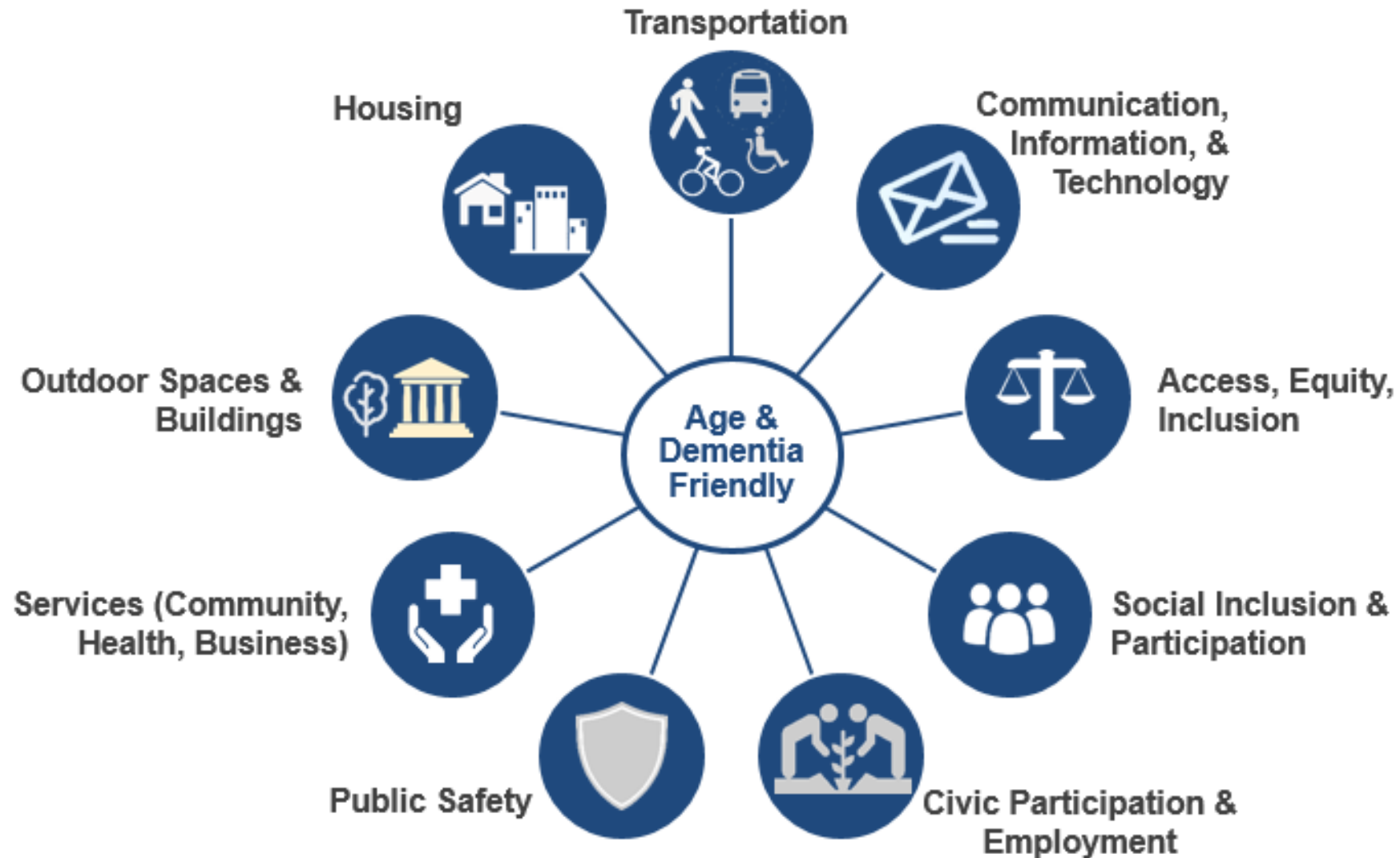# *MAGIC Meeting: Age-Friendly Housing and Transportation*

James Fuccione – MHAC Senior Director

March 2021

The work of the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative is supported in part by:

Age and Dementia Friendly Communities

2018 Massachusetts Healthy Aging Data Report
Older Adult Health in Every Community

Reporting on **179** health risk indicators in **379** communities
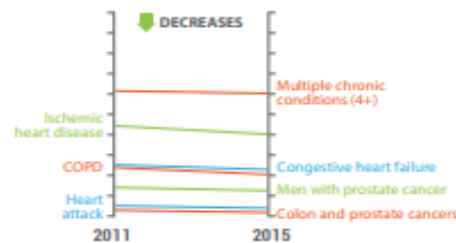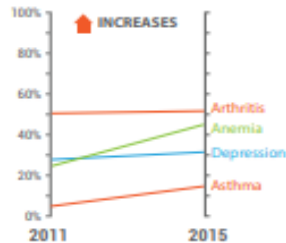
MASSACHUSETTS IS GETTING OLDER

About 15% of people in Massachusetts are **age 65+**, an increase of about 125,000 people since last report.

15%

The older population in Massachusetts:
- Is more racially and ethnically **diverse**
- Has more **education**
- Has **higher incomes**, with more people earning $50K+
- Is **younger**, with more 65-74-year-olds

#7 Massachusetts is the 7th healthiest state for older people in the U.S., according to America's Health Rankings Senior Report. Still, there is room to improve!

Health challenges are shifting

↑ INCREASES

Arthritis
Anemia
Depression
Asthma

2011 — 2015

↓ DECREASES

Ischemic heart disease
COPD
Heart attack

Multiple chronic conditions (4+)
Congestive heart failure
Men with prostate cancer
Colon and prostate cancers

2011 — 2015

MENTAL HEALTH IS OVERLOOKED

Mental health is important at every stage of life. It includes **emotional, psychological, and social well-being**. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It influences how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

6% of all Massachusetts residents 65+ years have some form of **substance use disorder**.

Rates vary widely across the state, from less than 4% to about 16%.

3 out of every 10 older residents have ever been diagnosed with **depression** – the most commonly diagnosed mental health issue among older people.

↑ **Higher rates** were found in communities with relatively high levels of serious and chronic disease, crime, and older people living alone.

↓ **Lower rates** were found in communities with higher percentages of older women of Asian descent.

BE A PART OF THE CHANGE

UNDERSTAND.
- Download your Community Profile at healthyagingdatareports.org.
- Educate yourself and others about the older people who live in your city or town.
- Compare your city or town to state averages.

ENGAGE.
- Start a conversation.
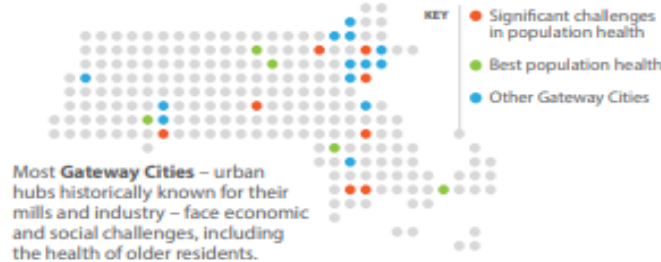- Bring older people, community organizations together.

ACT.
- Join the age-friendly movement.
- Prioritize community needs and resources.
- Collaborate with diverse partners and funders.

WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS

Many **rural communities** have higher percentages of people 65+ and limited access to care and transportation options.

Most **Gateway Cities** – urban hubs historically known for their mills and industry – face economic and social challenges, including the health of older residents.

KEY
- ● Significant challenges in population health
- ● Best population health
- ● Other Gateway Cities

↑ Serious chronic disease rates among older people are **lowest** in cities and towns where people have **more** education and **higher** incomes.

↓ Serious chronic disease rates among older people are **highest** in cities and towns where people have **less** education and **lower** incomes.

The 2015 data above reflect health for adults age 60+ or 65+ in Massachusetts.

Visit **healthyagingdatareports.org** for more.

Gerontology Institute
John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies
UMASS BOSTON

TUFTS Health Plan FOUNDATION

Data: Start the Conversation

MA Healthy Aging Data Report

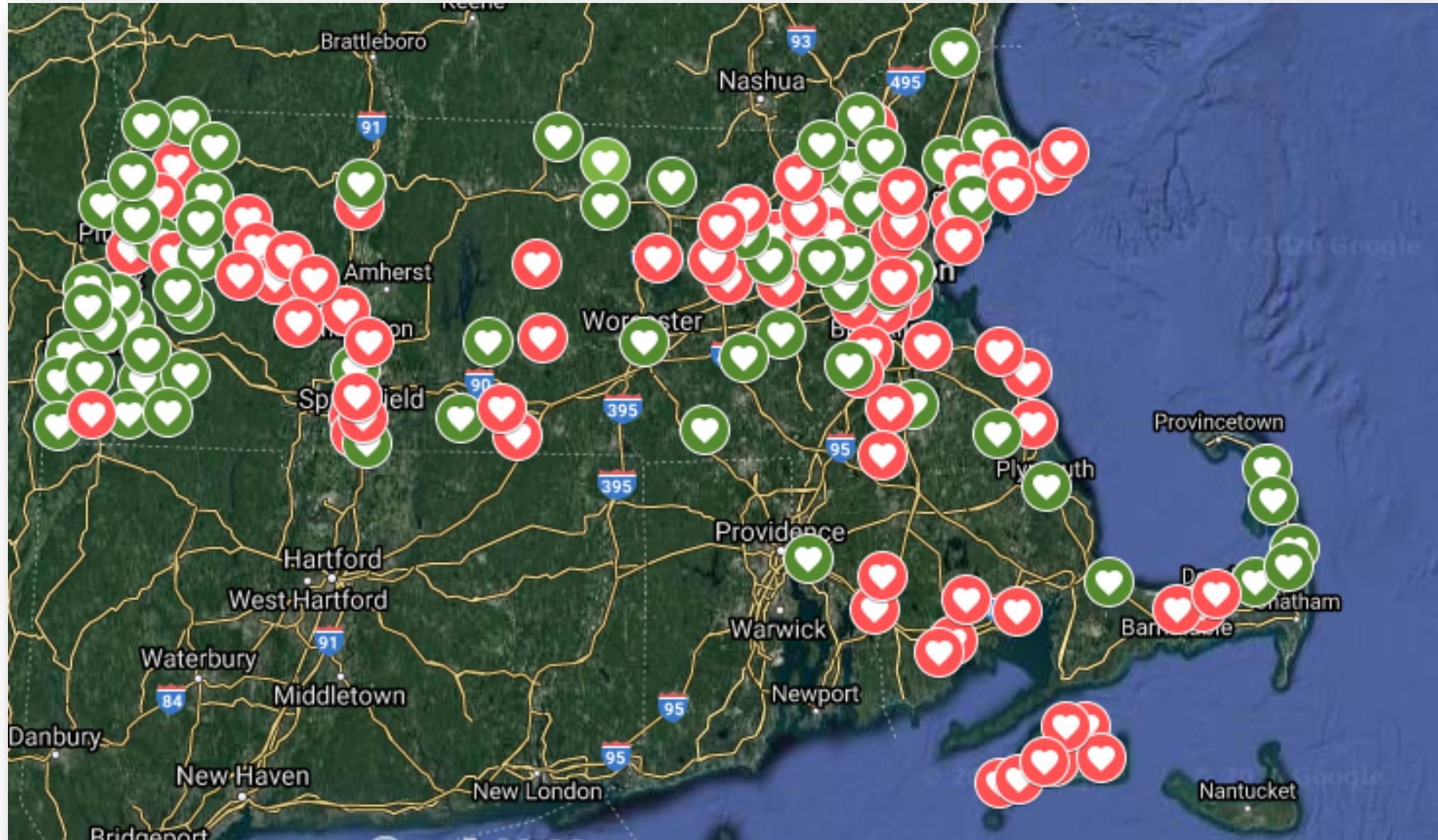2018 MASSACHUSETTS HEALTHY AGING COMMUNITY PROFILE

Acton (Middlesex)

Acton is a suburban town northwest of Boston with 2,956 residents aged 65 or older. The transit score suggests that there is minimal transit available (1/10). Compared to state averages, older residents of Acton have lower rates of depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, substance use disorder, tobacco use disorder, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, hypertension, heart attack, ischemic heart disease, congestive heart failure, peripheral vascular disease, lung cancer, osteoporosis, benign prostatic hyperplasia, hypothyroidism, anemia, chronic kidney disease, and glaucoma. They have a greater likelihood than the state rate of having hearing impairment, visual impairment, or a mobility impairment. Health promotion is strong with higher rates of shingle vaccines, physical activity, annual dental exams, and not smoking. Community resources to promote healthy aging include one memory café and the Council on Aging. Acton has been designated an Age-Friendly Community.
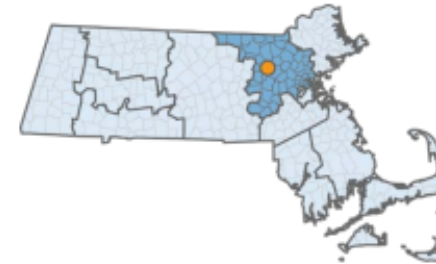
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS	BETTER / WORSE STATE RATE[1]	COMMUNITY ESTIMATE	STATE ESTIMATE
Total population all ages		23,209	6,742,143
Population 60 years or older as % of total population		18.0%	21.2%
Total population 60 years or older		4,171	1,428,144
Population 65 years or older as % of total population		12.7%	15.1%
Total population 65 years or older		2,956	1,016,679
% 65-74 years		55.2%	55.3%
% 75-84 years		31.8%	29.4%
% 85 years or older		12.9%	15.2%
Gender (65+ population)			
% female		58.6%	57.2%
Race/Ethnicity (65+ population)			

Age and Dementia Friendly Communities

Age-Friendly Massachusetts

Community-Led Age and Dementia Friendly Efforts

Age-Friendly Businesses

Dementia Friendly Massachusetts

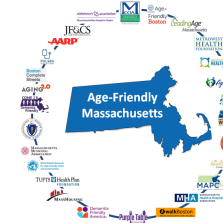**Feedback and Input from Stakeholders**

Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative
(MHAC and Multicultural Coalition on Aging)

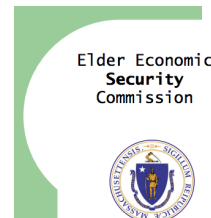**Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts**

Cross-Sector Partnerships and Collaboration

Input from 500+ Residents Across Massachusetts

State Commissions on Issues Critical to Older People

Sector-Specific Age-Friendly Initiatives

Rei*MA*gine *Aging*:

Planning Together to Create an Age-Friendly Future for Massachusetts

Age-Friendly Massachusetts

Mission

To amplify, align, and coordinate local, regional, and statewide efforts to create a welcoming and livable Commonwealth as residents grow up and grow older together.

Vision

Aging in Massachusetts is reimagined.
The Commonwealth is an accountable partner in supporting communities, embedding aging in all policies, and empowering residents with opportunities to age meaningfully in the communities of their choice.

Goals

1. Deepen Community Initiatives

2. Promote Information and Communication

3. Reframe Aging

4. Embed Aging in Policy and Practice

5. Improve Economic Security

6. Create Sustainability

MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTHY AGING
COLLABORATIVE

FSG REIMAGINING SOCIAL CHANGE

How Innovative Community Responses to COVID-19 Support Healthy Aging

TIFFANY CLARKE, MELISSA ODMER, VICTOR TAVAREZ

Protective factors for older adults disproportionately impacted by COVID-19

• Intergenerational households and families with strong intergenerational ties where members support one another in meeting daily needs and provide companionship to counter the threat of social isolation

• Tight-knit networks of individuals dedicated to the wellbeing of the community who disseminate information, keep an eye out for people who may have greater barriers to receiving services, and are willing to do whatever it takes to help their community

• Skillful and nimble CBOs that know community residents, have earned their trust, and are willing and able to pivot rapidly as needs arise.

• Leaders with a passion for the community, a history of coming together through past crises, personal connections, and willingness to collaborate

MASSACHUSETTS HEALTHY AGING COLLABORATIVE

What is the role of MHAC and its network in advancing these protective factors?

Understanding the community

- **Who** in your community is most affected by the pandemic? If you are unsure, how can you ask those you serve about their most significant concerns?

- **To what extent** are you and others in your community reaching individuals living in conditions that heighten the threat of the pandemic (see page 5)? **What opportunities are there to deepen or expand your work** with these individuals?

- Protective factors offer opportunities to provide older adults with the resources to navigate the pandemic (see page 6). To what extent are you **currently building on protective factors** in the way you do your work? How might you work differently with partners to **further incorporate them into your work?**

- What **other protective factors** have you observed in your community? How could you help **create more** of these protective factors or ensure older adults and **others benefit?**

Healthy Aging for All

Input from:

- MHAC Advisory Council (x2)

- MHAC Executive Committee (x2)

- Access, Equity, & Inclusion Workgroup

- MCA@MHAC

- Age/Dementia Friendly Framingham

MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTHY AGING
COLLABORATIVE

Inclusive Communities Crosswalk

The crosswalk can serve as a discussion and planning guide for stakeholder groups about different topics that are considerate of all residents in a city, town or region.

	Transportation	Housing	Social Inclusion & Participation	Civic Participation & Employment	Communication and Information	Services (Business, Community, Health)	Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	Public Safety	Custom Theme
Age									
Behavioral Health									
Country of Origin									
Dementia									
Disability									
Economic Security									
Gender									
Location									
Language									
LGBTQIA									
Race/Ethnicity									
Religion									
Residential Setting									
Substance Use Disorder									
Veterans									
Other									

Inclusive Communities Toolkit | 6

How to use Healthy Aging for All

Age and dementia friendly initiatives are about improving health and well-being for people of all ages in a community or region – and that means all people. This guide can be used throughout the continuous improvement process where coordinators and/or stakeholder groups convene, conduct community assessments, create an action plan, and implement that plan.

Convening

Healthy Aging for All can help local Age- and Dementia-Friendly leaders and conveners provide broad representation when bringing together relevant municipal department heads and local entities working to improve the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). This is important throughout the Age- and Dementia-Friendly process.

Goal Setting and Action Planning

By using Healthy Aging for All, community leaders can generate statements and themes that reflect an ideal end result of a community's Age- and Dementia- Friendly Community efforts.

A community does NOT have to address all the domains of the Age- and Dementia Friendly assessment. The domains should be selected based on the community's strengths and needs.

Once the community moves into the action planning phase, Healthy Aging for All can help ensure that proposed action items are inclusive and comprehensive.

Surveys and Assessment

Qualitative data is important to understand what Age-Friendly means to people within cities and towns. Some ways in which this data is gathered include (but is not limited to):

- Community Profiles available in the Healthy Aging Data Report
- Municipal master plans
- Regional planning agency assessments
- Community health needs assessments (CHNA)

Several organizations in a community – including the municipality itself – may already be conducting assessments or have recently gathered resident

feedback. This can all inform the Age-and Dementia Friendly process so stakeholders don't have to 'recreate the wheel.'

Implementation

In addition to helping a community assess their strengths and identify opportunities relative to access, equity and inclusion, Healthy Aging for All can help stakeholders take ownership or play a leading role in working to address gaps.

Stakeholders can discuss, identify and plan how to improve disparities at the intersections of the population groups and the Age- and Dementia-Friendly domains. It bears emphasizing that people often connect to multiple categories in the listed population groups on page 6.

Strategies may include targeted outreach or informing residents about already available resources.

Inclusive Communities Worksheet

AGE- AND DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY DOMAIN	The space below can be used to note the strategies you plan to use to ensure Access, Equity and Inclusion while you strive to make your community age- and dementia-friendly.
Transportation	
Housing	
Social Inclusion & Participation	
Civic Participation & Employment	
Communication and Information	
Services (Business, Community, and Health)	
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	
Public Safety	
Custom Theme	

AGE-FRIENDLY WINTER SPACES

Ideas for Municipalities to Embrace Winter

Communities have an opportunity to support people of all ages in remaining physically active and socially engaged during the winter months. There are simple and innovative ideas for communities to improve their physical environments—and promote the physical and mental wellness of their residents – all 52 weeks of the year!

Promote Winter Walkability

Identify and promote a walking route to allow individuals of all ages to stay active. Establish a walking loop through main street and city center to promote local business and connect essential services or use existing areas, such as local parks or an outdoor track for the walking route.

Things to consider when choosing the walking route:
- Is there sufficient lighting to allow for use during evening hours?
- Are there accessible restrooms and benches available near the walking route?
- How are community residents learning about the walking route?
- Can your community commit to keeping the walking route clear of snow and ice?
- Do you have well-plowed municipal parking lots that could serve as walking loops?
- Does the walking route provide access to essential businesses that people may need to visit?

Create Winter Destinations

Shared Winter Streets and Spaces Grant Program

A Quick-Launch/Quick-Build Municipal Funding Program

- **Grants:** $5,000 - $500,000 to improve plazas, sidewalks, curbs, streets, parking areas, and other public spaces in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce.

- **Bonus points** for Safe Routes for Seniors, including safe walking and bicycling facilities within one mile of senior centers, housing for elders, and travel corridors used by seniors.

Thank You!

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  - **617-717-9493**