

SENIOR AMENITIES AND LIFESTYLE ANALYSIS

REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN



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City of Huntington Woods, MI
City Hall
26815 Scotia Rd
Huntington Woods, MI 48070

In Partnership with the University of Michigan A. Alfred
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Urban and Regional Planning Master's Program

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Front Cover:
Top: Mary Gustafson at Community Gardening Day
Bottom: Senior Day-Trip to Port Huron

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Huntington Woods is already an excellent place for seniors – there are ample local and regional activities and services, the transportation network supports walking and biking, and the housing stock is of excellent quality. Nonetheless, the city faces some obstacles to fully supporting aging in place.

The *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* is an evaluation of how the City of Huntington Woods can better meet the needs of its senior residents. To achieve this, we assessed Huntington Woods' current situation by analyzing demographic and spatial data, reviewing the City's past senior life assessments, conducting case studies of other communities, and holding a variety of public engagement events to gather feedback.

Our team put forth the following findings and recommendations around three key domains:

Transportation & Mobility

Challenges

Although Huntington Woods is a very walkable community, some seniors and residents with limited mobility still experience challenges due to the limited operation of the City's shuttle bus, unclear directional indicators, and lack of knowledge about existing mobility services.

Recommendations

- Convert streetlights to LED lamps, improve signage clarity, install more benches, and fill the remaining gaps in the sidewalk network to improve walkability.
- Increase the number of transportation options and service breadth, as well as better connect the city's interior to regional destinations.
- Better advertise existing transportation options, as well as workshops on how to use them.

Housing

Challenges

Huntington Woods is largely composed of single-family homes with high home values. This creates affordability and accessibility challenges for seniors who wish to downsize or install accessible retrofits.

Recommendations

- Create floating zoning districts that can accommodate more housing options, allowing for a wider variety of housing stock (e.g., apartments, condos, multifamily units) and more accessible floor plans.
- Amend the zoning code to allow accessory dwelling units and garage conversions.
- Better advertise services that provide Universal Design home retrofits.

Social & Community Services

Challenges

There is limited space for both recreation facilities and senior activities within Huntington Woods. Additionally, many seniors are unaware of the programmatic offerings and senior services at their disposal.

Recommendations

- Evaluate and re-allocate existing indoor space (or newly constructed space) to both exercise equipment and a new senior gathering space that is event-friendly.
- Better advertise local and regional events, activities, and services.
- Promote more intergenerational socialization and recreation through programming.

Implementing the strategies listed above would facilitate comfortable aging in place for all residents, regardless of their mobility or stage of life. To help the City navigate our recommended actions, we've included an implementation plan and a public engagement plan, both of which strive to streamline processes, assign roles and responsibilities, and ensure adequate and equitable community input. We hope that Huntington Woods will incorporate this analysis into its master plan to help put these recommendations into action, creating a safer and more affordable age-friendly Huntington Woods.

Thank You

We would like to extend a thank you to everyone who contributed to the creation of the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis*.

First, we would like to thank the participants of the three focus groups conducted as a part of this analysis. Their thoughts, ideas, and insights were invaluable sources of information and understanding, and we greatly appreciate the personal time they dedicated to help their friends, neighbors, and community. Additionally, we would like to thank Parks and Recreation Director Mary Gustafson for coordinating the meeting space that made the focus groups possible.

Second, we would like to thank the residents who attended the City's open house meeting and those who completed the survey on senior life in Huntington Woods. Their feedback helped us identify areas of improvement and the key issues affecting seniors now and in the future.

Third, we would like to thank City Commissioner Michelle Elder and City Manager Amy Sullivan for their time, input, and dedication to understanding the needs of the senior community.

Fourth, we would like to thank all the members of the Senior Advisory Committee for their continued engagement throughout the analysis process and for being key advocates in the senior community.

Fifth, we would like to thank Professor Larissa Larsen and Julie Steiff, faculty at the University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, for providing academic support in this endeavor.

Sincerely,
The Senior Lifestyle Team



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INTRODUCTION

The *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* is a report, developed by the City of Huntington Woods in partnership with the University of Michigan, on how Huntington Woods can best meet the needs of its seniors as they age in place. The report includes an assessment of current senior needs surrounding transportation and mobility, housing, and social and community services, as well as recommendations on how the city can best meet those needs. Ultimately, the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* strives to create equitable, implementable, and community-driven changes that will help all Huntington Woods residents age comfortably in place at every stage of life.

The *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* is intended to be a guide for City policy making as Huntington Woods seeks to supplement its existing senior amenities to promote a high-quality senior lifestyle. The report is designed to inform aging in place strategies across three key domains of senior life:

1. Transportation and Mobility
2. Housing
3. Social and Community Services

Above all, the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* is intended to promote the community's vision of an age-friendly Huntington Woods by informing the upcoming master plan effort. By incorporating the key findings and strategies contained herein, Huntington Woods can help ensure that residents of all ages maintain a healthy, affordable, and enjoyable quality of life.

The Problem At Hand

America's population is aging. By 2030, senior citizens will account for 20% of the national population as baby boomers age into longer lifetimes and younger generations continue to have fewer children. Michigan is one of the fastest-aging states in the nation, and the City of Huntington Woods is experiencing the real impacts of this trend. According to Huntington Woods' 2015 Master Plan, there has been a 48% increase of people who are 35-64 years of age since 2010, and the city will need to accommodate the many people who will soon be part of the senior community. In light of its changing demographics, Huntington Woods is striving to become a city where older residents can stay in their community while retaining their independence and mobility. According to the AARP, over 90% of seniors enjoy living in their homes and community because of the many amenities, support, and family around them. Huntington Woods residents are no exception, and the city is looking for ways to help its growing senior population more comfortably age in place.

Visions, Goals, and Objectives

The following visions, goals, and objectives guided the creation of the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis*.

Vision 1: An Age-Friendly Huntington Woods, for Now and Later

Goal: Develop strategies to meet senior transportation and mobility needs

Objectives:

- Assess the current conditions of the transportation network
- Gather community members' feedback on their experience with transportation and mobility
- Produce actionable implementation strategies

Goal: Develop strategies to meet senior housing needs

Objectives:

- Review existing assessments to determine ongoing desires and needs
- Gather community feedback on seniors' housing needs
- Consider land use changes to meet housing needs
- Produce actionable implementation strategies

Goal: Develop strategies to meet senior community and social service needs

Objectives:

- Assess the current condition of senior services, events, and activities offered in and around the city
- Gather community feedback on the prevalence, variety, and accessibility of social and community services
- Produce actionable implementation strategies



Fire Open House

Vision 2: Transparent, Inclusive, and Meaningful Senior Engagement Process

Goal: Engage the public through a diversity of means

Objectives:

- Conduct focus groups to gather in-depth feedback on senior life in Huntington Woods
- Offer multiple feedback opportunities for the entire community
- Engage senior leaders

Goal: Be present and receive feedback during community engagement events

Objectives:

- Advertise broadly to ensure maximum participation
- Be open, thoughtful, and attentive
- Compile and publicly share feedback gathered at the events

Vision 3: Huntington Woods as Part of an Age-Friendly Network

Goal: Help the city become a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities

Objectives:

- Understand the membership criteria
- Research other certified cities in Michigan
- Create an action plan for Huntington Woods so the City can act as an age-friendly model for other municipalities to follow
- Help the City meet the requirements for the membership application

ABOUT Process Overview

Timeline

In January 2020, the City of Huntington Woods partnered with the University of Michigan Master of Urban and Regional Planning program to develop a series of implementation strategies geared towards senior living and aging in place. As the city's population over the age of 65 increases, so does pressure to accommodate senior needs. A group of four masters students interested in Huntington Woods' proposal joined the team and began planning the data collection and report creation process in early January.

In February, the City conducted five community engagement activities to gather feedback on senior life in Huntington Woods and generate ideas for possible improvements. In combination with other data sources, the collected feedback was analyzed in March and the team began crafting the draft report in early April. The final draft of the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* was submitted on April 24, 2020, along with the materials necessary for the City to pursue membership in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

The following sections detail our engagement and analysis processes.

Community Engagement

In February 2020, we conducted six engagement activities in four different formats to gather feedback on seniors' needs as they age in place:

Senior Advisory Committee (2/20)

The work plan for the report was presented at the Senior Advisory Committee meeting and time was dedicated to open feedback on the proposed project.



Seniors participating in a focus group on 2/22

Senior Lifestyle Survey (2/19 to 2/24)

A one-page survey on senior lifestyle and needs was distributed to seniors at the Gilham Recreation Center. Of the several dozen surveys distributed, 7 were returned, yielding informative but not statistically significant results.

Focus Groups (2/22)

Three 1.5-hour focus groups were conducted on the three key domains: Transportation and Mobility, Housing, and Social and Community Services. 270 residents over the age of 65 were randomly selected and mailed hard-copy invitations to participate in a focus group.

Additionally, invitations were extended to the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Committee, each of which sent one representative to one focus group. Of those invited, 19 participated, resulting in one 5-person focus group and two 7-person focus groups. The three questions asked were:

- How do you picture an age-friendly Huntington Woods in the future?
- What is one discrete actionable change that would help achieve your vision?
- What are several strategies that could be taken to achieve that change?



Seniors participating in a focus group on 2/22

Open House Public Meeting (2/25)

A public open house-style meeting was held at City Hall. Residents were given the opportunity to provide open-ended written feedback about senior life, as well as engage in a senior amenities mapping activity.

Through these engagement efforts, we heard a variety of diverse viewpoints and collected valuable ideas on which actions and strategies could best improve seniors' ability to age in place. For a comprehensive record of the feedback from the engagement events, please see the *Engagement Summary* for this report on the City's website or contact the City Manager for a physical copy.



Seniors giving their feedback through the mapping activity at the 2/25 open house

Data Sources & Analysis Process

The analysis process for the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* ran from late February to early April 2020. The report's key findings and action recommendations are derived from five sources:

1. Resident feedback at the engagement activities
2. Spatial data from regional agencies
3. Demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau
4. Information from the City's senior newsletter and past assessments
5. Case studies of other aging communities

1) Community Engagement - Resident Feedback

The *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* used three forms of resident feedback: written, verbal, and spatial. From the focus groups we collected both written and verbal feedback. At the open house we gathered both written feedback through open-response forms and spatial feedback through a mapping exercise which asked residents to mark locations where senior-related improvements could be made. We then combined the feedback from the focus groups and open house with the survey responses and cross-analyzed the content for major themes and ideas. Our comprehensive content analysis on the resident data both provided the foundation for the report's key findings and directed the remainder of the analysis process. Please see Appendix A for the complete content analysis findings.

2) Spatial Data

The *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* uses mapping data from two sources: the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and Oakland County. These sources provided us with data on local and regional transportation networks, recreational facilities, indoor and outdoor attractions, and land uses. However, we could not find data on the location, type, and number of senior-catering establishments near Huntington Woods, so we created a new dataset through independent research. This dataset contains information on the location and function of every senior-catering establishment, ranging from dialysis clinics to retirement homes, within two miles of Huntington Woods. We then analyzed the spatial data to answer key questions about senior life and amenities for Huntington Woods residents, such as:

- How accessible are entertainment, recreation, commercial, and senior-catering destinations by foot, car, and bus?
- How accessible is the city interior for residents with limited mobility?
- How much and what types of age-friendly housing exist in and around the city?

Our spatial analysis of Huntington Woods and its neighboring communities helped us geographically identify where senior needs are being met and where they are not. This information then helped us contextualize the feedback received during the engagement events, inform the report's key findings, and craft the recommended action plan. Please see Appendix B for the complete spatial analysis findings.

3) Demographic Data

To better understand the senior population in Huntington Woods, we analyzed data from the American Community Survey, a questionnaire distributed by the U.S. Census Bureau that gathers similar information to the decennial census. Our demographic analysis was designed to answer a variety of senior life questions, such as:

- Is Huntington Woods' senior population growing, shrinking, or remaining stable?
- How many seniors are primary caretakers of grandchildren or partners?
- What proportion of seniors have a physical or mental disability that limits their mobility?

The demographic analysis helped us understand the dynamics of the Huntington Woods senior population and tailor the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* to meet their needs, as well as those of future seniors. Please see Appendix C for the complete demographic analysis findings.

4) Huntington Woods Resources

Three assessments on senior life have been conducted in Huntington Woods: the 2015 *Senior Needs Assessment*, the 2012 *Older Needs Assessment Survey*, and the 2016 *Housing Options For An Aging Population*. To learn from and avoid duplicating or contradicting past efforts, we analyzed the city's past assessments for key takeaways and major conclusions and resolved our findings with our other domains of analysis. As a component of our analysis on social and community services, we also reviewed Huntington Woods' "60+ Crowd" bi-monthly newsletters on senior life. From these, we inventoried the existing senior services and events that residents may not be aware of to avoid making redundant recommendations for similar programs. Please see Appendix D for the complete analysis of Huntington Woods' past assessments and newsletters.

5) Case Studies

To better understand the age-friendly movement across the United States and how it could be realized in Huntington Woods, we conducted case studies on four aging cities: Cleveland, OH; Boston, MA; Seattle, WA; and Southfield, MI. Although every community is unique in its composition and needs, many cities have been reaching similar conclusions to those outlined in the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis*. For example, the *Age Friendly Boston Action Plan* centered on the same three key domains of transportation, housing, and community services. As a result, we were able to derive select lessons from Boston's planning process and apply them to the age-friendly efforts in Huntington Woods. Conducting case studies on other cities helped us structure our analysis process and recommendations by answering questions such as:

- Are other communities creating new senior programs or better advertising existing ones?
- Are other communities pursuing infrastructure and/or policy changes to meet senior needs?
- Are the challenges faced by Huntington Woods' senior community similar to those elsewhere?

Although we did not draw our recommended actions and strategies from the case study findings, they were valuable in placing Huntington Woods' problem at hand – meeting senior needs to facilitate comfortable aging in place – in a broader context. Please see Appendix E for the complete case studies.

KEY FINDINGS

and Recommended Action Plan

Summarized below are the key findings on seniors' needs in Huntington Woods, separated according to the three key domains of analysis: Transportation and Mobility, Housing, and Social and Community Services. Many findings extend beyond a single category and should be considered as interconnected elements that will promote aging in place.

Each finding is associated with a parallel recommended action to help seniors comfortably age in place in their community. The following actions and strategies were derived from our research, public engagement, and analysis. This is not a comprehensive list of all possible strategies to improve aging in place, but rather a refined list based on anticipated effectiveness and feasibility.

Transportation and Mobility

Finding 1: Improve walkability for those with limited mobility or visual impairments

Huntington Woods is a very walkable community – it has many parks, accessible street crossings, and an almost completely connected sidewalk system – which supports a healthy and active lifestyle. However, seniors and residents with limited mobility still experience challenges. For many seniors, the city's street signage and lighting make walking in the early morning or late evening difficult, either because the signs are unclear or the lighting is too poor to read them. As a result, a recurring theme across resident feedback was the feeling of being lost in one's own neighborhood.

Additionally, there are some gaps in the sidewalk network along and adjacent to Henley Ave that make the walk to the Recreation Center indirect, and consequently burdensome, for seniors living on the city's west side. Many seniors also mentioned uncleared, snowy sidewalks as a major obstacle to active recreation and expressed a desire for more reliable city-wide snow removal.

Lastly, seniors appreciated the ample seating options available in the city's parks and asked for similar seating to be placed along residential streets, which would give them more opportunities to rest and allow them to take longer walks.



Existing Huntington Woods
street sign

Action #1: Improve walkability for those with limited mobility or visual impairments

Strategies

- Work with DTE to replace the city's existing streetlights with brighter LED lamps.
- Place benches at intersections that do not have a park within the next couple blocks.
- Fill the last remaining sidewalk network gaps along Henley, Talbot, and Nadine and create a walkway connecting Talbot to the back of the Recreation Center.
- Partner with Berkley School District students to clear sidewalks after heavy snows when the city must prioritize road plowing, either as an extension of the leaf removal program or as a new program.

Metrics

- Percentage LED lamp conversion of neighborhood streets.
- Percentage LED lamp conversion of connector/major streets.
- Percentage of sidewalk network gaps filled.

Finding 2: Connect the city's interior to regional destinations

For able-bodied residents, Huntington Woods' location within the greater Detroit area is ideal. Within two miles of the city, every amenity, ranging from theaters to medical clinics, is easily accessible by foot. Residents who can drive have even greater access to regional destinations and can find almost everything they desire within five miles. However, for many residents with limited mobility, public transit is their sole option for reaching destinations, attractions, and necessities, which makes access to services and amenities more difficult. For visually and physically impaired seniors, it is difficult to reach the FAST or SMART bus stops on Woodward Ave, which connects Huntington Woods to its surrounding communities. Although the SMART on-call shuttle bus services regional destinations, many seniors expressed a need to have a fixed-route shuttle inside the city's boundaries that could connect them to peripheral regional transit stops, helping them travel the "last mile" of the interior.

Action #2: Connect the city's interior to regional destinations

Strategies

- Partner with a fixed-route shuttle service (e.g., May Mobility) to expand transit service in the city's interior and take residents to peripheral SMART stops.
- During the non-winter months, partner with Berkeley School District students to form a bike taxi service to connect the city's interior with peripheral SMART stops.

Metrics

- Number of major peripheral SMART stops to which transit is extended.
- Number of riders on service.



A peripheral SMART bus stop
on Woodward Ave

Finding 3: Increase the number of transportation options and service breadth

Huntington Woods' SMART on-call shuttle bus operates from 9am to 3pm and will transport senior residents to any location within seven miles of the city. It requires a reservation at least 48 hours in advance and costs \$1 per ride. Its service boundary encompasses nearly all requested destinations, ranging from Beaumont Health to downtown Royal Oak. However, the operating times of the SMART shuttle do not meet many seniors' needs, particularly if they have appointments – medical or otherwise – in the early morning or evening. Seniors also found that the advance reservation system makes it difficult to book emergency trips to buy groceries, medicine, and other necessities if supplies suddenly run out. Overall, seniors expressed a need for both fixed-schedule transportation to needed locations as well as on-demand private or public transportation outside of the existing SMART shuttle's service hours. Additionally, there is demand for ridesharing among seniors who can drive but do not wish to maintain a personal vehicle for the low number of trips they take. Seniors in this group saw the City's overnight parking restrictions, which are a challenge to storing shared cars, as the greatest obstacle for rideshare companies like Zip Car or Maven.

Action #3: Increase the number of transportation options and service breadth

Strategies

- Expand the service hours of the existing SMART paratransit bus to run from 8am to 7pm.
- Better advertise the procedure allowing residents to park shared vehicles (e.g., Zip Car) on the street overnight and dedicate a few spaces at City properties to shared vehicles.
- Develop a fixed-route fixed-schedule shuttle bus that picks up at the Recreation Center and services regional destinations (e.g., Beaumont, Kroger, CVS, Oakland Mall) and pursue partial subsidies from the destinations.

Metrics

- Number of service hours for which SMART paratransit is expanded.
- Number of spaces at each City property for shared vehicles.
- Successful partnership with one ridesharing company.

Finding 4: Better advertise and provide more education about transportation options

In addition to the SMART shuttle, several alternative transportation options are available in Huntington Woods to help meet seniors' mobility needs. However, many seniors are not aware of or comfortable using the options at their disposal, such as GoGoGrandparent or Uber (especially those requiring a smartphone). Although the City advertises senior transportation services in its bi-monthly newsletter, many seniors still feel that they are not fully aware of the public and private options available because of their limited access to or understanding of technology. Additionally, free technology classes on services such as Uber or Lyft are offered by Berkeley High School students, but many seniors are unaware of the program.



GoGoGrandparent advertisement in the Gilham Recreation Center

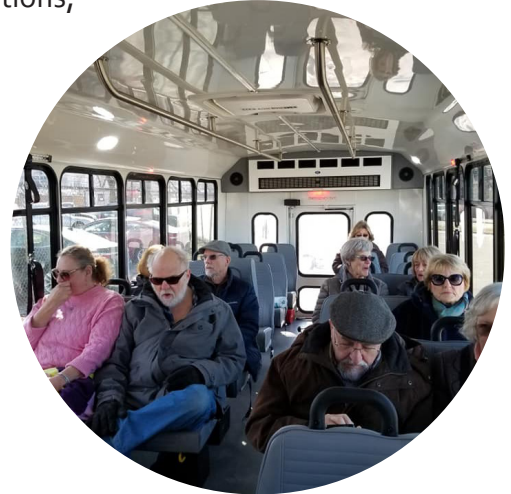
Action #4: Better advertise and provide more education about transportation options

Strategies

- Use the parks' notice boards to display transportation options, times, and pick-up locations.
- Create a City webpage that lists all available modes of transportation, as well as their times, schedules (if applicable), prices, and all other relevant information.
- Promote GoGoGrandparent's call-in option whereby a staff member can schedule reservations on a variety of platforms for seniors who do not have internet access.
- Post information about ride-hailing workshops on multiple mediums: websites, public posting boards, newsletters, etc.

Metrics

- Number of modes by which transportation services are advertised.
- Amount of web traffic on the transportation page.
- Number of call-ins per week.
- Number of workshop attendees.



Seniors taking the SMART shuttle bus for an outing in Detroit

Housing

DEFINITIONS

- "Floating" zone: a zoning district that is a part of a city's land-use toolbox but is not "laid down" within the city's boundaries until it is needed; a zoning district that is created in anticipation of a future need but not immediately used.
- Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) or granny-flat: a dwelling, either attached or detached from a main house, that exists on a lot with another house.
- Rezoning: changing the zoning district classification of a parcel.
- Zoning amendment: an alteration to what is permitted within an existing zoning district that then affects all the parcels currently under that zoning district classification.

NOTE

The suggested strategies for the Housing domain have a high degree of overlap. For example, creating a floating zone for apartments is included as a strategy to both improve affordability and help accommodate the upcoming senior boom. As these broader housing actions are considered during the 2021 master plan update, overlap will be noted to avoid redundancies in policy and all subjects will be open for discussion and community input. For additional information on housing in Huntington Woods, please refer to the 2020 *Inclusive Housing Plan*, to which this report contributed its data on senior housing needs.

Finding 1: Improve affordability for stayers and downsizers

Huntington Woods is largely composed of single-family housing. Many residents have seen their home values rise over the past few decades as the city attracts new buyers looking to settle in the "City of Homes." Unfortunately, the rise in home values also led to a rise in property taxes. Long-term senior residents, especially those with fixed incomes, are worried about how to cover living expenses in Huntington Woods as they age in place.

Residents have expressed the desire for downsizing options – such as apartments, smaller houses, or condos – to make their living expenses more affordable so they can stay in their community. For seniors who can afford to stay in their current home, there is another often unaffordable obstacle to aging in place: accessibility retrofits.

Action #1: Improve affordability for stayers and downsizers

Strategies

- Increase Home Assistance Repair Program (HARP) advertising and mail informational materials to all residents over 65 in combination with promotional materials paid for by local contractors.
- Create floating zoning districts that accommodate more affordable housing options (condos, apartments, multi-family units, and single-family houses on smaller parcels) and can be used when commercial or residential land becomes available for rezoning.
- Amend the city's existing zoning code to allow for ADUs in single-family residential zones and support garage conversions.

Metrics

- Number of housing types added to zoning code.
- ADU standards incorporated into zoning code for single-family residential zones.
- Percentage increase in HARP requests.

Finding 2: Ensure homes are physically accessible

Almost all houses in Huntington Woods have one or more design features that make independent living and aging in place a challenge for senior residents. For example, almost all houses have bedrooms located on the second floor and steps leading up to the front door, both of which are obstacles for residents with limited mobility. Most houses in the city were built before the 1970s and without Universal Design principles, making retrofits (such as ramps and grab-bars) a common and costly necessity. HARP has made strides in alleviating retrofit affordability concerns, but many seniors are unaware of this service.

Additionally, all homes in Huntington Woods have yards and garages, the maintenance of which becomes a challenge for seniors losing their mobility – even rolling trash to the curb down a long driveway can be exhausting. Retrofits can help alleviate some accessibility concerns, but many seniors have stated that the layout of their houses remains the largest barrier to aging in place. There is increasing demand for universally designed 1-story living spaces, either in the form of ranch homes, elevator-equipped apartments, or multi-family units that are divided by floor (rather than townhome style).

Action #2: Ensure homes are physically accessible

Strategies

- Create a floating zoning district that allows residents to divide their houses by floor, making it possible for seniors to live entirely on the first floor while still accommodating renters or family on the upper floor(s).
- When designing zoning districts or writing building code for apartments, ensure that 3-story and higher density multifamily buildings require elevator access.

- In the “Guidelines for Exterior Additions and Infill Development,” remove Standard (gg)(1)(d) which requires that front doors/porches have a step-up.
- Require ground-level access in all new zoning districts.
- Better advertise side-of-house waste pickup for residents who have a demonstrated need.

Metrics

- Zoning amendment passed requiring all new 3-story+ buildings to have elevator access.
- Standard (gg)(1)(d) removed.
- Percentage opt-in for side-of-house waste pickup service.

Finding 3: Accommodate the upcoming senior boom

Residents over the age of 65 currently make up 22% of Huntington Woods’ population, and the proportion of seniors has steadily increased over the past decade. The city’s senior population is expected to reach an unprecedented size in the next two decades as children of the baby boom generation age into senior citizenship. Residents of all ages have expressed concern that the city’s housing stock will be unable to accommodate the senior boom because the number of accessible housing units is almost completely fixed. Many seniors recognize the need for an increase in living density and are in favor of zoning modifications – particularly allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) – as an immediate low-cost solution to the upcoming housing crunch. Fixed-income seniors looking to live more affordably have also noted that converting their garage to an ADU would allow them to sell their house but still stay in Huntington Woods as they age in place.

Action #3: Accommodate the upcoming senior boom

Strategies

- Amend the city’s existing zoning code to allow for ADUs in single-family residential zones and support garage conversions.
- Create floating zoning districts that accommodate denser housing options (condos, apartments, multi-family units) and can be used when commercial or residential land becomes available for rezoning.

Metrics

- Number of housing types added to zoning code.
- ADU standards incorporated into zoning code for single-family residential zones.

Finding 4: Support social and multigenerational housing options

Huntington Woods is a uniquely multigenerational community and stands apart from other cities in the greater Detroit area as a place people want to return to as they age. Many young parents move back to the city to raise their children and stay close to their families, often living just a few blocks from the house they grew up in.



Senior “super fans” supporting their grandson during a basketball game at the Gilham Recreation Center

Many seniors have expressed the desire to move in with their children to ensure they are supported as they age, especially in the event of a spousal death. Many young couples want to support their parents but also maintain some physical distance. Straddling these two demands creates the need for multigenerational housing as a compromise – duplexes, attached granny-flats, and ADUs all allow seniors to live with their adult children or others while also maintaining physical separation, reducing feelings of isolation and fear of injury without compromising personal space.

For seniors who do not have family in Huntington Woods, there is increased demand for social arranged housing where they can socialize with other residents. Many seniors, especially those living alone, support denser housing accommodations where they can interact with other seniors and younger residents. Apartments, condos, multi-family houses, and even co-operative living options have been mentioned as desirable possibilities for seniors combating isolation.

Action #4: Support social and multigenerational housing options

Strategies

- Create floating zoning districts that accommodate social housing options (condos, apartments, multi-family units) and can be used when commercial or residential land becomes available for rezoning.
- Amend the city's existing zoning code to allow ADUs in single-family residential zones and support garage conversions.
- Explore housing code alterations that would support multiple non-related seniors living cooperatively in a single home.

Metrics

- Number of housing types added to zoning code.
- ADU standards incorporated into zoning code for single-family residential zones.
- Number of secured partnerships with retrofit-friendly contractors.

Social and Community Services

Finding 1: Create an indoor space with exercise equipment for all

Huntington Woods residents have multiple gym options, such as the YMCA and Orangetheory Fitness, in the surrounding communities. Additionally, the City's Recreation Center provides track space for seniors to get an indoor cardio workout and hosts programs designed to encourage senior fitness – Wellness Walk-and-Talk, Walk the Gym, the Think Spring exercise series (which includes yoga, sit-and-fit, and balance training), and pickleball, to name a few. However, for many seniors, the lack of strength training equipment within the city's boundaries remains a barrier to active and healthy living. Nearby gyms are inaccessible for seniors who cannot drive, and residents of all mobility levels have expressed apprehension at going outside of their community to work out. Many seniors want to exercise in a space where the people are familiar to them and they are less likely to feel judged.



Gilham Recreation Center

Action #1: Create an indoor space with exercise equipment for all

Strategies

- Incorporate a gym into the ground floor of a new multi-story development where appropriate.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to exempt gyms (which open early and close later) from the limitation on hours of operation in the Transitional District as an incentive for local establishment.
- Evaluate the use of existing space in the Recreation Center and, if underused or excess space is found, dedicate a portion to indoor exercise equipment.

Metrics

- Space evaluation completed.
- Plan to utilize and/or re-utilize space in the Recreation Center developed by City.
- Zoning amendment passed for gyms in the Transitional District.

Finding 2: Better advertise local and regional events, activities, and services



Officer Todd
Tyler checking seniors'
blood pressure at the Health Fair

Huntington Woods has an advantageous location within the greater Detroit region; within two miles of the city there are dozens of commercial and entertainment destinations, wellness providers, and recreation opportunities. Within five miles, the number of destinations increases into the hundreds. There are many senior and community-focused events near or with the City. The City's bi-monthly newsletter advertises senior-focused events such as the 60+ drop-in social group, health fair, Monday Lunch Bunch, and monthly movie at the Recreation Center, along with local services such as homebound library delivery, leaf removal, and the medical equipment exchange. The newsletter contains a wealth of information but falls short for seniors who do not have computer access or do not see the posters in the Recreation Center or at City Hall.

Word-of-mouth helps overcome some informational obstacles, but many seniors feel that either they or their neighbors are not up to date on local and regional events, activities, and services.

Action #2: Better advertise local and regional events, activities, and services

Strategies

- Recruit block-leaders or neighborhood liaisons to disseminate non-newsletter event information to home-bound neighbors.
- Send out an annual mailing to residents over 65 that contains information on routine events and year-round services.

Metrics

- Percent increase in routine event participation.
- Percent increase in opt-in for year-round services.



Betsy Murdoch welcomes seniors to
the Detroit Winery

Finding 3: Promote intergenerational socialization and recreation

Because Huntington Woods Elementary School and the Recreation Center share building space, mobile seniors in Huntington Woods frequently interact with children and young parents. Additionally, routine and one-time intergenerational programs facilitate connections between seniors and students, including the Teeniors Bingo and Pasta Night, Pen Pal Program, and high schoolers vs seniors pickleball tournament. Many seniors would like to see even more intergenerational opportunities, particularly programs and events that are no-cost or low-cost, such as potluck picnics, senior-aided afterschool childcare, and library readings.

Action #3: Promote intergenerational socialization and recreation

Strategies

- Increase the number of low-cost all-age events, especially during the winter (e.g., indoor concerts in the park, potlucks).
- Invite seniors to volunteer with the latchkey program and create a hands-on skill-share program where seniors can teach kids skills like gardening, cooking, or sewing.
- Organize a lecture series at the library where schoolchildren can practice public speaking in front of a senior audience by presenting on what they are learning.
- Expand existing intergenerational programs (e.g., Pen Pals, Teeniors Bingo).

Metrics

- Number of intergenerational events.
- Number of attendees at intergenerational programs.

Finding 4: Support continued and practical education

The City of Huntington Woods offers several practical skill-building opportunities for seniors, including the AARP Driver Certification course and Computer College. Many seniors would like to see the course offerings expanded to include other practical skills that support aging in place, such as classes on how to use Uber and Lyft, navigate the SMART bus system, or vet a home contractor. For home-economics classes, such as gardening or cooking, many seniors would like to see greater youth recruitment to increase intergenerational skill sharing. Additionally, many seniors desire continuing education opportunities to keep them mentally sharp as they age and would like more lectures on history, science, literature, and current events.

Action #4: Support continued and practical education

Strategies

- Expand Computer College or create a series of independent workshops on how to use Uber, Lyft, Zip Car, SMART, and other online mobility services.
- Increase in-school recruitment for practical skill workshops that offer multigenerational learning opportunities.
- Organize a resident-led lecture series where people of all ages can present on a historical, cultural, literary, or scientific topic in which they have expertise (alternative: teacher-led lecture series).
- Organize a facilitated current events meeting hour at the library to bring seniors up to date on local and global news.

Metrics

- Number of lecture series.
- Number of attendees.
- Percent increase in student attendance at skill workshops.

Finding 5: Create an event-friendly gathering space for seniors

As the senior population continues to grow, Huntington Woods' senior lounge in the Recreation Center will likely be unable to accommodate the number of seniors and the diversity of their needs. Many seniors are frustrated with the Recreation Center's weekend operating hours, which limit the use of the senior lounge to only mornings and afternoons. Additionally, many seniors expressed their desire for a larger space where they can host events and invite younger generations to socialize rather than simply sit around tables. Overall, there is high demand for a quiet, free-of-charge senior space that accommodates a diversity of programs and can bring all age groups together for a common cause.



The Senior Lounge in the Gilham Recreation Center

Action #5: Create an event-friendly gathering space for seniors

Strategies

- Extend the operating hours of the Recreation Center on the weekend to accommodate evening events.
- Evaluate the use of existing space in the Recreation Center and, if underused or excess space is found, dedicate a portion as event-friendly flex-space with reservation priority for multigenerational and senior events.
- Incorporate a senior center into the design of a new multi-story development or renovation to an existing public building where appropriate.

Metrics

- Percentage increase in number of senior-hosted events.
- Percentage of Recreation Center space (or other space) dedicated to senior events.

Finding 6: Expand check-in options for vulnerable residents

The Public Safety Department currently offers Kindcall, an opt-in program for vulnerable residents that provides a daily phone call from Public Safety and a home-visit follow-up if they do not receive an answer. Many seniors are unaware of this program and instead pursue neighbor-based check-in strategies, which are not available on a city-wide level. Many seniors are interested in developing a more comprehensive neighborhood check-in call system to make sure no seniors are being forgotten, especially those who are largely homebound. Additionally, many seniors have mentioned that they would like the Kindcall program to be better advertised, especially in a format that could reach homebound seniors without internet access.

Action #6: Expand check-in options for vulnerable residents

Strategies

- Advertise the Kindcall program through a mailing, door hanger, or recorded phone message to all residents over 65.
- Create a list of volunteers willing to place weekly check-in calls to isolated seniors in their neighborhood.
- Recruit block/neighborhood leaders to take a one-time inventory of their neighbors to locate seniors living alone.

Metrics

- Number of check-in call volunteers.
- Percentage increase in Kindcall program opt-in.

Summary of Findings

Overall, Huntington Woods is already an excellent place to be a senior – there are ample local and regional activities and services, the transportation network supports walking and biking, and the housing stock is of excellent quality. To make aging in place possible for all seniors, regardless of mobility, social connectivity, or technological capacity, several key changes must be made:

- Improve transportation access and service range for residents with limited mobility
- Diversify and increase the amount of housing available
- Make accessibility retrofits more affordable
- Expand intergenerational programming
- Promote all-ages exercise
- Dedicate flexible senior space
- Increase advertisement of existing services and events
-

By pursuing these changes over time, Huntington Woods can facilitate comfortable aging in place for all residents, regardless of mobility or stage of life.



Top: Janet Meisel Voisine on a senior trip to Port Huron, MI
Bottom: Pamela Haxton at Community Gardening Day

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Recommended Implementation Plan outlines our suggestions for how the City of Huntington Woods and its partner organizations can most effectively carry out the strategies in the Recommended Action Plan.

Action	Strategies	Project Lead	Timeline	Metrics	Orgs to Involve or Inform
TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY					
Improve walkability for those with limited mobility or visual impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with DTE to replace the City's existing streetlights with LED lamps • Place benches at intersections that don't have a park within the next 2 blocks • Fill remaining sidewalk network gaps along Henley, Talbot, and Nadine • Create a walkway connecting Talbot to the back of the Recreation Center • Partner with Berkley students to clear sidewalks after heavy snows 	Public Works Department	1 – 3 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage LED lamp conversion of neighborhood streets • Percentage LED lamp conversion of connector/major streets • Percentage of sidewalk network gaps filled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTE Energy • Berkley School District
Connect the city's interior to regional destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with a fixed-route shuttle service to expand transit service in the City's interior and take residents to peripheral SMART stops • Partner with Berkley students to form a bike taxi service to connect the City's interior with peripheral SMART stops 	Parks and Recreation Department	1 – 2 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of major peripheral SMART stops to which transit is extended • Number of riders on service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMART • Berkley School District

Increase the number of transportation options and service breadth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the service hours of the existing SMART paratransit bus to run from 8am to 7pm • Better advertise the procedure allowing residents to park shared vehicles (e.g., Zip Car) on the street overnight and dedicate a few spaces at City properties to shared vehicles • Develop a fixed-route fixed-schedule shuttle bus that picks up at the Recreation Center and services regional destinations (e.g., Beaumont, Kroger, CVS, Oakland Mall) and pursue partial subsidies from the destinations 	Senior Advisory Committee	3 mo – 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of service hours for which SMART paratransit is expanded • Number of spaces at each City property for shared vehicles • Successful partnership with one ridesharing company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMART • Rideshare companies • Car-share companies • Anchor stores (Kroger, CVS, etc.) • GoGo Grandparent
Better advertise and provide more education about transportation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the parks' notice boards to display transportation options, times, and pick-up locations • Create a City webpage that lists all available modes of transportation, as well as their times, schedules (if applicable), prices, and all other relevant information • Promote GoGoGrandparent's call-in option whereby a staff member can schedule reservations on a variety of platforms for seniors who do not have internet access • Post information about ride-hailing workshops on multiple mediums: websites, public posting boards, newsletters, etc. 	Communication Committee	3 mo or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of modes by which transportation services are advertised • Amount of web traffic on the transportation page • Number of call-ins per week • Number of workshop attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Center staff

HOUSING

Improve affordability for stayers and downsizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase HARP advertising and mail informational materials to all residents over 65 in combination with promotional materials paid for by local contractors • Create floating zoning districts that accommodate more affordable housing options (condos, apartments, multi-family units, and single-family houses on smaller parcels) and can be used when commercial or residential land becomes available for rezoning • Amend the city's existing zoning code to allow for ADUs in single-family residential zones and support garage conversions 	Planning Commission	1 – 5 yrs or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of housing types added to zoning code • ADU standards incorporated into zoning code for single-family residential zones • Percentage increase in HARP requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HARP • Carlisle Wortman • Planning Department
Ensure homes are physically accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a floating zoning district that allows residents to divide their houses by floor, making it possible for seniors to live entirely on the first floor while still accommodating renters or family on the upper floor(s) • When designing zoning districts or writing building code for apartments, ensure that 3-story and higher density multifamily buildings require elevator access • In the "Guidelines for Exterior Additions and Infill Development," remove Standard (gg)(1)(d) which requires that front doors/porches have a step-up • Require ground-level access in all new zoning districts • Better advertise side-of-house waste pickup for residents who have a demonstrated need 	Planning Commission	1 – 5 yrs or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning amendment passed requiring all new 3-story+ buildings to have elevator access • Standard (gg)(1)(d) removed • Percentage opt-in for side-of-house waste pickup service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local contractors • Planning Department • Public Works Department

Accommodate the upcoming senior boom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend the city's existing zoning code to allow for ADUs in single-family residential zones and support garage conversions • Create floating zoning districts that accommodate denser housing options (condos, apartments, multi-family units) and can be used when commercial or residential land becomes available for rezoning 	Planning Commission	1 – 5 yrs or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of additional housing types added to zoning code • ADU standards incorporated into zoning code for single-family residential zones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlisle Wortman • Planning Department • Local contractors
Support social and multigenerational housing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create floating zoning districts that accommodate social housing options and can be used when commercial or residential land becomes available for rezoning • Amend the City's existing zoning code to allow ADUs in single-family residential zones and support garage conversions • Explore housing code alterations that would support multiple non-related seniors living cooperatively in a single home 	Planning Commission	1 – 5 yrs or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of housing types added to zoning code • ADU standards incorporated into zoning code for single-family residential zones • Number of secured partnerships with retrofit-friendly contractors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlisle Wortman • Planning Department

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Create an indoor space with exercise equipment for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate a gym into the ground floor of a new multi-story development where appropriate • Amend the Zoning Ordinance to exempt gyms from the limitation on hours of operation in the Transitional District as an incentive for local establishment • Evaluate the use of existing space in the Recreation Center and, if underused or excess space is found, dedicate a portion to indoor exercise equipment 	Parks and Recreation Department	3 mo – 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space evaluation completed • Plan to utilize and/or re-utilize space in the Recreation Center developed by City • Zoning amendment passed for gyms in the Transitional District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Center staff • Senior Advisory Committee • Local gyms • Planning Commission
Better advertise local and regional events, activities, and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit block-leaders or neighborhood liaisons to disseminate non-newsletter event information to home-bound neighbors • Send out an annual mailing to residents over 65 that contains information on routine events and year-round services 	Communication Committee	3 mo or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent increase in routine event participation • Percent increase in opt-in for year-round services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Center staff • Senior Outreach Coordinator
Promote intergenerational socialization and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of low-cost all-age events, especially during the winter (e.g., indoor concerts in the park, potlucks) • Invite seniors to volunteer with the latchkey program and create a hands-on skill-share program where seniors can teach kids skills like gardening, cooking, or sewing 	Parks and Recreation Department	3 mo or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of intergenerational events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Center staff • Library staff

Cont... Promote intergenerational socialization and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a lecture series at the library where schoolchildren can practice public speaking in front of a senior audience by presenting on what they are learning • Expand existing intergenerational programs (e.g., Pen Pals, Teeniors Bingo) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of attendees at intergenerational programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berkley School District
Support continued and practical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Computer College or create a series of independent workshops on how to use Uber, Lyft, Zip Car, SMART, and other online mobility services • Increase in-school recruitment for practical skill workshops that offer multigenerational learning opportunities • Organize a resident-led lecture series where people of all ages can present on a historical, cultural, literary, or scientific topic in which they have expertise (alternative: teacher-led lecture series) • Organize a facilitated current events meeting hour at the library to bring seniors up to date on local and global news 	Library	3 mo – 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of lecture series • Number of attendees. • Percent increase in student attendance at skill workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library staff • Local mobility companies • Berkley School District • Recreation Center staff • AARP

Create an event-friendly gathering space for seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the operating hours of the Recreation Center on the weekend to accommodate evening events • Evaluate the use of existing space in the Recreation Center and, if underused or excess space is found, dedicate a portion as event-friendly flex-space with reservation priority for multigenerational and senior events • Incorporate a senior center into the design of a new multi-story development or renovation to an existing public building where appropriate 	Senior Advisory Committee	3 mo – 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage increase in number of senior-hosted events. • Percentage of Recreation Center space (or other space) dedicated to senior events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee • Recreation Center staff • City Commission
Expand check-in options for vulnerable residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise the Kindcall program through a mailing, door hanger, or recorded phone message to all residents over 65 • Create a list of volunteers willing to place weekly check-in calls to isolated seniors in their neighborhood • Recruit block/neighborhood leaders to take a one-time inventory of their neighbors to locate seniors living alone 	Senior Advisory Committee	3 mo or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of check-in call volunteers • Percentage increase in Kindcall program opt-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Committee • Public Safety Department

RECOMMENDED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

The Recommended Public Engagement Plan lays out a variety of activities that the City of Huntington Woods can pursue during its master planning process to ensure that seniors are meaningfully and effectively included. The activities described below are designed to be additions to the master plan's engagement strategy. Staff can choose which activities they would like to pursue based on internal capacity and desired format.

Activity 1: Community Forum/Consultation

Description

The purpose of the suggested community forum/consultation is to solicit feedback from residents on how they expect age-friendly principles to be included in the Master Plan. It should be an open discussion among participants with one or more public officials present who are involved in the master plan effort, with a total attendance of 20 to 50 persons. Two forums may be held, one for senior citizens over 65 years old and the second for participants under 65 years old.

Supplies

- Pens and paper
- Name tags
- Light refreshments
- Feedback forms to be filled out and turned in after the forum
- Moderator
- Note-taker
- Sign-in sheet
- Microphone
- Note cards numbered 1-15

Location

A public location that is easily accessible, such as the school, City Hall, library, or Recreation Center. Location will depend upon how many participants are anticipated.



Members of the Senior Lifestyle Team pose with a focus group sign at the Gilham Recreation Center

Advertisement

Begin advertising the forum three weeks to a month in advance. Methods include but are not limited to flyers on public posting boards, e-mails to various list-serves, co-sponsoring during other events, and distributing hand-outs to residences.

Implementation

Schedule the senior and non-senior groups on different days and at different times. The senior forum can be held at most hours of the day; the non-senior forum should be held after working hours or on the weekends. Avoid Sunday morning for both forums and be mindful of any other religious or federal holidays. Limit the forums to no more than two hours with a ten-minute break halfway into the meeting. Prepare an agenda of topics to be covered, reminding participants that the purpose of this meeting is to brainstorm how Huntington Woods' Master Plan can incorporate age-friendly principles.

Use a staff facilitator to moderate the forums and ensure that participants do not talk over each other and that contributions stay on-topic. Ask who would like to speak on the topic at hand and randomly hand out the numbered notecards to those who raise their hands, then pass the microphone around starting with the participant holding #1. If there is little initial reaction from the audience, ask about seniors' current experience, how to meet their needs, and what specific master plan elements would promote aging in place. Designate a note-taker to take time and record the essence of what participants say, if not their exact words. At the end of the forum, encourage participants to fill out their feedback form to determine how the forum can be improved and to share what other input they have on the age-friendly effort.

Follow-Up

Send out emails or make phone calls to those who left their personal information, or post a city-wide notice on the website, thanking participants for their time. If applicable, let them know the details the next community engagement event.

Activity 2: Aging Focus Group

Description

The suggested aging focus group is designed to collect opinions, diverse perspectives, and suggestions for improvements that are unique at the local level. A focus group is an activity that gathers randomly selected people, with a group size of 5 to 12, from a targeted population to participate in a facilitated discussion focused on aging in Huntington Woods.

Supplies

- Flipcharts
- Pens and paper
- Invitation flyers
- Note cards for brainstorming

- Light refreshments, such as small water bottles, fruit, and sugar cookies
- Printed materials including agendas and sign-up sheets
- Name tags

Location

Publicly accessible locations with semi-private rooms, such as the library or the Recreation Center. Location will depend upon how many participants are anticipated.

Advertisement

Start advertising three weeks before the focus group by mailing invitations to selected participants. Use local newsletters and public billboards to solicit participants if the mailings do not generate enough replies.

Implementation

Three weeks before the focus group, randomly select Huntington Woods residents and distribute invitations to them, explaining the purpose of the focus group. One week before, contact participants to confirm location and time and to provide them with a detailed schedule/agenda. Conduct the focus group using a combination of [Nominal Group Technique](#) and open-response format. Ask residents to brainstorm ideas about how the findings of the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* can be incorporated into the Master Plan and record their responses to include in the Master Plan's engagement summary.

Follow-Up

Send out feedback surveys by mail, email, or phone, and contact participants individually to thank them for their time and input.

Activity 3: Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Description

The purpose of the suggested stakeholder engagement activities is to ensure that the City carefully considers all the interconnected relationships throughout the community that affect senior life. The City of Huntington Woods has strong ties with its stakeholders, ranging from business partners and non-profits to homeowner and community associations. Additionally, there is a heavy focus on local and community-based organizations that connect the city, its residents, and the community at large. Two stakeholder engagement activities are recommended to facilitate understanding and encourage age-supportive relationships between actors:

1) Canvassing Huntington Woods Organizations

Deploy staff or volunteers to solicit feedback from nonprofits, businesses, and community groups on their role in making Huntington Woods age-friendly, as well as the master planning process. Canvassing requires more time but can yield valuable in-depth information.

2) Stakeholder Meetings

Conduct a series of stakeholder meetings at which local organizations can engage with the City to talk about senior amenities. Stakeholder interactions with one another can generate more collaborative ideas and unify organizations from different sectors to support aging. Include the four main stakeholder categories: homeowners associations, local businesses, faith-based organizations, and non-profit organizations.

Supplies

- Flyers for advertising
- Pens and paper
- Flipchart for note taking
- Light refreshments
- Small stipend (for canvassers to casually patronize businesses when appropriate)
- Tablet or clipboard (for canvassers to log information)

Location

City Hall or a local business venue for stakeholder meetings; no location needed for canvassing.

Advertisement

Solicit relevant stakeholders (obtained from the Berkley Area Chamber of Commerce) through direct mail, email, and in-person invitations. Ask stakeholders to RSVP to help staff accurately gauge material needs.

Implementation

For canvassing, obtain a list of commercial and office properties in Huntington Woods from the City of Huntington Woods, Berkley Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Oakland County Equalization Department. Design a meeting/canvas structure (questions, survey, etc.). For meetings, use a similar format to Activity 1 – Community Forum/Consultation (p. 26) and for canvassing conduct the survey in-person or by phone using a staff member or volunteer.

Follow-Up

Send thank-you notes to both those who attended and those who RSVP-ed but were unable to attend and offer additional written feedback opportunities.

THANKS FOR READING!

If you have additional feedback or questions about how the *Senior Amenities and Lifestyle Analysis* will be used in Huntington Woods, please contact:

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Members of
the Senior Lifestyle Team
meet with Senior Advisory
Committee member Lenny Newman

REFERENCES

Huntington Woods Materials

- Carrie A. Leach & Thomas B. Jankowski (2012), Wayne State University Institute of Gerontology, Huntington Woods Older Adult Needs Assessment
- City of Huntington Woods (2015.1), City of Huntington Woods Needs Assessment
- City of Huntington Woods (2016.3), Housing Options for an Aging Population
- City of Huntington Woods (2017.3), Housing Options for an Aging Population
- Huntington Woods Recreation Senior Division, The 60+ Crowded Newsletter, Feb.1st,2019 - Feb.1st, 2020

Recommended Community Engagement Plan Precedents

- City Of Ann Arbor (2012), City Of Ann Arbor Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update Public Engagement Plan
- City of Ann Arbor (2014), City of Ann Arbor Pedestrian Safety & Access Task Force—Proposed Work Approach

Spatial Data Sources

- Maps of Water and Recreation Nearby: Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) <https://maps-semcog.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- Maps of Walking and Bus Nearby: Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) <https://maps-semcog.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- Maps of Parks and Recreation Nearby: Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) <https://maps-semcog.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- Maps of Indoor Activities: Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) <https://maps-semcog.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- Maps of Biking and Walking: Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) <https://maps-semcog.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- Maps of All Recreation: Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) <https://maps-semcog.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- Map of Senior Destinations: Google Map, Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) <https://maps-semcog.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- Map of Huntington Woods Land Use: Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) <https://maps-semcog.opendata.arcgis.com/>

Case Studies

- City of Boston (2017), Age-Friendly Boston Action Plan 2017, https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/embed/f/full_report_o.pdf
- The Center for Community Solutions, Age-Friendly Cleveland Action Plan 2017-2019
- City of Seattle, Age Friendly Seattle Action Plan 2018–2021 <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/AgeFriendly/AgeFriendlySeattleACTIONPlan2018-2021.pdf>
- City of Southfield Commission on Senior Adults (COSA), COSA Action Plan: City of Southfield “Age Friendly Community” Designation (City of Southfield, 2019)

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Resident Feedback Content Analysis

Content analysis is the systematic study of a document for patterns or major themes to help one better understand the information at hand. We performed content analysis on the feedback received from residents through the focus groups, survey, and open house by marking up multiple copies of the Engagement Summary, distilling major themes independently, and then comparing our results. The content analysis process yielded the following major themes about senior life in Huntington Woods, organized according to the three key domains.

Transportation and Mobility

- Although walking is already achievable throughout Huntington Woods, it could be improved with design strategies such as better lighting, benches, filled sidewalks gaps, and consistent plowing. There were suggestions for more technologically innovative options such as moving sidewalks as well.
- Knowledge of existing public and on-class transit options is limited, so a public awareness campaign and how-to-use classes on ride-hailing and SMART would be greatly beneficial. Existing on-demand transit service is not well enough publicized.
- A ride board to advertise drivers and those needing rides would help people connect.
- People have trouble getting to transit pick-up spots from the interior of the city. A last-mile fixed route shuttle for those with limited mobility is needed for the interior.
- Transit hours are a challenge – some want on-demand service and some want a scheduled shuttle to key external commercial locations. On-demand ride service for medical appointments and other activities would be useful – perhaps a partnership for a discount with a ride hail company or better use of existing paratransit (affordability, rather than provider, is the main issue). Suggested schedules would be 7 am – 10 pm on the weekends and an even longer span on the weekdays. For basic needs, commerce, or entertainment, a scheduled shuttle would allow seniors to plan their schedules. Car-sharing services can assist in increasing mobility for residents as well.
- Advertisement of transportation services does not reach those who do not have the internet. Suggestions such as a few-page pamphlet (which be annual, like a phone book) or posting on the park boards to reach those outside the online realm are good tactics.
- Schools and the library are walkable, and recreation access is decent. Stores and medical services are the major challenge for transportation connectivity.

Housing

- For people who wish to age in their homes, there is a demand for affordable home renovation services to make housing accessible. Commonly suggested methods are expanding the knowledge of and volunteer base for the HARP program and creating a resource base of affordable contractors. Dollar assistance for home improvements is also greatly desired.
- Seniors are looking for more housing arrangements, such as single-floor and universal design homes, that are accessible.
- Seniors are looking for more housing types (combined with price points). Rental and ADU units, as well as multigenerational housing, are common desires. Other housing options include ranch homes, apartments, and condos.
- Zoning for greater density and mixed use to accommodate a growing senior population (both physically and in terms of accessing basic non-housing needs) is a pressing issue.
- Fixed incomes for seniors make affording taxes much harder.
- For additional assistance in housing construction for retrofits, there is interest in harnessing residents' collective buying power to attract local contractors to larger projects.

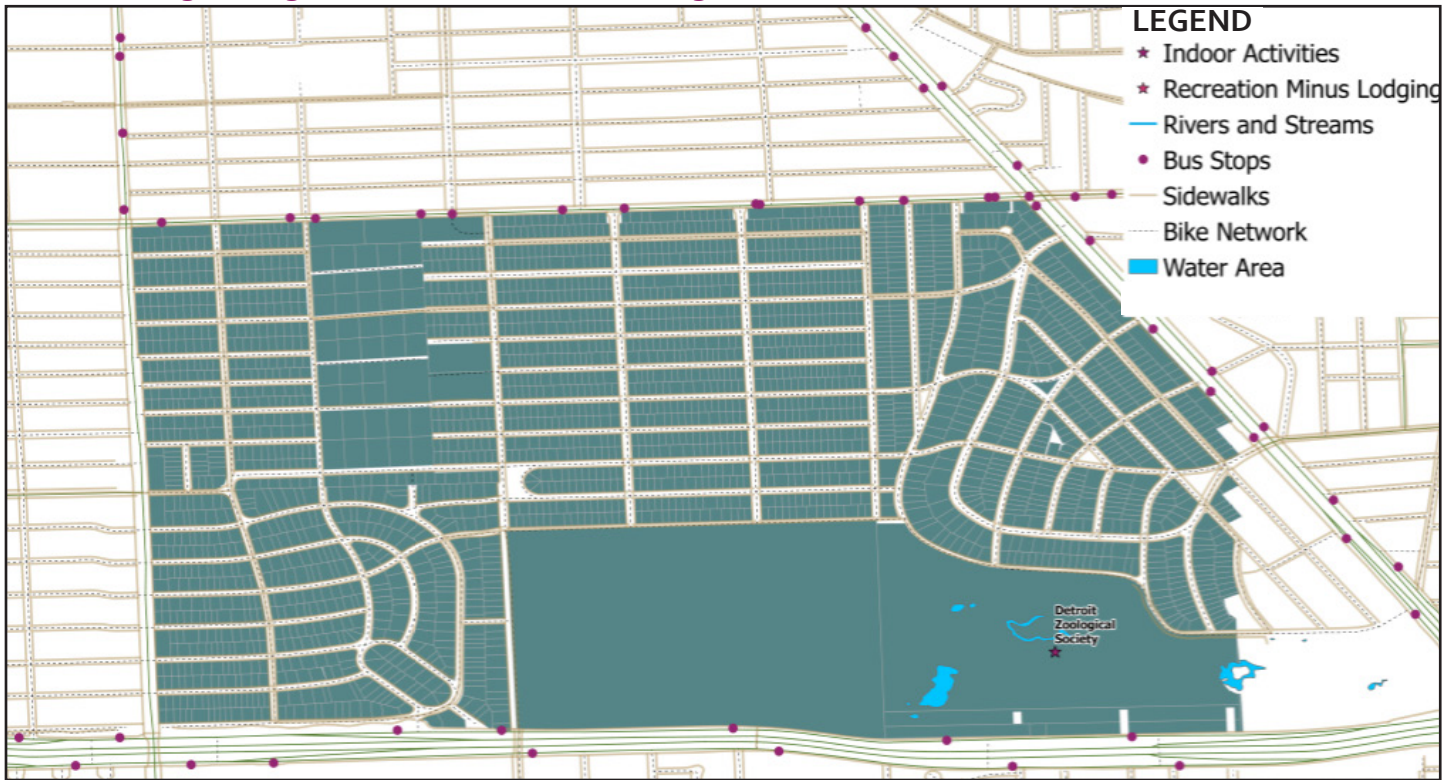
Social and Community Services

- No strength training or fitness facilities (besides the track) exist within the city boundaries. A gym and fitness facility that is indoors and can be used year-round by all ages is highly desired.
- Better amenities can be provided, such as a post office, better streetlights, readable signs, and universally designed public spaces.
- Spaces for seniors to meet and host events, not just sit at tables, is highly desired – ideally in a location that is proximate to other generations to achieve cooperation and collaboration.
- Continuing and practical education opportunities for seniors are highly desired. Seniors want educational seminars and classes on how to use services such as HARP, SMART, Uber, and Lyft, as well as classes on history, science, culture, and other topics that would improve mental stimulation. For practical classes (art, cooking, etc.), seniors expressed a desire for discounts, rather than more classes, and for ways to make them multi-generational. Generally, a greater diversity of programs seems to be the major want, especially programs that are senior-friendly and make them feel welcome.
- Access to commercial and recreation destinations outside the city, as well as information on what such activities exist, is highly desired.
- A safety program for checking on neighbors who are housebound or at risk is desired. This may include making block groups and having a volunteer list, in combination with expanding the existing police program.
- Intergenerational socialization is highly desired, especially free and physically accessible events (concerts, park-based, etc.), to combat loneliness and breaking down barriers.
- Advertising more senior programming through the senior newsletters and bulletin boards is needed.

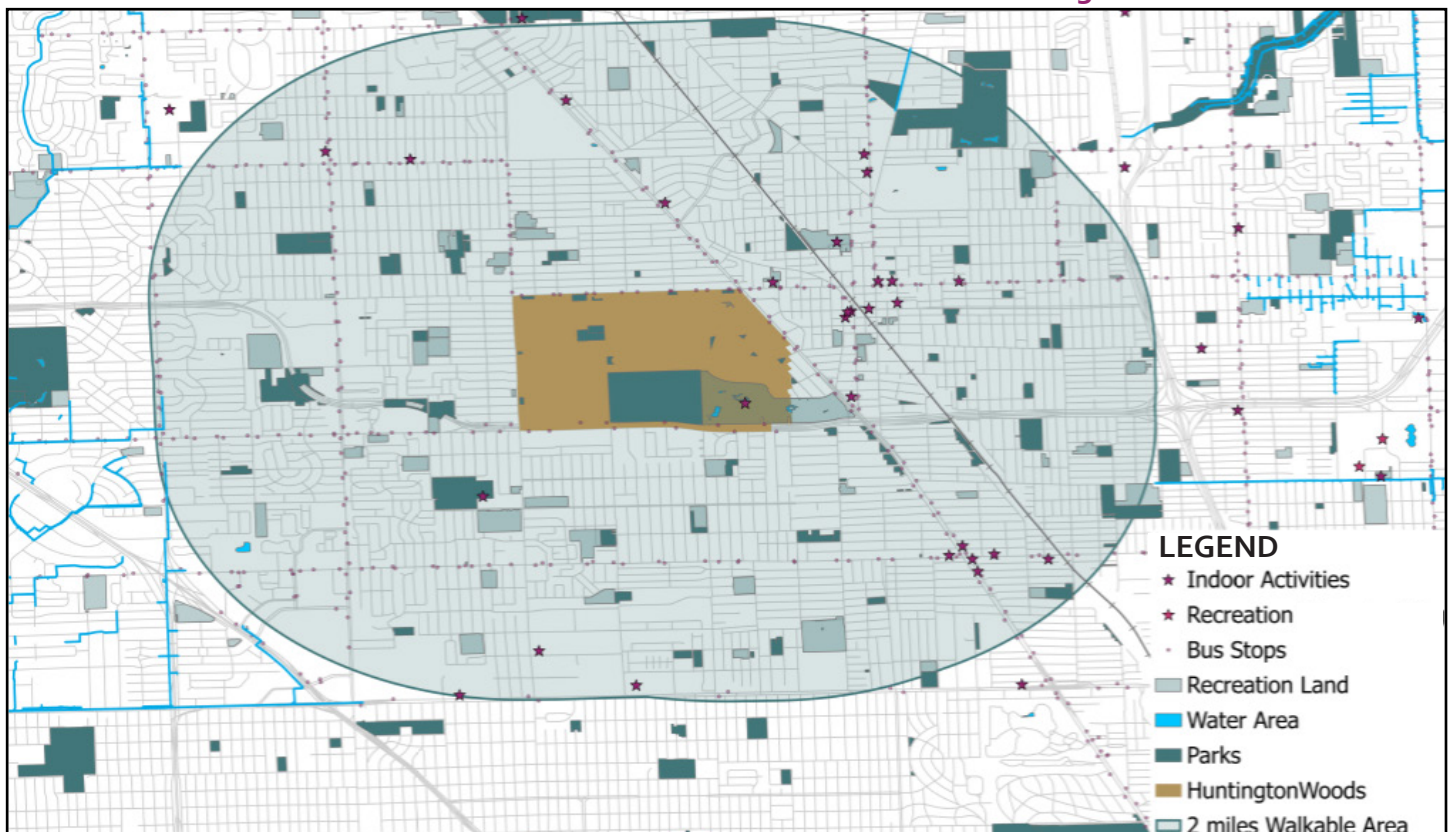
Appendix B: Spatial Data Analysis

Transportation and Mobility

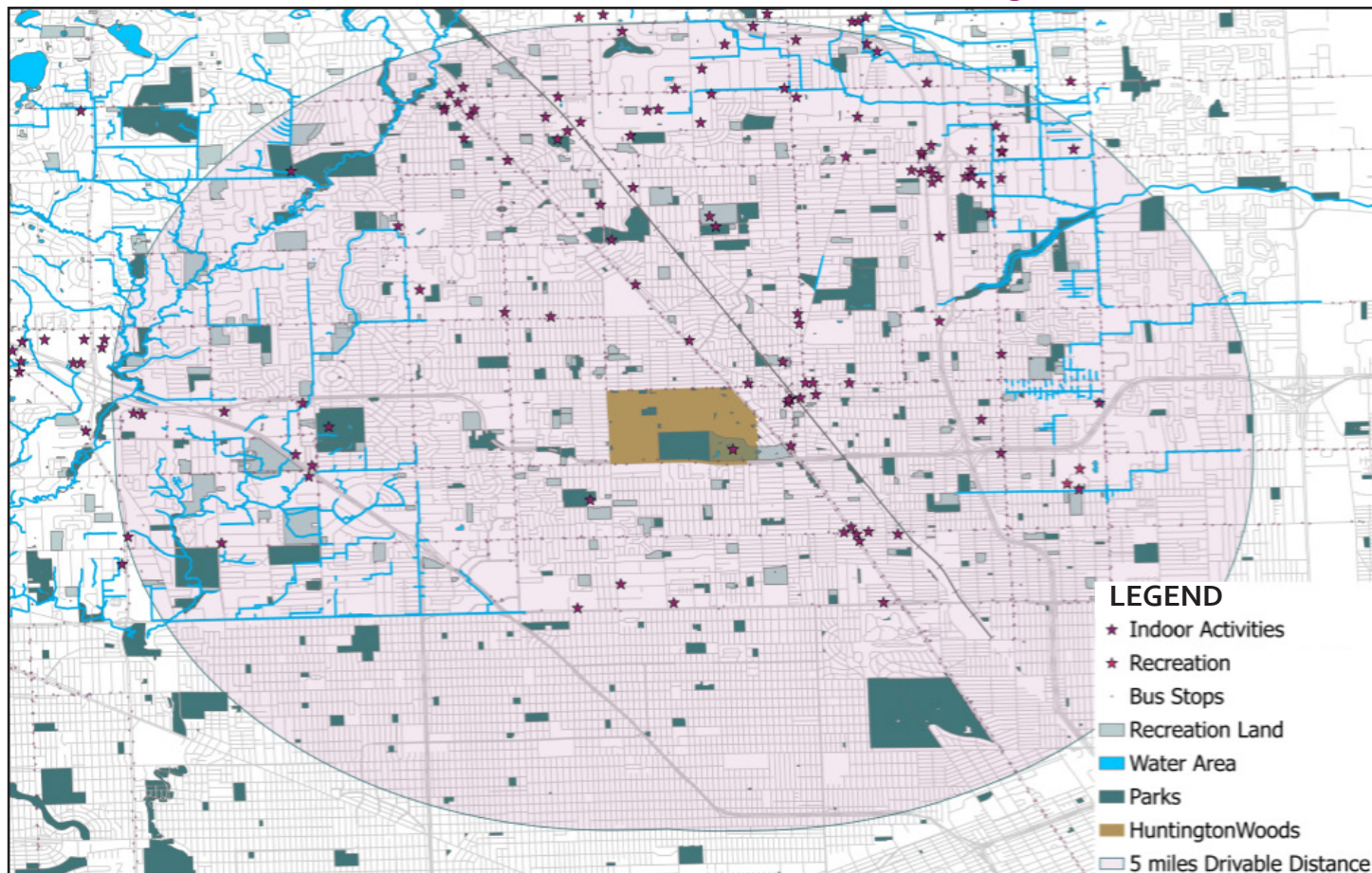
Local Walking, Biking, and Bus Network In Huntington Woods



Walkable Recreation and Entertainment Destinations within 2 Miles of Huntington Woods

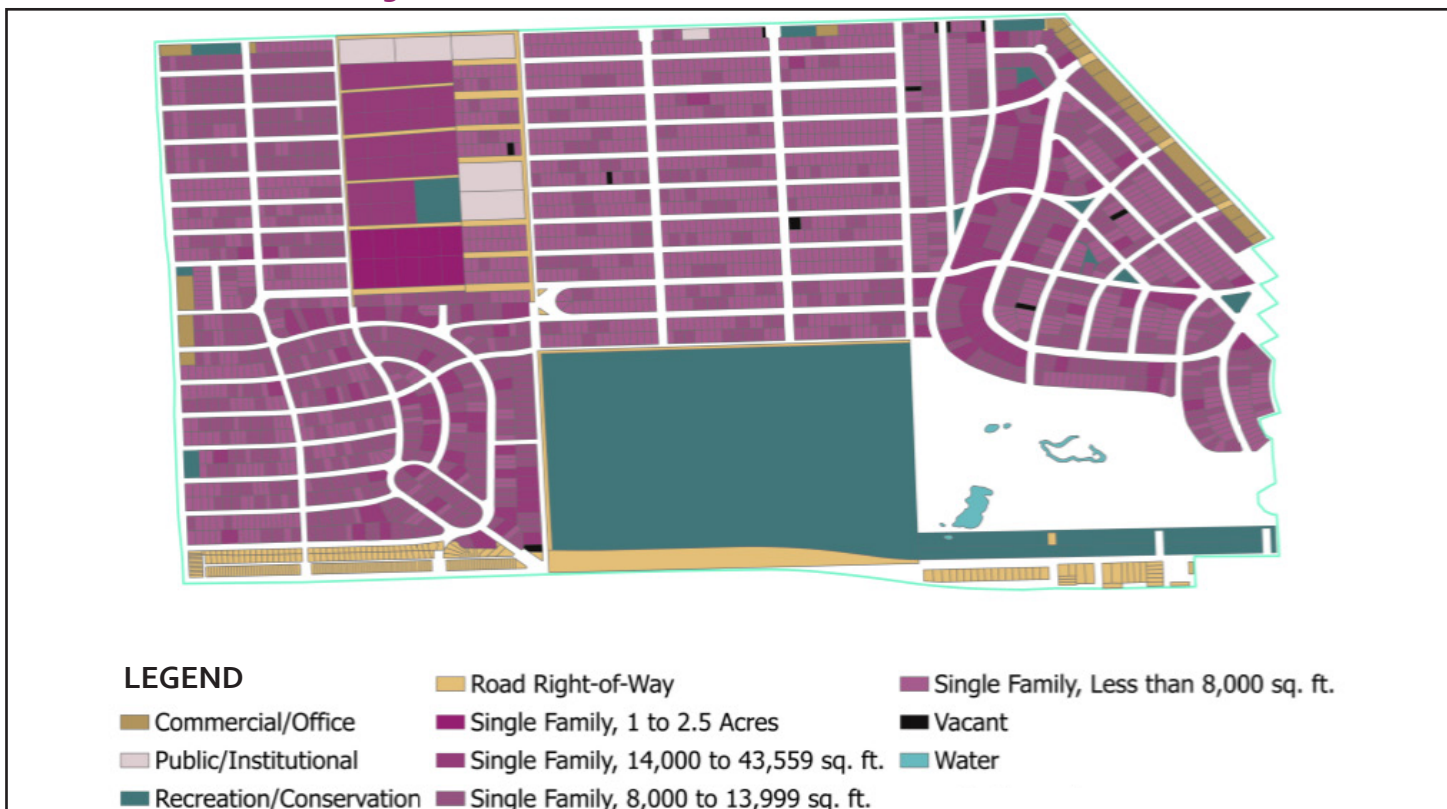


Drivable Recreation and Entertainment Destinations within 5 Miles of Huntington Woods



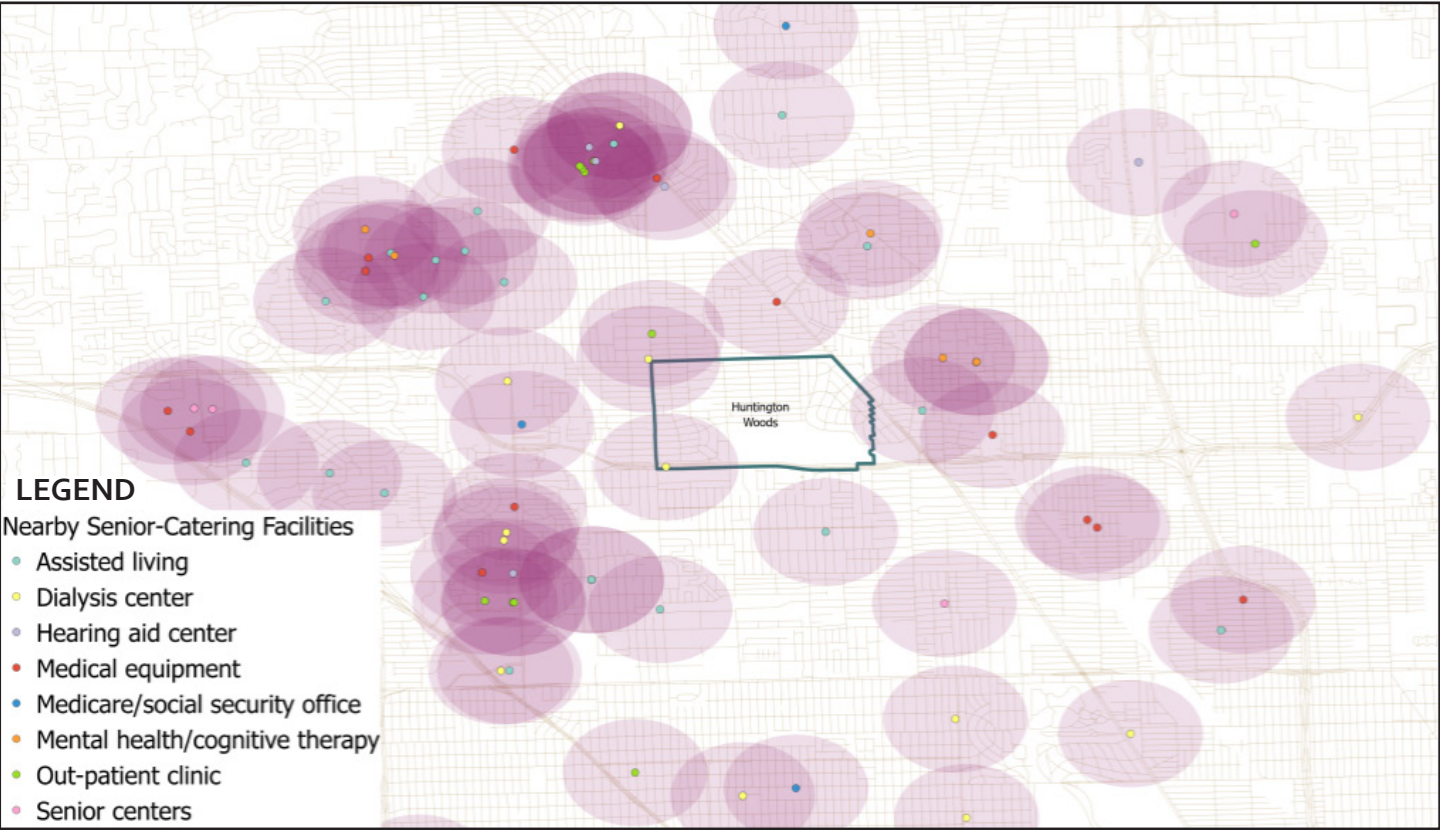
Housing

Current Land Use in Huntington Woods



Social and Community Services

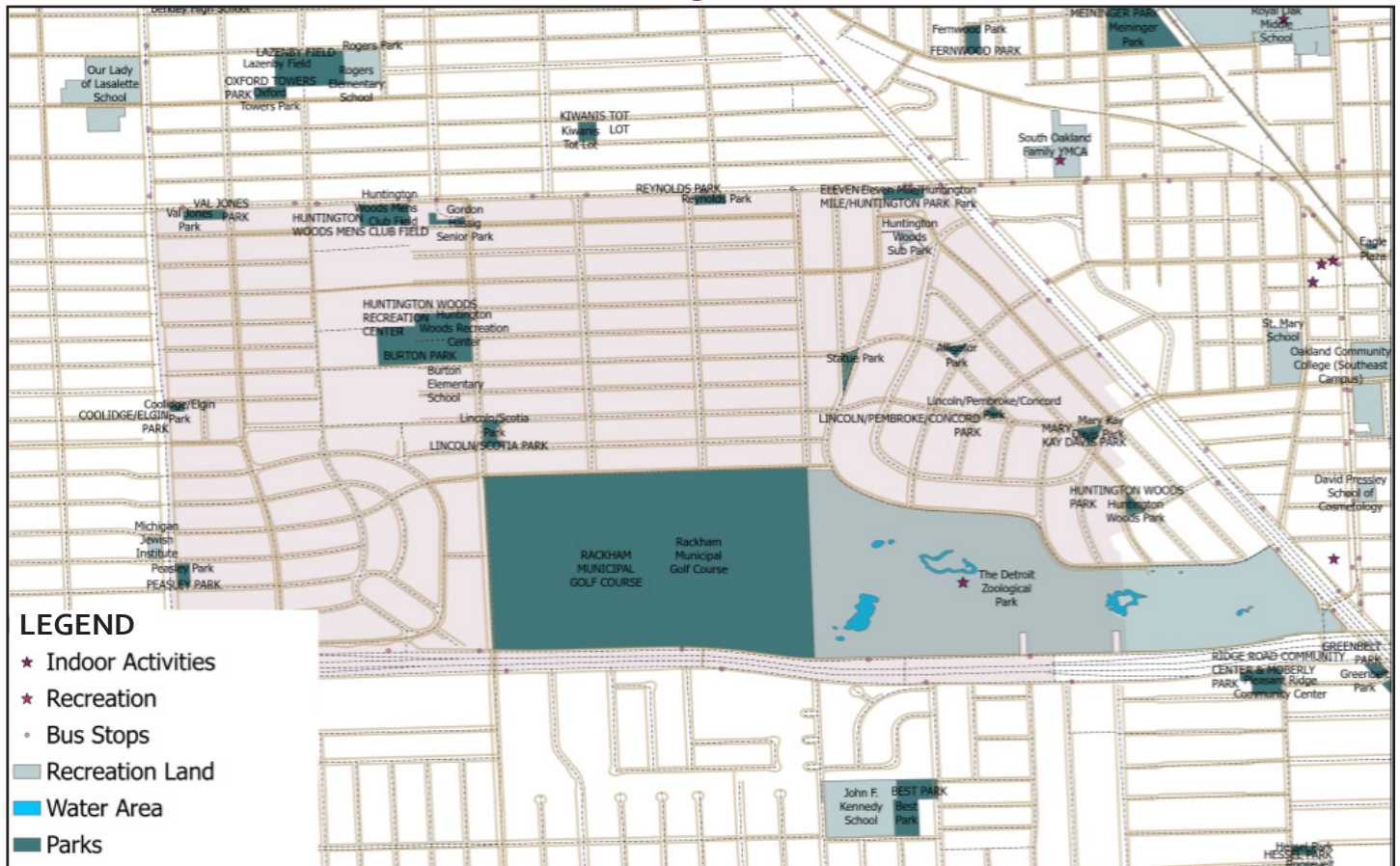
Senior-Catering Destinations within 5 Miles of Huntington Woods



Local Indoor Recreation Destinations Near Huntington Woods



Local Outdoor Recreation Destinations Near Huntington Woods



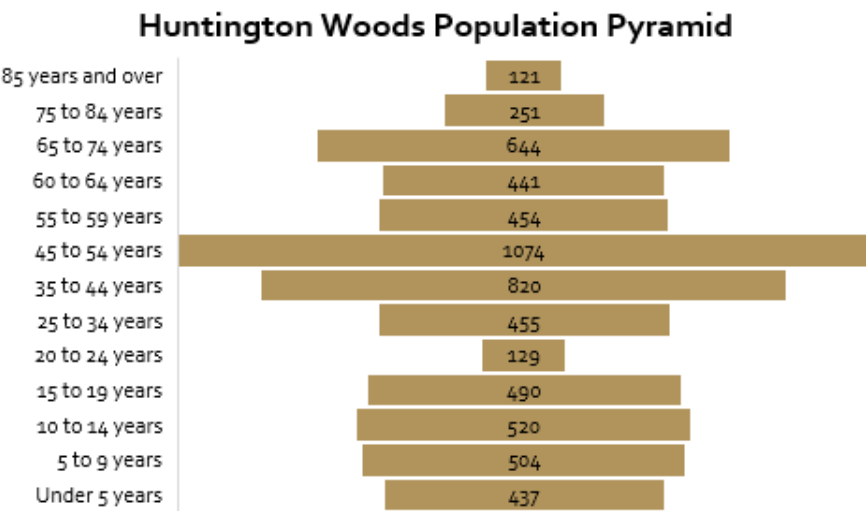
Appendix C: Demographic Data Analysis

Huntington Woods is a predominantly white (97%) and affluent metro-Detroit suburb that is home to 6,340 people. The city’s median household income is \$130,417, with nearly 30% of the population making \$200,000 or more. With 3,392 residents aged 19 to 64, 79% are employed and, of the employed, 98.4% have healthcare coverage. Huntington Woods’ unemployment rate is 3.9%, not including the 31.9% of residents age 16 and over who aren’t in the labor force, mostly seniors who have retired.

16% of residents in Huntington Woods are age 65 and over, slightly higher than the statewide population proportion of seniors. Additionally, roughly 25% of residents are ages 45 to 59, indicating a major senior boom in the next 20 years.

Moreover, Huntington Woods is almost completely comprised of single-family homes. With its 2,328 housing units, housing affordability has become a challenge, especially for seniors who are on a fixed income. Huntington Woods’ lack of housing types also poses challenges for seniors who are looking to downsize and/or need living assistance. Of the 20% of residents who live alone, nearly half are age 65 or older. Additionally, a fifth of residents age 65 or older have a disability and suffer when living in multi-story homes (where the bedrooms are typically upstairs) and/or when living alone.

Huntington Woods is a highly educated community – 98.8% of the population age 25 and older have a high school diploma or higher, and 75% have a bachelor’s degree or higher. The number of residents over age 3 and enrolled in school is 1,834, which creates ample opportunity for intergenerational interactions with seniors. In addition to being a highly educated and involved community, Huntington Woods is also highly connected, with 98.3% of households owning a computer and 97.6% of households having a broadband internet subscription.



Appendix D: Huntington Woods Past Assessments & Newsletter Analysis

2012 Older Needs Assessment Survey

The Senior Advisory Committee conducted the *Older Needs Assessment*, a comprehensive survey distributed to all Huntington Woods residents over 50, in 2012 to determine what needs accompanied aging and how they could be met. The survey covered a wide variety of topics, including health, mobility, and the use of city services. Over 600 residents, averaging an age of 68, completed and returned the survey. The *Older Needs Assessment* identified four key findings about senior life in Huntington Woods:

- Over 73% of seniors do not use the aging-support services currently offered by the City of Huntington Woods or its partner organizations. Although a majority of respondents reported using Concerts in the Park and the library, most did not use or were unaware of services such as the durable medical equipment exchange, home repair program, or annual flu shots. Over two-thirds of respondents preferred to receive communications via mail as opposed to online, indicating the need for more analog communication.
- Only 3% of older adults in Huntington Woods live with a child or grandchild, but 2/3 have family members in the area who can assist them. Additionally, 1 in 10 older adults are caregivers for either a grandchild, spouse, or other family member. Overall, many seniors in Huntington Woods have access to familial support but many must also provide support for others.
- Of the housing alternatives presented in the survey, respondents were most interested in condominiums, rental apartments, cooperative living, and meal-assisted housing. Less than half of respondents who were interested in housing alternatives preferred nursing homes or a “care continuum,” demonstrating seniors’ preference for accessible living over assisted living.
- 52% of respondents indicated that they would use exercise equipment if it were available at the Gilham Recreation Center, demonstrating the desire for local fitness and strength-training facilities.

Overall, the 2012 *Older Needs Assessment* found that the greatest unmet need for seniors in Huntington Woods was assistance with home maintenance, largely because almost all seniors live in single-family homes requiring upkeep. However, the *Older Needs Assessment* also concluded that many older residents would consider another form of housing if it were made available in the community. There is demand for accessible and independent (or semi-independent) living in the form of apartments, condos, or other communal housing alternatives.

2015 Needs Assessment - Study of Eleven Mile Road Municipal Property & Age-Specific Housing

The City of Huntington Woods conducted the *Needs Assessment* in 2015 to explore how the 4.6-acre municipal complex on 11 Mile Rd might be redeveloped to meet the city’s need for senior housing and better municipal facilities. The *Needs Assessment* evaluated the conditions of the four existing buildings on the municipal complex and identified the building elements that meet staff needs and those that fall short.

The study then conducted a small focus group and a review of the 2012 *Older Needs Assessment*, arriving at the conclusion that seniors were satisfied with Huntington Woods' services and safety but wanted better housing, transportation, and program offerings. The 2015 *Needs Assessment* then combined the research on municipal space and senior needs and identified four key findings:

- The cost of accessibility retrofits is a top concern for seniors, especially those living in a house with bedrooms on the second floor and amenities like laundry in the basement. Additionally, mobile seniors are worried about their friends' ability to visit homes where accessibility accommodations have not been installed. Respondents favored remodeling to increase accessibility but noted that limited lot size was an obstacle. Some respondents preferred simply moving to an alternative housing layout (e.g., condo, apartment).
- Mobile seniors are concerned with local walkability, particularly with the quality of streetlighting and snow removal throughout the city. Seniors with limited mobility want more public and non-motorized transportation opportunities to local services, retail, and restaurants.
- Seniors need help locating and using the resources already provided to them by the City and its partner organizations. Many seniors are happy with the services they have used and are simply unaware of additional offerings designed to support aging in place.
- The municipal complex is cramped, unattractive, and limited by its aging infrastructure. Additional space, amenities, and updated lighting and ventilation systems are badly needed on the site to ensure community needs are being met.

The 2015 *Needs Assessment* recommends conducting further research on how municipal facilities could improved, senior housing needs could be met, and the 11 Mile Rd municipal complex could be redeveloped to achieve both goals simultaneously.

2016 Housing Options for an Aging Population

The Senior Advisory Committee commissioned *Housing Options for an Aging Population* in 2016 to determine the options and opportunities for meeting Huntington Woods' senior housing needs. The report examined the challenges faced by both seniors who want to remain in their homes as they age and seniors who want to move to alternative living arrangements but are faced with a single-family-exclusive housing market. The study gathered additional feedback through a public visioning workshop and open house, the information from which was combined with that of past assessments to yield several key findings:

- New and existing housing in Huntington Woods is not accessible for residents with limited mobility, and the community should pursue incorporating Universal Design principles into its zoning code and housing standards. Universal Design is a set of construction standards that ensure full accessibility entering, exiting, and inside the home, making socializing and living easier for those with and without disabilities.

- Housing over three stories, such as apartments or condos, is a favored option to increase options for seniors, as is permitting Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). However, most residents prefer that higher buildings be located on the city periphery to preserve neighborhood character, and many preferred ADUs for the city interior. Additionally, many favored attached multifamily units with an appearance consistent with Huntington Woods' existing single-family homes, making them another option for interior and exterior lots open to redevelopment.
- The city's perimeter roads (11 Mile Rd, Woodward Ave, and Coolidge Hwy), the municipal complex, the south wide of Wales Ave, and along Rackham Golf Course are the most opportune locations for new age-friendly housing (excepting ADUs).

The *Housing Options for an Aging Population* report recommends that the City identify specific parcels for potential non-single-family residential housing development, amend its zoning ordinance to allow ADUs, and develop a concept plan for the municipal complex that incorporates both senior housing and governmental facilities.

60+ Crowd Newsletter Analysis

The following programs, events, and services for seniors were found advertised in the 60+ Crowd bi-monthly senior newsletter between its first publication in February 2019 to its most recent edition in March 2020. Each offering was accompanied by a time, location, description, and all possible means of registration (phone, email, in-person) if required. Additionally, every issued included the contact information for the Senior Outreach Coordinator and encouraged residents to reach out with clarifying questions or for registration assistance.

Transportation and Mobility

- Curb to Curb Transportation (via SMART)
- GoGoGrandparent
- AARP Driver Safety Program

Housing

- Home Assistance Repair Program (HARP)

Social and Community Services

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| • Computer College | • Homebound Library Delivery |
| • 60+ Drop In Group | • Teeniors Bingo and Pasta Dinner |
| • Pen Pal Reunion | • Blood Pressure Reading |
| • Cribbage | • Walk the Gym |
| • Health Fair | • Book Series |
| • Wellness Walk and Talk | • Monday Lunch Bunch & Speaker Program |
| • Leaf Removal Program | • Think Spring Exercise Series |
| • Durable Medical Equipment Closet | |

Appendix E: Case Studies

Case 1: Age-Friendly Cleveland Action Plan 2017-2019

Location: City of Cleveland, OH

Overview

The Age-Friendly Cleveland Action Plan is a planning and implementation document, developed by the City of Cleveland, that provides an assessment of senior needs as residents age in place, pledges discrete actions to be taken to meet those needs, and outlines evaluation metrics for assessing if senior needs were adequately met by the actions prescribed.

General Structure

Cleveland's Action Plan begins with an overview of the planning impetus and timeline, which includes a history of the plan's development and implementation, as well as evaluation actions to be taken from 2017 onward. The plan then summarizes the history of the planning process, including specific engagement efforts, and the City's key findings on senior needs that arose from the assessment phase. The plan then lays out its year-by-year strategy and the actions to be taken or programs to be implemented in each. Every action or program contains an explanation of the current state of the senior needs that it aims to improve, a statement on strategies to be taken for achieving the desired state, and what the metric of success will be and how success will be measured during the evaluation phase. The Action Plan concludes with an implementation checklist which, for each action, includes the metrics by which success will be measured, the responsible party, the target completion date, and relevant resource agencies.

History of the Age-Friendly Effort or Program

Cleveland's age-friendly effort began with the City joining the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities in 2014 and the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities in 2015. The City began assessing existing senior needs in 2015 through a series of surveys, focus groups, and demographic analysis of census data. Based on the assessment's findings, the City launched its official planning effort the next year and subsequently adopted the Action Plan by the end of 2016. The City's implementation phase spanned from 2017 to 2019 and has only recently concluded, giving way to a one-year assessment period wherein the City will evaluate the effectiveness of the age-friendly actions taken. The City will soon publish an assessment of the age-friendly effort's success and begin to identify future senior needs in anticipation of updating the Action Plan in late 2020.

Identified Challenges

The most prominent challenge identified by the City of Cleveland was access to healthy living support systems, including health care networks, healthy food, medical equipment, and outdoor recreation destinations. Although most seniors reported having no trouble accessing transportation, the knowledge about and locations of health resources still posed a barrier to access. Seniors also reported that walking and biking infrastructure was poor and, combined with inconsistent snow removal, not conducive to active transportation.

Additionally, although almost all seniors have some form of medical coverage in Cleveland, many cannot afford the medical bills and supplies associated with procedures that are not covered under their individual plans. As a result, many Cleveland seniors either cannot access or must endure long waiting periods for at-home mobility and health equipment, leaving them at risk to injury.

The second challenge the City identified was social isolation of and lack of community support for seniors with limited mobility or internet access. Many seniors reported feeling both lonely and unsafe and expressed a desire for greater involvement in civic life and cultural events, as well as increased interaction with other demographics. Through its survey, the City determined that approximately 40 percent of seniors rarely or never engage in social events, leading to widespread negative mental and physical impacts. There is an existing Senior Companion Program but, because the program's primary funding source is the federal government, it is currently at capacity and cannot meet the social needs of all the senior residents that have applied to be paired with a companion. The City also has an existing community gardening program where primary schools are affiliated with gardens in each ward and it is a very popular draw for seniors seeking intergenerational activities and social opportunities. However, many older seniors have expressed concern about the physical safety of the program in the face of their disabilities and feel discomfort participating without a safety-certified staff member present.

The third challenge the City identified was the inability of seniors to access affordable home repair and accessibility retrofit services, resources essential for those aging in place. Most seniors in Cleveland own their homes and tight budgets make routine maintenance and accessibility retrofits unaffordable for over a third of the senior population, especially in a city where many houses are nearly a century old and in critical disrepair. Additionally, the City found that few contractors were willing to take the small retrofits jobs, such as installing grab-bars, that seniors most commonly requested, presenting another barrier to home improvement.

Solutions/Recommendations

To improve healthy living, the plan pledges to create a volunteer-led snow removal program, host safe biking classes, and identify neighborhoods with transit-oriented development potential. The design principles of transit-oriented development – retail and commerce near home and accessible by foot, a wide variety of home types and prices, and ample open space – largely overlap with the mobility and recreation needs of seniors living within a limited range. The plan also commits to coordinating a Medical Equipment Exchange program, run by both staff and volunteers, that provides seniors with affordable mobility and health-related devices, such as walkers or blood pressure monitors, that other seniors have used but no longer need. To increase the perception of safety when engaging in outdoor activities, and thereby encourage healthier, mobile lifestyles for seniors, the plan identifies several existing police programs that the City will enhance to make sure seniors are protected from outdoor risks, such as robberies, that discourage recreation.

To better involve seniors in civic life and reduce social isolation, the plan pledges to establish a call-in senior resource center where residents can obtain information on events and programming.

The plan also commits to expanding the existing Senior Companions Program by soliciting more volunteers, exploring group companionship (where one companion meets with a group of seniors), and seeking additional sources of funding beneath the federal level. The plan also pledges to create an age-friendly event planning guide, to be distributed to local agencies and businesses, that outlines how to advertise to and include seniors. To improve participation among older seniors in the community gardening program and increase intergenerational socialization, the plan identifies several nonprofits with which the City could partner to provide safety-trained staff on-site to ensure disabled adults are not at risk.

To improve access to home repair and retrofit services, the plan pledges to dedicate a staff member to coordinating home repairs for residents and investigate a certification mechanism for reliable contractors. The plan also commits to developing an “Age-In-Place Handyman Guide” for senior residents, containing information on what home modifications are necessary to safely age in place and which contractors are willing to perform small jobs.

Lessons Learned

The largest takeaway from the Age-Friendly Cleveland Action Plan is that raising awareness of existing senior resources can be equally as useful as implementing new programs. The City found that Cleveland seniors were largely unaware of many relevant services, such as the Department of Aging’s home repair program for low-income residents, because they did not have access to where the services were advertised, either online or in-person. Huntington Woods, MI, has similar challenges in advertising the City’s existing services, such as its HARP on-demand ride program or pen-pal group, which greatly benefit seniors of all ages seeking to improve their mobility and social participation. In addition to trying new strategies to support aging in place, the City should pursue alternative forms of program advertisement that reach seniors who have limited physical mobility or no access to the internet. This may include sending out fliers to residents over 65 with event listings and phone number contacts, advertising programs on the boards in public parks, or creating a group of senior block-leaders to disseminate information to their neighbors.

The second key takeaway from the Action Plan is that aging in place always requires on-site infrastructure modifications, both public and private, to support an active lifestyle in the face of limited mobility. The City of Cleveland identified that, by improving biking and walking infrastructure, it could greatly improve senior recreation, use of active transportation, and engagement in social activities. However, the City also recognized that private home improvements were equally as critical to support aging in place and that it had a key role to play in making retrofit services accessible and affordable. The City of Huntington Woods has an excellent infrastructure system and only a select few public infrastructure improvements, such as better street lighting, will further aid aging in place. However, the City can assist seniors in coordinating accessibility retrofits for their homes, a service that is particularly critical in a city composed almost entirely of single-family residential homes where residents plan to remain as they age.

Case 2: Age-Friendly Boston Action Plan 2017

Location: Boston, MA

Overview

The Age-Friendly Boston Action Plan is dedicated to Boston's older residents who remain vital to the vibrancy of the city. In order to build a more age-friendly Boston to prepare for the demographic shift, Boston joined the World Health Organization's (WHO) network of age-friendly cities in 2014. The Plan guides the city's many efforts to create an age-friendly city. The implementation of the Plan was led by the City of Boston's Commission on Affairs of the Elderly (the Elderly Commission).

General Structure

Age-Friendly Boston Action Plan starts with instructions and then provides background analysis including the aging trend analysis and current context of Boston through architecture, transportation, medical care, community-based aging services systems, and community. The Action Plan then reviews the progress of developing this plan, scientific progress including needs assessment, several steps of community engagement, and plan creation. The plan also includes a reading guide for the audiences and concludes the report with 5 guide principles, 3 topic of interest, 8 age-friendly Boston domains and how each domain was organized.

The major parts of the Action Plan were structured into 8 domains: Housing, Transportation, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Community Support and Health Services, Civic Engagement and Employment, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, and Communication and Information. Each part was constructed with the goals, present situation and future measures of improvement.

The Action Plan ended with immediate next steps along with detailed appendixes covering action planning methods, action items and works cited. The focus actions were listed along with the purposes of the actions, partners, indicators, and timelines.

History of the Age-Friendly Effort or Program

The City of Boston joined the World Health Organization's (WHO) network of age-friendly cities in 2014 and committed to becoming a dementia-friendly city in 2015. The history of the planning effort is presented below through the Action Plan's different domains:

- In the housing domain, the city worked to establish new funding resources for senior housing, which has helped build a 192-unit pipeline. 700 senior households were provided with housing security. Mayor Walsh also invested \$3 million to improve common areas in 21 Boston Housing Authority Elder and Disabled housing buildings. In 2016, Mayor Walsh created the Office of Housing Stability and expanded the Elderly Commission's Housing Unit to promote stable housing for Boston residents. Senior residents also benefited from programs like senior homeowner repair services and Senior Saves, a program to help low-income older adults access energy efficient furnaces. In the Transportation domain, Boston ran the Senior Shuttle and invested in wheelchair-accessible facilities. The city also dedicated itself to improving the walking environment for seniors.

- In the Outdoor Spaces and Buildings domain, the city of Boston increased the number of programs in City parks since 2014. The collaboration between the Elderly Commission and the Parks Department in 2016 also led to a more structured senior engagement strategy in park designs.
- In the Community Supports and Health Services domain, the Commission staff are trained to offer information and referral services to help older adults on information and connection. Partnered with the Alzheimer's Association, the city of Boston implemented a series of projects to build Dementia-Friendly Boston since 2014.
- In the Civic Engagement and Employment domain, the city focused on workforce development and enhancing as well as aligning civic engagement.
- In the Social Participation domain, the City supported and encouraged senior programming and organized over 100 events and programs a year, including the "Older Americans Month" celebration.
- In the Respect and Social Inclusion domain, the City used the skills, knowledge, and talent of seniors by encouraging senior engagement during planning progress.
- In the Communication and Information domain, the City took efforts to improve access through communications and formed a new unit in communication within the Elderly Commission.

Identified Challenges

One of the major challenges Boston is facing is insufficient affordable housing for senior residents. According to the survey, 55% of respondents say they required affordable housing options available in their neighborhoods.

Another challenge is adequate employment opportunities available to older adults in Boston, according to the survey. Senior people need civic engagement and employment to fully utilize their skills and talents.

The Plan also identified ageism and disrespect for older adults as one of the main concerns in Boston. An age-friendly city should be recognized as a city where the voices of the senior group are valued and heard by the public. 40% of the respondents of the survey believed the older residents were not treated respectfully.

Solutions/Recommendations

To meet the challenges of affordable housing, the Action Plan forwards several recommendations: advocating for increasing funding towards housing vouchers and increasing the value of the vouchers, supporting the efforts to expand vouchers to obtain support services, and supporting efforts to advocate for the reinstatement of the federal Section 202 funding to support new low-income housing development.

In order to build connections with and employment opportunities for older adults, the City of Boston first planned to increase public awareness of the value of older workers. Then the City planned to better inform older workers of opportunities and resources. The Plan also provided recommendations for enhancing volunteer opportunities for older adults.

Solutions/Recommendations

As for the respect and ageism concern for older residents in Boston, the Plan recommended that the City address ageism through public education, such as developing a campaign targeting ageism and creating recognition awards for older adults who have contributed to the community. The Plan also made recommendations to promoting inclusive programs and services for older adults.

Lessons Learned

- Huntington Woods can learn from the effective structure of Boston's action plan. For each domain, readers can see the blueprint for this goal, the feedback from the previous public engagement efforts, the main conflicts addressed in response to the feedback, how the city is currently handling that issue, and the recommendations for future plans. The logistics are neat and efficient. Since each part follows the same structure, readers can easily find the zoomed-in information.
- Improving senior living should not just focus on the physical level but also should consider the mental needs of seniors. Boston made efforts to improve public engagement for seniors by providing employment as well as improving the awareness of older workers' value. Public recognition of seniors' skills and intelligence plays an important role in benefiting older adult's mental health.
- Community engagement events should play a crucial role in the plan-making process. The Action Plan was built on a strong base of public engagement events and social surveys that identified the residents' needs in building an age-friendly city.

Case 3: Age Friendly Seattle – Action Plan 2018-2021

Location: Seattle, WA

Overview

Like Huntington Woods, MI and many other US cities, Seattle's population is aging. We chose Seattle to study because we hope to gain insights through Seattle's implementation of its Age Friendly Seattle plan. This plan also built upon preceding aging-in-place plans; since Huntington Woods does not have predecessors besides Auburn Hills, MI, we hope to be able to use Seattle's plan to help Huntington Woods create a plan that can be a precedent for Michigan's future age-friendly cities.

Age Friendly Seattle: Action Plan 2018-2021 is a response to challenges accompanying a growing aging population. Moving Toward Age-Friendly Housing in King County, a recent report released by Seattle, projects that King County will experience a 17% increase of total household occupied by people 55 years or older by 2030. By 2050, the report anticipates an additional 15% increase. The growing number of senior citizens strains housing, transportation access, and safety resources. Age Friendly Seattle proposes solutions to these challenges through eight domains of livability, developed by The World Health Organization (WHO) and supported by American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). The eight domains are: housing, transportation, outdoor spaces and buildings, respect and social inclusion, social participation, civic participation and employment, community and health services, and communication and information.

Although studying all eight domains is beyond the scope of this case study report, we were able to take away lessons from Seattle that can be applied to Huntington Woods: creating more options for senior physical education, awarding grants and funds for home improvements through non-profits, and educating drivers to provide better transit services.

General Structure

Following the executive summary, the report is divided into six chapters.

- Chapter 1 addresses plans preceding the creation of an age-friendly community.
- Chapter 2 discusses the importance of creating an age-friendly community.
- Chapter 3 outlines Seattle's demographics, various surveys conducted, and key findings to better implement age-friendly strategies.
- Chapter 4 is the bulk of the report; it details the eight domains of livability by explaining what the domain is, the current initiatives taking place, and areas for growth.
- Chapter 5 lists attainable goals and action items for the eight domains.
- Chapter 6 discusses possible implementation strategies and funding sources.

History of the Age-Friendly Effort or Program

Age Friendly Seattle had many predecessors influencing its creation. In 2009, Senior Services, a non-profit, created Aging your Way to prepare for Baby Boomers. Through 2010 and 2011, the non-profit held meetings that attracted 700 Baby Boomers. Participants brainstormed possible initiatives to help communities become more age friendly. The Seattle-King County Advisory Council on Aging continues to raise awareness on the lack of federal and state resources in supporting the growing Baby Boomer population. In response, the Council suggested that local governments allocate limited resources more effectively and develop new partnerships to create new approaches in making more age friendly communities.

Seattle joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities in 2016. This network provides resources for best-practices, implementation techniques, and examples of other age-friendly cities within the network. AARP assists in planning and evaluation throughout this process. City Council unanimously passed Age Friendly Seattle Resolution 31739 in 2017, stating that Seattle has committed to becoming a more age-friendly community under WHO and AARP guidelines.

Identified Challenges

Seattle anticipates many challenges accompanying its aging population. The city gathered data through administering surveys to its residents who are 45 years and over.

1. Health. Most health concerns involve weight, physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco use. Within the 65 years and over population, 61% are overweight or obese. 77% are not getting the recommended amount of daily exercise.
2. Housing. High housing costs decrease the affordability of food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. Housing maintenance is also costly; 87.5% expressed that their neighborhoods lack adequate home repair services. 66% reported that their home does not support residents with mobility challenges due to features such as steps leading up to the home's entrance, no grab bars in bathrooms, and second floor bed and baths.

3. Mobility. Survey respondents were concerned for pedestrian and transportation safety and basic affordability. 73% believed that their neighborhoods' sidewalks were in poor condition and were not safe or accessible while over 70% said that their sidewalks needed better maintenance. They also wished for more specialized transit and driver education, such as paratransit and the knowledge of loading or unloading assistive devices.
4. Care and amenities. Most concerns involve education, access, and affordability. Nearly 33% were unsure whether the city provided properly trained home health care givers and whether it would be affordable. Respondents also expressed there were not enough resources to help residents understand the changes that accompany aging.

Solutions/Recommendations

The plan suggested some solutions to these challenges. While not all challenges are addressed, these recommendations provide a foundational start to moving towards a more age-friendly Seattle.

Transportation

- Recommendations include age-friendly street design to promote walkability and pedestrian safety, addressing concerns discussed in Challenge 3. Seattle's plan to promote safety include incorporating more pedestrian amenities such as lighting, benches, and public bathrooms, and traffic calming methods; designing public spaces to attract more use; and increasing education on the importance of pedestrian rights-of-way and daily exercise. These initiatives can decrease obesity rates, increasing health.

Housing

- In 2014, City Council passed a legislation that encouraged homeowners to build Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to increase the stock of affordable living options. ADU's would target aging adults priced out of their neighborhoods, addressing issues introduced in Challenge 2. The Seattle Office of Housing also offers incentive programs for home repairs and weatherization services for low-income households, alleviating the financial pressures of home maintenance mentioned in Challenge 2.

Social Participation

- Age Friendly Seattle advocates for safe and affordable opportunities for fitness, sociocultural, and spiritual activities to promote health, addressing issues in Challenge 1. Seattle Parks and Recreation has programs that also focus on fitness, education, creativity, and other healthful lifestyles for aging adults. Lastly, Seattle and Lifelong Recreation partnered to create Sound Steps, a free walking program for the elderly.

Communication and Information

- Age Friendly Seattle partnered with local community organizations to make print and digital communications accessible, decreasing the gap in knowledge aging adults experience in Challenges 3 and 4. ADA coordinators are also trained to lower barriers by effectively delivering print, digital, and face-to-face communications. Aside from these policy recommendations, Seattle also proposed a series of action plans that increase the likelihood of successful implementation and accountability. The plan's project manager will lead Seattle's implementation and is responsible for holding regular meetings and public forums, seeking advice from relevant stakeholders, raising awareness of age-friendly initiatives, and transparently reporting whatever progress is being made.

Lessons Learned

Seattle's age-friendly plan is an excellent example of a robust set of initiatives accommodating an aging community. Huntington Woods can adopt some of Seattle's recommendations because of similarities shared with Seattle's challenges. For example, Huntington Woods lacks amenities for physical activity. Similarly, the City's residents are concerned for the expenses accompanying retrofits that allow for more accessible homes. Residents also want more transportation options throughout and beyond Huntington Woods, which calls for improving public transit and paratransit options. The solutions Seattle recommended are applicable to Huntington Woods: increasing pedestrian amenities to encourage physical exercise, organizing group exercise and other extracurricular activities, incentive programs for accessibility-improving retrofits to existing homes through non-profits, and driver education in providing transit services for the elderly. These solutions do not require large pools of funding; rather, Huntington Woods can make these changes with City Commission approval and smaller funding sources. Huntington Woods can also emulate Seattle's implementation strategies to ensure changes towards an age-friendly community.

Not all of Seattle's challenges and solutions apply to Huntington Woods. Seattle is a much larger city than Huntington Woods, so resources and partnerships with local organizations are more abundant. Therefore, large projects such as sidewalk maintenance, funding for ADU's, and adding additional transportation services may be infeasible. The challenges present in Seattle may be absent in Huntington Woods; Seattle may have the resources to propose recommended solutions where Huntington Woods may have to prioritize funding and investment allocations.

Case 4: Southfield Senior Needs Assessment

Location: Southfield, MI

Overview

Launched in 2016, the Southfield Senior Needs Assessment aims to improve – and maintain – the quality of life for all residents, particularly those over the age of 50. Given its geographic proximity and demographic makeup, Southfield's recent senior needs assessment serves as a model for what the City of Huntington Woods seeks to implement and can also serve as a model for many rural and suburban communities looking to create a more age-friendly community. More specifically, Southfield's plan addresses problems like those currently in Huntington Woods: senior amenities and recreation, housing, and transportation. Lastly, Southfield's plan emphasizes communication and education, something that is also lacking in Huntington Woods (as identified during our team's own community engagement process). Additionally, Southfield's plan isn't overly ambitious, nor does it evade key issues. While there are drawbacks to Southfield's plan, specifically around community engagement and implementation, its emphasis on creating and maintaining an age-free community can still be used as a model for communities looking to do the same.

General Structure

Like any assessment or master plan approach, Southfield's plan follows an intuitive path to solving its problem:

Identify the Problem and Establish Goals

- Southfield clearly states that seniors have concerns around their quality of life as city residents. To address those concerns rigorously, Southfield decided to seek the AARP's designation as "a premier community for senior adults."

Data Collection and Analysis

- In its Asset Inventory, Southfield uses census data, surveys (paper and online), and community conversations to help inform its analysis. Over the two years that Southfield collected data, it was analyzing it along the way to streamline the process.

Establish an Action Plan

- Southfield understands that this step is just as important as collecting and analyzing the data, which is why it clearly outlines action items and next steps for the city to take toward building and maintaining an age-friendly community.

Demographics

While both cities are in Oakland County and just four miles from each other, their demographics are starkly different. Southfield's population at the time of the plan's release (2016) was 73,203, with 2,788 people per square mile. Huntington Woods, at roughly 1.5 square miles, had a population of 6,312 in 2018. Additionally, Southfield's population is 70% black and 23% white, which is more drastically the reverse in Huntington Woods as 93.5% of its population is white. Moreover, median household income in Southfield is \$58,813 compared to \$130,417 in Huntington Woods. While these demographics are important in any policy decision (along with scaling), it is important to understand that our focus is senior living. In Southfield, people age 65 and over make up 19.4% of the population compared to 16% in Huntington Woods, creating a commonality between the two cities that speaks volume to the types of issues both are experiencing around seniors' quality of life.

Identified Challenges

Through its community engagement process (community conversations and surveys), Southfield identified three main challenges:

1. **Awareness:** the survey results showed that an overwhelming majority of seniors don't know about the programs and amenities the city offers. The lack of awareness spanned from health and wellness to social participation and inclusion. While many people affirmed that the city offers a myriad of programs and amenities for seniors, more people were unsure. As one Southfield resident noted, "if we have programs and services but no one knows about them, it's useless." Southfield identifies this as a communication problem because the city indeed has "many programs that many Southfield residents want and need," but information about them isn't readily available.

2. Transportation: for most seniors in any community, mobility and accessibility are always challenges. In Southfield, residents expressed concerns around not being able to access programs and services due to lack of seating and adequate sidewalks. Residents also expressed concerns around lack of public transportation. For example, nearly a third of Southfield seniors surveyed said that more access to public transportation is a major factor in deciding when to move. While this is a separate issue from awareness, it's also intertwined because residents don't know about public and private transportation opportunities.
3. Housing: housing affordability and aging in place pose major challenges for any community. The survey revealed that most seniors have lived in their homes for a range of 5 to 25 years, and that housing affordability is a major concern. However, 67% of the respondents are uninformed about affordable housing options in Southfield for adults of varying income levels. Additionally, while most seniors want to age in place, they are unaware of the programs and repair services that assist seniors in maintaining their homes.

Solutions/Recommendations

To address these concerns, Southfield lists several actions that will help the city become more age-friendly and sustainable. These actions are categorized by the amount of time needed to achieve these goals: short-term goals (three months or less), medium-term goals (three months to one year), and long-term goals (one to five years or more). This structure eases the implementation process by creating a realistic framework. To help solve its most pressing issues, Southfield plans to do the following:

1. Awareness: create and maintain a list of locations for distribution (e.g., churches, homeowner associations, health clubs, etc.) so seniors are equipped with the tools and resources to access information. Additionally, Southfield identifies opportunities to improve seniors' use of technology by conducting technology trainings in collaboration with AARP, the Southfield Public Library, and charitable organizations. Lastly, all these actions will be measured by the number of classes, attendees, and evaluations.
2. Transportation: to provide safe, affordable, and reliable transportation, Southfield plans to develop a brochure that lists current options for both public and private transportation options. To help circulate the brochure, the city will send out press releases to newspapers of general circulation and update the website with useful and accessible links. Lastly, Southfield will develop a comprehensive transportation plan that will incorporate the needs of senior residents. This action in particular will help crystallize the city's findings around senior needs to help them come to fruition.
3. Housing: because a variety of housing options is already available (and accessible) to senior residents, Southfield will focus its efforts on providing more information on housing options and creating a framework for seniors to access resources for home modification and repairs. To jumpstart this initiative, Southfield will build a database for a one-stop access point for information, provide information seminars, and increase funding for repairs using CDBG funds.

Lessons Learned

When trying to solve any problem, it is easy to jump into the data and start analyzing. It's also easy to focus on quantitative data analysis rather than taking more qualitative approaches. For local municipalities that don't have the resources (e.g., budget, personnel, etc.) to effectively engage the community and collect qualitative data, its findings and action plans could be biased and may not reflect the overall needs of the community. Southfield's community engagement approach lacked the necessary penetration to properly address an issue of this size. Addressing issues that affect an entire population – regardless of the size, geographic location, or demographics – requires a diligent process that involves fully understanding the needs of the community.

It's also important to understand and prioritize scale. There are plenty of great policy approaches that would help build an age-friendly community, but if they aren't feasible (e.g., too expensive, out of scope, etc.), they become shelved and the plan becomes a lifeless document. Southfield fully understands its capacity and doesn't try to accomplish everything at once. Instead, the plan employs a four-step process that allows for a more realistic implementation.

Lastly, it's important to clearly outline how projects and other action items will be implemented. Like a plan that recommends unrealistic approaches to solving problems, a plan that doesn't identify steps to implement the listed actions could also become a lifeless document. It's important to remember that action plans must accompany an implementation plan. This not only establishes roles, responsibilities, and accountability, but it also gives the public a deeper understanding of how things are going to happen.

End of Document

Back Cover:

Top: Residents at the 2/25 open house meeting at City Hall

Bottom: Lenny Newman at the Holiday Meal at Farina's
Banquet Center

