Age-Friendly Montgomery County

Presentation:

Maryland Statewide Commission on Aging Summit

September 17, 2019

North Laurel Community Center

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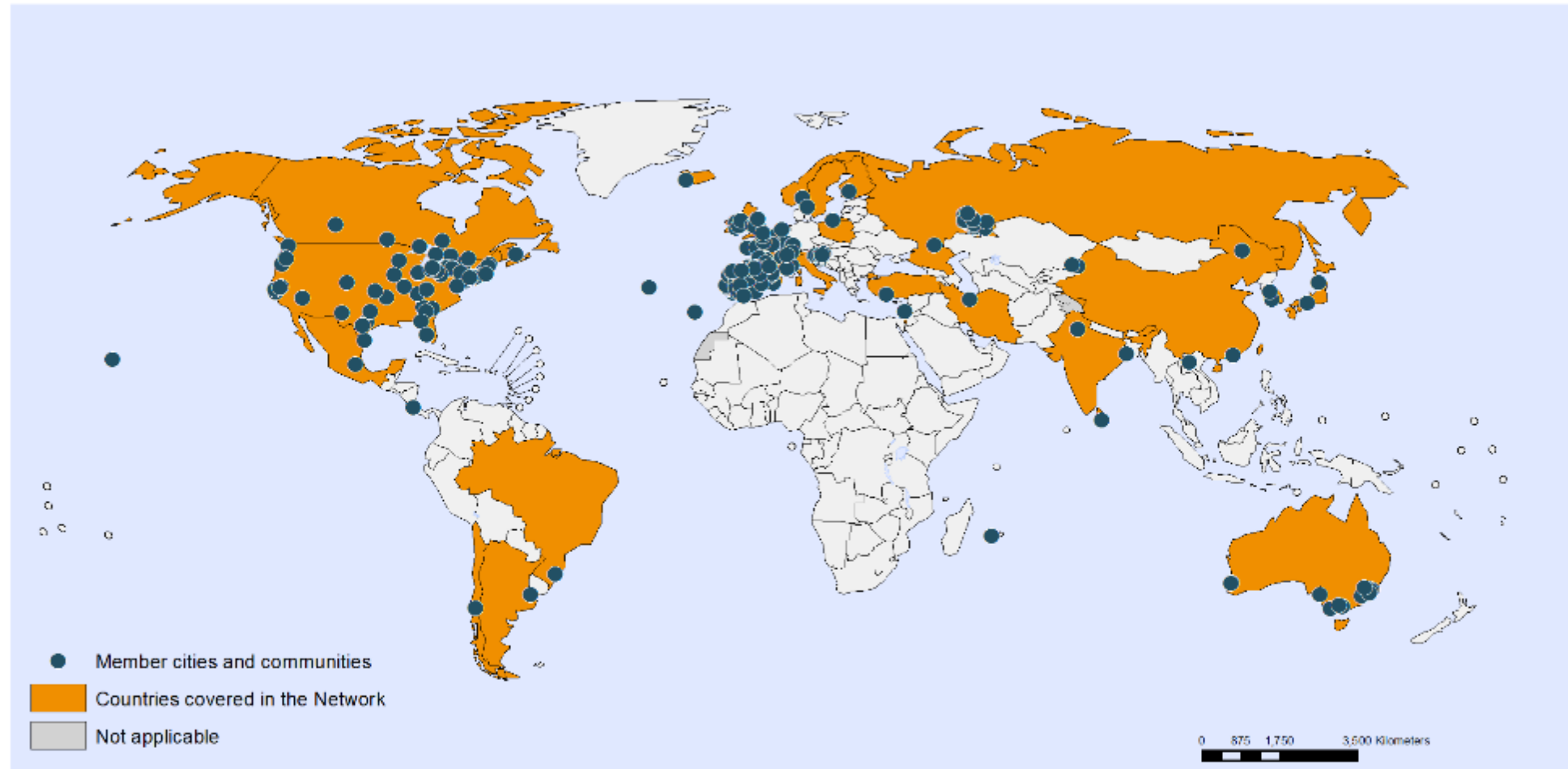
What is the WHO/AARP Age-Friendly Communities Program?

- A global initiative
- 20+ nations
- 180+ communities in the US
- **AARP** is the umbrella organization in the US.
- Encourages states, cities, towns and counties to prepare for the rapid aging of the U.S. population by paying increased attention to the environmental, economic and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults.

WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities

- ● Member cities and communities
- ▮ Countries covered in the Network
- ▯ Not applicable

0   875   1,750   3,500 Kilometers

Data Source: World Health Organization
Map Production: Health Statistics and
Information Systems (HSI)
World Health Organization

World Health Organization

Background/History

- **Long History of Support:** County Executive, County Council, Departments, and Commission on Aging.

- **Recognition of projected growth of older population**

- 2007: Strategic Planning Process initiated

- 2007: Strategic outreach and communication report commissioned: *"Imagining an Aging Future for Montgomery County" (Towson University)*

May 2008: County Executive Establishes "Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living"

Cross-County Initiative

- Data-driven performance
- Strategic governance
- Government transparency
- Culture and accountability

Members: Department Heads, Commission on Aging Chair

November 2008: First Summit on Aging
Staff, Community Partners, Commission on Aging, and Stakeholders

- Review accomplishments and identified needs in eight areas of focus

- Develop and Prioritize Recommendations/Goals

- Identify Cross-Cutting Issues

2008 Senior Summit

- **Work in 8 areas:**
  - Communication and Outreach
  - Housing and Zoning
  - Transportation and Mobility
  - Health and Wellness
  - Civic and Social Engagement
  - Home and Community Support Services
  - Safety
  - Employment
- **Outcomes:** Recommendations and Priorities in 8 work areas

2012: Adoption of Commission on Aging's Senior Agenda

Commitment to Older Adults

- Ageism
- Economic Benefit to County
- Diversity
- Communications
- Aging in Place and Community
- Partnerships

Approved: County Executive (May 2012) and County Council (December 2012)

2012: Commission on Aging Summer Study: Approaches for Aging in the Community

- Recommendation that Montgomery County join Age-Friendly Communities WHO/AARP
- Recommendation for this initiative to be led and staffed by Montgomery County Government

Summer 2015: Surveys and Focus Groups

- Online and paper surveys of residents 55+ in multiple languages

- Focus groups with older adults from diverse communities

- Results:
  - General appreciation for quality and availability of County services and programs
  - Need for improved communication so that more are aware of programs and services
  - Concern over cost of living, transportation, housing,

2015 MONTGOMERY COUNTY
AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SURVEY

Age Friendly Community Survey - 2015

Welcome

1 / 7   14%

Are you 55+ years old? **We'd like to hear your opinion about age friendliness in Montgomery County** so that we can make the County an even better place to live as we age.

Several years ago, we collected information from hundreds of County residents regarding services for seniors. Based on that feedback, we've been developing and promoting new transportation options, neighborhood villages, sports, fitness and dance programs, volunteer opportunities, housing options, educational programs, activities at senior and recreation centers, nutrition services, library programs, cultural outings, caregiver support and much more. You can learn about these services at: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/senior

This survey is anonymous and will take approximately 15 minutes. Thank you for your feedback and assistance in helping to achieve our shared goal of making Montgomery County a **"community for a lifetime."**

December 2015: Second Summit on Aging

- To celebrate of accomplishments since 2008
- To review recommendations from focus groups, County-wide survey of seniors, and stakeholders
- To restructure framework into 10 domains
- To prioritize for FY 17 and beyond
- To enroll in AARP's Age-Friendly Communities
- To enroll in Dementia Friendly America

COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S
Summit on Aging
December 3, 2015 | Silver Spring Civic Building
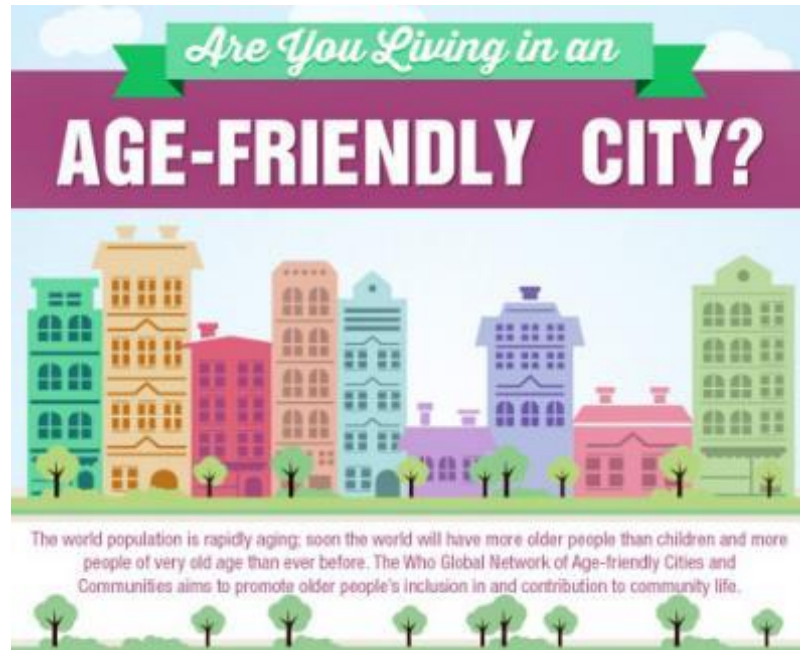
Age-Friendly Montgomery County
THE VISION

Montgomery County: a wonderfully diverse ***Community For a Lifetime***, *where all residents can remain and thrive as they age and be a powerful resource in making our County a better, stronger, more inclusive community for everyone.*

Supporting Steps Along the Way

- New Positions
  - Mobility Manager for Senior Transportation Program
  - Villages Coordinator
  - Caregiver Coordinator (and Dementia Friendly Coordinator)
  - Senior Olympics Position (Recreation Department)
  - Senior Fellows
    - Age-Friendly Montgomery County
    - Office of Housing and Community Affairs
    - 50+ Volunteer Network

Age-Friendly Communities have "Domains of Livability," improvements that influence the health and quality of life of older adults

**Montgomery County's
10 Age-Friendly Domains**

Domain 1: Civic and Social Involvement

Domain 2: Communication and Outreach

Domain 3: Employment

Domain 4: Elder Abuse Prevention

Domain 5: Health and Wellness

Domain 6: Home and Community Based Services

Domain 7: Housing

Domain 8: Planning, Open Spaces, Parks, and Community Buildings

Domain 9: Senior Public Safety

Domain 10: Transportation and Mobility

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Submitted to AARP
August 2018

Approved
October 2018

Valid until
October 2020

Age-Friendly Montgomery:
A Community for a Lifetime
A Three-Year Action Plan

Structure: Age-Friendly Montgomery

- **Age-Friendly Montgomery County Advisory Group** (Formerly "Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living")
  - Chairs: Director, Departments of Recreation and Health and Human Services
    Members: Department and community leaders, COA
- **10 Domain Work Groups**
  - Chairs: Acting Chief, Aging and Disability Services, DHHS
  - Co-Chairs for each domain : department and community leaders
- **Process:**
  - Quarterly meetings for reports, updates, education
  - Funding: resides in department program areas

Progress Report 2015-2018

Age-Friendly Progress Report

2015-1018

- Changing demographics
- Three-year growth in older resident population
    - 22,000 additional residents 60+
    - 4x faster than residents overall
    - Accounts for 60% of growth in County population
- Accomplishments
- Future Plans

Age-Friendly Montgomery
A Community for a Lifetime
"I'm inviting you to enjoy our County's resources and programs."
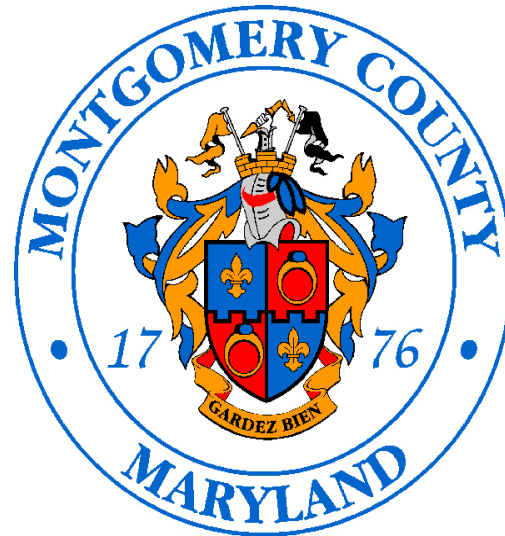County Executive Ike Leggett

Summary of Steps to Certification

- Senior Leadership Commitment to:
  - Outcomes from two Summits on Aging
  - COA Senior Agenda
  - Commission on Aging: Studies and Recommendations
  - COA recommendation for joining Age Friendly
- Determination of Vision, Domain Missions, Priorities. Action Steps
  - Review/Assessment of efforts and progress over years
  - Restructure areas of focus from 8 to 10 domains
  - Results of online/print surveys and listening sessions with older populations across county, including those in diverse communities
- Review, Assessment of Progress/Impact
- Ability to Refine, Adjust as Needed

Benefits of Age-Friendly Structure

- Results from 2018 Survey of Age-Friendly Members and Partners
  - Appreciation for Age-Friendly approach and structure
  - Increased knowledge of activities across domains
  - Increased ability for inter-group collaboration and cooperation

Challenges

- Need for:
  - Increased public awareness and understanding of County as an Age Friendly Community
  - Increased awareness of/access to County programs and services
  - Ability to communicate and serve all diverse groups and areas of County (and the 170+ languages spoken in County)
  - Increased participation from business community
  - Budget

Domains: Selected Activities and Accomplishments

Communications and Outreach

- Community outreach promoting programs and services

- Enhanced website and information products

- Increased publication translations

Domains: Selected Activities and Accomplishments

- **Civic and Social Involvement**

  - Launched 50+ Volunteer Network linking local organizations with skilled volunteers

  - Expanded technology training

  - Expanded social/educational programs for diverse older populations

  - Robust support for Village movement (25+ in County)

Domains: Selected Activities and Accomplishments
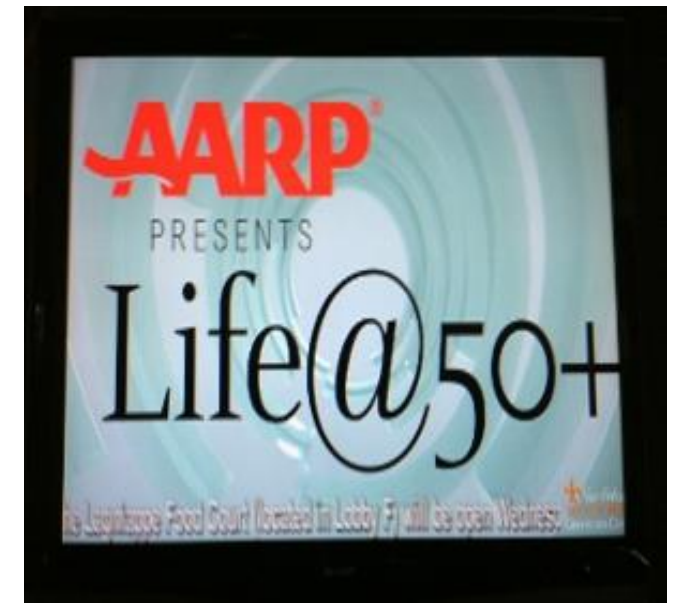
Elder Abuse Prevention

- Enhanced Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force

- Added Crimes Against Seniors and Vulnerable Adults Unit

- Increased successful prosecution of crimes

- Support for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

- Expanded outreach and education in diverse communities

Domains: Selected Activities and Accomplishments

Employment

- Continued 50+ Employment Expo

- Expanded outreach to community

- Supported first County workshop on ageism in employment

- Worked with local association to create first "Age-Friendly Employer" certification

Domains: Selected Activities and Accomplishments

Health and Wellness

- Multiple medication management and turnback events
- With Fire and Rescue, training emergency responders on medication management issues
- Expansion of 55+ recreation and health promotion activities
- Increased fall prevention programming
- New areas of focus:
  - mild cognitive impairment programs,
  - social isolation

DIET AND EXERCISE:

Choices Today for a Healthier Tomorrow

Eating a healthy diet and exercising often can help control or delay health issues associated with aging, like high blood pressure and diabetes.

Set short-term goals to achieve and maintain a healthy diet and exercise routine.

Domains: Selected Activities and Accomplishments

Housing

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Expanding affordable senior rental housing

- Initiating energy efficient program with Habitat for Humanity

- Certification program at Montgomery College for managers of senior residences

- Supporting Design for Life incentives

- Expanding property tax credit for older adults

- Piloting home sharing project

Domains: Selected Activities and Accomplishments

Planning, Open Spaces, Parks, and Community Buildings

- Builder Incentives-Accessible Park amenities
- Park Prescription program in partnership with physicians
- Priority: co-location for senior centers in multi-purpose spaces

Domains: Selected Activities and Accomplishments

- **Senior Public Safety**

  - Increased fire safety outreach and programming

  - Increased home safety program inspections

  - Increased community education on crime

  - Increased emergency planning outreach

  - Keeping Seniors Safe Program-outreach on safety issues

Domains: Selected Activities and Accomplishments

- **Transportation**
  - Increased free and reduced fare for bus services
  - Increase in wheelchair accessible transportation availability
  - Increased education : Connect-A-Ride transportation options
  - New on-demand FLEX program: minibuses in community

Where Are We Now?

Current Status-Planning for Recertification

- Review and comment cycle
- Reassessment by each domain
- Continued focus on cross-cutting areas of concern
    - Communication
    - Diversity
    - Housing
    - Transportation
    - A vibrant community for all ages

Emerging Areas of Increased Focus

- Intergenerational activities
- Social Isolation

Looking Forward

- Continued support and collaboration with our Commission on Aging, departments, and community partners

- Growth of community partnerships

- Expanded opportunities for cross-collaboration across Age-Friendly domains

- Support for other Maryland counties working to become Age-Friendly communities

- Support for Age-Friendly Maryland!

For More Information, Contact:

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