

Brookline Age-Friendly City Committee

Accomplishments in 2017-18 and Plans for 2019

The Brookline Age-Friendly City Committee is co-chaired by Frank Caro, co-chair of Brookline CAN; Ruthann Dobek, Director of Brookline Senior Center and Council on Aging, and Co-Chair of Brookline CAN; and Nancy Heller, Select Board. The committee meets regularly at town hall with citizen participation and representation from town departments.

In 2012, Brookline became the first municipality in New England to be admitted to the World Health Organization's Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Brookline based its application on a broad assessment of its age-friendly features. In joining the network, Brookline committed itself to a comprehensive, multi-year effort to strengthen its age-friendly status. Age-Friendly Brookline is a collaboration of the Town of Brookline, the Council on Aging, and BrooklineCAN formed to respond to the needs of Brookline's senior population.

The Brookline Council on Aging and BrooklineCAN are the leaders and catalysts for issues impacting older adults. The Brookline Council on Aging, a town department, is responsible for planning, coordinating, and providing comprehensive services to Brookline residents over the age of 60. For a complete list of services and programs, please visit the site at <https://www.brooklinema.gov/245/Council-on-Aging>. Brookline Community Aging Network (BrooklineCAN) is a member-driven, volunteer organization primarily for older Brookline residents that promote services and activities to enable independent living and improved quality of life. For a full description, please visit the site at http://www.brooklinecan.org/about_us.html. Both organizations collaborate with town departments to ensure older adults are a priority in the Town of Brookline.

This document provides a progress report on 2017 and 2018 accomplishments as well as 2019 goals. Our focus areas include Housing, transportation, property tax relief, employment opportunities, parks and open space, disability and diversity, public health, recreation, public safety, information dissemination, and veteran's services.

Topic	Accomplishments in 2018-19	Plans for 2020
Housing	<p>A Select Board committee has studied the feasibility of an affordable senior housing development above the town-owned parking lot between Kent Street and Station Street in Brookline Village. In January 2019, the committee recommended that the Select Board issue an RFP.</p> <p>We supported the Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly’s proposal for an affordable senior housing development on the Temple Kl site on Harvard Street near Coolidge Corner.</p> <p>Supported exploration of an accessory dwelling unit bylaw. The exploration was put on hold pending state legislation that would make it easier to amend local zoning bylaws.</p> <p>Supported public education through BrooklineCAN on home sharing among senior home owners with extra space in their homes.</p>	<p>Continue to advance the proposal for the Kent Street-Station affordable senior housing development.</p> <p>Explore other opportunities for affordable senior housing, including possible use of air-rights above other Town-owned parking lots.</p> <p>Support adoption of an accessory dwelling unit bylaw in Brookline.</p> <p>Through public education, encourage home sharing arrangements among older homeowners with extra space in their homes.</p>
Transportation	<p>TRIPPS, an advisory service offering information on local travel options (other than driving), services Brookline and Newton residents. The program was supported for 3 years by grants from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. In 2018, TRIPPS supported 18 public events in Brookline that reached 349 individuals. These included classes on ridesharing and information sessions on public and private transportation options available to Brookline seniors. TRIPPS worked with 8 individuals more intensely on the</p>	<p>Continue the public education work of TRIPPS with an emphasis on training use of smart phones to order car sharing services.</p> <p>Continue updating the TRIPPS resource guide.</p> <p>Publish a research report on transportation patterns and community participation among older Brookline residents.</p> <p>Seek funding for state-wide replication of TRIPPS.</p>

	<p>emotional loss many can feel upon giving up driving and working through the options available to them as they made this transition. In 2018, TRIPPS was cited as a model program by the Governor’s Council to Address Aging Issues in Massachusetts.</p> <p>The Pedestrian Advisory Committee appointed by the Transportation Board has established itself quickly as an active participant in Town transportation policy. The Age-Friendly City committee supported BrooklineCAN in its advocacy for the formation of the committee.</p> <p>The Town adopted a Complete Streets policy that includes strong features to support pedestrians.</p> <p>The Transportation Department is seeking Complete Streets funding for some projects to support pedestrians such as new crosswalks and pedestrian-activated flashing signs at intersections.</p>	<p>Persuade the Town to establish a program to assure that benches are provided at regular intervals along sidewalks that are important for pedestrian transportation.</p> <p>Persuade the Town to provide more extensive pedestrian-friendly street lighting in densely populated areas.</p> <p>Assure that a portion of the Town’s revenues from assessments on ride sharing services are used to subsidize local transportation for older and disabled adults who do not drive.</p> <p>Advocate for adequate funding for the BETS program as long as the Brookline taxi industry remains viable.</p> <p>Conduct a survey of BETS program users to determine options to assure their continued access to adequate transportation.</p>
<p>Property tax relief for senior homeowners</p>	<p>The Board of Assessors is now able to offer a reduced interest rate on deferred property taxes for qualifying senior homeowners with the goal of increasing participation. The interest rate is tied to the one-year average of 10-year US Treasury constant maturity rate. For 2018 the rate was 2.33%. In 2018, the Town successfully petitioned the State Legislature to adopt a Home Rule Petition for the Town of Brookline to increase the</p>	<p>Increase the number of participants in the tax deferral program.</p> <p>Increase the number of positions available in the property tax work-off program for senior homeowners.</p> <p>Continue replenishing the tax aid fund and provide relief to financially insecure adults who apply.</p>

	<p>annual income limit to qualify for the tax deferral program to \$86,000, from the previous limit \$57,000. The new income limit is tied to the Senior Circuit Breaker income tax program, which is indexed annually by the State Revenue Department.</p> <p>The third leg of the stool built to aid senior property taxpayers was completed; the formation of a Taxation Aid Fund and Taxation Aid Committee. The purpose of the Fund and the Committee is to identify and assist senior or disabled taxpayers in need of tax payment relief. The Taxation Aid Committee includes the Tax Collector, Tax Assessor and three additional members appointed by the Town’s Select Board. The Committee is also supported by the Council on Aging and the Town’s Senior Center staff in identifying potential applicants. The Fund is supported by volunteer contributions solicited during the tax billing process.</p>	
<p>Senior Employment & Volunteering (REAP)</p>	<p>Introduced the <u>Coffee Connection Program</u> to reach the younger senior community (ages 60-75).</p> <p>Developed new health advocacy volunteer opportunities for Brookline seniors.</p> <p>Placement of seniors in jobs through collaboration with Mass Rehabilitation Commission, Operation Able of Greater Boston, and Senior Community Elder Service Program.</p> <p>Continued expansion of the Property Tax Work Off program. The program now provides \$1,500 in tax relief to 35 seniors. For the first time,</p>	<p>Increase participants in Renter’s Employment Program from 10 to 12.</p> <p>Increase and solidify participation with Brookline Schools for all volunteers.</p> <p>Fully operationalize the newly developed internet database on volunteer opportunities in the Brookline/Boston area.</p> <p>Provide several ongoing educational programs such as internet job search, updating resume, interviewing skills, and networking.</p>

	<p>participants have been placed in assignments with the Brookline Schools.</p> <p>Placement of 10 seniors in part-time positions in Town Departments in the Senior Renter Employment program.</p> <p>Provided several educational programs on obtaining employment and retirement.</p>	
<p>Parks and Open Space</p>	<p>The Age-Friendly City Committee and the Parks and Open Space Division published a brochure on age-friendly features of Brookline’s public park, funded by JF&CS.</p> <p>Completed renovation of the Brookline Avenue Playground including companion seating, accessible entrances, pathways and benches.</p> <p>Added a public bench along the public way outside Billy Ward Playground to provide a place to rest for people walking to Town Hall or Brookline Village.</p> <p>Completed the renovation of Emerson Garden, which included accessibility improvements, along with seating in the sun and shade.</p> <p>Completed renovation of the Emerald Necklace Bicycle and Pedestrian Pathway on Brookline Avenue including accessible ramps to the MBTA stop and crossing at Aspinwall Avenue.</p> <p>Completed the Police Department Tribute Garden & Seating Area that</p>	<p>Commence renovation of Brookline Reservoir Park. Improvements will include a new seasonal restroom, improved walking track, accessible entrances, and water fountains.</p> <p>Commence renovation of Harry Downes Playground and Athletic Field. Improvements include accessibility upgrades to the restroom, accessible walking paths and entrances and seating in both sun and shade.</p> <p>Complete design and construction bid documents for reconstruction and safety improvements of the pathways, roadway, drainage and parking at Larz Anderson Park.</p> <p>Reprint the age friendly brochure and distribute to people living in senior housing.</p> <p>Conduct several outings to Brookline-accessible parks.</p>

	provides respite along Washington Street.	
Diversity & Disability (Office of Diversity, Inclusion, & Community Relations (ODICR):	<p>Continued offering a Lego display in Town Hall that features the various Age-Friendly themes in Brookline. The display changes seasonally.</p> <p>Completed an ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan for all Town Departments.</p> <p>Awarded a \$10,000 MOD grant to have a Pedestrian Right of Way Survey Completed on Beacon St. and Harvard St.</p> <p>Made Assistive Listening Devices available to all Brookline residents to use for any public meeting or event.</p> <p>Awarded a \$20,000 MOD grant to begin addressing curb ramp issues that were identified in PROW Survey.</p> <p>Began holding Pop-Up Town Hall Events at different and accessible locations throughout Town to expand reach of Town resources and promote diversity in civic engagement.</p> <p>Continued collaboration with Brookline CAN and Council on Aging in sharing information and support on mutual issues affecting both older people and people with disabilities. Collaborated in advocacy for adoption of sidewalk repair recommendations of PROW survey on Beacon St.</p> <p>Placed videos developed by the New England ADA Center on disability</p>	<p>Will continue to offer a Lego display in Town Hall that features the various Age-Friendly themes in Brookline. The display will continue to change seasonally.</p> <p>Will follow up with all Town Departments to ensure updates and progress on ADA Transition Plan.</p> <p>Continue to hold Pop-Up Town Hall Events.</p> <p>Continue to assist Town residents in addressing issues of ADA compliance in order to ensure full inclusion for all residents in Town life.</p> <p>Collaborate with BrooklineCAN and Council on Aging to address access issues experienced by those with disabilities who live in elevator buildings when those buildings experience prolonged elevator failure.</p> <p>Will continue to collaborate with BrooklineCAN and Council on Aging on pedestrian access issues for persons with disabilities.</p>

	awareness among seniors on its website.	
Health	<p>The Emergency Preparedness (EP) Buddies program helps vulnerable populations improve resiliency during emergencies. The original one-on-one buddy system matches a resident with a volunteer to help with emergency preparations.</p> <p>The EP Buddies Village Model was introduced in 2017 and just finished its second year of programing. We have been working with three organizations: Hebrew Senior Life/Center Communities, Winn Co/Village at Brookline, and Brookline Housing Authority/O’Shea and Sussman, to provide EP Buddy information and support to residents in group settings. For the period January 2017 to December 2018, program staff hosted 48 events in 6 locations, serving 425 residents. The program has developed materials for several new topics, including emergency preparedness materials in Mandarin.</p> <p>Provided physician backup and medical underwriting to all immunization programs in which vaccinations were provided including three flu clinics (954 vaccinations). One of the flu clinics was held at the Senior Center</p> <p>Offered a Yoga series at Putterham Library for South Brookline seniors.</p>	<p>Continue with EP Buddies Program.</p> <p>Continue with Flu Clinic.</p>
Recreation	<p>Brookline Recreation brought Pickleball, the fastest growing sport in America, to the Brookline community in the Fall of 2017. In one year, running 4 seasonal sessions, the program served over 250 people with</p>	<p>Brookline Recreation plans to continue to expand Pickleball in order to meet the needs of the community.</p> <p>Brookline Recreation will continue</p>

	<p>a drop-in program.</p>	<p>to support the community in a more strategic way and we'll ensure that our programs and services align well with mission and recreational trends. Our strategy is to streamline and focus our future efforts with Active Older Adults to offer more active recreation programming that encourages residents to stay active and healthy.</p>
<p>Public Library</p>	<p>Continued to provide one-to-one training sessions for members of the community of all ages to help with use of technology based services such as e-books and audio books.</p> <p>Increased the number of museum passes offered; and included providing several passes at Coolidge and Putterham.</p>	<p>Will continue to provide technology sessions for members of the community of all ages to help with new devices (IPads, tablets, laptops) and programs including Google G Suite, Overdrive, and electronic resources.</p>
	<p>All three locations participated in the intergenerational program series Brookline Eats!</p> <p>The furniture and remaining plantings were installed in the spring at the Putterham Library garden.</p> <p>Expanded their adult programs to include Mahjong & Games, a Family Bingo Night, and more.</p> <p>Coolidge Corner Library closed for renovations June-December 2018. An elevator was installed to improve access to the meeting room; improved lighting, layout of collection, additional seating, AV equipment upgraded, noise mitigated by enclosing children's room; improved accessibility.</p>	<p>Will have public restrooms upgraded to meet ADA requirements.</p> <p>Will continue to partner with the Council on Aging to provide ongoing South Brookline Senior Meet Up program and the monthly book group.</p> <p>Will offer a series on ball room dancing suitable for all ages in April.</p> <p>Will expand the Library of Things (cake pans, hammers, screw drivers, circular saws, tape measurers, etc.) to the Coolidge Corner Library.</p> <p>Will offer opportunities for members of the community to "Borrow an Expert" April through</p>

		June where staff experts will meet one-on-one on several topics.
Public Safety	<p>The Brookline Fire Department successfully managed our annual Senior SAFE (Senior Awareness of Fire Education) grant providing direct contact training at several locations throughout the town including programs at the Center Communities of Brookline and Step By Step Services Inc. BFD staff continued its efforts with the Hebrew Senior Life R3 initiative providing subject matter expertise to an innovative program aimed at helping seniors require less trips to the emergency room by providing in-house medical and social services in senior communities. Fire Chief John F. Sullivan personally met with many of the town’s senior service organizations over the year to articulate his vision for “Community Risk Reduction” with special emphasis on fire safety education and assistance for seniors including an appearance on Brookline Age Friendly TV Program.</p> <p>Through the Police Department’s continuing education program, the percentage of Brookline officers who have participated in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) has continued to increase. CIT includes recognition of dementia symptoms.</p> <p>The Brookline Police Department has continued to offer its tracking program for those at risk of wandering.</p> <p>Public education sessions have been provided at senior residences to prevent financial exploitation</p>	<p>The Brookline Fire Department will continue to advance community risk reduction efforts specifically aimed at reducing avoidable accidents among the elder population through various efforts including Senior SAFE. The department is also seeking funding sources to reinstitute the very successful senior smoke and carbon monoxide detector program.</p> <p>Additional police officers will participate in CIT so that eventually all officers will have had training in recognition of dementia symptoms.</p> <p>Provide public education session at Senior Center to protect seniors against financial exploitation.</p> <p>Provide public education and enforcement to protect pedestrians during motorized scooter trial.</p> <p>Provide improved education for cyclists on traffic regulations covering operation of bicycles on sidewalks. Attend particularly to regulation requiring that cyclists walk their bikes on sidewalks in</p>

	<p>The Department has engaged in proactive enforcement of the Town’s “slippery sidewalk” bylaw in the sector of Town designated as Police responsibility.</p>	<p>commercial areas.</p>
<p>Information dissemination</p>	<p>BrooklineCAN (Brookline Community Aging Network) Communications</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BrooklineCAN Newsletter 2. BrooklineCAN Facebook page and Twitter account (1200 followers) 3. BrooklineCAN web site <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provided repository for Volunteer opportunities, various Minutes, AFC-TV videos, events for older adults, photos of events, press releases, articles, newsletters, courses and workshops, age friendly businesses and related interviews b. Display Annual meeting videos and photos c. Display Brookline Day photos d. Provided a “picture search function” e. Provided Senior Cinema in the Libraries streams f. Provided A Senior’s Guide to Healthy Eating <p>AFC-TV subcommittee delivered the following key television shows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director of Gerontology Institute of UMass Boston 	<p>BrooklineCAN Communications</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BrooklineCAN Newsletter 2. BrooklineCAN Facebook page and Twitter account (1500 followers) 3. BrooklineCAN web site <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update repository links/information b. Provide AFC-TV video streams c. Recognize holidays and significant events d. Publicize upcoming events sponsored by BrooklineCAN, Brookline Senior Center, and other organizations that serve the interests of older adults. 4. Produce an article for news outlets re Brookline Age Friendly Businesses 5. Produce “special editions” of the BrooklineCAN Newsletter <p>AFC-TV has tentative plans for the following shows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recently elected “Brookline” State Representative Tommy Vitolo 2. Recreational Marijuana 3. Nancy Heller, Member of the Select Board 4. Ruthann Dobek, Director of

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Head of Volunteer Program of Brookline Senior Center 3. Chief of Fire Department 4. Health Commissioner 5. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees 6. Food Insecurity in Brookline 7. Chief of Brookline Fire Department 8. Town of Brookline Tax Assessor and Assistant Assessor Head of the Senior Center Tax Abatement Program 	<p>the Senior Center</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Andrew Pappastergion, Commissioner of Public Works
<p>Veterans' Services</p>	<p>The Brookline Office of Veterans' Services continued to provide direct emergency financial assistance to veterans and their spouses, over half of whom were seniors.</p> <p>Developed a compressive application packet to assist seniors and their families in applying for the VA Aid and Attendance benefit.</p> <p>Worked directly with the Boston VA Medical Center to advocate for Brookline Veterans to reduce the wait time for an initial primary care visit to 30 days or less.</p>	<p>The Brookline Office of Veterans' Services will continue to provide emergency financial assistance to veterans and their spouses, most of whom are older adults.</p>