



Aging in Bowdoinham: Two Years Later

An update to the 2012 needs assessment, *Aging in Bowdoinham*, using *Measuring the Age-friendliness of Cities: A Guide to Using Core Indicators* by the World Health Organization Centre for Health Development



Prepared with:
Bowdoinham's Advisory
Committee on Aging

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Executive Summary

This report describes the update of the 2012 report, *Aging in Bowdoinham*, that was undertaken between December, 2014 and March, 2015. The Advisory Committee on Aging (COA) was asked to pilot the World Health Organization's (WHO) Age Friendly Communities Indicator Guide for Bowdoinham. Bowdoinham, Maine is one of 15 communities from around the world asked to pilot the WHO guide, including Washington, DC; Hong Kong, China ; La Plata, Argentina; Nairobi, Kenya; New Delhi, India; Shanghai/Jing'an, China; Tehran, Iran; Tuymazy, Russia; and Udine, Italy. Bowdoinham is the smallest and most rural community included in the study. In addition to providing a rural perspective on the guide developed by WHO, the pilot provided COA with the opportunity to update its needs assessment, to investigate the needs, interests, preferences, and opinions of the Town's older residents about the opportunities and challenges of aging in Bowdoinham.

During the pilot of the WHO guide, a multidimensional image of the strengths and weaknesses of Bowdoinham as a place for residents to age and thrive was developed that can be used to plan and implement services for Bowdoinham's older residents. Demographic characteristics of the older population in Bowdoinham was compiled based on data from the US Census Bureau. Two focus groups were conducted to gain input from older residents about the implications of the aging population for the Town of Bowdoinham as a whole and for the programming sponsored by the Advisory Committee on Aging. The content of this report is intended to inform the future work of the Advisory Committee on Aging, the departments within the Town of Bowdoinham that have a stake in the aging of population, organizations that provide services to older people in Bowdoinham, and community members.

Summary of Results

Bowdoinham is home to 2,889 residents, nearly half of whom are age 45 or older. Bowdoinham has experienced substantial growth within its older population, with the number of persons age 60 and above increasing by 61.2% between 2000 and 2010, compared to a growth of 10.6% for the Town as a whole. The aging of Bowdoinham is being driven by a combination of aging in place, in-migration to Bowdoinham as a retirement destination, and out-migration of younger adults and their families. Projections suggest that growth in the number and share of older residents in Bowdoinham will continue; by 2030, it is expected that adults age 60 and older will include nearly half of Bowdoinham's residents.

One in three residents over age 60 in Bowdoinham live alone, and the majority live in homes that they own. Although many older households in Bowdoinham are economically secure, about 20%

report incomes under \$25,000 annually. Even for individuals who no longer are paying off a mortgage, expenses associated with property taxes, insurance, and routine upkeep may exceed their available resources. For individuals who develop functional impairments and disabilities, home modification, such as bathroom grab bars, railings on stairs, adequate lighting, and/or a first floor bathroom, may be necessary for a resident to remain living safely in his or her home. Modifications represent an additional housing expense that may be difficult for residents living below economic security.

Bowdoinham has been recognized by the World Health Organization as an age-friendly community. The WHO Guide provided guidance for assessing the age friendliness of Bowdoinham and identifying areas for change that can be addressed by COA and the Town of Bowdoinham in the upcoming years. To frame Bowdoinham's assessment process, the WHO Age Friendly Communities Indicator Guide identified indicators of the eight aspects of communities that influence the health and quality-of-life of older residents. The eight age-friendly domains identified by WHO and measured in the guide are: accessibility of outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation, communication and information, and community support and health services.

An age-friendly community has infrastructure to support the needs of residents who are living with limited mobility. The Town of Bowdoinham has invested in an extensive sidewalk systems that covers about 90% of the village area where shops and businesses are located. About 70% of the buildings owned by the Town and 50% of privately owned buildings that are open to the public (e.g. the Town Landing, Bowdoinham Country Store) are accessible for a person who uses a wheelchair or walker for mobility. For residents who are no longer capable of driving or who no longer chose to drive, there are no publicly available transportation programs to take residents to medical appointments, errands, recreational opportunities, or to socialize with friends or neighbors. Residents depend on friends, neighbors and relatives to meet their need for transportation. While there is room for improvement in accessibility and transportation, the Town and COA continues to work to increase accessibility by people of all ages and abilities.

An age-friendly community has ample opportunities for civic engagement and volunteering and for older residents to participate in recreation and socio-cultural activities. About 70% of active volunteers in the Bowdoinham-based organizations (e.g. Bowdoinham Historical Society, Friends of the Library, Merrymeeting Arts Center) have reached the age of 60. Older residents serve on the many town committees and are actively engaged in planning for community-side events, such as Celebrate Bowdoinham, the Library Plant Sale, and the Smelt Festival and 81.6% of eligible voters over the age of

60 participated in the most recent election. Older residents of Bowdoinham are actively engaged in opportunities for physical activity. About 17.8% of older residents have participated in one of the COA sponsored exercise programs (e.g. Exercise Plus, tai chi, kayaking, geo-caching, mushroom walks, cross-country skiing) or another organized exercise opportunity. More than 40% of people over the age of 60 participated in a socio-cultural opportunity sponsored by COA or offered by another organization in the community.

The Advisory Committee on Aging made an effort to approach the update of the 2012 needs assessment without pre-conceived ideas about what Bowdoinham's older residents thought were the strengths and weaknesses of the community for aging in place. Data about the core indicators of a community's age friendliness provided a broad overview of aging in Bowdoinham. COA wanted to hear directly from older residents what they identified as key features of aging in the community by learning what residents identified as the benefits of aging in Bowdoinham and what they thought the town should do to increase its age friendliness. Members of the focus group clearly shared their desires to grow older in Bowdoinham. Participants were proud of Bowdoinham's reputation as a good place to live and a place that welcomes people who move into town from other places.

Among the strengths of Bowdoinham identified by residents in the focus group were:

1. A positive attitude toward older people and their contributions to Bowdoinham.
2. The community tradition of neighbor-helping-neighbor.
3. Opportunities to engage in meaningful volunteer work.
4. Activity and Resource list, produced by COA, that keeps residents aware of activities in town and nearby.
5. COA-sponsored social and recreational opportunities that give residents a chance to meet neighbors who share their interests.

Items 4 and 5 above were instigated by COA in response to focus groups held in 2012 as part of the Comprehensive Planning Process for the town. COA has been distributing monthly activity and resource lists, offering recreational opportunities for different interests and fitness levels and operating the Shipmates Senior Club, open three hours each Thursday in space donated by the Second Baptist Church. These efforts have been met with enthusiasm.

The primary barriers to aging in the community identified were:

1. Accessibility to town services, public spaces, and other buildings open to the public by residents with mobility limitations that require use of a walker or wheelchair.
2. Care Partner support.

3. Opportunities for alternative transportation to meet the needs of residents who are no longer able to drive or who chose not to drive.
4. Availability of housing options for residents who wanted to age in the community, even when they were no longer able to maintain their current homes.
5. Finding someone to help with chores in the home and with basic home maintenance.

These are challenging barriers. Addressing them will require significant time and resources from COA, Bowdoinham town government, and residents of all ages. All across the United States, cities and towns are waking up to the need to create age friendly communities that will benefit residents of all ages. Bowdoinham's culture of self-help will inspire us. Bowdoinham residents banded together to build a new elementary school with volunteer labor and materials paid for by chicken barbeques We did that for our children sixty years ago. In the years to come, we will find a way to keep our older residents actively engaged in the community, participating in the recreational and social opportunities that they enjoy; and thriving in the home of their choice. The Advisory Committee on Aging looks forward to continuing to work with the Select board and with town residents to make Bowdoinham the age friendliest town in Maine!

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The Advisory Committee on Aging would like to thank the 18 Bowdoinham residents who shared their experiences and opinions about aging in Bowdoinham at the community focus group. Their insights will be key to planning the programs, activities and events COA will sponsor in the upcoming years. COA appreciates the cooperation of Town officials who shared their insight and expertise throughout the data collection phase of the study. William Post, Town Manager; Nicole Briand, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development, Darren Carey, Code Enforcement Officer; Lisa West, Recreation Department Director; and Pam Ross, Town Clerk, provided invaluable data and insight for the study. COA also thanks Rodney Chute, Deacon, Bowdoinham Second Baptist Church; Pastor Christina Couch, Church of the Nazarene; Kate Cutko, Library Director; Stephanie Dustin, Instructor, Cathance Fitness Center; Jim McGee, President, Bowdoinham Snowbirds Club; Lealeah Parker, Manager, Merrymeeting Arts Center; Joanne Savoie, Bowdoinham Food Pantry; Elizabeth Steen, Treasurer Bowdoinham Historical Society; and Suzie Uhle, President of the Ladies Auxiliary; each of whom graciously agreed to provide valuable information for the study. This update to the 2012 report, *Aging in Bowdoinham*, could not have been completed without the cooperation and efforts of all those mentioned above.

BOWDOINHAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGING

George Christopher, Chair
Theresa Turgeon, Vice-Chair
Gracia Woodward, Secretary
Robert Curtis, Member
Martha Cushing, Member
Linda Jariz, Member
Kathy Pszczolkowski, Member

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Bowdoinham

Bowdoinham, Maine, is home to approximately 2,889 residents (1) spread across a 39.2 square mile area with eight miles bordering on Merrymeeting Bay and the Cathance River. The median age is 43.7 (US Census, 2010); 574 (19.8%) residents have reached age 60 or more.

The majority of the population is white, non-Hispanic (94.4%) and well educated, with 42% of residents between the ages of 25-64 and 37.4% of residents aged 60 and over participating in some education beyond high school (2). Despite the lack of racial diversity, Bowdoinham prides itself on the occupational diversity of its residents—from blue collar workers to managers and professionals, from farmers to artists and craftspeople. Bowdoinham is home to many special interest groups that satisfy a diversity of interests —from the Bowdoinham Historical Society to the Snowbirds, a snowmobile club.



Bowdoinham includes residents who have lived a lifetime in Bowdoinham and residents who have moved from other places to enjoy the rural lifestyle. The 24



operating farms in the community are a source of pride. About 18.2% of Bowdoinham’s land area is used for farming and almost 56% of the land is forested (3). The Town’s location on Merrymeeting Bay, its rivers and forested land provide many recreational opportunities—including hiking, boating, kayaking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, hunting, fishing and bicycling.

Bowdoinham has a distinct town center, commonly known as “the village” (see Appendix 1), which includes single and multi-family housing, businesses, and municipal services. Bowdoinham’s village area includes a restaurant, grocery store, gas station, arts center, craft school and other small businesses located near the Maily Waterfront Park. The fire station, Coombs Municipal Building (housing the Town office and library), Bowdoinham Community School, Town Hall (used for concerts and other gatherings), Second Baptist Church, Bowdoinham Church of the Nazarene, three voluntary associations (Merrymeeting Grange, Bowdoinham Masonic Hall, and Knights of Pythias) and a small airport are all within a one-mile radius of the Town center. Although Bowdoinham has no industrial base, local encouragement of small businesses and entrepreneurship is evidenced by the large number (91) of businesses and sole proprietorships listed on the Town website. About 8.5% of the working age population (aged 16+) work primarily from home; 4.5% are employed within the Town limits. The remaining 87% of workers commute to work in other municipalities (4).



The majority (49.1%) of Bowdoinham residents who have reached the age of 65 live with a spouse or partner in a single-family home. However, multi-generational households are also common. Of the 269 households that included at least one resident aged 65 or older, 19.3% included a grand-child (5). The community—with its many recreational and social opportunities-- also provides an ideal setting for the 32% of older households occupied by a resident living alone.

Community residents are known for their civic engagement and volunteerism. For example, the eight volunteers of the Town’s Emergency Medical Services provide “first responder” services to assist residents until an ambulance arrives. The Bowdoinham library receives approximately 44% of its annual budget from the Town. Much of the remainder is earned through its annual plant sale, organized by the Friends of Library with over 1000 hours of volunteer time. The sale, the longest continuously running plant sale in Maine, attracts gardeners from miles around. It is more than a fund-raiser, it is a community building event. The residents of Bowdoinham pride themselves on their can-do attitude as well as a culture of neighbor-helping-neighbor. For residents who struggle financially, a food pantry is open once a week and a “clothing closet” is open one day a month for residents to purchase clothing at a nominal fee (currently \$1/bag).



Although Bowdoinham offers many of the services and consumer goods needed by residents, some are not available in the community. Bowdoinham is an easy commute by car to larger communities with a wealth of services, shopping, and cultural opportunities. The nearest hospital is 12 miles away, in Brunswick, Maine. Medical services (e.g. primary care physicians, physical therapists, long-term care facilities, supportive housing options, and counselors) are available in the neighboring town of Richmond as well as in nearby Topsham (distance: 7 miles). The Town is centrally located with Augusta, the state’s capitol 25 miles away, Portland, the state’s largest city, 33 miles away and Lewiston, the state’s second-largest city, 18 miles away.

The Advisory Committee on Aging

The mission of the Advisory Committee on Aging (COA) is to provide services and advocacy that enable older residents of Bowdoinham to live in their homes for as long as possible as well as to provide programs geared to keeping older adults active and engaged in the community.

In 2012, as part of the comprehensive planning process, the Town of Bowdoinham completed an assessment of services and supports needed for older residents to age optimally in the community

(<http://www.bowdoinham.com/needs-assessment-aging-bowdoinham>). The assessment identified five key areas for improvement:

1. information about community activities and how to access services;
2. coordinated leadership and advocacy for Bowdoinham's older residents;
3. transportation alternatives for residents who are no longer comfortable driving;
4. supportive housing for older adults and availability of affordable home repair and home modification services; and,
5. central place where older adults and other community members can gather for activities.

In response to the needs assessment, the Town of Bowdoinham Select Board appointed the Advisory Committee on Aging (COA) to address issues and concerns of older residents. Bowdoinham became the first community in Maine to be accepted as part of the WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities in 2014 (<http://agefriendlyworld.org/en/property/bowdoinham/>).

COA has two primary functions: (1) advocating for the inclusion of older residents in town life; and, (2) sponsoring programs to enhance the lives of older residents at all levels of physical and cognitive ability. For a timeline of COA's work from 2012-2014 see Appendix 2.

In its role as an advocate for older residents, COA has focused on the need for increased accessibility to town buildings and town-sponsored events. COA brings the concerns residents share with the committee to town employees who can make a desired change. When an issue requires the intervention of the Select Board, the Town Manager brings COA requests and recommendations to the bi-monthly meeting of the Select Board. For example, participants in a fall prevention class sponsored by COA completed a safety and accessibility assessment of the Town office. Class participants presented their findings to COA. COA brought the recommendations to the Town Manager who made many of the requested changes (e.g. adding brighter lighting and replacing existing door knobs with lever handles). Several residents brought COA their concerns about accessibility for the Town's annual festival, *Celebrate Bowdoinham*, held at the Maily Waterfront Park. At COA's request, *Celebrate* organizers added sitting areas, signage for handicapped parking, and a drop-off area closer to activities. Without fail, the Town has responded positively to the requests and recommendations made by COA to increase the age friendliness of town wide events.

Beyond COA's primary role as an advisor to the Select Board, COA members, collectively, provide more than 1,200 hours each year in direct service to older residents so that all activities and events sponsored by COA can be offered free of charge or for a nominal cost. COA members and community volunteers facilitate the Shipmates Senior Club, offer ongoing exercise opportunities (e.g. tai chi and line dancing) and special classes (e.g. kayaking, geo-caching, mushroom walks), provide social

opportunities (e.g. bridge, cribbage, movie afternoons), and organize trips. This year, COA also organized a wellness fair that featured free flu shots, balance assessments, and blood pressure checks. One of the COA members provided healthy snacks with nutrition information and recipes that were very popular with attendees. For more information about the types of activities offered in 2014, see Appendix 3.

Although Bowdoinham has accomplished a lot in the past two years, its plan to increase age friendliness is not complete. The next step will be to create a 3-year plan that will reflect the desires of older residents and guide the ongoing work of Bowdoinham's Advisory Committee on Aging. COA will use the results of this study to guide its work to make Bowdoinham more aging friendly for residents of all ages and abilities.

Methods

Formal community needs assessments are an important means by which gaps in services and programs provided by municipalities may be identified. Typically, multi-method approaches are employed to assess the strengths of the community for aging in place and to identify the unmet needs of older residents. The approach used in this project was to compile data from several sources, including publicly available information obtained through the US Census Bureau, along with quantitative and qualitative data collected from Bowdoinham residents and from other key groups. Bringing multiple types of data to create a picture of aging in one municipality is consistent with WHO efforts to identify ways in which cities and rural places may become more age-friendly by supporting the independence and quality of life of older people as they age in the community where they want to live.

Quantitative Data

The emphasis in the guide developed by WHO was on using existing data. As an initial step toward understanding characteristics of Bowdoinham's residents age 60 and older, a demographic profile of Bowdoinham, using data from the 2010 US Census and from the American Community Survey (ACS)—a large, annual survey of the population that is conducted by the US Census Bureau. For purposes of this study, data from the most recent five-year estimates made by ACS (2009—2014) along with Census 2010 data for the Town of Bowdoinham were used to summarize demographic characteristics. Additional data was gathered from state databases and from municipal officials and social, recreational, and religious organizations that work with Bowdoinham's older residents. Data was gathered throughout the month of December, 2014 and first week of January, 2015.

Safety and Accessibility Survey

The Advisory Committee on Aging's Safety and Accessibility sub-committee completed a safety and accessibility assessment of all buildings, publicly and privately owned, that are open to the public and the Maily Waterfront Park. The survey was conducted between 15 December 2014 and 9 January 2015. The members of the sub-committee co-wrote the final report during the week of 12 January 2015.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted—one with community members (n=18; conducted 07 January 2015) and one with COA members only (n=6; conducted 09 January 2014) to provide a more detailed picture of aging in Bowdoinham than could be gleaned from secondary data alone. To recruit older residents, an article was published in the Bowdoinham News about the community focus group (see Appendix 4), an email or postal mail invitation was sent to each of the community residents (n = 217) who are on the COA distribution list, and fliers were placed at the Town Landing, the Bowdoinham Town Library, the Town Office, and the Post Office. See Appendix 5 for a copy of the flyer. To recruit participants with a diversity of opinions in a short period of time, care partners and residents who do not participate in COA-sponsored activities were contacted for inclusion in the focus group. A focus group of COA members (n=6) was also completed. Both focus groups were tape recorded. Transcripts were analyzed for common themes and patterns that provided information about the indicators identified in the WHO Guide.

Defining Core Indicators of Age-Friendliness

Small towns and rural areas often lack some of the amenities measured in the WHO's Age Friendly Communities Indicator Guide —public transportation, access to medical and social services within the Town's geographic boundaries, access to supportive housing, and other amenities associated with urban life. Small municipalities find alternatives to "big-city" services by creating volunteer networks of neighbor helping neighbor. Residents of small places adapt to the dearth of services, preferring the rural lifestyle to the services available in larger municipalities. Many of the operational definitions provided in the Guide were altered to reflect the local context, the goals of COA and the Town of Bowdoinham's age friendly initiative, and the availability of data (for definitions used and summary of data, see Appendix 6).

Results

As the population of Maine, Sagadahoc County, and the Town of Bowdoinham ages, the particular needs of older residents will have to be addressed. The term “older adult” covers a wide range of ages and needs—from a recently retired 63 year old in good health who wants to find local opportunities to be physically active to a 103 year old who wants to find exercise opportunities that will improve balance, from a 60 year old who needs information about resources to help caring for older parents or grand-children with work responsibilities to an 84 year old who wants to find volunteer opportunities. A commonly expressed goal among a majority of middle-aged and older adults is to remain living in their homes as long as possible. The current buzz-term “aging-in-place” implies remaining in familiar home and community settings with supports as needed, as opposed to moving to institutional settings. By aging in place, and in the community, older people are able to retain their independence, as well as maintain valued social relationships and community involvement. In turn, aging in place may support “optimal aging” by providing physical activities that reduce the risk of functional impairment and development of chronic illness and social activities that reduce the risk of isolation and loneliness. By proactively taking steps to support the goals of older adults in terms of aging in place and optimal aging, Bowdoinham may retain a larger share of its older population and benefit from the experiences and local commitment that long-term residents offer and attract retiree in-migrants looking for a community that is aging-friendly. An age-friendly community has infrastructure, programming, and services to encourage older residents with different interests, physical capacity, and social needs to thrive in the community as they grow older.

Demographic Profile

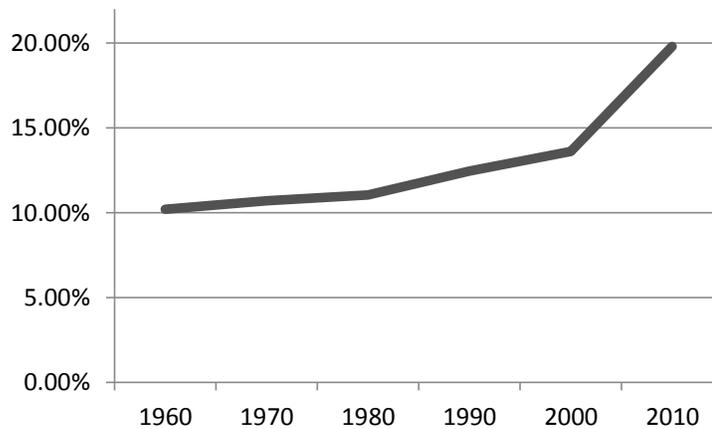
Older residents of Bowdoinham have diverse needs that place unique demands for the ongoing development of an age-friendly Bowdoinham. Among them are changing physical and social needs of that can threaten the independence and well-being of older residents if community supports and targeted services are not available to encourage optimal aging. Many retirees experience constraints associated with living on fixed incomes that could limit their choices, and reduce quality of life. This section provides a demographic profile of Bowdoinham’s aging population that identifies current needs.

Age Structure and Population Growth

Between 1990 and 2010, Bowdoinham’s median age rose from 33.9 to 43.7 (6,7,8). In recent years, the majority of Bowdoinham’s population growth has been driven by an increase in the number

of residents aged 50 and over. During the decade between 2000 and 2010, the total population grew by 10.3% but the number of residents between the ages of 60 and 79 grew by 82.5% (7, 8). Figure 1 shows the change in the proportion of Bowdoinham residents aged 60 and above from 1960 to 2010.

Figure 1: Percentage of Bowdoinham residents aged 60+, 1960-2010



Source: US Census, 1960 thru 2010, State Planning Office

Population growth in Bowdoinham has been concentrated in older age groups during the last decade. For the total population of all ages, the Town of Bowdoinham experienced a 3% decline between the 2000 and 2010 censuses; however, the absolute numbers of residents in the Boomer and Senior cohorts grew substantially during this time period (Table 1). The segment of the population age 45 to 59 increased in size by 26.2%— a rate slightly higher than the 22.9% seen in Maine overall. The older population increased by 61.2% in Bowdoinham, compared to a 26.3% increase for the state. Over the next ten years, the aging of the Boomer cohort will continue to swell the proportion of older residents in Bowdoinham and in Maine in general.

Table 1: Population growth between 2000 and 2010: Maine, Sagadahoc County, and Bowdoinham

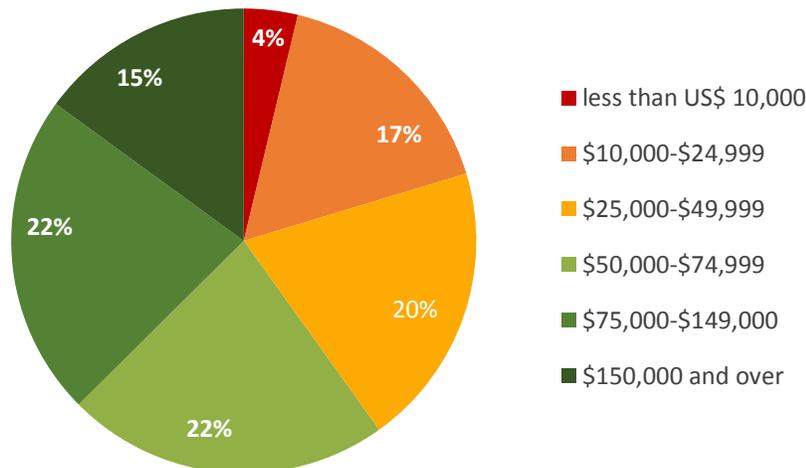
	All Ages			Boomers, aged 45-59			Residents aged 60+		
	Population 2010	Population 2000	% growth	Population 2010	Population 2000	% growth	Population 2010	Population 2000	% growth
Maine	1,328,361	1,274,923	4.2%	321,016	261,086	22.9%	300,740	238,099	26.3%
Sagadahoc County	35,293	35,214	0.2%	9001	7336	22.7%	8236	5766	42.8%
Bowdoin	2,889	2,612	10.6%	809	641	26.2%	574	356	61.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 Census, Summary File 1, Table QT-P1; and 2000 Census, Summary File 1, Table QT-P1.

Economic Security

Economic security is measured as the proportion of older people living in a household with a disposable income above the risk of poverty threshold (see Appendix 6). Median household income for householders aged 65 and over in Bowdoinham was \$68,417 in 2013 (9). According to the US Census Bureau, a “householder” is the person reported as the head of household, typically the person in whose name the home is owned or rented. Figure 2 shows the proportion of Bowdoinham households headed by a person aged 65 and older living at various income levels. Among Bowdoinham’s older households there is significant income disparity, with 5.7% of households with income less than the federal poverty level¹ and 4.8% with annual income of \$200,000 or more (10, 11).

Figure 2: Household income of Bowdoinham householders aged 65 and over, 2013



Source: US Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Table B19037

The Elder Economic Security Index (Elder Index) provides a detailed county-specific measure of poverty that applies specifically to the typical costs of older households. The Elder Index determines poverty based on the true cost of housing, food, transportation, and health care. Different thresholds are provided based on household size and for costs associated with renting or owning, with having a mortgage or without a mortgage² (Table 2).

¹ In 2014, the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a household of one was \$11,670 and \$15,730 for a household size of two (12).

²The Elder Economic Index, developed by Wider Opportunities for Women and the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, examines what older adults and older couples need in order to age in place with dignity. The index does not include the cost of “extras” (e.g. meals out, gifts, electronic equipment, cost of

Table 2. Elder Economic Security Index, Sagadahoc County, Maine, 2010

Sagadahoc County, Maine						
Monthly Expenses	Older Adult Living Alone			Couple, Household Size 2		
	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter, single bedroom	Owner w/ Mortgage	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter, single bedroom	Owner w/ Mortgage
Housing (includes utilities, taxes & insurance)	\$507	\$761	\$1,308	\$507	\$761	\$1,308
Food	\$252	\$252	\$252	\$463	\$463	\$463
Transportation	\$293	\$293	\$293	\$453	\$453	\$453
Health Care (Good)	\$470	\$470	\$470	\$940	\$940	\$940
Miscellaneous	\$304	\$304	\$304	\$473	\$473	\$473
Monthly and Yearly Totals						
Elder Index Per Month	\$1,826	\$2,080	\$2,627	\$2,836	\$3,090	\$3,637
Index Per Year	\$21,912	\$24,960	\$31,524	\$34,032	\$37,080	\$43,644

Source: <http://www.basiceconomicsecurity.org/EI/location.aspx>

Most (83%) older residents of Bowdoinham live in their own homes; among non-renters, 62% of households headed by a single resident and 57% of households with two or more residents owned their home without a mortgage in 2010 (13, 14). Based on the proportion of older households who rent a home and households with/without a mortgage, this analysis estimates that an older adult living alone in Bowdoinham needs about \$24,984 to meet basic expenses—housing, food, transportation, and medical care for a person in good health. The estimate for couples is \$38,165.

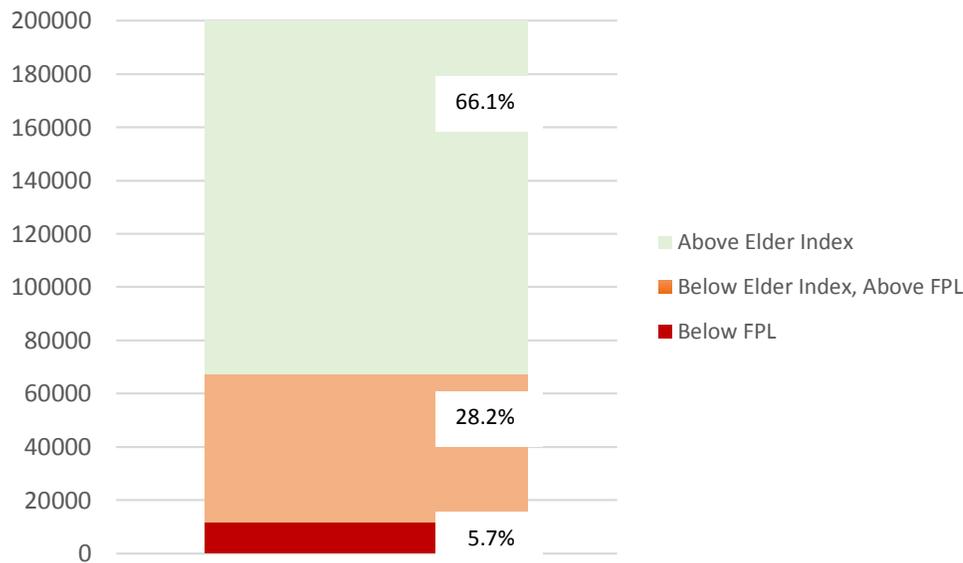
Federal poverty lines (FPL) were considerably lower than the Elder Economic Index. Households at 100% of FPL are eligible for public assistance so cannot meet minimal needs without assistance. Older residents of Bowdoinham who rent or own their own home with or without a mortgage need incomes well in excess of FPL to stave off poverty. An older person living alone and renting a one-bedroom apartment in Bowdoinham would need an income equal to more than twice FPL to meet basic housing, medical, and nutritional needs. An elderly couple paying off a mortgage would need nearly three times

pets). People living below an adequate income to meet day-to-day needs may have to make difficult choices about heating their home, purchasing nutritious food, or buying prescription drugs. Estimates are made for single individuals and for couples living in their own home with or without a mortgage or living in rental housing (see Table 5). For more information about the Elder Economic Index: <http://www.basiceconomicsecurity.org/more-info.aspx>

FPL to meet basic needs. For the purposes of this analysis, the thresholds set by the Elder Economic Security Index are used as the bare minimum needed for economic security.

Using the Economic Security Index, the number of older adults struggling financially in Bowdoinham is alarming. More than 1/3rd of all older households fall below the Elder Economic Standard Index in 2013 (see Figure 3). The greatest risk for living below economic security was experienced by residents aged 75 and over, by women who lived by themselves, and by people who depended solely on social security income in retirement. About 35.2% of residents over age 75 had an income too low to meet routine everyday expenses; compared with 18% of residents between the ages of 65 and 74 (15).

Figure 3: Economic security of Bowdoinham residents, aged 65+, 2013



Source: US Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Table B17024; B19215

Median income for a man over age 65 living alone was \$67,917, while median income for a similarly aged woman was \$22,679, less than the minimum needed for economic security (16). Median Social Security income was \$18,656 (74.7% of income needed for economic security in a single person household and 97.8% for a couple with both receiving the median social security payment) (17). Median retirement income was considerably higher, at \$28,085. Bowdoinham residents who retired with a pension to supplement Social Security income were relatively affluent compared to their peers who depended solely on Social Security.

Existing Services to Support Older Residents who Lack Economic Security

The one in three households headed by an older resident of Bowdoinham who live below economic security may have to do without nutritious food or make difficult choices about heating their home, using gas to go to a social event or opportunity for physical recreation, or keeping pets. About 1/3rd of all Bowdoinham residents who use the food pantry, are age of 60 or older (Joanne Savoie, unpublished data, December 19, 2014). Thus, some of the financial struggles of older residents are being assuaged by the community. However, it is important to recognize that asking for financial help through the Town's General Assistance fund or at the food pantry can be especially difficult in a small town:

No I think there are barriers. I don't think it is lack of interest so much as it is part of it is our fierce independence. Part of that whole "I'll be here to help you but I'm not going to ask you to help me". I think some of that is a lot of what is going on. There are some people who because of whatever they are thinking they don't want to use things like the food bank or services. It is embarrassing to access things that are available to low income people, especially in a small community. *(COA support group)*

COA attempts to minimize the cost of participating in the social and recreational opportunities that it sponsors so that all residents will be able to access programs without requesting financial help. The exception is the ride program, which requests a donation for gas paid directly to the volunteer who provides a ride. For residents who live below economic security, those most likely to struggle to pay the costs associated with car ownership, it may be difficult to pay for rides and embarrassing to admit that they cannot afford to reimburse a volunteer's expenses. This may be especially true for the 3.5% of older Bowdoinham residents who live on less than 50% of FPL (18).

Paid employment.

Many people choose to leave the labor force between the ages of 65 and 70; some people want or need to work beyond normal retirement age. Participation in paid employment can be a positive indicator of social participation and inclusion. However, it can also be a negative indicator if people want to retire but cannot afford to stop participating in paid work. The majority (76.6%) of Bowdoinham's residents age 65 and older were no longer in the labor force in 2013 (see Appendix 6). Of those who were employed in the past 12 months, 92% were between the ages of 65 and 74 and 8% were aged 75 or older (19). Among older Bowdoinham residents who reported that they either worked in the past 12 months or wanted to work in the past 12 months, 6.5% were unemployed (20). The overall rate of unemployment for Bowdoinham residents was about 3.0% (21), less than half of that experienced by Bowdoinham's older workers.

There are limited opportunities for employment by the small businesses in town. However, one COA member noted:

They don't turn anyone down in the agricultural field. Whether the people are up for it... washing vegetables and things like that. (*COA members focus group*).

For older entrepreneurs, the Town offers a few possibilities. The Town does not have a public sewage system; it would not be possible to start a business in the historic village such as a restaurant or laundromat that requires access to a sewage system:

Certain facilities, even though they may be needed and well utilized, we don't have the infrastructure that would support that because a laundromat or another restaurant could certainly do just fine downtown but just so we're limited by the lack of infrastructure. (*COA members focus group*)

However, the Town encourages sole proprietorships and small businesses with fewer than four employees by not requiring a license from the Town. Starting a business that is not dependent on walk-by business but that can draw on a customer base both within Bowdoinham and in the surrounding area, would be a relatively simple matter for an older resident of Bowdoinham. Approximately 45.9% of workers between the ages of 65 and 74 in Maine are self-employed (22). Thus, encouraging small business and sole proprietorship is one of the age-friendly policies implemented by the Town of Bowdoinham.

Social and Health Services

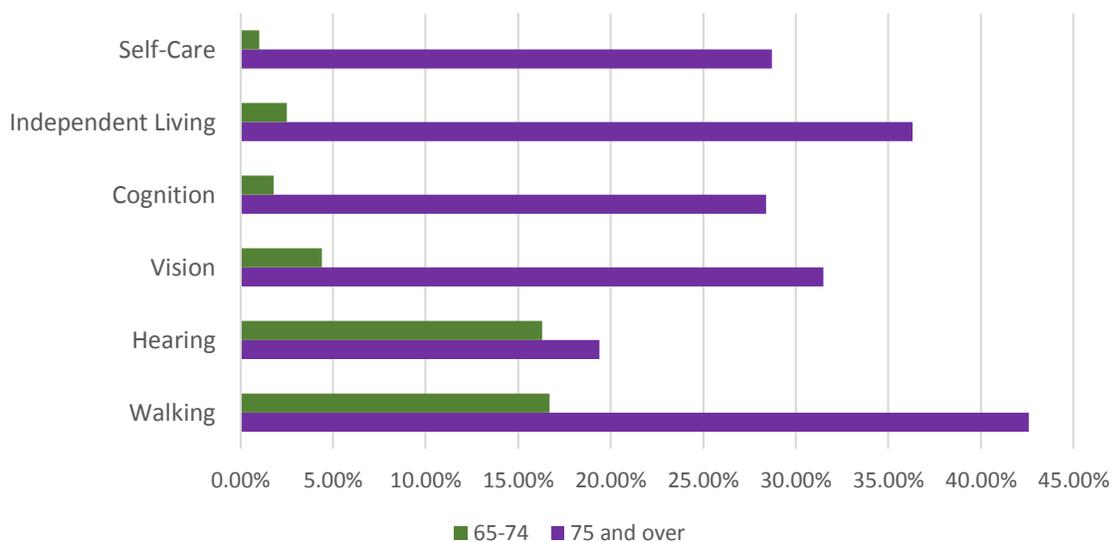
With age, comes increased risk of functional limitations that make it difficult to accomplish tasks of daily living without assistance. In an age friendly community residents who need access to in-home help with routine activities of daily life can find the needed services. The availability of data about the number of Bowdoinham residents who receive in-home care through a private home care service is limited. To measure access to needed in-home help, this study reports the proportion of older Bowdoinham residents who have a disability that are receiving publicly paid home-based services (see Appendix 6). Approximately 19.3% of older adults (aged 65+) in Bowdoinham who have a disability and meet income qualifications for Medicaid received home-based care in 2011 (23).

About 35% of Bowdoinham's residents aged 65 and older were living with a disability³ that interfered with daily life in 2013 (24). The need for assistance with personal care or independent living

³ The Census Bureau counts a person as having a disability if they answered "yes" to having had a sensory disability (blindness, deafness, or a severe hearing or vision impairment that cannot be corrected with the use of hearing aids or lenses); physical disability (a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities, such as

increases with age and with the onset of hearing, vision, cognition, or walking difficulties. Difficulty walking, late onset hearing and vision loss that cannot be corrected using hearing aids or eyeglasses, and cognitive disabilities increase the need for formal or informal help with tasks that were easily completed before the onset of disability—independent living and with self-care.⁴ Figure 4 shows self-reported disability by age. With the exception of hearing, Bowdoinham residents aged 75 and older were more than twice as likely to report disability than their younger counterparts. Walking and hearing were the most common types of disability for residents aged 65-74. Walking remained the most common problem for residents who had attained age 75. However, the next most common report was difficulty with independent living. For older residents, the lack of formal supports, such as transportation and chore services to help residents with independent living tasks, may create a significant barrier to aging in the community.

Figure 4: Self-reported disability by age, 2013



Source: US Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Table B1802: Hearing; Table B1803: Vision; Table B1804: Cognition; Table B1805: Ambulation; Table B1806: Self-Care; Table B1807: Independent Living

Generally, men who had reached the age of 75 reported more difficulty with self-care and with independent living than did women of the same age. About 34.8% of men and 17.9% of women aged 75 or older in Bowdoinham reported difficulty with self-care activities (e.g. dressing, bathing) (25). When

walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying); or cognitive disability (a condition lasting six months or longer that made it difficult to perform learning, remembering, or concentrating).

⁴ Independent living refers to the ability to independently accomplish tasks, such as shopping and getting to medical appointments, which takes place outside the home. Self-care refers to the ability to accomplish everyday personal care within the home (e.g bathing, dressing) without assistance.

asked about difficulty with independent living—the ability to do errands alone—about 65.2% of men and 17.9% of women aged 75 or older indicated some limitations (26).

In 2013, approximately 27% (n = 31) of Bowdoinham's older residents (aged 65+) who had a disability were income qualified for MaineCare (Maine's State-administered, Federally-funded Medicaid program) that would pay for home health care if it was medically needed (27, 28). In 2013, 19.3% of individuals in that group received in-home care (29, 30). There is no publically available data about the proportion of older residents with a disability who pay privately or who have long-term care insurance that covers the cost of home-based care. Because of the small size of the community and concerns about protecting the privacy of clients, home care agencies whose service area includes Bowdoinham did not release data about the number of clients in the community.

Positive social attitude toward older people

Although difficult to measure, an age-friendly community encourages older residents to feel respected and socially included in community life. In the past two years, the Town of Bowdoinham has made significant strides toward encouraging older residents to be actively engaged in all aspects of community life. As part of its Comprehensive Planning process, the Town of Bowdoinham made a significant commitment to include older adults in community life when it appointed the Advisory Committee on Aging. Requests made by COA have been answered positively by community organizations, such as the Second Baptist Church, Bowdoinham Library, and Town Landing (restaurant) as well as by town officials. When space was needed for older residents to meet regularly, the Second Baptist Church provided space and coffee at no charge. When interest in a community Trivia game became known, the Town Landing, the only restaurant in town, started the once/month "Lunch with Lynn", which provides a \$5 lunch special followed by a trivia game. The library purchased exercise videos recommended by COA and added material about home modifications to its offerings. The Friends of the Library added outside seating to make waiting easier at their annual plant sale. The Town planner implemented all of the changes requested by COA to increase accessibility to town sponsored events such as Celebrate Bowdoinham. When a group of residents conducted a safety and accessibility assessment of the Town office, some of the recommended changes (e.g. clearing clutter from hallways, changing doors knobs to lever handles) were implemented immediately by the Town Manager. All of these are signs that Bowdoinham has a positive social attitude toward its older residents.

The community focus group talked about the role of older adults in the community. Older residents, especially those who have been active in the community for many years, act as mentors for the younger residents:

Bowdoinham wouldn't be such a strong community if it weren't for the older adults in town. It is that simple. There wouldn't be a community without us. You need the older adults to sort of entice the younger generation to come in and ...give them responsibilities so that they feel that they are part of the group... If the young people feel comfortable then the older people really feel as though what they worked so hard on establishing is not going to disappear. I mean something like the plant sale. If it weren't for the younger generation, it could have stopped a number of years ago... We now feel as though who knows how long it will go on. I mean we have three generations working on it now. I hope it keeps going for as long as it can. And I think it is important for younger people to see older people and that they have a brain (laughter).
(community focus group)

Older residents play an important role in the community. The residents of Bowdoinham are known throughout the area for their civic engagement. Residents who moved to town when they were raising children have continued their pattern of community involvement as they have grown older. As one focus group participant surmised, since "we don't act old", older community members are accepted by all ages in the community:

it's as if there isn't an age barrier if you will. The people there, even the kids, are very accepting of older people. *(community focus group)*

Infrastructure

Accessibility to public buildings and to outdoor spaces have a major influence on the independence, mobility, and quality of life of people of every age. Safe accessible infrastructure is a key aspect of building an age-friendly community. Outdoor spaces and buildings—including sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, trails, outdoor spaces where community wide events are held, and buildings open to the public—should accommodate a range of physical ability and support the ability to age in place.

Walkability

Bowdoinham has a central, historic village area where homes and businesses are located within close proximity to one another. The majority of municipally and privately owned public spaces are located in the historic village area—the Town offices, Bowdoinham Public Library, Maily Waterfront Park, the Merrymeeting Arts Center, and numerous small businesses. In 2010, Bowdoinham adopted a Walkable Village Plan to repair existing sidewalks and invest in additional sidewalks in order to

encourage walking throughout the village district and to bring foot traffic into the heart of the village district (see Appendix 1). By 2014, approximately 90% of the historic village district had sidewalks. The Walkable Village Plan includes the growth area that is immediately outside the historic village. About 30% of the sidewalks that are planned for this area have been completed (see Appendix 7, Nicole Briand, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development, unpublished data, 7 January 2015). All sidewalks (but not street crossing) are wide enough to be accessible to a person using a wheelchair and are accessible to a person with vision impairment.

Walkability also refers to the extent that a community supports all types of recreational walking. Walking paths abound throughout the Town limits of Bowdoinham. The Snow Birds snowmobile club maintains 44 miles of snowmobile trails on privately owned land (Jim McGee, President, unpublished data, January 15, 2015). Property owners have generously given permission for outdoor enthusiasts to use the trails for walking, cross-county skiing, and snow-shoeing as well as for use by ski mobilers. In addition, the State of Maine maintains two wildlife refuges that include walking areas. The one mile walk at Wildes Road Wildlife Management Area takes the walker through wide-open meadows and ends with a view of Merrymeeting Bay. The John Detweiler trail also takes the traveler on a path through an abandoned farmstead and ends with a view of the Abagadasset River.

Accessibility of Public Spaces and Buildings

One way to measure the accessibility of public spaces and buildings is by counting the number of spaces and buildings open to the public that are fully accessible by wheelchair. About 71% of publicly owned buildings and 54% of privately owned buildings are accessible (see Appendix 6).

In the assessment of public buildings and spaces completed by the Safety and Accessibility subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Aging, town-owned buildings were seen as generally accessible to a person using a walker or wheelchair (see Table 3). A significant exception was the Town office, housed on the first floor of the Coombs Municipal Building. Town residents come to the Town office to purchase tickets to pay for municipal curbside trash collection, register dogs, apply for building permits, pay for hunting/fishing licenses, and to access a host of other municipal services. The Coombs



Municipal Building was built in the early 20th century. The historic building is beloved by the community but has many barriers to accessibility for a person using a wheelchair or walker. For example, door thresholds are higher than 3/4" and there are step-ups between offices that cannot be maneuvered by a person using a wheelchair.

Table 3: Accessibility of public-access buildings and public spaces, 2014

	Fully Wheelchair Accessible	Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people	Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.	Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well- maintained and accessible.	Designated parking for people with disabilities
Public Buildings					
Bowdoinham School	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Coombs Municipal Building-Town Office	no	no	no	none	yes
Coombs Municipal Building— Bowdoinham Public Library	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Fire Department	yes	yes	yes ⁵	Yes (indoor)	yes
Post Office	yes	yes	yes ¹⁴	none	yes
Recycling Barn ⁶	no	no	no	none	no
Town Hall	yes	no	yes ¹⁴	yes	yes
Outdoor Spaces					
Maily Waterfront Park	no	NA		summer only	yes
Privately Owned Buildings, by category					
Lifelong Learning and Cultural Opportunities ⁷	80%	none	60%	60%	60%
Places of Worship ⁸	100%	50%	0%	0%	100%
Stores and Essential Services ⁹	33%	33%	17%	none	33%
Voluntary Associations ¹⁰	50%	none	50%	50%	50%

⁵ Exception—no non-slip floors in the community room, kitchen, or bathrooms

⁶ The recycling barn is privately owned leased by the Town.

⁷ All of the places where lifelong learning and cultural events take place that are open to the general public were included.

⁸ All of the places that are designated as places of worship were included in this category

⁹ All of the stores (places that sell groceries, dry goods, and other merchandise that are open to the public) and essential services (e.g. banking, food pantry) were included in this category

¹⁰ All of the voluntary associations (e.g. Snow Birds, Grange, Ladies Auxiliary) that meet in town were included in this category

Although special accommodations can be made to meet someone in one of the two meeting rooms on the second floor of the Coombs Building, the difficulty of access to the Town office by residents who use either a walker or wheelchair for mobility has a negative effect on quality of life. In 2012, COA presented the Town Manager with a list of changes to increase accessibility of the Town office. Some recommendations were implemented—clearing hallways of clutter, replacing round door knobs with lever knobs, increasing lighting, and insuring that the ramp access was clear of obstructions. However, it is a historic building so not all of the recommendations could be made without changing the historical look of the building. William Post, Town Manager, continues to work toward finding creative solutions to protect the historic look of the building while correcting the remaining accessibility issues.

The second floor of the Coombs Municipal Building, which houses the Bowdoinham Public Library as well as two meeting rooms, is fully accessible to a person using a wheelchair or walker. A ramp is available at the back of the building that leads to an entrance to one of the second floor public rooms. A single parking space is available for people who use the ramp to visit the library, use the public WiFi or desktop computer available in the business center, or have a meeting in one of the public rooms.



About half of privately owned buildings that are frequented by the public are accessible to a person using a wheelchair (see Table 3). Places of worship and organizations that offered lifelong learning opportunities—the Long Branch School and Merrymeeting Arts Center—were the most accessible. Stores and voluntary associations were the least accessible.



Outdoor spaces were not accessible to people with mobility challenges. While some of the focus group participants said that the Maily Waterfront Park, where a number of town-sponsored summer activities take place, was fully accessible, others disagreed. For people using walkers and people who had trouble standing for long periods of time, going over the uneven turf was a barrier to participating in the summer concerts and to enjoying the view of the bay from the gazebo. Focus group participants noted that accessibility is a barrier to full social inclusion:

The area by the waterfront is difficult. It's not paved and the turf has lots of ups and downs that make it hard to walk to the gazebo.

There are barriers in the Town—especially for people who can't be up on their feet for that long. Going to the concerts or even Celebrate is hard. Without good mobility, people lose their independence and their ability to participate in the Town. All of the activities and stuff are good but not for people who are aging and have a hard time walking.

I really think that accessibility for people who have mobility issues is extremely limited and I'd really like to see the Town take an attitude toward that similar to the attitude they have toward providing food for the hungry because I think it is that basic.

In the upcoming years, COA will support the Town of Bowdoinham as it continues to make improvements in town –owned buildings and public spaces that will make a more accessible, supportive, and inclusive community for older residents.

Accessible Parking

Accessible parking is an important aspect of building an age-friendly community that encourages inclusion of older residents in all aspects of community life. Of the 40 municipal parking spaces in Bowdoinham, 7 (17.5%) are designated for people with disabilities (see Appendix 6).

There are two municipal parking lots in Bowdoinham. The municipal parking lot near Maily Waterfront Park includes 29 spaces; four spaces are designated for people with disabilities. The Coombs Municipal Building, which houses the Town Office and Bowdoinham Public Library, has 10 parking spaces, two of which are designated handicapped spaces.

There is one parking space at the ramp entrance to the Coombs building. The ramp is located at the back of the building to allow access to the library and second floor meeting rooms in the Coombs Building. Currently, there is only one parking space at the ramp. If someone who needs the ramp drives themselves to the library and leaves the car in the allocated space, other people who need the ramp have to wait for the person occupying the space to leave or come back another time. The majority of the people who use the ramp, however, do not drive themselves. The person driving helps the person needing the ramp into the building and then moves the car so that other people can use the ramp access if it is needed. The Advisory Committee on Aging is working with the Town Office to create better parking options for those who need to use the ramp. Most of the publicly accessible businesses and organizations in the historic village area of Bowdoinham have two or more designated parking spaces for people with a disability, but not all spaces are clearly marked.

Internet access

Dial-up Internet service is available throughout the Town. However, broadband, high-speed Internet service is only available in parts of the Town. To meet the need for universal Internet access, the Bowdoinham Public Library makes high-speed, wireless Internet available. In addition, the Town Office provides space for a “business center” with Internet access, a desktop computer and space for residents to bring their own laptop. The Town Office Business Center is located on the Second floor of

the Coombs Municipal Building, across the hallway from the Bowdoinham Public library. However, when the Bowdoinham Public Library and Town Office are both closed, Internet access is only available from the parking lot shared by the Town Office and library. All residents, as long as they have equipment, have access to the Internet, but sometimes it's only from their cars. COA-sponsored technology lessons are available at the Shipmates Senior Club.

The majority (87.5%) of focus group participants indicated that they used the Internet for a wide variety of purposes that included email, social networking, banking, shopping, paying bills, playing bridge and other games, watching movies, finding recipes, looking for information, and reading the newspaper. However, only one person in the focus group had accessed the Bowdoinham Town website looking for information about COA-sponsored activities and events. Focus group participants depended primarily on email or land mail communication from COA about its events.

Transportation

The accessibility of public transportation is measured as the proportion of housing within the coverage area of a service that offers door-to-door rides for non-emergency medical appointments and, also, of a service that provides transportation for non-medical needs (e.g. errands, socialization, shopping) rides (see Appendix 6). Town residents who participated in the focus groups identified transportation as one of the largest barriers to aging in Bowdoinham. As one participant put it, "When people can't drive anymore, they lose independence no matter what".

Non-emergency medical transportation

Coastal Trans, Inc (CTI) provides fully accessible non-emergency medical transportation for Bowdoinham residents who are low-income and qualify for state of Maine administered Medicaid health insurance (MaineCare). To qualify for MaineCare a resident aged 65 or over must have unearned income (e.g. Social Security or other retirement income) of no more than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL, \$972.50/month for person living in a household of one, combined \$1310.83 for two people living in the same household) and a combination of earned and unearned income of no more than 250% of the FPL (\$2431.25 for those living alone and \$3277.08 for couples) (31). To qualify for MaineCare, a person between ages 60 and 65 must have a disability that meets the Social Security Administration medical standards and meet the aforementioned income requirements. For residents that meet income and age or disability qualifications, CTI provides up to a maximum of two rides each week to mental health services, medical care, and rehabilitation services. CTI does not offer Bowdoinham residents transportation for shopping or other errands or for socialization.

In 2013, although 18% (n = 59) of Bowdoinham's older residents (aged 65+) qualified for CTI transport to non-emergency medical appointments (32, 33), the service was only used by a minority of eligible residents (approximately 5.1%, n = 3) (J. Huff, Transportation Director, unpublished data, December 22, 2014). Coastal Trans rarely provides privately paid rides for medical appointments or for non-medical reasons. Older residents who do not meet income qualifications to receive non-emergency medical rides have very limited access to the service. One of the members of the community focus group told about her experience trying to get a non-emergency medical ride for her husband:

My husband was in a wheelchair and I had to take him to Portland and ahh... I said, 'can't the people from Brunswick (Coastal Trans)?' They come up this way for somebody... and take him to Brunswick and stuff. And I ended up paying \$400 to take him to Portland. (*community focus group*)

Non-medical transportation

Limited transportation for non-medical needs is available through SEARCH-Greater Bath and a small transportation program sponsored by COA. SEARCH-Greater Bath, matches isolated older adults with community volunteers who—in some cases—provide transportation as part of their work with a client (<http://www.ccmaine.org/a-z-services/search-program-elderly-services>). In 2014, one person in Bowdoinham was matched with a volunteer through SEARCH-Greater Bath (Christine Szalay, Program Coordinator, unpublished data, January 09, 2015). SEARCH does not provide transportation to residents who do not participate in the program; transportation provided by SEARCH volunteers is not intended to meet all of a participant's needs for transportation. COA has a small, informal, transportation program. Volunteers are available to provide rides for socialization, shopping, and other errands on an as-needed basis. Payment is not required but riders are encouraged to make a small monetary contribution to cover the volunteer's expenses. The COA-sponsored program has remained small because very few residents have requested transportation, not because of a lack of volunteers. Needing to rely on others for transportation is avoided by many residents because it means becoming "dependent". As one COA member noted, "even when people know they can call and get a ride for a medical appointment, to go shopping, or to meet a friend—whatever they need a ride for, they don't call".

There is no public bus service in Bowdoinham. Private-pay taxi service is available. The approximate cost for a round-trip ride from Bowdoinham to Topsham, the nearest service center community, is \$32.60 (\$5.50 for first mile in each direction, \$1.50 for each additional mile for an estimated 8.2 mile each way—outgoing and ingoing). Limited transportation options are a particular hardship for care partners:

The hardest part of being a caregiver in Bowdoinham is accessibility and transportation. It is a great community but when you are a caregiver, it can be isolating. If your person can't go somewhere, neither can you. (*community focus group*)

Neither SEARCH nor the small transportation program sponsored by COA can provide handicapped accessible rides. It is challenging for people with mobility limitations to get in and out of the private vehicles driven by volunteers.

Transportation alternatives

Participants in the community focus group talked about transportation systems in larger neighboring communities:

What works in Brunswick is a regularly scheduled bus. I think that people who have some need also like the independence of that. The buses there have certain times. You can go or you can not go. It doesn't matter. It's happening all the time. It isn't something that you need to arrange in advance like something you do with individuals that are volunteering or agreeing to take you. (*community focus group*)

Although a regular bus schedule appealed to many of the participants, some pointed out that a small community could not support a similar transportation system and, even if it was possible to work with neighboring communities to provide a regularly scheduled single pick-up at, for example, the municipal parking lot, people who didn't drive and didn't live within walking distance of the pick-up would still be dependent for rides from neighbors and friends to get to the bus and to get from the drop-off point back home. Lack of convenience was one of the trade-offs participants in the community focus group made for the less tangible aspects of living in Bowdoinham—of community, rootedness, and the natural beauty of the area. One participant in the community focus group pointed out:

But that is where you make a trade. Why are you in Bowdoinham? I mean if we want to be with all those services in Brunswick, then move there. (*community focus group*)

Housing

Home ownership is common in Bowdoinham. The majority of older residents live in homes that they own. About 72% of older residents in owner occupied housing have lived in the same home for 20 years or more (34). Housing that met the needs of young families may not provide the structural and design features needed by older residents living with functional limitations. When Bowdoinham residents can no longer live independently and need services and supports that are not available in the community, a move to another town is often necessary. Participants in the community focus group

noted that Richmond, Topsham and Brunswick all have long-term care facilities as well as assisted living and other supported housing options for Bowdoinham residents who need help performing daily tasks.

If I become physically or mentally unable to live on my own, I will probably have to move to town (Brunswick or Topsham), which I wouldn't like. I would like to see the community develop programs that encourage and support residents to stay in their homes as long as possible. (*COA focus group*)

Affordability

This study measures the affordability of housing by examining the proportion of older people who live in a household that spends less than 30 percent of their equalized disposable income on housing. The total proportion of Bowdoinham householders¹¹ aged 60 and over who spend less than 30 per cent of their equalized disposable income on housing was 69.2% in 2013 (35).

The majority (83%) of Bowdoinham householders aged 60 and over live in owner-occupied homes (36). Affordability of housing differs dramatically for those who own homes with a mortgage payment and those who own their homes without a mortgage. The median monthly housing expenses (e.g. mortgage, home maintenance expenses, property taxes, heating and cooling costs) for a householder aged 60 or older with a mortgage was \$1,347—more than twice the median monthly expenses of \$569 paid by a householder without a mortgage (37). Among Bowdoinham householders aged 60 or older who lived in owner-occupied housing, 72.8% paid less than 30% of their equalized disposable income on housing.

The median rent paid by the 17% of older householders who rented an apartment or home in 2013 was \$765 (38). Older residents of rental housing were more likely to live alone than were residents who lived in an owner-occupied dwelling (81.07 vs. 31.89 respectively) (39). The mean Social Security income for a Bowdoinham resident in 2013 was \$18,656 (40). A single person living on the mean social security income without any additional earned or unearned income who pays the median rental fee for a one-bedroom apartment (\$765) would have to pay 49.2% of their monthly income for rent. Among Bowdoinham residents living in rental housing, slightly more than half (51.6%) paid less than 30% of their equalized disposable income on rent.

¹¹ Householder refers to the person(s) whose name is listed on a rental lease agreement (renter-occupied housing) or on the deed to a home (owner-occupied housing). If more than one person is listed on a rental agreement or on a deed to a home, the two householders designate one person to be the "householder". If the designated person is aged 60 or above, the household is included in the discussion of affordability and housing.

Accessibility

Accessibility of housing is measured as the proportion of new and existing houses that have wheelchair-accessible entrances (i.e. sufficient width, ramps). Although building permits are required to add a ramp to an existing structure, most of the residents who install ramps do so without a permit. Anecdotally, the codes officer for the Town of Bowdoinham knows of several homes that have ramp access but could find no permits on file. One of the barriers to getting a permit for a ramp is the need to comply with land use code. Especially in the village area of Bowdoinham, many existing homes were built too close to the road to satisfy the 10 or 20 foot set-back required by Bowdoinham's land use code. However, by state law, the Town is required to provide a disability variance (Title 30-A § 4353(4) of the Maine Statutes) if the addition is needed by a person with a disability who regularly needs to enter and exit the home. Thus, it is possible to add a ramp to almost any single family or multi-family home in Bowdoinham. However, getting a permit takes time, especially if a variance is required, and costs money, which can be major deterrents when a person experiences a sudden change in ability that requires the addition of a ramp.

Housing Alternatives

There are a limited number of rental units available for older Bowdoinham residents who are no longer able to maintain their own homes. Bowdoinham Estates is the only multi-family unit exclusively for older and disabled adults (n=25 units). Generally, residents qualify for income-based rent. Low income residents pay no more than 33% of their monthly income to rent an apartment, which makes the units affordable. There is a waiting list for prospective tenants of Bowdoinham Estates. Beside the waiting list, another barrier for residents to move to Bowdoinham Estates is the lack of community knowledge about the availability of apartments:

I wonder how many people in the community even know what it (Bowdoinham Estates) is, know that there is a wait-list involved or that the apartment rent is based on income. We drove by the sign for years and had no idea. All I knew was the name on the sign, nothing else, so it would never have occurred to us that, if we had to down-size, we could apply for an apartment and stay in Bowdoinham (*community focus group*).

No support services, activities or amenities are provided by Bowdoinham Estates to its tenants. The units are for people who can live independently. One barrier that the community focus group identified to aging in Bowdoinham was the lack of assisted living, long term care facilities or supportive housing options:

I guess one of the things that Bowdoinham lacks is that when elderly people get to the point where they can't take care of themselves in their own place, where do they go? There is nothing for them here in Bowdoinham to speak of (*community focus group*).

COA has developed programs and supports for older adults who are active, who can leave their homes independently and who want to participate in the social and physical activities sponsored by COA. Although implementing supports that would help people to stay in their homes has been discussed by COA, it is not an issue that COA has had the capacity to pursue.

Information

One of the significant barriers to aging in Bowdoinham that was identified in the 2012 *Aging in Bowdoinham* report was the lack of information about local social and recreational opportunities and about regional services available to support aging in place. An age friendly community provides information about services, socio-cultural and recreational activities, and opportunities for civic engagement. This report measures access to information by looking at the proportion of older residents who receive information from COA about local services, programs and events that may be of interest to older people (see Appendix 6).

In Maine, there are five Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)¹² that provide information and referral by phone and in person through the Aging and Disability Resource Centers that are housed within each of the AAAs (<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/aging/resource/adrc.html>). Spectrum Generations serves the area that includes Bowdoinham (<http://www.spectrumgenerations.org/>). Information and referral is available by phone and in person. The information and referral specialists hired by Spectrum Generations are trained to provide information about social services, educational opportunities, long term care, health insurance, and care partner supports. The service is well publicized and universally available to all residents of Bowdoinham.

In 2012, COA began to distribute a monthly list of activities and resources. The list is mailed to residents who requested it and is available at the Town Office, Town Landing (local restaurant), and the Bowdoinham Public Library. Currently, about 26% of older residents (n=142) receive the monthly mailing. Residents who participated in the focus group for this report stated that they were confident that they knew where to find information about activities and events within Bowdoinham:

¹² Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs, <http://www.n4a.org>) were created by the Federal government to support older adults who are aging in their community. A local Area Agency on Aging is administered by the State AAA but is partially funded through the Federal Government Older Americans Act. Local Area Agencies on Aging, such as Spectrum Generations provide information and referral to social services, administer federally-funded nutritional programs for older adults and provide various supports for care partners.

I like the activity and resource list you (COA) send out each month. The calendar is very handy. I put it on the refrigerator. I still forget some things that I want to go to but at least I know they are happening. We plan out what we are going to do at the start of the month, when your calendar comes.

In 2013, the Senior Center opened one day each week for about five hours. The COA member who acts as the director of the Shipmates Senior Center has become an important resource for residents:

That's what I think has been so great about the Thursday group (Shipmates Senior Center) because I got to know Theresa (COA member, Senior Center Director) and anytime there was something, any problem I had, whether it was computer or someone to help with a specific problem. I would go there. She was affiliated with the Town office, too. She is kind of a go-to-person for everything you need.

In 2014, COA successfully advocated for the Town to hire a Coordinator of Older Adult Services. Because the Coordinator has regularly scheduled office hours (5 hours/week), there has been a steady increase in the number of older residents requesting information and referral from the Town. In 2015, at the suggestion of COA, the monthly Activity and Resource List will include monthly feature articles about formal services available to older Bowdoinham residents to support aging in the community.

Civic Engagement

Participation in local decision-making

One way to measure participation in local decision making is to record the proportion of eligible voters who voted in the most recent local election or legislative initiative. Bowdoinham's older residents are actively involved in all aspects of community life. About 74.3% of residents aged 60+ have voted within the past four years. Of those, approximately 81.6% of active voters participated in the most recent election. Older residents are active participants at the Town's annual Town Meeting and are actively involved in many of the Town committees.

Volunteer Opportunities

The rate of volunteering among Maine residents aged 65+ was 25.1% in 2013. Residents aged 65-74 were more likely to participate in formal volunteer opportunities than were their older peers (32.2% and 21.6% respectively). Older people gave an average of 80 hours/year of service (41). About 70% of all volunteers in the Town of Bowdoinham in 2014 were aged 60+ (see Appendix 6).

Several local organizations depend on volunteers to fulfill their mission. Organizations such as the Bowdoinham Public Library, Historical Society and the Merrymeeting Arts Center rely on volunteers for fund-raising as well as to plan programming and events. Older residents play a key role. For example,

33% of the women who belong to the Fire Department's Ladies Auxiliary have achieved the age of 60 (Suzie Uhle, President, unpublished data, January 20, 2015). 71% of the members of the Bowdoinham Public library Board are aged 60 or more (Bowdoinham Public Library, 2014). Without their dedication and hard work organizing the library plant sale, the annual book sale, and other fund raising events, it would not be possible for the library to offer the programming that it provides to the community. Although only half of the total membership of Historical Society is over age 60, they represent about 70% of the core group who work on events and exhibits throughout the year (Elizabeth Steen, Treasurer, unpublished data, 28 December 2014). Currently, 75% of the Executive Board of the Merrymeeting Arts Center has reached or surpassed the age of 60 (Laleah Parker, Manager, unpublished data, 30 December 2014). The Bowdoinham Snowbirds are a club for snowmobile enthusiasts. To keep the trails open, volunteers work countless hours to groom the trails, negotiate passage on private land, etc. Almost 25% of the members of the snowbirds who groom trails are age 60 or more (Jim McGee, President, unpublished data, January 15, 2015). Older adults are also active volunteers at the food pantry, serving on volunteer municipal boards, and forming informal helping relationships with their neighbors. All of the members of the Advisory Committee on Aging are over age 60. Together, they give more than 1200 of volunteer time each year to provide services and advocacy for Bowdoinham's older residents.

Older adults clearly represent a valuable resource for the Town of Bowdoinham. Volunteering and civic engagement were mentioned as part of the culture of Bowdoinham and one way newcomers could get to know other residents:

We moved here in July but by the end of August/September I got a post card from the Ladies' Auxiliary at the Fire Department asking if I would like to come and join. And so I went to the first meeting. Instantly, I had friends.... (*community focus group*)

A large majority of focus group participants (69%) spoke about volunteering and making a contribution to the community. They mentioned volunteering in the community not only in terms of generosity but was a way to "give back". Volunteering was framed as a positive experience—as providing enjoyment, fulfillment, stimulation, social interaction, and a way to remain engaged with the community. Formal and informal volunteering were discussed by members of the focus group. Several participants shared stories about neighbors reaching out to help neighbors:

Almost 6 years ago now, I needed to have bypass surgery so I was pretty down. The neighbors, for about 2 or 3 weeks, scheduled it so that someone brought food every day. In the spring, I broke my ankle and I was really down! They were absolutely incredible—the thought and care... you know... they brought food for another 2 or 3 weeks.... I was really, really grateful for my neighbors. And the food was great! We had

everything from vegetarian to elegant deserts. My husband said he was going to break my other ankle (laughter) That is what is great about Bowdoinham—it is Mayberry and better. Neighbors care about each other. (*community focus group*)

Formal volunteer experiences were described as self-fulfilling and satisfying. Volunteering was confirmation that skills and interests mastered over a lifetime were valued in the community.

I think COA has been a real bonus for me to get involved with what goes on in the community. And to get to know a few people a little bit better. I have to be doing something. I am not someone who is going to sit around and chat very well. I don't do the senior center but I led a mushroom walk and to have other people interested in something I am interested in was very rewarding. (*community focus group*)

Providing an array of volunteer opportunities to engage older residents is one way that Bowdoinham is an aging friendly community.

Well-Being

Well-being is affected by factors in the larger community, including access to desired activities, opportunities to find meaningful volunteer work, transportation, and housing supports. Well-being is also affected by individual factors, such as economic security and functional ability. COA promotes the quality of life of Bowdoinham's older residents by advising the Select Board and municipal departments about policies that enhance well-being and by sponsoring services and programs that encourage all older residents remain as active and engaged in the community as they want to be.

Socio-Cultural Activities

Regular participation in socio-cultural activities is important for people as they age. Regular participation in the many organizations in Bowdoinham that offer face-to-face formal and informal religious, social, and cultural opportunities is a sign of the inclusion of older people in the everyday life of the community. Not all organizations that offer socio-cultural opportunities for Bowdoinham residents keep detailed records about the age composition of participants but 14% of Bowdoinham's older residents (n=81) have attended at least one cultural event sponsored by the COA (see Appendix 6).

Informal and occasional opportunities to participate in socio-cultural affairs abound in Bowdoinham. Each summer, the Town of Bowdoinham sponsors a series of waterfront concerts. Once each month a local person with a converted barn welcomes residents of all ages to a potluck and musical concert. The Bowdoinham Guild of Artisans sponsors a yearly sale of work by local artists. Although the exact percentage of older residents attending these events is not known, older adults are frequent and enthusiastic supporters.

Older residents are over-represented as board members and fund raisers for the three local cultural organizations—the Bowdoinham Public Library, Merrymeeting Arts Center, and the Historical Society. Almost 3/4 of the library trustees and Friends of the Library, the group involved with fundraising for the library, are over age 60 but less than 15% of regular library patrons are aged 60 or more (Kate Cutko, Library Director, unpublished data, 16 December 2014). Older residents who are involved with the library find a source of social engagement and intellectual stimulation:

I joined the Loose Ladies Book Club a few years after we moved to town. I've made some good friends there. We talk about books but we also have fun. It's a good way for new people to get to know people. The library is the best place to find out what's going on around town as well. Kate (the librarian) is a great resource. She does a lot to bring people into the library who may not usually come. It's a wonderful resource for this community. (*community focus group*)

To attract a larger number of older patrons to the library, the Town librarian has requested COA's assistance to increase the age-friendliness of the library. One of COA's goals has been to work with all of the municipal departments, town committees, and local organizations to increase awareness of the needs of older residents. COA welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the Bowdoinham Public Library. COA is working to increase accessibility to the library's ramp entrance and has recommended the addition of physical fitness DVDs for older residents and materials about home modification. COA includes the library book clubs in its monthly activity and resource calendar. Future plans include hosting an open house for older residents to learn more about the library's online catalog system, working with the library to offer a class about using the library holdings and databases for genealogical research, and sending emails to the COA distribution list about special library events that may be of interest to older residents.

Merrymeeting Arts Center (<http://merrymeetingartscenter.org/about-us/>) provides opportunities for all ages to both participate in art and enjoy art. Three of four board members are aged 60 or older. Older adults are more likely to attend exhibits and events than they are to participate in art. Approximately 75% of the people attending exhibits have achieved their 60th birthday but none have participated in classes or "doing" art (Laleah Parker, Manager, unpublished data, 30 December 2014). The vision of Merrymeeting Arts Center is to "develop community by providing a place where everyone can enjoy and participate in the arts". COA is exploring ways in which it can work with Merrymeeting Arts Center to increase participation by older residents in classes and "doing" art.

Bowdoinham Historical Society (BHS, <http://www.bowdoinhamhistoricalsociety.org/>) was established in 1970 "to collect and preserve records and physical objects relating to the history of

Bowdoinham”. About 64% of the officers and trustees of the Historical Society and 50% of the members have celebrated their 60th birthday. However, the mean age of the volunteers who worked on the three largest recent projects of BHS is about 70 years. The three projects—restoring the Jellerson School, organizing the Lancaster-Bishop Room for archival research, and restoration of the Meeting House—took considerable time, fund raising skill, and physical labor to complete.

One of the most popular offerings sponsored by COA has been trips to various places in Maine. Some trips have been to places that make things (e.g. ELMS puzzle factory, Savage Oaks Winery), some have been to cultural spots (e.g. Peary-McMillan Arctic Museum, Margaret Chase Smith Museum). The trips are a chance to explore places in Maine that residents may not have visited but they are also a social opportunity:

I like the trips because it gives us a chance to get away for the day with other people from Bowdoinham. I’ve met some new people and found out that we had some common interests. (*community focus group*)

I’d never even heard of some of the places we went! We’re going to take our grandchildren to some of them this summer. It’s always a job to find something new for them to do (laughter). (*community focus group*)

Day trips were a new program sponsored by COA in response to a suggestion by the Shipmates Senior Center planning group. The planning group decides the location for the trips and where the group will stop for lunch. One of the foundational principles of COA has been to solicit feedback from the community to make sure that COA-sponsored activities and events are in line with what older residents want:

We have learned from the people what they want and moved ahead with activities and events that the people want, not what we think. Too many times communities or people who think they are being age friendly try to impose what they think older residents want. (*COA focus group*)

In its two year history, COA has used its energies to grow a program of choices that will encourage older residents to remain active and engaged in the community in ways that are meaningful to them.

Each month, the Second Baptist Church and Town of Bowdoinham sponsor a “Village Luncheon” for older residents. After the luncheons, volunteers are asked to share a topic of interest to attendees. Leslie Anderson, Billie Oakes, and Elizabeth Steen shared their experiences working for the restoration of the Combs Municipal Building. Jeanine Beaudoin told the group about artifacts she has found near her home in Bowdoinham. Martha Cushing and Nancy Curtis talked about their trips to European

destinations. Through the monthly luncheons older residents have found new common interests with other residents and have formed new friendships.

Lifelong Learning

Opportunities for lifelong learning abound in Bowdoinham and in the surrounding area. Merrymeeting Arts Center offers exhibits as well as hands-on art programs for adults. The Bowdoinham Historical Society offers lectures and special exhibits to share the history of the community. Author talks and book clubs are regular offerings of the Bowdoinham Public Library. The Advisory Committee on Aging provides numerous options specifically designed for older residents (see Appendix 3). Focus group participants were enthusiastic about the opportunities for lifelong learning that COA has sponsored:

They've started cooking lessons. Those are fun! We learned to make cheese but mine isn't as good as <NAME of INSTRUCTOR>. (*laughter*). (*community focus group*)

I appreciate all of the things I am learning. The thing about safety that is coming up. That is something that most people will be facing down the road. If you can keep your health, you know, no falls. I mean things can't always be avoided but if we can be very careful and take all these things we learn. They are so helpful.

The trips are great! It gives us a chance to get out of the house and go to some interesting places right here in Maine. It's educational. We've learned a lot.

Combining participation in Merrymeeting Arts Center events, Bowdoinham Historical Society lectures and exhibits, the library book clubs and author talks, and the lifelong learning opportunities sponsored by COA, approximately 44% of residents who have reached the age of 60 participate in a life-long learning opportunities within town limits (see Appendix 6).

In addition, there are numerous options in the surrounding area. The Midcoast Senior College and Merrymeeting Adult Education offer formal, classroom-based learning while cultural organizations, such as the Maine State Music Theatre, Peary-McMillan Arctic Museum, and Bowdoin College Museum of Art provide informal learning. Thus, the percentage may be higher than given.

Leisure-Time Physical Activity in a Group

Bowdoinham is a rural community with a wealth of recreational opportunities. About 18.7% (n=102) of Bowdoinham residents over age 60 participated in either a COA-sponsored exercise program, Silver Sneakers, or Zumba Gold/Zumba Tone (see Appendix 6). Silver Sneakers, located in nearby Bowdoin, Maine is an exercise program that is covered by many of the "gap" insurance policies purchased by older people to pay for medical care that is not covered by Medicare. For those who do

not have an insurance policy that includes the Silver Sneaker Benefit, the cost is \$2/class. In 2014, the program had about 60 participants, 16 from Bowdoinham (Stephanie Dustin, Instructor, unpublished data, January 31, 2015), Zumba Gold and Zumba Tone are offered in Bowdoinham for a fee of \$5/class. Scholarships are provided for residents who cannot afford the fee. All exercise programs sponsored by COA in 2014 were led by volunteers and offered free of charge. A total of 81 people participated in COA-sponsored exercise programs or wellness activities. Free and low cost, organized exercise programs are available to all local residents.

In 2012, when the initial *Aging in Bowdoinham* report was written, there was a limited variety of exercise opportunities for older adults. In the past two years, COA has sponsored a number of activities (see Appendix 2). Focus group participants were pleased to have a variety of organized physical activity opportunities because it gave them a chance to try new things and to find an enjoyable, organized activity that made them feel healthier and stronger:

I like all the things that are being offered. Line dancing was fun. I only went to a few of the classes but it was fun. I went to tai chi and found out it wasn't for me. <NAME> was in that class and said that if I was looking for more of a stretch, I should try chair yoga at Silver Sneakers so I tried that a few times too. When I moved here, I never thought there would be so many choices—and most of them are free! (*community focus group*)

I think that what the Committee on Aging has done best are Matter of Balance, the first aid talk (when there is a problem in the home), the wellness fair, just safety in general. Because at our age it is so critical that we don't get hurt and I have such a desire to be safe, not just for me but for <HUSBAND>. (*community focus group*)

For many participants, not having to drive outside of town to participate in exercise was a plus:

We've been wanting to join an exercise program but life is so busy, it is hard to take time to drive too far. And it doesn't take much for me to not go to exercise. I've noticed some changes in my balance this year, though so we are going to try tai-chi for balance. If it's in town, I think it is easier, transportation wise. (*community focus group*)

COA includes a dedicated team of volunteers who have offered many different types of physical activity. In 2014, COA expanded its physical activity option with its first annual Wellness Fair. The wellness fair included a free flu shot, balance assessment, blood pressure checks, and opportunities to learn more about maintaining wellness, living with chronic disease, healthy snacks, and volunteer opportunities. The participants in the community focus group were universally enthusiastic about the wellness fair:

The wellness fair was excellent! I hope you do it again.

To get our flu shots so early in the season like that and all of the other options that were there. The balance assessment was great.

I picked up a lot of information that I have shared with other people, too.

Your snacks (*referring to Snacks provided during focus group*) look good but the snacks at the Wellness Fair were amazing! I brought home some of the recipes to try at home. They are great!

One of the challenges of offering physical activity programs for older adults is that wellness levels are very different for newly retired Baby Boomers who have spent a lifetime exercising at the gym and physically frail residents who are aging with a disability. COA plans to meet the challenge of providing a wide array of physical activity opportunities to meet the needs of all the older residents who want to participate.

Quality of life

One way to measure quality of life is to examine healthy life expectancy at birth. Healthy life expectancy, defined as the number of years at birth an individual can expect to spend in very good or good general health, for a person born in Sagadahoc County is 79.1 years, slightly lower than the State of Maine 79.2 years but higher than the US 78.9 years (42).

Bowdoinham residents who participated in focus groups were proud of Bowdoinham's reputation in the State of Maine as a good place to live. People who moved to Bowdoinham from other places were attracted by the quality of life offered by the community. Focus group participants who had lived in Bowdoinham for a long time planned to remain in Bowdoinham for as long as possible because of their roots in the community.

When I mentioned I was going to be moving to Bowdoinham, it was interesting. It has a reputation of being a really nice town. Everyone would say 'It's really nice there' And I would say 'I'm so glad'.

Well, being one of the newest people in the area, we just moved here a year ago, we find people in Bowdoinham to be very friendly which is very unusual, especially when you come from out of the area.

I've heard people from Brunswick refer to Bowdoinham as a mythical place. (*laughter*) It isn't a go-through place either, it is a place where people are rooted.

Having lived here most of my life, you have a lot of family and connections. At least that is what I think of when I think about aging in this town. I have a lot of relatives and there are a lot of ties there. And then there are the children and the grandchildren and the ties to the school and all of that so <HUSBAND> says, 'Wouldn't it be nice to go to

Florida?’ and I say, ‘No it wouldn’t be!’ (*laughter*) Who do I know in Florida? All of my roots are right here in town and I feel a connection to a lot of things in town and I like that feeling.

One of the strengths of the community for aging in place is its acceptance of differences in the way residents approach aging. Some older residents want to be involved with activities and events sponsored by COA, others do not. Members of the focus group were insistent that lack of involvement did not mean lack of appreciation of the many programs COA sponsors for older residents to remain socially engaged and physically active, but was a reflection of the many different things that compete for the time of older residents—from family to hobbies—and of preferences to be or not to be involved.

Bowdoinham is the kind of town that allows people to be and do whatever they want to do. If you want to be involved, you can. But if you don’t want to be involved, that’s all right to. I think people are very accepting of all the different interests that we have.

Before Celebrate (Celebrate Bowdoinham, the Town’s annual festival), I didn’t know there was anything for older people but I saw my friend *<name redacted for privacy concerns>* in the (Committee on Aging’s) tent and found out about all these things that are going on! I haven’t been able to attend many things because we are busy but it is nice to know it is there when we do have time.

Another strength discussed by participants was the culture of neighbor helping neighbor. Residents prided themselves on respecting the privacy of their friends and neighbors but saw COA sponsored activities as one way to keep an eye on their neighbors without prying.

If they have the transportation, they can be involved and that is good so that everybody you know can keep an eye on them. I think that is what Bowdoinham is. We kinda don’t want to pry into somebody’s business but we like to keep an eye on them and make sure everyone is OK. That’s what I see COA doing.

Based on what the focus group member shared, COA sponsored programming has significantly improved the quality of life of town residents. However, participants discussed several significant barriers to optimal aging in Bowdoinham:

1. lack of transportation alternatives
2. lack of housing options for frail older residents
3. difficulty finding and paying for in-home care
4. lack of caregiver support programs and services
5. rising property taxes that outstrip fixed income resources
6. limited access to high-speed Internet

Quality of life for Bowdoinham residents who are physically fit and socially connected is very good. However, for residents who lack transportation, need to move to a more supportive housing option,

who struggle economically, or who are caring for a loved one or friend with a chronic condition, life in Bowdoinham can be challenging:

Barriers often depend on an individual's social and transportation resources – So for those who have no family, limited friends, do not drive (so not much of a network going and access to services is limited) – the barriers are huge. Conversely – for those with family and friends (even if they don't drive) the barriers will be less severe. (*COA focus group*)

Developing and maintaining relationships with friends and neighbors is an important contributor to quality of life for a person aging in the community and helps older residents to cope with adversity.

COA-sponsored programs provide residents 60 and older with opportunities to build friendship networks and support systems that allow them to both give and receive help as they age in the community. Involvement with the Shipmates Senior Center not only helps people to find new interests, meet new people, and build friendships, it confirmed their rootedness in the community:

The friends I have at the Shipmates give me a sense of family and community, of belonging here.

Designing the float was fun! Being in the parade felt great because I could be proud of the club we have created. It felt like the community was behind us.

Summary

Over the past decade, Bowdoinham's population has become increasingly older. Residents who are age 45 and older make up nearly half of the Town's population. Bowdoinham is increasingly identified as an age-friendly community and, thus, will continue to attract retiree immigrants looking for a home in Maine. As Boomer's age into retirement and newcomers retire in Bowdoinham, the proportion of the Town's population over the age of 60 will continue to grow as will the need for the COA to sponsor programs and services that will meet the needs and preferences of older residents.

Findings of this study indicate a continued commitment to Bowdoinham by the Town's older residents. Focus group participants were proud of Bowdoinham's reputation as highly livable, safe, and age-friendly. Among the advantages cited of living in Bowdoinham were the involvement by older residents in all aspects of town life. Bowdoinham does not have formal services to support aging in place. However, the Town is famous for its shared value of "neighbor-helping-neighbor". COA can harness the power of long-term residents and engage newcomers as volunteers to continue growing the age-friendliness of the community and meet the diverse needs of residents from age 60 to 106.

The generation of “Baby Boomers” (in 2015, aged 50-69) has a reputation for being self-advocating, proactive in seeking out preferred services, and for shaping institutions and systems to meet their specific needs and desires. Thus, as COA plans for the future, there will be need for consideration regarding services that best address the changing needs of older residents over time. Some older residents of Bowdoinham will need programs that help them to maintain health, well-being, and independence as they age with functional limitations or chronic illness. Others will need and want programs that give them opportunities to increase their fitness, civic engagement, and participation in socio-cultural activities. Others will need information and referrals to help them with caregiving responsibilities. COA’s aim is to provide all older residents of Bowdoinham with access to supports that will enable them to age safely and with dignity, while maximizing quality of life. In order to meet that goal, COA will continue to depend on the Town’s older residents to direct the work of COA as it creates, where needed and wanted, a menu of opportunities that will enhance the health, well-being and independence of Bowdoinham’s residents as they age.

The Town of Bowdoinham has made significant strides, in great part due to the work of the Advisory Committee on Aging, to make Bowdoinham and aging-friendly town. However, there is much work yet to be done. The findings from this report will direct the creation of long range plans to insure that Bowdoinham remains the aging friendliest town in Maine.

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Appendix 2: Timeline of Significant Events Bowdoinham’s Advisory Committee on Aging (COA), 2012-2014

How the committee came to be

Summer 2012 – A Needs Assessment was completed and the report, *Aging in Bowdoinham*, was written. Focus groups suggested that Bowdoinham needed to take the following steps to become a more aging-friendly community:

1. *Increased Communication*—specifically, a regularly distributed list of social opportunities, town activities and opportunities for community involvement as well as information about the programs and services offered by the Town to support aging in place.
2. *Information and Referral Source*—specifically, availability of a local resource person to help older residents access services located in and outside Bowdoinham that could promote aging safely in the community.
3. *Develop Volunteer Base*—specifically, a person to develop, coordinate and administer a network of volunteers willing to give time to help older or disabled residents.
4. *Promotion of Inclusiveness*—specifically, enhancement of a town environment promoting inclusiveness of all ages and abilities in all town-sponsored activities.
5. *Development of a Senior Center, Community Building, or dedicated space* where older adults can socialize or participate in activities of interest to them.

Sept 2012 – an Informal meeting about aging in Bowdoinham was held and the Committee on Aging in Bowdoinham was formed as an advisory committee to the Select Board.

October/ November 2012 – Seven committee members and two alternates were appointed and sworn in by the Select Board. In January 2014, the Committee was expanded to 9 members with two alternates.

- Official meetings began, first monthly, then bi-monthly. The committee adopted the steps listed above as its priorities, with major focus on the first three.
- The committee adopted the following statement of purpose: “Creating, where needed, a menu of opportunities to allow people to continue living in Bowdoinham as they age.”

Timeline of significant events in 2013

January

- Bowdoinham Senior Center opened. It was scheduled to be open each Thursday morning from 10-3:00PM in space donated by the Second Baptist Church. Facilitator of the Senior Center was Theresa Turgeon, a member of COA. At the opening day, Committee members presented information about the report and the goals of the Committee’s work and asked for feedback on areas of interest. Feedback informed selection of speakers after Village Seniors Luncheons, sponsored by the Town and by the Second Baptist Church on the 4th Thursday of the month.
- In an effort to keep townspeople informed about COA-sponsored activities and events, COA began contributing articles to each issue of the Bowdoinham Newsletter, a publication of the Town, distributed to all residents every other month.

February

- Met with Barry Lohnes, director of Region Ten Technical High School (still known as “Voc Tech”) to discuss services to seniors as one of the employment options for students. Effective Sept 2013, the school has incorporated this emphasis into its curriculum. This effort was coordinated by Peggy Muir, a member of COA.
- In accord with recommendation #1 in the Report, COA began distributing a monthly listing of local Activities and Resources for older residents, compiled by Linda Jariz, a member of

COA. This is sent to our email list and is available at the Town Landing, the local restaurant, the Bowdoinham library, and Town Office.

March

- Began planning for monthly movie showings at the Senior Center and for a senior exercise program.

April

- Exercise Plus began on Thursdays at the fire station led by Kathy Pszczolkowski, a member of COA: exercises emphasize strength, flexibility and balance exercises that can be done standing or sitting.
- Walking group began, led by Martha Cushing and Linda Jariz, both COA members.
- COA worked with Spectrum Generations on a grant application to the AARP Foundation. The grant application was not successful.

May

- Home modification self-assessment tool put in Bowdoinham library.

June

- A second session of Exercise Plus began on Tuesdays, led by Linda Jariz, a member of COA.
- At COA's request, outdoor seating was made available to people before the opening of the Annual Plant Sale – traditionally there is a long line waiting to get in. (This reflects the Report's recommendation #4.)
- COA sponsored the eight-session Matter of Balance class. For their final project, participants assessed the Town Office with regard to safety and accessibility and presented their findings to COA who then presented them to Bill Post, Bowdoinham's Town Manager, who received the information enthusiastically and has acted on several of the recommendations.
- COA sponsored a feedback session on the first six months of COA activities and received, among others, the following comments and recommendations:
 - Delighted to have a place to bring my mom.
 - This has been really good – I've gotten to know a few good people in the community – had not participated in community previously.
 - Esp for a really small town, it's great how many activities are going on
 - Should we continue? Yes, yes!
 - I'm all for anything that is going to keep us around and healthy longer – MOB and exercise class. Can we have a class on nutrition?
 - I get all my info from Facebook and I share it – I share info about lunches, etc.
 - Trips requested--the Botanical Gardens, the state parks, and elsewhere.

September

- After a summer break, COA resumed Exercise Plus and walking groups. Walking group is led by Jeanine Beaudoin, a member of COA.
- COA presence at Celebrate Bowdoinham 2013. On recommendation of COA, additional seating was provided throughout the waterfront. COA staffed a table with information and resources for older residents, including emergency Go-Bags and a home safety assessment tool. COA members staffing the table heard concerns about caring for aging parents (Recommendation#4), and heard requests for trips, a nutrition & weight loss group, and help with transportation.

October

- COA members visited the Litchfield Senior Center. Litchfield has a community center and 15 hours/week paid staff to operate their senior center. Activities are scheduled 3 days/wk.
- Bridge lessons began, every Monday until the end of the year. Instructors Martha Cushing, a COA member and Glenna Morin.

November

- A six-month Tai Chi for Better Balance class began, led by Kathy Pszczolkowski, a COA member, and Patricia Oh.

December

- Decision made to request Select Board approve change in by-laws to expand voting members from 7 to 9, with Jeanine Beaudoin and Bob Curtis moving from alternate status to full voting members.
- Discussion begins about increasing accessibility of library.
- Total participants served during 2013 = 102. Contact hours = 1120
- Total number of volunteers: 11 (9 COA members and 2 community volunteers)

Timeline of Significant Accomplishments of 2014

January

- Activities: Bridge, Exercise Plus, Tai Chi for Better Balance.
- Senior Center is open each Thursday from 10-3:00.
- Wendy Rose begins a crafting group once/month at the Senior Center.
- Linda Jariz represents COA in the Maine Aging Initiative and speaks at the Maine Summit on Aging.

February

- Activities: Bridge, Tai Chi for Better Balance.
- Senior Center is open each Thursday from 10-3:00. Activities include Crafting with Wendy, and Movie Afternoons.
- Members of the Advisory Committee on Aging attend other town committees to create links between their work and COA's work. Theresa Turgeon attended the Housing Committee; Martha Cushing attended the Bicycle, Paddling and Walking Committee, Peggy Muir attended an EMS meeting and met with Ann Davis to discuss ways that COA could work with EMS to support frail residents.

March

- Activities: Bridge, Tai Chi for Better Balance
- Senior Center is open each Thursday from 10-3:00. Activities include Crafting with Wendy, and Movie Afternoons.
- Linda Jariz speaks about the COA initiative at Maine Health Access Foundation's Community-Based Initiatives Workshop.
- Select Board votes to support application to join WHO Age Friendly Communities.
- Martha Cushing volunteers to work with SEARCH Greater Bath Program to increase participation in Bowdoinham. SEARCH pairs up volunteers with clients who need drivers to take them shopping, to doctors' appointments, shopping, etc.
- Jeanine Beaudoin provides transportation for Bowdoinham residents who want to attend the Silver Sneakers exercise program in Bowdoin.

April

- Activities: Bridge, Exercise Plus, Tai Chi for Better Balance, Walking Group.
- Exercise Plus resumes, led by Linda Jariz.
- Senior Center is open each Thursday from 10-3:00. Activities include Crafting with Wendy, and Movie Afternoons.
- New program: Lunch with Lynn is launched at the Town Landing. Once each month the Town Landing will offer two "Senior Specials"—a complete lunch for \$5 followed by Trivia. First event was attended by 10 residents.

May

- Activities: Bridge, Exercise Plus, Tai Chi for Better Balance, Walking Group.
- Shipmates Senior Center is open each Thursday from 10-3:00. Activities include Crafting with Wendy, and Movie Afternoons.
- Twice weekly meetings of tai chi have ended. Group will continue to meet once/week; average attendance: 12.
- Decision made to purchase CPR books for CPR class and exercise bands with honorarium earned by Linda Jariz for at the Maine Health Access Foundation.

June

- Activities: Bridge, Exercise Plus, Tai Chi at the Waterfront.
- Shipmates Senior Center is open each Thursday from 10-3:00. Activities include Cribbage and Crafting with Wendy, and Movie Afternoons.
- Bowdoinham accepted as a member of the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.
- Members of the Senior Club rename themselves the Shipmates Senior Center and form a planning committee that will meet once/month to plan the activities that will be offered by the Shipmates Senior Center.
- Dick St. Cyr begins to offer weekly cribbage lessons at the Shipmates Senior Club.
- Exercise Plus ends for the summer.
- Tai Chi will continue to meet weekly in the Gazebo at the Waterfront.
- COA recommends that the Select Board accept, with regrets, the resignation of Peggy Muir as a voting member of COA.

July

- Summer activities: bridge, kayaking, geo-caching, mushroom walks, pickle ball, and tai-chi at the waterfront.
- Shipmates Senior Center is open each Thursday from 10-3:00. Activities include Cribbage and Crafting with Wendy, and Movie Afternoons.
- Shipmates Senior Club starts to plan bi-weekly trips to places throughout Maine. First trip, to Margaret Chase Smith and LC Bates Museum. Attendance: 18.
- CPR class for 6 COA members that are involved with exercise programs.

August

- Summer activities: bridge, kayaking, geo-caching, mushroom walks, pickle ball, and tai-chi at the waterfront.
- Shipmates Senior Center is open 10-3:00 on Thursdays. Activities include Cribbage, Crafting with Wendy, and Movie afternoons.
- Coordinator of Older Adult Services hired.
- Developed and published information pamphlet about Advisory Committee on Aging.
- Developed Activity Survey to assess interest in additional programs, activities, and events. Distributed September – October. Total Surveys returned: 68.

September

- Activities: bridge, kayaking, line dancing, and tai-chi at the waterfront.
- Shipmates Senior Center is open 10-3:00 on Thursdays. Activities include Cribbage, Crafting with Wendy, and Movie afternoons.
- Jeanine Beaudoin starts to offer line dancing.
- Shipmates Senior Center Trips: Savage Oaks Winery.
- Celebrate Bowdoinham. On advice of COA, handicapped parking area was increased; drop-off area was added so that older residents with a mobility disability can be left off near the Advisory Committee on Aging tent and other activities. Groupings of chairs were added

throughout Celebrate so that people who needed a break could sit and relax. Helpful to attendees of all ages.

- Shipmates Senior Club participated in Celebrate parade and handed out calendars with COA-sponsored activities.
- Advisory Committee on Aging sponsored tent included free snacks, a BINGO game called by Helen Read, cribbage, board games, and a board to record favorite memories of Bowdoinham, and an information table. Total visitors to tent: at least 57. More visited the information table but did not stay to visit or participate in an activity in the tent.
- Wellness Fair. Jeanine Beaudoin provided healthy snacks that were very popular. Providers included: CHANS (flu shot), EMS: Blood pressure checks; Head to Toe Physical Therapy: Balance Assessments; SEARCH; and Merrymeeting Wheelers Bicycle Club. Total attendance: 53.
- Total attendance at all COA-sponsored activities and events in September: 303.

October

- Activities: bridge, line dancing, and Beginner Tai Chi.
- Shipmates Senior Center is open 10-1:00 on Thursdays. Activities include Cribbage, Crafting with Wendy, Knitting Lessons, and Movie afternoons.
- Knitting lessons start at the Shipmates Senior Center. Offered by Nancy Curtis and Dona St. Cyr.
- Recommendation made by Shipmates Planning Committee to shorten Shipmates hours to 10-1:00 since that is when most activities occur. COA supported the decision.
- Beginners Tai Chi, led by Kathy Pszczolkowski and Patricia Oh, meets twice/week for month of October.
- Profile of Bowdoinham's Age-Friendly initiative is placed on WHO website.
- COA participates in There's No Place Like Home, symposium sponsored by Spectrum Generations, the Area Agency on Aging that includes Bowdoinham in its coverage area. Specifically, COA was asked to participate in housing options panel to discuss benefits of joining WHO-AFC.
- Kate Cutko, librarian at the Bowdoinham Library requests collaboration to increase the number older patrons using the library.
- Total attendance at all COA-sponsored activities in October: 288.

November

- Activities: bridge, line dancing, and Beginner Tai Chi.
- Shipmates Senior Center is open 10-3:00 on Thursdays. Activities include Cribbage, Crafting with Wendy, Knitting Lessons, and Movie afternoons.
- Long Range Planning meeting.
- COA's application to participate in WHO pilot of Age Friendly indicators guide is accepted.
- COA recommends that the Select Board accept, with regrets, the resignation of Jeanine Beaudoin as a voting member of COA.
- Total attendance at all COA-sponsored activities and events in November: 134.

December

- Health and Wellness sub-committee planning meeting.
- Decision made to offer some fee-based classes. Until now, all classes have been offered free of charge with volunteer instructors. The first fee-based class will be a class on selling things on e-bay.
- Total attendance at all COA-sponsored activities and events in December: 121.

Appendix 3: Participation and contact hours by activities/programs for 2014

Activity	Participants	Contact Hours ¹³
Bridge lessons/playing	08	312
Cribbage	09	104
Cooking Classes		75
Cheese making	18	
Chocolates	07	
Crafting with Wendy	11	36
Knitting Class	08	24
Technology Tutorials	03	12
Exercise Plus	17	128
Line Dancing	16	79
Tai Chi	17	293
Transportation	07	129
Walking Group	07	36
Special Summer Activities		104
Frank Glazer Concert	3	
Geo-Caching	05	06
Kayaking	08	06
Pickle ball	05	12
Mushroom Walk	05	04
Lunch with Lynn	16	37
Village Seniors Luncheons	48	
Village Luncheon Speakers	105	105
Movie Afternoons	06	90
Shipmates Trips	72	432
Celebrate Bowdoinham tent	57	87
Wellness Fair	53	106
Total		1990

¹³ Contact hours are calculated include hours spent providing direct contact with residents multiplied by number of hours direct contact as made and does not include preparation, travel, or set-up time required for a volunteer to offer a class or plan an event.

Appendix 4: Article in the Bowdoinham News about the WHO-pilot and community focus group

We all know that Bowdoinham is a great place to live! Now, the world is starting to recognize it as well! In June, Bowdoinham became the first community in Maine to be accepted as part of the World Health Organization's Network of Age Friendly Communities. Late in 2014 the World Health Organization asked cities and towns throughout the world to pilot a newly developed guide that municipalities can use to measure the age friendliness of their community. Each city that was chosen will receive a \$5000.00 grant to field test the guide and to provide advice about how the guide could be improved. In the United States, only Washington, DC and Bowdoinham were asked to participate in the program.

To complete the evaluation of the guide, the Advisory Committee on Aging needs your help! As part of project, COA will be conducting a few focus groups to hear your opinions about Bowdoinham. What do you think is great about living here and what do you think needs improvement? In what ways can Bowdoinham improve its age friendliness? The Bowdoinham Town website will have information about date, time, and place. For more information about the pilot or about the focus groups, contact Patricia Oh, Coordinator of Older Adult Services (phone: 207-666-5531, ext. 110; email: p.oh@bowdoinham.com).

Wanted !!!

Your opinions!

The members of the Advisory Committee on Aging (COA) want to know more about what it is like to age in Bowdoinham



The Advisory Committee on Aging wants to learn more about your experience in Bowdoinham. What do you see as the challenges and benefits of growing older in Bowdoinham? By participating in the focus group, you can help COA and the Town understand more about what the Town is doing right and what it could offer to help residents who want to stay in Bowdoinham as they age.

FOCUS GROUP

Date: Wednesday, January 7th, 1:00-3:00 pm

Location: Board Room, 2nd Floor, Town Office

Refreshments will be provided

Contact Patricia Oh
Coordinator of Older Adult Services in Bowdoinham
to register for to learn more about the focus group

Phone: 1-207-666-5531, ext 110

Email: poh@bowdoinham.com

Appendix 6. Summary of Indicators

Core Indicators	Definition Used	Indicator Value	Data Source	Year of Data	Population/ Sample	Additional Comments
Economic security	Proportion of older people living in a household with a disposable income above the risk-of-poverty threshold.	66.1%	American Community Survey (5-year estimates, 2009-2013) Table B17024; B19037; B19215 Elder Economic Security Index	2013 2010	Representative Population of Bowdoinham, aged 65+	
Paid Employment	Proportion of adults aged 65+ who reported working or wanting to work in the past 12 months Proportion of residents aged 65+ who actually worked or wanted to work during the past 12 months who reported being unemployed	23.4% 6.5%	American Community Survey (5-year estimates, 2009-2013) Table B23001; B23004	2013	Representative population of Bowdoinham aged 65+	Not all people who have attained the age of 65 are interested in working. Thus, it was determined that reporting both the percentage of the population who wanted to work was important to understanding the unemployment rate. The reported unemployment rate is based on the population that reported either working or wanting to work and does not include residents who were no longer in the labor force (retired).
Availability of social and health services	Proportion of older persons with a disability receiving formal, publicly paid, home-based services.	19.3%	Medicaid Claims Data, 2011, analyzed by OADS, 2013.	2011	Older residents covered by Medicaid (MaineCare)	The reported proportion of people receiving in-home care only refers to the 27% of older people who have a disability and are covered by MaineCare. There is no publically available data to report the proportion of older residents with a disability who are not covered by Medicaid (MaineCare) who receive in-home care.
Neighborhood walkability	Proportion of streets that have pedestrian paths which meet locally accepted standards in the: historic village adjoining growth area.	 90% 30%	Nicole Briand, Town Planner.	2014	All streets within the historic village district and growth area that surrounds the historic district (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 6)	Locally accepted standards for pedestrian paths are described in Walkable Village Plan (http://www.bowdoinham.com/files/Walkable%20Village%20Plan-adopted_06-09-10.pdf). High-speed roads and roads outside the village district were not included in the denominator.

Accessibility of public spaces and buildings	Proportion of new and existing public spaces and buildings that are fully accessible by wheelchair.	Publicly owned: 71.4% Privately owned: 53.8%	Survey by Advisory Committee on Aging's Safety and Accessibility Subcommittee	2014-15	All buildings open to the public in the historic village (see Table 4)	Choice was made to look at publicly and privately owned buildings. One role of the Advisory Committee on Aging is to advise the Select Board about changes that will make the community more aging friendly. The select board and municipal offices do not have any control over the accessibility of privately owned buildings.
Accessibility of priority vehicle parking	Proportion of priority parking spaces at public facilities that are designated for older people or people with disabilities.	17.5%	Survey by Advisory Committee on Aging's Safety and Accessibility Subcommittee	2014/15	Survey by Advisory Committee on Aging's Safety and Accessibility Subcommittee	There are adequate handicapped parking spaces in the historic village. However, signage for the designated spaces is not always clear.
Internet access	Proportion of older people with Internet access available in Town.	100%	See comment	2014	Bowdoinham Public Library	Not all residents of Bowdoinham live in an area where high-speed Internet is available. The Bowdoinham Public Library has wireless Broadband Internet available 24/7 that can be accessed from the parking lot of the library when the library and town office are closed.
Accessibility of public transportation	Proportion of housing within the coverage area of door-to-door services for medical appointments. Proportion of housing within the coverage area of door-to-door services for non-medical needs	Medical: 18% Non-Medical: 0% (see note)	Making Community Happen: http://www.mchin.c.org/rides.html Unpublished data, Christine Szalay, Director SEARCH	2014	All transportation providers serving the Town of Bowdoinham	Note: Transportation for non-medical needs is available through a small ride program sponsored by COA and through SEARCH (see text) but neither program is intended to meet all of the social/ errand transportation needs of older residents who either cannot or choose not to drive and neither program has handicapped accessible vehicles available.
Affordability of housing	Proportion of older people who live in a household that spends less than 30% of their equalized disposable income on housing.	69.2%	American Community Survey (5-year estimates, 2009-2013) Table S0102	2013	Representative Sample of Bowdoinham residents	
Availability of information	Proportion of population that receives information about local services, programs and events of interest to older residents.	26%	Advisory Committee on Aging records	2014	Bowdoinham residents aged 60+	

Participation in local decision-making	Proportion of eligible older voters who voted in the most recent local election or legislative initiative.	81.6%	Town Clerk	2014	Population of Bowdoinham aged 60 and over	Active voters are voters who have voted in the past four years. Approximately 74.3% of Bowdoinham's older residents are active voters.
Engagement in Volunteer Activity	Proportion of older people (age 65+) who report engaging in volunteer activity in the last month on at least one occasion. Median hours volunteered per year Alternative definition: Percentage of volunteers in local organizations that are aged 60+. Based on a survey of organizations in Bowdoinham that depend on volunteers, about 70% of active volunteers were aged 60+	25.1% 80 hours 70%	Corporation for National and Community Service, 2014 Survey of all organizations in Bowdoinham that depend on volunteers to fulfill organizational mission (data collected 14 December 14 2014—09 January 09 2015)	2013 2014/ 2015	Representative survey of Maine residents aged 65+ Organizations that depend on volunteers to fulfill their mission	Data was not available for Bowdoinham or at the county level. Alternative definition allows an understanding of the contribution older adults make to community development without requiring a survey of the population.
Engagement in socio-cultural activities	Proportion of older adults among all reported visitors to COA-sponsored cultural events	13.9%	COA attendance records, January – December 2014	2014	Bowdoinham Residents aged 60+	Excludes many community events that are not sponsored by COA (see text).
Engagement in life-long learning	Proportion of older people who participated in formal or informal learning opportunities in the past year.	44%	Attendance records of organizations offering lifelong learning opportunities in Bowdoinham	2014	Organizations offering lifelong learning within Bowdoinham: Merrymeeting Arts Center, 80; Bowdoinham Public Library, 36; COA, 87; and Bowdoinham Historical Society, 52	Limited to organizations within Bowdoinham. There are many lifelong learning opportunities in the surrounding area (within 10 miles of Bowdoinham). Thus, the proportion listed may underestimate participation in lifelong learning. Proportion also leaves out people who participate outside a formal organization (e.g. using Internet-based opportunities, piano lessons, self-designed learning, etc.)

Participation in leisure-time physical activity in a group	Proportion of older people who are a member of a self-organized or institutional leisure-time physical activity group.	17.8%	Attendance records of Silver Sneakers, Zumba, and COA-sponsored exercise programs	2014	Organizations offering formal, organized exercise programs for older residents (aged 60+)	Limited to formal exercise programs; excludes self-directed exercise programs.
Quality of life	Healthy Life Expectancy at birth same	79.1	Measure of America: http://www.measureofamerica.org/ . Data is derived from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Mortality – All County Micro-Data File.	2013	Representative Population of Sagadahoc County, Maine	The State of Maine at 79.2 years of healthy life expectancy is slightly higher than the US (78.9 years). Sagadahoc County, at 79.1 years, has a higher healthy life expectancy than all but Knox, Lincoln, Cumberland, and York Counties in Maine. No readily available public data is available for Bowdoinham, Maine.

Appendix 7: Sidewalks per Walkable Village Plan, Bowdoinham, Maine, USA, 2014

