ROADMAP TO LIVABILITY

Strategies and solutions that make a community great for people of all ages

Book 1 in the *AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection*

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Community Listening Session Tool Kit	Housing Workbook	Transportation Workbook	Health Services and Community Supports Workbook	Economic Development Workbook

A Publication of

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Available online at AARP.org/LivabilityRoadmap

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Book 1 ***AARP Roadmap to Livability***

Book 2 ***AARP Roadmap to Livability: Community Listening Session Tool Kit***

Book 3 ***AARP Roadmap to Livability: Housing Workbook***

Book 4 ***AARP Roadmap to Livability: Transportation Workbook***

Book 5 ***AARP Roadmap to Livability: Health Services and Community Supports Workbook***

Book 6 ***AARP Roadmap to Livability: Economic Development Workbook***

A publication of

AARP Livable Communities

Community, State and National Affairs

AARP.org/Livable

Available for download at *AARP.org/LivabilityRoadmap*

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership of more than 37 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families, such as health care, employment security and retirement planning. We advocate for consumers in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services.

AARP 601 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20049

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Roadmap to Livability

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In a Livable Community, people of all ages can …

Go for a walk

Cross the streets

Ride a bike

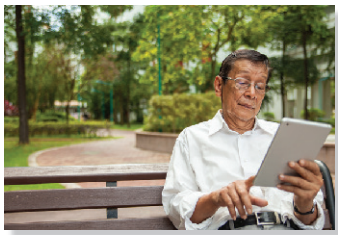
Get around without a car

Live safely and comfortably

Work or volunteer

Enjoy public places

Socialize



Spend time outdoors

Be entertained

Go shopping

Buy healthy food

Find the services they need

… and make their city, town or neighborhood a lifelong home.

AARP LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

aarp.org/livable

AARP® Real Possibilities

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Our free, downloadable poster about the features of a livable community is available in five languages. Visit *AARP.org/Livable-Poster*.

Great Places for People of All Ages

Since its founding in 1958 by Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, AARP has had as a goal that our nation's towns, cities and communities be livable for people of all ages. Andrus's passion for older Americans was equally matched by her passion for America's youth. The retired teacher and high school principal saw the importance of connecting the generations in service, work and play.

I came to AARP in the year 2000 after a long career in federal government. As I began looking at the demographic trends that are driving the aging of communities across the United States, I was struck by the changing composition of the age 65-plus population.

The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2030, one in five people will be age 65 and older. By 2050, the number of Hispanic, African American, and Asian or Pacific Islanders age 65-plus will increase by 600 percent, compared to an increase of roughly 95 percent in the white population. At the same time, the total population of people age 85 or older will increase by more than 200 percent.

People of all generations are deeply attached to the community where they live and want it to be a great place to live, work, play and do business.

In 2011, the first of the boomers turned 65. Boomers, like Gen Xers and millennials, want to live in towns and cities that are safe and secure, that provide affordable and appropriate transportation and housing choices, and have quality health care and community services. Most of these young and older adults want to live near walkable downtowns that have prospering local businesses, entertainment options and inviting parks and outdoor spaces.

At AARP, we call such places "communities for all ages" or "livable communities."

Communities are at the center of this demographic shift, and they're at the center of the shift in what people want and need in order to thrive in the city or town they call home.

American values include an emphasis on "do it yourself." The boomers, and the generations that have followed, are active and want to use their life experiences and energies to make their community a great place to live. Livable communities mobilize volunteers to advocate, plan and make the changes they want to see in a way that honors the community's values and preferences.

Developed by the AARP Livable Communities team, the *Roadmap to Livability Collection* was shaped by input from people throughout the nation who are working to make their city or town a place where people of all ages, income levels and abilities can thrive.

At AARP, our goal is to make the journey to livability easier for communities of all types and sizes. The *Roadmap to Livability* and its associated workbooks are intended to be a guide. The advice provided is not a strict formula for success but a framework that can be adapted to the needs and preferences of a community.

I hope you will find the *AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection* useful for the work you are doing in transportation, housing, economic development, health services and community supports.

On behalf of all of us at AARP, thank you for your continuing efforts to make your community a better place to live for people of all ages.

Nancy LeaMond
AARP *Executive Vice President*
Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer
Community, State and National Affairs

A Bit of Background

The *Roadmap to Livability* answers three key questions:

1. **What influences local advocates and municipal leaders to improve the livability of their community?**
2. **What are the commonalities in approach across communities working toward greater livability?**
3. **What's the best way to measure success and outcomes?**

Whether a community is large or small, urban, suburban or rural, the *Roadmap to Livability* will help identify challenges and opportunities to improve livability, shape an action plan to address those findings and successfully carry out the improvements that residents want. The plan will establish goals and describe action steps to meet those goals. Evolving over time, it will lead the community's livability initiative toward success.

NOTE: The focus of the *Roadmap to Livability* is on creating a strong plan that will guide implementation. While funding is an absolute necessity for implementing a plan, and you can find some ideas for funding on page 20, the topic of financing change (through fund-raising efforts, grant proposals, municipal financing, etc.) is not covered comprehensively in this series.

The Collection

Book 1:
AARP ROADMAP TO LIVABILITY

Book 2: AARP Roadmap to Livability
COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION TOOL KIT

Book 3: AARP Roadmap to Livability
HOUSING WORKBOOK

Book 4: AARP Roadmap to Livability
TRANSPORTATION WORKBOOK

Book 5: AARP Roadmap to Livability
HEALTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS WORKBOOK

Book 6: AARP Roadmap to Livability
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKBOOK

The introductory *Roadmap* to *Livability* provides broad guidelines and examples (best practices) for integrating livability principles into a community. Each workbook in the series provides planning tools to help complete a livability project.

Whether a community is beginning to look for opportunities to improve or already has a project (or projects) in mind, the *Roadmap to Livability Collection* can help. Use the series as step-by-step guides or as reference books to find the specific sections or resources that are needed to build on a community's strengths and address any challenges.

The goal of livability work is for people of all ages to …

1. Feel safe in the community
2. Participate in community activities
3. Be treated with respect
4. Have access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing and transportation
5. Have access to recreational opportunities and health services
6. Know what services and activities are available and have access to information by a means they prefer (e.g. online, in print, in person)
7. Be active, vital contributors to the economic, civic and social life of the community
8. Receive appropriate support if they can no longer look after themselves

What Makes a Community Livable?

"A Livable Community is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and offers supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence, allow residents to age in place, and foster their engagement in the community's civic, economic and social life."

— **AARP** *Policy Book*

Livable communities are livable for people of all ages, abilities and economic levels. Such places provide a host of advantages that enhance the quality of life of residents, the economic prospects of businesses, and the bottom line of local governments.

Livable communities encourage active participation by older residents

AARP research consistently finds that the vast majority of people ages 50 and older want to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

But a home can become difficult to navigate when it hasn't been designed to meet the changing needs of its residents. In a livable community, suitable housing options are available.

Livable communities promote neighborhood cohesion and maximize opportunities for residents to be active and engaged with their neighbors, family and friends. As the U.S. population grows older, community design that supports the participation of older people will play a larger role in the fiscal health of the entire community.

Continued ➢

Livable communities are good for public health and the environment

Many communities are not designed to support healthy, active living by people who do not drive. Cultural activities, visits with family and friends, shopping and other daily activities are off-limits when public transportation is not available and walking is not a safe option. In many cities and towns, it can be challenging to safely walk or ride a bicycle. Sidewalks and bike paths are nonexistent. Where they do exist, traffic lights and crosswalks are not always designed for people who have difficulty with vision, hearing or mobility. Walkable streets encourage people to walk, bike or roll to activities — all of which benefit public health, the environment and the economy.

Livable communities promote social equity

In a livable community, all residents can meet their essential needs in a safe, healthy environment. Making it easy to find affordable and accessible health services and community supports, for instance, improves the health and well-being of everyone, from newborns to centenarians.

Livable communities meet community needs

A community that wants to be livable for all ages makes policy and infrastructure changes based on residents' needs and preferences. Municipal planning, including land use, community revitalization and economic development efforts, should consider the needs of all residents regardless of age, income, physical ability, race and other factors. Changes should not be made without active input from a wide cross-section of community members.

Livable communities engage residents

Livable communities encourage all residents to be as actively engaged in community life as they want to be. Opportunities for social and civic participation make people feel they are part of the fabric of the community. The more connected and engaged people are, the more likely they are to contribute their skills and time to make the community a better place to live for all ages.

Livability is good for the economy

Livable communities bring financial benefits to homeowners, businesses and local governments. Livability initiatives contribute to improved economic performance and a more vibrant, desirable and competitive environment for housing and commercial investment.

Livability features that benefit everyone

1. **COMPACTNESS** helps make a community walkable, decreases automobile dependence and supports a socially vibrant public realm
2. **INTEGRATION OF LAND USES** enables people to live closer to or within walking distance of work, community activities and the services they need
3. **HOUSING DIVERSITY** helps ensure that suitable housing is available for each stage of life
4. **TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS** allow older adults to remain independent, mobile and engaged in their community

Livable communities don't feel like just another place to live. Livable communities feel like home.

Preparing the Community

What does it take to get started?
That's easy — people and a community!

Ingredient 1: People

The most important ingredient of a livability initiative is a dedicated group of people who want to make it work. Success comes most easily when no one person or organization is trying to do it all.

- A livability project can start with as few as one or two people who recruit others.

Ingredient 2: A Community

- Livability projects have been successfully implemented in communities of all sizes; in places that are urban, suburban and rural; in all parts of the country.
- Does the community pride itself on being a great place to live, work and play? If so, that's a plus. It means the political environment supports change to make the city, town or neighborhood an even *better* place to live.

The *Roadmap to Livability Collection* will help:

- Bring together a group of people dedicated to making change
- Work effectively in the community
- Foster an attitude that supports change

The Steps to Livability

Livability initiatives range from large-scale to community-specific activities such as:

- Starting a community para-medicine program in a rural area without local health care services
- Changing bus routes to support a location where people who don't drive live
- Developing a volunteer-based program to help older or disabled residents with simple home chores and routine maintenance
- Converting empty lots into gardens or safe outdoor spaces that can be used by people of all ages and abilities

The steps for implementing a livability project:

1. **Put Together a Team**
2. **Invite Stakeholders**
3. **Gather Information and Identify Priorities**
4. **Write the Action Plan's Mission, Vision and Goals**
5. **Develop the Action Plan's Strategies and Tactics**
6. **Determine the Evaluation Process**
7. **Ready, Set, *Go!***

Let's Get Started!

Put Together a Team

Most livability efforts start with a core group of people who have a passion for making their community a better place. The work typically begins from a growing awareness of the need to improve the quality of life for residents by making it easier for people to:

- get around town
- live where they want to live
- maximize their health and well-being

The idea may start with a volunteer working alone or with a small group of like-minded individuals. It could begin with a network of social service providers who recognize a gap in services. The effort could be launched by a business group, a philanthropic organization, or an elected or appointed official.

Many livable community efforts can identify a single person who has grown enthusiasm for an effort to improve livability. However, it always takes a team to get the work done.

Regardless of where the idea to work on a livable community initiative starts, the first step is to think about the "core team."

An effective team should include people who have different perspectives on the work being done. This usually means including people from the municipal government, the volunteer sector, local businesses, social service providers, philanthropies and residents. It's vital to recruit residents who represent the community's diversity. Those who are unable to advocate for themselves need representatives.

The core team will be responsible for guiding the livability project through the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation steps.

Members of the core team will reach out to community leaders and organizers to create partnerships in support of livability goals. The team will also be responsible for creating and delivering a unified message.

The Core Team

An effective team is made up of people who ...

1. Share a passion and vision for the livability project
2. Motivate one another
3. Bring different skills, experiences, contacts and interests to the work
4. Have expert knowledge
5. Are willing and able to put in the time to see the project through

People who are interested in *learning about*, *watching* or *helping* can be valuable to the initiative but are not good candidates for the team. Core team members need to be willing and able to work on projects independently and give of their time to both attend meetings and work between meetings.

There is no hard and fast rule for creating the right core team. Successful teams have included a mix of AARP staff and local service providers, elected officials, county and/or municipal staff, local business owners and philanthropists, and residents of all ages.

When possible, it's important to create a balance of providers, municipal decision-makers and community advocates who can look at different aspects of the work. Every community is different and the core team will reflect those differences.

- In an **Urban Community**, where change might need to be led by city departments, the team could consist of an elected official, a department head, service providers, current and potential service users, and citizen volunteers.
- In **Rural Communities**, change might be heavily dependent on citizen volunteers since it might not be possible to include service providers or a representative of the local government. (Be sure to provide regular updates to city or town officials so they'll be aware of the work and can voice their opinions even if they don't have the time to attend the core meetings.) Do try to include people with different professional backgrounds and interests so diverse perspectives will inform the decision-making.

No matter the size of a community, the core team should include, if possible, people ages 50 and older; members of the LGBTQ community; people who represent the ethnic, cultural and racial diversity of the community; and people with low incomes.

Other ways to ensure diversity on the team is to include people who live in different neighborhoods or who represent different interests (such as artists, farmers, business owners) and who have resided in the community for longer or shorter periods of time.

For ideas the team can use to engage elected officials in the work, see Appendix 2.

Continued ➢

Identify Leaders

It's usually helpful for a leader to orchestrate the overall initiative. This individual will facilitate developing and executing the "action plan."

The team leader will ensure that the action plan is faithful to the mission and vision of the livable community initiative. He or she will also ensure that the evaluation effectively captures the success and challenges of implementation.

The leader of a livable community team might be a volunteer, community activist, agency staff member or somebody employed by the local government. Most important is that he or she takes initiative, is highly organized and is able to inspire others and gain their respect and trust. Oftentimes leadership roles are shared among co-chairs. Do what makes the most sense to the team and what's manageable for all involved.

While each team member will have an opinion about the livability issue being addressed, it's important that the team speaks with a united voice so residents don't hear mixed or confusing messages. Each core team member should know what committee decisions have been made. Some teams develop a communication strategy that details who will speak publicly on what issues. (For more information on communication planning, see "The Four P's of an Effective Message" on page 40.)

Decide how decisions will be made

One of the first tasks of the core team is to determine how the group will make decisions. An agreed-to decision-making process also will help the team avoid conflicts.

Two common models that teams use to come to agreement are the consensus model and the democratic model.

- **Consensus decision-making requires agreement by all members of the team:** To arrive at consensus, the team discusses the issue until it finds a resolution that can be supported by everyone, even if it isn't a member's first choice. The goal is to come to an agreement that all can live with, if not embrace.

- **Democratic decision-making requires less time than consensus because the team simply votes and the majority opinion holds:** The disadvantage of democracy over consensus is that some people can be upset enough by a decision that doesn't go their way that they feel they can no longer support the work of the team.

Whatever model is used, team members must:

- Understand how decisions are made
- Know that decisions are always made by the team and not by a sole member
- Agree that, while each member has his or her own opinion, public messages about the team's work reflect team decisions

Securing a Municipal Commitment

Livability initiatives that achieve the greatest results include a mayor, city administrator, town manager and/or other elected or appointed official who is highly supportive of the project. (It's especially helpful when the municipality appoints one or two senior-level staff members to sit on the core team.)

Municipal support is critical to implementing changes in policies, services and infrastructure that will allow residents with different abilities and needs — and all ages — to live in a secure environment, enjoy good health and well-being, and continue to participate fully in their community.

Case Studies

Birmingham, Alabama
Taking Healthy Action

AL

The Health Action Partnership, a coalition initially formed to change policy on smoking rules in Birmingham, transitioned its work to make the community more livable for people of all ages. The partnership consists of the Community Foundation, United Way of Central Alabama, University of Alabama-Birmingham and the local health department. For fairness and to help prevent burnout, every two years one of the four organizations assumes the role of the anchor, managing and taking the lead on the work for that time.

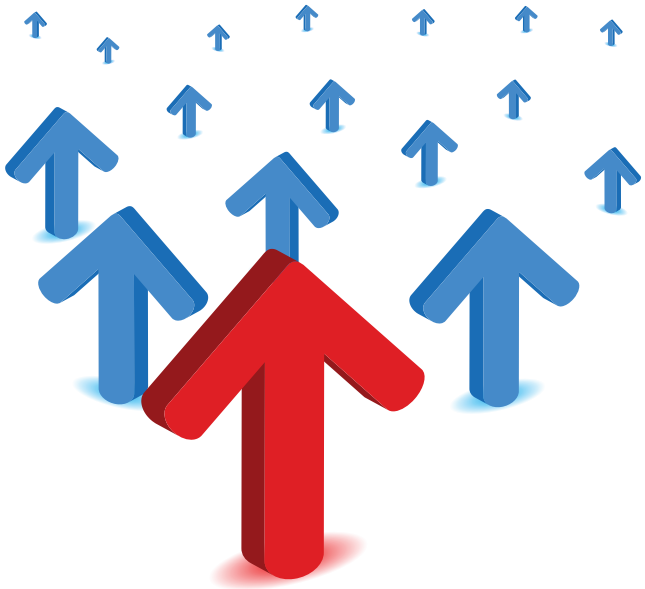
Portland, Oregon
Mayoral Candidate Forum

OR

During a mayoral race in Portland, AARP Oregon hosted a candidate forum on livability issues. Leaders of the Portland Age-Friendly Initiative, a local elected official and an AARP volunteer leader spoke about the importance of having community leaders champion the principles that make a town or city a great place for people of all ages and abilities. The forum began with a poll that asked about audience concerns and priorities for the city. The candidates were then asked about such issues as housing, transportation, civic engagement, health and financial resilience. The audience was also able to question the candidates. While successfully influencing and educating the mayoral candidates, the forum created accountability and buy-in for the livability initiative.

A Good Leader …

- Knows the community
- Appreciates the extent of popular support for the initiative
- Understands the perspective of residents of all ages, abilities and economic levels
- Embraces the community's ethnic, cultural and racial diversity
- Is respected by the community and among representatives of key stakeholder groups
- Keeps collaborative efforts on point



Invite Stakeholders

As the work on the livability project progresses, it's helpful to enlist additional stakeholders as key partners or supporters. These can be individuals, groups or organizations that are interested in or concerned about the outcome of the work.

All of the stakeholders with an interest in a livability project might not be supportive, and some might have the power to shut down what the team is trying to accomplish. To avoid conflict with other stakeholders, it's important at the start to identify all stakeholders with an interest in the project and, when possible, involve them to increase buy-in support for the work.

If it isn't possible to bring in the opposition as partners or supporters, then develop a strategy to overcome the challenges they'll raise.

For instance, residents might form a stakeholder group that opposes certain kinds of livability improvements. People who say "Not in My Backyard" to the development of affordable housing, land-use changes or the expansion of public transportation often have a powerful voice before municipal authorities. People may be concerned that their taxes will go up if certain community programs or improvement efforts are implemented. To avoid surprise opposition have a strategy for overcoming resistance.

The core team's work will be more effective when it engages people who can help with aspects of the livability project, who have connections to needed resources, or who can share expert advice. The more ambitious an initiative is, the more it will require broad collaboration with the right people engaged in the right way.

The core team will want to think beyond the obvious participants (e.g. the stakeholder groups are already doing related work) to individuals, groups and organizations that might be interested in expanding what they're presently doing.

One way to locate key stakeholders is to identify one or two "connectors," people who are familiar with the decision-makers in the community and with navigating local politics to make change.

That person could be a local official, a leader in a nonprofit organization, or simply a community supporter. This connector can help the team identify other key players and gain insight about the relationships between and across various groups. Additional stakeholders will be identified when the core team completes an asset inventory or asset-mapping process that identifies the strengths of the community related to the livability initiative. (See page 24 for those instructions.)

Reading List

See page 51 to find online articles, reports and resources, including:

- ***How to Involve the Right Players in a Livable Communities Plan***, AARP

Framing and Focusing

There are many ways to make a community more livable in the areas of transportation, housing, health services and community supports, or economic development.

Framing a livability initiative around a "hot button" topic that is meaningful to the community will build trust and support for the work the team is doing.

For one community, a "hot topic" might be increasing housing options for middle-income residents. Another community might see providing free or low-cost home repair and maintenance services as its most pressing need.

It's easier to attract stakeholder support when the team is able to frame the discussion within an issue that's important to the community.

Identifying Stakeholders

The support and participation of community members is essential. The "right" mix will depend on the livability initiative and the community. Following are the types of leaders, organizations and residents to engage:

- Elected and appointed officials, members of regional planning commissions and key municipal staff (such as the town or urban planner, the public works administrator)
- Metropolitan planning organization (MPO) representatives
- Leaders in diverse communities and those representing intergenerational issues
- Main Street organizations, chambers of commerce, downtown development groups
- Local nonprofit and voluntary service organizations such as the Rotary Club, Junior League, etc.
- Colleges and universities
- School administrators, staff and board members
- Philanthropies
- The area's tourism bureau, local heritage society and museums
- Health care and fitness communities, such as hospitals, YMCAs, disease groups (ALS, heart, lung, diabetes, etc.)
- Realtors and housing-related organizations
- Public transit authorities and specialized transportation programs
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are engaged in the issue
- Law enforcement and first responders.
- Major employers in the community
- Representatives of community foundations
- Neighborhood associations
- Library staff and board members
- Senior centers and other organizations that support healthy aging in the community
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Subject experts, interns and community relations personnel from local trade schools, colleges and universities
- Local environmental and "smart growth" groups

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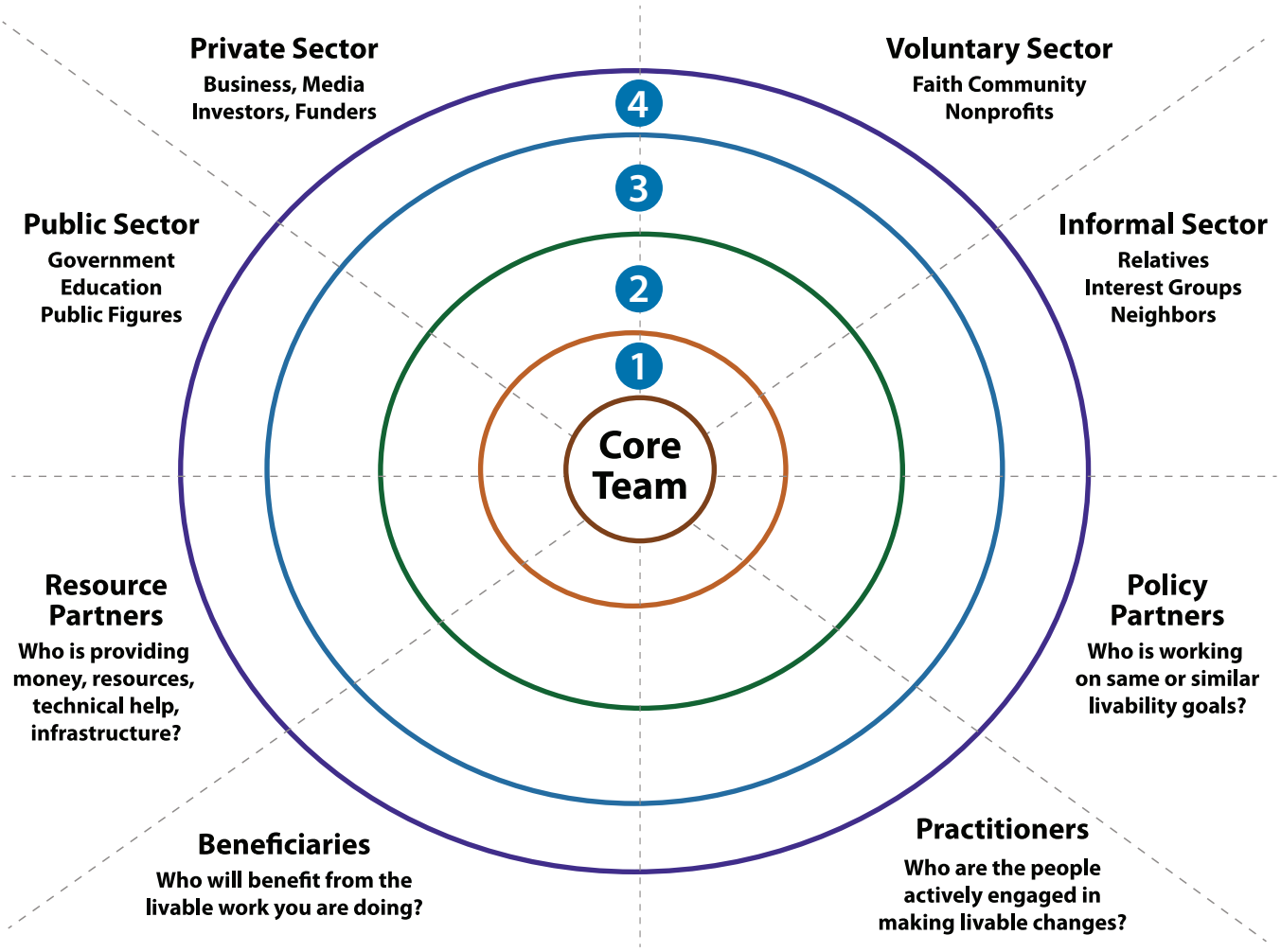
Expand Involvement

The *Circles of Involvement Exercise* is a tool that some livability initiatives have used to increase community support and participation.



The *Circles of Involvement Exercise* can help the core team identify new partners for the livability initiative.

Working with existing services saves the core team from "reinventing the wheel" and provides encouragement for the growth of the services and programs that already exist.

On the outside edge of the diagram, note the initiative's priority areas. Think about the people, organizations or groups that might be interested in one or more of the livability issues involved.

For example, the town recreation director and regional transportation authority might both be interested in a transportation initiative.

The Area Agency on Aging, local hospital, food pantry director, and public health officer or parish nurse may be interested in an effort to increase access to health services.

A livability initiative will be stronger when the core team is able to involve people, groups and organizations interested in each priority area.

The *Circles of Involvement Exercise* tool is based on "Creating a Framework of Support and Involvement," by The Institute of Cultural Affairs/Canada; diagram adapted for AARP by Jennifer Goodman.

The Core Team *Is* the Core Circle

The core team is the group of people who actively work on the livability initiative. They are responsible for implementing and overseeing the action plan.

Match the numbers below to those on the circle at left.

1 The Circle of Engagement

As the livability initiative moves through different phases, the core team might need people to help in specific areas. For example, one group of volunteers might be interested in pedestrian-friendly policies, while another group wants to start a transportation program. The people who participate in specific projects are part of the Circle of Engagement. This includes people who are committed to the livability initiative and are willing to help with specific tasks in a broader initiative. Community volunteers, municipal government and representatives from nonprofits and businesses that actively support part of the livability initiative might be part of the Circle of Engagement.

2 The Circle of Champions

The Circle of Champions can include elected officials, the town or city manager, municipal department leaders, and directors of regional and local programs. Because those people have special authority or access to resources that can make or break an initiative, their support is critical. Engage the town or city planner, codes officer, parks and recreation department, public works department, public health division and other advisory committees. The support of regional and local service and health providers is also key to a livable community effort. Local hospitals, regional or state health alliances, the Area Agency on Aging, community action organizations and local funders can help get the word out about the initiative and help expand available community services. It's important to regularly update the Circle of Champions about the progress of the project and to celebrate their contributions to the accomplishments.

3 The Circle of Information and Awareness

This circle includes all community residents who are interested in the initiative. Publicity and good communications are vital to getting the word out about what the team is doing. As people become aware of the work, the initiative will attract new volunteers and partnerships. For instance, after seeing newspaper articles and social media posts about the initiative, the library board might suggest ways it can help raise awareness about the project or new services.

4 The Circle of Possibility

People and organizations that are potential but not current partners in the initiative are in this circle. The possibilities for working together need to be explored before a partnership can be effective. Some examples might include chambers of commerce, foundations, banks, service organizations and professional associations. For example, a local service club might be looking for ways to volunteer and the livability initiative might have a need for volunteers that the club could meet. However, if no one on the core team reaches out to the club, the possibility for partnership isn't recognized. The asset inventory (see page 24) is a tool that can help the core team identify the people and groups that fit into this circle.

Continued ➢

Engage the Community

It's important to recognize that existing challenges might limit the team's ability to increase the engagement of people and organizations in the community because:

There are competing priorities:

- For example, a regional hospital or Area Agency on Aging may lack the resources to send staff to every initiative meeting. Or the part-time recreation department director is too busy with the children's recreation program to spare time for other activities.

There's a lack of knowledge or false perceptions about the initiative or team. People from or working for the following population groups and communities may need to be included:

- People who are living with a disability
- People ages 80 and older
- People from the LGBTQ community
- People who represent the cultural, ethnic or racial diversity of the community
- People who use income-based services (e.g. a food pantry, subsidized housing)

After the community engagement and outreach challenges have been identified, brainstorm strategies for how to overcome them. Some ideas:

- Hold a kickoff meeting to explain the initiative to the community
- Meet individually with different groups and programs to explore ways to work effectively together
- Use the local media by writing letters to the editor, appearing on radio programs or on community television, offering to write a recurring column in a town newsletter

If the team has successfully recruited a diverse group of residents to work with the core team:

- Have those people had an equal voice at the meetings?
- Are their ideas respected?
- Are all team members treated equally and made to feel their input is important?

Case Studies

Washington, DC

AARP Shares Vision With Faith Leaders

AARP DC engaged faith-based leaders as stakeholders in the District's age-friendly initiative. Pastors hear the same concerns that AARP hears from older adults and they share an interest in making the city a great place for all people of all ages. Both AARP and faith-based leaders are concerned about financial resilience, transportation, home and community-based services and support for family caregivers. What started as a group of six grew to include more than 50 faith-based leaders who are consulted regularly by AARP DC.

Wilmington, North Carolina

Urban Cities Help Rural Communities Embrace Livability

AARP North Carolina partnered with the University of North Carolina-Wilmington to engage rural communities in livability initiatives. Five communities with dispersed populations and distressed economies in northern North Carolina were chosen to receive intensive technical assistance from UNC-Chapel Hill and AARP to become more age-friendly. The program partners the five smaller communities with bigger cities to give rural communities access to additional resources and expertise. UNC-Chapel Hill is taking the lead by encouraging students and graduates (specializing in research, urban planning, public health and business) to work on the initiative.

Clarksdale, Coahoma County, Mississippi

Seniors for a More Livable Community

In Clarksdale, a group led by older adults holds monthly community conversations about livable issues. What began as a gathering of 12 people has become a group of more than 50.

The monthly conversations result in real change. For example, Clarksdale and Coahoma County crime rates were high and residents feared for their safety. The Seniors for a More Livable Community group formed neighborhood watch teams. Those teams are visible at city council meetings, and a law enforcement officer is present at each community conversation to provide an update on crime and assist with information as needed.

AARP Mississippi also initiated monthly community conversations with law enforcement, the mayor and residents. This collaboration improved safety throughout the county as well as the relationship between law enforcement and residents. It also promoted the continued engagement of the mayor and law enforcement in livable issues. During one of the community meetings, citizens expressed concerns about the safety and cleanliness of the neighborhood alleys and made a series of recommendations. A week later, the alleys were clean.

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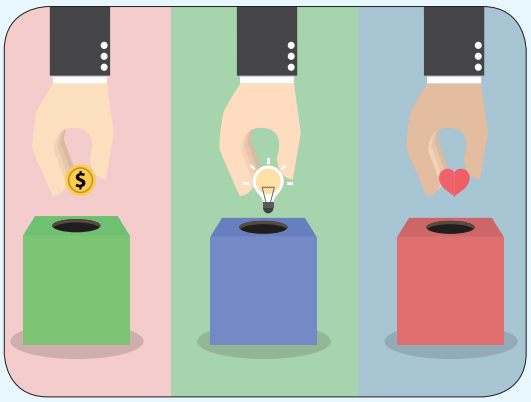
Funding a Project



Grants are the first thing many people think about when they have an idea for a livability project. They know that their idea is important and that it will benefit the people in their community. But it can be hard to know where to access a grant or other sources of funding. Some advice:

1. Speak with people who have implemented similar projects and ask how their project was funded and if they know of a suitable grantmaker for yours
2. Attend workshops and professional meetings to learn about funders and funding opportunities
3. See whether your state or region has grant-making associations that provide information about local funders
4. Find national and local requests for proposals in *The NonProfit Times* and the Foundation Center's *Philanthropy News Digest*

However, grants aren't the only source of funding. A sustainable funding strategy features many financial sources. Some possibilities include:

- Community fund-raising
- Requesting donations from businesses and the public
- Seeking donations via a direct mail campaign, public access television or radio, online crowdsourcing, or by calling people directly
- Creating a corporate sponsorship program
- Selling tickets to a special event

Fund-raising also presents the opportunity to increase local engagement. As Hildy Gottlieb, author of the book *FriendRaising,* writes: "The only road to sustainability is to engage the community in your work, to turn that community into an army of friends achieving something amazing together, spreading the roots of ownership of your mission and vision throughout the community, so the community would not dream of letting that mission die."

Fund-raising events that seek to increase engagement should be fun and excite the wider community. The event or appeal needs to show that the work benefits everyone in the community and that there's a clear passion and purpose for what's being planned.

Gaining friends who support the work you and others are doing in the neighborhood, village, town, city, county or region is vital to creating a sustainable fund-raising strategy.

NOTES:

Gather Information and Identify Priorities

Assessment is a vital step to avoid creating a service when one already exists or starting a program that community members don't want or need.

Conducting such research ensures that the initiative reflects community preferences, and it helps raise awareness about the initiative and the need to make the community more livable. The assessment also establishes a baseline to measure the changes that will result from the livability initiative.

A well-done assessment includes data gathered by the initiative and/or from existing sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau *American FactFinder* website and the *AARP Livability Index*.

A signature initiative of the AARP Public Policy Institute, the *AARP Livability Index* measures the quality of life in American communities across multiple dimensions: housing, transportation, neighborhood characteristics, environment, health, opportunity, and civic and social engagement.

To try the tool, go to *AARP.org/LivabilityIndex* and enter your address, city, state or ZIP code. The results page will show the livability score as well as category scores in each area. The results page also includes a map. (To make it easier to share the report, download a PDF.)

Data Should Identify …

- Livable features of the community
- Regional and local organizations that are already doing livable work
- What the community is doing well and what it could be doing better
- Gaps between what the town or city has and what people need and want in order to live safely in their homes and be involved in the community's economic, social and civic life
- Assets to leverage and opportunities available to make the community better
- Perceptions about existing programs and services
- Barriers to change
- Community members who want to be involved in the work
- Local and regional organizations that want to partner with the initiative

Conducting a Livability Assessment

Like all other aspects of livable community work, an assessment needs to reflect the community it is about. There is no right or wrong way to conduct an assessment. While the *Roadmap to Livability Collection* includes proven ideas for developing a livability plan, it's important to choose the ideas, tips and resources that are the best fit for the community, not just for the project.

Partnering with a university or consultant who specializes in community assessment can help the core team learn about different possibilities and develop the most effective tool (e.g. demographic profile, survey, community conversation or focus group guide). Working with a graduate student on an internship could also be very helpful and more affordable for communities that don't have the budget or resources to put into an assessment.

Contact your AARP state office!

AARP can provide the team with guidance about designing its community livability assessment and might be able to suggest funding sources for conducting it. Find the AARP state office near you at *AARP.org/States*.

Using Secondary Data

A demographic snapshot of your municipality that includes information about age distribution, economic well-being, housing, food security and the prevalence of disability can identify areas where the livability assessment will find gaps.

For example, if a livability initiative wants to increase access to health services and community supports, and the demographic profile identifies a high rate of ambulatory disability in the community, the survey should include questions about how residents find recreational opportunities that are accessible to people using a walker or wheelchair. (A guide to creating a demographic profile of the community can be found in Appendix 3.)

The Community Survey

A survey can reveal information about community members' perceptions, behaviors and levels of satisfaction about, for instance, the community's transportation and housing options.

Gathering the responses can give the team insight into how well the existing system serves residents' needs and what areas are worth investigating further through listening sessions or focus groups. (See Book 2, the *Community Listening Session Tool Kit*.)

Different initiatives need to ask different types of questions. Generally, it's good to ask people about the availability of services and programs and the barriers they encounter trying to do things in the community. The purpose of each question should be to find out what people of all ages need and want and prefer. Each question should lead, potentially, to a goal that can be enacted by the livability team.

Since the core team will have strong ideas about which questions are best to use, it's helpful to look at several sample surveys and/or to consult an expert in the field. While there is no one-size-fits-all model, AARP has created a comprehensive livability survey that can be customized to address the needs of any community. (See page 50 for how to find the survey.)

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Using the AARP Livability Index

West Sacramento, CA

Yolo County

West Sacramento, California, is making strides in its journey toward age friendliness. The city requires agencies such as transportation and parks and recreation to integrate issues of aging into their policies and programs.

In a 2015 forum, Mayor Christopher Cabaldon and several agency heads discussed their use of the *AARP Livability Index* and their decision to use its analysis of neighborhood data to address the gaps between what the city's residents need and what the city has to offer.

In an interview with *AARP Livable Communities*, Cabaldon said about livability and age-friendliness: "We need a community where it's possible to stay. We don't want West Sacramento to be the kind of place that's all cul-de-sacs and five-bedroom homes, so if you go away to college or to the Air Force and come back you couldn't live in your community anymore.

"We don't want to be a place that only has hip artist lofts and no place to raise a family. We've tried to create a city, even though we're small, where there's a place that matches what a person's needs are, and where their hopes and inspirations are at each stage in their life.

"Now it's not about staying in the same place from the time you're 18 until the time you're 80. It *is* about being able to stay in the same community. One of our big hopes out of this process is to make real that promise."

(See page 51 for a link to the complete interview. Use the ***AARP Livability Index*** at *AARP.org/LivabilityIndex*.)

Although each community and each assessment tool is unique, every community needs to gather the following information:

- **Assets:** What is working right in transportation, housing, and/or health services and community supports? The asset inventory will tell you what already exists.
- **Behaviors:** How do people use the current transportation, housing, or health services and community supports? What do people identify as gaps? What kind of behaviors would they like to do differently but are prevented from doing because of the existing system? Surveys and focus groups are two tools that help identify behaviors.
- **Preferences:** How do people want to see changes made? Surveys, focus groups and listening sessions can help identify preferences residents have for the types of changes to make and how to make them.

  For example, in a rural, coastal community, people may want a walkable downtown but don't want sidewalks outside the downtown area because, they believe, sidewalks will enable tourists to wander the residential areas.

  It's essential to understand a community's preferences before advocating for a program that won't have widespread support. It's better to start with changes that honor existing preferences. And who knows? When residents see the benefits of a walkable, bikable, rollable downtown, preferences may change to include wanting the same features in the rest of the community.
- **Ideas:** These are specific recommendations for how changes can be made, resources that can help create a needed change, and whom to involve in the process. Focus groups, a community listening session and listening posts (such as a bulletin board where people can post notes or responses to a question) are all good ways to get specific ideas from residents.

Livable Community Asset Inventory

Assets are anything the community has that's already working in an area related to the livability initiative. Such assets include:

- Infrastructure (such as a local hospital, community center or pharmacy)
- Service providers (mental health clinic, aging and disability resource center)
- Experts (people serving on the board of health)
- Municipal departments that are involved with or interested in the livability project
- Programs that help people to access transportation, housing, or health services and community supports
- Anything else the team discovers

The inventory will help with learning about aspects of the built and natural environment, formal and informal services, and regional resources that the core team can tap to further its goals. This exercise will help identify how the initiative can partner with programs and services already engaged in similar efforts.

Identifying assets and learning about potential partners for the work will help the core team decide how it will build on those assets to meet the needs identified by the community assessment.

For example, a regional transportation program or home modification service may want to find ways to increase awareness by older residents of the services it provides and may need more volunteers. Both are great opportunities for the livability initiative to support what already exists to make a community suitable as a lifelong home.

The Asset Inventory Form

Each of the workbooks in the *Roadmap to Livability Collection* contains an asset inventory form. The core team can use the form to identify community groups and organizations working in areas related to the initiative and to learn how residents of all ages can participate in those programs or services. The team will want answers to questions like these:

- Do residents of all ages have access to services?
- Are residents at different income levels and with different abilities able to use the service?
- Are people of all ages, abilities, cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds, and/or gender identity and sexual orientation serving in leadership roles and/or as volunteers?

The community asset inventory is more than a list of programs, services and factors in the built and social environment that might have an impact on the livability initiative. The inventory is vital to engaging in a conversation with the "asset" (the service or program or informal group) that has been identified to learn how residents in the community are interacting with it.

It's easy to see that completing this inventory in a large city or multi-town region could be overwhelming. If one or two volunteers are developing the asset inventory, it might be helpful to recruit additional volunteers to form a community mapping team assigned to divide the work by region or topic. An asset inventory can be as comprehensive or as focused as it's needed to be. However, the inventory should be limited to include the groups, organizations and infrastructure that the team needs to identify to further its goals.

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Listening Sessions

One way to think of a listening session is as a public forum. A facilitator leads a broad, inclusive discussion about many aspects of a livability issue — such as transportation, housing, or health services.

Listening sessions provide large groups of residents with the opportunity to discuss the livability effort that the core team is addressing. Such sessions are well-publicized events that seek involvement by as many people as possible.

The discussions can be used to identify community strengths, the needs of residents and their preferences for how change will be implemented, and the barriers to addressing needs and preferences.

The record of the listening session supplements other data gathered as part of the assessment to plan what can be done to solve a livability challenge and preserve community strength.

AARP California developed a community listening session tool kit that can be adapted and used by others. (See Book 2, the *AARP Roadmap to Livability: Community Listening Session Tool Kit*.)

Potential Assessment Partners

Statewide Program

- Universities, colleges and cooperative extensions that have researchers with expertise in assessment and planning and specific subject areas
- Lifelong learning programs
- A state smart growth entity
- Statewide downtown and village center programs

Regional Services Providers

Data about the delivery of local services can be acquired from:

- The Area Agency on Aging
- A community action agency
- Hospital and wellness activities
- A district health office
- A regional public transit provider for on-demand and fixed-route transportation
- Local and state agencies that provide or oversee public services (e.g., housing, transportation, health)

Local Organizations

Data about the participation of older adults in cultural, recreational and service-oriented organizations can be acquired from:

- Libraries
- Museums
- Food pantries and meal sites
- Community and senior centers
- Fraternal organizations

Informal Local Groups

- Clubs, adult sport leagues, golfing groups, hiking groups and craft circles are important partners for spreading the word about the livability initiative and encouraging others to participate in the survey or focus groups.

The Municipality

- The **planning office** can provide data about the accessibility of the built and natural environment for people with mobility differences or impairments as well as information about the percentage of streets that have sidewalks. The planning office also collects data on socio-demographics by neighborhood and it is the keeper of the comprehensive land-use plan and zoning ordinance. (Livability goals can and should be incorporated into the overarching policy and regulatory documents of the community.)
- The **zoning board** is usually part of the planning office. Data gathered from building permits might reveal how many secondary housing units (i.e. accessory dwelling units or ADUs) have been constructed by homeowners. The permit office might have information about the number of new and existing residences that have wheelchair accessible entrances.
- Some cities and towns have a **department of health and human services** that includes aging services. The department will likely have data about older adults living in the community.
- The **town clerk** or local **board of elections** can provide data about participation in recent elections.
- The city **transportation department** can share information about the accessibility of the local transportation system and the percentage of housing that's within a half-mile walk to a public transit location.
- The **recreation department** can offer information about volunteer activities and adult fitness and activity programs.
- An **arts/humanities council** can be a useful source of information as can the city's public safety agencies, such as the **police** and **fire departments**.

Case Studies

Lexington, Kentucky
Publicizing a Survey

In 2014, a locally relevant survey was fielded online and in hard copy at community centers and senior centers. A news conference announced the survey, which resulted in 1,048 responses and enabled the planning committee to identify, list and prioritize exactly what the community was interested in and wanted to work on. Lexington added depth to its understanding of the survey results by holding listening sessions that engaged more than 100 community members.

Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio
A Different Approach to an Assessment

Cleveland created a livability assessment based on the AARP Age-Friendly Survey (see page 50) and modified by the Center for Community Solutions to reflect local needs and priorities. Primary data was collected through facilitated focus group discussions, a comprehensive survey and an outreach questionnaire. The project successfully collected data from more than 1,000 older adult residents of Cleveland, while also engaging community leaders and additional stakeholders. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission then developed a unique assessment for Columbus based on the Cleveland and AARP tools. The assessment models developed by Cleveland and Columbus cultivated consistent and reliable metrics. More than 35 focus groups were conducted as part of those assessments.

San Antonio, Texas
Community Listening Sessions

AARP Texas hosted conversations about livable communities. Leaders posted a map of the city so residents could vote (using colored stickers) about priorities, such as transportation and housing, in different geographic areas. AARP also asked residents to share what they would like to see in their community.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Partnering to Expand the Reach

During their community assessment process, AARP Wisconsin staff and volunteers identified potential community partners stationed both locally and statewide with commitments to engagement work in Milwaukee. Local organizations, including Interfaith Milwaukee and the Milwaukee County Department on Aging, were critical in accessing local community networks. Wisconsin Partners, a statewide group of 30 CEOs and directors from public and private sector organizations interested in livability efforts, expanded the conversation to organizations working locally, regionally and statewide that the Milwaukee Leadership Team had not had access to in its initial engagement strategy. The outcome of the combined local and statewide outreach strategy continues to serve as a resource to the leadership team in developing support for livability practices countywide.

Write the Action Plan's Mission, Vision and Goals

Creating an action plan is vital to ensuring that a livability initiative will be effective and make meaningful progress. The action plan will be the guide for the team's day-to-day work.

Preparing for the Plan

The livability assessment and asset inventory discussed are key to making decisions about what needs to be in the plan and identifies activities that reflect the needs and preferences of all residents.

Before starting on the action plan, the core team needs to create both a mission statement and a vision statement that encompass what the team hopes will be the long-term results of the work.

Writing a Mission Statement

Answers to the following questions can help the core team craft a mission statement:

1. What is the focus of the livability work?
2. What is the ultimate goal?
3. What methods will the core team use to accomplish the overarching goal?
4. What is the target population for the livability work? (e.g. Is it to make a more livable community for people ages 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 the initiative?)
5. How is the team reaching out to community residents who are living with a disability, who represent the community's ethnic or racial diversity, who are part of the LGBTQ community, who have few economic resources, who may not be able to advocate for their own inclusion in the livability initiative?
6. What value does the livability work have for the community at large?

Here's an example of a mission statement that focuses on transportation and includes answers to all the questions:

"The Livable Community Transportation Committee seeks to make it safer and more convenient for people of all ages, abilities, income groups, and fitness levels to travel in Happy Town by increasing access to transportation alternatives and advocating for Complete Streets — streets that are designed, built, operated, and maintained for safe and convenient travel by all users — to encourage residents who do not drive or who would like to reduce their driving to be as active in the social, economic, and civic life of the community as they want to be."

Writing a Vision Statement

It's also important to take the time to write a vision statement that will motivate the livability team and community members.

The vision statement is a memorable and inspirational summary that describes why the work is taking place. It presents the vision for what life will be like in 10 years when the team has met its goals. The statement should be ambitious enough to be exciting, but not so ambitious that stakeholders think it's impossible to achieve.

When writing a vision statement, use the active voice in the present tense in order to provide a mental image of the ultimate goal. Keep the language simple and avoid using terms that are not familiar to the public. Don't be afraid to express the passion and commitment that the team has for the work.

The vision statement should of course be specific to the community and to the values the team brings to the work. For the statement to be memorable, it needs to be succinct — no more than two sentences.

These are some questions to think about before writing a vision statement:

1. What needs to be changed to make the community more livable?
2. Why is it important for these issues to be addressed?
3. What will the community be like in a few years if the livability initiative is successful?
4. How will the core team know that the livability work has been accomplished?
5. How will success be quantified?

Here is an example of a good vision statement:

"Volunteers helping Happy Town's older residents remain independent — one lightbulb and snow shovel at a time."

The team that created this vision statement chose to use the name of the community to build on community pride. It's clear that the focus of this initiative is on providing volunteers to help with simple home chores and basic maintenance.

Identifying the Values

Values support the vision of the core team. Taking the time to identify the values that will guide the effort will help keep the work on track.

Values provide a framework to guide the decision-making and planning process. Values also educate stakeholders about the work the team and community is trying to do and how it's being done.

Here are some examples of values commonly adopted by livable community core teams:

1. ***"When possible, we will work with existing services to expand what is offered in our community. We will not create a new program or service to compete with an existing organization."***
2. ***"We will foster an environment that encourages volunteerism."***
3. ***"We will include and respect the diversity in our community by including older adults; people with different cultural, ethnic or racial heritage; people who are living with cognitive, mental and physical disabilities; people of all gender identifications and sexual orientations. We will include people who have lived in the community for a long time as well as people who are new residents. We will include people from different neighborhoods in all phases of this initiative. When it isn't possible to recruit a resident who represents a segment of the diversity in our community, we'll invite a community-based organization that represents it."***
4. ***"We will keep our elected and appointed municipal officials — as well as the business community and community-based organizations — informed about the work we do and we will seek to work with them."***

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SMART Goals

Now that the team has identified a vision for the community's future and the role the livability team can play in achieving it, it's time to set goals. Creating specific, challenging, clear goals will lead to better results for the community:

S Specific

Goals need to be **specific.** Each goal should explain what will be achieved, how often or how much will be achieved, and where the achievements will take place.

M Measurable

How will the goal be **measured**? Measurement provides feedback that can be used in the initiative and shared with others.

A Attainable

Goals are **attainable**, but not so easily attainable that achieving them is largely meaningless. Set challenging goals that, when reached, are achievements.

R Relevant

Each goal should be **relevant** to the mission and consistent with the team's understanding of its livability principles.

T Timely

Goals should have a specific **time frame**. The easiest way to do this is to set a date by which the team hopes to have accomplished the goal.

Adapted from the University of Kansas, Community Tool Box, Section 3: Creating Objectives

Livability initiatives are most successful when they're the result of collaboration among the core team, community volunteers, local partners and regional organizations.

The goals for the livability initiative should reflect the collaborative nature of the work.

Setting Goals

- **Short-Term Goals**
  One of the keys to success is to identify a few goals that can be reasonably accomplished in a short period, usually three months or less. Two short-term goals:

  1. Educating the community about the need for a change
  2. Educating the team about the options available to make change

  It 's important to identify needed, "low hanging fruit" projects that won't take a lot of effort by the team or require working with several partners.

  Examples include getting the word out about an existing but underutilized service; publishing a monthly calendar of activities; creating a transportation resource directory; or asking a local grocery store to install a bench so an older shopper can sit when needed.

  Celebrating a few short-term goals will show the community that the livability initiative can make a difference. Short-term goals give the team an opportunity to make an early impact, create momentum and energize the team to work on more difficult, longer-term goals.

- **Medium-Term Goals**
  These goals will take three months to one year to complete, often due to requiring collaboration with other groups or organizations or the need for financial resources.

  Action items that require changes to existing policies can also act as barriers or delays to implementation. Even relatively easy to implement changes can become medium-term goals depending on the time needed to advocate for a policy change.

  Examples include adding an elevator to a library that isn't fully accessible or installing benches in a local park.

- **Long-Term Goals**
  Long-term goals take one to five years *(or more!)* to complete and typically require funds and working with other organizations, possibly other towns or cities. Examples of long-term goals would be creating a regional transportation program or planning to build a community center.

Setting Priorities

The livability team will most likely benefit by using a consensus decision-making model — as opposed to a democratic majority-rule model — to determine priorities for implementation.

As explained on page 12, consensus does not mean that everyone on the team has equal enthusiasm for the priority list, but it does mean that everyone can live with the goals.

Agreement about the way implementation will happen is as important for the sustainability of a livability initiative as agreement about the overarching vision of the initiative.

Once several goals have been identified, double-check them against the mission and vision statements. Does each goal fall within the team's mission and move the work closer to the vision? Asking the team this question over and over will help keep the focus on the ultimate objective.

Develop the Action Plan's Strategies and Tactics

Now that the core team has identified its mission, vision and goals, it's time to get specific about how to achieve those goals.

The team might have several ideas for initiatives, activities and programs. Start by brainstorming which ideas will work best in the community. Try to learn more about how other communities have implemented similar ideas. Ask about what worked, what didn't; what challenges might be encountered; what the community would do differently if it could.

Sources for Best Practices

Network: Talk to people who are or have been involved in other livability initiatives. The AARP state office or state division of aging might know which communities have implemented initiatives like the one your team is planning.

Spend Time Exploring *AARP.org/Livable*
The website of the AARP Livable Communities initiative is a treasure trove of information and local examples.

Search the Web: The power of an Internet search when looking for information about livability initiatives cannot be underestimated.

Use Regional Resources: Some organizations address only one or a few areas of livability and cover a specific region. Senior centers, Area Agencies on Aging, hospitals and social service organizations are all good sources of information. Most social service organizations are very open and willing to talk to people interested in bettering their community, so don't hesitate to make the call and invite the organization to present to the core team or meet one-on-one with team members.

Best Practice Tactics

Identifying the following for each goal will help keep the team's work on track:

1. A statement about what needs to be achieved
2. A list of necessary tasks or activities
3. A time frame for those tasks or activities
4. A date for each activity to be completed
5. An organization or individual to be responsible for each activity
6. A list of needed resources
7. A discussion of potential barriers
8. A discussion of possible solutions
9. Indicators to measure progress
10. A way for measuring success
    Creating the Plan

Creating the Plan

The sample action plan at right can be used as a model for creating a plan. Keep in mind:

When planning, think about the community's values and the preferences expressed by residents during the assessment.

For example: If two of the identified community values are "independence" and "minding your own business unless asked" — and older adults prefer to be recognized as the people who are making the changes they envision for their neighborhood or community — the team will want to address barriers in a way that reflects the preferences of older residents, encourages them to take the lead in the changes, and facilitates their independence.

It's never a good idea to include a goal that does not reflect what people want and need.

The *Roadmap to Livability* workbooks about livability efforts in transportation, housing, and health services and community supports include planning charts for each of the goals in the strategic action plan.

Sample Action Plan

Princeton Action Plan		Who	By When	Measures of Success
PRIORITY 1: Housing				
VISION:	**Princeton will have sufficient affordable and accessible housing so that residents can continue to live here through the lifespan.**			
GOAL:	**Increase number of affordable housing units for rent and purchase so people on a fixed income can remain in Princeton**			
OBJECTIVE:	Community to address needs for additional affordable housing			
ACTION:	Municipal Council work with Planning Board, Princeton Community Housing, Princeton Housing Authority to set goals and means for increasing affordable housing	Council, Planning Board, Princeton Community Housing, Princeton Housing Authority	2020	Goals and Plan established
OBJECTIVE:	Ensure that new affordable housing units are age-friendly			
ACTION:	Form community affinity group to advocate and raise awareness	Princeton Community Housing, Housing Authority, residents, PSRC, Enable, Affordable Housing	2017	3 Community meetings
ACTION:	Educate Municipal leaders on ADA and UD specifications	Affinity group	2017	30% of new units meet ADA and UD specifications
GOAL:	**Create Guidelines for the Adaptive Use and Renovation of Existing Housing**			
OBJECTIVE:	Increase awareness of age-friendly design among home-owners, contractors and architecture professionals			
ACTION:	Create an age-friendly housing checklist	Princeton Senior Resource Center (PSRC) with Certified Aging in Place contractors	2017	Checklist created

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Case Study

Burlington, Vermont: Creating an Action Plan for Success

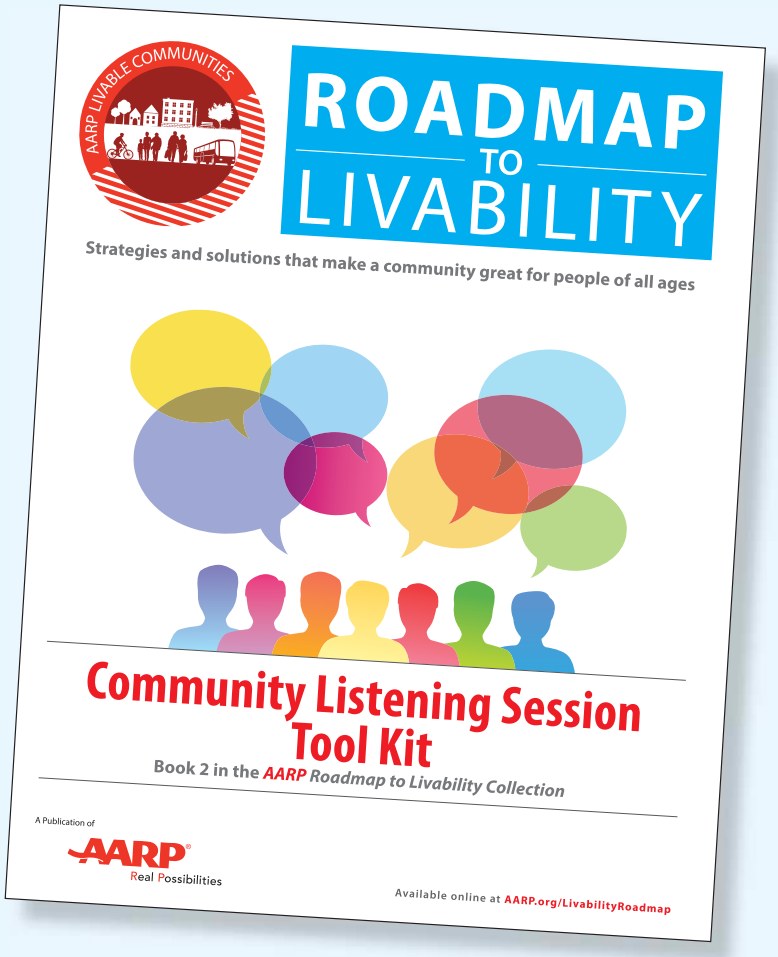
In 2007, a coalition to make Burlington the best small city in America to grow old in created a blueprint that listed the changes that needed to be made — from transportation to community support services. The growing age-50+ population represents both a transformative force by itself and a net asset to the city. Through a collaborative approach with the mayor and various partners, AARP Vermont's efforts for a "Livable Burlington" aims to provide direction, assess needs and resources, and develop recommendations in the areas of housing, transportation and community engagement.

Focusing on Listening

Surveys do a great job of showing how many people share a concern about the community and what assets and barriers exist.

However, surveys do not do a good job of explaining why people answered the survey questions the way they did. Also, surveys rarely invite people to talk about concerns not addressed by the survey.

See the *Community Listening Session Tool Kit* to learn how (and why) to conduct a listening session or focus group. Find out how the two feedback tools are similar yet different.



NOTES:

Determine the Evaluation Process

Evaluation provides answers to several questions, including two very important ones:

1. **Did the initiative accomplish the goal? (If so, how? If not, why not?)**
2. **What effects did the livability work have on the community?**

To develop a suitable way to measure outcomes, it's necessary to understand the priorities of the community and establish a baseline. Once those parameters are established, data can be regularly collected and evaluated over time to determine areas of progress. Planning for evaluation happens when the goals of a livability effort are determined. Each goal should include a measurement method.

Process Evaluation describes if and how program activities were implemented.

Outcome Evaluation measures the key indicators to see whether there have been changes since conducting the baseline assessment.

It's important to plan for both types of evaluation before beginning the implementation work so data can be collected from the start. Progress toward goals established by the core team will be apparent relatively quickly through the metrics identified to measure success.

Regularly evaluating the progress reveals:

- Where successes have been the strongest
- Which goals need more energy (or need to be reassessed)
- Which activities, facilitators or barriers are contributing to success
- Which activities, facilitators or barriers are *not* contributing to success
- Where goals have changed over time, and when measures of output or outcomes should be revised to reflect a change

Evaluation provides information the livability team needs in order to refresh the action plan and keep it relevant. The types of questions the team should ask:

- Who were the primary beneficiaries of the work? Were they the intended targets?
- If the initiative didn't meet one or several of its goals was it due to a lack of resources?
- Did the initiative fail to meet the goal because it wasn't a goal that residents considered important?
- Was the work delivered in a way that wasn't appealing to the community?
- If unexpected barriers emerged, how can they be avoided if the team tries again?

Evaluation also keeps the livability initiative accountable to funders, volunteers who give their time, partner organizations and the community. Showing success and attention to the initiative are important ways to increase engagement and support. Once there's a plan for how to evaluate the initiative, it's time to start the work of making change in the community!

Always Remember

An action plan is a living document. Refining or modifying goals and adjusting specific activities to respond to new situations or information is a sign of a healthy and vital initiative.

Evaluation Essentials

- **INPUTS are the resources that had to be present for the livability initiative to be implemented.**

For example, for a program that matches teens with older adults who want to learn more about technology, the inputs are:

1. *The place where equipment can be accessed*
2. *Computers and other devices that older adults want to learn more about*
3. *Students and older adults willing to participate in the program*

- **OUTPUTS tell what was created — what the team is doing and whom the work reaches. Outputs are the direct result of the input, the activity, program or service that was implemented.**

An example of an output for a home modification initiative may be the number of homes that received services or the average number or type of modifications made.

- **OUTCOMES report the changes that have occurred because of the livability initiative.**

For example, outcomes of a home modification initiative could be:

1. *Knowledge by residents about the things they can do to prevent falls in their home*
2. *The decision to make additional home modifications that were not included in the original program*
3. *The reduction in the number of hospital visits due to falls*

Evaluation Methods

There are different ways to measure the overall success of each goal and the impact the initiative has had on the community.

Common evaluation tools include:

- Satisfaction surveys
- Reports
- Focus groups
- Interviews with participants and community members
- Community indicators (such as the number of income-eligible people who are using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP, formerly known as food stamps)
- Program and public data (such as the number of people who participated in a program)

Reading List

See page 51 for information about finding online articles, reports and resources, including:

- ***Evaluating Your Age-Friendly Community Program***, AARP
- Also see the ***Roadmap to Livability*** workbooks about livability efforts in transportation, housing, and health services and community supports

Ready, Set, *Go!*

With the action plan completed and approved, the work begins!

Putting the Plan Into Action

Implementation of an action plan will differ by community and initiative. Some of the differences that will impact the implementation step:

- The size of the community
- The size and scope of the initiative
- The available resources
- The community's needs
- The priorities of partner organizations
- Existing plans for community improvements
- Partnerships with the local government, regional social and health service providers, businesses, organizations and service groups

The implementation of some plans will require small steps that can be accomplished without money to fund the changes. Many rural livability initiatives focus most of their work on low-cost and no-cost changes that do not require extensive investment by municipal government.

Implementation of a more extensive initiative — such as the development of affordable, accessible housing or extension of telehealth services — might require support by the municipal government, sponsorship by a major funder, and the collaboration of several regional service providers.

'Country Mouse' or 'City Mouse'

Implementing a plan in large cities is different from implementing a plan in smaller places. It can be easier in a rural community to gain widespread support for a livability project, but after gaining that support it can be easier in a large urban center to find the needed resources.

In small towns, change might require collaboration among volunteer organizations rather than collaboration between different municipal departments. In a rural home repair program, for example, volunteers may coordinate, raise funds and do the fix-it work with no paid help or formal support from the municipality.

In an urban community, changes can be rolled out as part of existing department initiatives. Many of the livability initiatives in urban places — such as Houston, Denver, Portland, Atlanta, Boston and Washington, DC — have required the joint efforts of a municipality, partner organizations and a funder willing to finance the needed changes.

Whether the livable community team is launching an initiative that targets low-cost, no-cost changes or an initiative that requires the coordinated efforts of multiple organizations and funders, the following tips can help make the implementation phase a success.

Target a Quick 'Win'

To keep the team, volunteers and the community motivated, consider setting an initial goal that can be accomplished within 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. It's equally important to celebrate both the small and larger wins. Setting benchmarks can be gratifying and help everyone involved realize that the team can make a real difference in the community.

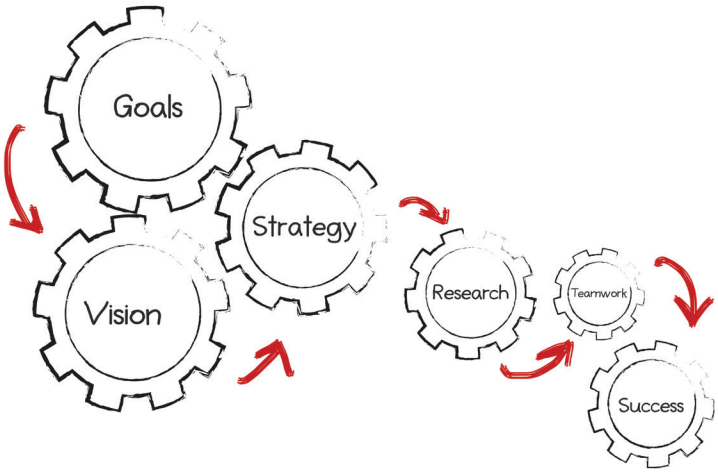
Reading List

See page 51 for information about finding online articles, reports and resources, including:

- ***Challenge Your Community to Change for the Better — in 100 Days or Less***

Identify the 'High Priorities'

In every community assessment, there are some concerns that rise to the top. It's important to include those "high priority" areas in the initial implementation plan even if working on the goals is unlikely to result in a "quick win." Give regular updates to the community at large, to community leaders and to the partner organizations about the progress made in the high priority areas. The team can break down the steps in a high priority area so all involved will have small milestones to celebrate.



Involve All Generations

Livable communities are places where young people and older adults are included in all aspects of community life. That includes being involved in making the changes they want to see in their community.

Ensure Diversity

People of all income levels share the benefits of safe, affordable, accessible housing and transportation options. People of all ethnicities, races and cultures share the benefits of accessible, inviting parks and green spaces. People of all gender identifications and sexual orientations enjoy the benefits to health and well-being of having access to quality health services and community supports. When people don't know about livable community projects or when they don't feel welcome, they likely won't benefit. If people who are traditionally excluded from community involvement are involved with the effort — especially the implementation effort — it will encourage other members of often excluded communities to participate in the work.

Share the Good News

Communication, communication, communication! Those three words are vital to the success of any livability initiative. Never forget the power of an effective communication plan.

Promotional Places

To get the word out about the livability initiative, spread the word through …

- Local newspapers and newsletters
- Letters to the editor
- The community Facebook page, the city or mayor's Twitter account (when suitable, use hashtags like #transportation or #housing)
- Posters, fliers or brochures placed in locations where the target audience gathers
- Community access television
- Public service announcements on radio and television
- Press releases and news conferences
- Presentations to local clubs, fraternal organizations, town committees, etc.
- Word of mouth

Continued ➢

The Four P's of an Effective Message

Whether the core team is creating a public service announcement, writing a letter to the editor, using social media, or working to develop a poster, it's important to consider the 4 P's of Messaging — Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

1. **PRODUCT:** The product is the result produced by the livability initiative. A resource guide is a product, but so is a change in attitude about the benefits of using, say, public transportation. Raising support within the community for the change the team is making is also a product, one that can help recruit volunteers, find funders, win political support and generate other kinds of useful assistance.

2. **PRICE:** Price addresses the cost for people who will be using a new service or attending a new activity. For example if someone is accustomed to making the drive to doctor appointments, what will it take for that person to use a volunteer service instead? If the people the core team are targeting to use a new service think it will be inconvenient or difficult to use, they won't try it. The message needs to stress that benefits outweigh perceived costs.

3. **PLACE:** Place refers to both a physical place and the barriers to accessing a service. For example, if the team is trying to get people to attend a fall prevention program at a community center, think about whether someone who uses a wheelchair or walker can enter the building safely? Are bus stops close by? The message will be more successful if the planning group thinks about the issues and addresses them before trying to persuade people to use a service that isn't accessible or is located too far away.

4. **PROMOTION:** How will the team promote an initiative in the community? One way to start brainstorming is by having team members think about how they themselves learn about programs and activities. The team might want to ask the advice of people who have successfully gotten the word out about a similar service.

A successful message is easy to understand

Clearly state what the livability initiative offers. The message should answer these questions:

- Who will benefit from the activity, program or service the team is implementing?
- How will people use the service or resource?
- Why is the activity, program or service valuable to the community?

A successful message is attractive

It's as important to pay attention to the visual appeal of a poster, flier or brochure as it is to develop appropriately messaged content. It isn't necessary to hire a professional designer in order to create a great handout. Word processing programs can be used to make effective, eye-catching promotional materials. Just keep in mind that:

- While bright colors attract attention, they can overwhelm the text
- The font style, text size and text color needs to be simple enough, large enough and have enough contrast with the background color to be legible
- The writing style and words used should be appropriate for the local community and the intended audience

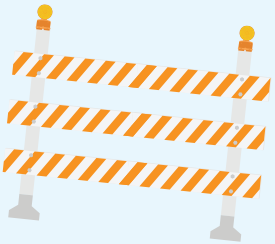
A successful message is targeted

If social media is part of the communication plan, it's important to know the target audience and decide which platform will be the most effective way to reach them. For example, Facebook may be a good way to tell the story of the livability initiative; but Twitter is a better choice for sharing short bursts of information such as, "City Council approves bike-only lanes on Mill Street."

A successful message stays on point

No matter how the information is presented, any messaging from the team needs to be clear, well designed and consistent. That said, some promotional opportunities, such as press interviews, might not allow the team to review a message before it's released. One way to make sure the messaging about the initiative is consistent is to put one person in charge of communication. That person can be both the press contact and public voice of the initiative.

Overcoming Roadblocks



The more ambitious a project is, the more likely it is to run into obstacles.

Maybe the initiative requires funding that hasn't yet been secured, or the team needs clearance from several of the municipality's departments — zoning, housing, public works, among others. Or maybe the project has received negative media coverage or resulted in unintended consequences. (An example: Equipment is placed in a way that it temporarily blocks access to residents' driveways.)

When a problem pops up, figure out what happened. Look within your Circles of Involvement (page 16) for experts and people who have experience dealing with a similar project.

Gather the best messages and information about the initiative, the need for it, and the benefit to the community of completing it. Then work on getting positive media attention and community support.

If the obstacle is insurmountable, revisit the initiative's vision, mission and goals and think about other ways to meet the goals and objectives.

Efforts to make a community truly livable and great for people of all ages can take years. 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. Struggles and challenges are often the norm.

It's important to not lose sight of the core team's ultimate vision and to not get discouraged. Most obstacles can be overcome with creativity, flexibility, tweaking and rethinking.

Case Study

Bowdoinham, Maine: One Lightbulb at a Time

The Masons Handy Brigade is a group of volunteers from the local Masonic Lodge who provide home maintenance, basic home repair and referrals to trustworthy contractors. These volunteers are handy and wanted to help the community, but they didn't know where to begin. So they contacted the livable community team. The Masons then became involved in implementing the community's plan. There's been a positive response from both the volunteers and the people receiving their services.

Onward!

Congratulations! A lot of hard work has gone into the creation of the livability initiative and its action plan. (Yes, we're pretending that Steps 1 through 7 have already been completed.) But the work isn't done.

The action plan is a living document to be monitored and modified over time.

Track associated programs, outputs and outcomes at regular intervals to measure progress toward the goals and make adjustments as needed.

Note and share lessons learned with stakeholders.

Make improvements and course corrections.

Meet and communicate with partners to understand successes and challenges — and to tackle any obstacles.

And don't forget to celebrate little victories and quick wins along the way. Holding a news conference, block party, or simply bringing a celebration cake to a core team meeting goes a long way in showcasing achievements and keeping people excited about the work.

See Appendix 4 for some of the many AARP resources that are available to support and promote livability work.

AARP Livable Communities

The AARP Livable Communities initiative supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities and counties nationwide to become great places for people of all ages.

AARP works to educate and inspire elected officials, local leaders, policymakers, planners and citizen activists to create and support communities that are livable and age-friendly.

AARP believes that communities should provide safe, walkable streets; affordable and accessible housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents to participate in community life.

As a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization that helps people ages 50 and older improve the quality of their lives, AARP is recognized as a go-to resource, convener and catalyst for raising awareness and driving change.

AARP is also a conduit of community interest through our consumer-based surveys and programs, which raise awareness about the need for livable communities and for AARP to serve as a catalyst for local change by providing resources, support and inspiration for communities to take action.

Since much of AARP's work is implemented locally by AARP state staff and volunteers, we collect and share innovative ideas and analyze insights with local leaders, relevant nonprofit organizations, business interests and philanthropic groups.

Our Work Is Driven by Some Key Realities

- The vast majority of people ages 50 and older want to live in their homes and communities for as long as possible.
- Well-designed, livable communities promote health, sustain economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents of every age, in all life stages.
- Different generations seek similar features, supports and services in their communities.
- Since livability work happens locally, local leaders are best positioned to turn their communities into great places for people of all ages.

Working With Elected Officials

The success of a livability initiative relies heavily on the contact the team will be making and the relationship it will develop with elected officials.

1. Contacting an Elected Official

The team or its representative(s) can connect with a local leader or legislator by:

- visiting in person
- writing a letter
- sending an email
- making a telephone call

- In-person visits are the most effective way of engaging with an elected official. It's best to have an appointment. If the office won't commit to a set time, or time with the elected official, popping into the office without an appointment is acceptable. But all the livability team will likely be able to do is leave information behind or speak briefly with a staff member.
- If the elected official is newly elected, during the weeks before his or her swearing in, send a letter of congratulations and suggest an introductory meeting. Then follow up with the person's office and make an appointment.
- The initial contact is important because any future correspondence will have more influence on the elected official's thoughts and actions if he or she knows the initiative, what it stands for and the person or team leading the effort.

2. Briefing Leaders and Legislators

Plan the visit carefully. If a meeting with the elected official is achieved, be prepared.
No winging it!

- **Know your subject:** Be well versed in the details about the issue(s) being discussed and be prepared to answer specific questions. If there's opposition to the livability team's efforts, know those arguments.
- **Know whom you're meeting:** Learn about the elected official's background and interests by visiting his or her website and social media accounts.
- **Introduce everyone:** Whomever the livability team's representatives meet with, identify all present, briefly explain the reason for visiting and provide information and insight into how the issue being discussed impacts the community.
- **Speak in your own words:** Limit the use of technical jargon.
- **Keep the conversation moving and on point:** Team members should be primed to ask questions or state requests. Depending on how many team members attend, only some will have a speaking role.
- **Share a negative story:** Explain the problems that need solving.
- **Tell a positive story:** Explain how the action the team is requesting will benefit the community.
- **Demonstrate the connection:** Be able to explain how the initiative serves the interests of the elected official's constituency.
- **Know the history:** If appropriate, be prepared to talk about how past legislation or governmental action has helped.

- **Ask for assistance and offer to help:** Identify ways the elected official, his or her staff and the initiative team can work together.
- **Put brakes on the babble:** Don't talk so much that there's no time for the elected official to ask questions. Limit your or the team's presentation to 5 to 10 minutes.
- **Be a good guest:** That means being polite, positive and respectful.
- **Be confident:** Don't be intimidated, but don't threaten or become defensive or aggressive.
- **Be prepared:** Leave behind a single page or double-sided sheet of paper with key details about the project and the issues involved. Consider supplying fact sheets (many are available at *AARP.org/Livability-Factsheets*).
- **Be specific:** Know what you want and clearly state what you want.
- **Be appreciative:** After the meeting, send a thank you letter.
- **Stay in touch:** Make a follow-up appointment or conduct follow-up "visits" via a letter or email.
- **Stay informed:** Sign up for the elected official's email or newsletter list, if one exists.

3. Tips for Successful Networking

- **Limit the visiting group:** Bring no more than 10 or 12 people. If sitdown work is being done, a smaller delegation (e.g. three or four) is recommended.
- **Assign roles:** If bringing a large group, designate who will participate as speakers and in what way (e.g. opening remarks, introductions, answering questions, summarizing the action steps at the end of the meeting).
- **Be natural:** Keep the meeting informal.
- **Share a memory:** Thank the elected official for any past assistance.
- **Be an engaged listener:** Keep ears open, mouth closed, eyes straight ahead.
- **Report back:** Document visit results, share with stakeholders as appropriate.

4. Keeping an Elected Official Involved

- Invite the legislator or local leader to attend a special event being held by the livability team.
- Consider inviting the elected official to be a featured speaker at an initiative event. (However, don't extend any invites during an electoral campaign. The elected official will be busy being a candidate. If possible, it's better for the initiative not to take sides in partisan politics.)
- Keep up to date on the elected official's public schedule. Elected leaders often hold town halls and make appearances at fairs and parades. A quick hello or interaction during such appearances provides an opportunity for staying in touch and can help reinforce the importance of the livability initiative.

Sell It in 60 Seconds

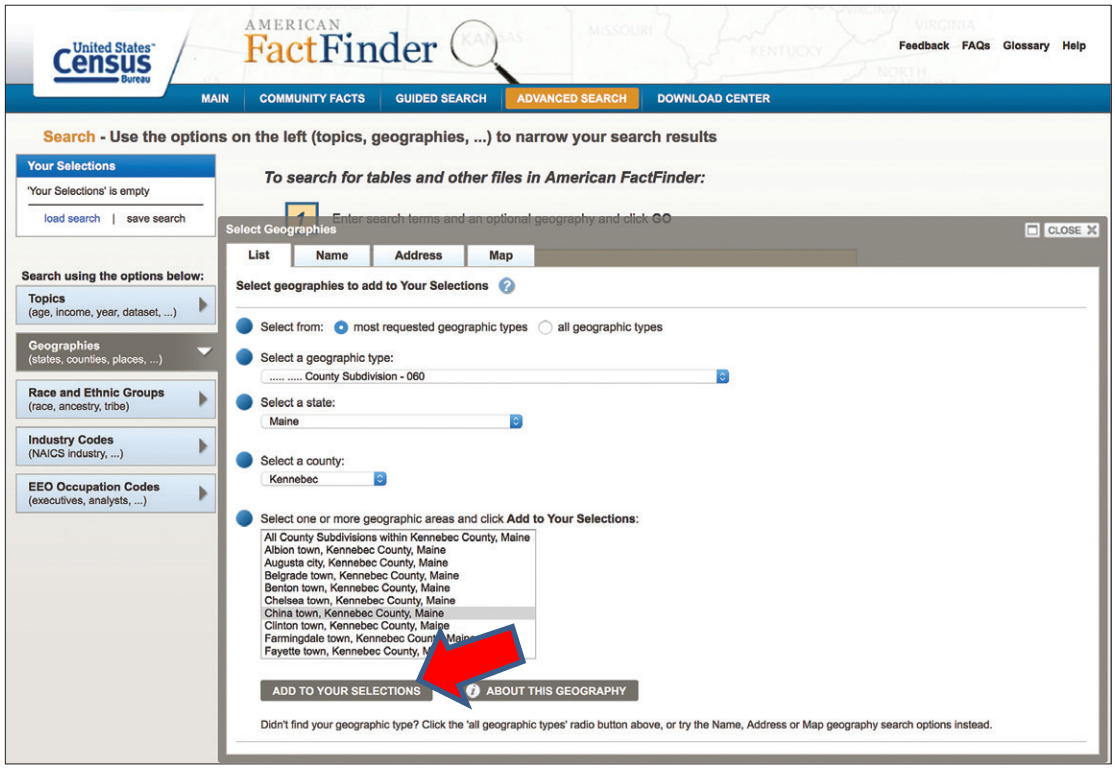
Livability team members should have a 60-second "elevator speech" ready in case they happen to run into an elected official or other influential community member.

Those two- or three-sentence elevator speeches should reinforce who the team is, the issue or need being discussed — and what needs to be done.

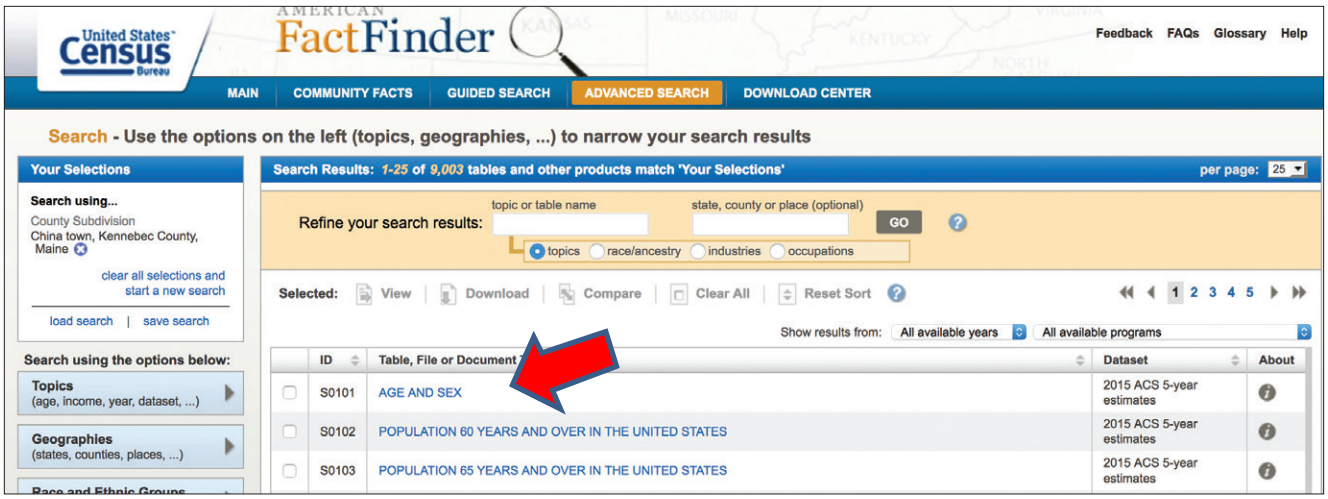
How to Create a Demographic Community Profile

1. Go to **American FactFinder** at ***FactFinder.Census.gov***
2. Click on **Advanced Search** and **SHOW ME ALL**

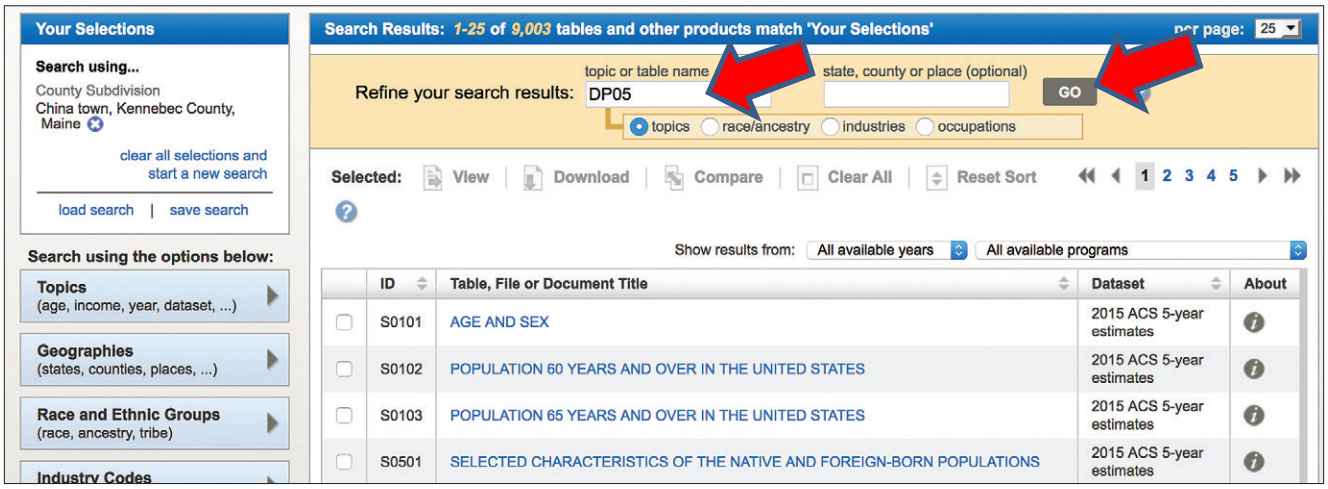
3. Click **Geographies**
4. Under **Geographic Type** click **County Subdivision – 060**
5. Select the **State**. (In the illustration we've selected Maine.)
6. Choose the **County**. (We've selected Kennebec County.)
7. Select the **Geographic Area**. (We've selected China Town, Kennebec County, Maine.)
8. Click **ADD TO YOUR SELECTIONS** and choose **Close** in the upper right corner of **Select Geographies**



9. When selecting any of the tables listed, the information will be about the town that was chosen. For example, selecting Table S0101 provides a description of the age distribution of the population, lists the median age of the community and states what percentage of the population is age 60 or older.

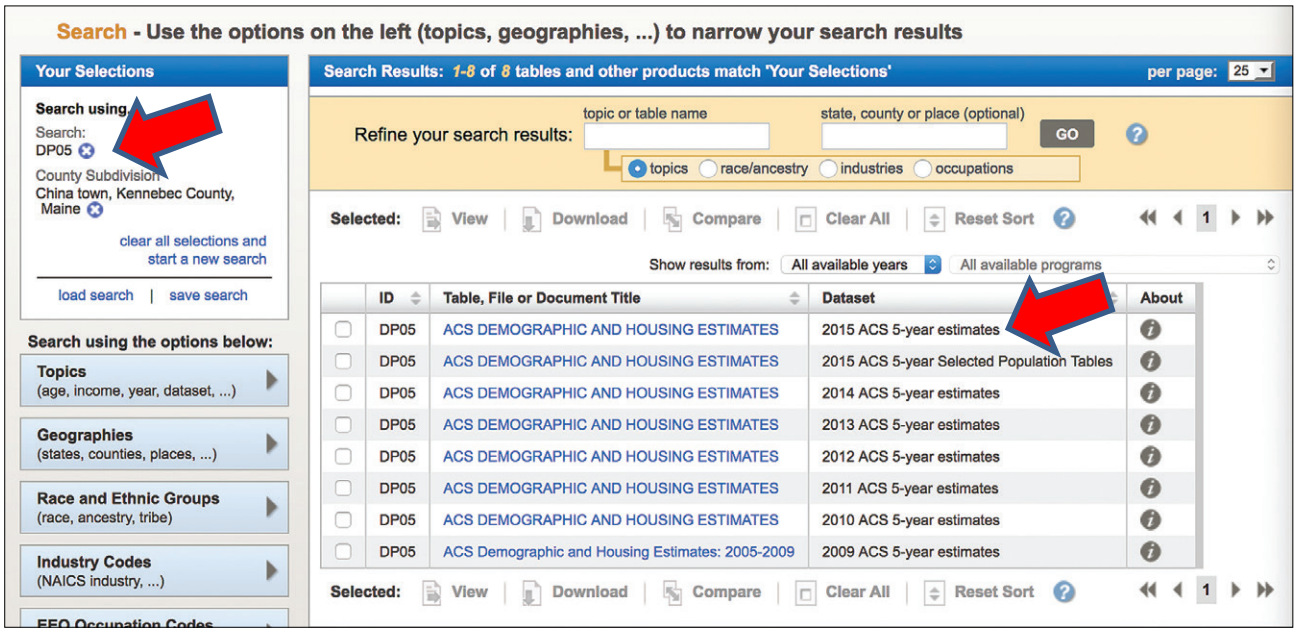


10. Put the table number that has the information you want in the box labeled **Topic or Table Name.** Then click **GO.** (Our example uses Table DP05 in order to get a broad sense of the age of the population and number of households.)



Continued ➢

11. After clicking on the table, it will appear on the screen. In the left corner is a box offering the ability to look at prior versions of the same table. Doing so provides data about the changes that have happened over time.



12. Under the title of the table, is a line that includes the options **Modify Table**, **Add/Remove Geographies**, etc. To remove younger age groups and download the table, click **Modify Table**.
13. The option **Add/Remove Geographies** lets the user add a comparison geography — such as the state or the county where the community is located.
14. The option **Bookmark/Save** provides a permanent link to the table that has been downloaded. **Print** will print the table that was downloaded. **Download** saves a copy of the table to the computer. When more than one geography (e.g. several towns in the region) has been included, **Create a Map** maps one variable on the table in the different communities.
15. When done looking at the table, go to the **Search** box and click the blue circle with a white **X** beside (in this example) DP05. The screen will return to the full listing of tables displayed during Step 9. If desired, put another topic or table number into the **Topic or Table Name** box.

For more help using American FactFinder, select the Help option in the upper right corner of the main page.

Useful Data Tables

From the U.S. Census, American Community Survey. Use the most recent five-year data from American FactFinder.

- **Table DP-1**: Population by age. The U.S. Census 2000 and Census 2010 can be compared by clicking on **Other Versions** of the table.
- **Table DP03**: Selected economic characteristics. Includes information about median Social Security and median retirement income.
- **Table DP05**: American Community Survey demographic and housing estimates. Includes information about the age composition of the community and number of households.
- **Table B09020**: Relationships by household type for population ages 65 and older. Provides information about the living arrangements of older residents — living with spouse, friends, other relatives, living in an institution and living alone.
- **Table B18101**: Gender by age by disability status.
- **Table B19037**: Age of householder by household income in the past 12 months.
- **Table B19049**: Median household income during the past 12 months, by age of householder.
- **Table B21001**: Gender by age by veteran status for the civilian population ages 18 and older.
- **Table B22001**: Receipt of SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) in the past 12 months by presence of people ages 60 and older for households.
- **Table B25007**: Tenure by age of householder. Overall age composition of owners and renters.
- **Table B25027**: Mortgage status by age of householder.
- **Table B25072**: Rental expenses.
- **Table B25126**: Tenure by age of householder by year structure was built. Provides information about the average age of the homes that older people occupy, presented for renters and homeowners.
- **Table B25128**: Tenure by age of householder by year householder moved into unit. Provides information about how long residents have lived in the same place. Data is presented separately for renters and owners, by age.
- **Table C18101**: Overall rate of disability by age and gender.
- **Table C21007**: Age by veteran status by poverty status in the past 12 months by disability status.
- **Table S1002**: Grandparents.
- **Table S1101**: Households and families. Includes information about the number of households with one or more persons ages 60 and older.
- **Table S1810**: Disability characteristics: Frequency of type of disability by age.

AARP.org/Livable and Other AARP Resources

The award-winning website of AARP Livable Communities is the entryway to livability content and materials

Featured Resources

- ***AARP Livable Communities e-Newsletter:*** Our free, award-winning weekly newsletter features articles, slideshows, tool kits, how to's, promising practices, case studies, interviews, news and more.
  AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe

- ***AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities:*** Learn how a city, town or county can join this action-oriented livability program.
  AARP.org/Agefriendly
  AARP.org/Agefriendly-Member-List

- ***Where We Live:*** This AARP book series highlights interesting and inventive ideas that have been implemented in communities nationwide.
  AARP.org/WhereWeLive

Collections

- ***AARP Livable Communities Slideshows:*** See what makes a community livable.
  AARP.org/Livable-Slideshows

- ***AARP Livable Communities '5 Questions' Interview Series:*** We talk to mayors, municipal managers, policymakers, planners, elected officials, advocates and experts.
  AARP.org/Livable-Interviews

- ***AARP Livable Lessons: Promising Practices and How To's:*** Field-tested strategies and replicable recipes for creating livable, age-friendly places and programs.
  AARP.org/Livable-Lessons

- ***AARP Livable Communities A-Z Archive:*** Find content lists and links by visiting our subject-based archives.
  AARP.org/Livable-Archives

Research, Policies and Reports

- ***AARP Livable Communities Policy Research:*** Experts from the AARP Public Policy Institute address topics including land use, housing and transportation.
  AARP.org/LivablePolicy

- ***AARP Livability Fact Sheets:*** This award-winning package of easy-to-understand guides (on topics including road diets, form-based code — using the physical form rather than the separation of uses as an organizing principle — and revitalization without displacement) can be used by local leaders, policymakers, citizen activists and others to learn about and explain what makes a city, town or neighborhood a great place to live. Available in English and Spanish.
  AARP.org/Livability-Factsheets

- ***The Livability Economy:*** Learn how livability initiatives contribute to improved economic performance and a more vibrant, desirable and competitive environment for housing and commercial investment.
  AARP.org/Livability-Economy

Tools

- ***AARP Age-Friendly Community Survey:*** Use or adapt this survey to ask residents to share their views about community features, services and needs.
  AARP.org/Livable-Survey

- ***AARP Livability Index:*** Find the "livability score" of communities and places nationwide by entering an address, city, state or ZIP code into this interactive, customizable, data-driven online tool.
  AARP.org/LivabilityIndex

Tool Kits and Guides

- ***AARP HomeFit:*** Learn about home modifications that can improve safety and accessibility. The guide and worksheets are available online in English and Spanish.
  AARP.org/HomeFit

- ***AARP Imagining Livability Design Collection:*** A visual portfolio of tools and transformations for creating livable places.
  AARP.org/Livability-Design

- ***AARP 'In a Livable Community' Poster:*** Available in English, Spanish, French, Chinese and Korean, this photo-driven handout (or wall hanging) shows the features and services that make a community livable for people of all ages. (See a sample on page 4.)
  AARP.org/Livable-Poster

- ***AARP Pop-Up Demonstration Tool Kit:*** When done right, temporary livability projects can lead to permanent change.
  AARP.org/Livable-Popup

- ***AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit:*** Evaluate roadways and neighborhoods for walkability and advocate for safer streets and sidewalks.
  AARP.org/WalkAudit

- ***The 8 Domains of Livability:*** Cities, town and communities of all sizes can use this framework to become more livable for older adults and people of all ages.
  AARP.org/Livability-Resources

Reading List Resources

The following articles or materials were mentioned in this guide and can be found by searching the following websites:

Page 14: ***How to Involve the Right Players in a Livable Communities Plan***
AARP.org/Livable

Page 20: Find information at ***TheNonProfitTimes.com*** and ***PhilanthropyNewsDigest.org***

Page 23: ***5 Questions for Christopher Cabaldon, Mayor of West Sacramento, California***
AARP.org/Livable-Interviews

Page 30: ***Community Tool Box, Section 3, Creating Objectives,*** University of Kansas
CTB.KU.edu

Page 37: ***Evaluating Your Age-Friendly Community Program***
AARP.org/Livable

Page 38: ***Challenge Your Community to Change for the Better — in 100 Days or Less***
AARP.org/Livable

Now What?

- **Tell us about the livability work you're doing or see in your community**
  AARP Livable Communities can feature the projects and programs on our website and other channels to build awareness and inspire other towns, cities and neighborhoods. Complete the online form at *AARP.org/SharingLivableSolutions*
- **Follow us on Twitter:** *@AARPLivable*
- **Like us on Facebook:** *Facebook/AARPLivableCommunities*
- **Email us:** *Livable@AARP.org*
- **And we'll say it again, subscribe to the AARP Livable Communities e-Newsletter**: It's free! If you're already a subscriber, encourage others to sign up: *AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe*

NOTES:

Read, order or download the *AARP Roadmap to Livability* and other resources at *AARP.org/Livable*

To stay informed about livability efforts nationwide and receive our newest livability materials, subscribe to the free, award-winning *AARP Livable Communities e-Newsletter* Sign up now at *AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe*

We want to hear about your community and its progress. Complete the form at *AARP.org/SharingLivableSolutions*

Find the AARP state office near you at *AARP.org/States*

Email the AARP Livable Communities initiative at *Livable@AARP.org*

Contact AARP at 1-888-OUR-AARP

The *AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection* is a collaborative effort of the AARP Livable Communities team.
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The *AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection* was designed by Jennifer Goodman.

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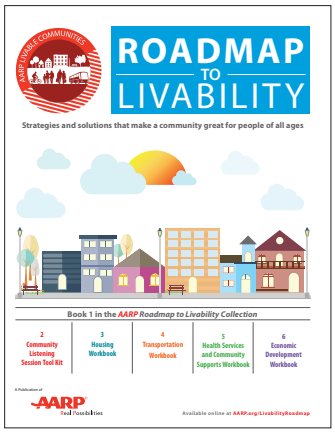

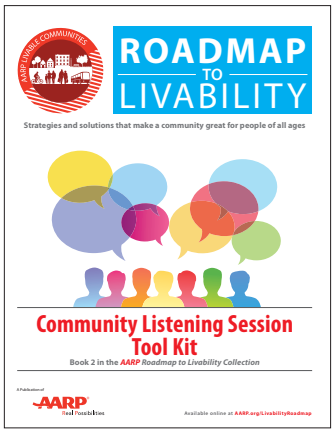

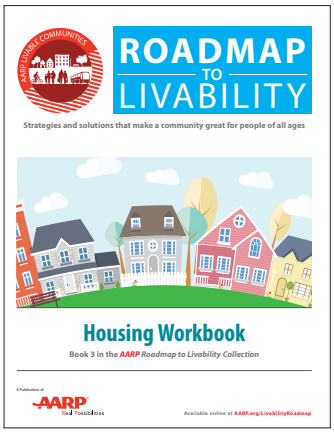

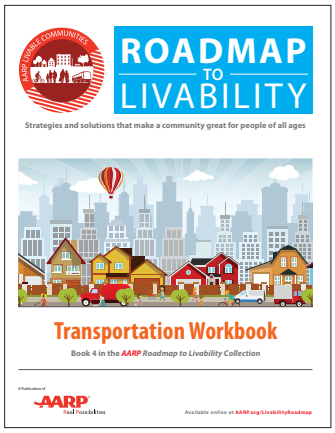

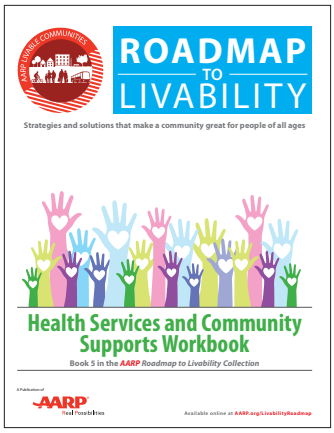

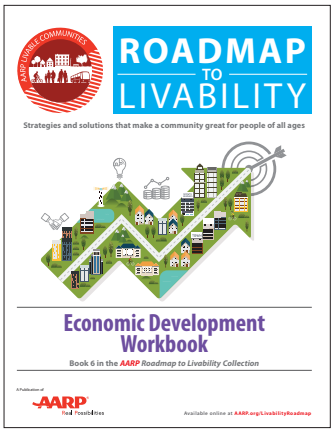

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