# SNHPC'S BECOMING AGE-FRIENDLY PROGRAM: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SNAPSHOT
# MAY 2017



**What worked well?**

1. Getting the Word Out

   From our community conversations, many participants felt that there was no centralized means of communicating events in their towns. However, some communities had town and regional newspapers, local newsletters, and volunteer-driven communication – like the Deerfield Telephone Directory. Different ways communities get the word out include the following:

   o  Local newspapers:  Bedford Bulletin, *The Forum*, *The Hippo*, etc.
   o  Digital content: Bedford 'App' for smartphones/tablets,  Facebook (community groups, individuals, clubs), email networks
   o  Newsletters: *Auburn's Village Crier*,  New Boston Bulletin, Schools, Libraries, Parks and Rec. , *Weare in the World* – Weare Public Library Newsletter
   o  Senior Check-In: Volunteer and *Are You OK* call system (Hooksett)
   o  Welcome Packet – Deerfield volunteers
   o  Word of Mouth
   o  *The Forum* – regional newspaper covering the towns of Candia, Deerfield, Northwood, and Nottingham
   o  MyManchester –offers neighborhood based connections that can be used to become more involved in the local community, take advantage of available resources and create personal growth. MyManchester will be available in June 2017.

2. Transportation

   Many communities focused their conversations on transportation.  Although there are limited services, multiple services are present but often not commonly used, recognized, or understood.

   o  Fixed Route: MTA (Manchester Transit Authority)
   o  Health and Senior Transportation Services: Easterseals and CART,  Community CareGivers, Inc., Green Cab Company, Manchester Community Health Center, Londonderry Senior Center, Windham's senior van, YMCA, St. Joseph's Community Services Inc. Meals on Wheels, Lamprey Health Care (senior medical services),
   o  Businesses like Uber and Lyft are slowly being adopted across communities, helping some with mobility concerns

- o Organized volunteer efforts (St. Elizabeth Seton – friends driving friends),  Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC )- available in Francestown, Seniors helping Seniors (Rockingham and Hillsborough)
- o Family and friends
- o Bike and Pedestrian-related: Pedestrian & Bicycle Connectivity Master Plan (Bedford), Bicycle Master Plan (Manchester), Manchester's new bike sharing program
- o Rail trails (Manchester, Goffstown, Derry, et. al), and Connecting Trails (New Boston)
- o Bike share program (new for Manchester!)

3. <u>Housing and Zoning</u>
   Single-family homes are the dominant housing type in the SNHPC region. Many residents feel that these types of homes allow the communities to keep their NH character.

   - o Many communities in the SNHPC Region do allow for a variety of housing types – multi-family, manufactured housing, accessory dwelling units and mixed-use development.
   - o New Hampshire residents tend to prefer single family homes (SFH) with SFH making up 61.5% of homes in the region.
   - o There are examples of independent living facilities, age-restricted housing, assisted living facilities, and other senior-friendly living facilities in the SNHPC Region. While these living spaces support the aging population, residents often feel that they are largely unaffordable.
   - o Manchester has recently seen an increase in housing that often attracts millennials, e.g. relatively affordable, smaller units close to lively areas of the community.

4. <u>Recreation and Engagement</u>
   There is no shortage of recreation opportunities in the Region. Many residents find enjoyment in outdoor recreation such as walking or snowmobile trail networks such as those along Lake Massabesic in Auburn or Uncanoonuc Trail in Goffstown. Many town parks and recreation departments provide opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in activities such as youth and adult recreation leagues, movie nights, town dances, etc.  More and more, town libraries have become community centers, creating unique programing for all ages.

   - o Libraries: Much more than books, programs for all ages (all towns) including volunteer coordinator  (Heidi, Director in Candia)
   - o Parks and Recreation Departments: trips, multi-generational programs, summer concert series, seasonal events, and partnerships with multiple community group/departments.
   - o Public Works Departments: cleanup events, touch-a-truck, etc.
   - o Historic Societies: Programs and events honoring the community such as "Old Home Day"
   - o Churches and Places of Worship: multiple events and hosts to events, even farmers markets
   - o Schools of every level: after-school programs, multi-generational programs, hosts of recreational and community events, acting and theaters for plays, places for community movies, concerts,

- o Civic Organizations: Bedford's Rotary Club and their Regional Idol Contest
- o Senior Centers: (Londonderry oral history project: 22 seniors signed up to work with high school students to record stories)
- o Collaborative Efforts & Partnerships, i.e. police/fire internship programs (Goffstown), food pantries, etc.
- o Snowmobile trails
- o Massabesic Lake and Rockingham Rail Trail network are regional draws (Auburn, Manchester)
- o Flex spaces and facilities in some towns aid with hosting community events all year
- o Community days, seasonal events, town dances
- o Businesses – creating events, partnering with other entities and/or community
- o Clubs: Community clubs such as Bedford's women's club, newcomers club, new mothers club
- o Continuing Education including Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)
- o Organizations focusing on ethnic groups and people of color are instrumental in supporting largely underserved communities, specifically in the Manchester area. These organizations may provide educational opportunities, help welcome immigrants to the community, or provide support to working families in the area. Some examples of these organizations include Welcoming Manchester, Director of the NH Alliance for Immigrants and Refugees, Victory Women of Vision, Congolese Community Association, The Bhutanese Community of NH, The International Institute of NH, and Emerging Leaders in Communities of Color.

5. Economic Development

- o Regional Industries: Manchester Airport is one of the region's best examples of dedication to accessibility and an age-friendly environment.
- o Establishments with multigenerational appeal such as Mack's Orchard are economic drivers, bringing both tourists and locals out in great numbers (Londonderry)
- o Commercial and industrial uses are bringing in dollars from neighboring towns—Bedford and Hooksett see the 2nd and 3rd most number of visitors from across region according to survey respondents despite ranking 4th and 7th for population.
- o Non-profits act as anchors in SNHPC communities. For example, NH Audubon in Auburn partners with multiple community groups to create vibrant programs; fairgrounds in both Deerfield and New Boston draw visitors from all over the state and beyond, provide employment and volunteer opportunities, and allow community members to interact with one another.
- o Businesses along heavier-developed areas – such as the many businesses along Elm Street in Manchester – have age-friendly characteristics like accessible doorways, clear, easy to read signs, accessible bathrooms, etc.

## What are the key roadblocks?

- Lack of transportation options: Participants felt that the nature of their towns enabled a disconnected system with little to no safe places to walk or bike. Outside of Manchester, many people either didn't know of, or did not have access to public transportation or on-demand transportation services.
- Lack of diverse, affordable (esp. 55+) housing (Goffstown, Derry, Chester, Bedford), including single-level housing
- While single-family homes allow the communities to keep their NH character, the physical realities of multi-story, single-family homes can be a barrier to people as they age. Similarly, these homes may not be affordable to a first-time homebuyer. Many communities place caps on lot sizes to control land use; however, placing a minimum on lot sizes can deter growth in more diverse housing.
- Lack of higher-paying jobs (Goffstown, Derry, Londonderry)
- Most rural and some suburban communities lack utility infrastructure (gas lines, sewer and water) which can be seen as a barrier to development in residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Lack of gas lines, sewer, and water (Goffstown, Hooksett)
- Extremely high property tax rates (Derry)
- Lack of walkability/transportation options (rural/suburban towns)
- No central information source for town events (several towns)
- Isolation (Weare)
- Vast majority of housing stock (single family homes) does not reflect tastes of millennials or needs of seniors
- Lack of succession planning: loss of key people, program champions and no plan for succession so vital programs get dropped, i.e. welcome packets
- Lack of volunteer coordination
- Lack of venue coordination or allowance for utilization
- Lack of business support – Francestown losing its only in-town store
- Lack of internet

## Quotes
- On transportation assets in Weare, "There aren't any."
- "Rush hour is when the turkeys cross the road." – Weare librarian on the benefits of being isolated
- "If you don't drive, you can't exist in this town" – several towns
- For new immigrants who do not have their own car and can't navigate the public transit system, "Where you are in Manchester is America, period."
- When asked about greatest transportation asset, all Bedford residents said in unison (as if rehearsed): "Your own car!"
- "I own a big home, I'm 66 years old. NH has nothing for me; it's so expensive." Londonderry resident

- "Auburn's single biggest issue is lack of affordable housing for seniors and millennials.  Land is too expensive, so builders end up building bigger homes on it to make up their investment." – Auburn resident

**<u>Wish List:</u>**

<u>Transportation</u>: More affordable options, walkable community, more bike lanes, paved rail-trails, improved maintenance on existing systems

<u>Housing</u>: More affordable options such as options for co-habitating, single-level living with shared amenities, and downsizing

<u>Recreation and Engagement</u>: Better/more coordinated communication of town events, happenings, etc.

<u>Economic Development</u>: Better internet and Wi-Fi connections, more possibilities for business development, higher paying jobs