

Age-Focused Planning Study 2018 - 2020

Understanding and Promoting Age-Friendly Communities

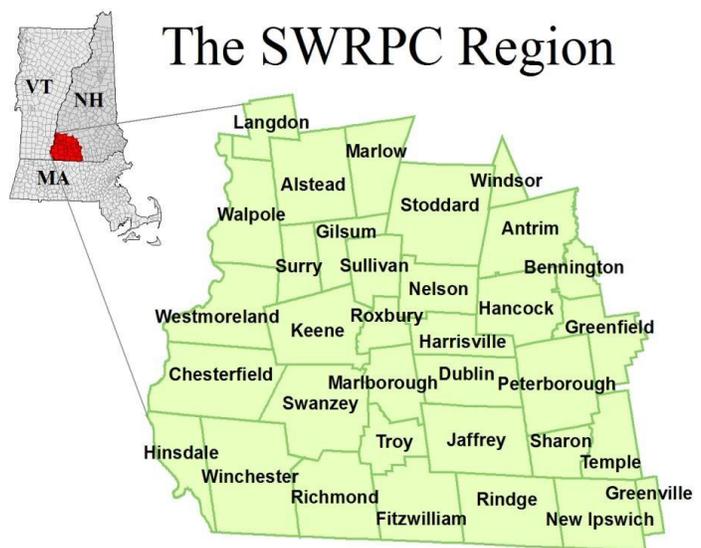
A planning effort facilitated by Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) in partnership with Cheshire Medical Center aimed at better understanding the needs of all ages regarding housing, transportation, employment, social engagement, and civic participation.

In Southwest New Hampshire, the proportion of the population that is 65+ is growing faster than any other age group while the total population is showing little to no growth. Projections indicate that this cohort will increase from 15% to 26% of the total population between 2010 and 2040. As of 2010, over 80% of the Region's municipalities had a median age exceeding that of the state. In contrast to our senior population, the number of children under the age of 15 decreased by 14% between 2000 and 2010. While total housing units have increased since 2000, older householders are increasing while younger ones are declining. Strategies designed to promote a healthy balance of age among a community's population are needed. Since many of the Region's towns do not have the data or staff to conduct the required analysis, this project will provide a foundation for community planning to begin to address local needs.

Changing Demographics = Changing Wants & Needs

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project consists of two phases spanning a two-year period. An Advisory Committee representing a range of interests will serve as a resource to SWRPC staff. During Year 1, we will collect information pertaining to 33 communities in Southwest New Hampshire through research and a series of outreach activities including surveys and focus group discussions. Information will cover issues such as housing, transportation, economic opportunity, and social engagement.



GOALS

Project goals include:

- Improved understanding of local and regional demographics;
- Analysis of issues as they relate to the spectrum of various age groups; and
- Enhanced engagement and improved decision-making among communities, institutions and other stakeholders.

The project is intended to improve understanding of the issues and needs relative to promoting age-friendly communities in the Southwest Region of New Hampshire. Individual communities and other stakeholders in the Region will be provided with findings, recommendations and guidance for establishing a policy basis as well as specific strategies for becoming more age-friendly including priority focus areas for consideration in local master plans and land use regulations.

OUTPUTS

Outputs will include:

- A regional report analyzing demographic trends with a focus on the status and overall value of an age-friendly approach to effective community function and overall quality of life;
- Individualized age-friendly assessments for 33 communities; and
- A final project report describing the approach and results.

An education and outreach campaign will be conducted relative to age-friendly communities to provide a better

understanding of approaches and support for changes that address the dynamic needs and preferences across the age spectrum.



GET INVOLVED

There will be multiple opportunities to get involved by attending project related forums and focus group meetings, participating in surveys, and visiting a web-page dedicated to the project. Click [here](#) to take the survey.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This initiative is funded through a grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation in partnership with Cheshire Medical Center. The timeline extends from July 2018 through June 2020. For additional information, please contact Lisa Murphy, SWRPC Senior Planner at (603) 357-0557 or lmurphy@swrpc.org.

