

# **Age-Friendly Communities of the Lower Kennebec**

Arrowsic, Bath, Georgetown,  
Phippsburg, West Bath &  
Woolwich

**ACTION PLAN Spring 2021**

**Everyone is respected.  
Everyone is included.  
Everyone belongs.**

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## Executive Summary

**Age-Friendly Communities of the Lower Kennebec** (AFCLK) is a regional grassroots volunteer coalition in Maine's mid coast region serving the municipalities of Arrowsic, Bath, Georgetown, Phippsburg, West Bath and Woolwich with a fast growing population over the age of 65 years.

Our five-year Action Plan offers a path forward to achieve the group's mission: *to help our communities become the best possible home for people of all ages, by ensuring that public spaces, homes, programs, civic events, and social gatherings are set up to meet people's changing needs and wants across the lifespan.*

This plan was built on community listening sessions and stakeholder interviews, by learning from other Age-Friendly communities and AARP's framework of eight "domains" of work needed for success, and a survey of area residents' wants and needs, which garnered an incredible 1000 responses and many profound realizations. These include:

- **48%** said they expected they will have to move to another home as they grow older
- **16%** replied "No" to "Is your home warm enough in the winter?"
- **38%** said it's not easy to find a ride when it's needed
- **31%** (pre-pandemic) said they see family, friends, or neighbors only once every few weeks, occasionally, or rarely

Analyzing all this information, Age-Friendly Communities of the Lower Kennebec created goals and strategies in four focus areas: Homes, Mobility, Social Connections, and Communications.

### **Homes. Encourage options to allow older adults to age where they choose safely, warmly, and comfortably.**

- \*Promote Bath Housing's "Comfortably Home" Aging in Place program and similar resources
- \*Research, communicate about, and explore expansion of heating resources
- \*Promote safety programs such as "Sand Bucket" and smoke detector installations
- \*Investigate a "knock box" program for emergency responder home access
- \*Research potential volunteer snow shovel and "handy helper" volunteer brigades
- \*Research and advocate for more small, single-level housing development

### **Mobility. Increase transportation resources for people to participate in community and social opportunities, attend to personal needs, work, and volunteer.**

- \*Include information on walkability, parking, restrooms, and building access in community event invitations and maps
- \*Advocate for increased "courtesy parking spaces", promote disability license plates/cards, and work with City of Bath to assess/improve walkability with a walker within ¼ mile of City Hall
- \*Work to create "Age-Friendly Business" certification including access issues
- \*Gather and disperse information on delivery of food and prescription drugs
- \*Increase safe walking with classes, walking at the YMCA, walking with a Doc, and identifying and marking ¼ and ½ mile walks with benches in three communities
- \*Develop People Plus's Volunteer Transportation Network in our area

**Social Connections. Increase the health and well-being of residents by increasing social engagement.**

- \*Increase participation in SEARCH, Meals on Wheels, and Good Morning call-in programs
- \*Produce Volunteer Opportunities list for age-friendly activities
- \*Hold social events such as community dinners
- \*Create opportunities for elders to share reading, storytelling, and skills with younger people
- \*Develop “Together Tuesdays” model with volunteers regularly driving a small group of seniors to a downtown, library, coffee shop, or group volunteer or social activity
- \*Explore models for outdoor socializing such as Friendship Benches and mixed-age playgrounds

**Communications. Provide reliable information that ensures access across the community.**

- \*Develop an Age-Friendly website, expand Facebook engagement, and develop consistent communications with Bath Area Senior Citizens, town offices, and other partners
- \*Develop an Emergency Responder Resource Card
- \*Develop a Resource Inventory list
- \*Research a plan for using assistive technology and computer training

We recognize that while progress has already begun, completing these actions will need the combined efforts of many more citizens, town officials, store owners, service groups, and others. We welcome everyone to look at what strategies they would like to pursue and add their unique contributions. We can be reached at [agefriendlylowerkennebec@gmail.com](mailto:agefriendlylowerkennebec@gmail.com)

**Together**, we believe we can make the communities of Arrowsic, Bath, Georgetown, Phippsburg, West Bath, and Woolwich more livable for a lifetime, and a place where **everyone is respected, everyone is included, and everyone belongs.**

# 1 Strategic Framework

## *Vision*

In our communities, people of all ages are able to live safely and comfortably in their homes, get easily to where they want to go, enjoy social connections that nourish their souls, make a contribution to our communities, help others in multiple generations and receive the support they need to thrive. Everyone is respected, everyone is included, everyone belongs.

## *Mission*

To help our communities become the best possible home for people of all ages, by ensuring that public spaces, homes, programs, civic events, and social gatherings are set up to meet people's changing wants and needs across the lifespan.

## *Strategy*

In order to accomplish its mission AFCLK provides information, promotes initiatives, engages volunteers, creates connections and enhances collaboration among all residents, caregivers and other organizations.

## *Organizational Structure*

AFCLK is a grassroots coalition open to anyone in our region who wishes to participate. The members of the Steering Committee meet in person or via online conference services. Following the survey and data analysis three subcommittees were formed: homes, mobility, social connections. In addition, communications were identified as important in each of the focus areas. A Leadership Team was formed with currently five members to strengthen our effectiveness. While we do not have an official role in our municipalities' infrastructure, we are in regular contact with the five town offices and representatives from the City of Bath. The City of Bath is our fiscal sponsor. Within our group we have a representative from the Age-Friendly Georgetown initiative, which started activities in 2017.

## *People and Processes*

There is an existing culture in our municipalities of caring for our neighbors and we are working to provide additional support and resources to those efforts. Our group currently has twenty-one members. We do not operate with bylaws or an overly formalized structure to date. Members are preparing upcoming meetings and grant applications, are sending out newsletters to over 300 recipients, are engaged in organizing learning opportunities and presentations, and are initiating partnerships with local organizations.

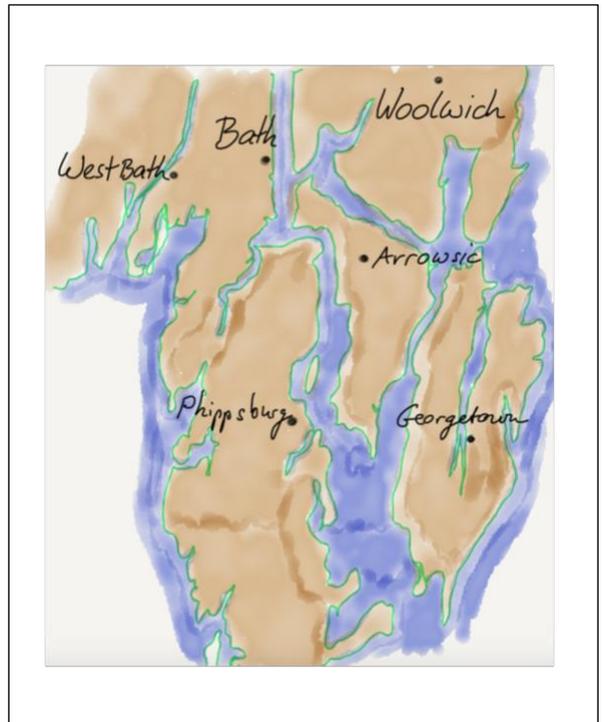
Members Steering Committee Age Friendly Communities of the Lower Kennebec, \*Leadership Team

Name	Town	Occupation	
Bob	Kalish	Arrowsic	Retired media reporter/columnist
Ben	Averill	Bath	Director of Planning, City of Bath
Phyllis*	Bailey	Bath	Bath City Council, led national program to promote well-being of older adults as they aged in their homes, Retired
Cindi	Compton	Georgetown	Retired local representative
Marla	Davis	Woolwich	Retired, Cofounder Sagadahoc County Board of Health. Director of Health and Community Education, MidCoast Hospital
Paul	Dumdey	Woolwich	Retired physician. Municipal Health Officer
Janet	Eich	Woolwich	Student, Occupational Therapy, University of New England
Allison	Hepler	Woolwich	Woolwich Selectwoman; State Representative District #53; Professor, History Department, University of Maine at Farmington
Jess	Irish	Bath	Director of Housing, Bath Housing
Kathy	Lavallee	West Bath	West Bath Town Council; Mental Health Program Manager, State of Maine
Ruth*	Lawson-Stopps	Bath	Retired, Health Policy and Management
Joel	Merry	West Bath	Sheriff, Sagadahoc County
Deirdra*	Murphy	West Bath	Physical Therapist, Adjunct Faculty member at University New England, Retired Associate Dean University Massachusetts Lowell
Terry	Nordmann	Bath	Bath City Council
Jim	Peavey	Georgetown	Retired, Associate Director of Community Impact, United Way of Mid Coast Maine; Chair, Age-Friendly Georgetown
Barbara*	Reinertsen	Bath	Executive Director, United Way of Mid Coast Maine
Randee	Reynolds	MidCoast Hosp	Vice President, MidCoast Hospital
Karin*	Sadtler	Arrowsic	Resident
Polly	Shaw	Bath	Retired resident
Chris	Szalay	Newcastle	Program Coordinator, SEARCH Greater Bath & Lincoln County
Deb	Young	Woolwich	Chief Operating Officer, Bath Area Family YMCA

## 2 History and Community Profile

The Age-Friendly Communities of the Lower Kennebec are on the land of Mawooshen, which had been populated by the Wawenoc people prior to the arrival of Europeans. The land provided seasonal fishing in the tidal rivers of the Androscoggin, Kennebec, Sasanoa, and New Meadows, as well as Merrymeeting Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. In the winter, the people moved inland.

English people began to settle permanently in the lower Kennebec in 1649, with the purchase of land from Chief Mowhotiwormet by John Parker, although European fishermen had been in the area prior to this time. This land became known as Georgetown, which then encompassed all of the communities represented by AFCLK. Settlers farmed a little, fished, and set up mills along the suitable rivers and streams, such as Nequasset in Woolwich, and tide mills in Phippsburg and Arrowsic.



Near continuous conflict between indigenous peoples and European settlers, which began with King Philip's War in 1676 ensured that these communities were not permanent until the fall of the French in 1759. At this time, parts of Georgetown petitioned the Massachusetts government to form independent communities, which was permitted if the community had sufficient population and a church. Woolwich was incorporated in 1759, Bath in 1781, and Phippsburg in 1814. Arrowsic separated from Georgetown in 1841. And West Bath, which had been part of Bath since 1781, became a separate community in 1844.

Shipbuilding along the Kennebec constituted the major industry following independence from Great Britain and has continued until today. Bath Iron Works is Maine's largest private employer, and has workers from every county in the state, although most hail from the region covered by AFCLK.

Our age-friendly efforts evolved within the framework of our deeply connected communities. They differ in size and geographic location, access to local services and resources, population size, population density, and residents' ages. Each municipality has a fire department with all but Bath a volunteer department, who work together in a mutual aid emergency system. Some communities have general stores, amenities like eating places, community centers, libraries and walking trails, supermarkets, medical services or schools, and others just have a town hall as their only meeting place.

The City of Bath on the Kennebec River is in the center of our region providing many of the resources and services that especially older adults so heavily rely on like medical services, Bath EMS, the Patten Free Library, Bath Area Senior Citizens Activity Center, Bath Area Family YMCA to name a few.

It is not surprising that in a beautiful old ship-building region more than half of all homes were built before 1940. As a result, the housing supply is often not very energy efficient, has bedrooms on the 2nd floor, and requires significant maintenance expenditures. Many residents are in housing that is too big - 54% of housing units have three or more bedrooms. Both young and older residents often find

themselves cost-burdened as rents, utilities and repair costs outstrip their incomes. Older adults looking to downsize from larger homes find a limited selection of potential rental units in a landscape dominated by single family homes. We believe collaboration through AFCLK may help our region generate some new options to maximize the housing resources that exist here.

A total year-round population of about 17222 (census 2010) cover a land area of 111 square miles. In 2016 twenty percent of our residents were over the age of 65 years. *(Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Censusdata <https://factfinder.census.gov>)* Two bridged islands and long peninsulas challenge individual transportation, and access to essential services as well as daily needs. The six towns encompass many acres of wooded areas, with storms frequently resulting in power outages, and lack of high-speed Internet challenging residents' ability to access services.

<b>Who Lives Here - Over 65 years old?</b>			
	2016 population	# over 65 years old	% over 65 years old
Arrowsic	397	137	35%
Bath	8334	1422	17%
Georgetown	1018	321	32%
Phippsburg	2029	533	26%
West Bath	2157	448	21%
Woolwich	3069	542	18%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,004</b>	<b>3403</b>	<b>20%</b>
Sagadahoc County	35,134	6,394	19.40%
Maine	1,329,923	242,046	18.20%

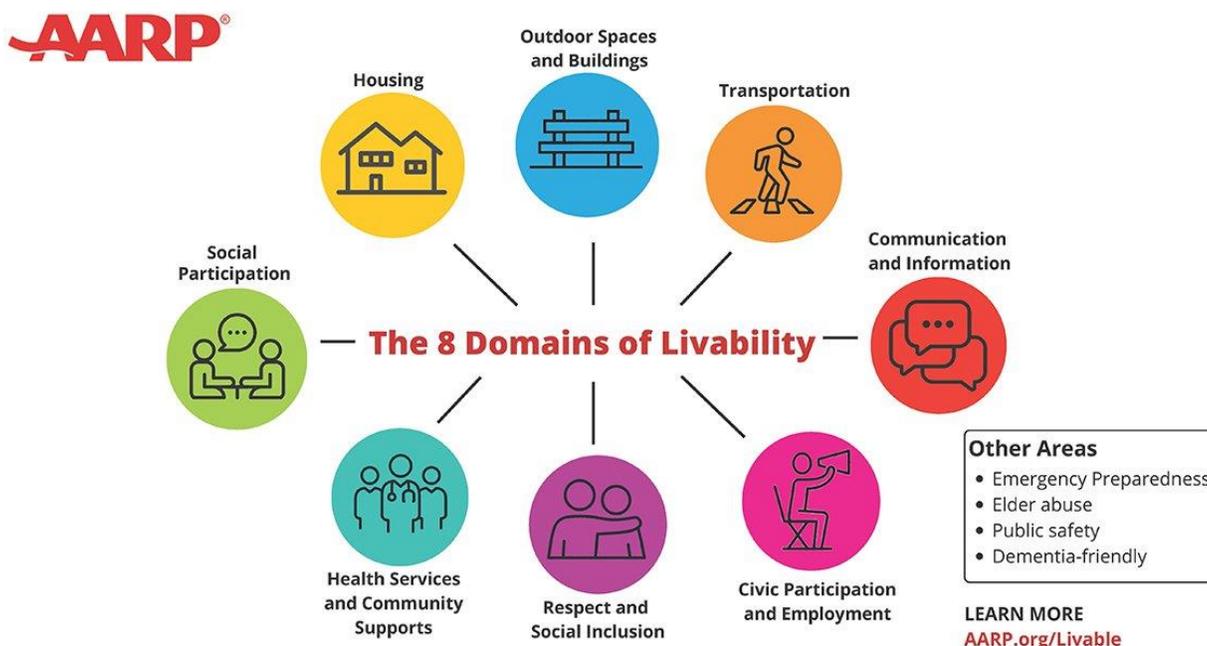
**Source:** American Community Survey, U.S. Census Data.  
<https://factfinder.census.gov>

**Note:** This represents the most recent population data.  
Forecasts suggest that the 2020 census will indicate a higher percentage of > 65 years olds in our region.

### 3 Process for Developing the Plan

The plan outlined in this document is the result of a detailed process that started with the creation of a community wide survey, input from five listening sessions, the collection of responses and data assessment. During a public presentation of survey results at the Patten Free Library in Bath community members contributed their thoughts, concerns and ideas. Based on these findings the AFCLK Steering Committee developed a work plan that provided the basis for this Action Plan.

AARP offers a framework, the eight domains of livability, to age-friendly communities to organize and prioritize their work. In our conversations we realized the interconnections and overlap of domains. Just as an example, the connections between Respect and Social Inclusion, Transportation, and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, became apparent as survey participants described the difficulty of attending social gatherings when a resident cannot drive or is concerned about access to an event venue due to a chronic illness or disability.



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After analyzing the results of the survey, the Steering Committee organized three subcommittees for each of the focus areas: homes, mobility, and social connections. Communications is an overarching task for all three groups but will be a fourth subcommittee in the future. Subcommittees with two to four members met to brainstorm and share ideas on how to mitigate the concerns that were brought to our attention by survey respondents. Action items were developed for each of the focus areas based on feasibility as well as impact. We identified potential community partners, required resources and communication strategies.

## 4 Community Assessment, Focus Areas, Goals, Strategies

We developed the Community Assessment Survey containing 20 questions asking residents about strengths, barriers and challenges to aging well in this region. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A of this Action Plan.

Between October of 2018 and February of 2019, the group conducted the survey among residents to learn what is working in our area to support healthy, active, and engaged aging and identify areas for improvement. Identical surveys were distributed electronically and in print, available at libraries, town offices, polling stations, the Bath Area Family YMCA, beauty salons, churches and some special events with collections boxes in place for completed questionnaires. Several municipalities linked the online questionnaire to their websites. In Woolwich and Arrowsic, surveys were mailed with tax bills to ensure that every household could participate. We received 1000 responses.

We did not ask about income or ethnicity. Many respondents chose not to answer questions about age and gender. Responses that referred to the size of the household and shared personal comments led us to believe that our survey reached residents from all walks of life and from a wide range of incomes.

### *Community Meetings/Listening Sessions*

As part of our community assessment, we conducted five listening sessions in different communities and with local emergency responders. These round table conversations invited participants to share personal challenges. Residents described and identified future needs to live safely in their homes and to be engaged in their communities as they age.

The final data report includes a cover page, and a one-page summary for each community and the entire region. It will be used to inform residents, local organizations, stakeholders, and municipalities in future conversations. A summary of the regional and town specific data is included in Appendix B of this Action Plan.

Patricia Oh, Ph.D., LMSW, our age-friendly consultant of AARP of Maine, provided consultation throughout data collection and analysis. The AARP graciously funded the printing of our data report.

### *Key Findings and Action Items*

From the quantitative and qualitative data three themes emerged:

- homes
- mobility
- social connections

We also learned about common ways used to seek and share information. This will help us identify efficient tools for communications. The most important regional results are summarized here followed by goals and strategies that will guide our future work.

## 4.1 Homes

One key finding was that the homes\* people are living in may not fit their future. (\*Homes refers to all types of places people live like condos, houses and apartments.) People want both, more choices and more information on resources that will help them stay in their homes.

- Almost half of respondents (48%) expected they will have to move to another home as they grow older, 30% to a different home in the area and 18% to a home outside the area.
- The statement, “I will need to modify my home to continue living here”, prompted 60% to say yes.
- 91% said that a resource list of home repair and chore resources was important to them, but that information was lacking.
- In response to the question, “Is your home warm enough in the winter?” 84% said yes; but an alarming 16% said no. Reasons cited were, the home not being well insulated for 62%, difficulty paying for fuel for 45% and the challenge of moving wood/pellets for 6%.
- People also commented about the need for more choices: housing at a variety of price points including the middle class, in smaller one-level configurations, with a mix of ages, within walking distance of places they would like or need to go and provisions for accessory dwelling units.

Personal comments indicate that it is challenging to find affordable housing, and professional help for small house repairs, especially for home-owners with moderate or low incomes. “Need someone to call if the smoke alarm goes off and I can’t reach it to stop it and change the battery. Who to call?” “Its....becoming too much to maintain.....House repair, grounds....a tank of oil has gone from \$162 to \$940”. “I’d like to move out of my larger home and into an area where I can walk to the library.”

**Goal: Encourage options to allow older adults to age where they choose safely, warmly and comfortably.**

**Partner with Bath Housing (BH) to increase awareness of the “Comfortably Home” Aging in Place Program and resources like AARP “HomeFit” guide.**

Activities: Program information distributed to all Steering committee members/organizations, to print and electronic media. Incorporate “Comfortably Home” program into AFLCK events, brainstorm other ways to support their outreach.

Metrics/Outcomes: Program materials distributed in Steering Committee pre-pandemic, Bath Area Senior Center (BASC) newsletter articles 11/2019 & 11/2020, on-line info distribution, program staff participated in AFCLK event. Give support in other ways as identified. Support BHA research/exploration of how to expand to other income groups beyond those of moderate means.

Timeline: 2019 to 2024 (Program suspended periodically during pandemic)

**Research and communicate about heating needs and resources. Explore expansion of heating resources with lower barriers to access.**

Activities: Communicate survey findings on need, research existing heating resources and communicate about availability. Research “Wood Bank” program.

Metrics/Outcomes: Research & conversations with organizations/municipalities on heating assistance resources. (Interviews with Kennebec Valley Community Action Program and other organizations began Fall 2019). Educate public in print and on-line including BASC article on need August 2019; and on resources in January 2020. Ongoing research for additional heating resources including potential “Wood Bank” prototype. Volunteer recruitment and partnership development.

Timeline: 2019-2024

**Educate about safety focused programs - Increase awareness & use of free “Sand Bucket” program. Research local availability of programs for smoke detector installation.**

Activities: Communicate how to access free program for buckets of sand to reduce falls on outdoor steps. Research on free smoke detector programs in other places, costs and implementation targets. Education about what smoke detector installation programs may be available.

Metrics/Outcome: Bucket program article in senior center newsletter Nov. 2020, city website, other on-line listings. Increase of calls to Police and Sheriff’s departments for buckets. Summary of findings on smoke detector program options with recommendations. Partnership development and volunteer recruitment to move forward locally.

Timeline: 2020-2022

**Investigate development of “knox box” program for emergency responders to gain easy access to home via key in coded, locked exterior box.**

Activities: research and briefing on program elements, viability for this region, discussions with fire, police and emergency responders, costs and implementation strategies. Volunteer recruitment, fundraising.

Metrics/Outcome: Information about what program entails, decision about whether to proceed with program design and implementation.

Timeline: 2021-2024

**Research volunteer at home supports like “snow shovel” and “handy helper” brigades, evaluate viability.**

Activities: Outreach to schools and existing programs. Research best practices, supervision and volunteers needed. Recommend options.

Metrics/Outcome: Assess best practices in nearby programs, create summary. Evaluate resources needed and potential utilization. Recommend options and potential implementation strategy. Recruit resources and volunteers.

Timeline: 2021-2024

**Goal: Explore/promote development of more varied housing options which leverage existing resources and future opportunities, across the economic spectrum.**

**Research potential revenue generating options for owners of homes with extra space. Explore Short Term Rentals, Accessory Dwelling Units, etc and related regulatory issues. Advocate for more small single level housing unit development.**

Activities: Research Airbnb, Nesterly, Housematching program of Vermont, etc. Explore with local leaders the creation of additional small unit single floor housing, (especially for the middle class) and its inclusion in upcoming community projects. Advocate for regulatory and permitting changes needed.

Metrics/Outcome: Research brief prepared on revenue generating options in existing homes. Communication plan for findings/recommendations/next steps. Promote inclusion of single level unit housing in community projects under consideration for a variety of income levels. Advocacy for ordinance/zoning changes needed.

Timeline: 2021-2024

## 4.2 Mobility

The inability to get around safely greatly limits people's lives and opportunities. The fear of losing the ability to drive and therefore losing independence is a common concern in Listening Sessions and survey comments.

- To get around 91% of survey respondents said they drive themselves. Other modes of transportation included walking (16%) and riding with a spouse/partner (14%) or with family and friends (7%).
- 38% said, "It would not be easy to find a ride if an older person needed one for medical appointments, etc."
- When asked, "If it is hard to get to the places you need to go, why?" 15% answered the question. 44% of these participants chose as the reason lack of transportation, 35% said lack of money, 32% replied that they can't walk well, 22% said they disliked asking for a ride, 12% cited poor vision or hearing, and 11% said they don't like going out alone. For those 60+ in the region, not being able to walk well was the largest barrier (41%).
- 35% were concerned about falling but only 4% have participated in a fall reduction class.
- Mobility-related comments focused on community infrastructure: having enough benches, handicapped parking, public restrooms and winter snow clearance on sidewalks.
- Affordable and convenient transportation options, well-lit safe roads for walkers, bikers and drivers, and sidewalks or wide shoulders that encourage walking were important to 91-94% of survey participants.

The lack of sufficient transportation opportunities is another challenge, especially for older adults who may not have family nearby. "If I can't drive, I have no options." The City of Bath has a year-round bus service and a Trolley in the summer months but there is no regional public transportation system in place that connects residents to locations within our immediate area. Eligible MaineCare members have access to the Mid Coast Connector bus service for non-emergency medical appointments.

**Goal: Increase transportation resources for people to participate in community and social opportunities, attend to personal needs, work and volunteer.**

**Work to reduce transportation barriers.**

Activities: Invitations to community events will include information about walkability, parking, restroom availability and building access.

Metrics/Outcome: Starting immediately AFCLK announcements will include this information to encourage participation of residents with impaired mobility. Three community organizations will be contacted every year.

Timeline: 2021-2023

Activities: Define and advocate towards "Courtesy Parking Space".

Metrics/Outcome: Residents with limited mobility park closer to building in designated areas.

Timeline: 2020-2023

Activities: Education Campaign on access to disability placards and handicapped plates.

Metrics/Outcome: Information reduces barriers for eligible residents.

Timeline: 2020-2022

Activities: Assess condition of sidewalk for walking with a walker within 1/4 mile of Bath City Hall.  
Metrics/Outcome: Advocate towards improved walkability in partnership with Bath Pedestrian & Bike Committee.  
Timeline: 2021-2023

### **Add public restroom information to Bath City maps.**

Activities: Work with City of Bath to include this information in new maps printed in the coming years.  
Metrics/Outcome: Maps including this information will be available by 12-31-2022 It will be easier for residents and tourists alike to find public bathrooms in downtown Bath.  
Timeline: 2021-2022

### **Certification for age-friendly businesses.**

Activities: Research and identify which parameters influence the shopping experiences for all ages in respect to building access, store based shopping helpers and transportation of goods to vehicles in the parking area. Develop a partnership with Main Street Bath and store owners to raise awareness for the needs of customers with impaired mobility with the goal of expanding specific services.  
Metrics/Outcome: Research finished by 12-31-2021, parameters developed by 6-2022, store specific certification process started by 12-2022.  
Timeline: 2021-2023

### **Gather and disperse information on delivery of food and prescription drugs**

Activities: Publicize information on existing delivery programs and service offered by VTN twice a year.  
Metrics/Outcome: Increased knowledge about these services.  
Timeline: 2021-2022

### **Support and promote opportunities to increase individual physical strength, and balance**

Activities: Promote and organize classes and public events in partnership with community organizations, Spectrum Generations -the Area Agency on Aging- and the Bath Area Family YMCA.  
Metrics: Organize and promote two classes or events every year.  
Timeline: 2021-2023

Activities: Walking at the YMCA during cold season for non-members.  
Metrics/Outcome: Track numbers of participants.  
Timeline: Program was active in winter of 2019/2020, restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activities: Walking with a Doc.  
Metrics/Outcome: Walking opportunity for residents together with a member of MidCoast Medical Group once a week.  
Timeline: 2022-2023

Activities: Identify and mark 1/2 mile walk in Bath and two other communities.  
Metrics/Outcome: Residents exercise and meet.  
Timeline: 2021-2024

Activities: Promote 1/4 mile walk routes with multiple benches in Bath and two other municipalities.  
Metrics/Outcome: Residents with restricted mobility receive additional outdoor walking opportunity.  
Timeline: 2021-2023

### **Work towards improving transportation opportunities in our area**

Activities: Link information about public transportation resources to municipal websites.  
Metrics/Outcome: Increased number of riders.  
Timeline: 2021-2022

Activities: Develop relationship with People Plus Volunteer Transportation Network to offer this program in our municipalities.  
Metrics/Outcome: Rides will be available in the Bath area and extend to surrounding communities.  
Timeline: 2021-2023

Activities: Research potential for wheel-chair accessible transportation service in partnership with community organizations and engage public support.  
Metrics/Outcome: A volunteer based transportation network will operate a wheel-chair accessible vehicle for personal non-medical appointments.  
Timeline: 2022-2025

Activities: Explore and identify potential transportation opportunities that may be provided by Western Maine CAP and Waldo CAP.  
Metrics/Outcome: Additional transportation opportunities will improve connectivity to other Maine towns.  
Timeline: 2022-2025

### 4.3 Social Connections

The lack of social connections and loneliness pose a great risk for physical illness, decline, depression and death. Feeling “isolated” is a common theme in survey comments.

- 25% of survey respondents said they live alone.
- 31% of respondents – almost 1 in 3 – said they see family, friends, or neighbors in their community only “occasionally”, “rarely” or “once every few weeks.”
- When asked, “Do you have family, friends, or neighbors nearby, whom you could ask for help?” 20% said no.
- 29% said that a disability or chronic illness kept them and/or their spouse or partner from being as active in the community as they wanted to be.
- 85-89% said the following aspects of community were important or very important to them: Social and volunteer opportunities, accessible and inclusive community activities and events and opportunities to interact with people of all ages. Yet only 9-13% said they participated in these activities; many were not sure they existed. 27% reported using the library – the most of any service listed.

Despite a great sense of community that many respondents describe, others experience loneliness or social isolation, “Summer has music events in the park which is wonderful, but I feel isolated in the winter and due to disability cannot be out in cold much.”

**Goal: Increase the health and well-being of residents living in the lower Kennebec towns by increasing social engagement.**

**Increase enrollment in SEARCH and Meals on Wheels, valuable existing person-to-person services geared toward isolated elders.**

Activities: Work with SEARCH and Spectrum Generations to promote participation and recruit more volunteers.

Metrics/Outcomes: Increase SEARCH matches by an additional five by 12/22; increase Meals on Wheels by 5% (compared to pre-pandemic) by 12/22.

Timeline: 2021-2023

**Partner with Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Office and Bath Police Department to boost participation in Good Morning call-in safety programs as well as outreach efforts such as “Coffee with a Cop.”**

Activities: Work with Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Office and Bath P.D. to promote participation in call-in programs.

Metrics/Outcomes: Increase number of seniors in call-in programs by 10% by 12/22.

Timeline: 2021-2023

**Produce Volunteer Opportunities list and promote volunteering for age-friendly activities.**

Increasing the number of engaged volunteers will make possible many of the strategies in this plan and increase personal interactions for some seniors. Opportunities for seniors themselves to volunteer, particularly with others, will be sought and promoted, as volunteering is an excellent way to boost connection to community and well-being.

Activities: Define volunteer needs in Age-Friendly plan. Work with existing agencies to capture existing and ideal volunteer needs and explore potential of group volunteer activities including

seniors. Work with United Way's VolunteerME existing matching site. Produce a list that can be widely publicized and used as a tool in group presentations or personal asks.

Metrics/Outcomes: A Volunteer Opportunities list will be produced by December 2021. The # of volunteers engaged in age-friendly activities will increase by 25 by December 2023.

Timeline: 2021-2023

### **Hold social events such as community dinners, potlucks, and “on tap” gatherings.**

Activities: Identify lead person for at least three towns as well as for AFCLK, organize or partner to hold dinners, conduct outreach to elders, provide transportation as needed.

Metrics/Outcomes: Three towns and lead persons identified by 11/21. Dinners held by 12/22.

Timeline: 2021-2023

### **Sharing Reading & Storytelling**

Activities: Explore a feasible coordinated system for reading online for child cares, schools, and libraries, and recruit senior volunteers. Work with Midcoast Literacy to increase “My Life Story” matches of elders with young adults. Engage students and older adults to share stories or send cards. Explore oral storytelling possibilities.

Metrics/Outcomes: Report delivered to Steering Committee on online reading and next steps by 12/21. Meeting with Midcoast Literacy and goal for matches established by 7/21. Small group established to pursue Reading & Storytelling activities by 10/21.

Timeline: 2021-2025

### **Create a Skill Sharing plan for elders to share with children/youth.**

Seniors have much to offer, and sharing skills such as using tools, knitting/crocheting, woodworking, clothes repair, gardening, etc. can boost not only social interaction with another generation but also respect for their abilities. Relationships and experience gained in the Reading/Storytelling strategy can help inform this strategy.

Activities: Meet with youth groups, schools, library to gauge interest and possible partners for sustainability. Identify desired skills. Develop outreach, perhaps through informal networks, to find elders willing to share these skills. Learn lessons from or possibly work alongside the Reading/Storytelling strategy.

Metrics/Outcomes: Report given to Steering Committee by 7/22 on possible interested parties, system for Skill Sharing. Demonstration project with at least one school, library, youth group begun by 12/22.

Timeline: 2022-2025

### **Develop “Together Tuesdays” or similar model with volunteers regularly driving a small group of seniors to a downtown, library, coffee shop, or group activity.**

Activities: Discuss idea with groups serving elders, faith communities, for feedback and suggestions on how participants and volunteers could be recruited (post-COVID-19 pandemic). Identify at least one anchor location, such as a library, for a starting suggested destination. Consider ties to Age-Friendly businesses, possible deals for participating groups. Research any screening, liability issues.

Metrics/Outcomes: Report given to Steering Committee by 7/22. If practicable, at least two small groups established and running by 12/22. Potential pre and post-survey of participants on

feelings of social connection or loneliness. Steering Committee review of pilot, potential for growth and how to make sustainable in 2023.

Timeline: 2022-2025

**Explore creating infrastructure for outdoor social activities.**

In addition to the accessible walking paths and benches envisioned in the Mobility section and the social benefit they make possible, there are several successful models of community improvements that foster outdoor socialization that we plan to explore. These include:

- “Friendship” Benches
- Mixed-Age Playgrounds
- Bicycle Volunteer Corps giving rides

Activities: Research models elsewhere, including benefits and cost. Create synopses, including video/visual when possible, and share ideas with local towns, aligned groups, and seniors to gauge interest and feasibility. Identify potential partners and funding.

Metrics/Outcomes: Report given to Age-Friendly Communities Steering Committee on potential of the above ideas and any similar ones found especially promising and next steps in 2022. Small group formed for one or more ideas, if practicable, in 2022.

Timeline: 2021-2025

## 4.4 Communications

- 85% stated that information about community events was easy to find. 12% disagreed.
- 91% used the Internet. For communication 89% used the phone, 77% used email and 45% used Facebook.
- To find out what's happening residents checked the Internet (78%), read the newspaper (61%), talked with friends (58%) and listened to the radio (34%). Participants looked at flyers (27%), watched public access TV (24%) and heard about events at church (15%).
- The most popular places to look for information concerning services for older people were the Internet (68%), family and friends (59%), City Hall and Town Offices (53%), the Bath Senior Center (44%) and medical providers (36%), followed by newspapers (31%), Spectrum Generations (15%) and faith-based organizations (14%).

"Our 86-year old neighbor constantly has issues finding someone to do what she needs to have done. She doesn't have a computer, so finding information is very difficult for her." Many survey participants commented on the need for "high speed broadband internet connections".

### **Goal: Provide reliable information in a way that ensures access across the community.**

Activities: Develop an AFCLK website.

Metrics/Outcome: The website is operational.

Timeline: 2022- 2024

Activities: Expand the AFCLK Facebook engagement.

Metrics/Outcome: 10% yearly in the number of Facebook followers (Baseline #127 on 2.3.2021).

Timeline: 2021-2024

Activities: Develop consistent communications with town offices and Bath Area Senior Citizens Activity Center.

Metrics/Outcome: Monthly communication with town offices and Bath Area Senior Citizens Activity Center. (Baseline three consecutive months article in the Bath Area Senior Citizens Newsletter.)

Timeline: 2021-2024

Activities: Research a plan for using assistive technology, funding, and training.

Metrics/Outcome: A finalized assistive technology and computer training plan.

Timeline: 2022-2024

Activities: Create and distribute an Emergency Responder Resource Card.

Metrics/Outcome: A minimum of 400 older adults receive the Emergency Responder Resource Card.

Timeline: 2022-2024

Activities: Develop a one-page updatable Service Resource Inventory geared towards older adults.

Metrics/Outcome: Information available on website, distributed electronically to mailing list, service providers and towns by 12/22.

Timeline: 2021-2022

## 5 Community Strengths

We are writing this Action Plan during a time when the COVID-19 pandemic questions our usual ways of community interaction. It brought emotional and economic hardship to many in our communities and demonstrates the vulnerability of certain groups, defined by ethnicity, age, and preexisting health conditions. This health crisis also highlighted the communities' strength to support one another during difficult times. Mainers in congregate living settings and others who are more at risk due to their frontline occupancy have been more likely to contract the disease. In addition, individuals living alone struggle with social isolation and the feeling of loneliness. This emphasizes the need for strong community resources to support older adults in ageing safely.

Most respondents – 81% - agree that their community is a great place for older people to live. Residents feel safe in their neighborhoods and communities, in part due to the strength of emergency services. Many respondents value the beauty of the region's natural surroundings. Library Services especially are highly appreciated and frequently used.

- 78% note that they can ask family, friends and neighbors for help.
- 58% talk with their friends to find out what's happening.

Numerous local organizations are embedded in the communities and contribute through educational programs, social opportunities, health and community services, fundraising activities and outdoor experiences. These strong community organizations include among many others the Area Agency on Aging/Spectrum Generations, Bath Area Family YMCA, Bath Area Food Bank, Bath Area Senior Citizen Center, Bath Farmer's Market, Bath Housing, Catholic Charities SEARCH, faith communities, first responders, Kennebec Estuary Land Trust, Maine's First Ship, Maine Maritime Museum, Main Street Bath, Mid Coast-Parkview Health, Patten Free Library, People Plus, The Chocolate Church Arts Center, and United Way of Mid Coast Maine.

## **6 Future Processes for Implementation**

The AFCLK Steering Committee has agreed to adhere to this Action Plan to secure progress, mitigate the potential for conflict and misunderstanding and ensure that everyone is moving in the same direction. We encourage committee members to take on tasks that are concise and manageable. We are building this initiative to be sustainable and will focus on the immediate tasks.

This Action Plan is a living document that will be refined or modified to respond to new situations or information as they arise. The following processes have been established to ensure on-going accountability to the Action Plan:

### **On-going Action Reports**

At AFCLK meetings committee members will have the opportunity to report on their activities, challenges and proposals for change in action items.

### **Approval of Action Items/Objectives**

Any substantive additions, withdrawals or changes to action items in the Action Plan will be approved by the Steering Committee.

### **Timeline**

AFCLK acknowledges the comprehensiveness of its five-year plan and the time constraint of its all-volunteer organization. Therefore, the timeline for the completion of the plan is flexible in nature.



**Please tell us a bit about yourself. Select *all* that apply**

6. What is your gender?  Male  Female  Would rather not say  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Including you, how many are in your household?  1 person/only me  Two  Three or more
8. If you don't live alone, who lives with you?  Spouse/partner  Children under age 18  Parent(s)  
 Adult children  Other family members  Others: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Is your home warm enough in the winter?  Yes  No  
If your home is not warm enough, what is the reason?  Wood/pellets too difficult to move into my home  
 Paying for fuel is a problem  My home is not well insulated  Other \_\_\_\_\_
10. How do you get around for things like shopping, visiting the doctor, running errands or going to other places?  
 Drive myself  Spouse/Partner takes me  Family/Friends take me  Walk  Ride a Bike  Taxi  
 Public Transportation  Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
If it is hard to get to the places you need to go, why?  Transportation  Lack of money  
 I can't walk well  Dislike asking for a ride  I don't like going alone  Poor vision/hearing
11. Do you have concerns about falling?  Yes  No
12. What, if anything, have you done to prevent falling?  
 Walk  Look for information  Talk to a medical care provider  Participate in a fall-prevention class  
 Make changes in my home  Nothing  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Does any disability or chronic illness keep you and/or your spouse or partner from being as active in Bath area as you want to be?  Yes, myself  Yes, spouse or partner  No
14. Do you use the Internet?  Yes  Yes, but I rarely use it  I do not have Internet access
15. How often do you see family, friends, or neighbors in your community?  
 Several times a week  Once every few weeks  Occasionally  Rarely
16. Which do you use to communicate with people?  Phone  E-Mail  Facebook
17. How do you find out what's happening?  Internet  Church  Talk with my friends  Public Access TV  
 Newspaper  Radio  Flyers  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
18. Which of the following resources would you use if you, a family member, or friend needed information about services for older people in our area?  Town Office  Bath Senior Center  Spectrum Generations  Faith-based organizations  Family or Friends  Internet  Phonebook  Newspaper  TV  Radio  Medical Provider  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
19. What was your age at your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_ years  Prefer not to answer

20. Please add any comments you have that might help make our community a better place to live.


**Optional:** To learn more about the work we are doing or to volunteer, please share your name and contact information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone or Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much for completing this survey. Your assistance in providing this information is greatly appreciated and will help make our communities better places to live, work, and recreate**

**Please return the survey by February 28th to one of the following locations:  
Bath City Hall or the town office in Arrowsic, Georgetown, Phippsburg, West Bath or Woolwich**

## Appendix B

### Survey and Listening Session Results REGION

**Social Connections.** The lack of social connections and loneliness pose a great risk for physical illness, decline, depression and death. Feeling “isolated” is a common theme in survey comments.

- 25% of survey respondents say they live alone.
- 31% of respondents – almost 1 in 3 – say they see family, friends, or neighbors in their community only “occasionally”, “rarely” or “once every few weeks.”
- When asked, “Do you have family, friends, or neighbors nearby, whom you could ask for help?” 20% say no.
- 29% say that a disability or chronic illness keeps them and/or their spouse or partner from being as active in the community as they want to be.
- 85-89% say the following aspects of community are important or very important to them: Social and volunteer opportunities, accessible and inclusive community activities and events and opportunities to interact with people of all ages. Yet only 9-13% say they participate in these activities; many are not sure they exist. 27% report using the library – the most of any service listed.

**Homes.** One key finding is that the homes\* people are living in may not fit their future. (\*Homes refers to all types of places people live like condos, houses and apartments.) People want both, more choices and more information on resources that will help them stay in their homes.

- Almost half of respondents (48%) expect they will have to move to another home as they grow older, 30% to a different home in the area and 18% to a home outside the area.
- The statement, “I will need to modify my home to continue living here”, prompt 60% to say yes.
- 91% say that a resource list of home repair and chore resources is important to them, but that information is lacking.
- In response to the question, “Is your home warm enough in the winter?” 84% say yes; but an alarming 16% say no. Reasons cited are, the home not being well insulated for 62%, difficulty paying for fuel for 45% and the challenge of moving wood/pellets for 6%.
- People also commented about the need for more choices: housing at a variety of price points including the middle class, in smaller one-level configurations, with a mix of ages, within walking distance of places they would like or need to go and provisions for accessory dwelling units.

**Mobility.** The inability to get around safely greatly limits people’s lives and opportunities. The fear of losing the ability to drive and therefore losing independence is a common concern in Listening Sessions and survey comments.

- To get around 91% of survey respondents drive themselves. Other modes of transportation include walking (16%) and riding with a spouse/partner (14%) or with family and friends (7%).
- 38% say, “It would not be easy to find a ride if an older person needed one for medical appointments, etc.”
- When asked, “If it is hard to get to the places you need to go, why?” 15% answered the question. 44% of these participants choose as the reason lack of transportation, 35% say lack of money, 32% reply that they can’t walk well, 22% say they dislike asking for a ride, 12% cite poor vision or hearing, and 11% say they don’t like going out alone. For those 60+ in the region, not being able to walk well is the largest barrier (41%).
- 35% are concerned about falling but only 4% have participated in a fall reduction class.
- Mobility-related comments focus on community infrastructure: having enough benches, handicapped parking, public restrooms and winter snow clearance on sidewalks.
- Affordable and convenient transportation options, well-lit safe roads for walkers, bikers and drivers, and sidewalks or wide shoulders that encourage walking are important to 91-94% of survey participants.

**Community Strengths.** Most respondents – 81% - agree that their community is a great place for older people to live. Residents feel safe in their neighborhoods and communities, in part due to the strength of emergency services. Many respondents value the beauty of the region’s natural surroundings. Library Services especially are highly appreciated and frequently used.

- 78% note that they can ask family, friends and neighbors for help.
- 58% talk with their friends to find out what’s happening.

**Communications.**

- 85% state that information about community events is easy to find. 12% disagree.
- 91% use the Internet. For communication 89% use the phone, 77% use email and 45% use Facebook.
- To find out what’s happening residents check the Internet (78%), read the newspaper (61%), talk with friends (58%) and listen to the radio (34%). Participants look at flyers (27%), watch public access TV (24%) and hear about events at church (15%).
- The most popular places to look for information concerning services for older people are the Internet (68%), family and friends (59%), City Hall and Town Offices (53%), the Bath Senior Center (44%) and medical providers (36%), followed by newspapers (31%), Spectrum Generations (15%) and faith-based organizations (14%).

**Demographics.** 17004 residents lived in our six towns in 2016. 3403 were over the age of 65 years. (Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Censusdata <https://factfinder.census.gov>) 977 survey responses from five towns are presented in this report. The Committee for Age-Friendly Georgetown received an additional 259 responses from their residents, presented in the town specific report.

- The median age of respondents at the time of the survey was 65 and two thirds were 60 years or older.
- 94% of respondents live in the region year-round and 82% are planning to stay in the area.
- 55% of regional survey participants are Bath residents, followed by 19% from Woolwich, 10% from Arrowsic, 8% from West Bath and 7% from Phippsburg.

**Personal Comments of Survey Respondents.**

“Need someone to call if the smoke alarm goes off and I can’t reach it to stop it and change the battery. Who to call?”

“Summer has music events in the park which is wonderful, but I feel isolated in the winter and due to disability can not be out in cold much.”

“If I can’t drive, I have no options.”

## Survey and Listening Session Results ARROWSIC

**Social Connections.** The lack of social connections and loneliness pose a great risk for physical illness, decline, depression and death. Feeling “isolated” was a common theme in survey comments.

- 24% of Arrowsic survey respondents say they live alone.
- 27% – more than 1 in 4 – say they see family, friends, or neighbors in their community only “occasionally”, “rarely” or “once every few weeks.”
- When asked, “Do you have family, friends, or neighbors nearby whom you could ask for help?” 26% say no.
- 28% say that a disability or chronic illness keeps them and/or their spouse or partner from being as active in the community as they want to be.
- 83-89% say the following aspects of community are important or very important to them: Social and volunteer opportunities, accessible and inclusive community activities and events, and opportunities to interact with people of all ages. Yet only 9-19% say, they participate in these activities; many are not sure they exist. 36% report using the library – the most of any service listed.

**Homes.** One key finding is that the homes people are living in may not fit their future. People want both more choices and more information on resources that will help them stay in their homes.

- Almost half of Arrowsic respondents (46%) expect they will have to move to another home as they grow older – 19% to a different home in the area and 27% to a home outside the area.
- The statement, “I will need to modify my home to continue living here”, prompt 63% to say yes.
- 86% say that a resource list of home repair and chore resources is important to them, but that information is lacking.
- In response to the question, “Is your home warm enough in the winter?” 87% say yes; but an alarming 13% say no. Reasons cited are, the home not being well insulated and difficulty paying for fuel, at 40% each.
- Arrowsic residents commented on Town Ordinances allowing alternate living situations, for example full accessory dwelling units that could be used for an older relative/friend, a caretaker, or an adult child not yet able to afford to live on their own.

**Mobility.** The inability to get around safely greatly limits people’s lives and opportunities. The fear of losing the ability to drive and therefore losing independence was a common concern in Listening Sessions and survey comments.

- To get around 97% of Arrowsic survey respondents drive themselves. Other modes of transportation include riding with a spouse/partner (16%) or with family and friends (3%) and walking (6%).
- 41% say, “It would not be easy to find a ride if an older person needed one for medical appointments, etc.”
- When asked, “If it is hard to get to the places you need to go, why?” 11% answered the question. 40% of participants choose as the reason lack of transportation, 40% reply they can’t walk well, 40% cite poor vision or hearing, 20% say they dislike asking for a ride and 20% say they don’t like going out alone. For those 60+ in the region, not being able to walk well is the largest barrier (41%).
- 40% are concerned about falling but only 5% have participated in a fall reduction class.
- Mobility-related comments in the region focused on community infrastructure: having enough benches, handicapped parking, public restrooms and winter snow clearance on sidewalks. In Arrowsic comments emphasized the need for more transportation choices, suggesting a volunteer driver system as well as sufficient sanding of icy roads, more biking and walking paths and respect for dog-leash-laws.
- Affordable and convenient transportation options, well-lit safe roads for walkers, bikers and drivers, and wide shoulders that encourage walking are important to 87-96% of survey participants.

**Community Strengths.** Most respondents – 82% - agree that their community is a great place for older people to live. Residents feel safe in Arrowsic, in part due to the strength of emergency services.

Many respondents value the beauty of the region's natural surroundings. Library Services especially are highly appreciated and frequently used.

- 74% note that they can ask family, friends and neighbors for help.
- 91% agree that older residents are included and respected in the community.

### **Communications.**

- 91% feel that information about community events is easy to find. 9% disagree.
- 94% use the Internet. For communication 90% use the phone, 86% use email and 21% use Facebook.
- To find out what's happening, Arrowsic residents check the Internet (79%), read the newspaper (74%), talk with friends (51%), and listen to the radio (42%). Participants watch public access TV (27%), look at flyers (18%) and hear about events at church (6%).
- The most popular places to look for information concerning services for older people are the Internet (74%), family and friends (61%), Arrowsic Town Office (60%), medical providers (46%), and the Bath Senior Center (43%), followed by newspapers (34%), Spectrum Generations (11%) and faith-based organizations (9%).

**Demographics.** 17004 residents lived in our six towns in 2016. Of 3403 over the age of 65 years in the region 137 lived in Arrowsic. (Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Censusdata <https://factfinder.census.gov>) We received 977 survey responses from the five towns. 95 of them were from Arrowsic.

- The median age of respondents at the time of the survey was 69 years. 78% were 60 years or older.
- 83% live in Arrowsic year-round.
- 55% of regional survey participants are Bath residents, followed by 19% from Woolwich, 10% from Arrowsic, 8% from West Bath and 7% from Phippsburg. The Committee for Age-Friendly Georgetown received an additional 259 responses from their residents.

### **Personal Comments of Survey Respondents.**

“Need safety checks for the elderly living alone.”

“During extended power outages I have a generator but can't get it started. I need help.”

“If I can't drive, I have no options.”

## **Survey and Listening Session Results BATH**

**Social Connections.** The lack of social connections and loneliness pose a great risk for physical illness, decline, depression and death. Feeling “isolated” is a common theme in survey comments.

- 26% of Bath survey respondents say they live alone. Another fourth live with multiple generations.
- 28% – more than 1 in 4 – say they see family, friends, or neighbors in their community only “occasionally”, “rarely” or “once every few weeks.”
- When asked, “Do you have family, friends, or neighbors nearby, whom you could ask for help?” 19% say no.
- 29% say that a disability or chronic illness keeps them and/or their spouse or partner from being as active in the community as they want to be.
- 86-91% say the following aspects of community are important or very important to them: Social and volunteer opportunities, accessible and inclusive community activities and events, and

opportunities to interact with people of all ages. Yet only 9-11% say they participate in these activities; many are not sure they exist. 27% report using the library – the most of any service listed.

**Homes.** One key finding is that the homes\* people are living in may not fit their future. (\*Homes refers to all types of places people live like condos, houses and apartments.) People want both, more choices and more information on resources that will help them stay in their homes.

- Half of Bath respondents expect they will have to move to another home as they grow older, 33% to a different home in the area and 20% to a home outside the area.
- The statement, “I will need to modify my home to continue living here”, prompt 62% to say yes.
- 92% say that a resource list of home repair and chore resources is important to them, but that information is lacking.
- In response to the question, “Is your home warm enough in the winter?” 81% say yes; but an alarming 19% say no. Reasons cited are, the home not being well insulated for 66%, difficulty paying for fuel for 50% and the challenge of moving wood/pellets for 6%.
- People also commented about the need for more choices in housing, at a variety of price points including the middle class, in smaller one-level configurations, with a mix of ages and within walking distance of places they would like or need to go.

**Mobility.** The inability to get around safely greatly limits people’s lives and opportunities. The fear of losing the ability to drive and therefore losing independence is a common concern in Listening Sessions and survey comments.

- To get around, 90% of Bath survey respondents drive themselves. Other modes of transportation include walking (26%) and riding with a spouse/partner (11%) or with family and friends (8%).
- 34% say, “It would not easy to find a ride if an older person needed one for medical appointments, etc.”
- When asked, “If it is hard to get to the places you need to go, why?” 20% answered the question. 46% of participants choose as the reason lack of transportation, 44% say lack of money, 27% reply that they can’t walk well, 22% say they dislike asking for a ride, 16% say they don’t like going out alone and 10% cite poor vision or hearing. For those 60+ in the region, not being able to walk well is the largest barrier (41%).
- 35% are concerned about falling but only 5% have participated in a fall reduction class.
- Mobility-related comments focus on community infrastructure: having enough benches, handicapped parking, public restrooms and winter snow clearance on sidewalks.
- Affordable and convenient transportation options, well-lit safe roads for walkers, bikers and drivers, and sidewalks or wide shoulders that encourage walking are important to 91-94% of survey participants.

**Community Strengths.** Most respondents – 83% - agree that their community is a great place for older people to live. Bath residents feel safe in their neighborhoods, in part due to the strength of emergency services. Many respondents value the beauty of the region’s natural surroundings. Library Services especially are highly appreciated and frequently used.

- 78% note that they can ask family, friends and neighbors for help.

**Communications.**

- 88% state that information about community events is easy to find. 10% disagree.
- 93% use the Internet. For communication 88% use the phone, 76% use email and 56% use Facebook.
- To find out what’s happening, Bath residents check the Internet (81%), talk with friends (58%), read the newspaper (56%) and listen to the radio or look at flyers (32% each). Participants watch public access TV (21%) and hear about events at church (13%).

- The most popular places to look for information concerning services for older people are the Internet (70%), family and friends (59%), Bath City Hall and the Bath Senior Center (48% each) and medical providers (34%), followed by newspapers (27%), Spectrum Generations (15%) and faith-based organizations (11%).

**Demographics.** 17004 residents lived in our six towns in 2016. Of 3403 over the age of 65 years in the region 1422 lived in Bath. (Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Censusdata <https://factfinder.census.gov>) We received 977 survey responses from the five towns. 541 of them were from Bath.

- The median age of respondents was 49 and 56% were 60 years or older. Many live with multiple generations: 24% with children under 18, 4% with aging parents, 10% with adult children.
- 97% of Bath respondents live in the city year-round and 83% are planning to stay in the area.
- 55% of regional survey participants are Bath residents, followed by 19% from Woolwich, 10% from Arrowsic, 8% from West Bath and 7% from Phippsburg. The Committee for Age-Friendly Georgetown received an additional 259 responses from their residents.

### **Personal Comments of Survey Respondents.**

“Summer has music events in the park which is wonderful, but I feel isolated in the winter and due to disability can not be out in cold much.”

“Housing concerns for older middle income retirees looking to downsize. Options currently are high priced condos or lower income housing. Might need to leave Bath which we don't want to do.”

“We need regular bus service to Brunswick and Mid Coast Hospital and doctors offices.”

## **Survey Results GEORGETOWN**

**Social Connections.** The lack of social connections and loneliness pose a great risk for physical illness, decline, depression, and death. Feeling “isolated” was a common theme in survey comments.

- A large majority says they get some level of support from family, neighbors, friends, or town organizations.
- There are very active and strong organizations in town that are open to everyone but have a large percentage of older residents involved. These include the Community Center, Working League, Historical Society, Richards Library, Robinhood Free Meetinghouse, and Volunteer Fire Department.
- Another large majority feels the town is friendly, neighborly, and supportive of one another. However, some note they feel left out of that connectedness.
- There are many community events such as potluck suppers, “get to know your neighbors” parties, bingo, jam sessions at the Meetinghouse, holiday events, Blessing of the Fleet, the Gleaning Program, and a local parade. These are very popular and well attended.
- Isolation, especially in the winter, is a concern of some.
- 48% say they would like to get involved with Age-Friendly activities.

**Homes.** One key finding is that the homes\* people are living in may not fit their future. (\*Homes refers to all types of places people live like condos, houses and apartments.) People want both, more choices and more information on resources that will help them stay in their homes.

- The ability to safely maintain their homes, as they get older is a major concern.
- Basic chores have become, or will soon become, a serious challenge. This includes snow shoveling, lawn mowing, and other yard work.
- The availability of workers to help in these areas is a concern. A volunteer-based “Handy Helper” program would be of great assistance.

- Many say they need, or would soon need, help in heating their homes. Much of the housing stock is quite old and not well prepared for cold winters.
- Many struggle to stay safe and warm during power outages and a good number are not aware that there are warming centers available in town for those occurrences.
- 95% have working smoke detectors.
- 71% have working carbon monoxide detectors.
- Affordable housing for young families and for those working in town is a big challenge due to the cost of housing/rentals and the limited amount, and cost, of buildable land.

**Mobility.** The inability to get around safely greatly limits people's lives and opportunities. The fear of losing the ability to drive and therefore losing independence is a common concern in the survey comments and the three town forums. This is especially true in Georgetown as it is fairly removed from needed services, and there is little in the way of public transportation.

- 42% say they expect to need transportation assistance at some point.
- 84% indicate that getting to and from medical appointments is, or will be, their most important concern.
- 65% say grocery shopping, getting prescriptions, and other such errands are worries.
- Affordable and convenient transportation options, well-lit safe roads for walkers, bikers, and drivers, and sidewalks or wide shoulders that encourage walking are very important to participants.

**Community Strengths.** Most respondents agree that their community is a great place to live. Residents feel safe in their neighborhoods and get support and fulfillment from town organizations.

- 95% say they always feel safe in their home.
- The natural beauty and wide variety of recreation opportunities is a top response.
- Close-knit neighborhoods provide a safety net and communication network for many older residents.
- Town organizations like the Community Center, Working League, Historical Society, Richards Library, Volunteer Fire Department and the Robinhood Free Meetinghouse are widely valued and supported.

### **Communications.**

- 78% say that email is the most effective way to receive information.
- 43% say *The Georgetown Tide*, the Historical Society's newsletter, is another important communication tool.
- 30% get information from the two town public notice boards.
- However, there are many that are not tied in to communication networks and developing ways to get everyone in the loop by some means is a major goal.

**Demographics.** 17004 residents lived in the region in 2016, 1018 in Georgetown. Of 3403 over the age of 65 years 321 lived in Georgetown. (Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Censusdata <https://factfinder.census.gov>) 259 survey responses from Georgetown residents were evaluated in this region wide survey which differs from the questionnaire that was sent out by Age-Friendly Georgetown.

- 79% were 60 years or older.
- 59% were female.
- 69% filled out the survey on their own. 31% completed it with a spouse, partner, or helper.

### **Personal Comments of Survey Respondents.**

"My family members are continually grateful for Georgetown being the wonderful community it is."

“I really like the idea of an age-friendly community. So many could use help. Thank you for doing the survey and the wonderful effort that is being put forth.”

“If climate change increases, storm damage makes road access and driving more difficult - particularly with the tidal situation.”

“Caregivers need affordable short-term respite care. Some can’t get away for even an overnight.”

“The Fire Department and Ambulance Service are of critical importance.”

## Survey and Listening Session Results PHIPPSBURG

**Social Connections.** The lack of social connections and loneliness pose a great risk for physical illness, decline, depression, and death. Feeling “isolated” is a common theme in survey comments.

- 25% of survey respondents in Phippsburg say they live alone.
- 37% of respondents – more than 1 in 3 – say they see family, friends, or neighbors in their community only “occasionally”, “rarely”, or “once every few weeks.”
- When asked, “Do you have family, friends, or neighbors nearby, whom you could ask for help?” 19% say no.
- 39% say that a disability or chronic illness keeps them and/or their spouse or partner from being as active in the community as they want to be.
- 88-92% say the following aspects of community are important or very important to them: Social and volunteer opportunities, accessible and inclusive community activities and events, and opportunities to interact with people of all ages. Up to 28% say they participate in these activities; many are not sure they exist. 33% report using the library – the most of any service listed.

**Homes.** One key finding is that the homes\* people are living in may not fit their future. (\*Homes refers to all types of places people live like condos, houses and apartments.) People want both, more choices and more information on resources that will help them stay in their homes.

- Almost half of respondents (47%) expect they will have to move to another home as they grow older, 33% to a different home in the area and 14% to a home outside the area.
- The statement, “I will need to modify my home to continue living here”, prompt 53% to say yes.
- 92% say that a resource list of home repair and chore resources is important to them, but that information is lacking.
- In response to the question, “Is your home warm enough in the winter?” 86% say yes; but an alarming 14% say no. Reasons cited are, the home not being well insulated for 73%, difficulty paying for fuel for 36% and the challenge of moving wood/pellets for 18%.
- Phippsburg residents commented about the need for more choices in housing including options priced for the middle class and people of modest means and the need for affordable home repairs.

**Mobility.** The inability to get around safely greatly limits people’s lives and opportunities. The fear of losing the ability to drive and therefore losing independence is a common concern in Listening Sessions and survey comments.

- To get around 91% of survey respondents drive themselves. Other modes of transportation include riding with a spouse/partner (14%) or with family and friends (5%) and walking (2%).
- 38% say, “It would not easy to find a ride if an older person needed one for medical appointments, etc.”
- When asked, “If it is hard to get to the places you need to go, why?” 13% answered the question. 37% of participants choose as the reason lack of transportation, 50% say lack of money, 38% reply that they can’t walk well, 63% say they dislike asking for a ride, and 13% say they don’t like going out alone. For those 60+ in the region, not being able to walk well is the largest barrier (41%).

- 38% are concerned about falling but only 2% have participated in a fall reduction class.
- Mobility-related comments focus on community infrastructure: having enough benches, handicapped parking, public restrooms and winter snow clearance on sidewalks.
- Affordable and convenient transportation options, well-lit safe roads for walkers, bikers, and drivers, and sidewalks or wide shoulders that encourage walking are important to 90-95% of survey participants.

**Community Strengths.** Most respondents – 81% - agree that their community is a great place for older people to live. Phippsburg residents feel safe in their community, in part due to the strength of emergency services. Many respondents value the beauty of the region’s natural surroundings. Library Services especially are highly appreciated and frequently used.

- 81% note that they can ask family, friends and neighbors for help.
- 52% talk with their friends to find out what’s happening.

### **Communications.**

- 90% state that information about community events is easy to find. 8% disagree.
- 89% use the Internet. For communication 92% use the phone, 80% use email and 28% use Facebook.
- To find out what’s happening Phippsburg residents check the Internet (70%), read the newspaper (67%), talk with friends (52%) and listen to the radio (37%). Participants look at flyers (28%), watch public access TV (31%) and hear about events at church (25%).
- The most popular places to look for information concerning services for older people are family and friends (70%), the Internet (62%), Phippsburg Town Office (62%), the Bath Senior Center (35%) and medical providers (33%), followed by the newspapers (29%), faith-based organizations (27%) and Spectrum Generations (13%).

**Demographics.** 17004 residents lived in our six towns in 2016. Of 3403 over the age of 65 years in the region 533 lived in Phippsburg. (Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Censusdata <https://factfinder.census.gov>) We received 977 survey responses from the five towns. 69 of them were from Phippsburg.

- The median age of respondents at the time of the survey was 70 and 77% were 60 years or older.
- 94% of Phippsburg participants live in town year-round and 86% are planning to stay in the area.
- 55% of regional survey participants are Bath residents, followed by 19% from Woolwich, 10% from Arrowsic, 8% from West Bath and 7% from Phippsburg. The Committee for Age-Friendly Georgetown received an additional 259 responses from their residents.

### **Personal Comments of Survey Respondents.**

“It is extremely isolated in lower Phippsburg for seniors who do not have a lot of money.”

“Our community is wonderful. Wish there was more affordable housing for hard-working families.“

“I do not want to have to move just because I can't drive.”

## Survey Results WEST BATH

**Social Connections.** The lack of social connections and loneliness pose a great risk for physical illness, decline, depression and death. Feeling “isolated” is a common theme in survey comments.

- 19% of West Bath survey respondents say they live alone.
- 35% of total respondents – 1 in 3 – say they see family, friends, or neighbors in their community only “occasionally”, “rarely” or “once every few weeks.”
- When asked, “Do you have family, friends, or neighbors nearby, whom you could ask for help?” 15% say no.
- 31% say that a disability or chronic illness keeps them and/or their spouse or partner from being as active in the community as they want to be.
- 77-80% say the following aspects of community are important or very important to them: Social and volunteer opportunities, accessible and inclusive community activities and events, and opportunities to interact with people of all ages. Yet only 5-12% say they participate in these activities; many are not sure they exist. 23% report using the library – the most of any service listed.

**Homes.** One key finding is that the homes\* people are living in may not fit their future. (\*Homes refers to all types of places people live like condos, houses and apartments.) People want both, more choices and more information on resources that will help them stay in their homes.

- 44% of West Bath respondents expect they will have to move to another home as they grow older, 32% to a different home in the area and 12% to a home outside the area.
- The statement, “I will need to modify my home to continue living here”, prompt 59% to say yes.
- 85% say that a resource list of home repair and chore resources is important to them, but that information is lacking.
- In response to the question, “Is your home warm enough in the winter?” 90% say yes; but 10% say no. Reasons cited are, the home not being well insulated and difficulty paying for fuel, at 57% each.
- People also comment about the need for more choices in housing, including affordable housing with yard work and shoveling provided, and smaller one-level configurations.

**Mobility.** The inability to get around safely greatly limits people’s lives and opportunities. The fear of losing the ability to drive and therefore losing independence is a common concern in Listening Sessions and survey comments.

- To get around, 93% of West Bath respondents drive themselves. Other modes of transportation include riding with a spouse/partner (17%) or with family and friends (3%) and walking (2%).
- 49% say, “It would not easy to find a ride if an older person needed one for medical appointments, etc.”
- When asked, “If it is hard to get to the places you need to go, why?” 9 residents answered the question. Four reply they can’t walk well, three each choose as a reason lack of transportation and lack of money and one cites poor vision or hearing. For those 60+ in the region, not being able to walk well is the largest barrier (41%).
- 31% are concerned about falling but none say they have participated in a fall reduction class.
- Better community infrastructure to support mobility was raised by many people in the general comments section: sidewalks, walking trails, more bike paths -paved and not- next to highways, wider road shoulders to make walking and bike riding much safer, places to walk ice free in winter, plowed walking sidewalks in a pleasant walking area, better snow removal in public parking and more sanding on icy parts especially handicapped ramps and parking spaces.
- Affordable and convenient transportation options, well-lit safe roads for walkers, bikers and drivers, and sidewalks or wide shoulders that encourage walking are important to 90-92% of survey participants.

**Community Strengths.** Most respondents – 77% - agree that their community is a great place for

older people to live. Region wide residents feel safe in their neighborhoods, in part due to the strength of emergency services. Many respondents value the beauty of the region's natural surroundings. Library Services especially are highly appreciated and frequently used.

- 79% note that they can ask family, friends and neighbors for help.
- 60% talk with their friends to find out what's happening.

### **Communications.**

- 78% state that information about community events is easy to find. 15% disagree.
- 88% use the Internet. For communication 83% use the phone, 79% use email and 43% use Facebook.
- To find out what's happening, residents check the Internet (82%), read the newspaper (65%), talk with friends (60%) and listen to the radio (35%). Participants look at flyers (15%), watch public access TV and hear about events at church (13%).
- The most popular places to look for information concerning services for older people are the Internet (63%), West Bath Town Office (59%), family and friends (43%), newspapers (38%), the Bath Senior Center (34%) and medical providers (29%), followed by Spectrum Generation (15%) and faith-based organizations (11%).

**Demographics.** 17004 residents lived in our six towns in 2016. Of 3403 over the age of 65 years in the region 448 lived in West Bath. (Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Censusdata <https://factfinder.census.gov>) We received 977 survey responses from the five towns. 77 of them were from West Bath.

- The median age of respondents at the time of the survey was 65 and 72% were 60 years or older.
- 97% of respondents live in West Bath year-round and 90% are planning to stay in the area.
- 55% of survey respondents are Bath residents, followed by 19% from Woolwich, 10% from Arrowsic, 8% from West Bath and 7% from Phippsburg. The Committee for Age-Friendly Georgetown received an additional 259 responses from their residents.

### **Personal Comments of Survey Respondents.**

"It would be wonderful to have help finding places to work after retirement."

"We need more units of affordable housing for which yard care, mowing, plowing, shoveling, is provided."

"My mom is older, mobility impaired, and I really believe transportation for non-driving seniors could use improvement. The bus is great, but she honestly needs door-side service."

## Survey and Listening Session Results WOOLWICH

**Social Connections.** The lack of social connections and loneliness pose a great risk for physical illness, decline, depression and death. Feeling “isolated” was a common theme in survey comments.

- 23% of Woolwich survey respondents say they live alone.
- 38% of total respondents – more than 1 in 3 – say they see family, friends, or neighbors in their community only “occasionally”, “rarely” or “once every few weeks.”
- When asked, “Do you have family, friends, or neighbors nearby whom you could ask for help, 21% say no.
- 24% say that a disability or chronic illness keeps them and/or their spouse or partner from being as active in the community as they want to be.
- 86-92% say the following aspects of community are important or very important to them: Social and volunteer opportunities, accessible and inclusive community activities and events and opportunities to interact with people of all ages. Yet only 8-13% say they participate in these activities; many are not sure they exist. 21% report using the library – the most of any service listed.

**Homes.** One key finding is that the homes people are living in may not fit their future. People want both more choices and more information on resources that will help them stay in their homes.

- 44% expect they will have to move to another home as they grow older – 30% to a different home in the area and 14% to a home outside the area.
- The statement, “I will need to modify my home to continue living here”, prompt 52% to say yes.
- 92% say that a resource list of home repair and chore resources would be important to them, but that information is lacking.
- In response to the question, “Is your home warm enough in the winter?” 87% say yes; but an alarming 13% say no. Reasons cited are, the home not being well insulated for 58%, difficulty paying for fuel for 29% and the challenge of moving wood/pellets for 6%.
- Personal comments included the need for medical and financial help and eldercare services to remain at home comfortably and the need for more affordable senior housing.

**Mobility.** The inability to get around safely greatly limits people’s lives and opportunities. The fear of losing the ability to drive and therefore losing independence was a common concern in Listening Sessions and survey comments.

- To get around, 92% of Woolwich survey respondents drive themselves. Other modes of transportation include riding with a spouse/partner (19%) or with family and friends (6%) and walking (4%).
- 46% say, “It would not easy to find a ride if an older person needed one for medical appointments, etc.”
- When asked, “If it is hard to get to the places you need to go, why?” 18% answered the question. 42% of these say the lack of transportation, 39% reply they can’t walk well, 21% say lack of money, 18% say they dislike asking for a ride and 12% cite poor vision or hearing. For those 60+ in the region, not being able to walk well is the largest barrier (41%).
- 35% are concerned about falling but only 2% have participated in a fall reduction class.
- Mobility-related comments focus on community infrastructure: regular bus service to Bath, paved shoulders for bike riders, more safe places to exercise, hiking spaces, a sidewalk on one side of George Wright Road, a community internet “Ride Board” – need ride/can give ride.
- Affordable and convenient transportation options, well-lit safe roads for walkers, bikers and drivers, and wide shoulders that encourage walking are important to 91-93% of survey participants in Woolwich.

**Community Strengths.** Most respondents – 77% - agree that their community is a great place for older people to live. Woolwich residents feel safe in their neighborhoods, in part due to the strength of emergency services. Many respondents value the beauty of the region’s natural surroundings. Library Services especially are highly appreciated and frequently used.

- 78% note that they can ask family, friends and neighbors for help.
- 75% agree that older residents are included and respected in the community.

### **Communications.**

- 76% feel that information about community events is easy to find. 18% disagree.
- 86% use the Internet. For communication 94% use the phone, 74% use email and 37% use Facebook.
- To find out what's happening, residents check the Internet (73%), read the newspaper (63%), talk with friends (62%), and listen to the radio (34%). Participants watch public access TV (26%), look at flyers (24%) and hear about events at church (22%).
- The most popular places to look for information concerning services for older people are the Internet (65%), family and friends (58%), Woolwich Town Office (55%), the Bath Senior Center (41%) and medical providers (37%), followed by newspapers (36%), faith-based organizations and Spectrum Generations, each at 17%.

**Demographics.** 17004 residents lived in our six towns in 2016. Of 3403 over the age of 65 years in the region 542 lived in Woolwich. (Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Censusdata <https://factfinder.census.gov>) We received 977 survey responses from the five towns. 183 of them were from Woolwich.

- The median age of respondents at the time of the survey was 68 years. 73% were 60 years or older.
- 91% live in Woolwich year-round and 87% plan to stay in the area.
- 55% of survey respondents are Bath residents, followed by 19% from Woolwich, 10% from Arrowsic, 8% from West Bath and 7% from Phippsburg. The Committee for Age-Friendly Georgetown received an additional 259 responses from their residents.

### **Personal Comments of Survey Respondents.**

“Where we live in a rural area it would be really nice if there was some way to meet our neighbors or at least get to know who our neighbors are.”

“It is depressing how many people are ashamed of their financial situation, myself included. Not everyone has a support system they can rely on.”

“Once I cannot drive I believe my home, although perfectly safe to live in, will be too isolating.”