

# THE BECOMING AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAM

## PHASE III PILOT COMMUNITY: HOOKSETT

### IDENTIFYING ASSETS & OPPORTUNITIES

During Phase III the Southern NH Planning Commission worked closely with the Town of Hooksett to identify opportunities for improvement in the areas of recreation and transportation for senior residents. In the Fall of 2018, SNHPC staff met with the Hooksett Town Planner and the Director of Family Services about the Age Friendly Pilot Program in Hooksett and quickly learned that there were little to no organized recreation or engagement opportunities for seniors in Hooksett. The only space that offered activities and programs was the Hooksett Public Library. We learned about the library's variety of programs, activities and events offered to residents of all ages. We also learned about a very active and engaged senior citizen group called the Hooksett-ites.

### THE HOOKSETT-ITES

The Hooksett-ites is an active group of seniors that gather weekly. The group organizes its own lunches, games, speakers, movies and events as well as group trips to Manchester, Boston, Squam Lake, the White Mountains and more. The group hosts annual holiday luncheons and an "over 80's dinner" every Spring that's open to all Hooksett senior residents. The issue is that many Hooksett residents don't know the group exists. None of the group's events or meetings are posted online or printed in a newsletter. The primary way for the group to gain membership is through word of mouth, which is proving inadequate as membership is declining.



*The Hooksett-ites is an active group of seniors but many Hooksett residents don't know the group exists.*

## WHAT WE LEARNED

We decided to attend one of the Hooksett-ites meetings in January of 2019 and ask the group what their main concerns were as a senior citizen group in Hooksett. The group indicated the following concerns:

### **The need for a town staff event coordinator**

The group indicated it is increasingly difficult for any one member of the Hooksett-ites to coordinate the logistics for these activities (transportation, cost, meals, wheelchair and other accessibility details etc.).

### **Increased Exposure to attract new members**

How to attract more members? The group does not maintain a social media presence or a monthly newsletter. The group agreed that a central contact person would be helpful in communicating effectively among the group and to the public about important information on upcoming events.

### **Coordinated Transportation Efforts**

the Hooksett-ites either carpool or drive themselves to meetings and events.. The group repeatedly suggested that there should be an effort to better coordinate transportation to and from events with other area groups. Many members of the group stated that seniors in Hooksett do not attend weekly meetings or monthly events because they are unable to drive or find a ride.

*Many seniors in Hooksett do not attend the Hooksett-ites meetings because they are unable to drive or find a ride.*





## WHAT WE DID

Realizing that there were, in fact, recreation and engagement opportunities in the Town of Hooksett, we decided to switch our angle from increasing recreation opportunities to **increasing awareness of the existing recreation opportunities** in Town, as well as looking to improving transportation options to and from those opportunities. There was no single place to find information about recreation opportunities in Hooksett for seniors, so our first initiative was to create a brochure for the library and the Hooksett-ites. The brochure was made available at public spaces such as the Library and Town Offices.



Next, we explored transportation options for Hooksett residents. The Manchester Transit Authority (MTA) currently offers a curb-to-curb shuttle service on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am-2pm that is underutilized, so we decided to include MTA in our Age-Friendly conversation. In May 2019, we organized a round table discussion with MTA, the library director and staff, Town Planner, Family Services Director, part time parks and recreation director and the president of the Hooksett-ites to discuss how we could **work together to improve awareness of the programs offered in Hooksett as well as the existing transit options available to Hooksett residents.**





## MTA MEET & GREET

On July 12th, 2019, MTA brought the shuttle as well as a larger bus to the Hooksett-ites meeting for members to see. We discussed the MTA scheduling, how to call for a ride and other available MTA services. We presented the final brochure for members and library staff to hand out. The buses and the brochure were very well-received. In addition, the Hooksett Town Planner, Nicholas Williams, promoted his master plan charette happening the following day, and several Hooksett-ites members attended and encouraged the town to continue its partnership with the Manchester Transit Authority.

For more information on SNHPC's  
Becoming Age Friendly Pilot  
Programs visit [www.snhpc.org](http://www.snhpc.org)

