Livable Sheboygan Committee Members

Pastor Abraham, Comunitario Centro La Cima
Carrie Arenz, City of Sheboygan
Sarah Beckman, Habitat for Humanity Lakeside
Jeannie Bogardus, Senior Services Commission
Judy Gmach, AARP Advocate
Craig Grabhorn, Local artist
Darrell Hofland, City of Sheboygan
Lisa Hurley, ADRC of Sheboygan County
Jane Jensen, UW Extension
Tom Malmstad, United Way of Sheboygan County
Nancy Maring, City of Sheboygan
Rich Miesfeld, Lakeland University
John Motiska, Harbor Centre BID
Mary Motiska, Sheboygan County EDC
Derek Muench, Shoreline Metro
Emily Nuernberg, Habitat for Humanity Lakeside
Doug Palmer, Kohler Co.
Chad Pelishek, City of Sheboygan
Grazia Perrella, Sargento
Kelly Rohde, Mead Public Library
Jon Rost, Hearthstone
Vicky Schneider, Senior Activity Center
Sarah Schwefel, City of Sheboygan
Michael Vandersteen, City of Sheboygan
Darrin Wasnieswki, AARP
Saleen Yang, Hmong Mutual Assistance Association

Community Partners

City of Sheboygan
John Michael Kohler Arts Center
AARP
Kohler Company
Habitat For Humanity Lakeside
Sargento
UW Extension Sheboygan
Senior Services Commission
Harbor Centre BID District
Hearthstone
AARP Advocate
Mead Public Library
ADRC of Sheboygan County
Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation
Centro Comunitario La Cima
Lakeland University
Hmong Mutual Assistance Association
United Way of Sheboygan County
Sheboygan is a city of approximately 48,200 people in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. The city is bordered by Lake Michigan on the east, Interstate 43 on the west, the Town of Sheboygan to the north, and Town of Wilson to south. Known as “The Spirit on the Lake,” the City of Sheboygan rests on the Lake Michigan shores, at the halfway point of the state’s eastern seaboard. Historically, hard-working northern Europeans settled Sheboygan and shaped it into the manufacturing powerhouse it continues to be. Over time, Sheboygan has welcomed a more diverse population while continuing its tradition of a strong work ethic. Sheboygan residents enjoy working hard and playing hard. The positioning of Sheboygan on Wisconsin’s Lake Michigan coast, combined with access to the Sheboygan River and the proximity to outstanding state parks, allows residents and tourists a plethora of recreational activities.

Examining key demographic and economic indicators provides a baseline understanding of the city’s current situation and its opportunities for future focus. Data indicates that Sheboygan is a prosperous coastal community known for its manufacturing base, educational facilities, diverse residents, and quality, affordable housing. These facts, along with a number of key assets, contribute to the city’s strength. However, Sheboygan’s shifting demographic profile and changing position in the region indicate the city needs to consider new approaches and strategies to maintain success. Key economic and demographic indicators for the city are:

- Sheboygan’s 2018 population was 48,203 representing a four percent decrease since 2000. The city’s household size is also shrinking from an average of 2.99 persons per household in 1970 to 2.38 in 2010.
- Sheboygan’s homes are significantly more affordable compared to the county and neighboring communities.
- According to 2016 Census data, the city’s median household income was $44,134. The median age in Sheboygan is 36.6 years compared to the State of Wisconsin at 39.4 years.
- 91.6 percent of residents have achieved a high school diploma or higher. 23.6 percent of residents have received a bachelor’s degree or higher, per 2016 Census data.

AARP Livability Index rates Sheboygan’s Livability Index Score as a total of 64/100, indicating strengths in Transportation, Opportunities and Engagement. Sheboygan strengths also include exceptional full-time police and fire departments. The Sheboygan Police Department consists of the 83 full-time sworn officers, providing 24-hour police protection. The Sheboygan Fire Department consists of the 74 sworn officers, providing 24-hour fire and emergency medical services to the residents of Sheboygan.
Background Continued

The City of Sheboygan operates a premier public transportation system known as Shoreline Metro. Service is offered Monday through Saturday, with most routes operating on a 30-minute schedule. In 2018, Shoreline Metro contracted with the Sheboygan Area School District (SASD) to provide free bus service year-round to their students.

SASD serves nearly 9,200 students in 26 schools, providing a wide variety of educational opportunities, ranging from four-year old kindergarten to college courses offered at the high school level. All instruction is provided by a highly-educated teaching staff. The State of Wisconsin standards for teaching licenses are among the highest in the nation.

Sheboygan is proud to host the University of Wisconsin Green Bay, Sheboygan campus located within its municipal boundaries.

History of Livable Sheboygan Committee Work

Shortly after Sheboygan joined the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Network of Age-Friendly Cities initiative, a task force was formed to create an action plan to make Sheboygan more livable. Recognizing the importance of inclusion, the task force chose to focus on livability rather than age-friendliness, and named themselves “Livable Sheboygan.” Livable Sheboygan includes members from local advocacy groups, non-profits, City of Sheboygan staff, economic development professionals, the arts community, and members of the business improvement district. The mission developed by Livable Sheboygan involves promoting positive attributes of the community through collaboration, advocacy, and engagement. The group is committed to building partnerships and effective communication with stakeholders in our community.

Livable Sheboygan sponsored community outreach to promote and discuss livability in late fall of 2018. This outreach included five community listening sessions guided by the AARP livability listening session manual. These sessions gathered feedback from residents to reflect on our city’s condition and services offered specifically to people as they age. Outreach included listening sessions and surveys conducted in Spanish, an appearance on Hmong Radio, a booth at the Hmong New Year celebration, an informational booth at the Sheboygan Farmers Market, and promotion at the Levitt Amp Outdoor Concert Series. Presentations were made to city department heads to inform them of the efforts of Livable Sheboygan and to gather information on initiatives each department has undertaken related to age-friendliness and livability.
Mission and Vision

Mission Statement: To promote the positive attributes of Sheboygan through collaboration, advocacy, and engagement.

Vision Statement: That all community stakeholders are connected to and demonstrate pride in the City of Sheboygan.

Eight Domains of a Livable Community
The eight domains of a livable community is a framework developed by the World Health Organization and promoted by AARP. The framework allows communities to organize their work to become more age friendly and livable; not just for older adults, but for people of all ages. The eight domains are as follows:

• Outdoor Spaces and Buildings - Outdoor Spaces and Buildings refer to the public places of gathering in the community. Public buildings and spaces should be easily accessible and welcoming to people with limited mobility.
• Transportation - The Transportation domain covers public transportation and all of the various ways that people move about the community.
• Housing - The housing domain asks communities to ensure that there are ample housing options for older adults in the community, including handicap accessible private homes, subsidized housing for seniors and affordable assisted living.
• Social Participation - Access to leisure and cultural activities, including opportunities for older residents to socialize and engage with their peers as well as with younger people.
• Respect and Social Inclusion - Programs that promote ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as multigenerational interaction and dialogue.
• Civic Participation and Engagement - Paid work and volunteer activities for older residents and opportunities to engage in the formulation of policies relevant to their lives.
• Communication and Information - Access to communications technology and other resources so older residents can connect with their community, friends, and family.
• Community and Health Services - Access to home-based care services, health clinics and programs that promote wellness and active aging.
OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Sheboygan continues to rank high in this domain during our survey and exploration phase. Outdoor spaces and buildings is included in the City of Sheboygan's strategic plan under Quality of Life. 87 percent of survey participants indicated the quality of life in Sheboygan was excellent, very good, and good. This is an overall increase of 13 percent since the 2016 Community Survey. 2016 was the first time a community survey was completed.

Sheboygan's waterfront continues to be the number one asset of the community. Sheboygan's miles of lakefront, sandy beaches and navigable river entice thousands of residents and tourists each year. The area has become a natural resource destination and brings in millions of dollars in visitor spending per year.

Sheboygan maintains over 76 acres of parkland. As the city and neighboring areas continue to grow, the demand on existing programs, facilities, and park areas are anticipated to grow proportionally. Sheboygan intends to continue its tradition of providing top-quality, outdoor recreational opportunities for its residents.

Downtown Sheboygan has a walkability score of 83/100 and bike score of 89/100 per WalkScore.com. Downtown Sheboygan, Riverfront, and South Pier are in the midst of an important revival. Downtown Sheboygan is a cultural destination complete with art, music, nightlife and dining. Downtown Sheboygan is also experiencing a number of new, large-scale, residential complexes providing the growing number of resident the robust, walkable, urban lifestyle they are looking for.

Livable Sheboygan proposes to:

- Communicate and promote an ADA assessment plan, make recommendations, and advocate for all city facilities to be brought up to code.
- Inventory and promote current accessible amenities throughout the City of Sheboygan.
- Improve the perception of neighborhood safety.
TRANSPORTATION

Transportation options available in Sheboygan are excellent for a community with a population under 50,000. Sheboygan has a city-operated public transportation service known as Shoreline Metro providing service Monday through Saturday to Sheboygan and the surrounding cities, towns and villages. All buses are equipped with bike racks and accessible features for mobility concerns. Shoreline Metro also offers an on-demand para transit service for door-to-door service for the elderly for medical appointments at a subsidized rate from Sheboygan County. Bus ridership on fixed routes has increased by 14 percent in 2018, a 16 year high in ridership. Shoreline Metro also operates the Metro Trolley during the summer months to connect the downtown and lakefront districts. This service is available to residents and tourists.

Sheboygan also has a number of privately owned taxi services and ride-sharing services, one example being Uber. In July 2005, the U.S. Congress adopted a new transportation budget including special provisions to create a Non-motorized Transportation Pilot Program. Sheboygan County was one of four communities in the country selected to participate. As part of the program, Sheboygan County received nearly $25 million over four years to develop a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that connect neighborhood. The City of Sheboygan received the largest share of these funds, used to invest in new trails to promote non-motorized transportation.

Sheboygan also realized the need to provide alternative forms of transportation. In 2020, Sheboygan will implement a bike share program allowing residents and visitors the ability to rent bicycles to navigate the downtown and lakefront areas.

Livable Sheboygan endorses the following activities as it relates to transportation:

• Create large font maps and other public information to assist in wayfinding.
• Provide adequate wayfinding signage around the city.
HOUSING

The majority of the housing stock in Sheboygan is pre-1940 vintage. This poses challenges for residents that prefer to live in a newer, affordable house. During community listening sessions, discussion centered around affordable housing opportunities, senior living, aging-in-place opportunities, and being able to live in close proximity to downtown.

Sheboygan offers a variety of housing options for older residents across a spectrum of needs — including independent living, assisted living, secured memory care, and skilled nursing care. Several of the options include supportive services. Sheboygan does not, however, provide a comprehensive continuum of care model in the same facility.

A number of local efforts are underway to improve the availability of housing for older adults, including affordable housing. Currently under construction is a 118-unit affordable housing development based on income in the former tannery property. Also, the city is currently undertaking a Riverbend Master Plan and one proposed use for the former Mayline property along the Sheboygan River is to redevelop the property with aging-in-place senior housing.

To address the Housing domain, Livable Sheboygan proposes to complete the following:

- Research and recommend programs and activities which encourage people of all ages to be connected to their communities and to remain in their own homes.
- Research and promote housing assistance programs for aging in place.
According to the World Health Organization, social participation has significant benefits above and beyond adding entertainment to a lifestyle. Social participation is connected to positive health and well-being outcomes, including a longer lifespan, lower rates of depression, and feelings of empowerment. However, as an individual grows older, opportunities to participate socially can be more challenging due to physical changes or a lack of accessible transportation. As a result, in order for older adults to participate, social opportunities must be close to home, varied, and consistently occurring.

Fortunately, for the residents of Sheboygan, many options for social participation already exist. Residents interact with each other numerous times a week/month through a variety of venues including but not limited to the Senior Activity Center, Mead Public Library, and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

Seniors in Sheboygan can easily miss out on social opportunities because there is no centralized resource to find information about community events and other social activities. Instead, information is hosted in a variety of places including websites, Facebook, newspapers, and radio or TV commercials. Furthermore, event and class descriptions often do not contain information about accessibility or audio/visual support leaving individuals who have physical and sensory impairments with concerns about attending.

- Invite and encourage residents of all ages to attend public events, such as farmers markets, classes, concerts, and community festivals.
RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Inclusion goes beyond simply inviting people to participate. Intrinsic to the concept of inclusion is the sense of a wide range of perspectives, especially lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) and minority perspectives that may be frequently excluded. All residents need to feel valued, respected, and appreciated. Too often, older adults are invited to passively engage in community activities, rather than being recognized as potential active participants. In order for Sheboygan to become an livable community, it will be necessary not only for older residents to feel included in community activities, but also for seniors to provide an important voice in public matters, viewed as contributing members of society, and given the opportunity to take on leadership roles.

For the past few years Sheboygan has made a conscious effort to bring more young professionals to the city and encourage those currently living locally to stay. As a result, many networking groups have been focused on creating events and opportunities for young professionals and community-wide conversations have been largely focused on the importance of the millennial to a city’s vitality. As a result, many older adults have begun to feel undervalued and even uninvited to actively participate in a community to which they have contributed for years. While it is important to enhance the vitality of Sheboygan by catering to certain demographics, we must ensure our efforts do not isolate other populations.

- Develop strategy to expand programming to include diverse senior populations.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Unlike past generations, Baby Boomers have consistently expressed interest in remaining employed even as they reach their older years. This trend has come about for two reasons; some older adults enjoy the satisfaction and purpose gained from working, while others require additional income to cover their cost of living. Alternatively, as some adults grow older and become financially secure, they encounter new opportunities to start small businesses or launch an encore career. From walking dogs at the Humane Society of Sheboygan County and cleaning up hiking trails, to assisting with local elections, and serving on non-profit boards, there are ample opportunities for an individual of any ability to participate.

In addition to paid positions, Sheboygan boasts hundreds of volunteer opportunities, many of which are popular with older residents.

- Partner with institutions of higher learning to develop and facilitate lifelong learning programs.
- Initiate pop-up meetings to gather community input.
- Educate and encourage older adults to use the Volunteer Center program offered through United Way.
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Communication and Information holds a position of critical importance in the livable community Initiative because it directly affects all of the other domains. If widespread information does not ultimately reach older adults, even the best senior services will be underutilized and the most enjoyable social events will suffer from low attendance. When targeting older adults, it is important to use a variety of modalities to disseminate information. While many Baby Boomers are comfortable using the internet and social media to discover information, older generations are unfamiliar with computers and may miss out on information if not provided in other ways. Although the internet and the city’s website ranked as the number one way to access information in the community survey (62 percent), newspapers and local radio were also frequently cited.

- Expand newsletter to include community news items.
- Develop technology training and on-going support for older adults.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Health encompasses more than physical fitness, especially for older adults. In a livable community, health initiatives must also include access to health care services, caregiver support, an emphasis on mental health, and an abundance of preventative wellness programs.

In addition, the resources available for older adults in Sheboygan appear to suffer from a general lack of visibility. While many services exist, including caregiver support, Medicare and Medicaid enrollment assistance, palliative care, hospice, and courses on end of life decisions, the majority of older adults in Sheboygan do not know how to access them, falsely believe they do not qualify for services, or simply do not know these services exist.

- Research and recommend community connections for residents which promote wellness, as well as healthy and active aging.
Next Steps

Now that areas of improvement in Sheboygan have been identified and outlined, the Age-Friendly framework set forth by AARP and the WHO will serve as the guide for the next five years and beyond. Using the action items outlined in the Livable Sheboygan Action Plan, concrete steps to promote, implement, and sustain livable initiatives and programming will make Sheboygan a great place in which to age.

Implementation 2019-2023
The implementation phase of Livable Sheboygan initiative will be led by Livable Sheboygan and domain subgroups. This will occur over the span of three to five years. Upon endorsement of this report, Livable Sheboygan will begin to identify partners and develop the initiatives referenced in this action plan. After three years, Livable Sheboygan and the City of Sheboygan will submit a progress report to the AARP.

City of Sheboygan Five Year Strategic Plan
The City of Sheboygan will be updating their five year strategic plan in 2021. The framework used in this plan update will incorporate the livable community’s action plan and the focus on the eight domains. The Strategic Plan has become a valuable resource for governments as a way not only to communicate with residents, but also a means to establish performance based outcomes. The Livable Community’s Action Plan and the city’s Strategic Plan should share the same vision for the community.

Acknowledgements

Completing the Livable Communities Action Plan for Sheboygan was made possible by the collaboration of dozens of local individuals. Without their hard work and dedication to making our city a move livable place for residents of all ages, this action plan would not come to fruition.

Thank you to the staff of the Senior Activity Center and the Department of Planning and Development for their hard work and dedication of drafting this plan, assisting with the community survey and day-to-day correspondence with representatives of the AARP and the Sheboygan community.

Thank you also to Mayor Michael Vandersteen and City Administrator Darrell Hofland for their support and approval of this project and to Darrin Wasnieswki, AARP Wisconsin support. Furthermore, thank you to all the individuals on Livable Sheboygan who helped organize the launch of this project and guide its overall progress. Additionally, thank you to former supervisor of the Senior Activity Center of Sheboygan, Wendy Schmitz for her work and dedication to serve as the inspiration to push this initiative forward and organize all the community listening sessions.
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<tr>
<th>Domain of Livability: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Livable Sheboygan - AARP Livable Communities Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<th>Action Items Matrix</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>By Whom</th>
<th>Resources and Support</th>
<th>Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Meets</th>
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**SECTION NAME**
Sheboygan Sustainability Plan

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### Sheboygan Sustainability Plan

#### Appendix - Action Items Matrix

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<tr>
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<th>Metrics</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>House</td>
<td>Mobility of Home Modification Programs for Older Adults and Affordability of Age-Friendly Housing Options.</td>
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<td>Transportation - Safe and Affordable Modes of Private and Public Transportation.</td>
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**Domain of Livability:**

2017-2022
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<td><strong>Domain of Youth:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Respect &amp; Social Inclusion:</strong></td>
<td>Programs that promote ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as multicultural interaction and dialogue.</td>
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<td><strong>By whom</strong></td>
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## Sheboygan Sustainability Plan

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**Section:** United Way of Sheboygan County

**Goal:** Support local organizations to enhance access to technology and communication for all community members.

**Timeframe:** 2022

**Supports:**
- Partner with institutions of higher learning for innovative teaching programs.
- Gather community input to identify community needs.
- Hold at least two community engagement events/meetings.
- Support the implementation of ideas.

**Expected Outcomes:**
- Increased number of volunteers.
- Increased awareness and participation.
- Developed/implement increased community projects per year.

**Supporting Data:**
- United Way of Sheboygan County Library: Public Access
- United Way of Sheboygan County Business Plan: Social Media
- United Way of Sheboygan County Education and Ensurance: Volunteer Center Program

**Activities:**
- Partner with institutions of higher learning for innovative teaching programs.
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<td>Oct 2022</td>
<td>Expand Senior Activity Center newsletter to city and local advertisers. City of Sheboygan. Local advertisers. Distribution: SACS staff and city.</td>
<td>Activity Center for older adults.</td>
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