



SHOW NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

EPIISODE SHOW NOTES

- Episode Title:** San Mateo: An Age-Friendly City
- Episode # & Date:** Episode #53 – November 19, 2020
- About this Episode:** Judy highlights the efforts that have led to the World Health Organization certifying San Mateo, CA as an Age-Friendly City.
- Episode Web Page:** <https://sanmateofocus.com/san-mateo-age-friendly-city/>

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I'm Judy Gordon, and *this* is San Mateo Focus. As long-term residents who have raised six kids here, we thought it was high time someone shined a light on the good things in San Mateo to enrich the lives of those living here and the businesses that serve them. If you want to know the best places to eat and play, the events not to miss, *and* want to know how San Mateo became the crown jewel of the peninsula, tune in every Thursday and please be sure to click the 'subscribe' button on your favorite podcast app. Now, onto this week's episode.

As I prepared for the last two episodes of San Mateo Focus, centered around intergenerational communities and age-friendly cities, I found that by coincidence my two main sources are women who early in their careers made choices to work to shape the future of aging in our country. Last week, you heard about San Mateo resident Eunice Lin Nichols and her work with Encore.org, This week Laura Poskin, who is the executive director of age-friendly Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, helped me understand what a successful age-friendly city can look and feel like. Laura became a gerontologist after realizing what an obstacle course a city can be for older residents: narrow hallways, heavy doors, a sea of oblivious people. She realized that we need to change the way that we view aging, and how we plan our communities for it. Pittsburgh joined age-friendly communities in 2015. From her years of experience with age-friendly Pittsburgh, she offers examples of changes that can be made in a community to help older residents that will be beneficial for everyone. For example: if a sidewalk gets fixed it will work better for older residents, young parents, and active children; a museum with plenty of places to sit and rest; a cashier who is trained not to rush customers; or acquaintances who reintroduce themselves—all benefit the whole community. She says that the work is about equity and kindness.

Addressing the needs of an aging population is critical. Our population is growing older rapidly. In the U.S., every day 10,000 baby boomers turn 65. In 2030 we will have 20% of our population in that category. By 2035, older adults will outnumber children. In San Mateo County, people 65-74 are expected to increase by 53% by 2030 and those aged 75-84 by 71%. San Mateo has the highest population of seniors of any city in San Mateo County. This is our new demographic reality.

San Mateo recently received certification from AARP as an Age-Friendly City. The age-friendly movement was started by the World Health Organization, and in the United States it's led by AARP. An age-friendly community is a livable community for people of all ages. In San Mateo County, Daly City, Redwood City, and Pacifica received certification last year. San Mateo, Colma, and Foster City are in this round. All cities, counties, and states seeking to enroll in the age-friendly network are



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required to submit a membership application. In addition, the community provides a letter of commitment signed by the jurisdiction's highest elected official. San Mateo created a task force to work with consultant-led focus groups to make choices for the work that they will complete during two initial phases.

There were many ideas summarized from the input that they received from the participants, and a list of gaps in terms of services and issues were identified. The task force took those and narrowed them down to four projects. Because of the city's resources and budget, changes tied to Covid and manpower, they broke up the projects into two phases. They chose two and made them the top priority for the first phase. The first one is called *Safe Walking Routes for Seniors and Everyone*. They will identify routes where most seniors live and those that are most used. Those routes can be sent to the city and prioritized for repair. Since sidewalk repair is already a part of the city budget, the task force and Public Works can take into consideration those heavily trafficked routes.

The second project is called the *Coordination of Communication about Local and Regional Senior Services and Events*. San Mateo has a good amount of senior housing of all types and many senior services already available including, *Get Around!*, the senior transportation program. There is a vibrant senior center and a senior citizens commission that has been advising the city council since 1986. For many of the gaps that were identified in the focus groups, there are already services available in the city that are simply unknown to the senior population. The task force will be working with community partners to share information about service activities and events in new ways that reach them effectively. This doesn't involve creating new services, but improving the communication methods to result in more seniors taking advantage of existing programs.

The second phase of the projects will include *Intergenerational Programs* and *Age-Friendly Business Recognition and Certification*. The goal is for businesses to meet criteria to promote themselves as age friendly. That involves training staff on how to interact with seniors and people with disabilities, and making their environments welcoming and safer for everyone. Since these projects involve working with groups of people, it makes sense to wait until our social interactions are back to normal, post-Covid.

Everyone benefits from the adoption of policies and programs that make neighborhoods walkable, feature transportation options, enable access to key services, and provide opportunities to participate in community activities. The San Mateo Senior Citizens Commission will serve as the oversight body for all the projects. If you want to stay up to date on the age-friendly communities projects and other issues surrounding seniors in San Mateo, *Here's the Deal*: the commission meets the second Monday of every month and the agendas are posted on their page on the City of San Mateo website.

Okay, that's all the time we have for this episode. Have a great week. Don't forget to subscribe to San Mateo Focus on your favorite Podcast app. As always, if you'd like more information about the topics in today's episode or any of our sponsors, visit [sanmateofocus.com](https://www.sanmateofocus.com).

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[Video: Laura Poskin's TEDx Talk](#)

[Press Release: Becoming An Age-Friendly City](#)

[Webpage: San Mateo Aging Services](#)

[Webpage: San Mateo Senior Citizens Commission](#)

[Webpage: Volunteering in the City of San Mateo](#)

[Webpage: AARP – Introducing the Age-Friendly Network](#)

[Application: San Mateo Age-Friendly City Membership Application](#)

[Letter: San Mateo Mayor's Letter](#)

[Webpage: AARP – The Member List](#)

[Webpage: W.H.O. – Global Age-Friendly Cities Project](#)

[Webpage: Center for Age-Friendly Excellence \(CAFE\)](#)

[Webpage: AARP Videos – See What Livability Looks Like](#)

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PODCAST SHOW NOTES

Podcast Name: **San Mateo Focus**

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Description: We created San Mateo Focus to shine a light on the good things in San Mateo in order to enrich the lives of those living here and the businesses that serve them.

Website: <http://www.sanmateofocus.com>

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