

# AGE-FRIENDLY MAPLE GROVE TRANSPORTATION AUDIT

June 2019



## Introduction

Transportation is a very influential part of a person's overall well-being and a fundamental part of age-friendly and livable communities. People need reliable, affordable, appropriate ways to do the things that are important to them. Without that, quality of life—including physical and emotional health—often suffers. Further, cities have an interest in helping all residents remain engaged and independent. Older adults contribute greatly to local economies and to the social fabric of the community.

Age-Friendly Maple Grove is a community-driven, city-sponsored initiative to make Maple Grove a better place to grow older. Visit our website for more information: [www.agefriendlymaplegrove.org](http://www.agefriendlymaplegrove.org).

In a 2016-2017 assessment of community needs, AF-MG heard from older residents that transportation is a high priority concern. This transportation audit is the first major step—and part of AF-MG's three-year action plan—to better understand gaps and opportunities and to make recommendations for how to improve mobility for Maple Grove residents. It assesses numerous transportation options (not including personal vehicles) and considers cost, convenience, service area, service hours, and other aspects of each service—primarily from the perspective of what would be needed and useful to older residents. It also incorporates input that AF MG received from the community concerning transportation. See Appendix B for those findings.

The City of Maple Grove, which is a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, also recognizes the need for and importance of continual review and planning concerning transportation. The City's most recent Land Use Plan includes six objectives, one of which states, "*Multi-modal transportation will be planned for and invested in to slow the growth of congestion,*" and is followed by six strategies to support this objective. AF MG hopes to help the City reach this objective by providing quality information and support for all efforts to create more and better transportation options.

**Purpose of this audit:** Take stock of the full picture of current transportation options—public transportation, walking, cycling, and private services—to shed light on the most pressing gaps, primarily for older residents.

**Next steps:** Using information from this audit along with additional research, AF MG will develop recommendations aimed at providing or facilitating more and better transportation options for city residents.

# Bus Services

## 1. Maple Grove Transit: My Ride

### *Overview:*

My Ride (formerly known as Dial-a-Ride) is an advance reservation, shared-ride, curb-to-curb bus service available to the general public. My Ride is provided by Maple Grove Transit, which is operated by the City of Maple Grove. It currently uses a fleet of seven small buses; the City would like to add more. With affordable fares and quality customer service, My Ride is an important and valued community service.

### *How it Works:*

*Service hours:* Monday - Friday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. No service on Sundays or major holidays.

*Service area:* Within City of Maple Grove boundaries, plus service to City of Osseo, Hennepin Technical College/North Hennepin Community College and Starlight Transit Station (next to Cub Foods in Brooklyn Park)

*Fare:* \$1.75 cash per one-way ride (exact change, no checks). Children five years and younger ride free. Purchase 10-ride punch cards for \$15 (\$2.50 savings) at the Maple Grove Government Center, Community Center and Cub Foods.

Mobile apps are now available that allow users to make reservations and pay for their trip. For all details, go to <https://www.maplegovernm.gov/services/transit/my-ride>.

### ***Strengths:***

- Affordable
- Easy to use
- Reservations and payment can be made with or without the mobile app
- Well-run and locally operated

### ***Limitations:***

- Due to funding and policy realities, there is no service in the evening, on Sundays, or on holidays
- Nature of the service means it cannot usually be used on demand (i.e., trips must be planned and booked in advance)

## 2. Metro Mobility

### *Overview:*

Metro Mobility is a bus service available to people who are unable to use regular fixed-route bus service due to a disability or limiting health condition. It serves the entire Twin Cities region. While some avoid it due to what can be long wait and travel times, others value it greatly for the safe and affordable service it offers.

### *How it Works:*

Metro Mobility is operated by the Metropolitan Council. Riders must obtain certification from a medical doctor or other authorized professional to be eligible to use the service. Trips can be taken for any purpose (other than emergency medical) and to any destination within the service area and service times, which vary across the metro area.

For more information, call 651-602-1111 or go to <https://www.metrotransit.org/metro-mobility>.

**Strengths:**

- Service is generally available 7 days a week
- Travel anywhere in the metro area
- Affordable fares
- Provides an option for people with few other choices

**Limitations:**

- Available only to eligible riders
- Requires advanced notice and, as a shared ride service covering a relatively large geographic area, is often a time-consuming way to travel

### **3. Metro Transit**

*Overview:*

Metro Transit is the primary public transit provider in the Twin Cities region. It operates train and bus service, including Metro Mobility and Transit Link, and provides a free carpool matching program. However, other than rush-hour commuter buses operated by Maple Grove Transit, no fixed-route buses or trains currently serve Maple Grove directly.

*How it Works:*

Metro Transit is the region's largest public transit provider serving the Twin Cities area offering both bus and train service. In addition to traditional buses, the METRO system includes light-rail trains (LRT) and bus rapid transit (BRT) that offer frequent, all-day service between stations with enhanced amenities. A [METRO Blue Line extension](#), which will provide light-rail service from downtown Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park, is under development. At this point the construction timeframe and how Maple Grove Transit will connect with this line is uncertain. Call (612) 373-3333 for regional transit information or go to [www.metrotransit.org](http://www.metrotransit.org).

**Strengths:**

- Wide network of service
- Affordable fares
- Many services available 7 days a week (schedules vary across the metro area)

**Limitations:**

- Other than weekday rush hour/commuter bus service, service is not available in Maple Grove (without use of supplementary service such as Transit Link)
- Older people not accustomed to using the system are unlikely to start using it

### **4. Transit Link**

*Overview:*

Transit Link "links" riders to/from fixed-route transit service, not to other specific destinations. For example, a person could be picked up at their home in Maple Grove and dropped off at the Brooklyn Park Starlite Transit Center to connect to regular bus service (or vice versa). It is shared-ride public transportation for the Twin Cities metro area where regular route transit service is infrequent or unavailable. It's for trips that can't be accomplished on regular transit routes alone.

*How it Works:*

Trips must be requested from one to five business days in advance. All trip requests are subject to availability – they are not guaranteed. Fares are paid in cash or with a Go-To Card with stored value and cost \$4.50 during peak hours and \$3.50 during non-peak times. Standard service hours are weekdays, Monday through Friday, from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m

For details, go to <https://metro council.org/Transportation/Services/Transit-Link.aspx>

**Strengths:**

- Provides a means of connecting to a broader, comprehensive transportation network, which is necessary in Maple Grove, where there is very little fixed-route service.
- Affordable fares
- Trips can be scheduled over the phone; computer/smart phone not required
- Same-day trips are sometimes possible
- “Standing orders” are possible for regular trips
- Trips can be paid for with cash or with a Go-To fare card

**Limitations:**

- Service generally available on weekdays only
- People not accustomed to using the system—including the broader Metro Transit system—are unlikely to start using it

**5. Maple Grove Transit: Commuter Express**

*Overview:*

As its name suggests, Commuter Express is a bus service primarily for commuters traveling between Maple Grove and downtown Minneapolis during rush hour on Monday through Friday. Operated by Maple Grove Transit, it is a very valuable service and has grown substantially over the years, but is of limited use or benefit for people going to Minneapolis for other reasons.

*How it Works:*

Commuter Express is a service offered by the City of Maple Grove providing weekday morning rush-hour express service to downtown Minneapolis with return service to Maple Grove in the afternoon rush hour. There is one midday round trip from the Transit Station to downtown Minneapolis.

*Routes:*

Five express routes serve downtown Minneapolis: 780, 781, 782, 783, and 785. Additionally, Route 788 shuttle acts as a collector and transfers customers to Route 783. Route 789 is an express route to the University of Minnesota and does not operate during the Winter and Summer semester breaks. Route 787 is a shuttle route that provides midday and evening service from Maple Grove Transit Station to the other Park & Ride lots, allowing someone parked at any Park & Ride to get back from downtown Minneapolis midday or evening via route 781. For detailed maps on routes, times and park and ride locations go to:

<https://www.maplegrovern.gov/services/transit/commuter-express-services>

*Fares:*

Commuter Express fare is \$3.25 during rush hour, and \$2.50 (\$1.00 for seniors) during non-rush hour times. Persons with disabilities are always \$1.00. Fares are payable in cash while boarding the bus or bus cards and passes are available at Maple Grove Cub Foods or Metro Transit Service Centers. There is also a mobile app available.

**Strengths:**

- Well-run, locally operated service
- Affordable fares
- Trips can be paid for with cash on the bus or with a Go-To fare card

**Limitations:**

- Service targets traditional commuters traveling to/from Minneapolis; not suited to people interested in traveling to Minneapolis for recreation or other purposes

## **6. Jefferson Lines**

*Overview:*

Jefferson Lines offers bus service to other Minnesota communities (and beyond), including St. Cloud, Duluth, Blaine, Winona, Grand Rapids, and many others. Buses depart from Maple Grove Transit Station six times a day.

*How it Works:*

Jefferson Lines is a Minneapolis-based company that provides service to 65 Minnesota communities directly and intercity bus service to 13 states, serving more than 170 communities nationwide. The City of Maple Grove has an arrangement with Jefferson Lines to provide an “intercity” bus stop at the Maple Grove Transit Station located downtown at 12350 Main Street North. Jefferson Lines provides three daily westbound route stops in Maple Grove and three daily eastbound route stops.

Visit Jefferson Lines website (<https://www.jeffersonlines.com/>) for service details and to purchase an advance fare bus ticket. Tickets must be purchased through Jefferson Lines in advance of making a trip. Neither Maple Grove Transit nor the City of Maple Grove sells Jefferson Lines bus fare tickets.

## **On Demand Transportation Services**

### **1. Uber / Lyft**

*Overview:*

Uber and Lyft are convenient, relatively affordable, and easy to use. Riders use their smart phones to book and pay for rides. Similar to taxis, rides are available at any time, but drivers use their personal vehicles, and fares are generally cheaper. Importantly, these services are available on demand, providing a level of spontaneity and independence not available through many other services.

Potential barriers are that 1) users must generally have a smart phone and be comfortable inputting personal and payment information online; and 2) some older residents have expressed reluctance to be picked up by a stranger in their personal vehicle. However, services like GoGoGrandparent have been

created to connect people to Uber and Lyft without smart phones, and training classes can instruct people on exactly how to use these services and help allay common concerns.

*How it Works:*

Uber and Lyft are on-demand transportation companies that operate nationwide. Riders must download a mobile app to their iOS or Android-based phone, sign up, enter a valid phone number, and enter a valid form of payment (either a credit card, or link to an Apple Pay, Google Wallet, or PayPal account). Passengers can then request a ride from a nearby driver. Once confirmed, the app shows the driver's name, arrival time, ratings from past passengers, and photos of the driver and car. It also shows the estimated fare for the trip. Drivers and passengers can add personal information to their profiles about their hometown, music preferences, and other details to encourage drivers and passengers to converse during the ride. After the ride is over and the passenger has left the vehicle, the passenger is given the opportunity to provide a gratuity to the driver, which is also billed to the rider's payment method. Fares are generally cheaper than taxis, but rates fluctuate according to demand.

**Strengths:**

- On-demand, 24/7 service allows for independence and spontaneity
- Relatively affordable
- Service area not defined by any particular boundaries
- No cash exchanged; gratuity is not necessarily expected

**Limitations:**

- Perceived safety concerns and lack of trust in driver
- Need for a smartphone (unless a third-party service is used), some “tech savvy” or willingness to learn, and to feel comfortable inputting personal and payment information

## **2. Taxi and Limo Services**

A variety of taxi and limo services serve the Maple Grove area. These services are very convenient and easy to use with a landline phone, but they are relatively expensive.

**Strengths:**

- Generally available on-demand 24/7
- Generally trusted by older adults (more than Uber/Lyft)
- Does not require a smart phone to book service
- Cash or credit card payment accepted

**Limitations:**

- Can be expensive, and gratuity typically expected
- Availability within Maple Grove can be inconsistent

## Senior-Focused Transportation Options

### 1. Senior Housing Communities

Two of the eight senior residential communities in Maple Grove offer transportation for their residents. A third facility has scheduled two regular weekly trips to grocery stores through MyRide, with residents paying the fee. At all other senior housing communities, residents are responsible for their own transportation.

Those providing transportation limit the trips to the Maple Grove area, which can include Osseo. The service is limited to residents of the facility.

#### **Strengths**

- Beneficial and convenient for residents at facilities that provide transportation
- Partnership with MyRide is creative use of resources

#### **Limitations:**

- Majority of facilities do not offer transportation
- Those that do are unable to provide on-demand service

### 2. In-Home Care Service Providers

Some companies that provide in-home care to older adults also offer transportation services for an additional cost. Rides are provided in personal vehicles and costs vary.

#### **Strengths**

- Individual-focused transportation—not a shared service, trip is planned by the rider
- Includes companion assistance; staff from the agency drive the vehicle and accompany the individual for the entirety of the trip
- Riding in a personal unmarked vehicle carries no stigma of a special service

#### **Limitations:**

- Available only to people already connected to an in-home care agency that offers this service
- Can be costly

## Other Services

### 1. Carpool Metro Transit

#### *Overview:*

Metro Transit's free carpool program helps match people who can ride together to work, saving gas money and allowing use of the high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on local interstates.

#### *Nuts and Bolts:*

Metro Transit's carpool program targets regular commuters. To use it, riders create a profile to be entered into Metro Transit's searchable ride matching system. The system will then match a rider with other users in a carpool. The carpool program is free but has limited use for people other than regular commuters.

**Strengths:**

- Service is free and saves gas money
- Provides alternative to driving one's own vehicle
- Grants carpoolers access to interstate lanes with less traffic/faster travel times

**Limitations:**

- Of little use for people not commuting to work on a traditional workday schedule

## Biking and Walking

**Overview:**

Safe and inviting walking and biking opportunities are important parts of an age-friendly community. Maple Grove already has an impressive network of trails and sidewalks, and the City has included walkability as a land use goal in 2018. Since many of AF MG's goals support the City's existing land use plan, the AF MG leadership team can work with the City on mutual goals of improving biking and walking trails both for recreation and as a means of getting around the community.

**Maple Grove Land Use Plan 2018**

The city's existing strategies for biking and walking trails are as follows:

- A. Maintain and continue the extensive network of trails and parks that link substantially all portions of Maple Grove.
- B. Locate neighborhood parks and design the street system so the parks are easily accessible to the neighborhood and are linked to other parks and schools via bicycle routes (either along quiet local streets and/or by on-street lanes and off-street paths).
- C. Comprehensively plan pedestrian and bicycle networks for new residential and commercial neighborhoods to ensure coordination and continuity among individual subdivisions, commercial sites, parks, schools and trails.
- D. Accommodate walking along every local residential street where practical via concrete sidewalks and asphalt trails. Connect the sidewalk network to the trail system and also link to commercial areas, parks and schools. Provide sidewalks and/or trails along streets in a manner consistent with current and past policy. Create walkable streets that foster an active public life and streets that are energized by their proximity to a vibrant mix of activity-generating uses.
- E. Identify trail and sidewalk gaps in the pedestrian system and allocate resources to fill the most critical gaps.
- F. Identify streets without street trees and allocate resources to add additional street trees.  
[https://www.maplegrovern.gov/files/1315/5266/5890/2018\\_LAND\\_USE\\_PLAN.pdf](https://www.maplegrovern.gov/files/1315/5266/5890/2018_LAND_USE_PLAN.pdf)

### 1. Existing Trails

Numerous biking and walking trails connect within and outside of Maple Grove. These extensive trails are well maintained by the city and well utilized by residents. The trails connect around the lakes, Elm Creek Park and also into retail and residential areas across the city. View a map of city's trail system:

[https://www.maplegrovern.gov/files/4313/3831/8714/Park\\_and\\_Trail\\_Map.pdf](https://www.maplegrovern.gov/files/4313/3831/8714/Park_and_Trail_Map.pdf)

### 2. Proposed Trails

Maple Grove continues to improve and expand its trail system. A number of proposed improvements are being considered in parks and residential areas. See Appendix A for a list of Trail Barriers & Barrier

Reduction Program, which documents problematic areas in the trail system that may need attention. Follow this link to view a map of existing trail barriers:

[https://www.maplegovernn.gov/files/2615/2908/9043/3\\_Maple\\_Grove\\_3\\_Parks\\_and\\_Recreation\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.maplegovernn.gov/files/2615/2908/9043/3_Maple_Grove_3_Parks_and_Recreation_Plan.pdf)

***Strengths:***

- Free way to travel
- Promotes “active transportation” (i.e., walking, biking, etc.), which contributes to public health, livability, and overall quality of life

***Limitations:***

- Some intersections, such as those in downtown Maple Grove, are considered unsafe to cross on foot or bike due to reasons such as heavy traffic, wide streets that take time to cross, and drivers who are or appear to be inattentive, speeding, not coming to complete stops, etc.
- Most older neighborhoods do not have sidewalks and adding them retroactively can be controversial.
- Snow and ice on sidewalks and trails can be hazardous during the winter and limit older people’s ability or desire to walk outside. The city addresses snow and ice removal, but they are a reality of Minnesota winters.

## Summary Analysis

This transportation audit serves to analyze current transportation options in Maple Grove primarily through the lens of what would be of greatest use to older residents who no longer drive or drive on a limited basis. However, whether or not a person drives, a livable or age-friendly community should provide other means of getting around, including safe and inviting places to walk or bicycle.

Based on this audit's information about different services, as well as what AF MG learned about what is important to older residents, the following summarizes key assets and gaps in the current transportation system. These learnings will serve as a guide to the City of Maple Grove as it seeks to develop, facilitate, or promote improved mobility for Maple Grove residents.

### Key Assets

- My Ride and Maple Grove Transit
- Metro Mobility
- Extensive (though not comprehensive) trail and sidewalk network
- Retail, restaurant, and service hubs located near relatively dense housing communities and developments contributes to walkability
- Transportation provided by senior housing communities
- City supportive of improving walkability and multi-modal transportation

### Primary Gaps

- **On-demand services.** There is a need for more on-demand services and/or better utilization of existing on-demand services such as Uber and Lyft. Advance reservation services such as MyRide or Metro Mobility are critical, but the ability to go on unplanned or spontaneous outings or errands adds tremendously to quality of life and people's ability to live with dignity and independence.
- **Service hours.** Existing public services limit the times and days that residents can participate in events, activities or gatherings away from home. MyRide, for example, due to funding and policy constraints, does not operate in the evenings, on Sundays, or on holidays. This prevents some users from being able to attend things like evening community events and Sunday morning worship services, or to join in holiday celebrations with family or friends.
- **Travel to Minneapolis or Saint Paul:** Numerous residents expressed an interest in traveling to Minneapolis and/or Saint Paul to take advantage of recreational, cultural, dining, and shopping opportunities. Metro Mobility allows this type of travel, but only for eligible riders. Transit Link would make this possible by connecting riders to fixed-route service that would take them to Minneapolis, but many older residents not accustomed to using public transportation feel vulnerable using the system to head in to the city. Taxi service is costly, and previously discussed barriers to using Uber and Lyft currently limit their use.
- **Education and awareness:** Some services appear underutilized due to lack of knowledge that they exist or how to use them; fear or mistrust; or the need to use the internet with an appropriate device. Classes or trainings may help overcome these barriers.

- **Cost:** Publicly subsidized options like My Ride, Metro Mobility, and buses are affordable for most people. Private services—taxis, Uber, Lyft, etc.—are less so, yet they are most likely to offer service that is on-demand and available 24/7.

Over the course of 2019 and 2020, AF MG will continue its efforts to learn about the current landscape of transportation for residents and to work for more and better multi-modal options that suit a variety of needs and preferences.

## APPENDIX A

The following document, created by the City of Maple Grove, identifies “barriers” on existing trails—places that are problematic to users for various reasons and that need improvement or study to correct the issue. Such lists change over time as current barriers are addressed and new ones are added.

### *Trail Barriers & Barrier Reduction Program*

Previous comprehensive plans for Maple Grove have included a Trail Barrier Reduction Program to identify those restrictions in the trail system that should receive additional study to resolve the user conflict. This program has been very successful where barriers have been minimized in many locations. The continuation of Highway 610 and other future roads in the northwest area of the city will create new barriers to be considered. Residential development in natural areas near Rush Creek and Elm Creek will present further barriers. While each barrier represents a substantial construction cost, each will be considered on its own merit at the time infrastructure planning is occurring. Neither the natural system nor the planned road system will be allowed to reduce Maple Grove’s future residential neighborhoods to small isolated fragments, unable to access recreation facilities and amenities.

Table 2. **Trail Barriers**

Map Key	Barrier	Linkage	Method	Purpose	Priority Level
1	Rush Creek	- North of 101st Ave. - PSA 6	Bridge over creek	- Connects users east of creek to park west of creek - Part of Rush Creek Linear Park	Low priority / With development
2	Rush Creek	- Between Fernbrook Ln and Ranchview Ln - Near future park - PSA 4	Bridge(s) over creek	- Connects users north of creek to park south of creek - May be part of regional system	Low priority / With development
3	Fernbrook Lane	- North of Co Rd 81 near Rush Creek - PSA 4	Bridge or at grade crossing	- Connects users west of creek to regional park east of creek - May be part of regional system	Low priority / With development
4	Elm Creek Blvd.	- North Elm Creek Trail between Teal Lake Park and High School - PSA 10	Potential to add stoplight to existing safety measures	- Part of linear park and significant trail loop - Mitigates busy roadway	Low priority
5	Zachary Lane, north of 610	- Maple Valley Linear Park to Elm Creek Park Reserve and neighborhoods - PSAs 11 and 12	Potential to add warning flasher to existing safety measures	- Connects users east of Zachary to Elm Creek Park Reserve - Mitigates busy roadway	Low priority
6	Hemlock-Zachary	- Between Weaver Lake Rd and Elm Creek Blvd. - PSA 23 and 24	Improved at grade crossing(s)	- Link residents to Arbor Lakes	Low priority / With development
7	Co Rd 30 / 93rd Ave N	- Maple Creek Linear Park	Potential to add warning flasher to existing safety measures	- Link residents north of Co Rd 30 to Central Park and Community Center	Low priority
8	Elm Creek	- South of Bass Lake Rd. - Utilize powerline corridor - PSA 32	Boardwalk and bridge over creek	- Connects west neighborhood to east side trail and Forest Preservation Area	Low priority
9	Elm Creek south of Elm Road	- Near Elm Creek - PSA 32	Creek crossing	- Elm Creek Linear Park - East/west connection	Low priority
10	Co Road 101	- Between 78th Ave and Bass Lake Rd. - PSA 30	At grade crossings at future roadway intersections	- Link Cook Lake neighborhood to park on east side	High priority
11	Co Road 30	- Co Rd 30 and Rush Creek - PSA 18 and PSA 6	At grade crossings east of creek	- Connects residents south of Co Rd 30 to the PSA 6S Neighborhood Park - Crossing improvements at time of roadway improvements	High priority

## APPENDIX B

The following information is the transportation portion of Age-Friendly Maple Grove's three-year action plan. View the full plan at Age-Friendly Maple Grove's website.

### Domain 2: Transportation

*Safe, accessible and affordable modes of public and private transportation that allow residents to move within and outside of the community with independence and flexibility.*

Transportation is an enormous, complex issue and frequently a top challenge for any community working to become age-friendly—in part because transportation is so closely tied to well-being in other areas of life. Suburban and rural places tend to struggle more. They often are less walkable; housing is located far from shops and services; and public transit is scarce. Even in urban core cities that have more sidewalks and more extensive public transit, crossing busy roads on foot can feel unsafe. And in places like Minnesota, snow and ice can make sidewalks and streets risky or impassable for older pedestrians. Yet affordable, accessible transportation is a fundamental part of life, for all of us.

Most adults—including older adults—in Maple Grove get around by car. In the US, cars long have been our favored mode of transport. They are a symbol of independence and freedom. Most cities and neighborhoods in the US that developed largely after World War II (primarily suburbs) were designed to move cars, not people. As we get older, many of us tend to gradually drive less—e.g., only during daylight, in optimal weather (no rain, snow, or ice), to a few specific destinations, and during off-peak/low traffic times. The ability to continue driving provides choice and independence that contributes to our well-being as we get older. Yet most of us will outlive our ability to drive by seven to 10 years.<sup>1</sup>

More options from the public, private and nonprofit sectors are needed to fill the many gaps left in our car-centric society. Improvements to road design, street and traffic signage, and pedestrian infrastructure can also make driving and walking safer and easier for everyone, including older residents.

Public transportation funding is political and complex; it also largely determines public transportation options. Policies and regulations from governmental oversight agencies such as the Federal Transit Administration and Metropolitan Council also factor heavily into the types and levels of available public transportation options.

#### *Transportation in Maple Grove*

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of older adults in Maple Grove drive themselves as their primary mode of transportation. About 18 percent get rides from others. Maple Grove residents are fortunate to have access to two city public transit services, though both have limitations.

Maple Grove Transit offers a demand-response service called MyRide (formerly Dial-a-Ride) for the general public. It is a subsidized service that allows residents, including older adults, to book “curb-to-curb” van rides primarily within the city. This is a valuable and well-utilized program that that city continues to improve. A new mobile app, for example, offers more on-demand service. However, MyRide operates under constrained funding and policy realities. The service does not operate on Sundays or holidays, and service ends at 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

Maple Grove Transit also operates a well-utilized weekday commuter bus service between Maple Grove and Minneapolis during rush hour. Midday service is available but limited, making it challenging for people to travel into the core cities at other times of the day. Metro Mobility is a shared public transportation

service operated by the Metropolitan Council as part of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It provides a critical service but requires a doctor's certification to ride and is often a time-consuming way to travel.

Maple Grove's Engineering and Public Works departments have been working on a number of issues related to the age-friendly community assessment. This includes taking action to address traffic congestion; developing a pedestrian crosswalk policy; and completing a city-wide review of pedestrian facilities within the public right-of-ways (which includes an inventory of all concrete sidewalks to identify trip hazards and similar issues, data collection concerning sidewalks and pedestrian ramps, and a review of pedestrian push-buttons at traffic signals) as part of the ongoing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan. While this work on the ADA Transition Plan was not directly tied to the community assessment, it supports the goals and principles of Age-Friendly Maple Grove.

## **What We Learned:**

### *Transit Options:*

- Due to funding and policy realities, existing transit services are constrained in their geography, schedules, and availability.
- Transportation can be a barrier to social participation. Non-driving residents cannot attend evening events or Sunday worship services, for example, because the few transportation services that do exist have limited hours
- People need better general knowledge of what transportation options are currently available and how they operate, including ridesharing services like Lyft and Uber.
- Healthcare-related transportation services are limited and have long wait times. For those who doctor out of the community and do not drive, it can be especially difficult to travel to those appointments.
- Older residents would like to visit downtown Minneapolis/St Paul but most transportation services available are designed around traditional commuter schedules.
- Numerous people wished there were a shuttle or circulator bus that would make regular stops at key destinations in Maple Grove.
- Protected seating to wait for transportation is important.

### *Walkability*

- People appreciate and enjoy the walking paths.
- There is a general desire for safer crosswalks with features like longer crossing times. Specifically, the intersection on Main Street and Lakeview Drive N/82<sup>nd</sup> Ave. N (just east of the library) feels dangerous despite it being a four-way stop; this intersection is an important pedestrian gateway from senior and other concentrated housing to many destinations.
- Some sidewalks are uneven and not consistently available.
- More benches along walking trails would be helpful.

### *Driving and Parking*

- More handicapped parking is needed all over the community. This is especially important in the winter with snow and ice.
- Driver education is needed when new traffic features like roundabouts and flashing yellow turn arrows are introduced.
- Traffic/street signs are difficult to read, especially at night. Many are too small and hard to find or see.
- Traffic is heavy in Maple Grove, especially on the weekends, causing congestion and making it hard to get around.

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## **Action Items: Transportation**

<b>Goal 2.1   Ensure current transportation services are being utilized and maximized</b>				
<i>Key Activities</i>		<i>Potential Partner(s)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
a.	Conduct a transportation services audit to understand the landscape of transit options in Maple Grove, including the gaps and limitations, to help inform development of plans to fill identified needs. Audit would include both public options (e.g., MG MyRide) and private options (e.g., Uber/Lyft).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MG Transit</li> <li>• Hennepin County Public Works</li> </ul>	Written audit completed and disseminated to key stakeholders	Year 1
b.	Increase utilization of existing services by improving/expanding communications methods for informing older adults of those services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MG Transit</li> <li>• MG Senior Center</li> <li>• CROSS Services</li> <li>• CCX Media</li> </ul>	Identify and implement new communications strategies and follow up on efficacy	Year 2
<b>Goal 2.2   Explore creation of a new transportation program or programs to provide an affordable, reliable option for older adults.</b>				
<i>Key Activities</i>		<i>Potential Partner(s)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
a.	Create a brief research report on local/regional and national transportation programs and services to educate city and community leaders about promising models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dakota County</li> <li>• AARP</li> <li>• White Bear Lake Senior Program</li> <li>• WeCAB</li> </ul>	Produce report that includes brief analysis of feasibility of applying such models in MG.	Year 2
b.	Make recommendations for new or enhanced transportation service/program using findings from transportation services audit (Goal 2.1) and research on existing models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MG Transit</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• MG Economic Dev.</li> </ul>	Produce and disseminate recommendations report to key stakeholders.	Year 3
<b>Goal 2.3   Encourage active transportation (such as walking and biking) and support pedestrian safety.</b>				
<i>Key Activities</i>		<i>Potential Partner(s)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
a.	Conduct audit of bicycle parking to identify priority locations for new/additional parking. (To be included as part of retail audit under Goal 1.1.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MG Engineering</li> <li>• Active Living Hennepin County</li> </ul>	Map of bicycle rack locations.	Year 1
b.	Conduct walking audit to identify priority locations for adding benches and lighting along walking paths or sidewalks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MG Parks &amp; Recreation</li> <li>• MG Public Works</li> <li>• AARP</li> </ul>	List of and rationale for priority locations for additional benches and lighting.	Year 2
<b>2.4   Make driving and navigating safer and easier</b>				
<i>Key Activities</i>		<i>Potential Partner(s)</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>

a.	Expand driver and cyclist safety and education programs, e.g., 55 Alive, CarFit, and/or workshop about new traffic features like roundabouts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MG Senior Center</li> <li>• AARP</li> </ul>	Number of programs and participants.	Year 2
b.	Develop a procedure that incorporates best practices for safe conditions for older adults as detailed in the Federal Highway Administration's Handbook for Designing Roadways for the Aging Population and similar guides into the planning and/or design of future roadway improvement projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MG Engineering/</li> <li>• Public Works</li> <li>• Hennepin County Public Works</li> </ul>	Produce a procedure that incorporates best practices to improve the safety of the transportation system for the aging population into the planning and design of future roadway projects.	Year 3

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<sup>i</sup> Foley DJ, Heimovitz HK, Guralnik JM, et al. Driving life expectancy of persons aged 70 years and older in the United States. American Journal of Public Health. 2002; 92: 1284- 1289.