



Findings Report:

Executive Summary

Central Ohio's 65+ population is expected to double in the next 35 years. This poses a great opportunity for the region to ensure that as people age and their abilities change, the region is able to provide easy access to services, amenities, and opportunities. Working within the World Health Organization and AARP Livable Communities guidelines, Age-Friendly Columbus will work toward implementing improvements in 8 focus areas, or Domains. Over the course of 2 years, this project will assess the age-friendliness of Columbus and result in a strategic plan to guide the City's and Central Ohio's efforts to maintain and promote a high quality of life for all residents.

The Eight Domains of Age-Friendly Columbus

- Communication and Information
- Community Support and Health Services
- Employment and Civic Participation
- Housing
- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Safety and Emergency Preparedness
- Social Participation, Respect, and Inclusion
- Transportation



THEMES

The first year (2016) of the initiative focused on assessing the age-friendliness of Columbus. Research, field work, and outreach resulted in several themes which are consistent with other studies relevant to the age-friendliness of Columbus and beyond. Some of its major themes are outlined below and will drive the creation of a strategic plan during the second year (2017) of the Age-Friendly Columbus initiative.

Community connections

Columbus is a diverse community with representation from a multitude of age groups, cultures, races, and ethnicities. Age-Friendly Columbus and its partners can bolster the benefits of this diversity by creating intergenerational connections, reducing negative stereotypes against older adults, and increasing neighborhood safety.

Housing

Columbus offers a range of housing options for its residents' varying needs and preferences. A clear understanding of the affordability, design, and age-friendliness of Columbus' housing stock will help its residents, leaders, developers, and others work together to assure that people have housing options in their neighborhoods as they age.

Additionally, while the continued growth of Columbus and Central Ohio is a major success, commitment to working together to reduce the rate of displacement, foreclosure, and evictions of our most vulnerable residents is critical to sustaining age-friendliness.

Mobility

The majority of older adults in Columbus drive themselves as their main mode of transportation. As their preferences and abilities change, Columbus and regional transportation partners can collaborate to ensure that people have other options of getting around. At a neighborhood level, connected and complete sidewalks are essential to encouraging and enabling residents – no matter their age – to walk and use public transportation.

Personal Preparation

While current conditions are largely favorable for older adults in Columbus, research shows that they may not be adequately planning for the future with regard to finances, housing, medical resources, long term services and supports, transportation, and social support networks.



STRENGTHS & CONCERNS

Strengths Identified by Columbus' Older Adults:

- Older residents find the city to be a good place to age
- Columbus has many options for long-term services and supports
- Older residents want to be engaged as partners for making Age-Friendly improvements
- Columbus has a strong network of neighborhood-based grass-roots organizations, such as Villages, Settlement Houses, and Neighborhood Pride Centers, that support aging-in-place and intergenerational connections

Concerns Identified by Columbus' Older Adults:

- Older residents are concerned about the fast-paced growth of the city and the potential negative effects it could have on affordable and accessible housing
- Resources and safety-related disparities exist across neighborhoods
- Mobility challenges and reliance on personal vehicles need to be addressed
- There is a perception of ageism and negative stereotypes of older adults in the community
- There is a lack of preparation for individuals' changing needs and preferences over time

“The results of the Age-Friendly Columbus survey indicate a varied and vibrant older adult community largely satisfied with the services and amenities available to them. Protecting and building upon those assets will be critical as the Age-Friendly Columbus initiative moves forward.”

Age-Friendly Columbus Survey Report, The Center for Community Solutions



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