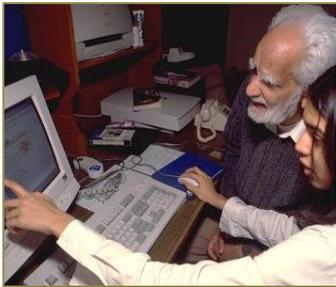


The Maine Guide

Building Livable, Age-Friendly Communities



The Maine Guide

Building Livable, Age-Friendly Communities

with the

AARP Maine Age-Friendly Team

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In a **Livable Community,**

people of all ages can

GO FOR A WALK

GET AROUND WITHOUT A CAR

ENJOY PUBLIC PLACES

WORK OR VOLUNTEER

FIND THE SERVICES THEY

NEED

SHOP, SOCIALIZE, AND BE ENTERTAINED

LIVE SAFELY AND COMFORTABLY

**...and make their town city or neighborhood
a lifelong home**

Maine Communities for all Ages: A message from Lori Parham

Since the organization's founding more than 50 years ago by Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, AARP has responded to the desire of older Americans to age with dignity and purpose in the communities they call home.

Andrus also sought to change Americans' perception of aging. As she once explained, "*Old age is not a defeat, but a victory, not a punishment, but a privilege.*"

From its beginnings AARP has focused on livable communities for all ages. Andrus's passion for older Americans was equally matched by her passion for America's youth. She saw the importance of connecting the generations in service, work, and play.

Maine's population is the oldest in the country and this trend will continue over the next decade.

AARP Maine views this demographic change as an opportunity. It is an opportunity to engage cities and towns, non-profits and businesses in building the type of supportive infrastructure that draws people to Maine. We have an opportunity to build a long-term care system that serves people in the appropriate setting and tests health care models that reduce costs and provide higher quality care. Maine's 50+ residents can continue to be role models for younger workers and those looking to give back to the causes they care about. Our communities can be supportive venues for all people to age in place if they so desire.

The *Maine Guide: Building Age-Friendly, Livable Communities* follows the World Health Organization (WHO)/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities (NAFC) model by providing a road map to community leaders and local citizens who want to make their community more age-friendly. It is the only comprehensive guide in the United States that places a particular emphasis on smaller and more rural communities.

You will find specific tools and useful examples of what has been working in Maine cities and towns as well as far-away places. *The Maine Guide* will help you build an action plan to move from discussions to implementation.

As of this writing, 18 localities have committed to the NAFC model and dozens of others are developing their own approach. *The Maine Guide* is meant to support all of these efforts.

I hope you will find this guide a useful tool for supporting efforts in your own community. On behalf of all of us at AARP Maine, thank you for working to make a difference in the lives of older Mainers and their families.

Lori K. Parham
State Director
AARP Maine

Acknowledgements

The Maine Guide was developed by AARP Maine's age-friendly team shaped by input from Maine communities working on age-friendly initiatives. AARP Maine received insight about age-friendly implementation, practical know-how, and direction from the AARP National Livability Team. Funding for writing and production was provided through the generous support of the John T. Gorman Foundation and AARP.

There is nothing new or original in this guide. AARP Maine's age-friendly team simply compiled the tools and methods that are working in Maine communities. Our goal is to make the age-friendly journey easier for citizen activists engaged in age-friendly and livability efforts throughout Maine. The principle writer is Patricia Oh, AARP Maine Age-Friendly Consultant. Contributors to and editors of this guide include Peter Morelli, who also assisted with photos and layout, Lori Parham, Jane Margesson, and Erica Magnus.

We would like to thank the members of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities (AARP-NAFC) in Maine and other age-friendly communities who field-tested parts of this Guide. The invaluable feedback that we received helped us to create a guide that, we hope, is useful to citizen activists who are engaged in this work.

Communities include:

Augusta*
Bangor*
Belfast/Waldo County
Berwick*
Bethel*
Blue Hill peninsula
Boothbay region
Bowdoinham*
Bucksport*
Cumberland*
Eastport*
Ellsworth*
Greenwood*
Kennebunk*
Newry*
Paris*
Portland*
Readfield*
Saco*
Wayne
Woodstock*

* denotes member NAFC as of August 2016.

About the Maine Guide to Building Livable, Age-Friendly Communities

The Maine Guide is intended to help you:

- Gather a team.
- Increase community involvement with your work.
- Offer guidelines and tools for assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Every community is different. Community-level work to address the eight domains of livability reflects those differences. Each age-friendly team has its own quirks. Whether your community is large or small or if your work is led by municipal government, a group of health and social service providers, or by a team of residents, *The Maine Guide* will help you to develop an action plan that will establish goals, identify the activities that you can use to reach each goal, and establish a plan to evaluate initiatives and respond to changes over time.

*If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending,
we could better judge what to do, and how to do it.*

Abraham Lincoln

This guide is not a rule book that lays out exactly what you should do, how you should do it, and when you should do it. It offers guidance and tools based on our experiences working with Maine communities. You may use it as a step-by-step guide or reference specific sections and/or resources when you need them. Use the Guide in a way that supports the community work you are doing. Even within sections or sample documents, it is important that you adapt the information we give to your own community.

If you need any help or guidance along the way, don't hesitate to contact AARP Maine. We are here to support all the work you are doing to make your community a better place for people of all ages to live.

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Introduction

The Maine Guide

Building Livable, Age-Friendly Communities



AARP Livable Communities and the Network of Age-Friendly Communities

The goal of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities is to support the work of citizen activists, local community-based organizations and non-profits, service providers, and municipal governments to increase livability. Livable communities are towns and cities that include the needs and preferences of their older residents when they are planning community development. Livable communities are great places for people at all stages of life to live, work and play.

Livable Communities

AARP Livable Communities supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns and cities to become great places for people of all ages. We believe that communities should provide safe, walkable streets; age-friendly housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in community life.

AARP research consistently shows that older adults want to age in the homes where they currently live or, if that is not possible, to remain in their community. However, many places in Maine do not have the policies, infrastructure or services older residents need to stay safely and comfortably in the city and town where they want to live.

Changes in livability do not have to be expensive or change community values. For example, some towns have implemented zoning and building code changes to allow families to add an “in-law” apartment. A few have addressed accessibility by making simple changes in the built and natural environment—such as adding designated parking, making a library book return box more accessible, or creating wider walking paths in the local park. Others have made more expensive infrastructure changes, such as creating a dedicated bike lane when improving local streets. Maine communities that have joined the Network of Age-Friendly Communities have increased access to services by partnering with regional service providers to increase local awareness or by engaging volunteers to provide

Stay informed - *for free!* – by subscribing to the award-winning **AARP Livable Communities e-Newsletter**, which contains a mix of best practices, research, ideas, community resources, slideshows, interviews, how-to’s and information about livable community efforts from places near and far. Subscribe now by emailing livable@aarp.org. Please type “Subscribe Me” into the subject line.

services to meet a gap identified in the age-friendly assessment. You will read more about the types of initiatives Maine towns and cities have launched as part of the descriptions of each of the eight domains of livability described in the next section.

Eight Domains of Livability

Research conducted with people 50+ living in communities around the world concluded that there are eight aspects of community life that are essential for the health and well-being of older residents:

1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings.** Availability of safe and accessible recreational facilities, shopping opportunities, municipal services, community-based organizations, and other essential services.
2. **Transportation.** Availability of safe and affordable transportation to needed services and desired activities.
3. **Housing.** Access to a range of housing options, home-modification programs, and affordable home maintenance services.
4. **Social Participation.** Opportunities for social and civic engagement with peers and younger people.
5. **Respect and Social Inclusion.** Access to an environment that encourages civic involvement by residents of all ages and abilities.
6. **Civic Participation and Employment.** Opportunities for paid work and volunteer opportunities for older people and the chance for residents of all ages to engage in the creation of policies relevant to their lives.
7. **Communication and Information.** Access to information about community activities and needed services.
8. **Community Support and Health Services.** Access to homecare services, medical care and programs that promote wellness.

Consider your own life in the community where you live. Are the eight domains of livability important to you? Do you prefer to live in a place where civic engagement is encouraged? Where public spaces are safe and attractive? Where recreational opportunities abound? Research by AARP shows that places that provide what older adults need to age happily in their communities are places that provide what people of all ages are looking for when they first move to a community. That is why AARP

developed resources to help community activists and municipal governments address each of the domains of livability.

Residents in a livable community may still struggle with chronic illness, functional limitations, economic insecurity, and the loss of family and close friends.

This can be a part of the aging process in any community. Livable communities, however, support and encourage full participation in the social, civic, and economic life of the community by people of all ages and abilities.

In a livable community, policies, services, settings, and structures encourage people to remain as active as they want to be at any age, to live life to their own satisfaction regardless of individual challenges. This is achieved by:

- Recognizing the wide range of capacities and resources among residents.
- Anticipating and responding flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences.
- Respecting the decisions and lifestyle choices of people of all ages.
- Protecting and supporting older adults who are the most vulnerable.
- Promoting the inclusion and contributions of older adults in all aspects of community life.

Furthermore, because aging is a life-long process, a livable community is not just a great place to grow old. It is a great place to live, work and play at any age. Livable communities improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for Mainers of all ages.¹

Some communities are interested in tackling one or two of the eight domains and not looking at all eight. AARP Maine celebrates all community efforts to increase the livability of Maine's towns and cities.

Other communities make a commitment to identify the strengths of their community in all eight domains and to learn more about possibilities for improvement. They commit to creating an action plan to increase the livability of the community and promise to implement the plan and evaluate progress. They recognize that older residents have a

Learn more about the [AARP Livable Communities](#) initiative and find out how Livable your community is by going to the [Livability Index](#)

¹ Adapted from: AARP (2014). AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities Tool Kit. Step 1: Getting Started. Establish an Advisory Committee that includes older adults. <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/getting-started.html>

lifetime of experience to contribute to the community and include older people in all phases of age-friendly development.

For towns and cities that commit to using the framework of the eight domains as they think about planning for the changing age-structure in their towns, AARP has created a special way to recognize them through their membership in the Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities

Members of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities join a network of towns, cities and counties that have committed to providing residents of all ages and abilities with the opportunity to live rewarding, productive and safe lives by using the framework of the eight domains of livability as a tool for planning and development.

Benefits of membership include:

- Public recognition by AARP of the commitment your city, town, or county has made to become a better place to live for all ages, but especially for older residents.
- Support and guidance from AARP Maine.
 - Monthly newsletter with hints and tips for your age-friendly community initiative.
 - Opportunity to learn from other communities and to be featured on the [Age-Friendly Facebook page](#).
 - Participation in the annual Maine Age-Friendly Community meeting.
 - Tools to guide you through assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Technical advice to help you find grants to support livable and age friendly community planning efforts and implementation of ideas to make your community a better place for older residents.
- Resources to develop policies, supports, and services to make your community more livable.
- Access to peer communities and best practices.
- Age-friendly and livable communities toolkits at AARP.org/agefriendly and AARP.org/livable. The AARP tool kits includes resources for every phase of the Age-Friendly cycle of continuous improvement and for implementing changes in the eight domains of livability.

Snapshot of the Eight Domains



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Outdoor spaces, such as parks, and buildings affect the independence and quality of life of residents of all ages, but especially older adults. Some Maine communities have made parks more accessible by increasing the width of paths and adding benches. Others have increased the number of designated parking spaces near key services and added accessible features government buildings.



Transportation

Affordable and accessible public and volunteer transportation programs, is key to aging in place safely and independently. Some communities have created transportation resource guides that include information about public and private options. Others have created volunteer programs that provide rides to where people need to go and may offer help with, for example, shopping or getting in and out of a building.



Housing

Safe and affordable housing promotes well-being and is key to older residents being able to age comfortably and safely in the house and community of their choice. Communities can make regulatory changes to encourage additional housing options or can create new housing. Some initiatives have started their own “Handy brigade”, others have partnered with existing services to increase awareness of home modification and home maintenance services.



Social Participation

Socializing with friends and neighbors who don't live in the same home with you--is connected to physical and cognitive health. Some communities have started a “senior” center or added to the opportunities available. Others have partnered with local organizations such as life-long learning programs, an art center or library to increase programming for adults.



Respect and Social Inclusion

The lack of contact between generations and lack of knowledge about aging are two reasons why stereotypes that exclude older people from full participation in the community continue. Aging adults who feel welcomed and respected for their contribution are more likely to remain actively engaged in economic, social and civic life than those who do not feel included.



Civic Participation and Employment

Older people do not stop contributing to their communities when they turn 65 or 85 or 105. An age-friendly community provides opportunities for residents who want to or need to work past traditional retirement age and encourage people of all ages to volunteer and participate in the political process.



Communication and Information

Staying connected with activities, resources, and people is key to optimal aging. Some communities have created information portals on their town website to increase access to information about local activities and resources making them easy to find. Other communities have created resource manuals.



Community Support and Health Services

Access to health care and services to support aging in place is key for the health and well-being of older residents. Some communities have emphasized food security in this area. Others have looked at elder abuse prevention or added disaster preparedness.

Getting Started

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Building Livable, Age-Friendly Communities



Building Your Age-Friendly Core Team

Most age-friendly community efforts start with a core group of people who have a passion for making their community a better place for residents at all stages of life, but especially for older residents. Although an informal, citizen-initiated group can get the age-friendly ball rolling, additional help may be needed to:



- Raise awareness in the community and among municipal officials.
- Plan the direction the initiative will take.
- Recruit volunteers to help implement an action plan.

Creating a town-appointed committee can help the core team forge partnerships with other organizations and attract new volunteers who are committed to the work. One key difference between a citizen-initiated and town-appointed committee is the role each has in local government.

Town-Appointed and Citizen-Initiated Age-Friendly Committees

A committee may be appointed by the town select board or city council to plan an age-friendly initiative, to work on a livable community project, or to advise town officials about aging in the community. Committees appointed by the town may be ad-hoc or standing committees. An ad-hoc or planning committee is usually designated for a specific time and/or to implement a town-sponsored age-friendly initiative that will encompass the eight domains of livability. A standing age-friendly committee is usually an advisory committee whose purpose is to advise the town about aging-related issues. Both ad-hoc and standing committees are common in towns and cities that have joined the Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

Although a citizen-initiated committee does not have formal ties with local government, members will benefit from attempting to foster a good relationship with elected officials and municipal staff.

Town-appointed and citizen-initiated committees actively work to make their town a better place to grow older. Both learn about barriers that older residents face to living in the community and build on the strengths and resources the community has to address those needs. Both implement projects and create programs that increase opportunities for older residents to be as actively involved in the social, civic, and economic life of the community as they want to be.

Every town is different. Don't get bogged down with the details of what your committee is called or if it has formal ties to your town government. Your town or city may have local practices related to committees or you may be breaking new ground. The important thing is to create a core committee with positive ties to elected officials and to staff.

Activist Committees

Building a core team to develop an agenda framed by the eight domains of livability requires more than gathering a group of willing people who share a commitment to making your community a better place for older residents (but that is a good place to start!). An effective team includes people who: (1) motivate each other; (2) bring different skills, experiences, contacts, and interests to the work; and, (3) are willing to put in the time that is required of an activist committee. An age-friendly committee advocates for changes in many different ways. Examples include:

- Raising community awareness that older adults are key contributors to the economic and civic vitality of the town.
- Publicizing the benefits of age-friendly, livable communities for people of all ages.
- Forging partnerships with local services and organizations whose mission is to provide services to residents in your community.
- Developing policies, infrastructure and services that residents of your town or city say they need to age in place.

Finding people who have the time to commit to an activist committee can be challenging. Activists committees require more than monthly attendance at a one-hour meeting. Members work on projects between meetings and report back for guidance from the full committee.

The Work of an Age-Friendly Committee

The committee will keep the aging-friendly effort organized and on track. Each community is different and the committee will reflect some of those differences. The role of the committee depends on existing services and programs and on how the age-friendly program fits into the structure of municipal government. A few important roles of an age-friendly committee are to:

1. Guide your community through the planning process (see sections on conducting an age-friendly assessment, developing a plan that reflects the

needs and preferences of older residents, implementing your plan, and evaluating success).

2. Advocate for changes in the community. An age-friendly committee raises awareness of the need for changes in municipal policy and the built environment that will make it easier for residents to age in place. Committees also increase awareness of age-related issues among businesses, religious groups, service organizations, and community-based non-profits.
3. Identify and engage partner organizations that will offer the programs and services that older residents need and want to age in your community. For example, you may find that a segment of the older residents in your community struggle financially to buy nutritious food. In this example, the age-friendly committee may try to partner with a nearby food pantry to extend its outreach to residents in your town or you may work with a local food pantry to make it easier for older residents to use their services.
4. Create an environment that fosters volunteerism to build on the strengths your community has already developed. For example, you may find that there is an informal group of people who provide transportation when they know someone needs a ride. If there are no agencies that offer transportation to residents in your community, the age-friendly team may be able to encourage the informal group to formalize and increase the number of volunteers to meet the transportation needs of a larger number of older adults in the community.
5. Organize events, develop activities, and create programs to further your mission and to address needs identified in the age-friendly assessment.

Recruiting Volunteers for an Age-Friendly Committee

As you start gathering a team, think about the different groups and organizations in your community. Develop a list of the ones that are not represented by people in the core group, but who could be important to meet the team's goals.

Discuss the list you have compiled to find out if any of them have ties to groups or organizations that are not represented. Spend some time brainstorming who to recruit to fill the gaps and how to approach that person or organization.

Do you want everyone with ties to any group or organization in town to join the core committee? No! The core group will need to establish guidelines for involvement.

For example, you may want to limit the core group to residents of your community and/or may want to limit the size of the committee to make it easier for the group to make decisions. It is also important to find a way to work with people and organizations that are interested and supportive of your work, but who may not have the time to commit to working with the core committee. Even if each group or organization that you identify is supportive of your work in the community, they won't all be able to commit to the time it takes to work with an activist committee.

Recruit people who fill the gaps. Here are a few tips for recruiting people to your team. The tool on **page 2A** in the Appendix will help you think about the contribution that each person will make to the work.

- Older residents, individuals with a good understanding of community values, experience working with community-based organizations, and/or knowledge of aging issues.
- A municipal official with an interest in age-friendly community development. A member of the Select Board or Town Council can be an important connector between the team and the municipality.
- People who represent the racial, religious, or ethnic diversity in your community. Community engagement is stronger when more diversity is represented on your committee.
- Residents with ties to the different groups in your community. In some places, it could be artists and farmers, in another residents who can trace their lineage for hundreds of years in the community and people who have moved to the community after retiring.
- Other community organizations, such as the Town Recreation Department and Planning Board, Comprehensive Plan Committee, public health, service clubs, food pantry, voluntary associations, places of worship and meditation, arts organizations, Chamber of Commerce, Historical Society, Library, Social Services Agencies, schools, senior center, etc. These people will be valuable partners because they will connect the livability and age-friendly effort to the work already being done by other organizations.
- Businesses with ties to the local community. Present the benefits of an age-friendly community to your Chamber of Commerce or National Main Street organization to try to engage local businesses.

Engage Strong Leadership and Forge Connections with Your Municipal Government

Team Leadership

Strong leadership is needed to keep an age-friendly team on track. Communities that organize their work around the eight domains of livability (see **page 13**) often target more than one domain at the same time. Multiple leaders may be needed to keep the work in each area moving ahead.

Whether a leader is referred to as facilitator, director, or chair, the individual chosen will help the team focus on the overall goal of making the community more livable and may lead the core committee's effort to develop and execute an action plan. He/she may be a volunteer, community activist, agency staff, consultant, or somebody employed by the local government. What's most important is that the leader take initiative, be adept at working on a team, be highly organized and able to inspire others, and able to gain the respect and trust of a diverse set of stakeholders.

Leaders of domain-specific initiatives need to have the same leadership qualities as the leader of the initiative. They should also have experience and a very strong commitment to the domain-specific work targeted by the core committee.

Engaging Elected Officials and Municipal Staff

Joining the Network of Age-Friendly Communities requires a letter of support by an elected official, usually the mayor or chair of the Select Board. Successful livability and age-friendly efforts often have an elected official, town or city manager, and/or municipal department head who commits to ongoing support of the age-friendly initiative. Core teams benefit when a municipal staff member or elected official participates as a stakeholder in the effort. This should be someone who has direct and frequent access to the select board (if not a member of the select board) and town or city manager in order to facilitate successful planning and implementation.

Key attributes of leader(s)

- Know the city or town and how to effectively make change that builds on the culture and values of the committee.
- Aware of the extent of popular support of the age-friendly initiative and livability efforts.
- Understands the perspective of older adults who want to remain in the community as they age and of their care partners.
- Well respected in the community and among representatives of key stakeholder groups.
- Able to keep collaborative efforts on point.

Meeting with your Elected Officials and Key Municipal Staff

The success of your work relies heavily on the ongoing contact you will have with municipal staff and the relationship you will develop with your local elected officials. Thus, it is important to establish an effective working relationship with elected officials, especially when the official is newly elected.

This initial contact is important because future meetings with your elected officials will have more influence on their thoughts and actions if they know you, what you stand for, and how concerned you are about issues at hand.

When you meet with a member of the Select Board, the Mayor, a Town or City Manager, or with municipal staff, give specific information about your age-friendly action plan (or a specific goal to increase livability if that is the purpose of your meeting). Tell him/her how the issues identified by your assessment affect residents of all ages. If appropriate, tell the official how past policy changes or governmental action has helped your community to be a better place to live for all ages. Try to provide anecdotes about how the changes have helped specific residents. Municipal leaders will appreciate hearing how effective the local government is in your community. Look for areas where the municipal leader and the age-friendly core group can work together.

In briefing a governmental official or presenting recommendations to your Select Board, these suggestions may help you to more effectively engage them in your work:

1. Plan your visit carefully and keep it brief. Allow as much time as possible to answer any questions.
2. Do your homework first. Be well-versed in any costs associated with your recommendation, how effective similar changes have been in other communities, and why there is a need for the proposed changes. The more prepared you are, the easier it will be to answer specific questions that may be asked.

TWELVE QUICK TIPS FOR APPROACHING YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

- Be concise.
- Oral presentations should be limited to 5-10 minutes.
- Be prepared—know your subject and know the government official's background.
- Be polite.
- Be specific.
- Don't use technical jargon.
- Don't be intimidated.
- Don't threaten or become defensive.
- Leave behind a one-page summary.
- Follow up with a letter or email.
- Work with municipal staff.

3. Supply individual fact sheets on issues (many are available on the AARP Livable Communities website) that are urgent and/or complex. Try to boil each issue down to a single page.
4. Demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the community residents.
5. Ask for specific support.

Whether you meet with a local government official individually or in a group meeting, send a letter of thanks after the meeting. It will be appreciated.

Committees Appointed by the Select Board or Mayor

Many municipal governments choose to appoint an age-friendly ad-hoc or advisory committee to provide a link between the citizen initiative and elected officials, town and/or city staff. If that is the case in your community, there will be times when the committee reports to the board. Generally, there are two kinds of reports you may make. You may provide an update of the successes that have been accomplished so far and you may provide recommendations about policy and infrastructure changes that will make the community more age-friendly. In either case, several members of the audience should be primed to make pertinent comments or ask questions during the public comment segment of the meeting. Audience engagement shows the Select Board that the work of the age-friendly committee is important to residents.

Other Ideas to Help Build a Relationship with the Elected Official

1. Arrange for the elected official to visit occasional special events that you hold as a part of your Livable Communities initiative, **but not during the electoral campaign.**
2. Invite an elected official to be a featured speaker at a special event.
3. Keep up to date on the elected official's public schedule. Elected officials often hold town halls, walk in parades, make appearances at fairs, etc. . These provide excellent opportunities to reinforce the importance of livability and age-friendly efforts.
4. Have a 60 second "elevator speech" ready in case you run into an elected official or municipal staff member unexpectedly and have the opportunity to talk about your livability and age-friendly work in the community. The "elevator speech" should reinforce who you are and highlight the last issue you discussed.

Increasing Support and Involvement with Your Age-Friendly Team²

A successful age-friendly community initiative is based on broad collaboration between stakeholders. The development of partnerships between local and regional organizations doing work that overlaps with the work of the core team is key to building an effective collaboration. The support and participation of community members, local groups, municipal government, and non-profits working in your community is essential to building an age-friendly community. However it can be challenging to generate interest by residents, officials, and service providers in your community and to foster the partnerships that are key to making effective and meaningful changes. Here are a few tips to help you increase support and involvement with the efforts of the age-friendly team

Identify the issues that motivate stakeholders

One way to strengthen support for your initiative is to show how your work will address a “hot button” topic. For one community the “hot” issue may be pedestrian safety while another may see food security as a most pressing need. While your age-friendly work will—ultimately—address all eight domains of livability, looking at a topic that is an area of immediate concern in your community allows you to tap into existing efforts, make connections with other residents and organizations, raise awareness of your age-friendly effort, and work with others to make important change in your community. The networking you do while working in the area that is seen as pressing in your community will help you to meet your goals in each of the eight domains as you move forward with your age-friendly work.

Organize a Diverse Set of Stakeholders

The first step is to reach out to a wide range of people, groups, and organizations, including elected officials, government staff, non-profit organizations, citizen activists and other groups and individuals representing different interests (such as health, biking, sustainability, transportation, planning, parks and recreation, and so forth). Try to think beyond the obvious participants and include any organization or group interested in making a community more livable for citizens of all ages.

You may be surprised by who emerges as a “champion” for your initiative or for one or more aspects of your livable and age-friendly work.

² AARP *Roadmap to Livability* (Local Change Agenda).

One way to start reaching out to different groups and organizations is to identify a key “connector” in your community. That person could be a local government official, or a leader in a nonprofit organization, or a citizen activist. Starting with this “connector” can help you reach other key players, and gain insight on the relationships between and across various groups.

Here are examples of the types of leaders, organizations and residents to engage³.

- Older residents with a good understanding of community values, experience working with community-based organizations, and/or knowledge of aging issues.
- People who represent the diversity found in your community.
- People with ties to the different groups in town such as artists, farmers, long-term residents, and people who have moved to the community after retiring.
- Public Sector (elected officials and staff who represent certain departments planning, codes, public works, recreation, public health; Education—especially lifelong learning programs; Public figures).
- Volunteer Sector (faith community, non-profits, fraternal organizations)
- Private Sector (business, media, investors, funders).
- Health and Safety (emergency first responders, local law enforcement, hospitals, recreational facilities).
- National Main Street organizations, chambers of commerce, downtown development groups.
- Social and hobby groups (book clubs, craft circles, special interest groups)
- The area’s tourism bureau, heritage society, or museums.
- Existing groups that are engaged in the issues, such as outdoor group and citizen patrol.
- Local smart growth and environmental groups.
- Neighborhood associations.
- Town-based services, such as the library director and board members, Senior Center, and food pantry.
- Regional providers, such as Community Action Programs and Area Agencies on Aging.

³ AARP (2014). List of Potential Stakeholders. *AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities Tool Kit*. <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/stakeholders.html>

Circles of Involvement

The Circle of Involvement Exercise⁴ is a tool that some committees have used to increase engagement. Start by looking at the diagram in the appendix, **page 3A**.

On the outside edge of the diagram is a box for each of the eight domains. As you are working your way through this exercise think about people, organizations or groups that may be interested in one or more of the eight domains. For example, your local TRIAD and law enforcement may be interested in the respect and social inclusion domain as part of their mission to prevent elder mistreatment. Your library may be interested in communication and information. Ideally, you will engage people and organizations who are, collectively, interested in addressing all eight domains of livability. However, it is unlikely that any one person will be equally interested in all eight. Your age-friendly initiative will be stronger if you are able to involve people, groups and organizations interested in each domain.

The Core Circle is the group of people who actively working on the age-friendly initiative in your community. The members of an Advisory or Steering Committee are part of the Core Circle because they are responsible for implementing and overseeing your age-friendly action plan.

As your initiative begins the implementation phase, you may find that you need people to help in specific areas. The people who participate in specific projects are part of the circle of engagement.



The Circle of Engagement includes people who are committed to making the community more age-friendly and are willing to help with specific tasks in one or more of the eight domains. You may have a group of volunteers who are interested in complete streets while another group is willing to help plan the annual Wellness Fair.

Community volunteers and service organizations that actively support part of the livability work you are doing in one or more of the eight domains are part of the Circle of Engagement.

The Circle of Champions may include elected officials, the town or city manager, municipal department heads, and directors of regional and local programs. The support of the Circle of Champions is critical to the success of your initiative. Support

⁴ Adapted from *Creating a Framework of Support and Involvement* originally created by The Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs.



from the Select Board or City Council (or elected official) is required for membership in the Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Municipal departments which you may want to engage in the work include the town/city planner, codes officer, parks and recreation department, public works department, public health nurse, and other advisory committees whose mission includes one or more of the eight domains of livability.

The support of regional and local service and health providers is also key to age-friendly development. Local hospitals, the Area Agency on Aging, community action organization, and local funders can help you get the word out about your efforts and can help you expand services available to residents of your town. It is important to regularly update your Circle of Champions about the work you are doing and to celebrate their contributions to your work.



The Circle of Information and Awareness includes all of the residents of your community who may be interested in the work you are doing. You can think of this circle as the “publicity and communication” arm of your effort. It is vital that you get the word out about who you are and what you are doing in the community.

As people become aware of your work, you will attract new volunteer and partnerships with other organizations. For example, your local librarian may want to increase the number of patrons who regularly use its services. Seeing articles about the work you are doing may inspire the Chair of the Library Board or the librarian to ask if there are ways for your group to work with the library to improve services for older residents.



The Circle of Possibilities includes people and organizations that you would like to partner with but who are not yet part of the age-friendly effort. The possibilities for working together need to be explored to be identified. For example, the local Masons may be looking for ways to volunteer. Your age-friendly core team may know of a need volunteers from the Masons could meet. However, if no one reaches out to the Masons, the possibility for partnership may not be recognized. When you complete your age-friendly asset inventory you will identify people and groups who fit into the Circle of Possibilities.

Brainstorming with the Circles of Involvement Worksheet (p. 66 in appendix)

After your group has compiled a list of *who is currently involved* with your age-friendly initiative and a list of *who you think should be involved*, take a few minutes to list them in the left hand column of the Circles of Involvement worksheet (see **page 4A** in appendix). Then, identify a contact person (if one is known, if not contact the main desk or administrative staff for a suggestion about who to contact) and think about how each group should, ideally, be involved with your age-friendly team.

Assign each group or organization to one or more of the Circles of Involvement based on the level of involvement that will advance your livability and age-friendly efforts. For example, your Town Government may assign a staff person or Select Board member to attend each meeting of the Advisory Committee and the Mayor may be an important champion. A sub-committee focused on Buildings and Outdoor Spaces may be working with the Recreation Department to increase walkability. You may also think it is important for different departments to be kept abreast of what you are doing. On the worksheet, you would mark the Core Circle, the Circle of Engagement, Circle of Champions and Circle of Information and Awareness. Organizations and groups can be engaged with your age-friendly initiative in more than one way.

You may want to use a color system to mark cases where the current level of involvement does not match the level of involvement that your age-friendly team thinks would be ideal. For example, your team may want to move the Local Health Officer from the Circle of Possibilities to the Circle of Engagement to increase awareness of the importance of adult immunizations.

Identifying Strategies for Overcoming Challenges to Engagement

Finally, after discussing the level of engagement of different groups and organizations and identifying at least one contact person for each, think about the challenges that accompany increasing engagement for each organization or group that is not currently engaged with your initiative (or that you wish would increase engagement). Challenges may include:

- Competing priorities. For example, does a regional hospital or Area Agency on Aging lack the time and resources to send staff to every meeting? Is the part-time Recreation Department director too busy with the children's recreation program to spare time for activities for adults?

- Lack of knowledge about your initiative.
- Perception that working on an “age-friendly” initiative means excluding work with younger people in the community.

After you have identified challenges, brainstorm strategies to overcome the challenges. Some ideas may include:

- Holding a stakeholder kickoff meeting to explain your initiative to the community.
- Meeting individually with different groups and programs to explore ways that you can work effectively together.
- Involving local media.

Conclusion

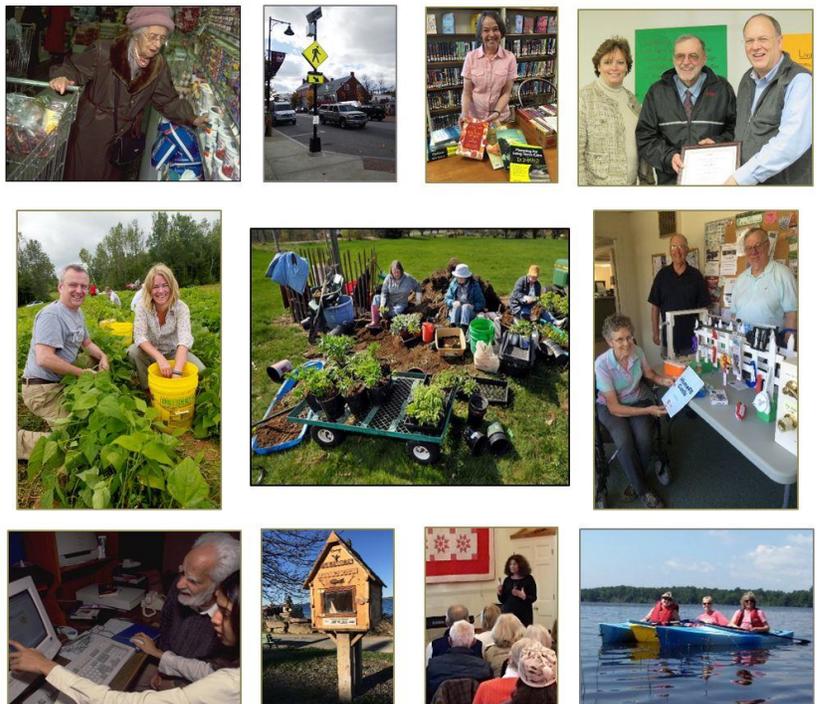
The Circles of Involvement exercise can help you identify new partners to help with your work in one or more of the eight domains of livability or with other aspects of age-friendly planning and development. Working with existing services and organizations saves you from “reinventing the wheel” and provides encouragement for the growth of the services and programs that already exist.

The Circles of Involvement exercise can also yield new volunteers and can help frame your initiative in a way that may attract organizations not yet engaged in your work. The exercise is appropriate whenever your age-friendly team is wondering how to increase engagement.

Age-Friendly Assessment

The Maine Guide

Building Livable, Age-Friendly Communities



The purpose of an age-friendly assessment is to identify the strengths of your community for aging in place and to learn about the gaps between what your community already has and what older people need and want. Assessment is a vital step to avoid creating a program or service that already exists or that people don't want. Assessment also ensures that your age-friendly planning reflects the needs, wants, and preferences of residents.

We know that, by far, the majority of people want to age in their own homes or, if that is not possible, they want to age in the community where they have social ties and established relationships with services and programs to support aging in place. Communities benefit when older people aren't forced to move to resource-rich places for supportive housing options. Older people are key to the economic, civic, and social life of their communities.

An increasing number of municipalities in Maine have recognized that the percentage of people in the community who are age 60+ has increased and that it is important to include an aging lens when they plan the future of their town or city. A first step to planning for an older population, is to conduct a needs assessment to learn what the town is already doing for its older citizens and what it can do to meet the needs of its older residents.

Age-friendly development depends on citizen advocates to do much of the work—from assessment to planning and implementation. The Maine Age-Friendly team recognizes that assessing the eight domains of livability as described by the World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP can be intimidating. We want to provide your initiative with the tools to customize the eight domains to reflect the infrastructure, character, and values of your community.

This document will help you to design an assessment that reflects the character of your community and that is tailored to identify the needs, wants, and preferences of the residents of your town or city. We describe how to conduct an age-friendly asset inventory to identify the groups, programs, services, and infrastructure that are already addressing livability in one or more of the eight domains. We also provide examples of focus group and survey questions. This document is organized by domain to help you think about how each domain is important to the health and well-being of older residents in your town or city.

There is no right or wrong way to conduct an assessment. It would not be a good idea to use all of the material we have included. You will want to choose the assessment methods and questions that are relevant for your community. Use what is useful and ignore what is not. As a guide, we have included a sample survey and focus group guide at the end of the document.

Enjoy learning more about your community!

The AARP Maine Age-Friendly Team

Conducting an Age-Friendly Assessment

The purpose of an age-friendly assessment of your community is to identify the strengths and assets your community has that already make it a great place to live for people of all ages. There is no single “right” or wrong way to conduct an assessment. In this document, we describe the types of questions you may choose to use if you distribute a survey, conduct focus groups, or complete an age-friendly asset inventory. All three methods have strengths and weaknesses. All can be used individually or together, to help you learn more about how people age in your community.

AARP Maine has technical and financial resources available to help you with the assessment process. Assessment can be a challenging process. Our experienced staff is here to help your age-friendly team.

These are the tools we describe in this guide that can be used as part of an assessment. Other tools can also be used. What is most important is that, at the end of the assessment, you have gathered the data you need to start defining goals and creating a strategic plan to move your initiative toward those goals.

Survey: In each section we have included a few sample survey questions that you may choose to use if you design your own survey. Different communities need to ask different types of questions. The age-friendly core team members in your town or city are the experts about which questions are the best to use on your survey. Generally, we designed some questions in each domain that ask people about the availability of services and programs and the barriers they encounter trying to do different things in the community. The purpose of each question you choose for your survey will be to find out about what people need and want to age in place, and to learn about the preferences of older adults within each domain.

A survey can be distributed electronically, by postal mail, or left in public places for people to pick up, fill out, and return as they choose. Some age-friendly communities use a combination of methods. Distribution by postal mail is the most expensive option, but ensures that every person in your community who, for example, is over age 50, has an equal chance to see and fill out the survey. The advantage of distributing your survey electronically is that it keeps the cost down and can simplify analysis. If you use an electronic survey, you will also want to make a paper copy available so that people who are not comfortable with a computer will have an equal opportunity to be heard.

AARP Maine can help with survey distribution. We can send an email to AARP members telling them about your survey and providing a link to an online survey tool or an email to contact the age-friendly initiative in your town. We can also send a postal mail announcement to AARP members who live in your town.

Focus Groups: Surveys do a great job of telling you how many people share a concern about aging in the community and about the assets and barriers that exist to help or hinder people who want to age in place. However, surveys do not do a good job of telling you why there may be a specific need, and do not provide a space for people to talk about an aspect of aging in the community that you may have missed putting into your survey. For example, one age-friendly survey didn't ask questions about emergency preparedness but, during focus groups, the age-friendly core team learned that it was a central concern of older adults.

One of the first things to think about when you are planning a focus group (or groups) is how you are going to ensure that you hear from the groups your initiative has identified as having information or an opinion about aging that you want to include when you are creating a plan for your age-friendly work. Focus groups, ideally, should include 8-16 people who represent the different groups of older people in your community. Each group should be scheduled for 90 minutes to allow time for introductions and a full discussion. If everyone has had time to share their opinions, it is fine for a focus group to end early. During your introduction to the focus group, remind people that you will be meeting for about 90 minutes.

You will want to find a way to keep a record of the focus group. The easiest ways are for a member of your steering committee to come prepared to take notes or to record the session. If you record the focus group, tell people that you are recording and that when you make a transcript of the recording all identifiable information will be excluded.

One of the challenges of running a focus group is making sure that one person does not dominate the conversation and that everyone participates. At the beginning of the group, you will want to share a little about the impact of age-friendly planning and development and explain the purpose of the group. That is a good time to say that it is important to hear from all participants and to explain some ground rules for the conversation. These are some sample ground rules that you may choose to use:

- We have 90 minutes set aside for the focus group. You are all busy people. NAME AGE-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE is grateful for the time you are giving to share what you know about aging in NAMETOWN. We won't go over the time we have scheduled. To honor the time, I might move you along in conversation. Since we have limited time, I'll ask that questions or comments off the topic be answered after the focus group session.
- I'd like to hear everyone speak so I might ask people who have not actively participated to comment.
- The reason you are here is that you are the experts about aging in NAMETOWN. Please respect each other's opinions. There's no right or wrong answer to the questions I will ask. We want to hear what each of you think and it's okay to have different opinions.
- We'd like to stress that we want to keep the sessions confidential so we ask that you not use names or anything directly identifying when you talk about your personal experiences. We also ask that you not discuss other participants' responses outside of the discussion. However, because this is in a group setting, the other individuals participating will know your responses to the questions and we cannot guarantee that they will not discuss your responses outside of the focus group.

Many age-friendly initiatives opt to have more than one focus group to include as many different groups as possible. For example, Harpswell, Maine consists of different peninsulas that have their own sense of community so the age-friendly initiative had focus groups on each of the peninsulas. Bowdoinham, Maine wanted to include providers so they conducted a focus group just for social service providers and municipal employees to hear their point of view about aging in Bowdoinham. The age-friendly initiative in Bowdoinham also had a focus group for middle-aged residents, for older people living in the community, and for people who live in the only congregate housing complex in town for older and disabled people.

A second thing to think about are the topics you want to cover in your focus group(s). There is no requirement that the focus group guide you use for every group be identical. You may identify different topics for different groups if different groups have different types of knowledge about aging in the community. If, for example, you are asking social service providers about aging in your community, you will want to hear their impression of the services people access, barriers to getting

those services, and gaps they have noted while working with their clients. You may be less interested in their perceptions of communication about local services and activities than you would be in a focus group of older residents. However, you will want your focus group guides to be identical if you are asking opinions of older people who happen to live in different sections or neighborhoods in your town. Using the same guide for groups of people in different neighborhoods will allow you to compare the experiences of people who live in different places within the community.

It is a good idea to keep the number of questions you plan to ask your focus group down to 5 or 6. The goal is to hear what people have to say about their experiences in your community—not to rush the group through the most questions you can squeeze into the allotted time. The questions you choose for your focus group will reflect what your age-friendly steering committee thinks are the most important topics in your community. We have included a sample focus group guide on **page 12A** in the appendix to get you started.

Age-Friendly Asset Inventory: An age-friendly asset inventory will provide information about the strengths and resources your city or town already has to address the goals of the livable community work you are starting. This exercise is particularly helpful when trying to identify what is already working in your community and to learn how you can partner with those programs and services. It is important to complete an age-friendly asset inventory for three reasons:

1. The inventory will help your age-friendly initiative to learn about aspects of the built and natural environment, formal and informal services, and regional resources that your livable community team can tap into for your work.
2. Conducting the inventory will help you to identify partner organizations for your livable community efforts. For example, a regional transportation program or home modification service may want to find ways to increase awareness by older residents of the services they provide and may need more volunteers. Both are great opportunities for your livable community initiative to support what already exists to make your community a great place to age.
3. Identifying assets and learning about potential partners for your work will help you start to think about how you will build on existing assets to meet the needs identified by older residents in your community.

The community asset inventory is more than a list of programs, services, and factors in the built and natural environment that potentially have an impact on your livable community work. It is vital to engage in a conversation with the “asset”—service or program or informal group—that you have identified to learn how older residents in your community interact with the asset. How many older residents receive services? Do older people serve on the board, are they volunteers or active in fund raising? Asking how older adults are involved is key to identifying possible partnerships and learning how to build on identified assets to address needs.

In the description of each of the eight domains, we have included a description of the questions you may want to ask about your community as part of the work you will do on the age-friendly asset inventory. It is not necessary to ask all of the questions. Look at the ones that make sense in your community and use those.

We have included forms you can use to complete your community asset inventory on **pages 14A and 15A** of the appendix. The Age-friendly asset inventory form (**page 14A**) is designed to help you identify all of the groups and organizations in your community and to learn how older adults participate in the programs or services offered. The Accessibility Inventory (**page 15A**) provides a way for you to organize your observations about the accessibility of buildings that are open to the public in your community.

It is easy to see that filling out either form for a large community, or a region of towns and cities, could be overwhelming. Customize the forms to cover the area you are interested in learning more about and the types of groups, organizations, and places that you want to identify. If you need assistance customizing a form for your community needs, call AARP Maine. We are here to help.

The material laid out here is only a guide to different ways of completing an age-friendly assessment. Some communities focus their initial assessment on the 4 or 5 domains the steering committee thinks are most pressing. Other communities use a different assessment process. We want to remind you that there is no wrong way to gather information for your age-friendly effort.

The work you are doing for your community is going to make it a better place for people of all ages to grow up and to grow old. AARP Maine applauds your work!

The Eight Domains: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Outdoor spaces and public buildings are important to residents of all ages to be actively engaged in the civic, economic, and social life of the community. The physical environment of a town or city—parks, buildings, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and the natural landscape—plays a significant role regarding the health, independence, and well-being of residents of all ages but, especially, residents who have limited mobility or cannot walk long distances.

People need places to gather that are accessible for everyone to feel welcomed and included in their community. The middle railing and the heated stair treads to melt the ice and snow on the stair steps leading to the



Bowdoinham library make it safer for residents of all ages to visit. The book return box, located at ground level, makes it easier and more convenient for residents of all abilities to return books. For residents with lower leg weakness, these accessible features make it possible to continue enjoying the many services and social opportunities that are offered at this library. For younger residents with no physical limitations, the features make visits to the library safer and more enjoyable.

The opportunity to enjoy outdoor spaces has a positive effect on mental and physical health and contributes to independence. Wide park paths that can accommodate an adult using a walker or a wheelchair also make the park more enjoyable for a person teaching a young person to ride a bike, a couple who would like to walk hand-in-hand, and a person walking a dog.

Many municipalities in Maine have outdoor festivals that bring the community together for a town-wide celebration. Accessible public spaces and buildings are a win for all! Simple changes can make community events welcoming to residents of all abilities. The addition of a drop-off area, an area for people to sit and enjoy a little people watching time, and events targeted for older adults can make the day more enjoyable for

everyone. Age-friendly communities adopt policies about buildings, places, and events that encourage ongoing involvement by all residents.

Accessible businesses—restaurants, shops, and buildings where services are offered—are crucial for residents with different physical abilities to age safely and independently. Some municipalities and some age-friendly initiatives encourage businesses to be as age-friendly as possible. Age-friendly businesses have adequate lighting, keep noise (and music) at a moderate level, encourage staff to speak clearly in low tones, use large clear signage, and offer assistance when people are shopping. They may offer drop off or delivery services. They treat customers of all ages courteously. Some offer discounts for older people, but that isn't the key to being an age-friendly business. The key is treating all people—old, young and people with different abilities—with respect.

Here are some examples of what age-friendly businesses have done to make people of all ages and abilities, but especially people who have a disability, feel more welcome⁵:

Grocery stores have modified their environment and services by:

- Adding places for people to sit while they wait for transportation.
- Developing signs for pricing and unit cost that are in easy-to-read print.
- Creating a volunteer shopping and delivery program.

Pharmacies have staff who are trained to recognize common customer concerns and needs, such as illness or mobility issues, and who have received dementia awareness training. Throughout the store, magnifying glasses are available to help people read the fine print on product labels.

Restaurants have made a number of age friendly changes:

- A drop-off area at the entrance and a parking area for walkers or scooters.
- Tables that are located away from chilly air vents and easy to use chairs.
- Staff that speak clearly, and at an appropriate speed, while looking directly at the person.
- China that contrasts with the table linens.
- Menus (and bills) with easy-to-read print.

Banks have added screens with good contrast which are adjustable to reduce glare. Staff trained to identify signs of possible financial confusion or abuse, or of people needing additional care, and are aware of whom to notify if there are concerns.

⁵ Seniors Healthy Aging Secretariat, B.C. Ministry of Health (2011). *Creating an Age-friendly Business in B.C.* http://smallbusinessbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/resource_files/SeniorsBC_agefriendly_business_guide.pdf

The following survey highlights some of the ways your age-friendly initiative can gain a better understanding of how older residents interact with the built and natural environment in your community.

Survey. These are some examples of questions to help you to learn more about how older adults perceive the natural and built environment of your community. You wouldn't want to use all of these questions on a survey. Some may feel more "right" than others. Use the ones that are best for your community. When deciding which survey questions to include, don't forget to ask yourself how the resulting information will further the age-friendly work in your community.

Please rate the following in your community:

	Satisfied	OK	Unsatisfied
a. Safe places to walk that are near your home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Public parks with enough benches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Path and street lighting at night.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Paths wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other assistive mobility device	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Sidewalks in good condition and accessible for wheelchairs or other assistive mobility devices.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Snow removal from sidewalks.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Availability of parking near public buildings and in the center (downtown) of your community.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Enough designated parking spots for people with a disability placard.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Ramps are available and in good condition to get into businesses and public buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Doors to public buildings and businesses are easy to open.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Clear, easy-to-read signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Clean and accessible public restrooms to accommodate people of different physical abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you fallen while you were out and about in the community—walking, patronizing a local business, using a service or visiting a municipal office? Yes No

If so, please tell us where:

What are some of the changes that would help you to get around in your community or use public services/go shopping (check all that apply)?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clearing of snow and ice on sidewalks | <input type="checkbox"/> More street/parking lot lighting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better maintained sidewalks | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair ramps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More designated parking spots | <input type="checkbox"/> Handrails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doors that are easier to open | <input type="checkbox"/> More street/parking lot lighting |

Other: _____

Focus Group: One way to find out if what older adults think about the accessibility safety of outdoor spaces and buildings in their community is to ask them. Possible focus group questions include:

1. Tell me what it is like to go for a walk (**alternatives:** *visit a doctor or other medical service; do errands; get together with friends*) in your community. *Prompts: Do you have public parks? Are paths wide enough to accommodate two people walking side-by-side? Is parking convenient? Do you feel safe when you are out walking?*
2. Tell me about your favorite business or service (**alternatives:** *the business or service you visit most often, your favorite recreational activity*) in town. What is it like to get in and out of the building?
3. What is it like to visit the town office? To pay your taxes or register a pet?

Age-Friendly Asset Inventory:

One way to learn about the accessibility of your community by pedestrians is to conduct a walk audit. AARP has a do-it-yourself walk audit tool that can be downloaded [here](#).

Walk audits provide you with a tool to assess and document the ways that the physical and natural environments of your community encourage or discourage walking. The equipment needed for a walk audit is simple—a copy of the audit tool for each participant, an orange vest, and a few cameras to take pictures of significant findings. For example, this picture, taken during a walk audit in Bar Harbor, Maine, shows both a barrier and a facilitator. The green space planted with



trees effectively separates the pedestrian path from the road. However, the brick pavers can be a trip hazard for someone who has leg weakness or uses a walker. Walk audits can also show you which cross walks and signs are most pedestrian friendly. This tool is invaluable for communities that want to increase walkability.

Another assessment that can be completed is an accessibility survey of public buildings, services, and businesses.

If your town has recently completed a comprehensive plan, it will have up-to-date inventories on housing, transportation, and parks. Most comprehensive plans do not include an assessment of buildings where social services, local businesses, and town sponsored organizations, such as the public library, art center, or historical society, are located.

One way to complete an inventory for public buildings and spaces is to use volunteers from your age-friendly initiative. Community volunteers can assess the condition and usability of ramps, the ease with which one can open doors into buildings, lighting, signage, parking, and the accessibility of public restrooms in each building. All of these are factors that are important for older adults to remain independent and to be as active in the community as they want to be.



Another thing to consider for your building accessibility audit are attitudinal barriers. Attitudes that see the disability, and not a person living with a disability, or that are ageist can create as much of a barrier to full participation in the community as physical barriers. It is unreasonable to expect everyone who works for a local business, municipal government, or social service to be sensitive to the needs of people living with, for example, dementia or a mobility limitation. However, organizations can create an environment that is accepting and can offer simple accommodations to their customers who have a disability. One way to find out if an organization is making proactive efforts to make their product or service accessible is to ask, “How are you making your organization more accessible to people with different abilities”?

Building accessibility checklist⁶

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Parking: Are 2% of nearby parking spaces designated for people with a disability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it easy to get into building from designated parking space?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a step-free entrance or an attractive, well maintained ramp?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are entry doors wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do entry doors have an automated opener or are they equipped with lever handles and require less than five pounds of pressure to open?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the building have well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are bathroom faucets automatic or do they have lever handles? ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If there is carpet, is it low-pile, tightly woven and secured?.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are light switches 42" from the floor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is lighting inside and out bright enough to allow a person to easily see any trip hazards and to see things in "dark" corners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are signs inside and outside the building large enough to be easily read and are they situated so that they are easy to find and understand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the smoke detector include both audio and visual signals? ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do stairs have non-slip surfaces? So they have high visibility, high-contrast edges?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do interior stairs have continuous railings on both sides and extend beyond the top and bottom of the stairs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

When your age-friendly team reviews these results, you may want to take into consideration the reasonable accommodations that organizations have made to make their product or service more accessible. Reasonable accommodations allow organizations to make adjustments that are practical and manageable relative to the size and context of where it is located. Examples include home delivery services, meeting in an accessible space, and using a door-bell to indicate someone needs a door opened for them when an automatic door is impractical.

⁶ Adapted from City of Parksville (2009). Accessible Community Builder Checklist.

<http://www.city.parksville.bc.ca/cms/wpattachments/wpID270atID3216.pdf>. For an alternative form, see page 79

Moving Forward:

Now that you have completed your assessment, the next step is to think about how to encourage your community to make needed changes.

Here are a few ideas for making welcoming outdoor spaces:

[How to Create a Grandparent Park](#)

In need of a place for children and adults to exercise and spend more time together outdoors, Wichita, Kansas, built a playground for all ages. (AARP)

[How to Create a Parklet](#)

In places crowded with streets and structures, small open spaces (even those as small as a parking spot) can provide lots of room to relax. Parklets were first introduced in San Francisco, when an art and design studio created one to call attention to the scarcity of outdoor public spaces. (AARP)

[An Outdoor Gym?](#)

Some parks offer easy-to-use outdoor equipment as well as a social atmosphere for runners, body builders, and older people to connect. They are aimed at getting adults back into fitness, but the fun way, not the scary diet and workout video way.

[Revitalizing a Neglected Park](#)

Some communities may already have a park but it may be neglected or may not be very attractive. A grassroots non-profit community organization worked to revitalize Tattnell Square Park, in Macon-Bibb, Georgia, by creating an engaging landscape that would be safe and welcoming for all. Similar projects have taken place across Maine. Examples are Franklin Park in Portland and Hillcrest Park in Millinocket.

[Reclaiming Space for a Park](#)

The City of Ellsworth, a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities turned the site of a condemned school into one of the most exciting and welcoming parks in Maine. Knowlton Community Park is accessible to people of all ages and abilities, with walking path, benches to rest and watch all of the activity, and playground equipment for children. For the young and for the young at heart, the [splash pad](#) can make a hot day into fun.



The Bureau of Parks and Lands has published a [guide to accessible parks and beaches in Maine](#).

The Eight Domains: Communication and Information



Effective, age-friendly communication is key for older adults to age optimally in the community of their choice. Older residents want access to information about local and regional activities and events and need to know about resources available to support aging in place. People want the information to stay connected with their communities. Communication should be clear, pithy, and should be printed in a way that is easy to read. Twelve-point font is the minimum size for eyes that have lived 30 or more years. Margins should be adequate and there should be space between paragraphs so there is enough white space to break up the text and make your message more entertaining.

Age-friendly communities develop approaches to communication that ensure that older residents—and residents of all ages—have access to information developed by the municipality about activities, services and programs. Communication is not limited to the printed word. It may include developing a page on the town website with information of interest to older residents or may include using social media to get the word out. Whatever venue you are using, the message should be clear and include enough information to effectively convey your message but not so much information that the message gets lost in the words.

Another form of communication is signage. Age-friendly communities use signs that are easy to read and have a clear meaning. If you conducted a walk audit, you may already know if there are ways to improve signage. For example, are designated parking spots clearly marked? Are street signs easy to read? Do they point in a direction that makes sense? Are they large enough to read easily? What about the town notice board? Is it easy to read?

One way that communities can increase access to information is by appointing a municipal employee to make sure that older adults who ask questions about activities, services and supports are pointed in the right direction. Many older adults go to their town clerk or another municipal employee when they need information. It is important that the person who answers questions from older adults has enough information to be able to tell them where to go to find the answers to their questions.

Here are some ways that your age-friendly initiative can assess the effectiveness of information available to older residents of your town or city.

Survey. These are some examples of question you can include on a survey that will help you to understand the effectiveness of information available to older adults in your community. You wouldn't want to use all of these questions on a survey. Some may feel more "right" than others. Use the ones that are best for your community. When deciding which survey questions to include, don't forget to ask yourself how the resulting information will further the age-friendly work in your community.

Is information about services and resources to support aging in place easy to find?

- Yes No Not Sure

Is information about community events and local activities easy to find?

- Yes No Not Sure

How do you like to receive information about community services, news and events?

- Newspaper Word of mouth Websites E-mail Newsletters Facebook
 Text message Twitter NAMETOWN Community Television Radio Flyers

Does the community where you live have the following?

	Yes	No but I wish it did	No. We don't need it.
a. Access to community information located in one central place.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Information about community resources and activities is clearly printed with large enough lettering to read easily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Free access to computers and the Internet in public places such as the library, senior centers, or municipal buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Information of interest to aging adults that is delivered by postal mail for people who do not have access to the Internet or do now want to use it.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. A single place or person where community residents can go for access to reliable information about services and programs that are available to people in NAMETOWN....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. A place where an older person can go for help filling out forms.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Focus Group: One way to find out if older adults have the information they need to participate in local activities and access needed services is to ask them. Possible focus group questions include:

1. If you or a friend are looking for information about activities and programs (**alternative:** *services, volunteer opportunities, paid work opportunity*) in NAMETOWN, where would you look? How would you get the information you need? *Prompt: Computer? Newspaper? How is information distributed?*
2. Care partners often need access to information to help them provide the best quality care to a loved one. How do care partners in your community find the information they need?
3. Tell me about how information about services and local activities (**alternative:** *services, volunteer opportunities, paid work opportunity*) is presented. Is it easy to read? *Prompt: Size of print, colors, easy to understand—clearly written.*
4. Do you use a computer or other device to find information? What is it like to find information on the Internet?

Age-Friendly Asset Inventory: The age-friendly asset inventory should include places that town residents go to get needed information. Where can people get hard copies of information and what kinds of information can be found at the different locations you identified? Other things that your age-friendly initiative may want to include are:

- What percentage of your community has access to broadband or high-speed Internet service?
- Where are free computers and access to the Internet offered? Are there local classes to help older adults learn to use technology or to answer their questions about technology?
- Where can people go for help filling out forms?
- Where can people go to find out about services, programs and activities that are offered in your community? Regionally? Where can they learn about volunteer opportunities? Paid work?

Moving Forward: After learning how older residents in your community get information, identify any information gaps and explore ways that your age-friendly initiative can address them. For example, one age-friendly initiative found out that most residents went to the town office to find needed resources. The town clerk gave each person

the same resource list—printed in 7 point font—that included information about anything anyone could need from birth onward. The list wasn't very helpful to a person looking for information about affordable home maintenance or the schedule for the adult pickle ball game. Filling the information gap is usually not expensive and goes a long way toward making a community age-friendly because it increases access to services and programs in all eight domains.

Here are a few ideas other communities have used to increase access to information:

Lego Display

The age-friendly initiative in Brookline, Mass created a Lego display to illustrate the eight domains in the context of their city. It is on display in the entry-way of City Hall—the perfect place to educate members of the public and municipal employees.



Page on the Town Website

Cumberland and Cape Elizabeth, Maine have created pages on their town website that have information that may be of interest to older adults. For ideas, check them out:

- [Cumberland](#)
- [Cape Elizabeth](#)

For guidelines about designing an effective website for older people, go to [Designing Websites for Older Adults](#) by AARP.

Community Calendar and Resource List:

- The age-friendly team in Bowdoinham found out that older residents wanted a [community calendar](#) that included activities and special events so they could participate in the things that interested them. The calendar is posted on the town website, sent electronically to people who sign up for the e-newsletter and distributed by postal mail to residents who prefer a hard copy.
- Age-Friendly Bethel publishes an electronic newsletter, written by Nancy Davis, which includes information about their age-friendly efforts and highlights resources that can make aging in Bethel a little easier and more fun. It is distributed electronically and throughout the Bethel region in places older residents are likely to visit.

Facebook Page

Augusta, Harpswell, and Wayne are using Facebook to spread word about their age-friendly efforts and to link people to needed resources

- [Augusta](#): Augusta Age-Friendly
- [Harpswell](#): Harpswell Aging at Home
- [Wayne](#): Aging at Home



Kiosk with information about aging

Several towns have created a kiosk in their town hall or library with information and resources that can be taken or borrowed by older people or by families and friends.

Age Friendly Programming on Public Access Television:

- Harpswell Aging at Home sponsors a program on Harpswell TV that is hosted by Jess Maurer. Topics so far have included [transportation](#), and a [visit with Speaker Eves](#).
- The Age-Friendly City Committee in Brookline, Mass. has a television program on the [Brookline Community Access Channel](#).

Recurring Column in your local newspaper:

Age-Friendly Bethel, Maine regularly publishes articles about their age-friendly initiative in the [Bethel Citizen](#).

Age-Friendly Saco maintains a close working relationship with one of the reporters for the Biddeford-Saco Journal to ensure coverage of their accomplishments. Local newspapers in your area are probably also looking for current information. Don't forget to tell them about your accomplishments!

[Men's sheds](#) are spaces where older, mostly retired men from all walks of life can gather to socialize and talk while working on practical building and woodworking projects.



For more information about tailoring your communication for older people, go to either of these guides: [Making our Printed Health Materials Senior Friendly](#) by the National Institute on Aging or [The Senior Audience: Large, Growing and Diverse](#) by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The Eight Domains: Social Participation



Social connections with friends who live in the community and involvement with local organizations—places of worship and meditation, fraternal organizations, a craft group, book club, Bridge, Cribbage or any organized group of people who share a similar interest—is associated with better mental and physical health. When older adults are actively engaged with people of all ages, the entire community wins!

The following are some ways to measure the engagement of older residents with organized social opportunities, identify the opportunities that are available and explore barriers—such as information and accessibility—which may prevent older residents from being as socially involved as they want to be. One of the things to keep in mind when looking at social participation is that not all people want to be involved with formal social activities. Age-friendly communities make social opportunities available by publicizing them and making sure that people have full access to the activities that exist.

Survey. These are some examples of question you can include on a survey that will help you to understand if older residents have access to the formal social participation that they want. You wouldn't want to use all of these questions on a survey. Some may feel more "right" than others. Use the ones that are best for your community. When deciding which survey questions to include, don't forget to ask yourself how the resulting information will further the age-friendly work in your community.

How frequently do you spend time with family, friends, or neighbors in the NAMETOWN area?

- Once a day or more Several times each week Once each week
 Every 2-3 weeks Once each month Less than once each month

When you go out, what do you normally do (check all that apply)?

- Go for walks
- Exercise class or sport
- Visit family
- Go to a place of Worship
- Play cards or BINGO
- Meet friends
- Go to a restaurant
- Attend a hobby group
- Take a class
- Run errands (banking, shopping, etc.)
- Go to medical appointments
- Other: _____
- I don't go out

Which of the following are available/do you use or attend in NAMETOWN?

	Available, I use	Available, I don't use	Not available, I wish it was	Not available, not important
a. Activities that offer senior discounts.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Accurate and widely publicized information about social and recreational activities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Formal recreational opportunities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Opportunities to volunteer at local schools ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Social or Hobby Clubs (e.g. book club, gardening, craft).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: _____

If you would like to socialize more, what prevents you (check all that apply)?

- Mobility issues or health
- Events are scheduled at times when I am not available
- No one to go with me
- Too costly
- Find out too late
- Lack of transportation
- Not much to do here
- Other: _____

Focus Group: One way to find out if older adults in your community have adequate opportunities to meet with other people who share similar interests is to ask them.

Possible focus group questions include:

1. What is there to do for fun in NAMETOWN? What opportunities are available that keep you as busy as you want to be? *Prompt: Are you able to do what you want to do when you go out? Visit with friends or family? Go to library/museum? Enjoy recreation? Participate in classes/hobbies? Attend*

cultural and spiritual activities? Are activities age-segregated or age-integrated? Is participation affordable?

2. Are there places where people meet in town for recreation or to talk? Tell me about them. Is it difficult to get into the places or to park? Are opportunities affordable?
3. Think about someone 10-15 years older than you are. What opportunities are available to participate in lifelong hobbies, to develop new interests, to visit with friends, to worship, and to visit the library or a local museum, i.e. to be as active as they want to be in the community?
4. Interactions with younger people—children, young adults, middle-aged people—is part of life in any community. Tell me about the opportunities you have to share time with people who are younger than you are. *Prompt: volunteering, participation in voluntary associations, etc.*



Age-Friendly Asset Inventory: To begin, decide what kinds of socialization opportunities you are going to include in the inventory. Are you going to limit yourself to municipally-sponsored activities? Are you going to limit yourself to formal groups or are you going to try and find informal groups as well? After you have decided the scope of your inventory, make a list of recreational, social and volunteer opportunities that fit your criteria.

Next, call each organization to find out about the participation of older adults. For example, if your community has a local museum, call to find out if older adults visit, if they are active on the boards, and if they volunteer. Ask about the cost of participation. The same questions can be asked of all the organizations in town—formal places of worship or meditation, food pantry, library, book club, quilting group, Masons, lifelong learning program, etc. You can probably see that this inventory, in a medium or large size town could quickly get too large to manage. It is important to limit your focus to a reasonable quantity so that you can start doing and not just planning. Later, some communities expand their focus to include more organizations.

Moving Forward: The asset inventory will help you to understand how older adults are involved in your community. Are older adults volunteering but not participating in formal groups? Are there barriers to participation?

The needs assessment and focus group will help you to understand if older people are isolated, or if they are participating in fewer social opportunities than desired. Are there enough activities or are there gaps? For example, did you find a number of older people who would like to go hiking in a group? Could the municipal Recreation Department set up a weekly hiking group?

After you learn if older adults are satisfied with the number and type of social opportunities that are offered in your community, look at the barriers that some aging adults have to being as socially involved as they want to be. Are there ways that your age-friendly initiative could help people to overcome barriers? For example, if one barrier is the lack of transportation, it may be possible to increase awareness of an existing transportation program.

Here are a few options that have been tried in age-friendly communities:

Community Center

The new [Ellsworth Community Center](#) is a very busy place with an abundance of opportunities for social participation. One program allows older people to take music lessons from members of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra.

Storybox Project

Age-friendly Manchester, England, uses this project to provide an opportunity for people with dementia to share their stories. On Thursdays the *Manchester Art Gallery* lets a group of older residents take over the space to host an evening of art, storytelling, music and more. To learn more about the cultural initiatives in age-friendly Manchester, go to:

Sociable Streets:

At least four times a year, miles of streets in downtown [Brownsville, Texas](#), are closed to cars and trucks so residents (and, increasingly, visitors) can gather to bike, walk, jog, dance, socialize and simply have fun.



The Eight Domains: Housing



Age-friendly housing options allow residents to age in their own community even when changes in health or ability mean that a person needs some help to remain in the community safely and with as much independence as possible.

In age-friendly communities, affordable options are available when a resident needs home modifications or help with routine maintenance to stay in his or her home safely. Housing alternatives are available for people at all income levels it becomes necessary to move to a smaller home that requires less work to clean and maintain. Many communities have developed “senior” housing options for wealthy older adults and some have income-based housing with reasonable waiting lists for people who are low income. However, few have options for people who are middle income. As a result, people making less than 150% of the median income in their town are often forced to find alternatives in other municipalities or to continue living in their own home when it is no longer safe to do so.

One option to make home ownership more affordable for older residents with a limited income is a property tax rebate program for older long-term home owners.

Cumberland, Maine has launched a tax rebate program that is a model for other communities. The refund is available to residents who are age 67 or older, have lived in the town for 10+ years, and who qualify for the Property Tax Fairness Credit program (a program of the State of Maine). The maximum amount residents can receive is \$750.00 but, combined with the Property Tax Fairness Credit, it can reduce the effective property tax bill by 25-50%.⁷

Another way that municipalities can support the desire of older residents to age in the community is through the use of zoning and building codes. AARP offers model codes that will allow residents to build “accessory dwellings” (aka “in-law apartments”) so that multi-generational households can receive needed help from family while also maintaining independence and privacy.⁸

⁷ Town of Cumberland (2016). *Property Tax Assistance Ordinance*. <http://cumberlandmaine.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/2013-Cumberland-Property-Tax-Assistance-Ordinance-Clean-Copy1.pdf>.

⁸ Cobb, R.L. & Dvorak, S. (2000). *Accessory Dwelling Units: Model State Act and Local Ordinance*. AARP Public Policy Institute. http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/consume/d17158_dwell.pdf

The need for assisted living or residential skilled nursing care should not preclude a person from living in the community of his or her choice. Ideally, communities include high-quality options for older people at all income levels.⁹

Some communities have the capacity to provide a wide array of housing options. When the age-friendly planning team in your town thinks about how it wants to assess the housing domain, it is important to ask question that reflect community capacity and community values. If the questions do not, they will not give you the data you need to create an action plan that addresses housing.

Survey. These are some examples of question you can include on a survey that will help you to understand the housing situation of older residents in your community. You wouldn't want to use all of these questions on a survey. Some may feel more "right" than others. Use the ones that are best for your community. When deciding which survey questions to include, don't forget to ask yourself how the resulting information will further the age-friendly work in your community.

What kind of housing do you currently occupy (check all that apply)?

- Single-family dwelling Apartment Condominium Extended Family
 Retirement Community Mobile Home Assisted Living Nursing Home

My home is: Owned by me Rented by me Owned or rented by family

What are your plans for moving to another home?

I plan to move in the next 1 year 1-2 years 3+ years No plans to move.

If you were to move during the next few years, would the following factors impact your decision to move?

	Yes	No	Not sure
a. Looking for a smaller or more accessible home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. To live near friends or family.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Expense of your current home (e.g. property tax, maintenance) is too high.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. To be near medical care and conveniences (e.g. shopping, library, place of worship or meditation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Need public transportation or other transportation options ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, please specify: _____

⁹ AARP. (2016). Supportive Housing Options. Excerpts from *AARP Policy Book*.
http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/liv_com/2012/supportive-housing-options-AARP-ppi-liv-com.pdf

If you are not thinking about moving, please check of all of the reasons that effect your decision to stay:

- I prefer to stay in my own home.
- Moving expenses are too high.
- It is too difficult to sort through and pack up my current home.
- My health and physical abilities don't allow me to move.
- I haven't found a suitable location.

Other _____

People sometimes make modifications to their home to allow them to stay where they are as they age. Do you think you will need to make the following types of modifications or improvements to your home to enable you to stay there as you age (check all that apply)?

- Create easier access into or within your home by, for example, installing a ramp or widening doorways
- Put in a bedroom, bathroom, or kitchen on the first floor
- Install modifications such as grab bars, handrails, or non-slip tiles.
- Improve indoor or outdoor lighting.
- Install a medical emergency response system that notifies others in case of an emergency.

Other _____

Please rate how important you think each of the following is to have in your community:

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not Very important
a. Home repair contractors who are trustworthy, do quality work and are affordable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. A home repair service for low-income and older adults that helps with things like roof or window repairs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Seasonal services such as lawn work or snow removal for low-income and older adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Housing options (e. g. retirement communities, assisted living, congregate housing) for people at all income levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Focus Group: One way to find out about the types of housing supports that older adults want and need to age in the community is to ask. Possible focus group questions include:

1. When you think about growing older, what are the top three things related to housing that are important to you?
2. If you had a friend who was 80 (**alternative:** 60) who needed housing information (**alternative:** *to find a subsidized apartment; choose an assisted living facility; wanted to learn about home modification*), where would you suggest she or he go for information?
3. Tell me a story about older residents in town who have decided to age in place. What is it like for them to age in their current home?
4. Describe the type of housing that you would like to be living in when you are their age—10 or 20 years from now. (*Prompt: retirement, assisted living, condo, current home with supports*)
5. What might prevent you from living in the situation you desire in the future? (*Prompt if necessary: savings; retirement; equity in owned home; family; etc.*)
6. If a friend needs a home modification—say a grab bar or ramp—how would they find the information needed to decide which type or design is best for them, how would your friend find someone to do the work? What about payment options?
7. Describe modifications you have made or features in your housing that you feel will allow you to stay in your home long-term.

Age-Friendly Asset Inventory: As part of your asset inventory, you will want to identify the programs and services whose mission is to increase accessibility of existing housing. Do you have a home modification program in your community? Does your Area Agency on Aging offer the service? If so, is there a charge? Does your community have private “aging in place” specialists or volunteer organizations whose mission is to help older home owners with basic home maintenance and/or to install home modifications? All of these organizations/services will be included in the Asset Inventory.

Moving Forward: After examining your initiative to see how older adults are included, the next step is to think about what you have learned from your survey, focus group, and/or asset mapping exercise. Are there ways to increase awareness of existing programs? Can you partner with other programs to increase capacity to better serve

residents of your community (e.g. helping to recruit volunteers, fund raising support)? Are there gaps in services that your age-friendly initiative can fill?

US Census Data. The US Census has a wealth of information about the housing in your community. The data can tell you what kind of housing people occupy, if rents or mortgages are affordable, the age of housing, and other topics. For more information about collecting census data, contact AARP Maine.

Here are a few options that have been tried in age-friendly communities:

Volunteer Chore and Home Maintenance Services

- [The Regulars](#) are a group of volunteers who work with Habitat for Humanity and Bath Housing Authority to make the homes of older people safer, more comfortable, and accessible.
- The task of changing a light bulb, replacing a rug, moving furniture, or taking things down from high shelves can be daunting for some older adults. The [Masons Handy Brigade](#) is a group of volunteers who help with simple routine home chores and basic maintenance and provide referrals to trusted contractors.

Information about home modification

- The age-friendly initiative in Bowdoinham, Maine created a [Tool Table](#), a display of items that can make everyday life easier—from jar openers, to seat belt extenders. Residents of Bowdoinham and the surrounding area can borrow items for up to three weeks to try at home.
- AARP offers [Home Fit Workshops](#) that can help residents in your community identify change that will make their homes safer and more comfortable. FMI:

Learn more about how zoning in your community can make it easier for older families to age in place:

- [Form-Based Code](#). Form based Code is an alternative to traditional zoning that reflect the community’s vision for itself. Do you want to ensure that the character of your community is preserved? Form based code can be the answer.
- [Density](#). This Livability Fact Sheet explains how high density zoning can protect the green space and character of your community.
- [Accessory Dwelling Units](#). “In-law” apartments can be a valuable addition to a community’s age-friendly planning.

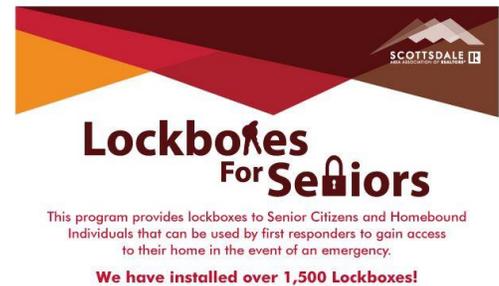
Click [here](#) to see the complete list of AARP Livability Fact Sheets.

[Efficiency Maine](#) has free information and low-cost (or no-cost) programs to help residents in your community save money by using less energy.

[Lockboxes for Seniors](#)¹⁰

The *Lockboxes for Seniors* program provides a lockbox for older adult or person with special needs to secure a spare house key outside their home. Participants in the program are encouraged to share their lockbox combination with their local police and fire departments.

Knowing the combination allows emergency responders to gain entry to a home without breaking in if an individual is unable to open an entry door in an emergency.



[Property Tax Rebate Program](#)

Older adults typically live on a fixed income and cannot readily respond to sharp and unpredictable increases in housing costs. To make property taxes more affordable for older residents, the town of Cumberland created a [property tax rebate program](#) for older residents with a low income.

[Universal Design and Visitability](#)

In 2015, the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners adopted a for residential housing units. “The resolution encourages providers and builders of housing in the County to construct housing and communities which are safe and enable residents to move around easily in their communities and to age in place.”

[“Villages” and Senior Housing](#)

A growing number of communities in Maine have worked with a developer to create **new senior housing**. In York, Maine, they developed senior housing and created the [Neighborhood Network](#) which provides a “village” for their residents with access to transportation, recreational activities, health facilities, and socialization opportunities.

¹⁰ Dwyer, Katelyn (2015). 11 Inspiring Livability Efforts. *AARP Livable Communities*. <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/livable-in-action/info-2015/inspiring-livability-efforts.html?cmp=NLC-LC-HF-CTRL-081716-F2-CreativelyInspiring-CTA-1401367&encparam=9YhZC9ou5HTLj4/5OVFjbULBM4Kf3qLwg1aLwFqAkUw%3D>

The Eight Domains: Respect and Social Inclusion

How are older adults treated in your community? Are people age 60 included in all aspects of community life or are they ignored? Are people with mobility limitations or cognitive impairment included in town wide events and in decision-making or are they treated as a nuisance? Do you see older residents interacting with young people—at schools, in the library, or at special activities for children? Research suggests that older adults who feel included—who are welcomed when they attend the school activities of their young grand-children, who are recruited to serve on town committees, who are valued for their volunteer contributions to the community—are more likely to remain active in the social, economic and civic life of the community as they age.



From a municipal perspective, an important part of respect and social inclusion is consideration of the different needs of older adults who are aging with a disability. For example, does your town include enough areas for people to sit and relax at the community fair? Are provisions for absentee voting well publicized? When the recreation department thinks about changes to the local park, does it attempt to make simple changes to increase accessibility? Does your town’s comprehensive plan include the town’s plans to include older adults? The way a city or town welcomes people of all ages and abilities sends a powerful message to residents. When a community is inclusive, the residents who live in the community are more likely to respect older residents and welcome their participation in local activities.

Survey. These are some examples of question you can include on a survey that will help you to understand if older residents feel respected and included. You wouldn’t want to use all of these questions on a survey. Some may feel more “right” than others. Use the ones that are best for your community. When deciding which survey questions to include, don’t forget to ask yourself how the resulting information will further the age-friendly work in your community.

Do you feel that older residents are respected for the contribution they make to the community?

- Yes Most of the time Some of the time Not usually No

Have you ever been treated in a disrespectful way because of your age? Yes No

If you have been treated disrespectfully because of your age, who did the behavior come from?

- A business owner or staff working at a business
- Someone working or volunteering for a local organization (e.g. library, museum)
- A social service provider
- A municipal employee
- Family members
- Children or teenagers

Do you think there is a general awareness of the needs of older residents by the people in your community?

- Yes No I don't know

How important do you think it is to have the following in your community?

	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important
a. Activities specifically geared towards older adults	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b. Activities that offer senior discounts	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c. Activities that are affordable to all residents....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d. Activities that involve both younger and older people.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e. Local schools that involve older adults in events and activities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Does the community where you live have the following?

	Yes	No	Not sure
a. Activities specifically geared towards older adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Activities that offer senior discounts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Activities that are affordable to all residents.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Activities that involve both younger and older people.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Local schools that involve older adults in events and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Focus Group: One way to find out if older adults feel that they are welcomed and included in your community is to ask them. Possible focus group questions include:

1. We all know how important it is to feel respected and included. How are older adults treated in this community? Are they included in activities? Are their opinions and contributions respected?
2. If someone was thinking about moving to this community, how would you describe NAMETOWN and what it offers for older adults?
3. Tell me a story about the role older residents play in the community. *Prompts— what is their role in town groups? Municipal government?*

Age-Friendly Asset Inventory: At Bowdoinham’s annual festival, *Celebrate Bowdoinham*, children gather to hear their fortune at the Advisory Committee on Aging tent. Older adults are a central part of the day’s activities. Think about the community wide events in your town. Are older adults able to attend? What is their contribution to the event?

Take a look at your town’s comprehensive plan, strategic plan, or downtown plan. Are older adults included? Another sign of respect and social inclusion is the role of older adults in local organizations and in town government. Go back to the list of groups you made to get the asset mapping exercise started. Do older adults serve on the boards? Are they members? Do they participate in programming?



Inclusion of Older Adults

1. Do older residents of your community serve on municipal boards (e.g. Select Board, Planning Board, Comprehensive Planning Committee)?
2. Are older adults mentioned in your municipality’s Comprehensive Plan?
3. Are older adults included in the advisory board or steering committee of your age-friendly initiative?
4. Does your age-friendly initiative ask older adults about their preferences for an age-friendly community?
5. Do older adults attend community-wide events?
6. Do older adults serve on the boards of voluntary organizations and non-profits?
7. Do older adults attend events and activities offered by non-municipal organizations?

Moving Forward: Respect and social inclusion starts with the age-friendly initiative in your community. Are older adults included on the steering committee? On the citizen’s advisory board? Are older people included in discussions about how to make the community more aging-friendly? If you have an advisory group or steering committee that includes municipal employee(s), social service providers, representatives of local organizations, and older adults, is decision-making shared equally between them?

After examining your initiative to see how older adults are included, the next step is to think about what you have learned from your survey, focus group, and/or asset mapping exercise. Are there ways to expand the roles of older adults in the community?

Here are a few ideas that have been tried in other places:

Playground for all Ages:

[Multigenerational playgrounds](#) with adult and child recreational equipment are being developed around the country. In Wichita, Kansas, the age-friendly initiative transformed an empty lot into a “[grandparent’s park](#)”, a place where people of all ages can enjoy socialization and green space.



Sharing Knowledge Between the Generations

In Northport, Vermont, the age-friendly initiative created a [community gardening](#) project that allows older adults to share their knowledge of gardening with younger people. Watch a [video](#) about the “adopt a grandparent program” that is an essential part of the project.

The Cedars Skilled Care Nursing Facility is home to [Opening Minds through Art](#) (OMA), an intergenerational arts program for people diagnosed with a disease that causes dementia.

Living the Dream

In age-friendly communities, age is a number, not a reason to limit having fun doing things you love or trying something new. In Taiwan, they have established the [Bulao program](#), which encourages older Taiwanese to live their dreams—from performing in a Broadway show to riding a motorbike across Taiwan to sharing war experiences with young recruits and more!

The Eight Domains: Civic Participation and Employment



Communities benefit when older residents have opportunities for paid employment and when they can participate in the civic life of the community by volunteering and being part of the local political process. It is important to recognize that not all older people have the same interest in this domain--some

want or need to work for money, while others focus on volunteer work or prefer not to volunteer or work for money. One of the reasons that this domain is so broad is to encourage communities to foster a range of possibilities—from paid work for an organization to starting a business, from volunteering for a local non-profit to running for the Select Board.

Given the range of options in this domain, it can be challenging for communities to encourage older residents to participate in paid employment and to be as involved with the civic life of the community as they want to be. Two other domains – transportation and outdoor spaces and buildings—are key. Accessible buildings and alternative transportation options allow people who can no longer drive or who choose not to drive to vote in local elections, to volunteer, and to participate in paid work.

These are some suggestions to identify the strengths of your community for encouraging older residents to be as involved in the civic participation and employment domain as they want to be. These measures will also help you to learn where there is room for improvement and gaps in services that your age-friendly initiative can address.



Survey. These are some examples of question you can include in a survey that will help you to understand if older residents feel respected and included. You wouldn't want to use all of these questions on a survey. Some may feel more "right" than others. Use the ones that are best for your community. When deciding which survey

questions to include, don't forget to ask yourself how the resulting information will further the age-friendly work in your community.

What is your employment status (check all that apply)?

Employed full or part-time Unemployed, looking for work Retired

Other: _____

If you work for pay, how likely is it that you will continue to work for as long as possible, rather than choosing to retire or no longer work for pay?

Very Likely Somewhat likely Not very likely Not at all likely Not sure

On average, how many hours each week do you spend in formal and informal volunteer activities (rounded to the nearest hour)?

0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 more than 8

Which of the following are available in NAMETOWN?

	Available, I use or participate	Available, I don't use or participate	Not available, I wish it was	Not available, not important
a. A range of flexible job opportunities for older residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Job training opportunities for older adults who want to learn new job skills.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. A range of volunteer activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Opportunities to participate in local government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Opportunities to participate in decision-making in community organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Easy to find information about volunteer opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: _____

Focus Group: One way to find out if older adults have adequate opportunities to participate in paid and unpaid work in your community is to ask them. Possible focus group questions include:

1. Tell me about a volunteer experience in NAMETOWN that you enjoyed. *Prompt: did the organization offer training, reimbursement of expenses, how did the organization express appreciation)?*
2. Think about someone who is 15 years older than you are who lives in this community. What opportunities does he or she have to contribute to the community (**Alternative:** *to participate in decision-making at the municipal level and in local organizations*)? *Prompt: meaningful volunteer or paid work (Alternative Prompt: Participation on municipal boards, as community leaders)?*
3. How do the opportunities that you enjoy compare to a person who is older than you are? *If there are differences, are they important? How? Explore solutions.*
4. Thinking about paid and volunteer work, what is it like to live in NAMETOWN as an older person? Are some of your friends or neighbors forced to find paid work for economic reasons? What sorts of opportunities do people have to engage in paid work? What are the opportunities to be involved in volunteer work? Municipal decision making? Decision making of local organizations?



Age-Friendly Asset Inventory: An important opportunity for civic engagement can be the age-friendly initiative in your community. Are older adults involved in all aspects of your age-friendly initiative? Are their voices privileged during assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation?

Other questions to think about are how involved older adults are in municipal decision-making. Does your select board include a mix of ages? Are older adults included on committees appointed by the Select Board? Are older adults active as volunteers on town committees? For example, do they participate in the recreation department as volunteers? Are they active on the school board? Do they volunteer at the school?

Another set of questions looks at local decision making. Are older adults active as leaders in voluntary associations (e.g. Masons, environmental groups) and other organizations (e.g. museums, places of worship or meditation, library)? Are older people included in the planning of the organizations? Do older adults provide services for the organization? For example, do they volunteer as docents or do they volunteer to teach religious education or meditation classes?

A fourth set of questions will focus on the availability of paid employment. Are there opportunities for people to work for pay? Are there regional opportunities for job-related training and learning new skills that are available to older adults? Do older adults in your community who want to work know about the resources available to them?

Does your community make large print records (e.g. vital records, tax bills) available when they are needed? Are adaptive communication devices available to help people who are hard of hearing or deaf to participate in town meeting? Select Board meetings? Meetings of select-board appointed committees?

Moving Forward: After learning about participation in paid and volunteer work by older residents of your community, the next step may be to work with existing services to increase awareness of paid and volunteer work opportunities.

Other things that you may learn about are barriers to participation. Do public and volunteer transportation services provide affordable and convenient rides to volunteer and paid employment? What can municipal government do to encourage participation by older adults? Is accessibility an issue? Each community is different. The plan you make will reflect what you learn in your needs assessment.



Here are a few ideas that have been used in other communities:

Lifelong Learning Opportunities

In Iron County Wisconsin, the age-friendly initiative found out that people wanted more lifelong learning opportunities but there were no existing programs. The solution? [Create a lifelong learning program!](#)

Creating meaningful volunteer opportunities.

Bethel, Maine learned that people needed better transportation options to age in the Bethel region. They partnered with another organization to recruit and train volunteer drivers who want to help their neighbors age in the community.

Finding Paid Work and Volunteer Opportunities

AARP has resources for older people in your community who are looking for [paid work opportunities](#) and for people who are looking for [meaningful volunteer work](#).

Eight Domains: Transportation

Age-friendly communities offer transportation options that improve health, support vibrant neighborhoods and connect people to economic and social opportunities throughout their communities. They enable people of any age to reach their desired destinations safely and conveniently.

Transportation alternatives are essential for health and well-being of people who can no longer drive or who choose not to drive. The ability to drive a car to local stores, keep medical appointments, or meet friends at a local restaurant is a sign of independence that many older adults do not want to lose. People who live in rural areas or in places without extensive public transportation systems are forced to drive even when they no longer feel safe driving. For many, the only alternative is unwanted dependence on friends, neighbors and family for rides to health and community services and to participate in social and recreational opportunities. Lack of transportation that prevents residents from participating in community activities often results in isolation, depression and anxiety. Some people seek out more supportive housing options. Offering a range of affordable and convenient transportation options to maximize independence is important for older adults to remain engaged in the community and to be as socially and physically active as they want to be.¹¹



Transportation alternatives are also important for safety. Nationally, about 15 older adults die and 586 suffer serious injuries in car crashes on an average day.¹² While older drivers are in fewer accidents than their younger counterparts, they are more likely to suffer serious injuries or die as a result of an accident than are people who are in better health. The risk increases dramatically for people age 85 and older. All the residents in the community benefit when transportation options are available to older and disabled adults.

*Convenient Transportation Options*¹³

A variety of safe, affordable, dependable, and user-friendly travel options enables people to stay active and engaged in their communities. For some, regular, fixed-route public transportation services are ideal; for others, because of health,

¹¹ Ball, Scott. Aging in Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments. AARP: <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/plan/planning/aging-in-place-a-toolkit-for-local-governments-aarp.pdf>

¹² Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (ND). Older Adult Drivers. http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/older_adult_drivers/

¹³ AARP. (2016). Livable Communities: Transportation. <http://www.aarp.org/ppi/issues/livable-communities/transportation/>

disability status or geography, personal services — such as paratransit, dial-a-ride, reduced-fare taxis, or volunteer driver programs — are needed.

Safe Streets

More than 30,000 Americans are killed on our nation’s roadways each year and far more are injured. Older road users, because of their increased frailty, are overrepresented in both vehicle and pedestrian fatalities.

Complete Streets are those designed and operated for safe, comfortable and convenient travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. The focus of complete streets initiatives has been on changing transportation agency policies and procedures so that these multimodal accommodations become routine at the project-development stage. Well-designed roads help to extend many older adults’ safe driving years and at the same time they make it possible to travel by foot, bicycle or public transit safely in the community.

Transportation Coordination of Human Services

Travel is essential for independence. Recognizing this, a variety of local public and private agencies and organizations—for example, State Departments of Transportation, Health, and Employment, County Social Services Agencies, sheltered workshops, and the American Red Cross—provide specialized transportation services to persons who have difficulties providing their own transportation. In addition, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public transportation agencies to provide complementary paratransit services for persons with disabilities wherever the public transit agency provides fixed-route, accessible transportation. These different service providers may receive funding for transportation services from a number of federal, state, local, and nonprofit programs and organizations—each with its own objectives and requirements.

This human service transportation “system” has resulted in a multiplicity of local services targeted to particular populations for specific (and often limited) purposes. Transportation resources are often not coordinated and frequently duplicate expenditures and service efforts. They lack cooperation and communication, provide inadequate levels

AARP Resources to Support Your Age-Friendly Transportation Initiatives

[AARP Driving Resource Center](#) has a host of resources that can keep your roads—and community residents of all ages—safer.

The [AARP Public Policy Institute](#) has done extensive research to identify the travel patterns and needs of people age 50+.

of service, vary in service quality, provide inadequate and unreliable information about services and costs, and have no comprehensive plan for meeting service needs. The fragmented system confuses consumers and fails to address the needs of many individuals who do not meet specific agency or program eligibility requirements.

Coordination is one strategy for improving the performance of transportation services and increasing overall mobility. The potential benefits of coordination among transportation providers include more resources applied to transportation, more cost-effective use of those resources, expanded service, more trips taken, lower costs to customers, cost savings for some participating agencies, more centralized management, and improved service quality. When transportation providers are able to coordinate their operations, older persons—and other special population groups—often benefit from the increased availability of transportation and higher-quality services¹⁴

These are some ways that your age-friendly initiative can learn about how older adults in your community are using transportation and to identify any gaps in services.

Survey. These are some examples of question you can use in a transportation survey. You wouldn't want to use all of these questions on a survey. Some may feel more "right" than others. Use the ones that are best for your community. When deciding which survey questions to include, don't forget to ask yourself how the resulting information will further the age-friendly work in your community.

Please describe your level of mobility (your ability to walk and get around):

- I can easily walk unassisted
- I use a cane or walker when walking
- I walk unassisted but with difficulty
- I use a wheelchair

Please tell us how you usually travel around NAMETOWN (check all that apply):

- Personal vehicle
- Friends/family
- Volunteer Driver Program
- Walking
- Public transportation
- Other: _____

¹⁴ Burkhardt, Jon E. *Coordinated Transportation Systems*. Rockville, MD: Econometrics.
http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/consume/2000_16_transport.pdf

Please rate how important the following factors are to your ability to travel in NAMETOWN. Only rate those factors that are relevant to your situation.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not Very important
a) I no longer have a valid driver's license/ don't drive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) I don't have anyone to take me.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) I can't afford transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Availability of transportation (services/times are inconvenient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) I have physical limitations and there is no accessible means of transportation available in NAMETOWN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Weather conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Darkness.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: _____

How many times per month do you:

	0	1-2	3-4	5 or more
a) Go to medical appointments.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Take a walk or go to a group exercise program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Run errands (e.g. banking or shopping)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Go out to socialize (e.g. visit relatives or friends, play cards, attend a book club).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please list): _____

How important do you think it is to have the following in your community?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important
a. Accessible, convenient and affordable public transportation that is reliable.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Transportation services for people living with a disability.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Easy to read traffic signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Well-lit, safe streets and intersections for all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Audio-visual pedestrian crossings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Driver education/refresher courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Focus Group: One way to find out about how older adults in your community get around and what the unmet needs are for the current transportation system is to ask them. Possible focus group questions include:

1. How do you get around NAMETOWN? To do your shopping, errands, attend a formal place of worship or meditation, or attend a social or recreational activity? To get to medical appointments?
2. Tell me about the transportation options in NAMETOWN.
3. Think about a person 10-15 years older than you are who no longer drives. Tell me what his or her life is like. Is he or she able to get to medical appointments? Go shopping? Visit friends? What kind of transportation does he or she use?
4. What kind of transportation options do you think NAMETOWN needs?
Prompt: A fixed route system, volunteer program? More accessible transportation options?
5. What would you be willing to pay to ride/use (transportation system described above) if we were to have it in NAMETOWN?

Age-Friendly Asset Inventory: AARP created a [walk audit tool kit](#)

that you can request from AARP Maine. Conducting a walk audit will provide your age-friendly initiative with invaluable information about how well your community supports safe use of the roads and public ways by pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. The walk audit will look at the condition of

streets and sidewalks, examine the safety of intersections, identify safety features—such as buffers between roads and pedestrian pathways and well-marked, clear road signs—and will also identify areas for improvement. Another advantage of a walk audit is that it increases community engagement. Communities that are safe for older drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists are safer places for residents of all ages to move around in the community.



As part of your age-friendly asset interview you may also want to identify:

- In addition to public transportation available to residents of all ages (if there are any in your community), what other transportation options are available to residents?

- Formal volunteer driver programs. What are the restrictions for using the service? Who is eligible? When are rides available (7 days, M-F, times of day)?
- Informal group transportation/car pools. For example, does a group form your local senior center carpool to special events? How is information about the car pools disseminated?
- Public transportation for people with a disability. Does it provide rides to medical appointments only or does it also provide rides for errands, to meet friends at a restaurant, or to attend a social group? What are the days/hours of operations? Who can use it?
 - Private transportation, such as taxis. Are they available? What is the cost?
- Is signage on public and private transportation vehicles clear?
- Make a list of ways in which people find out about transportation options?

Moving Forward: After learning whether existing transportation options meet the need for older adults in your community, the next step is to think about how your age-friendly initiative can address any gaps that were identified in your assessment. Are there ways to expand participation in existing forms of alternative transportation? Are there groups that you could work with to expand options in your community?

Here are a few ideas that have been used in other communities:

[Ped-Flag Program](#)¹⁵

Yellow flags are placed at more than 75 pedestrian crosswalks in Kirkland, Washington. Pedestrians carry a flag from one side of the street to the other in order to be more visible to drivers. Volunteers “Adopt a PedFlag Crossing” and commit to maintain and replace flags at their designated crosswalk.



AARP Resources

- [AARP Smart Driver Program](#) offers on-line and classroom-style courses to help older adults learn how to compensate for age-related changes when they are driving. Taking the class can help people evaluate their own driving skills, better understand new technological features available in most cars and learn

¹⁵ Dwyer, Katelyn (2015). 11 Inspiring Livability Efforts. *AARP Livable Communities*. <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/livable-in-action/info-2015/inspiring-livability-efforts.html?cmp=NLC-LC-HF-CTRL-081716-F2-CreativelyInspiring-CTA-1401367&encparam=9YhZC9ou5HTLj4/5OVFjbULBM4Kf3qLwg1aLwFqAkUw%3D>

important safe driving techniques. There is no driver evaluation component so the classes are not intimidating.

- [CarFit](#) is an assessment of the “fit” between you and your car that was designed by AARP and AAA. The program takes about 20 minutes and ensures that your car is set up to maximize the comfort and safety of the driver.

Volunteer Driver Transportation Program

Age-Friendly Ellsworth Maine is home to [Friends in Action](#). Friends in Action runs a very successful transportation program that serves people in Ellsworth and in many of the surrounding small towns. For more information, contact Friends in Action:

Partnering with Volunteer Transportation Networks.

- The age-friendly initiative in Harpswell, Maine learned that there was a need for transportation by some of its older residents and that several older people were interested in providing rides. Rather than start its own driving program, Harpswell Aging at Home worked with an existing transportation service that covered the area but hadn't been well publicized in Harpswell. [People Plus](#) in Brunswick added new riders and more than fifty new volunteers when it expanded to Harpswell. People Plus and Harpswell at Home both benefitted by working together to strengthen transportation outreach in the community.
- [Rides in Sight](#): A non-profit service that works to find local rides for residents who need them. Affiliated with Independent Transportation Network of America (ITNAmerica), a national transportation network that supports community-based transportation efforts across America.

Increasing Awareness of Existing Options

In larger communities, where there are public and volunteer transportation options, programs that help people identify the best transportation options for their needs can be very helpful. Edmonton, Canada has implemented a number of programs to increase awareness of transportation options and to encourage older residents to try public transportation. To increase awareness, the city has created [information hubs](#) that are displayed in shopping centers, housing complexes and activity centers.

For more information about transportation in rural areas, read the AARP Special Report [Meeting Older Adults' Mobility Needs: Transportation Planning and Coordination in Rural Communities](#).

The Eight Domains: Community Support and Health Services



Community supports and health services are vital for the health and well-being of older residents. Access to clearly written information about health and other topics of concern to older people and to affordable, high-quality social and health services is key to staying healthy and maximizing independence as people age in the community.¹⁶

The health of older people depends on access to a primary care physician and to medical care specialists. Preventative and health maintenance programs that aim to give older adults tools to, for example, improve balance and prevent falls, manage weight, stop smoking, or manage a chronic disease help people to maintain or even improve their health and quality of life. Readily accessible information about health concerns empowers older people to take charge of their physical health.

Your local public health department is a valuable partner for an age-friendly community. For more ideas, go to AARP Livable Communities [Public Health and Age-Friendly Communities](#).

Formal and informal recreational opportunities for people of all abilities provide an opportunity for people to socialize and stay fit. When older residents enjoy optimal health, they are more likely to be actively engaged in the civic and political life of the community, to shop at local businesses, and to spend time with friends and neighbors.¹⁷ Family and other informal care partners are less likely to have to miss work or withdraw from volunteer positions in the community if their loved ones enjoy the best health possible.

Older residents also need access to community supports—including programs that address food security (such as a food pantry or meals on wheels), assistance with everyday activities (such as yard work, snow removal, and shopping), home care services, legal services, and care partner supports—to thrive in their community.

None of us want to think about the likelihood of a natural or man-made disaster. However, communities need to prepare for this possibility and those plans need to include the age-related needs of their older residents, who are more likely to suffer adverse effects from an emergency situation than their younger peers.¹⁸

¹⁶ Citizens Advisory Committee (HI): <http://www.kupunatokeiki.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/6-Community-Support-and-Health-Services-Meeting-Notes-4-10-14.pdf>

¹⁷ http://www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/resources/AFCP_Eng.pdf

¹⁸ <http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/EmergenciesEnglish13August.pdf>

All of this seems like a tall order for any community, but especially for a small town. Age-friendly communities do not need to create all of the health and community supports described. They increase awareness of existing programs and services and only create new programming when there is a gap that isn't met by existing services.

Survey. These are some examples of question you can include in a survey that will help you to understand what kinds of needs people in your municipality have for health and community services and to learn how older people in your town are engaging with existing services. You wouldn't want to use all of these questions on a survey. Some may feel more "right" than others. Use the ones that are best for your community. When deciding which survey questions to include, don't forget to ask yourself how the resulting information will further the age-friendly work in your community.

In the past 12 months, have you needed help with any of the following? Were you able to get the help?

	<u>Did you need help?</u>		<u>Could you find help?</u>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
a. Filling out forms or preparing taxes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Household chores or routine home maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Home repair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Yard work or gardening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Snow removal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Running errands—shopping, banking, picking up medications, returning books to the library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Taking medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Preparing meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Place a check beside the resources you would use if you or a friend or family member needed information about a service:

- AARP NAME Area Agency on Aging Popular Press (newspaper, radio)
- Local Senior Center** Family and Friends Phone Book
- Library Local non-profit organization Doctor or Health Care Provider
- Faith-based organizations NAMETOWN Town Office Internet

How often do you engage in some form of physical exercise?

- Several times a week
 Once or twice each week
 Weekly
 Every other week
 Rarely

How important is it to you to remain as physically active as possible?

- Very Important
 Important
 Not very important
 Not at all Important

Which of the following are available/do you use or attend in NAMETOWN?

	Available, I use	Available, I don't use	Not available, I wish it was	Not available, not important
a. Fitness activities for older people.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Health and wellness programs and classes in such areas as fall prevention, chronic disease management and nutrition.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. A service that helps residents fund and access health and supportive services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Easy to find information on local health and supportive services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Easily understandable and helpful local hospital or clinic answering service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Home health care services that are affordable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Respectful and helpful social service providers and medical care providers.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How likely do you think it is that you will need the following services in the next five years?

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not likely
a. Personal Care at Home.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Housecleaning.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Caregiver Support.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Wellness/Fitness Classes.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Home maintenance.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Home delivered meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Safety checks.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Library Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Focus Group: One way to find out how well existing health services and community supports are meeting the needs of residents is by asking them. Asking people their opinion of current services may also tell you about gaps in services and how residents prefer that the gaps are addressed. Here are some focus group questions you can use:

1. Tell me what you do for physical exercise in NAMETOWN? How do you find out about the recreational opportunities that interest you?
2. Have you or a friend or a neighbor ever needed help finding a service—finding affordable home health care, getting help around the house, finding resources needed by a caregiver. What was it like to search for what was needed? *Prompt: Were resources found? Where did you look?*
3. What is it like to use the social services and medical care providers in NAMETOWN?
4. What is the best way to get word out if you plan a new activity? If you were starting a new program or service?

Age-Friendly Asset Inventory: One of the best ways to find out if support and health services are available in your community is to inventory all of the local health care providers. Make a list that includes their designation as primary care physicians or specialists. If there are no health care services in your community, calculate the distance to the regional center that offers health care services. A longer distance may indicate a need for transportation to increase access. Your asset inventory will also want to identify:

- Formal recreational opportunities for active older adults and therapeutic exercise programs for people who want to maximize their wellness even though they have a disabling condition or difficulty with balance.
- Availability of health promotion programs that address concerns that are common among older people.
- End of life resources and supports.
- Availability of food security programs such as a food pantry or meals on wheel program
- Home care services or other programs to help people with Independent activities of daily living—such as chores, balancing a checkbook, preparing meals, shopping, etc.
- Services or programs that specifically target isolated older adults.

- Affordable home care services that offer help with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs, bathing, dressing, etc.).
- Pharmacies? Do any deliver?
- How does your local disaster preparedness plan address the needs of older, frail adults?

Moving Forward: After gathering data about the services that are available and learning how older adults in your community perceive those services, the next step is to match existing needs with available services. Are some services under-utilized? Is there a way for your age-friendly initiative to increase participation? Are there gaps in services? What can your age-friendly initiative do to address those gaps?

Here are a few initiatives that have been tried in age-friendly communities:

Emergency Responder dementia awareness training

Some age-friendly communities have successfully advocated for emergency responders to receive dementia training through the Alzheimer’s Association and have publicized resources, such as the [Code Red Emergency Notification](#) system, that will alert residents in time of an emergency or when a vulnerable person has wandered away and emergency personnel need to help locate them. Communities and counties across Maine have also started wanders databases. However, they can only work if residents know that the database is an option. Age-Friendly communities get the word out about available resources.

Wellness Programming

- Bowdoinham, Maine offers wellness programming to meet the needs of active older residents as well as residents who are aging with a disability or who are experiencing age-related changes that make physical activity difficult. Examples range from kayaking and pickleball to Matter of Balance.
- Age-Friendly Des Moines, Iowa offers the [50 and Better Senior Health Fair](#) each year. The age-friendly initiative in Des Moines makes it fun to learn about staying healthy.

Caregiver Supports

The [Livable Communities Caregiver Coaching Program](#) ensures that caregivers have access to the information and support they need by matching a “caregiver coach”—someone who has provided care for a friend or loved one and has gone through a special training program—with new caregivers.

[Fire Safety.](#)

American Red Cross offers [free home fire safety visit](#) to promote fire safety. Volunteers will come to your home and replace or install smoke detectors, help design escape routes for people of all abilities, and provide free smoke alarms and bed shaker alarms for people who are hard of hearing. One way for your age-friendly team to promote fire safety is to publicize it in your community.

[Food Security](#)

- The Community Enterprise Shop, coordinated by volunteers, provides fresh fruits and vegetables for local residents at no cost (donations appreciated). A “kitchen table” provides space for people to gather over a cup of coffee or tea. Clothing and books are available for sale or exchange. Donations and proceeds from the sale of books and clothes keep the shop going.
- The Healthy Peninsula Project started a [Magic Food Bus](#) project that offers free, fresh, local produce, health information, and books for children and adults. The goal of the program is to encourage people—regardless of income—to try fresh produce by making it free for anyone who visits the bus. The program serves about 50 families each week in Deer Isle, Stonington, and Blue Hill.



[TRIAD](#)

TRIADS represent the collaboration of older residents, police, and social service and health care providers who work together to prevent elder mistreatment. The goal of TRIAD is to prevent crimes against older people and to reduce the fear of being a victim of crime that many older people experience. There are more than a dozen active TRIADS in Maine. Call 2-1-1 to find out if there is one in your area.

[Medical Equipment Loan Closets](#)



Medical equipment loan closets lend durable medical equipment to people who need it. Donations of equipment are made by people who no longer need the walker, portable toilet, cane, hospital bed, lift chair, or any other type of medical equipment. This means that most of the equipment has been gently used. It also means that starting a loan closet is not difficult or expensive. Given the high cost of equipment, it can be very helpful to residents who need equipment they cannot afford or would rather not purchase. Several age-friendly communities in Maine have a loan program. To find a loan closet near you, call 2-1-1.

Developing a Plan to Produce Impact

The Maine Guide

Building Livable, Age-Friendly Communities



Creating an action plan is vital to ensure that your age-friendly community initiative will be effective and make meaningful progress to increase the age-friendliness of your community. The action plan that you create will be the guide for your day-to-day work.

Mission, Vision, and Values

There are a few things that need to be in place before you start to develop your action plan.

A completed age-friendly assessment of your community will help you set priorities, make decisions about what needs to be in the plan, and determine activities that reflect the needs and preferences of older residents.

It is important to have a strategic framework to focus the thinking of the team writing the action plan. The eight domains of livability provide a guide to set priorities in areas that effect the health and well-being of the people in your city or town. Take time to review the eight domains and discuss your understanding of each within the context of your community.

Before work begins the group needs to have a clear and shared vision that the goal of your work in the community is to increase livability. It is easy to become derailed from the overarching goal to increase livability when a specific need in one of the domains—such as transportation, housing, or communication – emerges as the focus of your work. Before starting on the action plan, it is a good idea to come up with a mission statement, a vision statement describing what your team hopes will be the long-term effects of your work, and values that will guide your work. The worksheet on page 17A of the appendix may help organize your work.

To write a mission statement, your group may want to ask the following questions:

1. What is the focus of your livability work? The ultimate goal?
2. What are the broad methods you plan to use to accomplish the overarching goal of your work?

The goal of age-friendly community work is that people of all ages:

1. Can actively participate in community activities.
2. Will be treated with respect, regardless of their age.
3. Have access to recreational opportunities and health services to enjoy the best health possible
4. Are able to be active, vital contributors to the economic, civic, and social life of the community.
5. Receive appropriate support if they can no longer look after themselves.

3. What is the target population for your work in the community? Are you trying to make a more livable community for people age 60 and older—knowing that creating a community that is more welcoming of older people is a better place for all ages--or is age not an issue for your initiative?
4. What value does the livable community work you are doing have for the town at large?

This is mission statement answers to all four questions:

The Advisory Committee on Aging seeks to enhance the lives of all people who live in OurTown (value), with special focus on residents age 75 and older (target population), by advising the Select Board about policy and infrastructure changes that will make our town more livable, by partnering with other organizations to enhance existing services, and by encouraging volunteers to create programs and services (broad methods) that are needed to inspire older residents to be age safely and independently in our community and to be as active in the social, economic, and civic life of the community as they want to be (focus).

To Write a Vision Statement imagine what you would like to have accomplished when the livable community effort has been in place for 5-10 years. Use the present tense and offer a clear graphic mental picture of your goal. Don't be afraid to express the passion and commitment your livable community team has for the work. Your vision statement should be specific to your community and to the values your team brings to the work.

To help your team write a vision statement, you may want to ask these questions:

1. What needs to be changed to make our community more livable?
2. Why is it important for these issues to be addressed?
3. What is our 10 year goal?
4. How would we know that our 10-year goal has been reached?

This is an example of a poor vision statement:

Providing an environment that will allow older residents in our community to continue participating in all aspects of community life for as long as they want to live here.

The vision statement could apply to any community in the world, doesn't offer any specifics for how it will create an environment that "allow(s) older residents" to "continue participating in all aspects of community life," and doesn't express the goals of the livable community team. It also isn't the most inspiring.

This is a better vision statement: *Franklin for a lifetime*¹⁹.

The statement is short and catchy—almost a slogan rather than a vision statement. You want people to remember your vision statement. In this short phrase, the team built on resident's pride in their community and it tells us that this livable community effort is focused on making a better community for all ages.

Another example of a good vision statement is: *Dedicated to making Burlington the best place to live, work, and play as we age.*²⁰

Again, the team that created this vision statement chose to use the name of the community to build on community pride. We also know that this initiative is citizen-driven (as we age) and that their focus is on creating an environment that supports active aging.

A third example of a well-written vision statement is: *A community that values, empowers, and supports older persons and their quality of life.*²¹

This vision statement clearly expresses how the relationship the age-friendly team would like to see between older adults and the community at large (a community that values older residents, empowers them to make decisions for their private lives and for the age-friendly work in the community, and one that provides policy, infrastructure, and services to support quality of life of residents who choose to age in place. It is also catchy enough to be memorable).

Identify the core values that will guide your age-friendly work.

Value statements define the core principles that will guide your decisions and actions. They should honor community values, guide your work with partner organizations and help volunteers to understand how your age-friendly initiative conducts business.

¹⁹ City of Franklin (2015). *Franklin Voices*. http://extension.unh.edu/resources/tag/Franklin_for_a_Lifetime

²⁰ Burlington Age-Friendly seniors Council. (2016). *About Us*. <http://burlingtonagefriendly.ca/about/>

²¹ City of Ottawa. (2011). Older Adult Plan.

<http://ottawa.ca/cs/groups/content/@webottawa/documents/pdf/mdaw/mjg1/~edisp/cap290801.pdf>

One way to develop value statements is to brainstorm core values that team members believe should guide the age-friendly work. This will allow you to see how the age-friendly values of team members converge and where they differ. It is important that your team agree on value statements. The brainstorming activity provides an opportunity for your team to discuss their values and come to agreement around 5 or 6 values that they identify.

A few well-developed value statements include:

1. A recognition that older adults are contributors to our community and that all – regardless of cultural and religious background, language, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, abilities, financial situation, or geographic location – must be respected and included.
2. A belief that older adults must have access to services that are people-centered, accessible, affordable, equitable, and appropriate to individual needs and abilities.
3. A recognition that the majority of older adults prefer to age in place, in their familiar neighborhood.
4. A belief that encouraging age-friendly business development will have a positive effect on our economy.
5. A belief that older adults must be involved in deciding priorities, shaping actions and bringing about change.
6. An awareness that age-friendly environments and communities benefit all age groups.
7. An awareness that age-friendly communities will, when possible, raise awareness of existing services and/or advocate with local organizations to expand capacity to include our community. Only when services are not available will we attempt to create services that fill the gaps.

Each age-friendly initiative will develop its own values, based on the shared values of team members as well as the values of the community. For example, if your community wants to attract more young families, you may want to list the recognition that age-friendly communities are good for people of all ages at the top of your list of values. On the other hand, if your community wants to discourage young families from moving to town and wants to market itself as a retirement destination/ideal tourist spot for older people, you may want to list the effect of age-friendly business on economic development value.

Determining Priorities and Setting Goals

One of the first steps when writing an action plan is to identify priority areas. Most age-friendly initiatives do not immediately start work on all eight domains. To avoid being overwhelmed by the amount of work to be done and to produce some early “wins” based on the findings of the age-friendly assessment, the core team determines which three or four of the eight domains are top priorities to increase livability.

The worksheet on **page 19A** of the appendix may help you to set priorities in the eight domains of livability that reflect your age-friendly assessment and community environment.

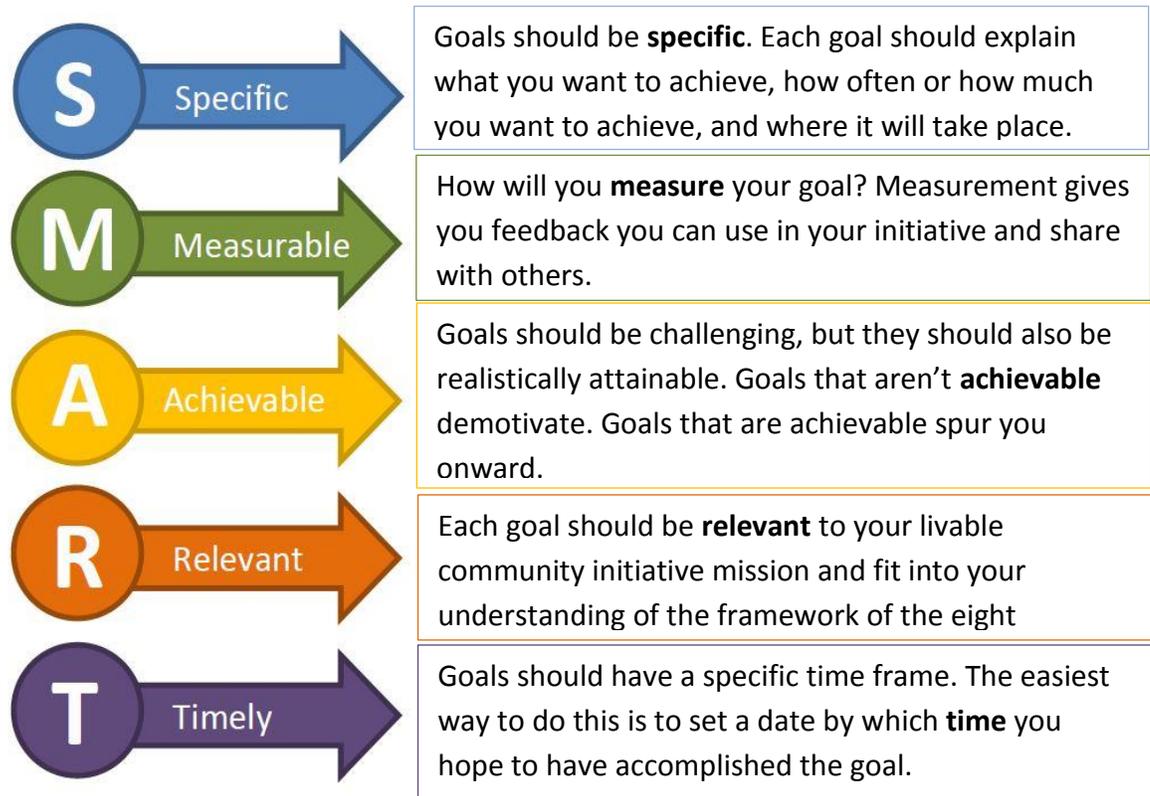
After you identify the top priorities in all of the domains, the core group may want to consider what is realistic for your group to accomplish. Most age-friendly efforts start by targeting three or four domains that are identified in the age-friendly assessment as top priorities for older residents. This can help the group focus on one or two high impact areas that are highly feasible in your community.

It is important to remember that a single initiative may address more than one domain. For example, one community found out that 80% of their older adults were not getting an adequate amount of fresh fruits and vegetables in their diet. The group started a community shop in the town (pop. 300) that provides older visitors with the opportunity to get fresh fruit and vegetables (free or donation-based), a place to sit and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea with their friends, and the chance to purchase (or exchange) used books and clothing. The shop is staffed completely by volunteers, all of whom have celebrated more than 60 birthdays. The need to address food security (community supports and health services) led to an initiative that also addressed two other domains--social participation and respect and social inclusion. By addressing three of the eight domains, rather than focusing on one at a time, the initiative has had a significant impact on the health and well-being of older residents with nearly the same effort that would have been required to address one.

After you have identified priority areas within a few domains, it is time to set specific goals.

*SMART goals*²²:

Now that you have identified the strengths and areas for improvement in your community, it is time to set goals that will build on the strengths you have identified to address barriers to livability. Setting goals and finding the right words to describe them can be a difficult process. Research consistently shows that creating specific, challenging, clear goals will lead to better results for your livable community initiative:



The livable community work you are doing can only be done in collaboration—between members of your team, with community volunteers, with community partners and regional organizations. The goals you set should reflect the collaborative nature of your work. Identifying partners needed to accomplish a goal is important for moving your initiative forward.

²² Holt, C., Fawcett, S., Francisco, V., Schultz, J., Berkowitz, B., Wolff, T. (2016). Creating Objectives. *Community Toolbox*. <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/create-objectives/main>

Short-Term, Medium-Term and Long-Term Goals

One of the keys to starting your initiative on the path to success is to identify a few goals that can be reasonably accomplished in a short period of time, usually defined as three months. Examples could be getting the word out about an existing, but under-utilized, service, starting to publish a monthly calendar of local activities, or creating a transportation resource directory. You will not find an opportunity for quick success in every domain. However, celebrating a few short term goals will show people in your community that your efforts are making a difference in the everyday life of residents. Short term goals give you the opportunity to make a big impact and to gather more support for your initiative.

Medium-length will take three months to one year to complete. These goals may require collaboration with other groups or organizations, or they may require financial resources to complete. Examples may be the addition of an elevator to a library that wasn't fully accessible or adding benches to a local park.

Long-term goals take 1-5 years (or more!) to complete and require funding and work with other organizations or even with other towns or cities. Examples of long-term goals may be creating a regional transportation program or planning to build a community center.

Short-Term Transportation Initiatives

1. Bicycle Lanes
2. Chicanes
3. Crossing Islands
4. Curb Extensions
5. Clear Directional Signals
6. Easy to Read Street Signs
7. Head-Out Diagonal Parking
8. Lane Narrowing
9. Parklets and Pocket Parks
10. Pedestrian Scaled Lighting
11. Rain Gardens
12. Safety Buffers
13. Sharrows
14. Street Trees

For more information, go to the [Livable Community Tool Kit, Short Range Solutions](#)

Developing Strategies to Reach your Goals and Establish Impact Metrics

Now that you have identified the mission, vision, value statements, and goals of your age-friendly work, it is time to get specific about how you will achieve your goals. You may have several ideas for initiatives, activities, and programs that will meet the needs you identified in the age-friendly assessment. Start by brainstorming which ideas will work best in your community. Next, learn more about how other communities have implemented their ideas.

Developing strategies.

Setting goals is step one but identifying programs or activities that other livable community initiatives have used to reach similar goals can be challenging. There are a number of ways to gather information. After you have found an idea that seems like it may work in your community, contact another community that is using a similar effort to gather advice about lessons learned—what has worked best, challenges to making it work, and things they would have done differently.

Sources for ideas about best practices.

Networking: Talk to the other age-friendly and livable community initiative teams in your state or in your region. Your AARP state office will know which communities have implemented initiatives similar to the one you are interested in starting.

Internet Search: The power of an Internet search when looking for information about livable changes in any of the 8 domains of livability cannot be underestimated.

AARP and WHO resources about livability and about age-friendly development:

- [Challenge Your Community for Change for the Better—in 100 Days or Less](#)
- [AARP Livable Communities: Information and Resources for Local Leaders](#)
- [Age-Friendly Archive](#)
- [Age-Friendly in Practice](#)
- [Age-Friendly Guides and Toolkits](#)

Regional organizations that work with older adults: Some organizations address only one or a few areas of livability and cover a region larger than your community. Senior centers, Area Agencies on Aging, hospitals and social service organizations may all be good sources of information about addressing the goals that your livable community initiative has identified.

Customizing Best Practices for your Community

After you have identified some ideas for ways to address the priority needs in your community, there are a few things you may want to consider:

1. Are similar programs offered by a regional or local group? If there are, can your age-friendly initiative work with that program to increase its capacity to serve older adults in your community?
2. If there is no similar program that can expand services to your area, is there an organization that is willing to expand or create needed services? For example, the age-friendly initiative in Bowdoinham, Maine partnered with the Masonic League to create a Handy Brigade that met the need of local residents for help with simple chores.
3. What has already been developed and tried in other communities to meet the need? For example, the age-friendly initiative in Bethel wanted to start a program to meet the need for information about local events and services to meet the needs of older people. One of their first steps was to contact other age-friendly initiatives in Maine to hear how they had tackled the need.

When you are listing areas for improvement and considering the appropriate way to address those needs, think about community values and the preferences of older adults for the way needs are addressed. For example, if two community values are “independence” and “respecting another person’s independence unless asked”, you may find that older adults prefer to be recognized as the people who are making the changes they want to see in the community. You will want to address barriers in a way that encourages that independence. The worksheet on **page 21A** of the Appendix may help your core team customize implementation ideas for your community.

It is never a good idea to include a goal that does not reflect what older people want and need, that does not adhere to older people’s preference or the way things are done, and that is not in line with community values.

For example, if a barrier under housing is “lawn care and home maintenance,” you may think it is an ideal opportunity for a youth group to provide community service to older adults. However, when designing the program, you will want to remember that your community is a place where older residents do not welcome a service if it takes away from their feeling of independence. You may want to create a mentoring opportunity so that older adults are able to participate as equals in the relationship, rather than simply as recipients of services.

Identifying the tactics you will use to achieve a goal

For each of the goals you have established, identifying the following will help keep your efforts on track:

1. A statement about what must be achieved, and the actual goal (keeping in mind the discussion of SMART goals, mentioned earlier). Include a time-frame for the goal that allows completion of all activities and a way to measure success.
2. A list of activities that have to be followed to reach the goal.
3. A date when you hope to have accomplished each activity.
4. Identification of the organization or individual who is responsible for each activity.
5. A list of the resources required to complete the activity.
6. A discussion of potential barriers to complete of each activity listed under the goal.
7. Identification of indicators that will allow your livable community to measure progress regarding each activity needed to accomplish the goal.

In the Appendix, we have included a worksheet that may be useful to plan action steps for each of the goals in your strategic action plan (see **page 23A**).

While you were designing your goals and the activities needed to accomplish each goal, you determined a way to measure success. In the sidebar, you will see different ways to measure the overall success of each goal and of the impact your initiative has had on the community.

Evaluation

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Evaluation answers the question, “How did we accomplish the goal?”. Three important terms for talking about evaluation are “inputs”, “outputs” and “outcomes”.

- Inputs are the resources that had to be present for the activity to be implemented. For example, considering the program that matched teens with older adults who wanted to learn more about technology, the inputs were a place where equipment could be accessed, computers and other technological devices, and students and older adults willing to participate in the program.
- Outputs tell what you created. An example of an output may be the number of people who attended a computer training session or the number of volunteer students who signed up to work with an older resident to help overcome their technical challenges.
- Outcomes report the results of your work. For example, an outcome of the technical training initiative may be the percentage of students who had a positive attitude toward older adults after the training or the percentage of older adults who reported using their devices regularly.

Methods that can be used for evaluation:

- Satisfaction surveys
- Reports about goals you have reached
- Focus groups
- Interviews with participants
- Community level indicators (such as number of older people who are income-eligible who are using SNAP benefits)
- Program data (for example, the number of people who participated in a program)

Evaluation Examples.

Here are a few examples of evaluation tools you may use to measure progress toward your overall goals in the housing, transportation, and health and community services domains.

1. Transportation

Transportation frequently becomes a focus of concern by local communities. Safe, reliable, appropriate transportation is essential to the health and well-being of older people.

If your initiative wants to measure the walkability of your municipality or how safe streets are for walkers, bikers, and cars, AARP has tools designed for the purpose.

- [AARP Walk Audits](#)
- [Complete Street Evaluation guide](#)

If your initiative is interested in increasing driver safety, you may want to report the number of people who have enrolled in the [AARP Smart Driver Course](#) in the past three years, or you may want to host a [Car Fit event](#) and report how many people attended.

2. Housing. Adequate, safe housing is essential for health and well-being. Nationally, older people are more likely to live in older housing than are younger people. Older homes are less likely to have home modifications and are more likely to need repairs. When a person is no longer able to complete home repairs or install modifications safely, overall safety in the home decreases.

Housing is often the single largest asset of older people. Without proper upkeep, the value of an older person's home can decline. A derelict home in the neighborhood negatively affects property values of surrounding homes.

Thus, many livable community initiatives focus on at least one aspect of housing as part of their work.

If your initiative is interested in finding ways for older residents to remain safely in their own homes and to protect their investment, you may want to learn how many older adults are accessing programs for increasing accessibility or safety in a home or who are getting help with simple chores, lawn care, or snow removal.

You may want to invite a program, like **Efficiency Maine**, to present their programs to your community or provide information about the services they offer. One way to evaluate the success of a presentation is to ask people if they plan to use the service or share the information with others.

You also may want to work with your AARP office to sponsor a **Home Fit Workshop** and distribute the [Home Fit Guide](#). As part of your evaluation, you can record, as an "output" the number of people who participated in the workshop. To measure "outcomes," you could do a follow-up telephone

survey six months later to find out how many people have made changes in their home and how they feel about the changes made.

3. Community Health and Support Services. Access to health care and services to support aging in place is key for the health and well-being of older residents. Some communities have emphasized food security in this area. Others have looked at elder abuse prevention or added disaster preparedness.

If your initiative is interested in making sure that older adults are included in the disaster preparedness plans for your community, you can document the ways that older adults are included by asking your town and county government for a copy of the plan.

If you are interested in food security, look at American Community Survey data to find out what percentage of older adults in your community who are eligible for SNAP benefits get them. Ask a local food pantry how many older adults participate in food pantry programs. If you see that older residents are not getting the help they need, you may want to mount a campaign to increase awareness. The American Community Survey Data is slow to change but an increase in the number of older people participating in the food pantry will be evident a few months into your initiative.

When you are choosing how to evaluate an activity or a goal, try to find indicators of change that will respond to your initiative quickly—such as program satisfaction or the reduction in falls six months after participating in a home modification program—over indicators, such as those in the census, that take a long time to reflect the changes you are making. It is important for evaluation to have, when possible, data that can show progress (or lack of progress) early in the initiative so that necessary adjustments can be made.

The Benefits of Evaluation

Changes in all eight domains of livability that are directly tied to the action plan you created will be apparent relatively quickly when you engage in a continuous process of evaluation. Evaluation tells you:

- Where your successes have been the strongest and the goals that need to be energized or that need to be re-assessed.

- Did your initiative fall short of meeting one of its goals because you didn't have the necessary human, financial or other resources?
- Did you fail to meet the goal because it wasn't a goal that older adults agreed was important or that was delivered in a way that was not respectful of how older adults preferred the program, activity or service to be offered?
- Which activities have contributed to the success of your goals, and which activities were not as meaningful to meeting your goals.
- Which facilitators and barriers contributed to the success (or lack of success) of a goal:
 - If barriers were unexpected, how can they be avoided if you attempt to reach the goal again?
 - If unexpected facilitators helped you to reach a goal, how can your initiative use that facilitator to recreate success in the future?
- How goals were revised to reflect the information you learned while you were implementing the service or activity.
- How measures of output or outcomes should be revised to reflect a change in a goal.

Evaluation gives you the information you need to keep your action plan flexible and relevant to the work you are doing. It tells you if the work you are doing has been effective and tells you how to make your initiative even more effective. Evaluation keeps your initiative accountable to funders, the volunteers who give their time to the local livable community effort, to your partner organizations, and to the municipality. It is an important way to increase engagement and garner support.

Now that you have created an action plan and a plan to evaluate the results of your efforts, it is time to start implementation--making changes in your community! As you move toward implementation, remember that a strategic action plan is a living document. Refining or modifying your goals and adjusting specific activities to respond to new situations or information is a sign of a healthy and vital initiative.

Implementation

Building Livable, Age-Friendly Communities

The Maine Guide



After your age-friendly initiative has agreed on an initial action plan, the next phase is implementation, which is when the community commits to moving forward.²³

Efforts to make a community truly livable and great for people of all ages can take years, and maintaining such livability – and improving upon it – is an ongoing endeavor. Occasionally, the stars will align and there will be a smooth path to implementation. However, that is rarely the case. Usually there are struggles and challenges. It is important to keep sight of your ultimate goal as you work toward implementation, and not get discouraged if everything doesn't fall into place as smoothly as you hoped in your action plan.

Putting your Plan into Action

Implementation of the community action plan will not look the same in all municipalities. Some of the differences between communities that will affect implementation are:

- Size of the community. It may be harder to gain wide-spread support in a large urban center than in a small rural community. Getting municipal help with specific livability initiatives may be harder in a rural community than in an urban community where changes can be included as part of department initiatives.
- Human and financial resources available to help with your initiative.
- Partnerships with departments in local government who can help or hinder implementation of a goal or specific activity that contributes to the goal.
- Partnerships with local and regional social and health service providers.
- Partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and service groups.
- Needs identified in the livable community assessment.
- Competing priorities of partner organizations.
- The Town Comprehensive Plan and department plans for city-wide improvements.

Implementation of some plans will require small steps that can be accomplished by community volunteers without access to money to fund the changes. Many rural age-friendly initiatives focus the majority of their work on low-cost and no-cost changes that do not require extensive investment by municipal government.

²³ AARP (2015). Step 3: Implementation. *AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities Tool Kit*.
<http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/implementation.html>

Implementation of other plans will require a major initiative that is supported by municipal government, sponsorship by a major funder, or collaboration by a number of regional service providers. Many of the age-friendly community initiatives in urban places—such as New York City, Washington DC, Honolulu, Hawaii, and Boston, Massachusetts—have required the joint efforts of a municipality, partner organizations and a funder willing to finance needed changes.

Whether you are launching an initiative that is targeting low-cost or no-cost changes, or an initiative that requires the coordinated efforts of multiple organizations and funders, there are a few guidelines that can help you make the implementation phase a success.

The Power of Consensus

Your age-friendly team will benefit by using a consensus model to determine how programs, activities, and services are implemented. Consensus does not mean that everyone on the team shares equal enthusiasm for the way you implement age-friendly changes, but it means that everyone can live with it. When the group is in agreement about the priorities it is setting for implementing your plan, your team will work together on the plan. Agreement about the way implementation will happen is as important for the sustainability of an age-friendly community team as is agreement about your overarching vision.

Target a Quick “Win”²⁴

To keep motivation up, you might want to work on a few initial age-friendly changes that can be accomplished within the next 100 days. Starting with a project or goal that can be put into place almost immediately enables the effort to create some forward momentum early on.

Focus Implementation Efforts on “High Priority” Goals and Actions

In every age-friendly assessment, there are some community concerns that rise to the top. It is important to include these “high priority” areas in your initial implementation plan even if working on the goals is unlikely to result in a “quick win.” Give regular updates about the progress you make in high priority areas to the community at large, to community leaders, and to your partner

²⁴ Stanton, Melissa (2015). Challenge your Community to Change for the Better—in 100 Days or Less. *AARP Livable Communities*. <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/livable-in-action/info-2014/the-100-day-community-challenge.html>

organizations. Break down the steps in a high priority area so that you will have small milestones toward progress to celebrate.

There are times when a “high priority” area is identified by a funder or a community partner that does not align with the priorities identified in the age-friendly community assessment. In that case, your core team will have to determine whether or not there is a way to align the priorities of a funder or community partner with those in your community. For the strength of your initiative, the priorities of older residents should come first. Community support is vital for an age-friendly community initiative to flourish. It will be hard to garner community support if your priorities don’t reflect what older residents want and need.

Involve Older Adults in Implementation

Age-friendly communities are places where older adults are included in all aspects of community life. That includes involvement in making the age-friendly changes they want to see in their community. You will benefit from their knowledge of the community. The same is true of involving younger people. An age-friendly community is a good place for people to live at all life stages. Including some younger residents in implementation ensures wider community buy-in for the work you are doing.

Now that you have identified what success will look like and have developed strategies to achieve your goals, it is time to take action. As you implement your program, it is important not to forget the power of an effective communication plan.

Creating a Message

Whether you are creating a public service announcement or working to develop a poster, it is important to keep in mind the four Ps of creating a successful message—product, price, place and promotion. Below we discuss these using a transportation example. Creating a message about a livable community effort in one of the other eight domains will follow the same pattern.

- **Product**

The product you are trying to sell is your transportation initiative. Are you trying to get the word out about transportation options available to people so that people who no longer want to drive will know that there are alternatives and so that people who no longer drive will use the transportation options in your

community? The resource guide is part of your product. Another, important, part of your product is the change in attitude about the benefits of using public transportation. You may also want to use your message to increase community support for your initiative. Raising support by the community at large for the change you are making is also a product that you are trying to market.

- **Price**
Price is not just about the cost of using or implementing your livable community initiative. Price addresses the cost for people who will be using the service you are implementing. Think about things like time and how much effort it will take to change a behavior. For example, if someone is used to driving themselves to a doctor's appointment, what will it take to switch to using a volunteer driver service or public transport? If the people you want to use a new service think that it will be inconvenient or difficult to use, they won't try your service. Your message needs to stress that benefits outweigh perceived costs.
- **Place**
Place refers to a physical place as well as to barriers to accessing a service. For example, if you are trying to get people to use a guide to local transportation options, you will want to make sure that the guides are readily available in the places where older adults and their families are likely to see them. If you are trying to increase the number of older people using the public transportation system, you may want to think about access. Are bus stops close to senior housing units? Are the busses accessible to someone using a walker or wheelchair? Your message will be more successful if the planning group thinks about the issues and addresses them before trying to convince people to use a service that is not accessible or is located more than a mile away from senior housing.
- **Promotion**
How will you promote your transportation initiative in the community? Contact people who have successfully gotten the word out about a social service to ask for advice about your campaign.

A successful message has to be easy to understand and must clearly state what your age-friendly community initiative offers, who will benefit from the transportation initiative you are implementing, how to use the service or resource, and why it is a valuable to participate in your transportation initiative. Your message also has to be

attractive. A poorly delivered message or a badly designed poster will not encourage people to engage with your transportation initiative. It is as important to pay attention to the visual elements in a program flier as it is to develop appropriately messaged content. Bright colors attract attention but make sure that the bright colors you use don't overwhelm the text. Text should be large enough and have enough contrast with the background color to be easily readable. The language you choose should reflect your community and your audience.

A message has to be clear and well-presented to attract people to adopt a new way of thinking about transportation. It is also important that the message be consistent. When possible, your livable community team should review all messaging that is distributed to the community—press releases, fliers, etc. However, some messaging opportunities, such as press interviews, do not allow the team to go over the message before it is given. One way to make sure that the message about your transportation initiative is always the same is to put one person in charge of communication for the project. That person can be the press contact who will be interviewed on community access television, and serve as the public voice of your initiative. AARP Maine can give you tips on talking with the media.

Developing a Communication Plan

Now that you have moved to the implementation stage, it is important to get the word out about your age-friendly work. An effective communication plan begins by raising awareness of your action plan. As you advocate for changes in policy and improvements in the community, communication is vital to garner wide-spread support for the changes you are proposing. As you implement programs and services, it is important to get the word out to attract volunteers and to encourage people to participate. If people don't know what you are offering, they won't be able to enjoy the new services, programs, changes in policy, or

Places where you may be able to get the word out about your livable community initiative:

- Local newspapers (free and subscription based)
- Community Facebook page
- Posters and fliers or brochures at places where your target audience gathers
- Community access television
- Public Service Announcements—Radio and Television
- Letters to the editor
- Press releases and press conferences
- Press coverage of your transportation initiative
- Word of mouth—offer to share information at clubs, fraternal organizations, town committees, anywhere older adults and their families may pick up the information

improvements to infrastructure. Your goals, and your successes when goals are met, should be shared with all of your community partners, your municipal government, the community at large, and funders. When it comes to community development work, it is good to brag! An age-friendly initiative is dependent on good will from residents, municipal government, and other community and regional partners.

For a worksheet that your core team can use to design a communication plan, see **page 24A** in the appendix.

It is also important to celebrate the success of partnerships. Your partners enjoy getting some public accolades for their work. By using the media to highlight their contribution, you increase awareness of your livable community work, ensure that partners will be willing to work with you again, and attract new volunteers and partners.

One of the first steps in a communication plan is to share your action plan with EVERYONE. No municipality or citizen group has all the financial and human resources to address the action plan alone. By sharing your plan widely, you will attract volunteers interested in specific projects and will attract organizations and groups interested in joining forces with your efforts in specific areas.

When you begin to implement a new initiative, it is important to get the word out about your service to:

1. Residents. The people in the community who you think will benefit from participating in your livable community transportation initiative.
2. The community at large. You want as much community support for the work you are doing as possible. One advantage of community support is that it will help raise awareness of the need for your initiative and will encourage residents to help your work by contributing human or financial resources.
3. Family members and friends. When family and friends are aware of a program, they can share the information with the people you hope will benefit from using it. Friends and relatives can also encourage someone who is reluctant to try a service or activity.
4. The decision makers in your community. Having their support for the livable community efforts you are making is invaluable.

Conclusion

Congratulations on the work you have done in your community! By engaging in the age-friendly planning process described in *The Maine Guide to Building Age-Friendly, Livable Communities*, your age-friendly effort is on its way to making sustainable changes in your community that will make it a better place to live for people of all ages.

The Maine Guide was developed to frame the efforts of community leaders working with interested stakeholders—residents age 50+ and their younger peers, municipal employees, elected officials, local businesses, social service and medical providers, volunteer and beneficent groups, and educational or research institutions--to making age-friendly or livable community changes in your city, town, or region. Each community is different and the way you use the guide will reflect those differences.

All of the steps presented here are essential for implementation of a sustainable age-friendly community initiative. The material in each section is based on the experience of other age-friendly community initiatives. However, each age-friendly step is flexible and should be tailored to meet your needs.

AARP is here to help you--now or twenty years from now. Some of the things you can do to stay up-to-date with the latest age-friendly and livable community news include:

- Subscribe to the free [AARP Livable Communities monthly newsletter](#) .
- Like the [Age-Friendly Maine Facebook page](#).
- Subscribe to the Maine Age-Friendly monthly newsletter (email request to: me@aarp.org).

By using the age-friendly planning process described in *The Maine Guide* and staying up to date with the latest news, you have joined communities across Maine, the United States, and throughout the world that have committed to becoming livable, age-friendly communities—great places for people of all ages and abilities to grow up, work, and play.

Appendix

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Worksheet: Building your Age-Friendly Committee²⁵

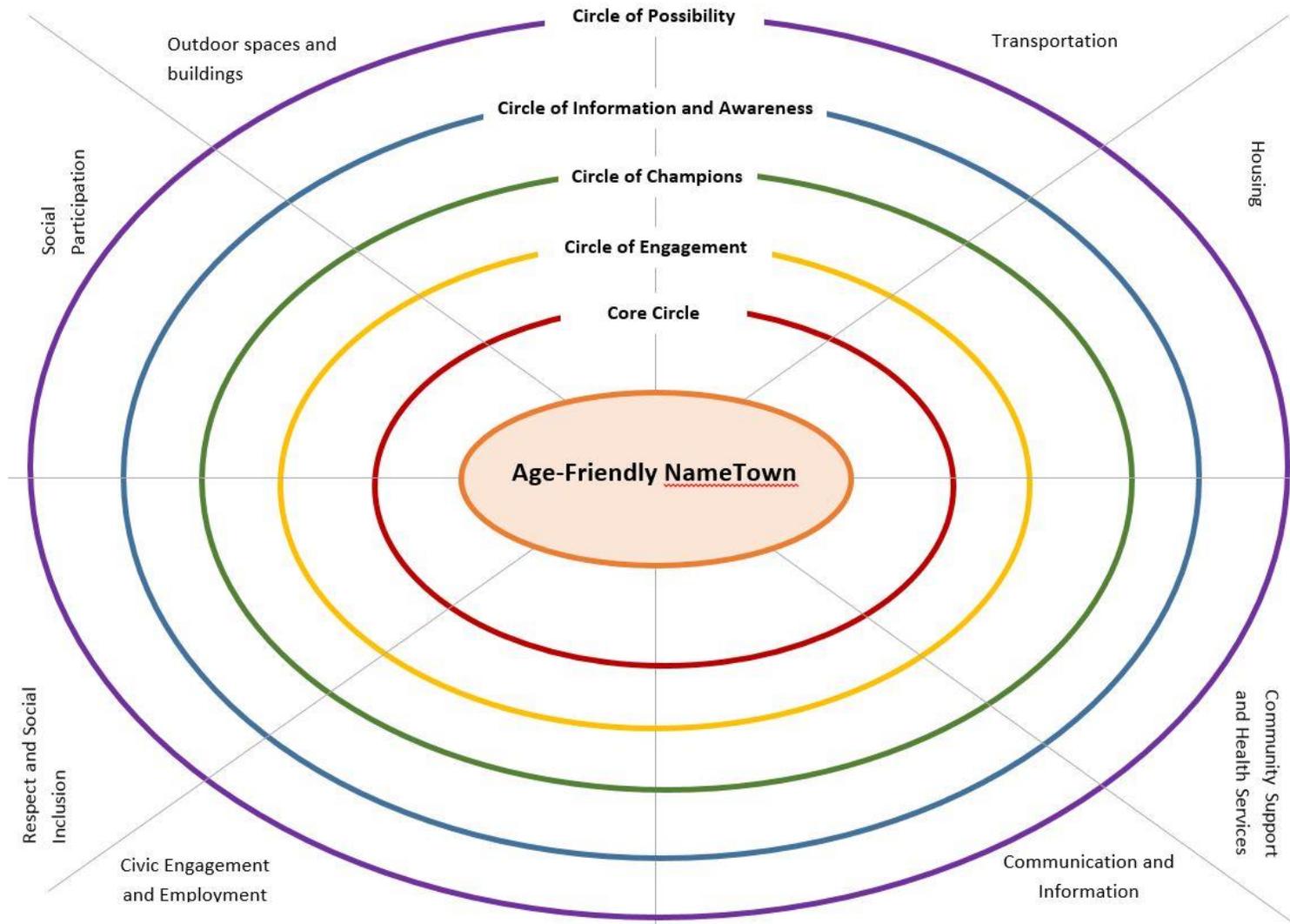
Groups that you want to include in the committee	Age-Friendly Committee Members			
	Name	Interest Area ²⁶	Community Affiliation ²⁷	Preferred Contact
Residents who represent a cross-section of the different groups in town.				
Representative(s) of your town or city government—elected officials and staff.				
Representative(s) of local Business				
Representatives of local voluntary, religious, and service associations—Mason, Library, Food Pantry, places of worship and meditation, Life-Long Learning, etc.				

²⁵ Adapted from University of Waterloo (2013). Age Friendly Communities: Tools for Building Strong Communities. Online: <http://afc.uwaterloo.ca/index.html>

²⁶ Which of the goals in the strategic plan energize the person joining the committee? What do they want their contribution to be to the age-friendly effort?

²⁷ Note community affiliations—e.g. Member of the Rotary, participant in the comprehensive plan committee, select board member, Emergency responder.....

Circles of Involvement Diagram: Key Relationships for Implementation of Age-Friendly Communities²⁸



²⁸ Adapted from "Creating a Framework of Support and Involvement" originally created by The Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs.

Worksheet: Expanding Participation, Circles of Involvement

Age Friendly NAMETOWN :			Circle of Involvement				
	Name of Organization	Name and Contact Information of a Person with ties to the organization or group	Core Circle	Circle of Engagement	Circle of Champions	Circle of Information and Awareness	Circle of Possibility
Currently Involved							
We Would Like to Involve							

Sample Survey developed by AARP-Maine

The following is a sample six-page survey developed by AARP Maine. The goal of the design was to limit questions so that the survey would only cost \$0.48 to mail (with a stamped, self-addressed envelope included in the mailing). An added advantage of a shorter survey is that it is respectful of the survey respondents' time.

Sample cover letter: on letterhead

The NAME OF INITIATIVE is a group of NAMETOWN residents who are working together to make NAMETOWN a more age-friendly/livable place.

NAME OF INITIATIVE has started gathering information about how to make NAME OF PLACE more age-friendly. Now we need your help! We need your input before we can go any further. We need to hear from members of the community, especially those over 50.

This survey focuses on aspects of our community that are important for the health and well-being of older residents. It also explores what might help older residents age in place or age in the community.

Please take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey. Your opinions will help us learn about the strengths of NAMETOWN and will help us to identify opportunities for improvement as we build an age friendly-community. The survey results will be analyzed and from there, we will work together to develop action steps to address our community needs.

Your opinion is important to us! We appreciate your help!

If you would like to know more about INITIATIVE or would like to be added to our mailing list, please fill in the form below. When we receive your survey in the mail, this page will be separated from your responses.

Thank you,

NAME OF INITIATIVE

Page 2 should be intentionally left blank

Community

1. How would you rate NAMETOWN as a place for people to live?
 Excellent Good Fair Poor
2. How important is it for you to remain in NAMETOWN as you age?
 Very important Somewhat important Not at all important

Outdoor Space & Buildings.

Outdoor spaces and buildings have a significant effect on the ability of older people to age in the community where they want to live. Outdoor spaces, such as parks, and buildings affect the independence and quality of life of older people in TOWN.

-
3. Please rate the following when thinking about civic buildings and parks in NAMETOWN:
- | | Satisfied | No Opinion | Not Satisfied |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Civic buildings that are accessible to people of all abilities..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Elevators, escalators or ramps where needed | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. The number of parking spaces..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. The number of designated parking spaces for people with mobility limitations..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Clear, easy to read signs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Public parks with enough benches | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Paths that are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other assistive mobility device. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Path and street lighting at night | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Sidewalks that are in good condition, safe for pedestrian use and accessible for wheelchairs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j. Well-lit, safe streets and intersections for all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k. Public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments: _____

Communication & Information

Staying connected with activities, resources, and people is key to optimal aging. In similar surveys, the central concern expressed by older people is the desire for information about local activities and resources that is easy to find.

4. Is information about services and resources to support aging in place easy to find?
 Yes No Not Sure
5. Is information about community events and local activities easy to find?
 Yes No Not Sure
6. How do you like to receive information about community services, news and events?
 Newspaper Word of mouth Websites E-mail Newsletters Twitter
 Social Media Text message NAMETOWN Community Television Radio Flyers

Social Participation

Social participation—connecting with friends and neighbors who don't live in the same home with you—is connected to physical and cognitive health. People are more likely to participate in formal social opportunities when activities are well-publicized, events are affordable and offered in an accessible place, and transportation alternatives are available.

7. About how often do you spend time with family, friends, or neighbors in the NAMETOWN area?
 Once a day or more Several times each week Once each week
 Every 2-3 weeks Once each month Less than once each month

8. Which of the following are available/do you use or attend in NAMETOWN?

	Available, I use	Available, I don't use	Not available, I wish it was	Not available, not important
a. Activities that offer senior discounts.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Accurate and widely publicized information about social and recreational activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Formal recreational opportunities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Opportunities to volunteer at local schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Social or Hobby Clubs (e.g. book club, gardening, craft).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: _____

9. If you would like to socialize more, what prevents you (check all that apply)?
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility issues or health | <input type="checkbox"/> Events are scheduled at times when I am not available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No one to go with me | <input type="checkbox"/> Too costly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Find out too late | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not much to do here | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Housing

Safe and affordable housing promotes the well-being of residents of all ages. Information about home modification and the availability of housing options for people at all income levels are key to encouraging older residents to age comfortably and safely in the house and community of their choice.

10. What kind of housing do you currently occupy (check all that apply)?

- Single-family dwelling
 Apartment
 Condominium
 Extended Family
 Retirement Community
 Mobile Home
 Assisted Living
 Nursing Home

11. If you were to move during the next few years, would the following factors impact your decision to move?

- | | Yes | No | Not sure |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Need for smaller or more accessible home | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Desire to live near friends or family..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Expense of your current home (e.g. property tax, maintenance) is too high .. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Need to be near medical care and conveniences (e.g. shopping, library, church) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Need public transportation or other transportation options..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Prefer a different climate..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other, please specify: _____

12. People sometimes make modifications to their home to allow them to stay there as they age. Do you plan to make any of the changes below to enable you to stay in your home?

- Create easier access into or within your home by, for example, installing a ramp or widen doors.
 Put in a bedroom, bathroom, or kitchen on the first floor.
 Add grab bars, handrails, or non-slip tiles.
 Install better indoor or outdoor lighting.
 Install a medical emergency response system.
 Other: _____

13. Please rate how important you think each of the following is to have in NAMETOWN:

- | | Very
important | Somewhat
important | Not Very
important |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Home repair contractors who are trustworthy, and do good work for a good price..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. A home repair service for low-income and older adults that helps with things like roof or window repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Seasonal services such as lawn work or snow removal for low-income and older adults | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Housing options (e. g. retirement communities, assisted living, congregate housing) for people at all income levels | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Respect & Social Inclusion

The lack of contact between generations and ignorance about aging are two reasons why stereotypes that exclude older people from full participation in the community continue. Aging adults who feel welcomed and respected for their contribution are more likely to remain actively engaged in the economic, social and civic life of the community than those who do not feel included.

14. Do you feel valued as an older resident of NAMETOWN?
 Yes Most of the time Not usually No
15. Do you feel there is general awareness of the contributions of older residents in NAMETOWN?
 Yes Most of the time Not usually No
16. Do you feel that the town of NAMETOWN wants to encourage older residents to remain in NAMETOWN as they age?
 Yes No

Civic Participation and Employment

Older people do not stop contributing to their communities when they turn 65 or 85 or 105. An age-friendly community provides opportunities for residents who want to or need to work past traditional retirement age. Age-friendly communities encourage people of all ages to participate in volunteer work and in the political process.

17. What is your employment status (check all that apply)?
 Employed full or part-time Unemployed, looking for work Retired
Other: _____
18. On average, how many hours each week do you spend in formal and informal volunteer activities (rounded to the nearest hour)?
 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 more than 8
19. For each of the items below, please indicate how important you think it is to have in NAMETOWN.
- | | Very important | Somewhat important | Not Very important |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. A range of volunteer activities..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Opportunities to participate in local government. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Opportunities to participate in decision-making in community organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Easy to find information about volunteer opportunities.. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments: _____

Transportation

Transportation, from affordable and accessible public transportation to volunteer door-to-door and door-through-door transportation services, is key to the ability of people to age in place safely and independently. The transportation options available reflect community values—what people want for public transportation—and community capacity.

20. Please describe your level of mobility (your ability to walk and get around):

- I can easily walk unassisted I use a cane or walker when walking
 I walk unassisted but with difficulty I use a wheelchair

21. Please tell us how you usually travel around NAMETOWN (check all that apply):

- Personal vehicle Friends/family Volunteer Driver Program
 Walking Public transportation Other: _____

22. Please rate how important the following factors are to your ability to travel in NAMETOWN. Only rate those factors that are relevant to your situation.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not Very important
a) I no longer have a valid driver's license/ don't drive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) I don't have anyone to take me.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) I can't afford transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Availability of transportation (services/times are inconvenient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) I have physical limitations and there is no accessible means of transportation available in NAMETOWN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Weather conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Darkness.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: _____

23. How many times per month do you go:

	0	1-2	3-4	5 or more
a) To medical appointments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) For a walk or to a group exercise program.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Out to run errands (e.g. banking or shopping)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Out to socialize (e.g. visit relatives or friends, play cards, attend a book club).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please list): _____

Community Support & Health Services

Access to health care and services to support aging in place is key for the health and well-being of older residents. Knowing how and where to find needed resources before they are needed is an essential part of preparing for the time when you – or a friend – may need those services.

24. Place a check beside the resources you would use if you or a friend or family member needed information about a service?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AARP | <input type="checkbox"/> Name Area Agency on Aging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NAME Local Senior Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Family and Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith-based organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Local non-profit organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> NAMETOWN Town Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor or Health Care Provider | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> Popular Press (newspaper, radio) |

25. How likely do you think it is that you will need the following services in the next five years?

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not likely
a. Personal care at home.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Housecleaning.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Caregiver support.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Wellness/fitness classes.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Home maintenance.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Home delivered meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Safety checks.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Library services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

About You

26. Please select your age category:

- Under 50 50-59 60-65 66-69 70-79 80-89 90 or older

27. Are you: Male Female

28. How many years have you lived in NAMETOWN?

- Less than one year 1-9 years 10-19 years 20 or more years I grew up here

29. Your nearest family lives:

- With me Within a one hour drive In the same town More than one hour away

30. Describe your household: (check all that apply)

- Live Alone With spouse with Child/children under 18 with Parent(s) or other older relative
 Other: _____

31. What is your current living arrangement? Rent Own your home Other: _____

Sample Focus Group Guide developed by AARP-Maine

Introduction: Hello and welcome to this group discussion. My name is [insert name of facilitator] and I am working with [insert name of age-friendly initiative and describe the purpose of the initiative]. My role is to help get a conversation going and to make sure we cover a number of important topics that they would like your input on.

Allow time for Participants to introduce themselves

Purpose: First of all, I would like to thank you all for taking time out of your day to come here and discuss your ideas. The overall goal is to hear your thoughts about aging in [insert NAMETOWN].

We are asking you because you are [explain why this particular population is being asked to participate in the focus group—e.g. you are a resident of NAME TOWN].

We will be taking some notes later on but we would also like to audio tape what you say so that we don't miss anything important and so that we can go back and revisit the information if we need to.

These are a few “ground rules” for the group:

- We have 90 minutes set aside for the focus group. You are all busy people. NAME AGE-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE is grateful for the time you are giving to share what you know about aging in NAMETOWN. We won't go over the time we have scheduled. To honor the time, I might move you along in conversation. Since we have limited time, I'll ask that questions or comments off the topic be answered after the focus group session
- I'd like to hear everyone speak so I might ask people who have not actively participated to comment
- The reason you are here is that you are the experts about aging in NAMETOWN. Please respect each other's opinions. There's no right or wrong answer to the questions I will ask. We want to hear what each of you think and it's okay to have different opinions.
- We'd like to stress that we want to keep the sessions confidential so we ask that you not use names or anything directly identifying when you talk about your personal experiences. We also ask that you not discuss other participants' responses outside of the discussion. However, because this is in a group setting, the other individuals participating will know your responses to the questions and we cannot guarantee that they will not discuss your responses outside of the focus group.

Does anyone have any questions?

OK, with your permission, I would like to start.

1. If a friend of yours who is 20 years older than you are right now was thinking about moving to NAMETOWN, what would you tell them about aging in NAMETOWN? *Prompt: Are businesses accessible? Are people friendly? Are older people respected and included in community life?*
2. If you or a friendly were looking for information about a program or services or about activities and programs in NAMETOWN, where would you look? How would get the information you need? *Prompt: Computer only? Printed versions? How is information distributed?*
3. Tell me what life is like in NAME TOWN for a person 10-15 years older than you are who no longer drives. Is he or she able to get to medical appointments? Go shopping? Visit friends? What kind of transportation does he or she use?
4. Thinking about paid and volunteer work, what is it like to live in NAMETOWN as an older person? Are some of your friends or neighbors forced to find paid work for economic reasons? What sorts of opportunities do people have to engage in paid work? What are the opportunities to be involved in volunteer work? Municipal decision making? Decision-making of local organizations?
5. When you think about growing older, what are the top three things related to housing that are important to you? *Prompt: home modifications? Finding someone to do simple repairs? Paying taxes/upkeep expenses for your home?*
6. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about aging in NAME TOWN?

I think we've come to the end of our questions. Let me be the first to say thank you for your honest opinions – you were tremendously helpful at this very early, but very important stage of our age-friendly effort. We appreciate your help.

Worksheet: Age-Friendly Asset Inventory—Groups, Organizations and Institutions

Note: Each community is unique. This chart is a sample worksheet. Each community will have a unique list of groups, organizations, and institutions included in the asset mapping exercise.

Group, Organization, Institution	Name of Group/Contact	How are older adults involved?	How is the organization aging friendly?
Groups: Crafting Circles, Neighborhood Associations, Book Clubs, Athletic Associations, Gardening Clubs, Prayer Groups...			
Institutions: Senior Center, Food Pantry, Community Center, Clinic, Places of Worship and Meditation, Hospital, Library, Schools, Social Service Providers...			
Local Businesses: Grocery, Legal Services, Hardware, Restaurants, Banks, Chamber of Commerce...			
Municipal Government: Recreation Department, Fire Station, EMS, Police, Planning Department, Economic Development....			

Worksheet: Age-Friendly Accessibility Inventory—Infrastructure and Public Spaces²⁹

Note: Each community is unique. This chart is a sample worksheet. Each community will have a unique list of places and spaces in the asset mapping exercise. Some communities, for example, have no sidewalks and residents don't want to have sidewalks. If that is the case, skip the "sidewalk" section of the worksheet.

Place	Name	Do older adults and residents with disabilities use regularly?	Fully Wheelchair accessible?	Special Customer Service arrangements are provided, such as special lines or lower service counters for people using a wheelchair?	Buildings are well signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, ramps, railings and stairs and non-slip floors?	Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained, and accessible?
Municipal Buildings & Municipal Services: Town Offices, Town Hall, Fire Station, Police Station, Library, Schools, Community Center, Food Pantry...						
Privately Owned Buildings: Restaurants, Private Schools, Grocery and Hardware Stores, Banks, Art Center, Museum, Places of Worship and Meditation						

²⁹ Adapted from World Health Organization (2012). *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities*. Online: www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/home-and-family/livable-communities/2013-12/3-age-friendly-cities-checklist.pdf

Parks and Walking Paths	Name	Do older adults and residents with disabilities use regularly?	Benches are sufficient in number to allow people to rest as needed?	Wide, even paths that will accommodate a wheelchair or walker	Public toilets are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible
Sidewalks	Area	Pavement is well maintained, free of obstruction and reserved for pedestrians?	Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disabilities	Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings	Cycle paths are separate from pavement and other pedestrian walkways
Public and Private Recreational Opportunities open to people of all ages in the community	Program/Opportunity	Do older adults and people with disabilities use regularly?	Fully wheelchair accessible?	Available toilets are fully accessible?	Designated parking?

Worksheet: Writing Mission, Vision, and Value Statements

There are many ways and methods to do this work besides the one listed below so work with the Model that works best within your framework (i.e Logic Models, Theory of Change Models, etc).

Develop a Mission Statement (a one-sentence statement describing the reason why this group of stakeholders is being convened, what are your aims and goals?):

Focus of your age-friendly work: _____

Broad methods you plan to use: _____

Target population: _____

Value of your age-friendly work for the community: _____

Putting it all together: _____

Develop a Vision Statement (a one-sentence aspirational statement describing the long-term effects resulting from your work):

What needs to be changed to enhance the livability of our community, to create a community that is truly age-friendly?

Why is it important for these issues to be addressed? _____

What is our 10-year goal? _____

How will we know the 10-year goal has been reached? _____

Creating a short phrase or sentence that conveys these aspirations:

Develop Value Statements (several one-sentence statements describing how you will conduct your work):

What core values do you believe should guide the age-friendly work?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Put your value statements together with the value statements of other members of the core team:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Worksheet: Identifying Priorities

One way that some core teams divide the work of their committee is by assigning domains to the member of the core team that is most interested in working in that area of livability (see **worksheet: Building Your Age-Friendly Committee on p. 55**). If that is how your core team has divided the work, you may want to ask the member with a special interest in a domain to fill in the worksheet and bring it to a team meeting for discussion and modification by the larger group of core team members.

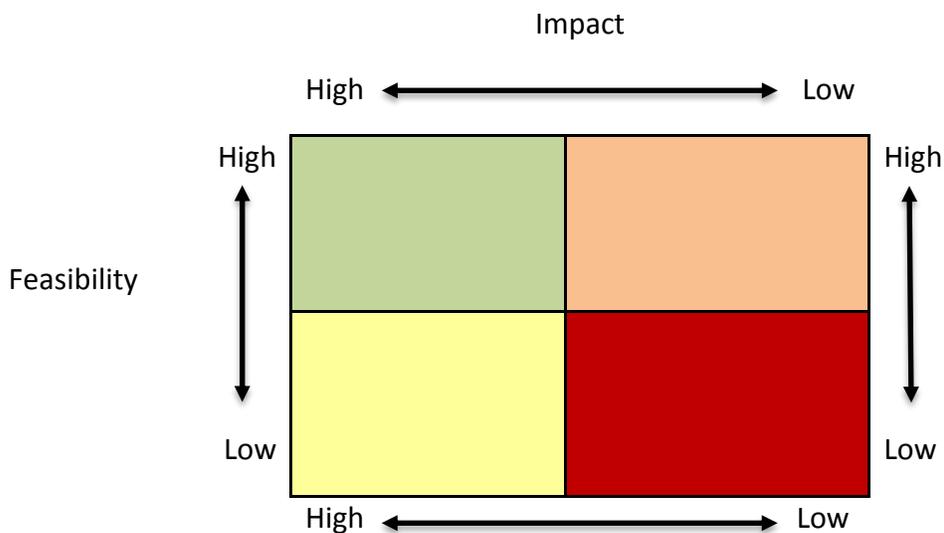
Domain: _____

What services, policies, and initiatives does your community currently have in place that are working well? _____

What services, policies, and initiatives does your community currently lack or which ones are not working well? _____

Contextual Factors: What factors in the environment might affect the success of addressing potential priorities? _____

If there are services, policies and initiatives that your community does not have that were identified in the age-friendly assessment, take a few minutes to imagine how difficult it would be to implement each one. What would the impact be on the livability of your community? Place them on the chart according to impact and feasibility.



Age-friendly changes that have high feasibility and high impact are relatively easy to implement and will have a significant impact on the livability of your community. We have color-coded the

square green because these types of changes make the most impact on your community with a relatively small effort. These are usually your first priority issues.

Age-friendly changes that have low feasibility but high impact may require raising money or developing strong partnerships with other organizations. However, they may be worth the effort because they will have a significant impact on the livability in your community. We have color-coded the square yellow because, despite the long-term effort needed to make the change, once completed, your effort will have a significant impact on livability.

Age-friendly changes that have high feasibility but low impact are relatively easy to implement but may not have a big impact on livability or will only affect a few people. We have color-coded the square orange because any change that has low impact should only be approached if it can result in a quick and public success that will increase support for your initiative in the community.

Age-friendly changes that have low impact and low feasibility are those that will be hard to implement and may not have a significant impact on livability. We have color-coded the box red because a great deal of effort will be required without the possibility of a significant impact on livability.

Now, look at the overall pattern on your graph. Is there a pattern to the needs that you identified? Are most in the high impact and high feasibility category? Low impact and low feasibility? If either extreme is the case, it is easy to determine if this is a priority domain. High feasibility and high impact initiatives are high priorities because they are easy to accomplish and have a high impact.

Overall feasibility of addressing gaps in services in this domain. High Low

Overall effect of changes that are feasible for your age-friendly initiative High Low

Are a few of the needs identified in the age-friendly assessment in the green box on the figure? Then this may be a priority domain. Are all the needs concentrated in the red or orange boxes of the figure? Then this may not be a priority domain.

Priority Domain? Yes No

Worksheet: Customizing Your Implementation Plan for Your Community

Here are a few questions to ask yourself about a service, program, event, or activity that your age-friendly team thinks may contribute to meeting one of the goals you have set.

1. Is a program similar to this one already at work in our community? *(if yes, you may consider partnering with that program to enhance the work they are doing)*

No Yes, _____

2. What side-effects (good and bad) may accompany the implementation of this service, program, event, or activity?

3. Have other municipalities implemented a similar approach?

If so, list the name of the municipality and contact information of someone you can speak with about the implementation experience: No Yes

Municipality: _____ Contact: _____

4. After learning how another initiative has implemented the idea, consider how the city or town you spoke with is different than your community? (size, resources, geographical area)

5. How will the differences in each community affect implementation of this idea?

6. What were the “lessons learned” that Community ABC shared when you talked about implementation of this idea?

7. How will your age-friendly initiative team plan for the successes experienced by community ABC when they implemented this initiative and avoid some of the pitfalls they experienced?

After thinking through all of the above, it may help to sum up your conclusions on the following grid:

This initiative...	Yes	No	Questions/Comments
Addresses the needs identified in our livable community assessment?			
Lines up with our livable community project mission?			
Is practical in our community?			
Is likely to be effective?			
Will be cost effective?			
Will be easy to put into practice?			
Requires hiring an outside consultant?			
Needs money to implement?			
Will be accepted by the people we hope will use it?			
Will be embraced by the community as a whole?			

Notes: _____

Worksheet: Domain or Initiative-Specific Strategy Chart/ Action Plan

Domain/Initiative: _____ **Goal:** _____

Collaborating Organization(s): _____

Beneficiaries: _____

Activities	By Whom	By When	Resources and Support Available/Needed		Potential Barriers or Resistance	Partnerships	Metrics
<i>What needs to be done?</i>	<i>Who will be responsible for getting it done?</i>	<i>By what date will the action be done?</i>	<i>Resources available</i>	<i>Resources Needed (financial, human, political, etc.)</i>	<i>What individuals and organizations might resist? How?</i>	<i>What individuals and organizations should be informed about/involved with these tasks?</i>	<i>What indicators have been identified to measure progress?</i>

Who is responsible for maintaining and updating information: _____

Frequency of meetings: _____

Worksheet: Communication Plan

Initiative: _____ Primary Spokesperson for the Media Campaign: _____

Message	Audience	Tactic	Resources Needed	Community Contact	Team Member Responsible	Notes (barriers, successes, schedule...)
<i>Using public transport is easier when you are aware of the resources</i>	<i>People who will use the transportation resource</i>	<i>PSA</i>	<i>Video equipment</i>	<i>Community television program manager</i>	<i>Jane Smith</i>	
<i>Volunteer transportation system is key to older residents getting needed services</i>	<i>Potential Volunteers</i>	<i>Creation and distribution of a poster</i>	<i>Copier, paper, volunteers to distribute posters</i>		<i>Paul Doe</i>	
		<i>Listing in volunteer data-base</i>		<i>Volunteer data-base manager</i>	<i>Matthew Smith</i>	



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