Macon-Bibb, Georgia
Age-Friendly Community Report
2014-2016

☑ Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
☑ Transportation
☑ Housing
☑ Social Participation
☑ Respect & Social Inclusion
☑ Civic Participation & Employment
☑ Communication & Information
☑ Community Support & Health Services

Update and Vision for the Next Five Years
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 3  
Introduction 4  
2014-2016 In Review 7  
Livability Index 10  
Housing 12  
Neighborhood 13  
Transportation 13  
Environment 14  
Health 14  
Engagement 15  
Opportunity 15  
Eight Domains 16  
Domain 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings 17  
Domain 2: Transportation 21  
Domain 3: Housing 27  
Domain 4: Social Participation 30  
Domain 5: Respect and Social Inclusion 31  
Domain 6: Communication and Information 32  
Domain 7: Civic Participation and Employment 35  
Domain 8: Community Support and Health Services 38  
Vision for the Next Five Years for Macon-Bibb 43  
Conclusion 48  
Appendix A: Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly Resource List 49

For additional information, please contact the office of Macon-Bibb County Mayor Robert A.B. Reichert at (478) 751-7170.
Acknowledgments

The efforts to move Macon-Bibb forward in its Age-Friendly Community initiative could not have been realized without the support, personal experience, and professional expertise of all involved in this process. Macon-Bibb County has made tremendous strides during the five years since its designation in 2012. Because of the hard work and consistent dedication of the community, it is important to acknowledge the efforts of the key leaders who are involved with Age-Friendly Macon-Bibb so that momentum continues.

A “special thanks” is extended to Mayor Robert Reichert, the Macon-Bibb County Commissioners, and their dedicated staff members for the tremendous support and endorsement they have provided to Age-Friendly Macon-Bibb. The enthusiasm they have shown has continued to be a great inspiration and driving force for the members of the Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee (CAC).

Age-Friendly Macon-Bibb has been guided from its inception by a distinguished Community Advisory Committee. We sincerely appreciate the generous giving of their time, resources, and expertise and we would like to thank each of them. The CAC is composed of the following individuals: Nancy White, Macon-Bibb County Health Department; Danielle Steele and Ivan Allen, Central Georgia Technical College; Thomas Rockenbauch, Carlyle Place/Navicent Health; Rick Jones, Macon-Bibb Transit Authority; Shannon Fields, Bibb County Department of Family and Children Services; Toni Altenburg, Magnolia Manor; Sam Henderson, Macon-Bibb County Government; Stacy Barrett, Wesleyan College; Gregory Brown, Macon-Bibb Planning and Zoning; Wazina Jackson, Macon-Bibb Economic and Community Development; Pam Carswell, Keep Macon Beautiful; Reginald Moore and Dominique Lewis, Macon-Bibb Parks and Recreation; Mike Dyer, Macon Chamber of Commerce; Luciana Green, Macon-Bibb Economic Opportunity Council; Jennifer Lautzenheiser, Middle Georgia Regional Library; Karen Middleton, Macon Housing Authority; Robin North, Macon Convention and Visitors Bureau; Theresa Robinson, Georgia Power; Gigi Rolfes, Volunteer Macon; Ivey Hall, Habitat for Humanity; Frank Tompkins, Citizen Member; Margaret Eskew, Mercer University; and Julie Hall, Middle Georgia Area Agency on Aging.

We also applaud Cuirstaun Echols and Kimberly Lowe, staff of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, for their diligence in writing this report. Their professionalism and ongoing support in compiling data and writing the report were priceless.

Special thanks to the Advisors of the Community Advisory Committee, David Pilgrem of AARP Georgia, Romell Cooks, Romell Consulting (Augusta, Georgia) and Myrtie S. Habersham of M.S. Habersham Consulting Services (Macon, Georgia) for their dedication and steadfast support of Age-Friendly Macon-Bibb.
Introduction

Since Macon-Bibb’s recognition as an AARP and World Health Organization (WHO) Age-Friendly Community in 2012, Macon-Bibb County has completed efforts to become a consolidated community. Consolidation not only influenced how the government as a whole operated, requiring the adjustment of a delegation of two separate bodies with a total number of representatives of 21 to one deciding commission of 10 members, it also included the blending of several community services and organizations. The consolidation efforts did not hinder the progression of Macon-Bibb County in making strides to continue the advancements of its Age-Friendly Community. Along with the constant change in population, improvements are needed to address the needs of the estimated 153,459 residents of Macon-Bibb County per the United State Census Bureau. The last three years since the 2013 report have been extremely active. Some monumental age-friendly enhancements experienced throughout Macon-Bibb County include, the renovation of Tattnall Square Park, revitalization of the Second Street Corridor, and the evolution of Macon Connects.

To encompass the needs of all age groups, many restoration and preservation efforts have been accomplished to ensure Tattnall Square Park is accessible and enjoyable for all. Some of the improvements include, a new gateway at Lawton Street, numerous resting facilities, connections throughout the park, replacement of the Tattnall Square Park Fountain, and energy efficient amenities. In 2014, Tattnall Square Park was named one of twelve “Frontline Parks” by the City Parks Alliance. Every month the City Parks Alliance named one “Frontline Park” from across the country as a standout example of urban park excellence, innovation, and stewardship. Tattnall Square Park was selected because it exemplifies the power of urban parks to build communities and make cities sustainable and vibrant. The World Health Organization (WHO) in 2014 also acknowledged the spectacular work completed at Tattnall Square Park, recognizing it to be an example for the rest of the world to create open spaces with input from the older population. The many events held within the park such as the Mulberry Market, Art in the Park, Poetry in the Park, and Yoga at Tattnall Square Park inspire the inclusion and interaction of all ages.
As mentioned in the Macon-Bibb County, Georgia 2013 Age-Friendly Community Action Plan, Macon-Bibb County has made colossal strides in fortifying the Second Street Corridor multi-year, multi-million-dollar project connecting the neighborhoods surrounding Mercer University to Downtown Macon. The project began with $8 million from the “special-purpose local-option sales tax” SPLOST funds and has since seen an increase in available funds. Work completed along the corridor includes, the widening of pathways for pedestrians and bicyclists, the installation of a pedestrian bridge, new lighting, reverse angle parking, and the creation of additional greenspace. The Second Street Corridor project will provide ease of mobility and an increase in recreational spaces from downtown to the neighborhoods surrounding Mercer University. Such a major rejuvenation for Macon-Bibb County will address the needs of all ages and encourage community participation in various events. College students, families, and the aging population alike will have the opportunity to explore more of the possibilities offered in Macon-Bibb.

The development of Macon Connects, improving the livability of Macon-Bibb County through the advancement of transportation alternatives, occurred when NewTown Macon, Macon-Bibb County, Bike Macon, 8 80 Cities, and The Better Block decided to combine their strengths and work together to achieve shared goals. This new partnership has greatly influenced the efforts to ensure that Macon-Bibb continues to be a community that is all-inclusive. Macon Connects has explored new and innovative projects aimed at continuing the advancement of Macon-Bibb County and to address any issues that may prevent future growth. Some of the projects completed include, an Ideas Festival, a three-day event to excite and engage residents about their mobility concerns and the world’s largest network of temporary pop-up bicycle lanes. Each project has allowed for the collaboration of numerous viewpoints and alternatives of all age groups to be explored to create a more movable and walkable community.

As Macon-Bibb County continues to experience an increase in population, the need for a collaborative community is essential. In addition to the population boom, Macon-Bibb is also experiencing an increased influx of people from surrounding communities as they travel to Macon-Bibb County for services ranging from doctor’s appointments, to shopping and entertainment. In accordance with Macon-Bibb’s recognition as an Age-Friendly Community, strides are continually being made to incorporate all perspectives and methods to better the mobility and services for residents and visitors in every stage of life.
Macon-Bibb...a thriving Age-Friendly Community that is striving to be a more livable community for all ages.
2014 In Review

Movie Night at the Douglas Theater...for Residents of All Age Groups

Caregivers’ Workshops Offered to Residents throughout Macon-Bibb

Macon-Bibb Meeting as a Consolidated Government
Local residents (above) provide input that results in the development of a “state of the art” Senior Center as illustrated below.

Historic Tattnall Square Park is designated a “best practice example of Outdoor Spaces” in the world.
Macon Housing Authority demolishes 75-year-old Tindall Heights to rebuild new $45 million-dollar senior development.

Hundreds of citizens celebrate Macon-Bibb’s Cherry Blossom Festival.

Largest pop-up bike lane in the world (8 80/Macon Connect Project)
Livability Index

As the Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee continued the work began in 2012, many new elements influenced their work in Macon-Bibb County. In addition to the consolidation of Bibb County and the City of Macon, there were also changes in the council makeup. With this change came new domain group leaders, and new or modified recommendations for the work plan. In 2015, AARP introduced the Livability Index, which became a great influence and guide for the work being completed by the CAC.

The Livability Index is a web-based tool created by the AARP Public Policy Institute, and is designed to evaluate the amenities available in cities and neighborhoods across the United States. The tool allows users to compare their community with other communities and can be accessed at www.aarp.org/livabilityindex. Users are able to view scores based at varying levels of community (i.e., neighborhood, city, and county) and are also able to manipulate variables to see how the scoring may change based on what is most important to them. The Livability Index provides each community an overall “livability” score between 0 and 100 that represents the average of all the neighborhood scores within its boundaries. Within this overall measurement, seven categories are evaluated and scored individually allowing users to know the exact strengths and weaknesses of the location(s) being viewed. The seven categories and the metrics and policies used to evaluate them are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livability Index Category</th>
<th>Metrics and Policies Evaluated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Housing**               | • Availability of multi-family housing  
                           | • Basic passage accessibility of housing  |
|                           | • Housing affordability  
                           | • Availability of subsidized housing  |
| **Neighborhood**          | • Proximity to destinations, such as parks, grocery stores and farmer’s markets, libraries, and jobs  
                           | • Diversity of destinations and services  |
|                           | • Density of jobs and people  
                           | • Crime rate  |
|                           | • Vacancy rate of housing units  |
| **Transportation**        | • Convenience and frequency of local transit services  
                           | • Accessibility of transit stations and vehicles  
                           | • Walkability  |
|                           | • Traffic and average travel times  
                           | • Household transportation costs  
                           | • Street speed limits and rate of fatal crashes  |
| **Environment**           | • Quality of drinking water  
                           | • Air quality  |
|                           | • Near-roadway pollution  
                           | • Industrial air pollution  |
| **Health**                | • Prevalence of smoking and obesity  
                           | • Access to exercise opportunities  |
|                           | • Access to healthcare services  
                           | • Quality of healthcare  |
| **Engagement**            | • Access to Internet  
                           | • Presence of civic organizations  
                           | • Voting rates  |
|                           | • Socialization rates  
                           | • Number of cultural, art, and entertainment institutions  |
| **Opportunity**           | • Income equality and distribution  
                           | • Number of jobs per worker  |
|                           | • High school graduation rates  
                           | • Age diversity  |
Where Are We Now?

The categories scored by the Livability Index align closely with the eight Age-Friendly domains; therefore, the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly Committee found this tool to be a great asset for identifying opportunities to enhance age-friendly efforts. The Livability Index also provides resources for each category about policies and identifies best practices that, if implemented, can improve scores.

Currently, Macon-Bibb has a Livability score of 49, and received above average ratings in three of the seven categories. Interested in understanding and improving the score, the council worked to understand what influences index scores and what could be done to improve the score. AARP Public Policy Institute reports that “for each category, the index evaluates current conditions, as well as policies and programs that can enhance community livability over time” (https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/faqs). Within the metrics measured, each community is rated as either within the top third, middle third, or bottom third, as compared to other neighborhoods across the country.

Some of the metrics evaluated are on state and local levels, which mean that Macon-Bibb is scored on existing state and local policies and programs. Upon review of the individual category scores, the council identified many programs and policies currently in place that may improve index scoring for Macon-Bibb. For example, one of the policies evaluated for the health category, existence of state or local smoke-free laws. Georgia enacted the Georgia Smoke free Air Act on July 1, 2005, which “prohibits smoking inside most public areas and facilities. However, improvements or amendments to the law are needed to prohibit smoking in bars, restaurants, and workplaces. These changes could help Macon-Bibb meet the non-smoking metric as defined by AARP. (https://dhs.georgia.gov/statewide-smokefree-air-act-helps-georgians-breathe-easier).

This encouraged the Age-Friendly Committee to explore ways to ensure that policies and programs are reported to AARP’s Public Policy Institute. It also provided an incentive for some of the domain sub-committees interested in improving the score in the category most aligned with their domain. These targets were the catalyst for some of the new recommendations provided with this update, and are a key part of the Community Advisory Committee’s vision for the next five years.
Macon-Bibb’s housing score on the Livability Index is currently 68. Housing continues to be a major concern in Macon-Bibb for people of all ages, incomes and abilities, especially older adults. Research shows that residents want to remain in their homes as long as possible. In order for the older adults to age in place, the housing environment must be one that can support the varying needs of the population. Housing must be available, affordable, and accessible, i.e. it must accommodate varying levels of physical abilities, require minimum maintenance and be close to essential services.

Increasing housing units with extra wide doorways, and level entryways in rooms within the home, would enable more people to age in place. In addition to ensuring people are able to remain in their homes as they age, housing costs need to be affordable. The index indicates that currently, Macon-Bibb residents spend 16.7 percent of their income on housing costs. Following are examples of two projects in Macon-Bibb that address the issues of availability, accessibility and affordability.

Tindall Heights is a historic public housing development in Macon-Bibb. First constructed in 1940, this development is now undergoing a major renewal that will ultimately replace the existing units with 270 multi-family units. These units will be spacious, more energy efficient, affordable and will include 72 housing units, named Tindall Senior Towers, that are exclusively for residents aged 62+. Along with the senior complex, master plans for Tindall Heights include a commercial complex aimed at providing jobs and shopping opportunities to the residents. Another of Macon-Bibb’s successful, Age-Friendly compliant projects is Hunt School Village. The property contains 36 1-BR and 24 2-BR units. In addition, units are available that are designed specifically for persons with mobility, hearing, or visual impairments. In order to qualify for residency, all family members must be at least 62 years of age with a total family income that comply with HUD published income limits for Macon-Bibb County. Hunt School Village will be contiguous to those services such as grocery stores, recreational spaces and commercial establishment that create a livable community.

In addition to the new construction projects underway, the Macon Area Habitat for Humanity has programs to help residents age in place. Many of the programs they offer provide affordable home renovations designed to help seniors stay in their home for as long as possible. Habitat has also received funding from Lowe’s and the Jaques Foundation to provide weatherization and exterior improvements for seniors within the Lynmore Estates neighborhood of Macon-Bibb. In October 2016, Macon-Bibb government passed a resolution authorizing Rebuilding Macon, Inc. to provide minor home repair services to 65 elderly or disabled low-income home owners with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.
Projects such as these will go a long way to improving Macon-Bibb’s housing index score and will benefit residents greatly.

Efforts to nurture and continue Macon-Bibb’s cultural influence for all age groups have led to the development of the Mill Hill East Macon Arts Village. Mill Hill East Macon Arts Village is a neighborhood revitalization effort that seeks to develop approximately four blocks of the historic Fort Hawkins Neighborhood in East Macon into an arts village to address blight and foster economic opportunity. The effort is a partnership between neighborhood residents, Macon Arts Alliance, the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority, and many community stakeholders. The Mill Hill effort seeks to address the challenges of blight and lack of economic opportunity in the neighborhood known as the "Birthplace of Macon".  
(http://www.maconartsalliance.org/mill-hill-east-macon-arts-village/)

Macon-Bibb’s current neighborhood score is 39. The index identified three areas where Macon-Bibb neighborhoods can have beneficial improvements. These areas are: access to jobs by transit, crime rate reduction, and residential vacancy rates. Many of the projects underway in Macon-Bibb serve to improve multiple areas of the Livability Index. All of the housing projects mentioned above are dedicated to reducing crime by addressing urban decay within Macon-Bibb and offering economic opportunity.

Macon-Bibb County government is planning to improve community safety by spending $1.5 million dollars to replace approximately 1,600 existing street lights with LED light fixtures. LED lighting is both brighter and more energy efficient. Georgia Power has also invested in Macon-Bibb’s safety and has replaced 6,000 street light fixtures with LED street lights throughout Macon-Bibb neighborhoods to enhance personal safety.  

Macon-Bibb Planning and Zoning department is currently working on its 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan. This plan will help put in place increased transportation options, as well as improve passage along existing routes. Throughout 2016, the Planning and Zoning department has obtained a great deal of community input to identify the enhancements residents feel are a priority.

Macon-Bibb’s current transportation score is 42. The Livability Index identified that Macon-Bibb needs to enhance transportation options offered. Increased route frequency and ADA compliant transit stations are key factors in transportation improvement. Age-friendly Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members have distributed a community transportation
survey to assess route needs and marketing effectiveness. The survey is also designed to identify additional transportation options that may be available through other means such as churches, private companies, and community organizations.

A major goal of Macon-Bibb is to reduce the crash rate and the number of pedestrian fatalities. Macon-Bibb Commission approved the assembly of a Pedestrian Fatality Review Board (PFRB). The PFRB meets monthly and is comprised of representatives from the sheriff’s department, health department, county schools, traffic engineers, facilities management, planning and zoning, elected officials, AARP, and concerned citizens. The PFRB is dedicated to developing strategies for creating safer, more active streets and roads in Macon-Bibb County. The PFRB has a website dedicated to educating the public about pedestrian safety, make announcements about roadway projects, and seek community feedback (http://pfrb.maconbibb.us/). Efforts to improve pedestrian safety have included conducting multiple road audits and hosting the Georgia Walks Summit in June 2016.

Macon-Bibb ranked very well on the Livability Index for environment; the current score is 64. Macon-Bibb is in the top third of the nation when it comes to water quality and air quality. The index indicates that 0% of Macon-Bibb residents have been exposed to health-based violations during the past year. Macon-Bibb only has an average of 3.4 unhealthy air quality days compared to the U.S. median of 8 unhealthy air quality days per year. The index indicates that Macon-Bibb needs to reduce near-roadway pollution and local industrial pollution.

Near-roadway pollution is comprised of street noise and the vehicle exhaust and emissions that people are exposed to when they reside near high-traffic roadways. To address this, Macon-Bibb has begun to include barriers along sections of I-75 that run alongside neighborhoods to reduce the noise pollution experienced by residents. Macon-Bibb Mayor, Robert Reichert, along with other Macon-Bibb department officials serve on the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition to help improve air quality both regionally and locally.

Macon-Bibb’s current score for health on the Livability Index is 39. Macon-Bibb has great access to healthcare; however, in order to improve the index scoring, Macon-Bibb must provide additional focus on the health behaviors of the residents, as well as quality of care experienced throughout the healthcare system.

The index indicates that 22.8 percent of people in Macon-Bibb smoke regularly and 28.3 percent of people are obese. The Macon-Bibb County Health Department (MBCHD) participates in the annual Great American Smokeout and launched a campaign called “Trash the
Ash” in 2015 to help reduce smoking rates. In 2016, the MBCHD provided “quit kits” to eleven community organizations participating in the Great American Smokeout. In 2015, MBCHD held a call-to-action rally titled #Macon Moves: Helping Children Eat Well & Play Hard. The focus of this rally was to educate the residents about resources and programs that are available to families to help keep children healthy.

Only 41.6 percent of patients reported satisfaction with the quality of the healthcare services they have received. The healthcare system has responded to this by including satisfaction surveys as a part of their process for identifying service issues and strategies to address these areas of concern. Additionally, local health care facilities are offering appointment system to reduce patient waiting time, holding more educational outreach sessions/health fairs in the community and using the triage process to streamline patient care in non-emergency situations.

Macon-Bibb’s current score for engagement on the index is 59. Engagement relates to the opportunities available for an individual to connect with others within their community and serves to reduce social isolation and strengthen the community. One of the areas scored by the index was the number of performing arts companies, museums, concert venues, sports stadiums, and movie theaters per 10,000 people. Macon-Bibb has a long, rich, cultural history that celebrates diversity in the services and types of events offered for all age groups. From the historic Douglass Theatre to the Macon Centreplex, there is always something to do in Macon-Bibb County. The index scored Macon-Bibb among the top third in the nation for opportunities for civic involvement. With a total of 12.3 civic, social, religious, political, and/or business organizations per 10,000 people, opportunities to get involved are plentiful.

Macon-Bibb scored 33 on the index for the opportunity category. For this category, Macon-Bibb was scored on the opportunities available for residents to earn a living wage and improve their overall quality of life. The index also scored the opportunities available for education and employment. Macon-Bibb has five institutions of higher learning, all of which are greatly involved in community development; however, the metric that had the greatest impact on the score was the high school graduation rate. The index indicates that Macon-Bibb has a graduation rate of only 52% as compared to a U.S. median of 81.3%. There are many community programs dedicated to improving graduation rates in Macon-Bibb. One of the newest programs, Read United, is organized by the United Way of Central Georgia. This program aims to have all students reading at grade level or higher by third grade. From kindergarten to third grade students are learning to read, whereas from fourth grade on, students are reading to learn; therefore, if a student is not reading at grade level by the end of third grade, it is easy for them to fall behind and be at a greater risk for dropping out of school.
The Eight Domains

The Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) has been hard at work implementing the recommendation steps reported in the action plan that was approved in 2014. Much has been accomplished, and the CAC is eager to continue strengthening Macon-Bibb as an age-friendly community.
Domain 1: Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

**Recommendation 1:** Construction or reconstruction of a new Senior Center.

**Implementation Step A:** Review several locations throughout the community to either build a new senior center or reconstruct an existing vacant building for use as the new senior center.

**Update:** Locations were reviewed and presented to Macon-Bibb County seniors for input. After three sessions, a location was selected and site preparation has begun. Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation Department are working to finalize the center design.

**Implementation Step B:** Ensure that new senior center location is accessible by public transportation and includes programming that is of interest to all segments of the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly community.

**Update:** The location is easily accessible to all Macon-Bibb County seniors through the Macon-Bibb County public transportation. Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation plans to conduct surveys and meetings to collect senior input on desired programs.

A senior coalition group has been formed to ensure that the concerns and interests of the seniors are incorporated into the design plans. This group is comprised of county commissioners, Macon-Bibb citizens, AARP Age-Friendly volunteers, and representation from the Middle Georgia Regional Commission/Area Agency on Aging.

**Recommendation 2:** Highlight public safety enhancements in media.

**Implementation Step A:** Work with Bibb County Public Affairs Officer to create article for quarterly editions of Macon-Bibb Parks and Recreation Newsletter to cover topics such as: buildings and properties security, installation of security cameras, improved lighting at entrances, new roofs/floors and updated HVAC systems.
Update: Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation has distributed press releases as updates, and enhancements were completed at the various parks and recreation centers. The press releases were tailored to highlight upgrades paid for by SPLOST funds, increase awareness of facility safety, and encourage participation.

**Implementation Step B:** Establish an Age-Friendly communication link and/or conduct educational marketing in Ovations 365, the College Hill Alliance, the Macon Arts Alliance and Macon Magazine.

Update: Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation and Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly maintain links to each other’s website to increase community involvement.

Organizations represented by members on the CAC shared their events with each other and circulated informational emails regularly.

**Recommendation 3:** Plan more senior/family-type activities in the parks.

**Implementation Step A:** Meet with Macon-Bibb Parks and Recreation Newsletter editor to seek ideas on how Age-Friendly workgroup can help promote publication’s calendar of recreational opportunities, such as movies in the park, which enhance the social, cultural, and physical well-being of residents and visitors in the community.

Update: Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation experience better events promotion through Facebook and social media advertisement than through newsletter distribution. Events are successfully published through these sites and shared through Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly’s agencies; however, there is a quarterly newsletter that remains in circulation.

**Implementation Step B:** Development of a new series of family and age-friendly events that is able to utilize a newly acquired 32 passenger bus. Bus can be used to provide trips for
seniors and students to attractions throughout the state of Georgia.

**Update:** The bus was used to advertise Age-Friendly Macon-Bibb, and also to transport seniors to Age-Friendly community events such as Movies in the Park, the Cherry Blossom Festival, and National Night Out.

**Implementation Step C:** Contact Parks and Recreation to obtain feedback on their four community meetings with citizens on recreational needs.

**Update:** Community feedback will be obtained as a part of a comprehensive study that Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation will begin in 2017. The results of this study will be used to create a master plan for the next 10-20 years.

**Implementation Step D:** Develop draft list of actions the Age-Friendly workgroup can take to assist the Recreation Department and present to the workgroup for feedback and approval.

**Update:** During CAC, bi-monthly meetings ideas were shared amongst domains to further collaboration and reduce duplication.

**Recommendation 4:** Identify best practices in other communities

**Implementation Step A:** Encourage Parks and Recreation Department to continue this activity.

**Update:** Macon-Bibb Parks and Recreation staff is regularly in contact with other communities, such as Hall County, DeKalb County, Gwinnett County, and Augusta-Richmond County to identify best practices to increase park usage. As a result, Macon-Bibb Parks have experienced an increase in usage by individuals, churches, families, schools, and have become event locations for weddings, family reunions, Cherry Blossom Festival, etc.
Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation has begun the process of obtaining the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) certification.

**Recommendation 5:** Work with Parks and Recreation Department to ensure Age-Friendly focus that includes call boxes, recharging locations for scooters, adequate benches, enhanced lighting and more accessible sidewalks.

**Implementation Step A:** Encourage Parks and Recreation Department to include these elements into future construction plans.

**Update:** Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation is constantly including Age-Friendly amenities throughout the various facilities like ADA compliant walkways, LED lighting, and benches. Some other enhancements include remodeled restrooms and an increased security presence. With the abundance of cell phones in the community, call boxes are no longer needed.

**Recommendation 6:** Community athletes and sports teams to have scheduled events listed in the Parks and Recreation newsletter.

**Implementation Step A:** Encourage Parks and Recreation Department to continue this activity.

**Update:** This activity has been continued and enhanced through social media outlets. Events offered include:

- Movies in the Park (Once a Month: April-October)
- Yappy Hour (March-May, August-October)
- Chalk Festival (March)
- Adult Field Day (May)
- Summer Camp
- Instructional Classes (Yoga, Taekwondo, Art)
- Fall Festival
- Star Gazing/Moon Observation
- Martin Luther King Oratorical Competition
Domain 2: Transportation

**Recommendation 1:** Inform senior communities of transportation services and promote usage of transportation services.

**Implementation Step A:** Contact churches and senior centers to identify specific community transportation services already in place.

**Update:** Four Community Transportation Surveys were completed and received; one from a local church and three from local senior centers.

**Implementation Step B:** Arrange a meeting of church and community center activity directors to better assess community transportation needs.

**Update:** The Community Transportation Survey helps to assess the transportation needs for the local church membership and the senior center residents. Questions 4 and 5 specifically identify the needs.

**Recommendation 2:** Advertise discounted rates on MTA for seniors, youth, and individuals with disabilities.

**Implementation Step A:** Post routes on the MTA website and at the terminal station. Advertisement may also be placed at community centers, senior centers, and libraries.

**Update:** The Macon Transit Authority (MTA) currently offers approximately 50 percent in discounts to seniors and disabled riders. Specialized paratransit service rates is a little higher because it’s more efficient and offers “curb to curb” / “door to door” service. Regular 10-ride adult rates are $12.00, whereas 10 rides for seniors and disabled individual’s rates are discounted to $6.00. Additionally, regular 20-ride adult rates are $20.00 and 20 rides for seniors and disabled individuals are $10.00. 20 rides for students (K-12) are $12.50. MTA also offers 31 consecutive day rides for $50.00 and a 4-ride pass (minimum of 50) for $5.00. Routes covered by the Macon Transit Authority (MTA) are available online on the MTA website. Printed copies of this information have been distributed to the community centers, senior centers, and libraries in Macon-Bibb to encourage members of all age groups to use these services.

**Recommendation 3:** Sponsor annual CarFit vehicle safety event; this program
reinforces basic car maintenance with seniors and reviews whether or not a senior’s car is appropriately fitted to their physical abilities and needs.

**Implementation Step A:** Coordinate a class with an AARP instructor.

**Update:** The Macon-Bibb County Health Department has partnered with AARP to ensure that an annual CarFit event is held in Macon-Bibb County. To date, at least two CarFit events have been held.

**Recommendation 4:** Coordinate with the Macon Transit Authority to identify enhancements which consider feedback from the office’s Needs Assessment Survey results.

**Implementation Step A:** Promote additional purchases of fuel-efficient/zero-emissions buses for public transportation.

**Update:** Macon-Bibb Transit Authority began purchasing fuel-efficient vehicles in 2012 and continues to supply the fleet with more fuel-efficient vehicles. In addition to this, a study has begun to evaluate the feasibility of incorporating total electric buses into the fleet. Unfortunately, for the current cycle to purchase new buses in 2016, MTA was unable to secure two new buses due to non-reimbursement and the lack of matching funds.

**Implementation Step B:** Encourage the inclusion of more active “people-friendly” highway and street designs. Designs should include the use of sidewalks into street designs.

**Update:** Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. In May 2012, before the Macon-Bibb consolidation, the City of Macon created a resolution to institute a Complete Streets policy to increase the usability of streets within the City of Macon for all modes of travel for citizens of all ages in the community.
Complete Streets concepts are identified in the goals of the Macon Area Transportation Study (MATS) 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update to: 1) Promote multimodal and affordable travel choices, 2) Improve infrastructure conditions and 3) Ensure equity to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The 2040 LRTP update is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2017.

Current road improvement projects that are underway in the Macon–Bibb County area that will accommodate vehicular motorists, pedestrians and biking are: Improvements to the extension of the Little Richard Penniman Boulevard to connect with the Second Street Corridor; Newly installed Pedestrian Bridge, as shown above, at the Mercer University Campus that connects to the newly developed Lofts along Mercer University Drive; Log Cabin Road and Forest Hill Road improvements.

To address the issue of safety, Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) hosted a Georgia Walks Summit (an initiative of PEDS) June 16–17, 2016 at Middle Georgia State University in Macon, Georgia. The summit covered a range of topics from Road Safety Audits, Walking your Way to a Healthy Community, and the Livable Centers Initiative: Catalyst for Walk-Friendly Transformation.
On Tuesday, August 16, 2016, the Macon–Bibb County Health Department hosted a Pedestrian Safety Stakeholder Summit to address the county’s plan to make roads safer and to introduce the concept of Vision ZERO, which is a means to reduce pedestrian fatalities. The summit was held in conjunction with the newly created Pedestrian Fatality Review Board of the Macon–Bibb County Commission.

**Recommendation 5:** Provide transportation for seniors, especially low-income seniors and non-drivers to community events.

**Implementation Step A:** Identify potential need for services, explore options and marketing approaches.

**Update:** Macon Transit Authority offers fixed-route and paratransit services to address the needs of older, low-income adults. This service is explained more in recommendation 2, implementation step A.

The Terminal Station was originally constructed in 1916 to be the union station of all 15 railroads operating in Macon at the time. In 2010 a $5 million renovation of the station was completed. The property was transferred to the Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority in 2014, and it currently serves as a truly unique venue that provides a beautiful setting for weddings, receptions, fundraisers, and any other special gatherings. In 2016, the terminal station celebrated 100 years by offering all day FREE bus rides, free lunch in conjunction with Nu Way Wiener, vendors, raffles, kids activities and music.

The Community Transportation Survey assesses route needs and marketing effectiveness.

At a press conference in May 2016, the Macon-Bibb County Government and other agencies welcomed its first ride sourcing company to the community (Uber) and hopes that this form of private transportation will expand mobility options. Mayor Reichert indicated that when you talk about being a hub city, that includes being the center of transit network with multiple ways for people to get around, from bike lanes to sidewalks and trails, to mass transit, and services like Uber.
Recommendation 6: Conduct a transit/sidewalk study and/or road safety audit (RSA)
To determine pedestrian use and the need for sidewalk placement, as well as identify safety concerns in regards to crosswalks and signals.

Implementation Step A: Arrange a meeting with the County to discuss feasibility of blocking off portions of downtown traffic during evening hours to stimulate greater pedestrian and cycle usage and sense of community.

Update: Along with Macon-Bibb County’s consideration of Complete Streets, the county has also partnered with NewTown Macon to analyze the feasibility of blocking off portions of downtown traffic during evening hours. In September 2016, NewTown Macon hosted “Macon Connects Street Makeover”. The makeover included a network of temporary “pop-up” bike lanes and public space improvements in downtown Macon. The makeover covered more than six miles for the purpose of enhancing connectivity and mobility in Macon-Bibb, and to also experience what it would be like to have safer and more vibrant streets for walking and biking, which further evaluate the effects of Complete Streets policies on traffic patterns.

Implementation Step B: Install sound barriers along the future construction of I-75 to improve the quality of life of the residents impacted by the freeway noise.

Update: Sound barriers have been installed along portions of I-75 that have undergone improvements and are also a part of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Implementation Step C: Development of bicycle trails and pedestrian facilities along more roadways throughout the community that incorporates safety measures such as crosswalks and signals.

Update: Through the Macon Area Transportation Study (MATS), a bicycle advisory council is in the beginning stages of evaluating the bicycle grid throughout the Macon-Bibb County area. The Council will be charged with looking at ways to develop a downtown bike grid that will then extend the bicycle network to adjacent neighborhoods and areas throughout the county (Zebulon Road, Bass Road, Lizella area, etc.). Bike trails have been included along various roadways in Macon-Bibb County to
include, Sardis Church Road and Second Street, and are constantly considered as a part of Complete Streets planning.

In April 2015, the Macon–Bibb County Pedestrian Fatality Review Board was created by the Macon–Bibb County Commission to review all fatal accidents involving pedestrians in Macon-Bibb County in order to ensure that proper safety protocols are in place on all roads, streets and alleys. The Board has held field trips to visit areas where pedestrian fatalities have occurred. (Northside Drive @ Elnora Drive; Forsyth Road @ N. Wellington and Forsyth Road @ Tucker Road). The field team was able to evaluate existing conditions of the roadway’s character in an effort to make meaningful improvements.

Additionally, Road Safety Audits were completed along the following roadways: Eisenhower Parkway (January 2016), Emery Highway (June 2016), and Gray Highway (October 2016). A Road Safety Audit (RSA) is a formal safety performance evaluation of an existing or future road or intersection by a multidisciplinary team of auditors, typically including the State Department of Transportation (GDOT), local agencies, law enforcement, and other transportation professionals as applicable. RSAs have been used successfully for a wide variety of locations to identify potential solutions leading to both short-term improvements and longer term efforts including construction projects. It is a proactive tool, not solely dependent on crash data, but rather an innovative approach to identify safety issues to be considered in improvement projects. The actual audit is a three-step process for the gathered team. These steps are: 1) the pre-audit meeting to review the project information, 2) the field review, and 3) the audit analysis. During these three key steps, the audit team has the opportunity to provide an objective, unbiased summary of safety issues, needs identification, and consideration of local conditions, make suggestions for future short, intermediate, and long term improvements. As a result of this audit, additionally recommendations are being
considered for potential implantation to address public safety areas.

**Recommendation 7:** Create a system that will enable better communication between Macon Transit Authority and the community.

**Implementation Step A:** Research the feasibility of installing GPS systems on all MTA buses that are able to indicate their immediate location.

**Update:** The Route Match Cad-avl system was installed on the entire MTA fleet in 2016 and was upgraded for the GPS tracking and tablets usage to help better ascertain the location of all buses, as well as the on-time performances on each route. With this, we are able to locate each bus to see where they are at all times during their routes.

**Implementation Step B:** Create system that will enable MTA consumers to use personal technology devices to gain up-to-the-minute information on the location of public transit through the use of installed GPS systems on MTA vehicles.

**Update:** Route Match – Route Shout technology device: MTA has plans to implement this service in the future as soon as a funding source has been identified.

**Domain 3: Housing**

**Recommendation 1:** Collaboration between the CAC subcommittees working on the housing domain and the community support and health domain to accomplish established recommendations on overlapping issues.

**Implementation Step A:** Committees will meet together at least bi-monthly.

**Update:** The committees share newsletters and information on upcoming events monthly and collaborate as needed.

**Recommendation 2:** Establish process for educating seniors about available housing options such as the Affordable Housing Program.

**Implementation Step A:** Conduct educational events/programs on such areas as housing, medication assistance programs, senior
rights, transportation, mental health services, and train the trainer workshops.

**Update:** The Macon-Bibb County Economic and Community Development (ECD) Department conducts quarterly educational events where citizens discuss important issues, such as housing, transportation, and health problems. In these well-publicized meetings, the facilitator and/or project developer lead a discussion of various aspects of issues like the community’s strengths and potential problems. Several agencies currently participate in these events to include, but not limited to, Macon-Bibb County Housing Authority, Home First Housing Resource Services, Middle Georgia Area Agency on Aging, One-South Macon Community Development Council, and River Edge Behavioral Health Center.

Community groups hold monthly education sessions for topics, such as purchasing a home, budgeting your money, computer usage, community concerns, etc.

**Implementation Step B:** Host annual resource fairs that have vendors on hand to provide help with availability of housing, mortgage issues, home maintenance workshops, etc.

**Update:** Through community partners multiple resource fairs are held throughout the year and are annually recurring events. The housing domain subcommittee ensures that all community partners have information to distribute about housing availability, home maintenance workshops, etc.

**Implementation Step C:** Support senior events such as the Area Agency on Aging’s Senior Day Expo, Parks and Recreation’s Golden Olympics, Mayor Reichert’s Senior Christmas Celebration, etc.

**Update:** A representative of the housing domain subcommittee has attended these annual events since 2014. The Macon Housing Authority also aids in the coordination of transportation for their residents to these events.

**Implementation Step D:** Create a Welcome/Resource packet that will provide a consistent message and will include housing, community, and health resources.

**Update:** The Macon-Bibb County Senior Health Services Directory has been developed and shared with potential
residents and partner agencies. This directory includes contact information for agencies that provide community resources and services.

**Recommendation 3:** Increase the availability of safe, warm, and dry age-friendly housing units.

**Implementation Step A:** Collaborate with developers of new construction and renovation projects to encourage the use of universal design that will improve accessibility for seniors.

**Update:** River Edge Behavioral Health Center has begun building 15 new homes that incorporate a universal design. These homes will provide shelter for 40 disabled individuals. The homes are being built with materials that will reduce utility expenses and includes features like ceramic roll-in showers and therapeutic tubs.

Tindall Heights housing development has been demolished and a new 76-unit senior high-rise is under construction. In April 2016, the Macon Housing Authority broke ground on the Hunt Senior Village, which will provide 60 units for qualifying individuals.

**Implementation Step B:** Development of cost-effective financing systems that will enable seniors to afford repairs and home modifications needed to allow them to age-in-place.

**Update:** Operation Hope and the Homebuyer’s Club offer monthly financial literacy education sessions to residents of the Macon Housing Authority.

Agencies such as Disability Connections and Rebuilding Macon work to help individuals increase the accessibility of their homes and ensure home safety.

Macon Area Habitat for Humanity has many aging-in-place programs that allow for weatherization and critical home repair. In 2016, the Macon Area Habitat for Humanity partnered with Lowe’s and completed home improvements to 10 seniors’ homes in the Lynmore Estates neighborhood.

**Recommendation 4:** Establish a Macon-Bibb Housing Forum consisting of housing agencies.

**Implementation Step A:** Coordinate agencies and set regular meeting dates and times.
Update: The housing domain subcommittee found that collaborating agencies are already participating in semi-monthly Age-Friendly meetings and providing updates.

**Implementation Step B:** Invite service providers to present and discuss trending housing issues and potential collaborations.

Update: The Brown Bag Group is a diverse group of local organizations involved in providing affordable housing and commercial development in Macon-Bibb County. The goal of the Group is to expand housing opportunities by increasing the supply of affordable, quality housing in Macon-Bibb through advocacy, education, and collaboration. The participants include: Macon-Bibb County Economic Community Development, Macon-Bibb County Land Bank Authority, Macon Housing Authority, Macon Area Habitat for Humanity, Historic Macon Foundation, Georgia Behavioral Health Services, Rebuilding Macon, and non-profit sponsors.

**Recommendation 5:** Establish and keep an updated database of available resources for affordable housing.

**Implementation Step A:** Create a database of resources on the Macon-Bibb County Age-Friendly website.

Update: Multiple community agencies maintain these resources and duplication to Age-Friendly website was not necessary; however, links to these community agencies have been uploaded to the Macon-Bibb County Age-Friendly website.

**Domain 4: Social Participation**

**Recommendation 1:** Utilize the central community calendar, Ovations 365.

**Implementation Step A:** Increase awareness of RSVP programs and Senior Corp Programs.

Update: Programs are advertised at various community events, health fairs, and festivals. Information is also distributed through community partners like Foster Grandparents.
Implementation Step B: Work with promoters to advertise activities for all ages.

Update: Advertisement is conducted through traditional avenues and electronic sources, such as Out & About, Macon Magazine, 11th Hour, and the Georgia Family Magazine. Partnerships are being formed with local broadcasting stations to enhance event promotion.

Recommendation 2: Educate activity coordinators in the community

Implementation Step A: Identify activity coordinators.

Update: Activity coordinators have been identified and information about the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website has been disseminated to them.

Implementation Step B: Set up email distribution list.

Update: The Age-Friendly Council agreed since the information is readily available online at the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website, an email distribution is not needed.

Implementation Step C: Email quarterly with updates and information.

Update: The Age-Friendly Council agreed since the information is readily available online at the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website an email distribution is not needed.

Recommendation 3: Work with Parks and Recreation to host “Senior Nights”

Implementation Step A: Work with senior living communities to promote these activities.

Update: Monthly events are held at various community centers throughout Macon-Bibb County. These events feature speakers that present on topics of interest to older adults. Examples of these events include Senior Night during the Cherry Blossom Festival, Movie Nights, and Picnic in the Park.

Domain 5: Respect and Social Inclusion

Recommendation 1: Utilize the central community calendar, Ovations 365.

Implementation Step A: Work with venues to ensure/promote handicap access.
Update: Events promoted by Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly are sure to highlight accessibility for all.

**Recommendation 2:** Provide continuing education for all ages.

**Implementation Step A:** Provide classes at libraries, the Hutchings Career Center, and area colleges.

Update: Macon-Bibb County libraries have been offering regular computer classes geared towards enhancing senior technology proficiency. The classes have been very well received in the community, and as a result the library is expanding the topics covered.

Local colleges and universities, such as Mercer University and Wesleyan College offer continuing education programs for working adults and seniors in the community.

**Recommendation 3:** Expand volunteer activities with veterans and senior veterans.

**Implementation Step A:** Include veteran organizations in event planning.

Update: Veterans manage and host a bi-monthly food distribution event at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

Senior volunteers coordinate an annual Macon Stand Down event for veterans, which include medical screenings, job resources, and provision personal goods as needed.

Senior volunteers also participated in the “Welcome Home, Heroes Program” presented by the Safe America Foundation and Georgia Power to share services and resources available to veterans.

**Recommendation 4:** Engage seniors in local coalitions such as Macon Safe Decisions and participate in PSAs and ads.

**Implementation Step A:** Identify a community issue to be addressed by Macon Safe Decisions.

Update: Macon Safe Decisions is currently focused on prevention of underage drinking. They have created five PSAs, three of which feature senior volunteers. Airing of the PSAs began in June 2014 and are still appearing.
**Recommendation 5:** Recruit volunteers to participate with local non-profits.

**Implementation Step A:** Maintain a list of local non-profits in need of volunteers.

**Update:** Twice year tailored information about non-profits is distributed to interested individuals. Potential volunteers are provided with contact information to pursue opportunities.

**Domain 6: Communication and Information**

**Recommendation 1:** Utilize the central community calendar, Ovations 365 (www.ovations365.com).

**Implementation Step A:** Increase awareness of RSVP programs and Senior Corp Programs.

**Update:** This implementation step has been handled by the Social Participation subcommittee.

**Implementation Step B:** Work with promoters to advertise activities for all ages.

**Update:** Events promoted by Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly are advertised on the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website and through community partners. Events posted to the Ovations 365 community calendar are tagged as “Age-Friendly” when appropriate.

Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly CAC members shared events amongst the CAC through email distribution and by maintaining links to each other’s organizations websites on their respective webpages.

**Recommendation 2:** Coordinate with Senior News Magazine on ways to access and distribute information on Age-Friendly initiative.

**Implementation Step A:** Identify point of contact at Senior News and provide information for articles and distribution.

**Update:** The Macon-Bibb County Health Department distributes a monthly newsletter; age-friendly events are frequently included.

The Community Support and Health Services domain have advertised the GeorgiaCares program in the Senior
News publication. GeorgiaCares provides personalized counseling, education and outreach to assist Medicare beneficiaries with their Medicare questions. The program helps people with Medicare understand their choices and helps them enroll in a Medicare plan that meets their needs.

**Recommendation 3:** Contact church groups for input and to disseminate information on the Age-Friendly initiative.

**Implementation Step A:** Identify activities coordinators.

**Update:** Many volunteers from AARP and the Age-Friendly Council were enlisted to identify the activity coordinators of local churches. They have created a list of contacts to be pursued.

**Implementation Step B:** Set up database.

**Update:** Rather than a database, a listserv has been created for easy dissemination of information to the identified coordinators.

**Implementation Step C:** Email quarterly with updates and information.

**Update:** Information is updated on the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website. A link to the website is emailed to the coordinators quarterly.

**Recommendation 4:** Highlight training available to help consumers gain more the internet and social media sites.

**Implementation Step A:** Post the Middle Georgia Regional Library’s computer class schedule on the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website.

**Update:** The Middle Georgia Regional Library offers computer classes regularly and various topics are covered, including how to classes on using the internet, Facebook, Twitter, Ancestry.com, etc. The class schedule is posted to the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website monthly.

July through November of 2014, over 700 seniors received training through AARP TEK workshops. Five workshops were held at senior housing facilities throughout Macon-Bibb. The workshops taught people aged 50+ technology basics, such as how to use smartphones, tablets, and social media apps.
Recommendation 5: Establish and Maintain a Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly community Facebook page and invite AF partners to post their AF information and events.

Implementation Step A: Facebook page with website so that the posts made on the website will automatically post to the Facebook page.

Update: Two Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly Facebook pages have been created. The CAC is exploring how to combine the two pages and expand the number of individuals able to maintain the consolidated Facebook page.

Implementation Step B: Identify a process of how often the Age-Friendly Facebook page will be updated and parties responsible for updating.

Update: The Age-Friendly Council is still in the process of identifying the best protocol for updating and posting to the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly Facebook page and who will have editorial control.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that the content of the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website is focused on Age-Friendly initiatives, programs, and improvements within the community.

Implementation Step A: Council members will post listings of upcoming events.

Update: Council members have been emailing upcoming events and resources to the current webmaster. Events are being uploaded to the website and posted to the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly Twitter and Facebook pages as they are received.

Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly Facebook page will contain a link to the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website.

Update: A link to the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website has been posted to the Facebook page.

Recommendation 7: Transfer hosting of the current Age-Friendly web page to County for better consumer access and webpage traffic.

Implementation Step A: Contact Macon-Bibb Public Affairs Director to discuss website transfer to Macon-Bibb government.

Update: Macon-Bibb Public Affairs Director has been contacted and has agreed to build an Age-Friendly page on the
Once this has been done, a volunteer will be trained to update the page with Age-Friendly information. Transfer and training will be completed in the first quarter of 2017.

Domain 7: Civic Participation & Employment

**Recommendation 1:** Sponsor website for the public to post specific questions about the community and post responses on the site as a resource for others seeking information on the Macon-Bibb community.

**Implementation Step A:** Identify possibilities for the website, including a host that is able to develop the website and maintain the website information and updates.

**Update:** Communication domain subcommittee ensured the creation of the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website. The website is updated regularly as information becomes available. Transfer and training will be completed in the first quarter of 2017. Currently, a link to the website is on the Macon-Bibb County government website.

**Recommendation 2:** Help age 50+ students write and publish their life stories.

**Implementation Step A:** Set up writing workshops for the public through the Macon Telegraph, Daybreak, Facebook, and YouTube.

**Update:** Workshops have been successful and led to the publishing of “Regeneration! A Journal of Creative Writing 2016”. Several book readings have been held throughout Middle Georgia and the Southeast.

**Implementation Step B:** Provide “Train the Trainer” workshops that will allow volunteers to assist others with their storytelling.

**Update:** Storytelling workshops were held at Tattnall Square during the 2015 and 2016 Cherry Blossom Festival.

**Recommendation 3:** Assist impoverished people, through Lens of Poverty, to tell their own stories in their authentic voice which are available through Amazon and in bookstores.
**Implementation Step A:** Marketing of “the stories” through media and video.

**Update:** Over 50 stories have been compiled from participants at Daybreak Resource Center and set to be published in spring 2017. The stories have been presented by Sharon McElhaney at the 2015 Mercer Bear Day, and 2014 Research Conference. This publication is marketed on the Regeneration Press website.

**Recommendation 4:** Place students in the community to participate in various service projects.

**Implementation Step A:** Identify various interns at local colleges – use of high school students, non-profit organizations, veterans, Habitat for Humanity, and Mercer University Service Learning.

**Update:** Students have been recruited to participate in seminars on play writing. The seminars are designed to educate students on how to provide workshops and write plays dealing with difficult topics, such as memory loss among older adults.

**Recommendation 5:** Provide referrals for legal assistance with workplace rights to those who do not understand the legal process and/or cannot afford representation.

**Implementation Step A:** Identify and contact appropriate legal representatives or agency (AARP, GA Legal Services Macon-Bibb County, Mercer Law School, and the faith-based community).

**Update:** A system for referrals through Age-Friendly is not feasible. The group has decided to create an annotated guide, to be published on the website, which provides resources for legal assistance.

**Recommendation 6:** Build and expand collaborations with local universities to leverage opportunities for seniors in such programs as professional studies, enrichment classes to strengthen/learn new skills, service learning (internships/community service programs) free classes for 62+ adults, Encore Program and EMBA degree programs.

**Implementation Step A:** Have Age-Friendly representatives meet with organizations to “spread the gospel.” Examples include *The Georgia Informer, Macon Middle Georgia Black*
Pages, Macon Telegraph and News, local colleges, websites, and Heaven’s Light Radio Program, etc.

Update: Public colleges and universities of Middle Georgia offer opportunities for free education to individuals aged 62+. This information is regularly shared by Age-Friendly CAC members at age-friendly events.

**Recommendation 7:** Ensure Macon-Bibb maintains Age-Friendly focus to address availability of large print records (taxes, etc.), telephone communications for the deaf and promotes an active lifestyle.

**Implementation Step A:** Identify options and develop strategies for Age-Friendly group.

Update: Currently, Age-Friendly volunteers and CAC members inform Macon-Bibb residents of the options available for adaptive devices that enable better communication for the seeing and hearing impaired. GA Power will provide bills in large print or in braille upon request. The Area Agency on Aging has partnered with the local Center for Independent Living (CIL) to introduce a voucher program to allow disabled adults to obtain up to $300 worth of adaptive equipment to assist with impairments.

**Recommendation 8:** Disseminate flyers, electronic documents and postings on websites that advertise various opportunities for civic participation and employment to schools, churches, and other appropriate organizations.

Update: Opportunities for civic participation and employment have been identified and are posted to the Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly website. Age-Friendly AARP volunteers and CAC members routinely share opportunities that have been identified with clients at their respective organizations.

**Domain 8: Community Support and Health Services**

**Recommendation 1:** Conduct focus group discussions with older adults of Macon-
**Implementation Step A:** Collaborate with students and faculty at Mercer Graduate School of Public Health to plan and implement focus group discussions.

**Update:** Mercer University began moving its Graduate Public Health program to the Atlanta campus in 2013. In fall 2015, Mercer University started the undergraduate degree program in public health at the Macon Campus. The Age-Friendly CAC is working to utilize the undergraduate program as they move forward in the next five years.

**Implementation Step B:** Once focus group discussions are completed and analysis of their data has taken place, disseminate this information beginning with the Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee in order to better inform the community of our work.

**Update:** Area Agency on Aging (AAA) public hearings for the AAA Area Plan were held all throughout the region to ensure everyone is aware of the challenges the older population is experiencing. The plan was also made available online to increase its circulation. Middle Georgia Regional Plan public hearings were also used to gain information about other domains.

Recognizing the rate of pedestrian injuries and fatalities in Macon-Bibb as a public health concern, the Pedestrian Fatality Review Board (PFRB) partnered with the Macon-Bibb County Health Department to develop and print pedestrian safety coloring books. The books were disseminated throughout the community and were a great success. More books are set to be printed for distribution in 2017.

**Implementation Step C:** Use collected data to help the Social Support and Health Committee determine which subjects should be addressed in community events and Public Service Announcements as described in the following recommendations.

**Update:** The Pedestrian Fatality Review Board (PFRB) regularly receives data from Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System (GEARS). This data reports the type and location of accidents that have occurred; this information has been used to create PSA’s on
pedestrian safety and have been disseminated throughout the community.

Data gathered during the public hearings held by the Area Agency on Aging was used to update the 2016-2017 AAA Area Plan. The Area Plan establishes goals for aging services in Middle Georgia.

**Implementation Step D:** Use the established methods to conduct similar focus group discussions about housing and other Age-Friendly domains.

**Update:** Area Agency on Aging public hearings for the Area Aging Plan were held all throughout the region to ensure everyone is aware of the challenges the older population is experiencing. The plan was also made available online to increase its circulation. Middle Georgia Regional Plan public hearings were also used to gain information about other domains.

**Recommendation 2:** Hold regular on-going educational events/programs addressing health issues that were identified by focus group participants.

**Implementation Step A:** Solicit speakers from community organizations, gerontology health care specialists, and other organizations.

**Update:** The Hispanic Outreach Coalition meets on a monthly basis to educate the Latino population of the many services that are available in the community. Each meeting is hosted by a different organization and information is provided of the services they provide.

**Implementation Step B:** Hold forums in easily accessible community locations and make these events a regular feature in the community.

**Update:** The Macon-Bibb County Health Department (MBCHD) conducts monthly educational sessions and blood pressure screenings at the Bibb County Senior Center. The MBCHD works to implement initiatives that not only encourage residents to utilize their services, but also to make them easy to access. Examples of this include the drive-thru flu shot service they offer every year, and the new satellite location for their Teen Health Center.
The Macon-Bibb County Health Department also conducts monthly educational sessions on car seat safety and performs inspections of car seats.

Macon-Bibb area hospitals, the MBCHD, the Macon Volunteer Clinic and the Area Agency on Aging, offer health education classes throughout the community. These classes are designed to help residents with managing chronic diseases, fall prevention, and overall wellness.

Area Agency on Aging partners with various community organizations to facilitate evidence-based wellness programs (i.e. Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, Diabetes Self-Management Program, and A Matter of Balance) year-round.

**Recommendations 3:** Create and air PSAs with relevant public health information on local television and radio stations and in newspapers.

**Implementation Step A:** Solicit participation of locally known figures (commissioners, TV reporters, religious leaders, etc.) as actors/presenters to personalize messages and increase self-efficacy among audience.

**Update:** Rather than recruiting locally known figures, Age-Friendly affiliated organizations have recruited local volunteers that are Macon-Bibb residents to be a part of the PSA’s developed and publicized.

**Implementation Step B:** Collaborate with advertising experts and educators to craft messages that will reach the intended audience.

**Update:** Collaboration with cumulus radio for development of Georgia Cares radio advertisements.

Public service announcements for the Macon-Bibb County Health Department aired regularly (i.e. flu shot availability, shingles vaccine awareness program, etc.). Health Department also has a monthly newsletter distributed to community partners and posted to Facebook.

The Macon-Bibb County Health Department sponsored the creation of a pedestrian safety coloring book to be disseminated to school aged children and their families.
Recommendation 4: The Community Support and Health Domain Committee will continue to work with the Housing Domain Committee in a collaborative effort to accomplish recommendations for issues that overlap in both domains in efforts to increase efficiency.

**Implementation Step A:** Committees will meet together at least bi-monthly

**Update:** The community support and health domains collaborate at the bi-monthly age-friendly CAC meetings. These collaborative meetings continue to be held.

Recommendation 5: Coordinate a community service provider committee focused on collaboration of community events which promote health access opportunities.

**Implementation Step A:** Arrange a kick-off meeting at the Middle Georgia Regional Commission office and extend an invitation to community service partners.

**Update:** The first meeting was held on June 24, 2016 and consisted of 10 community organizations. As a result, the group agreed to conduct quarterly meetings to share information, and to develop a coordinated community calendar to share health and wellness outreach activities.

Recommendation 6: Attend Macon-Bibb County Commission meetings in an effort to influence the development of public infrastructure targeting community health access needs.

**Implementation Step A:** Review Commission agenda to determine items of interest to the health collaborative and develop factual information to be shared with the Commission explaining the impacts of the project on community health needs.

**Update:** Pedestrian safety has been identified as a major public health concern in Macon-Bibb. As a result, the Pedestrian Fatality Review Board has been convened; CAC members are a part of the PFRB. Macon-Bibb has already put some infrastructure changes in place to improve pedestrian safety. These features include a round-a-bout at one corner entrance of Tattnall Square Park and a new pedestrian bridge on Mercer University Drive.

Recommendation 7: Identify contact at Senior News for articles and press releases.

**Implementation Step A:** Establish contact at Senior News to find out who receives and releases articles.
Update: This recommendation has been completed. Contact has been established by the Area Agency on Aging and an on-going Georgia Cares article is currently in publication.
Macon-Bibb Vision for the Next 5 Years: 2017-2021

Macon-Bibb refers to itself as a “Stand Out” Community and a city moving “Forward Together.” Macon-Bibb was the first Age-Friendly community in Georgia, the first designated in AARP’s network of communities in the United States, and the first city-county Age-Friendly community. Since the designation, the area has experienced numerous accomplishments as indicated throughout this report.

In general terms, Macon-Bibb’s Vision is to continue its commitment to its citizens by insuring that essentials such as roadways and transportation infrastructure are in place and that housing, recreational and health services are available. With the engagement of the Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee (CAC), Macon-Bibb will continue to implement and expand those programs and services that contribute to an outstanding quality of life for all citizens of Macon-Bibb.

More specifically over the next five years Macon-Bibb’s Age-Friendly initiatives will:

**Update and Expand Community Advisory Council**

Age-Friendly Macon-Bibb will utilize the process established through the Mayor’s office to renew and/or appoint new Age-Friendly Advisory Committee Members. Macon-Bibb has been fortunate to have a diverse group of very talented, dedicated and highly skilled CAC members that have served for several years, successfully working to implement the community’s 2014-2106 Age-Friendly Community Action Plan. To ensure the continued leadership and support of AF operations, the Mayor used a two-year appointment process of CAC members since the AF designation in 2012. Therefore, some CAC members will remain in their current roles, while the Mayor will identify, appoint, and orient several new CAC members. It is anticipated that a full 28-member committee will be in place by June 2017.

**Continue Implementation of Domain Tasks**

Macon-Bibb has been successfully working as an AF community for more than 5 years. The CAC will continue to champion, support and implement activities that fall within the 8 domains. In addition, the CAC will seek and receive citizen feedback, while implementing newly identified recommendations that are designed to improve the quality of life for Macon-Bibb residents.

**Link Domain Goals to the Livability Index**

Linking the domains to the Livability Index is a key element for determining success and change as Macon-Bibb’s Age-Friendly community works to become a more livable community.

The domain leaders will make every effort to ensure that the current indices accurately reflect the Macon-Bibb community. They will set future goals based on index metrics, and assess
Macon-Bibb’s existing policies, laws, and regulations. Moreover, they will identify needed additions and changes that can positively affect the index numbers.

The overall index Livability Score for Macon-Bibb is 49. However, the index numbers for Engagement, Environment and Housing (59, 64, and 68 respectively) are significantly higher than most areas in the Southern US. These numbers can be improved, and the vision is to see all index numbers progress, which in turn will improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Maintain Partnerships and Enlist New Partners, Stakeholders and Sponsors

AARP Georgia has worked closely with Macon-Bibb in the development and implementation of the Age-Friendly program. Many local organizations and institutions have stepped up to provide logistical support, in-kind services, and visible participation in many community programs. The vision for the future is to identify foundations and donors who will allocate additional funds and grants to support Age-Friendly initiatives. Organizations such as the Tufts Health Foundation, Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit, The John T. Gorman Foundation have invested in Age-Friendly communities. Macon-Bibb has the characteristics of proven collaborative efforts, membership in a network, strong supportive leadership and proven accomplishments that makes it an excellent candidate to receive funding from partners, and foundations.

Increase Internet Connectivity for Older Adults

Macon-Bibb is part of the White House initiative, ConnectHome to expand internet access to every low-income family. A primary reason for Macon-Bibb’s selection as one of the 28 communities across the nation to participate in this project is the local commitment to expanding broadband and the support of local partners. The necessity for internet access for students and younger adults is just as essential for older adults. Surveys show that many older adults do not have internet access at home. The 2012 data show that 77% of 30-49-year-old households have high-speed internet, while only 39% of age 65+ households have connections. Many services needed by older adults are only accessible with internet connectivity. In addition, internet connectivity helps prevent isolation and allows older adults to connect with family and friends. One of the longer-term visions of Age-Friendly Macon-Bibb is to increase the number of older adult households with internet access. AARP’s Public Policy Institute shows that technology provides support in areas of health preservation, social connectedness, functional capability, activity and caregiver support.

Implement Vision Zero for Safer Streets

Macon-Bibb currently has the second highest per capita pedestrian fatality rate in Georgia. Age-Friendly Macon-Bibb is actively involved in the Pedestrian Fatality Review Board’s (PFRB) efforts to address this very serious problem. The Mayor’s Office, local law enforcement, the county traffic engineer and several other community leaders comprise the members of the Board. By age 75 a person is twice as likely as a 16-20 year old to die in a pedestrian crash. Safe streets are a significant issue as it relates to older adults and the livability of their community. Older adults
often feel imprisoned in their own homes because they are afraid to try to maneuver in the traffic. Macon-Bibb is developing projects that involve sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian medians and other safety improvements at high risk locations. Macon-Bibb’s vision is that all citizens will be able to walk safely to the market, the park or just walk for health’s sake.

“Volunteers Make Livable Communities”

By fall of 2017, Macon-Bibb will start a series of five community talk sessions to identify specific needs of the community and explore local ideas to address community problems as they relate to the domain areas. Age-Friendly will also seek to recruit additional volunteers to help with program implementation. As an example, teach community members how to conduct walkability audits, build a pocket park, start a community garden, or host a technology training session. Citizen engagement is the most effective way to connect with the community and make the outcomes their successes which leads to greater Age-Friendly successes.

One Macon

One Macon, a collaboration of 40 different organizations, is continuing the implementation of its strategic plan with the long-term goal of “creating an energetic and opportune region where workforce thrives, sense of places is keen and education excels opportunity. It’s in this spirit of collaboration that egos are set aside, silos come down, sleeves are rolled up and the OneMacon Way! takes the lead towards a prosperous and engaged community”. One Macon is tracking the progress of the implementation of its plan sharing the progress which continues to make Macon-Bibb a more Age-Friendly community.
Second Street Corridor

Mayor Robert Reichert, with community support, has initiated the Second Street Corridor Project. This multi-year initiative will involve a major revamping and renovation of a significant portion of the general downtown and surrounding area over the next five years. It will create a new entry way into Macon at the interchange of Mercer University. Many of the features that will be included in the project will be bike lanes, reverse angle parking, landscaping, shade trees, and benches with improved sidewalks. Thus it should greatly aid in making the area, and the community more livable for older adults and all of Macon-Bibb residents. The corridor will include new restaurants, housing, and a hotel/restaurant development. When the project is complete, residents will be in safe walking distance of a hospital and parks to enjoy the benefits of living in an Age-Friendly community.

Macon Connects

Macon Connects is an initiative that will change the mobility of Macon residents. Macon’s 2015 Action Plan (MAP) created a comprehensive strategic guide to help improve the urban areas of Macon-Bibb to promote connectivity. Macon Connects had significant accomplishments in 2015 funded by the Knight Foundation. Macon Connects has built a pop-up bike network throughout the urban core that greatly enhances the mobility of Macon residents. Macon Connects and partner organizations will continue their work to improve access to all parts of the city. Key partners include NewTown Macon, Macon-Bibb County, Better Block, and 8 80 Cities.

Macon-Bibb County Planning for a more Livable Community

The first-ever Strategic Plan helped develop the consolidated government’s new Mission and Vision statements, as well as five Strategic Focus areas that are helping to emphasize service delivery, programs, and initiatives: Economic and Community Development; Safe
Neighborhoods and Safe Communities; Efficient and Effective Government; Infrastructure Improvement; and Quality of Life.

As Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly continues to move forward over the next five years, it has a great foundation, and a powerful vision to create noteworthy improvements in areas that impact every domain. The Mayor, the Age-Friendly CAC, numerous stakeholders and partners will achieve notable outcomes over the next five years.

**Macon-Bibb Teams up with 8 80 Cities**

A partnership of Macon-Bibb County, Macon Urban Development Authority, Main Street Macon, and Bike Walk Macon, led by NewTown Macon has teamed up with 8 80 cities to create additional mobility options and transportation choices for Macon. A series of community forums that include implementation that is under consideration by the community.
Conclusion

In conclusion, Macon-Bibb is proud of the progress made during 2014-2016. The leadership and residents of Macon-Bibb pledge to continue the effective programs currently in progress and implement new initiatives over the next five years to improve quality of life for all its residents.

It is evident that many programs and polices put forth by the WHO and AARP can bring about significant changes in how communities develop long range planning, allocate resources and build relationships with stakeholders and partners. Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly will continue to explore and employ these programs and policies, implement them when they are suited for Macon-Bibb and monitor the impact on the metrics in the communities Livability Index.

Finally, Macon-Bibb will continue to utilize the greatly appreciated resources of the many community volunteers, the AARP Georgia State Office and AARP Headquarters as the community moves "Forward Together" to implement the vision over the next five years.
Appendix

Macon-Bibb Age-Friendly Resource List
8 80 Cities - http://www.880cities.org/
AARP Georgia State Office - http://states.aarp.org/region/georgia/
AARP Livability Index – www.aarp.org/livabilityindex
AARP - www.AARP.org
Bibb County School District - www.bc.12.net/
Cherry Blossom Festival - https://www.cherryblossom.com
Connect Home - http://www.maconbibb.us/tag/connecthome/
Georgia Department of Transportation - www.gadot.gov
Georgia PEDS - http://peds.org/
Keep Macon Beautiful - http://kmbbc.org/
Macon Art Alliance - www.maconartsalliance.org
Macon Connects - www.newtownmacon.com/macon-connects/
Macon Consolidated Government - www.Maconbibb.us
Macon Housing Department - http://www.maconhousing.com/
Macon Parks and Recreation - http://www.maconbibb.us/recreation/
Macon Planning and Zoning - https://mbpz.org
Macon Transit Authority - http://www.mta-mac.com
Macon-Bibb County Commissioners - http://www.maconbibb.us/commissioners/
Macon-Bibb Health Department - www.maconbibb.us/tag/health-department/
Macon-Bibb Sheriff’s Department - http://bibbsheriff.us/
Mayor Robert Reichert - http://www.maconbibb.us/mayor/
Mercer University - www.mercer.edu
Middle Georgia Regional Commission - http://www.middlegeorgiarc.org/
Middle Georgia State University - https://www.mga.edu
One Macon - http://www.onemacon.org/
Tattnall Square Park - http://fotsp.org/
Wesleyan College - www.wesleyancollege.edu

Links to Strategic Plans
Macon Action Plan - www.maconactionplan.com
Macon-Bibb County Strategic Plan - http://www.maconbibb.us/maconbibbstrategicplan/
Newtown Macon Strategic Plan - www.newtownmacon.com/powering-newtown/strategic-plan/
This page intentionally left blank