



PLAAN

Planning for a Livable All Age-Friendly Newton

Action Plan and Progress Report



Age-Friendly Communities
Are Livable for
People of All Ages
aarp.org/livable



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Mayor's Letter

I am honored to present Newton's Age-Friendly Action Plan and Progress Report.

Our community is deeply committed to the well-being and participation of our older residents. Newton's Age-Friendly Action Plan and Progress Report lays out concrete steps to foster age-friendly environments for healthy and active aging. Even with the pandemic, we have made important progress in many spheres. Notably, we are providing affordable transportation through Newton in Motion (a.k.a., NewMo) to help older people who no longer drive, making participation in community life easier, and easing the risk of isolation and loneliness. We are on the verge of beginning the construction of a new facility (the Newton Center for Active Living or NewCAL) designed specifically for the needs of our older residents, giving older people additional reasons to go out and participate in cultural, educational, volunteer, and exercise opportunities. Our streets and sidewalks are being designed to be safe and interesting for people walking, biking, riding, and driving.

This plan is a culmination of a public process that occurred over many years. We deliberately involved hundreds of community stakeholders: residents, local organizations and nonprofits, neighborhood groups, service providers, businesses, religious organizations, and elected officials. Our process included public meetings, surveys, and focus groups. This Plan and Progress Report details what we learned through the process and our plan for the future. We highlight the strengths and challenges residents face in aging in Newton, what Newton has done to improve circumstances to date, and what Newton will do to be a leader in shaping a community that is built for and offers the robust supports for people of all ages to thrive.

The staff of the Newton Department of Senior Services (DSS) and volunteer members of the Newton Council on Aging (COA), a commission for senior action and advocacy appointed by the Mayor and City Council, have worked in tandem to develop this plan. I offer my deepest thanks to them for their dedication in leading Newton's Age-Friendly planning efforts. In particular, I want to thank Jayne Colino, our former Director of Senior Services, for her vision, inclusive leadership, and commitment to enhancing the lives of Newton's older adults.

About Our Process

While Newton has always actively supported older residents through the Department of Senior Services and the Newton Senior Center, comprehensive Age-Friendly planning began formally in 2014. The goal of this ongoing strategic planning is to address the needs arising from demographic changes that Newton and many other cities and towns around the world are facing — an aging population. To start, the City of Newton worked with the Gerontology Institute at the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, University of Massachusetts, Boston, to conduct a population analysis.

In 2016, Newton applied for and was designated to be part of the World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP Livable Communities Age-Friendly Network. Newton's planning effort

is called PLAAN (*Planning for a Livable All Age-Friendly Newton*). The Age-Friendly Network provides a framework of domains including:

1. Housing
2. Transportation
3. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
4. Community Support and Health Services
5. Civic Engagement and Employment
6. Social Participation
7. Respect and Social Inclusion, and
8. Communication and Information

In addition to these specified areas, the planning framework also lays out a process intended to ensure repeated consultation with the community, collective reflection, action, and evaluation.

We had intended to complete Newton's Action Plan and Progress Report in 2019 and to release it formally in 2020. Then the COVID-19 pandemic erupted in March 2020. We abruptly ceased almost all in-person Senior Center activities and focused instead on emergency support for seniors and creating remote programming and services. Although a considerable amount of work was done on formulating and implementing aspects of the Action Plan prior to 2020, we are now returning to this important planning and implementation efforts.

What We Learned

The process of creating the PLAAN reaffirmed much of what we had already experienced about living in Newton. Our proximity to Boston, public transportation from buses, the Green Line and commuter rail, excellent schools, world-class healthcare providers, ample green spaces, safe neighborhoods, and an unusually high number of walkable village centers make Newton an attractive place to live and age. Yet, our residents face known challenges: a high cost of housing, an aging infrastructure including an 82-year-old senior center building, and a lack of affordable and accessible transportation options, particularly across Newton. In addition, the planning process helped identify circumstances that were less evident, including food insecurity, age discrimination in employment, a desire for greater intergenerational connection, and a growing sense of isolation among Newton's older residents.

What We Are Doing

In 2017 and 2018, using the priorities established by the community, the Newton Council on Aging, in collaboration with the Department of Senior Services, organized the COA members into Domain Action Teams. Each focused on one of the eight domains, and together they worked on specific domain-related projects and began to develop a formal action plan. Each team worked closely with other City of Newton departments, commissions, and groups to achieve age-friendly goals. This PLAAN details the priorities for each domain area and the progress that has been made to achieve the goals that were established.

As a result of what we heard, we took several actions that we are pleased to report here. Two of the highlights include:

- NewMo – Newton in Motion – a new transportation system for residents aged 60 and older was launched in 2019. Initially, riders could request on-demand trips to the Senior Center, medical appointments, houses of worship, grocery shopping, and to long-term care facilities within Newton. Seniors could also go to any of the 13 village centers, any city building or city-sponsored program or event, and to the Needham Street Corridor. Riders can access the service using the NewMo app or by calling a call center. In July 2021, due to the early success of NewMo, the system was expanded to include service to the entire city for riders of all ages.*
- The construction of a new Senior Center/Community Center has been approved and ribbon cutting is slated for the end of 2024. In spring of 2018, the City of Newton initiated a comprehensive planning process to address the space needs of Department of Senior Services programming. The Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) is the name given to the proposed building that will meet those needs. In September 2020, the NewCAL Working Group recommended that the existing Senior Center site in Newtonville be the location for the new building. The designs have progressed with much community input. The City Council approved my request for \$20 million in funding in August 2022.*

The Future

We are committed to taking concrete steps to making Newton a great place to live and age. Age-friendliness crosses the jurisdiction of many departments. The lens of age-friendliness is being incorporated across the city. We are confident the improvements we make through this process will benefit Newtonians of all ages. We are using the plan to set goals and to monitor our progress. We will continue to revise the plan as we move forward and will frequently check in with community members to set new priorities and continuously improve our implementation steps.



Mayor, City of Newton





Community Profile¹

The City of Newton has a population of nearly 90,000. (See Appendix A, Table 1.) It occupies a land area of 18.33 square miles and is principally suburban-residential in character. Unlike many communities that are established around a single Main Street or downtown, Newton is comprised of thirteen distinctive villages – Auburndale, Chestnut Hill, Newton Centre, Newton Corner, Newton Highlands, Newton Lower Falls, Newton Upper Falls, Newtonville, Nonantum, Oak Hill, Thompsonville, Waban, and West Newton. Known as “The Garden City,” open space comprises 19.6% of the Newton’s total land area, of which 55% is publicly owned.

The area now known as the City of Newton was originally inhabited by the Native American people of Nonantum, a sub-tribe of the Massachusett. The English settled in the area in 1630, and Newton became an official city in 1874. Today, Newton is governed by Mayor Ruthanne Fuller with an elected City Council made up of 24 members: 16 At-large Councilors and eight Ward Councilors. Councilors are elected every two years.

Newton became one of America’s earliest commuter suburbs. The Boston and Worcester, one of America’s earliest railroads, reached West Newton in 1834. Wealthy Bostonian businessmen took advantage of the new commuting opportunity offered by the railroad, building gracious homes on erstwhile farmland of West Newton hill and on Commonwealth Street. Further suburbanization came in waves. One wave began with the streetcar lines that made many parts of Newton accessible for commuters in the late nineteenth century. The next wave came in the 1920’s when automobiles became affordable to a growing middle class.

Newton is home to a variety of private secondary and post-secondary schools that contribute to the fabric of the city. The major colleges/universities in Newton include Boston College, Lasell University, William James College, and the UMass Amherst/Mount Ida Campus. Their combined student enrollment is approximately 17,000 students.

The largest employers in Newton include Boston College and Newton-Wellesley Hospital. Newton has two symphony orchestras — the New Philharmonia Orchestra of Massachusetts and the Newton Symphony Orchestra.

Newton offers a unique residential experience that combines an urban and suburban feel. It is a

desirable community in which to live and work for people all ages. With proximity to Boston, large areas of green spaces, major educational institutions, and multiple village downtowns, Newton is especially well suited for aging in place. Newton initiated an age-friendly planning process in 2013 and continuously works to integrate citywide planning that supports residents' ability to stay engaged in their community.





Overview of Newton's Age-Friendly Planning

Newton is a thriving city, and like many municipalities across Massachusetts, the country, and the world, Newton's population is aging. Forty percent of Newton households have at least one member who is 60 years old or older, and over the next two decades the proportion of residents age 60 and over is expected to grow more rapidly than any other age group.ⁱⁱ (See Appendix A, Figure 1.) In order to prepare for this demographic shift, Newton initiated a planning process in 2013.

A. Leadership of Newton's Age-Friendly Initiative

The Newton Senior Center, under the jurisdiction of the Newton Department of Senior Services (DSS) is an important and valued resource as the city's central point of contact for older residents who seek services to promote independent, healthy, and fulfilling lives. In addition, the Newton Council on Aging (COA) is a commission for senior action and advocacy appointed by the Mayor and City Council. The staff of the DSS and volunteer members of the COA work in tandem to develop and adapt programs and services to fit the needs and desires of Newton's residents for aging in the community. Together they have been leading an ongoing process to plan for demographic changes.

B. Timeline of Newton's Age-Friendly Initiative

In 2013, DSS and COA conducted a Strategic Planning Process, which resulted in joint vision and mission statements.

Vision Statement

Newton will be a livable and age-friendly community that adapts structures and services to be accessible and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.

DSS and COA Mission Statement

As leaders, the Department of Senior Services and Council on Aging provide sustained leadership that helps Newton be a livable and age-friendly community for all who choose to live here. We work to optimize quality of life for older adults and those who support them through welcoming, respectful, and meaningful opportunities that engage and value older people, and empower them to remain independent and to be important assets in our community.

Following this Strategic Planning Process, the Senior Citizens Fund of Newton, Inc., a separate and independent 501C3 entity, commissioned a survey of Newton residents age 50 and older to investigate the needs, interests, preferences, and opinions of the city's older resident population, with respect to living and aging in Newton. Results was used to inform and guide the DSS and the COA in their planning efforts.

The Gerontology Institute at the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, University of Massachusetts, Boston was engaged to design a research strategy, develop and administer a survey instrument, analyze data, report findings, and create a final report. All work was done with the active involvement of DSS staff, COA members, and Newton residents. The survey and report were completed in Spring 2014 and the full report, *Living and Aging in Newton: Now and in the Future*, was presented to the public and elected officials. The community learned a great deal from this project and the results serve as an important ongoing planning tool.

C. Overview of World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP Livable Communities Age-Friendly Framework

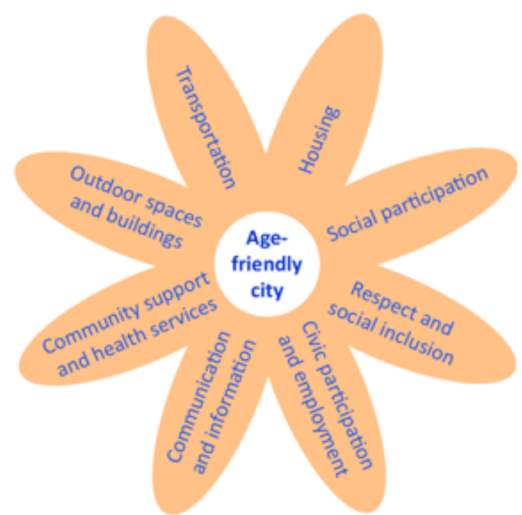
In 2016, Newton applied and was designated to be part of the World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP Livable Communities Age-Friendly Network. Newton's effort is called PLAAN (Planning for a Livable All Age-Friendly Newton).

The Age-Friendly model includes a framework for describing areas for all communities to focus on. It also lays out a process intended to ensure repeated consultation with the community, collective reflection, action, and evaluation.

The Age-Friendly framework includes eight domains of community life that intersect with livability, accessibility, and the ability to thrive within the community. The following are domain definitions:ⁱⁱⁱ

Housing: Safe, affordable, and well-designed housing that can be adapted as residents age, contributes to independence, security, and quality of life.

Transportation: Affordable, accessible transportation that allows residents to freely travel around the city, promotes participation, helps maintain networks, and supports equity of mobility.



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings: Public spaces that are accessible, well-lit, and well-marked, with shade and places to sit, allow for comfort and independence.

Community Support and Health Services: A wide network of medical and non-medical services promote well-being and quality of life.

Civic Engagement and Employment: Paid employment builds social capital and generates income and purpose. Being involved in issues that affect the lives of older adults contributes to empowerment and affects social change.

Social Participation: Activities and events that are affordable, held at convenient times, and accessible by public transportation.

Respect and Social Inclusion: Older adults are included and consulted on community projects, planning initiatives, and all aspects of city life.

Communication and Information: An effective distribution of information about events, programs, and opportunities, preferably in centralized locations, is an essential feature of an age-friendly city.

Within each domain, elements are identified relevant to affordability, appropriateness, and accessibility.

D. Newton's PLAAN Process

In 2017 and 2018, using the AARP/WHO guidelines, the Newton DSS and COA undertook a community engagement process to clarify the strengths and challenges of living in Newton and to hear directly from residents, city staff, and nonprofit and business leaders about how systems could be improved and modified. A three-step process was implemented and included:

- 1) Community Input, Listening Sessions, and Key Interviews
- 2) Community Goal Setting
- 3) Working Groups Action Plan Development and Implementation

Community Input

As part of this information gathering, listening sessions provided an opportunity to hear directly from residents as well as from city leaders to get a comprehensive view on the strengths and challenges of aging in Newton. The process included two parts:

RESIDENT LISTENING SESSIONS	KEY INTERVIEWS
<p>A. Listening sessions help define goals for improvement in meeting the continually changing needs of older adults. The following is a summary of the activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 listening sessions • 300+ participants • Participants included residents who had lived in Newton from one year to 99 years • Sessions were conducted in English, Russian, and Mandarin Chinese • Sessions were conducted as “drop-in” meetings at libraries and schools and with senior residential facilities, religious organizations, and veterans’ organizations • Participants included residents ages 16 to 99 years old 	<p>B. This included interviews with leadership of key city departments and community-based organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Newton departments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Health and Human Services • Police • Information and Technology • Library • Treasury • Community-based organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce • Newton-Wellesley Hospital

Listening Sessions (LS)

LS followed a consistent 60-to-90-minute format. These were larger group meetings that included six or more participants. There were two types of LS: 1) those open to the public and 2) those that were customized with specific groups including faith-based organizations, senior residences, employers, and volunteer organizations. In addition to English, sessions were also conducted in Mandarin Chinese and Russian.

The primary focus of LS was to hear from participants about their vision for age-friendly life in Newton. At the same time, LS welcomed specific participant questions and concerns. Follow-up and details about individual questions occurred after the LS. Resource materials (about transportation and other case management services, in addition to the case manager’s contact information) were provided to all LS attendees. After each session, participants completed session evaluation forms that provided feedback on how to improve future sessions and how to get input from others in the community.

Key Interviews (KI)

These were face-to-face meetings with the leadership of City of Newton departments and other civic organizations and businesses. The format was more conversational between Senior Services staff and the COA members.

Through KI, an understanding of the citywide landscape of the available formal and informal services was developed. In addition, PLAAN received input about future priorities and the vision that leaders had (and continue to have) for age-friendly Newton. During these meetings, information was shared with colleagues about what resources were available through Newton Senior Services. Resource documents about and contacts for Newton Senior Services were distributed. A secondary outcome of the KI was that many leaders gained a new awareness of what was available to their constituents that they could share and thus become a better resource.

Community Goal Setting

After the completion of the Community Input phase, the feedback was organized into the eight domain areas. Three community sessions, open to the public, were held to review feedback and set priorities for areas of focus moving forward. Seventy-five residents were involved with the goal-setting process.

Working Groups Action Plan Development and Implementation

In 2017 and 2018, using the priorities established by the Goal Setting sessions, the Newton COA in collaboration with DSS organized the COA members into Domain Action Teams (DATs). Each focused on one of the domains, and together they worked on specific domain-related projects and began to develop a formal action plan. Each team worked closely with other City of Newton departments, commissions, and groups in the community to achieve age-friendly goals. Age-friendliness is not within the jurisdiction of any one department.

These concepts have been (and continue to be) incorporated into the regular work of collaborative partners. The start of Newton's formal Action Plan was initiated in 2019. Unfortunately, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic caused the cessation of the majority of Senior Center activities, a focus on emergency support for seniors, and a shift to remote programming. Although a considerable amount of work was done on formulating and implementing aspects of the Action Plan, the completion of the plan work was put on hold until 2021.





Newton's Age-Friendly Domain Plans

A. HOUSING

Age-Friendly Vision for Housing

A city in which safe, appropriately designed housing options are available and affordable for older residents, including housing with services that help them stay at home.

Newton Overview: What We Learned Through the Process^{iv}

According to the survey conducted by the Gerontology Institute at the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, University of Massachusetts, Boston, Newton's older residents express positive feelings about the city, with 88% of residents indicating that they would like to remain living in Newton as they age. The majority of those residents live in single-family homes. (See Appendix A, Figure 2.) However, respondents did identify some challenges.^v Concerns about staying in Newton for the most part were around affordability and availability of age-friendly designed options. The following list provides more detail about what was learned.

- The high cost of homes and city property taxes, along with home maintenance expenses, were identified by Newton residents as barriers for staying in the community as they age.
- The Newton Department of Senior Services is witnessing an increasing demand for subsidized housing for older adults and financial assistance for property taxes and utilities.
- 21% of survey respondents aged 60 to 79, and 28% of those 80+ indicated they are unable to afford needed home maintenance and age-friendly modifications.^{vi}
- Even for those residents who can afford modifications, the ability to access contractors and supervise work projects seems difficult for many older residents.
- On surveys and in community meetings, residents expressed that if a move from a single-family home was necessary, a single-floor condo or apartment with no entry stairs or with an elevator

was a preference for aging in Newton. Despite this demand, there continues to be a lack of age-friendly housing stock.

Current Age-Friendly Practices in Housing

- **Newton Leads 2040 Housing Strategy:** In 2017, the City of Newton commissioned a comprehensive *Newton Leads 2040 Housing Strategy Report* for the next 25 years that included some focus on the needs of older adults. The plan clearly indicates that Newton’s housing stock consists predominantly of single-family homes and that 65% of all housing units in the city have three or more bedrooms.^{vii} This data shows that available housing is not aligned with Newton’s aging demographic and addressing this mismatch is a key priority. The strategy identifies a combination of policies and action steps with the goal of producing additional affordable housing units.
- **Inclusionary Zoning:** Inclusionary zoning is a tool used to increase affordable rentals and ownership. In Newton, zoning was adopted in 2019 to require that a minimum of 15% of new housing developments with eight units or more be set aside for affordable housing. See *Newton’s Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance*.
- **Tax Relief:**
 - **Newton Elderly and Disabled Taxation Aid Fund:** The Fund provides modest grants to help elderly and/or disabled residents faced with temporary financial hardships. The grants are used to pay a small portion of a homeowner’s real estate taxes.
 - **Newton Senior Tax Work-Off Program:** The program provides qualified seniors, who work up to approximately 118 hours per year for the city, with a credit of up to \$1,500 against their real estate taxes. To qualify, one must meet age, income, and residency guidelines. Recent efforts are underway to increase the income limits to allow more people to participate. In October 2021, the income eligibility levels were significantly increased for the first time since the inception of the program.
 - The income guidelines were increased in 2019, for the first time, for the Property Tax Deferral Program. Fifteen additional households qualified under the new guidelines that wouldn’t have qualified previously.
- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** Also referred to as family accessory living areas (FALA) or “in-law apartments” in Newton, ADUs are allowed with restrictions on occupancy and size. Requirements were revised in 2017 to allow for additional units to be developed “by right” without requiring a special permitting process.
- **Community Preservation Act Fund:** The Community Preservation Fund provides authority for municipalities in Massachusetts to create a surcharge of up to 3% of the property tax with a state match of up to 100%. Portions of Newton’s funds are dedicated to the creation of affordable housing for seniors.

Recommendations that Support Age-Friendly Housing in Newton

1. Promote/advocate for new age-friendly housing options in Newton
2. Support residents to access existing age-friendly housing in Newton
3. Support older residents to stay in their homes safely

Quotes from Listening Sessions

“I have lived in Newton my whole life. I have seen many changes and the prices of houses are driving people away.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“We would love to stay living in Newton, but there are few options for us to downsize into a smaller space on one floor.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“I would love to stay in my house, but getting people to do things is a major challenge, especially snow shoveling.”

– Newton Senior Resident

B. TRANSPORTATION

Age-Friendly Vision for Transportation

Affordable, accessible transportation that allows residents to freely travel around the city, promotes participation, helps maintain networks, and supports equality of mobility.

Newton Overview: What We Learned Through the Process

During the community input phase of the planning, residents of all ages identified Newton’s proximity and access to public transportation to Boston as a major asset to living in the city. Despite this access to public transportation options, the majority of Newton’s older residents (90% of survey respondents) still drive themselves as their primary transportation. Overall, residents felt Newton was a walkable city with ample sidewalks but did point to some infrastructure maintenance challenges that limited their use.

- Senior residents pointed to the DSS taxi voucher program as an important tool for maintaining independence and access to transportation. However, many felt that the taxi voucher program offered limited sites and they did not like having to reserve three days in advance.

- Many seniors shared that they did modify driving habits by not driving at night or in bad weather.
- The greatest transportation challenges exist for those who do not drive and require wheelchair transport; there were few low-cost options available.
- Street and sidewalk conditions prevented some from walking for shopping and recreation.
- Some residents indicated that the time allocated to cross streets at some intersections was too short and was a challenge for some seniors to cross safely.
- Many residents felt that drivers drove too fast and did not recognize pedestrians in walkways.

Current Age-Friendly Practices in Newton

- In February 2017, as part of Newton Leads 2040, *Newton in Motion – A Transportation Strategy for Newton* was created as a beginning of an ongoing process of engagement, collaboration, and implementation as the community and City Council work together to advance transportation and mobility improvements.
- In June 2019, Newton launched a new transportation system for residents aged 60 and older called NewMo – Newton in Motion. Provided by Via under a contract with the Department of Senior Services, NewMo enabled riders to request on-demand trips to the Senior Center, medical appointments, houses of worship, grocery shopping, and to long-term care facilities within Newton. They could also go to any of Newton’s 13 village centers, any city building, to city-sponsored programs or events, and to the Needham Street Corridor. Additionally, NewMo took riders to certain medical facilities outside of Newton, and continues to do so. Riders can access the service using the NewMo app or by calling the call center.
- In July 2021, NewMo was expanded to include services to commuters to increase options for people working in Newton who lack access to transportation. The expansion allowed for travel to unrestricted destinations throughout the city for residents of all ages. Both the commuter and Senior Service transportation services receive funding from the city and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation.
- To improve/encourage access to the village centers, the Department of Senior Services offers Newton residents aged 65 and older free parking in the city’s municipal parking lots, with some restrictions.
- Residents 65 and older can apply for an MBTA Senior Charlie Card at the Senior Center at quarterly sign-up sessions. (This program has been paused while the Senior Center building is being reconstructed.)
- Newton is committed to increasing bike infrastructure in the City of Newton. The city is currently working on designs for painted bike lanes for the length of Parker Street and Beacon Street from Washington Street to Centre Street.



- Newton is part of the Bluebikes bike-share program. Self-rental bikes are available throughout the city, including at MBTA stations.

Recommendations that Support Age-Friendly Transportation in Newton

1. Optimize transportation options for older adults
2. Improve older adults' knowledge of and access to transportation options
3. Improve infrastructure including streets, roads, and sidewalks

Quotes from Listening Sessions

“The (transportation) program allows me to be independent – I don’t have to burden my children for rides all the time.”
– Newton Senior Resident

“We seniors need to have an affordable way to get to our appointments.”
– Newton Senior Resident

“Although I love to walk, I am hesitant to venture out because the streets and sidewalks are in bad condition in many places.”
– Newton Senior Resident

C. OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Age-Friendly Vision for Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

A community that provides public spaces that are accessible, well-lit, and well-marked, with shade and places to sit that allow for comfort and independence.

Newton Overview: What We Learned Through the Process

Residents of all ages appreciate the multiple villages in Newton and liked having the smaller and accessible shopping areas in walkable distance to their home. However, many shared concerns that the village centers were losing their individuality and shopping diversity. The rise of rents had made it difficult for specialty “Ma and Pa” stores to survive. Access to green spaces and parks was identified as a major asset to living in Newton. In general, residents felt that open spaces and business districts needed additional age-friendly adjustments to make them more accessible. Snow removal was also a major concern that limited older adults’ outings during the winter.

With regard to public buildings, the Newton Free Library was consistently identified as a significant and well-used resource for residents. Residents gave high marks for the programming and staff of the DSS and appreciated the range of recreational options provided by Newton Parks and Recreation Over 55 Programs. In 2019, DSS staff and COA members participated in the development of *Newton's Open Space and Recreation Plan* to ensure that age-friendly concepts were included.

Overall, residents expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the Newton Senior Center building, describing the building as “small and dated.” In addition to being in general disrepair, lack of adequate parking, and insufficient space to accommodate classes were the most frequent complaints about the Senior Center.

Many felt that there was inadequate seating in the village business districts. Access to public restrooms was also cited as a concern by older residents.

Current Age-Friendly Practices in Newton

- In spring of 2018, the City of Newton initiated a comprehensive planning process to determine and address the space needs of DSS programming. The community and space review process had significant input from Newton's older residents under the direction of the COA. The Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) is the name given to the proposed building that will meet the programming needs. After a two-year site selection process, in September 2020 the NewCAL Working Group submitted a letter to Mayor Ruthanne Fuller formally recommending that the Newtonville site of the existing Senior Center be the location for the new building. Subsequently, after further community input and approval by the COA, the recommendation was made to demolish the current center and build a completely new building. The alternative was to renovate and add on to the current building that was built in 1938 as a branch library. Renovation would have been significantly more expensive, made construction more complicated, and would not have addressed the programming needs as well as a new building could. The Mayor endorsed the recommendations, and planning and design are underway for a new center to be completed by the end of 2024.
- In 2018, the City of Newton embarked on a project to plan, design, and construct roadway, sidewalk, and streetscape improvements that included “age-friendly design” concepts, including benches, improved lighting, and crosswalks on Walnut Street in the heart of Newtonville.
- In 2019, West Newton Square enhancements were begun, also incorporating “age-friendly design” concepts.
- Each year from June through October, Newton Parks and Recreation operates farmers' markets at two locations. Both accept WIC and SNAP benefit cards as well as senior vouchers. The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) provides low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs.
- In the fall of 2020, Newton's Planning Department initiated a community engagement process around village rezoning and design. DSS and COA are participating in and helping to facilitate older-adult focus groups.

Recommendations that Support Age-Friendly Outdoor and Built Spaces in Newton

1. Develop a new senior center to accommodate the changing needs and interests of a growing population
2. Complete inventory of existing age-friendly resources and communicate with community
3. Increase age-friendly and dementia-friendly elements into designing parks and green spaces

Quotes from Listening Sessions

“We love to walk around Crystal Lake in every season of the year.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“I love living in Newton because it is close to Boston, and we have lots of green spaces.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“I have lived in Newton for over 70 years. It is supposedly the Garden City, however over the years our gardens have not been cared for as they were in the past.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“I love the Newton Senior Center. The staff and class offerings are A+ but the building is an F.”

– Newton Senior Resident

D. COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Age-Friendly Vision for Community Support and Health Services

An age-friendly community offers a wide network of medical and non-medical services to promote well-being and quality of life.

Newton Overview: What We Learned Through the Process

The largest share of Newton residents who attended listening sessions and who participated in the survey report good physical health. Newton’s proximity to excellent hospitals and medical services was

noted as a contributing factor to resident well-being. Predictably, Newton residents who are 80 years and older indicated that they needed more help including with daily living activities, errands, and personal care. One of the more common problems facing older adults who need assistance was locating appropriate services that may be available to supplement informal care provided by family and friends. Commonly cited issues expressed by many older people regarding their difficulty in gaining access to available services include not knowing where or whom to contact for help and being unaware of what services exist. Access to healthy food is a growing problem for Newton's older lower-income residents.

A growing number of older Newton residents are in a "caregiver" role providing informal care and assistance to family members who are frail or disabled while managing other aspects of their lives such as family and work. While residents indicated that exercise programs were available through the DSS, Parks and Recreation, and other community-based organizations like the YMCA and Jewish Community Center, many expressed a need for more low-cost or no-cost programs.

As part of the information gathering process, a series of listening sessions was conducted with the staff of Newton-Wellesley Hospital, the only hospital located within the city. Medical staff expressed an interest in building stronger partnerships with the DSS and Newton's aging population. This process launched an ongoing dialogue with the hospital that resulted in cosponsored programs and an increase in patient referrals by doctors to the programs available through DSS.

Current Age-Friendly Practices in Newton

- The DSS provides Caregiver Support Groups as well as other health-related affinity groups including Parkinson's, low vision, and bereavement groups.
- The DSS, in partnership with Newton's Department of Health and Human Services and other providers, offers regular blood pressure, eye, and hearing screenings at the Senior Center.
- The DSS, in partnership with the Greater Boston Food Bank, offers the Commodity Supplemental Food Program to improve the health of low-income senior residents by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA foods. Seniors must be 60+ and complete the application form in advance to be registered to receive groceries. Eligible residents receive two free bags of food once a month containing healthy shelf-stable products. Food packages include a variety of foods such as nonfat dry milk, juice, farina, oats, ready-to-eat cereal, rice, pasta, peanut butter, dry beans, canned meat, poultry, or fish, and canned fruits and vegetables.
- The DSS, in partnership with Springwell, the Aging Services Access Point (ASAP), provides a daily lunch site program (Monday through Friday) to eligible residents.
- The DSS coordinates the Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Loan Program that allows Newton residents to donate and borrow "gently used" medical equipment such as walkers, rollators with seats, shower chairs, commodes, wheelchairs, and transport chairs. (This program has been paused until NewCAL opens.)
- The DSS and Newton Parks and Recreation Over 55 Programs offer a range of low-cost and free exercise options including choices for less mobile and more active residents including: Seated Strength & Balance, Tai Chi, Yoga, Muscle Conditioning, LaBlast Cardio Dance, and Zumba Gold.

Recommendations that Support Age-Friendly Community Support and Health Services

1. Support caregivers in sustaining and improving their role
2. Provide nutritional assistance to older adults who experience food insecurity
3. Deepen the connection between Newton-Wellesley Hospital and the Department of Senior Services
4. Expand opportunities for seniors to participate in peer-to-peer support
5. Expand the number of low-cost/no-cost exercise options for seniors

Quotes from Listening Sessions

“I am a single woman and have no children. I have always been independent, and now that my health is failing, I need more help and I don’t know where to turn.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“I am very worried about my future. I depend on Social Security, and it is so hard to make ends meet.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“Eating healthy is a top priority, but it is hard to do. I wish that the home-delivered meals were healthier and had more fresh vegetables.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“Many seniors are caught in the middle with regards to getting supportive services; they can’t afford to pay for services out of pocket but make too much money to qualify for subsidies.”

– Newton Senior Resident

E. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Age-Friendly Vision for Civic Engagement and Employment

An age-friendly community offers resources and partnerships to promote civic engagement, paid employment, consultancy, or mentorship for residents. These vehicles provide residents with mutually rewarding opportunities to actively share their ideas, interests, and talents through employment or volunteer support for programs, organizations, and economic growth in Newton.

Newton Overview: What We Learned Through the Process

Newton has a tradition of high voter participation and civic involvement, and residents voiced a desire to continue to be involved with the community in deep and meaningful ways as they age. Eighty-six percent of older adults aged 80 and older indicated that they felt a sense of belonging to their neighborhoods.

There was a strong interest in volunteering, especially with school-age young people. During the listening sessions, people voiced their feelings of separation from the younger generation and had creative ideas about bridging the generational divide. In addition, many of Newton's high school students who participated in the listening groups also voiced their desire to connect with older residents. With many families living far distances from their parents and grown children there is an appetite for community-based intergenerational activities.

There seemed to be confusion about where to go to find volunteer opportunities, and a central clearing house for volunteer activities was suggested. Listening session participants voiced a strong desire for meaningful paid work experiences. The desire to work was multifaceted; many felt that they had much to contribute to their field and wanted to work on a part-time basis to stay involved. Others expressed a need to supplement their current incomes. Many said that they felt stress related to financial sustainability. Whether for financial reasons or other, overall participants felt that age discrimination was prevalent and difficult to overcome.

Current Age-Friendly Practices in Newton

- The DSS has a staff member dedicated to coordinating volunteer options across the city.
- The City of Newton actively seeks out older adults to sit on city boards and commissions.
- The DSS in partnership with the Assessor's Office administers a Senior and Veteran Tax Work-Off program that reduces property taxes in exchange for work in city departments. The Mayor and the City Council recently approved an increase to the income eligibility limit to include more residents.
- COA members attend and act as liaisons with related committees and commissions to ensure an age-friendly perspective in discussions and decision making.

Recommendations that Support Age-Friendly Civic Engagement and Employment

1. Expand opportunities for older adults to access employment
2. Expand opportunities for older adults to participate in the electoral process
3. Expand and enhance opportunities for older adults to participate in volunteer activities

Quotes from Listening Sessions

“I am 72 and healthy. I would like to keep working, but I never get call backs for the jobs that I apply to, including from the City [of Newton].”

– Newton Senior Resident

“Older workers face significant prejudice. It is hard to accept a job that has less responsibility than you had before.”

– Newton Senior Resident

F. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Age-Friendly Vision for Social Participation

Age-friendly community activities and events that are affordable, held at convenient times, and accessible by public transportation.

Newton Overview: What We Learned Through the Process

Newton offers a wide variety of recreational programs, historical and cultural activities and events that encourage social participation of residents. Listening groups pointed to the comprehensive offerings at Newton’s Senior Center including art classes, technology instruction, book clubs, crafts, and fitness classes — thousands of hours of programs offered. The Newton Free Library was also consistently mentioned as a place for social interaction.

Current Age-Friendly Practices in Newton

- The DSS and Parks and Recreation offer multiple social programs and opportunities for recreation and social engagement.
- The Newton Free Library offers technology support classes, discussion groups, and volunteer opportunities.

- Newton North and Newton South High Schools host a variety of musical and theatrical programs throughout the year and reserve a specific number of tickets for older adults.
- Numerous faith-based congregations offer senior programming and classes throughout the year.

Recommendations that Support Age-Friendly Social Participation:

1. Develop supports for the most isolated older adults
2. Raise community awareness about the impact of isolation on older adults
3. Increase opportunities for intergenerational exchange

Quotes from Listening Sessions

“There are so many activities and performances happening in Newton that are easy to get to and are affordable, too.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“I feel so fortunate to live in a community that values learning and has such a great library. I don’t know what I would do without this fantastic resource.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“I recently moved to Newton to be close to my grandchildren. I am very impressed with how much is going on in the city.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“Weekends are the hardest time for me. There are not a lot of programs going on and I feel very lonely.”

– Newton Senior Resident

G. RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Age-Friendly Vision for Respect and Inclusion

An age-friendly community includes and consults older adults on community projects, planning initiatives, and all aspects of city life.

Newton Overview: What We Learned Through the Process

The majority of survey respondents (92%) rated their well-being and life satisfaction as good or excellent. For the most part, older people in Newton remain well-connected to family and friends via forms of frequent communication including in-person visits, telephone conversations, and email exchanges. Nevertheless, some survey respondents suggested that they might not have adequate social/emotional support. Twenty-three percent of Newton residents live alone. Survey results indicated that a small percentage of residents are at risk for social isolation due to their limited community connections and inadequate access to goods and services outside of their homes.

Ageism and respect for older adults is a concern in Newton. During the listening sessions, a number of participants expressed a growing sense of isolation they felt in their neighborhoods. They described situations in which a large number of their neighbors were not at home during the day and that they lack a sense of neighborhood connection. Even young participants shared a feeling of isolation. As neighborhoods changed over and young families moved in, there was not a natural connection for people to meet. Once the children of older residents were no longer in school, they reported a lack of opportunity to connect and build community. Those who did not have children felt even more isolation. Listening group participants expressed an interest in creating more informal “block” activities. Several listening group participants also voiced the idea of creating more informal welcoming programs at the Newton Free Library where residents could meet and mingle.

Additionally, isolation is a concern for those dealing with memory issues. In Newton, 13.5% of individuals over 65 are estimated to have been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or some other form of dementia. Caregivers of family members expressed significant frustration about supporting their family members. There is a substantial need for dementia care facilities in the area.

Current Age-Friendly Practices in Newton

- Newton’s DSS conducts a regular Memory Café for individuals experiencing memory loss and their caregivers.
- The Newton Free Library provides regular book delivery for homebound residents.
- In 2019, Newton’s DSS implemented a friendly visitor program in partnership with FriendshipWorks.
- DSS participates in the annual Alzheimer’s walk held during September.
- The COA developed a community outreach/awareness effort to educate the community about the issues related to isolation and loneliness.

Recommendations that Support Age-Friendly Respect and Inclusion

1. Develop supports for the most isolated older adults
2. Raise community awareness about the impact of isolation on older adults
3. Increase opportunities for intergenerational exchange

4. Build relationships with faith-based organization to specifically target and provide supports to socially isolated seniors

Quotes from Listening Sessions

“Sometimes I feel invisible to the community because I am an older adult. People talk around me and not to me.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“I wish I had more contact with the younger generation. I am a scientist and feel I have much to offer students.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“I live far away from my grandmother and my other grandparents have passed away. I wish I had more opportunity to speak with elders.”

– Newton South High School Student

“I would love the opportunity to be part of an adopt-a-grandparent program, but I feel so pressed for time. I wish that our school would give us credit for volunteer service.”

– Newton South High School Student

“We raised our children in Newton, and they have chosen to raise their families here, too. We have deep roots here.”

– Newton Senior Resident

H. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Age-Friendly Vision for Communication and Information

An age-friendly community includes and consults older adults on community projects, planning initiatives, and all aspects of city life.

Newton Overview: What We Learned Through the Process

Newton residents identified a variety of communication and information resources made available to them. However, listening group participants felt there was still a need for a centralized tool for

getting a complete overview of news and events. Groups identified the DSS bimonthly newsletter and the Newton TAB as their most used tools for accessing information. Participants stressed the importance of preserving print communication to reach the residents who are without regular Internet access or are not comfortable using the technology.

Many older residents expressed frustration about the communities' perception of older adults and felt that there should be a dedicated effort to educate the public about the strengths of Newton's aging population.

Current Age-Friendly Practices in Newton

- Newton's municipal website (<https://www.newtonma.gov>) offers an overview of the city's services.
- The Mayor's Office, and many of Newton's organizations and groups, are active on social media.
- The DSS publishes a bimonthly *Coming of Age* newsletter, with a description of programs.
- In 2020, the DSS introduced a weekly e-newsletter.
- There is a system in place to make automated calls from Newton City Hall during times of severe weather or other types of emergent situations for those with publicly listed telephone numbers.
- NewTV is a nonprofit Newton-based cable organization dedicated to providing the Newton community with a platform for opinions, news, and local information not generally available from commercial or public media. NewTV also offers training, media facilities, and content distribution. <https://newtv.org/about>
- The Newton TAB is a printed newspaper that publishes weekly and includes a listing of senior activities, volunteer opportunities, and other recreational and social events. (As of March 2022, the Newton TAB became available online only, in a reduced format.)
- The Department of Parks and Recreation offers special programs for residents 55+ and provides an online calendar of events as well as quarterly printed communications.

Recommendations that Support Age-Friendly Communications

1. Enhance existing communication channels, using best practices and marketing research, and leveraging community partners to expand reach
2. Review communications best practices to better reach out to the older adult audience and develop a comprehensive plan
3. Expand the knowledge of age-friendly services and issues to elected officials and community leaders

Quotes from Listening Sessions

“I depend on the Newton TAB to get my information about what is going on. I am not good with computers.”

– Newton Senior Resident

“There is so much going on, I wish there was a central place to look for things daily.”

– Newton Senior Resident





Citations

- i City of Newton. (n.d.). *About Newton*. Retrieved from City of Newton website: <https://www.newtonma.gov/about>
- ii Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, John W. McCormack School of Policy and Global Studies, University of Massachusetts. (2014) *Living and Aging in Newton: Now and in the Future*, page 22
- iii World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Age-Friendly World*. Retrieved from WHO website: <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/about-us>
- iv Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, John W. McCormack School of Policy and Global Studies, University of Massachusetts. (2014) *Living and Aging in Newton: Now and in the Future*
- v Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, John W. McCormack School of Policy and Global Studies, University of Massachusetts. (2014) *Living and Aging in Newton: Now and in the Future*, page 25
- vi Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, John W. McCormack School of Policy and Global Studies, University of Massachusetts. (2014) *Living and Aging in Newton: Now and in the Future*, page 34
- vii RKG Associates. (2016) *Housing Needs Analysis and Strategic Recommendations, City of Newton, Massachusetts*, page 16



Appendix A Support Tables, Charts

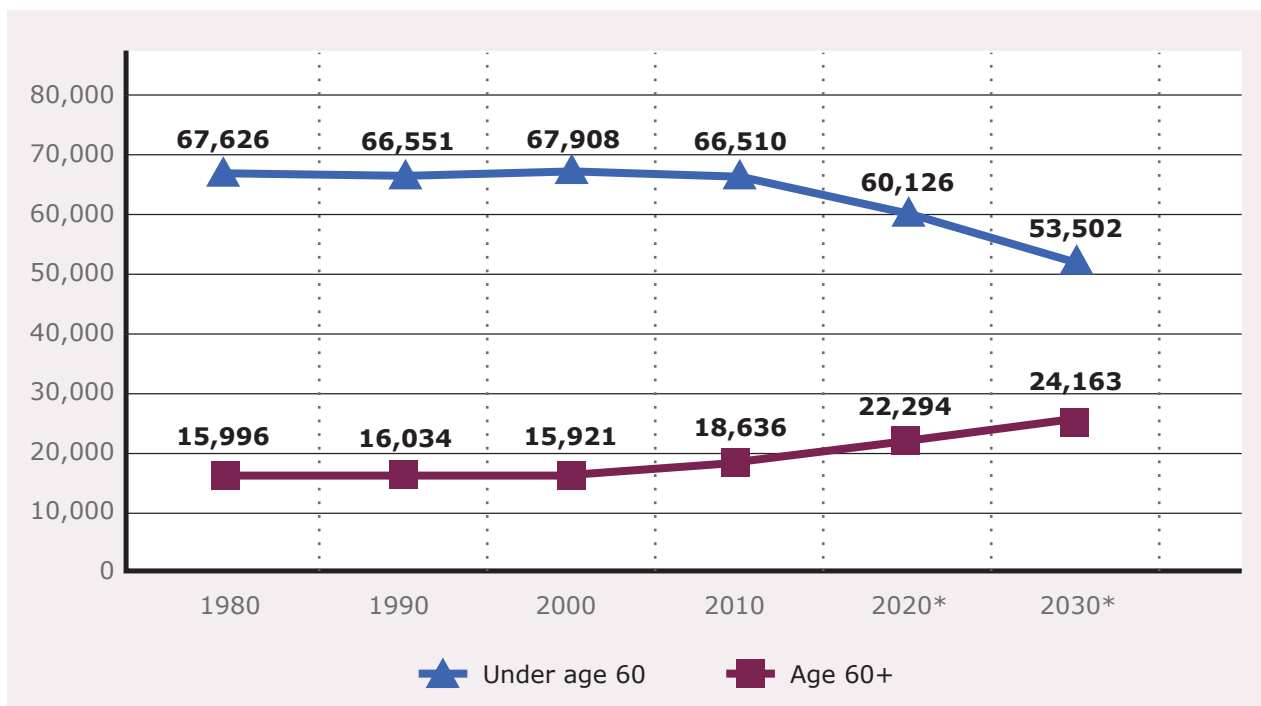
Table 1. Number and Percentage Distribution of Newton’s Population by Age Category, 2010

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Under age 18	18,416	22%
Age 18–49	35,744	42%
Age 50–59	12,320	15%
Age 60–79	14,018	16%
Age 80 and older	4,618	5%
Total	85,146	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census. Summary File 1, Table QT-P1.

The median income for a household in Newton was \$107,696, and the median income for a family was \$136,843. The per capita income in the city was \$56,163. About 3.6% of families and 5.9% of the population were below the poverty line, including 5.2% of those under age 18 and 9.4% of those age 65 or over. As of 2018, 22.3% of Newton residents (19.7k people) were born outside of the United States, which is higher than the national average of 13.7%.

Figure 1. Change in the Number of Newton Residents Under Age 60, and Age 60 and Older, 1980 to 2010 with Projections to 2030*

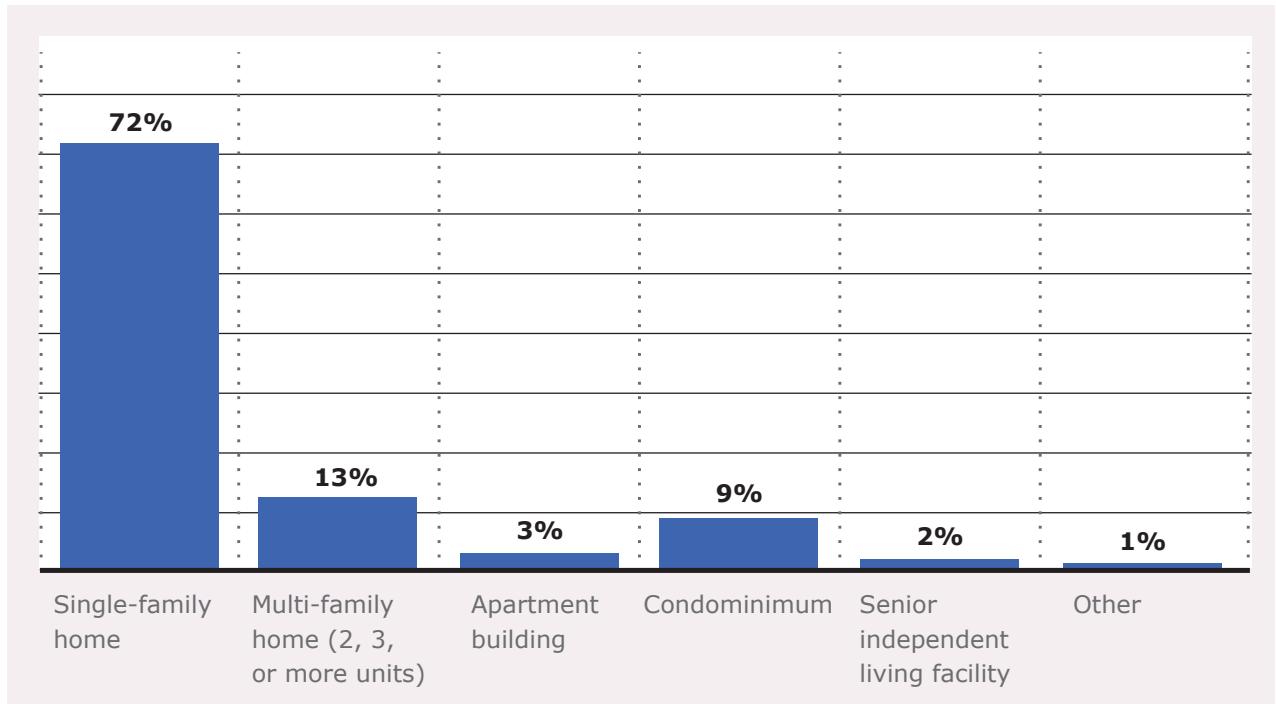


Source: Population figures for 1980-2010 are from the U.S. Census, 1980 thru 2010.

* Figures for 2020 and 2030 are projections generated by the Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts: <https://pep.donahue-institute.org/>



Figure 2. Current Type of Residence Reported by Respondents



A noticeable characteristic of Newton is the number of single-family homes. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the majority of occupied housing units (62%) are single-family attached or detached homes, 37% are apartment buildings or condominiums, and the remaining 1% are other types of housing (ACS Table S2504, 2008-2012). **Figure 2** indicates that an overwhelming majority (72%) of survey respondents reported living in single-family homes. The remaining respondents lived in multi-family homes with 2 or more units (13%), condominiums (9%), apartments (3%), or senior independent living facilities (2%). One percent reported living in other types of residences including nonprofit housing for seniors. Similarly, among residents aged 80 and older, the majority (55%) live in single-family homes. For many older residents, living in a single-family structure may become a greater burden with age, as home maintenance becomes more challenging and keeping up with expenses becomes more difficult on fixed incomes during retirement. Living in single-family homes may also become less practical as family situations change. Thus, the process of aging in community may often require difficult decisions about whether to leave one's residence for housing alternatives that are a better fit with current and future health and social situations. The extent to which older people live in single-family houses because there are limited alternatives (e.g., condos) is not known.



Appendix B PLAAN Actions and Recommendations

A. HOUSING

Recommendations: Continue to collaborate with community housing advocates, integrating age-friendly designs, and raising awareness to ensure residents have housing options to choose from as they age in Newton.

#1. Promote/Advocate for new age-friendly housing options in Newton		
ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Develop age-friendly housing criteria using Universal Design principles	AARP, ADA Coordinator, Inspectional Services Department, COA Housing Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/17: Completed and distributed to interested residents, developers, and city departments including Planning and Inspectional Services
B. Promote concept of age-friendly housing to developers	Engine 6 Newton Housing Advocates, Newton Planning Department, Newton Housing Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing meetings with developers as they approach the city through design/permitting process • Provide housing criteria to interested developers
C. Advocate for the development of age-friendly housing	Engine 6, Newton Planning Department, City Council, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA provided letters of support for six multi-unit projects that are suitable for an older population and one proposed assisted living/memory care facility • Attend and testify at public hearings relevant to housing supportive of older residents • 3/20: Hosted debate with special election candidates for City Council. Housing and age-friendly questions were posed to candidates. Raised awareness of issue among future city councilors and obtained commitments to support in the future.

#2. Support residents to access existing age-friendly housing in Newton

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Improve public knowledge about housing and housing services available in Newton	Planning Department, Newton Free Library, Newton Housing Authority, Housing providers, Health and Human Services (HHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided several seminars on housing with library and other community partners • Ongoing case management from DSS and HHS • Continue to educate on current and changing resources
B. Develop a housing guide to inform people of housing options	Newton Housing Partnership, Newton Housing Authority, COA Housing Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6/17: Completed • Develop a process to keep guide current/updated • Continue to distribute through all available avenues
C. Develop list of elevator buildings in Newton	Newton Assessors' Office, ADA Coordinator, COA Housing Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6/17: Completed by COA Housing Committee. Included in Housing Guide • Update as new resources become available

#3. Support older residents so they can remain in their homes safely

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Develop safety criteria for setting up an age-friendly home	AARP, Solutions for Access, Active Matters, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018: Criteria completed with an AARP grant and tested in people's homes • Continue to update and distribute
B. Support the Newton Planning Department to develop and pass and updated accessory apartment ordinance	COA, Engine 6, City Council, Planning Department, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosponsored listening and educational sessions about the pending accessory apartment ordinance change • Provided and encouraged testimony at public hearings • 4/17: Accessory apartment ordinance passed • Educate residents about the option to adapt their homes
C. Increase participation in the tax relief and other programs that help support older Newton residents to reduce the cost of staying in their home	Case Managers, Assessors' Office, Mayor's Office, HHS, Boston College's Center for Retirement, City Council, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include info in public presentations on housing (ongoing) • Provide specific outreach about Tax Deferral Program • Promotion of Senior Circuit Breaker tax credit through AARP's tax program and articles • Advocate for increase in income limits — 7/19: Implemented increased income limits for Tax Deferral Program. 9/21: City Council approved increase to Tax Work-Off income limits.

B. TRANSPORTATION

Recommendations: Continue to collaborate with community transportation advocates, to ensure the incorporation of age-friendly aspects in transportation solutions. Advocate for a variety of options and services to keep older people mobile and engaged.

#1. Optimize transportation options for older adults		
ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Enhance city-sponsored affordable transportation options for older adults	Planning Department, Via (transportation provider). Funding from: DOT, Massachusetts Community Compact Program, City of Newton budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6/19: Established NewMo (Newton in Motion), an affordable micro transit on-demand shared ride system • As of 6/21, 25,000 rides had been provided to 700 older adults (ridership affected by COVID and inability to provide shared rides) • Awarded two grants from DOT and one from Community Compact program • 7/21: Expanded NewMO to include all destinations in the city for older riders and a workforce commuter service with additional funds from DOT • Continue to encourage and train riders to use the app to enhance their experience • Assess, enhance, and recontract the NewMo service for FY23
B. Increase older residents' use of discount rides on MBTA (public transportation)	MBTA, TRIPPS (Transportation, Resources, Information, Planning, and Partnership for Seniors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunity for Newton residents to get MBTA Charlie Cards (senior discount cards) at the Newton Senior Center (on hold due to COVID) • Twice yearly sign-up sessions with 100+ attendees on average (on hold due to COVID) • Small group trips using public transportation with TRIPPS • 7/21: Continue to assist people with the newly introduced online platform for NewMo ride system
C. Increase older residents' participation in the Senior Parking Sticker Program (municipal parking lot discount) program	DPW, Newton Police, Planning Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated regulations • Educated eligible residents about how new citywide electronic parking kiosk program works with sticker • Instituted a mail-in process to renew stickers for bi-annual renewal process (due to COVID)

#2. Improve older adults' knowledge of and access to transportation options

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Provide forums to educate residents about transportation options	The Ride, MBTA, Veterans Taxi, TRIPPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented regular bi-annual transportation fairs at the Newton Senior Center (paused until NewCAL is complete) Continue to provide forums that allow riders to interact with providers
B. Highlight transportation options in various media outlets	Newton TAB, Constant Contact, DSS website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing The COA routinely published articles in the local paper (Newton TAB) and transportation was addressed several times. (TAB newspaper print edition ceased publication in 2022.)
C. Partnership with Brookline TRIPPS	Mass. Council on Aging, Town of Brookline, City of Newton Director of Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created directory, developed application training, conducted field trips 2019: TRIPPS lost funding

#3. Improve infrastructure including streets, roads, and sidewalks

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Identify dangerous/challenging intersections, streets, and sidewalks in Newton and explore age-friendly strategies for repairing sidewalks, assess, and evaluate solutions for each of the findings	Newton Department of Planning and Development, Transportation Advisory Group (TAG), DPW, Parks and Recreation, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensured consistent COA representation in TAG to bring issues forward COA provided testimony, letters of support, or feedback for proposed changes by the City of Newton and/or MBTA Newtonville redesign incorporated more pedestrian-friendly elements: more crosswalks, benches, and tables placed at frequent intervals, improved lighting, etc. Continue to participate in village redesign and zoning discussions and implementation

C. OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Recommendations: Continue to collaborate with open, green space, and building advocates to ensure that Newton’s older residents are encouraged and able to safely and easily access the natural and built environment.

#1. Develop a new Senior Center to accommodate the changing needs and interests of a growing population		
ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Foster opportunities for older adults to be involved in the planning processes	Mayor’s Office, Public Buildings Department, COA, Parks and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2/18: Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) planning process begins • 6/18: Community encouraged to apply to serve on the NewCAL Working Group. Group established and began meeting fall of 2018 • As of 8/2022, 350 meetings had been held with the community, businesses, city councilors, etc.
B. Provide opportunities for input across all aspects of the community	Public Buildings Department, Mayor’s Office, COA, neighborhood advisory groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to hold monthly community meetings to ensure that current and future user groups, business, art, recreational, and other sectors of the community have input in the design process

#2. Complete inventory of existing age-friendly resources and communicate with community		
ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Identify the location of current public restrooms on main streets and other business areas and determine the best ways to communicate this information to the public	Chamber of Commerce, DPW, Parks and Recreation, ADA Coordinator, Economic Development Director, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/21: Established a COA committee to initiate the process
B. Map current location of benches and make recommendations for improvement	DPW, Parks and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/21: Established a COA committee to initiate the process

#3. Increase age-friendly and dementia-friendly elements into the design of parks and green spaces

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Develop a set of recommendations for age-friendly and dementia-friendly park features to use as a guide for redesign and in new developments	Parks and Recreation, Planning Department, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3/20: Staff and COA participated in updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan • Age-friendly features guide/recommendations to be developed
B. Educate city departments and developers about age-friendly design concepts	City departments, developers, COA, City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed housing criteria to City Council • Ongoing usage of age-friendly housing criteria
C. Provide training to city departments and local businesses about how to serve residents with physical, cognitive, and memory challenges	Dementia Friendly Massachusetts, MCOA, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Newton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided Dementia Friendly trainings to city staff and Village Bank • Ongoing

D. COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Recommendations: Continue to work with providers and advocates for community and health services to ensure awareness of access to services that support aging in Newton.

#1. Support caregivers in sustaining and improving their role

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Expand the number of caregiver support groups	Community residents, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Springwell, Temple Emmanuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded times caregiver support groups are offered at the Senior Center • 6/20: Implemented a Zoom-based caregiver group due to COVID • Promotion of support opportunities from other community providers (ongoing)
B. Produce reference materials for caregivers to access additional supports	Springwell, Community residents, Temple Emmanuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evidence-based programs such as Powerful Tools for Caregivers (ongoing)
C. Expand recreational opportunities for caregivers and those in their care to gather together socially	Community residents, local artists, Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS), business community through program sponsorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3/17: Implemented a monthly Memory Café at the Senior Center

#2. Provide nutritional assistance to food-insecure older adults

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Develop monthly food pick-up program for seniors	Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB), community volunteers, Newton Free Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/18: Launched the monthly Commodity Supplemental Food Program, developed in partnership with GBFB (ongoing) • Converted completely to a home-delivery system during COVID
B. Provide food delivery service to seniors who qualify for home delivery	Community volunteers, DPW, Community Development Block Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3/20: Established a food and essential item shopping and delivery program (due to COVID) • Awarded a CDBG COVID grant to support this program • 9/21: Assessed need and ability to continue this service in some manner • 1/22: Pursue funding to continue determined level of service • 9/22: Service discontinued due to lack of funding
C. Work with Springwell to enhance the daily lunch options	Springwell, Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve Springwell in the design of NewCAL and the implementation of dining alternatives

#3. Deepen the connection between Newton-Wellesley Hospital and the Department of Senior Services

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Develop cosponsored programs with Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH)	Newton-Wellesley Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018: COA member appointed to the NWH Elder Care Council • Initiated ongoing programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tai Chi • Mindfulness and meditation • Matter of Balance • Educational forums
B. Increase doctor referrals to Senior Center programs and services	NWH primary care physicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a Senior Services information card that is distributed by NWH doctors to their patients

#4. Expand opportunities for seniors to participate in peer-to-peer support

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Develop support/discussion group for newly retired residents	Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019: Launched group (ongoing, however no longer sponsored by the City of Newton)
B. Expand and promote current affinity groups including: dementia-friendly Memory Cafés, men’s club, LGBTQ+, Parkinson’s, COVID support, low vision, clutter, and bereavement	JFCS, Massachusetts Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired, LGBTQ Aging Project (Fenway Health Center)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Converted to Zoom platform for most groups during COVID (ongoing)

#5. Expand the number of low-cost/no-cost exercise options for seniors

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Increase the number of locations where DSS-sponsored exercise classes are held	Hyde Center, Scandinavian Living Center, Stone Institute, Newton Housing Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017: Implemented off-site programming (ongoing) • 9/21: Reviewed additional off-site opportunities to ensure a safe level of indoor participation due to COVID
B. Expand the number of donation-based, senior-focused exercise classes	EOEA/State Formula Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017: Made all fitness classes donation-based • Pursue additional funding to underwrite these ongoing programs
C. Expand the number of classes offered online	Fitness instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3/20: Due to COVID, all classes were are on Zoom platform or pre-recorded and available on NSS website

E. CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Recommendations: Continue to work with the business and civic community to ensure older adults have access to rewarding work and volunteer opportunities. Ensure older adults are involved in making decisions in both public and private sectors and are regularly consulted by elected officials.

#1. Expand opportunities for older adults to access employment

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Educate employers regarding the advantages of hiring older workers	Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce, Jewish Vocational Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019: Led a workshop for local employers with the Chamber of Commerce
B. Provide job search support for older adults	MCOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018: Began MCOA’s 50+ Job Seekers program. Conducted multiple sessions prior to COVID (ongoing, now sponsored by the Massachusetts Library System).

#2. Expand opportunities for older adults to participate in the electoral process

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Conduct candidate forums focused on issues directly affecting older adults	UMass, Newton Election Commission, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5/17: COA-sponsored Age-Friendly Mayoral Candidates Forum with standing-room-only crowd at the Senior Center • 11/19: COA-sponsored City Council Election Forum • 3/21: COA-sponsored City Council special election candidates forum moderated by UMass (on Zoom)
B. Provide increased access to older adults to speak directly to elected officials	City officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

#3. Expand and enhance opportunities for older adults to participate in volunteer activities

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Facilitate greater connections between city departments, community organizations	City departments, nonprofit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017: Hired a Volunteer Coordinator • Expanded Tax Work-Off Program • Placed 45 residents in volunteer positions in city offices, enabling them to participate in the Tax Work-Off Program
B. Increase outreach and communication about opportunities	City website, local agencies, Newton TAB. (TAB newspaper print edition ceased publication in 2022.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7/20: Hired a full-time Outreach and Engagement Coordinator to promote all programs and services

F. and G. Social Participation/Respect and Social Inclusion (merged domains)

Recommendations: Ensure access to and promote a network of social engagement opportunities for older adults.

#1. Develop supports for the most isolated older adults

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Create a friendly visitor program	FriendshipWorks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/19: Implemented (ongoing)
B. Institute a call program for homebound older adults	Volunteers, COA members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2/20: Initiated in response to COVID (ongoing)

#2. Raise community awareness about the impact of isolation on older adults

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Create a brochure outlining the warning signs and impact of social isolation	COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019: Brochure completed
B. Conduct community outreach	Volunteers, COA members, Library, UMass Boston, NewTV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables at various community locations • Posting in local media • Created educational programs • 12/20: Mayor Fuller created a <i>public service announcement</i> regarding isolation awareness

#3. Increase opportunities for intergenerational exchange

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Seek opportunities for older adults to act as mentors and tutors	Newton Public Schools, Newton community-based organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined
B. Seek volunteer opportunities for young people to support older adults	Boston College students, Newton North and South High Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young adults recruited/placed in FriendshipWorks program • Young volunteers recruited to support food shopping/delivery service in response to COVID
C. Foster the creation of more intergenerational programming	Girl Scouts, Newton North and South High Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing partnership with Girls Scouts • Ongoing partnership with Newton North and South High Schools
D. Create more opportunities for older adults to attend high school programming	Newton North and South High Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated transportation support for older adults to attend student concerts and plays (on hold due to COVID) • Organized special lunches for seniors prepared by Newton North culinary students (on hold due to COVID)

#4. Build relationships with faith-based organizations to specifically target and provide supports to socially isolated seniors

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Seek input and conduct regular communication	Temple Emmanuel, Newton Interfaith Clergy Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to programs • Post information • Conducted listening sessions • Provide transportation to faith-based organization activities

H. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Recommendations: Improve access to opportunities for engagement through enhanced communications.

#1. Enhance existing communication channels, using best practices and marketing research, and leverage community partners to expand reach		
ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Consistent updates about programs and service opportunities to established communication vehicles	TAB, NewTV, Mayor's e-newsletter, Patch, LPI (newsletter publishing company)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7/20: DSS hired first full-time Outreach and Engagement Coordinator responsible for communications • Facebook page improvement • 8/20: City updated/improved web platform for all city departments. Changes focused on better layout, navigation, general appearance, and accessibility. • Weekly Constant Contact emails implemented due to COVID, over 4,000 subscribers • Regular submissions to Mayor's e-newsletter, over 30,000 subscribers • Weekly TAB submissions for a 55+ page. (TAB newspaper print edition ceased publication in 2022.)
B. Redesign/reformat communications platforms to reach more people and to help promote other organizations that reach older adults	IT Department, Constant Contact, LPI, key community agencies that will submit content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4/20: Initiated redesign of paper newsletter due to COVID • Transitioning content to information on community resources and articles on timely topics. Relying more on e-newsletter to communicate time-sensitive programs • Implement an opt-out option for the print newsletter
#2. Review communications best practices to better serve the older adult audience and develop a comprehensive plan		
ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Review each of the domains and develop a communication plan for each domain	COA, Outreach and Engagement Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined
B. Develop a guide for communication steps for reaching older adults	To be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined

#3. Enhance communication regarding age-friendly services and issues to elected officials and community leaders

ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	STATUS
A. Distribute summary of COA initiatives/accomplishments to City Council, other city departments, and to the general public via selected media outlets	Mayor's Office, department heads, IT, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report is submitted to Mayor's Office • Improve COA section on DSS website • Utilize DSS communications to highlight age-friendly efforts through out the city
B. Establish a process for nominating and awarding a citywide Age-Friendly award	Local businesses, city departments, nonprofits, COA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019: Process developed • Ongoing





Appendix C PLAAN Participant List

City of Newton Staff

NAME	TITLE/DEPARTMENT
Seth Bai	Office of Veterans Affairs
Rebecca Camargo	Social Worker, Newton Housing Authority
Bob DeRubeis	Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Quinn Etchie	Department of Health and Human Services/Youth Outreach
Jini Farley	Commissioner, Disability and Inclusion
Nicole Freedman	Director of Transportation, Planning Department
Barney Heath	Director, Planning Department
Julie Joy	Volunteer Coordinator, Department of Senior Services
Emily Kuhl	Case Manager, Department of Senior Services
Shin-Yi Leo	Public Health Educator
Margaret Liepsitz	Outreach Coordinator, Department of Senior Services

NAME	TITLE/DEPARTMENT
Gino Lucchetti	Chief, Newton Fire Department
Phillip McNulty	Newton Free Library
Ellen Meyers	Programs and Communication Director, Newton Free Library
Linda Plaut	Department of Cultural Affairs
Eric Rosenbaum	Newton Police
Ilana Seidmann	Program Coordinator, Department of Senior Services
Nancy Scammon	Department of Parks and Recreation
Fred Weissman	Department of Senior Services
Deb Youngblood	Commissioner, Health and Human Services
Amy Zarechian	Director, Newton Housing Authority

Newton Council on Aging and Advisory Board

NAME	TITLE/AFFILIATION
Joan Belle Isle	Chair, Council on Aging
Elizabeth Dugan	Council on Aging
Jo-Edith Heffron	Council on Aging
Adele Hoffman	Past Chair, Council on Aging
Marian Knapp	Past Chair, Council on Aging
Norman Meltz	Council on Aging
Donna Murphy	Past Chair, Council on Aging
Julie Norstrand	Council on Aging
Joyce Picard	Council on Aging
Sue Rasala	Council on Aging
Allison Sharma	Council on Aging
Laura Shaw	Council on Aging

NAME	AFFILIATION
Dov Bard	Advisory Board
Sandra Davidow	Advisory Board
Mary Glendon	Advisory Board
Tyrone Hooks	Advisory Board
Jessica Johnson	Advisory Board
Ena Lorant	Advisory Board
Maria Meyer	Advisory Board
John Pelletier	Advisory Board
Eric Rosenbaum	Advisory Board
Lisa Samelson	Advisory Board
Nancy Scammon	Advisory Board
Tom Shoemaker	Advisory Board
Gordon Szerlip	Advisory Board
Emma Watkins	Advisory Board

Community Partners

NAME	TITLE/AFFILIATION
Alicia Bowman	Bike Newton; Transportation Advisory Committee
Andrea Burns	Director, Age-Friendly Boston
Daniel Elias	Newton Art Center
Mike Festa	Director, AARP Massachusetts
Jack Fucci	President and CEO, West Suburban YMCA
Fran Godine	Engine 6 Newton Housing Advocates
Maureen Grannan	Executive Director, Newton at Home
Lauren Lele	Newton Wellesley Hospital

NAME	TITLE/AFFILIATION
Aileen Murphy	Newton at Home
Anna Neuman	Student Representative
Josh Obeiter	Seniors Helping Seniors
Susan Paley	Village Bank
Carla Pepka	Lasell Village
Greg Reibman	Newton Needham Chamber of Commerce
Emily Shea	Commissioner, Age Strong Boston
Valerie Spain	AARP