



# Age-Friendly Colorado Springs Five-Year Progress Report





**Innovations in Aging Collaborative**

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# Letter from Mayor John Suthers



In March 2016, I was proud to announce the designation of Colorado Springs as an AARP Age-Friendly City. Being Age-Friendly is a dynamic commitment that we have proudly maintained and built on over the last few years. The Innovations in Aging Collaborative has spearheaded this initiative through the convening of leadership in business and government across the city.

Over 100 community members, experts, and professionals worked for six weeks to create the initial Age-Friendly Colorado Springs Report and Action Plan for 2015-2020. The over 150 action items in the plan served as a map to a better future for aging in our community. Innovations in Aging has worked on behalf community members to implement the initiatives outlined in that plan.

Initiatives that support older adults create sustainable change that will provide value for all community members for years to come. This report recognizes the remarkable progress we have made as a city, and it is a testament to the innovative solutions that will be realized in the next Age-Friendly cycle. We are one of the fastest-growing cities in the country, and if we want to capitalize on our growth, Colorado Springs needs to be a welcoming community at all stages of the aging process. Being a great place to live means more than having attractive features for new residents; it requires a framework of support for those residents that allows them to still call Colorado Springs home 50 years from now. In the wake of COVID-19, it is more important than ever that we challenge ourselves to continuously improve and develop as a community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Suthers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

John Suthers  
Mayor of the City of Colorado Springs



## Letter from Executive Director Claire Anderson



Greetings! It's hard to believe that it has been five years since we first began our Age-Friendly work at the end of 2015. This project has been a real labor of love since then, and we are proud of the large number of accomplishments that we have celebrated since we launched this initiative! We want to thank each and every community member who has lent their voice, ideas and support to the Age-Friendly initiative over the past five years. This is truly a community-based effort, and it would not have been as successful without the high number of residents, experts, professionals, and concerned citizens who helped is along the way.

Many thanks to our Program Associate, Leo Brasuel, for his significant contributions to this final progress update, as well as our Program Associates from the past few years, Emma Schiestl, Teelin Lucero, Natasha Riveron, Rachael Maxwell, and Mikaela Burns, who worked diligently to help implement action items and track our progress. A huge thank you goes out to our numerous community partners, without whom none of our accomplishments would be possible. Over the past few years, a number of working groups met regularly to help implement the plan, and we thank them for their continual dedication to this project, especially those domain chairs, David Lord, Gail Nehls, Mary Swantek and Paula Pollet. Finally, thank you to the Innovations in Aging Collaborative Board of Directors and the Age-Friendly Colorado Springs Committee for their guidance and dedication in moving the project forward.

Looking forward, Innovations in Aging Collaborative plans to begin a new county-wide five-year cycle of Age-Friendly at the beginning of 2021, which will work to continue making Colorado Springs and El Paso County a livable community for people of all ages, abilities and mobilities. We are proud and excited to present these results to the community, and we look forward to the next five years of being Age-Friendly in the Pikes Peak Region!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Claire E. Anderson". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Claire Anderson

# Acknowledgments

We begin aging the moment we are born, so it is only logical that we should want to secure a future in which we can thrive, year after year. Through this wide-ranging community initiative, we have found that we are not alone in this belief. Completing the work of the Age-Friendly Colorado Springs Report and Action Plan involved dedicated effort by hundreds of community members. This Final Progress Update would not be where it is today without the support of these individuals. We thank them for helping us make Colorado Springs a remarkable place to age for people of all ages, abilities and mobilities.

Thank you to Mayor Suthers and members of the Colorado Springs City Council and the Colorado Springs Commission on Aging for their support and dedication to Age-Friendly Colorado Springs. Thank you to the staff at AARP Colorado and National AARP for their support of this initiative. Thank you to a number of staff from the City of Colorado Springs for always helping us get the data we needed and for providing support, connections and opportunities for collaboration!

We also want to extend our gratitude to the local market research firm Elevated Insights for helping us develop and inform our vision. With their help, we've been able to gain a greater insight of community needs and design our initiatives accordingly.

## History of Age-Friendly Colorado Springs

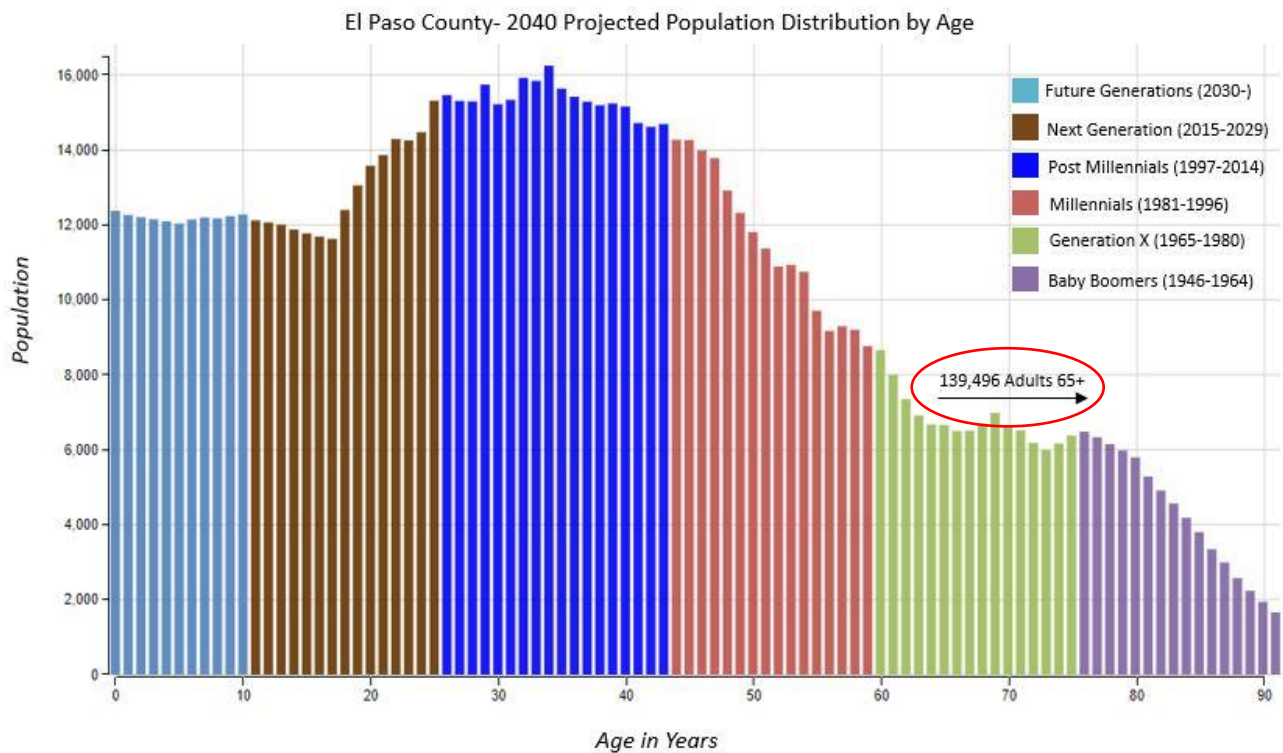
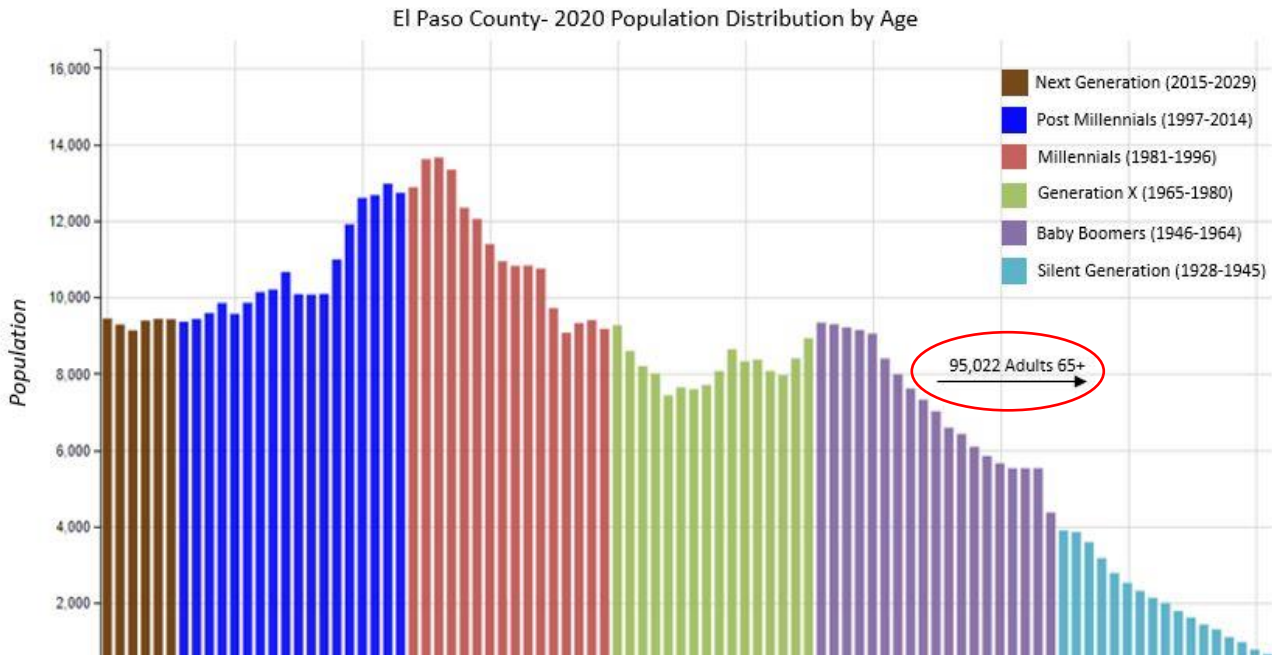
The Innovations in Aging Collaborative (IIAC) was formed in 2009 by Barbara Yalich and BJ Scott, with the belief that our community had great potential to improve the ways in which we support our aging population. Our early initiatives focused on building a local dialogue around aging at a series of summits. The community conversations reflected on our preparedness for supporting a looming demographic shift as the Baby Boomer generation reaches retirement. We heard genuine appreciation for existing resources, but we also started to identify specific community needs in areas where we fell short. We began to see a place for ourselves in enhancing older residents' quality of life, and we moved forward to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in December 2012.

As momentum continued to build, IIAC sought to engage in strategic action. As a small group with a growing understanding of aging in the region, we structured ourselves as a catalytic organization that identifies innovative solutions and then partners with local organizations for initiative implementation. After being introduced to the Age-Friendly City Network by Roberto Rey of AARP Colorado in 2014, we were impressed by the ways in which an Age-Friendly framework could help focus our catalytic work while also giving us national-level support and solidarity with a larger movement.



*Photo of 2014 Remarkable Aging Series Convening*

Using the Age-Friendly framework, we were able to publish the comprehensive “Aging in the Pikes Peak Region” report by Dr. Tucker Hart Adams in 2015. The report presented quantitative evidence of the need to strengthen local systems that would empower us to age on our own terms. Population projections for the Pikes Peak region indicate that between 2015 and 2040, we can expect the number of residents 65 and older to grow by 179% and the population of residents 85 and older to grow by 337%.<sup>1</sup>



Data from the Colorado State Demographer’s Office can be used to visualize the anticipated growth.<sup>2</sup> Note that even as we attract more young adults, we’ll need to prepare for their eventual retirement as well.

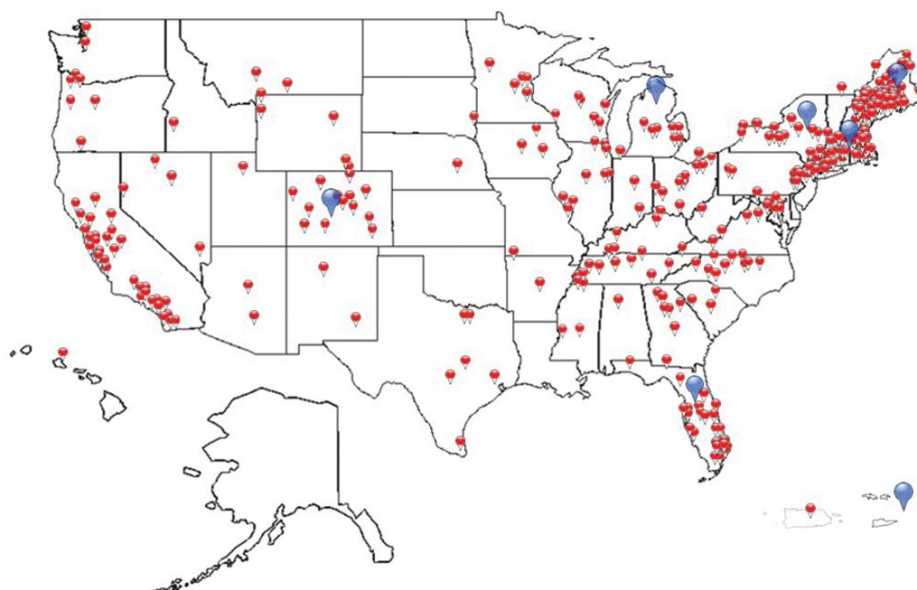


The report helped us gain official support from Mayor John Suthers and City Council for Colorado Springs to join the Age-Friendly Cities Network on March 8, 2016. We immediately got to work creating the action plan that guided our work for these first five years. And what a busy five years it has been! This progress report details initiatives and data relating to our implementation of Age-Friendly on behalf of the City of Colorado Springs. We believe these is much cause to celebrate our achievements, but we want to stress the importance of looking forward. Colorado Springs has made great strides across the domains of livability for older adults, but we are confronted with new challenges as we seek to recover from the global COVID-19 pandemic.

We are thankful that we have found local support to see us through these challenges, and we are also excited by the growing network of Age-Friendly initiatives across the state:

- Colorado is itself an Age-Friendly State
- Boulder, Eagle, Jefferson, Larimer, Pitkin and Summit are Age-Friendly Counties
- Denver, Fruita, Manitou Springs, Carbondale, Las Animas, and La Junta are fellow Age-Friendly Cities

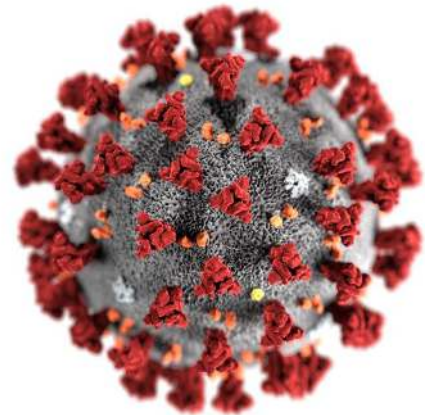
Together we can aspire to an Age-Friendly future—one day and one initiative at a time.



*Map of the National Age-Friendly Network.<sup>3</sup> Blue pins mark Age-Friendly States and red pins mark Age-Friendly Communities*

## Being Age-Friendly in the Wake of COVID-19

Older adults are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Age-Friendly structure, IIAC is prepared to lead the effort of assessing and addressing community needs emerging as a result of COVID-19. The pandemic highlights the importance of our work and calls for increased effort on behalf of our community members at the greatest risk.



### ***What will we be doing?***

We plan to be front and center in emerging community efforts. As we prepare for our second cycle of Age-Friendly, we are ideally situated to innovatively tackle new obstacles in the lives of our older adults. We are spending the remaining months of 2020 gathering community input and conducting assessments of current community needs. If you want to be a part of the process, don't hesitate to reach out to us.

### ***The next five years***

This report celebrates the steps forward in livability that we've achieved over our first Age-Friendly cycle, but the work has only just begun. We will catalyze innovation around as many emerging and current issues as we can while growing community awareness and support for what we are doing. Colorado Springs still has the same AARP Livability Index Score of 53 that we had five years ago.<sup>4</sup> We believe that we can expect more of ourselves and become a national model for effective Age-Friendly practice.

# Executive Summary

## *Our Strategy and the Domains of Livability*

The World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP identify eight Domains of Livability that cities and communities can address to better adapt their structures and services to the needs of older people. These domains are outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, community support and health services, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, and communication and information.



We utilized these eight domains as a template for the construction of our first Age-Friendly Strategic Plan. Committees were formed for each domain, consisting of community leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds including city representatives, non-profit leaders, local residents, and college students. With former City Council President Pro Tem Jan Martin acting as a facilitator, the committees established impactful and achievable goals for the first cycle. These goals were informed by both focus groups and a Community Needs, Awareness and Satisfaction Survey with participation from local older adults and senior-industry professionals.

Every initiative designed in the original strategic plan kept the same four pillars of success in mind:

1. Engage the public
2. Build public will
3. Contribute to building the infrastructure for Age-Friendly work
4. Work across sectors

With their goals established, the committees continued to meet and work continuously toward actualizing the future they had envisioned. This report summarizes a truly incredible four years of labor and passion.

### **Domain Highlights**

| Domain   | First Cycle Highlights  |
|--|---|
|  <p>Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</p>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ IIAC secured \$3,000 in AARP funding to implement improvements on the Sand Creek Trail</li> <li>➤ Five local parks have been redesigned or developed with universal design principles</li> <li>➤ Seven active trail projects are improving recreation opportunities</li> </ul>   |
|  <p>Transportation</p>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 102 Seniors have attended travel training with Mountain Metro</li> <li>➤ Mountain Metro provides approximately 433,887 rides to older adults annually (based on 2019 data)</li> <li>➤ The City’s Bike Program installed almost 36 miles of on-street bike lanes</li> </ul>   |
|  <p>Housing</p>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Three ordinances were approved in 2020 for Accessory Dwelling Unit and Accessory Family Suite housing options</li> <li>➤ The Community Development Division (CDD) funded the construction of 315 new units and 175 rehabilitated units for older adults</li> <li>➤ The Affordable Housing Collaborative formed as an education and advocacy group</li> </ul> |
|  <p>Social Participation</p>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Participation has grown by 22% at the Colorado Springs Senior Center</li> <li>➤ 460 older adults and 140 caregivers participated in a Community Needs, Awareness and Satisfaction Survey</li> </ul>  |
|  <p>Community Support &amp; Health Services</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Over 40 community members participated in the creation of a Dementia-Friendly Colorado Springs Action Plan</li> <li>➤ Silver Key Senior Outreach Services has connected over 400 older adults in need with appropriate resources and assistance</li> </ul>   |



- 10 residents participated in a training program for Project Visibility: Person-Centered Care for LGBT Older Adults
- The Colorado Springs Commission on Aging was formed as an advisory group to City Council; it is currently being considered for a role at the county level



- An Age-Friendly Business Designation was created through the local Better Business Bureau
- IIAC partnered with the Pikes Peak Workforce Center to host a "Job Searching after 50" event for older adults



- A comprehensive Pikes Peak resource portal for older adults was launched through the Pikes Peak Area Agency on Aging
- The IIAC consistently reaches nearly 1,000 community members through social media and newsletters

### ***What's Next?***

Together, we have certainly made progress that is worth celebrating, but we must continue to address the persisting and evolving needs of our older adults. Through the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, we will be conducting community assessments and convening leadership to identify important areas of focus for the next Age-Friendly cycle. As we seek to recover from the pandemic as a community, an emphasis on Age-Friendly concepts will help reduce gaps in support and empower us all to age on our own terms. The Age-Friendly Network has grown to six states, one territory and 471 communities nationwide.<sup>5</sup> We hope that through collaboration and continued advocacy we can catalyze sustainable and meaningful growth for years to come.





# Domain I: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



*To what extent does the natural and built environment help older people get around conveniently and safely in the community? To what extent does the outdoor and built environment encourage active community participation?*



## Overview

Colorado Springs offers a unique and expansive array of outdoor activities year-round. With over 9,000 acres of parkland, 500 acres of trails, and 48 open spaces, we have been selected as one of the best cities for active families and outdoor lovers.<sup>6</sup> In the creation of our initial strategic plan, residents and stakeholders identified outdoor accessibility as an important milestone for achieving an Age-Friendly Colorado Springs.

With outdoor spaces becoming more essential in a time of social distancing, there is currently significant momentum to meet the needs of older adults in outdoor settings.



## Spotlight: AARP Walk Audit

In partnership with AARP and the YMCA, IIAC conducted a walk audit of the Sand Creek Trail. Recommendations from participants and stakeholders were instrumental in securing AARP Challenge grant funding for the installation of a new bench and light. Plans are underway to create a community art feature.

## Going Forward

Colorado Springs is home to an active aging population—our residents regularly utilize our parkland amenities and support our efforts through volunteerism. We look forward to continuing to invest in the places and spaces that provide a high quality of life for our community and advance opportunities for health and wellness.

-Karen Palus, Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director

**Final Goal Status**



*Goal Completed*



*In Progress*



*Reconsidered*

**Goal 1: Fully incorporate Age-Friendly concepts and initiatives within the City of Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan Update**

**1.1** Clearly and comprehensively identify significant aging trends and issues

The “Aging in the Pikes Peak Region” and Elevated Insights reports identified specific issues and localization for older adults in Colorado Springs. Mapping was done by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG). (Appendix B)

**1.2** Identify locations with current and anticipated future concentrations of senior living and activity

**1.3** Include strategies in the plan to implement catalytic actions that address the needs of seniors

The Age-Friendly Colorado Springs Plan was included as a partner entity plan for the Plan COS update from City Council, ensuring visibility and reflection on the action items from our strategic plan at the city government level

**1.4** Include one or more “Co-creators” of the Age-Friendly Action Plan to participate in the Comprehensive Plan Update

**Goal 2: Redevelop two or more highly utilized parks as Age-Friendly pilot projects that include concepts of universal design**

**2.1** Create a refined list of potential park sites or community spaces that are close in proximity to senior housing and activity hubs

PPACG has created overlays of assisted living facilities that are in proximity to city and county parks (Appendix B)

**2.2** Evaluate current facility operations plans at the identified locations from an Age-Friendly perspective and adapt them to include Age-Friendly concepts

Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation solicited feedback from community members and stakeholders to design and implement Universal Design concepts

**2.3** Fund and implement capital construction and programming

■ Redevelopment projects have been completed by Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation at Nancy Lewis Park and Memorial Park

**Goal 3:** Redevelop two or more underutilized parks as Age-Friendly pilot projects that include concepts of universal design

**3.1** Create a comprehensive list of parks with Age-Friendly and multigenerational utilization opportunities

■ This list is utilized by community partners to encourage use of Age-Friendly parks

**3.2** Identify two pilot parks and plan improvements

■ Panorama Park, Bancroft Park and Sand Creek Trail were identified as needing improvements. AARP, IIAC, COS Parks and Rec, Bike COS, and the Commission on Aging were involved in planning improvements.

**3.3** Implement the improvements and programs

■ Universal design principles were implemented at Panorama and Bancroft Parks. A bench and a light have been installed on the Sand Creek Trail.

**Goal 4:** Create a database that contains comprehensive information rating the relative ease of access to and use of local trails, and comprehensively identifies the amenities in all parks

**4.1** Examine other communities creating and implementing an Age-Friendly facility rating system, particularly for parks and trails

**4.2** Create a uniform system for identifying trails as easy, medium, and difficult using an Age-Friendly focus

**4.3** Create an app, an interactive website, and signage that help to identify the Age-Friendly status of parks and trails

■ Due to liability issues, Parks and Recreation will not rate the ease or difficulty of trails. Many of the needs related to goal are met with web-based resources such as AllTrails.



## Domain 2: Transportation



*To what extent do older adults have the opportunity to travel conveniently and safely wherever they want to go in the community, using a variety of transportation modalities?*



## Overview

As the 29th fastest growing large city in the country, we have a critical need to maximize transit options that allow us to navigate our sprawling infrastructure.<sup>7</sup> Currently the city spans over 195 square miles and walkability, bikeability, and expanded transit services have become a higher priority for citizens and elected leaders alike.<sup>8</sup>



This year, the city has embarked on the ConnectCOS initiative to study transportation needs in our growing community.<sup>9</sup> This is an exciting opportunity to make sure the voices of older adults are heard. Organizing around ConnectCOS could be a great way to create significant and sustainable change in the next cycle.



### Spotlight: ONE-RIDE

The ONE-RIDE hotline is a one-stop transportation resource formed through collaboration between Mountain Metro Transit, Envida, Community Intersections, Fountain Valley Senior Center and Silver Key. This coordinated approach ensures quality service for older adults in need of transit solutions.

## Going Forward

Transportation can be instrumental to empower our older adults to age in place. As we move forward I think we should aspire to implement more responsive supportive transit. Shorter wait times may reduce stress and worry for older adults as they try to access amenities and services around town. Additionally, transit solutions play a crucial role in health services and accessibility. We want to foster and cultivate an experience that is personalized and capable in promoting wellness and comfort.

-Gail Nehls, Chief Executive Officer at Envida

**Final Goal Status**



*Goal Completed*




*In Progress*




*Reconsidered*

**Goal 1:** Increase ease of use by expanding and increasing the availability of tools and information concerning local transportation options


**1.1** Develop and implement real-time technology for bus arrivals

 Mountain Metro Transit provides My Next Bus real time information through Google Maps


**1.2** Create a Joint Call Center to coordinate transportation resources

 One Ride is the result of collaboration between Mountain Metro Transit, Envida, Community Intersections, Fountain Valley Senior Center and Silver Key


**1.3** Increase use of Senior Ambassadors Program by tying it to a special event

 An event will be designed by IIAC and community partners to promote the Senior Ambassadors Program

**1.4** Encourage multi-modal information dissemination for community events by including information on bus routes, bike routes, and walking opportunities


 Trip planning services were found to already exist throughout the Downtown Partnership. The next step is to promote trip planning in future events.

**1.5** Implement the Walk Your City Initiative

 IIAC received funding from the lodgers and automobile rental tax to implement Walk Your City. IIAC partnered with Bike COS to create walkability/bikeability maps in Southeast Colorado Springs.

**Goal 2:** Improve the connectivity between modes of transportation and reduce physical and other barriers that limit people from reaching their desired destinations

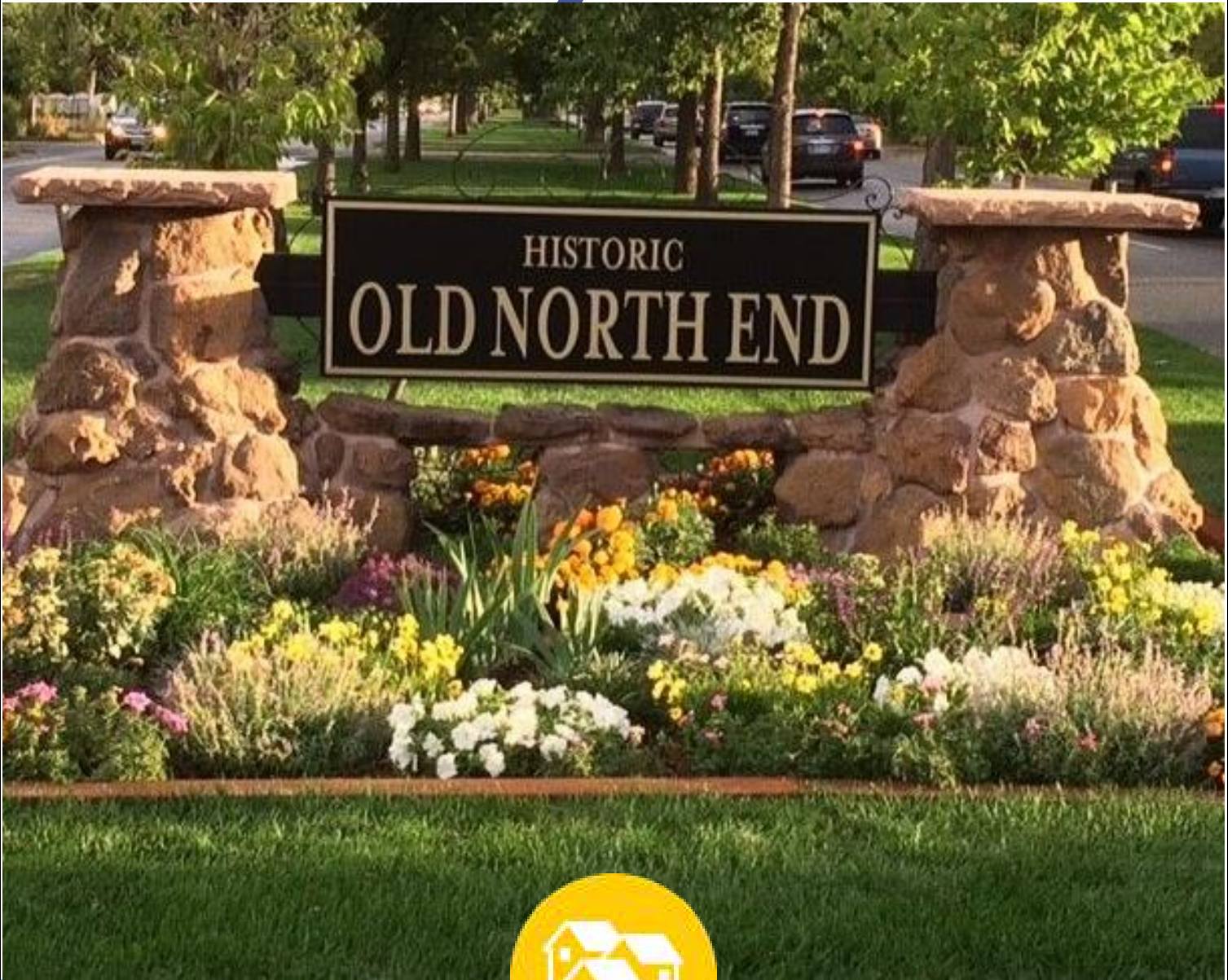
**2.1** Incentivize transit oriented, walkable, and bike-able development that is conducive to senior access in the City Infill Plan

 Colorado Springs has embarked on the ConnectCOS initiative to study transportation needs to inform development

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>2.2</b> Create a heat map with different overlays including mode of travel, senior services, housing, parks, key senior destinations, and more to identify hot spots of senior activity</p> | <p> PPACG has created a map of senior housing with transit, park, and destination overlays</p>  |
| <p><b>2.3</b> Implement an on-demand senior ride service</p>  | <p> Silver Key Senior Services received funding for and conducted a feasibility study for an on-demand ride service for seniors</p>                 |
| <p><b>2.4</b> Assess the need for vehicular transportation options on weekends and evenings, including the need for first and last mile connections</p>   | <p> Envida, Silver Key, and Fountain Valley Senior Center received funding to explore transportation options for evenings and weekends</p>          |
| <p><b>2.5</b> Create a promotional program for older adults to increase the number of choice riders</p>   | <p> IIAC and Age-Friendly community partners will work to create this promotional programming</p>   |
| <p><b>Goal 3:</b> Advocate for a transportation network that is safe, convenient, accessible, and comfortable</p>   |  |
| <p><b>3.1</b> Ensure that the relocated downtown terminal meets the accessibility and safety needs of older adults</p>  | <p> The Commission on Aging sent a memo encouraging the adoption of universal design principles to the city</p>                                   |
| <p><b>3.2</b> Create a plan for uniform sidewalks and accessible paths of travel around bus stops, including snow removal, sidewalk maintenance, and code enforcement</p>                         | <p> The City of Colorado Springs' Great Streets Initiative can be used as a model plan for achieving and maintaining accessibility on streets</p> |
| <p><b>3.3</b> Encourage appropriate implementation of the Complete Streets Initiative</p>   | <p> The City of Colorado Springs has a Complete Streets initiative and is currently working to update the policy</p>                              |



## Domain 3: Housing



*To what extent do older people have housing options that are safe and affordable? To what extent do seniors have options that allow them to maintain dignity and autonomy as their needs change?*

## Overview

Housing is truly an intergenerational issue in Colorado Springs. Housing costs are rising faster than median income. Since 2011, we've seen a 66% increase in the cost of two-bedroom apartments and a 76% increase in the cost of single-family homes, but only a 12% increase in median household income.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, 31% of residents responding during the 2011 Colorado Assessment Survey of Older Adults reported a lack of affordable housing that fits their needs.<sup>11</sup>



In the first Age-Friendly cycle, the Housing Domain reported 85% completion of its goals. We will be front and center as we seek to address housing problems that have been further complicated by the pandemic. We have laid a strong foundation for this work, and we hope to build further on it as we go forward.

## Spotlight: Draper Commons

A collaborative research endeavor between IIAC and QUAD interdisciplinary undergraduate students identified best practices and key considerations in building affordable housing for at-risk seniors. That work helped encourage a developer to start a new, 280-unit housing project that will serve low income seniors and families in Colorado Springs.

-Jake Eichengreen, QUAD executive director

## Going Forward

With the economic stress of COVID-19, it is crucial that we promote education around affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Collaborative is continuing to develop and provide educational resources that will empower residents to be advocates for housing solutions that are both sustainable and broadly accessible.

-Paraphrased from the Housing Domain Final Assessment



**Final Goal Status**



*Goal Completed*




*In Progress*




*Reconsidered*

**Goal 1:** Create innovative ways to promote aging in place and expand current resources that allow older adults to remain in their homes as they age


**1.1** Promote home improvement and renovation packages that facilitate a senior’s ability to age in place

 Work has been done to assemble a master list of aging-in-place resources. These could potentially be used to create senior volunteer opportunities to do accessibility audits.

**1.2** Support aging in place using the Village model and other models that focus on bringing services and support to individuals in their neighborhoods


 After suspending the Old North End Neighborhood Intergenerational Village project, IIAC and CONO developed a DIY Village toolkit available to any interested neighborhoods

**1.3** Utilize AARP Housing resources, including developing the Lifelong Housing Certification Project in Colorado Springs, HomeFit Toolkit, and HomeFit Remodel Guides

 The Colorado State University Lifelong Housing Initiative has assembled an easy-to-access housing resource library

**Goal 2:** Develop incentives to increase the inventory of affordable and accessible senior housing units


**2.1** Encourage and advocate for waiving development fees, streamlining the permit process, and providing incentives to builders, investors, and utility companies to use Age-Friendly concepts

 Several housing stakeholders were members of this domain’s committee, which allowed for streamlined advocacy efforts

**2.2** Incentivize builders to supply a percentage of affordable senior units in each new development

 This is a policy issue that must be addressed at a local government level

**2.3** Encourage the city to create incentives for infill and affordable housing options

 Three ordinances were passed to begin allowing some ADU options. Additionally, housing for older adults is identified as a priority in the new HomeCOS plan.

**Goal 3: Increase and promote community awareness of Age-Friendly housing options, home modifications opportunities, and universal design**

**3.1** Educate senior homeowners on home modification and retrofit considerations and create home modification demonstrations to raise awareness about Age-Friendly retrofits

■ Our partners, Energy Resource Center and Brothers Redevelopment, educate senior homeowners on these issues

**3.2** Promote awareness of age-related tax credits through the El Paso County Assessor’s Office

■ The tax credits were promoted through the IIAC newsletter

**3.3** Encourage the creation of innovative, intergenerational housing opportunities

■ The QUAD partnership studied innovative housing opportunities and helped inform design of the new Draper Commons multigenerational complex

**3.4** Increase awareness of alternative housing options like alternative dwelling units to amplify demand for a variety of housing options

■ IIAC and partners worked to increase awareness about the importance of alternative housing options

**Goal 4: Advocate for senior focused housing issues**

**4.1** Create a Commission on Aging

■ The Commission was formed in 2017

**4.2** Encourage the city to make affordable senior housing a top priority when disposing of city-owned property

■ HomeCOS has a clear goal to make adaptive re-use of vacant buildings to meet housing needs

**4.3** Encourage the City and local nonprofits to take an active role in the preservation of subsidized housing units that are at risk of conversion

■ There was momentum in the wake of the Emerald Towers evictions to encourage the protection of subsidized housing

**4.4** Endorse modified zoning codes to allow for alternative housing options like alternative dwelling units

■ Three ordinances were passed to begin allowing some ADU options

**4.5** Encourage an increase in the annual funds from the city to remove barriers and to make seniors’ homes more accessible

■ Domain Committee advocated for continued funds to remove housing barriers. HomeCOS is a testament to the city’s commitment to accessible housing.

## Domain 4: Social Participation



*To what extent do citizens have access to leisure and cultural activities?  
What opportunities are there for older residents to participate in social  
and civic engagement with their peers and younger people?*



## Overview

The importance of social participation for the mental health of older adults has become abundantly clear during this time of social isolation. Recent research has demonstrated that the stress of persistent loneliness can worsen cognitive decline and increase the risk of dementia in the aging brain.<sup>12</sup>

This domain faced some challenges during the first cycle of Age-Friendly because of the intangible nature of social interactions. However, the critical importance of seeking innovative solutions to the new obstacles confronting older adults has become quite apparent. This domain intends to focus its scope and impact in the years ahead.



## Spotlight: Research with Elevated Insights

Well-informed solutions are vital for the formulation of successful initiatives. IIAC partnered with the market research firm Elevated Insights to collect data from 460 older adults and 140 caregivers on a Community Needs, Awareness and Satisfaction Survey.

## Going Forward

As we continue our efforts in the future we will find means to combat social isolation in our community through faith-based organizations, local neighborhood organizations and in partnership with health and medical establishments. We will also investigate strategies that increase social participation opportunities for homebound older adults through technology.

-Mary Swantek, Director of senior programs at Colorado Springs Senior Center



**Final Goal Status**



*Goal Completed*




*In Progress*




*Reconsidered*

**Goal 1: Expand senior programming hubs across the city to allow more people access to social opportunities and learning experiences**

**1.1** Implement Senior Center programming in local community centers, empty schools, and other unused public spaces


 PPLD, PILLAR Institute, UCCS, Silver Key and other local organizations are working to synergize the kinds of programming they offer for older adults

**1.2** Implement Senior Center programming at local YMCA locations

 The YMCA Senior Center maintains busy monthly calendars for older residents including evidence based and life-long learning options


**Goal 2: Increase the dissemination of information about senior-friendly activities, events, and programming**

**2.1** Create and maintain a centralized database that includes a community calendar, programming, and classes. Include information on physical accessibility, audio and visual aids, and transportation options.


 The new Age-Friendly Pikes Peak Resource Portal includes links to all the information sought by this goal and more

**Goal 3: Increase intentional intergenerational interaction and promote skill and wisdom sharing between generations**

**3.1** Increase the number of activities and programs that promote intentional intergenerational interaction

 Members of the social participation domain worked to catalogue and share information about local intergenerational opportunities

**3.2** Develop and disseminate a How-To Guide for businesses and organizations interested in creating intergenerational programming

 Bridges Together has a how to guide for intergenerational programming that we have shared with our local partners

**Goal 4: Centralize volunteer opportunities for older adults**

**4.1** Create a volunteer database and matching website that allows users to filter volunteer opportunities based on their interests and abilities

■ We found that the online resource from Volunteer Match met this need for the Colorado Springs region. Volunteer Match allows interested community members to filter opportunities by location, required skills, and age group.

**Goal 5: Create innovative transportation options to allow older adults to participate in more social activities**

**5.1** Develop and implement a ride share program for local trips

■ Silver Key conducted a feasibility study. More funding would be needed to actualize the ride share program.

## Domain 5: Community Support and Health Services



*To what extent do older people have access to quality community support and health services necessary for staying healthy and maintaining independence?*

## Overview

Since our Strategic Action Plan in 2016, Colorado has maintained its rank as the eighth-healthiest state in the nation.<sup>13</sup> A big contributor to that ranking is the excellent health of our older adults. According to the United Health Foundation, the health of our adults 65 and older is the best in the country.<sup>14</sup> To maintain these great achievements, we must continue to



focus on connecting older adults with community health and support resources. The pandemic is adding stress and barriers to normal services, so we are stepping up to ensure accessibility of mental health services, preventative care, and support groups.

It is important for us to expand on our good work in order to stay responsive to the dynamic issues facing older adults.



## Spotlight: COVID-19 Survey

The Gerontology Center and UCCS partnered with IIAC to survey older adults in El Paso County for their physical, psychological, and social experiences during the Safer-at-Home months. The results were shared with the community to inform our partners of resident needs.

-Judy Scott, PhD, RN, UCCS and IIAC Board

## Going Forward

In the midst of a pandemic, health and wellness have been brought to the forefront of our national discourse. It will be necessary to capitalize on the opportunities for innovation that we have been presented with. By recruiting more local experts to our working groups, we can focus our efforts to have powerful lasting impact for older adults. Particular areas of focus will include long-term care and advance care planning.

-Paraphrased from the Community Support and Health Services Domain Final Assessment



**Final Goal Status**



*Goal Completed*



*In Progress*



*Reconsidered*

**Goal 1:** Increase awareness of and participation in health and wellness activities that focus on healthy aging

**1.1** Create a centralized resource of wellness activities focused on healthy aging

The new Age-Friendly Pikes Peak Resource Portal contains comprehensive information on available programs

**1.2** Create a public outreach campaign to increase awareness of available programs

**Goal 2:** Increase the support for caregivers charged with supporting an older adult

**2.1** Increase the awareness of and strengthen existing caregiver support programs

Silver Key, PPACG and the UCCS Aging Center have a caregiver support program. Silver Key offers caregiver support services.

**Goal 3:** Promote and expand health and wellness initiatives that foster healthy physical and mental aging

**3.1** Expand the Community and Public Health Division of the Colorado Springs Fire Department

Community Assistance Referral and Education Services (CARES) uses outreach services to support frequent 9-1-1 users. CARES also operates a Homeless Outreach Program and an Aging in Place Program.

**3.2** Implement the Dementia Friendly Initiative in Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs is officially Dementia Friendly. The next step is the implementation of the strategic plan.

**3.3** Develop a local conversation project for advanced care planning

While several groups made initial steps toward opening discussion about advanced care planning, a more focused project will be designed and implemented in the next cycle.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>3.4</b> Support the development of the Transitional Care Group’s Portable Patient Information initiative</p>                         | <p>■ Worked with PPACG to discuss this concept. May need to find more organized support from local health services providers to make this feasible.</p> |
| <p><b>3.5</b> Increase participation in current community gardens in food desert areas and neighborhoods with a high senior population</p> | <p>■ Connected with Pikes Peak Urban Gardens and Colorado Springs Food Rescue to discuss ideas to increase intergenerational participation</p>          |
| <p><b>3.6</b> Support development and implementation of Silver Key Senior Outreach Service Program</p>                                     | <p>■ Silver Key Senior Outreach Services has connected over 400 older adults in need with appropriate resources and assistance</p>                      |

## Domain 6: Respect and Social Inclusion



*To what extent do we offer programs to support and promote ethnic and cultural diversity? To what extent are there programs and events that encourage intergenerational interaction and dialogue?*



## Overview

The Respect and Social Inclusion domain is vital to an Age-Friendly City. Inclusion and positive social connection depend on our willingness to challenge societal stigma and fears about difference, including everything from aging to racism. Social stigma and discrimination are pervasive issues that can permeate many facets of life. For example, older job seekers are less likely to be hired, and many older adults find themselves the targets of both implicit and explicit ridicule for their age.<sup>15</sup>



## Spotlight: Commission on Aging

The Colorado Springs Commission on Aging was formed as an 11-commissioner advisory group to City Council. Embedding advocacy for older adults in the municipal government promotes representation and consideration within the legislative process.

## Going Forward

Challenging implicit biases and stigma is no trivial task. The work is far from over, and we may be able to take much of what we learned in the first cycle to inform focused initiatives that effectively target both ageism and the systemic barriers that older adults face. Going forward, we plan to connect with local organizations to educate the community on best practices for inclusion. Additionally, establishing a forum for discussions on inclusivity will help us to gain a more nuanced understanding of the current experience of older adults in Colorado Springs.

-Paraphrased from the Respect and Social Inclusion Domain Final Assessment



**Final Goal Status**



*Goal Completed*



*In Progress*




*Reconsidered*

**Goal 1:** Establish, support, and sustain formal advocacy concerning senior-related issues and ensure that all voices are included and respected

**1.1** Create a Commission on Aging

 The Colorado Springs Commission on Aging was formed as an 11-commissioner advisory group to City Council

**1.2** Implement Project Visibility in Colorado Springs


 10 residents participated in a training program for Project Visibility in 2018, but momentum stalled and the project hasn't seen much movement since

**Goal 2:** Create intergenerational understanding by fostering intergenerational opportunities and creating forums for intergenerational dialogue

**2.1** Create a senior-themed topic for Food for Thought


 IIAC worked with Food for Thought to encourage integration of Age-Friendly concepts

**2.2** Identify and establish intergenerational enrichment opportunities


 IIAC utilizes social media and newsletter platforms to promote local intergenerational programming

**Goal 3:** Improve human connectivity within neighborhoods, social settings, and support services by including older adults in activities and conversations

**3.1** Offer discounts for low-income seniors to allow them to participate in social activities

 A multitude of local organizations offer discounts to seniors. Some also offer discounts to volunteers, such as Pillar and the Fine Arts Center.

**3.2** Identify services that can cover the gap between private payers and those who qualify for government funding

 Silver Key and AARP offer recurring trainings and forums on navigating Medicare and insurance after 65. Continued work on this goal may fit better with the Community Support and Health Services domains.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>3.3</b> Incentivize neighborhoods and HOAs to bring services hyper-locally | ■ Efforts to work on the iVillage concept expanded Age-Friendly ideas into local neighborhoods   |
| <b>3.4</b> Establish a mobile community center                                | ■ There has been discussion about the YMCA starting a mobile community center. The Pikes Peak Library District has a mobile library service. More discussion needs to happen on what the vision of this goal is. |

## Domain 7: Civic Participation and Employment



*To what extent do older people have the opportunity to participate in community decision making? Can older adults regularly contribute their experience and skills to the community through paid or unpaid work?*



## Overview

The anticipated retirement age has been growing significantly late over the last quarter century. In 1991, only 11% of people expected to have to continue working past 65, but now 45% expect to retire late or never retire.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, even after retirement, 23.5% of older adults nationally stay engaged with their communities through volunteering.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, it is important to create equal opportunity for older adult employment in both the paid and volunteer sectors.



It takes more than legislation to create employment opportunities for older adults. Despite the long-standing Age Discrimination in Employment Act, nearly two-thirds of workers 55 to 65 report that age is a barrier to getting a job.<sup>18</sup> The Civic Participation and Employment domain committee has sought innovative solutions in the first Age-Friendly cycle, to change the narrative around aging workers.



## Spotlight: Age-Friendly Business Certification

The Better Business Bureau of Southern Colorado created the Age-Friendly Business Certification in alliance with IIAC and the City of Colorado Springs. The program promotes age-friendly business practices and certifies businesses through a review of physical environment, staff and personnel, marketing and customer experience. The certification has been a catalyst for conversation as other BBBs have begun to offer similar programs throughout the US and Canada.

-Jonathan A. Liebert, CEO/Executive Director, BBB of Southern Colorado

## Going Forward

Looking toward the future, we plan to advance an Age-Friendly Employer designation while increasing community awareness about the challenges that older adults face in the workforce. Additionally, we will promote Age-Friendly practices across more sectors of the community.

-Paraphrased from the Civic Participation and Employment Domain Final Assessment

**Final Goal Status**



*Goal Completed*




*In Progress*




*Reconsidered*

**Goal 1: Make local businesses and employment opportunities Age-Friendly**

**1.1** Create an Age-Friendly employer designation

 The AARP Employer Pledge Program and the Certified Age-Friendly Employer Program through Changing the Narrative CO are two designations that address this need

**1.2** Create an Age-Friendly business designation


 An Age-Friendly business designation was created through the Better Business Bureau of Southern Colorado. There are currently nearly 100 Age-Friendly businesses.

**Goal 2: Enhance political interest and government involvement**


**2.1** Develop a Commission on Aging to educate the community on aging issues and to promote Age-Friendly public decision making

 The Colorado Springs Commission on Aging was formed in 2017 as an 11-commissioner advisory group to City Council

**2.2** Increase advocacy for seniors in the political sector by teaching individuals in the Leadership Pikes Peak Encore program about local government and political involvement

 The Encore program no longer exists. However, the City of Colorado Springs Civic Engagement Program is a great addition to this work.

**2.3** Create a senior living facility roundtable to increase community participation by residents

 The AAA, the UCCS Aging Center, and PILLAR collaborated to create a new lecture series, which encourages more awareness in the community

**Goal 3:** Enhance volunteer engagement among seniors by providing them with information on volunteer opportunities and increase the Age-Friendliness of local volunteer opportunities

**3.1** Create a centralized volunteer resource and referral center

■ Volunteer Match allows interested community members to filter opportunities by location, required skills, and age group. There are also volunteer resources in the Age-Friendly Pikes Peak Portal.

**3.2** Develop a training program for volunteer coordinators and employer leadership teams to facilitate work with older adults and multigenerational volunteer groups

■ Active Living at Senior Key and the Center for Nonprofit Excellence have opportunities for this sort of program

**3.3** Create and implement an intergenerational mentorship program

■ Silver Key Active living is partnering with the Children's Literacy Center to have older adults tutor youth

**3.4** Create and implement in-home and in-facility volunteer opportunities

■ Many facilities have such opportunities for residents. The next steps would be to share some of these different approaches and create an in-home guide for independent older adults.

**Goal 4:** Enhance employment opportunities for seniors and adequately prepare older adults to re-enter the workforce

**4.1** Develop midternship and encore fellowship opportunities

■ Midternship opportunities exist with the Pikes Peak Workforce Center

**4.2** Create and reimagine programs to help people to identify their personal and professional goals

■ We put on a “Career Satisfaction” event and a “Job Searching after 50” event with UCCS downtown in 2018



## Domain 8: Communication and Information

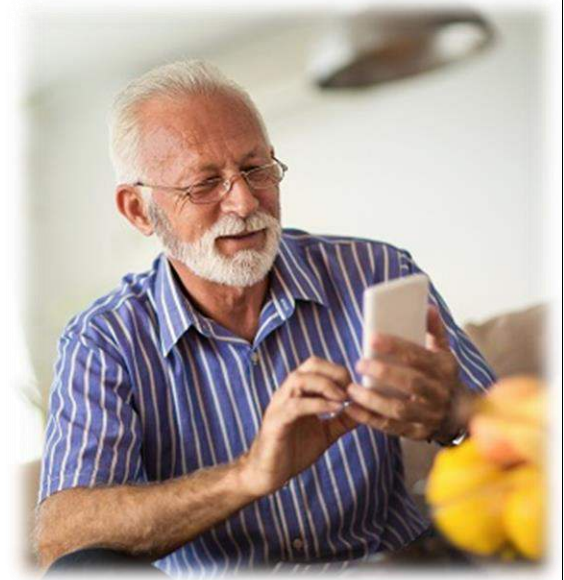


*To what extent can residents access technology in order to stay connected to community, friends, and family? To what extent is community information disseminated to residents through a variety of modalities?*

## Overview

Colorado Springs is home to many great nonprofits and initiatives aimed at empowering the lives of our older adults. At times, we have heard feedback that there are too many different resources for people to know what's right for them or where to start.

Communication and Information gathering are about more than just having resources available. Perhaps the most critical component is that people know where to look and how to navigate the abundance of information in our digital age.



For our older adults, effective communication should be quick, convenient, and accessible. We have made great strides in the first cycle of Age-Friendly. It will be critical for us to promote successful solutions and maintain our momentum to date.



## Spotlight: Pikes Peak Resource Portal

In partnership with IIAC, the Pikes Peak Area Agency on Aging launched a comprehensive Pikes Peak resource portal. Through this new centralized portal, older adults can access services for arts and culture, financial and legal, health and wellness, housing, safety, transportation, and much more. The portal can be accessed at [agefriendlypikespeak.org](http://agefriendlypikespeak.org).

## Going Forward

We believe that it will be important to strengthen and optimize our marketing strategies as we progress into the next cycle of Age-Friendly. The continued success of Age-Friendly will be dependent on growing awareness of our work locally. Additionally, we plan to educate older adults on accessing and utilizing different methods of communication in their personal and professional lives.

- Paraphrased from the Communication and Information Domain Final Assessment

**Final Goal Status**



*Goal Completed*




*In Progress*



*Reconsidered*

**Goal 1:** Senior residents and their support systems are able to easily access information and services related to aging

**1.1** Create a consortium to develop, implement, and maintain a senior information portal

 IIAC convened representatives from PPACG, Silver Key, Peak Radar, and the City of Colorado Springs to form a portal steering committee


**Goal 2:** Create a Commission on Aging for the City of Colorado Springs

**2.1** Create a Commission on Aging


 The Colorado Springs Commission on Aging was formed as an 11-commissioner advisory group to City Council

**Goal 3:** Promote accurate information and vetted resources through outreach to seniors and their caregivers

**3.1** Coordinate networks of currently established senior resources to disseminate information


 The creation of the Pikes Peak Senior Resource Portal provides a comprehensive guide to senior resources

**3.2** Conduct a survey to determine what means of communication seniors prefer, how easy or difficult it is for them to find information, how willing they are to adopt technology, and what barriers they face

 The 2019 Elevated Insights study assessed these community needs as they related to the creation of the Pikes Peak Senior Resource Portal

**Goal 4:** Encourage the community to promote an Age-Friendly culture in Colorado Springs

**4.1** Develop a broad communication strategy, including an Age-Friendly advertising campaign

 The advertising campaign was launched along with the resource portal to reach older adults and caregivers

**4.2** Highlight and elevate intergenerational opportunities

 Intergenerational opportunities are promoted on our social media platforms



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# Notes

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## Appendix A: Acronym Guide

**AAA:** Area Agency on Aging

**AARP:** American Association of Retired Persons

**ADU:** Accessory Dwelling Unit

**CARES:** Community Assistance Referral & Education Services

**CDD:** Community Development Division

**CONO:** Council of Neighbors and Organizations

**COVID-19:** Coronavirus disease of 2019

**CSFD:** Colorado Springs Fire Department

**DIY:** Do-it-yourself

**IIAC:** Innovations in Aging Collaborative

**LGBT:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

**PILLAR:** Peak Institute of Living, Learning and Rejuvenation

**PPACG:** Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments

**PPLD:** Pikes Peak Library District

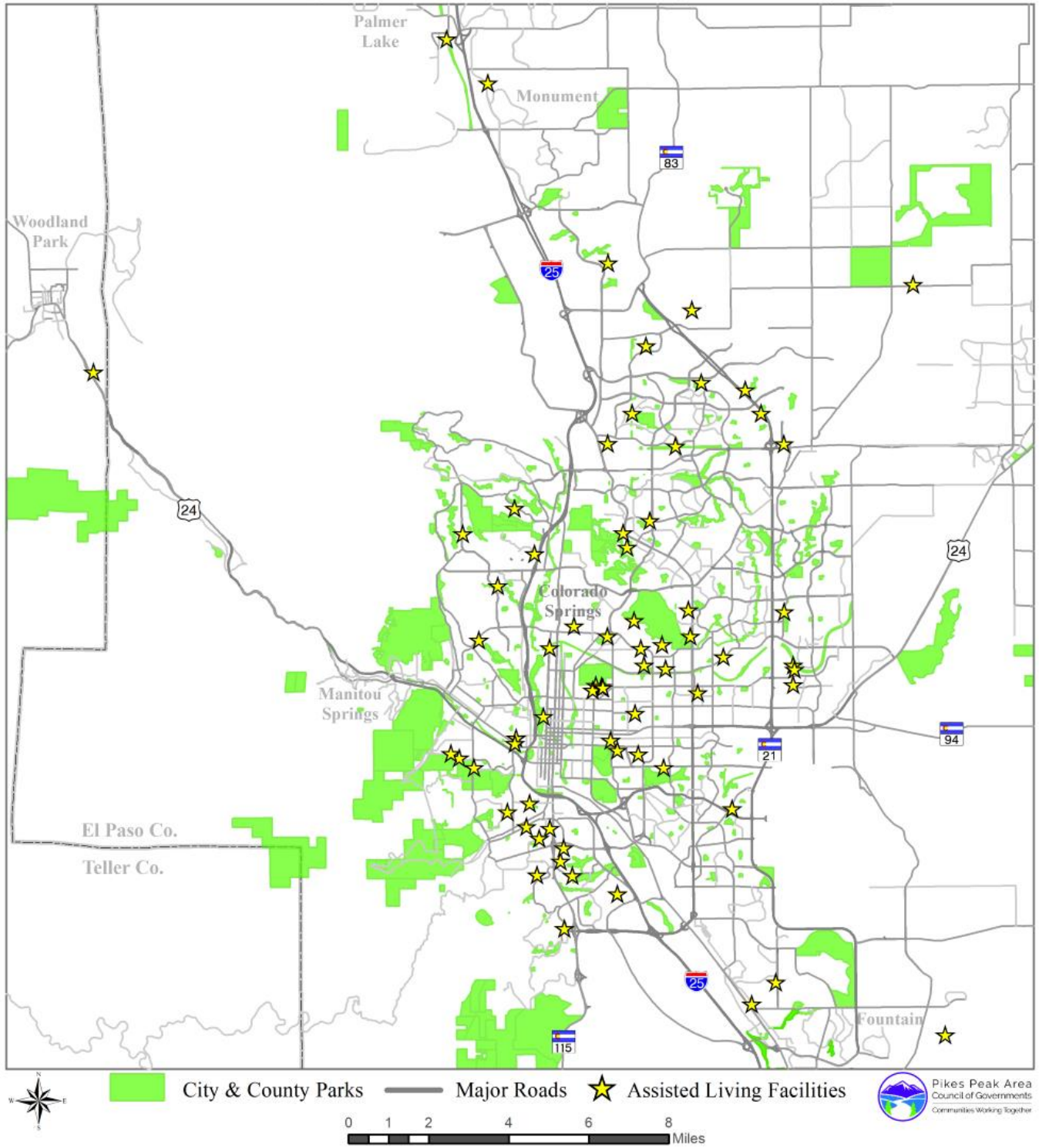
**UCCS:** University of Colorado: Colorado Springs

**WHO:** World Health Organization

**YMCA:** Young Men's Christian Association

Appendix B: Overlays

Assisted Living Facilities in Proximity to City and County Parks



# Assisted Living Facilities and Bus Transit Routes

