



CITY OF AUBURN HILLS

# AGE-FRIENDLY 2015 ACTION PLAN







April 23, 2015

Ms. Karen Kafantaris, State Director  
Michigan AARP  
309 N. Washington Square #110  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Ms. Kafantaris,

On behalf of the city of Auburn Hills, we are proud to present to the Michigan AARP our 2015-2018 Age-Friendly Action Plan. Since we enrolled in the Age Friendly Communities Network, residents, city officials, business representatives, and nonprofits have come together to create a vision of what Age-Friendly looks like now and will look like in the future in the city of Auburn Hills. We learned more about the residents that we represent, as well as what we can do to improve their overall quality of life. Many of our older residents enjoy our city events, parks, and plan to stay in Auburn Hills as they age. However, as they get older new barriers will arise such as means of transportation, lack of age-friendly housing options, and a need for more sidewalks.

This Action Plan is the start of our journey to creating a city that will be ideal for residents of all ages for years to come. It will serve as a guide as we continue to commit to improving our citizens' and visitors' access to our community. What is unique about this document is while it focuses on our older residents, the changes that we make will benefit all residents, regardless of their age.

Upon approval of our action plan, we hope to continue to create partnerships that will strengthen our community and seek opportunities that will add value to this historic initiative. We are very proud of the participation from all the members of our Auburn Hills community and look forward to moving towards becoming an even greater place to live, work, play, and age.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin R. McDaniel'.

Kevin R. McDaniel  
Mayor of the City of Auburn Hills



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# INTRODUCTION

According to the 2010 Census Data from the Southeast Council of Michigan Governments (SEMCOG), Auburn Hills has 21,412 residents. 2,011 of those residents are ages 65 and over. By 2035, SEMCOG projects that the number of residents ages 65 and older will increase to 7,345. This creates not only a community that is older, but one that comes with a variety of ability. This will change our city's future policies on housing, transportation, and programs offered to residents age 55 or older. To prepare for these changes, the city of Auburn Hills enrolled in American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Age-Friendly Communities Network in August 2013.

Auburn Hills is the first municipality from the State of Michigan to be accepted into this prestigious and growing network. The vision for the commitment came from Auburn Hills Senior Services Director, Karen Adcock. She saw a need to bring the program to the community and better plan for the future. Adcock has been following the demographic shift closely and decided the program was a great way to learn and prepare for future changes. The Age Friendly Communities Network Program is a five year, four stage process. This program involves an assessment of the community, creation of an action plan, implementation of the plan, and evaluation of its performance.

## OUR EFFORTS ARE GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- Respect and support of all citizens
- Access and inclusion for all
- Further community engagement in decision making
- Livability and accountability

The overall mission of the Age-Friendly Auburn Hills initiative is to transition into a city where all generations are welcome. As a city, we are committed to engaging our citizens by providing opportunities for residents to assess what that city does well, and suggest ways to improve. Through Auburn Hills' open citizen forums, community members can come together to plan a future that includes age-friendly initiatives and retain citizens for life.

The AARP Age-Friendly Community Network Program recognizes communities that thrive in inclusion of all generations. The goal of this program is to provide local governments with the tools they need to be accessible to all ages. AARP assists local governments all over the country as they identify issues and improve the livability of their city. They also provide communities with information related to best practices and new initiatives.

Members of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities are committed to giving their older residents the opportunity to live rewarding, productive and safe lives. Participants have the ability to connect with communities around the world that are also engaged in the same mission. Auburn Hills uses these partnerships to build upon the community's strengths and address any gaps.

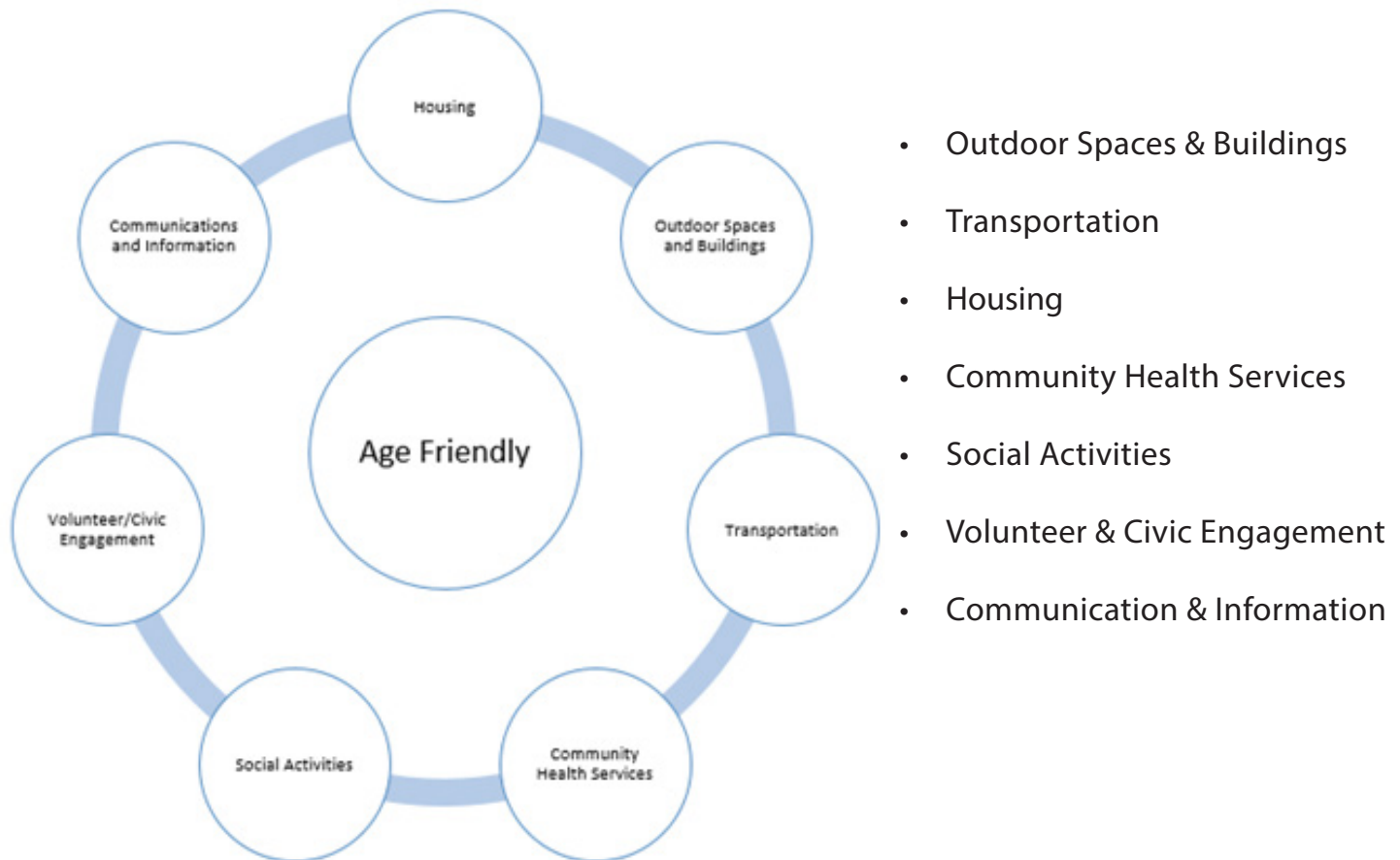
The Age-Friendly Action Plan identifies indicators of success. These indicators will be used to measure our success for the next three years. After the three year cycle is complete residents, city employees, and community leadership will come together to evaluate progress. This group will identify accomplishments, and what new goals the city should take on to become better for all ages. This process will become an ongoing cycle that we will use as a tool to become a more livable community for residents of all ages.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Auburn Hills is a distinguished leader in southeast Michigan. Home to 21,000 residents, as well as a workday population of approximately 100,000, Auburn Hills continues to be a thriving global business address. It is home to over 80 international corporations and hosts the World and North American headquarters for numerous outstanding businesses such as Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, Continental Automotive Systems, Faurecia, and BorgWarner. Auburn Hills' residents enjoy the amenities of city and suburban living with parks, a revitalized downtown district and a welcoming city complex with a library and community center. Additionally, the city has four colleges and universities, the award winning Palace of Auburn Hills sports and entertainment complex and Great Lakes Crossing Outlets, one of the state's largest destination shopping centers, providing a variety of cultural, social and educational opportunities to residents, workers and visitors. Learn more at [www.auburnhills.org](http://www.auburnhills.org).

# AGE-FRIENDLY AUBURN HILLS

Members of the AARP Age-Friendly Communities are committed to providing the older residents in their community the chance to have fulfilling, dynamic, and safe lives. The city of Auburn Hills has identified seven domains of livability that impact the quality of life for residents of all ages.



## AGE-FRIENDLY PLANNING ASSISTANT

To assist in the assessment and planning phases of the Age-Friendly Communities Network, the Community Development Department allocated funds for the creation of an Age-Friendly Planning Assistant. This part time position is responsible for forwarding the development of the Age Friendly Action Plan. Duties included participation in Age-Friendly Auburn Hills Leadership Team meetings, coordination of community assessment projects, preparing reports, and other tasks that support the Age-Friendly Auburn Hills initiative.

# WHO DOES THE AGE-FRIENDLY PROGRAM IMPACT?

The Age-Friendly Program will affect citizens of all ages in that live, work, or play in Auburn Hills. Although the main focus is on the city's aging population, the age-friendly community concept is welcoming to individuals of all ages.

Some action items identified in the Action plan include expanding walkability, implementation of an age-friendly business program, and implementing community paramedicine. These action items will not only improve the lives of our seniors, it will improve the overall quality of life for all residents that use our sidewalks or shop in our community.

These action items will also affect local organizations in the community. For example, by expanding walkability, more people are able to use the public infrastructure. In addition, more patrons will then be able to visit a variety of businesses and nonprofits. This helps major employers in the community, restaurants, shops, tourist attractions, and many more. Implementing these action items will not be simple. Creating a successful program will take key community leadership and partnership to collaborate and create the best possible, and cost effective solution. With the help of current and new partnerships, we will be able to achieve the goals identified by our residents.

## AGE-FRIENDLY AUBURN HILLS LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Age-Friendly Auburn Hills Leadership Team is a mix of city departments and community leaders who volunteer their time to engage the Auburn Hills community in the Age-Friendly Communities Program. These members work together to expand awareness of opportunities for residents to voice their opinions on age-friendly efforts. This Committee also oversees the creation and implementation of the Age-Friendly Auburn Hills Action Plan.

- **Karen Adcock** - *Director of Senior Services (Co-chair of Leadership Team)*
- **Steve Cohen** - *Director of Community Development (Co-chair of Leadership Team)*
- **Karen Kafantaris** - *AARP Associate State Director*
- **Shawn Keenan** - *Assistant City Planner*
- **Karrie Marsh** - *Executive Assistant to the City Manager*
- **Maria Willett** - *Age-Friendly Community Planning Assistant*
- **Bob Pierce** - *Planning Commission Member*
- **Doreen Olko** - *Chief of the Auburn Hills Police Department*
- **Dawn Keiser** - *Deputy Treasurer*
- **Kathleen Novak** - *Deputy Clerk*
- **Diane Bright** - *AARP Volunteer*
- **Stephanie Carroll** - *Manager of Business Development and Community Relations*
- **Donald Grice** - *Assistant City Manager*
- **Samantha Mariuz** - *Management Assistant, City Manager's Office*
- **Stephanie McCoy** - *Library Director*

The Leadership Team periodically reported back to the Planning Commission and City Council. Planning Commission and City Council members also actively participated in various community outreach events that contributed to the action plan. They also provided the Leadership Team with feedback as the team continued the baseline assessment.



# ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

This Action plan was created from several interactions with older residents, including:

- Seven Community Conversations - Spring 2014
- Survey of Auburn Hills Residents - Ages 50+ Spring 2014
- Five Focus Groups - Fall 2013 to Fall 2014
- Business Roundtable with Local Businesses and Non-Profits that interact with older residents - January 2015
- Three Age-Friendly Auburn Hills Action Plan Development Committee Meetings - February 2015 to March 2015

These community engagement opportunities were selected in an effort to give seniors, and businesses or nonprofits that interact with seniors, a chance to participate and give their feedback on improvements the city could make. Through these events, the community identified 20 action items along with steps, resources, obstacles, solutions, possible partners, a timeframe, and indicators of success.





Dear Resident,

It is my pleasure to present to you the 2014 Survey of Auburn Hills residents – age 50 and older. This survey was executed in partnership with the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons).

A big thank you goes out to all the residents that took the time to voice their opinions through this survey and share their thoughts with us. We received 627 responses back that let us know what aspects of a city are the most important to you and where the city should focus its attention as we continue to move forward.

The information gathered from this survey along with our Community Conversations, Focus Groups, and Business Roundtable will be used to help residents, local businesses, and city employees as they work together to create our Auburn Hills Age Friendly Action Plan.

This action plan will help guide the city as we continue to strive to make our community a great place to live, work, and play for residents of all ages.

Again, thank you for helping us with this exciting and historic initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin R. McDaniel'.

Kevin R. McDaniel  
Mayor of the City of Auburn Hills

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hosting these Community Conversations required collaboration from many members of the Auburn Hills Community. Our Age-Friendly Leadership Team has been an essential part of these outreach events. They have helped plan events, lead discussions, and gather information from residents. The support from these team members have helped maximize the Age-Friendly engagement the city has with the community. Committee members include:

- **Karen Adcock** - *Director of Senior Services (Co-chair of Leadership Team)*
- **Steve Cohen** - *Director of Community Development (Co-chair of Leadership Team)*
- **Karen Kafantaris** - *AARP Associate State Director*
- **Shawn Keenan** - *Assistant City Planner*
- **Karrie Marsh** - *Executive Assistant to the City Manager*
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- **Stephanie McCoy** - *Library Director*

The Planning Commission, Senior Services Department, and City Council were also crucial to the success of these Community Conversations. Many member of these groups assisted our leadership team in collecting information from residents and providing feedback. Because of their efforts, the Age-Friendly Leadership Team was able to provide several opportunities for residents to share their thoughts. The Leadership Team will use this feedback to improve and identify upcoming needs for our community. We are very appreciative of their strong, consistent support of these organizations as we move forward in the Age-Friendly Communities Program.

We also would like to thank the following organizations for allowing us to host these Community Conversations in their facilities:

- Avondale School - Grant Graham Elementary & High School
- Auburn Hills Baptist Church
- Auburn Hills Christian Center
- Great Lakes Golf & Sports Complex
- The Meadows of Auburn Hills
- Meadow Creek Village - National Church Residences

In order to determine what city programs and services will be needed in the future, it is important to first hear from the people that will be most affected; our residents. Thank you to all our residents that took time to sit down with us and share their vision for an Age-Friendly Community. It is because of their active participation in this program through Community Conversations and similar events that we are able to move forward. Without their efforts, creating an Action Plan would not be possible. We look forward to continuing to partnering with residents, local businesses, and nonprofits as we move forward with the implementation and evaluation of our Age-Friendly Action Plan.

Special thanks to the Michigan Municipal League for highlighting the city of Auburn Hills' efforts and writing this article in their May/June 2013 issue of the Review Magazine. We would also like to thank the Area Agency on Aging 1-B for producing a report on the impact of the senior population growth for residents for residents to use as a tool when creating the Age-Friendly Action Plan

# COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

The Age-Friendly Auburn Hills Leadership Team held seven Community Conversations involving 210 residents of all ages. Each Community Conversation lasted about two hours and were held from February 2014 to May 2014. Community Conversations were also held in a variety of locations. Having multiple locations and dates allowed the Age-Friendly Leadership Team to gather feedback from residents in all parts of the city at their convenience. Community Conversations were advertised in the Auburn Hills Review. Residents could also learn about the events from flyers posted, the city blog Developing Thoughts, and information posted on the city website.

During the Community Conversations, each participating resident received a booklet. This booklet contained Age-Friendly Community information, the agenda, and a story published in May/June 2013 issue of the Review Magazine featuring our age-friendly efforts. Members of

the Age-Friendly Auburn Hills Leadership Team helped lead discussions. Questions asked to participants included:

- “Do you intend to stay and live in the Auburn Hills and the surrounding areas as an older person?”
- “What’s it like to walk and drive in Auburn Hills and the surrounding areas as an older person?”
- “In what ways does Auburn Hills include (or not include) you as an older person in activities and events?”

Members of the Auburn Hills Leadership Team recorded the responses to these questions. Residents also shared their “Rock Star Ideas” to improve their quality of life in Auburn Hills. The Age-Friendly Planning Assistant took the recorded opinions and organized them by appropriate domain of livability. Example domains of livability include Housing and Transportation. Once organized, thoughts that were stated by residents repeatedly could be identified.

## AGE-FRIENDLY AUBURN HILLS

By 2030, the population of people age 65 and over is expected to double its current size. This significant increase in older residents will impact city policies, daily operations, services, and new projects. Because we are devoted to the well-being of our citizens, we have begun to take proactive steps and partner with AARP to prepare for emerging needs of our older adults.

In an effort to make our community a great place to live, work, play, and age the city of Auburn Hills was the first city in the State of Michigan, and 14th in the nation, to participate in the AARP Age-Friendly Communities Network. The Age-Friendly Communities Network assists local governments like the city of Auburn Hills in developing a place that is ideal for residents of all ages to live.

The Age-Friendly Community program requires Auburn Hills to create a three-year plan of action for the community based on findings from our Community Conversations and continuing assessment. Upon approval of the action plan, the community will begin implementation. After the plan has been in place for five years, a progress report will be submitted to the AARP Network. Evaluation of the needs of the city of Auburn Hills will be ongoing, involving residents of all ages to identify new priorities as the plan progresses.

As an Age-Friendly Community, the city is striving to make advancements in the following domains of livability: ***Outdoor Spaces & Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Community Health Services, Social Activities, Volunteer & Civic Engagement, Communication & Information.***

Making improvements in these areas will not only benefit our seniors, but the entire community. The city of Auburn Hills is dedicated to improving the lives of all citizens so they can be prepared for future needs, and enjoy aging in their homes throughout their lives.

The goal of these Community Conversations was to provide a way for residents to share what they will need as they age directly with the city employees leading this initiative. Together, participants and city employees were able to find ways to improve Auburn Hills as our residents get older.



# KEY FINDINGS : HOUSING

## ***Keeping their independence***

For many of Auburn Hills' older residents, having a home is a part of the American Dream. However, staying in their home can come with many barriers. Many residents expressed the need for modifications to their homes such as wider hallways, handrails, walk-in showers, and ramps. These new additions to their home would make maneuvering around their home easier as they age. Residents also stated concern about outdoor maintenance of their home. Activities such as cutting the lawn, shoveling snow, and cleaning out the gutters can become physically taxing on residents as they age. To resolve this issue and keep their yard space, participants suggested providing smaller, more manageable homes.

Because of this wide range of physical and financial capabilities, participants voiced a need for an increase in housing choices. Residents feel that Auburn Hills currently does not have enough housing with age-friendly aspects for future needs. Residents would also like to see new options such as cottages, duplexes, and assisted living that will accommodate their physical abilities.

## ***Building a sense of community***

Bringing more businesses to the city of Auburn Hills emerged as a prominent theme in all Community Conversations conducted. Residents view living close to city features as a key component in their quality of life. Seven aspects of cities were offered by participants as important for residents to live close to.

- Medical facilities
- Pharmacies
- Grocery stores
- Shopping centers
- Sit down restaurants
- Parks

Especially in situations where older residents may not have consistent transportation, having easy access to the things they need becomes a priority. Attracting new businesses like restaurants and medical facilities helps people spend their money here in our community. The closer city features are to the residents, the easier it will be for older residents to live, work, and play in Auburn Hills. Participants suggested encouraging age-friendly developments near these city features. This will potentially allow older residents to walk to get the things they need and make it easier to participate in community activities.

## ***Staying in the budget***

For many older residents, their home is the biggest part of their budget. This is especially true for residents that are living on a fixed income. Older residents shared concerns that the cost of outside yard maintenance and indoor home modifications may be more than what they can afford in the future. Through this discussion residents concluded that they not only need housing options that have age-friendly features, they also need housing options to be affordable. Affordability is a priority for our residents. Having these type of housing options will allow older residents to keep their independence without barriers.

## **ROCK STAR IDEAS!**

- Subdivisions could have association fees for snow removal and lawn care
- Make sure garbage containers are age-friendly
- Host an event to educate residents on how to make their home more age-friendly
- Create and publish a list of dentists and doctors who specialize in elder care

# KEY FINDINGS : TRANSPORTATION

## ***Walkability***

Having the ability to walk to different places in Auburn Hills is important to our residents. Being able to incorporate walking into their daily activities can have a number of health benefits. Walking also provides residents of any age an affordable way to get to nearby locations. Participants believe that creating a community that is more pedestrian and biker friendly will improve their quality of life. They mentioned different barriers that currently hurt the walkability of Auburn Hills. These barriers include cracked cement, lack of lighting, and a concern that they would be unable to cross the street in the timeframe currently set at city crosswalks.

When discussing solutions, residents focused on how walking in Auburn Hills could become a safer experience. Many ideas such as increasing the number of crosswalks, increasing the walk time at crossings, and installing more signage were discussed as ways that the city could provide a more walkable community. Residents also placed an emphasis on the importance of having shaded, well lit benches. By providing this amenity, the city would be able to promote more outside activity. Well-lit areas would also make it easier and safer for residents to walk in the evening.

### ***Adapting to Abilities***

As our residents age, their ability to drive safely may change. Residents have a variety of concerns behind the wheel. Some residents are not sure when driving will become a problem. Many older residents expressed the anxiety they currently feel on the road. Roads mentioned included Walton Blvd., Squirrel Road, Dutton Road, and Baldwin Road. Traffic congestion, speeding, and driving when it is dark or cold, were all things that make drivers nervous. For residents who may have difficulty reacting to potential driving hazards, this can make getting from point A to point B difficult.

### ***Current Transportation System***

In all Community Conversations, residents expressed that the most important features of the bus system is affordability and convenience. Residents offered a range of recommendations including implementing a scheduled set route and monthly trips to Great Lakes Crossing Outlet Mall. Some respondents reported they would also like to have the ability to use the bus in the evening. In addition, participants discussed the idea of allowing riders to purchase a monthly bus pass to make riding the bus more affordable for those who are on a tight budget.

When asked what they would like to use the bus for, several residents talked about the need to have the bus take them to and from medical appointments. Some residents have several doctors at different locations and are only able to get there with the help of a family member. Having an on-call bus system was seen as a possible solution to this issue.

## **ROCK STAR IDEAS!**

- Install more lighting in the downtown area
- Implement a volunteer driving program
- Educate residents on transportation programs
- Provide emergency phones in public areas

# **KEY FINDINGS : RESPECT, INCLUSION AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**

### ***Communication***

Residents receive information from the city in a number of ways including: the city calendar, the Auburn Hills Review, the city website, and the local newspaper. Many participants said that the Auburn Hills Review is the primary way they get their city information. Many residents also stated that they do not use a computer, email, or the internet. This limits the ways that the city can get information to these specific residents.

The Age-Friendly Leadership team also discovered that many of the suggestions from residents were for programs and services that the city currently provides. This discovery indicates a need to find ways to better communicate with our residents about what we provide. Some ideas to get the word out offered by residents included a refrigerator magnet with contact information or an Auburn Hills phone app. Many participants stated that city communications should be placed throughout the city so residents have easy access to this information. One suggestion made was to install an easily changeable bulletin board with upcoming events for residents that could be displayed in different locations such as the Meadows of Auburn Hills.

### ***Intergenerational activities***

When conversing about current community wide events, residents provided positive feedback on their experiences. Residents would like to see an increase in events and programs that provide opportunities to interact with people of all ages in the community. Participants also would like to see ways that older residents could share their knowledge and experiences with younger residents. They discussed a variety of programs that could connect the two generations through volunteering.

For example, Auburn Hills could partner with local schools or churches to provide high school students interested in receiving volunteer hour opportunities to either rake leaves or shovel snow for older residents. The possibility of a mentorship program was also discussed. Through this type of program, older residents could assist younger residents in their personal and professional growth either through one-on-one interactions, job shadowing, or a special lecture. The city could also partner with local schools to provide opportunities for seniors to share the knowledge and expertise through after school programs.

A wide range of suggestions for new events were mentioned, including:

- Auburn Hills Idol in the Park
- Comedy Night
- Celebration of the 60s
- Movies in the Park
- Game Night

Participants hope that as the city grows, there will be more city wide events to attend.

### **Community Center**

When brainstorming new Community Center programs, participants came up with several great ways to engage residents. Ballroom dance classes, classes on aging well, and a community garden were just a few of the many Rock Star Ideas that residents shared. Residents also mentioned an interest in knowing who else signed up for a city program, similar to a public Facebook event.

Participants in all Community Conversations also saw a need to increase the amount of physical space and the variety of classes provided at the Community Center. The fitness center was mentioned repeatedly by residents as needing more equipment and space to accommodate its popularity with residents. By providing more space for activities like exercising, the city could expand its programming and engage more residents.

### **ROCK STAR IDEAS!**

- Community Bonfires at Hawk Woods Nature Park
- Install alert sound for crosswalk or electronic buttons for pedestrians to change the light, and add more time to cross
- Time Bank Program - Exchange of services instead of money
- Workshop on Aging Well Successfully

## **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

The city of Auburn Hills is dedicated to providing efficient quality service to our residents and businesses. We aim to provide a healthy, vibrant community in which to live, work and play. The city currently provides a number of resources for our community. Our transportation services, volunteer opportunities, and city events are just a few of the reasons residents live in Auburn Hills.

Through partnerships with individuals, neighborhoods, and businesses, we strive to enhance the quality of life and create a community for all ages. As we continue to improve Auburn Hills, we will identify ways that we can improve our livability. Some of the ideas that we have heard through these Community Conversations have already been put into action. One of these ideas was delivering the Auburn Hills Review to each door in the senior housing units. This idea received positive feedback and we plan on continuing this initiative.

There was also a need stated by residents to have transportation for city summer concerts and Community Center potlucks. This initiative did not engage the community like we expected. Transportation was available to five summer concerts and a few potlucks, but unfortunately residents did not sign up. We also have created magnets important resources for residents with contact information and have done research time bank programs.

These Community Conversations are just one of many outreach events we will host for the members of our community. We will continue to seek feedback through focus groups, a survey, and a business and nonprofit roundtable. The information gathered at these events will then be presented to residents that volunteer to sit on the Age-Friendly Action Plan Development Committee. This group will meet three times to identify what steps the city should take during the next three years to create a more livable community.

Again, we would like to thank the many citizens and staff members who have supported our commitment to the AARP Age-Friendly Communities Network. With your help, we can provide a community that is ideal for all generations to live, work, and play.

If you are interested in learning more or participating in this initiative, please visit our website at [www.auburnhills.org](http://www.auburnhills.org) or contact Karen Adcock, Director of Senior Services at [kadcock@auburnhills.org](mailto:kadcock@auburnhills.org)

# FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT

The city of Auburn Hills is committed to creating an ideal community for all ages. As part of the assessment of the age-friendliness in the community, the Age Friendly Leadership Team conducted three focus groups in the fall of 2014. These focus groups allowed residents to participate in the Age Friendly Communities Program and share their ideas for a better Auburn Hills. These focus groups focused on five of our seven domains of livability: Housing, Communication and Information, Social Activities, Transportation, Community Health Services, and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings.

The Age Friendly Leadership Team provided these focus groups to provide residents a way to share their opinions in a quiet, more intimate setting. Focus groups had much smaller groups of residents than our Community Conversations. Because of the unique size, residents were able to provide the city a more in-depth perspective on what they will need as they age.

## *Focus Groups Conducted*

### **SEPTEMBER 25, 2013**

This focus group had both men & women ages 50 and above.

### **SEPTEMBER 27, 2013**

This focus group had both men & women ages 50 and above.

### **SEPTEMBER 22, 2013**

This focus group had five women ranging from age 65-77. Years lived in Auburn Hills varied from 5-60 years.

### **SEPTEMBER 2, 2014**

This focus group had two women and one man ranging from age 60-72. Years lived in Auburn Hills varied from 15-21 years.

### **OCTOBER 3, 2014**

This focus group had four men ranging from age 71-75. Years lived in Auburn Hills varied from 19-45 years.

## *Questions asked in Focus Groups*

- Do you live in a home, apartment or mobile home?
- Do you plan to continue to live where you currently are as you get older, or are you going to move?
- If you move, what sort of housing would you be looking for?
- If you are going to remain where you are, is your home laid out to be age-friendly?
- Do you experience difficulty maintaining your home?
- How do you get information about what is going on in the city?
- What events do you like or would like to see the city do?
- Are there any city programs or services that you find helpful?
- What businesses would you like to see in the downtown area?
- What is it like to drive/use the bus in the city?
- What is it like to walk in the city?
- Are the health services you use easy to access/understand?
- What do you see yourself needing in the next 5-10 years?
- Lastly, if you had 10 minutes to speak with community, state or federal decision makers, what would be two things you would tell them that senior citizens and/or their caregivers need the most to have a good quality of life?

# FOCUS GROUP KEY FINDINGS

## *Housing*

The housing needs of seniors in the city of Auburn Hills reflect a wide range of ability levels. Many seniors have homes that do not have age-friendly modifications. These homes also require a considerable amount of indoor and outdoor maintenance. Residents expressed a desire to stay in these homes as long as possible. Residents also plan to stay healthy and active to achieve this goal.

It can be challenging for residents to find age-friendly homes. Some seniors have actively looked for housing that

will accommodate their potential needs, yet, the search has been difficult and lengthy. Others are new to the idea of installing age-friendly home modifications, and hope to have more information provided in the future. Many residents have a senior parent that lives with them. This means residents have to consider the abilities of their parents, as well, when selecting a home. This can also impact the decision to choose a senior living facility. Participants were very interested in the possibility of senior housing coming to the city of Auburn Hills.



### ***Communication & Information***

Seniors learn about city events through many channels. These different channels include flyers, the Auburn Hills Review, local cable channel, and interaction with City Council members. Many focus group participants use the Community Center often. When they visit, they flip through the featured flyers to learn about upcoming programs. Seniors also expressed an interest in having other local events featured at the Community Center. One example given was providing information about shows at Meadow Brook Theater.

There was a broad spectrum for technological abilities of older residents. For older residents, technology can be challenging. Some seniors do not have access to a computer at their home. One senior compared using a computer to learning a new language. On the other hand, other older residents use the city website often. Tech savvy seniors stated for them it was a convenient way to get information. They also enjoyed that they had the ability to register for classes online, instead of making a trip to the Community Center.

### ***Social Activities***

Seniors gave positive feedback about events in the city. They hope that as the city continues to grow, the city will create more ways to engage residents. Focus group participants stated an interest in events that involve music and community service.

Seniors also voiced an interest in continuing their education as they age. Seniors would like to attend one of our local educational institutions. One of the barriers seniors encounter is that they are not aware of any discount rates that may be available. Participants suggested a partnership between the city and local educational institutions. The goal of this partnership would be to provide free or discounted courses for older residents.

### ***Community Health Services***

Residents would like to be able to have healthy food options in the city of Auburn Hills. Maintaining a wholesome diet is now a priority. Residents are more aware of the ingredients in their food. They are removing processed food items from their grocery carts. Residents suggested attracting a local grocery store to the city. If a new grocery store came to Auburn Hills, residents would not need to travel to other cities to get the food they desire.

Many seniors are also caretakers for their parents. They expressed a desire to increase awareness of services such as respite care. Focus group participants also said that in the past, the Community Center offered free health services. An example given was free health screenings. Participants stated that they enjoyed this benefit. Residents hope that in the future, the Community Center will provide these health services.

### ***Outdoor Spaces & Buildings***

Auburn Hills' residents expressed excitement about the new developments they see. However, they do not view the downtown area as a destination for residents. They hope that this increase in business will continue to soar and expand what is available to residents.

Residents also use the many trails and sidewalks in the city. They noted that in the past 15 years, there has been a huge increase in the amount of sidewalks the city has. Participants stated that they would like to continue to see more sidewalks. Participants also felt sidewalks needed an increase in continual maintenance. One participant commented that she observed sidewalk cracks in residential areas. This made her concerned about her safety when using city sidewalks.

## **FUTURE STEPS**

The city will use the information received from these focus groups to assist us in the development of our 2015 Age-Friendly Action Plan. This plan will outline the city's age-friendly priorities for the next three years. As we move forward, we will continue to gather thoughts and opinions from the members of our community. Thank you to our residents that sat down and shared their experiences and perspective on life here in Auburn Hills.

# BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY REPORT

The Age-Friendly Leadership Team held a Business Roundtable on January 15, 2015. Our community is unique because we are known for our world-renowned retail, entertainment and manufacturing. We also have a number of nonprofits that have chosen to make Auburn Hills their home. Because these businesses and nonprofits interact with residents every day, we sought to find a way for these organization to engage in the Age Friendly Communities program.

Twenty-two business and nonprofit representatives attended the Business Roundtable and provided their insight. Through this event, we learned about what older residents need from the perceptive of a business or nonprofit representative. Participants discussed several ways that we can improve the quality of life in our community. This information was collected and then used to assist in the creation of the 2015 Age Friendly Action Plan.

The city of Auburn Hills designed the Business Roundtable to gather information regarding our seven domains of livability with the following questions:

- Has your business made any changes to accommodate the needs of older customers?
- What changes do you see your business or nonprofit needing to make in the next 5-10 years to attract seniors?
- What kinds of trends do you see in your older customers/clients?
- Do any of the seniors you interact with have barriers that may deter them from coming to your place of business? (ex. difficulty driving, products on high shelves)
- How would you like to be educated on Age-Friendly practices that businesses/nonprofits could use?
- How do you receive information about events/programs in your city?
- Would you be interested in joining a network of businesses committed to age-friendly changes?
- As a leader in the community, what do you think the city should do to improve the quality of life for senior citizens?

In order to determine what city programs and services will be needed in the future, it is important to first hear from the people that will be most affected; our residents. Thank you to all our residents that took time to sit down with us and share their vision for an Age-Friendly Community. It is because of their active participation in this program through Community Conversations and similar events that we are able to move forward. Without their efforts, creating an Action Plan would not be possible. We look forward to continuing to partnering with residents, local businesses, and nonprofits as we move forward with the implementation and evaluation of our Age-Friendly Action Plan.

# THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE: RECOMMENDED CHANGES

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During this event, participants expressed three ideas for Auburn Hills that will help create a community for all ages. These three ideas will remove barriers for our residents of all ages. While these ideas may come with challenges, they can be realized through partnerships with individuals, businesses, and nonprofits.

## **IDEA 1 : INCREASING THE OPPORTUNITIES RESIDENTS HAVE TO RECEIVE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

- Partner with local universities to provide a car share program
- Partner with private companies to decrease the current cost of the city transportation program
- Research the opportunity for seniors to use My Ride 2 (provided by AAA 1-B)
- Spread awareness of driving education for older residents
- Spread awareness of new transportation services such as Uber and Lift

## **IDEA II: INCREASE COMMUNICATION OF AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESSES IN THE COMMUNITY**

- Host a Senior Expo featuring programs and services available in the community
- Incorporate Age-Friendly information into the Meals on Wheels program
- Partner with businesses to provide a coupon book that showcases age-friendly businesses
- Partner with public safety officials to provide home safety checks
- Provide a directory of Age-Friendly services
- Reach out to local newspapers to provide residents with Age-Friendly information

## **IDEA III: ENSURE THAT LOCAL BUSINESSES OFFER CLEAN, HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE BATHROOMS**

- Create an age-friendly business network. This program could encourage businesses to offer accessible bathrooms. This program would also encourage large font signage to assist older customers.
- Showcase businesses that provide Age-Friendly amenities on the Auburn Hills blogs and social media
- Spread awareness of legal requirements to provide accessible bathrooms

# DOMAIN ONE : HOUSING

Auburn Hills is home to 21,000 residents. About 50.6% of the homes in Auburn Hills are owner-occupied. According to the Area Agency on Aging, 2,539 households in Auburn Hills have one or more residents that are ages 60 or older in 2010. Out of these, 313 households are seniors that live alone. To assist senior residents, the city utilizes the Senior Home Assistance Repair Program, Meals on Wheels, and the Rake and Run program to provide low income residents the services they need to stay in their home for as long as possible.

The housing domain focuses on ensuring that there are home modification programs and a variety of housing options available to older residents so that they do not have to move away when they get older. As our residents continue to age, there will be a demand for housing modifications and new housing that will accommodate a range of physical abilities. Our housing action items focus on ensuring that our residents are able to live in their home safely without any barriers.

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #1

### **Encourage developers to think about universal design features (steps, single level units, low maintenance)**

#### **Activities**

- Connect developers with community development, financing, and age-friendly housing information
- Support transit and transit-oriented development
- Encourage affordable housing developments for older residents

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Planning Commission and Senior Services

#### **Timespan**

- September 2015 - December 2016

#### **Resources and Support**

- Channel for homeowners to find licensed contractors that have received training on home modifications
- Demand for affordable and age-appropriate housing
- State of Michigan – Building codes need to align with age-friendly guidelines

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Channel for homeowners to find licensed contractors that have received training on home modifications
- Demand for affordable and age-appropriate housing
- State of Michigan – Building codes need to align with age-friendly guidelines

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Connecting developers with governmental resources
- Flexibility in zoning and incentives to builders
- Host a program and highlight demand for age-friendly housing to developers
- Partner with Oakland County Community and Home Improvement Home Repair Program
- Develop a universal design recommendation guide

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- AARP
- Builders
- Chamber of Commerce
- Churches
- City Council
- Community Development
- Construction Association of MI
- Faith Based Housing Agencies
- Homeowners Association for Senior Communities
- Housing and Urban Development
- Local business owners
- MISHDA
- Planning Commission
- Senior Services Department

#### **Metrics**

- Creation and distribution of an age-friendly housing guide for contractors
- Increase in the availability of accessible housing
- The number of properties that are under development for age-friendly housing
- Increase in the number of residents that plan to stay in Auburn Hills



## ACTION PLAN ITEM #2

### Build awareness of local and reliable home contractors

#### Activities

- Create a “how to select a contractor” guide
- Provide a list of contractors for residents at the Community Center
- Provide a list of contractors on the city website, cable channel, newsletter

#### Responsible Departments

- Community Development and Senior Services

#### Timespan

- November 2015 - November 2016 (ongoing)

#### Resources and Support

- Link with Chamber of Commerce for potential contractors
- List of licensed and insured contractors from the Community Development Department
- Local cable channel, newsletter space, web page
- Time and personnel to compile list of agencies

#### Potential Barriers or Resistance

- Cost of providing printed list to residents who may not use the internet
- Ensuring that information on home contractors is updated and accurate
- It may be difficult to identify reliable contractors.

#### What solutions exist for these obstacles?

- Advertise the list of contractors
- Directory of local home contractors
- Providing computer access to residents

#### What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?

- Better Business Bureau
- CAPS Contractors
- Chamber of Commerce
- Community Development Department
- Department of Public Works
- Senior Services Department
- SHARP Program

#### Metrics

- Establishment of the list of local contractors
- Number of clicks to web page featuring list of home contractors
- Number of print copies taken by residents
- Increased knowledge of how to select a licensed contractor
- Creation of a Home Fit program
- Implementation of a Housing Expo

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #3

### Partner with emergency services to provide safety checks on seniors and/or disabled residents during power outages or inclement weather.

#### Activities

- Create a volunteer calling program
- Establish a “neighbors check on neighbors” program
- Establish a non-emergency phone number for calls
- Establish a strong relationship with emergency services

#### Responsible Departments

- Community Development

#### Timespan

- March 2016 - August 2016

#### Resources and Support

- A small group or committee to coordinate the program
- Fire department cadets and volunteers
- Funding for program
- List of homeowners with addresses and phone numbers
- Police department
- Red Cross
- VOADS (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)
- Volunteers
- AARP

#### Potential Barriers or Resistance

- Identifying appropriate emergency services
- Recruiting volunteers
- Reluctance of people to be put on a list

#### What solutions exist for these obstacles?

- Develop a volunteer recruitment and training plan
- DPW/Police and other department collaboration
- Establish a neighbors check on neighbors program
- Homeowners notify city department if they would like to be on an emergency call list
- Require generators for apartments and senior housing developments

#### What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?

- Chamber of Commerce
- Consumers Energy
- Department of Public Works
- Detroit Edison
- Emergency Services
- Local service clubs
- Oakland County
- Partnership with Rochester Mutual Aid
- Rotary Club
- Senior Services Departments

#### Metrics

- Establish a “neighbors check on neighbors” program
- High satisfaction for safety rating of Auburn Hills city wide survey
- Number of businesses, churches, and volunteers involved in program
- Increase in the number of residents signed up for the safety checks program

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #4

### Improve Communication of Age-Friendly Housing Options available in Auburn Hills

#### Activities

- Create a Health and Housing Fair for residents
- Highlight new housing options available through developers
- Utilize local cable channel, Community Lifestyles, Auburn Hills Review, website brochures, and press releases
- Partner with Chamber of Commerce to spread awareness

#### Responsible Departments

- Community Development

#### Timespan

- January 2016 - March 2017

#### Resources and Support

- Communication and Marketing Plan
- Volunteers that will compile list of available housing

#### Potential Barriers or Resistance

- Marketing costs
- Residents may not have access to a computer or the internet

#### What solutions exist for these obstacles?

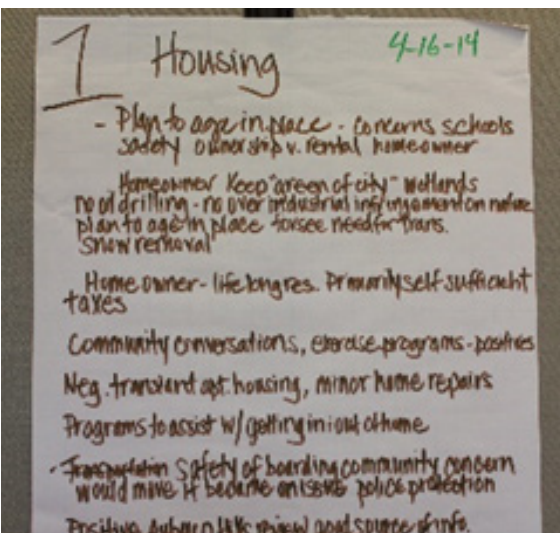
- Advertising housing options on the local cable channel, city web page
- Educational opportunities involving younger age groups (40-50)
- Partner with a housing counselor that will explain housing options
- Utilize the Michigan housing locator website

#### What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?

- AARP "Home Fit" program
- City Council
- City Manager
- Community Development
- Department of Public Works
- Developers
- Housing and Urban Development
- Housing Realtors
- Oakland County
- Senior Services Department

#### Metrics

- How many residents stay in Auburn Hills
- Number of appointments scheduled with the Community Center
- Older residents voice that they have the correct type of housing to match their needs
- Increase in knowledge of available housing options in Auburn Hills



# DOMAIN TWO : OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

The city of Auburn Hills is home to five parks that host a variety of programs and events for all residents. The City is also home to the E. Dale Fisk Hawks Woods Nature Center, a skate park, and the Clinton River Trail. These parks provide a number of recreational activities including disc golf, basketball, volleyball, and camping. Currently, the city has 63 miles of sidewalk and 59 miles of pathways.

The Outdoor Spaces and Buildings domain focuses on the parks walkways, and buildings within the city. To be considered age-friendly, these features must be accessible and available to residents of all ages. As we increasingly have more residents that get older, more residents may no longer have the ability to drive. This will make having easy walking access to local businesses and public services even more important. Having a walkable community promotes healthy living practices to residents of all ages.

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #5

### Improve walkability of Auburn Hills, including bike paths and trails

#### **Activities**

- Clear overgrowth through adopt-a-trail program
- Connect Squirrel Rd to Hawk Woods
- Connect University Dr. to Opdyke Rd. with the I-75 Bridge
- Create a loop system on North, South, Grey Rd, and S. Blvd
- Identify areas where bike paths & trails can be connected
- Install benches and outdoor lighting
- Install Emergency Phones
- Install sidewalks and benches in Cross Creek Pkwy.
- Install wider sidewalks, create a plan for routine maintenance
- Investigate state and federal grants
- Level out steps at Auburn/Oakmont
- Make sure pathways, sidewalks, & trails are clearly defined
- Partner with DPW to ensure clear sidewalks year-round

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services
- Department of Public Works
- Parks and Recreation Department

#### **Timespan**

- September 2015 - September 2018

#### **Resources and Support**

- Create a walkability plan
- Establish a bench sponsorship program
- Funding/grants
- Implement an assessment of the sidewalks to ensure all sidewalks are wide enough for wheelchairs
- Land for more bike paths and trails
- More personnel focused on maintenance
- Water refilling stations and benches
- Support from the community

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- City does not plow pathways – liability
- Don't live close enough to path (and don't drive)
- Funding to widen sidewalks and increase the number of bike paths/trails
- Connecting trails to create loops will be expensive
- Limited personnel
- Need to ensure it won't infringe on private property rights
- Ordinances regarding electric bikes
- Ordinances regarding routine maintenance

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Budget plan for walkability
- Parks & Recreation Millage Proposal
- Individual maps of biking and trail systems
- Federal grants
- Improve existing sidewalks and finish started projects
- Include expected costs of expansion in the plan
- Install emergency phones on the trails to improve safety
- Install lighting along the trails and pathways
- Pave Clinton River trail
- Provide transportation to park trails
- Volunteers to conduct walkability assessment
- Walking groups/buddy

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts
- City Council
- Community Development Department
- Department of Public Works
- Local Businesses
- Oakland County
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Planning Commission
- Police Department
- Property owners
- Senior Services
- State of MI

#### **Metrics**

- City Council approval of walkability plan
- Establish a walkable/biking and bussing center
- Increase in residents engaging in activities on the trails
- Increase in residents shopping downtown
- Increase of volunteers in the parks



## ACTION PLAN ITEM #6

### Host an Age-Friendly Business Program

#### **Activities**

- Create a directory of age-friendly businesses
- Partner with business to provide senior discounts
- Partner with stores to provide deliveries for homebound seniors

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services
- Community Development
- City Manager's Office

#### **Timespan**

- June 2016 - June 2017

#### **Resources and Support**

- List of local businesses
- One page application with criteria
- Point person/committee for program
- Stickers for businesses to display their age-friendly business program participation

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Businesses may need expensive updates to be suitable for all ages
- Businesses may see benefits of participation
- Marketing new program to businesses will take time and resources
- Time and cost of approving businesses/continually updating directory

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Charge an administrative fee to cover directory expenses
- Encourage businesses to participate by providing advertising opportunities through an age-friendly business directory
- Create a volunteer age-friendly business committee of residents and chamber members that will be responsible for evaluation and approval of potential age-friendly businesses

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Chamber of Commerce
- Churches
- City Manager
- Senior Services Department

#### **Metrics**

- Number of participating businesses in the program
- Creation of an Age-friendly business directory
- Number of stores that provide deliveries for homebound seniors
- Number of businesses that provide more handicapped parking spaces than the required minimum.





# DOMAIN THREE : TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is available for senior citizens and eligible disabled individuals residing in the city of Auburn Hills. Our two mini buses are equipped with a lift to accommodate wheelchair riders and provide curb to curb service. Transportation is free for residents ages 62 and older and the bus travels within a five mile radius of city boundaries.

When looking at the Transportation domain, one should consider if the current public and private transportation options are safe, available, and affordable. In some parts of the city, older residents have a difficult time walking or driving around the city safely. Others are unaware of other affordable methods of transportation, including our two city buses. In addition to these concerns, the demand for city transportation will increase with our aging population. The following action items work to address these issues.

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #7

### Increase sponsorship/funding opportunities for transportation programs

#### **Activities**

- Create a partnership with private companies to utilize vehicles
- Finding and developing sponsor relationships
- Explore the possibility of billing insurance companies for transportation for medical visits
- Provide information regarding transportation service options for medical appointments

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services

#### **Timespan**

- June 2016 - June 2018

#### **Resources and Support**

- List of possible grants opportunities
- Sponsorship process and vehicle donation program
- Strategic plan to engage stakeholders and obtain sufficient financial resources
- Volunteer vehicle drivers

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Increase in transportation budget
- Time required to manage sponsorship program
- Additional staff may be needed to drive buses

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Research best practices for increasing partnerships for transportation program
- Partnerships in with businesses and local universities

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Chamber of Commerce
- City Council
- City Manager's Office
- Grocery Stores
- Local Businesses
- Private transportation companies
- Senior Services Department
- SMART transportation systems
- Local universities

#### **Metrics**

- Securing sponsorships for transportation system
- The purchase of additional buses



## ACTION PLAN ITEM #8

### Increase ridership of the bus program.

#### **Activities**

- Build covers for bus stops
- Install bus stops with electronic tools that update you on bus route (e.g. mobile app)
- Create shuttle route that is a consistent loop (Great Lakes Crossing, downtown and city campus)
- Invite SMART to identify opportunities to increase ridership and assist with transportation awareness throughout the community
- Provide a fixed route for shuttle services

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services

#### **Timespan**

- June 2016 - June 2018

#### **Resources and Support**

- Funding for bus stop covers, lighting, manpower, and time to install bus stops
- Knowledge on ADA compliancy

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Convincing the community to allocate resources
- Funding for advertising to increase awareness
- Riders need the bus route times to fit their schedules
- Traffic concerns
- Unpredictable pickup times

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Build covers for bus stops in conjunction with SMART
- Create a partnership with local universities
- Have fixed routes
- Identify more methods to communicate the bus program, such as magnets
- Increasing the number of bus stops
- Partner with businesses to provide sponsorship opportunities

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- City Council
- Local cable channel
- Senior Housing
- Senior Services Department
- SMART transportation systems

#### **Metrics**

- An increase in the number of riders
- An increase in the awareness of the bus program

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #9

### Ensure Public Safety – Driving and Walking

#### **Activities**

- Host education classes for driving (such as CarFit)
- Update lanes so they are more visible to drivers
- Install audible signal devices for pedestrian crosswalks with accessible countdown sidebar
- Research tools for effective group discussion about when it is time to give up your keys

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services
- Department of Public Works
- Community Development
- Police Department

#### **Timespan**

- September 2015 - February 2017

#### **Resources and Support**

- Funding to update roads and sidewalks
- Increase street lighting on roads
- Trained people to provide assessment of car modifications
- Update crosswalk signals

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Downtown parking changes cause difficulties
- Encouraging seniors to take the class
- Funding to update road infrastructure
- Seniors may feel like they lose their freedom when they give up keys
- Seniors that have lost driving ability and continue to drive

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Create sponsorships for classes
- Crosswalks with signs to add visual and written directions
- Identifying partnerships with organizations that focus on public safety

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Insurance Companies
- Oakland County Road Commission
- Partner with the State of MI for required driving tests
- Police Department
- Department of Public Works
- Senior Services

#### **Metrics**

- Fewer pedestrians accidents in the community
- Number of participants in the driving education class
- Number of audible signal devices installed
- Number of street lights installed

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #10

### Building awareness of affordable means of transportation

#### **Activities**

- Build awareness of transportation programs that private and nonprofit offer, UBER etc.
- Create a transportation guide
- Explore the CarShare program

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services
- Marketing and Communications

#### **Timespan**

- June 2016 - June 2018

#### **Resources and Support**

- Grants
- Students with access to cars
- Transportation options
- Use private busses when not in use

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Coordination of the CarShare program
- Ensuring seniors are able to find drivers that are experienced and dependable
- Insurance and Liability problems
- Marketing of plan

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- College/Universities (offer credits)
- Liability waivers
- Provide managers of the senior homes should have a list of transportation resources to inform the residents.
- Someone to manage the CarShare program
- Electric bikes

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Area Agency on Transportation
- Faith in Action volunteer program
- Law Firm
- Local Churches
- Local universities to offset parking fees for helping seniors
- Police Department
- Seniors Services Department
- SMART Transportation Services
- Total number of volunteers giving rides

#### **Metrics**

- Monetary value of volunteer hours
- The participation of seniors in the program
- Total number of volunteers giving rides
- Creation of a transportation guide
- Increase in awareness of available transportation
- Increase in bus ridership

## DOMAIN FOUR : COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

The Auburn Hills Community Center partners with Crittenton Hospital Home Care to bring in a registered nurse to do routine blood pressure screenings, answer questions, and provide information about available resources. Seniors can attend monthly caregiver support group meetings, scleroderma support group meetings, or meet with a licensed social worker from Oakland Family Services. Senior Services also has a Health & Wellness Coordinator position that is responsible for the development and management of senior health, wellness, & fitness programs.

The community health services domain seeks to make sure that residents have access to homecare services, clinics, and programs that promote their overall wellness. Some residents have expressed a need to better understand healthcare, nutrition, and health practices. As they get older, residents want to have access to education and services that will help them to live healthy lives.



## ACTION PLAN ITEM #11

### Educate residents on community health services

#### Activities

- Marketing of community based exercise programs, KnoxBox, and Vial of Life kits
- OU Health Fairs: individual vendors (yoga, cooking)
- Utilize Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine or hospitals for healthcare screenings
- Partner with local organizations to increase awareness of local health fairs

#### Responsible Departments

- Senior Services
- Police Department
- Fire Department

#### Timespan

- September 2015 - September 2016

#### Resources and Support

- Marketing of health fairs
- Medical students assist seniors with screenings
- Transportation to event(s)
- Volunteers to assist during the Health Fair

#### Potential Barriers or Resistance

- Need to find doctors that have an interest in community health programs
- Insurance carrier dictates location of health services
- Need a contact person from Baker, OCC and OU
- Price for KnoxBox
- Some residents may not be interested in participating

#### What solutions exist for these obstacles?

- Communication and marketing plan
- Encourage residents by explaining benefits
- Take the fair to senior housing and promote other resources

#### What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?

- Auburn Hills Public Library
- Baker College
- Cooley Law School – Health Care POA
- DHS for Medicaid recipients
- Electronic Boards
- Fire Department
- Local Universities
- Oakland County
- Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine
- Senior Services Department
- State of MI
- YMCA

#### Metrics

- Advertisement of local health fair on web site
- Number of attendees at Health Fair
- Number of health fairs offered in Community Center
- Increase in knowledge of local community health services



## ACTION PLAN ITEM #12

### **Provide community engagement focused on healthy living**

#### **Activities**

- Bring the health insurance companies to the businesses and to the residents
- Create a community garden
- Install outdoor exercise equipment within the parks
- Partner with Michigan State University extension program to teach canning program
- Provide classes focused on cooking with organic foods
- Provide healthy food options for the senior nutrition program
- Spread awareness about options to order grocery food from home

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services

#### **Timespan**

- September 2015 - September 2016

#### **Resources and Support**

- Computers to access online health services
- Contact person to coordinate community garden activities
- Contact with grocery stores
- Gardening supplies
- Grants and sponsorships to provide funding
- Need land for gardens, plants, seeds, etc.
- Volunteers

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Age limits (some programs are 65+)
- Finding volunteers that will coordinate the community garden program
- Garden will need continued maintenance
- Getting sustainable funding/sponsorship
- Need stores that are willing to deliver food
- Potential lack of demand or need
- Resistance to eating healthy foods
- Will there be liability tied to healthy food recommendations?

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Compile list of groceries stores that will deliver
- Grant for outdoor exercise equipment at Riverside Park
- Healthy foods campaign
- Recruit volunteers to deliver groceries

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Area Agency on Aging
- Auburn Hills Public Library
- Home Depot/ Lowe's for supplies
- Insurance Companies
- Legal Agencies
- Meadow Creek Housing
- National Church Residences
- Older Persons Commission
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Senior Services Department
- The River Church
- Volunteers to pick up groceries
- Whole Foods, Trader Joes

#### **Metrics**

- Implementation of a community garden
- Increase in the number of volunteers
- Increase healthy options for the senior nutrition program
- Increase in the use of outdoor fitness equipment
- Increase in the number of programs focused on healthy living

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #13

### **Implement Community Paramedicine - EMTs & Paramedics operate in expanded roles in an effort to connect underutilized resources to underserved populations.**

#### **Activities**

- Establish what they are qualified to monitor
- Fire department will partner with hospital to start program
- State of Michigan will need to establish regulations

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Fire Department

#### **Timespan**

- January 2017 - January 2018

#### **Resources and Support**

- Extra personnel to assist with program
- Fire department representatives
- Students studying to become EMTs and Paramedics

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Hospitals to fund program
- Need regulations from the state to move forward
- Spreading awareness to residents

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Ask hospitals to sponsor a position
- Communication and marketing plan

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Fire department
- Local hospitals
- Senior services department

#### **Metrics**

- Number of people that have been serviced by the program



# DOMAIN FIVE : SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The city of Auburn Hills has a number of fun, engaging events throughout the year. From our summer concerts, farmer's market, and year round trips, there is something for every resident of any age. The Senior Services Program Developer is responsible for creating programs, classes, activities, travel, and special events for older adults. All city programs and events can be found in the Auburn Hills Review. Residents can request a print copy of the Auburn Hills Review to be mailed to their home, or view it online on the city website.

The social activities domain emphasizes having access to affordable leisure and cultural activities that not only gives them the opportunity to socialize with their peers, but with younger people as well. Through our discussions with residents, we learned that they hope to continue to interact with community members of all ages. However, older residents may experience challenges that can deter them from participating. Local business may not have easy access to products or restrooms in their building for customers with physical limitations. Older residents may be confused or frustrated with technology such as internet sites and smart phones as they continue to evolve at a fast pace.

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #14

### Increase the number of intergenerational programs

#### **Activities**

- Identifying the demand for certain intergenerational programs
- Marketing of events and programs
- Recruit volunteers to assist during programs

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services
- City Manager's Office
- Library
- Parks and Recreation

#### **Timespan**

- March 2016 - March 2018

#### **Resources and Support**

- Community organizations
- Marketing and event implementation plan
- Interest in new programs from residents and potential sponsors
- Volunteer coordinator to match grandparents and children
- Young residents interested in volunteering in assisted living home

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Costs of events
- Lack of personnel available to coordinate programs
- Marketing
- Some seniors may not have the ability to travel to Community Center
- Possibly not enough demand

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Creating volunteer opportunities for all ages in programs
- Host events at a variety of locations in the community
- Provide transportation for intergenerational programs
- Find organizations that are interested in sponsoring programs

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- All day youth camps
- Auburn Hills Public Library
- Boys and Girls Club, YMCA
- Community Center
- High Schools – Leadership program
- Home School Organizations
- Local Churches
- Recreation Department
- School Districts
- SMART transportation system
- [www.volunteermatch.com](http://www.volunteermatch.com)

#### **Metrics**

- Increase in attendance at events
- Increase in the number of volunteers for community events
- Increase in the number of intergenerational programs
- Number of seniors that volunteer to mentor students

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #14

### Seek partnerships with companies to provide technology-based classes to residents.

#### Activities

- Contact NHS – Avondale and see if students could volunteer
- Reach out to Oakland University students to volunteer as tech experts
- Partner with private technology companies to sponsor or teach classes

#### Responsible Departments

- Senior Services
- City Manager's Office

#### Timespan

- January 2016 – January 2017

#### Resources and Support

- Access to computers
- Instructors/Volunteers
- Knowledge of new technology

#### Potential Barriers or Resistance

- Many different versions of phones to understand
- Residents may be hesitant to attend program

#### What solutions exist for these obstacles?

- Demonstrations at senior events to advertise program
- Have a senior teach other seniors technology program
- Provide a technology hotline for residents to call
- Provide one-on-one teaching to educate resident on their specific technology
- Provide residents with "how to" handouts with photos
- Show "how to" videos on the local cable station

#### What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?

- Auburn Hills current 'Techy Thursdays' event
- Auburn Hills Public Library
- Chamber of Commerce
- Information Technology Department
- Network neighborhood – based on grant funds
- OCC instead of phone provider
- Senior Services Department
- Volunteer Coordinator

#### Metrics

- How many seniors start using phones/texting
- Increase in technological understanding among residents
- Number of participants at technology education programs

## DOMAIN SIX : VOLUNTEER & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The city of Auburn Hills provides a number of volunteer opportunities to residents and business in our community that can be found in the Auburn Hills Review or on the city website. The Senior Services Volunteer Coordinator partners with groups or individuals to match them with the opportunities that best fit their skills and schedules. Residents interested in volunteering can get involved in a number of programs including Meals on Wheels, Common Ground Crisis Helpline, the Senior Home Assistance Repair Program, and a variety of city event.

The volunteer and civic engagement domain focuses on giving residents of all ages the opportunity to volunteer and engage with their community. While talking to members of the community, the Age-Friendly Leadership Team discovered that some residents are want more ways to volunteer and some are looking for local volunteers to assist them. Some residents have very specific one time needs like help with fixing their computer or home maintenance and are looking for ways to connect with potential volunteers.



## ACTION PLAN ITEM #16

### Better utilize volunteers

#### **Activities**

- Identify what volunteer opportunities match best with our volunteers
- Offer volunteer opportunities to local educational institutions
- Partner with schools program that require volunteer hours and identify opportunities to use their skills
- Provide volunteer registration online
- Update list of current volunteers

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Library
- Police Department

#### **Timespan**

- September 2015 – September 2017

#### **Resources and Support**

- An updated list of what departments use volunteers and for what
- Increase in the marketing and communication materials for volunteer opportunities
- Webpages that target different audiences of volunteers (youth, college students, seniors)

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Difficulty marketing volunteer opportunities to interested residents
- Providing immediate access to information, resources, and people

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Gather feedback from volunteers about why they volunteer
- Match volunteers with their skills
- Providing opportunities for residents to volunteer as a family
- Use city web site, newsletter, and email past volunteers about new opportunities

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Auburn Hills Public Library
- Churches
- Local Business Clubs
- Local schools
- National Night Out Committee
- Parks and Recreation Department
- PTO groups
- Senior Services Department
- YMCA

#### **Metrics**

- Development of a list that compiles all city volunteers
- Increase of residents signing up to volunteer

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #17

### Implement a Time Bank - a reciprocity-based work trading system in which hours are the currency

#### **Activities**

- Appoint someone in charge
- Establish a partnership with Pontiac
- Establish a resource list of people and their services

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services

#### **Timespan**

- September 2016 – September 2018

#### **Resources and Support**

- Directory of Time Banks within area
- Interested residents
- Point person to write grants
- Reputable time providers

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Ensuring participants feel confident that volunteers are reputable
- Not enough people in the beginning stages
- Obtaining initial funding to start the program
- Recruiting a point person to run the program

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Bring in a nearby time bank to speak about benefits
- Communications and marketing plan
- Partner with current volunteer programs
- Provide background checks

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- City Manager
- City of Rochester Hills, city of Rochester
- Local business retirees
- Mayor
- Pontiac Time Bank
- Senior Services Departments

#### **Metrics**

- Establishment of a time bank
- Number of Participants in the time bank program

# DOMAIN SEVEN : COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

The city of Auburn Hills communicates with residents and business owners in several ways including the Auburn Hills Review, Social Media, LinkedIn, Flickr, four blogs, Cable channel, a distributed events calendar and Nixle. Nixle is a community notification service that is free and allows residents to receive alerts sent out by the police department directly to their mobile phone.

The communication and information domain gives Auburn Hills an opportunity to examine the methods used to connect to residents. To be considered age-friendly, residents of all ages should be able to easily access the information they need. During the Community Conversations with residents, we heard suggestions for a lot of great programs and services that are currently available for residents. This indicates that there is a need to find innovative and new ways to connect with our residents and share what the city has to offer.

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #18

### Update city web site with larger font options

#### Activities

- Create a communication strategy to educate residents on how they can enlarge the web site text
- Research various software possibilities

#### Responsible Departments

- Senior Services
- City Manager's Office

#### Timespan

- September 2015 – February 2016

#### Resources and Support

- Funding for new software needs
- Information Technology Assistance

#### Potential Barriers or Resistance

- May be difficult to change certain aspects of the website (calendar)
- May require redesign and web page reformatting
- Not knowing how to increase the font size
- Residents may not be willing to learn

#### What solutions exist for these obstacles?

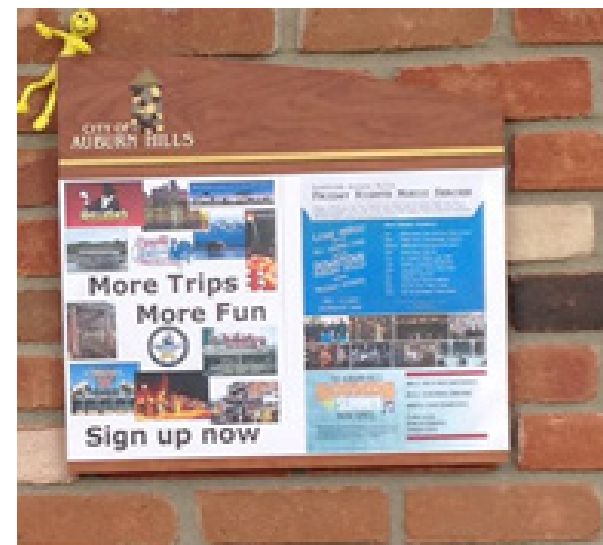
- Communicate new features through local cable channel, web site, and newsletter
- Create awareness of alternatives (Smartphones allow enlargement easily)
- Test the new changes with a focus group of residents first

#### What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?

- Information Technology Department
- Senior Services Department

#### Metrics

- Increase in number of residents using the web site
- Number of clicks daily that change font size





## ACTION PLAN ITEM #19

### Increase distribution of Auburn Hills Review to all residents

#### **Activities**

- Advertise the ability to request Auburn Hills Review through the water buck slip
- Identify public locations to place the Auburn Hills Review
- Print Auburn Hills Review on a more cost effective material
- Research the costs of increasing distribution

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services
- City Manager's Office

#### **Timespan**

- September 2015 – February 2016

#### **Resources and Support**

- Funding for postage
- Point person to manage increased distribution
- Various locations throughout city to distribute Auburn Hills Review
- Volunteers to distribute Auburn Hills Review

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Cost of providing Auburn Hills Review to all residents
- Permission to place Auburn Hills Review in public locations

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- Mail to all households with an opt out option
- Print on cheaper grade of paper
- Provide a link on the main city webpage
- Provide sponsorship opportunities to offset new costs

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Churches
- City Manager
- Homeowner associations
- Local businesses

#### **Metrics**

- Increase in city event attendance
- Increase in awareness of city services

## ACTION PLAN ITEM #20

### Increase marketing of city events

#### **Activities**

- Build kiosks downtown and at Great Lakes Crossing that provide current city information
- Create a phone line that explains current and future events
- Improve utilization of the local cable channel, city calendar, and Community Lifestyles
- Install electronic signs advertising events
- Send a newsletter specifically for senior residents, use to advertise events
- Send out e-blasts for city events monthly

#### **Responsible Departments**

- Senior Services
- City Manager's Office

#### **Timespan**

- September 2015 – September 2016

#### **Resources and Support**

- Billboard signs
- Calendar
- City personnel and volunteers
- Dedicated phone line for event updates
- Funding for increase in marketing efforts
- Local cable channel
- Point person for plan

#### **Potential Barriers or Resistance**

- Ensuring marketing targets interested individuals
- Expensive to increase outreach
- People might be confused by recording

#### **What solutions exist for these obstacles?**

- City Department collaboration
- Establishment of a strategic marketing communications plan

#### **What individuals and organizations should be informed or involved with these tasks?**

- Chamber of Commerce
- City Manager's Office
- Community Development Department
- Local Businesses
- Senior Services Department

#### **Metrics**

- Increase in event participation
- Installation of information kiosks
- Creation of phone line for events
- Installation of electric signs featuring events



# CONCLUSION

As we move into this next phrase of the Age-Friendly Communities Program, we are excited to have the opportunity to make a positive impact for residents of all ages. This plan will help us to gage the progress we make over the next three years and ensure that we are doing what we can to improve the overall quality of life.

Thank you to everyone, especially our residents, for helping to make this Action Plan. Your willingness to participate in the process and have your voice heard is the foundation for all the initiatives that we will be implementing for the next three years. As we continue to move forward, please do not hesitate to let us know any new ideas you have by going to our Age-Friendly webpage at [www.auburnhills.org](http://www.auburnhills.org) and submitting them in the Rock Star Ideas Comment Box.

## CONTACT US

City of Auburn Hills - Senior Services Department  
1827 N. Squirrel Road  
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Karen Adcock - Director of Senior Citizen Services  
Phone : 248-370-9353  
Email : [kadcock@auburnhills.org](mailto:kadcock@auburnhills.org)

# AGE-FRIENDLY AUBURN HILLS PARTICIPANTS

Thank you to all our residents, business partners, and community leaders that helped us create our action plan! With your help, we were able to create a plan that will create a community for all ages.

Al Westbrook  
Al Widowski  
Alicia Kader  
Allen Sunitt  
Andrea George  
Andrea Mulheisen  
Angel Lou  
Angela River  
Ann Heilbrun  
Anna Romig  
Anne Anderson  
Annie Seay  
Anthony Coblér  
Antonio Macias  
Arif Heiskic  
Art Gruener  
Art Rouser  
Aurora Gonzalez  
Barbara Whitaker  
Bertha O' Rourk  
Betty Canyack  
Beverly Miller  
Beverly Morgan  
Bob Bruhn  
Bob Grusnick  
Bob Kittle  
Bob Mills  
Bob Pierce  
Bonnie Potter

Brian Marzolf  
Bruce Taylor  
Cami Johnson  
Candace Moore  
Carmen Ortiz  
Carol Verbeke  
Carol Wilson  
Carole Heben  
Carole Wilson  
Celeste Yoskovich  
Charles Love  
Charles W Pruitt  
Chauncey Hitchcock  
Cheryl Burke  
Cheryl Joy Bailey  
Christina Malcolm  
Conni Cox  
Darlene Kitchen  
Darlene MacMillan  
David Hazley  
David Heilbrun  
David Lonier  
Dawn Keiser  
Debbe Lang  
Debra Ehrmann  
Delores Rollin  
Denise Jones  
Dennis LiPugh  
Dennis Pugh

Dillon Wright  
Donald Nelson  
Donna Agusti  
Doreen Kitchen  
Doreen Olko  
Dorothy Chilkott  
Dorothy Sueme  
Dorothy C  
Dorothy Gordon  
Dorothy Patterson  
Dr. Adelaide Hughley  
E. Adams  
Eddie Taber  
Edward Lindsey  
Elaine Evans  
Elizabeth Brennan  
Elizabeth Rohmaier  
Elmer Jackson  
Fran Schuessler  
France Hoppingardner  
Frances Hoopingartner  
Frances Williams  
Fred Spencer  
Fritz Troff  
Gail Cartwright  
Garrett Douglas  
Georgia Ball  
Gilbert Hernandez  
Glenna K. Long

Gloria Gracey  
Grace O' Deven  
Greg Ouellette  
Greg Skorre  
Gwendolyn New  
Hanna Clampitt  
Helen Thomas  
Hester McFadden  
Hugh Mac Millian  
Ilene Ingram  
Isabella Doviney  
Isabella Gucher  
Jackie Smiertka  
James O' Rourk  
Jane Ozmun  
Janet Koss  
Janice Waun  
Jean Stewart  
Jeanne Ouellette  
Jeff Drafé  
Jennifer Magrita  
Jesse Dons Jr.  
Jesse Lillard  
Jim Mian  
Jim Whitaker  
Jo Ann E. Roberts  
Joan Allen  
Joanne Purty  
John Baker

# PARTICIPANTS CONTINUED

John Lang  
Joseph Yoblonski  
Joy Coons  
Joyce Boisveet  
Joyce Thompson  
Judy Said  
Julie Boomgaard  
Julie Murphy  
Karen Adcock  
Karen Bleitz  
Karen Brierly-Reagan  
Karen Glanz  
Karen Hyatt  
Karen Kafantaris  
Karen Love  
Karen Lowe  
Karen Roach  
Karrie Marsh  
Kate Logan  
Kate Viohl  
Kathleen Novak  
Kathy Pizzurro  
Kaye Thornton  
Kerrin Kresnak  
Kristie Kelly  
Larry Douglas  
Laura Ochs  
Laurice Markowski  
Lee  
Leslie Lord  
Linda Arendt  
Linda Hildebrand  
Linda Michno

Linda Sedan  
Lindsay Brieschke  
Lindy Fielk  
Liza Shone  
Logan Pizzurro  
Lorna Page  
Lorraine Calhoun  
Louise Moss  
Lue Stephens  
Lynn Kim  
Lynn Lim  
Madeline Erwin  
Madonna Van Fossen  
Mahine Hamilton  
Marcia Dove  
Marco Munoz  
Margaret Leonard  
Maria Bacik  
Maria Willett  
Marilyn Strawn  
Marlene Korff  
Mary Ann Grissman  
Mary Davis  
Mary Jane Nelson  
Mary Melega  
Mary Smith  
Mary Troff  
Maryanne Chrisman  
Matthew Ferri  
Mel Schott  
Melanie Norberg  
Michael Jones  
Michael Kreffel

Michael Rossi  
Michael Wrights  
Micheline Sommers  
Michelle Wtaker  
Mike Walrath  
Mildred Nelson  
Millie Baker  
Mo Klang  
Nadine Grabowski  
Nancy Al- Zokeir  
Nancy Delosh  
Nancy Mannaioni  
Nancy Schott  
Neneva Jackson  
Nick Shone  
Nicole Stallworth  
Otis Newkirk  
Paige Baranyai  
Pat Miller  
Patricia Houlett  
Patricia Lashett  
Paul Korff  
Paul Landsberg  
Paulette Tet  
Peggi Kern  
Peggy Marshall  
Phillip Clampith  
Rene Swanson  
Renee Gruener  
Rob Thornton  
Robert Hyatt  
Ron McCain  
Ron Melchert

Rose Wodonishi  
Sada Spahide  
Sandra Cummings  
Saundra Williams  
Shawn Keenan  
Shirley Brett  
Shirley Davis  
Shirley Voight  
Stephanie Carroll  
Steve Cohen  
Steve Langlois  
Steven Willaimson  
Sue Emery Justice  
Surjit Dhillon  
Susan Skorke  
Sylvia Clark  
Terri Ricketts  
Thelma Sarage  
Thomas Coolmm  
Tim Kern  
Tom Page  
Tracy Rettig  
Trudy Krig  
Tyson Brown  
Veronica Mitchell  
Virginia Smith  
Wade Spurlin  
Wanda Pruitt  
Wanda Salaske  
William Goodbar  
William Penciel

## ***City Council Members***

Mayor Kevin McDaniel  
Mayor Pro-Tem Robert Kittle  
Cheryl Verbeke  
Maureen Hammond  
Henry Knight  
John Burmeister  
Veronica Mitchell

Tom Tanghe, *City Manager*  
Don Grice, *Assistant City Manager*

## ***Planning Commission***

Greg Ouellette, *Chairperson*  
Sam Beidounm, *Vice Chairperson*  
Susan Emery, *Secretary*  
VeRonica Mitchell, *City Council Liaison*  
Chauncey Hitchcock  
Bob Pierce  
Eric Mendieta  
Carolyn Shearer

## ***Business and Non-Profit Participants***

AARP  
Alzheimer's Association  
Area Agency on Aging 1-B  
Arthritis Foundation – Michigan Chapter  
Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce  
Auburn Hills Rotary Club  
Center for Advanced Orthopedics  
Centro Multicultural La Familia  
Emery Benefit Solutions  
Heritage in the Hills  
Independence Township Senior Adult Activity Center  
Law Office of Matthew Ferri  
Meadow Creek Housing, National Church Residences  
Michigan Municipal League  
Pontiac Housing Commission  
Quality of Life Center – Adult Day Care  
The River Church  
SMART Transportation Systems