State: New Hampshire
Community Name: Manchester
Population Size: 115644
Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 21
Community Structure: City
Other:
Community Type: Urban, Mixed, Suburban (offices, apartments and shops)
Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment Name: Joyce Craig
Title: Mayor
Office Mailing Address: One City Hall Plaza, Manchester, NH 03101
Community Contact Name: Sean Parr
Email: 
Position: Chair, Senior Services City Commission
Telephone: 
Role: Dr. Parr is the Chair of Manchester's Senior Services Commission, a committee of community volunteers, appointed to a three-year term by the City's Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Dr. Parr has organized a Drafting Committee that will be developing the City's Action Plan over the next months. This committee comprises Senior Services members, the head of the City's Senior Center (the Cashin Center), community volunteers, and city staff from the Planning, Health, and Youth Services Departments.

Older Adult Involvement: We have data from a 2017 survey carried out by the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC). This survey engaged deeply with our older adult community in Manchester. The SNHPC team visited several areas within our community, engaging municipal staff, organizational board members, general citizens, and other stakeholders. SNHPC staff led conversations with these community members on issues that affect both seniors and millennials and were focused among the following topic areas: Transportation & Connections; Recreation & Engagement; Housing; and Business & Economic Development. The SNHPC carried out listening sessions and gathered data from a comprehensive survey in providing information on our city's friendliness to all age groups. As we move forward, we plan to continue to engage with the community by hosting additional listening sessions, building on our robust membership at the Cashin Senior Center, and engaging with
older adults across the city. We are also interested in an interest in reaching an elder population that is racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse. We intend to circulate our draft plan as widely as possible to solicit feedback and input from our senior population and other stakeholders. Additionally, we have important sources of data and community-wide goals in both Manchester’s 2021 City Master Plan and the 2019 Greater Manchester Community Health Needs Assessment. And several of the members of our AARP Age-Friendly Drafting Committee are older adults who are, or have had been, leaders in Manchester on a variety of levels—in their own neighborhoods, at the Cashin Senior Center, on the Senior Services Commission, in social activism, civic engagement, community service, and beyond.

Increasing Collaboration and Coordination:

Our efforts will be coordinated by a Drafting Committee made up of both older adults who come with important domains of experience, as noted previously, and leaders from various city departments, including the Cashin Senior Center, the Board of Aldermen, the Health Department, the Office of Youth Services, the Planning and Community Development Department, the Mayor’s Office, and Human Resources. Already in our first meetings, these representatives have been collaborating in a synergistic manner, bringing together ideas from a wealth of knowledge across our city. We plan to circulate our draft to leaders across Manchester’s city departments, as well as to leaders in our business community. We are fortunate to also have the Executive Director of Stay, Work, Play NH on our Drafting Committee, providing us with an expertise that will prove essential to the vision of our Age-Friendly action plan.

AARP Team Member Contact Info:

Todd Fahey NH Executive Director

William (Bill) Armbruster Livable Communities Dept, Senior Advisor Network of Age Friendly States and Communities

Most Instructive Area of Work:

Our current plan is to address five of the domains of livability: Transportation, Housing, Health Services and Community Supports, Communication and Information, and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings. We hope to structure our plan by approaching these domains all through the lens of increasing social connectivity. In other words, the efforts in each domain will be unified through a single purpose—to enhance social connection in our community. It is certainly possible that this approach could be useful as a model that focuses on a sense of social connection and community that works to counter the isolation not only of our older population, but also of many people of all ages, particularly because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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