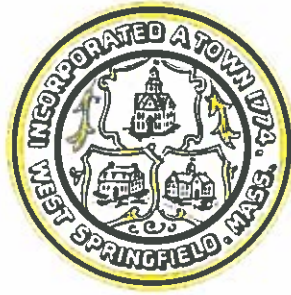


Town of West Springfield

26 Central Street, Suite 23
West Springfield, MA 01089-2785



(413) 263-3041
wreichelt@West-Springfield.ma.us

William C. Reichelt
Mayor

Via First Class Mail

27 October 2016

Mr. Michael Festa
AARP MA State Director
1 Beacon Street, Suite 2301
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Age Friendly West Springfield

Dear Mr. Festa:

The Town of West Springfield is very interested in pursuing admission into AARP and the World Health Organization's Age Friendly Cities and Communities Network. Our community is committed to creating an age friendly environment that supports healthy, active aging for all ages, as well as developing future policies that take into account the needs of changing demographics within the Town. Currently, West Springfield is involved with several initiatives that pair well with the Age Friendly movement:

- **Complete Streets** – working to improve the design of comfortable, safe travel and access for all users of all ages and abilities;
- **Access to Green Space** – working on improvements to our parks, including the addition of handicapped accessible parking, improved entrances, and community gardens;
- **Safe Streets** – working to improve lighting, crosswalks and signage;
- **Housing** – working on eliminating blight and improving affordable housing in West Springfield; and
- **Communications** – working toward inclusiveness for all and participation in government through volunteerism.

While the rate of older adults in West Springfield is rising according to the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Community Profile, West Springfield's adult population aged 60 years and older represents 21.3% of the population; an increase over the state average of 19.3%. West Springfield residents do better on several healthy aging indicators with lower rates of: colon cancer, prostate

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cancer, hospital stays, emergency room visits, and prescription medication use. However there are several other areas where we can improve, such as working with families and caregivers of those with Alzheimer's disease, stroke, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and hip fractures to name a few. Voter participation and property crime rates are also worse than state rates and can be improved upon within the Age Friendly Network Initiatives and World Health Initiative's Domains.

We have many existing community resources to promote healthy aging: The Council on Aging, Senior Center, Arts & Cultural Committee, Parks and Recreation Department, Public Health Department and Department of Public Works. We are encouraged by the World Health Organization's 8 Domains of Livability, provide opportunity for growth, collaboration and lifelong learning opportunities:

- Domain 1. Outdoor Space and Buildings
- Domain 2. Transportation
- Domain 3. Housing
- Domain 4. Social Participation
- Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion
- Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment
- Domain 7. Communication and Information
- Domain 8. Community and Health Services

As our Town's population begins to shift, we feel very strongly that all residents of our community will be able to benefit from our alliance with your network. We are committed to improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life of all residents in our community. We look forward to joining you and thank you for your consideration of our membership into AARP's Age Friendly Cities. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



William Reichelt

Mayor

cc: Council on Aging
Laurie Cassidy, Director
File