

Age-Friendly Englewood (NJ)

Action Plan

October 17, 2018

Executive Summary

The City of Englewood is, by any demographic, one of the most diverse cities in New Jersey. The City already hosts vibrant nonprofit organizations, extraordinary communities of faith, committed civic leaders and dedicated elected officials. Age-Friendly Englewood drew on these entities to form an "Age-Friendly Englewood Coalition" in early 2016 that has been working collaboratively across the entire Englewood community to assess infrastructure, amenities and services relevant to seniors; determine where there are gaps; and devise strategies to fill those gaps. The goal of the Age-Friendly Englewood program is to make Englewood an ideal community for older adults to age-in-place with dignity and independence and to enhance a community that is robust, inviting and welcoming to people of all ages.

A letter from Englewood Mayor Frank Huttie III and a Resolution from the City Council are attached.

Community Profile

Englewood is located in Eastern Bergen County, New Jersey, just 2 miles from the George Washington Bridge to Manhattan. It was founded in the 1600s by early Hudson River explorers, settled by the Dutch, and played a pivotal role in the Revolutionary War, when Washington's troops just barely evaded the British at what is now Liberty Pole and Liberty School. Significant expansion occurred following completion of the railroad in 1859, making the community a haven for Wall Street magnates. The city is a suburban community with a thriving Downtown anchored by City Hall, many restaurants and BergenPAC, a major performance venue. The Master Plan cites issues with traffic, parking and sidewalks that affect transit in, out and around the City.

Demographic Data

The population of 29,112 (US Census Quick Facts 2017 estimate), includes 15.9% (4,628) age 65 or older.

Comprised of 4.9 square miles, the city is organized into four Wards corresponding roughly with the crossroads of Grand Ave./Engle St. (N/S) and Palisades Ave (E/W). Two major highways, I-95 and State Rte 4, run through the City on its southern side.

Ethnically, racially and culturally diverse, Englewood's population is 44.3% White, 30.4% Black and 12.3% Asian; 23.4% are of Hispanic or Latino origin and 32.9% are foreign born. The Black population is declining by around 20% while the Hispanic population has grown by 25%. Koreans are the largest Asian group, with a 60% increase between 2000-2010. (US Census 2010)

91.1% of Englewood residents have graduated from high school, and 47.3% have a Bachelor's degree or higher.

In 2017 the city had 10,673 housing units, with approximately 55% owning and 45% renting. 27% of residents live alone with most of these over age 65. This age group increased by 20% between 2000-2010. (US Census 2010).

Median household income is \$77,272 but Englewood has a higher poverty rate (11.3%) and lower median household income than 51 of Bergen County's 70 towns. Income varies greatly. In the 4th Ward (south-west sector), house values average \$350,000 and household income \$58,000, but in the 1st Ward (north-east sector), house values average \$1 million and household income \$134,000.

Age-Friendly Features

Downtown Englewood is a vibrant with many shops and restaurants. Homes are in good repair, and property values remain strong. Most residential areas are considered walkable, however, improvements are needed to enhance pedestrian safety. Englewood is close to major highways, and several bus lines serve the Englewood, making access to the abundant cultural and entertainment features of New York City fairly easy. Englewood boasts a wide variety of housing stock at various price points, however, there is always a need for additional affordable housing. Englewood is home to a major regional hospital (Englewood Health – a.k.a Englewood Hospital) and features easy access to doctors and other health-related resources. The City's Public Library and Southeast Senior Center offer myriad programs of interest to the aging population at little or no cost, and several nonprofit organizations provide services to people of all ages. Englewood has numerous opportunities for physical activity at gyms, senior centers and recreation facilities. Social and civic organizations provide opportunities for socialization and volunteering, and BergenPAC, the performing arts center, provides free tickets to clients of nonprofit organizations. The Englewood Housing Authority operates one senior facility with 152 units and another multi-family project with 9 units for seniors. There is one major supermarket in the center of town and several smaller markets throughout the City.

The city boasts 15 parks which are well utilized by people of all ages.

Introduction to the Plan

Mission:

Age-Friendly Englewood is a partnership between community organizations and the City of Englewood that aims to maximize the social, physical and economic participation of older adults so they may age in place with dignity and independence.

Values/Guiding Principles

- View an aging population as a community asset
- Treat aging as a normal development stage
- Involve older people in problem identification and resolution
- Engage all sectors – public, private, business, etc.

- Recognize and embrace the diversity of Englewood's older population
- Provide ways for residents to come together across boundaries of geography, race, religion and age.
- Build upon existing resources and activities

Who was involved in development of the plan:

Planning Committee

Early in the development phase we engaged leaders of nonprofit organizations, City agencies, civic organizations and houses of worship that span the broad demographics of Englewood. Participants in the planning phase included representatives of the following organizations: City of Englewood (Mayor, City Manager, Council), Arts for Life, Bergen Family Center, Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative, Center for Food Action, Community Baptist Church, Community Chest, Englewood Hospital, Flat Rock Brook Nature Center, Jewish Family Service, JCC on the Palisades, Office of Concern, Police and Fire Depts, Rebuilding Together, Rotary Club, St. Paul's Church, Vantage Health System, Visiting Homemaker Service, Volunteer Center, Women's Rights Info Center, and SESCIL (fiscal agent).

Key decisions are made by the Steering Committee, which is comprised of leaders of the following organizations: Ahavath Torah Congregation, Bergen Family Center, Bergen Volunteer Center, Center for Food Action, City Manager, Community Chest, Age-Friendly Englewood Coordinator & Assistant Coordinator, Englewood Housing Authority, Flat Rock Brook Nature Center, Mayor, Southeast Senior Center, Vantage Health

How did you include older adults/diversity of the community?

In our early stages of planning we held three focus groups that were open to the public and held in a Jewish synagogue, African-American church, and the public library. We also held workshops on home safety and Medicare, and we captured the names and contact information of all older adults who attended. We then enlisted them on committees as we developed our plan. Realizing that we lacked input from the Hispanic/Latino population, we intentionally held a focus group for this population at a Colombian restaurant; 20 eager and older adults attended and actively participated. We continue to add more older adults from all segments of the community to our committees and to our email lists as our plan and our work evolve.

Synopsis of learnings from the community assessment

How the assessment was conducted

During the winter/spring of 2016 we administered a comprehensive survey (adapted from AARP's Age-Friendly Community Survey) both on paper and online; we received a total of 329 surveys (nearly 7% of the senior population). We also conducted three focus groups and held individual one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders in Englewood – government agency leaders, elected officials, nonprofit leaders, civic leaders, etc.

Demographics of the residents who participated in the surveys, etc:

Residents represented all four Wards of the City of participation rates ranging from 17% to 26%. 33% of respondents were African-American, 57% Caucasian and 10% Hispanic/Latino. 67% were female; 33% male. 50% age 60-70; 36% age 71-80, 10% age 81-90; 4% over age 90. 9% did not finish high school; 16% graduated from high school; 19% have a college degree, and 33% have a graduate or professional degree. Representation was equal among income level

Key Learnings that impact plan development – identified needs

Information about available resources – online, print, flyers, etc.

95% of older adults want to live independently as they age.

More affordable and low-income housing

Information about low-cost home repairs

Increased pedestrian safety is needed – countdown lights, well-marked crossings, speed regulations enforced

Information about available transportation options

Accessible, convenient and affordable public transportation; also need options for when they no longer drive

Affordable fitness activities

Help with accessing and navigating services

Social isolation affects approximately 37%, who have few or no friends or family nearby

Older adults want ways to come together across boundaries of geography, race, religion and age.

Reach out and welcome older adults into civic life

Need for assistance with technology (81% use a computer or smart phone, but 19% do not use a computer at all)

Who will manage implementation of the plan?

The Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator are working with members of the Steering Committee to implement the plan.

Other information

AARP Livability Score: 55

Englewood ranks low in “housing” because homes/apartments are expensive, due largely to our close proximity to New York City. Englewood also ranks relatively low in environmental factors, due to air and water quality – again because of our location in a major metropolitan area. Civic engagement is low (35.3% voted; 55.6% is national median)

Domain-Specific Action Plans

See attachments:

Plan of Work update July 2018

Comprehensive Plan of Work for 2018-19

Age-Friendly Englewood

Update – July 2018

Plan of Work – 2017-2019

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Priority Domain: HOUSING

Promote & expand programs that support affordable property maintenance and home repair

- Home Safety programs
- Explore home sharing
- Advocate for low-income senior housing
- Educate residents about property tax relief & property tax freeze
- Promote programs that provide financial assistance for housing & utilities

Collaborating Organizations Bergen Volunteer Center (Chore Service); Rebuilding Together; Habitat for Humanity; Jewish Home/Safely@Home; Habitat for Humanity; AARP (passive); Bergen County Community Action; Center for Food Action; PSEG; Women's Rights Information Center; Englewood Construction Code Compliance; Planning Board; City Council; Mayor; Englewood Tax Office

Updates: **Year 3 in BOLD**

Hosted Housing Options conference May 2017 – 140 registered/105 attended (bad weather)
Provided info about all topics.

Will present additional programs on these topics in Year 3

Priority Domain: OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

Promote and advocate for improved public amenities

- Audit existing parks, sidewalks & crossings
- Explore the concept of "complete streets," designed to be safe for all modes of transportation, including walking.

Collaborating Organizations: Mayor; Englewood Department of Public Works; City Engineer; Volunteer sidewalk & street assessors; Coalition Partners

Working with City Engineer to advocate for more benches

Conducted Walkability Study May 2018. **Report to be shared with City etc.**

Developing Public Arts project with several collaborating organizations and artists

Priority Domain: TRANSPORTATION

Improve/Enhance network of transportation options to increase mobility of older adults and provide access to a broad range of activities

- Provide education about available public transportation
- Explore alternative transportation Services
- Improve the safety of older adult drivers

Collaborating Organizations NJ Transit, B.C. Community Transportation; EZ-Ride; Independent Travel Network (ITN), Englewood Economic Development Corp.; Mayor/Council/City Manager; Uber/Lyft; GoGoGrantparent; SESCIL, JCC, Flat Rock Brook; Actors' Fund Home, Board of Education (buses), Dwight-Englewood School, Houses of Worship (buses); AAA, Jewish Home at Home, AARP

Hosted Transportation Options conference Sept. 2018 attended by 100 Developed & circulated chart of various transportation options; included in Directory

- Promoted GoGoGrandparent, Ryde4Life & B.C. Community Transportation
- Promoted driver safety programs
- Promoted Economic Benefits Checkup

Continue ALL in Yr 3

Priority Domain: COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR HEALTH SERVICES

Goal: Promote & provide access to available health & social services
Provide health-related informational and vaccination programs

- Promote the broad range of accessible and affordable fitness activities
- Distribute refrigerator magnet with pocket to contain critical personal information to 1,000 older adult residents of Englewood

Collaborating Organizations: Department of Health, Englewood Hospital, "Disease" organizations, Coalition Partner organizations providing Health-related and/or fitness activities; Police/Fire/EMS; Houses of Worship.

Promote & continue to promote info about wide variety of health-related & fitness programs.

Promote & continue to promote info about Caregiver support groups in Yr 3

Advocate for EHMC to open Urgent Care center in central business district

Priority Domain: CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT

Goal: Successfully integrate older adult residents of Englewood into the life of the community

- Encourage businesses to adopt age-friendly practices that attract and retain older adults as customers and potential employees
- Engage older adults in civic life of the community
- Assure sustainability of Age-Friendly Englewood

Collaborating Organizations: Chamber of Commerce, EEDC (Englewood Economic Development Corp.); Mayor/Council/City Manager; Volunteer Center, nonprofit organizations, agencies of City government, Coalition partners, Houses of worship

Promote & continue to promote Age-Friendly Businesses with SID. Visit businesses and provide Checklist. Certify as "Age-Friendly"

Advocate creation of Senior Advisory Council

Promote volunteering through Volunteer Center

Promote employment opps for older adults

Continue to Consult with other towns to become Age-Friendly

Priority Domain: SOCIAL PARTICIPATION & INCLUSION

Goal: Promote and ensure access to a range of activities that integrate older adults into the life of the community

- Increase Number of Older Adults participating in existing activities
- Reach out to Isolated Older Adults
- Help older adults understand options in retirement
- Promote intergeneration programs that bring all ages together.

Collaborating Organizations: Numerous Coalition Partners offering activities, Dept. of Health, DPW, Bergen PAC, Recreation, CofC, EEDC, Houses of Worship; Housing complexes; Providers of Meals on Wheels; High Schools/students; Mayor, City Manager; Police/Fire/EMS; Village to Village Network

Promote & continue to promote existing activities

Promote technology opps

Partnered with BergenPAC to promote Older Americans Month 5/2018. **Will repeat in Yr. 3**

Hosted breakfast for local clergy on 7/10/18, attended by 13. **Will follow up in Yr. 3**

Hosted Latino focus group on 6/13/18 attended by 18 older adults. **Will follow up in Yr. 3.**

Community celebration of Milestone Birthdays and/or arts project

Develop & Promote intergenerational programs with schools, scouts, etc. in Yr. 3

Develop & Promote technology sessions for older adults

Priority Domain – COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION

Goal: Improve access to information about programs and services

- Utilize effective Communications Strategies across all activities as needed
- Utilize existing resources to promote Age-Friendly programs and services (city website, DPW calendar, Div. of Senior Services materials, AARP)
- Increase access to information (technology, reach out to caregivers)

Collaborating Organizations: Coalition Partners, Local Media, 2-1-1, City Communications manager; Bergen County Caregiver Coalition.

Prepare materials for Englewood to become designated as an **Age-Friendly City** by AARP and the World Health Organization. Process has been streamlined to accommodate work already done. Requires letter from Mayor, which Mayor Huttie has said he will provide

Continue communication initiatives

- **Montly E-news sent to 900+ email addresses**
- **website updates**
- **Facebook posts & ads (now up to 415 “likes” and 35,540 people reached through ads)**
- **Timely and relevant press releases**
- **Inform/ engage older adults residents of Englewood through blast emails about activities & events**
- **Update, print and distribute 2nd edition of Guide to Older Adult Services (2,000 distributed in March 2018)**
- **Create Database from entries in Directory**
- **Survey older adults about knowledge and effectiveness of Age-Friendly Englewood**
- **Include AFE blurbs in DPW calendar**
- **Provide articles for “My Englewood” newsletter**