mayors innovation project

BUILDING AN AGE FRIENDLY CITY: THE IMPERATIVE OF AGING IN PLACE

WINTER 2026 POLICY MEETING
JANUARY 30-31 · WASHINGTON DC

As the number of older adults rapidly increases, seniors have become the fastest growing homeless demographic in the nation. This stark reality makes keeping older adults safe, independent, and secure in their homes and communities an urgent municipal priority. This panel will explore successful 'aging in place' strategies. We'll focus on proactive solutions–from ensuring seamless healthcare access and support services to implementing critical eviction prevention and housing stability programs—all aimed at allowing seniors to live independently and comfortably thrive within their communities.

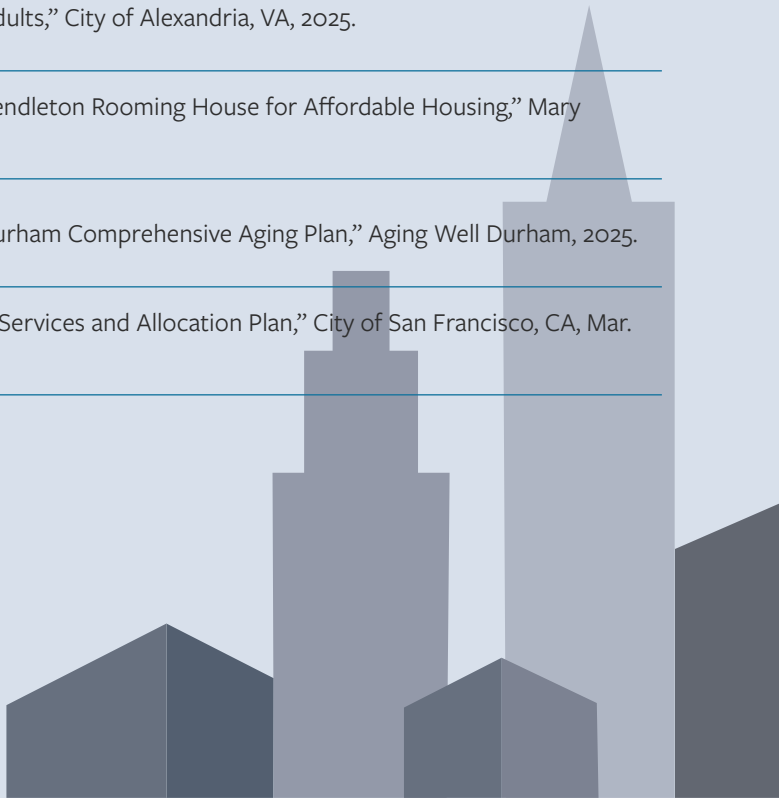


DISCLAIMER

For length, clarity, and printing purposes, many of these sources have been abbreviated and/or edited from their original form. To read the full, unabbreviated resources from this book, please visit our website or view them on the usb drive provided in your meeting materials.

RESOURCES

PAGE	
1	"AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities," AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communitites, Oct. 2023.
3	Pages excerpted from "A Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods," AARP & Congress for the New Urbanism, 2020.
15	"America's Housing Market Is Failing Older Adults," Linna Zhu & Amalie Zinn, Urban Institute, Mar. 12, 2025.
20	Pages excerpted from "Age-Friendly Cleveland 2025-2028 Action Plan," City of Cleveland, OH, 2025.
32	"ARHA spends $56.9 million on Old Town Senior Living Complex," Mary Wadland, The Zebra, Sep. 1, 2025.
34	"Rent Relief for Older and Disabled Adults," City of Alexandria, VA, 2025.
36	"City of Alexandria Revives Historic Pendleton Rooming House for Affordable Housing," Mary Wadland, The Zebra, Jun. 17, 2025.
40	Pages excerpted from "2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan," Aging Well Durham, 2025.
50	Pages excerpted from "Dignity Fund Services and Allocation Plan," City of San Francisco, CA, Mar. 2023.



AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities

An age-friendly community is livable for people of *all* ages

America's Population Is Rapidly Aging

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2034 the nation will have more people age 65 or older than under 18. By 2060, nearly 1 in 4 people in the United States will be at least 65 years old.

This demographic shift presents an opportunity for communities that are prepared. Well-designed, age-friendly communities foster economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents of all ages.

The **AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities** supports the work of local, regional and state governments as they prepare for the nation's changing demographics. Established in 2012, the network includes towns, cities, counties and states that have made a commitment to being more livable for people of all ages, and especially older adults.

The program's framework equips local leaders and residents with resources for assessing the needs of older adults related to housing and transportation options, access to key services, and opportunities to participate in community activities. Once identified, those needs can be incorporated into an action plan.



Age-Friendly Communities Are Livable for People of *All* Ages

aarp.org/livable

Membership in the network:

- Serves as an organizing structure for making community improvements
- Fosters partnerships among community groups and local stakeholders
- Provides resources for identifying and assessing community needs
- Enables community improvements that benefit people of all ages

Membership provides local leaders with:

- Access to expert-led webinars and technical assistance from livability professionals
- Connections to a national network of more than 700 enrolled communities
- A private group forum for discussions, asking questions and finding answers
- Support, guidance and best-practice resources from AARP about creating an action plan and documenting progress

Membership in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities is *free!*

Membership matters:

- 68% of communities successfully advanced policy changes
- 86% of communities overcame barriers
- More than 100 million people in the United States live in a community that is committed to being age-friendly.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA: "Demographic Turning Points for the United States: Population Projections for 2020 to 2060," *Current Population Reports*, P25-1144, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C., 2020

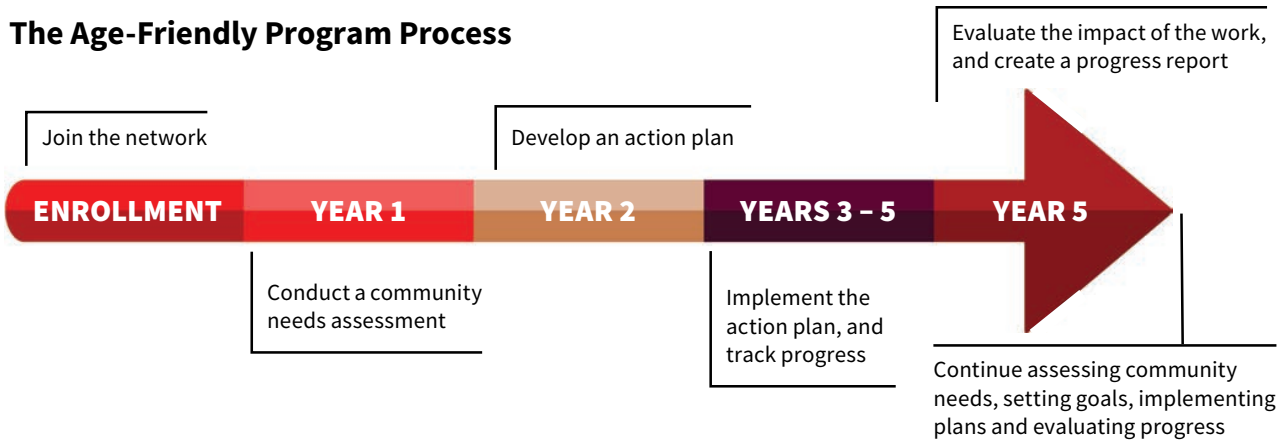
AARP NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY STATES AND COMMUNITIES DATA: 2022 Member List and Survey

Enrolling in the Network

Communities enroll individually or as part of a region. A governor can choose to enroll an entire state. All towns, villages, townships, boroughs, cities, counties and states seeking to enroll in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities are required to submit a membership application. The community must also provide a letter of commitment signed by the jurisdiction's highest elected official (e.g., a governor, mayor, county executive) or a legislative body can pass and provide a resolution in support of membership.

Learn more and find the membership application via ***AARP.org/AgeFriendly***.

The Age-Friendly Program Process

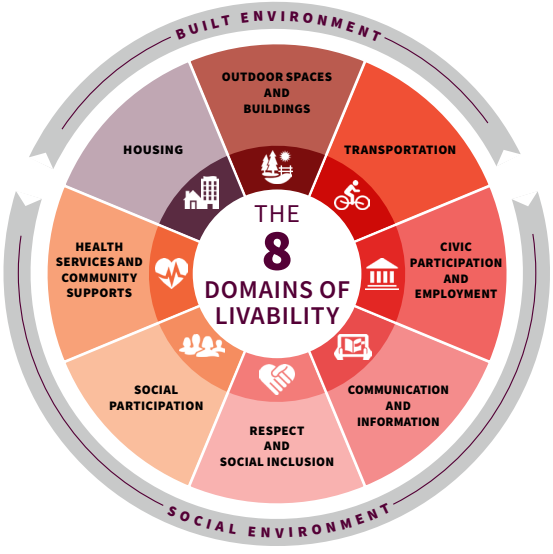


The Program Steps

Members of the **AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities** commit to an assessment process and cycle of continuous improvement, the steps of which typically require the member community to:

1. Establish a way to include older residents in all stages of the age-friendly process
2. Conduct a community needs assessment *(AARP provides survey examples and access to an online tool)*
3. Develop an action and evaluation plan based on the assessment results and submit to AARP for review
4. Implement the plan and work toward its goals
5. Assess the impact of implementing the plan and submit progress reports
6. Share solutions, successes and best practices across the age-friendly network
7. Repeat!

The **8 Domains of Livability** is the framework used by states and communities enrolled in the network to organize and prioritize their work. The availability and quality of these community features impact the well-being of older adults and people of all ages.



LEARN MORE, GET IN TOUCH

- **Website:** *AARP.org/AgeFriendly or AARP.org/Livable*
- **Email:** *AARPAge-FriendlyNetwork@AARP.org*
- **Facebook:** */AARPLivableCommunities*
- **Twitter:** *@AARPLivable*
- **Free Newsletter:** *AARP.org/LivableSubscribe*
- **Locate Your AARP State Office:** *AARP.org/States* or call 1-888-687-2277

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AARP®

CNU Building Places People Love.

Enabling Better Places

A Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods







By **AARP Livable Communities** and the **Congress for the New Urbanism**

Reinventing Spaces

Small changes can make a difference.

Revising a zoning code to suit a community's needs requires the support of a diverse collection of stakeholders, including elected leaders, business owners and residents. When a community has the resources and ability to undertake wholesale code changes, the right choices can result in a great place to live and a stronger economy.

But changing the way a community is designed can pose logistical hurdles and provoke emotions. Communities that have the resources to pursue comprehensive zoning reform often find it to be a contentious and arduous process for all involved. That's why incremental code reform is frequently a better and more effective approach. When the public understands the goals and is involved in the process, there's generally greater support for implementation.

By undertaking a series of immediate first steps, a community can try new approaches and grow into them, advancing to additional changes in an organic way and at a pace that suits that particular place. In some locations, the biggest wins come from simplifying or removing certain requirements, as opposed to overhauling the code completely. Enacting broader, midrange changes might require greater political will and momentum. Regardless of what a community takes on, the formula is as follows:

- Focus on the most problematic barriers first
- Build political will
- Address inequities, including racial segregation
- Assess the priorities and challenges raised by local leaders, residents and influential stakeholders

What's the biggest little thing that can transform a community?

The incremental code reform process empowers place-specific changes that address the most achievable reforms first and build political will, with the goal of creating places that equitably serve residents, regardless of age, race, sexual orientation or physical ability.

Getting into the Zone

Master Plans and **Downtown Plans** are a community's framework for growth, redevelopment and investment. **Zoning** is the primary tool for the implementation of those plans.

- Zoning, street standards and other codes dictate where buildings are placed, how they are used, where and how much parking is built, and the width and location of sidewalks.
- Zoning can make or break the ability to spur economic growth, meet residents' needs, increase diversity, or respond to local or regional challenges.

Some Past, Present and Future Reality Checks

The population of the United States is aging and growing more diverse.

- By 2030, 1 in 4 Americans will be a race other than white and 1 in 5 people will be age 65 or older.
- By 2034, older adults will outnumber children younger than 18 for the first time in the nation's history. By that year, people age 80 or older will account for more than 10 percent of all U.S. households. Most will live alone.
- AARP research finds that the vast majority of people 50-plus want to remain in their homes and communities as they age.

Housing tenures and types have an impact on financial security and the growing economic inequality among older adults. "Older renters are less well positioned than homeowners because they have lower cash savings and wealth," notes the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, which adds that "longstanding differences in access to well-paying jobs and homeownership opportunities leave older minority households at a financial disadvantage in their retirement years."

An older population will require different options for where and how to live, work and play than what current zoning codes allow. Updating the codes to ensure that communities have amenities and services to support aging will enable older adults to remain independent, engaged and active in community life.

SOURCES (BOTTOM BOX): *DEMOGRAPHIC TURNING POINTS FOR THE UNITED STATES: POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR 2020 TO 2060*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
HOUSING AMERICA'S OLDER ADULTS 2019, JOINT CENTER FOR HOUSING STUDIES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Building Support for Code Reform

Change is both a technical and political process. To revise a zoning code, advocates need to actively engage, educate and inspire the community.

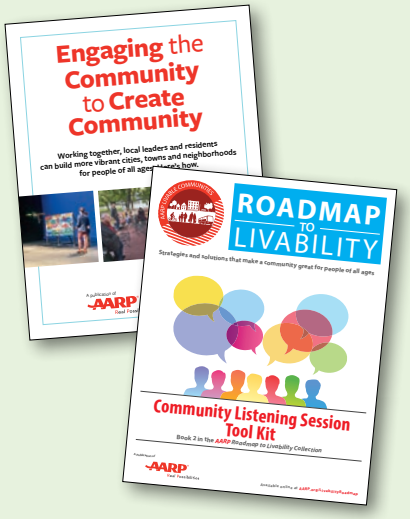
1. Identify needs and how reform can help

Successful code reform has well-defined goals that cannot be achieved under the current code. As a starting point, advocates can cite examples of what isn't working, or what is no longer allowed but could work well.

- **Reverse past wrongs**
  Conventional zoning has been used as a tool for social and racial segregation. Reform efforts can work to reverse past wrongs and start eliminating inequities by increasing support for local business ownership, housing that's affordable and protections against displacement.

LISTEN and LEARN

Visit *AARP.org/LivableLibrary* to order or download these free community engagement guides for local leaders.



2. Linking reforms to community interests and concerns

Who are the decision-makers and what are their interests? Are their goals consistent with the concerns of the general public? For example, the community's elected officials and local leaders might be concerned about:

- **Increasing opportunity**
  Code reform can allow for more flexible land use, which can contribute to larger community goals, such as rebuilding or strengthening the local economy, increasing housing choices, fostering attractive public spaces, improving safety, and creating opportunities for disadvantaged or underrepresented residents.

- **Focusing on redevelopment zones and areas**
  Code revisions — such as improved design practices and simplified development regulations — can support community-desired changes for target investment in areas of need.

- **The "plans that sit on the shelf" syndrome**
  At some point in its past, the community might have invested time and money in plans that were never implemented. Aligning code reform with a community's master planning increases the likelihood of plans becoming a reality and allows the community to adjust to new challenges or opportunities.

3. Predicting and addressing potential pain points

The language used to explain code changes should be as transparent and easily understood as possible. But even with misinterpretations off the table as a problem, common challenges include:

- **Costs and capacity**
  Concerns about price and staffing are why it's important for decision-makers to understand that incremental reform can be incorporated in less time, and with lower risk and cost, than a full overhaul of a zoning code.

- **Legal questions**
  Since code reform efforts are typically vetted by a community's attorney or land use expert before implementation, legal concerns shouldn't prevent a community or its leadership from brainstorming about and considering new approaches.

- **A lack of public support**
  The code reform approach outlined in this handbook reduces complexities and enables zoning codes to be tailored to local goals. Among the benefits of incremental code reform is that the process is easy for the public to understand — and *support*!

Identifying the Right Reforms

For incremental code reform to be effective and enable better places, the right solutions need to be used in the right types of locations.

Planning for Better Downtowns and Main Streets

The downtown or Main Street districts that succeed and become useful destinations offer a sense of place. They don't look or feel like the shopping centers — or roadways dotted with chain eateries, strip malls and big box stores — that are common throughout the nation.

What successful Main Streets and downtowns *do* share with strip malls and shopping centers is that all are set up for effective cross-shopping, which means the customers of one business become aware of other businesses by walking past them. Such areas have the ability to pivot quickly, adjusting to changing conditions and incorporating new services and amenities as needed.

Another similarity many Main Streets and downtowns have with shopping malls is that they can be "park once" destinations. The difference is that instead of oversized asphalt lots and concrete parking garages, Main Streets and downtowns can provide on-street parking and small lots behind buildings. Both types of in-town parking areas are convenient and can generate parking meter income for reinvesting in the streetscape.

When housing is integrated into a downtown, local businesses have a built-in customer base, people who can't or don't want to drive can reside in a walkable community, and the added "eyes on the street" enhance neighborhood safety.

The following menu of strategies, elements and interventions can help Main Streets and downtowns become active, vibrant, successful places. ▶



▲ **PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE:** A wide downtown sidewalk on Congress Street provides room for diners, pedestrians, cyclists, bike racks and trees.



▲ **SOUTH BEND, INDIANA:** The West Side Main Streets Initiative improved Western Avenue's sidewalks, reduced crossing distances and added pedestrian-scale lighting.

MELISSA STANTON, AARP | CITY OF SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

The Streetscape

Simple code changes can transform streets from places in service to cars to spaces designed for people.

STAGE 1

Change can happen with relative speed.

1. Save Small Streets and Alleys



Small blocks with service access via alleys are often eliminated from historic communities so the spaces can be used in other ways. Doing so typically reduces walkability and a district's potential for success. If small blocks and alleys no longer exist (or never existed), consider adding some.

2. Establish On-Street Parking



On-street parking is public, conveniently located and business-friendly. The spaces can provide a variety of benefits, including a layer of safety to pedestrians by separating moving traffic from the sidewalk. But on-street parking spots are often removed in order to add travel lanes or accommodate curb cuts for driveways. Wherever possible, on-street parking should be maintained or added before creating off-street parking lots or garages at an additional cost.

3. Allow Encroachment



The word encroachment isn't often used in a positive context, but here it is. The space in front of a restaurant for outdoor dining and an awning that projects over the public right-of-way are both beneficial encroachments. A caveat: On sidewalks with significant pedestrian traffic, it might be necessary to ensure a width of at least 8 feet (not including any sidewalk seating, bus stop shelters, planters or other features) so passersby of all abilities can safely navigate the space.

STAGE 2

Change requires time and investment.

1. Restore Two-Way Streets



The one-way streets in many downtowns were once two-ways that were converted to increase vehicular capacity and speeds. But high-speed roadways in downtown districts are dangerous to pedestrians. One-way streets also reduce the number of customers who'll see a shop or business as they drive by. Many towns and cities that converted their two-way streets to one-way are switching back to benefit the local economy.

2. 'Complete' the Streets



The term Complete Streets refers to a transportation policy that considers the needs of all roadway users: drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders. Increased access and safety for walking and bicycling correlates with an increase in customers for an area's shops, service providers and eateries. While an expressway doesn't need to be suitable for pedestrians and cyclists, a Main Street or downtown does. State governments that want to encourage Complete Streets can incentivize street safety projects by providing funding.

3. Put Roads on a Diet



Communities benefit from slower-moving vehicles. From a safety standpoint, slower speeds save lives. From a business perspective, slower speeds increase visibility and make the sidewalk a more pleasant place for customers. Posting a lower speed limit helps, but it's more effective to reduce the number and width of travel lanes. Each should be no more than 10 feet wide in business districts, except where bus routes or bicycle lanes make more width necessary.

4. Limit the Lanes



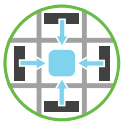
For reasons similar to those of a road diet, the most vibrant Main Streets consist of two travel lanes moving in opposite directions. Two-lane roadways can be easily crossed by pedestrians. While some downtown districts do fine when a third lane is added for turning, additional travel lanes typically reduce safety.

5. Set Public Realm Standards



Although careful attention should be paid to creating an attractive public space, design standards need to be limited and reasonable. Sensible policies establish a minimum sidewalk width; provide on-street parking; and call for street trees, outdoor seating and pedestrian-scale lighting.

6. Provide Stormwater Options



Stormwater that passes over roofs, parking lots, streets and other impervious surfaces carries pollutants into local waterways. Some communities require treating stormwater on-site, which can be done with street trees, bioretention, swales and permeable pavement. When costly underground treatment is the only option, off-site stormwater management should be employed. When a community's stormwater isn't managed collectively over a large area, a fee-in-lieu approach can fund streetscape retrofits to add storage and protect water quality.

7. Remove Highways That Blight or Disconnect Communities



Replacing urban freeways with surface streets is a cost-effective, sustainable option for cities dealing with aging, grade-separated roads. This has the added benefit of healing local street networks and improving regional traffic dispersion. (Learn more on page 21.)

Building Forms and Uses

Buildings shape the public spaces of Main Streets and downtowns. Minor text changes in a zoning code can go a long way toward ensuring that building forms are in the appropriate contexts. To encourage equitable development and a robust local economy, uses within a building should be changeable without the need for a change-of-use permit.

STAGE 1

Change can happen with relative speed.

1. Permit 100% Lot Coverage



Main Street and downtown buildings usually fill most, if not all, of their lot footprint. This is especially true with small historic properties. Lot coverage limitations aren't appropriate in historic or downtown areas and should be removed.

2. Set Facade Heights



A street can feel like a comfortable, outdoor room when the height of the buildings is at least half the width of the street. While this is not always achievable, particularly on larger streets, the "enclosure" of the sidewalk space can be more easily addressed. Along sidewalks it's best to ensure that building facades are no less than 24 feet high. Mandating facade heights can create a sense of enclosure without the economic pitfalls of minimum story requirements.

3. Support Mixed Uses



While ground floor commercial uses are the norm in downtowns, ground-level residential properties can be useful, too. They can, for instance, result in additional customers for area businesses and an around-the-clock presence that helps keep the area safe.

4. Simplify Uses



Since building uses change over time, it's best to regulate them on the basis of broad categories — commercial, residential, industrial, civic — not narrow ones, such as coffee shops or barber shops. Where certain uses need to be restricted, list only those that are disallowed or limited rather than all permitted uses.

5. Allow Short-Term Uses



Temporary structures and short-term permitted uses lower the barrier to success, help businesses adapt, and validate ideas without triggering parking requirements and site development costs. Permission should be granted for at least two years, perhaps with an option to renew.

6. Bust Buffer Requirements



Tree-filled lots or sound-blocking walls are useful for separating housing from busy roadways. In downtowns areas, the adjacency of buildings is key to a location's vibrancy and economic success.

7. Don't Dictate the Decorating



Architectural mandates about building styling can be costly and artificial-looking. For shopkeepers, the key to success in downtowns and on Main Streets is an appealing storefront and ground floor space. The creation of welcoming entrances, smart signage and street-level windows can happen without decrees.

8. Plan for Inclusionary Zoning



A market-based strategy for creating mixed-income communities, inclusionary zoning encourages or requires developers to set aside a portion of the units in a new or remodeled residential project for low- and moderate-income households.

STAGE 2

Change requires time and investment.

1. Set Adjacency Requirements



Where downtowns abut residential areas, adjacency requirements can address compatibility issues involving height restrictions, side yard setbacks within 50 feet of residential districts and more.

2. Say 'Yes' to Mixed Income, Multifamily Housing



Having housing within walking distance of a downtown or Main Street is vital to an area's success, especially outside of peak business hours. Multifamily housing, such as apartment buildings or multiunit row homes, should be available at different sizes, affordable for a range of income levels and permitted throughout a downtown district, with the possible exception of street-level units in the main commercial hub.

3. Encourage Public Use of Private Parking



Centrally located but underused parking lots and garages are detrimental to the success of Main Street and downtown districts. It's better to devote the space to more vital activities. To do that, private parking lots and structures, such as apartment buildings or offices, can share their parking areas with the public at least part of the time.

4. End Density and Ratio Rules



Per-property-density and floor-area-ratio (or FAR) restrictions aren't needed on Main Streets or in downtowns, where activity and vibrancy are among the goals. These types of mandates often restrain the business and housing market, especially when they're set unreasonably low.

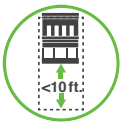
Facades, Frontages, Parking

Simple changes in the code for how buildings meet the street can make a difference in the economic success of a community.

STAGE 1

Change can happen with relative speed.

1. Establish Sensible Setbacks



When Main Street or downtown buildings are constructed far from the street and sidewalk, such as for a parking lot, the area becomes more car-centric and less lively. Yet, if buildings are too close to the street, the space in front of stores can be too tight for foot traffic and unsafe, undermining passersby who aren't agile enough to dodge obstacles and other pedestrians. While a 10-foot setback works for most Main Streets and downtowns, it's important to be mindful of all users and uses when determining the distance.

2. Require Sidewalk Entrances



Buildings located along sidewalks should have entries that face the sidewalk. This seems obvious, but it's now common for buildings to be accessible only from parking areas. Doorways that face parking lots or are at the rear or side of a building can serve as secondary entrances. Buildings that are more than 100 feet wide can be required to provide additional entrances, such as one for every 70 feet of facade.

3. Ban Blank Walls



People are less likely to use sidewalks alongside buildings that have no street-facing windows or doors. While some blank walls can be mitigated with murals, art isn't a total solution. Blank walls at street level or on the second floor of buildings should not exceed 30 feet in width.

4. Require Transparency



Opaque windows and doors are as uninviting as blank walls. Ground-floor facades should have 50 percent transparency — in other words, clear glass between the bulkhead, at about two feet above ground, and the sign band at roughly 10 feet. (The percentage is calculated in reference to the full facade.) Mirrored and heavily tinted glass should be similarly prohibited, since being able to see into buildings and be seen by the people inside enhances public safety.

5. Be Smart About Parking



Parking should be located behind buildings, inside structures or on the street. When parking lots are located between buildings and the sidewalk, curb cuts interrupt the sidewalk, trees are typically scarce, and pedestrians and drivers are at risk from vehicles pulling into or out of the lot. If parking is near a sidewalk, there should be a visible barrier, such as a wall or evergreen hedge, between the pedestrians and vehicles.

6. Limit Curb Cuts



Driveway curb cuts along the sidewalk interrupt the pedestrian flow and put walkers at risk. In many cases, properties can provide vehicle access from a side street or alley. Another common pedestrian- and driver-unfriendly configuration is when neighboring parking lots don't connect to one other. As a result, drivers need to merge onto the main roadway in order to move from one lot to another — and pedestrians need to protect against a steady stream of vehicles moving into and out of the lots.

7. Allow Shared Parking



Shared parking has been tested in many areas and studied by the Urban Land Institute, which recommends that interested parties start by analyzing overlapping usage patterns. For instance, there's probably not much overlap in peak parking usage for a small apartment building and an office complex. Similarly, lodging, restaurants, retailers, municipal buildings and houses of worship each have distinctive patterns of demand that can be used to optimize the use of parking areas. Shared parking promotes a "park once" experience, in which customers are more likely to find and patronize businesses near their destination and complete more tasks and errands.

STAGE 2

Change requires time and investment.

1. Reduce the Gaps



Empty lots and building vacancies can destroy a downtown. When the gap between businesses is large, pedestrians turn back in the direction they came from rather than explore what's farther down the street. To avoid gaps, require new buildings and additions to fill a minimum portion of the lot width along the sidewalk, typically 60 to 70 percent.

2. End Minimum Parking Rules



Parking guidelines are primarily devised for auto-dependent suburban retail centers. Those same standards are rarely applicable to Main Street contexts. Municipalities are recognizing that parking minimums aren't an effective tool for creating great places. Lenders and tenants may still require a minimum number of parking spots, but creative solutions — including shared parking and improved pedestrian and bicycle access — can be used to meet those requirements.

Identifying the Right Reforms

Planning for Better Neighborhoods

Residential areas that abut downtown or Main Street districts are called "adjacent neighborhoods."

Most of these neighborhoods were developed before the 1950s and include single-family homes of various sizes along with duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and small apartment buildings. (For more on that point, see the Missing Middle Housing entry on page 19.)

The appeal of adjacent neighborhoods is that most are walkable, with local shops and restaurants frequented by community residents. And due to their proximity to Main Streets and downtowns, they also easy access to daily needs and activities, be it by foot, bike or public transit.

Over time, zoning and land use changes discouraged the development of adjacent neighborhoods. Yet the existence of such walkable communities with varied housing options is critical to the success of the nation's downtowns and Main Streets.

Zoning reform is typically aimed first at addressing streetscape issues that have led to decline. That work is followed by reviving the historic mix of housing types found in older, traditional neighborhoods. Although many of the strategies and elements common in adjacent neighborhoods are similar to those discussed in the Downtowns and Main Streets section of this guide (page 9), the location, details and implementation differ. ▶



▲ **CINCINNATI, OHIO: The city skyline is visible behind the Missing Middle-style homes on Betton Street in the West End. According to *WalkScore.com*, the location boasts a 24-minute commute by foot (or 6-minute by bike) to downtown.**

The Streetscape

Just beyond a downtown or Main Street district, the streetscape transitions into the quieter residential areas of an adjacent neighborhood.

STAGE 1

Change can happen with relative speed.

1. Save Small Streets and Alleys



Common in older neighborhoods, small roads and alleyways serve an important role as informal connectors, providing access to rear lot garages and trash bins. Alleys can also serve as an entryway to an accessory dwelling unit. (See pages 17 and 20 to learn about ADUs.) If an alley is on-site but isn't maintained, consider ways of addressing its use through better maintenance or investments that might activate the space, such as by adding lighting and outdoor tables, seating, and games. Activated alleys can become safe and useful community spaces.

2. Implement a '20 Is Plenty' Policy



Neighborhood streets should be subdued and safe, with drivers able to easily stop for slow walkers or kids who dart into the roadway. Safety, and the ability to react quickly, increases as vehicle speeds decrease. At 20 mph, about 10 percent of pedestrian strikes are fatal. That proportion increases to 50 percent at 30 mph. The 20 Is Plenty campaign has raised awareness worldwide about vehicle safety on neighborhood streets. In the United States, some jurisdictions have adopted 20 mph speed limits on neighborhood streets, accompanied by an information campaign. While posting new speed limits won't influence all drivers, doing so is a positive first step that can be followed by Stage 2 fixes.



▲ **PORTLAND, MAINE: To support socially distant outdoor activities, including dining, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many communities closed streets to traffic.**

STAGE 2

Change requires time and investment.

1. Put Roads on a Diet



While posting a lower speed limit on a residential roadway is useful, a driver's speed is more directly influenced by the size and number of lanes — and the smaller and fewer the better. Travel lanes should be sized to reflect a target speed of 20 mph. That typically means nine feet wide in residential areas, with exceptions where bus routes require more room. Roadway re-striping can be timed to coincide with other improvements, such as the installation of bicycle lanes, on-street parking and chicanes, which are serpentine curves added to a street so drivers are forced to slow down.

2. Create Yield Streets



The streets in many historic neighborhoods are so narrow that two vehicles heading in opposite directions cannot pass each other without one pulling into a parking lane. Such yield streets significantly decrease vehicle speeds. When possible, one-way roadways should be reconfigured as yield streets.

3. Set Public Realm Standards



The vitality of an adjacent neighborhood is a function of its open space, rights-of-way and streetscape. Public spaces should be walkable and have a relatively unified look and feel. While official design standards ought to be few and far between, municipal policies can and should mandate minimum sidewalk widths as well as the presence of on-street parking, street trees and pedestrian-scale lighting.

4. 'Complete' the Streets



As explained on page 10, a Complete Streets transportation policy considers the needs of all roadway users. Such a policy is often easier to implement in small communities than in large municipalities or along large commercial roadways — although government funding for projects can go a long way toward incentivizing their implementation. Adjacent neighborhoods are also able to provide effective, neighborhood- and traveler-friendly routes for connecting Main Streets and downtowns with more distant communities.

Building Forms and Uses

A primary concern in historic neighborhoods is that zoning regulations enacted in the mid-20th century caused some existing properties and lots to be deemed "nonconforming." Zoning regulations should match existing conditions. In addition, flexibility regarding use (e.g., allowing home-based businesses) can boost the local economy by enabling entrepreneurship and promoting housing affordability and ownership.

STAGE 1

Change can happen with relative speed.

1. Allow Home-Based Businesses



Working from a home-based office was once a norm for doctors, lawyers and other professionals. When disallowed by a zoning code, some home-based but less visible businesses simply operate under the radar. New technology, delivery services and adapting business practices are expanding the practicality and — during the COVID-19 pandemic — necessity of home-based work. Where home-based businesses are permitted, potential nuisances can be avoided through the minimal regulation of signage, workspace size relative to the size of the residence, the number of employees and customers, the hours of operation, storage, noise, fumes and similar pollutants.

2. Make Existing Lots Conforming



Suburban-oriented lot size and setback regulations commonly label older, preexisting properties and structures as "nonconforming." Code reform should adopt language specifying that such lots and structures are *in* compliance and can, if desired by the owner(s), be modified without first meeting the standards required by the contemporary code.

3. Let New Buildings Align with Older Buildings



The broad adoption of suburban zoning standards has resulted in front setback requirements that greatly exceed those in older neighborhoods. Setting new buildings farther back than existing buildings can undermine a neighborhood's character. To address this, allow new buildings to align with the older buildings or let them match the most minimal of the existing setback distances.

4. Support Additional Housing Types



For much of the nation's history, downtown and Main Street neighborhoods contained a variety of housing types, enabling people to live near areas of employment and activity. Over time, zoning codes limited or eliminated many housing choices, especially small, multifamily buildings. These forms of housing offer prices and formats that are attractive to both older and younger adults. Adjacent neighborhoods should include town houses and multifamily units. To further meet the need for housing, and to provide homeowners with an opportunity to add an income-generating unit to their property, Missing Middle building types and accessory dwelling units should be permitted. (To learn more, see pages 17 and 19 — and visit *MissingMiddleHousing.com* and *AARP.org/ADU*.)

STAGE 2

Change requires time and investment.

1. Modify Lot Size and Setback Standards



To protect the historic pattern that established a neighborhood, lot sizes and setback standards should be modified to reflect those used for the area's original lots and remaining older structures.

2. Reintroduce Neighborhood-Based Shops



There was a time when people could walk from their home — be it an apartment or a detached single-family house — to a corner market, dry cleaner, coffee shop or ice cream parlor. Such businesses were typically located along busier streets that bounded or bisected the neighborhood. Over time, zoning made these commercial-residential adjacencies illegal. As a result, nearly every errand or task, whether it's to buy a gallon of milk or get a haircut, now requires getting into a car. When zoning codes are revisited, it's important to allow small, neighborhood-based, service-oriented businesses.

3. Eliminate Specific Design Standards



Design standards requiring there to be, for instance, vertical or horizontal alignment variations in town houses often result in an erratic design that is visually distracting.

4. End These Rules



Eliminate per-property-density maximums and floor-area-ratio (FAR) minimums. Height, setback and footprint standards are better for regulating building placements and size.

Facades, Frontages and Parking

When zoning is done right, adjacent neighborhoods become places where people can meet their daily needs and stay active and engaged, regardless of their age, income or ability to drive.

STAGE 1

Change can happen with relative speed.

1. Require Sidewalk-Facing Entrances



Commercial buildings are increasingly being designed so all entrances connect to only the parking areas. Require that the main entrances face a sidewalk. Entries in a parking area can be considered subsidiary. (For buildings that are more than 100 feet wide, an entrance should be provided for every 70 feet of facade.)

2. Establish Alley Access



Where an alley exists behind or alongside a building, require all driveways to be accessed from the alleyway and not the street. Eliminating street-front driveways provides more room for trees and on-street parking, reduces the number of sidewalk curb cuts and improves pedestrian safety.

3. Place Parking Behind Buildings



When a parking spot or garage is located directly along a sidewalk in front of a house or office building, movement along the sidewalk is interrupted every time a car is driven to, or away from, the property. In addition to detracting from the home or building's appearance, a garage door-dominated facade can prevent the structure's occupants from seeing or engaging with any activity happening outdoors, which undermines the safety provided by having "eyes on the street." An appealing solution is to require that parking be located behind the building. A second option is for parking to be set back a minimum of 20 feet from the street or sidewalk. That way there's at least a bit of a buffer before a departing vehicle crosses the sidewalk or merges into traffic.

STAGE 2

Change requires time and investment.

1. Reduce the Gaps



Buildings that don't fully occupy their lot in a commercial district create gaps that detract from the area's liveliness. (Intentionally vacant green spaces or outdoor seating areas are not considered gaps.) To address this problem, a zoning code can require that buildings fill a minimum portion, typically 60 to 70 percent, of the lot width along the sidewalk.

2. Limit Parking Requirements or ...



Parking mandates are often based on standards better suited to suburbs than to urban settings. They are especially problematic where buildings are older, properties are small, and it's difficult or impossible to add new parking. In these conditions many businesses are denied permits or are required to make costly renovations or secure off-site parking. Smaller-lot, single-family town houses and multifamily buildings are also impacted. In adjacent neighborhoods, the minimum required parking should be one off-street spot per unit. On-street spaces can be for visitors or serve as additional parking for residents. The curb front of a single-family detached home typically allows two parking spaces. A town house provides room for one.

3. ... Eliminate Parking Requirements



Local governments are beginning to accept that minimums aren't an effective tool for meeting parking needs or producing great places. Lenders and tenants may still require a minimum number of parking spots, but creative solutions (including identifying nearby shared parking options and considering pedestrian and bicycle access) can be employed to address those requirements.



MELISSA STANTON, AARP

▶ **LEWES, DELAWARE: A parking spot for one car is large enough for parking a dozen bicycles. Cyclists heading into town to shop or dine have exclusive access to a coveted piece of Second Street real estate.**

Reality Checks

Code reform is not a one-size-fits-all solution, nor is it likely to achieve widespread change quickly. But the right changes and guidelines can point the work in the right direction.

Understand what's possible

- Does the community want change?
- Is there local capacity to administer the changes?
- Is there political will to adopt and enforce the proposed code changes?

Localize the solutions

- Decisions need to be made within the local context rather than regionally or by some other distant, decision-making body.
- Pay attention to the local market. Is the planned retail space or downtown housing wanted and needed? What is needed to cultivate a strong local economy?

Keep it simple

- Don't regulate health and safety issues (which are protected by other types of codes) through zoning.
- Don't try to anticipate every possible situation.
- Don't attempt to predict future market demands — or hinder flexibility. Conditions change.
- Don't complicate the code reform by creating design guidelines or architectural regulations.

Move forward together

- Recognize that business as usual will produce the usual results.
- Discard regulations that are no longer relevant. (These may include standards that were put in place to manage a specific use or problem that no longer exists.)
- Make sure the community and key stakeholders understand and support the reform.

Focus on the basics
(A little change can go a long way)

- Get quality buildings into the right places to define the public realm — and be prepared when those buildings' uses change over time.
- Place parking on the street or behind buildings.
- Design for *people*, accommodate cars.

This is just a beginning!

Incremental code reform will not address all of a community's aspirations or zoning needs. Many important issues that aren't addressed by an initial reform effort can be considered in the future.

What Code Reform Can Do



Accessory dwelling units — or ADUs — can play a major role in addressing a national housing need. Many local zoning codes prohibit these small houses or apartments, which exist on the same property lot as single-family residences. However, that's beginning to change. Visit ***AARP.org/ADU*** to learn more about ADUs and to order or download the following AARP publications:

- ***The ABCs of ADUs***, a 20-page guide for how towns, cities, counties and states can include ADUs in their mix of housing options.
- ***Accessory Dwelling Units: A Step by Step Guide to Design and Development***, a 113-page catalog featuring ADU policies and projects from Austin, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Oakland, California; and Washington, D.C. This guide contains information about financing and budgeting for an ADU project and how ADUs can be designed to serve people of differing ages and abilities.

URBAN WIRE

America's Housing Market Is Failing Older Adults

Linna Zhu, Amalie Zinn

March 12, 2025



JohnnyGreig, Getty Images

The US population is aging. Within the next decade, older adults will outnumber children for the first time in American history. As Americans live longer, their housing needs will change, but our current housing market is ill prepared for this demographic shift.

Today, senior households—many of whom are on fixed incomes—are facing a combined crisis of housing affordability, accessibility, and availability. As the country's population ages, policymakers must prioritize seniors in solutions to the housing crisis. Without action, the consequences will be severe.

More seniors are strained by housing costs

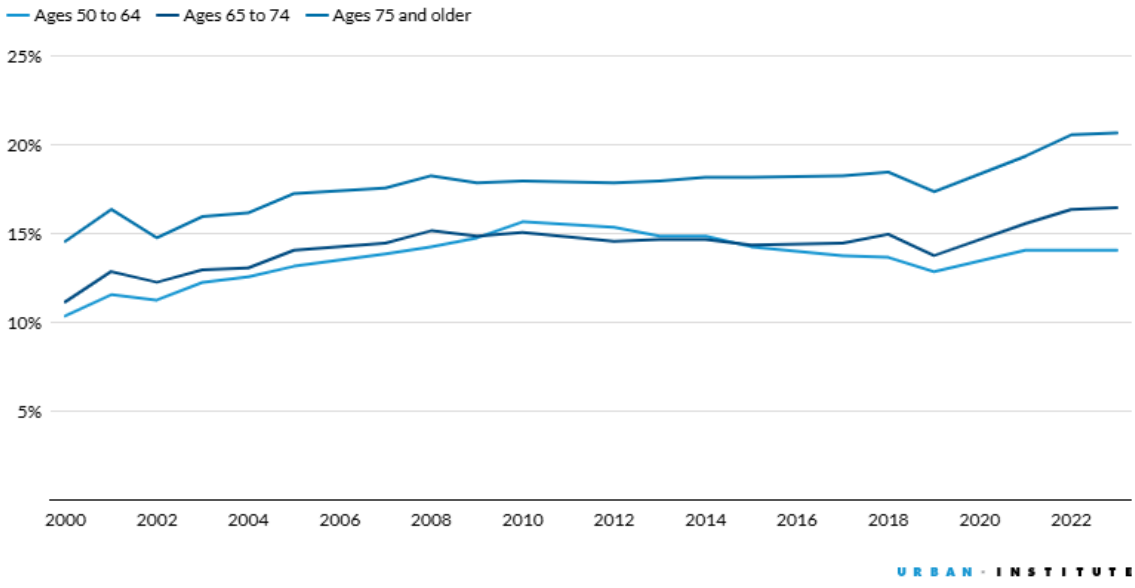
Over the past two decades, the number of senior households considered severely cost burdened—those spending more than half their income on housing—has nearly doubled, rising from 5.2 million to nearly 11.7 million, according to American Community Survey data. And the share of severely cost–burdened senior households has increased. In 2000, 11.5 percent of households headed by someone 50 or older were severely cost burdened. By 2020, the share increased to more than 16 percent.

Housing cost burdens are driven not only by one's rent or mortgage payments, but by the cost of utilities, home insurance, property taxes (PDF), maintenance, and other fees.

Some demographic groups are more affected than others. Renter households are more likely than owners to be cost burdened at all ages. Older seniors, those 75 and older, are more likely to be cost burdened than younger seniors. Other research finds that rising insurance premiums have also made senior living communities more expensive.

Heads of Households Ages 75 and Older Are More Likely to Be Severely Housing Cost Burdened

Share of severely cost–burdened older adults, by age



Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2000–23 American Community Survey data.

Notes: Households are severely cost burdened if they spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing costs.

Unlike younger adults, who can change their spending in response to rising cost burdens, seniors, especially those on fixed incomes, have less flexibility. For older adults facing increased or unexpected housing costs, limited budgeting alternatives can lead to homelessness. Between 2019 and 2022, the share of older adults experiencing homelessness increased 37 percent.

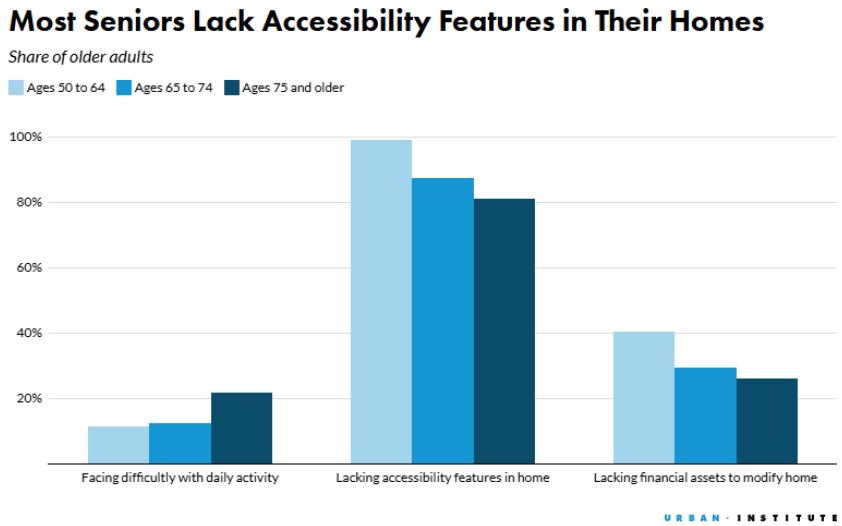
To reduce housing costs and ensure that seniors can stay in their homes if costs increase, federal, state, and local policymakers can

- consider property tax deferrals at the local level to help seniors defray rising tax burdens;
- allow state-issued Medicaid waivers to cover housing supports, like emergency rental assistance;
- subsidize insurance costs for low- and fixed-income households, appropriately regulate the private insurance industry, and improve the data used to quantify climate risk;
- fund more Section 8 housing vouchers to help seniors with low incomes who rent stay in their homes; and
- expand the number of subsidized units to address supply shortages at the affordable end of the market.

Many seniors live in homes that do not meet their needs

Survey data suggest that most older adults want to remain in their current homes and communities as they age. But affordability and accessibility present challenges.

According to the latest data from the American Community Survey, more than 75 percent of senior households live alone or with only one other person, yet 60 percent of these households live in homes with at least three bedrooms. These homes may not only be too big—they might be too old or in poor condition. Nearly half of large homes rented and owned by seniors were built before 1980 and might require serious renovation or modification.



Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2020 Health and Retirement Study.

Notes: A household is considered lacking the financial assets to modify their home if their financial assets are below the median out-of-pocket expenses paid for accessibility modifications by other seniors of the same tenure.

According to data from the latest Health and Retirement Study, 34 percent of households headed by someone older than 50 lack the financial resources to cover the median out-of-pocket expenditures on home modifications. Renters in particular are more likely to lack the resources for renovations, with 58 percent of older renting households unable to cover median expenditures compared with 27 percent of homeowners.

To help keep older adults in their homes as they age, policymakers and federal agencies can

- allow Medicare to cover the cost of home modifications seniors need for changing health and mobility;
- simplify and introduce more low-cost options of the Home Equity Conversion Mortgage program the Federal Housing Administration offers to allow seniors to draw from their home equity; and
- leverage state-based affordable housing preservation initiatives and funding to support preservation and rehabilitation of homes in poor condition.

Seniors that want or need to move face limited options

Even if older adults want and have the means to move, the severe housing supply shortage has led to a limited available housing stock, particularly at the affordable end of the market. Only 10 percent of the country's housing units are ready to accommodate older people, as most homes have entryway steps, only upstairs bedrooms and bathrooms, and inaccessible bathrooms.

Research suggests that many older adults might want to move closer to their children, meaning they might be searching for housing in high-cost areas with amenities important to younger people, like employment opportunities and strong school districts. Older adults that require greater levels of care might face even more barriers, as the cost of independent- and assisted-living communities are prohibitively high, in part because of the high cost of housing development.

Increasing affordable housing supply—and especially the supply of smaller, accessible homes in areas where seniors want to live—can improve the well-being of senior households. To ensure that senior households can move if that is best suited for their needs, federal, state, and local policymakers can

- change zoning regulations to allow for multigenerational and intergenerational housing, as well as backyard accessory dwelling units;
- ease the way for more homes to get built, particularly at the affordable end of the market; and
- ensure the Federal Housing Administration has the resources to increase lending for senior living and health care facilities.

More data and research are needed to avoid worsening the housing crisis as America ages

To stave off a crisis in senior housing instability and homelessness, policymakers, planners, and housing developers need information about what seniors want and need, today and in the future. This information is most important at the local level, where policymakers control most decisions that affect the housing supply.

The housing needs of seniors will continue to evolve, especially as the country's demographics shift and senior households make up a larger share of the population. To prepare for the coming decades—by building the necessary homes and making policy changes—we need research to make future needs clear.

Projections of future housing needs among older adults—especially those that account for climate vulnerability, insurance cost increases, health status, social connections, and changes in senior incomes and benefits—could provide crucial insights. The collection and publication of population-level data on senior housing decisions, challenges, and outcomes at detailed geographic levels can support this work and clarify problems and solutions.



Age-Friendly Cleveland 2025 - 2028

ACTION PLAN

CITY OF CLEVELAND
Mayor Justin M. Bibb
AGING

AGE-FRIENDLY CLEVELAND

In 2014, the City of Cleveland became Ohio's first Age-Friendly Community, setting the stage for policies and programs that support residents as they age. **Today, more than 35 cities and counties in Ohio—and over 950 communities nationwide—are part of this growing network.**

Through an agreement with the World Health Organization and AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities, Cleveland committed to creating safer streets, accessible public spaces, reliable transportation, affordable housing, and supportive health and social services for older adults and people with disabilities.

Now, ten years later, these residents make up more than one-fifth of Cleveland's population. Ensuring access to resources and meaningful participation in community life is not just a priority—it is a necessity. As Cuyahoga and neighboring counties join the Age-Friendly Network, Northeast Ohio is becoming more responsive as a region to the needs of an aging population.

This action plan is a practical tool to connect city strategies with community action, ensuring older residents continue to live with dignity, independence, and opportunity.
The City of Cleveland is deeply grateful to our older residents. Thank you for the foundation you have created and for your continued role in shaping a city where everyone can thrive.



Justin M. Bibb, Mayor
City of Cleveland



Mary McNamara, Director, Department of Aging with Justin Bibb, Mayor, City of Cleveland and Sonya Pryor-Jones, Chief, Youth and Family Success

"We can't afford to lose Cleveland's Seniors to warmer places like Florida or Arizona. We can't change the weather, so we have to ask ourselves, what sets Cleveland apart? I think it's the caliber of programs and services offered within our city. Not only will existing services be enhanced by this collaborative plan, and keep our residents happy, but will, I think, entice people looking for a new place to call home to join the tens of thousands of seniors already aging in place here."

Mary McNamara
Director, Department of Aging



What is Age-Friendly Cleveland?

In 2014, the City of Cleveland became a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and later joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Since becoming the first Age-Friendly city in Ohio, over 35 communities have joined across the state, including Cuyahoga County.

Currently, more than 86,000 seniors call Cleveland home. We, like other Age-Friendly communities, have dedicated ourselves to being a livable city for people of all ages. By creating accessible services and infrastructure that promote the health and safety of its citizens, **Age-Friendly Cleveland works to create a city where people of all ages are valued, respected, and can thrive knowing their community supports them.**

MISSION

Age-Friendly Cleveland works to create a city where all people are valued, respected, and can thrive knowing their community supports them.

VISION

A City of Cleveland that is accessible and inclusive for people of all ages and abilities.

2022 — 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Outdoor Spaces, Buildings, and Transportation

Cleveland Moves: In July of 2023, a request for proposals went out from the City of Cleveland to hire a mobility plan consultant. Cleveland Moves, Cleveland's 5-year Multimodal Transportation Plan will guide improvements for pedestrians, bikes, and transit riders. Community outreach for this plan included inviting seniors and people with varying disabilities to provide insight on their mobility experiences throughout the city.

Complete and Green Streets: In June of 2022, Cleveland City Council passed an update to the 2011 Complete & Green Streets ordinance. The program "seeks to incorporate design elements in roadway projects that expand opportunities for travel via modes like walking, biking, and transit and reduce environmental impact within the City of Cleveland."[2]

Vision Zero: The Cleveland City Planning Commission adopted the Vision Zero Action Plan on September 2, 2022. "The Action Plan includes strategies to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities on our roadways through a clear workplan with prioritized actions that will create a "new normal" for transportation in Cleveland – one that shares responsibility for the elimination of deaths and serious injury on city streets, making it safe for everyone to move through the city whether they are walking, rolling, or in a vehicle."[3]

The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) initiative 15-Minute City: Approved in March 2024, the TDM Program works alongside Vision Zero and Form-Based Code. Together, the city based initiatives create safe communities surrounded by essential services that can be reached by a 15-minute walk, bike ride, or transit trip.







2022 — 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Housing

Form Based Code: In July 2024, Cleveland City Planning Commission began using FBC. The goal is an entirely new zoning code that embodies Health, Sustainability and Equity. Also called the LandCode, this project is designed to help protect the integrity of the city's communities while creating safe, walkable, livable neighborhoods. Additionally, Form Based Code will foster diverse housing and transportation options.

Residents First: February 2024 marked the passage of Cleveland's new Residents First legislation. This group of housing laws is, among other things, intended to help renters and the city have more contact with landlords and property agents. All landlords have to designate a local agent that will represent them if they don't live within Cuyahoga or surrounding counties.

A Home for Every Neighbor: February of 2024 saw the launch of A Home for Every Neighbor. This program is designed to provide resources and housing for unsheltered people within the city. As of April 2025, the program has already identified and housed 27 people over the age of 55, and 134 people with a disabling condition experiencing long-term homelessness.

Residential Tax Abatement: Effective January 1, 2024, the Residential Tax Abatement program began granting 100% abatement for Single-Family projects that meet Age-in-Place building criteria. The Developer must submit architectural plans and a completed "Age-In-Place" checklist.





2022 — 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Social Participation, Respect, and Inclusion

Park Updates: 2022 through 2024 saw many City of Cleveland Parks receive updates, openings, and new names. A few examples:

- April 2022 welcomed the opening of **Clark Field's** brand-new park, including age-and-ability-inclusive play equipment, a paved walking loop, pickleball courts, and more. The effort to revitalize the park was led by local senior, Beverly Wurm, as well as Friends of Clark Field and Tremont West Development Corporation.
- **Shirley Chisholm Park** reopened in November 2024 having received its new name as well as brand-new exercise playground equipment that can be used by the community as well as students from Mary M. Bethune School.
- Friends of **Impett Park** worked with Cleveland City Council, City Hall Leadership, and members of the Ward 17 committee to open a new all-abilities playground in the West Park neighborhood in November 2024.

The Hispanic Senior Center: Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland opened a new stand-alone Hispanic Senior Center facility in September 2023.

Trauma-Informed Care Neighborhood Resource and Recreation Centers: Program staff provide Trauma-Informed Care in Cleveland's recreation centers and are trained in identifying Toxic Stress, a well known contributor to acquiring a disability later in life, in children and their families. Program staff provide community-based resources and support services. Since 2023, 386 individual seniors have received services.

Greater Cleveland Food Bank's Community Resource Center: In November 2023, the Greater Cleveland Food Bank opened their Community Resource Center. The center hosts more than 15 community organizations that serve a wide range of ages and needs. Senior-only shopping hours are a highlight for many area older adults. Serving tens of thousands of Northeast Ohio citizens, the center has become a one-stop shop for many in the area.



2022 — 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Civic participation and employment:

Greater Cleveland Works: In just the last few years, Ohio Means Jobs, now renamed Greater Cleveland Works, has enrolled more than 6,300 City of Cleveland residents in their programming. 800 of the participants are older adults and people with disabilities. Notable participating employers include:

- AARP
- Amazon
- Case Western Reserve University
- City of Cleveland
- Cleveland Cavaliers
- Cleveland Clinic
- Cleveland Metropolitan School District
- Dynamic Workforce Solutions
- Giant Eagle
- Provide-A-Ride
- Salvation Army
- Shaker Courts Apartments
- University Hospitals

Communication and Infomation:

Digital C: Digital C is an internet provider deploying affordable connectivity across the city of Cleveland since 2023. All residents are eligible to receive internet service for just $18 per month, and households with a student in Cleveland's school system can receive internet access for free.

New 311 Non-Emergency Services Website: In September 2024 the City of Cleveland launched it's new 311 online complaint tracking system. This system added extra flexibility and reliability to residents receiving city services. Now residents are able to call, or submit an easy to use online form. Those unfamiliar with technology can receive help using the platform at any Cleveland Public Library branch.

Community support and health services:

Livable Cuyahoga: Armed with the knowledge that nearly 30% of Cuyahoga County residents will be over 60 by 2030, Cuyahoga County Senior and Adult Services Division launched Livable Cuyahoga in September 2022. The Roadmap for Livable Cuyahoga, published in March 2024, lays out a plan for creating a community built for all ages to thrive.

The Path Forward



Age-Friendly Senior Taskforce Members with Chief Pryor-Jones (left) and Asian Services In Action focus group members (right)

Age-Friendly Community Engagement

The Age-Friendly Cleveland Initiative was due to be renewed in the year 2020. By March of that year, it was clear that the COVID-19 Pandemic would have a profound effect on our oldest and disabled populations. To meet the immediate needs of our citizens, The Department of Aging and it's staff pivoted time, attention, and resources to vaccine and resource distribution.
Age-Friendly began a refresh process in 2023 under Mayor Bibb's administration as a key pillar for the Mayor's population health priority.

The Age-Friendly team within the department then dedicated a year and a half to renewing data, surveying citizens, and engaging community stakeholders. Research-gathering included multiple formats of surveys, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews.

The team engaged nearly 1000 people who live, work, and play in Cleveland. 82% were seniors. This is their plan.

City Hall Taskforce

The Age-Friendly City Hall Taskforce consisted of 35 City employees representing over 20 Divisions and Departments. Representatives began meeting in December 2023 to learn about the initiative, become champions of the Aging and Disability communities, and create new Age-Friendly Strategies. Between December and May, using an Age-Friendly lens, the Taskforce identified ways to create more accessible services and communication for the public.

As a group, the Taskforce completed the following activities to understand and participate in the strategic planning process:

- Evaluation of the 2017 Age-Friendly Cleveland Action Plan
- Compilation of experiences working with older adults and people with disabilities through their own department's services and programs
- Completion of empathy and accessibility training with a focus on serving and understanding older adults and People with Disabilities
- Creation of strategies that will directly impact the Age-Friendliness of Cleveland City Hall



John Petkac, Superintendent, Bureau of Sidewalks, navigates a bumpy sidewalk utilizing a training wheelchair.

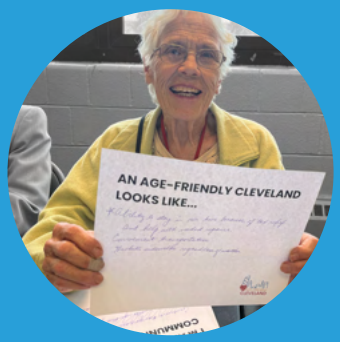


Age-Friendly Cleveland City Hall Taskforce Members with Mayor Justin Bibb

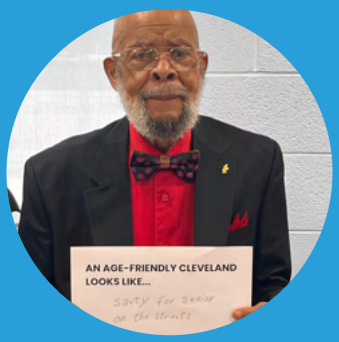
Senior Taskforce

To ensure that community input is always at the center of Age-Friendly planning, older adults were invited to take part in the Cleveland Senior Taskforce. Members of the Taskforce proposed and shaped Action Plan strategies and tactics through:

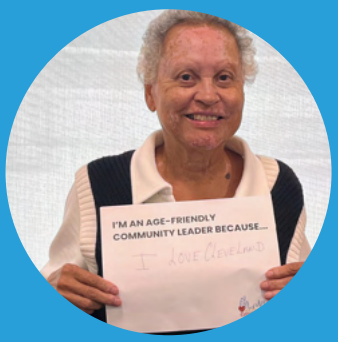
- Interpretation and analysis of survey and focus group data
- Sharing lived experiences as aging citizens of the city
- Sharing why and how they'd chosen to grow older in Cleveland
- Analyzing what the City has to offer them, and what still needs more work



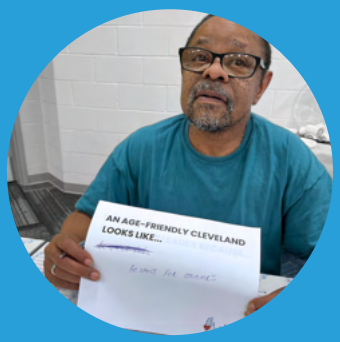
"Ability to stay in my own home because of tax relief, and help with needed repairs. Convenient transportation, walkable sidewalks, regardless of weather" – Phyllis



"An Age-Friendly Cleveland looks like safety for seniors on the streets" - Luadrie



"I'm an Age-Friendly community leader because I love Cleveland" -Judy



"An Age-Friendly Cleveland looks like respect for seniors" - Stephen



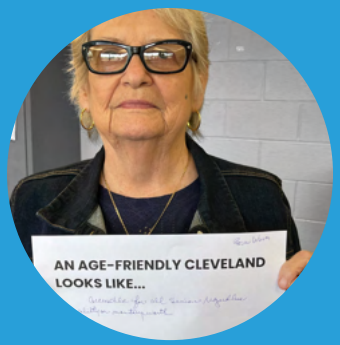
"An Age-Friendly Cleveland looks like: Love, Happy, Safe" - Clifford



"I'm an Age-Friendly community leader because I care about my community." - Diane



"An Age-Friendly Cleveland looks like more involvement of Cleveland residents" - Delores



"An Age-Friendly Cleveland looks like accessible for all seniors; regardless of age, ability, or monetary worth" - Beverly

Focus Groups

Age-Friendly team members met with more than 120 Seniors in Focus Groups. Community Partners helped to facilitate these focus groups in comfortable and familiar settings.

Partners:

- Asian Services In Action
- Rose Center for Aging Well at Gunning Park
- The Hispanic Senior Center
- Linking Employment Abilities & Potential
- Rainbow Pioneers Advisory Council
- Thea Bowman Center

Seniors and People with Disabilities were engaged in conversations about their lived experience in Cleveland. Guided by Aging Department Staff, they discussed each of the Domains of Livability and how they apply to their everyday lives. Clevelanders shared what works, and what still needs some work, to make aging in Cleveland an enjoyable and equitable experience.

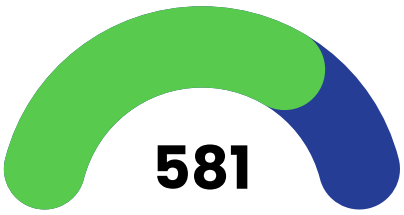


Age-Friendly Focus Groups at Rose Center for Aging Well at Gunning Park and Asian Services In Action

Survey

The Age-Friendly Cleveland Survey consisted of 45 questions, all of which were optional. The questions were developed with the intention of refreshing data collected by the Center for Community Solutions in 2015 and distributed to more than 1500 Seniors and People with Disabilities across the City of Cleveland. Participants were selected randomly from The Department of Aging's database, handed out in person to program participants, and shared online with residents.

The survey was completed in both English and Spanish on paper and online by 581 residents of Cleveland.



75% Women, 25% Men

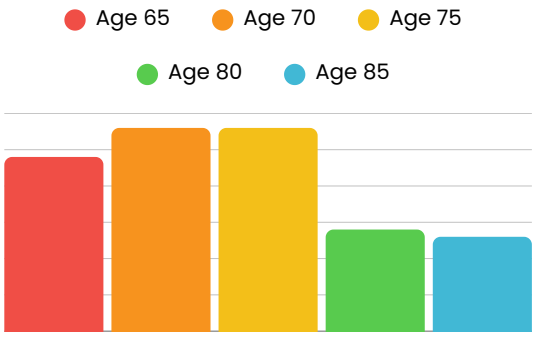
Total number of survey respondents and % of reported gender

Reported location of respondents

Highest number of responses:

1. Glenville
2. Collinwood
3. Old Brooklyn
4. West Park

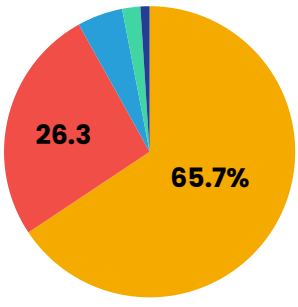




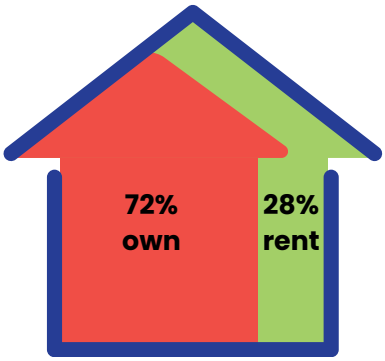
Average reported ages of respondents



75% report having at least one disability



- **African American or Black**
- **Caucasian or White**
- **Hispanic Spanish or Latino**
- **American Indian or Alaskan Native**
- **Other**





83% make less than $30,000 per year

ARHA Spends $56.8 Million on Old Town Senior Living Complex

With rent protections guaranteed, 110 seniors will transition from Ladrey to Alate, where they can remain part of the Alexandria community during redevelopment.



Mary Wadland ✉ • September 1, 2025

2 minutes read



Alexandria, VA – In a significant move to address aging public housing in the city, the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA) has purchased a senior living complex in Old Town for $56.8 million, with plans to relocate more than 100 residents from the nearby Ladrey Senior High-Rise.

The acquisition of the Alate Old Town building, located at 1112 N. First Street was finalized on August 6. The five-story building, which features 133 units, was only partially occupied at the time of purchase. According to ARHA, approximately 110 age-eligible seniors from Ladrey will be provided with new homes in the complex by the end of the year, with current rents protected.

"This acquisition ensures that our residents have a safe, modern, and comfortable place to live without being displaced from the community they've called home for decades," ARHA CEO

Eric Johnson said in a statement.

Why the Move Was Necessary

The Ladrey Senior High-Rise at 300 Wythe Street, a 1970s-era tower, was initially slated for demolition and redevelopment. However, according to the *Alexandria Times*, escalating construction and financing costs derailed the plan, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) terminated its operating support for the building. HUD then issued 168 tenant-protection vouchers, forcing ARHA to relocate residents.

"This new path allows us to keep our seniors in Old Town and avoid displacement while we determine the long-term future of the Ladrey site," Pettigrew added.

Financing the Deal

The purchase was made possible through the Virginia Resources Authority (VRA) pooled bond program. On June 25, Alexandria City Council approved a "moral obligation" backstop to help ARHA secure favorable financing terms.

According to city documents, the city could be on the hook for up to $3.5 million annually in debt service if ARHA defaulted, though safeguards were built in. These include a $6 million letter of credit, collateral from ARHA-owned properties, and a third-party property management agreement.

Council members expressed both support for preserving affordable senior housing and concern about the financial exposure. Still, the vote passed unanimously, clearing the way for ARHA's purchase.

What Residents Can Expect

The Alate building, which ARHA has internally dubbed "Silver Fox", includes amenities such as a fitness room, theater, underground parking, and communal gathering spaces. Current Alate tenants may remain or receive relocation assistance, according to Virginia Business.

ARHA says it plans to relocate Ladrey residents by late 2025, after which the authority intends to pursue a substantial renovation of the existing Ladrey tower beginning in early 2027, pending HUD approval.

For now, residents are being assured that their rents will not increase and that ARHA will work closely with them throughout the transition.

Office of Community Services
4850 Mark Center Dr., 5th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22311

703-746-5700

Department of Community and Human Services

RENT RELIEF FOR OLDER AND DISABLED ADULTS

Enclosed is an application for the **2025-2026** Rent Relief Program. In order to be considered for a rental subsidy through this program, please complete the application and return it as soon as possible along with the required documents (See Checklist) to:

Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS)
Office of Community Services-Attention: Samantha Huffman
4850 Mark Center Dr., 5th Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22311
703-746-6085

Program Information

Rent Relief offers assistance of **up to** $6,000 per year to low-income, older and/or disabled renters in the city of Alexandria. The payments are distributed in monthly allotments directly to the program participant. Funds can be used to cover any household needs.

Applications will be accepted year-round. In the event the number of approved applicants exceeds the amount funded for this program, new applicants will be placed on a waiting list. When an opening becomes available for the program, applicants on the waiting list will be prioritized according to history of homelessness and/or need for homeless prevention/intervention services, involvement with other programs within DCHS, high percentage of rent to income ratio, and previous Rent Relief recipient.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Applicant must be 65 years of age or older and/or permanently and totally disabled by Social Security standards or submission of disability certification form by licensed physician. *Form may be provided upon request

2. Applicant must be a City of Alexandria resident for at least 12 months***** prior to application and must be an occupant on the lease if not the leaseholder.

3. Rent amount must meet HUD's Rent Reasonableness requirement.

4. The total combined gross income from all sources of all individuals living in the household shall not exceed 30% AMI. Deductions of $12,700 from the gross income are given for individuals who meet the disability requirements, as defined by SSA or medical provider; and $11,000 for roommates or relatives other than the spouse.

5. Applicant's total combined financial worth shall not exceed $75,000.

6. Persons who receive rental subsidies under section 8 or other federal, state or local housing authority subsidy programs are not eligible.

*****Waiver for persons coming out of homeless shelter or receiving homeless prevention/intervention services.

RENT RELIEF CHECKLIST

Please include all applicable verifications with your application to avoid delays in the determination process. Please use the list below as a reference. This page does not need to be returned.

1. Copy of current lease or rental agreement (Page that has your name, rent amount)

2. Income verification for all sources of income for all individuals residing in the home:

_____ Social Security and SSI benefits (award letter)
_____ Employment income (pay stubs)
_____ Verification or retirement benefits
_____ Annuity verification
_____ Pension benefits
_____ Child support income
_____ TANF benefits
_____ Unemployment compensation
_____ Roomer income
_____ Consistent family or other financial assistance
_____ Loans
_____ Tax return
_____ Any other household income

3. Resource information for all individuals living in the home:

_____ Checking (Most recent bank statement)
_____ Savings or credit union statements
_____ Copies of stocks, bonds or CDs
_____ Pension plans, retirement accounts, IRAs
_____ Copies of cash value of life insurance policies

If you have any questions, feel free to contact:

Samantha Huffman, Program Coordinator
DCHS/Office of Community Services
703-746-6085
Samantha.Huffman@alexandriava.gov

Clara Roberson, Supervisor
DCHS/Office of Community Services
703-746-5942
Clara.Roberson@alexandriava.gov

PLEASE NOTE: You must inform the Office of Community Services of any income, assets, rent or address changes within 10 days of the change. To report changes please call (703)746-6085 or email DCHSOCSRRP@alexandriava.gov and include supporting documents if possible.

Alexandria News Community News Alexandria Virginia LOCAL News

City of Alexandria Revives Historic Pendleton Rooming House for Affordable Housing

Once a Green Book safe haven, property will be modernized with federal support and local leadership



3 minutes read

Mary Wadland • June 17, 2025



Pendleton Rooming House Henry Street sIde. (Photo: Lucelle O'Flaherty)

ALEXANDRIA, VA — A historic gem in Alexandria's Parker-Gray neighborhood is getting a new lease on life. The City of Alexandria has officially begun a large-scale rehabilitation of the Pendleton Rooming House, located at 1022 Pendleton Street, with an ambitious project aimed at preserving its cultural legacy while ensuring long-term affordability for low-income residents.

The project, led by the City's Office of Housing, includes extensive interior and exterior renovations such as upgrades to the building's plumbing and electrical

systems, installation of insulation, geothermal energy improvements, and modern safety and accessibility features. A key component of the rehabilitation also involves restoring the former commercial storefront on Henry Street, which once housed businesses central to Alexandria's Black community.



pendletonhousehistoricphoto

A Legacy of Shelter, Community, and Culture

In 1920 John W. and Corrine Jackson acquired the property which at the time included 12 rooms, a bathroom, a hot water heater, as well as a barn, stable, and blacksmith shop. Trained as a baker, John W. established the Alexandria Home Bakery on the property. He became a figure of local renown, known simply as "Baker John" in the community, and operated a thriving business for close to three decades until his death in 1949.

The Jacksons also continued to rent rooms in the building, continuing the legacy that Harvie Johnson began some ten years earlier. For more than a century, throughout Alexandria's segregated past, the residential portion of the building has served as a sanctuary for African American travelers and local residents in need of accommodations. The list of luminaries who were guests of the Jacksons included Elijah Muhammed, the founder of the Nation of Islam. The property also served as a meeting place for local African American organizations and later became a community social hub when it functioned as a beauty salon and barber shop.

Three generations of Jacksons have owned the historic property at 1022 Pendleton St., beginning with John W. and Corrine Jackson, continuing with their daughter Corrine J. Dixon, and now their granddaughter Janice Howard. The Pendleton Street Rooming House Rehabilitation Project will ensure that the building will continue to enhance housing affordability in the community, and stand as a significant landmark within the historic Parker-Gray neighborhood for generations to come.

Since the 1970s, the house has functioned as a rooming house for Alexandria's working poor, continuing its mission of shelter and support for those in need.



Pendleton Renovation front (Conkey Architects)



Pendleton Renovation side (Conkey Architects)

Preserving Affordability and Honoring the Past

The rehabilitation is being funded through federal Community Development Block Grants via the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, with critical backing from Congressman Don Beyer and U.S. Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine.

“Preserving affordable housing in our city while honoring its history is exactly the kind of investment we should be making,” said Rep. Beyer. “This project reflects both Alexandria’s heritage and our commitment to a more equitable future.”

“Maintaining affordable housing in historically significant properties like this helps us preserve not just our buildings but our collective memory,” said Helen McIlvaine, Director of the Alexandria Office of Housing.

Community-Driven Collaboration

The rehabilitation is a collaborative effort between several city departments and the building’s longtime operator, Ms. Janice Howard, whose stewardship of the home continues a legacy of community care. Ms. Howard, a direct descendant of the family that built and operated the property for generations, has worked closely with the city to support the renovation.

The City says in the Pendleton Project papers that they are “grateful for the cooperation and collaboration of Ms. Janice Howard in choosing to continue to preserve the property and operate it as a rooming house following renovation in honor of her mother’s legacy of helping others.”

Existing residents were relocated within the city prior to the start of the construction and will have an opportunity to return upon completion. A referral process is being created in coordination between Ms. Howard and the Office of Housing and Department of Community and Human Services, as vacancies occur in the future. Rents will be restricted and help ensure residents at risk of homelessness remain stably housed. .

“Seeing this building restored means so much to my family and to the community,” Howard said. “It’s a chance to honor our history while ensuring it remains a home for others.”

Looking Ahead

The City says that once complete, “the revitalized Pendleton Rooming House will continue to serve Alexandria’s most vulnerable while honoring a rich and complex history. It stands not just as a building under construction, but as a symbol of resilience, remembrance, and renewal in one of the city’s most historically significant neighborhoods.”



2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan

ROOTED IN DURHAM

AGING WELL DURHAM



2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan *At-A-Glance*

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8 The Age-friendly Network of Communities and States & the Age-friendly Community Process

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Overview of Durham Aging Initiatives and Aging Well Durham

Beginning with the formation of the Coordinating Council for Senior Citizens in 1949, Durham has dedicated several decades of community-centered initiatives that improve quality of life for aging adults. Many of these efforts have been led by diverse groups of community volunteers, along with representatives from nonprofits, coalitions, faith-based organizations, public health., healthcare, Durham City and Durham County governments. They have also involved a neutral convener that is responsible for several functions, including:

- Bringing together different groups that reflect Durham's community, civic and public sectors.
- Working with group members to define a collective mission, vision and set of values.
- Coordinating information-gathering to understand challenges faced by aging adults in Durham.
- Identifying strategic, asset-based recommendations to address the challenges, including promising models used in other age-friendly communities.
- Coalition building to strengthen existing relationships and to develop new partnerships.
- Managing the group's work so that it moves from planning to implementation.
- Communicating on behalf of the group so that members of the Durham community who are not actively involved in the work are aware and can engage.

"Keeping in Step: An Action Plan for Durham's Growing Older Population, 1991" (KIS Plan) is an early example of a Durham initiative focused on older adults.[1] The process to develop the KIS Plan began in 1990 when Durham County, the Department of Social Services and the Coordinating Council for Senior Citizens formed a 20-person Steering Committee. The Plan's purpose was to address three community-wide problems that were negatively affecting the health and wellbeing of older adults. The identified issues were:

- Older adults were not able to keep medical appointments, shop or participate in recreational activities because of their inability to drive or not having reliable, affordable transportation.
- A lack of social support and affordable housing that would enable older adults to manage daily activities and sustain their quality of life.
- Older adults using community resources that did not meet their needs.[2]



Photo © Discover Durham


Photo © Discover Durham

In addition to the Steering Committee, sub-committees were formed to develop the 1991 KIS Plan. The Plan detailed four priorities with specific actions to address the three challenges. The priorities were information, care coordination, direct services and housing.[3] The Plan listed community-based organizations, Durham City and Durham County departments responsible for moving the action steps forward. The Plan also called for the Durham Board of County Commissioners to "authorize the Coordinating Council for Senior Citizens and the Department of Social Services to appoint and chair an oversight committee to assure the implementation of the strategies outlined in the report."[4]

Since 1991, Durham has continued to collaborate for the purpose of improving care coordination, direct services, housing, information-sharing and other priorities for older adults. This includes the Coordinating Council for Senior Citizens transformation into the Durham Center for Senior Life.[5] Durham County's strategic plans have included action items that focus on aging adults including the County's 2008 Results-Based Accountability Initiative.[6] Additionally, the City of Durham's plans have also included older adult-focused activities that support its strategic goals.[7]

One group that has led recent initiatives is the **Durham Partnership for Seniors.** The Durham Partnership for Seniors was a long-standing coalition of healthcare, public health and social service providers along with community volunteers. The Partnership focused on improving the lives of older adults in Durham through advocacy, strengthening collaborations and identifying opportunities to improve quality of life. Beginning in 2008, the coalition served as the advisory committee for Durham County's Home and Community Care Block Grant.[8]

The Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) funds in-home and community-based services for adults ages 60 and older through the Older Americans Act. The intended purpose of the HCCBG is to "develop and enhance comprehensive and coordinated community-based systems of services, opportunities and protections for older adults."[9] The Administration on Community Living distributes HCCBG funds to states using a census-based formula.[10] In North Carolina, Boards of County Commissioners approve HCCBG funding plans each year. The Boards appoint a local lead agency that is responsible for managing the funding and documenting how it is spent.[11] County Commissioners also select an independent advisory committee that works with the lead agency to identify priority services and to make a funding plan for those services that will be supported by the HCCBG.[12] Prior to the Durham Partnership for Seniors being the HCCBG independent advisory committee, the Keeping in Step Committee served in this role.[13]



Photo © Discover Durham

The Partnership organized Durham's Healthy Aging Summits and successfully advocated for both Durham City and Durham County to join the AARP Age-Friendly Network of States and Communities on March 1, 2019. The group also led Durham's effort to create its first aging plan as an age-friendly community.

A volunteer steering committee managed the process to develop Durham's 2020 Aging Plan. Similar to the 1991 KIS Plan, the group that developed the 2020 Aging Plan was diverse and included representatives from nonprofits, faith-based communities, Durham County and City of Durham departments, public health, healthcare and social services providers as well as individual older adults and adults who have disabilities. The design process lasted ten months and involved a Steering Committee and five working groups. The finalized Plan was prepared and distributed throughout the community in 2020. Because of COVID-19, community-wide coordination to implement the 2020 Aging Plan was put on hold.

In 2020, members of the Partnership along with representatives from new collaborating nonprofits and Durham's academic institutions formed a second coalition called the **Durham Partnership for Seniors and More**. This group met regularly to coordinate community efforts around telephone reassurance calls, volunteer deployment and COVID-19 information-sharing. Their activities also included a COVID-19 prevention program for a multi-generational and bilingual cohort of Community Health Promoters. The Durham Partnership for Seniors and More's activities were time limited with the group being active until the end of 2020.

In 2021, community-level discussions began about how Durham should move the goals of the 2020 Aging Plan forward. Like the KIS 1991 Plan's recommendation of Durham needing a dedicated team to move the work forward, both Durham Partnerships for Seniors agreed that the community needed a new and independent nonprofit to manage the Aging Plan. Over several months, a dedicated group of individuals met to recruit board members. The volunteers also successfully advocated to Durham County and the City of Durham to secure support and funding for the new nonprofit, **Aging Well Durham (AWD)**.

On September 9, 2021, AWD's articles of incorporation were filed with the North Carolina Secretary of State Office. In January 2023, the organization hired its first employee, the Executive Director. The first Livability Program Manager was hired in July 2023.

As the backbone organization for the Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan, Aging Well Durham is responsible for five main goals:

- Ensure that the Aging Plan remains relevant to aging adults.
- Actively collaborate with community members and representatives from the public, civic and private sectors to make Durham more age-friendly, more livable and more equitable.
- Provide technical assistance and serve as a convener to manage implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan.
- Maintain bidirectional communication with partnering organizations and individual aging adults for the purposes of transparency and accountability.
- Share updates about the Plan's activities to Durham community members and other audiences via public forums and other engagement activities.

Aging Well Durham's Board of Directors has now taken on the responsibility of being the independent advisory committee for Durham County's Home and Community Care Block Grant.

DURHAM AGING INITIATIVES TIMELINE

1949 Coordinating Council for Senior Citizens formed

1990 Durham County, the Department of Social Services and the Coordinating Council for Senior Citizens form a 20-person Steering Committee

1991 Twenty-person Steering Committee and Sub-committees develop "Keeping in Step (KIS) : An Action Plan for Durham's Growing Older Population"

2006 Coordinating Council for Senior Citizens becomes Durham Center for Senior Life (DCSL). DCSL's new building at 406 Rigsbee Avenue opens

2008 Durham Board of County Commissioners designate the Durham Partnership for Seniors as the county's independent committee for the Home and Community Care Block Grant

2015 The Durham Partnership for Seniors launch the Durham Community Resource Connection for Aging and Age-friendly initiatives

2015 First Aging Well in Durham Summit

2016 Second Aging Well in Durham Summit

2019 City of Durham and Durham County join the AARP Age-friendly Network of States and Communities

2019 Durham's first Aging Plan as an Age-friendly Community is created. The Plan covers 2020-2025

2020 Durham Partnership for Seniors and More launch several initiatives to support aging adults during the first 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic

2021 Community-level discussions about how to move Aging Plan forward begin. Consensus is that Plan's convener should be an independent nonprofit called Aging Well Durham

2021 Articles of incorporation for Aging Well Durham are filed

2022 Aging Well Durham's Board of Directors approve the organization's bylaws

2022 Durham County and City of Durham agree to jointly support Aging Well Durham

2023 Aging Well Durham hires first employees

2023-2024 More than 100 representatives from the community's civic, public and private sectors create the 2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan

Defining Older Adulthood, Inclusive Language and Ageism

Different age ranges are used to determine older adulthood. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention uses 65 years and older.[14] The World Health Organization's age range for older adulthood begins at 60.[15] For the Aging Plan and the age-friendly community process, Durham has adopted AARP's definition for "older adult" as being an individual who is at least 50 years old. The 2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan contains data from a variety of sources that use different age ranges to define older adulthood.



In support of inclusive language, the Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan uses "aging adults," "older adults," or "older individuals." Inclusive language encompasses words, phrases or tones that do not reflect biased, stereotyped or discriminatory views about a particular group of people.[16] The Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan uses and promotes inclusive language for three main reasons.

The language we use reflects our beliefs and influences our actions. Terms such as "elderly," "seniors," or "the aged" have been shown to reinforce negative biases about aging adults.[17] These beliefs are the basis for ageism or discrimination against people because of their ages. While anyone can experience ageism, this particular form of prejudice impacts older adults across a wider range of social relationships than individuals in other age groups.[18] Ageism against older adults is prevalent across a variety of community settings including the workplace and healthcare.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967 protects individuals who are 40 years and older from discrimination in any aspect of employment.[19] Despite the ADEA, older workers still report age-related barriers in obtaining employment and age-based discrimination while being employed. Almost one in 6 older adults working or looking for work in 2022 believed that their age was a significant reason why they were not hired for a job they had applied for over the past 2 years.[20]



In healthcare, ageism results in poorer health outcomes for older adults across a spectrum of experiences. On one end, ageism against older adults decreases their access to services and resources like organ transplants, mental health support, sexual and reproductive healthcare and surgical interventions.[21] On the other end of the spectrum, healthcare professionals prescribe too many or unnecessary medications to older adults compared to patients in other age groups with the same medical diagnosis.[22]

Negative stereotypes about aging can also influence how individual older adults perceive themselves as well as understand and manage their health. Research shows that associating aging with decline and loss is a factor in older adults not engaging in preventative health behaviors.[23] Internalized ageism, or when an older person has negative self-perceptions about aging, has shown to increase the risk of developing depression and becoming socially isolated. Other research shows that older individuals who have internalized ageism live on average 7.5 years less than older adults who have positive attitudes about getting older.[24]

The second reason for the use of "aging adults" and "older adults" is because of the intersection between ageism and ableism. Ableism is a "belief system that sees persons with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, and of less inherent value than others."[25] Similar to ageism, younger people who have disabilities can experience ableism. But it impacts more older adults because individuals who are 60 years and older represent the majority of people who have disabilities - globally[26] and in North Carolina.[27] The overall purpose of the 2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan is to improve quality of life for older adults. This means also making sure that Durham's community spaces, services and communications are accessible to everyone.

The third reason for not using terms that reinforce negative biases and stereotypes about older adults is because our perceptions about aging are changing. How adults view aging is becoming more optimistic and more representative of the diversity in demographics and lived experiences across older adults. National data reveals that older adults overwhelmingly view aging as a positive experience with continuous opportunities for learning and personal growth.[28] Information from the American Psychological Association demonstrates that as we age, people are generally more satisfied with their lives and more optimistic about growing older.[29]



2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan's Vision, Mission & Cross-Cutting Issues

A Coordinating Council made up of representatives from the livability groups met twice in 2024 to create a vision and mission statement and to identify values and cross-cutting issues for the 2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan. The Coordinating Council began by reviewing the 2020 Durham Aging Plan's mission, vision, values and cross-cutting issues and then updated these specific elements.

2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan's Vision Statement - Durham is a thriving, vibrant, diverse and inclusive community that respects and values aging adults of all races, ethnicities, abilities, and socio-economic status. It offers abundant opportunities for all residents to engage, live, work, worship, learn and play with dignity by building a sense of belonging.

2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan's Mission Statement - Durham will celebrate aging as well as meet the needs and engage the strengths of all neighbors toward the goal of building a safe, affordable, accessible and connected community through its Comprehensive Aging Plan.

2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan's Values - Engagement, Equity, Dignity, Integrity, Respect, Belonging, Compassion, Self-Determination, Person-centered, Inclusion, Health and Well-being, Safety, Happiness.

Cross-cutting issues are embedded throughout the Plan's domain definitions, goals and strategies. Their purpose is to ensure that the Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan reflects the diversity of older adults in Durham, their lived experiences and consideration of Durham's assets and needs. The 2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan's cross-cutting issues are:

- **Accessibility, in all forms**
- **Communication, including digital literacy**
- **Community safety**
- **Climate resiliency**
- **Dementia**
- **Intergenerational opportunities and spaces**
- **Racial equity**
- **Sexual orientation and gender identity**
- **Social support**
- **Socioeconomic status.**

"One is how much I appreciate the public library. It's a really, really good public library. And when I am able to ride the bus to the public library, everybody's very sweet. I've found the passengers and the drivers are very kind people."

- Adults who have Disabilities Listening Session Participants

2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan's Domain Definitions, Goals, Strategies and Lead Agencies

ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION

DOMAIN DEFINITION: In an age-friendly Durham, aging adults are free from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation including systemic/structural inequities.

GOAL 1: Strengthen the community's ability to recognize and report abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults and adults who have disabilities.

STRATEGY 1: Increase the public awareness of North Carolina's Adult Protective Services Program.

STRATEGY 2: Educate the community regarding the legal requirement for reporting incidents of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of older adults and adults who have disabilities.

STRATEGY 3: Continue to promote and improve interagency communication, collaboration, and coordination between organizations who serve adults who have disabilities.

Lead Agencies: Durham County Adult Protective Multidisciplinary Team

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/EMPLOYMENT

DOMAIN DEFINITION: An age-friendly Durham provides safe ways older adults can, if they choose to, work for pay, volunteer their skills while being civically engaged.

GOAL 1: Establish and maintain a clear, equitable, and accessible volunteer and employment opportunities information network.

STRATEGY 1: Inventory existing volunteer and employment opportunities for older adults.

STRATEGY 2: Identify and recruit partner organizations that have the capacity to organize an information network of volunteer and employment opportunities.

STRATEGY 3: Increase awareness of existing organizations that provide volunteer and employment opportunities for older adults.

GOAL 2: Expand awareness of civic engagement and employment opportunities for older adults and adults who have disabilities by building inclusive partnerships.

STRATEGY 1: Identify existing businesses and organizations that expand volunteer and employment opportunities for older adults and older adults who have disabilities.

STRATEGY 2: Identify and expand training opportunities for older adults.

STRATEGY 3: Provide workshops around new employment opportunities like remote working, entrepreneurship, and transitioning into 2nd and 3rd careers.

STRATEGY 4: Facilitate membership of older adults in all aspects of the public, private and the volunteer sectors.

Word of mouth brought me business. I never do any advertisement. I 110% feel supported. And based on conversations that leads to what you do, do you have kids, you get information. And Durham provides that.

- Older Adults who Speak Haitian Creole Listening Session Participants

People talk more here, they communicate, they do reach out. …you know, being in the big city, sometimes it's hard to, to reach out, you know, maybe it's because there's just so many people there. But here, it's easier to connect with people.

- Older Adults who live in North Durham Listening Session Participants

GOAL 3: Build community awareness of the value of older adults and older adults who have disabilities in employment, volunteer and civic engagement.

STRATEGY 1: Reframe aging and the messaging around the value of older adults in employment and volunteering.

STRATEGY 2: Increase the number of jobs, volunteering, and civic engagement opportunities for older adults.

GOAL 4: Promote equitable voter participation and civic engagement throughout Durham.

STRATEGY 1: Partner with existing nonpartisan voting groups to increase knowledge among older adults about voter requirements, voting periods and deadlines, and poll locations.

STRATEGY 2: Encourage older adults from underrepresented demographics to run for political offices.

STRATEGY 3: Coordinate transportation of older adults to polling locations.

STRATEGY 4: Ensure all polling locations are accessible, including public transportation stop locations.

Lead Agencies: AARP NC, Durham CAN, Durham County Board of Elections, Durham Technical Community College, City of Durham - Technology Solutions Department, Digital Durham, El Centro Hispano, League of Women Voters of Orange, Durham, Chatham Counties, Kramden Institute, The National Caucus & Center for Black Aging, Inc, Triangle Nonprofit & Volunteer Leadership Center– RSVP, North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislators, You Can Vote

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

DOMAIN DEFINITION: An age-friendly Durham provides a fair and just opportunity to achieve wellness and well-being for all older adults and older adults with disabilities.

GOAL 1: Improve coordination among community-based, healthcare and governmental organizations to achieve the best possible/optimal health outcomes for older adults and older adults with disabilities.

STRATEGY 1: Identify innovative strategies to enhance collaboration.

STRATEGY 2: Promote investment in a shared, consumer-facing platform for information exchange to facilitate service coordination and navigation.

STRATEGY 3: Advocate for fair reimbursement of health and social services.



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GOAL 2: Improve equitable access to health services to achieve optimal health and function.

STRATEGY 1: Improve organizational literacy to effectively engage older adults who have limited health literacy.

STRATEGY 2: Invest resources and cost-savings into the community and community-based organizations that work with older adults.

STRATEGY 3: Invest in community-based programs that are trusted by aging adults in Durham.

GOAL 3: Improve community support and response to ensure public safety for all older adults in the event of emergencies and crises.

STRATEGY 1: Use and promote evidence-based practices and models to reduce harm to older adults from emergencies and crises.

STRATEGY 2: Improve coordination of government and community support during emergencies and crises.

STRATEGY 3: Invest in coalition-building activities for emergency/crisis preparedness and response including support for community convenings.

STRATEGY 4: Increase use and coordination of the Access and Functional Need Registry.

STRATEGY 5: Use diverse communication approaches to disseminate information, with specific emphasis on support for older adults who are socially isolated and/or who speak languages other than English.

GOAL 4: Build paid and volunteer workforce capacity to improve older adult health.

STRATEGY 1: Invest and expand training, scope of practice, pay, benefits and appreciation of direct care workforce.

STRATEGY 2: Provide community-level information about employing direct care workers.

STRATEGY 3: Expand community health workforce to increase the number of older adults working as Community Health Workers (CHWs) and number of CHWs who work with older adults from HMPs.

STRATEGY 4: Improve education and communication between care teams to effectively serve older adults.



GOAL 5: Value family care partners and encourage self-directed care.

STRATEGY 1: Support care partners by advocating for policy changes that recognize and compensate them.

STRATEGY 2: Provide care partner resources that are racially equitable, affirming to LGBTQ+ individuals, and appropriate for all socioeconomic, literacy levels and languages used in Durham.

You gotta have four or five people in a house… Just to pay the rent that they're asking for. I feel that they should have some other accommodations or vouchers or some type support for mental health. You have a lot of families out here. Housing for them is terrible.

- Older Adults who Live in West End-Lakewood Neighborhoods

GOAL 6: Support aging adults and their families in preparing for decisions about goals of care, including end-of-life care.

STRATEGY 1: Provide community resources, including spaces, that facilitate goals of care and end-of-life care planning.

STRATEGY 2: Improve care teams' capacity to engage older adults and families about goals of care through policies and workforce development.

STRATEGY 3: Engage communities using models and behaviors that reflect cultural differences and values about goals of care.

Lead Agencies: AARP NC, Central Pines Regional Council - Area Agency on Aging, Diaper Bank of North Carolina, Duke University Health System, Durham Center for Senior Life, Durham County Community Paramedics, Durham County Office of Emergency Services, Durham County Department of Social Services, Durham County Department of Public Health, Durham Men's Health Council County Paramedics, Durham Technical Community College, El Centro Hispano, Jewish for Good, Local Direct Care Workforce Agencies, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina Community Health Worker Association, Partnership for a Healthy Durham, Project Access of Durham County, Senior CommUnity Care of North Carolina - PACE, Senior PharmAssist

HOUSING

DOMAIN DEFINITION: In an age-friendly Durham, aging adults have an abundance of affordable, safe, community-oriented, inclusive and accessible housing options and resources that support their aging in-place with dignity.

GOAL 1: Older adults and older adults who have disabilities are equitably engaged and are co-creators of Durham housing policies.

STRATEGY 1: Ensure that aging adults are consulted about public projects before decisions and plans are finalized.

STRATEGY 2: Co-create community safety interventions with Durham community members who are most at-risk of experiencing harm: youth, older adults, individuals who are returning home after incarceration and older individuals with disabilities.


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GOAL 2: Mobilize to support safe, fair housing and to increase supply of and access to housing and supportive services for aging adults who have disabilities in Durham.

STRATEGY 1: Raise awareness about tenant and resident housing rights in Durham.

STRATEGY 2: Increase the supply of and access to permanent supportive housing and supportive services for older adults who have limited incomes, who are returning home after incarceration and/or who have disabilities.

STRATEGY 3: Make long-term investments in Durham's frontline public health, social services and direct care workers.

GOAL 3: Use innovative policies and models to support aging adults who own their homes to age in-place and with dignity.

STRATEGY 1: Support existing and create new nonprofit organizations to provide newly constructed age-friendly and all-ability housing.

STRATEGY 2: Provide public-financing to implement models like Community Aging in Place Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE) that proactively support aging adults to remain in their homes and communities.

STRATEGY 3: Expand eligibility and simplify application process for Durham County's Low-Income Homeowners Relief and the North Carolina Elderly/ Disabled Exclusion Tax Relief Programs.

STRATEGY 4: Promote existing weatherization, home repairs, healthy homes and modification programs to homeowners.

STRATEGY 5: Increase access to types of financing options for families struggling to remain in their homes that do not increase debt.

GOAL 4: Use innovative policies and models that support older adults who rent their homes to age-in place and with dignity.

STRATEGY 1: Identify and preserve low-income housing in Durham that have expiring affordability options.

STRATEGY 2: Provide public-financing to implement models like Community Aging in Place Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE) that proactively support aging adults to remain in their homes and communities.

STRATEGY 3: Create and sustain a rental assistance program jointly-supported by Durham City and County government.

STRATEGY 4: Promote existing weatherization, home repairs and modification programs to rental property owners and tenants.

Lead Agencies: Central Pines Regional Council, City of Durham Neighborhood Improvement Services, Coalition for Fair Housing and Transit, Durham CAN, Durham City and Durham County Government, Durham City-County Planning, Durham County Department of Social Services, Durham Housing Authority, Legal Aid of North Carolina, Partnership for a Healthy Durham - Health and Housing Committee

I like the fact that you have different types of housing styles, just all the different neighborhoods I can see. Yes. I like the fact that we have great institutions of higher education. We have several. I know that because they provide opportunities for you to continue lifelong learning. Yes. I like the fact that there are a lot of things going on in the arts and culture.

- Older Adults who Live in West End-Lakewood Neighborhoods


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OLDER ADULT HUNGER AND NUTRITION

DOMAIN DEFINITION: An age-friendly Durham has a regionally appropriate food system actively addressing the unique circumstances and challenges that older adults face in meeting their nutritional needs.

GOAL 1: Ensure reliable access to regionally appropriate food tailored to individual needs and preferences.

- **STRATEGY 1:** Strengthen existing partnerships between diverse sectors of the local food system to distribute regionally appropriate food.
- **STRATEGY 2:** Identify opportunities for new partnership between diverse sectors of the local food system including community members.
- **STRATEGY 3:** Provide cooking demonstrations and nutrition education to promote regionally and culturally appropriate food and meal preparation.

GOAL 2: Provide support for enrollment and retention of benefits to maximize financial resources.

- **STRATEGY 1:** Support peer-to-peer networks to share enrollment and benefits information.
- **STRATEGY 2:** Increase local investment to clear social service waitlists and to close gaps.
- **STRATEGY 3:** Increase enrollment opportunities at community events.

GOAL 3: Support existing congregate meal sites like the Durham Center for Senior Life (DCSL) in expanding their capacity.

- **STRATEGY 1:** Increase organizational capacity to clear waitlists.
- **STRATEGY 2:** Enhance transportation services to all congregate meal sites, including doorstop transportation to the main DCSL location.
- **STRATEGY 3:** Increase the number of older adults accessing congregate meals at the Senior Center at Little River.

GOAL 4: Increase opportunities for congregate meal participation.

- **STRATEGY 1:** Identify potential new congregate meals sites.
- **STRATEGY 2:** Provide sustainable funding and in-kind support for congregate meal infrastructure.
- **STRATEGY 3:** Develop new transportation options that provide access to congregate meals.

"I've been here 30 years. I'm from New York. Back in 92, I couldn't even find a bagel. I don't like how Durham, outside of Durham, is portrayed in a negative light. I like the fact, Durham is the gritty underdog, middle class - everybody is in it together. And I hope that it doesn't change with the upscale million-dollar apartments."

- Family Caregiver Listening Session Participants

GOAL 5: Support transportation and delivery opportunities for older adults to secure food.

- **STRATEGY 1:** Strengthen coordination and communication among organizations who deliver food in Durham.
- **STRATEGY 2:** Co-create neighborhood-based food hubs with aging adults.
- **STRATEGY 3:** Promote mutual aid and volunteerism to increase deliveries.
- **STRATEGY 4:** Coordinate with out-of-the box producers and delivery services.

Lead Agencies: Benefits Enrollment Center, Black Farmers Market, Durham Center for Senior Life, Durham County Cooperative Extension, Durham County Department of Social Services, Durham Farmers Market, Durham Food Security Network, End Hunger Durham, Feed My Sheep, Golden Life Partnership, Jewish for Good, Meals on Wheels of Durham, Root Causes



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OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

DOMAIN DEFINITION: Outdoor space is available throughout Durham and meets the needs of all users. Green space and buildings are plentiful, affordable, accessible, well-maintained, beautiful, inviting and safe for all.

GOAL 1: Assess and improve current outdoor spaces to maximize beauty, use and access for all ages.

- **STRATEGY 1:** Survey Durham's outdoor spaces to better understand and prioritize where improvements are needed, with specific emphasis on hearing from community members who lack access to outdoor spaces that are well-maintained, beautiful, inviting and safe.
- **STRATEGY 2:** Build additional sidewalks in Durham communities where there are none. Ensure existing sidewalks are well-maintained and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- **STRATEGY 3:** Increase the number of pedestrian crossings and cycle paths that meet ADA accessibility and safety standards.

GOAL 2: Collaborate with public and private partners to support inclusive and equitable access to outdoor spaces and buildings.

- **STRATEGY 1:** Create underlying principles to define what "inclusive access" should look like for Durham.
- **STRATEGY 2:** Prioritize where new inclusive and intergenerational outdoor spaces should be located by convening a working group of intended users.
- **STRATEGY 3:** Improve outdoor safety by using aging, accessibility and racial equity as lenses for design.
- **STRATEGY 4:** Increase the number of public restrooms that are clean, well-maintained and accessible.

GOAL 3: Publicize availability and encourage healthy use of outdoor spaces by older adults and people of all ages.

STRATEGY 1: Provide opportunities for and promote enjoyable, healthy behaviors in Durham.

STRATEGY 2: Provide both traditional and innovative means of monitoring and reporting maintenance issues, safety concerns and condition of outdoor spaces and public buildings.

Lead Agencies: Durham Parks and Recreation

RESPECT & INCLUSION

DOMAIN DEFINITION In an age-friendly Durham, aging adults are celebrated and aging itself is not considered a barrier to engagement and inclusivity in all things.

GOAL 1: Raise community awareness about the value of aging adults.

STRATEGY 1: Use Age-Friendly and Health in All Policies Frameworks for idea development, implementation and strategies in Durham.

STRATEGY 2: Promote positive media visibility of older adults.

STRATEGY 3: Promote and support existing inclusive, intergenerational opportunities.



GOAL 2: Enhance the wellbeing of persons living with dementia through an inclusive, community-wide, multisector partnership of support and services.

STRATEGY 1: Promote community commitment to supporting dementia as a public health priority.

STRATEGY 2: Enhance dementia capability of multisector stakeholders providing service and support to persons living with dementia.

STRATEGY 3: Plan and deliver accessible training and information to community-wide, multisector partnership.

Lead Agencies: Dementia Inclusive Inc., Jewish for Good

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

DOMAIN DEFINITION In an age-friendly Durham, social participation is essential to improving individual and community health, well-being, and resources. Social participation means connecting people where they are and honors their right of self-determination.

GOAL 1: Expand opportunities for individuals to connect around common interests while cultivating a sense of belonging.

STRATEGY 1: Support expansion of existing programs that reach older adults who are home-bound or are at-risk of experiencing social isolation.

STRATEGY 2: Promote existing social opportunities for older adults, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options.

STRATEGY 3: Ensure social participation opportunities are inclusive and intergenerational.



Lead Agencies: Digital Durham, Durham Center for Senior Life, Durham County Public Library, Durham Cooperative Extension, Durham Men's Health Council, Durham Parks and Recreation, Jewish for Good, Partnership for a Healthy Durham, Triangle Nonprofit and Volunteer Leadership Center

TRANSPORTATION

DOMAIN DEFINITION: Transportation is available throughout Durham. It is accessible, affordable, safe, equitable, respectful and comfortable for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. Transportation meets the needs of all users.

GOAL 1: Decrease barriers to affordable, safe, equitable and accessible transportation options.

STRATEGY 1: Assess the current transportation system by engaging older adults and older individuals who have disabilities.

STRATEGY 2: Promote current methods of receiving feedback from community members and develop innovative reporting mechanisms to ensure equitable accountability.

STRATEGY 3: Increase access to a variety of transportation options particularly for community members who have accessibility and financial barriers. This includes public transportation and ride share programs.

STRATEGY 4 : Ensure there is equitable access to regional transportation.

STRATEGY 5: Increase transportation access to healthcare, social services and recreation opportunities by expanding innovative programs, such as the GoDurham Senior Shuttle.

GOAL 2: Promote and provide accessible, clean, and safe public transportation.

STRATEGY 1: Ensure information on how to access transportation options in Durham is current and readily available, including paper and digital maps in all languages used in Durham.

STRATEGY 2: Support passengers who have accessibility needs. This includes safety, sensitivity and bus etiquette awareness for both passengers and drivers.

STRATEGY 3: Equitably distribute and evaluate transit infrastructure, such as bus shelters, benches and lighting to promote safety and comfort.

I think the issue is they probably are not paying attention to how many people are living in North Durham right now. And realizing that there's not enough variety when it comes to the shopping and things like that… It's when you start thinking about it. Especially when you get past that last grocery store, across from the Eno River. There is no other."

- Older Adults who live in North Durham Listening Session Participants

GOAL 3: Design a flexible transportation system that allows Durham's aging population to safely engage in walking and biking.

STRATEGY 1: Design infrastructure through the lens of aging, such as well-maintained sidewalks, protected bike lanes, crosswalks, shaded rest areas with benches, lighting, bike storage and improved readability/visibility of signs.

STRATEGY 2: Support walking and biking safety programming by providing information on how to walk and bike safely in Durham, including maps of low-stress areas and walking trails.

GOAL 4: Create a system that supports aging drivers and facilitates a transition from their personal vehicle to other transportation options.

STRATEGY 1: Make older adult driver education readily available and more affordable.

STRATEGY 2: Increase targeted education about different public transportation systems (local and regional) that are available and how older adults can access them.

STRATEGY 3: Provide education and resources that support family members and care partners or caregivers in having conversations about when an older adult should stop driving.

GOAL 5: Provide both traditional and innovative means of monitoring and reporting maintenance issues, safety concerns, and condition of Durham's transportation systems.

STRATEGY 1: Publicize current reporting mechanisms.

STRATEGY 2: Convene an intergenerational and racially equitable group to develop innovative reporting mechanisms.

Lead Agencies: AARP North Carolina, Bike Durham, City of Durham Transportation Department, Durham Center for Senior Life, End Hunger Durham, Golden Life Partnership, Partnership for a Healthy Durham, Vision Zero Coalition



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There are older adults who are caregivers to their parents, but they need respite. They need rest and time to recharge, refuel."

- Older Adults who Speak Haitian Creole Listening Session Participants



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GLOSSARY FOR TERMS USED IN THE 2025-2030 DURHAM COMPREHENSIVE AGING PLAN

The 2025-2030 livability groups defined some of the terms used in the Plan. The groups also adopted definitions used by other organizations that have missions similar to the 2025-2030 Durham Comprehensive Aging Plan. The sources for the adopted definitions can be found in the Reference section of the Plan.

Affordable Housing - Affordable housing means Durham households spending less than 30% of their gross monthly income on housing. The Housing Livability group acknowledges that affordability is personal. We will continually engage Durham community members to update this definition.

Community Crises - Encompass a wide set of events that that negatively impact the health and well-being of Durham older adults. These events can happen periodically or be ongoing. Some examples of community crises that affect aging adults more than other groups are: extreme heat[59], social isolation,[60] public health pandemics,[61] prescription, intentional and unintentional overdose.[62]

Fair Housing - The Federal Fair Housing Act and the Fair Housing Ordinance of the City of Durham "prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (gender), handicap (disability), familial status, military status, protected hairstyles, sexual orientation and sexual identity. It is illegal to discriminate in the sale or rental of property, coerce or interfere in housing, or administer less favorable housing terms based on a tenant's membership in one or more of the above "protected" classes. It is also illegal to sexually harass a tenant or commit other acts of harassment that creates a hostile environment."[63]

Goals of care (GOC) - Are the main intentions of an individual's healthcare. Healthcare teams should understand and honor an individual's values, health priorities and preferences about procedures, medication, therapies and preferred locations to receive healthcare.

Inclusion - Everyone having fair access to resources. Having the opportunity to access all resources, particularly for groups who are usually excluded. Everyone is embraced as a member of the community and benefits.

Inclusive Language - Language that avoids the use of certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people.[64]

Systemic/structural Inequities - "Institutionally created and reinforced privilege for some groups of people and a lack of privilege and access to resources by others (for example, in law, policies, business practices, access to education, health care, banking, and housing)."[65]





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SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
Department of Disability and Aging Services

Dignity Fund Services and Allocation Plan

FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27 Funding Cycle



Background

San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services

Within the City and County of San Francisco, **the Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS)** is the government agency charged with **coordinating services for older adults, veterans, people with disabilities, and their families to maximize safety, health, and independence**. As the state-designated Area Agency on Aging for San Francisco, DAS is responsible under the federal Older Americans Act to serve as the lead on local aging issues.

DAS is located within the San Francisco Human Services Agency, which delivers a safety net of services and public benefits to promote wellbeing and independence. Each year, **DAS serves over 70,000 unduplicated clients directly through our department programs and through partnerships with community-based organizations**. With an overall budget of $483 million in FY 2022-23, DAS is supported by a staff of 439 employees and contracts with over 60 community organizations to deliver services.

Collectively, these services are organized into seven service areas based on their primary underlying goal. These service areas provide a higher-level conceptual framework for the Department's work and the ways in which we seeks to impact lives. These service areas are listed below in Table 1. Please see *Appendix A: DAS Service List & Descriptions* for more information about our services in each service area.

Table 1. DAS Service Areas

Service Area	Primary Goal
Access & Empowerment *e.g., Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Empowerment Programs, Legal Assistance*	To educate, empower, and support older adults and people with disabilities to access needed benefits and participate in services
Caregiver Support *e.g., Adult Day Programs, Caregiver Respite*	To support the wellbeing of family and friend caregivers and their care recipients through education, counseling, resources, and connection
Case Management & Care Navigation *e.g., Community Living Fund, Money Management*	To facilitate service connections and support individuals with complex needs to navigate available resources and promote stability in the community
Community Connection & Engagement *e.g., Community Service Centers, Employment Support*	To provide opportunities for older people and adults with disabilities to socialize, build community, and participate in a meaningful way in their community
Housing Support *e.g., Housing Subsidies, Scattered Site Housing*	To support seniors and adults with disabilities to maintain stable housing through service connection and community engagement
Nutrition & Wellness *e.g., Home-Delivered Meals, Nutrition Education, Health Promotion*	To promote physical health and wellbeing for older adults and adults with disabilities by providing nutritious foods and supporting healthy lifestyles
Self-Care & Safety *e.g., Elder Abuse Prevention, Long Term-Care Ombudsman*	To support older adults and people with disabilities to meet their needs in the most independent setting, safe from abuse and self-neglect

Dignity Fund

The **Dignity Fund** was established via a charter amendment passed by San Francisco voters as Proposition I in 2016. Working with a coalition of community advocates, Supervisor Malia Cohen led drafting the measure, which was placed on the ballot by the Board of Supervisors and supported by Mayor Edwin Lee. Proposition I was approved with 66% of the vote.

The Dignity Fund has three key components:

- **Creates special fund:** Stabilizes funding for current services and support for older adults, veterans, adults with disabilities, and caregivers and provides additional set aside dollars each year to address the unmet and emerging needs of these communities. The initial baseline funding level of $38 million has grown to $59 million in FY 2022-23. The Dignity Fund baseline will reach $71 million by the end of the new funding cycle in FY 2026-27.

- **Establishes a planning and funding process:** Requires DAS to follow a planning and funding cycle, beginning every four years with a **Community Needs Assessment** and followed in the next year by a **Services and Allocation Plan**, to ensure Dignity Fund money is appropriately and purposefully spent to address community needs.

- **Institutes an oversight body:** Creates an oversight body to monitor and participate in the administration of the Dignity Fund and to ensure the Fund is administered in a manner accountable for the community. The **Oversight and Advisory Committee** is made up of representatives from key advisory bodies on aging and disability, including: the Disability and Aging Services Commission; the DAS Advisory Council; the Long-Term Care Coordinating Council; and at-large members appointed by the Mayor. The Oversight and Advisory Committee is also advised by a **Service Provider Working Group**.

The Dignity Fund can be used to fund a variety of services that support San Francisco's seniors and adults with disabilities to age with dignity in their communities. This funding is intended to promote an aging- and disability-friendly city, with particular attention to improving equity among historically disadvantaged groups and underserved neighborhoods. While certain types of expenditures are prohibited by the charter amendment,[1] the Dignity Fund legislation outlined a broad array of services eligible to receive Dignity Fund money. These include, but are not limited to: home and community-based long-term care services, food programs, education and empowerment programs, community service centers, tailored services meant to reach specific populations like veterans or LGBTQ+ individuals, and administrative services to support DAS in administering the Fund.

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[1] For example, the charter amendment prohibits use of Dignity Fund money for the purchase of property and housing construction costs, as well as most medical services and services provided by hospitals.

Background
Dignity Fund Services and Allocation Plan FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27

Spotlight on Pilot Programs and Neighborhood-Initiated Services

In its description of the funding and allocation planning process, the **Dignity Fund legislation emphasizes the importance of funding pilot programs and neighborhood-initiated services**. These elements of the legislation align with the broader principles of the Fund: to adopt best practices with demonstrated impact, to develop and test innovative approaches to meet client needs, and to work collaboratively with City and community stakeholders to ensure the equity and reach of our services throughout the diverse neighborhoods and communities of San Francisco.

DAS currently funds numerous pilot programs and neighborhood-initiated services, and will maintain or expand funding levels in these areas over the next four years, as described later in this section. We have highlighted select new or planned pilot programs and neighborhood-initiated services below to give a sense of these efforts in action.

PILOT PROGRAMS

- **LGBTQ+ Mental Health Connections:** Launched in May 2022, this pilot program provides short-term counseling and therapy services to LGBTQ+ individuals and HIV long-term survivors ages 50 and older who self-report serious depression, anxiety, and trauma related to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. It also offers technology support to enhance clients' digital literacy. This pilot was developed in response to the findings of the 2021 DAS-funded citywide LGBTQ+ Older Adult Survey assessing mental health and related impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on queer and transgender seniors.

- **Community Service Center – Technology Navigators:** DAS plans to use new Dignity Fund resources to launch an innovative pilot to provide on-site technology support for clients at Community Service Centers throughout the city. We are developing this pilot in partnership with community stakeholders in response to the 2022 Dignity Fund Community Needs Assessment and other recent community research findings pertaining to issues of digital access and literacy. This approach reflects our understanding that access to technology devices alone is not sufficient to bridge the digital divide experienced by many adults with disabilities and seniors; hands-on technology navigation assistance and training are essential to help close this gap.

NEIGHBORHOOD-INITIATED SERVICES

- **Disability Community Cultural Center:** Based on plans developed in close collaboration with City partners, service providers, and disability community members, DAS is currently procuring services to begin implementation of the nation's first City-funded Disability Community Cultural Center. The Center will be located in the heart of San Francisco — in the Civic Center neighborhood — on the site of a new affordable housing development, a quarter of whose units are designated for low-income people with disabilities. The site is currently under construction, and will welcome residents and launch on-site services in 2025.

- **Neighborhood Choirs:** A more recent addition to the DAS social services network, these neighborhood-focused choir programs are offered at multiple sites throughout the city, and are designed to promote social connection, provide participants with an increased sense of belonging, and reduce their feelings of loneliness. The Department plans to expand the scope of our neighborhood-based arts programming in the FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27 funding cycle, supported by new Dignity Fund growth, to include support for other forms of art in addition to choirs.