

Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee FY22 Progress Report

Making Chelmsford Even More Age-Friendly

6 Feb 2023

Briefing Outline

- ▶ **Background**
- ▶ **Committee Members**
- ▶ **Age-Friendly Chelmsford Timeline Overview**
- ▶ **Domains of Livability**
- ▶ **Progress Reports by Domain**
- ▶ **Summary FY22 Observations**
- ▶ **Information Sources**

Background

In May 2021, the Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee was formed to address the goals and accomplish the actions in the Age-Friendly Chelmsford Action Plan that was approved by the Town and subsequently by AARP.

The Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee is co-chaired by Debi Siriani and Fred Brusseau. Domains are led by the following: Connie Donahue (Housing), John Bowles (Transportation), Jen Melanson (Community Supports and Health Services), Steve Callaghan (Outdoor Spaces and Buildings), Debi Siriani (Social Participation, Respect and Inclusion), Lisa Marrone (Civic Engagement and Employment), Becky Hermann and Lesley Kimball (Communication and Information).

As a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, Chelmsford assessed its age-friendliness across several domains of livability. Despite the impacts of the pandemic, during FY22, these domains were very successful in making Chelmsford even more age-friendly.

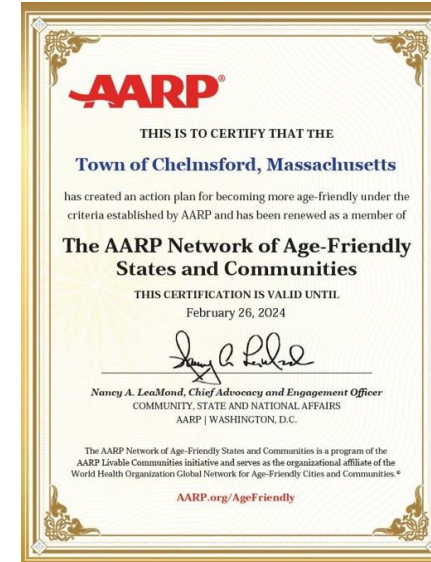
This presentation details those accomplishments.

Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee

- ▶ Fred Brusseau co-chair, resident
- ▶ Debi Siriani co-chair, Director, Chelmsford Senior Center
- ▶ Becky Herrmann, Clerk, Director, Chelmsford Public Library
- ▶ Lesley Kimball (proxy), Acting Co-Director, Chelmsford Public Library
- ▶ Lisa Marrone, Director of Business Development
- ▶ Jen Melanson, Community Services Coordinator
- ▶ John Bowles, resident
- ▶ Connie Donahue, Deputy Director, Chelmsford Housing Authority
- ▶ Steve Callaghan, Chelmsford DPW
- ▶ Colin Spence, Deputy Police Chief

Age-Friendly Chelmsford Timeline

- ▶ Initial start (November 2017)
- ▶ Membership package approved by AARP (May 2019)
- ▶ Membership certificate presented to Town (July 2019)
- ▶ Action Plan domain inputs initiated (December 2019)
- ▶ Action Plan completed (January 2021)
- ▶ Action Plan approved by Select Board (March 2021)
- ▶ Action Plan approved by AARP (March 2021)
- ▶ Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee (May 2021)



Domains of Livability

- ▶ **Housing (Connie Donahue, lead)**
 - ▶ Promote availability of affordable, age-friendly housing, housing modification programs
- ▶ **Transportation (John Bowles, lead)**
 - ▶ Strengthen availability of safe/affordable, private/public transportation
- ▶ **Community Supports & Health Services (Jen Melanson, lead)**
 - ▶ Ensure access to home-based care services, programs that promote wellness and active aging
- ▶ **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings (Steve Callaghan, lead)**
 - ▶ Ensure availability of safe/accessible recreational facilities
- ▶ **Social Participation, Respect & Inclusion (Debi Siriani, lead)**
 - ▶ Ensure residents feel included/respected in community life
- ▶ **Civic Engagement & Employment (Lisa Marrone, lead)**
 - ▶ Support access to work activities for older residents
- ▶ **Communication & Information (Becky Herrmann, lead, Lesley Kimball, proxy)**
 - ▶ Ensure access to communications technology/resources that enable older residents to connect with the community, family, friends, and remain aware of available local resources

Housing

- ▶ Increasing availability of affordable housing
 - ▶ Helena Crocker Residences (18 units), UMASS West Campus (54-58 units)
- ▶ Preserving/improving existing affordable housing stock
 - ▶ McFarlin Manor (51 units)
- ▶ Increasing number of rental vouchers
 - ▶ Awarded 31+ new vouchers for rental assistance including all populations
- ▶ Established partnership with Habitat for Humanity
 - ▶ Offers assistance to qualified homeowners, seniors and veterans with homes in need of certain repairs
- ▶ Uploaded inventory of Town-wide affordable housing to new website (HousingNavigatorMassachusetts.org)
 - ▶ One of first communities to do so

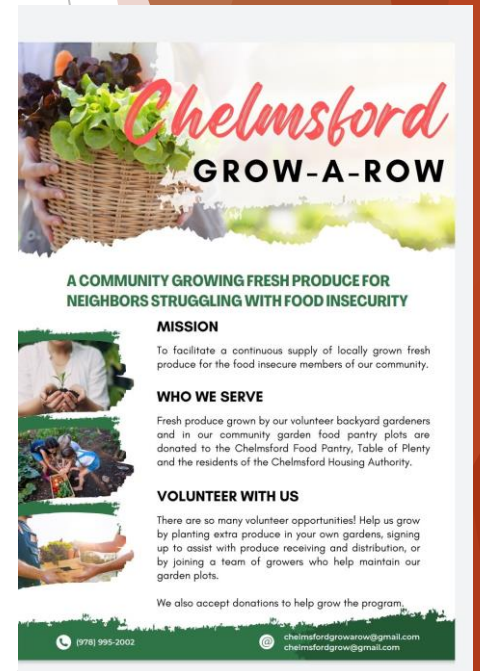
Transportation

- ▶ **Planned/promoted supplementary volunteer transportation service - - “Chelmsford RIDE”**
 - ▶ Supplementary to existing Senior Center transportation service
 - ▶ Volunteer drivers, Town-furnished vehicles
 - ▶ Service available for those age 18+ who are unable to drive
 - ▶ Flyers prepared and ready for distribution
 - ▶ Scheduled launch February 2023
- ▶ **Compiled list of local transportation options for residents**
 - ▶ Senior Center, MRTA, Road Runner, Age Span Care Ride, Chelmsford RIDE
 - ▶ Information provided to Community Services Coordinator for brochure



Community Supports & Health Services

- ▶ Purchased/distributed 15 electronic key locks
 - ▶ Project initiated jointly by Fire Dept and Police Dept; funded by grant
 - ▶ Permit secure, emergency access by first responders w/o forced entry
- ▶ Purchased/distributed 10 of 15 SafetyNet bracelets;
 - ▶ Project initiated by Police Dept; funded by Town Manager
 - ▶ Allows Police Dept to track missing people with cognitive impairments
- ▶ Continued Grow-A-Row, Gardens for Good
 - ▶ Volunteers grow, maintain, harvest, deliver fresh produce to the food insecure
 - ▶ Chelmsford Food Pantry, Table of Plenty, Chelmsford Housing Authority
 - ▶ Delivered FY22 produce valued at over \$7800
 - ▶ Supplementary food items also provided by residents
 - ▶ Seasonally recurring activity



Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

- ▶ Renovated several playgrounds/athletic fields
 - ▶ Varney (on-going), Center School, Southwell, Roberts Field
 - ▶ All playgrounds will be ADA-compliant
- ▶ Installed two outdoor fitness areas
 - ▶ Chelmsford Center, Roberts Field
- ▶ Created new “pocket park”
 - ▶ Intersection of North Rd and Worthen St
 - ▶ Cross-domain, Inter-departmental partnerships
 - ▶ Substantial local sponsorships
- ▶ Enhanced inter-departmental collaboration
 - ▶ DPW and Police Dept - increased safety mechanisms at playgrounds



Social Participation, Respect, Inclusion

- ▶ Conducted multi-cultural lecture series
- ▶ Held inter-generational, multi-cultural, weeklong activities with Chinese students (age 12+) and seniors
- ▶ Hosting LGBTQ & Friends Social Group twice monthly
- ▶ Senior Center staff and transportation van drivers completed dementia-friendly training

Civic Engagement & Employment

- ▶ **Planned/promoted/conducted Age-Friendly Chelmsford Job Fair**
 - ▶ MassHire, Chelmsford Senior Center, Chelmsford Business Development as partners
 - ▶ Focused on Chelmsford-based employers for local jobs only
 - ▶ Full-time, part-time, volunteer, temp/seasonal positions
 - ▶ 19 local organizations/businesses; 105 attendees
 - ▶ First hour priority given to those age 50+
 - ▶ Fully registered 3 weeks in advance of Fair
 - ▶ Highly successful; planning to be an annual event
 - ▶ As per AARP, a unique Job Fair focused only on local employers for local jobs



Communication & Information



- ▶ “Pop Up” Library service
 - ▶ Specially equipped vehicle provides mobile Library services
 - ▶ Weekly appearances at various Town locations
- ▶ Created Resource Directory
 - ▶ Added hyperlinks to the Senior Center Resource Guide on the Library’s website
- ▶ Evaluating potential for centralized Town calendar
 - ▶ Possible combination of current Library calendar (LibCal) and Google calendar
 - ▶ Heavily dependent on multiple groups to upload own events
 - ▶ Content currency may not be sustainable in long term

Summary FY22 Observations



- ▶ Highly successful year, in spite of pandemic impact
- ▶ Seamless progression from planning phase to implementation phase
 - ▶ Committee members remained same for both phases
- ▶ FY22 projects were truly a team effort
 - ▶ Committee members, Town leaders, Town staff, residents, business partners
- ▶ Cross-domain, inter-departmental partnerships
 - ▶ Contributed to success of several FY22 projects
- ▶ Inter-Town committee cooperation/collaboration
 - ▶ Age-Friendly Implementation Committee & Master Plan Update Committee
 - ▶ New Master Plan is more age-friendly, especially in housing, transportation sections
- ▶ Business partners contributed to success of some FY22 projects
 - ▶ Habitat for Humanity, MassHire
- ▶ Need to enhance community outreach

For More Information

- ▶ Age-Friendly Chelmsford web page on Town website - coming soon
- ▶ The Internet (search “Age-Friendly Chelmsford”)
- ▶ Age-Friendly Chelmsford programs on Chelmsford Telemedia (on demand)
- ▶ “Age-Friendly Corner” in newly expanded Senior Center *Messenger*
- ▶ Town Manager monthly newsletter
- ▶ Social media platforms
- ▶ Newspaper articles
- ▶ Contact:
 - Debi Siriani at 978-251-0533
 - Fred Brusseau at 978-256-3278

