

One Bridge at a Time: Bridging the Digital Divide for the Well-Being of Aging Populations in Smart and Connected Communities

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Research Coordination Network (RCN) - FY 2017

The **objective** of this Smart and Connected Communities (S&CC) Research Coordination Network (RCN) project is to develop a collaborative, multidisciplinary research platform to study the relationship between S&CC and the built environment (e.g., varying urban densities), centered on creating S&CC that incorporate the aging population

Problem Statement

The physical, cognitive, and/or perceptual challenges prevent older adults from taking advantage of SCC technologies. There is a need for older adults to have venues to communicate their issues with researchers and practitioners from a wide range of backgrounds – engineers, health professionals, social scientists, community activists, homemakers, to name a few.

Activities: Three workshops

- “Challenges and Solutions for Involving the Aging Population in Smart and Connected Communities” at Stony Brook University, 4/19-20/2018
- “Bridging the Digital Divide for the Well-Being of Aging Populations in Smart and Connected Communities” (virtual), 10/29/2021
- “Bridging Resilience Divides: Technology, Transportation, and Communications” at Florida A&M and State University, 4/14-16/ 2022

Immediate Broader Impacts

- Direct interactions with older adults during RCN events regarding ongoing research and practice initiatives, and technology products
- Wider dissemination of RCN presentations, findings, and research needs statements for the aging population and research communities through RCN channels

Long-Term Broader Impacts

- Developed training and educational programs, and sustained research collaborations fostered by RCN activities, e.g., “Grow Your Ridership by Welcoming Older Adults” course by Karen Alexander (Rutgers University), funded by Federal Transit Administration, with support from Virginia Dize (National Transit Institute)

Intellectual Merit

Connecting national and international researchers and community organizations who otherwise carry out studies in their respective fields with limited interaction and tackling S&CC challenges within a network which is true to the interdisciplinary nature of S&CC in the areas of transportation, public safety/emergency services, and housing.

Activities: Special Conference Sessions and Journal Issues

- Intelligent Transportation Systems and Disadvantaged Populations: Technology Adoption Challenges and Bridging the Digital Divide - 21st IEEE International Conference on Intelligent Transportation Systems Conference (ITSC2018)
- Bridging the Digital Divide for the Well-Being of Aging Populations in Smart and Connected Communities - Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives Journal (open access)

Next Steps for 2022-2023

- Preparing concluding remarks of RCN activities based on FL workshop roundtable discussions
- Keeping the journal special issue active to receive and publish more papers
- Finalizing the RCN initiated survey on older adults’ short and long term technology adoption following COVID19 period