AARP Livable Communities: Supporting Healthy, Thriving Age-Friendly Places for All
Elderly in U.S. Are Projected to Outnumber Children for First Time

Census Bureau predicts milestone will be hit within 17 years

By Paul Overberg and Janet Akamy
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People over 65 years old would outnumber children by 2035, a first in U.S. history, according to updated projections released by the Census Bureau on Tuesday.

The milestone would be the latest marker of the nation’s aging, which has accelerated with baby boomers’ move into their senior years and recessionary effects on births and immigration over the past decade.

October 2019: US Census updated to 2034

June 2020: US Census reported

The 65-and-older population grew by over a third (34.2% or 13,787,044) during the past decade.

Over half of all HH are 1- or 2-persons, but more than 85% of housing stock is 2, 3, 4 or more bedrooms.

The share of 65+ renters who are rent-burdened increased from 43% in 2001 to 50% in 2015.

Less than 1% of US homes are built with universal design in mind.

Older adults represent more than 20% of population, but only 4% of park users.

Parks serving communities of color are half the size (and 5x as crowded) which increases temps. Older adults represent a disproportionate share of heat-related deaths.
Isolation and loneliness present health risks equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Isolation is associated with a 50% percent increased risk of dementia.

Older adults outlive their ability to drive between 7-10 years.

Transit funding/services in crisis.

Bike/ped fatalities on the rise for last decade. 2018/19 most dangerous years to date for pedestrian fatalities.

Older adults represent disproportionate share of pedestrian fatalities in 35 states.
Roadblocks to age-friendly communities

- Lack of options when people stop driving
  - And disparate access to quality transit, safe bike/ped environments, other solutions
- Public transit in crisis
  - Older adults and people with disabilities rely more on public transit
- Overall bike/ped fatalities are increasing
  - Older adults represent a disproportionate share
- COVID introduced new risk to use of prior sources (e.g. volunteer driver programs)
Pathways to age-friendly communities

- **Invest** in better/more infrastructure
  - Safer bike/ped, better public transit, lighting and signage

- **Ensure** existing infrastructure meets needs of all
  - Schedules/destinations match needs,
  - Payment/discounts are easy,
  - Crosswalk signal timing, and more…

- **Educate** older adults on options
  - Bus, rideshare, bike/ped, volunteers, AVs

- **Engage** older adults in planning efforts – as well as implementation
AARP Livable Communities Approach
aka our “Age-Friendly” Approach

We support communities and local leaders to think differently about their housing, transportation and public spaces to create great places for all people of all ages.

- **Framework** for age-friendly policy and investment
- **Grants** to catalyze change
- **Tools and resources** for local leaders
- **AARP staff and volunteers** in every state
AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities

We support communities and local leaders to think differently about their housing, transportation and public spaces to create great places for all people of all ages.

Over 500 communities + six states + USVI

Five-year cycle

Led by diverse coalitions

Over 100 million US residents live in an age-friendly community

Many overlap with CDC/DNPAO programs or Bicycle Friendly Communities

Search for communities at https://livablemap.aarp.org/
Community Challenge grants to catalyze change

2021 application window
February 17-April 14

Search for your community at
https://livablemap.aarp.org/

Conway, AR (top)
Des Moines, IA (left)

>$6 million in 4 years (in 2020 alone, $2.4 million in grants awarded to 184 communities)
Community Challenge grants at work

(clockwise from top left) Los Angeles, CA; Montgomery, AL; Columbus, OH; Bethel, VT; and Brownsville, TX;
(More) Community Challenge grants at work

- Accessible seating + paths
- Community gardens
- Bike racks, signage and public art
- Opportunities to engage public in decision-making
- Pedestrian safety improvements
- Pop-up placemaking to enhance safety
- Transit/bike training

(clockwise from top left)
Baltimore, MD; Cuyahoga, OH; Opelousos, LA; Memphis, TN
Tools to help local leaders

- Livability Index
  [https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/](https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/)

- Searchable map
  [https://livablemap.aarp.org](https://livablemap.aarp.org)

Free weekly e-newsletter
Text LIVABLE to 50757
• Older adults bicycle more often when they have someone to bicycle with.

• COVID-19 has motivated many older adults to start bicycling again or to ride more.

• Older bicyclists want access to a high-quality bike network and fewer potential points of conflict with motorists.

• Older adults prefer to bicycle in places with easily accessible places to shop, work and socialize.

• E-bikes are growing in popularity, with use increasing with a rider's age, or when stamina declines.

• Many older adults consider bicycling to be a staple in their lives and cannot envision a time when they would stop riding a bicycle.

Read more:
Free publications

Free practitioner-oriented publications in print and via download

Access all at: aarp.org/livable

Download guide or worksheets (Eng/Span) at aarp.org/walkaudit

Download Pop-Up Placemaking Tool Kit at aarp.org/livable
Focus on: Alexandria + Arlington County

- **Alexandria**: member of NAFSC (2016)
  - Action plan focuses on being more inclusive for aging communities of color, different gender identities, sexual orientation, nationalities, cultures, and disabilities. Also building on its Vision Zero policy, hosting new walkability audits with community groups, and ensuring that school zones are safe.

- **Arlington County**: member of NAFSC (2018)
  - Action plan focuses on working with the Virginia regional transit agency to enhance public transportation by making transit more affordable. Also will work to improve its commitment to enhance pedestrian safety, seeking to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries to pedestrians, bikers, and drivers by enhancing Vision Zero policies. Increase public transit use.
Focus on: Miami-Dade County, FL

- **Member of NAFSC (2018)**

- Action plan focuses on improving pedestrian safety and improving walkability by auditing existing roadways, providing driver education for older adults and promoting public transit use. Also advocating for additional transit stops in areas of high need and at key destinations for older adults.

- **Ex**: 2018 Community Challenge grant to install 12 bus benches to support increased use of transit in Little Havana, where residents use transit 3x as much as general population


Excerpt of video on age-friendly bench program
Images courtesy of AARP and UHP
Focus on: Columbus, OH

- **Member of NAFSC (2015)**

- **Ex:** Expansive action plan over several years plus early 2019 deep dive into **transportation** led to:
  - Two neighborhood circulator buses
  - *Safe Routes to Age in Place* study, funded by the Ohio DOT, to ID transportation challenges and solutions
  - "*Mainstream on Demand*" mobility service to offer an on-demand paratransit service, created in response to non-ADA paratransit needs.
  - **Lyfting Villages**, a pilot program in which rides are provided by Lyft to Village members when volunteer drivers aren't available

Excerpt from Lyfting Villages how-to video with guidance for riders and Lyft drivers

Watch entire video here: [https://youtu.be/dlyR3pGXF0M](https://youtu.be/dlyR3pGXF0M)
AARP’s Livable Communities Approach
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For more information:

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