AGE FRIENDLY
ITHACA & TOMPKINS COUNTY

ACTION PLAN 2022

Introduction

In 2014, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) led efforts to apply to participate in the AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities. COFA initiated this effort as a direct result of stakeholder input and recommendations made during numerous consensus workshops that were held to develop the 2015 Strategic Plan for Aging in Tompkins County. Tompkins County and the City of Ithaca were accepted into AARP's Network of Age Friendly Communities in May 2015 and the Age Friendly Ithaca and Tompkins County Action Plan was finalized in December 2016. The AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities is an affiliate of the World Health Organization's Age Friendly Cities and Communities Program, an international effort launched in 2006 to help cities prepare for rapid population aging.

In 2017, New York became the first Age Friendly State in the U.S. In 2018, the Governor issued Executive Order 190 to incorporate a Health and Age Across All Policies strategy into state agency activities leading to a public-private partnership between the New York State Office for the Aging, the Department of Health, the Department of State, and the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York (HFWCNY). The New York Academy of Medicine joined these agencies to create a learning collaborative for grantees of the New York State Age Friendly Planning Grant. In 2019, the Tompkins County Office for Aging was awarded a grant from the HFWCNY to create an Age Friendly Center for Excellence.

The Tompkins County Age Friendly Center for Excellence (TCAFCFE) is one of five regional Centers in New York State funded to support the NYS Health and Age Across All Policies Initiative by promoting Age Friendly, NYS Prevention Agenda and Smart Growth principles. *The primary goal of the TCAFCFE is healthy aging, which means transforming the social and physical environment to support health and well-being for community members across the lifespan.* This goal is achieved through cross-disciplinary organizational partnerships and stakeholder input. The TCAFCFE works directly with County agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and private partners to advance systems change and solutions at the county level, and to share best practices state-wide.

Throughout 2020, the TCAFCFE and community partners conducted extensive research and hosted numerous stakeholder interviews and meetings to identify and document age friendly community assets and strengths, as well as provide recommendations for addressing gaps and areas for improvement.

The AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities framework is a 5-year continuous improvement process that provides communities the opportunity to create an action plan through stakeholder engagement, implement the action plan and monitor indicators, evaluate progress, and refine and revise the action plan. Now in its fifth year, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging has updated and created the 2022 Age Friendly Ithaca and Tompkins County Action Plan.

What does "Age Friendly" mean?

In practical terms, age friendly environments are free from physical and social barriers and supported by policies, systems, services, products, and technologies that:

- promote health and build and maintain physical and mental capacity across the life course; and
- enable people, even when experiencing capacity loss, to continue to do the things they value.

Age friendly practices help enhance the ability of all people, both old and young to:

- meet their basic needs;
- learn, grow, and make decisions;
- be mobile;
- build and maintain relationships; and
- make meaningful contributions to their community.

In doing so, age friendly practices:

- recognize the wide range of capacities and resources among people across the life course;
- anticipate and respond flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences;
- respect older people's decisions and lifestyle choices;
- reduce inequities;
- protect those who are most vulnerable; and
- promote older people's inclusion in and contribution to all areas of community life.

The Age Friendly Process and Program Cycle

Members of the AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities commit to an assessment process and cycle of continuous improvement, the steps of which typically require the member community to:

1. Establish a way — such as through a commission, advisory panel or focus groups — to include older residents in all stages of the age friendly planning and implementation process
2. Conduct a community needs assessment (AARP can provide survey examples, templates and an online tool in English and Spanish)
3. Develop an action and evaluation plan based on the assessment results
4. Submit the plan for review by AARP
5. Implement and work toward the goals of the plan
6. Share solutions, successes, and best practices with AARP
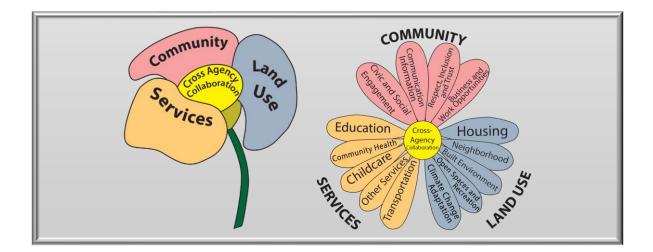7. Assess the plan's impact and submit progress reports
8. Repeat!

Age Friendly Framework

In 2020-21, the Tompkins County Age Friendly Center for Excellence partnered with Engaged Cornell faculty and student researchers from the Department of City and Regional Planning. Cornell University students Grace McCartney, Lin Khant Oo, and Robyn Wardell, under the direction of Professors Mildred Warner, PhD and Xue Zhang, PhD, conducted in-depth analysis to:

- build the research framework
- review community plans
- survey local government actions on planning for all ages
- interview community stakeholders

The full report may be found here: "Age Friendly Planning in Tompkins County: Bridging the Rural-Urban Divide - A Report to the Tompkins County Age Friendly Center for Excellence"

The graphic below shows the flower framework developed for assessing an age friendly community. It includes three broad domains: land use, services, and community. Lists of priority age friendly characteristics for a community published by AARP, WHO, UNICEF and Tompkins County Office for the Aging were combined into a single matrix.

Land use including housing, neighborhood, built environment, open spaces and recreation, and climate change adaptation.

Services including transportation, community health, education, and childcare.

Community including civic and social engagement, communication and information, respect, inclusion, and trust, and business and work opportunities.

These three domains are held together by cross-agency collaboration.

Engaged Cornell Research Summary

<u>Introduction</u>

Students at Cornell University conducted an assessment of the state of age friendly planning in Tompkins County. Their assessment began with developing the flower framework. After developing the framework, they interviewed community members in each of the municipalities in Tompkins County. These interviews offered real stories about successes and shortcomings relating to age friendly topics. In addition to the interviews, students produced an analysis of comprehensive plans for each community. The dual pronged process led to a general assessment of age friendly planning in the county and related recommendations.

Overall, the students found that age friendly communities are defined by five major themes:

- The divergent experiences of urban and rural residents
- The role of municipalities
- Access to services
- Community resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- The presence of cross-agency collaboration

<u>An Age Friendly Assessment</u>

1. Research into age friendly planning has focused more on urban spaces than rural areas. While what works for urban age friendly environments doesn't necessarily work in rural contexts, the different environments create distinct challenges and opportunities. Services and broad community cohesion are essential for age friendly living in rural areas and transportation accessibility is a larger challenge for young children and older adults who have less ability to drive. Incorporating services and community elements are particularly important for rural adults who want to age in place. Tompkins County Planning Department employs Nodal Development as a Smart Growth strategy to tackle the challenge of accessibility in rural communities. Nodes of denser, walkable neighborhoods create mixed-used rural centers of age friendly services attracting residents and density. They serve as age friendly centers because they integrate land use and services while preserving the agricultural character of rural municipalities

2. Comprehensive plans are used by municipalities to outline a vision for their community and to set long-term planning goals. In our review of the plans in Tompkins County, we found that most plans are focused on land use and characteristics of the built environment. Planners often see their roles as being focused on land use within their own municipality rather than collaborative across municipal lines. Services are usually state-funded, county programs or local nonprofits, which seemingly alleviates the need of planning to focus on delivering them. The center of our flower framework is cross agency collaboration to encourage laying the groundwork for continued collaboration among service and planning agencies. Municipalities, therefore, play important roles in how the land use challenges surrounding age friendly are addressed. Planners have a unique opportunity to create more

equitable built environments and they can create age friendly communities by integrating services and collaborating with community organizations to address age friendly concerns

3. Access to services varies widely across Tompkins County. In denser community centers like the City of Ithaca or the Village of Lansing, residents are more likely to be able to walk, bike or have access to reliable and consistent public transportation in order to get to the doctor or buy groceries for example. In rural areas, it is rare to be within walking distance of such community resources. We found that lack of access to one service can have a domino effect on other services. For example, in less populated areas where cell service and internet access is limited, it may be hard for an individual to access information about other services. Transportation access is particularly important for rural residents and residents of subsidized senior housing, to be able to access services. While all of the senior living centers can be reached by bus routes, the frequency, timing, and lack of bus shelters can undermine its effective use by all ages.

4. The COVID-19 pandemic came with a new and difficult reality for all the communities in Tompkins County. Every interview with community leaders involved some discussion of the pandemic; whether it was about youth programming, walking trails or libraries, every individual and institution had to adjust. The interruption of typical life, however, revealed the strongest parts of each community. Communities that were able to overcome troubling impacts of the pandemic did so because they had strong foundations of volunteerism, collaboration, and established networks. One striking example of this creative resilience was the countywide coordinated effort to combat food security. (See "[MULTIAGENCY RESPONSE TO FOOD INSECURITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC](#)") Through strong community efforts and new ways to engage with youth and volunteers, many communities already reliant on volunteerism found that their age friendly practices helped make resilient communities in the face of the pandemic.

5. Cross-agency collaboration sits at the center of our flower framework because municipalities that value it are often more adaptable and innovative in their age friendly planning initiatives. In rural communities, there is a collaborative, all hands-on deck mentality for most projects that does not leave room for specializing. Common hindrances to cross-agency collaboration across different levels of government tend to separate youth and elder needs. Youth and elders often have overlapping needs and really benefit from interacting with one another, but education, care and engagement programs are often divided between youth and older adults. Secular community organizations like libraries often serve as a hub for information and a space for a variety of community programming. Despite limited resources, libraries are happy to engage and link different community programs because they are 'yes' organizations. At their core, libraries search for answers, so patrons likely hear a 'yes' when they ask for assistance. Fire departments can serve as space for community events and school districts act as a hub for youth programming to recruit and work with youth.

Recommendations

After identifying the five trends above, students decided to look forward and imagine how some of these challenges could be addressed. The following recommendations are intended to provide tangible groundwork for moving toward a more age friendly environment in Tompkins.

1. Build and maintain a task force to sustain momentum and collaboration

   a. The task force should include social service agencies (for children and seniors), economic development, planning, local communities, and libraries to encourage collaboration to promote all aspects of age friendly communities.
   b. Develop a governance and leadership model that ensures that all members are empowered to contribute.

2. Build on the successes that emerged from the County's COVID response efforts

   a. Tompkins County's COVID response included innovations in the delivery of goods and services, finance, and information-sharing. These collaborative efforts built community resilience that we should work to sustain after the pandemic is over.

3. Recognize the importance of volunteerism and community engagement

   a. Recognize the crucial role of citizen planners and volunteers in town level planning efforts.
   b. Support informal networks and services.
   c. Expand internet connectivity improvement efforts to increase communication, information sharing and outreach, especially for rural communities.

4. Expand and ensure access to services regardless of location.

   a. Encourage both market and government providers to expand service access, especially delivery systems for groceries and drugs to rural households. This could be a role for economic development.
   b. Expand coordination of decentralized service delivery, as the County Youth Bureau and Libraries do now, so that a wider range of services is available to seniors and children across the county.

5. Augment nodal development by incorporating services and community into land use

   a. Recognize the limits of nodal development for age friendly rural settings. A focus on physical planning is not enough. County and town-level planning needs to recognize the importance of services as they pertain to childcare and aging in place.
   b. Create training and opportunities for cross community learning on age friendly practices for planning board members.

A Portrait of Ithaca and Tompkins County

Tompkins County is located at the southern tip of Cayuga Lake in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. It is part of the Southern Tier Economic Development Region and is grouped by the New York State Department of Health (DOH) in the five-county Southern Tier region, along with Broome, Chenango, Delaware, and Tioga Counties. Tompkins jurisdictions include nine towns, seven villages, and one city, Ithaca. About 30% of the county's 102,000 residents reside in the City of Ithaca.

- o Population 102,000
- o 30% are college students
- o 14% are over 65
- o Tompkins County ranks 8th in Health Outcomes: how long people live and how healthy people feel (Health Data NY)
- o Tompkins County ranks 5th in Health Factors: health behaviors, clinical care, social & economic, physical environment factors (Health Data NY)
- o Disparities exist across wealth and race
    - ▪ Inequalities in housing and access to healthcare, primarily due to transportation
- o The array of programs active in Tompkins County to address social determinants of health drive strategies that are evidence-based, promising/pilot programs, and/or programs planning an expansion to serve new constituencies. (Community Health Improvement Plan Executive Summary)

Demographics

According to Census data, 18,756 people aged 60 and over live in Tompkins County[1].

Age Range	
60-64	28.7%
65-69	25.4%
70-74	17.8%
76-79	11.2%
80-84	7.6%
85-89	5.1%
90+	4.1%

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____ [1] Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 9.0 ACS 2017 5-Year estimates. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2019. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V9.0

The following charts show the demographic breakdown of the residents in Tompkins County.

Gender Identity	
Female	54.0%
Male	46.0%

Marital Status	
Married, spouse present	60.2%
Separated	2.3%
Divorced	14.0%
Widowed	16.9%
Never married/single	6.7%

Household Size	
Single	29.4%
Two	59.2%
Three	7.2%
Four	3.8%
Five	0.4%

Town of Residence	
Caroline	2.8%
Danby	6.3%
Dryden	15.8%
Enfield	5.0%
Groton	7.8%
Ithaca City	13.7%
Ithaca Town	19.0%
Lansing	13.7%
Newfield	6.9%
Ulysses	9.0%

Race/Ethnicity/Cultural Identity	
One Race	
White	93.1%
Black/African American	2.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.1%
Asian	2.6%
Other Asian or Pacific Islander	0.2%
Other Race	0.3%
Two Major Races	1.3%
Latino/Hispanic	1.5%

Household Income	
Below 100% of Poverty Level	5.6%
100-200% of Poverty Level	12.7%
200-400% of Poverty Level	29.2%
400-600% of Poverty Level	15.1%
Over 600% of Poverty Level	37.4%

Tompkins County Office for the Aging 2019 Needs Assessment, Summary Report

To better understand the needs of the older adult population in Tompkins County, the Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) conducted a needs assessment survey between August 6, 2019, and September 9, 2019. A link to the online survey was distributed widely and paper copies were made available through various programs including Foodnet's Meals on Wheels program. In addition, respondents were able to call COFA to either request a paper survey or to complete it by telephone.

Participation in the survey was restricted to people aged 60 or over, residing in Tompkins County and caregivers of county residents 60 and over. The survey was anonymous; no personal, identifying information was collected. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. A total of 359 surveys were completed.

In addition to the 2019 COFA Needs Assessment (2019 COFA) survey data, data from the 2019 Tompkins County Community Health Assessment (2019 CHA) and Census data were examined to provide additional insights into the needs of older adults in the county. This report was prepared by Lisa Horn, Horn Research LLC. The full report may be found at https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/cofa/COFA%202019%20Needs%20Assessment%20Report%20Final.pdf

Top 10 Issues

The issues COFA 2019 survey respondents most frequently selected as important problems in their community centered around housing, transportation, and social isolation. These issues are mirrored in the personal concerns identified by survey respondents with the addition of concerns around insurance and Medicare.

	This is an important problem for older adults in my community
Obtaining affordable housing	76.9%
Being able to pay rent/mortgage and property taxes	73.5%
Being lonely or socially isolated	72.1%
Falling victim to a scam or financial exploitation	71.3%
Having a way to get to out of county/town medical appointments	70.5%
Being able to afford heat and other utilities	69.1%
Maintaining the outside of your home (lawn, snow)	68.8%
Having a way to get to medical appointments	67.1%
Finding reliable help to perform home repairs	66.9%
Being able to make or afford home repairs/weatherization	66.9%

	This is a current or recent concern for me/the person I care for
Finding reliable help to perform home repairs	32.9%
Maintaining the outside of your home (lawn, snow)	30.4%
Being able to make or afford home repairs/weatherization	26.5%
Understanding Medicare	25.6%
Being able to find parking easily	25.6%
Being able to pay rent/mortgage and property taxes	23.7%
Preventing falls in and out of the home	22.6%
Understanding eligibility for insurance and various subsidies	22.3%
Being able to perform household chores (cleaning, laundry)	20.6%
Being lonely or socially isolated	20,1%
Being able to safely cross the street	20.1%

Alignment with Other Plans

Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council

This plan is a result of the need for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to prepare a Simplified Statement of Work. The plan coordinates all federally funded transportation and related planning activities in the MPO. The Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC) is responsible for conducting the transportation planning process because it is the designated MPO for the Ithaca Area. In the 2020-2021 Emphasis Areas for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) there are several elements that tie into an age friendly framework. One item on the list of emphases is a focus on participation in initiatives that promote community livability and social justice. It specifically mentions working with community groups, making transportation accessible to all citizens, and offering alternatives to automobile transportation. The ITCTC Plan also mentions interest in collaborating with Downtown Ithaca Alliance (DIA), Way2Go, Ithaca Carshare, TCAT, Tompkins County Parks and Trails Network, Bike Walk Tompkins, and Finger Lakes Cycling Club, among others to establish robust alternatives to automobile transportation.

[Community Health Reports 2019-2021](#)

The Tompkins County Department of Health publishes a Community Health Assessment (CHA) to summarize health data and findings in Tompkins, and the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) to lay out a path of preventative action. Data for the CHA was primarily collected from a community-wide survey in which respondents were asked to report elements of their health, choices they make, and how they envision a healthy community. There was a median of 1,100 responses per question. Data was also pulled from the US Census and New York Department of Health, interviews with 29 stakeholders and four focus groups with a total of 32 people. The CHA also contains an index of organizations addressing health outcomes ranging from youth services to academia to health and nutrition. The 2019-2021 CHIP expands on four of the focus areas established by the New York State Prevention Agenda.

1. Prevent Chronic Disease, Focus Area 1: Healthy Eating and Food Security
2. Prevent Chronic Disease, Focus Area 4: Preventive Care and Management
3. Promote Healthy Women, Infants, and Children, Focus Area 4: Cross cutting healthy women, infants, and children
4. Promote Well-Being and Prevent Mental and Substance Use Disorders, Focus Area 1: Promote Well-Being

[Tompkins County Housing Strategy](#)

The Tompkins County Housing Strategy was published in 2017 with the priority that "Tompkins County should be a place where housing is affordable, safe, energy efficient, and appealing." This plan addresses the role the government can play to build a continuum of options within the market that vary in price, size, and type. The plan acknowledges that housing is intertwined with transportation, the economy, natural areas, and climate change. To incorporate these facets into the plan, a foundational system focusing on 16 development focus areas is implemented. Targets to achieve by 2025 were established pertaining to four

major categories of housing demand: supportive housing/special needs beds; senior housing; workforce units; and student beds. A three-pronged approach is used to address these categories. The first focuses on building new housing, the second focuses on existing housing, and the third focuses on collaboration.

Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan

The Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2015, is a document prepared by the Planning Department to establish a 20-year vision of the county's rural and urban areas, with a core vision of voluntary partnerships. Public outreach was a constructive component in the early stages of developing the plan, including a public survey, open houses and sitting in on meetings of other departments. It addresses a plethora of issues including: the economy, housing, transportation, the environment, climate change, neighborhoods, and communities. The plan approaches these topics with a framework rooted in demographic changes and geologic and natural resources. The Comprehensive Plan reflects the values and goals held by local governments as they relate to the built and natural environment. The plan included a list of 28 Action Items to be initiated by 2017. A review of the Comprehensive Plan in 2019 developed a new list of 18 Action Items to be implemented by 2025.

Youth Services Plan

Within the department of Youth Services in Tompkins County is the Achieving Youth Results initiative, which kicked off in 2016. After an iterative process of community engagement, survey collection, and idea creation the Pitch Program was launched in 2018. This program awards grants to organizations within the county that strive to improve the quality of life for youth. Organizations selected after the multistep application process impact several hundred youth across many municipalities each year. In 2016 a series of community planning sessions informed how the Tompkins County Youth Services Department would address the six Touchstones of Life, as determined by NYS: community, economic security, education, engagement, family, and physical and emotional health. Every touchstone was assigned indicators and corresponding strategies. Each indicator comes from a NYS, regional, county, or community level data source to show how progress is being made or lost. The related strategies are actionable items that, when implemented, would improve the indicator statistics. The Tompkins County Youth Services Department has refined strategies throughout the years to improve the results they see.

The Child Development Council (CDC) promotes the healthy development of children and families at home, in childcare, and in the community. The CDC's Strategic Initiatives - Building Community focuses on three areas in Tompkins County.

- Build access to childcare - Parents need childcare to work in today's economy. Only 1/3 of all families with preschool children have access to regulated childcare, especially low wage earners and single parents. Childcare providers work long hours for below market rates.
- Develop an early childhood education fund - Most families in Tompkins County have a difficult time paying for childcare. A family making the median household income will need 24% of their income to pay for childcare. Yet, parent fees are not adequate to compensate providers at a living wage.
- Strengthen all families with *Welcome Baby!* - Babies are born with an enormous amount of potential, but they rely on those closest to them to spark interactions that will contribute to a lifetime of opportunities. We know that babies' development and their well-being is affected by their genetics and is greatly influenced by the social relationships they have and the physical environment around them.

Age Friendly Action Plan

<u>Community Needs</u>

Key Trends Identified in the TCOFA's 2019 Needs Assessment Summary

- Respondents in the 2019 COFA survey most frequently noted that knowing how to use social media and knowing how to use a video or phone were issues in their community or for them personally. According to the 2019 CHA, 56.1% of older adults get their health information from internet sites.

- Over 70% of COFA 2019 respondents said that falling victim to a scam or financial exploitation is an important problem for older adults in the community. Seventeen percent of respondents said it is a current concern for them personally.

- Just over half of 2019 COFA respondents said that access to legal and financial services was a problem in the community. The specific issues ranged between 16% and 17% as a current concern.

- Nearly three quarters of 2019 COFA respondents said that being lonely or socially isolated is a problem for older adults in their community. This concern is echoed in the one in five respondents who said it was a current concern personally. Census data indicate that about

1.5% of older adults were widowed in the past year. About 50% more women were widowed than men.

- According to Census data, only 1.7% of older adults in the county are unemployed. The bulk are not in the labor force and about a third are employed.

Community Action

Civic and Social Engagement

Goal 1: Recognize the importance of volunteerism and community engagement (CU Research)

Task 1.1 Recognize the crucial role of citizen planners and volunteers in town level planning efforts.

Task 1.2 Support informal networks and services.

Goal 2: Reduce social isolation (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 2.1 Mitigate some of the devastating effects of social isolation and find innovative ways to reach older adults who face loneliness, isolation, and lack regular companionship; conditions which have worsened during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Task 2.2 Review and build on 2020 COFA contract with Senior Planet and Older Adults Technology Service (OATS) to run a tablet project for eligible, case managed clients. Participants were matched with students from Ithaca College's Aging Studies Program who became their virtual visitor and support through the process. COFA continues to partner with Lifelong to provide virtual programming for their members as well as a 9 to 5 tech support hotline for members and the pilot project participants. Monitor program successes and challenges and make adjustments as needed.

Task 2.3 Continue to provide socially isolated clients with robotic companion pets by matching interested clients with a Joy for All Companion Pet. Monitor program successes and challenges and make adjustments as needed.

Goal 3: Support children and youth to demonstrate commitment to their community as contributing members of their families, schools, and neighborhoods (Achieving Youth Results 2.0, 2020).

Task 3.1 Coordinate existing programs so that they can utilize similar resources (space, publicity, location, transportation, timing, etc.).

Task 3.2 Increase the number of intergenerational programs offered by service providers.

Task 3.2 Support further mentoring programs for youth within rural communities and other targeted populations.

Communication and Information

Goal 1: Build and maintain a task force to sustain momentum and collaboration (CU Research)

Task 1.1 Include social service agencies (for children and seniors), economic development, planning, local communities, and libraries to encourage collaboration to promote all aspects of age friendly communities.

Task 1.2 Include organizations representing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Task 1.3 Develop a governance and leadership model that ensures that all members are empowered to contribute.

Goal 2: Increase and promote legal and financial planning information and resources (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 2.1 Partner with Lifelong to provide legal and financial information in the Senior Circle.

Task 2.2 Partner with LawNY to provide legal assistance and referrals.

Goal 3: Increase and promote access to technology for information and communication (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 3.1 Expand internet connectivity improvement efforts to increase communication, information sharing and outreach, especially for rural communities (CU Research).

Respect, Inclusion and Trust

Goal 1: Continue efforts to deliver services to underserved populations. (COFA Public Hearing)

Task 1.1 Continue efforts to reach out to non-English speakers and racial/ethnic minorities, particularly the Asian community.

Task 1.2 Continue to direct efforts to older adults of lower income, those who are isolated, and those living in rural portions of the County.

Task 1.3 Continue outreach efforts to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender older adults.

Task 1.4 Strive to maintain racial and socio-economic diversity on the Advisory Committee and include older adults from all parts of Tompkins County.

Goal 2: Increase and promote financial frauds and scams information and resources (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 2.1 Partner with Lifelong to provide financial frauds and scam information in the Senior Circle.

Goal 3: Promote intergenerational learning to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages. (Ithaca College Age Friendly Principles)

Task 3.1 Expand access to intergenerational learning opportunities through the IC/Longview Partnership.

<div align="center">**Business and Work Opportunities**</div>

Goal 1: Promote personal and career development in the second half of life and to support those who wish to pursue "second careers." (Ithaca College Age Friendly Principles)

Task 1.1 Explore opportunities to collaborate with Tompkins County Workforce Development.

Goal 2: Increase the understanding of students of the longevity dividend and the increasing complexity and richness that aging brings to our society. (Ithaca College Age Friendly Principles)

Task 2.1 Explore opportunities to collaborate with the business community.

Goal 3: Develop age friendly business model for Tompkins County.

Task 3.1 Research best practices and involve stakeholders in developing a model.

Goal 4: Prepare youth for their eventual economic security (Achieving Youth Results 2.0, 2020)

Task 4.1 Increase opportunities for soft skill development (I.e., volunteerism, enrichment workshops, supported employment, job coaching, apprenticeships, etc.)

Task 4.2 Work with schools and employers to develop a more robust school-to-career pipeline.

Land Use Needs

Key Trends Identified in the TCOFA's 2019 Needs Assessment Summary

- For the most part, older adults in the county live in their homes over long periods of time. Census data show that 67% of older adults have lived in their home for 10 years or more. In addition, over 80% of older adults in the county own their home.

- In the 2019 CHA, 53.3% of older adults said affordable safe housing was one of the top three factors in creating a healthy community. In the 2019 COFA survey, housing was the most frequently identified community problem for older adults. Affordability of housing was deemed a problem most frequently: 76.9% of respondents said obtaining affordable housing and 73.5% said being able to pay rent/mortgage and property taxes are problems for older adults in the community. Nearly a quarter of survey respondents said being able to pay for their housing is a current concern for them personally.

- The most frequently noted personal concerns related to housing were focused on maintaining their homes. About a third of survey respondents said maintaining the outside of their home and finding reliable help to perform home repairs was a current issue. Over a quarter of respondents said being able to make or afford home repairs was a current concern.

- Overall, the majority of COFA 2019 respondents rated their community positively. Nearly 80% of respondents said spending time outdoors was good or great. Access to healthy food was also ranked highly by the vast majority of respondents (72.5%) as was enjoying public

spaces (68.7%). Respondents ranked their community the worst in using public transportation, safely crossing the street, and riding a bike.

- The majority of 2019 CHA respondents reported feeling very safe in their neighborhoods. Over two-thirds of respondents rated their neighborhood as good or great as a place for adults to walk and be physically active.

- About half of the 2019 COFA respondents indicated that issues around outdoor spaces and buildings were an issue for older adults in the community with the most prevalent concerns being their ability to safely cross the street and being able to find parking easily. Nearly a quarter of respondents said finding parking was a current concern for them and 20.1% said they had issues being able to cross the street safely.

Land Use Action

Housing

Goal 1: Support Tompkins County's goal to provide housing which is affordable, safe, energy efficient, and appealing. (TC Comprehensive Plan, 2015 and 2019 Update)

Task 1.1 Update the Tompkins County Affordable Housing Needs Assessment and engage the broader housing community in revising the Tompkins County Housing Strategy.

Task 1.2 Better define the housing needs of client populations served by County human services agencies.

Task 1.3: Assist municipalities in developing strategies to help homebuyers compare and evaluate the energy efficiency of existing housing. (Comprehensive Plan, 2015)

Task 1.4: Identify and pursue methods to continue and expand the Community Housing Development Fund Program. (Comprehensive Plan Update, 2019)

Goal 2: Meet or exceed Tompkins County housing targets, 2016-2025 (TC Housing Strategy, 2017)

Task 2.1: Correct existing deficit of 100-200 subsidized senior apartments.

Task 2.2: Add at least one Medicaid Assisted Living Program facility (requires certificate from NYSDOH).

Task 2.3: Increase market-rate senior housing units with services and congregate care facilities to be determined based on future vacancies and waitlists given recent expansions.

Task 2.4: Research options for assisting in the rehabilitation of housing units and transitioning some current student rental units to workforce rental and ownership housing. Beyond code compliance, these efforts should prioritize energy efficiency improvements and use of renewable energy sources that reduce both greenhouse gas emissions and energy use as well as incorporation of universal design. (TC Housing Strategy, 2017)

Task 2.5: Analyze the local housing impacts of short-term rentals, such as Airbnb, and options for local regulation.

Task 2.6: Track vacancies, new or changing needs identified in the community, and development of new units of senior-oriented housing, including subsidized independent living units, Medicaid beds, and market-rate beds with services. (Tompkins County Office for the Aging with assistance from the Tompkins County Dept. of Planning and Sustainability) (TC Housing Strategy, 2017)

Task 2.7: Research and investigate issues, concerns, and benefits regarding Accessory Dwelling Units to develop a greater understanding of their use and potential in Tompkins County. (CU Research)

Goal 3. Improve existing housing units to meet residents' needs and the County's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals. (TC Housing Strategy, 2017)

Task 3.1: Explore the potential for improving existing code enforcement and for the County's potential involvement in code enforcement (TC Housing Strategy, 2017)

Task 3.2: Investigate substandard housing issues for vulnerable populations. (TC Housing Strategy, 2017)

Task 3.3: Consider adoption of the draft local law prohibiting source-of-income discrimination.

Task 3.4: Provide outreach and education to home seekers as well as landlords, realtors, and other housing providers and stakeholders, such as supportive housing organizations and nursing homes, about their rights and responsibilities with regards to Fair Housing Laws.

Task 3.5: Monitor housing discrimination complaints in order to identify particular types of complaints which require more specific outreach.

Task 3.6: Continue implementing the County's obligation to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing.

Goal 4: Increase home repair and maintenance opportunities (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 4.1 Partner with Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services to administer the Small Home and Safety Repair Program.

<u>**Neighborhood**</u>

Goal 1: Augment nodal development by incorporating services and community into land use (CU Research)

Task 1.1 Recognize the limits of nodal development for rural age friendly areas. A focus on physical planning is not enough. County and town-level planning needs to recognize the importance of services as they pertain to childcare and aging in in place.

Task 1.2 Create training and opportunities for cross community learning on age friendly practices for planning board members.

Goal 2: Emphasize new development focused in compact, walkable, mixed-used communities in Tompkins County. (TC Comprehensive Plan, 2015 and 2019 Update)

Task 2.1 Work with municipalities to identify potential infill or redevelopment sites within Development Focus Areas.

Task 2.2 Provide technical assistance to municipalities to establish land use policies and regulations that support development within Development Focus Areas.

Task 2.3 Support TCAD's update of the Countywide Inter-Municipal Water and Sewer Feasibility Study for Tompkins County (2010) and disseminate the results to municipalities.

Task 2.4 Identify and share ways local municipalities can use the Planning and Design Principles from the Development Focus Areas Strategy (2012) in their communities.

Goal 3: Aim to provide children, youth, and families with healthy, safe, and thriving environments in Tompkins County. (Achieving Youth Results 2.0, 2020)

Task 3.1 Increase the number of youth friendly community centers (formal and informal).

Task 3.2 Bring food and education to people where they are.

Climate Change Adaptation

Goal 1: Work to prepare the entire community for the economic, environmental, and social impacts of climate change. (TC Comprehensive Plan, 2015 and 2019 Update)

Task 1.1 Assess the vulnerability of the County government's critical facilities to the impacts of climate change.

Task 1.2 Prepare a community disaster recovery plan to prepare the community to take the actions; including those that build economic resilience, to bounce back from a disaster should it occur.

Task 1.3 Conduct an inventory of pipeline stream crossings in the county and identify those of highest priority in order to advance measures to reduce risk to human health and the environment.

Task 1.4 Develop the Tompkins County Resiliency and Recovery Plan that both includes an update of the Tompkins County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2013) and develops tools to support resiliency and post-disaster economic recovery.

Task 1.5: Partner with community-based organizations to provide information and resources on climate change adaptation and home weatherization to residents across Tompkins County, including rural areas. (CU Research)

Built Environment

Goal 1: Promote a built environment which accommodates healthy, safe, and active lifestyles (TC Comprehensive Plan, 2015 and 2019 Update)

Task 1.1 Develop a healthy communities strategy as a collaborative effort of County departments.

Task 1.2 Establish a formal role for the County in trail development.

Task 1.3 Prepare and share a sidewalk inventory with municipalities.

Task 1.4 Work with community partners to further implement the Tompkins Priority Trails Strategy.

Task 1.5 Complete tasks associated with the regional Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Implementation grant from the New York State Department of State.

Goal 2: Promote a paradigm shift for creators and stewards of the built environment to view their work through an age friendly lens (AF Action Plan 2016)

Task 2.1 Present age friendly Initiative to Tompkins County Council of Governments.

Task 2.2 Provide training seminar inviting members of the Tompkins County Council of Governments and reach two municipalities.

Task 2.3 Work in greater depth with two municipalities to implement age friendly concepts in planning and zoning efforts.

<u>**Open Spaces and Recreation**</u>

Goal 1: Preserve and enhance natural features and working rural landscapes in Tompkins County (TC Comprehensive Plan, 2015: Natural Resources)

Task 1.1 Monitor development activity within the Natural Features Focus Areas and Agricultural Resource Focus Areas and share that information with municipalities.

Task 1.2 Identify Purchase of Development Rights priority projects for implementation in the Agricultural Resource Focus Areas.

Task 1.3 Develop a conservation funding strategy that accurately captures need for key conservation acquisitions.

Task 1.4 Build on the recommendations in the Finger Lakes Trail Corridor Protection Plan to identify specific areas and tools to improve connectivity between Natural Features Focus Areas.

Task 1.5 Provide resources to support and encourage local officials to establish mechanisms and programs for protecting stream corridors.

Task 1.6 Establish clear goals for managing County-owned Forest Lands and develop a plan of action for advancing those goals.

<u>Services Needs</u>

Key Trends Identified in the TCOFA's 2019 Needs Assessment Summary

- According to Census data, 8.2% of older adults in Tompkins County not living in group quarters do not have access to a vehicle. In the 2019 CHA, 7.6% of older adults said transportation was an issue for them.

- Access to medical appointments both generally and out of town were noted as a problem for older adults in the community by a large majority of respondents in the 2019 COFA survey. Nearly one in five respondents said access to medical appointments was a current concern for them personally. Access to social and recreational activities was also a concern both for the community at large and for respondents personally. Being able to use public transportation was also flagged as a concern

- Overall, the older adults who responded to the 2019 CHA rated their health as average. Ratings for health got worse as people aged with the exception of mental health. Older adult respondents ranked their mental health better than all other dimensions and better than the CHA total respondent pool.

- About a quarter of CHA respondents indicated they have a long-term illness or disability that limits them in some way. Census data suggest that 26.4% of adults aged 65 and over in Tompkins County have a disability.

- The most frequently noted personal concerns related to health services and community supports are understanding Medicare and insurance and preventing falls in and out of the home. 2019 COFA respondents most frequently said understanding Medicare and insurance were community issues but obtaining help in the home and being prepared for a health or safety emergency were also frequently noted as community problems.

- Older adults responding to the CHA most frequently said the barrier they face in accessing health care is cost.

- Just over 17% of 2019 COFA respondents said they were both over 60 and a caregiver for someone over 60 years of age. 15.1% of CHA respondents said they are a caregiver of some sort with 10.4% of CHA respondents being a caregiver to an elderly family member and 3.9% to a disabled family member.

- Census data show that approximately 1.3% of older adults in the county are responsible for grandchildren living in their home. Slightly more than that, 2.2%, of 2019 COFA respondents said that caring for a grandchild in their home was a current concern.

- Just over 15% of 2019 COFA respondents said that caregiver stress or burnout was a current concern for them personally. In the 2019 CHA report, older adults who were caregivers did not report any significant difference in physical, dental, mental, or overall health, but caregivers were much more likely to report low doctor use than non-caregivers and were significantly more likely to say that "I don't have the time" was a barrier to improving their physical health and a barrier to getting health care.

<u>Services Action</u>

<u>Transportation</u>

Goal 1: Participate in efforts to address transportation aspects of community livability and social justice (Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council, 2020)

Task 1.1 Cooperate and work with the Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability in implementation of action items from the Tompkins County Countywide Comprehensive Plan.

Task 1.2 Support local municipalities and community groups in development of transportation plans and other efforts that support the goals and objectives in the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Task 1.3 Support community programs/initiatives that encourage increased use of active transportation (walking, bicycling, transit, shared transport), such as Bike Walk Tompkins, Ithaca Carshare, and Gadabout.

Task 1.4 Coordinate with appropriate agencies to ensure that transportation services are seamless, comprehensive, and accessible to all citizens.

Task 1.5 Provide continued emphasis and support for the development of transportation modes and programs that provide alternatives to the private automobile as a primary mode of transportation including: trail development, public transportation, bicycling initiatives, pedestrian initiatives, car sharing, ride sharing/carpooling, van pooling, guaranteed/back-up ride home and transportation demand management.

Task 1.6 Monitor continually evolving transportation technologies and evaluate for beneficial implementation in Tompkins County.

Task 1.7 Identify and promote a *mobilities framework* for transportation policy that addresses the full range of transportation needs for all ages and not just for the purpose of commuting. (CU Research)

Task 1.8 Research and investigate the issues, concerns, and potential impact of lowering speed limits to 45 mph on rural roads to make biking and waking safer. (Bikewalk Tompkins and Association of Towns)

Goal 2: Promote transportation choices which are efficient, affordable, and healthy for people and the environment. (TC Comprehensive Plan, 2015 and 2019 Update)

Task 2.1 Identify the most critical elements of the County-owned highway infrastructure network for use in prioritizing investment of County funds.

Task 2.2 Conduct a study to identify electric vehicle charging station development needs and opportunities.

Task 2.3 Investigate additional park and ride and other ways to provide better, safer access to existing transit routes in suburban and rural areas.

Task 2.4 Develop the 2020 State Route 13 Corridor Study and identify opportunities to implement recommendations.

Task 2.5 Assist County employees in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from their daily commutes.

Task 2.6 Undertake an inventory and analysis of County facilities and fleet to determine a financially sound path to net-zero emissions.

Goal 3: Increase and promote transportation options to medical appointments (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 3.1 Provide transportation vouchers for medical appointments.

Goal 4: Increase and promote transportation options to religious, social, and recreational activities (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 4.1 Explore opportunities to increase transportation options such as Uber, Lyft, and other networks.

<div align="center">

Community Health

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Goal 1: Prevent chronic disease (CHIP)

Task 1.1 Increase access to healthy and affordable foods and beverages for people of all ages across Tompkins County.

> COFA will partner with Foodnet to provide the Meals on Wheels Program and nutrition counseling.

> COFA will continue the Farmers Market Senior Nutrition Program.

Task 1.2 Increase skills and knowledge to support healthy food and beverage choices.

Task 1.3 Increase food security.

Task 1.4 Encourage both market and government providers to expand service access, especially delivery systems for groceries and drugs to rural households. This could be a role for economic development. (CU Research)

Task 1.5 Increase cancer screening rates for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer.

Goal 2: Promote good health outcomes for women, infants, and children (CHIP)

Task 2.1 Reduce racial, ethnic, economic, and geographic disparities in maternal and child health outcomes; promote health equity for women and children.

Goal 3: Promote well-being and prevent mental and substance use disorders (CHIP)

Task 3.1 Strengthen opportunities to build well-being and resilience across the lifespan.

Task 3.2 Facilitate supportive environments that promote respect and dignity for people of all ages.

Goal 4: Understanding Medicare (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 4.1 Provide health insurance counseling. **(COFA and Lifelong)**

Goal 5: Falls prevention (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 5.1 Provide falls prevention home safety assessments and make referrals to the Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services for repairs and upgrades.

Goal 6: Support home care options for hospital discharge and/or managing chronic conditions (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 6.1 Support the Caregiver's Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit, which are designed to help caregivers provide quality care for older adults and persons with disabilities while also maintaining the quality of their own lives and the lives of their family member.

Task 6.2 Pilot and support the Pause for Parkinson's Project, which will provide REST (Respite Education and Support Tools) and Parkinson's specific training to Project Care/Generation students who will be matched with the care receiver for a few hours a week to provide respite to the caregiver.

Task 6.3 Continue to administer the NY Connects Program to provide residents of all ages with objective and comprehensive information about long term care services and supports available in Tompkins County.

Task 6.4 Partner with the Finger Lakes Independence Center for the Home Care Registry and the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Programs.

Task 6.5 Partner with Stafkings, Caregivers, Home Instead Senior Care, and the Finger Lakes Independence Center to provide Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP) non-medical home care services.

Task 6.6 Partner with the Tompkins County Department of Social Services Office of Long-Term Care to provide long term care information and assistance and EISEP assessment and case management.

Task 6.7 Partner with the Human Services Coalition to coordinate the Long-Term Care Committee.

Goal 7: Health and safety emergency preparedness (COFA Needs Assessment)

Task 7.1 Continue to provide and upgrade the technology used by the Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) Program and ensure compatibility with digital phones, cell phones, and GPS applications, and will increase the number of people served.

<div align="center">**Education**</div>

Goal 1: Prepare youth leaving school to live, learn and work in their community (Achieving Youth Results 2.0, 2020)

Task 1.1 Support the development of parent advocates throughout the county/community.

Task 1.2 Increase volunteerism and community connections of youth in each school district through a commitment from the school districts to help youth explore community and business opportunities.

Goal 2: Recognize the range of educational needs of older adults (from those who were early school-leavers through to those who wish to pursue advanced degrees). (Ithaca College Age Friendly Principles)

Task 2.1 Support IC faculty and staff in understanding the range of educational needs of older adults.

Task 2.2 Promote the range of educational opportunities available at IC among community older adults.

Goal 3: Widen access to online educational opportunities for older adults to ensure a diversity of routes to participation. (Ithaca College Age Friendly Principles)

Task 3.1 Support IC faculty in development and delivery of non-credit bearing online educational opportunities.

Child care

Goal 1: Build access to child care (Child Development Council Strategic Initiatives)

Task 1.1: Increase the recruitment of child care providers using innovative strategies, while providing training and support to retain them in the field.

Task 1.2: Reduce the demands of program and business operations, with comprehensive supports for shared purchasing and back-office services to strengthen the business model.

Task 1.3: Help providers – centers, family and group family – expand to meet the child care supply needs of the community.

Goal 2: Develop an early childhood education fund (Child Development Council Strategic Initiatives)

Task 2.1: Identify stable sources of support for the cost of child care so that no family pays more than 10% of their income on child care and teachers and home-based providers are paid a living wage.

Goal 3: Strengthen all families with *Welcome Baby!* (Child Development Council Strategic Initiatives)

Task 3.1: Welcome, inform and refer families of newborns. Experienced Family Support Specialists will recruit and support a cadre of trained *Welcome Baby!* volunteers who will visit the family of every baby born in Tompkins County.

Task 3.2 Compile a list of top 10 things or skills children should have to be successful in kindergarten and work to ensure day care providers are aware of and have access to this list.

Goal 4: Support families to provide children with safe, stable, and nurturing environments (Achieving Youth Results 2.0, 2020).

Task 4.1 Implement and expand programs and resources to reduce chronic absenteeism rate in Tompkins County Schools.

Task 4.2 Utilize informal community spaces to provide resources for families such as fresh foods, gardens, classes, programming, etc.

Task 4.3 Expand and improve access to formal parenting supports and classes.

<u>Other Services</u>

Goal 1: Expand and ensure access to services regardless of location. (CU Research)

Task 1.1: Expand coordination of decentralized service delivery, as the County Youth Bureau and Libraries do now, so that a wider range of services is available to seniors and children across the county.

Goal 2: Build on the successes that emerged from the County's COVID response efforts. (CU Research)

Task 2.1 Sustain Tompkins County's COVID response innovations in the delivery of goods and services, finance, and information-sharing. These collaborative efforts built community resilience that we should work to sustain after the pandemic is over.

To view Implementation Timeline:

https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/cofa/Timeline%20edits%205.24.22%20FINAL.pdf

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