



# **PROGRESS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND PRIORITIES**

## **AGE FRIENDLY OLMSTED COUNTY PROGRESS REPORT**

### **2023-2025 Action Plan**

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**AGE FRIENDLY**  
**OLMSTED COUNTY**  
Livable communities for longer lives.

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# 1 Introduction

Communities across the United States are experiencing significant demographic change as residents live longer and the proportion of older adults continues to grow. These changes affect housing markets, transportation systems, health care delivery, workforce participation, caregiving responsibilities, and community life.

Age Friendly Olmsted County was established to help the community consider how these changes affect local conditions and to encourage collaboration among organizations and residents interested in supporting healthy aging. The initiative is affiliated with the AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities, both of which promote community environments that enable residents to age safely, actively, and with dignity.

The changes described in this report can also be understood as part of a broader longevity transition. Today, people routinely live decades longer than previous generations. This shift affects housing, transportation systems, workforce participation, caregiving, health care, and community design. Communities are learning how to adapt to this reality. Age friendly work provides a framework for that learning process and informs a systems level approach to supporting aging in community throughout the lifespan.

This report reviews the first action cycle of Age Friendly Olmsted County and describes how the initiative has engaged local partners, community members, and organizations in discussions about aging related issues affecting the county. It summarizes the work undertaken between 2023 and 2025, reflects lessons from those activities, and outlines a process for updating the community assessment and developing the next action plan.

## 2 Executive Summary

Age Friendly Olmsted County (AFOC) is a countywide initiative led by Family Service Rochester and affiliated with the AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. These initiatives encourage communities to consider how housing, transportation, public spaces, services, and community connections affect the ability of residents to age safely, actively, and with dignity.

The first Age Friendly Olmsted County action cycle focused on building awareness of aging issues and strengthening collaboration across sectors. Activities included community walk and park audits, housing discussions, participation in community planning efforts, caregiver education initiatives, and engagement with local organizations and institutions.

These efforts helped to engage and introduce aging perspectives into a range of community conversations and strengthened relationships among partners whose work affects the experience of growing older in Olmsted County. The initiative functioned most effectively as a community convener and connector, helping bring together organizations and residents interested in improving conditions affecting aging.

Many of the issues influencing aging, such as housing affordability, transportation systems, health care access, and workforce challenges, extend beyond the direct authority of a local initiative. As a result, much of the first action cycle focused on awareness, engagement, and partnership building rather than large scale policy or infrastructure change.

This report covers the development of Age Friendly Olmsted County, summarizes the activities undertaken between 2023 and 2025, and reflects on lessons from the first action cycle. It also outlines a process for updating the community assessment and developing the next action plan for AFOC while remaining attentive to and aligned with broader statewide planning efforts, including the Comprehensive Aging Survey and other initiatives affecting aging policy in Minnesota.

## 3 Context and Purpose

### 3.1 Background

Age Friendly Olmsted County (AFOC) is a countywide initiative led by Family Service Rochester and affiliated with the AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. These initiatives support communities in intentionally designing systems, environments, and policies that allow residents to age actively, safely, independently, and with dignity across the life course.

The age friendly framework recognizes that the conditions that support healthy aging: accessible housing, safe transportation systems, inclusive public spaces, digital connectivity, and reliable services are the same conditions that contribute to strong and resilient communities overall. Communities that function well for older adults also function well for families, people with disabilities, caregivers, and residents across the lifespan.

Age friendly work therefore extends beyond traditional senior services. It intersects with housing policy, transportation planning, health systems, workforce dynamics, education, public space design, and community development. It requires collaboration across public agencies, nonprofit organizations, employers, educational institutions, health providers, and civic organizations.

This report provides an account of the first Age Friendly Olmsted County action cycle. It summarizes the development of the initiative, describes the activities undertaken between 2023 and 2025, assesses how well those activities advanced the goals of the Action Plan, and outlines directions for the next phase of work.

### 3.2 Why This Work Matters Now

Communities across Minnesota and the United States are experiencing significant demographic change as the population ages. In Olmsted County, the number of residents aged sixty and older continues to grow, reflecting longer life expectancy and the aging of the Baby Boom generation. These trends bring both opportunities and challenges.

Families are providing more caregiving support to older relatives, often while balancing employment and other responsibilities. Health systems are increasingly focused on helping individuals remain healthy and independent outside institutional settings. Housing markets are under pressure to provide options that allow residents to remain in their communities as their needs change. Workforce shortages in health and human services are affecting the availability of home and community based support.

One issue that surfaced repeatedly during community discussions was housing. Many concerns residents expressed about aging, including remaining in their homes, finding smaller or more manageable housing, locating housing near services, or adapting existing homes, are closely tied to broader housing market conditions affecting the entire community. Expanding housing options that work well for older adults can also contribute to a more flexible housing system overall.

These challenges are interconnected. Housing design influences caregiving needs. Transportation access affects the ability to obtain services and remain socially connected. Digital access increasingly determines whether residents can participate in health care, community life, and economic activity.

### 3.3 Development of the Age Friendly Initiative in Olmsted County

The Age Friendly Olmsted County initiative emerged from a series of community discussions that began between 2017 and 2019. During this period, community leaders, service providers, and civic organizations began exploring how demographic changes were reshaping community needs. Olmsted County was experiencing a steady increase in the number and proportion of residents aged sixty and older. At the same

time, caregiving demands were increasing, workforce shortages in health and human services were becoming more visible, and housing affordability pressures were affecting residents on fixed incomes.

These conversations highlighted that aging issues were not confined to traditional senior services. Housing design, neighborhood infrastructure, transportation access, digital connectivity, and opportunities for social participation all influence whether residents are able to remain engaged and independent as they age.

In response to these discussions, Olmsted County formally joined the AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities in 2020. Family Service Rochester was designated as the lead organization responsible for coordinating the initiative locally.

Following enrollment in the network, the initiative entered the assessment phase required by the age friendly process. A countywide community needs assessment was launched in 2021. The findings from this assessment informed development of the Age Friendly Olmsted County Action Plan covering the period 2023 through 2025.

The development of the initiative can be summarized in the following timeline.

Phase	Key Development
Community exploration	Early conversations about aging and community design (2017 to 2019)
Network membership	Olmsted County joins the AARP Age Friendly Network (2020)
Community assessment	Countywide needs assessment conducted (2021)
Planning phase	Development of the Age Friendly Olmsted County Action Plan (2022)
Implementation	Community partnerships and initiatives launched (2023 to 2026)
Transition	Review and preparation of the next Action Plan (2026)

## 4 Work of the First Action Plan Cycle

### 4.1 Strategic Priorities of the 2023 to 2025 Action Plan

The first Age Friendly Olmsted County Action Plan organized its work around four strategic priorities that reflected both the community assessment findings and the broader age friendly framework.

Strategic Priority	Focus
Expand Home and Community Based Services	Strengthen systems that allow residents to remain in their homes and communities
Improve Service Navigation and Dementia Informed Care	Simplify access to services and promote dementia aware communities
Providing Tools and Education for Aging in Place	Support housing stability, technology access, and community resources
Strengthening Community Engagement and Advocacy	Ensure aging perspectives inform community planning and decision making

These priorities reflected a broad understanding of aging as a community wide issue involving housing, transportation, public space design, health systems, and social participation.

### 4.2 Activities and Initiatives Undertaken

Implementation of the Action Plan involved a wide range of activities conducted in partnership with community organizations, local government departments, and regional initiatives. These activities addressed community infrastructure, housing policy discussions, caregiving support, digital inclusion, and engagement with broader planning processes.

The following table summarizes the major categories of activity.

Area of Work	Examples of Activities
Community Engagement	Walk audits, park audits, community listening sessions
Housing and Aging in Place	ADU forums, housing coalition engagement, housing transitions pilot
Caregiving and Navigation	Dementia friendly community education, caregiver forums
Digital Inclusion	Digital Connection Committee work and community surveys
Community Planning	Participation in transportation, parks, and regional planning initiatives

These efforts reflected a deliberate strategy of embedding aging considerations across multiple sectors rather than focusing solely on service delivery.

#### 4.2.1 Community Engagement and Environmental Assessments

Community engagement played a central role in the initiative’s work. Walk audits and park audits were used to evaluate how community infrastructure affects accessibility and safety for residents across the lifespan.

Walk audits examined sidewalks, intersections, lighting, benches, transit stops, and pedestrian crossings. These audits helped identify barriers that affect mobility and safety for older adults and people with disabilities.

Walk Audit Activities
Slatterly Park neighborhood audit
Rochester Alternative Transportation Summit
Downtown Walk and Roll Summit
Link BRT / Kutzsky Park Walk and Roll initiative
Neighborhood walk audit projects

Park audits evaluated how public parks support recreation, social connection, and accessibility for residents of all ages.

Park and Recreation Assessments
Rolling Green Park
Martin Luther King Jr. Park
Central Park (in progress)
Soldiers Field FitLot donation (in progress)
Oronoco city parks
Rochester Sports and Recreation Complex

These assessments generated observations about seating availability, accessibility of paths, lighting, signage, restrooms, and other features affecting usability.

#### 4.2.2 Housing and Aging in Place Initiatives

Housing emerged as one of the most significant themes during the community assessment process. Many residents expressed concern about the affordability, accessibility, and adaptability of housing as they age.

AFOC participated in several housing discussions and initiatives designed to explore policy options and programmatic responses.

Housing Initiative	Description
Accessory Dwelling Unit forums	Community discussions about flexible housing options
Rochester Area Housing Alliance	Collaboration on housing priorities
Senior Housing Work Group	Senior housing transition pilot

These efforts aimed to strengthen understanding of housing challenges and support exploration of new housing models.

#### 4.2.3 Caregiving and Service Navigation Initiatives

Caregiving responsibilities have grown substantially as residents live longer and families manage complex health needs. Many caregivers report difficulty navigating available services and support.

The initiative addressed these issues through education efforts, community conversations, and the development of information resources.

Caregiving and Navigation Initiative	Description
Dementia friendly community education	Training and awareness programs
Employer forums on caregiving	Discussions about workplace supports
Guide to Aging in Olmsted County	Online navigation resource
Promotion of Minnesota Aging Pathways	Statewide navigation tool

These efforts focused on improving access to information and increasing awareness of caregiving challenges.

#### 4.2.4 Research, Grants, and Knowledge Development

Research and data collection were important components of the initiative’s work. These efforts provided partners with information needed to understand community needs and plan potential responses.

##### 4.2.4.1 Grants Supporting Initiative Activities

Grant	Purpose
AARP Community Challenge Capacity Grant (2023)	Slatterly Park walk audit
MN DHS HCBS Research Grant (2023)	Co design research on home and community based service needs
MN DEED Digital Connection Committee Grant (2023)	Digital inclusion research
Rochester Park Board Community Grant (2025)	Rolling Green Park upgrades
Age Friendly Minnesota Technical Assistance Grant (2025 to 2026)	Walk and park audits; caregiver employer support forums; age friendly universities promotion

##### 4.2.4.2 Research and Data Projects

Age Friendly Olmsted County Community Needs Assessment
AFOC 2022 to 2025 Priority Preference Survey
HCBS Co Design Research
Seniors’ Digital Connection Research
Rochester Sports and Recreation Complex pre and post referendum focus groups

#### 4.2.5 Community Outreach and Presentations

AFOC shared findings and perspectives through presentations and community discussions across a range of organizations.

Outreach Engagement
Mayo Clinic Study on Aging Annual Meeting
Rochester City Council Study Session
Rochester Area Housing Alliance
AARP Community Challenge network
AARP National Age Friendly Communities network

Rochester Parks and Recreation Department
AmeriCorps Seniors Association of Minnesota
Olmsted Medical Center Transitions of Care team

These engagements helped strengthen relationships and ensure that aging perspectives were included in broader community conversations.

### 4.3 Work in Progress and Pending Initiatives

Several initiatives launched during the first action cycle remain underway and are expected to continue into 2026.

The Central Park audit is currently being completed. As a prominent public space in downtown Rochester, Central Park presents an opportunity to examine how accessibility, seating, circulation, and safety features affect residents across age groups. Findings from this audit will be shared with city staff and planning partners.

Another project still underway involves the installation of a FitLot outdoor fitness installation at Soldiers Field. FitLot installations are designed to support strength training and mobility exercises that help maintain independence and reduce fall risk.

A third initiative involves outreach to regional colleges and universities regarding participation in the Age Friendly University Network. Meetings with area campuses are being planned to explore opportunities related to lifelong learning, research partnerships, workforce participation, and student engagement.

Initiative	Status	Expected Contribution
Central Park Audit	In progress	Inform accessibility improvements in downtown public space
Soldiers Field FitLot Installation	In progress	Expand outdoor fitness opportunities
Age Friendly University Network engagement	Early development	Strengthening collaboration with higher education

## 5 What We Learned

### 5.1 Assessment of Progress

The first Age Friendly Olmsted County action cycle achieved meaningful progress in building awareness of aging issues and strengthening collaboration across sectors. Aging considerations are now more visible in community discussions about housing, transportation, and public space design.

The initiative functioned most effectively as a convener and connector. Its influence was strongest where it could bring partners together and contribute to planning conversations. Progress was slower where outcomes depended on funding decisions, workforce availability, or formal policy authority.

### 5.2 Lessons from the First Action Cycle

The experience of implementing the first Age Friendly Olmsted County Action Plan offers several lessons that can inform the next phase of work.

First, building cross sector collaboration takes time. Housing organizations, planners, health systems, community service providers, and educational institutions often operate within different professional frameworks and planning cycles. Creating opportunities for these sectors to work together requires sustained engagement and relationship building.

Second, aging issues appear in many parts of community life. During the first action cycle, discussions about aging emerged not only in traditional service settings but also in conversations about housing development, public space design, transportation infrastructure, and digital access.

Third, integrating aging perspectives into planning processes is an important step, but it does not automatically produce visible change. Many of the initiative's contributions were advisory or exploratory, reflecting the fact that implementation authority often rests with other organizations.

Finally, the work of the first action cycle suggests the value of focusing on a smaller number of priorities where collaboration among partners can move from planning toward coordinated implementation.

These lessons provide a foundation for shaping the next Age Friendly Olmsted County Action Plan.

### **5.3 What the First Action Plan Cycle Achieved and Its Limits**

The most significant accomplishment of Age Friendly Olmsted County (AFOC) during the first action plan cycle was the creation of a cross sector platform that brought aging considerations into a wide range of community conversations and planning processes. Through community assessments, walk and park audits, housing discussions, caregiver engagement, and presentations to community partners, the initiative helped introduce an aging and longevity lens into areas where it had not consistently been applied before.

Housing organizations, planners, parks and recreation staff, health systems, community service providers, and other partners became more aware of how issues such as accessibility, housing design, caregiving pressures, and service navigation affect the ability of residents to remain independent and engaged as they age. In this sense, AFOC functioned effectively as a convener and connector, helping establish relationships across sectors and contributing to a shared language for discussing aging related challenges within the community.

Much of the work of the first action cycle involved participation in existing planning processes and community initiatives. That strategy was intentional and appropriate for a new initiative seeking to integrate aging perspectives into community decision making.

The next phase of work therefore does not require a different foundation so much as a different emphasis. The relationships, awareness, and planning connections established during the first action cycle provide a strong base for moving toward a small number of collaborative initiatives where multiple partners can move together from planning to implementation. By focusing on areas where planning conversations have already matured and where partners are positioned to act, Age Friendly Olmsted County can build on its strongest contribution, cross sector collaboration, while producing more visible and measurable outcomes in the community.

### **5.4 What Changed Because of This Work**

Despite the challenges of measuring community wide change within a short timeframe, several shifts are evident.

Aging perspectives are now more consistently included in community planning conversations. Partnerships between housing organizations, planners, health systems, and nonprofit organizations have strengthened. Community leaders have developed a clearer understanding of how infrastructure and housing design affect independence as residents age.

Equally important, the initiative is helping to build a shared language for discussing aging across sectors.

### **5.5 What AFOC Contributes**

Age Friendly Olmsted County does not function as a governing body, policy authority, or service provider. Its role is more modest. The initiative provides a community setting where partners and residents can periodically

reflect on conditions affecting aging in the county, share perspectives across sectors, and explore opportunities for collaboration.

During the first action cycle, this role was most visible in activities that brought together organizations whose work intersects with aging, but who do not always collaborate directly. Housing organizations, local planners, community groups, health providers, and residents participated in discussions about housing options, neighborhood accessibility, public space design, and caregiving challenges.

This convening role does not replace the responsibilities of government agencies, health systems, or service providers. Instead, it offers a complementary forum where community experience can be shared and where cross sector conversations can occur outside formal institutional structures.

## **6 Looking Forward**

### **6.1 Direction For the Next Action Plan (2027 to 2030)**

The experience of the first action cycle suggests that the most valuable role Age Friendly Olmsted County can play is continuing to serve as a cross sector platform while focusing its efforts more intentionally on areas where collaboration can move from discussion to coordinated action.

The relationships and shared understanding developed over the past several years provide a foundation for identifying a smaller number of priorities where partners across sectors can work together to produce visible and meaningful improvements.

The next action plan will build on this foundation while placing greater emphasis on implementation, alignment with regional systems affecting aging, and opportunities where collaborative efforts can have the greatest impact. [See also Appendix]

### **6.2 Questions for the Next Planning Cycle**

As the community prepares for the next Age Friendly Olmsted County action plan, several questions may help guide discussion and reflection:

How have conditions affecting aging in Olmsted County changed since the first community assessment?

Which issues identified during the first action cycle remain most visible in the community?

What activities undertaken during the first action cycle should continue or expand?

Where do opportunities exist for practical collaboration among local organizations and community members?

How might statewide initiatives, including the Comprehensive Aging Survey and other planning efforts, inform local understanding without determining local priorities?

These questions are intended to encourage a planning process that remains grounded in local experience while remaining attentive to broader developments affecting aging in Minnesota.

Future priorities will likely be fewer in number and more tightly aligned with partners who have the authority and resources needed to implement change. Clear definitions of roles and responsibilities will help strengthen accountability.

A multisector steering committee will guide development of the next plan and help ensure that priorities align with community planning processes and decision cycles.

### **6.3 Opportunities For Community Partners**

The next phase of Age Friendly Olmsted County will depend on continued collaboration across sectors.

Housing developers, transportation planners, employers, health systems, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations all have opportunities to contribute to age friendly progress. These contributions may include incorporating accessibility considerations into housing development, designing transportation systems that support mobility across the lifespan, expanding workforce support for caregivers, and strengthening lifelong learning opportunities.

As partners begin to consider priorities for the next action plan, it may also be helpful to consider how the community systems that influence aging interact with one another. An addendum to this report introduces an “age friendly ecosystem” perspective and briefly describes the regional systems that shape many of the conditions affecting how residents age in southeastern Minnesota. The addendum is intended as background for readers interested in the broader context that may inform future collaboration.

## **7 Conclusion**

Age Friendly Olmsted County has established an important foundation for cross sector collaboration around aging. Through its first action cycle, the initiative strengthened partnerships, elevated awareness of demographic change, and integrated aging perspectives into community discussions.

The next phase of work offers an opportunity to translate this foundation into more focused and measurable improvements in community systems and environments.

With sustained collaboration among partners across sectors, Olmsted County can continue moving toward a community where residents of all ages are able to live, work, and age well.

The relationships, shared understanding, and cross sector connections developed during this first action cycle represent an important community asset that can now be leveraged to support more coordinated action in the years ahead.

The work undertaken during this first action cycle has helped establish relationships, shared understanding, and a framework for collaboration around aging issues in Olmsted County. While many of the activities during this period focused on assessment, engagement, and participation in community planning processes, these efforts have helped build a foundation that did not previously exist.

The connections formed among community organizations, local governments, health systems, educational institutions, and residents create new opportunities for collaboration in the years ahead. As the community continues to experience demographic change, this foundation can support more coordinated efforts to ensure that Olmsted County remains a place where residents of all ages are able to live, work, and age well.

## **Appendix A Community Assessment and Action Planning Process (2026 to 2027)**

This addendum outlines a proposed process for conducting an updated community assessment and developing the next Age Friendly Olmsted County Action Plan. The purpose of the process is to build on the work completed during the first action cycle while creating an opportunity for community partners, residents, and stakeholders to reflect together on current conditions affecting aging in Olmsted County and consider practical directions for the next phase of work. As shifts in systems that support people over the lifespan continue to increase across communities, a countywide approach is essential to ensure alignment, equity, and effective use of resources.

The process is intended to remain grounded in local experience while maintaining awareness of broader developments affecting aging policy and planning in Minnesota.

## A.1 Overview of the Planning Process

Step	Purpose	What Happens
1. Progress Review and Community Briefing	Reflect on the first action cycle	Share the progress report and convene partners and community members to review accomplishments, lessons, and emerging issues affecting aging in the county.
2. Updated Community Assessment	Refresh understanding of local conditions	Review findings from the Comprehensive Aging Survey together with local engagement, partner discussions, and relevant planning efforts.
3. Collaborative Planning	Identify practical priorities	A steering committee and participating partners consider where local collaboration may be most useful in the coming years.
4. Action Plan Development	Define the next phase of work	Develop and finalize the next Age Friendly Olmsted County Action Plan based on assessment findings and community input.

This framework is intended to provide a structured opportunity for the community to reflect on recent experience, consider emerging statewide information, and identify practical opportunities for collaboration that remain grounded in local conditions.

## A.2 Why This Process Is Being Convened Through Age Friendly Olmsted County

Age Friendly Olmsted County provides a practical setting for this community assessment and planning process because the initiative already brings together organizations and residents interested in issues affecting aging in the county. During its first action cycle, AFOC developed relationships with local partners and engaged in activities such as community assessments, walk audits, park accessibility reviews, housing discussions, and participation in community planning conversations.

While the initiative does not function as a governing body or central authority in the aging field, it can provide a community forum where partners and residents periodically reflect on local conditions, consider emerging developments affecting aging, and explore opportunities for collaboration. Convening the next assessment and planning process through AFOC allows the community to build on work that has already begun while keeping the discussion open to a broad range of participants.

## A.3 Local Assessment and Planning in a Broader Planning Environment

The next Age Friendly Olmsted County assessment and planning process will occur during a period of significant planning activity related to aging at the state level.

Several initiatives currently underway may influence how aging related policy, services, and collaboration evolve in Minnesota. These include the Comprehensive Aging Survey (CAS), whose report is expected to be released on September 30, 2026; ongoing implementation activity related to the Age Friendly Minnesota Multisector Blueprint for Aging; and a Healthy Aging initiative associated with the Minnesota Department of Management and Budget, with a statewide plan anticipated in April 2027. Minnesota’s current State Plan on Aging (2024 to 2027) also remains in effect during this period.

These initiatives involve several state level actors, including the Minnesota Board on Aging, the Age Friendly Minnesota Council, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and the Minnesota Department of Management and Budget. Because many programs affecting older adults rely on federal and state funding administered through these systems, local governments and nonprofit organizations often look to statewide planning processes for guidance.

Age Friendly Olmsted County's role is to provide a local setting where community partners and residents can review emerging information, consider how broader developments may affect the county, and reflect on which local opportunities for collaboration remain practical and relevant.

#### **A.4 What This Process Can Realistically Offer**

The upcoming planning process can serve several useful purposes for the community.

First, it provides an opportunity to review the accomplishments and limits of the first action cycle. Activities such as walk audits, park assessments, housing discussions, community engagement efforts, and participation in local planning conversations helped introduce aging considerations into a variety of community settings.

Second, the process allows community partners and residents to update their understanding of conditions affecting aging in Olmsted County. Statewide surveys and planning efforts provide valuable information, but they cannot fully capture local circumstances or emerging concerns within individual communities.

Third, the process creates space to consider statewide initiatives, including the Comprehensive Aging Survey, the State Plan on Aging, the Multisector Blueprint, and the Healthy Aging initiative, may shape the broader environment in which local aging related work occurs.

Finally, the planning process may help distinguish between issues that can be addressed locally through collaboration and those that depend more heavily on developments in state policy or funding.

#### **A.5 Continuing Work During the Planning Period**

The assessment and planning process does not require Age Friendly Olmsted County to pause ongoing activities. Many factors affecting the experience of aging in the community are shaped locally and can continue to be addressed through existing partnerships and opportunities.

Work related to housing discussions, neighborhood accessibility, public space design, walk audits, park assessments, and community engagement can continue while the planning process unfolds. New opportunities for collaboration may also emerge as partners identify practical ways to improve conditions affecting older adults and caregivers.

In this sense, the planning process should be understood as occurring alongside ongoing community work rather than replacing it. The next action plan will reflect both the lessons of these continuing activities and the broader insights gained through the assessment process.

#### **A.6 Convening Stakeholders and Community Members**

The first step in the next planning cycle will be to convene community stakeholders, partners, and residents to review the Age Friendly Olmsted County progress report and discuss the direction of the next phase of work.

Participants could include representatives from community organizations, health systems, housing providers, local government, educational institutions, employers, advocacy groups, and residents with lived experience related to aging and caregiving.

The purpose of this meeting is not to establish a new organization but to invite participation in a community based planning process that will help shape the next phase of Age Friendly Olmsted County.

## A.7 Formation of a Steering Committee

The steering committee will help guide the assessment and planning process by reviewing findings, supporting community engagement activities, and helping identify potential priorities for the next action plan.

Family Service Rochester will continue to serve as the lead organization for Age Friendly Olmsted County, providing coordination and administrative support.

## A.8 Updated Community Assessment

An updated community assessment will form the foundation for the next Age Friendly Olmsted County Action Plan.

This assessment will incorporate findings from the Comprehensive Aging Survey together with information gathered through local engagement activities, including community discussions, partner interviews, and review of relevant local planning efforts.

Together, these sources will help provide an updated understanding of conditions affecting aging in Olmsted County while ensuring that local perspectives remain central to the planning process.

Several statewide planning efforts related to aging are currently underway in Minnesota. These include the Comprehensive Aging Survey, the Age Friendly Minnesota Multisector Blueprint, and a Healthy Aging initiative associated with the Minnesota Department of Management and Budget. The local planning process should remain attentive to developments emerging from these efforts and consider how they may affect conditions in the county.

In this way, the community's assessment and planning work can proceed alongside statewide planning activity, drawing on useful information as it becomes available while continuing to focus on practical opportunities for local collaboration.

## A.9 Proposed Timeline

Phase	Activity
Spring 2026	Release of AFOC Progress Report
Spring to Summer 2026	Community convening and formation of steering committee
Summer 2026	Initial planning discussions and preparation for updated assessment
September 30, 2026	Release of Comprehensive Aging Survey
Fall 2026	Review CAS findings and integrate with local engagement
Winter 2026 to 2027	Development of draft Action Plan
Early 2027	Community review and refinement
Spring 2027	Finalization of next Action Plan

This timeline may be adjusted as additional information becomes available from related planning efforts at the state level.

## A.10 Maintaining a Community Based Focus

Throughout the planning process, the experiences of residents will remain central to the work of Age Friendly Olmsted County. Engagement activities such as community conversations, walk audits, park assessments, and discussions with caregivers provide valuable insight into how residents experience housing, mobility, social participation, and access to services.

Maintaining the participation of older residents, caregivers, and community members will help ensure that the next action plan remains grounded in local experience while remaining attentive to broader developments affecting aging in Minnesota.

## A.11 Closing Perspective

Age Friendly Olmsted County can provide a local forum where partners and residents periodically review conditions affecting aging, share perspectives across sectors, and identify practical opportunities for collaboration within the county.

Through this process, the community can remain attentive to broader developments while continuing to support local efforts that help residents age well in Olmsted County.



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