State: Connecticut  
Community Name: Town of Groton  
Population Size: 38436  
Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 10  
Community Structure: Town  
Other:  
Community Type: Suburban (offices, apartments and shops)  
Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment  
Name: John Burt  
Title: Town Manager  
Office Mailing Address: 45 Fort Hill Road. Groton, CT 06340  
Community Contact Name: Mary Jo Riley  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Position: Senior Center Director  
Telephone: [REDACTED]  
Role:  
As supervisor of the Senior Center, Mary Jo serves as the main point of contact for the Town's senior programming, including frequent events, fitness and continuing education classes, and a regular newsletter to seniors.  
Older Adult Involvement:  
The Office of Planning and Development, in conjunction with the senior center, has coordinated an Age Friendly Community Committee comprised of town employees, older adults and other interested parties. This committee began in August 2021. The committee will look at ways to promote the eight domains of livability within the Groton community. The Goal of this committee will be to assist the town in identifying areas where improvements can be made to provide better access to services, ways to get to needed resources without having to drive, and safe parks and recreation areas for all ages to socialize. The hope is to create an active, healthy, and engaged living for people throughout their lifespan. One example where older adults were involved in the town's efforts to be more age friendly was a sidewalk assessment in one area of town. The Office of Planning and Development put the word out that the assessment was going to happen and they were looking for residents to participate and walk the area with staff. Members of the senior center's Walk with Ease program learned about this assessment and participated, giving input into improvements and needs. As the Age Friendly Community
Committee continues, areas of need in each of the domains of livability will be looked at and ideas shared with town staff on ways to improve these areas. The committee will also work to support the town’s efforts by representing the efforts when out in the community. Having the Senior Center involved in the committee will also allow the center to bring back the efforts by the town to participants at the center. Information can be marketed through the center’s newsletter, websites and Facebook page.

Efforts to become more age-friendly will start by increasing the collaboration and coordination amongst town departments. When reviewing outdoor spaces and buildings, input is sought from community members including older adults on trails, parks, and outdoor areas where people can socialize. The Parks and Recreation divisions will need to team up with Public Works to do some of the work needed for park improvement. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee in town - which is comprised of employees and community members - will be at the willing to help the town departments work on the issues of public outreach, housing, and transportation. Specific projects will focus on collaboration between community agencies and other towns to promote age-friendly work. The Senior Center currently works with twelve other towns and the Eastern CT Transportation Consortium (ECTC) on a state match grant for transportation of the elderly and disabled population. Continuing efforts to provide improved transportation for all residents will involve collaboration and coordination between transportation services and town departments working so residents are able to get to needed destinations where a vehicle is required. Work will be done with the Police Department and members of the community who have either dementia or children on the Autism spectrum with characteristic of wandering. The Police will be working with these families through Project Lifesaver International to promote the use of a radio bracelet that will significantly reduce the search time when a participant wanders. Not only will this improve the outcome when someone is found but will reduce the stress on the family members and caregivers. Groton recognizes that collaboration with other organizations, community agencies and between town departments will provide more resources and expand the reach of each project.

Increasing Collaboration and Coordination:

AARP Team Member Contact Info: N/A

Most Instructive Area of Work:

One aspect of Groton’s current age-friendly work that could be useful to other communities in the network is looking at Groton Senior Center’s current collaboration with ECTC and twelve other towns in the county. This collaboration offers twelve free round trip rides annually to medical appointments for the elderly or disabled through a state of Connecticut DOT grant. ECTC coordinates the rides for all participants and utilizes its own van, and local cab or transportation companies. The grant money is currently available to all towns in the state of Connecticut and similar programs could be modeled after this one. In other states, towns could look at other
grants to offer a similar service to improve transportation options for the elderly and disabled. The current collaboration pools the money available to the twelve towns and results in approximately $300,000 available for medical transportation. 6,239 individuals were provided 62,784 rides through this grant from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, (during the pandemic). This grant also provided mileage reimbursement to family members who drove participants to medical appointments which overall is the least expensive way to get persons to their appointments.

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Website:  http://www.groton-ct.gov/
Twitter 2:  
Facebook 1:  www.facebook.com/townofgroton
Facebook 2:  
Additional Social Media: