



Municipal Data Across Sectors for Health (M-DASH)
Town of Gray

Task Force Meeting
March 17, 2021 – 1:00-3:00p.m.
Zoom Recording: : <http://bit.ly/3vX5pMH>

Attending: Will Burrow, Food Pantry; Sharon Young, Town Council; Kathy Tombarelli, Town Planner; Kurt Elkanich, Fire Chief; Kristin Melville, Androscoggin Home Health Hospice; Mary Hadlock, SMAAA; Nellie Levier, Gray Rec & Ed; Nate Rudy, Town Manager; Valerie Rasza, Gray Lifelong Living Committee; Josh Tiffany, Gray Library; Deb Fritzson, RTP; Jayne Chandler, Community Transportation Leader, GPCOG; Jan Strout, Gray Lifelong Living Committee; Joe Schnupp, Cumberland Co. Sherriff's Office; Jess Maurer, Effie Rorke, and Anne Schroth, MCOA

Meeting Notes

I. Welcome and Overview

- a. This is the 2nd of our data meetings for the Municipal Data Across Sectors for Health project.
- b. Since our last meeting on January 20, we have talked to many of you to get more detailed information about Gray-specific data and Effie has integrated that data into the new dashboard.

II. (Re)Introductions

- a. Will Burrow – 25-year resident of Gray; school board; food pantry volunteer; and more!
- b. Nellie Levier – Child Care Service Coordinator for Gray Parks and Recreation Dept.
- c. Sharon Young – Town Councilor, Chair Gray Lifelong Living Committee
- d. Nate Rudy – New Town Manager; also on MCOA Board
- e. Mary Hadlock – SMAA RSVP Volunteer Services Director
- f. Kurt Elkanich – Public Safety Director for Gray
- g. Josh Tiffany – Gray Librarian; *hear of older people having to leave Gray...*
- h. Kathy Tombarelli – Gray Town Planner; *my parents would like to live in Gray but can't find the right kind of housing...*
- i. Deb Fritzson – RTP
- j. Jayne Chandler – Gray resident; Community Transportation Leader from GPCOG.
- k. Kristin Melville – Androscoggin Home Health & Hospice
- l. Jan Strout – Gray Lifelong Living Committee; worked on original survey
- m. Valerie Rasza – Gray Lifelong Living Committee; helped with survey and found results really important. Also just completed work on Comp Plan steering committee

III. Gray Updates

- a. New Town Manager - Nate Rudy
 - i. The work with M-DASH will provide important and useful data to help inform discussion about Gray planning.

- ii. Lots of data and lots of things that weave it all together that isn't explicitly shown in the data. Want to encourage questions and discussion. Let's use this as an opportunity to do community asset mapping and networking among organizations.
- b. New Senior/Disabled Housing Units (Sharon Young)
- i. Avesta has provided some details about new development
 - 1. Planning 27-unit project
 - 2. This is 1 of 3 new developments that Avesta has in planning stages. Won't start until end of this year or possibly early 2023.
 - 3. Will be very close to existing Meadowview housing; which gives wonderful proximity to Library and complex where town services are.
- c. Review of Lifelong Living Survey Results (for new participants) (Sharon)
- i. First thing asked for was home repair and home maintenance.
 - o 2 levels (E.g. change lightbulb or getting lift/grab rails/etc.)
 - o Both levels were at top of needs.
 - ii. In open-ended question three things rose to top: property taxes too high; senior housing needed; walkability and safe transit around town
 - iii. Transportation: 90+% had cars. Small handful indicated problem getting to doctor appointments.
 - o *Comment:* The people who live here can still drive and if they can't, they have to go someplace else to live...so no one left here identifies transportation as problem.
 - iv. Emergency Response System was a big thing that people wanted, too.
 - v. Wanted more community events – socialization; etc.
 - o Have some experience with intergenerational socialization ideas with Nellie's work with kids and Meadowview residents during pandemic; also High School community service club.
 - vi. The thing that moved me most was how many respondents loved Gray and wanted to stay here.

IV. Review Updated Data Dashboard (Effie)

See Updated Dashboard and Slide presentation (distributed with these meeting notes)

V. Discussion – Gray does not have many 80+ residents. Why?

- a. Housing: Affordability; Property Taxes; Maintenance
- i. Lots of big houses on big lots; maintenance gets hard and expensive
 - ii. Maybe leaving because can't manage big property lot with old house so downsizing to assisted living facility that doesn't exist in Gray.
 - iii. EMS experience: elderly people calling us need more help than they are getting. All we can do is refer to DHHS but standards for DHHS involvement are low.
 - iv. Could we incentivize universal design in town center? Different kinds of housing: duplexes; medium-density buildings; ADU's; etc.?
 - v. Town will (in the longer term) be talking about how new housing opportunities (zoning, e.g.)

- vi. Home repair is an important issue to aging in place. Is there a Habitat for Humanity or vocational tech program that could help?

b. Transportation

- i. Transportation challenges that come with aging
- ii. Gray is a car town -- not an issue until it is an issue, so when it happens, that population just vanishes.
- iii. RTP has door-to-door possibilities in Gray
 - 1. Many towns link to RTP under “public transportation” on town website
 - 2. RTP has contractual arrangement with DHHS – people can get free, non-emergency, door-to-door transportation.
 - 3. If above 200% Federal Poverty Line, can pay reasonable fee.
 - 4. RTP distributes complimentary tickets through town GA program.
 - 5. RTP is already supported by the town - just need to get the word out.
- iv. So, lack of transportation options isn’t really the issue; the issue is lack of knowledge of existing, available resources.

c. Medical Care

- i. Medical care not in town.
- ii. Nearest hospital is Lewiston or Portland; people might want to be closer as they get older.

d. Walkability

- i. Note how low we rated in biking and walking. It’s not safe to cross the street in the village. If 27 new units going in where we already have other units for older people, it is really important that they are able to walk and cross the street without feeling have to get in car.
- ii. Could we get information about pedestrian/car accidents in the Village area?
 - 1. Possibly in Maine DOT public crash query tool:
<http://mdotapps.maine.gov/mainecrashpublic/PublicQueryStats>
 - 2. Not easy to identify in EMS data but, anecdotally, can’t think of a lot (though obviously significant when they happen)
 - 3. Sherriff’s data is not identified as pedestrian/car, just personal injury accident.
 - 4. Lack of data might not be illustrative; if you look around Gray, people aren’t walking...because it’s not safe to do so.
- iii. Town will be looking at these issues as we look at bicycle and pedestrian-friendly accommodations in Gray Village

VI. Discussion – Ideas

a. What Resources Already Exist?

- i. SMAAA has many resources to address issues mentioned: e.g. options counseling, planning for future; money-minders, benefits screening.
- ii. We should be developing brochures about who does what, but need to figure out how to put in the right hands.

b. Possible Ideas

- i. “Watch out for your neighbors” -- Can we make that a village message?
 - 1. Dementia-Friendly Communities (<https://www.dfamerica.org/>)

2. If wanted to go in that direction, there is a lot that can be done, e.g. vulnerability registries (towns, EMS, etc.)
- ii. Town staff need training about how to respond/refer people if they seem to need help. How to identify warning signs to be aware of when come into contact with an older person.
 1. First Contacts Program: A few years ago, the Area Agencies on Aging created a training for community members on identifying and responding to signs of decline among neighbors and community members.

VII. Next Steps

- a. Education on community-based resource information for Gray
- b. Planning Charrette? Comprehensive Plan just finished and planning for the Village coming up; might be good timing to do some planning with the community?
- c. Next Meeting: May 19, 2021, 1-3p.m.