

# PROGRESS REPORT: YEAR 2



May 2021

Age-Friendly Maple Grove

This report evaluates Age-Friendly Maple Grove's progress in implementing Year 2 of its three-year action plan.

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# AF MG: Year 2 Progress Report

## AGE-FRIENDLY MAPLE GROVE

### OVERVIEW

Age-Friendly Maple Grove is a community-driven, City-sponsored initiative to make Maple Grove a better place to grow older. The City of Maple Grove joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities in 2016. Since then, Age-Friendly Maple Grove 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.

We are excited to present an update on our work. During 2020 we implemented the second year of our three-year action plan (2019-2021). This report serves to inform the City and the community of our progress over the course of the year. Like everything else, Age-Friendly Maple Grove was impacted by COVID-19.

For more information about Age-Friendly Maple Grove, or to view the entire action plan, please visit [www.agefriendlymaplegrove.org](http://www.agefriendlymaplegrove.org), or find us on Facebook.

*Age-Friendly Maple Grove is supported by:*



# Highlights from 2020

Despite COVID-19, Age-Friendly Maple Grove had a strong year. We continued our planned efforts to the extent possible, and also shifted gears to find ways to help support older residents during the pandemic. The items below describe highlights and accomplishments from the past year. We credit and are very grateful for the commitment of our community volunteers, many partners, and the City of Maple Grove for making these things possible.

## AF MG invited to present to statewide audiences

In April 2020, Age-Friendly Maple Grove was invited to present to the **Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota**. The Council, a temporary entity established to create a set of recommendations for Governor Walz related to making Minnesota an age-friendlier state, recognized Maple Grove's notable efforts and hoped to apply some learnings to its own recommendations.

In November 2020, Liz Faust, Senior Program Coordinator for the City of Maple Grove, spoke on a panel at the **AARP MN Age-Friendly Communities Conference**. The panel, titled *Age-Friendly Communities as Resilient Communities – Lessons from 2020 and COVID-19*, featured age-friendly communities from Minnesota that had innovated to find solutions to issues presented by the pandemic. The virtual conference was attended by people from across the state and featured an address by Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan.

## City of Maple Grove uses My Ride to help older residents during COVID-19

City of Maple Grove leaders utilized its invaluable My Ride transportation service to help residents get food and other goods and services during the pandemic. My Ride began offering free grocery pick-up/delivery for residents who had ordered groceries from local stores. My Ride also expanded its service area to include the food shelves at CROSS Services (Rogers) and CEAP (Brooklyn Center), so that residents who needed food assistance could access free groceries at those places. Residents could either ride to CROSS or CEAP, or My Ride would pick up/deliver food from those places to residents. Age-Friendly Maple Grove commends City leaders and staff for its commitment and innovative use of community resources.

## New educational materials developed for online and print distribution

- A flyer on scams to help inform older people how to identify scams and avoid being defrauded. This was especially timely due to COVID-related scams targeting older adults.
- A housing brochure with a selection of resources drawn from the AF MG website. This easy-to-print brochure provides an alternative to web-based information.



### Transportation report completed and shared with City leaders and Metropolitan Council

AF MG’s Transportation Team completed a recommendations report that built off the previous year’s audit of transportation options in Maple Grove. The team shared its report with City leaders as well as our local Metropolitan Council representative, who sent the report to key Met Council staff working on the Metro Region’s Service Allocation Study, currently underway at Met Council, and invited AF MG to provide input and guidance in future transit/transportation work.

Top report recommendations for the next one to three years included:

- 1) **Continue to grow My Ride as a valued service for Maple Grove residents of all ages.** Further investment in this service can benefit the entire community. This may include: a) Smaller bus fleet when feasible to accommodate point-to-point requests more economically, and b) Ensure that the service can be available to those most vulnerable or who lack other options.
- 2) **Explore other economical point-to-point alternatives that might be used by Maple Grove residents,** such as partnerships or contracts with Uber or Mobility4All
- 3) **Explore the concept of a circulator bus.** As COVID-19 subsides and businesses return to normal, there may be an opportunity to execute at a later date.

### Social media presence established and leveraged

After developing a social media strategy, AF MG launched a Facebook page that provides a range of news and information related to many aspects of aging. This was especially helpful to have during the pandemic as a way to share important community information related to COVID-19. The page is steadily gaining followers that include community members and partner organizations, who often share our information with their own networks.

### Communications team innovates to share important information during COVID-19

The pandemic prevented in-person gatherings and information-sharing at Maple Grove’s senior center. It also meant that AF MG would need to cease production of its television show on CCX, of which it had produced two episodes and planned to do more. To help continue to provide information to the community—especially information that was of particular importance during COVID-19—the AF MG communications team recorded interviews with experts on various subjects pertinent to the pandemic. These interviews were shared on Facebook, posted on the AF MG website, and aired on CCX—especially important for residents who do not use the internet.

INTERVIEWEE	TOPIC
• Patty Anderson, Yes& Studio	Mindfulness and managing anxiety during COVID-19
• Elizabeth Faust, City of Maple Grove	55 Forward programming during COVID-19
• Todd Strege, Maple Grove Police Department	Scams related to COVID-19
• Jetta Wiedemeier Bower, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging	Senior LinkAge Line: What is it and how can you take advantage of it?
• Jennifer Bauernfeind, Owner, Comfort Keepers Osseo-Maple Grove	Home health care and other services during COVID-19
• Deb Stock, Volunteer Community Educator, Alzheimer’s Association MN-ND Chapter	Caregiver support during COVID-19

# Progress Report




This section of the report contains an itemized list of goals and action steps from Year 2 (primarily) of AF MG's action plan and our progress to date against each one. It is divided into six sections, each of which is a domain area identified by the World Health Organization/AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. That program, which AF MG follows, identifies eight domains of livability fundamental to age-friendly communities work (see below). For planning and implementation purposes, AF MG combines three domains as indicated with an asterisk.

## WHO/AARP Domains of Livability

1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation\*
5. Civic Engagement & Employment\*
6. Respect & Social Inclusion\*
7. Communication & Information
8. Community Support & Health Services

*\*These domains are combined under one subcommittee for implementation purposes.*

Each action item is coded as follows:

-  **Progress made:** Action item completed and/or significant progress made and work continues.
-  **In progress:** Action item not yet complete, but work toward the goal is actively underway.
-  **Strategy deferred/Reconsidered:** Action item not completed due to changing circumstances (which may include COVID-19), and may or may not be pursued as originally stated.

Progress is generally measured against metrics that are detailed in the original [Age-Friendly Maple Grove Action Plan](#).



# Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

## Goal 1.1 | Ensure that city parks are inviting to and utilized by older adults

1.1c	Identify neighborhood parks that would be suitable for age-friendly adaptations.	■	This work was impacted by COVID-19 (as it was to involve assistance from volunteers) and will be revisited next year. Some progress was made as part of a related goal; see walking audits discussed in 2.3b.
1.1f	Inform parks projects to ensure age-friendly considerations are embedded in process and plans (e.g., Weaver Lake Park, community center remodeling).	■	AF MG is working with City leaders to have greater input on projects, plans, and proposals, including for parks projects.

## Goal 1.2 | Make buildings used by the public easier to access.

1.2b	Encourage and provide guidance to major retailers and restaurants to make their buildings and property easier to use or navigate.	■	COVID-19 impacted work related to engaging local businesses. However, AF MG met with Mpls Regional Chamber of Commerce (formerly Twin West) for the first time and there was mutual interest in future collaboration.
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# Transportation

## Goal 2.1 | Ensure current transportation services are being utilized and maximized

2.1 b	Increase utilization of existing services by improving/expanding communications methods for informing older adults of those services	■	Changes and updates to My Ride and other transportation services were routinely posted on AF MG's Facebook page and website.
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## Goal 2.2 | Explore creation of a new transportation program or programs to provide an affordable, reliable option for older adults.

2.2 a	Create a brief research report on local/regional and national transportation programs and services to educate city and community leaders about promising models.	■	AF-MG Transportation Recommendations Report issued and sent to City leaders and Metropolitan Council in late 2020.
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## Goal 2.3 | Encourage active transportation (such as walking and biking) and support pedestrian safety.





2.3 b	Conduct walking audit to identify priority locations for adding benches and lighting along walking paths or sidewalks.	■	AF MG team members conducted walking audits in more than 25 locations. Rather than focusing only on benches and lighting, the audit included sidewalk conditions, pedestrian safety at key intersections, and other such features. The audit was shared with City engineering staff (John Hagen) and posted on the AF MG website.
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## Goal 2.4 | Make driving and navigating safer and easier

2.4 a	Expand driver and cyclist safety and educational programs	■	On hold until in-person classes can begin again.
2.4 b	Develop a procedure that incorporates best practices for safe conditions for older adults as detailed in the Federal Highway Administration's <i>Handbook for Designing for the Aging Population</i> .	■	The Transportation team is currently working on this action item.









<h1>Housing</h1>			
<b>Goal 3.1   Encourage and advocate for supports and services that would help older adults stay in their homes</b>			
<b>3.1 a</b>	Expand access to information about existing housing support services, such as home repair and modification resources.		A housing brochure to complement web-based information was designed and completed. The brochure is available at the AF MG website; hard copies will be made available and distributed as COVID-19 allows.
<b>Goal 3.2   Increase affordable and accessible housing development</b>			
<b>3.2 a</b>	Hold housing forum with cross-sector participants to discuss opportunities and challenges surrounding age-friendly housing		A housing-related event was deferred for Year 2 largely due to COVID-19. A post-pandemic forum or similar event is being considered.
<b>Goal 3.3   Incorporate aging-related concerns into housing plans and policy</b>			
<b>3.3 b</b>	Develop a checklist of age-friendly housing criteria that could be used by the city to help understand the degree to which proposed new housing could be considered “lifelong” housing		Rather than a checklist, AF MG produced a housing brief for the City (in spring 2021) that included various recommendations pertaining to making more of the community’s housing age-friendly.
<b>3.3 c</b>	Advocate for creation and/or expansion of zoning ordinances to support alternative housing arrangements that create additional options (e.g., accessory dwelling units (ADUs), residential care homes).		ADUs were included among a set of age-friendly housing recommendations presented to the City in spring 2021.

# Social Participation & Civic Engagement

## Goal 4.1 | Connect older adults to other people, information and other resources.

<p><b>4.1 a</b></p>	<p>Expand City program that provides older adults a low-cost tablet device and data plan, and free device training.</p>		<p>Because existing inventory of tablets meets current demand, the program has not been expanded. We will continue to monitor demand, and in the meantime will continue to support current users and promote available tablets. A phone survey of current users was completed to gauge satisfaction and efficiency of the program; results will be used to refine the program.</p>
<p><b>4.1 b</b></p>	<p>Identify quality web-based programs that connect older adults to other people and help MG residents utilize such programs – e.g., NextDoor, MeetUp groups or Facebook groups for local older adults.</p>		<p>AF MG launched a Facebook page in spring 2020 after careful discussion and planning. The Facebook page has been successful in sharing important information, raising awareness of AF MG as a community resource, and connecting with partner organizations/initiatives. (Additional web-based programs are not being pursued at this time due to concerns about scams and safety.)</p>
<p><b>4.1 c</b></p>	<p>Launch web-based program that allows isolated adults to participate in senior center programs/classes remotely.</p>		<p>A variety of 55 Forward Parks &amp; Recreation programs were offered online at low or no cost during 2020, especially fitness classes, discussion groups, and presentations. The 55 Forward email list (open to anyone) also was used heavily during COVID in place of printed newsletters to promote web-based programs offered by local organizations and businesses. Virtual programs also have been advertised through the seasonal Parks &amp; Recreation Activity Guide, social media, emails to past participants, City newsletter, phone calls, announcements at programs, and word of mouth.</p>

## Goal 5.1 | Connect older adults with volunteer opportunities.


<p><b>5.1 a</b></p>	<p>Explore expanded or stronger partnerships with local schools to connect older residents and students and their families. Consider older residents volunteering in schools and/or students volunteering in community with older adults.</p>		<p>COVID-19 stalled this effort. A key partner organization, Osseo Area Retired Educators (OARE), was not active during the pandemic, and it was difficult to connect with schools related to the possibility of virtual tutoring opportunities between older adults and students.</p>
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<p><b>5.1b</b></p>	<p>Determine ways in which city volunteers could be used more strategically.</p>	<p>■</p>	<p>AF MG is working with the City's special events coordinator on ways to engage more older residents in volunteering, including making the application process more user-friendly and customized to a person's abilities and preferences. (Older adults make up most volunteers with 55 Forward programs.)</p>
<p><b>Goal 5.2   Formalize older adult participation in planning processes.</b></p>			
<p><b>5.2a</b></p>	<p>Create a formal mechanism for older adult input into city plans and projects (e.g., aging commission or task force; a city staff member dedicated to including aging issues in his/her position; or using AF MG for this function).</p>	<p>■</p>	<p>AF MG and the City are working towards a more formalized approach to incorporating aging concerns into the City's work. Already, AF MG co-chairs meet regularly with City leaders to discuss progress, and City staff and a City Council member routinely attend AF MG Leadership Team meetings.</p>
<p><b>Goal 5.3   Connect older adults and employers related to job opportunities.</b></p>			
<p><b>5.3a</b></p>	<p>Improve communications about job opportunities, placement and training to help connect interested older adults and employers who need workers.</p>	<p>■</p>	<p>A local staffing agency interested in hiring older adults was added to the AF MG website. The Community Support &amp; Health Services subcommittee's potential collaboration with TwinWest Chamber of Commerce may also include work on connecting local businesses with older jobseekers.</p>





# Community Support & Health Services

## Goal 7.1 | Improve “health literacy” of older adults by helping them connect to appropriate services


<b>7.1a</b>	Learn landscape of resources currently available to help older adults coordinate care and services and navigate the health care system. Disseminate information learned to key stakeholders and use it to inform next steps.		The website continues to provide important information and resources on this topic. Aspects of this action step were deferred largely due to COVID-19 but will be pursued in the future.
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## Goal 7.2 | Provide resources that help older adults improve or maintain their health.


<b>7.2a</b>	Offer and/or facilitate access to evidence-based programs <sup>1</sup> that improve older adults' health by addressing fall prevention and management of chronic conditions.		Select evidence-based programs (EBPs) were offered and promoted through Parks & Recreation. Juniper/Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging began offering a wide range of EBPs online (and free) due to COVID-19. AF MG regularly promoted these on the AF MG Facebook page.
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<b>7.2b</b>	Identify existing mental health resources for older adults (including local/in-person as well as telehealth services/programs) and raise awareness of these supports to ensure they are utilized.		Mental health resources are available on the AF MG website and posted on Facebook. AF MG also facilitated the offering of a free Older Adult Mental Health First Aid class (from the National Alliance on Mental Illness – NAMI) in partnership with Maple Grove Hospital. The class was postponed pending availability of virtual curriculum needed during the pandemic.
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## Goal 7.3 | Increase options for and availability of nutritious food and meals.

<b>7.3a</b>	Identify new ways of providing older adults with healthful food and prepared meals		AF MG initiated conversations with CROSS Services and the MG Fire Department about ways to connect more older residents with food and information about key resources.
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## Goal 7.4 | Partner with the business community to address improvements in attracting and serving older customers.

<b>7.4a</b>	Complete an audit of age-friendly services/promotions at local businesses.		COVID-19 stalled efforts related to in-person visits to local businesses.
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<sup>1</sup> Evidence-based programs (EBPs) offer proven ways to promote health and prevent disease among older adults. They are based on research and provide documented health benefits.

7.4b	Engage local businesses in understanding economic potential of older customers and coordinate on the establishment of age-friendly business practices	■	AF MG is beginning to build a relationship with Mpls Regional Chamber of Commerce. There is mutual interest in working together to engage local businesses.
<b>Goal 7.5   Strengthen Maple Grove Police and Fire Departments' service of older residents</b>			
7.5a	Facilitate and help advance the efforts of Maple Grove's police and fire departments as well as North Memorial Ambulance as they work to better understand and serve older adults in the community.	■	AF MG has begun quarterly communication with City fire prevention staff to identify opportunities for collaboration and mutual support. Possibilities include utilizing fire dept. contact with older residents to identify those in need of food or other resources.
<b>Goal 7.6   Enhance supports for people with dementia and their caregivers</b>			
7.6a	Identify quality resources for people with dementia and their caregivers and increase awareness of these resources to ensure they are being utilized.	■	Many local and area dementia resources are available on the AF MG website; a resources brochure is in development. AF MG interviewed a local caregiver support group leader, which was published on Facebook and YouTube and aired on CCX. AF MG also applied for a dementia-friendly communities grant from Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging in late 2020. (AF MG was awarded the grant in early 2021. It will focus on the role of faith communities in supporting people with dementia and caregivers. More detail to come in 2021 progress report.)
7.6b	Offer Dementia Friends training to community members, city staff, business leaders, and others.	■	AF MG's Leadership Team participated in Dementia Friends training; one member trained to become a Dementia Champion and lead additional trainings in the community. Maple Grove's first community Dementia Friends session, offered through Parks & Rec and to be co-led by an AF MG co-chair, was scheduled but then cancelled due to COVID-19.
7.6.c	Investigate opportunities for developing program(s) for people with dementia	■	Memory Café and caregiver support offered through Maple Grove Parks & Recreation. Caregiver support group transitioned to online format during COVID-19.






# Communication & Information

## Goal 6.1 | Protect and empower older adults related to targeted scams.

6.1a	Inventory existing programs that educate older adults and their families about scams targeting older people. Identify gaps and ways to utilize, maximize, and expand upon existing programs to further spread this training.		AF MG developed a scams flyer, which was shared on Facebook and our website. Hard copies will be distributed to community members when COVID-19 allows. The flyer was especially timely given COVID-related scams that target older people. AF MG also interviewed MG Crime Prevention Officer about scams; the interview video was published online and aired on CCX.
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## Goal 6.2 | Use various media platforms to provide community with current and easily accessible information about AF MG's work.

6.2b	Ensure that the city's new website is developed using best practices for age-friendly site design.		Development of a new City website remains on hold.
6.2c	Create a regularly updated, easy-to-navigate AF MG website/web pages.		<p>AF MG launched its website a year ahead of schedule (2019 rather than 2020). The site is kept current and regularly updated with news, information, resources, etc.</p> <p>AF MG also launched a Facebook page in spring 2020 after careful discussion and planning. The Facebook page has been successful in sharing important information, raising awareness of AF MG as a community resource, and connecting with partner organizations/initiatives.</p>
6.2d	Share initiative news by utilizing/maximizing existing sources of information known to be accessed by older residents.		AF MG regularly communicates via both printed and online media, including its website, Facebook, CCX (public access television), City Focus newsletter, Parks & Recreation brochures, local media articles, and other means.



# Looking Ahead

Age-Friendly Maple Grove will implement the third and final year of its three-year action plan during 2021. We then will complete a final evaluation of that plan, and submit it to AARP and the City of Maple Grove.

In keeping with the framework for the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, the next step will be to repeat the five-year process as a way to build a cycle of continuous improvement. Therefore, we will plan and undertake a community needs assessment and use those findings—in conjunction with lessons learned from implementation of our first plan—to develop a new three-year action plan.

We have learned a great deal over the course of the work and continue to incorporate those lessons into our efforts as we continue. Age-friendliness is building momentum beyond Maple Grove, as well. Seven Minnesota cities and two counties, including Hennepin, now are members of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, and the State of Minnesota is taking steps to enroll at the state level.

Age-Friendly Maple Grove is excited and proud to be part of this work to make our community—and county and state—a place where policies and programs reflect a new level of inclusion for older adults, and where all of us can live healthy, purposeful lives as we age.



# APPENDIX

## AGE-FRIENDLY MAPLE GROVE'S STRUCTURE (2020)

### Leadership Team

- **Co-Chairs:** Mark Carpenter, Community member; Elizabeth Faust, Senior Program Specialist, City of Maple Grove
- **Secretary:** Nancy Carpenter, Community member
- **15-20 members** made up of local residents and cross-sector professionals, including representatives from CROSS Services, SilverCreek on Main, Three Rivers Park District, M Health Fairview, Maple Grove Lions, Maple Grove Rotary, and Comfort Keepers of Osseo/Maple Grove.

### Subcommittee Chairs (during 2020)

- **Communication & Information:** Kris Orluck
- **Community Support & Health Services:** Marie Maslowski/Patty Anderson
- **Fundraising:** Mark Carpenter
- **Housing:** Lydia Morken
- **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:** Kris Orluck
- **Social Participation & Civic Engagement:** Elizabeth Faust
- **Transportation:** Cheryl Theuninck

**Consultant:** Lydia Morken, Morken Consulting

### Description:

The Leadership Team is comprised of 15-20 community members and representatives from various sectors, including health care, social service providers, senior housing, home care service providers, and more. Six subcommittees implement the action plan, and a seventh deals with fundraising. Many but not all subcommittee members also are on the Leadership Team.

The City of Maple Grove is another core element of the work, including as a provider of financial support. AF MG co-chairs meet regularly with the City to share information and identify opportunities to integrate age-friendly concerns into the City's work. A City staff member also serves as a Leadership Team co-chair, and a City Council member and the City's Community Development Director regularly join monthly Leadership Team meetings.

The third player is an age-friendly communities planning consultant, who has worked with AF MG from early in the initiative. She provides higher level strategic guidance, some degree of project management, and chairs the housing subcommittee. She was also closely involved in AF MG's community needs assessment and drafted the resulting action plan.

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.