



Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton Community Assessment & Action Plan

August 2022



NORTHAMPTON
Massachusetts



Acknowledgements

This Community Assessment and Action Plan for making Northampton an Age and Dementia Friendly Community was developed under the leadership of **Mayor David Narkewicz**, staff from **Northampton Senior Services** and the **Department of Planning and Sustainability**, with technical assistance from the **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)** through funding from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. Findings and recommendations were developed through the participation of community partners in the Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton Initiative including the following Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton Steering Committee members:

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Introduction

Northampton is a vibrant small city that is committed to all aspects of livability and accessibility. The city was awarded Age Friendly Community status by the AARP in April 2019 after submission of an application for designation in which the city committed to engaging older adults in listening sessions, focus groups, and individual interviews, and to specifically target socially isolated and more vulnerable community members to ensure that all perspectives are reflected.

After the Age Friendly designation was approved, the Age Friendly Northampton committee conducted a kick-off event and listening session in April 2019 to get feedback from community members on the assets and challenges for older adults and conducted a Livable Communities Survey in February through April of 2020.

The Age Friendly Northampton Committee met in September of 2020 to review survey results and to discuss how services and programs have shifted due to the COVID-19 state-mandated shutdown. Northampton Neighbors conducted a survey of its members to measure how the pandemic was affecting their lives, and to determine where the greatest needs are for older adults in the community.

This Community Assessment Report was developed with assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission through their Age Friendly Pioneer Valley Initiative that provides technical assistance to municipalities in the PVPC region (Hampshire and Hampden Counties) through funding from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. The report is organized by the Eight Domains of Livability, the model for Age Friendly Cities that was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and incorporates the additional community sectors of a Dementia Friendly Community.

The Community Assessment draws from existing plans and assessments that have been completed for the city and incorporates the results of the community engagement activities to develop recommendations for activities that the city can take going forward to make the city even more livable and welcoming for people of all ages.

Background

As the Hampshire County seat, Northampton is the home of a number of county-wide programs and services, all with a long history of collaboration and coordination. The vibrancy of Northampton is reflected in many designations: Best Place to Retire, Best Arts Community, Healthy Motion Award, Bicycle-Friendly Community (Bronze), Pedestrian Friendly Community

(Bronze), STAR Communities Five Star Rating for Community Sustainability, Top 25 Arts Designations,¹ Great Cities for Simple Life (AARP)² and Top Adventure Towns.³

A number of recent initiatives Northampton highlight Northampton's commitment to being an inclusive and Age Friendly community:

- A Climate Resilience and Regeneration planning effort that includes building social resilience with neighborhood networks to take care of all residents and planning for the development of a Community Resilience Hub.
- A “pavement to parks” program, Main Street redesign effort, and Pleasant Street complete streets improvements all focused on ensuring that Northampton is safer and more comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists of all abilities and comfort levels.
- Development of a Rocky Hill Greenway with additional benches for more accessibility and comfort for people of all ages and populations.
- Participation in the regional coordination of the regional ValleyBike Share program with charging stations for pedal-assist E-bicycles to serve a larger demographic than traditional human-powered bicycles.
- Planning activities and temporary improvements to try out plans for an eventual reconstruction of Main Street.
- Participation in the Mass in Motion program that promotes active living and healthy eating for people of all ages and focuses on health equity and the needs of vulnerable populations.
- Housing efforts that address both market rate housing and expanding housing options beyond large single-family homes designed for families with children.
- Northampton Neighbors offers a “Village model” of support services and social programs for over 900 residents who have opted to “age in place”.

Of respondents to the Survey, 82% of respondents said that Northampton is either good, very good, or excellent to live in as people age, and only 6% rated the city as poor.

Community Engagement and Review of Past Plans

The Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton initiative has conducted several community engagement efforts since the application for Age Friendly designation was submitted to the AARP in November of 2018. These efforts have included the development of a multi-sectoral Age Friendly Northampton working group, a kick-off event and listening session held in April 2019, administration of the Livable Community Survey in February through April of 2020.

¹ <http://northamptonma.gov/154/Northampton-Awards>

² https://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-07-2009/simple_life_more_cities.html

³ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/article/northampton-massachusetts>

Results of the Livable Community Survey were compiled in a Summary Report in June of 2020 (Appendix A).

This Community Assessment report was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic which included a state-mandated closure of Senior Centers and most public buildings and businesses. The Age Friendly Northampton Working Group met (via Zoom) in September of 2020 to review the results of the Livable Communities survey and to discuss the activities of working group member organizations in their services to older adults during the pandemic. Summaries of the results of these efforts are included Appendix A, and findings have been incorporated into this Community Assessment.



Northampton Neighbors distributed a survey in the Fall of 2020 to ask members about additional needs and concerns that they had during the pandemic. The survey reached 733 of Northampton Neighbors' 900 members, and 244 surveys were returned. Most of the survey responses indicated that the NN members were able to meet their needs during the pandemic and appeared to have some social connections; however, from the responses, NN concluded that most of the responses were from their younger members (in their 60s and 70s) so survey responses may not reflect the needs of some of the older members. The survey responses

indicated that NN members are making considerable use of a number of the services that NN offers and did not need any additional services due to the pandemic.

Review of Past Plans and Assessment Reports

In order to assess the City's policies and plans for a more livable community, existing plans and assessment reports were reviewed for this Age and Dementia Friendly Community Assessment. These include the following:

- Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan (2008-28)
- Northampton Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2015-2020)
- Housing Needs Analysis and Strategic Housing Plan (2011)
- Open Space, Recreation and Multi-Use Trail Plan (2018-2025)
- Healthy Hampshire Food Access Assessment Report (Healthy Hampshire/CES 2017)
- Increasing Accessibility for People with Disabilities at Northampton Greenways, Parks, and Recreation Areas (Healthy Hampshire/CES 2019)
- Planning the Northampton Resilience Hub (Jones Whitsett Architects, June 2020)
- Age Friendly Survey of Northampton Residents Summary Report (Northampton COA, Senior Center, and Northampton Planning and Sustainability, June 2020)
- Northampton Neighbors Survey Summary (November 2020)
- Northampton Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan and Section 504 Plan (October 2020)

Elements of Age and Dementia Friendly Communities

Models for assessing the qualities of a community that makes it "Age Friendly" or "Dementia Friendly" have evolved over the years as communities identify additional factors or domains that contribute to the quality of life for older adults. The Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative has developed the following Domains of Livability model for an Age and Dementia Friendly Community. Based on the World Health Organization's "Eight Domains of Livability" model, the MHAC model adds Public Safety and Access, Equity and Inclusion to the original eight domains and includes Technology in the Communication domain.

This model invites communities consider elements of the physical and social environments as key determinants of whether people can remain healthy, independent and autonomous as they age. The model is helpful in considering elements of a community that extend beyond the built environment and that are critical to the needs of older adults, but also contribute to healthy, active, more livable communities. Some communities have added domains such as Food Security and Financial Stability as needed depending on the needs of the individual communities.

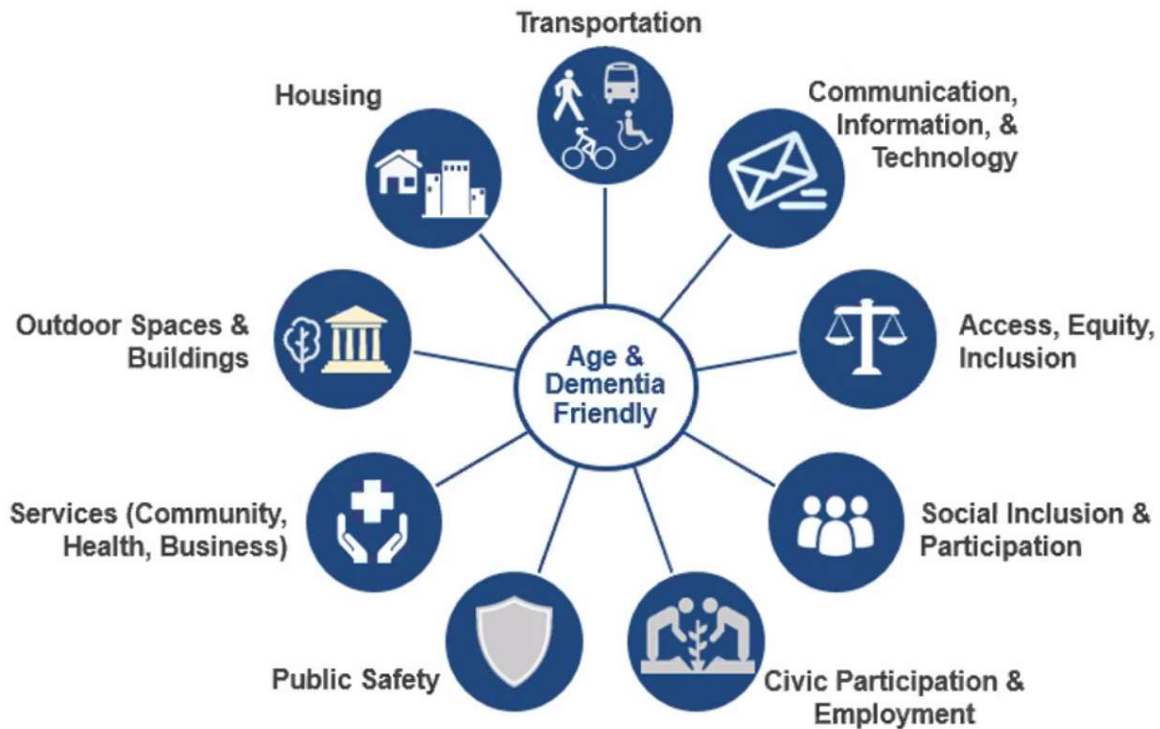


Figure 1 - Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Communities (Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative)

Ten Sectors of a Dementia Friendly Community

As populations age, the number of people diagnosed with Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia also increases along with the need for understanding of the signs of dementia, and how to work with and support people with dementia and the people who care for them. It is important for many sectors of the community to be educated about the signs of dementia and for communities to provide safe and comfortable spaces where people with dementia and their caregivers can meet or seek respite care.

Dementia Friendly America is a national network of communities, organizations and individuals seeking to ensure that communities across the US are equipped to support people living with dementia and their caregivers. Dementia Friendly Communities foster the ability of people living with dementia to remain in community and engage and thrive.

Dementia Friendly America lists ten sectors that should be dementia informed in order to create a dementia friendly community⁴:

1. **Transportation, Housing and Public Spaces (local government)** – Infrastructure that makes communities more livable for people with dementia and their caregivers.

⁴ <https://www.dfamerica.org/what-is-dfa>

2. **Businesses** – Dementia supportive customer service, environments and policies that support employee caregivers.
3. **Legal and Advance Planning Services** – Legal services that help vulnerable clients express their wishes early and avoid problems such as unpaid expenses.
4. **Banks and Financial services** - Dementia friendly practices that help maintain clients' independence while protecting them from problems.
5. **Neighbors and Community Members** – Raising awareness to help neighbors and community members understand and support people living with dementia.
6. **Independent Living** – Home-based services available to maximize independence and promote autonomy and a high quality of life.
7. **Communities of Faith** – Faith communities use dementia friendly practices to provide a welcoming, compassionate environment and spiritual connection.
8. **Care throughout the Continuum** – Early diagnosis of dementia and ongoing medical care; patient education; and connecting patients and their caregivers with community resources that promote quality of life.
9. **Memory Loss Supports and Services** – A spectrum of settings and services needed by people with dementia – from long-term care facilities and assisted and independent living residences, to home care, adult day services, and hospice care.
10. **Emergency Planning and First Response** – Community planning and family preparation considers safety, security, and needs of people with dementia in disaster planning and emergency response.

The domains of an Age & Dementia Friendly Community model include some of these ten Dementia Friendly Sectors. It is important for communities to plan for people with dementia while preparing for more livable communities, as data indicates that the numbers of people with dementia will continue to rise as the population ages. This Community Assessment highlights areas within the Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community where supports or environments should consider people with dementia as well as older adults.

Dementia Awareness and Support Programs in Northampton

Members of Northampton Neighbors, a volunteer-driven organization that matches volunteers with people who need help, have conducted a number of educational programs to raise awareness about Alzheimer's and dementia.

In February 2021 Northampton Neighbors started regularly scheduling Dementia Friends virtual sessions led by Kathy Service, Dementia Friends Champion (Trainer). There have been five sessions and 90 people have become Dementia Friends (as of March 2022).

In October 2021, Northampton Neighbors also started offering brief monthly educational sessions, "News You Can Use," with two of the sessions offering resources for dementia

support; Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support program (administered through Highland Valley Elder Services -HVES); and the Alzheimer's Association's Care Consultation program.

Northampton Alzheimer's Community Forum was held January 20, 2022 in collaboration with Cooley Dickinson Hospital, the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative, and the Northampton Senior Center. It was organized through the Alzheimer's Association and was virtual with the panel including representatives from the Alzheimer's Association, the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative, Highland Valley Elder Services, and Northampton Neighbors. Twenty 20 people attended including the Division Chief of EMS at Northampton Fire Department, the director of Office of Community Care, and at least one person living with Dementia.

In January 2020 the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative (PVMCI) was launched. This initiative, funded by the Eisenberg Family Trust, is a coalition of health care and community providers dedicated to empowering and supporting older adults living with dementia and their family caregivers to improve their quality of life. Partnering organizations include Cooley Dickinson Hospital, Cooley Dickinson Medical Group, VNA & Hospice, Valley Medical Group, the Alzheimer's Association, Highland Valley Elder Services, Northampton Neighbors and the Northampton Senior Center.

The Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton Working Group will be formally launching a Dementia Friendly Northampton subcommittee to continue to build awareness and support for people with dementia and their caregivers in Northampton. Members of this committee will also join other subcommittees working to implement strategies outlined in the Action Plan to ensure that people living with dementia are included in all Age Friendly initiatives.

Communication, Information and Technology

Getting information to older adults and their caregivers about services, programs and even the built environment is critical to ensuring that people get the support that they need and are informed about programs and services for health and well-being. Access to technology for the purposes of communication as well as access to social programming, health care, and other services became especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic when the Senior Center, businesses, restaurants and cultural venues had to close to prevent spread of the virus. Communication, information and technology span all of the other domains in that people need to know where to find information on services such as transportation, social programs or volunteer opportunities in order to take advantage of these opportunities.

The pandemic heightened concerns over the "Digital Divide" and how to distribute information to those who are not able to access online resources. Northampton Senior Services responded with an I-Pad loan program and coordinated trainings for new users. However, even with the knowledge, connection and equipment, understanding how to avoid online scams or malware and the cost of equipment and internet access are hurdles that are not easily overcome by all

residents. At a meeting of the Age Friendly Steering Committee, a representative from the Police Department reported increased numbers of scam/spam calls during COVID-19.⁵ The survey distributed by Northampton Neighbors found that most respondents did have access to the internet, but that their older members were more likely to request paper copies of the survey, indicating less comfort with digital platforms.

During the pandemic, Northampton Senior Services and Northampton Neighbors conducted regular check-in calls with seniors. Northampton Neighbors has also developed ten “Neighborhood Circles” or groups of neighbors who take responsibility for checking on one another. At the Age Friendly Northampton meeting in September 2020, it was suggested that developing Neighborhood Circles in Housing Authority properties would be a good way to engage people with less financial resources who may need more support systems.

Those in attendance at the Age and Dementia Friendly Kick-Off and Listening Session in April of 2019 noted the city’s creative spirit and problem solving. This theme was echoed in the September 2020 meeting of the Age Friendly Northampton committee as organizations reported on their collaborative efforts to continue offering programming and services in spite of the state-mandated shutdown during the pandemic. During the shutdown period, Northampton Senior Services partnered with the Forbes Library to jointly market programs and services, and library staff assisted with trainings on how to use the I-pads.

Language and translation services, as well as communication enhancements for people with visual or hearing impairments are also critical to reaching all members of the community. The Healthy Hampshire Food Access Assessment Report reported that Hispanic/Latinos in Hampshire County experience food insecurity at disproportionately high rates and are not aware of programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This assessment recommended having signage in both English and Spanish, especially at locations where SNAP is accepted. The City is in the process of acquiring equipment to accommodate people with hearing loss at public meetings.

The proposed Northampton Resilience Hub, which would create an accessible location to coordinate the delivery of services and complement existing shelters, could play a role as a central location for community information (Planning the Northampton Resilience Hub, 2020).

Livable Community Survey respondents (pre-pandemic) said that the most trusted sources of information were family and friends, the internet, Northampton Senior Center and Forbes Library. The areas that could be improved included free access to computers and internet in public places, community information in multiple languages, and information in one central source.

Assets/Accomplishments

- City has recently added devices for making meetings at City Hall more welcoming to people with hearing loss (Summary of COVID meeting, 2020)

⁵ Summary of Age Friendly Northampton Meeting and Next Steps, September 2020

- Northampton Senior Services (NSS) has developed an I-Pad loan and training program that is used as a model for other senior centers in the region.
- Northampton Neighbors has developed “Neighborhood Circles” that check in on neighbors during emergencies (and during the pandemic)
- NSS distributes a newsletter of programming and information for people on their mailing list in print and online formats

Communication and Community Information Recommendations

1. Develop a **Communications Hub**, possibly through the Community Resilience Hub, to ensure that all residents know about services and programs that are available.
2. Develop innovative systems for sharing information with all agencies and partners in real time. **Participate in 413-Cares** and ensure that all community members know about this resource.
3. Establish more Neighborhood Circles in Housing Authority properties.
4. Continue to build the capacity of people without equipment or internet access through I-pad or laptop loan programs, training, and assistance in accessing affordable internet service.
5. Develop a “train the trainer” program to enlist older adult volunteers in technology assistance programs.
6. Develop policies and programs for offering interpreter services and programming in other languages.
7. Establish programs and systems to include people with visual and hearing impairments

The Built Environment

Three of the domains of an Age Friendly Community fall under the theme of the built environment. These include Housing, Transportation, Public Buildings and Outdoor Spaces. The Healthy Community Design Toolkit, developed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in 2014 and amended in 2017 to include considerations for healthy aging, describes the effects of the built environment on older adults:

As people age, the built environment of their immediate home and neighborhood has an increasing effect on them.⁶ This is the result of two factors. First, a person’s daily travel radius tends to shrink. Second, if an older person’s physical capacity is diminished, barriers within the built environment can become more inhibiting. What was once solely an inconvenience—like a busy intersection between home and a grocery store—can become a significant deterrent to healthy living, keeping them venturing out.⁷

⁶ 21 Hans-Werner Wahl, Susanne Larsson, and Frank Oswald. Aging Well and the Environment: Toward and Integrative Model and Research Agenda for the future. The Gerontologist Vol 52, No. 3, 306-316.

⁷ Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Healthy Community Design Toolkit, 2nd Edition. P. 11.

Livable communities are safe, walkable, healthy and engaging. Walkability depends on the location of housing in relation to commercial areas, parks and gathering spaces.

Northampton's Comprehensive Plan, developed in 2008, promotes a walkable city with infill development in and around downtown and existing denser parts of town, and "housing that is within walking distance of safe paths or with bicycle access to and from neighborhood commercial areas, parks and recreation, schools, and public transportation."⁸ The Comprehensive Plan also promotes universal accessibility of the downtown and village centers, and greenspace to keep urban and village centers attractive.

Efforts to provide access to shared use paths, walking trails and parks within walking distance of most residences, and offering housing options that allow people to downsize as well as move closer to services are a couple of examples where Northampton leads the way in becoming a community that is walkable and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

Housing

Many older adults want to continue living in their community but would like the option to downsize or to be in housing that is more affordable, accessible, or closer to services. The majority of Livable Community Survey respondents (85%) were homeowners and most (90%) said that they want to live independently as they age. Most respondents (95%) said that they live in Northampton year-round. Fifty-eight percent of respondents said it was unlikely that they would move to a different home when they retire. Survey respondents expressed broad support for programs that would allow them to age in place or stay in their own homes. Factors that might make residents move out of the city during retirement include being in an area with a lower cost of living or finding a home that would allow them to live independently as they age.

During the Age and Dementia Friendly Kick-Off and Listening Session, participants expressed the need for the development of more accessible and affordable housing, more affordable retirement communities, and increased housing options. These could include more single-story homes, tiny houses, multi-generational housing, or communal living such as co-housing that includes social support and options for sharing expenses. Other comments included improving walkability to downtown and providing more home repair and modification resources to allow older adults to stay in their own homes. One Working Group participant noted that due to COVID-19, a couple of older adults had grown fearful of being home by themselves and reported relief when moving to an assisted living facility.⁹

⁸ Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan (2008), p. 11.

⁹ Age Friendly Working Group Meeting participant, September 2020 meeting notes

The City of Northampton is a leader in planning and zoning for housing that meets the needs of older adults. The “Just Big Enough” effort exists to make smaller units more acceptable, to serve those left out of the housing market, and to serve those whose housing needs are not necessarily met by the traditional housing design.

Housing Needs Analysis and Strategic Housing Plan

In 2011, the Northampton Housing Partnership received funding from the Northampton Community Preservation Committee Northampton to complete a Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Housing Plan. A summary of significant demographic and housing trends and priority housing needs reported in this assessment were as follows:

Significant Demographic Housing Trends:

- *Northampton’s population growth has remained relatively flat since the middle of the 20th Century, from 29,063 residents in 1950 to 28,549 residents in 2010, and projections were that the population would remain relatively stable over the next 20 years.*
- *Despite flat overall population growth, the number of households in Northampton has been increasing and the **average household size has decreased** from 2.45 persons per household in 1980 to 2.14 persons per household in 2010, and there has been a growing number of smaller, non-family households.*
- ***Northampton’s population is aging** (as noted above). The numbers of children have declined, and while there is a substantial population of young adults age 21 to 34 in Northampton, including Smith College students, their numbers have been on the decline as well. In fact, based on 2010 Census Redistricting data, the number and percentage of those under 18 have continued to decrease from 4,917 or 17% in 2000 to 4,616 or 16.2% by 2010. On the other hand, there were substantial increases in more middle-aged residents age 35 to 54, a decline since 1980 in the numbers of those aged 55 to 64, and relative stability of those aged 65 or older.*

NOTE: Since the publication of the Housing Needs Assessment, the population of people 65 and older is estimated to have increased dramatically compared to other age groups. According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the number of people over 65 in Northampton increased from 3,613 to 5,126 between 2011 and 2019, and people over 65 increased as a percentage of the population from 12.6% to 18%. ¹⁰

- *Northampton’s median household income remains consistently lower than the County and State.*
- *Approximately 50% of Northampton’s housing stock is owner-occupied; however, the rate of owner-occupied housing is increasing as many units are converting from rental units to owner-occupancy.*
- *Addition of new housing has been steady, but modest.*

¹⁰ 2011 and 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

- *Housing prices remain high despite a poor economic climate and declining sales.*
[Note that the Housing Plan was developed just after the 2008 economic crisis.]

Priority Housing Needs:

- *Homelessness Prevention – The Tenancy Preservation Program, special federal funding such as the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP), tenant and landlord mediation efforts, regional networks for services coordination, and other housing stabilization programs are highly effective ways to preserve housing for those at-risk of homelessness. As the All Roads Lead Home Plan states, “Prevention must be a key part of our strategy, because it is humane, cost effective, and critical to ending homelessness”.*
- *Shelters and Rapid Re-Housing – Northampton has a number of emergency shelters that reflect a crisis management response to helping the homeless. Agencies and organizations are focused on providing services and programs to move individuals and families into permanent housing. However, Northampton’s HUD Consolidated Plan indicates that wait lists for shelters continue to grow. The City was moving toward a “Housing First” model which would provide temporary housing for homeless families and individuals.*
- *Producing and Preserving Affordable Housing including:*
 - *Rental housing for individuals – SRO units or one-bedroom units for people with lower paying jobs who can’t find affordable housing in Northampton*
 - *Rental housing for families*
 - *Preservation of existing affordable rental stock*
 - ***Housing rehabilitation resources – Including modifications to improve handicapped accessibility.***
 - *Affordable homeownership for families*
 - *Housing for at risk and special needs populations – For those who are at risk of homelessness or have special needs that require supported services.*
 - *Look beyond traditional housing models – to promote alternative living options, including live/work space for artists.*

Zoning for Smaller and Affordable Housing

The City has implemented zoning changes to encourage new affordable housing, higher density development in urban and village centers, and to allow for smaller ownership and rental units. The City recently adopted zoning to allow two-family homes by-right throughout the City, thus eliminating single-family only districts. These units can be owner or renter occupied. Additional zoning incentives for construction of new units close to downtown have been adopted to encourage smaller units.

Subsidized Housing

Many older residents on fixed incomes may need to live in subsidized housing. The Northampton Housing Authority manages seven subsidized housing properties, with 437 units specified for elderly or disabled residents. The Walter Salvo House, with 192 one-bedroom units is located next to the Northampton Senior Center.

Properties managed by the Northampton Housing Authority include the following:

- Cahill Apartments, 35 Fruit Street – 64 one-bedroom units (elderly and disabled)
- Florence Heights, 178 Florence Road, Florence – 50 two-, three- and four-bedroom units (family)
- Forsander Apartments, 137 High Street – 72 one-bedroom units (elderly and disabled)
- Hampshire Heights, 241 Jackson Street – 80 two-, three- and four-bedroom units (family)
- McDonald House, 49 Old South Street – 60 one- and two-bedroom units (elderly and disabled – handicap accessible)
- Tobin Manor, 56 Maple Street, Florence – 49 one-bedroom units (elderly and disabled – handicap accessible)
- Walter Salvo House, 81 Conz Street – 192 one-bedroom units (elderly and disabled)

Discussions at Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton listening sessions and working group meetings included concerns about whether people living in subsidized housing developments feel safe and connected to the community. Northampton Neighbors has made efforts to start up neighborhood circles in some of these properties. Additional efforts to engage residents of these properties would be warranted to understand their specific challenges and concerns.

Independent and Assisted Living Communities

Several independent living and supportive care communities are located in Northampton. These privately owned facilities offer different levels of care and support as well as central meeting spaces for people to socialize and meet. Some facilities offer light support in the form of meals and housekeeping through full supported long-term and memory care. Some of the independent and elder care facilities currently available in Northampton include the following:

- Lathrop Village, Northampton – Independent living with a central community center; a-la-carte nursing services can be arranged.
- The Lathrop Home – Congregate supported living in downtown Northampton.
- Day Brook Village – Independent living, supported independent living, short- and long-term care, certified memory care.
- Rock Ridge Retirement Community – Independent living, assisted living, memory care
- Christopher Heights of Northampton – Independent and assisted living with a variety of “lifestyle plans”.

- Linda Manor – Assisted living, memory care, respite stays.
- River Valley Rest Home – Level IV rest home with Community Support Designation (can take people with mental health needs).

Aging in Place

Older residents of single-family homes, condominiums, and apartments are effectively “aging in place” in their community. As noted above, 58% of survey respondents said that it was unlikely they would move to another home. Additional supports for people aging in place can range from assistance with basic tasks such as shoveling snow or grocery shopping to full-time nursing care. As noted elsewhere in this report, Northampton Neighbors is an important organization that provides volunteer assistance for many basic tasks.

As people age, they are more likely to have difficulty with balance and mobility. Some people with dementia also experience loss of spatial awareness which can lead to falls. Home safety assessments and home modifications are a good way to prevent injuries for people aging in place. Funds for home modifications such as grab bars or wheelchair ramps are available through Wayfinders for residents of Northampton.

Assets & Accomplishments

- Programs focusing on homelessness prevention, and shelters for emergency housing
- Multiple continuum of care facilities located in town
- City continues to advance regulatory changes to allow new housing types including the Just Big Enough effort - a program that works to make smaller units more acceptable, serve those left out of the housing market, and those whose housing needs are not met by traditional housing design (Membership Application, 2018)
- Zoning incentivizes higher density development and affordable units, and promotes walkability.
- Northampton Neighbors offers a robust volunteer-run program to support people aging in place.

Housing Recommendations

1. Work with City and community-based organizations to determine if there are **adequate supports for older homeless** people in Northampton.
2. **Engage residents of Housing Authority properties** to determine if their need for services and if they have any safety concerns.
3. Examine waiting lists for subsidized housing to determine number and types of units needed.
4. Identify “Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities” and ensure that residents are aware of support services.

5. Inform residents of **Home Modification Loan programs** for those who need to retrofit homes for safely aging in place.
6. Develop **list of dependable contractors** for home assessments and modification work.
7. **Research innovative housing options** - multi-generational housing, co-housing, tiny homes, and semi-independent congregate housing - ensure that zoning regulations support development of these housing types.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Parks, sidewalks, bike paths and bike lanes, accessible buildings and restrooms are all facilities that are important for inviting active transportation and social interaction inside and out. The amount of physical activity that people engage in is related, in part, to the availability of safe and convenient places to walk and ride a bike. Many participants from the Age and Dementia Friendly Kick-Off and Listening Session (2019) reported that the landscape, green and recreational spaces, and beauty of the surrounding area were some of the reasons that they loved living in Northampton.

The **Northampton Open Space, Recreation and Multi-Use Trail Plan (2018-25)** provides a vision and blueprint for using the City's resources to meet open space, agriculture, conservation, multi-use trail, parks, and recreation needs.¹¹ Some of the key goals of this plan as it relates to older adults include adding greenspace and appropriate agriculture on City-owned land or on larger infill development parcels, creating incentives to enable well-designed development in the downtown and more densely developed locations, reducing emissions of greenhouse gasses through reforms in transportation and land use patterns, and providing open space and recreation opportunities for people of all ages, economic levels and physical abilities. Actions included in the Seven-Year Action Plan include developing a ONE Northampton Trail which would encircle the city, closing existing gaps, and would be easily identifiable; and making accessibility improvements on conservation land by adding boardwalks, new accessible trails, benches and picnic tables.

The **Increasing Accessibility for People with Disabilities at Northampton Greenways, Parks, and Recreation Areas** project (2019 by Healthy Hampshire) contains many recommendations for making Northampton's parks and conservation land more accessible to people with disabilities which will benefit all users. Suggestions included adding handicapped accessible picnic tables and pads, prioritizing accessible bench seating with shading, fully accessible bathrooms, an accessible water fountain at Pulaski Park, and adding accessibility and warning signs in parks. The report also recommended maintaining and improving networks of multi-use trails, developing a better system for snow removal, maintaining and expanding the green

¹¹ <https://www.northamptonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1812/Open-Space--Recreation-Plan-2018-2025>

spaces near affordable housing developments, and managing conservation land to preserve natural systems and be user-friendly.

In 2020 the City completed an **ADA Self-Evaluation and transition Plan** that looks at accessibility in all parts of the community. According to this plan, some recent accomplishments by the City include the following:

- ✓ Assess city policies and programs (Massachusetts Office on Disability grant)
- ✓ Improve the accessibility of the pedestrian environment around City Hall, Municipal Annex, Pulaski Park, the crosswalk to the east side of Main Street (MOD grant, handicap parking revolving funds, and community donations)
- ✓ Add an accessible water fountain and an electric wheelchair charger, at Pulaski Park and City Hall respectively (City funds)
- ✓ Assess the accessibility needs at recreation areas (Massachusetts Health grant)
- ✓ Assess the accessibility needs at a planned community and resilience hub (Massachusetts Health grant)
- ✓ Add wheelchair ramps at streets and bike paths all over the City (CDBG, City capital improvement, and traffic mitigation funds)
- ✓ Plan for accessibility improvements at Bridge Street School, the school area with the highest concentration of low-income students (Massachusetts Safe Routes to School)
- ✓ Add an accessible access to the MassCentral Rail Trail to replace in accessible trail (MassDOT Complete Streets)
- ✓ Replace the final gravel sections of the MassCentral Rail Trail with a paved accessible trail (MassTrails, Land and Water Conservation Funds, and CPA funds)
- ✓ Replace a one-mile non-accessible earthen trail with an accessible paved trail at Burts Bog Greenway (Land and Water Conservation Funds and CPA funds)
- ✓ Improved the accessibility of the City's website (City funds)

Priority recommendations in the **2020 Northampton ADA Transition Plan** include the following:

1. *Designate the ADA Coordinator to also serve as the Section 504 Coordinator and position it in the Office of Planning & Sustainability, which has been charged with many of the bricks and mortar accessibility projects, to provide the necessary commitment of resources to be effective, while working with the Building Commission to carry out essential ADA/Section 504 reasonable accommodation and compliance functions. **(This has been completed.)***
2. *Work with DPW and seek other funds to continue the City's progress in increasing the procedures and standards for responding in a timely way to requests for installation of wheelchair curb cuts, fully accessible crosswalks, or repair of deteriorated walkways.*
3. *Adopt procedures and standards for providing reasonable modifications to policies and procedures.*

4. *Define procedures, standards, and time frames for handling ADA related grievances, conducting reasonable accommodations assessments to inform decisions regarding undue burden, undue hardship, and fundamental alteration as limits to ADA obligations. Include staff training so that staff understands the City's roles and responsibilities.*
5. *Promote snow removal procedures to minimize interruption to accessible pedestrian routes in winter weather. Enforce procedures on noncompliant owners when necessary.*
6. *Strengthen enforcement of parking rules to ensure that public walkways are not blocked by commercial, municipal, or privately operated vehicles.*
7. *Strengthen effective communication procedures, technology, and resources available upon request. These can include sign language interpreter services, expanded captioning of City Council and School Committee meetings, acquiring assistive listening systems, subtitle system, and the training of City staff.*
8. *Provide code compliant accessible parking in the public garage, surface lots, and on-street locations.*
9. *Improve the accessibility of parks and open spaces as identified in the Open Space & Recreation Plan and the Self-Evaluation Report.*
10. *Ensure bathroom facilities at public meeting locations and public emergency shelters are fully accessible.*

Northampton's downtown is a popular gathering place for people of all ages, with restaurants offering indoor and outdoor seating, retail shops, galleries, and the Smith Art Museum and Botanical Garden. The Northampton Senior Center offers fitness and educational programs, a bistro, a computer lab, and many services for older adults. The Forbes Library also offers programming and computers for public use during "normal" (non-COVID) times. In the listening session, it was suggested that more parking was needed at the Senior Center.

The COVID-19 pandemic stopped all indoor gatherings and highlighted the importance of having outdoor gathering spaces year-round. As Main Street was originally designed to move traffic through the downtown, pedestrians must cross several lanes of traffic, which can be dangerous for those who cannot walk as fast or need assistance in crossing the road. Through a Shared Streets and Spaces grant from MassDOT, the City completed some temporary changes or "tactical urbanism" on Main Street to create more space for pedestrians and bicyclists, closing a number of parking spaces in front of downtown businesses in order to make space for these improvements. Although people on bikes and pedestrians appreciated the changes, many businesses did not want to lose the parking spaces and requested that the temporary barriers be removed. A re-design of Main Street will incorporate issues and concerns raised by business owners as well as users of the streets and sidewalks.

The Livable Communities Survey asked about a variety of infrastructure improvements. The areas that receive the highest responses were sidewalks in good condition and accessible public buildings and restrooms.

Assets & Accomplishments

- ✓ Great landscape/green and recreational spaces (Age and Dementia Friendly Kick-off, 2019)
- ✓ Development of a Rocky Hill Greenway (Membership Application, 2018)
- ✓ There are two existing community gardens that mostly serve the city (Increasing Accessibility for People with Disabilities, 2019)
- ✓ Open Space and Multi-Use Trail Plan provide a blueprint for an interconnected network of trails and parks and 7-year plan for a ONE Northampton Trail which would encircle the City.
- ✓ Pavement to Parks program proposes to create more parks in densely populated commercial/residential areas
- ✓ City working toward greater accessibility of parks and recreation areas through engagement and completion of the ADA Transition Plan in 2020 and locating ADA coordinator in the Department of Planning and Sustainability.
- ✓ Implementation of accessibility features in the downtown (ADA Transition Plan).

Challenges/What is Needed

- 5G broadband or WIFI in public parks/buildings (Age and Dementia Friendly Kick-off, 2019)
- Complete plans for re-construction of Main Street through downtown to create safer pedestrian crossings and more space for bikes and pedestrians.
- Handicap accessible picnic tables and pads (Increasing Accessibility for People with Disabilities report, 2019)
- Accessibility and warning signs, and other related signage
- Fully accessible bathrooms, walkways and benches
- Tactile warning strips at curb ramps leading into crosswalks for people with visual impairments
- Maintain and improve networks of multi-use trails
- Develop better system for snow removal
- Protect, maintain, and expand green spaces near Affordable Housing
- Improve accessibility at the Connecticut River Greenway
- Prioritize bench seating and shading
- Increase nighttime visibility along downtown pedestrian corridors through careful use of targeted lighting
- Improve accessibility at schools
- Manage conservation land to preserve natural systems and be user-friendly
- Open spaces within walking distance of low-income populations

Location-Specific Recommendations (from other reports)

- **Senior Center:** More parking needed.

- **Pulaski Park:**
 - Bicycle rail descending on the stairs to Pulaski Park prevents the use of the handrail (completed).
 - The playground does not meet safety standards for insurance liability used by some area preschools.
- **King Street and Damon Road:** The pedestrian activated button is too high for people on recumbent bikes [and wheelchairs?] and on the wrong side.
- **Old South St/Main St/State St. intersection:** Need an audio signal at the intersection
- **Multi-use path outlet at Old South St.:** Expand accessibility from the multi-use path to connect to the Senior Center. Currently, sidewalk feels too narrow on Conz Street to safely traverse with a trike.
- **Leeds Beach:** Reinstate the railing that went right down into the water, which people used as a guide.
- **Crafts Ave:** Add a curb cut opposite the elevator in City Hall (this has been analyzed and determined not to meet ADA standards so was dropped).
- **Downtown:** Consider installing electric wheelchair chargers in the downtown area, similar to electric car charging stations. When considering car charging stations, remember that people with electric wheelchairs need sources of power, too. (The City installed a wheelchair/scooter charger in front of City Hall in 2019)

Buildings and Outdoor Spaces Recommendations

1. Develop a **better system to enforce snow removal requirements** to improve safety of sidewalks in winter.
2. Protect, maintain and expand green spaces near affordable housing and provide community garden spaces at all Housing Authority properties.
3. Provide **accessible unisex bathrooms** and map showing locations of public restrooms.
4. **Include considerations for people with dementia** in review of accessibility and comfort of parks and shared use paths – wayfinding, comfort, safety.
5. **Complete improvements** outlined in Healthy Hampshire report (Increasing Accessibility for People with Disabilities) and priorities outlined in the **2020 ADA Transition Plan**.

Transportation and Streets

As people age, some are more likely to acquire impairments to vision or hearing and may lose some physical or cognitive abilities. As a result, many lose the ability to safely operate personal vehicles for transportation, having to rely on family, friends, or transportation services to buy food or other supplies or to socialize and participate in community events. Although not everyone loses their ability to drive, many choose to give up driving as response times slow and/or vision or mobility impairments prevent them from being able to safely operate a vehicle.

With the aging of the population the need for transportation services and increasing levels of assistance is likely to increase. Complicating that need is an ongoing desire of older adults to remain independent and to maintain the ability to travel when they want to rather than having to rely on a fixed schedule or reserve rides in advance. Many older adults continue to walk even when they no longer drive, so connections to services and retail locations with safe and well-maintained sidewalks and shared use paths are important for meeting their transportation needs. The electric assist E-bikes offered through ValleyBike share also allow for a form of assisted active transportation for older adults.

Most respondents to the Livable Communities Survey (98%) said that well maintained sidewalks and affordable and convenient public transportation were the most important transportation needs in the community.

Northampton adopted a Complete Streets Ordinance in 2015. This ordinance ensures that “pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities are fully integrated into a safe and efficient transportation system.”¹² The ordinance includes prioritizing all streets within one mile of downtown Northampton, Florence center, and all schools to be retrofitted to include sidewalks, and includes provisions for green infrastructure (e.g. vegetated swales and rain gardens) when feasible to enable infiltration of stormwater.

Transportation Services

The **Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)** offers several fixed routes in Northampton with connections to colleges and surrounding communities. The PVTA offers Senior Service door-to-door van service for anyone over 60 in all of the towns served by PVTA buses, from 8:30 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday. Rides must be scheduled in advance and are available on a space-available basis. Van drivers are required to assist passengers with up to 3 bags with a combined weight of up to 25 pounds. Paratransit service is also available for people with disabilities who live within ¾ of a mile from a fixed transit route. The PVTA also offers free travel training for seniors and people with disabilities.

Cooley-Dickinson Hospital provides free daily shuttle service from Atwood Drive to Mass General Hospital in Boston, Monday – Friday at 6:30 am. Riders can specify if they require handicapped access.

Northampton Senior Services provides residents who are members of the Senior Center and over the age of 60 with taxi services for non-emergency medical rides, and an ADA compliant van shuttle service for medical rides, shopping and essential errands at \$1.00 per ride within city limits.

¹² Northampton Complete Streets Ordinance, adopted December 2015.

Northampton Neighbors offers rides with volunteer drivers for seniors who are part of the Neighbors network. Riders must call ahead to register a request for a ride. [Note: This service was suspended due to the pandemic.]

As people transition from driving themselves to needing assistance in getting to appointments or doing errands, some orientation around available services could be beneficial. The PVTA offers sessions on how to use on-demand and fixed route services.

Walking, Biking and Rolling

Northampton has been making improvements to roads and sidewalks for pedestrians and bicycles for many years. Most roadway reconstruction projects include modifications to create safer routes for biking and include sidewalks where connections for pedestrians are needed. In the Livable Community Survey, 94% of respondents said that they drive for their transportation needs, but 42% of respondents said that walking is also a major means of transportation, suggesting that many areas of Northampton are walkable. This is confirmed by a WalkScore of 95 (Walker's Paradise) for downtown Northampton. The Bike Score is even better at 97 (Biker's Paradise).

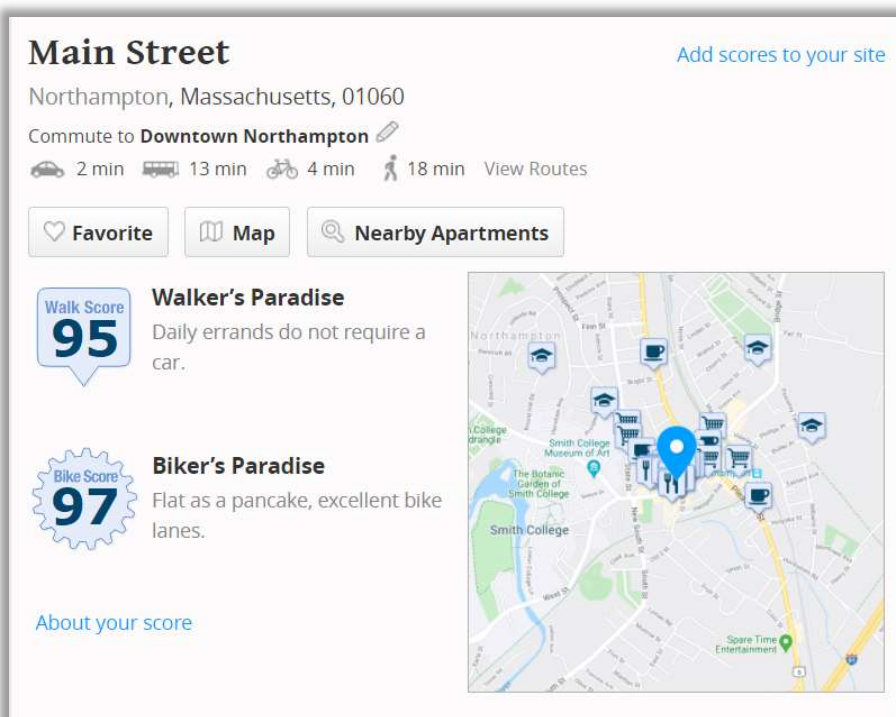


Figure 2 - WalkScore for Downtown Northampton (source: <https://www.walkscore.com/>)

One of the top priorities in the City's 2020 ADA Self-Assessment and Transition Plan is to "work with the DPW and find additional funds for responding to requests for installation of wheelchair curb cuts, fully accessible crosswalks, and repair of deteriorated walkways."¹³ Pedestrian crossings on West Street, Green Street and Bridge Street by Lampron Park and the Bridge Street School were noted as being dangerous and in need of improvement in the ADA Transition Plan. (The Lamron Park/Bridge Street School crosswalk is currently part of a Safe Routes to School project to be implemented in 2022.)

¹³ Northampton ADA Self-Assessment and Transition Plan (October 2020).

Another priority identified in this plan and confirmed by the Age and Dementia Friendly Working Group is a better system for snow removal on sidewalks.

Assets & Accomplishments

- ✓ City completed sidewalk study and looked at curb cuts downtown (Summary of Age Friendly Advisory Committee meeting, 2020)
- ✓ City is working on implementing the ADA transition plan including accessibility of sidewalks (Summary of Age Friendly Advisory Committee meeting, 2020)
- ✓ City is looking at walkability and physical connections in the built environment (Summary of Age Friendly Advisory Committee meeting, 2020)
- ✓ ValleyBike share stations throughout the downtown and in locations next to the bike path

Challenges/What is Needed

Age and Dementia Friendly Kick-off meeting (2019)

- More accessible and affordable (or free) transportation options
- Better signage for crosswalks and improvements for safety
- City enforcement of plowing/clearing sidewalks
- Bike paths that are wide enough for safety
- Sidewalk and road repair
- Dementia and age-friendly transportation
- Comprehensive public/private transportation

Increasing Accessibility for People with Disabilities report, 2019

- Repair bike path accessibility gaps
- Link public transportation to recreational sites

Transportation Recommendations

1. Support continued safety and accessibility improvements on sidewalks and pedestrian crossings based on the City's sidewalk inventory and **ADA Transition Plan**.
2. Develop an improved system for snow removal on sidewalks (also in Buildings and Outdoor Spaces section).
3. Add benches and trees along sidewalks in areas that need more shade to create more comfortable spaces.
4. Ensure that all residents know about available transportation services and how to reserve rides.
5. Offer instruction and demonstrations of how to use ValleyBike share and provide information on annual passes for income eligible users.
6. Provide instruction on rules of the road and courtesy for bikers and other road users.
7. Ensure drivers of all transportation services understand how to recognize the signs of dementia and how to communicate with people with dementia.

The Social Environment

The social environment is not often the subject of municipal planning but is a key element of a community that supports the needs of older adults. The social environment is determined in part by the built environment in that there must be places to gather, both indoors and outside; a safe transportation network and broadband system that allows people to connect with one another; and housing that is located close to public spaces or that provides spaces for social interaction.

Opportunities for participation in social or civic events must also be inclusive of all members of the community. For older adults, this may mean holding events at times that are convenient for those who may need to take public transportation or walk to an event. For non-English speakers, translation services or events held in other languages contribute to an inclusive social environment.

During the pandemic, use of technology – including access to equipment, training on how to use it and access to high-speed internet – became a primary means for engaging older adults in programming and meetings while avoiding physical interactions. Holding virtual meetings and programming also allows people who travel to other places for the winter or who have difficulty with transportation to participate in social and educational programming from their homes.

Social Participation and Inclusion

With a walkable and active downtown hosting many restaurants, music and performance spaces, museums and galleries, a college (Smith), and pleasant outdoor spaces, Northampton is a welcoming community for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Northampton Senior Services (NSS) holds a wide variety of educational, social, and fitness programs and events; lunch (during non-pandemic times); and has an on-site café and other informal spaces for people to meet and socialize. The Senior Center and **Forbes Library** have partnered during the pandemic to hold online programming. NSS has also been a model for other senior centers in its administration of a tablet loan program including tablets with Sim cards (so as to eliminate the need for an internet subscription during training and short loan periods), training on how to use the devices and help accessing subsidized and discounted internet plans. During the pandemic, the Senior Center offered online programming that saw strong participation by people sequestered at home and even some who traveled south for the winter.

Attendees to the first Age Friendly Northampton listening session called for more evening events for older adults, more activities for adults in their 80s and 90s, and more entertainment for older adults or people of all ages.

Northampton Neighbors, a volunteer-based organization with over 900 members and based on the Village model of a system for allowing older adults to age in community, connects older adults with members who offer their time to provide services to others. Northampton Neighbors has developed and encouraged several “neighborhood circles” made up of residents of neighborhoods throughout the city who check up on each other, and provided regular check-in calls to isolated older residents during the pandemic.

The online survey sent to all of NN’s members in the Fall of 2020 asked how people were getting groceries and other supplies, what type of transportation they were using and how much contact they were having with family and friends. While no major gaps were noted in the survey responses, there was interest by many (31) in getting access to more transportation services, and some (14) in having neighborly visits. Many survey respondents (57) said that they would like to participate in offering assistance to other neighbors when safety protocols are established. One finding of note from this survey was that the older members responded to snail mail more than email, indicating less use of digital communication for the older members of the network. The survey was also taken during the pandemic and did not have baseline information from before the pandemic. Northampton Neighbors plans to work with the Housing Authority to engage people living in subsidized housing, and to develop Neighborhood Circles in all Housing Authority properties.

In the Livable Communities Survey, the most popular locations for continuing education were local organizations, online programs, the Senior Center, and colleges or universities. Survey respondents also wanted activities that are affordable to all residents, a variety of cultural activities for a diverse population, intergenerational activities, and continuing education.

Five-College System

Northampton is home to Smith College and is in the center of an area that hosts five major colleges and universities including the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Amherst College, Hampshire College, Smith, and Mount Holyoke College. As many colleges and universities struggle with a decreasing number of college-age youth, offering classes and programs for older adults could be a great opportunity for remaining viable. Figure 3 outlines the ten principles of an “Age Friendly University.” The University of Massachusetts in Amherst has been designated as an Age Friendly University.

The **Five College Learning in Retirement** program serves the Pioneer Valley and is an affiliate of the Road Scholar Institute Network. The program requires payment of membership dues of \$110 (for ½-year for new members to \$220 for full-year members. Tickets for single lectures are available for programs that are open to the public. The program offers peer-led classes in the Fall and Spring with visits to museums, historic sites and musical performance between the two semesters. Until the pandemic programs were offered in person but shifted to online programming during the pandemic.

It was noted at one meeting of the Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton working group that of the 900 Northampton Neighbors volunteers, approximately 300 are retired educators, which could present an opportunity for continuing educational programming as well as intergenerational mentoring.

The 10 Age-Friendly University Principles

1. To encourage the participation of older adults in all the **core activities** of the university, including educational and research programs.
2. To promote personal and career development in the second half of life and to support those who wish to pursue **second careers**.
3. To recognize the **range of educational needs** of older adults (from those who were early school-leavers through to those who wish to pursue Master's or PhD qualifications).
4. To promote **intergenerational learning** to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages.
5. To widen access to **online educational opportunities** for older adults to ensure a diversity of routes to participation.
6. To ensure that the university's **research agenda** is informed by the needs of an aging society and to promote public discourse on how higher education can better respond to the varied interests and needs of older adults.
7. To increase the understanding of students of **the longevity dividend** and the increasing complexity and richness that aging brings to our society.
8. To enhance access for older adults to the university's range of **health and wellness** programs and its **arts** and **cultural activities**.
9. To engage actively with the university's own retired community.

Figure 3 - Ten Principles of an Age Friendly University (source: Age Friendly University Global Network)

Assets and Accomplishments

- ✓ Friendly and welcoming community
- ✓ Senior Center offers numerous educational, social, and fitness programs, and partners with the Forbes Library to offer online programs
- ✓ Restaurants and event venues in the downtown are accessible and inclusive.
- ✓ Young@Heart Chorus
- ✓ Neighborhood Circles are good examples of social resilience
- ✓ Northampton Senior Services offers loaner tablets and laptops and training to help people connect and close the digital divide
- ✓ Digital programming offered by NSS reached more people than in-person programming, including out-of-state part time Northampton residents
- ✓ Weekly connections/meetings/chats helped to prevent social isolation during the pandemic.

- ✓ The City has set up headsets for audio assistance at public meetings. Headsets are also available for translation services.

Challenges/What is needed

Summary of Age Friendly Community Provider Meeting, September 2020 (focus on the impacts of the pandemic):

- Social isolation and loneliness have been exacerbated by COVID-19
- Concern about winter months when people cannot go outside
- Concern about programs that previously offered opportunities to connect ex: Book loan drop-off program)
- Digital Divide is concerning
- Lower socioeconomic group may be falling through the cracks
- 300/900 Northampton Neighbors members are retired educators
- Opportunity for intergenerational programming with schools
- Should reach out to Faith Community to collaborate

Increasing Accessibility for People with Disabilities, 2019:

- Support economic access for people with disabilities to participate in existing programs
- Support sustainability of existing programs that service people with disabilities

Social Participation and Inclusion Recommendations

1. Develop a master list of resources and programming to be shared with all partners in the Age and Dementia Friendly initiative.
2. Coordinate trainings and education for business and City departments on inclusivity and sensitivity to older adults.
3. Continue to help people get internet access so that they can participate in online programming. Investigate the interest in continuing with online programming after Senior Center opens. Build awareness of predatory sales techniques and internet security protocols.
4. Support **sustainability of existing programs** that serve people with disabilities.
5. **Establish Memory Cafes** and **Purple Table** program for people with dementia and their care partners.
6. Provide some **evening programming** and transportation to get to the Senior Center.
7. **Enlist retired educators** to provide free classes or discussion groups.
8. **Provide trainings on dementia** – recruit volunteers to be Dementia Friends and Dementia Friends Champions.
9. Develop a **“buddy system”** to encourage participation and engage populations that don’t normally participate in programming or activities.

10. Ensure that refugee and recent immigrant families are supported and have information about services in the area.
11. Work with area colleges on intergenerational programming.
12. Tag meetings with translation & hearing assistance services
13. Work on “Reframing Aging” – the language we use to address aging and inclusion at all levels of government.
14. Conduct a review of all City policies, practices, communications, programs and regulations to ensure that they all take older adults into consideration and that language is not ageist. [The City is getting ready to do this work through funding from a Community Compact Best Practices grant.]

Employment, Volunteering and Civic Engagement

As noted above, there is a strong culture of volunteerism in Northampton and many skilled retirees who are willing to share their knowledge and expertise through continuing education programming (through the 5-college lifelong learning program). Volunteer opportunities are available through Northampton Neighbors and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and area nonprofits. According to respondents to the Livable Communities Survey, information on volunteering is easy to find and there are a wide range of volunteer activities to choose from as well as good transportation to and from these activities. During the pandemic, Northampton Neighbors representatives noted that it was more difficult to find volunteers due to concerns about contracting COVID.

Most respondents (75%) to the Livable Communities Survey said that opportunities to continue working were very important. Northampton Senior Services offers assistance to older adults who are looking for work or volunteer opportunities. Survey respondents also valued assistance finding jobs and employment adapted to people with disabilities and flexible job opportunities with training for older adults.

The **Employment After Retirement Network (EARN)** program, formerly operated through Northampton Senior Services, has been integrated into **the 50+ Job Seekers Network** that is coordinated through the Massachusetts Council on Aging. This program strives to eliminate age discrimination in the workforce and to match seniors seeking additional income with employers who will benefit from hiring skilled, experienced employees.

Assets & Accomplishments

- ✓ Active and engaged volunteers, many retired educators.
- ✓ Former Employment after Retirement Network (EARN) now housed under the 50+ Job Seekers Network, matched older adults seeking additional income with employers.

Employment and Civic Engagement Recommendations

1. Continue to support older adults in finding employment and partner with local employers to identify their needs and employment or volunteer opportunities for older adults.
2. Train businesses in all sectors (retail, banking, grocery stores) on recognizing the signs of dementia and how to work with people with dementia.
3. Encourage businesses to provide flexibility for caregivers.
4. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to designate Age and Dementia Friendly Businesses – based on welcoming environment for staff and customers.
5. Post information about volunteer opportunities and trainings on the NSS website (and in the Forbes and Lily libraries or other visible locations).
6. Reframe the narrative about aging and dementia – review how policies, plans, reports and programs refer to older adults.
7. Expand work with area colleges and develop more intergenerational programming with schools and adults of all ages.
8. Ensure that supports are in place for grandparents raising grandchildren.

Health and Community Services, Public Safety and Resiliency

Most respondents to the Livable Communities Survey (85%) rated their health as excellent or very good, and 81% of respondents said that it is extremely important to remain physically active. Survey respondents also ranked hospital and clinic staff, the variety of health care professionals, affordable health care providers and well-trained certified home health care providers high in terms of the health and wellness services available in Northampton.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges to health care and social service providers as well as the older adults who were advised to stay home or maintain distance with others due to the high risk of contracting the virus with potentially severe consequences due to the weaker immune systems that come with age. Northampton Senior Services (NSS) shifted from having on-site programming to distributing food through the brown bag and Nutritional Outreach programs, providing resource lists for accessing programs and services, and helping older adults to get their food and transportation needs met. NSS also conducted periodic distribution of care packages of masks, hand sanitizer and toilet paper.

A network of service providers met regularly to discuss food distribution; grocery stores provided early shopping hours for older adults; and many who chose not to go out took advantage of food delivery services offered by some stores or delivery services. The pandemic also increased the feeling of social isolation and fear among many people, causing them to feel unsafe in their own homes.

The sections below detail the health care and social services that are available to older adults in Northampton as well as the importance of integrating the care needs of older adults with planning for emergencies and long-term resiliency of the community.

Health and Community Services

Although not universal, as people age, some are increasingly likely to lose some of their physical or cognitive capabilities, and many have more health needs or require help with basic tasks such as yard work, cleaning, and cooking. Some cognitive and physical impairments lead to a need for full-time assistance from nurses, home health care providers, or family members.

Northampton is home to **Cooley-Dickinson Hospital (CDH)**, the **VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System** (VA Hospital), many doctors and dentists' offices, and both traditional and non-traditional wellness practitioners.

Cooley Dickinson Hospital has a geriatrics department and has focused on the needs of older adults for many years. The Cooley Dickinson **Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) and Hospice** provides skilled nurses, home health aides, palliative care, hospice care and social workers to assist with end-of-life needs. CDH is funded to implement the Pioneer Valley Memory Care project with people who have been diagnosed with dementia to build community among people with dementia and their caregivers. The project involves trained Memory Care volunteers within Northampton who reach out to people with dementia. Currently the program involves 32 partners (Diads) and plans to expand into Easthampton and Amherst. The goal of the program is to enable individuals to remain in their homes, create linkages to monitor care, and focus on caregivers.

Highland Valley Elder Services, based in Florence, is the area Agency on Aging that provides (to eligible older adults) assistance with home health services, ombudsmen to support people living in care facilities, training support for caregivers, adult day services, chore services, meal delivery and congregate meals, bill paying, and personal care services. During the pandemic, HVES provided shelf-stable meals at their congregate meal sites for pick-up or delivery.

Northampton Senior Services offers fitness programs and a fitness center, as well as rides to medical appointments, the Ipad or Chromebook loan program (which can help with telemedicine appointments), and assistance in finding local health or social services.

For people who choose to age in place or who cannot afford or get into supported care facilities, home health care or volunteer services such as those provided by Northampton Neighbors volunteers may fill their needs for assistance with some basic tasks such as rides to appointments, shopping, yard work, or shoveling snow. During the pandemic, volunteers and neighborhood circles checked in on neighbors and other members to talk and check in on their well-being. NN also worked with the YMCA to deliver food to people who needed it. Some NN

volunteers are certified to conduct Dementia Friends trainings which could benefit community members, faith communities, and other sectors.

Northampton has been working on plans for a Community Resilience Hub which would potentially offer a central location for community gatherings and social services, day programs for those with chronic stress (e.g., homeless, below poverty line), and also would serve as an emergency shelter during times of acute stress (e.g. pandemic, hurricane). A space plan for this facility was developed in 2019. The City is in the process of determining the best location for this facility. Community Action Pioneer Valley, the likely operator, is working with the City, social service providers, and those with lived experience to develop a shared governance and programming plan.

Participants in the Age Friendly Northampton working group meetings listed a need for more mental health services and resources or a shelter for older people who are unhoused, and more work to support people with dementia and the people who care for them. Participants also discussed the need for health care providers to talk to patients about advanced directives and end of life rights.

Assets and Accomplishments

- ✓ Memory Care project with Cooley-Dickinson (and Northampton Neighbors) works with people with dementia and their caregivers.
- ✓ Highland Valley Elder Services provides support for caregivers, home-based care, help with basic chores and many other services for older adults.
- ✓ Northampton Survival Center and Grow Food Northampton help people access healthy food and places to grow food.
- ✓ Cooley Dickinson and the Visiting Nurses Association and Hospice provides trainings on advanced directives, palliative care and hospice.

Health and Community Services Recommendations

1. Establish an outreach and education program for community members, emergency service providers, faith communities, and businesses on how to recognize signs of dementia and how to communicate with people with dementia. Work with existing organizations including Dementia Friends (Jewish Family and Children's Services and the Alzheimer's Association).
2. Educate community members and older adults about advanced directives, Goals of Care conversations and ensure that people are aware of end-of-life rights. Work with providers to ensure that primary care physicians have these conversations with their patients.
3. Ensure that residents have access to affordable mental health services and support groups.
 - a. Develop an understanding of the level of psychiatric support needed for older adults and how to create more beds for people with psychiatric conditions.

4. Encourage collaboration and communication between providers (patient-centered care).
 - a. Ensure all the service providers people are working with the same platform and share information through devices such as Services Passports or Patient Ping (that notifies other providers when there is a change in medical records).
5. Map food resources and create a list of resources, locations and hours of operation of emergency food providers.
6. Participate in efforts to increase resiliency in the community.
7. Research insurance access needs for people of all incomes.
8. Ensure that all older adults are aware of the basic financial services and supports that are in place, i.e. fuel assistance applications, etc. for those who meet eligible income guidelines.
9. Ensure that all resource providers are signed up on 413-cares and/or Look4Help (different platform) offer orientation trainings for providers and users of the platforms. Develop a directory of available resources with links to find them quickly.
10. Continue to fund the Memory Care program at Cooley Dickinson Hospital (currently funded through 2022).

Public Safety and Resiliency

The City of Northampton embarked on a planning process to develop a Community Resilience Hub in May of 2020 with the assistance of Jones Whitsett Architecture. This project was conceived with the intention of establishing a center “to support Northampton residents who face chronic and acute stress due to climate change, social and economic stress.”¹⁴ The City hired the services of the architecture firm to help determine the space needs and criteria to assess potential hub locations. The main programming needs that the hub seeks to address are a day center to support homeless individuals and families and a resource space for use in climate events. At “normal” times (when there is not a crisis), the hub would also provide community programming for residents.

Hampshire County was the first in the state to develop a Triad council, a national organization initially started by the National Sheriffs’ Association, the International Chiefs of Police, and the AARP. Thirteen Hampshire County communities are actively involved in this community policing initiative in which seniors, law enforcement and other service providers increase safety through education and crime prevention. SALT (Seniors and Law Enforcement Together) is the Triad program on the community level. Although Northampton does not currently have an active Triad or SALT program, Northampton Senior Services hopes to start one up. Many SALT programs assist residents with filling out File of Life documents that include important medical information and are stored in a prominent location in case of emergencies. This program also

¹⁴ Jones Whitsett Architects. *Planning the Northampton Resilience Hub*. May 5- June 8, 2020.

allows people to voluntarily put their names on a list if they have dementia and may wander from their homes.

Assets & Accomplishments

- ✓ Plan for a Community Resilience Hub has been developed and the City is moving forward with siting this facility in collaboration with Community Action of the Pioneer Valley
- ✓ Triad program in place – Northampton Senior Services, Police and Fire Departments
- ✓ Discussions about Police Reform are in progress.

Public Safety Recommendations

1. Support the development of a Community Resilience Hub and assist the City in engaging older adults to determine the types of services needed at this facility.
2. Determine how social services will be structured with new Department of Community Care and police reform as the Police Department has taken a lot of well-being calls in the past.
3. Ensure that all emergency service providers are trained on how to recognize the signs of dementia and communicate with people with dementia.
4. Ensure that emergency service providers have an updated list of locations of where residents with cognitive impairments (dementia, autism, etc.) live.
5. Educate community members about File of Life and assist them with filling out forms.

Action Plan

This Action Plan for an Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton details goals and strategies for improving Northampton's social and built environments to build on the welcoming atmosphere that the City has for people of all ages and abilities. Based on surveys, meetings of the Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton Working Group, and past community engagement and assessment reports, the areas where Northampton should focus energy in the next five years include the following:

- Changes to the built environment to encourage and support year-round walking and biking as well as accessible parks and sidewalks;
- Ensuring adequate services to support mental health needs of older adults and easily accessible information about these services;
- Providing support for people to age in place;
- Ensuring that information about resources can be easily found and supporting older adults in their ability to use digital devices for social and health needs; and
- Educating community members and all sectors about the signs and needs of people with dementia.

Plan Implementation

The Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton Steering Committee, made up of members of the COA, residents, representatives from municipal departments and service providers, met several times before and during the development of this Community Assessment and Action Plan. This group will continue to meet, lead, and oversee implementation of the strategies recommended in this report and presented as an Action Plan on the following pages. The following steps are recommended to ensure the sustainability of this process:

- 1) Distribute the Community Assessment and Action Plan to relevant City boards, committees, social groups and faith organizations to solicit input and to build awareness of ways that these groups can participate in making Northampton Age and Dementia Friendly.
- 2) Seek approval from the Mayor to submit final report to AARP and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts.
- 3) Submit report to AARP and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts for final certification as an Age (Friendly) and Dementia Friendly Community.
- 4) Set regular meetings of the Age and Dementia Friendly Northampton Steering Committee the guidance of Northampton Senior Services. Set priorities for implementation and continue to involve the broad range of stakeholders that have participated in the process to date in subcommittees. Involve additional stakeholders including local, regional and state partner organizations and agencies as well as community residents.
- 5) Report on successes and challenges – both to the community, AARP and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts.

Action Plan Priorities

- High – 1-2 years
- Medium – 3-5 years
- Low – 6-10 years

Partners Identified in the Action Plan

Municipal Departments:

- Northampton Senior Services (NSS)
- Office of Planning and Sustainability
- Conservation
- Department of Public Works
- Police and Fire Departments

Other important partners

- Northampton Neighbors (NN)
- Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES)
- Cooley-Dickinson Hospital
- Forbes Library
- Baystate Medical Center
- Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA)
- Valley Medical Group
- Cooley Dickinson Hospital
- District Attorney's (DA's) Office
- Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce
- Valley Community Development Corporation (Valley CDC)
- Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTa)
- Friends of Northampton Trails
- ValleyBike Share/Bewegan
- MassBike Pioneer Valley
- Community Action of the Pioneer Valley
- Northampton Housing Authority
- Massachusetts Council on Aging
- Alzheimer's Association
- Jewish Children and Family Services (Dementia Friends coordinator)

Built Environment - Housing, Transportation, Buildings and Outdoor Spaces

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
BE1	Improve sidewalks for safe comfortable walking:	DPW, NSS, NN	1.1. Develop snow removal system that connects older adults to services for snow removal, maintains access.	High (regulatory review project)
		Planning, DPW, Conservation	1.2 Increase Tree plantings along routes and within business districts.	High/Ongoing
		DPW, Planning	1.3 Continue to prioritize maintenance and sidewalk replacement based on the City's sidewalk inventory. Make annual investments to address deficiencies.	High (regulatory review project)
		Planning, Chamber of Commerce	1.4 Add seating and other comfort amenities within business district and other places where people like to walk (parks, etc.). Develop an inventory of existing benches and identify places where others are needed.	High/Medium
BE2	Increase support services to encourage Aging in Place	NSS, NN, PVPC	2.1. Distribute financial support information for home improvements such as the Home Loan Modification Program.	High
		NSS, Valley CDC, PVPC	2.2 Connect people with contractors able to renovate homes for accessibility or do basic maintenance.	High (as feasible)
BE3	Increase bicycle opportunities as mode of transportation	Friends of Northampton Trails; MassBike Pioneer Valley, Planning, NSS, ValleyBike share	3.1 Provide instruction and demo for bike use & rules/courtesy. Focus not only on ValleyBikes but also private bike usage.	Medium

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
BE4	Work with City and community-based organizations to determine if there are adequate supports for older adults at risk of losing their homes or already homeless.	Planning, Community Action of the Pioneer Valley, Housing Authority, private landlords, DA's office,	4.1 Work with landlords and the Housing Authority to ensure that they connect older adults to the Tenancy Preservation Program and Community Legal Aid for people at risk of eviction.	High
		Community Action of the Pioneer Valley, Housing Authority	4.2 Collaborate with social service agencies to integrate services into housing authority properties and other senior housing developments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an understanding of the current situation • Ensure inclusivity in services for all properties 	Medium (potentially logistically challenging)
BE5	Continue to support development of affordable and accessible units for older adults and connect people to available units.	NSS, Housing Authority, residents	5.1 Provide support services through Northampton Senior Services or the Northampton Housing Authority to help people sign up for affordable units. Identify alternative housing opportunities or services for people on the waiting list.	High/Ongoing
		NSS, NN	5.2 Distribute information about how to downsize and find available housing options.	Low
		NSS, NN, Planning	5.3 Research alternate living options that allow people to share houses or apartments to decrease housing costs.	Low/Medium
BE6	Ensure that all residents know about available transportation services and how to reserve rides.	NSS, NN, PVTA	6.1 Work with PVTA and Northampton Neighbors to provide transportation orientation for older adults to ensure that people understand available services, costs and schedules and how to access them.	High

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
BE7	Ensure drivers of all transportation services understand how to recognize the signs of dementia and how to communicate with people with dementia.	NSS, NN, MCOA, Alzheimer's Association, HVES, Meals on Wheels (MoW)	7.1 List all transportation services and assess the level of assistance provided by each (i.e. to the door, through the door, etc.) and level of assistance provided for people with dementia (with or without caregivers). Known services include Meals on Wheels, Northampton Neighbor volunteer drivers, Senior Center drivers, PVTA.	High/Medium
			7.2 Train drivers on how to communicate with people with dementia through partnership with the Alzheimer's Association.	High/Medium

Social Environment – Social Participation, Inclusion, Employment & Civic Engagement

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
SE1	Continue to build and distribute a master list of resources and programming to be shared with all partners in the Age and Dementia Friendly initiative.	Northampton Senior Services (NSS), NN, HVES, EOEA, Valley Medical, Cooley Dickinson Hospital, DA's Office	1.1 Conduct outreach to partner organizations and all providers of services to older adults living in Northampton to get a comprehensive list of services provided.	High \$\$\$
		Northampton Senior Services (NSS), NN, HVES, EOEA, Valley Medical, Cooley	1.2 Work with resource providers and other stakeholders to develop resource guide that is available in print and online in a format that can be updated on an ongoing basis. Also develop an abbreviated flier that	High

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
		Dickinson Hospital, DA's Office	summarizes the major document which will be distributed extensively throughout the community	
		NSS, NN, Hampshire Gazette	1.3 Plan a Community Launch of the resource guide including a media campaign. Also plan to distribute the flier throughout the city.	Medium \$\$
		Public Health Institute of Western MA	1.4 In conjunction with developing a resource list for Northampton residents, ensure that all providers have accounts on the 413-Cares platform	Medium
SE2	Coordinate trainings and education for business and departments on inclusivity and sensitivity to older adults.	NSS, NN, Chamber of Commerce; Downtown Northampton Association	2.1 Work with the Chamber of Commerce to designate Age and Dementia Friendly Businesses. Review existing models or develop new designation based on welcoming environment for staff and customers. (e.g. Boston Strong checklist)	Medium
		NSS, NN, arts organizations	2.2 Work with Arts Organizations (Smith College, arts venues such as AoM, Bombyx, Arts Council, etc) and others such as Historic Northampton	Medium
		NN, Alzheimer's Association, Dementia Friends (JF&CS)	2.3 Train municipal departments and businesses in all sectors (retail, banking, grocery stores) on recognizing the signs of dementia and how to work with people with dementia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dementia Friends America has on-line training with sector specific training 	High

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
			<p>which may be easier given current economic climate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCOA has DF@work which is an hour long which may be more challenging for businesses 	
		NSS, NN, COC	2.3 Encourage businesses to provide flexibility for caregivers.	High
SE3	Design integrated social activities and support services that include individuals experiencing dementia and their care partners.	NSS, NN, JF&CS Memory Café Network, assisted living facilities	3.1 Publicize online Memory Cafés and support groups offered through Jewish Family and Children’s Services and the Alzheimer’s Association.	High
		Lathrop House , NSS, NN, Cooley Dickinson Hospital, JF&CS, assisted living facilities, faith community, Forbes Library	3.2 Collaborate with partner organizations to hold local Memory Cafés in multiple venues such as libraries, community centers, restaurants and houses of worship.	High
		NN, Dementia Friends, Smith College, Historic Northampton	<p>3.2 Have a designated Dementia Friend to provide individual support for people with dementia and respite for caregivers at these communal activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Memory Café and with Smith College, DF’s will be asked to volunteer also at Neighborhood Circles. Historic Northampton has been approached about DF training and we 	Medium (coordination may take time)

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
			can explore volunteer activities in which DF's can partner with PLwD. (Person living with Dementia)	
		CDMC, NN	3.4 Expand the Memory Care Initiative coordinated by Cooley Dickinson Medical Center and Northampton Neighbors.	High
SE4	Continue to provide devices and training on how to use them, and how to access the internet so that everyone can participate in online programming, telemedicine, and public meetings. Coordinate efforts of all organizations offering these services in Northampton	Northampton Senior Services; NN, Forbes Library Community Action, Youth Works, Northampton Schools, colleges	4.1 Coordinate a joint community which includes all partners who offer computers and tech assistance to older people in our community.	High
		Northampton Senior Services; NN, Forbes Library Youth Works, Northampton Schools, colleges	4.2 Engage youth and other older adults to train others on how to use I-pads and laptops. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage retired college employees to recruit college student participation. 	High
		NSS, HVES, DA's office	4.3 Work with the DA's office and HCES to build awareness of predatory sales techniques and internet security protocols.	High
		NSS, NN	4.4 Investigate the interest in continuing with online programming after Senior Center opens.	High

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
SE5	Meet people where they are in terms of accessing programs and activities in person or online.	NSS, NN, other area senior centers, Learning In Retirement, Forbes Library	5.1 Create a Virtual Senior Center to share technology training and online programming with other area senior centers.	High
		NSS, NN	5.2 Provide hybrid programming to provide events at the senior center with people in person as well as those accessing programs online.	High
		NSS, Forbes Library	5.3 Develop an online calendar that identifies all online activities that would be of interest to the older population; including, NN Speakers Series, Forbes Library events and speakers, etc.	High
SE6	Continue to support older adults in finding employment and partner with local employers to identify their needs and employment or volunteer opportunities for older adults.	NSS, 50+ Job Seekers, Mass COA, Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce (GNCOC)	6.1 Hold Job Fairs and 50+ Job Seekers events at the Northampton Senior Center.	High (ongoing)
		NSS, 50+ Job Seekers, Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce (GNCOC)	6.2 Reintroduce the EARN Program as a way of connecting local employers with older job seekers.	High

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
		NSS, 50+ Job Seekers, Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce (GNCOC)	6.3 Encourage local employers to hire the older worker. Encourage employers to consider flexibility and part-time employment as an incentive to older workers. Recognize employers who hire older workers and offer a work environment that reflects an understanding of this cohort.	High (can be coordinated through the EARN program)
SE7	Continue to connect people with volunteer opportunities.	NSS, RSVP, partner organizations, NN	7.1 Post information about volunteer opportunities and trainings on the NSS website (and in the library or other visible locations).	High
		NSS, Municipal Departments, RSVP	7.2 Connect people with the Tax work-off program to ensure they benefit financially for volunteer time. Encourage City departments to utilize interested volunteers in appropriate positions.	High (ongoing)
		NSS, RSVP	7.3 Continue to work with RSVP to connect people to volunteer opportunities.	High (ongoing)
		NN, NSS	7.4 Design volunteer initiatives that utilize older people as volunteer leaders.	High (ongoing)
SE8	Reframe the narrative about aging and dementia. Ensure that policies, plans, reports, programs and practices serve the needs of older adults.	NSS with assistance from PVPC	8.1 Implement Community Compact funded project to review policies, plans, programs and practices.	High – 2022-23

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
SE9	Expand work with area colleges and develop more intergenerational programming with schools and adults of all ages.	NSS, Community Action, area colleges and high schools	9.1 Connect with school departments and agencies that manage volunteers; encourage high school service programs to provide volunteer opportunities working with older adults	High
			9.2 Develop a team of retired college faculty to connect college interns with local programs and services for Northampton's older population. Engage students from UMass and other area colleges in providing services at the Senior Center.	High

Health & Community Services, Resilience and Public Safety

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
HC1	Establish an outreach and education program for community members, emergency service providers, faith communities, delivery people, and businesses on how to recognize signs of dementia and how to communicate with people with dementia. Work with existing organizations including Dementia Friends (Jewish Children and Family	NSS, NN, Alzheimer's Association; Jewish Family & Children's Services (Dementia Friends), Fathi Community, Businesses	1.1 Develop a Dementia Task Force to schedule trainings and set milestones for progress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite someone living with dementia to join the task force or consult on proposed activities. 	High
		NSS, NN, Faith community, COC,	1.2 Conduct outreach to multiple sectors of the community to engage them in trainings and	High

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
	Services) and the Alzheimer's Association.	municipal departments	outreach efforts. (See above for sector specific connections).	
		Alzheimer's Association, JF&CS, MCOA, COC, NSS	1.3 Research existing Dementia Certification program for local businesses, schools and faith communities that participate in training programs.	Low
HC2	Educate community members and older adults about advanced directives, Goals of Care conversations and ensure that people are aware of end-of-life rights.	NSS, Cooley Dickinson Hospital (VNA and Hospice), VA Medical Center, assisted living and nursing homes	2.1 Work with providers to ensure that primary care physicians have Goals of Care conversations with their patients.	Medium
		NSS, Cooley Dickinson Hospital (VNA and Hospice), VA Medical Center, assisted living and nursing homes	2.2 Educate community members about advance directives and other critical paperwork that should be in place as people age.	Medium
HC3	Ensure that residents have access to affordable mental health services and support groups.	NSS, Service providers, Cooley Dickinson Hospital, VA Medical Center	3.1 Develop an understanding of the level of psychiatric support needed for older adults and how to create more beds for people with psychiatric conditions.	High

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
HC4	Encourage collaboration and Communication between providers (patient-centered care).	Cooley Dickinson Hospital, VA Medical Center, BSMC, Valley Medical Group, HVES, service providers	4.1 Ensure all the service providers are working with the same platform and share information through devices such as Services Passports or Patient Ping (that notifies other providers when there is a change in medical records).	High
		Cooley Dickinson Hospital, VA Medical Center, BSMC, Valley Medical Group, HVES, service providers	4.2 Empower individuals to ensure that information is in place when transitioning to other medical providers or facilities.	High
HC5	Support the development of a Community Resilience Hub and assist the City in engaging older adults to determine the types of services needed at this facility.	NSS, NN, CAPV Office of Community Care	5.1 Ensure that the interests of older adults are represented in planning for the Community Resilience Hub and discussions about services that will be housed in the facility.	High \$\$\$
		NSS, NN, CAPV	5.2 Notify older adults through NSS and NN mailing lists about opportunities to provide input during the planning process.	High
HC6	Ensure that the interests of older adults are considered in discussions about police reform, especially regarding well-being calls	Office of Community Care, NSS,	6.1 Participate in discussions about the development of the Office of Community Care to ensure that the interests of older adults are included in department changes.	Medium

	Strategies	Lead/Partners	Action Steps	Timeline
	conducted by the police department.			
HC7	Expand caregiver support programs both for caregivers of older adults and grandparents raising grandchildren.	NSS, NN, Schools	7.1 Re-start Grandparents raising grandchildren programming.	High
		NSS, NN	7.2 Expand support groups for caregivers of older adults	High