AARP Livable Communities Membership Application

Section 1: Community Details

June 1, 2021

Maryland

College Park

32159

9%

Community Governance – City

Community Type – Urban/Small Town/Other-Culturally and Ethnically diverse University Town

Elected Official - Patrick Wojahn, Mayor

8400 Baltimore Ave, Suite 375 College Park, Maryland 20740

Community Contact – Robert Thurston, AARP Livable Workgroup Chair

Mr. Thurston will act as the leader of the AARP Livable Communities Workgroup for College Park and is committed to its 5-year process. He will be responsible for leading the work and the application into the Network. Mr. Thurston will work with elected Officials and City Staff to build and maintain commitment to the shared vision of a livable community for
Having experience of 20+ years of organizational management and facilitator skills that will be utilized to develop partnerships and collaboration to achieve positive outcomes. Mr. Thurston is currently involved in various community activities, such as Lakeland Civic Association President, City Ethics Commissioner, Senior Advisory Committee, Neighbors Helping Neighbors Board of Directors, and he will continue to chair the AARP workgroup.

Section 2: Community Activities, Engagements and Collaborations

Briefly describe your existing community policies, programs and services that are targeted toward older people. Please identify how your community plans to become more age-friendly. (250-300 words required)

The City of College Park has a Department of Youth, Family and Senior Services. The Director of this department reports to the City Manager.

Senior Services were initiated in 1974 to service two subsidized housing sites for older adults. Over time, services have expanded to include all City of College Park residents aged 62 and older to enhance quality of life, support independence and advocate self-determination. Case Management services provide residents with individualized advocacy. Additionally, there is a concentration on physical and mental wellness, socialization, and emotional support. Supporting activities include an annual health and wellness day, day trips, physical movement and brain boosting activities, endeavors in art, interactive game dates and information sessions. Transportation is provided that prioritizes medical care and shopping. Additional programming targets older adults with a desire to develop and implement a personal action plan to maximize capabilities in aging.

In 2017, a community survey for those 55 and older was completed by the National Research Center in Boulder, Colorado. Subsequently the Mayor appointed a Senior Advisory Committee to encourage and support positive aging by creating a pathway for senior citizens to receive services that enable them to age successfully in the community. Their focus has been on accessibility and equality in various domains to encourage social
inclusion, respect, and communication. The committee supported Neighbors Helping Neighbors, a volunteer organization helping older residents with transportation, household chores, friendly visits and phone check-ins and it partners with local organizations for other services. The city sanctioned the effort and provided funds, an address and phone line for Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

Several of the partners that work in cooperation with the City include: College Park Arts Exchange (crafts, performances, dance/yoga classes); Explorations on Aging (annual senior art show, afternoon teas, informative programming) Route 1 Corridor Conversations (monthly lecture series on a variety of cultural and educational topics); Golden ID program with the University of Maryland; programs set up by the College Park Recreation Board; College Park Meals on Wheels; as well as collaborative relationships with neighboring community Aging in Place groups (Hyattsville, University Park), and Greenbelt Seniors Programs Director.

The Senior Advisory Committee provided a recommendation to the City Council that the City participate in the AARP Livability Certification program. An Initial Livability Workgroup has been formed and presently includes members from the Senior Advisory Committee, the College Park Youth & Family Services Director, and the College Park Director of Planning & Community Development.

The city was recently awarded a $60,000 grant from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) for consultant services to assist the Livability Workgroup with the planning phase required by the Network. A community engagement plan will be prepared after acceptance into the Network followed by the livability and asset assessment, mission and vision statements and action plan.

How will older adults be involved in the community’s efforts to become more age-friendly? (250-300 words required)

Inclusivity, transparency, and effective communication practices are priorities for both the livability workgroup and the consultant as the age-
A friendly action plan is researched and developed. We believe that accurately assessing the needs of the stakeholders is essential. To that end, it is incumbent upon us to engage as many older adults as possible in the development of our goals and programs.

There are currently nine neighborhood associations in the City of College Park: Berwyn District, Calvert Hills, Camden, College Park Estates, Lakeland, North College Park, Old Town, West College Park and Yarrow. Through collaboration with those neighborhood associations, we can identify and engage senior citizens living in those communities. While all communities have some common needs like transportation, it is crucial we also identify needs that are unique to a specific area as we work toward making those areas more age friendly.

Collaborative outreach efforts will include, but not be limited to, focus groups representing each community, listening sessions during regularly scheduled civic meetings, individual interviews reflecting the age and ethnic diversity in each geographic area. Additionally, a survey/needs assessment will be developed and distributed to civic associations, faith-based groups, senior housing units, Meals on Wheels and Neighbors Helping Neighbors. Our survey distribution plan would also utilize monthly city publications, local newspapers and the city website.

Seniors are involved in many ways volunteering with, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, City committees, Meals on Wheels, Girls and Boys Clubs, intergenerational tutoring, sharing expertise and abilities, friendly calls to shut-ins; transportation assistance, North College Park Community Library, informants for Corridor Conversations, collaborations with UMD research studies, University student-senior partnerships including participation in UMD Community Engagement activities and UMD music, art, and sporting events.

How will the efforts to become more age-friendly increase collaboration and coordination among relevant community agencies and departments? (250-300 words required)
Building a “livable community” or “community for all ages” as referenced in the AARP Roadmap to Livability, by its very nature, demands communication, collaboration and planning with a myriad of city and county departments, agencies and individuals. Livability encompasses where and how people work, play, do business and serve their respective communities. Thus, efforts to make those communities more age-friendly, requires a broad-based approach. Our Livability plan is to initially focus on the domains involving transportation, housing, communication, community support and health services and social participation. By establishing sub-workgroups in each domain that include persons who represent community agencies and departments, communication and collaboration will be enhanced.

Specifically, collaboration and representation from local agencies and city departments in our domain workgroups will assist our age-friendly efforts in the following ways. Communication initiatives such as monthly progress reports published on the City’s website and in the newspaper, "Here and Now", will keep residents informed. These digital communication efforts will be emailed to civic associations, faith-based groups and appropriate City department heads requesting their feedback. Quarterly zoom meetings with relevant department heads will be organized for input and discussion of workgroup goals.

The domains selected by the City, especially transportation, housing and health services, will necessarily involve City and County departments charged with addressing these issues. The efforts to become more age-friendly will require collaboration with these departments to highlight the impact of what they do for persons of all ages. We will seek partnerships with other City Boards and Committees such as the Recreation Board and Committee for a Better Environment and strengthen relationships with the City’s Department of Youth, Family and Senior Services, Planning and Community Development, Economic Development, and Communication and Events. Reaching out to key stakeholders, we will include the College Park – University of Maryland joint ventures CPCUP (College Park City University Partnership) and Terrapin Development Company. The many outreach efforts of the University of Maryland such as, Good Neighbor Day, Maryland Day, and College Park Scholars offer many opportunities to be
exploited for the benefit of seniors (for example, training and help with computers and artificial intelligence programs (Alexa). Seniors have a lot to offer the community and collaboration will expand everyone's horizons in order to promote inclusivity.

Section 3: Network Membership

*Your answers to the following questions will help us complete your community's membership in the age-friendly network and enable AARP to better understand how to support the network.*

1-a. What motivated your community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities (100 words minimum)

Recently, our neighbor, the City of Hyattsville, Maryland, applied for and was accepted into AARP’s Livability Certification program. At that time, several members of the CP Senior Advisory Committee began tracking the Hyattsville livability workgroup’s progress through the certification process with the thought that College Park might embrace a similar initiative.

Concurrently, the City of College Park made a commitment to actively work with residents and local advocates to make our city an age-friendly place to live. An inclusive community that encourages and embodies engagement, collaboration and equity throughout our city is our deliberate goal. To this end, the City of College Park’s most recent strategic plan includes key objectives and results dedicated to improving livability for people of all ages over the next five years. Additionally, in September 2020, the City of College Park adopted a resolution outlining our pledge to pursue membership in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Membership will support our goals of creating services vital to the City’s growing aging population.
The City of College Park has made a commitment to actively work with residents and local advocates to make our city an age-friendly place to live. An inclusive community that encourages and embodies engagement, collaboration and equity throughout our city is our deliberate goal. The City of College Park’s most recent strategic plan includes key objectives and results dedicated to improving livability for people of all ages over the next five years. Additionally, in September 2020, the City adopted a resolution outlining our pledge to pursue membership in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Membership will support our goals of creating services vital to the City’s growing aging population.

Through participation in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, the City of College Park intends to:

· Support age-friendly policies, practices and programming in outdoor spaces and recreation, housing, transportation, social participation and inclusion, civic participation, and community support.

· Convene a work group of stakeholders through the City’s Seniors Committee to oversee these efforts and commit to continuous improvement.

· Engage the community, particularly older persons, in a community livability assessment process and inventory.

· Adopt an Age-Friendly Action Plan.

· Implement, evaluate, and track the progress of the Action Plan.

1-b. If you have consulted with an AARP State office or the national AARP Livable Communities team to discuss enrollment, please provide that person's name, title and e-mail address or phone number.

Hank Greenberg, Maryland State Director-AARP Maryland, HGgreenberg@aarp.org; Tammy Bresnahan, Advocacy Director AARP MD, TBresnahan@aarp.org; Joy Hall, Associate Director AARP MD PG, JHall@aarp.org; Jennifer Holz, Associate Director AARP MD, JHolz@aarp.org;

2. What aspect of your community’s current or intended age-friendly work could be useful to other communities in the network? (100 words minimum)
We have a desire to help people remain in their homes as long as they can by creating housing options and home modification. We would like to see College Park become a retirement destination because of University activities (theater, sporting events, classes) and ease of access to D.C. culture, museums, etc. We stress respect, diversity and inclusion for seniors and all age groups.

We have successfully implemented action plans that are unique to College Park but capable of adaptation and implementation in similar cities. Programs like Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Meals on Wheels, Corridor Conversations webinars certainly benefit many seniors and can be easily adapted for other cities. As new and exciting approaches to each domain area are developed by the workgroups, they will be available to the entire network of age-friendly cities.

Website URL
www.collegeparkmd.gov

Twitter
twitter.com/collegepark_md

Facebook
Facebook.com/collegeparkmd

I have read and understand the requirements for my community to become a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, including the need to conduct a community assessment; develop and acquire approval of an action plan; implement the plan; submit an annual best practice and provide periodic updates, including a five-year progress report.

Robert Thurston