

How Age-Friendly is my Community?

Emily Phillips

Gerontology Minor/Certificate Program, University of Findlay

ABSTRACT

The older adult population continues to significantly grow at an unprecedented rate. Around 8.5% of the world's population is 65 or over and within the coming years, these numbers are projected to grow more and more. As this becomes a more pressing issue, it is important to reiterate the significance of age-friendly communities and to have specific services readily available to the older population. In certain communities, these services are limited and is something that needs to be looked into more because it is becoming a more ethical issue. It is my intention to look at my hometown community of Rawson, Ohio and discuss if it is an age-friendly community and to figure out the best alternatives for the community members if this specific criteria is not met.

The criteria as stated in the research article for an age-friendly community includes sufficient housing, outdoor spaces/built environment, transportation, social environment, community support, and health/wellness services.

HOUSING

The criteria for housing that I was looking for in my community was housing options with accessible and affordable housing that includes assisted living.

- Forest Edge housing/apartments are for low income families
- Assisted living facilities only near Rawson, OH
- The best assisted living facilities near by would be in Bluffton, OH
- One of them being Maple Crest Senior Living Village
- Maple Crest is for adults 55+
- Includes 3 levels of available care



OUTDOOR SPACES/BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The criteria for outdoor spaces that I was looking for in my community is a pleasant and clean environment that includes adequate public toilets, green spaces, places to rest, and age-friendly pavements and buildings.

- The council of Rawson have 6 people on it who maintain the streets, sidewalks, sewers, and the park
- Side walks are paved well and are only on the main street
- Rawson park includes a good amount of green space
- Basketball court, baseball field, pickle ball court, grill, picnic tables, & playground
- Also includes the old train depot used for gatherings



TRANSPORTATION

The criteria for transportation that I was looking for in my community is a range of different options for people to get where they need and want to go. This includes availability and affordability, safety and comfort, and age-friendly vehicles.

- HATS is a transportation service within Findlay, OH & people in Rawson can use it
- It is a handicapped accessible vehicle
- Older adults 65 and over could get a discount
- Either way, it is very cheap and affordable



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The criteria for social environment that I was looking for in my community of Rawson, OH is essentially age-friendly services that engage older adults within the community.

- Social activities include "Lets Create" which is a Ladies night where they craft, and all the materials are provided
- All ages are welcomed
- The city hall is open from 8am-5pm daily for people to come and discuss ways to improve the community
- New Hope United Methodist Church has a grief support group
- Rawson Proud Festival is very age friendly
- It includes a craft show, parade, food, & games



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The criteria for community support that I looked for within my community includes encouraging active engagement in community life and includes options and opportunities for volunteering and employment for seniors.

- Volunteer work within Rawson, OH – high school allows older volunteers to help mentor students
- Other than that, I couldn't find really anything within Rawson
- In Bluffton, OH (around 12 mins away from Rawson) there is a senior center where they quilt, dance, and do exercise classes
- They also plan out trips to places such as DC and Indiana Amish Country
- Community support that I found in Findlay, OH is 50 North
- 50 North is a perfect example of community support for older adults that includes assistance in counseling, health and wellness, nutrition, health screenings, financial assistance, and many other things as well

HEALTH & WELLNESS SERVICES

The criteria for health & wellness services that I was looking for in my community includes physical health, nutrition, and accessible care such as assisted living facilities and home care.

- Only these specific services are found within other towns around Rawson, OH
- There is a Right at Home in home care and assistance service in Findlay OH
- Findlay has the service of 50 North that has health services such as exercise sessions
- Includes personal training sessions, nail care clinics, group exercise classes, & healthy living nutrition coaching
- There is Marathon Café that allows adults 50+ to have lunch Monday-Friday
- Grocery includes Mobile Meals
- Delivery as well (delivered on Wednesdays from 11am-2pm)
- Seniors only pay for the prices of the groceries (NO delivery fee)
- Chopin Hall in Findlay OH is a non-profit and is a place to get food, toiletries, and clothing



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, after researching all the criteria for an age-friendly community, I believe that my community of Rawson, OH does not meet the criteria because of the lack of resources available. There is a lot of room for growth to improve, especially within the social environment and housing.

REFERENCES

- <https://rawsonvillage.org/home>
- <https://www.facebook.com/events/227498104602819/>
- <http://www.blufftonseniors.org/>
- <https://www.hhwpcac.org/hancock-area-transportation-services/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/ outreach>
- <https://visitfindlay.com/event/rawson-proud-town-festival/>
- <https://chopinhall.org/our-story/what-we-provide/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/wellness>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/nutrition>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/health-screenings/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/financial-assistance/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/other-services/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/employment/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/volunteering/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/transportation/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/housing/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/health-screenings/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/nutrition/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/financial-assistance/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/other-services/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/employment/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/volunteering/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/transportation/>
- <https://www.50north.org/services/housing/>