

Report to AARP

Brookline Age-Friendly Accomplishments FY20-21 and Goals FY22

The Brookline Age Friendly Cities Committee is a Select Board committee responsible for identifying and reporting on age-friendly activities and needs of Brookline residents.

In 2011, Frank Caro and Ruthann Dobek initiated Brookline Community Aging Network (BrooklineCAN) in order to expand the advocacy and resources for older adults in Brookline by utilizing volunteers. In 2012, one of the first projects and major accomplishments was to have Brookline become an Age-Friendly community through certification by the World Health Organization (WHO). BrooklineCAN's efforts were the catalyst for Brookline's proud achievement of becoming the first community in New England to be cited as Age-Friendly. Since that time Brookline has had an Age-Friendly Cities Committee (AFCC) guided by a Select Board committee. BrooklineCAN continues to be the engine that is capturing and contributing to the Age-Friendly work of Brookline.

BrooklineCAN has regularly provided the town with an annual roadmap that outlines accomplishments and plans that reflect the domains of activity used by WHO and AARP, its arm in the U.S. The annual report serves as a process for continuous improvement toward the goal of improving the quality of life for older adults and others in town who benefit from age-friendly activities and services.

As part of the annual process, BrooklineCAN gathers information about accomplishments and plans across different municipal departments and organizations.

Below is a synthesis of work from 2021 and plans for 2022 across the eight domains of livability based on contributions of different Brookline municipal departments and organizations including BrooklineCAN. It describes age-friendly work by municipal and other entities that encapsulates the age-friendly lens that is the focus of BrooklineCAN's work.

In addition to the citizen members participating organizations include but not limited to the following:

- Age Friendly Cities Committee (AFCC)
- Age Friendly Cities TV (AFC-TV)
- Brookline Community Aging Network (BrooklineCAN)
- Brookline Community Foundation (BCF)
- Brookline Interactive Group (BIG)
- Brookline Public Library (BPL)
- BrooklineCAN Communications Committee
- BrooklineCAN Livable Community Advocacy Committee (LCAC)
- Center Communities of Brookline (CCB)
- Council on Aging (CoA)

- Commission on Disability
- Department of Public Works (DPW)
- Department of Transportation Department Highways Division
- Goddard House Assisted Living
- Health Department
- Hebrew Senior Life (HSL)
- Housing Development Authority
- Jewish Family and Child Services (JF&CS)
- Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Community Relations (ODICR)
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PedAC)
- Pedestrian Friendly Lighting Committee
- Select Board
- Town Clerk
- Town Meeting
- Transportation Resources Information Planning and Partnership for Seniors (TRIPPS)
- Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan Project Team

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Accomplishments in 2021:

- BrooklineCAN and CoA sponsored several online programs that addressed pandemic issues including comfort level on participation after vaccination.
- BrooklineCAN and CoA sponsored the film “All the Lonely People”.

Goals for 2022:

- BrooklineCAN and CoA will continue work with community partners on best practices around social isolation.
- BrooklineCAN and CoA want to go back to the level of events provided pre-COVID.
- CoA will continue to partner with the Recreation Department to promote pickleball with demonstrations at the Senior Center.
- On-going programs directed at reducing social isolation and loneliness.
- Provide access to all in our social programming by ensuring that programs have remote as well as in-person options.
- Continue to provide needed technology to older adults, especially those who cannot afford the needed technology.

HOUSING

Accomplishments in 2021:

- The tax work-off program supported by CoA and BrooklineCAN struggled, but all the tax work-off people were able to pivot their jobs during pandemic to reach out to socially isolated adults. 35 people in the program were able to continue their involvement even though municipal buildings were not open. Examples of their work included: providing check-in calls, delivering lunches and grocery shopping.
- BrooklineCAN and the AFCC participated in and advocated for the needs of older adults as part of development of the town's Housing Productivity 5 year Plan.
- BrooklineCAN supported adoption of an accessory dwelling unit bylaw in Brookline.
- BrooklineCAN and the AFCC monitored/advocated for an RFP process and continue to advance the proposal for the Kent Street-Station affordable senior housing development.
- BrooklineCAN and the AFCC explored other opportunities for affordable senior housing, including possible use of air-rights above other Town-owned parking lots.
- BrooklineCAN and the COA welcomed the residents at Brown Family Affordable Housing on Harvard Street with educational programs and available resources.

Goals for 2022:

- BrooklineCAN and the AFCC will work with Housing Development Authority in the redevelopment and expansion of Colonel Floyd housing to make sure the project goes successfully through the planning process
- BrooklineCAN and AFCC will monitor the RFP process and continue to advocate for affordable senior housing.
- BrooklineCAN and the AFCC will work with Town of Brookline to advocate for the affordable housing development at 108 Centre Street with additional community space.

OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Accomplishments in 2021:

- BrooklineCAN identified needs and Brookline Transportation Department Highways Division (Todd Kirrane) completed installation of 10 benches on Beacon Street as part of the WHO Age-Friendly Cities initiative to improve Brookline walkability for all ages & abilities. In addition, Frank Caro's condominium association paid for a memorial bench for Frank Caro that the Town installed near James Street.
- A report from the Select Board's Pedestrian-Friendly Lighting Committee -- a committee that had its origins in many years of BrooklineCAN advocacy -- was completed and submitted to the Select Board

and to Town Meeting. Numerous recommendations were made to enhance pedestrian lighting throughout Brookline.

- Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PedAC), AFCC and BrooklineCAN advocated for audible walk signals a number of which were installed to help the visually impaired at critical intersections.
- Brookline Town did a tree canopy study which included CoA on the working group. This was directly related to the health impacts by reducing climate change negative effects.
- Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan (<https://www.brooklinema.gov/1758/Urban-Forest-Climate-Resiliency-Master-P>) project team (of which COA was a member) met in 2020-2021 and made their recommendations to the Select Board in June 2021.

Goals for 2022:

- BrooklineCAN will continue partnership to identify additional places for benches.
- BrooklineCAN will advocate for bocce courts to be installed in outdoor spaces.
- PedAC, AFCC and BrooklineCAN will continue follow-up on implementing specific recommendations regarding Pedestrian Lighting.
- PedAC, AFCC and BrooklineCAN will continue to advocate for walk signals as additional funding becomes available.
- When outdoor space (e.g. park) is up for renovation, role of PedAC, AFCC and BrooklineCAN will be to ensure that age-friendly attributes are addressed.
- The goal of the team will be to have the follow-up on the (tree canopy) recommendations.
- The Department of Public Works (DPW) is currently working on a USDA grant application to increase composting and community garden access across Brookline. The DPW is hoping to engage high school students and senior residents by creating Zero Waste Ambassadors. They would receive a stipend to help increase participation in curbside composting, conduct outreach, and speak to their friends/ neighbors/ etc. about the value of composting and community gardens. The hope is to recruit seniors interested in serving as Ambassadors and possibly host community engagement/education programs regarding compost and community gardening. (Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan)
- Creation of more outdoor pickleball spaces by Parks and Open Spaces Recreation Department.
- BrooklineCAN and CoA will continue to work with Parks and Open Spaces on their new Community Engagement Programs to ensure older adults participation.

HEALTH SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Accomplishments in 2021:

- BrooklineCAN worked with the health department to get vaccines for both flu and COVID.
- Health Department distributed COVID test kits.
Health Department distributed 400 coupons to low-income residents to use at the farmers' markets. This was a community-wide event with many departments including COA participating.

Goals for 2022:

- Health Department and CoA continue vaccinations.
- Health Department and CoA continue testing.
- CoA continue to support food security.

RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Accomplishments in 2021:

BrooklineCAN Project – Age-Friendly Business Campaign

- BrooklineCAN produced news releases on Age-Friendly businesses during COVID. To serve customers safely during the pandemic, Brookline’s Age-Friendly businesses adopted special measures to protect both customers and employers. A few of these businesses that are helping Brookline get through trying times were featured in news releases: Bottega Fiorentina, The Abbey, Aborn True Value Hardware Store, Connelly Hardware, Serenade Chocolatier, and Olive Connection.
- CoA, AFCC and BrooklineCAN worked diligently to ensure that ARPA funds would be available to older adults who have been adversely affected by the pandemic. Brookline Community Foundation and BrooklineCAN took leadership roles with Town meeting and Select Board on funding issues.
- The Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Community Relations (ODICR) continued to assist Town residents in addressing issues of ADA compliance to ensure full inclusion for all residents in Town life.
- ODICR collaborated with BrooklineCAN and CoA to address access issues experienced by those with disabilities who live in elevator buildings when the buildings experience prolonged elevator failure.
- COA was part of the working group with ODICR on creating a disparity report regarding Brookline residents under-served.

Goals for 2022:

- Through a grant from JF&CS BrooklineCAN will update the Age-Friendly business list and descriptive materials, add new businesses, collaborate with municipal employer initiatives, and sponsor an educational event about age-friendly businesses.
- CoA, AFCC and BrooklineCAN will monitor the process and implementation of ARPA funded work as it relates to age-friendly initiatives.
- Town has passed a language proficiency warrant article; BrooklineCAN and CoA will help promote language access for older adults accessing the Senior Center (e.g. for older adults who speak Mandarin, Cantonese and Russian).
- BrooklineCAN will work with Brookline Chamber of Commerce on “DISCOVERBROOKLINE” (<https://discoverbrookline.com/>)
- ODICR will continue to assist Town residents in addressing issues of ADA compliance to ensure full inclusion for all residents in Town life.

- ODICR will continue to collaborate with DPW, PedAC, CoD, BrooklineCAN and CoA on pedestrian access issues for persons with disabilities.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Accomplishments in 2021:

- The Livable Community Advocacy Committee (LCAC) of BrooklineCAN met monthly to learn about town issues, provide updates on ongoing projects (e.g. Centre St. Development Project, Pedestrian Friendly Lighting), communicate about public hearings of special interest to older adults and set advocacy priorities. Educational topics included “Charting the Course for Brookline’s Future: The Role of Planning and Zoning”; presentation on Proposed Warrant Articles 14-17 on Short-Term Rentals; presentation on Community Preservation Act; “Shouting Down Ageism: Finding Your Voice”; presentation on Brookline’s Senior Tax Work-Off Program; ARPA funding needs and decision-making process; and redistricting. Advocacy included supporting Warrant Articles that can help older residents, such as WA #6 to improve the Town’s ability to remove sidewalk obstructions.
- Responded to ongoing need to meet, orient, educate, and inspire new department heads around age-friendly concept.
- BrooklineCAN hosted virtual candidate forums for local town elections with a special emphasis on issues facing older adults.
- Public Library
 - worked hard to connect with elderly and at-risk neighbors through a partnership with Mutual Aid Brookline. The organization arranged for volunteers who utilized the contactless pickup service to retrieve and deliver materials to homebound or community members who couldn’t leave their homes.
 - loaned laptops bundled with hotspots for community members who do not have computers or internet access at home. The library has yard signs providing the password to the Wi-Fi for access outside the buildings. The library offers printing services for those without a printer at home.
 - partnered with Brookline access Group (BIG) to live-stream many of our programs on television to make programs available to those without internet access. The library partnered with the Senior Center to distribute Adult Craft-Along kits with materials and DVD instructions. The library partnered with Brookline Thrives to send home printed announcements featuring its programs and services. Staff used the 3D printers to make N95 masks and mask holders. Staff also used Library sewing machines to sew cotton masks that were distributed to elderly community members.
 - On June 1, 2021 the library returned to in person browsing, computer use and printing. The library continues to provide virtual programming and anticipates returning to in person programming in the fall. The library is offering an Adult Summer Reading program. The Friends of the Library book sale is outside at all three locations depending

upon the weather, and provides an opportunity for socially distanced browsing and purchases.

- On July 6, 2020 the library began contactless pickup. The procedure changed on August 17th when the library switched to walk-up service where patrons could pick up materials at their convenience five days a week.

Goals for 2022:

- BrooklineCAN, BrooklineCAN LCAC, CoA, will continue to do all of the above.
- Redistricting – BrooklineCAN and BrooklineCAN LCAC, will work with Town Clerk to get the word out about new voting precincts.
- Public Library
 - resume in person programs for all ages, but still provide some virtual programs to allow access for homebound residents.
 - expand the Library of Things collection to include checking out tools from the Coolidge Corner Library, the recreation equipment including backpacks, telescopes, laptops and Wi-Fi hotspot bundles, and more. Provide access and programs through utilizing our ideaSPACE equipment.
 - continue partnership with the Senior Center and the CoA to provide Yoga programs, the CoA Putterham book group, mahjong, and craft along kits.
 - expand and strengthen the ELL programs.
 - continue to partner with Mutual Aid Brookline, and reach out to other Brookline organizations to coordinate and work together to provide programs and services that support the elderly members of our community.

TRANSPORTATION

Accomplishments in 2021:

- Transportation Resources Information Planning and Partnership for Seniors (TRIPPS) and CoA provided training in the use of smart phones to order car sharing services to older adults in Brookline and the surrounding communities.
- TRIPPS published a research report on transportation patterns and community participation among older Brookline residents.
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uDIt7wLLqUeZCeH61WMNuEIPJkrRnD6yyu721mfENE/edit>
- BrooklineCAN persuaded the Town to establish a program to assure that benches are provided at regular intervals along sidewalks that are important for pedestrian transportation.
- BrooklineCAN and ODCIR worked with the PedAC to continue to assess lighting needs.
- CoA, TRIPPS and BrooklineCAN assured 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.

- CoA, TRIPPS and BrooklineCAN advocated for adequate funding for the Brookline Elder Taxi System (BETS) program.
- CoA and TRIPPS conducted a survey of BETS program users to determine options to assure their continued access to adequate transportation.

Goals for 2022:

- Continue the public education work of TRIPPS with an emphasis on training in the use of smart phones to order car sharing services.
- TRIPPS and CoA strengthen ability to provide translation services to older adults.
- TRIPPS continue to provide access to public transportation resources and information.
- TRIPPS create online videos and guides for other CoAs to offer training on rideshare for older adults.
- CoA explores options to support specific medical transportation services either through volunteer efforts or grant funding.
- Seek funding for an additional CoA run vehicle to provide medical transportation, food delivery, and access to town resources.
- CoA, BrooklineCAN and PedAC persuade the Town to provide more extensive pedestrian-friendly street lighting in densely populated areas.
- BrooklineCAN and PedAC monitor the pedestrian friendly bench program for additional placement.
- CoA and BrooklineCAN assure 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.
- CoA and TRIPPS continue to grow our transportation subsidized programs currently with GoGo Grandparent, Lyft, and a local taxi company to provide medical rides.
- CoA, AFCC, and BrooklineCAN advocate that CDBG funds include support for transportation.
- CoA, AFCC and BrooklineCAN advocate that new transportation modes include older adults in the planning and development process.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

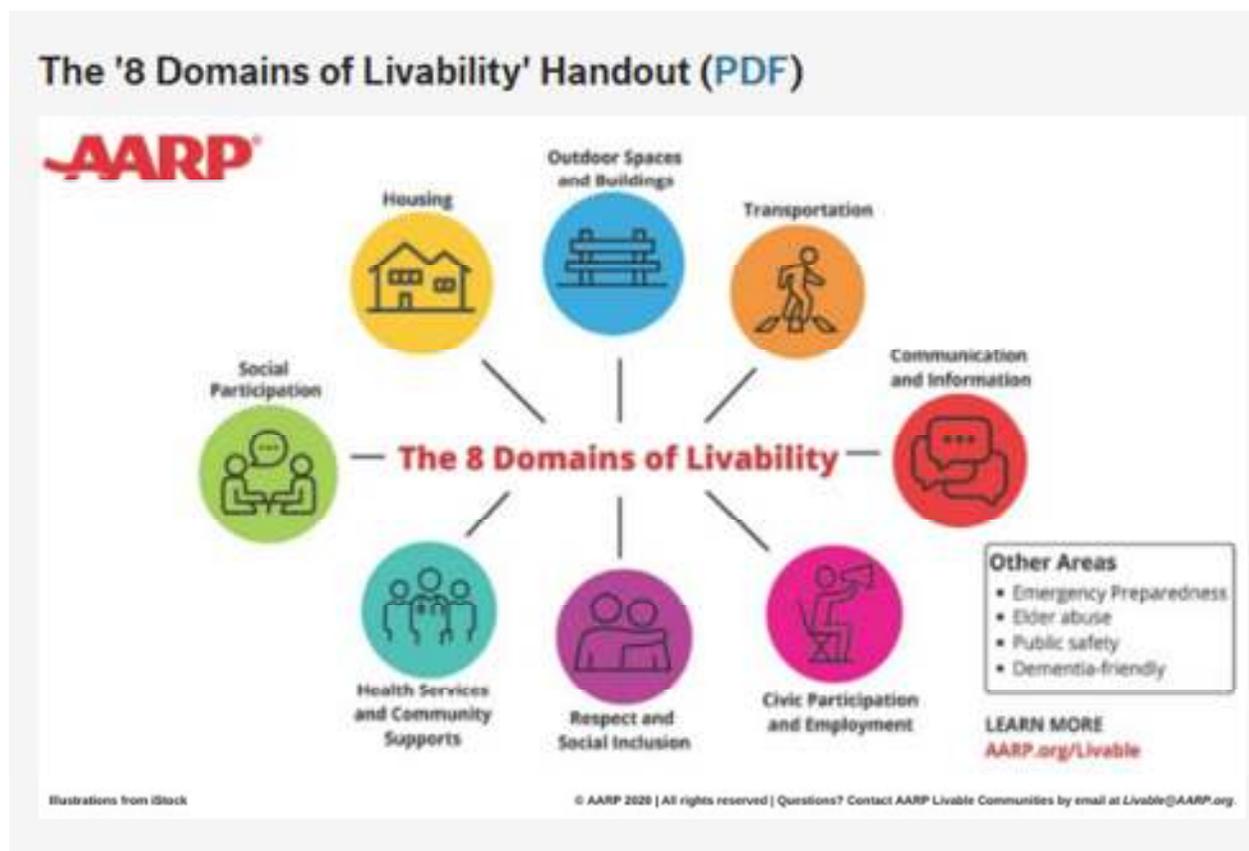
Accomplishments in 2021:

- BrooklineCAN Communications:
 - Monthly BrooklineCAN Newsletter including special editions in support of COVID-19
 - BrooklineCAN Facebook page and Twitter account (1500 followers)
 - Zoom-based meeting support for BrooklineCAN and the Senior Center using new equipment
 - BrooklineCAN web site
 - Updated repository links/information
 - Provided AFC-TV video streams
 - Recognized holidays and significant events
 - Publicized upcoming events sponsored by BrooklineCAN and the Senior Center.
 - Produced 10 articles for news outlets re Brookline Age Friendly Businesses
- BrooklineCAN and CoA worked with BIG during COVID to increase what they were providing – e.g. helped get weekly updates on their programming out to older adults

- AFC-TV as a program produced by the AFCC produced the following shows
 - Coronavirus Update and Vaccine Rollout
 - Brookline Town Meeting
 - Brookline Select Board
 - Brookline Select Board and Older Adults
 - BrooklineCAN

Goals for 2022:

- BrooklineCAN will continue updating the BrooklineCAN website.
- BrooklineCAN will feature new age-friendly businesses.
- BrooklineCAN Newsletter will continue to deliver news and information helpful to seniors to close to 1000 residents every month.



AARP AGE-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE LINKS

- AARP Livability Index: <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/>
- Brookline Livability Index Scores:
<https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/search#Brookline+MA+USA>
- ReiMAgine Aging Year Two Progress Report:
https://www.mass.gov/doc/reimagine-aging-2021-progress-report/download?_ga=2.201829394.2025638234.1622210203-1749865792.1574781090

The report covers the goals and accomplishments of the Commonwealth (Community, Information and Communication, Framing, Policy and Practice, Economic Security, and Sustainability) and provides information and resources related to Access, Equity, and Cultural Inclusion, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Housing, Social Inclusion and Participation, Mobility & Transportation, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Technology, Services (Business, Health and Community), Public Safety, Caregiving Support, COVID-19 & Emergency Preparedness.

- Network of Age-Friendly Communities Membership Online Application
<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/online-application/>
- **AGE-FRIENDLY BOSTON (City of Boston Age-Friendly project):**
<https://www.boston.gov/departments/age-strong-commission/age-friendly-boston>