Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh

Action Plan 2017–2020

Contents

Cover Photo: Bike Pittsburgh

Photo: Venture Outdoors and Lively Pittsburgh

Acknowledgements

Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh builds on years of progress by organizations in the field of aging and outside of it. We like to think everyone works in aging, since we are all growing older from the moment we are born. We look forward to amplifying the good work already happening in Pittsburgh and across Allegheny County, and finding ways to include new partners and projects as we extend the initiative throughout the region.

"Cities have
the capability of
providing something
for everybody,
only because,
and only when,
they are created
by everybody."

— Jane Jacobs,
author and activist

Letter from the
County Executive and Mayor

Rich Fitzgerald

William Peduto

We are pleased to present you with the Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Action Plan, a roadmap developed by neighbors, for neighbors, to increase opportunities and elevate inclusion across generations. In 2015, Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging applied for Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh to join the World Health Organization and AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Now, in partnership with more than 100 organizations and 800 voices, this plan is the next step in that effort.

We have always been successful in this region when we work together, and this effort is no exception. For generations, our neighbors are the ones that make "it" happen. We want people of all ages to call this area home, frequent our businesses and work here. Residents who are 65 and older currently represent 16.8% of our county's population, as compared to 13% nationally. We expect that the figure will continue to grow, and we need to begin thinking about and talking about how to best serve all of our populations. We want everyone to have the opportunity to get where they need to go because both long-time residents and new residents benefit when a community is designed for everyone to thrive.

Our region has long been known as one that is open and welcoming to all. That focus is only strengthened by the age-friendly movement reflected in these pages. We offer our continued support and commitment as Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh launches this ambitious plan. We applaud the leaders who have long been working in the field of aging, and we are proud to see a growing number of new faces who recognize that age-friendly communities benefit all of us. We can't wait to see where we go from here!

Allegheny County Executive
Rich Fitzgerald

Mayor of Pittsburgh
William Peduto

Introduction

Our community should work for everyone. Whether you're a longtime Penn Hills resident grocery shopping with your dad, a Millennial in Polish Hill renovating your century-old row house, or a Kindergartener in Dormont skipping safely to your playground, you deserve to thrive in the place you call home.

Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh brings people of all ages together to rethink how our neighborhoods are built and to take action to make them more inclusive and respectful of every generation. From the laws that impact building codes to the training we need to secure the jobs we want to how we're treated on the bus, there is work to do as our region's age demographics shift and we're presented with a new opportunity.

In the next two decades, the number of residents ages 65 and older will increase by 40% in Southwestern Pennsylvania.[1] Meeting the needs of an older population certainly comes with challenges, but as more of our residents live longer lives, it means our region has a new, growing resource—people with buying power, career expertise, lived experience, and diverse skills and interests. The time is now to tap into this resource by coming together and ensuring continued opportunities for all.

Photo: Joe Angelelli

Background

The age-friendly movement recognizes that we all want the same things. We want safe, affordable places to live where it's easy to get around. We want proximity to the shops and businesses we frequent, as well as to the family and friends we love. We want the opportunity to participate in life by doing what interests us.

In fact, Baby Boomers and Millennials—which represent a combined total of 150 million people[2] —have a lot in common when it comes to how they want to live.

- **72% of Boomers and 54% of Millennials would trade a shorter commute for a smaller home.**

- **52% of Boomers and 55% of Millennials want public transportation options.**

- **49% of Boomers and 62% of Millennials want proximity to shops, offices, and restaurants.**[3]

We may want the same things, but if we take an honest look around, our communities aren't built for us to all have the same things across our lifetimes. Crossing the street or finding a part-time job, for example, may be exponentially more difficult for an 82-year-old than a 28-year-old. The age-friendly movement inspires us to see this as a social justice issue, and rethink how to welcome every generation to be part of the community, regardless of ability, and share their inherent strengths however they choose.

The vast majority of Americans (nearly 90%) want to age in place.[4] We understand "place" means more than the confines of a home. It means all that a community has to offer—rich, meaningful experiences and relationships, as well as structural elements (streets, parks) that many of us take for granted.

Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh is dreaming up new ways to improve our "place" for everyone. After all, a crosswalk that works better for a person using a wheelchair works better for someone pushing a stroller or lugging home grocery bags. In the next three years, our collaboration of local leaders, businesses, organizations, and residents will focus on **Access, Connection,** and **Innovation** to improve the lives of Pittsburghers of all ages.

Photo: Bike Pittsburgh

"**I live in an apartment building that has made me realize what an age-friendly community could be and it's wonderful.** My building is filled with people, from young college students to the oldest old. People interact beautifully—we greet each other, we're concerned for each other, we have an informal grapevine that keeps us informed. My neighborhood is so varied that I see every age and nationality walking down the street."

– Maxine, 80; Shadyside

"An age-friendly community is important to me because we need interaction, not only between we older people, but between people of all ages."

– Bob, 70; Oakdale

"I was raised in a multigenerational household and I raise my children in one as well."

– Julie, 33; Observatory Hill

Portrait Photos: Larry Rippel
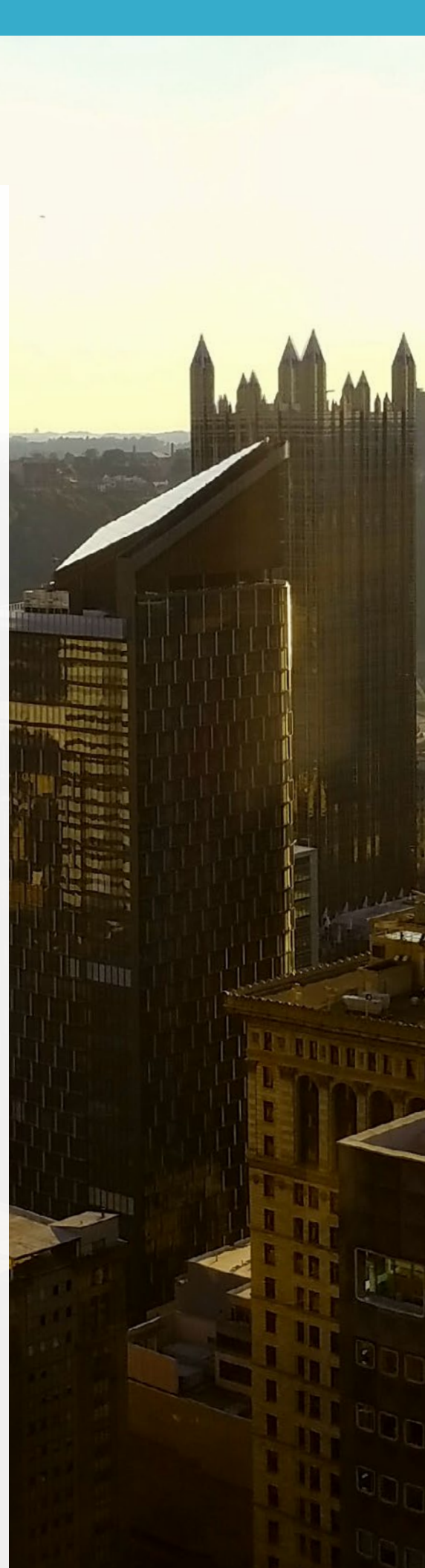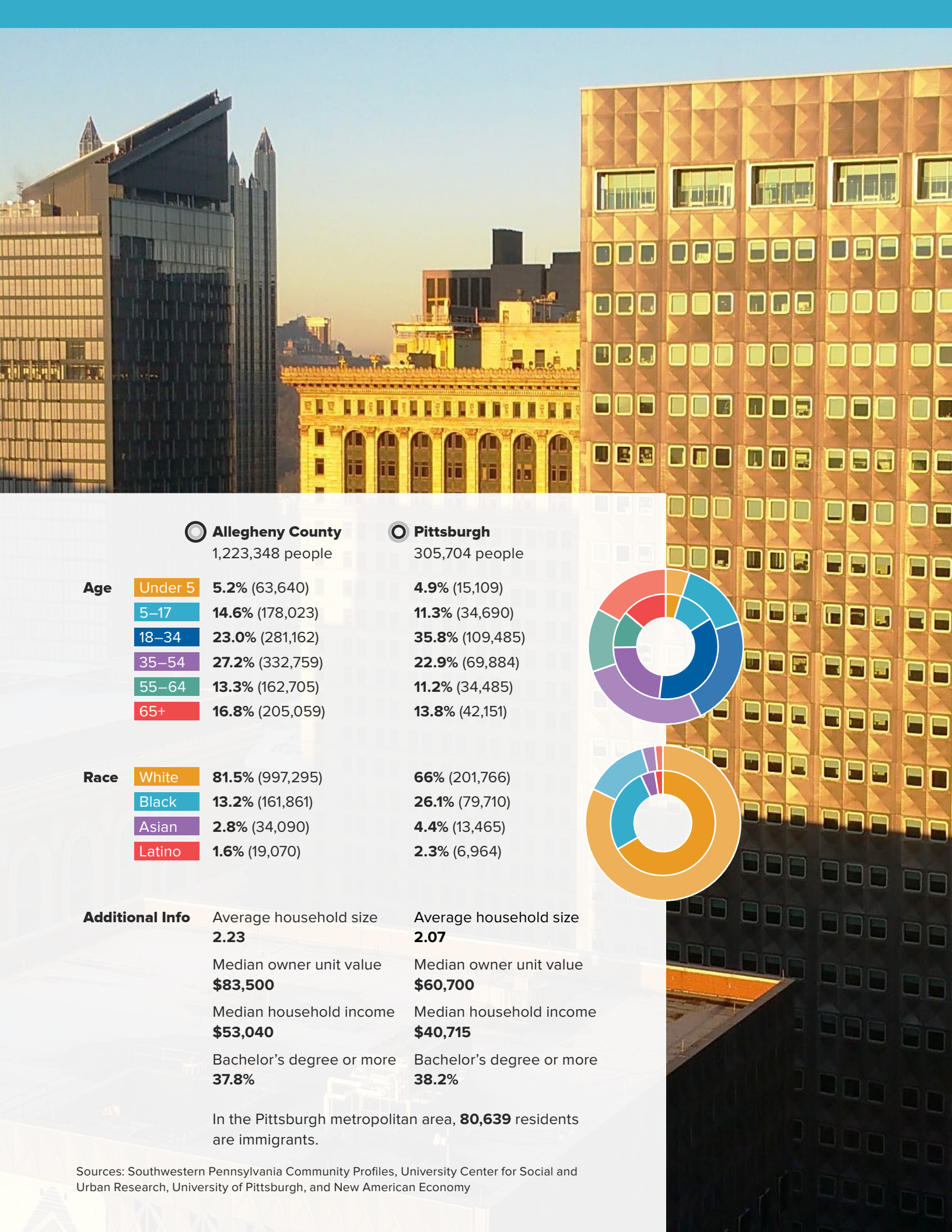
	◉ **Allegheny County** 1,223,348 people	◉ **Pittsburgh** 305,704 people
Age		
Under 5	**5.2%** (63,640)	**4.9%** (15,109)
5–17	**14.6%** (178,023)	**11.3%** (34,690)
18–34	**23.0%** (281,162)	**35.8%** (109,485)
35–54	**27.2%** (332,759)	**22.9%** (69,884)
55–64	**13.3%** (162,705)	**11.2%** (34,485)
65+	**16.8%** (205,059)	**13.8%** (42,151)
Race		
White	**81.5%** (997,295)	**66%** (201,766)
Black	**13.2%** (161,861)	**26.1%** (79,710)
Asian	**2.8%** (34,090)	**4.4%** (13,465)
Latino	**1.6%** (19,070)	**2.3%** (6,964)

Additional Info

Average household size
2.23

Median owner unit value
$83,500

Median household income
$53,040

Bachelor's degree or more
37.8%

Average household size
2.07

Median owner unit value
$60,700

Median household income
$40,715

Bachelor's degree or more
38.2%

In the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, **80,639** residents are immigrants.

Greater Pittsburgh Past and Present

What's great about Greater Pittsburgh—that is, the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County—is its fusion of old and new, urban and suburban, sports and the arts, grit and poise. Situated at the convergence of the Allegheny and the Monongahela Rivers, forming the start of the Ohio River, Pittsburgh is where two bodies merge into one. It's quite a fitting metaphor.

Did Yinz* Know?

- 11.3% of Pittsburgh commuters walk to work. Only Boston and Washington, D.C., rank higher.[9]

- The tower at PNC Plaza is one of the greenest office building in the world.[10] It opened in 2015, and was designed to exceed LEED Platinum certification.

- Eight counties are located just a 30–60 minute ride outside of downtown Pittsburgh.

- Pittsburgh is the only city in the country where all professional sports teams share the same colors: black and gold.

- Our region was once home to *Silent Spring* author Rachel Carson, dancer Gene Kelly, America's neighbor Fred Rogers, golfer Arnold Palmer, and playwright August Wilson.[11]

"Yinz" is Pittsburghese for "you."

New and native Pittsburghers are proud of what we've built. The region played an integral role in U.S. history during the French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, and the American Civil War. Steel production boosted the economy in the late 1800s, and later spurred labor strikes that would shape modern laws to protect workers' rights.[5]

The generosity of industrial giants like Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick, food manufacturer H. J. Heinz, and financier Andrew Mellon lives on through their investments in art, culture, and education. Likewise, the legacies of the thousands of immigrants who worked in the mills and mines are deeply woven into the cultural tapestry that keeps people here—and draws others in.

Today, our region regularly tops lists of where to visit, where to eat, and where to live. Students from all over the world enroll in our 61 local universities, community colleges, and training providers,[6] including top-tier colleges like University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, home of the first robotics department at an American institution, established in 1979. It's no coincidence that Google, Uber, Facebook, and Duolingo are just a few tech companies to recently open up shop here.

Even if we don't live in Pittsburgh proper, we identify as Pittsburghers and as residents of distinct, vibrant neighborhoods. Allegheny County has 130 municipalities—boroughs, townships, and cities (Pittsburgh being one)—connected by a network of more than 440 bridges. Each community has its own personality and demographic makeup.

According to U.S. Census data analyzed by University of Pittsburgh's Center for Social and Urban Research, 205,059 of Allegheny County's 1.2 million residents were ages 65 or older in 2010, approximately 17% of the total population.[7] In 33 of the county's 130 municipalities, though, residents ages 65+ represent 20% or more of the population, reaching as high as 54% in Aleppo, a pocket northwest of Pittsburgh.[8]

From a frontier village to a steel town to a hub of innovation, Greater Pittsburgh understands change. We've lived it. For generations, we've grown and adapted with creativity, passion, and a little elbow grease. It's a powerful combination.

Action Plan Summary

The Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Action Plan is the culmination of nearly two years of community participation and planning. In September 2015, the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County joined the World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, kicking off a five-year planning, implementation, and evaluation cycle. For the first two years, we completed the following steps to create this Action Plan:

- **Convene local leaders —** 147 unique stakeholders from 84 organizations attended at least one Age-Friendly Champions or work group session.

- **Mobilize neighbors —** More than 90 residents participated in seven Aging Your Way workshops and one summit.

- **Collect data —** 500 people ages 50+ responded to AARP's Livability for All in Pittsburgh & Allegheny County Community Survey.

- **Evaluate —** University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health evaluated Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh's progress.

- **Gather feedback —** 39 participants completed a web-based survey and nearly 100 individuals attended four public input sessions.

Distilling what we heard and rallying neighbors of all ages and backgrounds to join us, we are committing to 30 Action Items over the next three years to make our region more livable and open to everyone.

We group these Action Items into the three focus areas listed at right. Our vision builds on years of hard work by community partners. Bringing it to life will rely on their continued dedication and on new partners joining the movement—local leaders, businesses, organizations, and residents—all contributing their strengths, resources, and unique perspectives.

The plan detailed on the following pages leverages existing community strengths and programs that are underway, while also including new efforts that Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh will champion through its growing network of partners.

1. Access

We will improve entry points, participation, and navigation to new options and opportunities—within neighborhoods and health systems—for people of all ages and abilities.

2. Connection

We will strengthen intergenerational relationships to combat social isolation and loneliness, creating spaces that encourage coming together and celebrating initiatives that put relationships first.

3. Innovation

We will champion meaningful technology and ideas that enable people to age in community, and help neighbors of all ages collaborate with our region's growing tech industry.

Photo: Bike Pittsburgh

Access

We envision…

…a region that's open to all of us. It's easy to get around. It's easy to find and afford different options, whether we're looking for a new home or a ride across town. We all can feel comfortable crossing the street. We all can make it to an appointment on time. We all can enjoy a Sunday afternoon outside.

We heard...

With five parks in Pittsburgh and another nine in Allegheny County, green space abounds. In total, we have 14,000 acres of public land where families can hike, swing, kayak, golf, and fish.[12, 13] Runners and cyclists can take in a waterfront view along the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, 24 miles of segments on both banks of Pittsburgh's three rivers.[14]

Another area we rarely consider an outdoor space: our streets. Forming nearly half of Pittsburgh's public space, streets should serve "people and the environment in addition to moving freight and traffic," according to Pittsburgh's Complete Streets Policy adopted in 2015.[15]

"I'd like to see better sidewalks in my community. I'd like to work to make sure there's a safer way for seniors to walk."

– Glenda, 65; Homewood

But in many neighborhoods, public rights-of-way are unsafe or unwelcoming, making it difficult to enter, explore, and enjoy the places we cherish, like parks. While AARP survey respondents ranked safe and well-maintained parks among our region's top features, they ranked safe and accessible sidewalks as the bottom feature. Nearly 35% said sidewalk conditions and accessibility in their communities were "fair" or "poor." Another 17% reported that sidewalks in their communities didn't even exist.

It's no wonder the Regional Transportation Alliance of Southwestern Pennsylvania, a 10-county coalition, identified bicycle and pedestrian connections in *Imagine Transportation 2.0,* the culmination of a two-year needs assessment released in March 2017: "...there is a need to help pedestrians and cyclists move between neighborhoods and on our streets to their destinations in a safe way."[16]

We agree. In line with Complete Streets, we see potential for enhanced mobility, equity, and health for people of all ages when we understand our walkways and streets as essential connectors to public spaces, and as public spaces themselves.

Rose, a 72-year-old Lawrenceville resident we met during The Crossings, pop-up street performances to ignite visibility around pedestrian safety, told us she lived in her senior apartment building five and a half years—but never once attempted to cross the street. A landscape architect, Rose wanted to visit her neighborhood park, but it wasn't possible to get there in her motorized wheelchair. "It's too dangerous," she said. And the data backs her up: According to PennDOT, the proportion of fatal traffic crashes in Pittsburgh involving a person walking or biking doubled from 2011 to 2015.[17] (See Action Item #1.)

Photo: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Each day, the Port Authority of Allegheny County operates bus, light rail, incline, and door-to-door paratransit services for approximately 200,000 riders. The Authority's fleet includes more than 700 buses, 80 light rail vehicles, and 32 hybrid diesel-electric buses. People ages 65 and older ride for free when they show a Pennsylvania Senior Citizen ID Card or a Medicare card.[18]

Although we heard the region described as "car-centric" in our planning sessions, we discovered that a considerable number of people take advantage of the public transit system—or want to. Thirty-four percent of AARP survey respondents said they use public transportation, although they also noted affordable options were limited. One of our meeting participants, reliant upon a car now, summed it up by saying, "Transportation will be the toughest thing for quality of life as I get older. I will have to find a bus or Uber, or a self-driving car."

In their 2016-2020 four-year plan, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Area Agency on Aging identified that the most commonly reported unmet need was for information about their services or advice.[19] Along the same lines, we identified a need to be able to better navigate our options, particularly regarding transportation.

A person-centered search engine to "give riders the option to knit together their best options," as noted in *Imagine Transportation 2.0* and included in this plan, could be one answer. Another is to continue to assess multi-modal transportation options (sidewalks, paratransit, bike routes, ride-sharing), corresponding with Allegheny County's *Plan for a Healthier Allegheny.*[20]

> **"Accessibility issues are important to me because whether you have a disability or you're aging, you have to be able to get out into the community and remain vibrant and participate."**
>
> – Bill, 60; Northside

As a hub for education and medicine—"eds and meds"—our region has a strong network of medical providers, which is viewed as a positive. The majority of AARP survey respondents (63%) reported well-maintained hospitals and health care facilities. Likewise, 60% noted a variety of health care professionals, including specialists.

However, only 19% said health and social services were conveniently located. Like our beloved outdoor spaces made inaccessible due to poorly designed and maintained sidewalks, our top-notch health services can be out of reach not only when they're expensive, but also when they're on the other side of town. According to a 2015 Heritage Community Initiatives transportation survey cited in the County's *Plan for a Healthier Allegheny,* 66% of riders surveyed had missed a healthcare appointment at least one time in the past year due to transportation barriers.

Our conversations echoed the overwhelming majority of Americans who want to age in their communities. As one North Hills participant said, "I want to maintain my independence and not become a burden on anyone, particularly my kids." To stay at home, as long as possible, health services need to come to us, not the other way around, and we've got to test creative solutions for transportation.

We must explore affordable housing options that fit everyone.

Our AARP survey revealed that on average, residents ages 50+ have lived in their community for 32 years, and lived in their home for 24 years. An impressive 77% rated their community as an excellent, very good, or good place for people to live as they age, a view echoed in our sessions when participants underscored vibrant neighborhoods as one of our strongest community assets. Still, there is concern about finding inclusive housing options, when circumstances change.

Pittsburgh and Allegheny County have a Visitability Design Tax Credit, awarding up to $2,500 for new construction projects with features that make it easy for anyone to live or visit there (e.g., a no-step entrance, 36"-wide hallways, a wheelchair-accessible bathroom with lever handles). While other communities still push for visitability legislation, our region was among its earliest adopters. Pittsburgh's ordinance passed in 2004.[21]

But, generally speaking, our region's housing stock is old, not new. And the homes we have don't work for everyone. In fact, one third of calls to Allegheny Link—Allegheny County Department of Human Services' hotline for older adults and people with disabilities—are requests for housing and home accessibility issues. According to United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, there are nearly twice as many adults in Allegheny County who have a disability than available housing that is appropriate and affordable.[22]

We heard this, too. Thirty percent of AARP survey respondents said affordable housing options were "fair" or "poor," a sentiment that also surfaced in our conversations about universal design at our neighborhood workshops. That's why it is time to investigate and propose new solutions.

"The community supporting me as I age is important to me—good access to healthcare, as well as access to places to go and things to do."

– Linda, 67; Highland Park

Photo: ACCESS

Together, we will...

...work to improve entry points, participation, and navigation to new options and opportunities—within neighborhoods and health systems—for people of all ages and abilities. Focusing on mobility, affordability, and navigation, we will:

- Improve access to safe, welcoming walkways and streets
- Expand options for transportation, housing, and health services
- Connect people with resources and services that meet their needs and honor their preferences

MOBILITY
Improve access to safe, welcoming walkways and streets.

1 The Crossings

Build visibility and change policies in favor of crosswalk safety by bringing pop-up performances called The Crossings to busy, hazardous intersections in Allegheny County, including both urban and suburban locations.

Targets Completion of multiple events per year with intentional engagement of underserved communities and a focus on gathering input for policy change, particularly in areas with high concentrations of older residents.

Partners include Lively Pittsburgh, Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative, and Bloomfield Livable Streets.

2 Walkability Studies

Collect data about sidewalk and park path accessibility using Pittsburgh-based tech startup pathVu's free app and "PathMeT" device. PathVu will use data to prioritize sidewalk improvements, which support neighborhood-based chronic disease prevention and management efforts.

Targets Data collection (called walkability studies), analysis, and prioritization of improvements that will increase walkway and park path usage among neighbors of all ages in urban and suburban areas.

Partners include pathVu and Lively Pittsburgh.

3 Complete Streets Advocacy

Align with the Complete Streets movement to increase safety, equity, and comfort among people of all generations. Advocate for advances including traffic calming measures, more shelters with seating at bus stops, better lighting, and increased use of Intelligent Transportation System technologies, such as pedestrian-aware stoplights.

Targets Champion the implementation of policies or practices that have the greatest potential to reduce accidents involving pedestrians or to improve quality of life for the greatest number of people, considering the different approval processes for infrastructure improvements that involve municipal, state, and federal funding.

Partners include Allegheny Conference on Community Development, City of Pittsburgh Department of Mobility and Infrastructure, and Bike Pittsburgh.

Ideas for Multi-Modal Street Improvements

- ADA-compliant curb cuts
- Audible signals with pedestrian countdown buttons
- Exclusive bus lanes
- Runnels, or narrow channels for drainage
- Traffic calming elements such as bump outs and refuge islands
- Intelligent technology, like cameras to detect bicycles and pedestrians

Source: Pittsburgh's Complete Streets Policy

Photo: Bike Pittsburgh

Expand options for transportation, housing, and health services.

4 Creative, Far-Reaching Transit

Advocate for creative solutions to increase transportation options for older adults (e.g., free volunteer, shuttle, and rideshare access) and improve and enhance existing services (e.g., ACCESS, MATP, OPT), particularly in less dense areas of the county where public transit is less available.

Targets Testimony and story sharing, both in person and on camera, by allies and self-advocates to increase urgency for change that decreases the number of unmet transit requests among older residents.

Partners include Wesley Family Services, North Hills Community Outreach, and ACCESS.
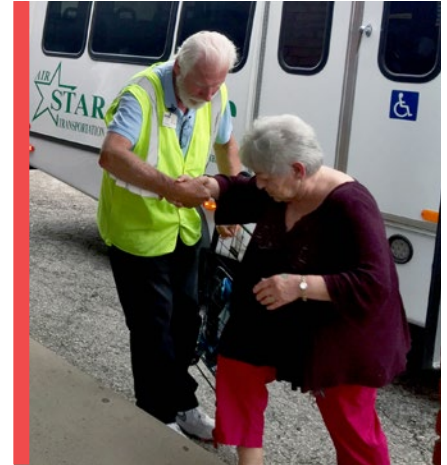
Photo: ACCESS

5 Housing Assessment and Mapping

Investigate current and forecast future demand for healthy, affordable, accessible, and inclusive housing options (public, private, subsidized), with an emphasis on housing for older adults as well as middle-income residents who have limited financial resources but do not qualify for income-restricted units.

Targets Production of a community asset map and plan for future redesign of senior housing in our region. Creation of a public-facing guide to Age-Friendly Housing in Greater Pittsburgh to build visibility that helps consumers and makes a case for increased options.

Partners include Jewish Healthcare Foundation, Jewish Association on Aging, Presbyterian SeniorCare Network, Persad Center, and ACTION-Housing, Inc.

6 Health Promotion Expansion

Extend evidence-based models for health promotion, particularly those that are no-cost or low-cost for participants and those with relationship components (e.g., utilizing volunteers of all ages and/or other trusted individuals), throughout the region to help people age in community as long as possible.

Targets Increase in number of participants of all ages, with additional zip codes served, particularly in underserved areas with large populations of older residents.

Partners include United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Vintage, Inc., AgeWell Pittsburgh, Global Links Community Partners Program, *UPMC Health Plan, and Consumer Health Coalition.*

Connect people with resources and services that meet their needs and honor their preferences.

7 Online Concierge for Ride Options

Develop an online concierge tool for riders to find transportation options that match their specific profile and fit their preferences. Start by distributing a questionnaire to transportation providers, designing a decision tree structure, and testing for user experience.

Targets Development of online concierge tool to increase understanding of no-cost or low-cost options. Identification of gaps in transportation options and advocacy to fill these gaps.

Partners include ACCESS, Port Authority of Allegheny County, and Wesley Family Services.

Photo: Presbyterian SeniorCare Network with Senator Bob Casey

8 Connecting Referral Services

Maximize awareness of existing resources—from housing options to social activities—by convening local providers of Information & Referral services and establishing best practices for warm, respectful referrals.

Targets Biannual meetings among Information & Referral providers to improve communication among providers, which in turn improves access to services for older adults and their families.

Partners include Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania's PA 2-1-1 Southwest, Allegheny Link, Jewish Healthcare Foundation, Consumer Health Coalition, and Wesley Family Services.

9 Murals to Help Caregivers

Start a creative, grassroots campaign (e.g., street art, murals) about caregiver self-identification, incorporating messages about intergenerational cross-cultural solidarity and where to turn if you don't know where to start.

Targets Creation and implementation of culturally relevant art and messaging in urban and suburban neighborhoods, increasing intergenerational dialogue about caregiving and self-identification to find help.

Partners include SWPPA and Global Minds Initiative.

Spotlight: Senior Connections

Est. 2016

Building on its 26-year history in the field of aging, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) established Senior Connections to strengthen services and supports that enable older adults to live safely and satisfyingly in their communities. JHF developed a series of intensive planning sessions, called charrettes, to bring together stakeholders from a variety of disciplines to examine pressing needs. The initiative also established the Recreation & Exercise program and the Virtual Senior Academy. (See Action Items #14 and #27.) In Fall 2017, JHF will host a charrette on innovative housing with medical professionals, social workers, care managers, architects, property managers, and government organizations. The goal: Create a community asset map and plan for the future redesign of senior housing in our region. (See Action Items #5 and #23.)

Graphic recorder Leah Silverman illustrates the conversation at *Senior Connections: A Charrette to Create a Culture of Health & Exercise* held August 17, 2016.
Photo: Jewish Healthcare Foundation

Spotlight: OpenStreetsPGH

Est. 2014

On the last Sunday in May, June, and July, select segments of Pittsburgh's streets become car-free zones, for all ages to bike, dance, run, walk, or skate. Organized by bike and pedestrian advocacy organization Bike Pittsburgh, the events—which have drawn an estimated 100,000 participants over the past two years—also include yoga and arts workshops, as well as special offerings from more than 100 local businesses and organizations. Other Allegheny County municipalities including the boroughs of Etna and Sharpsburg are getting in on the fun, too. Open Streets events are more than one-day celebrations, though. They're important reminders that streets can and should be for much more than driving. (See Action Item #3.)

Photo: Bike Pittsburgh

Connection

We envision...

...a region that supports one another. It's understood that we are better when we move outside of our age silos and come together to enjoy life. We celebrate the power of relationships that build bridges across ages and life experiences. We all can attend shows, take classes, and join causes that interest us. We all have the option to participate.

We heard...

Throughout our planning process, we heard about the challenge of our society's perception of aging. It's viewed as a decline, sometimes slow and sometimes fast, but most often frustrating, sad, and lonely. Our growing population of older adults—the destructive "Silver Tsunami," as it's often couched—is positioned as a burden on our families, on our healthcare system, and on our pocketbooks.

"The PR side of aging work is always a struggle," one community partner told us. "Finding exciting ways to bring public attention to this work would be a huge win for everyone!"

It became clear that we must work to change the dialogue from "aging as a burden" to "aging as an asset." Unprecedented demographic shifts won't come without challenges, but we must communicate that our older population is one of the very few growing natural resources we have. As described in the WHO 2015 *World Report on Ageing and Health:* "A longer life is an incredibly valuable resource. It provides the opportunity for rethinking not just what older age might be, but how our whole lives might unfold."[23]

> "There's a lack of respect between young people and old people today. There has to be some common decency brought back again."
>
> – Mike, 59; Homestead

Of course, there is no typical older person, since everyone experiences aging differently based on our individual (racial, ethnic, genetic, behavioral) and environmental (structural, cultural) differences.[24] As a reflection of the diversity in our region, 82,395 Allegheny County residents speak a language other than English at home, according to *A Community Blueprint: Helping Immigrants Thrive in Allegheny County.*[25]

We uncovered a need to celebrate the diversity in experience as we age, and the contributions we all bring to the table. "I want to share my personal gifts with others," an older East Liberty participant explained. With intentionality towards inclusive, equitable development, we want our region to be a place where people of every generation are involved in community decision-making and welcome to share their knowledge and expertise.

Photo: Joshua Franzos for AgeWell Pittsburgh

With 130 municipalities in Allegheny County and 90 distinct neighborhoods in Pittsburgh alone, our region is a network of villages. When asked to identify what's working related to social participation and inclusion, participants in our planning process said, "friendly neighborhoods which offer support." This may contribute to why an impressive 89% of AARP survey respondents said they were in contact with family, friends, or neighbors weekly.

Participants in our planning process also frequently cited a strong arts and entertainment scene as a community asset. According to the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, which owns and maintains theaters, galleries, and mixed-use properties in Pittsburgh's Cultural District, their programming attracts people to over 2,000 events and activities annually.[26]

It is time to build upon our neighborhood support systems and opportunities to engage with the arts. Stakeholders in our sessions raised concerns about social isolation and loneliness, two realities that can negatively impact physical and mental health. Plus, AARP survey respondents weren't convinced our thriving arts community reaches everyone. "A variety of cultural activities for a diverse population" ranked among our community's bottom features.

We must find ways to leverage our strong neighborhoods and cultural assets to help people of all ages connect and thrive.

"As you grow older, you need those neighbors and a community environment, not only to keep you young in spirit, but to know that somebody is there."

– Jo-Ann, 79; Shaler

Programming abounds, but it's age-specific instead of intergenerational.

Allegheny County boasts 44 senior community centers and numerous libraries across the region, including 19 located in the City of Pittsburgh as part of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh—each with dozens of activities and classes for older adults each week.[27, 28] There's yoga on Monday, conversational French on Tuesday, writing club on Wednesday, watercolor painting on Thursday, and soul line dance on Friday.

The only caveats: To participate at a senior community center, you must be age 60 or older. For both senior centers and libraries, you must be well enough to participate and find your way there.

According to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Area Agency on Aging's 2016-2020 four-year plan, providers are receiving more requests for "life enrichment" activities, like volunteering and continuing education. Participants in our sessions echoed this sentiment, but expressed

a desire for intentional mixing of generations. In the AARP Community Survey, too, "local schools that involve older adults in events and activities" was among the bottom features identified by participants, revealing a lack of multigenerational spaces.

Opening programs and third places (i.e., social environments other than home or the office) to all ages could help logistically (e.g., families could carpool) and increase contact among generations, building generational intelligence and empathy. When asked about what she's most excited to see come out of Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh, one project leader said intergenerational solidarity: "Most older people I know don't want to be 'senior citizens,' warehoused off in separate venues and activities. We want to be out in the world, doing what we can to help and contribute."

Social isolation and loneliness can impact us all. Let's address it.

Twelve million Americans ages 65 or older live alone, according to the Pew Research Center. That's 26% of older adults in 2014.[29] Whether living alone is by choice or by circumstance, there is a risk for social isolation and loneliness among this growing population, as well as people of all ages. In our planning process, both topics frequently came up as issues that must be addressed across our region.

Although often but not always related, social isolation (being alone) and loneliness (feeling alone) are not interchangeable. According to data from the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project at the University of Chicago, 19% of older Americans experience loneliness often or at least some of the time. Loneliness is associated with increased mortality and a host of negative physiological and health outcomes.[30]

Social connectedness, as defined by the University of Chicago researchers, is the opposite of loneliness. It's a person's satisfaction and contentment with their social life. While risks are associated with social isolation and loneliness, higher levels of social connectedness are associated with better health among older adults, including survival after heart attacks, slower memory decline, less risk of cancer recurrence, and more resistance to the common cold.[31, 32]

Loneliness isn't exclusive to one age group. Whether moving to a new city, losing someone you love, or experiencing a big life change, we all understand what it feels like be lonely. We must make it easy for residents of all ages, particularly those living alone, to connect with one another and develop new friendships throughout their lives.

"When people come together to celebrate and to work for a common cause, there is something beautiful that happens. I'd like to help more people of all ages come together to enjoy each other's company and to be enriched by each other's presence, talent, wisdom, and resources."

– Susan, 60; Friendship

Together, we will...

...strengthen intergenerational relationships to combat social isolation and loneliness, creating spaces that encourage coming together and celebrating initiatives that put relationships first. Focusing on perception, social spaces, and intergenerational relationships, we will:

- Educate the public to dispel myths about aging and promote solidarity
- Champion the power of "third places" in promoting health and wellness
- Build friendship and support across generations

PERCEPTION

Educate the public to dispel myths about aging and promote solidarity.

10 Speakers Bureau

Assemble a multigenerational, multicultural Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Speakers Bureau to educate various stakeholders and the press, breaking down stereotypes and advocating for the use of inclusive language that celebrates aging as a lifelong process with cultural and personal uniqueness.

Targets A trained group of speakers on hand to share their unique experiences and represent Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh at events and in the media, debunking myths and changing attitudes about aging.

Partners include All for All, Global Minds Initiative, Vintage, Inc., and Persad Center.

11 Sensitivity on the Bus

Launch an awareness campaign (e.g., posters, videos) to improve sensitivity and build empathy among drivers and passengers about the experiences of riders of all ages, particularly older riders. Distribute materials, which will feature real testimonials from riders, to bus garages and training centers.

Targets Availability of materials that amplify inclusion placed in public transportation garages and training centers, with a focus on improving the experiences of passengers of all ages.

Partners include Port Authority of Allegheny County, ACCESS, and AgeWell Pittsburgh.

12 Campaign to Combat Isolation and Loneliness

Develop a series of Op-Eds and public service announcements about the dangers of social isolation and loneliness and the power of relationships, using AARP's #Connect2Affect campaign as a model.

Targets Creation of monthly content, along with intended media outlets or platforms that have the greatest potential to reach older residents and people of all ages who may step up (through volunteerism, changes in behavior) to be part of the solution.

Partners include iCorConnects, Meals on Wheels of Greater Pittsburgh More Than A Meal, and CLASS.

SOCIAL SPACES
Champion the power of "third places" in promoting health and wellness.

13 Arts for All

Collaborate with arts and cultural organizations to provide meaningful ways for generations to connect and participate in Pittsburgh's vibrant cultural scene.

Targets Intergenerational events targeting older and younger Hill District and Northside residents first, and expanding to other neighborhoods with promising arts and cultural opportunities that foster increased intergenerational dialogue and promote solidarity.

Partners include United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania's Open Your Heart to a Senior, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Senator John Heinz History Center, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Photo: Bike Pittsburgh

Photo: Jessica Joseph for Venture Outdoors and Lively Pittsburgh

14 Parks Reimagined

Offer senior-friendly programming in highly visible, public spaces, like the region's parks, through Jewish Healthcare Foundation's (JHF) Recreation & Exercise program, an arm of the broader Senior Connections initiative. Working with partner organizations, JHF will also empower older adults to serve as Park Ambassadors to help motivate fellow seniors to get active.

Targets Increased use of the region's parks by older residents and their families; Development of an interactive online map of two pilot parks exhibiting curated walks for people with mobility challenges, as well as highlighting resources like benches and restrooms.

Partners include Jewish Healthcare Foundation, Allegheny County Parks Foundation, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, AARP Pennsylvania, Lively Pittsburgh, and Venture Outdoors.

15 Centers for More than Seniors

Expand the reach of senior center activity to find and include people of all ages by offering programming in visible, public settings. Also, open centers to nontraditional users and groups after hours. Implement creative promotion that appeals to all generations.

Targets Identification of existing senior activities that can be replicated in new, visible settings. Likewise, identification of events for all ages to be held at senior centers on evenings or weekends, increasing participation and interaction across generations.

Partners include Eastern Area Adult Services, Fine Art Miracles, Inc., Vintage, Inc., AgeWell Pittsburgh, and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.

16 Gardening for Good

To encourage people of all ages to understand the connection between body, environment, and health, align with community gardening and other environmental initiatives, including a project to connect third graders with graduating high school students to plant trees in groves.

Targets Identification of intergenerational community garden sites; Assessment of neighborhoods and selection of at least two sites for planting each year, each of 100 trees.

Partners include One Tree Per Child Pittsburgh, Avonworth School District, Avonworth Historical Society, and Jewish Association on Aging's G2G Intergenerational Program.

Build friendship and support across generations.

17 Solidarity Discussions

Facilitate discussions among traditional and nontraditional allies, as well as within the foundation community, to elevate the ideas of intergenerational solidarity and age diversity as essential to the health and wellbeing of residents and organizations.

Targets Discussions that build a case for intergenerational solidarity and the power of age diversity in leadership, such as increased representation of people of all ages within boards, commissions, and authorities.

Partners include North Hills Community Outreach, Consumer Health Coalition, and Global Minds Initiative.

Photo: Bike Pittsburgh

18 Welcoming Committees

Develop neighborhood ambassador programs to connect newcomers and legacy residents, building on the learnings of Lawrenceville United's Senior AdvantAge program.

Targets In addition to Lawrenceville, at least one more urban and one suburban neighborhood ambassador program pilot to increase interaction and participation among new and longtime residents.

Partners include Lawrenceville United, Lively Pittsburgh, All for All, and Global Links Community Partners Program.

19 GenPGH

Based on Philadelphia's successful GenPhilly coalition, engage with young professionals, as well as high school and college students, reaching to our strong network of local universities, to promote careers in the field of aging.

Targets Launch of GenPGH, which will organize events (e.g., lunch & learns, happy hours) and maintain a listserv to develop a strong network of young professionals and help recruit more local talent to the field.

Partners include SWPPA, UPMC Health Plan, and GenPhilly.

Spotlight: Open Your Heart to a Senior
Est. 2012

Thirteen agency partners across Allegheny County match volunteers with older neighbors through United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania's Open Your Heart to a Senior initiative, which extends to Westmoreland and Fayette Counties. Last year in Allegheny County alone, more than 1,100 volunteers clocked 54,000+ hours through the program, helping 6,200+ older people by grocery shopping, offering rides, delivering meals, providing company, and more. In 2016, United Way began piloting Open Your Heart to a Senior Outings with Prime Stages Theatre and Ursuline Support Services, pairing volunteers with older residents of a senior high rise to enjoy shows together. (See Action Item #13.)

Photos: United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania

Innovation

We envision...

...a region that's relentlessly pushing for progress. It's committed to affording each resident the opportunity to age where and how they choose. We honor promising solutions and test brand new ones that open doors—to businesses, workplaces, training opportunities, and apartment listings. We all can benefit from advancements in technology and design. We all can see what's on the horizon.

We heard...

People of all ages want to be valued customers and employees. That's what participants across our community engagement sessions told us, corresponding to national statistics and trends. As consumers, older adults have tremendous buying power.[33] In fact, according to a study by Oxford Economics, in 2012, Americans ages 50+ spent $3.0 trillion, accounting for 51% of all spending by people over age 25—and that excludes healthcare dollars.[34]

> **"We're living in a part of the world where this is going to be our future. We have a great opportunity to innovate and be creative and find intergenerational solutions that will enhance quality of life for everybody."**
>
> – Paul, 61; Oakmont

As people are living longer, many are bucking traditional career and retirement paths, contributing to a steady increase in the number of older workers. According to a report published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor, people ages 55+ accounted for 13.1% of the labor force in 2000, 19.5% in 2010, and are expected to reach 25.2% in 2020.[35] Some are considering retirement more of a process than an event, with phases and even brand new, or "encore," careers.

Our AARP survey respondents weren't so optimistic about finding new jobs, though. Nearly 40% said the range of flexible job opportunities for older adults was "fair" or "poor," and 35% described job training opportunities for older adults as "fair" or "poor."

We see this as an opportunity for local businesses to evolve to meet their changing demographics of consumers and employees. Participants in our planning meetings identified the home health sector as one new frontier for older workers. Across sectors, however, skill-building and addressing ageism will be essential.

Medically, we're at the forefront. We can amplify with dialogue and outreach.

In our planning sessions, lottery-funded senior services and a higher-than-national-average supply of geriatric specialists were among the assets identified as what's working. Being embedded in an economy now driven by "eds and meds" helps, too. Innovations in care and services are, quite truly, right around the corner.

Extending planning and care conversations to include loved ones—spouses, children, friends, neighbors—remains a challenge. Family caregivers, who provide the majority of day-to-day care for most older adults, often do not identify as caregivers, and therefore do not access resources.

We heard a specific need for dialogue among family caregivers for people living with dementia. More than 15 million Americans provide unpaid care for loved ones with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.[36] Bringing together not only family caregivers, but also people living with dementia themselves, community organizations, and nontraditional allies, is a vital—albeit nonmedical—step towards inclusion and progress.

Everyone wants to be part of Greater Pittsburgh's tech boom.

Google, Facebook, Duolingo, and Uber have offices in Pittsburgh, along with countless tech companies started and staffed, often, by Carnegie Mellon University graduates. Today's tech boom is now part of the region's narrative, so it's no wonder it surfaced during our planning process.

Our participants saw promise in connecting older and younger generations to build digital literacy. "Technology may create a barrier for older people who are not computer savvy," one said. Engaging with the tech community—many members who may be new to the region—could be one way to eliminate that barrier.

Free access to computers and the Internet in public places is a top feature in our community, according to AARP survey respondents, 40% of whom reported it to be "extremely good" or "very good." With 44 senior community centers and an abundance of high-quality public libraries, tech classes are available. Personal sessions with younger professionals could build upon this community resource while forming reciprocal relationships across generations.

The presence of an entrepreneurial, tech-minded community can also mean advances in technology to improve life for everyone in our region. For 10 years, the Quality of Life Technology Center, jointly run by Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh, was a National Science Foundation (NSF) Engineering Research Center developing intelligent systems to enable people to live as independently as possible. While NSF funding has ceased, the work and synergistic relationships advanced through the center have created a ripple effect. Some leaders, like the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, are testing new technologies that connect older people with new opportunities, which will hopefully inspire others to do the same.

> "There's so much information that older generations have that we need to learn. If we can absorb that knowledge from each other, that's where our age-friendly community can happen."
>
> – Rachel, 23; Coraopolis

Together, we will...

...champion meaningful technology and ideas that help people age in community, and help neighbors of all ages collaborate with our region's growing tech industry. Focusing on businesses, neighborhoods, our workforce, and interaction, we will:

• Promote equitable development that helps people remain in their communities as they age

• Find new, more effective ways to do business that include people of all ages

• Come together for support and vital company to combat isolation

BUSINESSES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Promote equitable development that helps people remain in their communities as they age.

Participants at Eastern Area Adult Services, Turtle Creek. Photo: DHS Office of Community Relations

20 An Age-Friendly Seal

Establish a seal and incentives program for local businesses and employers with a focus on replicating best practices. Align with Live Well Allegheny, Sustainable Pittsburgh, and other regional efforts that offer designation for schools, restaurants, workplaces, and communities.

Targets Creation of an application and designation process, targeting businesses within walking distance of neighborhoods with high concentrations of older adults.

Partners include Sustainable Pittsburgh, Allegheny County Health Department's Live Well Allegheny, *and All for All.*

21 Dementia-Friendly Conversations

To build a dementia-friendly community, ignite conversation and creative engagement among family members, friends, and people living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia by partnering with faith-based communities and other nontraditional partners.

Targets Two summit-style events per year in urban and suburban locations with intentional outreach to providers, family caregivers, and people living with dementia. Monthly sessions called Bridging Connections piloted at Heinz History Center.

Partners include Alzheimer's Association Greater Pennsylvania, Presbyterian SeniorCare Network, Arden Courts, Dementia by Day, LLC, Fine Art Miracles, Inc., AARP Pennsylvania, and Senator John Heinz History Center.

22 Dementia-Friendly Training

Train health professionals, community organizations, and families about ways to interact and communicate with people living with dementia, continuing to expand the reach of these dementia-friendly messages to new people as well as policymakers.

Targets Development of a toolkit for health professionals, families, and policymakers who can impact the lives of people with dementia and move the needle on community action that promotes inclusivity.

Partners include Jewish Healthcare Foundation, Aging Institute of UPMC Senior Services and the University of Pittsburgh, UPMC Health Plan, and Pennsylvania Department of Education.

23 New Housing Solutions

Explore options for progressive housing solutions, such as home-sharing and intergenerational housing. Also identify mechanisms to encourage and incentivize developers to use universal design elements in newly proposed housing units.

Targets Development of a white paper and advocacy strategy to challenge public and private entities to advance innovative solutions in the next five, 10, and 20 years.

Photo: Joshua Franzos for AgeWell Pittsburgh

Partners include Presbyterian SeniorCare Network, Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture, Jewish Healthcare Foundation, Persad Center, and Lawrenceville United.

WORKFORCE
Find new, more effective ways to do business that include people of all ages.

24 The Job Search, Redefined

Advocate for increased job training and placement programs that are inclusive of job seekers of all ages. Also support entrepreneurs of all ages by equipping them with the skills they need to successfully launch startups or small businesses.

Targets Increased workforce participation among people of all ages; Increased skill-building opportunities and entrepreneurial competencies across generations.

Partners include Lively Pittsburgh, Make It Work, and North Hills Community Outreach.

25 **Intergenerational Tech Training**

Increase access to technology through tech training, particularly in-person, one-on-one opportunities. Tap into Pittsburgh's growing tech community for volunteers, many of whom may be younger and/or new to the region.

Targets Promotion of existing tech training programs (e.g., AgeWell's Tablet Café) and partnership with tech companies for increased volunteer opportunities and connection across generations.

Partners include AgeWell Pittsburgh, North Hills Community Outreach, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, and Caregogi.

26 **Direct Care Workforce Development**

Advocate for a robust, multicultural direct care workforce (DCW) to support the needs of frail elders and people living with disabilities and their care partners. Educate managed care organizations and providers about the need for capacity-building among DCW and family caregivers at a neighborhood level.

Targets DCW development, increased use of standardized training, and increased opportunities for capacity-building.

Partners include SWPPA, Consumer Health Coalition, and All for All.

INTERACTION
Come together for support and vital company to combat isolation.

27 **Virtual Senior Academy**

Offer online, interactive classes through the use of video conferencing technology developed and implemented by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation to extend senior center activity far beyond the walls of a building.

Targets Decreased social isolation and loneliness reported by seniors in the region through social engagement opportunities offered through the Virtual Senior Academy.

Partners include Jewish Healthcare Foundation, American Heart Association, Breathe PA, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh.

28 Tech Support

Champion technology, including Jewish Healthcare Foundation's Virtual Senior Academy, that helps older adults remain in their communities and connected to people of all ages.

Targets Promotion of Virtual Senior Academy and other assisted technology for families living in the region and beyond, with the aim of decreasing self-reported measures of loneliness.

Partners include Fine Art Miracles, Inc., AARP Pennsylvania, and Jewish Association on Aging's G2G Intergenerational Program.

29 Disaster Preparedness

Engage first responder organizations and other services and systems to develop disaster preparedness plan for isolated elders and people living with disabilities.

Targets Development of disaster preparedness plan targeting areas with large populations of older adults and people with disabilities.

Partners include Global Links Community Partners Program, *UPMC Health Plan, and Presbyterian SeniorCare Network.*

30 Bye Week Back Home

Support intergenerational community gatherings that bring together new and native residents, including Bye Week Back Home, a project that also engages the Pittsburgh diaspora (i.e., long-distance Pittsburghers) via social media.

Targets One day per year (occurring on the Pittsburgh Steelers' Bye Week) focused on location-based engagement in and outside the region with targeted social media outreach to Pittsburghers across the globe.

Partners include UPMC Health Plan, SWPPA, and Always a Home Game.

Photo: Jessica Joseph for Venture Outdoors and Lively Pittsburgh

Spotlight: Career Development Center

Est. 1984

The Career Development Center (CDC), a nationally recognized division of Jewish Family & Children's Service, has helped more than 16,000 job seekers navigate their career paths and transitions. From recent college graduates to mature workers, the CDC provides counseling and referrals without regard to race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, or age.

Participants test out the Virtual Senior Academy at Vintage Center for Active Adults in Summer of 2017.
Photo: Jewish Healthcare Foundation

Our Process

Understanding the Age-Friendly Framework

Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh is part of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Currently, the WHO Global Network includes 500 communities in 37 countries, covering over 155 million people worldwide.[37]

In the United States, AARP leads designation and coordination efforts through the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. At present, 182 communities have signed on as members, committing to work towards making their city, town, or county a place where people of all ages can thrive.[38]

In September 2015, the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County joined the national and international networks, kicking off a five-year planning, implementation, and evaluation cycle. We chose Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh as the name for this combined city and county initiative.

Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Timeline

2015 Designation

2016-2017 Planning (Years 1–2)

- Convene local leaders through Age-Friendly Champions meetings
- Mobilize neighbors through Aging Your Way workshops
- Start domain-specific work groups
- Collect data via AARP's Livability for All in Pittsburgh & Allegheny County Community Survey
- Evaluate the planning process
- Gather feedback through a survey and public input sessions
- Create a storytelling library with video interviews of local influencers and community members

2017-2020 Implementation (Years 3–4)

- Execute, coordinate, and track progress of action items
- Convene Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Leadership Circle
- Continue domain-specific work group sessions

2020 Evaluation (Year 5)

- Administer follow-up survey
- Conduct an evaluation of the implementation process
- Determine future needs
- Update Action Plan

Eight Domains of Livability

The World Health Organization developed a framework with eight domains of livability. Acknowledging variability in the preferences and experiences of people as they age across cultures, this framework encourages communities to identify their own priorities within each domain.

Based on WHO's Checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities, the domains include the following elements that influence health and quality of life among people of all ages.[39]

1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:** Public areas, green spaces, outdoor and indoor seating, walkways, bike paths, lighting, customer service arrangements, public toilets.

2. **Transportation:** Public and private transit options, reliability and frequency, specialized services for people with disabilities, priority seating, traffic flow, roads, driver education, parking, drop-off areas.

3. **Housing:** Public and private housing options, proximity to services and rest of community life, home maintenance, home modification, safety and comfort.

4. **Social Participation:** Venues, timing, affordability, promotion of events and activities; fostering diversity and inclusion; outreach to combat social isolation.

5. **Respect and Social Inclusion:** Consideration of preferences, public images of aging, intergenerational and family interactions, public education, recognition of contributions to past and present, economic inclusion.

6. **Civic Participation and Employment:** Volunteer and employment options, job training, age discrimination, inclusion on decision-making bodies, entrepreneurship.

7. **Communication and Information:** Distribution of information, person-to-person communication, printed information, media, access to technology and the Internet.

8. **Community Support and Health Services:** Promoting, maintaining and restoring health, home care services, proximity to housing and the rest of community life, coordinated service delivery, emergency planning.

The Built Environment

The Social Environment

Transportation

Housing

Outdoor spaces and buildings

Social participation

Age-Friendly City

Community support and health services

Respect and social inclusion

Communication and information

Civic participation and employment
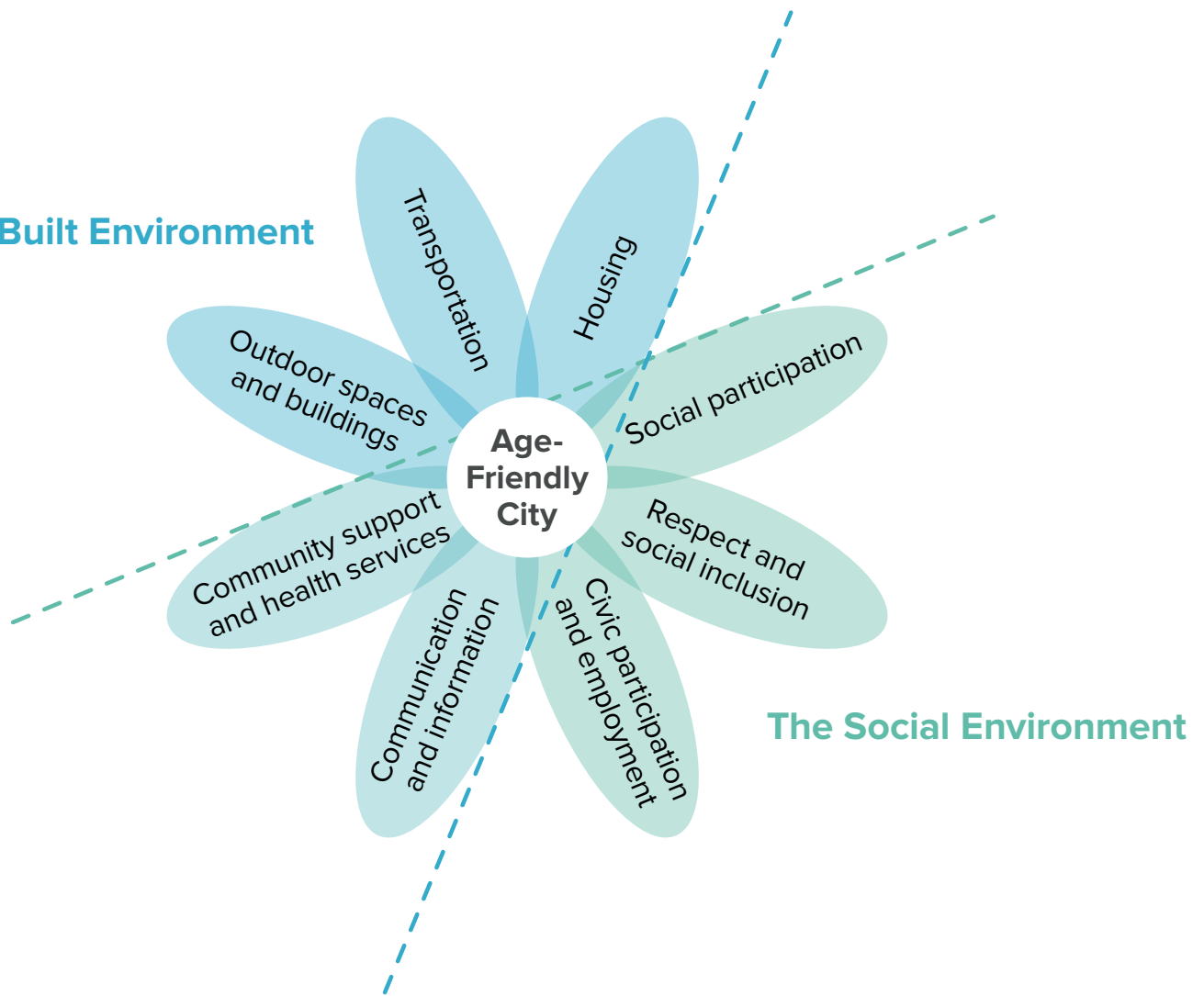
The eight domains of livability from the World Health Organization's report, *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* (2007).

Developing Our Action Plan

Building on the WHO framework, we focused on convening, engaging, and storytelling to complete the planning phase of Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh. In total, more than 800 voices are captured in this plan.

We took a two-track approach by organizing conversations among a.) professionals, and b.) neighbors. In both tracks, it was paramount to engage with participants, first and foremost, as residents. For example, rather than start with name and organization or company affiliation, introductions at the professional-track meetings, called Age-Friendly Champions meetings, intentionally started with name and neighborhood (e.g., "My name is Sam and I live in Clairton.") The goal was to get people thinking about Greater Pittsburgh's future as their own future.
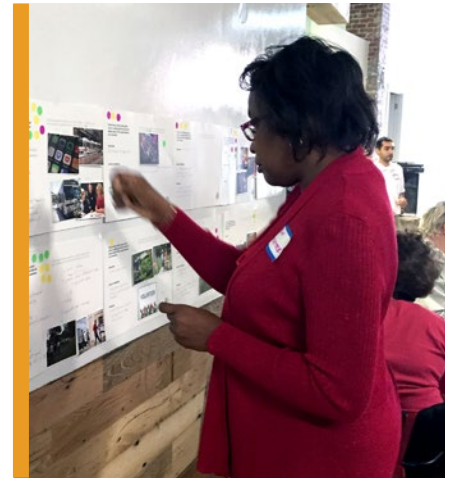
Through the dialogue and data collection described below, three focus areas emerged: **Access, Connection,** and **Innovation.** The Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Action Plan includes 30 Action Items that fall into these three categories.

Convene Local Leaders

A total of 136 unique stakeholders from 77 organizations participated in Age-Friendly Champions meetings. We started with a kickoff event in November 2015, then organized quarterly gatherings in 2016 addressing two of the eight WHO domains at a time. These professional-track events brought together people working in aging and people working in a variety of fields related to each of the domains.

Here is how we grouped the domains for the discussions:

- **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings | Transportation**

- **Housing | Community Support & Health Services**

- **Social Participation | Respect & Inclusion**

- **Communication & Information | Civic Participation & Employment**

At each meeting, after a brief introduction, participants self-selected a domain on which to focus. Individually, each participant identified strengths, challenges, and innovations on color-coded Post-It notes, then facilitators guided participants in sharing their ideas with the group. Notes were compiled as data to inform this plan.

Spotlight: Walkability Studies

Est. 2016

Dreamed up at the first of seven Aging Your Way workshops, these one-hour strolls capture safety concerns and needed improvements using a smartphone app developed by Pittsburgh-based startup pathVu. Using a mix of engineering-grade hardware and crowdsourcing tools, pathVu's goal is to produce a worldwide sidewalk network that improves the happiness, health, and safety of every community. (See Action Item #2.)

Photos: Lively Pittsburgh

Mobilize Neighbors

More than 90 residents participated in seven Aging Your Way workshops in urban and suburban areas across the city and county. These workshops—inspired by a model based in Seattle[40]—activated local community members and informed this plan. Led by Lively Pittsburgh, a community-based organization helping active adults pursue their passions and shape their communities, these neighborhood-track workshop sessions challenged participants of all ages to:

*   Envision communities that would help support them as they age
*   Brainstorm concrete projects that they would like to do to make that happen
*   Form action teams to begin work and move the community toward its vision

Creativity was infused into each five-hour session. Midway through, local dance company Attack Theatre engaged with participants to generate a creative interpretation of the group conversation, while getting everyone up and moving together.

In total, 39 resident-led projects were identified, ranging from multicultural potluck dinners to memoir writing projects. We analyzed transcripts, project ideas, and other outputs from the workshops, which are woven into this plan. Analysis revealed that Aging Your Way conversations aligned well with WHO's eight domains of livability, although the domains were never discussed at the workshops.

Start Domain-Specific Work Groups

Participants from both the professional and neighborhood tracks joined forces to draft three to four measurable goals for each WHO domain. Seven domain-specific work groups—each with facilitators professionally linked to their domain—were assembled. (Social Participation and Respect & Inclusion were collapsed into one group.) Each work group's three to four goals were included in this plan.

Collect Data

Five hundred residents ages 50+ participated in AARP's Livability for All in Pittsburgh & Allegheny County Community Survey conducted by telephone in June and July 2016. Results were presented to more than 150 regional advocates at SWPPA's Annual Meeting in December 2016. Domain-specific work groups used findings to inform goal setting. Highlights are included in the "We heard" sections of each focus area on the following pages.

Photo: Bike Pittsburgh

Evaluate

Synthesizing data collected in meetings and participant surveys, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health evaluated the initiative's progress and delivered a report in March 2017. Strengths identified in the report include:

- Shared leadership in tasks and in facilitation of work groups

- Successful engagement of stakeholders who bring a broad perspective on the various topics

- Continued participation of organizations and people throughout the meetings

- Use of surveys to capture participants' concerns and suggestions to improve the working process and effectiveness

This evaluation underscored the need, interest, and commitment among stakeholders across the region, a strong foundation for implementation.

Gather Feedback

We closed out the planning phase with a survey to 2015-2016 participants and an outreach blitz to the community through four public input sessions located across Allegheny County. This was our way of taking the Action Plan to our partners and to the public one more time before publication. We distilled feedback from the survey and the input sessions, and incorporated it into this plan.

Among the 39 participants who completed the web-based Action Plan Feedback survey, 33 indicated that the draft action items resonated with Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh conversations they previously attended. Respondents were asked to rate their impression of each section—Access, Connection, and Innovation—as very strong, strong, undecided, weak, or very weak. They were then asked: "What would you change? Or what's missing?" Action items were modified based on the feedback.

At our four public input sessions, we unveiled our proposed focus areas and gave a new audience—almost 100 individuals ranging in age from 8 to 90— the opportunity to provide feedback through a participatory process. We started each session by addressing the entire group to familiarize them with the initiative, then we broke into stations to gather input around what's working, what's not working, and what participants wished for within our three focus areas. We also set up a video and photo station to collect the stories shared on these pages, stories that will continue to inspire our work in the years ahead. This final phase was critical to ensuring the Acton Plan is relevant and actionable.

"There is a wealth of opportunity to learn from those older than us and those younger than us and share the resources that are available to us in our community."

– Christine, 27; Bloomfield

Call to Action

Nearly two years after joining the WHO and AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, we are thrilled to submit the Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Action Plan shaped by the passion of local leaders, businesses, organizations, and neighbors. This is both the final step in the planning process and the first step in implementation.

Oversight of the Action Plan will continue to be provided by SWPPA, with funding from the Mary Hillman Jennings Foundation.

Successful implementation of the Action Plan—one that integrates our goals for **Access, Connection,** and **Innovation** with other community-wide initiatives—requires a small but impactful project team that will include SWPPA, Pittsburgh-based social enterprise Change Agency, and ongoing partner Lively Pittsburgh. For the first year, this team will include a PULSE Fellow, part of a Pittsburgh-based fellowship program dedicated to cultivating community and developing the next generation of servant leaders.

Of course, the continued work, support, and forward thinking of our partners—both current and new—will be absolutely critical to the initiative's success. In May 2017, domain-specific work group facilitators were invited to join the Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Leadership Circle. Work groups will continue to meet regularly and run independently to move forward with the Action Items outlined here, but setting the structure for quarterly Leadership Circle gatherings establishes ownership and accountability while also connecting projects with similar goals.

Additionally, we want to be sure that on-ramps are available for residents, organizations, and companies to take the journey with us, whether they've been a part of the process to date or not. This Action Plan is intended to be a living document. The project team, Leadership Circle, and partner organizations will be encouraged to spread the word about our shared mission and invite newcomers into the fold every step of the way. We are particularly interested in broadening the scope of our reach by engaging surrounding counties to join the WHO and AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

At Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh, we know that now is the time to build a region that not only accommodates younger or older people, but one that empowers every generation to thrive, today and tomorrow. With the Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Action Plan as our roadmap for the next three years, we are prepared to embark on the journey.

Appendix A: Action Items

Access

Access	Action Item	Domain(s)	Years		
Mobility	1. The Crossings	• OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS • TRANSPORTATION	1	2	3
	2. Walkability Studies	• OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS	1	2	3
	3. Complete Streets Advocacy	• TRANSPORTATION	1	2	3
Affordability	4. Creative, Far-Reaching Transit	• TRANSPORTATION	1	2	3
	5. Housing Assessment and Mapping	• HOUSING	1	2	3
	6. Health Promotion Expansion	• COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES	1	2	3
Navigation	7. Online Concierge for Ride Options	• TRANSPORTATION	1	2	3
	8. Connecting Referral Services	• COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION • HOUSING	1	2	3
	9. Murals to Help Caregivers	• COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION	1	2	3

Connection

Connection	Action Item	Domain(s)	Years		
Perception	10. Speakers Bureau	• COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION	1	2	3
	11. Sensitivity on the Bus	• TRANSPORTATION	1	2	3
	12. Campaign to Combat Isolation and Loneliness	• SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND RESPECT & INCLUSION	1	2	3
Social Spaces	13. Arts for All	• SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND RESPECT & INCLUSION	1	2	3
	14. Parks Reimagined	• OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS	1	2	3
	15. Centers for More Than Seniors	• OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS • SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND RESPECT & INCLUSION	1	2	3
	16. Gardening for Good	• COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES	1	2	3
Intergenerational Relationships	17. Solidarity Discussions	• CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT	1	2	3
	18. Welcoming Committees	• COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION • SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND RESPECT & INCLUSION	1	2	3
	19. GenPGH	• COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES	1	2	3

Innovation

	Action Item	Domain(s)	Years		
Businesses and Neighborhoods	20. An Age-Friendly Seal	• OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS • COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES	1	2	3
	21. Dementia-Friendly Conversations	• COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES	1	2	3
	22. Dementia-Friendly Training	• COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES	1	2	3
	23. New Housing Solutions	• HOUSING	1	2	3
Workforce	24. The job Search, Redefined	• CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT • COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION	1	2	3
	25. Intergenerational Tech Training	• CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT • COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION	1	2	3
	26. Direct Care Workforce Development	• COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES	1	2	3
Interaction	27. Virtual Senior Academy	• SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND RESPECT & INCLUSION	1	2	3
	28. Tech Support	• SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND RESPECT & INCLUSION	1	2	3
	29. Disaster Preparedness	• COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES	1	2	3
	30. Bye Week Back Home	• SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND RESPECT & INCLUSION	1	2	3

Appendix B: Our Partners

More than 100 organizations were involved in the creation the Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Action Plan. Please note that these are current partners. We will continue to welcome new partners to join us along the way.

AARP Pennsylvania*

ACCESS*

ACTION-Housing, Inc.

AgeWell Pittsburgh

All for All*

Allegheny Conference on Community Development

Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging

Allegheny County Department of
Economic Development

Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Allegheny County Executive's Office

Allegheny County Health Department

Allegheny County Parks Foundation

Allegheny County Housing Authority

Allegheny Link

Always a Home Game

Alzheimer's Association Greater Pennsylvania

American Heart Association

Arden Courts

Avonworth Historical Society

Avonworth School District

Baptist Homes Society

Bike Pittsburgh

Bloomfield Development Corporation

Bloomfield Livable Streets

BNY Mellon

Breathe PA

Caregiver Champion

Caregogi

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh

Carnegie Mellon University*

City of Pittsburgh Department of Mobility and Infrastructure

City of Pittsburgh Office of the Mayor

CLASS*

Community LIFE

Community Options

Connecting Hearts

Consumer Health Coalition

Dementia By Day, LLC

Dezudio

Easter Seals

Eastern Area Adult Services*

Extended Family Care

Fine Art Miracles, Inc.

Friendship Community Group

Gateway Health

GenPhilly (Philadelphia)

Global Links

Global Minds Initiative

GTECH Strategies

Healthcare Council of Western Pennsylvania

Heinz Family Foundation

Hillman Family Foundations

Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh

iCorConnects*

Institute of Disabilities, Temple University

Jewish Association on Aging

Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh

Jewish Family & Children's Service

Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh

Jewish Healthcare Foundation*

Just Harvest

Lawrenceville United

LIFE Pittsburgh

LifeSpan, Inc.

Lively Pittsburgh*

McKeesport Housing Authority

Meals on Wheels of Greater Pittsburgh

MetaFit Solutions

National Aging in Place Council

National Alliance on Mental Illness

North Hills Community Outreach

Ohio Valley Hospital

One Tree Per Child Pittsburgh

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the
University of Pittsburgh

pathVu*

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency*

Perkins Eastman

Persad Center

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre

Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership

Pittsburgh Mercy Health System

Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative

PNC Real Estate

Port Authority of Allegheny County

Presbyterian SeniorCare Network*

Robert Morris University

Senator John Heinz History Center

Sojourn Theatre (Portland)

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Star Transportation Group Vetaxi

Sustainable Pittsburgh*

SWPPA*

The Forbes Funds

The Pittsburgh Foundation

Trek Development

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,
Pittsburgh Office

United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania*

University of Pittsburgh

UPMC Aging Institute

UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care*

UPMC Health Plan

Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh

Ursuline Support Services

Venture Outdoors

Vintage, Inc.

Volunteers of America

Wesley Family Services*

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Western Pennsylvania School of Blind Children

*Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Leadership Circle

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more and find ways to get involved!