionals and everyday ‘handymen’ who are likely to encounter older adults and others hoping to age in place. The training covers critical information needed for successful home modification outcomes: needs assessment, design and product information, building materials, funding sources, and options for a home’s entrance, bathroom, kitchen, home tech, and much more.

- Although Aging in Place has been a focus of Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity for years, as the executive director sat in on HOAP meetings, listening to colleagues at the table, it became clear to him that our community needed someone to step up and develop new, affordable homes designed specifically with older adults in mind. Later in 2020, Asheville Habitat will begin its largest neighborhood development to date. All of those homes will include some universal design
features and 20% will be specifically designed and marketed to help older household with lower incomes age in place.

- Meetings with City of Asheville Planners about HOAP resulted in an amendment, in October 2019, to the City’s land use incentive grant policy: to incentivize 20% of units to be Universal Design standards, rather than 10%.

- While not as a result of HOAP or its work, one of HOAP’s partners, ABIPA, received a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Fellows Grant to support its pilot program, HELP. HELP will train community health workers to improve the health and mental well-being of particularly vulnerable adults age 60+ to age in place. HELP also provides HOAP access to older adults who are very low income, formerly homeless, and/or living with severe and persistent mental illness.

- Members of the HOAP Leadership Team were included among key stakeholders in a planning meeting for the County’s Consolidated Strategic Housing and Community Development Plan (Consolidated Plan), which will guide CDBG and HOME grant distribution by the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium from 2020–2024.

### Housing Options for Aging in Place Action Plan

Implementation of the Action Plan began in January 2020 and will run through December 2022. The plan covers the following four areas:

1. Research and communication
2. Community engagement
3. Streamlined services
4. Funding and sustainability

#### Action Area 1. Research and Communication

The HOAP Working Group recognizes that there is an absence of aging in place within the affordable housing arena. There is a great need to educate our community – from consumers to professionals to funders and planners – about how housing fits into aging in community: what aging in place means, what housing options for aging in place look like, and the scale of the issue in our community.

**Action Items:**

1. Publish a reference paper defining the scale of the housing challenge for older adults (define terms, link to housing and census data)
2. Complete a lexicon – shared language and definitions for terms such as “affordability” and concepts such as design standards
3. Develop talking points, including about HOAP (our “why” and vision)
4. Create and implement a messaging/communication plan, including platform(s) and content

Potential Partners: AARP; Communities for Older Adult Health (COAH); Aging in Place Special Interest Group of OLLI at UNC-Asheville; Universal Design Institute; Pisgah Legal Services; Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging; Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity; Mountain Housing Opportunities; Council on Aging of Buncombe County; Buncombe County Public Library

**Action Area 2. Community Engagement**

Although the HOAP Working Group includes 33 individuals (20 active), each of whom represents a different partner organization, there are still important voices missing from the table. Specifically, the group aims to recruit Latinx, LGBTQ, and other minority representation. The group also wishes to better engage the City of Asheville. In addition to growing the Working Group, it is important to engage public officials and community leaders, for the purpose of educating them about HOAP and its work, but also to enable the community to hold leaders accountable for addressing the housing needs for older adults in particular. Finally, HOAP aims to build community buy-in and raise awareness among consumers, housing professionals, service providers, planners and leaders, and others. This awareness is not only about HOAP’s focus on housing, but is also about the entire Age-friendly Buncombe County initiative and all of the eight domains of livability.

**Action Items:**
1. Recruit Latinx, LGBTQ, and other minority representation to join the Working Group
2. Recruit one or more representatives from the City of Asheville to join the Working Group
3. Identify public officials and community leaders to target for education and engagement
4. Engage leaders and hold them accountable by attending city and county housing-related meetings and hosting a leadership forum.
5. Engage community members to understand their lived experience aging in place
6. Identify and develop a community champion

Potential Partners: Buncombe County Community Engagement; City of Asheville Neighborhood and Community Engagement; Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce; LGBTQ Elder Advocates of Western North Carolina; Asheville Buncombe Institute for Parity Achievement; Nuestro Centro; AARP

**Action Area 3. Streamlined Services**

Providers of many services, from housing and home repair organizations to legal, health and social services, are involved in the HOAP Working Group. Nonetheless, the group recognizes that
coordination and communication among these organizations remains insufficient. For the older adult seeking services or information about housing options, there is no one clear person or organization to ask. For HOAP and service providers, service gaps and opportunities for collaboration are unknown.

Action Items:
1. Compile a comprehensive list of housing and aging related services in Buncombe County
2. Align and support existing efforts
3. Create a coordinated entry system designed for the end user
4. Develop a new community aging in place navigator position
5. Promote the use of NC Care 360 for housing and aging service providers (Launched in late 2019, NC Care 360 is the first statewide network that unites health care and human services organizations with a shared technology that enables a coordinated, community-oriented, person-centered approach for delivering care in North Carolina)
6. Create an app to coordinate home repair programs

Potential Partners: Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity; Mountain Housing Opportunities; Council on Aging of Buncombe County; ABIPA; Givens; Land Trust; NC Care 360

**Action Area 4. Funding and Sustainability**

The HOAP Working Group includes older adult community members and representatives from interested organizations and government departments. All participate on a volunteer basis. The current facilitator is the County Aging Plan Coordinator, a funded part-time position. This position, however, is going to be absorbed into a new county position beginning in July, 2020. The Age-friendly Buncombe County initiative and the Aging Plan will be de-coupled at that point, leaving HOAP without funded support. For Age-friendly Buncombe County to thrive and grow, expanding out beyond housing to encompass other domains of livability and aging in community, it will need a new source of funding.

Action Items:
1. Develop a job description for a paid coordinator position for HOAP
2. Identify a potential “backbone” organization for HOAP
3. Identify potential funders for HOAP and/or Age-friendly Buncombe County
4. Develop a funding plan and budget for HOAP
5. Keep writing grants!

Potential Partners: Buncombe County Health and Human Services; Buncombe County Strategic Partnerships; Universal Design Institute; Council on Aging of Buncombe County; Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging
Next Steps for HOAP

In the early months of 2020, the HOAP Working Group will establish committees for each of the four areas of focus, and will continue to flesh out the action steps, lead partners, benchmarks and a more specific time-table. The group has just under 24 months to complete and evaluate this work. It is fully expected, however, that the work will extend far beyond the December 2022 end date and will continue on toward the vision that all older adults living in Buncombe County have the ability and choice to age in place in order to remain safe, well and engaged in their communities.

Age-friendly Buncombe County, Beyond HOAP

Throughout 2018 and 2019, as the HOAP Working Group and its plans were being developed, several other projects were launched as part of the Aging Plan implementation. For instance, Buncombe Elder Justice Coalition (EJC) began as a conversation between the Buncombe Family Justice Center (which at the time focused primarily on children and families) and a flailing local Triad¹ group to consider the Aging Plan’s “safe” related goals. EJC has become a community-wide collaboration and includes older adult volunteers and professionals from various disciplines including social work and human services, elder law, law enforcement, criminal justice, healthcare, care/case management, aging services, and many others. EJC holds twice yearly “stakeholder think tank” events to strengthen our community’s capacity to prevent and address elder abuse, neglect and exploitation quickly, effectively, and with respect. EJC is also initiating work to establish an elder abuse multidisciplinary case review team.

Another Aging Plan project is the Experienced Workforce Initiative (EWI), which was established to address goal 2.2, “Support financial wellbeing among older adults.” EWI is also a coordinated, collaborative effort made up of older adult volunteers and professionals committed to its mission, which is “to support and promote the engagement of adults age 50+ in the volunteer and workforce continuum.” EWI held its first annual “Asheville 50+ Works” job fair in 2019 and in 2020 has added a 3-part lunch and learn series.

Also, during this time period, the Aging Coordinating Consortium took on Aging Plan goal 3.2 “Improve older adults’ access to services and supports.” Beginning midway through 2019, it re-branded as the Buncombe Aging Services Alliance (BASA). BASA meets monthly and focuses on building capacity within the aging services network by providing education, training and networking opportunities for aging services and support providers. There are nearly 50 participants in BASA, representing 34 organizations.

Finally, independent of the Aging Planning process but in parallel, a group of community volunteers and professionals initiated a project called Dementia Friendly WNC, which is committed to the well-being of

¹ Triad is a program of the National Sheriff’s Association and involves collaboration between leaders in law enforcement, older adults and service providers.
people living with dementia & their families through a welcoming and knowledgeable community. Dementia Friendly WNC offers training faith communities and businesses in dementia friendly practice. They have trained Asheville Art Museum docents to lead art salons and activities for people living with dementia, and members of their steering committee serve on both HOAP and EWI steering teams.

This report and action plan have focused primarily on how Buncombe County came to join the WHO/AARP Network of Age-friendly Communities, and on one particular project: Housing Options for Aging in Place (HOAP). Yet taken all together, Age-friendly Buncombe County may better be understood as a conceptual umbrella that encompasses activities that are strategically aligned with the vision that **Buncombe County is an age-friendly community where older adults are safe, well and engaged.** These activities currently include Buncombe Aging Services Alliance, Experienced Workforce Initiative, Elder Justice Coalition, Dementia Friendly WNC and Housing Options for Aging in Place. Each of these groups functions fairly independently and with its own leadership and participants (with some overlaps) but with ongoing communication and coordination between and among these groups.

**Conclusion**

Moving forward, Age-friendly Buncombe County will continue to expand to encompass other domains of livability as opportunities and needs present themselves, and it will continue to be a nexus for new and existing organizations and activities that share the vision for an age-friendly Buncombe County.
Appendices

A. Committee and Working Group Rosters
B. 2017 Aging Plan Community Survey
C. Buncombe County Aging Plan (2018-2022)
D. 10-year history of housing-related aging planning in Buncombe County
E. Housing Options for Aging in Place mission document
F. Elder Justice Coalition mission document
G. Experienced Workforce mission document for 2019-2020
Appendix A. Rosters

2017 Aging Plan Committee Roster

- Marla Browne; Director, United Way 2-1-1
- Rebecca Chaplin; Associate State Director, AARP Mountain Region
- Alison Climo; Coordinator, Buncombe County Aging Plan
- Celeste Collins; Executive Director, OnTrack Financial Education and Counseling
- Marc Czarnecki; Silver to Gold at UniteWNC
- Richard Duncan; Executive Director, Universal Design Institute
- Linda Giltz; Community Planning Consultant; President, Connect Buncombe
- Cathy Hebert; Co-chair, Dementia Friendly WNC
- Juanita Igo; Council on Aging of Buncombe County
- Vicki Jennings; Director, Mountain Mobility
- Allyson Johnson-Sawyer; Executive Director, CarePartners Adult Day Services
- Telle King; Co-chair, Dementia Friendly WNC
- Gene Knoefel; Buncombe County Delegate, Senior Tar Heel Legislature
- Bob Krollman; Skyheart Consulting, PLLC
- Bill O’Connell; Communities for Older Adult Health
- Shelia O’Connor; No Place Like Home WNC
- Diane Saccone; Director, Healthy Aging Initiatives, YMCA of WNC
- Linda Stanton; Senior Community Service Employment Program, Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging
- Christina Stenhouse; Social Work Manager, Buncombe County Health and Human Services
- Marsha Stickford; Community Volunteer
- Sharon Willen; Community Volunteer
- Elizabeth Williams; CarePartners Adult Day Services
- Judy Williams; Community Volunteer
- Ann Wisenhunt; Director, Senior Companions Program at Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging

HOAP Leadership Team Roster:

- Bob Krollman Co-chair Chair, ABC Steering Team
- Rebecca Chaplin; AARP
- Ali Climo; Buncombe County Aging Plan
- Linda Giltz, Community Planning Consultant; President, Connect Buncombe
- Richard Duncan; Universal Design Institute
- Terri March; MAHEC and Community Health Improvement Project

HOAP Working Group Roster: (Last updated 11-05-19)

Kathey Avery; Nurse educator, Asheville Buncombe Institute for Parity Achievement (ABIPA)
Alison Banzhoff; Adult Care Homes Supervisor, Buncombe County Health and Human Services
Andy Barnett; Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity
Katie Bartholomew; Manager, Clinical Operations, Mission Health Partners
Rebecca Chaplin; Community Outreach Associate State Director, AARP
Alison Climo; Coordinator, Buncombe County Aging Plan
Scott Dedman; Executive Director, Mountain Housing Opportunities
Lindy Desmarais; Community Resource Specialist, Mission Health Partners
Richard Duncan; Executive Director, Universal Design Institute
Linda Giltz; Community Planning Consultant; President, Connect Buncombe
Johnnie Grant; Editor, The Urban News
Jane Hatley; WNC Director, Self-Help Ventures Fund
Jenni Kerr; Director of Home Ownership Program, Habitat for Humanity
Telle King; Dementia Friendly WNC; Long Term Care Ombudsman, Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging
Bob Krollman; Skyheart Consulting, PLLC
Erin Makara; Buncombe County Public Library
Terri March; Health Improvement Specialist, MAHEC
Will McLean; Co-director, Center for Healthy Aging, MAHEC
Rasheeda McDaniels; Supervisor, Buncombe County Community Engagement
Meridith Miller; Chair, Aging in Place, a Special Interest Group of OLLI
Brenda Mills; Neighborhood and Community Engagement Manager, City of Asheville
Bill O'Connell; Communities for Older Adult Health (COAH)
Janet Price-Ferrell; Executive Director, FIRST
Laurel Radley AARP HomeFit volunteer
Shana Roberts; Service Coordinator, Arrowhead Apartments
Philippe Rosse; Vice President of Business Development, NovusWay
Parker Smith; Staff Attorney, Pisgah Legal Services
Teresa Stevens; Director, Givens Affordable Communities
Jen Teague; Director, Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Inc.
LeeAnne Tucker; Director, Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky Regional Council
Gayland Welborn; Resource Coordinator, Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Inc.
Ellen Westbrook; Skills Development Team Leader, NC Works
Sara Yakira; Realtor, Asheville Realty Group
Do older adults in Buncombe County...

...Feel **SAFE** from crime, scams and exploitation?

...Feel **WELL** - both physically & mentally?

...Feel **CONNECTED & SUPPORTED**, not isolated?

*We want to know what you think.*

**What is the Aging Plan?**

The Buncombe County Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC) – a group of aging-services providers and older adult volunteers – is directed by the County Commissioners to develop and implement a **5-year strategic Aging Plan** for 2018-2022. The Aging Plan directs how federal, state and county “older adult” funds are used in our community and provides focus and direction.

**What will the Aging Plan address?**

The Aging Plan will address needs in areas such as:

1. Health and social support services
2. Housing and transportation
3. Inclusion and participation in social events
4. Employment and volunteering
5. Information and communication
6. Safe and accessible outdoor spaces

(Adapted from the World Health Organization & AARP’s 8 Domains of an Age-Friendly Community)

**What is the Purpose of the Aging Plan Survey?**

The purpose of this survey is to help the ACC understand our community’s current strengths and weaknesses in meeting the needs of adults as they grow older.
More About the Aging Plan Survey

- This survey should take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete.

- Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may choose to skip any questions you do not wish to answer. At any time, you may opt out of this survey.

- Your responses to this survey will be combined with the other surveys we receive, and results will only be reported in the aggregate; your name will not be attached to any of your answers.

- Results of this survey will be available this fall. If you would like to receive a report summarizing the results, please e-mail: bcncagingplan@gmail.com or call Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging at (828) 251-6622

More About the Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC)

- MISSION: The ACC works collaboratively with providers, consumers and others to improve the quality of life for older adults in Buncombe County.

- VISION: The ACC serves older adults in Buncombe County by creating and implementing the Buncombe County Aging Plan; advocating for public and private support; promoting community awareness; and, submitting funding recommendations to the Lead Agency and County Commissioners.

- The ACC has the following four committees:
  o Allocations
  o Community Advocacy and Awareness
  o Governance
  o Planning and Implementation

- The ACC meets monthly (except July and November) and welcomes Buncombe County residents who support the purpose and goals of the ACC, and who desire to participate in carrying out the ongoing activities of the organization.

- For more information about the ACC, go to: https://www.buncombecounty.org/Governing/Depts/Dss/Adults/Aging.aspx
1. As you think about growing older, how satisfied are you with the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Not Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Housing options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Home repair services</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Transportation options</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Volunteer opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Employment options</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Access to information about services and supports</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Health care services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Social support services</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Parks &amp; other outdoor spaces</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please circle your answers to the following questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Not Safe</th>
<th>Safe</th>
<th>Very Safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How <strong>safe</strong> do you feel from crime, scams and exploitation?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well do you feel <strong>physically</strong> most days?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How well do you feel <strong>mentally</strong> most days?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How worried are you about becoming isolated as you age?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Do you provide unpaid care (physical, financial, instrumental) to an aging parent, spouse or other older adult? ___ Yes ___ No
   If Yes, ...does that person live in Buncombe County? ___ Yes ___ No
   ...does that person have dementia? ___ Yes ___ No

4. Do you provide care or support to a child or grandchild who lives in Buncombe County? ___ Yes ___ No
5. What suggestions do you have that would **improve** our community for you and other people growing older?

6. Demographics:
   - Zip Code: ____________________
   - Age:  ____ 18-49  ____ 50-64  ____ 65-79  ____ 80+
   - Gender:  ____ Female  ____ Male  ____ Other
   - Race/Ethnicity:  ____ Black or African-American  ____ Hispanic or Latino
   -  ____ American Indian or Alaska Native  ____ White
   -  ____ Hawaiian or Pacific Islander  ____ Asian

7. Would you like to join the Aging Plan e-mail list?  ____ Yes  ____ No

8. Are you interested in participating in a focus group later in the summer to discuss the results of this survey?  ____ Yes  ____ No

If yes to either questions 7 or 8, please complete the following:

   Name: ____________________ E-mail: ____________________
   (If you do not use e-mail, please feel free to share your mailing address)

   Please share where and when you completed this survey: ____________________

**Thank You!**
Appendix C. Buncombe County Aging Plan (2018-2022)

Buncombe County Aging Plan (2018-2022)

COMMMITTED TO AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY
WHERE OLDER ADULTS ARE SAFE, WELL AND ENGAGED

Presented to the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners
By the Aging Coordinating Consortium
November, 2017
“The challenge we are facing is not population aging, but outdated and ineffective policies and practices.” Salzburg Global Seminar session “Aging Societies: Advancing Innovation and Equity,” 2015.

Introduction

In just a few years, one in five residents of Buncombe County will be age 65 or older. In fewer than twenty years (by 2035) projections suggest this ratio will be closer to one in four. North Carolina ranks 9th nationally in the number of people ages 65+ (see Table 1). Buncombe County has one of North Carolina’s fastest growing older adult populations; and, its age 65+ population is already greater in numbers, and as a percentage of the population, than its ages 0-17 population.

Table 1. Buncombe vs. NC People Ages 65+ and 85+ as a Percentage of the Population

The Buncombe County Aging Plan for 2018-2022 builds on the successes and lessons learned over a decade of age-friendly community planning and implementation work guided by the Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC), the County’s entity that is charged with overseeing the provision of services to older adults and the identification of service priorities and issues affecting older adults.

The goals and strategies within this plan are the culmination of a comprehensive review of available secondary local, regional, and state data and reports. The goals and strategies also reflect responses to two surveys conducted during the summer of 2017: the Community Aging Plan Survey, completed by over 1150 Buncombe County residents age 50+; and the Providers and Professionals Aging Plan Survey, completed by over 100 service providers and professionals who work with older adults in Buncombe County.
This Aging Plan reflects the vision of an age-friendly community where older adults are safe, well and engaged. This vision aims to answer the big question, “Why an aging plan?” and even, “Why an age-friendly community?” It is our hope with this vision that priorities and resources may be better focused and targeted toward demonstrable results. This plan also reflects a set of values established by the ACC to help guide its work, including how it allocates Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) funds and other limited resources.

We value:

- All older adults in Buncombe County, regardless of income or education level, race, ethnicity or nationality, ability, health or cognitive status, gender identity or sexual orientation, veteran status or religious affiliation.

- A systems perspective to help us understand and address the many complex challenges we face with changing demographics.

- A multi-dimensional definition of “livable, age-friendly community.”

- The term of a five-year plan allows Buncombe County sufficient time to engage many organizations and institutions in the creation and implementation of a sustained process of improvement toward becoming an age-friendly community.

This Aging Plan coincides with Buncombe County joining the World Health Organization (WHO)/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities (AFC) and launching a 5-year program, which will run parallel with this Aging Plan. In May 2017, the Commissioners resolved to join the Network, affirming that:

An “age-friendly community” has policies, services, and structures that facilitate older adults staying healthy, participating in economic growth, remaining socially active, and living in security. Communities in which older adults can “successfully age” are more likely to mitigate the challenges and enjoy the opportunities related to their older citizens. Actions leading to “age-friendly communities” lead to happier, healthier residents of all ages.

Resolution Authorizing Buncombe County to Join the WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities;” Consent Agenda; Buncombe County Board of Commissioners’ Meeting, May 2, 2017

The WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Community (AFC) framework contains 8 domains of livability that influence the quality of life for older adults: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, and community and health services. Whereas earlier aging plans set goals and made recommendations within specific areas similar to the AFC domains (e.g., “social engagement,” or “financial wellbeing”), in this plan the goals stand independent of any particular domain assignment,
recognizing that to truly improve the livability of a community for older adults, we must enable a diversity of community entities to forge strategic partnerships across silos. Within any given domain there exist multiple dimensions and stakeholders, thus to achieve the goals of this Aging Plan will require effort across many sectors.

As new and diverse stakeholders become engaged in the Age-Friendly Community initiative, it will be important for the ACC to evolve to accommodate the necessary growth and expansion into a truly community-wide coordinating body that accomplishes its mission. Thus, this Aging Plan includes specific recommendations regarding strengthening the capacity of the ACC.

**Goals and Strategies**

The vision for this (2018-2022) Aging Plan – of an age-friendly community where older adults are *safe, well* and *engaged* – is articulated into a set of goals and strategies (see Table 2).

The goals were selected through a review of available data. They reflect pressing needs and have the potential to be effectively realized through a community-wide, collective effort led by the ACC.

The strategies communicate clearly and simply how the ACC will work toward achieving the goals over the next five years.

For each strategy, the ACC will identify performance measures, develop an action plan, and create a dashboard, enabling the ACC to monitor progress toward desired results and to course-correct along the way.

Through collective and targeted efforts over the next five years, the Buncombe County Aging Coordinating Consortium will demonstrably move Buncombe County closer toward its vision of an *age-friendly community* where older adults are *safe, well* and *engaged.*
### Table 2. Safe, Well and Engaged: Goals and Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Example Strategies</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAFE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Prevent abuse and neglect of older adults</td>
<td>Increase the numbers of vulnerable older adults who accept supportive services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase numbers of Adult Care Home staff and administrators reached through training and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Increase awareness of fraud, scam and financial exploitation among older adults</td>
<td>Increase formats and distribution of fraud, scam and financial exploitation outreach and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase numbers of older adults reached through fraud, scam and financial exploitation outreach and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WELL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Improve health and wellness among older adults</td>
<td>Increase healthy behaviors among older adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce rate of injuries due to falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Support financial wellbeing among older adults</td>
<td>Increase numbers of older adults enrolled in economic support programs for which they are eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase numbers of older adults reached through financial literacy outreach and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Support caregivers providing care to older adults</td>
<td>Increase numbers of caregivers reached through support groups and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENGAGED</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Increase older adults’ access to transportation</td>
<td>Increase number and geographical reach of transportation options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Improve older adults’ access to services and supports</td>
<td>Increase awareness among older adults of how to access information about services and supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Increase age-friendly capability of Buncombe County</td>
<td>Join WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase the number of businesses and organizations designated as age- and/or dementia-friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase numbers of frontline County employees and first responders who participate in dementia-friendly training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC): Goals and Strategies

With this (2018-2022) Aging Plan, and the concurrent launch of the Age-Friendly Community (AFC) initiative, it is imperative that the Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC) strengthen its capacity to serve as the coordinating body for increasingly more complex and cross-sector efforts to realize the vision of this plan and make Buncombe County an age-friendly community where older adults are safe, well and engaged.

**Goal 4.1:** Strengthen the capacity of the ACC to encompass the Age-Friendly Communities initiative and lead the implementation of this 2018-2022 Aging Plan effectively.

**Example Strategies:**

a. Revise the structure of the ACC to lead and monitor implementation of the 2018-22 Aging Plan.
b. Establish a strong executive committee to direct the activities of the ACC and monitor the implementation and progress/results of the Aging Plan.
c. Clarify the functions of the ACC and restructure meetings to effectively accomplish them.
d. Utilize the Governance Committee to create meaningful membership categories, facilitate an annual membership process including orientation, and revise the bylaws to reflect the restructure of the ACC.
e. Replace the Planning and Implementation Committee with work groups that set targets and create and implement annual actions plans for the Aging Plan’s goals and strategies.
f. Expand the scope and charge of the Allocations Committee to include resource development.
   1. Identify and seek new sources of funding.
   2. Develop decision-making matrix to align funding allocations with Aging Plan goals and values (e.g., evidence based/informed; interagency collaboration; equity and inclusion).
   3. Designate five percent County supplemental funds to invest in new solutions.
   4. Consider increasing amount of money set aside for this fund based upon demonstrable results.
g. Closely align Advocacy and Awareness Committee activities with the Aging Plan’s goals.
h. Establish the Age-Friendly Community Steering Team, as called for in the Commissioners’ May resolution, as a committee of the ACC.
   1. Recruit ACC volunteers/individual members to lead this initiative.
   2. Engage diverse stakeholders from across the community to participate in this initiative.
   3. Recruit increased participation by older Buncombe County residents.
i. Use Results-Based accountability to monitor the Aging Plan and its progress.
   1. Build scorecard development into funding application process.
   2. Provide training and support for programs to develop appropriate scorecards.
   3. Establish bi-annual scorecard update reports to monitor progress and results.
j. Encourage partnering between existing organizations, initiatives and community entities to collaboratively achieve the goals of the Aging Plan.
k. Employ technology to advance the goals of the Aging Plan and to create systems for improved coordination among services, organizations and other community entities.
Acknowledgments

This Aging Plan is the result of over a year of effort by many individuals. We wish to thank the following for their work and leadership in developing this plan:

- Katie Bartholomew, Mission Health Partners
- Marla Browne, United Way/NC 2-1-1
- Rebecca Chaplin, AARP Associate State Director WNC
- Ali Climo, Coordinator, Buncombe County Aging Plan
- Celeste Collins, OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling
- Marc Czarnecki, UniTe WNC Silver to Gold; OLLI UNCA
- Richard Duncan, Universal Design Institute
- Linda Giltz, Community Planner
- Cathy Hebert, Dementia Friendly WNC
- Juanita Igo, Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Inc.
- Vicki Jennings, Mountain Mobility, Land of Sky Regional Council
- Alyson Johnson-Sawyer, CarePartners Adult Day Services
- Telle King, Dementia Friendly WNC
- Gene Knoefel, Senior Tar Heel Legislator
- Bob Krollman, ACC volunteer
- Charlie Lee, Mountain Mobility, Land of Sky Regional Council
- Bill O'Connell, Communities for Older Adult Health; OLLI
- Sheila O'Connor, No Place Like Home
- Derek Parris, Premier Home Health Care
- Diane Saccone, YMCA of Western North Carolina
- Linda Stanton, ACC volunteer
- Christina Stenhouse, Buncombe County Health & Human Services
- Stephanie Stewart, Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky Rg Council
- Marsha Stickford, ACC volunteer
- Katie Swanson, Buncombe County Health & Human Services
- LeeAnne Tucker, Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky Regional Council
- Ann Whisenhunt, Area Agency on Aging, Land of Sky Regional Council
- Sharon Willen, Wiser Together Wisdom Bank; AARP Volunteer; UniTe WNC Silver to Gold
- Judy Williams, AARP Volunteer

Thanks also to Madison Agardi for field data management; to Communities for Older Adult Health for funding this internship; to Emily Lehman-Rios for help coding open-ended survey responses; and to the many Buncombe County residents who volunteered to contribute to the Aging Plan surveys.
Appendix D. Connecting the Dots — Aging Planning and Aging in Place Ten Year History: 2008—2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Events</th>
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| 2008 | Buncombe County Aging Plan (2008-2012) introduces living environments (built and natural) as one of six components of a livable, age-friendly Buncombe County.  
Goal 1, Objective 1: Housing...Provide a broad range of options that promote physical safety and independence for older adults, in a setting of their choice. |
| 2011 | Aging Plan Committee selects new focus: “Enhance opportunities for older adults to age in place: Explore the development of a Green House model in Buncombe County and identify key city and county boards and commissions that affect the development of built and sustainable environments for an aging community.” |
CCAN (Culture Change and Aging Network) is established to pursue alternative housing options for older adults in Buncombe County. |
| 2013 | New Aging Plan (2013-17) is produced, with goal 13: “Expand housing and community living options for older adults.”, with the outcome “increase housing choices for older adults.”  
Recommended strategies for goal 13 include: Work through the Buncombe County Culture Change in Aging Network (CCAN) to educate and advocate for improved and affordable housing options; improve zoning policies; ensure relevant city/county commissions and boards understand the particular needs of older adults and engage them to improve policies.  
CCAN develops and offers three half-day workshops at Land of Sky Regional Council on Aging in Place options (100 attendees)  
CCAN develops a website, with a monthly blog and resources (maintained 2013-2016). |
| 2015 | CCAN develops a virtual tour of existing Aging in Place communities  
CCAN offers an 8-week class at UNCA's OLLI "Aging in Community: Exploring the Options" |
| 2016 | Repeat of OLLI course "Aging in Community: Exploring the Options"  
OLLI, AARP and Universal Design Institute sponsor "Aging in Community: A Forum on Better Home Design" (100+ attendees)  
AARP and Universal Design Institute collaborate to produce Livable Homes for a Lifetime: Policy Analysis & Recommendations Report  
Aging Coordinating Consortium recommends to the City of Asheville and to Buncombe County to join the WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities |
- CCAN explores nonprofit status and funding options; funding from Buncombe County to support CCAN ended in Dec 2016. Ultimately, CCAN decides to affiliate with AARP and encourages individuals to get involved with a new OLLI SIG and/or AARP's Age-Friendly Communities and related initiatives

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| 2017 | - Buncombe County joins WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities  
      - CCAN launches a new Special Interest Group (SIG) at OLLI called “Thriving in Community” |
| 2018 | - One of 9 goals in the Buncombe County Aging Plan (2018-2022) is: “Increase age-friendly capability of Buncombe County”  
      - The Aging Coordinating Consortium (ACC) launches the Age-friendly Buncombe County (ABC) Initiative and begins to establish a steering team. |
Appendix E. Housing Options for Aging in Place Mission Document

Housing Options for Aging in Place (HOAP)

An Age-friendly Buncombe County (ABC) Initiative

**Vision:** All older adults living in Buncombe County have the ability and choice to age in place in order to remain safe, well and engaged in their communities.

**Strategy:** Create a comprehensive, coordinated initiative that knits together diverse stakeholders across multiple domains to effectively work toward a community where older adults have the ability and choice to age in place.

**Strategy Rationale**
In just a few years, one in five residents of Buncombe County will be age 65 or older and in fewer than twenty years (by 2035) projections suggest this ratio will be closer to one in four. Yet neither the current housing stock nor the booming development of new housing matches the expressed desire among older and aging residents to age in place. According to AARP almost 90 percent of adults age 65 and over want to stay in their current home and community as they age. However, only 1 percent of the current U.S. housing stock offers the five key Universal Design features to enable aging in place. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level."

**HOAP-ABC Outcomes**
1. The community recognizes and supports safe, accessible, affordable housing as a social determinant of health for older adults.
2. New and modified policies and practices (government, organizations) support and promote affordable and accessible housing options.

**Steering Team Partners**
AARP; Area Agency on Aging at Land of Sky; Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement (ABIPA); Asheville Realty Group; Buncombe County Community Engagement; Buncombe County Health and Human Services; Buncombe County Public Library; Communities for Older Adult Health; Connect Buncombe; Council on Aging of Buncombe County; Dementia Friendly WNC; FIRST; Habitat for Humanity; Land of Sky Regional Council; MAHEC Center for Healthy Aging; MAHEC Community Improvement Project; Mission Health Partners; Mountain Housing Opportunities; NC Works; OLLI at UNC-A; Pisgah Legal Services; RL Mace Universal Design Institute; Self-Help Ventures Fund; Skyheart Consulting; The Urban News; and more!

For more information, contact Ali Climo, Coordinator, Buncombe County Aging Plan bcncagingplan@gmail.com
Appendix F. Elder Justice Coalition Mission Document

Buncombe County Elder Justice Coalition

Mission
The mission of Buncombe Elder Justice Coalition is to strengthen our community’s capacity to prevent and address elder abuse, neglect and exploitation quickly, effectively, and with respect.

Buncombe Elder Justice Coalition is a community-wide collaboration and includes older adult volunteers and professionals from various disciplines including social work and human services, elder law, law enforcement, criminal justice, healthcare, care/case management, aging services, and many others.

The focus of Buncombe Elder Justice Coalition includes:

1. Elder-centered supportive services
2. Community awareness and prevention
3. Professional collaboration and coordination, and
4. Civic and legal protection and offender accountability

Initiatives

- Friends Against Fraud
- Elder Abuse Case Review Multidisciplinary Team
- Bi-annual professional networking and capacity-building events (typically May and November)

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Elder Justice Steering Team** – The Elder Justice Steering Team is a multi-disciplinary group that provides strategic leadership in setting the agenda and direction for the Elder Justice Coalition, and identifying and addressing systems improvements in the four areas of focus (see above).

- **Elder Justice Navigator** – The Elder Justice Navigator serves as the go-to case manager for clients involved in elder abuse, neglect and exploitation (including financial fraud and scam). This position is housed at the Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Inc. The Elder Justice Navigator also coordinates the coalition’s Friends Against Fraud program.
  Contact: Niki Duff, nikid@coabc.org

- **Buncombe County Family Justice Center (FJC)** – The Family Justice Center is one safe place where survivors of abuse can access services from multiple, on-site agencies and, as such, provides meeting space and other in-kind support.
  Contact: Diana Sierra, diana.sierra@buncombecounty.org

- **Aging Plan Coordinator** – The Aging Plan Coordinator serves as the convener of the Steering Team, including setting up and arranging for meetings, agendas and meeting notes.
  Contact: Ali Climo, aliclimo@gmail.com
Appendix G. Experienced Workforce Initiative (EWI) Mission Document

Experienced Workforce Initiative (EWI)

Mission
To support and promote the engagement of adults age 50+ in the volunteer and workforce continuum.

We accomplish this mission by:
• Educating employers and organizations about the benefits of hiring and engaging older workers and volunteers;
• Providing networking and skill-building opportunities for older adults, through job and volunteer fairs; and,
• Holding periodic “lunch and learn” events to build capacity for collaboration in support of EWI’s mission.

2019-2020 Goals:
1) Partner with Junior League of Asheville’s Volunteer Expo to feature special focus on volunteer opportunities, including stipend-based programs, for adults ages 50+ (February 29, 2020)
2) Offer the second annual Asheville 50+ Works Job Fair, featuring a traditional job fair with opportunities along the workforce continuum, from stipend-based training, to part- and full-time employment, for adults age 50+ (May 20, 2020)
3) Promote the value of hiring older workers at SHRM with presentation by Phil Lenowitz (Spring 2020)
4) Launch periodic Lunch and Learn program (to be held 12-1pm March 11, June 10, October 14, 2020). Each meeting will typically include the following three elements:
   • A tutorial presented by one partner about their work as it pertains to our mission, accompanied by a 1- to 2-page fact sheet;
   • Progress updates on 2019-2020 Goals (see above);
   • An opportunity for participants to share upcoming events, news, requests, etc. in order to promote coordination in support of EWI’s mission.

EWI Partners include: AARP; Area Agency on Aging at Land of Sky Regional Council; Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College; Buncombe County Health and Human Services; Foster Grandparent Program; Four Seasons Hospice; Home Instead; Land of the Sky Association of Volunteer Administrators; Mountain Area Workforce Development Board; NC Works Career Center Asheville; YMCA of WNC; Senior Companions Program; Silver to Gold, UnITEWNC.io Initiative for Tech Jobs in WNC; RN Patient Advocacy of North Carolina; and Others

For more information
Contact Ali Climo, Coordinator, Buncombe County Aging Plan
aliclimo@gmail.com