# Dakota County Communities for a Lifetime Initiative

## <u>What Cities and Counties Can Do to Create Age-Friendly Communities</u>

| Issues | Key Challenges | Action Steps, Goals, Recommendations | Potential Partners |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Housing** | Affordable housing options are limited, forcing some people to leave their community. Too many people are paying > 30% of their income for housing, especially renters (58% of Dakota C. renters). | • Encourage development of a **full range of housing options** (rental apts., condos, single level units, independent and assisted living).<br>• Offer **tax incentives** for new affordable housing for older adults or mixed-age.<br>• Support projects funded through **HUD Section 202 housing**. | • *Housing developers*<br>• *Cities*<br>• *Trade groups*<br>• *Dakota County Community Development Agency*<br>• *Nonprofits* |
| | Home and building design is tailored to narrow range of physical abilities, when most people want to "age in place" and in their community. | • Institute **home modification** and **repair programs** and **loan fund**.<br>• Encourage and incentivize **universal design**, "visit-ability" in new housing.<br>• Enact **Accessory Dwelling Unit policy**. | |
| | Suburban housing, services and transit are typically not mixed or well-coordinated. | • **Build Transit-Oriented Development** (TOD): housing with walkable streets, transit options, and easy access to goods and services.<br>• **Create partnerships** with housing and service providers. | |
| **Planning, Zoning, and Land Use** | Land use and transportation planning affect how people and goods move from place to place. | **Integrate mixed land use** (housing, commercial and retail uses, and public services) to create more housing options, walkability, and shorten distances. | • *Cities*<br>• *Housing developers*<br>• *Transportation providers* |
| | Lack of public support for community design that supports aging in place/community. | • **Engage older adults/boomers** in the planning process.<br>• **Conduct focus groups** that include Boomers/older adults. | • *Cities*<br>• *Residents*<br>• *Community leaders*<br>• *Developers* |
| | Zoning regulations discourage a broad range of age-appropriate housing options. | **Update zoning codes** to encourage a range of housing options, including accessory dwelling units. | |
| **Outdoor Spaces, Parks** | Pedestrian crossings are often inadequate and unsafe; sidewalks in many communities are nonexistent or not connected to a larger system of sidewalks. | • **Improve pedestrian crossings** by providing adequate crossing times, non-slip markings, visual audio cues, etc.<br>• **Implement a sidewalk system** in key areas (near multi-unit housing, downtown) that is well-maintained, free of obstructions, and with curb cuts.<br>• Increase **green spaces**, **equipment**, and **outdoor seating** to make more welcoming to older adults, others. | • *Cites*<br>• *Counties*<br>• *Businesses* |

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| **Mobility/ Transportation** | Many older drivers experience specific difficulties related to the driving environment. | • Improve **signage, road design**, and **speed reduction** to save lives.<br>• Provide **safety programs** and **driving refresher courses** (ex. CarFit). | • *Transportation providers*<br>• *Cities*<br>• *Counties*<br>• *Community education*<br>• *Libraries*<br>• *Residents*<br>• *Businesses* |
| | Customer-oriented community transportation options are lacking. | • Create more **transit options** that are flexible and responsive.<br>• Support **volunteer driver programs**.<br>• Support a **shared shuttle** or **circulator bus**. | |
| | Road design can make walking, biking difficult and dangerous. | • Use **walk audits** to identify and prioritize pedestrian improvements.<br>• Implement **Complete Streets design**.<br>• Conduct a **Bike Pedestrian Plan**. | |
| **Health, Supportive Services, and Food Access** | Community information on available services is dispersed across agencies and providers. People aren't aware of what is available. | • Promote services such as **Senior LinkAge Line/One Stop**, www.MinnesotaHelp.info, **DARTS hotline** (651-455-1560)<br>• Create a **directory of information** (in print and online) that provides access to local service providers. | • *Health care providers*<br>• *Home care providers*<br>• *Nonprofits*<br>• *Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging (MAAA)*<br>• *Businesses* |
| | Home-based services are often disjointed (for ex., medical and homecare). | Encourage providers to **integrate home-based services**. | |
| | Lack of transportation to clinics, grocery stores affects access to health care, food. | Improve access to **medical transportation, to farmers markets, grocery stores, home-delivered food**. | |
| **Cultures and Lifelong Learning** | Few arts and cultural programs are offered to older adults. | Provide opportunities for **intergenerational learning** around arts and cultural activities. | • *Cities*<br>• *Community education*<br>• *Libraries*<br>• *Nonprofits*<br>• *Residents* |
| | Few opportunities for older adults to stay up-to-date on technology. | Increase **technology trainings** (ex., classes pairing older adults and youth). | |
| **Strengthen Neighborhoods and Public Safety** | Connections and safety could be improved in some neighborhoods. More older adults are living alone and isolated. | • Encourage **Neighborhood Watch** programs; implement **home visiting**, **check-in calls**.<br>• Create **Neighborhood Networks** to strengthen connections and support.<br>• Conduct **safety audits** and make improvements as needed. | • *Local law enforcement*<br>• *Cities*<br>• *Community education*<br>• *Residents* |
| **Employment/ Volunteering Opportunities** | With more people retiring, the workforce is shrinking. Volunteering options are limited in many communities. | • Provide **employment options for older workers**; more options to engage older adults as assets.<br>• Enhance **volunteer recruitment** and **coordination activities**.<br>• Work through community education and other programs to link older adults and youth. | • *Cities*<br>• *Community education*<br>• *Libraries*<br>• *Nonprofits*<br>• *Residents* |

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