

# Bar Harbor Age-Friendly Bar Harbor, ME



**“Strive for a community where all the residents of Bar Harbor, regardless of age, can live, grow and thrive.”**





# TOWN OF BAR HARBOR

## Manager's Office

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August 26, 2020

Ms. Patricia Oh  
AARP Maine  
Portland, ME 04111

Dear Ms. Oh:

Please allow this letter as my endorsement and support of the Bar Harbor Age-Friendly Committee. What began in August 2016 as a Task Force is now a standing Committee due to the importance of their vision, initiatives and work that will be done to enhance the lives of the residents of Bar Harbor regardless of age.

We appreciate the support that AARP Maine has provided to this committee and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Cornell Knight  
Town Manager



# BAR HARBOR

MAINE

## Executive Summary

### Introduction of the Bar Harbor Age Friendly Initiative

In August 2016, the Task Force on Aging was established to ensure that residents of Bar Harbor were living within the 8 Domains of Livability as set forth by the WHO (World Health Organization) and the AARP Age-Friendly Initiative. Initial work for the Task Force included a survey of 50+ households with results focused on 3 major concerns of the residents – housing, transportation and community support and health services. Focus Groups were created to delve deeper into each concern to get a better idea of what the residents could see as potential solutions. A request was made publicly for the Task Force to convert to an on-going town committee. This was approved in 2020. As an organization that does NOT want to “reinvent the wheel”, Bar Harbor Age-Friendly will encourage existing community organizations to continue to seek out partnerships to support various projects and activities that enhance the lives of all residents..



### About the Community

Bar Harbor is a town on Mount Desert Island along Maine’s Frenchman Bay founded on February 23, 1796. It serves as a gateway to the mountains and cliffs of neighboring Acadia National Park. Towering over the park, Cadillac Mountain has trails and views of the town, the bay and the Cranberry Islands. Sand Beach is ringed by mountains. From the town pier, the Shore Path winds along the bay overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and the Porcupine Islands. As of 2018, the year-round population was recorded to be 5,535. Bar Harbor is a popular tourist destination in the Down East region of Maine and home to the College of the Atlantic, Jackson Laboratory, and MDI Biological Laboratory (Salisbury Cove village). Until a catastrophic fire in 1947, the town was a noted summer colony for the wealthy. Bar Harbor is home to the largest parts of Acadia National Park, including Cadillac Mountain, the highest point within twenty-five miles (40 km) of the coastline of the Eastern United States. The town is served by the Hancock County-Bar Harbor Airport, which provides

year-round direct flights to Boston, Massachusetts. The town is governed by a town council and supervised by a Town Manager. The majority of household income comes from the tourist industry.

### **The Mission, Vision and Values that Guide the Age-Friendly Work**

The mission of the committee is to “Strive for a community where all the residents of Bar Harbor, regardless of age, can live, grow and thrive.” Our vision is to embrace the 8 Domains of Livability that can help to enhance the lives of all residents so they can participate in a more fulfilling way.

### **Summary of our Assessment Approach and How it Informed the Action Plan**

We conducted an in-depth survey of the community in January 2018. Our assessment was conducted via US Mail, on-line through the Town of Bar Harbor website, drop locations where people could access and return the survey as well as with in person assistance. We also conducted focus groups in order to take a deeper dive into the results. The information developed established the direction of our Action Plan.

### **Summary Based On Each Domain**

**Outdoor Spaces and Buildings** - When asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of Bar Harbor’s outdoor spaces and public buildings, parking availability, both downtown (51.4% dissatisfied), and parking near public buildings (41.2% dissatisfied) were the areas of greatest dissatisfaction. Sidewalk condition was the third most prevalent area of dissatisfaction with 40.7% being dissatisfied with this area. Areas of highest satisfaction include safety of places to walk near home (69.3%), high quality signage (63.7%), and enough benches in public parks (59.6%).



**Transportation** - In terms of transportation, the respondents to the survey were generally highly mobile, with 90.7% indicating they can walk unassisted. The remaining individuals reported using a cane or walker (5.5%), or walking unassisted with difficulty (3.8%). The members of the sample rely heavily on driving themselves in order to access appointments, go shopping, etc. However, a portion (27.1%), report walking as a

transportation method they usually use. Very few individuals reported using taxis or transportation services tailored to seniors or those with disabilities as their common mode of transportation. Respondents also perceived being able to drive themselves and having a license as crucial to their ability to be able to travel, with 90.8% selecting this option. Although the vast majority of individuals indicated that transportation is not a problem for them, 15.4% of the sample did identify this as an issue. When this group of individuals (N=55) were asked about sources of transportation difficulties, there was not a single barrier that stood out, with lack of public transit, money, traffic, mobility issues, and other reasons being identified by similar percentages of these respondents.

The results of a question asking how important the following are in the community: well-lit and well maintained streets and intersections, easy to read traffic signs, affordable and accessible public transit, and transit services tailored toward the needs of older adults. Almost all respondents said each of these was either very important or somewhat important. Notable was that respondents perceived older adult or disability-focused transit as more important than general public transit.



**Housing** - When asked about current living situation, 81% of respondents stated that they live in a single family dwelling, while 10.5% live in apartments.

Survey recipients were asked about what factors might cause them to move. The most commonly identified issues were inability to do home maintenance or lack of assistance (45.3%) and health challenges (42.5%).

When asked about their perceptions about the quantity of senior housing options in Bar Harbor, 12.8% said there were sufficient options, and 42.6% perceived there aren't. A notable result was that 44.6% felt that they don't know about the status of senior housing.

Survey respondents were also asked about what living situation they preferred if they wanted to or needed to leave their current situation. Of the four options provided, a single level apartment or condo was seen as the most desirable. At the other end of the spectrum was house sharing with a non-related individual which was clearly the least

desirable. Notably, there was not a large magnitude of difference between preferences for senior housing communities over multigenerational housing communities.

**Social Participation** - In terms of social participation, when asked about how frequently they spent time with friends, neighbors, or family they don't reside with, approximately two thirds of respondents did this at least once a week. On the extreme ends were 7.3% who had this contact once a day or more, and 5.0% who never had this contact.

Respondents were asked about social resources they access and their perception of how available they are. Acadia National Park was identified by 93.5% as a resource they access, while only 22.0% report using hobby or social clubs. Participants were asked about resources they felt were not available, but wished they were. No particular resource was identified by 10% or more of the survey sample. The highest category was accurate and publicized information about social events, identified by 9.2% of respondents.

There were 214 respondents who indicated that they would like to socialize more than they currently do. When asked about barriers to this, timing of events (31.3%) and finding out too late (24.3%) were identified as the most significant issues. Mobility issues or health and lack of transportation were the least significant barriers identified by participants.





**Respect and Social Inclusion** - When queried about respect and social inclusion of older adults, 83.8% of respondents felt that older adults are respected in the community at least most of the time. Only 2.5% of respondents felt that older adults were not usually or not at all respected.

Slightly over 1 in 10 individuals indicated that they had been personally disrespected because of their age. Among these 47 individuals about half stated that this disrespect had come from business owners or staff, about a quarter indicated it had come from children or teenagers, and 10% indicated municipal employees had been a source of disrespect.

**Work and Civic Engagement** - Survey recipients were asked about their perceptions of the availability and desirability of a variety of civic participation and employment resources. There were several categories where a very large proportion of respondents indicated that they didn't know about the availability of certain resources. The most significant were the availability of flexible job opportunities for older adults and job training opportunities to learn new skills, with 57% and 67.1% not being aware of the availability of the resources, respectively. In terms of resources that respondents do use, the highest percentage identified volunteer opportunities and opportunities to participate in decision making in community organizations.

**Communication and Information** - In the communication and information domain, participants were asked about ways they commonly access news about town government and social events. In both cases, newspapers were identified as the top sources of this type of information. Word of mouth/friends, and social media were other common sources of information. Television, radio, and local access television specifically were only used by between 11%-14% of survey respondents. Sufficient internet access was reported by 92.7% of respondents

**Community and Health Services** - In the community and health services domain, issues explored included the role of health status in day to day activities, healthcare access, desired community and health services, and hospital usage.

Almost two thirds of respondents stated that their health allows them to participate in all activities that they need to or desire to. Another 28.2% stated that they were able to participate in most activities. Only 7.3% stated that they were only able to participate in some or very few activities.

When asked about issues of healthcare access, such as being able to make an appointment with a provider, afford to pay for appointments, access transportation to appointments, and obtain prescribed medication or equipment, at least 80% answered that they were able to do these things. The area where healthcare access was most challenging was obtaining medication and medical equipment that are needed or prescribed, with 18.2% stating that they are unable to do this.

When asked about healthcare usage, almost 40% indicated they had been to the hospital in the previous year. Of these 141 individuals, about a quarter indicated having a hospital stay and about half indicated they had visited the emergency room.

When asked about the availability and desirability of a variety of community support and health services, help with home maintenance had the highest percentage of individuals who felt it was not available, but wished it was (26.4%).

#### **The Bar Harbor Age-Friendly Committee**

The committee consists of the following active members:

Doreen Willett, Chairperson, Executive Director of Island Connections and community resident of Bar Harbor

Ron Greenberg, Vice Chairperson, retired business owner and community resident of Bar Harbor

Jan Varnum, Secretary, retired school teacher and community resident of Bar Harbor

Allie Nolan, committee member, Director of Operations at MDI Housing Authority and community resident of Bar Harbor

Heather Lewis, committee member, Executive Director of the Mount Desert Nursing Association and community resident of Bar Harbor

Terry Wagner, committee member, retired and community resident of Bar Harbor



## Community Profile

The town of Bar Harbor is a coastal vacation destination on Mount Desert Island that according to the US Census Bureau Population Estimates for 2019 is made up of the following:

**Population estimates** - July 1, 2019 - 5,559; Population estimates base, April 1, 2010; 5,234; Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2019 - 6.2%

**Age and Sex** - Persons under 5 years, 4.7%; Persons under 18 years, 16.8%; Persons 65 years and over, 18.7%, Female persons, 49.1%

**Race and Hispanic Origin** - White alone, 90.2%; Black or African American alone, 3.0%, American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 0.0%; Asian alone, 3.4%; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, 0.0%, Two or More Races, 3.4%, Hispanic or Latino, 3.7%, White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, 88%

**Housing** - Housing units, July 1, 2019, Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2014-2018 - 64.0%, Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2014-2018, \$327,400, Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2014-2018, \$1,638; Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2014-2018, \$628; Median gross rent, 2014-2018, \$857\

**Currently the following senior and/or subsidized housing is available:**

### **Bar Harbor Housing – Elderly Disabled HUD subsidized Independent Living**

- Malvern Belmont Estates/MaineState 74 Apartments
- Rodick Lorraine Apartments 49 Apartments
- Eden 4 Apartments

### **Stanford Management Independent Living**

- Harbor Hill Estates - Elderly Disabled Housing 25 Apartments

## **Birch Bay Village**

- 20 Retirement Cottages
- 23 Independent Living Apartments licensed as Assisted Living
- 16 Residential Care Suites
- 16 Memory Care Suites

**Families & Living Arrangements** - Households, 2014-2018, 2,337; Persons per household, 2014-2018, 2.15; Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2014-2018, 87.9%; Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2014-2018

**Population Characteristics** - Veterans, 2014-2018, 278; Foreign born persons, percent, 2014-2018 - 10.5%

**Computer and Internet Use** - Households with a computer, percent, 2014-2018, 92.0%; Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2014-2018, 82.4%

**Education** - High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2014-2018, 98.5%; Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2014-2018, 50.9%; There are approximately 250 K-8 students and 250 in grades 9-12.

**Health** - With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2014-2018, 3.7%; Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent, 7.1%

**Economy** - In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2014-2018, 65.4%; In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2014-2018, 65.3%; Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012 (\$1,000)(c), \$119,586; Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 (\$1,000)(c) \$75,579; Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 (\$1,000)(c); Total merchant wholesaler sales, 2012 (\$1,000)(c); Total retail sales, 2012 (\$1,000)(c), \$79,669; Total retail sales per capita, 2012(c), \$15,135

**Transportation** - Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2014-2018, 15.0 minutes

**Income & Poverty** - Median household income (in 2018 dollars), 2014-2018, \$51,544; Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2018 dollars), 2014-2018, \$30,330; Persons in poverty, percent, 9.0%

**All firms** - 2012 1,319; Men-owned firms, 2012 - 870; Women-owned firms, 2012 - 238; Minority-owned firms, 2012 - 38; Non Minority-owned firms, 2012 - 1,243; Veteran-owned firms, 2012 - 94; Nonveteran-owned firms, 2012 - 1,077

**Bar Harbor is a Good Place to Live because** we are nestled next to beautiful Acadia National Park in an area rich in landscape and nature. Bar Harbor is a town where the resources are often created by bringing the community together to create grass roots solutions. It is a very beautiful town that offers a large number of programs and services that are provided through a variety of organizational collaborations such as Island Connections Newsletter, free transportation and delivery of Meals on Wheels; At Home Transportation, medical visits, social visits; Eastern Area

Agency on Aging- Surplus Food Program; Jesup Library provides books on tape, CDs/DVDs, Warmth, Social; HUD Ellsworth/MDI Housing Authority; Healthy Acadia for medical support; MDI Hospital, Police/Fire-Check in calls, smoke detector battery changes; Community Suppers; Serendipity 2nd hand clothing sales to support the Bar Harbor Food Pantry; YWCA-Housing, exercise programs, socials; YMCA-Free swim, exercise programs and socialization; Veterans Affairs; churches providing food, fuel assistance, social, spiritual experience; MDIHS Adult Education; Island Explorer public transportation; Maine Seacoast Mission providing medical assistance, clothing, Community Christmas Celebration, Senior Coffee's On; Acadia Senior College for education, Banks provide free checking, accounting, scam alerts; Attorneys provide reduced fees; medical/dental practices provide reduced fees' Pharmacies provide medication assistance; Foot Loose Friends-Social exercise hikes/walks, Reel Pizza offers reduced rate showings on Thursdays with closed caption for the hearing impaired during Winter; Emera provides reduced rates, payment programs. We would like to create a page on the Bar Harbor Town's website to serve as a Senior Guide with all of this information and more.



**Domain:** Housing **Goal:** Provide advocacy and support to residents so they are able to remain living safely in their own homes

**Collaborating Organization(s):** Local architects, builders, Paradis, Hammond Lumber, MDI/Ellsworth Housing Authority, Maine Seacoast Mission and The Town of Bar Harbor, Downeast Community Partners, Rural Development

Activities	By whom	By when	Resources and support available/needed		Potential barriers or resistance	Partnerships	Metrics	Outcome
<i>What needs to be done?</i>	<i>Who will be responsible for getting it done?</i>	<i>By what date will the action be done?</i>	<i>Resources available</i>	<i>Resources needed (financial, human, political, etc.)</i>	<i>What individuals and organizations might resist? How?</i>	<i>What individuals and organizations should be informed about/involved with these tasks?</i>	<i>What indicators have been identified to measure progress?</i>	<i>What was the outcome of the activity? This will help you with your next plan</i>
<b>Home modifications Comfortably Home Neighbor to Neighbor Program</b>	AFC and volunteers	Spring 2021	MDI Housing Authority Grant, Town of Bar Harbor, Maine Seacoast Mission, Downeast Community Partners	Both human and financial; Grant opportunity; need more clients Materials, experienced construction workforce	Individuals in their own homes who are hesitant; the Town of BH	Potential clients, contractors, funders, volunteers	Number of homes affected	
<b>Identify residents who need home modifications</b>	Island Connections Volunteers Neighbors MDI Housing Authority	Ongoing	MDI Housing Authority, IC volunteers, Town of BH Police/Fire Dept., MDNA	Funding, volunteers, local carpenters, materials	The neighbors themselves, family members and neighbors	All community members and potential partner organizations		
<b>Advocacy - Coordinate with the town to determine the goals – Identify Alternative Housing Options</b>	AFC	Ongoing	Town of Bar Harbor; MDI/Ellsworth Housing Authority	People to attend meetings; time	Town of Bar Harbor Time	Town of BH; Jesup Memorial Library;	Number of brochures were shared; newspaper articles; speakers for groups; # of participants	

**Who is responsible for maintaining and updating information:** Committee Members

**Frequency of meetings:** 1x per month or more as needed

**Domain Partnerships:** Social Participation, Respect and Inclusion, Communication and Information, Community and Health Services,

**Domain:** Community Support and Health Services **Goal:** Be a resource to connect the community to information and services

**Collaborating Organization(s):** MDI Hospital, local physicians, Eastern Area Agency on Aging, United Way of Eastern Maine, MDI YMCA, YWCA MDI, Jesup Memorial Library, MDIslander MDI Housing Authority, Maine Seacoast Mission and Healthy Acadia

Activities	By whom	By when	Resources and support available/needed		Potential barriers or resistance	Partnerships	Metrics	Outcome
<i>What needs to be done?</i>	<i>Who will be responsible for getting it done?</i>	<i>By what date will the action be done?</i>	<i>Resources available</i>	<i>Resources needed (financial, human, political, etc.)</i>	<i>What individuals and organizations might resist? How?</i>	<i>What individuals and organizations should be informed about/involved with these tasks?</i>	<i>What indicators have been identified to measure progress?</i>	<i>What was the outcome of the activity? This will help you with your next plan</i>
<b>Create Resource Guide for Hancock County</b>	AFC	Dec 2020 - may need be extended due to COVID	Published materials Collaborating Organizations	Publication - AARP Volunteers to distribute Post to the Town's Website	Time to collect info; keeping the guide up to date Funding?	Collaborating Organizations	# of guides printed - print as needed	
<b>Reach out to Janet Lewis about the Blue Hill Hospital model and sustainability</b>	AFC - Heather to reach out	Dec 2020	Technology	Time involved			Report to AFC	
<b>Contact the League of Towns – all town managers meet</b>	AFC - Cornell Knight, Town of BH Town Mgr							
<b>Communication with the local paper – senior focused column</b>	AFC	Fall 2020	Wealth of Specialists living on MDI	Participation by members	Time	Collaborating Organizations	Frequency of publication; collect articles	

<b>Aging &amp; Loss Workshop</b>	AFC	TBD - due to COVID	Hospice Volunteers of Hancock County	Free program; they provide all of the marketing materials	Time and Scheduling	Hospice Volunteers of Hancock County; YWCA MDI and	The number of participants over the 8 week workshop	
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**Who is responsible for maintaining and updating information:** Committee Members

**Frequency of meetings:** 1x per month or more as needed

**Domain Partnerships:** Transportation, Social Participation, Work and Civic Engagement, Communication and Information

**Domain:** Transportation **Goal:** Increase awareness of available transportation resources and increase accessibility and availability of transportation

**Collaborating Organization(s):** Downeast Transportation, Island Connections, Town of Bar Harbor, BH Chamber of Commerce, Town Hill Village Improvement Society, ANP, Taxi Services, Bus Systems, COA, Camp Beach Cliff, HH, MDI Hospital, YMCA, YWCA and Jesup Memorial Library

Activities	By whom	By when	Resources and support available/needed		Potential barriers or resistance	Partnerships	Metrics	Outcome
<i>What needs to be done?</i>	<i>Who will be responsible for getting it done?</i>	<i>By what date will the action be done?</i>	<i>Resources available</i>	<i>Resources needed (financial, human, political, etc.)</i>	<i>What individuals and organizations might resist? How?</i>	<i>What individuals and organizations should be informed about/involved with these tasks?</i>	<i>What indicators have been identified to measure progress?</i>	<i>What was the outcome of the activity? This will help you with your next plan</i>
<b>Poll tax payers to drill down on transportation concerns</b>	AFC	Nov 2020	Town of BH	IPADS	Time	Advertise		
<b>Convene Meeting with providers and collaborating organizations</b>	AFC	Oct 2020	Town of BH	Town of BH	schedules for participation	Transportation providers		
<b>Help increase awareness of existing transportation</b>	AFC	Ongoing	Island Connections Downeast Transportation	Funding for resource guide and distribution of marketing materials	N/A	Local service organizations, medical providers, retail stores		
<b>Assist in recruitment of volunteers</b>	AFC	Ongoing	Island Connections and other organizations	People to help spread the word	N/A	Local banks and businesses who have staff that can use their lunch hours to do local drives		
<b>Advocated for better sidewalks</b>	AFC	Oct 2020	Walkability Studies provided by AARP	Town of BH Grant	Town of BH	Town of BH Committee Members	A comprehensive study of all work needed to	

			Parking Funds from the Town of BH			Collaborating Organizations	improve sidewalks in the Town of BH	
<b>Create Survey to find out exact needs</b>	<b>AFC</b>	Election Day Nov 2020	Town of BH to put up survey website	Ipads, Volunteers	Time and scheduling	Town of BH	# of responses	

**Who is responsible for maintaining and updating information:** Committee Members

**Frequency of meetings:** 1x per month or more as needed

**Domain Partnerships:** Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Inclusion, Work and Civic Engagement, Community and Health Services