

Age-Friendly Imperial Beach  
2023 Action Plan





# City of Imperial Beach, California

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

825 Imperial Beach Blvd., Imperial Beach, CA 91932 Tel: (619) 423-8303 Fax: (619) 628-1395

**November 2023**

As Mayor of the City of Imperial Beach, I plan to champion and advance this Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Initiative and its following Action Plan steps. This plan will unify our city-wide efforts in making the community even more equitable and supportive for all ages and will help keep Imperial Beach a great place to grow well and age well!

The United States population is aging rapidly, and by 2035, the number of adults older than 65 will be greater than the number of children under 18. At the same time, in the next seven years one of every five people in the country will be 65 or older, which is why it is imperative to create a plan to adapt to this shift in age groups. Our coastal community must prepare for this reality by making the implementation of this Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Action Plan a priority.

Imperial Beach staff worked collaboratively for the past year to guide the development of key goals and action steps that will improve the health and well-being of our community's residents of all ages. Significant resident participation in our outreach activities was essential throughout this process, including 245 responses to our Community Baseline Survey and 67 listening session attendees. Our team also hosted four action planning sessions and heard from 49 participants, in both English and Spanish, helping us to collect foundational data to inform the recommendations on the following pages. We are fortunate for the ongoing assistance from our partners at the County of San Diego HHSA, City of Imperial Beach, San Diego State University's Social Policy Institute, and AARP. The project was supported by a generous grant from the San Diego Foundation.

Collected in the following pages are clear action plan steps to set Imperial Beach on a path to becoming accessible, inclusive, and transformative as a community for individuals of all ages. For me, this vision entails that the activities we enjoy doing now are even more accessible for individuals with different aging journeys. This includes safely traveling throughout town and beyond, enjoying our welcoming outdoor spaces and parks, walking the dog along safe sidewalks, or attending community celebration events alongside residents of all ages and backgrounds. These steps are intended to gradually and sustainably improve the quality of life of our Imperial Beach community over the coming years.

It is my hope that each individual who sees Imperial Beach as part of their community will actively participate in building upon and expanding the range of our support and services. It is the collection of all our individual efforts that will make the biggest difference in transforming Imperial Beach into an Age-Friendly Community.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Paloma Aguirre  
Mayor, City of Imperial Beach





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## Noviembre de 2023

Como alcaldesa de la ciudad de Imperial Beach, tengo la intención de defender y promover la Iniciativa de Imperial Beach Amigable para las Personas Mayores, así como llevar a cabo el subsecuente Plan de Acción. Se pretende concentrar esfuerzos en toda la ciudad para fomentar aún más la equidad y el apoyo para las personas de todas las edades. Asimismo, este plan contribuirá a mantener a Imperial Beach como un excelente lugar para vivir y envejecer de manera plena.

La población de los Estados Unidos está envejeciendo rápidamente, y para el 2035, el número de adultos de 65 años o más será mayor que el número de menores de 18 años. De igual manera, en los próximos siete años, una de cada cinco personas en el país tendrá 65 años o más, por lo que es esencial idear un plan que se adapte a este cambio de los grupos de edad. Nuestra comunidad costera debe estar preparada para esta realidad, y dar prioridad a la implementación del Plan de Acción de Imperial Beach Amigable para las Personas Mayores.

El personal de Imperial Beach trabajó de manera colaborativa durante el año pasado para guiar el desarrollo de objetivos clave, así como tomar las medidas necesarias que mejorarán la salud y el bienestar de los residentes de todas las edades en nuestra comunidad. La significativa participación de los residentes en las actividades de divulgación fue esencial a lo largo de este proceso, donde se obtuvieron 245 respuestas a la Encuesta de Referencia Comunitaria y hubo un total de 67 participantes en la sesión de consulta. Nuestro equipo también organizó cuatro sesiones de planificación de acciones y escuchó a 49 participantes, tanto en inglés como en español, lo cual nos ayudó a recopilar datos esenciales para respaldar las recomendaciones de las siguientes páginas. Tenemos la suerte de seguir contando con la colaboración de nuestros socios la Agencia de Servicios Humanos y de Salud (HHS) del Condado de San Diego, la Ciudad de Imperial Beach, el Instituto de Política Social de la Universidad Estatal de San Diego y la Asociación Estadounidense de Jubilados (AARP). El proyecto recibió el apoyo de la Fundación de San Diego mediante un generoso subsidio.

A continuación se encuentran las medidas claras del plan de acción para encaminar a Imperial Beach hacia la accesibilidad, la inclusión y la transformación a una comunidad de todas las edades. Personalmente, esta visión implica que las actividades que disfrutamos actualmente sean aún más accesibles para personas en diferentes etapas de la vida. Esto incluye viajar de forma segura por toda la ciudad y al más allá fuera de la ciudad, disfrutar de los acogedores espacios al aire libre y parques, pasear al perro por aceras seguras o asistir a festejos comunitarios junto a residentes de todas las edades y orígenes. Estas medidas tienen como objetivo mejorar de manera gradual y sostenible la calidad de vida de la comunidad de Imperial Beach en los próximos años.

Espero que cada persona que considere Imperial Beach como su comunidad participe activamente en la construcción y ampliación de nuestras ofertas de apoyo y servicios. Es la suma de todos los esfuerzos individuales la que hará la mayor diferencia en la transformación de Imperial Beach en una Comunidad Amigable para las Personas Mayores.

Atentamente,

La Honorable Paloma Aguirre  
Alcaldesa de la Ciudad de  
Imperial Beach



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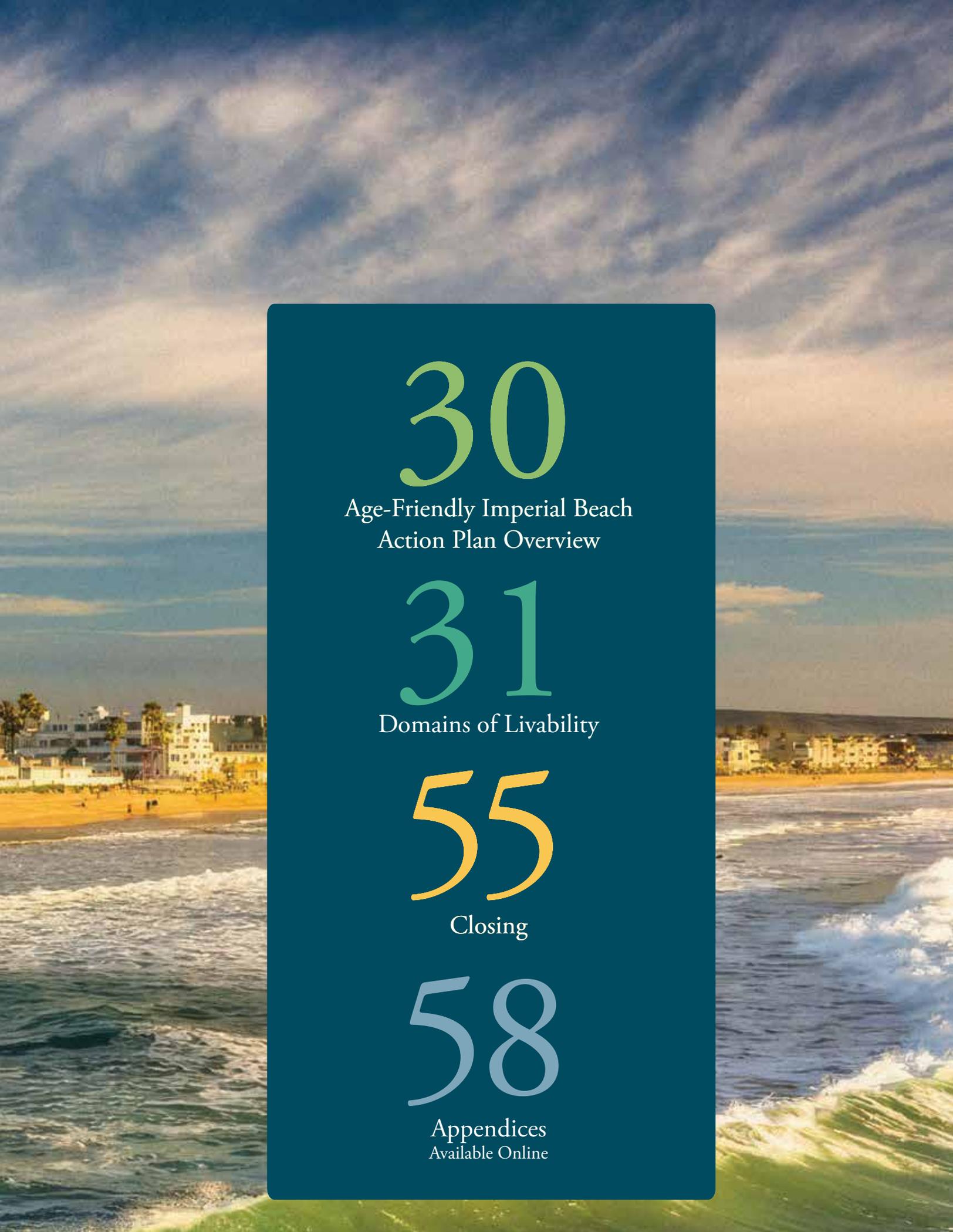
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# Executive Summary

Imperial Beach, California became part of AARP's Livable Communities Network in 2022. This initiative is an affiliate of the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, an international effort launched in 2006 to help cities prepare for the growing population of older adults. AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities targets improvements in eight domains that influence the health and quality of life of older adults. Over the course of the past year, with input from a diverse cross-section of the City of Imperial Beach residents, the Age-Friendly Imperial Beach project team has prepared this Action Plan to help make the City of Imperial Beach a more vibrant, equitable and livable community for all ages.

During the process, residents were asked to complete an online assessment of livability perceptions and were invited to attend one of four listening sessions to provide deeper perspective on what was already working for older adults, and where there are gaps. Results of the survey and listening sessions were presented to residents for verification and additional input, then to City staff so they could prepare to mobilize next steps.

City staff, County staff, and AARP representatives with support of the Age-Friendly Imperial Beach project team, determined that the baseline survey results, and initial input pointed to six community-tailored domains of livability most relevant to the City of Imperial Beach:

- » Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
- » Transportation
- » Social, Physical, and Educational Support
- » Communication & Information
- » Housing
- » Volunteerism, Military, and Civic Engagement

Throughout the Action Planning Sessions, the community gave input on suggested actions to fulfill the proposed goals with recommendations on possible action steps. The themes of livability determined through community input were incorporated into the action plan and may be summarized as:

- » **Safety:** Increase lighting and traffic calming measures; e-Bike training; improve the City of Imperial Beach’s walkability with special attention to access to crosswalks and sidewalks; and education on safety as we age, home repairs, and modifications
- » **Outreach and Communication:** Utilize a comprehensive marketing strategy; promote services, events, and activities; and increase the visibility and communication from the City of Imperial Beach and elected officials
- » **Activities:** Develop more community events; intergenerational opportunities; and expanded programs and classes for older adults with a varying degree of mobility
- » **Community Building:** Offer volunteer opportunities; create a welcoming community for all; increase access to convenient transportation; and promote a clean and healthy environment

The draft Action Plan was available for public review and comment from September 15 – October 1, 2023. The Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Action Plan clearly identifies the vision, goals, potential actions to be accomplished by elected officials, municipal staff, city residents and numerous community/civic organizations working together towards the common goal of making the City of Imperial Beach a vibrant, equitable, livable community for all ages.

Oversight and accountability for implementation is contingent on approval by City Council. An annual review of implementation progress at an open City Council meeting is called for in the action plan. A summary of the goals and activities is provided in the next Domain Goals and Actions At-A-Glance section.



**Buckle your seatbelts and join us on our Age-Friendly Imperial Beach journey!**

# Resumen Ejecutivo

En el 2022, Imperial Beach, California, se convirtió en parte de la Red de Comunidades Habitables de AARP. Esta iniciativa está afiliada con la Red Mundial de Estados y Comunidades Amigables a las Personas Mayores de la Organización Mundial de la Salud, una iniciativa internacional lanzada en el 2006 para ayudar a las ciudades a prepararse para la creciente población de adultos mayores. La Red de Estados y Comunidades Amigables a las Personas Mayores de AARP apunta a mejorar ocho ámbitos que influyen en la salud y la calidad de vida de los adultos mayores. A lo largo del último año, con aportes de una variada muestra transversal de los residentes de la Ciudad de Imperial Beach, el equipo del proyecto de Imperial Beach Amigable para las Personas Mayores ha preparado este Plan de Acción para convertir a la Ciudad de Imperial Beach en una comunidad más vibrante, equitativa y habitable para personas de todas las edades.

Durante este proceso, se les solicitó a los residentes que contestaran un cuestionario en línea sobre sus percepciones de la calidad de vida y se les invitó a participar en una de las cuatro sesiones de consulta para obtener una perspectiva más detallada sobre lo que está funcionando actualmente para los adultos mayores y conocer lo que hay que mejorar. Los resultados de la encuesta y las sesiones de consulta fueron presentados a los residentes para su corroboración y obtener aportes adicionales, para que luego el personal municipal pudiera prepararse para poner en marcha los pasos siguientes.

El ayuntamiento, el personal del condado y los representantes de AARP, junto con el apoyo del equipo del proyecto de Imperial Beach Amigable para las Personas Mayores, concluyeron que, a partir de los resultados de la encuesta y las aportaciones iniciales, se identificaron seis áreas específicas sobre la calidad de vida de la comunidad de mayor relevancia para la Ciudad de Imperial Beach:

- » Espacios al Aire Libre y Edificios
- » Transporte
- » Apoyo Social, Físico y Educativo
- » Comunicación e Información
- » Vivienda
- » Voluntariado, Servicio Militar y Participación Cívica

A lo largo de las Sesiones de Planificación de Acciones, la comunidad sugirió medidas para cumplir con los objetivos planteados, y recomendó posibles pasos a seguir. Los temas determinados sobre calidad de vida a través de la contribución de la comunidad se han incorporaron al plan de acción y pueden resumirse de la siguiente manera:

- » **Seguridad:** Tomar medidas para incrementar la iluminación y disminuir el tráfico; entrenamiento en bicicletas eléctricas; mejorar la circulación peatonal en Imperial Beach, poniendo atención al acceso a cruces y aceras; así como educar acerca de la seguridad a medida que envejecemos en temas de reparaciones y modificaciones en el hogar.
- » **Divulgación y Comunicación:** Utilizar una estrategia de marketing integral; promocionar servicios, eventos y actividades; y aumentar la visibilidad y la comunicación de la Ciudad de Imperial Beach y los funcionarios electos.
- » **Actividades:** Desarrollar más eventos comunitarios; oportunidades intergeneracionales; así como programas y clases adicionales para adultos mayores de diferentes niveles de movilidad.
- » **Desarrollo Comunitario:** Ofrecer oportunidades de voluntariado; crear una comunidad acogedora para todos; aumentar el acceso al transporte eficiente; y promover un entorno limpio y saludable.

El borrador del Plan de Acción estuvo disponible para revisión y comentario públicos del 15 de septiembre al 1 de octubre de 2023. El Plan de Acción de Imperial Beach Amigable para las Personas Mayores identifica de manera clara la visión, los objetivos y las posibles acciones a tomar por los funcionarios electos, el ayuntamiento, los residentes de la ciudad y las varias organizaciones comunitarias y cívicas que trabajan juntos hacia el objetivo común de convertir la Ciudad de Imperial Beach en una comunidad dinámica, equitativa y habitable para personas de todas las edades.

La supervisión y responsabilidad de la implementación depende de la aprobación del Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad. El plan de acción establece realizar una revisión anual del avance de la implementación del mismo durante una reunión pública del Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad. Se proporcionará una síntesis de los objetivos y actividades en la sección Resumen Rápido de los Objetivos de Áreas y Acciones.



¡Abróchense los cinturones y únanse a nuestro viaje a Imperial Beach Amigable para las Personas Mayores!

# Domain Goals and Actions At-A-Glance

## Domain 1 Outdoor Spaces & Buildings



### Goal 1

Imperial Beach Senior Community Center: Increase opportunities, access, and improve the visibility.



#### Action Steps

- » Research and apply for capital improvement/development grant(s) to update the physical space and function of the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Increase variety of programming during the hours of operation of the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Create an outdoor patio space for older adults to gather within the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Allow community members to reserve and rent various spaces within the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.



### Goal 2

Residents will have well-maintained, safe, and active public spaces near where they live.



#### Action Steps

- » Offer outdoor fitness programming, such as dance and Tai Chi, in Veterans Park.
- » Host age-friendly and accessible outdoor events in various locations throughout the city.
- » Create an intergenerational community garden with special consideration for pollinators where feasible.
- » Enforce and educate against public intoxication.
- » Educate residents and visitors on dog leash laws in Imperial Beach.
- » Create a small dog park area at Veterans Park.



### Goal 3

## Make Imperial Beach more walkable for all ages and abilities.

- » Review and increase pedestrian safety on main thoroughfares and near bus stops.
- » Identify potential areas to install additional benches and wayfinding signage throughout the city.
- » Create wider sidewalks meeting ADA requirements, where feasible.



#### Action Steps

- » Consider “Slow Zones” with appropriate signage for increased safety and walkability near the Senior Community Center and Senior Housing developments.
- » Encourage older adult community volunteers, with varying degrees of functionality, to complete a “Walk Audit” from AARP, compile the information and provide data to the City of Imperial Beach to inform future improvements.



### Goal 4

## Promote a clean and healthy environment in Imperial Beach.

- » Facilitate community clean-up volunteer event(s) annually.
- » Provide information, demonstrations, and opportunities for coaching to the older adult community on how to utilize the City of Imperial Beach’s non-emergency incident reporting, complaints, and service requests app, “My Imperial Beach App,” to report maintenance concerns.
- » Promote and provide free trees for residents to increase the shade canopy in Imperial Beach when available.
- » Offer free community shredding, electronic, large item(s), paint disposal, and/or hazardous waste events.



#### Action Steps



## Domain 2 Transportation



### Goal 1

Support enhanced traffic flow to increase safety throughout Imperial Beach.

- » Install traffic calming measures on main thoroughfares (i.e., speed bumps, stop signs, roundabouts, flashing lights, narrowing of streets), to slow traffic.
- » Increase speed e-signage to enforce safe driving practices.
- » Offer regular bike safety and e-bike safety and skills training workshops.
- » Research the feasibility of installing cameras at high-traffic intersections.
- » Sync traffic lights on main roadways for maximum traffic flow.
- » Proactively communicate planned traffic disruptions, via multiple communication channels, to residents.



### Goal 2

Expand the mobility choices for older adults in Imperial Beach.

- » Distribute the County of San Diego’s “Ride Well to Age Well Guide” transportation resource.
- » Consider low-cost transportation service designed for older adults and individuals with disabilities.
- » Host an Imperial Beach-tailored transportation options workshop for the community in partnership with the County of San Diego.
- » Communicate and strategize with MTS to promote and ensure adequate bus routes.



  
Goal 3

Older adult residents can access public transit and utilize best practices when driving.

  
Action Steps

- » Share information related to public transit training courses for individuals who are not comfortable/confident in riding public transit when available.
- » Invite a community partner to conduct educational courses on safe driving best practices for older adults.
- » Consider a shuttle system within IB to connect individuals to public transit and local commerce.



## Domain 3 Social, Physical, and Educational Support



### Goal 1

Coordinate and expand active aging programming offered in Imperial Beach.

- 
- Action Steps
- » Launch a community walking group.
  - » Provide programming for residents with different levels of mobility.
  - » Research opportunities to partner with agencies for parks and recreation programs.
  - » Build community by providing space for social clubs that focus on residents' interests and desires.
  - » Collaborate with local organizations to host a variety of life-long learning opportunities.



### Goal 2

Increase opportunities and improve visibility of health and wellness support services and education.

- 
- Action Steps
- » Host an annual Health and Wellness Fair.
  - » Identify and promote the day/time/location that all health and wellness, recreation, and social activities are available to older adults in Imperial Beach.
  - » Offer First Aid and CPR Certification classes in Imperial Beach when available.
  - » Promote awareness and access to healthy food via the donation-based congregate meal site, offered at the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center, outside nonprofit organization's food distributions, and farmer's market.

  
Goal 3

Enhance awareness, prevention, and support for residents concerned about or experiencing mild cognitive impairment (MCI).



Action Steps

- » Incorporate the “Dementia Friends USA” training for all necessary city staff and promote to interested community members.
- » Offer brain fitness classes/activities for older adults when available.
- » Collaborate with a local Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD) organization to host an educational workshop on ADRD.



## Domain 4 Communication & Information



### Goal 1

Strengthen consideration for residents of all ages in city activities and services.



#### Action Steps

- » Utilize inclusive marketing strategies on all promotional materials, i.e., large print, contrast in colors, and stating, “All ages welcome!”
- » Offer residents the ability to sign up to receive regular City Council communications to stay informed.
- » Host scheduled opportunities to meet with city officials to learn about city activities and services.
- » Post informational and directional signage for clear access to City Council meetings.



### Goal 2

Promote awareness and knowledge of available resources for older adults in Imperial Beach.



#### Action Steps

- » Host community resource information.
- » Enhance the coordination and messaging of communications from the city.
- » Consider community bulletin boards for information distribution.
- » Partner with an interested party to create and distribute a comprehensive informational flyer to promote available resources for residents.
- » Promote major city events and activities to local media, including the Eagle & Times.



### Goal 3

Practice comprehensive outreach and communication techniques to reach all ages in both English and Spanish.



#### Action Steps

- » Produce both digital and print media outreach materials in both English and Spanish—when feasible.
- » Distribute promotion and outreach materials to the community at places they gather and frequent such as markets, restaurants, and the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Provide community information on the City’s social media platforms.
- » Promote events to the community and increase frequency of promotion closer to the date.



## Domain 5 Housing



### Goal 1

Help ensure all residents have access to housing which is safe for older adults and accessible for all ability levels.



#### Action Steps

- » Host educational workshops with interested organizations on home safety modifications for both inside and outside the home.
- » Consider increasing community street lighting where feasible.
- » Host educational workshops on housing issues such as Fair Housing Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and community resources.
- » Offer appointment times for personal housing resource consultations subject to staff availability.
- » Research the feasibility of developing additional low-income housing units for older adults in Imperial Beach.



### Goal 2

Support opportunities for residents to create and expand housing options.



#### Action Steps

- » Identify existing housing opportunities and subsequent gaps.
- » Encourage entities to address the gap areas in housing availability.
- » Provide educational materials for homeowners to understand the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) development process.

  
Goal 3

Ensure Imperial Beach maintains a neighborly, small-town beach community vibe.

  
Action  
Steps

- » Emphasize the importance of San Diego County Sheriff's Department patrols near parks and beaches for an increased sense of safety.
- » Host intergenerational community events where people of all ages can enjoy.



## Domain 6 Volunteerism, Military, and Civic Engagement



### Goal 1

Imperial Beach residents have opportunities to share their interests and talents.



#### Action Steps

- » Create a city-wide volunteer program for all ages. Opportunities can range from community clean-up events to hosting a class/workshop at the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Encourage neighborhood volunteer-based “Repair Café” - where volunteers mentor individuals who want to learn and complete bike, small appliance, and miscellaneous repairs.



### Goal 2

Celebrate and support the military community.



#### Action Steps

- » Hold military appreciation events in conjunction with community partners at Veterans Park.
- » Explore the opportunity of offering a shuttle service from base to event(s) to ease transit/access concerns.
- » Collaborate with military partners and school districts to provide information to create a “Welcome Kit” for new residents that is available on the city website. Include local businesses, basic services, events, and contact information.
- » Consider creating a Veterans Committee to support outreach efforts that impact military families in Imperial Beach.



### Goal 3

Imperial Beach offers a variety of options for residents to get involved and make meaningful connections in the community.



#### Action Steps

- » Make available the County-developed “Get Connected! A guide to Becoming Engaged in the Community” and “Ways to Engage Guide.”
- » Host an information table at community events. Consider including information on “Ways to Get Involved” at city events.
- » Create cultural exchange opportunities, such as cultural education events, music in the park, and holiday celebrations.
- » Research the feasibility of restarting the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) federal volunteer program.



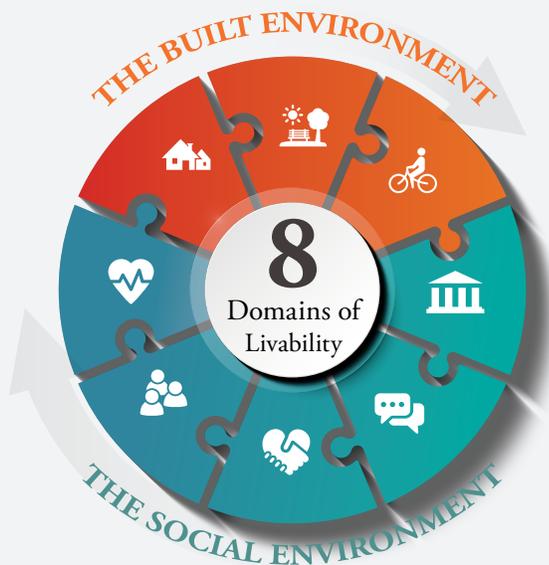
# Introduction to the Action Plan

The City of Imperial Beach, California became part of AARP’s Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities on October 20th, 2022. The City received a generous grant from the San Diego Foundation Age-Friendly Communities Program, funded by Del Mar Healthcare, Inc, and started working with the San Diego State University Social Policy Institute (SPI) in November 2022. Together, with the support from the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services (AIS), and AARP, the Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Project Team was formed. Our team’s goal was to engage residents, who are 50 years of age or older, caregivers, and service providers, to assess our current strengths and areas where we can improve to create a dynamic and vibrant Imperial Beach.

The City of Imperial Beach, in partnership with AARP who is an affiliate of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Global Network of the Age-Friendly Communities, is an international effort launched in 2006 to help cities prepare for the growing population of older adults. The belief of AARP’s Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities is that “well-designed, age-friendly communities foster economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents of all ages.”

## What is an Age-Friendly City?

An age-friendly city is a community in which people can grow up and grow old with ease. The WHO determined specific environmental, economic, and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults. These are called the “8 Domains of Livability,” which can be categorized as both the “built” and “social” environment and are noted as the following:



### THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Housing
- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation

### THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

- Civic Participation and Employment
- Communication and Information
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Social Participation
- Community Support and Health Services

## Age-Friendly Imperial Beach: What does it look like?

Our goal is to improve the quality of life for every resident as demographics change. People of all ages will benefit from the adoption of policies and programs such as making neighborhoods walkable, feature transportation options, enable access to key services, provide opportunities to participate in community activities, and to support housing that is affordable and adaptable. Age-Friendly Imperial Beach looks at equity and aims to work to eliminate disparities to serve all residents. The City of Imperial Beach is committed to providing meaningful and relevant services to residents of all ages, with special attention to keeping older residents active, engaged, and healthy.

## City of Imperial Beach Profile

Imperial Beach is a small residential coastal city just over four-square miles in size, that also holds the distinction of being the most southwesterly city in the continental United States. We have four miles of beaches that make up our western border with the Pacific Ocean. That coastline stretches to the south where it meets the United States border with the country of Mexico. Our city's north side is flanked by the city of Coronado and the southern portion of the San Diego Bay. And, to our east, we are adjacent to the City of San Diego and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, which houses Border Field State Park.

Imperial Beach is known for its beach-centric, easy-going, laid-back vibe, and has a community that is rich in culture and diversity. This last fact is evidenced by a population in which 45-51% (depending on the source) speak a non-English language at home. The majority of our citizens are year-round residents. The city has strong military roots and houses the Naval Outlying Field Imperial Beach which is a Navy facility for helicopters known as “The Helicopter Capital of the World.”

The city hosts miles of separated bike lanes, including a portion of the Bayshore Bikeway along its northern edge. With very little variation in elevation around the city and good walkways throughout, the city is quite walkable and is home to numerous scenic trails including those that go along and through the Tijuana Estuary National Park. The beach is easily accessible, and the seaside vendors represent a variety of local microbreweries, eclectic shops, diverse restaurants, coffee houses, and specialized services. There are places of worship representing most denominations.

Imperial Beach is served by two school districts, South Bay Union School District and Sweetwater Union High School District.

The city is 95 percent developed and the new construction projects are primarily infill development.

## History

The land that Imperial Beach sits on was originally part of an 1846 land grant from the Spanish Crown and sits on the traditional territory of the Kumeyaay people. It was initially known as South San Diego Beach in the late 1800's. The city's history is closely tied to the establishment of the Coronado Beach Company, which played a pivotal role in developing the area as a recreational destination. In the early 1900's, the name was changed to Imperial Beach to reflect its proximity to the Imperial Valley, an important agricultural region in the area. The city incorporated in 1956.

During the early 20th century, the city attracted visitors seeking respite from the bust of city life, leading to the construction of the iconic Imperial Beach fishing pier in 1909. The pier quickly became the centerpiece of the community, attracting locals and tourists alike. The pier has since been rebuilt on several occasions with the latest iteration built in the 1960's, which was destroyed in a storm and rebuilt in the 1980's.

The construction of the United States Naval Air Station (now known as the Naval Outlying Field Imperial Beach) during World War II brought further development and population growth to the area. The influx of military personnel and their families contributed to the expansion of the community and the diversification of its population. Just over the city limits to the north, in Coronado, is the Silver Strand Training Complex, the premier training facility for U.S. Special Operations Forces.

In recent years, Imperial Beach has experienced a revitalization and renewed focus on preserving its natural beauty. The city has taken steps to protect its coastline, emphasizing environmental stewardship and maintaining a sustainable coastal ecosystem. The efforts to enhance the city's infrastructure and promote tourism have resulted in an increased appeal for residents and visitors alike.





## Projected Demographic Changes

Across the United States, by 2035, the number of adults older than 65 will be greater than the number of children and youth under 18 years of age. The City of Imperial Beach is anticipated to have roughly a 7% increase in its population by 2050 based on projections calculated by SANDAG. This future population growth is modest given that the community is nearly completely built out. Currently our 55 and older population makes up approximately 27% of the population. Imperial Beach currently has a median age in the mid-thirties. This is slightly lower than that of San Diego County, and the United States, and therefore forecast statistics may trend at a slightly later date than is forecasted for the county and country.

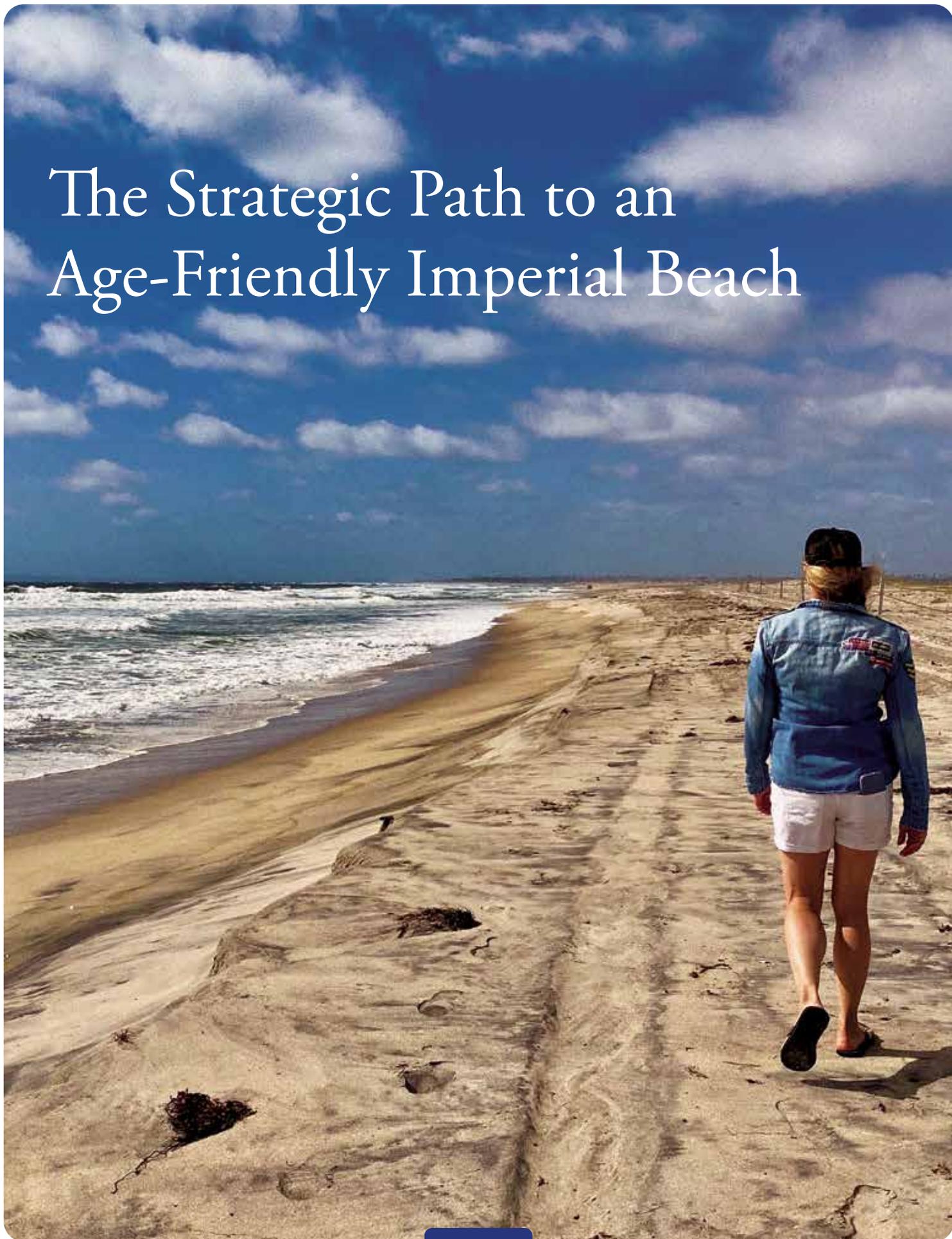


## Imperial Beach Population Trends

Total Population; %55 and older

- » 2020- 28,055; 26.8%
- » 2025- 29,314; 25.6%
- » 2035- 29,522; 27.5%
- » 2050- 30,077; 30.5%

# The Strategic Path to an Age-Friendly Imperial Beach



The City of Imperial Beach is committed to becoming a dynamic Age-Friendly Community through investment in and support of current and future generations of older adults. This age-friendly initiative will bring improvements and innovations to make the city more livable for residents of all ages. The following section maps out how the Blueprint (or process) developed by SDSU's Social Policy Institute, is being led by city staff to create a more Age-Friendly Imperial Beach.

## Impetus for the Plan

Since becoming an incorporated city in 1956, Imperial Beach has experienced a profound transformation. The city has established and maintained a significant level of involvement with civic-minded residents and a large military community. Additionally, Imperial Beach has a longstanding history of big wave surfing, which has contributed to the active lifestyle of many residents and to the desire to improve the environment in the coastal community.

After learning of the range of community enhancements and transformations spearheaded by the Age-Friendly Communities movement, city leadership reached out to learn more about the process and explore partnership opportunities. After careful deliberation, Imperial Beach leadership made the decision to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities in November 2022.

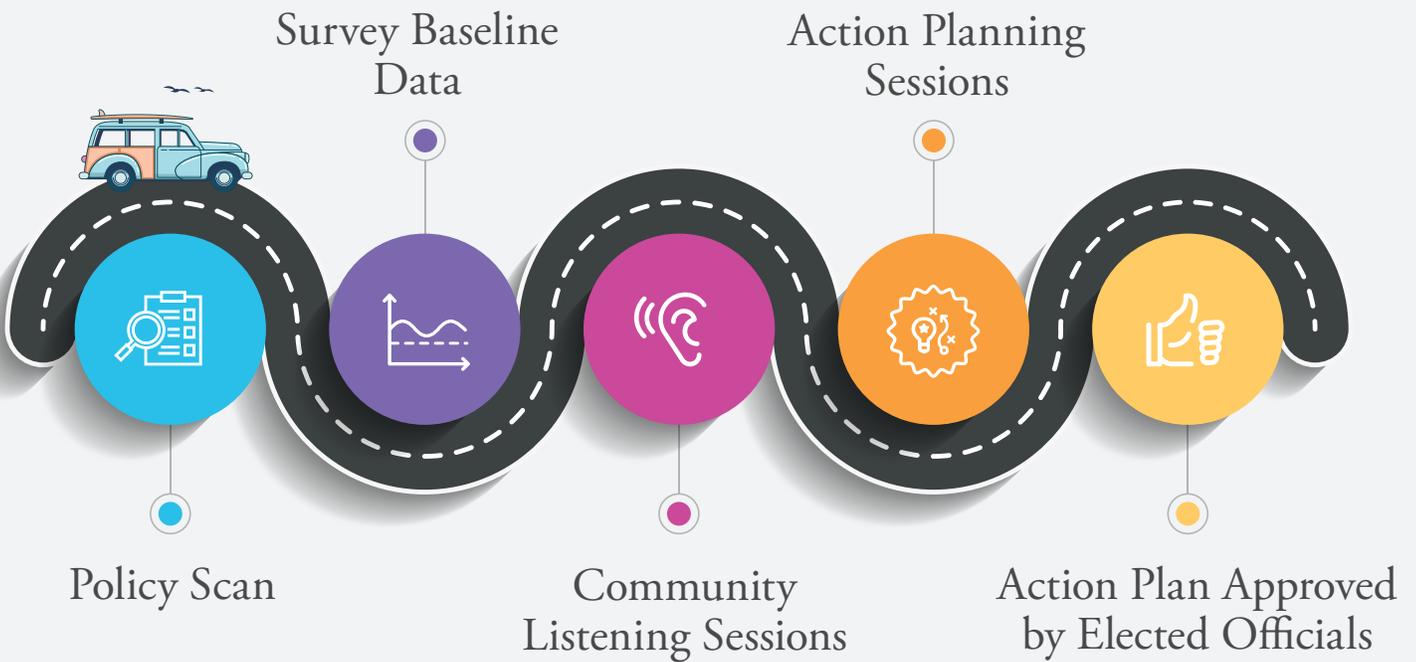
The City of Imperial Beach hosted an Age-Friendly Imperial Beach hybrid (in-person and virtual) launch event on January 12, 2023, at the Imperial Beach Library to announce the initiative and gain community awareness and support. Residents and service providers shared their thoughts on what makes Imperial Beach a great place to live—and what would make it even better. Mayor Paloma Aguirre shared her support and vision for Age-Friendly Imperial Beach as a citywide initiative to grow well and age well.





San Diego Foundation supports efforts by creating a local peer Age-Friendly network and providing funding to give San Diego County residents the best opportunity to age well, thrive, and feel supported by their community. Del Mar Healthcare, Inc., through the San Diego Foundation, provided funding and support for SDSU’s Social Policy Institute<sup>1</sup> to bring their experience in working with age-friendly communities; network of resources available through the Center for Excellence in Aging & Longevity<sup>2</sup>; and considerable expertise and experience in meeting the needs of older adults.

## Blueprint For Building Livable Communities



<sup>1</sup> SDSU Social Policy Institute, part of the College of Health and Human Services: [www.sdsusocialpolicyinstitute.org](http://www.sdsusocialpolicyinstitute.org)

<sup>2</sup> Center for Excellence in Aging & Longevity (CEAL), an initiative of SDSU Social Policy Institute and SDSU School of Social Work: [ceal.sdsu.edu](http://ceal.sdsu.edu)

## How the Action Plan was Developed

The City of Imperial Beach senior staff were instrumental in launching the Age-Friendly Imperial Beach initiative and took the lead in developing, in partnership with the community, the following Action Plan recommendations. The action steps that follow are catered specifically to support and increase equity and access to resources for older adults and residents of all ages throughout the City of Imperial Beach.

The Age-Friendly Imperial Beach team followed the steps required by AARP for certification, as outlined by San Diego State University Social Policy Institute (SPI). SPI was selected to guide the city throughout the Age-Friendly development process, alongside requesting input at multiple junctures from service providers, caregivers, and community members.

The steps of engagement and alignment on the journey were accomplished as follows:





## City and Community Involvement

### AGE-FRIENDLY IMPERIAL BEACH COMMUNITY BASELINE SURVEY

Launched on December 17, 2022, and closed on January 29, 2023, the Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Community Baseline Survey collected demographic information and provided an opportunity for respondents to provide direct feedback on eight overarching domains of livability. A “domain of livability” is a specific factor which influences the health and quality of life of older adults. A total of 245 surveys were completed and 158 met the criteria to be analyzed from residents 50 and older. The survey was made available in online and paper versions, and available in English and Spanish, though most surveys that were completed were in English. Age-Friendly Imperial Beach staff attended various community events to request survey feedback from residents. In addition, outreach was completed through a variety of aging network outlets, including AARP social media blast to City of Imperial Beach members, AIS, Imperial Beach Senior Community Center, SDSU SPI and the city’s website and social media accounts.

### LISTENING SESSIONS

A total of four **Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Listening Sessions** were held throughout February and March 2023. These sessions were a direct follow-up to the Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Community Survey and were designed to allow for direct feedback from stakeholders on the most significant challenges facing them in their community. Over these four sessions, there were 67 total attendees. Sessions were held at Oneonta Elementary School, Fleet Reserve Association, Imperial Beach Library, and Bayside Elementary School.

Notably, Imperial Beach had a high turnout of elected officials and city representatives at these listening sessions, and participants often stayed to continue conversations.

## ACTION PLANNING SESSIONS

The priorities identified throughout the Community Baseline Survey and Listening Sessions were utilized by SDSU SPI and city staff to create an initial draft vision, goals, and sample actions for six community-specific domains of livability. To reaffirm that the Age-Friendly Imperial Beach project team accurately “heard” the community to the fullest extent, community members were invited to provide feedback on the Action Plan recommendations. Community members were able to suggest additional action plan steps, as well as reaffirm those previously indicated. The themes of livability determined through community input were incorporated into the action plan and may be summarized as:

- » **Safety:** Increase lighting and traffic calming measures; e-Bike training; improve the City of Imperial Beach’s walkability with special attention to access to crosswalks and sidewalks; and education on safety as we age, home repairs, and modifications
- » **Outreach and Communication:** Utilize a comprehensive marketing strategy; promote services, events, and activities; and increase the visibility and communication from the City of Imperial Beach and elected officials
- » **Activities:** Develop more community events; intergenerational opportunities; and expanded programs and classes for older adults with a varying degree of mobility
- » **Community Building:** Offer volunteer opportunities; create a welcoming community for all; increase access to convenient transportation; and promote a clean and healthy environment



A total of 49 residents attended the sessions, with four sessions hosted in various locations. To gain as representative a sample as possible given the scope of the project, oversampling was conducted. This included one group conducted in Spanish with eight in attendance. Each session was 90 minutes and had a mix of residents that had previously interacted with Age-Friendly Imperial Beach, first-encounter participants, and community service providers that live in Imperial Beach.

Overall, the recommended vision and suggested goals were agreeable to residents with slight modifications, and many identified which specific ones they felt would impact the community the most. Participants indicated which proposed actions were not aligned, priority actions, and suggested several proposed actions, which can be found in the discussion summary by domain in the following paragraphs.

## **PUBLIC REVIEW**

The draft Action Plan was released for public comment from September 15 - October 1, 2023. This review was intended to confirm and validate the public input gathered through the community survey, listening sessions, and action planning sessions.

Public comments that were specific as to community member or neighborhood needs were passed to the city staff for review and consideration for follow-up. All public comments, other than ones indicating minor typos/grammatical errors, were shared with the City Council for review and consideration when the Action Plan was presented for approval on November 15, 2023.

“Imperial Beach has improved a lot since the 1980s, but the lifestyle in the area continues to retain its old, ‘small-town beach’ feeling.”

*-Older Adult Resident from Action Planning Session*

# Action Plan Oversight and Accountability

Accountability for and sustainability of carrying out the Action Plan steps involves the following:

1. Approval (by vote) of the City of Imperial Beach City Council
2. Review, adapt, and operationalize Action Steps
3. An “Implementation Team,” comprised of City Staff, Community Providers, and residents will assist with implementation and monitor progress
4. Assign a city staff position (or contract with an external provider) to implement the Continuous Quality Improvement system, adapted to the City of Imperial Beach by SDSU’s Social Policy Institute
5. Calendar and deliver preliminary progress reports after year one and two and a final report to City Council detailing progress made, barriers (if any encountered), unintended innovations, and impact of implementation on residents after year three

The Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Action Plan specifies suggested time frames for the steps to be accomplished by elected officials, municipal staff, city residents and numerous community/ civic organizations working together towards the common goal to realize the Age-Friendly vision. Although the Goals and Objectives/Actions are presented at-a-glance in the Executive Summary (pages 6-7), and elaborated in the context of constituent input, the full Working Plan is found in the Action Plan itself.



Once approved by the City Council, senior city staff will be accountable to the goals and action steps (with support and assistance as desired by community providers and residents). While many of the potential actions listed were directly suggested by Imperial Beach's older adults and align with best practices of other Age-Friendly municipalities, they may be adapted, changed, or added to as the needs and resources of the city warrant. Note that some actions are already underway, others are planned for short-term implementation using existing resources, and a few actions may require bold innovation coupled with new staffing and additional resources as feasible.

Upon review, senior city staff may adapt actions and timeline as needed to align with the City's Master Plans, the California Master Plan on Aging, City of Imperial Beach policy priorities and the annual budget. Essential steps in implementation require city staff to operationalize key tasks and calendar for planning purposes and accountability. This will include developing an evaluation plan for regular progress reporting and tracking of metrics, or measures of success.

An annual progress report will be prepared and delivered to the City Council and AARP in December 2024 and December 2025 with a final report in December 2026.





## Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Action Plan Overview

The Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Action Plan was developed to increase livability with vitality and equity for people of all ages, with particular attention paid to the City’s evolving needs based on the rapidly increasing percentage of adults 50 years old and older. This plan is intended to complement, rather than duplicate, existing City and County Plans, as well as California’s Master Plan on Aging.<sup>3</sup>

The Age-Friendly Imperial Beach project team gathered data from the community through a series of community engagement activities, including an Age-Friendly Imperial Beach launch event, community baseline survey, in-person listening sessions, and in-person action planning sessions. Additionally, the team analyzed data from the AARP Livability Index for the City of Imperial Beach, national best practices, and conducted a policy scan from adjacent city documents and plans.

<sup>3</sup> CA Master Plan for Aging. <https://mpa.aging.ca.gov/>

# Domains of Livability

The pages that follow lay out the plans in each domain area using the following template:

## Domain Definition

Details what this domain is/entails; shared language helps to build shared understanding.

## Vision

The desired outcome once this plan is complete; describes future aspirations.

## What We Heard

Key findings from the baseline assessment survey, community listening sessions, policy scan and other relevant existing data.

## What We Know

Key assets that are already in place and available to build on; includes programs, services, city plans and facts (data) regarding the population.

## What We Will Do

Goals (what we want to achieve) and action steps (what will result or be in place) for each domain.

# Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

**Definition** Outdoor Spaces & Buildings focuses on the availability of safe and accessible recreation locations and public facilities.

**Vision** Imperial Beach is a coastal community with well-maintained, enjoyable, and accessible outdoor active and engaging spaces.



## What We Heard

Older adults in Imperial Beach enjoy the coastal climate, essence of a classic surf town, and appreciate the access to parks and outdoor activities. When it comes to outdoor spaces and facilities, older adults particularly need level, clearly defined sidewalks (to help avoid fall risk), well-lit areas (to increase sense of safety), and want to have well-maintained and patrolled public spaces.

### **Aging with Vitality**

- » The community desires an enhanced and upgraded Imperial Beach Senior Community Center to accommodate larger groups and programs.
- » People love that the weather in Imperial Beach is conducive to enjoying the outdoors nearly year-round; they want access to additional public spaces and activities that are appropriate for older adults.
- » Residents would like to utilize outdoor amenities, such as a swimming pool, pickleball/tennis courts, comfort stations, and easier ADA access to the beach.

### **Enhance the Community Function and Design with Age-Friendly Principles**

- » Lack of sidewalks or walkways in poor condition, are a major concern for personal safety and accessing the outdoors, especially given increased fall risk for older adults.
- » Consistent lighting, seating, wayfinding signage, and shade on thoroughfares greatly increases a sense of safety and creates a supportive environment for older adults.

- » Crossing the streets in Imperial Beach is a concern. Residents would like to see additional crosswalks, stop signs, and extended crossing times and visual/audio cues to allow for varying degrees of mobility.
- » The on-going Imperial Beach transboundary pollution crisis from the Tijuana River negatively impacts the community.



## What We Know

The City of Imperial Beach is the southernmost beach town in California with 3.5 miles of uncrowded, white-sand beaches and big waves that are great for surfing! The Tijuana River National Estuary<sup>4</sup> is located in the city and is the largest coastal wetland in Southern California. It features a visitor center, pathways, and is great for birdwatching, biking, and hiking.

The City of Imperial Beach Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department began in June 2021.<sup>5</sup> The department was established to serve residents and visitors in improving their health, wellness, and quality of life through programs and services. It operates a Senior Community Center; Sports Park Community Recreation Center which includes a skate park, play structure, and baseball/softball fields; and a variety of parks- both beach front and inland. Imperial Beach also boasts a newly remodeled public library and an iconic wood pier that extends into the Pacific Ocean. In addition to contracting city law enforcement with the San Diego County Sheriff Department, the city has a team of Community Park Rangers who actively patrol parks, trails, recreation facilities, and beach areas across the city.

### City Infrastructure in Place

- » The City of Imperial Beach operates seven different parks with picnic areas, playgrounds, fitness equipment, and walkways for all residents to enjoy.
- » Two Community Centers- Imperial Beach Senior Community Center and the Sports Park Community Recreation Center.
- » The Parks, Rec & Community Services Department assists residents and visitors with obtaining permits for special events taking place in the city's public areas.

<sup>4</sup> Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. [www.trnerr.org](http://www.trnerr.org)

<sup>5</sup> Imperial Beach Parks, Rec & Community Services. <https://imperialbeachca.gov/168/About-Us>

- » Several popular outdoor community events are hosted in collaboration with the city annually, such as: 4th of July Celebration, National Night Out, Symphony by the Sea, and Spooktacular Trunk or Treat.
- » There is a dog park between Veterans Park near the upper soccer field.
- » San Diego County operates the Imperial Beach Branch Library, Monday-Saturday, in conjunction with the Friends of Imperial Beach Branch Library.
- » Imperial Beach Fire-Rescue Department has one station located at 865 Imperial Beach Boulevard.<sup>6</sup> It responds to over 3,000 calls each year.



## What We Will Do

### **Goal 1: Imperial Beach Senior Community Center: Increase opportunities, access, and improve the visibility.**

- » Research and apply for capital improvement/development grant(s) to update the physical space and function of the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Increase variety of programming during the hours of operation of the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Create an outdoor patio space for older adults to gather within the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Allow community members to reserve and rent various spaces within the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.



### Action Steps

### **Goal 2: Residents will have well-maintained, safe, and active public spaces near where they live.**



### Action Steps

- » Offer outdoor fitness programming, such as dance and Tai Chi, in Veterans Park.
- » Host age-friendly and accessible outdoor events in various locations throughout the city.
- » Create an intergenerational community garden with special consideration for pollinators where feasible.

<sup>6</sup> Imperial Beach Fire-Rescue Department. [www.imperialbeachca.gov/272/About-Imperial-Beach-Fire-Rescue](http://www.imperialbeachca.gov/272/About-Imperial-Beach-Fire-Rescue)

- » Enforce and educate against public intoxication.
- » Educate residents and visitors on dog leash laws in Imperial Beach.
- » Create a small dog park area at Veterans Park.

### **Goal 3: Make Imperial Beach more walkable for all ages and abilities.**

- » Review and increase pedestrian safety on main thoroughfares and near bus stops.
- » Identify potential areas to install additional benches and wayfinding signage throughout the city.
- » Create wider sidewalks meeting ADA requirements, where feasible.
- » Consider “Slow Zones” with appropriate signage for increased safety and walkability near the Senior Community Center and Senior Housing developments.
- » Encourage older adult community volunteers, with varying degrees of functionality, to complete a “Walk Audit” from AARP, compile the information and provide data to the City of Imperial Beach to inform future improvements.<sup>7</sup>



#### **Action Steps**

### **Goal 4: Promote a clean and healthy environment in Imperial Beach.**

- » Facilitate community clean-up volunteer event(s) annually.
- » Provide information, demonstrations, and opportunities for coaching to the older adult community on how to utilize the City of Imperial Beach’s non-emergency incident reporting, complaints, and service requests app, “My Imperial Beach App,” to report maintenance concerns.
- » Promote and provide free trees for residents to increase the shade canopy in Imperial Beach when available.
- » Offer free community shredding, electronic, large item(s), paint disposal, and/or hazardous waste events.



#### **Action Steps**

<sup>7</sup> AARP Walk Audit. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/aarp-walk-audit-tool-kit.html>

# Transportation

**Definition** Transportation focuses on safe and affordable modes of private and public transportation.

**Vision** Imperial Beach is a coastal community where all people have access to transportation options and infrastructure so they can safely travel for leisure and to access needed services.



## What We Heard

Many older adults in the City of Imperial Beach currently drive themselves to places they want and need to go. The most pressing issue for residents is that people are driving too fast in their community, which presents a safety concern for both driving and walking. Residents would like to have speed limits enforced and traffic calming measures installed. Overall, residents are concerned about having available, affordable, and accessible mobility options going forward as they age.

### Older Adult Mobility Concerns

- » A majority of older adults currently drive themselves in private automobiles and have concerns about the lack of transportation options available to them when they are no longer able to drive safely.
- » As mobility declines, accessing public transportation becomes increasingly difficult. Older adults want specialized transit available for door to door, on-demand transit.
- » Residents have safety concerns about electric bicycles (e-bikes) and the limited availability of bike parking and bike lanes makes biking challenging.
- » Driving longer distances and freeway driving can be difficult. Older adults expressed an interest in organized field trips, both locally and beyond San Diego County.



## **Inclusive Transportation System**

- » Adapting the environment to the increase in older drivers should include additional lighting, easy to read signs, and a variety of traffic calming measures.
- » Transit education, including hands-on training, is needed to increase awareness and confidence in the mass transit system.
- » Speeding through Imperial Beach creates safety concerns for all.
- » Residents would like to see a community-based shuttle/electric cart to move them around the city and help to bridge their access to bus stops.



## **What We Know**

The City of Imperial Beach has limited transportation options and many residents rely on a private automobile to move about the city. A few older adult transportation options exist within the city, but often, individuals are unaware of the services that may be limited by hours of operation, type of ride, and the need for enrollment, etc.

## **Transit Infrastructure & Mobility Strategies**

- » There are three main points of entry/exit to Imperial Beach: Palm Avenue, Imperial Beach Boulevard/Coronado Avenue, and Silver Strand Boulevard.
- » Interstate 5 runs north and south on the east side of Imperial Beach.
- » Highway 75 (Palm Avenue) connects Imperial Beach to Coronado via Silver Strand Boulevard.
- » The crash rate in Imperial Beach is getting worse. In 2015, there were 4.5 fatal crashes per 100,000 people per year and it rose to 6.9 fatal crashes per 100,000 people in 2022, as noted in the AARP Livability Index.<sup>8</sup>
- » The San Diego County Bicycle Coalition offers a variety of educational opportunities for awareness building and bike safety.<sup>9</sup>
- » The City of Imperial Beach General Plan outlines mobility strategies in the Circulation Element which are designed to enhance pedestrian, rider, and driver experiences. assist older adults.

<sup>8</sup> Imperial Beach- AARP Livability Index. [livabilityindex.aarp.org](http://livabilityindex.aarp.org)

<sup>9</sup> San Diego County Bicycle Coalition. [www.sdbikecoalition.org](http://www.sdbikecoalition.org)

## Mass Transit

- » San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) provides bus and light rail (Trolley) services in San Diego County. They have a 15-member Board of Directors which includes one appointed member from Imperial Beach City Council.<sup>10</sup>
- » Three main MTS bus lines support Imperial Beach: 901, 933, and 934. The 932 route will soon be modified to service the east side of the City.
- » The UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley has a stop on Palm Avenue and connects La Jolla to San Ysidro/ Mexico border.
- » The SANDAG Coordinated Transportation Plan outlines many goals towards strengthening the availability and improving the transit experience. A key overarching goal is to “Provide safe, secure, healthy, affordable, and convenient travel choices between the place where people live, work, and play.”<sup>11</sup>

## Transit Designed for Individuals with Specialized Mobility Needs

- » MTS offers Seniors discounted rates of \$1.25 each way for individuals over the age of 65 to ride public transit.<sup>12</sup>
- » MTS provides a paratransit option, MTS Access. MTS Access is for customers with disabilities who are unable to use the MTS fixed route bus. Eligibility certification is mandatory prior to use.<sup>13</sup>
- » A limited variety of older adults specialized transportation options exist within Imperial Beach. Often, they are limited by hours of operation, type of ride, enrollment, etc.
- » The Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) in San Diego County is FACT.<sup>14</sup> They are available to match transit services to individuals’ personal needs.

<sup>10</sup> MTS Operations. [www.sdmts.com/about/about-mts](http://www.sdmts.com/about/about-mts)

<sup>11</sup> San Diego Association of Governments. 2020 Coordinated Plan. (2020). [sandag.org/-/media/SANDAG/Documents/PDF/projects-and-programs/transit/coordinated-plan/2020-coordinated-plan-short-range-transit-plan-coordinated-public-transit.pdf](https://sandag.org/-/media/SANDAG/Documents/PDF/projects-and-programs/transit/coordinated-plan/2020-coordinated-plan-short-range-transit-plan-coordinated-public-transit.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> MTS Public Transit Fares. [www.sdmts.com/fares/reduced-fares](http://www.sdmts.com/fares/reduced-fares)

<sup>13</sup> MTS Access-Paratransit and ADA Certification. [www.sdmts.com/transit-services/mts-access-paratransit](http://www.sdmts.com/transit-services/mts-access-paratransit)

<sup>14</sup> FACT- Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation, County of San Diego CTSA. [www.factsd.org](http://www.factsd.org)



## What We Will Do

### **Goal 1: Support enhanced traffic flow to increase safety throughout Imperial Beach.**



#### Action Steps

- » Install traffic calming measures on main thoroughfares (i.e., speed bumps, stop signs, roundabouts, flashing lights, narrowing of streets), to slow traffic.
- » Increase speed e-signage to enforce safe driving practices.
- » Offer regular bike safety and e-bike safety and skills training workshops.
- » Research the feasibility of installing cameras at high-traffic intersections.
- » Sync traffic lights on main roadways for maximum traffic flow.
- » Proactively communicate planned traffic disruptions, via multiple communication channels, to residents.

### **Goal 2: Expand the mobility choices for older adults in Imperial Beach.**



#### Action Steps

- » Distribute the County of San Diego’s “Ride Well to Age Well Guide” transportation resource.<sup>15</sup>
- » Consider low-cost transportation service designed for older adults and individuals with disabilities.
- » Host an Imperial Beach-tailored transportation options workshop for the community in partnership with the County of San Diego.
- » Communicate and strategize with MTS to promote and ensure adequate bus routes.

### **Goal 3: Older adult residents can access public transit and utilize best practices when driving.**



#### Action Steps

- » Share information related to public transit training courses for individuals who are not comfortable/confident in riding public transit when available.
- » Invite a community partner to conduct educational courses on safe driving best practices for older adults.
- » Consider a shuttle system within IB to connect individuals to public transit and local commerce.

<sup>15</sup> County of San Diego, Aging & Independence Services- Ride Well to Age Well.  
[www.livewellsd.org/i-want-to/learn-more/aging/age-well-san-diego/transportation](http://www.livewellsd.org/i-want-to/learn-more/aging/age-well-san-diego/transportation)

# Social, Physical, and Educational Support

**Definition** Social, Physical, and Educational Support focuses on individual connection to leisure and educational activities, including opportunities for all residents to socialize, have access to wellness services, and participate in lifelong learning.

**Vision** Imperial Beach is a coastal community which offers a variety of activities that support one's ability to engage in social interaction, participate in physical activity, and lifelong learning.



## What We Heard

Older adults enjoy and would like more options for leisure and cultural activities, at varying times for varying ability levels, within Imperial Beach. Most individuals interact with friends, family, or neighbors at least once a day and are thankful for the community connections.

### Access to a Variety of Activities is Highly Desired

- » Older adults desire an upgraded Imperial Beach Senior Community Center to gather for dynamic active aging programming—offered both inside and outside.
- » Residents want an increased variety of lifelong learning opportunities, social activities, fitness, intergenerational involvement, brain fitness, and creative arts.
- » 99% of respondents said that affordability is a key factor to participation. Low cost or free activities are desired.
- » The reported current top 3 locations for participating in activities are: Online programs (39%), library (37%), and through a university/community college (25%).
- » Residents are interested in a community garden, for all ages, to enjoy the outdoors and grow their own produce.



## Health and Wellness Support Services and Education

- » About 1/3 of the survey respondents have heard of the free lunch program offered at the Senior Community Center, but only 1/10 use it.
- » Access to healthy food is a challenge for a significant number of residents: 26% sometimes or often worry about running out of food.
- » Older adults would like the opportunity to participate in wellness events with health screenings/services at community locations.
- » Fall prevention education, nutrition education, resource navigation, and healthy aging are presentation topics requested.
- » There is a perception that there are not enough service professionals (medical and community) that are knowledgeable in memory and cognitive impairments to meet the growing demand and shift in our society. Older adults also want to be better informed to prevent, support, and care for individuals with memory and cognitive impairments.



## What We Know

The City of Imperial Beach, along with several community organizations, offers a range of activities and services for older adults throughout the city. The Senior Community Center offers programs that enhance the lives of seniors that promote active aging and essential engagement between residents.



## Availability of Community Recreation Services and Programming

- » The Parks, Rec & Community Services Department supports healthy aging through programming that includes a lunch service, that is offered at the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Several service/community clubs are available in Imperial Beach, such as: Kiwanis International, Imperial Beach Woman's Club, Imperial Beach Athletic Club, I.B. Beautiful, Boys and Girls Club, and Suncoast Co-Op.
- » The Imperial Beach Fire-Rescue Department offers CPR classes and regular safety videos via social media.
- » A weekly Farmer's Market is offered on Friday afternoons at the Imperial Beach Pier Plaza and the Suncoast Farmers Market is held every 3rd Saturday at Veteran's Park.
- » AIS provides a plethora of programming and works in conjunction with community partners to host classes, such as the: Feel Fit Club, Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention, Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance, and a series of Healthier Living evidence-based self-management programs.<sup>16</sup>

## Health Information

- » There is limited access to health services in Imperial Beach. Most residents must leave the city to access healthcare.
- » Social determinants of health impact both the quality and longevity of life. The social determinants that frequently impact older adults are isolation and loneliness.<sup>17</sup>
- » Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. and the third leading cause of death in California and San Diego County.
- » The City of Imperial Beach has a slightly lower prevalence rate of smoking (16%) as compared to the Median US Neighborhood (18%), as noted in the AARP Livability Index.
- » The City of Imperial Beach has a lower obesity rate (27.2%) as compared to the Median US Neighborhood (32.2%), as noted in the AARP Livability Index.

<sup>16</sup> County of San Diego, Aging & Independence Services-Healthy Living [sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ais/health\\_promotions](https://sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ais/health_promotions)

<sup>17</sup> Julianne Holt-Lunstad, PhD, The Potential Public Health Relevance of Social Isolation and Loneliness: Prevalence, Epidemiology, and Risk Factors, Public Policy & Aging Report, Volume 27, Issue 4, 2017, Pages 127–130, [academic.oup.com/ppar/article/27/4/127/4782506?login=true](https://academic.oup.com/ppar/article/27/4/127/4782506?login=true)



## What We Will Do

### **Goal 1: Coordinate and expand active aging programming offered in Imperial Beach.**



#### Action Steps

- » Launch a community walking group.
- » Provide programming for residents with different levels of mobility.
- » Research opportunities to partner with agencies for parks and recreation program.
- » Build community by providing space for social clubs that focus on residents’ interests and desires.
- » Collaborate with local organizations to host a variety of life-long learning opportunities.

### **Goal 2: Increase opportunities and improve visibility of health and wellness support services and education.**



#### Action Steps

- » Host an annual Health and Wellness Fair.
- » Identify and promote the day/time/location that all health and wellness, recreation, and social activities are available to older adults in Imperial Beach.
- » Offer First Aid and CPR Certification classes in Imperial Beach when available.
- » Promote awareness and access to healthy food via the donation-based congregate meal site, offered at the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center, outside nonprofit organization’s food distributions, and farmer’s market.

### **Goal 3: Enhance awareness, prevention, and support for residents concerned about or experiencing mild cognitive impairment (MCI).**



#### Action Steps

- » Incorporate the “Dementia Friends USA” training for all necessary city staff and promote to interested community members.
- » Offer brain fitness classes/activities for older adults when available.
- » Collaborate with a local Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD) organization to host an educational workshop on ADRD.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The Alzheimer’s Project. Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias in San Diego County, (April 2018). [sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/CHS/Reports/FINAL\\_2018\\_ADRD\\_Prevalence\\_4.13.2018.pdf](https://sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/CHS/Reports/FINAL_2018_ADRD_Prevalence_4.13.2018.pdf)



## Communication & Information

**Definition** Communication & Information focuses on the distribution of information, person-to-person communication, printed information, media, access to and use of technology and the internet.

**Vision** Imperial Beach is a coastal community where all residents know about resources, services, and opportunities for engagement.



### What We Heard

Residents value the ability to stay connected to the Imperial Beach community and would like clear pathways to access information. Older adults want to gain more awareness of support services, are mindful of safety, and desire to have service professionals trained and systems designed with them in mind. Overall, there was minimal awareness of 2-1-1 and the variety of services provided through AIS.

#### Distribution of Information

- » Many older adults in Imperial Beach are comfortable and frequently use the internet to communicate and gather information (82% Very Comfortable; 16% Somewhat Comfortable). Individuals identified Facebook and the city website as two primary on-line sources.

- » While the city website was recently updated, residents find it confusing to navigate and inconsistent in content and updates which vary by department.
- » There is still a strong desire to have printed information delivered to the home (49% Very Important; 39% Somewhat Important) and residents also identified the local community newspaper, Eagle & Times, as a go-to information source.
- » Conversations about resources and recommendations on where to find them from peers proved to be a dynamic exchange. More structured informational sessions, support, and resource brokerage for older adults will be helpful.
- » Older adults would appreciate regularly scheduled distribution of resource information and upcoming events/activities by the city in an e-newsletter, via text message, and/or an e-blast specifically for older adults.
- » Residents value communications offered in both English and Spanish.

### **Limited Awareness of Services & Events**

- » A majority of older adults in Imperial Beach are not aware of the two main resource brokers in San Diego County: 2-1-1 and AIS Call Center.
- » Outreach and marketing for older adult resources must be conducted by multiple methods, as older adults access information in a variety of ways. Electronic (Internet), print, social media, in-person communication, community centers, library, parks, electric street signs, and word-of-mouth were all cited as sources.
- » Specific areas of interest that were identified include information on food resources/ security, home maintenance/ modification services, and shared housing opportunities.
- » Almost a quarter (22%) of older adults do not feel welcome and included in community activities. 47% said sometimes and 31% said usually they feel included.



## **What We Know**

Imperial Beach is a South County coastal community with access to a county-wide resource network. The information and referral services strive to connect people to resources and promote a high quality of life for older adults.

## Community Resources

- » The city hosts a comprehensive website, including information on city departments, links on how to engage in city business, a community events calendar, and residents can stay connected by signing up for specific notifications.
- » The Imperial Beach Library and Senior Community Center have free access to computers.
- » 2-1-1 San Diego is a free service that connects people of all ages with community, health, and disaster services. Trained call center representatives are available 24 hours per day by calling 2-1-1 or more than 6,000 community services can be accessed on-line.<sup>19</sup>
- » AIS operates the AIS Call Center, 1-800-339-4661, which provides over the phone assistance and resources for older adults and persons with disabilities.<sup>20</sup>
- » County of San Diego, Office of Emergency Services actively monitors and promotes safety and preparedness for all residents. There is a website with valuable information and an app is available to download for emergency notifications and updates.<sup>21</sup>



## What We Will Do

### Goal 1: Strengthen consideration for residents of all ages in city activities and services.

- » Utilize inclusive marketing strategies on all promotional materials, i.e., large print, contrast in colors, and stating, “All ages welcome!”
- » Offer residents the ability to sign up to receive regular City Council communications to stay informed.
- » Host regularly scheduled opportunities to meet with city officials to learn about city activities and services.
- » Post informational and directional signage for clear access to City Council meetings.



## Action Steps

<sup>19</sup> 211 San Diego. What is 211? <https://211sandiego.org/>

<sup>20</sup> County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. Aging & Independence Services. <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ais.html>

<sup>21</sup> County of San Diego Office of Emergency Services. [www.readysandiego.org](http://www.readysandiego.org)

**Goal 2: Promote awareness and knowledge of available resources for older adults in Imperial Beach.**



- » Host community resource information.
- » Enhance the coordination and messaging of communications from the city.
- » Consider community bulletin boards for information distribution.
- » Partner with an interested party to create and distribute a comprehensive informational flyer to promote available resources for residents.
- » Promote major city events and activities to local media, including the Eagle & Times.

**Goal 3: Practice comprehensive outreach and communication techniques to reach all ages in both English and Spanish.**



- » Produce both digital and print media outreach materials in both English and Spanish—when feasible.
- » Distribute promotion and outreach materials to the community at places they gather and frequent such as markets, restaurants, and the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Provide community information on the City’s social media platforms. Promote events to the community and increase frequency of promotion closer to the date.

“In Imperial Beach, the community is strengthened through various communication channels as its residents embrace open dialogue in both English and Spanish.”

# Housing

**Definition** Housing looks at the availability of home modification programs for aging in place as well as a range of age-friendly housing options.

**Vision** Imperial Beach is a coastal community that supports one's ability to safely age in place with a "small-town, laid-back" feel.



## What We Heard

Many Imperial Beach older adults are long-time residents who enjoy the community they live in and primarily desire to age in their own homes. Housing concerns include affordability, accessibility, and livability of the limited housing stock available in the city. Residents look to Imperial Beach as an example of what San Diego used to be—an example of tight-knit neighborhoods filled primarily with families in single-family homes and a laid-back community.

### Prefer to Age in Own Community

- » A large majority of individuals want to remain in their own homes to age (also known as Aging in Place) within the communities they are familiar with and connected to (82% very important, 16% somewhat important).
- » Perception of living in Imperial Beach varied (59% said it was adequate, 37% excellent, and 7% rated Imperial Beach as poor).
- » Residents identified that having access to a variety of in-home services could be very helpful to remain at home as daily functioning begins to decline.
- » Increased density, environmental concerns, and congestion were identified as elements that negatively affect community enjoyment.

### Older Adults Need Greater Access to Appropriate Housing

- » Individuals want support identifying affordable housing resources, such as single-story housing options, home modification services, financial assistance, and ADA accessible homes.

- » Older adults are concerned with not having enough income to keep up with rising costs of living in Southern California.
- » Some residents are interested in exploring living with a roommate but said that fears for their personal safety is a deterrent.
- » Home safety modifications are necessary in adapting a home to changing needs, yet older adults report there are not enough trusted and affordable service providers.



## What We Know

The City of Imperial Beach is one of the smallest cities, both in population and land, within the County of San Diego. Being a coastal city with near perfect temperatures year around, Imperial Beach offers an authentic surf-town with a small-town vibe at a fraction of the cost of other beach communities.

### Livability Factors

- » Imperial Beach had a 2021 estimated population of nearly 28,000. Of those, 8,652 are over the age of 50, representing 31% of the population.
- » The city covers approximately a total of 4.4 square miles along the southern California coast on the border of Mexico.
- » The San Diego County Sheriff's Department has a YANA (You Are Not Alone) program which is a free service where Senior Volunteer Patrol members completes a safety visit to older adults weekly.<sup>22</sup>
- » The SANDAG Coordinated Transportation Plan identified creating “Healthy and Complete Communities” as an overarching vision. These complete communities include a supply and variety of housing types, affordable for people of all ages and income levels, in areas with frequent transit service and with access to a variety of services.

### Housing Resources

- » According to the 2021 estimated census data, there are 10,007 housing units available in the city.

<sup>22</sup> San Diego County Sheriff's Department, YANA. [www.sdsheriff.gov/community/you-are-not-alone](http://www.sdsheriff.gov/community/you-are-not-alone)

- » Median household income adjusted for inflation is nearly \$50,000. Many older adults are longtime residents (30% reported 35 years +) who own their own homes (65%).
- » The City of Imperial Beach General Plan- Housing Element includes policies which strive to create and promote an array of housing options and support programs for vulnerable and special needs populations.



## What We Will Do

### **Goal 1: Help ensure all residents have access to housing which is safe for older adults and accessible for all ability levels.**

- » Host educational workshops with interested organizations on home safety modifications for both inside and outside the home.
- » Consider increasing community street lighting where feasible.
- » Host educational workshops on housing issues such as Fair Housing Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and community resources.
- » Offer appointment times for personal housing resource consultations subject to staff availability.
- » Research the feasibility of developing additional low-income housing units for older adults in Imperial Beach.



### Action Steps

### **Goal 2: Support opportunities for residents to create and expand housing options.**

- » Identify existing housing opportunities and subsequent gaps.
- » Encourage entities to address the gap areas in housing availability.
- » Provide educational materials for homeowners to understand the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) development process.



### Action Steps

### **Goal 3: Ensure Imperial Beach maintains a neighborly, small-town beach community vibe.**

- » Emphasize the importance of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department patrols near parks and beaches for an increased sense of safety.
- » Host intergenerational community events where people of all ages can enjoy.



### Action Steps

# Volunteerism, Military, and Civic Engagement

**Definition** Many older adults find value in contributing to their communities including volunteering time and talent, serving in the Armed Forces, or working locally.

**Vision** Imperial Beach is home to military operations that actively appreciates the service members and encourages civic engagement.



## What We Heard

Imperial Beach is uniquely influenced and mindful of the military community, both active duty and veterans. Individuals seek meaningful connections and want to facilitate positive interactions and create a welcoming community. Community members appreciate access to elected officials, civic engagement, and would like additional volunteer opportunities.

### Sharing of Culture, Time, and Talents

- » Residents want more volunteer opportunities that are appropriate for older adults and clear directions on how to find them.
- » Intergenerational activities, connecting with various ages (not just children), are viewed as important and older adults would like opportunities to share their life experiences and feel connected with the larger community.
- » Community members recognize and celebrate that people, regardless of age, can learn from each other.
- » Most residents reported they sometimes feel valued in their community (51%) and 29% said usually, and 21% said never.

### Military Presence

- » Residents expressed a deep respect and appreciation for the military presence in Imperial Beach and want them to feel welcomed. “We love our Military!”
- » Many individuals identify as a veteran, active duty, or spouse/family member of a service member and choose to reside in Imperial Beach.
- » The military community represents a wealth of information, cultural experiences, and world travel that many like to share.



## What We Know

Imperial Beach is a diverse community with a vast amount of knowledge and experience held by the residents. There are limited opportunities for volunteering and civic engagement and the military presence is strong.

### Civic Engagement

- » The voting rate for City of Imperial Beach residents is very similar (61.4%) to the Median US Neighborhood (61.9%), as noted in the AARP Livability Index.
- » Residents of the City of Imperial Beach have less access to high-speed, competitively priced internet access (88.5%), compared to Median US Neighborhood (93.7%), as noted in the AARP Livability Index.
- » The City of Imperial Beach offers three different Board and Committees for residents to participate in: Design Review Board, Tidelands Advisory Committee, and Parks & Recreation Committee.
- » The City of Imperial Beach actively recruits community volunteers for the Sheriff's Department Senior Volunteer Patrol Program.
- » The County of San Diego, through the Age Well San Diego Action Plan, adopted several social participation goals in 2018.<sup>23</sup>

- » Create policies and practices that facilitate intergenerational engagement and the development of shared spaces for intergenerational activity.
- » Implement and expand recreational and educational programming that is safe, dementia-friendly, and diverse.
- » Create and implement a targeted social support outreach, engagement, and education plan, especially for those who are isolated.
- » Develop leadership and empowerment opportunities for aging adults.

<sup>23</sup> County of San Diego. Age Well San Diego Action Plan. (2018).  
<https://www.livewellsd.org/home/showpublisheddocument/752/637962550075530000>

# “We love our Military!”

*-Older Adult Resident from Action Planning Session*

## Active Duty & Veteran Connections

- » Imperial Beach is home to the Naval Outlying Landing Field and is very close to the Silver Strand Training Complex, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Naval Air Station North Island, and Naval Base San Diego.
- » Imperial Beach American Legion’s (Post #820) mission is, “To enhance the well-being of America’s veterans, their families, our military, and our communities by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”<sup>24</sup>
- » Imperial Beach Fleet Reserve Association represents the interest of enlisted members of the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.<sup>25</sup>
- » Imperial Beach Veterans of Foreign Wars’ (VFW) mission is, “To foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve our veterans, the military, and our communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans.”<sup>26</sup>



## What We Will Do

### Goal 1: Imperial Beach residents have opportunities to share their interests and talents.

- » Create a city-wide volunteer program for all ages. Opportunities can range from community clean-up events to hosting a class/workshop at the Imperial Beach Senior Community Center.
- » Encourage neighborhood volunteer-based “Repair Café” - where volunteers mentor individuals who want to learn and complete bike, small appliance, and miscellaneous repairs.



## Action Steps

<sup>24</sup> American Legion- Veterans Strengthening America [www.legion.org/vsa](http://www.legion.org/vsa)

<sup>25</sup> Fleet Reserve Association [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org)

<sup>26</sup> Veterans of Foreign Wars [www.vfw.org/about-us](http://www.vfw.org/about-us)

## Goal 2: Celebrate and support the military community.

- » Hold military appreciation events in conjunction with community partners at Veterans Park.
- » Explore the possibility of offering a shuttle service from base to event(s) to ease transit/access concerns.
- » Collaborate with military partners and school districts to provide information to create a “Welcome Kit” for new residents that is available on the city website. Include local businesses, basic services, events, and contact information.
- » Consider creating a Veterans Committee to support outreach efforts that impact military families in Imperial Beach.



Action  
Steps

## Goal 3: Imperial Beach offers a variety of options for residents to get involved and make meaningful connections in the community.

- » Make available the County-developed “Get Connected! A Guide to Becoming Engaged in the Community” and “Ways to Engage Guide.”<sup>27</sup>
- » Host an information table at community events. Consider including information on “Ways to Get Involved” at city events.
- » Create cultural exchange opportunities, such as cultural education events, music in the park, and holiday celebrations.
- » Research the feasibility of restarting the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) federal volunteer program.



Action  
Steps



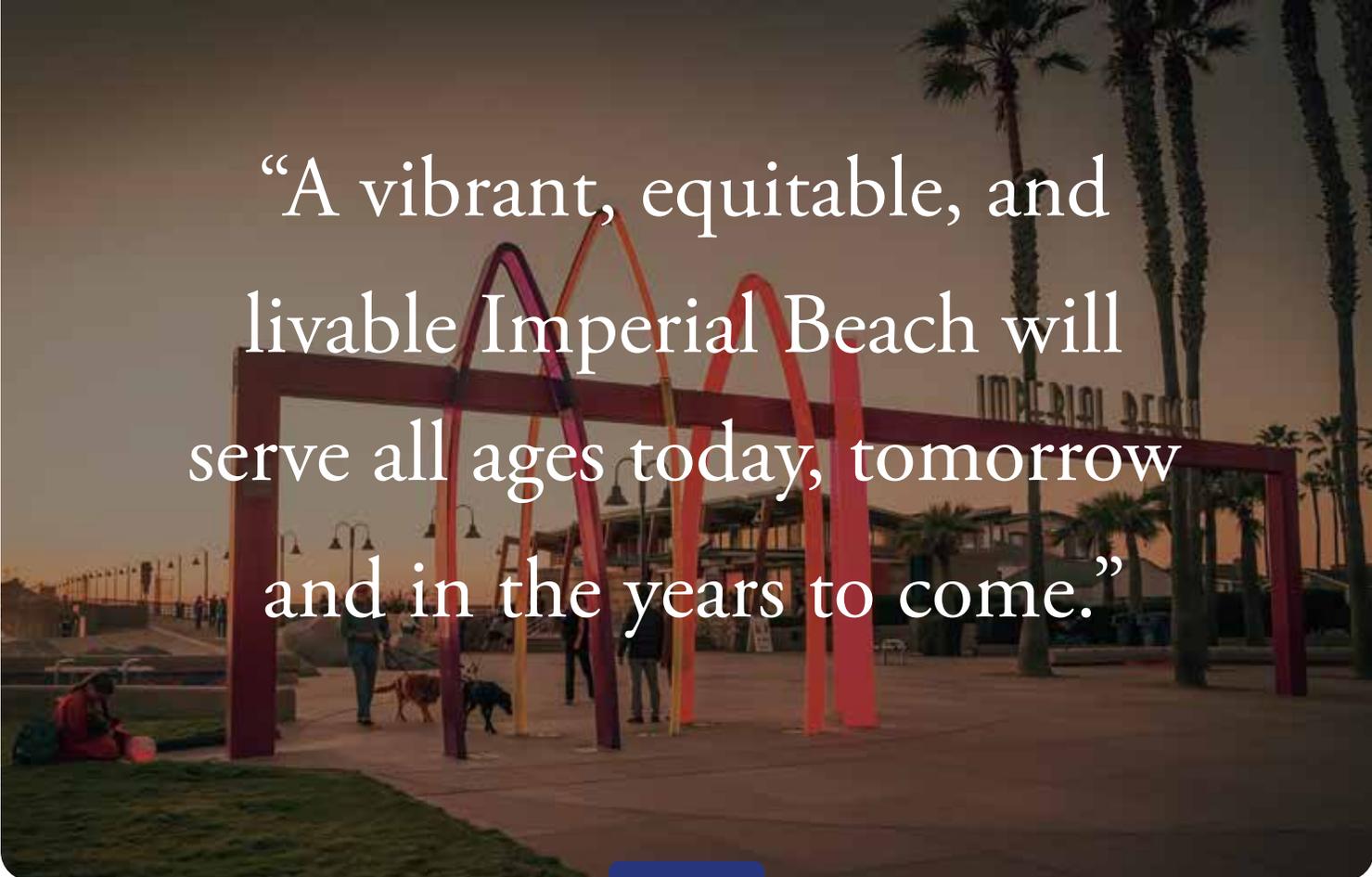
<sup>27</sup> County of San Diego, Aging & Independence Services- Get Connected! [www.livewellsd.org/i-want-to/learn-more/aging/age-well-san-diego/social-participation](http://www.livewellsd.org/i-want-to/learn-more/aging/age-well-san-diego/social-participation)

# Closing

## Call to Action: Age-Friendly Imperial Beach

Our Action Plan outlines the goals, steps, and potential activities that we endeavor to accomplish over the next few years. To achieve this, we envision our elected officials, municipal staff, city residents, and numerous community/civic organizations working together for a common goal—to make the City of Imperial Beach an even more **vibrant** and **equitable** place to live for all ages.

The Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Team feels so fortunate that our city has so many assets upon which to draw, including all our capable and dedicated community leaders, plus an engaged older adult population dedicated to bringing the vision to reality. We realize that many of the action steps in this plan will rely on a **community effort** to fully implement and require support and interest from all levels of residents in Imperial Beach, we are hoping you are both excited and supportive of this effort and ready to actively participate.



“A vibrant, equitable, and livable Imperial Beach will serve all ages today, tomorrow and in the years to come.”

## What happens next and how can YOU help build an Age-Friendly Imperial Beach?

Once the Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Action Plan is approved by the City Council, it will be time to move from discussing and planning to **collaborating and doing!**

Some actions that we have discussed over the last year may already be underway, while others will need to be planned for, with strategic implementation to follow. It will be essential for city partners and staff to work collaboratively on the wide variety of tasks, along with community residents, to make this action plan a reality.



### Residents of all Ages Can:

- » Get involved in community activities
- » Keep informed - [sign up for updates](#)
- » Continue to offer your own Age-Friendly ideas
- » Advocate for what you need
- » Listen to and acknowledge the voice of older adults in Imperial Beach

## Your voice is valuable, make it heard!

Be on the lookout for meeting announcements so you are informed and can participate in making change happen. Announcements will be posted online on the City of Imperial Beach's website, [www.imperialbeachca.gov](http://www.imperialbeachca.gov), via the city's social media outlets, Imperial Beach Senior Community Center, and the Imperial Beach Library.

We encourage everyone to share this Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Action Plan with family, friends, neighbors, and any others that may have interest. This plan has the potential to shape a fulfilling, optimistic future for all Imperial Beach residents.

# Acknowledgements



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**Matthew Leyba-Gonzalez**, Mayor Pro Tempore    **Carol Seabury**, Councilmember, District 1

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Appendices will be available on-line.

[www.imperialbeachca.gov/agefriendly](http://www.imperialbeachca.gov/agefriendly)



- » Policy Scan
- » Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Community Survey
- » Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Community Survey Results
- » Age-Friendly Imperial Beach Outreach Materials



**AGE  
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Age-Friendly Imperial Beach  
**2023 Action Plan**

