The community of Princeton NJ joined the Age Friendly Network in 2014. The Action Plan was approved in 2016.

The Action Plan focused on four areas: housing, transportation, communication, and strengthening neighborhoods. These focus areas were selected based on the focus group outcomes, as well as input from municipal and non-profit groups who work with aging adults.

In addition, there were several initiatives in the community that connected directly with other domains and contribute to Princeton’s being an age friendly community. The community is proud of the efforts that have been accomplished in this period.

At the same time, there were inevitable challenges encountered. The executive director of the lead agency, Susan Hoskins, at Princeton Senior Resource Center, retired. Additionally, many of the original members of the task group moved out of the community or faced health issues for themselves or family members so they were unable to continue, and they were difficult to replace.

We were surprised that there was some push-back on the concept of being age-friendly in a progressive college town, where focus is on children and youth. Meanwhile, the message that the population is aging is slowly gaining traction across the country. Other urgent issues commanded the attention of municipal government.

Lessons learned include the need for a dedicated (paid) person to serve in a leadership role for this work, and to have an active advocacy group of members of the community who will help to plan and implement projects and spread the word.

The Action/Implementation Plan is attached, with a column reporting activity in each area.
Additional efforts were also made in Princeton that enhance the livability for all include:

**Domain 1: Outdoor spaces and buildings**

- Renovation of Mary Moss Park, in the historic Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood. This park and playground are in the heart of the African American and immigrant communities. Paved walkways, pavilion, and plenty of seating were included. *(PHOTO A)*

- Every summer, a pop-up park has been created on Witherspoon St, outside Small World Coffee, in the heart of downtown for community socializing. Many eating establishments have been permitted to include outdoor sidewalk seating. *(PHOTO B)*

- Hinds Plaza, adjacent to the Princeton Public Library, has become the heart of the community, hosting the weekly farmer’s market, live music, and countless community events. Palmer Square, in front of the Nassau Inn, also hosts many community events including the annual tree-lighting, and a town-University event for watching the eclipse. *(PHOTO C)*

- Sidewalks have been extended into residential areas and have been improved downtown to reduce tripping hazards. Curb cuts are installed throughout downtown.

- Nassau St Streetscape report — Ordinance passed to make application easier for restaurant outdoor seating. Redesign elements proposed.

- Wayfinding signage for parking, walking distances, and key destinations
- Exploring adding dog park
- “Dohm Alley” improved a narrow alley between Nassau St and the parking lot into a sculpture gallery with plants and seating.
- Art museum opening accessible space in Bainbridge House on Nassau St

- Added pickup/drop off spaces in front of key locations

**Domain 2: Transportation – See Action Plan**

- Princeton continues its commitment to transportation for aging adults, recognizing this as the key to social interaction and independence. The municipality supports the neighborhood FreeB, *(PHOTO D)* a small bus that runs a continuous loop six days a week to all senior housing communities, downtown, library,
shopping center, and senior center. It also supports Crosstown, a door-to-door car service for residents to get to appointments, shopping, senior center, and the medical center complex.

- Princeton has done a high level of advocacy with New Jersey Transit to continue the Princeton Dinky train link service to the Princeton Junction train station.

- Additional bus shelters and transportation information, including live tracking have been added.

- Bike rentals are now available (PHOTO E)

- Bike lanes were created on major streets, and additional bike parking added downtown.

Domain 3: Housing – See Action Plan

- Affordable housing goal set
- Opportunities to develop housing identified
- Developed & distributed “Friendly Home” brochure
- Created universal application for affordable & subsidized housing
- Applications for assisted living communities, others in neighboring communities

Domain 4: Social Participation

- Princeton is very proud of its model Princeton Senior Resource Center (PSRC), which provides programs for social interaction, education, cognitive engagement, and physical activity. These include the popular Evergreen Forum lifelong learning classes TED Talk discussions and Technology Labs (free help from volunteers).

- The award-winning Princeton Public Library is the “Community Living Room”, providing programming seven days a week for people of all ages. Collaborations with PSRC include the Engaged Retirement Series.

- The formation of an Executive Directors Collaborative in 2016 has helped to stimulate several collaborative ventures, including a year-long theme on migrations, which included art exhibits, music, lectures, field trips, group discussions, and more conducted by approximately twenty organizations.

- The Princeton Nutrition site was reopened, providing a local space for residents to gather daily for a nutritious meal provided by Mercer County. Participants are encouraged to attend other PSRC programs before and after the program.

- An annual picnic at Redding Circle, one of the subsidized housing communities, with all community members invited, hosted by Princeton Public Library, Human Services, PSRC, and the Police Department, and Princeton Housing Authority. Other neighborhoods also have picnics.
• Library has social work intern to help connect people to services.

• Diversity surveys of municipal commissions and boards, committees have high percentage of aging adults.

Domain 5: Respect and Inclusion

• Support for immigrants has been a high priority issue during this period. Princeton is a “Welcoming Community” and participates in Welcoming America initiative. The Human Services Commission, Not in Our Town, and YWCA have conducted many activities to combat racism and to support the undocumented residents of the community. New Civil Rights Commission appointed.

• Another issue of acute focus has been emergency preparedness, especially in the years after Superstorm Sandy, and as the reality of greater impact from climate change are understood. Princeton chose to identify the strengthening of neighborhood groups as a key to our response. This is a multi-generational local effort that emphasizes neighbors getting to know each other, believing that this will increase willingness to help in an emergency. It also builds on existing support networks and gives opportunities for meaningful engagement and leadership for aging adults, social participation, respect and inclusion, and improved communication. We were disappointed not to receive funding to support neighborhood events to launch this concept. Municipal Office of Emergency Management and Sustainable Princeton are taking the lead role, hosting a meeting in June 2019 of leaders from many organizations throughout Princeton toward creating an action report. A Climate Action Plan is pending approval (July 2019).

• PSRC’s GrandPals Program has expanded into all four elementary schools, as well as the summer enrichment program and two classes of children with special needs. A model intergenerational program, over 130 older adult volunteers read weekly with the children in kindergarten. Many work with more than one group and have stories to tell about how this contributes to a sense of purpose, new friendships, and feeling welcome and valued.

• Community Night Out, hosted by the Police Department for people of all ages at the community pool.

• Princeton also supports the LGBTQ community with Pride parades, the Bayard Rustin Center (LGBTQ) and special programs at PSRC.

• All single-stall bathrooms must be labeled as unisex.

Domain 6: Civic Participation and Employment

• The municipality of Princeton has numerous commissions, where older residents are actively engaged. The abundance of non-profit organizations in and around Princeton also engage residents on their boards and as volunteers.

• PSRC alone has over 350 volunteers, including GrandPals, office volunteers, lab volunteers, instructors, and group facilitators.

• Many “retired” residents continue to work in their professional roles (doctors, lawyers, researchers, teachers) on a part-time basis, either for former employers or as entrepreneurs starting new ventures.

• “Hire Princeton Initiative” formed to connect local residents with local jobs.

• Forming an “Aging Issues” advocacy group has been discussed, but not yet formed.
Domain 7: Communication & Information – See Action Plan

- The focus groups illustrated the challenges of fast-changing communication methods. Over this period of time, more people have become adept at using electronic communications, but not all. Many organizations use both paper and electronic methods for wider reach. PSRCs technology lab and the Princeton Public Library are helping everyone access electronic communications.

- Meetings were held with staff from the key communication organizations: PSRC, Human Services, Princeton Public Library, and Access Princeton to enhance their awareness of the services each provides so that inquiries can be addressed quickly and accurately.

- There are resources available through LanguageLine Solutions, the medical center, and Princeton University to facilitate communication in any language.

Domain 8: Community & Health Services

- Princeton HealthCare System joined with Penn Health, becoming Penn Medicine Princeton Health, adding access to a larger health system and its network of services, including mental health, children’s health, LGBTQ, physical therapy, homecare & hospice, and specialized elder care services (senior emergency room and acute care for elderly).

- The Bristol-Myers Squibb Community Health Center provides free or low-cost care to uninsured or underinsured families.

- Many residents seek specialized care in New York City or Philadelphia.

- Crosstown provides free transportation to Penn Medicine Princeton Health for Princeton residents age 65+.

- Collaboration between PSRC, Princeton Health Department, and Penn Medicine Princeton Health, Capital Health, and Robert Wood Johnson Health provide numerous health education sessions, health fairs and flu immunization clinics.

- Princeton participates in the Mayors Wellness Campaign. Princeton was identified as a pilot community for “Conversations of a Lifetime,” to encourage completion of advance directives. Several workshops were held at PSRC and the Princeton Public Library, and information provided at the health fairs.

- Princeton named a Healthy Town by the NJ HealthCare Quality Institute.

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