

Promoting Age-Friendly  
Communities in  
Southwest New  
Hampshire



Community  
Resource  
Guide

Prepared by Southwest Region  
Planning Commission



**Implementing Age-Friendly Strategies in Southwest New Hampshire  
Community Resource Guide**

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## Overview

Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) developed the *Implementing Age-Friendly Strategies in Southwest New Hampshire Community Resource Guide* in 2021 as a tool for Southwest New Hampshire communities interested in making their communities more age-friendly for people of all ages. It is intended as a general guide that municipalities, citizens, community groups, and other stakeholders can use to make their communities more inclusive, welcoming, supportive, and healthy for people of all ages.

The Guide includes helpful information for communities to: 1) build a community coalition to plan and implement age-friendly interventions; 2) identify community needs and strategies to address them; 3) develop an action plan; 4) implement and evaluate interventions and community coalition effectiveness; 5) conduct community outreach to inform the community about project interventions and progress; and, 6) additional helpful resources for becoming an age-friendly community.

### What is an Age-Friendly Community?

An age-friendly community is designed to meet the wants and needs of residents of all ages. The American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) describes a livable or age-friendly community as follows:

A livable community is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and offers supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence, allow residents to age in place, and foster their engagement in the community's civic, economic and social life.

Creating an age-friendly community requires action in many sectors including transportation, housing, economic development, health, and social and human services. It also requires active involvement of local government and engaged citizens. Age-friendly community design requires actions to improve policies, services and structures that create healthy, supportive and vibrant physical and social environments for people of all ages.

### About the Implementing Age-Friendly Strategies in Southwest New Hampshire Project

The project began in 2019 when SWRPC conducted a two-year *Age-Focused Planning Study* to improve the understanding of changing demographic trends and the issues and needs relative to promoting age-friendly communities in the Southwest Region of New Hampshire. Demographic trends indicate a decline in youth and residents of working age while the proportion of the population that is 65+ is growing faster than any other age group. Projections indicate that the 65+ age group will increase from 15% to 26% of the total population between 2010 and 2040.

During the Study, SWRPC analyzed population characteristics within the Region and reviewed information gathered from 33 municipalities related to economic opportunity, housing options, transportation alternatives, and opportunities for social engagement, four areas that can have a profound impact on health and quality of life for residents.

The aim of the *Implementing Age-Friendly Strategies in Southwest New Hampshire* project is to engage municipalities, community stakeholders and citizens to implement age-friendly strategies that address the findings and recommendations of the *Age-Focused Planning Study*.

## Community Leadership

Your community's age-friendly project begins with the identification of leaders to guide and manage the project. It is never too early to begin engaging and mobilizing your community. Like laying a sturdy foundation for a house, establishing a strong Age-Friendly Community Coalition will ensure the success of your project.

It is recommended that communities identify two project leaders, one a municipal representative and the other a member of the community at large, who are fully committed to all components of the project and dedicated to the ongoing improvement of the community. Strong leaders will promote active and diverse citizen participation in the Community Coalition throughout all phases of the project. It is essential that project leaders have:

- The desire and ability to contribute to the mobilization, firm engagement, empowerment, and sustainability of the Community Coalition;
- ability to impact your community's policy making;
- access to necessary funding, technical and other project resources; and,
- ability to keep the Community Coalition members active and involved.

## Mobilizing Your Community: Establishing an Age-Friendly Community Coalition

Establishing a representative Community Coalition is one of the most important steps to becoming an age-friendly community. Building the Community Coalition is a process that will evolve throughout the project. It involves the bringing together of citizens, stakeholders and community groups to share ideas, review community needs, identify action items, and participate in action plan implementation.

### About the Age-Friendly Community Coalition

#### ***What is the Age-Friendly Community Coalition?***

Your Community Coalition should include people from municipal government, local businesses, the volunteer sector, social service providers, philanthropies, citizens, stakeholders and others interested in playing an active role in making your community more age-friendly. Coalition members should be prepared to commit to working on activities independently and dedicate time to attend meetings.

#### ***Why build a community coalition?***

- ✓ To get associations, agencies, organizations, and citizens to work together towards a common goal.
- ✓ To collaborate with and support existing community organizations.
- ✓ To create initiatives defined by citizens and stakeholders.

#### ***Should coalition partners have similar goals and interests?***

Ideally, the coalition will consist of a diverse makeup of citizens, stakeholders and community groups with different perspectives on the work being done. The varying ideas, skills, interests,

and experiences of coalition partners will enhance the overall richness and outcomes of the age-friendly project. It is important that the coalition include residents from within the community. As a result, your community will become a more enjoyable place to live, learn, work, and play.

It will be important to identify key stakeholders, people who are influential within the community. One way to do this is to engage one or two “connectors” to approach decision makers in the community who understand how to navigate local politics and make change. [Appendix A](#) includes a list of potential stakeholders that communities can consider recruiting as coalition members.

### Purpose of the Age-Friendly Community Coalition

The purpose of the Community Coalition is to work collaboratively to influence changes that result in more age-friendly physical and social environments for people of all ages. The path to achieving these changes is through designing and implementing interventions that promote changes to local master plans, policies, land use regulations, and coordination of community services and programs to meet the needs of the community and residents. Long-term outcomes include: 1) older adults who desire to can remain in their homes as they age and be socially connected; 2) younger adults have clear pathways to local job opportunities and amenities that meet their social and recreational interests; 3) families have access to affordable housing and quality schools; 4) transportation alternatives are available for all residents to get to where they need and want to go; and, 5) communities are economically vibrant, resilient and meet the diverse needs of an aging population, while providing opportunities to attract younger families and workers.

### *What is needed to build an Age-Friendly Community Coalition?*

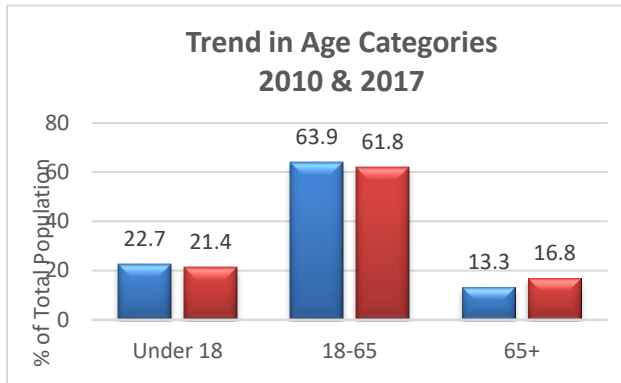
- ✓ Community Readiness
- ✓ Intentionality (clear goals, objectives and action plans)
- ✓ Membership
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Resources
- ✓ Relationships
- ✓ Technical Assistance

### *Steps for building an Age-Friendly Community Coalition*

1. Begin with a mission or goal.
2. Identify key stakeholders (may be made up of informal and/or formal community/organizational leaders).
3. Solicit citizen input to articulate goals and objectives (via community forums, etc.).
4. Review information about the community that was collected and analyzed during the *Age-Focused Planning Study* (includes relevant data, inventory of existing assets and accomplishments and recommended strategies). This information may be requested from SWRPC staff.
5. Develop an Action Plan.
6. Implement the Plan.
7. Identify funding and resources to sustain the coalition.

## Identifying the Needs of the Community

As mentioned previously, SWRPC completed a two-year *Age-Focused Planning Study* in 2020. SWRPC can make available to communities recent town-specific data and information from the Study to identify needs and target age-friendly interventions to where they are most needed. Data and information were collected for 33 municipalities in the Southwest Region of New Hampshire. The compiled information provides a customized snapshot of the community.



Included for each community is data and analysis of demographic information such as population trends and projections, population change among age groups, and comparisons to surrounding towns.

In addition, data and information is available related to the four theme areas of economic opportunity, housing options, social engagement, and transportation. Within each theme area are

noteworthy statistics, survey responses from community members, community assets, and potential town-specific opportunities and strategies for towns to consider. The opportunities and strategies were determined based on analysis of the information collected and can serve as a starting point for communities when conducting action planning activities.

Communities should complement the town data with information from other sources that towns have at their disposal that would be informative to the age-friendly planning process. Communities can also review relevant reports available from SWRPC.

## Developing and Presenting an Age-Friendly Community Vision

A good place to start with launching an age-friendly initiative is with the development of a community vision, recognizing that most people value a vibrant, healthy and supportive community to live in. The vision will serve to motivate community members to get involved with and support the project. The vision should reflect the unique needs, characteristics and values of the community.

The vision statement should be succinct, no more than two sentences, and answer the following questions as recommended by AARP:

1. What needs to be changed to make the community more livable?
2. Why is it important for these issues to be addressed?
3. What will the community be like in a few years if the initiative is successful?
4. Will the Community Coalition know that the work has been accomplished?
5. How will success be quantified?

The vision will provide the foundation from which to develop the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.

## Developing an Action Plan

An Age-Friendly Community Action Plan will help your community move toward implementing action steps as quickly as possible. The action plan is a useful tool for identifying and mapping out age-friendly interventions, as well as for monitoring outcomes and documenting project successes.

Noticeable changes resulting from implementing action plan activities will help your community:

- ✓ Build project support
- ✓ Engage other community members
- ✓ Maintain motivation
- ✓ Implement additional action steps
- ✓ Find reasons to celebrate

It is recommended that communities that are at the initial stages of launching their age-friendly projects begin by identifying one or two short-term “low-hanging” actions to implement within the first year. This will help the community coalition achieve early wins from which to build on.

There are many great resources your community can use to assist with identifying realistic age-friendly community goals, objectives and actions. The AARP [Roadmap to Livability](#) is one of the best. This resource will help communities identify challenges and opportunities to improve livability, shape an action plan to address those findings and carry out the improvements that residents want. The Roadmap is a comprehensive resource that provides guidance with all project phases, including assembling a leadership team, inviting stakeholders to join the Community Coalition, gathering information and identifying priorities, action planning, conducting an outreach campaign, evaluation, and launching project activities. The Roadmap also provides real world examples of age-friendly communities in action, including examples from New Hampshire, both rural and urban communities.

In addition to the Roadmap to Livability, AARP created five companion [Roadmap to Livability Workbooks](#). The Workbook collection can be downloaded or ordered from the AARP website for free. The Workbooks provide detailed guidance in the following topic areas: Conducting Community Listening Sessions, Housing, Transportation, Economic Development, and Health Services/Community Supports.

Information about specific age-friendly interventions that communities around country are working on, including communities in New Hampshire, can be found on the interactive [AARP Livable Communities Map](#). Many of these communities were awarded funding through AARP’s [Community Challenge Grant Program](#) to create comprehensive and detailed action plans.

The Tufts Health Plan Foundation, which provides funding for the *Implementing Age-Friendly Strategies in Southwest New Hampshire* project, has compiled descriptions of all the projects it has funded over the past eleven years. The Foundation’s investments support communities to promote healthy living across the life span with an emphasis on older people. We recommend that communities scan these [Community Investment](#) examples for project ideas, which includes projects in New Hampshire and throughout New England. Communities should also look to the Tufts Health Plan Foundation as a funding source for their own interventions.

An action plan template can be found in [Appendix B](#) and sample action plans are included in [Appendix C](#). As a part of the *Age-Focused Planning Study*, SWRPC identified recommended strategies for each of the

33 communities included in the Study. The strategies were organized under each of the four theme areas of economic opportunity, housing options, transportation alternatives, and opportunities for social engagement. A sampling of these strategies is included in [Appendix D](#).

The American Planning Association has developed *Guiding Principles for Designing Age-Friendly Communities* which can be found in [Appendix E](#). The guiding principles provide an excellent framework for any community considering embarking on an age-friendly initiative.

[Appendix G](#) includes additional tools and resources to help communities plan and implement age-friendly initiatives.

## Monitoring and Documenting Progress

Evaluating the outcomes of your age-friendly initiative is important for a number of reasons, most notably, to determine if project goals and objectives were met and to assess what impacts project activities are having on the community. Establishing desired outcomes and conducting ongoing evaluation helps the Community Coalition understand what is working, what is not working, how effectively the coalition is performing, and recognizing unexpected changes in the environment or other factors that may require a reexamination of project goals and objectives.

The Community Coalition should view the action plan as a living document that can be modified in response to new information or situations that arise after the project is underway. For example, community services organizations were required to make changes to the ways they delivered services during the Coronavirus pandemic, including Volunteer Driver Programs (VDP) in the Southwest Region. VDPs are vital to ensuring that older adults, low-income, disabled, veterans, and other vulnerable populations have transportation access to the services they need. The pandemic required VDPs to make significant operational adaptations to meet health and safety requirements. They also experienced decreases in ridership and losses of volunteer drivers who were concerned about being exposed to the virus. These and other situational changes impacted their financial bottom lines. Age-friendly Community Coalitions that were working on interventions to improve access to transportation were compelled to revise their goals and action plans in response to the situation.

Lack of anticipated resources, lack of interest among residents and other community stakeholders, and unexpected barriers that arise along the way are factors that may trigger Community Coalitions to revise goals and objectives. On the other hand, evaluation and promotion of the coalition's achievements will help to increase interest and commitments from residents as well as attract funding and other resources.

Identifying appropriate outcomes and evaluation indicators does not need to be a complicated process. Target measures of success can be built into the action plan and monitored accordingly. There are a number of resources to help communities plan and conduct an evaluation. They provide roadmaps to help coalitions develop target outcomes, select appropriate evaluation indicators and methods, identify data sources, and examples of outcomes and indicators for specific types of interventions.

Included in [Appendix G](#) are evaluation resources we have found to be particularly relevant and helpful.



## Taking Action

Each community will take a different approach to launching and implementing their action plans. Questions communities should ask when considering their approaches to implementation are:

- Is my community rural or urban?
- What is the target geographic area and population size?
- What is the size and scope of the initiative?
- What are the priorities and interests of partner organizations and community stakeholders?
- What are the strengths of the partnerships?
- What is the level of available funding and resources?
- Are there existing community improvement plans that can be leveraged?

As already mentioned, achieving early victories will help to keep the community and coalition partners engaged and motivated. Early victories can be achieved by identifying specific goals and actions that can be realistically achieved within the first three to six months. The Community Coalition should celebrate the early successes and promote them to the community.

## Community Outreach, Messaging and Tactics

Effective communication is vital to the success of any Age-Friendly Community project. An effective outreach campaign is designed to communicate what the project is all about and motivate community leaders and residents to get involved and take action. Promoting project outcomes and successes is also essential to keep community stakeholders involved and generate resources to sustain the project for the long haul.

In general, the outreach campaign should focus on those who can be persuaded and audiences that can bring others along. The target audiences will vary based on the specific strategies that are being implemented.

Important communications goals include:

- Articulate values messages for the overall initiative, specific objectives and key audiences.
- Attract people to the initiative and build enthusiasm/excitement.
- Persuade people to take action towards the initiative's goals and objectives.
- Engage specific target audiences that can contribute most directly to desired actions and have the greatest influence with decision makers.
- Explain what is going on relative to the project at a certain time.
- Communicate project successes to the community.

Ready-made messages targeted to specific audiences and associated communications tactics can be found in [Appendix F](#).

## Appendix A: Age-Friendly Community Coalition Members

Following is a recommended list of individuals, organizations and sectors that communities should consider including in the age-friendly coalition:

- Elected officials
- Key municipal staff, such as the town planner, public works administrator, recreation director, bike/pedestrian coordinator, assorted transportation representatives
- Residents and volunteers
- Regional Planning Commission (RPC) representatives
- Emergency first responders
- Members of the public health, health care and fitness community, such as public health network, hospitals, and YMCA
- School administrators, staff and board members
- Community transportation organizations
- Senior centers and community centers
- Chamber of Commerce
- Academic institutions
- Local voluntary non-profit service organizations such as the Rotary Club
- Library staff and board members
- Local historical society or museums
- Existing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are engaged in the issue, such as bicycle and pedestrian groups
- Local employers
- Representatives of community foundations

## Appendix B: Action Plan Template

Community:	Responsible Partners	By When	Success Indicator	Progress
Target Area:				
Goal:				
Objective:				
Action:				
Objective:				
Action:				
Objective:				
Action:				

## Appendix C: Sample Action Plans

Community: Town A	Responsible Partners	By When	Success Indicator	Progress
<b>Target Area:</b> Transportation Alternatives				
<b>Goal:</b> Town A will have more transportation options for people of all ages to get to work, school, shopping, health care services, parks, and other key destinations in town and throughout the region.				
<b>Objective:</b> Secure the necessary funding and resources to make walking and biking infrastructure improvements.				
<b>Action:</b> Continue to make improvements to walking and bicycling conditions particularly in downtown, near schools, parks, senior housing and near neighborhoods.	Municipality, local bike/ped group, schools, local businesses, SWRPC, Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST)	2022	Project funding secured (e.g., NH DOT, MAST Complete Streets)	
<b>Objective:</b> Ensure that older adults have transportation options to get to the places they want and need to go.				
<b>Action:</b> Develop a travel training program to engage more older adults in town to take advantage of the existing transit service.	Municipality, transit agency, SWRPC, Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council (MRCC), MAST	2021	Increased ridership	
<b>Objective:</b> Ensure that people without vehicles and other vulnerable populations have sufficient transportation options.				
<b>Action:</b> Work with local transportation company to recruit local volunteer drivers to provide rides to the town's disabled, elderly or otherwise vehicle less residents.	Municipality, transportation company, volunteer agency, schools, SWRPC, MRCC	2022	Increased number of volunteer drivers	

Community: Town B	Responsible Partners	By When	Success Indicator	Progress
<b>Target Area:</b> Social Engagement				
<b>Goal:</b> Town B will provide opportunities for social and civic engagement for people of all ages throughout the year.				
<b>Objective:</b> Increase awareness of and access to safe places to play and be active for people of all ages.				
<b>Action:</b> Conduct an examination of barriers that prevent people from accessing local parks and recreation spaces (e.g., road infrastructure, safety, signage, awareness) and identify opportunities for improvement.	Municipal parks & recreation department, schools, local bike/ped group, residents	2021	Inventory & condition assessment of parks & recreation spaces	
<b>Objective:</b> Increase opportunities for older adults and youth to participate in intergenerational activities.				
<b>Action:</b> Develop a program for older adults to learn technology skills from students.	Municipality, schools, students, senior center	2022	Program created & launched	
<b>Objective:</b> Promote increased social interaction and volunteerism among community members.				
<b>Action:</b> Create a community garden.	Municipality, local gardening group, volunteer service organizations, schools, residents	2023	Local coalition established to build & maintain garden	

Community: Town C	Responsible Partners	By When	Success Indicator	Progress
<b>Target Area:</b> Housing Options				
<b>Goal:</b> Town C will have sufficient affordable and accessible housing so that residents can remain in the community throughout the lifespan.				
<b>Objective:</b> Identify opportunities to expand housing options for young adults, families and older adults.				
<b>Action:</b> Hold community conversations to engage residents on housing issues and what expanded housing options might look like.	Municipality, community housing organization, Plan NH, SWRPC, NH Housing, residents	2021	Results used to inform municipal planning	
<b>Objective:</b> Ensure that new affordable housing units are age-friendly.				
<b>Action:</b> Form a community affinity group to advocate and raise awareness.	Municipality, community housing organization, residents	2022	Community meetings	
<b>Objective:</b> Provide resources for community residents to maintain their homes and to age in place.				
<b>Action:</b> Identify funding opportunities or possible partnerships to facilitate weatherization and other homeowner rehabilitation for older homes.	Municipality, community housing organization, funders, Community Action Program, utility companies	2023	Number of homes weatherized & rehabilitated	

## Appendix D: Sample Age-Friendly Community Interventions

The following sample interventions were drawn from strategy recommendations that were identified for each of the 33 communities included in the *Age-Focused Planning Study*. They are categorized by the four theme areas addressed in the Study.

### Transportation Alternatives

- Revisit and monitor progress in implementing projects cited in the Master Plan's Traffic and Transportation Chapter. There are a number of recommendations to improve accessibility, connectivity and safety that would benefit vulnerable users including seniors, disabled and youth.
- Consider working with local transit agency to develop a travel training program to engage more seniors to take advantage of the existing transit service and look for opportunities to create sheltered bus stops with good pedestrian access.
- Conduct an audit of existing pedestrian facilities in the community to determine compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Make improvements to walking and bicycling conditions particularly in downtown, near schools, parks, and senior housing.
- Align local transportation project development with Town's adopted Complete Streets policy and design standards.
- Ensure that the maintenance program considers transportation infrastructure important for youth and seniors including sidewalk infrastructure, crosswalks, bus stops, pedestrian scale lighting, etc.
- Work with local police and others to identify transportation safety hazards for senior drivers.

### Housing Options

- Conduct a housing gap analysis to identify the type and quantity of housing needed to accommodate the current and future population.
- Update Town's housing chapter of the master plan to include an analysis of the housing needs of the Town as the Region's median age increases.
- Cultivate a relationship with the NH Community Loan Fund's Resident Owned Communities program and the Town's manufactured housing parks to facilitate the creation of cooperatives when manufactured housing parks are placed on the market.
- Connect with local or statewide organizations and nonprofits to provide educational and financial assistance opportunities for first-time homebuyers.
- Explore funding opportunities or possible partnerships to facilitate weatherization and other homeowner rehabilitation for older homes to allow residents to age in place in their communities.
- Engage a professional planning resource such as SWRPC to conduct a regulatory review to address potential barriers to expanding the Town's housing options.
- Work with Plan NH or other sources to envision and facilitate the adaptive reuse of existing structures for mixed-use and/or diverse housing options.

## **Social Engagement**

- Increase awareness of and access to leisure, recreational, cultural and educational opportunities inclusive of persons of varying ages, abilities and financial means.
- Provide intergenerational activities:
  - Opportunities for older adults to learn technology skills from students.
  - Older adults mentor students in academics, and students visit assisted living centers to assist with activities such as gardening, musical productions and oral history projects.
- Increase opportunities to participate in local decision-making bodies.
- Identify areas within the trail network that are in need of improvement for accessibility.

## **Economic Opportunities**

- Evaluate whether municipal permitting processes are clearly defined and easy to navigate by small businesses and entrepreneurs—both those already located in Town as well as those that might be interested in moving to the area.
- Consider the formation of a Town broadband committee to examine potential approaches to expanding access to high-speed internet.
- Study whether sufficient coordination is occurring between local employers, educators, guidance counselors, and municipal officials to develop clear pathways to local job opportunities.
- Assess whether commercial development opportunities are sufficiently promoted and marketed via the Town website and other outreach materials.
- Ensure that individuals of all ages can access the education they need to enter or remain in the workforce.
  - For younger adults, examine whether sufficient coordination is occurring between educators, guidance counselors, employers, and Town government to develop clear pathways from high schools and post-secondary institutions to local employment opportunities.
  - For older workers, evaluate whether continuing education offerings are well-matched with the workforce needs of local employers.
- In order to leverage fiber optic network development, assess whether local ordinances encourage and support development of at-home businesses.



## Appendix E: Guiding Principles for Designing Age-Friendly Communities

From: *Aging in Community Policy Guide*, American Planning Association

1. Actively engage the aging perspective in the planning process – Ensure participation across age, language, race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, ability and technology barriers, and solicit input in all dimensions of planning and policies.
2. Provide a range of affordable and accessible housing options – Promote housing development of differing sizes and costs. Better utilize existing housing resources, and advance universal design and visibility standards to promote accessibility in new housing.
3. Ensure access to a variety of quality transportation options – Provide choices that facilitate the maximum degree of personal independence for people of differing abilities. Design and fund appropriate mobility components.
4. Use land-use and zoning tools to create welcoming communities – Maximize connections among housing, transportation, health care, recreation, human services and community engagement, to facilitate health, participation, security and quality of life.
5. Support the economic well-being of older adults and their caregivers – Advance local economic development policies and planning that support older adults remaining in the workforce longer, serving as employees, entrepreneurs and mentors.
6. Strengthen the community assets of and supports for older adults – Shift the housing and service design model and ensure that community services and assets are accessible to older adults. Promote and nurture the rich human asset of older adults who wish to engage in civic and community life.

## Appendix F: Age-Friendly Messages

The following ready-made messages can be used by communities to engage community stakeholders in the Age-Friendly Community project, build enthusiasm and excitement, and persuade people to take action towards the project’s goals and objectives. The messages are targeted to the general public as well as specific audiences including municipalities, community-based organizations, businesses, and residents. They are categorized by theme areas including transportation alternatives, housing options, social engagement, economic opportunities, and others.

Target Audience	General Messages
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Implementing Age-Friendly Strategies in Southwest New Hampshire</b> project aims to improve access to transportation, housing options, economic opportunities, and vital community services for older and younger adults in Southwest New Hampshire. The effort also involves coordination activities for broadband connectivity and other emerging health issues as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Age-friendly communities are designed to address the needs of residents of all ages.</li> <li>• <b>Implementing Age-Friendly Strategies in Southwest New Hampshire</b> is a response to changing demographics in Southwest New Hampshire. Trends indicate a decline in residents of working age and a population of those aged 65 and over that is growing faster than any other age group. Census data indicates that over 80% of the Region’s municipalities have a median age exceeding that of the State.</li> <li>• The recently completed <b>Age-Focused Planning Study in Southwest New Hampshire</b> investigated the implications of demographic changes on four theme areas that impact community vitality and residents’ health and quality of life including transportation alternatives, housing options, economic opportunities, and social engagement. In the current phase of the project, covering 3-years and beginning during the summer of 2020, project partners will continue to move forward on these issues while also assisting communities with implementation activities designed to incorporate age-friendly principles and practices.</li> </ul>

Target Audience	Transportation Messages
General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vast majority of residents in Southwest New Hampshire rely on a car for daily transportation, which poses accessibility challenges in particular for youth and elderly and can be a cost burden for young workers and seniors with fixed incomes. Your community can help by working with area transit and volunteer driver agencies to provide rides to appointments, services, schools, and work.</li> </ul>

Target Audience	Transportation Messages
<b>Municipalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities that have adopted Complete Streets policies can consider aligning local transportation project development with adopted Complete Streets policy and design standards.</li> <li>• Municipalities can work with local police to identify transportation safety hazards for senior drivers.</li> <li>• Municipalities can make improvements to walking and bicycling conditions, particularly in village areas, near schools, parks, senior housing and near neighborhoods adjacent to recreational trails.</li> <li>• Municipalities can conduct audits of existing pedestrian facilities in the community to determine compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.</li> </ul>
<b>Business community</b>	<p>Messages to Share with Business Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses need to be aware that many of their clients rely on volunteer rides to get to and from your business or organization.</li> <li>• Promoting participation in regional volunteer driver programs helps our local and regional community to access our location.</li> </ul> <p>Messages for Business Community to Share Internally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to increase our coordination with volunteer driver dispatchers and their clients to ensure customers can reach businesses.</li> </ul>

Target Audience	Social Engagement Messages
<b>General Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing opportunities for social engagement in communities is perhaps one of the most critical components of retaining and attracting a diverse population and a factor in improving population health.</li> <li>• Social and emotional support is critical for navigating the challenges of daily life as well as for good mental health.</li> </ul>
<b>Municipalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities can provide a range of culturally appropriate social activities tailored to the diverse interests, needs and talents of older adults and people of all ages.</li> <li>• Town Recreation Departments provide opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in activities such as athletic leagues, movie nights, holiday events, lessons/classes, town dances, and more.</li> <li>• Free or low-cost community events such as ice cream socials, craft fairs, concerts, art fairs, dances, and dinners provide excellent opportunities for residents to connect with other residents, while attracting visitors to the community.</li> </ul>
<b>Community-Based Organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town libraries offer an array of opportunities for social interaction and experiences for all ages, including classes, crafts, social events, and more.</li> <li>• Community organizations can provide intergenerational activities that benefit old and young adults alike. For example, older adults can mentor students in academics or workforce skills. Students can teach older adults technology skills or visit assisted living centers to assist with activities such as gardening, musical productions and oral history projects.</li> </ul>

Target Audience	Social Engagement Messages
<b>Community Volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteerism provides multiple benefits for both volunteers and recipients, including the highest levels of social engagement and personal reward.</li> <li>• Churches and Service Organizations provide numerous options to volunteer, provide support to underserved community members, and serve in leadership roles. These opportunities can be especially rewarding because of the personal interactions with others and satisfaction of helping community members.</li> </ul>

Target Audience	Housing Messages
<b>General Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents in Southwest New Hampshire need more housing options. Creating more diversity in housing supply, including more affordable and multifamily housing, more workforce housing, and more choices for renters, is essential to supporting a diversity of age groups. A range of housing is a key element to sustaining community vitality.</li> </ul>
<b>Municipalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities can create connections with the development community to encourage the diversification of the housing stock.</li> <li>• Municipalities can adopt innovative land use approaches such as infill development and single-family home conversions.</li> <li>• Municipalities can consider the creation of a municipal housing commission pursuant to NH RSA 674:4-c.</li> <li>• Municipalities can consider a regulatory review of zoning and other regulations to address barriers to expanding housing options.</li> </ul>

Target Audience	Economic Opportunities Messages
<b>General Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic well-being of Southwest New Hampshire communities both depends on and contributes to fostering a high quality of life for all age groups.</li> <li>• The Southwest New Hampshire Region’s ability to attract and retain a well-trained workforce, from newly minted college graduates to veteran, management-level employees, hinges on providing community amenities that high-skilled workers value.</li> <li>• Local availability of affordable education and well-paying jobs enables young people and working families to achieve financial stability and a higher standard of living.</li> <li>• A robust economic climate in Southwest New Hampshire benefits those aging out of the labor force by attracting and retaining workers, including medical staff, critical to maintaining a high quality of life for older adults.</li> </ul>

Target Audience	Economic Opportunities Messages
<b>Municipalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities can evaluate whether the municipal permitting process is clearly defined and easy to navigate by small businesses and entrepreneurs—both those already located in Town as well as those that might be interested in moving to the area.</li> <li>• Municipalities can consider the formation of a town broadband committee to examine potential approaches to expanding access to high-speed internet.</li> <li>• Municipalities can study whether sufficient coordination is occurring between local employers, educators, guidance counselors, and municipal officials to develop clear pathways to local job opportunities.</li> <li>• Municipalities can assess whether commercial development opportunities are sufficiently promoted and marketed via the Town website and other outreach materials.</li> </ul>
<b>Businesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses can coordinate with educators, guidance counselors, and municipal officials to develop clear pathways to local job opportunities.</li> </ul>

Target Audience	COVID-19 Messages
<b>General Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends three important ways to slow the spread of COVID-19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wear a mask to protect yourself and others.</li> <li>○ Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from others who don't live with you.</li> <li>○ Avoid crowds. The more people you are in contact with, the more likely you are to be exposed to COVID-19.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Additional information you should know about the COVID-19 pandemic is available at the <a href="#">Centers for Disease Control</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a variety of trusted social media outlets featuring NH-specific and general COVID-19 information to “like and follow:” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="https://www.facebook.com/NHDepartmentOfHealthAndHumanServices/">https://www.facebook.com/NHDepartmentOfHealthAndHumanServices/</a></li> <li>○ <a href="https://www.facebook.com/GreaterMonadnockPHN">https://www.facebook.com/GreaterMonadnockPHN</a></li> <li>○ <a href="https://twitter.com/NHDHHSPIO">https://twitter.com/NHDHHSPIO</a></li> <li>○ <a href="https://twitter.com/NHPubHealth">https://twitter.com/NHPubHealth</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• NH DHHS has consolidated a wide variety of resources and guidance at <a href="https://www.nh.gov/covid19/resources-guidance/index.htm">https://www.nh.gov/covid19/resources-guidance/index.htm</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Communities, Workplaces and Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Centers for Disease Control has <a href="#">many helpful COVID-19 resources for communities, workplaces and schools</a>.</li> <li>• The New Hampshire Municipal Association has <a href="#">many resources and solutions for municipal governments</a>.</li> </ul>

Target Audience	Emergency Preparedness Messages
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who have and routinely practice emergency plans. This group needs ongoing encouragement and access to training, but already understands the importance of preparedness. They may be encouraged to share their efforts with others.</li> <li>• Those who may or may not have a plan, but are aware of the importance of emergency preparedness. This group needs access to information and tools on how to elevate their level of preparedness.</li> <li>• Those who do not have a plan or practice emergency preparedness. This group—the largest—first needs to be persuaded that preparedness is important, and then provided with information, simple first steps, and ongoing encouragement.</li> <li>• People should be prepared for major weather events and disasters at all times. However, emergency preparedness is an extremely important aspect of day-to-day life that many people overlook. Being better prepared for such events can reduce health risks.</li> <li>• Make emergency preparedness planning a priority in your home and in your community now and throughout the year.</li> </ul>
<b>Specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you prepared to be in your house for 72 hours? Work with your family to make a preparedness kit with 72 hours' worth of food, water, and medications in case the power goes out and you are waiting for help to arrive. Tips for a successful preparedness kit can be found here <a href="https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit">https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit</a>.</li> <li>• Local emergency alerts are available for your address. You can sign up and download the app in order to be better prepared and informed during emergencies here <a href="https://www.onsolve.com/landing/sign-up-for-coded-emergency-alerts/">https://www.onsolve.com/landing/sign-up-for-coded-emergency-alerts/</a>.</li> </ul>

### Outreach Tactics

#### News Media Outlets

- Conduct a **media audit** to understand how project objectives are being framed.
- Create a series of news releases focused on major themes of the project relative to regional trends (e.g., in the example of transportation: area demographics, demand for rides/transportation in the community, benefits, need for volunteers, value in community). The news release should feature quotes and offer interviews with Workgroup members, staff and other experts.

#### Municipal

- Create a phone script to discuss project with potential participants.
- Create a letter to local leaders explaining what is planned and what to expect over the course of the project. The letter should provide background on needs from community assessments and concrete steps to indicate interest.

- Create and submit a sample community newsletter article that describes the project, schedule, and ways to get involved.
- Create a series of local newsletter articles focused on major themes of the project (e.g., in the example of transportation: demand for rides/transportation in the community, benefits, need for volunteers, value in community demonstrated through local voices).
- “Meeting in a Box” toolkit of slide deck, invitations, other content to enable local champions to deliver information about the project in their community and initiate recruitment for their own implementation activities.

### **Social Media**

- Utilize the **Partner Facebook** accounts to publish messages tied to the project objectives and values, advertise events and meetings, host conversations or presentations with project partners. The messages could be promoted within target communities, the region or both.
- Create partnerships with key organizations to help spread/cross-post content

### **Websites**

- Use the **Partner websites** to promote general information about the project for use by a variety of visitors seeking information about the purpose and goals of the project. Create a project webpage on the municipal website including an overview of the project. Recruit project partners to link to or mirror the content on their own website.
- Compile and promote resources designed to expedite the implementation of project objectives (these could include toolkits from NH OSI, AARP and others).

### **Events**

- Organize online events aimed at encouraging the use of best practices in implementing project objectives – and providing technical assistance/access to experts.
- With the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, in-person events may not be permitted depending upon local health and safety restrictions.

### **Other**

- Use **Partner Newsletters** to promote general information about the project for use by a variety of visitors seeking information about the purpose and goals of the project.
- Document and publicize actions people have already taken or undertake during the course of the project. This could be accomplished via news release, award, interview or other public recognition.

## Appendix G: Helpful Resources

### **Age-Friendly Communities Planning and Implementation Tools and Resources**

Roadmap to Livability Collection, AARP – 6 workbooks with strategies and solutions that make a community great for people of all ages: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2017/roadmap-to-livability-collection.html>

Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities, World Health Organization: [https://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Age\\_friendly\\_cities\\_checklist.pdf?ua=1](https://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Age_friendly_cities_checklist.pdf?ua=1)

Policy Guide on Age-Friendly Communities, American Planning Association: <https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/agingincommunity.htm>

### **Age-Friendly Community Project Examples**

AARP Community Challenge Grantee projects: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/>

Tufts Health Plan Foundation Grantee projects: <https://www.tuftshealthplanfoundation.org/grant-seekers.php?page=grant-seekers/awarded-grants>

Age-Friendly Rural Planning, American Planning Association: <https://www.planning.org/planning/2020/dec/age-friendly-rural-planning/>

### **Evaluation Resources**

Evaluating Your Age-Friendly Community Program, AARP: <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2014/NAFC%20Documents/evaluating-your-age-friendly-community-program.pdf>.

Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide: Using Indicators to Measure Progress: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/aging-seniors/friendly-communities-evaluation-guide-using-indicators-measure-progress.html>

### **Funding Opportunities**

Tufts Health Plan Foundation – makes investments that promote healthy living across the life span with an emphasis on older people: <https://www.tuftshealthplanfoundation.org/focus-areas.php?page=focus-areas/overview>

AARP Community Challenge Grants – supports projects that build momentum for local change: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/>

Municipal Technical Assistance Grant Program (MTAG), Plan NH – provides funding and technical assistance to support expanding the supply and type of available housing in communities through the modification of ordinances and regulations: <https://plannh.org/programs/municipal-technical-assistance-grant>



**Age-Friendly Organizations and Alliances**

New Hampshire Alliance for Health Aging: <https://nhaha.info/>

Tri-State Learning Collaboration on Aging: <https://agefriendly.community/>

AARP New Hampshire: <https://states.aarp.org/new-hampshire/>

**Guidance from Southwest Region Planning Commission**

For additional information, guidance and technical assistance, contact:

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