

Age Friendly Communities Plan: Wayne, Maine

Introduction to Wayne

Wayne is a community of 1050 year-round residents and 3000-plus summer residents. In 2015, 408 residents were over age 60. Wayne has an aging population in the oldest state in the US. Wayne has the largest population of 60-69-year-olds (20.5% of the total) of towns in the area. One third of elders in Wayne have limited economic security. One third of elders in Wayne have at least one disability. The population of Wayne dropped 7% from 2010 to 2015.

Healthcare

91% of Wayne residents have health insurance. 76% of those are from private insurers. 35% of the total have Medicare and Mainecare (Medicaid.) Of the people whose income is under 25 thousand dollars a year, 18% have no health insurance.

Housing

There are 848 housing units in Wayne. 98% of Wayne residents live in a home they own or are buying. 77% live in a home 25 or more years old. These older structures often need maintenance and modification for residents to continue to live in them safely as they age.

Past efforts to support elders in town

Wayne is a community with a long history of community support for all. In 1989, New England Monthly magazine wrote of us "*Wayne is a place full of exquisite landscapes where everybody knows you, where they take care of you when you're sick, where your kids can grow up without fear. Why doesn't everybody live like this?*" (New England Monthly: "In Praise of Small Towns", April 1989). Benefit suppers raise money for health care. Neighbors help with transportation to grocery shopping and medical appointments. People check in with each other. Volunteers deliver meals from the Winthrop Hot Meal Kitchen. Volunteers staff the Fire Department, extend the hours at the Library, and run the Farmers Market.

There have been several formal efforts in the past to create supportive elder housing, which have not succeeded, and to extend sidewalks and improve ADA access in town. The Library board succeeded in improving access for all to the library building and collection, yet efforts to create sidewalks for safer walking and public bathrooms have not yet been successful.

Creation of an Age-Friendly planning committee.

In 2016, a number of residents began exploring a new effort to maintain and extend our community's history of support for elders, with assistance from the AARP age friendly communities initiative. We named our initiative Aging At Home, or AAH (partly in reflection of the way we feel about living in our town: "Aaaahhhh...") A logo was created, and a committee was formed as a part of town government. We received a planning grant from AARP to determine needs and goals and decided to use the grant money to hire an outreach coordinator to get as many people as possible to respond to our 2016-2017 survey. Survey modifications and interpretation were provided by experienced in town volunteers so we could concentrate our efforts on hearing from many of our residents. Phone calls, email, person to person outreach, and networking led to 107 responses. Here are some of the things we learned from the survey:

- More than 90% of survey respondents reported that they wanted to stay in Wayne as they age.
- Most respondents reported that they were satisfied with accessibility of public buildings (90%), parking near places they go (88%) , and availability of accessible parking (71%)
- Some elements of living in town were not as satisfactory. Substantial numbers said they were dissatisfied with. 35% reported a need for streets that are safe to cross; 55% report a need for

sidewalks that are in good enough condition for a wheelchair; 67% report a need for accessible public restrooms.

- Among respondents age 75 and older, 60% identified at least one problem that blocks them from socializing as much as they would like to. The most common blocks to connecting with others were listed as: Health or trouble moving around; No one to go with me; Find out too late; Not much to do here; Activities that are too expensive or at times that don't work for me.
- When we asked what elders had needed help with in the past year, those 75 and older stated: Snow removal 79%; Yard work or gardening 72% ; Home repair or modifications 71%; Household chores or routine house maintenance 67%; Filling out forms or preparing taxes 46%; Errands 43% Most elders said they were able to find the help they needed.
- We asked about home modifications. These are the modifications that the largest numbers of respondents want to make or plan to make: A ramp or wider doorways 47%; Adding grab bars, handrails, or nonslip flooring 40%; Installing a medical emergency response system 33%; Movable stair chair to second floor 27%
- Wayne residents 75 or older told us that if they moved, they would look for a less expensive place to live 79%; A smaller or more accessible home 65%; A warmer climate 57%; An assisted living home 53%; A place closer to friends or family 50%
- We asked about services that people think they will need. Most chosen by residents 75 and older were Housecleaning (80%); Home maintenance (68%); Caregiver support (60%); Personal care at home (55%); Home delivered meals (44%); and Safety checks (43%)

History and focus of our Aging At Home effort:

From the beginning, we chose to create an effort that met five criteria: First, we wanted to enhance rather than replace the well-functioning informal networks for helping and connecting which are already in place in our town. Second, we wanted to deepen the resources of those networks and extend their reach through adding to those who volunteer and to those who receive help and connection. Third, we wanted to have connectedness and responsiveness to individual needs as a major focus. With that in mind, we hired a resident part time who had long public health nursing experience to identify needs, support elders, and connect community volunteers with those in need. Fourth, we have created a series of events to promote connection, community, and safety, ranging from luncheons to community wide efforts with the Red Cross to install fire alarms. (see appendix 2 for details about programs and accomplishments to date.) Fifth, we wanted to create a sustainable intervention, not one based on short term grant funding. With the fifth criterion in mind we used a grant from AARP to begin the effort, sought and received a two-year operating grant from the Ladd Family Foundation, and are requesting funds to continue supporting our part time outreach coordinator position from Town Meeting in June of 2019. The town manager, select board, and other town stakeholders support this step.

Existing resources and Aging At Home program actions to date- see appendices 1 and 2 at the end of this plan.

Based on input from a wide range of stakeholders, the town's Aging at Home committee and the project's outreach coordinator have identified the following goals for making Wayne a more age-friendly community, based on the AARP's 8 Domains of Livability:

1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:** Wayne will have safe places to walk, both near roads and in natural settings, that are accessible to those with limited mobility and that are safe for all, including elders who may be distracted or whose senses may be compromised. This includes safe crosswalks and sidewalks. Public buildings will be accessible to those with mobility impairments.

2. Transportation: Wayne will continue to provide informal transportation support to those who need help getting to appointments or shopping. We will explore ways to make public non-driving transportation more available.
3. Housing: We will update existing housing to be accessible and safe to those of all ages and explore home-sharing and assisted living options for those who cannot or do not want to live alone.
4. Social Participation: To reduce isolation, and thus prolong healthy lives, we will work to expand opportunities for formal and informal social contact including home visiting and check ins, activities of all kinds, and building connections between elders and between elders and younger people.
5. Respect and Social Inclusion: Elders' contributions to the community will be discussed, and we will actively involve elders as mentors, volunteers, and teachers in the life of the community.
6. Civic Participation and Employment: See item 5
7. Communication and Information: A wide variety of means of communication including face to face and phone contact, the church newsletter (Messenger) and AAH newsletters via mail through the USPS, email, social media, public events, and informational and educational programs will help us connect with elders and help them connect with each other and the community at large.
8. Community and Health Services: We will link elders with existing health services and support programs such as Catholic Charities' SEARCH program and the programs of the Cohen Center. We will advocate for other needed services.

Overall our program goal is this: To value seniors as full members of our community, to strengthen social connections, and to support safe and healthy living for seniors in Wayne, so our elders can live full and long lives in this community. People of all ages, sexual orientation, gender and gender expression, race, religious background, language, and socio-economic status will be included in our plan and as respected members of our community.

Our three-year plan:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings: Wayne will have safe places to walk, both near roads and in natural settings, that are accessible to those with limited mobility and that are safe for all, including elders who may be distracted or whose senses may be compromised. This includes safe crosswalks and sidewalks. Buildings will be accessible to those with mobility impairments.

Objectives:

- A. Create a plan for extending sidewalks and crosswalks and find funding for this project. Responsible: aging at home committee, outreach coordinator, town manager, and select board. Timeline: By summer of 2020 there will be a plan for sidewalks and crosswalks and identification of grant funding sources and timelines. By summer of 2021 an article asking for funding for needed local match for grants will be presented to town meeting. If approved the project will begin by summer 2022.
- B. Create an accessible public bathroom in downtown Wayne. Responsible: aging at home committee, outreach coordinator, town manager, and select board. Timeline: Design and funding estimate including grant resources completed by summer 2020. Construction to follow by summer 2021
- C. Create woods walking trails accessible to residents with mobility challenges. Responsible: aging at home committee, outreach coordinator, town manager, and select board. Timeline: Town meeting 2019 will vote on a plan to conserve a tract of

land including level, accessible hiking opportunities. If this vote is successful, we will work with other community organizations to create accessible trails starting in summer 2019. If the town votes no, we will work to reopen level hiking trails on the town's Ladd Recreation Center property.

2. Transportation: Wayne will continue to provide informal transportation support to those who need help getting to appointments or shopping. We will explore ways to make public non-driving transportation more available.
 - A. Continue to link those needing transportation with those who are willing to drive. Responsible: Outreach coordinator. Ongoing.
 - B. Determine a way to cover volunteer drivers with liability insurance. Responsible: Outreach coordinator. We are currently working with the Catholic Charities SEARCH program to include our volunteers under their program; they will provide background checks, insurance, and training. Goal: implement in 2019
3. Housing: We will update existing housing to be accessible and safe to those of all ages and explore home-sharing and assisted living options for those who cannot or do not want to live alone.
 - A. Explore needed changes, if any, to zoning and other land use ordinances to allow conversion of single occupancy dwellings to multiple occupancy dwellings, to allow tiny houses, and to allow the construction of congregate living facilities. Responsible: Town Manager, Select board, and Planning Board. Timeline: Review to be completed by summer 2020.
 - B. Identify funding for retrofitting existing housing for seniors, including widening doorways, lever door handles, grab bars, enhanced lighting, and other modifications as needed. Responsible: Aging at Home committee. Directory of funding options and local contractor resources to be completed by summer 2021.
 - C. Explore developing a home share matching program like those in use in Vermont and New Hampshire. Responsible: Aging at Home committee. Details to be gathered and community forums held by summer 2020.
 - D. Work to reduce property taxes for needy elders so they can stay in this community. Responsible: aging at home committee, outreach coordinator, town manager, and select board. Timeline: Proposal to be brought to Town Meeting in 2020 for partial tax abatement program. There is already a fund at the town office for needed tax relief, based on citizen contributions.
4. Social Participation: To reduce isolation, and thus prolong healthy lives, we will work to expand opportunities for formal and informal social contact including home visiting and check-ins, activities of all kinds, and building connections between elders and between elders and younger people.
 - A. Continue to create social connections through the work of the outreach coordinator. Make the outreach position sustainable through asking the town to fund it at 2019 town meeting after two years of grant support. Responsible: Outreach coordinator (connections) and Town Manager and Select board (seek local funding). Goal- present town funding article at June 2019 town meeting.
 - B. Continue to create and link with a wide range of social and educational activities that are without fee and at varying times of day. Help elders link with transportation and/or someone to attend events with. Responsible: Outreach coordinator and aging at home committee. Ongoing.
5. Respect and Social Inclusion: Elders' contributions to the community will be discussed, and we will actively involve elders as mentors, volunteers, and teachers in the life of the community.
6. Civic Participation and Employment: See item 5
 - A. Continue to work to integrate elders actively into the life of the community. Responsible: Outreach coordinator and aging at home committee. Ongoing.

7. Communication and Information: A wide variety of means of communication including face to face and phone contact, the church newsletter Messenger, regular AAH newsletter via USPS email, social media, public events, and informational and educational programs will help us connect with elders and help them connect with each other and the community at large.
 - A. Continue to use all methods above to connect elders with resources, education, and socialization. Responsible: Outreach coordinator and aging at home committee. Ongoing.
 - B. Seek resources to connect and train elders who are not using social media and electronic communication (and who wish to) to do so. Responsible: Outreach coordinator and aging at home committee; Town manager and select board. We plan to present a warrant article at town meeting 2019 to begin expanding access to broadband internet.
8. Community and Health Services: We will link elders with existing health services and support programs such as Catholic Charities' SEARCH program and the programs of the Cohen Center. We will advocate for other needed services.
 - A. Partnership has already begun with the Catholic Charities SEARCH program, and other partnerships will be developed. Responsible: Outreach coordinator and aging at home committee. Timeline: By 2020 three other partnerships will be identified.

Appendix 1:

Existing Assets for seniors in Wayne

Wayne social groups:

Friday Club—"Mutual improvement- to themselves, their homes and their communities"

Coffee and Conversation—to relieve cabin fever

Historical Society—working to preserve the historical documents and stories of past Wayne.

Sustain Wayne—"Sustain Wayne is a non-profit organization that creates & strengthens community connections through educational programs focusing on energy conservation, local food, heritage, and the arts."

Yacht Club- boating, swimming and socializing

Ladd Rec center- After-school care, summer programs for students, all-age uses throughout the year. (town meeting, quilting group, exercise classes, tennis, many others.)

Cary Memorial Library- books and videos, interlibrary-loan, Maine author presentations, children's programs, travelogues, speakers, luncheons, various meetings.

Williams House—monthly gathering spot for socializing, coffee and eats, book sales, boutiques, yearly silent auction, bake and candy sales

Snowmobile Club

Farmer's Market in summer

Wayne Community Church

North Wayne Church

General Store—gathering spot with food

Corner Store

Other—informal groups from the community to provide meals for the sick and grieving

Core Team Guiding the Aging At Home work

Town Manager Aaron Chrostowsky

Gloria Ladd and Ladd Center Director Donna Freeman

Church Pastor, Secretary Hannah Faulkner, Sue Spalding, AAH committee member.

Librarian Janet Adelberg

AAH coordinator Pam Chenea

Key Community Partnerships

Town manager/Wayne Town Office

Cary Memorial Library

Ladd Recreation Center

Wayne Community Church

Sustain Wayne: community organization

Appendix 2- project activities to date. We recently reported to the Select Board (Winter 2019): Aging At Home has been busy serving the elders of Wayne in a number of capacities over the last year and a half. 2514 Units of service have been performed for and with the elders during this time. 54 people have volunteered to help with our efforts. Of course some people have been served a number of times, and some volunteers are doing a number of different volunteering projects.

Here is a summary of the various services offered:

Visits to those intensely needing services or caregiver support (usually for health reasons.)

Visits to those with lesser needs

Phone calls to check on people or socialize

Meals delivered from the Winthrop soup kitchen

Home cooked meals delivered from individuals to the recently sick

Buckets of sand delivered

Matter of Balance exercise program offered 8 weeks

Tai Chi offered twice a week X 8 weeks

Coffee and Conversation offered twice a month in winter

Music programs performed

Homebound music performed

Smoke alarms need established and installation provided

Files of Life distributed

Luncheons- for anyone

Elders had their oral histories done by volunteers

Knitting group was co-sponsored at the library

Volunteer made quilts for children and lap quilts

Volunteer sowed and weeded a garden

Coordinator received CPR and AED training and certification in support of Tai Chi program

We wrote a grant and received funding for traffic speed reduction signs for Wayne Village

We wrote a grant and received funding for support of our program