

# COLCHESTER SENIOR CENTER STRATEGIC PLAN



**2023-2027**

**Department of Senior Services**

## Table of Contents

Transmittal Letter from the Chair	2
Strategic Planning Team Members	3
Strategic Plan for 2023-2027	3
Mission Statement	4
Vision Statement	4
Core Values	4
Objectives	4
Organizational Goals	5
Outcomes & Performance Measures	5
Strategic Plan Summary	6-10
A. Purpose	6
B. Community	6
C. Governance	7
D. Administration & Human Resources	7
E. Program Planning	7
F. Evaluation	8
G. Fiscal Management	8
H. Records & Reports	9
I. Facility	9
J. Communications & Marketing	10
S.W.O.T. Analysis Report	11



# *Town of Colchester, Connecticut*

*95 Norwich Avenue Colchester, CT 06415*

*Patricia A. Watts Director of Senior Services/Municipal Agent for the Elderly*

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March 1, 2023

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman  
Town of Colchester  
127 Norwich Avenue  
Colchester, CT 06415

Dear First Selectman Bisbikos,

It has been my honor to serve as the Chairperson of the Colchester Senior Services Strategic Planning Team, alongside eight other individuals who were dedicated to the development of this plan. The Strategic Planning Team were tasked to review, revise and develop a five year plan for the Department of Senior Services to best serve the needs of Colchester's senior citizens, ages 55 and over.

The members of the Strategic Planning Team gave willingly of their time, insights and talents; and together we present you with a long range plan which we expect will serve the Department of Senior Services as well as the senior citizens of Colchester for the next 5 years, until 2027. On behalf of the Senior Services Strategic Planning Team, I ask that you accept this report as a comprehensive summary of our work together. We thank you for your time and look forward to your feedback. Additionally, I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.

Best Regards,

*Patricia A. Watts*

Patricia A. Watts  
Colchester Senior Services Strategic Planning Team, Chair  
Director of Senior Services  
Municipal Agent for the Elderly

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS**

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Patty Watts, Director of Senior Services, Chairperson

Joan Hunter, CSC member, Per Diem Staff

Nancy Nelson, CSC member, AARP #4019 member, CORE Commission

Bill Otfinoski, CSC member, CoA member, AARP #4019 member

Diane Paquette, community member

Jodi Savage, Program Coordinator

Antoinette Sirois, CSC member

Geraldine Transue, CSC member, CoA member, SCBC member

Denise Turner, Board of Selectman Liaison

## **STRATEGIC PLAN for 2023-2027**

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Working off of our previous Strategic Plan (2017-2022), the Strategic Planning Team worked together to review and revise the previous plan, both updating it for current day and providing a vision of our transition into the new Colchester Senior Center facility which will be built on Louis Lane with anticipated occupancy in 2024. Developing our Strategic Plan involved several important steps: 1) Determining the Mission of the Department of Senior Services; 2) Defining our Vision; 3) Identifying our Core Values; 4) Discussing our Organizational Goals; 5) Identifying our Objectives; 6) Creating a Plan for Implementation and Goal Achievement and finally; 7) Determining Outcomes and Performance Measures.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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*It is the mission of the Colchester Senior Services Department to support older adults by providing programs and services designed to promote their independence, health, wellness and overall quality of life.*

## **VISION STATEMENT**

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*A community resource dedicated to engaging, enriching and empowering the lives of seniors.*

## **CORE VALUES**

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- Advocacy and Safety for Seniors
- Respect for All
- Efficient Use of Resources
- Growth
- Fiscal Responsibility

## **OBJECTIVES**

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The following items are components of the department which our Strategic Plan seeks to address. These objectives align with the National Council of Aging's (NCOA) goals for strategic planning:

- Purpose
- Community
- Governance
- Administration & Human Resources
- Program Planning
- Evaluation
- Fiscal Management
- Records & Reports
- Facility
- Communication & Marketing

## **ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS**

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**WHO do we serve?** We serve citizens ages 55 years and older; both Colchester and non-Colchester residents.

**WHAT do we do?** Provide opportunities to enhance quality of life; champion the health and safety of our senior community and encourage community involvement utilizing the following programs and services:

- Senior/Younger Disabled Transportation Services
- Delivery of Social Services
- Senior Nutrition Programs (Community Cafe Meals and Home Delivered Meals)
- Programs-Educational, Recreational, Health & Wellness, Social & Special Events
- Meaningful Volunteer Opportunities

**HOW do we achieve our goals?**

- Human Resources-Staff, Members & Volunteers
- Community-Partnerships between the senior center and Town leaders, community organizations and businesses, and Colchester Public Schools
- Financial Resources-operational budget, revenue producing programs, and fundraising opportunities
- Facility Resources: building, grounds, and amenities

## **OUTCOMES & PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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Please see the Strategic Plan Summary (pages 6-10) for the goals and the outcome measures for each category of the Strategic Plan. You will find under each heading listed above 1) the Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Plan; 2) whose responsibility it is to meet each goal; 3) the target date for completion of each item and finally; 4) the Action Plan, or how to best meet the goal or objective. This Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis for goal setting and achievement. Also, it is the Department of Senior Services' intention to review and revise this Strategic Plan every five years, to remain current concerning the needs of Colchester's older adults.

## STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE	ACTION PLAN -- STATUS
<b>A. PURPOSE</b>			
Integrate long-range plan goals with the annual budget process	Director, First Selectman, BoF, Public Works Director	Annually	Evaluate facility and programatic needs in the development of the departmental budget
Review Colchester Senior Center Mission Statement and Vision Statement	Director, Strategic Planning Team	Ongoing, Every 5 years	Update as needed, but review formally as part of Strategic Planong process every 5 years, beginning 2027
Conduct Strategic Planning	Director, Strategic Planning Team	Every 5 years, or as needed	Publish Strategic Plan for Department of Senior Services in 2023, and every 5 years thereafter. Recruit a team of volunteers to serve as Strategic Planning Team involving active members and community stakeholders
<b>B. COMMUNITY</b>			
Develop partnerships with organizations throughout the community and region	Director, Program Coordinator, CoA	Ongoing	Schedule a minimum of 2 programs per month, which are collaborative efforts with community partners
Seek new/utilize current opportunities to provide education and information about available services to our community	Staff, CoA	Ongoing	Make Senior Resource Guide available via link on webpage and hard copies, as requested. Provide free community education on a wide variety of topics through the Colchester Senior Center's schedule of programs
Utilize outreach methods to provide services to adults unable to come to CSC	Director, Staff, Senior Nutrition Program	Ongoing	Provide senior transportation for elderly and younger disabled clients. Provide Home Delivered Meals to homebound elderly. Conduct phone and/or home visits
Schedule Social Services hours on-site to serve community seniors	Director, Social Service Coordinator	Ongoing	Social Service Coocrdinator is on-site and accessible to senior citizens to assist with Medicare, Veterans' benefits and other beneficial programs.

## STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE	ACTION PLAN -- STATUS
<b>C. GOVERNANCE</b>			
Follow Policies, Procedures and Best Practices of the Town of Colchester	All Staff, HR Coordinator	Ongoing, as assigned	Distribute Employee Handbook & Personnel Policies, as revised and instructed by Human Resource Coordinator
Review CSC's Policies & Procedures Manual	Director, Policies & Procedures Subcommittee	Bi-annually, or as needed	Recruit a committee comprised of Director and 3 CoA members to review and revise CSC's Policies & Procedures Manual
<b>D. ADMINISTRATION &amp; HUMAN RESOURCES</b>			
Review financial viability of the Making Memories Program	Director, MMP Coordinator	Ongoing, Annually	Apply for available grants, including Sr. Resources AAA, annually. Manage reports. Explore program expansion.
Review staffing requirements	Director, First Selectman, BOS, BOF	Ongoing, Annually	As CSC continues to realize growth in membership & services, evaluate staffing needs.
<b>E. PROGRAM PLANNING</b>			
Explore ways to attract younger seniors (Baby Boomers)	Director, Program Coordinator	Ongoing	Grow Fitness, Travel, Technology programs & recreational clubs.
Seek opportunities to expand and extend programs and services offered on evenings and weekends	Director, Program Coordinator	Ongoing	Look for opportunities to expand programs into the evening and occasional weekend hours; long-term feasibility only if new staff position is created/approved.
Explore interdepartmental collaborations	First Selectman, Director	Once new building opens	Contact Youth & Social Services & Parks & Recreation to explore viability of program partnerships and/or resource sharing.
Conduct Activity Interest Survey	Director, Program Coordinator	bi-annually	Poll CSC members for their feedback on existing programs & ideas for new program development. Digital/hardcopy distribution.



## STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE	ACTION PLAN -- STATUS
<b>F. EVALUATION</b>			
Utilize various tools and resources to determine any unmet needs of Colchester Seniors.	Director	Ongoing	Develop and distribute electronically and through hard-copy an Annual Member Satisfaction Survey during the month of September.
Develop and implement evaluations of Colchester Senior Center programs, which includes outcome-based measurements	Director, Program Coordinator	Ongoing, Annually	Utilize Client Satisfaction Survey for Fitness programs and Travel Opportunities/Trips to quantify client feedback and measurable outcomes for programs and trips.
<b>G. FISCAL MANAGEMENT</b>			
Review fiscal procedures for adherence to current regulations and best practices	Director, First Selectman, Director of Finance	Ongoing, Annually	Follow policies and procedures for fiscal management including utilizing Town RFP's, PO's, deposit documentation & employee time sheets.
Plan for significant future needs i.e. furnishings, equipment, buses, facility, for the town Capital Improvement Plan	Director, First Selectman, BoF, Public Works Director	Ongoing, Annually	Review with staff annually in October. Provide report for Capital Expense needs within the department for the upcoming fiscal year. Develop a schedule of replacement for large items.
Conduct a feasibility study to explore the creation of a "Friends of the Colchester Senior Center" 503(c) fundraising arm.	Director, First Selectman, BoS	Ongoing	Recruit a committee comprised of staff, community members and BoS liaison to conduct study.

## STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE	ACTION PLAN -- STATUS
<b>H. RECORDS &amp; REPORTS</b>			
Prepare a monthly report to include: program attendance, building usage, transportation usage, meals, Meals on Wheels, and delivery of social services.	Director, Staff	Monthly with Annual Report	Provide a monthly accounting of all statistics to the First Selectman by the 15th of each month. Follow Town schedule for an annual Departmental Report, submitted to the First Selectman.
Create reports to share at Commission on Aging monthly meetings	Director	Monthly	Submit Director's Report and Transportation Itemization Reports to be reviewed at monthly CoA meetings.
Maintain a compatible, flexible computer database of membership and services	Director, Staff	Ongoing	Contract with <i>My Senior Center</i> for data related to building usage, membership information and senior transportation.
<b>I. FACILITY</b>			
Maintain communication with town personnel who interface with the Senior Center's physical environment.	Director, Staff, Public Works	Ongoing	Timely submission of Town Work Orders to the Public Works Department for any physical plant issues/necessary repairs.
Develop a comprehensive plan to guide the transition into the new building	CSC staff	Prior to move	Assessment and organization of senior center resources
Review on-going needs of the facility.	Director, First Selectman, Strategic Planning Team	Annually, 5 Year Strategic Planning	Review facility needs as part of the ongoing Strategic Planning review process to assure community needs are addressed.

## STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

<b>J. COMMUNICATION &amp; MARKETING:</b>			
Maintain good relationships between department and community organizations	Director, Staff	Ongoing	Meet periodically with community groups such as Colchester Lions, CBA, Rotary, CHA/senior housing communities to facilitate collaboration/coordination.
Development of Marketing Plan	Director, Staff, CoA	Ongoing	Hardcopy CSC monthly newsletter, digital newsletter available on Town website, Colchester Connections Quarterly publication, weekly press releases in local media outlets.
Utilize Electronic Communications & establish a Social Media Presence	Director, Staff	Ongoing	Send weekly email blasts to members. Create and maintain Facebook page to augment communication. Senior Center website should include 12 months of digital newsletter.
<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>			
BoS: Board of Selectmen			
BoF: Board of Finance			
CoA: Commission on Aging			
CSC: Colchester Senior Center			
MMP: Making Memories Program			
HR: Human Resources			
RFP: Request for Payment			
PO: Purchase Order			
CBA: Colchester Business Association			
CHA: Colchester Housing Authority			

# S.W.O.T. Analysis Report

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>STRENGTHS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ People: Professional Staff; kind, friendly senior center members and volunteers</li> <li>➤ Zoom classes offered during pandemic and still offering hybrid classes</li> <li>➤ Excellent programs, activities and trips</li> <li>➤ Organized operations, well-managed</li> <li>➤ Pleasant culture, everyone is welcomed</li> <li>➤ Accommodating transportation services both in-town and out-of-town</li> <li>➤ Senior citizens are valued and visible as important members of the community</li> <li>➤ Large network of community partnerships</li> <li>➤ High level of engagement from members</li> <li>➤ New senior center to bring wonderful opportunities to grow</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>WEAKNESSES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Current building and parking present challenges</li> <li>➤ Restrooms are too small, not designed for seniors, leaking roof, condition</li> <li>➤ Lack of privacy in the building</li> <li>➤ Current building is a deterrent for some seniors to attend</li> <li>➤ Tech issues with phone and WiFi in the building</li> <li>➤ Limited evening/weekend programming</li> <li>➤ Limited budget which doesn't allow for new initiatives</li> <li>➤ Approximately 50% of members actually come into building</li> <li>➤ Staffing resources are limited</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increased community interest in senior center with new senior center project</li> <li>➤ New senior center referendum passed by wide margin=high community support</li> <li>➤ Increased community partnerships with public schools and area businesses</li> <li>➤ Fundraising "Friends of the Senior Center" Group</li> <li>➤ Senior demographic is the largest percentage of town's population</li> <li>➤ Building rentals to increase Town revenue</li> <li>➤ Bendas' Bequest financial gift of \$575k</li> <li>➤ Interdepartmental cooperation for programs and cost-share</li> <li>➤ Increased diversity for age (55-100+), economic status, race, religious groups, &amp; LGBTQIA+</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>THREATS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ COVID pandemic was particularly difficult for seniors—fear and isolation still exists within the senior community</li> <li>➤ Ageism-devaluing of older adults in our society</li> <li>➤ \$0.00 line item for senior programs</li> <li>➤ Multiple failed budget referendum is the norm, with a culture of cutting operational budgets, especially in Community Services</li> <li>➤ National and local political division</li> <li>➤ Some seniors lack access to technology or technology infrastructure</li> <li>➤ Cost bids for new senior center came in high reflecting current escalation in cost of building materials</li> </ul>