

# Powering Livable Communities

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**Mark Hensley, MA**  
**Associate State Director, AARP NC Triad**  
**[mhensley@aarp.org](mailto:mhensley@aarp.org)**

# An Age-Friendly Community

...is a community in which people can grow up and grow old with ease

...is barrier-free, designed for diversity, and is inclusive and cohesive

...optimizes opportunities for overall well-being to enhance quality of life as people age

...designs and adapts their natural and built environment for residents of all ages and different capacities.

...meets the needs of people of all ages, whether someone is pushing a stroller or using a walker.

...allows people of all ages to participate in activities that keep the community healthy and encourage economic stability.

***An Age-Friendly Community is one where a community's elected leadership has committed to actively work with residents and local advocates to make their town, city, or county an age-friendly place to live through enrollment in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.***

**All communities seeking to enroll in the AARP age-friendly network are required to submit a membership application and commit to a 5-year process of improvement which includes:**

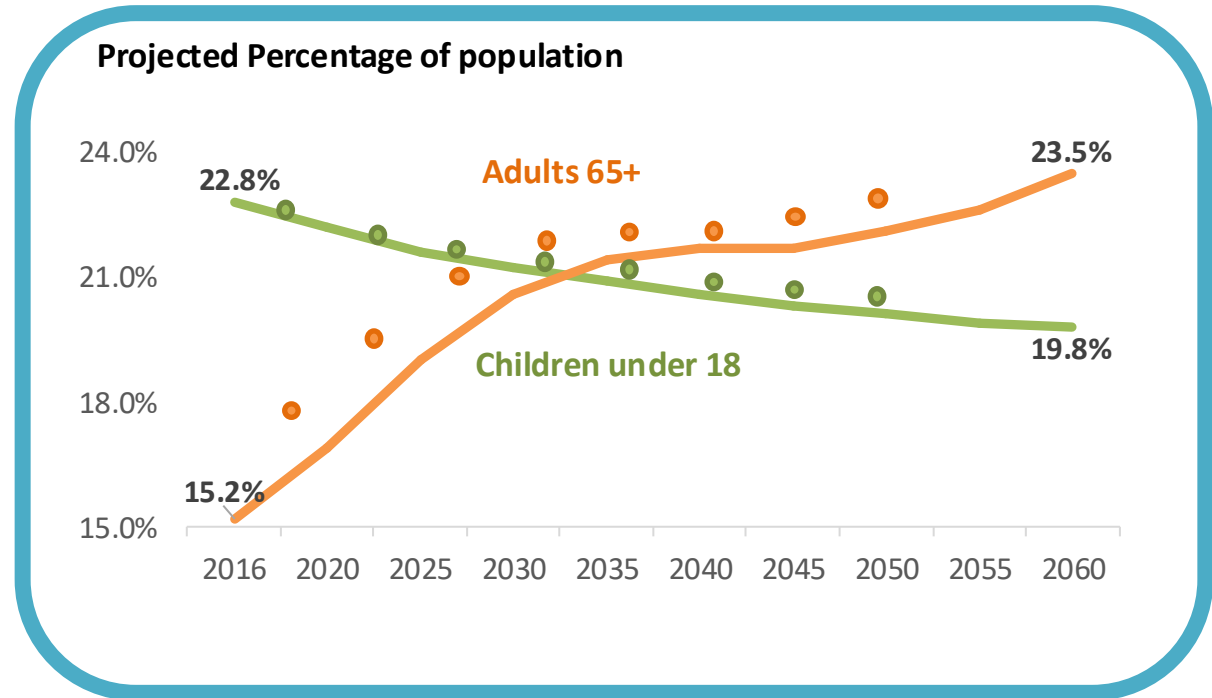
- conducting a community needs assessment
- developing an action and evaluation plan
- implementing and assessing the plan's impact
- *and* includes the voice of older residents in all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

**So Why A Livable  
Communities Focus?**



# For the first time in U.S. history, older people will outnumber children.

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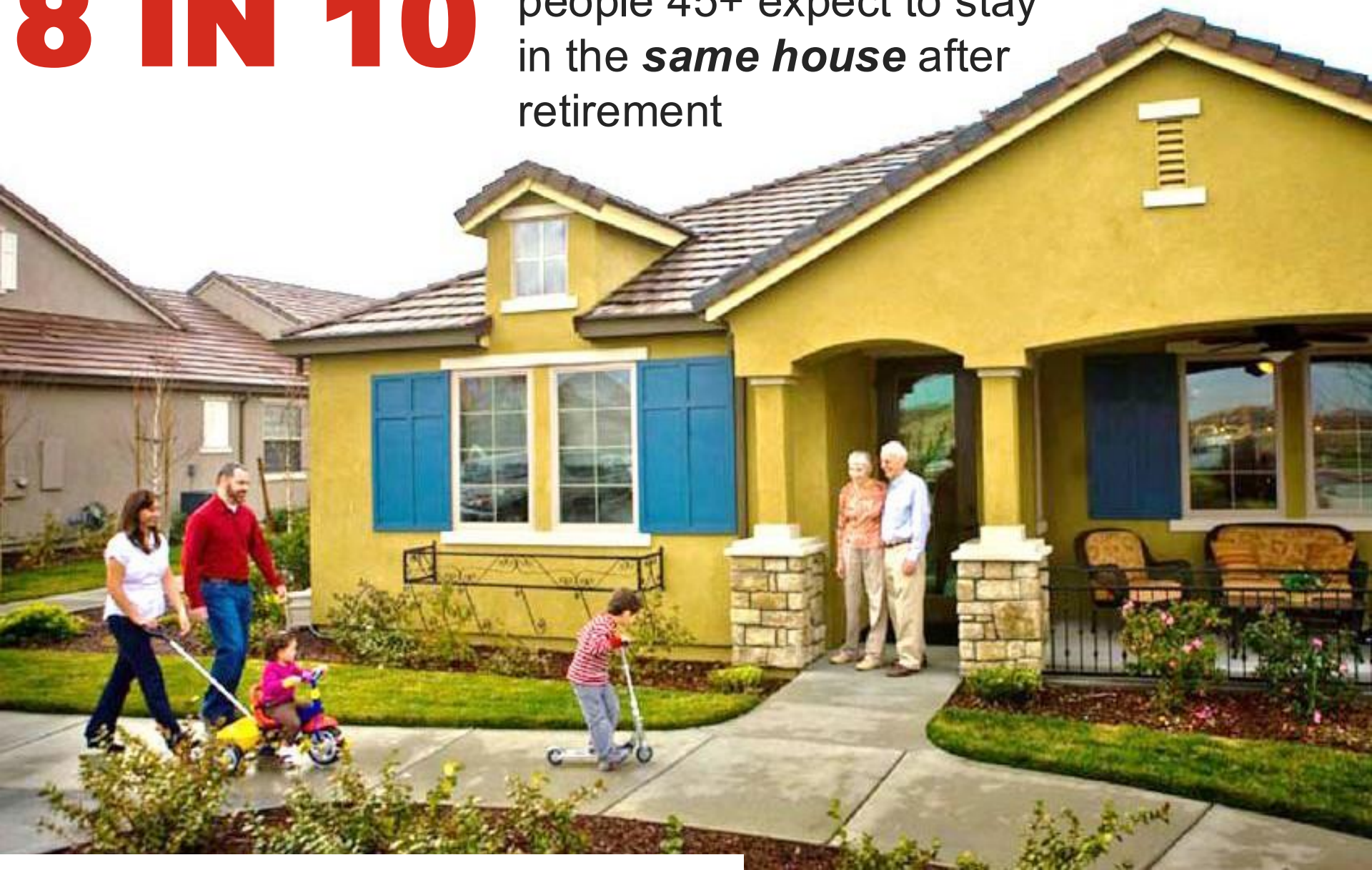


**Median age will increase from 38 today to 43 in**

**So What Do We Want?**

**WE WANT TO STAY WHERE WE ARE**

**8 IN 10** people 45+ expect to stay  
in the *same house* after  
retirement



# A PLACE WHERE ALL AGES CAN.....



**Go for a walk**



**Cross the streets**



**Ride a bike**



**Get around without a car**



**Live safely and comfortably**



**Work or volunteer**

# EMPLOYMENT IS IMPORTANT TO ALL

## OLDER WORKERS ARE ENTREPRENEURS



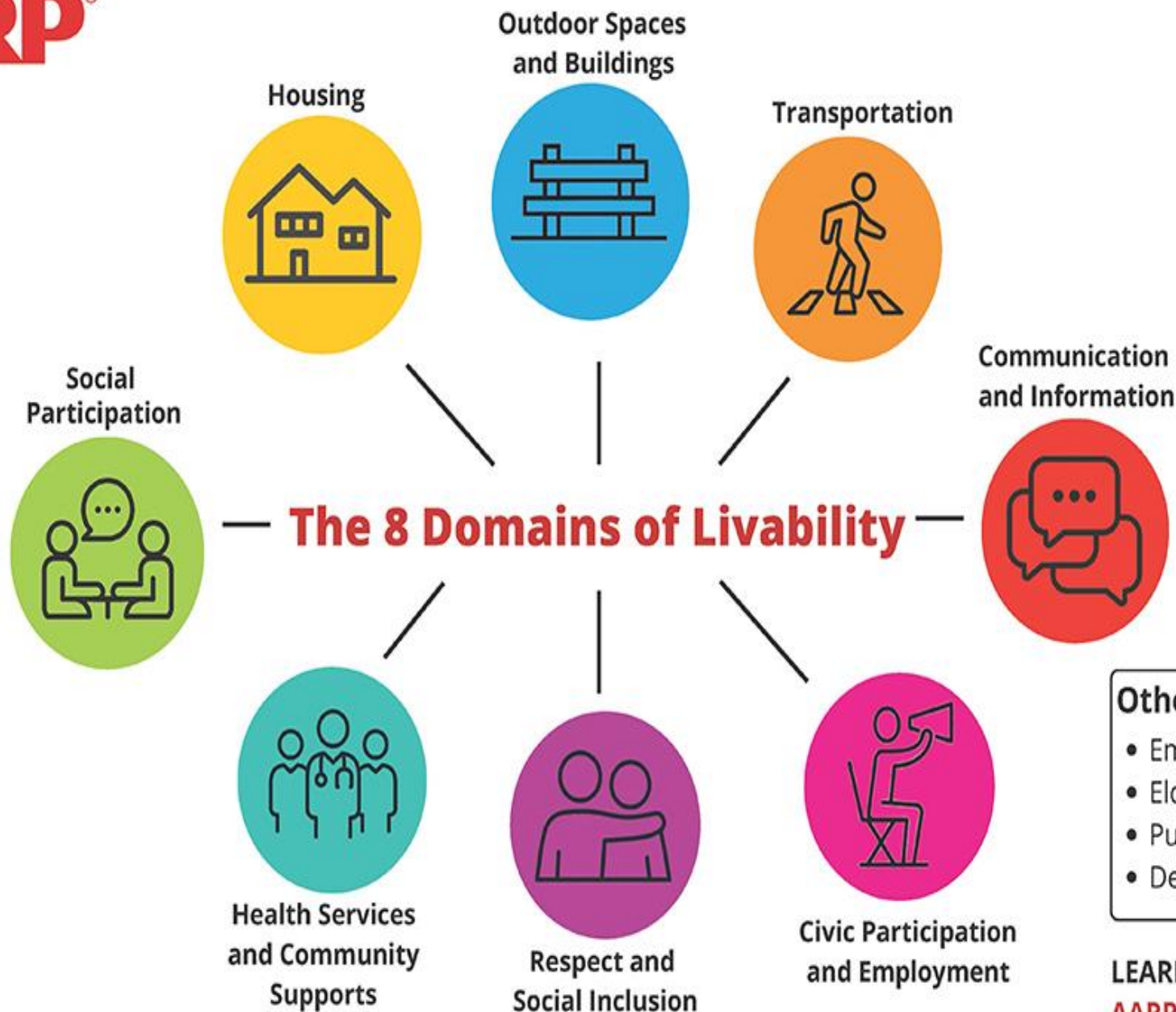
- From 2003 to 2013 people from ages 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 saw the highest increase in entrepreneurial activity of any age group.

## 50+ NORTH CAROLINIANS ARE AN ECONOMIC FORCE



- Responsible for \$189 billion in NC economic activity (40% of state GDP)
- Responsible for 2.6 million jobs (47%)
- Contribute to \$19.4 billion in NC taxes (47%)

**So What is the  
Focus of Livable  
Communities?**



## Other Areas

- Emergency Preparedness
- Elder abuse
- Public safety
- Dementia-friendly

**LEARN MORE**

**[AARP.org/Livable](https://www.aarp.org/Livable)**



# 1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

People need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.

## 2. Transportation

Pedestrians need sidewalks and safe, crossable streets. Dedicated bicycle lanes benefit non-drivers and drivers alike. Public transit options can range from large-scale (trains, buses, light rail) to small (taxis, shuttles, or ride-share services).





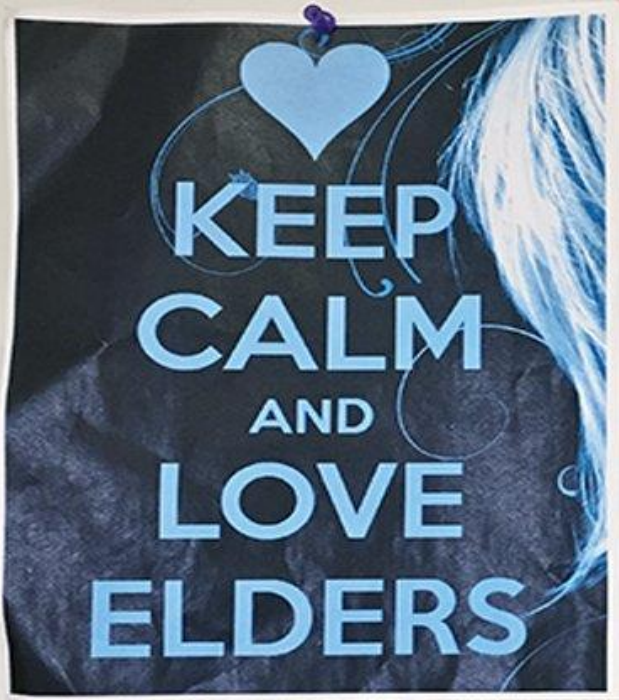
### 3. Housing

AARP surveys consistently find that the vast majority of older adults want to reside in their current home or community for as long as possible. Doing so *is* possible if a home is designed or modified for aging in place, or if a community has housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages, and life stages.

## 4. Social Participation

Regardless of a person's age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combated by having opportunities to socialize and the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities





## 5. Respect and Social Inclusion

Everyone wants to feel valued. Intergenerational gatherings and activities are a great way for young and older people to learn from one another, honor what each has to offer and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.

## 6. Work and Civic Engagement

Why does work need to be an all-or-nothing experience? An age-friendly community encourages older people to be actively engaged in community life and has opportunities for residents to work for pay or volunteer their skills.





## **7. Communication and Information**

**We now communicate in ways few could have imagined a decade ago. Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet.**

## 8. Community and Health Services

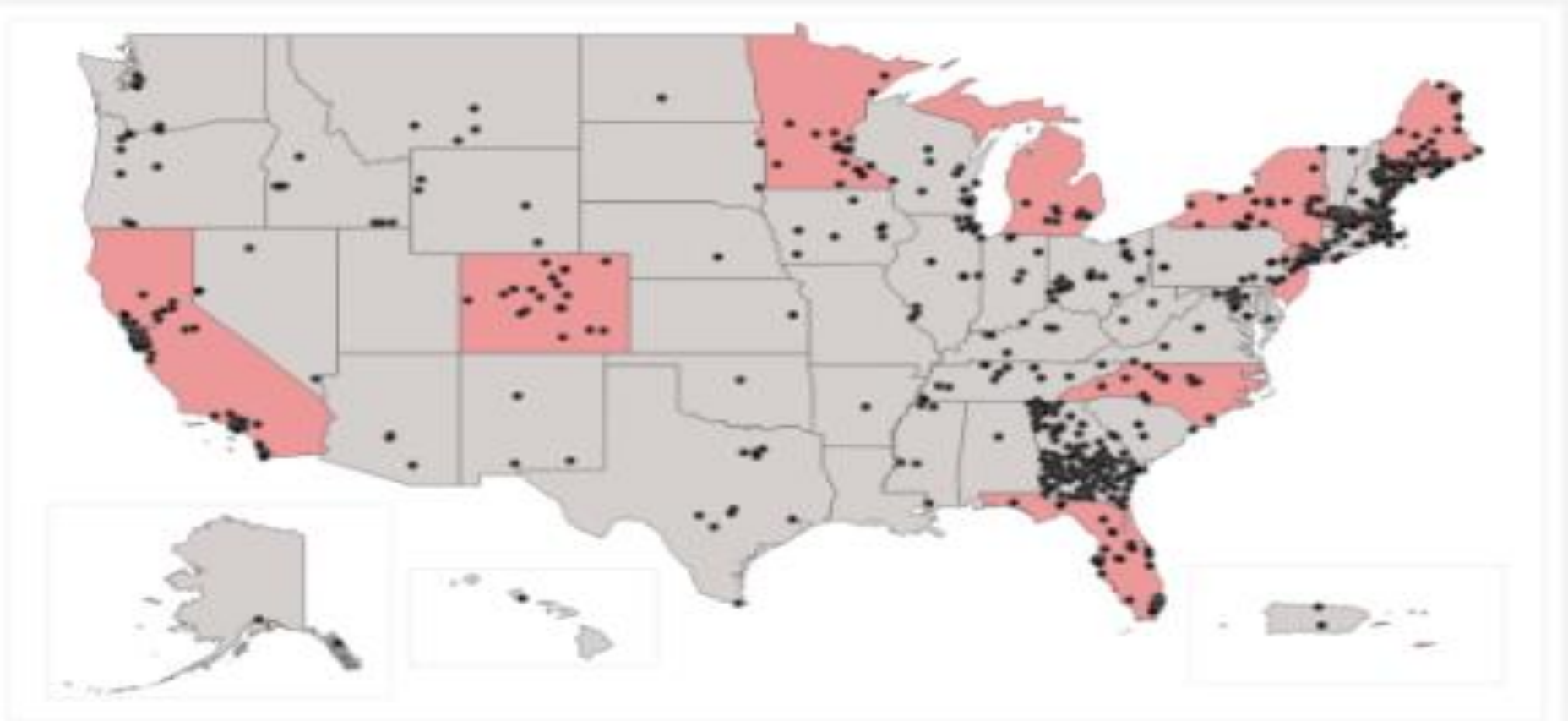
At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it's important that assistance and care be available nearby, it's essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.



# **What is the AARP Network of Age- Friendly Communities?**

# AARP AGE FRIENDLY NETWORK

Nearly 100 million people live in a town, city, county, territory or state that has enrolled in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.



*Updated March 2026*

**12 states, one territory, 984 communities nationwide  
— and counting!**

# Developing an Age-Friendly State or Community

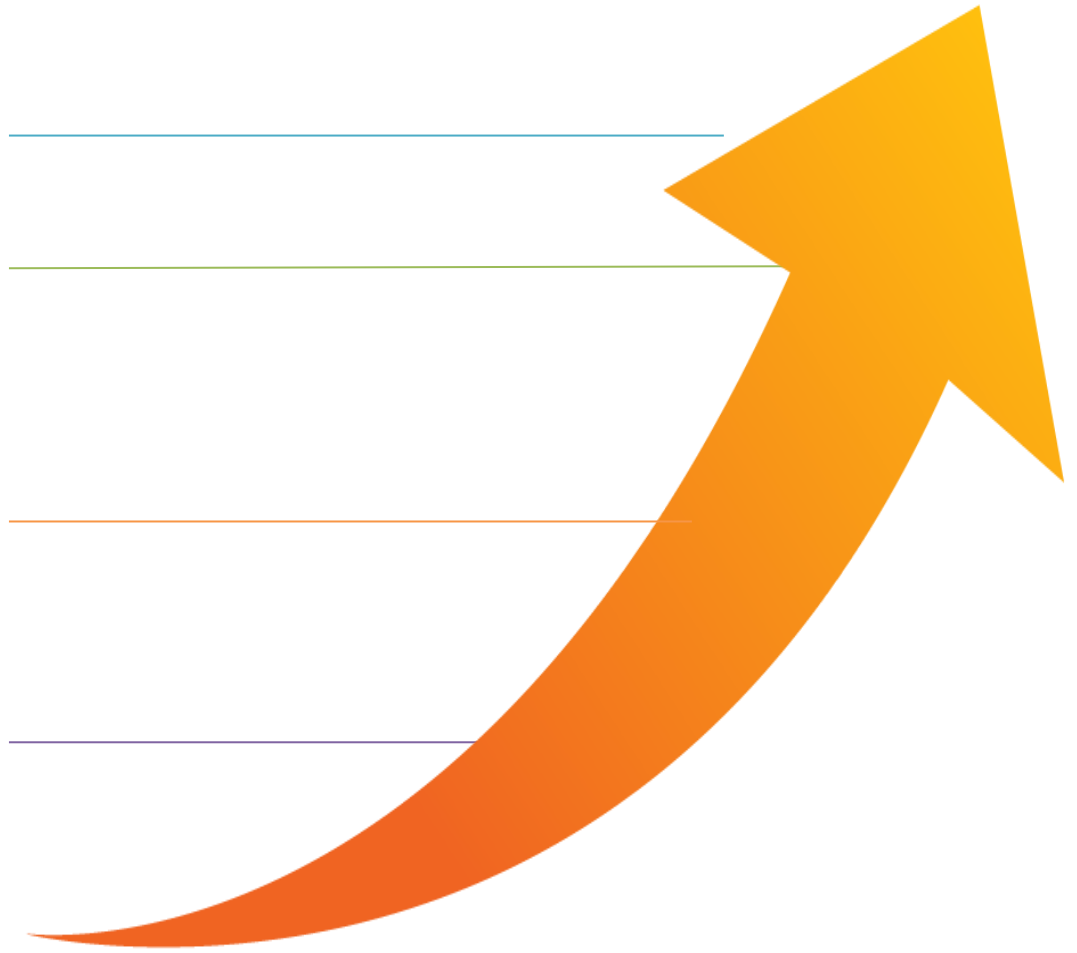
**Year 5+: Continuous Improvement**

**Years 5: Full Evaluation**

**Year 2-4: Implementation and Annual Update**

**Year 1: Assessment and Planning**

**Enrollment & Launch Survey**



# **Age My Way NC Survey: Key Findings**

- **People want to stay in their communities and not relocate**
- **People want to age in their own homes**
- **Individuals worry about when they won't be able to drive**
- **People worry about becoming socially isolated**
- **Employment for older and disabled adults is an important issue that needs to be addressed moving forward**

# Age-Friendly North Carolina

- > May 5, 2023 - Governor Roy Cooper Signs Executive Order to Highlight North Carolina's Commitment to Building an Age-Friendly State
- > Order directs the state to develop a comprehensive plan for aging, strengthen the caregiving workforce and enhance transportation options
- > 10th **AARP** Age-Friendly State in US.
- > NC is the 9<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state of people 65 and older.
- > Directs all State Departments to plan how they will address how they will respond to an ever-growing aging population and livability of all ages

# All Ages, All Stages NC

*A Roadmap for Aging and Living Well*

A **cross-sector, state-led strategic planning resource** that can help states transform the infrastructure and coordination of services for their rapidly aging population, as well as people with disabilities.

# All Ages, All Stages NC

A decorative graphic consisting of a series of colored dots in shades of green, teal, and blue, arranged in a curved, arc-like pattern that sweeps from the left towards the right, partially overlapping the text.

*A Roadmap for Aging and Living Well*

# Already Impacting Over 3.0 Million in NC

## COUNTIES:

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| BUNCOMBE COUNTY    | 2017 |
| DAVIE COUNTY       | 2024 |
| DURHAM COUNTY      | 2019 |
| FORSYTH COUNTY     | 2018 |
| GUILFORD COUNTY    | 2024 |
| LENOIR COUNTY      | 2020 |
| MECKLENBURG COUNTY | 2016 |
| NEW HANOVER COUNTY | 2024 |
| ORANGE COUNTY      | 2016 |
| ROCKINGHAM COUNTY  | 2023 |
| WAKE COUNTY        | 2016 |

## CITIES:

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| ARCHDALE       | 2019 |
| BREVARD        | 2024 |
| DURHAM         | 2019 |
| HENDERSONVILLE | 2024 |
| MOUNT AIRY     | 2020 |

## TOWNS:

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| CARY        | 2022 |
| JAMESTOWN   | 2021 |
| LELAND      | 2022 |
| MATTHEWS    | 2015 |
| WAKE FOREST | 2024 |

# AARP LIVABILITY INDEX

[Join](#)[Renew](#)[Membership & Benefits](#)[What We Do](#)[★ AARP Rewards](#)[Register](#)[Login](#) [Health](#) [Money](#) [Work & Jobs](#) [Social Security](#) [Medicare](#) [Caregiving](#) [Games](#) [Travel](#) [More...](#)[AARP EN ESPAÑOL](#)[Help](#) 

AARP LIVABILITY INDEX | GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS FOR ALL AGES

## How livable is your community?

The AARP Livability Index scores neighborhoods and communities across the U.S. for the services and amenities that impact you the most.

Explore your community today.

[Search](#)[Explore all communities >](#)

# Raleigh NC 27617

## Demographics

Total Population:

16,678

Black/African American: 14%

Asian American: 11%

Hispanic/Latino: 3%

White: 71%

American Indian/Alaska Native: <1%

Age 50+: 31%

Age 65+: 10%

% of the population with a disability: 8%

Life Expectancy: 82 years old

Households Without a Vehicle: 2%

Median Household Income: \$104,465

% of the population with income below poverty: 4%

Upward Mobility ⓘ : 95

## Climate

| 2022 Temperature | January | July | 2022 Avg. Precipitation | January | July |
|------------------|---------|------|-------------------------|---------|------|
| Lowest           | 28°     | 71°  |                         | 6"      | 6"   |
|                  | 88°     | 84°  |                         |         |      |

# Zip Code 27617

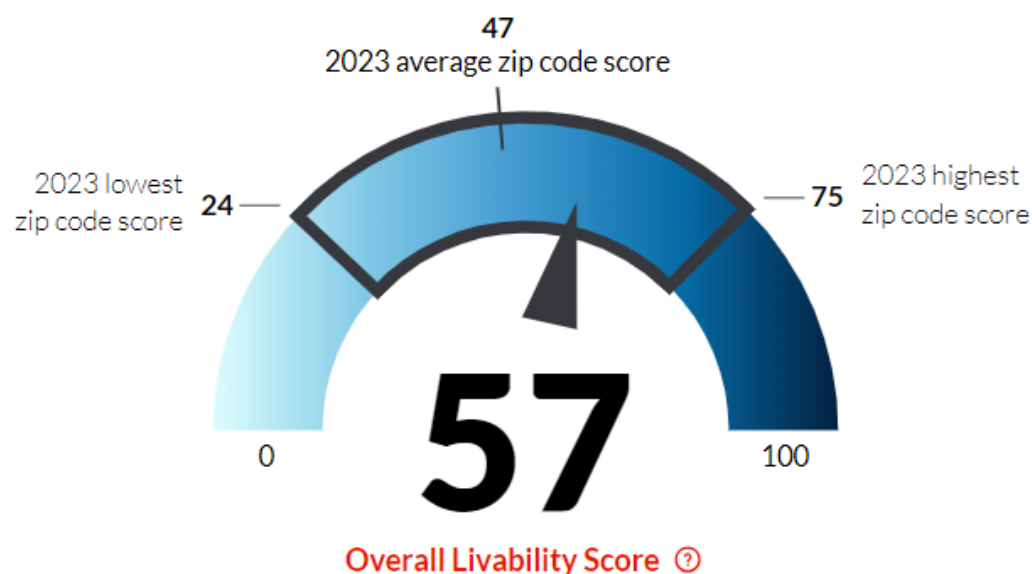
Community Level ⓘ : Zip Code

Location: [North Carolina](#) > [Wake County](#) > [Raleigh](#)

Population: **16,678**

[Print to PDF](#) 📄

[Share Score](#) ➦



The overall livability index score for **Zip Code 27617** is **57**.

This is in the **top half** of **communities** in the U.S.

Surprised by the score? Issues surrounding livable communities are complex and interconnected.

[Learn more about our methodology and the key factors of livability](#) >



## Housing ⓘ

Affordability and Access



[View Indicators ▼](#)



## Neighborhood ⓘ

Proximity and Security



[View Indicators ▼](#)



## Transportation ⓘ

Safety and Convenience



[View Indicators ▼](#)



## Environment ⓘ

Clean Air and Water



[View Indicators ▼](#)



## Environment ?

Clean Air and Water



[View Indicators](#) ▼



## Health ?

Prevention, Access and Quality



[View Indicators](#) ▼



## Engagement ?

Civic and Social Involvement



[View Indicators](#) ▼











## Opportunity ?

Inclusion and Possibilities



[View Indicators](#) ▼


[Hide Indicators ^](#)

| Indicators: Metrics                    | 2015 Value                       | Change   | 2023 Value & Measure             | Tertile   | 2023 Median Zip Code |
|--|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Zero-step entrances ⓘ                  |                                  |  | * 40.3% of units                 |    | 53.8%                |
| Availability of multi-family housing ⓘ | 53.1% of units are multi-family  |  | 57.5% of units are multi-family  |    | 8.6%                 |
| Housing costs ⓘ                        | \$1,550 per month                |  | \$1,645 per month                |    | \$847                |
| Housing cost burden ⓘ                  | 23.6% of income spent on housing |  | 18.0% of income spent on housing |    | 13.2%                |
| Availability of subsidized housing ⓘ   |                                  |  | 80.3 units per 10,000 people     |  | 39.0                 |

Key:



Getting Better



No Change



Getting Worse



Imputed Data

# AARP Livable Communities Library

[AARP.org/Livable](#) - [About](#) - [Age-Friendly Network](#) - [Community Challenge](#) - [Publications & Resources](#) - [Videos](#) - [Livability Index](#) - [Map](#) - [A-Z Topics](#)

## Order Free Publications from AARP Livable Communities

The following (free!) publications have been created to help community leaders and residents make where they live more livable for people of all ages.

Click on the titles below to learn more about a publication and to access its PDF download.

To order a printed edition:

- Use our [Online Order Form](#)\*
- If you're seeking multiple copies or want to make a bulk order, Email [Livable@AARP.org](mailto:Livable@AARP.org) with your Name, Mailing Address, Title and D-Number of the publication(s) you want, and the reason for your request
- To learn when new publications are available, subscribe to the free, weekly, award-winning [AARP Livable Communities e-Newsletter](#)

\* AARP will provide one copy of each title ordered. Allow up to four weeks for delivery.

## PLACE AN ORDER

Click on the image below to order free publications from AARP Livable Communities.



## FEATURED PUBLICATIONS



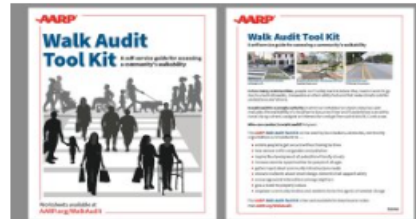
### Community Gardens

[Creating Community Gardens for](#)



### Disaster Resilience

[AARP Disaster Resilience Tool](#)



### Improving Walkability

[AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit \(D20381\)](#)



### Parks and Public Spaces

[Creating Parks and Public Spaces](#)



## Missing Middle Housing

What it is. Where it went. And why it's a needed housing option for people of all ages. Learn all of that and more in this 36-page, photo-filled guide.



## All About ADUs

Check out our free, photo-filled guides to Accessory Dwelling Units and how they expand housing options for people of all ages



## AARP HomeFit Guide

Learn how to make a house or apartment safe, comfortable and a great fit — for people of all ages. (Available in 5 languages.)



## Make Room

Filled with photos, infographics, ideas, solutions and floor plans, Making Room is a rallying cry for a wider menu of housing options



## Rural Livability

Learn how small towns and remote communities are working to become more livable for older adults and people of all ages



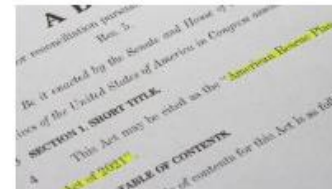
## Enabling Better Places

Small-scale land use and zoning changes can help communities revitalize and thrive. Learn how in this publication for local leaders and community advocates



## The Parks and Public Spaces Collection

One free guide from AARP — and others from the placemaking specialists of 80 Cities and Trust for Public Land



## The American Rescue Plan and Older Adults

The legislation is a once-in-a-generation funding opportunity to strengthen communities for the future



## The Handout

This downloadable graphic is available in two sizes in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese

# AARP Community Challenge

Our annual "quick-action" grant program funds local projects that help make communities more livable for people of all ages

The application period for the 2025 AARP Community Challenge is now closed. Click [here](#) for information about what happens next. Follow the links below to learn about the grant program's history and the achievements of past grantees.



## 2025 AARP COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

Application Deadline:  
Wednesday, March 5, 2025  
5 PM (ET) / 2 PM (PT)



Grants to make communities livable for people of all ages  
[aarp.org/CommunityChallenge](https://aarp.org/CommunityChallenge)



Pictured: Knight Creative Communities Institute  
2023 AARP Community Challenge Grantee (Tallahassee, Florida)

## AARP Livable Communities



### INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION FOR LOCAL LEADERS

Find articles and more by clicking the words "AARP LIVABLE COMMUNITIES" above the page title or tapping the button below!

[Visit AARP.org/Livable](https://aarp.org/Livable)

# Thank You!

May 16, 2025



**Mark Hensley, MA**  
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