

PRESENTATION ITEM

Meeting Date: January 11, 2024

Staff Contact: Leslie Herring

Agenda Item: Westwood recognized as a Community for All Ages

Background/Description of Item

The City of Westwood has been recognized for its work to create a Community for All Ages. Westwood received a Gold level recognition in November 2023, which acknowledges the work the city has done to become more age friendly. This Gold level award follows the City's recognition as a Bronze level City in October 2022 and as a Silver level City in April 2023.

The Communities for All Ages (CFAA) recognition program was developed by the First Suburbs Coalition and KC Communities for All Ages — two groups convened by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) to develop programs and tools to support first-tier suburbs, help communities respond to a rapid increase in the older adult population, and make communities more welcoming for all age groups. The program is available to all jurisdictions in the nine-county MARC region. Since the program started, 24 local jurisdictions have been recognized for their efforts to make their communities more age friendly.

The program's three sequential levels of achievement reflect increasing degrees of commitment to becoming a CFAA. The Bronze Level recognizes heightened age awareness and requires a resolution or commitment by the city's elected body, along with community presentations and public engagement. The Silver Level adds the completion of an assessment process and requires the community to appoint a resident-based committee to assess related city activities and investments. Gold, the highest level, recognizes communities that formally adopt a CFAA plan based on the assessment completed at the Silver Level. Communities can maintain their recognition status by advancing to higher levels or, once the Gold Level is achieved, continuing to implement new elements of their plans. The program encourages communities to respond positively to changing demographics and adopt policy and program approaches that make the region a great place to live and age well.

The City of Westwood created a Communications Strategic Plan based on the findings and recommendations of the CFAA Bronze and Silver level activities and will implement this Strategic Plan once formally adopted following a community-wide survey and Governing Body Strategic Plan creation in the coming months. The City is also committed to incorporating CFAA principles and Westwood CFAA Task Force representation in its creation of a new City Park, which design process is set to take place over the course of 2024.

More information about the recognition program is available online at www.marc.org/aging-health/communities-all-ages.