

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As populations age across the globe, the World Health Organization (WHO) has called on communities around the world to become more “age friendly.” Seattle officially joined this movement in 2016, receiving our “age-friendly community” designation and crafting an action plan to meet the needs of older adults in our region. We made steady progress on those goals: even while pivoting to meet emerging needs during the COVID-19 crisis, we advanced 27 of the 29 distinct goals we originally set out to accomplish.

We now build on these efforts to continue improving Seattle’s age-friendliness. We know that our older adult population is growing and becoming increasingly diverse, and that people are aging into and living with disabilities for longer. Creating a welcoming city where everyone can thrive will require consideration of our built environments, including the physical structures in which people live, work, shop, and maneuver every day, as well as our social environments. The pandemic shone bright light on our need for human connection, and we strive to ensure people of all ages and cultures can engage socially and avoid isolation.

This 2022-2027 Strategic Framework will serve as our roadmap for the next five years. It is grounded in a set of values that will guide our goals, strategies, and actions:

- We will **lead with race**, recognizing many older adults of color face deep inequities caused by a lifetime of structural racism.
- We will **prioritize inclusivity and equity**, acknowledging Seattle’s increasingly diverse older adult population.
- We will **recognize the intersectional nature** of issues impacting older adults.
- We will continue to do this **work in partnership** with community members, organizations, and government partners.
- We will **seek and listen** to community input, **use data** to inform our work, and **stay open-minded** and nimble.

Underpinned by these values, this strategic framework is organized around our theory of change: that maintaining continuity while aging supports higher life satisfaction, and that financial, health, and social resources are key to maintaining continuity. For the next five years, Age Friendly Seattle will focus on helping older adults retain these critical resources by pursuing the following 16 goals:

### Section I: Economic Security

1. Older adults have increased access to housing options and affordability.
2. More housing stock meets accessibility needs.
3. Transportation options meet the needs of older adults.
4. Older adults can plan financially for retirement and elder financial abuse is decreased.
5. Businesses and workplaces are more age-friendly.

### Section II: Health & Wellbeing

6. Ageism and stigma against older adults and aging is reduced.
7. Physical activity and exercise is increased for older adults.
8. Caregivers are supported.
9. Brain health is improved and people experiencing memory loss are supported.
10. The number of falls has reduced.
11. Safety is improved for older adults.

### Section III: Social Connectivity

12. Access to arts and entertainment is increased.
13. The impacts of hearing loss are mitigated.
14. Older adults are engaged in volunteer and civic opportunities.
15. Programming aimed at reducing social isolation is successful.
16. Digital equity and comfort with technology is increased among older adults.

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Forty-four corresponding strategies support these goals (for comparison, the 2017-2021 Age Friendly Action Plan listed 29 goals and 87 related actions). This framework recognizes the intersectionality of issues facing older adults, and several goals and strategies support multiple priorities.

Because systemic injustices compound over a lifetime, we have evaluated each of our proposed strategies through an equity lens. As we make decisions about the allocation of resources and efforts over the coming years, these considerations will help guide our prioritization and ensure we are advancing equity alongside age-friendliness.

This framework provides clear direction while allowing for continual learning and adapting as we find new ways to make Seattle more age-friendly. It has been crafted using feedback and insights from our original 2017 community needs assessment survey, recommendations from subject-matter experts, related plans and initiatives, available research, and the lived experiences older adults have shared. We have heard that people appreciate Seattle's parks and green spaces as well as our diverse cultural communities, but struggle with housing and transportation and are increasingly concerned about public safety. We are committed to inviting and incorporating community input on an ongoing basis, and to regularly evaluating and adapting our efforts to meet the needs expressed.

We are deeply grateful to the older adults, community partners, government colleagues, and subject-matter experts who have informed this framework and whose work impacts the lives of older adults across Seattle. We are proud to support these collective efforts as we all strive to make Seattle a great place to grow up and grow old.