



# YEAR 1 PROGRESS REPORT

## Age-Friendly Maple Grove

This report evaluates Age-Friendly Maple Grove's progress in implementing Year 1 of the initiative's three-year action plan (2019-2021).

[www.agefriendlymaplegrove.org](http://www.agefriendlymaplegrove.org) | Spring 2020

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# Year 1 Progress Report

JUNE 2020



## OVERVIEW

This evaluation reports on Age-Friendly Maple Grove's (AF MG) progress in implementing the first year of its three-year action plan ([available at agefriendlymaplegrove.org](http://agefriendlymaplegrove.org)).

In keeping with the framework for the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, of which the City is a member, AF MG developed the action plan to address priority concerns that emerged in its community needs assessment conducted in 2017 and 2018. Over the course of 2019, five subcommittees worked to implement action items laid out in eight domains of work. This report describes those efforts, the degree to which they were successful, the reasons for the outcomes, and next steps for each action, if any.

The initiative has achieved notable success and continues to have good momentum. Not all Year 1 action items were completed as originally specified. This is due in part to uncertainty about capacity to implement the

plan at the time it was being developed and is therefore not entirely surprising. However, AF MG also accomplished several unplanned things because of opportunities that presented themselves or priorities that shifted over time for various reasons.

This report will help guide initiative leaders in a thoughtful assessment of the work of AF MG and inform any decisions that should be made in terms of strategy changes, how resources are being expended, and other foundational aspects of the work.

### STATEMENT ON COVID-19

This report was originally developed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Age-Friendly Maple Grove recognizes this crisis as a threat to its work and is adapting its strategies for the coming year in light of these unexpected circumstances. AF MG intends to continue to benefit and support the community through this crisis.

## OVERALL LOOK AT THE INITIATIVE

Age-Friendly Maple Grove is a community-driven, City-sponsored effort to make the city a better place to grow older. The rapidly-growing age-friendly communities movement is driven by the recognition that older adults can thrive in communities that facilitate active, purposeful aging, and cities benefit from residents who can continue contributing to the community's social and economic fabric for as long as possible.

### Age-Friendly Maple Grove's Structure & Leadership

AF MG has three main parts: Leadership Team, City of Maple Grove, and the work of a consultant (see Figure 1 on next page).

Figure 1

## AGE-FRIENDLY MAPLE GROVE STRUCTURE (2019)

### Leadership Team

- *Co-Chairs*: Mark Carpenter, Community member; Kris Orluck, Senior Program Specialist, City of Maple Grove
- *Secretary*: Nancy Carpenter, Community member
- 15-20 members

### Subcommittee Chairs

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

### Consultant:

Lydia Morken



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 are also 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 and the City meet quarterly 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.

The third player is a 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 a 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 and built environments (housing, transportation, communication, social participation, etc.). 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 players.

## How are we doing?

The initiative has many strengths and is making strides. Year 1 of plan implementation was largely successful. In addition to completing many planned action items, AF MG also accomplished several things not specified in the plan as new opportunities presented themselves, and traction was gained in some areas more than others. Several action items were postponed or are being re-evaluated for various reasons detailed in the next section of this report.

As AF MG continues to advance the goals of its initiative, it would also benefit from a deeper evaluation of what change (type and extent of) it is affecting as it heads into Year 2 with a year of experience and lessons under its belt.

The below SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis helps provide a big-picture look at the status of Age-Friendly Maple Grove at this stage of the effort.

### SWOT Analysis

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong leadership; well-organized and well-run initiative</li> <li>• Partnerships with the City and key organizations; regular forum for sharing information and ideas across sectors</li> <li>• Older adult participation; high volunteer retention rates</li> <li>• Funding to support various projects and consultant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient/inconsistent membership across subcommittees, leading to uneven progress; need for more deliberate recruitment</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age-friendly work is being elevated at state and county levels and among various professional organizations/associations; may benefit AF MG directly and/or indirectly</li> <li>• Increasing age-friendly involvement in City's work</li> <li>• Formalizing a governance structure over time</li> <li>• Continuing to raising awareness of AF MG's work in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disrupted work related to Covid-19</li> <li>• Loss of core volunteers would impact initiative</li> <li>• Majority of funding tied to single source</li> </ul>

# EVALUATION BY DOMAIN

This section goes through each domain and reports on every action item laid out for Year 1 of the action plan. It serves to help Age-Friendly Maple Grove better understand its work and progress and be accountable to itself and the community. It is organized as follows:

- **Domain/Subcommittee Name** and overview of work in each domain
  - **Goal** (numbers correspond with Action Plan)
    - **Action Item(s) under each goal; Indicator of success**
      - **Status of each item** and supporting information.

## Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

This subcommittee started out fairly strong but later faced low participation with the loss of two members (one due to a move, the other due to full-time job demands, though she remains on the Leadership Team). It has been a challenge to advance the work for this reason. Heading into Year 2, the AF MG Leadership Team will reevaluate this domain. One approach being considered involves developing a new strategy for engaging local businesses rather than starting with the audit tool developed in Year 1. AF MG may take up a more deliberate volunteer recruitment effort to help populate this team, or it may decide to table work in this domain until Year 3 (2021) based on other factors and reevaluate again at that time.

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

- a. **Incorporate age-friendly commitment and park practices into the MG Parks Plan due 2018.**  
*Indicator: Age-friendly commitment included in the 2019 Park System and Recreation Plan.*

#### **Status: Complete; ongoing**

- The 2018 Park System and Recreation Plan includes “Age Friendly” as one of the its 11 Guiding Principles. Age-Friendly Maple Grove helped develop the following language to articulate this principle: *“Plan and provide programs and facilities that cater to and promote participation deliberately inclusive of residents of all ages and abilities, especially recognizing those at the lower and higher ends of the age spectrum.”*
- Over the life of the Park System and Recreation Plan, AF MG will work to ensure that age-friendliness remains a living guidepost for plans and projects developed in the Parks Department and does not simply exist on paper. This may include such projects as a remodeling of the Community Center and/or a redesign of Weaver Lake Community Park.

- b. **Gather more information about park usage among older residents to help inform strategies.**  
*Indicator: Existing data compiled and additional data gathered.*

#### **Status: Shifted to Year 2 or 3**

The OSB subcommittee did not have capacity to compile this data in Year 1, as discussed above. It will shift this item into Year 2 or 3.

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

- a. **Conduct a retail audit of key businesses to gather, analyze, and share data about baseline age-friendliness.**

*Indicator:* Audit of 10-15 local businesses completed and disseminated to key stakeholders, e.g. City departments, property owners, and businesses.

**Status: Partially complete; strategy being re-evaluated.**

The OSB team successfully created two audit tools—one for buildings, and one for outdoor spaces. Only a handful of audits were completed, again due to unexpected loss of members on this committee. As discussed earlier in this section, the Leadership Team will be exploring options for how to proceed with work in this domain. Given the restructured Chambers of Commerce, there may be opportunity to partner with one or both Chambers on this work. Attempts to engage the previous Chamber did not result in significant outcomes.

## **Transportation**

The Transportation subcommittee has strong membership and is consistently active and engaged. It works regularly with Maple Grove Transit and has become a valuable resource and partner to the City in this regard. Its primary roles are to help MG Transit make the case and advocate for additional funding and resources that benefit older residents; and to highlight how improvements to transportation can serve residents of all ages and benefit the community at large.

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

- a. **Conduct a transportation services audit to understand the landscape of transit options in Maple Grove, including the gaps and limitations, to help inform development of plans to fill identified needs. Audit would include both public options (e.g., MG MyRide) and private options (e.g., Uber, Lyft).**

*Indicator:* Written audit completed and disseminated to key stakeholders.

**Status: Complete**

The team completed its audit ahead of schedule. The audit was shared with the City and is posted on the AF MG website.

**Goal 2.3 | Encourage active transportation (such as walking and biking) and support pedestrian safety.**

- a. **Conduct audit of bicycle parking to identify priority locations for new/additional parking. (To be included as part of retail audit under Goal 1.2 in Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**

*Indicator:* Map of bicycle rack locations.

**Status: Complete**

The team completed this audit. However, rather than a map, it is a spreadsheet that lists bike racks by address or location. The audit is available on the AF MG website. It was developed as a separate document rather than as a part of the retail audit as originally planned.

# Housing

The Housing subcommittee has strong membership representing various areas of expertise and perspective. It has led connection with City leaders and the greater integration into the City's work, as well as with broader affordable housing efforts in the community.

## Goal 3.1 | Encourage and advocate for supports and services that would help older adults stay in their homes

- a. **Expand access to information about existing housing support services, such as home repair and modification resources.**

*Indicator: New/enhanced means of communication and estimated number of people reached.*

### **Status: Partially complete; extended into Year 2.**

- A good deal of housing information was compiled and is available on the AF MG website, including information about home modification and repair services. Efforts to increase website traffic in general are underway in order to ensure the information is being utilized by the community.
- Access to information was not expanded in additional ways. The Housing team will continue to pursue this action in Year 2. It will seek to develop a brochure that includes select housing-related resources from the website and can be used to reach people who may not be aware of or may be unable to access the website.

### **Additional accomplishments in this domain:**

- An AF MG show on CCX was developed due to the initiative of a Leadership Team member with interest and expertise in that area. Two episodes of the show have been completed, and one focuses on affordable housing. The Housing team is helping to develop a potential series on housing to share information on a variety of topics related to housing.

## **3.2 | Increase affordable and accessible housing development**

- a. **Hold housing forum with cross-sector participants to discuss opportunities and challenges surrounding age-friendly housing.**

*Indicator: Organize and host a cross-sector forum*

### **Status: Postponed**

The Housing team determined mid-year that timing for a housing forum was premature and that additional discussion with the City was necessary before organizing an event. AF MG's relationship with the City deepened over the course of the year, and continued partnership will better serve planning of an eventual forum when circumstances and timing are optimal.

- **Next steps:** Continue discussions with the City and opportunities for using a forum to highlight and advance affordable and accessible housing options for older residents.



### **Goal 3.3 | Incorporate aging-related concerns into housing plans and policy**

#### **a. Integrate age-friendly principles and practices into comprehensive plan update.**

*Indicator: Age-friendly principles and practices included in 2018 comp plan update.*

#### **Status: Complete; ongoing**

Prior to the completion of the Action Plan, AF MG leaders worked with the City of Maple Grove to develop language addressing age-friendliness in the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. As a result, Section 2.17 is titled "Age Friendly Community" and discusses Age-Friendly Maple Grove, the action plan, and issues under a number of categories (housing, transportation, parking, walkability, buildings, and outdoor spaces) into which age-friendliness could be woven into the City's work.

However, AF MG leaders will continue to work with the City on an ongoing basis to ensure that age-friendliness is a living part of its planning, projects and policies, recognizing that this type of integration takes time.

## **Social Participation/Civic Engagement & Employment**

*These two domains were addressed by one combined subcommittee for the purposes of implementing the Action Plan.*

**Overview:** This team struggled due to loss of key members who became unable to commit necessary time because of extenuating circumstances (though all remain involved in AF MG). This has been addressed heading into 2020, with a new chair identified and a reevaluation of the domain and its planned actions being undertaken.

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

#### **a. Pilot a program that provides older adults a low-cost device and data plan, and device training. Pilot to include residents of affordable senior apartments.**

*Indicators: Launch pilot; make necessary adjustments and expand program*

#### **Status: Complete for Year 1 (expansion is noted for Year 2)**

- The tablet program launched and is up and running with 30 tablets in circulation; a waiting list is in place for interested participants. This was the goal for Year 1.
- Expansion of the program is noted as a step for Year 2. It depends on T-Mobile's willingness and ability to supply additional tablets.

### **Goal 5.2 | Formalize older adult participation in planning processes.**

#### **a. 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).**

*Indicator: Develop and recommend options to city.*

**Status: Partially complete; ongoing**

AF MG has not recommended a formal mechanism for older adult input beyond increasing its own involvement in the City's work, which may end up being the mechanism for the foreseeable future. Through the Housing team, AF MG established quarterly meetings with City leaders, which have the potential to influence the degree to which older adult considerations are incorporated into the City's work. However, the possibility of weaving an official mechanism into City government that would exist outside of (or addition to) AF MG should remain open. We will continue to consider possibilities.

**Goal 5.3 | Connect older adults and employers related to job opportunities.**

- a. **Improve communications about job opportunities, placement and training to help connect interested older adults and employers who need workers**

*Indicator: Inventory and evaluation of new/expanded communications modes.*

**Status: Shifted to Years 2 and 3**

Due to temporary low subcommittee membership during Year 1, AF MG has decided to shift this action item into the Years 2 and 3. We may approach this work from another angle by making it an arm of work with the business community, which AF MG hopes to engage in the coming year.

**New opportunities in this domain:**

A new member of the Leadership Team and this subcommittee have connected AF MG to efforts to reach older adults of Hispanic/Latinx origin. This would significantly aid the initiative in connecting to such residents, who can be hard to identify and engage, for various reasons. The nature of AF MG's involvement in this work will be fleshed out over the course of 2020 and beyond.

**Communication & Information**

*Overview:* This team has been consistently active and well-staffed and accomplished a good deal in Year 1. It led efforts to go above and beyond Year 1 actions, resulting in the creation of an AF MG website, regular articles published in various publications, and even the creation of an AF MG television show on CCX, with two episodes being produced in 2019.

**Goal 6.2 | Use various media platforms to provide community with current and easily accessible information about AF MG's work.**

- a. **Update current AF MG web page on City website in conjunction with action plan release. Keep content updated until launch of new website.**

*Indicator: AF MG web page updated and remains current.*

**Status: Exceeded**

AF MG ended up developing its own website in Year 1 rather than flesh out content within the City's website. The City's timeline for developing its own new website was extended, and AF MG

leaders felt that the initiative should move ahead with launching its own site rather than waiting for the City. The website was launched in May 2019.

**b. Ensure that the city's new website is developed using best practices for age-friendly site design.**

*Indicator: Site contains priority age-friendly design elements; beta site tested by older adults.*

**Status: Postponed according to City timeline**

When the City does move to develop a new website, AF MG will work to ensure that it reflects age-friendly design practices.

**d. Share initiative news by utilizing/ maximizing existing sources of information known to be accessed by older residents.**

*Indicator: Create calendar with key publications and their deadlines to ensure AF MG news is submitted and shared. Number of pieces published/ aired. Ongoing.*

**Status: Complete; ongoing**

While AF MG did not end up using a calendar to track its publications and news-sharing, it published articles in every issue of the City Focus newsletter and numerous articles in the *Osseo-Maple Grove Press* over the course of the year.

It also shared news and information via its website, the CCX show described earlier, and by tabling at several City events.

## **Community Support & Health Services**

*Overview:* This has been an active and engaged team with members bringing helpful expertise from various backgrounds. AF MG's consultant has been serving as the long-term temporary subcommittee chair due to unavailability of the original chair, who remains a member of the team. This will be reevaluated for Year 2.

### **Goal 7.2 | Provide resources that help older adults improve or maintain their health.**

**a. Offer and/or facilitate access to evidence-based programs that improve older adults' health by addressing fall prevention and management of chronic conditions.**

*Indicators: Number of programs and participants. (Some programs have particular metrics to meet.)*

**Status: In progress; continuing into Year 2**

The subcommittee did make progress related to Evidence-Based Programs, and the work will continue into Year 2. Work is focused on enhancing marketing and awareness of the programs, and ensuring programs offered by different organizations are coordinated so as to minimize competition. The work in Year 2 will include tracking enrollment rates and other metrics to determine whether enhanced marketing and other efforts have successfully helped to boost enrollment. The subcommittee will also assess enrollment/participation rates in key offerings through MG Park & Recreation, such as the Memory Café, Alzheimer's classes, and others.

**Goal 7.4 | Partner with the business community to address improvements in attracting and serving older customers.**

**a. [An audit of age-friendly services/ promotions will be included in the audit detailed in Goal 1.1.]**

*Indicator: Audit report created; results shared and used to inform strategy*

**Status: On hold**

The Outdoor Spaces & Buildings subcommittee did not have capacity to create the audit of age-friendly services/promotions detailed in Goal 1.1, and therefore the CSHS subcommittee had no role in this action item either. However, this action was slated for Years 1 and 2, so aspects of this work may yet progress in Year 2 depending how the broader strategy unfolds.

**b. Engage local businesses in understanding economic potential of older customers and coordinate on the establishment of age-friendly business practices (Part of this will be included as part of retail audit in items 1.1 and 7.4.)**

*Indicator: Number of information sheets distributed to businesses; number of businesses adopting age-friendly practices.*

**Status: On hold**

The subcommittee did not have capacity to advance this action. It may be addressed in the future in tandem with a broader effort to engage the business community in work related to AF MG.

**Goal 7.5 | Strengthen Maple Grove Police and Fire Departments' service of older residents.**

**a. Facilitate and help advance the efforts of Maple Grove's police and fire departments as well as North Memorial Ambulance Community Paramedics as they work to better understand and serve older adults in the community.**

*Indicators: Identified opportunities for collaboration, cross-pollination and mutual support*

**Status: In progress**

The subcommittee met with the police department; it has not yet further engaged the fire department or North Memorial Ambulance Community Paramedics. This is partially due to personnel changes in the fire department. The team plans to meet again with the police department in Year 2 to learn more about additional aspects of the work and needs or opportunities related to serving older adults. Efforts to meet with the Fire Department will continue; work with North Memorial Ambulance Community Paramedics will be reevaluated.

**Goal 7.6 | Enhance supports for people with dementia and their caregivers.**

**a. Identify quality resources for people with dementia and their caregivers and increase awareness of these resources to ensure they are being utilized.**

*Indicator: Documentation of compiled resources and estimated number of people reached.*

**Status: Partially complete; continued into Year 2**

Many dementia resources were compiled and included on the new AF MG website. They are also available there as an easily printable PDF. However, the subcommittee will discuss other ways in which the resources could be shared with the public, as it should not be limited to the website.

**Additional accomplishments in this domain:**

At the end of Year 1, Dementia Friends training was held for Leadership Team members. This spurred the planning of a community event to be held in spring 2020; a member of the Leadership Team has been trained as a Dementia Champion and will co-present (with an experienced Dementia Friends presenter) this first community session. AF MG has been able to help build local capacity to deliver Dementia Friends training, and is moving strongly into Year 2 action items already in this regard. *(NOTE: The community session was cancelled due to Covid-19. AF MG intends to pick up this work when circumstances allow.)*

## SUMMARY

Age-Friendly Maple Grove's first year of implementing its three-year action plan was rewarding and instructive. The initiative accomplished much of which it set out to do, and along the way continued to strengthen the identity of the group and build momentum for the work. And while some action items were postponed or being reevaluated, AF MG also accomplished several things not included in the action plan. As with any initiative, strong plans are necessary for success, but with many variables at play all the time, work cannot always proceed precisely according to plan. In some cases, this is even a good thing.

As noted in the earlier SWOT analysis, AF MG has numerous strengths that contribute to its success: consistent leadership; active partnerships with key community organizations and the City; participation of older residents; and funding to support staffing of the initiative. AF MG will also be tracking age-friendly work as it unfolds at the county and state levels and hopes to engage and coordinate with the work of those governments in the future.

As we move into Year 2, we will work within our capacity to become stronger and more effective by:

- Deliberate and coordinated volunteer recruitment
- Bringing additional partners and expertise to the table
- Refining strategies as needed based on lessons from Year 1

AF MG is learning actively and continually adapting in an attempt to be as effective as possible. This evaluation contributes to that process and will enhance the second year of implementation work.