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, budgets or plans to find better, easier ways for residents to get around town and the region. 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 technical assistance with using the Checklists or for other assistance, call Age Friendly Berkshires at 413-442-1521 x16.

TRANSPORTATION

Driving is the primary mode of transportation for most Berkshire County residents, particularly in the most rural areas. Non-drivers and those without private cars, have few alternatives to help them remain engaged in community life.

Accessible and affordable public transit options should be expanded to include multiple on-demand services including taxi companies, ride-sharing and others. The creation of more bike lanes and sidewalks to encourage and increase healthy alternatives to motorized travel is also desirable. The re-development of rail service should be fully supported!

People should be able to navigate the region's transit system with ease and feel comfortable using it. Transportation services should cater to people with a range of mobility needs. Helpful drivers and station staff trained and attuned to the unique needs of older riders, or those living with disabilities, is essential. Information on safe, accessible and affordable transport services must be made more available to people, to encourage broader use.

Heavy traffic, poor road conditions, inadequate street lighting and poorly positioned signage are barriers to safe driving. Maintaining confidence as drivers age is important to ensuring a safe driving experience for all. Parking located close to buildings and drop-off and pick-up services are welcomed by young and old alike.

TRANSPORTATION - REGIONAL GOALS:

- ➤ Maximize access to user-friendly transportation services to meet daily living, employment, health and socialization needs, through ways that are safe, effective, affordable, and respectful to each person served.
- ➤ Ensure residents are fully aware of existing transportation options. Identify barriers to use and facilitate solutions.
- ➤ Expand transportation options in innovative ways to address gaps in the existing system
- ➤ Identify on-line shopping and support local delivery services to reduce need for unnecessary driving.
- ➤ Keep older adults using their personal vehicles safely for as long as possible, through programs that support the retention of driver skills.
- ➤ Improve and develop infrastructure to encourage walking and biking and to increase safety for wheelchairs and other assistive devices, following Complete Streets guidelines

Transportation Checklist

- ☐ Public Transportation schedules, stops, routes and fares are posted/distributed widely

- ☐ Public transportation or private taxis are reliable and available nights and on weekends

- ☐ The community has good connections and well-marked routes for travel.

- ☐ Support and allow space for driver skill retention with community organizations, thru partnerships with AARP, AAA, RMV, Auto Insurance providers

- ☐ Research relevant data on infrastructure needs and gaps in your town. Take advantage of regional/state/federal technical assistance to adopt infrastructure improvements through Complete Streets

- ☐ Collaborate with auto dealerships, mechanics and others town businesses to develop incentives and discounts for car maintenance for older adults.

- ☐ Reduce need for unnecessary travel – promote affordable home delivery services in town

- ☐ Join the Berkshire Regional Coordination Council (RCC) to help improve municipal access to regional transportation network

- ☐ Explore partnerships with adjacent municipalities for shared transportation services and expand existing, like NADTC van-sharing and use of the BRTA Community Transit grants

- ☐ Help update the 2015 Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan with focus on expanding ride sharing and alternate auto-based services in your town

- ☐ Conduct research to create a county-wide pool of volunteer drivers

- ☐ Develop a Walk&Bike-ability Index for your community.

- ☐ Identify/map/advertise town locations for walking and biking; support creation of new paths/trails

- ☐ Extend/support the BHS - TRIAD-sponsored high visibility vests program throughout Berkshire County.

☐ Evaluate town-wide public parking and drop-off locations for safety, lighting, convenience and accessibility for those with special needs, i.e. low vision, physical or cognitive impairments

☐ Add your Age Friendly Transportation Actions here: