

ADOPTING AN AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY STRATEGY IN
Lanesborough, MASSACHUSETTS

WHEREAS, The Select Board of Lanesborough, Massachusetts does hereby find as follows:

WHEREAS, Berkshire County is one of the fastest aging communities in the Commonwealth. Lanesborough is above the Massachusetts average with approximately 50-60% of residents over the age of 50;

WHEREAS, an Age Friendly Community as defined in the Age Friendly Berkshires Action Plan, is a way to help older adults remain healthy, active, connected and engaged in their community for as long as possible. It is committed to improving both the physical and social environments that support community seniors. It facilitates independence and neighborhood cohesion;

WHEREAS, the collective input and guidance from local, state and national partners has been, and will continue to be, vital to the development of and effective implementation of a comprehensive plan to support an aging community;

WHEREAS, the Town shall support community policies for infrastructural and environmental changes that will promote active living and healthy eating among older adults;

WHEREAS, the Town shall approach transportation improvements and project phases as an opportunity to create safe, more accessible streets for all users;

WHEREAS, the Town shall advocate for policies that allow for easier access to public transportation, biking and walking;

WHEREAS, the Town shall enhance opportunities for physical activity, especially for seniors by developing joint use agreements allowing for use after hours related to physical activity and education programs;


WHEREAS, the Town shall support affordable and accessible housing in locations that provide connectivity to transportation, public services, retail businesses and social activities;

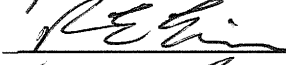
WHEREAS, the Town shall encourage readily available fresh food programs, such as farmers markets and food assistance programs;


WHEREAS, the Town will sustain a vibrant workforce that is aware of issues facing older adults that will support their needs and lifestyle.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY PROCLAIMED by the Select Board of Lanesborough, Massachusetts, that an Age Friendly Community Strategy is established as the Town's standard for planning and community development.

Dated: 7/9/18



Select Board Chair


Select Board Member


Select Board Member



Becoming
Age
Friendly
Berkshires:
A Municipal
Checklist

1 of 8

A SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR MUNICIPALITIES

IN THIS ISSUE:
COMMUNICATIONS &
INFORMATION

What is Age Friendly?

Age Friendly communities are *livable* - providing appropriate housing, good transportation, work and volunteer opportunities, plus a range of leisure activities for all residents - across their lifespans.

Age Friendly communities enable people to actively participate in civic and social life and treat everyone with respect, regardless of their age or ability. They are places that makes it easy for older people to stay safe and connected to the people that are important to them. Age Friendly communities help people stay healthy and active -- even at the oldest ages and provide appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves.

An Age Friendly Berkshire County Is a great place to grow up and a great place to grow old!

This Checklist is intended to be used to "start the conversation" in your city or town, around becoming age-friendly. Chances are, you're doing alot already! No need to start from scratch – just put on your age-friendly lenses, review your current programs, software and practices that you're using to Communicate or share important Information with your residents. Then identify ways to expand or adapt your Actions from the suggestions on the Checklist - or create some yourselves. Don't forget to share best practices or what you've discovered, with other Berkshire County communities, via www.agefriendlyberkshires.com. For additional assistance with using the Checklists call Age Friendly Berkshires at 413-442-1521 x16.

BECOMING AGE FRIENDLY BERKSHIRES: A MUNICIPAL CHECKLIST



Communication & Information



Staying connected with people, events, news and practical information is a key part of aging in place. Age-friendly communities recognize that not everyone has a smartphone or Internet access. Mass media is still instrumental in communicating emergency and non-emergency information to the wider community. Access to community information should be centralized and standardized across the region, to ensure that all residents are able to receive or easily locate, needed information. Governments and service organizations must ensure that information on policies and issues affecting the public be developed with their input. Timely, effective and accessible dissemination of municipal/regional news must be through a variety of all-ability-friendly communication channels. It is recommended that municipalities consult legal counsel for compliance with Massachusetts General Laws regarding public information and the creation of internal communications and social media policies.

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION REGIONAL GOALS:

- Maximize the dissemination of necessary and useful information to all Berkshire residents regardless of their location, age, economic status, technical expertise or physical limitation.
- Develop or improve municipal-level communication to reach all residents.
- Develop a county-wide "senior voice" of, for and by, the growing population of older adults and encourage them to be more actively involved in their communities
- Develop an all-encompassing, ongoing program of information, resources and technical assistance to implement the Age Friendly Berkshires Action Plan and engage all residents in implementing
- Hold annual Age Friendly Berkshires events, e.g. Legislative breakfast, AFB Progress awards celebration and others, to highlight/celebrate progress implementing the Action Plan

Communication & Information Checklist

- Create a basic, but effective Municipal Communication Plan. Inventory what municipal info is being shared by each department, including both non-emergency and emergency channels; Survey residents to see how they are getting their news, ID gaps and weaknesses in local communications; Research/adopt effective methods to fill communication gaps
- Make sure municipal website is updated regularly and is easy to navigate; Design for the broadest range of consumers, including those with visual or physical impairments
- Utilize existing community-based networks e.g. faith communities, civic groups, education channels, business groups, etc. to share pertinent info.
- Create or link town website to timely information and broadcasts of interest to older residents, via the Age Friendly Berkshires website and other elder-serving websites , Berkshire Senior, N. Adams TV and others. Share content with neighboring towns.
- Printed information – including official forms or invoices and text on visual displays in public spaces, have large lettering with main ideas in bold type
- Maximize use of municipal public access channel to create and help distribute content to residents; Elicit cooperation/input from public mass media to fill communication gaps inexpensively but effectively, for appropriate messages. Consider sharing contracted communication services with neighboring towns, i.e. web hosting, design services, survey and e-news services, to reduce costs
- Investigate new media outlets (Newsletters/Posting Boards/Blogs/Twitter/FB) and custom mobile apps to broaden communications to reach residents of all ages

- Identify and reach out to socially isolated residents via personal contact from trusted municipal staff
- Review all print or spoken communication, to insure the use straight-forward sentences and simple language
- Telephone answering services shall give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time
- Voting kiosks and public-use computer terminals, have large buttons/keys and big lettering
- Municipal signage uses large, bold fonts and is well-lighted
- Services provided at municipal facilities always includes friendly, person-to-person assistance.

Add you current or future Municipal Communication Actions here:

BECOMING AGE FRIENDLY BERKSHIRES: A MUNICIPAL CHECKLIST



OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS



Berkshire County offers nature lovers year-round beauty and easy access to the outdoors – and has a major impact on the quality of life of young and old alike. The built environment also has an impact on how we live our lives, as does the use of our public buildings and spaces. Aging public buildings and infrastructure have evolved as our community has grown and needs have changed. Today, the wish to protect our natural environment, while making it accessible to all ages, coupled with the ever-changing needs of an aging population, are prompting us to re-create our communities again.

Clean, safe, well-planned and maintained roads, parks, natural areas, pedestrian walk and bike-ways, and accessible, well-lit buildings and sidewalks, together provide an ideal living environment for aging-in-place.

Creating an age-friendly region will likely require the adaptation or rehabilitation of many public spaces and structures over time, with the goal of a more cohesive and integrated community, designed for maximal access to nature, increased mobility and independence for all.

OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS REGIONAL GOALS

- Create and/or maintain accessible spaces to ensure that residents of all ages and abilities can use and enjoy public spaces, whether they are indoors or outdoors.
- Market and promote opportunities to encourage residents of all ages and abilities to use public places and buildings.
- Work to create/maintain safe places, including parks, open spaces and public buildings.
- Work to create/maintain spaces that are multigenerational and inclusive for all users.
- Encourage the creation of joint-use agreements allowing community groups to use municipal buildings.
- Promote Complete Streets solutions (i.e., those designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities) whenever possible.

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**BECOMING AGE FRIENDLY BERKSHIRES:
A MUNICIPAL CHECKLIST**



Outdoor Spaces & Buildings Checklist

- Work toward making all public buildings and outdoor spaces in town Age & Dementia Friendly & ADA accessible.
- Work with Commissions on Disability to develop a system to identify needed improvements, develop prioritization plans and track actions.
- Encourage the use of alternate, accessible venues for public meetings and hearings if town halls are not Age-friendly/ADA accessible
- Assess/Upgrade existing lighting and signage for immediate improvement to Accessibility in public buildings and outdoor spaces . Seek funding for more extensive infrastructure improvements.
- Cooperate with a region-wide Age & Dementia-Friendly Certification Program, to educate and assist local businesses to better serve their customers with different abilities
- Encourage development of free Age Friendly trails throughout the County.
- Make sure wayfinding markers are easily recognizable, clearly visible, and at frequent intervals.
- Site accessible bathrooms near walking loops, or between destinations, where possible.
- Provide benches that have backs and arms at regular intervals in shady areas.
- Encourage creation of trails, parks and bikeways close to centers of population and/or where public transportation is available
- Encourage the creation of walking groups or walking buddy programs through councils on aging or other municipal departments, posting on community website and bulletin boards
- Encourage use of accessible parks and open spaces in town for a variety of community events
- Provide conveniently located, safe, commodious well-lit parking.
- Maintain sidewalks, parking lot and other pavement around public buildings and in parks.
- Ensure adequate street lighting at intersections and sidewalks.
- Reduce potential trip hazards including glare, uneven surfaces, sudden transitions, etc.
- Encourage location of park benches where they are not isolated from other park activities.
- Encourage trails/play areas that are safe, age friendly and tick free (e.g. where vegetation on trails is cut back and maintained).
- Create a "wild" park/playground for kids and families as an alternative to traditional parks or playgrounds.
- Establish regular, organized activities in parks, both age-specific and multigenerational, by partnering with local organizations.

List your existing plans for Outdoor
Spaces & Buildings here:

List your existing or future plans for
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings here: