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Michael Festa
AARP MA State Director
1 Beacon Street, Suite 2301
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Mr. Festa:

The City of Newton wishes to join the AARP/World Health Organization's Age Friendly Cities Network.

Newton's 2010 population was 85,146, and 21% of residents were 60 and over. By 2030 the 60 and older population will be at least 30%. Newton is becoming more diverse. In 2010, less than 80% of our population was non-Hispanic compared to 95% in 1980. Asians represents the fastest-growing demographic.¹ We also have a large number of Russian speaking residents. Our over 65 population is higher than the state average. The need for planning is evident.

The AARP Network will help us further *Newton 2040* which is our overall long-term plan for Newton to be a sustainable community for all ages. *Newton 2040* is a planning and policy process designed to examine and improve multiple dimensions of life in our city. As part of this process, Newton has commissioned studies on demographics, housing, and transportation needs that include specific data on seniors. Future projects will address other dimensions such as community involvement. One of our early efforts, *Economic Growth for All*, will explore ways to help people prepare financially for retirement and how the city can support their efforts.

Membership in the AARP Network will support Newton's vision to be "... a Livable & Age Friendly Community for all who choose to live here."² We believe that making improvements in WHO's eight domains will enhance life for residents of every age.

For the past five years, the Newton Department of Senior Services (NDSS) and the Newton Council on Aging (NCOA) have been creating a foundation for an Age-friendly/Livable Newton through efforts that promote concepts of livability and which is consistent with and enhances the *Newton 2040* concept. Some of the NDSS and NCOA accomplishments to date are:

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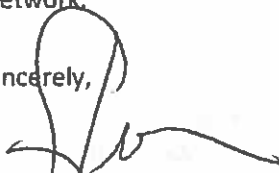
- Developed a shared NDSS/NCOA long-term Strategic Plan based on age-friendly/livable community concepts
- Sponsored the Living and Aging in Newton Survey of Adults 50+ (with UMASS Boston, Gerontology Institute)
- NCOA vote to support a housing development on city-owned property that will be good for people of all ages including seniors
- Developed Housing Criteria to guide decision-makers, developers and citizens on age-friendly housing
- NCOA Representative on Newton's Transportation Advisory Group
- Collaborations on Intergenerational Programs with Newton's schools and other agencies
- Formed the Age-friendly/Livable Strategy Group that represents the skills from WHO's eight domains.

As a participant in the Age Friendly Cities Network, the City of Newton commits to:

- Collaborate and integrate work among *Newton 2040*, Age-friendly/Livability efforts, and other endeavors locally, state-wide, and nationally;
- Determine a role for an ongoing, action-oriented Age-friendly/Livable Steering Group;
- Document existing initiatives on the eight domains among governmental, non-governmental agencies, and individuals;
- Document and categorizing existing data sets to inform our efforts and to determine what other data may be needed;
- Gather additional data where necessary to better understand senior and community needs, and wishes;
- Create an Action Plan with appropriate measurements;
- Regularly measure our progress over time.

We are excited to learn from and contribute to AARP/World Health Organization's Age Friendly Cities Network.

Sincerely,



Setti D. Warren, Mayor
Newton, Massachusetts

ⁱ Bluestone, Barry & Corley, Tracy A., May 2014. Demographic Trends and Housing in the City of Newton, Massachusetts, Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, Northeastern University, p. 1.

ⁱⁱ Newton Department of Senior Services and Newton Council on Aging. 2013. Strategic Plan.