Age-Friendly Mecklenburg

Action Plan

Mecklenburg County, NC
2021 - The AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities
Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
Age-Friendly Action Plan

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Age-Friendly Mecklenburg

2021 Age-Friendly Action Plan

Executive Summary

Noting the Purpose of Age-Friendly Mecklenburg

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg is an initiative that facilitates the collective planning of not-for-profit, higher education, faith-based, private, and governmental organizations along with community residents to improve the quality of life for older adults. Having such a collaborative effort is vital, since by the year 2035, an additional 140,000 residents aged 55 and older will be living in Mecklenburg County, of which 100,000 will be aged 65 and older. This is by far the fastest growing age group in the County; in fact, 43% of the total population growth between now and 2035 will come from growth in those aged 55+.

Based on research conducted by Age-Friendly Mecklenburg, it has become clear that seniors want to remain Active and healthy, physically and mentally. They want to become better Informed about what is going on in the community. There is a need to Support seniors so that they feel safe and secure, whether it is within their homes or moving around the community. And seniors also need to feel more Connected to others within the community – whether it is through digital connectivity or through more transportation-oriented methods to connect.

Addressing the Needs of Seniors - The Designation Process

In late 2016, Mecklenburg County leadership submitted a letter to AARP/WHO noting commitment to “improvement in the eight domains the World Health Organization identified as influencing the health and quality of life of older adults.” Soon thereafter, Age-Friendly Mecklenburg (AFM) was formed. Today, the AFM Committee includes over 60 members representing 40+ organizations. It’s an age-diverse and racially/ethnically-diverse group of individuals knowledgeable of the needs of local seniors through their work on local committees/boards, delivery of services to seniors, and working for organizations that provide housing, healthcare, services, transportation, and activities for seniors.

The AFM Committee conducted research on the needs of seniors in the community and created the Age-Friendly Gap Analysis in 2019, reflecting the current state of the community and offering recommendations for improvement. The group then presented the Gap Analysis to the Health and Human Services Committee of the Board of County Commissioners in late 2019 prior to beginning to create implementation plans.

Seeking Designation as an Age-Friendly Community

The next step in seeking designation as an Age-Friendly Community is to submit a community-wide Action Plan to the national office of AARP as well as the World Health Organization that notes a comprehensive approach to improve the livability of Mecklenburg County for seniors.

If Mecklenburg County were to receive this designation, the community would receive the support of AARP/WHO and gain access to their livable communities resources, best practices, and contacts from the more than 1,000 age-friendly communities worldwide. The Mecklenburg County community would be more coordinated in its support of seniors, and Mecklenburg County would be seen as a great location to age-in-place or for seniors to move for retirement.

Action Planning for Becoming Age-Friendly

In 2020, AFM designed its Age-Friendly Action Plan around AARP’s 8 Domains of Livability. The AFM Committee created and then refined the Action Plan after draft plans were reviewed by the AFM Committee community partners, the AARP national office, and 1,121 community residents representing all County Districts.
The Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Action Plan has four (4) Core Implementation Strategies to help seniors stay Active, Informed, Supported, and Connected. The final Action Plan has Recommendations, Action Steps, and Partners included under the 4 Core Strategies:

❖ **Engagement Strategy**: The goal is to help Seniors stay Active by promoting senior activities and wellness as well as facilitating senior employment and civic engagement.

❖ **Communication Strategy**: The goal is to help Seniors stay Informed of the programs and services available to them as well as building positive public awareness of seniors.

❖ **Support Strategy**: The goal is to Support Seniors and their caregivers. The main components are safety/policy-related recommendations and support in place actions to help individuals who care for seniors as well as helping seniors to age-in-place.

❖ **Connectivity Strategy**: The goal is to help seniors Connect – from both technology and transportation perspectives. This includes technology-related recommendations to improve senior access, comfort, and training on digital resources as well as transportation-related actions to facilitate movement to/from support services, community activities, and employment/civic activities.

**Noting Year 1 Focus, and Summarizing Goals**

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg has structured the Year 1 Recommendations to focus on activities where implementation would be led by existing partners, have low/no cost or are already budgeted, and represent priorities of senior residents. This approach has been undertaken so that there is the best chance of successfully implementing AFM recommendations in the first year that would have a benefit to seniors.

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg seeks to work together so that today’s seniors as well as the 140,000 additional seniors who will become a part of Mecklenburg County over the next 15 years will enjoy living, working, and engaging in activities in our community. We are committed to collaboratively improving the quality of life for seniors, and AFM is prepared to submit its Action Plan to AARP/WHO to request designation as an age-friendly community.
Introduction

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Approach for Supporting Older Adults

This Age-Friendly Mecklenburg document focuses on the strategies that community organizations will use to collaborate with residents to improve the quality of life for seniors. While there are many actions identified that these collaborative groups will undertake, the big question is: What will Age-Friendly Mecklenburg mean for the individual senior resident?

The graphic to the right illustrates the overall approach of Age-Friendly Mecklenburg through the lens of our older adults. First, this plan is focused on having strategies that will help seniors to remain Active. Next, the strategies defined in the Action Plan should help seniors to become better Informed about what is going on in the community, and help the community become more aware of the needs and contributions of seniors. The approach also is focused on helping to Support seniors so that they feel safe and secure, whether it is within their homes or moving around the community. Finally, the approach should help seniors to feel more Connected to others within the community.

Noted below is more information on how Age-Friendly Mecklenburg will help seniors to remain Active, stay Informed, be Supported, and feel Connected.

Active Seniors

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg has an Engagement Strategy that is part of the Action Plan that focuses on helping seniors to be Active. This involves developing or expanding activities - including intergenerational activities - for seniors to stay physically and mentally active. There will also be more wellness opportunities and better access to geriatric providers to ensure that seniors are staying as healthy as possible through their day-to-day lives.

The Action Plans include civic engagement opportunities, so that seniors can get more involved on boards, committees, and other decision-making groups. And finally, there are initiatives to foster senior employment and to promote the need for openness on the part of local businesses in hiring seniors to tap into their experience and skills.

Informed Seniors

This Action Plan also has a Communication Strategy that is focused on ensuring that seniors stay Informed. There are several different action items in the plan that focus on reaching out to seniors to let them know about different activities, programs, or services that are available as well as how to access resources. This should include creating a Senior Resource Guide that enables older adults to find where to access the services, programs, or information they need.

There are efforts outlined in the plan so that current methods of communicating with seniors via papers and television continue so that seniors are not purely reliant on digital communications to stay informed. Finally, part of the approach to keeping seniors informed also involves ensuring that the broader community is informed about the needs of seniors, and the benefits that seniors contribute to the quality of life and the vibrancy of Mecklenburg County.
Supported Seniors

The Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Action Plan also has a Support Strategy that is focused on ensuring that seniors and their care providers have what they need to enable a positive quality of life. There are recommendations that address walkability within the community as well as looking at various policies to protect seniors as much as possible from financial exploitation and other types of scams that target older adults.

Along with these safety and protection-oriented action items, there is a focus in the Action Plan on ensuring that resources are available for seniors who want to age-in-place. This could involve everything from repairing homes to making upfits to homes that enable safe living as residents get older. There are recommendations that address how to best educate, inform, and support unpaid caregivers (including family members) who are working with seniors, as well. The goal is for seniors and their caregivers to be Supported and safe.

Connected Seniors

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg also has a Connectivity Strategy. This is geared toward helping seniors to feel Connected within and throughout the community. There are two major aspects to this strategy. First, it includes a series of action items that will strive to make getting around the community easier, more accessible, and more affordable. These are transportation-related recommendations that are focused on helping seniors more quickly get access to the transportation they need so that they can participate in activities that are away from their home.

In addition, part of connecting with others requires that there be a strategy to close the “digital divide.” There is a technology aspect to this Connectivity Strategy that is focused on ensuring seniors have the access to technology, the education to utilize it effectively, and the content and information via technology that would be of interest to them.

Summary

By sharing their knowledge and experiences as well as being active members within the community, seniors provide tremendous benefit to Mecklenburg County. This document is a community-wide Action Plan where organizations will collaborate for the benefit of those seniors.

The goal is that, through these activities, seniors will be able to be even more Active, more Informed, more Supported, and more Connected in their daily lives so that they can enjoy living, working, learning, and playing in Mecklenburg County.
Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Action Plan - Document Overview

This Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Action Plan starts with an overview of the process that the community has used to develop the Plan. The **Process Overview** notes the initial commitment made to become an Age-Friendly community, the analysis undertaken to evaluate - through the community’s eyes - the current quality of life for seniors, and the process of developing Action Plans to become an even more age-friendly community.

Following the Process Overview, this document includes a **Community Profile** of Mecklenburg County, particularly pertaining to older adults. We describe the demographics of the community, note that the population of senior residents in the County will grow by over 140,000 by 2035, and identify locations with a higher percentage of older adults, among other factors. We also address the characteristics of the senior experience in being a resident of Mecklenburg County.

This report then outlines the overall implementation strategy for Age-Friendly Mecklenburg. That strategy overview is immediately followed by the detailed **Domain-specific Action Plans**. We share overviews of the current state and the future goals and objectives of the community for each of the 8 Domains of Livability. We then list all of the Recommendations for each of the Domains, providing a series of strategies, implementation timelines, resource requirements, and indicators and measures of implementation success. The strategies identified for implementing the Recommendations have common themes such as:

- Expanding services for senior adults
- Determining how to make services for seniors more affordable and accessible
- Launching campaigns to inform the public about seniors and their needs
- Building awareness of and access to resources available to caregivers
- Ensuring planning and programmatic initiatives and decisions take into account the senior perspective
- Offering more intergenerational activities
- Providing senior engagement opportunities so older adults feel valued and a part of the community.

Specific implementation steps are provided for each of the recommendations included in the Action Plans. This section includes a detailed approach for how the community is going to collaboratively enhance the quality of life for seniors.

Following the Domain-specific Action Plans, we provide a brief **Conclusion** as well as an **Appendix** that includes a summary table of the Action Plans, along with a staging of those Plans. We provide Acknowledgements of all of those individuals and organizations who have supported this process to-date, conveying appreciation for their time and expertise in the development of the Action Plan. The Appendix includes references and notes to ensure that readers of this document are clear on the sources of key information.

Overall, we hope that the full content of this document provides a clear understanding of our community, our approach for improving the livability for seniors, and our detailed plans for continuously enhancing the quality of life for older adults in Mecklenburg County.
Process Overview – Development of the Plan

Noting the Basis for the Action Plan
In September of 2016, Mecklenburg County leadership sent a formal commitment letter to AARP noting the intent to seek designation as an Age-Friendly Community. This decision started a process where various organizations throughout the community began to meet and share information about their common constituents – senior residents of Mecklenburg County. That process – from 2016 to today – is noted below.

To begin the process to seek designation, the collaborate group was formed in 2017 and named the Age-Friendly Mecklenburg (AFM) Committee – community experts convened by Mecklenburg County to work together to assess and plan enhancements in the quality of life for senior residents.

The AFM Committee includes a mix of professionals from not-for-profit, higher education, faith-based, private, and governmental organizations along with community residents. This age-diverse and racially/ethnically-diverse group includes individuals knowledgeable of the needs of local seniors through their work on local committees/boards, delivery of services to seniors, and working for organizations that provide housing, healthcare, services, transportation, and activities for seniors. Committee members both personally and professionally understand and address the challenges, needs, and goals of older adults in the County.
One of the most significant actions completed by the Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Committee was the development of the Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Gap Analysis in 2019. The Gap Analysis utilized the methodology and framework outlined in the WHO’s Global Age-Friendly Cities and Communities project. This framework centers around 8 Domains of Livability which served as the main guiding principles for the report. These Domains were designed to guide communities in the evaluation of their services, amenities, and programs.

The Gap Analysis was based on 2019 research conducted by Age-Friendly Mecklenburg with members of Mecklenburg County’s congregant meal sites, which complemented the Community Needs Assessment of the Aging Population prepared by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. Age-Friendly Mecklenburg sought resident input on life in Mecklenburg County – what was working well, what needed to be improved, and what gaps in resources, services, or information needed to be addressed.

These combined research sources obtained feedback from older adults throughout the County. The resulting Gap Analysis included 43 Recommendations, and Age-Friendly Mecklenburg knew that the next step would be to create implementation plans to address key community needs.

Developing the Framework of the Action Plan

The Mecklenburg County community embarked on the development of a formal Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Action Plan in February 2020. Our first activity with the Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Committee was to define the desired structure for and components of the Action Plan. We reviewed AARP recommended Action Plans as well as similar plans from other jurisdictions so that we could design the structure of a successful submittal package.

Then we embarked on an initial wave of development of strategies and identification of potential partners to address the Recommendations from the 2019 Gap Analysis.
Crafting the Implementation Strategies

On a monthly basis during 2020, we systematically went through the 8 Domains of Livability, first with subgroup meetings with Domain experts and then with full Committee review and discussion. Most of our meetings and engagements were remote due to the development of the Action Plan during the COVID-19 pandemic. That online meeting approach actually enhanced the level of attendance and participation in AFM Committee and subgroup meetings with Domain experts. Over a 5-month process, we created a series of implementation steps to consider for inclusion in the final Action Plan. However, since the development process took place during the pandemic, our Committee understands the future environment could be very different from today; therefore, there is a need for flexibility in the detailed design and the implementation of Recommendations.

After draft plans were developed, the Committee then began refining these initial Action Plans and adding to them with potential resource requirements, implementation timeframes, and key indicators or metrics to gauge progress and performance. At the same time, Age-Friendly Mecklenburg leadership began meeting with potential lead implementation partners to ensure their understanding of the plan and timetables as well as to gain their commitment to help drive these improvements in quality of life for seniors.

All throughout the process of developing the Action Plan, we progressed through a communication plan – providing Monthly Status Reports and meeting with stakeholders – to ensure there was an ongoing understanding of what our committee was working on as well as what key next steps were being planned. This created ongoing dialogue and overall momentum as we moved through the process and toward Action Plan completion.

Refining Plans after Broad-based Validation of Strategies

As this refinement of the Action Plan continued, Age-Friendly Mecklenburg began seeking feedback on many of the strategies being considered. This feedback was solicited and received from residents, key community stakeholders, County leadership, and - of course - Age-Friendly Mecklenburg committee members.

In total, the AFM Action Planning Process involved:

- **Convening Local Age-Friendly Leaders** – The AFM Committee had 60+ members representing over 40 private, non-profit, and governmental organizations.
- **Addressing Livability Intentionally** – The final Action Plan includes 38 Recommendations – a refined subset of the initial list of 43 Recommendations from the 2019 Gap Analysis. Each Recommendation has its own set of Implementation Steps – strategically staged – to be initiated over a 4-year period.
- **Tapping into the Community Voice** – Along with the residents surveyed as part of the Gap Analysis process, AFM engaged 1,121 residents in the review of draft Action Plans.
Gaining Support and Beginning to Implement the Plan

This iterative process of gaining feedback and incorporating the input resulted in a presentation of the final Action Plan to County leadership and the Mecklenburg County Board in early 2021. During the Board presentation, the Board of County Commissioners enthusiastically supported this Action Plan as a continuous improvement strategy for addressing the livability of the community’s seniors today and in the future.

This final step in the Action Planning process closes the loop on this Phase of work - from the initial commitment made in 2016 to be an Age-Friendly community to the implementation plan being submitted today. From this point forward, the most important work - driving continuous improvement in the livability of Mecklenburg County for older adults - begins.

The Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Committee will embark on 2021 with the focus on continuous improvement through implementation of the Action Plan. We will use the AARP implementation model (noted in the graphic above), which is designed to Build Trust and Sustain Engagement and Participation. This model will ensure we are addressing the Action Plan’s high priority community needs first.

We will engage community partners and residents in the detailed design and implementation of strategies. There will be ongoing open invitations to organizations to participate in addressing the recommendations. The Committee understands the need for flexibility based on the community environment at the time of implementation. We plan to have the AFM Committee as well as a Steering Committee guide and monitor implementation efforts so that the goals identified for each Domain are reached. The AFM Committee will document progress through annual or bi-annual progress reports and updates.

The significant engagement by community leaders and their respective organizations in the development of the Action Plan needs to be continued through a similar commitment from the AFM Committee to remain informed and engaged on progress. It is exceptionally important that there is a group responsible and accountable to move the Plan forward to improve the quality of life for seniors.
Community Profile

Mecklenburg County is one of the two most populated counties in the State of North Carolina, with over 1,100,000 residents according to Mecklenburg County’s 2021 Pulse Report. The County includes the City of Charlotte and the towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville (north of Charlotte) as well as the towns of Matthews, Mint Hill, and Pineville (south and southeast of Charlotte).

Community Demographics

Based on 2019 American Community Survey data, 46% of County residents are Caucasian, 33% are African-American, 14% are Hispanic, 6% are Asian, and 1% are American Indian or of other races/origins. About 52% of residents are female, 90% of those aged 25+ have a high school diploma or higher, and about 10%+ of the population is aged 65 and older.

As noted in the graphic to the right, many areas within the County have even a higher mix of older adults, with several locations having at least 12%-18% of residents aged 65+.

Among those aged 65 and over, the Median Income is $49,961, and 7.4% live in poverty. About 26% of these residents (over 33,000) are living with disabilities. Almost 18% of homes owned in the County are owned by people aged 65+, and people aged 65 and older account for about 10% of rentals.

Current Population and Recent Growth

Mecklenburg County is one of the fastest growing large communities in the country. As of 2019, the Charlotte MSA was the 22nd most populated metropolitan area of the Country, and Charlotte was the 15th largest city. The growth of Mecklenburg County is illustrated in being ranked 10th nationally in growth of metro areas from 2010-2019.

Along with Charlotte/Mecklenburg’s growing economy and its rapid urbanization, the population mix is changing, as well. Baby Boomers are now projected to outpace children by 2035, and that change in age demographics has already begun. In 2010, residents aged 55+ were 18.7% of the County population, and by 2020 that ratio had already increased to 23.2% of the population.

Since 2010, the mix of residents aged 55 or older grew from 18.7% to 23.2% of the population.
Growth Projections

When that demographic is viewed within the context of the overall population growth in the County, the growth in senior residents becomes even more clear. Census data shows that the number of Mecklenburg County residents aged 55+ increased from 172,411 in 2010 to 262,982 in 2020. That is an increase of over 90,000 residents – up 53%. That trend is projected to continue, as the population aged 55+ is expected to exceed 403,000 by 2035, equal to 27.7% of the population. This would be an increase of 53% over the 2020 population. That means that there will be about 140,000 more residents aged 55+ living in Mecklenburg County by the year 2035.

As noted in the graphic above, the population of the County is expected to grow by approximately 325,000 residents from 2020-2035. During that same period, the number of residents aged 55+ is expected to increase by over 140,000. Therefore, 43% of the total population growth will come from growth in those 55+. Much of that growth in the population of older adults will be driven by increases in population of those 65+, with 103,000 additional residents projected in that age group over the next 15 years.
From 2020-2035 in Mecklenburg County, the growth rate for residents 55+ will outpace the rate of growth for those under 55. That change is reflected in the following two charts. The chart on the left notes the mix of residents by age in 2020, and the chart on the right notes a significant shift in mix within just 15 years.

The significant growth in our community is occurring even faster within the older adult population. Through this Action Plan, the community has laid out a strategy for strengthening livability of seniors in Mecklenburg County with that growth in mind.
Action Planning Overview – Four Core Strategies

The Action Plan in the next section of this document details almost 40 Recommendations within the 8 Domains of Livability and includes many more actions steps. A more strategic way to understand the overall approach that Age-Friendly Mecklenburg will undertake in the implementation of these plans is noted in the graphic below.

Overall, there are four primary strategies which the community will utilize to strengthen the age-friendly experience in Mecklenburg County. Framed around the desired outcomes for seniors: Active, Informed, Supported, and Connected, the Recommendations are grouped into an Engagement Strategy, a Communication Strategy, a Support Strategy, and a Connectivity Strategy. Each of these four Core Strategies are described below.

**Engagement Strategy**
The goal of this Strategy is to help Seniors stay Active. The two main components of this Strategy are:

- **Activity/Wellness** - The plan includes several Recommendations that promote the importance of walking and making walking more accessible for seniors on greenways and even in and around facilities within the community. There are multiple Recommendations that address expanding and promoting social activities for senior adults as well as developing intergenerational activities. Expanding access to geriatric providers and promoting wellness and healthy diets are also components of this Strategy.

- **Employment/Engagement** - The plan includes Recommendations that promote programs that enhance job skills and readiness as well as lifelong learning. Not only does the plan address the employment needs of seniors and the value of seniors working for businesses, but there is also an emphasis on ensuring equitable representation of seniors on local boards and committees.
Communication Strategy
The goal of this Strategy is to help Seniors stay Informed. The two main components of this Strategy are:

❖ Public Awareness - The plan includes age-friendly campaigns for the broader public. These campaigns serve to educate the public - across all generations - on the housing, transportation, and other needs of older adults as well as the value of seniors in the community. The communications also emphasize the importance of promoting positive images of older adults.

❖ Informed Seniors - The plan includes several Recommendations that focus communications primarily on older adults. These Recommendations vary from education-oriented about transportation or Alzheimer’s and dementia support to Recommendations that focus on ensuring that communication methods and formats are age-friendly, with references to the importance of continuing print media and telephone outreach.

Support Strategy
The goal of this Strategy is to help Seniors and their caregivers to be Supported. The two main components of this Strategy are:

❖ Safety/Policy - The Mecklenburg Age-friendly Action Plan incorporates Recommendations that serve to try to address financial exploitation of seniors by building awareness of this issue and identifying organizations that can help to track and mitigate the risk of these concerns. The Action Plan also seeks to determine how the Americans with Disabilities Act supports age-friendly community characteristics and what needs to be done beyond the ADA to foster age-friendly activity.

❖ Support in Place - The Action Plan in the following section is focused on supporting older adults and their desire to age-in-place in a safe environment. Recommendations deal with everything from support services that renovate homes of seniors to enhancing support for seniors’ caregivers.
**Connectivity Strategy**

The goal of this Strategy is to help Seniors stay **Connected**. The two main components of this Strategy are:

- **Technology** - The Action Plan was developed with the understanding that technology is often a challenge for seniors. Recommendations focus on educating seniors on the use of technology as well as services and information available through technology. Many Recommendations within this Strategy and elsewhere in the Action Plan note the importance of improving access to and understanding of digital resources for older adults.

- **Transportation** - The Connectivity Strategy also focuses on physical connectivity within the community. There are multiple Recommendations that are transportation-related, often addressing actions that can be taken to facilitate easier movement within the community, whether that is via public transportation or other means that typically involve low cost door-to-door services.

The next section of this document includes the specific Recommendations referenced here and provides detailed Action Plans organized within the 8 Domains of Livability. An initial list of Partner organizations has been identified, and once Mecklenburg County receives the designation as being an age-friendly community and implementation begins, AFM will reach out to the community to request participation from any Partners interested in becoming involved in implementation efforts.

Also, each Domain Action Plan is followed by a section titled “Additional Considerations.” These Considerations represent common themes - areas of particular interest - noted by community residents in response to their review of the AFM Recommendations.
Age-Friendly Mecklenburg

Domain-specific Action Plans

Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Domain 2. Transportation

Domain 3. Housing

Domain 4. Social Participation

Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion

Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment

Domain 7. Communication and Information

Domain 8. Community and Health Services
Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Where We are Now: The Charlotte/Mecklenburg region offers 230 parks and facilities on over 21,000 acres of park land for its residents. Many of these spaces and buildings include various programs and opportunities for seniors to improve their physical and cognitive health, expand their support systems, and find services that they need to remain independent. Over 90% of residents rate the parks as either excellent or good, and as the population continues to increase, the demand for high-quality and accessible parks, greenways and recreational activities will also increase.

With the vast array of outdoor spaces and programs available to residents, travel within and to/from these spaces and buildings becomes very important. The City of Charlotte has made a commitment to safer streets by launching a Vision Zero plan to reduce traffic-related deaths and serious injuries for all who share Charlotte streets by 2030. Exploring how this plan will improve walkability and safety for older adults is a key component of the Age-Friendly Plan.

As the Charlotte/Mecklenburg region continues to strive for greater walkability, more attention is being placed on bringing quality County services to customers in locations that are convenient to them. With that goal in mind, a Mecklenburg County initiative called “Bringing Mecklenburg County to You” includes the development of Community Resource Centers (CRCs), and the first of six planned CRCs is operational. This location and the future sites will be a significant benefit for residents with limited mobility and/or a lack of transportation.

Our Goals and Objectives: People of all ages need places to congregate and socialize. These areas include parks, greenways, safe streets, sidewalks, and processes to ensure access to buildings and gathering spaces (i.e., elevators, railings, wheelchair ramps, outdoor seating, etc.). The goal of this Domain is to ensure that Mecklenburg County’s public spaces are accessible to all residents and provide a positive, age-friendly experience.
# Recommendation

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<th>Key Actions</th>
<th>Impl’n Start</th>
<th>Resources Required</th>
<th>Indicators/Metrics</th>
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| 1 | Encourage Seniors to walk in order to remain active, leveraging the Charlotte Moves Walkability Task Force results to show the benefits of walking. | 1.1 - Establish a group to determine the current state of task force  
1.2 – Use existing research data to identify older adult areas of concern; this could include [Vision Zero Charlotte](#) and Sustain Charlotte senior walkability study. Also, Southminster has funded phase II of this project.  
1.3 – If needed after 1.2, survey older adults on frequency and limitations of walking and reasons for walking.  
1.4 - Identify barriers and facilitators to walking for older adults (engineering, behavioral, incentives, etc.)  
1.5 - Educate older adults on walking risk reduction. | 2022         | • Time for convening/participating in task force  
• Funding of Phase II of walkability study (Southminster) | • Commitment of lead agency  
• 1st Task Force Meeting Held or Walkability Study Launched  
• [See Vision Zero Charlotte Metrics](#) |
## Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
### Implementation Plan

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| 2 | Ensure that greenways and trails have age-friendly, strategically placed benches and other age-friendly amenities such as tree shade, parking access, water, and emergency call stations or patrols. | 2.1 – Research older adult use of greenways including observations on greenways and surveys, noting proximity of greenways to where seniors live.  
2.2 – Identify age grouping of needs that may include benches, tree shade, parking access, gravel use, water, emergency call stations or patrols, etc.  
2.3 – Ensure that long-term greenway planning addresses senior needs identified in 2.2  
2.4 – Review data in Meck60+ Study on ‘age friendliness’ of parks as well as review high traffic park areas frequented by seniors - Tyvola Senior Center, Intergenerational Play Space at Marion Diehl Park. There is also Cycling Without Age program at several senior centers within the Parks and Rec system.  
2.5 – Ensure that long-term parks planning addresses senior needs identified in 2.4 including routes for these bikes, addressing factors such as access to greenways. | 2021         | • Time for participating in greenways planning and research  
• If research conducted, time/fees for research  
• Funding for benches and other amenities needed | • Completion of Action Steps |
# Recommendation

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<td>Ensure that older adults are able to connect to services through sidewalks and streets.</td>
<td>2023</td>
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3.1 – Conduct a needs assessment of what services older adults need most on a daily/walkable basis. Note: Some of this data can be found in [report from Sustain Charlotte](#).
3.2 – Perform geocoding or other similar analysis of older adults’ zip code areas of census data and proximity to services.
3.3 – Use sidewalk completion buttons and fragile neighborhood indexes to track utilization of walking areas (most of this data exists already).
3.4 – Utilize data resulting from 3.1-3.3 to ask designers to consider connectivity from development to greenways, etc. Go to development groups and encourage their members to include connections; consider incentivizing to connect the communities. Identify unestablished street connections to use as pedestrian access.
# Identify and cultivate the use of facilities for providing walking tracks/lanes to promote walkability, particularly inside during inclement weather.

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| 4 | **Identify and cultivate the use of facilities for providing walking tracks/lanes to promote walkability, particularly inside during inclement weather.** | 4.1 – Assess usability of other existing walking tracks for seniors, such as in Park & Recreation facilities and similar places.  
4.2 – Evaluate malls and other existing internal facilities (such as schools – public and private) with accessibility, hours, and security for potential requests/recommendations to build walking tracks.  
4.3 – Consider soccer complex during/after development for walking trail-type opportunities.  
4.4 – Build recognition in for organizations that provide (or design/build) these walkable facilities; NOTE: ADA addresses many senior requirements, so ADA compliant developments are typically also senior friendly. | 2023 | • Time for identifying and assessing existing tracks | • Completion of Action Steps |
**Age-Friendly Mecklenburg**  
**Implementation Plan**

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| 5 | When seeking feedback from older adults in surveys and/or focus groups, it is important to identify if there is a gap between American’s Disability Act (ADA) compliance and “Age-Friendliness.” | 5.1 – Convene meeting to define key terms such as ADA compliance v. Age-friendliness, definitions of “older” adults based on age (i.e., 50-60 year old v. 70-80 year old) or particular capabilities.  
5.2 – Contact local municipalities and other organizations conducting senior research to convey results from 5.1  
Potential 5.3 – The State uses ANSI 117.1 as the code ADA-related development; if movement to a newer code stalls, consider advocating for it – new code should be adopted by 2022.  
5.4 – Summarize findings/recommendations by categorizing such as: (A) ADA regulations that address Age-friendliness (B) ADA regulations that do not relate to Age-friendliness (C) Aspects of Age-friendliness that are unrelated to ADA regulations. | 2024 | • Time for developing guidelines/definitions and communicating recommendation to organizations | • Completion of Action Steps |

**Additional Considerations for Implementation from Community Feedback on Action Plan**

- Several respondents cited **fear of crime** as an impediment for participating in walking outdoors on greenways and in some neighborhoods.
- **Safe walking spaces** for people with limited mobility was highlighted by respondents, e.g., flat and smooth surfaces is preferred to uneven terrain. Road maintenance and lack of streetlights were safety issues for respondents when walking in neighborhoods.
- Respondents listed the need for **convenience**, whether that means increased public transportation access to senior centers or building senior centers close to senior housing areas.
- Respondents listed the need for **indoor spaces for exercise during inclement weather**.
**Age-Friendly Mecklenburg**  
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### Summary Recommendation Timeline

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<th>Recommendation</th>
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<th>Implementation Start Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 2: Ensure that greenways and trails have age-friendly, strategically placed benches and other age-friendly amenities such as tree shade, parking access, water, and emergency call stations or patrols.</td>
<td>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</td>
<td>2021, 2022, 2023, 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 1: Encourage Seniors to walk in order to remain active, leveraging the Charlotte Moves Walkability Task Force results to show the benefits of walking.</td>
<td>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</td>
<td>2021, 2022, 2023, 2024</td>
</tr>
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<td>Recommendation 3: Ensure that older adults are able to connect to services through sidewalks and streets.</td>
<td>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</td>
<td>2021, 2022, 2023, 2024</td>
</tr>
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<td>Recommendation 4: Identify and cultivate the use of facilities for providing walking tracks/lanes to promote walkability, particularly inside during inclement weather.</td>
<td>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</td>
<td>2021, 2022, 2023, 2024</td>
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<td>Recommendation 5: When seeking feedback from older adults in surveys and/or focus groups, it is important to identify if there is a gap between American’s Disability Act (ADA) compliance and “Age-Friendliness.”</td>
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<td>2021, 2022, 2023, 2024</td>
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Domain 2. Transportation

**Where We are Now:** The Charlotte/Mecklenburg region offers many public, private, and non-profit transportation options to help its residents navigate. The region boasts transportation systems such as Charlotte Area Transit Service (CATS), Special Transportation Services (STS), Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS), Metrolina Association for the Blind, and Disabled American Veterans. These systems are complemented by bicycle rental services, e-scooters, and rideshare services such as Uber and Lyft, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department’s Passenger Vehicles for Hire (PVH) Office focuses strictly on monitoring/enforcing ordinances relating to many of the private transportation resources. Combined, these transit options create a network of services designed to meet the transit needs of older adults.

However, navigating this network is not always easy, especially for those who are unfamiliar with how to access some of these niche transit programs. Getting around this transit network is also challenging for those with limited mobility or disabilities. In addition, there are still a number of older adults, living in Charlotte/Mecklenburg, who are unable to drive, due to their declining health, eyesight, or the costs associated with maintaining a vehicle. Some transportation barriers are based on their location or due to affordability concerns. For these individuals, public transportation is often the only option.

**Our Goals and Objectives:** People who do not drive (or would prefer walking/biking to nearby locations) will be aware of and have access to the services and amenities needed to take full advantage of all that the community has to offer. They will have options for which mode of transportation to take (i.e. transit, taxis, cars, ride-sharing, bikes, etc.), and will be able to affordably access safe transportation options that enable them to experience what’s needed to enjoy their quality of life.
# Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
## Implementation Plan

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| 6 | Create Age-Friendly campaigns to increase the awareness of the region’s public transportation network. These campaigns should focus on educating older adults on navigating the vast array of transportation services and help them apply for special programs and services | 6.1 - Seek/incorporate the Senior Voice in the design of the campaign to identify how they seek/receive information.  
6.2 – Develop core messaging/content that - in light of COVID-19 - addresses how/why it’s safe to ride transit, esp. for vulnerable populations. Ensure that transportation initiatives, campaigns, and messaging are designed through the lens of seniors/aging adults.  
6.3 - Disseminate information through Driver Assessment Programs so those at highest risk don’t go back to driving and crashing.  
6.4 – Host Applications Training events; have volunteers and staff trained to assist with applications; enlist faith community support to assist in filling out Special Transportation Services applications with social workers present.  
6.5 – Develop a Funding Strategy for the campaign. | 2021 | • Time for developing strategy and hosting training  
• Funding for campaign | • Completion of Action Steps  
• Community Surveys gauging Senior Awareness |
### Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
#### Implementation Plan

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| 7 | Advocate to streamline the eligibility and assessment processes for the various transportation services. Websites and written materials for these services also need to be simplified as they often contain complex funding and eligibility information. | 7.1 – Develop an Inventory of Assessment Processes, noting opportunities to streamline. Ensure that Inventory includes some definition of what specifically drives eligibility based on the program (CATS v. Federal, etc.) or criteria (such as proximity to transportation) used to determine eligibility.  
7.2 - Create Standardized Access to applications/systems by (1) Providing computer access to Transportation Service systems in municipal offices or other locations with seniors (e.g., County Community Resource Center (CRC)) and (2) Ensuring Mecklenburg and surrounding counties all using same application, since many people come from other counties (for medical care, etc.).  
7.3 - Provide Driver Training “skill” development programs to enhance their ability to drive longer. | 2024 | • Time for assessing processes/systems  
• Funding of technology and process standardization | • Completion of Action Steps |
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| 8  | Work with Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) to continue refining its approach to service delivery to have more direct routes and on-demand services. | 8.1 - Develop an overview of the current mix of transportation system routes/services and plans for continuing to change the mix of routes/services.  
8.2 - Partner with CATS and existing community transportation groups to continue to change the mix to more direct/on-demand routes. Leverage work of Sustainable Energy Transportation Group, which will include notification to riders of when trips will arrive.  
8.3 - Identify Key Points of Emphasis with the following considerations:  
• Develop a white sheet on success and cost savings, noting any evidenced-based research. Once complete, send to city/town councils and county “safety” committees.  
• Ensure that plans address overall connectivity of bus stops, crossing connectivity, etc. to help with safety.  
• Ensure there is consideration for walking/biking on any plans, whether it’s getting from public transportation to the home, or going from the home to local amenities/facilities. | 2023         |                   | • Time for ongoing communications about needs/goals and monitoring of results  
• Completion of Action Steps  
• Key Transportation Access Metrics |
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<td>9</td>
<td>Explore options for expanding free &amp; low-cost door to door services offered by Mecklenburg Transportation System to additional residents with expanded hours, where possible.</td>
<td>9.1 - Perform a Needs Analysis to include identification of priority areas and costs. This analysis would detail current and planned changes to times/hours of door-to-door services in relation to community needs/demand.&lt;br&gt;9.2 - Assess/identify other community transportation assets in order to expand capacity such as (1) Use of school buses during off hours or days off (2) Partnering with Retirement Centers to use their vehicles to provide transportation services in nearby neighborhoods (3) Evaluating the feasibility of working with private providers (e.g., taxis/cabs/Uber/Lyft) to ensure vehicles are (or identified as) Age-friendly and possibly can have services provided at discounted rates (possibly reducing fares when use of service aligns with a mandated public service portion in their contract).&lt;br&gt;9.3 - Create an overall Funding approach to support these services that incorporates (1) Inquiring about Grant funding from hospitals (2) Identifying related benefits provided via insurance programs/agencies (3) Contacting the Foundation for the Carolinas to request establishment of a fund for active aging and/or senior transportation (4) Determining feasibility of cost-sharing with CATS or other organizations (5) Advocating to county commissioners in the budget process.</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>• Time for analysis and discovery of alternative vehicle use&lt;br&gt;• Funding of alternative vehicle use</td>
<td>• Completion of Action Steps</td>
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## Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
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| 10 | Partner with the faith community and other community stakeholders to recruit and organize volunteers to provide quick trips to the grocery store and other recreational destinations. | 10.1 - Perform a Needs/Risks analysis relating to the service; explore risk and legalities of protecting volunteer drivers and training for protecting older adults.  
10.2 - Partner with organizations to pilot the service including (1) Engaging faith community leaders through existing partners such as Atrium Faith Community, MeckMin, etc. (2) Investigating whether local shopping centers have or could develop shopping shuttles for seniors.  
10.3 – Identify Alternative Transportation Modes such as biking or slow stroll groups to accompany older adults.  
10.4 – Develop an overall driver training strategy with the following components (A) Training drivers on engaging/communicating with seniors (B) Tapping into existing Programs to train drivers who are older adults: (1) Dementia Friendly Charlotte offers training specific to elders with cognitive impairments. (2) Travel training for older adults. (3) AAA/AARP CarFit.  
10.5 - Reward/Recognize volunteer groups (and individuals) such as with stickers noting organizations as “Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Partner.” | 2023 | - Time for organizing volunteers and tracking utilization  
- Funding of Reward/Recognition program  
- Possibly funds to group managing volunteer program  
- Completion of Action Steps  
- # of Volunteer Trips and/or  
- # of Seniors Transported via Volunteer Trips |
### Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
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| 11 | Educate elder adults on ways that they can safely use ride sharing services and leverage technology to take advantage of grocery and other home delivery services. | 11.1 – Identify key reasons for seniors not using ridesharing (e.g., time, cost, lack technology, fear, lack of awareness).  
11.2 - Develop communication pieces and disseminate through key communication mechanisms.  
11.3 - Develop a Technology Strategy that identifies what technology can do for the seniors (take trips, have items delivered, etc.) based on today’s and future transportation needs and capabilities.  
11.4 – Seek opportunities for centralized delivery of groceries and other items for a given neighborhood or area – could “create community.”  
11.5 – Develop a Funding strategy for educational efforts, identifying existing grants and resources (such as a Disability rights program that included a transportation grant) that teach how to ride. Disability Rights and Resources teaches people how to use the bus and light rail systems.  
11.6 - Provide Training on ridesharing; this could be delivered via a combination of on-demand webinars and tutorials, virtual and in-person classes, mentoring/training from young professionals and tech savvy retirees, and written documents detailing key steps. | 2022         |                    | • Completion of Action Steps  
• Surveys gauging senior awareness, perception, and utilization of ride sharing |
### Additional Considerations for Implementation from Community Feedback on Action Plan

- **Educating seniors on public transportation options** was noted as a need, and it was suggested using faith communities, senior housing and centers, and physician’s offices as vehicles for education.
- Respondents highlighted the special needs of seniors with mobility issues or medical issues and recommend tailoring some public transportation to those needs; door-to-door service was one recommendation, as was expanding current handicap services.
- Expanding CATS access through additional routes/stops was highlighted by several respondents to get to senior centers and shopping.
- Making the bus Transit Center more “senior friendly” was suggested by respondents.
- **Performance Issues**: Timeliness of shuttle service was highlighted as a need, wait times are inconsistent and in some cases long which results in inability to participate in senior center programs.
- Transportation cost was noted by many as an issue with several respondents recommending subsidizing ride sharing and bus fares for seniors.
- Use of community resources was highlighted, specifically enlisting faith-based and civic organizations’ vehicles for transportation.

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# Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
## Implementation Plan

### Summary Recommendation Timetable

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<td>Recommendation 6: Create Age-Friendly campaigns to increase awareness of public transportation. Educate older adults on navigating the array of transportation services, &amp; help them apply for special programs &amp; services.</td>
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Domain 3. Housing

Where We are Now: While the Charlotte/Mecklenburg community is working on improving the social mobility prospects for all of its residents, there has not been a focus on older adults. Local challenges to affordable housing for older adults exist, in part, because Charlotte/Mecklenburg has experienced such significant growth within this demographic, and this has created an increase in demand for affordable senior housing.

A study conducted in 2014 (sponsored by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Coalition on Aging and the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute) identifies housing services gaps for older adults in Mecklenburg County. This study notes that affordable housing needs are acute among middle-income older adults who cannot afford to live in expensive retirement communities and do not qualify for housing assistance. Also, those who live in older homes face additional barriers to their independence. Many of them live in homes that need repairs and renovations. Without these modifications, they are unable to stay in their homes. If forced to move, the study revealed a shortage of affordable housing units that are accessible for older adults and people living with disabilities.

In addition to increasing the supply of affordable housing units, there is a need for supportive services to ensure that older adults are able to age in place. Both the City and County offer tax relief programs to help income qualified homeowners stay in their homes. But there are few services available to help older homeowners make the necessary structural modifications (i.e. the installation of wheelchair ramps, hand railings, etc.) and/or repairs that will allow them to age safely in their home. Additionally, as residents continue to live longer, availability of in-home-aid support (to assist them with essential home management tasks) is often the main determinant to allowing them to remain in their homes.

Our Goals and Objectives: The community wants older adults to have housing that is developed/renovated with universal design principles, affordable, and structurally setup to enable seniors to live safely. Since many older adults desire to stay in their home and communities for as long as possible, Charlotte/Mecklenburg needs to offer the services and programs that allow seniors to age in place, and seniors need to be made aware of the housing options and services available to them.
# Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
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| 12 | Provide more services to support homeowners and renters desiring to age in place. These services should consider extending eligibility to middle-income households, who often cannot qualify for existing services. | 12.1 - Develop a widely-used tool noting low cost and higher cost adjustments that could be made by/for residents to stay at home safer.  
12.2 - Support programs such as Habitat’s activities in critical home repair (e.g., stabilize floors; upfit bathroom to fit walkers) and the CAST Program, focused on low-to-middle income residents. Support could potentially be provided via promotion of the activities with the public at large and seniors, recruitment of volunteers and service providers, and development of lower cost/discounted service options.  
12.3 - Investigate the feasibility of offering a discount program with home repair professionals.  
12.4 - Expand existing realtor association volunteer days, where the purpose is to offer home upkeep/minor maintenance. | 2022          | • Funding of development of home repair/modification tool.  
• Funding of discounted services or expansion of existing programs. | • Completion of Action Steps  
• # of owners/renters utilizing repair/modification services to age in place |
| 13 | Create Age-Friendly campaigns to increase the awareness of the housing needs of seniors. This will ensure that this demographic is included in future regional studies on housing, social mobility, etc. | 13.1 - Identify planning committees to sit on and an agency who will participate on committees to address this need.  
13.2 - Recruit seniors and host participants for Age-Friendly campaigns.  
13.3 - Develop white paper of needs to share. | 2022          | • Time for development of campaigns and recruitment of seniors for planning committees | • Completion of Action Steps  
• Level of senior representation on planning committees |
### Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
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<td>14</td>
<td>Champion educational campaigns that reflect the diversity of older adults and enable seniors to understand services and support that will help them age in place.</td>
<td>14.1 - Identify topics and find lead agency who would develop campaigns. Topics could include (1) State tax relief options for homeowners; address a Gap for renters (their financial relief options need to be identified/communicated to seniors) (2) Hoarding (an increasing problem) (3) Frauds and scams (currently addressed through Money Smart for Older Adults Program) (4) Declined cognitive conditions (dementia, Alzheimer's, etc.) (5) Final expense planning (6) Medication management and help with paying for medications (7) Food insecurity (8) Substance abuse (9) Socialization activities (10) Fall prevention, home safety, and transportation safety 14.2 - Create an overall messaging approach that includes (1) Communications delivered in seniors’ preferred ways to communicate/learn. (2) Addressing the varied demographics of seniors such as race, ethnicity, language, etc. All information in print should be multiple languages for the growing Hispanic, South Asian populations. 14.3 - Provide tours to seniors/others to share the look/feel of senior housing to help them become more comfortable. Include virtual tours as well as transportation options for onsite tours. 14.4 - Ensure housing programs are inclusive of all demographics and special populations.</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>• Time for development and delivery of educational campaigns</td>
<td>• Completion of Action Steps</td>
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# Age-Friendly Mecklenburg

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| 15 | Seek to develop age specific support services to assist seniors to age in place. | 15.1 - Create a Technology-specific age-in-place strategy. Example uses could include: (1) Supporting virtual care – telemedicine via phone or laptop. (2) Ensuring Housing approaches give consideration to technology needs such as Wi-Fi, Bandwidth, and include related costs as part of monthly rent/fees. (3) Educational services that teach and promote – for example – Transportation access via smart phone requests for Uber/Lyft. (4) Mecklenburg County's DSS Economic Services Division is developing an app for Medicaid/Food Stamp online applications  
15.2 - Offer/Expand Services including (1) Encouraging grocery/drug stores to continue to provide home delivery. (2) Providing access to ongoing home maintenance services.  
15.3 - Provide education/training and services (such as PT) that promote Fall prevention in the home and enhanced driving skills courses. | 2024         |                    | • Time for developing strategies and engaging private sector businesses  
• Completion of Action Steps  
• # of homes (or residents) receiving designated “Age in Place” Services |
Additional Considerations for Implementation from Community Feedback on Action Plan

- Several respondents see the need for financial assistance for seniors to “age in place.” Grants, capping property taxes, and identifying other means to make it affordable to age in place were recommended.
- Many respondents underscored the issue of affordable housing and noted inability to keep up with rent on fixed incomes. Fixed rent/limiting rent increase was one solution given by respondents.
- Affordable housing was an important need for many respondents. Discounting property taxes for those aging-in-place or building high rises for seniors were recommended.
- Seniors aging-in-place have unique needs for maintaining housing. Respondents recommended training for developers, landlords and housing managers to address these needs. Additionally, access to low-cost, reliable maintenance and repair workers was noted.
## Summary Recommendation Timetable

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<td>Recommendation 14: Champion educational campaigns that reflect the diversity of older adults and enable seniors to understand services and support that will help them age in place.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 12: Provide more services to support homeowners and renters desiring to age in place. These services should consider extending eligibility to middle-income households, who often cannot qualify for existing services.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 13: Create Age-Friendly campaigns to increase the awareness of the housing needs of seniors. This will ensure that this demographic is included in future regional studies on housing, social mobility, etc.</td>
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Domain 4. Social Participation

Where We are Now: There are many opportunities for seniors in Charlotte/Mecklenburg to engage in social activities that can help them combat their loneliness and isolation. However, these opportunities are not being fully realized, as barriers associated with accessibility and/or a lack of information, still exist.

Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) offers a Senior Nutrition Congregate Program at 19 locations throughout the county. This program offers seniors age 60 and older a place to gather and socialize. In addition to sharing a meal together, residents are able to engage in meaningful activities, exercise, and learn about community resources at each of these sites. Mecklenburg County also has three senior centers countywide. These centers are available for individuals ages 55 and older and provide activities to support their physical and cognitive health.

To ensure that everyone has access to the Senior Centers and Congregant sites, Mecklenburg County offers free transportation to individuals that don’t drive or have personal transportation. This service is provided to encourage those who are reluctant to utilize public transportation, to get out and interact with others. These efforts are a good start at increasing social participation.

Our Goals and Objectives: The community wants to be able to provide accessible programs and services that are designed to help combat loneliness and promote social engagement. This Domain addresses the goals of more proactively identifying seniors at-risk of social isolation, expanding the availability of senior-friendly locations and programs, and enhancing the accessibility of social activities for seniors.
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<th>Impl’n Start</th>
<th>Resources Required</th>
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</table>
| 16 | Expand and promote social activities for older adults, and ensure activities are not limited to weekday work hours. | 16.1 - Identify high-demand activities/events and key locations, particularly for evenings and weekends for both traditional and non-traditional senior center users.  
16.2 - Determine approaches for delivery of activities (sports, arts, faith) in a remote fashion or in light of a stay-at-home orientation; include consideration for those without ability to leave their home, as well. Ensure activities have a participatory element - not just “watching.”  
16.3 - Develop promotional strategy to increase awareness/demand for activities during these hours; on promotional items, include a “key” that notes physical requirements of activities to participate (so seniors know which they are/are not able to participate in based on mobility/physical ability level, etc.).  
16.4 - Address the Transportation barrier, particularly for neighborhoods with biggest challenges: Look at existing ride-sharing programs to match seniors wanting to get to events with those going.  
16.5 - Consider timing of events to relate to most effective time for seniors (daylight, early AM, etc.).  
16.6 - Identify Greeter opportunities at gatherings (like hospitality, tourism, City/Town/County functions, at Performing Arts Center, etc.) to enable free participation. | 2023         |                   | • Time for developing strategies and addressing barriers to participation.  
• Potential funding for expanded hours.  
• Completion of Action Steps |
# Age-Friendly Mecklenburg

## Implementation Plan

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| 17 | Identify those at high risk of social isolation, and provide targeted support. | 17.1 - Develop an approach to identifying those who could be socially isolated, incl. those isolated based on cultural/ethnic norms. (1) Tap into existing County surveys and processes (see Partners who have home network ->) where social isolation questions could be added to help evaluate social isolation risk level. (2) Work with community partners to increase screening of vulnerable seniors. See “Additional Points” for example program. (3) Partner with healthcare providers to identify/assess/support individuals of high risk for social isolation and to offer referrals to programs/services/engagement. (4) Train 1st responders such as EMT/fire staff (also USPS workers); look into other community "Gatekeeper Programs" that have training modules for postal workers, grocery, meter readers, etc. | 2022 | • Time for developing approaches, metrics. | • Completion of Action Steps  
• Metrics that gauge effect on health of engaging/helping socially isolated individuals; consider, for example, adult day care facilities/programs. |
<p>| | | 17.2 - Determine overall approaches to engage those socially isolated. Identify types of support needed. Be creative in how to include high risk seniors (see how schools have done graduation, etc.). (1) Educate elected officials on social isolation – what it is, scale, solutions, etc. such as prior to planning retreats (2) Promote/provide access to resources that increase understanding about and address social isolation. See “Additional Points” for example program. | | | |
| | | 17.3 - Address the digital divide (due to culture, income, age, comfort with technology, etc.), particularly with the need for virtual engagement/participation. Investigate how to tap into grants and other funding sources for devices for seniors or increasing Wi-Fi speed to enhance ability to access resources and engage in activities online. | | | |
| | | 17.4 - Investigate including “social isolation” topic for Continuing Ed. programs for healthcare providers. | | | |
| | | 17.5 – Develop/track metrics that gauge effect on health of engaging/helping socially isolated individuals; consider, for example, adult day care facilities/programs. | | | |</p>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Consider including congregate activities in future Community Resource Centers so that older adults are able to socialize and congregate in places where they are required to conduct normal business.</td>
<td>18.1 - Ensure transportation between “business locations” (CRCs or Existing Facilities) to nearby facilities where activities occur such as (1) Faith community senior group meetings (2) Congregant Nutrition Sites - YMCA/YWCA, Sr. Complexes, Senior Centers, Faith Communities; County programs - recreation, volunteering, etc. 18.2 - Identify list of activities of particular interest to seniors as individuals or in senior groups (e.g., Entertainment targeted to Seniors: movies, pop ups in neighborhoods/churches/retirement centers; virtual tours of conventions such as Southern Living show, Christmas shows). 18.3 - Determine whether the County could volunteer to be an autonomous vehicle test area, working with manufacturers for development for just this purpose.</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>• Funding transportation services and activities</td>
<td>• Completion of Action Steps</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Develop intergenerational activities and family friendly social activities to augment existing social activities.</td>
<td>19.1 - Create an Intergenerational Mobile Group Approach: Consider &quot;walking groups&quot; and also cycling groups. 19.2 - Form Educational Partnerships (1) Go to schools (Pre-K, K-12, Community Colleges, Universities) to find students to support seniors (use of technology); (2) Students (ROTC, Girl/Boy Scouts) could go learn about history from seniors - reciprocal learning by seniors of youth; (3) Do something similar in Faith communities where they have strong youth programs. 19.3 - Identify educational opportunities for younger individuals that include senior input/participation. (1) A legacy civil rights training engagement might be effective. (2) Partner with the school systems to establish a curriculum with 9-12 grades, particularly since there are senior projects and presentations expected of seniors. For example, with Senior High School students on their Senior project, there could be a template developed to guide their interaction with Senior citizens. (3) Home schoolers (actual example) given a project to meet seniors and design something to make seniors’ lives easier with Legos. 19.4 - Identify new programs/opportunities to bring Seniors/Youth together such as (1) Adopt-a-grandparent. (2) Consider adding day cares to Senior Centers. (3) Develop new forms of intergenerational housing design. When they are together the opportunities for onsite activities increase.</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>• Time for relationship development and design/development of engagement opportunities</td>
<td>• Completion of Action Steps</td>
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## Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
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| 20 | Identify facility options so that programs can be delivered in venues close to the people that need them most. | 20.1 - Work with County Geographic Information System (GIS) to perform demographic analysis such as noting current seniors (population clusters) and comparing existing program delivery locations/capacity.
20.2 - Consider partner venues (e.g., church fellowship halls) and other locations. (1) Get programs to where seniors are already located. (2) Activities can be determined by content. So a classic or art house theater might be intergenerational and occur at a theater. | 2021         |                    | Time for conducting analysis and identifying alternative locations
Funding for associated transportation needs
Completion of Action Steps
Proximity of Seniors to facilities hosting programs
Participation level of seniors at alternative locations |
Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
Implementation Plan

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**Additional Points**

❖ For #16 and #17, the Urban Institute’s 2014 Community Needs Assessment of the Aging Population offered suggestions for expanding activities for seniors and providing targeted support to those at-risk of social isolation.

❖ From Action Step 17.1 (Example #2): AFM could work with community partners to increase screening of vulnerable seniors. For example, based on a full screening tool developed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, Humana, a community partner of AFM, has created a streamlined tool for health care professionals, particularly primary care physician offices, to use for identifying seniors at risk for health issues exacerbated by social determinants of health including social isolation. An AFM initiative could be to partner with Humana to implement this tool broadly in Mecklenburg County where Humana has multiple provider relationships.


❖ From Action Step 17.2 (Example #2): Due to the increase of social isolation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a community partner of AFM, Humana, recently launched Far From Alone, a public health awareness campaign to address health-related social needs and promote understanding of loneliness and social isolation. Knowing the importance of a multifaceted outreach, this campaign is being conducted by Humana, Uber Health, Papa, Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness, and Translational Research Institute for Space Health (TRISH). Many of the resources can be accessed online. Partner with Humana to determine how to direct seniors at risk for social isolation to these resources. Far From Alone is featured in this USA Today article from October 2020.


➢ One of the specific resources included in the Far From Alone campaign is the virtual Neighborhood Center which offers on-line classes such as cooking or travel. These classes are open to everyone and are free. AFM could work with Humana and other partners to compile and make widely available such resources to the socially isolated seniors identified through screening.
Additional Considerations for Implementation from Community Feedback on Action Plan

❖ Social isolation was mentioned by respondents as an issue which needs to be addressed. Identifying seniors at risk and needs assessments are important, especially as some seniors may not ask for help or may have a handicap (hearing trouble) leading to discomfort or inability to participate in activities.
❖ Volunteers to visit elderly without a support network was suggested to reduce social isolation.
❖ Transportation was listed as a priority for seniors to get to events in the city or at senior centers. Increasing access to senior centers through public transportation was highlighted by several respondents while the need for reserve seating and parking for entertainment venues was also noted.
❖ Transportation for seniors was noted as an issue whether they do not drive or do not drive at night. Specific bus routes to senior centers was recommended.
❖ Increasing activities for seniors was listed as a need by several respondents. Enlisting HOAs, faith-based organizations and municipal buildings like libraries to provide activities was recommended.
### Summary Recommendation Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 20: Identify facility options so that programs can be delivered in venues close to the people that need them most.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 17: Identify those at high risk of social isolation, and provide targeted support.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
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<td>Recommendation 16: Expand and promote social activities for older adults, and ensure activities are not limited to weekday work hours.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 19: Develop intergenerational activities and family friendly social activities to augment existing social activities.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 18: Consider including congregate activities in future Community Resource Centers so that older adults are able to socialize and congregate in places where they are required to conduct normal business.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
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Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion

Where We are Now: The Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners has made the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority. This focus should ensure that residents will be served respectfully, regardless of their race, geography, culture, language, gender, sexuality, ability, socio-economic status or age. Unfortunately, many people still maintain negative attitudes towards the elderly and as this demographic continues to grow, there must be concerted efforts to foster inclusion and challenge communities to combat ageism.

Seniors in Mecklenburg County and throughout the country deal with many challenges, and sometimes difficulties are caused by others through cases of alleged adult abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. Those difficulties are dealt with through a number of different services provided throughout the community such as the Department of Social Services’ adult protective services; for example, adult protective services provides the FDIC’s Money Smart Training for older adults. This program and others equip residents with information that they can use to better protect themselves from exploitation. At the same time that these programs are focused on protecting seniors, there’s also a broader need to create a common understanding among all residents about the value of seniors as members of the community.

Our Goals and Objectives: The Respect and Social Inclusion Domain complements the Social Participation Domain and challenges services, programs and events to be designed using an age-friendly lens. By incorporating the age-friendly lens into design of different programs and initiatives as well as incorporating the senior voice when seeking community input and feedback, community initiatives will have a broader and more inclusive focus. In addition, this Domain suggests that the community should strive for more intergenerational activities to build relationships, understanding, and collective experiences between seniors and younger residents.
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| 21 | Develop community-wide campaigns that foster positive images of older adults among County residents. | 21.1 - Solicit professional media support for design of the campaigns and strategies (seeking volunteer organizations/individuals where possible).  
21.2 - Leverage Existing Contact Points - For materials/collateral created, share with groups Mecklenburg County meets with such as Adult Daycare Centers, In-home aide centers; senior nutrition sites.  
21.3 - Utilize varied Communication Vehicles such as (1) Use PSAs to get messages/images out in the community (2) Utilize Social Media (people can filter through quickly) such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snap Chat & Tik-Tok (Video games created based on current events of 30 years ago with intergenerational teams; YouTube channel with subscriptions and perhaps Custom art videos.) (3) Quite literally, Charlotte Area Transit Service (CATS) buses have advertisements on the side as a vehicle for inclusive ridership (4) Encourage writers to do such stories for local media partners such as The Observer.  
21.4 - Incorporate images of the older & younger self such as this article. | 2022         |                    | • Time for developing strategies.  
• Funding of campaigns.  
• Completion of Action Steps  
• Community surveys noting perceptions of older adults |
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| 22 | Look for more opportunities to promote intergenerational understanding that will assist in combating negative attitudes towards aging and the elderly. | 22.1 - Leverage existing events such as Open Streets 704; it’s an opportunity for people of all ages to be around one another with activities.  
22.2 - Develop intergenerational activities via Senior Nutrition during the summer.  
22.3 - Have young business professionals and seniors meet in comfortable “social setting” locations.  
22.4 - Have schools go to senior locations and vice-versa; identify common interest points that tie to school studies such as history, environment/greenspace, arts/theaters, affordable housing (speak to seniors and youth); note how seniors bring experience, how-to.  
22.5 - Consider developing banks of drivers to get Seniors to voting sites or prior to voting to help with absentee ballots. | 2022 | • Time to organize events and/or plan incorporation of intergenerational engagement. | • Completion of Action Steps |
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| 23 | Partner with banks and other financial institutions to increase awareness of financial exploitation in both seniors and institutions. | 23.1 - Reach out to organizations such as Better Business Bureau (BBB) or NC Department of Justice (DOJ) – which address fraud, exploitation, elder abuse, etc. – to gain access to their data/research and make connections with banks.  
23.2 - Engage banks (and credit unions) that already do community outreach – find each organization’s point person, and work with them.  
23.3 - Provide classes for seniors on financial management/exploitation such as for soon-to-be retirees. One example is FDIC Training (Money Smart for Older Adults); County has personnel trained in Money Smart to provide classes. Ensure guardianship exploitation (which can lead to financial exploitation) and other similar concerns could be a part of this training approach. | 2023         |                    | • Time for forming partnerships and developing/providing training.                  |
## Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Advocate for a national system to track financial exploitation.</td>
<td>24.1 – Determine an overall advocacy model that could work within the scope/focus of Age-Friendly Mecklenburg. 24.2 - Tap into Groups with Existing Advocacy Capacity (1) AARP has multiple advocacy groups, so we could work with local/regional/national AARP representatives – leverage that relationship and their existing advocacy structures. (2) Keep this as a recommendation if we focus on advocacy and tap into more national groups with Advocacy structure. 24.3 - Consider Example Model: Centralina Area Agency on Aging (CAAA) – Older Adult Group (“Senior Tarheels”); 2-3 seniors from each County; go to Raleigh a couple times/year and address top priorities.</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>• Time for working with existing advocacy groups and development of additional advocacy models.</td>
<td>• Completion of Action Steps  • Development of a national system to track financial exploitation</td>
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### Additional Considerations for Implementation from Community Feedback on Action Plan

- Promoting interaction between elderly and younger generations through activities such as pen pals or younger persons volunteering time to assist the elderly was listed by respondents as suggestions for this area.
- For seniors living in larger mixed-use neighborhoods, fostering relationships between seniors and younger families was noted as a way to alleviate isolation. A City/County campaign was recommended to bring attention to this need.
- Scamming seniors is an issue highlighted by several respondents. Educating seniors to these threats is important and it was suggested that neighborhood infrastructure, e.g. churches and schools, and congregant areas be used for these education events.
# Summary Recommendation Timetable

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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 21: Develop community-wide campaigns that foster positive images of older adults among County residents.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 22: Look for more opportunities to promote intergenerational understanding that will assist in combating negative attitudes towards aging and the elderly.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
<td>2022</td>
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<td>Recommendation 23: Partner with banks and other financial institutions to increase awareness of financial exploitation in both seniors and institutions.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
<td>2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 24: Advocate for a national system to track financial exploitation.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
<td>2024</td>
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</table>
Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment

Where We are Now: The number of older adults that are gainfully employed in the community is increasing, but so is the number of senior citizens who have been unemployed for over a year. This dichotomy is attributable – in part – to the overall growth of the senior population in Mecklenburg County. Both the city and county government have made job creation and workforce development activities a priority. They have created programs to provide residents with training and help finding employment. However, many of these programs are not targeted towards older adults.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is designed to help fill this void. SCSEP is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors. Centralina Area Agency on Aging houses the largest program in Charlotte. The development of employment, volunteer, and civic engagement activities for older adults will be a vital part in ensuring that they stay integrated in the community.

Our Goals and Objectives: Charlotte/Mecklenburg needs to be a place where there are significant civic and employment opportunities, and it should be a place where age discrimination does not exist. For older adults to participate, the community wants to build awareness among seniors of job and civic participation opportunities as well as skill development and knowledge-building initiatives that would better equip them to participate. In addition, employers and other governmental and civic organizations need to have greater awareness of the interest of seniors for engaging in civic and employment-related endeavors, understand the value of seniors serving in those roles, and be more conscientious about including seniors.
# Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
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<td>25</td>
<td>Promote programs that will ensure that older adults have access to job skills and readiness training, lifelong learning opportunities, and refresher trainings that are age appropriate.</td>
<td>25.1 - Engage with Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)/Goodwill Industries to identify affordable training available; determine the feasibility of providing life experience credits based on senior’s work history and expertise. 25.2 - Promote Programs, using methods such as (1) Social Media (Facebook, etc.) (2) Engage the Better Business Bureau (BBB) – they have 2 large list-servs; 1 to professionals; 1 to senior adults (veterans) 25.3 – Promote existing programs already available through partners such as Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library programs for adults as well as Reading/Writing groups and workshops.</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>• Time for engagement of partners. • Possibly funding of program promotions.</td>
<td>• Completion of Action Steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>City and County workforce initiatives should partner with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to ensure that older adults can participate in job training activities.</td>
<td>26.1 – Suggest to the City (and Towns) to augment their employment efforts (often focused on youth) by adding an aging component – possibly something similar to Mayor’s Youth program, but for senior training and job placement.</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>• Time for working on senior employment program development. • City funding for any new senior employment programs.</td>
<td>• Completion of Action Steps</td>
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| 27 | Actively recruit retirees and other older adults to serve as citizen representation in city and county advisory boards and committees. | 27.1 - Look online to identify availability on Boards/Committees (for City, lobby Council representatives); June/September good dates for conveying interest in being on boards/committees.  
27.2 - Determine Senior Mix on Boards that is representative of the population, and ensure composition is “Senior-friendly” – recognize those Boards that have an equitable mix of seniors.  
27.3 - Tap into existing Leadership Academies for potential representatives such as (1) City of Charlotte’s Civic Leadership Academy (Tries to be mindful of ages, diversity); Academy is a great way to learn how City/County work (2) Leadership Academy run by League of Women Voters (3) Consider Civics 101 Course offered by the NAACP.  
27.4 - Recommend staff (at Charlotte Area Transit Service (CATS), Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT), the City, etc.) to get input on Senior Representatives for Boards/Committees. The goal is to have an appropriate age mix to ensure appropriate representation from all sectors (applicable to Towns as well)  
27.5 - Work with Faith Communities (esp. clergy) to make announcements in the church about opportunities to represent community. | 2021 | • Time for research/recruitment | • Completion of Action Steps  
• Level of senior participation as citizen representatives in city and county advisory boards and committees |
## Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
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<td>28</td>
<td>Work with Employer Association to help promote the value of having seniors as workers.</td>
<td>28.1 - For promotion of value of seniors, leverage key partner organizations by requesting their support to promote the value of employing seniors to their constituents and business partners.</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Time for developing relationships and promotional strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Consider creation of Senior Employment website.</td>
<td>29.1 – Include Key Steps in design process for site (1) Review existing websites and services – <a href="#">Charlotte Works put up dashboard</a> (2) For Seniors, ask in-what-ways are you using the internet and websites for job searches? (3) Determine who would be responsible for inputting information, vetting, monitoring – the administrator. (4) Model after “match” websites – characteristics, type of job you’re seeking as an employer – so an employer-employee match can more easily occur. 29.2 - Identify and recognize Senior-friendly companies (based on mix of senior employees or some other measurable threshold) on the website/app.</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Completion of Action Steps • Level of partners involved and employers directly engaged • Time for design/implementation of site. • Funding of site development • Volume of web traffic • Possibly volume of activity (resumes developed, employment counseling, applications submitted, jobs) due to the site.</td>
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</table>
## Additional Considerations for Implementation from Community Feedback on Action Plan

- Several respondents noted the **breadth of experience and knowledge seniors have** and suggested **businesses and government recruit retirees** to take advantage of this resource.
- Continuing education was noted as a need for seniors. Using **local community colleges as a source for training and education** was recommended.
- Plugging into established programs such as AARP Worksearch to **provide a skills matrix database for employers looking for qualified seniors** was recommended to facilitate employment opportunities for seniors.
### Summary Recommendation Timetable

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<td>Recommendation 26: City and County workforce initiatives should partner with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to ensure that older adults can participate in job training activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 28: Work with The Employer Association to help promote the value of having seniors as workers.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 30: Lead discussion on the value of having modified work schedules to accommodate older workers.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 29: Consider creation of Senior Employment website.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Domain 7. Communication and Information

Where We are Now: Technology, social media, and various digital platforms have dominated our society - transmitting information around the world in seconds and keeping people across the globe connected. Unfortunately, many older adults are ill-equipped to navigate the digital landscape as most businesses and services are incorporating digital platforms.

Mecklenburg County is no different in this respect. While our community utilizes many different communication vehicles, we are increasingly moving toward more digitally-oriented methods of informing the public as well as seeking community input. This requires a heightened level of understanding of technology as well as access to technology which our older adults did not grow up with, and many still lack at this time.

Our Goals and Objectives: The vision for this Domain includes two primary and seemingly divergent approaches. The first is to expand the technology knowledge base of older adults in Mecklenburg County as well as their access to digital platforms so that they can have access to more information, services, and social engagement.

At the same time, we need to understand and address the fact that many seniors still prefer more traditional methods of communication including the newspaper, other publications in hardcopy, television, and radio. Therefore, this Domain also challenges the community to ensure that pertinent information is conveyed both in the more traditional format as well as using the more modern digital means.
## Recommendation

### 31.1
Conduct Additional Research to identify most used vehicles/publications, and ask seniors about how they do/can get information.

### 31.2
Leverage existing print publications for key communications to seniors.

### 31.3
Tap into groups such as County DSS and P&R who conduct periodic wellness calls to senior clients (although this is only done when “doors closed”) for telephone outreach.

### 31.4
Ensure Television considered as a communication vehicle such as (1) Ch. 14, if still available (2) “Ageing with Attitude” – 1-hour TV show with information that seniors should know on Channel 21 at 8:30pm – 2nd & 3rd Saturdays each month). Phil Koch and Effie: [https://www.tvaccess21.com/index.html](https://www.tvaccess21.com/index.html)

### 31.5
Consider Other Vehicles such as (1) Radio (2) Text systems with opt ins for Major Event notices (e.g., Free COVID testing) (3) Nextdoor.

### 31.6
Ensure the Strategy by (1) Having Age-Friendly Recognition/Awards (2) Considering funding for postage/printing, sending information through a trusted organization (like a utility – relate to Social Isolation – *if you’re experiencing ABC, call 704.555.xxxx*).
# Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
## Implementation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Key Actions</th>
<th>Impl'n Start</th>
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<th>Indicators/Metrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 32 | Offer classes to help older adults adapt to technology and digital platforms. | 32.1 – Develop a trainer pipeline/approach (1) Recruit volunteers to teach classes and offer 1-on-1 support. (2) Partner with school system to enlist HS Students to teach classes. (3) Create an Intergenerational Buddy System, where millennials/teens team with seniors to assist with technology.  
32.2 – Utilize engagement tools/approaches such as (1) Ensure we address trusted links and direct seniors there (2) Public Television (CH-14? PBS Charlotte?) (3) Contact health systems to understand virtual visit/care approach and technology best practices for application to Tech/Digital education of seniors. (4) Provide links so some could do hands-on self-guided training (e.g., videos); this may also eliminate fear of being scammed. (5) You Tube and Smart TV – having a Senior/intergenerational channel especially for Charlotte.  
32.3 – Consider training content such as (1) Podcasts – how to access, content available (2) Online Digital Games - Getting seniors familiar with online and digital games might alleviate some fears of technology. (3) Use of smart phones, tablets, and other high-use senior devices.  
32.4 – Promote existing courses/tools (1) Courses from Partners who offer such training: Libraries, Park & Recreation, AARP, Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC), Urban League, Charlotte Area Fund (2) Apple Classes (3) Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU) uses Coursera (Online Platform – see if it could be applied to Seniors) | 2021 | • Time for developing strategies. | • Completion of Action Steps  
• Level of senior engagement in various forms of training |
## Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
### Implementation Plan

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</table>
| 33 | Create intergenerational opportunities for seniors to learn how to use social media. A best practice is to pair older adults with teen volunteers.  
❖ Guiding Principle: To have true intergenerational programs, they need to be mutually beneficial, where both young and old are learning from one another. | 33.1 - Look into CMS & Charter Schools for students seeking volunteer hours.  
33.2 - Deliver via “closed” Facebook pages (not open to everyone) to limit advertising and eliminate scammers (remember that NC Secretary of State has tools for fraud avoidance). | 2022 | - Time for developing strategies. | - Completion of Action Steps  
- Level of senior engagement in training  
- # of intergenerational engagements |
# Additional Considerations for Implementation from Community Feedback on Action Plan

- Respondents reinforced the need to communicate with **seniors who have hearing and eyesight issues**.
- Several respondents mentioned **patience as a key factor when guiding seniors through the digital world**. Using college-age adults or other seniors as mentors was recommended.
  - Technical training for seniors or offering a service to assist seniors in navigating online was recommended by some respondents as a way to bring seniors into the digital world.
- Internet cost and device cost are seen as obstacles for seniors to join the digital world. Several respondents recommended **getting free or low cost internet service and devices**.
- Many respondents noted that **television, radio, and physical newspapers are good sources** for seniors to get community information.
## Summary Recommendation Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Recommendation 31: Continue to utilize print-media (being mindful of font size), direct mail, and telephone outreach when communicating with older adults, and inform organizations about the need to continue using these communication vehicles with seniors.</td>
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Domain 8. Community and Health Services

Where We are Now: The health needs of older adults are significant in Mecklenburg County like in any community, and those needs are only increasing as our community grows. In particular, the healthcare challenges in serving older adults such as the need for more personal care, the prevalence of more chronic illnesses, and the significant numbers of seniors living with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia make community and health services for seniors an important and large scale focus area. Due to rising healthcare costs, there is an increased need to provide support and care for individuals who are living with this disease, along with support for their family and caregivers.

Mecklenburg County currently does not have enough funding and services to meet the needs of the residents regarding dementia care, and as the population continues to age, the number of individuals diagnosed with dementia and the number of informal caregivers will grow significantly. As the number of individuals grows, so will the demand for beds available to serve seniors with health needs as well as the need for services and clinicians providing care in the home.

Focusing on wellness activities and increasing the medical infrastructure will help the region improve resources available to assist persons that are living longer and desiring to remain a part of the larger community, despite the health concerns that heighten as people age.

Our Goals and Objectives: The community desires to increase the availability, affordability, and access to healthcare and social services. With greater capacity to serve residents, the community would be better equipped to support seniors when aging in place as well as to support caregivers. In addition, the community seeks to identify and provide wellness and preventative activities for older adults to help delay or reduce the effects of these health concerns in older adults and the community as a whole.
### Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
#### Implementation Plan

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</table>
| 34 | Increase awareness of and expand programs and services to assist families and unpaid caregivers, who are providing care for adults with chronic illnesses. | 34.1 - Develop an inventory of chronic illnesses (referencing any existing inventories of Medicare/Medicaid, DSS, other programs such as Atrium’s 3 Outreach Programs – Transition Care, Community Paramedicine, and Community Care Partners of Greater Mecklenburg (CCPGM)) for those families/unpaid caregivers.  
34.2 - Determine need (demand) for programs/services for caregivers as well as education relating to chronic illnesses.  
34.3 - Determine the educational, resource-related, and emotional support needs of families and unpaid caregivers. Determine programmatic and resources required to address these needs.  
34.4 - Increase awareness of existing programs, and deliver education as need identified.  
34.5 - Determine approach to develop and/or expand programs/services where needs exist. | 2021          | • Time for conducting analysis and developing/delivering training.  
• Potential funding for expansion of services and new programs. | • Completion of Action Steps  
• Utilization of Programs by families and unpaid caregivers |
| 35 | Increase county caregiver support and respite services. | 35.1 - Develop an overall funding strategy for care-giver support and respite services. Include (1) Identifying methods for expansion of vouchers for Project C.A.R.E. (Alz. and Dementia) and LifeSpan – Existing programs (in-home aides) (2) Tapping into Family Caregiver Program and C.A.R.E. program through Just 1 Call. This funding comes from the Older Americans Act. There is Community Alternative Program/Disabled Adults (CAP/DA) through Mecklenburg County Health Department that has Choice such that a family member or friend can be hired as a paid caregiver, but the client must have Medicaid and be at the Skilled nursing need level. | 2022          | • Time for engaging key funding partners | • Completion of Action Steps |
# Recommendation | Key Actions | Impl'n Start | Resources Required | Indicators/ Metrics |
---|---|---|---|---|
36 | Champion awareness of Alzheimer’s Disease and dementia support for persons affected by these diseases. | 36.1 - Bring in representatives from groups in Alzheimer’s and Dementia to work with Partner organizations and agencies.  
36.2 - Provide programs to Business Community – through their HR departments – on how dementia impacts business community.  
36.3 - Provide ongoing Education/Training to non-traditional partners such as (1) First Responders, regarding seniors and those with cognitive impairments. See Addendum at end for more details  
(2) For providing education/training, partners would include Park & Recreation, Grocery Stores, etc. to identify signs of dementia, etc. (thereby becoming dementia friendly and creating “Awareness Ambassadors”). See Addendum at end for more details  
36.4 - Leverage Social Media and Traditional Media (e.g., local papers, public access channel – Aging with Attitude) – particularly communication vehicles used by seniors. | 2021 | • Time for engagement and education  
• Completion of Action Steps  
• # of individuals/organizations trained or certified as Dementia Practitioners or “Awareness Ambassadors” |
## Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Implementation Plan

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| 37 | Incentivize older adults to participate in activities that promote wellness and healthy diet. | 37.1 - Benchmark with existing incentive/support structures such as Atrium’s Faith Community coordinators and Senior Living Communities  
37.2 - Review Similar Incentive Programs for Ideas/Concepts such as (1) Silver Seniors (2) Double bucks at Farmer’s Market (linked to SNAP)  
37.3 - Review Existing Training Programs for Ideas/Concepts such as (1) At Centralina, deliver workshops (living healthy, living healthy with Diabetes, etc.) in group settings over multiple weeks (2) People First – Different education (like at The Gables) (3) United Healthcare has existing programs with free gyms, etc. (see Advantage Plans)  
37.4 – Develop/Deliver an ongoing senior wellness incentive strategy based on benchmarking best practices. Consider providing B-Cycle senior discount memberships, especially with the new electric bicycle fleet going online soon | 2024 | • Time for benchmarking activities  
• Funding for any financially-based incentives | • Completion of Action Steps  
• # of Residents recognized for wellness activities |
### Age-Friendly Mecklenburg

**Implementation Plan**

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| 38 | Partner with hospitals and healthcare providers to attract more geriatric physicians to the region. | 38.1 - Engage Key Organizations to support attraction/recruitment of geriatric physicians: (1) Atrium is a teaching facility, so meet with those programs working with residents to discuss. (2) Consider hosting trainings for current providers to be more aware of older adult needs in a healthcare visit.  
38.2 - Work to attract and engage other clinicians such as (1) Providing training modules at AHEC – offering to clinical providers, beyond physicians; also to Internal Medicine/Family Practice, Dentists, Nurses, not just geriatric specialists. (2) Encouraging scholarships for individuals (CNA, RN, etc.) that specialize in geriatrics. (3) Ensuring that NPs, PAs are part of this recommendation. Go to schools that train individuals at the NP/PA level.  
38.3 - Investigate the feasibility for advocating for dedicated Geri-Psyc beds (none in the County at this point), as that could also attract more geriatric physicians. | 2024         |                   | • Time for engaging key organizations in recruitment, retention, and training efforts  
• Completion of Action Steps  
• # of Overall Geriatric Practitioners Locally |
Addendum

First Responders - Specific Opportunities for Recommendation 36.3
❖ The Alzheimer’s Association has classes for First Responders, Families etc. and other elder care Professionals. No designation of Practitioner is granted but a certificate of completion is awarded as with any continuing education. The Alzheimer’s Association is the most recognized body offering Support Groups and Helplines - [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org). AFM member Angela Burrow is also one of their pro bono Community Educators...AACEs (Alzheimer's Association Community Educator).

Certified Dementia Practitioners - Specific Opportunities for Recommendation 36.3
❖ AFM member Angela Burrow is a national trainer with the National Council for Certified Dementia Practitioners (CDP) [www.nccdp.org](http://www.nccdp.org) - Offering a specific training for qualifying professionals working in Elder Care with a required 8 hour training which comes with the CDP credential (renewable with CEU's every 2 years and the professional designation with letters after the graduate’s name - CDP).

Specific Opportunities for Recommendation 36.1-36.3
❖ Dementia Friendly Charlotte Mecklenburg committee/initiative - Lead person - Sara Maloney ([smaloney@centralina.org](mailto:smaloney@centralina.org)) at Centralina Area Agency on Aging. (Reporting to the State initiative and ultimately the national program - [www.dfa.org](http://www.dfa.org) (Dementia Friendly America).

➢ We are a growing group of Dementia Champions who offer Dementia Friends Sessions throughout the county (Free). In addition, we will be piloting a larger program (on COVID hold) which will create Dementia Friendly businesses. (Fees are involved and more awareness, training, resources with follow-up etc.).

❖ Ashley Stevens - Mecklenburg County Social Worker with Project CARE - works with Sara Maloney on Dementia Friendly initiatives
Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
Implementation Plan

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Additional Considerations for Implementation from Community Feedback on Action Plan

❖ Respondents raised the issue of caregiver needs when caring for someone in the home, and one recommendation was to assign case workers to assist the caregiver in navigating the resources available within the community.

❖ Nutrition education for seniors as well as institutions providing food was listed as a need by several respondents.

❖ Some respondents recommended bringing physicians to their patients, either through visits to senior housing buildings or locating physician offices near senior housing.

❖ Caregiver health was seen as an important issue to respondents. Recommendations included taking advantage of AARP training programs as well as providing a service whereby qualified persons could spell caregivers during the day. Education on caregiver resources was also recommended.
## Summary Recommendation Timetable

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<td><strong>Recommendation 35:</strong> Increase county care-giver support and respite services.</td>
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<td>( ) 2021 ( ) 2022 ( ) 2023 ( ) 2024</td>
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Conclusion

Mecklenburg County’s population is growing and aging, as 43 out of 100 additional residents by the year 2035 will be aged 55+. While there are challenges associated with having an increasing mix of seniors and significant growth in the number of residents that are older adults, there are also many opportunities to utilize the knowledge, experiences, and other contributions that seniors can make to a community.

To ensure that we tap into seniors as a community asset as well as have the resources and the collaborative approach to support both the physical and social needs of seniors, we were presenting this Action Plan. It was based on community input and research, designed to address high priorities, and structured to take a strategic approach to ensuring that Mecklenburg County is an age-friendly community for people of all ages and abilities.

We know that this plan may be refined over time as the community changes, needs change, external factors influence decisions and priorities, and Partners begin the detailed design for each Recommendation. So this will be a living document – one that reflects our understanding today of the future Mecklenburg, but should be adjusted to fit the needs of the community over time.

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg will engage community partners and residents as we progress through the detailed design and implementation of the recommendations. There will be ongoing open invitations to those who want to help improve the quality of life for seniors to become part of Age-Friendly Mecklenburg, lending their time, expertise, resources, and community connections to collaboratively support older adults in our community.

In the crafting of the Recommendations and associated Action Steps, older adults can be confident that their voices were heard in all of the Domains of Livability. The collective voices of seniors, the expertise of the Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Committee members, and the guidance of AARP have enabled us to put together an Action Plan that will move us toward a long-term Vision of working together to continually strengthen the quality of life in the community.
### Appendix

**Summary Table of Action Plans with Timetables – Date Sort**

The following Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Recommendations are sorted by the year they are slated to begin implementation. *Note that Recommendations are not listed in order of priority within each annual grouping.*

#### Recommendations with 2021 Start Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 2: Ensure that greenways and trails have age-friendly, strategically placed benches and other age-friendly amenities such as tree shade, parking access, water, and emergency call stations or patrols.</td>
<td>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 20: Identify facility options so that programs can be delivered in venues close to the people that need them most.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 27: Actively recruit retirees and other older adults to serve as citizen representation in city and county advisory boards and committees.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
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<td>Recommendation 32: Offer classes to help older adults adapt to technology and digital platforms.</td>
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Create an **Age-Friendly Education and Awareness-building Campaign Strategy for Seniors**

This Strategy would focus on increasing awareness among seniors of services and programs available to them and could result in development of a **Senior Resource Guide** with content such as:

- **Locations, hours, and access options to senior centers, senior programs, greenways, parks, etc.**
- **Lists of nearby walking tracks and indoor walking facilities.**
- **Schedules and locations of senior training opportunities including technology training (on smart phones, tablets, computers, web use), fraud/scam prevention, financial management, ride sharing, safe driving, etc.**
- **Listing of transportation options for those with mobility issues, including door-to-door service options.**
- **Listing of low/no cost providers of home repair/renovation services – particularly addressing senior housing needs.**
- **Community/Government advisory board & committee listings/contacts for seniors interested in joining the groups.**
- **Listing of localized walking and biking groups as well as information on groups hosting intergenerational activities.**
- **Potential sources of free or low-cost internet service and devices.**
- **Inventory of programs, services, educational opportunities, and emotional support resources available for families and unpaid caregivers who are caring for individuals with chronic illnesses.**
- **Lists of institutions providing free or low cost food for seniors.**

Specific Action Plan Recommendations that this Strategy could address include:

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 6: Create Age-Friendly campaigns to increase awareness of public transportation. Educate older adults on navigating the array of transportation services, &amp; help them apply for special programs &amp; services.</td>
<td>Domain 2. Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 14: Champion educational campaigns that reflect the diversity of older adults and enable seniors to understand services and support that will help them age in place.</td>
<td>Domain 3. Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 36: Champion awareness of Alzheimer’s Disease and dementia support for persons affected by these diseases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 1: Encourage Seniors to walk in order to remain active, leveraging the Charlotte Moves Walkability Task Force results to show the benefits of walking.</td>
<td>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 11: Educate elder adults on ways that they can safely use ride sharing services and leverage technology to take advantage of grocery and other home delivery services.”</td>
<td>Domain 2. Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 12: Provide more services to support homeowners and renters desiring to age in place. These services should consider extending eligibility to middle-income households, who often cannot qualify for existing services.</td>
<td>Domain 3. Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 13: Create Age-Friendly campaigns to increase the awareness of the housing needs of seniors. This will ensure that this demographic is included in future regional studies on housing, social mobility, etc.</td>
<td>Domain 3. Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 17: Identify those at high risk of social isolation, and provide targeted support.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 21: Develop community-wide campaigns that foster positive images of older adults among County residents.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 22: Look for more opportunities to promote intergenerational understanding that will assist in combating negative attitudes towards aging and the elderly.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 25: Promote programs that will ensure that older adults have access to job skills and readiness training, lifelong learning opportunities, and refresher trainings that are age appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 3: Ensure that older adults are able to connect to services through sidewalks and streets.</td>
<td>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 4: Identify and cultivate the use of facilities for providing walking tracks/lanes to promote walkability, particularly inside during inclement weather.</td>
<td>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 8: Work with Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) to continue refining its approach to service delivery to have more direct routes and on-demand services.</td>
<td>Domain 2. Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 9: Explore options for expanding free &amp; low-cost door to door services offered by Mecklenburg Transportation System to additional residents with expanded hours, where possible.</td>
<td>Domain 2. Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 10: Partner with the faith community and other community stakeholders to recruit and organize volunteers to provide quick trips to the grocery store and other recreational destinations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 16: Expand and promote social activities for older adults, and ensure activities are not limited to weekday work hours.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 19: Develop intergenerational activities and family friendly social activities to augment existing social activities.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 23: Partner with banks and other financial institutions to increase awareness of financial exploitation in both seniors and institutions.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 24: Advocate for a national system to track financial exploitation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 28: Work with The Employer Association to help promote the value of having seniors as workers.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 30: Lead discussion on the value of having modified work schedules to accommodate older workers.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Recommendations with 2024 Start Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 5: When seeking feedback from older adults in surveys and/or focus groups, it is important to identify if there is a gap between American’s Disability Act (ADA) compliance and “Age-Friendliness.”</td>
<td>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 7: Advocate to streamline the eligibility and assessment processes for transportation services. Websites &amp; written materials also need to be simplified as they often contain complex funding &amp; eligibility information.</td>
<td>Domain 2. Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 15: Seek to develop age specific support services to assist seniors to age in place.</td>
<td>Domain 3. Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 18: Consider including congregate activities in future Community Resource Centers so that older adults are able to socialize and congregate in places where they are required to conduct normal business.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 29: Consider creation of Senior Employment website.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 37: Incentivize older adults to participate in activities that promote wellness and healthy diet.</td>
<td>Domain 8. Community and Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 38: Partner with hospitals and healthcare providers to attract more geriatric physicians to the region.</td>
<td>Domain 8. Community and Health Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary Table of Action Plans with Timetables – Domain Sort

The following are the Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Recommendations, sorted first by Domain and second by year that the Recommendation is slated to begin implementation. The implementation start year was generally based on the following criteria:

- Recommendations that are Community Priorities (based on alignment to Domain Goals as noted in community surveys) are higher priority
- Low/No Cost Recommendations are higher priority than High Cost
- Those Recommendations more controllable by current AFM members are higher priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Implementation Start Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 2: Ensure that greenways and trails have age-friendly,</td>
<td></td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategically placed benches and other age-friendly amenities such as tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>shade, parking access, water, and emergency call stations or patrols.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 1: Encourage Seniors to walk in order to remain active,</td>
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<tr>
<td>leveraging the Charlotte Moves Walkability Task Force results to show the</td>
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<tr>
<td>benefits of walking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 3: Ensure that older adults are able to connect to services</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>through sidewalks and streets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 4: Identify and cultivate the use of facilities for providing</td>
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<tr>
<td>walking tracks/lanes to promote walkability, particularly inside during</td>
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<tr>
<td>inclement weather.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 5: When seeking feedback from older adults in surveys and/or</td>
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<tr>
<td>focus groups, it is important to identify if there is a gap between American’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Act (ADA) compliance and “Age-Friendliness.”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 6: Create Age-Friendly campaigns to increase awareness of</td>
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<tr>
<td>public transportation. Educate older adults on navigating the array of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>transportation services, &amp; help them apply for special programs &amp; services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 11: Educate elder adults on ways that they can safely use</td>
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<tr>
<td>ride sharing services and leverage technology to take advantage of grocery and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>other home delivery services.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 8: Work with Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) to continue</td>
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<tr>
<td>refining its approach to service delivery to have more direct routes and on-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>demand services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 9: Explore options for expanding free &amp; low-cost door to door</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>services offered by Mecklenburg Transportation System to additional residents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>with expanded hours, where possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 10: Partner with the faith community and other community</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>stakeholders to recruit and organize volunteers to provide quick trips to the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grocery store and other recreational destinations.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 7: Advocate to streamline the eligibility and assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>processes for transportation services. Websites &amp; written materials also need</td>
<td></td>
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<td>to be simplified as they often contain complex funding &amp; eligibility information.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Implementation Start Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 14: Champion educational campaigns that reflect the diversity of older adults and enable seniors to understand services and support that will help them age in place.</td>
<td>Domain 3. Housing</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 12: Provide more services to support homeowners and renters desiring to age in place. These services should consider extending eligibility to middle-income households, who often cannot qualify for existing services.</td>
<td>Domain 3. Housing</td>
<td>2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 13: Create Age-Friendly campaigns to increase the awareness of the housing needs of seniors. This will ensure that this demographic is included in future regional studies on housing, social mobility, etc.</td>
<td>Domain 3. Housing</td>
<td>2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 15: Seek to develop age specific support services to assist seniors to age in place.</td>
<td>Domain 3. Housing</td>
<td>2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 20: Identify facility options so that programs can be delivered in venues close to the people that need them most.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 17: Identify those at high risk of social isolation, and provide targeted support.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 16: Expand and promote social activities for older adults, and ensure activities are not limited to weekday work hours.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 19: Develop intergenerational activities and family friendly social activities to augment existing social activities.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 18: Consider including congregate activities in future Community Resource Centers so that older adults are able to socialize and congregate in places where they are required to conduct normal business.</td>
<td>Domain 4. Social Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 21: Develop community-wide campaigns that foster positive images of older adults among County residents.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
<td>2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 22: Look for more opportunities to promote intergenerational understanding that will assist in combating negative attitudes towards aging and the elderly.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
<td>2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 23: Partner with banks and other financial institutions to increase awareness of financial exploitation in both seniors and institutions.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
<td>2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 24: Advocate for a national system to track financial exploitation.</td>
<td>Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Domain</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 27: Actively recruit retirees and other older adults to serve as citizen representation in city and county advisory boards and committees.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 25: Promote programs that will ensure that older adults have access to job skills and readiness training, lifelong learning opportunities, and refresher trainings that are age appropriate.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 26: City and County workforce initiatives should partner with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to ensure that older adults can participate in job training activities.</td>
<td>Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 32: Offer classes to help older adults adapt to technology and digital platforms.</td>
<td>Domain 7. Communication and Information</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 31: Continue to utilize print-media (being mindful of font size), direct mail, and telephone outreach when communicating with older adults, and inform organizations about the need to continue using these communication vehicles with seniors.</td>
<td>Domain 7. Communication and Information</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 33: Create intergenerational opportunities for seniors to learn how to use social media. A best practice is to pair older adults with teen volunteers.</td>
<td>Domain 7. Communication and Information</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 34: Increase awareness of and expand programs and services to assist families and unpaid caregivers, who are providing care for adults with chronic illnesses.</td>
<td>Domain 8. Community and Health Services</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 36: Champion awareness of Alzheimer’s Disease and dementia support for persons affected by these diseases.</td>
<td>Domain 8. Community and Health Services</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 35: Increase county care-giver support and respite services.</td>
<td>Domain 8. Community and Health Services</td>
<td>2021 2022 2023 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation 37: Incentivize older adults to participate in activities that promote wellness and healthy diet.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 38: Partner with hospitals and healthcare providers to attract more geriatric physicians to the region.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of Community Feedback on Action Plan

Creating and refining the Age-Friendly Action Plan for Mecklenburg County required that we incorporate the voice of the community into the process. As noted earlier, community input was the basis for the Gap Analysis. Through the Action Planning process as well, community feedback on the draft Action Plan played a significant role in the refinement of plans.

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg appreciates all the community members who took time to participate in our Community Feedback research. Your insights and observations about the current status of Mecklenburg County and potential ideas for the future were invaluable to the success of this project.

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg conducted nine (9) versions of community feedback surveys, hosted by eight (8) AFM Committee members. While a significant percentage of responses came from Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services research, AFM utilized a varied set of organizations to ensure that the community participants, their locations, and their perspectives brought a diverse set of observations and viewpoints. The research hosts included:

❖ Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services: Services for Adults - Nutrition Sites
❖ AARP – Volunteer Members
❖ Southminster CCRC
❖ Centralina Area Agency on Aging
   ➢ CAC-RFAAC (Community Advisory Committees and Region F Aging Advisory Committee)
   ➢ SCSEP (Oasis Senior Enrichment Program and Levine Senior Center)
❖ Aldersgate CCRC
❖ Senior Scholars
❖ Atrium Faith Communities
❖ Temple Beth El and Jews for Justice Faith Community

These organizations work with seniors from all demographic groups and from all areas of the County as illustrated in the graphic to the right – depicting DSS and AARP respondent locations.

With the strong support of these research hosts, we were able to obtain feedback from 1,121 residents on a draft version of the Action Plan. This feedback was incorporated into the Action Plan, with many areas of particular interest noted as “Additional Considerations” within the appropriate Domains so that those frequently made points will be considered/addressed when implementation occurs. Also, the community feedback aided in determining the staging of Recommendations over time.

We greatly appreciate the time of our survey hosts and our community members for contributing to the successful completion of this Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Action Plan.
Acknowledgements

We are especially thankful for the knowledgeable, dedicated, caring, and creative members of the Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Committee. The AFM Committee includes seniors as well as a mix of racially and ethnically diverse members of not-for-profit, higher education, faith-based, private, and governmental organizations along with community residents.

They spent countless hours collaboratively engaging with each other in the development of the Action Plans and creation of the full submittal document. The success of this effort and the anticipated success of the implementation of the Plans would not be possible without the contributions of these participants.

Age-Friendly Mecklenburg Committee Members

1) Erin Barbee, Senior VP of Programs & Services – The Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership
2) Angela Berry, Traffic Safety Manager – Charlotte Department of Transportation
3) Leo Bohland, Program Manager – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services – Services for Adults – Adult Social Work Services
4) Connie Bonebrake, Population Health Strategy Lead/Charlotte, Humana
5) Julie Bolt, Aging Life Care Expert – Central Piedmont Community College
6) Dietrich Brown, Deputy Director, Special Transportation Service – Charlotte Area Transit System
7) Yvonne Brown, Administrative Support Assistant III – Department of Social Services - Services for Adults
8) Richard Buchanan, Sr. Social Services Manager – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services – Services for Adults – Mecklenburg Transportation System/ Senior Citizen Nutrition Program
9) C. Angela Burrow – Dementia Friendly Charlotte Mecklenburg & National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners
10) Nancy Carter – Soil & Water Conservation; former Council of Aging representative
11) Corsha Caughman, Citizen
12) Kate Cavazza, Health Policy Coordinator – Public Health
13) Vivian Coleman, Transportation Planning Program Manager – Charlotte Department of Transportation
14) Darryl Crenshaw, Coordinator Supervisor – Mecklenburg County – Veterans Services
15) Michael Daly, Park & Recreation Manager – Mecklenburg County – Park & Rec
16) Antia Dawkins – Johnson C. Smith University
17) Renee Dutcher, Social Services Manager – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services – Services for Adults – Community Social Work
18) Wanda Foy-Burroughs – Johnson C. Smith University
19) D’Lane Fries – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
20) Ed Gagnon, Consultant – CSS, Inc.
21) Melanie Gardiner, Information/ Education Coordinator – Department of Social Services
22) Thomas Grant, Information/Education Coordinator – Mecklenburg County – Public Health
23) Donald Green, Sr. Architectural Project Manager – Progressive AE
24) John Highfill – Citizen
25) Masie Jones, Social Services Manager – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services – Services for Adults – Mecklenburg Transportation System
26) Hillary Kaylor – Centralina Area Agency on Aging
27) Katie Kutcher – Centralina Area Agency on Aging
28) Courtney LaCaria, Management Analyst – Community Support Services
29) Jason Lawrence, Interim Manager of Service Planning – Charlotte Area Transit System
30) Janet LeClair, Executive Director – Memory and Movement of Charlotte
31) Sara Maloney – Centralina Area Agency on Aging
32) Michelle Mann, Director of Strategic Initiative & Legislative Affairs – Greater Charlotte Apartment Association
33) Lara Cole Marion, NC Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach – AARP (American Association of Retired Persons)
34) Tracy McGinnis, Director of Philanthropy – Southminster
35) Linda Miller, Aging Director – Centralina Area Agency on Aging
36) Shannon Myers, Sr. Social Services Manager – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services – Services for Adults – Adult Protective Services/Clinical Social Worker
37) Michelle Nance, Director of Regional Planning – Centralina Regional Council
38) Erin Nixon, Social Services Program Supervisor – Community Support Services
39) Elizabeth Novak – Alzheimer’s Association
40) Coury O’Donoghue – Alzheimer’s Association
41) Trena Palmer, Recreation Manager – Mecklenburg County – Park & Rec
42) Amrita Patel, Library Outreach Coordinator/Supervisor – Charlotte Mecklenburg Library
43) Kajal Patel, Social Services Manager – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services – Services for Adults – Senior Citizen Nutrition Program
44) Stephen Phillips – Charlotte Chapter of Jews for Justice
45) Jay Potter – AARP Volunteer, Retired from Central Piedmont Community College
46) Alethea Ramey, Senior and Disabled Program Manager – Inlivian Housing Redefined
47) Renee Rizzutti, CEO/Executive Director – PACE of the Southern Piedmont
48) Michelle Robinson, Vanpool Manager – Charlotte Area Transit System
49) Carla Scott, SS Program Supervisor – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services – Services for Adults – Senior Citizen Nutrition Program
50) Allen Smith, Deputy Director of Transit – Chief Operating Officer – Charlotte Area Transit System
51) Debbie Smith, Deputy Director – Charlotte Department of Transportation
52) Louis Smith, Architect – Microtecture of NC, PLLC
53) Keith Sorensen, Transportation Analyst – Charlotte Department of Transportation
54) Greg Tanner, Division Director – Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services – Services for Adults
55) Michael Taylor, Citizen
56) Jay Tryon, Superintendent of Community Recreation – Mecklenburg County Park & Rec
57) Natalie Tunney – Centralina Area Agency on Aging
58) Angel Vanover – Centralina Area Agency on Aging
59) Margaret White – Centralina Area Agency on Aging
60) Pamela White – Charlotte Area Transit System
61) Janice Williams – Atrium Health
62) Sheila Wright, Health Ministry Coordinator – Faith Community Health Ministry, Atrium Health
References/Endnotes

Community Profile


❖ 2010 Data Source: American Community Survey 1-year and 2019 Data Source: American Community Survey 1-year
  ➢ US Census information for Mecklenburg County: https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0500000US37119


❖ Mecklenburg County Quality of Life Explorer: https://mcmap.org/qol/


❖ Additional Information on Comparisons of Population aged 55+ (Mecklenburg v. NC v. US)
  ➢ Mecklenburg County – Younger population than NC/USA, but gap projected to close.
    ▪ 2010: 18.7%
    ▪ 2019: 23.2%
    ▪ 2035: 27.7%
  ➢ North Carolina
    ▪ 2010: 25.0%
    ▪ 2019: 29.3%
    ▪ 2035: 32.2%
  ➢ United States
    ▪ 2010: 24.9%
    ▪ 2019: 29.4%
    ▪ 2035: 32.0%
  ➢ US Data Sources
    ▪ https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-national-detail.html#par_textimage_98372960
    ▪ https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/popproj/2017-summary-tables.html
Works Cited in Action Plans

Domain 1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
❖ Sustain Charlotte senior walkability study - https://www.sustaincharlotte.org/seniormobility

Domain 2. Transportation
❖ Sustainable Energy Transportation Group - https://charlottenc.gov/sustainability/seap/Pages/default.aspx#:~:text=In%20June%202018%2C%20the%20Sustainable%20unanimously%20passed%20by%20City%20Council.&text=It%20also%20sets%20a%20communitv.2equivalent%20per%20person%20annually

Domain 4. Social Participation

Domain 5. Respect and Social Inclusion

Domain 6. Civic Participation and Employment
❖ AARP Employer Web Portal - https://www.aarp.org/work/employers/

Domain 7. Communication and Information
❖ Charlotte Mecklenburg Library - DigiLit Community - https://www.cmlibrary.org/digital-inclusion
❖ Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Online Courses - https://www.digitallearn.org/

Domain 8. Community and Health Services
❖ Alzheimer’s Association Course Offerings - www.alz.org
❖ Training on Dementia from National Council for Certified Dementia Practitioners - http://www.nccdp.org/