LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES: An Evaluation Guide

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The Public Policy Institute, formed in 1985, is part of the Research Group in the AARP. One of the missions of the Institute is to foster research and analysis on public policy issues of interest to older Americans. This publication represents part of that effort. Any views expressed in this publication are for information, debate, and discussion, and do not necessarily represent formal policies of AARP.

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Eighty-three percent of older persons surveyed by AARP state that they want to remain at home as they age. Planning and community design decisions made at the local level can help determine whether older persons achieve this goal. The ability to move about the community, maintain a home, access goods and services, and retain strong social ties is directly impacted by these decisions. Sound community planning can enhance the quality of older persons’ lives.

Until recently, however, not much attention has been paid to how the physical environment can be built or adapted to help older persons maintain their independence with minimum assistance. Many common physical barriers (such as the lack of neighborhood retail stores, limited pedestrian access, and inappropriate housing stock, etc.) reduce older persons’ independence. This results in some older persons requiring services or moving to an institution before they would have to had they lived in a community that incorporated age-sensitive planning principles. Further, this approach does not meet the preferences of older persons, leaving them isolated in their homes, dependent on others, or forced to relocate. The rapid growth of the older population is increasing the pressure on communities to find solutions that maximize the independence of older persons and delay the need for expensive services or institutionalization.

To address these topics, we asked Patricia Pollack, Associate Professor in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management at Cornell University, to develop a means whereby community residents could determine the extent to which communities encouraged or impeded independence as residents aged.

This Community Evaluation Guide is intended to help AARP volunteers and other interested persons assess the “liveability” of their communities, that is, to assess whether their community has the physical features, programs, and readily accessible services that will enable older persons to remain independent. “The Community Survey” is the principal tool provided in the Guide to help answer this question. Teams of older volunteers can use the community survey to examine key aspects of communities and identify ways in which their communities can be improved. Key subject areas covered in the survey include: public transportation, driving, walking, housing, shopping, and municipal features, services and leisure facilities. Also included in this Community Evaluation Guide is a reference section that highlights additional sources of information.

As Dr. Pollak notes in her introduction, residents of a community can have an impact on planning decisions if they are willing to participate in the decision-making process. There are many such individuals within the ranks of AARP members. It is the Association’s hope that this guide will assist them in fulfilling AARP’s vision as “a dynamic presence in every community, shaping and enriching the experience of aging for each member and for society.”

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed to this project. First, although my colleague Joe Laquatra moved on to other endeavors, I very much appreciate his colleagueship and partnership during the initial phase of this project.

I thank all those who helped with the arrangements for and those who participated in focus groups in Green Valley and Tucson, AZ; Ithaca and Syracuse, NY; Lexington, KY; and Providence, R.I. I also thank the following who were generous with their time and knowledge in lengthy interviews: Bobbie Allen, Nora Baratto, Tom Cook, Pat Crawford, Joel Embry, Yvonne Fortenberry, Katherine Freund, Ray Gindroz, George Jakobi, Patricia Jakobi, Margaret McAdam, Larry McNickle, Joe Molinaro, John Pynoos, Vince Ronghi, Kathryn Ruscitto, Mattie Umsheid, and Linda Wilson.

Alice Gorman’s knowledge and skill in discussing a broad range of topics with people in many fields is very much appreciated. Her interviews yielded concepts that greatly enriched this work. Madhurima Agarwal, Raisa Bachieva, Amanda Brino, Ossie Heath-Crump, and Coraleen Rooney provided assistance with various aspects of this project. The Northeast Seniors of Tompkins County, Pat Baker, Sandy Cooper, Diane LaMontain, Pat Lauper, and Barry Stark provided helpful “user” comments.

At AARP, I appreciate the prodding of Robert Jenkens who as initial Project Officer kept this effort moving along. The assistance of George Gaberlavage and Elizabeth Clemmer who took over when Jenkins left AARP, is similarly appreciated. I also thank Randall Gibson, Barbara Herzog, Robert Hoffman, and DaCosta Mason of AARP for their review and comments.

Finally, I thank Michael, Joshua, Zachary and Laura for their patience with me and their understanding of the long hours a project like this takes.

This project is dedicated to my parents, Sue and (the late) Sydney Baron, and to Irving Meyerson who are constant reminders of why liveable communities are worth working for.
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PART ONE:
INTRODUCTION
Why Examine Communities?

All communities have older residents. The features of a community that make it a liveable place for older people benefit everyone. Our ability to go where we need to or want to go in our communities contributes a great deal to our independence. Sound policies in community planning and design, with attention to the impact of decisions on the quality of life for those of us who are older, contribute to creating a supportive environment not only for older people, but for all. Assuring that attention is paid to the impact of planning and design decisions on the lives of older residents is not special attention for a particular population. All communities have older residents. And, those who are not yet older, if lucky, will be older one day. These decisions benefit all. The features of a community that make it a liveable place for older people benefit everyone.
INTRODUCTION

The Increasing Older Population

The age of older Americans is increasing rapidly. Indeed, the U.S. Bureau of the Census estimates that at the end of 1996, the number of persons aged 65 years and older numbered just about 34 million, or about 13 percent of the U.S. population. The number of people age 65 and older is expected to more than double between now and the year 2050, to 80 million. By that year, the Census Bureau reports, as many as one in five Americans could be “older.”

Research continues to tell us that most older Americans want to remain living independently for as long as possible. Census data show that the vast majority of older Americans (95 percent) live at home in the community; only 5-6 percent live in an institutional setting. The 1996 AARP Senior Housing Survey found that there was a great deal of stability in living arrangements. Over half of the survey respondents reported that they have lived in the same geographic area for over 30 years. Forty percent reported that they have lived in the same home for more than 20 years. The survey has consistently found that over 80 percent of older Americans want to remain in their own homes. That is, they want to age “in place.”

The dramatic increase in the number of older Americans has drawn attention to the community environment and housing requirements of an aging society. After we retire from work, many of us prefer to stay in the area in which we have lived for many years. Of those who do, some stay in the same home, while others move to another home in or near the same community. Still others move to a new community perhaps for a better climate, to reduce expenses, or to be near family or friends. No matter where we live, the community in which we live is important to us. Its features and its services are the setting of our daily lives.

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
Communities and Independence

Local officials, organizations, and agencies make planning and design decisions that have an impact on our lives in many ways. Such decisions can enhance or detract from our ability to remain independent. These include our ability to move about the community; our ability to maintain a home; our ability to acquire the goods and services we need and want; and, our ability to enjoy doing what we like, need, and want to do conveniently and safely. The physical features, programs, and services that are available to us in our communities can make the difference in whether or not we consider our communities “liveable”. They can help make our daily lives a pleasure, or they can make them difficult and burdensome.

As we age, some of our priorities for a “liveable” community change. Some things become less important to us than they once were, while others become more important. For example, those of us who are limiting our driving may be more concerned now with the accessibility and safety of public transportation than, perhaps, we used to be. For those of us who are homeowners, and find our personal financial resources limited, the expense of property taxes may be an issue of greater concern now than it was in the past. In addition, as we age, some of us find that we are more interested in the familiarity and convenience of neighborhood shops and services than we are in the variety of goods available at huge supermarkets and shopping malls.

In spite of the changes in some of our priorities, most of our basic concerns prevail. We are still concerned with getting around town, although the means may have changed; with our housing, although the issues may be different; with obtaining goods and services, and with the recreational, cultural, and leisure facilities of our communities.

Our communities’ responses to various planning and design opportunities are the result of a complex mix of public policy, technical and financial constraints, and many rules and regulations. Still, with all this given, various outcomes are possible. Usually, within certain constraints, there are options and alternatives. Bus stops can be added along routes, street signs can be larger and brighter, sidewalks can be maintained, pedestrian crossings can be marked, zoning codes can be amended, neighborhood shopping areas can be made safer, libraries can acquire different materials. Some of these decisions are legislative matters. Others are matters of implementation and administration. If we care enough, and the issues are important enough to us, we, as residents of a community, can have an impact on the decisions that are made.
What this guide is for, and what is in it

*Livable Communities* is a community evaluation guide. It will help you and municipal officials, organizations, and agencies in your community examine your community’s efforts to create an environment that supports independent living as people get older. It will also help guide discussion in your community to identify areas in which local improvements can be made. This community evaluation guide has been developed by AARP to help communities support the independence of older residents.

The main part of this community evaluation guide is a community survey. The community survey focuses on the ways a community can create an environment that supports independent living for older people.

The community survey will help community residents, planners, and municipal officials examine various aspects of your community and identify ways to improve it. It will also help AARP and other national and local organizations identify areas in which public policy changes will improve communities across the country.

For more information, see Part Four. The first part of Part Four has all of the “Read More About It” references from the six sections of the community survey. The second section of Part Four is a list of agencies and organizations that have a wealth of information on the various topics addressed. The third section is a list of addresses and telephone numbers for all of the State Offices on Aging. This is included as a further source of information about programs and services that are available in each state.

The Community Survey

There are 100 questions in the community survey to help you examine various features and elements of your neighborhood or community. It is not an answer book, but rather a guide to help you look at your community. The 100 questions are divided into six sections. Each section focuses on a different aspect of the community that is important for supporting and sustaining the independence of older people. The sections include examples of various efforts from communities across the country. Each section also includes resources for additional information.
The Six Community Survey Sections

The community survey is divided into the following six sections:

1. **Public Transportation**
   Public transportation is essential for those who do not drive and for those who are limiting their driving. Most urban areas have public transportation systems. Suburban and rural areas, however, may have limited or no service. This section examines the availability, cost, safety, convenience, and accessibility of public transit services, that is, those services that pick up passengers at regular stops according to a schedule (such as bus and subway systems.) It also looks at other means of public transportation such as Dial-a-Ride, para-transit, and taxi service.

2. **Driving**
   Most older people drive. Yet, as we age, our ability to drive safely is often compromised. Some people develop reduced hearing and visual acuity. Some have slower responses than they used to. This section raises questions about community features that help us find our way and that enhance our ability to drive and park our own cars conveniently and safely.

3. **Walking**
   Many neighborhoods and communities have been developed with little attention to the pedestrian. For those who cannot or do not want to drive, walking is essential to obtain necessary goods and services. Walking is also an enjoyable way to exercise and socialize. Questions in this section address community features and policies that make it easier, more pleasant, and safer to walk about a neighborhood or community.

4. **Housing**
   The availability of appropriate and affordable housing is essential to our ability to remain independent. Various housing concerns emerge as people get older, and their interests, abilities, financial resources, and family compositions change. This section addresses issues relating to the availability of a variety of housing types, the cost of our housing, and various community programs to help us modify and maintain our homes.

5. **Shopping**
   For many people, shopping is a necessity, for others it is a pleasant personal or social activity. The ability to walk to neighborhood shops and service providers is very important for those who do not drive. Neighborhood shops and services are an important component of a liveable community. This section addresses the availability of local neighborhood shops and services.

6. **Municipal Features, Services and Leisure Facilities**
   The section on municipal features, services, and leisure facilities addresses items of personal and home safety and security, as well as services and amenities for leisure and recreation activities.
LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES: An Evaluation Guide

PART TWO:
HOW TO PROCEED
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HOW TO PROCEED
1. The Team Approach

Few people will have all the answers or the time to find the answers to all of the issues covered in the community survey. Therefore we suggest that a group of people work together as a team to complete the community survey for a community or neighborhood.

The community evaluation team has six primary tasks:

A. Defining the boundaries of your neighborhood or “community”;
B. Examining your neighborhood or community, by completing the community survey questions;
C. Discussing the answers to the community survey questions and compiling a “Master Summary”;
D. Determining “Priorities for Community Action”;
E. Developing an “Action Plan”; and
F. Acting to improve your community.

How many should be on a team?

The community survey has six (6) sections. So, six is a reasonable number of people to work on the project. A team of six people should be able to complete the community survey for a small city, town, village, or for a neighborhood within a large city. You need to be realistic, however, about the amount of time each person on the team is willing and able to contribute to the effort. In many cases, if there are sufficient numbers of people interested in the project, it would be best to have twelve (12) people work on it. With 12 people, working in pairs on each section, there is the motivation and assistance of a partner to help get the task done.

Who should be involved?

The community survey has been designed to help focus attention on how supportive your community is for older people. It is intended to help community residents and municipal officials examine communities and develop priorities for their improvement. Ideally, the team should be made up of people very familiar with your community. But, interest in the community and in improving it is the most essential qualification.

The community survey has been designed for individuals who are concerned about strengthening their community’s capacity to support independent living for all of us as we age. These individuals may be members of AARP, senior clubs or centers, local civic associations, local service clubs, homeowners associations, religious groups, or members of any one of many different types of local organizations or clubs. They may also be community leaders of government or private organizations or business individuals who are concerned about ensuring a positive community environment that meets the needs of its residents.
Each team should have a **Coordinator**. The Coordinator should be someone with good administrative and leadership skills. The Coordinator is responsible for coordinating meetings and helping to keep all participants on track. It is important to have a Coordinator to keep the team focused.

**The Coordinator is basically responsible for the following tasks:**

- Assembling the team;
- Assuring that all sections of the community survey are assigned;
- Assisting with questions about the community survey;
- Helping with resources or sources for answers;
- Assembling the team when all community survey sections are complete;
- Coordinating the team meeting(s) to review the community survey responses;
- Coordinating discussion about the importance of issues;
- Working with the team to develop “Priorities for Community Action”; and
- Working with the team to develop and carry out any “Action Plans” the team wishes to pursue.

In a neighborhood group, the team may appoint a Coordinator by consensus. Two people might be interested in and willing to do the job together. If the project is sponsored by an agency or organization, a staff person from that agency may serve as Coordinator.

The Coordinator serves in the role of manager of the project. The Coordinator should be someone who is well organized and helpful to others. Even though the Coordinator has many responsibilities, the primary work of the project is done by the team members. The Coordinator plays the key role of getting everyone involved and helping as necessary.

Generally, the Coordinator will be the primary source of information about the project’s activities. That is, if there is a question about when and where a meeting will take place or where to go for particular information in the community, the Coordinator will be the person to call. The best Coordinator will keep the team motivated and will move the project along as a team effort.
3. Define Your Community

Municipal government uses a legal, political definition of community. This is the administrative jurisdiction by which services are provided and taxes to support these services are collected. But, it is not always what we think of when we think of “our community.” The community survey was designed to help you make the place in which you live, that is, the place in which your daily life is centered, a more liveable place. For the purpose of this project, it is important that your team carefully consider what, exactly, you mean when you think of “your community.”

Liveable Communities: An Evaluation Guide was developed to examine issues in a wide variety of places. It can be used in neighborhoods of a large city as well as in a small town or village. The community you examine need not be a legal, political jurisdiction. It may be a section of a larger place, such as a neighborhood of a large city or an area of a rural county. You may designate an area that crosses the political boundaries of more than one legally defined municipality. The community you examine should be the area you think of when you think of the place in which you primarily conduct your daily life.

Your group, however, needs to decide just what that place is. That is, where exactly are the boundaries of the “community” you will examine? If you live in a large city, your community is most likely one particular neighborhood of that city. If you live in a small village, this will probably be the entire legal, political jurisdiction of that village. In a rural community that encompasses a large area within its political boundaries, your “community” will be the section of the area that you think of as the place where you live. For those living in suburban areas, your “community” will depend on the size (in terms of population), distance, and activity of the place. Some suburbs are large and densely populated with numerous local neighborhood shopping areas and a lot of traffic and activity. Some are smaller places more closely approximating a small town or rural village. You need to decide whether a “whole community” approach or a “neighborhood” approach is the best in terms of what you think of when you think of your “community.”

Before you decide on what exactly you mean by your “community,” you should look over the community survey. Get a sense of how it is organized and what it asks. Communities vary. Some have several transit operations, some have none. Some have zoning and some do not. “Small” is a relative concept and teams will vary in size. The neighborhood or community your team examines will depend on what your community is like, the number of people working on the community survey, and the available time and skills of the people involved. Don’t be too ambitious but don’t think too small either. As you look over the kinds of questions in the community survey, you will get a sense of how these apply to the place where you live.
HOW TO PROCEED

Use a map

One good way to start is to get a street map of your community. As you look at the territory you consider to be your community, the map will help you define boundaries. When you look at streets, remember that people live on both sides of streets. Unless a road is a major arterial or highway, your boundary line will probably not be the street itself, but rather the midpoint, or the center of the block, between two streets. Remember that the community survey is a tool to examine the features and policies in your community, not a house-to-house survey. Including one or two blocks more or less will not alter your results. It is more important to have consensus than disagreement among team members. But you do need a good sense of what the territory is that you will be considering. Drawing boundaries on a map of the community will help keep everyone focused on the same area.

The map of your community or neighborhood will be helpful in several ways:

1. When you answer questions such as where more bus shelters are needed, or where pedestrian crossings need to be added, the map will help you locate the places you are thinking of.

2. If you are getting information from an agency or organization in your community, the map will help the person you are speaking with focus on the area you are considering.

3. If you present your findings to a community group, agency, or organization, the map will be a visual tool to show them the area you considered and the places improvements are needed.

What kind of map?

Start with a street map of your community. There are many sources for community maps. Maps can usually be obtained from one of the following: your local chamber of commerce, the transit company, the community tourism board, or the municipal planning or building department. Many communities have commercially prepared maps that are sold at convenience stores, drug stores, or newsstands. You may also be able to obtain a free map from a local realtor.

While a street map is a good start, unless it is large enough and has enough detail, it will not be very useful when you want to locate specific places that need improvement. Unless you can get a large scale “plot” map like the ones used for community planning, you may want to enlarge your map on a copying machine. Make it big enough so you can label places and features that are important as you work through the community survey. These will include items such as: bus stops and/or shelters, parking lots, street crossings, sidewalks, apartment buildings, shops, benches, and, perhaps, water fountains. Be sure to work with a map that is large enough to be useful for this project.
4. Complete the Community Survey

Section assignments and meetings

At the first team meeting, the project will be introduced, and each person participating will select a section to work on.

Each team member needs to know precisely what is expected of him or her, that is, which part of the community survey he or she is responsible for. If you have six people on the team, each one will have a separate section of the community survey. If you have more than six people, people can work on sections in pairs.

The coordinator should keep a list of the team members, their addresses, telephone numbers, and section assignments.

The team might decide to have a second, midway meeting. The group might feel that a meeting before all of the sections are scheduled to be finished would be useful to see how things are coming along. With an effort like this, once you get started, several people often have the same or similar questions. A mid-way meeting is very helpful to raise these questions and share the answers to them. There may be questions about the community survey itself and about good sources of information in the community. In addition, sections are not all the same length or the same degree of complexity, and people have different amounts of time they are able to devote to the project. Some sections will be finished before others. Perhaps someone who has completed his or her section might be willing to help with another section. A midway meeting is a good way to touch base and help everyone.

The group might decide that a midway meeting won’t be necessary and the second meeting will take place when all of the team members have completed their sections. In this case, the date for the second meeting will be set by the group as the date by which everyone agrees to have his or her assigned section completed.
Skip some questions

The community survey has been developed to apply to many different types of neighborhoods and communities. These include: neighborhoods in large cities, suburban communities, small towns, villages, and rural areas. Obviously, it will not be perfect for every place. The community survey was designed as a guide, and to raise issues commonly faced in many different communities.

Not all questions in the community survey will apply to every community. In some communities, there will be questions that simply are not appropriate. When you come to questions that do not apply to your community, skip them. Not every question has to be answered. There also may be issues in your community that the community survey does not address, but which you feel are important. Add comments or notes in the margins about these issues. The community survey should be thought of, and used, as a tool to help you examine your community and the ways it helps support the independence of older residents. Use the community survey as a tool to increase your knowledge about your community and to identify ways your community can be improved.

Remember
There are no right or wrong answers to the community survey questions. The community survey is a tool to help you focus on issues that enhance independent living for older persons in your community. It is a tool to help raise awareness of the elements of your community that make it a liveable and pleasant place for all. It is intended to help focus attention on the things that can be improved to allow us to continue to live independently as we get older.
How to answer the questions

Each community survey question has the option of being answered “Yes,” “Needs Improvement (N.I.)” or “No.” While, at first, this may seem straightforward, it isn’t. There are some questions that, when you think about them, really are simple “Yes” or “No” issues. For example, one question asks, “Will the police department or other agency in your community do in-home safety checks upon request?” If the police department or another agency does this, then a simple “Yes” is the answer. If they do not, then check the “No” box. Similarly, “Does your community have at least one drug store open at all times?” If one or another drug store is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, then check the “Yes” box. If not, “No” is the appropriate response.

Many questions, however, are not clearly “Yes” or “No” issues. Questions need to be carefully considered for each community. For example, one question asks, “Are there bus/transit shelters to protect passengers from the weather?” In many communities with a bus transit system, there are bus stop shelters at some, but not all, bus stops. So, neither “Yes” nor “No” is completely accurate. The person (or people) completing the “Public Transportation” section of the community survey should note in the margin by the question where there are shelters and where there are none. When this question comes up during team discussion of each of the community survey responses, the team, as a whole, will decide how to respond. If the group feels that the shelters that exist are adequate, “Yes” will be the appropriate response. If the group feels that the community would benefit from additional shelters at well-used bus stops, then “Needs Improvement (N.I.)” would be the best response. In reality, many of the items that the community survey asks you to consider, in most communities, could be improved. Your team will exercise its collective best judgment in determining the best response to each question.

Where to go for help

There are references and resources for many items in the community survey. All of the questions in the community survey deal with subjects and concepts with which anyone interested in creating a liveable community environment for older people should be conversant. If the material covered in a question is unfamiliar, try the references cited, or contact an appropriate organization listed at the end of this publication.
5. The Community Survey Team Review

When all team members have researched each of the questions in their sections of the community survey, the entire team will meet to go over all of the responses to each section and come to consensus about the answers. The purpose of the team review is to discuss and clarify answers to the questions.

This will probably take several meetings. If there is overall agreement among the members of the team, this may be done in a meeting or two. If there are differences of opinion, and much discussion, then it will take longer.

Remember, the idea is not to finish the community survey, but to use it to get a good sense of how well your community meets your needs. Team discussion is a very good way to learn more about your community. And this knowledge is one purpose of the community survey. Do not rush team discussion of responses in order to finish the community survey.

The community survey is a team effort. Therefore, the team should agree, or come to consensus, on the responses to all of the questions. That is, even though each section was initially worked on by one or two people, others on the team may have something to say or add to the response. There are many questions in the community survey that are matters of judgment. There are no right or wrong answers. While one person might feel that certain things in the community are fine as they are, others might feel that the same item needs improvement. The opinions of all should be listened to and respected. There is room on the community survey to make notes. The purpose of the community survey is to get a sense of how well the community meets the needs of its residents. So, the opinions of all count. When the community survey is finally completed, it should reflect a team effort, not the sequential efforts of individuals.
HOW TO PROCEED

How to review the answers

When all sections of the community survey are complete, the person, or people, who worked on each section will report to the group, question by question, what they found. If others on the team have something to add, this will be the time to do it. Team discussion will improve how well the community survey responses reflect your community. You may find that many of the questions will be best answered as “Needs Improvement (N.I.).” Just how much improvement, and whether there is interest in working towards those improvements, will be up to the group to determine later on. (See #7: Develop Priorities for Community Action). The discussion about responses to each of the questions will be very helpful when the time comes to set priorities for action in your community.

Each person will bring to the team meeting the information he or she has learned about each item in the community survey. In some cases, it will be an answer. In some cases, it will be information for the group, as a whole, to consider in determining the best answer for the community. For example, one question about mini-vans or other special transportation for older persons in the community asks: “Is the Special Transportation service free for older persons in your community?” If it’s “free” (that is, there is no charge for anyone using the service at any time) then you will have checked: “YES.” If there is a fee for using the service, you will have checked “NO.” But, what if the service is free for some people and there is a charge for others? The person looking into this question should inquire about the fee structure and make notes in the margin near the question. Then, the fee structure should be explained at a team meeting. If there is a fare, and it seems to be both fair and affordable to the group, then the response will be “No.” But make note of the team’s judgment in the margin. When it comes time to decide about the priority of this item for your community, the notes will remind you of this discussion and will inform your judgment about the issue. If, however, in the fare question example, the team feels that the fare structure could, or should, be improved, then “Needs Improvement (N.I.)” would be the best response. This will flag the question as possibly one to work on at a later time.

Interpreting the responses to the questions is one more reason why team meetings to review responses are important.
6. The “Master Summary”

The team should record its responses to each of the questions on a “Master Summary.” The Master Summary is simply another copy of this Evaluation Guide that is set aside and labeled for just this purpose. The purpose of the Master Summary is to compile all of the community survey responses concisely, in one place. When it is filled out, the team will be able to review all the answers, agreed upon by all members of the team, in one place.

When you look down the columns you will see which items are marked “Yes,” and which are “Needs Improvement (N.I.)” or “No.” Many “Yes” answers suggest that your community is making a good effort toward being a liveable place. The items that will be possible areas for improvement in your community are the ones that are marked “Needs Improvement” or “No.” Remember, every community is different. Not all questions marked “No” are appropriate for your community. Some may well be things that just do not apply.

The Master Summary will call attention to areas in which your community can be improved. The items marked “Needs Improvement (N.I.)” or “No” will be a guide to your team or to others in your community in identifying possible areas for improvement.
7. Develop Priorities for Community Action

After your team has reviewed and summarized all of the responses to the 100 questions of the community survey, you have the opportunity to consider just how important each and every item is for your community.

As a team, you will consider the importance of each item for your community. Not all items are important for every community. Some of the items that you have noted as “No” or “Not Available” in your community may be important and others may be simply unimportant. For example, one question asks: “Are there sidewalks throughout your community?” If your community does not have sidewalks, and your team feels that the provision of sidewalks is not an important issue for your community, then you would consider this item as irrelevant or not important. If, on the other hand, you feel that sidewalks would be a big improvement for your community, you might rank this item as very important.
8. Develop an Action Plan

After you determine which of the items are priorities for your community, you need to decide whether your group is willing and able to go further. That is, your team must decide if it wants to develop a plan of action to make improvements in the community and follow through on that plan.

Your team might decide that it would like to move to action on an item, but would like to enlist the support, cooperation, or partnership with another group or organization in your community. Or, your team might decide that it would prefer to proceed on its own, at this point, and see what happens. You can always decide to work with others at a later time.

You may decide that your group has neither the interest nor the time to work to improve some aspect of your community. In this case, you should think of your community evaluation as a helpful resource to others in your community. There are numerous agencies and organizations, both public and private, that might appreciate and benefit from the work you have done. These include agencies and organizations whose efforts have scored high marks, as well as those who would benefit from learning where improvements can be made. Agencies such as the Office for the Aging, the planning department, the police department, the transportation department, and the parks department are just examples of a few. There are also non-governmental organizations and clubs that might want to proceed with action on some of the items you have identified. Consider Cooperative Extension, the League of Women Voters, and other service clubs and organizations. Look over what you have found and consider which agencies or organizations would be appropriate. Completing the community survey was a serious undertaking, and others in the community will be able to use the information that you have compiled if your group decides not to.
HOW TO PROCEED

Decide on one specific item for action

The first step in developing an action plan is to determine the one specific problem area your group will take action on. Look over the priorities for community action that your team has developed. Consider the priorities, the interests, and the capabilities of the members of your team. You will need to decide, as a group, on one thing to tackle.

There are various ways to do this. The easiest is if, in your group discussion, one item emerges as the one everyone wants to work on, and all agree that the group has a reasonable chance of success. Unfortunately, this is quite unlikely. It is more likely that there will be several items that members of your team feel are important enough and manageable enough for the group to tackle.

To narrow down the list, you might ask each member of the group to write down five to 10 specific items that he or she feels are appropriate for group action. Use a blackboard or large sheet of newsprint to list all of the items that are suggested. A few items will probably be named by more than one person. It will not be possible to select everyone’s first choice as a first item to act upon. Aim for consensus. That is, work to select an area that might not be everyone’s first choice, but is one that all will agree is an area worth devoting some effort to. Your team may decide to start with an item that you believe would be relatively easy to achieve. An alternative is an issue that is currently on the agenda of a local agency such as the planning commission, highway department, or local library. These types of issues can be considered “targets of opportunity” for your opinions and perspective.

Remember that success is a wonderful motivator for continued action. It is almost 100 percent certain that there are a number of areas in which your community could be improved. You can always go on to work to improve other areas after your first success.
HOW TO PROCEED

Clarify the problem

The following are some suggestions of points to consider about each of the items that are possibilities for action.

1. What is the goal of working on that item? What, specifically, do you hope to accomplish?

2. Why should the problem be solved? How will the community benefit? Who will benefit?

3. Why does your group want to work on this area?

4. Who is affected by this problem?

5. Who is/are the responsible parties for making the desired change?

6. Who will support change? Why? How?


8. Are there other groups in the community that are now or might be concerned about this problem? Are they already working on this problem? Can you work with them? Or, will they work with you?

9. What resources will your group need to take action? People? Money? Media?

10. How much time will it take to work on this problem?

11. What additional information will you need? Where will you get it?

12. Does your group have the time and skills to work on this alone, or would it be best to work with others to achieve the goal?

13. What is the likelihood of success?

List strategies to accomplish the goal

In order to refine your answers to the questions above, it will be very helpful to make a list of all the strategies, actions, and activities you can think of to achieve each goal. This will help you clarify the goal and develop a realistic sense of how each might be accomplished. After you make this list for each possible goal, go back over the questions above. Then, refine your list of activities to reach the goal. This list will be your tentative plan of action.
Evaluate your plan

Consider the following for each tentative plan of action you have developed.

1. Do you have a realistic plan for accomplishing the goal?
2. Is there a reasonable chance of success?
3. Will the strategies you have outlined accomplish what you want?

Now, go back over your list of strategies, actions, and activities. Be sure that the questions above have been addressed. Refine the list of strategies to develop a working plan of action.
9. Act

Now that you have an action plan, it is time for action. That is, you have decided what your goal is and have determined the steps and resources needed to accomplish it. You have determined that your plan is realistic and that you have a reasonable chance of success with it. It is now time to organize your activities and take action.

Make a list

Make a list with three columns.

Column 1. “Task.” Itemize each task, meeting, or activity.

Column 2. “Responsibility.” Delegate responsibility for each task to a particular person.

Column 3. “Date.” Set the date by which each task will be completed.

As you proceed, be prepared to modify your goal or the strategies or tasks required to accomplish it. You may find that you need more information than you originally planned. You may find that it will be important to join with another group to accomplish your goal. Plan to meet regularly to discuss progress and reevaluate and modify your plan, as necessary.
10. Celebrate!

Plan to celebrate your success when you have accomplished your goal. You have worked hard to make an improvement in your community. The community will benefit now and in the future. You deserve to enjoy that success and to have others recognize and acknowledge your accomplishment.

This is not the time to be modest or shy. Sharing your success lets others know that if they care about their community, they, too, can make a difference.

Your success can motivate others to become involved. Celebrate it!
LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES: An Evaluation Guide

PART THREE:
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY
PART THREE:
COMMUNITY SURVEY
1. Public Transportation

If we think of public transportation as the ways we get around town that are not at our own personal disposal, there are many types of public transportation that are available in U.S. communities today. These include subway systems, light rail systems, commuter bus services (those that go between suburb and city), and community bus systems. To help assure mobility, many communities have paratransit services for older persons. Sometimes this transportation is provided in small buses or vans, sometimes in private autos. Some of these can be part of the public transportation system. Taxicab service is also a means of public transportation.

Across the country, the availability of public transportation varies greatly from community to community. Some communities have multiple modes of public transportation, including bus, light rail or subway service, para-transit services, and taxis. Some communities have one bus system, and some have multiple bus companies with overlapping service in certain areas. Other communities have no bus service and only taxi service, and still others have no public transportation services at all.

There are many issues that could be addressed with regard to public transportation. In general, we want to know what services are available, when the service is available, and the locations that are served. We are also concerned with the cost, safety, convenience, and accessibility of all the forms of public transportation available to us in our communities.

The following section raises questions to help you think about how well served the people in your community are by public transportation. There are questions about bus (or other scheduled transportation) services, Dial-A-Ride and other para-transit services, and taxi service.

The purpose of this section is to find out how well your community is served by public transportation and to identify items that, with some improvement, would enhance the liveability of your community for older people.

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.

**Light rail** is usually an electric railway system that uses one- or two-car trains often operating at or near ground level.
Because most communities do not have rail transit systems (light rail or subway systems) or multiple bus service providers, the following questions have been designed for a community with a single bus system. Your community, however, may be one that has more than one bus service provider or has light rail or subway transit in addition to bus service. If that is the case, you should complete all of the questions regarding bus or other transit services for each scheduled transit service available in your community.

To do this, simply complete this section of “The community survey,” using a separate copy of it, for each public transit service available in your community. If there is more than one para-transit service provider or taxi service available in your community, do the same for each of these.

1. Does your community have bus or other transit service?

   Yes  N.I.  No

   That is, does it have a fixed route transportation system where passengers are picked up at regular stops according to a published schedule?

   □  □  □

   If “No” Skip To #20

List all the bus, light rail, and other regularly scheduled transportation services in your community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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*N.I. = Needs Improvement
The following responses apply to the ____________________________ Transit System.

(Insert the name of the applicable transit service)

The following questions have been designed for a community with a single bus system. If your community has more than one bus service provider, rail, or other scheduled transportation service, use a separate copy of this section to report on each one.

2. WHEN is this transit service available?

For this question: if your community has bus (subway or light rail transit) service during a particular time period, but the service is infrequent or not available for the entire time period, “Needs Improvement” would be the appropriate response.

Yes N.I. No

2a. 7 days a week, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day

2b. Monday thru Friday - daytime

2c. Monday thru Friday - evenings and nighttime

2d. Saturday - daytime

2e. Saturday - evenings and nighttime

2f. Sunday - daytime

2g. Sunday - evenings and nighttime

2h. Holidays - daytime

2i. Holidays - evenings and nighttime

Your local bus company should be able to assist with the answers to the these questions. The telephone number of the bus company can usually be found in the “Yellow Pages” under “Bus Lines.”
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Public Transportation

On some public transit services, the driver or an automated announcement lets passengers know what stop is coming up. Those passengers wishing to exit can prepare to do so.

3. Are upcoming transit stops announced?  
   Yes ☐    N.I. ☐    No ☐

4. Are major shopping areas well served by this transit service?  
   ☐  ☐  ☐

5. Are the hospitals, clinics, or medical centers that serve the people in your community accessible by this transit service?  
   ☐  ☐  ☐

WHICH are not?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Bus Shelter Lighting

In King County, WA (the Seattle area), the King County Metro (bus system) has a Bus Zone Lighting Improvement Program to provide additional lighting to increase bus passenger and operator safety at bus stops.

For more information, call King County Metro at: (206) 684-1614.

6. Are there transit shelters to protect passengers from the weather?  
   Yes  N.I.  No
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________

   If “No” Skip To #7

6a. Do most of the bus transit shelters provide adequate protection from the weather?  
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________

6b. Do most of the transit shelters have a place to sit?  
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________

6c. Do most of the transit shelters have enough space to accommodate wheel chair passengers?  
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________

6d. Do most of the transit shelters have bright lighting for nighttime passengers?  
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________

6e. Are there enough transit shelters in your community?  
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________

WHERE are transit shelters needed?
Check with your local transit system to find out if its fleet of vehicles is accessible to people with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Physical barriers to using transportation services can be a serious problem. Many buses or vans can be hard to get in and out of even when one is in good physical condition. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that all public transportation become more accessible to people with physical and sensory disabilities. Although the ADA was intended primarily to help those with disabilities to have equal access to all opportunities, many health conditions experienced by older people qualify them for special ADA-mandated services.

7. Do buses (or rail transit cars) in your community have lifts or other ways to help people get onto and off the vehicle?

Transportation Accessibility

In Oregon, TRIMET, the Tri County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon operates approximately 85 bus lines running through the three counties of the district. For persons who are older or handicapped who can not ride buses, even with lifts, there are specially equipped vans that provide door-to-door service. The fare for people over the age of 65 is 55 cents per ride at all times, a reduction from the regular fare of $1.35. There is also a monthly bus pass available for $12.

For more information, call TRIMET at: (503) 238-4952.

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
8. Is it easy to get bus transit route and schedule information? 

8a. Are printed bus transit schedules available in public places? 

Where should bus transit schedules be made available?

8b. Can you call the bus transit company for route and schedule information? 

8c. Is transit schedule and route information available on community cable television? 

Remember: Skip questions that do not apply to your community.
Bus Schedules and Maps

Many transit systems have complicated schedules and routes. Some transit systems have paid special attention to making their schedules and route maps easy for the public to read and understand.

In Westchester County, NY, the map for the “Bee-Line Bus System” has been designed for easy readability. The text is printed in 12 and 14 point type; and street names on the map are in 9 point type. The four different types of service are distinguished by color. Transit riders can easily determine which bus service serves their travel area.

For more information about these maps, call the Westchester County Department of Transportation at 914-682-2020.

For the following questions: Use your own knowledge of the community and information you learn from speaking with others in the community along with information you obtain from the bus company. Your opinion and that of other community residents may differ from that of the bus company. Considering all of the information you have, use your best judgment to answer the following questions.

9. Are printed schedules and maps for your community clear and easy to understand?  
   Yes  N.I.  No

10. Are the transit stops clearly marked?  
    Yes  N.I.  No

11. Do you feel safe using the transit system in your community?  
    Yes  N.I.  No

12. Do most transit stops in your community have an emergency call box?  
    Yes  N.I.  No

Remember: the perceptions and opinions of all community residents are valid and important.
13. In your judgment, do most older people in your community feel that the fare for public transportation is affordable?

Yes  N.I.  No

---

**Bus Fares for Older Persons**

*The Westchester County (NY) Office of Aging* provides a “half-fare I.D. card” for people 65 years of age and over. It applies to fares and transfers, anytime, for transportation on the Westchester County Bee-Line bus system. The picture I.D. card costs $4.00. For information, call the Westchester County Office of Aging at: (914) 665-5900.

*In Providence, RI the Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA) offers a Senior Pass that is good for five years and costs $5.00 for older persons with moderate to low income. People age 65 or older may use the Senior Pass to ride weekdays before 7 am, during the day from 9 am to 3 pm, and after 6 pm. The Senior Pass may be used all day on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. For information about the Senior Pass, call RIPTA at: (401) 784-9524.*

---

14. Is there a reduced transit fare for older persons in your community?

Yes  N.I.  No

---

The following two questions apply ONLY TO BUS SERVICE. Discuss the following with your local bus company:

15. Can you “flag” a bus to pick you up on any corner?

16. Can you ask the bus driver to let you off the bus on any corner?
Use your knowledge of your community along with information you obtain from the bus company.

17. Is it easy to reach a bus stop from most of the homes in your community?

WHERE are bus stops far from homes in your community?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

18. Are all areas of your community well served by buses?

WHERE is bus service needed?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

WHERE is more frequent bus service needed?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
Paratransit

The Volunteer Transportation Program serves the rural communities of the Lafayette, IN area. There is no public transportation serving this area. Van transportation is provided seven days a week. The program is a cooperative venture between the five town councils, the Area IV Agency on Aging and volunteers in each community. There are weekly trips to take riders to downtown Lafayette for shopping, medical appointments, personal needs, recreation, and educational purposes. Riders can also request transportation on days when there are no scheduled trips. The van drivers are volunteers. There are no fees, but a donation is requested. For more information, call: (765) 447-7683.

In Portland, ME, The Independent Transportation Network provides transportation in private cars for people who are limiting their driving or have given up driving entirely. The service operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Some drivers are paid, some are volunteers. Drivers assist passengers at the end of the trip with wheelchairs, packages, or negotiating stairways, etc. Passengers pay for the transportation service. Rates are estimated to be about half the price of a taxi. For more information, call: (207) 772-2077.

For assistance with this question: call the Area Agency on Aging (or Office for the Aging) that serves your community. Look in the “Yellow Pages” under: “Information Services and Bureaus,” or “Social and Human Services.”

19. Does your community have Minivan, Dial-a-Ride, or some other “special” (paratransit) transportation service for older adults?  

Yes  N.I.  No

If “No” Skip To #21
If more than one “special” transportation service serves your community, Duplicate this page and complete the following questions for each service.

20. The following responses apply to the

______________________________________ Transit System.

(Insert the name of the applicable transit service)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20a. Is anyone 60 years of age or older eligible to use the Minivan, Dial-a-Ride, or special transportation service?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20b. Does the Minivan, Dial-a-Ride, or special transportation service have someone (the driver or an assistant) to help passengers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>20c. Can an older person bring a guest or assistant to help as necessary?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20d. Is the Minivan, Dial-a-Ride, or special transportation service affordable for older passengers in your community?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20e. Is the Minivan, Dial-a-Ride, or special transportation service available to take an older person:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To a medical appointment?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. To a social engagement (such as visiting a friend)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Shopping?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. For religious observance?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Remember: Skip questions that do not apply to your community.
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Public Transportation

In your judgment and from the information you have learned,

20f. Are there additional days or hours that special transit service is needed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

WHEN is additional service needed?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

In your judgment and from the information you have learned,

20g. Are there locations where special transit service is needed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

WHERE is service needed?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________
How many taxicab companies operate in your community? _____

If “None”, Skip To #22

Yes  N.I.  No

21. Is taxi service available in your community? □ □ □

21a. Is taxi service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in your community? □ □ □

That is, if your community has more than one taxi service provider, is at least one service operating at all times?

WHEN is taxi service not available?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

In your judgment and in the judgement of others in your community,

21b. Is the taxi fare reasonable? □ □ □

21c. Is there a reduced fare for older persons? □ □ □
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Public Transportation

If your community has more than one taxicab service provider, duplicate this page and complete the following questions for each service.

The following responses apply to the

__________________________________________ Taxi Service.

(Insert the name of the applicable taxi service)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>21d.</strong> Is this taxi service prompt?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>21e.</strong> Are the taxis clean and well maintained?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>21f.</strong> Do passengers feel safe using this taxi service?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Call the taxicab service and ask the following:

**21g.** If passengers require assistance, is it company policy for the taxi driver to help?

---

**Los Angeles CITYRIDE Program**

Los Angeles CA, has a program, called CITYRIDE, that enables city residents aged 65 or older and persons with mobility impairments to purchase a booklet of “transit scrip” that can be used to defray the cost of monthly bus passes, paratransit, or taxi service. Passengers may purchase one booklet of 60 “transit scrip” (peel-off stickers) for $15, each calendar quarter. The cost of the scrip booklets are reduced to $6.00 for Medi-Cal and SSI recipients. The “transit scrip” is applied toward the bus pass, lift-van Dial-a-Ride, private lift-van, or taxicab fare. For taxicab rides, up to eight scrip (costing the passenger $2.00) may be used to pay up to $8.00 of the fare.

For more information about CITYRIDE, call: (213) 808-7433 or the Los Angeles Transit Service information line at: (213) 580-5444.
2. Driving

According to the AARP, “[p]ersons over the age of 65 make over 90 percent of their trips by private vehicle, either as a driver or as a passenger.” In addition, “[i]n 1990, 75 percent of all persons 65 and older were licensed drivers...It is projected that by the year 2000 more than 90 percent of those 65 and older, both male and female, will be licensed drivers.”* Because driving is a means that so many older people use to get around town, it is important to look at our communities and identify ways that roadways, parking, and signs might be improved from both a safety and convenience perspective.

This section addresses factors that make getting around town by driving easier, not only for older people, but for all in the community. Clearly visible street signs and well designed and signed parking lots and structures all contribute to improving the safety and convenience of driving in our communities.

Read More About It:*  

Read More About It:*  

Making Streets That Work

The city of Seattle has published a neighborhood planning tool, Making Streets That Work. It is a comprehensive handbook designed to guide residents through the neighborhood planning process. With a focus on making streets safer, more attractive, and workable for everyone, it covers a wide range of transit, driving, and pedestrian issues. Even though the book is addressed particularly to Seattle, the range of physical improvements, operational changes, and planning tools detailed, present numerous ideas and solutions to transit, traffic, and pedestrian problems common in all communities.

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
Clear and visible street name signs are important when we are in unfamiliar areas of our communities, when we are looking for a new address, when the weather is dreary, or when it is dusk or night-time. These are situations all drivers face. In many communities, in numerous places, there are no street signs at all, or they are small or inappropriately located. Street signs are replaced periodically and can often be improved in terms of lettering size and placement. There are no known regulations against having street signs at every corner! Improved street name signs contribute to driving safety by permitting drivers to read the signs from a greater distance and therefore allow them more time to anticipate a turn.

Street name signs are the province of the governmental unit responsible for the particular street or road. To discuss improving the visibility of street name signs, as they are replaced in your community, call the appropriate office for the street in question. This may be the state, county, city, town, or village’s department of transportation, highway department, engineering department, or public works department.

Call the highway department, public works department, or department of transportation in your community for help with the following question.

22. Are there street name signs at EVERY intersection (main streets and roads as well as side streets) in your community?

WHERE are street name signs needed?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

Some communities are replacing small size street name signs with signs that are larger and easier to read.
Larger Street Name Signs

Taking the aging of the population into account, the New York State Department of Transportation, Design Department specified street name signs with six inch lettering when Route 222 in Cortland County NY, was re-paved. The new signs are on 12 inch (high) panels rather than the usual eight inch panel with 4 inch lettering. The engineer-in-charge of the project determined that a seven foot high placement was optimal. All specifications meet the requirements of and are within the guidelines of the federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), 1988.

New street name signs for both the main road as well as the side streets were placed at every intersection. The new street name signs are larger, brighter, and placed lower than usual. The resulting signs are very easy to read for both drivers and pedestrians. The new signs should contribute to greater safety for all.

In your opinion and in the opinion of other residents of your community,

23. Are the street name signs in your community large and easy to read from a distance?  

WHERE do street name signs need to be improved?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
The Community Survey — Driving

One way to determine this is to think about the various places you go and the times you go there. If you go shopping or to the bank at particular times because you know that parking will be easier at that time than at other times, perhaps there are places in your community where additional parking is needed.

24. Are the street addresses of homes and apartment buildings in your community well marked? Yes □ No □ N.I. □

25. Does your community have sufficient parking?

WHERE is additional parking needed?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

Note: If your community does not have any parking lots or parking garages/structures skip to question #31.
LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES: An Evaluation Guide

**THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Driving**


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In your judgment,

**26.** Are the parking lots and structures in your community lighted well enough for you to see where you are going when you park your car there at night?

WHERE does night lighting need to be improved?

---

**Parking Signage**

*When we park our car in a large parking lot for any length of time, it is sometimes difficult to remember where we parked it. Some people attach plastic flowers or other markers to their car to help locate it. Many parking facilities have clever signage systems to help drivers remember where they have parked their cars.*

---

In your judgment,

**27.** Do the parking lots and parking structures in your community have adequate, clear, and well-marked location signs?

WHERE is improved parking signage needed?

---

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.*
In your judgment,

**28.** Do the parking lots and parking structures in your community have wide enough, clear, and well-marked parking spaces?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] N.I.
- [ ] No

**29.** If there is a multilevel parking facility in your community, does it have a walkway separate from the driving lanes?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] N.I.
- [ ] No

In your judgement,

WHICH parking lots or structures need improved walkways?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Some multilevel parking structures have pathways separate from driving ramps for pedestrian entry and exit.

Some multilevel parking structures have elevators to access the street level.

**30.** If there is a multi-level parking facility in your community, does it have an elevator?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] N.I.
- [ ] No
Handicapped Parking Enforcement

In Onondaga County, NY, the Sheriff’s Department sponsors a program to recruit and train volunteers to ticket cars illegally parked in designated handicapped spaces. Volunteers for SHAPE (Sheriff’s Handicapped/Ambulatory Parking Enforcement Program) are sworn in as Parking Enforcement Officers. They primarily patrol medical centers and shopping malls.

For more information, call: 315-435-3056.

Call your local police department for information about handicapped parking and its enforcement.

31. Does your community have designated handicapped parking?  
   Yes  N.I.  No

   31a. Is the designated handicapped parking enforced in your community?
   Yes  N.I.  No

Speed Limits

In some communities and in some neighborhoods, it seems as though drivers pay no attention to speed limits. When speed limits are established for public safety, as they usually are, traffic that exceeds the speed limit jeopardizes us all.

Discuss the following with your local police department.

32. Are the speed limits enforced in your community?  Yes  N.I.  No

   32a. Are there places where enforcement should be improved?

   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
3. Walking

There are many communities and neighborhoods that have been developed with little attention to the pedestrian. In some places, residential subdivisions have no sidewalks and are separated from shops and other areas of the community by major highways. These highways mean that many of us cannot walk safely, securely, or easily from our home to a friend’s home, shops, a library, a park, or a bus stop that may be only a short distance away.

Walking is an enjoyable way to exercise and socialize. For those who cannot or do not want to drive, walking is essential to obtaining necessary goods and services. For individuals, walking contributes to mobility, personal health, and pleasure. For communities, pedestrian activity contributes to neighborhood and community vitality, economic vitality, and overall liveability.

Fortunately, there are many things communities can do to improve the environment for those who walk and for those who would enjoy walking more. Questions in this section address some features and policies that make it easier and more pleasant to walk about a neighborhood or community. These include: the design and maintenance of sidewalks, the availability of benches and other places to rest, and various features to improve personal safety.

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
Discuss the following with your local department of public works, department of streets and roads, department of transportation, or highway department. (The appropriate telephone number will be listed in the “White Pages” of your local telephone directory under the name of your community.)

Yes  N.I.*  No

33. Are there sidewalks throughout your community?  □  □  □

If “No” Skip To #36

WHERE are sidewalks needed?
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

Clean Sidewalks

Clean Sidewalks
In some communities, environmental factors (such as snow, sand, or leaves) can sometimes make walking difficult. Some communities have ordinances that require that the homeowner or tenant keep the sidewalk in front of their property clear.

Syracuse, NY, is a city with a lot of snow. The average snowfall for the five winters of 1991-1992 through 1995-1996 was 153 inches. In 1996, Syracuse started to actively enforce an ordinance requiring property owners to keep the sidewalks clear of snow and ice. Residents who are unable to clear or cannot afford to have the sidewalks cleared can call a central telephone line (the city’s information and service request line) and be referred to a neighborhood volunteer group that will clear their walkways.

*N.I. = Needs Improvement
For the following questions, use your judgment in addition to information you obtain from others.

34. Are the sidewalks well maintained throughout your community or neighborhood?  

WHERE does sidewalk maintenance need to be improved?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

34a. Are the sidewalks in your community kept clear:

In summer?  

In winter?  

WHEN does sidewalk maintenance need to be improved?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

35. Are the sidewalks in your community wide enough for at least two people to walk together?  

In some communities, sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the municipality; in others, it is the responsibility of property owners.
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Walking

Do you (or others you know) avoid walking on certain streets at night because it is too dark?

36. Is there street lighting throughout your community? □ □ □

36a. In your judgment, is the street lighting adequate throughout your community? □ □ □

WHERE does street lighting need to be improved?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Discuss the following questions with the public works department and the police department in your community.

37. Are there enough traffic signals in your community to allow pedestrians to cross streets? □ □ □

WHERE are traffic signals (for pedestrian crossing) needed in your community?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Turtle Buttons**

The City of Edmonton, in Alberta, Canada has experimented with a “Turtle Button” alongside the regular pedestrian signal street crossing button. This “Turtle Button” provides for a longer time for the pedestrian to cross the street. Reviews of the button have been mixed. Since they aren’t a common municipal feature, some people aren’t sure what their purpose is, and there has been discussion about a good name for the device.

For more information, call the City of Edmonton, Transportation Department 403-496-1791.
38. Are traffic signals in your community set at a pace so that pedestrians can cross the street without feeling rushed?  

WHICH traffic signals need to be adjusted for the benefit of pedestrians?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

39. Does your community have pedestrian traffic signals with push buttons to stop traffic on busy streets?

WHERE would pedestrian push buttons be helpful?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

40. Do traffic signals in your community have an audible signal to indicate when it is safe to cross the street?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Audible Traffic Signals

In Salt Lake City UT, there are traffic signals that “chirp” when it is safe to walk across the street in a north-south direction and “cuckoo” when it is safe to walk in the east-west direction.

For more information, call the Salt Lake City Division of Transportation, Traffic Operations engineer at: 801-535-6630.
**Long Blocks**

Some communities have long blocks between intersections. Sometimes, because of parking or the location of homes or facilities, we need to cross the street in the middle of these blocks, and walking to the intersection, across the street, and back on the other side of the street is just too long a distance.

From your knowledge of your community and from information you learn from your local public works or highway department...

41. Are there midblock crosswalks or pedestrian traffic signals on long streets with no intersections?  

41a. WHERE are these needed?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**Yield to Pedestrians**

Several states have laws that motorists must yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. In some states, like California, drivers do yield to pedestrians. In others, the law is rarely enforced. Princeton, has added zebra-striped crosswalks, brick markings, and signs to remind motorists that pedestrians (not motorists) have the right-of-way.

From your knowledge of your community and from information from your local public works or highway department...

42. Are the crosswalks in your community well marked?  

43. Do the sidewalks at all intersections have “curb cuts” or “curb ramps” that provide a gradual transition from the sidewalk to the roadway?
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Walking

Street trees are not only aesthetically attractive, but on hot sunny days add much needed shade for pedestrians.

44. Does your community or neighborhood have trees on most streets?

WHERE are street trees needed for shade?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

Bicycles and Pedestrians

In some communities, bicycle and roller skate traffic on sidewalks makes walking difficult or unpleasant.

Davis, CA, is a densely populated community of 53,000 people with a history of encouraging “alternative” transportation. It is estimated that over 90 percent of Davis residents (of all ages) ride bikes at one time or another and that there are over 50,000 bicycles in Davis (the highest bike-per capita rate in the nation.)

In Davis, eighty percent (80 percent) of the main streets have bicycle lanes (on the streets) or bike paths (separated from the roadways). Davis also has a city ordinance that prohibits bicycles and skaters from using the sidewalks in the downtown core area (the central business district.) There, the sidewalks are reserved for pedestrians. The ordinance is enforced, and bicyclists and skaters who violate it are subject to a fine.

For more information, contact the Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator in the Davis, CA Public Works Department, Engineering Division, at 530-757-5686.

Discuss this with your local Police Department

45. Do bicycles or roller skaters make walking difficult in your community?

WHERE?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
Pets and Pedestrians

While many people enjoy having dogs as pets for companionship or security, dog waste can sometimes pose a problem for pedestrians. Where this occurs, walking can be unpleasant. When dogs are unleashed, they can pose a safety and security hazard for pedestrians.

The following questions can be answered by the city, town, or village clerk in your community. The Police Department (or, in some communities, the Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) should be able to assist regarding enforcement.

46. Does your community have a dog-waste clean-up law?  
   46a. Is it enforced?

47. Does your community have a leash law?  
   47a. Is it enforced?

Benches

Many people walk. Some simply enjoy walking for pleasure or exercise, others walk to obtain necessary goods and services. Regardless of the reason that we walk, many of us need or want to sit and rest awhile along our way.

From your knowledge of your community,

48. Are there resting places (benches or low retaining walls) near walkways?  
49. Are there enough resting places (benches or other places to sit) in your community?

WHERE should benches or resting places be added?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Walking

In areas of the country where there are many hot sunny days, it is important that we not become dehydrated. Communities in these areas often have public water fountains in areas of significant pedestrian activity.

Discuss the following with your local police department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>50.</strong> Are benches and resting places adequately shaded from the sun?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>51.</strong> Are there adequate public drinking fountains in your community?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

WHERE are drinking fountains needed?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Consider the climate in your area, and in your opinion,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>52.</strong> Would you feel safe walking in all areas of your community?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**52a.** WHICH areas do not seem safe?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

**52b.** WHEN are these places not safe?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
**Public Telephones**

Public telephones increase our sense of security. When phones are available, we know we can call for assistance if it is needed.

53. Are there public telephones throughout your community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**Signs**

Visible and readable signage on public buildings and on shops make it easier for us to find the destinations we seek.

54. Are the signs on public buildings and shops throughout your community easy to read?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
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</table>
4. Housing

Housing is a basic need, and most Americans are well housed. Yet, as people get older, and interests and abilities, financial resources, and family composition change, housing problems may develop in three areas:

1) For some, routine maintenance may become difficult, and the expense of paying others to do it may be too great a financial burden;

2) Physical modifications may be required to meet the resident’s needs; and

3) People may need or want to move to housing that is more suitable for their current circumstances.

Through community programs, run by public or private agencies or organizations, communities can help older people maintain or modify the homes in which they live. Through public policy, communities can assure that a variety of housing types are available and affordable. This section addresses issues relating to the availability, affordability, and maintenance of housing in your community.

AARP has prepared A Guide to Local Housing Resources for Older Persons. This workbook is for compiling information about various housing programs and alternatives in communities. Each page is designated for a separate type of housing or housing support program. Each item is defined, and space is left for you to fill in what is available in your community. Its purpose is to serve as a working notebook to update information on the programs and services available in your community.

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
Home Repair Programs

The Lexington KY, REALTOR-Community Housing Foundation runs a once a year, two-day (Friday and Saturday) “Repair Affair” program. Homeowners who are over the age of 60 and meet income eligibility guidelines complete an application requesting assistance with exterior home repairs. The Remodelers Council of the local Home Builders Association provides volunteer technical expertise to: assess project eligibility and to specify supplies, equipment, labor, and time for each project. The Council also provide on-site expertise and supervision. A “House Captain” coordinates the volunteer labor at each site. Volunteers come from local business and corporate sponsors and the local community, in general. For more information, call: Repair Affair, Lexington Board of Realtors, 606-276-2693.

The Visiting Nurses Association of Texas collaborates with the Dallas Area Agency on Aging to offer a range of minor home repair and plumbing services to low-income older people living in Dallas County. Repairs include building ramps, installing doors and security locks, replacing flooring, and adding grab bars and shower heads. People who can do odd-jobs and plumbers are employed by the VNA. Financial support comes from Title III of the Older Americans Act. No fees are collected, but a donation of 10 percent of the cost is requested. For more information, call: 214-689-0022.

The New York Foundation for Senior Citizens offers a free “Minor Home Repair Program” for low- and moderate-income older people living in all boroughs of New York City. The program will do weatherization, carpentry, plumbing, electrical, masonry, and gutter repair work. Materials are supplied by the client. For more information, contact the New York Foundation for Senior Citizens, 150 Nassau Street, New York, NY 10038. Phone: 212-962-7653 or 212-962-7817.
Call your local Area Agency on Aging and senior clubs and centers for information about home repair programs.

**55.** Does your community have a Home Repair Program to assist older persons with minor interior or exterior repairs?

- Yes  
- N.I.*  
- No

**55a.** Is the program well publicized?

- Yes  
- N.I.*  
- No

**55b.** Does the program cover ALL KINDS of home repairs?

- Yes  
- N.I.*  
- No

What kinds of repairs are NOT covered?

______________________________________________  
______________________________________________  
______________________________________________  
______________________________________________  
______________________________________________  
______________________________________________

**Read More About It:**


---

**Seasonal Chores**

*The Syracuse NY, Public Works Department (315) 448-2489 works with neighborhood groups and other groups such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to undertake spring cleanups called “trash bashes.”*

*In the greater Cincinnati OH, and northern Kentucky area, People Working Cooperatively (PWC) run two seasonal programs called “Prepare Affair” in the fall, and “Repair Affair” in the spring. The idea is to help people with winter preparations, such as: leaf raking, putting up storm windows, cleaning gutters, putting away lawn furniture, etc. People requesting assistance check off the help they need on an application. Applications are distributed to participating community groups and organizations. The community groups recruit volunteers for the work that needs to be done. For more information, call: 513-351-7921.*

Call your local Area Agency on Aging for information about assistance with home chores.

**56.** Does your community have a program to assist with routine or seasonal home maintenance chores (such as snow removal, yard work, gutter cleaning, etc.)?

- Yes  
- N.I.*  
- No

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.*

*N.I. = Needs Improvement*
Many (but not all) communities have land-use regulations. These can be in the form of land-use plans or zoning ordinances, or both. These plans and regulations guide land-use development in the community. They address the requirements for and the location of housing as well as other kinds of development within the community.

While many older people enjoy living in the same single-family home they have lived in for many years, others prefer multifamily or apartment type dwellings to single-family housing. Still others prefer age-segregated housing built especially for older people. In most communities with land-use regulations, multifamily housing is allowed only in specified areas. Some communities, however, have no accommodation for any “multi-family” housing development at all. Older people who wish to live in such housing must then leave the community.

If the land-use regulations of a community do not permit multifamily housing, either generally or for seniors in particular, to be developed within the community, then a change in the plan or an adjustment to (or variance from) the zoning regulations will be required to remedy the situation. Laws which bar group homes may violate the Fair Housing Act. Your local Housing, Building, Planning, or Zoning Department or Code Enforcement officer should be able to show your community’s plan and zoning regulations to you and should be helpful with the following questions.

57. Are there any special housing complexes or apartment buildings especially for older people in your community?

57a. Does the land use plan or zoning ordinance for your community allow multifamily housing to be developed?

WHERE does the ordinance allow multi-unit housing for older people to be developed in your community?

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
Housing Options for Older Persons Today

In recent years, a number of new housing options for older people have become increasingly popular in U.S. communities. These include accessory apartments, elder cottages (also known as granny flats or ECHO housing), and shared residences. In New York State, Cornell Cooperative Extension has developed the Housing Options for Seniors Today (HOST) program to inform the public about these housing options and the ways communities can respond to make them available. There is a consumer workbook, videotape, and a Leader's Guide available. The Leader's Guide includes a detailed public education curriculum.

As a result of the HOST program and increased public interest in these housing options, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County obtained funding to staff its own HOST program. As a result of the HOST program’s public education efforts, a number of communities have amended their zoning to permit a wider array of options. The HOST program has also coordinated with a local not-for-profit housing company to purchase and manage six elder cottages (see following), and has inspired the local vocational education school to build a demonstration elder cottage. The school is now working on developing a shared residence for older people.

For information about HOST materials, write to: Housing Policy Programs, Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University, Martha Van Rensselaer Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853 or visit the website: http://www.cornell.edu/Admin/ELHOU.html

See It:

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
Accessory Apartments

Some older homeowners no longer want, or can no longer afford, the expense or effort of maintaining all of the space in their home. Yet, many people do not want to leave the home in which they have lived for many years, or would find it difficult to do so. In some areas market conditions make selling a home difficult. In other places there are no small housing units or apartments available.

In order to help older homeowners who wish to stay in the community, yet who also wish to reduce the amount of space and the expense of a large home, many communities across the country have amended zoning regulations to allow the creation of a small “secondary” apartment, either wholly within or attached to an existing single-family home. These are called “accessory apartments.”

Zoning is often amended to allow “accessory apartments” in single-family neighborhoods to enable older residents to remain in their homes, in their communities. When income is received from renting the accessory unit, it helps pay for property taxes and maintenance on the home. Because accessory apartments are additional dwelling units created within a single-family home, most communities develop regulations to insure that the new units do not alter the character of the single-family neighborhood in which they are installed. Zoning regulations often address issues such as where the “accessory apartments” may be created, the size of the unit, appropriate occupancy, design standards, parking, and other items.

Read More About It:*  


*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
Your community code enforcement officer or Village, Town, or City Clerk should be able to help with zoning regulations.

**Zoning Note**

In some communities, there are no zoning regulations governing land-use development. In some states, zoning is a local matter and is developed at the municipal level. In other states, counties are responsible for zoning. Some states have statewide regulations that address the issues raised below for the entire state. Regardless of the locus of zoning authority for your community, you should be able to find the answers to the following questions from an appropriate local office. This may be the county, city, town or village clerk, code enforcement officer, or planning department.

58. Do the zoning regulations for your community allow accessory apartments?  

58a. Are accessory apartments allowed in all residential areas of your community?  

WHERE are accessory apartments allowed in your community?

(Note: If your community is not governed by zoning regulations, accessory apartments will be allowed in all areas.)
**Read More About It:**


---

**Elder Cottages**

Concerned about older residents or residents with aging parents who need some assistance but not nursing home care, some communities have amended zoning ordinances to allow “Elder Cottages.” An “Elder Cottage” is a small, freestanding home that is placed on the same property as an existing residence. In **Australia** these units are called “Granny Flats.” In **Ontario, Canada**, the units are called “PLUS” (Portable Living Units for Seniors). Elder Cottages are often installed for a parent or other relative and can be removed when they are no longer needed. To assure that the units provide needed housing for older people and that they are moved when they are no longer needed, a community can set up a program whereby a not-for-profit organization owns the units and leases them to eligible families for as long as they are needed. When the unit is no longer required, the agency then moves the unit to another site for use by someone else. (See “Better Housing” below.)

Elder Cottages can be installed wherever zoning and other land-use regulations permit them. As information about Elder Cottages spreads, regulations continue to be adopted by communities across the country. **Snohomish County WA**, adopted an Elder Cottage ordinance for the “temporary” placement of the units, in 1976. In 1988, **Torrington CT**, amended its zoning regulations to allow the placement of an Elder Cottage on the same lot as a one-family dwelling. In 1994, the **Town of Ithaca NY**, amended its zoning regulations. An Elder Cottage is defined as: “...a separate, detached, temporary one-family dwelling, accessory to a one or two family dwelling...” Regulations for Elder Cottages address many of the same issues as those for Accessory Apartments.

---

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.*
Better Housing: Elder Cottage Demonstration Program

Better Housing for Tompkins County (NY), Inc., is a not-for-profit organization that works to develop and improve housing opportunities in the rural areas of the county. The organization is now embarking on an Elder Cottage Demonstration Project. The New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) is providing grant funds for the purchase of six units. The units will be owned by Better Housing and rented to families throughout the county. The units will enable older relatives to live close to their adult children, but not in the same home. When any one unit is no longer needed, Better Housing will move the unit to a new location for use by another family. For more information about the Elder Cottage Demonstration Program, call Better Housing for Tompkins County, Inc. at: (607) 273-2187.

59. Are elder cottages permitted in your community?  
   Yes □  N.I. □  No □

59a. Are elder cottages allowed in all residential areas of your community?  
   Yes □  N.I. □  No □

WHERE are elder cottages allowed in your community?

(Note: If your community is not governed by zoning regulations, elder cottages will be allowed in all areas.)
Read More About It:*  

(Call the facilities in your community and ask if there is a waiting list.)

**Board and Care and Assisted Living Residences**

These two types of residences can serve many purposes and vary widely in their set-up. Because terminology varies among the states and state regulations and licensing requirements also vary, it is often difficult to distinguish the two types of residence from their name. Both types of homes have staff to provide residents with services, helping with various aspects of daily living. They both serve a frail and/or impaired population. Persons living in such residences are usually people who need more assistance than they can readily obtain at home, either from family and friends or from paid assistants.

Board and care homes are residences that provide room, board, limited assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and grooming, and/or some degree of protective supervision to adults.

In assisted living residences, residents live in their own private apartment-like units and select and arrange for the particular services they need. A broad range of services are usually available. These services typically include 24 hour a day monitoring and unscheduled assistance by staff. Assisted living residences can seem very similar to high-service board and care homes, but assisted living residences are more likely to encourage residents' autonomy and independence, including resident involvement in selecting services, and private living quarters.

Call your state Office for the Aging, local Area Agency on Aging and/or Long-term Care Ombudsman Program for information about the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60. Are there residences in your community for older people who need regular care or assistance services?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60a. Are there sufficient facilities for the need in your community?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
**Shared Residences**

The Shared Residences addressed in the following questions are quite different from Board and Care and Assisted Living residences. A Shared Residence is a single-family home in which a group of unrelated people live in a family-style atmosphere. It is for well, independent, older people who want to live with others, sharing the responsibilities (and pleasures) of a household. There are no services or staff for the home, other than those that any single-family home might have if financial resources were available. Some homes might have help with such chores as housekeeping, gardening, or meal preparation; others might not.

In some communities, zoning limits the number of unrelated people who can live together in a single-family home, thereby restricting the establishment of shared residences for well, independent older people. Such restrictions can usually be found in your community’s zoning regulations in the “definitions” section, under the term “family.”

Your community code enforcement officer should be able to help with the following:

61. Are there any shared residences for well independent older people in your community?

   Yes  N.I.  No

61a. Are shared residences for older people permitted in the zoning regulations for your community?

   (Note: If your community is not governed by zoning regulations, shared residences will be allowed in all areas.)

   WHERE are shared residences for older people allowed in your community?

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
Harvest House: Shared Residence

Over a decade ago, Sister Jeanne Brendel, a trained social worker, became aware of the need for good living situations for some of the older people she was working with. She decided to set up a small household with an emphasis on the quality of life, where people could live together “family style.” While much of the work of developing and subsequently running Harvest House has been done by Sister Jeanne, she enlists the help of others who have needed expertise.

A foundation was set up to accept donations and purchase a single family home in a single family neighborhood in Syosset NY, on Long Island. Municipal officials had to be educated that a number of unrelated people could live together as “family,” and not be a boarding house. After some effort, the home received zoning approval.

In addition to Sister Jeanne, Harvest House can accommodate eight individuals in private bedrooms. Bathrooms, kitchen, and living room are shared. Residents prepare breakfasts and lunches. Dinner is prepared by Sister Jeanne or a volunteer from the community and is eaten family style. Residents help in and out around the house as any member of a family would.

Residency requirements for Harvest House include a minimum age of 65 and the ability to pay a share of the expenses. The eligibility screening process assures that the applicant is able to live independently and has commitment to the “family model.”

For more information about Harvest House, call: 516-496-9796.
Property Taxes
Over 80 percent of older Americans own their own home. For many, the current expense of property taxes is a concern. For others, there is a concern about this expense for the future.

Call your local tax assessor for information on property tax exemptions.

**Property Tax Exemptions**
In many states, there are special property tax reductions for people over a certain age. Some states grant this exemption to older homeowners without any income qualifications, others have income eligibility guidelines. Sometimes, the state allows it, but municipalities must individually choose to adopt the exemption program.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>N.I.</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>63.</strong> Is there a program for real-property tax exemptions (for income-qualified older persons) in your community?</td>
<td>□ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>63a.</strong> Is the program well publicized?</td>
<td>□ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>63b.</strong> Are the application forms readily available?</td>
<td>□ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>63c.</strong> Is assistance in completing the application available?</td>
<td>□ □ □</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Property Tax Deferrals**

Some states have a program where an older homeowner can borrow (against the equity he or she has in the home) the amount of real property taxes. Repayment is deferred until the property is sold or title is transferred at death.

The California “Senior Citizen’s Property Tax Postponement Law” permits residents who are 62 years of age or older and meet income and home ownership guidelines to participate in a property tax postponement program. Applicants apply to the state, annually, for a certificate that may be used to pay all or a part of their municipal property taxes. A lien is placed on the property to protect the state’s interest. Participants retain title to their homes. Municipalities receive anticipated tax revenues. When the house is sold, the amount of taxes postponed, plus interest, is repaid to the state from escrow. If a participant dies, the postponed taxes are repaid from the estate.

For more information, contact the State Controller in Sacramento CA, at: 800-952-5661 (for California residents); or, 916-323-5700 (for those outside of California).

There are similar statewide programs in Illinois, Maine, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin. Nine other states have similar programs available at local option.

64. Does your state (or community) have a program of real property tax deferral for older homeowners?  

   Yes  N.I.  No
5. Shopping

For many people shopping is a necessity, for others it is a pleasant personal or social activity. Many people prefer to patronize local, neighborhood shops where they know the staff and feel familiar and comfortable with the service. Others patronize shops close to their homes because they do not have a car to go elsewhere, public transportation is inconvenient or an added expense, or they do not want to depend upon others for transportation. The 1996 AARP Senior Housing Survey found that 54 percent of respondents reported living within walking distance of a food store, and 42 percent lived within walking distance of a drug store. About half of those living within walking distance of these types of establishments reported that it was important to them to be so close. And, about a third of those who don’t live close to food and drug stores reported that they would like to be able to walk to these places. Older respondents, women, and those with lower household incomes were more likely to say that being close to shops and services was important.

This section addresses the availability of local neighborhood shops and services. Parking for large community shopping areas is addressed in the “Driving” section.
Mixed-Use Areas

Community plans and land-use regulations specify where various land uses may be located. In addition to residential land-use, such plans and regulations also address the location of industrial and commercial activities. Some communities completely separate business and commercial activity from residential areas. Others allow various types of businesses to be located in or near residential areas. Mixed-use areas are those in which both business and residential activity are allowed.

Plans and land-use regulations are public policy and can be changed if there is a desire to do so. If your community does not permit shops and services to be located in or near residential areas, a demonstrated need and community support can bring about change. Such issues can be discussed with the local planning board or commission or local city, town or village council or officials.

For assistance with the following questions, call your city, town, or village's planning department. The number should be listed in the telephone directory under the name of your community.

65. Do most neighborhoods in your community have shops such as a drugstore, a bank, a barber, a hairdresser, a coffee shop, a dry cleaners, a book store, and a sundries store?  

[ ] Yes [ ] N.I.* [ ] No

 WHICH neighborhoods (areas) do not have shops?

 __________________________________________

 __________________________________________

 __________________________________________

 __________________________________________

 __________________________________________

 __________________________________________

 __________________________________________

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.

*N.I. = Needs Improvement
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Shopping

66. Can you walk to a grocery store from most homes in your community?  Yes  N.I.  No

WHICH neighborhoods in your community do not have a local grocery store?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

67. Do grocery stores deliver in your community to older peoples’ homes?  Yes  N.I.  No

67a. Will they deliver to all areas of your community?  Yes  N.I.  No

WHICH areas are not served by delivery service?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

68. Do grocery stores have an escort, assistance, or carry-out service?  Yes  N.I.  No

69. Do large supermarkets have motorized shopping carts?  Yes  N.I.  No

70. Do large supermarkets have a sitting or resting area?  Yes  N.I.  No

Call the grocery stores in your community to discuss these questions.
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Shopping

Call the drugstores and pharmacies in your community to answer these questions. Look under “Pharmacies” in the “Yellow Pages.” Remember: large supermarkets and other stores sometimes have a pharmacy department.

71. Does your community have at least one drugstore open at all times?

72. Are there drugstores that offer delivery service to your community?

72a. Will they deliver to all areas of your community?

WHICH areas are not served by delivery service?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

Call the drugstores and pharmacies in your community to answer these questions. Look under “Pharmacies” in the “Yellow Pages.” Remember: large supermarkets and other stores sometimes have a pharmacy department.
6. Municipal Features, Services, and Leisure Facilities

This section examines a variety of municipal features, services, and leisure facilities that might be available in your community. It includes items addressing issues of personal and home safety and security, as well as municipal features and amenities that might be available for leisure and recreation activities.
The following questions should be discussed with a crime prevention officer at your local police station. The telephone number of the police department can be found in your local telephone directory under your community’s name.

73. Does your community have neighborhood police stations? ☐ ☐ ☐

Public Safety

_In Broomfield CO, a community of 30,000, the Police Department has an officer assigned to provide education and intervention, on a full-time basis, to the community’s 3,000 older residents. Educational programs on topics such as crime prevention, physical security, weather emergencies, fraud, and physical neglect and/or abuse are offered at the local senior center._

_For more information, call: 303-438-6437.

74. Does your police department or other community agency have a program to educate the public about safety and security? ☐ ☐ ☐

74a. Is this program well publicized? ☐ ☐ ☐

75. Will the police department or other agency in your community do in-home security checks upon request? ☐ ☐ ☐

76. Does your community or neighborhood have a “Crime Watch” program? ☐ ☐ ☐

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.

*N.I. = Needs Improvement

Read More About It:*

Call your local newspaper(s) to discuss the following:

77. Will local newspapers in your community stop delivery for a short period of time?

In your judgment and from information you obtain from others,

77a. Is the “stop delivery” service reliable?
**Home Safety**

Accidents in the home are a major cause of injury. Many older people are especially vulnerable to serious and lingering injury from in-home accidents. A simple fall can result in an injury that limits independence.

The New York Foundation for Senior Citizens offers free home safety checks for older people living in all boroughs of New York City. The idea is to help people identify and correct safety hazards in the home. This program works in conjunction with their free minor home repair program.

For more information, call: 212-962-7559.

78. Is there an agency in your community that will do in-home safety checks upon request?  

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Call your local Area Agency on Aging to ask about house safety checks.

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*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.*
Leisure Activities

Different communities and different areas of the country have different facilities for leisure and recreation activities. Some places have an abundance of outdoor facilities, others have a predominance of indoor facilities. The availability of theater and other cultural facilities also varies. There are certain facilities, however, that are fairly common throughout the country. The questions below ask about those.

Swimming

Many older people enjoy swimming laps or exercising in a swimming pool. For those with mobility impairments, pool exercise is often very important for health. Mild water exercise is often more comfortable in a pool that is heated a bit more than one that is used for lap swimming.

79. Is a public swimming pool available to the residents of your community?

79a. Is it open all year long?

79b. Is it kept at a comfortable temperature for older people?

Golf

Many older people, when and where the weather permits, enjoy playing golf. One does not need to belong to a country club to do so. At public golf courses, greens fees are often less expensive during the week days when retired people can play than they are on weekends. In fact, 23 million golfers in the U.S. regularly play at a daily-fee or municipal golf course.

80. Does your community have a public golf course?
Tennis
Tennis can be enjoyed indoors or out. It is a relatively inexpensive sport that can be played at many different levels of intensity. Some communities have public indoor courts. Others have outdoor tennis facilities.

81. Does your community have public tennis courts?

Yes  N.I.  No

Bowling
In many parts of the country, bowling is a very popular activity. In fact, in some places, leagues reserve so much lane time that it is difficult to play an occasional game.

82. Are there bowling facilities in your community?

Yes  N.I.  No
Municipal Parks

On Staten Island, in New York City, the New York City Parks Department has received funding for the construction of a “Senior Citizen’s Area” in Clove Lakes Park. The special area will front on a major street and will be constructed near three bus stops. The area will be enclosed and will have an entrance gate near the bus stops.

The special area was designed and approved by people in the community. At community residents’ request, the area will have raised beds for neighborhood residents to plant, an accessible pavilion for concerts and lectures, an exercise area, benches with backrests, water fountains, a nature trail, chess and checkers boards, and a horseshoe area. The entire area will be built on-grade for easy accessibility.

Eventually, the Department of Parks would like to add a building that will include a reading room, space for indoor recreation, and rest room facilities. For more information, call the Staten Island Division of the New York City Department of Parks at (718) 390-8004.

83. Are there parks in your community? ☐ ☐ ☐

If, “NO” skip to: #86

84. Are the parks in your community safe and pleasant to be in? ☐ ☐ ☐

85. Are there benches in all parks? ☐ ☐ ☐

85a. Are there enough benches? ☐ ☐ ☐

WHERE are benches needed?

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

85b. Do park benches have backrests and armrests? ☐ ☐ ☐

*See Part Four for information on locating or ordering materials.
To answer the next two questions, call the theaters in your community. Look in the “Yellow Pages” under: “Theaters.”

86. Does your community have a movie theater? [ ] Yes [ ] N.I. [ ] No

86a. Are earphones for hearing assistance available at local movie theaters? [ ] Yes [ ] N.I. [ ] No

Call your local theaters for the performing arts for assistance with the following.

87. Are earphones for hearing assistance available for symphony, opera, theater, or other performances? [ ] Yes [ ] N.I. [ ] No

Public Libraries

Most communities in this country have at least one public library. The library is a resource for all sorts of information: fiction and non-fiction books, reference materials, audio and video materials, local and out-of-town newspapers, periodicals, and computer data terminals.

Larger communities often have a main library as well as neighborhood branches. Yet, as municipal budgets get tighter, some communities consider reducing or eliminating public library resources and/or services. The number of books in a library's collection does not tell us how useful a community resource it is. There are other factors to consider, such as ease of obtaining the books.

88. Does your community or neighborhood have a public library? [ ] Yes [ ] N.I. [ ] No

If, “NO” skip to #90

88a. Is the library easily accessible? [ ] Yes [ ] N.I. [ ] No

88b. Is your community library open:
evening hours? [ ] Yes [ ] N.I. [ ] No
on weekends? [ ] Yes [ ] N.I. [ ] No
The librarian should be able to assist you with the following questions.

88c. Does the library in your community have a program to deliver books to people who are homebound?

Books By Mail

The Palm Beach County Florida Public Library system has a Books By Mail department. They will mail: regular books, large print books, and Talking (audio) Books to county residents who are unable to get to the library.

People who would like to receive Books By Mail complete an application that asks for the patron’s name, address, and reading material preferences. The application needs to be signed by a health professional. After the application is returned to the library, the library contacts the patron and sends a catalog of books available. Patrons who receive Talking Books are also lent a tape player, for as long as they wish. There is no charge to patrons for the service or for the postage to receive or to return the books to the library.

For more information, contact the Palm Beach County Public Library system, Books By Mail department at: 561-845-4600.

89. Does your community library have audio tapes of books?

89a. Does your community library have videotapes?

89b. Does your library have large-print books, newspapers, and periodicals?

89c. Does the library have a public-access computer connected to the Internet?
**THE COMMUNITY SURVEY — Municipal Features, Services and Leisure Facilities**

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**Lifelong Learning**

In 1976, the Kentucky Legislature passed a bill that allows any adult over the age of 65 to attend any institution of higher education in Kentucky that receives state funding, tuition free. Qualified students may audit or take classes for credit.

**The University of Kentucky**, in Lexington, and all community colleges in the state (community colleges are part of the University system in Kentucky) have a Donovan Scholars program. The Donovan Scholars program has been in existence at the University of Kentucky since 1964. A Donovan student may take any academic class on a space available basis. There are also a large number of noncredit classes set up just for Donovan scholars, such as: art classes, computer classes, Great Decisions, radio drama, annual writing workshop, wellness, etc. To date, there have been 36 Donovan Scholars that have received degrees from the University of Kentucky and currently the number of Donovan scholars taking classes at the University per semester averages 550 individuals.

For more information about the University of Kentucky, Donovan Scholars program contact: Sanders Brown Center on Aging/Donovan Scholars Program, Ligon House, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0442. 606-257-2656.

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Forty states waive or reduce tuition in their public colleges for people who have reached a certain age.

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Call your local college, university, and board of education to discuss the following.

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**90.** Do the high schools, vocational education schools, college(s) and/or universities in your community offer courses that seniors can participate in at low or no cost?

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Yes  N.I.  No
Use your judgment and knowledge of the community for the following questions.

**Hospitals and Doctors**

Adequate, available, and affordable health care is, obviously, extremely important. For many of us, the availability of appropriate health care and associated health related services, such as podiatry and optometry, is an important factor in where we choose to live. This publication focuses primarily on the physical aspects of communities, and therefore, does not address the supply or quality of a community’s health care services. Still, the availability of health care is very important.

91. Does your community have a hospital or medical center?

92. Does your community have a 911 Emergency Access program?

**Neighborhood Maintenance**

In some places, trash on the streets has become a problem. When this happens, not only are the streets unpleasant for us as pedestrians, but our pride in our neighborhood diminishes. When the municipality takes good care of our public areas, we enjoy our community more and tend to take better care of our own homes and yards.

93. Does your community or neighborhood have adequate sanitation service?

Are there places where maintenance should be improved?

________________________

________________________

________________________

________________________

________________________
The Post Office

Post Offices in some communities are closing. If your group feels that it is essential to maintain your local post office, and it is in jeopardy of being closed, you can work on this issue together with your local post office.

94. Is there a post office in your community or neighborhood?  
   Yes  N.I.  No
   [ ] [ ] [ ]

94a. Is it easily accessible?  
   [ ] [ ] [ ]

From your knowledge of the community and from the information you learn from the post office,

95. Are there mail boxes every few blocks?  
   [ ] [ ] [ ]

Mail Carrier Alert

Some communities have a program where mail carriers will alert a third party when they notice that an older person living alone does not pick up his or her mail for a few days. Older people register the name of a designated person to be notified if mail is not claimed for a number of days. When a mail carrier notices that an older person’s mail is remaining in the mailbox, the carrier contacts the designated agency. The agency then contacts the designated person to investigate.

96. Is there a “Mail Carrier Alert” program in your community?  
   Yes  N.I.  No
   [ ] [ ] [ ]
Utility Shut-off Notification

Sometimes people simply forget to pay a bill, go away for vacation, or are ill for an extended period of time. If utility bills are not paid, utility companies usually shut off the service to the home. To prevent inappropriate action, utility companies often have programs to notify another party of impending service shut-off. The utility customer registers the name of the person they wish to have notified, in case such action is imminent.

97. Does the utility company serving your community have a program to notify a third party in case of impending utility shut-off?

Call your local utility company for information about the following:

97.

Call the Area Agency on Aging that serves your community for assistance with the following questions. Look in the “Yellow Pages” under: “Information Services and Bureaus,” or “Social and Human Services,” or under the name of your county.

98. Does your community have a Meals-on-Wheels program?

98a. Are there eligibility requirements for the program?

98b. Are all eligible older persons (who would like to participate) able to participate in the program? (Is there a waiting list for participation?)

99. Is there a “Friendly Visitor” or “Outreach” program in your community where volunteers visit home-bound older persons?

100. Is there a Directory of Senior Services for your community?
LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES: An Evaluation Guide

PART FOUR:
FOR MORE INFORMATION
PART FOUR:
FOR MORE INFORMATION
Publications

Community Planning and Design

City of Seattle. Making Streets That Work. 1996.(163 pp.)

This neighborhood planning tool is a comprehensive handbook focusing on making streets safer, more attractive, and workable for everyone. It covers a wide range of transit, driving, and pedestrian issues and presents numerous ideas and solutions to transit, traffic, and pedestrian problems common in all communities.

Leach, Deborah. Making Your Community Liveable: Programs That Work.
(Stock #: D15974.) 1996. AARP, Washington, DC (32 pp.)

This booklet describes over 25 successful programs that help older people live independently in their own communities. It highlights programs in many areas, including: transportation, crime prevention, and home modification and repair.

1995. (260 pp.)
Available from: Planners Book Service, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60603-6107. Phone: (312) 786-6344. Fax: (312) 431-9985. $40 plus s&h.

This book profiles places that promote the well-being of their residents. It includes a range of topics, from farmers’ markets and community festivals to transportation systems and public art.

Available from: Planners Book Service, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60603-6107. Phone: (312) 786-6344. Fax: (312) 431-9985. $44 plus s&h.

This book explores ways to tame the automobile, develop parks and other pedestrian-oriented areas, encourage the use of public transportation and implement policies to meet these ends.
Community Planning and Design (continued)

Parker, Valerie, et.al. *A Change for the Better: How to Make Communities More Responsive to Older Residents*. (Stock #: D13395.) 1991. AARP, Washington, DC (49 pages.)

For information, call or write: Virginia Robinson, Action for Boston Community Development, Inc., 178 Tremont Street, Boston MA 02111. Telephone: (617) 357-6000 ext.226.

*The Planning Game* is a “How-To” planning kit that focuses on elder housing planning. It includes suggestions for identifying the housing needs and preferences of older people in your community and ways to develop a workable plan, including how to access resources to turn a plan into action.


This book presents planning, design, and landscape techniques that are geared toward making neighborhoods and cities more liveable. It includes ideas about how to improve residential streets, public plazas, commercial centers, sidewalks, and transit centers. Topics range from how to promote crime-free neighborhoods to how to calm traffic.
FOR MORE INFORMATION — Publications

Driving

AARP, *Older Drivers*. 1996. PPI Fact Sheet #51. (4 pp.)

National Main Street Center and The Institute of Transportation Engineers.
Available from: Planners Book Service, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60603-6107. Phone: (312) 786-6344. Fax: (312) 431-9985. $50. plus s&h.

This book explains how to assess parking supply, develop parking regulations, manage a parking system, and find funds for parking improvements.

Available from: Planners Book Service, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60603-6107. Phone: (312) 786-6344. Fax: (312) 431-9985. $28 plus s&h.

Traffic calming is a technique to slow down or divert automobiles so that streets are safe and inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists. This report describes basic traffic calming principles and techniques, and examines their effects on traffic volume and speed in neighborhoods.

Available from: Planners Book Service, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60603-6107. Phone: (312) 786-6344. Fax: (312) 431-9985. $34.95 plus s&h.

This publication includes specifications for the design, development and construction of parking facilities. It covers provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as relevant federal guidelines on clean air, energy, and financing.
FOR MORE INFORMATION — Publications

**Housing**


This comprehensive AARP study identifies emerging housing changes and trends among older consumers based on the findings from a 1996 national telephone housing survey.


*Expanding Housing Choices for Older Persons* is a compilation of conference papers and recommendations from AARP’s White House Mini-Conference on Aging, Expanding Housing Choices for Older Persons. The book’s 13 papers examine innovative strategies (and related obstacles) for meeting older consumers’ preferences in housing and service models. The issues are organized into three areas: community planning, legal and regulatory issues, and financing strategies. Specific federal and state policy recommendations developed by the conference participants are included in the publication.


This guide to local housing resources for older persons briefly defines programs and services that help older persons with their housing needs. Its purpose is to serve as a working notebook to update information on the services offered in your community.


Housing (continued)


This publication uses data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to describe the current housing conditions of the older American population. It includes an analysis of the housing circumstances of all older households, of older single-person households and minority households, both homeowners and renters.


This report of a 1993 survey of 30 U.S. cities, examines home repair and modification programs. The budget and expenditures of each program, the number of homes served, and the kinds of home repairs made are described.


Available from: Ag. Communications Publications, Box 7603, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-7603. Single copy, free.

This publication is a comprehensive tool that will help you examine your own home from a safety perspective.

This booklet describes 25 zoning examples that help older people live independently in communities.


Pollak, Patricia B. *Key Issues for Shared Residences for Older Persons.* (Stock #: D13290.) 1991. AARP, Washington, DC (19 pp.)

Available from: Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University, Martha Van Rensselaer Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853. $5.

Available from Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University, Martha Van Rensselaer Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853. $3.

This Cornell University research paper presents various components of a zoning regulation for elder cottages and includes examples of regulations that communities have developed.

Available from: Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University, Martha Van Rensselaer Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853. $3.

This Cornell University Research paper discusses some of the court cases and some legal issues that relate to municipal zoning for elder cottages.

Housing (continued)


This publication describes housing options for older Americans that communities can encourage through local zoning changes. It provides examples of specific zoning language that will permit accessory apartments, elder cottages, and shared residences without changing the character of neighborhoods and discusses court decisions that support such zoning.


Municipal Features, Services and Leisure Facilities


This how-to-do-it book covers planning, designing, and rehabilitating park and recreation sites. It provides a basic introduction to park planning and design that emphasizes balancing the need to plan for people with the need to maintain recreation resources and facilities.

Municipal Features, Services and Leisure Facilities (continued)


This manual describes how to organize a neighborhood “crime watch” program.

Public Transportation


This study examines the potential impact of the complementary paratransit requirements of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on transportation services available to older Americans. It describes the ADA paratransit and other requirements and suggests ways to monitor the implementation of the ADA in communities.
FOR MORE INFORMATION — Publications

**Shopping**


*Available from: Planners Book Service, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603-6107. Phone: (312) 786-6344. Fax: (312) 431-9985. $29.95.*

This book looks at typical suburban developments and how they foster isolation. It describes the need to incorporate walkable streets, neighborhood shopping, and a wide range of housing choices into the landscape.

**Walking**


*Available from: Planners Book Service, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60603-6107. Phone: (312) 786-6344. Fax: (312) 431-9985. $35 plus s&h.*

This practical hands-on manual focuses on personal safety considerations. It examines factors such as lighting and signage to enhance safety and security in public spaces and offers techniques for improving safety in transit stations, pedestrian tunnels and underpasses, neighborhood parks, high-rise residential areas, downtown office areas, and other public places.


*Available from: Bicycle Federation of America, 1506 21st Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036. Phone: (202) 463-6622. ($2)*

This 24-page action kit for pedestrians gives citizens the tools they need to improve conditions for walkers in their communities. Successful efforts to improve walking in communities around the country are described. Ideas about how to overcome obstacles and take action to improve the walkability of your community are offered.


This book offers guidelines to improve urban safety in all types of public land uses, including residential streets, shopping plazas, parking lots and garages, and parks.
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Agencies & Organizations

American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA)
901 E Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 783-2255
Hours of operation: 8:30a.m. - 6:00a.m.EST

AAHSA is a national nonprofit organization representing 5,000 not-for-profit nursing homes, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living residences and senior housing facilities, and community service organizations for the elderly. It has publications on: choosing a nursing home, assisted living, home and community-based services, continuing care retirement communities, care options for a relative with Alzheimer’s disease, how to contact AAHSA’s state associations, and state-by-state listings of care providers.

American Planning Association
122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60603-6107
Phone: (312) 431-9100
Fax: (312) 431-9985
E-mail: APA@planning.org

The American Planning Association (APA) provides assistance to professional planners and current planning information and advice to all through publications, workshops, and conferences. For information about APA, call, write, or see http://www.planning.org.

Bicycle Federation of America
1506 21st Street, NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 463-6622

The Bicycle Federation of America (BFA) is a national, nonprofit corporation established to promote bicycle-friendly and walkable communities. The BFA provides planning, research, and program development technical assistance on planning and managing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs.

Center for Livable Communities
1414 K Street, Suite 250
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone; (916) 448-1198 or 1(800) 290-8202
Fax: (916) 448-8246

The Center for Livable Communities is a nonprofit membership organization that helps local governments and community leaders adopt programs and policies that lead to more livable and resource-efficient land-use patterns.
FOR MORE INFORMATION — Agencies & Organizations

Eldercare Locator
(800) 677-1116
Hours of operation: 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., EST

The Eldercare Locator is a nationwide, directory assistance service designed to help older persons and caregivers locate local support resources for older Americans. It will also provide you with the telephone number of your State Office for the Aging and the Area Agency on Aging that serves your community.

Institute for Transportation and the Environment
85 E. Roanoke St.
Seattle, WA 98102
(206) 322-5463

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
927 15th Street, NW, Sixth Floor
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 296-8130; Fax (202) 296-8134
Hours of operation: 8:30a.m. - 5:30.p.m., EST

National Association for Home Care
228 7th Street SE,
Washington, DC 20003
202-547-7424
Hours of operation: 9:00-6:00

National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse
1506 21st Street, NW
Suite 210
Washington, DC 20036
(800) 760-6272

The Clearinghouse responds to requests for information on bicycle and pedestrian programs and issues. It has a list of publications and fulfills orders for US Department of Transportation bicycle and pedestrian publications, provide technical assistance fact sheets and information on a broad range of topics, and provide referrals to other organizations, programs, and materials.

National Center for Community Policing
Michigan State University
School of Criminal Justice
560 Baker Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824-1118
(800) 892-9051 or (517) 355-2192 (in Michigan)

This nonprofit organization conducts research and provides training on community policing and publishes newsletters and brochures on the subject.
FOR MORE INFORMATION — Agencies & Organizations

National Meals on Wheels Foundation
2675 44th Street SW, #305
Grand Rapids, MI 49509
(800) 999-6262

National Safety Council
1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, IL 60143-3201
(800) 621-7615
State Offices on Aging

State Offices (or Departments or Commissions) for the Aging have a great deal of information about government programs and services for older people in each state. They have information about and can refer you to local, as well as state, public and private agencies, organizations, programs and services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Office on Aging</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Area Code(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Division of Senior Services</td>
<td>3601 C St. Anchorage 99503</td>
<td>Anchorage</td>
<td>AK</td>
<td>(907)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama Commission on Aging</td>
<td>770 Washington Ave. Montgomery 36130 (334) 242-5743 or (800) AGE-LINE</td>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>(334)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona Aging and Adult Administration</td>
<td>1789 W. Jefferson St. Phoenix 85007 (602) 542-4446</td>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>(602)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas Division of Aging and Adult Services</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1437, Little Rock 72203 (501) 682-8650</td>
<td>Little Rock</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>(501)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Department of Aging</td>
<td>1600 K St. Sacramento 95814</td>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>(916)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Aging and Adult Services</td>
<td>110 Sixteenth Street, Suite 200 Denver 80202 (303) 620-4191</td>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>(303)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut Elderly Services</td>
<td>25 Sigourney St. Hartford 06106 (800) 443-9946; (860) 424-5233</td>
<td>Hartford</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>(800)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Division of Aging</td>
<td>1901 N. Dupont Hwy. New Castle 19720 (302) 577-4791; (800) 223-9074</td>
<td>New Castle</td>
<td>DE</td>
<td>(302)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida Department of Elder Services</td>
<td>4040 Esplanade Way Tallahassee 32399 (904) 414-2000</td>
<td>Tallahassee</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>(904)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Office of Aging</td>
<td>2 Peachtree St., NW Atlanta 30303 (404) 657-5258</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>(404)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii Executive Office on Aging</td>
<td>205 South Hotel Street Honolulu 96813 (808) 586-0100</td>
<td>Honolulu</td>
<td>HI</td>
<td>(808)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho Office on Aging</td>
<td>3380 Americana Terrace Boise 83706 (208) 334-3833</td>
<td>Boise</td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>(208)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Department on Aging</td>
<td>421 E. Capital Ave. Springfield 62701 (217) 785-2870</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>(217)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana Aging Division</td>
<td>402 W. Washington St. Indianapolis 46207 (317) 232-7020</td>
<td>Indianapolis</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>(317)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa Department of Elder Affairs</td>
<td>914 Grand Ave. Des Moines 50309 (515) 281-5187</td>
<td>Des Moines</td>
<td>IA</td>
<td>(515)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Department on Aging</td>
<td>503 S. Kansas Ave. Topeka 66603 (913) 296-4986</td>
<td>Topeka</td>
<td>KS</td>
<td>(913)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>City/State</td>
<td>Zip Code</td>
<td>Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky Division for Aging Services</td>
<td>275 E. Main St.</td>
<td>Frankfort</td>
<td>40621</td>
<td>(502) 564-6930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Office of Elder Affairs</td>
<td>412 N. 4th Street</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>70802</td>
<td>(504) 342-7133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Bureau of Elder and Adult Services</td>
<td>11 Statehouse Station</td>
<td>Augusta</td>
<td>04333</td>
<td>(207) 624-5335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland Office on Aging</td>
<td>301 W. Preston St.</td>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>21201</td>
<td>(410) 767-1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs</td>
<td>1 Ashburton Pl.</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>02108</td>
<td>(617) 727-7750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Office of Services to the Aging</td>
<td>P.O. Box 30026</td>
<td>Lansing</td>
<td>48909</td>
<td>(517) 373-8230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Board on Aging</td>
<td>444 Lafayette Rd.</td>
<td>St. Paul</td>
<td>55155</td>
<td>(612) 296-2770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Division on Aging and Adult Services</td>
<td>750 N. State St.</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>39202</td>
<td>(601) 359-4925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Division on Aging</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1337</td>
<td>Jefferson City</td>
<td>65102</td>
<td>(573) 751-3082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana Office on Aging</td>
<td>111 North Sanders; Rm. 210</td>
<td>Helena</td>
<td>59604</td>
<td>(406) 444-4077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska Division on Aging</td>
<td>301 Centennial Mall S.; PO Box 95044</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>68509</td>
<td>(402) 471-2307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada Division for Aging Services</td>
<td>340 N. 11th Street</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>89101</td>
<td>(702) 486-3545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire Division of Adult Services</td>
<td>115 Pleasant St.</td>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>03301</td>
<td>(603) 271-4680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey Division on Aging</td>
<td>PO Box 807</td>
<td>Trenton</td>
<td>08625</td>
<td>(609) 588-3141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico State Agency on Aging</td>
<td>224 E. Palace Ave.</td>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>87501</td>
<td>(505) 827-7640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Office for the Aging</td>
<td>2 Empire State Plaza</td>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>12223</td>
<td>(518) 474-5731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Division on Aging</td>
<td>693 Palmer Dr.</td>
<td>Raleigh</td>
<td>27626</td>
<td>(919) 733-3983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota Aging Services</td>
<td>600 South 2nd Street</td>
<td>Bismarck</td>
<td>58504</td>
<td>(701) 328-8910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### FOR MORE INFORMATION — State Offices on Aging

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<tr>
<td><strong>Ohio Department of Aging</strong></td>
<td>50 W. Broad St.</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>43215</td>
<td>(614) 466-5500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oklahoma Aging Services</strong></td>
<td>312 NE 28th St.</td>
<td>Oklahoma City</td>
<td>73125</td>
<td>(405) 521-2327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oregon Senior Services</strong></td>
<td>500 Summer St. NE</td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>97310</td>
<td>(503) 945-5811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pennsylvania Department of Aging</strong></td>
<td>555 Walnut St.</td>
<td>Harrisburg</td>
<td>17101</td>
<td>(717) 783-1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs</strong></td>
<td>160 Pine St.</td>
<td>Providence</td>
<td>02903</td>
<td>(401) 277-2858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Carolina Division on Aging</strong></td>
<td>PO Box 8206</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>29201</td>
<td>(803) 253-6177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Dakota Office of Adult Services</strong></td>
<td>700 Governors Dr.</td>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td>57501</td>
<td>(605) 773-3656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tennessee Commission on Aging</strong></td>
<td>500 Deaderick Bldg.</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>37243</td>
<td>(615) 741-2056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Texas Department on Aging</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 12786, Capitol Stn.</td>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>78741</td>
<td>(512) 424-6840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utah Division on Aging</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 45500,</td>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>84145</td>
<td>(801) 538-3910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vermont Office on Aging</strong></td>
<td>103 S. Main St.</td>
<td>Waterbury</td>
<td>05676</td>
<td>(802) 241-2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Virginia Department for the Aging</strong></td>
<td>1600 Forest Ave.</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>23219</td>
<td>(804) 662-9333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Washington Adult Services Administration</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 45050</td>
<td>Olympia</td>
<td>98504</td>
<td>(360) 586-8753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Virginia Commission on Aging</strong></td>
<td>1900 Kanawa Blvd. East</td>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>25305</td>
<td>(304) 588-3317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wisconsin Bureau on Aging</strong></td>
<td>PO Box 7851</td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>53707</td>
<td>(608) 266-2536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wyoming Commission on Aging</strong></td>
<td>117 Hathaway Bldg.</td>
<td>Cheyenne</td>
<td>82002</td>
<td>(307) 777-7986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AARP is the nation’s leading organization for people age 50 and older. It serves their needs and interests through information and education, advocacy, and community services which are provided by a network of local chapters and experienced volunteers throughout the country. The organization also offers members a wide range of special benefits and services, including Modern Maturity magazine and the monthly Bulletin.