



State: Minnesota
Community Name: City of Brooklyn Park
Population Size: 80610
Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 20
Community Structure: City
Other:
Community Type: Mixed, Suburban (offices, apartments and shops), Suburban (mostly residential)
Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment Name: Jeffrey Lunde
Title: Mayor
Office Mailing Address: 5200 85th Ave N, Brooklyn Park MN 55443

[Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]

Role: The Recreation Supervisor for Adult and Senior Programs is a full-time position within the City. The role in the age-friendly initiative is to be the point person and move this work forward with-in the community through engagement with residents, community partners and City departments and commissions. The position will also represent the City with AARP and the Age-Friendly Minnesota and Hennepin County initiatives. The Recreation Supervisor will lead efforts on creating the three-year action plan, implement and evaluate our work as well as reestablishing an Age-Friendly Taskforce of residents and stakeholders. This role is key to holding our community accountable to our commitment of making sure people of all ages have what they need to feel healthy and safe and that again adults have services and amenities to thrive and age in place.

Older Adult Involvement: Older adult engagement to date: Older residents have been closely involved in the age-friendly planning work to date. In 2014-15, a resident-led Task Force on Aging, part of the City’s Community Long-Range Improvement Commission (CLIC), developed a set of recommendations for the City on how to become a better place for older people. It addressed Community & Civic Participation; Public

Spaces & Transportation; Housing; and Health & Social Services. To build on that effort, in 2018 the City undertook a more extensive assessment, including specific outreach to older residents who are low-income and who represent Brooklyn Parks many ethnic and cultural communities. This process also engaged professionals and stakeholders from a range of sectors who work with older adults in a variety of capacities. The learnings from this process were used to develop *Becoming Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park*, a recommendations report that was approved by the City Council and is being used to guide its age-friendly efforts. Older adult engagement moving forward: Brooklyn Park is working to identify the most effective way to engage older residents going forward as it shifts into implementation mode for its age-friendly work. This will be a focus for 2021 and the three-year action plan. Options being considered include an updated Task Force on Aging or an age-friendly advisory team or board. We will also continue to work with community partner organizations to help us better understand needs and wishes of older residents who the City itself may have a harder time reaching. This is particularly true in the case of older immigrants and refugees. Our Community Engagement department has worked to build relationships with key community-based cultural organizations who are critical to bridging a connection between the City and our diverse constituents.

**Increasing
Collaboration
and
Coordination:**

A good deal of our work so far has happened inside City government, and we are very excited to be integrating age-friendliness into the work of our City. Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park is one the City's Big 11 projects, strategic cross-departmental initiatives. Numerous cross-departmental meetings were held over the course of a year for directors and key staff to learn about age-friendly communities and share ideas about how each department could advance this work, both independently and collaboratively. Departments also met individually with a consultant to help uncover needs and opportunities for integrating age-friendliness into their own work. Findings from this process were used to develop our recommendations report, *Becoming Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park*. Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park remains a regular topic at cross-departmental meetings of department directors and other key staff. Each City department has developed a workplan that identifies its age-friendly strategies and priorities for the next two years. (These workplans will be adapted to create an action plan that meets network requirements.) Two cross-departmental initiatives have also been identified and are underway. We have also worked hard to engage and learn from our community partners. As part of the community engagement effort that informed *Becoming Age-Friendly Brooklyn Park*, we held meetings and interviews with organizations from a variety of fields and sectors: healthcare, the library system, senior housing communities, community-based cultural organizations, community education, nonprofit services providers, and local businesses, among others. As the initiative moves forward, we will continue to deepen partnerships with existing community organizations, and to build relationships with additional agencies and organizations in the community to ensure that age-friendly work is extending outside of city government.

**AARP Team
Member
Contact Info:
Most
Instructive
Area of Work:**

Elyse Ruiz Associate State Director, Community Engagement, AARP Minnesota 1919 University Ave. W., Suite 500, St. Paul MN 55104
Phone: (651) 726-5643 Email: eruiz@aarp.org

Brooklyn Park is one of Minnesota's only majority minority cities. This provides us with a special opportunity to learn more about how to meaningfully engage and support our many racially and ethnically diverse residents, and to share those lessons and insights with other cities, many of which are becoming increasingly diverse themselves. Further, not only are our residents diverse, but our City Councilmembers also represent various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Their leadership helps ensure that the full spectrum of older adult voices and experiences in the community are understood and reflected in the City's work. Brooklyn Park's efforts to support older residents during COVID-19 may also be of use to other communities. As part of our commitment to becoming age-friendly, the City of Brooklyn Park developed a strategy to help support older adults during the pandemic and earmarked a portion of our federal CARES dollars to fund it. The strategy includes several parts and may be of interest to other cities: Providing older residents with care packages that contain priority items. Packages are being customized according to different residents' circumstances, e.g., those living independently, in assisted living, or in memory care. Residents from various ethnic and cultural communities may also receive customized packages. Purchasing and providing assistive listening devices and tablet devices to senior housing communities. The assistive listening devices help hearing-impaired residents overcome communication difficulties associated with mask-wearing. Reaching out to community-based cultural organizations to learn about needs of older members of those cultural groups and identify ways for the City to respond. We also know that suburbs face particular challenges when planning for older adults--related to housing, transportation, and related land-use and built environment concerns, among other things. We hope to find innovative solutions and opportunities and contribute that knowledge to the field. Finally, Hennepin County (our home county) joined the network in fall 2019; the State of Minnesota likely will enroll in the coming year; and our neighbor to the west, the City of Maple Grove, joined in 2016. We hope to be able to partner across all levels of government and believe that our membership in the network will facilitate this.

- Website:** <https://www.brooklynpark.org/age-friendly/>
- Twitter 2:** n/a
- Facebook 1:** <https://www.facebook.com/brooklynparkmn>
- Facebook 2:** <https://www.facebook.com/BrooklynParkAdultsOnTheMove>
- Additional
Social Media:** <https://www.instagram.com/cityofbrooklynpark/?hl=en>