



## IS PRINCETON AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

I imagine you have thought about whether you will stay in Princeton and in your current home for the rest of your life. AARP found that 78% of people want to stay in their home and 80% believe their current community is where they will always live.

What makes a community age-friendly or livable?

*“A livable community is a place where people of all ages can enjoy secure, healthy lives and stay engaged in civic and social life. Livable communities offer housing choices, transportation, shopping and other services that meet everyone’s needs. These features make it easier for people to stay independent and avoid isolation. A livable community can reflect the rich tapestry of life, in which all generations contribute and interact, and the strength and wisdom of elders are not only respected but embraced.”* ~Jeannine English, AARP President

I’ve just returned from the AARP National Network of Age-Friendly Communities Conference in Washington, DC. It’s exciting to be part of a network of communities that have committed themselves to being age friendly and to learn about some of the efforts that they have made. Princeton joined the WHO and AARP networks last year. We are in the second phase of their process. We have until June 2016 to create a profile of the community, conduct a survey to see what we’re doing well and what needs improvement, and to create a plan of action.

We need to hear from you about what you find is working and what needs attention. What makes a community age friendly? The WHO established eight domains for assessing this: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information and community and health services. Key to livability (AARP uses the terms interchangeably) are compactness (walkable, reduced dependence on automobiles, supporting a socially vibrant public realm), integration of land uses - (live close to work, community activities and services), housing diversity and transportation.

Princeton has made many efforts that support our age friendly designation. Some examples include pocket and pop-up parks, traffic calming devices—speed bumps and rotaries, bike lanes, the FreeB bus, zoning, volunteer opportunities, intergenerational and neighborhood activities, Access Princeton, numerous cultural opportunities, quality medical care, and of course, PSRC programs and services.

At present, Princeton rates a score of 62 (out of 100) on AARP's new Livability Index (go to [www.livabilityindex.aarp.org](http://www.livabilityindex.aarp.org)). There are important issues that remain challenging. Some of the ones I've heard include pedestrian-safe intersections, transportation at night, and affordability. The Age Friendly Community effort is designed to be collaborative, from sharing the work of all network communities on the WHO and AARP websites for others to use, to engaging a local collaboration of government, non-profits, academic institutions, businesses and residents in identifying the problems and working together on the solutions.

Projects can be initiated by any person or organization. One example is the TCNJ Rowing team offering "Rent a Rower" when they were training last year, the idea was to provide help at an affordable price with projects like yard work, garage cleanouts, etc.; a win-win for the home owner needing help, and for the athletes, who earned money for the team. A business could install a resting chair, or a youth club could clear a wider, smoother park path. Many age friendly efforts benefit people of all ages in the community.

The Princeton Age Friendly Task Group would really like to hear from you. We will run one more focus group on October 27, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. for those who have not yet had a chance to participate. It's very important that our report reflect the issues that are important to you, Princeton residents.

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