



# Age & Dementia Friendly Hadley

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

APPROVED BY THE HADLEY SELECTBOARD ON 2/1/2023



Town of  
**HADLEY**  
Massachusetts



Point32Health  
Foundation

## Acknowledgements

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- Hayley Wood, Director of the Hadley Senior Center
- Linda LaDuc, COA
- Jane Nevinsmith, Selectboard
- Bruce Brewer, COA
- Michele Diamond, Resident
- Kit Ziomek, Volunteer
- Lauren Hannigan, Outreach Coordinator
- Violet Suska, Programs Coordinator

## Contents

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Acknowledgements.....	1
Introduction .....	1
Background .....	1
Community Engagement .....	2
The Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community .....	5
Ten Sectors of a Dementia Friendly Community .....	6
Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley .....	8
Housing .....	9
Transportation and Streets .....	16
Buildings and Outdoor Spaces.....	20
Health and Community Services .....	24
Communication, Information and Technology.....	28
Social Participation and Inclusion.....	32
Employment and Civic Engagement.....	37
Public Safety .....	38
Action Plan .....	40
Plan Implementation .....	40

## Introduction

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The Age & Dementia Friendly Hadley Community Assessment and Action Plan was developed with assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission through the Age Friendly Pioneer Valley Initiative funded by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. This initiative allows PVPC to provide technical assistance to municipalities in the PVPC region (Hampshire and Hampden Counties) and to bring together individuals and organizations on a quarterly basis to discuss best practices, policies and programs that support an aging population, people living with dementia and their care partners.

The report is organized by the Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community, a model developed by the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative that combines the World Health Organization's Eight Domains of Livability and Dementia Friendly America's Ten Domains of a Dementia Friendly Community. Although communities do not have to develop Action Plans for every domain in this model, assessing where communities are in each domain area can be helpful to establish a baseline understanding of the social and built environments and helps participants to measure progress going forward.

The report draws from existing plans and assessments that have been completed for the Town and incorporates the results of the community engagement activities to develop recommendations for activities that the Town can take going forward to make Hadley a great place to grow up and grow old. Action Plan priorities were determined through the responses to the Hadley Livable Community Survey and community engagement events that were held to gather feedback from older adults on the challenges that they face in the community.

## Background

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The Town of Hadley is small, with a population of 5,328, and hosts many of the large retail stores frequented by residents of Hadley and surrounding towns. Residents over the age of 60 make up 32.5% of Hadley's total population or 1,731 residents while approximately 26% (1,382) are over the age of 65.<sup>1</sup> Compared to state averages, older residents of Hadley do better on several healthy aging indicators with lower rates of high cholesterol, depression, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia/other psychotic disorders, substance use disorder, tobacco use disorder, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, ischemic heart disease, osteoporosis, lung cancer, liver diseases, and visual impairment. However, they have a higher rate of stroke, hypothyroidism, and fibromyalgia/chronic pain/fatigue.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2020 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) data

<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative Community Profile (2018). Data sources include the American Community Survey (2012-16), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Master Beneficiary Summary File (2014-15), and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (2010-15).

The majority of Hadley's population is White (93.7%) with the remaining population identifying as Asian (3.1%), Black or African American (1.6%), Hispanic or Latino (1.3%), or Other (1.7%).<sup>3</sup>

The number of older adults (over 65) who are veterans of military service is higher (25.3%) than the state (18.8%), and 35.9% of people over 65 live alone (compared to 30.2% in the state as a whole). More than 14% of residents over 65 are diagnosed with deafness or hearing impairment and 7.6% have self-reported vision difficulty. Over 20% of people over 65 have self-reported ambulatory difficulties while 4% are diagnosed with mobility impairments, and 13.3% of people over the age of 65 have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or Dementia (compared to 13.6% in the state).<sup>4</sup>

The Town of Hadley joined the Age Friendly Pioneer Valley initiative in July of 2021. Although many public buildings were closed due to a State mandated shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the new Hadley Senior Center remained open for programming and meetings with precautions in place. The Town applied for Age Friendly Community designation through AARP and was awarded the designation in August of 2021. The Age Friendly Community Designation gives the Town two years to develop a Community Assessment and Action Plan. Submission of the report and a Dementia Friendly Pledge to Dementia Friendly Massachusetts will also designate the Town as a Dementia Friendly Community.

## Review of Existing Plans and Reports

To understand the context in which the Town is working to plan for an aging population, PVPC staff reviewed plans and reports that the Town has adopted in recent years and highlighted findings pertinent to healthy aging. The reports that PVPC reviewed include the Hadley Master Plan (2017), the Hadley Open Space and Recreation Plan (2014), the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative Community Profile that includes health and demographic data for older adults, and an automatically generated Basic Housing Needs Assessment<sup>5</sup> developed through an online tool created by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission for all communities in Massachusetts.

## Community Engagement

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Older residents of Hadley and key stakeholders, people who work in municipal or nonprofit organizations that serve older adults, were engaged in this Community Assessment in three ways: through an Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley Working Group, administration of a Hadley Livable Community Survey (a shorter version of the AARP Livable Community Survey), and

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<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative Community Profile (2018).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.housing.ma/hadley/report>

several topic-based discussions held at the Senior Center or on Zoom with the Age and Dementia Friendly Working Group and invited guests.

### Age and Dementia Friendly Working Group

The Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley Working Group was formed to oversee the process of developing a Community Assessment and Action Plan. The group was facilitated by the director of the Hadley Senior Center with assistance from staff from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. The Hadley working group included the following individuals:

- ❖ Hayley Wood, Director of the Hadley Senior Center
- ❖ Jane Nevinsmith, Hadley Selectboard and President of the Friends of the Hadley COA
- ❖ Linda LaDuc, Council on Aging (COA)
- ❖ Bruce Brewer, COA
- ❖ Michele Diamond, Resident
- ❖ Kit Ziomek, Volunteer
- ❖ Lauren Hannigan, Outreach Coordinator
- ❖ Violet Suska, Programs Coordinator

The Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley Working Group met monthly starting in April of 2021 and plan to continue meeting beyond submission of this report. Starting in August of 2021, meetings focused on finalizing the Hadley Livable Community Survey, plans for distributing the survey, and plans for additional engagement of older adults and stakeholders around specific topics.

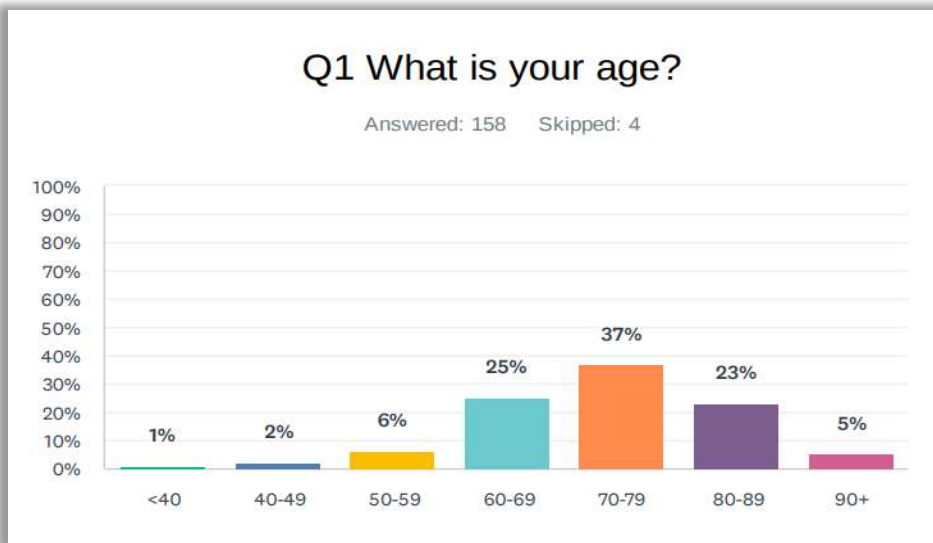
### Hadley Livable Community Survey

The Hadley Livable Community Survey was developed from surveys conducted in other communities and based on the AARP Livable Community Survey. The final survey was formatted to fit onto seven pages with a cover letter on the first page so that it could be easily printed and distributed to people who preferred to fill out the hard copy of the survey rather than taking it online. Hard copy surveys were distributed with Brown Bag food distribution packages, and were available at the Senior Center, Town Hall and library. Volunteers assisted in entering hard copy surveys into the online platform. The link to the online survey was publicized on the COA website, on COA and Town Facebook pages, in a press release that was published in the Hampshire Gazette and on a post card that was placed in the Senior Center and other strategic locations in town. Survey respondents were entered into a drawing for two Gift Cards.

A total of 162 surveys were completed, 142 by people over the age of 60, representing about 8% of the population over 60 living in Hadley. Outreach for the development of the Community Assessment was primarily directed to older adults and people who care for them in order to

understand the experiences of older adults living in Hadley. The survey reached its intended mark as more than 90% of survey respondents were over the age of 60, and 53% were over the age of 70. The majority of survey respondents were White and non-Hispanic (92%) while 3% were Black or African American, 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native and 4% other or more than one race. Most survey respondents (80%) have lived in Hadley for more than five years and 38% have lived in Hadley for 45 years or longer.

**Figure 1 - Age of Hadley Livable Community Survey respondents**



## Topic-Based Discussions

The Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley Working Group hosted four discussions at the Hadley Senior Center and one discussion on Zoom between November 2021 and February 2022. For each discussion, residents of Hadley and people working or volunteering in the topic area being discussed were invited to share their knowledge and to discuss challenges with working group members and other Hadley residents. Complete notes from these discussions are included in **Appendix B** and outcomes from the discussions are incorporated into this report. The topics and dates of these discussions were as follows:

- Transportation, Buildings and Outdoor Spaces (October 2021)
- Housing (November 2021)
- Social Participation & Inclusion, Communication, Employment & Civic Engagement (December 2021)
- Public Safety, Health & Community Services (January 2022)
- Social Inclusion – Meeting with Faith Community leaders (February 2022)
- Businesses and Dementia Awareness (May 2022)



## The Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community

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The World Health Organization developed a model for assessing a community's ability to support an aging population through assessment of domains of livability, or elements of the physical and social environments that are key determinants of whether people can remain healthy, independent and autonomous as they age. The original model included Eight Domains of Livability for an Age Friendly Community. Over time communities found that it made more sense to plan around domains of the community that impact their abilities to be both Age and Dementia Friendly. The Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative (MHAC) modified the Eight Domains of Livability into the Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community, which includes nine domain areas. Some communities have also added domains such as Food Security or Financial Stability to the suggested domain areas.

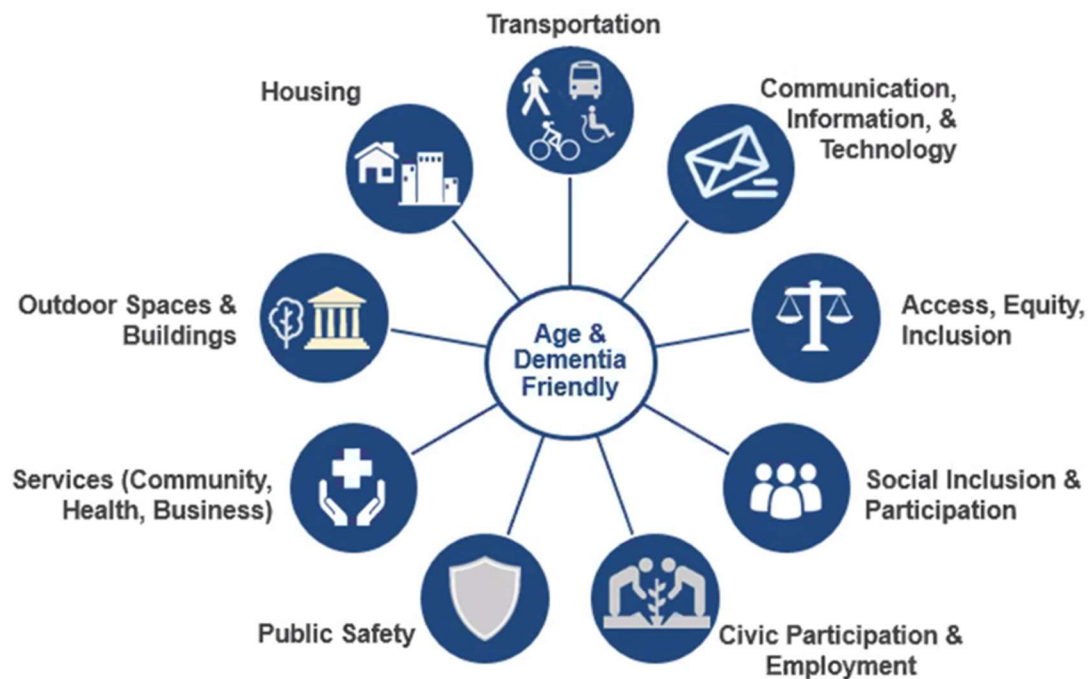
We have used the MHAC model to assess where Hadley is in terms of the policies, programs, systems and environments that support older adults in each of the domain areas. The model is helpful in considering elements of a community that extend beyond the built environment and that are critical to the needs of older adults, but also contribute to healthy, active, more livable communities.

The results of the Livable Hadley Community Survey indicate that Housing, Health and Caregiver Services, and Transportation should be the highest priorities for the Town to focus on in the next five years. Thirty-three percent of survey respondents thought that **Housing** should be the first priority and **Health and Caregiver Services** were the primary concern for 23% of survey respondents. **Transportation** is also an area that many survey respondents thought important, with 54% of respondents ranking it as the second most important area of focus.

Communication and Social Engagement, Outdoor Spaces and Building Accessibility, and Social Inclusion were also considered important areas for the Town to focus on in the next five years.



**Figure 2 - The Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community**  
(Source: Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative)



## Planning for 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 Communities foster the ability of people living with dementia to remain in community and engage and thrive.

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 America offers suggestions for how the following ten sectors of a community should be involved in planning for a dementia friendly community.

### Ten Sectors of a Dementia Friendly Community

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

This Community Assessment includes people with dementia in all recommendations within each Domain of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community. However, one of the main tasks of a Dementia Friendly Community involves building awareness among the sectors listed above. The Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley Working Group has started this process by holding discussions with stakeholders in several of the sectors of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community.

In a meeting with business leaders in May of 2022, several business representatives reported about experiences working with people who showed signs of dementia and discussed ways for working with them to make them feel safe and heard. A banking representative was particularly concerned with people at risk of being taken advantage of while in a state of cognitive decline. This meeting suggested a clear need for further education and tools that businesses and banks can use to keep customers feeling safe and welcome in the community.

Cooley-Dickinson Hospital hosts the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative that serves people with dementia and their care partners who live in Northampton and Easthampton. The PVMCI, 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.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cooleydickinson.org/programs-services/geriatrics/pioneer-valley-memory-care-initiative>

The following recommendations are focused specifically on the next steps that Hadley can take to build awareness and support for people with dementia and their care partners.

## Dementia Friendly Community Goals & Strategies

**Goal 1:** Build awareness, acceptance, and a culture of support for people living with dementia and the people who care for them.

### Actions

- 1.1 Recruit volunteers to become Dementia Friends Champions who will provide trainings for community groups and neighbors.
- 1.2 Continue to encourage trainings on how to recognize signs of dementia and communicate with people with dementia for all municipal staff.
- 1.3 Work with the Triad Program partners (Police, Fire, Emergency Services) to develop a registry of people living with dementia or other health concerns and encourage people with dementia and family members to register for this list.
- 1.4 Identify and reach out to family care givers to connect them with support programs and opportunities for meeting with other caregivers of people with dementia.
- 1.5 Identify respite care opportunities for caregivers at all income levels and connect people to these resources.
- 1.6 Identify memory cafes and other programs for people with dementia in the area and availability for residents of Hadley to participate and connect people with these opportunities.
- 1.7 Continue to raise awareness about dementia and available resources for people with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.
- 1.8 Explore the possibility of expanding the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative (through Cooley Dickinson Hospital) to serve people with dementia who live in Hadley.

## Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley

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The following sections summarize the findings gathered from the Livable Hadley Community Survey, topic-based discussions with working group members and stakeholders, and review of existing plans and reports. The Domain sections have been placed in order of importance according to the survey responses. Each section includes Goals and Actions that are also detailed in an Action Plan at the end of this report.

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## Housing

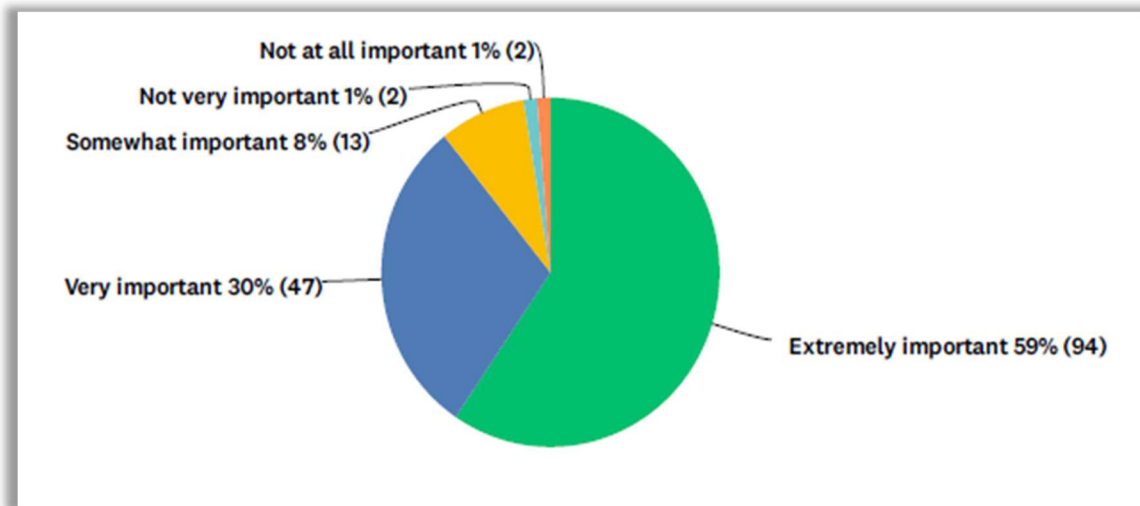
As people age, their housing needs may change in terms of the amount of living space they need or can afford, and property they want to maintain. Many older adults choose to locate closer to services and amenities that they can walk to when they lose their ability to drive, or when they lose a spouse and want to locate closer to community centers. For people who want to stay in their own homes or communities, additional services may be required in order to allow them to continue to live independently or to “age in place.”

The following factors are important when considering housing for older adults:

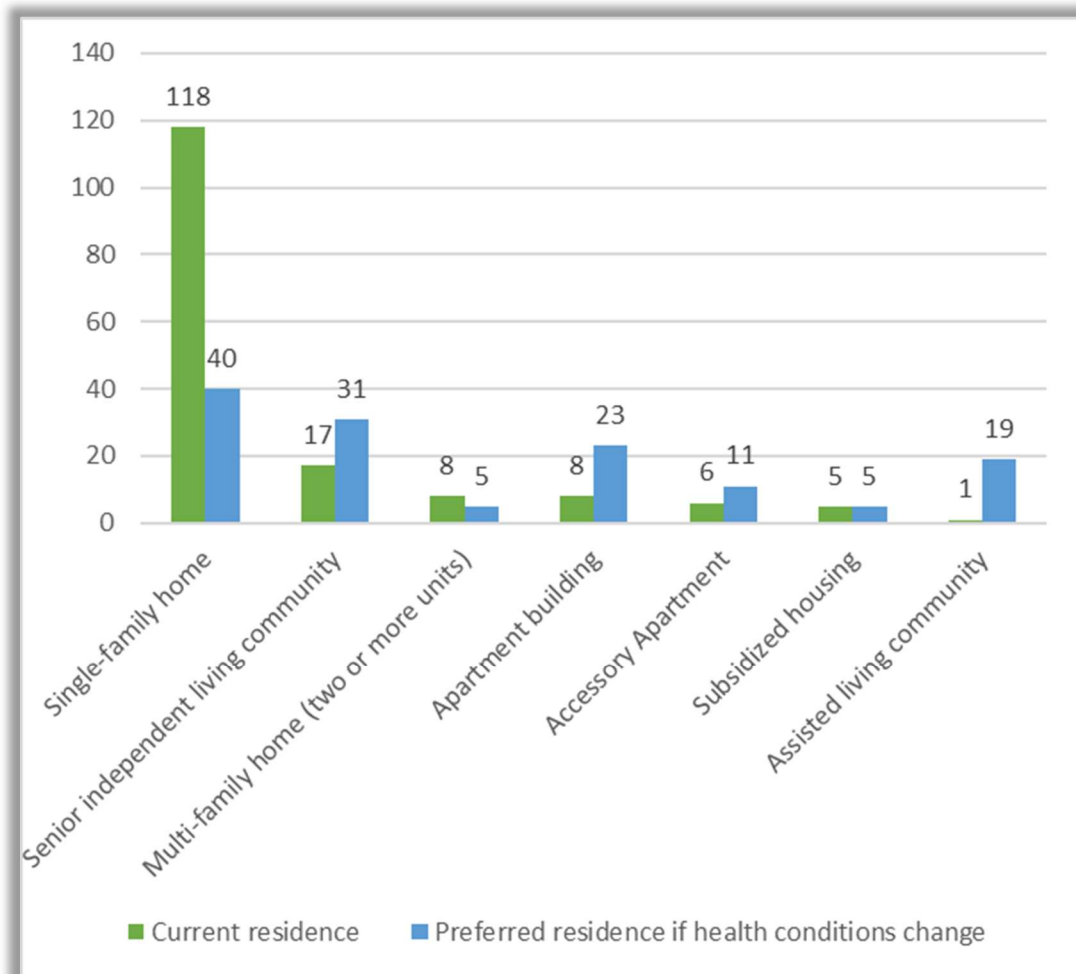
- **Affordability** – Smaller or shared units, accessory apartments, tiny houses, home sharing
- **Accessibility** – 1st floor, or elevator access, wheelchair ramps
- **Safety** – Removal of trip hazards, grab bars in bathrooms to prevent falls, smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors installed
- **Assisted Living and Long-Term Care options** – Living spaces that provide a continuum of care to meet potential care needs as people age, and available home care providers for people aging in place
- **Smart Growth** – Housing is located near retail, services, amenities, and community centers and infrastructure is in place to allow for safe walking, biking and use of a wheelchair
- **Neighborhoods** – Safe, connected, well-lit and walkable

Most survey respondents (38%) said that Housing was the most important issue for the Town to focus on in the next five years. Ninety percent of survey respondents also said that it is extremely important or very important to be able to stay in their homes as they age. However, the Livable Hadley Survey also showed that although 75% of respondents live in single family homes now, many would like to move to a senior independent living community (30 out of 155), an apartment (22 out of 155), or assisted living (10 out of 155) if health circumstances change.

**Figure 3 - How important is it for you to be able to stay in your own home, either independently or with a caregiver, as you age? (Livable Community Survey – Q11)**



**Figure 4 – Current residence and preferred housing type if change in health requires a move (Livable Community Survey Q19. 155 answered, 5 skipped)**



For older adults looking to move to another type of housing, 7% reported that they needed help finding affordable housing or finding a smaller home or apartment but did not know where to go for help. Although not a formal program, Hadley Senior Center staff help residents with the state application form for affordable housing which may place them in housing in Hadley or other parts of the state depending on availability. This list has a waiting list of several years in most communities due to the shortage of available units. Additionally, participants in the topic-based discussion on housing reported that the Housing Authority was not prompt about getting new tenants into available units. Participants in the Housing discussion at the Senior Center expressed concern that although many people want to stay in Hadley as they grow old, there are not the units available to allow them to downsize. There was also concern that any new housing gets quickly filled by students from area colleges and universities.

### Housing Supply

According to the 2017 Hadley Master Plan, 76% of Hadley's housing supply is made up of single-family homes, and 70% of those homes have three or more bedrooms. Hadley has an Affordable Housing Inventory (AHI) of 12.5% which meets the State's goal of a 10% AHI for each community in Massachusetts. Golden Court Apartments, owned and managed by the Hadley Housing Authority, consists of eight buildings totaling forty ground floor one-bedroom apartments designated for elderly or disabled residents. Mountain View Apartments, managed by Wayfinders, offers 25 units of subsidized housing for seniors and families. Woodland Crossing on Greenleaves Drive offers 1-bedroom apartments, some of which are subsidized; University Crossing (also on Greenleaves Drive) offers 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom subsidized units for families and houses some older adults as well.

The Hadley Zoning Regulations allow accessory apartments by special permit. These units must be part of or attached to an existing structure, and one unit must be owner-occupied. Detached accessory apartments are not allowed on properties that are zoned for single family homes.

The 2017 Hadley Master Plan notes that older residents may have to move out of town if they wish to downsize due to the shortage of housing units. Discussions with housing stakeholders (including representatives from the Hadley Housing Authority, Vesta Property Management, the Hadley Planning Commission and Housing Trust, and residents of Golden Cross), working group members and older adults during a topic-based discussion at the Hadley Senior Center suggest the need for a broader range of housing types, including backyard tiny homes, cottage type housing, condominiums; and siting new housing in locations close to services and amenities such as parks or trails. Survey comments highlight the need for more affordable accessory apartments, ranch houses on small parcels, apartments, multi-generational housing, and more affordable senior housing. There were concerns that much of the existing housing is not close to the town center or services. And, while condo development is allowed in areas designated for senior housing, it is not allowed in other areas of town. Others said that current zoning has created many 4-bedroom homes. While this could present opportunities for

informal congregate living or splitting larger single-family homes into multiple units, there was concern that there would be no guarantee that older adults would have access to these units due to the high demand for student housing. There were also concerns about how to allow for more housing units without overtaxing existing infrastructure.

The Hadley Affordable Housing Trust Fund was established through a vote at Town Meeting in 2020 to oversee funds that have been accumulating through an inclusionary zoning bylaw that the Town adopted in 2006. One project being considered by the Housing Trust (in March 2022) is conversion of an underutilized hotel into affordable and transitional housing. Hadley has also a Community Preservation Fund that was developed by the voters in 2004. This fund accumulates funds through a property tax surcharge and may be used for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing, and outdoor recreation.

### Supported Housing

One private Continuum of Care Facility, Elaine Center, is located in Hadley. The “Adult Family Care” program administered by WestMass ElderCare, pays people to house older adults or individuals with disabilities in their homes in exchange for training, support and financial compensation. Discussion participants suggested a program that could screen students to live with older adults in exchange for providing help with housework, shoveling or other basic tasks. An example of such a service is Nesterly<sup>7</sup> is currently utilized in Boston and Lynn, MA as well as central Ohio and Louisville, Kentucky. This web-based platform allows people to list their rental spaces and takes care of rental forms, vetting tenants and screening for safety and compatibility.

### Housing Affordability

As noted above, over 12% of Hadley’s housing units are considered affordable according to the state definition of the Affordable Housing Inventory. In Hadley, almost 35% of people over the age of 65 live alone. The MHAC Community Profile data shows that 11.9% of households over the age of 65 that rent spend more than 35% of their income on housing, and 14.2% of households over 65 that own homes spend more than 35% of their income on housing.<sup>8</sup> As a greater percentage of the population reaches retirement age, housing affordability will continue to be an issue.

In order to get into a housing unit that is managed by a local housing authority, residents must apply on the statewide online CHAMP system and choose their preferred locations. The waiting list for these units is very long, leaving many in housing that is too expensive or too big for their

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nesterly.com>

<sup>8</sup> MHAC Community Profile.



needs. Towns can require that a portion of all new housing units be affordable through inclusionary zoning, and local Housing Authorities can provide Section 8 vouchers.

Older adults who are having difficulty paying rent due to age-related impairments may be referred to the Tenancy Preservation Program (TPP) that is managed by the Berkshire Regional Housing Authority for all of the four counties in western MA. The TPP works with individual renters and families with disabilities that are facing eviction as a result of behaviors related to a disability (e.g. mental illness, developmental disabilities, substance abuse, aging-related impairments). TPP functions as a neutral party to the landlord and tenant. In consultation with the Western Massachusetts Housing Court Division, TPP assists the property owner and tenant to determine whether the disability can be reasonably accommodated, and the tenancy preserved. TPP case managers assess the reasons for the eviction, identify gaps in services, locate eligible services and develop a plan to implement those community-based services to maintain the tenancy.<sup>9</sup> This program cannot assist homeowners who are at risk of losing their homes.

### Aging in Place

As noted earlier in this section, most survey respondents said that it is either very important or extremely important to be able to stay in their homes as they age. As people lose the ability to drive, cook, or do other basic tasks due to the loss of motor skills or cognitive abilities that can come with age, they may need assistance from family, friends, or professional caregivers. Assessment and modifications of living spaces may also be needed to allow for safe movement and to prevent falls. Six percent of respondents need help getting home modifications (e.g., bars in shower, wheelchair ramp) and eight percent of respondents need help getting home repairs (e.g., new roof, electrical repairs), but do not know where to get help. Additionally, 25 respondents have been concerned about getting basic home maintenance in the past twelve months, and 3 respondents had to skip getting maintenance completed due to financial constraints.

Two programs are available to assist older adults or people with disabilities in modifying their homes for safety and movement. The Home Modification Loan Program is administered by the PVPC Community Development Department and is available for people with low to moderate incomes (see latest income eligibility chart at <http://www.pvpc.org/HMLP>). Community Action Pioneer Valley, located in Greenfield, was awarded \$1 million from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide grants for home modifications to older adults in Franklin and Hampshire Counties and the North Quabbin Region. More information on this program may be found at <https://www.communityaction.us/homerepair>.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://bcrha.com/tenancy-preservation-program/>

Supported transportation, home care, and other services that support aging in place are discussed in the other domain sections below.

## Housing Assets

- ❖ In 2016, over 12% of housing stock was considered affordable, meeting State goal of at least 10%
- ❖ Community Preservation Fund and an Affordable Housing Trust Fund that may be used to plan and develop affordable housing developments
- ❖ 1 Nursing Home (Elaine Center), Senior Housing at Woodland Crossing (Greenleaves Drive – 80 units), Golden Court Apartments (41 units), Burke Way (12 units of family housing), Mountainview (owned by Wayfinders)
- ❖ Accessory Apartments are allowed by special permit in or attached to existing structures.
- ❖ Home Loan Modification Program available through PVPC; grants for home modification available through Community Action Pioneer Valley
- ❖ The Hadley Housing and Economic Development Committee is working to develop a Housing Production Plan with assistance from PVPC

## Challenges

- **Housing Supply:** Not enough smaller housing units in Hadley for those who want to downsize, meaning people have to relocate to other communities
- **Affordability:** Long-term affordability of units depends on funding sources. Not all affordable units will remain affordable.
- **Accessibility:** Design for life-long housing, need for more affordable accessible units
- **Location & design:** Ensure walkability around new housing and connections to retail, services and amenities

## Goals and Action

**Goal 2:** Ensure that a range of safe, affordable, and accessible single and multi-unit housing options are available to meet the needs of the aging population in Hadley.

### Actions

- 2.1 Initiate a town-wide discussion about housing for older adults, including topics such as shared housing with students, tiny homes, cottage housing, mixed use development to allow housing in commercial areas, supports for people aging in place, and inclusionary zoning to encourage development of affordable units; and barriers that may exist that prevent development of additional affordable housing units – such as limited infrastructure for public sewer & water or expansion of septic systems.

- 2.2 Engage older adults in advocating for housing projects that include 1- to 2-bedroom accessible units close to services and new affordable housing units that are prioritized for Hadley residents.
- 2.3 Support that Town's adoption of a Housing Production Plan which would include an inventory of the existing housing stock and developable land; engage older residents in determining the types of housing desired in order for them to be able to stay in the community as they age.
- 2.4 Advocate for the Town to allow Accessory Apartments by right in all districts as a way to increase the number of smaller housing units in town.
- 2.5 Encourage property management companies to listen to the needs of older adults (and all residents) to provide a sense of independence.
  - Engage Dept of Housing and Community Development to understand standards for maintenance and management of larger housing developments.
  - Encourage the formation of tenants associations
  - Encourage intergenerational interaction and support among residents
  - Identify policy changes needed at the state level
- 2.6 Work with UMass to discuss town partnerships between the university and communities to ensure that affordable rental housing is available to both students and non-student older residents.
- 2.7 Continue to ensure that renters are connected with housing assistance programs such as RAFT or Tenancy Preservation program. Provide support for people who are at risk of eviction. [Ongoing]
- 2.8 Support incentives for developers to incorporate universal design concepts such as no-step access, stoves with automatic shut-off, and accessible bathrooms and hallways.

**Goal 3:** Provide support for Hadley residents who are aging in place.

#### Actions

- 3.1 Investigate the feasibility of a program (such as Nesterly) that would provide a stipend or reduced rent for students to live with older adults in their homes in exchange for providing assistance with basic tasks (e.g. Intergenerational Housing initiative with Age Strong Boston).
- 3.2 Research and consider development of the Village or Neighbors Model at the local or regional level to provide assistance to elders who wish to remain in their homes and community.
- 3.3 Assist homeowners in finding funding (i.e Home Modification Loan Program, grant programs) and provide assistance in finding contractors and/or people to help with basic maintenance.

- 3.4 Help residents identify local licensed contractors and/or staff from the Fire Department who can do home assessments for safety and fall prevention.
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## Transportation and Streets

The decision to stop driving can be one of the most difficult transitions that comes with aging. Slower reaction times, difficulty seeing at night, and cognitive impairments are only a few of the challenges that people may face as they age, and that make driving more difficult and potentially dangerous. Features on newer automobiles such as backup cameras and distance monitors can help with some of the difficulties with aging, and often people choose their own methods of dealing with the changes such as not driving at night or avoiding left-hand turns. Eventually some people make the decision to stop driving and rely on friends or family members to drive them or use public transportation or other transportation services available in the community. When asked what are the primary ways in which one meets their transportation needs, a majority (92%) of respondents said they drove themselves, followed by spouse or child(ren) driving them (22%). Thirteen percent (20 respondents) said that they walk and 9% said that they use a bike or e-bike. Only four respondents (13%) said that they use the bus for a majority of their transportation needs. When asked what their major difficulties were in meeting their transportation needs, most (86%) said that they did not have any difficulties. Seven percent (11) respondents said that public transportation was unavailable or inconvenient.

As people age, a continuum of assistance is needed as people transition from being independent and driving themselves, to not driving and taking public transit, to needing help getting to the door and then through the door. When people can use public transit and walk to transit stops or other destinations, it is important to have good lighting and sidewalks. When they can no longer walk, they may require paratransit or private transportation services, and in some cases caregivers to assist them into and out of vehicles.

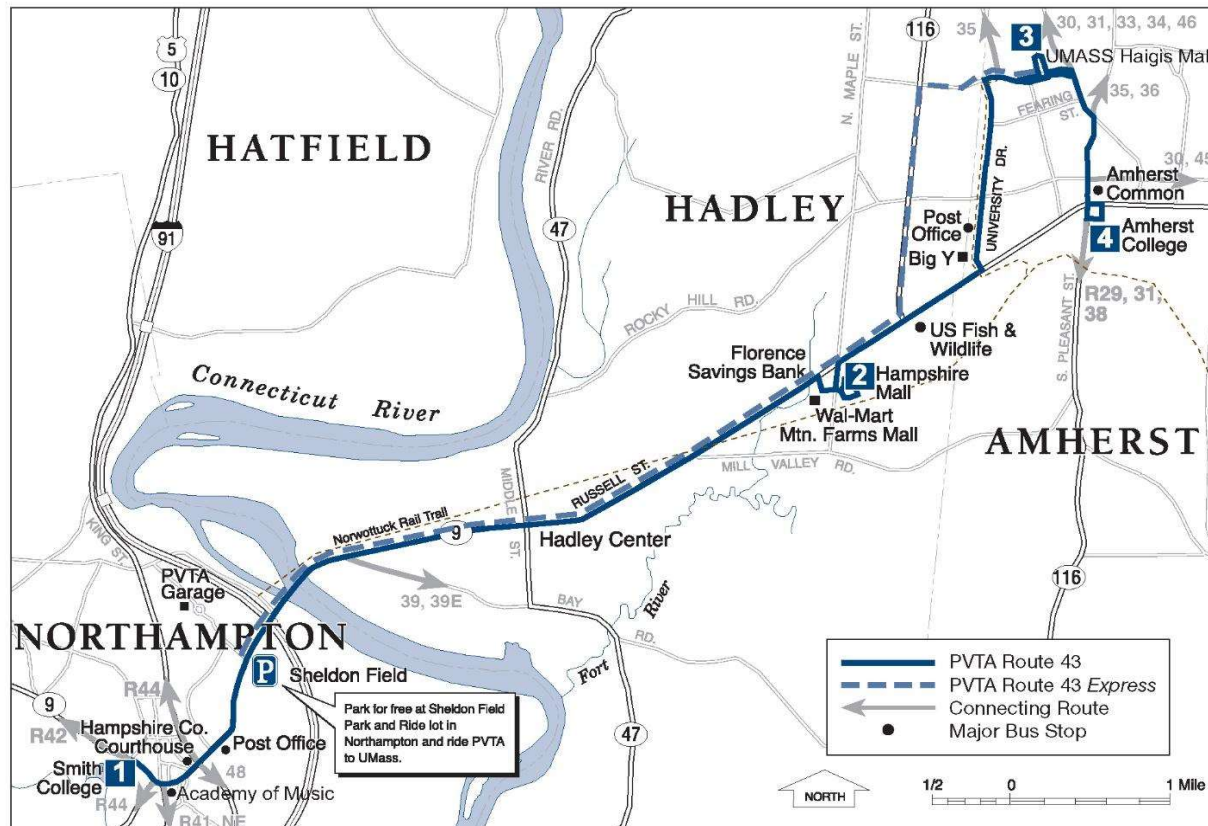
## Transportation Services

Services such as public transportation, senior center vans, and private transportation services are important to have in place when older adults in the community lose the ability to drive or the resources to maintain a personal automobile. Transportation services available in Hadley include limited fixed route bus service and on-demand van rides through the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA), van transportation offered through the Hadley Senior Center, and volunteer medical transportation through the Hadley Senior Center.

The PVTA operates bus service along Route 9 from Northampton to Amherst Center with stops at Smith, Hampshire, and Amherst Colleges; UMass, and the Hampshire Mall. The PVTA offers door-to-door Dial-a-Ride services Monday through Friday for people 60 and over. This service

must be scheduled one day in advance and rides are provided between 8 am and 4:30 pm. Paratransit service is also offered in Hadley for people with disabilities and must also be scheduled in advance.

**Figure 5 - PVTA bus routes and stops (Source: PVTA)**



The Hadley Senior Center offers rides to people 60 and over on a fixed loop, and rides by volunteer drivers for out-of-town appointments and for people who live outside of the fixed route or PVTA service area (more than ¾ mile from fixed route service).

### Walking and Biking Infrastructure

Many older adults choose to live within walking distance of stores, services or other amenities such as parks so that they can continue to be active and independent without having to drive. Hadley has several pedestrian and wheelchair friendly features - the center of town has many sidewalks, and new Senior Center and Library are connected by a wheelchair accessible walkway, and a shared use path connects to both Amherst and Northampton. However, the busy retail area on Route 9 is not friendly for pedestrians, and people who live in some senior housing developments complain that it is dangerous to cross the street.

The 2017 Hadley Master Plan noted the need for pedestrian safety through developing a connected sidewalk network and safe pedestrian crossings. The Town has not yet adopted a

Complete Streets Policy which would make the Town eligible for funds to develop a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and to implement projects that would improve transportation infrastructure for all modes and abilities of users.<sup>10</sup> The Town could also benefit from developing a bicycle and pedestrian network plan which would provide a vision for a connected network of sidewalks, bike lanes, roadway crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians, and connections to the shared use path.

## Transportation Assets

- ❖ Senior Center Van and private vehicle (for out-of-town appointments and outside ¾ mile fixed route)
- ❖ PVTa fixed-route bus service, Dial a ride for seniors (anyone 60 and over), and Door-to-door paratransit services available for people with disabilities
- ❖ Sidewalk replacement planned from Town Hall to the Hampshire Mall
- ❖ Norwattuck Rail Trail
- ❖ PVTa provides group or one-on-one travel training for taking fixed route buses (Tuesdays free for seniors)
- ❖ Route 9 improvements – widening Route 9 from Middle Street (Town Hall)
- ❖ Town plows sidewalks on Middle Street, West Street, from PO to Common on Route 9 (downtown)

## Transportation Challenges/Opportunities

- Many roads are unsafe for pedestrians and people on bicycles
- Sidewalks are in poor condition – Review maintenance budget
- Shared Winter Street grant program<sup>11</sup> is a potential funding source to repair sidewalks near bus stops to make them accessible for people with mobility limitations
- Snow clearing on sidewalks in the winter – Need for an alternative program when property owners are not able to keep them clear

## Transportation Goals and Actions

**Goal 4:** Ensure that transportation services are available and information on how to use them is easily accessible for residents of all ages and abilities to allow access to food, medical appointments, employment, education, and social connections.

### Actions

- 4.1 Assist people who use wheelchairs to access Paratransit services and investigate feasibility of adding services or accessing existing medical transportation services (such

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/complete-streets-funding-program>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-shared-streets-and-spaces-grant-program>

as non-emergency ambulance services) for people who cannot ride paratransit vans unassisted

- 4.2 Work with Mass Mobility<sup>12</sup> to develop options for filling gaps in existing transportation services and identify potential funding sources.
- 4.3 Expand volunteer driver pool for providing rides in personal vehicles to meet the current transportation needs. Investigate funding sources to pay drivers.
- 4.4 Collaborate with the school district to investigate the feasibility of employing school bus drivers during times they are not driving for the school to fulfill Senior Center driver needs.
- 4.5 Work with PVTa to provide transportation orientation programs for people transitioning from driving to using public transportation or other transportation services.
- 4.6 Add web page on Town or COA website that shows transportation options for people in Hadley; assist people who need to use public transportation and are not tech-savvy with filling their transportation needs with available services.
- 4.7 Train transit and COA van drivers on the unique needs of older adults, including best practices for how to interact, as well as recognize/respond appropriately to cognitive impairment, etc.

**Goal 5:** Ensure that roads, sidewalks and trail networks are safe and comfortable for use by people of all ages and abilities.

#### **Actions**

- 5.1 Develop a system for people to access help with shoveling sidewalks in the winter if they are responsible for a portion of sidewalk that is on their property.
- 5.2 Investigate the Town's system of maintaining sidewalks and how long-term maintenance plans can be funded.
- 5.3 Develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan that provides a plan for a network of bicycle and pedestrian routes that are comfortable and accessible for all users. Engage older adults to identify priority road crossings and desired walking destinations.
- 5.4 Advocate for the Town to adopt a Complete Streets<sup>13</sup> Policy and Complete Streets Prioritization Plan in order to access funds for improvements to sidewalks and roadway crossings to improve safety and connectivity of infrastructure for all roadway users.
- 5.3 Investigate Mass DOT's Shared Streets and Spaces<sup>14</sup> program to fund sidewalk improvements near bus stops.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massmobility>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/complete-streets-funding-program>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/program-overview-shared-streets-and-spaces-grant-program>



**Goal 6:** Implement programs that promote safe driving and transition to other forms of transportation.

#### Actions

- 6.1 Support and allow space for driver skill retention and setting up car for safety with community organizations, through partnerships with AARP, AAA, RMV, Auto Insurance providers.

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## Buildings and Outdoor Spaces

The amount of physical activity that people engage in is related, in part, to the availability of safe and convenient places to walk or ride a bike or participate in recreational or fitness activities. According to the Hadley Community Profile, 78.3% of people over 60 reported some physical activity within the last month, 31.3% met CDC guidelines for muscle strengthening activity and 58.3% met CDC guidelines for aerobic physical activity.<sup>15</sup> Although Hadley residents rank slightly higher than the statewide average for these areas, there is room for improvement.

Buildings that are open to the public and outdoor spaces such as parks, sidewalks and park benches, provide places for people to gather, recreate, socialize and exercise both indoors and outside. Parks with accessible walking trails, sidewalks, bike paths and bike lanes, accessible buildings and restrooms are all facilities that are important for inviting active transportation, recreation, and social interaction. Amenities such as benches, shaded resting spots, and lighting all support older adults, people with disabilities, and people of all ages. In New England, places for indoor exercise and socializing are also important in winter months when sidewalks are covered with snow and ice, or weather is not as welcoming.

During the pandemic, parks and open spaces were vital places for people to meet with friends or to get exercise while buildings and gyms were closed. According to the Hadley Livable Community survey, parks or outdoor space (96 respondents) places where most respondents like to spend their free time assuming that all other venues such as restaurants, museums, and libraries are open to the public.

### Outdoor Spaces

Hadley last updated the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) in 2014. OSRPs must be updated every eight years, so the Town is due for an update. At the time the last OSRP was published, the Town had roughly 35% of its land under some form of protection. Much of this land has prime agricultural soils and is an important food production resource for the region. The Hadley Dike, Connecticut River, and Mt. Holyoke Range offer the most recreational

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<sup>15</sup> Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative Community Profile (2018)

potential according to a survey conducted for the OSRP, and some public access is allowed on Lake Warner through a heavily used boat ramp. The Norwottuck Rail Trail also passes through the town and offers some access to retail stores on Route 9 (although designated bike lanes or trail connections to stores from the trail could improve safety for pedestrians and people on bikes).

The 2017 Master Plan and 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan both discuss expanding access to the Connecticut River for boating and fishing and adding improvements such as benches and signage to the Hadley Dike recreation area. The 2014 OSRP recommends developing connections between neighborhoods and recreational resources with walking and biking trails and requiring that new development include trail easements to ensure connections to trails and other resources. The OSRP also recommends the development of a map of trails and recreational resources. Adding accessibility and difficulty ratings to such a map would allow older adults and people with mobility difficulties to find trails within their abilities.

Some assets that were noted in the discussion on buildings and outdoor spaces with the Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley Working Group included trails around the high school, Zatyarka Park, the Skinner Reservation, Conte Wildlife Preserve, and the rail trail. Participants noted that the Town has a large town common, but it could use a walkway, more benches, and parking. The northern end of the Connecticut River Walk was noted as having little parking and difficult access up a steep bank to get to the trail. Some commented that the land in front of the former Russell School could be used as a park, and suggested expansion of the Dawson Recreation Area.

The Hadley Parks and Recreation Department offers a number of activities for all ages including Tai Chi, pickleball, “running for all ages,” yoga, cornhole, and fitness programs. The Senior center also offers fitness equipment and classes for older adults.

### Buildings and Indoor Spaces

In 2019-2020, the Town built a new Senior Center and library. Planning for the new Senior Center included many universal design principles, which plan for accessibility for all abilities from the beginning of the planning process rather than having to retrofit for accessibility later. Examples include walkways from the parking lot that do not involve ramps or steps, automatic doors, and wider hallways. Interior design of the Senior Center also includes a lot of natural lighting, handrails in the hallway, chairs with arms to enable easier up and down movement, and a sound system for meetings and presentations. Construction of the Senior Center was completed in 2020 and opened for public use during much of the pandemic as the open concept and ventilation allowed for safer indoor use than many older buildings.

The former library building is planned for restoration for municipal offices, but needs improvements to make it more accessible, including improving or replacing the elevator. The

Town does not currently have an ADA Self-Assessment and Transition Plan in place but has applied for funding to complete this work. An ADA Self-Assessment and Transition Plan looks at all Town-owned buildings and outdoor spaces (mostly public parks, but some also look at sidewalks) for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act standards and can include an assessment of the Town's website for use by people with visual impairments. The Town does have a Commission on Disabilities that did not meet during the pandemic but is becoming active again.

### Buildings and Outdoor Spaces Assets

- ❖ New library and Senior Center built with universal design principles (access for all)
- ❖ Old library to be renovated to be municipal offices
- ❖ Nowatock Rail Trail
- ❖ Commission on Disabilities in place and becoming active again
- ❖ Parks:
  - Zuterka Park (sp)
  - Walking trails around HS
  - Big Town Common (needs sidewalk through the common, benches, parking)
  - CT River Walk at north end – little parking, hard to get up the bank to the walk
- ❖ Sylvio Conte National Wildlife preserve – with trails, boardwalk (Federal)
- ❖ Trustees of Reservations – Mt Warner area (woodland trail)
- ❖ Skinner Reservation
- ❖ Hadley Reservoir (not accessible)

### Buildings and Outdoor Spaces Challenges/Opportunities

- Connect green spaces and recreational resources
- Rehabilitate and promote existing park spaces, recreational facilities, public gathering areas
- More fishing and boating access – CT River, Lake Warner
- Expand walking and biking trails to connect existing trails to neighborhoods and recreation destinations
- Include trail easements in new developments to expand trail network
- Provide more recreation programming in all seasons for older adults (both indoor and outdoor)
- Provide a map of Town's recreational facilities and open space properties
- Improve access to the north end of the Connecticut River Walk
- Expand Dawson Recreational Area
- Russell School Area – land in front of school could be a nice park
- ADA Transition Plan – Town applying for a CDBG grant to create one

- Improve accessibility at Hadley Reservoir
- Improve accessibility in Town Hall – improve or replace elevator (high cost)
- Access to trails at Lake Warner

## Buildings and Outdoor Spaces Goals and Actions

**Goal 7:** Provide opportunities for use of public buildings and outdoor spaces by people of all ages and abilities.

### Actions

- 7.1 Work toward making public buildings and parks in Hadley Dementia Friendly & ADA accessible.
  - Develop an ADA self-assessment and transition plan (if not already in place).
  - Activate the Commission on Disabilities to develop a system to identify needed improvements to public buildings and town-owned outdoor spaces, and to prioritize and track improvements.
- 7.2 Update the Town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan. Solicit feedback from older residents on desired outdoor recreational opportunities to inform future expenditures on parks and recreational programming.
- 7.3 Ensure that the Nowatock Rail Trail is wheelchair accessible at all entries and road crossings; and add amenities to make the trail more comfortable for older adults including benches and signage pointing to nearby public restrooms.
- 7.4 Develop a map of safe walking and biking routes for people of all ages and abilities and make it available throughout town in print and in digital form on the Town website. Provide information on levels of difficulty and whether or not they are ADA compliant and/or accessible to people in wheelchairs.
- 7.5 Identify a location for outdoor exercise equipment and access grant funding to purchase and install equipment (possibly between the Senior Center and the Library if feasible considering snow removal, or at Hopkins Academy).
- 7.6 Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility at the Hadley Reservoir (conserved by Kestrel Land Trust), and the north end of the Connecticut River Trail.
- 7.7 Connect existing housing developments to services and activity centers within walking distance by completing gaps in sidewalks. Encourage new housing projects to provide access routes to connect to existing trails or activity centers.

**Goal 8:** Increase programming and improve environments that encourage active living and social interaction for older adults in buildings and outdoor spaces in Hadley.

- 8.1 Encourage the growth of walking groups or walking buddy programs through the Council on Aging or other municipal departments, posting on community website and bulletin boards. Look into incentive programs or create incentives for people to join.
  - 8.2 Establish regular, organized activities in parks, both age-specific and multigenerational, by partnering with local organizations.
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## Health and Community Services

Next to Housing (38%), Health and Caregiver Services (31%) was considered by Survey respondents as the most important issue for the Town to focus on in order to make it a more livable community for people as they age. In addition to services by and for caregivers, this section includes all community services (with the exception of transportation) that people need to help them age in place.

The care needs of older adults who are aging in place can vary from assistance with basic tasks such as cleaning, shopping, cooking, yard work, snow shoveling, and minor home maintenance projects to full-time medical or home health assistance provided by professional or family caregivers. The pandemic highlighted the need for assistance with accessing food either due to difficulties in accessing transportation, fear of going out during the pandemic, or due to financial insecurity.

Most survey respondents rated their health as Very Good (43%) or Excellent (19%), while 29% rated their physical health as Good. A total of 9% rated their health Fair (8%) or Poor (1%). More respondents rated their emotional well-being as Very Good (40%) or Excellent (27%), with 8% rating emotional well-being as Fair (7%) or Poor (1%). Health is affected not only by the health care services that are available nearby, but also by where one lives, works and plays, and their ability to fully participate in programs and activities.

### Hospitals and Health Care Services

Cooley Dickinson Hospital (CDH) is located in Northampton, the next municipality to the west of Hadley, and Baystate Hospital has hospitals in Greenfield, Springfield, and Palmer. As mentioned previously, CDH is working on a Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative with the towns of Amherst, Easthampton and Northampton in partnership with Neighbors organizations (volunteer service organizations for older adults) from these communities. The purpose of this program is to understand the needs of people with dementia and their care partners and to connect these families with community support services.

Hadley hosts a number of private health care services, dentists, and an adult day facility. Many of these services are located on the PVRTA bus route or within the service area of the PVRTA on-demand van service that is offered to people over the age of 60, and van service provided by the COA.

Many older adults experience multiple health issues and can benefit from having one person to coordinate their care needs. This task may fall on primary care physicians, case workers or family members. Developing an understanding of the full range of health problems, how medications should be administered, and scheduling appointments can be critical to improving care for people with multiple health concerns.

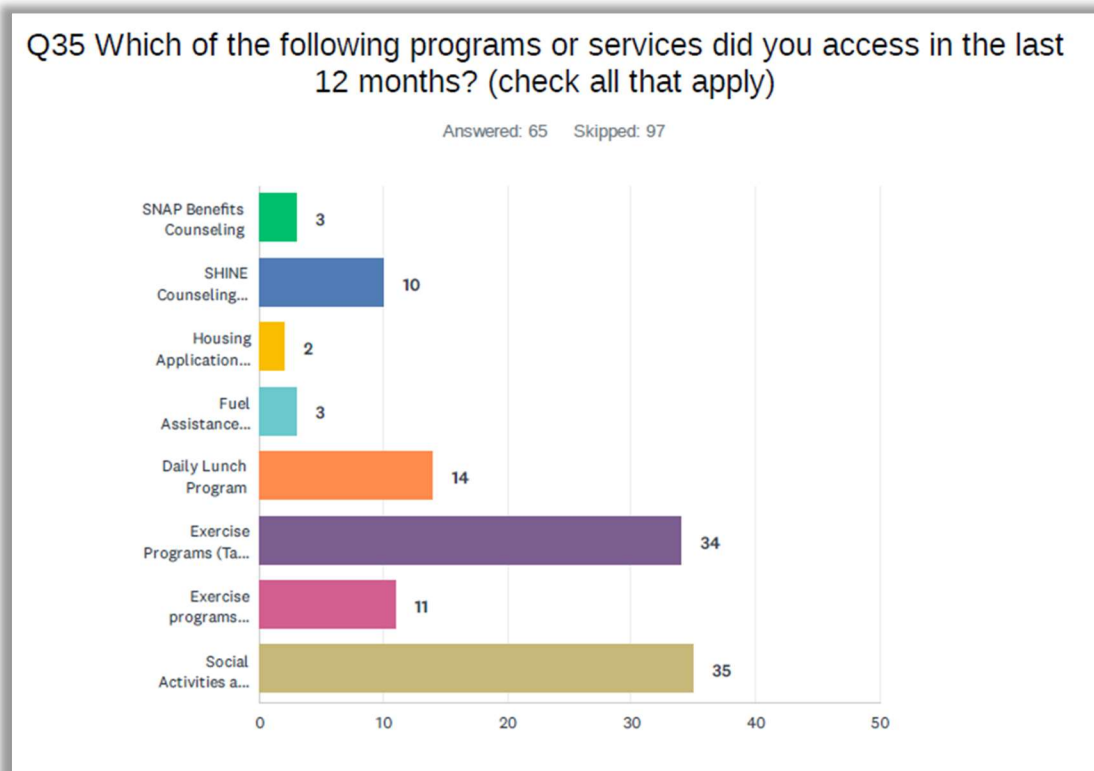
### Senior Center Services

The Hadley Senior Center offers a number of services and programs for older adults that support healthy aging. A few of the services offered include the following:

- Van transportation – MWF 9:15-1:00pm, \$2 roundtrip within Hadley
- Congregate meals through Highland Valley Elder Services
- Brown Bag food assistance (monthly)
- Amherst Survival Center Senior Mobile Nutrition Program (monthly)
- Fitness classes and equipment
- Assistance with access to social services, MassHealth applications, public benefits
- One-on-one technical assistance over the phone and in person to help with computers, tablets and smart phones; assistance with setting up access to virtual programming/Zoom
- Foot Care Clinics
- SHINE (insurance counseling)
- Medical equipment loans
- Cooling/warming center

Most survey respondents said that they attend exercise programs (52%) or social activities and classes (54%) at the Senior Center, and many also attended the daily lunch program (22%) or exercise programs offered on Cable Access TV through Hadley Media (17%).

Figure 6 - Programs or Services attended at the Hadley Senior Center (Livable Hadley Survey)



### Home Care and Help with Basic Tasks

Sixteen percent of survey respondents said that they needed help with basic tasks or errands such as changing a light bulb, shopping or shoveling snow. Forty-four respondents said that they had received these services from a friend or relative (24) or from a professional (20). Nine respondents said that they needed these services but did not know how to find them; and eleven respondents said that they had experienced problems accessing professional caregiver services. Fourteen percent of respondents said that they did not have a friend or neighbor nearby who they could call for help if needed.

Difficulty with finding help with basic home or yard maintenance is often a big hurdle for older adults when they begin to experience physical difficulties such as balance or arthritis, or vision or hearing impairments. Many communities surrounding Hadley have established “Neighbors” programs that offer volunteer assistance from other older adults who have the ability to offer their services. These programs have been very successful in Northampton, Amherst and Easthampton. In the discussion about Health and Community Services, some participants suggested partnerships with social clubs such as the Elks, or partnering with nearby schools and universities as a source of volunteers that could help people with shoveling or other basic tasks. Some communities also look to neighbors through neighborhood circles (Northampton) or a community volunteer pool (Portland, ME) to help with shoveling snow.



## Assets

- ❖ **Hadley Senior Center** provides wellness/exercise classes, yoga, income tax assistance, SHINE, fuel assistance and SNAP application support, flu shot clinics, foot care clinics, food support programs, Town Nurse, veterans services, Caregiver Support Services
- ❖ **Food delivery and assistance programs** are listed on Senior Center website
- ❖ **Highland Valley Elder Services** provides home-delivered and congregate meals and online resource directory
- ❖ **Alzheimer's Association** provides online classes for care givers and support groups for people with dementia and caregivers
- ❖ **Cooley Dickinson Hospital is located** nearby in Northampton
- ❖ **Many health care services** including medical clinics, alternative health care clinics, counselors, physical therapists, dentists and doctors located in Hadley (Russell Street) – some specialize in geriatrics.

## Challenges/Opportunities

- While the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative is not currently offered to Hadley residents, there is the possibility the program will expand to other communities in the future.
- Many residents need help with basic tasks such as snow shoveling or yard work
- Care coordination by health care providers is important for older adults who may have multiple medical conditions

## Health & Community Services Goals and Actions

**Goal 9:** Ensure that older residents of Hadley have access to health care and community services that support their ability to live long and healthy lives.

### Actions

- 9.1 Work with health care providers at Cooley Dickinson Hospital and other area hospitals to establish a system of care coordination for older patients.
- 9.2 Identify resources to provide respite care for family caregivers.
- 9.3 Create a well-designed, inclusive list of resources in the Hadley area that help people age in place.
- 9.4 Encourage emergency personnel and community members to take a “Psychological First Aid” course (through Coursera) to be able to respond to people in mental health crisis.
- 9.5 Research models for supplying nutritious food services; advocate for food suppliers to provide meals that comply with the needs of people with diabetes and high blood pressure (i.e. low carbohydrate and low sodium), and incorporation of fresh locally grown produce.

- 9.6 Research opportunities for senior farm shares (CSAs) that may be paid for by HIP or subsidized through grant funds from CISA.
  - 9.7 Support the growth of behavioral health services for older adults living in Hadley.
  - 9.8 Develop mindfulness programs or “radical acceptance” programs for people
  - 9.9 Develop a Village or Neighbors program that coordinates volunteers to provide services that allow people to age in place. Services may include grocery and pharmacy delivery, safety monitoring programs, daily check-ins, and transportation assistance.
    - Seek assistance from Social Clubs such as the Elks, Lions, etc.; universities or schools.
    - Develop neighborhood circles where neighbor volunteer to help other neighbors with basic tasks such as shoveling snow.
  - 9.10 Increase awareness and aid accessing food benefit programs (SNAP, HIP, Senior CSA shares, etc.).
  - 9.11 Collaborate with 413Cares.org to train local health care and social service providers on how to use the platform and inform clients about this resource.
  - 9.12 Expand programming for people with dementia and their care partners and include people with these experiences in program development.
  - 9.13 Support Medicaid reimbursement of higher wages for home care and home health care workers to build a more consistent and sustainable work force.
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## Communication, Information and Technology

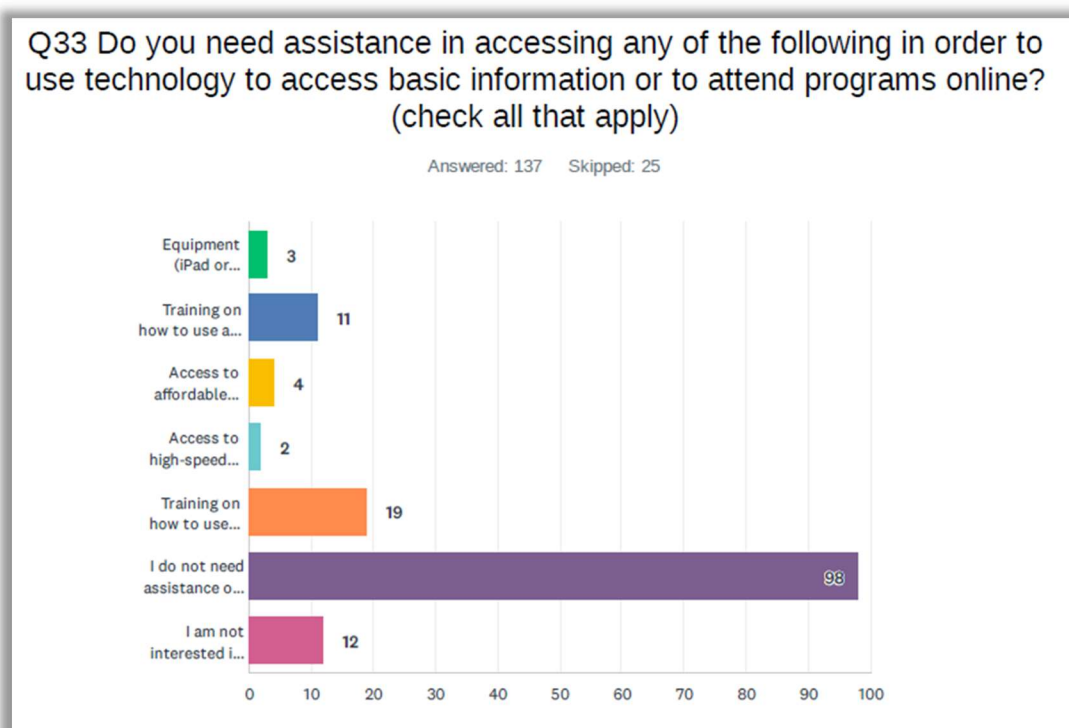
Communication and access to technology as a means for getting information is essential to the success of all of the domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community, as residents must know how to access information about programs, services, and places that are age and dementia friendly in order to use and appreciate these resources. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of technology for social interaction as well as for telehealth services, public meetings, shopping, and fitness programming when businesses and public buildings were closed. The pandemic also underscored the limitations of web-based interaction.

Most people who responded to the Livable Hadley Community Survey said that they were comfortable with computers or smart phones, but 11% said that they were not comfortable with these devices. When asked where they went to for information on services for older adults, 89% went to the Senior Center and 72% relied on family or friends for information. Many also had the ability to conduct internet searches (44%) or relied on a doctor or other health care professional (44%). Very few people were familiar with the 413Cares.com resource which is a platform where service providers can post services and refer people to other services. This platform is very useful for social workers or community health workers who are tasked with connecting clients to services. The platform is less well known by the general public

but could be a valuable resource for individuals and caregivers as long as service providers post information about their services and people know how to find the resources on the website.

Only three people said that they needed access to equipment such as a laptop or tablet, while eleven people said they needed training on how to use their equipment and 19 wanted training on how to use Zoom or other video meeting platforms. The Hadley Senior Center currently provides one-on-one assistance for people who need help with using their computers, phones, or tablets. Both the library and the Senior Center have free WiFi and computers that people can use while on site, and there is a tablet loan program in place through the Senior Center.

**Figure 7 - Assistance needed for people to access technology** (Livable Hadley Survey)



In addition to those who don't have access to technology, communication challenges exist with people with visual or hearing impairments, and those whose first language is not English. Once people are connected to technology, it can help those with physical impairments to participate in meetings that would otherwise be hard to get to in person. However, additional assistance such as closed captioning for the hearing impaired, assistance for vision impaired and translation services, should be considered in order to remove the barriers that restrict participation by many community members.

The Hadley Library offers Kindles for people to borrow and many tools for the visually impaired including audio books, reading devices, and programs on how to use these tools. Senior Center staff also have suggested collaborating with the library to offer workshops on how to use devices and software.

Hadley has an active local cable station, Hadley Media, which films programs held at the Senior Center and makes them available online for later viewing. The Town's recreation department publishes recreational programs on Hadley Media and also publishes a monthly newsletter that is posted on the Town's website and provides program flyers at the Town Hall. The Senior Center has a comprehensive website and newsletter with program offerings as well as important resources for older adults.

During a topic-based discussion on social programming, local faith leaders commented that the digital divide is present particularly for people in their late 80s and 90s as it becomes more difficult to learn to use new tools, and several are not interested in learning these tools. Many of the older parishioners who would have otherwise attended services in person did not attend online services during the pandemic.

### Assets

- ❖ **Hadley Media** – cable station, YouTube channel with COA playlist
  - Hadley Matters – monthly show featuring a town resident or employee
  - COA Weekly email reminder – Hadley Media director picks out some events to highlight
- ❖ **Hadley COA** web page, newsletter, robocall system that can go out to everyone over 60 for whom the HSC has a phone number
- ❖ **The Reminder** – local free newspaper published in Amherst
- ❖ **Free WiFi** at library, Senior Center
- ❖ **NIXLE** – community alert system (have to opt in), also set up for Spanish and sends texts or makes phone calls – people can choose to get messages from the COA, DPW
- ❖ **Facebook pages** – COA, Hadley Media, private local groups
- ❖ **Next Door** listserve for residents to connect to others by town or neighborhood and request or offer recommendations, give or sell items, and connect with others in the community
- ❖ Smart TV at Senior Center shows listing of programming
- ❖ **Library** has digital access and provides training on how to access digital resources
  - Audio books, connect to Kindle
  - Fire tablets – Kindle-based
  - Programming for people with visual impairments – use of digital tools
  - Equipment that allows people to enlarge print – to read books or newspapers

### Challenges & Opportunities

- 10% not comfortable with technology or have no interest in using it
- Need for help for vision and hearing impaired

- Language translation may be needed for some residents
- Town would benefit from a Communications or Engagement Plan to create a system for posting information in multiple locations and platforms
- No community wide calendar – there's a COA calendar, no place to post other events
- People are inundated with too much information
- COA Newsletter has a lot of information but is underutilized
- Senior Center could play a role in sharing spiritual services and events – bulletin boards, coffee tables, etc., also can share meeting space
- It could be helpful to pool resources to provide information in one place (for faith communities)
- Loss of hearing – smart hearing aids, very complicated, financial
  - Support group, training on navigating
  - Batteries for older hearing aids – challenge for a senior to get tested, new hearing devices

## Communications Goals and Actions

**Goal 10:** Ensure that all residents have access to information about policies and programs that provide opportunities for health and community engagement.

### Actions

- 10.1 Continue to assist older adults in acquiring equipment and training on how to use it and provide assistance with accessing low cost or free broadband service.
- 10.2 Provide accommodations for vision and hearing impaired on Town website and in spaces used for public meetings (closed captioning, interpreter).
- 10.3 Collaborate with existing community-based networks such as faith communities, civic groups, education channels, business groups, to share information.
- 10.4 Continue to identify and reach out to socially isolated residents via personal contact from trusted municipal staff, and/or develop "Buddy system" with volunteers who can reach out to socially isolated residents.
- 10.5 Create a basic but effective Municipal Communication Plan. Inventory what municipal information is being shared by each department, including both non-emergency and emergency channels.
- 10.6 Update the Town website regularly and poll users about the ease of navigation. Evaluate accessibility for people with visual or physical impairments, multiple languages, etc.
- 10.7 Invite an audiologist to give a presentation on free smart phones and use of captioning available to income eligible people.

**Goal 11:** Facilitate a culture of support and acceptance for residents of all ages and abilities.

## Actions

- 11.1 Provide training for municipal staff, community and civic organizations, faith communities, and businesses on how to recognize and effectively communicate with customers with dementia and other cognitive disabilities.
  - 11.2 Engage on demand interpreter services and have Spanish translations available for important information.
  - 11.3 Promote Dementia Friends and Dementia Friends Champion Trainings for community members and municipal staff.
  - 11.4 Ensure that printed information – including official forms or invoices and text on visual displays in public spaces – has large lettering with main ideas in bold type; simple and straightforward sentences and simple language; and is available in multiple languages as needed.
  - 11.5 Ensure that telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time. Offer options for people with hearing impairments.
  - 11.6 Ensure that reading glasses or magnifying glasses are available at election locations for people with visual impairments.
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## Social Participation and Inclusion

Participation in social activities, either formal or informal, is important to one's mental health. Conversely, social isolation and loneliness can cause poor health outcomes. Research shows that loneliness and social isolation can increase the risk of premature death and has been associated with a 50% increased risk of dementia as well as increased risk of heart disease and stroke, depression, anxiety, and suicide.<sup>16</sup> This research also highlights increased risk of loneliness among more vulnerable populations of older adults including immigrants; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) populations; minorities; and victims of elder abuse.

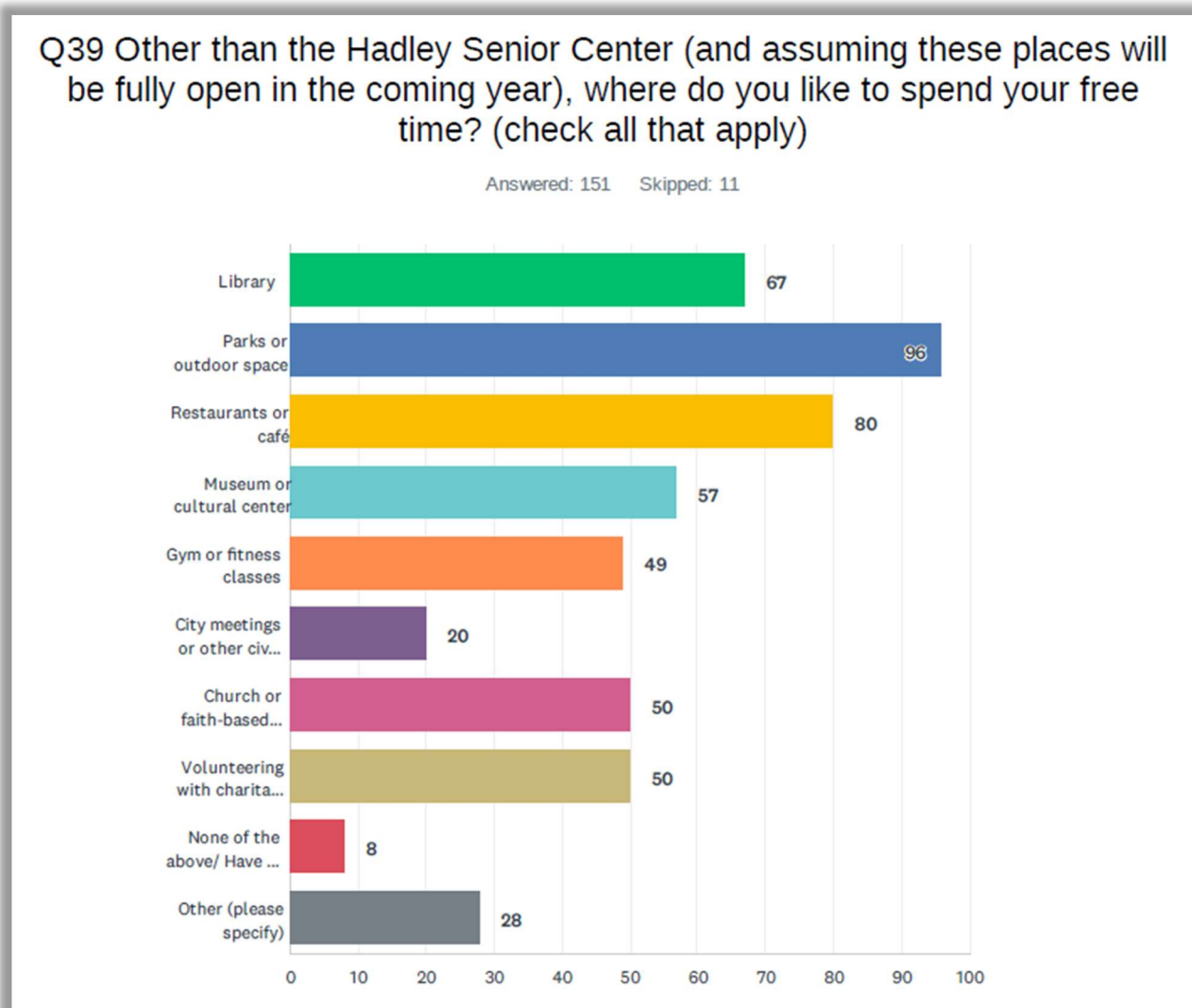
The pandemic increased social isolation among many older adults as they were advised to stay home. Transportation services and places where people had the opportunity to socialize were closed during the first year of the pandemic, leaving outdoor spaces such as parks and walking trails some of the few places where people could connect with others in person. According to the Livable Hadley Survey, parks or outdoor spaces were the places where most people (64% or 96 respondents) said that they like to spend their free time (other than the Senior Center). Restaurants and cafes (80 respondents), the library (67), and museums and cultural centers (57)

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<sup>16</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2020. Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. (Citation from <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>)

were also popular places to go, followed closely by churches or faith-based institutions (50), volunteering with charitable organizations (50), and gym or fitness classes (49). In the open-ended responses to this question, several people said that they were not able to participate in social activities due to their caregiving roles.

**Figure 8 - Places (other than the Senior Center) where people like to spend free time**  
(Livable Hadley Survey)



Inclusion of all sectors of the community in social programming is important in building an inclusive and Age and Dementia Friendly community. People with dementia are at high risk of social isolation as they may not be able to drive or may become confused or agitated when they are out in public spaces. Providing activities such as memory cafes or support groups for people with dementia and their care partners could ensure a welcoming space for socializing. Also, trainings for staff of the library, volunteers at town-wide events, and the broader community



can ensure that people with dementia are treated with respect and supported by the community.

Likewise, planning and outreach of events or programming should consider all sectors at risk of social isolation including veterans; people who are not fluent in English; people with vision, hearing or mobility impairments; and people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Eighteen percent of survey respondents (28 people) said that they had an impairment or condition that limits their ability to participate fully in the community.

The discussion on Social Participation and Inclusion that was held at the Hadley Senior Center was well-attended, although participants noted that very few people of color attend events at the senior center. The group generated many creative ideas for fostering a more inclusive and multicultural senior center, including suggestions such as holding food-focused events, opening the building for events for community-based organizations, inviting students from other countries to give presentations, and holding cultural competency trainings for staff and community members.

A subsequent discussion with three faith leaders highlighted the digital divide that was present for many of their parishioners. They noted that many attend services for the social connection that they get during coffee hour and missed that during the pandemic when services were offered online. Faith leaders also commented that volunteering to help others is a good way to combat social isolation, as it gives people a sense of purpose.

### Assets

- ❖ Senior Center – offers fitness programming, films, art classes, varied presentations
- ❖ Library – Book group, film noir on Fridays
- ❖ Accessible meeting room in new Safety Complex
- ❖ Parks & shared use path for all abilities
- ❖ Restaurants & retail stores
- ❖ Proximity to Amherst & Northampton (cultural venues, colleges and university, museums, restaurants, parks)
- ❖ Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- ❖ 5-College Learning in Retirement program
- ❖ Private adult day care facility available for respite care
- ❖ Community Events calendar on the Town website, COA has a calendar of programs and event
- ❖ Hadley Learns –Zoom and in person community learning program in collaboration with schools and library
- ❖ Strong Faith Community:

- First Congregational Church, 102 Middle Street
- Most Holy Redeemer Church, 120 Russell Street
- North Hadley Congregational Church, 243 River Drive
- Wesley United Methodist Church, 98 North Maple Street
- Hampshire Mosque, 451 Russell Street
- ❖ Several churches & other religious institutions in neighboring Amherst, MA
- ❖ Many volunteer opportunities and strong volunteer community

### Challenges/Opportunities and Program Recommendations

- Respite Care needed for caregivers – needs depend on what stage of dementia the person they care for is experiencing
- Interest in programming in evenings
- More programs needed for active, younger older adults
- Very few non-white participants
  - Offer cultural competency training (for staff and community members), reach out proactively to non-white older residents, people from other cultures
- Programming around food:
  - Use food as a means to draw out people for social, multicultural connections – cooking classes
  - Hybrid in person/online event – on Hadley media
  - Share films about food – several ways to connect
  - Collaboration with UMass nutrition program
- Intergenerational programming – with day care centers and schools
- Foster Grandparent program – older adults meet with kids in schools
- Programs for people with dementia and their care partners
  - Memory Cafes,
  - Men's breakfasts
  - Monthly birthday socials
  - Music programs
- Program for kids to visit older adults – shut-ins
  - Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts involved with Senior Center
- Programming that involves people of color, other ethnicities in design, offer use of the Senior Center for community events, foster identity as an inclusive culture
- Art programs – invite diverse populations to present art
  - Charity sewing event
  - Simple cooking classes

- Lost skill class – what do older adults have to share (darning a sock, Mend with a Friend), professional experiences, travel
- Bring students in from other cultures – Schools do classes that adopt another country, learn games and food
- Share events on web page, more description with photos – Task volunteers to do story-telling
- Programming by seasons

### Discussion with Faith Community

- People don't want to go out after dark
- Many people 85+ are not technologically savvy or have visual impairments that limit their ability to use technology
- Services in person are major social activity (especially coffee hour)
- People with mobility problems are afraid to use public transportation because of COVID (many used in the past but are not doing it now)
- People don't want to ask for rides so don't go out
- More education about dementia could be helpful
- Caregivers are under a lot of stress
- Create a "Welcome Wagon" for new residents including a list of programs and resources that are in Hadley and how to get involved
- Promote community conversation about starting a Neighbors group
  - Friends organization may be willing to take this on or collaborate
- Promote community service - It is important for people to feel that their life has purpose and meaning

### Social Participation and Inclusion Goals and Actions

**Goal 12:** Ensure that older adults and people with dementia have opportunities for social interaction through programming, planning of events, and access to technology.

#### Actions

- 12.1 Continue to collaborate with Hadley Media and other senior centers to offer online and hybrid meetings and social and fitness programming that can be accessed online or re-broadcast on cable access TV.
- 12.2 Seek funding to provide staffing for a Memory Café and other activities for people with dementia and their caregivers (adult day programs, creative arts/music, intergenerational connections, outings/group activities, respite care). Meaningfully engage people with dementia in developing programs and services whenever possible.

- 12.3 Provide a wide variety of activities that appeal to a diverse population, including people who may not speak English as their first language or others who don't normally participate in community events.
  - 12.4 Offer programming around food and other cultures to create a welcoming and learning environment for the whole community.
  - 12.5 Work with library to train staff and provide programming for people with dementia.
  - 12.6 Ensure that activities and events are welcoming to people with dementia who may have to attend with a companion, caregiver, or family member.
  - 12.7 Provide support services for caregivers including programs for people with dementia, and resources for home care and respite care where feasible.
  - 12.8 Provide information about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for community meetings and events.
  - 12.9 Identify "naturally occurring retirement communities" (NORCs) and develop neighborhood networks or "circles" using available communication channels and volunteers to serve as leads.
  - 12.10 Provide outreach information and events in other languages as determined by the needs of residents
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## Employment and Civic Engagement

Most respondents to the Livable Hadley Survey said that they were retired, but 13% responded that they were working full-time and 7% were working part-time. Those who are working may be the youngest respondents, but many older people do continue to work into their 70s and some into their 80s if they enjoy their work or need the additional income.

Many people take advantage of their additional “free time” after retirement to participate in volunteer activities, serving on local boards or taking advantage of the numerous volunteer opportunities available in the area. The RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) offers volunteer opportunities with agencies in Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire Counties including positions such as providing assistance with insurance (SHINE program), money management, food delivery, transportation, and Healthy Bones and Balance classes. RSVP volunteers also help with technology trainings or other skills.

The Massachusetts Councils on Aging administers a 50+ Job Seekers program that helps older adults to find work. This program offers a year-round, 12-week training program that helps people deal with agism, create resumes, find information on available positions, and work on interviewing skills.

The US Department of Labor provides a job training program for older adults called the Senior Community Service Employment Program. This program serves low income, unemployed people ages fifty-five and older who have experienced barriers to employment. The most local program serving this region is based in Springfield.

### Assets

- ❖ Senior Center provides volunteer opportunities and connection to Senior and Veterans Tax Work-off Programs
- ❖ RSVP program offers volunteer opportunities for older adults
- ❖ 50+ Job Seekers program – Coordinated by MCOA, provides assistance for people over 50 looking for full- or part-time work.
- ❖ Retail stores – opportunities for part-time work – (Staples, Target, Trader Joes, Whole Foods, etc.) – encourage seniors to apply. Accommodate senior needs for training.

### Employment & Civic Engagement Goals & Actions

**Goal 13:** Provide opportunities and assistance for older adults who want to work and volunteer in the community.

- 13.1 Consider implementing an Age and Dementia Friendly business certification program using the Age Strong Boston checklist as a model.
- 13.2 Develop intergenerational skill building/mentoring opportunities with the COA, community groups and local schools, e.g. youth teach elders about technology or other current studies, while elders teach youths about careers, life skills, etc.
- 13.3 Increase public engagement with elected/appointed officials by increasing publicity about public meetings or calls for comment in a number of formats and venues.
- 13.4 Connect with volunteer programs through RSVP and expand opportunities for property tax reduction in exchange for hours worked.

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### Public Safety

Feeling safe in one's home is important for everyone, and especially those who live alone. In Hadley, approximately 36% of people over the age of 65 live alone. Fifteen percent of survey respondents said that there were times when they did not feel safe in their communities. Reasons that people gave included not enough streetlights, fear of falling in one's home while alone, fear of crime and break-ins, walking on roads with no sidewalks, and fear of being isolated during emergencies without transportation.

**Figure 9 - Safety concerns** (Livable Hadley Survey)



Hadley has a Triad program in place that is a collaboration between the COA and police, fire, sheriff's department, district attorney's office, and older adults that meet with the common goal of the safety and security of older adults in the community. The program sponsors a house numbering program where reflective numbers are installed close to the road so that the house can be easily found by emergency personnel, and a lock box program where a lock box is installed to hold a house key and may be accessed by emergency personnel in case someone is inside and can't come to the door.

The Council on Aging's website includes a page on cybersecurity and tips for online safety. These tips are especially important for new users of technology.

### Public Safety Goals and Actions

**Goal 14:** Ensure the safety of all residents, including older adults and people with dementia, through multi-sectoral partnerships and programming.

#### Actions

- 14.1 Post information on the Triad program on both the Senior Center and Police Department websites to educate residents about the File of Life and other important documents.
  - Encourage residents to keep their File of Life documents updated regularly.
- 14.2 Provide regular trainings for all emergency personnel on recognizing the signs of dementia and how to communicate with people with dementia.
- 14.3 Develop a sustainable, voluntary check-in system for people who live alone and want to receive occasional check-in calls by volunteers.

- 14.4 Work with the Triad Program partners (Police, Fire, Emergency Services) to develop a database of people living with dementia or other health concerns and encourage people with dementia and family members to register for this list. (same as 1.3)
- 14.5 Continue to educate older adults about what to do in the case of emergency and about the Town's Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP).

## Action Plan

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This Action Plan for an Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley details goals and strategies for improving Hadley's social and built environments to make the town a welcoming place for people of all ages and abilities. According to the Livable Hadley Community Survey, comments gathered at topic-based discussions with members of the Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley Working Group and invited guests, the areas of greatest concern in Hadley include Housing,

The following Action Plan is ordered by domains of the highest importance to residents of Hadley based on the community engagement efforts completed for this report. However, this report and Action Plan are dynamic documents that will be amended as conditions change in the community.

The Goals and Actions included in the Action Plan are expanded from sections above to include lead entities, partner organizations or entities, metrics for measuring progress, and the priority as identified through the results of community engagement and the capacity of the entities assigned. Priority levels are as follows:

- **Short-Term (ST)** – 1-3 years
- **Medium Term (MT)** – 4-6 years
- **Long Term (LT)** – 7-10 years

## Plan Implementation

The Age and Dementia Friendly Hadley Working Group was formed to work with the PVPC on the development of this Community Assessment and Action Plan. An implementation committee made up of members of this working group and others identified by the Town will be developed to implement strategies on the following pages. In addition, the following steps are recommended for the implementation of this report.

- 1) Continue to build the Age and Dementia Friendly Working Group to include multiple sectors of the community as well as regional and state partner organizations and agencies.
- 2) Distribute the Community Assessment and Action Plan to Town boards, committees, social groups and faith organizations to solicit input and volunteers for an implementation



committee, and to build awareness of ways that these groups can participate in making Hadley Age and Dementia Friendly.

- 3) Submit report to AARP and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts for final certification as an Age and Dementia Friendly Community.
- 4) Select strategies for implementation each year.
- 5) Report on successes and challenges – both to the community, AARP and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts.