Membership Application
To join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities
and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities

• If you have questions while completing this form, please email livable@aarp.org
• If you need additional space for answering the questions you may add an additional sheet of paper

Section 1: COMMUNITY DETAILS
APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE:
NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: Bismarck
STATE: North Dakota
POPULATION SIZE: 74,632
PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 23%
NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Mayor Steve Bakken
OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 221 N. Fifth Street, P.O. Box 5503, Bismarck, ND 58506-5503

Section 2: COMMUNITY CONTACT for the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities
• The community contact is the local staff member or volunteer who is primarily responsible for carrying out the community-level work — it is not the responsible AARP staff member.

NAME: Ben Ehreth
POSITION: Community Development Director
EMAIL ADDRESS: [redacted]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [redacted]

Please describe the named person’s role in the city or community’s age-friendly initiative:

Ben leads the department responsible for planning and development of the built environment of the community. He will be the contact person for the Network of Age Friendly Communities and provides the leadership and guidance for the development of the communities comprehensive plan "Together 2045" which will align age-friendly perspectives into the goals, policies, practices, and recommendations of the City of Bismarck, in relation to the built environment.

The person named above agrees to be subscribed to the AARP Livable Communities Weekly e-Newsletter, which is one of the primary ways we share useful news and resources. To add additional subscribers, type their names and email addresses into below. Once this application is processed, a subscription confirmation message will be sent so the individual can confirm that they want to subscribe. To subscribe today, follow the link above or visit AARP.org/Livable-Subscribe.
Section 3: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, ENGAGEMENTS and COLLABORATIONS

1) Please provide a brief summary of the community policies, programs and services that are targeted toward older people and how the community plans to become more age-friendly.

Our community has pursued a variety of different ordinance and process changes over the years to make housing more affordable, multi-modal travel easier and safer, outdoor open and gathering spaces more accessible, as well as communication and civic participation easier. Specifically, some of these examples include but are not limited to: reduction in residential setback distances; reduction in roadway width standards; the creation of an accessory dwelling unit ordinance; park/open space requirements for new residential development; reduction and modification of parking requirements; sidewalk installation requirement; Public Transportation staff participating in review of new developments; availability of virtual public meeting attendance options; and new platforms to exchange information on-line for new developments in the community. In addition, we plan on utilizing the comprehensive plan update to identify other barriers and opportunities to enhance livability for persons of all ages in the community.

2) How will the community engage and involve older people in the process of becoming a more age-friendly?
The update of the comprehensive plan will be the key effort to engage older adults in assisting our community becoming more age-friendly. A robust public engagement strategy has been developed to engage different segments of the community. Specifically related to older adults, the North Dakota AARP State Director will be part of an Advisory Council developed to help guide the creation of the plan. Additionally, a series of focus groups will be employed to help provide feedback and suggestions for changes to community goals, policies, or practices to help enhance livability for all ages. It is anticipated that focus groups for both older adults and younger students will specifically be pursued to gather input and recommendations.

3) Briefly describe the mechanisms the community has or is planning to put in place to facilitate collaborative planning and implementation between different agencies and departments.

The naming of the Bismarck’s comprehensive plan “Together 2045” was intentional as the effort brings together different organizations within the community to collectively plan for our future. Too often, well intentioned, departments and organizations move in directions to better the community from their individual perspectives, however this can lead to the creation of silos. It is believed the power of collaboration can magnify individual organizational efforts, or at the very least ensure that different relevant agencies are not contradicting one another. The functional elements of the comprehensive plan will include many different areas which extend beyond the traditional scope of what the City of Bismarck has performed but which help enhance quality of life across the community. Together 2045 is envisioned to bring together all relevant community groups to collectively work towards making the City more livable for persons of all ages.
Section 4: NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

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

4) How do you hope to contribute to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?

We hope to not only be able to learn from other network members but also provide any information and best practices we have discovered in Bismarck. The City of Bismarck has a history of planning for age-friendly environments. Recently, a strategic plan was completed for the community with 6 focus areas. One of the focus areas is fostering a community for All Ages and All wages. Specific goals and objectives within this section of the strategic plan may be helpful (https://www.bismarcknd.gov/1360/Strategic-Plan). We would be happy to share our experiences with actions/ordinance such as those referenced in Section 3 question 1 of this application. Additionally, public engagement efforts identified within the City of Bismarck Comprehensive Plan update may be helpful for other communities to consider.

5) What motivated your community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities?

We were introduced to the program by North Dakota State AARP Director Josh Askvig. In learning more about the program, the efforts AARP is pursuing related to livable communities for persons of all ages appear to align with the goals and initiatives the City of Bismarck has established.
6) Provide a digital file or link of a logo or other image that represents your community and for which you have reprint rights. The image resolution should be at least 72 dpi. As an example of an image, here's ours: