

AGE  
FRIENDLY  
*Fairfield*

# Action Plan

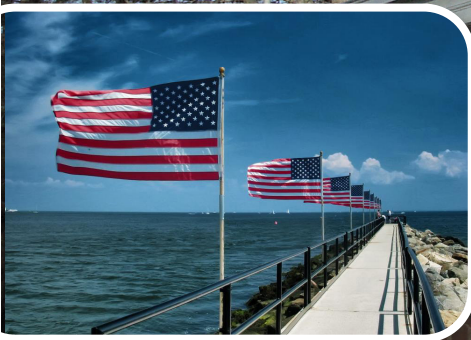
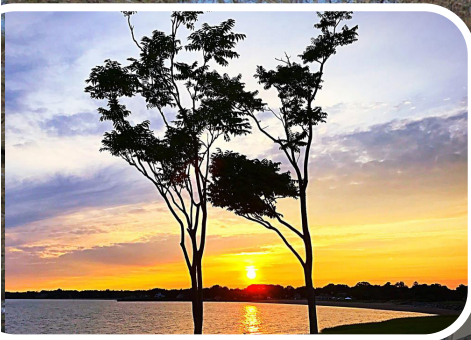


Photo courtesy of John Wynne



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**A Message from First Selectman Bill Gerber**

Dear Fairfield Residents,

Fairfield has always been a town built on strong values—community, connection, and caring for one another. Whether you’ve lived here all your life or are new to our town, there’s a special sense of pride and belonging that ties us all together. That spirit of neighborliness and respect continues to guide our vision for the future—one that’s welcoming, compassionate, and forward-thinking.

I’m excited to share with you the Age-Friendly Fairfield Action Plan—a roadmap that reflects our shared commitment to making Fairfield an even better place to live for residents of all ages and abilities. This plan isn’t just about setting goals; it’s a reflection of who we are and what we value: a community where everyone can live well, stay connected, and feel supported at every stage of life.

From making our streets more walkable and enhancing public spaces, to expanding inclusive programs and offering more diverse housing options, the initiatives in this plan are designed to strengthen the fabric of our community for years to come. It’s about ensuring Fairfield remains not just a wonderful place to live today, but also a place where future generations will continue to thrive.

This effort would not have been possible without the meaningful collaboration of so many—across town departments, local organizations, and most importantly, from residents like you. I am truly grateful to everyone who shared their ideas, time, and passion to help shape this vision.

Thank you for being an important part of what makes Fairfield a vibrant, welcoming, and resilient community. I hope you’ll take a moment to explore the Action Plan and think about the many ways—big and small—that we can all help build a more age-friendly Fairfield together.

Sincerely,

William A. Gerber  
First Selectman





## Town of Fairfield

Office of the First Selectman

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### A Message from First Selectman Christine Vitale

Dear Fairfield Residents,

In times of transition, the strength of a community is measured not just by how we move forward, but by how we come together. Stepping into this role under such difficult circumstances, I've been reminded daily of what makes Fairfield so special: the kindness of our neighbors, the resilience of our people, and the deep care we show for one another.

It is in that spirit that I share my wholehearted support for the **Age-Friendly Fairfield Action Plan**. This initiative speaks to the very heart of who we are—a town that values every resident, at every age and every stage of life. It reflects the vision and values of my predecessor, Bill Gerber, whose thoughtful leadership continues to guide us. His commitment to making Fairfield a place where every person can feel connected, supported, and at home is something I deeply respect and am proud to carry forward.

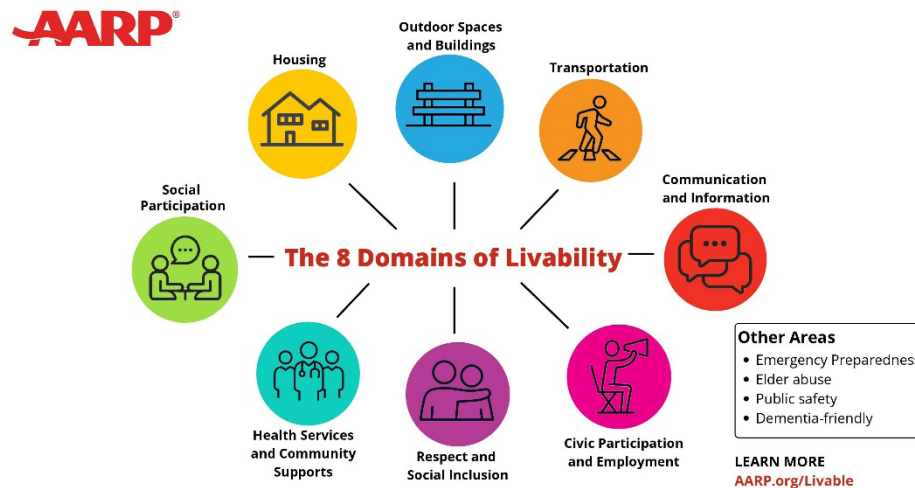
What I love most about Fairfield is that when we take on something meaningful, we do it together. This plan is a product of that togetherness—of listening, sharing, and building a future that reflects our collective hopes. It's about making sure our sidewalks invite us out, our programs bring us together, and our neighborhoods welcome all generations. It's about continuing to shape a town that doesn't just work for some—but works for everyone.

Thank you for being part of this incredible community, and for your continued commitment to keeping Fairfield a place of belonging, dignity, and care—for today, and for the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Christine Vitale  
First Selectman

# Introduction to Age Friendly Communities



## What Is an Age-Friendly Community?

Across the country, communities are embracing a simple but transformative idea: as we age, our communities should continue to support our ability to live safely, independently, and with dignity. That's the heart of the Age-Friendly Communities movement, an initiative led in the United States by AARP.

Launched by AARP in 2012, the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities helps localities prepare for the aging of populations by encouraging them to create environments that support healthy aging. Today, this network includes more than 800 communities nationwide, covering more than 100 million people—including cities, towns, counties, and even entire states.

These communities share a common goal: to become great places to live for people of all ages, with a special focus on older adults. Being part of the Age-Friendly network signals a public commitment to continually improving local policies, services, and environments in ways that support healthy aging and community well-being.

## What Does It Mean to Become an Age-Friendly Community?

Joining the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities is a voluntary but significant commitment. It means a community is intentionally working to improve its livability across areas such as housing, transportation, social participation, health services, and communication.

The process is structured as a five-year cycle, supported by AARP, and includes the following key phases:

1. **Commitment** - Community leadership—such as a mayor, town council, or county board—publicly pledges to join the network and begin the Age-Friendly process.
2. **Assessment** - Communities conduct a baseline assessment of current strengths and challenges related to aging and livability. This often includes community surveys, listening sessions, and research.

3. Planning - Using findings from the assessment, communities develop a three-year Age-Friendly Action Plan. This plan outlines goals, strategies, and partners across priority areas.
4. Implementation - The community begins enacting the strategies in its action plan, working collaboratively with residents, organizations, and government agencies.
5. Evaluation & Improvement- Progress is monitored and evaluated. Based on outcomes and feedback, the plan is refined for continued improvement and sustainability.

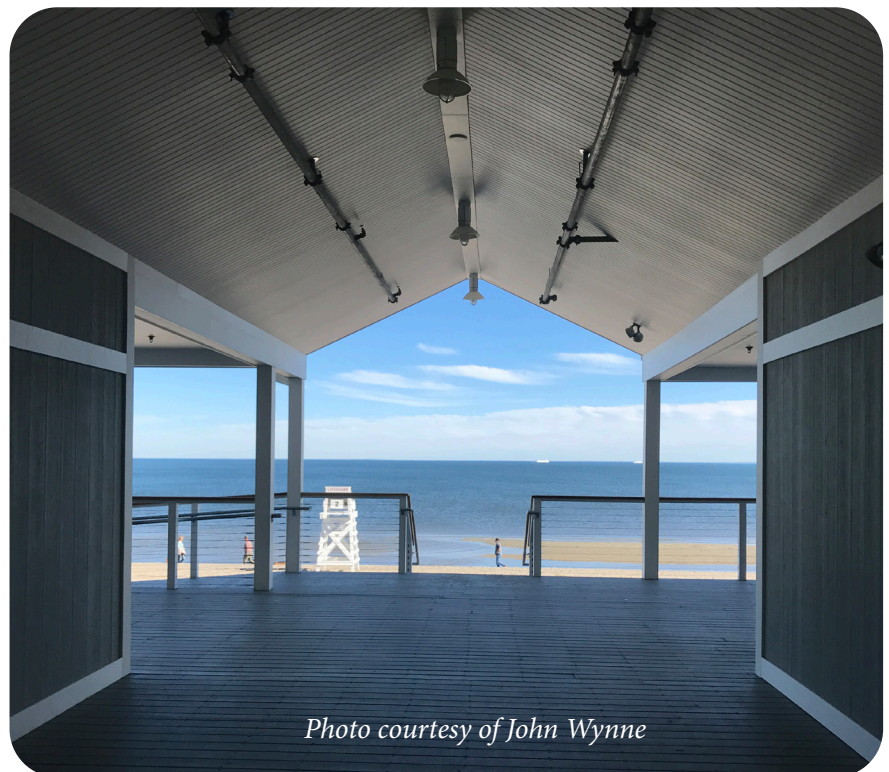
Throughout the process, communities focus on enhancing domains of livability that impact residents' everyday lives—such as walkability, accessible housing, public spaces, information access, transportation, and inclusion.

### Why It Matters

With nearly one in five Americans over age 65, communities must adapt to support a population that is living longer and seeking to remain active, engaged, and independent. Age-friendly strategies help ensure older adults can remain in their communities, contribute meaningfully, and access the support they need.

But the benefits go beyond older adults. Age-friendly improvements—like safer crosswalks, more benches, accessible public buildings, better transportation, and clearer communication—benefit everyone, from parents with strollers to teens biking to school.

In joining the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, a town or city signals that it values inclusion, health, independence, and connection—not just for today, but for generations to come.



# Age-Friendly Fairfield Action Plan Executive Summary

## Building a Livable Community for All Ages

Nestled along the scenic shoreline of Long Island Sound, Fairfield is a classic New England town that blends historic charm with a modern, forward-looking spirit. With its tree-lined neighborhoods, bustling downtown, sandy beaches, and iconic colonial architecture, Fairfield is a place where tradition meets innovation—and where a strong sense of place fosters an even stronger sense of community.

What truly distinguishes Fairfield isn't just its postcard-worthy landscape—it's the people. This is a town where neighbors wave hello, local events bring generations together, and civic pride runs deep. Whether you're picking up fresh produce at the farmers market on the Sherman Green, catching a performance at the Community Theatre, enjoying the sounds of Concerts on the Green, or watching the sunset over Jennings Beach, it's easy to feel connected—not only to the town, but to one another.

As a community that values inclusivity, accessibility, and lifelong well-being, Fairfield is proud to introduce the Age-Friendly Fairfield Action Plan. Fairfield is more than just a place to live; it's a place to thrive—at every age and every stage of life. There are activities for everyone, whether one's interests lie in arts, dining, entertainment, civic participation, or recreation of all kinds. This plan reflects the town's commitment to ensuring that all residents—young, old, and everyone in between—can enjoy a high quality of life, remain active and engaged, and continue to benefit from and contribute to the fabric of the community.

Grounded in local priorities and informed by regional partnerships and state data, the Action Plan currently focuses on five key domains: Community Health and Wellness, Communication, Housing, Social Participation and Engagement, and Transportation. It builds upon existing programs and initiatives while offering a roadmap to create a more livable, connected, and equitable Fairfield for generations to come. Community partners are an integral part of the plan's implementation and include two private universities, as well as commercial entities and civic groups.

Fairfield's journey toward becoming an age-friendly community isn't beginning from scratch—it's growing from a place of thoughtful planning, engaged leadership, and a shared commitment to collaboration. Take transportation and mobility, for example. The town is looking at how people move through the community and how that movement can be made safer, easier, and more accessible. With efforts like the Smart Streets and Complete Streets, roads and sidewalks are being redesigned with everyone in mind—from kids on bikes, to disabled citizens, to residents on foot. There's a renewed focus on walkability through the Town Sidewalk Plan, and new possibilities are being explored near public transit hubs, where land use and development can support both economic growth and better connectivity. At the same time, Fairfield is asking important questions about how to better promote existing transportation options and introduce new ones that support independence across age groups.

The town's creative energy is also gaining momentum. A newly formed Arts Commission is helping to elevate Fairfield's cultural scene, providing support for local artists and weaving the arts more intentionally into everyday life. Whether it's public art installations, performances, or community workshops, the goal is to ensure that creativity is visible, valued, and accessible to all.

Sustainability remains another key priority. With input and involvement from Town Departments, Boards and Commissions and Community groups, Fairfield is planning for growth in a way that respects and

protects its natural environment. The Town is making strategic investments in green spaces, trails, and recreational facilities—ensuring that nature is not just a backdrop, but an integral part of how residents connect, stay active, and build community.

As household sizes change, Fairfield is taking a closer look at its housing stock. With many larger homes and a limited supply of smaller, more affordable options, there’s a growing need for balance. The Town’s Affordable Housing Plan addresses these challenges directly, aiming to create housing that works for residents, younger residents, the special needs population and multigenerational families alike. Options like cluster homes, accessory dwelling units, and smaller-scale developments are being explored as part of a broader effort to diversify housing types. The Town’s recent four-year affordable housing moratorium from the zoning restrictions of State law 8-30g is a meaningful step—it provides more time and flexibility to guide development in ways that reflect Fairfield’s character and meet evolving needs.

Fairfield’s Age-Friendly Action Plan is more than a policy document—it’s a reflection of the town’s values, vision, and heart. It honors the unique character of Fairfield while embracing the opportunities that come with change, growth, and innovation. With thoughtful planning, strong partnerships, and the active involvement of residents, Fairfield is laying the foundation for a future where every person—regardless of age or stage of life—can feel at home, stay connected, and thrive. This is Fairfield: a town that looks out for one another, plans with purpose, and builds community with care.



*Photo courtesy of John Wynne*



*Photo courtesy of John Wynne*

# Community Profile

These Fairfield data sources are U.S. Census Bureau 2023 estimates, QuickFacts and other demographic resources. The data have slightly differing reference periods.

## Population:

- Estimated Town population (7-1-23): 63,433; this is a 3.1% increase from that of 4-1-20.
- Population growth between 2010 and 2020: 3.5% (increase of 2,108).
- 2025 population estimate: 64,143.

## Demographics:

- Race and Ethnicity (2019-2023 ACS period):
  - White alone: 86.6%
  - Black alone: 0.9%
  - Asian alone: 4.9%
  - Two or More Races: 5.4%
  - Hispanic or Latino: 7.0% (can include individuals of any race)
  - White alone, not Hispanic or Latino: 84.7%
- Age (2019-2023 ACS):
  - Under 5 years: 5.2%; Under 18 years: 24.0%; 65 years and over: 15.7%
  - Median age in Fairfield: 41.0 years (vs. Greater Bridgeport Planning Region 40.0 years and Statewide 41.2 years).
- Gender (2019-2023 ACS):
  - Females: 51.9%
- Foreign-born percentage (2019-2023 ACS): 12.9%
- Language other than English spoken at home, age 5 years+ (2019-2023 ACS): 16.1%

## Income and Poverty (2019-2023 period):

- Median household income (in 2023 dollars): \$168,391
- Percentage in poverty: 4.7%
- 2020 Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) population: 28%

## Education (2019-2023 American Community Survey):

- High school graduate or higher (age 25 years+): 96.9%
- Bachelor's degree or higher (age 25 years+): 71.4%

## Workplace and Economy:

Fairfield is an economic center, home to about 26,000 jobs. 84% of jobs are filled by out-of-Town commuters, while 80% of working residents commute from Fairfield to work. Healthcare, Social Assistance and Education represent major areas of employment in Town.

## Household/Living Trends

- Owner-occupied housing unit rate (2019-2023 ACS): 82.9%
- Median sale price (2024 MLS): \$865,000 (582 sales); both median home values and rents are high and have increased significantly since the pandemic, reflecting the desirability and growing affluence of the area.



- Median monthly gross rent (2019-2023 period): \$2,194 (now believed to be substantially higher). More than 50% of renters are housing-cost burdened.
- 6% growth in overall housing units (2020-2020).
- 10% growth in households (2020-2020): +6.9% one person; +20.3% two persons; -2.8% three persons; +9.8% four or more persons.
- In 2020: 73% family households; 60% married Households; 36% child under age 18 at home.
- 50% of new construction in single family homes; 40% in 5+ unit structures.
- Limited Housing Availability: Difficulty is encountered by both new/prospective and older residents in securing housing. This is exacerbated by limited downsizing opportunities and resident households content to maintain current homes with lower than market mortgage rates. While substantial progress has been made in building additional affordable housing (up to 80% of Area AMI) the need for affordable and workforce housing remains dire - as does that for older/downsizing adults generally.
- See Housing domain section for an in-depth description of challenges associated with household/population trends and available housing stock.

**Key Observations:**

- Population Growth: Fairfield has experienced continuing population growth in recent years. During and since the pandemic many new residents have moved from more urban areas (including New York) to Town/suburban areas such as Fairfield.
- Changing Composition of Population: There was a 9% decrease in children from 2010-20, with an increase in both young and older adults. While Fairfield remains predominantly white, the Town is becoming more diverse; about 60% of the 2010-20 population change is represented by Latino/Hispanic residents.
- High/Increasing Median Income: Fairfield has a significantly high and increasing median household income compared to State and National averages, indicating a more affluent population.
- High Educational Attainment: A large percentage of Fairfield residents hold bachelor's or advanced degrees, highlighting a strong emphasis on education.
- High Homeownership Rate: A significant majority of households in Fairfield are owner-occupied, suggesting housing stability and a long-term resident base.

# Survey Snapshot: Understanding Community Needs in Fairfield

Fairfield's journey toward becoming an age-friendly community began with listening. Our comprehensive 2023 community survey—with about 1,000 respondents—offers a clear window into residents' priorities, concerns, and hopes for the future—especially as they relate to aging, accessibility, and quality of life.

## Housing and Plans for the Future

Many residents are thinking ahead about how long they'll stay in Fairfield, and housing is a key part of that decision. The most common reasons people consider moving are: needing a different-sized home (43%), wanting a more affordable lifestyle (42%), and seeking a home better suited to aging or independent living (42%).

Some residents may be able to stay in their current homes with adjustments. The most commonly needed home modifications include bathroom updates (29%) and first-floor living arrangements (19%).

## Health and Accessibility Challenges

Health concerns significantly impact residents' ability to remain in their homes. Mobility limitations were cited by 22% of respondents. Other challenges include reliance on wheelchairs (16%), vision impairment (11%), dementia (10%), hearing loss (9%), and mental health issues (7%).

In 9% of households a disability, chronic condition, or handicap prevents a member from participating in regular activities such as work, school, or household tasks. Additionally, 10% expressed the need for more dementia-related support, including social programs, healthcare, and family caregiver resources.

## Caregiving and Household Support Needs

Caregiving is a shared responsibility for many in Fairfield. Ten percent of respondents help care for a loved one. Some caregivers reported financial strain (6%), while others expressed a need for more information (4%) or hands-on assistance (4%).

Separately, 6% of households reported needing help due to abuse, neglect, or mistreatment—highlighting the need for continued focus on community safety and social services.

## Recreation, Lifelong Learning, and Community Life

Residents value Fairfield's outdoor spaces and cultural opportunities—but they also see ways to improve. Suggestions include safer bike lanes (56%), better sidewalks (46%), more public restrooms (46%), and additional park seating (25%).

Lifelong learning is strongly embraced. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) are interested in continuing education. Popular sources include the public library (40%), online courses (35%), the Bigelow Center (22%), Parks & Recreation programs (20%), faith communities (17%), and area colleges (15%).

## Transportation: A Top Priority

While the great majority of residents drive themselves. Alternate transportation stood out as one of the most important issues for the future. Residents emphasized the need for public transportation that is reliable, accessible, affordable, and available during extended hours. They also want more options that connect different parts of town. These needs are especially critical for renters, lower-income residents, and those with fewer social connections.



### Improving Access to Information and Technology

How residents receive information—and their ability to use technology—are growing concerns. Suggestions for improvement included making the Town website and other digital platforms more user-friendly (43%), offering centralized “one-stop” resources (37%), and providing more printed materials (35%).

Technology training needs are also widespread. Many residents would benefit from help with smartphones and computers (27%), software like Zoom or Google Chat (26%), and basic setup and use (22%). Others highlighted the need for affordable, high-speed internet (16%) and access to devices (10%), especially among older adults.

**Complete and detailed survey results are available in the appendix.**



## Feedback from Listening Sessions: Voices from the Community

In Fairfield, community engagement isn't just encouraged—it's part of the town's identity. As a core element of the Age-Friendly Fairfield Action Plan, listening sessions offered a meaningful way to hear directly from residents, adding depth and context to the data collected through surveys and other research. These conversations brought forward personal stories, fresh perspectives, and lived experiences that helped shape the plan to reflect everyday life in Fairfield.

Held in familiar and accessible locations—such as the Bigelow Center for Senior Activities, local libraries, and several senior and disabled housing communities—these sessions created welcoming spaces for open dialogue. Residents responded to survey findings, shared their own insights, and offered new ideas that might not surface through numbers alone. The aim was twofold: to validate the survey results and to expand the town's understanding of what residents need and value.

Recognizing that housing is central to both livability and independence, a special session was held with local real estate professionals. These experts offered firsthand insights into current market conditions, including buyer and renter trends, affordability concerns, and evolving preferences—adding critical perspective to the broader conversation about how Fairfield is changing.

The feedback gathered through these sessions echoed and enriched what was learned through quantitative research. But beyond the data, these discussions served as a powerful reminder: behind every statistic is a story, and behind every story is a neighbor who cares deeply about Fairfield's future.





# DOMAIN ACTION PLANS

## Communications Action Plan

The Age-Friendly Fairfield Survey and communications questions, and community input sessions identified key challenges and opportunities in ensuring that residents, caregivers, and individuals with dementia or mental health challenges have access to clear, inclusive, and engaging information. Effective communication is essential for maintaining social connections, accessing resources, and participating in community life. While Fairfield has established strong digital communication tools, many residents continue to face barriers due to vision or hearing impairments, cognitive challenges, language differences, or limited digital access and literacy.

Key challenges include increasing the use of digital communications that may not be accessible to all residents, a lack of centralized information on programs and services, and limited outreach to socially isolated individuals. Many residents are unaware of available resources or struggle to navigate multiple sources of information. Additionally, traditional communication methods such as print materials, radio, and in-person support remain important for those who prefer non-digital options.

Survey respondents emphasized the need for more accessible information, improved coordination across communication platforms, and enhanced efforts to reach isolated residents. Many also expressed interest in expanded digital literacy support, increased intergenerational engagement, and greater accessibility for residents with disabilities. For example, a program at the senior center featured a father and son presenting to seniors about how to avoid scams—an initiative that not only provided practical information but also encouraged intergenerational connection and trust.

The primary goals for improving communications in Fairfield are to strengthen outreach and enhance accessibility, increase digital inclusion, and foster intergenerational connections. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes design improvements, expanded communication channels, and community collaboration.

### Action Plan Summary

#### Expanding Accessibility and Inclusion

Printed materials will be updated to incorporate large print, high contrast, plain language, and dementia-friendly design principles. Digital content will follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to ensure ease of use for all residents. Additionally, phone hotlines, printed materials, and in-person assistance will remain available for individuals without internet access or those with cognitive impairments. The Town Communications Department, Information Technology department, social services, dementia advocacy groups, and disability advocates will collaborate to contribute to these efforts.

#### Enhancing Digital Literacy and Online Engagement

To support residents in navigating digital communication tools, Fairfield will expand digital literacy workshops and one-on-one technology assistance. Online content will be simplified with clear captions, audio options, and user-friendly navigation. Social media outreach and video messaging will be expanded to reach a broader audience. Resources specifically designed for caregivers—including online support groups, mental health services, and dementia education materials—will be integrated into communication strategies to ensure they have access to the support they need.

### **Strengthening Traditional Outreach and In-Person Support**

Traditional communication methods will continue to play a vital role in reaching all residents. Printed newsletters, local radio, and television updates will be maintained for those who rely on these formats. A dedicated help desk at the Bigelow Center and libraries will provide one-on-one support for aging adults, caregivers, and those living with dementia who need assistance accessing information. Monthly postcards with key updates and event listings will be distributed at locations such as pharmacies, grocery stores, and medical offices to reach residents who may not actively seek information online.

### **Encouraging Intergenerational Engagement**

To bridge the digital divide and promote cross-generational learning, a technology support volunteer program will pair younger residents with aging adults to provide hands-on digital learning opportunities. Schools, universities, and youth organizations will be engaged to encourage participation and create mentorship experiences that foster stronger community connections.

### **Ongoing Community Engagement and Evaluation**

Fairfield will continue to assess communication strategies through community feedback, focus groups, and surveys to ensure outreach efforts remain effective and inclusive. Partnerships with local organizations, advocacy groups, and service providers will help refine communication methods and ensure that evolving needs are met and new approaches are introduced.



## 1. Ensure Accessible Communication for Aging Adults

| Action  | Community Partners  | Domains        | Targeted Outcomes   | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|---|----------------|---|----|----|----|
| 1.1 Use large print, high contrast, and plain language in all materials.                        | Social Services, Disability Rights CT, Town of Fairfield Communications Dept., Department Heads | Communications | Public-facing materials are easy to read and understand.                          | x  |    |    |
| 1.2 Ensure websites are screen-reader friendly and meet WCAG* standards.                        | IT Department, Libraries  | Communications | Websites are fully accessible to individuals with visual impairments.             | x  |    |    |
| 1.3 Provide multilingual resources and non-digital options (phone hotlines, printed materials). | Translation Services  | Communications | Increased information access for non-English speakers and those without internet. | x  | x  |    |

*\*Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provide technical standards that help make the digital world accessible to people with disabilities.*

## 2. Expand Digital Engagement

| Action  | Community Partners                              | Domains                             | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|----|----|----|
| 2.1 Offer digital literacy workshops for residents.                       | Libraries, Tech Volunteers                      | Communications, Social Engagement   | More Residents confidently using digital tools.                |    | x  |    |
| 2.2 Develop user-friendly online content with captions and clear audio.   | Communications Dept., FairTV, Media/Online News | Communications                      | Online resources are easy to navigate and accessible to all.   |    |    | x  |
| 2.3 Increase use of social media and video content for outreach.          | Communications Dept., FairTV, Media/Online News | Communications, Social Engagement   | Increased awareness and engagement from residents online.      |    | x  |    |
| 2.4 Launch a tech support volunteer program pairing youth with Residents. | Schools, Bigelow Center, Youth Organizations    | Social Engagement, Community Health | Residents gain tech skills and stronger community connections. |    | x  |    |

### 3. Strengthen Traditional Outreach

| Action  | Community Partners                                    | Domains                           | Targeted Outcomes   | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|----|----|----|
| 3.1 Distribute print newsletters, utilize local radio/TV for important updates. | Media/Online News, Faith-Based Groups, Bigelow Center | Communications, Social Engagement | More Residents staying informed through familiar channels.  | x  |    |    |
| 3.2 Establish a help desk for Residents to access information.                  | Bigelow Center, Libraries                             | Communications, Community Health  | Residents have direct access to assistance and information. |    |    | x  |

### 4. Improve Communication and Access to Health and Support Resources for Homebound and Aging Adults, Caregivers, and Individuals Living with Dementia

| Action   | Community Partners  | Domains                                     | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|---|---|--|----|----|----|
| 4.1 Explore creating a digital information hub (website or app) with regularly updated resources on health, caregiver support, dementia-friendly services, and telehealth. | IT Department, Bigelow Center, Social Services, Alzheimer's Association | Communications, Community Health & Wellness | Improved accessibility of health and caregiver information; increased use of digital health tools. |    | x  |    |
| 4.2 Educate the community on available caregiver resources, respite services, and mental health support.   | Bigelow Center, SWCAA, Social Services, Mental Health Providers         | Communications, Community Health & Wellness | Increased caregiver awareness; reduced caregiver stress through better access to support           | x  |    |    |
| 4.3 Develop dementia-friendly communication initiatives, including signage in public spaces and training for businesses.   | Alzheimer's Association, First Responders, Local Businesses             | Communications, Community Health & Wellness | Enhanced community inclusivity; improved navigation and support                                    |    | x  |    |

## Community Health and Wellness Action Plan

The Age-Friendly Fairfield Survey and the Community Health and Wellness “mini” survey identified key challenges and opportunities for improving services that support residents. Health and well-being for residents extend beyond physical fitness. A livable community must provide a broad range of services, such as mental health resources, preventive wellness programs, and caregiver support. However, many residents are unaware of these services or uncertain about their eligibility, limiting their ability to access essential support.

Key challenges include low awareness of critical resources such as Medicare enrollment, caregiver support, and hospice care. Many residents also struggle with transportation, attending medical appointments, and accessing affordable, healthy food. Caregivers frequently experience burnout while supporting family members with cognitive or physical challenges, yet they often lack access to respite care and support programs. Additionally, limited fitness opportunities, high home care costs, and technology barriers make it difficult for residents to utilize telemedicine and other virtual services.

The primary goals for improving health and wellness services are to expand affordable healthcare access, promote wellness activities, enhance social support, and strengthen mental health services—all while ensuring residents have the resources to remain independent in their homes.

While most survey respondents rated their health as good or fair, many may not participate in regular physical activity and feel there are too few affordable fitness programs. Healthcare access is inconsistent, with limited awareness of services such as dementia screenings, mental health support, and telehealth options.

Mental health concerns are also prevalent, with many residents experiencing stress, anxiety, or loneliness. However, few seek counseling or support groups due to barriers such as cost, stigma, and difficulty using telehealth. Expanding affordable mental health services and reducing stigma are key priorities.

Food and transportation challenges further impact well-being. While most residents have access to healthy food, some rely on grocery delivery or support from organizations like Operation Hope Community Kitchen and Food Pantry. Limited public transit, high costs, and scheduling difficulties make it harder for non-drivers to attend medical appointments and participate in social activities, potentially isolating many residents. Transportation solutions to partially address this needs to be more effectively communicated.

The Age Friendly Fairfield Community Health and Wellness Survey also revealed trends in community health and wellness affecting residents’ ability to age in place. Many respondents reported mobility limitations and issues with wheelchair access, along with concerns about vision, hearing, dementia, and mental health. These disabilities may hinder daily activities, impacting both individuals and their families. There is a notable demand for dementia support and better healthcare services, as well as concerns related to abuse, neglect, forgetfulness, and alcohol use. Many caregivers face financial difficulties and anticipate future assistance needs without having sought help. Overall, these findings highlight the urgent need for improved community health and wellness support.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that increases awareness, improves accessibility, and strengthens community partnerships to ensure all residents can lead healthier, more connected lives.

Food and transportation challenges further impact well-being. While most residents have access to healthy food, some rely on grocery delivery or support from organizations like Operation Hope Community Kitchen and Food Pantry, congregate meals at the senior center through the Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging (SWCAA), as well as its Home Delivered meals program. Limited public transit, high costs, and scheduling difficulties make it harder for non-drivers to attend medical appointments and participate in social activities, potentially isolating many residents. Transportation solutions to partially address this need to be more effectively communicated.

The Age-Friendly Fairfield Community Health and Wellness Survey also revealed trends in community health and wellness affecting residents' ability to age in place. Many respondents reported mobility limitations and issues with wheelchair access, along with concerns about vision, hearing, dementia, and mental health. These disabilities may hinder daily activities, impacting both individuals and their families. There is a notable demand for dementia support and better healthcare services, as well as concerns related to abuse, neglect, forgetfulness, and alcohol use. Many caregivers face financial difficulties and anticipate future assistance needs without having sought help.

## **Action Plan Summary**

### **Outreach and Awareness**

Raising awareness of available health, wellness, and social services is essential to ensuring residents can access the support they need. A comprehensive communications plan will be developed to educate the community about available programs and eligibility requirements. Collaboration with healthcare providers, local organizations, and community partners—such as the Bigelow Center and Chamber of Commerce—will strengthen outreach efforts. Annual health expos and educational events will offer CPR training, fitness classes, and wellness activities, helping residents stay informed and engaged in their health and well-being.

### **Access to Health Care and Social Services**

Helping residents to navigate Medicare, Medicaid, and other coverage options by providing clear guidance and assistance is a priority. Exploring expanding and accessing telemedicine services, with technology support and training to help residents effectively use virtual care. To improve access to in-person care, partnerships with transportation providers will ensure residents can attend medical appointments. Additionally, collaborations with healthcare and mental health providers will expand regular screenings for memory, hearing, and mental health, ensuring early detection and timely intervention.

### **Support for Caregivers and Aging in Place**

Caregiver support is crucial to enabling residents to remain in their homes. A volunteer network or community model will be developed to assist with practical tasks like snow shoveling and grocery delivery. Collaborations with organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association, Hartford HealthCare, and Bridgeport Hospital will provide caregiver support programs. Medical providers will also work together to train caregivers and first responders on aging-related issues.

### **Promoting Healthy and Active Aging**

Fairfield's Parks and Recreation Department, Conservation Department, and other local organizations are committed to fostering physical activity and social engagement among residents. The Bigelow Center for Senior Activities offers affordable fitness programs tailored to residents. The town has expanded access to walking paths and pickleball courts to encourage outdoor exercise. The Parks and Recreation Department collaborates with the community to increase wellness activities, including the recent addition of an ADA-compliant outdoor fitness center at the Bigelow Center, designed to help elderly and other adult residents exercise outside. Efforts are underway to increase the number of farmers markets that accept Older Americans Act vouchers, further promoting healthy eating among residents. Additionally, *Live Well* workshops—evidence-based self-management programs provided by the Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging—help residents living with ongoing health conditions like diabetes, arthritis, and heart disease take charge of their health by exploring practical strategies for managing pain, fatigue, stress, and more.

### **Promote Mental Health Services**

Expanding access to mental health care through behavioral health organizations and local providers is a priority. Efforts will focus on reducing stigma and increasing services such as counseling, support groups, and grief management. Training for healthcare providers, caregivers, and first responders will enhance their ability to recognize and respond to mental health challenges.

### **Ongoing Initiatives and Partnerships**

Collaborations with Hartford HealthCare and Bridgeport Hospital will highlight local care options. Fairfield's Social Services Department, will continue to provide in-home care, adult family care, and caregiver resources. Behavioral health organizations will remain engaged in addressing issues such as substance use and depression.

## 1. Objective: Expand the Availability of Health Services for Residents

| Action  | Community Partners   | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes   | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|--|--|---|----|----|----|
| 1.1 Partner with healthcare providers to offer screenings for memory, hearing, mental health, and general health. | Fairfield Health Department, Hartford Health, Yale New Haven Hospitals, Community Healthcare Providers | Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement                 | Increased early detection of health conditions; Improved access to preventative care. | x  | x  | x  |
| 1.2 Create and distribute a comprehensive resource guide featuring local health services.                         | Bigelow Center, Social Services  | Communications, Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement | Increased awareness and accessibility of healthcare resources.                        |    |    | x  |
| 1.2 Offer digital literacy training to help Residents navigate telehealth services.                               | IT, Bigelow Center, Libraries, Social Services   | Communications, Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement | Increased comfort and use of telehealth services.                                     |    | x  |    |

## 2. Objective: Encourage Active Lifestyles Among Residents

| Action  | Community Partners                           | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|--|--|--|----|----|----|
| 2.1 Expand and promote group fitness programs (yoga, tai chi, walking clubs).             | Bigelow Center, YMCA, Parks & Rec, Libraries | Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement | Increased physical activity and mobility.                                | x  | x  | x  |
| 2.2 Improve and implement safe walking/biking infrastructure and signage.                 | Conservation, Parks & Rec, Public Works      | Community Health and Wellness, Transportation    | Increased pedestrian and bike safety; More active transportation.        |    |    | x  |
| 2.3 Partner with farmers' markets to offer senior discounts and host nutrition workshops. | SWCAA, Farmers' Markets, State Delegation    | Community Health and Wellness                    | Increased access to healthy food; Better nutrition knowledge and habits. |    |    | x  |

### 3. Objective: Build Community Ties and Reduce Social Isolation

| Action  | Community Partners   | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes   | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|--|--|---|----|----|----|
| 3.1 Host regular social engagement events (game nights, coffee mornings, interest groups).                        | Bigelow Center, SHU, Fairfield U, Libraries, Chamber of Commerce, Fairfield Museum | Social Engagement                                | Reduced isolation; Increased community participation.               | x  | x  | x  |
| 3.2 Launch a volunteer and mentorship program for Residents.  | Bigelow Center, Schools, Social Services, Libraries                                | Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement | Increased sense of purpose; Stronger intergenerational connections. |    | x  |    |
| 3.3 Collaborate with mental health organizations to provide workshops on stress management and coping strategies. | Mental Health Providers, SWCAA   | Community Health and Wellness                    | Improved mental health and resilience.                              |    |    | x  |

### 4. Objective: Increase Awareness and Knowledge About Health-Related Issues

| Action  | Community Partners  | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|---|--|--|----|----|----|
| 4.1 Organize monthly health education seminars on health and wellness topics.                           | Bigelow Center, Libraries, Universities                   | Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement | Improved health literacy; Better chronic disease management. | x  | x  |    |
| 4.1 Organize monthly health education seminars on health and wellness topics.                           | Bigelow Center, Economic Development, Parks & Rec         | Communications, Community Health and Wellness    | Increased awareness of health resources.                     |    |    | x  |
| 4.3 Establish intergenerational learning programs with local universities and healthcare professionals. | Fairfield U, SHU, Housatonic & Norwalk Community Colleges | Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement | Increased health awareness across generations.               |    | x  |    |

## 5. Objective: Create a Dementia-Friendly Community

| Action   | Community Partners   | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|--|--|--|----|----|----|
| 5.1 Implement dementia awareness training for businesses, first responders, and community organizations. | Alzheimer's Association, Bigelow Center, Fire & Police Departments | Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement | Increased community understanding and support for individuals with dementia.       |    | x  | x  |
| 5.2 Develop a dementia-friendly toolkit for caregivers, families, and local organizations.               | Bigelow Center, Social Services, Health Providers                  | Communications, Community Health and Wellness    | Enhanced support for caregivers; Better-informed community members.                | x  | x  |    |
| 5.3 Expand dementia-friendly programs, including memory cafés and respite care options.                  | Bigelow Center, Libraries, Local Faith Groups, Fairfield Museum    | Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement | Increased social opportunities for individuals with dementia and their caregivers. |    | x  |    |

## 6. Objective: Identify and Increase Mental Health Services

| Action  | Community Partners  | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes                                      | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|---|--|--|----|----|----|
| 6.1 Assess the availability of mental health services and identify service gaps.      | Behavioral Health Response Team, SWCAA, Local Mental Health Providers | Community Health and Wellness                    | Improved understanding of mental health service needs. | x  |    |    |
| 6.2 Advocate for increased funding and services for geriatric mental health programs. | State Delegation, Local Healthcare Providers, Nonprofits              | Community Health and Wellness                    | Expanded mental health resources for residents.        | x  | x  |    |
| 6.3 Develop peer support groups facing mental health challenges.                      | Bigelow CTRr, Mental Health Providers, Faith-Based Organizations      | Community Health and Wellness, Social Engagement | Reduced isolation; Improved emotional well-being.      | x  | x  |    |

## Housing Action Plan

The Age-Friendly Fairfield Survey identified key challenges and opportunities in ensuring that residents have access to affordable, suitable, and diverse housing options as they age. Housing is a critical component of a livable community, allowing residents to remain in their homes safely, comfortably, and independently. However, the availability of appropriate housing options is limited, and affordability remains a significant concern for many aging and prospective residents. The following analysis addresses Fairfield's changing demographics and related societal challenges.

### Housing Stock vs. Household Profile

Fairfield's housing stock was built to service an overwhelmingly single-family market. Eighty-five percent (85%) of all housing in Fairfield is single unit, and a majority are detached homes. Eleven percent (11%) of units are in small multifamily buildings with between two and nine units. Only about 3% of all units are in larger, multi-family buildings. Between 2010 and 2020, Fairfield experienced a 10% growth in the number of households and a marked change in the size of households, as illustrated below.

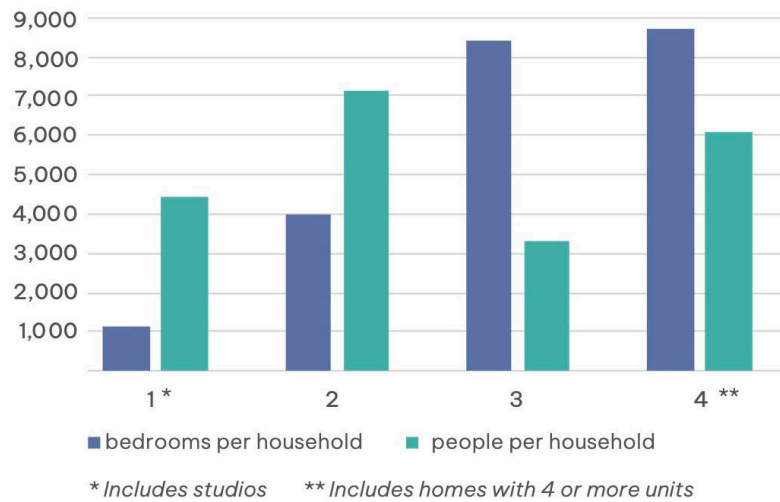
#### Change in Household Size 2010-2020

| Household Size | 2010  | 2020  | Change |
|----------------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1-person       | 4,190 | 4,480 | 6.9%   |
| 2-person       | 5,977 | 7,192 | 20.3%  |
| 3-person       | 3,460 | 3,364 | -2.8%  |
| 4-or-more      | 5,593 | 6,140 | 9.8%   |

*US Census Bureau - American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2020) and US Census Bureau- 2010 Census.*

The baby boomer generation has been reaching retirement age, leading to increased demand for downsizing options, such as smaller homes, townhouses, or retirement communities. Many older adults live in two-story homes that may become difficult to navigate over time, yet accessible housing alternatives remain scarce. At the same time, many younger Fairfield residents and prospective residents, while earning strong incomes, are professionals with higher education degrees and significant debt burdens. This has limited their ability to afford much of Fairfield's current housing stock and increased demand for a small supply of town rental properties.

The following exhibit compares the number of 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom homes to that of 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4 plus-person households. While some households may need more bedrooms than people (e.g., for an office) this data shows there are far fewer one-bedroom and studio housing units than single-person households. Similar comparisons underscore the growing need for more diverse housing stock in Fairfield to accommodate our evolving demographics and ensure a thriving, inclusive community for years to come.



US Census Bureau - American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2020)

As the population and housing needs shift, single individuals and couples without children may struggle to find smaller housing that meets their needs. This under-supply of smaller homes is likely having two effects: (1) smaller households are paying more for housing than would otherwise be necessary, and (2) mid-sized households of three or more people may face higher costs due to increased competition for mid-sized and larger homes. Expanding the supply of smaller housing units would not only help meet the needs of singles and couples, but also alleviate pressure on mid-size families by reducing competition for 2- and 3-bedroom homes. At the same time, accessible housing options for older adults remain limited, and many of those who would prefer to downsize or age in place lack suitable options within the community.

Recent years have brought rising housing costs. Median sales values have approached \$900,000, and the overall Town median home value appears to approach or exceed \$750,000. In 2021, the median rental cost was \$1,977, and with a shortage of available rental housing, it is likely that median rent has increased substantially since then. Renters are disproportionately affected by rising costs, with more than half spending 30% or more of their income on housing-related expenses. Additionally, Fairfield’s 2022 Affordable Housing Plan noted that more than 28% of all households are ALICE—Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed—and are struggling with the overall cost of living.

**Housing Progress**

Despite these challenges, Fairfield has made important progress in recent years. A substantial number of affordable units have been developed through zoning applications filed under State affordable housing statute 8-30g, which does not require adherence to local regulations. Since 2012, Fairfield has seen 24 such applications and has authorized a total of 710 dwelling units, of which 284 are below market rate. In 2015, the Town Plan and Zoning Commission adopted an inclusionary zoning provision requiring that at least 10% of units in developments creating 10 or more units (12% in Transit-Oriented District overlay areas) be deed-restricted at below market rate. Projects subject to these rules have produced 892

units, including 91 affordable homes. In 2018, Fairfield established an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, supported by a zoning fee on all other residential development, to support the creation and preservation of affordable housing.

The Town has also modernized its Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations to encourage more flexible, budget-friendly, and family-oriented housing arrangements.

In 2024, Fairfield qualified for a 4-year 8-30g moratorium as more authorized affordable housing units came online through construction. However, this progress has not come without community concern. Many residents have voiced opposition to what they view as overly dense development in residential neighborhoods. As Fairfield moves forward, it must balance the need for affordability and housing diversity with thoughtful planning. Developing creative “middle housing” solutions and mixed-use approaches will be critical in maintaining affordability while preserving neighborhood character. These efforts will also position the Town to qualify for a subsequent 8-30g moratorium and continue progress toward a more inclusive housing landscape.

Survey respondents identified affordability and housing suitability as major factors that could compel them to leave Fairfield. More than 40% cited a need for a home that better fits their changing needs, a more affordable community, or a living arrangement that supports independence as they age. In addition, some residents lack information about financial tools—such as reverse mortgages, home equity loans, and tax relief programs—that could help them remain in their homes and communities longer.

Looking ahead, Fairfield’s housing goals center on expanding housing options, supporting aging in place, and increasing public awareness of financial resources and transition planning. A comprehensive approach will require continued community education, advocacy, and collaboration with local partners to ensure that all residents have access to housing that meets their needs throughout every stage of life.

### **Action Plan Summary**

#### **Outreach and Education:**

A housing resource reference center will be established to provide information on housing options, home transition planning, home repair services, and financial assistance programs. Educational efforts will include workshops on housing affordability, reverse mortgages, home equity lines of credit, and other tools that may enable residents to remain in their homes. Collaboration with local real estate professionals and financial advisors will help provide guidance on housing transitions and long-term planning.

#### **Expanding Housing Options:**

To meet the diverse needs of residents, Fairfield must develop more housing options. The town’s draft Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) call for increased housing diversity, including missing middle housing, mixed-use developments and expanded accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Continued engagement with Town departments and commissions can support zoning updates, inclusionary housing policies, and incentives for age-friendly housing developments (e.g., age restricted or cottage cluster). Programs such as shared-housing initiatives and community

support networks could also provide alternative housing solutions for residents that would prefer to downsize without leaving Fairfield.

**Support for Aging in Place:**

Helping residents remain in their homes safely and independently is a priority. A network of home maintenance and modification services will be explored, including safety assessments, universal design principles, and accessibility modifications.

**Addressing Affordability and Financial Assistance:**

Many residents struggle with housing costs, particularly renters who lack the financial assistance available to homeowners. Other financial support programs (e.g., for middle income residents, senior/disabled tax relief program provisions) will also be studied.

**Ongoing Initiatives and Partnerships:**

Collaboration with Fairfield’s Planning & Zoning and Community and Economic Development departments, local realtors, and community organizations will help drive policy changes and expand housing opportunities. Engagement with financial institutions and nonprofit organizations will provide residents with better access to financial planning resources and homebuyer assistance programs. The Housing team will continue to gather resident feedback through listening sessions, focus groups, and surveys to ensure ongoing responsiveness to community needs.



## 1. Explore and Assess Housing Needs, Existing Options, Initiatives, and Services

| Action  | Community Partners  | Domains | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|---|---------|--|----|----|----|
| 1.1 Build knowledge of current and proposed Town programs and initiatives.                                      | DCED, Planning Dept, AHC  | Housing | Develop a briefing book summarizing programs and initiatives.          | x  |    |    |
| 1.2 Evaluate community demand for aging-in-place home features, service providers, alternative housing options. | Fire/Police, Social Services, Health Dept, Realtors, Fairfield University | Health  | Conduct focus groups and listening sessions to assess community needs. | x  |    |    |
| 1.3 Summarize findings in a continuing reference document.  | DCED, Planning Dept, AHC  | Housing | Develop a reference document summarizing findings for ongoing use.     | x  |    |    |

## 2. Educate Community on Housing Options that Enable Residents to Remain in Their Homes and Town

| Action   | Community Partners                                   | Domains                | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|--|------------------------|--|----|----|----|
| 2.1 Improve public knowledge of existing housing options, initiatives, and housing programs/services (including aging in place). | DCED, Planning Dept, AHC, Social Services, Fire Dept | Health, Communications | Host informational meetings and create reference materials on housing options.       | x  |    |    |
| 2.2 Educate senior community on housing transition issues.   | Realtors, Care Managers, Social Services             | Health, Communications | Develop and distribute educational materials on housing transitions.                 |    | x  |    |
| 2.3 Provide financial options education (e.g., reverse mortgages, veterans' loans, HELOCs, senior/disabled tax relief).          | Banking Professionals, SDTR Committees, FSA          | Communications         | Host educational meetings and distribute reference materials on financial resources. | x  |    |    |
| 2.4 Educate leaders on community housing needs.  | DCED, AHC, Planning Dept, FSA                        | Health, Transportation | Present findings and recommendations to AHC, Planning/TPZ, BOS, and RTM to present   | x  |    |    |

### 3. Support Efforts to Develop New Housing Options and Support Program

| Action   | Community Partners  | Domains                | Targeted Outcomes   | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|---|------------------------|---|----|----|----|
| 3.1 Expand financial and service programs that support residents' ability to buy or remain in their homes. | DCED, Social Services, FSA                                | Health                 | Identify new financial assistance and rehabilitation program opportunities.             |    |    | x  |
| 3.2 Develop strategies for middle housing, age-restricted housing, and budget-friendly options.            | DCED, Planning Dept, AHC                                  | Housing                | Support recommendations from DCED, AHC, and Planning Dept on expanding housing options. |    | x  |    |
| 3.3 Advocate for affordable and accessible rental housing options.   | DCED, Planning Dept, AHC, Fair Rent Commission, Realtors  | Health, Transportation | Make the case for new programs and propose policy solutions.                            |    | x  | x  |
| 3.4 Evaluate and endorse alternative housing solutions.  | DCED, AHC, Planning Dept, Realtors, Housing Organizations | Health, Transportation | Research and recommend home-sharing programs and tiny home options.                     |    |    | x  |
| 3.5 Develop a home maintenance service program to support aging in place.                                  | DCED, Social Services, Area Businesses                    | Health                 | Establish parameters for a reliable, affordable contractor network.                     |    | x  | x  |

### 4. Establish and Maintain a Housing Resource Reference Center

| Action  | Community Partners                             | Domains                                | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|--|--|--|----|----|----|
| 4.1 Identify contents and features of the reference center.                           | DCED, Planning Dept, AHC, Social Services, FSA | Health, Transportation, Communications | Develop a guide to alternative housing options and ADU decision-making resources.                |    |    | x  |
| 4.2 Catalog home service programs.  | Social Services, Fire Dept                     | Health, Transportation                 | Create safety evaluation process, services guide, housing hotline.                               |    | x  | x  |
| 4.3 Catalog age-friendly housing, assisted living options, and subsidized apartments. | DCED, AHC, Planning Dept                       | Housing                                | Compile a list of market-rate and subsidized housing options with vendor links.                  |    | x  |    |
| 4.4 Establish and ensure ongoing access to the reference center.                      | DCED, Social Services                          | Communications                         | Create online and physical resource centers and send an annual housing communicate to residents. |    | x  | x  |

# Social Participation and Engagement Action Plan

The Age-Friendly Fairfield survey and Social Engagement questions and community discussions identified key challenges and opportunities in fostering meaningful social connections for residents. Social participation is a vital component of a livable community, contributing to emotional well-being, mental health, and overall quality of life. While many Fairfield residents are active in community programs, barriers such as limited awareness of available opportunities, mobility issues, and technological access hinder full participation.

Key challenges include a lack of centralized information about engagement opportunities, scheduling conflicts among community organizations, and difficulty accessing transportation to events. Additionally, some residents experience social isolation due to mobility limitations, caregiving responsibilities, or lack of family support. Many survey respondents expressed interest in more intergenerational programs, volunteer opportunities, and activities tailored to diverse interests and abilities.

The primary goals for strengthening social engagement in Fairfield are to improve communication and outreach, expand volunteer and community-based programs, and leverage technology to foster inclusion. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates strategic partnerships, enhanced accessibility, and innovative programming.

## Action Plan Summary

### Expanding Awareness and Access to Social Opportunities

A key challenge for residents is a lack of information about available social opportunities. To address this, Fairfield will launch a comprehensive outreach and education campaign. A Social Engagement Resource Guide will be developed, providing details on local events, volunteer programs, and engagement opportunities. This guide will be distributed at key locations such as pharmacies, libraries, and medical offices and delivered to homebound residents.

An online event calendar will be created to consolidate activities from various community organizations, ensuring that residents can easily find and plan for upcoming events. Additionally, a dedicated Info Line with recorded event details will be introduced for those who prefer phone-based access. Coordination with town departments will help prevent scheduling conflicts and maximize attendance at social events.

### Enhancing Volunteer and Community-Based Programs

Fairfield will expand volunteer opportunities by partnering with schools, shelters, houses of worship, the senior center, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. A centralized volunteer hub will be established to match residents with meaningful opportunities based on their interests and skills. Programs will include intergenerational initiatives, such as mentorship programs with students and collaborative community service projects.

To encourage engagement with local businesses, Fairfield will collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce and economic development offices to promote age-friendly initiatives. A Senior Discount Program will be expanded, with a potential “Senior Pass” offering exclusive discounts at participating businesses. Businesses that actively support initiatives will receive an Age-Friendly Fairfield Decal. Cultural and creative engagement will also be prioritized through partnerships with museums, arts organizations, and cultural institutions. Additionally, the Chores Program will be expanded to connect



residents with volunteers for minor home repairs, yard work, and household tasks. A trusted vendor list will also be developed to help residents find reliable service providers.

### **Promoting Intergenerational and Community Engagement**

Fairfield will foster intergenerational connections through initiatives such as “Stories for Residents” and the Legacy Project, which encourage storytelling and mentorship between older and younger generations. Schools and community organizations will collaborate on projects like intergenerational pen pals, art exchanges, and joint community service initiatives.

Public spaces, including coffee shops, parks, and libraries, will be utilized to facilitate social connections. Businesses will be invited to sponsor aging-friendly events in these spaces, creating welcoming environments for diverse community interactions.

### **Leveraging Technology for Social Engagement**

Technology will play a key role in reducing social isolation and expanding access to engagement opportunities. Fairfield will enhance access to digital resources through the library, Bigelow Center, schools, and community volunteers. Virtual programs such as book clubs, fitness classes, and brain games will be expanded to allow residents to participate from home.

To support digital inclusion, Fairfield will explore technology loan programs that allow residents to borrow tablets or other devices to participate in virtual activities. Programs such as “Companion Charlie” tablets for Meals on Wheels recipients, a Tech Loan Library, and virtual wellness check-ins will be implemented. Local volunteers, including high school and university students, will provide technology training to ensure residents feel comfortable using digital tools.

Additionally, a digital volunteer matching platform will be developed to connect residents with engagement opportunities efficiently. This platform will streamline the process of pairing willing volunteers with individuals or organizations in need.

### **Ongoing Community Engagement and Partnerships**

Collaboration with local organizations, businesses, and educational institutions will be key to sustaining these initiatives. Fairfield will continue to engage residents through listening sessions, focus groups, and surveys to ensure social engagement efforts align with community needs. Ongoing data collection and assessment will help measure progress and identify areas for further improvement.



## 1. Improve Existing and Develop New Communication Systems to Support Social Engagement

| Action   | Community Partners  | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|---|--|--|----|----|----|
| Develop materials and resources to increase awareness of existing engagement programs.                                 | Social Services, Libraries, Parks & Rec, Economic Development               | Communication, Social Participation & Engagement                 | Create a Resource Pocket Guide for aging adults. Establish an Info Line with recorded community events. Develop an aggregate event calendar to centralize activities from local organizations. | x  | x  |    |
| Improve use of current resources to reach isolated and homebound aging adults, veterans, and people with disabilities. | Social Services, Police & Fire Dept., Libraries, Health Dept.               | Communication, Transportation, Social Participation & Engagement | Utilize an aggregate list of residents in need to share opportunities. Distribute a monthly postcard with events and resources at key locations (e.g., stores, libraries).                     |    | x  |    |
| Streamline access and awareness of community activities and events.  | Parks & Rec, Economic Development, Health Dept., Social Services, Libraries | Communication, Transportation, Social Participation & Engagement | Coordinate Town department calendars to ensure events are well-publicized. Centralize advertising for all town-sponsored community events.   | x  | x  |    |
| Create a platform for community members to share new ideas for social participation and engagement.                    | Local Facebook Pages, Library, High School Volunteer Programs, Book Clubs   | Communication, Social Participation & Engagement                 | Establish an online forum to share information about part-time work opportunities, volunteer positions, and community events that may not be widely advertised.                                |    | x  |    |

## 2. Develop and Promote Community Programming and Outreach

| Action   | Community Partners   | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes   | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|--|--|---|----|----|----|
| Research and create volunteer opportunities for aging adults.            | Schools, Shelters & Food Pantries, Houses of Worship, Bigelow Center, Local Businesses, CERT, Non-Profit Organizations | Communication, Social Participation & Engagement | Identify volunteer projects. Create list of community partners using volunteers. Determine the best place to house volunteer opportunity listings.  | x  |    |    |
| Increase the utilization of local businesses as resources for Residents. | Local Companies & Restaurants, Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce   | Communication, Social Participation & Engagement | Identify resources helpful to Residents. Update the Senior Discount Program with a “Senior Pass” (similar to student discount cards). Launch Age-Friendly Fairfield Decal for businesses. Expand arts & creative opportunities, part-time jobs for Residents. |    | x  |    |
| Improve access to resources and volunteers.                              | Local High School Volunteer Groups, Community Service Groups   | Communication, Social Participation & Engagement | Expand outreach to homebound residents. Develop a “Resource Pocket Guide” and Senior Hotline.   |    | x  |    |
| Develop and promote intergenerational programs.                          | Local Public & Private Schools and Universities, High School Volunteer Programs  | Communication, Social Participation & Engagement | Implement programs fostering engagement among age groups. Collaborate with local universities to attain Age-Friendly University status. Increase awareness of ageism.   | x  | x  |    |

| 2. continued   |   |  |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| Coordinate with local universities & museums on lifelong learning opportunities. | Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University, State Universities, Fairfield Museum                       | Communication, Social Participation & Engagement | Promote the state university tuition waiver for adults 62+. Expand and coordinate Lifelong Learning Programs. | x | x |  |
| Increase the use of "Third Places" for social engagement.                        | Neighborhood Associations, Walking Groups, Local Businesses, Parks & Rec, Economic Development, Libraries | Communication, Social Participation & Engagement | Expand use of existing locations (e.g., coffee shops, libraries, parks) to encourage social participation.    |   |   |  |

### 3. Improve Use of Technology to Facilitate Social Engagement

| Action  | Community Partners   | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|--|--|--|----|----|----|
| Increase access to and improve the use of technology from home for social engagement. | Libraries, Bigelow Center, Local Schools & Universities, Community Volunteers, Tech Apps (Strava, SocialSteps, FitTogether), Virtual Programs (Silver Sneakers, YMCA, Community Centers) | Communication, Health                            | Expand virtual social interaction options to reduce loneliness. Promote statewide Virtual Bigelow Center as it becomes available. Encourage participation in virtual exercise and wellness programs. | x  | x  |    |
| Use technology to match volunteers with opportunities to help aging adults.           | TBD  | Communication, Social Participation & Engagement | Develop an online system for volunteers to assist Residents with grocery shopping, rides, and home tasks.  |    | x  |    |

# Transportation Action Plan

The Age-Friendly Fairfield Survey and community input sessions identified key challenges and opportunities in ensuring that residents have access to safe, reliable, and accessible transportation options. Transportation is a fundamental component of a livable community, enabling residents to maintain independence, access essential services, and stay engaged in social and recreational activities. While many Fairfield residents continue to drive, aging-related mobility changes, transportation costs, and limited alternatives pose challenges for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Key challenges include a strong reliance on personal vehicles, limited public transportation options beyond the town's commuter rail and bus services, and gaps in north-south connectivity. Existing senior and paratransit services, while valuable, have restricted hours and capacity. Many older residents are unaware of available transportation resources or find existing services difficult to navigate. Additionally, affordability and accessibility remain concerns, particularly for residents with mobility limitations or lower incomes.

Survey respondents emphasized the importance of expanding transportation services, increasing affordability, and improving awareness of existing options. More than 80% of respondents indicated that expanded transportation options were important, with 62% rating them as very important. Many also expressed interest in better coordination of existing services, improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and increased transit connections to key town locations.

The primary goals for improving transportation in Fairfield are to enhance mobility options, improve public awareness of existing services, and expand support for older and disabled residents. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes service enhancements, infrastructure improvements, and strategic partnerships. These steps will have the benefit of improving mobility for seniors as well as caregivers.

## Action Plan Summary

### Expanding Awareness and Access to Existing Transportation Services

Ensuring that residents are aware of available transportation options is essential. A comprehensive outreach and education campaign will be launched to improve awareness and accessibility. This will include an updated transportation resource guide, an online hub with detailed information on routes and schedules, and an expansion of the Info Line to provide real-time updates. Coordination with Bigelow Center, libraries, and social services will ensure that residents receive timely information about transportation resources.

### Enhancing Senior and Paratransit Services

To better meet the needs of older residents and individuals with disabilities, Fairfield will work to enhance senior transportation options, including extended service hours and reduced wait times for Dial-a-Ride. Partnerships with nonprofit organizations and transportation providers will be explored to expand medical transportation services and ensure reliable access to healthcare appointments. Additional funding sources and grant opportunities will be pursued to support these enhancements.

### **Improving Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Public Transit Infrastructure**

Creating a more walkable and bike-friendly town is essential to expanding transportation options. Sidewalk improvements, enhanced pedestrian crossings, and expanded bike lane networks will be prioritized to improve safety and accessibility. Town planning initiatives will focus on increasing transit connectivity between key destinations, including Metro-North stations, shopping areas, and medical facilities. Collaboration with the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority will aim to improve bus frequency and expand service routes.

### **Exploring New Transportation Models**

Fairfield will assess the feasibility of new transportation options, including community shuttle services, ride-share partnerships, and micro-transit solutions. A study will be conducted to evaluate demand and identify cost-effective strategies for providing additional transit choices. Additionally, the town will explore a pilot program for volunteer driver networks to assist older residents who need transportation for errands and social activities.

### **Strengthening Transportation Affordability and Accessibility**

Cost is a significant barrier for some residents, particularly those who rely on private transportation services. Efforts will be made to expand transportation subsidy programs for low-income older residents and individuals with disabilities. Advocacy for state and regional funding to support affordable transit solutions will be a priority. Partnerships with local businesses and service providers will also be explored to offer discounts and transportation incentives for older residents.

### **Ongoing Community Engagement and Partnerships**

Collaboration with local, regional, and state transportation agencies will be key to implementing these initiatives. Fairfield will continue to engage residents through listening sessions, focus groups, and surveys to ensure transportation solutions align with community needs. Ongoing data collection and assessment will help measure progress and identify areas for further improvement.

## 1. Encourage and Promote Increased Use of Existing Transportation Options

| Action  | Community Partners   | Domains   | Targeted Outcomes  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|--|---|--|----|----|----|
| 1.1 Increase awareness of existing transportation options.                    | Human Services Bigelow Center, Senior Trans., GBT, Neighborhood Associations, Houses of Worship, Senior Housing Sites, Medical Offices, ADA Coalition CT | Transportation, Communication   | Create and distribute materials (printable and online) to inform residents and people with disabilities about available public transportation. Study, integrate, and communicate existing disability bus services and offerings. | x  |    |    |
| 1.2 Educate and promote town-wide initiatives in transportation and mobility. | Bike/Pedestrian Committee, Community & Economic Development, Conservation Commission<br><br>And Department   | Transportation, Social Participation, Communication, Outdoor Spaces & Buildings | Create and update guide (printable and online) on pedestrian and bike paths, including locations for bike routes and repair stations. Recruit volunteers for Walkability Map. Provide forums about transportation options.       | x  |    |    |
| 1.3 Increase awareness and advocate for the use of on-demand ride services.   | Uber, Lyft, GoGo Grandparent, On-Demand Providers  | Transportation, Communication   | Improve documentation describing available services. Support provider efforts for new programs, promotions, or initiatives to increase usage. Identify new providers to expand service options.                                  |    | x  |    |
| 1.4 Monitor ongoing usage levels to evaluate success.                         | Social Services + Bigelow Center, Fairfield Senior Transportation, Senior Housing Sites  | Transportation, Information & Communication                                     | Improve awareness and adjust services as needed based on data. Use findings to support future grant applications and funding requests.   | x  |    |    |

## 2. Encourage Improvements to Existing Transportation Options

| Action  | Community Partners  | Domains   | Targeted Outcomes   | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| 2.1 Enhance affordable transportation options for Residents and people with disabilities.   | Social Services/ Bigelow Center, Southwest CT Area Agency on Aging (SWCAA), Dept of Aging and Disability Services, NCOA           | Transportation, Health Services                           | Increase awareness and enhance mobility options.  |    | x  |    |
| 2.2 Explore low-cost or no-cost transportation for medical and non-medical trips.   | Social Services/ Bigelow Center, SWCAA, Dept of Aging and Disability Services, NCOA, Homecare Providers, Hospital/Clinic Networks | Transportation, Health Services                           | Improve current options. Expand service availability through new providers (e.g., Uber, Lyft). Develop new transportation models in partnership with healthcare providers.  | x  |    |    |
| 2.3 Explore enhancements to town infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, and bike/pedestrian paths, as part of the Complete Streets effort. | DPW, Engineering & Complete Streets Teams, Traffic Authority, Bike/Pedestrian Committee, GBT, Metro-North                         | Transportation, Outdoor Spaces & Buildings, Communication | Research improvements to bus stops and train accessibility. Evaluate transportation alternatives to support employees working outside public transit zones.   | x  |    |    |
| 2.4 Continue collaboration with GBT to improve transit services.  | GBT, Community Partners, Regional Transportation Providers  | Transportation  | Enhance bus service levels, expand routes. Improve bus stops (shelters, benches, etc.). Communicate new technologies for real-time bus tracking. Coordinate Fairfield and regional transportation providers. Collaborate with GBT in expanding and communicating rides for Seniors. |    | x  |    |

### 3. Explore Transportation Innovations

| Action  | Community Partners  | Domains  | Targeted Outcomes   | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|---|--|---|----|----|----|
| 3.1 Monitor transportation initiatives in other communities.  | Town & Town Commissions, Civic Organizations, GBT, Metro-North/State                | Transportation, Health Services, TBD                                 | Identify best practices and new ideas to enhance current transportation options.                              |    | x  | x  |
| 3.2 Explore a volunteer driver pilot program for medical and non-medical transport.                       | Social Services/ Bigelow Center, Council on Churches, Volunteer Square, SWCAA, FISH | Health Services, Transportation, Social Participation and Engagement | Develop new volunteer-supported transportation programs.  |    | x  |    |
| 3.3 Study options to develop public transportation for employees working outside existing transit routes. | Town & Town Commissions, Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Enterprises                | Transportation, Health Services, Civic & Employment                  | Assess alternative transportation models. Identify new service options for implementation.                    |    |    | x  |
| 3.4 Explore bike rental station placement near senior housing locations.                                  | Town & Town Commissions, Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Enterprises                | Transportation, Health Services, Outdoor Spaces                      | Conduct feasibility analysis. Pilot bike rental stations in strategic locations. Implement program if viable. |    |    | x  |

## Conclusion: Building a Livable Community for All Ages

What began as a plan to meet the needs of our older residents has blossomed into a vision for making every part of our community welcoming, safe, and vibrant for people of all ages. By viewing our streets, parks, and buildings through an age-friendly lens—whether it’s for someone in a wheelchair or a parent with a stroller—we’re ensuring that public spaces are easy to navigate and inviting for everyone. With our Complete Streets projects already improving sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes, getting around is already easier and safer for all.

This Action Plan isn’t a one-time thing; it’s a living, breathing guide that will evolve as the Town does. We’ll keep checking in through surveys, focus groups, and casual chats at local events to make sure we’re on track. And we’ll celebrate every step along the way—whether it’s a revamped sidewalk, a new workshop, or a DIY improvement that enhances accessibility.

Arts and culture are at the heart of how we connect as a community, and the Arts Commission is leading the way. After gathering information about all the wonderful galleries, performance venues, studios, and historic sites in Town, the Commission is now moving forward with plans to create a Cultural District in downtown Fairfield. This walkable area will serve as the heart of Fairfield’s creative spirit, bringing events, exhibitions, and performances that unite everyone. By focusing our artistic resources here, we’ll help support local artists and creative businesses while giving residents more opportunities to experience and enjoy the arts.

We’re also embracing our beautiful green spaces. From beaches to parks and trails, these are the places where we gather, relax, and recharge. With the new ADA-friendly fitness area at the Bigelow Center, expanded community gardens, and the upcoming ADA Recreation Center—offering everything from adaptive sports to family-friendly classes—there will be even more ways for everyone to get outside, stay active, and feel like part of the community.

Flexibility is at the core of our approach. Whether it involves securing new funding for affordable housing, collaborating with tech companies to offer virtual health services, or piloting a volunteer driver program, we’re prepared to learn, adapt, and build on what works. Every decision we make—big or small—will keep our age-friendly values in mind because when we plan with care, everyone benefits.

By putting these ideas into action, the Town is showing its ongoing commitment to respect, inclusion, and community spirit. We’re creating streets that welcome all types of movement, services that are easy to access, and programs that bring neighbors together. From better transportation and more housing options to exciting cultural events and stronger social support, each step we take brings us closer to a community where everyone feels like they belong. Together, we’ll keep working to make Fairfield—a place where people of all ages can live, laugh, and thrive for years to come.

# APPENDICES

1. AGE FRIENDLY SURVEY
2. AGE FRIENDLY SURVEY RESULTS
3. COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY
4. COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY SUMMARY OF RESULTS
5. INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



## APPENDIX 1: AGE-FRIENDLY FAIRFIELD SURVEY



Center for Social Impact



Fairfield University

### Age friendly fairfield survey introduction

*Fairfield has enrolled in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. As a member community in the Network, the Town commits to assessing the challenges of its population and identifying concepts, policies and programs that will improve the quality of life for all ages in Fairfield - in collaboration with residents, Town agencies and partners. We strive for a safe, healthy and inclusive environment in which Fairfielders of all ages can live their lives and retire one day. The Age-Friendly Community (AFC) initiative is designed to promote community discussion and understanding of needs across generations - ranging from young adults to those living with dementia and their caregivers.*

*AFCs can foster economic vitality and make for happier, healthier residents. People **of all ages**, backgrounds and interests benefit from programs that offer a range of housing options, make neighborhoods walkable, feature safe transportation options, enable access to key services, and provide opportunities to participate in community activities.*

*An integral step in the AFC initiative is an assessment of residents' perceptions of community attributes, needs and preferences through a **Town-wide survey**.*

*The survey results - supplemented with a number of focus group sessions - will enable us to develop specific strategies and action plans that advance our goals to make Fairfield more livable for all ages.*

*While completion of this survey is voluntary, we urge all residents aged 45 and over to complete it **between April 28 and June 15, 2023**.*

*We also encourage residents younger than age 45 to take the survey in support of older family members and to incorporate their own valued opinions on Town attributes and needed improvements.*

*The survey is approximately 42 questions and should take about 15 minutes to complete.*

*Anyone uncomfortable with using the internet to complete the survey can still participate at one of the following locations - Bigelow Senior Center; Fairfield Woods Library; Main Library; Pequot Library. Applicable hours will be posted on the Town website.*

### Demographic Data

1. What is your age?

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

**3. What is your current marital status?**

- Married
- Not married / Living with partner
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Never Married
- Prefer not to answer

**4. What is your racial/ethnic identity?**

- White
- Black
- African American
- American Native and Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Some Other Race
- Two or More Races
- Prefer not to answer

**5. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?**

- Yes
- No

**6. Which best represents the language(s) you speak at home?**

- Primary language English
- Primary language Spanish
- Primary language other (Please indicate):

**7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- K–12th grade (no diploma)
- High school graduate
- GED or equivalent
- Post-high school education/training (no degree)
- 2-year college degree
- 4-year college degree
- Post-graduate study (no degree)
- Graduate or professional degree(s)

**8. How long have you lived in the Town of Fairfield?**

- Less than 5 years
- 5 years but less than 15 years
- 15 years but less than 25 years
- 25 years but less than 35 years
- 35 years but less than 45 years
- 45 years or more

**9. Not counting yourself, do any of the following people live in your household?**

*(Please indicate the number of household members for each category from 0 to 10.)*

- I live by myself
- Spouse or partner
- Child/children under 18
- Child/children 18 or older
- Child/children away at college
- Parents
- Other adult relative or friend 18 or older

**10. In what part of Fairfield do you live?**

- Greenfield Hill
- Hoyden's Hill
- Stratfield / North Stratfield
- Samp Mortar / Lake Hills
- Tunxis Hill
- Holland Hill / Grasmere
- Mill Plain / University
- Fairfield Town Center and Beach Area
- Southport
- Not Sure

**11. Do you own or rent your primary home, or have another type of living arrangement?**

- Own
- Rent
- Other type of living arrangement

**12. How long do you expect to stay in the Town of Fairfield?**

- 1 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- More than 10 years

**13. If you were to consider moving out of Fairfield during your retirement years, which of the following factors would impact your decision? (Check all that apply)**

- Different home/size that meets my needs
- Home that helps me live independently as I age
- Better access to health care services
- More access to transportation options
- Community I can afford
- Less costly lifestyle
- To be closer to family/friends
- For a new job
- I would not consider leaving Fairfield
- Other (Please indicate): \_\_\_\_\_

**14. What was your annual household income before taxes in 2022?**

- \$0 – \$25,000
- \$25,000 – \$50,000
- \$50,000 – \$75,000
- \$75,000 – \$100,000
- \$100,000 – \$125,000
- \$125,000 – \$150,000
- \$150,000 – \$175,000
- Over \$175,000
- Unsure or prefer not to answer

#### **Home/Housing-Related**

**15. What type of home do you currently reside in?**

- Single family
- Duplex / 2-family
- 3–4 family
- Other multi-family
- Condo
- Multi-unit apartment
- Multi-occupant senior residence (independent, assisted living, or nursing home)
- Other

**16. What is the style of the structure in which you reside?**

- Cape
- Colonial
- Ranch / Single level
- Other multi-story (e.g., conventional, contemporary, split-level)
- Other single-level structure (e.g., condo, apartment)
- Other multi-level building (e.g., condo, apartment)

**17. How important is it for you to be able to live independently in your own home as you age?**

- Extremely important (1)
- Very important (2)
- Somewhat important (3)
- Not very important (4)
- Not at all important (5)

**18. Do any of the following factors limit your ability to remain in your home? Please click “yes”, “no” or “not sure” for each of the following.**

- |                                |                       |                       |                       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes (1)                        | No (2)                | Not sure (3)          |                       |
| Wheelchair-limited (1)         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other mobility limitations (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Sight disability (3)           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Hearing disability (4)         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Mental health (5)              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dementia (6)                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**19. People sometimes make modifications to their homes to remain there as they age. Have you made or do you anticipate making the following types of modifications to your home? Select all that Apply.**

- Easier access via ramp (1)
- Chairlift (2)
- Elevator (3)
- Wider doors (4)
- Bath modifications (e.g., grab bars, handrails, toilet height, non-slip tiles) (5)
- First floor living (e.g., first floor bedroom and bathroom set up) (6)
- Improved lighting (7)
- Medical emergency response system (8)
- Other (Please Indicate) (9)
- None is anticipated (10)

**20. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?**

- Employed full time (1)
- Employed part-time (2)
- Unemployed/searching (3)
- Retired (4)
- Otherwise not in labor force (5)

**21. If you now work (full or part time), to what age do you expect to work?**

- Please Indicate age (1)
- I am not working (2)
- Unsure (3)

**22. How frequently do you interact with your friends, family or neighbors by phone, in person, email or social media (such as Facebook)?**

- More than once a day (1)
- About once a day (2)
- Several times a week (3)
- About once a week (4)
- 1 to 2 times a month (5)
- Less than monthly (6)

**23. Where do you typically go for continuing education or self-improvement classes/workshops in Fairfield? Check all that apply.**

- University/Community college (1)
- Department of Parks and Recreation (2)
- Faith community (3)
- Local organizations or businesses (4)
- Libraries (5)
- Senior center (6)
- Offerings through my work (7)
- Online programs (8)
- Other (please specify) (9)
- I do NOT participate in any continuing education/self-improvement classes (10)

**24. There are many opportunities for residents to participate on Town boards and community service activities. Does the Town adequately encourage and provide support to volunteers?**

| Yes (1)                         | No (2)                | Could improve (3)     | Not sure (4)          |                       |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Encourages participation (1)    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provides volunteers support (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**25. How important are each of the following to you in Fairfield? Please address each of the following.**

| Extremely important (1)                                      | Very important (2)    | Somewhat important (3) |                       |                       | Not very important (4) |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Not at all important (5)                                     |                       |                        |                       |                       |                        |
| A range of volunteer opportunities (1)                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Conveniently located venues for entertainment (2)            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Activities specifically geared to older adults (3)           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Activities that offer senior discounts (4)                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Activities that are affordable to all residents (5)          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Activities involving both young and older people (6)         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| A variety of cultural activities for diverse populations (7) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Local schools that involve older adults (8)                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Continuing education classes (9)                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Transportation to/from activities (10)                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |
| Social clubs (books, gardening, hobbies) (11)                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>  |

**26. Do you or anyone in your household need support for the following? For each please click “I do not need help in this area”, “I need help, but do not know where to get it “ or “I know where to get help”.**

|   | I do not need help in this area | I need help, but do not know where to get it | I know where to get help |
|---|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Abuse, neglect, mistreatment (physical, emotional, financial) |                                 |  |                          |
| Forgetfulness or confusion                                    |                                 |  |                          |
| Smoking   |                                 |  |                          |
| Alcohol abuse   |                                 |  |                          |
| Drug abuse  |                                 |  |                          |

**27. Dementia is a general term describing a collection of symptoms such as memory impairment and/or cognitive impairment severe enough to interfere with daily function. If you or any member of your household has experienced dementia, have you been able to access the following? Check all that apply.**

- Programs for social interaction for dementia patients
- Improved support programs for families caring for dementia patients
- Improved information on available programs and services
- Other related needs (Please Indicate)
- Do not need support

**28. How likely is it that you will provide unpaid care to an adult loved one in the future?**

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not very likely
- Not at all likely

**29. Does any disability, handicap, or chronic disease keep you or a member of your household from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities? Please check all that apply for you and your family members.**

- Yes, myself
- Yes, my spouse or partner
- Yes, both my spouse or partner and myself
- One of my children
- A parent
- Other family member
- Not applicable

**30. How often do you engage in some form of physical exercise (such as walking, running, biking, swimming, sports, strength training, yoga, stretching)?**

- Everyday
- Several times a week, but not everyday
- About once a week
- About once every other week
- About once a month
- Less than once a month
- Seldom

**31. What inhibits or limits your engagement in fitness activity? (Check all that apply)**

- Lack of convenient facility that suits my needs
- Cost
- Concern with health exposure at facility
- Other health-related concern
- Inertia
- Other
- None of the above

**32. Where would you turn if a family member or friend needed information about services for older adults (e.g., caregiving services, home delivered meals, medical transport, etc.)? Please click “yes”, “no” or “not sure” for each of the following.**

|   | Yes | No | Not sure |
|---|-----|----|----------|
| Bigelow Center for Senior Activities          |     |    |          |
| Fairfield Social Services                     |     |    |          |
| Southwestern CT Agency on Aging (SWCAA)       |     |    |          |
| Library                                       |     |    |          |
| Other Town Departments                        |     |    |          |
| AARP  |     |    |          |
| Other local nonprofit organizations           |     |    |          |
| Houses of worship                             |     |    |          |
| Internet or phone book                        |     |    |          |
| Your doctor or other health care professional |     |    |          |
| Family or friends                             |     |    |          |

**33. If you personally provide caregiver services to a friend or family member, do the following apply to your situation? Please check all that apply.**

- Share caregiving responsibilities with others
- Need information and/or training in how to provide caregiving services
- Need assistance so that you can get some time off
- Have access to all the information on caregiving that you need
- Have access to a support group
- Experience any financial problems due to caregiving
- Other concern not listed above (Please Indicate)
- Not applicable

**34. Have you had difficulties accessing caregiver services (home healthcare or visiting nurses) for yourself, family member or friend?**

- Yes
- No
- I may have such a future need but have not yet reached out for assistance
- Do not see as applicable to me

**35. Do you get around Town for shopping, medical visits, errands and other activities in the following ways? Please click “yes” or “no” for each of the following.**

|                               | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------|-----|----|
| Drive yourself                |     |    |
| Have others drive you         |     |    |
| Walk                          |     |    |
| Ride a bike                   |     |    |
| Use public transportation     |     |    |
| Take a taxi                   |     |    |
| Ride share                    |     |    |
| Senior transportation service |     |    |
| Dial a Ride                   |     |    |

**36. How important to you are the following for Fairfield? Please address each of the following.**

|   | Extremely | Very | Somewhat | Not very | Not at all |
|---|-----------|------|----------|----------|------------|
| Reliable, accessible and affordable public transportation   |           |      |          |          |            |
| Special transportation services for people with disabilities and older adults   |           |      |          |          |            |
| Transportation at extended hours (e.g., late afternoon, weekends)   |           |      |          |          |            |
| A new form of transportation that would connect Town areas (e.g., a circulator shuttle between major neighborhoods and activity/transportation centers) |           |      |          |          |            |

**37. How would you rate Fairfield in each of the following categories?**

|  | Very Good | Acceptable | Needs Work |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|
| Well-maintained safe parks within walking distance |           |            |            |
| Public parks with enough benches                   |           |            |            |
| Adequate sidewalks                                 |           |            |            |
| Accessible public buildings                        |           |            |            |
| Separate pathways for bicyclists                   |           |            |            |
| Well maintained public restrooms                   |           |            |            |

**38. Where do you typically go for recreation or physical activity in Fairfield? Check all that apply.**

- Bigelow Center for Senior Activities
- Town gym
- Golf courses
- Tennis courts/Pickleball courts
- Athletic fields
- Parks or other walking areas
- Beaches
- Other facilities (Please Indicate)

**39. How often do you go online for Town information, support programs or services, or community activities?**

- Multiple times daily
- About daily
- Several times weekly
- About weekly
- Occasionally
- Do not make use of the internet

**40. Do you need assistance with any of the following to access technology? Please click “yes”, “no” or “not sure” for each of the following.**

|  | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| Access to affordable, high speed internet service                            |     |    |          |
| Access to computer equipment (iPad, Laptop, or Tablet)                       |     |    |          |
| Assistance with setting up computer equipment or training                    |     |    |          |
| Training to improve your use of smartphones or the computer                  |     |    |          |
| Training to use Zoom, WebEx, Google Chat, or other communications technology |     |    |          |

**41. Which of the following sources of Town information do you make use of? Check all that apply.**

- Town website
- Social media
- Town-wide meetings
- FAIR TV
- Printed communications in mailers or displayed in strategic locations
- Biweekly First Selectperson's Newsletter
- Email (e.g., Emergency Communications; Town Boards; Town Events; etc.)
- Fairfield Citizen weekly newspaper (printed)
- CT Post printed
- Online Newspapers (CT Post, Citizen, Patch, etc.)

**42. Would improvements in the delivery of Town information be helpful? Check all that apply.**

- More user-friendly automated information, including Town website
- More information in print form (e.g., in mailers at specified Town locations)
- Access to a wider range of community information
- Community information delivered in person (e.g., free or at cost newspapers)
- Community information available in different languages
- Expanded free access to computers
- One-stop shopping for community information
- No improvement needed

-END Survey-

## **APPENDIX 2: AGE FRIENDLY FAIRFIELD (AFF) COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS**

The comprehensive survey was coordinated by FSA and the Fairfield University Center for Social Impact.

- Inclusion in the town-wide bi-weekly newsletter
- Bigelow Senior Center monthly newsletters and weekly email blasts
- Social Services quarterly newsletter
- Announcements at Board of Selectmen and RTM meetings
- PTA communications
- Survey completion assistance to individuals at senior homes and libraries
- FSA email blast
- Press releases; print/electronic news
- Flyers, postings and announcements, including Fairfield farmers market and social media sites
- Social media including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

The survey - open to all Fairfield residents from the period May 1 to July 15, 2023 - consisted of 42 questions covering each of the eight AARP common domains. Fully completed forms were submitted by approximately 1,000 individuals. The survey was available in both English and Spanish. It was designed to facilitate multivariate analysis - by age, gender, neighborhood, education level, type of property, renter vs owner, etc. – in order to gain insights into the needs/preferences of all Fairfielders.

### **Demographics of survey respondents**

- The median age of survey participants who answered all questions is 68; 72.5% are female.
- 65.5% of participants are married, 11% divorced, 11% widowed, 6.5% never married, 3% not married/living with a partner and 1% separated.
- 93% of respondents are white, with other races constituting less than 3% of responses. About 5% preferred not to answer.
- 99% speak English as the primary language at home.
- 55% live alone; 25% live with a spouse or partner (only).
- 91% own their primary home, while 8% are renters. (Recent Census data indicate that about 18% of Fairfield households are renters.)
- 82% reside in a single-family home, 9% in a condo and 5% in a duplex/2 family home or multi-unit apartment. 40% reside in a colonial style home, 19% in a Cape Cod, 18% in other multi-story homes, 11% in ranch style homes, while 9% live in other multi-level buildings.
- Survey respondents were skewed toward those with a higher level of formal education than the Town Census results indicate. 44% of participants have a graduate or professional degree, while 8% have otherwise done post-graduate study; another 29% hold a 4-year college degree. While there was some education disparity between owners and renters, most renters nevertheless indicate having college degrees.

- There is higher than representative survey participation by longer term Town residents. 28% of participants have lived 45 years or more in the Town of Fairfield, 17% for 35-45 years, 23% for 25-35 years and 14% for 15-25 years, while 15% for 5-15 years. Only about 5% have resided here less than 5 years. Longer term tenure was reported in certain neighborhoods. Respondents who rent their homes reported they are newer in Town. Higher incomes were reported by other than longest term or newest term residents. Income level and education appear to be correlated.
- 51% of respondents are retired, 32% employed full time, 11.5% employed part-time, while 6% are unemployed/searching or otherwise not in the labor force.

The profile of survey respondents does not precisely align with the overall Town demographic despite team efforts to broadly promote the survey. For example, the profile is somewhat skewed toward older residents and those with higher education. While not invalidating survey conclusions, this points to the value of supplemental survey work and qualitative discussions with under-represented constituencies.

### **Analysis of survey responses**

#### **HOUSING/LIVING**

##### **Length of expected stay in Town**

- Home suitability and affordability are two major concerns reported by survey participants.
- Major factors for moving would be a different home size (43%), a less costly lifestyle (42%), and a home that enables independent living (42%). Respondents living in colonial or other multi-story home types appear to hold greater downsizing concerns than those living in single story structures.
- While cost of living and community affordability are significant factors, these were less frequently cited by those after age 70.
- Condo and apartment dwellers are slightly more apt to leave Fairfield.
- Another important factor is proximity to family and friends (24%).
- More access to transportation options was cited as a factor by 14%.
- Concern regarding access to health care (7%) appears to be a much less significant retention issue - perhaps due to our proximity to providers and hospitals.
- 20% of respondents indicate a strong attachment to Fairfield and would not consider leaving Town under any circumstances. 64% expected to stay in Town for at least 10 years.

##### **Necessary home modifications**

Large numbers indicated “None anticipated” to the question addressing needed home modifications.

- Bath modifications (29%) and first floor living (19%) were most often cited as the most needed home adjustments for seniors.
- Also mentioned were improved lighting (7%), chairlift (7%), easier access via ramp (6%), wider door (3%) and elevator (2%). That 55% indicated “none is anticipated” may be optimistic

##### **Importance of independent living**

An overwhelming majority (75%) noted the extreme importance to them of living independently in their homes as they age. Another 24% noted this as “very important” or “important”.

## HEALTH-RELATED STUDIES AND SERVICES

### Health factors that limit ability to remain in current home:

To the question of what family health factors could possibly (i.e., answered “yes” or “unsure”) limit an ability to remain in your home, 22% indicated “mobility limitations”, 16% chose “wheelchair-limited”, 11% indicated “sight disability”, 9% “hearing disability”, 10% dementia and 7% mental health.

For two types of disability issues tested - wheelchair and mobility - there appear to be greater concerns on the part of renters than owners. There was some variation in health results by neighborhood.

### Disability, handicap, chronic disease impact on participation:

9% indicated that a disability, handicap, or chronic disease keeps them from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities. 6% said that is a limiting factor for a spouse/partner, 2% for both, 3% for a child in the household, 3% for a parent, and 2% for other family members.

### Dementia:

About 10% indicated a need for some form of dementia support. These responses reflected expressed need for improvements in social interaction programs for dementia patients, health care services, and/or support programs for families.

### Household support:

A series of questions were directed to resident physical or mental health needs. 6% indicated a need for help for abuse, neglect, or mistreatment (physical, emotional, financial). Similar percentages were reported for forgetfulness/confusion and alcohol abuse.

### Caregiving:

- 10% share caregiving responsibilities, 6% experience financial problems associated with caregiving, 4% need caregiving information, and 4% need caregiving assistance.
- Caregivers indicated they have a high expectation that unpaid care will be required.
- 29% acknowledged a possible future need but have not yet reached out for assistance.

### Physical exercise and recreation:

- 43% engage in some form of daily physical exercise, another 42% several times a week, while 8% exercise weekly. 6% seldom exercise. The number of respondents reporting engagement in physical activity appears to be much higher than national results per a recent study cited by Fairfield U.
- Major Inhibitors to exercise are “inertia” (15%), other activity (14%), other health-related concerns (10%), and concern with health exposure at the facility (9%).
- Notable use is made of beaches (75%), parks or other walking areas (61%), golf courses (20%), tennis courts/pickleball courts (15%), the Town gym (12%), athletic fields (8%)
- Responses indicated recreational preferential differences between women and men.
- While limited use of the Bigelow Center seems to occur before age 70, a decline in the use of other facilities appears to begin at that age.
- The following were suggested as needing some improvement:
  - Separate pathways for bicyclists (56%),
  - Sidewalks (46%)
  - Maintenance of public restrooms (46%)
  - Park benches (25%)

### **Pursuit of important information:**

In pursuit of important health information 87% would consult family/friends, 80% their doctor or other health care professional, 66% the Bigelow Center, 64% Internet/phone book, 55% Fairfield Social Services, 44.7% AARP, 34% library, 33% houses of worship, 30% the Southwestern CT Agency on Aging and Independent Living (SWCAA), 27% other local nonprofit, 23% other Town departments.

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

- Continuing education is widely embraced. 40% participate in continuing education or self-improvement classes in libraries, 35% in online programs, 22% at the senior center, 20% in the Department of Parks and Recreation, 16.5% in their faith communities, and 15% in university/community colleges.
- 27% do not participate in any continuing education/self-improvement classes.

### **SOCIAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

#### **Social interaction:**

- 60% of participants interact with friends, family, or neighbors by phone, in person, email, or social media more than once a day, 17% about once per day and 18% several times a week.
- 6% indicated such social interaction less than once per week.

#### **Town-sponsored activities:**

An overwhelming majority feel that the following activities are importance to Fairfield:

- Activities that are affordable to all residents, including a variety of cultural activities, continuing education, social clubs, local schools involving older adults in events/activities and a range of volunteer opportunities.
- Conveniently located venues for entertainment
- Activities involving both young and older people
- Activities specifically geared to older adults
- Transportation to and from volunteer or social activities

#### **Volunteer participation:**

- As to whether the Town encourages volunteer participation, results were mixed: 28% said “Yes” while 10% said “No” and 24% were unsure.
- As to whether the Town provides such volunteers with needed support: 16% indicated “Yes”, 8% “No”, 21% said this could improve, while a majority (55%) are unsure.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Current usage:**

- 97% of respondents currently drive themselves around Town for shopping, medical visits, errands, and other activities, 54% walk, 21% have others drive them, 6% rideshare, 5% use taxis. Only 2% use Town-provided senior transportation service and 1% use Dial A Ride. Interestingly, 18% currently ride a bike.
- Only 3% indicated use of Area/State public transportation (although we are unsure if they reflected use on Metro North in their responses).

### **Future needs:**

- Respondents overwhelmingly viewed as highly important:
  - Reliable, accessible, affordable public transportation.
  - Transport for senior or disabled by households with a disability.
  - Transportation at extended hours. Several neighborhoods were particular in support of this.
  - A new form of transportation that would connect Town areas. Several neighborhoods were especially supportive of this.
- These services are especially important to renters, those with lower income and those with less personal interaction.

## **TOWN INFORMATION/COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Information sources:**

Respondents make use of the following to capture Town information:

- 84% Town website, 74% bi-weekly First Selectperson's newsletter (less use by renters and newer residents), 59% email, 55% online newspapers, 45% social media (less popular among older residents), 30% printed communications in mailers or strategic locations (more interest by older residents), 23% Fairfield Citizen print weekly newspaper, 19% CT Post print.
- Town-wide meetings (16%) and FAIR TV (14%) seem to receive limited viewing.
- Town emergency communications are widely followed (58%).

### **Frequency of online search for Town information, support programs, or community activities**

- There was limited reported internet use for these activities.
- Less than 1% indicated being online multiple times daily, 3%, about daily, 7% several times weekly, 17% about weekly, 69% occasionally. 4% do not make use of the internet.

### **Potential improvements**

Suggested improvements to the current delivery of Town information include:

- 43% More user-friendly automated information, including Town website.
- 37% One-stop shopping for community information.
- 35% Access to a wider range of community information.
- 20% More information in print format.
- 17% asked that more community information be delivered in person.
- 5% asked for expanded free access to computers.
- 28% felt that no improvement is needed.

## **TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT**

The need for assistance with accessing technology was indicated by the following survey results:

- 27% may need (i.e., "yes" or "unsure") training to improve use of smartphones or computer.
- 26% may need training to use Zoom, WebEx, Google Chat, or other communications technology.
- 22% may need assistance with setting up computer equipment or training.
- 16% may require access to affordable, high speed internet service.
- 10% may need access to computer equipment.
- A significant number of seniors reported an interest in (1) computer setup assistance, (2) smartphone support and (3) use of communications software.
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## APPENDIX 3: AGE-FRIENDLY FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY



**PLEASE NOTE: ALL RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS.**

Thank you for participating in this survey! Your feedback will help us better understand the needs and priorities of residents in Fairfield. The information gathered will guide improvements to health, mental health, and wellness services in our community.

### Section 1: General Health and Wellness

**1. How would you rate your overall health?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

**2. How often do you participate in physical activities (e.g., walking, fitness classes, yoga)?**

- Daily
- A few times per week
- A few times per month
- Rarely or never

**3. Do you feel there are enough affordable fitness programs in Fairfield for older adults?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**4. Do you receive regular health and mental health screenings? If yes, please select all that apply:**

- Blood Pressure
- Cholesterol
- Dementia
- Hearing
- Vision
- Depression and/or Mental Health
- Other (please specify); \_\_\_\_\_
- None

5. How satisfied are you with your access to the following services? (Select one answer per row)

| Service                 | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | Not Aware of This Service |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Medical care            |                |           |              |                   |                           |
| Fitness programs        |                |           |              |                   |                           |
| Transportation services |                |           |              |                   |                           |
| Social activities       |                |           |              |                   |                           |

## Section 2: Mental Health

6. How often do you experience feelings of stress, anxiety, or loneliness?

- Daily
- A few times per week
- Occasionally
- Rarely or never

7. Are you aware of mental health services available in Fairfield?

- Yes
- No

8. Have you ever used any mental health resources (e.g., counseling, support groups, or therapy)?

- Yes
- No

9. What barriers, if any, prevent you from accessing mental health services? (Select all that apply)

- I don't know what services are available
- I don't think I need mental health support
- Stigma around mental health
- Cost of services
- Lack of transportation
- Difficulty using technology (e.g., for telehealth)
- Other (please specify):

## Section 3: Caregiving and Aging in Place

10. Are you currently a caregiver for a family member or friend?

- Yes
- No

**11. If you are a caregiver, what types of support would be most helpful to you? (Select all that apply)**

- Respite care
- Support groups for caregivers
- Help with household tasks (such as snow shoveling, yard work, grocery delivery)
- Training on how to care for someone with cognitive or physical challenges
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**12. Do you feel Fairfield offers enough resources to help residents age in place (stay in their homes)?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

#### **Section 4: Access to Food and Transportation**

**13. Do you have regular access to healthy food options?**

- Yes
- No

**14. Which services do you currently use or would consider using for food access? (Select all that apply)**

- Meals on Wheels
- Grocery Delivery Services
- Farmers Markets
- Community Gardens

**15. How do you usually get to medical appointments or social activities?**

- Drive myself
- Rely on family or friends
- Use public transportation
- Use private or community transportation services (Bigelow Center senior bus, GBT, Uber, Lyft)

**16. Do you face any challenges with transportation? (Select all that apply)**

- I don't drive
- Lack of public transportation options
- Difficulty scheduling Rides
- Cost of transportation
- No
- Other (please specify):

## Section 5: Suggestions and Final Thoughts

17. What additional services or programs would improve your quality of life in Fairfield?

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18. How can Fairfield better support your physical, mental, or social well-being?

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19. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as an older adult in Fairfield?

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**Thank You!** We appreciate your time and valuable input. Your feedback will help us make Fairfield a more livable and supportive community for residents.

## **APPENDIX 4:**

### **COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

The Community Health and Wellness Survey, conducted online and at the Bigelow Senior Center, provided valuable insights into the health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life for Fairfield's residents and highlight several areas where we can improve services for our residents, particularly in mental health support, food access, transportation, and resources for aging in place.

#### **Key Survey Highlights:**

- **Health and Wellness:**
  - Many respondents shared concerns about their overall health and how active they feel.
  - There's a clear desire for more affordable fitness programs tailored to residents, helping them stay active and engaged in their community.
- **Mental Health Services:**
  - A number of participants weren't aware of the mental health services available to them or simply hadn't used them.
  - Cost and transportation challenges were commonly cited as barriers that prevent access to these essential services.
- **Health Screenings:**
  - While some respondents have regular access to health and mental health screenings, others indicated limited access, leaving gaps that impact their overall well-being.
- **Access to Healthy Food:**
  - Many shared concerns about being able to access healthy food, which can be a challenge in maintaining a balanced diet.
  - This feedback suggests that more efforts are needed to ensure everyone can easily access nutritious and affordable food.
- **Aging in Place:**
  - When asked about Fairfield's resources for aging in place, many expressed that there's room for improvement.
  - It's clear that ensuring residents have the support they need to remain in their homes is a priority.
- **Transportation Challenges:**
  - Many respondents mentioned facing difficulties with transportation, which affects their ability to attend medical appointments or participate in social activities.
  - Reliable transportation is key to helping residents stay connected and active within the community.
- **Opportunities for Enhancing Quality of Life:**
  - The survey highlighted a strong desire for additional programs and services to enhance the overall quality of life for residents.
  - Many respondents suggested that more resources are needed to support physical, mental, and social well-being.

## APPENDIX 5: INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

To shape Fairfield’s Age-Friendly Plan, we’ve drawn from a wide range of local and regional resources. These materials and resources reflect the town’s planning initiatives, community values, and shifting demographic trends, offering valuable insight into the evolving needs and opportunities for residents of all ages. If you’re reading this online, click the blue highlights for additional information.

### [Experience Fairfield](#)

Experience Fairfield is an informational webpage developed by Fairfield’s Community and Economic Development office that serves as a central guide to attractions, activities, and events in town. Designed for both residents and visitors, the site features curated lists of things to do, including local dining, shopping, arts and culture, outdoor recreation, and seasonal happenings. It also highlights Fairfield’s coastal charm, historical landmarks, and community spaces.

### [Fairfield Health Department](#)

The Fairfield Health Department, a vital resource for local health data and analysis, actively collects and maintains high-quality data to better understand community health needs and to support programs that enhance the well-being of residents, particularly older adults. Through its partnerships, the Health Department has access to several robust data sources. The resources provide evidence-based insights that guided planning, identified gaps, and helped to prioritize initiatives.

### [Affordable Housing Plan](#)

The Affordable Housing Committee was established by the Town of Fairfield in the late 1980s to look at ways to address the issues resulting from housing prices escalating far faster than household incomes. Since that time, the Committee has advocated for affordable housing and has worked with other organizations to increase the number of affordable housing units in Fairfield.

### [Parks and Rec Master Plan](#)

The Town of Fairfield Parks & Recreation Department has completed a comprehensive, town-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide the development and improvement of athletic and recreation facilities over the next decade. This effort focused on identifying current and future community needs by analyzing existing facilities, their conditions, limitations, and opportunities for expanded use. With input from residents, user groups, town agencies, and key stakeholders, the plan reflects the community’s goals and priorities.

### [The Plan of Conservation and Development \(POCD\)](#)

The Town of Fairfield’s Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), last adopted in 2016 and currently undergoing an update, serves as an important advisory document guiding the community’s physical development. It outlines long-term goals and strategies to preserve natural resources, enhance infrastructure, and support balanced growth. In addition to shaping land use and development policies, the POCD provides a framework for zoning regulation changes and capital investment decisions, helping ensure Fairfield evolves in a thoughtful and sustainable manner.

### [Complete Streets](#)

The Town of Fairfield’s Complete Streets Policy was prepared by the Town’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and endorsed by the Board of Selectmen. It outlines how the Town of Fairfield considers the needs of all of users when planning and developing transportation projects on town roads.

Complete Streets by definition are streets, highways, roadways, travel ways and corridors that are designed and operated to enable safe and comfortable access for all users. All users include pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit riders, and people of all abilities, cars, trucks buses and other modes of transportation. The policy is part of the Town’s efforts to create a safer transportation network for all.

### **Vision Zero**

The Town of Fairfield officially signed a pledge to join Vision Zero, a national initiative committed to eliminating all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries. Fairfield took a proactive step to make its streets safer for everyone—whether walking, biking, or driving. Vision Zero brings together transportation engineers, law enforcement, advocates, and policymakers to design and implement strategies that prioritize safety over speed and convenience. The initiative is rooted in the belief that no loss of life on our roadways is acceptable. Fairfield pledged to work closely with residents to promote safer driving behaviors, including encouraging drivers to slow down, stay alert to pedestrians and bicyclists, and respect the right-of-way of pedestrians, avoiding distracted driving, and the importance of never driving under the influence of substances.

### **Sustainable Fairfield Task Force**

Sustainable Fairfield provides support for Town practices and projects that can help Fairfield manage its growth to safeguard the health of its environment, ensure the reliability and economical use of its natural resources, and preserve the quality of life of its residents – today and for the future.

### **AdvanceCT Fairfield - 2025 Town Profile** (formerly the Connecticut Economic Resource Center)

The Connecticut Town Profiles are two-page reports of demographic and economic information for Connecticut’s municipalities, regions, and the state as a whole. They contain information about population, major employers, education, fiscal information, labor force, housing and quality of life.

### **Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging**

Funded through the Older Americans Act and state resources. SWCAA offers free or low-cost services to seniors and people with disabilities, including information and referral, care management, and support for family caregivers. The agency connects individuals to essential services such as home-delivered meals, in-home care, legal and health assistance, adult day care, transportation, and senior center programs.

### **Connecticut Healthy Aging Data Report**

The **2025 Connecticut Healthy Aging Data Report** is designed to help residents, agencies, providers and governments understand the older adults who live in their cities and towns – their ages, living arrangements, health status, strengths and vulnerabilities.

### **Latest Data about Fairfield from US Census**



