



**Citizen Study Groups on
Housing
Community Engagement and
Participation
Mobility
Prioritized Action Items**

Over the past three months, 32 citizens participated in a series of study and discussion groups to explore the question: *What is it about our community that can make it more livable for a maturing population?*

Three study groups formed around the topics of housing, community engagement and participation, and mobility and met for a series of four 2-hour facilitated sessions between October and December of 2006. Individuals were invited to participate by the Snelling Center, and invitations were issued to all citizens (age 50+) who had participated in one of the citizen activities of the Burlington Livable Community Project (BLCP) that took place in the summer or fall (e.g., the Pedestrian Survey or one of the Focused Conversations).

Participants ranged in age from 50 to 85 and joined the study groups for a variety of reasons. They were asked to share their “lived” experience. Study group participants were provided with the early results of the BLCP Stakeholders prioritized action items, the preliminary report from the focus groups, a preliminary report of the pedestrian survey data, a copy of the AARP “*Beyond 50.05 Report*,” and other research and reference materials that had been gathered. Members of the BLCP Stakeholder group were asked to present at the first meeting for each study group. Other than that, the groups were asked to organize their own agenda for discussion. The role of staff was to provide information and resources and to facilitate and record each session. The fourth meeting brought all groups together to share results and look for common themes across areas. The enclosed document details the prioritized action items that were identified by these citizens as ways to make Burlington a great place to live for all ages.

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Livable Community Project
Community Engagement and Participation Study Group
Priority Action Items
(Emphasis assigned: H-high; M-medium; L-low)

Underlying Values/Orienting themes:

- Support livability for every age
- Shared interests transcend chronological age
- Acknowledge the essential connection between transportation/mobility and community engagement
- Recognize the role of housing/neighborhood in facilitating community
- Reorient cultural attitudes around aging/the aged by asking cultural institutions and agencies not just what they do *for* elderly but what they do *with* elderly
- Communicate opportunities for citizens to gather and connect

SHORT TERM PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

Outreach and Public Education

- Identify an ombudsperson to represent the Livable Community Project at the City Level
 - Track initiatives, keep project attention focused, publicize activities
 - Encourage person-to-person contact and centralize information
- Create centralized list for Community Engagement opportunities (H)
 - Identify key staff person and/or agency to manage central list (H)
 - Print, publicize widely, and create multiple ways to access centralized list
 - Use centralized list as socialization tool for new Burlington citizens
 - Support CVAA senior helpline as informational sharing agency
 - Support United Way 211 as information central

Policy and Advocacy

- Develop clearer avenues for citizen participation in civic processes
 - Value and encourage citizen participation (H)
 - Appoint citizen representatives to committees and commissions
 - Improve meeting accessibility with attention to time and place

Initiatives: Activities

- Publicize and develop opportunities for the cultural arts (H)
 - Promote programming and studios for the arts
 - Utilize existing space and opportunities at senior centers and educational facilities
 - Centralize/publicize group gatherings around bridge, games, poker, or other fun activities
 - Provide art-related public transportation

- Enhance publicity for existing volunteer and work opportunities for seniors
 - Develop policy to actively recruit seniors as skilled volunteers or workers (H)
- Promote health and well-being through medical education (M/H)
 - Grow existing health education/informative medical classes
 - Provide additional opportunities for groups to share personal experiences and gather information
 - Develop onsite tours of the hospital, community health center, and other services
- Promote health and well-being through physical activities (M/H)
 - Identify or create opportunities for multiage and age-specific activities
 - Provide sporting opportunities for designated skill levels
 - Provide connecting point in the community to share information
- Promote/publicize educational opportunities in Burlington
 - Create local version of Elder Education Enrichment (EEE) as currently organized at Faith United in S. Burlington
- Provide transportation to events locally and in the surrounding communities (M/H)

Initiatives: Neighborhoods

- Develop “Welcome Wagon” to greet new community members (H)
- Develop resources to encourage neighborhood connections (M/H)
 - Promote multi-resident building design that facilitates community
 - Provide education/facilitation to encourage neighborhood connection
 - Promote Neighborhood Planning Associations (NPAs), forums, block parties, activities, training, etc.

LONG TERM PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

Policy and Advocacy

- Support efforts to preserve open space

Initiatives

- Continue Working on Short Term Goals

Livable Community Project
Mobility Study Group
Priority Action Items
(Emphasis assigned: H-high; M-medium; L-low)

SHORT TERM PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

Outreach and Public Education

- Increase community education and discussions on sidewalk/bicycle lane/street safety for users, drivers, pedestrians, and bikers (H)
 - Develop system to socialize positive street/sidewalk etiquette
 - Educate public to share the streets and sidewalks to maximize safety and respect for all
 - Clarify rules of the road
 - Educate drivers and pedestrians to honor crossing signals
- Learn from successful public transportation models (H/M) Example: Boulder Colorado
 - Build user friendly and frequent bus services
 - Encourage themed buses, create beautiful buses
 - Utilize small buses
 - Increase education on public transport as a community services

Policy and Advocacy

- Require notification devices and lighting on bikes (H)
- Encourage pedestrian-based road design (H)
 - Design transportation for car AND people moving!
 - Place and maintain street lighting with pedestrian safety in mind (H/M)
- Promote developments such as the new Riverside Ave (car and people moving)
- Clarify policies for motorized/electric mobility machines (H/M)
 - Identify where vehicles go
 - Identify who has priority
 - Provide people with information/training
- Explore option to adapt SSTA to meet the needs of multiple citizens (H/M)
 - Develop sliding scale for use
 - Clarify eligibility requirements and expand qualifying process if individuals pay

Initiatives: Sidewalks/Streets

- Plow thoroughly to allow access to services (H)
 - Plow sidewalk to bus stop (remove mounds of snow, leaves, etc)
 - Shovel around parking meters to allow access
- Enhance sidewalk design and construction (M)
 - Build to reduce/eliminate tree root “eruptions” and frost heaves (M)
- Install parking meters that accept cards and cash (L)

Initiatives: Public Transportation (the bus system)

- Promote safety at bus stops (H)
 - Place additional “Stop for Pedestrian” signs at bus stops
 - Line up bus stops and cross walks
- Target transportation systems to enhance safety (H)
 - Provide services for the elderly at night
 - Enhance signage and lights to promote safety
- Develop bus routes to meet service needs (H)
 - Have bus stops at supermarkets’ door!
 - Target research to population that uses the bus system
- Expand transportation services by adapting successful strategies from Special Events (4th of July, 1st Night) for events at the Flynn, etc. (H/M)
- Provide flexible transportation schedule (frequency and bus size) based on demand across the day (H/M)
- Use small buses, vans, etc., to meet transportation demands (H/M)
 - Build high quality small buses to balance cost with increased ridership
 - Utilize small buses to enhance community access
 - Utilize creative “bus” options, like cabs, jitneys, vans, low to the ground options, to enhance services
- Coordinate different bus services in Burlington and clarify ridership requirements
 - Advertise and clarify services that are available to the public (e.g., CATMA, UVM Off Campus Shuttle, CCTA “Special Services” like Fanny Allen/GD bus)
 - Publicize existing routes with signs and placards
- Create prepay (online, by mail) bus swipe card to reduce stigmas (H/M)
 - Use sliding scale for public transit
 - Develop online payment system with route, schedule, and even order service

Initiatives: Alternative Transportation

- Organize volunteer driving services and increase availability of information (H)
 - Clarify legal/liability issues around volunteer transportation networks
 - Encourage car pooling
- Develop access to private business shuttles (e.g., Hotels) for small donation (M)
- Add reflective marking as part of road resurfacing to identify bike lane (M)

Initiatives: Accessibility

- Provide easy access to meeting place through parking location or providing transportation (M)
 - Consider the needs of audience when scheduling a location

LONG TERM PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

Policy and Advocacy: Promote Universal Design

- Improve building design in new construction (H)
 - Build low thresholds on buildings
 - Place handicap accessible buttons on heavy doors
 - Build access ramps, doors, etc. at main entrance, not around the back
 - Build wider ramps so that electric vehicles/wheelchairs have an ample turning radius

Initiatives

- Continue working on Short Term Goals
- Develop on-demand, door-to-door transportation for seniors and disabled (M)

Livable Community Project
Housing Study Group
Priority Action Items
(Emphasis assigned: E-easy; M-medium; H-hard)

SHORT TERM PRIOTITIZED ACTION ITEMS (Conceptual Approaches)

Outreach and Public Education

- Enhance existing resources for aging in place (E)
 - Clarify and promote application process for building accessory apartment units
 - Identify follow-up requirements to ensure designated use (E)
 - Identify/grow resources for home modifications (E)
- Enhance communication of information and networking among agencies (E)
 - Provide support to the Champlain Valley Agency on Aging (CVAA) to increase housing expertise
 - Encourage informal networks for sharing housing information by Physicians/social workers, Multigenerational centers, Churches/Synagogues, “Across the Fence,” and other PSA
 - Air meetings on public access to increase the audience reached
- Clarify development requirements for creating affordable senior housing (E)
 - Create additional housing for low/middle class income
 - Eliminate “buy-outs” for section 8 housing for senior housing

Policy and Advocacy

- Build conceptual framework for Long Term Action Plan and include citizens (H)
- Promote community-based design philosophy in new housing developments and provide diverse options (H)
 - Encourage affinity model/development (similarity in culture, gender, age, artistic interest, religion, activism, etc.)
 - Encourage housing development by existing affinity networks (such as churches)
- Emphasize the link between the built environment and individual well-being.
 - Utilize a holistic approach to building
 - Utilize MacKenzie Architecture’s Tenets of Aging in Community as a model for creating design/development philosophy for Burlington. 1) Include people of all ages, especially elders; 2) Promote a lifestyle that is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just and humane; 3) Enhance wellness of the mind, body, and spirit; 4) Embrace interdependence, both within the community and in the greater society; and 5) Support opportunities at every age for civic and social engagement, education, and creative expression
- Consider elderly needs in the zoning rewrite (E)
 - Emphasize benefits of universal design (E)

- Engage citizens in the housing expansion planning process (M)
 - Develop a citizen and expert think tank to brainstorm optimal solutions for affordable housing development (E)
 - Organize builders' forums for nonprofit and for-profit developers regarding affordable housing construction (M)
- Grow resources for home healthcare service provision to allow aging in place

Initiatives

- Generate a range of housing options for all income levels (with special attention to low middle/middle class elderly populations)
 - Provide opportunities for residents to be creative, e.g., gardening
 - Design space to support people (storage space, car space)
- Address the growing needs of the low middle/middle income elder population (H)
 - Develop affordable housing for this population
 - Provide a range of care options in these facilities (thus allowing individuals to access a care continuum within the same community as they age)
 - Build an affordable Wake Robin

LONG TERM PRIORITIZED ACTION ITEMS (Operational Definition)

Policy and Advocacy

- Develop an orienting philosophy for housing development in Burlington
 - Use design philosophy as a tool for gauging projects
 - Limit building heights on all new construction
- Balance development with conservation of existing natural areas
 - Emphasize open space conservation plan
- Consider creative approaches to land development and redevelopment
 - Explore 2nd floor development of apartments at Ethan Allen Shopping Center
 - Consider redesigning schools and theaters for senior housing
 - Expand accessory-unit building opportunity to include businesses
 - Engage citizens in the inventory of developable/redevelopable land

Initiatives

- Move forward on city-owned and other currently available redevelopable properties
- Encourage churches, community organizations, and other affinity groups to develop housing on their property