

North Dakota

LEGENDARY

Economic Development by the Numbers

A source for data and statistical information to assist in promoting your community, county and state.

December 2015 - January 2016

Feature: AARP Livability Index

This month we will focus on the AARP Livability Index. The index provides a Livability Score that was created to help determine whether residents can easily live at a specific address, city, state or zip code as they get older. Because people look for different things in a community, scoring is also customizable based on the amenities of importance to the user. There is also a feature that allows users to compare scores for up to three locations at once. While created for older Americans, index scores are useful to people of all ages.

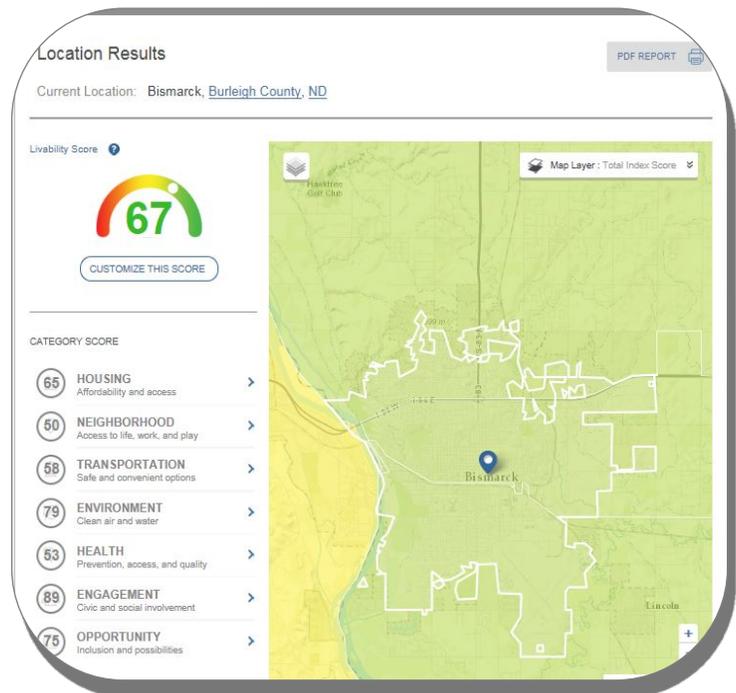
Featured Website: <http://livabilityindex.aarp.org/>

Begin by navigating to the website: <http://livabilityindex.aarp.org/>. To view a community's Livability Score enter an address, city, state, or zip code into the search box. Select the community from the drop-down box. Then click on the **Magnifying Glass** icon. For our example, please enter **Bismarck, ND** and click on the **Magnifying Glass** icon. The Location Results webpage will appear. The results page is split into three sections: the **Livability Score**, the **Category Scores**, and the **Map**.

The Livability Score is derived from seven Category Scores: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity. Each Category Score has been given equal weight and averaged to calculate the Livability Score. As you can see in the Bismarck, ND example, there are a broad range of Category Scores factored into its Livability Score of 67.

Click on the **Arrow** to the right of each category to view the related description and tabs. For example, click on the **Arrow** to the right of the Housing category. A side panel will open with a description that explains why this category is valuable in calculating the total Livability Score. Three tabs appear below the description: **Metrics**, **Policies**, and **Resources**.

Under the **Metrics** tab a legend is provided indicating how the community compares to others across the country. The legend labels each metric score in the top third (green circle), middle third (yellow circle) or bottom third (red circle). As you can see Bismarck's Housing accessibility score falls into the MIDDLE THIRD when compared to the rest of the United States. To view an explanation of the process used to calculate each metric and its data source, click on the **Plus (+)** symbol to the left of the metric name. For example, click on the **Plus (+)** symbol next to Housing accessibility to view the metric explanation and data source.



Click on the **Policies** tab next. The Policies tab shows the programs this community may have in place to help improve livability. Each community policy listed indicates **No Policy** or **Policy in Place** next to it. Click on the **Plus (+)** symbol next to Housing accessibility. As you can see, an explanation of this community policy is provided. The data source for each community policy is also provided at the bottom of each section.



The **Resources** tab provides a compilation of all of the data sources used to create the Metrics and to access the Policies information. Each resource listed provides a hyperlink to the data source website.

You may customize a community's Livability Score by placing more or less emphasis upon a preferred amenity. To do so click on the **Customize This Score** button under the Livability Score. A sliding scale will appear next to each Category Score. For instance, you may not consider transportation to be a relevant factor when considering a location's Livability Score so customize the Livability Score to eliminate emphasis on the Transportation category. To do so slide the scale beside the Transportation Category Score all the way to the left, or towards the **Negative (-)** symbol. A Customized Score, reflecting the adjustments made, will appear at the top of the page.

To view a detailed PDF report of the Location Results webpage click on the **PDF Report** button above the map. To save or print the PDF Report click on the **Generate PDF** button above the report. A pop up will then appear saying, "Do you want to open or save Bismarck-Burleigh-County-ND.pdf from livabilityindex.aarp.org?" Click on the **Open** button. The PDF file that opens can be printed or saved.

To compare the livability index with up to three locations, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the large **Compare Locations** button. To add each community click on the **Add a Location** button, enter the location, and click on the **Magnifying Glass** icon. For our example enter the following zip codes for our three locations: 58852, 58401, and 58301. The three North Dakota locations being viewed are Tioga, Jamestown, and Devils Lake. You are now able to compare the Livability Score and Category Scores for all three locations at one time.

LOCATION	Tioga, Williams County, North Dakota, 58852	Jamestown, Stutsman County, North Dakota, 58401	Devils Lake, Ramsey County, North Dakota, 58301
TOTAL INDEX SCORE	52	61	59
HOUSING Affordability and access	63	64	80
NEIGHBORHOOD Access to life, work, and play	36	48	49
TRANSPORTATION Safe and convenient options	30	50	52
ENVIRONMENT Clean air and water	65	59	60
HEALTH Prevention, access, and quality	28	53	28
ENGAGEMENT Civic and social involvement	74	91	86
OPPORTUNITY Inclusion and possibilities	71	63	61

This website is a great resource for identifying your community's strengths and weaknesses.

You can utilize this knowledge by promoting your strengths and taking action to improve your weaknesses.

Please contact me with any questions or comments. My contact information is at the bottom of this document.

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