

- **PRESS**
- **Press Releases**

## **New AARP Report Outlines What Older Americans Want In Their Communities, How Many Are Thinking of Moving**

**Washington, D.C.** – The vast majority of people age 50 and older plan to remain living independently in their communities, a new report from the AARP Public Policy Institute concludes. The report which surveyed boomers and older adults found that both value secure neighborhoods, safety, good schools, safe streets for walking, access to transportation, parks and affordable housing as community qualities. With these resources in place, communities enhance personal independence and foster resident engagement in community civic, economic and social life, qualities that AARP has traditionally used to describe the livability of a community. Most importantly, these resources allow residents to age in place successfully.

“What older Americans and Millennials want in terms of their community is not all that different,” said AARP Executive Vice President for Policy, Debra Whitman. “What is livable differs for each of us, whether we want a warm climate or a dense city, for example,” she said. “But this report tells us that the fundamental elements of a community that will please America’s aging population will equally serve future generations.”

The new report, “What is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults,” is based on focus groups and a survey of more than 4,500 participants. It reaffirms the historic trend that most people ages 50 and older want to age in place. Adults ages 65 and older are even more likely (87 percent) to say they want to age in their current home or community than those ages 50 to 64 (71 percent).

A small portion of adults age 50 and older – about one in six – say they plan to move in the next three years. This thought is more common for members of minority groups, those with low-incomes, those who don’t drive, or those living in metropolitan areas.

According to the report, many factors play into the hierarchy of a person’s community preferences. Household income influences the importance of local government spending priorities on schools, transportation, personal safety, and proximity to various amenities. Race and ethnicity play a role as do health and life stage. African American and Latino respondents ranked affordable housing more highly than respondents in general, for example, while caregivers and people with disabilities rate the availability of specialized transportation more highly than those who are not in those categories.

Participants were also asked, “What community amenities do you want close to home?” Access to public transportation, food and green space topped the list.

The research reported in “What is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults” was conducted in part to inform the development of a web-based tool expected to launch next year that will allow individuals to measure the livability of their community (or a community to which they are considering a move). It will also allow community leaders to identify the livability of their towns and cities and measure year-over-year progress toward improving their livability goals. The focus groups and survey used in this research were specifically designed to investigate the diverse needs and wants of the older adult population and to support the development of the index to measure livability as we age.

The 20-minute survey of nearly 4,500 people ages 50 and older, was conducted between September 2012 and January 2013. The sample was drawn from a probability-based web panel. The sample includes an oversample of certain underrepresented populations, such as nondrivers, racial and ethnic minority groups, households with people with disabilities (including people with disabilities, people who live with people with disabilities, and family caregivers), and people living in low-income households.

The full report “What is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults” can be found at <http://bit.ly/LivIndex>. For more information about livable communities and aging in place, visit [www.aarp.org/livable-communities](http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities)

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