

**Announcing the *Journal of the American Planning Association* 2008 best article:**

**Aging Baby Boomers and the Generational Housing Bubble: Foresight and Mitigation of an Epic Transition**

Citation: Dowell Myers and Ryu, SungHo (2008). *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 74(1), 17-33.

This article reports a study of the future consequences on housing demand and communities when the giant baby boom generation of 77 million people ages into its retirement years. The authors demonstrate how much the ratio of seniors to working age residents will shift in every state between 2010 and 2030, and they project how soon the number of home sellers could begin to outweigh the potential buyers in each state. Drawing on this long-range foresight, the article suggests strategies that local planners can follow to mitigate the impacts of this great transition. Those strategies include close monitoring of new construction, designing programs to retain elderly residents in their homes as long as possible, and recruiting young adults to help fill vacancies. Increasing human capital investment in neglected youth from disadvantaged groups can also help build the ranks of the middle class who will become potential home buyers.

The research underlying the projections integrates techniques of population projections with housing analysis. Census data are used in an innovative way to estimate age-specific rates of buying or selling homes that are unique to each state. The calibration period of 1995-2000 is assumed to represent a “normal” and sustainable pattern of demand, unlike the boom and bust years post 2000. Results show the age at which people begin to sell homes much more often than they buy, and the baby boomers are beginning to cross that age now. When combined with Census Bureau population projections of age groups, the authors provide a quantified basis for describing future changes likely to befall communities across America. With this valuable information, communities are better able to plan ahead and mitigate the negative consequences. This article deserves the 2008 *JAPA* best paper award because it successfully links outstanding analysis to meaningful policy implications for planners.

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