

Moving toward a more livable community for People with Disabilities

Presented by Shawn Lawrence,
Community Action Specialist,
disAbility Resource Center

What is the disAbility Resource Center?

- The dRC is the Center for Independent Living (CIL) serving the George Washington Region (PD16).
- CILs support people with disabilities in their efforts toward independence.
- The dRC's Mission is "to assist people with disabilities, those who support them, and the community, through information, education, and resources, to achieve the highest potential and benefit of independent living."

What is a Livable Community?

“a livable community is one that has **affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services**, and **adequate mobility options**, which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life.”

AARP Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide (2005)

What is a Livable Community?

We agree with AARP about **affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options** but we add:

- Encouraging employment opportunities for all who want to work.

The Challenge...

To facilitate the improvement of our community toward one that:

- Embraces policies encouraging the availability of appropriate and affordable housing choices;
- Offers an array of appropriate mobility options;
- Includes community design and access to services (commercial, non-government and government) that encourage and support personal independence and involvement in civic, economic and social life.

How do we get there?

The stated policies and goals of the community, **starting with local Comprehensive Plans**, should:

- Encourage the marketplace to address the needs of people with disabilities and our aging population and
- Recognize that good community planning and sound public policy are both key elements to moving toward more livable communities.

How do we get there?

A Community that does these things also enables all citizens to be as involved in community and civic life as they choose – the keystone of our democratic society.

Important Concepts:

1. “Aging-in-place” which means the ability to stay in one’s home in an environment that is safe, independent and comfortable for as long as desired without regard to age, income or level of ability;

Important Concepts:

2. People with disabilities (mental and/or physical) prefer to live in a “conventional” neighborhood, use everyday services and be able to participate in community life.

Implementation Policies:

Should:

- Encourage the private sector to actively address these issues, both commercial enterprise and the non-government sector of service providers – governmental agencies cannot and should not do it all.

Policy Evaluation:

Should be conducted with sensitivity to the impact of various choices on encouraging or discouraging the marketplace to respond.

Said Another Way --

Ask questions that test the impact of policy options on the environment of business and civic sectors to respond to community needs.

The Major Elements

✓ Housing

☐ Transportation

☐ Access to Services

☐ Design

☐ Employment

Housing

- Embrace policies encouraging the availability of appropriate and affordable housing choices.
- Do public policies encourage the private sector to offer options appropriate to an array of needs and income levels?

Housing

- Appropriate local housing policy can be especially challenging when other policies and circumstances can be seen as conflicting, such as impact of development on water quality and the fiscal impact on various taxpayer supported service.
- It means that all of these issues must be equitably considered as policy choices are evaluated.

The Major Elements

- Housing
- Transportation
- Access to Services
- Design
- Employment

Transportation

People with disabilities seek:

- The availability of an appropriate array of options to independent movement within our community.

Transportation

People with disabilities seek:

- An appropriate mix of transportation choices that recognize the urban, suburban and rural differences across our region.
- Even with these differences there are opportunities to encourage greater choice for citizens to meet their mobility needs.

Transportation

- Where practical, create pedestrian-friendly environments that facilitate walking to support independence, healthy living and convenience while saving public funds.
- Where appropriate, offer public transportation that is safe, convenient and properly priced.

Transportation

- Where needed, offer para-transit that supports independent living as long as possible.
- The automobile is an essential part of independence; a safe and convenient road network, with appropriate parking, is important.
- All options should be considered to achieve and maintain that “appropriate mix.”

The Major Elements

- Housing
- Transportation
- Access to Services
- Design
- Employment

Access to Services

Access encourages and supports personal independence and involvement in civic, economic and social life.

Access to Services

- Public policies that encourage commercial enterprise to provide convenient choices and that encourage the non-government sector to provide support services where for-profit services are not practical and as alternatives to government services.
- These services include access to health care, financial services, educational, recreation and cultural opportunities.

The Major Elements

- Housing
- Transportation
- Access to Services
- Design
- Employment

Design

- Offer “universal design” whenever practical.
- Florida calls this “Communities for a Life Time” – communities that are friendly to the very young and the very old – in other words – for everyone in your family.

Design

Includes:

- Public spaces such as community buildings and parks;
- Policies that allow the marketplace to provide private spaces such as homes, businesses and workplaces that are designed beyond the requirements of the ADA.

These policies foster the concepts of “aging in place” and “people with disabilities as full members of the community.”

The Major Elements

- Housing
- Transportation
- Access to Services
- Design
- Employment

Employment

- Work is important to having a sense of accomplishment, self-confidence, and pride, it is a key part of leading independent lives.
- Public policies that foster economic opportunity are just as important to people with disabilities as to all taxpayers.

An Offer to Help

The disAbility Resource Center is anxious to work with you as you move forward toward a more livable Stafford County for People with Disabilities.

We are part of the Rappahannock Area Disability Network (RADN) whose members are organizations and agencies that provides services or support to people with disabilities in the region.

RADN is also anxious to be a part of your team.

Thank you very much for
taking time to listen

Shawn Lawrence
Community Action Specialist
disAbility Resource Center