

the review

May/June 2013

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league



AGING IN PLACE

Is Michigan Ready?

**AGE-FRIENDLY
COMMUNITIES**

**AUBURN HILLS
EMBRACES
SENIORS**

**ACCESSORY
DWELLING UNITS**

the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

Features

6

Our Town

Creating Livable
Communities for All Ages

GOVERNING Magazine

10

Aging in Place Numbers

12

Age-Friendly Communities

Michigan Part of New Network

By Rene Rosencrantz Wheaton

16

Improving Communities for an Aging Population

By Dan Doezema

19

Capital Conference Highlights

22

2013 Regional Community Excellence Award Winners

24 COVER STORY

Aging in Place

in Auburn Hills

By Elizabeth Shaw

28

Accessory Dwelling Units

A Housing Option for
Older Adults

By Richard K. Carlisle

32

Making Collaboration Your New Normal

Neil J. Simon and
Clay J. Pearson

34

Public Officials Must Know the Law Concerning Open Carry

By Gene King

40

Michigan Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials



On the Cover:

Auburn Hills is among the first municipalities in Michigan to seek AARP's Age-Friendly City designation. The city's Community Center offers activities to the general population and seniors alike. Pictured at the Community Center are: Marilyn Robertson (left), Community Center user; Karen Adcock, (center), city of Auburn Hills Senior Services Director; and Community Center volunteer May Rock (right).



Columns

- 5 **Executive Director's Message**
- 38 **Northern Field Report**
- 42 **Legal Spotlight**
- 46 **Municipal Q&A**



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michigan municipal league

the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

Volume 86, Number 3

Better Communities. Better Michigan.

The Michigan Municipal League is the one clear voice for Michigan communities. Our goals are to aid them in creating desirable and unique places through legislative and judicial advocacy; to provide educational opportunities for elected and appointed officials; and to assist municipal leaders in administering community services. Our mission is that of a nonprofit, but we act with the fervor of entrepreneurs to passionately push change for better communities and a better Michigan.

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Please recycle this magazine

Aging in Place

Michigan's biological clock is ticking fast. Right now, nearly a third of the state's population is over the age of 50. By 2030—the year the last Baby Boomer turns 65—that number is projected to hit 36.8 percent. Do the math: that's 3.6 million people spread across every county in the state, living in every city, township, and village on the map.

If you're expecting most of them to head for Florida or Arizona, or to neatly vanish into a nursing home, it's time to wake up and smell the Ben-Gay. According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), nearly 90 percent of our seniors plan to stay right where they are for as long as they can. And only a fraction of them will ever end up living in a long-term care facility.

Oh and by the way, they aren't "they." They are "us."

So what does all this mean for our planners, policy makers and political leaders?

First, this isn't an alarm signaling doom and gloom for the future. Viewed properly, it should be cause for applause and high-fives all around. Rather than representing an economic drain, the golden years really do bring along a substantial pot of gold. Americans over the age of 50 control more than half of the nation's discretionary income. A significant percentage of new businesses are started by people in this age group. Here in Michigan, our seniors can boast a combined annual income of \$37 billion—and unlike some younger demographics, they tend to spend much of that income locally.


Obviously, we should want our seniors to stay put. But unless we begin *right now* to make age-friendly changes in how our communities are designed and how our services are delivered, many will find it difficult, if not impossible, to do so.

If we allow that to happen unchecked, our cities and villages will soon be bleeding gold, not red.

So what can we do to change it? The first steps can be found right here inside this issue of *The Review*. First and foremost, you'll read about exactly what it means to be age-friendly (which actually means *people*-friendly, since most of the qualities seniors seek are the same ones

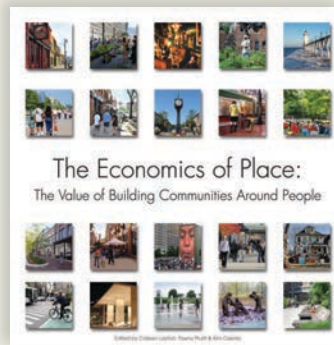
everyone seeks in a truly livable community). It means good transit, walkability, and appropriate housing, among so many improvements that just make good common sense. (Case in point: 71.7 percent of Michigan's housing stock are detached single-family homes—but less than a third of all Michigan households include children. So why do we keep building more of the same?)

You'll learn what state and federal policy makers are doing that encourages or impedes those changes. You'll see how one community—Auburn Hills—is helping lead the way with AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities. You'll discover resources and organizations ready to provide all the tools it takes to make aging in place a positive force in your community.

We can't stop the clock. But we can make sure it ticks to our advantage. 

The Economics of Place

We believe that our communities are at the core of our state's economic turnaround, and that "place" is the huge economic driver. In 2011, the League published *The Economics of Place: The Value of Building Communities Around People*, available at Amazon.com and economicsofplace.com.



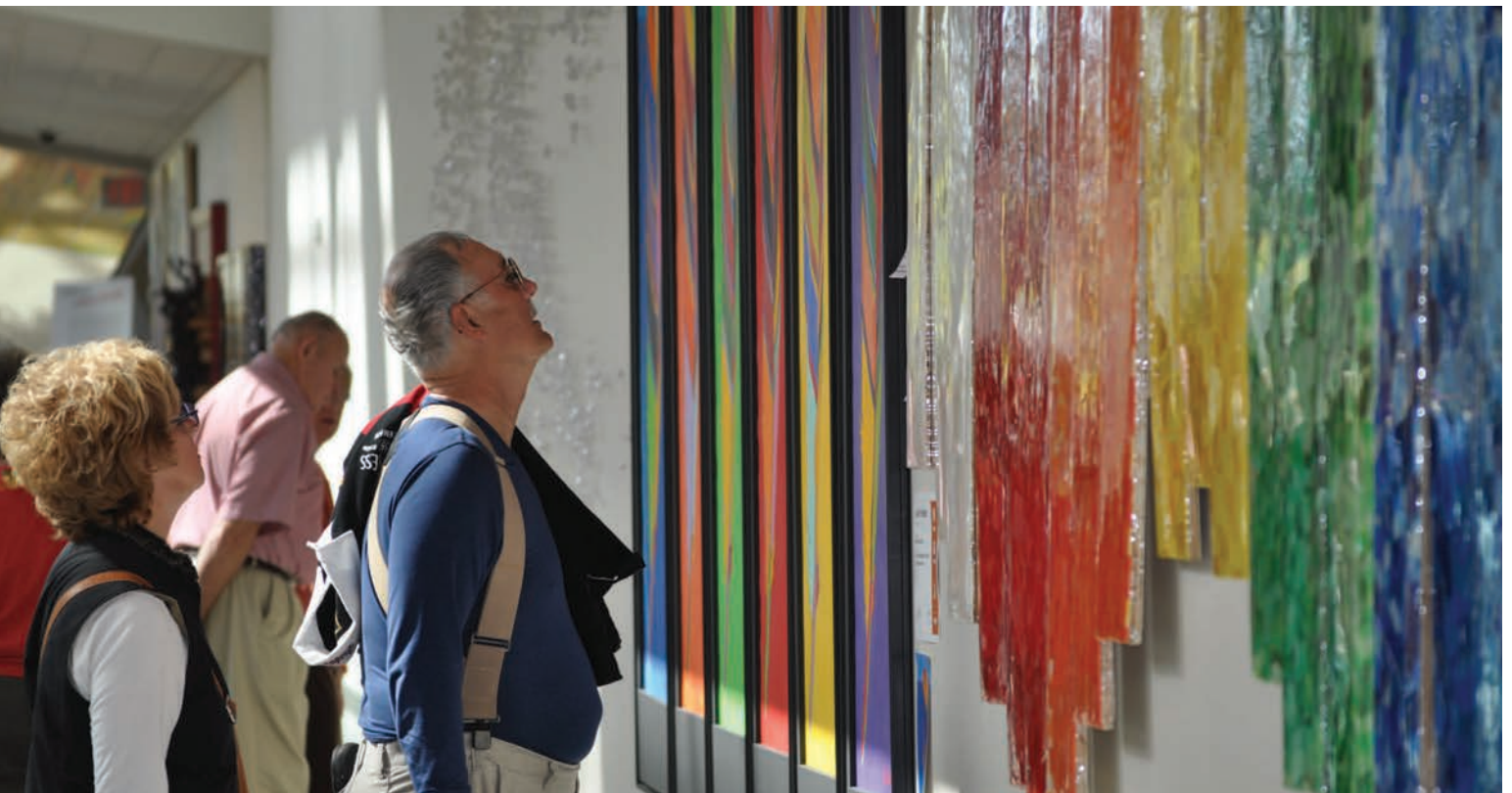
Daniel P. Gilmartin



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OUR TOWN

Creating Livable Communities for All Ages



GRAND RAPIDS

The numbers by now are familiar: Over the next 20 years, up to 10,000 Americans per day will reach the age of 65. By 2030, one in five Americans will have passed that milestone, and 10 U.S. states will have more residents of Medicare age than children of school age.¹

Nationally, awareness of the demographic shift and what it means varies. Some states and localities are working actively to get ready for the wave—both the opportunities it presents and the challenges. For most jurisdictions, though, priorities like budget crises, crime, education and natural disasters continue to dominate the policy and administration arena. Indeed, most of the U.S. is taking a “wait and see” approach to the aging population, said Nancy LeaMond, executive vice president of State and National Group at AARP. “Government and nonprofits like us need to find better ways to address the challenge.” (For a comprehensive listing of age-friendly initiatives around the U.S., go to www.aarp.org/livable.)

But it’s clear that there are areas around the country where community awareness and action around aging and how communities respond are rising as a priority. These regions reflect the wide array of ideas and actions based on the increasingly evident notion that what older Americans want in a community—safe, healthy and vibrant neighborhoods that offer multiple opportunities for engagement in a rich civic life—are exactly what every American wants in a community.

To explore the concept of livable communities for all ages, *GOVERNING* and AARP convened leaders from state and local government—as well as economic development experts, community advocates, academics and other key players in community development—in four cities (Des Moines, IA; Lansing, MI; Philadelphia, PA; and Salt Lake City, UT) around the country over the course of the year.

In each case, the roundtables highlighted the growing awareness of, and planning and action around, how to prepare

for what is arguably the most profound demographic shift in American history. The primary lesson from the roundtables: No two places are responding in precisely the same way; there is no single formula for how to create communities that embrace all generations. But it was clear from the discussion at the roundtables that there are plenty of communities that are certainly not taking “a wait and see approach” to preparing for an aging population. These communities are actively working to create the kinds of vibrant and healthy societies that are attractive to Americans of all ages.

Although each roundtable highlighted the variations in how different regions were responding to building communities, key themes did emerge around planning, partnerships and engagement—along with the sense that embracing a changing demographic presented significant opportunities for all sectors, whether in the area of economic development or in recruiting and engaging a growing army of experienced, seasoned volunteers and workers. For example, some Michigan community colleges report that they’re seeing a distinct increase in the number of older students coming back to hone new skills for new careers.

At the Des Moines roundtable, Michael Lehrer, a Los Angeles-based architect of the “new urbanist” school said, “You can say that it’s good for young people to be around older people and that it’s good for older people to be around younger people, but the truth is that it’s good for people to be around people.”

Or as Brian Duke, secretary for the Department of Aging in Pennsylvania summed it up during the Philadelphia roundtable, “I strongly believe that ‘aging’ and ‘community’ are the same thing.”

PLANNING

Numerous examples of the role of planning in creating communities for all ages emerged at each roundtable, but perhaps most notably in Michigan, known more for its struggling urban areas than for cutting-edge downtown economic development. But there, two cities are now thriving, having created long-range comprehensive master plans that are based largely on the notion that Americans of all ages want to live in compact, walkable, and vibrant downtowns.

In Traverse City, for example, officials have focused development and redevelopment efforts tightly on what has become a well-known key to downtown revival: getting people to live there. Two housing initiatives have drawn people of all ages to the downtown core, said City Manager Ben Bifoss and Downtown Development Authority Director Bryan Crough. Built by private developers and based on the city’s long-range comprehensive master plan, the projects include a senior housing community and a development designed with multiple generations in mind.

In Grand Rapids, city officials partnered with a local foundation to jump start a downtown revival that included a wide mix of uses from office to retail to housing. Key to the city’s success, noted Grand Rapids City Planning



GRAND RAPIDS

“Everybody has a role to play, and we’d be remiss if we thought that government was the only answer. We need to have mechanisms in place so that state and local government can work with the private sector as well as the charitable and not-for-profit sectors.”

— GARY HERBERT, GOVERNOR, UTAH

Director Suzanne M. Schulz, was a strict adherence to the redevelopment vision laid out in the city’s comprehensive master plan. In fact, said Schulz, the city actually rejected a significant development proposal by a large retail chain that didn’t fit the city’s vision for a compact, multi-sector, multi-use downtown.

The idea of multi-generational neighborhoods where neighbors support neighbors, and that offer access to a wide variety of key services nearby also appears to be catching on. Lansing, for example, will open Heart of Lansing Village in 2013, a development that will operate much like a co-op, with fees going to provide various services and programs for residents. Heart of Lansing represents an evolving concept in housing for those who wish to age in place: a holistic, supportive community for all residents with nearby services and amenities.

Very often it's simply a matter of neighbors of all ages banding together to help one another, noted AARP National Board Member and former State President of AARP Michigan Eric Schneidewind. As part of the "village" movement, community members form nonprofit corporations to exchange services such as housekeeping, home repairs and transportation.

Grand Rapids, Traverse City, and Lansing are all models of a new way of thinking about downtown development, noted Bill Rustem, director of strategic policy for Michigan. "We need to start by creating places where people want to be." And for a lot of reasons, noted roundtable participants. But one of the most important: to retain a demographic cohort that both policy makers and economic development experts argue can be a key part of a city's or region's economic success. "If we ship elders down to Florida, not only would that hurt the Michigan health care industry, but housing and restaurants would see a downturn as well," said Edith Killins, director of the Wayne County Department of Health and Human Services.

But there are complications around Rustem's admonition on creating places where people want to be. For decades, the American Dream consisted of vast tracts of suburban development; single houses on a cul-de-sac, which represent the antitheses of the sort of cohesive, easy-to-negotiate communities represented by places like Traverse City. The huge rise in suburban development—and the attendant abandonment of inner cities—during the 1950s, '60s and '70s has led to a world where making connections and creating vibrant communities easily accessible to all is much more difficult.

But certainly planning and development initiatives in and around places like Grand Rapids hold out significant promise for jurisdictions looking for new ways to approach development and knit together otherwise fractured geography and community.

For example, based on a "new urbanist" model, Stephen James, a Salt Lake City-based community planner, described Daybreak—a compact development outside of Salt Lake City built entirely with private money and designed to be a self-contained, walkable community, with schools, parks, shops, office spaces, recreation areas and civic centers. "In 2005, we began an explicit strategy for building units aimed at aging in place. There's a fantastic opportunity for developers in this market," said James.

The good news, of course, is that given the obvious alignment among generational views on what elements make for livable communities, any market research or long-range comprehensive planning process that includes older Americans will naturally drive the sort of development that all Americans want to see. And so it only makes sense that older Americans are included among the key cohorts consulted whenever a community is considering a smarter way to grow.

Young, middle-aged and older Americans do pretty much want the same thing in a community, noted Jay Byers, chief executive officer of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, the area's preeminent regional economic development organization. Indeed, most of the features that attract older people to a community are the same ones that draw younger residents. "We're focused on attracting and keeping young professionals," said Byers. "But I don't think it's all that different from what we need to do to make communities age-friendly: public transportation, different options for housing, lifelong learning opportunities, a robust arts and cultural scene, walkability and urban spaces."

TRAVERSE CITY



PARTNERSHIP

At the same time, there are those in Utah—and in other parts of the country to be sure—who have been thinking about the whole issue of all-age-friendly communities for quite some time, and who have pulled together the sort of remarkable and cross-sector partnerships necessary for getting the huge job of re-envisioning and redesigning communities done.

One of those people is Robert J. Grow, president and CEO of Envision Utah, whose board of directors includes state and local officials, builders, community advocacy organizations, educators, architects, regional economic development and planning councils, environmental advocates and small business advocates, among a host of others.

At the Salt Lake City roundtable, Grow described a remarkable, long-range and ever-evolving regional plan for Salt Lake City that's been ongoing for more than a decade, and that has included a host of initiatives, including everything from securing old railroad lines for current and future commuter rail, to redeveloping down-at-the-heels neighborhoods at the city's fringes.



Based on what Grow described as its “quality growth strategy,” Envision Utah has partnered with more than 100 communities in Utah, following a “civic engagement approach” that Grow said has been replicated by dozens of regions around the country. “How we grow will affect how we and our children will live,” said Grow. “At Envision Utah, we don’t believe in sitting back and seeing where growth will take us. We seek to be visionary and actively secure our future.”

Obviously, planning alone isn’t enough to create the sorts of dynamic and attractive places in which citizens say they want to live; it takes investment. Given the stark reality of state and local budgets, the whole notion of partnership is going to be especially critical as state and local officials try to re-imagine and redevelop communities, noted Utah Governor Gary Herbert. “Everybody has a role to play, and we’d be remiss if we thought that government was the only answer. We need to have mechanisms in place so that state and local government can work with the private sector as well as the charitable and not-for-profit sectors.”

In that regard, Envision Utah presents a strong model, said Herbert. “It gives multiple sectors the opportunity to work together.”

ENGAGEMENT


Ultimately, said Envision Utah’s Robert Grow, the key to creating places where people want to grow up, raise families and grow old, is to actively engage residents of all ages in the whole discussion about how they want their neighborhoods and communities to evolve. “We have conducted hundreds of hours of interviews with stakeholders and citizens to determine the values and the future that Utahns want,” Grow said.

For example, Grow noted that his group regularly convenes community meetings where Envision Utah lays out four basic growth scenarios ranging from uncontrolled sprawl to dense urban infill. Invariably, Grow said, opinion coalesces around relatively dense, walkable neighborhoods organized around town or city centers with a variety of transit options.

Another key group to engage, noted Pennsylvania’s Brian Duke, is the wide variety of in-state experts in community

development available to help create livable places. “That means using the best of Pennsylvania and applying that in Pennsylvania,” said Duke. “That includes taking the best research from academic institutions, like the University of Pennsylvania and Temple. But it also means looking at best practices in all communities across the Commonwealth.”

Donna Donald, a family life program specialist with Iowa State University, also cited the vital role played by tapping social capital—the full engagement of all sectors in a community in supporting that community—as another key to creating mutually supportive, age-friendly places. “I live in a county of 6,000 people. If I need to go to the doctor, I have a friend who can take me,” said Donald. “We have no bus or taxi service. We don’t depend on someone else to do that for us.”

Perhaps most important, though, is engaging the most obvious demographic of all when it comes to creating age-friendly places, said Christopher Doherty, mayor of Scranton, PA., at the Philadelphia meeting. Whether it’s in the area of cultural, political, social, educational or philanthropic endeavors, “if you reach out and connect to seniors, they’ll stay active members of your community, and that’s a benefit to everyone.” 

ENDNOTE

1. www.governing.com/generations/government-management/Governing-Generations-The-Project.html

For more information, visit www.aarp.org/livable.

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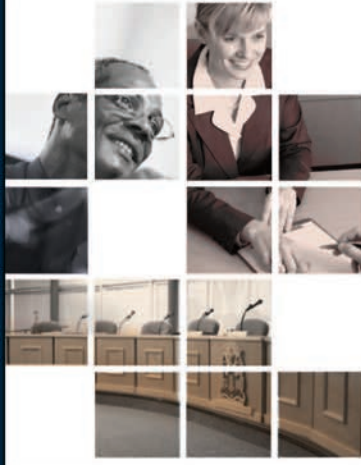


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Crunching the Numbers on...

Ageing in Michigan



SENIORS ARE ECONOMIC DRIVERS NOT DRAINS:

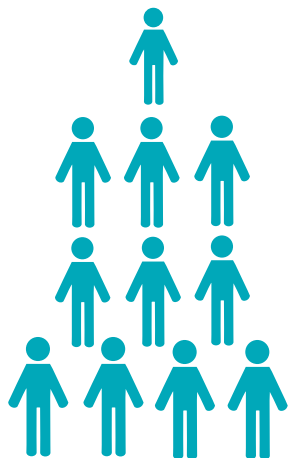
Americans ages 50+ control over half of America's discretionary income, and a significant percentage of new businesses are started by people in this age group. Seniors hold over 70 percent of the financial assets in the U.S. Michigan seniors are a \$32 billion economic force.

Two-thirds of trips taken by non-drivers 65+ are as passengers in private vehicles.



Michigan residents ages 65+ have a combined annual income of **\$37 BILLION** and tend to spend much of that income locally.

The last Baby Boomer (a person born between 1946 and 1964) turns 65 in 2030.



During the last century, the number of Americans over age 65 multiplied nearly 11 times, from 3.1 million in 1900 to 35 million in 2000.



Only about 5 percent of those ages 65+ require long-term care facilities such as nursing homes. About 15 percent suffer from chronic conditions which somewhat limit their ability to be fully active. The remaining 80 percent are able to engage in the normal activities of living.

THE CASE FOR WALKABILITY:

one in five Americans ages 65+ do not drive. In fact, men outlive their "drive-ability" by 7 years, and women by 10 years.





Around 70 percent of seniors voted in the last presidential election. This is compared to an overall voter turnout of about 60 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Seniors are also more likely than people in other age groups to write or telephone their state and federal representatives about an issue that is important to them.



Almost 30 percent of families have at least one member with a disability—but only three percent of Americans live in homes with any kind of accessibility features.

71.7 percent of Michigan’s housing stock are detached single-family homes—but less than half of all Michigan households are married couples, and slightly less than a third have children under the age of 18.



Seniors are the fastest growing population in the world. 32.8 percent of Michigan’s population is over the age of 50. That number is projected to increase to 36.8 percent by 2030. 13.8 percent of our state’s population is 65 years old and over.

THE CASE FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT:

Older adults increased their use of public transit by 40 percent between 2001 and 2009. About 15 percent of those over age 65 use public transit at least once a month, with more than half of them needing specialized transportation.



GLOSSARY

ACCESSIBILITY =

The capacity of everyone regardless of age or ability to be included in all physical structures, programs, and means of communication (e.g. websites, email, telephone)

AGING IN PLACE =

the ability to continue to live in one’s home safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level. It means living in a familiar environment, and being able to participate in family and other community activities.

ELDER-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY =

A community that facilitates aging in place by addressing basic needs, promoting social and civic engagement, optimizing physical and mental health and well-being, and maximizing independence for those who are frail or have disabilities.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN =

The concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life. Curb cuts or sidewalk ramps, essential for people in wheelchairs but also used by all, are a common example, as well as building design that requires doorway width requirements, ramps, and accessible restrooms.

(Michigan Association of Planning, www.planningmi.org):

Age-Friendly Communities

Michigan Part of New Network

By Rene Rosencrantz Wheaton

You don't have to tell anyone who's woken up with sore joints or had to hold a paper at arm-length to read it, that growing old isn't easy. While the Association for the Advancement of Retired People (AARP) can't stop the clock, the organization is working to make aging easier on everyone starting at the local level. The AARP, in affiliation with the World Health Organization (WHO), has launched the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities across the U.S., including pilot programs in Michigan, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia.

"As communities become more age-friendly, people of all ages will find them appealing," said AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeaMond. "Not only older people, but mothers with strollers and ex joggers with knee problems will welcome crosswalks with countdown clocks and mid-crossing safe havens. You shouldn't have to be a former Olympic sprinter to get across the street before the light changes."

The AARP will help government officials, businesses, and community leaders jump-start their efforts to make neighborhoods ready for aging baby boomers. The goal is to provide physical and social environments for the seniors that will help them remain healthy, active, and engaged in their communities.

The effort will specifically address the ongoing, global trends of rapid population aging and increasing urbanization. For example, Scottsdale City, Arizona is considered the U.S.'s oldest city, with one in five of their residents falling in the 65 and older age bracket. By 2030, the entire country will resemble Scottsdale City.

WHO and AARP want to help communities face their aging populations with forward-thinking public policies and urban planning. Making these proactive efforts can help communities attract and retain more residents as well as businesses seeking to serve older populations, their families, and caregivers.

Auburn Hills and Ann Arbor are the first Michigan cities in the program. These cities, and others like them, will be looking at a variety of things to improve the quality of life in their communities. *Continued on page 14*

As communities become more age-friendly, people of all ages will find them appealing.



Characteristics of an Age-Friendly Community

The World Health Organization wants communities to look at eight broad domains to help influence the health and quality of life of older people living all over the world.

The eight domains include:



OUTDOOR SPACES

buildings and recreational facilities which are accessible and available

1

TRANSPORTATION

both public and private, that is safe and affordable

2

HOUSING

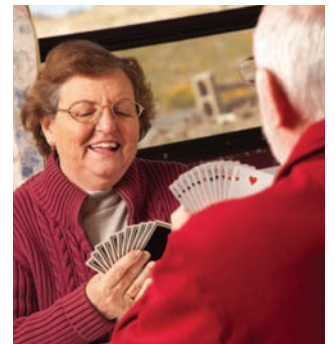
variety of housing options and home modification programs that give older residents the option of growing older without having to move from their home

3

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

giving seniors access to leisure and cultural activities that not only gives them the opportunity to socialize and continue civic engagement with their peers, but with younger people as well

4



RESPECT and SOCIAL INCLUSION

through programs that support and promote ethnic and cultural diversity as well as multi-generational interaction and dialogue

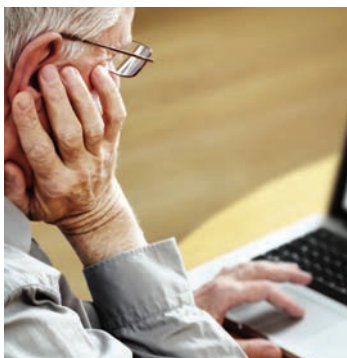
5



CIVIC PARTICIPATION and EMPLOYMENT

giving older residents the opportunity to continue working and volunteering and allowing them to have a say in policies that are most relevant to them

6



COMMUNICATION and INFORMATION

promoting the use of and access to technology to help senior citizens stay connected to their community and friends and family, both near and far

7

COMMUNITY SUPPORT and HEALTH SERVICES

giving older residents access to homecare service, clinics and programs that promote their overall wellness

8

While this effort by WHO and AARP is an international effort, the most important efforts must be made at a local level. The AARP's research shows that more than 80 percent of people want to stay in their homes and communities as they age. If the services and resources people need to stay in their communities aren't available, then they are forced to live elsewhere.


The AARP wants to join forces with communities to give more people the ability to do what they want—age where they are.

Age-Friendly Community Criteria & Process

The pilot states in AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities will identify and support communities in their states that want to improve their physical and social environments and help their elders remain healthy, active, and engaged in their communities for as long as possible.

The publication *AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities* contains the criteria and process for joining the network. Communities participating in the program commit to a cycle of assessing and improving

their age-friendliness through such things as passing a resolution to actively support, promote, and work towards becoming age-friendly; establishing a citizen advisory committee that includes the active engagement of older adults; and establishing a robust and concrete plan of action that responds to the needs identified by older adults in the community.

"AARP has worked for years to promote more livable communities for people 50 and older across the U.S., including improving housing and mobility/transportation options that are appropriate for an aging population," Leamond said. "We are committed to making a difference at the community level and to helping our members—and all those 50 and older—age comfortably and successfully in the communities where they live." 

Rene Rosencrantz Wheaton is a freelance writer. You may contact her at 810-444-3827.



The banner features a background image of a lush rooftop garden with various plants and flowers. In the background, a large, multi-story brick building is visible under a clear blue sky. Overlaid on the image is the Detroit 2013 Convention logo, which consists of a large, stylized white 'D' with a 'm' inside a circle, followed by the word 'ETROIT' in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this, the text '2013 CONVENTION' is written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is an orange diagonal banner with white text that reads 'REGISTRATION OPENS JUNE 1' and 'mml.org' below it. At the bottom of the banner, the text 'MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE • SEPTEMBER 17-20, 2013' and 'Pre-Convention Workshops • September 17' is displayed in white.



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IMPROVING COMMUNITIES for an Aging Population



By Dan Doezema

Aging in place is more than just staying in the same living arrangement for a long time and getting basic needs met. It means people residing in the environment of their choice—and continuing to live there as long as possible—by having readily accessible services and opportunities that meet their needs, without having to move each time a change in service is needed. It includes the opportunity for optimal engagement in the community, meaningful activities, recreational outlets, and self-expression pursuits.

In order to support successful aging in place, older adults, family members, professionals, organizations, businesses, government officials, and communities need to be aware of the kinds of proactive measures to take to increase livability in their own home environments and communities. Factors that can influence successful aging in place include: home modification and home retention, visitability, and livable and elder friendly communities.

Home Modification includes adapting living spaces to meet the needs of people with physical limitations so that they can continue to live independently and safely. These modifications may include adding assistive technology or making structural changes to a home. Modifications can range from something as simple as replacing cabinet doorknobs with pull handles to full-scale construction projects that require installing wheelchair ramps and widening doorways.

Universal Design features are usually built into a home when the first blueprints or architectural plans are drawn. These features include appliances, fixtures, and floor plans that are easy for all people to use, flexible enough so that they can be adapted for special needs, sturdy and reliable, and functional with a minimum of effort and understanding of the mechanisms involved.



Visitability features include home modifications for older adults who may want to entertain guests with disabilities or who wish to plan ahead for the day when they may require some extra help in getting around their own homes. For example, installing a ramp and remodeling the hallways and rooms to allow wheelchair access would make a home easier to visit for family members with disabilities or friends. Such changes may also give older adults a head start on home modifications they may need later in their lives.

For more information:

National Council on Aging

www.ncoa.org

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging: Aging In Place Initiative

www.n4a.org/programs/livable-communities/

National AdvantAge Initiative

www.vnsny.org/advantage/

University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute – Senior Mobility

www.umtri.umich.edu/expertiseSub.php?esID=83

National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modifications

www.homemods.org/

Infinite Potential Through Assistive Technology (IPTAT)

www.infinitec.org/live/homemodifications/basics.htm

Family Village – Home Modification

www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/general/homemods.html

AARP – Home and Universal Design

www.aarp.org/families/home_design/

National Aging in Place Council

www.seniorsafehome.com

Concrete Change – Making All Homes Visitable

www.concretechange.org/

Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access

www.ap.buffalo.edu/idea/visitability/

Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities

rtc.ruralinstitute.umd.edu/IL/Ruralfacts/Visitability.htm

Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)

www.stepforwardmichigan.org/

National Council on Aging Reverse Mortgage Information

www.ncoa.org/enhance-economic-security/home-equity/

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) How to Avoid Foreclosure

www.hud.gov/foreclosure/index.cfm

Home Retention is achieved when an older adult can secure affordable home repairs and maintenance in a timely way and cover mortgage costs along with any supportive in-home services needed to continue living independently. More than 80 percent of persons 65 and older are homeowners. Their homes tend to be older than average and consequently require more maintenance and repair to keep it in good shape. One study in the Midwest found that 36 percent of home foreclosures were due to unresolved repair problems.

LIVABLE AND ELDER FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Communities need help with establishing supportive living environments for older adults and their families to prepare for the demographic imperative, reduce elder mortality rates, and prevent premature, more costly institutionalization. Traditional neighborhoods with decent affordable housing, close accessibility to groceries, shopping, pharmacies, health care, churches, social supports, job, volunteer, and recreational opportunities have been eroding or disappearing over the last several decades. These conditions can lead to basic needs not being met by all ages.

The movement to support, develop, and establish elder-ready, elder-friendly and livable communities for all ages seeks to help communities take stock of where they may currently be with respect to livability for older adults and boomers—and how they can affect positive changes to make their community a good place to grow old in.

The Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) provides leadership, resources, and support for older adults throughout Michigan. OSA can provide information about a broad range of services to keep older adults living in their own homes for as long as they choose to.

COMMUNITY FOR A LIFETIME

OSA offers a statewide community recognition program: Community for a Lifetime (CFL). The program provides your community partnership group and local government the opportunity to receive state recognition by completing an aging friendly community assessment and/or implementing improvements recommended by an aging friendly community assessment.

Community groups interested in conducting an assessment are encouraged to contact OSA at 231-929-2531 or visit www.michigan.gov/osa for more information. Applications for recognition are reviewed four times a year, with application deadlines of March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.


The Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging, a 15-member body appointed by the governor, developed the recognition program in 2007 with input from the State Advisory Council on Aging as part of a state

and national trend to improve communities for an aging population. The purpose of completing a community assessment is to evaluate, identify, and build on attributes for all ages within areas such as walkability, transportation, commerce, enrichment, housing, inclusion, and safety.

OSA's CFL program is part of a broader national movement. "Creating Aging Friendly Communities" www.agingfriendly.org/ offers an online resource portal that provides interstate sharing, technical assistance and strategies to facilitate the development of sustainable communities supporting residents across the lifespan. Regardless of your age, the ability to conduct the "business of life" and participate in the social life of your community is often influenced by how well your community design and assets help you to access shops, banks, educational and civic activities, health care, restaurants, and entertainment.

Recognized communities include: Gaylord, Northwest Ottawa County, Kent County, Alpena, Greater Battle Creek area, Washtenaw County, the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills, Bay County, Holland, Inkster, Monroe County, Manistique, and Traverse City.

OSA contracts with regional Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) around the state. AAAs can also be helpful in providing technical assistance and resource data for completing community support sections of your community assessment. You can find the AAA in your region by going to www.michigan.gov/osa.

OSA stands ready to help you move forward in making your community a better place in which to grow up and grow old. For more information, visit: www.michigan.gov/osa. 

Dan Doezema is a field representative and Community for a Lifetime specialist for the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. You may contact him at 231-929-2531 or doezemad@michigan.gov.



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CAPITAL CONFERENCE

Capital Conference 2013 Recap

What lies ahead for the personal property tax issue...Governor Snyder's evolving perspective on running a business versus government...the future of transportation from the state and federal perspective...and the second year of EVIP. Those were just a few of the topics covered at the 2013 Capital Conference.



April 9-10, 2013 • The Lansing Center, Lansing



In all, nearly 450 people packed the Lansing Center to hear the latest on all the state and federal issues that impact local communities, and to network and make their voices heard on matters of public policy.



Twenty-seven communities pitched excellent projects during round one of the Community Excellence Awards on April 9 at the League's Capital Conference. Here are the seven Community Excellence Award Regional winners:

- Region 1:** Linden/Holly/Fenton's Shiawassee River Heritage Water Trail
- Region 2:** St. Joseph's Silver Beach Development
- Region 3:** Belding's Community Garden
- Region 4:** DeWitt's Community Showcase
- Region 5:** Imlay City's Economic Gardening
- Region 6:** Rogers City's Dancin' Downtown
- Region 7:** Ironwood's Depot Park

Wish them all luck as they move on to the finals at Convention (September 17-20 in Detroit) where one of the seven finalists will win the "Race for Cup" and take home the trophy to showcase in their community for a year.

2013 REGIONAL COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARD REGIONAL FINALISTS

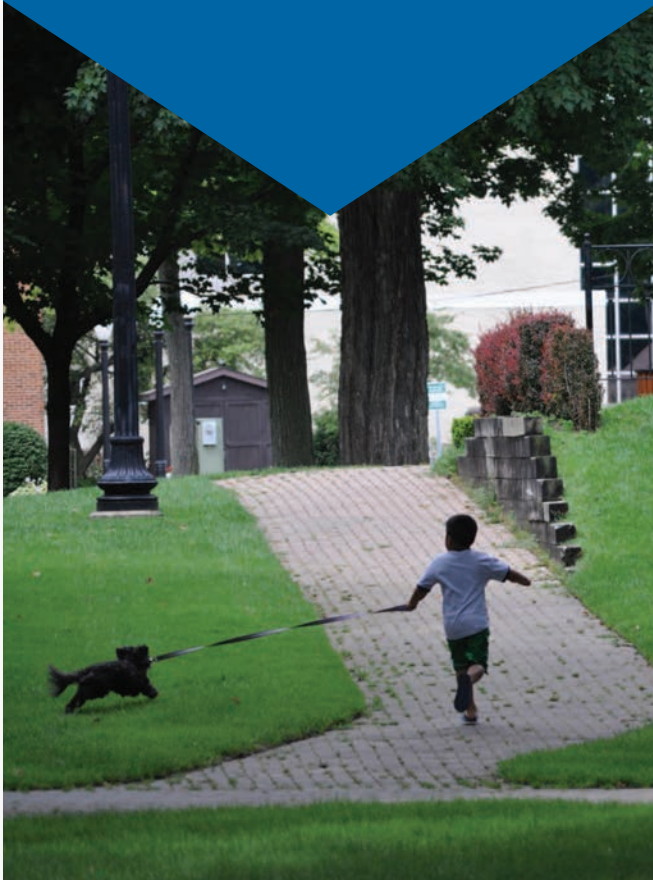
2013 Community Excellence Award Regional Winners, left to right: David Lossing, Mayor, City of Linden; Region 1; Mark Slown, Manager, City of Rogers City; Region 6; Andrea Belding, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Belding; Region 3; Daniel Coss, Manager, City of DeWitt; Region 4; Margaret Guerrero-DeLuca, Mayor, City of Imlay City; Region 5; Robert Judd, Mayor, City of St. Joseph; Region 2; Kim Corcoran, Mayor, City of Ironwood; Region 7

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What defines a community? It's the common ground where people gather—from housing, squares, streets, and plazas to parks, green spaces, and waterfronts. We believe that by revitalizing communities and rebuilding neighborhoods, we can strengthen the entire state. Together with our many partners, we invest in Michigan communities to enhance the quality of life of our residents—and to attract and retain businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers throughout the state.

This approach is commonly described as creating a “sense of place” or just “placemaking.” It's a simple concept really, based on a single principle—people choose to settle in places that offer the amenities, social and professional networks, resources, and opportunities to support thriving lifestyles. Michigan can attract and retain talent—especially young, knowledge-based talent—by focusing on how best to utilize our regional communities' unique placemaking assets.

Michigan leads the national movement for placemaking. Downtowns and neighborhoods, cities and regions, see the importance of “place” to attracting talent, inspiring entrepreneurship, and encouraging business. Recently, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, the Michigan Municipal League, the MSU Land Policy Institute, and other statewide organizations launched the MPlace Partnership Initiative (<http://miplace.org/>) and a companion placemaking curriculum with the purposes of helping Michigan communities learn more about and implement placemaking as a strategic economic development initiative in the new economy. Learn what your community can do to help restore prosperity to Michigan and enhance the quality of life for everyone in the community. This six-module, 18-hour curriculum from the MPlace Partnership can jump-start your community's placemaking creativity.

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2. Economics of Place
3. Neighborhoods, Streets, and Connections
4. Form Planning & Regulation
5. Collaborative Public Involvement in Placemaking
6. Applied Placemaking

Learn about opportunities to attend Placemaking Curriculum Training being offered in the spring of 2013 by nonprofit placemaking partners such as Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) and Michigan Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) at miplace.org. 





AGING in PLACE

Auburn Hills, pop. 21,412

in Auburn Hills



Auburn Hills' Community Center is situated on the city's park-like municipal campus and offers a range of events, programs, services, and activities. Top: Three generations of Darlene Kitchen's family (pictured with her daughter and granddaughter), Senior Services Director Karen Adcock, and Center volunteer and user Rick Sheeran.

By Elizabeth Shaw

Back in 2008, Rick Sheeran's world was flipped upside-down by his unexpected early retirement from Chrysler.

"At that time I was thinking I'd work maybe another five years at least, but then things got pretty scary in the auto industry and I knew I had to go," said Sheeran, 61. "It's one thing to plan for retirement and be ready for it. This threw me into an unexpected situation. You wake up and ask yourself, 'what am I going to do all day?' That's not an easy question to face."

Like Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz*, Sheeran found the answer was right at home in Auburn Hills, now a pilot city in the Age-Friendly Communities Network sponsored by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The city of Ann Arbor is currently undergoing the same process.

Age-Friendly Criteria

The designation means that the city has committed to ongoing improvements in eight key areas:

- safe and accessible outdoor spaces and recreational facilities
- affordable public and private transportation
- access to leisure and cultural activities for social and civic engagement
- respect and inclusion for ethnic and cultural diversity
- opportunities for civic participation and employment
- wide range of housing options
- access to technology for communication and information
- community support and health services

Communities that achieve these goals are places that are friendly for people of all ages, said Auburn Hills Senior Services Director Karen Adcock.

“The old model was to create some special place to isolate seniors. Now it’s all about being inclusive. If it’s good for seniors, it’s good for a child, and that means it’s good for everyone,” said Adcock.

Sheeran started by volunteering at the Auburn Hills Community Center, packing Meals on Wheels. He’d seen firsthand the value of the program when his own mother was in her 90s.

“It was peace of mind to know that every day someone was at least looking in on her. They probably saved her life one day when she accidentally set a popcorn popper on fire. If the delivery man hadn’t come right then and put it out, I don’t know what would’ve happened.”

Now Sheeran is at the center every weekday—two days as a kitchen volunteer and the other three working out and playing co-ed sports.

“When you live in a community that offers what Auburn Hills does, it can really help to reorient your life and retirement,” said Sheeran. “When your spouse is still working full-time and you suddenly have to fend for yourself, you’re doing hard time. This is a great way to land on your feet and get structure back into your life. I don’t know how I would’ve handled things otherwise.”



Recreational Services for All Ages

Jointly funded and operated by the city’s senior services and recreation departments, and situated on the park-like municipal campus, the center has become the venue for a huge range of events, programs, services, and activities. Some are specifically targeted at seniors while others are cross-generational.

May Rock, 81, enjoys the social interaction of being a kitchen volunteer. Great-granddaughter Makayla Kovach, 2, comes for events like the Easter Egg Hunt and Halloween Walk.

“I love that it’s right across the road from campus,” said Rock’s granddaughter Victoria Alcorn, an Oakland University student. “My friends and I come over to use the gym for conditioning for our Quidditch team.”

Addressing Walkability and Transportation

But that’s only one aspect of the city’s vision for a truly livable community, said Community Development Director Steven Cohen. The plan also includes such factors as increased walkability, better public transportation, and an ongoing investment in creating a true downtown.

The 17.5-square-mile city was incorporated out of the former Pontiac Township and wraps in an L-shape around the city of Pontiac—which explains why it looks suburban in its land-use style despite boasting over 20,000 residents. That has been both the city’s strength and its biggest challenge.

“It’s a hybrid community with a significant commercial and industrial tax base that enables us to provide excellent services you wouldn’t see in most communities this size,” said Cohen, referring to prominent Auburn Hills residents like Chrysler Group Headquarters and Technical Center, the Palace of Auburn Hills, and Great Lakes Crossing Outlets. But the city’s geography also means its service coverage area is vastly spread out.

Age-Friendly Programs & Services in Auburn Hills

Many programs also include residents who qualify as low-income, disabled, or active military

KnoxBox Safety Program

A master key in a lockbox allows emergency personnel to gain quick entry when the homeowner is away or unable to answer the door, and eliminates the need for a forced entry. A limited number of KnoxBoxes are available at no charge for eligible residents. Homeowners who don't qualify for a free KnoxBox may purchase one at cost. Smoke detectors for the hearing impaired are also available.

Mobile Home and Minor Home Repair Program

Eligible homeowners qualify for free home improvement projects up to a lifetime cap of \$5,000 for plumbing and electrical, furnaces, water heaters, door and screen repairs, porch and step repairs, and mobile home skirting (no windows or painting).

Sharp Program

Volunteers provide free labor for household handyman chores such as gutter cleaning, toilet repair, window caulking, replacing light fixtures and garbage disposals, etc. Resident pays for any needed materials.

Snow Sweepers 50/50 and Lawn Keepers 50/50

Cost-sharing program for snow removal or lawn care.

Home-Based Food and Nutrition Services

Focus Hope delivers free food packages each month to income-qualified homebound seniors. Commodity foods are delivered every three months. Meals on Wheels are delivered daily to anyone age 60+ who is physically unable to prepare meals.

Onsite Food and Nutrition Services

The center-based Nutrition Program offers interactive education on topics such as salt-free and sugar-free cooking, and stretching your food dollar. A daily lunch program is also offered at the center, where non-homebound, income-qualified seniors can also pick up Focus Hope and commodity foods.

Vial of Life

An emergency information system that keeps an updated registry of vital information on seniors.

Health Services

Volunteers provide scheduled health screenings, immunizations, and health education programs, as well as free enrollment assistance for Medicare, Medicaid, and Part D Prescription Drug Plan. The center also offers a medical equipment loan closet.

Legal Help

Law school students and attorneys provide free legal advice and brief service assistance to seniors and low-income residents for issues including estate planning, family and housing matters, debt counseling, wills, and powers of attorney. Criminal and traffic issues are excluded. The AARP provides free tax preparation assistance.

Social Engagement

The community center provides volunteer opportunities and an ongoing calendar of classes, clubs and activities that are free or available at a nominal cost. Examples include Secret Senior Pals Club, Birthday Club, potluck dinners, computer instruction, and drop-in Mahjong. The city also offers group rates for day and extended trips to various travel destinations, as well as art and cultural classes for adults with special needs.

Physical Fitness

Free and low-cost classes and activities include aerobics, swimming, golf, volleyball, walking club, yoga, pickle-ball, chair exercise and fitness room.

Transportation

Free and low-cost mini-bus service within a five-mile radius of the city's boundaries, or to the senior center. AARP offers low-cost Driver Safety classroom courses for both AARP members and nonmembers.

Mental Health

Onsite and in-home counseling with a licensed social worker program addresses anxiety, low energy, and depression-related issues. Paid by insurance carriers or on a sliding scale.

Outreach, Information, and Referral

Assistance with caregiving issues, housing, Medicare & Medicaid counseling, and aging issues, by appointment with qualified staff and volunteers.



"We've got two senior housing complexes and four mobile home parks where it's condensed and efficient to deliver services, but we've also got rural areas out on the north end that are more of a challenge," said Adcock.

One unique service is KnoxBox, which provides fast home entry for emergency personnel. It's the kind of small detail that enables seniors to feel safe about aging in place, said Adcock.

"We had one elderly couple where the man had fallen and his wife was trying to lift him and he fell on top of her. She managed to crawl to a phone and called 911. It saved the firefighters from having to break down the door to help them."

The city's township origin is also why it lacks a traditional downtown—something widely recognized as a critical element to a sense of place. City officials are working hard to change that, Cohen said, by building on the former village of Auburn Heights at Squirrel and Auburn roads.


"We're investing millions of dollars in creating an urban area with a small-town feel within a suburban area. We're dedicated to developing a walkable, mixed-use downtown that's good for all ages. That's what brings life to a community," said Cohen. That includes an initial streetscape project from 1999-2001, the current construction of student housing in the center of the new downtown, and the acquisition of a 41-acre former industrial parcel to the east that will eventually incorporate such amenities as an amphitheater, park, and a riverwalk along the Clinton River.

"The old model was to create some special place to isolate seniors. Now it's all about being inclusive. If it's good for seniors, it's good for a child, and that means it's good for everyone."

— KAREN ADCOCK, AUBURN HILLS
SENIOR SERVICES DIRECTOR

"Aging in place" may be the newest buzzword in urban planning—but here in Auburn Hills, it's already a way of life for three generations of Darlene Kitchen's family.

"I live with my mother and grandson on basically the same street I grew up on. A lot of my good neighbors are still here in the same place too," said Kitchen, 64. "We've got everything from newborns to 98 years old, and lots of outreach services. Even nonresidents from the outlying areas come here because we have so much to do."

And that, said Cohen and Adcock, is exactly the Auburn Hills plan. 

Elizabeth Shaw is communications coordinator for the League. You may reach her at 734-669-6318 or eshaw@mml.org.

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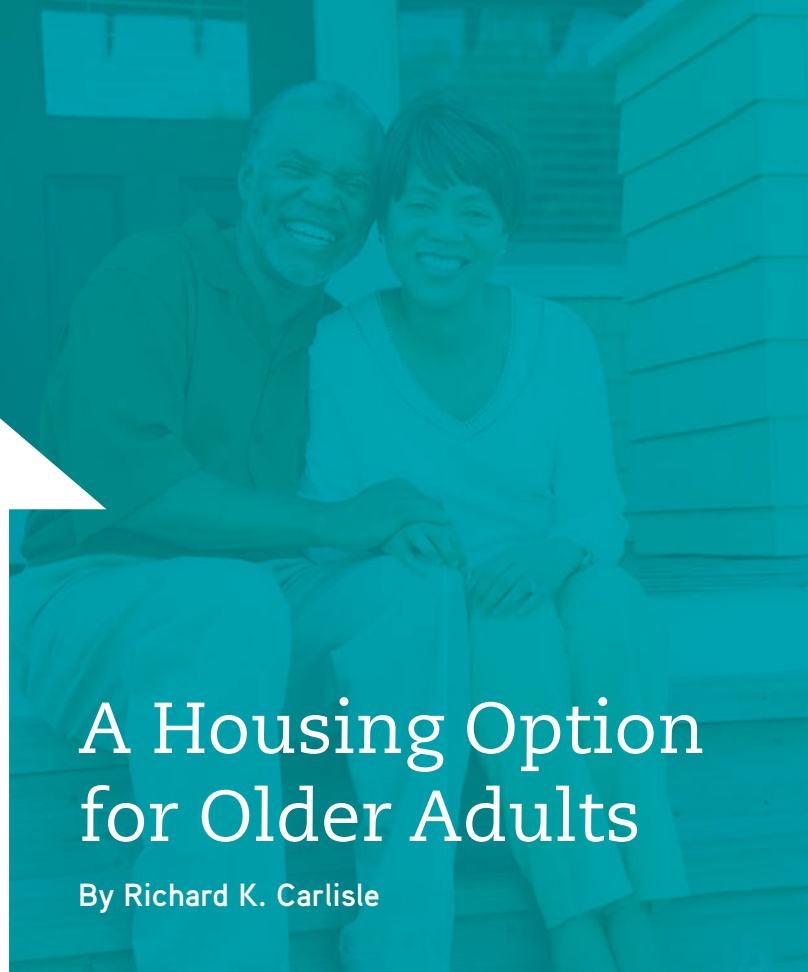
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ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

A Housing Option for Older Adults

By Richard K. Carlisle



In recent years, the field of housing has reversed a long-standing assumption that older adults need to move along a housing continuum, from one setting to another, as they age and require greater assistance. The traditional continuum incorporated a range of options including age-restricted housing, congregate housing, continuing care, assisted living, and nursing homes. While a range of housing types to meet the needs of older adults is necessary, trends in the housing field support the notion that older adults do not necessarily need to move when they require assistance.

According to a recent AARP survey, Americans overwhelmingly want to stay in their own homes and communities as they age, even if they need assistance caring for themselves. Today, a greater emphasis is being placed on residents remaining in their residential settings as well as bringing services to them. This trend is popularly known as “aging in place.” One of the housing options to better accommodate aging in place is accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Accessory Dwelling Unit Options

In some cases, neither staying within one’s own home nor entering an adult living center is either feasible or desirable. An alternative is to provide accessory dwelling units (ADU) in conjunction with a primary residence to accommodate an aging individual.

In general, ADUs are most commonly understood to be a separate additional living unit, including separate kitchen, sleeping, and bathroom facilities, attached or detached from the primary residential unit, on a single-family lot. ADUs are usually subordinate in size, location, and appearance to the primary unit. Such ADU housing typically takes one of three forms:

- ▶ Accommodating the individual within the primary residence without major internal or external modification.
- ▶ Accommodating the individual by expanding the primary residence with an accessory dwelling unit. Attached units, known variously as “mother-in-law apartments,” “accessory apartments,” or “second units,” are the most common types of accessory dwelling units. Accessory apartments usually involve the renovation of an attached garage, basement, or similar space in a single-family home.
- ▶ Less common are detached “accessory cottages” or ECHO housing (Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity), which are structurally independent from the primary residence. These units are often constructed or installed to provide housing for elderly parents being cared for by their adult children. Accessory cottages are permanent structures, while ECHO homes are temporary and moveable.

The city of Grand Rapids permits ADUs in various forms within a primary dwelling unit, with an accessory structure, or separate from the primary dwelling. ADUs are treated as a special land use in all residential zoning districts. Suzanne Shulz, Grand Rapids Planning Director, says that the idea of permitting ADUs became more acceptable once residents realized that many neighborhoods already had a mixture of housing types. Since the ordinance was passed, twelve ADUs have been approved.

Regulatory Issues to Consider

Depending upon the alternative form chosen, ADUs can be controversial when introduced into a neighborhood setting. The primary issue raised is what happens to the ADU when it is no longer used by a family member. The common concern expressed from other homeowners is that when an ADU is no longer occupied by the family member, it becomes a rental unit that can be occupied by an unrelated individual; thus in a single-family neighborhood you end up with two dwellings on a single lot.

Many of the potentially objectionable effects of ADUs can be avoided by regulating size, compatibility with the existing residence, number of occupants, parking, and overall design. In general, requiring the ADU to be attached to the principal residence is the most common form of regulation. Allowing detached units is not very common, and is generally more expensive. It is also more difficult to make a detached unit compatible with what is otherwise a single-family neighborhood.

Many regulations are written to allow residents to install an ADU for the limited purpose of providing in-home care to aging parents while maintaining separate living areas. However, restrictions on the age of tenants and their relationship to homeowners are difficult to enforce. When

relatives die or move away, homeowners will be left with an empty and unusable apartment and may be tempted to fill the vacancy in violation of the ordinance. Therefore, it is difficult for a community to keep tabs on the status of ADU tenants. ADU proponents argue that restrictions based on the age or familial status of tenants may discourage some homeowners from installing an ADU because of the risk of losing their investment in the event that their tenant moves away or dies.

This has certainly been the experience in Grand Rapids, according to Ms. Shulz. Consequently, the ordinance does not restrict ADUs to family members, although at least one of the dwellings on a property must be owner-occupied.


Conclusion

Prior to moving forward on the ADU alternative, we recommend that communities consider the issues set forth in this article. Addressing most of the physical design and compatibility aspects is pretty straightforward. Obviously,



ADUs can be controversial when introduced into a neighborhood setting. The primary issue raised is what happens to the ADU when it is no longer used by a family member.



occupancy issues are far more difficult. If the intent is to permit ADUs, it is far more realistic to expect that, once established, regulating occupancy by age or blood relationship will be next to impossible. Therefore, ensuring compatible relationships with neighboring properties and preventing irreversible nuisances will be the key. 

Richard K. Carlisle, AICP, PCP, is president of Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc. You may contact him at 734-662-2200 or rcarlisle@cwaplan.com.

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Making Collaboration Your New Normal

Neil J. Simon and Clay J. Pearson

Governing is complex in the best of situations, and nearly impossible in the worst. We as community leaders have been challenged by a deteriorating traditional economy and a largely inarticulate demand to operate government “differently.” In many ways, these challenges present opportunities for making necessary changes. Such changes do not come naturally; sometimes there is a reluctance to change, even in unprecedented situations. As local government officials, we wrestle with the question of how to preserve our communities and their resources without the revenue to do so in the usual ways. The traditional paradigm and “old” solutions are well known: higher taxes, service cutbacks, and state takeover.

Those solutions have failed. A paradigm shift is required because the challenges have changed over time.

Where We Are

We all have assumptions about community which are based on a personal world view. For instance, the concept of home rule is ingrained here in Michigan. Communities consider themselves exclusive and in competition

with other jurisdictions, especially those adjacent to it. Citizens voted for politicians to represent (exclusively) *them*, with reason and prudence. As a result, communities’ current paradigm has an inward focus. However, the world in which we live has changed dramatically. We, as leaders, need to consider our assumptions and rework our definition of community in order to overcome the challenges facing us today. Our world view must change.

Paradigm Change— Where We Need to Go

Rather than taking the traditional view that every community is a sovereign “island unto itself,” we support thinking in terms of a “general systems approach.” This approach emphasizes interlinking of decision making by leaders with the “best interests of the community as a whole” as the driver. The wider approach is unexpected and consequently risky due to the politics within each community and the existing paradigm of “home rule” that the constituents maintain.

At the same time, the systems approach makes sense with a bit of reflection. A municipality is not an end

unto itself—it is part of the region and state, bypassing those imaginary lines of jurisdiction. Especially in Michigan, our smaller cities and villages do not have scale to do all things and effectively or efficiently provide many services that require regional solutions. Our modest local jurisdictions do not have the breadth to compete with the modern world when we are battling across local roads instead of focusing from a regional view.

Individual Change Comes First

In order to shift a paradigm one must explore the foundations of belief. These beliefs are built on assumptions based on an individual’s knowledge and experiences. When working within a team it is important that all the leaders and stakeholders share their beliefs with their group. Exploring individual “truths” is a great exercise to start a process of change. These truths, once explored, reflect a community’s belief.

A follow-up exercise is to use a process called dialogue (which significantly differs from our common way of talking, i.e. debate) to share with each other the foundations of thought and beliefs and to come to some sort of group

consensus as to what the thoughts and belief should be for the community. Once there is a mutual understanding of community, then we leaders can help others “catch on.” For most who follow traditional thinking, this means changing from a parochial construct to one where we think of community as a cooperative. This collaborative environment becomes the new standard. We need to share our concerns and successes, while at the same time meeting our local environment’s needs. This will lead to a different type of decision making and communities will understand the need to pay for what they deeply hold to be necessary.

Paradigm Comparison

Our greatest challenge will be the barriers created by past assumptions about community. People may not accept modifying those assumptions in response to the reality of the current situation. There will be an initial shock—which you are probably experiencing already. If we have accepted the new reality, we need to get our constituents to change their individual concepts and replace the past with a new world view, a new belief. This can be done by re-building trust with constituents by being forthright with the assumptions of today, putting the reality “on the table,” and helping constituents realize and accept today’s challenges and realities. While doing this it is important to understand that human nature, for most, is to resist things being different—we resist change.

Overcoming Change Resistance

Experienced community leaders are open to this paradigm shift. They take the lead in the “thought change.” They need to help their constituents determine their underlying assumptions about their community and its integrity, and help them understand the differences between then and now. They then need to help them develop new assumptions by which to live with new measures of success. One way to gauge constituent feelings is to survey them on a list of common fears. The list needs to be neutral or positive in nature and can be measured using a Likert Scale (e.g., 1=great fear...5=no fear).

Common List of Peoples’ Fears Related to Change

1. Fear of change itself
2. Fear of loss of homeostatic community
3. Fear of difference
4. Fear of loss of control
5. Economic fears
6. Fear of judgment and/or rejection
7. Fear of the loss of the past history/legacy
8. Fear of change for change sake

Using the results of this “fear poll” helps to address the changes required by the new paradigm and community understanding. As Albert Einstein said, “expecting different results by using the same methods of coping that worked in the past is a definition of insanity.”

Another area to overcome is one of community culture. Many Michigan communities are based on cultural ethnicity (i.e., Polish, Dutch reformed, Native American) and/or creed (religion/religious affiliations, human rights, etc.). They are often insistent on their traditional community and standards


and wanting things to remain the same. There are often specific spokespersons representing the cultural stakeholders who lobby for things to stay the same.

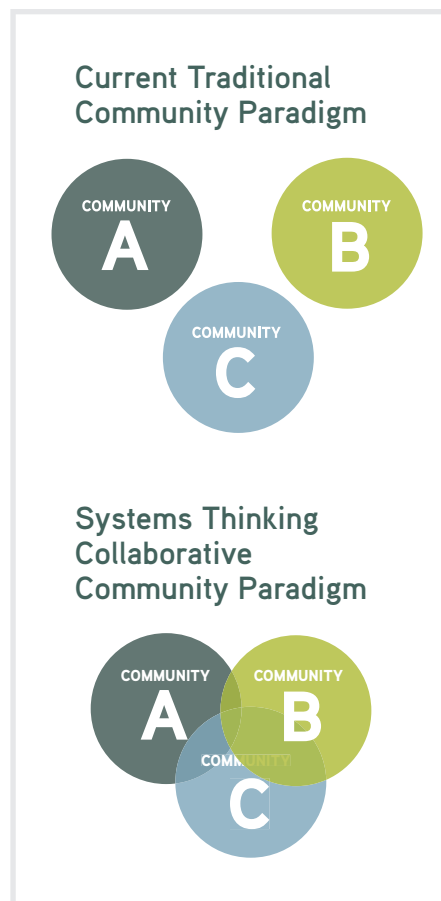
For those communities wanting to retain their traditional ways, leadership needs to help the community re-think itself while preserving the positives of the past. They need to determine what has been precious, good, and contributory. The answers to these questions will help shape the future of the local community and its collaborative relationships. The idea of the community helping to determine its quality and retaining what is most precious helps citizens feel involved and helps preserve what they want to keep.

Summary and Conclusion

We have focused on today’s current conflicts caused by economics. In order to move into the new normal, leadership must determine its own concept of community, engage in dialogue with the constituents to understand their concepts and help them transition to the current reality, and help build and point out the ways in which the “old” valued parts of the community will survive.

Leadership, in other words, must build trust within its constituency. This can be accomplished through transparent leadership, showing they value what their constituents value, helping the constituents engage with the change and be part of the transition, and acting in reliable and consistent ways, including decision making in the best interest of the whole community.

Leadership needs to balance the needs of the electorate/community with the reality of economic change. This process can be done through re-education and taking a stewardship position over that of self-interest. In order to create sustainable change, the leader needs to use a strategy of change that is inclusive and participative. 



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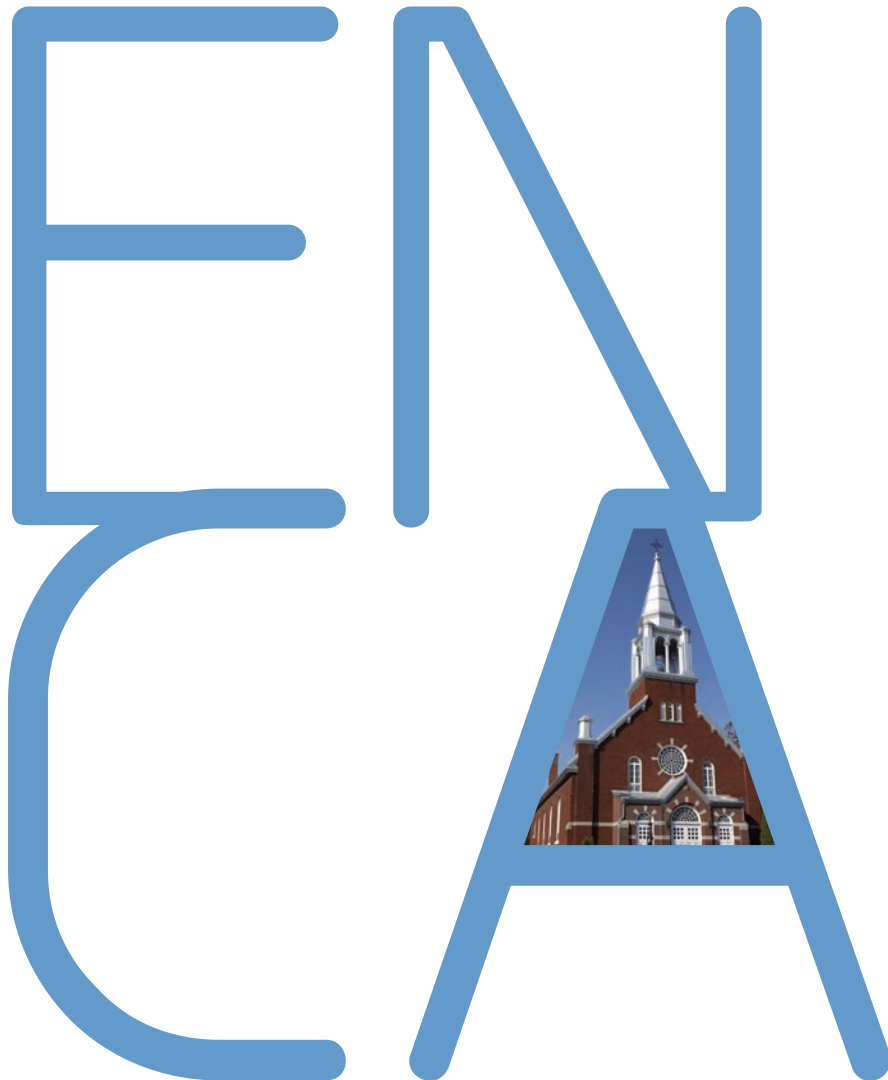
Clay J. Pearson is a city manager for the city of Novi. You may contact him at cpearson@cityofnovi.org.

By Gene King

Public Officials Must Know the Law Concerning

Although Michigan has many laws that regulate the ownership and possession of firearms, the state does not have a law that prohibits people from openly carrying firearms. At the same time, recent high profile shooting incidents have increased the public's concern about firearms and have led to controversy over gun control. The controversy has landed at the feet of elected officials who feel pressured to take action. This article outlines Michigan law so public officials understand why, even though some may find the presence of firearms to be threatening or intimidating, the ability to carry the firearm in a lawful and responsible manner is currently protected by state law.

Under Michigan law, a person who is an adult (18 years or older) may openly carry any legal firearm, and a person under 18 years old, while supervised by an adult, may openly carry a shotgun or rifle. Michigan law allows a person with a concealed pistol license (CPL) to carry a firearm concealed, except where concealment is specifically prohibited. In all cases, the firearm must "be able to be observed by those casually observing the person as people do in the ordinary course and usual associations of life" (*People v. Reynolds*, 38 Mich App. 159 (1970)).



Because there is a probability of encountering persons exercising their constitutional rights by openly carrying a firearm, the League has made a significant effort to educate law enforcement of the need to change their perception about people legally carrying a firearm. No longer is the presence of a gun the automatic mark of a “bad” guy. All public employees and officials need training on how to distinguish between someone behaving in a manner that may pose a risk as opposed to a person who chooses to carry a firearm legally.

STATE OF THE LAW

The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” The Michigan Constitution, Article 1, Section 6, reads, “Every person has a right to keep and bear arms for the defense of himself and the state.” A good resource on Michigan law is the Michigan State Police publication, *Firearms Laws of Michigan*, available at www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1591_3503_4654---,00.html. It is important to note that Michigan law has a large number of restrictions on who cannot possess or own a firearm.

Michigan law (MCL 123.1102), *Regulation of pistols or other firearms*, prohibits municipalities from passing ordinances that exceed firearm regulations under federal or state laws. For example, the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled in *MCRGO v Ferndale*, 256 Mich. App. 401, (2003) that the city’s ordinance prohibiting the possession or concealment of weapons in all buildings owned or controlled by the city was invalid because state law barred local units of government from enacting and enforcing ordinances that make local public buildings gun-free zones. This opinion continues to be supported in case law.

Therefore, in Michigan, a person may carry a firearm with lawful intent, openly exposed in places other than

those prohibited by statute or by private property posted “no firearms allowed,” and/or as dictated by the hunting and sporting laws. This means public entities, including schools, cannot prohibit firearms carried under a CPL or openly exposed in public areas of public buildings.

READ CAREFULLY TO AVOID CONFUSION

MCL 750.234d (1) sets forth the premises on which individuals cannot possess a firearm. These are:

- (a) A depository financial institution or a subsidiary or affiliate of a depository financial institution.
- (b) A church or other house of religious worship.
- (c) A court.
- (d) A theatre.
- (e) A sports arena.
- (f) A daycare center.
- (g) A hospital.
- (h) An establishment licensed under the Michigan Liquor Control Act.

Notice the list does not contain schools or libraries.

MCL 750.234d(2) then establishes the applicability of the regulation. Under this section, a person with a CPL may carry a firearm, either concealed or openly, on any of the premises in the above list.

Weapon-Free School Zones (MCL 750.237a (4)), prohibits any firearms except when carried by persons who are exempted in MCL 750.237a (5).

Exemptions include persons licensed by this state or another state to carry a concealed weapon. This is in conflict with MCL 28.425o(1)(a), CPL Act, which lists a school as a “gun free zone.” A person with a CPL cannot carry a concealed pistol except in a vehicle on school property, but they can openly carry a firearm while on school property.



A CASE WORTH WATCHING

In *Capital Area District Library (CADL) v Michigan Open Carry Inc.*, 298 Mich. App 220 (2012), on appeal, the Michigan Supreme Court is being asked to determine whether district libraries established pursuant to the District Library Establishment Act, MCL 397.171 et seq., are subject to the same restrictions regarding firearm regulation that apply to other local public libraries established by local units of government.

The case involves members of Michigan Open Carry Inc. (MOC) openly carrying guns in CADL's downtown Lansing branch. CADL has a policy that no weapons are allowed on its premises. One occasion allegedly involved a person carrying a shotgun. Some library patrons and employees were disturbed by the presence of exposed firearms. CADL believes that Michigan law permits it to prohibit the open carrying of firearms on its premises. The CADL received injunctive relief from the Ingham County Circuit Court and MOC appealed to the Michigan Court of Appeals. The Michigan Court of Appeals ruled in October of 2012 that district libraries are a quasi-municipal corporation and must comply with the pronouncement in MCL 123.1102 as ruled in *MCRGO*, which is that CADL may not regulate firearms beyond the state law and could not prohibit open carry. The CADL then appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS HAVE TO UNDERSTAND!

The most important point to remember when involved with subjects who are openly carrying firearms in non-prohibited places is that if they comply with the law, they are exercising their constitutional right. No matter how concerned citizens may become and no matter what personal or professional opinion a person has, these people can do what they are doing. If the person is on private property and the property owner or their representatives do not object or have not posted notices prohibiting firearms, the person is complying with the law.

FORGET THE CONSTITUTION, WE HAVE AN ORDINANCE!


Audrey Forbush, Plunkett Cooney, PC, the Law Enforcement Action Forum Legal Advisor, cautions that public entities should review their ordinances addressing firearms. She suggests consulting the entity legal advisor to ensure the ordinances meet current state law. Entities also should never rely on the enforcement of a local ordinance to trump state or federal law. Carrying a gun in and of itself does not constitute disorderly conduct and brandishing occurs only when the person is waving the gun around in a threatening manner. A person's fear when in the presence of a gun does not constitute an assault.

TRAINING

By now, all public entity employees should have received training on encountering people who are openly carrying a firearm. They should know how to handle the situation and follow established protocol. If the person is behaving in a fashion that raises concern, it is reasonable to contact law enforcement or security to ensure the person behaves appropriately. The key for

requesting assistance is the behavior of the person and not the mere existence of the firearm.

Forbush opined that this is especially true given the high degree of publicity the open carry issue has received. She points to a U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals case, *Gregory v City of Louisville*, 444 F.3rd 725 (6th Circuit, 2006) as being directly on point. In *Gregory*, the Sixth Circuit pointed to *City of Canton v. Harris*, 109 S.Ct. 1197 (1989) "deliberate indifference" standard in assessing liability because a municipality failed to train officers in their duty and that failure had a "highly predictable consequence" of being a moving force of a constitutional violation. The *Canton* decision is the bellwether case that affects all public entity employees, not just police.

In light of *Canton* and with the Courts looking at the *highly predictable consequences* of the actions of employees, Forbush believes that public entity employees must receive training on tasks or responsibilities that the employer expects them to fulfill regularly. The training does not have to be formal classroom instruction, but the entity has an obligation to educate its employees and to document all such activities. Forbush suggests using the Michigan State Police resources and newsletters that discuss the firearms laws. The MML's Law Enforcement Action Forum (LEAF) Newsletter about open carry is also a good resource. 

Gene King is the Law Enforcement Action Forum coordinator and loss control consultant for the League. You may contact him at 248-204-8040 or gene.king@meadowbrook.com.

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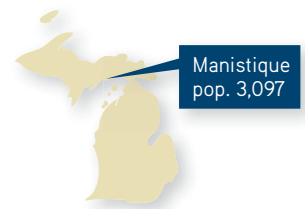
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AGE-FRIENDLY

Manistique



A 2012 economic impact study of the Manistique Farmers Market indicated increased spending downtown by about \$3,700 on Farmers Market Wednesdays.

Manistique, located along the northern shores of Lake Michigan, earned a “Community for a Lifetime” award through Michigan’s Office of Services to the Aging and the Commission on Services to the Aging in 2012—making it the first U.P. community to receive the award. But the community didn’t stop there. Kerry Ott, community coordinator for the Strategic Alliance for Health Projects for the Sault Tribe in Manistique says Manistique is on a roll.

Where it Began

“It all began with the farmers market,” noted Manistique City Manager Sheila Aldrich. Ott also credited the farmers market as the beginning of a wonderful collaboration among the tribe, city, and other community partners including Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital, Manistique Area Schools, the Schoolcraft Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Luce/Mackinac/Alger/Schoolcraft District Health Department.

Nurturing Collaboration

Part of the collaborative success story may be attributed to something as simple as meeting space. Says Aldrich, “The group met at city hall and I was always impressed with their enthusiasm and commitment. I couldn’t always be in the meetings, but proximity made us aware of more collaborative opportunities.” For example, when the city was working on its rural development water/sewer project, the group applied on behalf of the city for a Safe Routes to School grant, garnering \$250,000, then used that to connect sidewalks not covered by the rural development work. The city was well on its way to walkability.

Communities for a Lifetime 2012

As part of the Strategic Alliance for Health Projects in Manistique, Ott submitted an action plan update of its goals in making Manistique accessible and appealing for an older

population. Impressed with the city's progress, the state office selected Manistique, along with Traverse City, to receive the "Communities for a Lifetime" recognition in 2012.


Criterion includes access to healthcare and businesses, safety and security, housing, supportive community systems, enrichment, community caring and transportation options, such as walkability. In this regard, Manistique's walkability focus created 14 ADA compliant intersections along with more than five new and replaced sidewalks in 2012. Additionally, Manistique offers appealing enrichment activities, such as the farmers market, Pioneer Days and Folk Fest, which honor the city's rich lumbering history.

Roadmaps to Health Prize 2013

Simultaneously with their other projects, the Manistique super group worked on the city's non-motorized pathway plan to extend the boardwalk up the Manistique River through Central Park, creating a three-mile loop. In this pursuit, they discovered and applied for the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Roadmaps to Health prize. This is one of world's largest philanthropies focused on improving the health of the population, and 2013 was the first year of prize awards to communities fostering "diverse actions to promote healthy behaviors." Of 163 national submissions, 11 were selected for site visits and only six selected for awards. Manistique received \$25,000 and was by far the smallest winning community in the company of Minneapolis; New Orleans; Cambridge, MA; Santa Cruz County, CA; and Fall River, MA.

A PARTNERSHIP PROJECT WITH THE MANISTIQUE AREA SCHOOLS INCLUDES A FIFTH-GRADE INDOOR VEGETABLE GARDEN. ON SCHOOL-WIDE HEALTHY PIZZA DAY, THE PRODUCE IS USED IN THE SAUCE AND FOR TOPPINGS.

Aldrich says the group's complimentary travel to receive the award with such notable cities cemented the camaraderie of the team. Ott credits an amazing city council, "They really get it; what's good for the health of citizens is economically good for the community. They understand what Manistique needs to grow and be competitive."

May 15 will mark the spring opening of the farmers market and a community celebration of the Roadmaps to Health prize. Come check it out. 

Caroline Weber Kennedy is manager of field operations for the League. You may reach her at 906-428-0100 or ckennedy@mml.org.

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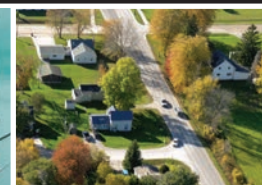
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AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT:

MICHIGAN BLACK CAUCUS OF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

American history has been filled with tales of small voices that grew loud enough to be heard when joined together, and groups who made a difference through the strength and unity of a shared vision.

That is exactly the driving force behind the Michigan Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (MBC-LEO), established in 2004 as a forum for its members to collaborate, network, share information, and provide support to one another throughout the state.

“One hand won’t clap, but together we can make lots of noise,” said MBC-LEO President Lois Allen-Richardson, who is also mayor pro tem of the city of Ypsilanti. “When you’re a member of MBC-LEO, you’re not alone. Our mission is to help others in their role as elected officials. As we work together, we can make a difference and bring about the changes we desire.”

Although they are separate entities, the spirit of MBC-LEO goes back more than three decades when a small group of African-Americans in the U.S. House of Representatives decided they had a responsibility to make sure the nation’s legislative process was inclusive of all people, regardless of race, color, or creed. Throughout the years, the Congressional Black Caucus has played a crucial role in national affairs as both a legislative and socio-economic champion for all underrepresented people.

That example has helped guide MBC-LEO’s own path toward building a fellowship of elected officials with a shared belief in the common good. Through its affiliation with the Michigan Municipal League, MBC-LEO advises, comments, and advocates policy positions that reflect the interests of the African-American community. Benefits of membership include leadership development, networking, forums, and information dissemination.



Among the group's proudest achievements is a scholarship program to help students achieve their academic goals. Thanks to fundraising efforts over the last two years, MBC-LEO has been able to establish a book scholarship fund that will grant \$500 to a deserving student each summer. The students are chosen based on their political participation, academic achievement, school and community activities, and a personal essay. The first scholarship recipients were Shellis Hampton of Grand Rapids and Lawrence Dupree of Harper Woods. Hampton entered Hampton University in the fall of 2012, while Dupree will use his scholarship to continue his studies at Oakland University.

“When you’re a member of MBC-LEO, you’re not alone. Our mission is to help others in their role as elected officials. As we work together, we can make a difference and bring about the changes we desire.”



The scholarship application can be found on the MBC-LEO website. The deadline for submission is June 1 of each year. MBC-LEO will host its 9th Annual Fundraising Dinner in Ypsilanti in October. Be sure to check the website for details as the date gets closer.

In addition to the annual fundraiser, the group meets twice a year in conjunction with the League’s Capital Conference and Annual Convention. It also hosts membership conference calls to keep in touch throughout the year.

Membership is open to anyone who believes in the mission of the group. A membership application is available on the MBC-LEO website, www.mbc-leo.org.

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Open Meetings Act violation and attorney fees

FACTS:

Kenneth Speicher (plaintiff) sued the Columbia Township Board of Election Commissioners alleging that the Board violated the Open Meetings Act (OMA). The trial court ruled in plaintiff's favor and found that the defendant twice violated the OMA. The court denied plaintiff's request for injunctive relief but granted his request for attorney fees and costs. Plaintiff then filed a motion requesting attorney fees and costs totaling \$32,484.25. Defendant responded that the requested amount was clearly excessive.

MCL 15.271(4) provides that a successful plaintiff is entitled to recover his or her "actual attorney fees" incurred in an OMA action.

If a public body is not complying with this act [OMA], and a person commences a civil action against the public body for injunctive relief to compel compliance or to enjoin further noncompliance with the act and succeeds in obtaining relief in the action, the person shall recover court costs and actual attorney fees for the action.



QUESTION # 1:

Are "actual attorney fees" limited by ethical standards set forth in the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct (MRPC), and, in particular, MRPC 1.5(a) that bars attorneys from charging illegal or clearly excessive fees?

Answer to #1 (according to the trial court):

Yes. The trial court ruled that the requested attorney fees were clearly excessive and reduced the amount to \$7,500.

Answer to #1 (according the court of appeals):

Yes. The court of appeals found that courts have the authority and obligation to take affirmative action to enforce the ethical standards set forth by the MRPC and that the rules of professional conduct apply to cases involving the imposition of attorney fees and fees charged by attorneys. The court found that principle applies even when a plaintiff is requesting that defendant be ordered to pay the attorney fees. The court of appeals remanded, however, for an evidentiary hearing to determine the appropriate amount of attorney fees that were incurred with reference to the factors contained in MRPC 1.5(a).

QUESTION # 2:

Are "actual attorney fees" limited to fees related to the OMA claims?

Answer to #2 (according to the trial court):

Yes. The trial court ruled that the award of "actual attorney fees" must relate to the OMA claims and not to other claims made in the same lawsuit. Since plaintiff's lawsuit included claims of election law violations, the court deducted those fees related to the election law claims.

Answer to #2 (according to the court of appeals):

Yes. The court of appeals noted that the plain language of MCL 15.271(4) requires that the fees charged must be "for the action," i.e., the claims for violation of the OMA. Again, the court of appeals remanded to the trial court for an evidentiary hearing to clarify the exact number of hours allocated to the OMA action.

Speicher v Columbia Township Board of Election Commissioners, No. 307368 (Dec. 20, 2012).

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Health Care Reform

Q: How will Health Care Reform impact my municipality?

A: There is no doubt that 2014 will bring new changes to how employers offer benefits as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Before addressing the question, however, we need to define a few key terms that municipalities need to understand regarding Health Care Reform.

1. **Large Employer:** an employer with 50 or more full-time and full-time equivalent employees.
2. **Small Employer:** an employer with less than 50 full-time and full-time equivalent employees.
3. **Full-Time Employee:** an employee working an average of 30 or more hours per week or, at the employer's option, working an average of 130 hours per month.

While there are many reform provisions in PPACA that will impact all employers, the "Play or Pay" mandate and the implementation of a Health Insurance Exchange may perhaps be the most significant change for the 2014 plan year.

The "Play or Pay" mandate, or "employer mandate," will take effect on January 1, 2014 and will subject a *large* employer to a monthly penalty of 1/12th of \$2,000 for each full-time employee (minus the first 30 employees) if the employer does not offer all full-time employees and their dependents minimum essential coverage and at least one employee receives a subsidy from a Health Insurance Exchange. If a large employer offers coverage but it is either unaffordable or does not meet the minimum value test, the employer will be subject to a monthly penalty of 1/12th of \$3,000 for each person who actually receives a subsidy from a Health Insurance Exchange.

While *small* employers are exempt from the "Play or Pay" penalties, there are four key reforms on insurers who offer coverage in the the small group and individual insurance market that could impact premiums.

1. New Rating Rules:

All small group and individual plans will be rated on four factors:

- a. Age
- b. Geography
- c. Tobacco
- d. Individual or family coverage
- e. Rates will no longer be based on industry, occupation, duration of coverage, health, claims experience, or gender.



2. Essential Health Benefits:

- a. All small group and individual plans must cover 10 essential benefit categories, including pediatric dental and vision services for individuals less than 19 years of age.
- b. Annual cost sharing limits will be imposed on all plans that limit what the enrollee pays for co-insurance, deductibles, and co-payments for the year.
Note: This also applies to large groups, as well.

3. Guarantee Issue & Renewability:

All health insurance plans must guarantee the availability and renewal of coverage regardless of health status.

4. Risk Pooling:

All small group and individual enrollees will be pooled into a statewide risk pool where a risk adjustment process will assign risk factors to each enrollee. A plan average risk score will be calculated and compared across insurance issuers in Michigan with payments being transferred between carriers to compensate plans with the highest risk.

The creation of a Health Insurance Exchange will also be new, effective January 1, 2014. These Health Insurance Exchanges will provide individuals with more options for obtaining health insurance. More information is still needed on the details of the Michigan Health Insurance Exchange.

Current guidance indicates that, regardless of employer size, there will be new fees imposed on employers through increased insurance premiums. It is expected that these costs will exceed normal inflationary trends impacting the upcoming budget year.

Thank you to Mandy Reed, League human resources specialist, and Chantel Sheaks from American Fidelity Administrative Services, LLC for their contributions.

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Durand sits at the crossroads of two major railroads, a vital hub in the industry that opened America's frontier and helped build the nation. Not every community can look back on a history this rich. So when city officials started plans to renew the downtown, that railroader legacy was the obvious foundation to build a sense of place.

Many key assets were already in place. Thanks to the efforts of local history buffs and rail fans, Durand's Union Station was placed on the National Register of Historic



Places. The city purchased it and restored it to its original Chateau Romanesque grandeur.

During the 1987 City Centennial, an historic baggage car and steam engine were put on permanent display in a newly created downtown park. At the end of Main, a locally sculpted bronze statue was erected in tribute to railroading. A tower added in the early 1990s boasts a clock that once adorned the old Simplicity Engineering Company, another local landmark since the 1920s.

The most recent round of renewal began in 2009 with two keystone projects: the newly constructed SAGELink Credit Union and the conversion of an historic school into senior housing. "We invited the whole community to a Desserts and Design Open House and 60 to 70 people showed up," said Mayor Deb Doyle. "It was a real group vision."



The city and Downtown Development Authority worked together to line up streetscape grants. The downtown shopping area became the Diamond District in honor of the Depot yard's diamond-shaped rail crossing. Brick diamonds adorned the sidewalks. Tree grates were custom-made with a steam engine motif. The Chamber of Commerce held an art contest to hand-paint the public waste bins. Walkability expert Dan Burden suggested features like a traffic-calming circle near the new senior housing. Classic streetlights were festooned with colorful banners.

With the streetscape completed, local businesses began buying in, adding flower pots and window boxes. Several are in line for façade improvement grants from the state. Next up: a proposed national railroad memorial on a vacant city block near the



tracks. "It's a perfect spot for a park with a good view of the Depot. Because we're going for a national memorial, we're hoping for some creative funding," said Doyle. "We are taking advantage of our heritage."