State: Maine
Community Name: Chelsea
Population Size: 2778
Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 23
Community Structure: Town
Other:
Community Type: Small Town, Rural
Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment Name: Mike Pushard
Title: Selectboard Chair
Office Mailing Address: c/o Town of Chelsea, 560 Togus Road, Chelsea, ME 04330
Community Contact Name: Scott Tilton
Email: [Redacted]
Position: Town Manager
Telephone: [Redacted]
Role: Scott is Chelsea’s town manager and is an active member and treasurer of Chelsea’s Age-Friendly Committee. Last year, Scott spearheaded the efforts to become an age-friendly community by surveying older residents, contacting key people in town and asking that a committee be formed to address some of the concerns expressed on the survey. He formed our committee and provided space in which the committee can meet. He also provides administrative support and assistance to the committee, as well as serving as a liaison with contractors and others who are integral to carrying out the projects the committee has taken on.

Older Adult Involvement: Our age friendly committee has 8 volunteer members, all over the age of 50. One way we engage older community members by holding monthly informational luncheons for people aged fifty plus. These luncheons feature a speaker to inform people about groups and events in town as well as addressing topics such as fire safety and community recycling. Through social media, we have connected with a great number of residents, mostly aged fifty plus. Mutual sharing of posts with other groups in the community increases followers for all groups. Many of this town’s older residents belong to one or more of these groups. Social media has been very effective in reaching a growing number of older residents because many of this town’s residents are getting most of their information through these platforms. This collaboration has enabled us to reach
more people than we could without those relationships. By developing and enhancing our park and open spaces to become age friendly, we are working to provide venues that appeal to older residents as well as younger people and families. Once work is done on these spaces, we will form groups to maintain and monitor them. We have found that many residents in town who are retired are looking for things to do, and we are continually seeking to engage them in our projects. We have started a walking group and, while most of those who come along on the walks are older people, many of them bring their grandchildren along with them. Our hope is that people will want to stay here as they age because they will have opportunities for recreation and socialization without having to travel outside the area.

**Increasing Collaboration and Coordination:**

Chelsea is a small community. Everyone knows everyone. In the work our age friendly committee has been doing, we often have to interact and coordinate with various boards and other committees. These boards and committees are all made up of people who live in the community and wish to remain here. They are invested in the work we are doing to build a community that fulfills the needs of its aging population. Because we do not want to duplicate the work of others, we have met with the Conservation Committee and the Historical Society and talked about ways we can build on the work they've been doing. Our first project will involve enhancing a walking trail the Conservation Committee is creating. It also includes providing historical signage to enable the Historical Society to share our rich history with the community. We are tapping into the expertise of these groups and giving them the means to further their work. We keep our governing Select Board informed of our activities, and we have their full support. We will be meeting with the Planning Board to present our plans for the community and learn the parameters within which our ideas can take place. The town will be building a new town office in the next couple years. The work we want to do as an adjunct to the new building will require coordination with multiple departments. Because we are all invested in building a better community, it has been a very positive experience working together.

**AARP Team Member Contact Info:**

Patricia Oh, Program Manager, Maine Center on Aging, Age-friendly liaison

**Most Instructive Area of Work:**

In the aftermath of a pandemic, many people have concerns about indoor gatherings and crowded venues. Chelsea is planning projects that will develop and enhance outdoor spaces to address these concerns. Other communities can look at our projects for ideas and inspiration to address these concerns in their own communities. Because our first project involves enhancing a park along the Kennebec river, we have had to consult with Maine's Department of Environmental Protection. We have learned about development near waterways and wetlands. This information could be shared with other communities who are considering similar projects. In order to address some of the eight domains, Chelsea's age friendly committee will have to be more creative and innovative than larger
communities that already have many services in place. Smaller rural communities will all benefit by sharing ideas and solutions.

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Logo or Image: Error in form input for this field only.
Website: NA
Twitter 2: Age-Friendly Chelsea
Facebook 1: Town of Chelsea or Chelsea, Town of
Facebook 2: Chelsea Area Historical Society, Chelsea Maine Heart & Soul