Age-Friendly Grand Rapids
Strategic Priority Alignment

Health & Environment
Governmental Excellence
Mobility for All
Safe Community
Engaged/Connected Community
Economic Vibrancy & Affordability

“a community for all ages”

Ginnie Smith
Age-Friendly Communities Coordinator
Grand Rapids City Planning
What is an age-friendly city?

“...an age-friendly city includes older adults in assessing, proposing solutions, monitoring progress...”

– World Health Organization

Why is this work important?

• Initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006
• Designed to prepare cities for the rapid aging of populations and increasing urbanization.

AARP well-designed livable communities:

• Help sustain economic growth
• Result in happier, healthier residents of all ages
Age-Friendly Milestones

- 2015: Commissioner Kelly/AARP convention (walkable neighborhoods, vital streets)
- 2016: three thought leader events with 300+ participants
- 2016: AARP survey of Grand Rapids residents aged 50+
- 2017: Research, interviews, group discussions, surveys, website, Grandy Land game
- 2017: Held 23 listening events yielding more than 2,000 comments
Age-Friendly Milestones

- 2018: City Commission unanimously approved seeking Age-Friendly Community designation
- 2018: Letter of commitment sent to AARP/WHO
- 2018: Mayor’s advisory council & work groups
- 2019: Celebration roll out of goals and recommendations

Accreditation Process

- **Phase One**- Involve older people in assessing community age-friendliness and develop a three-year action plan, including indicators for progress
- **Phase Two**- Implement the action plan and submit a five-year progress report
- **Phase Three**- Renew enrollment and continue to make improvements
The 4 Key Domains of Livability in Grand Rapids

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Housing
- Transportation
- Communication and Information

- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Employment and Volunteering
- Social Participation
- Community and Health Services

AGE-FRIENDLY GRAND RAPIDS
Transportation Goal/Recommendations

- Develop and promote awareness of transportation options and resources
- Create programs and services to address security issues
- Improve social comfort
- Focus on need for enhanced lighting
- Increase advocacy
- Develop partnerships
Outdoor Spaces
Goal/Recommendations

• Increase pedestrian safety and access
• Improve sidewalks and pedestrian crossings
• Focus on winter sidewalk issues (ice/snow)
• Expand pedestrian comfort and enjoyment
• Implement education and outreach programs
Housing Goal/Recommendations

• Increase fair rental practices for seniors, including supporting the Renter Readiness Program/Certification

• Educate the community and policymakers about housing options, services, and the need for assisted living

• Encourage community discussion regarding unfair rental practices and focus on collaboration
Communication

Goal/Recommendations

• Create a physical/virtual one-stop resource
• Combine the information about programs currently offered, with a focus on health, housing, transportation, utilities, food, in-home services, and social activities
• Develop a multi-faceted communication plan
Next Steps

• Mayor’s Advisory Council will continue to guide the process

• Task Forces will be created for the four key domains of livability in Grand Rapids (Communication, Transportation, Outdoor Spaces, Housing)

• Recommendations will be prioritized

• Action Plan will be completed
Age-Friendly Grand Rapids
Strategic Value Alignment

Customer Service-Equity-Innovation-Respectful
Collaborative-Accountable
Transparent-Trustworthy