

# How Age Friendly is my Community of Jackson, Michigan

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## Abstract

There is often a stigma to growing older and often those thoughts are negative. But how much more alarming does it get if your community is not age-friendly enough to be able to support your everyday needs? Being age-friendly means that there is safe access to everyday needs including access to get food, transportation, leisure activities, and exercise. These activities are not only important for both an individual's mental and physical health, it is also important to be educated on what's in your community for your future and the loved ones in your family as well. For this study I will be looking into my own community, Jackson, Michigan, by examining the elements set forth by the World Health Organization as to what makes my community an age-friendly environment. This study will include both positives and negatives in my own community to show what can be improved and what works.

## Housing

- As far as housing goes, there are a lot of assisted living spaces and low-income affordable apartment complexes available to seniors. 24 senior living communities in Jackson along with 16 surrounding Jackson.
- Countryside Manor – consists of independent living, assisted living, assisted memory care, nursing care, rehabilitation care, and professional plaza.
- Hope House II – low income and affordable housing apartments for seniors

## Transportation

- There are a few transportation services for seniors that include driving to and from appointments and for resources such as the grocery store or pharmacy.
- Catholic Charities – volunteer drivers for medical appointments
  - JTA's Reserve-A-Ride – \$2 each way, outside city is \$2.50-\$3. Can accommodate for wheelchairs
  - Rides to Wellness Program – county wide non-emergency service for appointments or going to the pharmacy or grocery store

## Outdoor Spaces & Built Environment

The city of Jackson has a lot of outdoor spaces, parks, and walking areas that benefit both the younger and older adults.

- The Dahlem – Five miles of trails including the "Nature for All" trail for those with limited mobility
- Falling Waters trail – wide sidewalks for walking, biking, running, etc.
- Ella Sharp Park – tennis courts, mini golf, trails to walk, picnic areas, museum

## Community Support

As far as community support goes,

- Lions Club – volunteer work such as building wheelchair ramps, work parades and community food services, have a band to join, and do game nights such as playing cards

## Social Environment

As far as the social environment goes, there are a few senior centers that are spread out amongst Jackson, including some suburbs.

- Crouch Senior Center – recreational activities such as euchre, bingo, bridge club, theme parties or special events, wood working, enrichment classes, computer classes or senior computer lab, craft corner, health and exercise classes
- Grass Lake Senior Center – Consists of activities such as dancing, bingo, crafts. Also, can provide meals from meals on wheels or Senior café. \$25 per calendar year. Right now, even with the Corona Virus they are providing food item pickup and lending of books and puzzles.

## Health and Wellness Services

There are a few health and wellness services that pertain to the older adults in the Jackson community.

- Henry Ford Allegiance Senior Health Center
- Home Instead – home care services, Alzheimer's and dementia care, diabetes care, arthritis care, personalized in home care wherever home is located from senior communities to rehab facilities
- Department of Aging in Jackson – curbside events including meal pick up sites. There are also classes such as various events such as "Exercise, Tai chi, and enhance", "foot clinic and respite", and online and zoom classes

## Conclusion

In conclusion, according to the components of what makes a community "age-friendly", I believe that Jackson is an age-friendly community. These components include housing, transportation, outdoor spaces and built environment, social environment, health and wellness services, and community support for older adults. We have plenty of services that can fit this criteria for a senior's lifestyle.

## References

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2. Other references available upon request