



Membership Application

To join the **AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities** and **WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities**

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE: 10/1/2015

1) COMMUNITY DETAILS

NAME OF THE COMMUNITY: Town of Matthews

STATE: North Carolina

POPULATION SIZE: 30,008 (2014 Census)

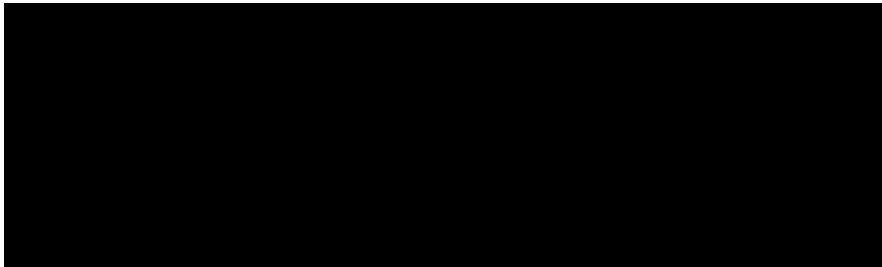
PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS ABOVE THE AGE OF 60: 5% over 65 (2013)

NAME AND TITLE OF THE ELECTED OFFICIAL SIGNING THE OFFICIAL COMMITMENT: Mayor Jim Taylor

OFFICE ADDRESS OF THE SIGNER: 232 Matthews Station Street, Matthews, NC 28105

2) COMMUNITY CONTACT* FOR THE AARP NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY 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.*



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

Ms. Thompson will be the liaison representing the Town and its interactions between the mayor and the Age Friendly Committee that has recently formed. She assists in scheduling meetings between the mayor, Age Friendly Committee and AARP local representatives. Ms. Thompson is assisting in preparing materials for the official AARP application to the North Carolina office, is assisting with developing a resolution for the Matthews mayor to sign at a Board of Commissioner meeting October 12, and is working with local AARP contacts to develop media releases and other promotional materials.

(You can add an additional sheet of paper if needed.)

3) THE COMMUNITY'S AGE-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES TO DATE

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.

The Town of Matthews completed a study In 2008, "Planning, Aging & Matthews: A Look At Matthews' Preparation for an Aging Population". The report directly quotes AARP's definition of a livable community as "one that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options, which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life." The study goes on to say that creating this type of community is quite similar to creating a livable community for people of all ages. Already, Matthews is actively planning and/or building several new developments for the elder population and incorporating accessory dwelling units as a housing option. The Town is also active in connecting areas with greenways and sidewalks. Earlier this year, the Town adopted a Composite Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan to provide another mode of getting around other than by car. For those who still drive, the Levine Senior Center offers safety driver programs. The Center also assists in providing other forms of transportation and volunteer driver programs. The Town's Farmers Market offers locally grown items to promote healthy eating, and the Matthews Help Center provides food/nutrition services to residents. Again, the Levine Senior Center provides valuable health and wellness classes, as well. The Town's Crews Recreation Center is another great resource for cardiovascular exercise, as is the local YMCA branch.

4) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How will the community engage and involve older people in the process of becoming a more age-friendly?

The Town has been and will continue to work with AARP and the Age Friendly Committee to develop a thorough list of stakeholders comprised of representatives from various organizations (adult daycares, hospitals, disability advocacy groups, independent living facilities, local councils of government, senior centers, better business bureaus, local universities) in addition to Town staff. The stakeholder list is still expanding as we seek to attract more parties to take an interest in what can be done to make Matthews more age-friendly than it is currently. Already there is an event scheduled at the Levine Senior Center on October 15 with our mayor - a "community conversation" welcoming thoughts on how Matthews can become the best place to age in the country. We are currently working with local AARP staff to develop a press release announcing the Town's intent to become an age-friendly community, and we are composing a resolution to be presented at our October 12 Board of Commissioners meeting. We are also intending to have representatives from AARP, the Levine Senior Center and possibly one of our independent living developments, Plantation Estates, present at the meeting to show unity and support behind this effort. Local AARP staff are also working with us to collaborate on a video featuring our mayor, as well as coverage in local media through op-ed pieces, radio interviews, blogs, AARP Magazine, etc. The goal is to draw as much attention as possible to this announcement and to invite the public to be a part of this community effort.

5) CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

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.

Moving forward, the Town will continue to implement plans to make Matthews attractive and appealing across the age spectrum. The Town is proud to provide outdoor recreation areas within half a mile of residences in the town limits. We boast a thriving downtown with emphasis on historic building preservation and economic development to attract a diversity of businesses, goods and services. We're working with our planning/zoning department to make responsible decisions with our open spaces and how best to develop them to benefit the community. We're working with our state partners at NCDOT to build roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways and multi-use paths that provide a safe way for everyone to maneuver around Matthews. We encourage all citizens to get involved in public service through the Town's many boards and committees. Knowing that our older population has a wealth of experience to share both from the worlds of work and life, they are a precious commodity to the Town and we should provide every opportunity to learn from them, be it through a board, a committee, or just volunteering time to serve in some capacity. We have the support of our mayor, and are anticipating full support from our six-member Board of Commissioners on October 12 to pass the resolution to make Matthews an AARP Age Friendly community.