



Age-Friendly Communities Briefing

Economic Development
Project Team

April 14, 2026



Introductions

- **Layla Aslani**, City of Grand Rapids, Acting Assistant Planning Director
- **Jennifer Feuerstein-DiVita**, AARP, Associate State Director
- **Suzanne Callahan**, Senior Neighbors, President
- **Elyse Greene**, City of Grand Rapids, Age-Friendly Community Assistant

What We Will Cover

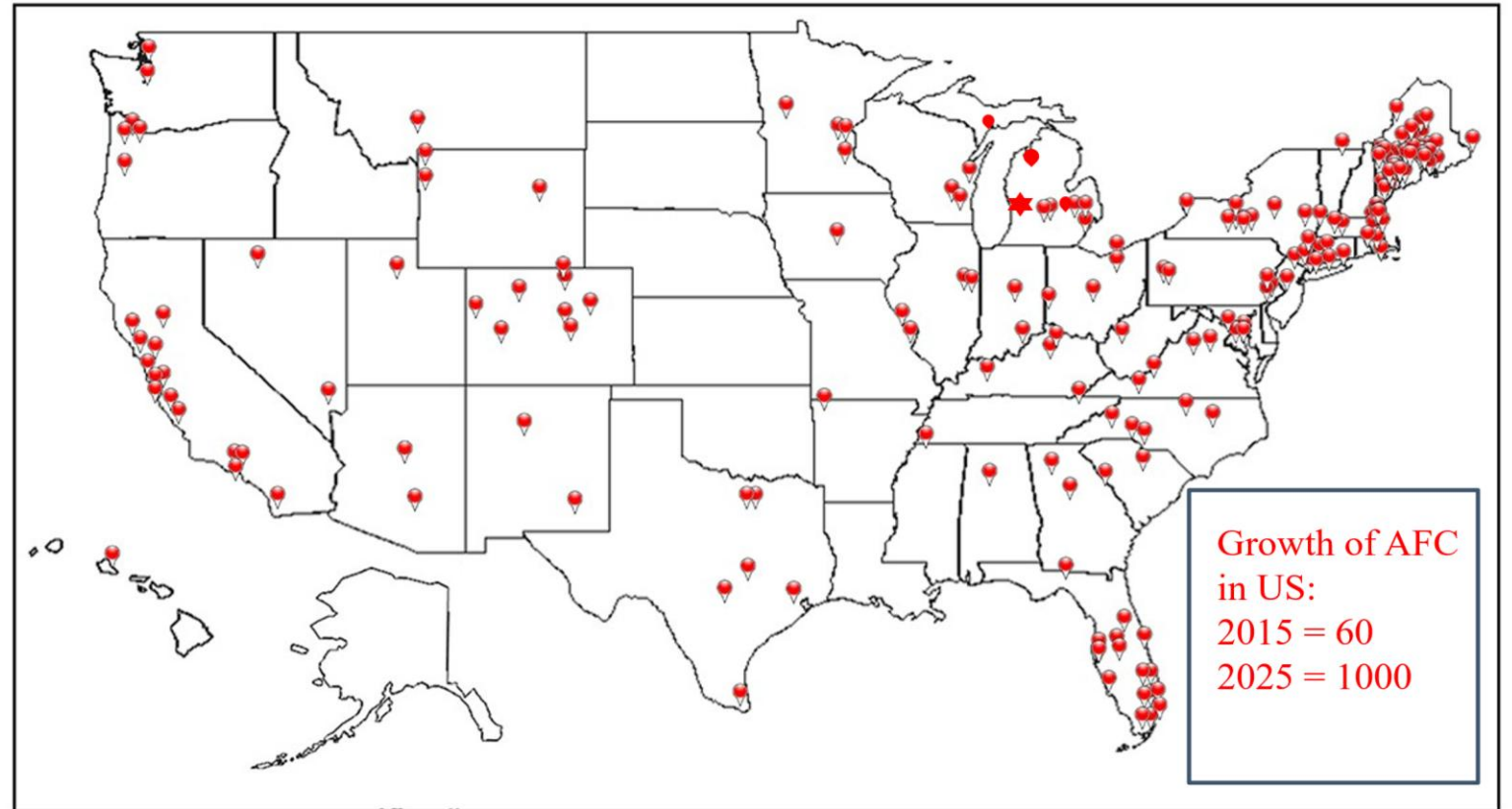
- What is Age-Friendly Communities?
- Why is it Important?
- History of Age-Friendly Grand Rapids
- Grand Rapids Age-Friendly Action Plan Focus
- Age-Friendly Action Plan Implementation

What is Age-Friendly Communities?

1000 Cities & Counting...

“An inclusive and accessible environment that promotes active aging, emphasizes enablement rather than disablement, and is friendly for all ages.”

- World Health Organization

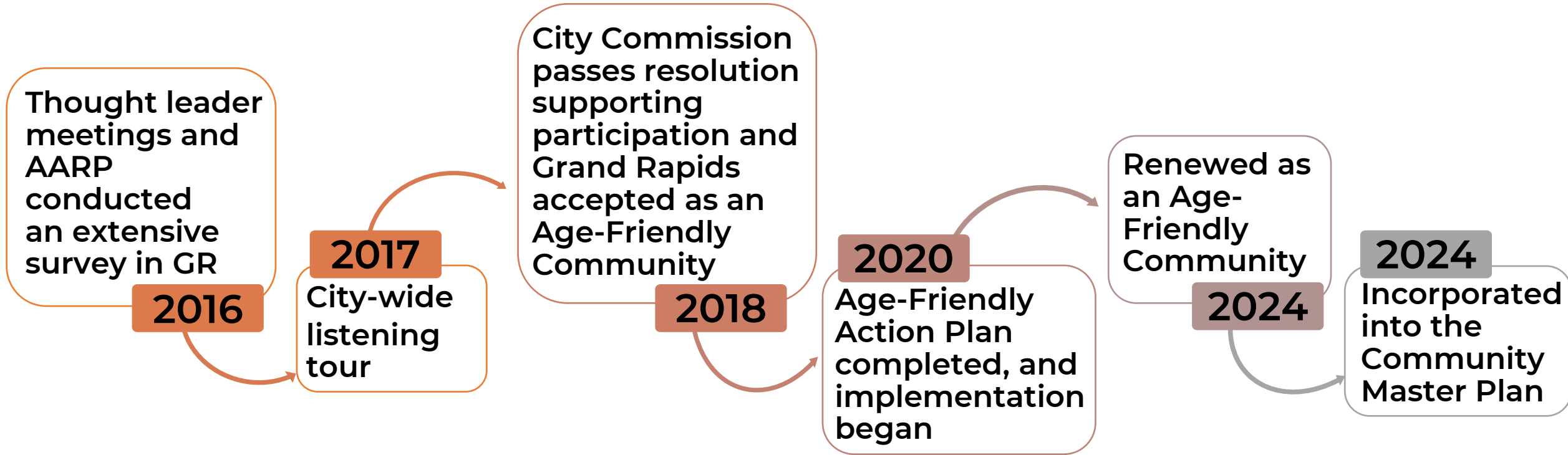


Why is it Important?

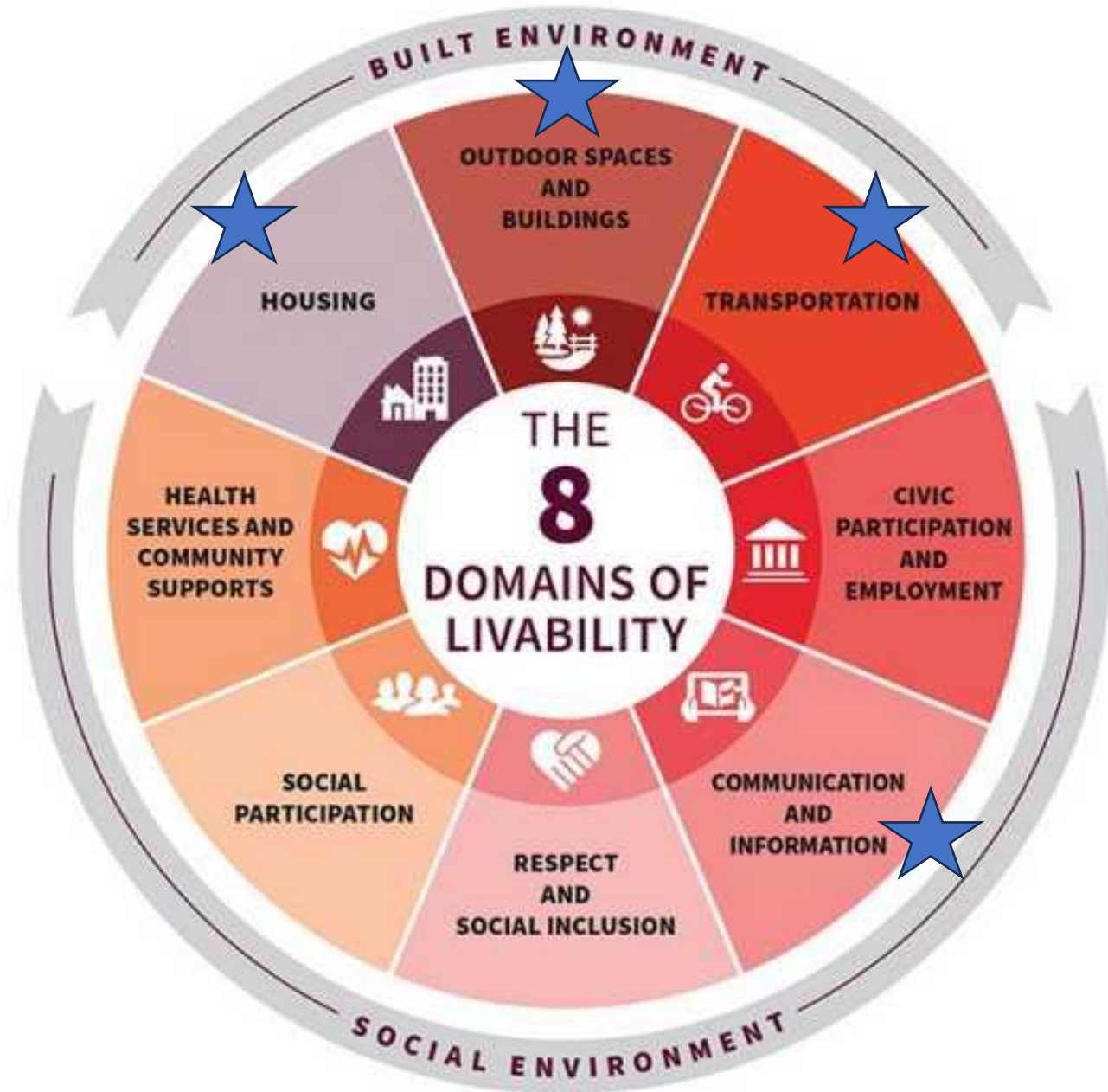
- It is estimated that by 2040, 22% of the total U.S. population will be over 65 years old
- Michigan's adults over 65 is 19.2%, ranking the state as the 14th oldest
- Kent County's adults over 65 is 15.4%
- Grand Rapids' adults over 65 is 12.9%
- Age 50+ households account for 59 cents of every dollar spent in Michigan



History of Age-Friendly Grand Rapids

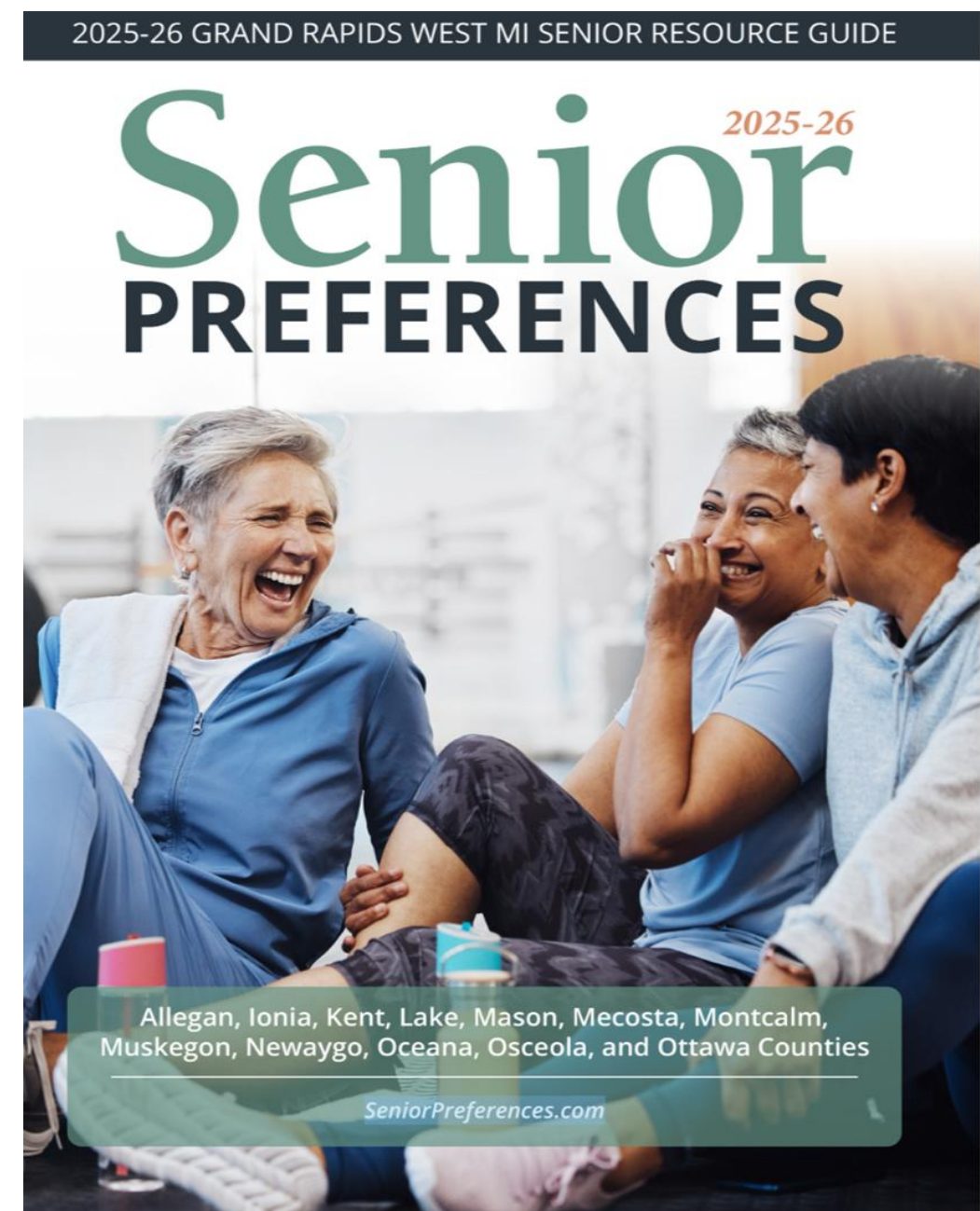


Domains of Livability



Communication

- Updated the city website to include maps of senior housing and key services available
- Partnered with the Senior Preferences Guide for West Michigan with an expansion of listings and distribution
- Ongoing focus on sharing information and resources with diverse populations



Housing

- Advocate for housing options for older adults, i.e., Accessory Dwelling Units and intergenerational housing
- Assured older adult population participation in the City of Grand Rapids and Kent County 2021 Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing focus group
- Support the Fair Housing Center to reduce ageism in the rental market



Outdoor Spaces

- Worked with Parks and Rec and Recreation to install and map senior-friendly amenities in parks
- The AARP Challenge Grant has been awarded to:
 - Benches in Creston
 - Painted Sidewalks in Creston
 - Outdoor Greenhouse at Dwelling Place
 - Georgie's Farm Market funding in Creston



Outdoor Spaces

- Piloted a neighborhood intergenerational walking program with funding from the Special Events Sponsorship
- Advocated for increased sidewalk snow removal and maintenance in neighborhoods with a higher senior population



Transportation

Planning staff has:

- Served on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Rapids' new Transit Master Plan
- Embedded Disability Advocates into Design Team for Vital Streets and development projects

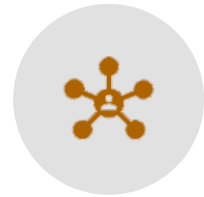


Next Steps

Continue to:



**Implement
the Age-
Friendly
Action Plan**



**Connect with
other Age-
Friendly
Communities
in Michigan**



**Partner with
senior serving
organizations
to support
them in the
work**



Questions?



For more details, please visit our website:
grandrapidsmi.gov/agefriendly

