



**R. HOWARD WIGGS**  
MAYOR

December 12, 2016

Mr. Jeff Johnson, State Director, AARP Florida  
400 Carillon Parkway, Suite 100  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33716

Dear Mr. Johnson:

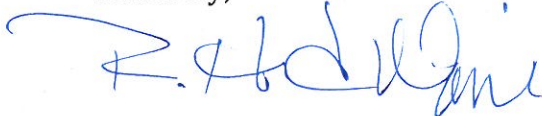
As Mayor of the City of Lakeland, I am pleased to submit our request to join the AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities, which is attached. As our application indicates, for the last five to six years the City of Lakeland has sponsored, in conjunction with the local non-profit organization known as "Lakeland Vision," a Seniors' Council to explore what the City should do to better prepare for the needs of seniors in our community. Lakeland's senior population relative to total population already exceeds that which resides within our county and state, making an "age friendly community" locally relevant. We recognize that issues important to seniors are frequently the same issues as other age groups in our community including transportation services and facilities, housing choices, access to parks and recreation services and affordable health services including wellness prevention programs. All of these services impact the quality of life of seniors as well as their ability to age in place.

Lakeland Vision, in partnership with Florida Southern College (FSC) and community partners represented on the Senior Council, will lead the effort to seek community input through the AARP survey tool as to what Lakeland already has and most needs in respect to addressing Age Friendly related issues. We look forward to the survey feedback as well as the opportunity to formulate a plan for implementation and evaluation of activities that address the next five-year period. We believe this will complement the many other initiatives that have helped make Lakeland a desirable community in which

to live, work, learn and play, including efforts to enhance physical connectivity throughout our community via complete streets projects for transit, pedestrian and bicycle users as well as drivers and freight mobility. Lakeland is a nationally designated walkable and bike friendly community. Lakeland has also worked with Polk County, Polk Vision and others to become a more-healthy community. We have adopted and are working with community partners to engage more people in healthy exercise as well as better access to nutritional and fresh foods.

As Lakeland contemplates this opportunity to become a part of AARP's Age Friendly Program, Lakeland Vision has solicited funding commitments in order to hire a part time staff person to assist in implementation efforts. This includes distribution of the survey and generally working to keep the Age Friendly agenda one that is relevant to many local households including seniors, families with young children, those with disabilities, and young professionals. Thank you again for offering the AARP's assistance and network of community resources for those who wish to pursue Age Friendly initiatives.

Sincerely,



R. Howard Wiggs  
Mayor

xc: Tony Delgado, City Manager  
Laura Rodriguez, Lakeland Vision Executive Director