

# Senior-Oriented Housing in Rural Main Street Communities

*an AARP Innovation Showcase Presentation*

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# Oklahoma Has Some Incredible Main Street Communities!

- Across the U.S., many downtowns were not maintained and fell into disrepair from 1950s onward
- Communities have turned to revitalization programs (like Main Street) to put their town back on the map
- There are over 30 Oklahoma towns with an active Main Street Program
- Many other towns in the state still try to maintain and revitalize their downtown



# Downtown is a great place for seniors

- **It's convenient:** everything is compact
- **It's walkable:** you don't need a car
- **It's pretty:** historic architecture and cultural heritage
- **It's vibrant:** where people – young and old – want to be
- It also keeps the housing market from going too stale: puts seniors into smaller downtown units while freeing up single-family houses for young families.





# Wells Building Senior Apartments

## Sapulpa, OK

- The building's façade/exterior were refurbished to the original 1900s aesthetic design
- The building's interior was demolished and renovated into state-of-the-art apartments.
- The building renovation project won awards for interior design, façade rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse
- The building contains over 30 units of senior housing and is located within a 1-2 block radius of nearly all of Sapulpa's downtown businesses.





# Some Room for Improvement

- Residents have not spent as much time downtown as originally anticipated.
- Why?
  - Business availability
  - Infrastructure
  - Perceived safety
  - Activities (inclusive of all ages)



# Innovations in Downtown Livability

- Converting unused downtown buildings into senior housing is **already innovative**.
- Further innovations are needed to make downtowns more appealing for residents
- Biggest opportunities for improvement & innovation:
  - Incentivizing senior-friendly businesses
  - Livability upgrades to downtown infrastructure (sidewalks, parks/plazas)



# Thank you!

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