



CITY OF NEWPORT
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Jamie Bova

Mayor

May 6, 2019

Ms. Kathleen Connell
AARP Rhode Island State Director
10 Orms Street – Suite #200
Providence, RI 02904

Dear State Director Connell,

I am pleased to share the City of Newport's interest in pursuing designation as a WHO/AARP Age-Friendly City. The City has a long history of engaging its residents in the civic life of the community and is committed to supporting policies friendly to our older population. Residents age 65 and over now comprise 16 percent of our population, and their numbers are rapidly growing as persons age 50 years and over now represent 34 percent of the City's population.

In 2017, the City completed its Comprehensive Land Use Plan, a plan required of all Rhode Island cities and towns under Rhode Island law. The Plan's Goals and Vision Statement, crafted with input from numerous City residents and organizations, clearly embody WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Network goals.

Vision Statement: "The City of Newport is a vibrant, forward-looking and welcoming community built upon a strong sense of place and cultural heritage. Residents and visitors alike enjoy the city for its rich history, natural beauty, boating traditions, walkability, enticing downtown, community diversity, and overall quality of life. We are committed to charting a course for our future that embraces and encourages innovative growth and development, taking an active role in the stewardship of our architectural and natural resources, and an enhanced quality of life, all while we maintain our unique historic and cultural assets that are the foundation of our character." (page Plan 1-6)


With funding from The van Beuren Charitable Foundation, a review of the Plan's goals, policy recommendations, and action steps was conducted in 2018 by a policy consultant on aging. The review found substantial alignment with the livability domains adopted by WHO including housing, transportation, outdoor spaces/recreation, and community supports/health services. Following this review, **Newport for All Ages**, a stakeholder group inclusive of members of the City Council, older residents, non-profit organizational leaders, and academia formed to educate and engage the community in Age-Friendly work and to move Newport forward in becoming an Age-Friendly City.

I look forward to working with members of the City Council and the stakeholder group to further engage our residents, especially older adults, in this process; to complete a needs assessment to gauge priorities for our work; to develop a strategic action plan responsive to community needs; and to monitor and report publicly on outcomes of this work.

We look forward to working with our state AARP staff, community volunteers, and officials to make Newport a great place to grow up and to grow old.

Thank you for considering our request to join the WHO/AARP Age-Friendly network.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jamie Bova".

Jamie Bova
Mayor

JB:pc