



City of Grand Rapids Age-Friendly Action Plan





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Executive Summary

Context

In 2006, the Age-Friendly Communities international effort was launched by the World Health Organization to help cities prepare for the parallel trends of a rapidly aging world population and increasing urbanization. Since 2012 AARP, an institutional affiliate of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, has led the effort to educate and support cities and communities that are interested in becoming designated as age-friendly communities in the U.S. In 2016, AARP and the City of Grand Rapids began seeking input from diverse stakeholders and taking the steps to seek formal designation for the City. In 2018, after two years of community engagement, the City applied for and was accepted as a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. The engagement efforts have continued in 2019, culminating in this Age-Friendly Grand Rapids Action Plan. Implementation of some of the Action Plan recommendations has already begun. Annual reports will be submitted to AARP/WHO to sustain the Age-Friendly designation.

Background

Grand Rapids is the second largest City in Michigan and, in 2019 was one of eight communities in Michigan that committed to

creating a place to live that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of residents of all ages and from all walks of life. In October 2019, Michigan became the fifth state in the country and the first state in the Midwest to partner with AARP/WHO to become an age-friendly state. Michigan is one of the most rapidly aging states in the country. According to AARP the number of Michiganders 60 years and older is growing by 50,000 each year. By 2025, Michigan will be the first state where residents age 65 and older will outnumber those that are 18 and younger – a decade ahead of the national aging projection. This compelling data calls on Grand Rapids and the state of Michigan to become a leader in age-friendly planning and practices.

While age-friendly initiatives around the world may focus on WHO's eight Domains of Livability, Grand Rapids is currently advancing work in the four domains that are most important to older adult Grand Rapids residents: Communication, Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Transportation. More than 500 older adults from every part of the City participated in Thought Leader meetings, Listening Tour events, bilingual surveys (online and in-person), Advisory, Subcommittee and Task Force meetings to identify the needs, gaps and opportunities that are included in the Action Plan.

It is worth noting that the City hopes to serve as a model for equitable and innovative engagement, particularly around engagement of older adults. The City has made substantial efforts to reach diverse populations with sessions oriented toward LGBTQ seniors, communities of color, homeless older adults and adults living with disabilities. The City also incorporated innovative engagement tools to complement traditional community meetings and surveying. One such tool is a City-designed game called "Grandy Land," which leads players through the WHO domains and encourages them to consider their application to Grand Rapids. Another innovative engagement strategy resulted in a partnership for a "combined class" with traditional university students and older adults from a senior living community.

Summary

The City's thorough engagement of residents and a wide variety of organizations has culminated in an Age-Friendly Action Plan supported by the Mayor, City Commission, City Manager and City Departments. The Plan has been integral to and aligned with, the City's values of a safe, affordable, engaged, inclusive, equitable and vibrant Grand Rapids for all citizens. The implementation of the Plan will result in each Grand Rapids neighborhood being a place for successful aging.



Introduction



City of Grand Rapids, Michigan

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ROSALYNN C. BLISS
MAYOR

Dear Residents of Grand Rapids,

Why is 'age-friendly' important for Grand Rapids? Because it involves our elders. Older Grand Rapidians who have built our city. Many of our seniors have deep roots here – often generations deep.

As we look forward to updating our City Master Plan, the time is perfect for us to integrate a commitment to becoming an age-friendly community. This will entail the creation of a city-wide action plan based on a baseline assessment of how age-friendly our community is today. Older adults have already been included in assessing the 'age-friendliness' of our city and in proposing solutions. Also included in our City's action plan are indicators to measure our progress and older adults will be involved in monitoring the success of that action plan.

Each year I designate a book for our community to read that is related to a direction in which we wish to travel. In 2018, I selected the AARP book "Where We Live – Communities for All Ages" as my Mayor's Book of the Year and invited all residents to read this inspiring book along with me. It includes examples throughout the United States of what can be done to create better communities for people of all ages and all abilities.

Grand Rapids currently has neighborhoods where more than 20 percent – or 1 in 5 – of our residents are 65 years or older. It is important that we make sure that our seniors have healthy, productive lives and that we are recognizing older adults as a valued resource in our city. What is good for our seniors is good for all of us.

Sincerely,

Rosalynn Bliss
Mayor / City of Grand Rapids, MI





**“What is good for our seniors
is good for all of us.”**

- Mayor Rosalynn Bliss





Hello Grand Rapids!

As your City Manager, I have the honor and responsibility to help set the vision of the City. In my recent work with the City Commission and staff, we created the City of Grand Rapids Strategic Plan. The plan aspires to make Grand Rapids nationally recognized as an equitable, welcoming, innovative and collaborative city that includes a safe and healthy community, a robust economy, and a high quality of life for residents of all ages.

Recognizing that by 2025 Michigan will be the first state in the US where residents age 65 and older will outnumber those who are 18 and younger we were compelled to become a leader in age-friendly planning and practices and to seek accreditation as an Age-Friendly Community. In 2016, following the leadership of the World Health Organization and in partnership with AARP (a national affiliate of WHO), the City began the age-friendly planning process. Our extensive outreach and robust community engagement culminated in an Age-Friendly Grand Rapids Action Plan and in 2018, the City was accepted by AARP into the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

Our plan strives to create a Grand Rapids that enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of age. We envision Grand Rapids as a place that makes it easy for older people to stay connected to those that are important to them and remain healthy and active even at the oldest ages. We also strive to make Grand Rapids a city that provides appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves.

This plan focuses on what Grand Rapiidian's have told us are some of their highest priority focus areas:

- Communication
- Outdoor Spaces
- Housing
- Transportation

Our Age-Friendly Action Plan includes goals for each of these four focus areas. These goals help to guide and measure outcomes for the twenty-nine action steps we have established to accomplish our goals. I encourage all residents to browse the age-friendly action plan to learn more about our vision and discover how you can help us make Grand Rapids a more age-friendly community

Mark Washington
City Manager / City of Grand Rapids, MI
300 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503



The City Manager, in collaboration with the City Commission and staff, created a Strategic Plan to serve as the operating plan for the City. This plan provides a community playbook for aligning initiatives, resources, goals, department operations, projects, and investments with a transparent and trackable timeline.

Careful attention was given to the City's Strategic Plan when crafting the Age-Friendly Action Plan. The Age-Friendly Action Plan will guide our progress and help us achieve the overall mission of the City, "To elevate the quality of life through excellent City services."



The Age-Friendly Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Grand Rapids will be nationally and globally recognized as an Age-Friendly Community that is:

- Equitable
- Welcoming, Innovative and Collaborative
- Economically Robust
- Safe and Healthy
- Providing An Opportunity For a High Quality of Life For People of All Ages

Mission

To elevate quality of life by providing excellent services to people of all ages, including older adults through both city and community partnerships.

Values

Accountability

Acting with integrity and transparency.

Collaboration

Working together in partnership with others.

Customer Service

Serving those who live in, work in or visit the city.

Equity

Leveraging city influence to intentionally remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice.

Innovation

Challenging how things have been done before and offering new ways to fulfill community needs.

Sustainability

Making decisions with an understanding of how those decisions will impact the environment and people, both today and in the future.



“...it is important to remember that the purpose of city master planning is to direct the work of city staff based on public input and priorities set by the community.

- Kristin Turkelson, Planning Director / City of Grand Rapids



To all Residents and Visitors of Grand Rapids:

Change provides many benefits—investment in neighborhoods, an increase in the number of housing units, new and expanded businesses and more construction jobs—but it also comes with costs, including displacement of residents and small businesses, higher rents, concerns about loss of neighborhood power and increased anxiety.

As we look forward to beginning our next City Master Plan, it is important to remember that the purpose of city master planning is to direct the work of City staff based on public input and priorities set by the community.

The purpose of Age-Friendly Grand Rapids is to include residents who may not have felt that they had a voice before, in assessing the city and proposing solutions. It is important that all residents, including older adults, know that they have a seat at the table and feel comfortable, valued and encouraged to give input.

As a result of Age-Friendly input, future projects will include city government, neighborhoods and faith and business communities. These projects will include older adult leadership and participation in domains that they have identified as important. These domains are: Communication, Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Transportation.

As we participate in the five-year process to becoming accredited as an Age-Friendly Community, it will have economic and social benefits for Grand Rapids, including the business community, residents and visitors of all ages.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristin Turkelson".

Kristin Turkelson
Planning Director / City of Grand Rapids





Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The City of Grand Rapids is in the process of becoming an Age-Friendly Community under the guidance of the World Health Organization. The goal is to enable residents to “age actively:” to live in good health and participate fully in their community. Initial steps have been taken to create a place that makes it easy for our older adults to stay healthy, active and protected from living in isolation.

We know that a well-designed community fosters healthy and productive activity for all ages. Taxpayers in Grand Rapids began making critical investments for the purpose of improving our parks system after passing a millage in 2013 and in 2014 voted to dedicate a portion of our income tax funds to improve our street and sidewalk infrastructure. These public assets play a key role in keeping us active as we age. Good trails and sidewalks, safe streets on which to drive, clearly marked bicycle infrastructure and quality parks all contribute to happier healthier lives.

What more can Grand Rapids do to prepare for a rapidly aging population? That was a question I left with after attending an AARP conference in 2015. Looking further into this issue, it became clear that our city needed to plan with seniors in mind. By the year 2030, one in five Americans is projected to be 65 years old and over. We must prepare for this demographic change.

The first steps toward becoming an Age-Friendly Community began with listening sessions that included over 300 of the city’s seniors along with organizations that serve our aging population. Great care was taken to engage with diverse groups within the city to identify their needs and wants.

The City will soon begin a new Master Planning process. One goal will be to prepare for the large increase in the older adult population. Your participation will be needed to plan for quality housing, transportation access to the amenities that will enhance your quality of life as well as provide appropriate support for those who can no longer look after themselves.

Age-friendly communities that are carefully planned will foster economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents of all ages. It is our hope that we can count on community stakeholders to optimize opportunities for the aging population in Grand Rapids.

We are grateful for the support of Mayor Rosalynn Bliss and our City Commission in voting unanimously to endorse this effort in 2018 and for the technical support given by Jennifer Feuerstein from AARP and our Planning Department staff including the City's former Planning Director Suzanne Schulz, Jay Steffen, Kristin Turkelson and Virginia Smith as well as the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan. Together we will continue planning for a livable city that includes the amenities we need to live with dignity and happiness as we travel through life.

Yours for a bright future for all,



Ruth Kelly
Former City Commissioner / City of Grand Rapids, MI



“ By providing an environment that keeps us healthy and productively engaged, it will help guarantee that we have an improved community for all ages.”

- Former City Commissioner Ruth Kelly



“...Grand Rapids is a front runner in being an innovative, livable community for people of all ages.”

- Jennifer Fuerstein, Associate State Director/AARP Michigan



10/23/2019

Dear Community Members:

I began working with Suzanne Schulz, former Grand Rapids City Planning Director, in 2016 to help Grand Rapids work toward achieving the Age-Friendly designation. The City was already accomplishing so many initiatives that aligned with the 8 domains of livability that it was a natural fit to have GR enroll in the Network of Age-Friendly Communities to tap into the support and resources available. The City leaders are exceptionally visionary people who are forward thinking and they want to ensure residents will call Grand Rapids their home for a lifetime. When the City leaders decided to build the Age-Friendly efforts into their revitalized master plan, they wanted to ensure that funding, resources and support were part of the City's future goals. It is a strategy that is sustainable.

Making Grand Rapids an age-friendly community is vital for the residents of this city—the second largest in the state of Michigan. Grand Rapids is a thriving, robust and popular city that many new residents are calling home and many longtime residents are retiring in. Since Michigan is one of the fastest aging states, the City is positioning itself to be sustainable for people of all ages and the leadership has been exemplary in how to make a community more livable.

It has been a joy to work with the City leaders in hosting our three thought leader listening sessions, conducting an AARP-funded survey, assisting with 19 community listening sessions and then working closely to build community support. And with the recent announcement of Governor Gretchen Whitmer declaring Michigan an Age-Friendly State, there is no doubt that Grand Rapids is a front runner in being an innovative, livable community for people of all ages.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Fuerstein".

Jennifer Fuerstein

Associate State Director / AARP Michigan

Experience GRAND RAPIDS

Welcome to Grand Rapids— A wonderful place to live and visit from retirees to millennials! The National Association of Realtors rated Grand Rapids the #2 Most Popular Destination for Millennials to Move and Stay. Conde Nast Traveler just named Grand Rapids the #9 Best Place to Retire in the U.S.

As a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, Grand Rapids is the second largest metro area in Michigan, but still maintains a small-town warmth. In almost any neighborhood, you could be met with a friendly wave and hello from people walking their dog, caring for their lawns, or sitting on porches.

With more than 1,200 acres of city-owned parks, the city is also a cultural hub, featuring museums, art, fine dining, entertainment and dozens of festivals. The city is also home to some of the finest craft brewers in the country.

Located in West Michigan, only 30 miles from Lake Michigan, you can also enjoy biking, walking and hiking trails, including beaches, dunes, forests and several nature preserves. There are also many great fishing spots, boating and golf courses.

Transportation choices include Uber, Lyft, para-transit and the Rapid, which maintains bus routes throughout downtown and the immediate suburbs. The DASH (Downtown Area Shuttle) offers free service connecting neighborhood areas to the city center, river walk, arena, convention center, dining, lodging and parking.


Whether coming for a short visit, or a longer stay, come and see what Grand Rapids has to offer!

Best,


Janet Korn
Senior Vice President / Experience Grand Rapids

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“... Grand Rapids is the second largest metro area in Michigan, but still maintains a small-town warmth.”

- Janet Korn, Senior Vice President Experience Grand Rapids

Age-Friendly Timeline of Events

2015



- After attending an AARP Conference which discussed safe streets and walkable neighborhoods, former City Commissioner Ruth Kelly reaches out to then Planning Director Suzanne Schulz. Together they begin discussing next steps for an increasingly aging population and an Age-Friendly Grand Rapids.

2016

- Three Thought Leader Meetings are held which included 300 representatives from the business community, neighborhood leadership and the City.



- An AARP Survey was conducted of City residents 50 years and older.
- An Age-Friendly Coordinator is hired to begin researching the age-friendly work of other cities and countries and then outlining a strategy for Grand Rapids.

2017

- A 23 location city-wide Listening Tour is conducted asking older adults, “What do YOU think would make Grand Rapids more age-friendly?”



- The interactive game called Grandy Land is created.
- The 4 Key Domains of Livability in Grand Rapids emerge from comments received from older adults: Communication, Housing, Outdoor Spaces Transportation.

2018

- State of the City Address
- The City Commission unanimously passes a formal resolution to support an Age-Friendly Communities initiative.
- Mayor Rosalynn Bliss' Advisory Council establishes Goals in each of the 4 Key Grand Rapids Domains of Livability.
- In August Mayor Bliss sends a formal letter of commitment to AARP Michigan and the World Health Organization to become an Age-Friendly Community.
- Work Groups meet and establish 16 Recommendations to support the four Goals established by the Advisory Council.

2019

- From January to December, Age-Friendly Task Forces and Discussion Groups identify 28 Action Steps which support the 16 Recommendations established by the 2018 Work Groups. These Action Steps also identify stakeholders/partners, timelines, funding and outcome indicators.

2020

- In 2020, the City and its partners began implementing the Action Steps. The implementation phase will continue for the foreseeable future.



“[Older adults] want affordable transportation and companionship to night time activities.”

- Age-Friendly Listening Tour Participant



A Plan Emerges

2016 Thought Leader Events

Discussion about Age-Friendly Grand Rapids first began when Former City Commissioner Ruth Kelly attended an AARP Convention about safe streets and livable communities. She realized that Grand Rapids was already doing much of this work and that the City had great potential for future improvements.

Commissioner Kelly then reached out to Suzanne Schulz, Former Planning Director, who saw potential for this work to inform the next City Master Plan. Commissioner Kelly and Director Schulz then reached out to representatives from AARP and the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan. In early 2016, this combined group created a series of three “Thought Leader” events.



More than 300 community leaders, senior advocates representatives from the City of Grand Rapids non-profit businesses currently offering senior services attended a series of three Thought Leader events.



The Source for Seniors



**At each event the same question was asked-
“Should Grand Rapids move forward towards becoming an
age-friendly community?” At each event the answer was “Yes!”**

2016 AARP Survey

In 2016, AARP researchers conducted a survey of older adults, age 50-plus, living in the city of Grand Rapids. Topics included their perceptions of the community on features and services related to the eight Domains of Livability (Transportation, Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Community Support and Health Services, Social Participation, Communication and Information, Civic Participation and Employment, Respect and Social Inclusion) as well as demographic questions.

86%



Rate community as excellent or good place for people to live as they age



73%

of Grand Rapids residents felt hospitals and health care facilities were well maintained. **64%** felt emergency care centers were conveniently located and medical staff were respectful.



61%

stated that remaining in their home was **VERY IMPORTANT**

and **57%** plan to stay in their current residence and never move

40%

say security concerns and personal safety are major factors for remaining in their current home



24%

will need to make major repairs, changes or home modifications

DID YOU KNOW?

Community residents age 50+ have resided in Grand Rapids an average of

34 YEARS

AGE-FRIENDLY GRAND RAPIDS DOMAINS OF LIVABILITY



COMMUNICATION



HOUSING



OUTDOOR SPACES



TRANSPORTATION

Older adults rated these features extremely or very good:

Free access to computers and the internet in public places

Well maintained homes and properties

Safe parks

Accessible and convenient transportation

These features were rated fair or poor:

Clearly displayed printed community information with large lettering

Well maintained, safe low-income housing

Safe and accessible sidewalks

Well maintained streets

Access to community information in one central source

Homes with accessibility features

Neighborhood Watch programs

Affordable public parking

44%

of survey respondents reported wanting a home that will help them live independently as they age.

2016 Age-Friendly Coordinator

In 2016, the City of Grand Rapids hired a senior intern, Virginia (Ginnie) Smith, to coordinate the Age-Friendly Grand Rapids initiative. Smith began by researching the work of other age-friendly cities and countries and interviewing leaders across the country that had already written Age-Friendly Action Plans for their respective communities. In 2017, Smith then assisted with creating an interactive game called Grandy Land with members of the Planning Department and launched a 23-location Listening Tour.



2017 Grandy Land

The game Grandy Land was used at listening events as another way for participants to engage. It was designed after the board game Candy Land and included stops at each of the eight Domains of Livability designated by the World Health Organization as important for an age-friendly community. At each of eight stops in the game, participants were asked to pause and answer the question - *“What would make the city of Grand Rapids more age-friendly?”* The game was created as both an actual board game and also in a digital format.

2017 City Wide Listening Tour

In 2017, The City engaged residents directly through in-person interviews, paper and online surveys – both in English and Spanish. The 23 Listening Tour locations were chosen based on reaching out to the largest number of older adults as well as a diverse audience including the homeless, communities of color, LGBTQ+, and refugee communities. The Listening Tour events were intentional efforts to listen to and learn from groups of older adults that are not traditionally involved in the planning process. Community engagement included outreach to older adults from communities of color, adults living with disabilities, and caregivers and persons living with dementia. The purpose of the Listening Tour was to foster participation in a way that would produce increased, equitable outcomes for all older adults in the city.

Two events located outside of the city limits included presentations to students at Grand Valley State University Frederik Meijer Honors College. The classes included older adults and students who may be some of our future medical professionals and business owners, caring for older adults.

You spoke...



and we listened.

Four Key Domains of Livability in Grand Rapids

Listening events were held in each of the three city wards and also at locations that included neighborhood association sites, gyms, a senior memory café, library, university locations, churches and senior living communities. The feedback received from older adults during the Age-Friendly Grand Rapids Listening Tour became the basis of four emerging themes shown to the right.



Communication

Listening Tour Comments

- Social workers to help with reading
- City senior website, calendar, or directory
- Call line for help with phone scams
- Neighborhood phone tree, buddy system
- Classes/tutors for technology
- Bus announcements louder/easier to understand
- Interpreters for public service announcements

Many comments focused on creating a one-stop resource hub – either physical or virtual – for all categories of information for older adults. Many older adults preferred paper as a resource, such as brochures, newsletters, or a ‘yellow pages’ type of book for listing resource information pertaining to older adults. Comments also highlighted literacy as an issue and face-to-face contact as a preferred communication method.



Housing

Listening Tour Comments

- Affordable, competent maintenance, including snow removal and yard assistance
- Secure walkways, less steep, wider stairs
- On site social workers, speech therapists and special needs clinic
- No penalties for income increase or criminal record after time served
- Door-to-door grocery help
- More walkable and vibrant neighborhoods

Comments focused on the need for safety, security and affordable housing at all income levels. Requests also included the need for more services in homes and senior living communities, funding for home repairs and modifications and contractors knowledgeable in universal design.



Outdoor Spaces

Listening Tour Comments

- More indoor/outdoor places to gather
- Nearby parking for events, plus companions
- Walking/wheelchair paths to activities
- Wheelchair accessible picnic tables
- Permanent outdoor game tables, like chess
- Plug-in outlets for electric wheelchairs
- Emergency call boxes

Many comments focused on safe, accessible sidewalks, including safe pedestrian crossings, more curb cuts and ramps, slower traffic, winter ice and snow removal, additional lighting, bathrooms, benches, shade trees and natural landscaping. Comments also included the need for more places to gather, such as nearby parks, including parks for small dogs, “senior” playgrounds and access to water activities for older adults.



Transportation

Listening Tour Comments

- More control of some students on city buses
- More space on buses for walker devices
- Need user friendly/affordable GO bus
- More visible lane markings
- Faith communities offering volunteer drivers
- Offer City-sponsored Uber
- Create a three-wheeled bike program
- Senior citizen parking ramp
- Consider making taxis more affordable
- Offer free/reduced bus rides

Many comments focused on mass transit and para-transit. Comments also included affordability, safety, comfort and an openness for transportation options such as new technologies, ride sharing and intergenerational and volunteer opportunities.



“[There is a need for] free accessible restrooms with raised toilet seats. [We need] more restrooms [that are] easier to find and [are] open more hours”

- Age-Friendly Listening Tour Participant



Moving Forward



AARP®



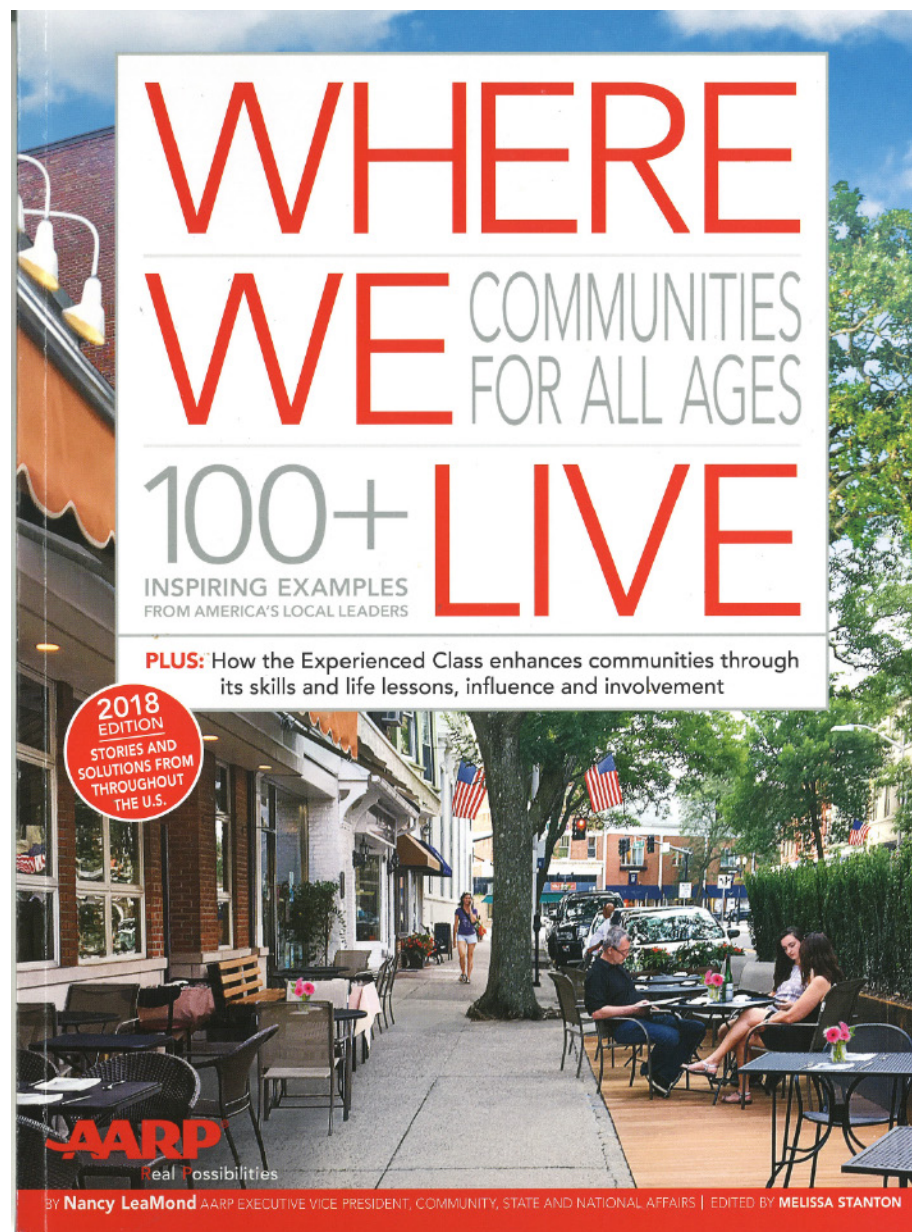
2018 State of the City Address

In February 2018, at her State of the City address, Mayor Rosalynn Bliss said, "What is good for our seniors is good for all of us." She continued by pointing out that in some Grand Rapids neighborhoods, more than 20% of the residents are 65 years or older. As the City looks to the future, which includes updating the City Master Plan, the time is perfect to integrate a commitment to becoming an age-friendly city. The Mayor highlighted the work of the Planning Department in partnership with AARP, which conducted more than 20 listening sessions with seniors from all corners of the community. The listening events were held in churches, neighborhoods and senior living communities and included more than 10 languages and resulted in more than 2,000 comments. The listening sessions, plus a survey of residents 50 years and older, provided incredibly important feedback that was used to create this plan.

Each year Mayor Bliss chooses a "Mayor's Book of the Year" related to the direction in which the City wishes to travel. In 2018, Mayor Bliss chose the AARP book "Where We Live – Communities for All Ages" that includes inspiring examples of communities throughout the U.S. The Mayor invited all city residents to join her in reading about what can be done to create better communities for people of all ages and all abilities.

"Please join me in reading about what can be done to create better communities for people of all ages and all abilities."

-Mayor Rosalynn Bliss



2018 City Commission Resolution

In May 2018, the City Commission unanimously passed a formal resolution supporting the Age-Friendly Communities initiative. The Commission also authorized the Mayor to convene an Age-Friendly Advisory Council to actively seek input from diverse stakeholders and seek formal designation of the City of Grand Rapids as an Age-Friendly Community from the World Health Organization.

87679 Result: Adopted.
Mover: Kelly. Supporter: O'Connor.

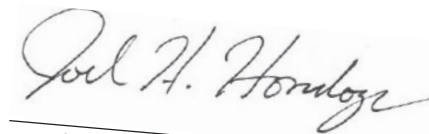
WHEREAS:

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities to encourage and promote public policies to increase the number of cities and communities that support healthy aging and thereby improve the health, well-being, satisfaction quality of life for older Americans; and
2. Older adults (aged 50 and above) represent just over a quarter of the population of Grand Rapids; and
3. Research shows that older Americans overwhelmingly want to remain in their homes and communities as they age; and
4. The World Health Organization Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide identifies core characteristics of an age-friendly city in Eight Domains of Livability: outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information; and community support and health services; and
5. Active aging is a life-long process, whereby an age-friendly community is not just "elder-friendly" but also intended to be friendly for all ages; and
6. The City of Grand Rapids has engaged older adults and others in the community through survey and community engagement events that have reached a significant number of residents and stakeholders within the city, resulting in the identification of priority age-friendly focus areas; and
7. Future master planning efforts desire to include the voices of older adults in all aspects of designing our community; becoming an Age-Friendly City helps us to learn how best to engage and involve them; and
8. The City of Grand Rapids wishes to encourage and promote public policies that support healthy aging and thereby improve the health, well-being, satisfaction quality of life for our older residents.

RESOLVED:

1. The City of Grand Rapids supports initiatives and opportunities to engage in the WHO Age-Friendly Cities and Communities network of municipalities encouraging and promoting public policies supporting health aging; and
2. The Mayor is authorized to convene an Age-Friendly Advisory Council to actively seek input from diverse stakeholders and support the steps necessary to seek formal designation of the City of Grand Rapids as an Age-Friendly Community.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true transcript of the action of the City Commission of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in public session held May 1, 2018.



Joel H. Hondorp, City Clerk

2018 Mayor's Advisory Council

The Advisory Council participants included a diverse group of representatives from the City of Grand Rapids, neighborhood organizations, the business community, advocacy groups and residents. City staff included representatives from Planning, Communications, Police and Parks and Recreation, as well as the direct involvement of Mayor Rosalynn Bliss, Former City Commissioner Ruth Kelly and County Commissioner David Bulkowski. Representatives from AARP Michigan and the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan also served on the Council. Other key agencies involved included The Grand Rapids Housing Commission, The Rapid (transit authority), Disability Advocates of Kent County and Senior Neighbors. Members of the Advisory Council served a key role in fostering collaboration, forming partnerships and identifying specific champions to lead future implementation efforts. They focused on establishing Goals that could be implemented in a 2-3 year time period and would be used in our Age-Friendly Grand Rapids Action Plan.



Mayor's Advisory Council Goals

In July and August 2018, the Mayor's Age-Friendly Advisory Council, which was made up primarily of older adults, began working in groups to identify goals in the four key domains of livability. They reviewed comments and suggestions in each of the four domains that had emerged as themes in the 2017 Listening Tour.

Communication

Discussion Group

Members of the Advisory Council that participated in the Communication discussion group included representatives from the City, Senior Neighbors, Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM) and city residents including representatives from the Native American, African American, refugee, LGBT+ and senior living communities.



Discussions included: creating a 'central hub' for senior information, the need for additional classes and programming in multiple languages, improving methods of communication and improving coordination to streamline services (i.e. call center). The Advisory Council agreed on the following:

Communication Goal

Create a one-stop resource that consolidates available information on senior-oriented resources. For example, this could combine the information and programs offered by United Way 211, AAWM, Senior Neighbors and the City of Grand Rapids. This one-stop resource may be physical or web-based.

Housing

Discussion Group

Members of the Advisory Council that participated in the Housing discussion group included representatives from City Commission, Advocates for Senior Issues, older adult city residents, Grand Rapids Housing Commission, the Dominican Center at Marywood and Senior Neighbors.



Discussions included: more affordable housing, shorter wait times for housing, safety for older adult residents, not allowing landlords to take advantage of renters, increased awareness of all current housing resources, creating new housing programs and supporting existing programs and locating all housing information in one location. The Advisory Council agreed on the following:

Housing Goal

Increase fair rental practices for seniors, including supporting the Renter Readiness Program/ Certification being collaboratively developed by the Grand Rapids Housing Commission and the Grand Rapids City Commission.

Outdoor Spaces

Discussion Group

Members of the Advisory Council that participated in the Outdoor Spaces discussion group included representatives from AARP, the City, including Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation and the Grand Rapids Police Department and older adult city residents representing faith and neighborhood organizations.



Discussions included: improving sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, slowing traffic, increasing lighting around neighborhoods and parking lots and adding natural landscaping to improve quality of life. The Advisory Council agreed on the following:

Outdoor Spaces Goal

Increase pedestrian safety, access and enjoyment through education, community outreach and the improvement of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings. Considerations should include improved signage and crossing treatments, slower traffic in neighborhoods, year-round sidewalk maintenance and the extension of sidewalks to connect with trails.

Transportation

Discussion Group

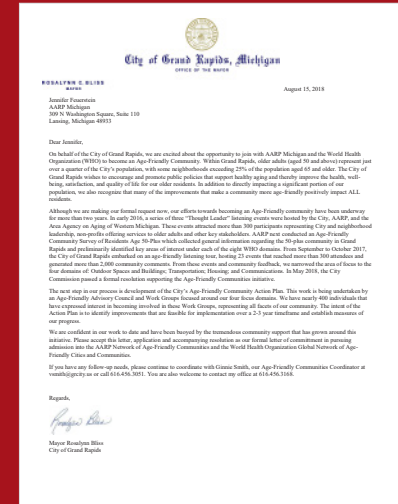
Members of the Advisory Council that participated in the Transportation discussion group included representatives from the city, older adult city residents, the Rapid, Disability Advocates of Kent County, Grand Valley State University, Community Media Center, Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan and AARP.



Discussions included: affordability, continued advocacy for special needs transportation users, intergenerational issues, security and comfort of older adults while using bus transportation within the city, awareness of current transportation resources and future options. The Advisory Council agreed on the following:

Transportation Goal

Develop and promote awareness of current and future transportation options and resources. Create programs to address real and perceived transit-related security issues on the buses and at bus stops. Specific concerns include behavior management, the need for enhanced lighting and improved social comfort at transit stops. Consideration should include dedication of some rides/lines for certain populations or rider intent, such as a seniors-only shopper line. Actions should include increased advocacy and development of partnerships (i.e. with local businesses).



2018 Mayor's Formal Letter of Commitment

On August 15, 2018 Mayor Rosalynn Bliss, on behalf of the City of Grand Rapids, sent a formal letter of commitment to AARP Michigan resolving to become an age-friendly community. On August 22, 2019 the City of Grand Rapids was accepted as a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

“There needs to be a central clearing house for all types of housing needs and options. Funding [is also needed].”

- Age-Friendly Listening Tour Participant



Work Group Recommendations

Work Groups

From September to December 2018, Work Groups continued the work begun by the Mayor's Advisory Council. Participants of the Mayor's Advisory Council were invited to take a leadership role in guiding the Work Groups. Invitations to participate in the Work Groups were also extended to all participants from the 2016 Thought Leader meetings and the 2017 Listening Tour events.

These Work Groups focused on identifying 16 Recommendations that supported the four Goals that had been established previously.

Communication Work Group



Communication Work Group participants included members of the Advisory Council as well as representatives from the Council on Aging, the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the art, business and medical communities.

Discussions included:

- Identify areas where older adults have questions
- Increase networking among organizations. Bring all organizations to the discussion table, including for-profit and not-for-profit organizations.
- Create an 'Aging is Awesome' campaign to all ages. Create a questionnaire "Are you prepared to be older?" Start a promotion/education initiative designed to take away the fear of aging.
- Learn how to identify scams. Call before there is a crisis. Understand how older adults receive their information.
- Encourage senior entrepreneurs.
- Define 'caregiver'. (Most people do not realize they are caregivers.) Educate younger people, including school age children about available resources for older adults.

The Communication Work Group identified the following three Recommendations that supported the Goal identified by the Advisory Council:

Recommendation 1

Create a physical or web-based one-stop resource.

Recommendation 2

Combine the information about programs offered by United Way 211, AAAM, Senior Neighbors and the City of Grand Rapids with a focus on addressing these seven topics: Health, Housing, Transportation, Utilities, Food, In-home Services and Social Activities.

Recommendation 3

Develop a multi-faceted communication plan for information distribution and engaging the community in connecting with older adults. (ie. paper, brochures, listening tour, TV, internet, radio).

Housing Work Group



Housing Work Group participants included representatives from the Advisory Council, the business community, the City, faith-based organizations, the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan and Disability Advocates of Kent County.

Discussions included:

- Indicate whether housing is visitable, accessible, or barrier free.
- Include social worker(s) to assist older adults when applying for housing options.
- Assess gaps in the current housing system.
- Coordinate existing and future housing policies.
- Research best practices from around the country.
- Identify whether current laws/policies are in place to stop predatory practices.
- Establish significant penalties for inappropriate landlords.
- Identify a 1-800 type of number to report housing abuses anonymously.

The Housing Work Group identified the following two recommendations that supported the Goal identified by the Advisory Council:

Recommendation 1

Educate the community and state level policy makers about housing options, services and the need for assisted living.

Recommendation 2

Encourage community discussion regarding unfair rental practices.

“I will stay in my home as long as possible. There are no affordable options at my income level. I enjoy living in Grand Rapids and do not want to move away.”

- Comment from older adult participant in Age-Friendly Listening Tour

Outdoor Spaces Work Group



Outdoor Spaces Work Group participants included representatives from the City Commission, Advisory Council, Advocates for Senior Issues and the City of Grand Rapids Engineering, Public Services, Parks and Mobile GR Departments.

Discussions included:

- An “outdoor park party” type event for older adults that includes transportation, fun activities, faith communities, the Grand Rapids Press, United Methodist Community House, Baxter Community Center, Senior Neighbors, Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan and AARP.
- Improving pedestrian safety
- Audible crossings
- Longer timed pedestrian crossings
- Additional curb cuts/ramps

The Outdoor Spaces Work Groups identified the following five Recommendations that supported the Goal identified by the Advisory Council:

Recommendation 1

Repair, maintain and construct safe sidewalks, curb cuts and accessible connections to trails.

Recommendation 2

Evaluate, install and maintain pedestrian friendly signage and crossings that may include signage, pavement markings and signals where appropriate.

Recommendation 3

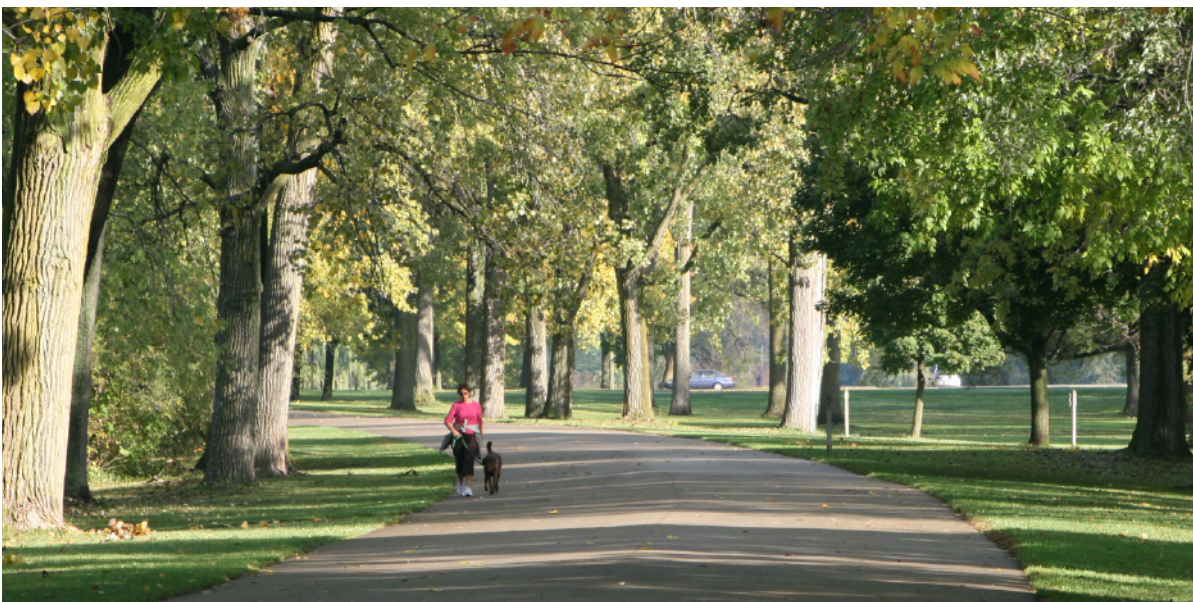
Expand existing programs and develop new programs to address winter sidewalk maintenance issues, i.e. snow and ice removal.

Recommendation 4

For increased age-friendly pedestrian access and enjoyment, add shade, benches, flowers and greenery to sidewalks and other walkways in neighborhoods and parks.

Recommendation 5

Partner with the City and community stakeholders to create and implement pedestrian safety education and community outreach programs.



Transportation Work Group



Transportation Work Group participants included representatives from the Advisory Council, City Commission, Mobile GR, Senior Neighbors, business and non-profit organizations.

Discussions included:

- New ways of communicating current and future transportation resources for older adults
- The need to try alternate transportation options before giving up a driver's license or experiencing a personal crisis or need
- Increased advocacy and using an intergenerational approach to increasing comfort levels for older adults while riding city buses

The Transportation Work Groups identified the following six Recommendations that supported the Goal identified by the Advisory Council:

Recommendation 1

Explore the development of a centralized system for curating transportation resources.

Encourage and promote older adults, friends and families to try/experience transportation options available to them whether they need them or not.

Recommendation 2

Create a “Be Nice” training program for transit drivers.

Recommendation 3

Explore creating an intergenerational program for older adults and students to address feelings and perceptions of vulnerable riders on buses and at bus stops.

Recommendation 4

Improve lighting where needed.

Recommendation 5

Continue advocacy to ensure that all modes of transportation are safe, affordable and accessible for older adults and residents of all ages and abilities and explore ways to increase the comfort level of older adults around unfamiliar people and situations.

Recommendation 6

Explore partnerships for the development of dedicated routes for older adults.



“[There is a] need to match older adults with employers and educate employers on the value of older adults.”

- Age-Friendly Listening Tour Participant



2019 Task Force and Discussion Group Action Steps

Communication

In 2019, the Communication Task Force began meeting to identify Action Steps. Participants in the Task Force meetings included representatives from the community, the Advisory Council and Work Groups.

Discussions included:

- Exploring ways of gathering and communicating all available senior resource information from one central location, which may include creating and maintaining a virtual resource hub.
- Identifying possible locations for physical resource centers.
- Researching methods for outreach to the many older adults who get their information only through face-to-face contact.
- Investigating diverse methods for the communication of age-friendly information for older adults such as advertising on city busses and billboards and reaching out to:
 - Retail stores
 - Malls
 - Libraries
 - Restaurants
 - Places of worship
 - Medical offices
 - Social Security and Secretary of State
 - Support and caregiver groups
 - Festivals
- Expanding informational outreach to target caregivers such as grandchildren and adult children caring for older adults.



The Communication discussions identified six Action Steps that supported the Goal/Recommendations established by the Advisory Council/Work Groups.

Action Steps - Communication

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
RECOMMENDATION 1: Create a physical or web-based one-stop resource.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.1 Include older adults in building a framework on the City of Grand Rapids website for Age-Friendly information relevant to older adults.	City of Grand Rapids 311	Engage with a maximum of four City departments to refine what information is most important to share with older adults. Conduct user testing of the new framework on the website.	City of Grand Rapids 311
	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.2 Create a process for the Age-Friendly Task Force and discussion groups to report progress on the Action Steps.	Communication Task Force Transportation Task Force Housing Discussion Group Outdoor Spaces Discussion Group	A template will be developed for for task force and discussion groups to provide information that could potentially be included on the City website and distributed through other communication channels.	No funding required
	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.3 Include older adults in obtaining a location and planning for a physical one-stop resource.	Grand Rapids Public Library Experience Grand Rapids	A possible location will be identified and relevant information collected to be displayed.	Location to be provided by partner organization

Action Steps - Communication cont.

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
<p>RECOMMENDATION 2: Combine the information about programs offered by United Way 211, Senior Neighbors, and the City of Grand Rapids with a focus on addressing these seven topics: Health, Housing, Transportation, Utilities, Food, In-home Services Social Activities.</p>	<p>2020-2022 ACTION STEP 2.1 Increase collaboration between United Way's 211 and the City's 311 to better understand the calls that older adults are making to each entity for assistance and the referral paths that are most helpful to them.</p>	<p>City of Grand Rapids 311 United Way 211</p>	<p>Coordinate joint meetings in 2020 with a summary document of new learnings and any proposed changes in referral procedures.</p>	<p>City of Grand Rapids 311</p>
	<p>2020-2022 ACTION STEP 2.2 Include older adults in assessing the availability and ease of accessing information from various programs.</p>	<p>211 AAAWM Senior Neighbors Council on Aging Caregiver Resource Network</p>	<p>Older adults will be included in developing a survey to better understand which programs have information in each category and what may be missing.</p>	<p>Funding provided through potential partners</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 3: Develop a multi-faceted communication plan for information distribution and engaging the community in connecting with older adults. (i.e. paper, brochures, listening tour, TV, internet, radio)</p>	<p>2020-2022 ACTION STEP 3.1 Include older adults in developing a pilot project(s) to provide information to older adults through multi-faceted communication channels.</p>	<p>North End Wellness Coalition Senior Centers Neighborhood Associations</p>	<p>Older adults will report having more access to information at the end of the pilot.</p>	<p>Funding provided through potential partners</p>

communicate

share or exchange information, news, or ideas; succeed in conveying one's ideas or in evoking understanding in others



friendly

kindly; not hostile; amicable; supporting, helping, favorable

Housing

In 2019, Housing discussions were held. Participants in the discussions included: representatives from the Advisory Council and the City of Grand Rapids. Participants also attended 2019 OurCity Academy sessions.

Discussions included:

- Including older adults in planning future housing projects, both in the city and county
- Increasing outreach and inclusion of older adults in future OurCity Academies

The Housing discussions identified two Action Steps that supported the Goal/Recommendations established by the Advisory Council/Work Groups.



Action Steps - Housing

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
RECOMMENDATION 1: Educate the community, as well as state level policy makers about housing options, services and the need for assisted living.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.1 Increase the marketing of OurCity Academy to older adults to inform them about housing, neighborhood services and resources provided through the City of Grand Rapids.	City of Grand Rapids Office of Community Development City of Grand Rapids Our Community's Children	Increased participation of older adults in the free educational program offered quarterly.	City of Grand Rapids
	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.2 Provide relevant information to state level policy makers about housing options and services.	City of Grand Rapids Office of Community Development Grand Rapids Housing Commission	Increased number of contacts with state level policy makers.	No funding required
RECOMMENDATION 2: Encourage community discussion regarding unfair rental practices.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 2.1 Include older adult voices in the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Plan to be developed by the City of Grand Rapids and Kent County for U.S. Housing and Urban Development	City of Grand Rapids Office of Community Development Senior Advocates	An older adult focus will be a requirement in the Request for Proposal and Scope of Work for the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Plan.	City of Grand Rapids Office of Community Development

Outdoor Spaces

In 2019, the Outdoor Spaces group discussions began to identify Action Steps. Participants in the discussions and meetings included representatives from the Advisory Council, Work Groups, City of Grand Rapids Office of Communication, Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, Grand Rapids residents in support of outdoor spaces and safe walking opportunities, and older adults representing non-profit and wellness organizations.

Discussions included:

- Engaging older adults in assessing safe walks/routes to outdoor spaces including issues of ice and snow, and signage.
- Increasing older adult awareness of available outdoor spaces and programming.
- Changing perceptions of the users of outdoor spaces in the city.
- Increasing the number and types of activities available for older adults in outdoor spaces.
- Adding and maintaining trees and other elements of beauty to outdoor spaces.

The Outdoor Spaces discussions identified eight Action Steps which supported the Goal/Recommendations established by the Advisory Council/Work Groups.



Action Steps - Outdoor Spaces

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
RECOMMENDATION 1: Repair, maintain and construct safe sidewalks, curb cuts and accessible connections to trails.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.1 Include older adults in walking audits and reporting sidewalk conditions and accessibility.	Mobile GR City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department AARP North End Wellness Coalition	Volunteers and partners will conduct walking audits in specific parts of the city.	<i>Potential Funding</i> Mobile GR City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department Audit materials provided by AARP and Safe Routes to Schools North End Wellness Coalition Neighborhood Associations
	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.2 Make action plans based on the recommendations from older adults included in the walking audits.	Mobile GR City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department North End Wellness Coalition	Action plans for sidewalks and accessibility improvements will be created with partners.	<i>Potential Funding</i> Mobile GR City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department City of Grand Rapids, Parks and Recreation Department North End Wellness Coalition Neighborhood Associations

Action Steps - Outdoor Spaces cont.

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
RECOMMENDATION 2: Evaluate, install, maintain pedestrian friendly signage and crossings that may include signage, pavement markings and signals where appropriate.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 2.1 Involve older adults in determining where signage is needed.	Mobile GR City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation AARP Safe Routes to Schools City of Grand Rapids Traffic Safety Department North End Wellness Coalition	Action plan for improved signage will be created with partners.	Mobile GR City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation AARP and Safe Routes to Schools (Audit Materials) City staff time North End Wellness Coalition and Business Partners Neighborhood Associations
	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 2.2 Make action plans based on the recommendations from older adults related to signage.	Mobile GR City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation AARP North End Wellness Coalition	Action plans for improvements to signage will be created with partners.	<i>Potential Funding</i> Mobile GR City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation AARP North End Wellness Coalition Business Partners Neighborhood Associations
RECOMMENDATION 3: Expand existing programs and develop new programs to address winter sidewalk maintenance issues, i.e. snow and ice removal.	2020-2021 ACTION STEP 3.1 Include older adults in identifying target areas of the city and creating a pilot ice/snow removal program.	Mobile GR in partnership with Public Works	Satisfaction surveys from older adults and miles of sidewalks plowed.	Mobile GR City of Grand Rapids Public Service Department Neighborhood Associations

Action Steps - Outdoor Spaces cont.

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
RECOMMENDATION 4: Add shade, benches, flowers and greenery to sidewalks and other walkways in neighborhoods and parks for increased age-friendly pedestrian access and enjoyment.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 4.1 Include older adults in maintaining the tree canopy and beautifying parks.	Friends of GR Parks AARP	4 volunteer events for tree maintenance and park beautification will include older adults.	Friends of GR Parks AARP Sponsorship of 4 Events Neighborhood Associations
	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 4.2 Include older adults in community engagement meetings and walking audits to plan for park improvements	City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department Friends of GR Parks	Increased number of older adults included in park planning.	City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department - Park Millage Neighborhood Associations
RECOMMENDATION 5: Partner with the City and community stakeholders to create and implement pedestrian safety education and community outreach programs.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 5.1 Include older adults in creating safety/education/outreach programs and messaging.	City of Grand Rapids Traffic Safety/Mobile GR/Vision Zero North End Wellness Coalition United Methodist Community House	Pilot workshops will be conducted with established programs serving older adults.	Heads Up, GR materials Mobile GR Vision Zero materials Partner staff time to make presentations Neighborhood Associations

Transportation

In 2019, the Transportation Task Force began meeting to identify Action Steps. Participants in the Task Force meetings included members of the Advisory Council, Work Groups and others focused on transportation. Task Force members also attended other transportation meetings including the Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF) and the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council.

Discussions included:

- Focusing on diversity and inclusion
- Including an intergenerational focus
- Identifying stakeholders
- Researching possible funding options
- Training for transportation drivers

The Transportation Task Force identified twelve Action Steps which supported the Goal/Recommendations established by the Advisory Council/Work Groups.



Action Steps - Transportation

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
<p>RECOMMENDATION 1: Explore the development of a centralized system for curating transportation resources. Encourage and promote older adults, friends and families to try/experience transportation options available to them whether they need them or not.</p>	<p>2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.1 Increase participation in an existing program to encourage older adults to experience transportation options before they are needed.</p>	<p>Churches, Senior Centers, or Senior Living Communities</p> <p>The Rapid</p> <p>Disability Advocates of Kent County</p> <p>RideLink</p> <p>Senior Neighbors</p>	<p>Older adults report increased satisfaction and usage after experiencing new transportation options.</p>	<p>Possible free bus passes from The Rapid</p>
	<p>2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.2 Pilot the use of GoGo Grandparent as an option for older adults who wish to use Uber but do not have access to smart phones.</p>	<p>GoGo Grandparent</p> <p>Grand Valley State University students</p>	<p>Older adults will report satisfaction and increased trips during follow-up contact calls.</p>	<p>TBD</p>

Action Steps - Transportation cont.

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
<p>RECOMMENDATION 1: Explore the development of a centralized system for curating transportation resources. Encourage and promote older adults, friends families to try/ experience transportation options available to them whether they need them or not.</p>	<p>2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.3 Explore and identify how a transportation system for health-related appointments could be coordinated.</p>	<p>Essential Needs Task Force, Transportation Subcommittee</p>	<p>Development of a centralized system for scheduling, routing and planning transportation for medically related travel, as well as coordination of available services.</p>	<p>TBD</p>
	<p>2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.4 Market the “Wheels to Work” program to older adult employees.</p>	<p>Wheels to Work</p>	<p>Increase in the number of older adults utilizing the system.</p>	<p>TBD</p>
	<p>2020-2022 ACTION STEP 1.5 Explore organizational capacity for maintaining a central database or curated transportation services.</p>	<p>Hope Network</p>	<p>Expansion of the current list of transportation resources listed on the website: https://hopenetwork.org/transportation-services/services-transportation/</p>	<p>TBD</p>

Action Steps - Transportation cont.

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
RECOMMENDATION 2: Create an awareness program for transit drivers focusing on the needs of older adults.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 2.1 Conduct a listening event with older adults to learn preferred elements of customer service that will be included in a training program for transportation providers.	The Rapid United Methodist Community House	A list of topics compiled to ensure good customer service for older adults using a variety of transportation options.	The Rapid United Methodist Community House conference space
	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 2.2 Engage with a transportation provider(s) to develop a transit driver training program regarding serving older adults and those with special needs.	Grand Valley University Masters in Public Health Program Holland Home United Methodist Community House	Development and rollout of a pilot training program and graduation of 20 drivers	TBD
RECOMMENDATION 3: Explore creating an intergenerational program for older adults and students to address feelings and perceptions of vulnerable riders on buses, at bus stops and at high/low traffic areas.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 3.1 Include college students in assessing senior needs, providing training and evaluating the use and satisfaction of mass transit services by older adult users.	Villa Maria Retirement Community The Rapid Grand Valley State University United Methodist Community House	Evaluation of current training/services to Villa Maria residents, an increased number of older adults riding the bus and increased satisfaction levels reported	TBD

Action Steps - Transportation cont.

	Timelines/Action Steps	Potential Partners/ Stakeholders	Progress Indicators	Funding
RECOMMENDATION 4: Improve street lighting where needed.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 4.1 Include older adults in surveys to assess where improved lighting is needed for increased safety when walking or using the bus. Make action plans based on recommendations.	City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department Grand Valley Metro Council Mobile GR	Post survey increases in satisfaction with lighting and increased lighting.	City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department Grand Valley Metro Council Mobile GR
RECOMMENDATION 5: Continue advocacy to ensure that all modes of transportation are safe, affordable and accessible for older adults and residents of all ages and abilities and explore ways to increase the comfort level of older adults around unfamiliar people and situations.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 5.1 Expand a program to pair experienced “transportation friends” with others who are new to riding the bus.	Explore potential with Leonard Terrace Apartments or another senior living community currently working with The Rapid	The senior living community will report an increased number of older adult riders and new users.	TBD
	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 5.2 Encourage utilization of new options for same day services and ride share.	Rapid on Demand Kaiser Health Rideshare	An increased number of senior riders accessing and using these services.	TBD
RECOMMENDATION 6: Explore partnerships for the development of dedicated routes for older adults.	2020-2022 ACTION STEP 6.1 Contact transportation providers about expanding or creating a partnership with a neighboring senior living community.	Explore with Dean Transportation, Charter Schools, Indian Trailways, churches and senior living communities such as Campau Commons Apartments and Reflections	One new or expanded partnership will be developed.	Possible funding from partners and stakeholders or grant funding





Mayor's Advisory Council

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all Mayor's Advisory Council members who have given of your passion, experience and commitment!

Below is a list of individuals and organizations who were invited to participate in the Mayor's Advisory Council. To those who participated by sharing their time and knowledge and those Advisory Council members who also participated in Work Groups we extend a sincere thank you. Your input and enthusiasm have helped move the Age-Friendly Grand Rapids work forward and shaped this Action Plan to make Grand Rapids a city that can be a lifetime home for people of all ages.

Rich Atha	Sergeant, Grand Rapids Police Department
Wilma Banks	Resident, Heartside Neighborhood
Jonathan Bates	Grand Rapids Center Coordinator, Senior Neighbors, Inc.
Mayor Rosalynn Bliss	Mayor, City of Grand Rapids
Jennifer Bryant	Community Member
Dave Bulkowski	County Commissioner, Kent County, Executive Director, Disability Advocates of Kent County
Lamont Cole	Chief Connections Officer, Compelling Connections
Gabriella Dela-Vega	Community Leader, Producer, Board Member, Grand Rapids Community Media Center
Eric DeLong	Deputy City Manager, City of Grand Rapids Executive Office
Jeremy DeRoo	Executive Director, LINC UP
Anne Ellermets	Director, Contract Services and Program Development, Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
DeDe Esque	Coach and Culture Change Facilitator, DDSQ Consulting
Jennifer Feuerstein	Associate State Director, AARP Michigan
Becky Jo Glover	Customer Service Director, City of Grand Rapids Customer Service 311
Sarah Green	Travel Trainer, The Rapid
Raquel Guzman	Attorney, Avanti Law Group
Edward Harris	RSVP Director, Senior Neighbors, Inc.
Jamell Hatchett	Volunteer, Senior Neighbors, Inc.

Mayor's Advisory Council continued

Jackie Hernandez	Community Liaison, LINC UP
Eunice Jackson	Resident, Southwest Community
Pat Jimmerson-King	Resident, Seeds of Promise
Alice V. Johnson	Resident, Southeast Community
Joseph Jones	City Commissioner, City of Grand Rapids, President/CEO, Grand Rapids Urban League
Jeff Keesler	Senior Program Assistant, AARP Michigan
Ruth Kelly	Former City Commissioner, City of Grand Rapids
Dhan Khatiwoda	Supervisor, Refugee and Immigrant Services, Interpreter Trainer, Bethany Christian Services
Latesha Lipscomb	Community Organizer, Heartside Neighborhood Association
India Manns	Community Advocate
David Marquardt	Director, City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation
Robbie McCollum	Educator, Grand Rapids Public School, Retired
Alex Melton	Customer Service Community Liaison, City of Grand Rapids Customer Service 311
Eleanor Moreno	Director of Community Engagement, The Other Way Ministries
Jackie O'Connor	Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
Brian A. Pangle	President/CEO, Clark Retirement Community
Felisa Pratt	Resident, Heartside Neighborhood
Ginger Randall	Board Member, Advocates for Senior Issues
Kurt Reppart	City Commissioner, City of Grand Rapids, Executive Director, The Other Way Ministries
Scott Rifenberg	Deputy Chief of Administrative and Investigative Services, Grand Rapids Police Department
Keyuana Rosemond	Program Director, Health Net of West Michigan FitKids360
Jane Royer	Community Volunteer
Carlos A. Sanchez	Former Executive Director, Grand Rapids Housing Commission
Chris Shomin	Elders Coordinator, Family Outreach Center, Anishinaabe Circle
Amy Snow-Buckner	Former Managing Director, City of Grand Rapids Communications
Margarita Solis-Deal	Director, Dominican Center at Marywood
Drew Stoppels	Transitional Educator, EDUStaff
Stacy Stout	Assistant to the City Manager - City of Grand Rapids Executive Office
Katherine Thelen	Photographer, Grandville Avenue Arts and Humanities
Patricia Turner	Community Development, Seeds of Promise
Heather Wallace	Assistant Professor, GVSU College of Health Professions, Department of Public Health
Pat Ward	Volunteer, AARP
Sarada (CC) Williams	Resident, Seeds of Promise

We couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you to the following locations and organizations that have supported
Age-Friendly Grand Rapids and hosted events.

Thank you!

AARP
Adams Park Apartments
Alzheimer's Association-Greater Michigan Chapter
Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
Bethany Christian Services Refugee and Immigrant Services
Brookside Christian Reformed Church
City of Grand Rapids 311
City of Grand Rapids Engineering Department
City of Grand Rapids Office of Community Development
City of Grand Rapids Our Community's Children
City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation
City of Grand Rapids Public Works
City of Grand Rapids Traffic Safety
Cook Library Center
Creston Neighborhood Association
Disability Advocates of Kent County
Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church
Eastern Floral
Faith United Methodist Church
Frederik Meijer Honors College-Grand Valley State University
Friends of Grand Rapids Parks
Garfield Park Gym
Garfield Park Neighborhood Association
Grand Rapids Housing Commission
Grand Rapids International Fellowship

Grand Rapids Public Library
Grand Valley State University Master's in Public Health Program
Grand Valley State University Richard M. DeVos Center
Grandview Apartments
Heart of West Michigan United Way
Heritage Hill Association
Hispanic Center of Western Michigan
Inner City Christian Federation
Leonard Terrace Apartments
Martha's Catering
Mobile GR
Mt. Mercy Apartments
North End Wellness Coalition
Pilgrim Manor Senior Living
Porter Hills Retirement Community
Ransom Tower Apartments
Rockford Construction
Salvation Army Kroc Center
Senior Neighbors, Grand Rapids Senior Center
St. Alphonsus Church
St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Community
United Methodist Community House
West Grand Neighborhood Association
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Wolfgang's Restaurant

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who have been invited and accepted the call to participate in making Grand Rapids an Age-Friendly community.

The enthusiasm to make Grand Rapids an Age-Friendly Community has been exciting! With your help, we will continue to make Grand Rapids a city for all ages, where all individuals and families can live, work play and make Grand Rapids their lifetime home.

Caryl Sue Abenroth
Ben Abraham
Pat Adams
Violette Adomaitis
Lena Agnew
Chris Ahler
Roza Akisa
Mary Aldrich
Lois Alexander
Vela Aly
Sarah Anderson
Joanne Anes
Patricia Ansari
Tom Appel
Holly Arguelles
Bobby Arizola
Roberto Arizola
Linda Arnold-Lillibridge
Layla Aslani
Rich Atha
James Aubrey



Riana Bagroski
John Baker
Kelsey Ball
Denis Bandora
Wilma Banks
Nikinec Bari
Mary Beth Barkeley
Mike Barkey
Bob Barnes
Rudy Barrera-Gonzalez
John Bartlett
Jonathan Bates
Beulah Batiest
Van Bawi
George Bell
Chi Benedict
Kristin Bennett
Darlene Bentz
Michael Bernier
Duke Beukema
Josie Beukema



Steve Beukema
Bryan R. Blakely
Jake Blakeney
Mayor Rosalynn Bliss
Mrs. Bliss
Connie Bohatch
Robert Bokianga
Elianna Bootzin
Elainne Bootzn
Christian Borg
Jackson Botsford
Judy Botts
Eric Bowers
Brenda Brame
Jacqueline Brayman
James Breuker
Sharon Breuker
Dennany Brewster
Carole Brown
Michael Brown
Rosemary Brown

Thank You! continued

Valerie Brown
Nancy Brubaker
Jennifer Bryant
Christy Buck
Karen Bugg Foley
Dave Bulkowski
John Burns
John Buter
Laurie Buter
Glen Caddy
Chris Cameron
John D. Cannon
Paige Capel
Thomas J Carabellese
Marian Carman
Anita Christopher
Michelle Christopher
Faye Chulski
Mark Cinco
Judith Claytor
Clearrce*
Timothy Clemen
Dotti Clune
Lamont Cole
Paula Collier
Yvonne Cones
Mike Conlin
Olia Cook
Valerie Cook
Mary Copeland
Nancy Court
Mckenna Craine

Beverly Crampton
Ida Cross
Diane Culver
David Dalrymple
Fran Dalton
Alicia Damulakis
Dave*
Lorna Dawson
Sue Decker
Suzanne Dehaan
Megan Dekeyser
Kristi Dekraker
Gabriella Dela Vega
Judy DeLeone
Eric DeLong
Tina Deming
Maria Deneau
Mary Dengerink
Cari Dennany
Duane DeRochey
Jeremy DeRoo
Bill Devries
Heidi Devries
Marian Devries
Virginia Dewey
Kerrie Doezema
Donald Douglas
Jeanine Douglas
Jan Dressander
Angie Drier
Nicole Driesenga
Robert Dubisky

Bob Dunlap
Divin Dusabe
Sarah Dykher
Anne Elbyneb
Harry Eldersma
Harry Elderson
Anne Ellermets
Roxie En
Jillian England
Karie Enriquez
DeDe Esque
Mark Evans
Wendy Falb
Michael Favreau
Vernel Felton
Jennifer Feuerstein
Kateline Feutz
Kathy Feutz
Jessica Fisher
Saunda Fleming
Jane Floria
Mary Flowers
Ann Flynn
Janice Fonger
Mike Franz
Sanford Freed
Eura Frerson
Kurt Freund
Margaret Freund
Emily Gaff

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Thank You! continued

Raymond Gage
Deloris Gaines
Robly Garoia
Denison Garrett
Sue Garza
Dan Gauthier
Justin Gendler
Sandra Ghoston-Jones
Nicole Glass
Becky Jo Glover
Jonathan Goeke
Danna Gomez
Benita Gray
Sarah Green
Melissa Grice
Nora Griffin
Raquel Guzman
Terenzo H.
Latif Habib
Brewster Hamm
Cornelius Hampton
Terrie Handlin
Jana & John Hanson
Debra Hardiman
Eddie Harris
Zach Harris
Hashim*
Jamell Hatchett
Brian Hauenstein
Loretta Hawkins
Marilyn Hawkins

Stephanie Hecksel
Lynn D. Heemstra
Kendrick Heinlein
Pat Heitzman
Karen Helder
Tabu Heli
Elizabeth Henderson
K Hendrick
Jackie Hernadez
Tom Herold
Annie Herring
Barbara Herring
Michael Hicks
Bobbie L. Hilliard
Elaine Hillory
Barbara Hodges
Stan Hone
Anesha D. Hopson
LG Horshaw
Pamela Houtteman
Margaret Howard
Jolanda Howe
Thierry Irambona
Gina Ivory
Caroline Jacksen
Caraline Jackson
Eunice Jackson
Margaret Jagar
Stewart James
Janeth*
Roxann Jentink

Pat Jimmerson-King
Alice V. Johnson
Emma Johnson
Raymond Johnson
Jessica Jones
Joseph Jones
Kay Jones
Rich Jones
Meegan Joyce
John Judnich
June*
Hendrika K.
Odreille Kamakazi
Mike Kane
Kateline Kati
Danelle Kauffman
Liz Keegan
Jeff Keesler
Pamela Keim
Ruth Kelly
Kabita Khadka
Dhan Khatiwoda
Pah Khee
Abigail Khonde
Linda Kirpes
Kristine Kletke
Carrie Koster
Katelyn Kovalik
Gene Kozminski

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Thank You! continued

Anne Krecke
Wendy Kroll
Jane Kubiszewski
Anne Kulie
Barbara LaBeau
Julia Laforte
Julie Lake
Fred & Paula Lane
Paula Lane
Lisa LaPlante
Leza Lazare
Rachel Lee
Sonja Lee
Senita Lenear
Karen Leppek
Barbara Lester
Shannon Lester
Jer Lia
Linda Likely
Latesha Lipscomb
Ruth Liszewski
Lynn Locke
John Lofton
Krista Logwood
Dale Lonani
Jae Loncks
Lorie
Jackie Love
Marsha Love
Jeanne Lucas

Zein Tin Lung
Terrie Lynema
Frank Lynn
Thelma Mable
Laura Maclam
Mamie Maddsey
Courtney Magaluk
Amber Magar
India Manns
Marilyn
Charles Marker
David Marquardt
Susie Marsh
Walt Marston
Elizabeth Martin
Pam Martin
Oliver Marty
Mike Matthews
Yvonne May
Audrey Mayfield
Gail Mayfield
Bill McCaleb
William McCaleb
Robbie McCollum
Kelly McCormack
Marilynn McKay
John J. McNaughton
Alex Melton
Karen Messick
Lorenzo Miguel

Jerrie Mill-Brank
Essie Millbrooks
Kathy Mindes
Bety Mitchell
John Mitchell
Thomas J Mollien
Kathy Monroe
Carla Moore
Michael Moore
Eleanor Moreno
Kerrie Morey
KP Morey
Tom Moyer
Joy Murphy
Sher Myers
Josh Naramore
Bill Nassen
Bob Navis
Barbara Neuman
Julie Niemchick
Dia Noble
Mark Nyquist
Jackie O'Connor
Laura Oesch
Barbara Olson
Linda Ortman
Fred Overeem
Riley Owczarzak
Sue Owen
Jean Packard

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Thank You! continued

Laurel Packard
Deanna Page
Brian A. Pangle
Darwin Parish
Katherine Paschal
Vondra Pat
Marcia Patrick
Alexander Payne
Richa Peace
Tiffany Pearson
Sandra Peterson
William Peterson
Brad Petru
David Plude
Tika Pokhapel
JoeAnn Polk
Jessica Pollins
Felisa Pratt
Linda Price
Olivia Prusinowski
Hezekiah Pulphus Sr.
Amy Rakowski
Zeke Ramirez
Ginger Randall
Michelle Rashid
Eddie Reed
EuLondon Reeves
Kathy Reinke
Kurt Reppart
Scott Rifenberg
Kathy Roaleen

Maria Robertson
Robin*
Carol Robinson
Elma Robinson
Carol Rocheleau
Patricia Rockwell
Haley Roestel
Mary Ann Romanowski
Jim Rooney
Val Rooney
Keyuana Rosemond
David Rothbart
Jane Royer
Lindsey Ruffin
Joel Ruiter
Maria Rydstedt
Lisa Rypma
Regina Salmi
Carlos A. Sanchez
Leslie Sanford
Joyce Sarah
Barb Savage
Dusty Scheuerman
Lynn Schmoll
Suzanne Schulz
Shannon Schultz
Warner Schultz
Kendra Schumaker
Diane Shelton
Trevor Sherman
Erin Shibley

Chris Shomin
Rose Simmons
Dorothy Simon
Carol Sinke
Chuck Skala
Barb Smalley
Chris Smit
Carol Smith
Christina Smith
Donna Smith
Kayla Smith
Quinnie Smith
Walter Smith
Willie L. Smith
Amy Snow-Buckner
Jessica Solis
Margarita Solis-Deal
Mariam Souleyman
Raymond Souza
Joy Spahn
Kaitlyn Spaudie
Avis Spenser
Laura St. Louis
Jay Steffen
Ruth Stenfors
Stephen*
Richard Stevens
James Stewart
Susan Stewart

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Thank You! continued

Elizabeth Stoddard
Drew Stoppels
Stacy Stout
Ellen Stuart
Sharon Swan
Mike & Victoria Swenson
Elliot Talen
Margali Tamarg
Mike Tamm
Mary Tassel
Patricia Taylor
Piang Tei
Ma Ngwe Thein
Katherine Thelen
Ann Thomas
Judy Thomas
Marilyn Thompson
Jeanette Tibstra
Ben Tiesworth
Bertha Tolbert
Jane Toot
Juan Torres
Maryl Travis
Richard Travis
Barbara J. Turner
Patricia Turner
Connie Udell
Sherri Vainavicz
Barb Van
Marisa Van Ness
Annette Vandenberg

Esther Vanderford
Gretta Vandridge
Amanda VanDuinen
Richard VanLente
Robert VanOort
Aly Vela
Malorie T. Venlet
Nick Venlos
Ryan Verwys
Bethany Vokaviak
Amber Vondra
Jill Vyn
Sandi Wake
Marilyn Walczewski
Retha Walker
Heather Wallace
Pat Ward
Joyce Washburn
Sheilla Washington
Linda Weatherspoon
Claire Webb
James Wells
Elizabeth Westerhof
Karl Westerhof
Betsy & John Westman
Louisa & Phil Wheeler
Erin Wieczorek
Bette Wiley
Edna Williams
Eric Williams
Glen Williams

Sarada (CC) Williams
Viviana Williams
Darr Wilson
Floyd Wilson
Shelley Wisdom
Isa Wishart
Kevin Wisselink
Margie Witbeck
Mary Wodecki
Martha Wouda
Tera Wozniak Qualls
Morgan Wright
Tammy Yeomans
Linda Yost
Elma Young
Kelsey Young
May Yvonne
Catherine Zietse
Linda Zizos

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