HENDERSON COUNTY

AGING PLAN

2026–2029

Community collaboration advocating for the needs of older adults in Henderson County

Identify. Educate. Develop. Connect.

MISSION

Community collaboration advocating for the needs of older adults in Henderson County:

Identify. Educate. Develop. Connect.

VISION

Create a community where older adults can remain connected, informed, supported, and engaged throughout the aging journey.

WHAT A MASTER AGING PLAN DOES

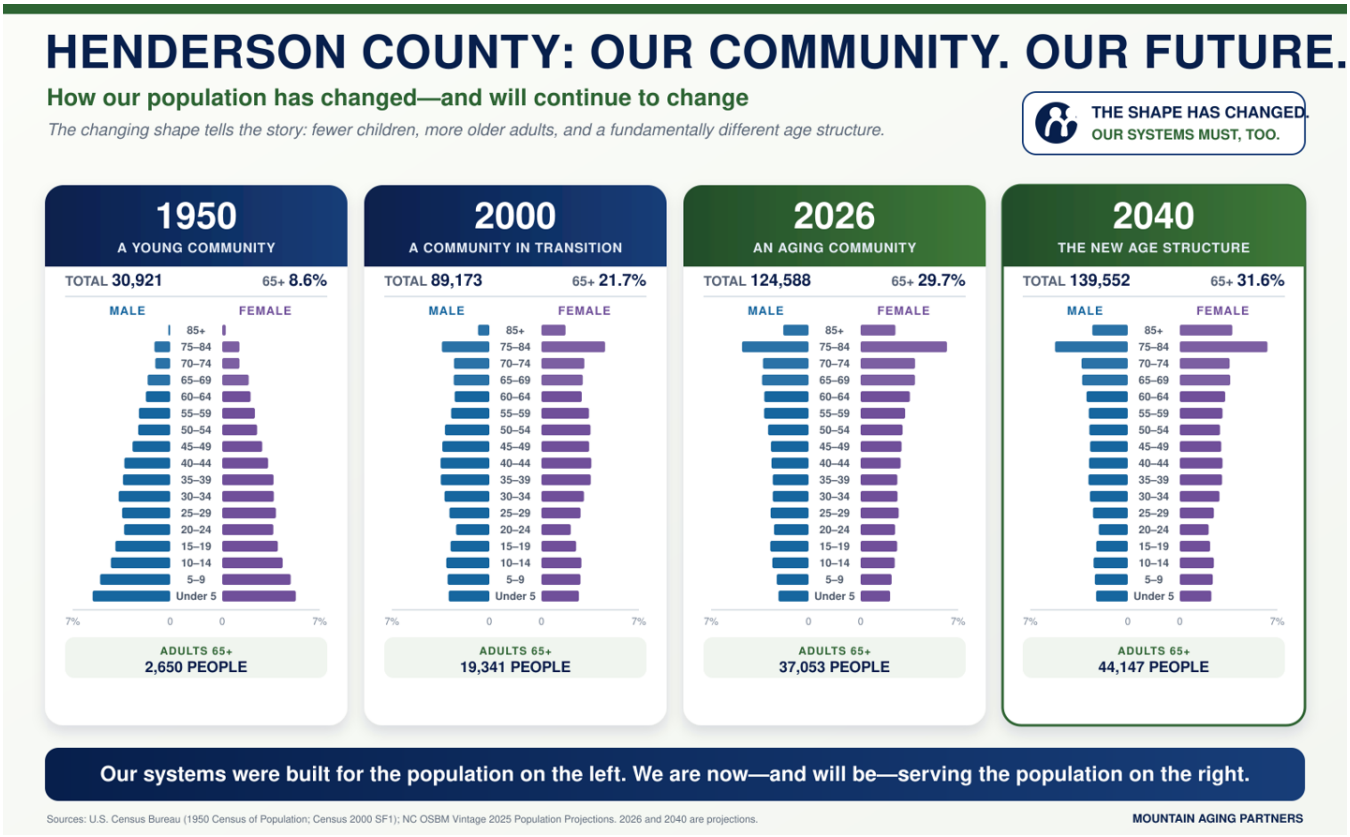
- Reflects community input and shared priorities.
- Enables communication of a clear vision and priorities.
- Guides public and private policy, planning, and investment.
- Aligns infrastructure and community resources.
- Improves coordination across organizations and sectors.
- Provides a framework for measuring progress over time.

WHY NOW?

Henderson County is experiencing significant demographic change. Henderson County has long been a destination for older adults and has one of the oldest populations in North Carolina. Since the last county aging plan was completed in 2018, the county has continued to grow and age, while family structures, housing availability, transportation needs, workforce capacity, healthcare demands, and community supports have also changed.

Organizations and community partners across Henderson County have continued to do important work to support older adults and caregivers. What has been missing is a current, coordinated countywide planning framework to align that work around shared priorities and a common direction.

The demographic shift is not a future issue—it is already shaping daily life in Henderson County. The purpose of this plan is to help the community respond effectively to current needs while anticipating and preparing for what comes next.



HCAC recognizes that every sector of the community will be affected by the demographic shifts, including healthcare, housing, transportation, workforce, education, economic development, recreation, and civic life. Creating a community where people can age well will require collaboration across generations, organizations, and sectors.

Advancing Alignment with Existing Community Planning

The Henderson County Aging Plan is intended to build on and strengthen—not duplicate—planning already underway across our community and region. HCAC will:

- Support alignment with the Henderson County Community Health Assessment and related community health priorities.
- Build on and advance alignment with the City of Hendersonville's Gen H Comprehensive Plan and Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.
- Advocate for aging priorities to be reflected in the Henderson County Strategic Plan and other local planning efforts.
- Coordinate, when appropriate, with Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging and other regional and statewide aging plans, surveys, and resource-coordination efforts.

HCAC ROLE



The Henderson County Aging Coalition serves as a:

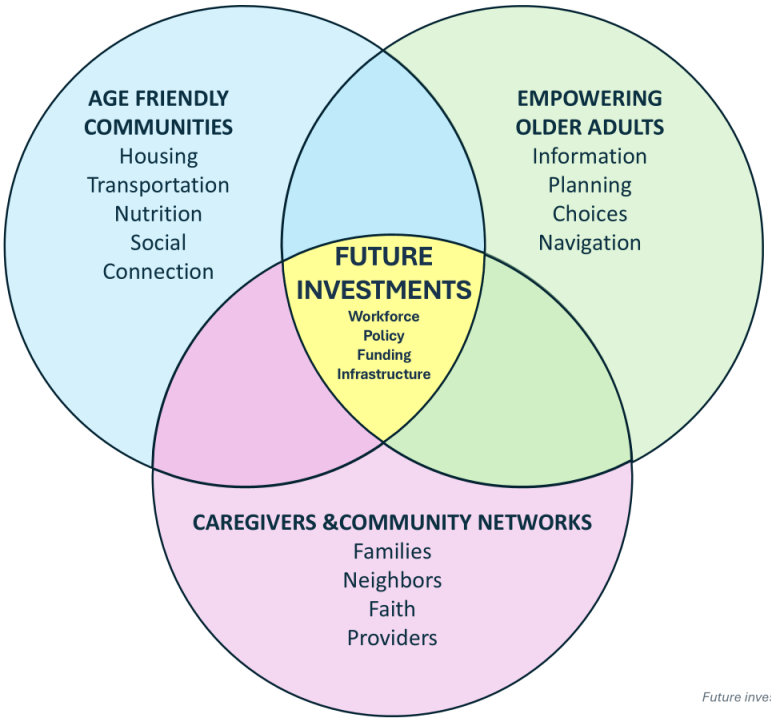
- Planning and advisory partner
- Convener
- Connector
- Educator
- Advocate

HCAC does not directly provide services. It works to strengthen collaboration, identify community needs, elevate aging issues, support coordinated action, track progress and help ensure that aging priorities are reflected in community planning and decision-making.

Mountain Aging Partners serves as the convener and backbone organization for HCAC; the Aging Plan is community-owned and implemented through shared partnership.

PRIORITY FRAMEWORK

The four priority areas remain the organizing framework for the plan. The diagram below shows how the first three areas overlap and how long-term investment in workforce, policy, funding, and infrastructure supports all of them.



Future investments support all three priorities.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Goal

Strengthen community environments that support healthy aging, social connection, mobility, and participation.

Potential Strategies

- Advance alignment with adopted City and County strategic plans
- Campaign and advocate for an Aging Resource Hub or Senior Center in partnership with community stakeholders.
- Assess and report on transportation access and gaps through the annual State of Aging report.
- Assess and report on food security and nutrition resources.
- Track housing and aging-in-place needs in coordination with Partnership for Health and other community partners.
- Consider relevant chronic disease indicators in alignment with the Community Health Assessment.
- Promote fraud prevention education in the community
- Collaborate with local law enforcement around fraud prevention and education.
- Strengthen collaboration with Parks and Recreation and other community engagement programs.

Areas of Focus

- Transportation
- Nutrition and food security
- Housing
- Social connection
- Fraud prevention
- Volunteerism and civic engagement
- Home modifications
- Aging in place
- Community infrastructure

Desired Outcomes

- *Improved awareness of community needs*
- *Increased community engagement*
- *Greater ability to age in place*
- *Increased awareness of housing options*
- *Stronger community planning for an aging population*

PRIORITY AREA 2

EMPOWERING OLDER ADULTS

Goal

Empower older adults to make informed choices, plan ahead, and access the information, services, and resources they need throughout the aging journey.

Potential Strategies

- Promote the concept of a personal aging plan and encourage planning before a crisis occurs.
- Identify opportunities for centralized, easy-to-understand information and navigation.
- Increase education about resources available in the community.
- Improve coordination among service providers and align with regional and statewide resource-coordination efforts.

Areas of Focus

- Personal aging planning
- Understandable information
- Resource navigation
- Referral pathways
- Community awareness of services

Desired Outcomes

- *Increased awareness of available resources*
- *Earlier planning and informed decision-making*
- *Improved service coordination*
- *Easier navigation for older adults*

PRIORITY AREA 3

CAREGIVERS & COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORKS

Goal

Strengthen the ability of families, caregivers, friends, neighbors, faith communities, businesses, and service providers to support older adults before a crisis occurs.

Potential Strategies

- Support caregiver education opportunities.
- Increase education about the important role of friends, neighbors, faith communities, businesses, and informal support networks.
- Encourage creating a personal aging plan.
- Increase Hendersonville based resources via Land of Sky AAA newsletter.
- Increase awareness of caregiver and respite resources.
- Report on available caregiver statistics through the annual State of Aging report.
- Track caregiver support needs and gaps.
- Encourage advance planning and preparedness for future care needs.

Areas of Focus

- Caregiver education
- Respite awareness
- Community support networks
- Caregiver resource awareness
- Planning for future care needs

Desired Outcomes

- Better support for caregivers
- Increased awareness of available resources
- Stronger informal and community support networks
- Earlier planning before crisis

PRIORITY AREA 4

WORKFORCE, INVESTMENT & LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Goal

Strengthen awareness of workforce, funding, and infrastructure challenges affecting an aging population and advance the partnerships and long-term investments needed to address them.

Potential Strategies

- Include relevant workforce and capacity indicators in the annual State of Aging report.
- Educate community leaders and policymakers about workforce, funding, and infrastructure needs related to an aging population.
- Strengthen connections with the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board and other regional workforce initiatives.
- Engage Blue Ridge Community College, Henderson County Public Schools, and other education partners around workforce needs and opportunities.
- Support and elevate innovative approaches to direct-care workforce recruitment, retention, training, and career pathways.
- Explore training and education opportunities for caregivers, community members, and in-home service providers.
- Advocate for sustainable public and private investment in aging services and age-friendly community infrastructure
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Areas of Focus

- Direct-care workforce
- Training and education
- Public policy
- Sustainable funding and investment
- Community infrastructure
- Innovation

Desired Outcomes

- Greater awareness and understanding of workforce and capacity needs.
- Stronger connections among aging, workforce, education, healthcare, and community partners.
- Increased attention to long-term funding and infrastructure needs.
- Greater coordination of public and private investment in an aging community.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Older adults and caregivers have greater awareness of available resources.
- More residents are encouraged to plan before a crisis occurs.
- Service providers and community partners coordinate more effectively.
- Community leaders use aging data to inform planning and investment decisions.
- Caregiver, workforce, housing, transportation, and other emerging needs are monitored over time.
- Progress is reviewed annually through the State of Aging in Henderson County Report.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE

Annual State of Aging in Henderson County Report

Purpose: To provide community leaders, elected officials, service providers, funders, and residents with a shared understanding of aging trends, community needs, service gaps, and progress toward local aging priorities.

The State of Aging Report may include:

- Demographic trends
- Transportation access and gaps
- Housing and aging-in-place needs
- Caregiving and community support networks
- Nutrition and food security
- Workforce challenges
- Progress on aging priorities
- Other emerging issues identified by HCAC

HCAC DELIVERABLES | 2026–2029

Deliverable 1 — Adopt and Present the Henderson County Aging Plan

Target: Fall 2026

Present HCAC priorities, goals, and recommendations to:

- Henderson County Board of Commissioners
- Hendersonville City Council
- Henderson County Board of Health and Public Health leadership
- Relevant city, county, and regional boards
- Partnership for Health and other community partners

Deliverable 2 — Produce and Present an Annual State of Aging Report

Beginning Fall 2026

- Demographic trends
- Transportation
- Housing
- Caregiving
- Nutrition and food security
- Workforce challenges
- Progress on aging priorities

Deliverable 3 — Advance Community Support and Planning for a Senior Center & Aging Resource Hub

2026–2029

Support community conversations, partnerships, education, advocacy, and planning related to the potential development of a Senior Center and Aging Resource Hub in Henderson County. This may include engaging local partners, identifying possible models, clarifying community needs, supporting public awareness, and helping build momentum for a shared community solution.

Deliverable 4 — Quarterly Community Education & Engagement Forums

2027

Host quarterly HCAC community meetings focused on aging-related topics, community input, education, and awareness. Topics may align with the four priority areas.

- Understanding the aging population
- Caregiving
- Housing and aging in place
- Transportation
- Long-term care and personal aging planning
- Fraud prevention
- Community resources

IMPLEMENTATION

HCAC will advance the plan through Steering Committee oversight, time-limited workgroups, community and technical partners, quarterly education and engagement forums, and annual review through the State of Aging in Henderson County Report.

Initial workgroups will be established only when there is a clear assignment, an identified lead, and a specific product or recommendation to complete.

GLOSSARY

Age-friendly — Community conditions that help people remain safe, connected, engaged, and independent as they age.

Aging in place — The ability to live safely and independently in the home and community of one’s choice.

Caregiver — A family member, friend, neighbor, or other person who provides unpaid or paid support to someone with ongoing needs.

Resource navigation — Helping individuals understand available services, compare options, and connect with appropriate supports.

Community Health Assessment — A collaborative process that identifies local health needs, priorities, and opportunities for action.