

Livable Community Indicators for Sustainable Aging in Place



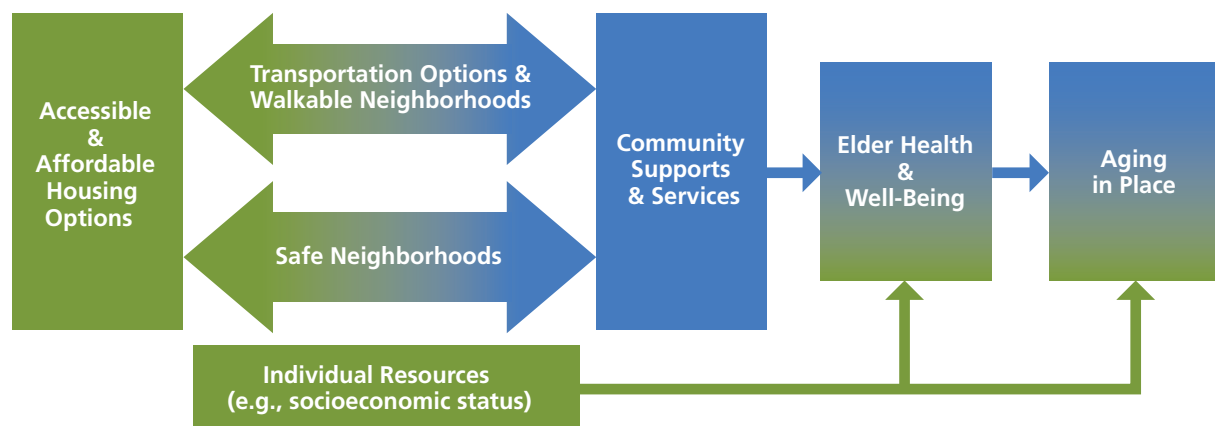
Aging in place is the ability to remain in one's own home or community in spite of potential changes in health and functioning in later life, benefitting older adults, their families, communities and governments. The concept of livable communities calls attention to the ways cities and towns can promote or hinder residents' ability to age in place, and remain in their own homes and communities. Aging in place has the potential to benefit not only older adults, but also their families, their communities, and their governments.

This report, produced by the MetLife Mature Market Institute in partnership with the Stanford University Center on Longevity, presents an indicator system for following a list of livable community characteristics that could promote sustainable aging in place. The goal is to identify an initial list of indicators that can be measured using information that is readily available to local governments, providing a low-cost way for cities and towns to begin to examine the needs of their aging population.

Livable Community Characteristics

- Offers a variety of accessible, affordable, and visitable housing options so that older adults have a place to live.
- Has features that promote access to the community, including safe and walkable neighborhoods, transportation and safe driving options, and emergency preparedness.
- Provides a wide range of supports and services, including health care, supportive services, general retail, healthy food, and opportunities to participate in community life.

Liveable Community Characteristics



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Key Findings

- As an initial assessment, this indicator system primarily focuses on the existence of goods, services, and infrastructure that existing literature and aging in place experts suggest may be particularly promising strategies for promoting sustainable aging in place. In many communities, understanding the ability of older adults to access these features and the degree to which these features are used to actually meet their needs will require additional data collection.
- Every community is unique, and therefore local governments should think about how to adapt these indicators to best meet the needs of their residents. One way in which communities differ is in terms of their population density, and the relevance of each indicator may vary depending on whether the community is urban, suburban or rural.
- The major challenge to developing an indicator system is the lack of existing data at the local (city or town) level. While additional data may be available for the county, metropolitan area, or state levels, these data may not provide an accurate assessment of what is happening in the community.
- Thinking about all of the community characteristics that can create more livable communities can be overwhelming, particularly at a time when local governments are struggling financially.

Methodology

The indicator system in the report was developed using three sources of information: 1) Existing livable community and sustainability indicator systems and checklists, 2) Existing research literature on the community characteristics that impact elder health, well-being, and the ability to age in place, and 3) Interviews with 19 aging in place experts. The final list is based on: 1) Strength of research evidence that the indicator is critical, 2) Strength of support for the indicator by aging in place experts, 3) Ability to measure the indicator using existing data sources, 4) The potential for multiple benefits, such as for the economic and environmental health of the community, and 5) The degree of adaptability to different types of communities, urban, suburban and rural.

For More Information

Download the full report *Livable Community Indicators for Sustainable Aging in Place*, including the complete list of indicators to be used in assessing livable community characteristics, at www.MatureMarketInstitute.com.

The MetLife Mature Market Institute®

The MetLife Mature Market Institute is Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's (MetLife) center of expertise in aging, longevity and the generations and is a recognized thought leader by business, the media, opinion leaders and the public. The Institute's groundbreaking research, insights, strategic partnerships and consumer education expand the knowledge and choices for those in, approaching or working with the mature market.

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