Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS)
Roundtable

June 23, 2026, **Discussion Highlights** Newtown Senior Center

From The FONS 2026 Member Meeting

FONS 2026 Member Meeting

FONS held it's annual Member Meeting June 11, 2026 at the Senior Center. Nearly 100 Newtown seniors were given an update on FONS 2025 and what's ahead for 2026 during the Member Meeting, followed by a bountiful Pig Roast meal. During the meeting members were asked questions about senior living in Newtown. Their responses formed the foundation of the June 2026 Roundtable.

1. Do you have firsthand experience, impacting you or someone close to you, with:

(Pick up to two)	%
f. Mental Health & Social Isolation	36%
b. Affordable Housing	27%
c. Navigating Senior Benefits	27%
e. Money and Insurance Confusion	27%
d. Caregiver Burnout & Support	18%

2. What would you like to see more of in Newtown

a. Smaller houses on smaller lots	33%
g. Sidewalks, Walking paths	22%
c. Independent Living facilities	17%
e. Rehabilitation / Long Term Care	17%
f. Sports facilities. What kind:	11%
d. Assisted Living facilities	6%
b .55+ Condo/Apartment Communities	6%
US Mail Drop Boxes	

3. Name one new business or service you would like to see in Newtown
   - Retail stores
   - Athletic Shoes, with recycling options
   - Trader Joes (Multiple times)

- Whole Foods
- Aldi's

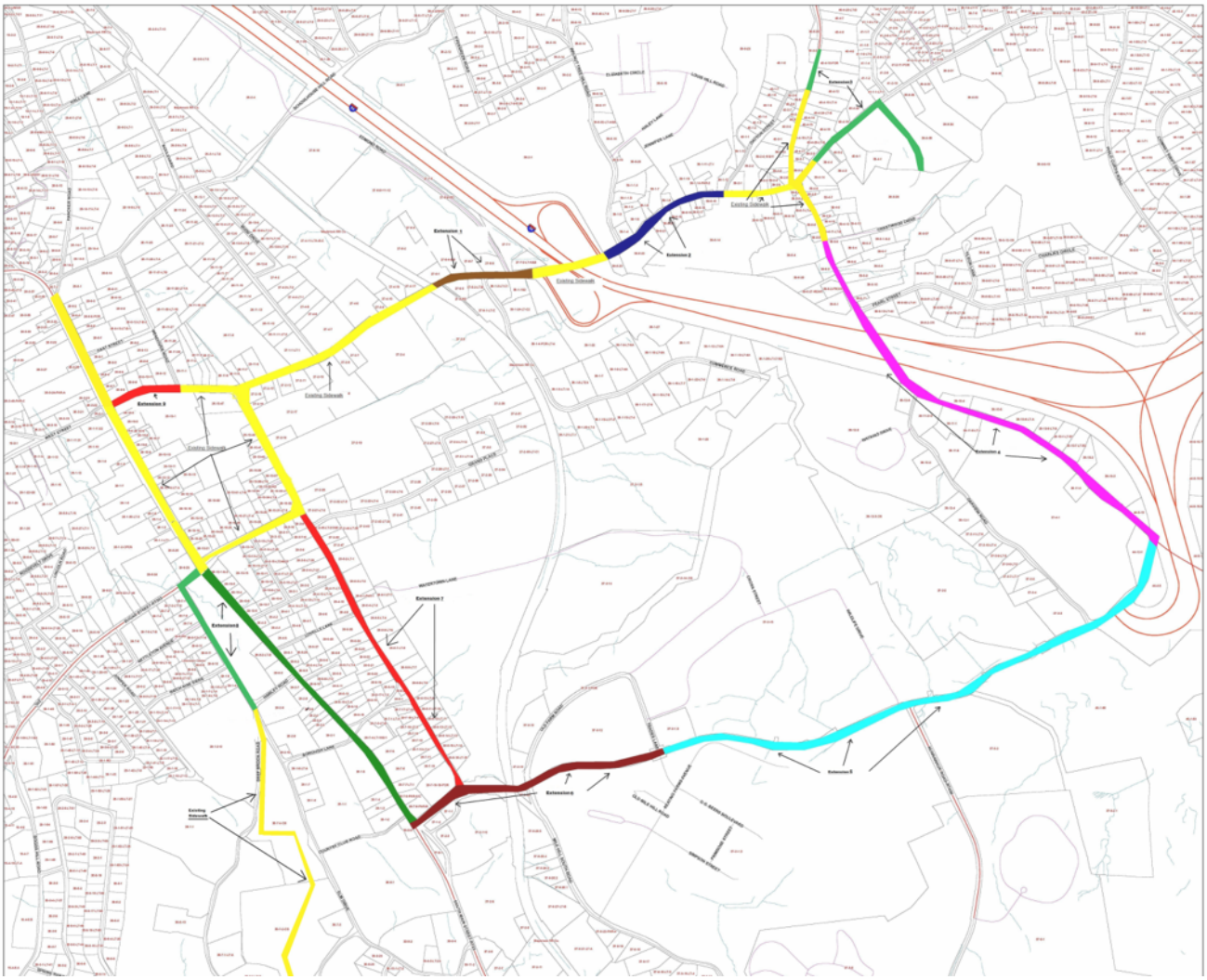
FONS June 2026 Roundtable

A small group of FONS members reviewed and reacted to the survey results taken at the Annual Meeting. To get a deeper understanding of the results from the Member Meeting, the group discussed:

1. What should FONS, COA and the Senior Center do about " Mental Health & Social Isolation"?
2. Where would you like to see sidewalks in Newtown?
3. What is good Newtown location for a store like Trader Joe's, Whole Foods or Aldi's ?

1. What should FONS, COA and the Senior Center do about " Mental Health & Social Isolation Mental Health & Social Isolation "?
   - There are lots of efforts in Newtown:
     - Coordinate efforts
     - Seen grants
   - Walk to other towns
   - Participate in the WCAAA workgroup on Mental Health & Social Isolation Mental Health & Social Isolation. Natalie G was part of the first meeting
   - Consider multiple ages
   - People who are isolated, by definition are difficult to identify
     - More outreach
     - Those that use the Senior Center find it open and welcoming. Others may be intimidated and a "place for old people"
     - HIPPA and other privacy concerns keep information from being shared
   - Create an information sheet of senior resources. This could be handed out at town food pantries, periodically included in Meals on Wheels lunches, and other locations
2. Where would you like to see sidewalks in Newtown?
   - Where students walk in the street after school
     - Newtown High School to Sandy Hook Center
     - Newtown High School to Fairfield Hills (NYA) there is school bus for this
     - Middle School to Church Hill Shops on to Sandy Hook center
     - Hawley Elementary School down Church Hill to Sandy Hook center
   - Fill in sidewalks from Sandy Hook Center to the I84 bridge
   - Elm Street to the Cemetery

The Newtown Sidewalk Master Plan that was in the 2014 POCD was shown. There is no sidewalk plan in the 2024 POCD. Towards the end of the 2024 POCD updated Planning & Zoning suggested that a Sidewalk supplement could be added.



3. What is good Newtown location for a store like Trader Joe's, Whole Foods or Aldi's
    - Locations cited were Stone Hill Plazza and around Exit 9.
    - Trader Joe's new store considerations analyzing population density, household income, and specific local traffic patterns to ensure a profitable market for its niche products. Looking for areas with accessible, high-visibility sites and adequate parking.
        - **Demographics:**
            - College-educated consumers
            - Median household incomes above $100,000.
            - 50,000 residents within the service area
        - **Site Accessibility:**

- Existing facility (Avoid new construction)
- Favorable traffic patterns
- Parking capacity
- Ease of entry to support a large trade area.

- **Request a Trader Joe's Store**
  - https://www.traderjoes.com/home/contact-us/request-a-store?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Newtown Senior Discount Card

The idea of a discount card for Newtown Seniors came up at the Member Meeting and was further discussed at the Roundtable.

- Operation of such a card needs to be designed
- Communication of which retailers/restaurants providing discounts for card holders needs to be designed
- Solicitation of retailers/restaurants once the program is designed
- And many other details need design and operationalization

Participants brought other similar programs to learn from

- NHS Football "Newtown Bucks"
- At Home in Darrien member discounts

A number of FONS members and even some local retailers have expressed interest in work in this.