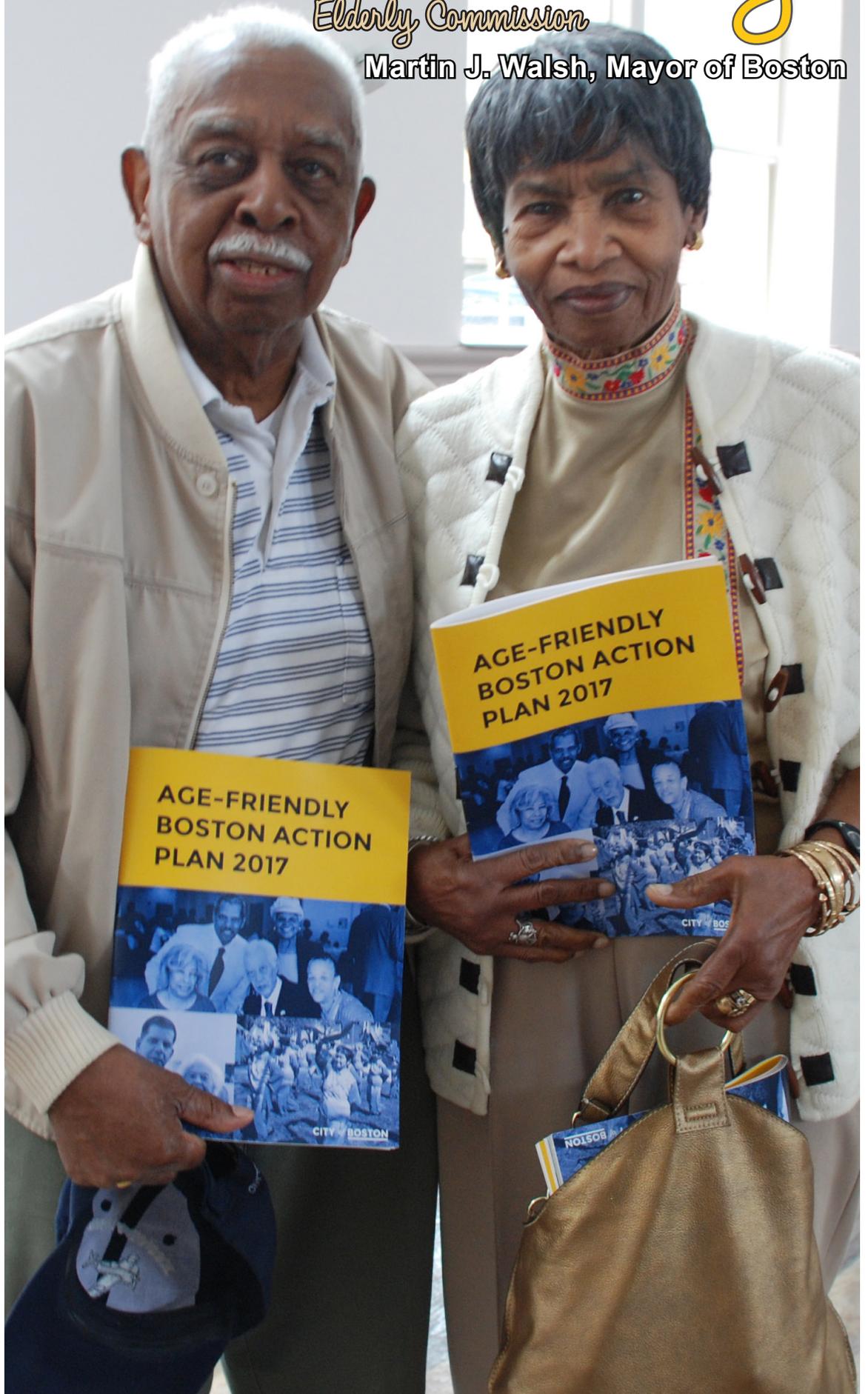


# Boston Seniority

Elderly Commission

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston



**FREE** June 2017  
Volume 41  
Issue 6

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Check out our website at [www.boston.gov/elderly](http://www.boston.gov/elderly)

Go on Facebook to find out what's going on at  
The Elderly Commission

[www.facebook.com/BostonElderlyCommission](http://www.facebook.com/BostonElderlyCommission)

Commission on Affairs of the Elderly

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## Boston Seniority

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A citywide celebration of urban gardening



BOSTON  
PARKS &  
RECREATION  
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

# MAYOR WALSH'S

# 2017 GARDEN CONTEST

sponsored by

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BOSTON  
Herald  
bostonherald.com

Mahoney's

### Important Dates

Entry Deadline – Wednesday, July 12 - 11:59 p.m.

Finalist Notification – Thursday, July 20

Judges Visit Gardens – Week of July 24

Awards Ceremony – Mid August

### Eligibility

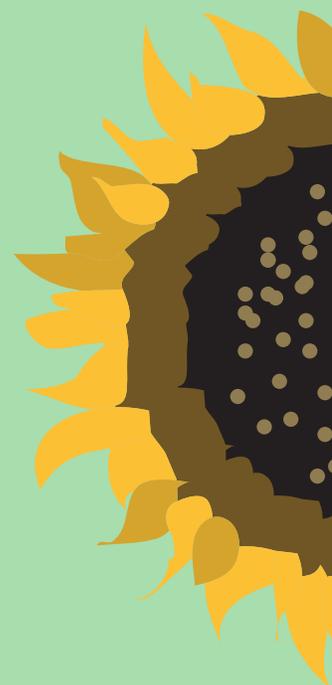
- Boston residents
- Club or Organization gardens
- Businesses
- Amateur gardeners' only

### General Information

Photographs or images submitted to the Boston Parks & Recreation Department become City of Boston property and may be used for press or marketing purposes. Gardeners may only enter one category per year. For more information, please call (617) 961-3047.

### Judging Criteria

- General Appeal
- Natural or Formal
- Neatness
- Plant Material
- Use of Color
- Variety/Quality
- Garden Hardware
- Furnishings/Art
- Sustainable Features and Methods



Please fill out the form completely and submit photos of the nominated garden

Please mail this form with photos to:

Mayor Walsh's Garden Contest  
Boston Parks & Recreation Department  
1010 Massachusetts Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02118

or apply online:

[boston.gov/mayors-garden-contest](http://boston.gov/mayors-garden-contest)

Categories (Check only **ONE** category)

- Porch, Balcony, or Container Garden
- Shade Garden
- Small Yard Garden (250 sq. ft. or less)
- Medium Yard Garden (250 to 500 sq. ft.)
- Large Yard Garden (larger than 500 sq. ft.)
- Community Garden (individual plot)
- Vegetable or Herb Garden
- Senior Garden Category (65+)
- Storefront, Organization, or Main Street District Garden

Gardener's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Garden Address if different than above:

\_\_\_\_\_



GREENOVATE  
BOSTON

## LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



It is my great honor to introduce the Age-Friendly Boston Action Plan: our city's blueprint to make Boston the best city and place in which to live. This plan is the result of deep neighborhood engagement and the help of community partners.

What does it mean to be an age-friendly city? It means a city that adapts its structures and services to be accessible and inclusive to residents of all ages and abilities. To understand what makes a true age-friendly city, we went to every corner of Boston asking older adults about the strengths and challenges they face on a daily basis. Many people said they cherish Boston's rich history, educational and cultural opportunities, and top-notch hospitals. They enjoy our world-class parks, proximity to the ocean, and the growing diversity of our neighborhoods.

Just as important, they also identified the challenges they encounter. This three-year plan will help address some of these challenges while building on our strengths.

We are dedicated to making Boston the best city in the world for older adults. That's why one of the first actions I took as Mayor was having Boston join the World Health Organization's network of age-friendly cities. We have a great respect for our older population. They are the ones who built our city, and we recognize their continued contributions.

Older adults are important to the future of our city. They represent the fastest growing sector of the population. We want people to continue to live and thrive here, and we

must make sure we can accommodate all of their needs. That's why we are committed to addressing all kinds of issues that affect seniors in our city: from housing, to health, to mobility, to utility rates. Right now is a very exciting time for the City of Boston. We are growing and expanding in many ways. The population is growing and becoming more diverse. Our economy is thriving and technology is advancing. These factors present us with limitless opportunities for our future. Above all, we share a responsibility to ensure these opportunities reach everyone in our city, across all ages and abilities.

We keep this goal in mind with every planning effort we embark on, whether it's how we grow affordable housing, how we make our streets safer and more accessible, how we make the arts available to everyone, or how we help enhance the quality of life in Boston for older adults.

Our Age-Friendly Boston Action Plan reflects multiple viewpoints, ages and cultures. We expect these goals to be accomplished within three years based on our efforts to identify realistic, concrete actions we feel confident we can accomplish. Once completed, with the help of our residents and community partners, we will measure our progress and start the process anew. We will never pause on our efforts to improve the quality of life for all of Boston's older adults.

Again, I want to say thank you to everyone who helped us with this effort, whether big or small. It is a great pleasure to be the mayor of a city where people step up and give their time and energy to make Boston the best it can be for all residents.

*Martin J. Walsh,  
Mayor, City of Boston*



## LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER



I am proud and excited to be launching Boston's Age-Friendly Action Plan. I am proud because this plan is truly grounded in community input. From the listening sessions, to the survey, to the workgroups, to our Action Planning Committee, Boston residents are at the heart of this Action Plan. And I am excited because, together, we crafted a plan that will have significant impact over the three-year implementation period and beyond.

This plan focuses on specific goals the City of Boston and its partners are committed to achieving within the next three years to continue to make our city a place where people can live and age well. It is also important to note the amazing breadth of age-friendly work that is happening in our community beyond this plan. Becoming age friendly is a process of continual improvement, and it requires engagement by all of us: our community organizations, residents, businesses, funders, and state and federal partners.

We could not have done this work without the collaboration of our leadership team. I would like to thank our partner and co-author, the UMass Boston Gerontology Institute's Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging. They

worked hand in hand with us. Their research and facilitation expertise, planning and analytical skills, and thoughtful approach kept us moving towards our goals. And the work of UMass Boston would not have been possible without funding from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. The Foundation's commitment and leadership around age-friendly communities is impressive, and we are especially thankful for their support of the Age-Friendly Boston Initiative. In 2014, we entered the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Network through their United States partner, AARP. I'd like to thank them for being a driving force for this plan, guiding us, sharing best practices from other communities, and supporting our progress to date.

Most of all, we are deeply grateful to the thousands of community residents who contributed their voices, their skills and their time to making this a meaningful plan. Without their leadership and participation, this project would not be possible.

On behalf of the Commission on Affairs of the Elderly, it is my honor to share this holistic roadmap toward achieving an even more age-friendly Boston.

*Emily K. Shea*

*Commissioner on Affairs of the Elderly, City of Boston*





# AGE-FRIENDLY BOSTON ACTION PLAN

The Age-Friendly Boston Action Plan is our city's blueprint to make Boston the best city to live and age in. In this special edition of ***Boston Seniority Magazine***, we are sharing key insights and action steps from our plan.

To see the complete plan, including steps the City has already taken to become age-friendly, visit: [www.boston.gov/age-friendly](http://www.boston.gov/age-friendly)

## DEDICATED TO:

Boston's older residents who remain vital to the vibrancy of our city.

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



## INTERSECTING INITIATIVES

The Age-Friendly Action Plan is part of comprehensive planning efforts on the part of the City and will be integrated into the other processes. These plans, like Vision Zero and Imagine Boston 2030, re-enforce and reflect each other.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY AND PROCESS

The age-friendly process has been a grassroots effort and a bottom-up approach. Our action items came directly out of the diverse voices from Boston's neighborhoods, ages 50 and over. Since this is a three-year Action Plan, we have included action items that we are confident can be completed within this time with interdepartmental support and community partners. We will continue to refine and build on other ideas generated through this process.

## DOMAINS AND TOPICS OF INTEREST

The Action Plan touches on topics of significant impact, such as dementia, economic insecurity, and social isolation. Action items fall under eight key domains, shown on *Page 9*.



# DOMAINS

---

**HOUSING**



**TRANSPORTATION**



**OUTDOOR SPACES  
AND BUILDINGS**



**COMMUNITY SUPPORT  
AND HEALTH SERVICES**



**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT  
AND EMPLOYMENT**



**SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**



**RESPECT AND  
SOCIAL INCLUSION**



**COMMUNICATION  
AND INFORMATION**



---

**WE HEARD:**

***“I’ve lived in Boston all my life...  
I love Boston and I have seen  
many changes!”***

**- BOSTON RESIDENT**

# HOUSING

## WE ENVISION...

...A city in which safe, appropriately designed housing options are available and affordable for older residents, including housing with services that help them stay at home.

## WE HEARD...

- Many older Boston residents need more housing they can afford.
- 55% of survey respondents say they do not believe there are sufficient and *affordable housing* options available in their neighborhoods.
- Older Boston residents want downsizing options, including housing with services.
- 63% of survey respondents say that

more housing with services needs to be developed for seniors in Boston.

- Boston seniors need help accessing affordable home maintenance services, so they can live safely in their homes.
- Nearly 90% of older adults report wanting to stay in their home for as long as possible.

## WE WILL...

### *Recommendation #3:\**

Improve education about housing and housing services available in Boston.

- **Action Item A:** We will educate older adult homeowners about how to access existing housing support services, such as the home repair and modification resources, information about selling a home, reverse mortgages and tax-relief programs.



- **Action Item B:** We will educate older adults who are renters about the resources available to assist with remaining housed or finding appropriate housing, as well as their rights as tenants.
- **Action Item C:** We will conduct an inventory of existing programs and services that help older adults stay in their homes and compile them into an easy-to-access, centralized location.

**Recommendation #4:**

Support older Boston homeowners through tax relief programs.

- **Action Item A:** We will create a public information campaign similar to the Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign, to increase the use of the *Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit*.
- **Action Item B:** We will increase awareness of the programs and exemptions available to help senior homeowners reduce property taxes by creating and delivering a comprehensive training for older adults. We will host training opportunities through out the neighborhoods of Boston targeting areas with high percentages of senior home owners. We will make sure that information about these programs is easily accessible on the City website and also in promotional materials.
- **Action Item C:** We will pursue legislation that will increase the income and net worth limits for the 41C elderly exemption program to

reflect the impact of inflation. The limits have not been adjusted since 2004. Raising the limits will enable more seniors with limited incomes to participate in the program.

- **Action Item D:** We will seek to increase the work-off credit maximum for the City's Senior Property Tax Work Off Program from \$1000 to \$1500 for FY 2019.

**Recommendation #5:**

Support housing for Boston's most at-risk seniors.

- **Action Item A:** As part of the Boston Homeless Elder Prevention Task Force (HELP), we will work with partner organizations to streamline and coordinate the system of assistance for older adults needing housing or looking to maintain housing.
- **Action Item B:** We will house all chronically homeless elders over 50 with long-term supportive services.
- **Action Item C:** We will aggressively pursue additional policies and tools to prevent the displacement of low and moderate-income seniors, ensuring that they can continue to live in the communities and neighborhoods they love.
- **Action Item D:** We will explore potential solutions to assist senior homeowners with severely distressed properties.

\*[For Recommendations 1&2, see [www.boston.gov/age-friendly](http://www.boston.gov/age-friendly)]

# TRANSPORTATION

## WE ENVISION...

...A city in which older residents can safely travel where they want and need to go.

## WE HEARD...

- Public transportation is an asset, but some older adults struggle with access.
- 22% of survey respondents are dissatisfied with the affordability of public transportation.
- Older residents value Boston's walkability, but walking conditions could be improved.
- 30% of survey respondents are

dissatisfied with the availability of maintained sidewalks.

- Older residents want more options for travel, and need more information about options that already exist.

Survey results suggest a lack of knowledge about transportation resources. For example, one-third to one-half of respondents gave “neutral” responses to questions about van rides or other senior transportation options and volunteer driver programs, respectively.

## WE WILL...

### *Recommendation #1:*

Optimize publicly-funded transportation options for older adults in Boston.



- **Action Item A:** We will improve and expand the Elderly Commission’s partnership with the MBTA to better serve older adults in Boston.
- **Action Item B:** We will advocate to maintain the MBTA/RIDE coverage area and affordability.
- **Action Item C:** We will modernize and increase the efficiency of the senior shuttle including the purchase of additional new, accessible, energy-efficient vans. We will explore potential service changes including hours and days of operation and expanding types of rides.
- **Action Item B:** We will publicize the taxi coupon program as a means of promoting travel options for older adults.
- **Action Item C:** We will partner with the MBTA to expand access to the Senior CharlieCard.

**Recommendation #4:** Improve pedestrian safety in partnership with Vision Zero.

**Recommendation #2:**

Optimize private transportation options for older adults.

- **Action Item A:** We will assess current training capacity of taxi and ride share companies, for serving people with disabilities or mobility limitations. We will explore the possibility of creating an “age-friendly” driver certification program.

**Recommendation #3:**

Improve older adults’ knowledge of and access to transportation options.

- **Action Item A:** We will educate older adults about ways to access public and private transportation options, including ways to access discounted rates and passes as well as travel training opportunities.

- **Action Item A:** We will support strategies of Go Boston: 2030 and Vision Zero to regulate new city speed limits and neighborhood “Slow Zones.”
- **Action Item B:** We will employ a comprehensive, age-friendly strategy when re-designing public spaces near high concentrations of older adults. This includes addressing sidewalks, crosswalks, signal timing, pedestrian ramps, places to rest, and shade.
- **Action Item C:** We will expand the use of audible crosswalk signals and longer walk times.
- **Action Item D:** Working in accordance with the City’s Sidewalk Maintenance Plan, we will explore age-friendly strategies for repairing sidewalks, including using materials and surfaces that are more easily managed by pedestrians, especially those with mobility challenges, and those who use wheelchairs or walkers.

# ☀️ OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

## WE ENVISION...

...A Boston in which older adults are able to safely and easily access the natural and built environment, including public buildings, parks and green space.

## WE HEARD....

- Boston's older adults value greenspace.
- 97% of Bostonians live within a 10 minute walk of a park and people said parks were a real asset to life.
- Many older Boston residents want better accessibility features in public areas.
- 31% of survey respondents are dissatisfied with the availability of benches in public areas and along walkways.
- Some seniors, especially those with disabilities, feel unsafe going to parks.
- 20% of survey respondents do not feel safe going to public parks.
- Many older adults want better access to public restrooms.
- 50% of survey respondents do not think that public restrooms are available in convenient locations.



## WE WILL...

### **Recommendation #1:**

Ensure the consideration of older adults' needs and opinions in park and public space design.

- **Action Item A:** We will develop a set of recommendations for age-friendly and dementia-friendly park features to use as a guideline when designing City-owned parks and green spaces.
- **Action Item B:** We will create a system that promotes older adult participation in all park planning processes.

### **Recommendation #2:**

Educate older adults about how they can help improve the safety of Boston's outdoor spaces.

- **Action Item A:** We will promote the use of *Boston 311* to encourage residents to report problems or concerns related to outdoor spaces.
- **Action Item B:** We will encourage older adults to get involved with neighborhood associations or friends groups to address safety concerns, promoting the idea of "community policing," and utilizing Boston Police Department communication tools such as "*Text a Tip.*"

### **Recommendation #3:**

Improve awareness of currently available public restrooms.

- **Action Item A:** We will identify the location of current public restrooms in *Boston Main Streets* and other business areas and determine the best ways to communicate this information to the public.

### **Recommendation #4:**

Mitigate effects of extreme heat on vulnerable populations, especially older adults living alone.

- **Action Item A:** We will develop an action plan to expand Boston's tree canopy and other types of green infrastructure to provide shade and means of other cooling. It will focus on neighborhoods with the greatest need, including those with high numbers of older adults.

## KEYWORDS:

**BOSTON 311:** is the telephone number that connects residents with Constituent Service Center Representatives who are ready to help resolve non-emergency questions and concerns.

**TEXT A TIP: ANYTIME,** anywhere, individuals can simply text the word "TIP" to CRIME (27463) and report a crime anonymously to Boston Police Department's Crime Stoppers unit.

**BOSTON MAIN STREETS:** Each neighborhood Main Streets organization is a small, independent non-profit responsible for beautifying and strengthening their local business districts.

# THE AGE-FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN LAUNCH EVENT

*On May 23, we launched the City's Age-Friendly Action Plan at the Thelma Burns Building.*



*“We’re focused on making Boston as friendly and inclusive as possible to residents aging in our City.”*

*–Mayor Martin J. Walsh*





# BY THE NUMBERS



**30 LISTENING SESSIONS**



**4,000 OLDER ADULTS VOICES REPRESENTED IN THE PLAN**



**3,600 SURVEY RESPONDENTS**



**70 ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED**



**6 TRANSLATED LANGUAGES**

# + COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

## WE ENVISION...

...A Boston that offers health care and support services in accessible locations, including in home, with staff that are culturally and linguistically matched to the older resident's needs.

...A Boston that recognizes the specific needs of Boston residents living with dementia, their family members and their caregivers, and creates supportive communities that promote quality of life within these populations.

## WE HEARD...

- Older adults want better access to good quality food they can afford.
- One-quarter of survey respondents are dissatisfied with the availability of affordable, quality food.
- Education is needed about available services, especially among those who are isolated.
- The most often mentioned recommendation related to community supports and health services was further investment in education about options for senior care.
- Residents with dementia and other

long-term conditions need better access to services and supports.

- One out of four survey respondents who have a disabling condition are dissatisfied with their access to physical and mental health services.

## WE WILL...

### *Recommendation #1:*

Promote outreach to support services and access to benefits, and focus on reaching seniors who are isolated.

- **Action Item A:** We will encourage the Commission's Title III funded organizations to adopt new outreach and marketing approaches to better reach Boston older adults. New approaches may include: partnering with local libraries or community centers to market programs and services, posting notices in grocery stores, sending information out with staff members who visit older adults' homes, or using social media or robo-calls to reach older adults and their families.



- **Action Item B:** We will build relationships with faith based organizations to specifically target and provide support to socially isolated elders at risk.
- **Action Item C:** We will develop a working group to identify strategies to reach isolated seniors with the goal of preventing crises, creating more positive outcomes.
- **Action Item D:** We will place additional emphasis on assisting older adults to access public benefits including increasing benefits outreach and developing a comprehensive system for tracking benefits enrollment and retention.
- **Action Item E:** We will identify areas of Boston with the highest concentrations of older adult residents and go door to door to ensure that they are connected to information and resources.
- **Action Item F:** We will continue to identify and pursue opportunities to raise awareness about Alzheimer's Disease information and resources.

***Recommendation #2:***

Ensure that older adults have access to high quality, affordable food.

- **Action Item A:** We will identify areas with limited food resources and utilize the City's Senior Shuttle to transport seniors to grocery stores

with affordable, healthy food.

- **Action Item B:** We will educate older adults about options for improving their access to food, including but not limited to, availability of delivery service options, pop up mobile markets, food benefits like SNAP and Bounty Bucks, and congregate and home delivered meals programs.
- **Action Item C:** We will explore options for increasing access to nutrient dense foods and goods by reducing mobility and transportation barriers.

***Recommendation #3:*** Enhance older adults' safety through education.

- **Action Item A:** We will convene a group to explore current processes for intervention for people with dementia who have wandering behaviors and identify ways to improve current protocols and communication to improve risk management.
- **Action Item B:** We will continue to collaborate with community partners who are experts on fraud, elder abuse and financial exploitation to raise awareness warning signs and avenues for assistance. We will consider multiple methods, including the City's communication channels, local television and community newspapers, to spotlight these resources.

# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

## WE ENVISION...

...A Boston in which older adults have access to work opportunities as well as to rewarding volunteer opportunities.

...A Boston where older residents are involved with making decisions in both public and private sectors and are regularly consulted by elected officials.

## WE HEARD...

- Older Boston residents want more work opportunities.
- Half of survey respondents disagree that there are adequate employment opportunities available to older adults in Boston.

- Older Boston residents need information about available volunteer opportunities that are close to where they live and fully utilize their skills and talents.
- Residents' top recommendation for improving civic participation and employment was to improve the dissemination of information about available opportunities.
- Many older residents do not feel that their perspectives are heard by local policy makers or leaders.
- 36% of survey respondents are dissatisfied with the extent to which local policymakers take into account the interest and concerns of older residents.



## **WE WILL...**

### ***Recommendation #1:***

Communicate the value of older workers.

- **Action Item A:** We will develop and implement a strategy for a public awareness campaign promoting the value of older workers and combating the stereotypes about aging.
- **Action Item B:** We will promote the value of older workers to Boston area businesses.

### ***Recommendation #2:***

Better connect older adults to employment opportunities and resources.

- **Action Item A:** We will work to identify the barriers to employment for older adults in the city.
- **Action Item B:** We will create a comprehensive list of existing opportunities for training and skill development and connect residents with the information.
- **Action Item C:** We will consider ways to expand the most successful existing training programs.

### ***Recommendation #3:***

Enhance and promote volunteer opportunities for older adults.

- **Action Item A:** We will explore ways

for the City to recognize volunteers, such as developing a “Volunteer of the Year” award.

- **Action Item B:** We will identify City offices and departments that could benefit from additional volunteers, and publicize these opportunities to older adults who may be interested.
- **Action Item C:** We will establish the Emerging Boston portal, a web-based tool that will connect residents to volunteer opportunities within the City and link to other Boston-based volunteer organizations.

### ***Recommendation #4:***

Ensure the perspectives and needs of older adults are included in all City planning and policies.

- **Action Item A:** We will explore strategies for older adults to be more deeply involved in policy making and advocacy. We will work in collaboration with community partners and older adults for effective solutions.
- **Action Item B:** We will incorporate the voice of Boston’s older residents by ensuring that an older resident or representative of the Elderly Commission serve on relevant internal working groups or task forces.

# ■ SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

## WE ENVISION...

...A Boston with an array of affordable and accessible social and recreational opportunities for older adults in conveniently located places.

## WE HEARD...

- Many older Boston residents want more opportunities for recreation.
- More than 20% of all survey respondents are dissatisfied with the availability of recreational opportunities.
- Older Boston residents want more things to do in their own neighborhoods.
- More than 25% of survey respondents age 50-69 are dissatisfied with opportunities for informal sharing and interaction in their neighborhoods.

## WE WILL...

### *Recommendation 1:*

Create and promote a network of social engagement opportunities for older adults.

- **Action Item A:** We will map existing opportunities for social engagement for older adults in Boston.
- **Action Item B:** We will identify gaps in programming by looking at current opportunities by location, offering

type, targeted population(s), and accessibility.

- **Action Item C:** We will enhance opportunities for social engagement, both through the City and by partnering with organizations, leveraging existing resources and public spaces as well as working to fill the identified programming gaps.
- **Action Item D:** We will make information about the opportunities for social engagement accessible to Boston's older adults.

***“We love living in the city and appreciate your efforts to amplify the needs of seniors, finding ways for us to be more active and involved in city life and civic engagement opportunities.”***

**- BOSTON RESIDENT**



# ♥ RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

## WE ENVISION...

...A city where older adults and their needs are valued and heard by both the public and private sectors.

## WE HEARD...

- Ageism and respect for older adults is a concern in Boston.
- 40% of economically-insecure survey respondents do not believe older residents are treated respectfully.
- Older Boston residents have concerns about fraud and abuse.
- Older adults identified fraud and exploitation concerns related to aging in the city.

## WE WILL...

### **Recommendation #1:**

Support age-friendly customer service.

- **Action Item A:** We will explore the creation of an “*Age-Friendly/Dementia-Friendly Business Designation*” in Main Streets districts. We will study best practices from programs from other initiatives as well as past experience with “Elder-Friendly Business Districts.”
- **Action Item B:** We will develop front-facing training for City staff that will educate employees on the unique needs of older adults, including those

with dementia, taking into account cultural and language diversity. The training will help empower City employees in their interactions with older adults, and help older adults receive improved service at City Hall.

### **Recommendation #2:**

Address *ageism* through public education.

- **Action Item A:** Using the Frameworks Institute’s Gaining Momentum Communication Toolkit, we will develop a campaign targeting ageism and seek funding and partners to implement it.
- **Action Item B:** We will create recognition awards for older adults who have contributed to the community and publicize their contributions through Seniority Magazine and other avenues.

### **Recommendation #3:**

Promote inclusive programs and services for older adults.

- **Action Item A:** We will host trainings for Boston area public and private housing staff targeting managers, resident service coordinators, and other on-site staff, on managing dementia-related behaviors.
- **Action Item B:** We will encourage and facilitate administration of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) awareness training for senior housing providers in Boston.

**WE HEARD:**

***“I recommend a city-wide campaign for greater sensitivity of seniors and people with disabilities in the city.”***

**- BOSTON RESIDENT**

---

***“I would like to see day programs and drop in activities, especially for seniors with memory impairment with services to support those who care for them.”***

**- BOSTON RESIDENT**

---

***“I feel we need to reach out to LGBT seniors and make spaces for them.”***

**- BOSTON RESIDENT**

# COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

## WE ENVISION...

...A city in which an effective communication system reaches and engages community members of all ages, including older adults.

## WE HEARD...

- Boston older adults do not feel adequately informed.
- 30% of survey respondents are dissatisfied with how activities and events are communicated to older residents.
- Older adults depend on a wide range of media.
- Over half of survey respondents prefer newspapers and TV as sources of information about programs, activities

and services in their community. Nearly 40% prefer the internet.

## WE WILL...

### ***Recommendation #1:***

Develop a Senior Communication Plan.

- **Action Item A:** We will develop a strategic Senior Communications Plan that will serve as a roadmap for communications across all channels, including traditional and new media. This plan will pay particular attention to strengthening audience engagement and recognizing and reflecting Boston's diversity of languages, cultures, neighborhoods, and interests.

***Recommendation #2:*** Review and determine communications best practices to better reach our audience.



- **Action Item A:** We will conduct and analyze marketing research about the communications preferences of older adults. This will include reviewing national and local trends, as well as understanding best communication practices that other cities employ when informing older residents about resources, services, and activities. Within this review, we will identify strategies that allow us to reach diverse populations. We will honor what is already happening.
  - **Action Item B:** With the help of the Mayor’s Press Team and the Department of Innovation and Technology, we will investigate current and potential uses of communication methods and new technology, taking into account a wide range of technological abilities.
  - **Action Item C:** We will review all current external communication methods that exist at the Commission, to understand our own baseline metrics.
  - **Action Item D:** As part of the Communications strategy, we will identify the most popular sources for news and information and use this knowledge to deepen outreach to neighborhood-based newspapers, cable television, web-based news outlets, church newsletters and bulletins.
- Recommendation #3:** Enhance existing communication channels, using the determined best practices and marketing research, and leveraging community partners to expand reach.
- **Action Item A:** We will develop even more holistic, effective ways to share important information about programs, services and events with older adults, leveraging our community partners.
  - **Action Item B:** We will develop a marketing piece that lists the most important phone numbers for older residents. This piece of collateral will also carry over to our digital properties on the Boston.gov website and social media.
  - **Action Item C:** We will build upon our existing communications channels, like social media, Boston Seniority Magazine and the *Seniors Count TV* show, with an emphasis on creating consistent, engaging content.
  - **Action Item D:** We will leverage city data to advance equity. The City will pursue a study on 311 services and use the data to serve residents by increasing resident access and awareness, and identifying gaps in service. Working with the City’s Language Access Coordinator, 311 data will be centralized with responses and translated into multiple languages to improve accessibility.

# MOVING FORWARD...

With our community partners, the Age-Friendly Boston Initiative will continue to make progress towards a diverse, vibrant community which empowers all individuals to age well and have full lives in the city. We will work towards transforming concepts around aging. For example, instead of just thinking about how we can serve older adults, we are also thinking about how older adults serve the larger Boston community with their wisdom and experience.

As one of the members of a local community group, “60+ Veterans,” remarked, “We don’t get old, we get valuable.” Just like race, religion, and culture—age diversity strengthens community bonds by deepening understanding across the lifespan and universally connecting us to one another as human beings.

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*Together, we have continued the aging conversation in Boston. Now, it is time for action.*

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The Senior Shuttle has multiple wheelchair accessible shuttles offering free door-to-door transportation to Boston residents age 60 or over.

*Rides are offered to non-emergency medical appointments. We kindly request advanced notification of appointments.*

To schedule a ride, call 617-635-3000  
Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4 pm

## **SNAP: Food Assistance**

### **Are you eligible?**

If you are single and make less than \$2,000 a month or if you are married and make less than \$2,700 a month then Yes!

For more information or to complete an application, call 617-635-4366.

## **Discounted Taxi Coupons**

at 1/2 Price  
- Buy 2 books each month-



Call 617-635-4366 to find a location near you.

## **Boston Fire Department**

### **Free Elderly Fire Safety Program**

Photo Electric Smoke Alarm and Carbon Monoxide Detector available for owner-occupied, single-family houses and condos

### **Restrictions Apply**

Please call the Fire Safety Program at 617-343-2022 or contact Shannon Murphy at 617-635-4366.

You can also view our website online at [www.cityofboston.gov/fire](http://www.cityofboston.gov/fire) or visit the Boston Fire Department on Facebook.

ARE YOU FRIENDLY?  
ARE YOU 60+?  
DO YOU HAVE A FEW SPARE HOURS EACH WEEK?

*We are looking for a few good  
volunteers to greet guests at  
Boston City Hall!*

Email us  
[CITYHALLGREETER@BOSTON.GOV](mailto:CITYHALLGREETER@BOSTON.GOV)



# The Longest Day: June 21<sup>st</sup>

On June 21, the longest day of the year, thousands of people from around the world will do what they love to raise funds and awareness in honor of those facing Alzheimer's.

The Longest Day is all about love. Love for all those affected by Alzheimer's disease. On the summer solstice, team up with the Alzheimer's Association and select any activity you love — or an activity loved by those affected — to help end Alzheimer's.

The Boston Alzheimer's Initiative and the Mass/NH chapter of the Alzheimer's Association will be hosting a table on the 3rd floor of City Hall on June 21st with information and resources for people worried about their memory, people with Alzheimer's and their families and caregivers.

## What will you do?

Visit [www.thelongestday.alz.org](http://www.thelongestday.alz.org) for ideas.



alzheimer's  association®

