Carbondale Age-Friendly Community Initiative (CAFCI)

CAFCI is a caucus of seniors that advocates for intergenerational inclusiveness – public policies that enable citizens of all ages and abilities to be fully included in their communities. CAFCI was the driving force behind AARP designating Carbondale, Colorado, an “Age-Friendly Community” in July of 2019.

WHO
Because CAFCI has no formal structure, officers, dues or physical office, it is best viewed as a caucus of concerned citizens run wholly by volunteers over the age of 60. CAFCI’s steering committee includes Judie Blanchard, Larry Bogatz, Niki Delson, John Hoffman, Ron Kokish, Nancy Peterson, Nicolette Toussaint and Sue Zislis.

WHERE
CACFI meets at Senior Matters in Carbondale’s Third Street Center. Because Roaring Fork Valley towns are too small to contain all the services people need, CAFCI works across an interdependent watershed that includes Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt and Aspen.

WHAT
CAFCI undertake projects and advocates for policies consistent with the “Eight Domains of Livability” framework developed by the World Health Organization and utilized by AARP to help communities plan and change in age-friendly ways. CAFCI’s 2019 assessment of Carbondale’s eight domains is on the Town of Carbondale website: (https://www.carbondalegov.org/residents/for_seniors.php). Among CAFCI’s currently identified issues are:

- Walkability
- Public Transit
- Socialization and Recreation
- Inclusion
- Improved housing access.
WHY
AARP has scored Carbondale at 57 (out of 100) on AARP’s Livability Index based on the Eight Domains of Livability. We can do better. During a November 2019 assembly in which Carbondale Mayor Dan Richardson accepted the Age-Friendly Community designation from AARP, he said, “I say we shoot for 65 next year. How’s that?”

Colorado has the third-fastest aging population in the country. According to the Greater Roaring Fork Regional Housing Study, released in April 2019, the local population of people over 65 years old is expected to increase by 60 percent over the next 10 years.

HOW
CAFCI partners and works with local non-profit, marketplace and governmental entities, including:

  **Senior Matters**, a senior-serving nonprofit, in part underwritten by the Town of Carbondale.

  **The Town of Carbondale**, including the town’s trustees, the mayor, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission, and the town’s Public Works and Parks and Recreation departments.

  **Carbondale Arts**, a nonprofit that brings the community together for art exhibitions, concerts, creative planning, placemaking and Carbondale Creative District events.

  **Carbondale’s senior living facilities**

  **Carbondale Chamber of Commerce**.

WHEN
CAFCI was founded in January 2019 to:

  Make Carbondale’s aging population more visible and vocal in shaping public policy

  Better utilize the energy and talents of older citizens to make Carbondale an increasingly age friendly community.

  Help Town officials to better assess and understand the needs of the aging population

AARP AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES – EIGHT DOMAINS
AARP uses the Eight Domains of Livability to help communities assess their age friendliness. ([https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities](https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities)):

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings  
2. Transportation  
3. Housing  
4. Social participation  
5. Respect and social inclusion  
6. Civic participation and employment  
7. Communication and information  
8. Community and health services
THE LIFELONG COLORADO INITIATIVE
As of July 2019, 13 Colorado counties and municipalities belonged to AARP’s network of age-friendly communities. Most are in the front range, but nearby Eagle and Pitkin counties and the town of Fruita are members. The state of Colorado joined in September of 2018, when then-Governor Hickenlooper announced a statewide program called “Lifelong Colorado”(https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/lifelong-colorado-initiative).