

Age Friendly St. Cloud Summary Report

General Summary

The St. Cloud community demographics are changing as is the population of the United States and by 2030 one in every five people in the U.S. will be over age 65. The World Health Organization and the AARP Age-Friendly Communities initiative presents a great opportunity for St. Cloud to plan and respond to these changes with inclusion, integrity and respect for each individual.

The City of St Cloud Aging Services staff started discussion in May 2020 with City leadership regarding the initiative. In October 2020, City Administration, Planning and Aging Services departments along with the Central MN Council on Aging submitted the official application to AARP to join the Age-Friendly global movement to focus on livable communities for people of all age groups. Members of the AARP Network of Age Friendly Communities commit to conducting an initial community needs assessment. A city-wide quantitative survey was completed in March 2021.

From St. Cloud, Waite Park, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, and surrounding communities, 810 individuals participated in the survey. There are limitations in this study that will be addressed in future qualitative research. The limitations include an underrepresentation from those with limited English proficiency, non-Caucasian, low-income and male respondents. Future listening sessions will be conducted to gather qualitative data from these priority groups.

A variety of key findings were found within the identified 8 domains of livability, which is a framework to assess and organize age-friendly community.



Summary Report

Survey Highlights

Participant Demographics

- 96% identify as White or Caucasian
- 73% identified as female
- 70% have a graduate or professional degree
- Over 60% of the survey participants reside in the City of St. Cloud and 40% reside in a neighboring community
- 50% are long-term residents, residing in the area for over 25 years
- 16% are over age 75, 65% are between the ages of 55-74 years, 11% are between 45-54, and 8% are under age 44

Key findings and highlights from each domain of livability

The following are major priorities in determining where to live:

- 57% - Personal Safety
- 40% - Wanting to be close to family
- 37% - Wanting to live in a community with opportunities for social interactions
- 27% - Health Care facilities
- 25% - Cost of living
- 22% - Access to public transportation
- 20% - Climate and weather

Civic Participation and Employment so people of all ages can be actively engaged in community life:

- 82% said the community offers an excellent to good range of volunteer activities to choose from.
- 49% of respondents were fully retired. 12% were employed part time and 31% were employed full time.
- Themed concerns of age discrimination at workplaces and ageism in obtaining employment.



Summary Report

Survey Highlights Continued

Health Services and Community Supports such as accessible and affordable health assistance and services:

- 89% said the community offers excellent to good in respectful and helpful hospital and clinic staff.
- 84% said the community is excellent to good in offering a variety of health care professionals including specialists.
- 81% said the community offers excellent to good well-trained home health care providers.
- 66% said the home care providers were affordable.
- Concerns due to a lack of medical service competition, as this has made it difficult in receiving affordable care.
- Themes about going out of town to receive second opinions and troubles scheduling with specialists in timely manner.

Housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages, and life stages:

- 93% said it is extremely or very important to be able to live independent in their own home as they age.
- Affordable housing options are important.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings such as green spaces, seating and accessible buildings enjoyed by people of all ages:

- Interest in outdoor riverfront public gatherings.
- Outdoor community pool for people of all ages.
- Personal safety was noted as a concern.
- More frequent snow removal and sidewalk clearing.

Respect and Social Inclusion so everyone can feel valued, such as intergenerational gatherings and activities:

- Need for more intergenerational, diverse, and multicultural activities.
- Bridging communities.
- Focus on keeping younger people and families here.
- 52% said local schools were fair to poor at involving older adults in events and activities.



Summary Report

Survey Highlights Continued

Social Participation and the availability of accessible, affordable, and fun social activities:

- 71% said the community offers an excellent to good range of continuing education classes or social opportunities to pursue new interests, hobbies, and passions.
- 40% rated the community as fair to poor at offering affordable activities to all residents.
- COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the community's sociability.
- Some activities were more affordable and had greater access due to the global pandemic, as many activities were online.

Transportation such as sidewalks and safe, crossable streets, dedicated bicycle lanes, and public transit options:

- “Good” received the highest rating between “Excellent and Poor” in all questions related to accessible, convenient, affordable, and timely public transportation options.
- Roads with shoulders designed for cycling.
- Need for expanded routes, such as more routes to St. Joseph and the Twin Cities.
- Transportation access is seen as a barrier to employment and volunteering.

Communication and Information as information needs to be shared in a variety of methods for accessibility:

- 69% said the community offers excellent to good free access to computers and the internet in public places such as library, senior centers, or government buildings.
- 50% said the community offers poor access to community information in one central source, the other 50% said access to community information was excellent to good.
- Use of marketing besides internet as a source of information gathering is needed

Age Friendly St. Cloud Next Steps

- Conduct listening sessions to gather qualitative data.
- Seeking additional feedback from underrepresented populations.
- Further data analysis summary by community to be made available.

For more information contact the City of St. Cloud Aging Services Department at:

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