

## **Cityscape, February 2019: Spotlight on Age-Friendly Healdsburg**

**By Anna Grant, Active Adult & Senior Services Supervisor**

In the fall of 2018, the City applied to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities to become the first city in Sonoma County to receive an "Age-Friendly" designation. At the core of the Age-Friendly City concept is "Eight-to-Eighty," meaning that when a community is designed for an eight-year-old, it also fits an eighty-year-old and ultimately everybody. Age-Friendly communities have walkable streets, housing and transportation options, and access to key services and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities.

Age-Friendly cities include eight domains of livability, many of which are already underway in Healdsburg. The eight domains are: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and engagement, communication and information and community and health services. Within these eight domains are two components that the Senior Citizens Advisory Commission, City Council, and City staff have been developing: transportation and housing options.

A 2014 survey of Healdsburg's older adults found that transportation is the number one issue to remain independent as one ages. In response, the Senior Citizens Advisory Commission and City Council placed a high priority on addressing transportation for our older adults. Key initiatives now underway include subsidizing Sonoma County's Healdsburg Shuttle (Route 67), researching for-pay/on-demand services such as Uber, Lyft and Women Driving Women, and developing a volunteer-driving program where seniors schedule rides to and from appointments, shopping, and leisure activities.

The free Route 67 Healdsburg shuttle has been underway since mid-summer 2018, and the volunteer-driving program is scheduled to launch as a pilot program in the spring. This program will be a way for seniors who no longer can drive to remain engaged in the community and thrive. The program is in the final stages of development and is currently seeking volunteer drivers. If you're interested in volunteering, you can attend an informational meeting on February 20, from 3-4 p.m. at the Senior Center. You can also contact the City's Volunteer Coordinator Donna O'Brien at 707-431-4932 or [dobrien@cityofhealdsburg.org](mailto:dobrien@cityofhealdsburg.org).

The second area of concern for our older adults is housing. The City will soon launch two housing-related initiatives: SHARE Sonoma County and a home-maintenance program, both of which are part of the new volunteer program. SHARE Sonoma County homeshares are living arrangements between two or more unrelated people, one of whom is 60 years of age or older, who agrees to share their home or apartment for mutual benefit. The first in a series of educational forums about SHARE are scheduled for 11 a.m., February 19 and 6 p.m., February 20 at the Senior Center (133 Matheson St.). SHARE Healdsburg is set to launch March 1. Later this year, we'll kick off a home maintenance assistance program for older adults.

An Age-Friendly City fosters solidarity among generations within communities, facilitating social relationships and bonds amongst residents of all ages. Becoming an Age-Friendly City means that the City has made a commitment to actively work toward making Healdsburg a great place for people of all ages. As we look forward to the upcoming year, the City will continue to incorporate age-friendly design and thinking across departments to help create a livability community for all.

For more information on the Age-Friendly community and volunteer program initiatives, please visit: <https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/269/Senior-Center>.