



Draft Action Plan

Domain #1: Information and Communication Workgroup

GOAL: Improve the age friendliness of communication in Broome County.

Objective: Promote age friendly communication practices such as readability and utilizing both technology and traditional communication methods.

Action Steps:

- Research best practices for age friendly written, oral, and online communication.
- Create a fact sheet of best practices for age friendly communication which includes both traditional communication options, online communication practices, and verbal communication.
- Distribute fact sheet to businesses, nonprofits, community organizations, Broome County government departments, and municipalities to encourage age friendly communication practices.
- Research best practices on the use of promotional items and possible sources of funding for a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of age friendly approaches to all aspects of public life to improve livability. Consider creation of age friendly promotional materials such as bags, pens, etc. which would visually communicate the message, such as looking at the world through an age friendly “lens.”
* AARP describes how utilizing an age friendly “lens” can impact community planning and the use of age friendly design standards. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/an-introduction.html>
- Explore developing a volunteer speaker’s bureau which would promote use of age friendly communication and other age friendly practices in Broome County.

GOAL: Enhance education about existing community programs, services, and events among professionals and the public.

Objective 1: Promote the Elder Services Guide available in print and online and the NY Connects number to call for up to date information about community programs, services, and events.

Action Steps:

- Publicize the “Broome County Elder Services Guide” through the *Senior News* and Press & Sun-Bulletin ads.

- Promote Broome County Office for Aging’s NY Connects service for individualized information and referrals through networking meetings and speaking opportunities and through distribution of brochures.

Objective 2: Create an online and printed community calendar of events.

Action Steps:

- OFA will look at how to reach those without access to or comfort with technology for communicating information about current events. The *Senior News* can be better utilized to communicate community events; however, it can never take the place of a dedicated community calendar through an app or website due to space limitations and print deadlines.
- Identify volunteers or a lead agency to either enhance existing printed community guides or create a new printed guide specific to social and cultural opportunities and events in Broome County.
- OFA will follow up with Broome County IT on the current status of the Ba-Bing app contract with Broome County and determine if this will effectively serve as a central digital resource for community events such as library offerings, theater, local business programs and events, fairs, government-sponsored events, senior center events and programs, etc.
- If the app does not come to fruition or if it does not meet community needs, OFA will evaluate whether there is a viable alternative.

Objective 3: Create a pocket guide of important local information for older adults such as service providers, healthcare, senior centers, government, and libraries.

Action Steps:

- Research information particular to the needs of older adults to be included in a new guide.
- Design guide according to age friendly communication standards such as readability.

Objective 4: Improve communication among community groups and agencies.

Action Steps:

- Create a directory of all of the groups in Broome County which provide opportunities for inter-agency communication and resource sharing, including event scheduling.
* Existing groups include VAST, Broome County Community Network Meeting, Building Better Futures, Broome County Nonprofit Alliance
- Share the list of existing groups with Broome County social, service, mission-driven, and civic groups and government departments. Encourage participation in order to improve communication.
- If it is determined that a gap exists in this area, explore creating a quarterly in-person meeting or listserv.

GOAL: Work towards increased internet access and education around technology in Broome County.

Objective 1: Advocate for increased availability of affordable internet access.

Action Steps:

- Identify current sources of affordable internet including free Wi-Fi hotspots and libraries which loan out hotspots. Publicize this information in the *Senior News*.
- Explore ways to provide affordable internet access in various parts of Broome County such as public-private partnerships to offer free Wi-Fi.
- Advocate for the importance of affordable internet access programs with local and state government as well as internet service providers.

Objective 2: Advocate for increased internet coverage in rural areas.

Action Steps:

- Identify rural areas without current internet coverage.
- Learn more about current efforts to increase rural internet coverage: examples include Governor Cuomo's statewide efforts, Congressman Brindisi's work in this area, and planned changes by local service providers.
- Explore the USA ReConnect Loan and Grant Program which can be used to provide broadband service in eligible rural areas, www.usda.gov/reconnect.
- Advocate for new 5G internet structure vs. older 4G options due to long-term cost savings and additional benefits.

Objective 3: Promote the availability of technology classes.

Action Steps:

Research currently available technology classes in Broome County and create a directory.

- Advocate for additional classes where gaps are identified based on type of classes or geographic area served.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have turned to technology for ways to stay connected and learn up-to-date information. Classes are needed to provide information on these tools such as Zoom, NextDoor, and utilizing online and government news alerts.
- Publicize available technology classes through the *Senior News*, Facebook, Senior Centers, inter-agency meetings, etc.

Domain #2: Community Supports and Health Services Workgroup

GOAL: Support age friendly changes to the local health care system and affordable, accessible health care which minimizes health disparities and provides better health outcomes.

Objective 1: Explore plans that local hospitals and primary care centers have for age friendly changes to their physical facilities and service delivery, including dementia-capable care and age friendly emergency rooms.

Action Steps:

- Research current efforts and future age friendly health plans by UHS, Lourdes/Ascension, Guthrie, the new Binghamton University Ford Center for Geriatric Excellence, Endwell Family Physicians, and other interested partners. A description of what it means to be an Age-Friendly Health System is provided through the Institute for Healthcare Improvement: the 4Ms Framework are "What Matters, Medication,

Mentation, Mobility.” <http://www.ihl.org/Engage/Initiatives/Age-Friendly-Health-Systems/Pages/default.aspx>

- Identify plans for geriatric emergency rooms in Broome County. Best practices are identified by the Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation Program, such as enhancements in the physical environment, providing standardized approaches to address common geriatric issues, and ensuring optimal transitions of care from one setting to another. www.acep.org/geda/.
- Identify local health care system efforts to provide dementia friendly care as described by Dementia Friendly America’s “Dementia Friendly Community Metrics” for clinical providers (e.g. staff training in dementia care, adapting programs to include caregivers, and responsive plans of care). www.dfamerica.org.
- Encourage participation by local health care providers in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s Age-Friendly Health System, implementation of dementia friendly care, and age friendly/geriatric emergency room changes, as appropriate.

Objective 2: Advocate for increased local delivery of primary and urgent care in rural areas, including mobile health services.

Action Steps:

- Identify current local primary and urgent care options in rural areas to learn about specific gaps in geographic coverage.
- Advocate for expanded rural healthcare options with local healthcare providers.
- Explore utilizing community locations as settings for the delivery of periodic wellness services such as blood pressure and diabetes checks, flu shot clinics, etc.

Objective 3: Increase access to transportation for medical care from rural areas.

Action Steps:

- Coordinate with and support the age friendly transportation workgroup which is working on rural-to-rural and rural-to-urban transportation access.
- Explore how Northern Broome CARES rural transportation efforts can be expanded to other rural areas.
- Encourage use of the Getthere mobility management program, a current provider of rural transportation planning and access to transportation through the Connection to Care program and the volunteer driver program. www.gettherescny.org/getthere-programs.
- BC Country provides reservation-based rural-to-urban transportation in Broome County. Explore how this can be expanded, especially to meet the need for medical transportation.

Objective 4: Explore increased use of tele-health services, including access to technology, internet and technology training.

Action Steps:

- Identify and promote current tele-health services available in Broome County, including those which were recently implemented or expanded due to the global pandemic.
- Research New York State regulations regarding tele-health, including the 2014 tele-health parity law and 2019 expansion of Medicaid tele-health: https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2019/feb19_mu_speced.pdf, and New York State tele practice guidance,

https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2019/feb19_mu_speced.pdf.

- With local providers, explore tele-health privacy and security issues and access, including technology, internet and technology training.
- Determine if a pilot project to provide technology, internet and technology training is needed and feasible to expand current efforts and reach out to local and other grant funders.

Objective 5: Work with local health systems and community partners to offer health care education, resources to find the lowest cost prescription drugs, and advocate for improved coordination of multiple health services.

Action Steps:

- Promote the Office for Aging and Binghamton University initiative for tele-health education at senior centers in Broome County.
- Explore local efforts to assist consumers in obtaining the lowest cost prescription drugs and work to promote these resources. Action for Older Persons is the local contracted provider for the Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) which provides education on health care options and Medicare counseling.
- With local healthcare providers, explore ways to improve coordination of multiple health services, including bundling of appointments for those living in rural areas but needing to travel to the urban core for healthcare.
- Promote the integration of substance use treatment into other systems of care such as mental health treatment for older adults.
 - * <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Growing-Older-Providing-Integrated-Care-for-An-Aging-Population/SMA16-4982>
 - * Additional information is available at the SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center, www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center

GOAL: Improve access to affordable, timely, and convenient mental health and substance use disorder services and activities that promote mental wellness.

Objective 1: Advocate for increased funding for affordable mental health and substance use disorder services.

Action Steps:

- Office for Aging will work with community partners, academic experts, and government agencies to identify specific community needs.
 - * A research study to identify the impact of physical distancing on social isolation among rural older adults and to develop a social isolation community assessment tool was initiated by Binghamton University and Broome County Office for Aging in May of 2020 due to the global pandemic: “Assessment of the Impact of Physical Distancing on the Social Isolation in Rural Upstate New York in the Context of Age-Friendly Communities.” This study may inform needs related to mental health among rural older adults.
- Identified needs and gaps in current services will be brought to local and state leaders through ongoing advocacy efforts.

Objective 2: Educate the public about available mental health and substance use disorder services.

Action Steps:

- Promote awareness of mental health care options which can be accessed immediately or that provide emergency services. NY Connects, the OFA Elder Services Guide and BroomeIncludes can provide this information to the public on an ongoing basis. Explore funding needs for a public education campaign.
- As of May 2020, UHS Outpatient Mental Health Clinic, Family and Children’s Society, Lourdes Center for Mental Health, the Greater Binghamton Community Treatment and Recovery Center, and the Addiction Center of Broome County are all accepting new patients with no wait time and are also offering tele-health sessions. It will be important to continually provide updated information on availability through BroomeIncludes and NY Connects.
- Promote awareness of available in-home supports such as RSVP’s “Good Morning Broome” service and MHA’s Sunshine Wellness Center “warm” call line, among others that can be accessed by phone.
- Promote a phone app and website being developed by BroomeIncludes which will use Google maps to display mental health and substance use disorder services by geographic area.
- Identify geriatric mental health counselors and other mental health counselors who can do home visits. Ensure this information is available to NY Connects staff who make referrals.

Objective 3: Explore increased use of tele-mental health services, including access to technology, internet and technology training.

Action Steps:

- Identify current tele-mental health services available in Broome County, including those which were recently implemented due to the global pandemic.
- Research New York State regulations regarding tele-mental health, including the 2014 tele-health parity law and 2019 expansion of Medicaid telehealth: https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2019/feb19_mu_speced.pdf, and New York State tele practice guidance, https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2019/feb19_mu_speced.pdf.
- With local providers, explore privacy and security issues related to tele-mental health and the feasibility of tele-mental health expansion including technology, internet and technology training issues.
- Determine if a pilot project to provide technology, internet and technology training is needed and feasible to expand current services and reach out to local grant funders.

Objective 4: Provide older adults with activities to promote mental health.

Action Steps:

- Research existing sources of educational materials about activities which promote mental health, available for distribution at no-cost or low-cost.

- Work with partners such as BroomeIncludes, the Broome County Mental Health Department, the Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier, Binghamton University, and others on creating a local public education campaign about the behaviors and activities which promote mental health.
- Broome County Senior Centers, Lyceum, and other organizations will continue to provide older adults with socialization, learning opportunities, and physical activity options which contribute to mental health. These opportunities may become part of a “How to Retire” workshop through the Respect, Social Inclusion, Civic Participation, and Employment workgroup.

Objective 5: Explore how mental health and substance use screenings are or can be integrated into local primary care.

Action Steps:

- Research best practices for mental health and substance use screenings.
- Identify which primary health care providers are engaged in regular mental health and substance use screenings.

GOAL: Improve the social determinants of health for Broome County older adults and rural residents.

Objective 1: Promote NY Connects as a source for up-to-date information about community programs and services.

Action Steps:

- Continue to publicize NY Connects through articles in the *Senior News*, ads in the Press & Sun-Bulletin, and through speaking engagements by Office for Aging staff.
- Ensure that agencies and healthcare providers are informed about how NY Connects can assist their clients in obtaining clear and accessible information about services.
- Continue to provide brochures about NY Connects to agencies, healthcare providers and at a variety of community locations.

Objective 2: Improve transportation access to basic services (grocery, pharmacy, banking, health care) and community supports which address the social determinants of health (food pantries, congregate meal sites, public benefit assistance, chronic disease management classes, exercise, social and civic opportunities, faith communities).

Action Steps:

- A current project working to improve rural transportation and access to basic services and community supports is Northern Broome CARES, the NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) grand-funded project through the Rural Health Network. Explore how lessons learned from this project and services implemented in the Towns of Lisle and Triangle can be applied to other geographic areas of Broome County.
* <https://rhnsctny.org/programs/northern-broome-cares/>
- Work with the age friendly transportation workgroup on their efforts to expand transportation options.

Objective 3: Increase access to community supports and services at geographically convenient locations such as food pantries, senior centers, community centers, libraries, and churches.

Action Steps:

- Research current services and community supports being delivered within rural communities and identify any gaps in types of services available or communities which are not being served regularly.
- Work with local agencies to increase the services and community supports being offered to older adults and rural residents in their communities.

Objective 4: Explore creating a “Village” or “Neighbor” model in one part of Broome County as a pilot program to provide supports to people where they live. This objective is shared with the Housing Workgroup.

Action Steps:

- Research the “Village,” “Neighbor,” and similar programs and create a list of required features and benefits of each model.
- Explore the feasibility of these options for the Broome County community and identify a lead agency to pilot the program.
- Identify funding needs and apply for grants to cover pilot program.

GOAL: Work to increase the availability of home health aides and trained medical personnel working in Broome County.

Objective 1: Advocate for expanded Medicaid and non-Medicaid subsidized in-home services due to current unreasonable long wait periods.

Action Steps:

- OFA will maintain an unmet needs list for clients currently waiting to be served by the Expanded In Home Services to the Elderly Program (EISEP).
- OFA will advocate for the need for expanded in-home services with New York State Office for Aging and New York Department of Health.

Objective 2: Advocate for higher wages for paid in-home aides to improve hiring and retention of workers.

Action Steps:

- OFA will work with WorkForce New York to explore local wage rates and policy changes that could support increased wages.
- OFA will advocate for higher wages for aides working in the Expanded In Home Services to the Elderly Program (EISEP) and other programs supported by New York State Office for Aging.

Objective 3: Explore workforce development changes to promote job opportunities and training for in-home aides in Broome County.

Action Steps:

- OFA will contact SUNY Broome and WorkForce New York to explore providing remote in-home aide training. The use of internet or no-cost use of cable subchannels may be options for widespread dissemination of training opportunities.
- OFA will contact SUNY Broome and WorkForce New York to explore ways to provide tuition discounts for aides who agree to work in Broome County for 3-5 years.

- OFA will contact WorkForce New York to explore current efforts and future plans to promote job opportunities for in-home aides.

Objective 4: Advocate for changes to support increased retention of trained medical personnel in Broome County.

Action Steps:

- OFA will contact Binghamton University to learn about current efforts to attract and retain graduating nurses, social workers, and pharmacists in Broome county.
- Explore offering tuition discounts for nurses, pharmacists, and social workers receiving their education in Broome County.
- Explore providing student loan forgiveness for trained medical personnel who agree to remain in Broome County for 3-5 years after graduation.
- OFA will contact SUNY Broome to learn about current efforts to attract and retain allied health professionals.

Objective 5: Advocate for in-home aides to have transportation support and/or subsidies due to transportation issues preventing service to some clients, especially in rural areas.

Action Steps:

- Explore how vanpool or Rural Health Network's Transportation to Employment program can assist with this issue and whether there are current capacity issues in serving those who need transportation support.
- Work to ensure that in-home care providers know about transportation options available to their staff.

Domain #3: Respect, Social Inclusion, Civic Participation, and Employment Workgroup

GOAL: Educate the community about the benefits of inclusiveness and how to engage with individuals with special needs.

Objective 1: Facilitate community-based programming that promotes broad community interaction and integration.

Action Steps:

- Working with knowledgeable provider agencies, create a list of best practices for creating inclusive events and programs.
- Work with community agencies to create programming which is sensitive to the needs of all participants.

Objective 2: Promote the benefits of inclusiveness through an educational campaign.

Action Step:

- Explore offering trainings or workshops for businesses, government offices, nonprofit agencies, and service and cultural groups about the benefits of inclusiveness, building understanding and respect, and breaking down barriers when interacting with individuals with special needs.

GOAL: Enhance education about existing community resources, social and cultural opportunities, and events.

Objective 1: Promote existing sources of community information.

Action Steps:

- Publicize the “Broome County Elder Services Guide” through the *Senior News* and Press & Sun-Bulletin ads.
- Promote Broome County Office for Aging’s NY Connects service for individualized information and referrals through networking meetings and speaking opportunities.

Objective 2: Provide printed information about social and cultural opportunities and events to the public.

Action Steps:

- OFA will look at how to better utilize existing printed sources of community events, such as the *Senior News*, however, it has space limitations and print deadlines.
- Identify volunteers or a lead agency to either enhance existing printed community guides or create a new printed guide specific to social and cultural opportunities and events in Broome County.
- Research a comprehensive list of social and cultural opportunities and events in Broome County.
- Promote enhanced guide or new guide throughout Broome County.

Objective 3: Ensure that there will be a printed and digital Community Calendar of Events.

Action Steps:

- OFA will follow up with Broome County IT on the current status of the Ba-Bing app contract with Broome County and determine if this will effectively serve as a central digital resource for community events such as library offerings, theater, local business programs and events, cultural opportunities, fairs, government-sponsored events, senior center events and programs, etc.
- If the app does not come to fruition or if it does not meet community needs, OFA will evaluate whether there is a viable alternative.

GOAL: Increase intergenerational opportunities.

Objective 1: Enhance outdoor spaces to better facilitate intergenerational interaction.

Action Steps:

- Identify outdoor spaces and types of equipment which could facilitate intergenerational interaction.
- Identify possible funding sources for equipment purchase and apply for grants or sponsorships.

Objective 2: Develop intergenerational programs such as a “Senior to Senior” intergenerational event which will bring together high school seniors and older adults to enjoy a shared evening of dinner and dancing.

Action Steps:

- Identify possible community partners interested in and capable of facilitating intergenerational programming.
- Conduct meetings to identify feasible programming ideas.
- Plan, implement, and evaluate the success of programs.

GOAL: Improve awareness within Broome County of retirement opportunities related to lifelong education, physical activity, volunteering, employment, and civic engagement.

Objective 1: Offer a How-to-Retire Workshop or series of workshops.

Action Steps:

- Identify a lead agency to facilitate an existing workshop which can be used locally (such as Aging Mastery Program through NCOA) or create a new workshop.
- If needed, funding or sponsorship will be sought.
- At the end of the workshop, participants will be asked for feedback through an exit survey and this will be used to determine if the workshops were successful and if content needs to be adjusted for future workshops

Objective 2: Publicize OFA's information and assistance services to address individual questions about lifelong education, physical activity, volunteering, employment, and civic engagement.

Action Steps:

- Run a series of articles in the *Senior News* about the ways that OFA's information and assistance service can assist by topic.
- Include information about OFA's information and assistance services in a printed guide of community resources.
- At OFA staff presentations to other agencies, include information about the ways Acton for Older Persons (AOP) can assist with health insurance counseling, long-term care planning, and Advanced Planning for End of Life (APEL) and OFA's information and assistance services can help with other retirement information.

Domain #4: Transportation Workgroup

GOAL: Increase rural transportation options for older adults in Broome County.

Objective 1: Improve existing rural-to-urban transportation services and explore additional options to better meet the needs of older adults.

Action Steps:

- Work with Rural Health Network and Broome County Department of Public Transportation to identify and define the current rural-to-urban transportation needs in the community.
- Engage in planning to address identified needs. This would involve looking at the existing services provided by BC Transit and the Northern Broome Cares NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) project and working in partnership to define how existing services could be expanded.

- Seek innovative and cost-efficient solutions to increase and improve the existing rural-to-urban service provided by BC Transit by engaging community partners in the planning process. Community partners include, but are not limited to, Getthere mobility management and Faith in Action Volunteers.
- Engage with transportation providers and community partners on development of a “feeder” or “first mile, last mile” system to address access to rural-to-urban transportation.

Objective 2: Improve rural-to-rural transportation for basic services like groceries and pharmacy.

Action Steps:

- Rural Health Network’s Northern Broome Cares NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) project will continue to provide rural-to-rural transportation in the Whitney Point and Lisle communities. This includes a weekly taxi service and a volunteer driver program.
- Office for Aging will collaborate with Rural Health Network to identify additional needs for rural-to-rural transportation.
- Office for Aging, Rural Health Network, and BC Transit will work together to find ways to address rural-to-rural transportation needs, including exploring the feasibility of expanding rural-to-rural transportation options to communities outside of Whitney Point and Lisle.
- Rural Health Network will seek Federal Transit Administration funds for volunteer driver mileage reimbursement.
- Additional volunteer drivers will be sought through recruitment efforts such as Public Service Announcements and working with local churches.

Objective 1) and 2)

Action Step:

Office for Aging will provide letters of support for transportation grant applications and advocate for rural transportation funding at the state level as an “unmet need” in Broome County.

GOAL: Enhance transportation hours so people can attend social opportunities, public events, and worship services.

Objective 1: Explore the feasibility of service enhancement options such as offering the OFA Mini-Bus on Saturdays and Sundays on a rotation basis.

Action Step:

- Office for Aging will look at the feasibility of different options, determine the costs involved, and explore funding for expanded services.

Objective 2: Educate Rural Health Network’s Getthere clients about Saturday and Sunday transportation options.

Action Step:

- Getthere will continue to educate clients about weekend service options.

Objective 3: Increase the number of clients served through Rural Health Network's Getthere volunteer driver program.

Action Steps:

- Recruit and train additional volunteers through Public Service Announcements and working with local churches.
- Seek FTA funds for volunteer mileage reimbursement.

GOAL: Educate the public about age friendly street enhancements such as pedestrian crosswalks and rapid flashing beacons in order to increase compliance and improve safety.

Objective: Air Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on television and social media.

Action Steps:

- Work with the NYS Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Committee for education and public outreach tools including videos and other materials.
- Explore possible use of existing PSAs.
- Work with the Broome County Sheriff on creation of additional local PSAs as needed.
- Create topical social media posts for the Facebook and Twitter accounts of government departments and community partners including Office for Aging, Broome County Department of Public Transportation, and Rural Health Network.
- Contact local TV stations to obtain monthly free airtime for PSAs.

GOAL: Obtain additional bus shelters and seating for the fixed route bus system.

Objective 1: Install 30 new bus shelters.

Action Steps:

- BC Transit received funding to install 30 shelters in 2019-2020.
- BC Transit is determining the location of the new shelters through identifying high volume areas and those with unpredictable wait times.

Objective 2: Add additional seating at other bus stops.

Action Steps:

- Seek additional local funding for seats through business sponsorships and donations from local service or nonprofit organizations (such as Rotary Clubs and Sertoma).
- Add this goal to the Broome County Coordinated Transportation Plan.

GOAL: Improve public education about transportation options and transportation planning assistance.

Objective: Educate the public about available transportation and transportation coordination services.

Action Steps:

- Continue to promote transportation services, trip planning assistance, and travel training through the Getthere mobility management program.
- Promote how BC Country assists residents in scheduling their appointments around bus availability to avoid long wait times.
- Publicize the OFA Mini-Bus as a transportation option for older adults.

- Publicize how new technology can assist with route planning and identifying transportation options: the Getthere Trip Planner and Broome County Public Transportation Department.

GOAL: Coordinate transportation planning and create a mechanism for continuous evaluation of Broome County transportation needs.

Objective: Utilize existing collaborative efforts such as Getthere and the BMTS Advisory Council for transportation planning and evaluation.

Action Steps:

- Encourage transportation partners to attend meetings.
- Discuss emerging challenges, opportunities, and plans.
- Find or create a mechanism to continuously evaluate transportation needs.

Domain #5: Housing Workgroup

GOAL: Improve the availability of housing and the variety of housing options for low, middle-income, and rural older adults in Broome County.

Objective: Increase housing availability and the variety of housing options for low, middle-income, and rural older adults in Broome County.

Action Steps:

- Office for Aging will continue to educate the public about existing and new low, middle-income, and rural housing options in Broome County.
- Expand the current Office for Aging “Senior Apartment Housing Guide” available on the Broome County website and distributed through NY Connects information and assistance line. Additional entries will include rental housing for middle-income older adults with rental rates between \$875 and \$2,000 per month.
<http://www.gobroomecounty.com/sites/default/files/dept/senior/OFA%20Resource%20Center/Senior%20Apartment%20Housing%20Guide%20August%202019.pdf>
- Identify currently underserved geographic areas and advocate with local and state entities for funding for low, middle-income, and rural housing in Broome County.
- Explore the development of low, middle-income, and rural housing in Broome County with nonprofit and for-profit housing developers.
- Office for Aging will support housing developers through providing OFA data and age friendly housing workgroup recommendations.
- Explore current networking and coordination efforts among housing developers, such as housing networking meetings, and determine if additional coordination is needed to successfully work towards increasing housing availability.
- Research innovative and feasible housing solutions. Some examples under consideration by the housing workgroup include accessory dwelling units, shared housing among seniors, seniors co-living with students, tiny homes, developing affordable housing on vacant property provided by a land trust, and the “Village” model for support to older adults aging-in-place in their neighborhoods.
- Work with community partners to implement innovative housing options.

GOAL: Improve the availability of home repair and modification options for Broome County older adults.

Objective: Support and advocate for community agencies to obtain more funding to help seniors repair and modify their homes and explore additional home repair/modification resources, including utilizing trade schools and affordable private pay options.

Action Steps:

- Identify gaps in current programs by geographic service area or types of home repair/modifications covered by available programs. A good starting place for this is OFA's guide, "Weatherization and Home Repair Programs" as well as information obtained by the Housing workgroup.
- Work closely with community partners who provide home repair/modification to explore existing challenges and potential solutions.
- Continuously advocate with local and state entities to communicate the need for home repair and modification funding to improve current housing stock and support seniors who wish to remain in their homes and communities.
- Provide letters of support and data from the Office for Aging Community Needs Survey to community agencies when they apply for funding to help seniors repair and modify their homes.
- Explore utilizing trade schools for home repairs and modifications.
- Research efforts to educate homeowners about home maintenance, modifications, and hiring contractors. Possible resources include AARP's "Here to Stay: Home Upkeep for All" program, "The AARP Home Fit Guide," and the Southern Tier Home Builders Association. Provide these resources to Office for Aging clients and publicize through the *Senior News*, if appropriate.
 - * AARP's Here to Stay: Home Upkeep for All program and toolkit: <https://heretostay.aarpfoundation.org/>
 - * The AARP Home Fit Guide: https://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org/articles/families/HousingOptions/200590_HomeFit_rev011108.pdf
 - * Southern Tier Home Builders Association: <https://sthbra.com/>
- Explore the development of a list of common home repairs with local cost estimates where possible (e.g. range of costs for discrete projects like installing bathroom grab bars, not for projects with great variables like roof work).
- Explore ways to assist homeowners in connecting with vetted contractors and those who offer a discount to seniors. Two possible resources are the Broome County Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development and the Southern Tier Home Builders & Remodelers Association.
- Office for Aging will continue to educate the public about contractor scams through articles in the *Senior News*.
- Identify innovations which may assist older adults to successfully age-in-place such as technology advances and internet-based resources.
- The age friendly housing implementation group and/or Office for Aging will communicate with community agencies to determine whether additional funding was

obtained to provide home repairs and modifications for older adults or if services were expanded to additional geographic areas in Broome County.

- The age friendly housing implementation group and/or Office for Aging will share any new, newly identified, expanded home repair and modification options, and in-home technology advances with the public through the printed and online “Weatherization and Home Repair Programs” guide as well as through articles in the *Senior News*, as appropriate. The current “Weatherization and Home Repair Programs” guide is located online at, <http://www.gobroomecounty.com/sites/default/files/dept/senior/OFA%20Resource%20Center/GUIDE%20to%20Weatherization%20%20Home%20Repair%20January%202019.pdf>

GOAL: Increase age friendly zoning regulations in Broome County and promote age friendly features in new housing.

Objective: Advocate for changes or variances to local zoning regulations to allow for age friendly housing alternatives such as shared housing and accessory dwelling units.

Action Steps:

- Create a list of age friendly zoning changes, such as allowing for accessory dwelling units and shared housing, that would improve the housing options available in Broome County.
- Research and develop an inventory of current zoning regulations related to age friendly housing options by geographic area. Several state-level resources to explore are the New York State Bar Municipal Law Section and the New York State Uniform Fire Code.
- Identify current local regulations which might inadvertently impact older adults’ housing options.
- Determine a strategic approach for encouraging municipalities to allow for age friendly zoning. One strategy would be to target zoning changes in larger municipalities which would then encourage changes in smaller municipalities.
- Reach out to local planners, municipal planning boards, municipal attorneys, and law departments to discuss the need for and benefits of zoning for age friendly housing options and obtain support for zoning changes as needed.
- Educate the public about local zoning and housing options. Consider development of a guide.

Objective: Work with community partners to educate housing developers about the benefits of incorporating age friendly features in their developments.

Action Steps:

- Create a list of age friendly housing features which would be most beneficial for new developments as well as the relative cost of incorporating these features at the development phase.
- Research and create a list of current age friendly residential and commercial properties as models of age friendly development.
- Work with the Broome County Planning Department on sharing a list of age friendly housing features with town/village planning boards and other planners in Broome County. Encourage them to utilize the age friendly housing features list during the

comments stage of new developments and to provide it to all housing developers, especially those focused on creating housing for older adults.

Objective 1 and 2

Action Step:

- Explore creation and implementation of a continuing education program in Broome County related to age friendly housing options, features and zoning.

Domain #6: Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings Workgroup

GOAL: Improve the safety and public enjoyment of facilities, outdoor spaces, and programs across all of Broome County.

Objective 1: Integrate age friendly features into County facilities and outdoor spaces.

Action Steps:

- Compile a list of Age Friendly Best Practices that can be integrated into County projects.
- As capital upgrades are made to County facilities, encourage Facilities and Department of Public Works to utilize Universal Design Best Practices.
- The Department of Public Works will complete the Broome County ADA Transition Plan. An ADA Transition Plan provides a self-assessment of the accessibility of the County's infrastructure. Typically, the focus is on sidewalks, ramps, and parking. It also identifies barriers to accessibility and prioritizes improvements to be made.
- Encourage County facilities to address needs identified in the Age Friendly Communities Broome County Facilities Self-Assessment Tool completed in January to March of 2020.
- Support the Broome County Planning Department's efforts to develop a facilities master plan.
- Determine if there is a need for more age friendly benches with back and armrests at County facilities.
- Office for Aging will pursue funding for intergenerational playground equipment for Otsiningo Park.
- Ensure that all facilities have adequate signage to for visitors.
- Provide more pedestrian and bicycle amenities at County facilities including bike racks and pedestrian crossings.

Objective 2: Enhance age friendly programming at the County.

Action Steps:

- Increase programming accessibility by working with BC Transit to determine the feasibility of offering periodic excursion buses to County parks and events.
- Identify opportunities for matinee shows at the Forum and the Arena.
- Work with community groups to organize intergenerational activities. Examples include mural projects at the Library, Parks, and senior centers. Intergenerational programming is also an objective of the Respect, Social Inclusion, Civic Engagement and Employment Workgroup.
- Work with the Binghamton Metropolitan Transit Study to develop Bicycle Safe Routes for their Bicycle Plan.

- Where feasible, establish a community garden program at senior centers and Willow Point.

Objective 3: Promote age friendly concepts for utilization by local Broome County municipalities when improving their outdoor spaces and public buildings.

Action Steps:

- Share the list of Age Friendly Best Practices with Broome County municipalities and encourage utilization when capital upgrades are made.
- The Planning Department will host a municipal training about age friendly best practices.

GOAL: Improve public knowledge of Broome County facilities and programs.

Objective: Publicize information about facilities, activities, and discount programs throughout Broome County.

Action Steps:

- Explore utilizing community volunteers as guest speakers at the senior centers and to community organizations to educate the public and encourage use of County assets.
- Identify ways to cross-promote County facilities between departments.
- Publicize activities and event discount programs available to older adults in the *Senior News* and encourage other local publications and agencies to spread the word.