

AGE-FRIENDLY MAPLE GROVE

# Action Plan

2024-2026



# A LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Greetings,

Maple Grove's age-friendly commitment officially began nearly eight years ago, when we became the fifth city in Minnesota to join the World Health Organization/AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Since then, a dedicated team of staff, community members, and representatives from cross-sector organizations have been working to ensure that aging is elevated and included at a new level in all facets of community life.

As part of this work, I am excited to share with you the Age-Friendly Maple Grove Action Plan 2024-2026, which will help us continue to think and act in ways that put a "lifespan lens" on all that we do. With more than 14% of our residents aged 65 or older—up from 8% in 2010, and just 4% in 2000—Maple Grove recognizes the need and opportunity to respond to shifting demographics. There is enormous potential to reimagine how communities can become more age-inclusive places.

Aging is a universal experience, but it is also an individual experience. What we want, what we need, and what opportunities are available to us as we grow older look different from person to person. In addition to recognizing that older people are not a monolithic group, this plan reflects a commitment to ensuring that all residents—regardless of race, culture, income, or ability—are actively included in the work.

I am proud to be mayor of a city recognized as a leader in Minnesota's age-friendly movement, and am grateful for the work of so many who continue to lead this charge week by week, month by month, year by year. Change takes time. We have accomplished a great deal, and I look forward to the work ahead!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Steffenson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Steffenson  
Mayor of the City of Maple Grove



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# Our Partners and Supporters

Representatives of the following organizations actively participate in Age-Friendly Maple Grove. Their ongoing engagement, contributions and commitment are critical to this work. Thank you!



- Arbor Lakes Commons/ CommonBond Communities
- City of Maple Grove
- CROSS Services
- Hindu Temple
- Maple Grove Library
- Maple Grove Rotary
- M Health Fairview
- North Memorial Health System/Maple Grove Hospital
- SilverCreek on Main
- Three Rivers Park District
- Trellis, the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging

THANK YOU TO OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS





# Our Work

## WHO WE ARE

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**Age-Friendly Maple Grove is a city-sponsored, community-driven initiative to make Maple Grove a better place to grow older.**

We officially launched in 2016, when the City of Maple Grove joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Since then, Age-Friendly Maple Grove (AF MG) has been using that program's five-year framework to take steps to make the community a place that is more deliberately inclusive of all ages, especially later life.

AF MG is led by a team of about dozen people, including city staff, community members, and representatives from various sectors, including health care, social service providers, senior housing, civic organizations, and more.

The City of Maple Grove anchors the work as a provider of financial and staff support. An age-friendly communities planning consultant, who has worked with AF MG from early in the initiative, helps lead and strategize

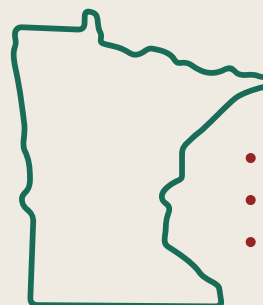
*Our communities play a big role in how we experience growing older.*

The World Health Organization/AARP framework addresses eight domains that collectively include the social, service, and built environments. Within each of these areas lie policies, plans, programs, services, processes, and other "levers" that can be pulled to make lasting change. Age-Friendly Maple Grove aims to work from all angles to ensure that older adult considerations are integrated into the work of the city, community organizations, local businesses, and other key stakeholders.

**Since 2016, Maple Grove has been a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, whose members include:**



- 817 cities & counties in the U.S.
- 10 states and 1 territory



- 17 cities in Minnesota
- 5 counties in Minnesota
- The State of Minnesota



## WHAT WE DO

Living is aging. Age-Friendly Maple Grove plays a unique role by leading cross-sector efforts to elevate aging and bring a “lifespan lens” to all aspects of the community.

- **Create a forum for partners and community members to work together related to aging.** Residents, city staff, and community organizations come together through AF MG to share information, coordinate efforts, and take collective action on key issues.
- **Bring the community needed information.** Our website provides information on a range of local and area resources related to aging.
- **Work to include “future you” in the community’s plans and decisions.** We work with city and community leaders to ensure that older adults are more integrated into all facets of community life.
- **Connect Maple Grove to the broader age-friendly movement to learn and grow.** Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota both are part of the AARP age-friendly network. Work and coordination across different levels of government and municipal lines is essential to the big picture of better aging for all of us.
- **Promote the value and richness of later life** and work to dispel negative stereotypes about aging.



## WORKING FOR ALL

While aging is a universal experience, we recognize that not everyone is afforded the same opportunities to thrive in older age. Age-Friendly Maple Grove is committed to meaningful engagement and inclusion of all residents—regardless of (dis)ability, race, culture, and income.

### As part of this Action Plan, AF MG will:

- Continue to build and strengthen relationships with residents from diverse backgrounds and culturally-specific organizations who work with those residents
- Use a process in our plans and projects to ensure our work is inclusive and benefits the breadth of residents in our community - asking questions such as, *Who is helped? Who is missing?*



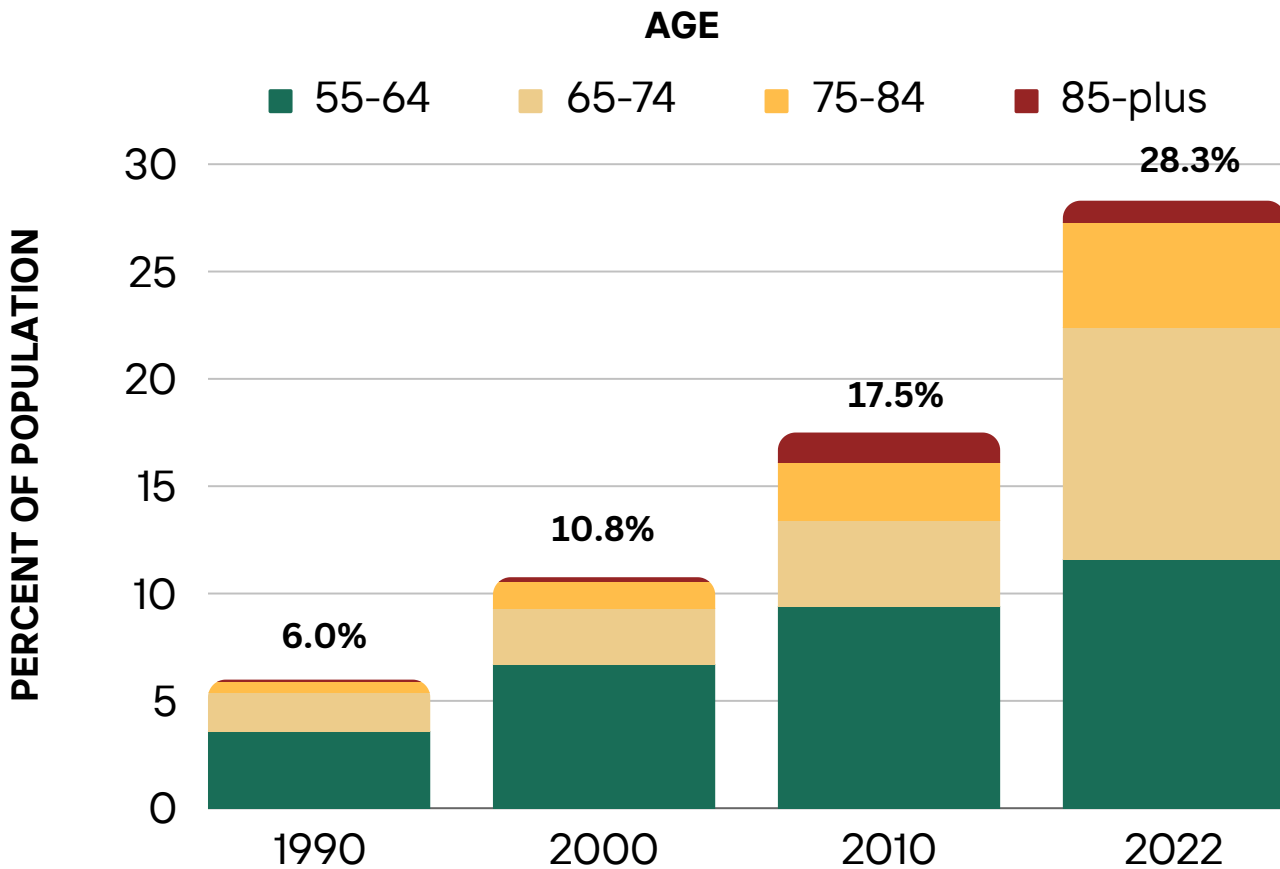
## WHY IT MATTERS

**As long as we're living, we're aging.** Older people now make up unprecedented proportions of the populations of Maple Grove, the state of Minnesota, and beyond. The reasons are many: incredible developments in public health over the years, Baby Boomers reaching older age, and lower birth rates, among others. However, our systems and communities weren't planned with modern lifespans or modern aging in mind.

The age-friendly communities movement is working to ensure that as aging is valued, elevated, and integrated into planning and funding decisions. We all matter, at every age, so let's make sure our communities reflect that.

# Aging: Everybody's doing it!

In 1990, 6% of Maple Grove's population was 55 or older.  
By 2022, that figure topped 28%.

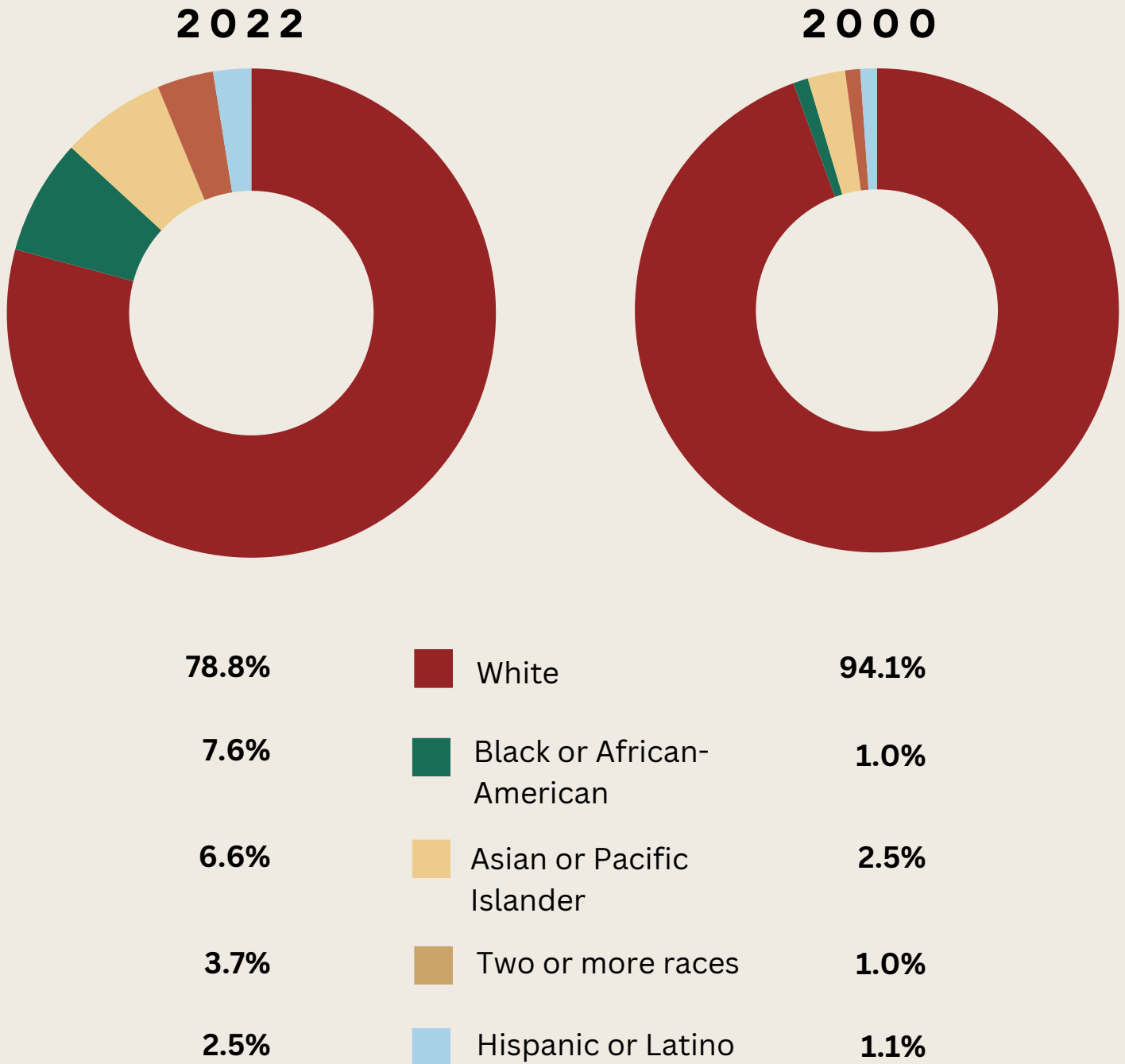


Sources: 1990: US Census Bureau Decennial Census; 2000: US Census Bureau Decennial Census; 2010: US Census, 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles; 2022: ACS 1-Year Estimate Data Profiles



# Like many places, Maple Grove is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.

Aging is viewed and approached differently across cultures. Age-Friendly Maple Grove is committed to ensuring that older adults from all backgrounds are included, respected, and reflected in our work.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2018-2022 and Census 2000, via Metropolitan Council, Community Profile for Maple Grove.

# Our Plan

This Action Plan is organized around three pillars and eight domains.

## PILLAR 1

### Built Environment

- Housing
- Transportation
- Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

## PILLAR 2

### Connection & Inclusion

- Social Participation
- Communication & Information
- Work & Civic Engagement

## PILLAR 3

### Services & Security

- Community Support & Health Services
- Emergency Preparedness

The plan's vision and work reflect a commitment to actively including *all* residents: all racial and ethnic backgrounds, those with disabilities, those with lower incomes, those who are LGBTQ+, those who are veterans, and others who are historically sidelined or excluded. We strive to undertake this work with the necessary persistence and humility.





## Housing

### WHERE WE ARE NOW

- More than 200 units of subsidized senior apartments, with more in development
  - Woodland Mounds: City-owned affordable apartment building (88 units) for residents ages 62-plus
- City's Project Point System incentivizes developers to incorporate Universal Design features into new home construction
- More new housing construction in the city includes smaller homes and more accessible homes
- AF MG developed a Housing Brief with recommendations for city leaders in 2021



### WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Community Survey responses:
  - 31% said their current residence needs modifications in order to stay there as long as possible; 39% weren't sure they could afford to make the changes
  - 62% said they are or might be interested in living in a development with small private homes or cottages clustered around a shared space
  - 59% disagreed or were not sure that if they want or need to move out of their current residence, Maple Grove has housing options that are appropriate and affordable
  - In open comments, respondents highlighted the desire for more one-level housing options, affordable housing options, and small single-family homes or tiny homes
- Key informant interviews stressed the challenge of "affording aging," of which housing is a big piece.



## PILLAR ONE: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

# Housing

### Where We Are Going

- Increased options for different housing types, models, and price points
- Increase funds put toward home modifications that support aging in place

### Strategies and Projects may include:

- Raise an organized, informed voice in support of age-friendly housing options
- Provide suggestions and feedback to city staff related to housing plans and policies
- Research and promote alternative housing and age-in-community options —such as Village to Village or Nesterly (intergenerational homesharing)
- Support development of new city-owned housing at lower price points for older residents
- Promote/support creation of Accessory Dwelling Units code through a formal recommendation to the city



# Transportation

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

- Walkable city center, with housing located near stores, services, and amenities
- My Ride: a general public local micro-transit program serving a cross-section of users—such as students, workers, and adults of all ages, including people who need accessible vehicles
  - A total of 35,322 rides provided through My Ride in 2022



## WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Community Survey responses:
  - The vast majority of survey respondents (93%) said they currently have transportation to get to the places they want and need to go; 95% drive themselves.
  - 20% indicated they likely will not have transportation to meet future needs, if or when driving is no longer an option.
  - 12% agreed that “Lack of transportation negatively impacts my life.”
  - “In my ideal community, I would like to be able to get around in the following ways (other than driving a car):”
    - 86% said walk
    - 72% said local circulator bus
    - 62% said a service like My Ride
    - 56% said public transportation
    - 54% said bicycle
    - 33% said a ride source company such as Lyft or Uber.





# Transportation

## Where We Are Going

- Expanding transportation options, including those aimed at residents of all ages
- Expanding service hours and area for My Ride to meet growing demand:
  - Extend weekday service hours from 7pm to 8pm
  - Expand service area to all of Plymouth, New Hope, Crystal, and Robbinsdale (Phase 1), and to all or portions of Champlin, Corcoran, Dayton and Rogers (Phase 2)
- Streets that encourage safe driving and pedestrian safety

## Strategies and Projects may include:

- Continue to support My Ride as it works to expand hours, service area, and fleet
- Promote/advocate for more changes to city-controlled streets and intersections to make them safer and more person-centered – right of way design, reduced speed limits, etc.
- Raise awareness of available transportation services
- Promote volunteer driver programs



## Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

### WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 53 parks, and more than 55 miles of trails passing through parks, woods and around lakes
- 22 designated pickleball courts, including numerous free courts
- All street signs replaced with new versions that are easier to see and read
- Dense housing developments, including older adult housing communities, located in walkable city core near parks and other key amenities
- Indoor walking tracks available at the dome (no cost) and at Lifetime Fitness (low cost for people ages 62-plus)
- AF MG completed bench audit in partnership with the city in 2021
- AF MG connection with Three Rivers Park District



### WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Community Survey Responses:
  - Percentage of respondents who said availability of the following items is very good or good:
    - Parks they feel comfortable visiting: 87%
    - Sidewalks in needed locations: 67%
    - Benches in public areas: 62%
    - Public restrooms, including accessible ones: 49%
    - Pedestrian intersections that feel safe to cross: 47%
  - In open comments, respondents highlighted the desire for more public restrooms, including portable toilets along walking trails.



## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

### Where We Are Going

- Improved pedestrian safety at intersections
- Continued expansion of age-friendly concerns integrated into renovated community center, expanded trail network, and other city infrastructure
- Increase number of indoor walking facilities

### Strategies and Projects may include:

- Participate in planning of Community Center redesign with age-friendly lens
- Work with city staff to improve pedestrian safety at key intersections
- Promote universal design that exceeds ADA standards and is truly inclusive – including things like lighting and indoor/outdoor furniture
- Identify priority areas for parks accessibility improvements – such as adding more hardscape at Town Green, or helping people get from parking to the park itself at Fernbrook Fields
- Assess portable toilet needs and key locations along paths and trails and in parks
- Promote value of being outdoors and in nature
- Identify gaps in bench availability





PILLAR TWO: CONNECTION & INCLUSION

# Communication and Information

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 200+ visits per month to AF MG website, a local/area information clearinghouse for aging resources
- 250+ followers of AF MG Facebook page
- City regularly mails newsletters and program information to all households
- AF MG Leadership Team and subcommittees serve as forum for members to share information
- Articles about AF MG-related efforts in City Focus and *Osseo-Maple Grove Press*
- AF MG created various printed publications on topics such as housing, volunteering, etc.



## WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Community Survey responses:

- Broad comfort level using the internet: 91% feel very or somewhat comfortable using the internet for socializing, taking classes, etc. COVID-19 drove up internet use among many respondents.
- Most turned-to resources for information: Family and friends (70%); Maple Grove Senior Center (63%); the Internet (60%); doctor/healthcare professional (59%)



## Communication and Information

### Where We Are Going

- Greater awareness of community and area resources related to aging
- Language and messages that dispel ageism and ageist stereotypes

### Strategies and Projects may include:

- Redesign AF MG website to strengthen it as a community resource
- Raise awareness of ageism and elevate new narratives that value aging
- Identify new ways to raise awareness about resources, such as keeping targeted printed information/resources available at the Government Center, at the dome, or the library
- Learn more about which communication modes are important to different cultural groups in Maple Grove
- Explore ways to make information/materials available in other languages and/or otherwise culturally inclusive
- Support city staff efforts to both share and gather information from the public



## PILLAR TWO: CONNECTION & INCLUSION

# Social Participation and Inclusion; Civic Engagement & Employment

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

- More than 5,000 participants in 55 Forward programs each year
- Nearly 500 memberships for ongoing game groups and social/hobby clubs at the Senior Center
- Three Caregiver Support Groups and Memory Café offered at the Senior Center
  - 33 caregiver support group sessions offered at the Senior Center in 2023; up from two to three groups as of April 2023
- Intergenerational Garden Club, a partnership between the Senior Center and Teen Center, launched in 2021
- City volunteer opportunities available through Senior Center, Fire Department (including Fire Corps), other



## WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Community Survey responses:

- 63% are very or somewhat familiar with the Senior Center or 55 Forward Programs
- 43% volunteer often or occasionally
- 33% work part- or full-time
- 21% sometimes lack companionship; 21% sometimes feel isolated from others
- 84% report very good or good physical health
- 91% report very good or good mental health
- More than a third (36%) provide care for grandchildren "often" or "sometimes."
- 11% of Maple Grove residents ages 65-plus live alone (*Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimate*)



## PILLAR TWO: CONNECTION & INCLUSION

# Social Participation and Inclusion; Civic Engagement & Employment

## Where We Are Going

- Community culture and programs that promote and support healthy, active aging
- Shift views of older adulthood toward being a valued stage of life

## Strategies and Projects may include:

- Raise awareness of volunteer opportunities and encourage volunteerism
- Seek opportunities for new/expanded intergenerational programs
- Explore advocacy opportunities for policies and funding that support aging at state level
- Continue to develop relationships with diverse community members and organizations to increase the extent to which they are reflected in the work of AF MG





## PILLAR THREE: SERVICES AND SECURITY

# Community Support & Health Services; Emergency Preparedness

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

- High-touch customer service and assistance from city staff
- 250 residents enrolled in Fire Department Senior Smoke Alarm Program, including File of Life (for emergencies)
- Regular Fire Department visits with Meals on Wheels recipients in coordination with CROSS Services
- New embedded social worker in city staff as additional community resource
- Maple Grove Farmers Market provides healthy food and social connection
- AF MG connections and collaboration with:
  - Local healthcare providers, including North Memorial Health System/Maple Grove Hospital and M Health Fairview
  - Trellis (regional Area Agency on Aging) and promotion of low-cost evidence-based health promotion programs
  - Key nonprofit service providers, such as CROSS Services and Senior Community Services



## WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Community Survey responses:
  - 47% currently or recently helped care for an older family member or friend
  - 15% rely on family, friends or neighbors to help with daily tasks
  - More than 60% are concerned about food and water supplies, loss of power, and receiving updated information related to an emergency
  - There is mixed awareness of important resources. Percentage of respondents who were very or somewhat familiar with the following:
    - MG Fire Department Senior Smoke Alarm Program: 58%
    - Senior Community Services: 43%
    - CROSS Services: 68%
    - Senior LinkAge Line: 23%
- The city had 365 police calls for lift assists (need help getting up after a fall) in 2022.
- Acute shortage of direct care workers in Minnesota impacts many Maple Grove residents.



## PILLAR TWO: CONNECTION & INCLUSION

# Community Support & Health Services; Emergency Preparedness

### Where We Are Going

- Greater AF MG promotion of services and programs in the community--such as CROSS and Meals on Wheels, Senior Community Services, Maple Grove Library offerings, local churches, etc.
- Greater community awareness of existing resources, including those related to caregiving and dementia
- More older residents have emergency plans in place

### Strategies and Projects may include:

- Identify, communicate and/or cultivate resources related to services such as those that help people maintain their homes and yards (including snow and ice removal), meals and groceries, and financial assistance for things like utility bills
- Build understanding of services needs among diverse residents and identify opportunities to support
- Develop a campaign to encourage and support creation of emergency response plans
- Identify gaps in resources and research success of others
- Identify and explore replicating promising models, such as Edina School District's Senior Advocate, St. Louis Park model for responding to falls, and Block Nurse program for providing services, as well as models at the state and national levels
- Support Police Department and other efforts to educate residents about scams
- Continue or expand promotion of evidence-based health promotion programs
- Work with city staff to utilize embedded social worker for supporting older adults



# How We Developed This Plan

Age-Friendly Maple Grove conducted an 18-month-long community needs assessment to find out what is important to community members and others as they think about aging—what are they experiencing, observing, and predicting for the future. We turned the findings of that assessment into the strategies laid out in this Action Plan.

## We listened to residents.

### COMMUNITY SURVEY

- 213 respondents
- 58 questions
- Online and in print
- Covered numerous topics, from housing to communication to affording aging

### Survey Demographics

While our survey findings are important and significant, keep in mind that our slate of respondents is not a representative sample of the community. Our respondents were largely female, White, married, and relatively affluent.

- **Nearly 50% have lived in Maple Grove for 25-plus years;** 13% for less than 5 years.
- **Most respondents were 60-79 years old.**
  - 13% were 50-59 years old
  - 38% were 60-69 years old
  - 33% were 70-79 years old
  - 6% were 80-89
- **The vast majority were White** (95%).
- **Two-thirds were female**, one third were male.
- **91% live with a spouse/partner.**



- **Income level skewed higher.** 46% have incomes of \$100,000 or greater. About 20% have incomes of \$20,000-\$49,999.
- **Many respondents are concerned about various aspects of life as they get older.** 41%-48% said they are concerned about the following as potential challenges: housing, transportation, healthcare, financial security, affording needed services, social isolation. Transportation was the greatest concern (48%).

## FOCUS GROUP

Focus group with 10 Russian-speaking residents of Arbor Lakes Commons (all residents aged 62-plus)

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## We listened to people whose work touches aging in a variety of ways.

### Key Informant Interviews

Age-Friendly Maple Grove conducted interviews with the following representative of key community organizations to gather input from stakeholders with a range of experiences and expertise.

- Jennifer Bauernfeind, Owner, Comfort Keepers Osseo-Maple Grove
- CROSS Services
- Carylee Eaton, Discharge Planner, Maple Grove Hospital
- Beckie Lueck, Benefits and Options Manager, Senior LinkAge Line
- Adele Mehta, Director of Senior Outreach & Caregiver Services, Senior Community Services
- Sharon Noble, Maple Grove Library
- Giannina Posner, Community Engagement Specialist, Three Rivers Park District
- Deb Stock, Volunteer, Alzheimer's Association



### Each interviewee was asked the following the five questions:

1. What are the strengths and contributions of older adults that we should work to value and leverage in our community?
2. What issues stand out, now and on the horizon, related to aging and older adults in the community?
3. What opportunities do you see for how we can improve the experience of aging?
4. How does culture influence beliefs and approaches to aging among older adults from different backgrounds and experiences?
5. Over the past couple of years, how have COVID-19 and other traumatic experiences impacted older adults? What support and resources did older adults need over the past couple of years?



## City Staff Engagement

AF MG met with a group with all department directors, and conducted individual interviews with 12 staff from the following departments:

- Administration, including Transit and Customer Service
- Community and Economic Development, including Planning
- Finance, including Utility Billing and City Assessor
- Fire-Rescue Department
- Parks and Recreation
- Police Department
- Public Works & Engineering



**Each interviewee was asked the following two questions:**

- What situations do you observe or experience related to older adults?
- What are you seeing and hearing that we should be paying attention to?



# RESOURCES

## AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities

[www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/](http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/)

## Age-Friendly Minnesota

<https://mn.gov/dhs/age-friendly-mn/>

## City of Maple Grove, Parks and Recreation

[www.maplegrovern.gov/162/Parks-Recreation](http://www.maplegrovern.gov/162/Parks-Recreation)

## Reframing Aging Initiative

[www.reframingaging.org/](http://www.reframingaging.org/)

## World Health Organization, Age-Friendly Cities and Communities

<https://www.who.int/activities/creating-age-friendly-cities-and-communities>

## CONTACT

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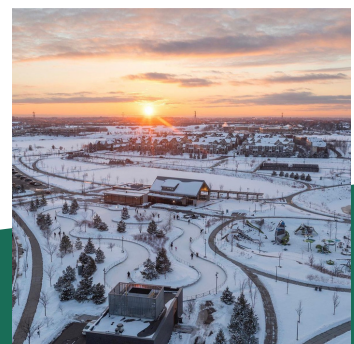
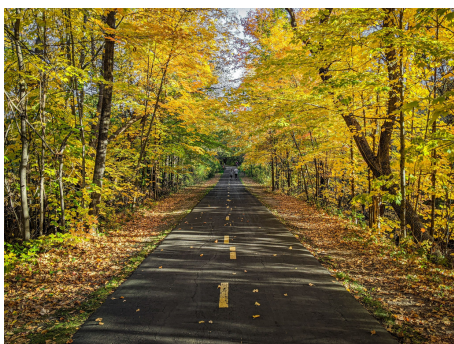


# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Age-Friendly Maple Grove would like to thank the City of Maple Grove-- Council, city leadership, and staff--for its long standing support of this work and initiative. We also thank the members of our Leadership Team and subcommittees for the time and energy they continue to give to making Maple Grove better for all of us.

## Photos:

- *Cover:* R. Lucas, City of Maple Grove Photo Contest
- *Table of Contents:* N. Anderson, City of Maple Grove Photo Contest
- *Our Partners & Supporters:* 55 Forward Programs/Senior Center
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- *Pages 19 & 23:* Senior Center/55 Forward Programs
- *This page:* City of Maple Grove; Parks and Recreation; Experience Maple Grove





Visit [agefriendlymaplegrove.org](https://agefriendlymaplegrove.org)  
to learn more and get involved!