



HOPE HALLECK
CLERK TO THE
COUNTY BOARD

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April 4, 2018

Jim Dau, AARP Virginia State Director
707 E Main Street, Suite 910
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Dau:

The Arlington County Commission on Aging has come to a consensus that joining the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities and using the Network's "eight domains of livability" would offer an advantageous framework to update the 2006 Elder Readiness Plan and promote elements of livability. This decision is supported by the Department of Human Services Senior Leadership and the Aging and Disability Services Division.

The World Health Organization defines an "age-friendly city" as "an inclusive and accessible urban environment that promotes active ageing." AARP defines a "livable community" as one that is "safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and has supportive community features and services [that] allow residents to age in place; and foster residents' engagement in the community's civic, economic, and social life." Currently the AARP Network includes 201 communities (and counting). The County's Elder Readiness Implementation Plan, which reflects the recommendations of the Elder Readiness Task Force, is now almost 12 years old. It is time for a major strategic initiative to update the County's state of elder readiness and plan for coming years. We believe that joining the network and working with the framework of the age friendly communities will become the footprint moving forward on the update of the county plan to advance our progress on elder readiness.

While Arlington clearly already is an age-friendly community, we need a ready structure for a strategic plan moving forward. AARP offers such a structure, allowing communities to set their own goals and objectives. AARP also provides resources to assist in the implementation – access to a global network of participating communities, opportunities to partner with other jurisdictions, ability to conduct an "age-friendly survey," and public recognition of the community's commitment. Additionally, at the state level, the age-friendly/livability concept is written into the Four-Year State Plan on Aging Services of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). The Commonwealth Council on Aging supports the concept; and DARS has contracted with an organization (Just Partners, Inc.) to work with Virginia localities on age-friendly plans and implementation.

Our Commission on Aging will lead this effort in the County under the leadership of an operating committee composed of the former and existing Commission chairs who are all committed to bringing the county under the umbrella of the AARP Age Friendly Network.

We believe our relationships within the community will facilitate our process. These key elements will help to bring our efforts to fruition:

- Present and past Commission members will be the backbone of the effort, and several have committed to dedicate time.
- We will seek partnerships with one or more universities.
- We will involve and leverage non-profits serving older people.
- We will pull together a group that can have collective impact.
- We will proceed with a five-year planning process, as set out by AARP.

The timing is good because the Commission is currently planning its annual Community Engagement Forum, and can frame it in terms of the AARP Age-Friendly Community concept with its eight domains. It will begin our process moving forward to join these important communities in building age-friendly livable communities for our aging residents.

The Arlington County Board is pleased to support the application to join the AARP Age-Friendly Livable Communities Network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Cristol". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Katie Cristol
Chair, Arlington County Board