

Community Engagement Report

Your Organization/Affiliation: Goodman Community Center	Your Name and Email: Organizer – Gayle Laszewski (gayle@goodmancenter.org) Moderator – Betsy Strahin (strahin.betsy@countyofdane.com)
Community Engagement Activity: <input type="checkbox"/> Community Forum or Listening Session – virtual or in person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussions – virtual or in person <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Interviews – by phone or in person <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Live or Social Media Virtual Event <input type="checkbox"/> Paper or Internet Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe): _____	
Date/s of Event or Effort: 6/25/2021	Number of Participants or Respondents: 7
Key Issues Discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From your personal experiences, what the main issues, problems, and challenges adults age 60 and older are facing in Dane County? - How can Dane County Support older adults in remaining independent for as long as possible? - What does Dane County have to change to be closer to your ideal community to age in? / What do you appreciate most about what Dane County already provides? 	
Key Takeaways/Findings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This group was very focused on what they lost during COVID. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Things they missed during COVID: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Opportunities for congregate meals: ‘my apartment is so small I can’t have friends over for a meal,’ Hyvee for meals, Goodman pantry, Cranberry Creek meals ii. Goodman – bingo, talks, movies, line dancing, puzzles, books/reading groups, philosophy club, exercise classes, walking groups, parties and events (that they can bring the family to) iii. JCO (Job Center) being closed has been hard iv. Warner Park for music v. The ADRC is very helpful for major problems. b. Essentially, they missed out on congregate meals, being physically active together, and the opportunity to socialize. As one participant explained – <i>I know who will be there. I look forward to seeing these people. I come with everyday questions for my friends. I know so-and-so is good at X, I am having problems with X, I can ask them about X when I see them at Y.</i> 2. One theme that emerged is that the group felt the East side of Madison does not have as many services as the West side of Madison. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. They mention poor bus service on the East side b. Health Services <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. They only have one GHC on the East side ii. The hospital on the East side is “in the boonies” iii. While they know about Transit Solution and Badger Bus they feel the services don’t come on time and can cause missed appointments. iv. UW Health needs better communication with the community to better serve the elderly and low-income. Especially were to build facilities. Right now you need to be able to drive to get to the locations. They should be better planned for walking, biking, and taking a bus. v. To get specialty care, like a mammogram, they must go to the West side or Park Street and that is inconvenient. 	

- vi. If you are injured and can't drive yourself it is hard to get care because access to a car and driver is needed to get to the clinics.
 - c. There are a few food pantries on the East side
 - d. **Needs/Wants:** Mobile services – bring back mobile pantries (only Harvest Food Bank stayed open during COVID), also like book mobile (needed appointments at libraries before they reopened). More emergency service locations like the West side. More direct ways to get to medical appointments.
3. Living expenses keep increasing and it is causing them to miss out.
- a. Housing
 - i. Rent has gone up so they were forced to switch to low-income housing. The additional expenses like paying for parking is also challenging.
 - ii. One mentioned they are retired but they have to work because they cannot cover the cost of housing.
 - iii. Property taxes keep rising
 - iv. Citations and fines are time consuming to fight. One uses Briar Patch kids to help keep their sidewalks clean in the winter. The problem is the kids can choose if they want to help clear the snow or not. They ended up fighting a fine that was given even though the snow melted a day later.
 - b. Entertainment – everything costs money now
 - i. Concerts on the Square used to be a free activity they could do with their family, but now they have to buy tickets.
 - ii. Breese Stevens charges entrance fees for their events: Taste of Madison, Fireworks, graduation Parking downtown is expensive.
 - iii. State Street is all commercial, there is no longer a place for elderly to congregate without having to spend money to be there. Remember when it used to not be that way.
 - c. **Needs/Wants:** Senior discount/allowances for property taxes; System for discounted bus passes/air travel at local airport; Sponsored bus trips to the county/state parks (keep them active and social)
4. They have several big ideas for improving aging:
- a. One moved to Madison and mentioned they would have liked a resource that told you where you can afford to live, what services are around the neighborhoods. The 411 on where you can afford rent and entertainment on a moderate income. Their family is here but doesn't have experience living on their moderate income.
 - b. Public Television/Extension has great programming. For example, *how to use food assistance/WIC at roadside stands and farmers markets*. Programming like this should be promoted/repeated.
 - c. Fixing things for the elderly isn't done when you are old. Have to start young. Teach younger people a healthy diet so they stay healthy when they age. Get people to be active young so they don't become decrepit in their 50's and 60's. Eating organically, not processed foods like schools serve now. Promote parks and vegetable stands for a healthy lifestyle.
 - d. Take advantage of small towns like Stoughton and Fort Atkinson. The second floor of their main streets are empty and there are no jobs in these rural areas. Encourage elderly to move to these areas to help revitalize the towns.
 - e. Encourage farmers markets to hand out leftovers to those who can't afford it. Good timing is during the harvest with surplus product farmers are not able to sell.
 - f. Expand social security, cover more people. Medicaid coverage is difficult. There is also a gap in Medicare for those 50+.
 - g. There is concern over homelessness. They don't like seeing elderly end up homeless. But they are also concerned about homelessness in younger populations. How will the relief encourage people to get off of support? Instead of just giving them housing, hire them in Public Works so they can afford their own housing. Model after the 1930's Civilian Conservation Corp. Educate them for a better future.
 - h. St. Bernard's is an empty school. St. Mary's daycare was supposed to be apartments for the elderly. They would have liked to live there.
5. It is notable this group is active and mobile. One bikes year round and mentioned the importance of keeping the paths cleared in the winter so they can still get around. Others were observed walking to get to Goodman for the coffee hour.

Planned Response:

Share this form with AAA of Dane County to inform the drafting of their 2022-2024 strategic plan.