



Creating an **AGE-FRIENDLY NORTHFIELD**

Age-Friendly Northfield
ACTION PLAN
July 2019



Greetings,

I am so pleased to share the Age-Friendly Northfield Action Plan. Northfield has received many accolades as a destination retirement community, so it was a natural fit when it joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities in 2016. We saw it as an opportunity to explore more formally our strengths as well as our areas of opportunity for continuous improvement.

As our vision statement reads, “Northfield is an open, safe and welcoming community recognized for its world-class colleges and historic riverfront downtown, and is dedicated to sustainably enhancing and preserving its vibrant culture, celebrated arts, strong economy, and an excellent quality of life where all can thrive.” We are committed to making our city a place where *all* community members can thrive at every stage of life.

This action plan reflects many voices in our community after a robust engagement process and careful analysis. Numerous stakeholders including residents, city staff, professionals in the field of aging, community leaders, and many others contributed their input and insights to this process to help identify Northfield’s unique needs and gaps. Four broad issues – or domains – emerged as those in need of the most urgent attention: Housing, Health & Wellness, Community Information, and Outdoor Spaces & Buildings. This plan will help us make meaningful improvements in these and other areas.

This action plan also integrates well into City plans and priorities, and that was an appreciated result of the intentional work of the Age-Friendly Northfield Steering Committee. The City of Northfield’s strategic plan through 2020 includes a strategic priority area of “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion: A Community that Welcomes Everyone.” As the Age-Friendly Northfield Action Plan explains, diversity and inclusion includes age in addition to race, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, and religious affiliation. The City looks forward to collaborating with other community stakeholders in fulfilling the aspirations of the Northfield Age-Friendly Action Plan.

I would like to say “thank-you” to our Age-Friendly Northfield Steering Committee members, and to AARP for their efforts. Additionally, to the listening session participants, survey respondents, consultants, and experts who assisted us; to city staff, my fellow colleagues on the City Council, and the City of Boston for providing an excellent model with its own age-friendly plan. This is a shining example of how collaboration brings together the best in us all.

Best regards,
Mayor Rhonda Pownell

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Executive Summary

Age-Friendly Northfield's Action Plan is the exciting culmination of several years' work to better understand and empower older adults and ensure that Northfield residents can live well as they age. Like most other places in the world, Northfield's population is aging, with older adults making up a greater number and proportion of the population. In Rice County, the population of 65-plus residents is projected to double between 2005 and 2040.¹ And more Minnesotans will turn 65 during this decade than the past four decades combined.

As a progressive and forward-thinking community, Northfield has taken a proactive response to this phenomenon, which holds great possibility for cities who ensure they harness the contributions of older adults by creating communities where people can remain active and connected at all stages of life. People are living longer than ever before, and communities play a very significant role in what those extra decades look like.

Northfield is well-positioned to take on the work of becoming an age-friendly city and already has many strengths as a community for older residents, but more deliberate action must be taken now and in the future, to ensure that the growing number of older adults have the housing, transportation, communication, services and other resources needed to live engaged and independent lives.

The AFN Action Plan was more than three years in the making. In 2016 the City of Northfield joined the World Health Organization (WHO)/AARP Global

Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. This program now includes around a thousand cities worldwide, about 400 of which are in the U.S.

As a network member, Age-Friendly Northfield is following a five-year process to take steps to become a better place to grow older. In keeping with this framework, the AFN Steering Committee led a community engagement process to identify what Northfield is doing well for older adults, and what areas need improvement. A survey for residents age 50-plus was supplemented with input from professionals in various sectors and additional community members. Survey data and findings from the listening sessions were analyzed and then translated into goals and priorities aimed at addressing what was learned.

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Findings revealed the biggest gaps exist in four key areas: Housing, Health & Wellness, Community Information, and Outdoor Spaces & Buildings. Those four domains are

¹ Minnesota State Demographic Center

given special attention within the plan. Four additional domains are also addressed: Transportation & Streets; Job Opportunities; Social Participation, Inclusion and Educational Opportunities; and Volunteer & Civic Engagement.

For each domain, the plan specifies goals that are supported by objectives, actions, partners, timelines, and measures of success. The AFN Steering Committee will oversee plan implementation, and domain action teams are being formed to lead work within each domain.

Importantly, the plan aligns with several of the City's strategic priorities, including affordable housing, climate change, and diversity and inclusion. City staff are part of AFN's work, and AFN will ensure it stays connected to the City's efforts in these and other realms.

The plan recognizes topics as increasingly important concerns that are not

independent domains but woven into several other areas. It also includes five guiding principles that acknowledge critical values and will underlie the work as a whole—cultural and linguistic diversity; generational interdependence; clear and consistent communication; combatting ageism; and creative partnerships.

Age-Friendly Northfield is proud to share this plan and invites the input and involvement of community residents. We are all aging, every day, and this work recognizes that as life changes, communities have a responsibility and an opportunity to respond in thoughtful and deliberate fashion, ensuring the inclusion and empowerment of its residents at all stages of life.

Introduction

Age-friendly communities have been called good places to grow up and grow old. They deliberately consider the well-being of residents at every stage of life, especially older age, and recognize that cities have a big role to play in helping us all fulfill the tremendous potential of aging.²

With that in mind, Age-Friendly Northfield is delighted to share this action plan with the community.

Like many other places, Northfield's population is aging. In 2010, 19 percent of residents were 55 or older; by 2030 that will rise to 32 percent.

Historically, government at all levels has simply not considered the realities of longer life spans as they planned housing, transportation, and healthcare systems.³ That is slowly changing, but not yet at necessary scale.

Local level action is very important. Community leaders in Northfield saw the importance of this work, organized a grassroots effort, gained city support, and in 2016 joined the World Health Organization (WHO)/AARP Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

Now led by a cross-sector Steering Committee of community residents and professionals, Age-Friendly Northfield follows the four-stage process laid out by WHO/AARP. This includes developing a three-year action plan based on the findings of a community assessment of older adult needs.

That action plan is now complete and will be implemented from 2020-2022. The plan specifically addresses four broad issues—or domains—that older residents (aged 50+) who completed the survey indicated are in need of the most urgent attention: Housing, Health and Wellness, Community Information, and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings. The other four domains also will be addressed but with less direct attention at this stage.

Teams of community leaders with special expertise or interest in each domain will be formed to refine and implement each domain's goals and strategies. Those teams will also lead plan implementation.

Historically, government at all levels has simply not considered the realities of longer life spans as they planned housing, transportation, and healthcare systems.

Northfield is a vibrant, progressive city noted for, among other things, civic-minded residents who are actively engaged in bettering the community. It is also home to an uncharacteristically high number of nonprofit organizations and healthcare providers for its size. These are other features that make Northfield well-equipped to take on the work of becoming an age-friendly community—a place where older adults can “live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society.”⁴

² Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging, 2002.

³ Lawler, Kathryn. “Go Big or Go Home,” *Public Policy & Aging Report*, 2015.

⁴ World Health Organization

Age-Friendly in Context: Portrait of Northfield

The City of Northfield sits on the Cannon River in scenic southeastern Minnesota. Less than an hour from Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Northfield is a (big) small town—population about 20,000—with a distinct character and defined sense of place.

Northfield is a vibrant city with an engaged citizenry and progressive sensibility. Residents and city leaders have worked diligently to preserve and strengthen its unique community identity and local economy. Unlike many other small towns, Northfield's downtown remains an active hub with historic buildings, nearby historic homes, thriving businesses and restaurants, and riverfront parks and open space. The city, at residents' urging, has shunned most residential and commercial development on its fringes in favor of infill development and increased density inside the city.



Northfield is also characterized by its commitment to environmental sustainability. Residents have voiced their strong feeling over the years that natural resources be protected and preserved—natural areas, farmland, recreational areas, and wildlife habitat. This aligns with a desire to use environmentally sustainable practices such as clean energy and green building.

The Cannon River plays a defining role in Northfield's past and present. The city was established in the 1850s along the Cannon to take advantage of hydropower that could be used to mill wheat grown on surrounding farms. This local industry drove Northfield's economy and growth. The Malt-O-Meal plant, now part of POST Consumer Brands, has manufactured cereal in Northfield for more than a century and remains a fixture in the community, as well as a large employer.

The Cannon River flows through the city, adding to the charm of Northfield's downtown, and waterfront paths, parks, and bridges allow residents to enjoy its natural beauty. The Cannon also provides many outdoor recreation opportunities. Locals and visitors take great advantage of canoeing, kayaking, swimming, hiking, tubing and fishing on the

river, and area businesses that support these activities contribute to the economy. The city offers more than 35 public parks and recreation areas, including some with extensive access to the Cannon River.

Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges—two esteemed liberal arts schools—call Northfield home and are the city’s two largest employers. Their 5,000 students account for about 28 percent of the local population. As such, they are a defining part of Northfield’s community fabric, economy, housing, transportation, and retail. The colleges provide opportunities for residents to attend world-class music and cultural events, lectures, classes, and other educational and enrichment activities. Students, faculty, and the schools at large are very much a part of the community but also a world unto themselves, making them a source of ever-changing vitality. However, like most college towns, Northfield must continually navigate the dynamic forces that exist between the schools and the city.

Quality healthcare is readily available and a notable community asset. Owned by the city, Northfield Hospital & Clinics is a local independent health care organization that serves the region, including the southern suburbs of the Twin Cities. Both the famed Mayo Clinic in Rochester and the Twin Cities’ abundant healthcare services are an hour’s drive away.

Northfield is also well served by an unusually high number of nonprofit organizations for its size. This is evidence of its culture of engagement and collective desire to better the community. Local leaders report that improved coordination and communication between nonprofits, however, would improve their effectiveness and help them use resources more efficiently.⁵

Like many other places, Northfield’s population is aging. In 2010, 19 percent of residents were 55 or older; by 2030 that will rise to 32 percent. The growth among the oldest



residents, aged 85-plus, is also worth noting. That demographic will increase from 1.7% to 3.8% of residents between 2010 and 2030. While they may sound like small figures, it will amount to more than 400 additional people in this age group, many of whom will likely need some degree of assistance.

Also like many places, Northfield’s population

⁵ Coffin, Dangor, Ehlenfledt, et al. A Strategic Analysis of the Northfield Nonprofit Sector. May 2011.

has been diversifying. While still predominantly White (88.5%), more than 8.7% is Hispanic, 3.5% Asian, and 2% Black.⁶ Close to 9% of Northfield's 65-plus population lives below the poverty threshold (though there is a fairly large margin of error).⁷ This is



higher than Minnesota's statewide rate (7.5) but lower than the national rate (9.5).

For older adults, Northfield is ahead of the game in many regards. *Money* magazine in 2014 named it the "Best Place to Retire" and Kiplinger Personal Finance in 2017 published an article titled, "Why Northfield, Minn. is a great place to retire." They noted features like the city's abundant parks and natural recreation areas, arts and cultural offerings, community

festivals, affordability, an active older adult community, and the perks that come with being a college town. The Twin Cities are a 45-minute jaunt up Interstate 35, putting metro amenities within reach, as well. Indeed, 98 percent of Northfield residents aged 50-plus say they feel it is a good place for older people to live.⁸

FiftyNorth (formerly the Northfield Senior Center) is an important hub for many older adults. It has more than 1,800 members and sees 300 people a day in and out of the center. With leadership from its members, it has evolved over the years to provide impressive breadth and depth of programming. It views older age as a time to learn, grow, be active, and enjoy life. In 2000 it marshaled the resources and partners to construct the Northfield Community Resource Center, which houses FiftyNorth, a warm-water exercise pool, fitness center for older adults, and other service agencies. FiftyNorth is an important voice for advancing older adult concerns in the city and has been a driving force in developing Age-Friendly Northfield.

Many other community assets and organizations provide a strong baseline age-friendliness. Their efforts, individually and together, will contribute significantly to advancing Age-Friendly Northfield.

The **Beautify Northfield Coalition** (BNC) is a group of local organizations including Northfield in Bloom, The Roundtable, Northfield Garden Club, Master

⁶ US Census Bureau. ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

⁷ 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, US Census Bureau.

⁸ The 2017 AARP Age-friendly Community Survey of Northfield, Minn. Residents Age 50+

Gardeners, Arts and Culture Commission, Environmental Quality Commission, City of Northfield, Chamber of Commerce, Northfield Arts Guild, and Save the Northfield Depot. BNC is committed to ensuring that Northfield's public landscapes, gardens, and historic buildings are aesthetically pleasing, well cared for, and reflect the community's pride in its built and natural environments. It is convened and facilitated by Northfield in Bloom.



The **Cannon Valley Elder Collegium** offers high-quality liberal arts classes for area residents aged 50 and over. Many instructors are retired college faculty and public school teachers, and classes range from literature and music to science and philosophy.

The **City of Northfield** has been a partner in age-friendly efforts from the early stages and continues to support and act on its commitment to this work.

The **Community Action Center** has served Northfield for 50 years, helping more than 2,500 people each year with housing assistance, gas vouchers, and groceries, among other services. It operates the Food Shelf, which includes delivery to residents who need it; the Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS) program; and a weekly meal open to the public.

The **Eldercare Committee** has met regularly for years to share information and experience concerning care of older patients. Active and retired doctors, nurses, parish nurses and others from Northfield Hospital, Allina and the Mayo Clinic participate in the committee in a spirit of collaboration and ongoing improvement of elder health care in the community.

The **Northfield Advanced Care Plan Action Committee** (NACPAC) is a subset of the Eldercare Committee. Based out of Northfield Hospital & Clinics, the group includes trained facilitators from Allina, FiftyNorth, Northfield Retirement

Community, and Three Links, which encourage and help as many people as possible to create an advanced care plan.

Kildahl Park Pointe is a senior housing cooperative that promotes active adult living. It includes 51 units, with more than a third of its space dedicated to common areas.

Laura Baker Services Association provides housing, educational and support services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They serve people throughout a lifetime and also offer support for family members of individuals with special needs.

Millstream Commons is an assisted living community with studio, one- and two-bedroom apartment rentals. Located in downtown Northfield, it also offers respite care for short-term stays or caregiver relief.

Neighbors United is a nonprofit advisory and advocacy group that works to empower Northfield's immigrant and refugee communities and bring visibility to the issues they face.

Northfield Hospital & Clinics is municipally owned and well-known for its quality care. It also runs the community's Meals on Wheels program, conducts support groups, provides home care services, and houses a long-term care facility.



The **Northfield Housing Redevelopment Authority** works to provide a sufficient supply of adequate, safe, and sanitary dwellings in Northfield. It strives to create affordable housing opportunities and strengthen neighborhoods, partnering with other organizations, such as the Cannon River Community Land Trust, to implement affordable housing initiatives in the community.

Northfield Retirement Community is a faith-based housing community that offers independent and assisted living options as well as memory care, short-term care and skilled nursing. It includes a café open to the public as well as

congregate dining, in addition to many other services. NRC is the largest senior housing facility in Northfield, with more than 250 units.

Northfield School District operates high-performing schools and is the city's third largest employer.

Three Links Care Center provides a range of services to older adults who need assistance. *Home Care Link* offers in-home services to provide everything from help with household tasks to skilled nursing. *Vital Link* adult day services brings people to Three Links to socialize, enjoy a meal with other participants, take part in a range of activities, and receive services, as well as to give caregivers a break during the day. *Transitional care* services help people recovering from surgery or injury.

Village on the Cannon is a condominium for active, independent seniors. The 46-unit community overlooks the Cannon River and is within walking distance to downtown. Units range in sizes from studios to large two-bedrooms. Amenities include a library, community room, exercise room, guest suite, and underground parking.

Livability: How are we doing?

AARP recently developed an interactive online Livability Index that measures the livability of every city and neighborhood in the country. Northfield earns a 61 out of 100 on the index, which weighs livability⁹ across seven categories: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity. Each category is scored from 1 to 100 based on a set of indicators. Communities are scored by comparing them to each other. (For context, Rochester earns a score of 64, Faribault 54, Red Wing 63, St. Peter 60, and Saint Paul 65.)

This is not necessarily the final word on Northfield's livability, and some of the measures are imperfect. But as the first and only such tool, the index provides a useful whole-city perspective on a range of community features.

⁹ AARP defines a livable community as appropriate housing and transportation services. Once in place, those resources are in place; and foster residents' engaged life." This definition makes livability questions of livability are specifically inclusive of older adult concerns, and the terms are not always used interchangeably.





Northfield receives above-average marks across the board, with its highest ratings related to access to and quality of local health care. It also gets high marks for its low crime rate, parks access, safe streets, drinking water quality, low traffic congestion, high voting rate, limited income inequality, opportunities for civic involvement, and high school graduation rate.

The city does less well related to public transit services and air quality (from local industrial pollution). The college student population skews certain measures—such as age diversity of population and availability of multi-unit housing.

Northfield actively supports livability and continues to anchor many of its plans on those principles.

Alignment with the City of Northfield's Strategic Plan

During the same months that AFN was conducting its community needs assessment as a basis for its own action plan, the city was developing a new strategic plan for 2018-2020. That plan is based on extensive community engagement and an internal assessment of the city's work, culture and operations. It focuses on six strategic priorities determined to be of greatest importance to the city.

AFN's action plan aligns with and reinforces priorities laid out in the city's strategic plan and is intended to help the city further these shared objectives. Three of the strategic plan's six priorities have explicit implications for older adults: Affordable Housing; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; and Climate Change Impacts.

Affordable Housing includes an aim to create more affordable housing in general and more senior housing units specifically. It also notes an initiative to create a senior housing plan, which AFN would be well-positioned to help inform.

Under **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** the plan includes "Increased transit options for all" and "Improved access to City services for all demographics." AFN could also support the city as it works to advance these efforts. This would specifically include racial and socioeconomic diversity among older adults.

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Climate Change Impacts note numerous concerns, of which flooding, food support, and walkability are especially relevant for older adults as the community anticipates experiencing increasingly more negative impacts related to climate change. Climate change is noted as a Topic of Interest (see page #25) in this plan, and AFN will stay connected to the City's efforts as its Climate Action Plan develops.

As the city carries out its strategic plan, AFN's expertise and resources related to older residents could also help the city further its Economic Development and Infrastructure priorities. Further, when the city develops its next comp plan update, AFN could help inform and advise on common goals and their implementation strategies to ensure that age-friendliness is incorporated into this important document as well.

Moving Forward

As Age-Friendly Northfield shifts into implementation mode, community members are invited to join this initiative. Every new perspective and set of experiences around the table enriches the work. AFN leaders also anticipate engaging other key stakeholders, such as the city's large employers, as the work evolves. As author and ageism expert Ashton Applewhite writes, "We are all either old or future old." This work will impact us and those we care about, whether sooner or later. We all deserve an age-friendly community.

Northfield's Path to Becoming Age-Friendly

Age-Friendly Northfield's roots extend deeper than the origins of this initiative. The city's ethos of caring for others and citizen-driven community improvement provided a ready foundation for the work, including specific efforts that support older adults and have been underway for years.

However, a specific seed for Age-Friendly Northfield was planted through an effort related to dementia-friendly communities, which promote greater understanding and support of people living with dementia and their families by engaging and educating cross-sector organizations and the public. Northfield received an ACT on Alzheimer's grant in 2014 to support becoming a dementia-friendly community, joining a network of 33 ACT communities statewide. Key staff from Three Links, Rice County Social Services, Northfield Retirement Community, FiftyNorth, the Chamber of Commerce, Northfield Hospital EMS, and the City of Northfield were actively involved in this work.

When grant funds expired, a handful of initiative leaders hung on to explore continuing in some capacity. They researched other models and approaches to community-wide efforts that support older residents and landed on the World Health Organization/AARP age-friendly program, impressed by the research-based fundamentals,

credibility of its leaders, and the program's scope.

The city—through changing administrations—supported the work and agreed to submit the official application, which must come from a local government's mayor, with agreement that it would be a citizen-led effort with city support. On August 2, 2016, City Council officially approved joining the age-friendly network.

A Steering Committee was formed and community outreach efforts undertaken. Key leaders had experience in organizational development as well as an understanding of how to effectively engage this particular community. They also knew that any such initiative would have to be based solidly on research and strong leadership, because the work would be scrutinized and hard questions would be asked by experienced community members who have seen initiatives come and go.

Soon thereafter the Steering Committee undertook initial work according to the age-friendly program framework. AFN conducted its community assessment of older adult needs in 2017 and 2018, and used what it learned to develop this plan. (See the "How the Plan was Developed" section for more details.)

The Value of Age-Friendly Communities

The Need and the Thinking

Age-friendly communities respond to two facts. First, population aging is changing our communities, and a response is required. Second, older adults must be deliberately included in community planning—not only because of population aging but on principles of inclusion and the fact that communities where residents can stay independent and active as long as possible are a win for all.

The ability to age in place is often considered a goal and achievement. Yet a shift in thinking has occurred in this space. The American Planning Association and others now think in terms of “aging in community.” This might include remaining in one’s own home, but more importantly, “the concept is focused on building vital communities that engage people of all ages and abilities in a shared, ongoing effort to advance the common good.”¹⁰

This stands in contrast to the potentially lonely endeavor of aging in place—where the emphasis is on the dwelling itself rather than the many other factors that determine our quality of life. Aging in place is a simpler and more concrete concept and perhaps easier to achieve, yet aging in community is almost certain to produce better results.

The challenging aspects of the aging population are compounded by changes wrought over the past six or seven decades. We have made ourselves car



dependent and largely designed routine physical activity and social interaction out of our neighborhoods and cities. Further, rural communities must address challenges related to residents dispersed over large areas away from services and resources.

A helpful way to think about age-friendly cities is whether our communities *enable* us to live with independence and dignity as we age, or whether they *disable* us through a lack of housing and transportation options, necessary services, opportunities for social connection, and so on.

Common perceptions and ideas about getting older have not kept up with modern aging. Lifespans are considerably longer, generational

¹⁰ Thomas, 1996.



attitudes about aging have evolved, and people are living “younger” lives at older ages. Research has shown that negative stereotypes about aging affect how we live in very real ways.¹¹ Ageism—stereotyping and discrimination on the basis of a person’s age—actually shapes policies related to older adults, and our own perceptions of aging influence our health and even how long we live.

Well-known development psychologist Erik Erikson wrote of Western societies, “Lacking a culturally viable ideal of old age, our civilization does not really harbor a concept of the whole of life.”¹² We usually accept our perceptions as reality, but not all cultures regard older age as something to be dreaded and denied. In fact, respect for elders is a traditional part of many cultures.

¹¹ American Society on Aging. *Generations*, Fall 2015.

¹² Erikson, Joan M. (1997). *The life cycle completed*. NY: Norton.

- In many Indian families, older adults are the heads of household. They are supported by younger family members and contribute by helping to raise grandchildren and providing highly-respected advice on important family matters.
- East Asian countries such as Korea, Japan, and China have special holidays for a person’s 60th birthday to celebrate longevity and the beginning of older age. In those cultures, elderly parents often live with and cared for by their children and families.
- Language also conveys cultural attitudes. The Hawaiian word *kūpuna* refers to elders in a spirit that respects their knowledge, experience, and expertise. In Japanese the suffix *-san* is often used with elders as a term of respect and veneration. Filipinos have various terms and customs built into their language for the purpose of showing respect for older people.

While such attitudes and practices are not customary in the United States, age-friendly communities play a role in helping to redefine perceptions of aging and what it means to grow older.

“Inclusion” Includes Age!

In all our focus on diversity and inclusion, age is commonly overlooked. Many cities and organizations are working to ensure that they represent the people they serve—taking into account race, ethnicity, gender or

gender identity, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, and religious affiliation. This is right and important, but sometimes lost in the equation is age and ageism. The experience and perspective of older people must be and explicit part of these efforts.

For cities, this means deliberately including older adult concerns in planning, policies and services. It often requires taking a big step back to identify assumptions and prejudices, and to rethink how older adults are perceived and included. As the WHO points out, “Ageism limits the questions that are asked and the way problems are conceptualized and is hence a major barrier to developing good policies.”¹³

Older adults are often bundled into a single category known as “seniors” and to some extent regarded as a group separate from the rest of the community—senior center, senior services, senior housing, etc. All of these functions and services are critical, but modern aging requires that we also go beyond the old paradigm—to the benefit of all.

And today, older adulthood can now span four or even five decades. It serves no one to lump 60 with 75, 85, or beyond.

Economic Contributions

Wise cities recognize older adults as crucial to local economic development. This dimension of the aging population is often overlooked or misunderstood.

¹³ World Health Organization.
<http://www.who.int/ageing/features/faq-ageism/en/>

Older adults help drive local economic development in critical ways:

- As a group, older adults hold tremendous power as **consumers**. People aged 50-plus now hold 51

“Ageism limits the questions that are asked and the way problems are conceptualized and is hence a major barrier to developing good policies.”

-World Health Organization

percent of purchasing power in the US.¹⁴ While some older adults have limited means, as a group this cohort wields huge purchasing power and creates demand for retail, services, and recreational opportunities. Moreover, Northfield’s older residents tend to favor and support local businesses.

- Older adults comprise an increasing share of the **workforce**. By 2019, workers aged 55-plus will make up 25 percent of the workforce.¹⁵ (In 1994 that figure was under 12 percent.) Their experience and

¹⁴ Miller, Shelagh Daly. AdAge. “Adults 50-Plus Now Dominate All Consumer Spending”
<http://adage.com/article/aarp-media-sales/adults-50-dominate-consumer-spending/301391/>. November 18, 2015.

¹⁵ National Council on Aging

institutional knowledge are valuable assets to employers.

- Older adults' work as **volunteers** is worth *billions* of dollars in the US. A quarter of people aged 55 and older volunteered in 2015. The yearly economic benefit of this service to the nation was valued at \$75 billion.¹⁶ This is especially relevant in Northfield given its highly engaged residents. Older people also make significant philanthropic and charitable financial contributions, many of them locally.
- Increasingly, older adults are **family caregivers**. They care for spouses and partners, grandchildren, and others, usually for free. This can reduce or delay the need for public services for older adults who need assistance, and provide younger adults the chance to work because they have affordable, reliable childcare.

A 2015 research report summarizes it this way: age-friendly communities are “economic engines, strong contributors to local tax base, more efficient users of infrastructure investments, and critical components to curbing healthcare, transportation and other high cost drivers for employers, local governments and local agencies.”¹⁷ This speaks to the direct and indirect economic benefits that result from making age-friendly changes to the physical and social infrastructure of our communities.

Age-friendly communities are “economic engines, strong contributors to local tax base, more efficient users of infrastructure investments, and critical components to curbing healthcare, transportation and other high cost drivers for employers, local governments and local agencies.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Corporation for National and Community Service, 2015.

¹⁷ Ball, Lambert, Lombard et al. The Value Proposition of Age-Friendly Communities, 2015.

How This Plan Was Developed

Age-Friendly Northfield created the action plan using guidelines provided by WHO and AARP. Developing and implementing the action plan are core parts of the age-friendly program's broader five-year, four-phase process (see Table 1).

According to this process, member cities must conduct an assessment to learn about community needs. At the core of this assessment is direct input from older residents, as well as from professionals who work with older adults in various ways.

TABLE 1: WHO/AARP AGE-FRIENDLY PROCESS

YEAR 0	• Apply to join the network with a completed application and a mayoral letter of commitment.
YEARS 1-2 Plan	• Conduct an assessment of the community's baseline age-friendliness. • Develop an action plan based on the assessment findings.
YEARS 3-5 Implement & Evaluate	• Implement the action plan. • Monitor indicators for progress.
YEAR 5 AND BEYOND Continual Improvement	• Evaluate action plan progress to refine strategies, identify new or additional priorities, build on what's been accomplished, and continue the work.

Age-Friendly Northfield used a survey to gather feedback from residents aged 50 and over. A paper survey was mailed to 1,000 residents, and an online version was available in several places. About 460 responses were received and analyzed. Students and faculty from Carleton College assisted in the process. The survey instrument was developed by WHO/AARP and was organized around eight age-friendly domains. See more detail about this process in the *Livability for All: The 2017 AARP Age-Friendly Community Survey of Northfield Residents Aged 50+*, available online here: www.agefriendlynorthfield.com/reports.

For numerous items under each domain, respondents were asked to rate how important a particular service or feature was in the community, and then to rate to what degree that service or feature is presently available in Northfield. The difference between the importance and perceived availability was defined as gaps.

The AFN Steering Committee and students from Carleton College's Center for Math and Computing worked together to analyze the survey findings. After particular study of the most significant gaps, the Steering Committee identified the top four priority domains and determined to focus on those issues in its first stage of work. Those domains are:

1. Housing
2. Health & Wellness
3. Community Information
4. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Action around the other four domains—Transportation & Streets, Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities; Volunteering & Civic Engagement; and Job Opportunities—will be included, but less fleshed out.

Once the priority domains were determined, the Steering Committee wanted to supplement the survey findings with input from local professionals working in those respective fields along with other residents who wanted to give additional input. They organized eight Listening Sessions, one for each domain, with facilitated interactive discussions. Listening session participants reviewed the survey findings and added their own perspectives and expertise to the needs and opportunities surrounding each domain. These dynamic conversations added depth to the survey findings and shed light on concerns and opportunities that were not addressed in the survey.

A group of key city staff also met with a consultant to learn more about the fundamentals of age-friendly communities and to examine their own work through an aging lens. Although some staff have worked closely with AFN from the start, discussion with the broader group helped further align the work of the city with the thinking and objectives of AFN.

As it developed the action plan, the Steering Committee incorporated especially effective report elements found in other cities' plans and engaged a consultant to undertake the writing itself. Steering Committee members crafted the initial goals and action charts for each domain. Domain Action Teams will have the responsibility and authority to refine or expand on those goals and actions, and will lead implementation, once those teams are in place.



How to Read This Report

Developing an age-friendly city requires involvement and commitment from all sectors in the community. This plan reflects engagement of current partners and outlines how others should be involved. Age-friendly communities go beyond senior programs and services for frail elders—although those are both critical. The new paradigm must work toward a simultaneous shift in attitudes, policies, and system-level thinking about how to integrate the needs of all community members as they move into older age.

5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES¹⁸

The following broad principles apply to many or all of the eight age-friendly domains. They reflect important dimensions of life in our community and our relationships with each other. AFN leaders will bear these principles closely in mind during plan implementation.

1) Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

As we recognize age as a fundamental part of diversity and inclusion, we similarly recognize that race, ethnicity, and culture are fundamental—and increasingly relevant—to developing an age-friendly Northfield. Like many communities, Northfield's population is becoming more culturally diverse. The work of Age-Friendly Northfield will reflect active attention to the cultural and linguistic dimensions of our changing community to ensure that all residents are respectfully and deliberately considered and included in the work.

2) Generational Interdependence

The lens of age-friendly communities is broader than older residents. Age-Friendly Northfield understands that the needs of all ages and generations are important and intertwined. Age-friendly communities recognize that the most effective services, programs, and infrastructure benefit the young, old and in-between either directly or indirectly. They also work to cultivate a sense of connection and community across generations.

3) Clear and Consistent Communication

Communication emerged repeatedly as a concern across all domains throughout Age-Friendly Northfield's community needs assessment. Given its importance and applicability to all aspects of the work, Age-Friendly Northfield will treat communication as an independent domain as well as a high-priority overlay of all other efforts.

¹⁸ This section was inspired by the City of Boston's Age-Friendly Action Plan. We have borrowed the principles they identified and redefined them according to Northfield's context. We are grateful for the excellent model Boston's plan provided.



4) **Combat Ageism**

Negative perceptions of aging are engrained in our culture and have very real consequences. Age-Friendly Northfield's work will be imbued with a commitment to reframing aging—shedding the notion that reduces aging to decline, and promoting a culture that appreciates aging as a time for continued growth, exploration, and contributions to the community.

5) **Creative Partnerships**

To find and sustain better solutions to older adult concerns, Age-Friendly Northfield will help forge new partnerships and strengthen existing ones. Creative partnerships are required across sectors and will involve a rethinking of how the city, nonprofit organizations, public agencies and other community institutions work together (or not). With an unusually high number of nonprofit and service organizations in the community, Northfield is well-positioned to uncover new ways to work more effectively and efficiently together.

TOPICS OF INTEREST

Similar to the five Guiding Principles described earlier, these topics of interest must be recognized as issues that cross-cut most or all domains and touch the lives of many Northfield residents. The goals and action items included in this plan include an awareness of these issues, and many include direct or indirect benefit to people experiencing social isolation and those living with dementia and their caregivers.

Social Isolation

Social isolation has become a serious public health concern. Its prevalence and impacts are driving a great deal of attention to this issue. In addition to the trouble human element of this fact, a 2017 report from AARP and Harvard University revealed that a lack of social contacts among older adults is associated with an estimated \$6.7 billion in additional Medicare spending annually. There are significant human and economic costs tied to social isolation, and the work of age-friendly communities must reflect this.

Dementia

The aging population and longer lifespans have resulted in more people living with dementia. This disease has been described as more a social condition than a medical one given the stigma and isolation that often accompany it. Family caregivers need attention and compassion as much as their family members or friends living with dementia, as the practical and emotional realities take a serious toll on them as well.

Climate Change

Age-Friendly Northfield recognizes that older adults will be particularly hard hit by the negative impacts of climate changes. While the oldest old are most vulnerable to more extreme temperatures, weather events, and air pollution, anybody with mobility or other physical limitations and more restricted access to resources—which includes many older adults—will have a harder time avoiding negative impacts of climate change or coping with changes that can't be avoided.¹⁹ In Northfield, climate change has contributed to extreme heat and cold, “mega-rains,” flooding, and tornadoes. Climate change may also threaten food security and pose economic threats to older adults. Actions that address climate change impacts in Northfield will be incorporated into the work of Age-Friendly Northfield where it makes sense.

¹⁹ “Older Adults and Climate Change: Vulnerability and Health Effects,” *Generations*, Winter 2009-2010. American Society on Aging.

ORGANIZATION WITHIN DOMAINS

For each domain listed above, the report includes the following sections. They define what we learned about needs and opportunities in Northfield, which organizations will be involved in finding solutions, and how we will measure our progress.

We Are... highlights Northfield's current efforts in each domain to give context for how strategies laid out in the action plan will complement or build on existing age-friendly activity.

We Heard... describes what was learned through the community needs assessment, which included the survey of residents aged 50 and older and listening sessions with professionals working in the various domains. The assessment findings informed development of this action plan.

We Envision... describes, for each domain, how we aspire to make Northfield a better community for all older residents by being more deliberately inclusive of their preferences and needs.

We Will... lays out goals that have been set under each of the four priority domains. Under each goal are noted specific actions and timelines, as well as partners and resources necessary to carry out those actions and indicators for measuring success.

NEXT STEPS

Implementation will be led by domain action teams and overseen by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is organizing teams of professionals from fields related to the respective domains, and teams will also include older adults and caregivers. The action plan will be implemented over the course of three years—2020 through 2022—with specific timelines attached to actions under each goal.



8 Domains Defined

This report is organized by WHO/AARP's eight domains of livability that underlie our age-friendly framework. While each domain was treated independently in the community assessment and in this action plan to some extent, Age-Friendly Northfield recognizes that they are deeply inter-related. Improvements in one area will result in improvements to another. Similarly, problems in one will lead to problems in another. For example, better transportation options will improve social connectedness, while deficient housing will negatively impact health and overall wellbeing.

- 1) **Housing:** Most people want to remain in their own home and community as they age. Doing so is possible if housing is designed or modified for aging in place and a community has affordable housing options for varying life stages.
- 2) **Health and Wellness:** At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it's important that care be available nearby, it's essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.
- 3) **Community Information:** Age-friendly communities recognize that not everyone has a smartphone or Internet access and that information needs to be disseminated through a variety of means.
- 4) **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:** People need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, safe streets, sidewalks, outdoor seating and accessible buildings (think elevators, stairs with railings, etc.) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.
- 5) **Job Opportunities:** Why does work need to be an all or nothing experience? An age-friendly community provides ways older people can (if they choose) to continue to work for pay.
- 6) **Transportation and Streets:** Driving shouldn't be the only way to get around. Public transit options can be as expansive and as infrastructure dependent as a train system or as targeted as a taxi service that provides non-drivers with rides to and from a doctor's office.
- 7) **Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities:** Regardless of a person's age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combatted by the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities.
- 8) **Volunteering and Civic Engagement:** An age-friendly community provides ways older people can (if they choose) volunteer their skills and be actively engaged in community life.

Note that the last two domains are combined in the Action Plan.

Housing

We Are...

Northfield offers a variety of housing options for older residents across a spectrum of needs—including independent living, assisted living, secured memory care, and skilled nursing care. Several of these options include supportive services, such as chore services, home care, personal care, medication management, therapy, meals, housekeeping, and life enrichment activities. Numerous organizations that provide this housing were noted earlier in the report, and two new older adult housing communities are also being constructed.



A number of local efforts are underway to improve the availability of older adult housing, including affordable housing and the exploration of accessory dwelling units. Several nonprofits are working to raise funds and awareness. The City's HRA plans to build 20 new affordable townhomes on the Southbridge site to help meet the demand for affordable homes and is also exploring using Social Impact Bonds to support services for older adults and for people with mental illness. The City has also prioritized affordable older adult housing in its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan.

We Heard...

- *Survey:*
 - Respondents indicated a need for trusted and affordable contractors and home repair services.
 - More housing options are needed for all income levels.
 - More homes should feature age-friendly design.
- *Listening sessions:*
 - The city should tie new business development to affordable housing, and work to connect housing to transportation and services.
 - The community needs more affordable housing options for older adults. This includes older adult housing as well as homes in the community where older homeowners can safely and comfortably remain through the availability of affordable maintenance and home services.

- More memory care is needed.
- Explore alternative housing models like home sharing.

We Envision... a community that provides affordable and appropriate housing options and housing with supportive services that include older residents of all income levels and at varying stages of older age.

We Will...

- **Goal 1:** Create additional older adult housing and housing with available services options.
- **Goal 2:** Ensure that older adults are aware of independent housing and housing with available support services.
- **Goal 3:** Ensure that community residents, policy makers, and local builders are familiar with Universal Design features that can be incorporated into the design of newly built or retrofitted housing.

Health & Wellness

We Are... Northfield residents are fortunate to have many quality health care providers and organizations in this relatively small community. Both the Northfield Hospital and Clinic system and Allina Health Clinic have strong reputations for excellent care, including care for older adults. These two organizations are popular resources for our community and region. Both systems include numerous specialty service lines. The renowned Mayo Clinic is in nearby Rochester. Health Finders provides services for those who have difficulty affording health care.



A range of supportive services are available through Three Links, Northfield Retirement Community, Rice County and private homemaker and homecare businesses. An array of fitness classes—designed for older adults as well as classes on various health and wellness related topics—are available at FiftyNorth. The YMCA and private businesses also provide access to fitness opportunities. Northfield offers miles of hiking and biking trails to promote outdoor fitness and active living.

We Heard...

- *Survey:*
 - Respondents appreciate the community's well-maintained healthcare facilities; the variety of health care professionals, including specialists; and the helpful staff at the hospital and clinics.
 - More affordable, well-trained and certified providers of in-home health care and supportive services are needed.
 - There is a lack of easy-to-find information about local health and supportive services.
- *Listening session:*
 - Affordable housing is the number one priority related to achieving greater health and wellness for older residents because of the fundamental nature of housing to wellbeing in the rest of our lives. Participants similarly noted transportation.
 - There is a lack of easy-to-find information about local health and supportive services.

- Collaborative health education is needed to promote health and wellness, disease prevention and safety.
- A need exists to identify and connect to homebound and isolated older adults.

We Envision... a community where residents can easily find and access high quality and affordable in-home healthcare and supportive homecare services that improve or maintain older residents' health and quality of life; and where the community culture and services promote healthy lifestyles and preventive care.

We Will...

- **Goal 1:** Increase the availability and awareness of affordable in-home healthcare services and supports that address the needs of older adults.
- **Goal 2:** Provide a centralized information source for educational opportunities that promote health and wellness, disease prevention and safety
- **Goal 3:** Promote outreach to isolated adults living within our community.
- **Goal 4:** Work to have adequate human resources to provide and enhance quality, respectful and appropriate healthcare

Community Information

We Are... The LINK Center, located in the Northfield Public Library, connects community members with information about resources in Northfield and the Rice County area. It offers a broad range of resources with a special focus on services for residents of color and low-income families. Other key sources of community information include the City of Northfield's website, FiftyNorth, Northfield Hospital and Clinics, and the Northfield Library.

We Heard...

- *Survey:*
 - Community information should be delivered in-person to people who have trouble leaving home.
 - There is significant need for community information from one central source.
 - Information should be available in multiple languages to reflect ethnic diversity.
- *Listening session:*
 - There is significant need for community information from one central source; listening session participants also noted that it would need dedicated staff.
 - Information should be available in multiple languages to reflect ethnic diversity.
 - Wayfinding signage should be improved and more visible.
 - Homebound and isolated residents need better sources of information.

We Envision... a community where residents can easily both find and receive needed information about a range of services and community events.

We Will... Age-Friendly Northfield is already acting on this important domain. It has applied for grants to develop a central online resource hub that would be staffed part-time. The website would include contact information and descriptions of the services and links to sites often accessed by older adults, their families, and caregivers when seeking help. This information hub would be in direct response to concerns raised through the AFN community needs assessment, which reflected a distinct lack of easily accessible information related to older adult services and resources. This project would also support work happening in all other domains.

- **Goal 1:** Ensure that older adults and their caregivers have ready access to web-based information about services available to them.
- **Goal 2:** Ensure that the Community Information Website for older adults is current and complete and that personal assistance is available for users of the site.
- **Goal 3:** Address information accessibility needs of older adults without Internet access.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

We Are...Northfield takes pride in its quality parks and green spaces, which are plentiful and readily available. The community is very organized in its attention to the city's public spaces, gardens and historic buildings, largely through the Beautify Northfield Coalition, a consortium of nonprofit and public sector groups that address this work together. The city's riverfront downtown has attractive and well-maintained historic buildings and public spaces.



We Heard...

- *Survey:*
 - More public restrooms are needed, including ones that are well-maintained, accessible, and open beyond normal business hours.
 - More seating/benches in public places is desired.
 - Separate paths for walking and cycling are preferable to shared paths.
 - More neighborhood watch programs are desired.
 - Sidewalks—their safety, accessibility, and overall condition—need to be improved
- *Listening session:*
 - Participants recommended that the city hire workers who have knowledge and experience with outdoor spaces, parks, and trails.
 - More public restrooms are a high priority and should be kept open beyond normal business hours.
 - More seating is needed along the Riverwalk and other open spaces.
 - Public spaces should be tested and redesigned for wheelchair accessibility.
 - Buildings should be updated with universal design features.

We Envision...a community where older adults are able to enjoy outdoor activities and public spaces and buildings are designed to accommodate their participation through incorporation of age-friendly design.

We Will...

- **Goal 1:** Work with existing organizations and the City of Northfield to create programs and policies for designing outdoor spaces and buildings that support utilization by older adult citizens and visitors.

Job Opportunities

We Are... Northfield faces similar challenges as other communities. As the population ages, more workers will leave the workforce, and there are not always enough younger workers to replace them. On the other hand, many workers are staying in the workforce longer, or wish to re-enter the labor force following retirement, out of desire or necessity. Older workers may desire a gradual transition to retirement, which many employers may not be prepared to provide.

We Heard...

- *Survey:*
 - Gaps concerning job opportunities were significant: respondents noted gaps of 48 to 52 percent for jobs for people with disabilities, job training opportunities, and a range of flexible job opportunities. However, many respondents also knew little about the availability of such services.
- *Listening session:*
 - More needs to be learned about older residents' wants and needs concerning employment, and traditional job structures may need to be re-thought to accommodate the changing demographics.
 - Employment opportunities need to be well-advertised in central locations.
 - The abilities of disabled workers need to be recognized in terms of employment.
 - Affordable housing is an important consideration in being able to support workers as a community.

We Envision... a community where older adults can find suitable job training and part- or full-time employment opportunities.

We Will...

- **Goal 1:** Ensure a system for job training and employment opportunities for older adults.

Transportation & Streets

We Are... Northfield has several transportation services but, like most communities, they still collectively provide only a patchwork with numerous gaps. Hiawathaland Transit offers dial-a-ride service six days a week and requires at least 24-hour advance notice. Some housing communities, such as Mill Streams Commons and Northfield Retirement Center, provide limited transportation to residents. Similarly, Three Links–Vital Day Care has a van to transport attendees. EcoTrans provides transportation to individuals and groups both within and outside the community—including to the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport and other metro destinations.



The City of Northfield’s Complete Streets policy will help ensure that all streets within the City safely accommodate users of all ages and abilities.

We Heard...

- *Survey:*
 - There is a shortage of public transportation options, and few respondents use the options that are currently available.
 - More than 91 percent of respondents drive themselves, and well-lit streets and intersections, well-maintained streets, and easy-to-read traffic signs are very important.
- *Listening session:*
 - There is a need for on-demand transportation service as well as one that offers 24/7 service.
 - Broader availability of Uber and Lyft in general would be helpful, and Uber drivers with accessible vehicles would fill an important gap.
 - On-demand car rentals would benefit older drivers.

We Envision... a community with safe sidewalks, streets, and intersections throughout the city and with clearly communicated multiple options for reliable and affordable public and private transportation services for older adults.

We Will...

- **Goal 1:** Ensure that streets, intersections, and sidewalks are well-maintained and well-lit.
- **Goal 2:** Ensure that multiple options are available for reliable and affordable public and private transportation services.
- **Goal 3:** Ensure that accommodations for older and disabled persons are included in the City Public Works plans.
- **Goal 4:** Ensure that there is a clear communication source for information about transportation services in the Northfield area.

Volunteering & Civic Engagement/Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities

We Are... Northfield is a civically and socially engaged community. Core institutions like FiftyNorth, Northfield Arts Guild, Carleton and St. Olaf colleges, and the Cannon Valley Elder Collegium help drive and channel this spirit of community engagement. Northfield Shares, an organization established in 2014, seeks to sustain and transform the Northfield community by advancing philanthropy, inspiring volunteerism and promoting collaborative leadership. Yet inevitably some residents are isolated and disconnected and would benefit from additional outreach to provide social connection, more opportunities to become more engaged in the community, and information about educational and social events.



We Heard...

- *Survey:*
 - The largest social participation gap relates to affordable activities.
 - Respondents note a lack of widely published information about social activities.
 - Having a range of volunteer opportunities available is a priority.
- *Listening session:*
 - Participants stressed the need for a central communication system for information about events, activities, and venues. Social media and the City's website could both be used.
 - Transportation and communication are closely tied to social connection and participation.

We Envision... a community where older residents can easily learn about and participate in a range of social, civic, and educational activities, and can contribute through meaningful and well-organized volunteer opportunities.

We Will...

- **Goal 1:** Implement a system to enhance volunteer opportunities for older adults.
- **Goal 2:** Increase the number of volunteers in healthcare and supportive services.
- **Goal 3:** Improve the accessibility of educational programs to isolated older adults.

Acronym Guide

ADU	Accessory dwelling unit
AFN	Age-Friendly Northfield
CAC	Community Action Center
CVB	Northfield Convention & Visitors Bureau
CVEC	Cannon Valley Elder Collegium
GARE	Government Alliance on Race and Equity
HCI	Northfield Healthy Community Initiative
HRA	City of Northfield Housing and Redevelopment Authority
NAG	Northfield Arts Guild
NCOA	National Council on Aging
NDDC	Northfield Downtown Development Corporation
SEMAAA	Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging
UD	Universal Design
WHO	World Health Organization

Council of Champions

Age-Friendly Northfield is grateful for the contributions of the following people and organizations that enrich our community and informed this report.

- Listening session participants
- Survey participants
- Bill Armbruster, Senior Advisor, AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities,
- Joanne Binette, AARP Senior Research Advisor
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- Jay Haapala, Assistant State Director for Outreach, AARP Minnesota
- Ben Martig, Northfield City Administrator
- Northfield City Council
- Will Phillips, State Director, AARP Minnesota
- Mayor Rhonda Pownell, Mayor of Northfield
- Katie St. Clair, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics, Carleton College
- Scott Tempel, City Planner, City of Northfield
- Carol Trosset, Applied Education Research Consultant
- Steering Committee, past and present:
 - Pat Allen
 - Evelyn Burry
 - Patrice Ciernia
 - David DeLong
 - Chris Ellison
 - Shelley Holden
 - CC Linstroth
 - Nan Just
 - Clare Mathers
 - Lynne Pederson

Additional Resources

Each of the following resources can be accessed at
www.agefriendlynorthfield.com/reports

- **Creating an Age-Friendly Northfield: Livability for All: The 2017 AARP Age-Friendly Community Survey of Northfield, Minnesota Residents Age 50+**
- **Survey Instrument** (used to develop above report)
- **Listening Session Notes** from meetings with professionals and residents on each domain topic

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REPORT PREPARED BY LYDIA MORKEN CONSULTING 2019

APPENDIX A

Age-Friendly Northfield Action Plan: Domain Action Charts

The following Domain Action Charts detail specific objectives and supporting actions for goals within seven domains (described within the full Action Plan):

1. Housing
2. Health & Wellness
3. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
4. Community Information
5. Job Opportunities
6. Transportation & Streets
7. Volunteering & Civic Engagement; Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities *(Note that these two domains have been combined into a single chart.)*

For each domain, the action charts include the following information:

- **Measure of Community Impact:** A statement by which to measure the overall impact we aim to have on the community in each domain.
 - **Goal:** A broad aim developed to address priority issues identified through the community engagement process
 - **Objective:** Defines *how* AFN will work toward achieving the corresponding goal
 - **Action:** Lays out steps to be taken toward meeting the objective. Note that action items are set up to match the objective and are not in sequential order, so a Domain Team could be working on an action item in two objectives at the same time.
 - **Responsible Party:** Group or organization charged with leading the work for a specific action
 - **Partnerships & Resources:** Additional groups or organizations who can support and/or be a resource to the work
 - **Actions from Associated Organizations:** Specific steps to be taken by supporting or partner organizations
 - **Measures of Success:** Metrics to indicate whether the objective has been met
 - **Action Years:** As a three-year action plan, the yellow-highlighted cell indicates which of the three action years (2020, 2021, or 2022) the work will take place.

ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING

MEASURE OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

We envision a community that provides affordable and appropriate housing options and housing with supportive services that include older residents of all income levels and at the varying stages of older age. The impact of these housing actions will be determined by a 15 percent increase in the availability of subsidized units and a 10 percent increase in housing with supportive service units. Older adult housing options will be listed and routinely updated within the Community Information website. Resources for building new or retrofitting housing with Universal Design features will be listed within the Community Information website resulting in 10 or more homes built or retrofitted with Universal Design features.

GOAL #1								
WE WILL create additional older adult housing and housing with available services options.								
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Promote development of new housing and resources for all existing options.	Form an action team charged with the completion of action items and assessment	AFN Steering Committee	- Affordable Housing Committee - Local builders and contractors - City Planning Commission - HRA		Action Team created	2020	2021	2022
	Promote additional one- level housing using Universal Design principles	Housing Domain Team	- Affordable Housing Committee - Local builders and contractors - City Planning Commission - HRA	City Housing Commission	Additional housing built	2020	2021	2022

Work with Rice County and the HRA to promote building more affordable housing models within Northfield, including the possibility of ADUs.	Housing Domain Team	- Affordable Housing Committee - Local builders and contractors - City Planning Commission - HRA - Three Rivers CAC	- HRA - CAC	Additional housing built	2020	2021	2022
Work to create an intergenerational cooperative housing model that will have a service component built into the organizational documents.	Housing Domain Team	- Affordable Housing Committee - Local builders and contractors - City Planning Commission		- New model of cooperative housing created - New model of cooperative housing implemented	2020	2021	2022
Promote federal and state programs that assist with either tax relief or subsidies for older adult housing through centralized community information.	- Housing Domain Team - Community Information Domain Team	- Affordable Housing Committee - HRA - Rice and Dakota Counties - City Planning Commission	- HRA - CAC	- Promotional materials developed - Promotional materials distributed	2020	2021	2022
Work with the City to create more accessible housing closer to Bridge Square.	Housing Domain Team	- Affordable Housing Committee - Local builders and contractors	- HRA - Community Action Center	More accessible Housing planned for closer to Bridge Square.	2020	2021	2022
Support the City to include mitigating climate change factors in the development of new rules, regulations, and ordinances.	Housing Domain Team	- City Planning Commission - HRA - Three Rivers CAC		Rules, regulations and ordinances include language regarding climate change	2020	2021	2022

	Work with both local colleges to develop curriculum for internships that promote service to older adults in exchange for housing. The goal is to provide housing in exchange for time serving older adults.	• Housing Domain Team • Job Opportunity Domain Team • Volunteer Domain Team	• Colleges' social work departments • St. Olaf Nursing Department • Laura Baker • Three Links		• Curriculum created • Curriculum implemented	2020	2021	2022
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ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING (cont'd)

GOAL #2

WE WILL ensure that older adults are aware of independent housing and housing with available supportive services.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Provide information to community members about housing options for older adults.	Create a comprehensive list of living options and housing with services agencies within Northfield	- Housing Domain Team - Community Information Domain Team	- Neighborhood organizers - FiftyNorth - Library - Housing agencies - Service agencies (e.g., Shore and Handyman) - Home care agencies - Eldercare Committee - City of Northfield		- Comprehensive list developed - Comprehensive list distributed via centralized system	2020	2021	2022
	Work with realtors and local contractors to create a list of options for home modification, home repair, reverse mortgage options, and tax relief programs.	- Housing Domain Team - Community Information Domain Team - Health and Wellness Domain Team	- Realtor Association - Local builders and contractors - Human Rights Commission - Neighborhood organizers	Realtor Association	- Comprehensive list developed - Comprehensive list distributed in centralized system	2020	2021	2022
	Work to identify isolated older adults to distribute information on housing and housing with services by forming neighborhood organizers.	- Housing Domain Team - Volunteering and Civic Engagement Domain Team - Community Information Domain Team	- City Human Rights Commission - County Sheriff Depts. - CAC - Parish nurses - HCI	Night to Unite	Information is delivered to 75% of Night to Unite neighborhood parties.	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING (cont'd)

GOAL #3

WE WILL ensure that community residents, policymakers, and builders are aware of Universal Design features that can be incorporated into newly built and retrofitted housing options.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Promote the integration of Universal Design (UD) features through education of community residents and City officials.	Develop educational programs for older adults, builders, and City officials regarding the incorporation of Universal Design features.	Housing Domain Action Team	- Local builders and contractors - FiftyNorth - Community Education - City of Northfield		A minimum of four educational sessions held with a total of 100 individuals attending.	2020	2021	2022
	Work with the City to develop recommendations for how to encourage builders to include UD features in their housing development plans.	Housing Domain Action Team	City of Northfield		- Recommendations are created. - City incorporates recommendations into discussions regarding housing development.	2020	2021	2022
	Provide information to older adults regarding builders and contractors who incorporate UD into building or retrofitting homes.	- Housing Domain Action Team - Community Information Action Team	- City of Northfield - Local builders and contractors		Local builders and contractors that are knowledgeable in UD are listed as resources within the Community Information website.	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

MEASURE OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

We envision a community where residents can easily find and access high quality and affordable healthcare and supportive homecare services that improve or maintain older residents' health and quality of life; and where community culture and services promote healthy lifestyles and preventive care. The impact of the below actions will be determined by the successful launch of a web-based information system (see Community Information Domain), 20 percent of identified gaps in healthcare addressed; the development of a collaboration of health and wellness education providers; a 20 percent increase in the number of older adults receiving needed food and clothing services; and the establishment of a forum to hear and respond to healthcare service concerns.

GOAL #1

WE WILL increase the availability and awareness of affordable in-home healthcare services and supports that address the needs of older adults

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Community has information on and access to available services, costs, and information on in-home healthcare and support services.	Form Health and Wellness Action Team charged with the completion of action items and assessment.	• AFN Steering Committee	• Eldercare Group • Neighborhood associations		• Action Team created	2020	2021	2022
	Create a centrally located web-based information system to communicate all services available to older adults.	• See Goal #1: Community Information Action Plan	• Community Information Team • FiftyNorth		• Web-based communication system created and implemented	2020	2021	2022
	Create Community Outreach Coordinator position responsible for responding to requests, updating information, and recruiting new providers.	• See Goal #2: Community Information Action Plan	• Community Information Team • FiftyNorth		• Coordinator hired	2020	2021	2022

	Promote citywide broadband so that older adults have access to telehealth systems.	• Health and Wellness Action Team			• Promotion of citywide broadband is communicated	2020	2021	2022
	Identify gaps in in-home services and supports.	• Health and Wellness Action Team	• Eldercare group • Home healthcare services providers • Local social service providers • CAC • Northfield Hospital		• Gaps identified	2020	2021	2022
	Develop a plan to fill the identified gaps in services that address issues of affordability and isolation.	• Health and Wellness Action Team	• Eldercare group • Home healthcare services providers • Local social service providers • CAC • Northfield Hospital		• Plan developed and implemented resulting in 20% of actionable items being addressed by the appropriate agencies, organizations and businesses	2020	2021	2022
	Develop a plan to use paid paraprofessionals and volunteers to provide certain in-home, respite care, and support services.	• Health and Wellness Action Team	• Northfield Shares • CAC • Local churches • HCI		• Plan developed and implemented	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS (cont'd)

GOAL #2 WE WILL provide a centralized information source for educational opportunities that promote health and wellness, disease prevention and safety.								
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Develop a collaborative of providers of health and wellness, disease prevention, and safety education.	Create quarterly meetings of health and wellness organizations to share information and cross-market	- Health and Wellness Action Team - FiftyNorth	- FiftyNorth - Eldercare - Northfield Hospital - SEMAAA - Juniper/RSVP - NCOA - NRC - Three Links		Quarterly updated list of educational opportunities listed on FiftyNorth website	2020	2021	2022
	Create an information source housed on the FiftyNorth website of health and wellness educational opportunities available to older adults across the community	- Health and Wellness Action Team - FiftyNorth			Information source created and posted	2020	2021	2022
	Bring teleconferenced programs into the homes of homebound and isolated older adults	See Volunteer and Civic Engagement/ Social Participation, Inclusion and Educational Opportunities Action Plan Goal #2				2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS (cont'd)

GOAL #3

WE WILL promote outreach to isolated adults living within our community.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Expand the system for identifying older adults in the community who are homebound or live in isolation and are in need of services for health and welfare.	Coordinate with CAC to expand the system for identifying older adults in the community who are homebound or live in isolation	- Health and Wellness Action Team - CAC	- Local churches - Police and sheriff departments - Northfield Hospital - CAC - Rice Co. Social Services - Neighborhood associations	CAC client data system	Database of CAC clients established and older adult clients expanded by 20%	2020	2021	2022
	Create an outreach system to identify older adults in need of food and appropriate seasonal clothing	- Health and Wellness Domain - CAC		- CAC Food Shelf - CAC Clothes Closet	Older adults served by Food Shelf and Clothes Closet increases by 20%	2020	2021	2022
	Ensure that outreach processes are in both English and Spanish and that an interpreter is available if needed	- Health and Wellness Domain - CAC	- FiftyNorth - Link Center - CAC		Information about programs is available in English and Spanish	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS (cont'd)

GOAL #4:

WE WILL work to have adequate human resources to provide and enhance quality, respectful and appropriate care.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS BY ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Community residents are listened to and able to share their concerns regarding health care services	Community forums are planned as a dialogue for older adults to share concerns regarding health services, system gaps, accessibility, dignity in care, etc.	- Health and Wellness Action Team - Eldercare Committee	Providers of senior service agencies including non-profit orgs, County, and local health providers.		Annual forums planned and held with attendance of a minimum of 25 older adults	2020	2021	2022
	Feedback on issues is shared at quarterly Eldercare meetings and actions on previous concerns shared	Health and Wellness Action Team			25% of actionable items are addressed by appropriate service provider	2020	2021	2022
Health care organizations and facilities and home health care providers collaborate on issues of staffing shortages.	Present the issue to the providers for brainstorming and determine ways for the group to collectively address the issue.	Health and Wellness Action Team				2020	2021	2022

There are an adequate number of volunteers to enhance and healthcare supportive services.	See Goal #2 in Volunteer and Civic Engagement/Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities Action Team	• Health and Wellness Action Team • Volunteer and Civic Engagement/Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities Action Team				2020	2021	2022
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ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY INFORMATION

MEASURE OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

We envision a community where residents can easily both find and receive needed information about a range of services within and close to our community. We have developed goals and actions to meet that need. The impact of these community information domain actions will be determined by a summative assessment that measures: 1) the number of website hits meeting or exceeding a predetermined number; 2) an average satisfaction rating of 4 out of 5 by users on a website embedded survey, and 3) a response by 90 percent of providers responding to a written survey of the website being very or extremely useful.

GOAL #1								
WE WILL ensure that older adults and their caregivers have ready access to web-based information about available services.								
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Create a centrally located, easily accessed and comprehensive web-based comprehensive information and referral system for older adult services.	Form an action team charged with completion of goal action items and assessment	• AFN Steering Committee	• Providers of senior service agencies, businesses and organizations • Funding from Northfield Shares grant		• Action Team created	2020	2021	2022
	Develop criteria for web design, feedback mechanism, and listings	• Community Information Action Team	• Other organizations providing services for seniors, Senior Linkage Line, web search		• Criteria list developed	2020	2021	2022
	Advertise and hire web designer	• Community Information Action Team	• Web design companies		• Web designer hired and contract signed	2020	2021	2022

	Develop form for gathering provider information and disseminate form to providers	Community Information Action Team	Providers of senior service agencies, businesses and organizations		Forms sent to providers	2020	2021	2022
	Develop website, beta test and modify site as indicated	Web designer	Providers of senior service agencies, businesses and organizations		Web site modified following Beta test feedback	2020	2021	2022
	Advertise and hire translator to work with web designer for the creation of a parallel Spanish language site	- Community Information Action Team - Web designer	HCI LINK Center		Web site available in both English and Spanish	2020	2021	2022
	Develop marketing and communications plan	Community Information Action Team	Marketing and communication companies, KYMN Radio, Northfield News		Completed plan is presented to Action Team	2020	2021	2022
	Launch site and marketing plan	- Domain Action Team - Web designer	- Marketing and communication companies, KYMN Radio, Northfield News - Providers of senior service agencies, businesses and organizations		Site is successfully launched	2020	2021	2022

	Develop a summative assessment plan to determine the community impact	• Community Information Action Team • Web designer	• Providers of senior service agencies, businesses and organizations		• Assessment completed	2020	2021	2022
	Conduct summative assessment	• Community Information Action Team • Web designer	• Providers of senior service agencies, businesses and organizations		• Assessment results match community impact goals	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY INFORMATION *(cont'd)*

GOAL #2

WE WILL ensure that the Community Information website for older adults is current and complete and that personal assistance is available for users of the site.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Create a funded position to maintain the community information website, coordinate with related agencies, and provide personal assistance to web site users as needed.	Develop a job description for Community outreach Coordinator that includes bilingual skills and knowledge of community	Community Information Action Team	- LINK Center - City of Northfield		Job description created	2020	2021	2022
	Determine supervising agency and location for advocate	- Steering Committee - Community Information Action Team	- LINK Center - City of Northfield		Supervision and location of advocate determined	2020	2021	2022
	Recruit and hire outreach coordinator	- Steering Committee - Community Information Action Team	- LINK Center - City of Northfield		Advocate hired	2020	2021	2022
	Set up coordination of web designer and outreach coordinator to develop list of service provider information	Community Information Action Team	- Providers of senior service agencies, businesses and organizations (see attached list) - Web designer - Outreach Advocate		List developed	2020	2021	2022

	Develop financial agreement for on-going funding of outreach coordinator position by consortium of stakeholders	Steering Committee	- Providers of senior service agencies, businesses and organizations - City of Northfield		Funding agreement developed	2020	2021	2022
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GOAL #3:

WE WILL address information accessibility needs of older adults without internet access.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Develop information delivery system for home-bound older adults with no internet access	Develop a short survey soliciting feedback from isolated and homebound older adults that identifies sources they use to obtain information on available resources.	Domain Action Team	- Steering Committee - Survey results		Survey developed	2020	2021	2022
	Develop distribution plan for survey	Domain Action Team	- Northfield Hospital Faith community - Rice County Public Health - Rice and Dakota Sheriff Depts.LINK Center		Surveys distributed	2020	2021	2022

	Analyze data and research best practices used by other communities to determine most potentially effective delivery systems	Domain Action Team	- Rice County Public Health - Rice County Social Services - KYMN Radio - Northfield News - Faith community		List of best delivery systems developed	2020	2021	2022
	Determine print format of website information by full document, service category, or language	Domain Action Team	- Web designer - Outreach Coordinator		Web site printable in different configurations	2020	2021	2022
	Develop a short survey soliciting feedback from isolated and homebound older adults that identifies sources they use to obtain information on available resources.	Domain Action Team	- Steering Committee - Survey results		Survey developed	2020	2021	2022
	Develop training on the website for the sources of information identified in the survey.	Domain Action Team	- Outreach Coordinator - Northfield Hospital - Faith community - Rice County Public Health - Rice and Dakota County Sheriff Depts.		Training completed	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

MEASURE OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

We envision a community where older residents are able to enjoy outdoor activities, and public spaces and buildings are designed to accommodate their participation through incorporation of age-friendly design. The impact of the Outdoor Spaces and Building Domain Actions will be determined by increased access to and usage of the City parks, trails, and walkways, measured through survey results in partnership with the City of Northfield and its POLCO survey system.

GOAL #1

WE WILL work with existing organizations and the City of Northfield to create programs and policies for designing outdoor spaces and buildings that support utilization by older adult citizens and visitors.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Work with local authorities to provide accessible and adequate public restrooms.	Form a Domain Team charged with completion of goals, action, items, and evaluation of results	• AFN Steering Committee	• Providers of services to older adults • Businesses • Community organization • City of Northfield		• Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team created	2020	2021	2022
	Research best practices for public restrooms	• Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	• City Staff, local residents, local business people, workers, visitors, tourists	• City of Northfield	• Research is completed and recommendations are identified	2020	2021	2022
	Inventory the number of existing public restrooms to allow comparison to identified best practices	• Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	• City Staff, local residents, local business people, workers, visitors, tourists	• City of Northfield	• Meet/exceed best practices for quantity public restrooms	2020	2021	2022

	Assess quality of existing public restrooms	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	City staff, residents, business people, workers, visitors, tourists	City of Northfield	Public restrooms meet or exceed Universal Design standards and ADA compliance	2020	2021	2022
	Plan, design, and build restrooms as needed	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	City staff, residents, business people, workers, visitors, tourists	City of Northfield	Newly built restrooms meet best practices	2020	2021	2022

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Create a Bench Program throughout the downtown, major walkways, and parks that provide resting places for older adults, disabled persons, expectant mothers and families	Research best practices in similar communities for bench placement	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	- Chamber of Commerce - Local merchants - Park Board - City Staff - Garden Club - Northfield Shares - Northfield CVB	NDDC	Best practices identified and used to assess what the needs are for our area.	2020	2021	2022
	Present and discuss the goal of the Bench Program with the community and solicit financial support.	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	- Downtown agencies - Local merchants/businesses - Park Board - City Staff - Older adult service agencies - Northfield Shares - Garden Club - Chamber of Commerce - Northfield CVB	NDDC	Community supports the program and financial support is provided by businesses and private party donations.	2020	2021	2022
	Utilize the financial support received to build benches where the need is identified.	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	<i>(Same as previous)</i>	NDDC	Number of benches identified as the need are built.	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS (cont'd)

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Work with the City to establish age friendly land use policies and practices regarding: • Parks and open spaces • Trails • Biking • Pedestrian safety and walkability • Sidewalks • Forestry	Encourage the city to update all building codes and plans to be age-friendly and meet Universal Design standards	• Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	• City Staff and Council	• City of Northfield	• Policy language reflects the use of universal design standards across all City planning.	2020	2021	2022
	Conduct a city wide audit of parks, trails and sidewalks using wheelchairs, bicycles, and strollers to assess walkability and rollability	• Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	• City Staff and Council • Park Board • AARP Guide Booklet	• ADA Bike Group	• Audit is completed and best practices are incorporated into planned improvements	2020	2021	2022
	Conduct an audit of the City's open spaces to determine their age-friendliness.	• Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	• City Staff and Council • Park Board • AARP Guide Booklet	• ADA Bike Group	• Audit completed; best practices are included in future design; improvements are staged and begun	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES

MEASURE OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

We envision a community where older adults can find suitable job training and part- or full-time employment opportunities. The impact of the job opportunities domain actions will be determined by a 10 percent increase in residents aged 55+ entering the workforce between 2020 and 2022 as identified in American Community Survey results.

GOAL #1

WE WILL ensure a system for job training and employment opportunities for older adults.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Enhance and promote job opportunities for older adults	Form a Job Opportunities Domain Action Team charged with the completion of action items and assessments	AFN Steering Committee	- Chamber of Commerce - Northfield Works		Action Team created	2020	2021	2022
	Work with local agencies to create a centralized list of job opportunities within the community for older adults to be placed on the community information website	- Job Opportunities Domain Team - Community Information Domain Team	- Chamber of Commerce - Local Businesses Leaders - Northfield News	SCORE	Creation of list on community information webpage	2020	2021	2022
	Create an awareness strategy to implement mentorships for older adults	- Job Opportunities Domain Team - Community Information Domain Team	- SCORE - Northfield Works - Chamber of Commerce	- SCORE - Northfield Works - FiftyNorth - City Commissions	Creation and implementation of mentor program	2020	2021	2022

	Promote job sharing and other flexible employment opportunities	• Job Opportunities Domain Team • Community Information Domain Team	• Northfield Works • Chamber of Commerce • Local businesses leaders	• SCORE • Northfield Works • FiftyNorth • City Commissions	• Job sharing opportunities created and implemented	2020	2021	2022
	Consider ways to promote and expand the more successful training programs for older adults	• Job Opportunities Domain Team • Community Information Domain Team	• Northfield Works • FiftyNorth • SCORE • CAC	• SCORE • Northfield Works • FiftyNorth • City Commissions	• Job training opportunities created and implemented	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR TRANSPORTATION AND STREETS

MEASURE OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

We envision a community with safe sidewalks, streets, and intersections throughout the city and with clearly communicated multiple options for reliable and affordable public and private transportation services for older adults. The impact of the below actions will be determined by a significant increase in transportation options for older adults as well as and expanded services hours. It will also be determined by POLCO results to the question of, "Does Northfield provide adequate options for safe and affordable transportation for older adults?" showing 70% or more responding "yes."

GOAL #1

WE WILL ensure that streets, intersections and sidewalks are well-maintained and well-lit.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Develop a plan for the improvement of drivability, walkability and rollability of city streets, intersections and sidewalks.	Form a Domain Team charged with completion of goals, action items, and evaluation results	• AFN Steering Committee	• City of Northfield • Providers of older adult services; organizations and businesses; Chamber of Commerce		• Transportation and Streets Domain Team created	2020	2021	2022
	Review Complete Streets Policy for inclusion of age-friendly considerations	• Transportation and Streets Domain Team • Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain Team	• City of Northfield	• City of Northfield Public Works Department	• Plan modified as needed and changes implemented	2020	2021	2022
	Work with the City to conduct a Walkability Audit	• Transportation and Streets Domain Team	• Carleton, St. Olaf and Northfield Shares volunteers • AARP Walkability Audit	• City of Northfield Public Works Department	• Audit complete	2020	2021	2022

	Incorporate results of Walkability Audit in city planning	• Transportation and Streets Domain Team		• City of Northfield Public Works Department	• Plan modified as needed and changes implemented	2020	2021	2022
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GOAL #2

WE WILL ensure that multiple options are available for reliable and affordable public and private transportation services.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Expand available options for public and private scheduled and on-demand transportation	Include AFN representation and perspective in Hiawathaland planning update	• Transportation and Streets Domain Team	• 3 Rivers/ Hiawathaland	• Hiawathaland conducting plan update for city	• AFN representative identified	2020	2021	2022
	Research feasibility of Uber and Lyft or a local facsimile for availability in Northfield area	• Transportation and Streets Domain Team	• City of Northfield		• Study identifies feasibility of private transportation service and city develops policy	2020	2021	2022
	Explore needs and policies for low-speed electric vehicle usage on city streets	• Transportation and Streets Domain Team		• City of Northfield	• Policy developed and implemented	2020	2021	2022
	Explore coordination with EPIC and bus companies for regular and on-demand transportation with handicapped accessibility	• Transportation and Streets Domain Team	• Hiawathaland • Northfield Lines • EPIC • DARTS		• Coordination expands transportation options for handicapped accessibility from current 2 options to 3 and include on-demand	2020	2021	2022
	Explore ways to provide discounted or free passes for public transportation	• Transportation and Streets Domain Team	• CAC • Rice County Social Services	• City of Northfield	• Number of passes used increases from 2,000/year to 4,000/year	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR TRANSPORTATION AND STREETS (cont'd)

GOAL #3 WE WILL ensure that accommodations for older and disabled persons are included in the City Public Works plans								
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Create a development and maintenance plan for implementing age friendly strategies when redesigning, repairing or expanding streets, intersections and sidewalks	Ensure AFN is represented in Public Works planning	Transportation and Streets Domain Team		City of Northfield Public Works Department	AFN included in public works planning	2020	2021	2022
	Analyze results of 2019 ADA Inventory and Walkability Audit to identify needs	Transportation and Streets Domain Team	- AARP Roadmap to Livability Transportation Workbook - Community volunteers from providers of older adult and disability services; family caregivers	City Public Works conducting 2019 ADA Inventory and AARP Walkability Audit	Needs identified and incorporated in City public works project schedule	2020	2021	2022
	Develop criteria for readable signage	Transportation and Streets Domain Team		City Public Works Department	Criteria developed and utilized in signage updates	2020	2021	2022
	Create policy for maintenance of safe transportation stops	Transportation and Streets Domain Team		City Public Works Department	Policy developed and implemented	2020	2021	2022
	Develop policies and criteria for sidewalk and intersection maintenance that use materials and surfaces easily managed by pedestrians with mobility challenges	Transportation and Streets Domain Team		City of Northfield Public Works Department	Policy and criteria developed and incorporated in Public Works' maintenance plan	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR TRANSPORTATION AND STREETS (cont'd)

GOAL #4

WE WILL ensure that there is a clear communication source for information about transportation services in the Northfield area

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Ensure that transportation service options in the Northfield area are included in the web-based information system	Create a list of available transportation services in the area	- Transportation and Streets Domain Team - Community Information Domain Team	All transportation providers servicing the City of Northfield		List created and included in community information website	2020	2021	2022
	Create an “age-friendly driver” certification program for private transportation services and volunteer driver programs	Transportation and Streets Domain Team	- AARP Smart Driving program - City of Northfield Police Department - ACT on Alzheimers - DART		Certificate program made available and marketed with the goal of certifying 40% of private and volunteer transportation service providers	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR VOLUNTEER AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/SOCIAL PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

MEASURE OF COMMUNITY IMPACT:

We envision a community where residents can easily learn about and participate in a range of civic, educational, and social opportunities, and can contribute through meaningful and well-organized volunteer opportunities. The impact of these volunteer and civic engagement/social participation, inclusion, and educational opportunities will be determined by an increase in communication of volunteer opportunities and volunteers, and by a participation number in teleconferenced programming by isolated adults of 30 and a satisfaction rating of 4 out of 5.

GOAL #1 WE WILL implement a system to enhance volunteer opportunities for older adults.								
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Enhance and promote volunteer opportunities for older adults.	Form an action development team charged with the completion of action items and assessments.	• AFN Steering Committee			• Action Team created	2020	2021	2022
	Work with other local agencies to create a centralized list of volunteer opportunities within the community for older adults	• Volunteer and Civic Engagement/Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities Domain Team • Northfield Shares	• Northfield Shares • FiftyNorth • Northfield Public Schools • CAC • Northfield Historical Society	• Northfield Shares	• Add to opportunities for older adults on Northfield Shares Volunteer Portal resulting in 30% increase of in volunteer numbers	2020	2021	2022

Identify transportation options for older adults to travel to volunteer opportunities	• Volunteer and Civic Engagement /Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities Domain Team • Transportation Domain Team		• Northfield Shares	• Options identified and included on Northfield Shares and Community Information websites	2020	2021	2022
Develop system to communicate with neighborhood organizers to disseminate information about volunteer opportunities, neighborhood watch, and community information.	• Volunteer and Civic Engagement /Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities Domain Team • Community Info. Domain Team • Health and Wellness Domain Team	• Neighborhood associations • Lutheran Social Services • Community Action Center • Catholic Charities	• Northfield Shares • Night to Unite	• Communication system developed and used by 75% of neighborhood groups	2020	2021	2022
Collaborate with City staff to promote older adult representation on City boards and commissions.	• Volunteer and Civic Engagement/Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities Domain Teams	• City of Northfield • FiftyNorth		• Older adults represented on 90% of city boards and commissions	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR VOLUNTEER AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/SOCIAL PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (cont'd)

GOAL #2 WE WILL increase the number of volunteers in healthcare supportive services.								
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
There are an adequate number of volunteers to enhance healthcare and supportive services.	Healthcare support volunteer opportunities are included in Northfield Shares volunteer portal	• Health and Wellness Action Team • Volunteer and Civic Engagement/ Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities Action Team	• FiftyNorth • CAC • NRC • YMCA • Northfield Shares • Laura Baker Services • Three Links		• Volunteer opportunities are listed on portal and number of volunteers increases by 15%	2020	2021	2022
	Research and implement innovative ways to spark interest in volunteering	• Volunteer and Civic Engagement/ Social Participation, Inclusion, and Educational Opportunities Action Team	• FiftyNorth • CAC • NRC • YMCA • Northfield Shares • Laura Baker Services • Three Links		• Reasons identified; initiatives are started	2020	2021	2022

ACTION PLAN FOR VOLUNTEER AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/SOCIAL PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (cont'd)

GOAL #3 WE WILL implement a system to bring fitness and lifelong learning classes into the homes of isolated older adults.								
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES	ACTIONS FROM ASSOCIATED PARTIES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	ACTION YEARS		
Develop a teleconferencing system to bring classes and programs into homes of isolated older adults.	Create a proposal for telecom-ferencing programs from FiftyNorth to off-site locations with volunteers to assist with users.	• FiftyNorth	• FiftyNorth • Aldrich Technology		• Proposal and budget developed	2020	2021	2022
	Obtain and install hard and software for teleconferencing	• FiftyNorth	• FiftyNorth • Aldrich Technology • Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges		• Hardware and software installed	2020	2021	2022
	Work with Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges to identify and train a volunteer team to bring the technology and classes into off-site locations	• FiftyNorth	• FiftyNorth • Aldrich Technology • Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges		• Volunteer recruitment and training program developed and implemented	2020	2021	2022
	Identify programs and classes appropriate for teleconferencing	• FiftyNorth	• FiftyNorth • Aldrich Technology		• Proposal and budget developed	2020	2021	2022
	Develop a marketing strategy to identify and contact isolated older adults who would benefit from programming	• FiftyNorth	• FiftyNorth • Northfield Hospital • NRC • Three Links • Benedictine Living Community		• Marketing strategy developed and contact made to isolated older adults	2020	2021	2022

	Develop a schedule of programs and volunteers to implement them	• FiftyNorth	• FiftyNorth • Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges		• Schedule developed	2020	2021	2022
	Conduct training and launch teleconferencing program	• FiftyNorth	• FiftyNorth • Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges		• Training completed and programming started with 10 clients in first offering	2020	2021	2022
	Develop and conduct assessment of client satisfaction and track client usage	• FiftyNorth	• FiftyNorth • Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges		• Satisfaction rating of 4 out of 5 on survey questions and usage increase from 10 to 30 within 6 months	2020	2021	2022



AGE-FRIENDLY NORTHFIELD MINNESOTA

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