

University of Massachusetts Boston

ScholarWorks at UMass Boston

Center for Social and Demographic Research on
Aging Publications

Gerontology Institute

5-2023

Building an Age & Dementia Friendly Barnstable: An Action Plan

Caitlin Coyle

Beth Rouleau

Shayna Gleason

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umb.edu/demographyofaging>



Part of the [Gerontology Commons](#)



Building an Age & Dementia Friendly Barnstable: An Action Plan

May 2023

Commissioned by the Town of Barnstable &
Barnstable Council on Aging

Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging

Gerontology Institute

John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy & Global Studies

University of Massachusetts Boston

Acknowledgements

This report was produced by the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging (CSDRA), a research unit within the Gerontology Institute at UMass Boston's McCormack School. The CSDRA provides resources and research expertise to communities, non-governmental organizations, and other agencies throughout the Commonwealth.

Dr. Caitlin Coyle is primarily responsible for the contents of this report. Other contributors include Beth Rouleau, Shayna Gleason, Nidya Velasco-Roldan, and Ceara Somerville. We are thankful for the leadership of Kelly Howley the, Director of the Barnstable Council on Aging; former Barnstable Council on Aging Director, Donna-Marie Burns; former Director of Community Services, Madeline Noonan; and Assistant Director of the Council on Aging, Jacqueline Easter, who all offered guidance at each step of this process.

Most importantly, we are grateful to all residents and community leaders in Barnstable who gave their time to participate in these efforts to transform Barnstable into a great place to grow up and grow old.

For more information, contact:

The Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging
Gerontology Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston
CSDRA@umb.edu | 617.287.7413

Recommended Citation

Coyle, Caitlin, Rouleau, Beth, and Gleason, Shayna, "Town of Barnstable: An Age & Dementia Friendly Action Plan" (2023). Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging Publications

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Background	4
Barnstable Age and Dementia Friendly Action Plan	11
Housing.....	12
Transportation, Walkability, and Outdoor Spaces.....	22
Community Supports & Health Services	32
Inclusion, Participation, and Information.....	37
Civic Engagement & Employment	42
Conclusion	46

Background

The Town of Barnstable has long-been aware of its aging population and, as a result, has initiated a number of planning processes to advance the livability of the community for all ages---this report documents the Age & Dementia Friendly planning process and associated ideas for action.

Barnstable is the county seat and largest community in land area, population, and school enrollment on Cape Cod. Barnstable is one of several Massachusetts municipalities with a City form of government, where the legislative body is an elected Town Council and residents do not vote in an open Town Meeting. Barnstable contains seven villages, which are not legally defined entities, including Barnstable, Centerville, Cotuit, Marston Mills, Osterville, West Barnstable, and the largest village, Hyannis. Within the town, there are five fire districts seven libraries, and ten post offices. The village of Hyannis is the site of the Town Hall, Police Station, and Cape Cod Hospital.

The community is accessed by U.S. Route 6, a four-lane freeway, and MA Route 28 which passes through the town from West to East. Routes 6A, 130, 132, and 149 also pass through the town. The closest access to the MBTA's commuter rail system is via stations at Kingston/Route 3 and Middleborough/Lakeville. Seasonal rail service is provided by the CapeFlyer passenger service on weekends between Memorial Day and Columbus Day. The Cape Cod Central railroad operates seasonal excursions from Hyannis to Sandwich and Sagamore, with some scheduled weekend stops at the West Barnstable depot. There are two airports: Cape Cod Airfield is primarily used for private travel while Barnstable Municipal Airport services regional flights. Ferry line services to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard are based in Hyannis.

With its rich history and proximity to the ocean, Barnstable has held longstanding appeal as a world-renowned tourist destination. In addition to several scenic beaches, there are several sites of interest including the Kennedy Compound in Hyannis Port, museums, and renowned houses listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The seasonal population swells due to an influx of visitors and seasonal residents. In 2007, Barnstable was the winner of the All-America City Award and received recognition as a community that successfully addresses local issues through civic engagement, collaboration, inclusiveness, and innovation.

In addition to its appeal as a summer destination, Barnstable has become home for many individuals during their retirement. This in part contributes to Barnstable's large and rapidly growing population of older adults. Projections suggest that by 2030, Barnstable will have more than 11,500 people aged 65 or older, a number that will comprise more than 30% of Barnstable's projected population. The Town's 2021 Annual Comprehensive

Financial Report¹ recognizes that the growing demographic of older adults prompts prioritization of outreach and other supportive services to meet residents’ increasing and diverse needs.

Barnstable’s Council on Aging has a long history of creating resources and implementing programs and services to meet the needs and interests of Barnstable’s older adults. As the Town evolves and its residents age, planning efforts have grown to incorporate age and dementia friendly features that promote quality of life, inclusivity, and accessibility. The contents of this report draw on years of planning and are designed to inform the Town as it puts action in place to ensure that Barnstable is a friendly, accessible, and inclusive place for residents to grow up and grow old. In addition, this report intends to intersect with and advise other ongoing community planning efforts. This work also aligns with the Commonwealth’s plan for an Age-Friendly State.

What is an Age-Friendly Community?

The Age-Friendly framework, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2002, describes a community where people participate, are connected, remain healthy and active, and feel they belong—no matter their age. Through assessment, planning, action, and evaluating progress, communities all over the world are taking steps to improve their social and physical environments as a strategy for promoting health and well-being throughout the life course. The Age-Friendly model includes a conceptual framework with eight “domains” that describe areas for communities to focus on. It also lays out a process intended to ensure repeated consultation with the community, collective reflection, action, and evaluation. The framework’s eight Age-Friendly domains of community life intersect with livability, accessibility, and the ability to thrive within the community. Within each domain, elements are identified relevant to affordability, appropriateness, and accessibility (See **Figure 1 below**).

Figure 1. Eight Domains of an Age-Friendly Community



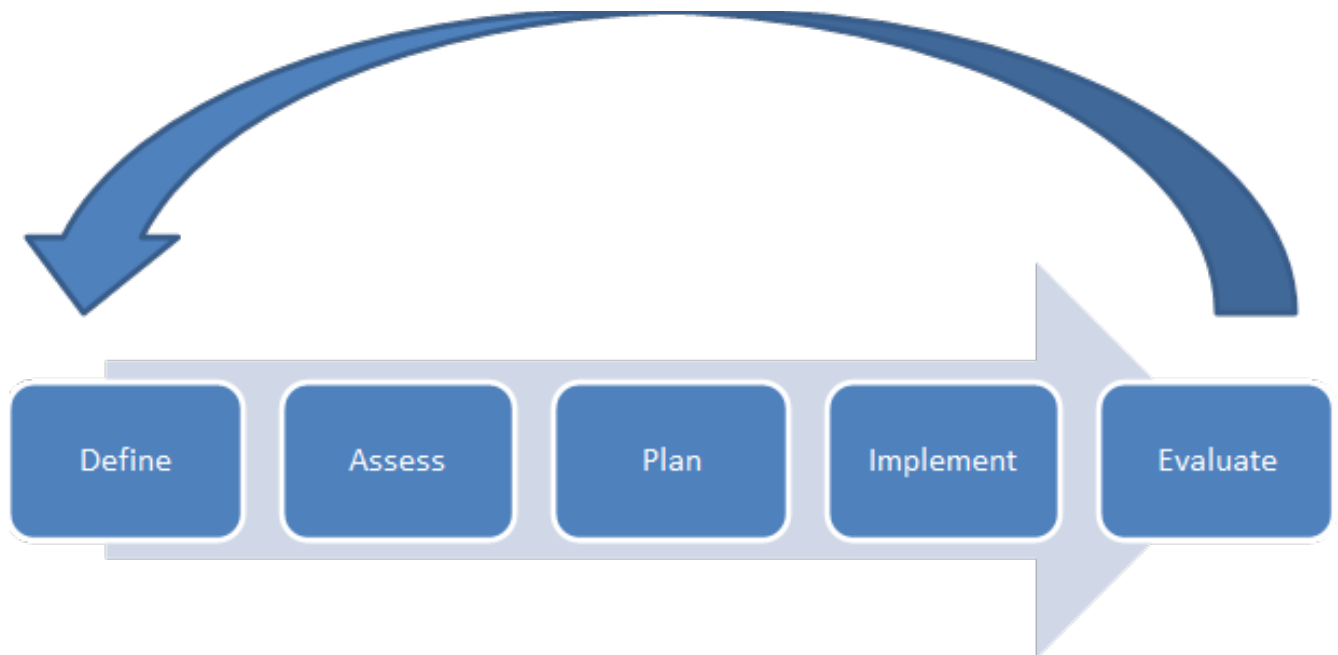
¹

[https://town.barnstable.ma.us/Departments/Finance/Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports/2021.pdf?tm=4/12/2022%2011:01:57%20AM](https://town.barnstable.ma.us/Departments/Finance/Annual%20Comprehensive%20Financial%20Reports/2021.pdf?tm=4/12/2022%2011:01:57%20AM)

The Age-Friendly Initiative Process

WHO describes five components of an age-friendly initiative and indicates that these components will be pursued sequentially. Briefly, in step one, local principles are defined in conjunction with building partnerships, creating a vision, and recruiting community members for involvement. Through these efforts, initiative goals are prioritized. Step two involves generating a needs assessment, focusing on environmental and population-based features that reflect age friendliness, as well as those that pose a challenge to this goal. The third step includes developing an Action Plan, which may be thought of as a “road map” to define programs and interventions that will be pursued in the process of becoming an age-friendly community. Broadly speaking, step four involves implementing promising interventions; these may include programs (such as evidence-based health promotion activities) as well as environmental modifications (such as expanding traffic-calming features at key intersections). As programs and modifications are put in place, step five tasks communities with evaluating the initiative’s efforts and demonstrating the impact of the initiative through individual outcomes and broader community change indicators. At the end of each age-friendly process cycle, a new phase begins, during which new goals are set, innovations put in place, and progress evaluated (see **Figure 2** below). It is important to note that local contexts shape the initiatives, programs, and partnerships put in place; they also shape the research and measurement used in support of the effort.

Figure 2. Process of Developing an Age-Friendly Community



The Dementia Friendly Framework

Additionally, the Dementia-Friendly aims to make communities livable for aging residents, particularly those with Alzheimer’s or related dementias. The leader of this movement in the United States is Dementia Friendly America (DFA)², which was formed in 2015 after the White House Conference on Aging. DFA is a network comprised of public and private organizations or communities that are working to make the community more dementia-friendly. Indeed, a grassroots movement in Massachusetts, Dementia Friendly Massachusetts, is a part of DFA and aims to make communities in Massachusetts dementia-friendly³. The Dementia-Friendly movement is similar to the Age-Friendly framework in that it aims to make communities livable for older adults, particularly those with Alzheimer’s or related dementias.

Figure 3. Aspects of a Dementia Friendly Community

² <http://www.dfamerica.org/what-is-dfa>

³ <https://www.mass.gov/dementia-friendly-massachusetts>



Reproduced from ACT on Alzheimer's® developed tools and resources⁴.

Dementia Friendly America (DFA) defines a Dementia-Friendly community as “a village, town, city or county that is informed, safe and respectful of individuals with the disease, their families and caregivers and provides supportive options that foster quality of life”. Furthermore, DFA cites the successful “ACT on Alzheimer’s” initiative from Minnesota as a model for developing the Dementia Friendly Framework. Based on the Dementia-Friendly Communities Toolkit developed by the ACT on Alzheimer’s Initiative, it is clear that a Dementia-Friendly community is based on efforts at all levels of the community. From individual residents to municipal and state government and private organizations, it takes a collaboration of all involved in the community to foster a welcoming environment for those with Alzheimer’s or related dementias in all the domains presented in Figure 3. The Dementia-Friendly Toolkit outlines the four phases of creating a dementia-friendly community (Figure 4). Phase 1, convene, is about getting community buy-in by involving key leaders in the community in the development of dementia-friendly efforts. Upon securing buy-in and collaboration from community members and organizations, Phase 2 involves assessing the community for assets and challenges for individuals with dementia

⁴ <http://www.actonalz.org/dementia-friendly-toolkit>

and their loved ones. Phase 3 is the time during which the assessment from Phase 2 is analyzed and used to determine priorities for action. Phase 4 is dedicated to creating an action plan and implementing change in the community to meet the action plan. The four phases are intended to take about a year to complete, with the understanding that dementia-friendliness is an ongoing process of assessment and action.

Figure 4. Phases of Creating a Dementia-Friendly Community Adapted from ACT on Alzheimer's® developed tools and resources.



The description of age and dementia-friendly features, and the experiences of communities throughout the world that are using the framework, make clear that each community will conceptualize this effort in a unique way. Local conceptualizations will shape the initiatives, programs, and partnerships put in place; they will also shape the research and measurement used in support of the effort. An initial task of any community's effort is therefore to identify elements that residents feel are "age-friendly." Community efforts to become age-friendly or dementia-friendly stem from two separate movements. However, when communities take steps to integrate the work of both movements, they can reduce duplicated efforts, avoid confusion, save resources, and allow each movement to strengthen and support each other.

Barnstable Age and Dementia Friendly Progress to Date

In 2015, prompted by the rapid increase in Barnstable's older adult population, the Town's Senior Services Division commissioned the University of Massachusetts Boston's Gerontology Institute to conduct a Needs Assessment study. Several research methods were utilized, including a survey of residents aged 50 and over, to document the needs, interests, preferences, and opinions of older residents. The report, "Aging in Place in the

Town of Barnstable: Striving for High Livability in a Cape Cod Community⁵", was completed in 2015 and has served as an informative foundation and guide from which age-friendly community planning initiatives have grown.

Following the Needs Assessment, Barnstable's next step was to develop an action plan to address barriers to livability for older adults. In 2019, Barnstable's Town Council and former Council on Aging Director, Madeline Noonan, initiated the process of becoming a certified age-friendly Community. The Council on Aging (COA) and Town leaders gathered to learn about the WHO Age Friendly Framework and discuss the COA's plans to launch Age-Friendly Barnstable. The COA Board has continued to actively support the Town's efforts in becoming age- friendly and will continue to inform and guide prioritization efforts.

In 2022, with age-friendly momentum established, the Town of Barnstable invited collaboration from the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging (CSDRA) in the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston to guide in the development of an Age-Friendly Action Plan. While initially framed as Barnstable County's commitment to age-friendly activities, this plan also contains a commitment by the County to become dementia-friendly. During the pandemic, communities began to understand the strong and unfortunate ties between social isolation and dementia. Building on their age-friendly work, communities across the Commonwealth shifted efforts to become both Age and Dementia Friendly. The understanding gained during the pandemic prompted the expansion of Barnstable's age-friendly planning to reflect a commitment by the County to become dementia-friendly. The COA has already begun to work with Dementia Friendly MA (DFM) to expand the dementia-friendly efforts in the community. Director Kelly Howley has reviewed the DFM Check List, and the county is close to being designated dementia-friendly. During 2023, an Age and Dementia Friendly Steering Committee will be established to promote the initiative and build inclusive community engagement among collaborative partners and residents of all ages. This action plan will serve to guide both the age and dementia-friendly efforts in Barnstable. Once submitted to both AARP and DFM, Barnstable will be proud to join the more than 60 communities across the Commonwealth that are both "Age and Dementia Friendly."

The contents of Barnstable's Age and Dementia-Friendly Action Plan are described in detail in this report.

Methods

⁵ <https://www.townofbarnstable.us/seniorservices/AginginBarnstable.pdf>

Demographic Profile

Demographic material used in this report was drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau (the decennial censuses and the American Community Survey); from projections generated by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts; and from the Healthy Aging Data Report¹ for Barnstable.

Document Review

In order to draw on current momentum in Barnstable, research staff from the CSDRA completed a systematic review of documents completed by or referencing the Town of Barnstable, including documentation from multiple municipal departments about their current age-friendly practices and future goals (See **Appendix A** for a full list of documents included in this review.)

Community Planning Work Sessions

Together with the CSDRA, the Town of Barnstable identified community leaders and stakeholders to gather in February of 2022. More than 50 participants attended, representing residents, local civic and non-profit leaders, aging service providers, and Town department staff. During five brainstorming sessions, findings from the Town's Needs Assessment, document review, and demographic profile assembled by the CSDRA were presented. Each working group session met for 2.5 hours and contributed to structured discussions that were facilitated by research staff from the CSDRA. Participants discussed challenges specific to: (1) housing; (2) transportation, walkability, and outdoor spaces; (3) community supports and health services; (4) respect and social participation; and (5) civic engagement and employment. Attendees were then tasked with developing concrete ideas for action to serve as recommendations for Barnstable's Age-Friendly Action Plan. It was crucial to the success of the age-friendly initiative to obtain insight from these key community stakeholders for their expertise and knowledge, as well as to foster their engagement in the future implementation of the Age-Friendly Action Plan.

Results from the work sessions were then condensed by CSDRA research staff into one document containing specific recommendations and action items in connection with WHO's age-friendly domains. Following the appointment of an Age-Friendly Steering Committee, these action items will be reviewed and amended for purposes of feasibility and alignment with the priorities of the Town.

Barnstable Age and Dementia Friendly Action Plan

The following section provides details of Barnstable's Age-Friendly Action Plan categorized by the domains represented during the 2022 working sessions. The

community needs described below reflect previous assessments and the needs identified during the five working sessions. Given the vast amount of planning and activity happening in Barnstable, we also document current activities and future plans that can be characterized as age-friendly. Lastly, we present a set of action steps that will build on existing momentum and allow Barnstable to continue its evolution toward a more age-friendly community.

The tables throughout the Action Plan outline Barnstable's age-friendly goals, a brief description of the action steps to be taken to achieve those goals, potential partners, and an estimated timeframe for completion,

Housing

For adults to remain in their communities as they age, housing must be available, affordable, and designed to accommodate a range of physical abilities. Moreover, homeowners must be able to maintain and repair their homes to stay in them safely. An age-friendly community provides a continuum of safe, affordable, and healthy housing options that provide the services and accessible design necessary to allow residents, regardless of income or housing type, to age in place.

In Barnstable, Town planning initiatives and community outreach have strengthened efforts to understand and address the community's evolving housing crisis. Housing-related challenges have become increasingly pronounced due to rising property values and associated taxes; cost of home maintenance and living expenses; inadequate housing inventory; and seasonal population fluctuations that further drive-up housing costs and reduce available inventory. Additionally, there are unique and evolving housing-related needs among Barnstable's large and rapidly growing population of older adults, many of whom live alone in single-family homes. In tandem with efforts to increase affordable housing choices, Barnstable's existing infrastructure must be evaluated to identify home modification needs and supportive services that increase safety and accessibility for residents aging in place. Finally, the growing effects of climate change on Barnstable's housing stock will necessitate the development of disaster-resilient housing structures.

Community Needs – Rising Housing Costs

In Barnstable, 39% of homeowners with a mortgage and 20% of homeowners without a mortgage are "cost-burdened", spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs including mortgage payments, property taxes, home insurance, and utilities. For renters in Barnstable, 50% are "cost-burdened". A large share of households headed by someone aged 65 and older (18%) report annual incomes under \$25,000. This compares with just 13% of households headed by individuals aged 45 to 64 having incomes under \$25,000. Thus,

there is a sizeable segment of the older population that is at- risk of financial insecurity or economic disadvantage.

Challenges identified during the 2022 Age-Friendly working sessions:

- Residents are cost-burdened and struggle to afford expenses that are beyond their essential needs.
- There is an emotional burden associated with housing instability and stigma associated with accepting housing vouchers.
- Amidst the reality of limited resources, struggling residents must impoverish themselves, by spending down their income or assets, to become financially eligible for resources.
- Demand for housing assistance is not met due to inadequate resources.
- Initial deposits and advance monthly payments create barriers to accessing rental housing.
- Taxes and home maintenance costs contribute to the cost burden.
- The housing crisis impacts the workforce and economy. Businesses often rely on workers who travel long distances due to limited affordable workforce housing inventory.
- Homelessness is a significant issue. 60% of individuals at the Hyannis shelter are over age 65 and two- thirds are women.

Community Needs - Options for Downsizing

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the majority (83%) of all occupied housing units in the Town of Barnstable are single-family attached or detached homes; approximately 17% are apartment buildings or condominiums; and less than 1% are other types of housing. Given that most residents of Barnstable reside in single-family homes indicates that with age, these residents may need or have interest in moving to a smaller home. According to the Needs Assessment, *Aging in Barnstable* ¹, approximately 40% of respondents aged 60 and over were receptive to the option of independent senior living when questioned about preferences for future housing arrangements. Independent living communities, often designated for residents aged 55 and older offer recreational and social amenities, concierge services, and limited property maintenance, but do not offer assistive care services. Although Barnstable's zoning ordinance was amended in 2016 to allow independent living, there is only one 55+ property in the Town. In response to the preferences of older adults and future needs, the Housing Production plan suggested the creation of zoning amendments that would encourage development of affordable independent and assisted living units. Of Barnstable's villages, Hyannis is racially and economically the most diverse. The Housing Production Plan recognized the need to promote diversity, inclusion, and increased housing choices in this area.

As well, year-round rental housing is exceedingly difficult to secure in Barnstable due to seasonal fluctuations and high demand in the summer. According to the Housing Needs Assessment the rental vacancy rate is exceptionally low at 1%, well below the 7% recommendation.⁶

Challenges identified during the 2022 Age-Friendly working sessions:

- Limited land is available for development. 40% of Cape Cod is environmentally restricted. North of Route 6 is a protected historic district.
- Housing stock is limited and lacks diversity.
- There is a need for downsizing opportunities that offer affordability, accessibility, and supportive services.
- There is increasing demand for subsidized housing for older adults. Public Housing waiting lists are 5-6 years.
- People vacate properties in summer months for rental income. Demand for seasonal housing pushes costs higher and reduces available inventory.
- An insatiable appetite to live on Cape Cod has led to conversions of space to create additional housing. The average cost per square foot of Barnstable's housing inventory is becoming increasingly cost prohibitive.
- Rising home valuations and strong buyer demand have led to a sharp increase in property sales. Tenants evicted at the time of sale struggle to find alternative housing.
- Longtime residents, essential employees, and seasonal workers are increasingly priced out of the housing market due to significant increases in home valuations, limited middle-income housing inventory, and high seasonal rents. Increasingly, employees live and commute from off Cape for access to more affordable housing.
- Unmet demand for affordable middle-income housing also creates tremendous hardship for business owners who are struggling to fill jobs.
- Homeless individuals struggle to find shelter amidst full capacities and waiting lists.
- There is a need for access to social services and legal counseling among homeless individuals.

⁶ [Barnstable Housing Needs Assessment REDUCED](#)

Community Needs - Suitable, Accessible, Supportive Features of Housing

Given that the majority of older residents live in single family homes, it is logical to expect that these residents will seek ways to modify their existing home to make it accommodating for changing mobility and cognitive needs. Results from a community Needs Assessment³ (2015) suggest that close to 30% of survey respondents indicated that their homes required modifications to facilitate aging in place, with a larger share of residents over age 60 (31%) than those age 45-60 (22%) reporting that modifications to their homes were needed to enhance their safety. 31% of all respondents aged 60 to 69 and 30% of those 80 and older acknowledged that they were unable to afford necessary home modifications. As 51% of owned homes in Barnstable are owned by someone age 60 or older, home modifications will be a center component of the Town's work to become age-friendly.

Challenges identified during the 2022 working sessions:

- Funding and subsidies for home modification/repair projects are needed to support the safety and suitability of existing homes.
- Many accessory dwellings, including those in unfinished basements, are illegal and unsafe for human habitation due to mold and other issues.
- It is challenging to find contractors for small jobs. Costs are high and contractor availability is low.
- Legal constraints restrict the potential impact of volunteers contributing to home repairs.
- Water and wastewater infrastructure varies Cape-wide. In many communities, inadequate treatment infrastructure has led to water quality concerns and diminished opportunities for housing development due to challenges associated with limited sewer capacity.
- There is a need to incorporate supportive housing features for residents with vision loss and adaptive space should be allocated as is similarly done for those with hearing loss. Supportive services are not available under Massachusetts Law through the Commission for the Blind unless you are legally blind; this policy is different from other states, where eligibility requirements are more lenient, and services are more accessible.
- Low-cost home enhancements that promote safety, such as contrasting paint colors and slip resistant flooring, should be ubiquitous in housing designed for older adults.

Current Age & Dementia Friendly Practices in Barnstable:

Collaboration among community leaders and stakeholders is essential for the advancement and implementation of age-friendly initiatives. On Cape Cod there are several nonprofit partners and other organizations working towards expanding affordable housing options, providing support for home modifications, and supporting vulnerable members of the community on the Cape⁷. These partners will be key in achieving continued progress. In Barnstable, planning processes are increasingly recognizing and responding to the evolving needs and interests of older residents. Related to housing, there is shared dedication to the goal of building access to affordable, suitable, and supportive housing choices for residents of all ages. For the purposes of this action plan, we highlight points of converging action to highlight that the Age-Friendly Barnstable Initiative is supporting the existing efforts and engaging the community to implement age-friendly practices.

Housing Stock

- ***The Town of Barnstable is updating its Local Comprehensive Plan.*** The introductory overview of the planning process recognizes the need to respond to the housing crisis and features several proposed housing styles that are suitable for downsizing, including accessory dwelling units, micro units, and townhouses.
- ***Barnstable's Housing Production Plan*** was updated in 2016. The Plan recognizes that housing choices are limited and older single-family homes are not often designed for aging in place. There is a need to serve existing and proposed demand for alternative housing options. The Plan identified the following goals:
 - Create year-round rental units for residents
 - Provide diverse housing options in villages
 - Encourage village-scale mixed-use and multi-unit development and re-development in village centers
 - Allow increased density for mixed-use, multi-unit development in Hyannis' Growth Incentive Zone (GIZ)
 - Amend zoning to achieve housing goals

⁷ Barnstable Housing Committee, Barnstable Human Services Committee, Barnstable Housing Authority, Barnstable Planning and Development Department, Barnstable Neighbor 2 Neighbor, Housing Assistance Corporation, Habitat for Humanity of Cape Cod, Community Action Committee of Cape Cod and the Islands, Cape and Islands Network on Homelessness, Champ Homes

- ***The Downtown Hyannis Zoning Revision presentation*** (August 2021) addressed proposed Downtown Hyannis Zoning revisions and their potential impact on development downtown. With focus on additional residential and mixed-use development, the re-zoning effort supports goals of prior planning efforts to build diverse housing options for residents across the lifespan.
- ***Barnstable's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan***, completed in 2020, provides a foundation for the expansion of wastewater infrastructure, in support of economic growth and housing development.
- ***The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan*** identifies nursing homes and senior housing as critical facilities in disaster preparedness planning. One of the mitigation measures is to identify, evaluate, and fund measures to reduce the vulnerability of critical facilities.

Zoning Opportunities

- ***Barnstable's Accessible Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw*** was adopted July 2021. The ADU bylaw supports the expansion of affordable rental and downsizing options across the lifespan while offering homeowners a means to defray housing costs through market rate rental income.
- ***Barnstable's AAAP program***, created in 2000, supports the creation of affordable housing by allowing affordable units within the dwelling or an existing detached structure of owner-occupied properties. Units are listed with the Housing Authority and Housing Assistance Corporation.
- ***Hyannis' Growth Incentive Zone*** offers diversity of lot sizes that range from small residential lots to large commercial lots. The development of affordable housing is also supported through the Private Initiated Affordable Housing Development overlay district, Multifamily Affordable Housing (MAH) District, and Residential Affordable Housing (RAH) district.
- ***Inclusionary zoning*** was adopted in 1999 in response to the need for affordable housing. Development of more than 10 units must include at least 10% of deed-restricted affordable units.

Support for Housing Costs

- ***Barnstable's Affordable Housing Growth & Development Trust*** provides funding to support the development and preservation of affordable housing.
- ***Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding*** is available annually for eligible projects that provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities for low and moderate income (LMI) persons.
- ***The Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP)*** provides tax incentives for developers to construct or rehabilitate market rate residential housing.
- ***The tax work-off program*** allows eligible individuals aged 60 and older the opportunity to work for the Town in exchange for an abatement of property taxes for the maximum of \$750 yearly.

- ***Community Preservation Act*** was adopted in 2004 and provides funding to support the creation of affordable housing.

Housing Action Items -

Housing - Goal #1: Leverage planning resources, partnerships, and community engagement opportunities to further understanding of needs, increase advocacy, and advance initiatives that create affordable and diverse housing options.

Proposed Action Items:	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p>Action Item A: Build awareness of features and costs associated with various housing options across the lifespan. Consider a series that spotlights new and evolving housing options such as the recently approved Accessory Dwelling Unit option or host a housing planning seminar to encourage proactive thinking about aging in place. Invite local experts (e.g., real estate agents, HomeFit⁸ programs, contractors, disability commission) who can share their perspective about future housing options including uses of home equity and how to prepare for downsizing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Development Department 	Short term
<p>Action Item B: Encourage developers to create diverse housing options for downsizing. Include smaller cottage-style neighborhoods, tiny homes, congregate housing, and mixed-use development close to transit. Ensure that housing development incorporates Universal Design and innovative enhancements to support the diverse and evolving needs of older adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Development Department 	Long Term

⁸ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2020/homefit-guide.html>

Housing - Goal #1 (cont'd): Leverage planning resources, partnerships, and community engagement opportunities to further understanding of needs, increase advocacy, and advance initiatives that create affordable and diverse housing options.

Proposed Action Items:	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p>Action Item C: Identify space and partnerships to increase housing capacity for homeless individuals. Increase access to legal counseling and social services for support in navigating barriers that inhibit access to affordable housing. Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness⁹, Heading Home¹⁰, and the Safe Parking program¹¹ organizations for emergency shelter, housing resources, supportive services, and job tutoring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and Community Development • Housing Assistance Corporation 	<p>Long Term</p>
<p>Action Item D: Explore shared housing arrangements for older adults. Identify best-practices for co-housing models and make public the results to achieve higher levels of resident education. See Masterly¹² or HIP Housing's¹³ home sharing programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Development Department • HAC (Housing Assistance Corp) • Cape & Islands Association of Realtors 	<p>Long Term</p>

⁹ https://www.hud.gov/ending_veteran_homelessness

¹⁰ <https://www.headinghomeinc.org/how-we-help/>

¹¹ <https://www.eugene-or.gov/3703/Overnight-Parking-Program>

¹² <https://www.nesterly.com>

¹³ <https://hiphousing.org/about/our-mission-and-story/>

Housing Action Items - Building an Age & Dementia Friendly Barnstable

Housing - Goal #2: Build access to resources that support aging in place including property tax relief, home modification and maintenance supports.

Proposed Action Items:	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p><u>Action Item A:</u> Identify additional volunteers and contractors to support home modification needs. Consider the provision of incentives for contractors to do pro-bono work. For example, add a surcharge to building permits that could be used to offset the costs associated with training volunteers and purchasing materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspectional Services, Habitat for Humanity, Housing Assistance Corporation • Remodelers Association of Cape Cod 	<p>Long Term</p>
<p><u>Action Item B:</u> Build partnerships that support home maintenance needs including yard care, trash, and snow removal. Consider intergenerational opportunities for support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Local non-profits 	<p>Long Term</p>

Transportation, Walkability, and Outdoor Spaces

A pillar of a community's aging-in-place infrastructure is transportation. When transport is available and adapted to the needs of older adults, both in terms of access and destination, it enhances mobility and health, facilitates social participation and a sense of inclusion across the lifespan, and supports access to outdoor spaces and recreation opportunities. Transportation options will be most successful at maintaining older adults' mobility when they are accessible (to all ages and abilities), affordable, available on a range of days and hours, acceptable to the older user, and adaptable to individual needs¹⁴. An age-friendly community is one in which older adults do not find transportation a barrier to remaining in their homes or living a fulfilled life as they age. Age-friendly transportation resources include coordinated intra-and inter-city travel options as well as supportive outdoor infrastructure for parking, walking, and biking.

Age-friendly transportation resources facilitate access to multiple community resources including outdoor spaces and recreation amenities. During the 2015 Needs Assessment process, many forum participants cited the Town's natural amenities and outdoor recreation opportunities as reasons to reside in Barnstable. These community assets must also be evaluated through an age-friendly lens to ensure that they are suitable, accessible, and appealing for residents of all ages and abilities. According to U.S. Census data, 18% of Barnstable residents aged 65 to 74 report at least one disability; while 51% of those aged 75 and older do so. Planning efforts related to programming and access to outdoor spaces in Barnstable must increasingly recognize the evolving and diverse needs of the community.

Community Needs – Accessible and Convenient Transportation Options

Working session participants revealed that Barnstable's community leaders were concerned about a variety of effects of inadequate transportation on the town's population of older adults. Among the ramifications noted were social isolation, lack of access to healthcare (especially in Boston) and resulting inability to keep medical appointments, and a general lack of compassionate treatment of older adults who are unable to drive themselves. Results from the community Needs Assessment revealed some degree of satisfaction with available transportation options in Barnstable; however, 9% of all respondents indicated that they were "not at all satisfied".

Challenges identified during the 2022 working sessions:

¹⁴ <https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/marapr-2007/better-options-older-adults>

- The cost of medical transportation services prevents some residents with limited financial resources from using these services.
- Many older adults lack information on transportation services in Barnstable and may not know what services exist or how they operate.
- Liability concerns prevent some transportation services from providing "door-through-door" assistance, which some of the frailest members of the population need.
- Ride-hailing applications that require trips to be booked through a smartphone or other device keep residents who lack technology access or savvy from accessing these services.
- Some local transportation services do not have sufficient numbers of wheelchair-accessible vehicles.
- Fixed-route public transportation stops often lack seating, shelter, and signage, and visibility of bus stops is poor.
- A stigma against riding public transportation exists in the community; residents may feel ashamed of riding public systems.
- A lack of evening and weekend services prevents some residents from enjoying social, recreational or faith based activities in the community.
- The timing and wait times of local transportation services can be exhausting and unmanageable for some residents.

Community Needs - Walkability and Accessible Outdoor Spaces

Participants in the 2022 working group session recognized multiple challenges that inhibit access to outdoor spaces and echoed challenges related to walkability that were identified during the 2015 community Needs Assessment³. According to the survey, 14% of older respondents described "walkability" issues such as poorly maintained sidewalks and interrupted or non-existent walkways as a transportation barrier. Physical environment issues were experienced by less than 10% of respondents over age 50.

Challenges identified during the 2022 working sessions:

- Narrow roads, some of which are maintained by the state, need repairs and present safety challenges for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- Seasonal population increases create significant traffic congestion.
- There is a need for additional seating, signage, and lighting throughout the Town. Limited street lighting poses challenges for night driving and evening activities.
- Pedestrian safety features vary due to sidewalk conditions and inconsistent availability of crosswalk signals with features for those with vision loss.
- Outside of Hyannis, sidewalk networks are limited and inconsistent; older subdivisions do not have sidewalks.
- Sidewalks are unsafe due to mixed materials including cobblestone and brick as well as damaged surface and tree roots.

- Connectivity for walkable travel is difficult due to sidewalks that end abruptly, including one disconnected route that leads to the beach.
- Access to the beach for swimming and recreation can be challenging. Mobi-Mats (long mats laid over sand to enable wheelchair access) are available, but offer limited support due to slippery conditions created by inclines.
- Lack of signage and trail markers are significant barriers to recreational trail use.
- Recreation trail accessibility is limited by uneven surfaces due to tree roots and elevations; conservation restrictions hinder trail improvements that would increase accessibility.
- There are significant costs associated with the maintenance of conservation properties.
- General and accessible parking in Hyannis is inadequate. Initiating plans to address challenges is difficult due to lots that are shared by multiple owners.

Current Age-& Dementia Friendly Practices in Barnstable

Barnstable has a variety of existing transportation assets, each with its own strengths and limitations. Some of these options include:

- ***The Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA)*** provides several fixed-route public transportation lines, some of which cross through Barnstable. These fixed-route services provide affordable connections between the densest hubs of activity on the Cape; however, many residents live further than walking distance from these routes. The CCRTA has implemented multiple strategies to improve mobility options for older adults.
- ***ADA complementary paratransit service*** (door-to-door, shared-ride transportation) is provided to those whose disability prevents them from using the fixed-route services. However, this service only operates within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the fixed route.
- ***Boston Hospital Transportation*** is a CCRTA-provided service that runs Monday through Thursday, by reservation, to Boston-area hospitals. The service has a stop in Barnstable, but is not door-to-door and the fare is expensive, at \$30 round-trip. The service also only enters/leaves Boston once per day.
- ***A semi-express medical transportation service operated by Peter Pan*** also runs between Hyannis and Provincetown and stops at multiple healthcare facilities along the way. It typically runs two round trips a day and is not door-to-door.
- ***DART Service*** is a door-to-door transportation service (provided by CCRTA) open to the public on Cape Cod for any travel purpose. While DART requires an advanced reservation, ***SmartDART*** is a new complementary service provided only in Barnstable and Yarmouth which can be booked on-demand through a mobile application. Transfers to the fixed route via SmartDART are free.
- ***Barnstable Neighbor 2 Neighbor*** provides a volunteer driver program for their members.

- **Human service transportation** services are provided to users of MassHealth, the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Public Health, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands and VNA of Cape Cod.
- **Several taxi services and private ride-hailing services** are available in Barnstable.
- **Many older adults walk** as a form of transportation; however, challenges, including inadequate street crossings, sidewalks, and pedestrian signals inhibit people from walking in Barnstable. According to the Cape Cod Regional Transportation Plan¹⁵, over 90% of Cape Cod roadways lack sidewalks.

Multiple planning initiatives are focused on enhancing transportation resources, walkability, and outdoor spaces for residents of all ages and abilities.

- **Barnstable ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan**, funded through a \$250,000 grant from the Massachusetts Office on Disabilities, was completed in March 2022. Town-owned facilities, playgrounds, and beaches were surveyed to evaluate compliance with the American Disabilities Act.
- **Barnstable adopted Complete Streets Policy in 2021** Complete Streets, a funding program established by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, supports community initiatives that enable safe access to roadways and sidewalks for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.
- **Barnstable’s Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)** was completed in 2018. The plan highlights the need to: eliminate architectural barriers to public buildings and services, including beaches and major conservation and recreation areas, to facilitate independent living for older adults and those with a disability; and build recreational opportunities and accessible outdoor spaces for residents of all ages and abilities.
- **Barnstable to Hyannis Rail Trail** construction is scheduled to begin in 2023 to extend the existing Cape Cod Rail Trail (CCRT), an off-road paved bike and pedestrian trail, beyond its current network. The trail will improve connectivity to Barnstable.
- **Barnstable Village Downtown Streetscape Project (2019)** included improvements for pedestrian access and safety through wayfinding, lighting, traffic calming, pavement repairs, crosswalk improvements, and bench installations.
- **Walk Audits** have been conducted through a partnership with Walk Boston to identify safety concerns and build municipal staff awareness of the components of a safe walking environment.

¹⁵ <https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/rtp/>

- **The Hyannis Parking Study (2017)** identifies opportunities for parking infrastructure improvements in Hyannis, with attention to increased lighting and signage.

Transportation Action Items -

Transportation - Goal #1: Enhance existing transportation options		
Proposed Action Items	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<u>Action Item A:</u> Redefine caregiver discounts for public transportation and other transportation services offered by the CCTRA to include additional caregivers, beyond Personal Care Attendants (PCAs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTRA 	Short Term
<u>Action Item B:</u> Move toward a more diverse range of vehicles , to both accommodate wheelchair accessibility needs, but reduce bumpiness of rides and work around stigma against riding on a van.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTRA • COA • CORD (Cape Cod Organization for Rights of the Disabled) 	Long Term
<u>Action Item C:</u> Prioritize improving bus stop facilities including shaded seating and signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTRA • DPW 	Long Term

Transportation Action Items -

Transportation - Goal #2: Improve communication between partners and even-out education on available transportation options.		
Proposed Action Items	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
Action Item A: Engage a focus group of healthcare providers and their administrative teams to discuss physical accessibility of healthcare offices, including transportation, but also parking, heaviness of doors, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORD • Healthcare providers • Planning and Development Department 	Long Term
Action Item B: Educate frontline workers who interact with older adults regularly on existing transportation options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCRTA • Town offices • COA • Banks • Post office 	Short Term
Action Item C: Partner with the medical community to empower healthcare decision-makers to advocate and fundraise for additional medical transportation services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Healthcare providers • CCRTA 	Long Term
Action Item D: Offer “travel training” programs in which residents can learn about available transportation options and practice utilizing those services with guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCRTA • Barnstable Neighbor to Neighbor (BN2N)¹⁶ • BACC 	Short Term

¹⁶ <https://www.barnstableneighbor.org/>

Transportation Action Items -

Transportation - Goal #2 (continued): Improve communication between partners and even-out education on available transportation options.

Proposed Action Items	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p><u>Action Item E:</u> Build public awareness about the value and ease of public transportation, and link with education on environmental consciousness and climate change. Pilot-test a town-wide “Leave Your Car at Home Today” campaign.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • CCRTA • Other town departments 	Short Term
<p><u>Action Item F:</u> Continue to promote programs on driver safety. Engage in public conversation about stopping driving or scaling back on driving at night, in severe weather, or when otherwise not necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • RMV • Police Department 	Short Term
<p><u>Action Item G:</u> Convene the many micro regional nonprofits working on transportation issues to share resources and create economies of scale.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA 	Long Term

Walkability and Outdoor Spaces Action Items -

Outdoor spaces -Goal #1: Support the current Complete Streets Initiative, making roads safe and accessible for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users of all ages.

Proposed Action Items	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p><u>Action Item A:</u> Establish a Complete Streets¹⁷ committee to promote coordination of planning efforts among residents and Town departments. Include liaisons from the Council on Aging (COA) and consider a survey of older adults to support prioritization of funding improvements that respond to greatest needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Development Department • Public Works • COA 	Ongoing
<p><u>Action Item B:</u> Designate a village-specific walk audit that identifies challenges in one location for visibility and future guidance. Develop best practices to support the creation of walk audit committees in each village. Devise a mechanism to report results of audits to the Town.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Development Department • Public Works • COA • Walk Boston 	Short Term
<p><u>Action Item C:</u> Conduct a geographic analysis of crash data to support prioritization of dangerous intersections and potential traffic calming solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Development Department • Police/Fire Departments • DPW 	Long Term

¹⁷ <https://www.mass.gov/complete-streets-funding-program>

Walkability and Outdoor Spaces Action Items -

Outdoor spaces -Goal #2: Improve accessibility of outdoor spaces and provide a broad mix of active and passive recreational opportunities.

Proposed Action Items	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p><u>Action Item A:</u> Support the assessment, enhancement, and creation of age-friendly recreation trails through advocacy and volunteer efforts. Consider grant funding and volunteer opportunities to build progress at specific sites such as the property behind the Barnstable Adult Community Center.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Division • Disability Commission • COA 	<p>Long Term</p>
<p><u>Action Item B:</u> Create printable age-friendly walking trail maps that identify curb cutouts and seating. Explore partnership with the Historical Society and/or the Eagle Scouts to develop walking maps which could include historical sites and natural landmarks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Historical Society • School Community 	<p>Long Term</p>
<p><u>Action Item C:</u> Promote accessibility and age-friendly/intergenerational features at park sites. Consider outdoor exercise equipment and modifications that address specific mobility and logistical needs. Use Wichita, Kansas' Grandparent Park ¹⁸as an example.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Division • Disability Commission • COA 	<p>Long Term</p>
<p><u>Action Item D:</u> Support continued efforts to make the beaches more pedestrian-oriented and publicly accessible. Explore alternatives to Mobi-Mats to increase accessibility for swimming and recreation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Division • Disability Commission 	<p>Ongoing</p>

¹⁸ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/grandparents-park-wichita-kansas.html>

Community Supports & Health Services

An age-friendly community offers a continuum of services and supports to meet the health and social needs of its older adult population. Supports include access to health services like home health care, hospitals, and doctors, but also resources like nutritious food, opportunities for physical activity, and caregiver support services. A sizeable share of Barnstable residents who are 65 and older and live alone also own their home (80%) (*ACS, 2016-2020, Table B25011*). The large number of older homeowners has implications for what amenities and services are likely to be needed and valued by members of the community.

Community Needs –Caregiving and Accessing Existing Services

The availability and funding of supportive services are critical to promoting health and independence within the community. In addition to the resources available at the Barnstable Adult Community Center, residents can access a spectrum of supportive programs through Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands. Many residents also rely on an informal, and invaluable, resource network of unpaid caregivers for support. Many also pay for private services, if financially feasible. According to the 2015 Needs Assessment Survey, 44% of respondents provided caregiving, during the prior 5-year period, to a person who is disabled or frail. While many valued supports and services exist, participants in the working group sessions revealed that there are technology, language, and financial barriers inhibiting access to these critical resources. Additionally, it is difficult to navigate the complicated landscape of social supports and benefits. Reinforcing feedback from the 2015 community forums, participants in the 2022 working sessions highlighted that the lack of awareness about programs and services creates a disconnect between available resources and residents in need.

Challenges identified during the 2022 Age-Friendly working sessions:

- Community support and health service needs are diverse among older adults, residents with disabilities, those living with dementia, and caregivers.
- The healthcare workforce is overwhelmed, understaffed, and underpaid. Nursing care is difficult to secure and wait lists are long.
- It is difficult to maintain consistent caregiver support. Formal caregivers are overburdened due to staffing shortages. Informal caregivers are strained due to multiple responsibilities including childcare and work commitments. Family caregivers lack training to address complex and diverse needs. Isolation, struggles to meet other demands, lack of compensation, and limited respite relief among caregivers contribute to burnout and associated health consequences.

- Many grandparents are relied on for the care and guardianship of grandchildren, often while managing their own health needs and financial concerns. Relevant programming and supports are limited.
- Behavioral/mental health support needs are increasing and straining limited resources among first responders and other Town Departments, many of which lack training to provide support during personal crises.
- Available resources such as nutrition assistance and vouchers for housing and transportation are underutilized. Barriers to accessing community supports include wait times, costs, limited transportation, language barriers, technology barriers, pride, and lack of awareness.
- Lack of awareness contributes to missed opportunities for transportation, housing, and healthcare support among veterans who qualify for benefits.
- Intake forms for benefits and social services, including SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), Mass Health, Frail Elder Waiver, and VA Benefits, are burdensome and create needless struggle for residents and providers.
- Health related release forms must be completed in advance for family members to be involved during a crisis.
- There is a need to build awareness of preventative resources and promote “know us before you need us” conversations with residents, families, and caregivers in advance of crises.

Current Age & Dementia Friendly Practices in Barnstable

Barnstable’s Adult Community Center, operated by the Council on Aging Division, plays an instrumental role in providing supportive programs and services, as well as referrals to other providers in the area. According to the 2015 Needs Assessment, 33% percent of respondents 80 years and older participate in Barnstable Adult Community Center activities. Multiple channels are employed to inform residents about available programs and services including the bi-monthly *Thrive Magazine*, Barnstable Adult Community Center website, Constant Contact, Facebook, community presentations, and cable programming on Channel 18.

Adult Community Center Programs and Services

- **Nutrition Programs:** home delivered meals and congregate meals are available to residents through Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Island’s nutrition program. SNAP enrollment is provided to supplement food purchases. The Barnstable Adult Community Center, in partnership with the Greater Boston Food Bank offers a monthly Brown Bag Program that is available for anyone in need of this additional food source monthly.
- **Health and Wellness Activities:**
 - Weekly blood pressure clinic screenings.

- SHINE Counseling assists older residents with medical insurance questions, including selection of new plans and concerns about billing or payment.
- Caregiver resources, respite and support groups are offered.
- Regularly scheduled fitness classes, such as strength training, tai chi and dance classes are offered.
- **Support & Advocacy** programs provide assistance, information, and referrals for local, state, and federal programs. Programs include:
 - AARP Foundation Tax Aide Program
 - Property tax relief work off positions
 - Fuel Assistance
 - Brown Bag
 - Telephone Reassurance Program
 - Home Safety Programs
 - Community Resource Library
 - 41C Tax abatement assistance
 - Mailbox Sticker Program
- **Transportation Resources:**
 - AARP Safe Driving Classes
 - RMV informational programming

Barnstable Neighbor to Neighbor (BN2N) is a nonprofit volunteer-based organization that provides support to Barnstable residents aged 60 and over. Membership fees support funding needs and provide members with up to 12 services requests per month.

Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands (ESCCI) is the federally designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and state designated Aging Services Access Point (ASAP) serving older adults in the twenty-two towns of Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket counties. ESCCI is also the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) for the area. As a central source of information, ESCCI connects older adults to resources and service providers throughout the region.

Community Supports & Health Services Action Items -

Goal #1: Continue to provide support and training.		
Proposed Action Items:	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p><u>Action Item A:</u> Increase awareness of aging in place and caregiver resources. Connect residents with resources and host forums to inform older residents and caregivers of available programs. Continue to provide volunteer and staff run caregiver support group program geared to support overwhelmed caregivers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Elder Services of Cape Cod & the Islands 	Ongoing
<p><u>Action Item B:</u> Explore the expansion of health and wellness services for older residents. Pursue partnerships with nursing students at Cape Cod Community College and the Visiting Nurse Association. Increase training opportunities through partnership with healthcare providers to support response to mental health challenges in the community. Consider adding a social work clinician to the Community Services Department to work across all age groups and support other town departments and libraries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Library • Cape Cod Community College • Cape Cod Healthcare 	Long Term
<p><u>Action Item C:</u> In the absence of an adult day program, consider additional ways to support residents and families in need. Coordinate with local long term care facilities to determine if shared day services or volunteer respite programs could be established. Continue Respite and Caregiver programming at the BACC in the absence of onsite adult day program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Elder Services of Cape Cod 	Ongoing

Community Supports & Health Services Action Items -

Goal #1 (continued): Continue to provide support and training.		
Proposed Action Items:	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p><u>Action Item D:</u> Reframe communication and outreach efforts to address access barriers related to diverse languages and messaging content. Consider cultural competency training and rebranding social services communication with language that reduces stigma-related barriers. See SPEAK¹⁹ model for guidance on initiatives that build inclusion and facilitate connection to the community by building language abilities and cultural knowledge. Consider asking Portuguese speaking high school students to provide interpretive translation support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Library • Schools 	Long Term
<p><u>Action Item E:</u> Encourage local businesses to take on more “age-friendly” practices. Work with local businesses and organizations to offer senior discounts and expand services, including legal and financial consulting, to meet the needs of older residents. Encourage them to install benches outside their storefronts. Also consider dementia-friendly supports including partnerships between restaurants and Purple Table that support residents living with dementia.²⁰</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Chamber of Commerce 	Long Term

¹⁹ <https://www.speak.social/en/>

²⁰ [Purple Table Reservations \(squarespace.com\)](https://www.purpletable.com/)

Inclusion, Participation, and Information

An age-friendly community offers recreational, educational and cultural programming, as well as events that encourage social participation of residents and facilitate connections for healthy aging. At a time when the population of older adults is rapidly growing in Barnstable, and in surrounding communities, it is critical to identify opportunities to integrate older residents with activities and their environment in a meaningful way, both to prevent social isolation and its deleterious effects as well as to combat ageism through positive messaging about aging. Social engagement opportunities developed through an age-friendly lens support residents with diverse interests and needs, while reducing the risk of social isolation.

Community Needs

While many residents of Barnstable participate in activities offered at the Adult Community Center, Libraries, and the Recreation Division, participants of the 2022 work session recognized isolation, maintaining a sense of purpose, and lack of awareness of available engagement opportunities as growing concerns. According to the ACS, a substantial proportion of Barnstable residents aged 65 and older (25%) live alone in their household. Residents living alone and those with a limited social network are at risk of becoming isolated. Socioeconomic status, language barriers, lack of transportation, and physical or mental health conditions also contribute to risk. The 2015 Needs Assessment suggested that older adults experience lessening social interaction with age; 24% of survey respondents aged 80 and older shared that they left their home to visit with friends or family once a month or less. Working session participants also stressed the need to identify supportive engagement opportunities for residents living with dementia and struggling to participate and connect with the community.

Challenges identified during the 2022 working sessions:

- There are several barriers that inhibit access to social engagement opportunities including limited communication related to activities and events.
- With increasing programming available online, many residents are unable to participate due to challenges associated with limited access to technology.
- To build trust and connection, there is a need to ensure that communication is inclusive of multiple languages spoken among Barnstable residents.
- Financial barriers exist for residents seeking to participate in fee-based programming.
- Access to activities is challenged by mobility issues and transportation needs which are amplified by weather-related conditions in the winter and summer.
- There is a need to provide support to residents with mental health challenges at libraries and other settings offering opportunities for engagement.

- Opportunities for intergenerational engagement are limited.
- There may be stigma associated with participating in senior center activities.

Current Age & Dementia Friendly Practices in Barnstable

The Barnstable Adult Community Center responds to many interests in the community through an expansive offering of classes, events, and social groups. Programming and activities are communicated to residents through the Center’s website, Facebook, Constant Contact and *Thrive*, a bimonthly newsletter.

- **Wellness promoting activities:**
 - Fitness programs include Pilates, Yoga, Zumba, and walking groups
 - Health lectures
 - Cooking demonstrations and nutrition based presentations
- **Dementia Friendly Supports:**
 - Through Barnstable Connects, the Council on Aging offers Memory Training; supportive programming for individuals living with dementia; and Dementia Friends Training²¹, a volunteer driven program that promotes understanding, conversation, and initiatives related to dementia.
 - During 2021, Cape Cod Healthcare awarded grant funding to several nonprofit organizations that provide outreach and support to isolated seniors and individuals living with dementia.
- **Special interest activities** are offered related to music, dance, art, cooking, technology support, learning new languages, intergenerational activities, and cultural programs.
- **Social clubs** are geared toward many interests including arts and crafts, bridge, cribbage, scrabble, travel, photography, wood carving, Haiku, and sports.

Barnstable’s Library Network incorporates feedback from the community to develop their programming and outreach in response to interests and needs.

- The library network offers technology support and wi-fi hot spot resources through funding provided by the Massachusetts Board of Libraries. A map of available resources is available to facilitate access to wi-fi services.
- Health and wellness activities include indoor walking, caregiver support, fall prevention workshops, and a bereavement group led by members of the Visiting Nurse Association.
- There are multiple special interest groups and events held throughout the year.

²¹ [Dementia Friends USA |](#)

The Recreation Division conducted a survey in 2017 as part of the Open Space and Recreation Plan update. The survey was distributed to locations throughout the community, including the Barnstable Adult Community Center. A guiding principle developed from the survey was for the Town to expand and improve recreational facilities and programs, with accessible features, for older adults and those with a disability.

Respect and Social Inclusion Action Items –

Goal #1: Expand programming and events for older adults while increasing communication efforts to facilitate access to learning and wellness-promoting activities.

Proposed Age-Friendly Action Items:	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p><u>Action Item A:</u> Increase access to offsite programming and events through partnerships among the Barnstable Adult Community Center, Library Network and the Recreation Division. Consider day trips, entertainment events, lecture series, and dining events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Libraries Recreation Division • Chamber of Commerce 	Ongoing
<p><u>Action Item B:</u> Increase lifelong learning opportunities. Invite representatives from local lifelong learning institutes to inform Barnstable residents about their programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Library • Academy of Lifelong Learning Cape Cod • CCCC 	Ongoing
<p><u>Action Item C:</u> Increase social engagement and enrichment opportunities for caregivers. Host events to provide information about caregiver support resources in Barnstable while offering opportunities for social engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Library 	Ongoing
<p><u>Action Item D:</u> Increase options for homebound residents or those traveling to participate in remote programming. Lessons from the pandemic suggest that convenience is crucial to participation. Continue to identify ways to connect residents with remote options, including remote volunteering options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BACC • Library • Barnstable Neighbor to Neighbor 	Short-term

Respect and Social Inclusion Action Items -

Goal #1 (continued): Expand programming and events for older adults while increasing communication efforts to facilitate access to learning and wellness-promoting activities.

Proposed Age-Friendly Action Items:	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p><u>Action Item E:</u> Develop an "Adopt-a Grandparent/Grandchild" program to increase connection between youth and older mentors. This could include an intergenerational gardening program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Schools 	Ongoing
<p><u>Action Item F:</u> informal intergenerational conversation hours at the COA and library to promote supportive and mutually rewarding conversations relevant to life stage changes. Consider mutual mentorship among participants. Consider a "History Walks" program where residents of multiple generations walk together in areas of Barnstable and share their personal histories (old and young) with each other.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Library • Schools 	Short Term
<p><u>Action Item G:</u> Continue to expand dementia-friendly practices in Barnstable. Host a "Dementia-Friendly Forum" to educate residents and businesses about dementia-friendly practices. Contact advocates at Dementia Friendly Massachusetts to arrange a presentation of promising initiatives. Create a dementia resource section at the library.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • MCOA • Libraries • Dementia Friendly Massachusetts 	Short Term

Civic Engagement & Employment

An age-friendly community offers resources and partnerships to promote civic engagement, paid employment, consultancy, and mentorship for residents. These vehicles of engagement are meaningful sources of fulfillment and provide residents with mutually rewarding opportunities to actively share their ideas, interests, and talents. Individually, participation in the community through volunteerism and employment is a valuable contributor to health and quality of life. According to research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention²², social engagement is associated with physical and mental health, and engagement with others is strongly associated with better brain function. Strong levels of civic engagement also promote community wide growth and wellness. Through their experiences and long-term interest in the community, engaged residents are poised to support planning efforts and guide age-friendly community initiatives.

Community Needs

The 2015 Needs Assessment suggested that many older adults in Barnstable continue to work beyond the traditional retirement age, for financial security and community engagement. According to the survey, 86% of residents aged 50-59 and 38% of those aged 60-79 are still working full or part-time. Close to 20% of residents aged 60-79 are not sure when, or if, they will retire. Similarly, many residents are dedicated to volunteerism. According to the survey, 34% of all respondents over the age of 50 and 28% of those over age 80 prioritize volunteering as a desired activity. Residents recognized that there is limited availability of professional jobs and a need for meaningful employment and volunteer opportunities. The desire among residents to work and volunteer as they age prompts a need for Town leaders to identify and facilitate access to such opportunities.

Challenges identified during the 2022 working sessions:

- Caregiving for spouses, grandkids, and others can inhibit older adults' ability to work and volunteer due to schedule constraints.
- Family caregivers seeking paid employment are deterred by limited pay and benefits provided by potential employers.
- For older adults with lower levels of technological access and savvy, remote employment and volunteering opportunities are difficult or impossible. Training opportunities are limited.
- Opportunities for part-time work or phased retirement are also limited.

²² <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/social-engagement-aging.html>

- There is a need for a centralized volunteer database that includes accompanying training opportunities to promote meaningful volunteer opportunities that align with residents' skills and interests.
- Language barriers inhibit access to information and community engagement. Translation services and language classes are limited and should expand to reflect the increasing number of languages spoken by Barnstable residents.
- There is a need for resident leadership and Town staffing that reflect Barnstable's diverse demographic community profile.
- There is lack of awareness surrounding potential costs associated with retirement that prompts the need for retirement planning workshops.

Current Age & Dementia Friendly Practices in Barnstable

- **The Barnstable Adult Community Center** relies on volunteers to support medical transportation, a friendly visitor program, reassurance phone calls, programming, administrative work, and initiatives of the Friends of the Council on Aging.
- **Barnstable's Neighbor to Neighbor network** welcomes volunteers to provide support for a variety of needs in the community including:
 - Transportation to appointments, shopping, and social activities
 - Light household tasks including small repairs
 - Technology support
- **The Inside Barnstable Town Government Civic Leadership Academy**, launched in 2003, offers residents an interactive experience to learn about Town government. The Academy serves as a conduit for resident participation on over forty Town Boards and Commissions.
- **Discovery Center**, the Barnstable Adult Community Center began working with the Discovery Center for Civic Engagement to expand efforts that are needed to engage older adults in their communities through purposeful work, whether volunteer or paid, with a social purpose. The Discovery center has deep experience in deploying older adult volunteers into nonprofits in high-impact roles creating a pathway for people to find meaningful opportunities for local civic engagement.
- **Mass Hire Career Center** in Barnstable offers job search tools and training, subsidized Wi-Fi access, and technology training for residents seeking employment. There are multiple career fairs and recruitment events supporting veterans, older residents, and individuals with a disability.

Civic Engagement and Employment Action Items -

Goal #1: Expand opportunities for employment and volunteering among older adults.		
Proposed Age-Friendly Action Items:	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
Action Item A: Increase access to opportunities and training for purposeful work, whether volunteer or train with a social purpose. Expand the pathways for older adults to find meaningful opportunities for civic engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Discovery Center for Civic Engagement 	Ongoing
Action Item B: Encourage local businesses to become certified Age Friendly Employers.²³ Offer opportunities for phased retirement and educational opportunities on financial health for employees nearing retirement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Chamber of Commerce • Local employers • Age Friendly Institute 	Long Term
Action Item C: Create support and incentives for caregivers including training, tuition reimbursement, and financial support (e.g., stipends or tax breaks) for informal caregivers. Work with legislators to advocate for support for caregivers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • ESCCI • CCCC • MCOA 	Long Term

²³ <https://institute.agefriendly.org/initiatives/certified-age-friendly-employer-program/>

Civic Engagement and Employment Action Items -

Goal #2: Expand opportunities for additional engagement vehicles among older adults.		
Proposed Action Items:	Advocacy and Potential Partners	Timeframe
<p>Action Item A: Aggregate volunteer opportunities on a central online platform. Categorize by type and location. Advertise by tabling at Town events (e.g., Unity Day). Alternatively, consider a “volunteer fair” where interested residents can connect with local organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Discovery Center 	Ongoing
<p>Action Item B: Consider facilitating a “Senior Day” in Barnstable in which older adults and those who are Seniors in High School spend a day of service addressing a local issue. For example, cleaning up of parks or writing letters to elected officials about the most pressing issues of the region. Alternatively, explore the facilitation of a “Sages & Seekers²⁴” program to connect generations through shared learning and exchange of experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Schools 	Short Term
<p>Action Item C: Ensure representation by inviting older residents or advocates to seek positions or regularly attend various boards and committees and periodically coordinate with this group to ensure representation and efficiency of advocacy efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA • Select Board • Town Clerk 	Ongoing

²⁴ <https://sagesandseekers.org/>

Conclusion

The vision of Barnstable's Age & Dementia Friendly Initiative is to inspire change in the Town so that residents of all ages and abilities can thrive. The success of this initiative is dependent on continued engagement of a dedicated and passionate group of residents and stakeholders that will proactively advance this age-friendly effort. These individuals will actively collaborate with civic, business, and non-profit organizations as well as state and local government officials to heighten awareness of the age-friendly movement and facilitate implementation of the action items outlined in this report, all to spur positive change for the Town of Barnstable. This report signifies a milestone in the Town's continued efforts and calls for community involvement in the age-friendly process to improve the quality of life for Barnstable residents across the lifespan.