



Our intention is to have in-person meetings going forward. For the time being, we will hold the City Committee Meetings, Plan Commission, Council and most others at the Community Room at 933 Michigan Avenue. This in-person location will meet the legal requirement for our open meetings.

We will have a virtual option available, but the technology for the hybrid style meeting may not be reliable all of the time.

AGENDA

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMISSION

Members

- Lee Bartnik
- Pearline Douglas
- Kate Giblin
- John Jury
- Marcia McDonald
- Michele Miller
- Dominique Swangstu
- Kaitlyn Wall
- Don Wigington
- Mykeerah Zarazua

Date December 19,
and 2023
Time: 5:00 PM

Location: Community Room
933 Michigan Avenue, Stevens Point, WI

OR

Zoom Teleconferencing

Meeting ID: 870 8016 7605

Passcode: 621548

By Computer:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87080167605?pwd=cGx3MVc1S2lXUkp2RXUybEN>

By Phone: +1-312-626-6799 (US Chicago)

Opening Section:

1. Roll Call

Discussion and Possible Action on the Following:

2. Selection of a Chairperson for the Age-Friendly Commission.
3. Selection of a Vice Chairperson for the Age-Friendly Commission.
4. Report of the November 16, 2023 meeting of the Age-Friendly Commission.
5. Conducting a community network analysis of Stevens Point.
6. Staff Updates:
 - Project timeline.
 - Kick-off party.
 - Community Challenge Grant.
7. Adjourn

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that any person who has special needs while attending these meetings or needs agenda materials for these meetings should contact the City Clerk as soon as possible to ensure that a reasonable accommodation can be made. The City Clerk can be reached by telephone at (715) 346-1569 or by mail at 1515 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481.

Maps further defining the above area(s) may be obtained from the City of Stevens Point Department of Community Development, 1515 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481, or by calling (715) 346-1567, during normal business hours.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that a quorum of the Common Council may be in attendance at this meeting.

REPORT OF AGE-FRIENDLY COMMISSION

November 16, 2023 – 5:00 PM
In-Person & Zoom Conference Call Meeting

PRESENT: Commissioner Douglas, Commissioner Giblin, Commissioner Jury, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Swangstu, Commissioner Wall, Commissioner Zarazua

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Wiza, Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn, Darrin Wasniewski and unidentified audience members via Virtual Zoom Meeting.

INDEX:

Opening Section:

1. Roll call.

Discussion and possible action on the following:

2. Introductions.
 3. Discussion on the AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities and the Role of the Stevens Point Age-Friendly Commission.
 4. Introduction – Community Needs Assessment.
 5. Adjourn.
-

Opening Section:

1. Roll call.

Associate Planner/Zoning explained opening rules for the commission as it related to roll call.

Mayor Wiza provided an opening statement for the commission and thanked them in advance for their service and efforts.

Present: Douglas, Giblin, Jury, Miller, Swangstu, Wall, Zarazua

Excused: Bartnik, McDonald

Absent: Wigington

Discussion and possible action on the following:

2. Introductions.

Present members provided summaries of their professional and personal experience and expertise. Post introductions, Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn continued the conversation by asking current commission members the following:

Q: What makes Stevens Point livable? What is one thing we can improve on to make it more livable?

Commissioners made the following comments:

- *Livable:* A friendly community. *Improve:* Lack of lighting in key areas where there are pedestrians.
- *Livable:* Environmental and outdoor recreation options.
- *Livable:* Larger City with small-town feel. *Improve:* Affordable housing, especially for seniors.
- *Livable:* Events through the seasons, local shops. *Improve:* Lack of transportation options, walkability concerns during the winter.

- *Livable*: Central physical location, sense of collaboration and openness for not just entities but community involvement, and outdoor recreation. *Improve*: Lack of affordable and quality housing and need better transportation offerings.
- *Livable*: Good area to raise a family, walkability to parks and other offerings. *Improve*: Lack of quality housing with good walkability, especially for seniors.
- *Livable*: Kind, welcoming, and friendly citizens, lots of community help and involvement. *Improve*: Lack of affordable housing and accessible transportation.

No action was taken.

3. Discussion on the AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities and the Role of the Stevens Point Age-Friendly Commission.

Darrin Wasniewski, Associate State Director-Community Outreach with AARP Wisconsin provided the following details:

- Personal introduction and background.
- AARP online resources and history of how they became involved with 'livable communities'.
- 'Is Your Community Age-Friendly' Presentation (*a copy of this presentation is available in the publicly posted agenda packet*).

Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn opened the floor for further discussion or questions.

Commissioners had the following comments:

- Inquiry as to what sparked the discussion to create such a commission or in becoming part of the AARP network, to which staff provided clarification.
- Inquiry on whether AARP had successful policy language that could be reutilized rather than having to reinvent from the ground up, to which Mr. Wasniewski confirmed that AARP did, however it was on limited topics, mostly around housing, but that they could provide additional support in navigating the creation of that policy language.
- Inquiry as to how Stevens Point could find what was working in other communities, to which Mr. Wasniewski noted that webinars on multiple topics were available monthly through the AARP Portal, and that they were recorded for those who couldn't make specific scheduled webinars. Portal access was available to commissioners if they so chose.

No action was taken.

4. Introduction – Community Needs Assessment.

Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn explained that the commission would work towards the creation of an action plan that would address livability within the City among key metrics. Part of that process would be to conduct a community needs assessment to better understand the wants and needs amongst citizens. He also noted that AARP provided an age-friendly community survey that could be used to better gauge what residents wanted relative to each domain of livability, and asked whether there was any initial feedback.

Commissioners had the following comments:

- Concern noted for the length of the Age-Friendly Community Survey. Mr. Wasniewski confirmed that while that concern had been noted in the past, they were still seeing decent numbers of those completing the survey, so changes had not been made yet on length.
- Having more intimate focus groups in culturally appropriate ways helped individuals open up more and be more comfortable speaking.
- Meeting community members where they were ('going to them') was beneficial, such as setting up tables at community events.

- Cautioned the potential to duplicate efforts with other bodies such as United Way. Was there a way to bounce off the other, rather than duplicate?
- Inquiry on whether the survey was available in different formats or languages, to which Mr. Wasniewski confirmed the survey was available in English, Spanish, and Hmong, but intake was done digitally only. If hard copy surveys were done, someone would need to follow-up with data entry.
- Note that while these types of focus groups were often more tailored towards older individuals, they shouldn't lose sight of younger demographics. The need to attract, but also retain those populations was just as important over the long term.

Mr. Wasniewski explained the basis for a Community Network Analysis, urging the commission to take a more proactive approach on the front end in mapping out different available networks and community groups. There was a brief back-and-forth discussion on the opportunity for AARP to fund a kickoff celebration for the community.

Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn provided next steps, highlighting that a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson would be selected at the following meeting.

No action was taken.

5. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM.

A recording of this meeting can be viewed/heard at: <https://stevenspoint.com/365/AgendasMinutesVideos>



MEMORANDUM

To: Age-Friendly Commission

From: Adam Kuhn, AICP
Associate Planner / Zoning Administrator

Date: December 19, 2023

RE: Community Network Analysis

Background: During our last meeting, we discussed the planning process that will take us to the adoption of an action plan. For 2024, priority work of the Commission will be to conduct a community needs assessment that gauges public input as to how Stevens Point can be more 'livable' within each of the eight domains of livability.

As we kickstart the process of conducting a community needs assessment, the first step would be to conduct a community network analysis. This analysis is meant to gauge relevant stakeholders within Stevens Point and Portage County within each domain of livability. For reference, these domains of livability are the following:

- Housing;
- Outdoor spaces and buildings;
- Transportation;
- Communication and information;
- Civic participation and employment;
- Respect and social inclusion;
- Health services and community supports; and
- Social participation.

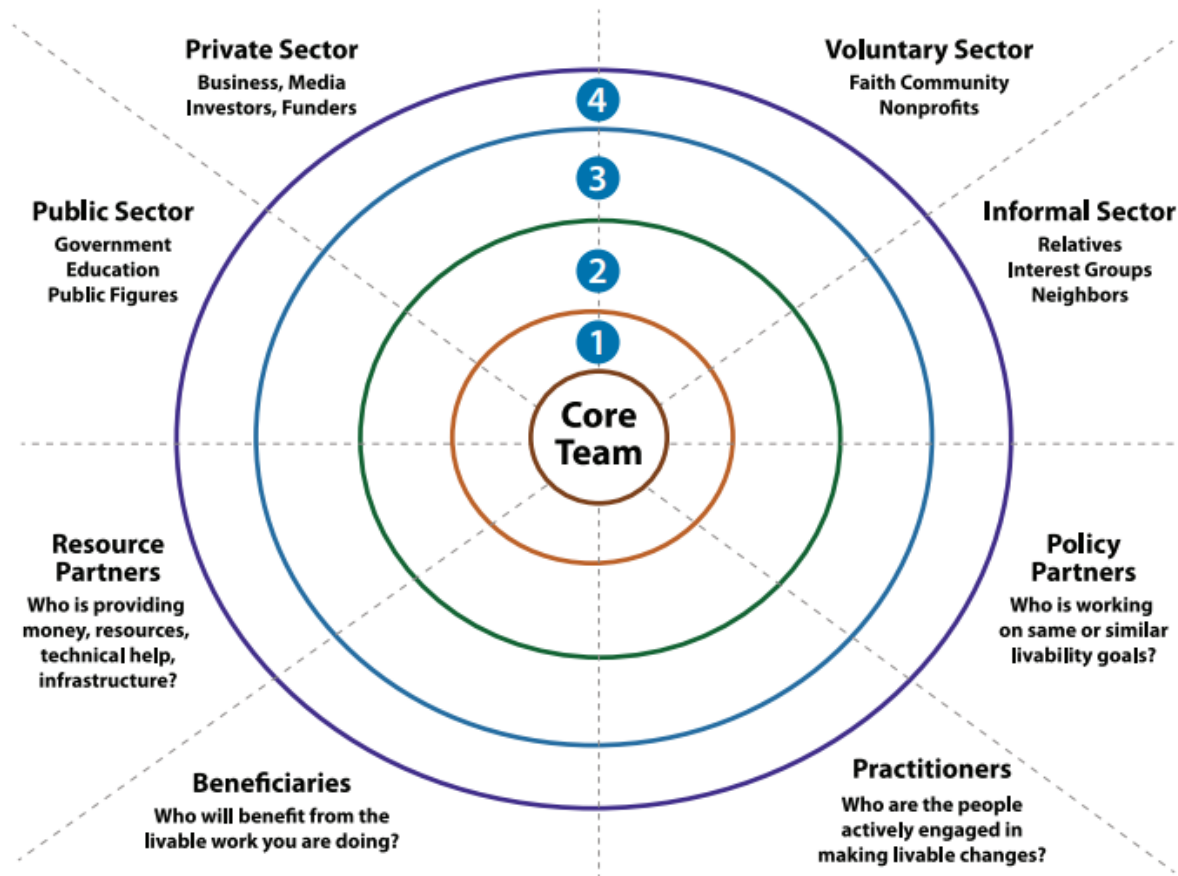
The purpose of this December 19th meeting will be to create a list of local stakeholders whose work or advocacy directly impacts any one of the above domains of livability. As you can foresee, there will be stakeholders whose work impacts more than one of the above domains (e.g., Midstate Independent Living Choices being involved in housing matters, respect and social inclusion, and the health services domain). As we

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progress through this meeting, I will be writing down each stakeholder mentioned into a comprehensive spreadsheet that we will reference in the months ahead.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.





ROADMAP TO LIVABILITY

Strategies and solutions that make a community great for people of all ages



Book 1 in the **AARP** Roadmap to Livability Collection

2
**Community
Listening
Session Tool Kit**

3
**Housing
Workbook**

4
**Transportation
Workbook**

5
**Health Services
and Community
Supports Workbook**

6
**Economic
Development
Workbook**

A Publication of



AARP *Roadmap to Livability Collection*

Strategies and solutions that make a community great for people of all ages

Book 1 **AARP** *Roadmap to Livability*

Book 2 **AARP** *Roadmap to Livability: Community Listening Session Tool Kit*

Book 3 **AARP** *Roadmap to Livability: Housing Workbook*

Book 4 **AARP** *Roadmap to Livability: Transportation Workbook*

Book 5 **AARP** *Roadmap to Livability: Health Services and Community Supports Workbook*

Book 6 **AARP** *Roadmap to Livability: Economic Development Workbook*

A publication of
AARP Livable Communities
Community, State and National Affairs
[AARP.org/Livable](https://www.aarp.org/Livable)

Available for download at [AARP.org/LivabilityRoadmap](https://www.aarp.org/LivabilityRoadmap)

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership of more than 37 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families, such as health care, employment security and retirement planning. We advocate for consumers in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services.

AARP 601 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20049

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In a Livable Community, people of all ages can ...



Go for a walk



Cross the streets



Ride a bike



Get around without a car



Live safely and comfortably



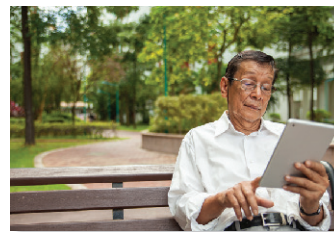
Work or volunteer



Enjoy public places



Socialize



Spend time outdoors



Be entertained



Go shopping



Buy healthy food



Find the services they need



... and make their city, town or neighborhood a lifelong home.



aarp.org/livable



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Our free, downloadable poster about the features of a livable community is available in five languages. Visit AARP.org/Livable-Poster.

Great Places for People of All Ages

Since its founding in 1958 by Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, AARP has had as a goal that our nation's towns, cities and communities be livable for people of all ages. Andrus's passion for older Americans was equally matched by her passion for America's youth. The retired teacher and high school principal saw the importance of connecting the generations in service, work and play.

I came to AARP in the year 2000 after a long career in federal government. As I began looking at the demographic trends that are driving the aging of communities across the United States, I was struck by the changing composition of the age 65-plus population.

The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2030, one in five people will be age 65 and older. By 2050, the number of Hispanic, African American, and Asian or Pacific Islanders age 65-plus will increase by 600 percent, compared to an increase of roughly 95 percent in the white population. At the same time, the total population of people age 85 or older will increase by more than 200 percent.

People of all generations are deeply attached to the community where they live and want it to be a great place to live, work, play and do business.

In 2011, the first of the boomers turned 65. Boomers, like Gen Xers and millennials, want to live in towns and cities that are safe and secure, that provide affordable and appropriate transportation and housing choices, and have quality health care and community services. Most of these young and older adults want to live near walkable downtowns that have prospering local businesses, entertainment options and inviting parks and outdoor spaces.

At AARP, we call such places “communities for all ages” or “livable communities.”

Communities are at the center of this demographic shift, and they're at the center of the shift in what people want and need in order to thrive in the city or town they call home.

American values include an emphasis on “do it yourself.” The boomers, and the generations that have followed, are active and want to use their life experiences and energies to make their community a great place to live. Livable communities mobilize volunteers to advocate, plan and make the changes they want to see in a way that honors the community's values and preferences.

Developed by the AARP Livable Communities team, the *Roadmap to Livability Collection* was shaped by input from people throughout the nation who are working to make their city or town a place where people of all ages, income levels and abilities can thrive.

At AARP, our goal is to make the journey to livability easier for communities of all types and sizes. The *Roadmap to Livability* and its associated workbooks are intended to be a guide. The advice provided is not a strict formula for success but a framework that can be adapted to the needs and preferences of a community.

I hope you will find the *AARP Roadmap to Livability Collection* useful for the work you are doing in transportation, housing, economic development, health services and community supports.

On behalf of all of us at AARP, thank you for your continuing efforts to make your community a better place to live for people of all ages.

Nancy LeaMond

AARP Executive Vice President
Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer
Community, State and National Affairs

➤ A Bit of Background

The *Roadmap to Livability* answers three key questions:

1. What influences local advocates and municipal leaders to improve the livability of their community?
2. What are the commonalities in approach across communities working toward greater livability?
3. What's the best way to measure success and outcomes?

Whether a community is large or small, urban, suburban or rural, the *Roadmap to Livability* will help identify challenges and opportunities to improve livability, shape an action plan to address those findings and successfully carry out the improvements that residents want. The plan will establish goals and describe action steps to meet those goals. Evolving over time, it will lead the community's livability initiative toward success.

NOTE: The focus of the *Roadmap to Livability* is on creating a strong plan that will guide implementation. While funding is an absolute necessity for implementing a plan, and you can find some ideas for funding on page 20, the topic of financing change (through fund-raising efforts, grant proposals, municipal financing, etc.) is not covered comprehensively in this series.

➤ The Collection

Book 1:
AARP ROADMAP TO LIVABILITY

Book 2: *AARP Roadmap to Livability*
**COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION
TOOL KIT**

Book 3: *AARP Roadmap to Livability*
HOUSING WORKBOOK

Book 4: *AARP Roadmap to Livability*
TRANSPORTATION WORKBOOK

Book 5: *AARP Roadmap to Livability*
**HEALTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY
SUPPORTS WORKBOOK**

Book 6: *AARP Roadmap to Livability*
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
WORKBOOK**

The introductory *Roadmap to Livability* provides broad guidelines and examples (best practices) for integrating livability principles into a community. Each workbook in the series provides planning tools to help complete a livability project.

Whether a community is beginning to look for opportunities to improve or already has a project (or projects) in mind, the *Roadmap to Livability Collection* can help. Use the series as step-by-step guides or as reference books to find the specific sections or resources that are needed to build on a community's strengths and address any challenges.





The goal of livability work is for people of all ages to ...

1. Feel safe in the community
2. Participate in community activities
3. Be treated with respect
4. Have access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing and transportation
5. Have access to recreational opportunities and health services
6. Know what services and activities are available and have access to information by a means they prefer (e.g. online, in print, in person)
7. Be active, vital contributors to the economic, civic and social life of the community
8. Receive appropriate support if they can no longer look after themselves

➤ What Makes a Community Livable?

“A Livable Community is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and offers supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence, allow residents to age in place, and foster their engagement in the community’s civic, economic and social life.”

— **AARP** Policy Book

Livable communities are livable for people of all ages, abilities and economic levels. Such places provide a host of advantages that enhance the quality of life of residents, the economic prospects of businesses, and the bottom line of local governments.

Livable communities encourage active participation by older residents

AARP research consistently finds that the vast majority of people ages 50 and older want to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

But a home can become difficult to navigate when it hasn’t been designed to meet the changing needs of its residents. In a livable community, suitable housing options are available.

Livable communities promote neighborhood cohesion and maximize opportunities for residents to be active and engaged with their neighbors, family and friends. As the U.S. population grows older, community design that supports the participation of older people will play a larger role in the fiscal health of the entire community.

Continued ➤

Livable communities are good for public health and the environment

Many communities are not designed to support healthy, active living by people who do not drive. Cultural activities, visits with family and friends, shopping and other daily activities are off-limits when public transportation is not available and walking is not a safe option. In many cities and towns, it can be challenging to safely walk or ride a bicycle. Sidewalks and bike paths are nonexistent. Where they do exist, traffic lights and crosswalks are not always designed for people who have difficulty with vision, hearing or mobility. Walkable streets encourage people to walk, bike or roll to activities — all of which benefit public health, the environment and the economy.

Livable communities promote social equity

In a livable community, all residents can meet their essential needs in a safe, healthy environment. Making it easy to find affordable and accessible health services and community supports, for instance, improves the health and well-being of everyone, from newborns to centenarians.

Livable communities meet community needs

A community that wants to be livable for all ages makes policy and infrastructure changes based on residents' needs and preferences. Municipal planning, including land use, community revitalization and economic development efforts, should consider the needs of all residents regardless of age, income, physical ability, race and other factors. Changes should not be made without active input from a wide cross-section of community members.

Livable communities engage residents

Livable communities encourage all residents to be as actively engaged in community life as they want to be. Opportunities for social and civic participation make people feel they are part of the fabric of the community. The more connected and engaged people are, the more likely they are to contribute their skills and time to make the community a better place to live for all ages.



Livability is good for the economy

Livable communities bring financial benefits to homeowners, businesses and local governments. Livability initiatives contribute to improved economic performance and a more vibrant, desirable and competitive environment for housing and commercial investment.

Livability features that benefit everyone

1. **COMPACTNESS** helps make a community walkable, decreases automobile dependence and supports a socially vibrant public realm
2. **INTEGRATION OF LAND USES** enables people to live closer to or within walking distance of work, community activities and the services they need
3. **HOUSING DIVERSITY** helps ensure that suitable housing is available for each stage of life
4. **TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS** allow older adults to remain independent, mobile and engaged in their community

Livable communities don't feel like just another place to live. Livable communities feel like home.

➤ Preparing the Community

**What does it take to get started?
That's easy — people and a community!**



Ingredient 1: People

The most important ingredient of a livability initiative is a dedicated group of people who want to make it work. Success comes most easily when no one person or organization is trying to do it all.

- A livability project can start with as few as one or two people who recruit others.

Ingredient 2: A Community

- Livability projects have been successfully implemented in communities of all sizes; in places that are urban, suburban and rural; in all parts of the country.
- Does the community pride itself on being a great place to live, work and play? If so, that's a plus. It means the political environment supports change to make the city, town or neighborhood an even *better* place to live.

The *Roadmap to Livability Collection* will help:

- Bring together a group of people dedicated to making change
- Work effectively in the community
- Foster an attitude that supports change

➤ The Steps to Livability

Livability initiatives range from large-scale to community-specific activities such as:

- Starting a community para-medicine program in a rural area without local health care services
- Changing bus routes to support a location where people who don't drive live
- Developing a volunteer-based program to help older or disabled residents with simple home chores and routine maintenance
- Converting empty lots into gardens or safe outdoor spaces that can be used by people of all ages and abilities

The steps for implementing a livability project:

1. **Put Together a Team**
2. **Invite Stakeholders**
3. **Gather Information and Identify Priorities**
4. **Write the Action Plan's Mission, Vision and Goals**
5. **Develop the Action Plan's Strategies and Tactics**
6. **Determine the Evaluation Process**
7. **Ready, Set, Go!**

Let's Get Started!

➤ Invite Stakeholders

As the work on the livability project progresses, it's helpful to enlist additional stakeholders as key partners or supporters. These can be individuals, groups or organizations that are interested in or concerned about the outcome of the work.

All of the stakeholders with an interest in a livability project might not be supportive, and some might have the power to shut down what the team is trying to accomplish. To avoid conflict with other stakeholders, it's important at the start to identify all stakeholders with an interest in the project and, when possible, involve them to increase buy-in support for the work.

If it isn't possible to bring in the opposition as partners or supporters, then develop a strategy to overcome the challenges they'll raise.

For instance, residents might form a stakeholder group that opposes certain kinds of livability improvements. People who say "Not in My Backyard" to the development of affordable housing, land-use changes or the expansion of public transportation often have a powerful voice before municipal authorities. People may be concerned that their taxes will go up if certain community programs or improvement efforts are implemented. To avoid surprise opposition have a strategy for overcoming resistance.

The core team's work will be more effective when it engages people who can help with aspects of the livability project, who have connections to needed resources, or who can share expert advice. The more ambitious an initiative is, the more it will require broad collaboration with the right people engaged in the right way.

The core team will want to think beyond the obvious participants (e.g. the stakeholder groups are already doing related work) to individuals, groups and organizations that might be interested in expanding what they're presently doing.

One way to locate key stakeholders is to identify one or two "connectors," people who are familiar with the decision-makers in the community and with navigating local politics to make change.

That person could be a local official, a leader in a nonprofit organization, or simply a community supporter. This connector can help the team identify other key players and gain insight about the relationships between and across various groups. Additional stakeholders will be identified when the core team completes an asset inventory or asset-mapping process that identifies the strengths of the community related to the livability initiative. (See page 24 for those instructions.)

Reading List

See page 51 to find online articles, reports and resources, including:

- *How to Involve the Right Players in a Livable Communities Plan*, AARP

Framing and Focusing

There are many ways to make a community more livable in the areas of transportation, housing, health services and community supports, or economic development.

Framing a livability initiative around a "hot button" topic that is meaningful to the community will build trust and support for the work the team is doing.

For one community, a "hot topic" might be increasing housing options for middle-income residents. Another community might see providing free or low-cost home repair and maintenance services as its most pressing need.

It's easier to attract stakeholder support when the team is able to frame the discussion within an issue that's important to the community.

Identifying Stakeholders



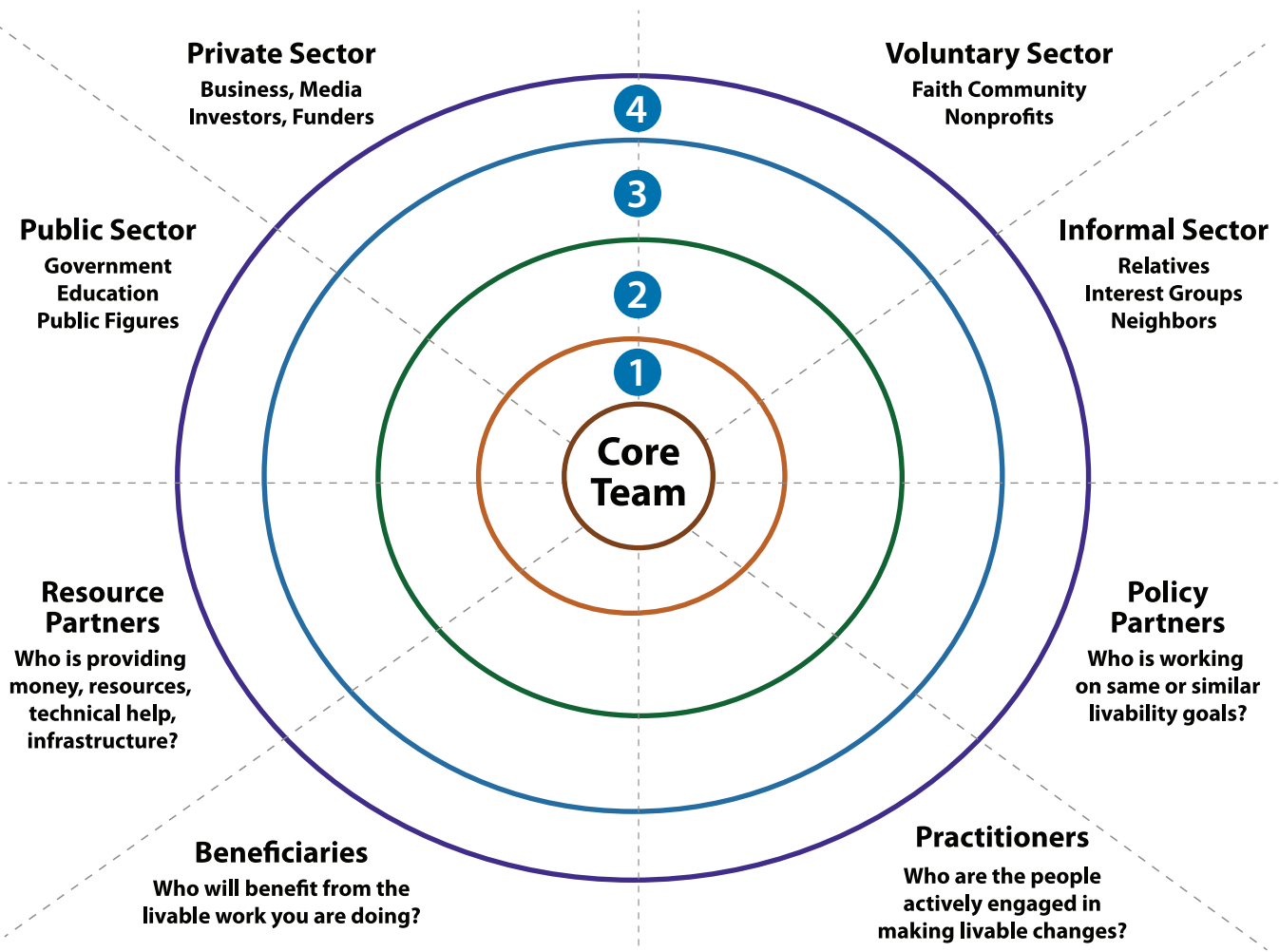
The support and participation of community members is essential. The “right” mix will depend on the livability initiative and the community. Following are the types of leaders, organizations and residents to engage:

- Elected and appointed officials, members of regional planning commissions and key municipal staff (such as the town or urban planner, the public works administrator)
- Metropolitan planning organization (MPO) representatives
- Leaders in diverse communities and those representing intergenerational issues
- Main Street organizations, chambers of commerce, downtown development groups
- Local nonprofit and voluntary service organizations such as the Rotary Club, Junior League, etc.
- Colleges and universities
- School administrators, staff and board members
- Philanthropies
- The area’s tourism bureau, local heritage society and museums
- Health care and fitness communities, such as hospitals, YMCAs, disease groups (ALS, heart, lung, diabetes, etc.)
- Realtors and housing-related organizations
- Public transit authorities and specialized transportation programs
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are engaged in the issue
- Law enforcement and first responders.
- Major employers in the community
- Representatives of community foundations
- Neighborhood associations
- Library staff and board members
- Senior centers and other organizations that support healthy aging in the community
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Subject experts, interns and community relations personnel from local trade schools, colleges and universities
- Local environmental and “smart growth” groups

Continued ➤

Expand Involvement

The *Circles of Involvement Exercise* is a tool that some livability initiatives have used to increase community support and participation.



The *Circles of Involvement Exercise* can help the core team identify new partners for the livability initiative.

Working with existing services saves the core team from “reinventing the wheel” and provides encouragement for the growth of the services and programs that already exist.

On the outside edge of the diagram, note the initiative’s priority areas. Think about the people, organizations or groups that might be interested in one or more of the livability issues involved.

For example, the town recreation director and regional transportation authority might both be interested in a transportation initiative.

The Area Agency on Aging, local hospital, food pantry director, and public health officer or parish nurse may be interested in an effort to increase access to health services.

A livability initiative will be stronger when the core team is able to involve people, groups and organizations interested in each priority area.

The *Circles of Involvement Exercise* tool is based on “Creating a Framework of Support and Involvement,” by The Institute of Cultural Affairs/Canada; diagram adapted for AARP by Jennifer Goodman.

The Core Team Is the Core Circle

The core team is the group of people who actively work on the livability initiative. They are responsible for implementing and overseeing the action plan.

Match the numbers below to those on the circle at left.

1 The Circle of Engagement

As the livability initiative moves through different phases, the core team might need people to help in specific areas. For example, one group of volunteers might be interested in pedestrian-friendly policies, while another group wants to start a transportation program. The people who participate in specific projects are part of the Circle of Engagement. This includes people who are committed to the livability initiative and are willing to help with specific tasks in a broader initiative. Community volunteers, municipal government and representatives from nonprofits and businesses that actively support part of the livability initiative might be part of the Circle of Engagement.

2 The Circle of Champions

The Circle of Champions can include elected officials, the town or city manager, municipal department leaders, and directors of regional and local programs. Because those people have special authority or access to resources that can make or break an initiative, their support is critical. Engage the town or city planner, codes officer, parks and recreation department, public works department, public health division and other advisory committees. The support of regional and local service and health providers is also key to a livable community effort. Local hospitals, regional or state health alliances, the Area Agency on Aging, community action organizations and local funders can help get the word out about the initiative and help expand available community services. It's important to regularly update the Circle of Champions about the progress of the project and to celebrate their contributions to the accomplishments.

3 The Circle of Information and Awareness

This circle includes all community residents who are interested in the initiative. Publicity and good communications are vital to getting the word out about what the team is doing. As people become aware of the work, the initiative will attract new volunteers and partnerships. For instance, after seeing newspaper articles and social media posts about the initiative, the library board might suggest ways it can help raise awareness about the project or new services.

4 The Circle of Possibility

People and organizations that are potential but not current partners in the initiative are in this circle. The possibilities for working together need to be explored before a partnership can be effective. Some examples might include chambers of commerce, foundations, banks, service organizations and professional associations. For example, a local service club might be looking for ways to volunteer and the livability initiative might have a need for volunteers that the club could meet. However, if no one on the core team reaches out to the club, the possibility for partnership isn't recognized. The asset inventory (see page 24) is a tool that can help the core team identify the people and groups that fit into this circle.

Continued ➤

Engage the Community

It's important to recognize that existing challenges might limit the team's ability to increase the engagement of people and organizations in the community because:

There are competing priorities:

- For example, a regional hospital or Area Agency on Aging may lack the resources to send staff to every initiative meeting. Or the part-time recreation department director is too busy with the children's recreation program to spare time for other activities.

There's a lack of knowledge or false perceptions about the initiative or team. People from or working for the following population groups and communities may need to be included:

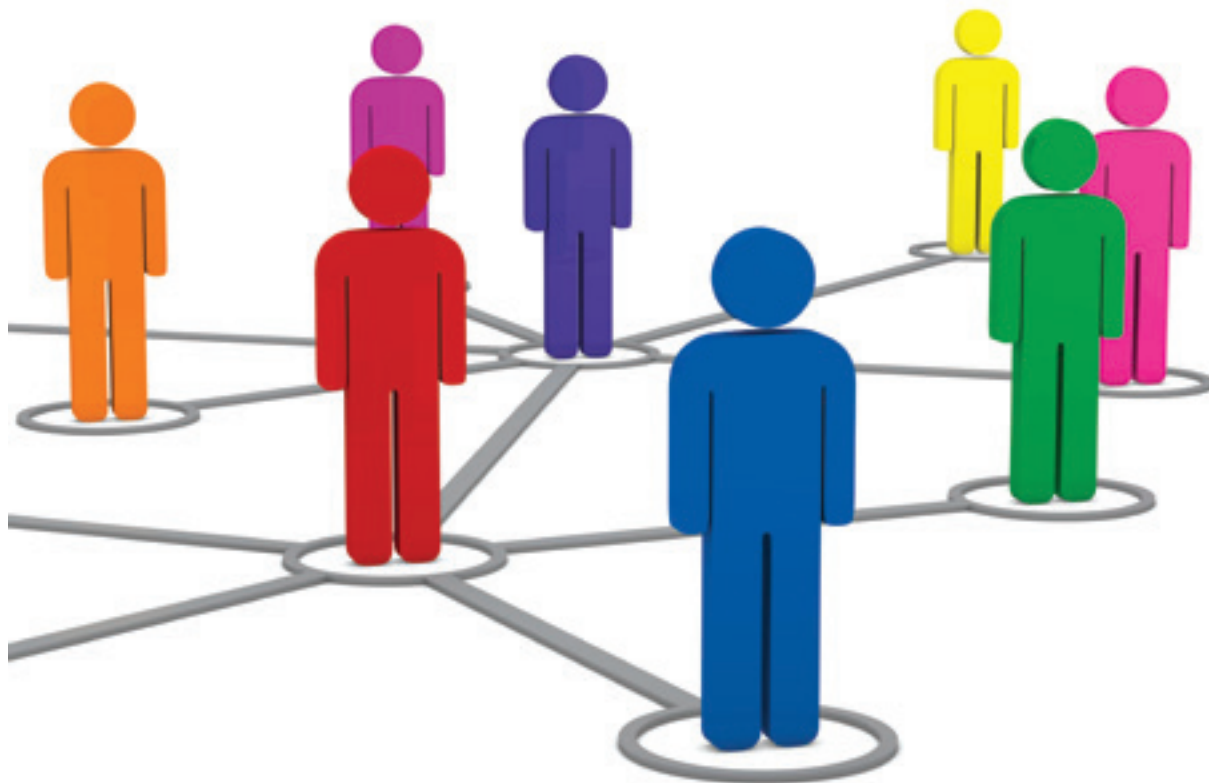
- People who are living with a disability
- People ages 80 and older
- People from the LGBTQ community
- People who represent the cultural, ethnic or racial diversity of the community
- People who use income-based services (e.g. a food pantry, subsidized housing)

After the community engagement and outreach challenges have been identified, brainstorm strategies for how to overcome them. Some ideas:

- Hold a kickoff meeting to explain the initiative to the community
- Meet individually with different groups and programs to explore ways to work effectively together
- Use the local media by writing letters to the editor, appearing on radio programs or on community television, offering to write a recurring column in a town newsletter

If the team has successfully recruited a diverse group of residents to work with the core team:

- Have those people had an equal voice at the meetings?
- Are their ideas respected?
- Are all team members treated equally and made to feel their input is important?



Potential Assessment Partners

Statewide Program

- Universities, colleges and cooperative extensions that have researchers with expertise in assessment and planning and specific subject areas
- Lifelong learning programs
- A state smart growth entity
- Statewide downtown and village center programs

Regional Services Providers

Data about the delivery of local services can be acquired from:

- The Area Agency on Aging
- A community action agency
- Hospital and wellness activities
- A district health office
- A regional public transit provider for on-demand and fixed-route transportation
- Local and state agencies that provide or oversee public services (e.g., housing, transportation, health)

Local Organizations

Data about the participation of older adults in cultural, recreational and service-oriented organizations can be acquired from:

- Libraries
- Museums
- Food pantries and meal sites
- Community and senior centers
- Fraternal organizations

Informal Local Groups

- Clubs, adult sport leagues, golfing groups, hiking groups and craft circles are important partners for spreading the word about the livability initiative and encouraging others to participate in the survey or focus groups.

The Municipality

- The **planning office** can provide data about the accessibility of the built and natural environment for people with mobility differences or impairments as well as information about the percentage of streets that have sidewalks. The planning office also collects data on socio-demographics by neighborhood and it is the keeper of the comprehensive land-use plan and zoning ordinance. (Livability goals can and should be incorporated into the overarching policy and regulatory documents of the community.)
- The **zoning board** is usually part of the planning office. Data gathered from building permits might reveal how many secondary housing units (i.e. accessory dwelling units or ADUs) have been constructed by homeowners. The permit office might have information about the number of new and existing residences that have wheelchair accessible entrances.
- Some cities and towns have a **department of health and human services** that includes aging services. The department will likely have data about older adults living in the community.
- The **town clerk** or local **board of elections** can provide data about participation in recent elections.
- The city **transportation department** can share information about the accessibility of the local transportation system and the percentage of housing that's within a half-mile walk to a public transit location.
- The **recreation department** can offer information about volunteer activities and adult fitness and activity programs.
- An **arts/humanities council** can be a useful source of information as can the city's public safety agencies, such as the **police** and **fire departments**.

➤ Invite Stakeholders

A successful livable communities initiative is based on broad collaboration. A crucial step in developing an initiative is to find, inspire and equip a diverse group of stakeholders to become engaged.

Begin by creating a list of people, groups or organizations that might be interested in or concerned with the outcome of the work. The team probably won't recruit someone in each sector. Use this as a guide to think about how to broaden the base of community support.

Use the *Circles of Involvement Exercise* described on pages 16 and 17 in Book 1, the *Roadmap to Livability*, to brainstorm about people who can be involved in the work.

For ideas about national partners and resources, see Appendix 1.

Worksheet: Make a List

Beneficiaries (Who benefits from the work? Who's the customer? On whose behalf is the work being done?)

Volunteer Sector (Examples: faith community, nonprofits, fraternal organizations)

Public Sector (Examples: local or regional government, education, public figures)

Private Sector (Examples: businesses, media, investors, funders)

Informal Sector (Examples: relatives, interest groups and clubs, neighbors)

Policy Partners (Examples: authorizers, management, the board)

Resource Partners (Examples: suppliers, networks)

Service Providers and Practitioners (Examples: local experts, professionals, employees)

Others (Examples: anyone who doesn't fit into the aforementioned categories)

Continued ➤