

AGE FRIENDLY PORTSMOUTH



An Assessment Report

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AGE FRIENDLY?

Age Friendly communities enable residents to thrive at every age and every stage of life.

Written by: Rockingham Planning Commission
and City of Portsmouth

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PORTSMOUTH AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Introduction

What does it mean to be Age Friendly?

Age Friendly Communities are committed to supporting their youngest residents, oldest residents, and everyone in between. Residents of all ages benefit from walkable neighborhoods, a variety of transportation options, access to services, opportunities for social activities, and housing options that are affordable and adaptable. Age Friendly Communities foster economic growth, improve public health, and enhance quality of life for all residents.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has identified eight characteristics or “domains” of Age Friendly Communities:

- **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**—it is important that gathering spaces, both indoors and out, are accessible to everyone. This can include anything from providing seating, highly-visible signage, and wide trails in green spaces; offering closed captioning and assisted listening devices at meetings; to equipping public buildings with elevators, zero-step entrances, and railings along staircases.
- **Transportation**—transportation options should not be limited to driving your own car. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and designated bike lanes enhance safety for all residents. Public transportation options—such as buses and trains—are also important, but may not be practical in smaller, less densely populated communities. Taxis, shuttles, rideshare, and volunteer driver services play a bigger role in most New Hampshire communities. Affordability is as important as the availability of these transportation services and age friendly communities ensure accessibility across all income levels.
- **Housing**—AARP surveys consistently find that most older adults want to remain in their current home or community for as long as possible. Survey data from this project indicates that Portsmouth residents also feel strongly about remaining in town in their own homes. This is possible if a community has housing options suitable for a variety of incomes and ages, or if homes are designed or modified for aging in-place. Municipalities can encourage development patterns that locate housing in close proximity to services and amenities that make it easier for older adults to live independently.
- **Social Participation**—opportunities for accessible, affordable, and enjoyable social activities help community members to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation. Special attention should be given to ensure that older adults living on low incomes or with long-term limiting health conditions are included.
- **Respect and Social Inclusion**—everyone in the community should feel valued. Opportunities such as intergenerational programs that allow community members to learn from one another and honor what each person has to offer are great ways to promote respect and social inclusion.
- **Work and Civic Engagement**—age friendly communities provide opportunities for older adults to remain engaged through paid employment and volunteer positions. Creating an age-friendly business guide is a great way to encourage local businesses to be accessible and attractive to employees and customers. It can also include information about the benefits of employing older workers and tips on recruitment, retention, and training.

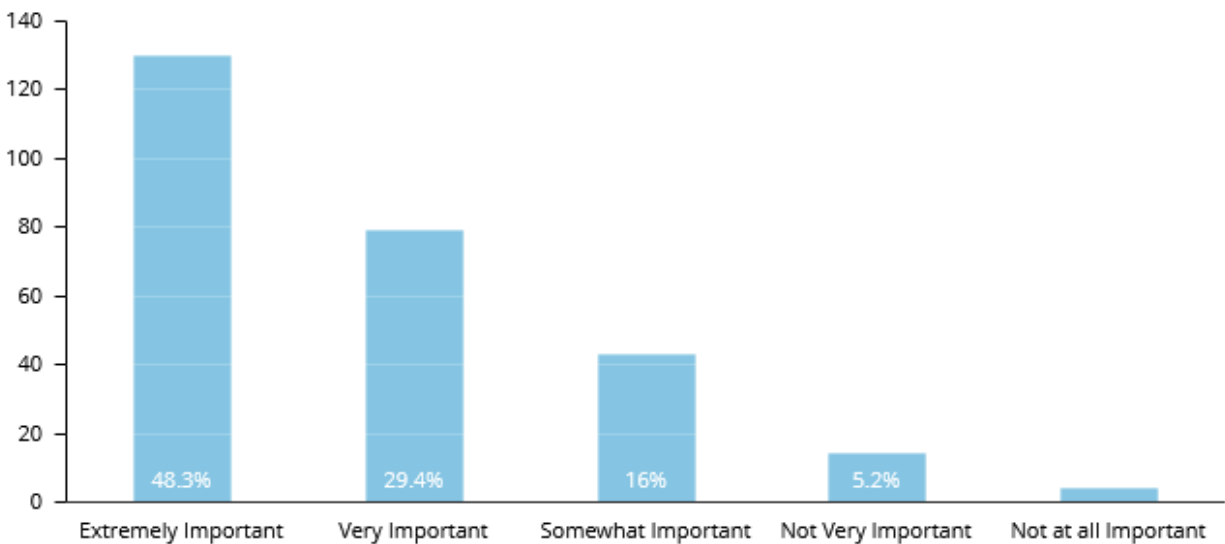
- **Communication and Information**—outreach to older adults should be clear, well-coordinated among partner entities, and disseminated across a variety of methods to ensure it reaches all residents.
- **Health and Nutrition Services**—assistance and care should be available close to where older adults live and affordable to all income levels. Likewise, age friendly communities provide support and services to family caregivers, who are often unprepared for the role, so that they can make informed decisions.

Why does it matter?

New Hampshire has an aging population. In 2015 there were 220,672 adults over the age of 65; by 2040 the projected 65+ population will be 408,522. According to AARP, 1 in 5 Americans over the age of 65 does not drive. That equates to 75,000 non-driving older adults in NH by 2030, based on population projections. Furthermore, what’s good for seniors is often good for younger adults and families. This includes having a variety of transportation options, walkable neighborhoods, access to services, and vibrant social opportunities.

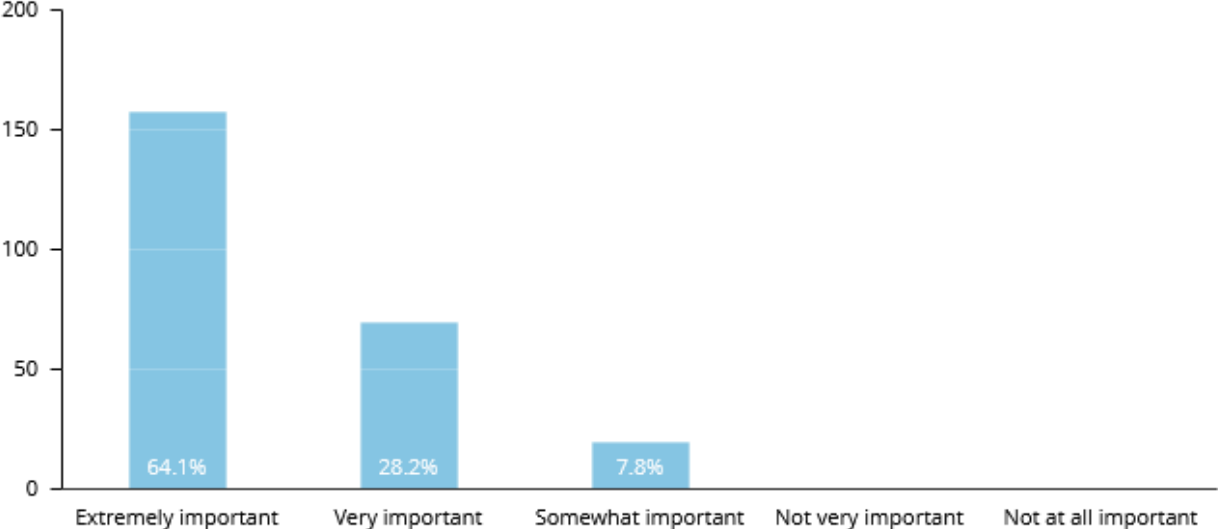
Findings from Portsmouth’s 2022 Age Friendly Communities survey show that residents wish to remain in the community as they age. 48.3% of respondents said it was “Extremely Important” to remain in Portsmouth in their 70s, 80s, and beyond while 29.4% answered that it was “Very Important.”

Survey Question 5. How important is it to remain in Portsmouth as you reach your 70s, 80s, and beyond?



Likewise, 64.1% of respondents said it is “Extremely Important” to live independently in their own home as they grow older and 28.2% reported that it is “Very Important.”

Survey Question 12. How important is it for you to live independently in your own home as you grow older?



Project Background

Age Friendly Communities Project Overview

In 2021, the Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels Program (RNMOW) and Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) were awarded a two-year grant from [Tufts Health Plan Foundation](#) to work with an array of partners to assist communities in the Rockingham region in becoming Age-Friendly. Age Friendly communities enable residents to thrive at every age and every stage of life, as policies and initiatives that help older residents tend to make communities more livable for all ages. The project draws on a national framework developed by [AARP](#) that has been used widely in New Hampshire in recent years. [AARP New Hampshire](#) is also a collaborating sponsor of the project.

Rockingham Planning Commission worked with the following six communities in 2021-2022 to conduct Age Friendly Community Assessments—Exeter, Fremont, Hampstead, Hampton, Portsmouth, and Stratham. Additional assessments and two local pilot implementation projects will be completed by July 2023.

History of Age Friendly Work in Portsmouth

The following is a brief summary of previous programs and initiatives sponsored by the City of Portsmouth geared towards older adults.

For almost 50 years the great Portsmouth community supported a senior center in various shapes and forms. In 2012, the City of Portsmouth took leadership of senior services and hired a coordinator within the recreation department to open a new center and build programs designed for older adults. In 2014 a temporary senior center was opened and in 2018, the City of Portsmouth formally committed to becoming age friendly through AARP's Livable Communities initiative. Then Mayor Richard Jack Blalock stated "Portsmouth has already made many strides to work towards a more age-friendly environment and we are excited to delve further into this project and implement additional services, opportunities and programs."

As evidence by that statement, in 2020 the City of Portsmouth's Recreation Department opened a new 13,000 sq ft senior activity center to serve the greater Portsmouth community. Fully funded by the City of Portsmouth.

In Spring 2022 the City of Portsmouth Senior Services began work with Rockingham Planning Commission to perform an age-friendly community assessment.

Portsmouth Steering Committee

This initiative was guided by Portsmouth residents and Brinn Sullivan, Portsmouth's Senior Services Supervisor.

In the spring of 2022, Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) staff worked with Brinn Sullivan to draft a survey designed to assess the needs of older adults in Portsmouth. They also brainstormed locations and methods to distribute the survey in order to reach as many residents as possible. Over the next few months, Portsmouth Senior Activity Center staff helped to disseminate and promote the survey, which

was available in paper and electronic formats. There were 236 online responses to the survey and 54 paper surveys completed.

At a meeting on June 8, 2022 RPC and Portsmouth Senior Activity Center staff reviewed the survey data and identified key themes to be explored in more detail at a community-wide forum. These themes included transportation, housing, recreational and social opportunities, in-home senior services, and information sharing/leadership/organization. The City of Portsmouth held a Forum on July 12, 2022 at the Portsmouth Senior Activity Center, which featured an information sharing component as well as breakout sessions to get more detailed input on key themes. Findings from the Portsmouth survey and Forum appear in the next section of this document.

Portsmouth Community Profile

The following section includes data on a series of indicators related to each of the AARP Eight Domains of Age Friendly Communities.

Demographic Data

Portsmouth is located in Rockingham County, in the Seacoast region of New Hampshire. The 2019 Census estimate for Portsmouth was 21,927 residents, which ranked it 13th among NH's incorporated cities and towns. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2019 data, the median age in Portsmouth is 39.8 years. Portsmouth's population by age group is distributed as follows:

- Under age 5 = 809
- Age 5 to 19 = 2,918
- Age 20 to 34 = 5,780
- Age 35 to 54 = 5,639
- Age 55 to 64 = 2,850
- Age 65 and over = 3,779

95.8% of Portsmouth residents 25 years and over have a high school degree or higher and 58.6% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. Per capita income is \$53,344 and median household income is \$83,923. 6.7% of Portsmouth residents fall below the poverty level (*Source: ACS 2015-2019*).



Transportation Data

- Portsmouth Senior Transportation is a service contracted by the City of Portsmouth and works with their community partner COAST to provide sustainable, safe, convenient, and comfortable transportation options to Portsmouth seniors and eligible adults with disabilities.
- In addition to the Senior Transportation Program, COAST offers a variety of shared-ride transportation services, including ADA Paratransit, that are operated by COAST staff. For more information, visit <https://coastbus.org/pst>.
- As part of the design build for the new Senior Activity Center a COAST bus stop was installed outside the senior center with an enclosure.
- Percent of Portsmouth residents 65+ who own a motor vehicle = 90.8% (state average = 91.0%)
Source: 2019 NH Healthy Aging Community Profile
- Portsmouth's Walk Score = 47 out of 100, "Car Dependent." This score indicates that most errands require a car.
Source: <https://www.walkscore.com/NH/Portsmouth>
- Portsmouth's Bike Score = 46 out of 100, "Somewhat Bikeable." This score estimates the accessibility of community facilities by safe, low stress bicycle routes (road shoulders, bike paths, trails) and indicates that there is minimal bike infrastructure in Portsmouth.
Source: <https://www.walkscore.com/NH/Portsmouth>

Housing Data

According to the 2015-2019 ACS data, Portsmouth has a total of 10,615 housing units, of which 5,044 are single-family units; 2,159 are 2-4 units multi-family structures; 3,118 are 5 or more units in structure; and 294 are mobile homes or other housing units. The 2019 total tax rate (per \$1,000 of value) in Portsmouth was \$14.86 and 57.7% of local assessed value came from residential land and buildings (*NH Dept. of Revenue Administration*).

Portsmouth has many buildings designated for seniors and disabled residents. Portsmouth Housing Authority manages five Elderly and Disabled buildings housing 297 apartments. They also manage three properties for ages 62+ containing 60 units. Two senior apartment complexes—Keefe House and Portsmouth Apartments—are classified as elderly and are managed privately. Combined they contain 103 apartments.

- Percent of Portsmouth residents age 60+ who own their home = 69.3% (State average = 79.9%)
Source: [2019 NH Healthy Aging Community Profile](#)
- Percent of Portsmouth residents age 60+ who have a mortgage on their home = 31.0% (State average = 35.3%) Source: [2019 NH Healthy Aging Community Profile](#)
- Percent of Portsmouth homeowners age 65+ spending > 35% of income on housing = 16.0% (State average = 21.2%) Source: [2019 NH Healthy Aging Community Profile](#)
- Percent of Portsmouth renters age 65+ spending > 35% of income on housing = 15.7% (State average = 8.7%) Source: [2019 NH Healthy Aging Community Profile](#)
- Percent of Portsmouth householders living alone, age 65+ = 12.2%
Source: [2020 American Community Survey](#)
- Portsmouth has a senior tax abatement policy:
<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/assessors/elderly-disabled>
- Portsmouth does allow accessory dwelling units (in-law apartments):
<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/planportsmouth/accessory-dwelling-unit-and-garden-cottage-application-instructions>
- Portsmouth is one of only a few communities in the region with a Housing Authority. As such, Portsmouth has a higher demand for senior housing because there is a lack of affordable options elsewhere. <https://porthousing.org/>



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Data

- Portsmouth has the only dedicated senior center in the region. It is run by a full time staff person and 6 part time employees, all supported 100% by the City.

Survey Question 14. How would you rate the following in your town?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure	Not applicable
Sidewalks	9% Excellent	40% Good	26% Fair	18% Poor	1% Not Sure	5% Not applicable
Benches where I walk	4% Excellent	19% Good	25% Fair	25% Poor	11% Not Sure	16% Not applicable
Ease of access at town facilities	13% Excellent	53% Good	23% Fair	4% Poor	4% Not Sure	1% Not applicable
Ease of getting to town facilities	11% Excellent	55% Good	23% Fair	8% Poor	3% Not Sure	1% Not applicable
Public restrooms	3% Excellent	13% Good	26% Fair	36% Poor	15% Not Sure	8% Not applicable



Social & Civic Engagement Data

- Ballots cast in Portsmouth Municipal Election; November 2, 2021 = 6,099; participation rate = 37.4% *Source: City of Portsmouth*
- Portsmouth voter participation rate in 2018 US midterm election (age 18+) = 62.5% (State average = 54.7%) *Source: [2019 NH Healthy Aging Community Profile](#)*

Communication & Information Flow Data

- 26% of survey respondents were unaware of activities/events that interest them.
- Percent of Portsmouth residents age 60+ who used the internet in the past month = 75.1% (State average = 77.6%) *Source: [2019 NH Healthy Aging Community Profile](#)*
- 64% of survey respondents utilized internet/websites to get information about services or events in Portsmouth.
- 42% of survey respondents utilized social media (ex. Facebook, Twitter) to get information about services or events in Portsmouth.
- 58% of survey respondents utilized email to get information about services or events in Portsmouth.
- Percent of Portsmouth households with:
 - internet subscription = 90.0%
 - broadband of any type = 89.6%
 - dial-up with no other type of internet subscription = 0.4%
 - cellular data plan = 82.5%
 - cellular data plan with no other type of internet subscription = 6.3%
 - broadband such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL = 82.9%
 - satellite internet service = 0.7%
 - without an internet subscription = 10.0%
 - *Source: [2020 ACS](#)*



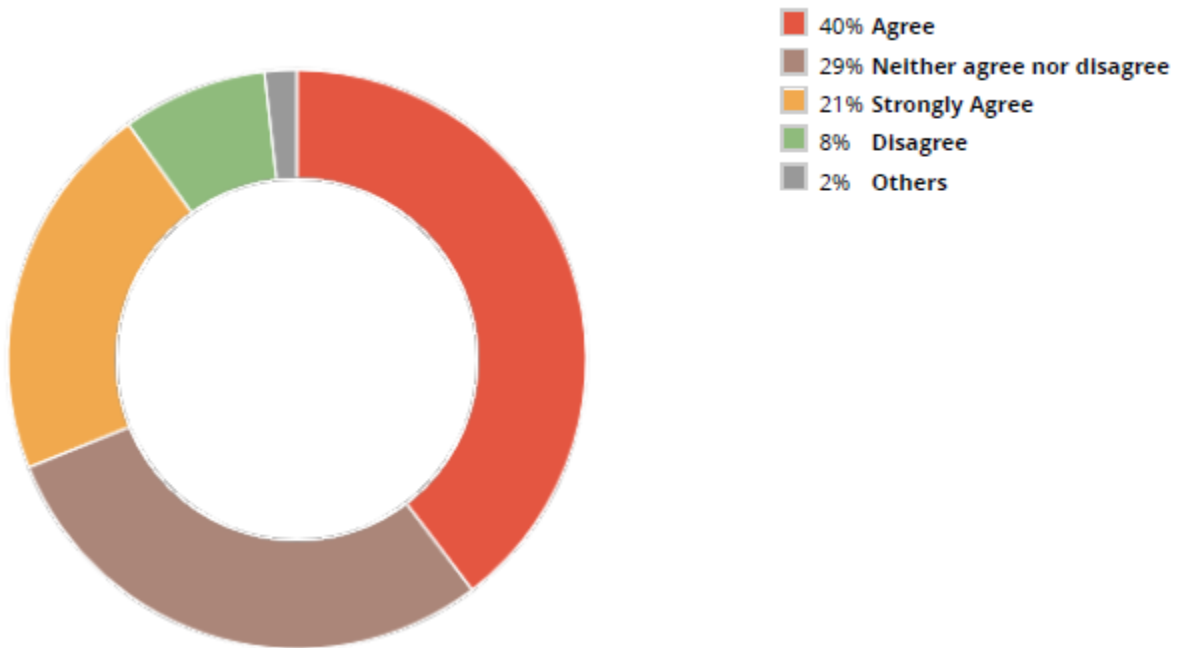
Respect and Social Inclusion Data

Survey Question 29. Do you feel accepted in your town with regard to:

	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Spirituality or religious affiliation	61%	9%	3%	28%
	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Sexuality	65%	8%	2%	25%
	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Age	68%	25%	3%	4%
	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Political views	53%	23%	8%	16%
	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Gender identity	67%	4%	1%	27%
	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Race and ethnicity	77%	5%	2%	16%
	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Economic status	67%	18%	6%	9%
	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A



Survey Question 30. My town is welcoming to all people.



Health and Nutrition Data

The 2019 New Hampshire Healthy Aging Data Report was designed to help identify strengths and needs across the state by presenting data on the health of older residents. It was funded by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and created by researchers at the Gerontology Institute of the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston, in partnership with the New Hampshire Alliance for Healthy Aging. The report can be accessed online at:

<https://healthyagingdatareports.org/>

The 2019 New Hampshire Healthy Aging Data Report covers 244 NH communities and includes more than 166 health indicators. Individual community reports allow municipalities to compare healthy aging indicators to state averages. The report finds that older Portsmouth residents did better than the state average on health indicators including obesity, high cholesterol, cataracts, osteoarthritis/rheumatoid arthritis, and endometrial cancer. They are also more likely to meet the CDC guidelines for muscle strengthening activity, aerobic physical activity, and getting screened for colorectal cancer. The report found that 95.2% of Portsmouth residents 60 years and older have a regular doctor and only 5.4% did not see a doctor when needed due to cost.

On the other hand, older Portsmouth residents had higher rates than the state average of older residents for:

- Excessive drinking
- Schizophrenia
- Ischemic heart disease
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Osteoporosis
- Breast cancer
- Benign prostatic hyperplasia
- Hypothyroidism
- Fibromyalgia

The report also found that 2.8% of Portsmouth residents age 60+ received food stamps in the past year. This is lower than the state average of 5.7%.



Work & Civic Opportunities Data

- Percent of Portsmouth residents 65+ employed in the past year = 25.3% (state average = 24.8%)
Source: [2019 NH Healthy Aging Community Profile](#)



Results and Key Themes

Survey Methodology

Portsmouth's Age Friendly Community Survey was adapted from a national model developed by AARP. The survey includes questions related to AARP's eight dimensions of Age Friendly Communities: transportation, housing, social engagement, outdoor spaces and buildings, work and civic engagement, respect and social inclusion, health and nutrition services, and information flow. The core of the forty-question survey was consistent across the six assessment communities, while each community had an opportunity to add questions of local importance. The survey was available online through the Public Input platform. It was also circulated in paper format at Portsmouth Senior Activity Center, Portsmouth Housing, and Portsmouth Public Library.

The survey was promoted using a range of methods including:

- Post cards at City Hall, Public Library, Senior Center, and Recreation Department
- City website and social media
- Portsmouth's TV channel
- Racial Unity Team
- Rockingham Nutrition and Meals on Wheels
- Local churches

PORTSMOUTH AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SURVEY

Portsmouth, in partnership with the Rockingham Planning Commission and Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels Program, is assessing the needs of older adults in our community—now and into the future. We want to hear from residents of all ages. Many younger people live with or help care for older adults and we are all aging. YOUR voice will help us understand what is working now and what is needed.



Take the survey today!

<https://publicinput.com/AgeFriendlyPortsmouth>

Paper surveys available at Portsmouth Senior Activity Center, City Hall, and Portsmouth Public Library

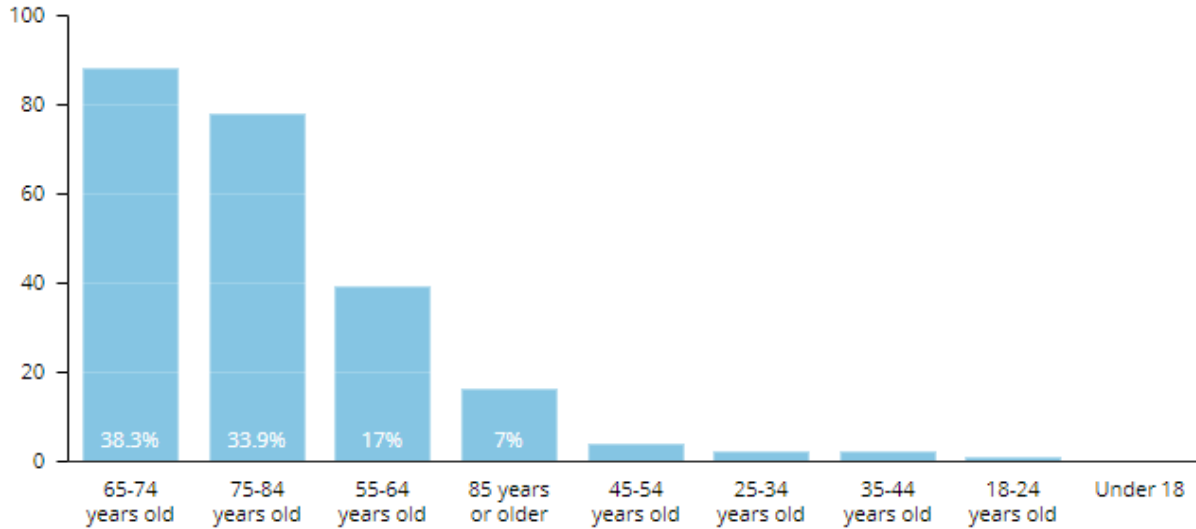


FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JILL LONGVAL:

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Age

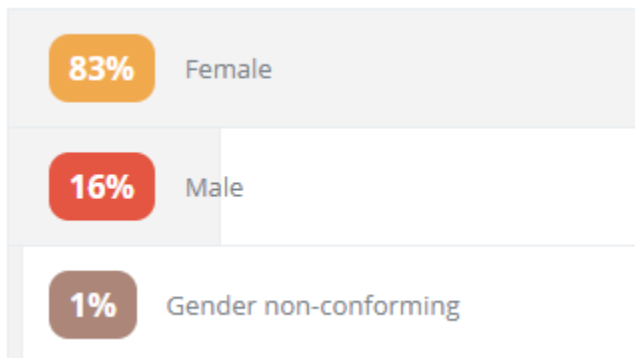
Survey Question 31. What is your age?



Of the 290 people who responded to Portsmouth's Age Friendly Communities survey, 38.3% were 65-74 years old, 33.9% were 75-84, 17% were 55-64, 7% were 85 years or older, and only 3.9% were 54 years or younger.

Gender

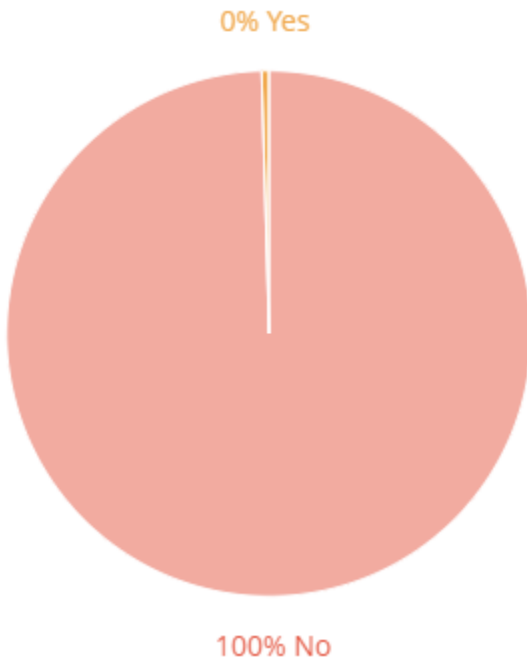
Survey Question 34. What is your gender?



Participation in both the Age Friendly Communities survey and forum in Portsmouth skewed heavily towards female. This was a consistent trend across all six communities.

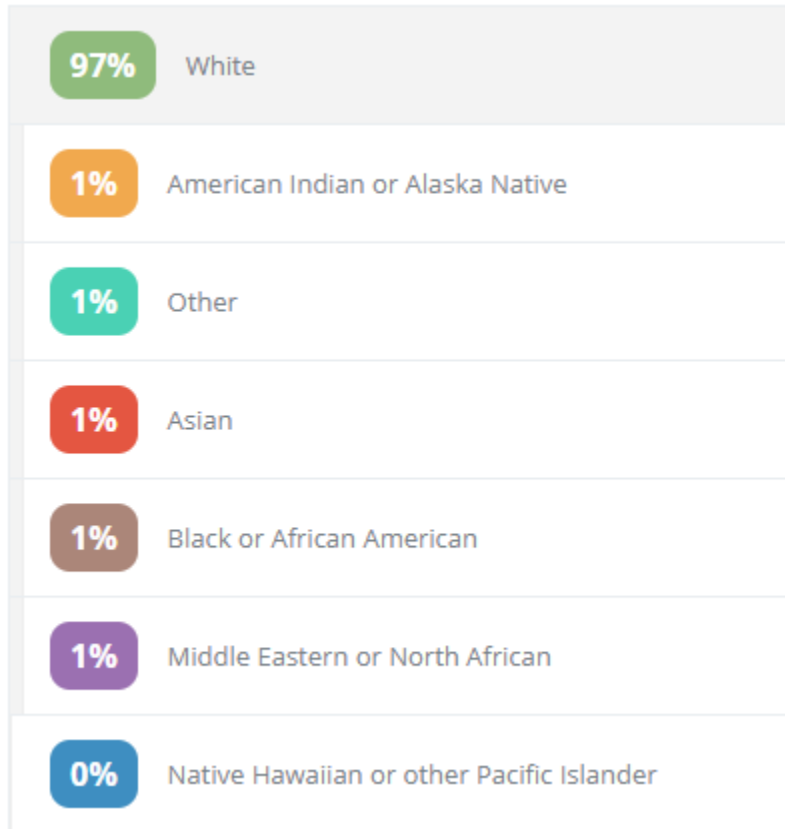
Race/Ethnicity

Survey Question 33. Do you consider yourself Hispanic, Latino/Latina, or of Spanish origin?



Survey respondents were asked to answer questions about their race and ethnicity. According to the 2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, 2.4% of Portsmouth's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, which means that they were underrepresented in this survey.

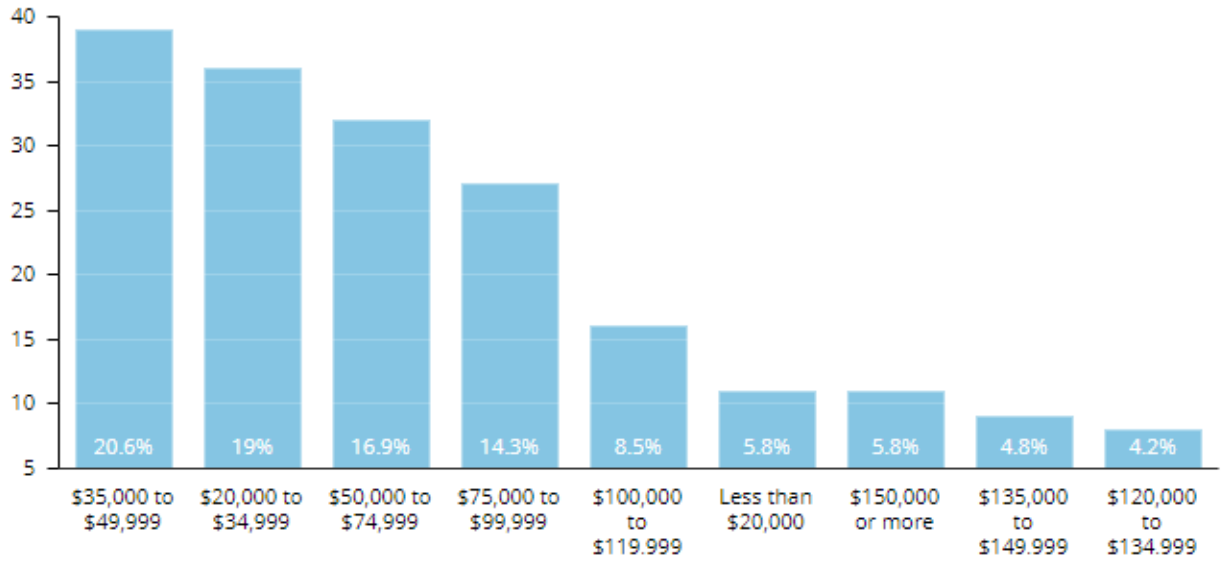
Survey Question 32. What race(s) do you identify with? (check all that apply)



According to the 2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimate, 89.5% of Portsmouth’s population identifies as white alone, 2.0% identifies as Black or African American alone, 0.0% as American Indian or Alaska Native alone, 4.8% as Asian alone, and 0.0% as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone. This means that white residents were overrepresented in the survey while Asian and African American residents were underrepresented.

Income and Employment Status

Survey Question 38. What is your household income?



Survey respondents were fairly evenly distributed across income levels and were representative of Portsmouth's population. 62.3% of respondents had a household income of \$74,999 or less. According to the US Census, Portsmouth's median household income in 2020 dollars is \$78,712.

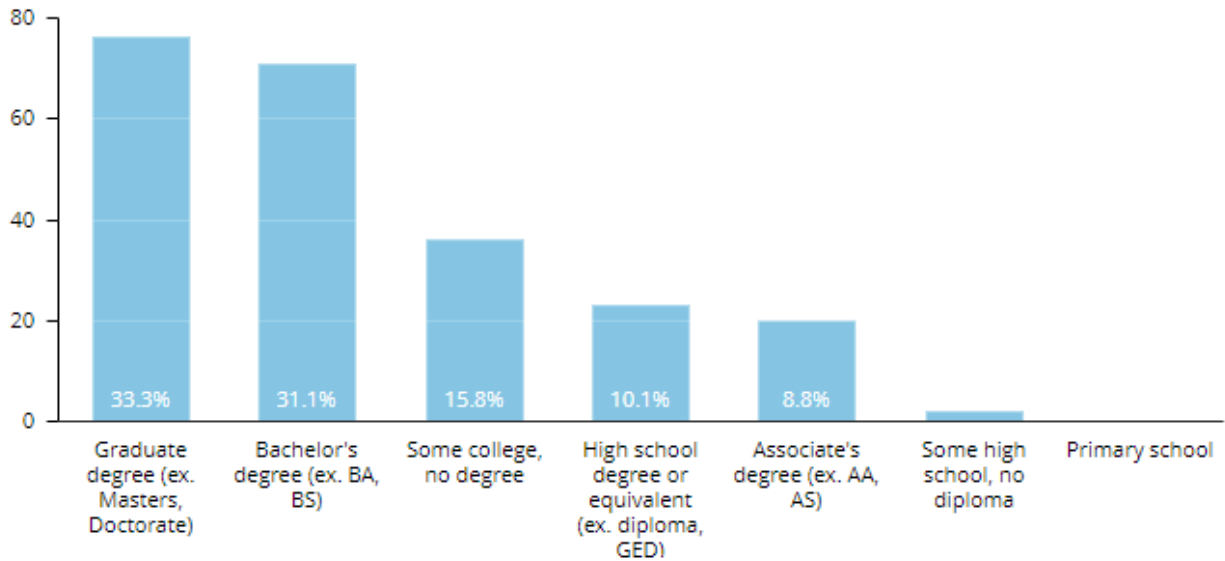
Survey Question 35. What is your current employment status?



79% of survey respondents were retired while 9% were employed full time. Only 2% were unemployed and currently looking for work.

Education

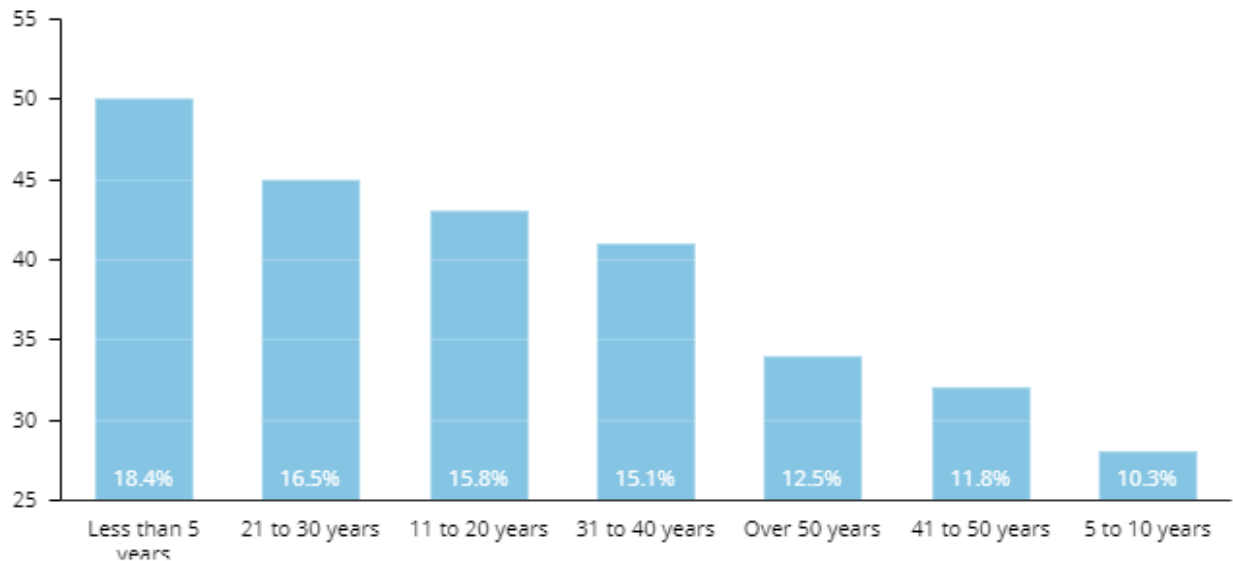
Survey Question 36. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?



More than 64% of survey respondents had a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Length of Time Living in Portsmouth

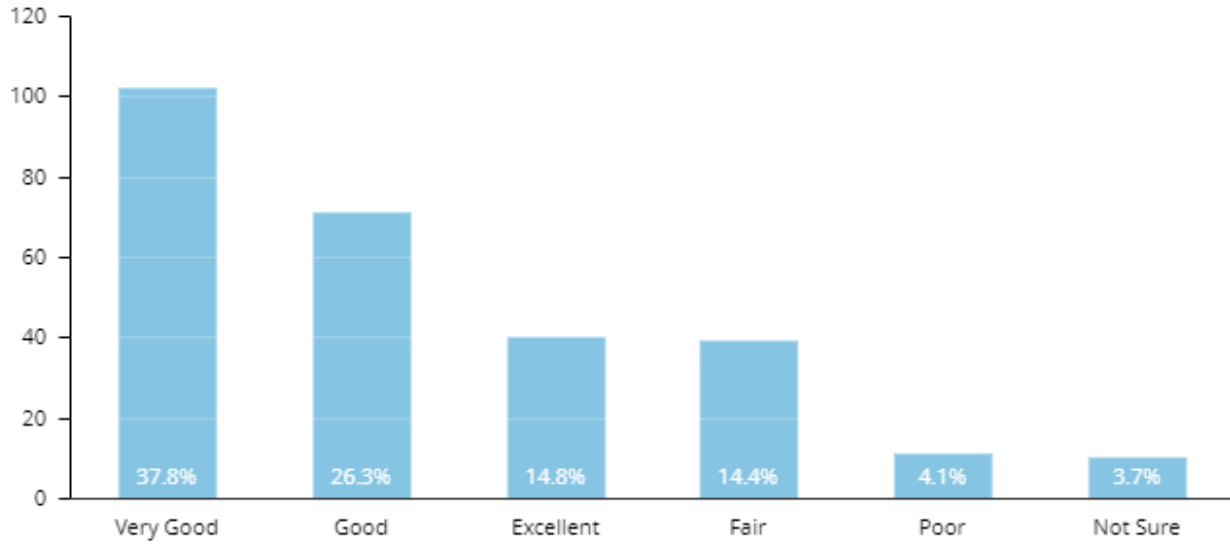
Survey Question 2. How long have you lived here?



Survey respondents represented a mix of new and long-time Portsmouth residents. 28.7% have lived in Portsmouth for 10 years or less and 24.3% have lived here for 41 or more years.

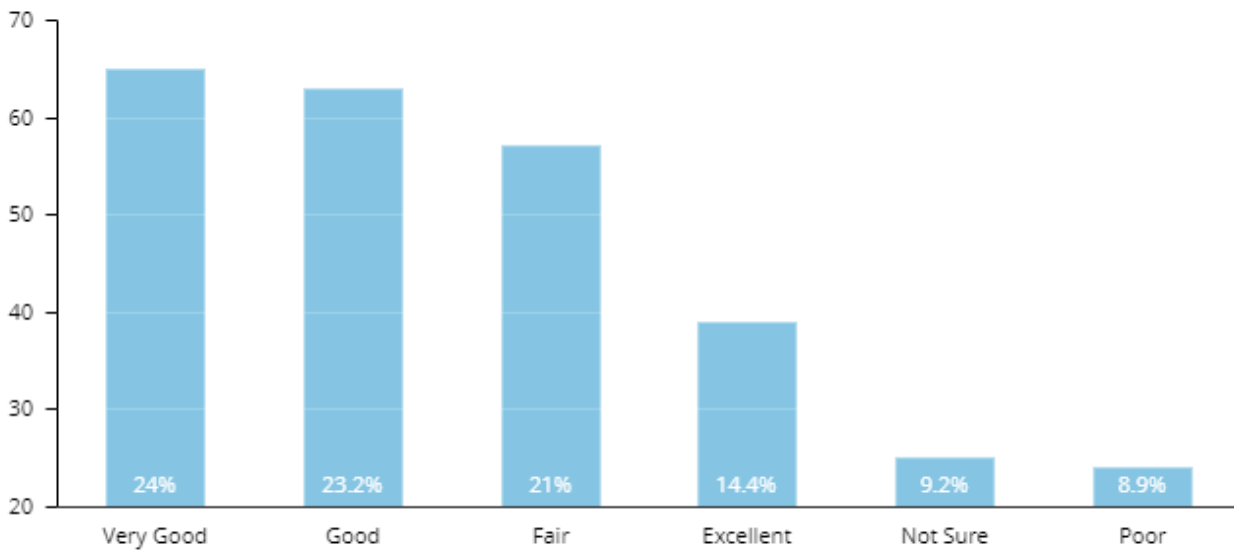
Impressions of Portsmouth as an Age Friendly Community

Survey Question 3. How would you rate Portsmouth as a place for people to live as older adults?



By and large, residents had a positive view of Portsmouth as a community for older adults.

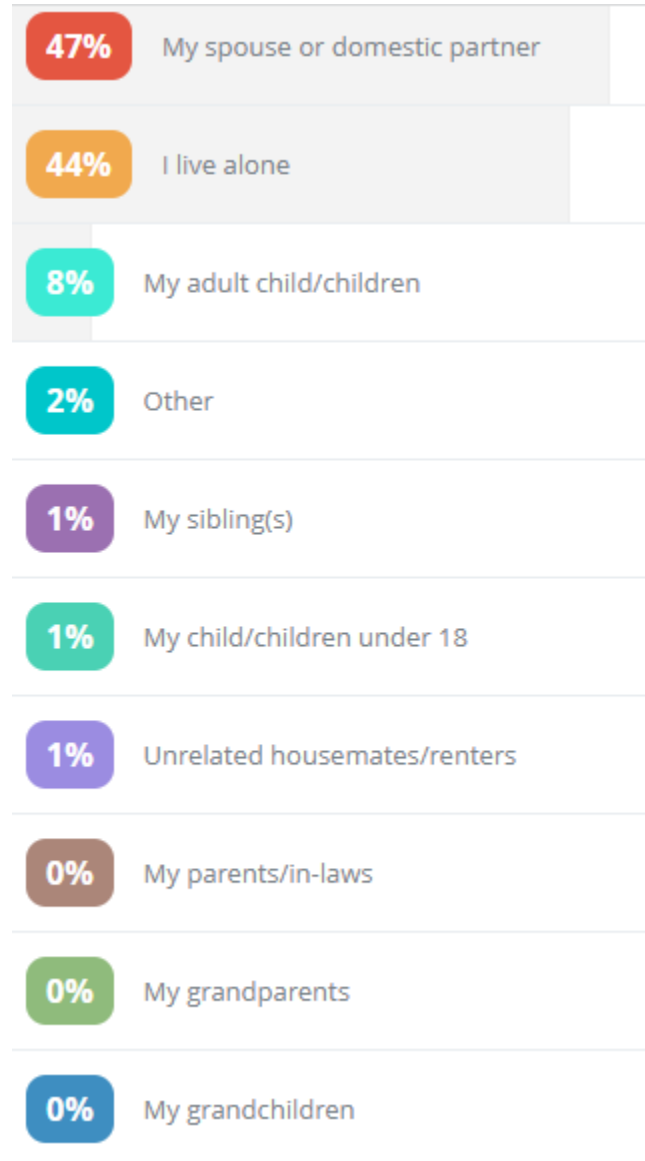
Survey Question 4. How would you rate Portsmouth as a place to attract/keep younger people in their 20s and 30s?



Residents were slightly less positive about how Portsmouth rates as a community for younger people.

Living Arrangements

Survey Question 26. Beside yourself, who else lives in your household? (check all that apply)

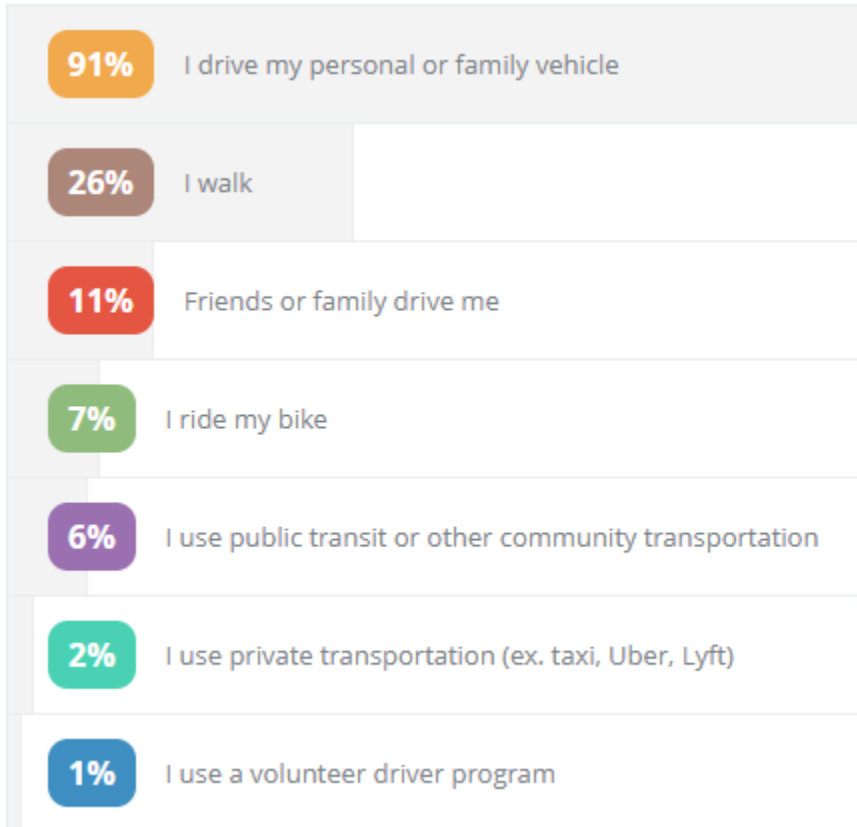


Survey respondents were asked to provide information about who they live with. Slightly less than half (47%) reported living with a spouse or domestic partner and 44% reported that they lived alone.

KEY THEME—Transportation

Modes of Transportation Used

Survey Question 13. How do you typically travel to meet your daily needs (grocery shopping, employment, medical appointments, etc.)? (check all that apply)



91% of survey respondents used their personal vehicle as their primary mode of travel. While this does represent the vast majority of participants, Portsmouth had the second lowest rate of respondents primarily using their personal vehicle behind Exeter at 81%. 97% of respondents in Fremont, 98% in Hampton, 99% in Stratham, and 99% in Hampstead reported using their personal vehicle as their primary mode of travel.

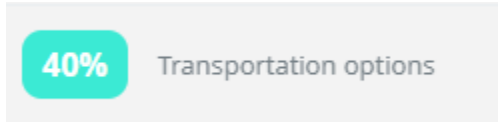
Survey Question 14. How would you rate the following in your town?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure	Not applicable
Bicycle safety	3% Excellent	19% Good	31% Fair	21% Poor	8% Not Sure	18% Not applicable
Sidewalks	9% Excellent	40% Good	26% Fair	18% Poor	1% Not Sure	5% Not applicable

44% of survey respondents rated sidewalks in Portsmouth as Fair or Poor. 52% of respondents stated that bicycle safety in Portsmouth was Fair or Poor. Improvements to sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure would help residents to utilize these transportation options to a greater degree.

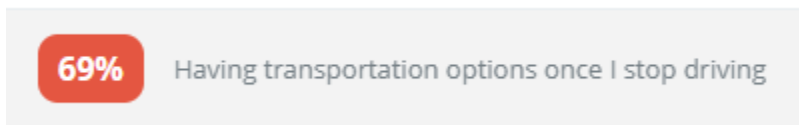
Perceived Availability of Transportation Options

Survey Question 6. Thinking about the future, which of the following reasons would likely keep you in Portsmouth as you reach your 70s, 80s, and beyond (check all that apply)?



Only 40% of respondents said that transportation options would be a reason to remain in Portsmouth.

Survey Question 7. What if anything concerns you most about growing into older adulthood in Portsmouth? (check all that apply)



69% of respondents stated they were concerned about having transportation options once they stopped driving. This concern was consistent across all six assessment communities.

Survey Question 14. How would you rate the following in your town?

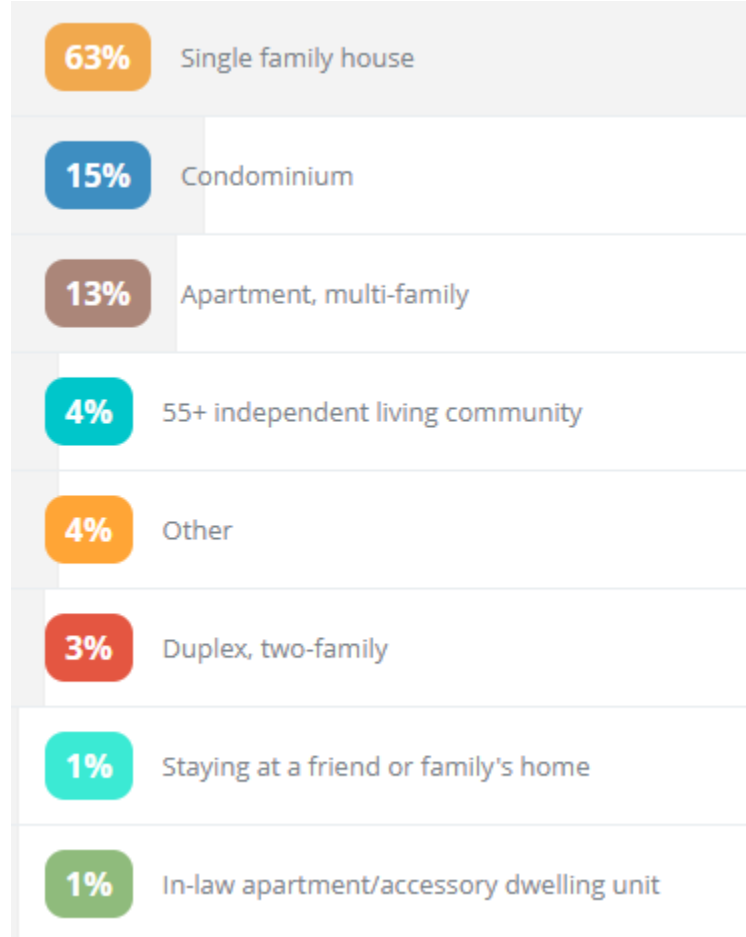
Public/community transportation	3% Excellent	20% Good	29% Fair	28% Poor	12% Not Sure	9% Not applicable
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57% of survey respondents rated public transportation in Portsmouth as Fair or Poor. However, there are community-based transportation services available to residents. Portsmouth Senior Transportation is a partnership between COAST and the City of Portsmouth to provide sustainable, safe, convenient, and comfortable transportation options to Portsmouth seniors and eligible adults with disabilities. COAST offers a variety of shared-ride transportation services operated by COAST staff. The survey responses suggest that more outreach should be done to make residents aware of these options.

KEY THEME—Housing

Existing Home Suitability

Survey Question 9. What type of house do you live in? (check all that apply)



The majority of survey respondents lived in single family homes, followed by condominiums and apartments.

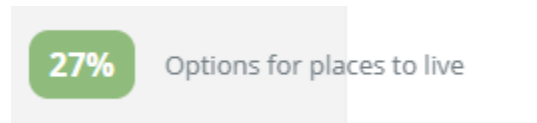
Survey Question 10. My current home meets or fits my needs regarding:

	Very Well	OK	Not Very Well	Not at All
Location near places I want to go	66% Very Well	28% OK	4% Not Very Well	2% Not at All
Type of home (ex. single family, apartment, condominium, other)	71% Very Well	24% OK	3% Not Very Well	2% Not at All
Design (ex. single floor living, width of doors, few entry steps)	57% Very Well	28% OK	13% Not Very Well	2% Not at All
Affordability within my budget	34% Very Well	50% OK	14% Not Very Well	2% Not at All
Amount of routine maintenance (ex. raking, snow shoveling)	35% Very Well	39% OK	21% Not Very Well	5% Not at All
Sense of acceptance (if in an assisted living or other retirement community)	45% Very Well	36% OK	6% Not Very Well	13% Not at All

71% of respondents said that the type of home they lived in fit their needs very well and more than half of respondents were happy with their current home’s design and location. On the other hand, only 34% said that their current home was very affordable and 35% of respondents said that the amount of routine maintenance required on their home met their needs very well.

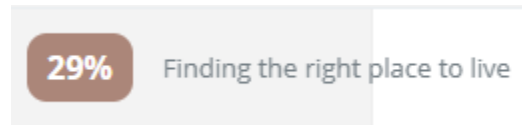
Options for a New Home

Survey Question 6. Thinking about the future, which of the following reasons would likely keep you in Portsmouth as you reach your 70s, 80s, and beyond (check all that apply)?



Only 27% of respondents said that options for a place to live would be a reason to remain in Portsmouth.

Survey Question 7. What if anything concerns you most about growing into older adulthood in Portsmouth? (check all that apply)



29% of respondents stated they were concerned about finding the right place to live as they grew older in Portsmouth.

Survey Question 11. If you have looked for a place to live in the past five years, or are considering finding another place to live in your community in the future, how would you rate the options available for you related to:

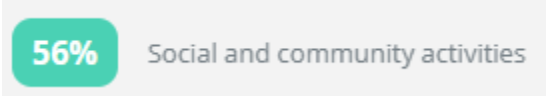
	Many available	Some available	Few available	None available	Not applicable	Don't know
Desired type of home (ex. single family, apartment, condo, other)	1% Many available	17% Some available	46% Few available	10% None available	18% Not applicable	7% Don't know
Level of maintenance I'm willing to take on (ex. lawn, raking, snow clearance)	3% Many available	17% Some available	37% Few available	7% None available	23% Not applicable	13% Don't know
Location near places I want to go	6% Many available	21% Some available	39% Few available	6% None available	18% Not applicable	10% Don't know
Design (ex. single floor living, width of doors, few entry steps)	1% Many available	16% Some available	45% Few available	8% None available	17% Not applicable	12% Don't know
Somewhere I'll feel acceptance (if looking for an assisted living or other retirement community)	2% Many available	17% Some available	27% Few available	4% None available	26% Not applicable	24% Don't know
Affordability within my budget	2% Many available	17% Some available	36% Few available	19% None available	16% Not applicable	10% Don't know

Likewise, 46% of survey respondents indicated that there were few houses available that met their needs with regard to type. More than 30% indicated there were few available that met their needs with regard to design, location, level of required maintenance, and affordability.

KEY THEME—Recreational and Social Opportunities

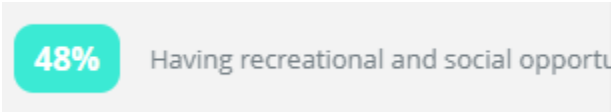
Survey Summary

Survey Question 6. Thinking about the future, which of the following reasons would likely keep you in Portsmouth as you reach your 70s, 80s, and beyond (check all that apply)?



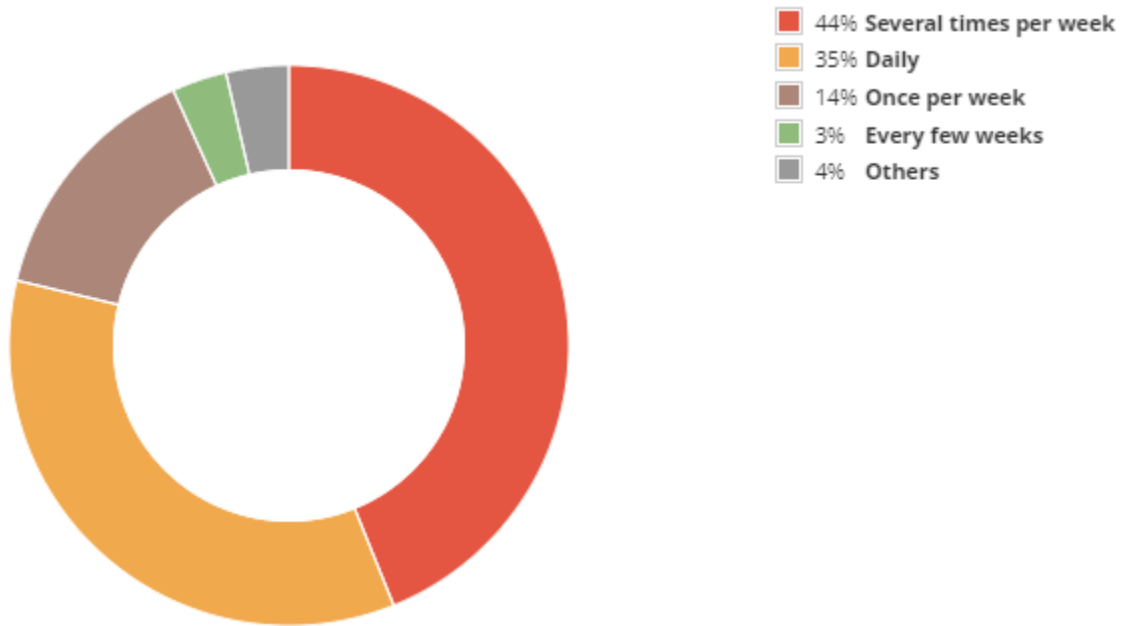
56% of respondents said that social and community activities would be a reason to remain in Portsmouth.

Survey Question 7. What if anything concerns you most about growing into older adulthood in Portsmouth? (check all that apply)



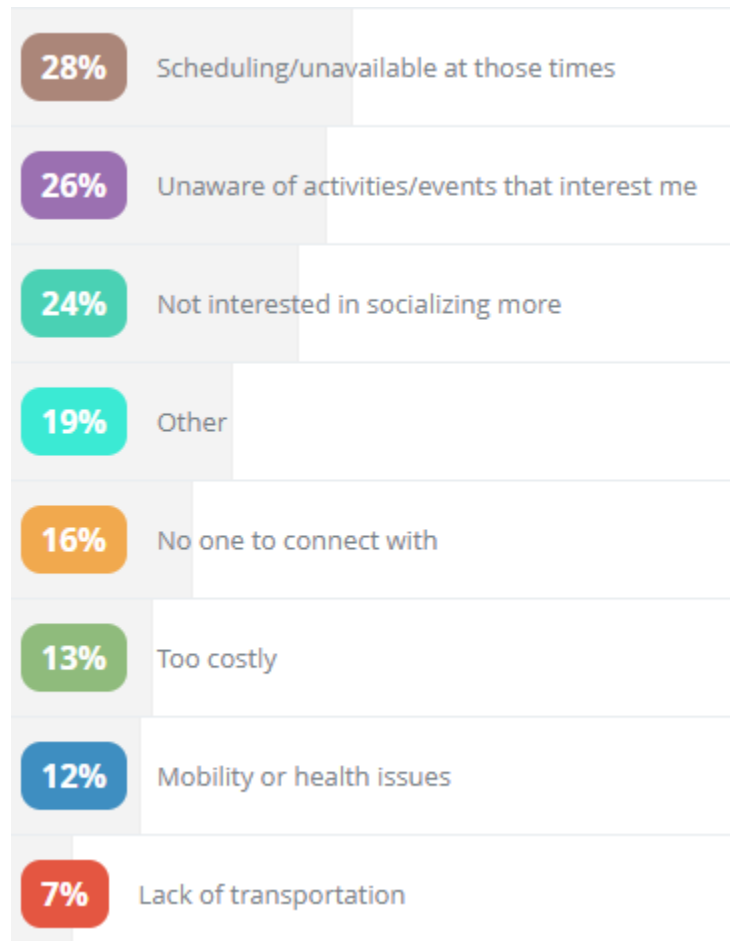
48% of respondents stated they were concerned about having recreational and social opportunities as they grow older in Portsmouth.

Survey Question 27. How often do you have contact with family, friends, or neighbors who do not live with you?



79% of survey respondents have contact with family, friends, or neighbors outside of their household at least several times per week.

Survey Question 28. If you would like to have more social contact with others, what prevents you from doing so? (check all that apply)



Portsmouth residents gave a variety of reasons for not having more social contact with others. It is noteworthy that despite concerns about lack of transportation options, only 7% of survey respondents stated that lack of transportation kept them from socializing.

Survey Question 25. Which of the following do you use in your community?

Restaurants, coffee shops, stores	93% I use
Library	83% I use
Sidewalks and bike paths	65% I use

The top 3 social and recreational opportunities in Portsmouth that are available and used by survey respondents are 1) restaurants, coffee shops, stores; 2) library; 3) and sidewalks and bike paths.

Survey Question 25. Which of the following do you use in your community?

Veterans service organizations	8% I use	60% Available, I do not use	3% Not available	30% Not sure if available
Continuing education/learning opportunities	28% I use	52% Available, I do not use	3% Not available	18% Not sure if available
Volunteer/community service opportunities	33% I use	49% Available, I do not use	- Not available	18% Not sure if available

When asked if there were social and recreational opportunities that they would use but were unsure whether they were available in Portsmouth, 30% of survey respondents identified veterans service organizations; 18% said continuing education/learning opportunities; and 18% stated volunteer/community service opportunities.

Forum Feedback—Recreational and Social Opportunities

Local Forums were held in all six assessment communities. Each forum featured an introduction to the Age Friendly concept and regional initiative, a summary of local survey findings, and break-out sessions to gather additional feedback on key issues identified through the survey. Lack of awareness about available programs and services was an issue in every community, so some forums also featured a series of brief presentations by local service providers. The City of Portsmouth held a Forum on July 12, 2022 at the Portsmouth Senior Activity Center, which featured an information sharing component as well as breakout sessions to get more detailed input on key themes.

Fitness, Wellness, and Social Programs that Work Well

- Yoga
- Bone Builders
- Sedentary bicycle
- Zumba/Dance
- Vaccine programs
- Watercolor and art class
- Community gardens
- Scrabble
- UNH Health and Wellness Program
- Outdoor Pool at Pierce Island
- Indoor pool at High School (PIP)
- Spinnaker Point Pool

Potential New Ideas

- Self defense classes—previously had access to these through the school.
- Classes on phone and/or internet scams targeting seniors (potential speaker: Rochelle Jones, Portsmouth Police)
- Stretching classes
- Music classes
- Outdoor programs, such as kayaking, hiking, sailing
- Neighborhood block parties, similar to National Night Out
- Driver’s education refresher
- Conversation about when to stop driving – how to give guidance to older drivers and family members on when is the right time to give up keys
- Tips on handling falls (note: “Balance Class” generates better participation than “Fall Prevention”)
- Presentation by police/EMS on how they pick what hospital you are transported to

Barriers to Participation

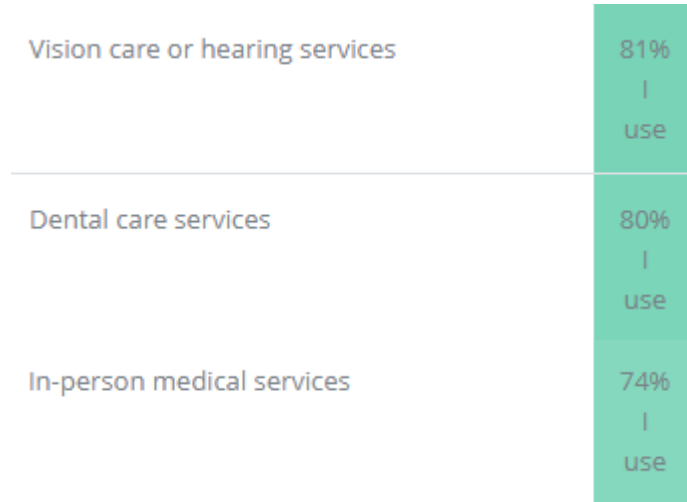
- Health and mobility concerns
- Lack of information about what is available

- COVID
- Social phobia post-COVID – reemerging and creating new habits
- Weather
- Inadequate information about expectations for an activity (ex. an organized walk should specify length, difficulty, steepness of trail, pace, etc.)
- Brick sidewalk hazards
- Cost—should be a senior discount at outdoor pool
- Accessibility at pool

KEY THEME—Senior Services

Services Used

Survey Question 17. Which if any of the following services do you use in Portsmouth?



The top 3 services in Portsmouth that are available and used by survey respondents are 1) vision care or hearing services; 2) dental care services; and 3) in-person medical services.

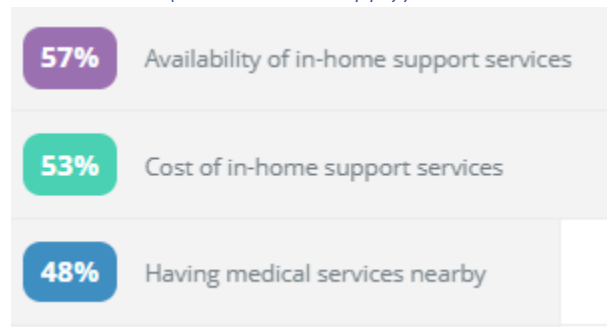
Survey Question 6. Thinking about the future, which of the following reasons would likely keep you in Portsmouth as you reach your 70s, 80s, and beyond (check all that apply)?



67% of respondents said that access to healthcare and other services would be a reason to remain in Portsmouth.

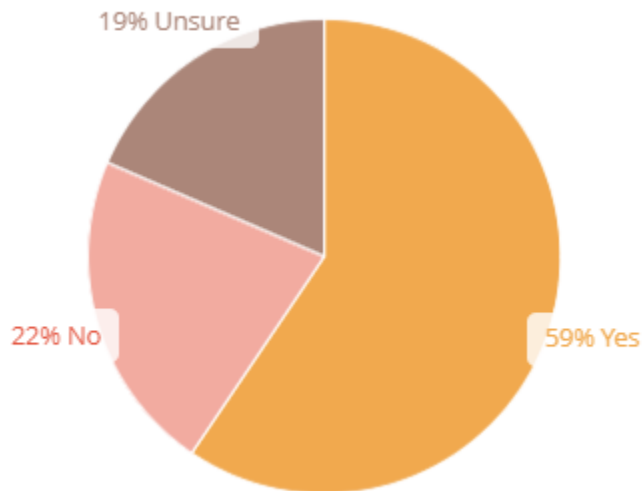
Concerns about Accessing Services

Survey Question 7. What if anything concerns you most about growing into older adulthood in Portsmouth? (check all that apply)



48% of respondents stated they were concerned about having medical services nearby as they grow older in Portsmouth. 57% of respondents stated they were concerned about the availability of in-home support services as they grow older in Portsmouth. 53% were concerned about the cost of these services.

Survey Question 18. Do you have family or friends nearby who can provide you with assistance now or in the future for things like running errands, transportation, cooking, and self-care?



While the majority of respondents do have someone who can help them, almost a quarter do not and another 19% were unsure if they had access to assistance.

Forum Feedback—Senior Services

Transportation related services

- General lack of information about options for senior transportation
- Unsure where to find transportation related information

Medical related services

- Hospice and end of life planning
- Better coordinated care prior to medical emergency – story of trying to get health data added to PRH database in case brought there for emergency
- Electronic database for medical records—hospitals have these but they tend to be siloed. How to share across providers?

General Quality of Life related services

- Resources for people living alone

Home and Housing related services

- How do you find affordable, subsidized senior housing?
- What are housing options for seniors in Portsmouth?
- Information session with tax assessor about how taxes are calculated
- Information session on Portsmouth’s Senior Tax Exemption and Senior Tax Deferral programs
- Making homes accessible to age in place—Senior Center could bring in expert to do free assessments
- More information about Seacoast Village Project
- Household help with handyman type tasks

Technology related services

- Need general technology assistance

Other services

- More information about veterans’ benefits, specifically municipal benefits associated with veteran status

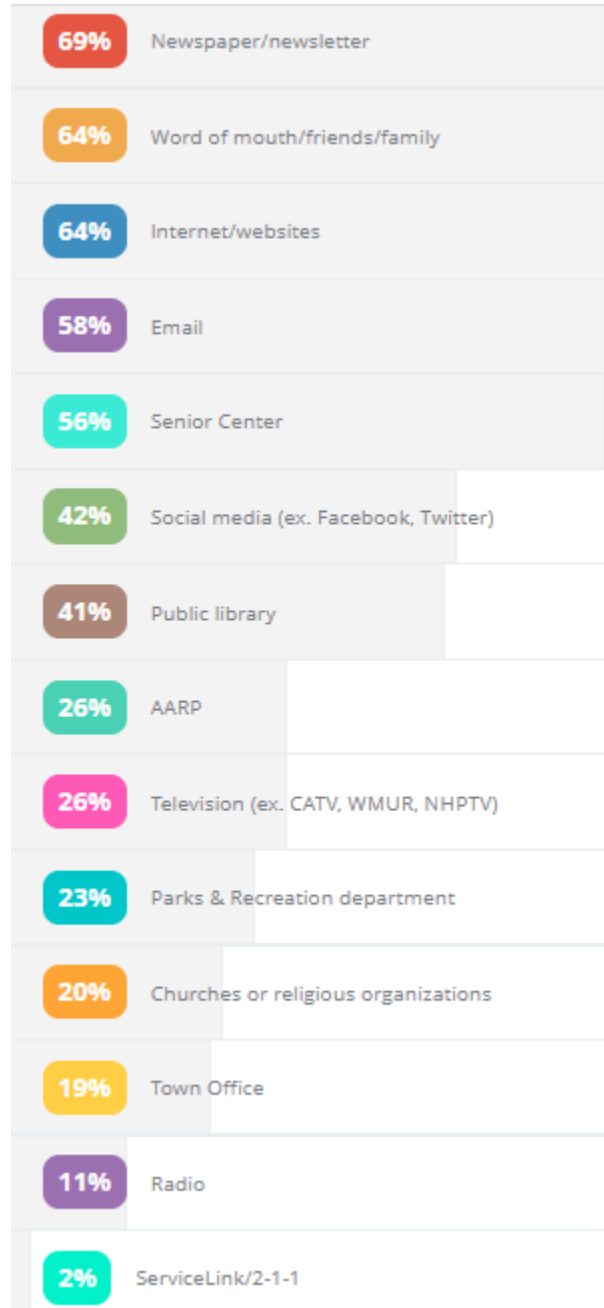
Barriers to accessing services

- No coordinated point of contact for services
- No case managers in NH

KEY THEMES—Information Sharing, Leadership, and Organization

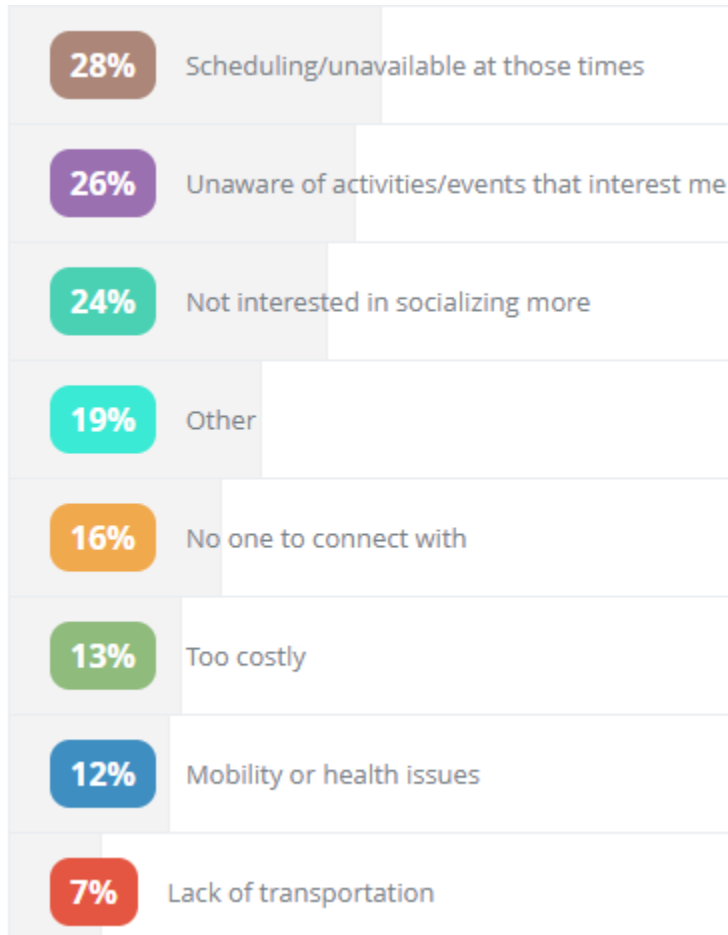
Survey Summary

Survey Question 24. How do you get information about services or events in your community? (check all that apply)



Survey respondents use a variety of methods to obtain information about events and services. The three most popular are 1) newspaper/newsletter, 2) word of mouth/friends/family, and 3) internet/websites.

Survey Question 28. If you would like to have more social contact with others, what prevents you from doing so? (check all that apply)



It is noteworthy that being unaware of activities/events was the second most common reason survey respondents gave for not engaging in more social activities. This highlights the need for better outreach and information sharing in the community.

Forum Feedback—Information Sharing, Leadership, and Organization

What can the City of Portsmouth do to help ensure information gets out to seniors?

- Ensure everyone has access to information—it can't all be electronic communications
- What share of older Portsmouth residents have convenient internet access vs. rely on non-internet information sources?
- Handbook of social service organizations
- City-wide wifi access
- Loss of local newspaper is barrier to information sharing
- Portsmouth Community Radio WSCA— a weekly/periodic show on senior services would be helpful
- Look for opportunities to improve information flow

Next Steps

While this Assessment Report serves as the final product for this grant program, it is just the beginning of Age Friendly work that could take place in Portsmouth. In order to ensure that this work continues, it is recommended that the Senior Center create an Age Friendly Communities Steering Committee. This Committee could be comprised of Portsmouth residents as well as local partner organizations. The following are implementations steps that the Committee could pursue to continue helping residents thrive at every age and stage of life. They have been used successfully by other Age Friendly Communities, including The Gibson Center for Senior Services in New Hampshire's Northern Carroll County.

Step 1—Conduct an inventory of your community's existing resources. Communities tend to jump into creating new resources, but often existing assets can be utilized to meet your needs. Cast a wide net when thinking about your resources. They should include everything from individuals who have skills and expertise they can share; physical infrastructure like meeting spaces, walking trails, and park benches; to services such as transportation assistance, meal delivery, and in-home healthcare.

Step 2—Analyze your community's existing resources. For each resource identified in your inventory, ask the following questions:

- What is working well but is underutilized? Those who know about these resources like them, but not enough people know they exist.
- What is working well but is overutilized? These are resources that may have a long waiting list or simply not enough capacity to meet demand.
- What is working well in another town that could be replicated in our town?
- What is working well but is at risk of falling apart? For example, this could be a resource that's being spearheaded by a single person and if that person leaves there is no one else to take it over.
- What else needs to be created? Communities should ask this question last to ensure that they are using their existing resources first.

Step 3—Set Goals. Goals should have the following characteristics:

- Specific—make sure your goals are specific and narrow for more effective planning. You should use action words to state exactly what you'll do.
- Measurable—define what evidence will prove you're making progress and reevaluate when necessary.
- Achievable—make sure you can reasonably accomplish your goal within a certain timeframe.
- Relevant—ensure your goals align with your values and long-term objectives.
- Time-bound—set a realistic timeline and end-date for your goals and prioritize tasks accordingly.

Step 4—Implement your first project. While planning is important, completing a successful project often helps to galvanize a volunteer group and build support among community members. Select a project that is low cost and relatively easy to implement. Here are a few examples:

- Sand Bucket Crew—deliver sand to seniors in November prior to the first snow.
- May Baskets—deliver baskets filled with flowers and other springtime items to those who need a “pick-me-up.” Include a list of senior services in the baskets. If you are unsure of who to include, you may be able to get names of seniors from your municipal tax rolls or from veterans service groups.
- Morning Check-In—seniors who live alone can call the Police Dept. each morning by 10:00AM to say they are OK. If they don’t call the Police by the set time then the Police will check-in on them. Start by asking your Police Department if a program like this already exists. It may be the case that it just needs to be publicized better.
- Database Clean-up and Outreach—make sure all the existing services in your community are accurately listed on NH 2-1-1. Then conduct an outreach campaign to ensure residents know about NH 2-1-1. <https://www.211nh.org/>
- Men’s Sheds—in the UK and Australia “sheds” are local programs or projects that provide social and community activities for older men. Men’s sheds typically take on projects that involve building or making things. In Louth, Ireland the men’s shed built bus shelters, which had been identified by senior citizens as a problem and priority need. In Portsmouth, a men’s group could work with the Recreation Department on construction and maintenance projects. There may also be opportunities to partner with Seacoast NH Habitat for Humanity or other groups to help make housing more accessible to older adults.