

# Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee FY22 Progress Report

*Making Chelmsford Even More Age-Friendly*

Brief to Select Board  
13 March 2023

# Briefing Outline

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# Background

As a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, during its age-friendly planning phase, Chelmsford assessed its age-friendliness across several domains of livability.

This planning phase resulted in the Age-Friendly Chelmsford Action Plan that was approved by the Town and subsequently by AARP in March 2021.

In May 2021, the Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee was formed to address the goals and accomplish the actions in the Age-Friendly Chelmsford Action Plan.

Despite the impacts of the COVID pandemic, during FY22, these domains were very successful in making Chelmsford even more age-friendly.

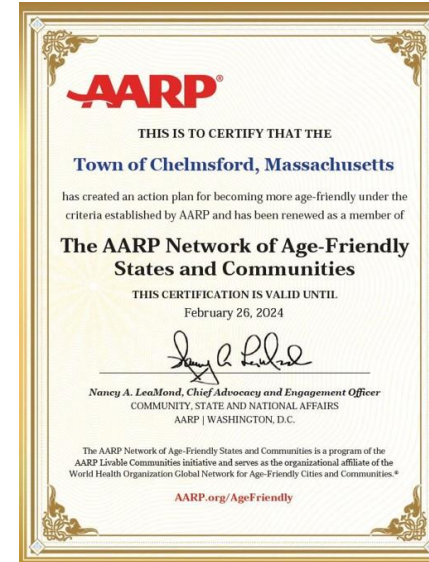
This presentation details those accomplishments.

# Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee

- ▶ Fred Brusseau co-chair, resident
- ▶ Debi Siriani co-chair, Director, Chelmsford Senior Center
- ▶ Becky Herrmann, Clerk, Director, Chelmsford Public Library
- ▶ Lesley Kimball (proxy), Acting Co-Director, Chelmsford Public Library
- ▶ Lisa Marrone, Director of Business Development
- ▶ Jen Melanson, Community Services Coordinator
- ▶ John Bowles, resident
- ▶ Connie Donahue, Deputy Director, Chelmsford Housing Authority
- ▶ Steve Callaghan, Chelmsford DPW, Parks & Playgrounds Coordinator
- ▶ Colin Spence, Deputy Police Chief

# Age-Friendly Chelmsford Timeline

- ▶ Initial start (November 2017)
- ▶ Membership package approved by AARP (May 2019)
- ▶ Membership certificate presented to Town (July 2019)
- ▶ Action Plan domain inputs initiated (December 2019)
- ▶ Action Plan completed (January 2021)
- ▶ Action Plan approved by Select Board (March 2021)
- ▶ Action Plan approved by AARP (March 2021)
- ▶ Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee (May 2021)



# Domains of Livability

- ▶ **Housing (Connie Donahue, lead)**
  - ▶ Promote availability of affordable, age-friendly housing, housing modification programs
- ▶ **Transportation (John Bowles, lead)**
  - ▶ Strengthen availability of safe/affordable, private/public transportation
- ▶ **Community Supports & Health Services (Jen Melanson, lead)**
  - ▶ Ensure access to home-based care services, programs that promote wellness and active aging
- ▶ **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings (Steve Callaghan, lead)**
  - ▶ Ensure availability of safe/accessible recreational facilities
- ▶ **Social Participation, Respect & Inclusion (Debi Siriani, lead)**
  - ▶ Ensure residents feel included/respected in community life
- ▶ **Civic Engagement & Employment (Lisa Marrone, lead)**
  - ▶ Support access to work activities for older residents
- ▶ **Communication & Information (Becky Herrmann, lead, Lesley Kimball, proxy)**
  - ▶ Ensure access to communications technology/resources that enable older residents to connect with the community, family, friends, and remain aware of available local resources

# Housing

- ▶ Increasing availability of affordable housing
  - ▶ Helena Crocker Residences (18 units), UMASS West Campus (54-58 units)
- ▶ Preserving/improving existing affordable housing stock
  - ▶ McFarlin Manor (51 units)
- ▶ Increasing number of rental vouchers
  - ▶ Awarded 31+ new vouchers for rental assistance including all populations
- ▶ Established partnership with Habitat for Humanity
  - ▶ Offers assistance to qualified homeowners, seniors and veterans with homes in need of certain repairs
- ▶ Uploaded inventory of Town-wide affordable housing to new website ([HousingNavigatorMassachusetts.org](https://HousingNavigatorMassachusetts.org))
  - ▶ One of first communities to do so

# Transportation

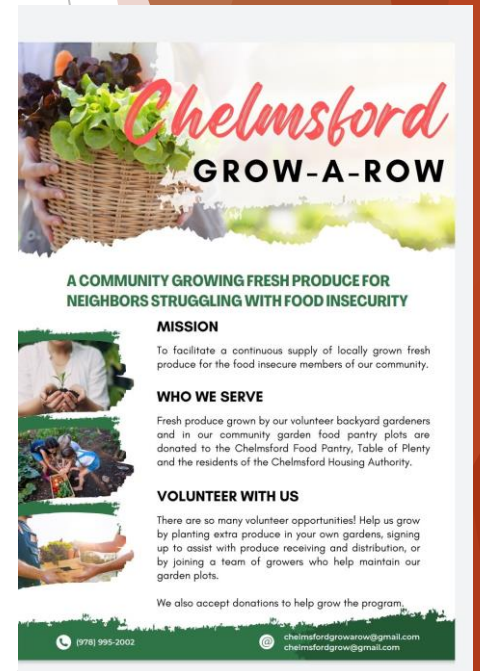
- ▶ Planned/promoted supplementary volunteer transportation service - - “Chelmsford RIDE”
  - ▶ Supplementary to existing Senior Center transportation service
  - ▶ Volunteer drivers, Town-furnished vehicles
  - ▶ Service available for those age 18+ who are unable to drive
  - ▶ Flyers prepared and ready for distribution
  - ▶ Scheduled launch March 2023
- ▶ Compiled list of local transportation options for residents
  - ▶ Senior Center, MRTA, Road Runner, Age Span Care Ride, Chelmsford RIDE
  - ▶ Information provided to Community Services Coordinator for brochure





# Community Supports & Health Services

- ▶ Purchased/distributed 15 electronic key locks
  - ▶ Project initiated jointly by Fire Dept and Police Dept; funded by grant
  - ▶ Permit secure, emergency access by first responders w/o forced entry
- ▶ Purchased/distributed 11 of 15 SafetyNet bracelets;
  - ▶ Project initiated by Police Dept; funded by Town Manager
  - ▶ Allows Police Dept to track missing people with cognitive impairments
- ▶ Continued Grow-A-Row, Gardens for Good
  - ▶ Volunteers grow, maintain, harvest, deliver fresh produce to the food insecure
    - ▶ Chelmsford Food Pantry, Table of Plenty, Chelmsford Housing Authority
  - ▶ Delivered FY22 produce valued at over \$7800
  - ▶ Supplementary food items also provided by residents
  - ▶ Seasonally recurring activity



# Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

- ▶ Renovated several playgrounds/athletic fields
  - ▶ Varney (on-going), Center School, Southwell, Roberts Field
  - ▶ All playgrounds will be ADA-compliant
- ▶ Installed two outdoor fitness areas
  - ▶ Chelmsford Center, Roberts Field
- ▶ Created new “pocket park”
  - ▶ Intersection of North Rd and Worthen St
  - ▶ Cross-domain, Inter-departmental partnerships
  - ▶ Substantial local sponsorships
- ▶ Enhanced inter-departmental collaboration
  - ▶ DPW and Police Dept - increased safety mechanisms at playgrounds



# Social Participation, Respect, Inclusion

- ▶ Conducted multi-cultural lecture series
- ▶ Held inter-generational, multi-cultural, weeklong activities with Chinese students (age 12+) and seniors
- ▶ Hosting LGBTQ & Friends Social Group twice monthly
- ▶ Conducted dementia-friendly training
  - ▶ Senior Center staff, transportation van drivers
  - ▶ At least one employee from Town departments (Town Hall, Library, DPW/Facilities, Police & Fire Departments)

# Civic Engagement & Employment

- ▶ **Planned/promoted Age-Friendly Chelmsford Job Fair**
  - ▶ Conducted in August 2022
  - ▶ MassHire, Chelmsford Senior Center, Chelmsford Business Development as partners
  - ▶ Focused on Chelmsford-based employers for local jobs only
  - ▶ Full-time, part-time, volunteer, temp/seasonal positions
  - ▶ 19 local organizations/businesses; 105 attendees
  - ▶ First hour priority given to those age 50+
  - ▶ Fully registered 3 weeks in advance of Fair
  - ▶ Highly successful; planning to be an annual event
  - ▶ As per AARP, a unique Job Fair focused only on local employers for local jobs





# Communication & Information

- ▶ “Pop Up” Library service
  - ▶ Specially equipped vehicle provides mobile Library services
  - ▶ Weekly appearances at various Town locations
- ▶ Created Resource Directory
  - ▶ Added hyperlinks to the Senior Center Resource Guide on the Library’s website
- ▶ Evaluating potential for centralized Town calendar
  - ▶ Possible combination of current Library calendar (LibCal) and Google calendar
  - ▶ Heavily dependent on multiple groups to upload own events
  - ▶ Content currency may not be sustainable in long term



# Summary FY22 Observations



- ▶ Highly successful year, in spite of pandemic impact
- ▶ Seamless progression from planning phase to implementation phase
  - ▶ Committee members remained same for both phases
- ▶ FY22 projects were truly a team effort
  - ▶ Committee members, Town leaders, Town staff, residents, business partners
  - ▶ Benefits from FY22 projects will continue into subsequent years
- ▶ Cross-domain, inter-departmental partnerships
  - ▶ Contributed to success of several FY22 projects
- ▶ Inter-Town committee cooperation/collaboration
  - ▶ Age-Friendly Chelmsford Implementation Committee & Master Plan Update Committee
  - ▶ New Master Plan is more age-friendly, especially in housing, transportation, open spaces & recreation sections
- ▶ Business partners contributed to success of some FY22 projects
  - ▶ Habitat for Humanity, MassHire
- ▶ Need to enhance community outreach

# For More Information

- ▶ Age-Friendly Chelmsford web page on Town website
  - ▶ [www.chelmsfordma.gov](http://www.chelmsfordma.gov), click on “community,” then “Age-Friendly Chelmsford Initiative”
- ▶ The Internet (search “Age-Friendly Chelmsford”)
- ▶ Age-Friendly Chelmsford programs on Chelmsford Telemedia (on demand)
- ▶ “Age-Friendly Corner” in newly expanded Senior Center *Messenger*
- ▶ Town Manager monthly newsletter
- ▶ Social media platforms
- ▶ Newspaper articles
- ▶ Contact:
  - Debi Siriani at 978-251-0533
  - Fred Brusseau at 978-256-3278

