SOMA

Becoming Age-Friendly Communities

What is an Age-Friendly Community?

- Age-friendly communities are great places to live for people of all ages.
- Well-designed, livable communities that promote health and sustain economic growth.
- Most people would like to age in place, near the people and activities important to them.
- Most cities and towns are not organized to help residents stay connected and engaged as they age. Communities are often unprepared for the growing number of older people.

WHO 8 Domains of Livability

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation
5. Respect and Social Inclusion
6. Work & Civic Engagement
7. Communication and Information
8. Community and Health Services

Understanding Your Population

South Orange

In 2016, 13% of the population is over age 65 (8% 65-74; 3% 75-84; and 2% 85+)

Population projections (2016-2021)

	Increase/Decrease
Total	2% ↑
0-64	1% ↓
65-74	27% ↑
75-84	28% ↑
85+	14% ↓

Maplewood

In 2016, 12% of the population is over age 65 (7% 65-74; 3% 75-84; and 2% 85+)

Population projections (2016-2021)

	Increase/Decrease
Total	2% ↑
0-64	1% ↓
65-74	33% ↑
75-84	24% ↑
85+	9% ↓

Age cohorts 65-74 and 75-85 are projected to increase dramatically as compared to all other ages.

SOMA - Becoming Age Friendly Communities: Planning Process

- ✓ Site assessments
- ✓ Key informant interviews
- ✓ Community survey – age 60+
- ✓ Focus Groups
- ✓ Community Forum

Key Findings

- Municipal buildings and outdoor spaces are in need of better maintenance, repairs and renovations.
- Jitney service, although available in both municipalities, is underutilized. Residents are unsure of jitney route, schedule, availability, accessibility and modes of access.
- There is not enough accessible and affordable housing for those that want to age in place; taxes are a major concern.

Key Findings

- South Orange's senior discount card assists older adults with the costs of daily living.
- Although both municipalities offer a wide array of recreational activities in which seniors participate, additional options are requested.
- Seniors seek action beyond planning including realistic accountable goals and timelines. Seniors need to have a voice in decision making.

Key Findings

- Intergenerational neighborhoods exist. Programming aimed at bringing various age groups together needs improvement.
- There are concerns about identification of and outreach to the socially isolated or homebound.
- Residents are unsure of volunteer opportunities; an organizing entity is needed to connect volunteers with organizations and persons in need.

Key Findings

- Local hospitals partner with SOMA to provide community health services. Health Officers and Public Health Nurses offer screenings, flu vaccinations and health education.

- SOMA has tremendous resources available for residents to age in place. Information about resources is not well communicated, centralized or easily accessible.

General Recommendations

- Create a SOMA livable community vision statement, age friendly logo and motto to raise initiative awareness and incorporate it into all facets of communication.
- Employ a dedicated project champion to coordinate services and programs for residents to age in place.
  - ➢ Seek and procure additional funding sources for sustainability of age friendly initiative.
  - ➢ Ongoing evaluation and assessment of services offered.

General Recommendations

- Include older adults in community-wide decision making.
  - ➢ Mobilize teams of volunteers with skills, experience and community commitment to maximize resources and accomplish measurable outcomes. SOMA gains community members as change agents, teams focused on local concerns and initiatives, and local talent.
  - ➢ Create a SOMA Senior Advisory Committee based upon successful established South Orange Senior Advisory Committee.

Priority Setting

- 26 Priority issues across 8 Domains of Livability were presented to the LSC in ballot format.
- Ranked each issue based upon 4 criteria:
  - Impact on most residents
  - Impact on seniors
  - Interest in working on this initiative
  - Meaningful progress in 3 years

Priority Setting

- For each of the four potential impacts on an issue, weighted averages were combined to create an overall ranking.
- Multiple weighting methodologies by impact were applied and 4 priority issues were selected to be included in the development of the action plan.

Priorities Identified

- Based upon the weighting methodologies & unweighted, top priorities were consistent.

Selected priorities for Action Plan development include:

1. Communication & Information
   - Recreation & Social Inclusion
2. Infrastructure
   - Improvements
   - Safety
3. Civic Participation
   - Volunteerism
   - Directory of Opportunities
4. Organizational Structure & Sustainability

Broadening the Coalition

- South Orange Seniors
- Jewish Community Housing Corporation
- JCC Metrowest
- Jewish Family Service
- JVS (Jewish Vocational Service)
- Jewish Federation
- Sage Eldercare
- Health Department
- Recreation Department
- Library
- Welfare
- Senior Share
- Winchester Gardens
- Maplewood Senior Coalition

Subcommittees

- Committee chair / co-chairs
  - ➢ 6-8 members
- 3-4 meetings/subcommittee
- Develop enough action items to enable short term accomplishments and long term sustainability of the initiative
  - ➢ Include high and low hanging fruit i.e. policy change and bench installation
  - ➢ Action items are modifiable
- Complete Action Plan Implementation Tool for each action item developed within the Priority
- Present to LSC

Communication & Information: Goals

1. Select an Age-Friendly Initiative Name & Develop Logo.
2. Develop a "two towns," comprehensive, age -friendly web page.
3. Compile and distribute (electronically / print) age-friendly monthly calendar.
4. Disseminate age-friendly information "through the pews.“

Infrastructure: Goals

1. Raise awareness of Civic Plus App (SO Connect) to ease residents reporting and follow-up of infrastructure complaints.
2. Ensure adequate public handicap parking - location and number of spaces.
3. Ensure adequate benches throughout both municipalities.
4. Refurbish Baird entry to be ADA compliant.
5. Improve Township-owned sidewalk and walking path conditions throughout both communities.
6. Improve lighting throughout the community
7. Paint house numbers on curbs for easy identification by police, fire and emergency response teams.

Civic Participation & Volunteerism : Goals

1. Increase engagement of adults 60+ on Township boards and committees.
2. Establish Maplewood Age-Friendly Advisory Committee.
3. Facilitate better communication between established South Orange Senior Advisory Committee and liaison to Township officials.
4. Establish a joint South Orange Maplewood Adults 60+ Advisory Committee.
5. Establish and/or increase formal and informal door to door neighbor awareness, focused on adults aged 60+ and isolated individuals.
6. Create Civic Participation Advertising Campaign.
7. Explore volunteer-based transportation opportunities.

Organizational Structure & Sustainability: Goals

1. Develop an initiative mission statement.
2. Develop an initiative narrative.
3. Hire an Age Friendly Project Coordinator.
4. Develop a project budget.
5. Define role and membership of newly established Management Committee of the Local Steering Committee.

SOMA

Two towns for all ages

Next Steps

- SOMA has committed to hire a P/T permanent employee to manage the Age-friendly initiative.
- 12 Resumes collected.
- Resumes to be vetted and interview process / hire to be completed by 3/1/2017.