



Living Well in Madison  
Moving from a Good to **GREAT** Community



# Update 2021

## **The Living Well in Madison Initiative:**

The vast majority of seniors in Madison and across the nation want to remain in their homes as they age. The town of Madison has recognized this important fact by promoting age-friendly planning and policies to make the town more friendly/comfortable/supportive to seniors who want to age in place in the community. This is not a new development. Some examples of the community's commitment to its seniors include sponsoring gathering places for older adults, support for a very active food pantry and "Meals on Wheels" program, a local cable network for programming and information sharing, community service work by MSAD 59 students who do lawn cleanup and a Thanksgiving meal for seniors, and a commitment to development of senior housing. In November of 2017, the town extended its work for seniors by partnering with Somerset Public Health to apply successfully to become an AARP Age-Friendly Community. In 2018 the Living Well Action Plan was developed as a road map to guide processes, projects and programs to benefit Madison residents.

In 2019 the Town received funding from the Maine Community Foundation to assist with implementation of the action plan. In May of 2020, Cheyenne Stevens was hired as Madison's first Living Well Coordinator, a part time position located within the Town Office.

## **About the Community:**

The Town of Madison, Maine is a mostly rural community of 4,725, with 1,986 (42%) of its residents over the age of 55 (US Census 2020). The Town located in southwestern Somerset County, an area with a rich manufacturing history and abundant natural beauty. The Kennebec River connects visitors and residents to outdoor recreation and innovation in industry. The major industries rely on forestry and agriculture, and with natural gas, solar, and hydroelectric production, the town is an energy hub for economic development.

Madison is a small town that values love of our neighbor, trust and respect, kindness, honesty, good communication, clear policies and procedures, and local decision making. Senior members of the community provide a living link between the past and the future. The Living Well work in Madison envisions an intergenerational population living, working and playing together. As a result, the town of Madison will be a resilient community that supports the health and well-being of its citizens of all ages.

## **Living Well Steering Committee**

After gathering information about Madison's senior population, Cheyenne began the work of convening a steering committee to guide implementation of the Living Well Action Plan. The current makeup of the committee includes: Julie Forbus-Head Library at Madison Public Library, John Harlow-Manager Somerset Community Television, Sally Dwyer-Select Board Member, Kristie LeBlanc-Program Director Somerset Public Health and Barbara Cary-Retired Nurse.

The committee meets monthly to develop ideas from the action plan and bring them to life!

Based on the 8 Domains of Livability developed by AARP, the Living Well Action Plan identified six areas where meaningful change could be developed in Madison: Housing, Transportation, Community Support with a focus on Health Services, Outdoor Spaces & Buildings, Civic Participation and Social Isolation.



**Housing:** Like many rural communities, Madison has an aging housing stock. The Living Well goal is to identify and create a growing network of resources to help residents stay in their homes with improvements to safety and energy efficiency.

The Living Well Action Plan identified the following objectives.

**Objective #1** By January 2020 establish a volunteer coordinator to connect housing needs in the community with available resources. This objective was met by the creation of the Living Well Coordinator position, filled in May of 2020 by Cheyenne Stevens.

**Objective #2:** By July 2020 a Madison/Skowhegan Home Repair Network will be established and delivering needs to residents. By taking a smaller 'bite of the apple' Cheyenne has partnered with the local school district to connect students with work that needs to be done among local residents, including raking, yard work, and clearing snow.

**NEW OBJECTIVE:**



**Transportation:** Madison currently has no large-scale public transportation. The Living Well Goal is to see development of a volunteer network to fill in the gaps of services such as KVCAP and local taxi/ride share programs

The Living Well Action Plan identified the following objective.

**Objective #1** By July 2020 establish a Volunteer Drivers Brigade to meet local transportation needs of residents. This objective will need to be pushed further out on the timeline. It is currently a 2022 objective of the Steering Committee.

**NEW OBJECTIVE:**



## **Community Support (Health Services):** The awareness of local resources

for residents has not kept pace with the growing need. The Living Well Goal is to develop opportunities for meaningful and inclusive community connections.

The Living Well Action Plan identified the following objective.

**Objective #1 By December 31, 2019 create a multimedia source for coordinating and communicating local health and volunteer services.** Through Cheyenne's efforts, Living Well has spread awareness of resources through social media and by creating and airing a series of interviews on local cable access (SCTV11).

**NEW OBJECTIVE:**



## **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:** Madison has an abundance of outdoor

recreation opportunities, but Madison's downtown and municipal infrastructure is very old and pre-dates ADA requirements. The Living Well Goal is to maximize the use and safety of our outdoor spaces and buildings.

The Living Well Action Plan identified the following objectives.

**Objective #1 By December 31, 2019 develop process to promote access and use of local trails.** While this objective has not been a focus of the Steering Committee, development has occurred through the work of Somerset Woods Trustees especially with the Weston Woods & Waters project and through Somerset Public Health's promotion of a reading trail at the Preble Avenue recreation area.

**Objective #2 By December 31, 2019 begin the planning process to improve access to public buildings.** In the summer of 2020 renovations were done at the Old Point School (community building) to make for ADA accessibility to allow for access to voting, public meetings and use by area support groups. Cheyenne wrote for and received a grant from the Grassroots Foundation to pay for materials to create an ADA accessible restroom at the Old Point facility.

Future planning and budgeting to improve access to buildings will be done at the Budget Advisory Level.

**NEW OBJECTIVE:**



## **Civic Participation/Employment:** Civic engagement in Madison will naturally

become more intergenerational as younger residents join boards and committees. The work to establish new jobs continues to be slow and steady. The Living Well goal is to raise awareness and recruit volunteers for a wide variety of programs and projects.

The Living Well Action Plan identified the following objective.

**Objective #1 By December 2020, Raise awareness of local service/employment opportunities.** Living Well has made several connections in the community including, Catholic Charities, Senior Strong, Spectrum Generations, Somerset Public Health and the local school district.

### **NEW OBJECTIVE:**



## **Respect and Social Inclusion:** Social Isolation remains an issue in central Maine

with an aging population and cold climate. In addition to adverse weather, the climate of unfriendliness to outsiders can further isolate residents of all ages. The Living Well Goal is increase opportunities for residents to reach out across generational and geographical boundaries.

The Living Well Action Plan identified the following objective.

**Objective #1 Create Intergenerational Summer Programs:** This is the area where the Steering Committee has really shined.

Madison is collaborating with Elliot Maine on a Fellowship program that has resulted in a \$1,000 grant for an 'Art Circle' program designed to connect older adults. With help from art student Melanie Marchman, the program will allow adults to meet (in person and virtually) to discuss isolating issues (like COVID19) while working together on a small craft or art project.

In collaboration with the Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG) program at Madison High School, a card buddy program has been established between students and residents at Maplecrest Rehabilitation. Students write cards to residents to brighten their day.

### **NEW OBJECTIVE:**