



# Department of Planning

## 2021 Winter Edition

225 North Center Street  
Westminster, MD 21157



### Special Interest Articles:

- Age-Friendly Rural Planning
- 2020 Countywide Annexations
- Commercial By Request Rezoning

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## Age-Friendly Rural Planning

**Even modest efforts from volunteers and their partner organizations can make rural communities more livable for older residents.**

***By: Jeffrey Spivak from the APA Magazine December, 2020***

As Candy Eaton and her husband approached the end of their working careers, they grappled with a decision faced by many older adults: where to live in retirement. They owned a 19th-century farmhouse in Maine, but for several years their jobs allowed them to winter in the warmth of Florida. There, they could take walks, go to art shows, volunteer at community events — basically lead a full and healthy life.

The Eatons found themselves homesick and returned to Maine to live year-round in 2017, but their rural town of Sullivan, population 1,200, felt quiet and empty during the winter. There wasn't much going on when the snow piled up. And there weren't many places for retirees to visit with friends even if they wanted to brave the cold.

"I saw what people had access to in Florida, and we didn't have that here," Eaton says.

So she decided to do something about it.

In 2018, Sullivan joined a national network of age-friendly communities. Becoming an officially designated age-friendly community involves a comprehensive planning process resulting in policies and programs that make communities more livable so older residents remain connected and independent.

So far across the U.S., age-friendly actions have taken many forms, such as planning new senior centers, making park enhancements, adding appropriate transit routes, and even working with planners on housing solutions like accessory dwelling units (ADUs). In rural areas, though, age-friendly efforts tend to start as grassroots planning, producing results that may appear modest but which still make a difference in small communities. In Sullivan's case, actions have included building a community garden, recruiting seniors to serve on community boards such as a planning committee, and launching a wellness fair — actions designed to develop and maintain social connections.

"It's been a good way to keep people engaged and in touch," Eaton says. "That's critical for a rural community."

The network of age-friendly communities was started in the U.S. by AARP in 2012, and it's affiliated with the World Health Organization's global network. It has now grown in the U.S. to about 500 communities, with participants doubling in recent years. The network is dominated by bigger cities and suburbs, places that tend to have more resources for community improvements. For rural communities, age-friendly planning often relies on volunteers, with fundraising sometimes involving passing the hat. So age-friendly solutions often involve things the townspeople can do themselves.

But how rural communities approach age-friendly planning can still lead to some key outcomes — with lessons to share, even for bigger, denser places. To highlight some of rural America's proactive actions to improve their age-friendly livability, *Planning* magazine identified four rural communities in different parts of the country that have focused their plans in different ways.

These rural communities have also embraced some ideals set out in *Lessons in New Ruralism*. The fall 2020 report is an initiative of APA's Northern New England Chapter and APA's Small Town and Rural Planning Division. It highlights a "blossoming renaissance" of rural planning, with towns welcoming new ideas to "invest in social sustainability" along with "fostering community" and "strengthening their safety net," among other things — all crucial to creating communities that work for everybody.

"What's important for age-friendly planning is understanding options," says Scott Ball, a principal with Commons Planning, an Atlanta-based firm that plans and designs age-friendly communities. "It's not a one-size-fits-all fix. It's about expanding your options and offering a variety of options that fit a community's needs and challenges."

## A Focus on Functionable Ability




The World Health Organization defines healthy aging as "the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age," including the ability to be mobile; to learn, grow, and make decisions; to meet basic needs; to build and maintain relationships; and to contribute.

### **Driven by demographics**

There's no mystery about what's driving the growing interest in age-friendly planning: demographics. The number of Americans aged 65 and older has already doubled since 1980 and has grown more than 50 percent since 2000. Every day another 10,000 Americans celebrate their 65th birthday, and one of every five Americans will be 65 or older by 2030. With baby boomers joining the greatest generation in retirement, the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2034 more people will be aged 65 and older than aged 18 and younger.

"The more that we talk about the coming demographic changes, the more that communities naturally look for something to do about it," says Danielle Arigoni, director of the AARP Livable Communities initiative, which includes the age-friendly network.

However, communities today aren't always well suited for older adults, especially the elderly. A sprawling landscape requires driving to access necessities like groceries and amenities such as parks. A lack of transportation options complicates matters for those who don't drive or can't. And a housing stock dominated by single-family homes doesn't offer many alternatives for older adults, who no longer want a large space or yard. All these issues are exacerbated in smaller cities and rural areas.



"This model doesn't work for most of us as we get older," declared the age-friendly action plan for Maple Grove, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis.

But for places that do try to adapt for their aging populations, the benefits are numerous. Research has shown the social and economic cases for cities retaining and attracting older adults. A Washington State University study this year found older people are more likely to live longer in neighborhoods that are highly walkable. Meanwhile, a forecasting model done by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) determined that its metro economy would benefit more by attracting new retirees to the region than by adding the same number of younger adults.

"Seniors are a critical part of our economic competitiveness," ARC concluded.

Becoming officially designated as "age-friendly" is a five-year process overseen by AARP involving a multistep planning program that includes a community needs assessment, an action plan, implementation, and follow-up evaluation. The recommended actions are explored in eight livability categories, or what AARP calls "domains."

In rural towns, older adult volunteers usually lead the process, but they also rely on partnerships and collaborations with community organizations and government agencies, including planning departments. That coordination proved important this year with the COVID-19 pandemic, which shut down some senior centers and programs. The established age-friendly network of volunteers and partners adapted by increasing their outreach to seniors in different ways, such as get-togethers via Zoom.

Senior service advocates hope that age-friendly planning doesn't end just with AARP's five-year process. Already, one outgrowth of the age-friendly effort has been the inclusion of senior-oriented elements in state and local housing, transportation, or comprehensive plans. Ohio's rural Clinton County, for instance, is exploring the inclusion of accessory dwelling units in the current update of its comprehensive plan. County planners foresee ADUs not only increasing the affordable housing supply but also possibly serving as an additional income source for seniors to "help them age in place in our community," says Taylor Stuckert, AICP, executive director of the county's Regional Planning Commission.

Emily Long, the associate director of the Regional Planning Commission, adds: "We want to build an age-friendly lens into our next decade of planning, so it's embedded and sustainable. That's not something we've done before."

*Jeffrey Spivak, a market research director in suburban Kansas City, Missouri, is an award-winning writer specializing in real estate planning, development, and demographic trends.*

## RESOURCES


**Unplugged: The Paradigm of Aging-Friendly Communities:** Aging-friendly communities are crucial, and policy makers are grappling to stay ahead of the demographic curve. [In this APA Learn course](#), identify community-based policies and quick-action projects that can help, and see how higher education can play a role.





## AARP's 8 Domains of Livability

This framework is used by many of the towns, cities, counties, and states in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities to organize their efforts to become more livable for older residents and people of all ages. (Adapted from [AARP's article](#).)

- 1. OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS.** People need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, seating, and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.
  - 2. TRANSPORTATION.** Driving shouldn't be the only way to get around. Pedestrians need sidewalks and safe, crossable streets. Dedicated bicycle lanes benefit nondrivers and drivers alike. Public transit options can range from trains, buses, and light rail to taxis, shuttles, or ride-share services.
  - 3. HOUSING.** AARP surveys consistently find that the vast majority of older adults want to reside in their current home or community for as long as possible. Doing so is possible if a home is designed or modified for aging in place, or if a community has housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages, and life stages.
  - 4. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION.** Loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combated by having opportunities to socialize and the availability of accessible, affordable, and fun social activities.
  - 5. RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION.** Everyone wants to feel valued. Intergenerational gatherings and activities are a great way for young and older people to learn from one another, honor what each has to offer, and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.
  - 6. WORK AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.** Why does work need to be an all-or-nothing experience? An age-friendly community encourages older people to be actively engaged in community life and has opportunities for residents to work for pay or volunteer their skills.
  - 7. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION.** Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet.
  - 8. COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES.** At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill, or simply needs some help. It's essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.
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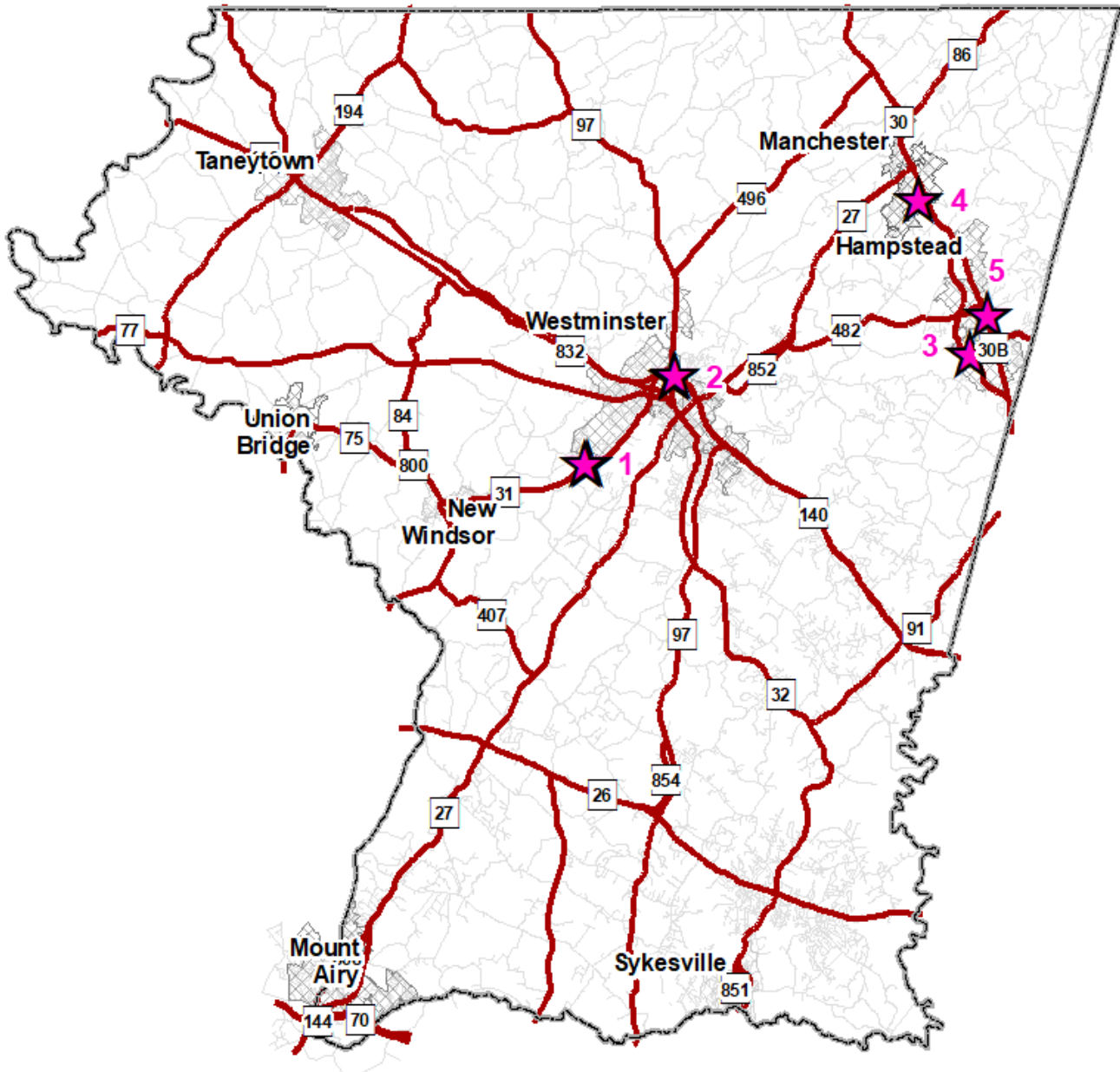
# 2020 Countywide Annexations

By: Clare Stewart, Comprehensive Planner






Countywide Annexations of 2020				
Map ID ★	Annexation Name	Jurisdiction	Description	Effective Date of Municipal Annexation
1	Livestock Auction Property	Westminster	2 parcels totaling 3 ¼ acres located north of MD 31 and west of Old New Windsor Road. The petitioner requested to be rezoned from General Industrial (County) to General Industrial (Westminster).	23-Jan-20
2	EOB, LLC & Dasy Corporation	Westminster	2 parcels totaling ½ acre, located at 214 Pennsylvania Avenue. The petitioner requested to be rezoned from Residential 7,500 (County) to Residential 7,500 (Westminster).	23-Jan-20
3	Beck Property	Hampstead	½ acre lot located on the northeast side of Singer Street. The petitioner requested to be rezoned from Residential 10,000 (County) to Residential 10,000 (Hampstead).	24-Jan-20
4	Lippy Property	Manchester	26 acres, of a 35-acre parcel, located on the west side of MD 30 at 2828 Hanover Pike. The petitioner requested to be rezoned from Residential 10,000, Conservation and Commercial-Medium (County) to Residential 20,000 and Local Business (Manchester).	-
5	HVFD	Hampstead	½ acre, of a 3-acre parcel, located east of MD 30 and south of Upper Beckleysville Road. The petitioner requested to be rezoned from Residential 10,000 (County) to Local Business (Hampstead).	-



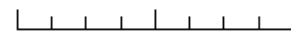
# Countywide Annexations of 2020



## Legend

-  2020 Annexations
-  Major Roads
-  Roads
-  County Border
-  Corporate Limits

0 1.5 3 6 Miles



Created by Carroll County  
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# Commercial By Request Rezoning

By: Mary Lane, Planning Manager

On January 14, 2021 the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) completed the final step of Master Plan implementation of the commercial, industrial and employment zoning districts with the adoption of Ordinance 2021-01. This comprehensive rezoning changed twelve of the County’s zoning maps by rezoning eighteen properties to these employment-related districts at the request of the property owners. It was the culmination of a year’s worth of staff analysis, public input, Planning Commission review, and BCC work sessions and public hearing.

The process was initiated early in 2020, when the Planning Department began accepting applications for this “by-request” phase of the comprehensive rezoning. This followed the adoption in 2019 of changes to the text of Chapter 158, the Zoning Code, for the commercial, industrial and employment campus districts. Thirty-one applications were submitted and were reviewed for consistency with the appropriate land use plan, with 28 moving forward in the process. The Planning Commission transmitted their recommendations to the BCC in October, and the BCC held numerous hearings and work sessions before final action. Each property was individually and carefully discussed before a final vote was taken. In all 18 properties, comprising 13 zoning maps changed reflecting these requests.

All information regarding the process and changes can be found on [carrollrezoning.org](http://carrollrezoning.org). The final properties and their votes can be found at: <https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/media/13363/by-request-rezoning-log-bcc-final-votes.pdf>

