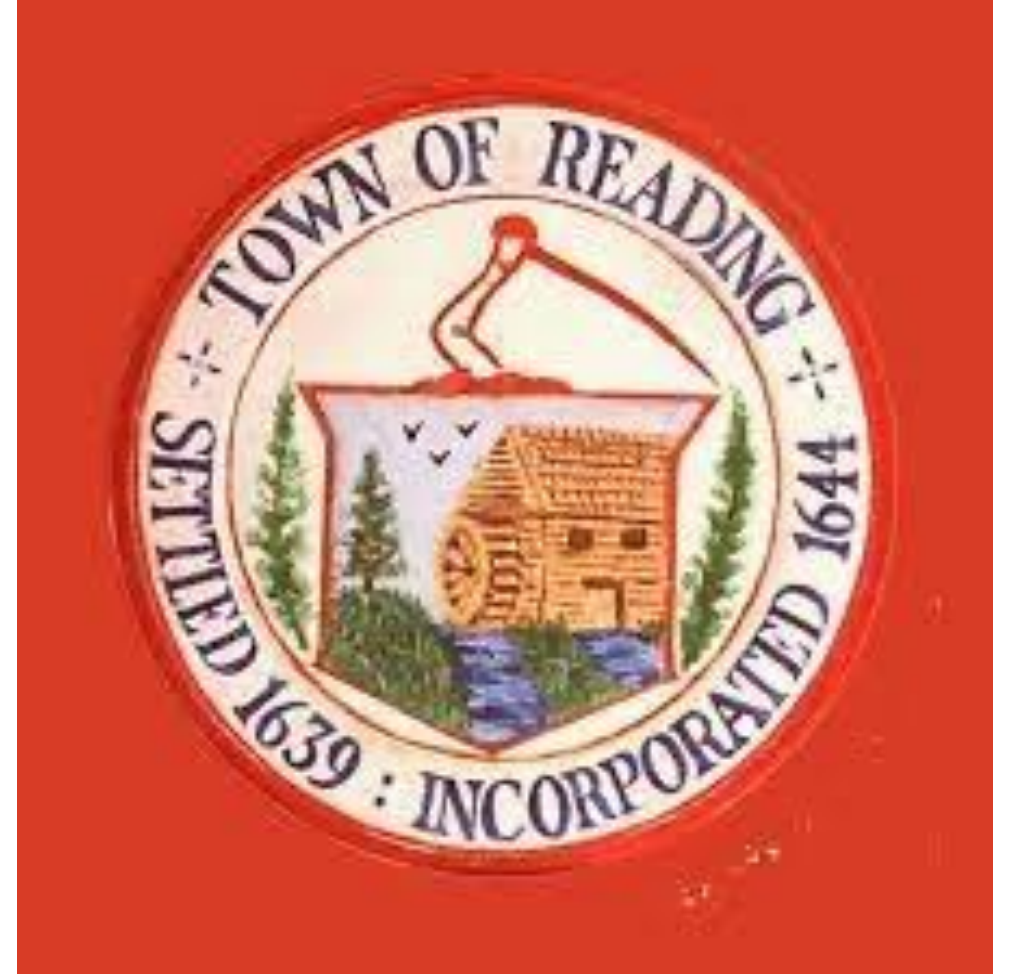# Reading Center for Active Living Committee ReCALC

- Summary Presentation
- March 21, 2023

Executive summary

Charge

- *The charge of ReCALC is to explore the current and future needs of the Community, and initiate planning for a potential new Senior/Community Center in town that will focus on residents aged 60+ and possibly other members of the Community*

Results

- Identified current and future needs of the entire community for a Senior/Community Center (with a dedicated senior space)
- Solicited the community's preference for addressing facility needs

Primary Recommendation

- *Identify and implement a solution to the facility needs for the Senior population in the immediate (2 to 3 year) timeframe.*

ReCALC MILESTONES

Nov 2021	Select Board creates and appoints 7-member Ad-Hoc Committee
Dec 2021	Bi-monthly meetings including joint meetings with COA
Jan 2022	Review of project parameters; Committee feedback
Feb 2022	Public Services Department hires UMASS Gerontology Institute (2021 Capital Funds) to lead community engagement.
Mar 2022	15 Site Visits to area centers; joint meeting with COA/UMASS Consultant team to review community outreach plan
Apr – Jun 2022	Held three community forums and four stakeholder focus groups
July-Aug 2022	Secured $300k ARPA funding for future feasibility study work
Jul-Sep 2022	Prepared & executed Community Survey (**1470 responses**)
Sep-Oct 2022	ReCALC working group review of potential Walgreens site Lunch & Learn – Sr. Center Options presentation by "Town Mgr. Select Board presentation – Extension of ReCALC to June 2023
Nov-Dec 2022	UMASS presentation on Survey results and final report

TOWN OF READING
MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 01 7:00PM

Public Forum

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1
7:00PM AT THE READING PUBLIC LIBRARY

Topic of Discussion

Discussion on the Walgreens site as a potential new Reading Senior/Community Center

Join Town Staff for an informative evening full of Q & A regarding a potential new Senior/Community Center.

Why Plan for A Center for Active Living (ReCALC)?

Vision

- A far-reaching vision for the future is needed to plan for the needs of the community.

Needs

- What are the needs of the community?

Pleasant Street Center has outlived its' useful life

- Needs Assessment, UMASS Gerontology Institute, 2017

Demographic Trends

- Growing overall population with 27% residents are 60+years

Impact on Service Delivery

- A dedicated staff having difficulty meeting the demand of community

Limited Capacity

- Some residents leave town for Services

Pleasant Street Center

The Pleasant Street Center
"Reading's gathering place for Seniors"

Smell of Gas!!!

Deficiencies (not a complete list)

- No bathroom on first floor
- No private offices
- No one-on-one space
- Inadequate Kitchen

- Unable to run multiple (lg.) programs at once
- 140 yr. old historical building
- No dedicated space for art, fitness, social, library
- Building Access

Office in the Hallway

Hallway Waiting Areas

Kitchen

Non-Dividable Multi-Purpose Room (700 Sq. ft.)

Art/Lunch/Meeting Room (no dedicated storage)

Registration
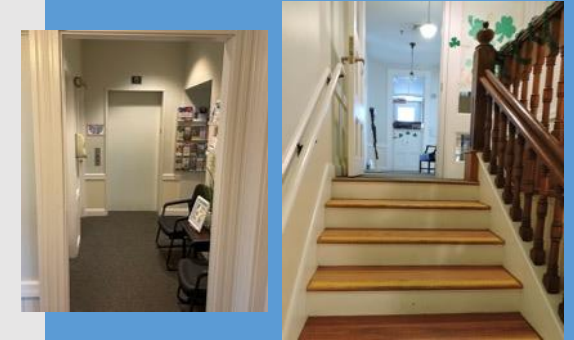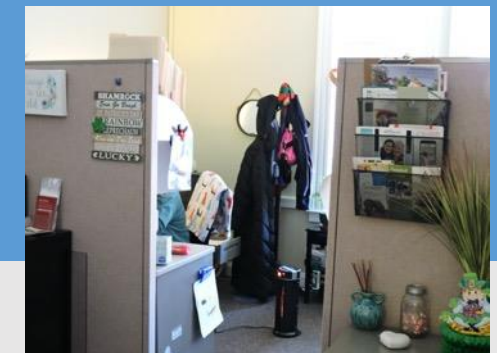
Computer & Game Rooms (basement)

Reception

Nurse & Senior. Case Worker Office (no privacy or one-on-one space)

ReCALC Strategies

- Engaged the community

- Collaborated with other community partners and volunteer boards

- Benchmarked local Senior Center/Community Centers

- Established lines of communication

- Explored a combined option of an All-ages Community Center (ACC)

Supporting Recommendations

➢ Review the identified needs, perform a more detailed assessment of priorities, and then define explicit plans to address the needs.

➢ Perform feasibility study (studies) on potential Senior Center/ACC solutions

➢ Advocate for continued investment in Elder Services

➢ Develop communication strategies and tools to keep the community informed

➢ Support the concept of an ACC ensuring first that the needs of the Seniors are being met.

Community Needs

Overall

- The focus of ReCalc was to assess needs and then translate that assessment into a recommendation for a Senior Center/ACC.
- Program and service needs differ by age group, but implications for the facility (indoor & outdoor space and accessibility) appears to be consistent (and similar).
- The survey results provide insight into the top five selected indoor & outdoor space and accessibility needs across the age groups, and for the most part, those results were well aligned.
- There was a clear difference in service needs (respondents were given option to select service importance) by age group.

8 Areas

- Socialization
- Interesting/Specialty Program Offerings
- Physical Activity
- Meals

- Outdoor Activity
- Administrative Services
- Accessibility
- Affordability

Socialization

PSC

Other

The need for socialization is a common theme

Every aspect of bringing people together can be thought of satisfying this need

Facility Implications:
- Café or drop-in space, dedicated arts and crafts space, multipurpose space for both small and large group activities, space for games, space for group exercise
- many of the local centers visited included a dedicated lounge area

PSC
RCTV

INTERESTING/SPECIALTY PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Peabody

Desire for expanded program offerings designed to draw in more participants, engaging a larger demographic.

Art, theater, clubs, games, thought-provoking activities, like enriching courses in cooking, technology, lectures, etc.

Facility implications:

- Dedicated space - Art, Games, and Technology
- Flexible multipurpose space (large space) that can be configured (broken up into smaller space) to adapt for a particular program
- Classrooms and program rooms should be accessible and inclusive, including technology for audio and visual presentations and the capability to receive participants who are participating virtually.

Peabody

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

One of the top attended programs at the current Pleasant Street Center (PSC) are those with a physical activity component, such as Zumba or Yoga.

Community feedback was consistent, expressing more support and facilities for fitness programs and access to exercise equipment.

They would also like to see expansion of these programs and the addition of other options such as Dance.

Facility implications:
- Dedicated space, or at least space that is designed with the correct flooring (etc.)
- Dedicated fitness and exercise rooms (indoor space) were listed as a top priority for all age groups.

Other

PSC

MEALS

- Providing the option for a daily meal was not only deemed a priority from the community survey, but also appeared as a common service offered by peer community centers.

- The differentiating factor is the facility amenities to support provision of meals. Currently the PSC does not provide the ability for on-site preparation, limiting what can be provided.

Needham

- The community expressed the need to have access to food and nutrition services.

- Facility implications:
 - Kitchen to support the defined dining space
 - Consider commercial kitchen

Peabody

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

- The community has expressed the need for a set of outdoor activities that should be supported by a new center.

- Facility implications:
  - Benches/comfortable seating
  - Picnic area
  - Grass area for lawn games
  - Gardening area
  - Walking/running track.

Other

Other

Other

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Needham
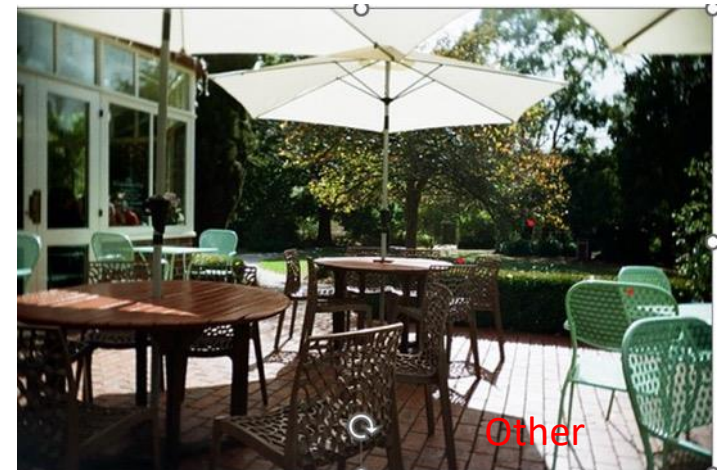
- Staffing to provide the programs and services
- Provide private office spaces for staff to conduct 1-1 appointments with residents.
- Provision of adequate staffing to support the core programs and services of Elder Services is a pre-requisite, with additional staff needed to meet new program, service and facility requirements.

- Facility implications:
  - Private office spaces
  - 1-1 conference rooms
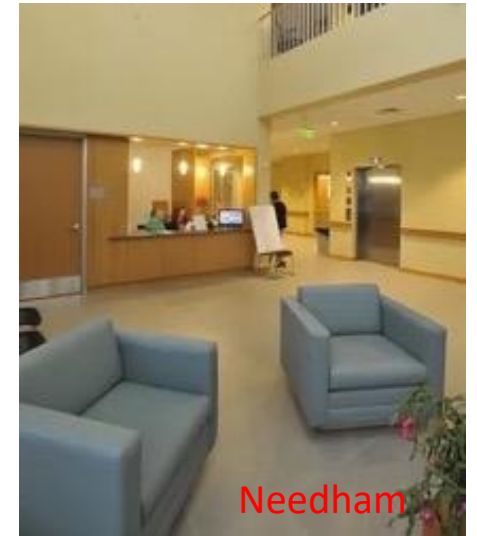
PSC

PSC

PSC

The staff of the Pleasant Street Center are *"maxed-out in their ability to meet the demands of the community."*

ACCESSIBILITY

Other

- Support for hearing (audio assistive devices), sight (design considerations), and handicapped accessibility beyond the standard ADA compliance
- Access the center because of limited hours of operation (for those that work during the day), the need for transportation (those that don't drive), adequate parking either on-site or in satellite lots (with shuttle service).
- Program and/or service accessibility can also be impacted by communication of information and the registration process

Facility implications:
- Hours of operation
- Parking & Transportation
- Technology for virtual participation
- Design for disabilities

PSC
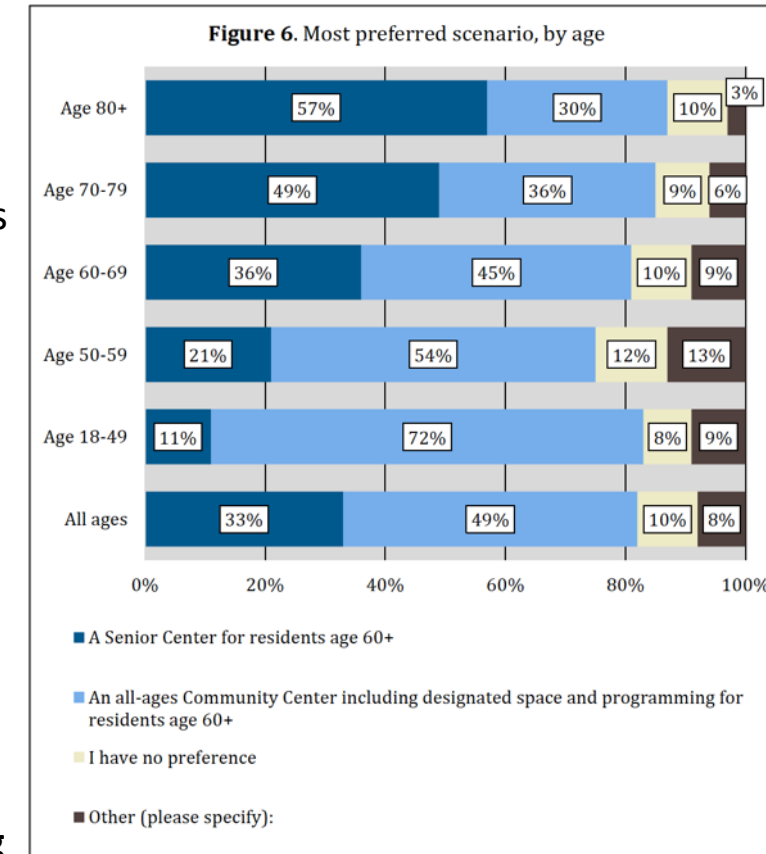

PSC

AFFORDABILITY

Other

- Most selected accessibility feature for a Sr./Community center was No to little cost to participate in programs.
- Center Cost
  - (+) Forty-seven percent of residents indicated they would be willing to pay up to $200 (added to annual property taxes), and sixty-four percent indicated they would be willing to pay up to $100
  - (-) A third of those surveyed indicated they would not support a new building if it required an increase in taxes. Those willing to pay $200 or more per year was only 23%.
- Resident concerns about affordability and the realization that some may be priced out of the community if the increase in taxes and other expenses (rent, utilities, etc.) continue unabated.

CENTER PREFERENCE
(MOST PREFERRED SCENARIO)

- 82% of the respondents selected either a senior center for residents age 60+ (33%) or an all-ages community center including designated space and programming for residents age 60+ (49%).

- Preference for a senior center increased with age, preference for an all-ages community center with designated space and programming for residents age 60+ declined with age

- Nearly half of survey respondents elaborated on their selection
  - 21% of those expressed support – stating a community center as **"an opportunity for community cohesion and inclusion."**
  - Nearly the same number (1 in 5) expressed resistance to a new building/development citing concerns **"about how development costs will influence their own expenses (e.g., increased tax bill) as well as perceptions that there are other priorities for town funding (e.g., improving school facilities, addressing road and sidewalk repairs). Those expressing resistance to a new development also reported the perception that are adequate existing resources in town that can be rehabbed or repurposed."**

Figure 6. Most preferred scenario, by age

Age	A Senior Center for residents age 60+	An all-ages Community Center including designated space and programming for residents age 60+	I have no preference	Other (please specify)
Age 80+	57%	30%	10%	3%
Age 70-79	49%	36%	9%	6%
Age 60-69	36%	45%	10%	9%
Age 50-59	21%	54%	12%	13%
Age 18-49	11%	72%	8%	9%
All ages	33%	49%	10%	8%

CENTER PREFERENCE

(RECALC CONCLUSION)

Needham

- ReCalc believes the <u>desire</u> for an all-ages community center (with dedicated Sr. space) is real, but
    - It should not take precedence over first meeting the program, service and facility <u>needs</u> of our Seniors
    - Take into consideration existing town services and facilities that could be used to support the types of programs and opportunities expressed for such a center.
    - There should always be separate space, programs and services for older residents.

Lexington

Lynnfield

NEXT STEPS - PRIMARY RECOMMENDATION

The following next steps should be performed to address the primary recommendation (*identify and implement a solution to the facility needs for the Senior population in the immediate (2 to 3 year) timeframe*):

(1) Define and execute an immediate facility solution for replacing and/or expanding the current Senior Center.

(2) Continue to enhance (invest in) the programming/services for Seniors including new offerings and better accessibility (e.g., address transportation, evening programming, etc.)

(3) Develop communication strategies and community outreach regarding the needs for Seniors

FUTURE OF RECALC

- ReCALC is scheduled to sunset by June 30, 2023

- Extension of its work to this date (from November 2022) was intended to allow the committee to finish its work on this phase of the Sr./Community Center project and report to the Select Board its final recommendations.

- ReCALC has developed an in depth understanding of the community needs.

- **Whether ReCALC continue to exist, executing the recommendations found in this summary report would benefit from continued support from members of the ReCALC committee.**
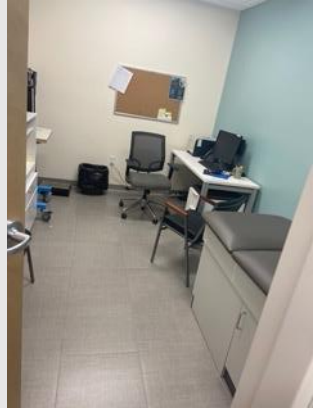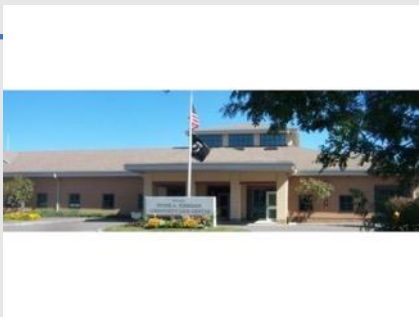
READING CENTER FOR ACTIVE LIVING COMMITTEE (ReCalc) SUMMARY REPORT

February 28, 2023

Presented by: ReCalc Members

- John O'Neill – Chair
- John Sasso – Vice Chair
- Ron Assini
- Nora Bucko
- Michael Coltman
- Mark Dockser
- John Parsons

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Acknowledgement:

The members of ReCalc would like to acknowledge the efforts and support of the following boards, committees, commissions, town government departments, organizations and individuals. This report, and the efforts it represents, would not have been possible without the cooperation of those named below.

- Reading Council on Aging
- Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging Gerontology Institute at UMASS Boston - Reading Select Board
- Local Senior/Community Centers Visited
- Jean Delios, Assistant Town Manager
- Jenna Fiorente, Community Services Director
- Kevin Bohmiller, Community Services Director (Retired 6/22)

Lastly, we want to acknowledge Elder Services Town staff who have served the community well; albeit constrained by a building that presents challenges.

Executive Summary & Recommendations:

The Reading Center for Active Living Committee (ReCalc) was charged with the following:

> *The charge of ReCalc is to explore the current and future needs of the Community, and initiate planning for a potential new Senior/Community Center in town that will focus on residents aged 60+ and possibly other members of the Community*

ReCalc has determined that the issues identified in the 2017 Report (Aging in Reading, Massachusetts: A community needs assessment), still exist. **The current Senior Center is inadequate**. The community is in support of upgrading its facility and service/program offerings to meet the needs of the growing elder population. This must include an accessible, inclusive building and that has sufficient space to provide support services, programs, events for reading residents age 60+ now and into the future. Therefore;

> **The primary recommendation from ReCalc is to identify and implement a solution to the facility needs for the Senior population in the immediate (2 to 3 year) timeframe.**

Through its efforts, which included the hiring of a consultant (Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging Gerontology Institute at UMASS Boston), ReCalc accomplished two major goals:

(1) Identified current and future needs of the entire community for a Senior/Community Center (with a dedicated senior space)
(2) Solicited the community's preference for addressing facility needs

Note: Although not originally defined, the premise of an all-ages Community Center (hereafter referred to as an **ACC**) is intended to mean a facility (or facilities) that provides programs and services for the entire community (multi- and/or inter-generational) with **dedicated space for senior (ages 60+) programming and services**. This was explicitly included as a basis for the preferences in the Community Survey. For readability purposes, when referring to the ACC throughout this report, it includes the assumption of dedicated senior space.

Summary information for both goals can be found in the first two sections of this report.

ReCalc implemented the following strategies in support of these goals:

(1) Engaged the community, with assistance from the UMass Consultant, through several forums and focus groups, culminating with a survey of 1470 residents (see Attachment A)
(2) Collaborated with other community partners and volunteer boards including but not limited to: the Select Board; the Council on Aging; the Reading Public Library (provided meeting room use) and RCTV (recorded ReCalc meetings, public forums, and provided additional support).
(3) Benchmarked twelve Senior Center (12) and three Community Centers (3) in 15 local communities (see Attachment B)
(4) Established lines of communication and began the process of educating the community about the need for an accessible, inclusive Senior Center that has sufficient square footage to provide

support services, programs, events for reading residents age 60+ for now and into the future. (see Attachment C)

(5) Explored a combined option of an ACC.

In addition to the primary recommendation (above), the following are supporting recommendations based on the work performed by ReCalc:

(1) Review the identified needs, perform a more detailed assessment of priorities, and then define explicit plans to address the needs. This should include all aspects of facility, staffing, services, programs, transportation, financial, etc., and should consider centralized and distributed approaches to service/program delivery whenever possible.

(2) Perform feasibility study (studies) on potential Senior Center/ACC solutions that may include renovation or construction of buildings. Ensure any proposed facility satisfies all ADA requirements and inclusivity recommendations for all populations.

(3) Advocate for continued investment in Elder Services (to support capital and operational expenses) aligned with the facility investments resulting from (1) and (2) above and Sr. Center use projections established from current use, demographic trends and comparable community data.

(4) Develop communication strategies and tools to keep the community informed of efforts and the rationale/priority for addressing the identified issues and unmet needs.

(5) Support the concept of an ACC ensuring first that the needs of the Seniors are being met. Implicit in this recommendation is to consider the "inventory" of currently provided Reading services and facilities to determine how best to meet the needs of the community. Whenever possible space in the ACC would be available for the community at large to use as is the option with current space at the Senior Center which is available for groups to reserve and use.

Although not something that can be implemented by the Town, ReCalc has encountered several communities that have established non-profit organizations (e.g., Friends group) for the purpose of fundraising for Senior activities. Many have used these organizations to fund furniture, fixtures and equipment in new and/or renovated Senior Center/ACC. ReCalc encourages the creation of a non-profit organization independent of town government that can raise funds for seniors. This model has been used successfully in other communities and provides an added resource to meet the needs of the senior population.

At their meeting on February 13, 2023, the Reading Council on Aging (COA) voted to support two motions related to the efforts of ReCalc. A copy of the COA communication is included as Attachment D to this report.

Lastly, the Community Services team provided input to ReCalc regarding other deficiencies and needs that should be considered (and addressed) as part of this process. While many of the items were not explicitly raised during the survey or other community input sessions, these do represent opportunities for synergies for programs and service offerings given additional (new) space. A copy of this input can be found in Attachment E.

Needs:

The following is an overall assessment of community needs derived from the work described herein. The focus of ReCalc was to assess needs and then translate that assessment into a recommendation for a Senior Center/ACC. This section does not provide recommendations for specific programs and services, although examples are discussed to provide context. While it is true that specific program and service needs differ by age group, the implications for the facility (indoor & outdoor space and accessibility) appears to be consistent (and similar). In particular, the survey results, although not a true prioritization, provide insight into the top five selected indoor & outdoor space and accessibility needs across the age groups, and for the most part, those results were well aligned. Looking at service needs, there was a clear difference in choices (respondents were given option to select service importance) by age group. A more detailed view of the information supporting this needs summary can be found in Attachments A and B. Needs listed below are enumerated as General needs, with implications for specific Facility needs highlighted (ReCalc was chartered with assessing both).

(1) <u>Socialization</u>

The need for socialization is a common them especially among the older population as clearly indicated by research. Every aspect of bringing people together can be thought of satisfying this need. From a facility standpoint, it was interesting to note that all age groups identified similar indoor space priorities: café or drop-in space, dedicated arts and crafts space, multipurpose space for both small and large group activities, space for games, space for group exercise. Kitchen and dining space was of lower interest for those under age 49 and a lounge space of higher interest for those aged 80 and older. Although not explicitly recorded, many of the local centers visited included a dedicated lounge area.

(2) <u>Interesting/Specialty Program Offerings</u>

The community, especially Seniors, expressed their desire for expanded program offerings. An ACC would be designed to draw in more participants and engage a larger demographic. Examples of programs discussed include art, theater, clubs, games, thought-provoking activities, life enriching courses in cooking, technology, lectures, etc. These offerings point to a number of different facility needs including <u>dedicated space for activities such as Art, Games</u>, <u>and Technology</u>, and <u>flexible multipurpose space (large space)</u> that can be configured (broken up into smaller space) to adapt for a particular program. Classrooms and program rooms should be designed to <u>incorporate technology for audio and visual presentations</u> and the capability to receive participants who are participating virtually.

(3) <u>Physical Activity</u>

One of the top attended programs at the current Pleasant Street Center (PSC) are those with a physical activity component, such as Zumba or Yoga. The feedback from the community was consistent is this

regard, expressing more support and facilities for fitness programs and access to exercise equipment. They would also like to see expansion of these programs and the addition of other options such as Dance. These programs require dedicated space, or at least space that is designed with the correct flooring (etc.) to support these activities. Having dedicated <u>fitness and exercise rooms</u> (indoor space) were listed as a top priority for all age groups. It's important to note here that exercise classes for those over 65 and those under 40 are very different. The implications for space needs based on varied programs have not been fully assessed but should consider whether running concurrent programs is feasible (requires additional large room space and staff).

(4) <u>Meals</u>

Providing the option for a daily meal was not only deemed a priority from the community survey, but also appeared as a common service offered by peer community Senior/Community Centers. The differentiating factor is the facility amenities to support provision of meals. Currently the PSC does not have a working kitchen for onsite preparation, limiting what can be provided. At a minimum, having a <u>functional kitchen and dining</u> <u>space</u> is a must. Many of the Senior/Community Centers we visited have a <u>commercial kitchen</u> which provides the ability to serve larger groups and functions. In addition to the physical space, the community expressed the need to have access to <u>food and nutrition services</u>. One comment we heard was "*Having high quality nutritious and delicious food is essential to continued meal programs.*"

(5) <u>Outdoor Activity</u>

The community has expressed the need for a set of outdoor activities that should be supported by a new Senior Center/ACC. Top priorities in this include <u>benches/comfortable seating, picnic area, grass area for lawn games,</u> <u>gardening area and a walking/running track offering a safe space for those with disability issues.</u>

(6) <u>Administrative Services</u>

Implicit in any new Senior Center/ACC is the need to accommodate staffing to provide the programs and services. A very specific need that is currently not being met is to provide <u>private office spaces for staff to conduct 1:1 appointments with residents</u>. The UMASS report highlighted community feedback that the staff of the Pleasant Street Center are *"maxed-out in their ability to meet the demands of the community."* <u>Provision</u> <u>of adequate staffing</u> to support the core programs and services of Elder Services is a pre-requisite, with additional staff needed to meet new program, service and facility requirements. When considering implications for an ACC, staffing for those expanded programs could leverage recreation and school department staffing and resources.

(7) Accessibility

Senior Center/ACC accessibility spans several concepts. First, there is the physical accessibility aspect, encompassing the need for design approaches to accommodate those with physical disabilities. This includes support for hearing (audio assistive devices), sight (design considerations), and handicapped accessibility beyond the standard ADA compliance*. Second, some Seniors currently cannot access the PSC because of limited hours of operation (for those that work during the day), the need for transportation (those that don't drive), and lack of adequate parking. Third, program and/or service accessibility can also be impacted by communication of information and the registration process. Any solution to the needs presented in this report must address all these accessibility issues.

[*Attachment A includes references to several resources to support Accessibility in Facility Design]
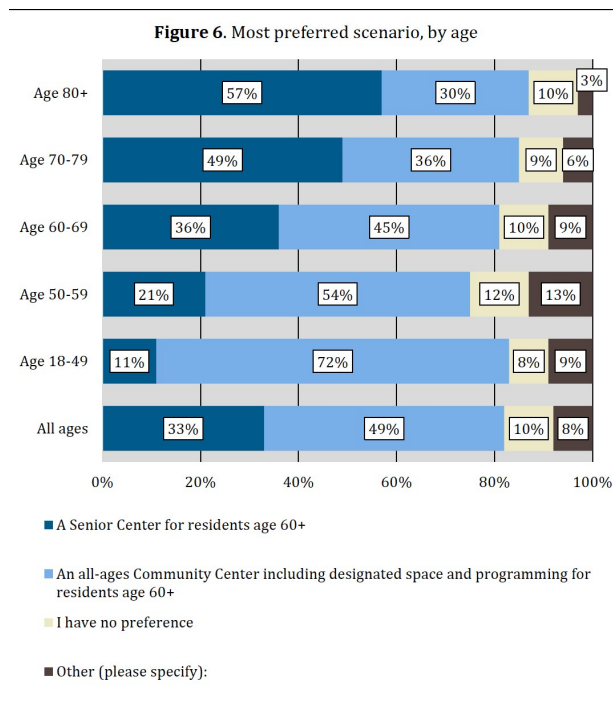
(8) Affordability

An interesting piece of data from the Community Survey was the willingness of residents to pay for a new Senior Center/ACC. Forty-seven percent of residents indicated they would be willing to pay up to $200 (added to annual property taxes), and sixty-four percent indicated they would be willing to pay up to $100. Conversely, nearly a third of those surveyed indicated they would not support a new building if it required any increase in taxes, and those willing to pay $200 or more per year was only 23%. Comments amplified the resident concerns about affordability and the realization that some may be priced out of the community if the increase in taxes and other expenses (rent, utilities, etc.) continue unabated.

It is therefore no surprise that the accessibility feature selected most often by respondents for a Senior Center/ACC was No to little cost to participate in programs. One program highlighted in other communities was the ability for Seniors to "work" (volunteer) their time and in exchange earn credit against property taxes. [Note: this is still an option for Seniors who qualify.]

Senior Only versus All-Ages Community Center (ACC):

As part of the formal community survey, a specific question was asked about preferences for a Senior vs. an all-ages community center (with dedicated senior space, ACC). The summary from that question is presented in the figure below (from Attachment A). Although about half (49%) of all respondents stated preference for an ACC, the breakout by age group is telling, with older residents preferring the Senior Center only option (aged 70-79 at 49% and aged 80+ at 57%).

Figure 6. Most preferred scenario, by age

Legend:
- A Senior Center for residents age 60+
- An all-ages Community Center including designated space and programming for residents age 60+
- I have no preference
- Other (please specify):

ReCalc believes that based on the feedback from the survey, discussions at community forums and focus groups, and the way other communities that have addressed Senior needs, the desire for an all ages community center (with dedicated senior space) is real. However, it should not take precedence over first meeting the program, service and facility needs of Reading Seniors.

In addition to the specific question about preference for a center, the respondents were provided the opportunity to expand upon their selection with a written response. Nearly half of the 1470 respondents did so. While 21% of the written responses advocated for a community center (ACC) as *"an opportunity for community cohesion and inclusion,"* almost the same number (nearly 1 in 5) expressed resistance to a new building or development believing there is *"no perceived need for a new Senior/Community Center (with dedicated senior space), citing sufficient existing opportunities, concerns about town development, and financial implications*."

Deliverables:

ReCalc's efforts were documented in several different ways, including but not limited to the following:

- ReCalc Meeting agendas and minutes
- Presentations to the Select Board
- Summary reports to Town Meeting
- Newsletters
- Postcards
- Emails
- Videos

In addition, three main reports were generated that reflect the core of the work performed by ReCalc. They are as follows:

- Attachment A: Community Engagement and Planning: Reading Center for Active Living (ReCal), February 2023
- Attachment B: ReCalc Center Visit Summary Report - Oct 9 2022 Draft
- Attachment C: ReCalc Communication Plan_Nov_8_2022

An additional attachment (Attachment E) was provided by the Community Services department in the form of a memorandum to ReCalc.

Copies of these three work products and the Community Services Memorandum can be found in the attachments to this report and on the ReCalc page of the town's website.

https://www.readingma.gov/601/Reading-Center-for-Active-Living-Committ

Next Steps:

ReCalc is scheduled to sunset by June 30, 2023. The extension of its work to this date (from November 2022) was intended to allow the committee to finish its work on this phase of the Senior Center/ACC project and report to the Select Board its final recommendations.

The ReCalc Committee, in addition to accomplishing its tasks, has developed an in depth understanding of the community needs. Its members have been actively involved in this process, having performed in-person site visits, spoken with members of the community, attended the numerous forums and meetings, and even advocated for ARPA grant funding for enhancing Elder Services activities and staff. ReCalc also maximized this work by involving the Council on Aging and other partners as noted above.

ReCalc has formulated recommendations after reviewing the data collected by UMass consulting team and acknowledges the community's desire for an ACC. However, a phased in approach is recommended so that the expense and time needed to meet these combined goals will most likely be the preferred strategy so that immediate (Senior) needs can be addressed in the short-term.

The following next steps should be performed to address the primary recommendation (*identify and implement a solution to the facility needs for the Senior population in the immediate (2 to 3 year) timeframe)*:
   (1) Define and execute an immediate facility solution for replacing and/or expanding the current Senior Center.
   (2) Continue to enhance (invest in) the programming/services for Seniors including new offerings and better accessibility (e.g., address transportation, evening programming, etc.)

(3) Develop communication strategies and community outreach regarding the needs for Seniors

Due to the constraints of the current Senior Center staff has always reached out to collaborate with other town departments and community organizations. It will continue this practice as it has proved very beneficial to be able to expand offering and services to the Elder and Human Services targeted population. Nevertheless, Reading's facility is not able to support the programming required to fully meet the needs of the senior community which must be remedied in the short-term.

ReCalc also supports moving forward with an all age Community Center (ACC). The specific recommendations defined in the Executive Summary should be pursued in parallel with the actions above including:

(1) Review the identified needs, perform a more detailed assessment of priorities, and then define explicit plans to address the needs. This should include all aspects of facility, staffing, services, programs, transportation, financial, etc., and should consider centralized and distributed approaches to service/program delivery whenever possible.

(2) Perform feasibility study (studies) on potential Senior Center/ACC solutions that may include renovation or construction of buildings. Ensure any proposed facility satisfies all ADA requirements and inclusivity recommendations for all populations.

(3) Advocate for continued investment in Elder Services (to support capital and operational expenses) aligned with the facility investments resulting from (1) and (2) above and Sr. Center use projections established from current use, demographic trends and comparable community data.

(4) Develop communication strategies and tools to keep the community informed of efforts and the rationale/priority for addressing the identified issues and unmet needs.

(5) Support the concept of an ACC ensuring first that the needs of the Seniors are being met. Implicit in this recommendation is to consider the "inventory" of currently provided Reading services and facilities to determine how best to meet the needs of the community. Whenever possible space in the ACC would be available for the community at large to use as is the option with current space at the Senior Center which is available for groups to reserve and use.

Attachment A –   Community Engagement and Planning: Reading Center for Active Living (ReCal), February 2023
Attachment B – ReCalc Visit Summary Report
Attachment C – ReCalc Communication Plan
Attachment D – Reading COA Motions (February 13, 2023)
Attachment E – Community Services Memorandum to ReCalc (February 15, 2023)