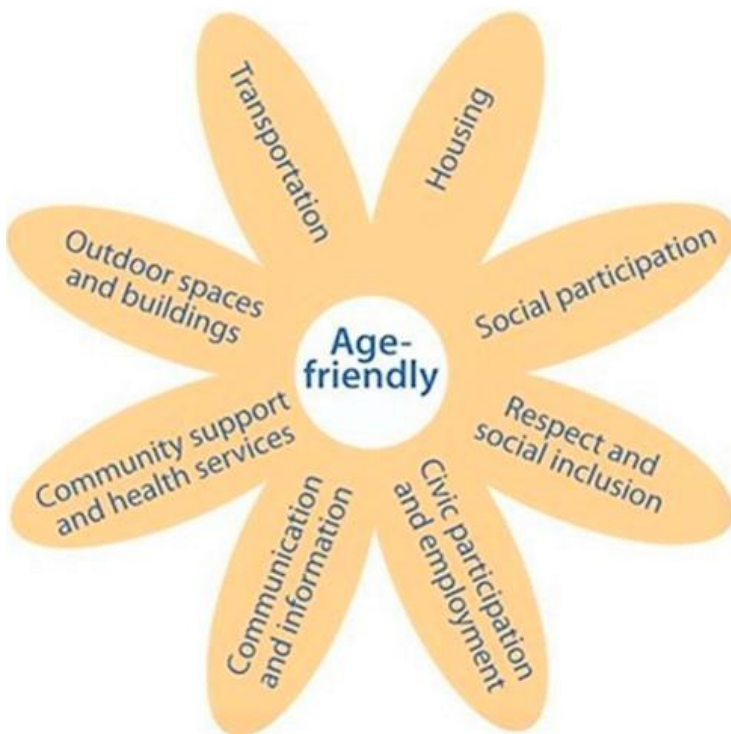


BECOMING AGE FRIENDLY BERKSHIRES: A MUNICIPAL CHECKLIST



Becoming Age Friendly Berkshires: A Municipal Checklist

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A SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR MUNICIPALITIES

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What is Age Friendly?

Age Friendly Communities are *livable* - providing appropriate housing, good transportation, work and volunteer opportunities, plus a range of leisure activities for all residents - across their lifespans.

Age Friendly communities enable people to actively participate in civic and social life and treat everyone with respect, regardless of their age or ability. They are places that makes it easy for older people to stay safe, and connected to the people that are important to them. Age Friendly communities help people stay healthy and active -- even at the oldest ages and provide appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves.

An Age Friendly Berkshire County is a great place to grow up and a great place to grow old!

This Checklist is intended to be used to "start the conversation" in your city or town, around becoming age-friendly. Chances are, you're doing alot already! No need to start from scratch – just put on your age-friendly lenses, review your current programs, capital budgets or plans to see if they include consideration of people living with disability, dementia or create intergenerational spaces for residents to enjoy. Identify ways to expand or adapt your Actions from the suggestions on the Checklist - or create some yourselves. Don't forget to share best practices or what you've discovered, with other Berkshire County communities, via www.agefriendlyberkshires.com. For additional assistance with using the Checklists call Age Friendly Berkshires at 413-442-1521 x16.

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OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS



Berkshire County offers nature lovers year-round beauty and easy access to the outdoors – and has a major impact on the quality of life of young and old alike. The built environment also has an impact on how we live our lives, as does the use of our public buildings and spaces. Aging public buildings and infrastructure have evolved as our community has grown and needs have changed. Today, the wish to protect our natural environment, while making it accessible to all ages, coupled with the ever-changing needs of an aging population, are prompting us to re-create our communities again.

Clean, safe, well-planned and maintained roads, parks, natural areas, pedestrian walk and bike-ways, and accessible, well-lit buildings and sidewalks, together provide an ideal living environment for aging-in-place.

Creating an age-friendly region will likely require the adaptation or rehabilitation of many public spaces and structures over time, with the goal of a more cohesive and integrated community, designed for maximal access to nature, increased mobility and independence for all.

OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS REGIONAL GOALS

- Create and/or maintain accessible spaces to ensure that residents of all ages and abilities can use and enjoy public spaces, whether they are indoors or outdoors.
- Market and promote opportunities to encourage residents of all ages and abilities to use public places and buildings.
- Work to create/maintain safe places, including parks, open spaces and public buildings.
- Work to create/maintain spaces that are multigenerational and inclusive for all users.
- Encourage the creation of joint-use agreements allowing community groups to use municipal buildings.
- Promote Complete Streets solutions (i.e., those designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities) whenever possible.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings Checklist

- Work toward making all public buildings and outdoor spaces in town Age & Dementia Friendly & ADA accessible.
- Work with Commissions on Disability to develop a system to identify needed improvements, develop prioritization plans and track actions.
- Encourage the use of alternate, accessible venues for public meetings and hearings if town halls are not Age-friendly/ADA accessible
- Assess/upgrade existing lighting and signage for immediate improvement to Accessibility in public buildings and outdoor spaces . Seek funding for more extensive infrastructure improvements.
- Cooperate with a region-wide Age & Dementia-Friendly Certification Program, to educate and assist local businesses to better serve their customers with different abilities
- Encourage development of free Age Friendly trails throughout the County.
- Make sure wayfinding markers are easily recognizable, clearly visible, and at frequent intervals.
- Site accessible bathrooms near walking loops, or between destinations, where possible.
- Provide benches that have backs and arms at regular intervals in shady areas.
- Encourage creation of trails, parks and bikeways close to centers of population and/or where public transportation is available
- Encourage the creation of walking groups or walking buddy programs through councils on aging or other municipal departments, posting on community website and bulletin boards
- Encourage use of accessible parks and open spaces in town for a variety of community events
- Provide conveniently located, safe, commodious well-lit parking.
- Maintain sidewalks, parking lot and other pavement around public buildings and in parks.
- Ensure adequate street lighting at intersections and sidewalks.
- Reduce potential trip hazards including glare, uneven surfaces, sudden transitions, etc.
- Encourage location of park benches where they are not isolated from other park activities.
- Encourage trails/play areas that are safe, age friendly and tick free (e.g. where vegetation on trails is cut back and maintained).
- Create a "wild" park/playground for kids and families as an alternative to traditional parks or playgrounds.
- Establish regular, organized activities in parks, both age-specific and multigenerational, by partnering with local organizations.

List your existing plans for Outdoor Spaces & Buildings here:

List your existing or future plans for Outdoor Spaces & Buildings here: