

A photograph of a paved path leading through a lush garden. The path is flanked by dense green foliage, including large purple hydrangea flowers on the left and a trellis of green leaves with small red flowers on the right. The path leads towards a bright, open area in the distance. The overall scene is vibrant and well-maintained.

**AGE FRIENDLY BELVEDERE
COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction - W.H.O. Global Network for Age Friendly Communities
- II. Marin County
- III. City of Belvedere
- IV. Age Friendly Belvedere - Strategic Action Plan
 - A. Mission Statement
 - B. History of Age Friendly Belvedere
 - C. Pertinent Data: 2021 Survey Results
 - D. Domains of Livability
 - E. Proposed Strategies for Local Action
- V. Conclusion: Future Actions and Ongoing Initiatives

I. INTRODUCTION

W.H.O. Global Network for Age Friendly Communities

“It is not how old you are, but how you are old.” - Jules Renard

The World Health Organization (W.H.O.) launched its international Age-Friendly Community initiative in 2006 in response to the growing population of older adults across the globe. The initiative was in part developed to promote the principles elucidated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). These ideas were further developed in work by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, including [Principles for Older Persons](#) emphasizing dignity, security and inclusion in society.

In or about 2010, the W.H.O. began to establish an international network to provide a uniform global platform for cities and communities to effectuate the principles articulated in the founding documents and to exchange experiences and share lessons. Since, there has been a global groundswell of interest in the program. In June 2017, Paris, France became the 500th City in the world to receive its Age Friendly designation. San Francisco earned designation as an Age Friendly City in 2014. As of 2021, there are more than 500 designated Age Friendly Communities in the United States alone.

The network focuses on action at the local level to foster the full participation of older people in community life, as well as to promote healthy and active aging. As AARP explains, “The common thread among the enrolled communities and states is the belief that the places where we live are more livable, and better able to support people of all ages, when local leaders commit to improving the quality of life for the very young, the very old, and everyone in between.” The W.H.O. determined that helping make cities and communities age-friendly is one of the most effective local policy approaches for responding to the worldwide demographic aging trend. Marin County generally, and the City of Belvedere in particular, exemplify this trend.

The global population of older adults aged 65+ will more than double over the next 35 years, from 9.3% of the worldwide population in 2020 to 16% in 2050. On the near time horizon, 20% of the population in the United States is projected to be

65+ by 2030. By 2035, there will be more adults older than 65+ than children under 18.

The W.H.O. Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (W.H.O. Network) is meant to foster the exchange of experience and mutual learning between cities and communities worldwide. Cities and communities in the W.H.O. Network are of different sizes and are located in different parts of the world. Their efforts to become more age friendly take place within very diverse cultural and socio- economic contexts. However, all members of the W.H.O. Network share the desire and commitment to promote healthy and active aging and a good quality of life for their older residents. The W.H.O. Global Network structures these aspirations and intentions into “8 Domains of Livability,” a framework which cities and towns can use to evaluate needs, design strategies, and implement actions to achieve the goals of the program, namely opportunities for healthy aging in place.

The World Health Organization and its constituent members recognize that governments – including local governments - and their institutions need strong leadership and community commitment to create and implement policies that benefit seniors. Without structure, such policies and practices are fragmented or non-existent. Meanwhile, ageism, which is the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age, is a powerful barrier to the development of good policy and practice. To create effective policies and community practices for people as they age, leaders need clear guidance as to what works, based on the best available evidence. A framework can organize the available data and coordinate the ideas and strategies to achieve the optimum outcomes, not just in the near term but for long-term benefit to the community.

The W.H.O. Network requires a commitment to participate in a five-year continuing cycle of community assessment, planning, improvement, and evaluation of their needs across eight broad domains of livability that contribute to active and healthy aging. This commitment involves review and analysis of what can be done by local government and neighborhood volunteers to achieve the best environment, effective programs, and services for residents with varying needs and capacities all through their lives.



WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

Building on the foundation established by the W.H.O., the Age Friendly Belvedere advisory group adopted Seven Domains of Livability to address and provide structure for planning and implementing age friendly improvements in the City. The 2021 Belvedere assessment, findings from the 2020 Marin County Community Survey, and common themes that emerged from group discussions establish the baseline and give guidance for the development of this initial Age Friendly Belvedere Community Action Plan.¹ The Belvedere advisory group identified significant areas for strategic analysis and desired outcomes, and W.H.O. the primary participants would be for each domain's working group. In addition, each domain is described in terms of why it is important. Going forward, the working groups will interview staff, stakeholder groups and community leaders to better advise how affiliated entities and partners will implement the Age Friendly Belvedere initiative to achieve needed changes and improvements.

The work done and proposed to be done in each of these categories is specifically addressed in Section IV(E) below.

¹ At the time of publication of this report, the 2020 census data specifically for Belvedere has not been published.. Demographic data provided here is drawn from the Marin County Age-Friendly action plan, January 2020 See, https://www.marinhhs.org/sites/default/files/files/servicepages/2020_01/cc_af_com_plan_final_draft_-_1.19.20.pdf.

II. MARIN COUNTY CONTEXT

“The longer I live, the more beautiful life becomes.” Frank Lloyd Wright

Based upon the most recent data prior to the 2020 census, Marin County is demographically the oldest county in California. Currently, 28% of Marin County’s population is 60 and older. By 2030, projections indicate that this percentage will increase to 33% or more as the county experiences a long-term aging trend and life expectancy increases. The Marin County Board of Supervisors proclaimed that 2018 was the Year of the Older Adult and has since continued to promote community policies, programs, practices, social infrastructure, and services that support a strong foundation on which to build the Age-Friendly County of Marin Initiative. Marin joined the W.H.O. and AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities in 2018. It published its action plan, entitled “Age Forward – a framework for an Age-Friendly County of Marin,” which set the policies and practices to create “opportunities to reframe how we think about and perceive aging and older adults, and for imagining and realizing tangible improvements to how we design our communities.” (See also, fn. 1.)

In 2014, the City of Sausalito became the first local jurisdiction in Marin County and the third in California to join the World Health Organization (W.H.O.) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. Fairfax and San Rafael adopted the initiative in 2015, followed by Corte Madera and Novato in 2017. The City of Belvedere was next, earning its Age-Friendly City designation in 2019.

In tandem with these local initiatives, the County of Marin sought to become a designated Age-Friendly Community, ultimately receiving its designation in 2018. The first aspect of the Age-Friendly community effort involves an assessment phase. Thus, Marin County launched a survey to collect county-wide data. The survey sought to ascertain whether Marin’s residents and stakeholders deemed their county age-friendly and sought comments regarding areas in need of improvement. In the course thereof, Marin adopted the 8 Domains of Livability recommended by the W.H.O. and added a ninth domain: emergency services. As will be discussed below, Belvedere has followed these categories with minor variation.

III. CITY OF BELVEDERE

“Youth is the gift of nature, but age is a work of art.” - Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

The City of Belvedere lies 11 miles north of San Francisco in Marin County and is surrounded by Richardson Bay, San Francisco Bay, and the Town of Tiburon. Belvedere maintains a comfortable temperate climate throughout the year. The City encompasses 2.4 square miles and has a population of approximately 2,000, making it the least populous city in Marin County.² Surrounded by San Francisco Bay on three sides, a full 76% of the area within the City boundaries is submerged. The land portion within Belvedere city limits is essentially built out at this time with single and multi-family residential properties. Less than 1% of properties is commercial; just over 1% of City land is designated as parks and open space.

Belvedere provides a range of municipal services such as police, road and storm drain maintenance, parks and recreation, and certain utilities. The City also partners with outside agencies for the provision of certain municipal services, including water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, library services, fire protection, and emergency services.

Recreational opportunities are provided by a Joint Power Authority (JPA) with the Town of Tiburon through “The Ranch.” Belvedere also supports the JPA which operates the Belvedere Tiburon Library, a center of learning and activity through library and community services, including senior services. The Belvedere Tiburon Library is undergoing extensive renovations due to be completed in 2021.

IV. AGE FRIENDLY BELVEDERE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

“Age is a very high price to pay for maturity.” - Tom Stoppard

A. MISSION STATEMENT

Age-Friendly Belvedere is a volunteer effort dedicated to supporting residents particularly, though not exclusively, aged 60 and older. The initiative seeks to promote health, safety and happiness for all residents while aging in place in this community. To this end, Age Friendly Belvedere actively engages in research and

² LAFCO 2020

shares resources to enhance independent livability promoted by the World Health Organization (“W.H.O.”), fostering improvements that enhance the livability of our town for all generations that constitute the community. By enhancing those aspects of daily life that promote inclusiveness, security and health, accessibility, and mobility for seniors, we believe that every citizen can benefit from all that Belvedere has to offer.

The plan to create an Age-Friendly city utilizes a local-level framework consistent with the global movement to create and adapt services programs, policies, places, and social infrastructure that are beneficial for all present and future generations. Such a plan involves weaving or embedding an “age-forward” approach into daily and long-range work, allowing Belvedere to advance health and wellness equity, while maintaining a high quality of living for all residents across their lifespan.

Age Friendly Belvedere acknowledges the W.H.O.’s Age-Friendly Network as a platform for information exchange and mutual support, while creating physical and social environments that support a healthy and active quality of life for seniors aging in the community.

Age Friendly Belvedere anticipates collaboration with existing internal city committees and JPAs, such as the Block Captain program; Parks and Open Space Committees; Traffic, Safety and Circulation Committee; Belvedere-Tiburon Library; Peninsula Villages; the City Council; the Planning and Building Department, as well as external groups and agencies, such as those listed without limitation in Section C below. In furtherance of the purpose expressed herein, Age Friendly Belvedere anticipates making recommendations, and promoting improvements and investments, that will enhance the livability of our town for seniors, and in so doing enhance the local quality of life for all ages.

B. HISTORY OF AGE-FRIENDLY BELVEDERE

The City of Belvedere learned of the W.H.O. Age Friendly initiatives through the Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers. Following the lead and guidance of other Marin cities such as Sausalito, Fairfax, San Rafael, and Corte Madera, as well as the County of Marin, the Belvedere City Council appointed Diana Bradley to the Marin County Commission on Aging, and she received authorization from the City Council on October 8, 2018, to apply to the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. Ms. Bradley successfully obtained that designation and on November 12, 2019, Ms. Anne Hinton presented the plaque the City Council.



Having received designation as an Age Friendly City by the World Health Organization and a Livable Community by National AARP, Belvedere joined the W.H.O. Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities in November 2019 and the AARP Livable Communities in March 2021. The City made the commitment for continuous improvement in the Eight Domains of Livability. As part of those designations, the city is developing a 5 year strategic action plan, which will be evaluated, revised and updated every five years. Age Friendly Belvedere is also affiliated with the entities listed below. It is an advisory body to the Belvedere City Council, as well as standing committees such as Parks and Open Space, and has working relationships with city staff, police and fire departments, office of emergency services as well as the Planning and Building Departments, Parks and Public Works.

C. PERTINENT DATA: 2021 SURVEY RESULTS

To obtain a baseline of age-friendly factors in Belvedere, the advisory group formulated questions for a city-wide assessment, using some questions posed by other participants in Age Friendly programs in similar communities. The City of Belvedere distributed a survey administered by Survey Monkey to the majority of residents city-wide who opt into city newsletters, as well as through the city website and a private landlord network covering the vast majority of local rental housing.

A total of 111 individuals responded to the survey. Of these, 16% were under 60 years of age; 16% were 60-70; 30% were 70-80 and 38% were 80+ years of age. The majority (slightly more than 50%) rated their health “excellent” and another 40% rated their health “good” compared to most people their age. The vast majority of respondents indicated they knew how to access essential services like health and wellness programs, and nearly 90% had a primary care provider. However, about half did not know how to access a service that helps seniors find health and supportive services in the first place.

While 64.52% of those surveyed knew how to access fitness activities specifically geared to older adults, more than 90% named simply walking in the community as one of the things they do within Marin County to stay physically active. Another 40% named hiking. Swimming, sailing, cycling, and tennis also garnered mention. Yoga, gym, and Pilates were also popular.

Most of those surveyed reported they own their Belvedere residence (62.75%) and 37.25% rent. Nearly 60% live with a spouse or partner; slightly more than 20% of respondents reported they live alone. Significantly, less than 1% live in Accessory Living Units (ADUs). Fully 87.13% of respondents said they plan to remain in their current home as they age.

In the event of a community-wide emergency, 68% of respondents felt prepared (32% did not) and 62.75% knew who their Block Captain is (38.24% did not).

Transportation choices reflected the dearth of public options in Belvedere. Only about 10% of respondents use the ferry and bus use was also de minimis. More than 90% drive themselves and another 12.8% have others drive them to shopping and medical appointments. With that said, nearly 40% sometimes walk and nearly 10% sometimes bike, presumably to venues closer to home.

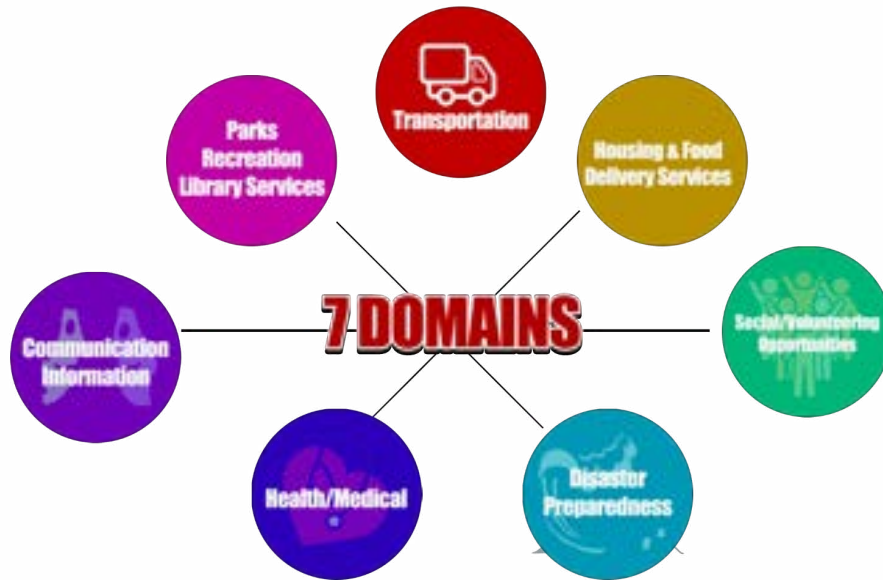
According to survey respondents, Belvedere could improve traffic signage (22.03%), better enforce traffic laws including speed limits (46.15%), parking for caregivers/guests (56.45%), resident parking (65.08%), street maintenance (69.84%), public transportation (49.12%) and especially sidewalks (72.60%).

With regards to the relative importance of community services overall, parks and open space proved to be the overwhelming favorite. A total of 94.32% of respondents said these common areas of Belvedere common were “important” or “very important” to them. It is no surprise that Concerts in the Park were popular as well, with over 70% rating this was “important” or “very important.” Volunteer opportunities also proved “important” or “very important” to a majority of respondents. In terms of educational programs, the library was used by 43.18% and the Ranch trailed at 15.91%.

Respondents were asked where they get information about a variety of senior services. The Belvedere website and Next Door both received about 40%, while the internet garnered 68% of survey responses. Family or friends (i.e., word of mouth) polled at 78%, implying the importance of social infrastructure in the community. Twenty-two percent of respondents also mentioned the library as a source of community information. The fact that 68% of respondents said they got information about local senior services from online sources implies the need for tech skills and support. While 97% have cell phone, 68.63% use a tablet, slightly more than half have a desktop computer, and 73.53% use a laptop.

With this assessment data, members of Age Friendly Belvedere propose interviews with stakeholders, staff, and leaders to ascertain additional policies and practices to support Belvedere’s aging population.

D. DOMAINS



The advisory group chose to combine and/or re-frame these domains for local application, as follows:

1. Parks, Recreation & Library Services
2. Transportation
3. Housing & Food Delivery Services
4. Social & Volunteering Opportunities
5. Disaster Preparedness
6. Health & Medical
7. Communication and information

Each of these domains is explained briefly below.

1. Parks Recreation & Library Services

We envision a City in which public spaces and services support the safety, health, and wellness of our residents. Belvedere is a small city built in part vertically, taking advantage of the exceptional views of the San Francisco Bay, and built-in other part along the Bay, shoreline, or lagoon. It has negligible commercial activity but is within walking distance to the adjacent Tiburon commercial downtown center. Belvedere is a walking and cycling destination whose streets and sidewalks are well-used. Creating a walking and cycling city for all ages has allowed ease of movement throughout our neighborhoods and to Tiburon's nearby commercial center.

For the safety of residents and visitors alike, the City's sidewalks, crosswalks and stairways must be safe and accessible for all pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders, those in wheelchairs, electric carts and strollers. In addition, Belvedere's two well-used parks must be welcoming, safe and equipped to promote fun, health, and fitness for all. Belvedere's steps, lanes, and open spaces should be protected, opened, improved, and maintained in a manner that is welcoming, safe and equitable.

In addition to public open spaces, the Belvedere-Tiburon Library is a hub of community involvement and inclusion, life-long learning, volunteer activity, intergenerational interaction, and communications center. Belvedere collaborates through a Joint Powers Authority with the Town of Tiburon in funding and operating the Bel-Tib library (See also § 4, below.) Although located just beyond the Belvedere city boundary, it is a walkable destination for Belvedere residents of all ages.

2. Transportation

We envision a city in which everyone has access to the transportation they need. Residents of all ages who do not drive, or simply prefer not to, need a way to attend to errands, appointments, social engagements, and connection to the limited public transportation available, such as the bus or ferry. Much of residential Belvedere is built on hills with narrow winding streets making it difficult for vans and larger vehicles to navigate. As such, there is a "transportation gap" that needs to be solved in order to allow residents to fulfill their personal needs yet age comfortably living in their homes. This means bringing renewed focus to transportation to/from local community events and shopping opportunities on one

hand; and, on the other hand, transportation to/from work, travel hubs, shopping, cultural and social venues throughout the county and wider Bay Area.

3. Housing & Food Delivery Services

We envision a City with increased living opportunities and attainable enhanced housing functionality. At the same time, we feel that viable housing to age in place requires the ability to obtain the necessities of life, such as food in the event of limited mobility or sheltering requirements in emergencies. Many lessons learned from the recent COVID-19 pandemic can benefit policies and practices going forward.

Neighborhood continuity and individual vitality can be better maintained when families and individuals can continue their lifestyles in their chosen lifelong neighborhoods. More adaptable physical upgrades and home services may accommodate aging lifestyles. A range of affordable housing opportunities like ADUs that allow individuals, couples, and families to downsize within the community are subjects worthy of further consideration.

It is no surprise that most Belvedere residents would want to age in place, but the strength of this desire was brought home when the initial assessment showed 87.13% of older residents surveyed wish to remain in their own homes in their community as they age. We acknowledge that when communities keep seniors close by enabling them to age in place, residents of all ages reap the benefits of intergenerational interaction.

4. Social & Volunteering Opportunities

We envision a City with no age boundaries in which everyone is encouraged and welcomed to participate in community activities with mutual respect. Participation and inclusion across the age spectrum keep a community lively and healthy. Individuals thrive, mutual respect is realized and the entire community benefits when talents abilities and life experiences shared. Age Friendly Belvedere strongly encourages intergenerational interaction wherever appropriate.

We envision a City in which all eligible members are encouraged to participate in local government and civic projects including civic employment. Social infrastructure and civic participation through volunteering across the age spectrum keeps the City and its inhabitants dynamic and vital. Such activity can provide psychological well-being and a sense of purpose and self-respect as individuals.

Many retired or semi-retired people with extraordinary work and volunteer histories as well as creativity and talents become great civic contributors and mentors. The City of Belvedere has an abundance of such potential, and we seek ways to encourage and maximize the benefits from intergenerational interaction whenever possible.

5. Disaster Preparedness

We envision a City that is comfortably prepared for catastrophic events by implementing and practicing emergency preparedness and health and safety programs for the protection of residents of all ages. This domain is particularly important given the city's geographic vulnerability to natural disaster. Belvedere's steep hillsides and waterfront location make it particularly vulnerable to earthquakes, floods, and extreme ocean/bay events. Although not formally a part of the Wildfire Urban Interface (WUI), Belvedere is vulnerable to fire from a variety of incendiary origins; and proximity to the Tiburon hills and ridge render it vulnerable to wind-driven fires from that direction.

Residents of all ages can benefit from a well-planned program that integrates access to community emergency information and resources and neighborhood-based health and safety initiatives. When residents are prepared with knowledge about neighbor assistance programs, community disaster centers within walking distance, as well as evacuation rules and routes, they can be self-sufficient in the event of an emergency, ultimately saving lives. But long before such events occur, preparation and knowledge of emergency services and neighborly connections serve to give residents aging in place a healthy peace of mind in the present time.

A program of emergency services is only as good as community awareness of what is available, the community's preparation, and the alert system needed to activate it. We can continue to work to improve our unique and popular Block Captain neighbor-to-neighbor assistance program as well as other means of disseminating resources.

6. Health & Medical

We envision a City in which residents feel supported in their medical needs and can access information and resources as they age. Additionally, these needs can change suddenly as the result of accident or illness, or occur slowly over time. This is true whether the need for such resources is for oneself or a family member.

Beyond acute or chronic medical service, we recognize the importance of broader health initiatives, including benefits of vibrant and ongoing community conversation around food delivery and dining, exercise, mental health providers, and professional caregiving services.

7. Communication and Information

We envision a City in which older adults are well-informed about and thus more engaged in community programs, services, activities, encore employment and volunteer opportunities. Informational access and exchange is the driver for all other Domains of Livability. We cannot succeed in those domains without effective communication. To begin, Age Friendly Belvedere must identify and enhance existing communication channels to local, county, and state resources related to all domains of livability. Next, in order to further engage all or our community, we must explore untapped transmission channels, greater use of technology, and ways to simplify the interchange process. To this end, we envision greater access and awareness of our city website and newsletter, as well as the senior resources provided by the local library.

E. PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL ACTION

1. Parks, Recreation & Library Services

Strategic Goal #1 – work with Dept. Of Public Works to improve road and sidewalk safety, provide benches; maintain and support Lanes Initiative; protect public use of open space.

Strategic Goal #2 – continue to work with the Library to provide senior services.

Strategic Goal #3 - Encourage Ranch offerings for seniors.

2. Social & Volunteering Opportunities

Strategic Goal #1 – improve communication and outreach regarding volunteer opportunities.

Strategic Goal #2 – continue to work with Library to publicize activities and events for.

Strategic Goal #3 – upgrade and improve Founders Room and other spaces within City Hall as a community center

Strategic Goal #4 – encourage inclusion and intergenerationally.

3. Housing & Food Delivery Services

Strategic Goal #1 – Promote planning policies and home modification programs that enable seniors to remain in their homes and community as they age.

Strategic Goal #2 – promote development of additional housing options for seniors in the community.

Strategy #3 – Improve communication regarding goals #1 and #2.

4. Transportation & Walkability

Strategic Goal #1 – Work with Dept. of Public Works to identify and rectify mobility issues on streets and sidewalks, and improve pedestrian safety and walkability through neighborhoods.

Strategic Goal #2 – Identify and publicize alternatives to driving for seniors;

Strategic Goal #3 – identify volunteers and ride sharing opportunities for seniors.

5. Disaster Preparedness

Strategic Goal #1 – Continue to support Block Captain Program.

Strategic Goal #2 – Ensure that development of evacuation plans includes elements needed for seniors.

Strategic Goal #3 – Improve communication to seniors of citywide disaster plans and individual responsibility.

Strategic Goal #4 – increase participation in Alert Marin and other notification sources.

6. Health & Medical

Strategic Goal #1 – provide list of medical and mental health resources to seniors.

Strategic Goal #2 – provide list of Marin County health resources focused on aging.

Strategic Goal #3 - Publicize local and county programs that educate seniors about Medicare and other insurance issues.

Strategic Goal #4 – provide source to share information among seniors regarding care-giving options for residents seeking to age in place.

7. Communication and Information

Strategic Goal #1 – improve digital and print resources to reach seniors, including city website, newsletters, and print-media fliers to make all other Domains more effective in the community.

Strategic Goal #2 – work with library and other professionals to provide basic computer skills to access digital resources for seniors and use zoom.

Over the next five years, these working groups will conduct outreach to identify other residents with interest or expertise in the domain, research and investigate the domain as applied to Belvedere, determine specific needs and areas for improvement, advocate for implementation of proposed improvements, and assess progress.

VI. CONCLUSION – FUTURE ACTION AND ONGOING INITIATIVES

“No one can avoid aging, but aging productively is something else.” Katharine
Graham

This initial Aging Action Plan is the beginning of what we anticipate to be a continuum of progress toward the goals enunciated by the World Health Organization. It seeks to articulate and adopt policies focused on concrete action to foster the full participation of older people in community life, as well as to promote healthy and productive aging.

Immediate next steps include: (1) Obtain and integrate the results of the 2020 U.S. Census and evaluate the extent to which the new data informs our goals and advocacy. (2) Working groups for each of the seven identified Domains of Livability will engage with staff, elected representatives, pertinent committees, and other stakeholders to develop agendas, actions, intended outcomes and steps toward achieving those outcomes. (3) Investigate and develop relationships with affiliated agencies and organizations, experts, and resources for continuing to learn and advance the mission of making Belvedere a safe and supportive community that sustain the highest possible quality of life at every age.

Special thanks to the Age Friendly Belvedere advisory group, including: Diana Bradley, Nancy Kemnitzer, Larry Binkley, Debra Fisher, Peyton Stein, Tom Cromwell, Rob Santo Domingo, Larry Stoehr, Cynthia Shaver, Astrid Johnson, Bonnie Spiesberger, Bryan Kemnitzer, Bill Smith, and Ann Alwyn.