Baby Boomers Get Smart: Local and State Strategies to Prepare for the Aging Population

Sandy Markwood, n4a
New Partners in Smart Growth Conference
February 8, 2008
Aging of the U.S. Population

• Since 1900, the percentage of Americans age 65+ has more than tripled from 4.1% of the population to 12.4% of the population in 2005.

• In 2005 in the U.S. there were 36.8 million people over the age of 65-representing one in every 8 Americans.

• As the Baby Boomers age, by 2030, 71.5 million Americans—twice their number in 2000—will be 65+. At the point, older Americans will comprise 20% of the U.S. population, representing one in every 5 Americans.
An Aging Population
Percentage of U.S. Population over Age 65

Source: From Baby Boom to Elder Boom: Providing Health Care for an Aging Population
Percent of Population Over Age 65, United States, 2000

Percent of Population Over Age 65, United States, 2015

Percent of Population Over Age 65, United States, 2025

Percent Change in Population Over Age 65, United States, 2000–2025

The Aging Population is Getting Older

Percentage of Americans Age 65 Expected to Survive Age 90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of data: US Census Bureau

Four fold increase
The Numbers Don’t Tell the Whole Story

- Older adults, like all adults, are not one monolithic group of people.
- There is a great deal of diversity in the aging population.
- Diversity is based on: cultural and ethnic heritage, gender, disability, income, education to name only a few.
- And, there is this issue of the Baby Boomers.
Baby Boomers- Born 1946-1964

- A Baby Boomer turns 50 every 7.5 seconds.
- In 2006, the first Baby Boomers turned 60 and became eligible for Older Americans Act services.
- By 2011, the first Baby Boomer will turn 65.
- People turning 50 today have half of their adult lives ahead of them.
Baby Boomers as Citizens

- Baby Boomers have changed the face of U.S. society since they were in diapers and will continue to do so as they age.
- Baby Boomers are a generation that is demanding - They want what they want and they want it now!
WHAT KIND OF ROCKER DO YOU WANT TO BE AT 61?
Refining Aging
Redefining Communities

By their sheer numbers, the aging of the Baby Boomers is resulting in

- A New Definition of Aging
- A New Attitude Towards Aging
- A New Interest in Aging
Americans Increased Longevity

Is Something to be Celebrated!

But To Ensure that Older Americans Don’t Just Add Years to Their Lives but That We Add Quality of Life to Those Years it will require:

- Individuals
- Families
- And the Community to Plan
What Does the Aging of the Population Mean for U.S. Communities

The dramatic rise in the numbers of older Americans will impact every aspect of U.S. communities. The entire social, physical and fiscal fabric of communities will be affected by the coming age wave.
Impact of the Aging Population on Your Community

- Housing
- Health
- Transportation
- Land Use Planning
- Public Safety
- Parks and Recreation
- Workforce Development/Education
- Volunteerism/Civic Engagement
- Arts and Cultural Activities
- Economic Development/Fiscal Impact
How Will the Aging Population Impact Housing
Profile of Older Americans: Housing Status

- Of the 21.4 million households headed by older persons in 1999, 80% were owners and 20% were renters.
- About 68% of older homeowners in 2005 owned their home free and clear.
- 45.7% of the homes of older adults had physical problems.
- 89% of older adults 65+ report that they want to remain in their homes for as long as possible.
- Over half of Baby Boomers report that they expect to move to a different home in their “retirement years”.
Housing

• Modification of Existing Homes
• Development of Active Adult Communities
• Development of Affordable Assisted Living/Continuing Care Facilities
• Zoning Changes to Allow Different Types of Housing Units within Existing Neighborhoods
How Will the Aging Population Impact Transportation
Profile of Older Americans
Transportation Status:

- Like most Americans, older Americans primarily rely on private automobiles for their travel.
- By 2030, 25 percent of licensed drivers in the U.S. will be 65+.
- If an older adult has not used public transportation in the past, it is unlikely that they will begin to use it after the age of 65.
- There will never be enough public transportation to meet ALL the needs of an aging population.
- Reduced mobility can put an older person at higher risk of poor health, isolation and loneliness.
Local Transportation Options for Older Adults

• Planning Communities to Reduce the Reliance on Automobiles
• Making Roads Safer for Older Drivers
• Making Sidewalks and Street Crossings More Accessible for Older Pedestrians
• Providing Mobility Options- Transit, Paratransit, Volunteer Drivers
How Will an Aging Population Impact Land Use Planning
Land Use Planning

- Review of Master Plan
- Review of Capital Improvements Plan
- Review of Transportation Plan
- Review of Zoning and Subdivision Requirements
- Review of Building Codes
Are America’s Communities Ready for the Aging of the Population?
Maturing of America Study

In 2005/2006, n4a in partnership with the International City/County Management Association, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities and Partners for Livable Communities with the support of the MetLife Foundation conducted a national survey of America’s cities and counties to assess their “aging readiness”.
Maturing of America Survey Findings

- Less than half (46 percent) of U.S. communities had begun any planning efforts to prepare for their aging population.
- The majority of the communities that had initiated plans or programs tended to be single issue focused not yet looking comprehensively at the range of programs, policies and services.
State Efforts to Prepare for an Aging Population

- Florida
- New York
- Kentucky
- Minnesota
- Illinois
Community Efforts to Prepare for an Aging Population

Stratham, NH modified its zoning ordinance to provide an “Affordable Senior Housing” zone

- no minimum lot sizes
- accessory apartments,
- Retirement Planned Community section
- “elder affordability” under the Multi-Family Housing section.
Arvada, CO adopted an ordinance with mandates for 15 percent of new homes of all types to have universal design components.

St. Louis Park, MN revised its comprehensive land use plan to embrace the vision of “a community so special that people will consciously choose to make St. Louis Park their lifelong home”
Detroit, MI  Working with the Michigan Department of Transportation implemented new standards to assist older drivers including:

- pavement markings,
- brighter stop lights
- increased street-name signage
Planning and Designing Livable for Older Adults is:

- Good Planning = Smart Growth
- Good Governance
- Good Public Relations
- Good for Everyone
The Questions We All Need to Ask

Is Your Community A Good Place to Grow Up and to Grow Old?

Will Your Community Planning Practices Meet the Needs of Your Citizens When They are 65, 75, 85, 95 or even 105?

If Not, What Can You as Planners Do Now to Begin to Make Your Community a Livable Community For All Ages- One that Values and Supports People as They Age?
“A window of opportunity exists now for planners and policymakers to prepare to address the needs of an aging society”

U.S. Census Report, 1985
The Time to Start is NOW!
Older adults are living longer, but are they living well?
Resources from n4a

• Maturing of America Survey*
• Blueprint for Action Guide**
• Aging in Place Website/Clearinghouse- www.aginginplaceinitiative.org**

* Prepared with the support of MetLife Foundation
** Prepared with the support of MetLife Foundation in partnership with Partners for Livable Communities
Contact Information

Sandy Markwood
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20036
202/872-0888
smarkwood@n4a.org