

# **AARP Vermont**

## **Press Release**

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Burlington Moves to Create a Livable Community**

*AARP Vermont joins City of Burlington and others in launching initiative to create vision, assess community and plan for burgeoning aging population*

BURLINGTON, VT, December 19, 2005 – As the citizens of Burlington age and their needs change, will the community continue to be a welcome and accommodating place to live? That question is at the core of a new initiative launched today by the City of Burlington and AARP Vermont aimed at assessing whether Burlington is a good place to grow old and charting ways to make it more livable for a fast-growing older population.

Called the Burlington Livable Community Project, the effort will include a host of partner organizations including UVM, CCTA, Cathedral Square, Champlain Senior Center and Champlain Valley Agency on Aging among others. The initiative will work to define a clear vision for Burlington and assess the needs of residents and the availability of necessary housing, transportation and services. This process will involve various research methods and citizen community evaluations across the city. Following these steps, concrete action steps will be identified that will make the city more accommodating to older residents and families.

“Today we are embarking on a project to earn Burlington yet another top national ranking -- this time as a great place to grow old,” said Greg Marchildon, AARP Vermont state director. “A livable community includes affordable and appropriate housing, an array of mobility options and community services that meet the needs of older residents. Burlington has some of these elements to one degree or another, but lacks an explicit vision for how it will meet the needs of its aging population and make the city truly livable for all its residents,” he explained.

The Burlington Livable Community Project was embraced by the City of Burlington and will complement several community-building initiatives already underway across the city such as Burlington's Legacy Project. "In many ways, Burlington has set the standard as an attractive place to live and raise a family," said Mayor Peter Clavelle. "This effort will focus on building a community that is accommodating for older citizens as well and makes these considerations an integral part of city planning and development activities. We are excited to work together with a number of important community partners toward a common goal."

A resolution will be presented to the City Council tonight authorizing the Community & Development Office and other city departments to pursue and support the initiative. The first step in the process will be the convening of partner organizations from throughout the city in January to map out a vision for a livable Burlington and begin identifying needs and areas of focus.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization with 120,000 members in Vermont and 35 million members nationally. Through a wide array of special benefits, services, and information resources, we help our members make important choices, reach their goals and dreams, and make the most of life after 50.

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