Communities for Healthy Aging Transitions (CHAT), a regional project, examined age-friendliness in Strafford County, as well as Brookfield, Wakefield, Newmarket, Nottingham and Northwood in Carroll and Rockingham counties, respectively. The project was funded by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and conducted in partnership with Greater Seacoast Community Health’s Strafford County Public Health Network (SCPHN) program.

The project mission was to engage communities in promoting diverse, equitable, inclusive, livable environments where people can grow and thrive, regardless of age. To achieve this, SRPC and SCPHN designed a project that engaged the community in understanding the strengths and opportunities in each community, which were framed within AARP’s eight domains of livability (see page 3). The qualitative and quantitative information from this engagement was presented in the Community Assessments for each community in the region. From there, Community Action Plans were developed for 4 communities, Farmington, Newmarket, Rochester and Strafford. Each community engaged stakeholders to identify goals and actions that addressed the results of the assessments. From there, 1 action was chosen from both the Strafford and Rochester Action Plans for implementation. The lessons learned from these projects provide best practices for other communities who want to create more age-friendly communities. A region-wide Age-Friendly Resource Guide was also created that is chock-full of organizations and partners that provide essential services that address the eight domains of livability. We hope this project can serve as a model for other regions looking to create more age-friendly communities.
“more integration of seniors into the schools and rec programs would help improve social participation in town.”
TIMELINE

July 2020 – March 2021
Community Engagement Session – Survey and Workshops

December 2022
Community Assessments Completed

July 2023
Age-Friendly Resource Guide Launched (online and print)

May 2023
Community Action Plans Completed

September 2023
2 Pilot Projects Completed
By the Numbers

- 156,145 Residents in SRPC Region
- 17.8% Residents over age 60+
- 12.4% Residents with a disability
- 10% Residents under 10 years old
- 18 Community Assessments Completed
- 75+ People Engaged
- 4 Action Plans Completed
- 30+ Resources Used
- 15+ Community Meetings
Age-Friendly Action Plans

Using the results of the Community Assessments, Age-Friendly Action Plans were created for Farmington, Newmarket, Rochester, Strafford. Each plan includes 6 goals and associated actions that were developed in partnership with community stakeholders. The actions lay out the time it will take to implement, responsible parties, potential partners, resources needed and best practices. At least two communities (Farmington and Strafford) are planning to adopt the final Age-Friendly Plans into their municipal Master Plan.

Community Assessments

Community assessments were developed for all 18 communities in the Strafford Region. They are derived from outreach and a public input survey, and present strengths and opportunities for each regional community in the eight AARP livability domains. Each Assessment includes demographic, economic and housing data and which community and health services are available to residents.
Project Deliverables

Age-Friendly Resource Guide

The Strafford Region and State of New Hampshire have many healthy aging resources available, but they aren’t always well known or easy to find. To remove the barriers to finding these healthy aging resources, the CHAT Project Team created an Age-Friendly Resource Guide. Categorized by the eight livability domains, the document is available as both an online tool, and a printed guide to be available at health centers, town and city halls, and other public locations around the region.

Age-Friendly Pilot Projects

The City of Rochester chose one action from their Age-Friendly Action Plans to implement: conduct an Accessibility Audit of the Downtown. Using the AARP Walk Audit Toolkit as a foundation, the Project Team worked with City staff, local officials, non-profits and volunteers to measure the accessibility of the sidewalks, crosswalks and municipal buildings in the central business district. 24 people participated in the audit. Recommendations are being included in the City’s Master Plan, updated Riverwalk Plan and Parking Commission planning efforts.
Interested in working with one of the organizations who lead this project?

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For more information on this project or to view an electronic version of this Guide, please visit:
strafford.org/projects/
communities-for-healthy-aging-transitions/