

Tiffin, Ohio: How Age-Friendly is my Community?

ABSTRACT

Certain aspects of the elderly population can unintentionally be overlooked. In order to address whether the needs of a community's older adult population are being met, it is helpful to examine the components of what makes a community age-friendly. Those components are: housing, outdoor spaces/built environment, transportation, social environment, community support, and health/wellness services. Even if one is not a part of this community, standards still need to be met. When each criterion is successfully accomplished, the community can be considered age-friendly. This is a step towards equality for all ages. We discuss this to bring a voice to those who are oppressed by these issues. This exploratory study of my hometown, Tiffin, Ohio, will bring a conclusion on whether it can be considered an age-friendly community. Each component will be researched and analyzed to determine what has been successfully implemented and what needs to be encouraged more.

TRANSPORTATION

- ✓ **Age-friendly vehicles & Specialized services for older people:**
- **Transportation Program:**
 - Planned transportation: 24 hours in advance for in town and at least one week in advance for out of town
 - Utilize shuttles/vans with easy access lifts and if needed, provide a wheelchair for the transport
 - Places like medical appointments, grocery stores, shopping malls, banks, laundromats, and beauty salons
- ✓ **Reliability**
- **Seneca County Agency Transportation(SCAT):**
 - Planned transportation: 48 hours in advance for county trips and 72 hours in advance for out-of-county trips
 - Those with wheelchairs/scooters will be secured with a four-point tie-down and use the seatbelts. Wheelchair lifts available.
 - Those with disabilities are allowed service animals but must notify the office of them
 - Those using an oxygen tank must also notify the office
 - Some reviews said they tend to be early
- ✓ **Safety and comfort & Affordability**
- **Tiffin Service Cab:**
 - Complaints of cleanliness and condition of interior, being late, and extreme pricing; majority seem to be dependent on which driver is received

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HOUSING

- **Nursing Care:** Autumnwood Care Center and St Catherine's Care Center
- **Assisted Living:** Seneca House and Saint Francis Home
- **Alzheimer's Care:** Sunrise at The Shawhan
- **Low Income:** Kiwanis Manor Of Tiffin, Willow Creek Village, Charles Meadow, and Helburn Meadows
 - ✓ **Affordability:**
 - These all are low-income options for seniors
- **Senior Only Living:** Tall Trees Senior Living Community, Coventry House Senior Living Community, Devon House Senior Living, Seneca Co VOA Elderly Housing and Clinton Mobile Home Resort
 - ✓ **Accessibility to places:**
 - These first 3 are grouped together and connect onto State Route 53, that would lead them into town
 - Around 2/3 minutes from Junior Home Park, and Oakley Park, 5 minutes from Shake Shak and Noble Elementary School, 7 minutes from Phat Cakes and Café and Fort Ball Pizza Palace, 10 minutes from Tiffin University Nature Preserve and Columbian High School, and 10/13 minutes from Westgate Village Shopping Center, Cinemark, Kroger, ALDI, and Walmart
 - ✓ **Safety and Maintenance services:**
 - Emergency notification systems and on-site management

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ **Intergenerational interactions:**
- **St. Francis Home/Angel Academy Day Care:**
 - Children can interact with elderly residents, with regularly scheduled visits and activities
- Look to the Tiffin Community YMCA again as their volunteer opportunities provide an intergenerational exchange with helping with youth sports and child watch
- ✓ **Respectful behavior & Age-friendly services:**
- Look to the Seneca County Commission on Aging again as they strive to help their older citizens maintain their lifestyles as a non-profit organization with free services.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- ✓ **Opportunities for volunteering and employment:**
- **Tiffin Community YMCA:**
 - Volunteer opportunities of helping with youth sports, adult sports, child watch, clerical work, and special events.
- **St. Paul's Sharing Kitchen:**
 - Provides a free, home-cooked meal every Monday and Thursday and each fourth Saturday for the Tiffin community.
 - Volunteer opportunities are preparation, and serving of sharing kitchen meals
- **Seneca County Commission on Aging:**
 - Helps its 60 year and older citizens maintain their lifestyles in comfort and wants to ensure elderly can live independently in their homes.
 - Non-profit organization with free services.
 - Volunteer opportunities are serving or delivering daily luncheons, help with Bingo every Monday night, fundraising, and marketing.

HEALTH/WELLNESS SERVICES

- ✓ **Wide range of health services**
- **Comfort Keepers:** In home care, Specialized care, Respite care
- **Mercy Hospital:** Alzheimer's/dementia care, Nursing care, Respite care, Senior rehabilitation, Geriatric internal and family medicine
- ✓ **Positive health behaviors:**
 - **Wellness Passport program:**
 - Located in Springfield
 - Offers exercise classes, cognitive stimulation classes, health screenings, nutritional education, and opportunities for social interaction
- **Tiffin Rehabilitation Center:** Trained nurses, therapists, social workers and other professionals for after injury or hospital
- **Tiffin Community YMCA:** Active older adult options
- ✓ **Geriatric psychiatry:**
- **Sojourn at Seneca Senior Behavioral Health Hospital:** Inpatient psychiatric treatment

OUTDOOR SPACES/BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ **Active recreation and leisure opportunities(Senior centers, parks, libraries, theater, and museums):**
- **Allen Eiry Center:**
 - Crafting including stained glass class, jewelry class, string art, and quilting and exercise including cardio drumming, Zumba, Tai Chi, and Yoga; all for \$1-\$4
- ✓ **Places to rest, pavements**
- **Nature Preserves:** Around 7 including Zimmerman Nature Preserve, Tiffin University Nature Preserve, Steyer Nature Preserve, and Forrest Nature Preserve; lack of benches is mentioned in reviews
- **Parks:** Around 13 parks; have adult sports but not senior; reviews again say there is a lack of benches; majority have safe pavements for walking/biking; shelters are available at some
- **American Civil War Museum of Ohio & Seneca County Museum**
- **East Green Amphitheater:** Green space, benches and tables, and a splash pad with lighted water features
- **Tiffin-Seneca Public Library:**
 - Ten months of each year area nursing homes and assisted living facilities are provided programs/presentations to stir up memories and encourage sharing about their past
 - Regular delivery of materials to local nursing homes and retirement complexes(at least eight different collections a year)
 - The collections include 30 to 80 items of large print mysteries, westerns, romance, fiction and nonfiction, and media items like audiobooks and DVDs

CONCLUSION

After analyzing each section of criteria, I conclude that Tiffin, Ohio does a reasonable job at accommodating to the needs of older adults. It succeeds in many aspects like age-friendly vehicles including specialized services for older people, affordable housing and accessibility to places, a wide range of health services including geriatric psychiatry, and active recreation and leisure opportunities. While these were met, others could use improvement. These areas include resting areas in outdoor spaces, more active recreation and leisure opportunities, affordable same day transportation, and more encouraging and endorsing of elder volunteer or employment opportunities. While I feel Tiffin is considerate to their elderly community and is going in the right direction, there is always room for growth and advocacy. Overall, I would consider it an age-friendly community.

REFERENCE

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