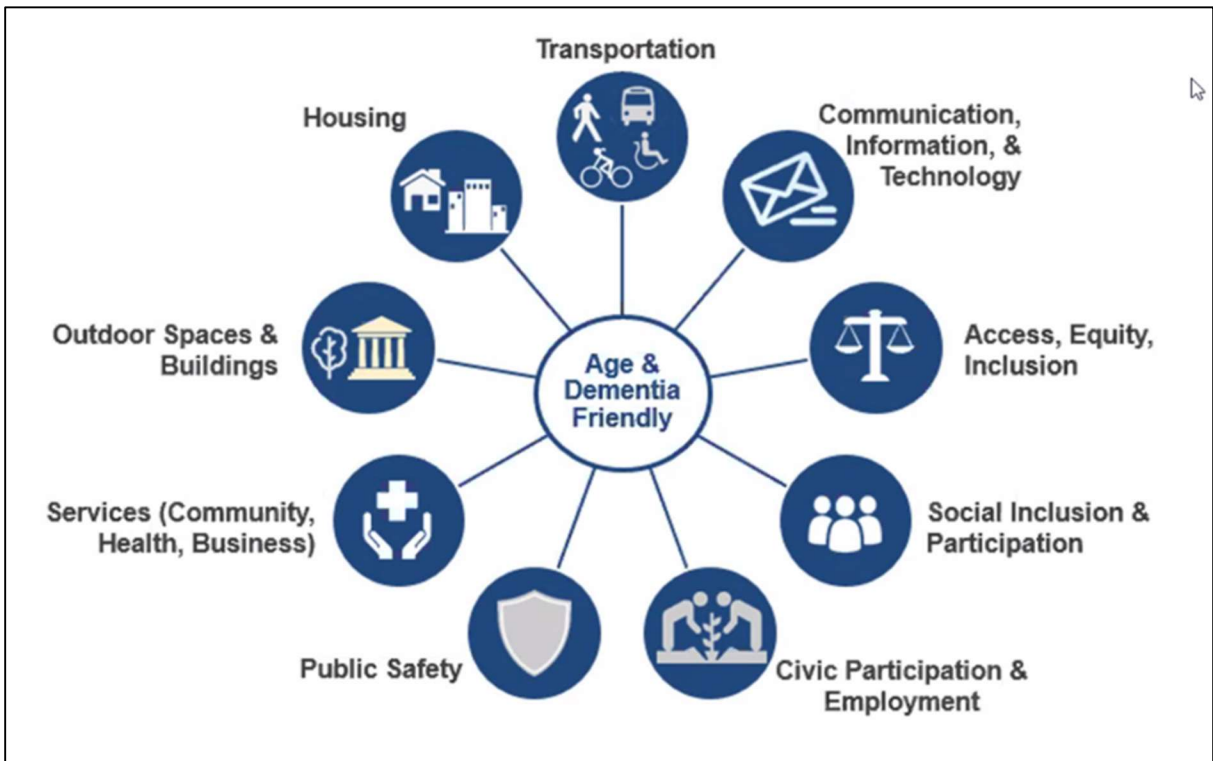


Health and Social Environment

I. What has Hatfield said about this topic in earlier plans?

INTRODUCTION

A review of past plans for considerations around health and the needs of older adults focused on the nine domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community, a model that was developed by the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative and combines both an Age Friendly (originally developed by the World Health Organization) and Dementia Friendly (a model developed by Dementia Friendly America) approach. The reason to combine these approaches is that as people live longer, there is a strong likelihood that they will have some form of dementia in their later years. According to information from the Alzheimer’s Association, it is estimated that one in three people over the age of 85 will have some form of dementia in their later years.



The “nine domains” include aspects of the Social and Built Environments as well as support that impact community livability and the health of all residents, particularly those who may be living with cognitive or physical impairments that become more prevalent in

older age. Providing support and removing barriers can help older adults to fully participate in the community and lead long and healthy lives, and can also create a more livable community for people of all ages.

Health and social services are not discussed in most of the existing plans and reports in Hatfield, and the specific needs of older adults are generally restricted to housing (need for more diverse housing types, particularly for older adults and millennials), recreation resources, and planning for severe weather events, when older adults are considered one of the more vulnerable populations in Hatfield.

For the purposes of the review of past plans and reports, we focused on the elements of the built environment that affect older adults including Housing, Transportation, and Buildings and Outdoor Spaces (for accessibility and opportunities for social interaction), as well as Communication & Technology. Findings will be summarized in the Health/Social Services chapter but should also be integrated in the applicable chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population and Household Trends

(2015 Housing Production Plan, p. 14-15)

- According to the American Community Survey's 2009-2013, an estimated 7.1% of Hatfield's population of residents age 18 to 64 (142 people), "working age residents," reported having one or more disabilities.³ Cognitive and ambulatory difficulties were the most prevalent types of disability. It should be noted that a person may respond to having more than one type of disability. An estimated 12.3% of elderly residents (404 people) reported having one or more disability in 2009-2013 (margin of error $\pm 2.9\%$). Elderly residents were the majority of this group (251 people) and had more difficulties associated ambulatory, independent living, hearing, and self-care. Hatfield's elderly population is expected to continue to increase, which will likely raise demand for affordable and barrier-free housing that is accessible to people with disabilities. The percentage working age and elderly residents with disabilities in Hatfield was comparable to that of the region.

Housing

- Limited Housing Opportunities, Particularly for Young Families and Elders – For residents seeking flexible, appropriate, and affordable homes – both owned and rented – the choices in Hatfield are limited. Multi-generational continuity is disrupted as elder residents and young families are forced to look outside Hatfield for housing. Without housing choices for these citizens, the town loses its ability to keep long-

term residents with knowledge of, and commitment to, the neighborhoods and community of Hatfield. (2001 Master Plan, p. 20)

- Single person households over the age of 65 consisted of 12.2% of all households in Hatfield in 2010 versus 11% of all households in the region.

Communication & Technology

- High-speed data service is available in Hatfield, but with little viable competition among providers... Without competition, this service remains too expensive for many residents and business owners. (2001 Master Plan, p. 54)

BUILDINGS AND OUTDOOR SPACES

Outdoor Spaces - 2001 Master Plan

- ...Public access to the dike along the CT River continues to be important, as this provides a link to an informal “circuit hike” through the town center.... (2001 Master Plan, p. 53)
- Some residents have indicated an interest in a hiking/biking trail connecting Hatfield to Northampton, perhaps linking to the Norwottuck Trail in the future. (2001 Master Plan, p. 53)
- The Lion’s Pavilion, next to the Breor School is used by many in the town for parties and special events. (2001 Master Plan, p. 54)

Municipal Recreation Lands - 2023 Draft OSRP

- Smith Academy Park - The Town has renovated the Smith Academy Park which is a 1± acres parcel next to Town Hall. The park is being used for outdoor concerts and other passive recreation. A plan is in place to construct a pavilion in the park to further enhance passive recreation opportunities. (p. 45)
- Smith Academy Fields - Construction has recently been started on a recreational walkway around the playing fields. There is undeveloped land available in this tract for field expansion if the need arises. (p. 45)
- Town of Hatfield, Terry Blunt Watershed and Conservation Area - ... The conservation area contains approximately 600 acres. An approximately 1-mile long trail was built by the Open Space Committee on the southern portion of the area in 2013 and is open to the public for hiking. Access to the trail is on Rocks Road at the south end, and Reservoir Road at the north end. The unpaved path traverses some of the highest elevation in Hatfield under a high open forest canopy offering a unique outdoor experience in Hatfield. (p. 45)

Buildings

- The Town Library requires a new facility. A new, expanded or renovated structure is needed to support the needs of Hatfield residents and to protect the collection. (2001 Master Plan, p. 54)
- There are approximately 1228 acres of land within the FEMA mapped 100-year floodplain and 246 acres of land within the 500-year floodplain within the Town of Hatfield. The Town Hall, Town Fire Station, Town Library and Town Police Station are all located within the Connecticut River's 500 year floodplain. There are 552 tax parcels located within the FEMA 100 and 500 year flood plains that contain structures, according to MassGIS data from July 2021, and 467 tax parcels located in the floodplains that contain residential structures. The estimated number of people living in the floodplain is 1,041. (2021 HMP, p. 21)

Infrastructure

- There are sidewalks in a number of areas of Hatfield, particularly those most densely populated. Sidewalks run the length of Main Street in the center of Hatfield, and continue along Maple and Elm Street until the border with Northampton. There are also sidewalks on Prospect Street and School Street that meet up with those on Main Street. There are no bike lanes in Hatfield, although the Town sees significant numbers of bikers that ride from Northampton and up Elm, Maple, Main and River Road into Whately. Main Street has a wide shoulder; these other roads are fairly narrow but have limited traffic, with the exception of Elm Street. In May, 2022, the Town applied and received \$56,641 in funding through MA Department of Transportation's Shared Streets and Spaces Program to install 8 solar button-activated flashing crosswalk signals for the purpose of providing safety to all pedestrians crossing two main arteries. These signals will be placed on School Street, a school district area, the corner of School Street/Main Street (which will benefit Capawonk Housing for the Disabled and Elderly), Hatfield Senior Center and Smith Academy Park, corner of North Street and Main Street, and the Elm Street area. Construction work has begun and will be completed in the spring of 2023. (2023 Draft OSRP, p. ___)
- The Town has adequate recreation areas at present, but there is a demand for additional, varied opportunities for passive and active recreation at a wider variety of recreational venues, as well as better maintenance of facilities. Among the potential additions are pickleball/tennis courts at Smith Academy, a bike trail between Elm Court and Damon Road, pending continued negotiation with Northampton, improved access to the Mill River; striping of roads for bike lanes and wider shoulders; and creation of new sidewalks with a view to expanding the Town's "pedestrian circuit." (2023 Draft OSRP, p. 57)

- Summary of Management Needs and Potential Changes in Use (2023 Draft OSRP, p. 58)
- There may also be opportunities to link recreational or open space areas with in-town trails or better sidewalk networks, as walking/jogging on sidewalks is the activity in which most (over 90%, according to the OSRP survey) residents participate. Better pedestrian linkages among recreational and open space resources in the village center and other areas of town also serve as opportunities to improve accessibility for Hatfield's senior and disabled residents.

PUBLIC SAFETY/RESILIENCE

Populations (2021 HMP, p 17)

- Vulnerability of populations is influenced by three factors: exposure or contact with the hazard; sensitivity or degree to which people or communities are affected by the exposure to the hazard; and capacity to adapt or the ability of communities, institutions, or people to adjust and respond to and recover from potential hazards. The major health impacts from natural hazards and climate change include:
 - Mental health and stress-related disorders ranging from minimal stress and distress symptoms to clinical disorders such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and suicidality. Specific groups of people who are at higher risk for distress and other adverse mental health consequences from exposure to climate-related or weather-related disasters include children, the elderly, women (especially pregnant and post-partum women), people with preexisting mental illness, the economically disadvantaged, the homeless, and first responders. Populations living in areas most susceptible to specific climate change events are at increased risk for adverse mental health outcomes (SHMCAP, 2018).
- In most natural hazard events, the vulnerability of a population is largely dependent on local preparedness and availability of human resources for social services staffing and supplies distribution. While this Hazard Mitigation Plan does not aim to recommend specific emergency preparedness and response activities, it should be noted that preparing for emergencies by training a large group of public and professional responders to ensure continuity of operations during a hazard event can be a critical tool for mitigating the overall impacts of any hazard event. (p. 26)

II. What have been key findings and recommended actions?

2001 MASTER PLAN

- Develop zoning regulations to promote a diversity of housing opportunities in Hatfield. Hatfield does not provide a very wide range of housing options for such groups as elderly or handicapped persons, new homebuyers, and low and moderate income families. Hatfield should explore a range of options to promote a diversity of housing opportunities, including zoning for elderly and handicapped congregate housing; zoning for traditional neighborhood developments, inclusionary zoning, and accessory apartment bylaws. (p. 22 – ranked very important)
- Update: Accessory Apartment bylaw adopted in 2019, Inclusionary zoning report (adopted?)
- End Notes (recommendations that the Master Plan Committee determined were beyond what they could reasonably accomplish):
- #23. Seek appropriate location, design and funding for a new or improved library facility. The failing town library facility needs renovation or replacement. If the residents of Hatfield wish to have continued use of a local library, the current building must be substantially renovated and expanded. Alternative sites that maintain proximity to the population center of Hatfield should also be considered for the development of a new facility.

2015 HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

- The 2014 Regional Housing Plan notes the critical need for more accessible housing to meet existing and growing demand. Key points include:
 - The range of disabilities present in our region requires different types of accessible housing to serve the needs of persons with disabilities.
 - The need for more concerted efforts to integrate accessible housing and housing with supportive services into our planning for market-rate and affordable housing development.
 - Many existing units with accessibility features are often rented to people who do not need them or all the features that are included.

2023 DRAFT OSRP

- The OSC has been communicating with the City of Northampton on the possible design and installation of a multi-use path that would connect from Elm Court on the southern border of Hatfield to a multi-use path that is being developed to run alongside Damon Road in Northampton, and that would then intersect with the Mass Central Rail Trail. This would provide Hatfield residents with the opportunity for safe walking and biking within the Town as well the ability to link into other paths regionally. Over 73% of survey respondents said that they would use such a path if it

were built. Some concerns regarding the proposed path were raised by residents during a fall 2022 Town forum. The Town will soon be deciding whether to support the proposed multi-use path. (2023 Draft OSRP, p. 57)

- Hatfield residents' lack of knowledge of recreational opportunities such as trails was one of the main themes that emerged from the survey. Many respondents commented that they were not aware of the hiking trails, swimming area at Bashin Beach, and tennis courts, in particular. Many respondents also commented that it would be very helpful to have both a map of the hiking trails in Town as well as a brochure and/or online listing of all the recreational facilities in Hatfield. The OSC will take on public education about recreational opportunities in Town as priority action items in the seven-year action plan. (2023 Draft OSRP, p. 57)
- The top responses for people who are mobility impaired include more and better sidewalks, wheelchair accessible trails, benches along sidewalks, and accessible swimming areas. More sidewalks and safe walking options were mentioned elsewhere in the survey as well as improvements to prioritize, especially for children and for seniors.
- The OSC has completed phase one of the Smith Academy Park in the town center through the assistance of a PARC grant, and also completed plans for a pavilion for the park. Some of the features planned for the park will meet the needs for mobility impaired and senior residents mentioned above. Currently, there is some use of the park by town employees (the park abuts Town Hall) as well as by residents of Capawonk Senior Housing, which is across the street from the park. Designs for phase two of the park redesign include additional walking paths, benches, and the installation of a pavilion for concerts and other public events.
- It is still a goal to add more sidewalks on streets close to the town center that lack sidewalks but have a significant amount of pedestrian activity. Regarding accessible swimming areas, the OSC will coordinate with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), who owns the Bashin Beach property, about making the access to the water more level and universally accessible. (2023 Draft OSRP, p. 57)
- Other improvements to active and passive recreation in Hatfield that the Town and the OSC plan to prioritize include the building of new pickleball/tennis courts and also increasing access to the Mill River above the dam for kayaks and canoes. Almost 73% of survey respondents said that they would be interested in and use access to the Mill River for either kayaking/canoeing and/or fishing, and 76% of respondents said that they would support using CPA funds to renovate the pedestrian bridge over the Mill River. (2023 Draft OSRP, p. 57)

III. What are best practices for consideration on this chapter topic?

What should Hatfield be thinking about that might best help plan for the future, ensure greater resilience?

The following are “Best Practices” to consider in each of the Domains of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community. These will be tailored to Hatfield based on results of the Age & Dementia Pioneer Valley Survey and comments collected in the Listening Session.

HOUSING

- Affordability– Smaller or shared units, expand accessory apartment bylaw to allow for detached ADUs as “infill”; creative living options such as small congregate housing or home sharing
- Accessibility – 1st floor with no-step entry or elevator access; programs/zoning to fund and allow for home modifications such as adding wheelchair ramps
- Assisted Living and Long-Term Care options for all income levels
- Smart Growth – Locate housing close to services, places to buy food, places that promote social interaction and opportunities to be active. Senior housing developments should provide connections to trails or safe places to walk and have opportunities for people to garden. Participants in the Listening Session at the Senior Center also talked about needing a place to store bikes.
- Neighborhoods are safe and people can walk or roll to where they need to go. Ensure safe and comfortable sidewalks or trails, safe pedestrian crossings, benches, street lighting.

Considerations for people with dementia:

- Include architectural variety
- Encourage life-long housing designs that reduce risks:
 - Barrier-free design – step-free entrances, kitchen counters at varying heights, 1-floor residences
- Accessory Apartments for caregivers
- Service enhanced housing – partner with a service organization
- Assisted living or memory care facilities

Aging in Place

- Grants or loans for Home Modifications to improve accessibility and to prevent falls
- Service Needs:
- Assistance with basic home maintenance and repair
 - Assistance with tasks such as yard work, shoveling, grocery shopping
 - Home care and home health care services

- Transportation services or the ability to walk or roll to stores or services
- Creative housing solutions to making aging in place more affordable

TRANSPORTATION

- Safe and affordable modes of private and public transportation
- Paratransit for people with disabilities
- Walking and biking infrastructure that is accessible and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities
- Sidewalks that are maintained and accessible for people in wheelchairs
- Road crossings allow time for slower walkers or rollers to cross, with pedestrian islands and well-timed signals
- Signs that are clear and easy to read

BUILDINGS AND OUTDOOR SPACES

- Buildings are accessible and have parking for people with wheelchairs. Employ Universal Design Principals for all new public buildings.
 - Universal Design: The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.
- Parks have benches and smooth pathways for people with wheelchairs or walkers
- Access to handicapped accessible restrooms in key locations
- Parks and sidewalks are safe and well lit

HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Access to home-based care services, health clinics, telemedicine
- Access to healthy food, prepared meals
- Programs and infrastructure that promote wellness and active aging – places to recreate inside for winter, outside for other seasons.
- Support for caregivers of people with dementia or other chronic illnesses
- Volunteer networks to help with basic tasks such as yard work, snow shoveling, grocery shopping

COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

- Access to technology – connectivity, equipment, and knowledge of how to use it; cybersecurity
- Formats for all users – Newsletters, phone, websites, social media, local cable access TV, newspapers
- Accessibility features for visual or hearing impaired
- Translation of materials to encourage participation by all residents

- Reframing the narrative about aging – Avoid ageist terminology, imagery, storylines (i.e. portraying older people as vulnerable and needing protection), use more age-positive phrases such as Older Adult, older people, older workers, younger people

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Emergency personnel are trained on how to communicate with people with dementia
- Registry for people with dementia who are at risk of getting lost
- Triad or SALT Programs – Collaboration between older adults, police and fire departments with programs such as:
 - Sand for Seniors
 - Smoke & CO detector installation
 - Assessment of living space for safety and fall prevention
 - Lock box & house numbering programs

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

- Activities for all ages, fitness and ability levels
- Social and recreational programs for the whole community are accessible to people of all ages
- Multigenerational and multicultural interaction and dialogue
- Programs in locations and at times that are convenient for older adults, and supportive of people with hearing or visual impairments

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

- Providing opportunities for older adults to engage in developing policies relevant to the lives of older adults
- Meetings at times and places that are accessible and convenient for people of all ages and abilities
- Employment and volunteer opportunities for all ages
- Members of boards and committees reflect the population of the community
- Flexibility for caregivers – allowing people to take time off or work flexible schedules to enable them to take care of caregiving responsibilities

Photos that would be useful for chapter

- Older residents walking on sidewalks, trails, biking, otherwise participating in community
- Photos from listening session

Maps needed for chapter

- Identify on map – Senior housing (if any), emergency services, farm stands/food stores

Data needed for chapter

Census Data:

- Population by age, change of <18 and >65 population as % of total between 2010 and 2020
- % of people over 65 with a disability, compared to total population – update data from last
- % of over 65 population living in poverty
- Subsidized housing inventory

From Mass Healthy Aging Collaborative Community Profile (2016-18 data) – is there more recent data?

- % of over 65 population living alone
- % of over 65 population who are veterans
- % of over 65 population with sensory impairments (visual, auditory), mobility impairments
- % of over 65 population diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer’s

Update this table from HPP (p24):

FIGURE 2-10: POPULATION BY DISABILITY STATUS 2009-2013

	Hatfield		Pioneer Valley	
	Estimate	% with disability	Estimate	% with disability
Total civilian non-institutionalized population	3,283		615,181	
<i>With a disability</i>	404	12.3%	85,827	14%
Population 18 to 64 years	2,013		397,140	
<i>With a disability</i>	142	7.1%	45,700	12%
With a hearing difficulty	39	1.9%	8,290	2%
With a vision difficulty	0	0.0%	6,747	2%
With a cognitive difficulty	17	0.8%	21,435	5%
With an ambulatory difficulty	80	4.0%	23,002	6%
With a self-care difficulty	51	2.5%	9,391	2%
With an independent living difficulty	59	2.9%	18,535	5%
Population 65 years and over	675		82,574	
<i>With a disability</i>	251	37.2%	30,677	37%
With a hearing difficulty	119	17.6%	12,597	15%
With a vision difficulty	39	5.8%	5,537	7%
With a cognitive difficulty	80	11.9%	7,001	8%
With an ambulatory difficulty	117	17.3%	19,269	23%
With a self-care difficulty	73	10.8%	7,636	9%
With an independent living difficulty	129	19.1%	13,853	17%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 ACS

Chapter background paper prepared by
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