

Creating a Community for a Lifetime

An Action Plan for an Age-friendly/Livable
Rochester and Monroe County



LIVABLE COMMUNITIES
Rochester and Monroe County



2024 Progress Report

Introduction

With support from its leaders, Monroe County and the City of Rochester joined the national Age-friendly movement in 2019. The following year, the Rochester/Monroe County Aging Alliance published a three-year Action Plan reflecting the commitment of both the county and the city to create an inclusive, age-friendly community for all its citizens. The Action Plan was submitted to AARP for inclusion in the national Age-Friendly Network. Though we are presenting the three-year progress report of the Action Plan, the intention is for local governments, nonprofits, funders and residents to continue using it as a blueprint as we strive to make our community a better place for all of us to age well.



Becoming a More Age-Friendly/Livable Community is Imperative

Why Strive to Become an Age-Friendly Community?



More of Us are Living Longer

The confluence of increasing longevity and the aging of the baby boom generation is creating an unprecedented demographic shift. The leading edge of the boomer generation, once the largest in history, is turning 80 in 2026 at a time when advances in health care are resulting in longer lifespans. The combination of factors is a key trend which will continue to increase the number of people 65 and older in our community well into this century.



Economics

Older adults fuel the economy. The 2016 report, *The Longevity Economy* by Oxford Economics found:

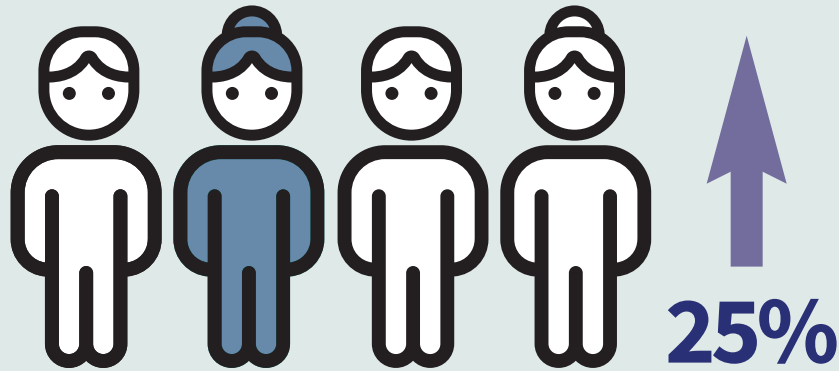
- The “longevity economy” is one of the most vital in the U.S., with 106 million people over the age of 50 collectively responsible for \$7.6 trillion in annual economic activity, spending \$4.6 trillion on consumer goods and services, and the health care industry.
- 83% of U.S. household wealth is held by people 50 and older.



Assets

Older adults are a community asset with a lifetime of experience and knowledge. As most hospitals and many nonprofits can attest, older adults give back thousands of hours of volunteer service each year in fulfilling roles which also boost their health and wellness. They also are valuable employees in multi-generation workplaces.

In Monroe County **one in four residents is 60 or older** for the first time in history.



60+ 192,000 (25% of the population) | 65+ 142,000 (19%)

In New York State, the fastest increase in the 65+ population over the past decade occurred in the City of Rochester

(+64%) while the under 65 population decreased by 6%.



(Source: U.S. Census 2020 5-YR American Community Survey)

The county's population of older people is aging-in-place in suburban towns.



The percentage of people 60 and older in many towns is over **25%**.

Percent of the Older Adult Population in Monroe County Towns		
	65+	60+
Sweden	12.8	18
Henrietta	15	21.6
Mendon	16.6	23.6
Parma	15.5	25.3
Chili	18.7	26.5
Greece	20%	26.6
Ogden	16.3	26.6
Brighton	20.7	26.7
Pittsford	20.2	28.1
Penfield	20.1	28.4
Gates	21.1	29
Webster	20.1	29.2
Perinton	22.4	29.7
Irondequoit	22.7	29.8

Sources: U.S. Census DEC Demographic Profile; 1970 data: CGR and U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2021 and 2022, 1-YR Estimates.

Age-Friendly Communities Have Three Characteristics.



1

Age is not a significant barrier to the maintenance of lifelong interests and activities.



2

Supports and accommodations exist to enable individuals with age-related disabilities to meet basic health and social needs.



3

Opportunities exist for older adults to develop new sources of fulfillment and engagement.



The World Health Organization’s Domains of Livability guided our Action Plan. We added a ninth domain, Economic Security. The availability and quality of these community features affect the well-being of older residents and help make communities more livable for all ages.

Domains of Livability

1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation
5. Respect & Inclusion
6. Volunteerism & Employment
7. Communication & Information
8. Health Services & Community Supports
9. Economic Security (added by this Action Plan)

Summary of Work

STEP ONE: **A Community Assessment**

Prior to creating the three-year Action Plan, the Aging Alliance, a group of leaders from nonprofits, hospital systems and higher education, compiled an inventory of existing age-friendly attributes.

The noted attributes included:

1. A strong nonprofit provider network.
2. A service-rich community.
3. Age-friendly health system engagement.
4. A supportive transportation network.
5. Numerous housing options.
6. Strong volunteerism.
7. Numerous cultural and outdoor spaces.

The group also surveyed more than 1,100 older people, conducted five focus groups and 25 one-on-one interviews with older adults and professionals and held meetings with 16 county departments.

What We Heard

Respect & Inclusion

Older adults said ageism, discrimination, equity, and respect issues are prevalent, more so for older adults of marginalized, under-represented populations.

Social Participation

56% of older adults rated their community as good or very good for opportunities to get together with other people.

Volunteerism & Employment

61% rated the community as good or very good with respect to volunteer opportunities.

Businesses need more data to dispel the myths about the hiring of older workers.

Communication & Information

66% were either unsure if there was one central source of information about community activities or thought access was poor or fair.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

75% rated their location as a good/very good place for people to live as they age.

Transportation

Mobility management services are needed to make sense of complex systems.

Housing

63% want a home that will support their independence as they age.

Health Services & Community Supports

84% ranked the availability of health care as good or very good.

Economic Security

The City of Rochester has the second highest poverty rate among older adults in New York State.

STEP TWO: Action Plan recommendations for an age-friendly/livable Monroe County.

Based on the assessment, the Action Plan presented the following recommendations with the expectations and hopes that:

- Local governments will use them routinely for purposes related to planning and zoning, transportation, human services funding, public communications, special events planning and other departmental services.
- Organizations and businesses will use them as evidence of the need for service expansion and new, innovative programs and activities.
- Planning organizations, foundations and other funders will recognize the needs of this growing population segment.
- Older adults and caregivers will recognize that our community is striving to become a more livable/age-friendly community.

Results — We are building momentum.

We are pleased to present the noteworthy wins within each domain from work completed during the last three years. We must recognize that the demographic shift toward an historically large population of people 60 and older is only now starting to influence decisions, policies and funding. The noteworthy wins of the last three years are the building blocks for a greater focus on age inclusivity in policies, funding and actions for the future.

OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

Recommendations

1

Provide safe, comfortable access to indoor and outdoor public spaces.

2

Provide and maintain clean and accessible restrooms at public parks and spaces.

3

Improve snow removal.



4

Improve pedestrian safety.

Noteworthy Wins

- Monroe County’s planning department implemented age-friendly design recommendations for the site plan review process. The set of recommendations asks developers to consider including age-friendly design elements whenever possible.
- A 305-foot ADA-compliant wheelchair pad was built at Ontario Beach. It allows people with mobility limitations to access the lake. An inclusive spray park was also added at the beach.
- Age-friendly improvements were implemented at county parks including caregiver restrooms, paved cart paths at golf courses and improved wheelchair accessibility at lodges and shelters.
- Eight pickleball courts were added in county parks.
- Benches were added to 50 high ridership bus shelters within the city and county.
- A walkability audit along Calkins Road involved 26 volunteers and revealed many areas for pedestrian improvements, including the need for crosswalks, automobile speed control, better access for bicycles and persons with disabilities, and general safety. The audit used a toolkit developed by AARP Livable Communities.
- ReConnect Rochester collaborated with the Josanna neighborhood to do a “Complete Streets” makeover at the intersection of Orange and Orchard streets.



TRANSPORTATION

Recommendations

1

Adopt a ‘Transit First’ approach to community development.



2

Improve cycling infrastructure.

3

Expand low-cost or no-cost transportation for medical and non-medical trips.

4

Implement more robust mobility management services.

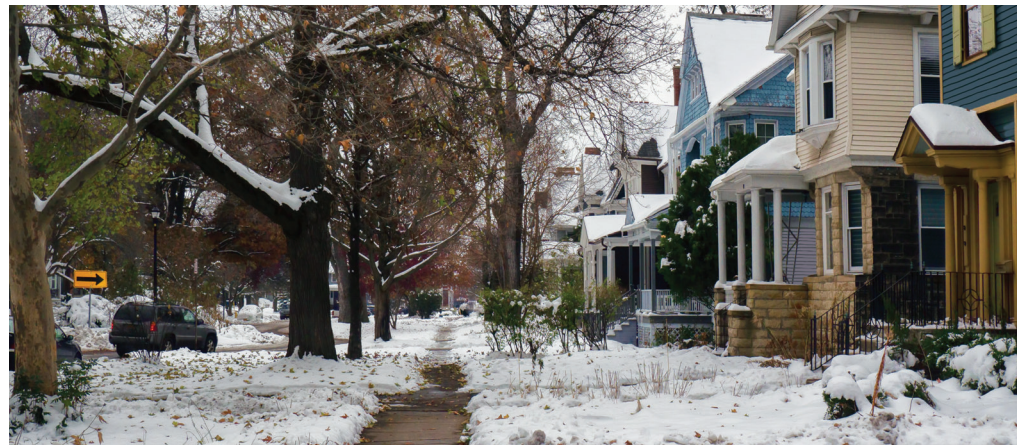
Noteworthy Wins

- The Genesee Transportation Council and RTS won a grant to upgrade bus shelters and seating.
- A partnership of providers including Lifespan, and Monroe, Livingston and Ontario counties created and launched a mobility management portal, [Here2there.help](https://www.here2there.help), for residents to find transportation options based on their needs.
- Bike lanes were added to various county roads during reconstruction.
- Representatives from the Aging Alliance provided input on the city and county active transportation plans.
- The City of Rochester intends to use \$3.2 million in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure & Jobs Law to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- The city also is developing a snow removal and maintenance plan for sidewalks, bus stops, bike facilities and trails.



Here²There

Your connection to routes and rides 



Recommendations

1

Increase affordable, safe, accessible housing.

2

Establish a reference center for home support and maintenance services.



3

Expand home modifications programs which provide railings, grab bars, etc.

Noteworthy Wins

- Additional housing for older adults opened including Marketplace Apartments, Tailor Square and Ellen's Place.
- Monroe County made a \$7.8 million dollar investment in affordable housing.
- Episcopal Senior Life Communities' Neighborhood Program is working in partnership with affordable older adult housing developers to address health disparities and social needs of those 65+ with limited incomes.
- The City of Rochester earmarked an additional \$20,000 for Lifespan's Home-Safe-Home service.



SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Recommendations



1

Reimagine older adult centers and programming.

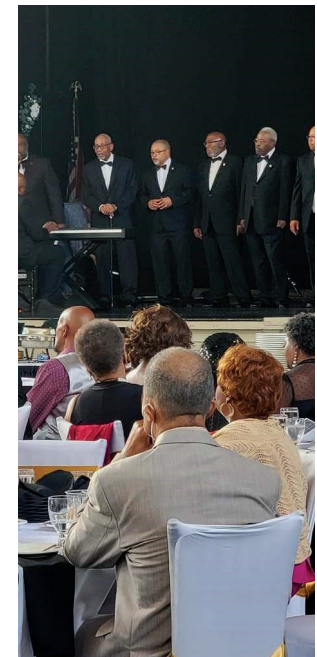


2

Increase support for homebound and/or isolated older adults.

Noteworthy Wins

- The Monroe County Office for the Aging funded a new meal site at Prayer House Church of God by Faith on Cumberland Street.
- Senior Expressions hosted events designed to engage older adults in socialization opportunities, emotional wellness and health education.
- Monroe County's Office for the Aging partnered with Rainbow Seniors ROC to support a social club at the Village Gate Square in the Neighborhood of the Arts.



PHOTOS: SENIOR EXPRESSIONS

Recommendations

1

Combat ageism.

2

Engage and support older adults from underserved and under-represented populations.

3

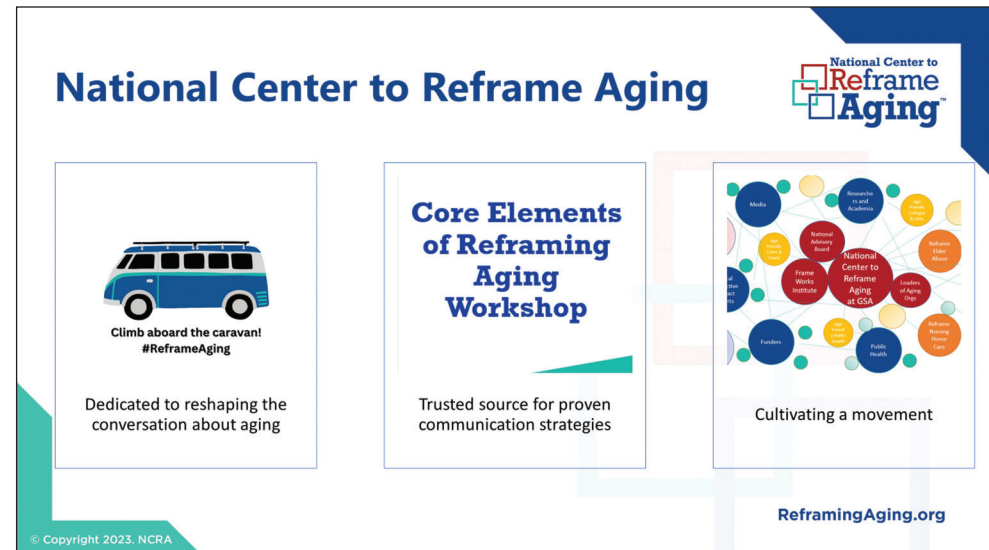
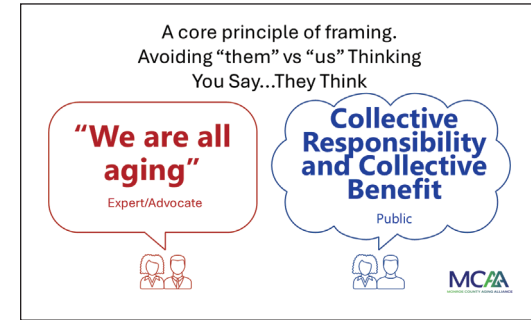
Recognize and respect older adults as economic contributors to the local economy.

4

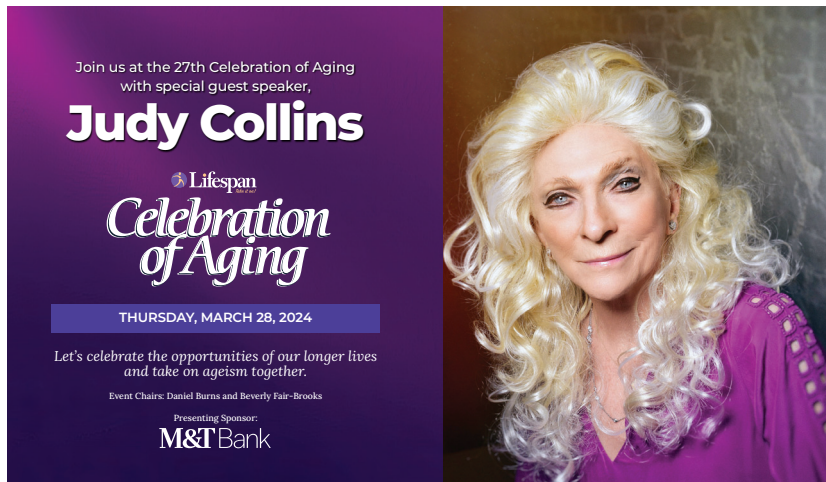
Increase intergenerational opportunities.

Noteworthy Wins

- Seventeen professionals working in the aging sector completed reframing aging training provided by the National Center to Reframe Aging. The purpose is to learn how to talk about aging and longevity in ways which counter ageism and ensure older people can fully take part in our communities. The seventeen people trained have provided over 70 reframing aging trainings and other types of engagements (E.g. social media posts).



- Members of the Aging Alliance worked with the Commission on Racial and Structural Equity's (RASE) Community Advancing Recommendation Team (CART) to track and implement the recommendations in the older adult domain of the RASE Report.
- Older representatives were added to multiple boards including the city and county Active Transportation Committees, a Systems Integration pilot, and the Racial and Structural Equity Commission.
- Two new institutes on aging were created. The University of Rochester's Aging Institute's goal is to transform the Medical Center into an Age-friendly Health System. The Clare and Jerry Rotenberg Aging Institute at Jewish Senior Life strives to be a hub of knowledge and innovation to promote all aspects of positive aging.
- Lifespan continues to hold the Celebration of Aging, a community luncheon designed to dispel the stereotypes about aging and longer life.



- An age-friendly unit was added to the University of Rochester Geriatric Education Center Center/Lifespan Gerontology Certificate course.
- The Alzheimer's Association provided free, online training for first responders in how to best interact with people with dementia.
- The Hearing Loss Association of Rochester added a Virtual Assistive Device Demonstration Center to their website.

Recommendations

1

Improve opportunities for older adults to share their skills and talents.

2

Debunk the myths about older workers and educate employers about the value of older workers and persons with disabilities.

3

Help older workers find and apply for jobs.

4

Raise wages for chronically low-paying jobs, particularly those in long-term care fields.

Noteworthy Wins

- RochesterWorks and Lifespan hosted an older worker job fair and workshops.
- Businesses and organizations have signed the AARP Employer Pledge to recruit across diverse age groups and consider all applicants on an equal basis, regardless of age.
- Lifespan now holds two volunteer fairs throughout the year designed to help older adults find fulfilling roles.



Recommendations

1

Centralize and simplify information for older adults.

2

Develop age-friendly style guidelines for community information exchanges.



3

Increase access to and proficiency of internet and technology to reduce the digital divide.

Noteworthy Wins

- The Aging Alliance and Lifespan produced, printed and distributed the Age-friendly Communication Style Guide. The guide is being distributed to media outlets, advertising agencies, government officials, and the public. The guide offers preferred ways to communicate with and about older adults.
- Aging Alliance members and older adults piloted our community's integrated service delivery system (TogetherNow).
- Students in Nazareth University's Aging & Community Service course partnered with the Health Equity Program Support Office (HEPSO) at the University of Rochester Medical Center and St. John's to administer surveys to better understand the usage of digital health tools like MyChart to gain a better understanding of access and usage roadblocks.
- Lifespan held two technology/aging-in-place fairs to help older adults and caregivers view devices which can help support independence.
- The Monroe County Office for the Aging funded computer classes at older adult centers and for homebound persons with a focus on how to use telehealth.



NAZARETH UNIVERSITY

Recommendations

1

Establish one navigator service to help older adults in accessing available health services, community supports.

2

Expand health services and health literacy programs for older adults.

3

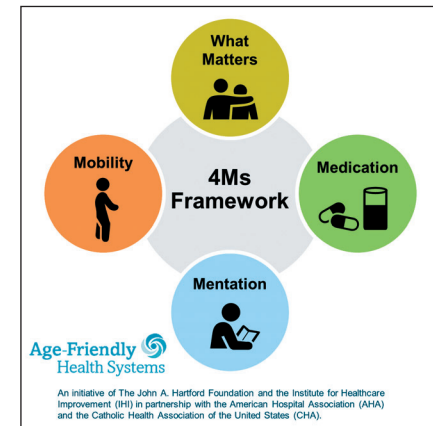
Support formal and informal caregivers, and caregiver networks.

4

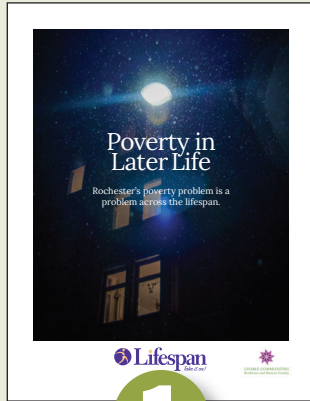
Promote full participation in the Age-friendly Health System Initiative by local hospital systems and all medical providers.

Noteworthy Wins

- Completed a Health Across All Policies County Initiative to infuse age-friendly planning principles into county policies.
- Multiple organizations including hospitals, nursing homes, surgical centers and other healthcare providers are participating in the Age-friendly Health System Initiative to improve care for older patients. Examples include:
 - Strong Memorial and Highland Hospitals achieved the highest level of age-friendly health system certification.
 - Rochester Regional Health implemented the Geriatric Surgical program to provide safe, high-quality surgical care for people 75 and older. Patient-centered care addresses the unique physiological, social and treatment goals of older patients.
 - The Eastman Institute for Oral Health Specialty Care Clinic is the first oral healthcare provider in the nation to be recognized as an Age-Friendly Health System participant.
- Community Care Connections, a service of Lifespan which integrates community-based social work and LPN services with medical systems of care expanded to serve people 60 and older with any health insurer. As evaluated by the New York Academy of Medicine, the integration of care reduces unnecessary ED visits and hospitalizations by 20 to 30 percent.



Recommendations



1

Recognize the issue of poverty among older adults, especially those of color living within the City of Rochester, and support improvements to address the elder poverty crisis. The City of Rochester has the second highest rate of older adult poverty in the state.

2

Increase participation in public benefit programs and services.

Noteworthy Wins

The 2021 Poverty in Later Life report informed this domain.

- Lifespan increased benefits outreach within the City of Rochester through a 2024 grant from the National Council on Aging. Through 10 months in 2024, \$4,270,000 in benefits were accessed for 605 residents. This is an estimated value of \$7,000 for each person.
- The ElderPages, produced by GRAPE, included an economic resources pull-out section.
- Aging Alliance members ensured that the Benefits Calculator, a pilot by ABC and TogetherNow for people applying for the city's Guaranteed Basic Income project, included the effect an extra \$500 a month would have on benefits available to people 60 and older.



Lessons Learned

Any project of scope and size has lessons learned. Becoming an age-friendly community is a work-in-progress, and these are our lessons learned.

1

A shorter list of more systemic versus specific programmatic actions might have been easier to implement.

2

Our first instinct shouldered the responsibility for the Action Plan on the Aging Alliance members versus awareness that the plan was a collective responsibility document for the community.

3

We realized the need for continuous education about age-friendly principles and how those attributes can and should affect policy throughout various departments and organizations.

4

We will include younger residents aged 45 to 59 in future age-friendly surveys and assessments to better prepare for future generations' needs and preferences in older adulthood.

Domain Areas Needing Further Attention

Respect & Inclusion

- Review racial/age equity provisions in city/county contracts.
- Train police/first responders about the unique needs of older adults.
- Explore the viability of an age-friendly business designation or similar program.
- Expand opportunities to volunteer and engage in schools.
- Expand intergenerational opportunities withing Monroe County Youth Bureau.

Social Participation

- Upgrade or renovate the city's older adult centers, in physical layout and programmatic offerings, and provider centers in neighborhoods lacking such resources.
- Seek input from older adults and expand programming options evenings and weekends.
- Expand in-home programs and volunteering to address isolation.
- Expand home-based volunteer opportunities for homebound adults, such as friendly calling.

Communication & Information

- Promote technology education and digital literacy for older adults.
- Improve access to and education about telehealth services for older adults.

Volunteerism & Employment

- Educate Chamber of Commerce members/businesses about the value of older workers.
- Foster partnerships with disability organizations to provide support to older adults with needed workplace accommodations

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

- Add emergency phones in parks and public venues.
- Educate older adults about safety-related issues, such as personal and home safety.

Transportation

- Pilot the addition of three-wheeled trikes in bike-share, rental inventory.
- Provide travel training, including public transit ride-along, education about on-demand and transit options, and support with electronic trip planning.

Housing

- Expand home modification programs, which provide affordable improvements such as railings, grab bars, non-skid stairs, interior/exterior ramps.
- Provide affordable packing and moving services for older adults who wish to right size.

Health Services & Community Supports

- Improve social determinants of health for underserved/represented OA
- Educate healthcare practitioners about how to improve communication with older adults and persons with disabilities.

- Expand evidence-based, in-home emotional wellness/behavioral health.
- Support kinship caregivers.

Economic Security

- Increase the number of older adults receiving public assistance (SNAP & other benefits).
- Connect older adults to financial support for Internet/technology.



A focus on demographics in our towns and villages.

As noted on page 4 of this report, in multiple towns within Monroe County more than 25% of residents are 60 and older. During the fall of 2024, students from Nazareth University and elders from St. John's organized several community listening sessions, investigated facts from the U.S. Census and reported their findings to local government officials. The purpose was to better understand efforts underway to create age-friendly communities, as well as what can be created to make our towns and villages more age-friendly. Looking toward the future, opportunities exist to highlight our population trends and the characteristics of age-friendly/livable communities.

A noteworthy mention! The best city to age-in-place!

A recent report from This Old House ranked 142 of the largest U.S. cities to identify the best cities to age-in-place. Their survey of 1,000 older adults revealed that more than half value access to quality medical care and housing affordability the most, so they placed special emphasis on those factors. The number one best city for aging-in-place — Rochester, N.Y.!

<https://thisoldhouse.com/moving/aging-in-place>



What Are the Best Cities for Aging in Place?

Best Cities for Aging in Place						
Rank	City	Monthly homeowner costs	Regional price parity	Senior-relevant care providers per 1,000 seniors	Home health aide care quality score*	Life expectancy
1	Rochester, New York	\$1,205	95.2	86.2	3.0	78.6
2	Grand Rapids, Michigan	\$1,403	94.2	65.9	4.0	78.7
3	Cleveland, Ohio	\$1,194	93.1	70.6	4.0	75.7
4	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	\$1,523	93.9	64.1	3.1	77.2
5	Winston-Salem, North Carolina	\$1,342	92.4	44.3	4.0	76.7
6	Fort Wayne, Indiana	\$1,187	92.7	31.5	3.9	76.0
7	Birmingham, Alabama	\$1,277	91.2	59.1	4.3	72.9
8	Augusta, Georgia	\$1,371	92.0	26.1	4.0	72.1
9	Buffalo, New York	\$1,326	93.9	32.8	4.3	77.5
10	Lexington, Kentucky	\$1,542	91.2	33.4	4.0	77.4

*Scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest score

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicare Services, and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

The following is the Executive Summary of an independent evaluation by Common Ground Health of the Aging Alliance and progress toward becoming a more age-friendly/livable community.

The Monroe County Aging Alliance (MCAA) prioritized the following topics for evaluation efforts: shifting perspectives on aging, social isolation and economic security. To answer these questions, Common Ground Health conducted surveys with community members, listening sessions with facilitators, and interviews with partner organizations.

Actions taken related to “Shifting Perspectives on Aging” focused heavily on raising awareness about reframing aging. Directly after the reframing aging workshops, approximately 90% of participants (n=151) completing the survey agreed to the importance of reframing aging, reflected on their own behaviors and intended to utilize information learned. Interviews with five of the reframing aging facilitators revealed that the training contributed to their personal and professional growth, and member organizations and certain workshop participants within the community have already started to adopt new habits and practices to reframe aging.

3-month post surveys with Reframing Aging participants revealed:

- 97% are more aware of language that may provoke ageist views.
- 83% have adjusted the way they communicate about aging.

Interviews with thirteen MCAA members and community partners on social isolation showed that many individual

and group services and programs are currently in place to support isolated older adults, but interviewees reported several needs in order to continue to provide this level of support and/or advance it. While certain requests were geared toward establishing more of a collective approach within the alliance itself, much of the requested support fell within the community or state/federal spheres of influence. These included, but were not limited to, issues of access, locating and streamlining funding, advocacy work, and addressing the workforce.

Economic Security was a new domain and intended to gather information on working with older adults in poverty to assist other locales that may want to include this in their age-friendly, livable community plans. Interviews with ten MCAA members and partners demonstrated the importance of being client-centered and meeting clients where they are, displaying cultural awareness and sensitivity, connecting services, ensuring accessibility for all, and including older adults and their feedback in processes. Members and partners felt that the alliance could assist by playing a larger role in advocacy, coordinating agencies and funding, offering professional development opportunities, and assisting with marketing their programs and services to older adults.

Advancing Equity Through Age-Friendly Plan Recommendations

The journey to foster equity for older adults in Rochester, Monroe County has been guided by the convergence of recommendations from the Age-Friendly Plan and the Commission on Racial and Structural Equity (RASE). This report details the progress achieved through collaborative efforts between the Community Advancing Recommendations Team (CART) and Monroe County Aging Alliance partners. By integrating the insights of these two pivotal reports — “No Time for Excuses, It’s a Time for Action” and “Creating a Community for a Lifetime” — significant strides have been made in advancing equity-focused initiatives while identifying areas that still require attention.

The analysis of these two foundational reports highlights shared priorities for Older Adults wanting to age in place. Both emphasize the importance of fostering environments that promote:

- **Community Engagement:** Encouraging older adults to actively participate in civic and social life.
- **Access to Essential Services:** Enhancing the coordination and navigability of services, especially in underserved areas.
- **Health Equity:** Addressing systemic barriers disproportionately affecting marginalized communities.
- **Support for Caregivers:** Providing expanded respite care, financial assistance, and training resources.
- **Housing Solutions:** Developing innovative and accessible housing models to enable aging in place.



Collaborative Milestones and Implementation Progress

The collaboration between RASE’s Older Adult CART and the Monroe County Aging Alliance has yielded tangible progress on key initiatives. Below are the significant achievements and their impact:

1. Livable Communities for Older Adults Initiative

- Monroe County Aging Alliance is in its third year of implementing the County/City age-friendly, livable community plan. With approximately 73% of the action items adopted, this initiative closely aligns with 10 of the 11 RASE Older Adult domain recommendations.

2. Navigation and Support Services

- Efforts to simplify service access have led to Together Now establishing MyWayfinder, a model integrating service delivery and community navigators. NY Connects serves as the regional resource center for aging and disabilities, offering free support to older adults, caregivers, and professionals. Additionally:
 - The Monroe County Office for the Aging (MCOFA) provides navigation services in community sites and through in-home support.
 - Lifespan delivers professional development courses and support services to enhance awareness and competence regarding older adult needs.

3. Health Task Force Creation

- In partnership with the RASE Healthcare CART, a referral is being developed to establish a countywide health task force. This initiative will focus on the social determinants of health, reinforcing the commitment to equity-driven healthcare solutions.

4. Racial Equity in Contracting

- The United Way has implemented diversity requirements for board and staff across funded programs. MCOFA is evaluating additional contracting practices to embed racial equity across all county programs, beyond just aging services.

5. Upgrading Senior Centers

- The CART organized a workgroup, in partnership with the Aging Alliance to assess and address the needs of

senior centers in underserved neighborhoods. Surveys are underway to capture input from participants and enhance the relevance of programs and facilities.

6. Digital Divide Solutions

- Monroe County Executive Adam Bello's \$4.2 million broadband initiative will deliver high-speed internet to over 6,000 households in underserved neighborhoods, addressing a critical barrier to digital inclusion.

7. Economic Security Initiatives

- Monroe County's participation in RMAPI's Level Up pledge has set a precedent for wage increases.
- Rochester's Guaranteed Basic Income project directs 20% of funds were allocated to beneficiaries over 50.
- Lifespan's outreach workers are actively assisting older adults in poverty-stricken areas to secure economic resources and benefits.

Through collaborative, equity-focused strategies, key accomplishments have demonstrated through:

- Transportation Improvements: New accessible transit routes are addressing mobility challenges in rural and urban regions.
- Resource Accessibility: Multilingual resources are increasingly tailored to the diverse needs of older adults.
- Community Connections: Neighborhood-based programs are reducing social isolation and fostering intergenerational relationships.

Ongoing Challenges

Despite progress, challenges persist in the following areas, to name a few:

- **Affordable Housing:** The shortage of accessible and affordable housing continues to strain resources.
- **Healthcare Access:** Gaps in geriatric care availability and cultural competence among providers require attention.
- **Economic Stability:** Expanding financial literacy and employment programs for older adults remains a priority.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Continued efforts are needed to bridge the digital divide through technology training and affordable broadband access.

Conclusion

The alignment of recommendations from the Age-Friendly Plan and the RASE framework, coupled with impactful collaborations, illustrates meaningful progress toward creating equitable opportunities for older adults. However, systemic barriers and resource gaps remain challenges that demand innovative, equity-focused solutions. By maintaining a commitment to these strategies, we can move closer to realizing a community where all older adults thrive.

Commission on
RASE
County • City • Community
<https://rocrase.com>

Results of the Action Items

The Monroe County Aging Alliance will continue monitoring our age-friendly/ livable communities progress in qualitative and quantitative changes and improvements. Our goal is to ensure full participation in the fabric of our community by an increasing population of older people who very much want to remain engaged. The availability and quality of these community features affect the well-being of older residents and help make communities more livable for all ages.

Our recommendation and action progress is summarized in the following charts.

Color Key For Results of the Action Item

-  **Green:**
Consistently Advancing
OR Achieved Significant Progress
-  **Yellow:**
Trending Positively
OR Some Progress Made
-  **Red:**
Not Accomplished

To learn more about or to get involved with our community's age-friendly work, visit <https://monroeagingalliance.org>.



Respect and Social Inclusion

Recommendation	Action	
1. Combat Ageism	1A. Provide educational workshops about the value of older adults.	
	1B. Include older adults in community planning and decision-making efforts, on boards, and in community discussions.	
2. Engage and support older adults from underserved and underrepresented populations.	2A. Review racial and age equity provisions in city and county contracts.	
	2B. Use intentional efforts and non-traditional outreach ideas to improve access to services and supports for older adults from underserved and underrepresented populations.	
	2C. Include older adults of various disabilities, languages and cultures in older adult program design.	
	2D. Train police and first responders about the unique needs of older adults with cognitive impairments and other disabilities, in order to improve their ability to respond to emergencies, communicate with, and assist older adults in times of crisis and need.	
	2E. Provide affordable gathering space for diverse older adult groups, such as LGBTQ and deaf/hard of hearing elders.	
3. Recognize and respect older adults as economic contributors to the local economy.	3A. Educate local business leaders about older adults as economic contributors and customers.	
	3B. Explore the viability of an age-friendly business designation or similar program.	
4. Increase intergenerational opportunities.	4A. Expand opportunities to volunteer and engage in schools.	
	4B. Use recreation centers, older adult centers, and other venues for intergenerational contact.	
	4C. Expand new intergenerational opportunities with the Monroe County Youth Bureau.	

Social Participation

Recommendation	Action	
5. Reimagine older adult centers and programming.	5A. Expand older adult programming and activities at alternative sites such as libraries, YMCAs, recreation centers.	
	5B. Upgrade or renovate the city older adult centers, in physical layout and programmatic offerings, and provide centers in neighborhoods lacking such resources.	
	5C. Seek ongoing input from older adults and participants to create programming at older adult and recreation centers that best meets the needs of today's older adult preferences.	
	5D. Expand social opportunities at times of the day that appeal to participants, including weekend and evening schedules, as well as spontaneous outings.	
6. Increase support for homebound and/or isolated older adults.	6A. Connect homebound older adults to online activities/workshops and/or volunteer roles to reduce isolation.	
	6B. Expand in-home programming to older adults to help address isolation.	
	6C. Expand home-based volunteer opportunities for homebound adults, such as friendly calling.	
	6D. Create social engagement opportunities for older adults living in congregate housing settings, where such opportunities and programs are lacking.	

Volunteerism and Employment

Recommendation	Action	
7. Improve opportunities for older adults to share their skills and talents.	7A. Promote the use of the current community volunteer database.	
	7B. Promote older adults' connection to volunteer programs, such as AmeriCorps Seniors, Volunteer United, and Veterans Outreach Center, for help to find volunteer opportunities.	
	7C. Promote SCORE Greater Rochester, an opportunity which allows older adults to volunteer to share their professional expertise and can help older adults launch entrepreneurial endeavors.	
8. Debunk the myths about older workers and educate employers about the value of older workers and persons with disabilities.	8A. Educate the Chamber of Commerce members and local businesses about the value of older adult workers.	
	8B. Create materials and videos dispelling the myths about older workers.	
9. Help older workers to locate and apply for jobs.	9A. Expand services providing job training and placement assistance for low-income older adults.	
	9B. Create an older adult job board, with linkage to other job posting sites and resources.	
	9C. Use libraries, older adult centers and RochesterWorks as hubs for workforce development.	
	9D. Foster partnerships with disability organizations to provide support to older adults with needed workplace accommodations.	
	9E. Promote the use of the SUNY ATTAIN (Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking) lab for low-income older adults seeking computer literacy & vocational support to secure job opportunities.	
	9F. Develop workshops about using online job search tools for older adults seeking employment, preferably at convenient community locations such as libraries and older adult centers.	
10. Raise wages for chronically low paying jobs, particularly those in long-term care fields.	10A. Raise wages for low-paying, long-term care and home care workers to increase the community's caregiver workforce.	

Communication, Information and Digital

Recommendation	Action	
11. Centralize and simplify information for older adults.	11A. Centralize information for older adults into one location.	
	11B. Provide information in digital and non-digital formats, such as by phone (a live person), via mail, in-person, in various languages and with supportive accommodations for disability.	
12. Develop age-friendly style guidelines for community information exchanges.	12A. Promote age-friendly language in written and spoken communication, using easily readable format and style.	
	12B. Promote full accessibility for information exchanges, especially supporting individuals with limited English proficiency, low literacy, visual and hearing impairments, and those with intellectual or developmental disabilities.	
13. Increase access to and proficient use of internet and technology to reduce the digital divide.	13A. Promote technology education and digital literacy for older adults.	
	13B. Create intergenerational connections and opportunities for technological assistance to older adults.	
	13C. Improve access to and education about telehealth services for older adults.	

Color Key For Results of the Action Item

- Green:** Consistently Advancing OR Achieved Significant Progress
- Yellow:** Trending Positively OR Some Progress Made
- Red:** Not Accomplished

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Recommendation	Action	
14. Provide safe, comfortable access to indoor and outdoor public spaces.	14A. Expand seating and shelters at transit stops.	
	14B. Increase availability of seating/benches in public places and parks.	
	14C. Construct inclusive and accessible playgrounds for older adults and people with disabilities.	
	14D. Add emergency phones in parks and public venues.	
	14E. Encourage greater accessibility of the built environment with wide entryways, well-maintained sidewalks and ramps, and good lighting leading up to and inside buildings.	
	14F. Encourage greater accessibility of outdoor spaces such as walk paths, trails and beaches.	
	14G. Educate older adults about safety-related issues, such as personal safety, home safety and scams.	
15. Provide and maintain clean and accessible restrooms at public parks and spaces.	15A. Improve public restrooms, including the height of toilets, entrances, walkways leading to restroom areas, and maximum space for wheelchair turns.	
	15B. Create more family-style, unisex restrooms for ease of use by individuals with special needs, and privacy for caregiver support.	
16. Improve snow removal.	16A. Educate homeowners, landlords and commercial building owners about snow removal policies.	
	16B. Create neighbor-to-neighbor and intergenerational assistance with snow removal for homeowners.	
	16C. Maintain sequencing for streets and sidewalk plowing to avoid snow moved to just-plowed sidewalks and driveways.	
17. Improve pedestrian safety.	17A. Conduct walkability surveys in both towns and the City of Rochester to track ongoing needed sidewalk repair and curb transition improvements.	
	17B. Promote safer streets with street reconstruction improvements.	

Transportation

Recommendation	Action	
18. Adopt a 'Transit First' approach to community development.	18A. Consider transit needs and services during the planning phase of community development projects.	
19. Improve bike infrastructure.	19A. Create more bike space when renovating, repaving, and upgrading street infrastructure projects.	
	19B. Consider expanding shared bike rental stations near older adult housing complexes.	
	19C. Pilot the addition of three-wheeled trikes in bike-share, rental inventory.	
	19D. Promote bike boulevards and urban bike trails, with signage and marketing.	
20. Expand low-cost or no-cost transportation for medical and non-medical trips.	20A. Expand volunteer driver programs through increased investment in recruitment, training, and placement of volunteers.	
	20B. Additional financial support for non-emergency medical and social transportation (such as voucher programs), for those not eligible for Medicaid.	
	20C. Expand geographic locations of on-demand transit zones.	
21. Implement more robust mobility management services.	21A. Create a centralized portal for all updated transportation options, accessible electronically and in print.	
	21B. Provide travel training, including public transit ride-along, education about on-demand and transit options, and support with electronic trip planning applications.	

Housing

Recommendation	Action	
22. Increase affordable, safe, accessible housing.	22A. Advocate for more affordable, accessible rental housing options for older adults.	
	22B. Support zoning changes for Accessory Dwelling Units on residential properties.	
	22C. Expand home modification programs, which provide affordable improvements such as railings, grab bars, non-skid stairs, interior/exterior ramps.	
	22D. Increase grants and low interest loan programs for home maintenance and repair.	
23. Establish a reference center for home support and maintenance services.	23A. Create a reference center for trusted home repair and improvement contractors.	
	23B. Provide affordable packing and moving services for older adults who wish to rightsize.	

Health Services & Community Supports

Recommendation	Action	
24. Establish one navigator service to assist older adults in accessing available health services and community supports.	24A. Champion the community's Systems Integration project efforts to establish a navigator service.	
	24B. Co-locate navigators at key neighborhood, community center and housing locations.	
25. Expand health services and health literacy programs for older adults.	25A. Expand the existing, evidence-based health care coordination model, for assistance with appointment management, transportation, medication management, and care coordination, regardless of income or insurance.	
	25B. Improve the social determinants of health for underserved and underrepresented older adults.	
	25C. Advance health literacy through programs such as Ask Me 3™ and other patient-empowerment programs.	
	25D. Educate healthcare practitioners about how to improve communication with older adults and persons with disabilities. E.g., take time, go slower, speak up, use large print.	
	25E. Expand evidence-based, in-home emotional wellness and behavioral health programs for older adults, as well as more intense services for behavioral health needs (mental health and substance abuse).	
26. Support formal and informal caregivers, and caregiver networks.	26A. Provide caregiver information and assistance to support those caring for loved ones, understanding that many do not identify as 'caregivers.'	
	26B. Expand formal and informal neighborhood care networks that coordinate assistance and support for aging in place. E.g. Episcopal Senior Life Neighborhood program, the Villages model, and private, neighbor-to-neighbor informal support.	
	26C. Support kinship caregivers.	
27. Promote full participation in the Age-friendly Health System Initiative* by local hospital systems and medical providers.	27A. Foster continuous improvements in locally certified Age-friendly Health Systems using the 4Ms framework: four evidence-based elements of high-quality care that focus on what Matters, Mobility, Mentation, and Medication.	

Economic Security

Recommendation	Action	
28. Recognize the issue of poverty among older adults, especially those of color living within the City of Rochester, and support improvements to address the elder poverty crisis.	28A. Support community-based organizations assisting low-income older adults with basic needs.	
	28B. Increase financial support to programs that assist older adults with bill paying and budgeting tasks.	
	28C. Infuse financial services programming into City of Rochester older adult programming locations, to support older adults living in poverty in these neighborhoods.	
29. Increase participation in public benefit programs and services.	29A. Host financial clinics in targeted locations, to provide eligibility and application assistance to older adults who qualify for public benefit programs.	
	29B. Increase the number of older adults receiving public benefits, especially the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.	
	29C. Connect older adults to financial support for internet access and Lifeline telephone benefits with smartphone technology options.	

For more information about
the Monroe County Aging Alliance,
visit us at <https://monroeagingalliance.org>.



LIVABLE COMMUNITIES
Rochester and Monroe County



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