



AGE FRIENDLY BERKSHIRES ANNUAL REPORT

GAINING TRACTION IN 2018-2019



INTRODUCTION

In 2015, Berkshire County formally joined the AARP network of Age Friendly Communities, becoming part of a worldwide Age Friendly movement to make Berkshire County a more livable place for all ages. After more than two years of planning, the Age Friendly Berkshires Action Plan was released in late 2017. This Annual Report describes progress toward the Action Plan goals over the 18-month period of approximately January 2018 to September 2019. It illustrates where we are gaining traction in making “age friendly in all things” a regular part of the thinking, language and culture of Berkshire County, and where AFB and its partners will want to concentrate their energy for the rest of 2019 and 2020.

Age Friendly Berkshires' mission is to create a more “livable” Berkshire County – that is, to more fully support the health and well-being of all residents, as they live, work, play and stay here - across the entire life span.

Age Friendly Berkshires (AFB) is a movement, focused on the eight Areas of Livability developed by AARP and the World Health Organization (WHO): **1) Communication & Information** **2) Transportation**, **3) Housing** **4) Community & Health Services**, **5) Civic Engagement & Employment** **6) Social Participation** **7) Respect & Social Inclusion** and **8) Outdoor Spaces & Buildings** - using the AFB Action Plan as our map and guide.



With Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) acting as the backbone agency, Age Friendly Berkshires activities are supported by through multiple partnerships with organizations and individuals throughout Berkshire County, supported by core Committees – the AFB Steering Committee, AFB Task Force Partners and Active-Ager Community Activists - helping to propel us forward. These committees have evolved since AFB first began – remaining flexible enough to meet the varying opportunities that have arisen, while staying constant in their commitment to the movement's mission and goals.

Thank you all very much for your interest and work this year in and for Age Friendly Berkshires! Your strong support for our mission has given AFB forward momentum through 2019 and beyond.

Summary of Accomplishments 2018-19		
1	Communication & Information	<p>Created and supported new communications platforms – Website, Facebook, Newsletter, Video</p> <p>Connected to other organizations' communications platforms</p> <p>Developed a professionally-produced Age Friendly Berkshires video and used it to start discussions with more than 30 groups to date at Councils on Aging, community groups, businesses and others.</p> <p>Annual gathering at Berkshire Community College, with keynote speaker Executive Office of Elder Affairs Secretary Elizabeth Chen</p> <p>Invited to present a numerous local, regional, state and national conferences, including AARP event at the MA Statehouse, the 2019 Annual Statewide Conference for Municipal Officials and Staff and the Hearing of the Joint Committee on Public Health coordinated by State Senator and Co-chair, Jo Comerford, among others.</p>
2	Transportation	<p>Countywide transportation provider list updated.</p> <p>Supported work of Berkshire Regional Coordinating Council on Transportation (BRCCOT) and Great Barrington Transportation committee.</p> <p>Hosted Transportation 4 America (T4A) and Transportation 4 MA (T4MA) at BRCCOT Transportation Messaging Workshop, via National AARP</p> <p>Invited panelist on rural transportation at 2019 AARP National Rural Livability Conference, Portland, ME, N4A National Conference, New Orleans & Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) National Conference, Portland, OR.</p> <p>Serve on National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) National Peer Technical Assistance Network.</p> <p>Supporting development of volunteer driver programs countywide.</p>

3	Housing	<p>Drafted Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) zoning bylaws to help diversify regional housing stock in Town of Egremont.</p> <p>Researched home financing loan/grant programs for ADU creation in Sheffield.</p> <p>Assisted H.O.M.E. (Homeowner Options for Massachusetts Elders) Program share information about home refinance options for adults age 60+.</p> <p>Promoted AARP free smoke-detector education and giveaway in Berkshire County.</p> <p>Joined state-wide Housing advocacy group (CHAPA).</p>
4	Community & Health Services	<p>Promoted health and wellness programming county-wide, including Berkshire Supergenarians, A Matter of Balance, Farmers Markets, MA in Motion, WalkBoston, Board of Health Flu Clinics and others.</p> <p>Joined Berkshire Eldercare Network.</p> <p>Conducted Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Workshops in multiple communities.</p> <p>Dementia Friendly Berkshires web page created at Agefriendlyberkshires.com.</p> <p>Working with lead agency Berkshire Alzheimer's Partnership on integrating dementia friendly into AFB.</p> <p>Working with Berkshire Health Systems to gather research related to in-home cardiac and pulmonary rehab pilot.</p> <p>Invited to testify at the Joint Committee on Public Health Public Hearing on Public Health in Greenfield.</p>
5	Civic Engagement & Employment	<p>Encouraging community-based Active Aging Advocates.</p> <p>Developing Age Friendly Business designation for 2020 rollout.</p> <p>Sponsor for OLLI University Day: <i>Changing the Culture of Aging</i>.</p> <p>Co-sponsored two very successful 50+ Job Fairs.</p> <p>Volunteer Fair – scheduled for November, 2019.</p>

6	Social Participation	<p>Supporting the creation of virtual “Villages” in several locations across the county.</p> <p>Promoted elder and intergenerational social events county-wide.</p> <p>In development: <i>Age Sensitivity Training for Cultural Institutions</i> with Elder Services of Berkshire County (ESBCI).</p>
7	Respect & Social Inclusion	<p>“Reframing Aging” Task Force sub-committee in development.</p> <p>Outreach to multi-cultural and LGBTQ communities.</p> <p>Facilitating Dementia Friends and Dementia Champions trainings.</p>
8	Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	<p>Advocated and helped plan improvements to the built environment in multiple municipalities.</p> <p>Municipal ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Planning in town of Peru.</p> <p>Obtained grant funding and oversaw installation of Age-Friendly Outdoor Exercise Park in Dalton, MA.</p> <p>Provided technical assistance on walkability and safety.</p>



1 Communication & Information-Sharing

Improving our ability to stay connected with people, information and regional supports/services and make timely information available to meet daily living needs of all residents.

Creating/Leveraging New Platforms and Embracing Multi-Media: During the development of the Age Friendly Berkshires Action Plan, outreach showed that residents universally wanted more information about services in the Berkshires that are available to assist them in almost every aspect of daily living. The Action Plan goals realized this year include the creation of a comprehensive communication program, including the creation of a new website agefriendlyberkshires.com, an Age Friendly Berkshires [Facebook](#) page, an [AFB e-newsletter](#) (with a current circulation topping 1,550!) -- all supported by an intermittent stream of press releases, articles and reports, on a wide range of topics relevant to residents' requests and needs.

In addition, we gathered "free, downloadable" reports and resource materials from various reliable sources, posted them on the AFB web site, while providing 'hard copies' upon request. The Resource and What's New?! tabs are the most popular.

In the constant search for trustworthy "content" we've encouraged writers from our Active Ager advocates and Task Force Partners to submit stories and events for regional distribution. We "borrow and share" relevant news stories too, from national media. Our Partner Organization networks also help us spread the word, especially to those who do not access the internet. The new Municipal Official's List-serve (<https://groups.google.com/d/forum/berkshire-municipalities>), Elder Services of Berkshire County's Berkshire Senior newspaper, multiple COA newsletters, Municipal and non-profit websites and monthly newsletters have been integral to growing our reach.

The regional news media, including the Berkshire Eagle, Berkshire Trade & Commerce, iBerkshires, PCTV, WGBY, Berkshire Senior TV, WSBS, WAMC and the Rogovoy Report have given us outstanding coverage and support.



The capstone and most exciting achievement in our 'multi-media' approach to iAge Friendly regional communications, is the creation of our first video production, all about becoming Age Friendly Berkshires! The film highlights several of our partners whose work embodies the spirit of the Age Friendly movement. It is

hoped that the video, which is being shared widely, will help more people understand what Age Friendly Berkshires is trying to achieve and give the movement greater visibility and momentum. The film collaboration was scripted by dedicated Active Ager, Roger Gutwillig, and produced by the Berkshire Film & Media Collaborative, under the leadership of Roger's daughter Diane Pearlman and Jeffrey Diamond. Please thank our sponsors, listed at the end of the video. If you haven't seen it yet, the video can be watched at agefriendlyberkshires.com or we are happy to bring it out to your group for a showing and discussion!

Looking to the future, Communications & Information-sharing will include the expansion of the AFB website to include a searchable database for "at home" services, transportation providers, more content and projects highlighting Dementia-Friendly services, Task Force Partner website links, profiles of individual Berkshire residents making a difference around safe, connected, healthy and active aging, wider sharing of our Age Friendly Berkshires Newsletter and the creation of additional, short video creations highlighting where AFB is having an impact around the County.



2 TRANSPORTATION

To get from one place to another is critical to "livability" in our rural region, especially for those without access to a personal vehicle, or for those who don't drive. The creation of multiple transit options is an overall goal in the Age Friendly Berkshires Action Plan.

Lack of access to fast, affordable, and convenient transportation is one of the leading causes of missed appointments, inability to get to work, school or other important activities, and contributes to isolation among residents. As we age, many of us are no longer able to drive, or are reluctant to drive at night or in inclement weather. Public or shared transportation services available in our communities are limited, operating only within designated weekday hours, and requiring advanced planning to complete the journey. Some residents, who have been driving a private car for their entire adult life, are unaware or uncertain of what options exist for alternative modes of transportation.

Sharing Information about existing Transportation Services: Age Friendly Berkshires is supporting the work of many participants in this arena as a member of the Berkshire Regional Coordinating Council on Transportation (BRCCOT) the voluntary organization comprised of the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, multiple Councils on Aging, regional Human Service and Paratransit providers, private transportation providers and citizen-activists like the newly-formed Affordable Transportation Committee, all of whom are learning from one another's challenges and establishing a framework to better coordinate services. The goal of

BRCCOT is to help coordinate county-wide transportation provision and fill gaps in services, particularly for those dependent on public transportation for work, important appointments and leisure activities. BRCCOT aims to devise ways to better share information about existing transportation services and schedules with the public and among providers themselves.

Through a technical assistance grant from AARP, BRCCOT members hosted Transportation for America (T4A) for a "messaging workshop" – to develop a set of messages to be used in public outreach and legislative advocacy activities, to capture what transportation means to Berkshire residents.

In addition, BRCCOT member-providers identified the need for route-mapping, particularly for Paratransit and other Human Service transit providers, to identify route overlaps and begin looking at opportunities to share transit responsibilities.

Advocating for Changes to Existing Transportation Services: The Great Barrington Affordable Transportation Committee was formed to help the BRTA modify bus schedules in south County, to better accommodate existing riders, students and to attract a greater number of riders regionally.

AFB also joined the statewide RTA Advocates Coalition that provides a collective public voice at any and all public hearings, legislative meetings and conferences related to funding the state's 15 Regional Transit Authorities.

Connecting to National Rural Transportation Network – AFB participated in the AARP Rural Livability Conference held in June, 2019 in Portland, ME, presenting on "A Multi-Sector Approach to Filling Rural Transportation Gaps in Rural Berkshire County." AFB also was invited to present at the 44th Annual Conference of N4A (National Association of Area Agencies on Aging) in New Orleans in July, 2019. In September, AFB spoke at the National Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) conference in Portland, OR, and was invited to serve in NADTC's **National Peer Technical Assistance Network**.

Locally, AFB is supporting the creation of **Volunteer Driver Programs** coordinated by Berkshire Interfaith Organizing (BIO), in partnership Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, BRCCOT and the health care community.



3. OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

Create and maintain accessible buildings and spaces for residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy together.

Advocating and planning for Improvements to the Built Environment: Building a team of community-based Age Friendly advocates has become a key aspect of our Age Friendly work. This year, AFB co-hosted two regional Walkability Workshops with Be Well Berkshires and Walk Boston, to encourage and teach community activists how to thoughtfully observe their communities' built environments and programming, with an eye toward advocating for infrastructural or other improvements. In June, 2019 we partnered with WALKBoston and Be Well Berkshires to hold two regional Walkability Workshops in North Adams and Great Barrington, to introduce active adults to Walk Auditing. The workshops featured a brief presentation by WALKBoston, followed by a neighborhood walk-about that helped identify safe routes for walking, traffic calming measures, as well as impediments to safe travel, combined with suggestions for simple safety improvements. So far, three communities are following up with WALKBoston to take the next steps to more accessible, safer streets.

In addition, AFB has developed an informational flyer on **ADA Accessibility** with the offer of technical assistance to conduct or update ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans for municipal facilities and buildings, and to help municipalities obtain grant funding through the MA Office on Disabilities (MOD) and others, to implement their completed Plans. This past year, an ADA Transition Plan was completed for the Town of Peru.



Age Friendly Berkshires also actively promotes the **Complete Streets** program, offered through MA Department of Transportation (DOT) to help municipalities make major improvements to infrastructure and create safe routes to services, schools, parks and other community facilities. This year, Stockbridge and Lanesborough participated in the program with technical support provided by Berkshire Regional

Planning Commission staff transportation planners.

Pedestrian Safety Program: Age Friendly Berkshires this year partnered with the Alford-Great Barrington-Egremont-TRIAD program, Fairview Hospital and several Councils on

Aging, to enlarge the **Be Seen Be Safe** program. Be Seen Be Safe distributes brightly colored, reflective safety vests, via police departments and through public events. Grant funding is currently being sought to take this program county-wide.

Dalton Outdoor Exercise Park: The Town of Dalton, through a \$10,000 Community Challenge Grant from AARP Massachusetts and technical assistance from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and AFB, installed a very fun Outdoor Exercise Park. The park was the brainchild of COA Director Kelly Pizzi, with expert installation provided by Dalton Highway Department. The park was officially opened with snow on the ground, in late November, 2018. The Town's Parks & Recreation department is assisting with



exercise training on each of the nine pieces of equipment and will hold classes in and outdoors at the Senior Center. Congratulations to Kelly Pizzi and the Town of Dalton for bringing this very Age Friendly park to fruition!



HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Accessible and affordable health and community services are crucial to keeping people healthy, independent and active. AFB supports services along the full continuum of care.

Promoting Health and Wellness Programming: Age Friendly Berkshires works to attend, participate in and promote multiple health and wellness programs offered by community partners all year long. This year, we disseminated information on falls prevention workshops, exercise programs, dementia care and caregiver support programs, retirement planning, healthcare planning and many, many others. Your submittals for upcoming events are always welcome!

Connecting Older Residents with Healthy Food, Activities and At-Home Services: AFB is helping to connect older residents to healthy, locally grown food through promotion of year-round farmers' markets. In addition, we are in the process of developing a regional, searchable database that will list stores and service providers (personal care, contractors, food deliveries, etc.) that offer home delivery and maintenance/ repair services to enhance resident's ability to age-in-place. Pilot work with the Town of Richmond Sustainability Committee helped move this work forward.



Building Stronger Communities &

Connections:

Age Friendly Berkshires participated and promoted several **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness** Workshops in three communities during 2018-19 conducted by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Over the course of those community convenings, it was discovered that emergency preparedness personnel and Councils on Aging were informally

working together to look out for their communities' most-vulnerable residents, particularly those with serious medical and/or mobility issues. Discussions about the best means of having regular contact with isolated adults led to strategizing on a better regional system for reliable 2-way communications, to deliver important news and keep people safe, especially during severe storm events.

As a result, AFB applied for a grant in partnership with two communities and several Task Force partners to conduct community outreach in 2020, aimed at identifying risk factors for isolation, with an eye toward developing social and safety interventions that can keep residents from becoming isolated in the first place and keep them safer in their homes, all year long.



5. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & EMPLOYMENT

People are our greatest asset. Age Friendly communities provide multiple ways that people can continue to work for pay or volunteer their skills and talents - to remain a vital part of community life and the political process.

Recruiting Community-based Age Friendly Advocates Previewing the Age Friendly Berkshires video to 23 Councils on Aging during the Spring of 2019 has led to the formation of a small corps of older adults who want to help bring “all things Age Friendly” into their hometowns! These champions are helping to conduct brainstorming sessions to identify community priorities and are spearheading the “formal” request for municipal support for the Age Friendly Berkshires Action Plan, in the form of a signed Municipal Age Friendly Resolution. The goal is to collect 32 Municipal Resolutions over the next several years! If you'd like to be a community advocate, please email agefriendlyberkshires@gmail.com.

Connecting older adults with jobs and employers – In September, 2018 we partnered with MassHire, Elder Services of Berkshire County and AARP Massachusetts, to host the first **50+ Job Fair**. The event was attended by over 100 individuals! A second job fair was held on September 23, 2019 at the Berkshire Athenaeum, and was equally successful.

Age & Dementia Friendly Business & Organization Designation: AFB and community partners Elder Services of Berkshire County, The Mount in Lenox and the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, are in the process of developing an **Age and Dementia Friendly Cultural Organization Training** program to help businesses and organizations of any kind become aware of and more adept at greeting, guiding and serving people of all ages and abilities. This program will operate in coordination with the **Age Friendly Business Designation**, currently under development.

The programs will feature a combination of physical site assessment (using an Age and Dementia Friendly Checklist to identify areas that might be enhanced) and customer service and communication skills training for staff, to enhance understanding of mobility and cognitive challenges, with an eye toward improving overall customer and visitor experience. Each organization that completes the assessment and training (and puts the Age Friendly recommendations in place) will received a Certificate and Logo Decal that can be used in marketing and promotions.



6. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Participating in educational, social, cultural and spiritual activities helps people stay healthy, engaged and informed. Preventing isolation and loneliness, building intergenerational bridges and taking full advantage of our regional assets, is critical to creating Age Friendly Berkshires.

AFB created a first Age Friendly video, produced with Berkshire Film and Media Collaborative. The video "Becoming Age Friendly Berkshires" highlights several local community organizations (nbCC in North Adams, Fairview Hospital and AGE Triad partnership and Berkshire Pulse in Great Barrington) that are already including "age friendly" programs, services and life-enrichment to our residents.

The Age Friendly Berkshires video was made possible by these generous sponsors:



Berkshire AHEC



VILLAGES in the Berkshires: Age Friendly Berkshires is supporting the creation of virtual “Villages” in Berkshire County, based on the model originally implemented in Beacon Hill, by providing technical support to organizers and promotional support, through the AFB media platform.

Villages of the Berkshires (VOTB), centered in Lenox, MA has begun accepting members. At present they are awaiting their own 501(c)3 designation but have partnered with Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), gained grant support from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and launched a website: VillagesOfTheBerkshires.org. The VOTB board of directors has hired a part-time coordinator, to field calls and start taking member applications and service requests. For more information, visit their website.

In northern Berkshire County, a 2018 feasibility study conducted by AFB and BRPC, with funding from the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), revealed a growing interest in a cross-border Village to provide social activities, rides to local appointments, home-based services like friendly visits, light housekeeping, dog-walking and other activities, to keep people safe and connected as they age in their own homes. Plans are underway to hold several formation meetings in late fall and into the winter months.



7. RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

An Age Friendly Community is an inclusive community where all people can participate fully in social, civic, economic life, develop stronger bonds through multi-cultural and intergenerational mentoring programs across all Areas of Livability and strive to overcome fear and build understanding of differences across all ages and life stages.

Dementia Friendly Berkshires – Berkshire Alzheimer’s Partnership (BAP), the lead organization around dementia friendly efforts, has been reinvigorated under new Co-Chairs Bobbie Orsi of Home Instead Senior Care and Chris Thompson of Elder Services of Berkshire County. BAP is developing an updated Strategic Action Plan for 2020, working closely with the Alzheimer’s Association MA/NH Chapter and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts through MA Councils on Aging. We look forward to hearing a lot more from these partners this year as we work to more fully integrate dementia friendly into AFB.

Changing the Culture of Aging – “Reframing Aging”. This year Age Friendly Berkshires will begin incorporating “reframing” strategies in all communications, with the goal of

combatting ageism. Reframing Aging, by the Frameworks Institute, seeks to create a better public understanding of older adults' needs and contributions to society—and to use communications and outreach to drive a more informed conversation about aging and its implications for our community. We are joining with the members of the AFB Task Force, to develop our own language for aging in our community. More to follow!

Age Sensitivity Training for Cultural Institutions. AFB and Elder Services of Berkshire County are partnering to develop an Age Sensitivity training for Cultural Institutions that can be used to train seasonal and docent staff on strategies and tips for improving the experience of older adult visitors. The program will include a self-evaluation checklist to adapt each venue's ambience, accessibility and program effectiveness, to better serve the needs of older adults, including those with disabilities or cognitive impairments.



8. HOUSING

Safe, affordable, accessible and supportive housing is key to being able to live and age well in one's chosen community.

Sharing Information about Housing Services: In 2016, Age Friendly Berkshires created a Berkshire County Residential Aging in Place Workbook and Video containing guidance on how to assess the condition of one's home, with an eye toward safety and greater accessibility and to accommodate physical and cognitive changes that occur with aging. The Workbook & Video are available free of charge, downloadable from the Age Friendly Berkshires website (agefriendlyberkshires.com).

As mentioned above, AFB is developing a searchable database of "At Home" Services in conjunction with Villages of the Berkshires. The database will include food and meal delivery services, affordable home care and repair companies and any other service that might help people stay safe and secure in their own homes.

Exploring the Creation of Additional Housing Services: Multiple community members have expressed interest in promoting the creation of new services and options to assist older adults who are aging in place to remain in their own homes. Research and dissemination on home sharing programs (e.g., Nesterly) that would match homeowners with other adults looking for affordable housing and willing to provide companionship, share a home and home upkeep with others is ongoing.

AFB and BRPC, with funding from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) were able to work with the town of Egremont on drafting a bylaw that would allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's), as well as with the town of Sheffield on a

loan-and-grant program that homeowners could use to finance the creation of an ADU. Although none of these measures have yet made it to Town Meeting, we are hopeful they will in the next year.

Advocating to Create Affordable Housing: Many Age Friendly participants report that their communities need more affordable dwellings, especially for those who are newly out of school or living on a fixed income and struggling with the high cost of home maintenance and taxes. In some communities there is resistance to affordable development due to fear that rental properties would bring in “undesirable” neighbors. There is a feeling that many residents and municipal leaders might be uninformed about the critical need for additional housing options for residents of any age, who do not wish to own, or cannot afford to buy, a home near where they work, go to school or wish to live.

AFB is looking for funding to publish an updated “State of our Housing” report, with the intention of using this information for longer-term, town-by-town affordable housing education and advocacy. The need for “middle housing” and supportive housing models is very much on people's minds. AFB is beginning work with municipalities, our state Legislators and real estate professionals to focus efforts on these needs.

Moving Forward:

Growing regard for AFB in the community: One aspect of “gaining traction” is earning a positive reputation within the community at large. People are becoming aware of AFB and its purpose and perceiving its value for their own community, their business or organization and the Berkshire community as a whole. Because building an age friendly community is a movement that takes the entire community, greater recognition, commitment and follow-through is the key to our ultimate success.

One lesson learned during the past year of Implementation is that relationship-building and partnerships take time, patience and nurturing. That is one of the constraints grant-funded initiatives such as ours must grapple with on an annual basis.

As we move forward in our implementation of the Age Friendly Berkshires Action plan, partners have begun to take more ownership of, and responsibility for, initiating age-friendly organizational and community change. Our Task Force community partners, whether in the public or private sector, are now moving from being a source of ideas and input, to conceiving and following through with their own Age Friendly priority projects and programmatic improvements! This is an exciting time!

Our community partners are beginning to reach out to each other to collaborate on age-friendly actions, independently – outside of the Steering Committee or Task Force. For example, multiple towns in our region heard about Dalton's success in building an Outdoor Community Exercise Park and have begun to work toward making their own community centers and parks the setting for raised gardens, accessible walking trails, exercise programs and healthy food distribution. The Town of Lenox distributed their Age Friendly Municipal Resolution to all departments for budgeting, planning and policy-making purposes. And, as a result of the NADTC van-sharing pilot program coordinated through AFB, several COA's began other resource-sharing programs on a permanent basis.

Thanks again to all our partners working to make the Berkshires a more livable community for us all. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming years!



End Note & Dedication: This photo shows the very-engaged crowd that attended one of three **Village Community Conversations**, held at the Town of Florida Community Center, in Spring, 2018. Pictured in the foreground (seated) is Paul Cormier, then Executive Director of the Florida Council on Aging, with whom AFB worked to complete a Village Feasibility Study for northern Berkshire County. Sadly, we learned of Paul Cormier's passing in May, 2019. Age Friendly Berkshires is grateful to have known Paul and thankful for his help and dedication to the Town of Florida's older adults. We dedicate this Annual Report to Paul's memory.