

# CREATING VIABLE FUTURES

A CASE EXAMPLE FROM THE  
**JEFFERSON AREA BOARD FOR AGING (JABA)**  
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA



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## Preface

Every day we see signs that changing demographics affect issues like community design, service provision, resource allocation, and policy development. Because new paths must be set to address an aging society, it's important to the fabric and finances of our nation to identify common ground across the generations. This case example identifies significant innovations already underway in one community that demonstrate the greater returns possible when solutions for an aging society simultaneously benefit other age groups and honor the limits on our financial and environmental resources.

The choices being made in the Charlottesville, VA area are likely to have real staying power, because:

- residents, organizations, and officials are intentionally working together rather than competitively to address concerns across the generations
- financial, human, and natural resources are being used wisely by focusing on “economies of scope” — single solutions that can solve multiple problems
- the needs of current generations are getting addressed across the lifespan without overburdening future generations.

This case example is a companion piece to the Viable Futures Toolkit, “Sustainable Communities for All Ages”, [www.viablefuturestoolkit.org](http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org), a practical set of ideas, strategies, and guidelines for creating well being. The report shows how a community organization with a mission to serve older adults and the partners it has mobilized are finding ways to achieve that mission while benefiting the entire community – not only now, but for generations to come. What we can learn from this example is applicable beyond aging organizations. Creating a viable future is about an intentional approach that respects human, natural, and fiscal resources, regardless of the focus of our respective work. The organization highlighted here partnered in the preparation and publication of the Viable Futures Toolkit that this study accompanies.



## Welcome to Charlottesville, VA: Home of the Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA)

In the Charlottesville, Virginia area, a strategic planning process focused on the increasing population of *older residents* has grown into a community-wide movement to create a viable future for *all ages*. This is the story of how the Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA) and its community partners are transforming the way they respond to pressing social issues. JABA, the lead aging organization in the area, is spearheading a community-wide movement to improve the quality of life not only for older residents, but also for generations to come.

JABA's CEO, Gordon Walker, described it this way. "JABA recognized that rapid population growth and in particular, the coming 'age wave,' would bring profound changes and opportunities for which the entire community would need to be prepared. Family caregiving responsibilities would dramatically increase, and health and social service delivery systems as they currently exist would be stretched beyond the breaking point. As more families struggled to care for older relatives, employers could anticipate an impact on their productivity. Development pressures were starting to put a strain on transportation systems and land use, which was threatening the high quality of life for which our region is known. Finally, as a member of the school board at the time, I knew our community's ability to treat older adults well was linked in so many ways to the well-being of children and youth."



These looming changes were the main catalysts that prompted JABA to bring together a wide array of individuals and organizations to plan for the area's future. A dramatic shift in policy and program approaches was needed to help ensure that all people in the region could age successfully, productively, and with dignity in a healthy environment.

With each phase of the planning process, participants experienced a growing awareness of the ingredients that could make the plan and the area's future a success:

- involving individuals and families of all ages
- protecting both human and natural resources
- turning potential problems into opportunities to think and act differently
- identifying the common ground that promotes the well-being of the entire community.

The community planning process produced the following collective statement:

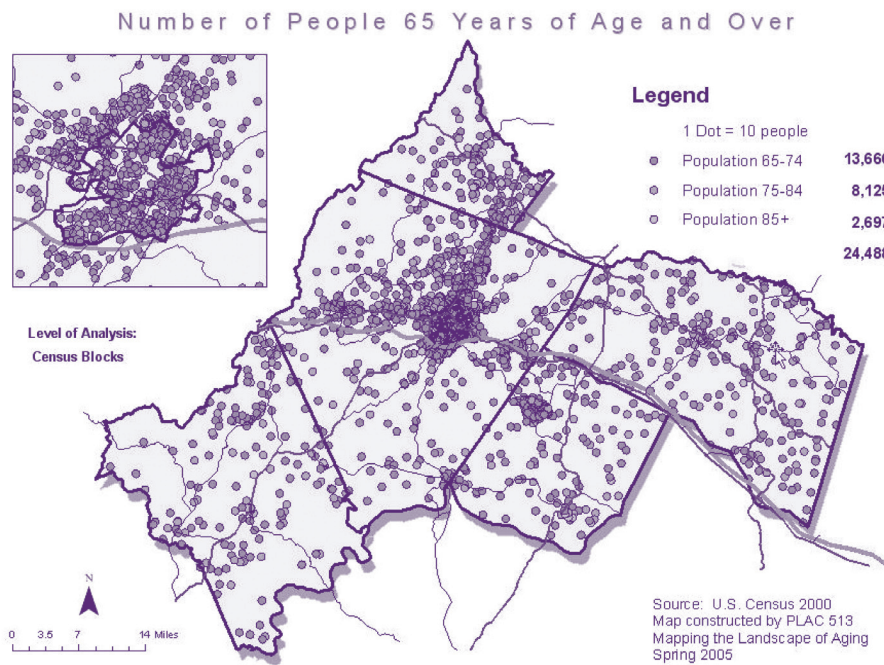
*"We will strive to develop intergenerational sustainable communities so that older adults may contribute to the wellbeing of all generations and live with maximum health, independence, security and overall quality of life. We believe that building communities that are good for elders will benefit people of all ages."*

*“We will work together to make the Jefferson Area the best place in the country to age. We will accomplish this by developing responsive health and support service systems; coordinating land use, economic development and transportation planning; expanding educational, employment, volunteer, cultural, and recreational resources; and promoting active, caring and inclusive communities.”*

## A Snapshot of the Area

JABA is a federally mandated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) that has been serving the needs of older adults in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District since 1975. This area includes the mid-size city of Charlottesville and the five surrounding counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson, which have both rural and suburban areas. The region is located in central Virginia in the shadows of the Blue Ridge Mountains, with the nation’s capital to the north and the Atlantic coastline to the east. It is a place where innovation and tradition walk hand-in-hand amidst an abundance of natural beauty.

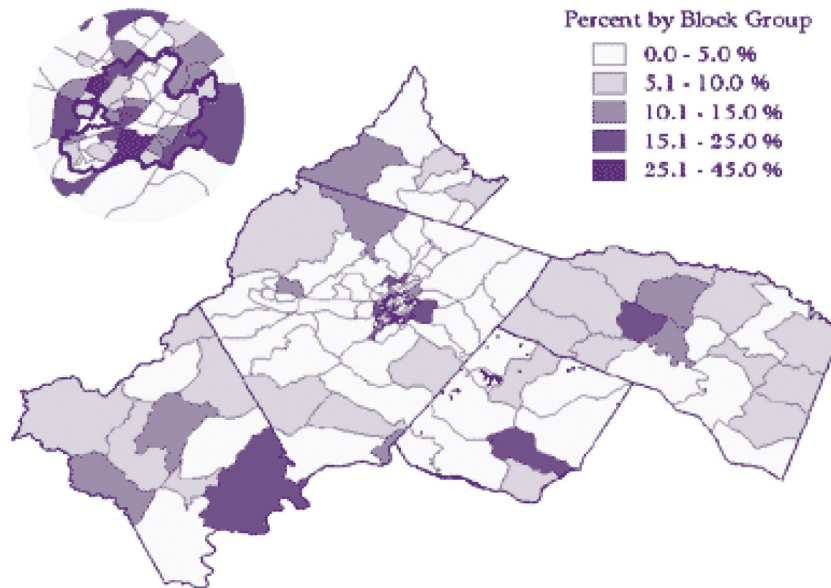
The area’s total population is about 200,000. The racial composition is 80% White, 15% African American, 2% Asian American, 2% Latino, and 1% Bi/Multiracial. The older population is expected to grow significantly. By 2025, about 25%, or one in every four residents, will be 60 and older, due to both “aging in place” and in-migration.



JABA serves an area of high need. Pockets of low income populations are found in both urban and rural areas. A large proportion of rural areas is designated as medically underserved. Medicaid reimbursement rates are low; and due to the nation’s most stringent nursing home eligibility requirements, Virginia’s population of community-based at-risk elders is among the frailest in the nation.



## Families Below the Poverty Level in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District 1999: 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrix P90

This is the context in which a broad initiative is underway to build a viable future for all ages and income groups.

## Building a Viable Future – One Brick at a Time

This section describes what the community, with JABA's leadership, has accomplished on the road to a viable future. The following section talks about how they did it.

Local and state statutes authorize Area Agencies on Aging to act as planning and service agencies for aging issues. But, as Gordon Walker points out, "JABA increasingly came to realize that aging is everyone's business. This emerging point of view motivated us to broaden our scope and commitment so that we could demonstrate how a life span approach to aging could help us meet both our statutory mission and a broader set of community goals at the same time." JABA also was aided in this expanded point of view by the joint exercise power agreement under which it was created in 1975, giving it planning responsibility for the region by the various local governments. In the five years since JABA's community-wide planning initiative has been underway, a wide spectrum of public and private partners has come to share responsibility for, and co-invest in, shaping a region that promises a viable future for all residents.

What started the ball rolling was the 20/20 Planning Process. “20/20” was so named to evoke the concept of a clear vision for the year 2020, when the first wave of “baby boomers” born in 1946 will be approaching 75. Originally called the *20/20 Plan for Aging*, the plan has since been renamed the *20/20 Plan: Aging in Community* to acknowledge the broadened point of view early deliberations set in motion. The Plan puts forth comprehensive and far-reaching strategies shaped by citizens, providers and planners within the Thomas Jefferson Planning District to make Charlottesville and surrounding communities more livable both for its growing population of older residents and for all other generations.

In 2005, the 20/20 Plan won the prestigious “Livable Communities for All Ages Award,” a national competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging. The plan was specifically recognized for its comprehensive, age-inclusive approach.

Here are some of the actions and changes that this more expansive point of view set in motion:

- 1. Age-inclusive community centers.** Four cost-effective community centers throughout the region now serve multiple generations with a mix of offerings, including: senior programs, adult day healthcare services, child development programs, recreational activities from the parks and recreation department, public library, health care services, and dental clinics. These settings foster intergenerational programs. At a local high school, a proposal is also under discussion to co-house the Jefferson Institute for Lifelong Learning (JILL) as part of an expansion of their facilities. This could occasion volunteering by older adults in the school and use space for lifelong learning during regular school hours as well as in the evenings and on weekends when it would otherwise be under-utilized.
- 2. Improved pedestrian safety and mobility.** Pedestrian and vehicular safety improvements have been made on a busy Charlottesville street that is home to senior housing, commercial businesses, organizations that provide senior services, and a child development center. Prompted by an elderly resident being hit by a car in a near fatal attempt to cross the street, a task force proposed thoroughfare features to afford young and old alike a safer pedestrian experience. Public input formed the basis of recommended policy changes to the state Department of Transportation (VDOT), which provided a grant to make the improvements. The task force included JABA, Albemarle County, the City of Charlottesville, VDOT, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, the Association of Realtors, a Senior Center, and residents living in the nearby area.
- 3. Multi-generational protection against heat waves.** JABA’s Cool-Aid project was launched to provide air-conditioners to older residents, but soon it was expanded to include low income people of all ages. The shift occurred when local pediatricians concerned about children with breathing difficulties became involved. Now applicants having a household income of 2½ times the federal poverty level or less are eligible to receive air conditioners.



- 4. Growing use of intergenerational programming.** In addition to intergenerational activities at the age-inclusive community centers, JABA partners with Urban Vision, a local non-profit, providing after school tutoring and other activities for at-risk children. JABA provides space in one of its independent living facilities, where older residents work as volunteers with the children. An “Embracing Elderhood” project is being piloted where high school students are paired with elders in a local nursing home. Together they create and record the life stories of the elders, which are then presented to the elders and their families. Older adults volunteer in the local schools as tutors and mentors through the FISH (Friends in Schools Helping) program. Plans are underway to add aging instruction to the high school curriculum as a way to dispel misconceptions about older persons and as an early avenue of recruitment for the health care workforce the region will need in the near future. Finally, Wintergreen Nature Foundation sponsors bird house construction by JABA’s Nelson County Senior Center participants and Nelson County High School woodworking students.

Dr. Pam Moran, Superintendent of Albemarle County Schools, stated: “Bringing volunteers into our schools who are representing different generations offers our children something in terms of learning. It also offers to folks who live in our community who may no longer have children in our schools the opportunity to really see what we’re doing.”

- 5. Improved availability of age-inclusive data.** Communities often have separate initiatives for children, families, and elders, and each of these collects its own data. JABA works in partnership with the Commission on Children and Families to collect data that includes elders and expands the definition of “family.” These improvements allow for more comprehensive planning that can benefit all age groups, and the inclusion of intergenerational perspectives when recommendations are made to local governments on funding priorities. The partnership also led the Commission to recruit elders to serve as commissioners.
- 6. Expanded considerations in addressing elders’ housing needs.** JABA’s evolving point of view also impacted its effort to create age-friendly and affordable assisted living for older residents. It was able to leverage funds from local, state, federal, and private sources to make low-interest capital improvements and offer rental subsidies. Its work to save a low-income housing facility in the town of Crozet through partnering with a local developer won JABA an award for innovations in housing from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. JABA staff are participating in community planning for Crozet to promote pedestrian friendly improvements and intergenerational programming that will benefit all ages. Discussions are underway to develop affordable housing for the long term care workers and food service workers employed by the assisted living facility. The proposed design would enable workers to walk to work instead of driving long distances in this rural area where affordable housing is limited and scattered. Employees’ children could go to the nearby pre-school, which would save the workers further travel costs and reduce large outlays for child care.

7. **Expanded considerations in addressing elders' health care needs.** With a LTC-PATH grant (Long Term Care - Partners Acting Together for Health) from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to address long term health care needs of area elders, JABA enlisted over 40 providers and stakeholders in the community, including elders and family caregivers, to create a community plan for improvements to the local long term care system. Accomplishments of this collaboration include a committee to address issues of communication between sites for elder care and health care providers, land use and transportation plans following a neighborhood model for easier access to services, and the formation of a community alliance to support coordinated care through aid in obtaining information and services without having to call or visit multiple sites.
8. **Coalitions for Universal Design.** Universal Design ensures access in housing, transportation, and land use so that people of all ages can be active members of their chosen community. The Livable for a Lifetime (L4L) initiative is driven by a steering committee from JABA, Piedmont Housing Alliance, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, and local architectural and landscape designers. It also involves local realtors, architects, home builders, developers, therapists, government officials, and university faculty. L4L emphasizes the use of sustainable building materials and exterior landscaping/green spaces to reinforce healthy outdoor environments.
9. **University – community partnership.** The Institute on Aging at the University of Virginia committed to do research on issues outlined in the 20/20 Plan. Examples of community-based research projects include: Mapping the Urban Landscape of Aging, Mental Health Needs of Older Adults and Their Caregivers, Collaborative Communities in Long Term Care: Charting a Pathway to Improved Care, and ecoMOD construction: Designing Environmentally Friendly Affordable Housing.
10. **Internal organizational changes.** As JABA's point of view transformed into working on behalf of all generations, it began to pay greater attention to its own environmental "footprint." Consequently, it has formed a "Green Team" which is examining organizational practices for energy efficiency, use of biodegradable products, and recycling; determining how to incorporate green components into the scope of its programming; and investigating the use of locally grown organic foods and the creation of community gardens for its food services.



11. **Formation of an Intergenerational Advocacy Council for 20/20 (I-ACT).** I-ACT is working to educate key stakeholders and the general public about the 20/20 Plan and strengthen policies developed at local, state and national levels. Decision-makers hear from community members directly impacted by the issues addressed in the plan. This group of grassroots advocates of all ages is the "eyes and ears" for concerns and issues related to the ability to age well in one's own community.

## 12. Advocacy in new arenas.

JABA increasingly recognizes that well-being in later life is conditioned by well-being in one's earlier years. As a result, it has found itself advocating in new arenas. Staff participate in the local health department's Childhood Obesity Task Force, and JABA's CEO led a movement for more nutritious choices in school vending machines. Furthermore, JABA understands that the nonprofit sector needs private sector support to build more livable communities. It has developed an age-friendly business certification program to heighten the awareness of local businesses about needs of consumers across the lifespan. In reaching out to the business community, it looks for a "handshake, not a handout." Discussions are exploring ways to collaborate on product development and ownership, employee training, and support for working caregivers. JABA participates in an Aging in Place roundtable through the Chamber of Commerce.



In summary, The *20/20 Plan* is a first step in a dynamic and ongoing process. What started with an inclusive array of stakeholders to forge a plan for older residents has increasingly become a broad community movement to ensure a viable future for all residents. The Plan offers a framework for addressing a host of emerging and pressing community issues. The infrastructure for the plan -- a steering committee, workgroups, and staff support -- guarantees forward movement. Work around the Plan facilitates new connections among community members and organizations and continually opens up opportunities to think beyond specialized interests toward the collective good. The economies of scope that have emerged -- that is, the decisions that address multiple problems through single strategies -- enable community resources to be used wisely, with benefit to the broadest range of residents.

## Building a Viable Future Together -- a Growing Commitment

What does it take for outcomes like these to happen? The bare bones ingredients seem to be:

- An organization willing to imagine how it can have a broader, more inclusive impact
- An intentional commitment to implement this point of view throughout the scope of its work
- An ability to persuade community partners that this point of view is advantageous for everyone

At JABA, the inclusive point of view has now become a fundamental commitment. It has invested both financial and human resources toward that end and encourages creative thinking along these lines from its board and staff. Emphases on intergenerational initiatives and sustainability now can be found in JABA's mission statement, statement of purpose, strategic plan, fundraising approaches, department goals and employee performance measures.

Beyond JABA, the mobilization of allies for a broadened agenda has grown incrementally since its start with the *20/20 Plan*. The *20/20* planning process engaged over 85 organizations and 500 individuals from throughout the region, including older adults, family caregivers, advocates, health professionals, human service organizations, faith community leaders, businesses, schools, volunteer organizations, local government representatives, community planners, the Area Association of Realtors and the Virginia Department of Transportation. The *20/20* Steering Committee included representatives from the Piedmont Housing Alliance, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, Mental Health Association, Commission on Children and Families, University of Virginia, Piedmont Virginia Community College, faith communities, students from a local high school, city and county government, planning commissions, and health systems. Youth input was solicited for the *20/20 Plan*, with a special chapter written by them and devoted to the shared concerns and issues of both youth and elders.

Beyond the bare bones ingredients, though, lies a set of factors that contributed to the success of JABA's broadening agenda. These include:

- **Initial and ongoing champions.** In addition to the JABA CEO, champions of the planning process included JABA Board members, the area's state senator, a school board member, the director of the Piedmont Housing Alliance, and the director of the Federal Executive Institute. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, which supports children's issues, provided a small planning grant to promote an intergenerational perspective. Dominion Virginia Power was also an early ally, since it had previously supported JABA's intergenerational Cool-Aid Program. The steering committee, which oversees the working groups that address matters of implementation and emerging issues, is now the ongoing champion for the work.
- **Buy-in.** From the beginning, a diverse assemblage of community members was included in planning and development, thus giving them early and substantive "ownership." In addition, JABA was successful in getting the media to look to JABA for local stories affected by national aging policies, such as proposed changes to Medicare. Written

memoranda of understanding were developed with organizations that agreed to take on a leadership role on specific regional issues, including the Piedmont Housing Alliance and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District, which includes elected officials from all localities in the region. Discussions with the Commission on Children and Families led them to take on more of a lifespan perspective. A recent partnership with AARP Virginia will enable the Charlottesville area to become a model for other communities in the state by promoting livable communities that focus on intergenerational initiatives and work to sustain natural and human resources.

- **Identification of common ground issues.** In the course of planning for an aging community, participants increasingly recognized that a number of issues that matter to elders matter to others as well. Specific intergenerational issues emerged that were rallying points for the community: lack of air conditioning, a near fatal pedestrian accident on a busy city street, and the challenge of access to health and recreational services, particularly in the rural counties.
- **Incentives for participation.** Participants were motivated by a variety of interests. The opportunity to be involved in a unique planning process and the potential for developing new kinds of partnerships and resources attracted some community members to the planning process. Some were mobilized because of challenges presented by an aging population to health systems, social services and businesses. Yet others envisioned opportunities to capitalize on retirees as a community resource and an economic development stimulus. From a personal and family perspective, too, aging is a common denominator. The personal experiences of key decision-makers (elected officials, corporate executives and non-profit agency directors) with aging family members brought them to the table.
- **Staffing.** Communication and coordination are essential to work that cuts across issue areas and organizations. JABA took on this staffing function, which initially was assigned to an existing staff member working on special projects. As the plan developed, its coordination moved to a half-time contractual position, and then to a full time planner. Currently, a Viable Futures Planner is the lead staff member, and the JABA management team ensures that the broadened perspective is woven throughout the agency's day-to-day operations. In addition, approximately 20% of the CEO's time was dedicated to the 20/20 planning process.
- **Funding.** To the extent that a Viable Futures point of view becomes integral to an organization, existing resources can readily be applied – and with greater return than previously achieved. JABA's CEO used longstanding relationships to leverage one-time funding for the planning process, some from new sources attracted to the cutting edge nature of the vision, including a number of public-private partnerships. The broadened vision opens up opportunities to decrease duplication and consolidate resources. Funders are attracted to ventures that promote the most efficient use of scarce resources. In addition, the engagement of children and youth makes the work of an Area Agency on Aging more appealing to a broader range of funders. For example, after development of the F.I.S.H. program, funding for expansion has been received from the Charlottesville Public School System, Albemarle County School System, and an anonymous local foundation.



To the extent that a Viable Futures point of view becomes integral to an organization, existing resources can readily be applied – and with greater return than previously achieved.

- **Building on success.** The early successes energized the community and were key factors in driving continued progress. For example, the initiative for pedestrian-friendly streets led to proposals for policy changes by the state Department of Transportation, and the early successes with intergenerational projects led to new types of programming and space-sharing in JABA facilities. The growing success experienced by JABA in promoting an inclusive point of view in its work contributed to, and now benefits from, the development of the Viable Futures Toolkit ([www.viablefuturestoolkit.org](http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org)). The blue moon fund of Charlottesville was the primary funder of the Toolkit, which has been positively received in communities from Oregon to Florida to Maine. Both JABA and blue moon believe that the momentum generated by the 20/20 Plan puts Charlottesville in contention for being the premier Viable Futures community in the nation.

## Added Value for JABA and the Charlottesville Area

Why should an organization that is doing just fine want to step out of the box and strive for broader impact? JABA's willingness to spearhead a sea change so that aging becomes everyone's business has paid off in ways beyond the obvious programmatic ones identified above. Some of the most important additional rewards from the inclusiveness, collaboration, and long-term vision being taken up in the Charlottesville area include:

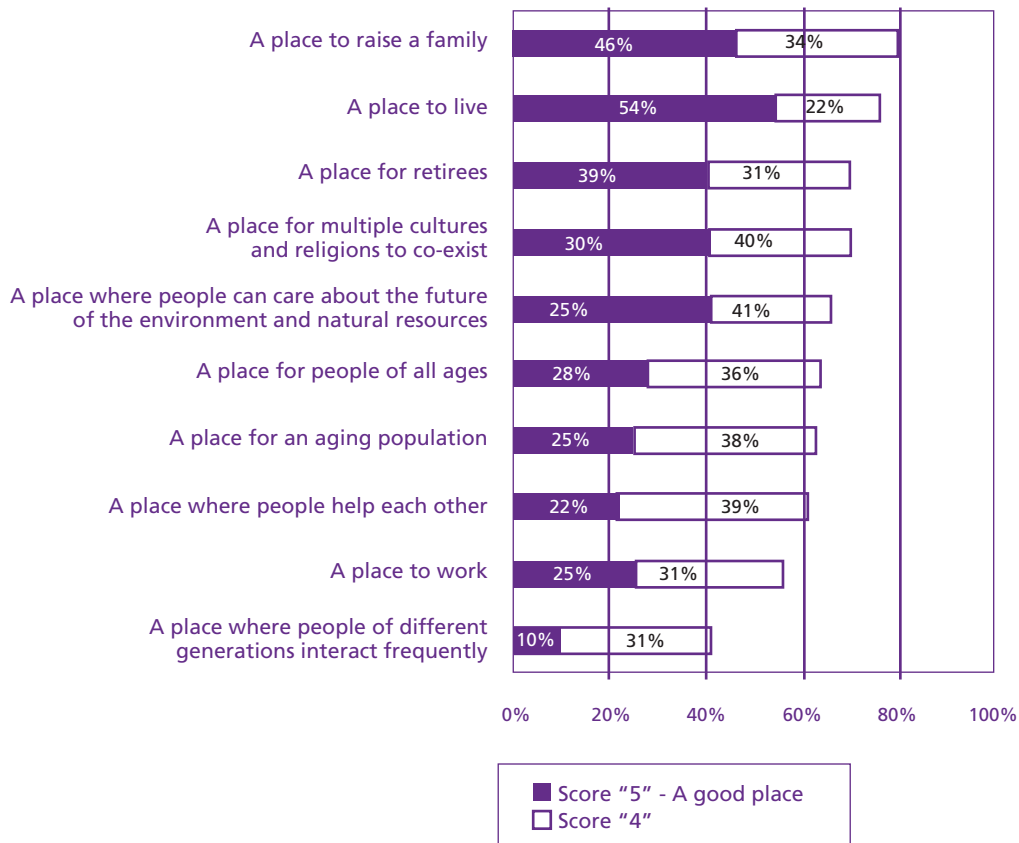
- **Increased visibility for JABA.** The 20/20 planning process and the successes of subsequent community initiatives have played a key role in establishing JABA as a leader in the community, not only on aging issues. It is now well established as an appropriate organization to lead this kind of planning initiative, and the Viable Futures Toolkit has become an effective tool to promote the objectives of the 20/20 Plan. New partnerships have opened up for JABA as the Toolkit is more widely used to reach across generations and into the future. For example, through the lens of the Toolkit, JABA is working with the Commission on Children and Families to establish a work group on intergenerational initiatives.
- **Culture change.** Significant culture change has occurred both within JABA and the larger community, as symbolized by the change in the *20/20 Plan* title to the more inclusive *20/20 Plan: Aging in Community*, reflecting a life span perspective. Change is also occurring with regard to resource allocation. Many localities are now looking for intergenerational components in proposals when making decisions about funding.



Connie Brennan, Supervisor in Nelson County: "As an elected official I review many proposals from local non-profit organizations. Those that advance collaboration among agencies and interactions across generations are most likely to catch my attention and receive my support because these use our limited resources in ways that will have the greatest positive long term effect on our community."

- Positive community image.** The Charlottesville area is increasingly recognized as a good place for all generations to live. In a recent survey conducted by the Southeastern Institute of Research about the Charlottesville region, the area scored very favorably (receiving a score of 4 or 5) on most measures of quality, as the chart below shows. The bottom statistic on the chart gives JABA ample room to advance its intergenerational point of view. In addition to these findings, 75% of respondents feel it is important to continue planning to help make the Charlottesville region a national model on how a region serves its aging population. One in every four indicated a willingness to join an online panel to offer occasional input.

Charlottesville Region Community Qualities, Southeastern Institute on Aging Survey



## Lessons Learned on the Way to Creating a Viable Future

JABA has learned a great deal that can be instructive for other Area Agencies on Aging, other nonprofits, and other communities considering a Viable Futures perspective:

### 1. Capitalize Upon Existing Relationships

Identify existing community-based collaboratives of which your organization is already a member and market the value of the perspective there first. The Coalition Building Tool in the Viable Futures Toolkit ([www.viablefuturestoolkit.org](http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org)) can be helpful here.

### 2. Expand the Capacity of Current Activities First

Integrate the Viable Futures point of view into existing initiatives in order to increase the likelihood of initial support and success. For example, advance intergenerational programming at senior centers and incorporate aging-specific content into a K-12 curriculum. The Organizational Self-Assessment Tool in the Viable Futures Toolkit ([www.viablefuturestoolkit.org](http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org)) can be helpful here.

### 3. Craft an Inclusive Message

The probability of initial support and sustainability for initiatives increases when efforts are presented as beneficial for all ages. Focus on messages that unite rather than set up competition, even implicitly. The Communications Tool in the Viable Futures Toolkit ([www.viablefuturestoolkit.org](http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org)) can be helpful here.

### 4. Be Committed to and Consistent with the Point of View

Change the organization's internal documents, as well as marketing, publications and websites to reflect an inclusive mission that extends beyond aging. The Communications Tool in the Viable Futures Toolkit ([www.viablefuturestoolkit.org](http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org)) can be helpful here.

### 5. Balance Internal and External Demands

Culture change of the kind described here takes time. A lead organization has just as much work to do to ensure that staff are committed to a broader mission as it does to bringing external partners to the table. The goal is for everyone to understand that the new perspective promises greater returns, and that each incremental change can demonstrate that. The Organizational Self-Assessment Tool in the Viable Futures Toolkit ([www.viablefuturestoolkit.org](http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org)) can be helpful here for identifying internal priorities for change.

### 6. Develop Outcome Measures for Expanded Goals

Be sure to add new measures to ongoing accountability processes in order to track the full value of the more inclusive approach. The Planning Worksheet in the Viable Futures Toolkit ([www.viablefuturestoolkit.org](http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org)) can be helpful here.

## Stay Tuned...

What's next for JABA and its partners? Stay tuned – and check the Viable Futures website periodically ([www.viablefutures toolkit.org](http://www.viablefutures toolkit.org)) – to see how this community and others capitalize on an inclusive approach to aging.

Here are some possibilities for next steps in Charlottesville:

- Each of the six jurisdictions in the planning district (city of Charlottesville, counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson) has a comprehensive plan that is reviewed and updated every five years. The use of the Viable Futures lens can favorably impact land use planning, transportation, affordable housing, health care service delivery and civic participation.
- The community can become a leader in building design. As homes, schools, office buildings, retail spaces, health care facilities, and assisted living and nursing facilities are built, redesigned or expanded, the use of environmentally friendly and sustainable materials would be healthy for everyone.
- Enhanced coordination with schools could include locating pre-schools close to senior programs, making better use of available space at schools during “non-school” hours, integrating aging curricula in the schools, and shifting from using the designation “schools” to “community learning centers,” especially in the neighborhood design process.
- Work with the Commission on Children and Families has produced a Work Group on Intergenerational Initiatives. This project will begin in the fall of 2007 to raise awareness and propose plans to local government and non-profits for the integration of programs and projects that reach across age groups.
- Efforts will continue to influence private and public distribution of funds through priority for the economies of scope advocated by the Viable Futures Toolkit. The optimal utilization of limited resources is a message that should appeal to everyone.
- Advocacy can promote green design, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating systems, and universal access in new housing for people of all ages.
- An existing urban agriculture project and related local food initiatives can promote the development of community food centers, offer healthy, fresh produce options for low-income families, and support the planned Buy Fresh, Buy Local food guide. JABA can develop a plan to purchase food served in senior centers and housing facilities from local



farmers. In addition, JABA's program participants can be involved in community gardening on site in conjunction with the local master gardeners program and school and community clubs such as 4-H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Future Farmers of America.

- Any of the work with a Viable Futures perspective has the potential to point to local, state, and federal policy changes that can benefit a larger constituency. JABA is well positioned to monitor this potential and advocate for policy platforms that promote a viable future.

These are just a few of the possibilities that people focused on sustainable communities for all ages can identify. The Community Checklist and the Issue Briefs in the Viable Futures Toolkit ([www.viablefuturestoolkit.org](http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org)) offer more.

## Can the Viable Futures Perspective Benefit Your Community?

If you care about what life will be like in the years ahead for you, your parents, or your grandchildren, then the Viable Futures perspective is for you. It's for you if you are on the front lines facing the most pressing community issues of today and tomorrow.

The aging of the population is actually opening up opportunities for people to think and act differently – for the greater good, on higher ground – with regard to both our human and natural resources. Diane Edgerton Miller, President and CEO of the blue moon fund in Charlottesville, and lead funder of the Viable Futures Toolkit, describes her commitment to this work: “Linking the immediate challenge of an aging population to the quality of life for all generations concretizes blue moon’s perspective and applies it to some of the most pressing – and interrelated -- issues of our day.”

The financial, social, and health care issues raised by today’s elders and aging baby boomers can be harnessed to create a viable future for generations to come. It’s time to shift our vantage point about the aging of our nation, focus on our shared destiny, and build on our common concerns. Organizations that have historically focused on aging services can be leaders in this charge.

The Charlottesville region has begun the collaborative effort to create a viable future for everyone. Will you join them?

**For more information about JABA, please contact Karen Beiber, Jefferson Area Board for Aging, Charlottesville, VA, phone 434-817-5224, or e-mail, [kbeiber@jabacares.org](mailto:kbeiber@jabacares.org).**

**For more information about the Viable Futures Toolkit, please contact Paula Dressel, JustPartners, Inc., Baltimore, MD, phone 410-244-0667, x102, or e-mail [pdressel@justpartners.org](mailto:pdressel@justpartners.org).**



Turn the page to see what you can do right now!



## 10 Immediate Things an Aging Organization Can Do That Also Benefit Children/Youth

- Form an Intergenerational Task Force to identify and address issues of concern to both elders and youth; include youth on your organization's planning and advisory boards
- Make senior center space available for activities for children and youth
- Involve older adults as tutors and mentors in local schools
- Advocate for the inclusion of an aging curriculum in high schools
- Host/promote a health clinic that serves all ages
- Share data with child, youth, and family advocates to plan more comprehensively for all age groups
- Advocate for pedestrian-friendly streets
- Develop an age-friendly business certification program to heighten awareness about needs of consumers across the lifespan
- Lead/join a task force on affordable and accessible housing
- Combine the residents of multi-family and senior housing in a neighborhood gardening project.



## 10 Immediate Things an Aging Organization Can Do That Also Benefits the Environment

- Start a “buy-local” campaign to support local farmers and to make healthy, affordable produce options available in nutrition sites and meals programs
- Promote the use of green and healthy building design in community centers, libraries, schools, senior centers, health care facilities and retail spaces
- Involve older adults as “environmental champions” to educate youth on water and energy conservation
- Create a program in which youth and elders both recycle; host community recycling days
- Support clean fuel vehicles for transportation services
- Promote open spaces (parks, gardens, trails) that attract people of all ages and are accessible to people of all abilities
- Involve senior center participants in on-site community gardening
- Develop a public education program on healthy indoor environments - with a focus on reducing the symptoms of chronic bronchial diseases among children and seniors
- Conduct an organizational audit to assess simple steps that can be taken to be more environmentally responsible (turning off lights when leaving a workspace for more than 15 minutes; printing 2-sided copies; using items that can be recycled and composted)
- Advocate for zoning changes with local planning entities to influence decisions on land use, transportation, and housing siting that protect the environment



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