

# GRANDY LAND

**Follow us to an  
Age-Friendly  
Grand Rapids**

**“a community for all ages”**

**Ginnie Smith**

**Age-Friendly Community Coordinator  
City of Grand Rapids  
Planning Department**

**Jay Steffen**

**Assistant Planning Director  
City of Grand Rapids  
Planning Department**



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# What is an age-friendly city?

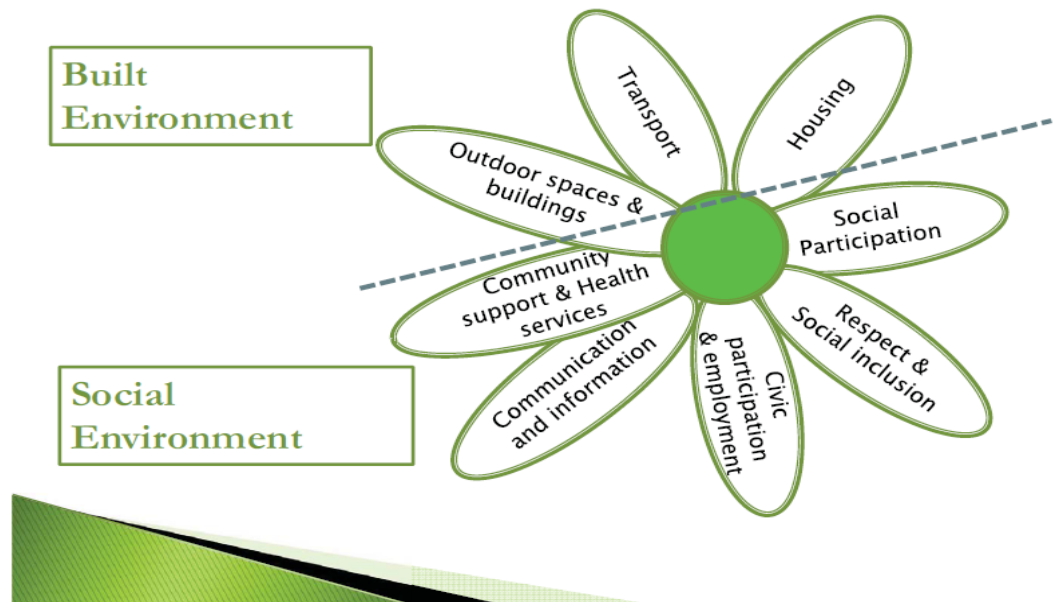
Initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006

Designed to prepare cities for the rapid aging of populations and increasing urbanization.

## Why is this work important?

Well-designed, livable communities help sustain economic growth

Result in happier, healthier residents of all ages-  
AARP





# City Master Planning

## Why is this work important?

- Defines a better future with a common vision
- Defines various roles and responsibilities
- Creates a framework
- Assists the work of city staff based on public input and priorities set by community
- An age-friendly city includes older adults in assessing, proposing solutions, monitoring progress - WHO



# Age-Friendly Beginnings

- 2015 - Councilwoman Kelly/ AARP Convention (walkable neighborhoods, smart streets)
- 2016 - 3 Thought Leader Events - 300+ participants
- 2016 - AARP survey/ Grand Rapids residents aged 50 and over
- Many residents rated health care as a top community feature
- Many residents rated certain aspects of transportation, housing, and employment as poor or fair.





# Research, Listen, and Learn- 2016

## What are other age-friendly cities and countries doing?

Netherlands, England, China

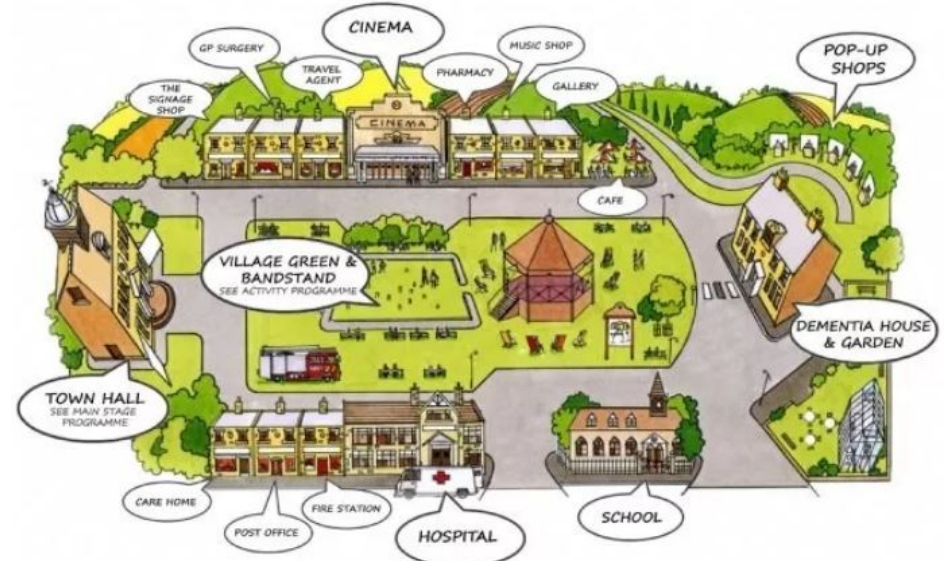
Portland, Des Moines, Auburn Hills

## What would make Grand Rapids more age-friendly?

Grand Rapids interviews with:

Business and neighborhood  
leaders

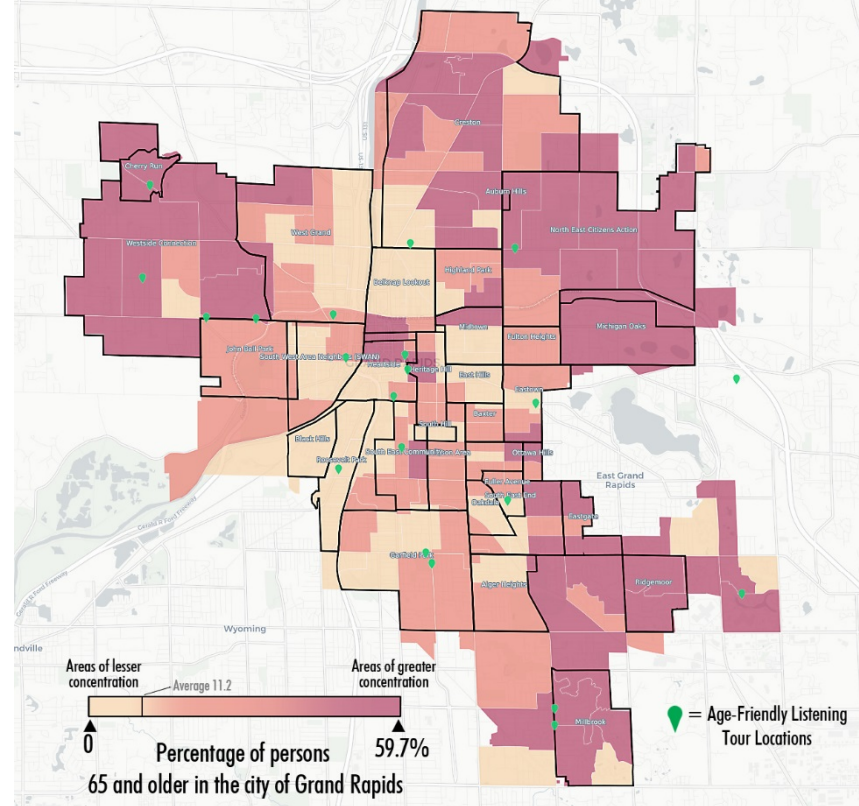
Representatives from senior  
living communities



Senior playgrounds

# Age-Friendly Grand Rapids- 2017

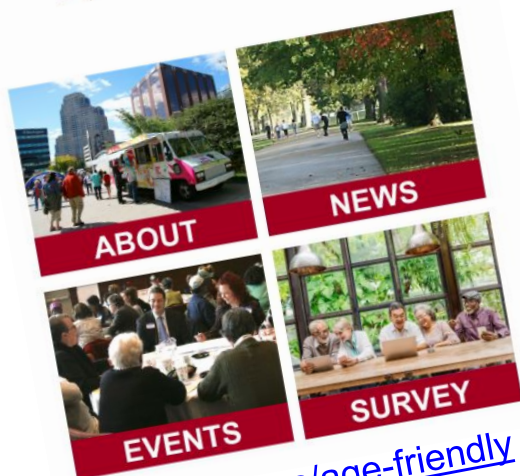
- City-wide listening tour-23 events
- Based on locations of largest populations of older adults and diversity
- Library, university, churches, neighborhood associations, senior living communities
- 2,000+ comments
- Interviews, group discussions, paper and online surveys
- created website
- designed Grandy Land



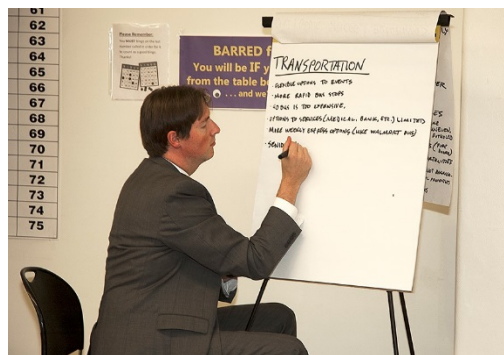




***“What would make Grand Rapids more age-friendly?”***



[www.grcity.us/age-friendly](http://www.grcity.us/age-friendly)





# The 4 Key Domains of Livability in Grand Rapids



# Age-Friendly Grand Rapids

## Outdoor Spaces and Bldgs

“Heavy doors are difficult to open”  
“More places to gather/ socialize”  
“More nearby parks/ small dog parks”  
“Free accessible public bathrooms”  
“Paths to activities, more curb cuts”  
“City sidewalk snow removal”  
“More benches, bus stops, trash cans”  
“Sharps containers for medical waste”  
“More handicapped parking downtown and at doctor’s offices”  
“Electric wheelchairs/ Meijer Gardens”  
“Discount tickets-Zoo/ Museums”  
“Transportation/ companion to events”  
“Stop assaults on older people”  
“Make neighborhoods safer”  
“Motion sensor lighting in parking lots”  
“Slow down traffic, safer crosswalks”  
“Pedestrian bridge”  
“Parking is at a premium- I had to feed the meter for “free” yoga in the park”



“Senior/ adult playground”

“Pool/ splash pad- better access to river  
outdoor theatre on the river”



“Want quiet space for meditation and  
nature observation, natural landscaping,  
shade trees, bird feeding, gardens with  
flowers”



# Age-Friendly Grand Rapids Transportation

“More control on city buses- students”  
“More space on buses for walkers, canes and wheelchairs”  
“Reduced/ free bus rides”  
“Need user friendly/ affordable Go Bus”  
“Cross walk safety, no right turn on red”  
“Length of pedestrian crossing time”  
“Elevated walkways”  
“Wider/clean sidewalks, more curb cuts”  
“City snow removal for sidewalks”  
“Difficult to see lane markings at night- street lighting and more visible markings”  
“Faith communities/volunteer drivers”  
“Neighborhood based dial-a-ride”  
“City sponsored Uber (older drivers)”  
“Car share, ride share, Zip cars”  
“People mover like in Detroit/ Phoenix”  
“Short distance tram, 3 wheeled bikes”  
“Senior citizen parking ramp”  
“Affordable taxis; taxis on Grand River”



“More bus trips and more weekly express options- like the Walmart bus.”



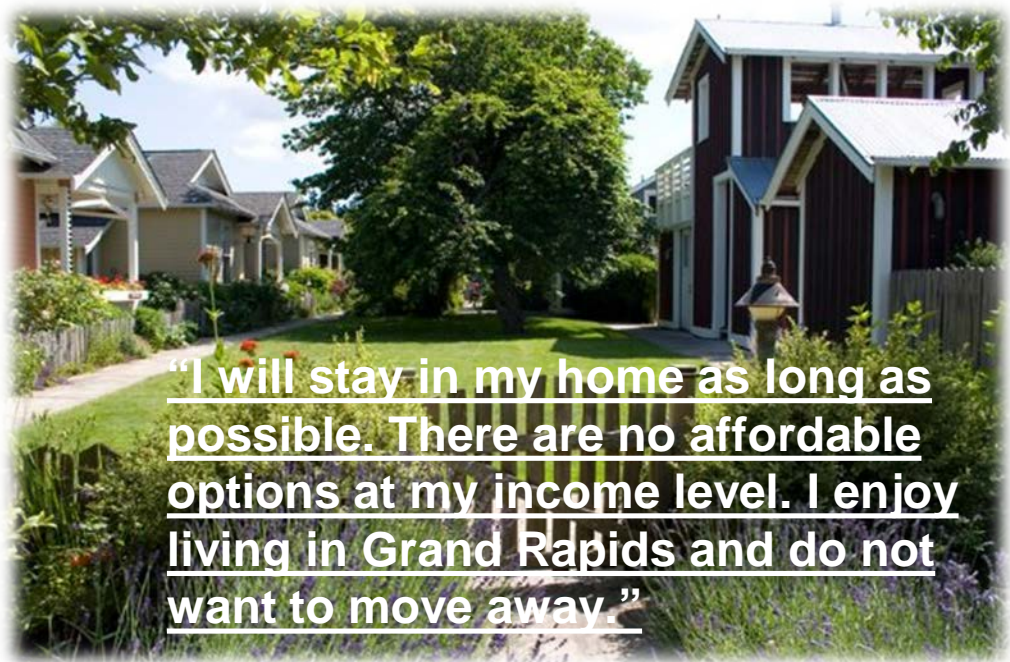
“Expand Rapid routes, including to parks”  
“User friendly bus stops, smaller steps”



# Age-Friendly Grand Rapids

## Housing

- “Prequalify contractors”
- “Condos need to be designed for seniors (most seniors buy condos)”
- “Affordable competent maintenance”
- “More funding for home modification”
- “Less steep stairs, wider stairs”
- “Need solid color carpeting”
- “Help for yards and snow removal”
- “More housing for middle income”
- “Shorten wait time for low income housing”
- “Tax reduction for older adults”
- “Door to door grocery help”
- “On-site social workers/speech therapists, special needs clinic”
- “Need gym, tennis, pickle ball”
- “Need security, secure walkways”
- “Should be step process before eviction”
- “More neighborhoods like Easttown”





# Age-Friendly Grand Rapids Communication

“Senior center to help with technology”  
“City webpage, email distribution list”  
“311” or something like it for seniors”  
“Need directory for social interests”  
“Social workers to help with reading”  
“More interpreters needed: language can be a problem”  
“Public service announcements”  
“Neighborhood service exchange”  
“Church bulletin”  
“Need to listen; Storytelling”  
“Emergency button/post to call for help”  
“Bus announcements- louder, easier to understand”  
“Daily regular callers/ buddy system”  
“Universal sign or signal if you needed help in your home”  
“Need a call line to find out if a call is legit and bank warnings about scams”  
“Education/ classes- tech and art”



“Someone to help you talk. (I’ve had TIAs/ stroke and find it hard to think/ find my words.)”

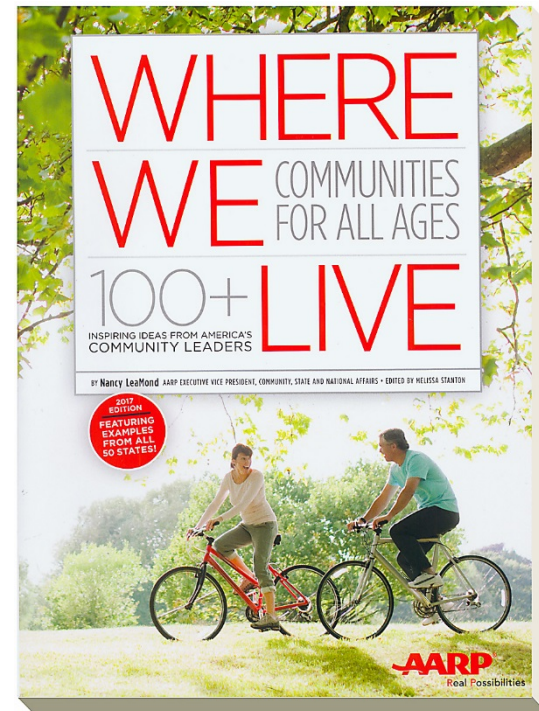


“Need a ‘Purple Angel’ Program”

“Put a purple dot on ID bracelets or doorways; also engage dementia caregivers in hospitals and medical appointments.”

# Age-Friendly Grand Rapids - 2018

- Mayor's State of the City Address
- 'Where We Live' book of the year- AARP
- Advisory Council
- Work Groups





# Age-Friendly Grand Rapids - Future

- Mayor sends a letter of commitment to AARP state office
- AARP enrolls city in AARP/WHO age-friendly community networks

**Phase One-** Involve older people in assessing community age-friendliness and develop a 3 year action plan, including indicators for progress

**Phase Two-** Implement the action plan and submit a 5 year progress report

**Phase Three-** Renew enrollment and continue to make improvements



# Thank you!

## Let's Play!





# Let's Play!



Give us your ideas!

INTERACTIVE!

FUN!



A game for individuals or groups of all ages



# Outside Spaces and Buildings



Instructions: Read and prioritize the following 3 suggestions from 1-3, with 1 being the most important and 3 being the least important.

- A. Available, accessible, and clean: sidewalks, benches, trash cans, and bathrooms.
- B. More indoor and outdoor spaces for older adults to gather, with accessible, affordable expanded programming, including volunteer companions and transportation.
- C. Safe/beautiful spaces with increased lighting and pedestrian crossings, slower traffic, emergency call boxes, plug in outlets for electric wheelchairs, natural landscaping with available shade, and nearby parking.

# Transportation



Instructions: Read and prioritize the following 3 suggestions from 1-3, with 1 being the most important and 3 being the least important.

- A. Expand mass transit and create more respect for seniors by: including additional crosstown bus routes, increasing route expansion outside of the city, providing additional bus shelters, and free or discounted tickets for older adults.
- B. Make para-transit systems (like Go Bus) more affordable, reliable, and user friendly, with no advance notice, less waiting and available without a doctor's prescription to: health services, social events, and shopping.
- C. Explore alternative age-friendly transportation options such as: 3 wheeled bicycles, people movers, driverless and hybrid vehicles, Zip cars, city sponsored van service, ride share, senior cabs, Uber, dial-a-ride, and programs including neighborhood, faith community, and volunteer drivers.



# Housing



Instructions: Read and prioritize the following 3 suggestions from 1-3, with 1 being the most important and 3 being the least important.

- A. Affordable, accessible housing in all parts of the city which includes: landlords who will not take advantage of older adults, housing for low and middle income, shorter wait lists, reduced taxes, and no discrimination/penalties based on income increase or criminal record after time served.
- B. Housing services including: funding for home repairs, home maintenance education for older adults, available, competent, licensed contractors and volunteers for yard and regular home maintenance and home modifications such as ramps and bathrooms.
- C. Assistance with health and safety issues including: compassionate, responsive staff, on site health clinics, social workers, and speech therapists, safe neighborhoods, including secure sidewalks, lighting and security personnel.

# Communication



Instructions: Read and prioritize the following 3 suggestions from 1-3, with 1 being the most important and 3 being the least important.

- A. Create classes and training for older adults that include: social and intergenerational activities, health, technology, employment, transportation options, and home maintenance.
- B. Build a one stop resource center of senior information including health, housing, transportation, employment, civic and social events, and volunteering.
- C. Explore methods of communicating information to seniors, such as a senior city website, calendar, or directory, a '311' like senior call center, an all-senior-services yellow pages type phone book or brochures, a senior email network, neighborhood phone tree, or person-to-person buddy system.





Thank you for playing!

