AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY
2019
The City of Houston Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan is dedicated to the many individuals who had a hand in building the amazing city that Houston is today. Your work and dedication have assisted in building a community that is inclusive of all people and all ages, including the young at heart.
AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY
2019
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Dear Houstonians,

I am excited to present to you this action plan that contains our strategy to make our great city more “age-friendly and livable” for ALL Houstonians.

Many people of all ages, representing many community organizations and city departments, have put hundreds of hours into developing this plan. They identified practices, programs and policies in nine subjects that cover all facets of living -- housing, transportation, health, open spaces and buildings, communication and information, public safety, civic participation, volunteerism and employment, social participation and respect and social inclusion.

Over the next few years, our city will work with other municipalities to ensure that we view our practices, programming and policies through the lens of being age-friendly and livable. I agree with the AARP’s mantra that “what’s good enough for an 80-year old will be good enough for an 8-year old.”

An additional million people are expected to move into Houston in the next 20 years. The number of older individuals in Houston is increasing not only as a percentage of the population but in raw numbers as well. Now is the time to make Houston more age-friendly to accommodate residents and visitors whose physical, mental, emotional and mobility abilities may become limited. Houston will raise its quality of life standards so that everyone enjoys a community that is safe, affordable, friendly and accessible to ALL.

The best legacy we can give to future generations is a more age-friendly and livable city. This plan is a milestone toward keeping that commitment. I appreciate the tremendous collaborative effort that produced this action plan and the additional work that will happen to make it a reality. Let us ALL commit to making Houston more “age-friendly and livable” as we seek to make One Complete City for everyone.

Sincerely,

Sylvester Turner
Mayor
August 7, 2014

Mr. Bob Jackson  
AARP Texas State Director  
98 San Jacinto Blvd., Suite 750  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Jackson:

On behalf of the City of Houston, we are excited about the opportunity to join with AARP Texas and the World Health Organization (WHO) to become an Age-Friendly City. Along with other selected communities in the nation, Houston is committed to promoting policies to make Houston friendly to the aging population.

The Houston metropolitan area is the fourth most populous city in the nation, with the 60+ community making up 13 percent of the population. This community is vital to Houston’s ongoing success, and we are dedicated to making The Bayou City even more livable for everyone who calls Houston home.

In 2012, I established the Go Healthy Houston Task Force to address health and wellness through policy and population-based strategies. This task force is multi-sectoral and includes leadership from many city departments, community based organizations, private health care organizations, and many others. Go Healthy Houston will work with AARP to bring together all invested groups and Houston residents to be a part of the planning and policy-making process. It is the City of Houston’s intent to:

- Establish a plan of action that responds to the needs identified by older adults in the community.
- Include the active engagement of older adults in the planning and implementation of the Age-Friendly Community plan.

We look forward to working with AARP Texas staff and volunteers to ensure our community has the appropriate infrastructure in place, so we can all age with dignity.

Sincerely,

Annise D. Parker  
Mayor
September 7, 2018

Mr. Bob Jackson
AARP Texas State Director
1905 Aldrich St., Ste 210
Austin, TX 78723

Dear Mr. Jackson,

On behalf of the City of Houston, I am happy to reaffirm our commitment with AARP Texas to develop an Age Friendly/Livable Community Plan for the City of Houston. Our team has been working with community partners for the last couple of years to develop a plan that complements and strengthens Houston’s many other important planning efforts that have emerged.

Since our initial letter of commitment, our City has gone through many experiences. Of course, you know how Harvey left its wrath upon our city. After many months of recovery and many more to come, Houston is coming back stronger, better, and more resilient. One of my administration’s signature initiatives, Complete Communities, was launched and has finalized action plans in five pilot neighborhoods: Acres Homes, Gulfton, Near Northside, Second Ward and Third Ward. Other initiatives like the Bicycle Master Plan; CIP plans, the CDBG and FEMA-funded housing recovery plans and a new strategic planning process under the Rockefeller 100 Cities Resilience Program are also underway. We appreciate the AARP Age Friendly/Livable Community Planning process taking into consideration these and other important and related parallel efforts as they proceed.

Early on, Houston’s Age Friendly/Livable Community Plan added a ninth domain, Public Safety, that was a fortuitous decision as Hurricane Harvey hit later that year. Not only does this domain cover natural and manmade disaster prevention and safety, but also addresses community crime prevention and personal abuse, neglect and exploitation, a critical area of concern for some of our elder adults.

As you can see, we are very engaged and eager to complete and implement Houston’s Age Friendly/Livable Community Plan along with the other planning efforts taking place. We look forward to our continued partnership with AARP as we create a city that will be age friendly and livable for all.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Sylvester Turner
Mayor

POST OFFICE BOX 1562 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77251
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Houston, founded in 1836 and incorporated in 1837, by brothers John and Augustus Allen, and named after Sam Houston, was originally labeled “the city to be”. Houston is the fourth largest city in America, coupled with being one of the most diverse cities in the nation one can observe many different ethnic communities and taste cuisines from all over the world without ever leaving the city limits.

Houstonians have come together to create this Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan to foster policies that are bold yet achievable. The City is mindful of the role aging plays in every aspect of life. Age cuts across all nine domains that frame an age-friendly community and we know from the State of Aging and Health in America 2013 (CDC) report that the key to improving health and overall quality of life must be through collaboration of multiple diverse groups at the national, state, and local levels.

A LOOK INTO HOUSTON’S OLDER ADULT POPULATION:

While Houston is known for having a relatively young and diverse population, the truth is, Houstonians are aging. Approximately, one out of every ten Houstonians are now 65 and over. While a majority of the total population identifies as male or female, the population 65 years and over is skewed to a female majority.

The societal makeup of Houston is a diverse mix of ethnicities and cultures. The Houston metropolitan area consists of 39.7 percent non-Hispanic whites, 35.3 percent Hispanics, 16.9 percent non-Hispanic blacks, and 8.2 percent Asians and others. According to Rice University’s Kinder Institute, Houston is the most ethnically diverse major metropolitan area in the United States in terms of the how near it is to an equal distribution of the nation’s four major ethnic communities: Asians, Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, and non-Hispanic whites.
The population of 65 and older is almost four times more likely to have at least one disability at 38.1 percent compared to 9.8 percent among the general population. Of those 65 and older, 14.4 percent are a civilian veteran. This is in comparison to 4.2 percent of Houston’s entire civilian population over age of 18.

Houstonians 65 and over live in the same house they did one year ago at a rate of 92.5 percent in comparison to 80.6 percent of the general population. This also means that the housing stock is older and more likely to need repair and/or ill-equipped to accommodate the higher rates of disability among Houstonians 65 and older. A higher percentage of 65 years and older own their own residence than rent. Most Houston AARP respondents (87%) want to live independently in their own home for as long as they can. Among Houston residents 65 and over, 70.8 percent speak English only at home. Yet 29.2 percent still speak a language other than English at home and 18.8 percent speak English less than very well.

Houston is diverse. Houston is aging. This is a significant segment of Houston’s population and the numbers cannot be ignored. The demand for services tailored to an age-friendly community will only increase in the coming years as more and more baby boomers become older persons. The belief is that what is good in an age-friendly community is good for the entire community.

_Houston is diverse. Houston is aging. This is a significant segment of Houston’s population and the numbers cannot be ignored._
DEVELOPING HOUSTON’S AGE-FRIENDLY/LIVABLE PLAN

There are three phases to the planning process: Planning, Implementation, and Continual Improvement. The Planning Process transcended two different mayors. In late 2014, Mayor Annise Parker initiated Houston in the Age-Friendly Network with the World Health Organization. In 2016, Mayor Sylvester Turner succeeded Mayor Parker and recommitted Houston to the initiative. Additionally, AARP became the U.S. affiliate for Age-Friendly and broadened the initiative to include the concept of “livable” communities. For the next three years, more than a hundred community partners, led by the AARP Houston office, developed its plan of action. One unique action by Houston was to add a ninth domain of Public Safety to the other eight existing domains as defined and described by the World Health Organization and AARP.

Houston had the benefit of utilizing many existing studies and reports developed by other community groups. They were reviewed and incorporated into Age-Friendly as appropriate. The Age-Friendly/Livable Community initiative also conducted a few original surveys and needs assessments to obtain baseline information and held many convenings of community partners and service providers who developed a plan of action and opportunities for older residents to provide feedback and review. On August 27, 2019, Mayor Turner signed Houston’s Age-Friendly/Livable Community plan into executive order. Now in Phase 2, Implementation and Evaluation will occur for the next 3–5 years. Domains led by co-leaders and community partners most knowledgeable and active in those domains, will provide continuous revision, refinement, and update of the plan for subsequent years 5–6.

HOUSTON’S AGE-FRIENDLY/LIVABLE VISION, MISSION AND VALUES:

We envision a community for our families that is safe, affordable, friendly, and accessible to all. We will work to ensure a city that is inclusive, embraces diversity, and promotes respect and dignity for all.

Furthermore, the following values best describe our Age-Friendly/Livable Community:

- Equity
- Friendly
- Embracing Diversity
- Respect For Dignity
- Awareness & Sensitivity
- Cooperation
THE 2018 LIVABILITY INDEX SCORE
The AARP Livability Index is a tool that measures the overall community livability of a selected neighborhood, city, county, or state. Every two years, AARP assesses communities on seven livability categories—housing, health, neighborhood, transportation, opportunity, environment, and engagement. Multiple metrics are utilized to create a base score for each category; each score is then averaged to produce the overall Livability Index Score. The City of Houston was given a score of 50 (out of 100), an average score across communities in the United States. Houston led in multiple sectors, Housing (affordability and access) scoring 67, neighborhood (access to life, work, and play) scoring 59, and health (prevention, access and quality) scoring 56. Areas needing more improvement are transportation and engagement. It is in these areas that the planning committee placed a special focus on what steps can be taken to significantly improve the scored metrics which will be measured and compared over time.

HOUSTON AGE-FRIENDLY/LIVABLE DOMAIN ACTION PLANS:
OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS:
In creating an Age-Friendly/Livable Community for Houston, the Planning Committee recognized the need to create overarching general recommendations to support and facilitate the individual domain recommendations and to ensure that they would be instituted within the City’s governmental structure. The following recommendations were requested of the Mayor and City Council:

• Adopt an executive order (EO) accepting and endorsing the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Plan and supporting its philosophy and implementation.
• Create a commission or committee to oversee and monitor the Age-Friendly/Livable Community plan, with appointments from older adults, community advocates, service providers, businesses, and civic sectors that represent expertise and interests in the various domains.
HOUSTON AGE-FRIENDLY/LIVABLE COMMUNITY

- Appoint a Special Assistant on Age-Friendly/Livable Community in the Mayor’s Office.

On August 27, 2019, Mayor Sylvester Turner signed into executive order the Age-Friendly/Livable Community plan that includes specifics on the above recommendations and how they will be incorporated and institutionalized into Houston municipal government.

TRANSPORTATION DOMAIN:
The transportation domain has a vision to “create a Houston that encourages safe and affordable specialized transportation and multimodal mobility options” and a goal to “make Houston a place with aging in place Infrastructure that encourages safe, walkable, accessible and affordable multi-modal mobility options.” There are eight (8) recommendations that were identified initially to address aspects of safety in speed, signage, infrastructure and making public and specialized transit options more available, affordable and assessible.

HOUSING DOMAIN:
The vision is “A city that promotes affordable, accessible, equitable, and age-friendly housing options” and the goal is “availability of home modification programs for aging in place as well as a range of age-friendly housing options.” Although Houston leads many communities with a Livability Index Score of 67 in Housing, the ability to age in place is important for many older Houstonians who continue to live in the neighborhood they were born and raised in. Nine (9) recommendations are initially described in the Housing Domain, ranging from increasing affordable housing options to outfitting existing homes to be able to age in place, to rental options of clean and safe apartments, to creating neighborhoods that are also clean, safe and “livable”.

The transportation domain has a vision to “create a Houston that encourages safe and affordable specialized transportation and multimodal mobility options.”

PUBLIC SAFETY DOMAIN:
The vision of the Public Safety Domain is “assurance of public safety and security in all aspects of life, such as crime, homeland security, cyber-security, emergency preparedness, and personal exploitation and neglect” and the goal is that because “older adults want to be safe, both inside and outside of the home, through collaborative initiatives and multi-disciplinary teams, areas that will be addressed are fire and crime prevention, home safety, elder abuse, and mistreatment, as well as financial security and fraud protection.” There are six (6) recommendations that address specific crime prevention and safety programs for older adults in their homes and neighborhoods to broader awareness and educational programs that protect them from scams and fraud, and neglect, exploitation and abuse.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT DOMAIN:
The vision for this domain is “access to home and community-based services for both community support and health programs that promote wellness and active aging and the goal is “to provide greater access for healthcare services, both physical and mental, to all older adults in the City of Houston.” There are nine (9) recommendations that largely address the infrastructure serving older adults in the health and support areas such as better training of personnel, making locating and assessing resources easier, connecting those who are discharged from the hospital with transitional care and community centers and addressing the mental health needs through prevention and treatment.
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION DOMAIN:
The vision of this domain is “access to communications technology and other resources so older residents can connect with their community, friends and family” and the goal is to “facilitate the provision of information and means of communication to all.” The seven (7) recommendations in this domain range from providing ongoing information through traditional media such as newspapers, TV and radio, and social media, including websites, Facebook, and a listserv like a Senior Nextdoor. Also using people like trained Ambassadors and volunteers through civic clubs and faith-based institutions to outreach.

OPEN SPACES AND BUILDINGS/SOCIAL PARTICIPATION DOMAIN:
This domain has a vision of “availability of safe and accessible recreational facilities and opportunities for social interaction” and a goal to “provide more of these resources for older adults.” The planning teams made the decision to combine both Open Spaces & Buildings, which scored a 41 on the Livability Index and Social Participation that scored a 35 of the Livability Index, due to the similarities of the recommendations and the parallel work of the individual collaborative organizations. These areas reduce stress, encourage exercise, and foster community cohesion. The six (6) recommendations from this domain range from creating a space for urban farming, identifying multiservice centers, improve access to facilities that provide older adult programing, and promote multicultural, multigenerational, and multiethnic interactions that inspire dialogue.

RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION DOMAIN:
The vision for this domain is “programs that promote ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as multigenerational interaction and dialogue” and the goal is to “foster an atmosphere promoting respect, inclusion, and diversity.” Recommendations from this domain include strengthening networks that promote social inclusion, identify causes of social isolation, and develop a toolkit for providers that educates on cultural and intergenerational inclusion.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION, VOLUNTEERISM AND EMPLOYMENT DOMAIN:
The vision for this domain is “paid work and volunteer activities for older residents and opportunities to engage in the formulation of policies relevant to their lives” and the goal is to “add value to the wise worker and to promote evidence-based programming to support civic participation and employment programs. The planning team centered their work around the concept that “community engagement is a lifetime commitment.” With this in mind, collaborative organization assessed how the lives of older adults could be improved in terms of increasing the levels of civic participation, volunteerism, and employment. Recommendations from this domain range from promoting a message that older adults are good investments to promoting programs that encourage volunteerism.

“... promote ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as multigenerational interaction and dialogue...”
COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Houston, founded in 1836 and incorporated in 1837 by brothers John and Augustus Allen and named after Sam Houston, was originally labeled “the city to be.” With early developers platting wider than average roads and thoroughfares, there were high expectations for the young town. It is no surprise that Houston now overlooks a global port, hosts the world’s largest medical center, and provides a residence for many of the world’s most innovative thinkers. The City of Houston is no longer the “city to be” but is now the city to model.

Houston is the fourth largest city in the country, coupled with being one of the most diverse cities in the nation.

Now known as the Bayou City, the City of Houston has brilliantly developed its many bayous into hike and bike trails, parks, and open greenways, creating assets where there were once underutilized resources. From those that call Houston home to frequent visitors, the Bayou City provides a unique experience that showcases the capabilities of a global city without losing the charm and meaning of southern hospitality.

Houston is the fourth largest city in the country, coupled with being one of the most diverse cities in the nation. One can observe many different ethnic communities and taste cuisines from all over the world without ever leaving the city limits. The city is also a cultural center hosting over twenty museums specializing in areas from natural history to health.

Houstonians are also by nature problem solvers and innovative thinkers. The city is home to the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, to 25 Fortune 500 companies and to over 40 colleges including world-class universities like the University of Houston, Texas Southern University, the University of St. Thomas, and Rice University.

The generosity of Houstonians knows no bounds. Always there with a welcoming smile and willingness to lend a hand, the City is committed to serving others. In 2005, the City welcomed evacuees in the wake of Hurricane Katrina with open arms—many of whom have chosen to call Houston home.
If there were any true test of community, look no further than Hurricane Harvey. Before Harvey made landfall, neighbors opened their homes, donated their belongings, and created spaces for potential evacuees. For the first time, Harris County and City of Houston Emergency services reported fleets of resident-owned boats that were ready to respond at a moment’s notice. The spirit of resiliency shined brightly throughout the storm creating the nationally recognized brand #HoustonStrong.

Houstonians have come together to create this Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan to foster policies that are bold yet achievable. The City is mindful of the role aging plays in every aspect of life. Age cuts across all nine domains that frame an age-friendly community and we know from the State of Aging and Health in America 2013 (CDC) report that the key to improving health and overall quality of life must be through collaboration of multiple diverse groups at the national, state, and local levels.

The City has been able to enjoy economic successes ranging from agricultural commerce, oversea trade, and energy innovation. Houston continues to provide opportunities for entrepreneurs, those looking to start or restart their careers, and individuals who are looking for a new place to call home. It is in this dynamic city where anything is possible, and where Houstonians have applied a big picture, big-hearted, and forward-directed approach, in the action plan that is presented here.

AGE

While Houston is known for having a relatively young and diverse population, the truth is, Houstonians are aging. The aging of Houstonians is reflected in the median age, increasing from 31.8 in 2009 to 32.9 in 2017. As of 2015, there were 2,267,336 people who call Houston home. Of these, 228,460 were 65 and over, making up 10.1 percent of the population. To put this in perspective, one out of every ten Houstonians are now 65 and over.

The number of older individuals in Houston is increasing not only as a percentage of the population but in raw numbers as well. Therefore, there will be more demand for services and amenities tailored to this age group. From 2000 to 2010, the number of Houstonians 62 or over increased from 197,956 to 288,654. The percentage of Houstonians 50 and over is increasing—there was a slight decrease in 2014 and 2015 however, the overall number is expected to increase regardless of future percentage changes.
DIVERSITY

The societal makeup of Houston is a diverse mix of ethnicities and cultures. The Houston metropolitan area consists of 39.7 percent non-Hispanic whites, 35.3 percent Hispanics, 16.9 percent non-Hispanic blacks, and 8.2 percent Asians and others. According to Rice University's Kinder Institute, Houston is the most ethnically diverse major metropolitan area in the United States in terms of the how near it is to an equal distribution of the nation's four major ethnic communities: Asians, Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, and non-Hispanic whites.

Source: U.S Census 2010

COMMUNITY PROFILE

GENDER

While a majority of the total population identifies as male or female, the population 65 years and over is skewed to a female majority.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey. 2015

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSTONIANS 50+
2005–2015

HOUSTONIANS BY GENDER
2017

DIVERSITY

The societal makeup of Houston is a diverse mix of ethnicities and cultures. The Houston metropolitan area consists of 39.7 percent non-Hispanic whites, 35.3 percent Hispanics, 16.9 percent non-Hispanic blacks, and 8.2 percent Asians and others. According to Rice University's Kinder Institute, Houston is the most ethnically diverse major metropolitan area in the United States in terms of the how near it is to an equal distribution of the nation's four major ethnic communities: Asians, Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, and non-Hispanic whites.

Source: U.S Census 2010

COMMUNITY PROFILE

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF HOUSTON METROPOLITAN AREA
Source: U.S Census 2010
ACCOMMODATIONS:
Houston must plan for older adults with higher rates of disabilities that hinder their mobility and ability to move around comfortably. The population of 65 and older is almost four times more likely to have at least one disability at 38.1 percent compared to 9.8 percent among the general population.

MILITARY SERVICE:
Houston’s residents 65 and older have a dedicated history to military service. In 2017, of those 65 and older, 14.4 percent were a civilian veteran. This is in comparison to 4.2 percent (2017) of Houston’s entire civilian population over age of 18.
HOUSING:
Houstonians 65 and over live in the same house they did one year ago at a rate of 92.5 percent (2017) in comparison to 80.6 percent (2017) of the general population. The benefits of a livable community, then, would be enjoyed by someone 65 and older for a longer period than someone in the general population. This also means that the housing stock is older and more likely to need repair and/or ill-equipped to accommodate the higher rates of disability among Houstonians 65 and older.

A greater percentage of AARP Houston respondents own their own residence at 77 percent while a smaller percentage rent compared to Houstonians 65 and over. In both instances, a higher percentage own their own residence than rent. In the general population, the story is different. More rent than own with 56.3 percent renting and 43.7 percent owning.

Most Houston AARP respondents want to live independently in their own home for as long as they can. A surveyed 87 percent believe it is important to stay in their own home as they age, and 44 percent say it is important to age in their own community. Two of the biggest reasons respondents would want to move out of their community are to find right-sized housing or to find a home that can help them live independently as they age.
In 2015, roughly half of the general population spoke a language other than English at home: 47.1 percent versus 52.9 percent speak English only. Of those for whom English is a second language, 23.3 percent speak English less than very well.

Among Houston residents 65 and over, 70.8 percent speak English only at home. Yet 29.2 percent still speak a language other than English at home and 18.8 percent speak English less than very well. While a greater percentage of those 65 and older speak English only at home than the general population, almost 30 percent still speak a language other than English at home.

**SUMMARY:** Houston is diverse. Houston is aging. One in four Houstonians is 50 and over. One in ten is 65 and over. This is a significant segment of Houston’s population and the numbers cannot be ignored. The demand for services tailored to an age-friendly community will only increase in the coming years as more and more baby boomers become older persons. The belief is that what is good in an age-friendly community is good for the entire community.
METHODOLOGY

In 2014, Houston became part of the World Health Organization (WHO) Network of Age-Friendly Communities. To begin the journey, the head of the municipality would commit in writing to begin the process. Under the leadership of Mayor Annise Parker with support from the Houston Health Department, the process began in late 2014.

During the next year, a host of activities related to age-friendly was conducted by community partners as part of the pre-planning process. This was necessary and critical since Houston is such a large city, both geographically and population-wise. Over the years, various plans had been developed and each played an important role in the development of policies, programs, and practices. However, they were focused on different parts of city programming. It was important to recognize what was already going on and integrate their activities where appropriate while creating awareness and support for the Age-Friendly/Livable Community initiative. To do this, many one-on-one meetings were scheduled with city elected officials, department directors, and community agencies to introduce the initiative and gain their commitment to participate.

In April of 2016, newly elected Mayor Sylvester Turner pledged his support in a keynote address with other key community partners such as the Area Agency on Aging and Care for Elders who reported on their recent findings on Houston’s older adult population. At the time, AARP Houston reported on the recent results from their survey of Houston’s AARP membership.

PHASE 1: PLANNING
(Years 1–4)

PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION
(Years 5–6)

PHASE 1: CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT
(Years 7+)

...a host of activities related to age-friendly was conducted by AARP Houston and community partners as part of a Pre-planning process.
PHASE 1: PLANNING PHASE
(YEARS 1–4)
In the fall of 2016 and throughout 2017 and 2018, community partners convened to begin the planning process of the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Plan with the mantra that “if it’s good enough for an 80-year old, it will be good enough for an 8-year old.” AARP, as the US affiliate for the WHO Age-Friendly Global Network, broadened the original Age-Friendly focus of the World Health Organization to address making the entire community more “livable.” Thought leaders from each of the domains included non-profit leaders, municipal officials, and members of the community with long-term vested interests in the community planning process. During the initial meetings, attendees were encouraged to be mindful and anticipate the needs and preferences of older adults and to respect lifestyle choices of older persons who are commonly the most vulnerable. Participants weighed their suggestions in accordance with the outline provided by the AARP Network of Age-Friendly/Community Action Plan. It must be mentioned that the Planning Phase lasted longer than expected due to Hurricane Harvey that hit the City of Houston in late August 2017. For many months following, the priorities of the city, its residents, businesses, and service delivery systems were devoted to recovery from the storm.

Members of the committees, with both personal and professional experiences brought their insight to create recommendations that were equitable for all. The recommendations ranged from age-friendly employment programs, establishing policies protecting and advocating for older persons, and implementing practices that will directly serve a community ready to age in place.

The roundtable meetings allowed the domain teams to design a comprehensive plan that included goals ranging from the inclusion of leisure & cultural activities, providing safe and affordable modes of public transportation, and promoting ethnic & cultural diversity programming. With the leadership provided by Houston AARP, participants were engaged at a grassroots level with a special focus on creating short-, mid-, and long-term programs and policy goals. Partners were supported with AARP efforts that included sponsored trainings, budget workshops, and speaker related events (Dr. Yu - University of Seattle). These efforts were imperative to educate and guide the recommendations from the domain roundtables.

Overall, the domain roundtables were well attended with participants with diverse experiences and varying fields of work. The Houston AARP team is confident that the presented goals resemble the values and overall mission defined by the AARP-Age-Friendly/Livable Communities program.

PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION (YEARS 5–6)
Upon acceptance and endorsement of Houston’s Age-Friendly/Livable Community Plan by Houston City Council, the Houston Age-Friendly/Livable Community team will organize and empower partners to implement the recommendations listed in this plan. This phase will include regular meetings of each domain, co-led by a team of community partners and supported by the organizations and providers who will strategize and make the recommendations actionable. The plan is considered a dynamic, living tool that will be amended, updated, and revised as conditions and situations warrant. It is planned that there will be an online reporting mechanism and website to keep everyone updated and on track.

PHASE 3: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (YEARS 7+)
During phase 3 the Houston AARP Age-Friendly/Livable Community plan will become self-sustaining with a team checking in with community leaders on progress. Progress will be monitored, measured, and reported on a regular basis to ultimately assess Houston’s progress toward being more “age-friendly and livable.”
NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

2016 AARP LIVABILITY FOR ALL SURVEY

To better understand the dynamics of aging among Houstonians, AARP Houston conducted an age-friendly community survey, the AARP 2016 Livability for All in Houston Survey. The survey had two goals: (1) establish a baseline with regards to older adults being able to age in place and (2) conduct a community needs assessment to identify and prioritize areas of focus. 328 members provided insight into how residents feel, what they want, what they have, and to what services they have access. This, in turn, allowed (perceived) gaps in services to be identified. Almost all Houston AARP respondents surveyed stated that they feel their community is a good place to live. However, the services and amenities the respondents identified wanting to have access to, and the corresponding lack of these services and amenities identified by respondents, indicate room for improvement.

Most Important Domains to Houston AARP Members:

The healthcare and transportation domains were the two most important livable community domains to Houston AARP members according to the 2016 AARP Livability for All in Houston Survey. Respondents were particularly concerned that hospital staff are respectful, facilities are accessible, and home health care is affordable.

73.4 percent of Houston AARP respondents have health insurance coverage while 26.6 percent have no insurance coverage at all.

Transportation is a close second to Houston AARP members. Respondents desire well-maintained streets, enforced speed limits, readable signage, and well-lit intersections. Almost nine out of ten, or 87.9 percent of Houstonians 16 years and older rely on a car, truck, or van as their means of transportation to work. This has major implications for the independence of Houston’s aging residents—only 4.2 percent use public transportation. Those who do not drive, walk (2.1 percent), bike (0.5 percent), use a taxicab, motorcycle, or other means (1.9 percent), and 3.4 percent work from home.

Houstonians spend more time in transit than others. The average travel time to work for Houstonians is 26.5 minutes versus 25.2 in the United States.
Largest Gaps Identified in 2016 AARP Livability for All in Houston Survey:

The largest community needs gap identified by the AARP survey is community information that is delivered in person to those with difficulties leaving their home as well as clearly displayed information with large lettering. It is likely that a significant number of the population 65 and over will require messaging that is not only clearly displayed but available in other languages due to the 30 percent that speak a language other than English at home. Another significant gap identified in the survey relates to jobs. There exists a lack of opportunities identified by respondents for older adults who would like to learn new skills in addition to a dearth of jobs that are adapted to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

AARP HOUSTON CONVIO SURVEY, 2018

In early 2018, AARP Houston members were contacted by email to respond to a short online survey to ascertain specific information. Close to 160 older Houstonians completed the survey, that assessed their top areas of concerns related to the listed AARP domains, descriptions of the City of Houston, and recommendations to improve the overall quality of life for older adults. Of this group, it was found that 13 percent were under the age of 55, 41 percent were between the ages of 55-65 years of age, 36 percent were between 66-75 years of age, and 9 percent were between 76-85 years of age. Also, 20 percent of residents have lived in their homes for less than 5 years, another 20 percent have lived in their homes for 5 to 10 years, 17 percent have lived in their homes for 11–20 years, 28 percent have lived in their homes 21–35 years, 13 percent have lived in their homes 36–50 years, and 3 percent have lived in their homes for more than 50 years.

COUNCIL MEMBER AMANDA EDWARDS EMPOWERMENT SERIES, 2018

This event, in its second year, had over one thousand older adults in attendance. Attendees could vote with beans for which of the nine domains were most important to them. In addition, the planning team held a session on the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Plan to inform older adults about the draft plan and the activities recommended. An estimated fifty older adults attended, and each chose the domain that they were most interested in. A community partner led the domain discussion and the results further provided input on the specific activities—providing the planning team with more direction and specificity.
SURVEY/DATA/REPORTS
In our efforts to create an equitable plan—community strategic plans and studies were reviewed to provide critical insight.

Intersecting Plans
- 100 Resilient Cities – Houston Initiative
- Area Agency on Aging of Harris County Area Plan 2015–2016
- The City of Houston Health Disparities Data Report, 2008
- Department of Health and Human Services: Moving Toward an Elder Friendly Future, 2008
- H-GAC Livable Center Study, (cont.)
- H-GAC Regional Transportation Plan, 2016
- Houston Active Living Plan, 2017
- Houston Bike Plan, 2017
- Houston Complete Communities Action Plan, 2018
- LINK Houston Equity in Transit, 2018
- Plan Houston, 2015
- Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services: Aging Texas Well Plan, 2014–2015

Data/Surveys
- 2008–2016 Aging Agenda: Progress Report for Houston and Harris County
- AARP Houston Convio Survey, 2018
- AARP Livability for All Survey, 2016
- AARP Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, 2015
- Council Member Amanda Edwards Empowerment Series, 2018
- The Gulf Coast Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan, 2017
- Health of Houston Survey, 2010
- Houston Economic Opportunity Zones
- The Population 65 Years and Older in the United States: 2016
- Rice – Kinder Houston Area Survey
- State of Aging and Health in America 2013 (CDC)
- U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2015
COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Houston Age-Friendly/Livable Community Planning Committee utilized existing partnerships and relied on community partners, many of whom who serve older adults but also who were advocates and providers in one or more of the domains to create an equitable plan that benefited all Houstonians. More than a hundred various organizations and groups met throughout Phase 1. Co-leaders were identified for each domain to help expand, convene, and create the domain action plan.

3-1-1
AARP Home Fit Program
AARP Houston
AARP Livable Communities
AARP Policy and Research
AARP Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
AARP State Executive Committee Council
AARP Volunteers
Adult Protective Services
Aged and Disabled Resource Center
Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries
Alzheimer's Association
Asakura Robinson Avenue
Baker Ripley (formerly Neighborhood Centers)
Baylor College of Medicine
Better Business Bureau Education Foundation
Big Brothers Big Sisters – Houston
Bike Houston
Boat People SOS – Houston (BPSOS)
Bridge Solutions Health
Buffalo Bayou Partnership
Care Connection Aging & Disability Resource Center
Care for Elders – Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center
Catholic Charities
Chinese Community Center
Citizens Transportation Coalition
City of Houston
City of Houston – Harris County Area Agency on Aging
City of Houston Administration and Regulatory Affairs
City of Houston Community Centers
City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods
City of Houston Health Department
City of Houston Housing & Community Development
City of Houston Parks & Recreation Development
City of Houston Planning Commission
City of Houston Planning Department
City of Houston Public Library
City of Houston Public Works
City of Houston Super Neighborhood Alliance
City of Houston Urban Garden
City of Houston Volunteer Program Executive Service Corps
Executive Service Group
Habitat for Humanity
Family Houston
Family Tree Home Care
Family Tree's Concierge Services
Filipino Lions Club
Foster Grandparents
Glasshouse Policy
Greater Houston Builder’s Association
Greater Northside Management District
Greatland Leasing & Management
Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions
H-Fast (Houston Abuse Specialist Team)
Harris County AAA Aged & Disabled Resource Center
Harris County District Attorney’s Office
Harris County Elder Abuse Fatality Review Team
Harris County Housing Authority
Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
Harris County Public Health
Harris County Rides
Harris County Senior Justice Assessment Center
Harris County Sheriff’s Office
Harris County Transit RIDES
Hawes Hill Calderon
Houston Apartment Association
Houston Area Management Districts
Houston Association for Volunteer Administrators
Houston B-Cycle
Houston Coalition for Complete Streets
Houston Contractors Association
Houston Fire Department
Houston Food Bank
Houston-Galveston Area Council – Area Agency on Aging
Houston-Galveston Area Council Livable Centers Program
Houston Habitat for Humanity
Houston Housing Authority
Houston Independent School District
Houston ISD-Community Partnerships
Houston Methodist
Houston Office of Emergency Management
Houston Parks Board
Houston Police Department
Houston Southeast Management District
Houston Tool Bank
Independent Consultant
Interfaith Ministries
International Management District
League of Women Voters
Legacy Community Health
LIFT
LINK Houston
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
MD Anderson Cancer Center
Meals on Wheels
METRO
Mi Familia Vota
The Montrose Center
Munford Consulting
National Homebuilders Association
New Hope Housing, Inc.
Outreach Strategists, LLC
Rebuilding Houston
Rebuilding Together Houston
Recipe for Success Foundation
Retired Senior Volunteer Program
RSVP & Telephone Reassurance Program
Scenic Houston
Senior Justice Assessment Center
SER Jobs for Progress
Settegast Health Center
Sharpstown Civic Association
Sheltering Arms (No Longer Active)
Southwest Management District
Student Conservation Association
Super Neighborhood Alliance
Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones
Texas Department of Engineers
Texas Elder Abuse Mistreatment Institute
Texas Housers
The United Way
Traffic Engineers, Inc
Texas Department of Transportation
Uber
United Way 211
University of Houston
University of Houston – Downtown, School of Social Work
University of Texas Health Consortium on Aging
University of Texas Health Policy & Community Health Practice
Urban Harvest
VN Teamwork-Golden Bamboo Village
Volunteer Houston
Westchase District
Yellow Cab Houston
YMCA
PLANNING PROCESS

CONVENINGS

The Houston process involved multiple general convenings with all community partners to gain consensus on fundamental principles and directions. It was agreed that, wherever possible, the plan would utilize and connect with other existing and related plans. An additional point of agreement was to focus on and limit the scope of the plan to the City of Houston while acknowledging that some activities were county-wide or regional in some cases, like transportation.

Most of 2017 was convening of the individual domains in “roundtable” format. Co-leaders were identified to help identify other potential partners and help draft the initial plan. In addition to the roundtables, the group used other public access opportunities to gain data particularly from older adults.

**Fall 2014**
Mayor Annise Parker submits letter for the City of Houston to join the World Health Organization Network of Age-Friendly Communities

**2015**
AARP conducts variety of activities related to Age-Friendly and meets one-on-one with city elected officials, department staff, and community organizations to introduce the concept and gain commitment to participate

**April 2016**
Mayor Sylvester Turner pledges his support in a keynote address at a convening of information sharing of senior data reports from community partners

**Fall 2016–2017**
Community convenings and domain roundtables begin to develop action plans

**Fall 2017**
Hurricane Harvey visits Houston and Houston is in recovery mode for the next several months
PLANNING PROCESS

**Spring 2018**
Domain roundtables completed

**Fall 2018**
Mayor Turner recommits Houston as an Age-Friendly/Livable Community

**December 2018**
Review draft and obtain final comments

**August 2019**
Mayor Turner signs Age-Friendly/Livable Community into Executive Order 1-62

**Fall 2019**
Celebrate and plan implementation

**Winter 2019+**
Implementation, refinement, and evaluation
HOUSTON VISION & MISSION STATEMENT

The vision and mission statement for the Houston Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan was crafted by community partners through their convenings and Houston’s older adult communities through the AARP Houston Convio Survey, 2018. They were asked to select words that best describe the vision, values, and mission of the City of Houston.

We envision a community for our families that is safe, affordable, friendly, and accessible to all. We will work to ensure a city that is inclusive, embraces diversity, and promotes respect and dignity for all.
Equity
Friendly
Embracing Diversity
Respect for Dignity
Awareness & Sensitivity
Cooperation
LIVABILITY INDEX SCORE 2018

The AARP Livability Index is a tool that measures the overall community livability of a selected neighborhood, city, county, or state. Every two years, AARP assesses communities on seven livability categories—housing, health, neighborhood, transportation, opportunity, environment, and engagement. Multiple metrics are utilized to create a base score for each category; each score is then averaged to produce the overall Livability Index Score. The tool allows a user to search the overall index via address, zip code, or community. Users have the opportunity to see in-depth where a community leads and where it can improve. More information can be found at [https://livabilityindex.aarp.org](https://livabilityindex.aarp.org)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIVABILITY INDEX SCORE: 50

The City of Houston was given a score of 50 (out of 100), an average score across communities in the United States. Houston led in multiple sectors, Housing (affordability and access) scoring 67, neighborhood (access to life, work, and play) scoring 59, and health (prevention, access and quality) scoring 56. Areas needing more improvement are transportation and engagement. It is in these areas that the planning committee placed a special focus on what steps can be taken to significantly improve the scored metrics.
HOUSTON DOMAIN ACTION PLANS

Overarching Recommendations
Transportation
Housing
Public Safety
Health and Community Support
Communication and Information
Open Spaces and Buildings / Social Participation
Respect and Social Inclusion
Civic Participation, Volunteerism, and Employment
OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

In creating an Age-Friendly/Livable Community for Houston, the Planning Committee recognized the need to create overarching general recommendations to support and facilitate the individual domain recommendations and to ensure that they would be instituted within the City’s governmental structure.

The following recommendations are requested of the Mayor and City Council:

The Mayor and City Council adopt an executive order (EO) accepting and endorsing the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Plan and supporting its philosophy and implementation.

- This executive order would delineate the content and process for incorporating the Age-Friendly/Livable Community philosophy and plan into City policies, practices, and projects.
- It will also include a monitoring and reporting mechanism from those appointed to enforce the EO back to the Mayor and City Council, its frequency and requirements.

The Mayor and City Council create a commission or committee on Age-Friendly/Livable Communities with appointments from older adults, community advocates, service providers, businesses, and civic sectors that represent expertise and interests in the various domains.

- The Commission would oversee the implementation of the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Planning process and would advise and counsel the Mayor and City Council on the City’s progress toward becoming more age-friendly and livable.
OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Commission will be expected to seek input from other related and pertinent advisory committees such as the Area Planning Advisory Committee which deals with older adult issues, and the Bike Advisory Committee who oversees the Master Bike Plan, and request input from city department staff, in order to gather a more complete and updated status of progress.

**Mayor Turner appoint a Special Assistant on Age-Friendly/Livable Communities in the Mayor’s Office.**

- Having a designated individual or team charged with the responsibility of implementing the recommendations created by the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Plan provides a focused perspective to ensure that policies, procedures, programming, and practices are viewed through an “Age-Friendly/Livable” lens.

- This individual, with the authority and scope of the Mayor’s office, can work across city departments and divisions and among and between public and private jurisdictions to facilitate, collaborate, and problem-solve the recommendations in the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Plan.

- This individual would provide staffing and support to the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Commission.

- Similar to previous initiatives in the Mayor’s office, this position would be funded initially through outside sources to demonstrate its strategic and critical necessity and usefulness.

**Executive Order 1-62 Issued**

On October 27, 2019, Mayor Turner signed the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Plan into Executive Order to address the overarching recommendations. The scope of the Executive Order is applicable to all City of Houston departments with primary responsibility for housing, mobility, community planning and development, neighborhoods, public safety, health, social services, public infrastructure, culture, recreation, and green space projects and programs. (The complete Executive Order can be found at the end of this section.)

The Mayor designated in the Executive Order, that in collaboration with the Mayor’s Office of Boards and Commissions, the Mayor’s Advisor on Age-Friendly/Livable Communities submit the names of Houstonians with demonstrated commitment to age-friendly practices and policies as nominees to the Mayor for consideration as mayoral appointees to the Area Planning Advisory Committee (APAC) of the Harris County Area Agency on Aging. APAC was established originally as a result of the Older American Act of 1965 and is one of the City of Houston’s many boards and commissions. It is described as advisory and composed of 96 openings. Age-Friendly/Livable Community added over 20 new members of APAC. Meeting monthly on the first

*The Commission would oversee the implementation of the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Planning process and would advise and counsel the Mayor and City Council on the City’s progress toward becoming more age-friendly and livable.*
1. PREFACE

The City of Houston ("the City") is a young, vibrant, and diverse city, teeming with opportunity and amenities. While being home to a young and diverse population, the City of Houston is also home to an aging population.

As of 2015, one out of every ten Houstonians is 65 years of age and older. As the number of older Houstonians increases, the demand for services and amenities tailored to this demographic will increase as well.

The City recognizes the importance of anticipating the needs and preferences of older Houstonians and respecting their lifestyle choices by ensuring that access to services and amenities that support a healthy and proactive lifestyle for all Houstonians.

2. SCOPE

This Executive Order is applicable to all City of Houston departments with primary responsibility for housing, mobility, community planning and development, neighborhoods, public safety, health, social services, public infrastructure, culture, recreation, and green space projects and programs.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Age-Friendly/Livable Community: A community that is safe, secure, resilient, and its residents have access to affordable and age-appropriate health care, housing and transportation options, and proactive programs that foster the independence of Houstonians as they age and their ability to actively engage in civic, economic, and social life.

3.2 Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan: The collaboration with the City, AARP, and community partners to promote and prioritize policies, programs, and actions that support the City’s commitment to meeting the needs and preferences of Houstonians as they age now and in the future.

3.3 Mayor’s Advisor on Age-Friendly/Livable Communities: Mayor’s representative and chief advocate for policy matters that impact Houstonians as they age. The Mayor’s Advisor coordinates City resources in the implementation of the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan. The Mayor’s Advisor works closely with local, state, and national advocacy organizations on aging to ensure that the Mayor’s vision, policies, and initiatives are implemented.

4. PURPOSE

4.1. To establish policies and practices that comport with the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan for Houston and with AARP’s national age-friendly/livable community initiatives.
4.2. To facilitate and increase access to services that contribute to and support vibrant living environments and a healthy quality of life for Houstonians as they age.

4.3. To ensure that City facilities and infrastructure meet the needs of Houstonians as they age.

4.4. To improve and increase access to healthy living components such as fresh food options, multimodal mobility options, physical and social activities, communications technology, and cultural and intellectual activities.

4.5. To implement policies and practices that will increase and strengthen access to physical and mental health care services.

4.6. To increase opportunities for senior citizens to remain in their homes and neighborhoods.

4.7. To strengthen and expand programs that provide safety to Houstonians as they age and lessen their vulnerability to crime.

4.8. To collaboratively foster an environment and culture that proactively seeks continuous improvement of the services and amenities that are accessible and available to Houstonians as they age.

5. POLICY

5.1. The City of Houston is committed to becoming an Age-Friendly/Livable Community and endorses the goals of the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan for Houston and AARP’s Age-Friendly/Livable Community initiatives.

5.2. Existing City policies and efforts to further the City’s objective in becoming an Age-Friendly/Livable Community include, but are not limited to:

5.2.1. Operations such as the Area Agency on Aging, the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, Mayor’s Safer Streets initiative, the Houston Police Department’s DWI Task Force, and Harris County Sheriff’s Office Regional Multi-Agency Task Force and Special Task Force on Intersection and Sidewalk Safety for Persons with Disabilities.

5.2.2. Complete Streets and Transportation Plan Executive Order 1-15: adopted on November 1, 2013, directs City efforts to achieve complete streets that consider all users, including people of all ages and abilities who are driving or riding in cars, using mass transit, riding bikes, walking, using wheelchairs, driving or being transported by emergency vehicles, and being served by other users.

5.2.3. Plan Houston, which is the City’s first General Plan and adopted by City Council on September 30, 2015, identifies six (6) goals and actions that align with an Age-Friendly/Livable Community. They are: Nurture Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, Connect People and Places, Champion Learning, Foster an Affordable City, Sustain Quality Infrastructure; and Communicate Clearly and with Transparency.

5.2.4. Complete Communities Action Plans are solutions-oriented platforms developed by community collaboratives and adopted by City Council on August 29, 2018. These action plans help provide greater access to quality affordable housing, transit options, public infrastructure, healthy food choices, recreational amenities, and multi-generational social interaction that support and reinforce a healthy, vibrant, and active age-friendly lifestyle.
6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1. The Mayor’s Advisor on Age-Friendly/Livable Communities will ensure that all departments develop criteria and standards that appropriately include components of the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan in City of Houston plans, programs, and designs as they relate to the following areas.


6.1.2. Housing: Promote and support the availability of affordable, accessible, equitable, age-friendly housing options that include the availability of home repair and modification programs that allow for aging in place.

6.1.3. Public Safety: Promote public safety and security inside and outside of the home that address fire and crime prevention, home safety, elder abuse and mistreatment, financial security, disaster preparedness, and fraud protection.

6.1.4. Health and Community Support: Ensure greater access to home and community-based healthcare services, both physical and mental, and programs that promote wellness.

6.1.5. Communication and Information: Facilitate affordable access to communications technology and training for all Houstonians to continue to stay connected to the City and their neighborhoods, communities, friends, and family as they age.

6.1.6. Open Spaces and Buildings/Social Participation: Emphasize safe, affordable, and accessible indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and increased opportunities for multi-generational social interaction.

6.1.7. Respect and Social Inclusion: Encourage and foster an atmosphere of respect and inclusion for ethnicity, age, and cultural diversity.

6.1.8. Civic Participation, Volunteerism and Employment: Encourage volunteerism and mentorship among all Houstonians and seek the value-added services they have to offer.

7. GENERAL PROVISIONS

7.1. The Department of Neighborhoods Inspections and Public Service Division routinely encounters Houstonians age 65 and older who own and occupy single-family residences that do not meet minimum standards or have been classified as dangerous buildings. On an ongoing and collaborative basis, the Mayor’s Advisor on Age-Friendly/Livable Communities, the Housing and Community Development Department, Health Department, Houston Public Works, Planning and Community Development Department, and the Department of Neighborhoods will coordinate available public and community-based resources that will partner with the age 65 and older homeowner to bring the residence up to standards.

7.2. In collaboration with the Mayor’s Office of Boards and Commissions, the Mayor’s Advisor on Age-Friendly/Livable Communities will submit the names of Houstonians with demonstrated commitment to age-friendly practices and policies as nominees to the Mayor for consideration as mayoral appointees to the Area Planning Advisory Committee (APAC) of the Harris County Area Agency on Aging.
7.3. The Mayor’s Complete Communities initiative, Climate Action Plan, Resilient Houston strategy and other current and future citywide planning efforts will be updated, where appropriate, to reflect the goals and objectives of the Age-Friendly/Livable Community Action Plan.
VISION
Create a Houston that encourages safe and affordable specialized transportation and multimodal mobility options.

GOAL
Make Houston a place with Aging in Place Infrastructure that encourages safe, walkable, accessible, and affordable multimodal mobility options.

Collaborative Organizations:
AARP Houston
Bike Houston
Citizens Transportation Coalition
City of Houston Planning & Development Department
City of Houston Public Works Department
Family Tree’s Concierge Services
Harris County RIDES
Houston B-Cycle
Houston Coalition for Complete Streets
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Houston Police Department
LINK Houston
LYFT
Management Districts
METRO
Super Neighborhood Alliance
Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones
Texas Department of Transportation
Uber
Volunteer Houston
Yellow Cab Houston

Co-Leaders:
AARP Houston
Bike Houston
Citizens Transportation Coalition
Harris County RIDES
LINK Houston
METRO
Texas Department of Transportation

Transportation is one of the two most important livable community domains to Houston AARP members. Nine out of ten Houstonians rely on a vehicle as their primary source of transportation. The inability to drive a vehicle has major implications for a Houstonian’s independence—a disability hinders independence even more. Houston’s older residents are four times as likely to have at least one disability in comparison to the general population.

The AARP Livability Index scores transportation in the City of Houston as a 47, within the middle third and not scoring within the average. Houston is cited as having 28 busses and trains per hour, providing Houston a passing score, however, an accessible system design, convenient, transportation options, and safe streets (based speed limits) all fall below the bottom third of the scoring metric.
ACTIVITIES

**RECOMMENDATION 1:**
Speed limits are context appropriate and enforced, and traffic safety is encouraged.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:**
Traffic signs are visible and easily read.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:**
Multimodal parking facilities are:
  - Available
  - Affordable
  - Physically available with spaces reserved and identified specifically for older adults and people with disabilities (ADA)

**RECOMMENDATION 4:**
Public transportation services are:
  - Available
  - Affordable
  - Accessible for older adults

**RECOMMENDATION 5:**
Provide aging-in-place infrastructure including bus stops, benches, shelters, sidewalks, ramps, crosswalks, bike lanes, and streets that are well designed, constructed, well-lit, safely crossable, and well-maintained.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:**
Aging-in-place infrastructure and specialized transportation options are available for seniors and people with disabilities.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:**
Increase educational programing for specialized transportation options.

**RECOMMENDATION 8:**
Assist the Texas Department of Transportation on:
  - Development and dissemination of their survey: Seniors & Transportation
  - Development of listing/shapefile of senior facilities by facility type
  - Pedestrian/Crash analysis as it pertains to Seniors
**HoUston Age-Friendly/Livable Community**

**Domain:**

**Housing**

**Vision**
A city that promotes affordable, accessible, equitable, and age-friendly housing options.

**Goal**
Availability of home modification programs for aging in place as well as a range of age-friendly housing options.

**Collaborative Organizations:**
- AARP Houston
- Avenue
- City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods
- Greater Houston Builders Association
- Harris County Housing Authority
- Housing and Community Development Department
- Houston Apartment Association
- Houston Contractors Association
- Houston-Galveston Area Council Area on Aging
- Houston-Galveston Area Council – Livable Centers Program
- Houston Habitat for Humanity
- Houston Housing Authority
- Houston Police Department
- Houston Tool Bank
- Local Initiatives Support Coalition
- New Hope Housing, Inc.
- Super Neighborhood Alliance
- Texas Housers
- VN TeamWork

**Co-Leaders:**
- AARP Houston
- Avenue
- Houston Apartment Association
- Houston Habitat for Humanity
- New Hope Housing, Inc.
- Texas Housers
Assessed by the Livability Index Score, Houston leads many communities in terms of accessibility and affordability in the housing sector, scoring a 67. Houstonians are able to enjoy homes that are both near greenspaces and access points for transportation.

The ability to age in place is important for Houstonians who were born and raised in the same neighborhood. During the planning process, the community provided recommendations that ranged from promoting Homefit programming, supporting local neighborhood events, and creating a resident tenant’s council.

ACTIVITIES

RECOMMENDATION 1:
Increase affordable housing options.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
Promote and distribute programs to help Seniors age in place, including: Homefit and program of installing bars, ramps, elevators, lifts, alarms etc.

RECOMMENDATION 3:
Advocate housing policies to encourage more housing options including universal design, tax credits (eliminating state representative letter), changing building codes to allow for more variety of housing, smaller housing, and middle housing.

RECOMMENDATION 4:
Create comprehensive list of affordable housing.

RECOMMENDATION 5:
Create comprehensive public list of citations against apartments.

RECOMMENDATION 6:
Support and encourage neighborhood pride and investment through community clean-ups and National Night Out.

RECOMMENDATION 7:
Assess the feasibility of a City of Houston Tenants Council.

RECOMMENDATION 8:
Provide letters of support for affordable housing initiatives/projects (based on pre-approval).

RECOMMENDATION 9:
Provide a letter of support to The Montrose Center.
DOMAIN: PUBLIC SAFETY

VISION
Assurance of public safety and security in all aspects of life, such as crime, homeland security, cyber-security, emergency preparedness, and personal exploitation and neglect.

GOAL
Older adults want to be safe, both inside and outside of the home. Through collaborative initiatives and multi-disciplinary teams, we will address fire and crime prevention, home safety, elder abuse and mistreatment, as well as financial security, and fraud protection.

Collaborative Organizations:
Adult Protective Services
Better Business Bureau Education Foundation
City of Houston – Harris County Area Agency on Aging
Harris County District Attorney
Harris County Elder Abuse Fatality Review Team
Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
Harris County Senior Justice Assessment Center
H-Fast (Houston Abuse Specialist Team)
Houston Fire Department
Houston-Galveston Transportation Safety Program
Houston Police Department
Management Districts
METRO
Sheltering Arms
Southwest Management District
Super Neighborhood Alliance
Texas Elder Abuse Mistreatment Institute
United Way Texas 211
University of Texas Health

Co-Leaders:
Adult Protective Services
Harris County Office of Emergency Management
Houston Fire Department
Houston Police Department
Public safety remains a top concern for Houston residents. The planning team invited multiple organizations to assist in drafting recommendations, including Adult Protective Services, the Houston Police Department, the Houston Fire Department, and numerous organizations dedicated to protecting the general welfare of Houston’s older adults.

Recommendations from this domain included increased support for Senior Citizens Crime Prevention, improving the accuracy of the STEAR registry, and supporting local initiatives like the “Healthy Homes-Fall Prevention” program.

ACTIVITIES

RECOMMENDATION 1:
Support and increase Senior Citizens Crime Prevention Initiative which provides seniors with home safety prevention equipment, e.g., locks, alarms, lighting, batteries, and smoke detectors.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
Support and increase public awareness campaign for elder abuse and neglect including educational programming on financial crime, fraud, and scams.

RECOMMENDATION 3:
Improve the effectiveness and accuracy of the STEAR registry.

RECOMMENDATION 4:
Support the Senior Justice Assessment Center (SJAC).

RECOMMENDATION 5:
Support the Heat Prevention “Beat the Heat” & “Healthy Homes-Fall Prevention” programming.

RECOMMENDATION 6:
Explore the feasibility of recontinuing the Gatekeeper program.

Older adults want to be safe, both inside and outside of the home.
VISION
Access to home and community-based services for both community support and health programs that promote wellness and active aging.

GOAL
To provide greater access for healthcare services, both physical and mental, to all older adults in the City of Houston

Collaborative Organizations:
AARP Houston
Alzheimer’s Association
Baker Ripley
Baylor College of Medicine
Care For Elders
City of Houston Health Department
City of Houston – Harris County Area Agency on Aging
Family Tree Home Care
Harris County AAA Aged & Disabled Resource Center
Harris County Public Health
Houston Methodist
Interfaith Care Partners
Interfaith Ministries – ERJCC
Legacy Community Health Center
MD Anderson Cancer Center
The Montrose Center
Settegast Clinic
Meals on Wheels
United Way 211
University of Texas Consortium on Aging
University of Texas Health

Co-Leaders:
AARP Houston
City of Houston Health Department
Harris County Public Health
Legacy Community Health Center
The Montrose Center
University of Texas Health
RECOMMENDATION 1:
Create a user-friendly map for Houston senior centers.
  • (e.g. Coalition for Homeless maps and Parks for All Ages map based on walkability and features).

RECOMMENDATION 2:
Create a “Primer” or training on how and where to find information and create a “FAQ” or Tool-kit.

RECOMMENDATION 3:
Create awareness around the “front door” intake and assessment lines and also systems coordination between the providers for older adult and caregiver service, including Harris County Area Agency on Aging/Care Connection Aging and Disability Resource Center, United Way’s 211, and Baker Ripley intake line.
  • Standards to look for and best practices in caregiving

RECOMMENDATION 4:
Allow people of all ages living in Houston to find answers to, “Where do I go and who do I call to be healthy and exercise my sense of purpose?”

RECOMMENDATION 5:
Identify underserved pockets of the community where calls to key intake lines are not being received and create targeted outreach initiatives to increase overall reach.

RECOMMENDATION 6:
Offer aging training from the HGEC/UTH Consortium model to direct service staff in FQHCs, clinics, and providers in Houston.

RECOMMENDATION 7:
Ensure programs like AAA’s Care Transition Program and Home Plate (Meals on Wheels) are available to those who need it most.

RECOMMENDATION 8:
Improve transition of care by linking discharging hospital patients that do not have immediate/significant medical needs to community centers and other social opportunities in their community.

RECOMMENDATION 9:
Examine mental health needs among elderly adults such as depression, suicide, and memory loss:
  • Increase options for addressing them
  • Advocate for more access to prevention and treatment programs

Health in the City of Houston is scored at a 56 by the Livability Index Score. The AARP Houston 2016 Age-Friendly Community Survey found that survey respondents list respectful and helpful staff and access to a variety of professionals and specialists as a top priority. Respondents are particularly concerned that hospital staff are respectful, facilities are accessible, and home health is affordable.

Respondents also expressed a want for well-maintained facilities and conveniently located emergency centers. During the planning phase recommendations such as creating a map of senior centers, creating an older adult based FAQ document, and improving transition care were items of importance.
VISION
Access to communications technology and other resources so older residents can connect with their community, friends, and family.

GOAL
To facilitate the provision of information and means of communication to all.

Collaborative Organizations:
- 311
- AARP
- Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries
- Care Connection Aging and Disability Resource Center
- Care for Elders
- City of Houston Administration and Regulatory Affairs
- City of Houston – Harris County Area Agency on Aging
- City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department
- Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Assistance
- Houston-Galveston Area Council Area Agency on Aging
- Houston Public Library
- United Way 2-1-1
- Volunteer Houston

Co-Leaders:
- 311
- Care Connection Aging and Disability Resource Center
- Care for Elders
- City of Houston Administration and Regulatory Affairs
- City of Houston – Harris County Area Agency on Aging

The largest community need gaps identified by the AARP survey is community information that is delivered in person to those with difficulties leaving their home as well as clearly displayed information with large lettering. It is likely that a significant number of the population 65 and over will require messaging that is not only clearly displayed but available in other languages due to 30 percent speaking a language other than English at home.

During the planning phase, programming providing computer literacy, disseminating a Senior Guidance directory, and creating an Age-Friendly/Livable Community Facebook page were recommendations brought to the table.
ACTIVITIES

RECOMMENDATION 1: Provide ongoing education and information:
• Share/disseminate information daily, weekly, monthly, etc. depending on the information
• Promote community newspapers and free publications such as Senior News

RECOMMENDATION 2: Provide computer literacy and information technology classes for older adults.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Produce and disseminate Senior Guidance directory.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Create and maintain an Age-Friendly/Livable Community Facebook page.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Develop and maintain Age-Friendly/Livable Community Website.
• Develop a senior listserv similar to “Nextdoor”
• Identify and disseminate trusted and relevant sources of information

RECOMMENDATION 6: Create a Senior Communication Volunteer Network using trained “Ambassadors” and identify a recognizable senior advocate or champion from Civic Clubs/Super Neighborhood Councils, service organizations, faith-based institutions, residences, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Identify senior advocates or spokespersons.

The largest community need gaps identified by the AARP survey is community information that is delivered in person to those with difficulties leaving their home.
DOMAIN: OPEN SPACES & BUILDINGS/SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

VISION
Availability of safe and accessible recreational facilities and opportunities for social interaction.

GOAL
To provide availability of safe and accessible recreational facilities and opportunities for social interaction.

Collaborative Organizations:
AARP Houston
Bike Houston
Buffalo Bayou Partnership
City of Houston Health Department
City of Houston Parks & Recreation Department
Harris County Public Health
Houston BCycle
Houston Coalition for Complete Streets
Houston-Galveston Area Council Area Agency on Aging
Houston Parks Board
International Management District
Kinder Institute
Near Northside Management District
Recipe for Success Foundation
Urban Harvest
Westchase Management District
YMCA

Co-Leaders:
BikeHouston
City of Houston Health Department
City of Houston Parks & Recreation Department
The planning teams made the decision to combine both Open Spaces & Buildings, which scored a 41 on the Livability Index and Social Participation that scored a 35 of the Livability Index, due to the similarities of the recommendations and the parallel work of the individual collaborative organizations.

During the planning phase, the domain team learned that Houstonians of all ages desire beautiful spaces to live in. Places filled with trees and flowers, parks that are accessible regardless of disabilities, and areas to talk and to rest.

These areas reduce stress, encourage exercise, and foster community cohesion. Recommendations from this domain range from creating a space for urban farming, identifying multiservice centers, and improving access to facilities that provide older adult programming.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:**
Identify and disseminate information regarding multiservice centers, parks, and recreational spaces in the City of Houston.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:**
Create places & spaces for urban farming and gardening to promote food access and food security in conjunction with multigenerational and multiethnic programming.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:**
Develop and promote local resources and programs both in outdoor spaces and in buildings that encourage active aging.

- Improve active transportation access to facilities that allow seniors to engage in sports and fitness activities

**RECOMMENDATION 4:**
Develop an online “Life-course” pilot program allowing older adults to share their personal life experiences.

- Local AARP Podcast
- Exist on AARP Houston website

**RECOMMENDATION 5:**
Identify and improve the convenience, safety, and accessibility of parks and recreational spaces including:

- Lighting
- Walkability
- Accessibility
- Usability
- Connectivity
- High comfort bikeways

**RECOMMENDATION 6:**
Promote multigenerational, multicultural, and multiethnic interactions that inspires dialogue.

*Houstonians of all ages desire beautiful spaces to live in.*
DOMAIN:
RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

VISION
Programs that promote ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as multigenerational interaction and dialogue.

GOAL
To foster an atmosphere promoting respect, inclusion, and diversity.

Collaborative Organizations:
AARP Houston
Adult Protective Services
BakerRipley
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
Boat People SOS
Chinese Community Center
City of Houston – Harris County Area Agency on Aging
City of Houston Urban Gardens
Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center
Filipino Lions Club
Harris County Sheriff’s Department
Houston Fire Department
Houston Independent School District
Houston ToolBank
Independent Consultant
Super Neighborhood Alliance
United Way 211
Urban Harvest
Volunteer Houston

Co-Leaders:
BakerRipley
Houston Independent School District
Independent Consultant

Houstonians have always shown respect for each other, especially after the wake of Hurricane Harvey. In the immediate aftermath neighbors of every culture and of every generation came together to provide assistance to whomever was in need. This spirit of inclusion continues to exist today and is represented by the collaborative organizations leading this domain.

Recommendations from this domain include strengthening networks that promote social inclusion, identify causes of social isolation, and develop a toolkit for providers that educates on cultural and intergenerational inclusion.
ACTIVITIES

RECOMMENDATION 1:
Build and strengthen networks and collaborations that promote inclusion and diversity in cultural and intergenerational activities.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
Identify causes of social isolation and identify assets in neighborhoods where seniors have access to social participation.
- Possibly develop a pilot program project
- Develop best practices

RECOMMENDATION 3:
Develop education, training and communications efforts that promote respect and a better understanding of older adults’ presence, and contributions in the community.

RECOMMENDATION 4:
Develop a toolkit to providers that will help integrate cultural and intergenerational inclusion and provide cultural competency.
- Develop a tool-kit for providers that include cultural and geographical sensitivities

Houstonians have always shown respect for each other.
DOMAIN: CIVIC PARTICIPATION, VOLUNTEERISM & EMPLOYMENT

VISION
Paid work and volunteer activities for older residents and opportunities to engage in the formulation of policies relevant to their lives.

GOAL
To add value to the wise worker. Promote evidence-based programming to support civic participation and employment programs.

Collaborative Organizations:
AARP Houston
AARP Senior Community Service Employment Program
Chinese Community Center – Senior Employment Program
City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods
City of Houston – Harris County Area Agency on Aging
City of Houston Volunteer Initiatives Program
Executive Service Group
Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions
Houston Association of Volunteer Administrators
Houston Food Bank
Independent Consultant
Interfaith Ministries
League of Women Voters
Mi Familia Vota
RSVP & Telephone Reassurance
SERJobs
Super Neighborhood Alliance
Volunteer Houston

Co-Leaders:
AARP Senior Community Service Employment Program
Independent Consultant
Mi Familia Vota
Super Neighborhood Alliance
Volunteer Houston

The planning team centered their work around the concept that “Community engagement is a lifetime commitment.” With this in mind, collaborative organizations assessed how the lives of older adults could be improved in terms increasing the levels of civic participation, volunteerism, and employment.

Recommendations from this domain range from promoting a message that older adults are good investments to promoting programs that encourage volunteerism.
ACTIVITIES

RECOMMENDATION 1:
Develop and promote programs that encourage civic participation, including encouraging voter communication and voter turnout, increasing the number of attendees at candidate forums and encouraging easier avenues for voter participation; hold politicians accountable for senior issues.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
Develop an information/communication network system that utilizes both online links and a telephone call-in number for older adults to receive and give needed information about voting, volunteerism, employment, and a number of other uses.

RECOMMENDATION 3:
Promote flexible work arrangements to help employees maintain work-life balance, especially those who provide care for their spouses or relatives.

RECOMMENDATION 4:
Promote an education and marketing program supported by research from AARP National that promotes the message that older workers are good investments.

RECOMMENDATION 5:
Develop and promote programs that encourage volunteerism.
- Including volunteer interest organizations and human resource organizations for volunteer collaborations
- Address transportation barriers for older adults that want to volunteer

“Community engagement is a lifetime commitment.”


We would like to thank the many individuals who volunteered their time and efforts to create the Houston AARP Age-Friendly/Livable Community plan for the City of Houston that is inclusive of all needs, lifestyles, and points of view.

Their efforts were documented, discussed, and weighed to map a comprehensive plan that accurately represents the needs of each individual. Their continued commitment drives us to improve livability and opportunity for the residents of the City of Houston. In addition, we appreciate the leadership of the individuals below in the preparation of this report:

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AARP Texas

*In Memoriam, to AARP Associate State Director Marisol Rodriguez. Her efforts provided a pathway to success. Her dedication to the community will not be forgotten.*
The AARP Network of Age-Friendly States & Communities

an institutional affiliate of the World Health Organization’s
Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities & Communities®

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE

City of Houston, Texas

has created an action plan for being more age-friendly under the criteria established by AARP and the World Health Organization and is renewed as a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

THIS CERTIFICATION IS VALID UNTIL
August 27, 2022

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