



AGING TOGETHER

five communities
creating choices



**OUR VISION: AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES THAT ACTIVELY
ENGAGE, VALUE AND SUPPORT OLDER ADULTS**

Strategic Plan

2020-2023



PATH FOUNDATION

CULPEPER, FAUQUIER, MADISON, ORANGE & RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTIES, VIRGINIA

OVERVIEW

In 2030, 25 percent of our region's population will be over the age of 60 with the fastest growing segment of the community 75 and older. All Baby Boomers will be over 65. 1 in 5 people in the United States will be at retirement age. How will we, as a community, respond to the growing needs and preferences of this expanding older adult population? Aging Together is a collaborative effort to help our localities respond to the growth in the older population and to assure that local residents will have the services and supports they need as they age.

OUR MODEL

Aging Together's success in supporting older adults and their families is based on facilitating strong effective partnerships and providing partners with relevant resources and support.

We have had a significant impact on aging services to date by:

- identifying needs
- pulling partners together to develop solutions
- identifying funding sources
- securing grant funding and coordinating new project implementation

This partnership is built on an alliance of more than 200 organizations and individuals who actively participate in one or more county-based teams and regional workgroups, and collaborate across agencies, counties and interest areas.

Members include:

- older adults
- caregivers
- hospitals
- businesses
- service providers
- the faith community
- law enforcement
- local government
- concerned citizens

Much of our work is done through teams in each of the five counties of the region (Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock). Together teams identify the strengths and needs of older adults in their community and develop plans to address them through community education, new service delivery, or other unique responses. Programs are then delivered by our partner organizations, assuring their sustainability. Our small staff does the behind the scenes work others may not be able to given their intense workloads. The Aging Together County Resource Specialist maintains contact lists, engages new team members, distributes meeting minutes, researches resources to support team activities, and helps the team to progress. Using this unique model of collaboration at both local and regional levels. Aging Together has changed the way our community does business and has brought state and national recognition to the area.

OUR VALUES

Aging Together is grounded in the principles of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *Community Partnerships for Older Adults* which provided initial funding to help establish the organization. We believe:

- Systems change can only occur through true collaboration.
- The voices of older adults need to be part of the process.
- Working locally and regionally is key to success.
- A small but well informed staff are needed to keep momentum, focus, and to view the landscape ahead.
- Building a community that is good for older adults benefits people of all ages.

We still find these principles to be relevant to our work. Aging Together does not need to provide aging or healthcare services as this expertise already exists in the community. Instead, we provide the neutral base from which ideas can incubate and collaborations can be explored to increase or enhance services, and to make services more easily accessible for seniors and their families.

INFORMING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

In July, 2018, Aging Together received a generous grant from PATH Foundation for the Engaging Communities in Strategic Planning to Meet the Needs of Older Adults / Caregivers (July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019). The grant's purpose was to assess current issues facing older adults and caregivers through community conversations; stake holder interviews; and data gathering. A goal of the proposal was to analyze results, and, to plan strategies to address needs.

Using funding from the above grant, in January, 2019, Aging Together hired a consultant to facilitate the COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS and interviews with key stakeholders. The consultant then worked with the Board of Directors to develop the three-year strategic plan with the goal of addressing those outcomes.

Parallel to this process, PATH Foundation hired a consultant and conducted a research and development process designed to produce a Strategic Action Plan for Senior Services, (one of the four focus areas selected by PATH Foundation). Demographic surveys and research conducted informed estimated and projected older adult population statistics from 2016-2030.

The process was also informed by dozens of community professionals and volunteers who participated by serving on a Community Advisory Group or participating in a Community Insight Event (not unlike the Community Conversations).

The final report included "Ten Guiding Strategies for Focusing and Aligning Community Efforts" and "A Guiding Framework for Action: Community Concerns and the Eight Domains of Livability." The Senior Services Collaborative was formed and the findings were condensed to 7 key goals. Aging Together is helping to lead the effort of the Collaborative workgroups.

Together the work with PATH Foundation, along with the work of over 500 people who voluntarily attended

Community Conversations in our region's counties (Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and, Rappahannock), helped identify key challenges, strengths, and opportunities affecting the area's aging demographic and, informed the Board of Directors in the development of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023.

COMMON THEMES ACROSS THE BOARD FROM THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS AND THE PATH RESEARCH IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

TRANSPORTATION

Several trends have been observed that impact older adults use of the expanding menu of transportation options in our area. First is the reluctance of older adults to give up the independence of their own vehicles and start to use the public transportation options available to them. The number of transportation options for older adults has grown in the past several years with the formation of the Foothills Area Mobility System (FAMS) a collaboration of human service transportation providers across the region. The region has long had a strong volunteer base through the RRCS Senior Volunteer transportation service, a locally organized transportation service for those getting cancer treatment, and the "good neighbor" support of many in the community. Through grant funding, Aging Together was able to hire a Volunteer Driver Coordinator to assist in recruitment of volunteer drivers. Volunteer transportation networks, a critical resource in rural areas, rely on regular recruitment of volunteer drivers, support and recognition of those drivers and outreach to assure that riders know about and use volunteer transportation opportunities.

Though systems are in place, the Community Conversations highlighted needs for transportation to places other than medical appointments, for example, rides to the grocery store or beauty salon. Additionally, weekend service was reported to be almost non-existent.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing improves the quality of life of residents by leading to better health, adequate jobs, financial stability, security, and population diversity. The **effects of affordable housing on residents** are profound and capable of transforming communities, especially when the projects are designed with an urban plan in mind. Community Conversations indicated a need for affordable housing in all five counties, and, for affordable Assisted Living and Long-Term care housing options.

SOCIAL ISOLATION

Even in today's time of connection through social media and technology many people are still alone. Older people are particularly vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness owing to loss of friends and family, mobility or income. Certain lifetime milestones put someone at risk of social isolation as the type and frequency of connections seniors have with others change: retirement, caregiving, divorce, widowhood. Research compiled by the AARP Foundation indicates that social isolation can have a significant impact on the overall health of older adults and may contribute to early death.

As many older citizens have moved from the area to be closer to services, many others have expressed their interest in living out their lives in this beautiful area, close to family and friends. Community Conversations identified social isolation as a growing concern, highlighting the need for technology services and internet access in some of our more rural areas.

FOOD ACCESS (MEALS & NUTRITION)

Food insecurity refers to the uncertain availability of food and beverages. According to Feeding America, food insecurity impacts around 40 million Americans. Those who suffer from food insecurity often face poverty, homelessness, lack of medical care, and other serious issues in their lives. Older adults also face more food insecurity than their younger counterparts. As people get older, their nutritional needs change. They need more calcium and vitamin D, for instance, because their bones become more brittle. Additionally, the body gets weaker as it ages, so the elderly need more calories to maintain a healthy weight

and to sustain their energy levels. When deprived of food, the older adults often succumb to serious illness or death much quicker than they would than if they were younger.

Access to food and nutrition was an identified need that emerged from the Community Conversations. In our region, this appears to be related to social isolation. The RRCS Senior Centers offer a place for older adults to gather and enjoy meals together, however, only a small percentage of older adults are taking advantage of this option. We continue to seek solutions for reaching isolated older adults.

AGING IN PLACE

Overall, people have a desire to stay home and be independent as long as possible, and to stay close to family and friends. Community Conversations confirmed that remaining at home independently can be achieved with simple support solutions - such as help with yard work, repair and maintenance, or simple house chores, but more help in these areas was needed.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT / ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

80% of the care of older adults and people with disabilities is provided by family members. The typical family caregiver is a woman between the ages of 35 to 60, often raising children and working full or part time. Men are quickly catching up as family caregivers however. Caregivers experience stressors that impact their health, relationships, and financial and work status.

75% of family caregivers are also employed outside the home. The cost of caregiving to U.S. based employers has been estimated to be as high as \$34 billion per year.

These costs include:

- reduced productivity at work when caregivers are distracted by their home responsibilities
- lost productivity as they have to take unplanned time off from work for appointments or to provide care
- the cost of recruiting and training new employees when family caregivers are forced to leave the workforce
- Employers experience additional costs for health care for employed family caregivers.

Community Conversations indicated the need for education, support groups, and resources. Knowing who to call and what to ask for was a common theme in all regions. Many access information and support through the faith communities, however, many older adults remain isolated, do not attend church, and are reluctant to seek help from governmental agencies. Reaching these older adults continues to be a tremendous challenge.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE & DEMENTIA

Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States and causes between 60 and 80% of all dementia cases.

According to the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, nearly half a million caregivers in Virginia provide assistance for a family member with dementia. At a projected 519 million hours of care in 2015, this was equivalent to \$220 billion in unpaid caregiving that year.

The cost of nursing homes to care for people with dementia can be staggering - between \$4,000 and \$8,000 per month.

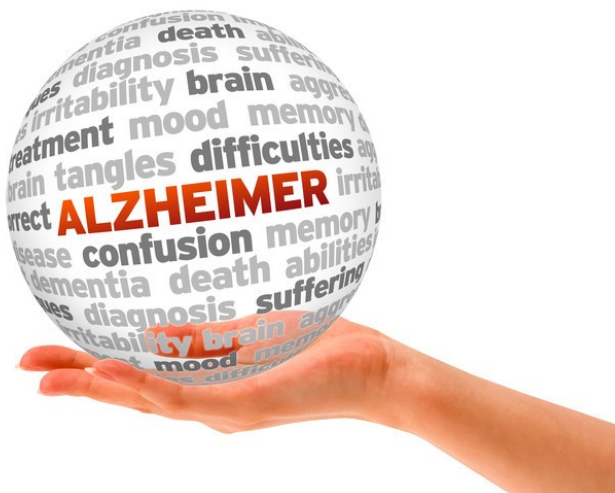
As the size and proportion of the U.S. population age 65 and older continues to increase, the number of Americans with Alzheimer's or other dementias will grow. This number will escalate rapidly in coming years, as the population of Americans age 65 and older is projected to grow from 55 million in 2019 to 88 million by 2050. The baby boom generation has already begun to reach age 65 and beyond: the age range of greatest risk of Alzheimer's dementia. In fact, the oldest members of the baby boom generation turn age 73 in 2019.

Raising awareness of dementia and knowing where to find support was a prevalent theme in the community conversations. Are we prepared to help and support people living with a diagnosis and families seeking affordable help, information, support groups, and, respite care? Due to the nature of Alzheimer's disease or other dementia, caregivers of persons with dementia experience greater challenges than other caregivers.

Each year, more than 16 million Americans provide more than 17 billion hours of unpaid care for family and friends with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. ...

Well over half (57%) of family caregivers of people with Alzheimer's and related dementias provide care for four years or more.

- cdc.gov



LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

OUR VISION FOR AGE-FRIENDLY / "LIVABLE" COMMUNITY

The common themes identified across the board in our communities are not unique to this region. Throughout the country, models for "age friendly" communities have been emerging. Aging Together believes, the best way to respond to the issues identified from the Community Needs Assessment is to embrace the concept of "Livable" communities and to begin to explore the options for implementation.

AGING IN PLACE/AGING IN COMMUNITY

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging defines a Livable Community as one that enables citizens to thrive across their lifespan and age in community.

A Livable Community:

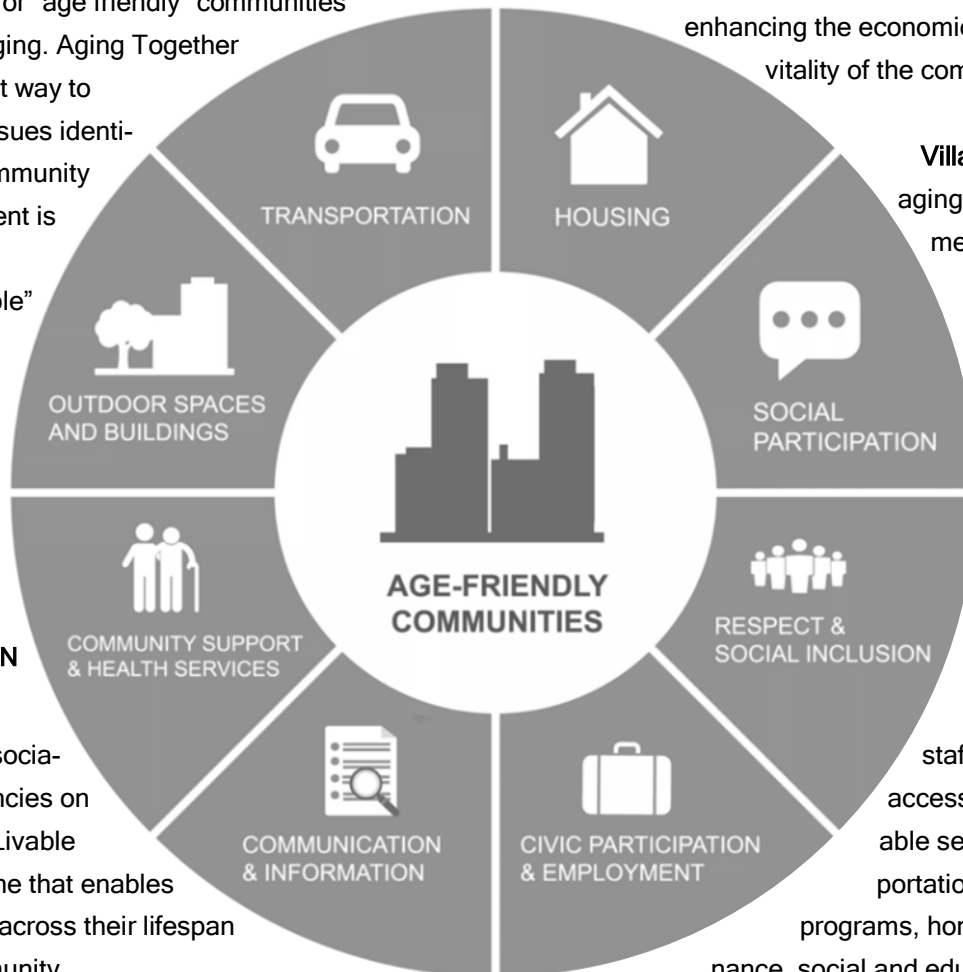
- Ensures that people have affordable housing choices that are appropriate for their needs at different ages and abilities.
- Enables people to get around by providing transportation options and designing public spaces with ramps, level surfaces and no-step entries to buildings as opposed to stairs.
- Provides basic amenities like a grocer and pharmacy nearby, so that people do not need to get into a car to meet their daily needs.
- Fosters social interaction and community involvement

through the creation of intergenerational public spaces and opportunities for engagement.

These and other amenities help to maximize the independence and quality of life of older adults, while also enhancing the economic, civic and social vitality of the community.

Villages are one model for aging in place. A Village is a membership organization that provides services to residents who prefer to live independently at home for as long as possible, rather than relocate to an assisted living or other similar facility.

Through both volunteers and paid staff, a village coordinates access to no-cost and affordable services, including transportation, health and wellness programs, home repairs and maintenance, social and educational activities, and other day-to-day needs, enabling individuals to remain connected to their community throughout the aging process. In our region, there are two such models, with *Lake of the Woods Living Independently in our Community* (LOWLINC) in Orange County, and *Rapp at Home* in Rappahannock County.



"The most frequent calls for help that we hear concern aging at home and staying in the community. That is the goal of most individuals. Rarely do we hear anyone saying, 'I just can't wait to go into an institutional setting.'"

Sandy Markwood, CEO, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

2020-2023 GOALS & STRATEGIES

GOAL 1

TO SUPPORT HEALTH, SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OLDER ADULTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

STRATEGIES:

- Support age friendly communities throughout the region through the gathering of information of existing models
- Serve as a catalyst to strengthen community-based supports that enhance choice and quality of life for older adults and caregivers.
- Explore feasibility of Adult Day (Culpeper)
- Raise awareness of dementia
- Connect older adults and caregivers to needed resources and information - including educational programs
- Support Food Groups and Mobile Food Pantries

GOAL 2

TO PROMOTE THE VALUE THAT OLDER ADULTS BRING TO THE COMMUNITY AND TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FULL ENGAGEMENT WITH ALL AGES

STRATEGIES:

- Continue to work closely with County Teams in addressing the issues raised through the community assessments
- Encourage older adults to participate in County Teams
- Explore and expand the role of County Teams toward our vision for age-friendly communities.
- Continue to offer Community Conversations

GOAL 3

TO CHAMPION COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES FACING OLDER ADULTS

STRATEGIES:

- Develop an advocacy group to address legislative issues related to aging issues
- Develop outreach, marketing, branding and messaging

GOAL 4

ASSURE SUSTAINABILITY OF AGING TOGETHER AS A VALUED COMMUNITY RESOURCE

STRATEGIES:

- Increased collaboration with Rapp At Home, LowLinc, Rapp CE, RRCS Roundtable; Regional SCommission; FAMS; PATH Foundation; Senior Services Collaborative; Faith Communities and others as appropriate
- Continue to seek grant funding
- Launch Aging Together Development Plan
- Recruitment strategy for Board of Directors



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Aging Together is grounded in the principles of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Community Partnerships for Older Adults which provided initial funding to help establish the organization. We still find these principles to be relevant to our work. The concepts establish the underlying foundation that influences our core values.

CORE VALUES

- Systems change can only occur through true collaboration.
- The voices of older adults need to be part of the process.
- Working locally and regionally is key to success.
- A small but well informed staff are needed to keep momentum, focus, and to view the landscape ahead.
- Building a community that is good for older adults benefits people of all ages.

VISION
**AGE FRIENDLY
COMMUNITIES
THAT ACTIVELY
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MISSION

**AGING TOGETHER THROUGH
PARTNERSHIPS CONNECTS PEOPLE TO
COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCES TO
IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE AS WE AGE.**

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

**TO SUPPORT HEALTH, SAFETY &
QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OLDER
ADULTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.**

**TO PROMOTE THE VALUE THAT
OLDER ADULTS BRING TO THE
COMMUNITY AND TO CREATE
OPPORTUNITIES FOR FULL
ENGAGEMENT WITH ALL AGES**

**TO CHAMPION COMMUNITY
RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES
FACING OLDER ADULTS**

**TO ASSURE SUSTAINABILITY OF
AGING TOGETHER AS A VALUED
COMMUNITY RESOURCE**