



February 20, 2018

Ms. Rebecca Kelly, Director
AARP Tennessee
150 4th Avenue North
Suite 180
Nashville, TN 37219

Dear Ms. Kelly,

On behalf of the City of Knoxville, I would like to express our interest in becoming a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Cities. Throughout my professional life, I have advocated for strong, connected communities with engaged citizens. I believe that when you work with people to promote change from the grassroots level, the resulting change is more meaningful, impactful and long-lasting. As Mayor, I continue to advocate for a City that is the best place for *everyone* to live, work and play.

We currently have a number of initiatives already in place that make Knoxville a more Age- and Disability-Friendly City. Here are a few examples:

- Because almost half of Knoxvillians live within a quarter mile of a bus stop, Knoxville Area Transit (KAT) is working with our Engineering Department to ensure that transit stops are appropriately connected and accessible.
- We are a member of the Tennessee Complete Streets Consortium and, as such, we are looking into how to improve our street, sidewalk, transit and bike lane facilities so that all people can safely navigate around our city.
- The City Community Development Department's goal is to build visitable housing every time a new home is constructed with City funds.
- My Administration has committed significant City funds to ensure that we have more affordable and accessible rental housing in order to meet the growing need of seniors and people with disabilities.
- The Mayor's Council on Disability Issues (CODI) is an advisory body of 21 individuals who provide input on ways the City can be more accessible and inclusive of seniors and people with disabilities.
- The City Disability Services Office drives our efforts to renovate city buildings and review/update our policies to ensure that all are welcome and able to engage with their government, without regard to age or ability.

Having accessible transportation and affordable housing options are key factors for whether a person can remain independent and live in his or her community of choice. We also know when our housing and transportation options are strong, there are greater opportunities to obtain education and employment.

My Administration is committed to engaging Knoxville's citizens to determine what they would like to see as we move towards becoming a more age-friendly and livable community. I intend to establish a committee of City staff and community stakeholders who understand current initiatives and policies and who can help us move the needle to become truly age-friendly. Currently, CODI is conducting a study of what it will take to make Knoxville a Disability-Friendly City and are using the eight domains of livability to assess our status. Last year, the local Office on Aging conducted a Senior Needs Assessment. Both of these studies will help us set priorities as we strive to become an Age-Friendly City.

Knoxville is in a prime position to become a truly age-friendly city. I look forward to working with AARP of Tennessee and other community stakeholders as well as members of my staff to establish a team to create a strategy for Knoxville to become an Age-Friendly city. We are ready to make this happen in Knoxville!

Sincerely,



Madeline Rogero
Mayor