



# Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Progress Report

September 2020

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Cover Photo: Wilkinsburg Community Drum Circle, a project that emerged from Aging Your Way.



Photo: In-Formed by Nature art workshop, Frick Environmental Center, August 2019

# Welcome

## We're so glad you're here.

At the heart of it, that's what our work is about. Design—of neighborhoods and opportunities—should welcome us. We should be able to participate in life our entire life.

Our work says to people of all ages and abilities: We care about you. We respect you. We want you in our community. It's a simple message, but so often it gets lost. And that's why we're here.

**Five years ago**, Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh set out to make our region more inclusive and respectful of every generation. Our population is growing older, we said, and that's an opportunity to rethink what works and what doesn't—for older people and for all of us. We envisioned better options for transportation, housing and connecting with one another. We envisioned innovation by and for everyone, allowing us to age where and how we choose.

As you'll see in the pages ahead, we've made tremendous progress, and we're proud of that. We're consistently recognized as a model among the nearly 500 age-friendly communities nationwide.

And yet, we have a long way to go. Pittsburgh is heralded as one of the most livable cities, but we must ask—livable for whom? White women in our region can expect to live to 78, while Black men can expect to live to 64. That's a difference of more than a decade. Disparities across health, income, employment and education are pervasive—and have been laid bare by COVID-19.

Everyone should have the opportunity to grow old in an environment that is safe and healthy, and in communities that are thriving. That's what guides us as we celebrate this five-year milestone and look ahead to what's needed and what's possible.

Thanks for being here, and for being on this journey with us.



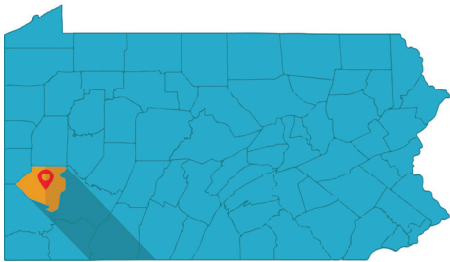
**Laura Poskin**, Executive Director  
Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh



# Introduction

**Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh** is part of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. In the United States, AARP leads designation and coordination efforts among members which, at present, includes six states, one territory and 472 communities.

Thanks to leadership by Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging, Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh joined the national and international networks in September 2015, kicking off a five-year planning, implementation and evaluation cycle.



City of Pittsburgh in Allegheny County, State of Pennsylvania

Our Action Plan—created in partnership with more than 100 organizations and 800 voices—outlines 30 Action Items, grouped into three focus areas:

- 1. Access** to transportation and housing options, as well as new opportunities,
- 2. Connection** across generations to combat social isolation and loneliness, and
- 3. Innovation** that empowers people of all ages and abilities.



Read our Action Plan at [swppa.org/agefriendly](https://swppa.org/agefriendly)

## Did You Know?



**19.3%**

of Allegheny County's population is 65+, compared to 16.8% nationally.



Between 2015–2030, Southwestern Pennsylvania will experience a

**40% increase**

in residents ages 65+.

Between 2030–2045, we will experience a

**75% increase**

in people ages 85+.



Nearly half of Allegheny County

**residents ages 75+ live alone.**

# Progress Highlights

## ACCESS

### Safer streets

Pop-up street performances called The Crossings engaged 396 advocates across seven neighborhoods and sparked change including new pedestrian countdowns, widened curb cuts, the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy and \$455,000 in upgrades from the City budget. Data on 905 miles of Pittsburgh sidewalks collected by pathVu.

1 2 3

### Coordinated COVID response

Building on relationships developed through Age-Friendly, partners including ACCESS Transportation and United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania teamed up to use paratransit vehicles to move food and supplies—rather than people. More than 50,000 meals and 5,000 boxes of PPE delivered to date. 4

### Smarter navigation

In partnership with 20 public and private transit providers, Age-Friendly's Transportation Work Group developed an online concierge tool called A to B for riders to better navigate their options across 98 zip codes. 7

Numbers indicate Action Items from the Action Plan 2017–2020. See the full list on pages 18–19.



Walkability Study in East Liberty, May 2016



## Pittsburgh Mobility & Infrastructure

@PghDOMI • Jun 9

Now THAT'S a good looking signal!  
(40th@Penn) New pedestrian  
countdowns, audible cues (push  
button for audible indicator — no  
need to push for walk phase!), new  
protected turn. Thanks to  
[@AgeFriendlyPGH](#) for championing  
our older adults here and helping us  
make it safer for all!



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12

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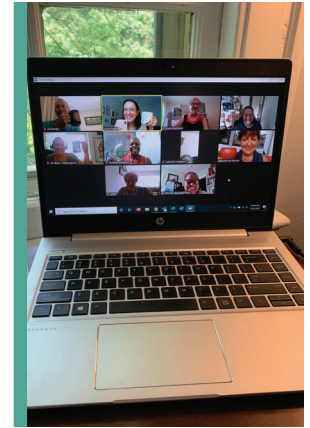


# Progress Highlights

## CONNECTION

“We need to feel connected to one another because in that connectivity, we have strength.”

– Ted Cmarada, Lively Pittsburgh’s Director of Community Engagement



#CoffeeConnectPGH event in Homewood, July 2019, and on Virtual Senior Academy, July 2020



## Age-inclusive advocacy

A series of four Legislative Briefings in partnership with AARP Pennsylvania convened 300+ attendees, including more than 80 elected officials or their staffers.

10

## Intentional conversation

Events called #CoffeeConnectPGH fostered dialogue in five neighborhoods and transitioned to bi-weekly online gatherings in March 2020. Prompts—like “Who is someone you’ve met during the pandemic?”—initiate meaningful dialogue across generations. 12 27

## Increased empathy

Age-friendly module embedded in Port Authority’s training for all new bus operators, so far completed by 145 operators in seven cohorts. Dementia-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh educated hundreds of professionals about creating safe, respectful and engaging spaces for those living with dementia and their care partners. 11 22

## Elevated arts scene

Intergenerational arts events held in unexpected spaces—Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, the Frick Environmental Center—engaged 275 participants. Color Beechview public art project engaged 60 neighbors, made possible via an AARP Community Challenge grant, one of two awarded in Pennsylvania. 13 15

Numbers indicate Action Items from the Action Plan 2017–2020.  
See the full list on pages 18–19.

# Progress Highlights

## INNOVATION

### Inspired neighbors

Aging Your Way workshops, organized by Lively Pittsburgh in 11 neighborhoods, motivated 130 people to dream up ways to leverage their own skills and strengths to make their community a better place to grow old. \$20,000 awarded to promising projects via the Age-Friendly Challenge.

INNOVATION FOCUS AREA

### New housing options

Age-Friendly championed the development of a cohousing project called Rachel Carson Ecovillage, to be the first of its kind in the region. A summit and webinar series on LGBTQ+ housing options convened 325 participants to date. 23

### More online opportunities

Virtual Senior Academy, created by Jewish Healthcare Foundation, offered 147 classes to more than 1,000 participants. Tech Buddies program launched to create one-on-one learning opportunities.

25 27

Numbers indicate Action Items from the Action Plan 2017–2020. See the full list on pages 18–19.



Legislative Briefing on Innovation, Allegheny County Gold Room, November 2018



## AARP Livable Communities

@AARPLivable • Jun 11

As conversations around the country continue on race, equity, and justice, we'd like to point toward [@AgeFriendlyPGH](#), one of our champion [#agefriendly](#) communities, as they take a stand on both intergenerational and racial inclusion.



2

4

19



# Timeline



## JANUARY 2016

Aging Your Way workshops spark resident-led action



Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh  
Action Plan 2017-2020

## OCTOBER 2017

Action Plan launched at press event in City-County Building

## SEPTEMBER 2015

Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh join WHO and AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities

## NOVEMBER 2015

Age-Friendly Champions meetings convene leaders in and outside the field of aging

## JUNE 2016

500 residents ages 50+ participate in AARP's Livability for All Community Survey



## APRIL 2017

Performances of The Crossings create a stir



## MARCH 2018

First of four Legislative Briefings hosted with AARP Pennsylvania



**DECEMBER 2018**

#CoffeeConnectPGH events celebrate social connection



**OCTOBER 2019**

Lively Pittsburgh releases Aging Your Way Toolkit



**JULY 2020**

Rachel Carson Ecovillage in advance planning stage

**OCTOBER 2018**

Color Beechview public art project



**JULY 2019**

A to B online concierge tool for ride options launched



**SEPTEMBER 2019**

In-Formed by Nature art workshop and exhibit at Frick Environmental Center



**APRIL 2020 TO DATE**

Transportation Network delivers 50,000 meals and 5,000 boxes of PPE



# Engagement

## Media Wins

[“Community Profile: Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh,”](#)  
by AARP Livable Communities | aarp.org

[“Want to Live to 100? Living in One of These 8 U.S. Cities Will Help,”](#) by Paula Spencer Scott | Parade

[“Age-Forward Cities for 2030,”](#) by Caroline Servat and Nora Super | Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging

[“To build an inclusive smart city, look through an age-friendly lens,”](#) by Katie Pyzyk | Smart Cities Dive

[“How This Big City Is Becoming Age-Friendly,”](#) by Laura Poskin | Next Avenue, Forbes.com

[“Age-Friendly Pittsburgh: Action plan aims to make this a better place to grow old,”](#) by Gary Rotstein | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

## Presentations

AARP Livable Communities Transportation Workshop | Virtual Event | September 2020

Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging | St. Paul, Minnesota | December 2019

TEDx Point Park University | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania | October 2019

American Society on Aging Conference | New Orleans, Louisiana | April 2019

AARP Livable Communities Conference | Charlotte, North Carolina | November 2018

American Planning Association Pennsylvania Annual Conference | Erie, Pennsylvania | October 2018

United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley’s Age-Friendly Forum | Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania | June 2018

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging M. Powell Lawton Conference | Philadelphia, PA | November 2016

We are all aging.

TEDx Point

# Our Partners

**Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh is a collaboration** between local leaders, businesses, organizations and residents of all ages. The initiative is made possible through generous funding from the Henry L. Hillman Foundation, with support from AARP Pennsylvania, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, Jewish Healthcare Foundation and Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging (SWPPA).

In 2017, we launched our Action Plan in partnership with more than 100 organizations and 800 voices. We'd like to thank everyone who has been along for the ride: the longtime partners and the new partners we continually welcome into the fold. We especially appreciate leaders from the organizations on the following page, who were the primary forces bringing our Action Plan to life.

**“The Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh collaboration has developed into a powerful movement, adapting to changing circumstances while manifesting their vision of communities in which people can thrive at every age.”**

– Evaluation Institute for Public Health, University of Pittsburgh

## Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Leadership Circle 2019–2020

AARP Pennsylvania

ACCESS Transportation

All for All

Alzheimer's Association Greater Pennsylvania

Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging

City of Pittsburgh, Department of Parks and Recreation

Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture

CLASS

Dementia-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh

Eastern Area Adult Services

Jewish Healthcare Foundation

Lively Pittsburgh

Office of Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald

Office of City of Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto  
pathVu

Persad Center

Presbyterian SeniorCare Network

Sustainable Pittsburgh

SWPPA

UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care

United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania

Wesley Family Services

# Action Items from the Action Plan 2017–2020

## ACCESS

### Mobility

- 1 The Crossings
- 2 Walkability Studies
- 3 Complete Streets Advocacy

### Affordability

- 4 Creative, Far-Reaching Transit
- 5 Housing Assessment and Mapping
- 6 Health Promotion Expansion

### Navigation

- 7 Online Concierge for Ride Options
- 8 Connecting Referral Services
- 9 Murals to Help Caregivers

## CONNECTION

### Perception

- 10 Speakers Bureau
- 11 Sensitivity on the Bus
- 12 Campaign to Combat Isolation and Loneliness

### Social Spaces

- 13 Arts for All
- 14 Parks Reimagined
- 15 Centers for More Than Seniors
- 16 Gardening for Good

### Intergenerational Relationships

- 17 Solidarity Discussions
- 18 Welcoming Communities
- 19 GenPGH



# INNOVATION

## Businesses and Neighborhoods

- 20 An Age-Friendly Seal
- 21 Dementia-Friendly Conversations
- 22 Dementia-Friendly Training
- 23 New Housing Solutions

## Workforce

- 24 The Job Search, Redefined
- 25 Intergenerational Tech Training
- 26 Direct Care Workforce Development

## Interaction

- 27 Virtual Senior Academy
- 28 Tech Support
- 29 Disaster Preparedness
- 30 Bye Week Back Home

**Want to find out more about the progress of specific Action Items?** Contact us.

[Laura Poskin](#)  
Executive Director  
412-456-6716

[Randi Vega](#)  
Project Manager  
412-439-2025



Read our Action Plan at [swppa.org/agefriendly](https://swppa.org/agefriendly)

**Join us as we build a region that's more inclusive  
and respectful of every generation.**



**SWPPA** | Southwestern Pennsylvania  
Partnership for Aging



Visit [swppa.org/agefriendly](https://swppa.org/agefriendly) to learn more and find ways to get involved!